

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island	
COUNTY: Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	APR 26 1973

1. NAME

COMMON:
Wreck Sites of H. M. S. "Cerberus" and H. M. S. "Lark"

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Waters of Narragansett Bay adjacent to Aquidneck Island

CITY OR TOWN:
off Portsmouth

STATE: Rhode Island CODE: 44 COUNTY: Newport CODE: 005

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Comments <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>On bottom of Narragansett Bay, out of main navigational lanes</u>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

STREET AND NUMBER:
State House, 90 Smith Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence STATE: Rhode Island, 02903 CODE: 44

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
State House

STREET AND NUMBER:
90 Smith Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence STATE: Rhode Island CODE: 44

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

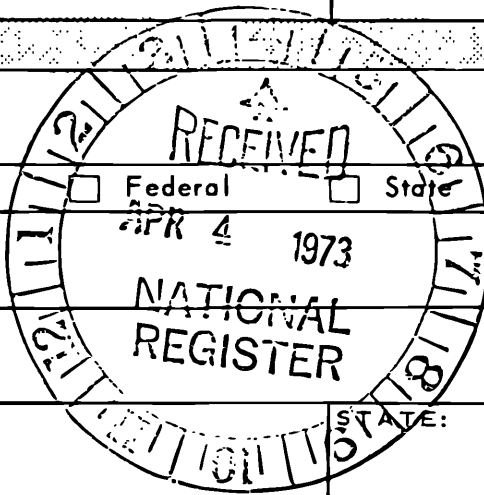
TITLE OF SURVEY:
Not so represented

DATE OF SURVEY:

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:



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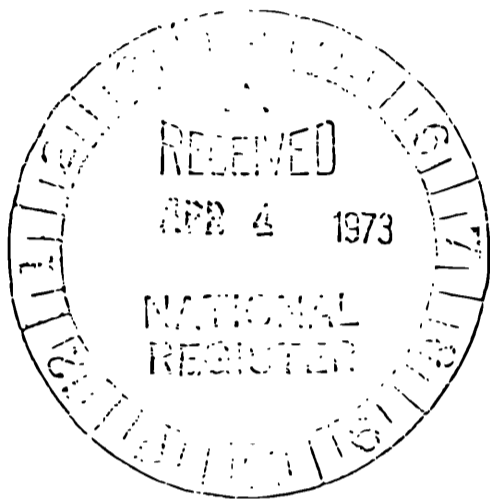
7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ruins
	(Check One)			(Check One)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The present appearance is typical of undisturbed, underwater wreck sites. Ballast mounds, large sections of heavy oak planking, cannons, anchors, cannon-balls, ship fittings etc. are strewn about the bottom, with the majority of items buried in the sediment. The two wreck sites are separated from one another by several miles.

The original and intact appearance of H. M. S. "Cerberus" and H. M. S. "Lark" is best described by a photograph accompanying this nomination which shows a scale model typical of these two ships in size, plan and armament.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

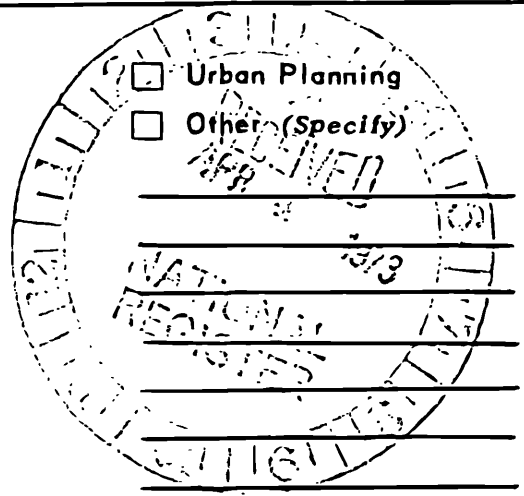
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) August 5, 1778

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

In our country's War of Independence, the alliance between France and the United States, undertaken on February 6, 1778, had given the patriots greater confidence in their ultimate success. The first movement of the French government, in compliance with the alliance's requirements, was to dispatch in May of 1778 a squadron consisting of twelve ships of the line and four large frigates, under command of Count d'Estaing, to blockade the British fleet in Delaware Bay. Fortunately for the commander in charge of the British fleet--Lord Howe--he had left the Delaware a few days before the arrival of d'Estaing on July 8 and had found safety in the waters of Raritan Bay, into which the heavy French vessels would not enter for fear of striking the sandbar stretching northward from Sandy Hook to Staten Island. D'Estaing therefore relinquished his design of attacking Howe's fleet and, on the solicitation of General Washington, proceeded to Newport to assist the Americans in their attempt to drive the British from Rhode Island. For this, General Sullivan had been sent to supercede General Spencer; and Washington had also dispatched La Fayette (accompanied by General Greene, then a quartermaster-general) with two continental regiments to aid in the Rhode Island expedition. John Hancock came at the head of the Massachusetts militia, and similar troops from Connecticut and Rhode Island also gathered at Tiverton.

Thus, with the arrival of the French fleet, which anchored off Brenton's Point on July 28, the scene was set for Rhode Island's largest conflict in the War of Independence: the Battle of Rhode Island. On July 29 two French frigates sailed up the Sakonnet Passage and caused the destruction of three British warships. On July 30, two French ships of the line sailed into the West Passage of Narragansett Bay and anchored abreast of Conanicut (Jamestown) Island, causing the British to abandon Conanicut Island and concentrate forces in Newport.

Valuable time was lost in petty disagreement between the Americans and Count d'Estaing over articles of command and various methods of attack. With a general lack of communications, the French fleet remained at anchor for several days. Then, on August 5, in the early morning, they got under sail to move around the north point of Conanicut Island. Upon seeing this movement, four large British frigates mounting

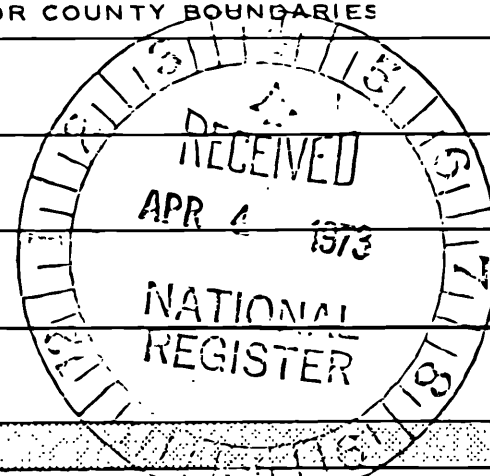
(See Continuation Sheet.)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bryant, William C., and Gay, Sydney Howard: Scribner's Popular History of the United States (New York, 1897), Vol. 3, pp. 605-607.
Diary of Frederick Mackenzie (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1930), Vols. 1 and 2.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	41° 37' 19.45" N	71° 18' 23.23" W		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	41° 36' 46.81" N	71° 16' 9.94" W		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	41° 32' 37.75" N	71° 17' 58.81" W		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	41° 33' 9.89" N	71° 20' 11.88" W		° ' "	° ' "	
APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:			4250 acres			
LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES						
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Albert P. Davis, Jr., Research Associate	
ORGANIZATION Ocean Engineering Laboratory	DATE March 29, 1973
STREET AND NUMBER: University of Rhode Island	
CITY OR TOWN: Kingston	STATE Rhode Island, 02881
	CODE 44

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: Richard C. Wilhansen
 Title: State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: 30 March 1973

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert H. Utley
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 4/26/73

ATTEST:
[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 4 20 73

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Rhode Island	
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(Number all entries)

8. Significance.

a total of 12½ cannon, and including the "Cerberus" and the "Lark," were immediately destroyed to prevent their capture by the French ships. On August 9 the Americans landed in force on the north end of Aquidneck Island, and the French had meanwhile been bombarding Newport--encountering minor resistance from the batteries surrounding that place. It was during this day that Lord Howe's reinforced fleet appeared off Point Judith; and, upon seeing their approach, Count d'Estaing sailed out of Narragansett Bay to meet them. A furious storm arose before an engagement could start, and both fleets were disabled and scattered, remaining at sea for ten days until Howe turned back to New York and d'Estaing returned to Newport.

During this period General Sullivan had pushed on, notwithstanding the absence of the expected French troops. When d'Estaing arrived again off Newport on August 9, the Americans had advanced almost to Newport, with every promise of a successful siege. They had previously been promised four thousand land troops from the French fleet, but these were denied them, and--refusing to listen to entreaties or remonstrances--d'Estaing sailed for Boston and abandoned the Americans in their upcoming battle. This lack of support caused an American withdrawal to the north end of the island, the British pursuing, and a severe engagement took place in the area of Quaker Hill on August 29. Sullivan then managed to repel the British, but when he heard that Sir Henry Clinton was soon to reinforce General Pigot at Newport with five thousand men, he decided to further remove his troops to Tiverton, and thus there was an unsuccessful end to the Battle of Rhode Island.

The only positive accomplishment of this battle, other than the courageous fighting on both sides, was the destruction of the British fleet stationed at Newport. Therefore, it is felt that the historically valuable wreck sites giving physical evidence of this happening should be recognized and afforded as much protection as possible from both state and federal government agencies, pending recovery operations and careful study of their findings. The importance of these sites is increased by the fact that the recovery of Revolutionary War vessels is extremely rare in New England waters, there being only one other such instance known to the writer. Plans are presently under way at the University of Rhode Island's Ocean Engineering Laboratory to retrieve and preserve artifacts from the sites, beginning in the summer of 1973. The work will be carried out with appropriate archaeological supervision.

