NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK WITHDRAWAL OF DESIGNATION REPORT

USS *CLAMAGORE* (SS 343)

Designated a National Historic Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior June 29, 1989.
National Historic Landmark designation withdrawn by the Secretary of the Interior, September 2, 2024.

Designated: June 29, 1989

Location: Norfolk Shipping Yard
Norfolk, VA

Owner: State of South Carolina
Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum
40 Patriots Point Road
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464

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Significance of the Landmark:

The ex-USS *Clamagore* (SS343) was commissioned June 28, 1945, and decommissioned June 12, 1975. Built in 1945, the Balao class submarine *Clamagore* is one of 132 Gato, Balao, and Tench class submarines built during World War II. *Clamagore* was a typical World War II "fleet boat" built as part of a major submarine construction program that followed the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The submarine warfare pursued by the United States and supported by this construction program was instrumental in securing an American victory in the Pacific.

In 1947 the US Navy modified the *Clamagore* into a Fleet Rehabilitation and Modernization (FRAM) II submarine. She principally operated off Key West and in the Caribbean during the Cold War, earning the moniker "Grey Ghost of the Florida Coast." In 1962, it was again modified to become a GUPPY III (Greater Underwater Propulsive Project) submarine. *Clamagore was* one of only nine submarines converted to a GUPPY III and the only surviving GUPPY Type III submarine in the United States. Ex-*Clamagore* represents the continued adaptation and use of war-built diesel submarines by the Navy for the first two decades after the war.

Condition of Landmark:

On display at the Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum since 1981, the structural outer hull was severely

failing due to extensive corrosion, causing safety concerns and closure to visitors in 2021. The wasting of the hull rapidly degraded the interior systems and structure. A large leak in the Main Ballast tank caused the vessel to begin to sink, which required air be pumped into the ballast tank on a regular basis. Additionally, many of the batteries began leaking contaminates into the water. In 2019, the US Navy granted Patriots Point approval to dispose of the vessel, with Section 106 compliance concluded through a Program Comment. In 2021, the South Carolina legislature secured funds to begin the scrapping process. All superstructure components have been removed along with 504 batteries and the vessel was stabilized for towing. On October 14, 2022, the vessel was towed to Norfolk, VA, for the last stage of the scrapping process.

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Recommendation:

Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum spent a decade looking for funding for both repairs and/or transport to another facility and pursued and researched various options prior to securing the funding for scrapping. The initial stage of scrapping is complete and all of the superstructure has been removed, in addition to select equipment salvaged for future display. Therefore, National Historic Landmark (NHL) designation should be withdrawn.

Justification for Withdrawing Landmark Designation:

Having been dismantled and recycled for scrap, the ex-USS *Clamagore* has ceased to meet the criteria for designation because the qualities which originally led it to be designated, have been destroyed or removed [36 CFR 65.9 (b)(1)].

Select Bibliography:

Delgado, James P. "USS Clamagore (SS-343)." National Historic Landmark Nomination Form. Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1988.

Naval History and Heritage Command. "Clamagore (SS-343)." https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/c/clamagore.html (accessed April 5, 2023).

The Post and Courier. "Photos: Ex-USS Clamagore submarine towed off from Patriots Point." October 14, 2022. https://www.postandcourier.com/photo_galleries/photos-ex-uss-clamagore-submarine-towed-off-from-patriots-point/collection_3d3623e6-4be8-11ed-b051-efbea6473153.html#newsletter-popup (accessed April 5, 2023).

Rose, Andy. "USS Clamagore submarine will be destroyed and recycled, museum says." CNN. March 19, 2022. https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/19/us/uss-clamagore-submarine-destroyed-museum-cold-war/index.html (accessed April 5, 2023).

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Ex-USS *Clamagore* (SS 343)
August 30, 2022
Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum
Photo credits: Melissa Buchanan/Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum