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# Save Our Ships: The Viability of Naval Vessels as Museum Exhibitions

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**Save Our Ships:  
The Viability of Naval Vessels as Museum Exhibitions**

**Seth Weiner**

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
**Master of the Arts in Museum Professions**

**Seton Hall University  
December 2012**

**Juergen Heinrichs, Ph.D., Faculty Advisor**

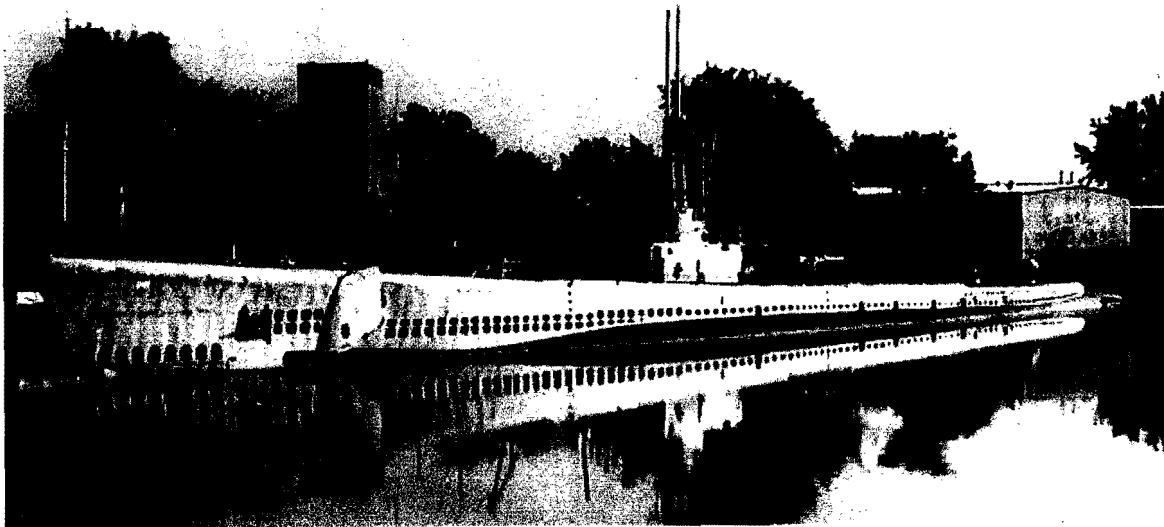
## **Abstract**

The past twenty years have seen dramatic changes in the state of the world economic situation. As a result, museums the world over have been forced to take measures to ensure their continued economic viability. This process of adaptation has been especially difficult for small museums, as these institutions often lack substantial missions, good locations, qualified staff, and clear exhibition and collections management policies.

This thesis examines the one such institution, the New Jersey Naval Museum, as well as several case study institutions of similar mission scope, in order that workable solutions may be found that will assist small museum institutions in coping with the ever changing world economic climate. Included are analyses of scope, institution location, patterns of tourism, and institutional organization, as well as proposed ideas for fundraising and more efficient exhibit design.

The goal of this work is to foster a better understanding of how small museum institutions, and those that utilize decommissioned Naval Vessels as primary exhibits in particular, can better adapt to severe changes in the economic environment.

# Save our Ships - The Viability of Naval Vessels as Museum Exhibitions



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## Acknowledgements

I have invested more than two years in completing the requirements for my Masters Degree in Museum Professions. During that time, in addition to developing a better understanding of my chosen professional field, I also made new friends and realized that I am indeed surrounded by so many wonderful people, both personally and professionally.

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I would like also to extend thanks to all of my friends who have given me their support during this long and difficult project. Most of all, I would like to thank my girlfriend Amber, for always being there for me and keeping me honest, and for instilling in me the confidence to always give it my best. Finally, I would like to thank my family: my sister for her kind advice, and my parents, for their love, and for the help, proofreading, and support that only parents would be willing to give. Thank you for helping me to pursue my dreams.

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## **Introduction**

Over the past two decades, the ever changing world economic situation has caused ripples within the museum professional community, even going so far as to cause these professional circles to question the financial and intellectual viability of specific types of museums and related institutions. Highly specialized institutions, such as those involved in preserving complex and large-scale military related artifacts, have often been forced to face the worst of economic hardships due to the specific issues of maintenance these artifacts present to the professionals responsible for their care.

The concept of the warship as a public museum institution is not immune to the scrutiny of academic research. The United States Navy's mothball fleet, consisting of naval vessels that have been decommissioned and retired from active service yet not scrapped, was primarily established for the purpose of providing a contingency of ships to be available in the event of a large military conflict or disaster. However, this fleet has also provided for the establishment of naval museums designed to preserve naval heritage and to educate the public on the history of the United States Navy.

Opportunities for research at these institutions are many. The preservation and exhibition of the retired warship is probably the best possible way to exhibit to the public the evolution of military technology. Many of the technological marvels that we now take for granted, including radio, RADAR, SONAR, transistors, and even the computer, were perfected on the proving grounds of the United States Navy warship. With their original interiors and equipment often preserved in operating condition, these historic vessels allow researchers to examine the changes made to these various technologies during this process of development. Just as the warships



themselves were the laboratory for testing new innovations, they have now become the baseline for new testing.

Museum warships also present the opportunity for museum professionals to examine and perfect conservation and preservation techniques on all types of materials in artifacts that are unparalleled in complexity. A decommissioned warship has everything under the sun, including a variety of textiles, metals, electronics, glass, rubber, organics, and even, on occasion, radioactive materials. It is a perfect practical lab for a conservator-in-training to hone his or her skills in a real world situation.

Such military museums also offer training in the more practical aspects of museum operation and idealistic museum professionals-to-be may be surprised at the challenges they present. Given the recent “culture wars” and political divisions in the United States, directors of military museums may have to contend with public controversy over the exhibition of military objects and interpretation of military history. There is also the potential for environmental problems, especially in cases where the vessel on exhibition is still in the water. All of these issues may be compounded by a lack of trained the staff, directors, and even trustees, many of whom are military veteran volunteers rather than trained museum professionals and, thus, unqualified to handle many of the issues related to the care and preservation of the artifacts in their charge. Such is the case with the New Jersey Naval Museum.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the intellectual and economic viability of a specific focus institution, the New Jersey Naval Museum (NJNM) in Hackensack, NJ, as well as other museums that care for warships as primary exhibits. It will examine several case study

institutions in the United States and the United Kingdom, in order to identify common positive and negative characteristics of these institutions, in the hopes that this level of evaluation will provide solutions necessary to achieve greater sustainability. There are several specific research questions posed within this broader framework, the most important being whether or not museum institutions with warships as their primary attractions or exhibits are economically viable. What do small, maritime museums like the NJNM need to do to counteract declining attendance and revenues? How can they generate new interest in their exhibits and attract audiences so that they can survive into the future and accomplish their missions? Do they need to alter their traditional missions as history museums and war memorials in order to survive?

There is also the question of the level of specialization of the given institution versus level of success; is there such a thing as too much specialization, and can specialization taken to extremes ultimately alienate a museum's potential audience? Since many of these institutions, especially the smallest of them, operate under the direction of staff not trained in the museum studies field, the relationship between the level of staff professionalism and the success of the institution must also be questioned. Can military veterans and other volunteers with no formal museum studies training or experience successfully and efficiently run a museum institution in the current economic climate? Finally, this study will survey a number of factors that ultimately determine both the scope and success of any small museum institution, including patterns of tourism, 501c3 and other tax regulations, target audiences, maintenance and conservation, and collections management policy.

**Thesis:**

Although the obstacles that small, maritime museums like the NJNM face in the current economic climate seem insurmountable, I will argue that they continue to be valuable resources

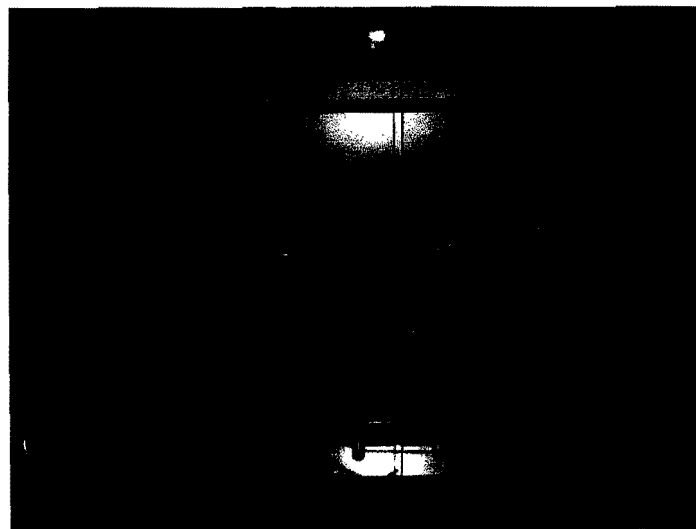
of historical knowledge and national identity and can survive economically (and perhaps prosper) if they are professionally managed and are able to employ new strategies to generate interest in their exhibits. Recent research indicates, for example, that some large and small museums are successfully responding to declining attendance and revenues by broadening the scope of their exhibits, making their exhibits more interactive, and entering into partnerships with neighboring museums, libraries, and schools. In more dire cases like the NJNM, survival will require first more professional leadership (i.e. one or more staff members with museum studies training) and changes in organizational structure and policies that are limiting its public appeal and revenues.

### **Methodology**

This study is designed primarily around participant-observation, with both volunteer-based internship and hands-on curatorial and conservational activities involving the collections of the focus institution. The research methodology incorporates documentation provided by the United States Navy and the New Jersey Naval Museum Board of Trustees concerning the disposition and status of the United States Submarine *Ling* AGSS/IXSS-297, as well as case study analyses of other museum institutions charged with caring for retired or decommissioned warships. It also explores specific criteria relevant to the economic success of this kind of museum institution, such as location, patterns of tourism, size of the institution, maintenance, and legal and political issues. I will be citing published research on maritime and small museums, but my observations about the NJNM are frequently based upon informal conversations and interviews with the museum personnel and board members. I will make clear when I am drawing on these conversations but will not provide formal citations since I do not have specific dates for them.

My initial participant-observational study of the New Jersey Naval Museum started in May of 2009 and continued through the fall of that year, during which time I compiled extensive background information concerning the organizational structure and history of the institution. I also got to know all of the military veteran volunteers who were working for the institution at the time, and participated in the various events hosted by the institution. In addition, I took an active role in commemorative activities, serving as Drum Major for the museum's Memorial Day and Pearl Harbor Day festivities.

My primary duty at the institution during the internship / participant-observation phase of this study was to provide tours of the submarine *USS Ling* to museum visitors. In addition, I was also responsible for explaining to visitors the various large ordinance exhibits located on the museum grounds and for answering all visitor questions regarding these artifacts, as well as those inside the museum building. Finally, I curated a display that highlighted objects from military forces from around the world.



Special exhibit curated by the researcher.

In January of 2010, the Board of Trustees of the New Jersey Naval Museum appointed me Assistant Curator so that I would be able to offer changes to museum policy and to help

manage future operations at the institution.<sup>1</sup> This gave me a unique opportunity to examine the response of the institution to proposals for alternative operational practices, allowing me to answer some of the questions raised at the beginning of this research study. I was also made responsible for the day-to-day care and disposition of the submarine *Ling*, all artifacts contained therein, as well as displays and exhibitions within the museum itself and on museum property. This gave me the opportunity to observe closely practices at the museum and their implications, not only for the conservation of museum artifacts, but also for the viability of the museum itself. Although the museum does not count or record information about its visitors, I kept informal notes about visitation so that I could draw some conclusions about the museum's current audience and the connections between audience, revenues, and museum policies.

Photography has been important in my work at the New Jersey Naval Museum. As a researcher, I consider photography an invaluable tool for documenting specific issues and evidence to be used in drawing my conclusions. During my time as an intern, and even more so during my assistant curatorship, I took hundreds of digital photographs detailing every inch of the submarine *Ling*, as well as the museum itself, its exhibitions, and its operation. These photographs provide a visual record of many of the issues requiring attention at the institution, but they also show that the museum is a remarkable and valuable attraction, one that can be rewarding to future visitors.

In addition to these methods of research, I have chosen to focus on several specific case studies, each one highlighting an issue relevant to the research being conducted at the New Jersey Naval Museum. For each institution, I will discuss its strengths and weaknesses in regards to location and potential audience, institution name and size, policies, condition of exhibits, and resources and compare them with conditions at the New Jersey Naval Museum. The comparison

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<sup>1</sup> Documented in NJNM Board of Trustee Minutes, January. 2010.

analysis will help to clarify the particular problems of the New Jersey Naval Museum and also to suggest some solutions to them. The case study institutions I will be focusing on are as follows:

USS Intrepid Sea, Air, and Space Museum, New York City

USS Batfish Museum and Memorial, Oklahoma

HMS Belfast [Imperial War Museum], London UK

USS Missouri and USS Arizona, Pearl Harbor

USS New Jersey, Camden NJ

Battleship Cove, Massachusetts

### **Limitations of this Study**

Although, for the most part, the research for this particular study went smoothly, it was not without its problems. One limitation was that I did not have the resources of time and money to travel to the case study sites, though some of them I had visited before. I have relied, therefore, on their respective websites and other published sources for information about them. Further, while NJNM board members Tom Coulson, Ted Fielding, and Alvin Mihalieck were tremendously helpful in providing information necessary for the completion of this study, the same cannot be said for the other members of the NJNM board of trustees or the membership of the Submarine Memorial Association, a fact which will be further examined. Another problem is that many of those working at the NJNM are not trained museum professionals and so were often suspicious of the researcher and the research itself. This speaks directly to the problems of volunteerism at this and other small museums, which I mentioned earlier and will discuss more fully later on.

### The Problems of Small Museums, Then and Now

Like several other maritime museums focused on a single vessel, the NJNM falls into the category of a small museum. Its main attraction is a large object and it evokes the national and international scope of World War II, but in every other respect it is small. As George L. Collie noted long ago, small museums are usually local, and their collections reflect their need to serve the interests of a particular place or region. Often the small museum is connected to a local library, historical association, or college. The question Collie asked in 1909 about the Logan Museum, which he helped to establish at Beloit College, is still relevant: "Of what value is such a museum when it is once secured?"(95). His answer followed from his premise about the small museum. Its value lies in directing its collection and programming to serve a local population or region; in the case of the Logan Museum, that meant primarily the students of Beloit College.

The New Jersey Naval Museum (NJNM), located in Hackensack, NJ, looks like a small museum. It is open only two days a week, and it is staffed, like many small museums, mainly by volunteers. But it is an anomaly, for its main attraction, a World War II submarine, the *USS Ling*, and supporting collection of military hardware and equipment, ship's instruments, and miscellaneous photos and documents make it national in scope. The story it has to tell its visitors has almost nothing to do with the local setting or local history. The museum would have more local appeal and a much different character if its main attraction were the *USS New Jersey*. As it is, it must compete for attention and visitors with larger, nearby maritime museums of national interest, such as the *USS Intrepid* in New York City. Unlike Collie's typical small museum, the NJNM is in a heavily populated area. The problem is not a lack of potential visitors but how to attract them with a relatively narrow, yet national, focus on World War II submarine warfare. As far as the residents of NJ and nearby NYC are concerned, the *USS Ling* might as well be

submerged. Indeed, the museum is attracting little attention from the public or the museum profession. For example, it is not surprising that the NJNM is not featured in Peter Neill's *Maritime America: Art and Artifacts from America's Great Nautical Collections* (1988), but it does not even appear in Neill's long list of "Additional American Maritime Collections" (251-53). The anomalous situation of the NJNM as a small museum focused on a large, nationally owned military artifact raises interesting questions about how it should manage its collections and direct its programming, especially in difficult economic times. Should it be trying to cultivate a local audience, or should it maintain a national focus and compete more broadly with the Intrepid and other large NYC museums? Can it do both as a small museum? My argument is that it will need to do both to survive, to do better at drawing a steady local audience and more "outside" visitors, and to do it by creating a more compelling exhibit of the USS Ling, one that presents its national significance in a more engaging way.

Williamson and Warren-Findlay (1991) suggest that there are key reasons for the existence of museums like the NJNM and the preservation of military objects, such as historic ships, for the benefit of the public. The first of these is the need to preserve these unique and complex historical artifacts for the educational benefit of future generations. Museums allow visitors to learn about the past and to have access to a collective knowledge that contributes to a sense of community or national identity. A second, corollary reason for preserving historic ships is that the past they represent can to some extent be experienced. One can learn about the World War II submarines in history books, but a well-presented museum exhibit of the object can give visitors some tactile experience of what it was like to serve aboard a submarine in both war and peacetime.



These goals have served, to varying degrees, as the motivation for the creation of most museums that employ historic ships as primary exhibits. According to the Mission Statement of the *USS Hornet* Foundation, which manages the exhibition of the Aircraft Carrier *USS Hornet* as a public museum, "the *USS Hornet* Museum connects the greatest generation of Americans with future generations, educating and inspiring them to meet their challenges." *USS Hornet* Museum also states the following as its motto: *HONORING THE PAST; SERVING THE PRESENT; INSPIRING THE FUTURE* (<http://www.uss-hornet.org/aboutus/mission> ). When the *USS Constitution* Museum was incorporated in 1972, the same philosophy influenced the development of the museum "as the memory and educational voice of *USS Constitution*, by collecting, preserving, and interpreting the stories of 'Old Ironsides' and the people associated with her" (<http://www.ussconstitutionmuseum.org/about/mission.htm>). The *USS Constitution* Museum meets this goal by providing a hands-on, minds-on environment where inter-generational groups seeking an enjoyable, educational experience can have fun and learn as they explore history together (<http://www.ussconstitutionmuseum.org/about/mission.htm> ).

In addition to operating with these goals, the New Jersey Naval Museum has adopted a third *modus operandi*, that of the living memorial to those who died defending their country. Though this idea is not unique to military museums, it does seem to be a common driving force behind their development. The New Jersey Naval Museum was founded under a governing trust entitled the *Submarine Memorial Association*, which was organized to memorialize and perpetuate the honor and memory of those who have served in the submarine service of the United States of America; to uphold and to preserve the memories and incidents of the World Wars, and any and all other engagements of the United States Submarine Force (NJNM Bylaws). These statements clearly define this organization as being, primarily, a memorial. As such, visits

to the NJNM are often, in fact, pilgrimages, not undertaken for education or pleasure, but to pay homage. As this research shows, this has implications for the long-term viability of the museum.

The stated goals of many maritime museums are consistent with recent research which examines the nationalistic role of small and large historic site or historic object museums. As Phyllis Leffler writes in "Peopling the Portholes: National Identity and the Maritime Museums in the U.S. and the U.K." (2004), that "as places that often tell a national story of both domestic and international significance, [maritime museums] present an opportunity to shape national consciousness in important ways" (24). Her interest is to show how maritime museums have adapted to new notions of history and national identity, especial to reflect social diversity. Maritime museums, Leffler observes, "still exhibit ships, ship models, nautical instruments, naval armaments, maritime art, and the heroism of famous naval leaders. But now, in addition, they also explore the geophysical, political, social, economic, and cultural facets of maritime history. In both England and the United States, maritime spaces reflect sensitivity to issues of class and race. . . . By exploring new topics, maritime museums attempt to satisfy the goals of diversity and social inclusion" (31). And Leffler asserts that the effectiveness with which maritime museums present this new social history and help to reshape national identity depends again upon the opportunities they afford visitors "to 'experience' the daily lives and conditions at sea most vividly portrayed on board the ships themselves" (32). As visitors walk, for example, "through the incredibly narrow passages of submarines, stand within the cramped fo'c'sle (forecastle) where those lowest in rank slept and ate . . . They will almost always see the difference between how officers and enlisted men lived, and they will certainly understand the rigorous divisions of rank that defined maritime life" (32).

Leffler acknowledges that the efforts of museum directors to present a diverse past can be sensitive and controversial, but she believes the response at maritime museums has been mostly positive. On the other hand, in "American Memory, Culture Wars, and the Challenge of Presenting Science and Technology in a National Museum" (2007), Roger D. Launius, chair of the Division of Space History at the Smithsonian, laments the controversies plaguing museum exhibits that have tried to revise the "One-Nation, One-People" concept of American history and identity. The important point, however, for this discussion of the NJNM and similar museums is that Launius also emphasizes their role in preserving and interpreting the past and in shaping group or national memory and identity. "Museums are a representation of cultural or group memory, and most of the people who visit them (at least this is the case with the Smithsonian) come to connect with iconic artifacts. Although these artifacts have been interpreted differently over time, they have resonance at both national and personal levels" (22). Launius points to research and visitor surveys at the Smithsonian which suggest that visitors are primarily interested in a past that is local and personal. "Repeatedly, visitors come looking for an artifact to which they have a personal connection" (23). Secondly, they are drawn to history that "is known through members of the family, close friends, and mentors. Although people may have no personal memories of World War II, for instance, they have heard stories about it and its effects on their families and loved ones. It reverberates with meaning because of this connection" (24). The apparent disconnection of current audiences from the distant past leads Launius to question the future role of museums which are preserving objects from earlier periods of history. "So what communities are served by the museums of the Smithsonian Institution? . . . When the World War II generation passes from the scene and the majority of twentieth-century history depicted in the museum fades deeper into the past, will the museum become less popular, less

salient, less inviting?" (25). Perhaps Launius underestimates the connection that visitors may feel to a distant past and the educational value they may derive from it, regardless of how it is interpreted. But the relevance of his question to museums like the NJNM, more local in character than the Smithsonian and focused almost exclusively on WW II history, is obvious.

In fact, small museums like the NJNM are already experiencing the waning popularity and attendance that Launius fears may affect the Smithsonian. In "The End of History Museums: What's Plan B?" (2008), Cary Carson surveys the dire situation that small historic house and historic site museums are facing today. The main problem seems to be a combination of declining attendance and increased costs. Although Carson notes that attendance figures for even the most famous destinations, like Colonial Williamsburg, Monticello, and Mount Vernon are not always reliable, these museums are reporting declines in attendance between 15 and 28% since the year 2000. Less well-known historic sites or museums are faring even worse, like Great Camp Sagamore in the Adirondack Mountains, whose director reported to Carson that walk-ins have dropped from 12,000 annually in peak years before 2001 to 7,000 currently. Moreover, some research suggests a positive correlation between declining attendance and loss of interest in historic site museums. Carson cites a Research Advisors study in 2007 which finds that "history museums rank dead last with family audiences who visited the eight different kinds of museums they surveyed" (11).<sup>2</sup> According to many directors who participated in the "Kykuit Conference" in 2007 on the sustainability of historic house museums, a declining economy, a too-crowded field of competing museums, and "tired and antiquated" museum exhibits, "disconnected both from current issues and from their own communities" are also contributing to

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<sup>2</sup> The study Carson cites is "Museum Audience Trends," Research Advisors Study of Family Visitation at Museums, Part II, online newsletter from Research Advisors (1947 New Scotland Avenue, Slingerlands, New York 12159), Summer 2007.

the declining attendance (Carson, 11-13). The most popular strategies to generate new interest and woo museum goers back to historic site museums are not working, according to Carson. "Still worse, because the added costs never go away, is the false hope that new galleries, blockbuster exhibitions, souped-up period rooms, or major acquisitions will somehow bring back the lost audiences of yesteryear. They don't—not after the buzz dies down, certainly not for the long haul" (14). For example, Carson notes, "Right now, just down the road from Williamsburg, we are biting our nails as the Mariners' Museum dog-paddles desperately in a sea of deficits after opening a wonderful new wing built to display the ironclad gunboat, the Monitor. Meanwhile visitation at the museum hovers around 40 percent of the estimated—and budgeted—ticket forecast" (14).

Carson's mention of the Mariners' Museum helps us to see the NJNM in the context of his discussion of the problems of small, historic site museums. We can apply Launius questions as well; given that the goal of the NJNM is to preserve and memorialize a part of WW II history, what communities should it serve? Since it does not have the resources or professional leadership of the Smithsonian or Williamsburg, how should it deal with declining attendance and increasing costs? Unlike the institutions mentioned, the New Jersey Naval Museum has consistently failed to keep adequate records of visitor attendance or demographics, a fact which has greatly hindered NJNM when it comes to events and programming. Based on my own observations and field notes, the number of visitors has been on a steady decline for the past decade. The number of visitors expected to show is now usually no more than fifteen to twenty per day with wide variation by month. This has in turn resulted in a steady decline in revenues from visitor traffic, senior citizens paying \$5.00 and other adults \$9.00 to board the *Ling*. The situation is not helped by the discounts given to veterans, who are often allowed aboard the *Ling*

for free. Carson notes, in fact, there are strategies of sustainability that are succeeding at other small, historic site museums which could work to improve the situation at NJNM as well. These include making the museum more interactive, broadening the story it tells to connect to present generations, and developing partnerships with other local institutions like libraries, schools, and colleges to increase the profile of the museum in the community and the flow of visitors. However, before discussing what might help to sustain and perhaps improve the NJNM, we need to examine its current organization and policies and to look at other examples of similar maritime museums to see what they suggest further about the problems of the NJNM and possible solutions to them.

### **The New Jersey Naval Museum**

#### **A. Background**

The NJNM was established in 1973 as a trusteeship organization and has developed as such, utilizing a single director with an overseeing board of trustees that governs all aspects of museum operation. The exhibitions of the New Jersey Naval Museum center on the now decommissioned United States Submarine *USS Ling*, AGSS/IXSS-297,<sup>3</sup> a Balao Class Fleet Submarine launched in 1943 and commissioned in 1945. In its active career, the *USS Ling* received one battle star for service in the Atlantic fleet, before being reassigned to the Pacific theater of operations just as the Second World War was ending. It had in fact just cleared the Panama Canal when news came of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the subsequent Japanese surrender. And thus, *USS Ling's* active war service ended without its ever firing a single shot in anger. After a brief assignment to anti-piracy duties in the Caribbean, the *Ling* was re-designated to the United States Navy Reserve Fleet and moored at

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<sup>3</sup> AGSS – Submarine, Auxiliary; IXSS – Submarine, Experimental

the Brooklyn Navy Yards as a training auxiliary vessel, in which capacity it served up until 1971. After being decommissioned and struck from the naval register in 1972, it was destined for the scrap yard until a small group of United States Navy Veterans, including several former members of her crew, decided to lease and preserve her as a museum and memorial to sailors "on eternal patrol." Though it is officially still under ownership of the United States Navy and subject to United States Naval jurisdiction, it has been leased to the Submarine Memorial Association under a \$1.00 lease contract, and the Submarine Memorial Association is responsible for its care and maintenance. Today, the *USS Ling* remains a part of the United States Navy's Historic Vessels and Inactive Reserve 'Mothball' Fleet Programs and can even be recalled into active service in times of crisis or when United States national security is otherwise threatened.

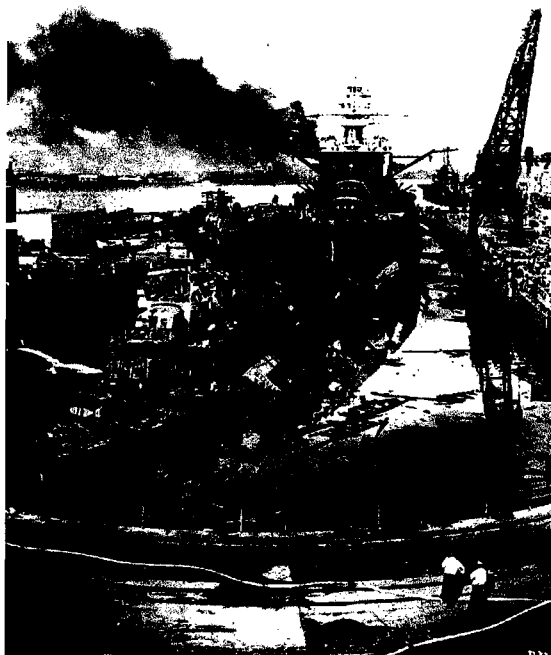
Thus, in its role as caretaker of the *Ling*, the NJNM is beholden to the United States Navy, which is interested in ensuring both a general status of operational readiness for all inactive reserve vessels and the safety of museum/attraction staff and patrons. The United States Navy provides general oversight, by conducting site-specific safety and maintenance inspections. If the NJNM were to fail to comply with these oversight inspections, its operations could be suspended until it rectified any infractions. During this time, the *Ling* would be closed to the public while necessary maintenance was carried out. Any further failures to comply would likely result in the confiscation of the *Ling* by the United States Navy. Such action usually concludes with the subsequent destruction of the vessel. In other words, the NJNM either takes care of the centerpiece of its collection or it risks its destruction. Inspections of inactive reserve vessels are the responsibility of United States Navy Sea Systems Command, which is also responsible for overseeing the commissioning and decommissioning of active naval vessels, as well as the

overall maintainable of the United States Navy's active assets (Fielding, US Navy – USS Ling Inspection Report).

Further, the NJNM plays a role in meeting the military's educational and political goals. In awarding military vessels to institutions such as the NJNM, the United States Navy takes an active interest in the general public's interpretation of United States Navy and military historical information; thus, United States Navy prefers to maintain an active presence in how museum institutions use its inactive vessels and assists these institutions in providing educational and other programming to the public. Thus, although a relatively autonomous institution, the NJNM is not entirely independent.

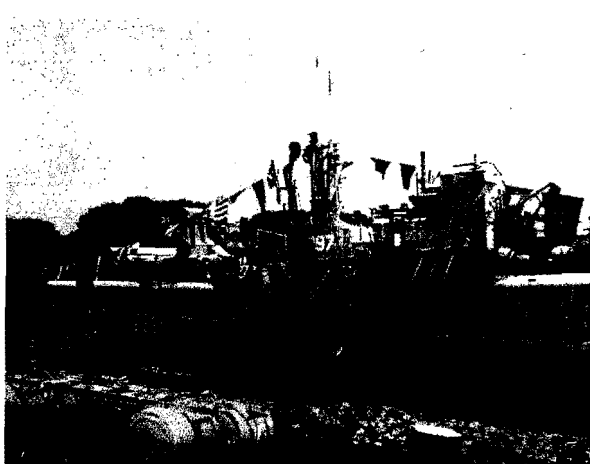
Moreover, while furthering the educational and other goals of the United States Navy, the NJNM also serves as a memorial site for the community of submariners, members of the Submarine Memorial Association, which holds the lease to the *USS Ling* itself. The NJNM operates a permanent memorial to submarine sailors "on eternal patrol." Twice each year, on Memorial Day and Pearl Harbor Day, the institution organizes events to recognize those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. For these occasions, the NJNM holds a small parade and a memorial service.



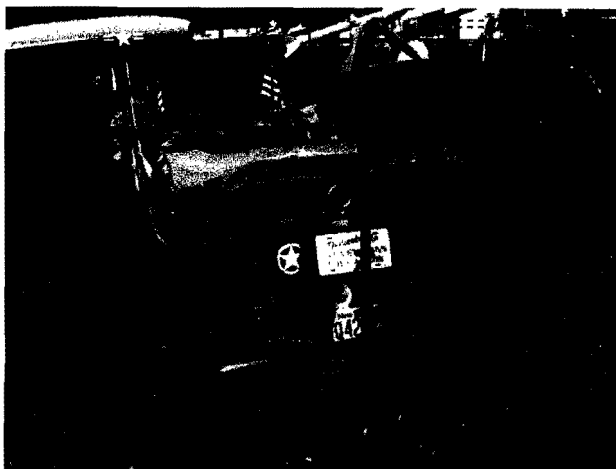


**Wreckage of *USS Downes* (DD-375) and *USS Cassin* (DD-372),  
damaged by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941**

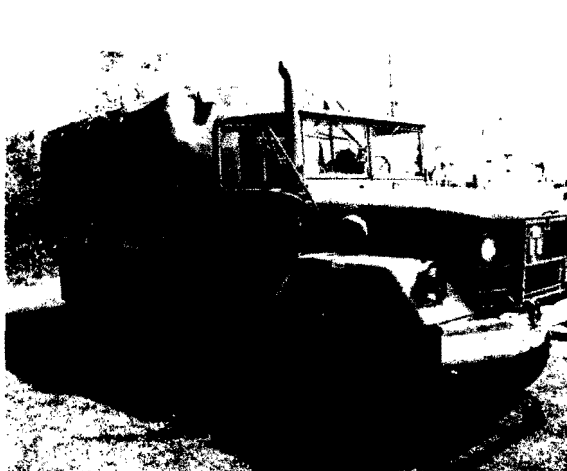
These activities also serve to define the NJNM as a local museum serving the Hackensack community, particularly local history buffs, and commemorative events are often personal even when they are not mournful. One exhibit in particular stands out, for example. In the summer of 2009, during the museum's Memorial Day celebrations, visitors were treated to a special exhibition of antique military vehicles from the Second World War and the Korean and Vietnam Wars. These excellently restored vehicles were the work of local hobbyists without any formal historical, restoration, or conservation training (See photos below).



Memorial Day at NJNM; Photos taken by NJNM trustees.



Two 1937 Army Jeeps, both fully restored by hobbyists. (Note the vertical bar on the front of the example on the left, which was meant to cut the wires the Germans would string across the road to prevent decapitation of occupants.)



Type A2 2 1/2 Ton (Deuce and a Half) Used in the Vietnam War (left) and a 1953B Air Force truck restored with the original blue paint (right)

The photographs shown above serve to highlight the love and dedication for American and World II history shown by veterans, collectors, hobbyists, and conservators. It contradicts, to some extent, the fears that some museum professionals express about the growing irrelevance of history museums. They also document the role played by the NJNM as the locus of community. The NJNM serves as a gathering spot for many in the local community who are army and navy veterans, and World War II and/or Korean War enthusiasts and hobbyists. On these occasions, at least, the NJNM serves as a largely local institution, helping its audience participate in the work of preserving, interpreting, and celebrating a national past and identity.

