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 Torsk (SS-423)

and/or common:

2. Location

street & number: Pier IV Pratt Street

city, town: Baltimore

state: Maryland

code: 24

county: Independent City

code: 510

3. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Present Use</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>structure</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>work in progress</td>
<td>educational</td>
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<tr>
<td>site</td>
<td>in process</td>
<td>X: yes: restricted</td>
<td>entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X object</td>
<td>being considered</td>
<td>X: yes: unrestricted</td>
<td>government</td>
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</table>

4. Owner of Property

name: Baltimore Maritime Museum

street & number: Pier IV Pratt Street

city, town: Baltimore

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 20362

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title: None

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date: federal state county local

depository for survey records:

city, town: state:
USS Torsk (SS-423) was built by the U.S. Navy at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. She was launched on September 6, 1944, and was placed in commission on December 16, 1944.

USS Torsk is a fleet-type submarine of the Tench class. The Tench class were virtual copies of the Gato and Balao classes; however, they were more strongly built than the Gato/Balao classes and had a better internal layout, which increased their displacement by about 35-40 tons. The deck of the boat is made of teakwood, and the exterior is painted black.

Specific ship data concerning USS Torsk is:

- **Length:** 311 feet
- **Displacement:** 1,800 tons surface / 2,500 tons submerged
- **Beam:** 27 feet
- **Draft:** 17 feet
- **Speed:** 20 knots surface / 9 knots submerged
- **Design Depth:** 400 feet
- **Crew:** 8 Officers 74 Enlisted
- **Armament:** Ten torpedo tubes, 6 forward and 4 aft, with 14 reloads, total 24 torpedos, various combinations of antiaircraft guns

USS Torsk was a pre-snorkel submarine operating underwater on batteries, and powered by a diesel electric system. In 1951 USS Torsk was converted to a snorkel-equipped Guppy submarine that allowed the boat to operate her diesel engines underwater. During this conversion all the boat’s exterior guns were removed and the conning tower was enclosed by a new sail casing designed to reduce underwater water resistance.

USS Torsk is in good condition, and aside from the addition of the snorkel and the exterior changes, retains much of her World War II integrity.
8. Significance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Areas of Significance—Check and justify below</th>
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Specific dates: 1944–1945
Builder Architect: Portsmouth 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 all but impossible for Japanese ships 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.1

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

1. USS Torsk is a World War II Tench class submarine. The Tench class was a late World War II submarine design that represented the continued attempt by the U.S. Navy to improve on the previously successful Gato/Balao classes. Only ten Tench class submarines, including USS Torsk, were commissioned in time to see service in the Pacific during World War II.

2. USS Torsk conducted two war patrols and sank 3 Japanese ships totaling 2,473 tons. USS Torsk was awarded two battle stars for her World War II service.

3. USS Torsk is credited with firing the last torpedoes and sinking the last Japanese combatant ships of World War II, when on August 14, 1945, she sank the Japanese Coast Defense Vessel No. 13 and Coast Defense Vessel No. 47. With the sinking of these two vessels the U.S. Navy completed its mission, begun on December 7, 1941, to sweep the oceans of Japanese merchant shipping and warships.

4. USS Torsk is in good condition and, although altered as a Guppy submarine, retains much of her World War II integrity.
FOOTNOTES


BIBLIOGRAPHY


Trench Class Fleet Submarine—USS TORSK (SS423)

After Torpedo Room

This after torpedo room, which has four torpedo tubes, also served as crew's quarters compartment. It carried only four torpedo tubes. Two bunks were in the overhead, one for access to the main deck and one for looking overboard. A crew's head was in the bow, and all of the compartment, in pitch.

Control Room

Here was where the main propulsion controls were located. The upper level held a control room for the main engines with four control panels, each with an individual instrument board. The bow and stern planes were located on the lower level, and the control room for the auxiliary engines was located on the main deck.

Intake snorkel

Exhaust snorkel

Forward Battery Compartment

The upper level contained the control room for the main engines. The lower level housed the auxiliary engines. The forward battery compartment was located on the main deck, and it contained the forward battery well, which was used to store torpedoes, and a small arms and ordnance store.

After Battery Compartment

The upper level contained the generator sets, one on each side. The space was divided into upper and lower levels, and the main engine occupied all of the vertical space. A grating was placed on the main deck to facilitate the movement of crew members to the main deck.

After Engine Room

The after engine room was divided into upper and lower levels, and the main engine occupied all of the vertical space. A grating was placed on the main deck to facilitate the movement of crew members to the main deck.

Forward Engine Room

The after engine room was divided into upper and lower levels, and the main engine occupied all of the vertical space. A grating was placed on the main deck to facilitate the movement of crew members to the main deck.

Central Room

The upper level contained the control room for the main engines. The lower level housed the auxiliary engines. The central room was located on the main deck, and it contained the forward battery well, which was used to store torpedoes, and a small arms and ordnance store.

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DRAWN BY ALAN B. CHESTLEY—1960
9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: N/A

Quadrangle name: Baltimore East

UTM References

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<thead>
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Zone Easting Northing

1111111111

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>
</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

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

GPO 544-785