

# US COAST GUARD

## CAPE DISAPPOINTMENT STATION



Seaman Jose Gonzalez is part of a team that stands watch in the Coast Guard's Cape D observation tower, keeping track of boat traffic and bar conditions throughout the day using giant binoculars.

DAMIAN MULINIX PHOTO



At the southern-most point of the Peninsula lies one of the oldest and busiest Coast Guard stations on the West Coast: Cape Disappointment and the U.S. Coast Guard Motor Lifeboat School.

Because it guards what has been called the world's most dangerous waters, the station is often called to aid foundering vessels and their crews.

The river itself is dangerous, but when coupled with a strong outflowing (or ebb) tide, the clash between the outgoing current and the incoming ocean waves can be downright deadly.

Numerous fishing and commercial vessels have fallen victim to the Columbia's power combined

with the dangerous offshore waters of the Pacific Ocean, with the area nicknamed "Graveyard of the Pacific" because of the number of vessels lost there at sea.

Vessels stationed at the Cape include the 47-foot motor lifeboat, which was put through its initial sea trials at the Cape.

Cape Disappointment is also home to the only motor lifeboat school in the United States. Originally established to serve the Coast Guard's District 13, the school now accepts students from marine services worldwide. There are 36 students in each class.

To get to the station from Ilwaco, follow the signs to Cape Disappointment and the station. Phone 360-642-2382 for more information.