#### B. Organization and Structure of the New Jersey Naval Museum:

The NJNM is a private trusteeship under the auspices of the Submarine Memorial Association, and in coalition with the United States Submarine Veterans International (U.S.S.V.I.). Originally organized in 1965 to promote unity among veterans who had earned the coveted title of *Qualified in Submarines*, United States Submarine Veterans International boasted a dues-paying membership of over 9000 strong in fiscal year 2001 (<https://www.ussvi.org/NationalOffice.asp>). Linking the State of New Jersey's history with the United States Navy's Submarine Service, members of the U.S.S.V.I. New Jersey North Base formed the Submarine Memorial Association in 1972-3 to establish a permanent memorial that would serve to honor submarines and submariners on eternal patrol (<http://www.njnm.com>). It was immediately proposed that the organization purchase a retired United States Navy Submarine with the intention to preserve and open it for the public as a memorial related exhibit. This would create an opportunity for navy veterans and historians involved with the organization

to educate the public about the history of submarines in the United States Armed Forces and to honor those lost while serving their country in the Submarine Service.

The NJNM is a not-for-profit private trust organization, which is governed by an appointed and self-sustained board of trustees, in accordance with federal and State of New Jersey 501c3 regulations. Under 501c3, the institution is exempted from state, federal, and local property taxes and eligible for status as a recognized historic site. The institution is also eligible for state and federal financial assistance from grant programs dedicated to preserving the nation's historic treasures and cultural heritage.

According to the institution's bylaws, the NJNM Board of Trustees consists of four elected officers and up to eleven general members for a maximum of 15 persons, all of whom must be U. S. citizens in good standing. All memberships on this board are annual and expire exactly one year from date of issue. Donors to the institution have no right to vote on Submarine Memorial Association matters, as is necessary to prevent conflicts of interest. The President presides over all board meetings and is chair of the board itself. At each annual meeting of the board, he presents an annual report of the work of the organization. He appoints all committees, temporary or permanent, and is a member *ex-officio* of all committees appointed. The president sees that all books, reports, and certifications of the institution are properly kept as required by law. He may sign the checks or drafts of the organization. He has any powers as may be reasonably construed as belonging to the chief executive of any organization. The Vice President is authorized to act in the President's place when he or she is absent. The Secretary is responsible for keeping the minutes and records of the Submarine Memorial Association and the New Jersey Naval Museum and for filing all certificates required by statute, federal and state. The Secretary may also act in place of the President or Vice President if either of them is absent.

The Treasurer is responsible for conducting all business related to the finances of the New Jersey Naval Museum and the Submarine Memorial Association and for reporting on the finances at the meetings of the organization.

No Officer or Trustee of the organization is entitled to receive any salary or compensation, or to be an *employee* of the organization. In addition to the regular board membership, and unusual for a museum or memorial, the NJNM Curator and the Submarine Memorial Association's lawyer also enjoy permanent, full membership on the Board. Currently, no member of the Board of Trustees of the SMA / New Jersey Naval Museum is a trained museum professional, nor does any member have specialized knowledge of, or training in, 501c3 regulations or museum ethics.

The Board of Trustees has established several organizational committees to undertake various tasks associated with the overall operation of the institution. Service on a committee is mandatory for all officers and trustees. Currently in place are a By-Laws Committee, which is responsible for considering changes to the by-laws; an Auditing Committee, which is responsible for auditing the Treasurer's books semi-annually; a Site Committee, which is responsible for maintaining the condition of the site of the museum and the care of all artifacts and memorabilia entrusted to the institution; a Finance Committee, which is responsible for devising ways to raise funds and increase revenues for the organization; a Boat Committee, which is responsible for regular examination, inspection, and maintenance of *U.S.S. Ling*; and finally a Nominating Committee, which is responsible for fielding nominations to fill board and committee positions. At his discretion, the President can appoint other committees as he deems advisable and necessary for the operation of the business of the organization. Surprisingly, there is no

designated committee tasked with organizing memorial or other events, and in most cases, the paid staff of the New Jersey Naval Museum is left to figure out the important details on its own.

### C. The NJNM Collection

There are three parts to the NJNM collection: small artifacts housed inside the main museum building, an outdoor display of large vehicles and ordinance, and the *USS Ling*.

Inside the museum one finds such diverse items as a deep-see diving suit, models of different naval vessels, documents, photographs, and other ephemera dating to World War II and the Korean Conflict. Many of these items focus on the submarine service, but not all do. Outside the museum's building is a display of the variety of bombs, missiles, and large caliber guns the NJNM has amassed over the years, including three that are nuclear capable: a Regulus I Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile, a Terrier SAM-N-7 Sea-Launched Cruise Missile, and a Talos I SAM-N-6 Sea-Launched Cruise Missile. The outdoor display also includes two mini-submarines from World War II, and a Riverine Patrol Boat [PBR Mk II] from the Vietnam War.



The outdoor (left) and indoor exhibits at the NJNM.

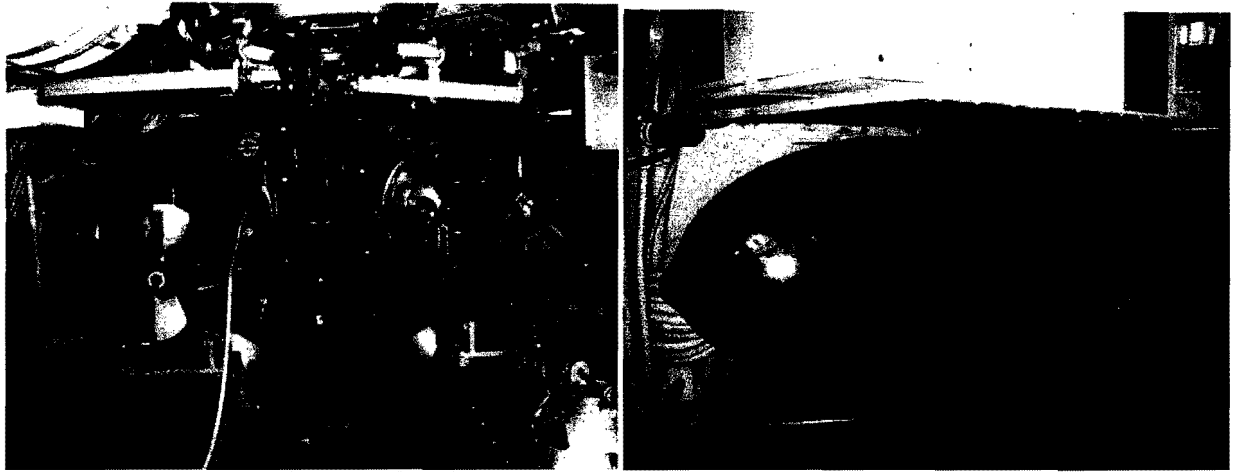
The *USS Ling* is the centerpiece of the NJNM collection. A typical tour outlining major shipboard systems and points of interest, as taken from my own internship notes, begins on the forward deck topside. If you stand on the deck and look forward, you will see the top of the forward escape hatch and the SONAR listening module; which would allow an operator to hear the sounds of enemy ship propellers in the water. This passive system could be used in place of the active SONAR, which could give away the sub's position. In addition, topside is the sub's superstructure, known as a fairwater. At the top of the fairwater are the bridge, the two periscopes, and the RADAR dishes; which were installed during the Korean War. The fairwater also carries the two 25mm anti-aircraft machine guns.



The Forward Deck Topside - Looking forward (left) and aft toward the fairwater (right)

You enter the submarine through the forward torpedo-loading hatch. The forward torpedo bay houses six of the *Ling*'s ten torpedo tubes. These tubes are over thirty feet long and made of solid brass so they do not corrode. The tube doors weigh about 350lbs. Also in the compartment are two different types of torpedo that are on display to visitors. One is an Mk14 steam powered torpedo, which was used during World War II. The other is an Mk48 electric, which is still in service today. Up to sixteen men slept in this compartment along with ten of the sub's complement of twenty-four torpedoes. This compartment also houses the sub's SONAR system,

as well as the officers' shower and toilet. The sub only produces 2000 gallons of fresh water per day, which meant that each crewmember could only shower once every two weeks.



The Forward Torpedo Bay (left) and Mk14 Steam Powered Torpedo (right)

Going through the hatch takes you into the officers' quarters. Going through this narrow corridor, you pass by the officers' pantry and mess, officers' sleeping quarters, and the Captain's cabin. Before moving on to the next cabin, you will see the wardroom, where the secretary of the boat worked.



The hatch from the Torpedo Bay (left), The Officers' Shower and Toilet (center), and the Captain's Quarters (right) provide visitors with a good indication of what life was really like aboard the submarine when it was in service during World War Two.

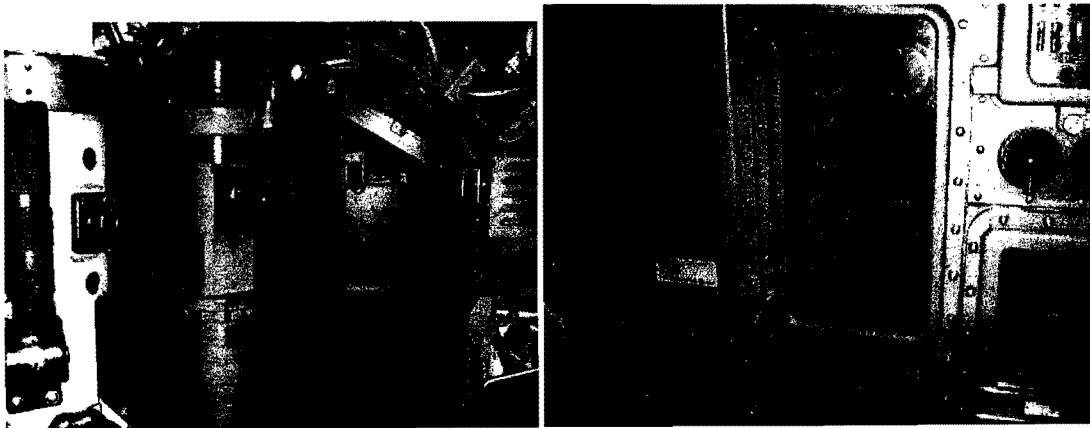


The next hatch brings you into the control room. This large compartment is perhaps the most important area of the ship, housing the necessary equipment needed to run the ship. At the forward end is the lower telemotor control where the sub was steered from when under water.



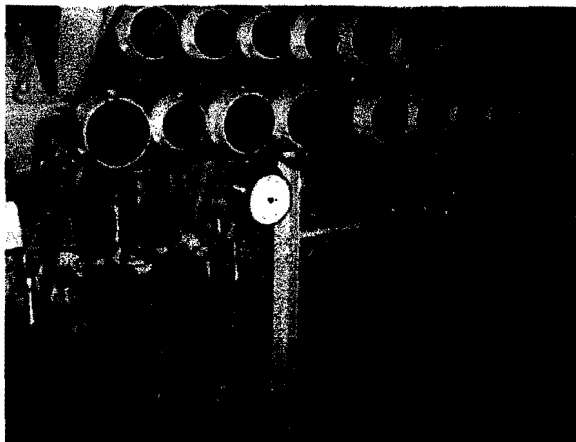
Lower Telemotor Control

The upper telemotor is located above in the conning tower compartment, which also houses the two periscopes, as well as the Torpedo Data Computer System (which is still operational).



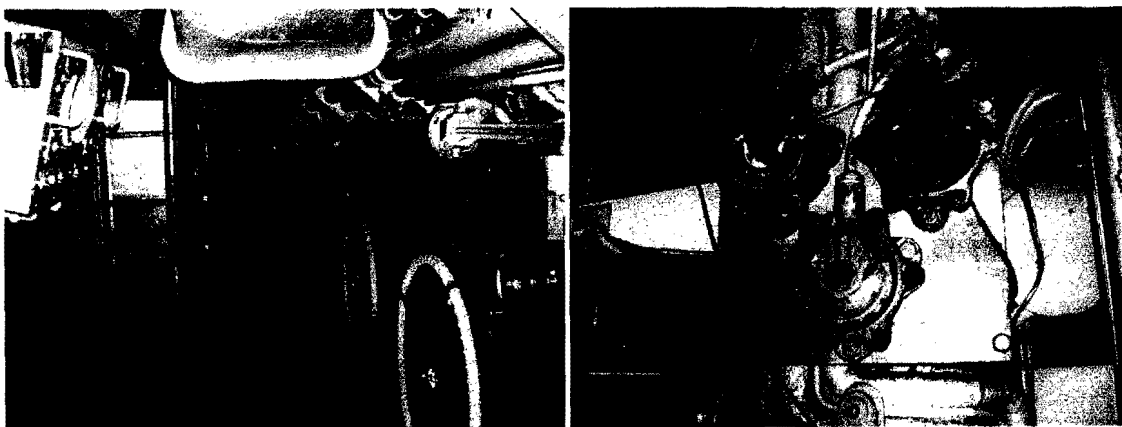
Up in the Conning Tower compartment, you can see the two periscopes and Upper Telemotor (left), as well as the Torpedo Data Computer (right) which is still fully operational.

On the port side of the control room is the hydraulic diving plane control system, as well as the “Christmas Tree” panel, whose red and green lights indicate if there are any holes in the ship. On the opposite side are the electrical and main ballast control systems.



The Main Ballast Control Systems

In the middle is the primary plotting table, compass, and SONAR sounding board. Also in the middle of the room is the console for the sub’s alarm system.



Hydraulic Diving Plane Controls (left) and the *Ling*'s three alarms (right)  
[Red = Collision, Yellow = Battle Stations, Green = Dive/Surface]

As you move aft toward the next compartment, you will pass by the radio room. This small room also houses one of our two Government Issue clocks, which have been running since World War II.



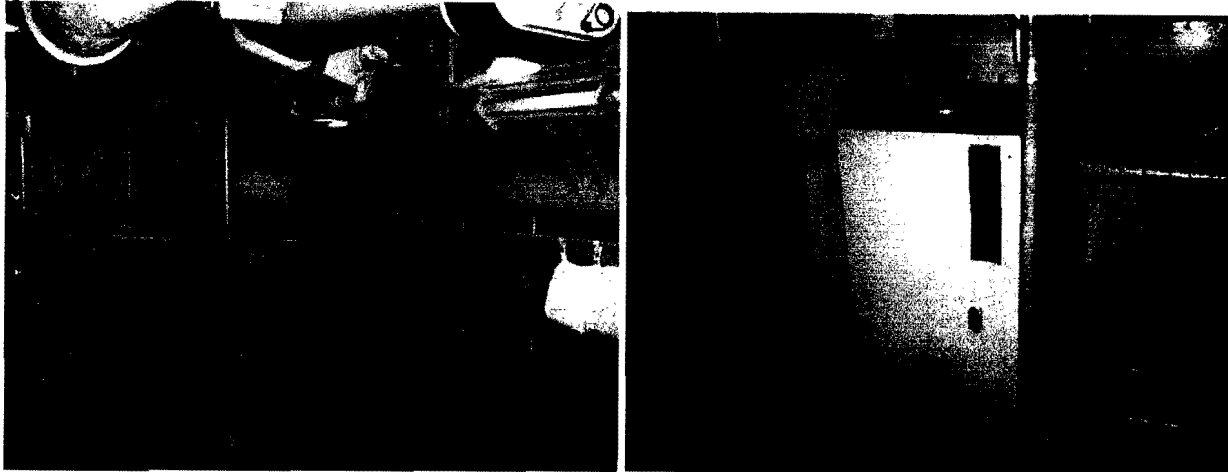
Inside the Radio Room

Moving through the next hatch takes you into the crew living compartment. The first thing you will see is the still fully functional ship's galley. The crews' mess, complete with the original World War II game tables, served as both an eating and relaxation area.



The Ship's Galley (left) and the Crew's Mess (right)

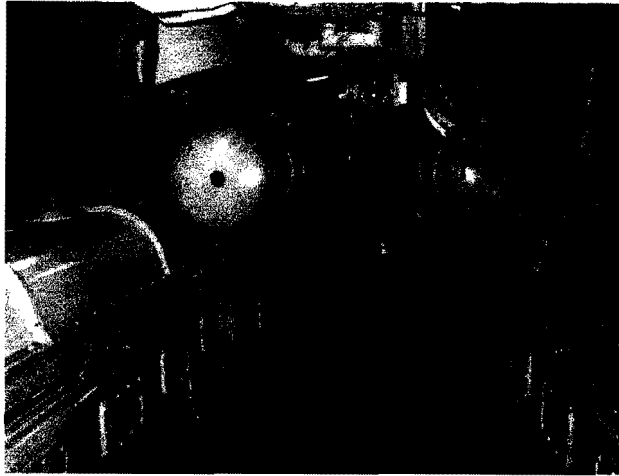
Below the deck is an auxiliary ammunition bay, in which extra ammunition for the guns on deck was stored. Further aft are the crews' sleeping quarters. This area of the compartment could house up to forty-five men comfortably and also houses the sub's ice cream maker and medical locker.



The Crew Sleeping Area [You can see the medical locker in the back](left), and the Ice Cream Maker (right)

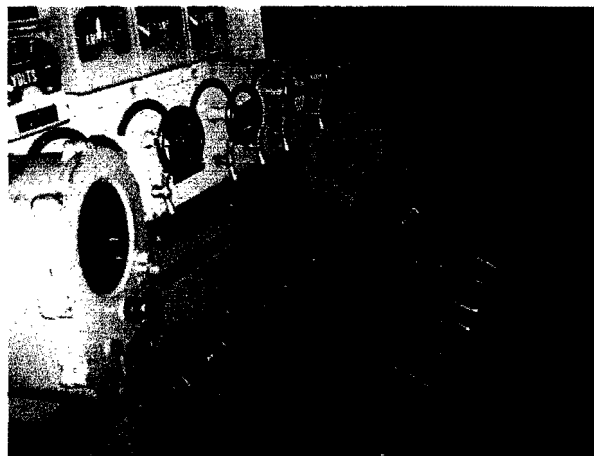
The entrance to the sub's aft battery compartment is also located here. At the aft end of the compartment is the shower and toilet facility for the enlisted crewmembers.

The next compartment on the tour is the sub's power plant, consisting of the two engine rooms and the main maneuvering room. The four main engines, each a nine-cylinder diesel-electric, were built by the Morse-Fairbanks company in Chicago. The two fresh water distillers, located in the forward engine room, provided approximately 2,000 gallons of fresh water daily for the engines and the use of the crew. The main engines of this class submarine had to be turned off when the ship dived, so the ship could only stay under water as long as the batteries held out.



**The Forward Engine Room**

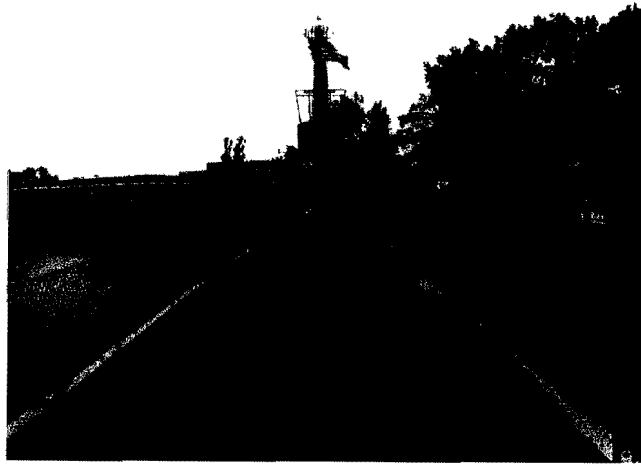
The maneuvering room houses the ship's electrical sub-station as well as the electric motors that turned the propellers. The control station was also designed and built entirely by General Electric. The aft section also houses the ship's common machine shop, which was necessary for creating spare parts.



**The Maneuvering Station**

The final interior compartment of the submarine is the aft torpedo bay. Essentially, this is identical to the forward bay, except that there are only four tubes instead of six. This last compartment also houses the hydraulics that control the rudders, as well as the ship's signal gun.

We exit topside through the aft torpedo-loading hatch. On the aft topside deck, is the sub's aft 4-inch caliber deck gun, which has a range of eight miles.



Topside Aft - Four Inch Caliber Deck Gun

The last thing the visitor sees on the tour is the *Ling*'s dipole radio antenna, which has the range to reach Kuwait from submarine's current position in Hackensack, NJ. This is, concisely, a complete tour of the submarine *USS Ling* SS-297. How I would conduct these tours would vary slightly from guest to guest depending on interests and age. Normally, these tours take anywhere from thirty-five minutes to forty-five minutes. Because the New Jersey Naval Museum fails to survey its visitors, it is difficult to characterize the reasons why they come, or their reactions to their visits. We do not know, for example, as Launius suggests of the Smithsonian Museum system, whether they are coming to connect to personal or family histories, or for nationalistic or patriotic motives. Some do come for patriotic or community reasons. For example, members of Brooklyn's Orthodox Jewish community have come thinking that the *Ling* was involved in the Atlantic theatre campaigns against the German Navy, only to be disappointed to learn that it was not. For the most part, however, based on my own observations the *Ling* is viewed by most visitors as an attraction. Young children especially enjoyed the experience of being on a warship.

Adults often seem disinterested, as if the only reason they are there is for their children, though occasionally they show interest in certain particulars about the technology or history of the ship.

The photographs help to show that, despite the lack of funding and the absence of professionally trained curators (problems to be discussed below), the main exhibit of the museum has been preserved in relatively good condition. In this regard, the museum can still offer visitors valuable knowledge and an experiential feel of World War II naval (especially submarine) warfare and life. As some later photographs will show, the same cannot be said of the main building of the museum and the collections stored and displayed there.

#### D. Fundraising at the New Jersey Naval Museum:

Maintaining this diverse collection requires funds. Although, as noted above, the NJNM is a private trusteeship, the U. S. Navy has a vested interest in the continued operation of the institution; nevertheless it offers little support in terms of financial and fundraising assistance. According to the museum's directors, when the NJNM acquired the *USS Ling* in 1973, the Navy placed all responsibility for upkeep and maintenance of the vessel in the museum's hands and subsequently refused to assist in mitigating the financial burden of such maintenance. This has made the continued operation of the museum difficult.

Without fundraising assistance from the United States Navy, museum institutions like the NJNM that use naval vessels as exhibits must look to other fundraising methods in order to provide for the maintenance and upkeep of the vessels in their custody, as required under United States Navy regulations. Most small museum institutions in the United States operate as self-governing trusteeships, allowing for both community involvement and efficient use of limited funds. Some are organized with a standing Board of Directors, with each member having equal authority over the institution's staff and resources; such is the case with the *USS Missouri*

Museum. The principle benefit of this method of operation is that it streamlines the chain of command, allowing for greater efficiency. Other institutions operate under a slightly more complex structure, utilizing a single director managing the collective resources of the institution and reporting to an overseeing, but separate, Board of Trustees. Though it is the fiduciary duty of the Board of Trustees to manage the finances of the institution responsibly, they have no direct authority over the staff of the institution. Whichever form the organization takes, it must abide by 501C3 regulations if it is to maintain tax-exempt status in the United States. Like other museums, those that employ warships as exhibits either can be private trusts or publicly administrated, the latter being run either by public trust or government administration. There are of course potential advantages and disadvantages to both. A key difference between the two is the method of fundraising, private contributions versus government grants. In the current economic climate, with government funding of museums decreasing, a museum's reliance on individuals or corporations allows private contributors to have oversight over how their contributions are used. It also motivates the institution to provide programming specifically intended for the benefit of its membership, thereby encouraging further donations.

In contrast, government administration of museums in the United States is undertaken by the Department of the Interior's National Parks Service (NPS), which, since its establishment in 1916, has been entrusted the National Park Service with the care of all national parks, monuments, and protected national treasures. The NPS also works with Native American tribes, local governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and individual citizens to preserve the national heritage and allow for the education of the public. The National Parks Service requested 3.14 billion dollars from the United States Congress for FY2011, and currently has a 2.75 billion dollar annual budget, supporting 21,501 employees (<http://www.nps.gov/aboutus/index.htm>).



The NPS is responsible for establishing its own policy regarding curation, preservation, conservation, exhibition, and public interpretation of all artifacts, including military vessels, entrusted to its care and is answerable to applicable government and public oversight.

The New Jersey Naval Museum is a public trust museum, whose primary attraction is owned by the government. Thus, unlike museums administered by the government, it is responsible for the maintenance of its exhibits. But unlike private museums, it is accountable to an external agency that has the power to remove (and destroy) the centerpiece of its collection. As this research shows, this places the New Jersey Naval Museum in a difficult, if not untenable position.

The New Jersey Naval Museum, like similar non-profit institutions across the United States, employs two primary fundraising methods. The first of these is the standardized intake of proceeds from entrance / admission fees and merchandising. Because the implementation of such a system is, in all cases, left up to an institution's governing body, be it a board of trustees or otherwise, thus accounting for the enormous variety in the nature of such systems of fundraising from institution to institution. The *USS Intrepid* Sea, Air, and Space Museum charges a general admission for all access to the museum complex, including the *USS Intrepid* and submarine *USS Growler*, and additional tickets can be purchased for special exhibits (<https://tickets.intrepidmuseum.org/>). In the case of the Battleship *USS Missouri*, all tours are guided, with each tour option associated with different fees ranging from twenty to forty-five dollars for adults and ten to twenty-two dollars for children (<http://www.ussmissouri.com/visitor-information>). At the NJNM, however, entrance to the exhibitions within the primary museum building, including those large objects displayed on the exterior museum property, is free of charge, whereas entry into the submarine *Ling* is \$9.00 for adults, \$5.00 for seniors and military

veterans, and \$3.00 for children. NJNM staff and volunteers have noted that patrons will, upon learning of the fees charged to enter the submarine, often decide to forgo entry to the submarine entirely in favor of free admission to the other exhibitions on the museum grounds. Also the museum staff frequently waives the entrance fee for veterans and discourages their donations. This denies the museum crucial funding. The *Ling* cannot compete with *Intrepid* for number of visitors, so every entry-fee dollar is crucial to its survival.

Failure to capitalize on admissions fees to the NJNM is exacerbated by the specialized nature of potential patrons. As noted above, the subject matter on exhibit is historically focused and so personal interest factors greatly into a visitor's decision to pay for a tour or to visit the indoor exhibits. It is going to be very difficult to get anyone not interested in military history to visit the museum and especially to donate funds.

As is the case with all small museum institutions, the NJNM's museum gift shop augments admissions revenues. Because the NJNM, like other small museums, is limited in the scope of its exhibitions, its merchandising is often limited to the going theme of the institution. There are two specific results from this fact; the first is that the merchandise sold is often inexpensive, and the second is that the profit margin is minimal. In the case of the NJNM, merchandising is limited primarily to toys, apparel, and other small items that follow the institution's overriding Navy / Submarine theme. Some of the more unusual items sold include United States Military Identification Tags, commonly referred to as "Dog Tags" (reproduced on an original World War Two era Graphotype Machine), and actual pieces of the *Ling's* original teakwood decking. Unfortunately, according to the testimony of museum staff and volunteers, merchandising efforts at the NJNM have done little to help the institution cope with operating costs.

The NJNM is further constrained by legal restrictions on the allocation of funds. According to guidelines of the American Association of Museums and The Institute of Museum Ethics, as well as requirements set forth in the United States Code for 501c3 tax-exempt status of museum institutions, funds acquired through admission to, and merchandizing for, not-for-profit attractions may not be used in the acquisition or care of artifacts in institutional collections (<http://www.museumethics.org/>). Such funds may only be utilized for general institutional operating costs. Thus, the NJNM, like most small museums, relies on donations to support collections acquisition and management, and donation fundraising must remain constant.

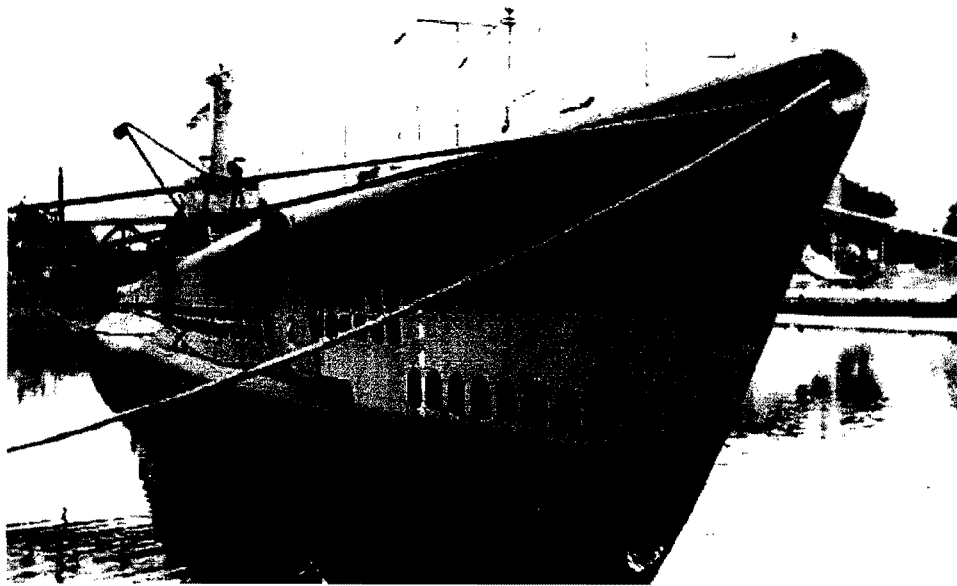
There is a major difference in donation gathering methods between small, highly specified institutions, such as those involved in preserving warships as primary exhibits, and large multi-theme institutions such as the Smithsonian Institution or the Metropolitan Museum of Art. For the former, donation funding is acquired primarily through small, and often impulse, individual contributions rather than through large scale scheduled memberships, as with the latter. To put it much more simply, donation funding for small institutions, such as the NJNM, is often highly unreliable and haphazard.

#### E. Environmental Issues:

In addition to the financial challenges it faces, the NJNM, like other institutions specializing in the display and care of decommissioned naval vessels, also faces a number of environmental issues that, given the complexities and scale of the artifacts involved, seem daunting. With many museum warships still actually in the water, the danger of severe environmental contamination is enormous, and museums, including the NJNM, must take specific and advanced conservation measures to minimize dangers to wildlife, local water

sources, and other environmental resources. Examples of specific environmental problems faced by institutions such as the NJNM include, but are not limited to, maintenance of watertight integrity of submerged vessel hulls and components; prevention of contamination of local environments and environmental resources by toxic and harmful substances and/or materials (ex. Asbestos, fiberglass, engine oil and lubricants, battery acid and other caustics, radioactive material, halons, etc.); and protection of staff, volunteers, and the public from these and other harmful materials and substances.

The submarine *USS Ling* is a good example of the kind of environmental nightmare faced by naval museums. Since it arrived at the NJNM in 1973, it has remained in the water with more than half of its hull still submerged. According to the United States Navy inspection reports, the damage to the *Ling's* hull is extensive, with visible holes and pitting along its entire length, and watertight integrity already compromised (USN *USS Ling* Inspections). Clearly, the NJNM has let the process of natural deterioration get out of control, and it urgently needs to undertake conservation measures to preserve staff and visitor safety, prevent environmental damage, and prevent the loss of an important piece of history.



Damage to the Ling from long submersion and lack of conservation.

Photographs provide a visual record of the continuing deterioration of the submarine *Ling*. As can be seen in the photograph below, taken when the Hackensack River was at low tide, this deterioration is extensive. Because the photograph was taken before the 2010 repainting of the *Ling*'s hull, all of the rusting on the upper hull can be clearly seen. The outer torpedo tube doors for torpedo tubes 1 and 4, both located just above the waterline at the bow, are rusted to the point where watertight integrity has been completely compromised. This uncompromising illustration of the submarine *Ling*'s deterioration compliments the inspection reports of the United States Navy, in the spring of 2010. The report itself also notes that the watertight integrity of the *Ling*'s port and starboard ballast tanks was compromised, which is also clearly visible in the above photograph.

The United States Navy, in addition to being charged with ensuring the operational and preservation readiness of those vessels in the mothball fleet programs, is also responsible for inspecting said vessels to ensure compliance with both federal and state environmental protection regulations. Yet, as noted above, the costs of ensuring that the vessel meets these regulations is

borne by the museum. In all cases, dealing with these and other issues costs money, and, for small institutions such as the NJNM, this represents a further drain on institutional financial resources. Further, the NJNM, like many small museums, lacks the specially trained staff necessary to deal with many of the conservational and maintenance/care issues inherent in the public display of a decommissioned naval vessel. As the Ling's staff is learning, without support from local communities, these institutions are left with no dedicated means of budgeting for this type of maintenance at all.

### **Current Issues Affecting the New Jersey Naval Museum**

Current issues and problems existing at the New Jersey Naval Museum are many and essentially fall into three categories: scope, location, and personnel. I have not listed "financial" as a category here because the current financial situation at the New Jersey Naval Museum exists as a direct result of problems relating to the three categories listed.

#### **A. Scope**

As noted above, the NJNM has several goals. As a military museum charged with the care of a naval vessel, it is responsible for public education. It is also responsible for the care and preservation of the naval vessel. Finally, the NJNM, founded by the Submarine Memorial Association, must honor those who gave their lives in the submarine service. One difficulty for the NJNM is that it doesn't do much more than this last. The scope of its activities is, in fact, so narrow that its collections and programming focus only on the contributions of the United States Navy, and any education of the public concerns primarily the United States Submarine Service.

In any intellectual attraction, whether it is a museum or other non-profit educational service, if a single narrow subject forms the entirety of the scope of the institution's activity, then

the audience must actually care about that subject. If the audience is not interested, then no amount of publicity or fundraising activity is ever going to make individuals come forward to support the institution. Launius notes that visitor surveys at Colonial Williamsburg indicate the importance to modern museum goers of “an underlying, on-going story that museum educators let them in on. Stories are the *sine qua non* of popular history, of course. Storytelling is what we public historians do, or should do. I am often surprised and disappointed by museums that stubbornly insist that visitors stay focused on exhibited objects rather than using those objects to take visitors back to the three-dimensional places where history stories took place” (19). As for the stories that large and small history museums try to tell, Launius concludes, bigger is better. “The bigger the narrative, the better it can teach a chunk of American history that is genuinely worth taking the trouble to learn” (19). Leffler confirms this conclusion in her examination of U.K. and U.S. maritime museums that have enlarged the stories they tell by including dimensions of social, economic, and cultural diversity. In this way, she suggests, they are trying to reach and connect to a wider contemporary audience (45).

The New Jersey Naval Museum definitely needs to tell a larger story. However, efforts to widen the scope of the museum, even to include other branches of the military and/or non-naval actions during World War II and the Korean Conflict, have been consistently met with resistance from untrained museum staff and trustees and so have ultimately been in vain. When I was appointed Assistant Curator by the NJNM Board of Trustees in January of 2010, I attempted several times to increase public interest by suggesting the expansion of the scope of its activities to include artifacts from other military services, and even from other countries. To this end, I curated an exhibit of privately-owned artifacts, including various military medals and insignia, and other WW II and cold war military ephemera (pay books, drivers licenses, base security

cards) and currency. Although the narrowness in scope of the NJNM has allowed for a highly detailed presentation of particular aspects of Naval history, in particular, submarine warfare, within a confined physical space, it has also limited the target audience of the institution to children and those few adults with a devoted interest in submarine warfare. Even within that target audience, the small size of the institution and small number of exhibits all but eliminates the possibility of repeat visits; most patrons will only visit once in their lifetime. In two years of working at the NJNM, I have never observed any member of the general public visit the museum on more than one occasion.

#### B. Location

The NJNM is located in Hackensack, New Jersey, approximately one hour from New York City. Aside from a small Railway Museum located just north of Hackensack in Maywood, New Jersey, the NJNM is the only attraction of its kind in the immediate area. One would think that this would be an advantage. Ironically, however, this location also contributes to poor attendance and to the inability of the institution to fundraise effectively and gather public support.

The City of Hackensack is the seat of Bergen County in northeastern New Jersey, occupying 4.6 square miles. Elevation is from three feet to 120 feet above sea level. The resident population of Hackensack is approximately 43,000; however, the influx of people coming into the city for county and state business has the potential to triple the city's population during business hours. The city can be accessed by U.S. Interstate Route 80, as well as New Jersey State Routes 4, 17, and 46. The city is also serviced by New Jersey transit bus and rail services, as well



as the New York-Susquehanna & Western freight rail corridor (<http://www.hackensack.org/content/64/853/default.aspx>).

Yet, although well served by interstate and rail, and despite the close proximity of Hackensack to New York City, there is not much tourist traffic. In addition, although Bergen County is one of the richest counties in New Jersey, Hackensack is on the low end of the income spectrum of that county. This, combined with the general lack of diverse attractions in the area, has kept tourists from New York City away. In short, why would these tourists want to make a trip out of New York, even by public transport, to a small nearby city with few attractions when there is so much more to do and see in New York? Or, to put it another way, why would tourists in the region want to stop in Hackensack when they can go on to New York City and do so much more? That is not to say that people do not come to Hackensack; however, most are there to do business with Bergen County and State of New Jersey Authorities, not to go to museums.

There is also the problem of the generally poor state of the property on which the NJNM sits. Until recently, the property was owned by Bergen Record Newspaper Company, which in turn is owned and operated by Stephan A. Borg. Over the course of the past decade, the decline in the business of the Bergen Record Company left the property in a state of extreme neglect and disrepair. Backed up storm drains, a parking lot full of sink holes, and flocks of resident geese are just a few of the maintenance problems facing the institution.



Herds of resident geese (left) have done nothing but contribute to the problem of already deteriorating and dirty exhibits (right).

The property has also become a magnet for the many homeless individuals that pass through; several times, homeless persons and vagrants have had to be forcibly removed from NJNM property by Hackensack Police and the Bergen County Sheriff's Office. In addition, local safety officials have repeatedly found the property to be in violation of fire and other safety codes, a fact that has cost the institution thousands of dollars over the past two decades. Lack of budgeting for maintenance on the part of the institution's Board of Trustees has only compounded the problem, and has been extremely detrimental to both the museum property and the artifacts contained therein. In particular, many of the outdoor exhibits are dirty and in ill repair.

In May of 2011, Borg sold the property to the Wal-Mart Corporation. According to testimony of current NJNM Director Ted Fielding, this recent turn of events may actually benefit the NJNM in that Wal-Mart may be more willing to make an effort to fixing up the property than either the Bergen Record Company or the NJNM Board of Trustees. Whether or not this prediction comes true however remains to be seen.

### C. Personnel

An overly narrow focus and a bad location may be overcome with imaginative leadership. A third issue confronting the NJNM is a lack of trained personnel. Since the NJNM / SMA Board of Trustees has full authority to appoint permanent staff, this is really the result of a governing board that lacks training and expertise. No current member of the Board of Trustees, nor any senior permanent staff member of the NJNM, has ever received formalized museum ethics training or training in techniques and standards utilized by museum professionals. In fact, Arthur Bischoff, curator of the NJNM since its founding, likes to joke that his first question upon being named curator of the institution was "What is a curator?" Over the course of four decades of operation, it is this lack of specialized training among senior staff and trustees that has led to the restricted programming at NJNM, the poor condition of the property and the collection, and the current financial state of the organization as a whole.

There are also many organizational issues and problems within the Board of Trustees itself. Currently the organization's lawyer, charged with representing the interests of both the Submarine Memorial Association and the NJNM in legal and financial matters, occupies a voting seat on the Board of Trustees itself. I am not sure whether the lawyer is paid to represent the museum, but nevertheless his seat on the Board appears to be a conflict of interest. It would be difficult for a lawyer to remain objective when he or she has a direct voting say in the day-to-day operation of the organization he or she represents. Members of staff directly responsible for the disposition of exhibits and artifacts, including curator Arthur Bischoff, also have voting power on the Board of Trustees, thus rendering them immune to direct criticism for mistakes.



\$109.00 of museum funds was spent to purchase this LED sign.

Lack of clear board oversight over paid staff has in turn led to lack of oversight in the allocation of funds within the institution. According to some members of the museum staff, there has been occasionally some irregular accounting of money spent.

That the staff and trustees of the institution have no specialized knowledge or training regarding conservation and preservation of artifacts or the problems that may arise in a museum institution due to lack of general maintenance is also evident in the failure of the NJNM Board of Trustees to establish maintenance policies regarding either the property or the collection. The exhibit spaces are currently far from meeting the standards that the American Association of Museums has established as conducive to preserving cultural property. The primary museum structures leak badly, and a number of artifacts have been damaged or destroyed by water and mold. Just recently, according to the museum director, a 1940s (specific year and month unknown) issue of *Life Magazine*, donated by a close friend of the Submarine Memorial Association, was carelessly left next to a leaking window and irreparably damaged. To put it mildly, the donor was furious.

The absence of locks on display cases is also a major problem. Shortly after setting up a new exhibit, I was forced to take it down because a rare item, a Hawaii dollar from World War II, was stolen from the display case; it was never recovered.

The current curatorial situation is a nightmare all its own. Even within the narrow scope of the museum's activities, there seems to be no policy or strategy with regard to how objects are displayed. Objects from World War II are exhibited randomly alongside objects from the present day. Displayed artifacts and documents are often without labels, and the mostly volunteer staff does not have the knowledge to provide information to visitors. To add to the problem, there is no adequate storage space for objects not on display; thus, everything donors bring in to the institution ultimately ends up overcrowding the already filled walls and displace spaces or on the floor where it can be easily damaged.



Although the camaraderie within the NJNM is evident, improper use of exhibit space is equally apparent.

After becoming Assistant Curator, I attempted to assist Curator Arthur Bischoff and Museum Director Ted Fielding in solving these and other problems by developing forms for artifact registration (see Appendix 1) and policies designed to bring the institution more in line

with the standards of the American Association of Museums. These efforts met with little success, for those in the positions of leadership were far from receptive to suggestions from, as the curator put it, "a young whippersnapper." Currently, these and other problems have brought the institution to the breaking point. If something is not done soon, it is likely the NJNM will end up closing its doors.

### **Comparative Case Studies**

The NJNM is not unique, and other museums face similar issues. Examining other naval museums in similar institutions can shed light on why things are working at these institutions, but not at NJNM. Hopefully, drawing on examples will provide a better picture of what works and what does not.

#### **A. *U.S.S. Intrepid* Sea, Air, and Space Museum and *HMS Belfast* : Location Counts**

As stated previously, location plays a prime factor in the success of any attraction. For example, the *U.S.S. Intrepid* Sea, Air, and Space Museum in New York City relies heavily on its location to attract heavy tourist traffic. Currently, the *U.S.S. Intrepid* occupies Pier 86, W 46th St and 12th Avenue, in downtown Manhattan, which puts the museum centrally within the flood of tourist traffic that descends upon New York City each year (<http://www.intrepidmuseum.org/Contact-Us.aspx>). In addition to location, the sheer size of the vessel provides what could be considered the best form of advertisement in that it the museum is easy for visitors to New York City to find. Heavy advertisement based on location is also the primary philosophy behind the *Intrepid's* museum website, which refers to the institution as

“New York’s IN destination” (also a play on the name *Intrepid*) (<http://www.intrepidmuseum.org>).

Location and ship size has, of course, heavily influenced the institution’s displays of larger and more eye-catching artifacts, such as aircraft and aircraft ordinance. Rather than opting to exhibit these objects in the main hangar deck below the flight deck, curators have chosen to display most of the museum’s aircraft on the open flight deck itself. The resulting exposure of these objects to the elements has in turn created specific issues for museum staff regarding the conservation of these objects, including increased rust/oxidation deterioration and contamination, exposure to seawater contaminants, exposure to pests, and damage due to severe weather. The increased need for conservation of objects exposed to elemental deterioration has resulted in increased costs to the institution’s conservation budget.



Aerial view of the *USS Intrepid* Sea Air and Space Museum, Pier 86 Manhattan, showing the displays of aircraft on the exposed flight deck of the vessel

Display of large exhibits outdoors has also heavily affected visitor traffic in that it subjects incoming visitors to the whims of Mother Nature. In the event of severe weather, museum

patrons are often restricted to interior exhibit spaces. This is also true during the winter, late autumn, and early spring.

The *U.S.S. Intrepid* Sea, Air, and Space Museum is like the NJNM in that much of its exhibition is outdoors and unshielded from the elements; both institutions display large artifacts outside. As a result, both institutions must commit a substantial portion of their budgets to weather-related upkeep of artifacts. Both also require year-round labor to perform the constant cleaning and maintenance necessary to keep these outdoor artifacts presentable to the public. Both are also subject to weather problems, including winter ice, flooding, heavy snowfall, thunder storms, and even excess summer heat, which can result in visitor medical issues such as heat stroke and sunburns, as well as the occasional outright closing of the institution.

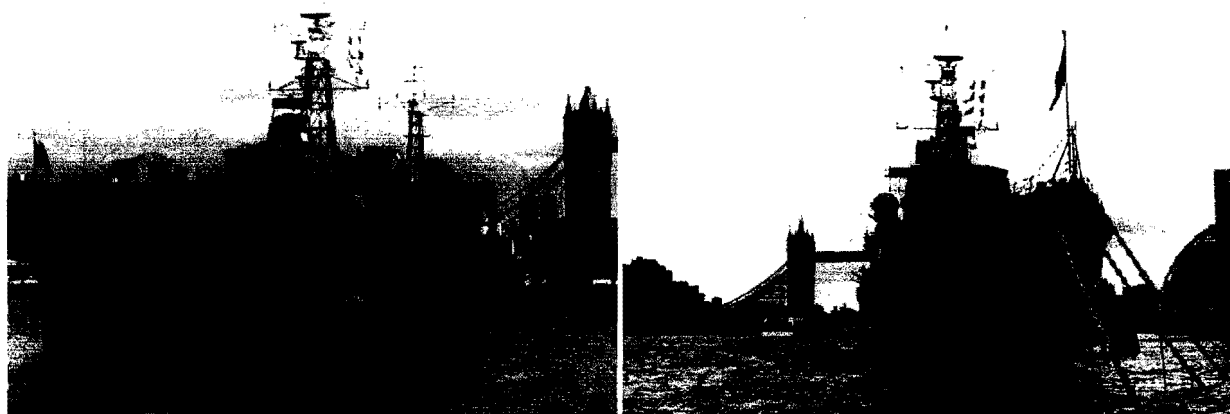
Yet while the *Intrepid* is in the heart of a tourist mecca, the NJNM is situated in Hackensack, NJ, at least an hour's drive from New York City's throngs of tourists. The inevitable consequence is that the institution must rely mostly on local attendance, as well as the occasional out-of-town visitor. Because most of Bergen County NJ is completely unaware of the New Jersey Naval Museum and because the novelty of the institution has worn off for many Hackensack residents, who would be interested, new traffic through the institution has become sparse edging on non-existent.

Increased tourism means that the *U.S.S. Intrepid* Sea, Air, and Space Museum can much more easily raise the revenues it needs to maintain its outdoor exhibits. Literally in a backwater, the *Ling* does little to advertize its presence, and it, like the other outdoor exhibits at the NJNM do little to generate the revenues that would contribute to their upkeep.

The importance of location is further demonstrated by an example from the other side of the Atlantic, the United Kingdom's *HMS Belfast*. Like the NJNM, this naval museum has as its



primary exhibit a single naval vessel, in this case a modified 613 foot long Southampton Class Cruiser. The *Belfast* was submitted to be turned into a museum by its former Captain, then Rear Admiral, Sir Morgan Charles Morgan-Giles, DSO, OBE, GM (<http://www.iwm.org.uk/visits/hms-belfast>).



*HMS Belfast*, located currently in London, United Kingdom

Situated in central London, across the Thames River from the renowned Tower of London and London Bridge, *HMS Belfast* occupies what is perhaps the best possible location for a museum institution of its type. The vessel is impossible to miss in its location, and its visibility has even caused it to appear on occasion within the scope of popular media, including a recent appearance in the film *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*.

Like the *Intrepid* and the *Ling*, the *Belfast* is subject to problems caused by outdoor display. The *Belfast* Museum, however, enjoys financial security, for it operates within a public trust with direct oversight of the British Parliament, which directs all of the institution's financial assets. With American and Continental European tourism growing rapidly since the end of the Second World War, the British Government and specifically the British Tourist Agency has had a vested interest in the continued preservation of the vessel, often referring to her as the "Come to Britain Trophy" ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS\\_Belfast\\_\(C35\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_Belfast_(C35))). Its central location reflects its central role, not just in museum marketing but in national tourist efforts. Both the

*Intrepid* and the *Belfast* institutions suggest the advantage of a good location in a tourist center that the NJNM is definitely lacking. The best it can do in this regard is to try to take better advantage of its proximity to New York City and Newark. This will be further addressed in my conclusions.

#### B. *HMS Belfast*, Battleship Cove, the *USS New Jersey* and the NJNM: Scope, Programming and Political Implications

In determining viability of an institution of this type, it is important to consider the scope of its mission and, thus, its activities. The very size of the institution is a function of mission: the number and range of individual exhibits, the scale of the institution's collections on the whole, the scale of the facilities, and the number of potential visitors, and even its overall visitor capacity. To put it another way, if the scope of the institution is narrow and the museum's mission only covers a small specialty of study—the history of the United States Submarine Force, for example—then it is fair to say that the institution will be considered small.

It is important to note that the size of the institution does not necessarily mean the size of the facility. Let us take two very well known museum institutions, the British Museum and the United Kingdom's Imperial War Museum. First, it must be noted that the facilities of the latter are far larger, especially when one considers that *HMS Belfast*, London's *Cabinet War Rooms*, and *RAF Duxford* are all considered part of the Imperial War Museum institution. On the other hand, if we are to determine the size of these two institutions based on scope of mission alone, then the conclusion changes entirely. The British Museum's mission scope encompasses virtually every specialization within the fields of Art, History, Anthropology, and Social Studies, while the scope of the Imperial War Museum is limited merely to the military history of the

United Kingdom and the British Empire (<http://www.iwm.org.uk>, <http://www.britishmuseum.org>). In this analysis, based solely on mission scope, we can only conclude that, although the Imperial War Museum has a larger facility, it is not the larger institution.

Whether the scope of the institution is broad or narrow plays a key role in determining the institution's viability. The evidence of these case studies confirms the arguments made by Launius and Leffler about the stories being told by small and large history museums; a more expansive institutional mission scope leads to enhanced ability to withstand economic hardship by drawing a larger audience and raising the institutions profile within intellectual circles, as well as in the mainstream media. Such notoriety also generates opportunities for publicity through utilization of media and other artistic elements such as film and television.<sup>4</sup> Simply put, a more diverse museum collection has more potential to generate publicity and opportunities for institutional advancement.

Perhaps the best example of this is the museum at Battleship Cove, located in Fall River, Massachusetts. Battleship Cove is currently the largest naval vessel exhibition in the world, consisting of four United States ships of the line, as well as a wide assortment of small military craft and equipment (<http://www.battleshipcove.com/exhibits.htm>). The Battleship Cove exhibition covers three separate military theaters of operation and has examples of equipment from all branches of United States Military service. Although the Balao Class submarine *USS Lionfish*, sister ship to *USS Ling*, forms a central part of the primary exhibitions at Battleship

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.battleshipcove.com/dd850-history.htm>. Such opportunities should not be confused with one-time corporate investments, such as in the case of *USS Pompanito*, which received a multimillion-dollar investment from 20th Century Fox to prepare the vessel for use in the film *Down Periscope*. Such one-time investments happen so rarely and are not available to institutions without specific connections. Thus, such investments are outside the norm.

