

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

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

not for publication

city, town Chicago

vicinity of

state Illinois

code 17

county Cook

code 031

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Great Lakes Naval and Maritime Museum

street & number P.O. Box A-3785

city, town Chicago

vicinity of

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?  yes  no

date October 18, 1972  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records National Park Service

city, town Washington

state DC 20013-7127

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	N/A original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	moved date
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### 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.<sup>1</sup>

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

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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

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	religion
1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	science
1500-1599	agriculture	economics	literature	sculpture
1600-1699	architecture	education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	social
1700-1799	art	engineering	music	humanitarian
1800-1899	commerce	exploration settlement	philosophy	theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	communications	industry	politics government	transportation
		invention		other (specify)

**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.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>
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.

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FOOTNOTES

1. The descriptive information contained in this section was take from:

The Combined Great Lakes Navy Association, Inc. USS Silversides Information Package (Chicago, Illinois: Combined Great Lakes Navy Association, Inc., no date), pp. 1-2.

2. Drew Middleton, Submarine--The Ultimate Navy Weapon-Its Past, Present & Future (Chicago, Illinois: Playboy Press, 1976), pp. 109-112.

Edwin P. Hoyt, Submarines at War--The History of the American Silent Service (New York: Stein and Day, 1983), pp. 297-298.

Richard H. O'Kane, Clear the Bridge (New York: Bantam Books, 1981), pp. 465-467.

3. Clay Blair, Jr, Silent Victory--The U.S. Submarine War Against Japan (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1975), Appendix J.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Blair, Clay, Jr. Silent Victory--The U.S. Submarine War Against Japan. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1975.

Combined Great Lakes Navy Association, Inc. USS Silversides Information Package. Chicago, Illinois: Combined Great Lakes Navy Association, Inc., no date.

Farrar, William G. "National Register of Historic Places Inventory USS Silversides." Benton, Illinois: Illinois Historic Landmarks Commission, 1972.

Hoyt, Edwin P. Submarines at War--The History of the American Silent Service. New York: Stein and Day, 1983.

Middleton, Drew. Submarine--The Ultimate Naval Weapon-Its Past, Present & Future. Chicago, Illinois: Playboy Press, 1976.

O'Kane, Richard. Clear the Bridge. New York: Bantam Books, 1981.

Roscoe, Theodore. United States Submarine Operations in World War II. Annapolis, Maryland: United States Naval Institute, 1965.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property N/A

Quadrangle name Chicago Loop

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

116	44951510	41631761210
Zone	Easting	Northing

B 

Zone	Easting	Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

N/A

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

state \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_

state \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_

## 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 20013-7127

## 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

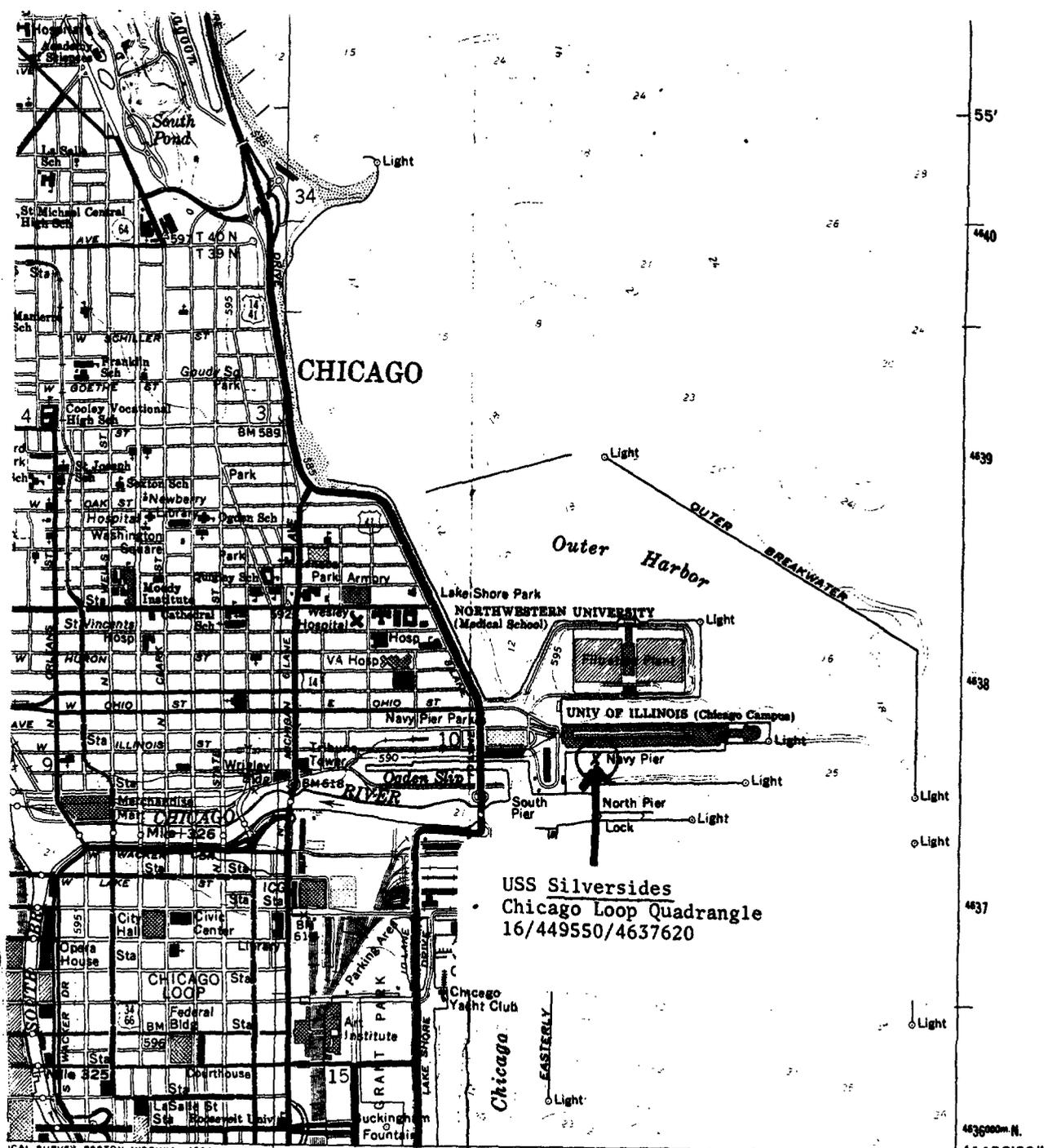
date \_\_\_\_\_

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration



**ROAD CLASSIFICATION**  
 Light-duty  
 U. S. Route      State Route

**CHICAGO LOOP, ILL.**  
 N4152.5—W8737.5/7.5  
 PHOTOINSPECTED 1978  
 1963  
 PHOTOREVISED 1972  
 AMS 3467 I NW—SERIES V863