

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What happens to warships after they are decommissioned?

To decommission a ship is to terminate its career in service in the armed forces. Decommissioning a ship confers that the vessel has reached the end of its usable life, usually 35 years, and is being retired from the Navy.

After a ship or boat is decommissioned, there are five options for its future:

- 1) Sold – Old warships are often sold to other countries to be overhauled and continue in service under a new flag
- 2) Preserved – A few vessels are donated to non-profits, states or local governments to be preserved as museum ships.
- 3) Mothballed – Ships or boats that have some strategic value left in them are often “mothballed.” They are sealed for preservation and parked with older ships in Reserve Fleet bases in case the Navy needs them in the future.
- 4) Sunk – Old ships are often used for target practice in exercises, or for use as artificial reefs.
- 5) Dismantled and Recycled – If there’s no value left in a hull, it will be stripped for usable parts and then the remaining metal will be recycled. In 1996 the Benjamin Franklin class ballistic missile submarine USS Lewis and Clark was recycled through the Navy’s Nuclear-Powered Ship and Recycling Program at Bremerton, Washington. The submarine’s sail, fairwater planes, and rudder top are on display at Patriots Point’s Cold War submarine service memorial.

### What are the biggest repairs needed on the Clamagore?

The main ballast tanks, which are responsible for the submarine’s buoyancy, are failing due to extensive corrosion. This corrosion occurred after 40 years of steel sitting in salt water. The boat cannot be repaired where it sits and requires a dry dock and complete overhaul.

### **What are the environmental concerns?**

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are present throughout much of the vessel and exceed levels that the EPA requires to be removed. There are also 504 lead batteries, weighing nearly 1.5 tons each, that are an environmental hazard and need to be removed. Right now all environmental issues are contained and not an imminent threat, but the submarine's extensive corrosion could lead to more urgent concerns in the future.

### **How much would it cost to repair the Clamagore and reopen the submarine to visitors?**

According to marine surveyor Joseph W. Lombardi, an expert in historic ship restoration, it would cost \$9.35 million (2019) to remove the submarine from its berth, make the necessary repairs, and then return the vessel to the museum.

The submarine would go to the shipyard for removal of bad metal where it would be sandblasted to remove corrosion. A crew would seal any penetrations to the hull, recoat the vessel, and remove hazardous materials.

Joseph Lombardi specializes in preparation of ship repair specifications, ship project management, dead-ship tows, and inspections of waterfront marine facilities. He is the current Chairman of Ship Preservation for the Historic Naval Ships Association.

Below is a link the entire estimated budget for watertight repairs to the submarine:

<https://bit.ly/3sGpEgO>

### **Why can't Patriots Point pay the \$9 million to restore the Clamagore?**

There is a business element to what we do at Patriots Point. The primary responsibility of our board is to make sure that the Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum is perpetually self-sustaining. To ensure that, like any business, we have to develop a plan with goals and objectives.

The Patriots Point Development Authority is an agency of the State of South Carolina that does not receive any recurring appropriated funding for operating costs. Our revenue is generated through ticket sales and lease revenue from the 400+ acres of land we manage. Our fiscal year 2022 operating costs will reach \$9.75 million. Our revenue forecast is \$10.3 million. We have to carefully allocate the money we earn to goals and

objectives that are based primarily on the aircraft carrier USS Yorktown, the flagship of our museum, and destroyer USS Laffey.

Restoring the Clamagore is not a one-time expense. If Patriots Point were to keep the submarine for 100 years, the museum would have to restore the ship four or five times. Over years, the rust will return because the vessel is floating in the salty Charleston Harbor.

### **Why can't Patriots Point move the submarine onto land?**

In 2010, Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum hired two engineering firms to research the feasibility of bringing the sub onto land where it could be more easily maintained. The study showed that the least expensive method for land-berthing would cost \$5.8 million, in addition to the costs of doing actual repairs to the sub. Transporting the submarine from its current location across protected wetlands would be too expensive. The estimated cost to recycle the Clamagore is about \$2 million (2020).

Below is a link to the 2010 report:

<https://bit.ly/369hHJh>

### **What is the estimated annual maintenance cost if the submarine was kept?**

The maintenance could cost as much as \$250,000 per year. That includes the work on the submarine, the docks where the vessel is kept, personnel costs, insurance and proper savings for future dry-dock work.

### **Has Patriots Point given thought to any other offers for the submarine?**

Many options to maintain USS Clamagore in her current state as a museum, whether in Charleston or at some other location, have been explored over a number of years. Groups who would like to have the boat have been identified. Several have been given the opportunity to organize and fund their suggested options. None have been able to meet the requisite financial commitment. Not only would a group have to raise the money for restoration, they would also have to prove that they could transport the ship safely and maintain it for years to come. The PPDA board, the state of South Carolina and the United States Navy would all have to approve any potential plan.

In 2012, Patriots Point listed the submarine on South Carolina Business Opportunities (SCBO), a database for goods, services and construction needs of state and local

government. The museum also distributed information about the Clamagore's availability to museums across the world through the Historic Naval Ship Association.

### **Why doesn't Patriots Point give non-profits and support organizations more time to raise money to pay for the submarine's repairs?**

The Patriots Point board has given support organizations more than a decade to raise money for the USS Clamagore's restoration. They have not been able to raise the necessary money. The longer a solution is delayed, the more likely the submarine could pose serious environmental problems due to landfall of a major hurricane.

### **Does Patriots Point have permission from the Secretary of the Navy to recycle the Clamagore?**

On July 13, 2019, the U.S. Navy granted permission for Patriots Point to dispose of the submarine. Below is a link to the official letter:

<https://bit.ly/361aSJD>

### **What does recycling mean? How will Patriots Point pay for it?**

The vessel will be dismantled and parts will be sold to be reused or recycled. Because the Clamagore is almost 80 years old, much of the equipment is outdated and no longer suitable to be used on active submarines. The vast majority of the remaining steel will be made into new products. This lowers the demand for mined iron ore and reduces energy costs in the steelmaking process.

The recycling project will be funded from Patriots Point's operating budget.

### **What will happen to the artifacts on board the submarine?**

Under the advisement of Patriots Point curatorial staff, many of the artifacts aboard the USS Clamagore will be harvested and used in an upcoming exhibit aboard the Yorktown. Some of the artifacts planned for preservation include: gauges, charts, wheels, sonar equipment, torpedo hatches, navigation aids, communication gear, and the periscope. Patriots Point will also reach out to other institutions who may be interested in gathering artifacts for their own collections.

### **Is the Clamagore a memorial?**

We do not consider any of Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum's ships to be memorials. The vessels are museums.

### **Is the Clamagore a WWII submarine?**

The Clamagore was commissioned during the war but did not serve in it. The boat is considered a World War II-era submarine that was heavily modified for service in the Cold War.