Cove, the board of the institution has chosen not to place any limits on the scope of the institution relating to branch of military service, or given specialty of military history.

According to the testimony of a member of Battleship Cove's board of trustees, who wishes to remain anonymous, the Battleship Cove museum is run in much the same fashion as the NJNM, with a mostly volunteer staff overseen by a private trusteeship. Meeting regularly, the Board of trustees determines the best direction for the institution based on, among other things, the current economic climate. However, unlike its New Jersey counterpart, Battleship Cove is doing relatively well economically. The institution's facilities are in a good state of repair, and there have been recent expansions to the exhibitions (<http://www.battleshipcove.com>).

Clearly, a more expansive scope enables institutions like Battleship Cove, *USS Intrepid*, and *HMS Belfast* to thrive while other museums with a similar focus are facing imminent economic collapse. The New Jersey Naval Museum, in choosing to limit its mission to the presentation of the history of the United States Submarine Force, has in turn severely limited its target audience.

This has other financial implications. By casting itself as a memorial institution and focusing its scope and, consequently, the majority of its programming, on not just one branch of the military, the Navy, but on a subgroup within that branch, the submarine service, the NJNM has all but eliminated support from sources interested in the history of other service branches, including the United States Navy Surface Fleet. To put it another way, a member of the public is not going to visit a museum about submarines unless that person has at least a passing interest in submarines.

The way an institution defines the scope of its mission influences not only the nature of its collection but how the collection is presented to visitors. For example, both the *Intrepid* and

the *Belfast*, in keeping with their respective missions to educate and entertain a broad public audience and inculcate national values, are open seven days a week. In contrast, the NJNM, in keeping with its mission to be first a memorial site and only secondarily an institution with an educational role, caters to a much smaller population and is only open on weekends.

The impact of mission scope on presentation is particularly notable in the different ways these institutions conduct tours and otherwise respond to visiting tourists. In keeping with its notion of itself as a memorial site, the NJNM has a policy that all visitors be guided through the vessel by designated volunteer tour guides, and under no circumstances are visitors to be allowed to move through the vessel on their own. At the *HMS Belfast*, however, clearly a tourist attraction, visitors are allowed to roam the vessel completely unaccompanied; indeed, when this researcher toured *Belfast* in the spring of 1999, there were few, if any, staff on duty aboard the vessel herself. There are advantages to the latter method of operation. The first is that it allows costs related to training and compensating docent staff to be kept at a minimum, a clear financial benefit to the institution. A second advantage is that visitors are allowed to move at their own pace. This way, visitors never succumb to boredom and never feel rushed or constrained in how they are allowed to view the vessel, both common problems at the NJNM. Importantly, allowing visitors freer access to the ship means that the *Belfast* is able to handle larger numbers of visitors and visitors who may show up without warning, something that the New Jersey Naval Museum simply cannot do. Notably, the *Intrepid* and Battleship Cove have also opted for the open access method of operation.

As noted above, these other museums charge admission to the entire site, allowing visitors to board the vessels if they wish. The NJNM provides open access to the site but charges visitors to board the *Ling*. Making the visit to the vessel more difficult, thus, makes it even

more likely that the visitor will depart without doing anything to further the wellbeing of the institution.

Ultimately the way in which an institution defines itself and the scope of its mission may be influenced by political considerations. Indeed, politics has played a major role in determining the economic viability of these institutions, particularly when economic conditions are especially harsh. It is all too often the case that the allocation of funds tends to favor those institutions in which local or national government holds political stock. A case in point is the battleship *USS New Jersey*. Located in Camden, New Jersey, only a two-hour drive from the New Jersey Naval Museum, the *USS New Jersey* Museum is currently facing many of the same economic difficulties as its Hackensack, NJ counterpart. It is also run in the same fashion, by a private board of trustees, many of whom are not specifically trained to run a museum. Also like the NJNM, most of the staff at the *New Jersey* are veteran volunteers (<http://www.battleshipnewjersey.org>).

Yet the *USS New Jersey* is fairing better in the harsh economic climate. Like the *Intrepid* and the *Belfast*, the *New Jersey* has a broader mission than the NJNM; its location in Camden, New Jersey, some distance from competing tourist attractions may also be more advantageous than that of the NJNM. But perhaps more important than either the scope of its mission or its location may be its name and what the institution has come to represent. Quite simply, the *USS New Jersey*'s name has given the vessel political clout in the state in which it is located, often much to the chagrin of staff and trustees at the NJNM, many of whom often feel that the state of New Jersey pays too much attention to the state's namesake vessel while neglecting the *USS Ling*.

The association of the battle ship *USS New Jersey* with the state in which it is now docked has also been a major attraction for corporate funding and advertising. Major local companies such as PSE&G, Comcast, NJ Transit, and AmeriHealth have all invested heavily in the institution. In addition, the local county government and the New Jersey Historical Commission have also taken great pains to preserve the vessel and provide for its financial survival (<http://www.battleshipnewjersey.org>).

Resulting investments have given *USS New Jersey* an almost indestructible safety net that, to use a terrible pun, has kept the vessel afloat through economic hard times. These investments have also provided considerable advertising for the institution itself, including spots on the History Channel and a thoroughly maintained and up-to-date website. In contrast, the website of the NJNM has not been thoroughly updated in several years (<http://www.battleshipnewjersey.org>).

Other vessels, such as the *USS Massachusetts* at Battleship Cove have also had the added advantage of being the namesake of the state in which they are now located. Local politicians have extra incentive to use these vessels as political rallying points, and they serve as magnets for corporate investment at the state level.

Politics have also played a major role in the preservation of Pearl Harbor museum vessels such as *USS Missouri* and *USS Arizona*. Again, mission and location can influence political considerations, in turn reinforcing the museum and adding to its strength and influence. Such is most definitely the case here. In the collective American mindset, the World War II attack on Pearl Harbor still inspires extremely strong feelings and carries great weight politically. It has become an iconic event in American history. Every American child is taught about it in schools and, more than any other engagement in 20th Century military history, the Pearl Harbor attack

has been romanticized in film and popular culture. Politically it has become a touchstone for every American president seeking to evoke patriotic feelings in any constituency. It is certainly no surprise that the site has, ironically, become a haven for museum warships, and maintaining these historic vessels has become a political given.

Although the NJNM has not benefited from its name in the way the *USS New Jersey* has, its board recognizes the potential political importance of the institution's name, and much of the discussion at institutional board meetings focuses more on how the institution presents itself to the public than on the more pressing financial and safety concerns expressed by the staff of the institution. To put it more simply, at spring board meetings, there has generally been more talk of the importance of having parades on Memorial Day and July 4 than there has been actual planning to ensure the success of these events, which have often been poorly organized. Ironically, as a result, the public often has often been given very little information about activities. Further, there has been very little consistency from event to event; sometimes the organization was very good, with diverse involvement, and other times there was no organization at all, and people attending were obviously and understandably bored.

In some cases concern about the way in which the institution's mission is being understood publically has even had a negative impact on the way in which the institution carries out that mission. According to NJNM board member, Ted Fielding, maintenance and conservation of exhibits has taken a back seat to concerns about the way in which the institution is viewed by local and state politicians. Mr. Fielding also notes that the NJNM board seldom discussed seriously the need for an institutional maintenance budget, but instead focused most of its attention on the perceived need for public events. This is one of the consequences of not having professional museum staff.



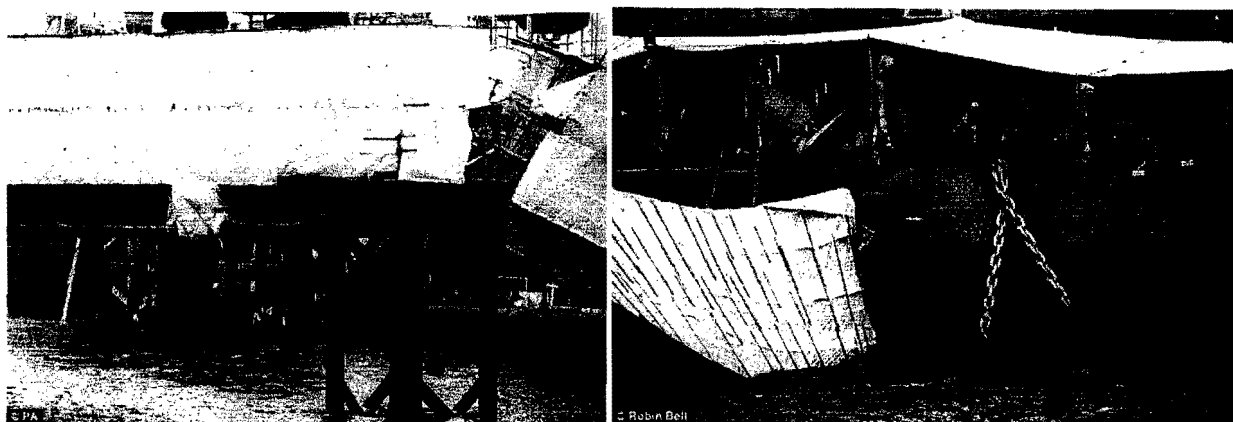
On the 29th of November, 2011, at approximately 12:47 PM GMT, the visitor gangway connecting *HMS Belfast* to its visitor center on London's Fleet Street suddenly gave way and collapsed into the Thames River (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/nov/29/two-hurt-hms-belfast-gangway>). After the gangway collapse, 170 people, approximately 90 of whom were museum visitors, were evacuated to London Bridge pier. Thirty of the evacuees were schoolchildren visiting the *Belfast* as part of a museum education program. The incident occurred just ten days after the *HMS Belfast* attraction celebrated its 40th birthday. Ironically, the London Fire Brigade commented that it had been due to carry out an evacuation training exercise on the vessel the next day. According to *HMS Belfast's* director Phil Reed, a section of the gangway sheared off, causing the entire gangway to collapse. Luckily for the institution, no one was on the gangway at the time; however, two contractors working on the brow of the vessel received minor injuries (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-15944260>).



The gangway collapse at London's *HMS Belfast*

Director Reed announced to the BBC that *HMS Belfast* would be closed until further notice, and that Great Britain's Imperial War Museum, which owns the vessel, would be launching a full and comprehensive investigation into what had caused the gangway to collapse. He claimed he was "flabbergasted" to learn about the incident and described the collapse as unfortunate. Meanwhile headlines reading "*Terror on the Thames as gangway leading to HMS Belfast collapses*" could

be seen across the United Kingdom (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2067626/HMS-Belfast-Terror-Thames-gangway-collapses.html>).



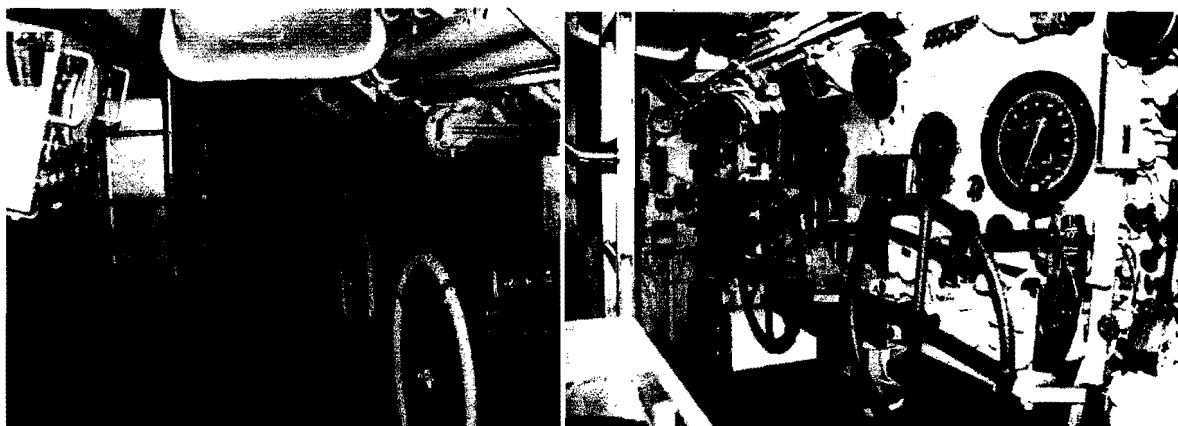
It is likely that maintenance practices at the *HMS Belfast* will come into question.

Upon hearing of this incident, NJNM Director Ted Fielding was not amused. This is not surprising given the current maintenance situation at the NJNM and the fact that, in 2010 Director Fielding and I had discovered that the dock connecting the entrance to *USS Ling* and the adjacent shoreline had deteriorated to the point that it needed to be replaced. Clearly the NJNM board's preoccupation with the way in which the museum is viewed publically has limited the attention it pays to protecting the museum itself, its mission, and its collection. This also highlights the difficulty that the NJNM has in financing any repairs or improvements in comparison to other similar institutions.

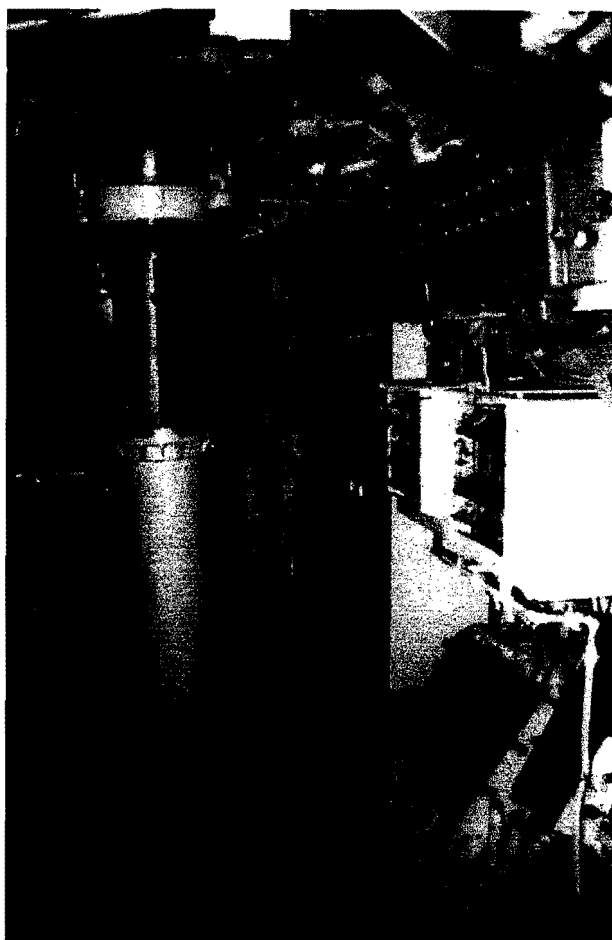
### C. The *USS Batfish* and the NJNM: Personnel

Clearly the personnel at an institution shape the way its mission is or is not carried out. To see this even more clearly, it helps to compare the NJNM to an institution of the same size and with a similar mission and collection. The *USS Batfish* in Muskogee, Oklahoma, is, like the *USS Ling*, a Balao Class submarine that is now a museum. There are two distinct differences

between *USS Batfish* and *USS Ling*. The first is that the World War II service record of *USS Batfish* is longer and more distinguished; *Batfish* is often remembered by her crew as the “Champion Killing Sub of World War II” (<http://www.ussbatfish.com>). Second, and more importantly, in operating the *Batfish* as a museum, its board made the decision to beach the vessel, that is, to remove it from the water and place it on land on a slab. This has eliminated the museum’s need for major maintenance related to water damage, a constant issue for the *USS Ling*. Beaching the vessel also takes it out of the jurisdiction of the United States Coast Guard, thereby eliminating the museum’s need to meet US Navy and USCG safety regulations (US Dept of the Navy, NSSC Inspection Report - *USS Ling* (SS-297), 2009). The cost savings have enabled the board to make funds available for conservation of the interior of *USS Batfish* (<http://www.ussbatfish.com>).



This comparison of the Current Condition of the Main Diving Stations of *USS Ling* [left] and *USS Batfish* (right). The board’s decision to beach the vessel has meant funds available to restore its original white primary paint scheme. Images of *USS Batfish* have been taken from its website.



*USS Batfish Conning Tower Compartment, Fully Restored.*

With an artifact as materialistically complex as a warship, maintenance is always a tricky subject. It is usually the case that maintenance at a warship-based museum institution will encompass a substantial portion of the annual budget of the institution. Such is the case with both *USS Batfish* and *USS Ling*; however, in the case of *USS Ling*, the board has chosen to allocate funds primarily to make repairs, often after there has been deterioration to the point that there is a health risk or a risk of losing the artifact. In contrast, the *USS Batfish* board has allocated funds in a way that has made maintenance mostly preventative and restorative.

This difference in decision-making says much about the respective understanding of museum operations of the two boards. Clearly, the board of the *USS Batfish* is more aware of the implications of particular maintenance decisions, beginning with the decision to beach the vessel.

In contrast, the board of the NJNM lacks any training or expertise in the maintenance of large objects, such as the *USS Ling* and other items on outdoor display. The consequences of this are evident in the photographs above, which clearly indicate a much better restored condition and presentation of the interior of *USS Batfish*.

