United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  

**National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form**  
See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. **Name**

   historic: **USS Silversides (SS 236)**  
   and or common

2. **Location**

   street & number: **South Side of Navy Pier**  
   city, town: **Chicago**  
   state: **Illinois**

3. **Classification**

   Category:  
   __ district  
   __ building(s)  
   __ structure  
   __ site  
   **X** object  

   Ownership:  
   __ public  
   __ private  
   __ both

   Status:  
   **X** occupied  
   __ unoccupied  
   __ work in progress  
   Accessible:  
   __ yes: restricted  
   __ yes: unrestricted  
   __ no

   Present Use:  
   __ agriculture  
   __ commercial  
   __ educational  
   __ entertainment  
   __ government  
   __ industrial  
   __ military  
   **X** museum  
   __ park  
   __ private residence  
   __ religious  
   __ scientific  
   __ transportation  
   __ other:

4. **Owner of Property**

   name: **Great Lakes Naval and Maritime Museum**  
   street & number: **P.O. Box A-3785**  
   city, town: **Chicago**  
   state: **Illinois**

5. **Location of Legal Description**

   courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.: **Department of the Navy**  
   street & number: **Naval Sea Systems Command**  
   city, town: **Washington**  
   state: **DC 20363**

6. **Representation in Existing Surveys**

   title: **National Register Inventory Form**  
   has this property been determined eligible?  
   **X** yes  
   **no**

   date: **October 18, 1972**  
   depository for survey records: **National Park Service**  
   city, town: **Washington**  
   state: **DC 20013-7127**
7. Description

**Condition**

- excellent (X)
- good
- fair

**Check one**

- deteriorated
- unaltered (X)
- altered

**Check one**

- N/A original site
- moved date

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance.

USS Silversides, (SS 236), was launched at Mare Island Naval Yard, California, on August 28, 1941. She is a fleet-type submarine (built to maintain fleet speeds averaging 17 knots) of the Gato (Drum) class. USS Silversides has all-welded construction, all-electric drive, all diesel engines, advanced refrigeration systems, air purifiers, fresh water distillers, oceanic cruising range, and optimum crew "habitability" for her time with such conveniences as air conditioning, an ice machine, showers, and entertainment systems.¹

USS Silversides is in excellent condition with most of her mechanical systems still operational. Although used as a museum exhibit under the direction of the Combined Great Lakes Navy Association USS Silversides is now undergoing a check of all systems with the intention of returning her to surface operation on Lake Michigan. Specific ship data concerning USS Silversides is:

- **Length:** 312 feet
- **Width:** 27 feet at the beam
- **Height:** 60 feet keel to top of shears
- **Mean Draft:** 16 feet
- **Displacement:** 1,525 tons surface / 2,410 tons submerged
- **Speed:** 21 knots surface / 9 knots submerged
- **Test Depth:** 370 feet
- **Complement:** 72 enlisted, 8 officers

**Power:** Diesel-electric drive

Four 9-cylinder Fairbanks-Morse diesel engines at 1,600-hp each driving General Electric generators and electric motors for 5,400 shaft hp. 252-cell Gould storage battery.

**Fuel Capacity:** 116,000 gallons for cruising range of more than 10,000 miles

**Armament:** Ten 21-inch (diameter) torpedo tubes and stowage for 24 torpedoes (Mark 14 or Mark 18s used)

One 4-inch/.50 open mount deck gun plus various combinations of the following were used during the war: .50 caliber and .30 caliber machine guns, single 20mm gun and one 40mm gun.

**Other Features:** double hull construction with 19 ballast and fuel tanks located between hulls; 8 watertight compartments inside with separating bulkheads built to withstand the same pressure as the hull.
Navigation and Fire Control Instruments: SD radar for locating aircraft; SJ "surface search" radar for locating ships; sonar system; two periscopes, one for night attacks and navigation with ranging radar on the end and one smaller daylight attack scope; target bearing transmitter (TBT) binocular system for night surface attacks; torpedo data computer (TDC) fire control system which automatically plots gyro angle in the torpedo from radar information, periscope observation, and sonar information.
8. Significance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Areas of Significance—Check and justify below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>prehistoric</td>
<td>archeology-prehistoric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1400-1499</td>
<td>archaeology-historic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500-1599</td>
<td>agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600-1699</td>
<td>architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700-1799</td>
<td>art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-1899</td>
<td>commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X 1900-</td>
<td>communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>landscape architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>exploration settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>invention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X politics government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X other (specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specific dates  1941-1945  Builder Architect Mare Island Naval Shipyard

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

In the conflict against Japan in World War II, the role and importance of the submarine forces of the United States cannot be overestimated. American submarines sank more than 600,000 tons of enemy warships and more than 5,000,000 tons of merchant shipping, thus destroying much of Japan's ocean commerce. This was accomplished by a force that never numbered more than two percent of naval personnel engaged in the war. The American submarine war against Japan created a blockade that denied her the oil, iron ore, food, and other raw materials she needed to continue to fight. By 1945 this submarine war made it impossible for any Japanese ship to sail the ocean. Without this commerce and the raw materials it supplied to her war effort, Japan found it impossible to continue the war outside of the homeland.

USS Silversides represents the U.S. submarine forces that fought against Japan in World War II for the following reasons:

1. USS Silversides ranks third among U.S. submarines in the war for enemy ships sunk with 23 confirmed sinkings for a total of 90,080 tons. The number one and two subs, Tautog and Tang, no longer exist. Tang was lost in action in the Formosa Straits in October 1944 and Tautog was scrapped in 1960. USS Silversides is thus the top ranked surviving U.S. submarine. No other surviving American submarine from World War II sank more ships.

2. USS Silversides was commissioned on December 15, 1941, just 8 days after Pearl Harbor and saw service during the entire period of the War. USS Silversides made 14 war patrols during this period of time. She was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for 4 patrols, and received 12 battle stars for her World War II service.

3. USS Silversides was made famous for an emergency appendectomy operation while submerged in enemy waters. The operation was a success and the sick crewman was back to regular duties six days later. This incident was later described in medical journals and depicted in the TV series, "Silent Service" and in the movie, "Destination Tokyo."

4. USS Silversides is in excellent condition, retains her World War II integrity and her mechanical systems are operational.
1. The descriptive information contained in this section was taken from:


**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: N/A
Quadrangle name: Chicago Loop

UTM References:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Easting</th>
<th>Northing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1 1 6</td>
<td>4 4 1 9 5 1 5 1 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification:

N/A

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>state</th>
<th>code</th>
<th>county</th>
<th>code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Harry A. Butowsky
Organization: National Park Service
Date: May 1985
Street & number: Division of History
Telephone: (202) 343-8168
City or town: Washington
State: DC

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Title: date

For NPS use only:

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

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration