



**Department of Historic Resources**  
**Reconnaissance Level Survey**

**Accomack**

**DHR Id#: 001-0027-0101**

*Historic Context(s):* ..... Military/Defense

*Historic Time Period(s):*..... Q- World War I to World War II (1914-1945)

*Significance Statement:* This observation tower, built in 1936, is located to the northeast of the WEMA Recreational Facility (001-0027-100, WFF# V-065), toward the north end of Wallops Island. Originally, the building and structure operated in concert, with the Observation Tower providing an elevated platform from which vessels could be observed on the Atlantic Ocean to the east.

The Wallops Beach Lifeboat Station and Observation Tower were constructed in 1936 as the second government life saving station on Wallops Island, the first being constructed in 1883 by the United States Life-Saving Service. The 1883 station was destroyed by the August 1933 Hurricane. The Coast Guard operated the Wallops Beach Lifeboat Station and Observation Tower as an adjunct to the main station on Chincoteague Island. Three Lifeboat Stations, including Wallops Beach, Popes Island, and Assateague Beach, were managed from Chincoteague, along with the Killick Shoal Light Station. From 1936 to 1947, the Station's mission was to rescue sailors from sinking vessels and save cargo from damaged ships. Wallops Beach Station rescue boats reached open sea via a channel and boat basin dug to the rear of the island off Sloop Gut that provided access from Ballast Narrows to open ocean via the Chincoteague inlet. The building was primarily living quarters for the Lifeboat Station. A boardwalk to the building's rear, now gone, connected it to a boathouse and pier. Because the station was located inland from the shore, an observation tower was constructed during the same period.

The Wallops Beach Lifeboat Station and Observation Tower have been evaluated as an individual resource. Issues of significance, integrity, and district boundaries were carefully considered. The Wallops Beach Lifeboat Station and Observation Tower are eligible for listing in the National Register and the Virginia Landmarks Register as a single site under Criterion A for their association with the Coast Guard on the local and State levels and Criterion C in the area of Architecture on the local level, with the period of significance 1936-1947.

The Wallops Beach Lifeboat Station and Observation Tower is eligible under Criterion A for the local and regional association with the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard and its predecessor, the United States Life-Saving Service, played a vital role as protector of shipping and human lives, and consequently the economic development of Virginia's Eastern Shore. Their presence and protection helped establish the area as an important part of Virginia's seafood industry and as part of the Atlantic shipping lane for commerce. The Wallops Beach Lifeboat Station and Observation Tower is eligible under Criterion C for its architectural significance as an example of Colonial Revival-style architecture designed and constructed for the Coast Guard mission on the Eastern Shore in the 20th century. The architectural details of the building exemplify the Colonial Revival style of the early 20th century with a symmetrical front facade with balanced windows, a centered front door, and windows with double-hung sashes and multi-paned glazing. The historic resource is not associated with the life of a person significant in the past and is therefore not eligible under Criteria B. The historic resource is not likely to potentially yield information important in prehistory or history and is therefore not eligible under Criteria D.

The Wallops Beach Lifeboat Station and Observation Tower retain the necessary aspects of integrity, including location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, to be eligible for the National Register.

***Bibliographic Documentation***

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**DHR Id#: 001-0027-0101**

*Reference #:* 1

*Bibliographic RecordType:* ..... Map  
*Author:* ..... Giffels and Valet  
*Citation Abbreviation:* .....  
*Notes:* ..... Giffels and Valet, Engineers and Architects, Detroit, Michigan. "General Plot Plan – Auxiliary Air Station, Chincoteague, Virginia." 1942.

*Reference #:* 2

*Bibliographic RecordType:* ..... Map  
*Author:* ..... U.S. Navy  
*Citation Abbreviation:* .....  
*Notes:* ..... "Map of Navy Auxiliary Air Station and Naval Ordnance Test Station, Chincoteague, Virginia." 1950.

*Reference #:* 3

*Bibliographic RecordType:* ..... Map  
*Author:* ..... U.S. Navy  
*Citation Abbreviation:* .....  
*Notes:* ..... "Station Development Map – Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Naval Aviation Ordnance Test Station, Chincoteague, Virginia." 1953.

**Ownership Information**

**Graphic Media Documentation**

<i>Medium</i>	<i>Depository ID #</i>	<i>Photo Depository</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>File Name</i>
35mm B&W	21537	DHR	2004/07/99	Frame 27
35mm B&W	21532	DHR	2004/07/99	Frames 22-26

**Cultural Resource Management (CRM) Events**

*CRM Event # 1,*

*Cultural Resource Management Event:* ..... Reconnaissance Survey  
*Date:* ..... 2004/07/99  
*Organization or Person:* ..... URS Group  
*VDHR Project ID # Associated with Event:* .. 2003-0571  
*CRM Event Notes or Comments:* ..... 200 Orchard Ridge Drive, Suite 101  
 Gaithersburg, MD 20878

*CRM Event # 2,*

*Cultural Resource Management Event:* ..... Reconnaissance Survey  
*Date:* ..... 2003/08/08  
*Organization or Person:* ..... URS Group  
*VDHR Project ID # Associated with Event:* .. 2003-0571  
*CRM Event Notes or Comments:* ..... 7101 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 700  
 Bethesda, MD 20814