In fact, board members lack training in collections management of any kind. Currently, anyone off the street can walk in and leave something for the museum to take, and the museum will take it, generally with no questions asked. NJNM ran out of space for new objects years ago, and many incoming donations are destined for immediate storage in a locked shipping container behind the facility. Members of the board also frequently drop off their own items that they want to display and will often demand that these replace current exhibits. Since board members have failed to create a de-accession policy, items not on display continue to pile up in storage.

Lacking professional training, the NJNM board has failed to demand a minimal level of expertise on the part of its paid employees or its volunteers. The drawbacks of this lack of expertise were dramatically demonstrated in the summer of 2010 when a member of the public brought in a US M1 rifle that he wanted displayed. NJNM personnel on duty at the museum knew nothing about this individual, and they carried out no background checks on either him or the weapon he was donating. In other words, this man could have been a murderer and the rifle a murder weapon, and no one at the museum would have been the wiser. Commensurate with the unknown donor's wishes, the NJNM curator immediately put the rifle into a display case, and the donor went on his way and was never heard from again. These actions have the potential to put the NJNM and its employees and patrons in a great deal of danger.

A poorly educated board makes poor decisions, and these can detrimentally affect the museum, its employees, those who visit the collection, and the collection itself. Ultimately, wise

leadership is necessary if the institution is to overcome the challenges of location and the constraints of mission. Although *USS Batfish* is also run by veterans, it has the benefit of being advised by local tourism authorities and state museum professional consultants. The other case institutions cited above are all run by highly trained and specialized museum professionals. If the NJNM is not able to professionalize its own staff, then it must at least seek the advice of available professional consultants if it is to survive.

### **Worst Case Scenarios:**

Currently the New Jersey Naval Museum is on the brink of collapse; the Museum Director and SMA Board Treasurer have recently left due to personal conflicts, and as far as I know, there is almost no money left in the institutional accounts. If the Museum is not able to generate more income or support, and thus not able to maintain the exhibits to meet the standards set by the US Navy Department of Historic Ships, the following is likely to happen. The museum will again fail the US Navy yearly inspection to determine whether the submarine is fit to receive visitors. Because the museum has failed previous inspections, the Navy is very likely to withdraw support and take the submarine back. The result will be that the submarine is dismantled on site because in its current condition it cannot be moved. Most of the other artifacts in the museum's collections will probably be de-accessioned in some fashion, since without the submarine the museum is going to draw visitors.

It is also possible, if the museum becomes increasingly dysfunctional, that the New Jersey Attorney General's Office will revoke the institution's 501c3 Tax Exemption. In that case, the institution will not be able to operate as a museum but will have to become a for-profit business. Obviously, it will be unlikely to succeed for lack of capital and reliable income.

Nevertheless, I have been arguing that the museum is still a valuable educational resource and memorial. There is still the potential to succeed if changes are made immediately.

### **Issue-Based Recommendations for the New Jersey Naval Museum**

These case studies make clear ways in which the NJNM might better prepare itself for survival in difficult economic times. Although a great number of museum institutions do eventually fall by the wayside, it should be stated immediately that *any* museum could succeed. Many of the negative circumstances in which the NJNM finds itself can be mitigated and even eliminated given the proper conditions and wise decision-making. In my time at the NJNM, it was all too common to hear "...and where are you going to get the money for it?" whenever someone would bring up one of the many problems facing the institution. This raises the fundamental question of museum leadership. Based on the case studies, I suggest several ways in which the NJNM can address the challenges posed by location, mission scope, and personnel.

#### **A. Organizational Changes**

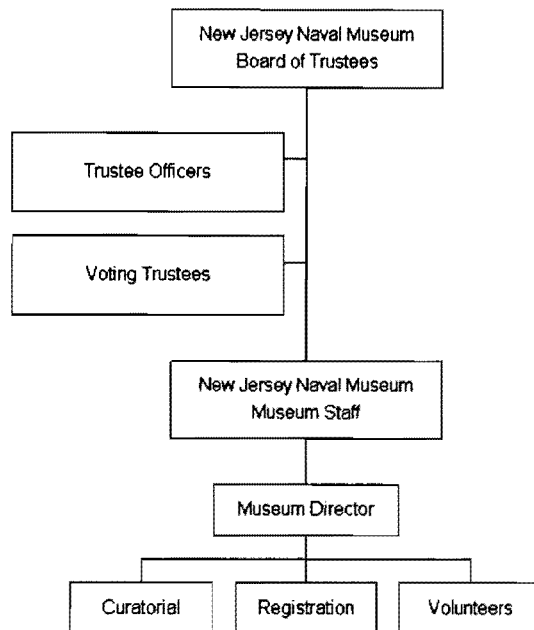
Since, as noted above, good leadership is key, my recommendations address first the NJNM leadership. Although the leadership structure of the museum itself is sound in theory, in practice it has not worked, primarily because it permits conflicts of interest. As of this time, the board of the New Jersey Naval Museum includes the Director of the institution, the Curator of the institution, and the institution's lawyer. Because these are all staff positions within the institution, it is a conflict of interest to allow them to have a direct say in financial decisions of the institution. One of the fiscal duties of trustees is to ensure objectivity in directing funds during hard economic times, and it is unfair and irresponsible to expect staff members to fulfill that duty when they themselves are the direct beneficiaries of the budget process.

Even more important is that none of the current staff have any real training in running either a non-profit or a business. They are there because they are veterans of the United States Submarine Force who were voted in by their fellow veterans. In essence, the museum is being run as part of the United States Submarine Veterans International (USSVI) organization and the same board controls both. This means that although the current board members and staff may be qualified to oversee a veterans' organization like USSVI, they are not qualified to oversee a non-profit museum institution.

I would recommend the following actions. First, American Association of Museums guidelines state that members of a museum staff cannot serve on the institution's Board of Trustees. This is to eliminate potential conflicts of interest. The NJNM should comply with these guidelines. Second, non-veterans should be appointed to serve on the Board, preferably members of the local community. This will help to give the museum greater standing in the community and enable it to benefit from the expertise of local businessmen and professionals. Third, NJNM staff and trustees should be given courses of instruction in museum management and ethics in order to better prepare them for museum-related situations they might face in their positions of leadership. The American Association of Museums, as well as nearby Seton Hall University, offers several of these courses. Fourth, if and when the museum is on firmer financial ground, it must appoint at least one museum professional to a position of leadership (either Director, Curator, or Registrar). Without that professional expertise, the institution is unlikely to be accredited and to thrive in the long term. Finally, there should be established specified lines of authority from the top down within the institution. Currently, because the staff, trustees, and volunteers are all veterans, they treat each other like fellow veterans, acting as all equals in most matters; there are no clear lines of authority. Clear lines of authority in the institution must be



established in order to ensure that decision-making occurs in a timely manner and that the board's decisions are acted on appropriately by staff. The chart below suggests a possible organizational structure.



In the case of personnel and staff of the NJNM, there is again the issue of qualifications. At the present time, the staff of the NJNM is entirely volunteer, and has no incentive to remain at the institution, which means that the turnover rate is high. It also means that there are no training requirements for those in staff positions. Even those who do maintenance or curatorial tasks lack appropriate training, meaning that artifact conservation at the NJNM is non-existent. There is a conundrum here in that the hiring of untrained personnel allows the institution to keep its costs low, and paying for training and wages of trained personnel can be costly. However, this can be mitigated by establishing workshops for NJNM personnel utilizing resources from the American Association of Museums and from the Masters in Museum Professions (MAMP) department at Seton Hall University. Such workshops could cover everything from basic docent training to object care and basic conservation to museum registration policy. The board should work to

solicit the help of local professionals who would be willing to volunteer their time to offer such workshops free of charge to NJNM personnel. One solution would be to seek out Seton Hall Museum Professions graduate students, for whom this would provide interesting internship opportunities.

#### B. Development of Registration Policy and Improvement of Collections Record Keeping

Lack of museum training on the part of staff and trustees at the New Jersey Naval Museum has also lead to a lack of adequate collections record keeping and insufficient museum registration policy at the institution. To put it more bluntly, there is no registration policy at all. Nor are there policies governing de-accession, repatriation, or cooperation with other institutions.

In order to eliminate these problems, a comprehensive Museum Registration Policy must be created for the institution encompassing the following specific areas:

- Defining Institution Mission and Scope/Categories of Collections
- Responsibilities of Staff and Volunteers concerning Collections and Registration
- Accessioning and De-accessioning Policy and Criteria
- Collections Documentation and Care
- Loans and Handling of Objects-in-Custody
- Criteria for Determining Collections Access (Public and Staff) / Security Insurance
- Repatriation of Objects-in-Custody
- Cooperation with Other Institutions

Examples of policies covering each of these issues can be found in many writings within the Museum Studies field, including *The New Museum Registration Methods*, edited by Rebecca A. Buck and Jean Allman Gilmore. In terms of collections documentation and record keeping, this researcher, in his capacity as assistant curator developed a number of forms for collections documentation at the NJNM (see Appendix 1).

### C. Fundraising Solutions:

First, there should be a consistent admissions fee schedule for entrance into the museum, including the submarine and other exhibits. There can be different fees for adults, children, senior citizens and veterans, but there should be no exemption for veterans. Although veterans are treated preferentially at many institutions, they comprise a large percentage of the visitors to NJNM and it is simply not feasible to exempt them (as the museum now does) from paying. Also, the museum currently makes special days when the museum is likely to attract visitors, like Memorial Day, Pearl Harbor Day, and the Fourth of July, admission free. It needs to eliminate these "free days."

I have already discussed the way in which mission-driven decision-making has limited the income available to the NJNM from admissions and sales of museum shop merchandise. This means that the NJNM needs to fundraise. Museum fundraising is never easy and is often made more difficult by specific circumstances in which the museum institution finds itself. In small institutions like the New Jersey Naval Museum, fundraising resources are often local and extremely limited. There seems to be a strong tendency to be stuck in what is essentially a detrimental fundraising limits cycle. Limited fundraising resources equals limited fundraising equals limited fundraising resources. The challenge for these institutions is to find a solution that will allow them to reach the maximum numbers of new potential donors, while utilizing the least amount of resources.

The key here is to think small and think local, to use the resources closest to the institution, and to take into account the specific characteristics of local populations. These points are perhaps best represented in the following small-scale fundraising initiative recently proposed to NJNM director Ted Fielding by this researcher, entitled the *Dollars for the USS Ling*

campaign (see Appendix 2). The core of this fundraising scheme is to collect at least one dollar from each person in Hackensack, which would come out to \$42,839. If the campaign were to cover all of Bergen County, NJ, that amount could increase to \$895,250, assuming again that every person were to give at least one dollar. Realistically, even if only 5-10% of the local population chipped in, the amount would be significant for the museum. This simple form of fundraising, which requires only a minimal contribution from each donor, would take full advantage of local resources, and the adaptability of the scheme would help to keep costs down for the fundraising institution.

This fundraising scheme received a great deal of support from NJNM director Fielding and was introduced in the spring of 2011; it was also introduced into the online community via Facebook and Second Life. Nevertheless, it received little support from the NJNM board, and no fundraising will be successful unless the leadership of the institution is willing to take the risks and allow it to work.

The current leadership of the New Jersey Naval Museum has also made little effort to approach appropriate funding sources. In the absence of corporate investment, the proverbial "saving grace" of the *USS New Jersey*, large intellectual organizations such as the National Endowment for the Sciences and National Science Foundation, might be possible funding sources. In addition, the United States Government, as well as many Veterans' Organizations offer grants for historical preservation of National Heritage. This problem is related to the fact that there are no museum professionals in leadership positions at NJNM, who have the motivation and expertise to write grant proposals or seek other sources of funding.

#### D. Maintenance

Observations at the NJNM and the study of similar institutions lead to the conclusion that many of the maintenance-related issues currently facing the NJNM are due to lack of a maintenance budget that prioritizes the needs of the institution. This has resulted in severe deterioration of the *USS Ling* and other exhibits. Recommendations given here will address the three most severe issues observed: maintenance of *USS Ling*, artifact storage, and needed maintenance of the exhibit space.

Much of the maintenance needed currently by *USS Ling* has to do with keeping its compartments free of water. The water-bound existence of the vessel is a topic that has been much debated since the founding of the museum in 1973. Much of the early discussion centered around whether or not to beach the *USS Ling* like the *USS Batfish* and many other small museum naval craft, including Nelson's *Victory* in London (<http://www.hms-victory.com/>). Ultimately, as noted above, the board decided not to beach the *Ling*, and to do so now, according to the museum Director, would carry an initial cost estimated at over \$1 million, so such an undertaking is highly unlikely. As things currently stand, although the pressure hull of *USS Ling* is intact and sound, its outer hull has lost all watertight integrity and is rusted completely through in several areas. Immediate recommended actions include instatement of cathodic protection on any surface of the vessel that is exposed to the elements and replacement of outer hull plating where possible (US Dept of the Navy, NSSC Inspection Report - *USS Ling* (SS-297), 2009). If and when additional funds do become available to allow for dry-docking of the vessel, a refit of the outer hull should be first priority.

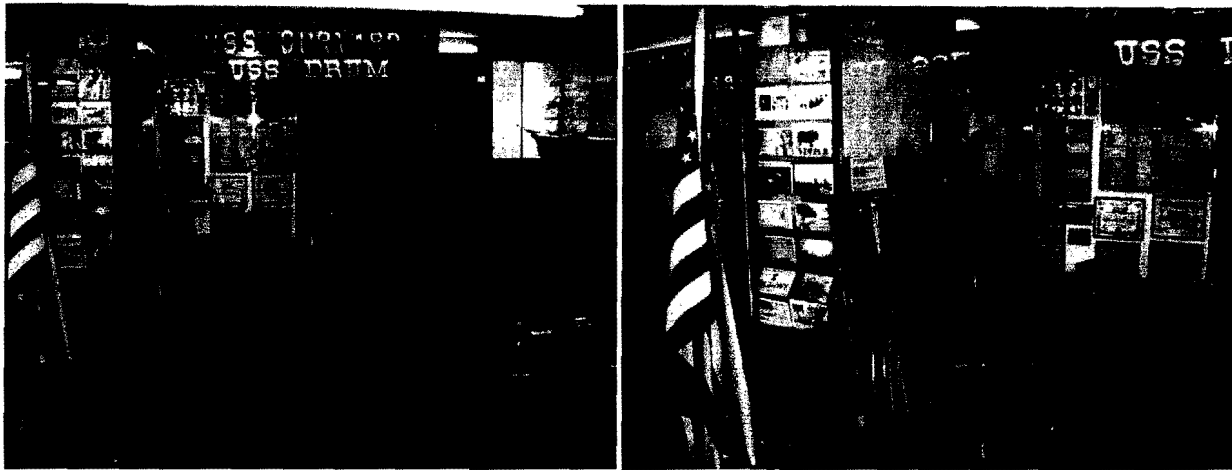
As for the interior of *USS Ling*, a good cleaning from stem to stern is in order. In addition to common contaminants and dirt, rust and chipping paint present a clear hazard and must be

removed immediately. Little effort has been made to locate and neutralize hazardous chemical sources, and many internal components and pieces of machinery still contain and leak oil and are covered in grease and other chemical lubricants. Particular examples include all four engines, as well as the periscopes, which are both covered in oil. To date, there has been no effort to clean the bilge, and many of the wet-bilge compartments have not been pumped since *USS Ling* arrived at the museum site years 38 ago. The potential hazards to museum visitors from these conditions are serious.

There is currently no artifact or collections storage space on NJNM property that would meet the standards of the American Association of Museums (<http://www.aam-us.org/museumresources/accred/standards.cfm>). Current storage space consists mainly of an old, dilapidated trailer located next to the primary museum building, as well as a padlocked metal shipping container located to the rear of the facility. Temperatures inside these storage facilities fluctuate between sub-zero in winter and over 100° F. in the summer, and the trailer itself is largely unsecured, except for a small padlock that could easily be cut or shot off. The NJNM curator has also, on several occasions, removed museum collections items to his own home when they are not on display. The NJNM needs to construct storage facilities and establish practices that are in compliance with AAM standards.

As for the building exhibit space itself, it is dirty and overcrowded, and most of the display and exhibit cases have not been updated in years. Most of the current exhibit cases also lack working security features, which allows for easy access by thieves. The building itself is almost falling apart, with noticeable holes in the ceiling and floor, as well as a floor that has deteriorated and shifted under the weight of the structure. Interior surfaces, including carpets and walls, have not been maintained or updated since the early 1980s, giving the building's interior a

ghastly appearance. In essence, the facility is old and it shows, and the interior looks more like a fraternity clubhouse than a museum.



Poor Exhibit design, a Curator with no museum training, and lack of Registration Policy all contribute to artifact overcrowding and lack of space within the museum.

The recommendation here is simple: update the facility. All worn out and broken exhibit cases should be replaced immediately, and the structure itself should be assessed to determine whether it is sound. Repairs should focus not only on the safety of patrons, but also on the safety and disposition of artifacts on display. Care should be taken to eliminate damage by the elements and infestation by animals and other pests, and to ensure that a patron does not accidentally put his or her foot through a hole in the floor. Interior surfaces, wherever possible, should also be updated to reflect current tastes, as well as to provide a more inviting atmosphere. Whether dealing with a small historical institution, or the grand lobby of the Met, the same logic applies; patrons are going to be more apt to visit an attraction that looks inviting.

Of course, the most common excuse given by the current leadership of the New Jersey Naval Museum is that there is no money available. Yet, this leadership seems unwilling to even take the basic steps necessary to raise such funds. There are really three causes for this:

1. Lack of Museum Training - Simply being a submarine veteran does not qualify one to operate a submarine museum. Many of the staff and leadership simply do not know how to do it, and do not know how to go about acquiring the funds needed by the institution.
2. Lack of Commitment - Running a museum institution, whatever its size, takes effort and work; lots of effort and work. Mostly volunteers, the staff and leadership of the New Jersey Naval Museum are simply unwilling to put in the time and effort needed to run the institution effectively.
3. Consistent Policies and Enforcement – the museum needs to set and enforce policies for the allocation of funds and for the conduct of the staff and volunteers. This will be aided by clearer lines of authority in the organization of the museum and by further professionalization.

E. Scope of the Institution

Although it is not possible currently to expand the collections of the NJNM, it is possible to expand the scope of the museum. As the name of the museum suggests, it should be about the U.S. Navy and even more generally about U.S. military history and not just the *USS Ling* or Submarine Service. In other words, as scholars like Launius and Leffler suggest about other museums, the NJNM needs to tell a larger, more inclusive story based on the collections it already has. Like the maritime museums that Leffler surveys, the NJNM can change its exhibits and programming to reflect the social, racial, and cultural diversity of U.S. Naval history and servicemen and women to attract and connect to a broader, contemporary audience. The museum has space on its grounds, for example, to create a model beach entrenchment using artifacts in the collection, which would reflect the operations of naval engineers during amphibious landings. There are other things like this that the museum can do to broaden the historical education it provides visitors and to become more attractive to potential audiences.



The museum can also increase its appeal to the public by becoming more interactive. Although, as Christian Heath and Dirk von Lehm have shown, interactivity has been used to enhance exhibits mainly in science museums, the potential is there for other museums to attract more visitors by making their exhibits more interactive. For example, Ann Day and Ken Lunn discuss the addition of interactive oral histories to exhibits in British maritime museums. As they note, the ability of visitors to hear sound or see video recordings of mariners and other participants in maritime warfare and industries, and experience sound and video enhancement of exhibits that seek to place visitors at the scene, has "served to widen the scope of British maritime history" (95). It also increases the opportunities for visitors to connect to museum exhibits in the personal way that Launius argues contemporary museum goers are seeking. Interactivity is an important element of Carson's "Plan B" for the survival of history museums. "Even four short years ago I did not understand how visitors could be more than spectators [at a museum]. But they can be, and they want to be" (25).

The NJNM could be recording oral histories from surviving Navy veterans and civilians who worked on building and servicing Navy ships. The museum could use interns to do this work, archiving oral histories until it could afford the equipment to mount interactive exhibits. Sound recordings could also be used on *USS Ling*, as is done on *HMS Belfast*, to simulate the living conditions present when the ship was in service. The staff of the museum has staged reenactments of operations aboard the submarine for the benefit of visitors, but they were not interactive. They could be made more interactive to involve, for example, Boy and Girl Scout or school groups, providing more of an experiential education in history. Anything to make the experience of visiting the NJNM more interactive and thus more engaging, educational, and memorable would be an improvement.

## F. Partnerships

The NJNM has not been successful going it alone and is not likely to survive without the support of other institutions. As Rodger, Jorgensen and D'Elia observe, "Museums have had an active history of collaboration, both with other museums and with libraries and other community organizations" (44). They also note that "size is an indicator of incidence of collaboration;" smaller institutions with fewer resources are less likely to form partnerships and benefit from collaboration (49). Nevertheless, their survey shows that institutions which do collaborate are mainly positive about the benefits (59-60).<sup>5</sup> I believe that NJNM has much to gain from collaborating with local institutions. It would benefit, for example, from entering into partnerships with Bergen and Essex County Historical Societies, and perhaps with the New Jersey Historical Society in Newark, NJ. This would enhance the NJNM's profile in the local museum community and allow it to mount exhibits that draw on the resources of the other institutions, or coordinate exhibits in such a way as to encourage visitors of one museum to visit the others. The NJNM could also benefit from partnership with the Hackensack Public Library, again to make the museum better known in the community and attract the patronage of library users. One can imagine, for example, a program called "A Reading Experience of World War Two," which seeks to bring people interested in reading about WWII to the library and then to the museum for some interactive experience of it.

The NJNM would be wise also to seek some form of limited partnership with the *Intrepid* and *USS New Jersey Battleship* museums. Although there is not currently much incentive for these larger institutions to partner with the NJNM, they are neighboring and similar institutions

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<sup>5</sup> On partnerships as a means of improving community engagement and increasing attendance at museums, see also Claudine K. Brown, "Museums and Funders Embracing New Constituencies," *Journal of Museum Education*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Spring 2006), 15-28.

and even a nominal relationship would perhaps enable the NJNM to draw upon the professional expertise at the other institutions to address some of its problems.

The NJNM has hosted interns from Seton Hall University's program in Museum Professions, but it would do well to establish collaborative ties with nearby Fairleigh Dickinson University in Teaneck, NJ and Bergen Community College in Paramus and Hackensack, NJ. Jeffrey P. Bonner suggests in "Museums in the Classroom and Classrooms in the Museum" (1985) how museums can enhance their educational missions by becoming teaching resources and alternative classrooms. His interest is mainly in successful internship programs, but his ideas are more broadly applicable. Institutions like the NJNM can forge partnerships with local colleges and schools to bring students to the museum for an alternative classroom education in various aspects of military history and technology. Students at the high-school and college level could pursue research projects not only in their school libraries but in the archives and collections of the museum. Partnerships with the schools will not only make the museum better known in the Northern New Jersey community, but it will bring a more steady flow of visitors to the museum for one of the primary reasons it exists – education. Even if these visitors are paying a reduced admission fee (or no fee for school groups), the museum's revenues will increase. It is very possible that primary and secondary school children, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, will return with their parents, or university students with their friends, for paid visits. The main thing right now is to get a larger, steadier flow of visitors to the museum.

The NJNM will have to improve its facilities and practices of managing and securing its collections (and artifacts it may borrow) in order for partnerships and collaboration to develop and thrive. And it will have to professionalize its staff so that it can gain the trust of other museum, library, and school professionals and collaborate with them on relatively equal footing.

The benefits of partnerships can serve in fact as incentive for NJNM to improve its facilities and practices and to professionalize.

## Conclusions

This study asks whether warships are viable as museum institutions in the current economic climate. For this researcher, finding an answer to this question has taken more than two years of observations, research, and analysis, as well as detailed interviews and testimony from staff and volunteers at several museum institutions. The question of viability is in fact a question of circumstance. In essence, any museum institution is viable so long as it has a trained and dedicated staff. It is all too easy to say "I know about something; therefore, I can create a museum about it," but actually operating such an institution is not easy at all.

Through examinations of case studies related specifically to historic warships, it is clear that certain circumstantial factors do influence institutional viability. Location is certainly key; an institution situated in an area with a more varied population and lots of tourists will likely attract more visitors. The *USS Intrepid* Sea, Air, and Space Museum and *HMS Belfast* are clear examples; both are centrally located in diverse population centers. In addition, size of mission scope also influences traffic through the institution; those museums with a wider collections and program scope are generally more successful at attracting a wider audience, as evidenced by the success of the *USS Intrepid* Sea, Air, and Space Museum and Battleship Cove.

Yet, as museums like the *USS Batfish* demonstrate, even small museums in more isolated places can be successful given good leadership and wise decision-making. It is up to the staff and leadership of the NJNM / *USS Ling* to take advantage of opportunities for professional training and to put in the time and effort needed to correct the problems.

I believe that the NJNM is a classic case of well-meaning people getting in way over their heads. Those who helped found this troubled institution might have had the best of intentions; however, the reality of what it takes to run such an institution successfully more than likely escaped them at the time. That being said, the answer to the question of whether warships are viable as museum institutions is both *yes* and *no*. Although all museum warships and related institutions *can* be viable, without the right leadership, programming, and relationships with other institutions they will end up sinking fast.

### **Recommendations for Further Study:**

Opportunities abound for examination of the circumstances that could best guarantee the continued economic survival of any particular museum or intellectual institution. The question should be raised, by both academics and appropriate government officials charged with oversight, is whether or not the traditional not-for-profit institution, that is, one that meets 501c3 standards as described by the American Association of Museums and the United States Internal Revenue Service, can still function within the current economic climate. In the current economic climate, would museum institutions be better off as profit making businesses? What conflicts would such a change create and how could these conflicts potentially resolved?

Another opportunity for study is the question of what constitutes appropriate maintenance within a museum institution. Is it possible to set standards that would improve efficiency and cut costs for struggling museums? What are the advantages, within specific museum institutions, of preference for long-term preventative maintenance versus continuous repairs and restorations? Is it beneficial to employ in-house conservators or to budget for conservation facilities?

All of these questions are worthy of study, and to answer them would more than likely benefit the museum and intellectual institutions themselves, as well as the public from whom these institutions draw patronage.

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This thesis also cites testimony from individual persons who wish to remain anonymous, and will thus, not be named here in accordance with their wishes.

**Appendix 1: Forms Created by Researcher for Use at the NJNM**

**Example of NJNM Object Deaccession Form**

**NEW JERSEY NAVAL MUSEUM**  
**USS LING AGSS/IXSS-297**

**OBJECT DEACCESSION FORM**

ACCN #: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME/TYPE/DESCRIPTION OF OBJECT: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

REASON(S) FOR DEACCESSION: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF DEACCESSION:

- ☐ OBJECT TO BE RETURNED TO CUSTODY OF ORIGINAL OWNER/DEPOSITOR
- ☐ OBJECT TO BE RETURNED TO MILITARY/GOVERNMENT CUSTODY

SPECIFY: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

☐ OBJECT WILL BE DEACCESSIONED BY OTHER MEANS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

CURATOR SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

DIRECTOR SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

↺ NOTERIZATION BELOW IF REQUIRED ↻

ACCN # \_\_\_\_\_

NOTARY PUBLIC SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Accession Number must include relevant object code.

Example of NJNM Object Deposit-to-Custody Form

**NEW JERSEY NAVAL MUSEUM**  
**USS LING AGSS/IXSS-297**  
**OBJECT DEPOSIT-TO-CUSTODY FORM**

NAME OF DEPOSITOR: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

DEPOSITOR ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NAME/TYPE OF OBJECT: \_\_\_\_\_

OBJECT DESCRIPTION: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NATURE OF OBJECT OWNERSHIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

CUSTODY ARRANGEMENT: ☐ PERMENANT ☐ LOAN

LOAN DATES: START: \_\_\_\_\_ END: \_\_\_\_\_

LOAN CONDITIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

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**PLEASE SIGN AND DATE - UNSIGNED FORMS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED**

**SIGNATURE OF DEPOSITOR:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MUSEUM USE ONLY - DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE**

☐ **ACCEPTED FOR PERMENANT COLLECTIONS**

**ACCN #:** \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **ACCEPTED FOR TEMPORARY/LOAN COLLECTIONS**

☐ **CONSERVATION/CLEANING REQUIRED**

**NATURE OF CONSERVATION REQUIRED:** \_\_\_\_\_

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☐ **FURTHER RESEARCH REQUIRED**

☐ **OBJECT NOT ACCEPTED FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON(S):**

☐ **OWNERSHIP DOCUMENTATION/EVIDENCE NEEDED** ☐ **IRRELEVANT OBJECT**

☐ **UNREASONABLE CONDITIONS OF LOAN** ☐ **OBJECT TOO DETERIORATED**

☐ **OTHER:** \_\_\_\_\_

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---

**SPECIFIC DISPLAY REQUIREMENTS:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

☐ **OBJECT APPRAISAL NEEDED**

☐ **MILITARY/GOVERNMENT APPROVAL REQUIRED TO DISPLAY:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**CURATOR SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTOR SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**↺ NOTERIZATION BELOW IF REQUIRED ↻**

**ACCN #** \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTARY PUBLIC SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

\*Accession Number must include relevant object code.

Example NJNM Special Object Form

New Jersey Naval Museum  
Special Object Intake Form

Name/Description of Object:

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-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

Object Type (Circle One)

W - Weapon      HR - Human Remains\*      HE - Hazard (Explosive)

HC - Hazard (Chemical)      R - Radioactive      N - Numismatic

PD - Personal/Confidential Document\*\*

Name of Depositor:

-----

ID Presented (Circle One)\*\*\*

DL - Driver License      PPT - Passport      SSN - Social Security #

CCW - Concealed Weapons Authorization      LE - Law Enforcement ID

FS - Other Federal/State ID      OT - Other \_\_\_\_\_

ID Information:

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----



Depositor's Address (Street, Apt, City, Zip, Country):

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

Depositor's Phone:

-----

Depositor's Email:

-----

Proof of Ownership Available (Circle):      Yes      No

If 'Yes,' Specify:

-----  
-----  
-----

If 'No,' Depositor must swear a signed and notarized affidavit of ownership to be included with this completed form.

**AUTHORIZATION OF CUSTODY**

I, THE ABOVE MENTIONED DEPOSITOR, DECLARE THAT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE IS TRUE, AND DO HEREBY DISCHARGE THE OBJECT(S) NAMED ABOVE TO THE CUSTODY OF THE NEW JERSEY NAVAL MUSEUM ACCORDING TO THE TERMS OF ACCESSION ARRANGEMENT. I RECOGNIZE THAT THE NEW JERSEY NAVAL MUSEUM ASSUMES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR OBJECTS OR PROPERTY ACQUIRED UNDER FALSE PRETENSES, AND THAT I AS THE ORIGINAL POSSESSOR OF SAID OBJECTS, DO HEREBY

-----  
 SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
 DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
 MUSEUM USE ONLY - DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

Further Research Required (Circle):

Yes      No

If 'Yes,' Specify:

**If Yes, Specify:**

**Further Research Required (Circle):**

Yes	No
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Additional Information:

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Military Notification/Authorization Required:      Yes      No

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Special Handling/Storage Requirements:

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-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
  
Curator Signature:

----- Date -----

Director Signature:

----- Date -----

**NOTERIZATION BELOW IF REQUIRED**

ACCN # -----

NOTARY PUBLIC SIGNATURE: -----

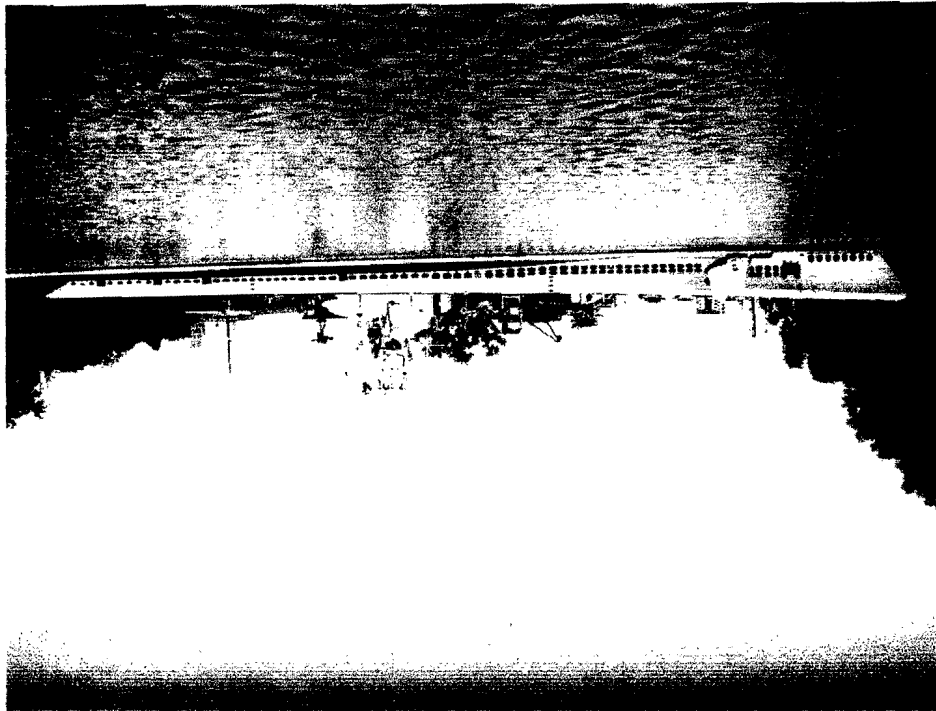
DATE: -----

\*Intake of Human Remains, Grave Properties, or Funerary Properties requires immediate notification of Law Enforcement

\*\*Personal/Confidential Documents include, but are not limited to, Documents issued by the United States or any other government, Medical and Related Documents, Military Records and Reports, Documents marked with Security Classification CONFIDENTIAL or higher, etc

\*\*\*With the exception of SSN, IDs provided must include a photograph

**DO YOUR PART  
GIVE A DOLLAR TO SAVE A  
PIECE OF HISTORY**



**DOLLARS  
FOR THE  
U.S. LING**

Appendix 2: Dollars for the Ling! (Example Dollars for the USS Ling River)