

**Another chance for historic sub**  
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Clamagore at dock at Patriots Point. (File photo)

The historic submarine Clamagore, once slated to be towed from Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum and sunk off the coast of Florida, has been given a reprieve. Those who support keeping the Cold War-era submarine at the museum should seize the unexpected opportunity to rescue the vessel.

The Clamagore, one of three large vessels on display at the state museum in Mount Pleasant, was to have been taken off Florida's shore and sunk as a diving attraction. But funding for the proposal fell through in Florida, and the Clamagore remains at its berth near the aircraft carrier Yorktown.

While the aircraft carrier Yorktown is the central exhibit of Patriots Point, the Clamagore ranks second in popularity, according to a 2011 review of the museum by the Legislative Audit Council.

The World War II destroyer Laffey ranks third. The Laffey almost sank at its mooring seven years ago, and was saved only by an emergency \$11 million loan from the state Bond Review Committee. That was fortuitous for the Laffey, known as the “Ship that Wouldn’t Die.” But it eliminated similar consideration for the Clamagore, which needs \$6 million in repairs, according to the latest estimate from Patriots Point.

There has been a turnaround at the museum, both in an improved bottom line and in plans to use a portion of the museum property for resort development, and another nearby site as the Medal of Honor Museum.

But the Patriots Point board hasn’t changed its mind about getting rid of the Clamagore. Patriots Point director Mac Burdette says the options include donating the ship to another museum, sinking it offshore as a reef and scrapping it.

“We’re not going to be able to keep the submarine,” he said. Patriots Point officials are concerned that the sub could be swamped during a hurricane and sink at its berth.

Meanwhile, museum officials have added to the attractions by bolstering its Vietnam War exhibit, which now includes one of the few surviving river patrol boats from that conflict.

Certainly, the Vietnam War deserves to be recognized at the museum, as a defining historical period affecting many veterans and their families. Meanwhile, World War II is becoming more and more a memory as the number of veterans declines daily.

The Clamagore’s years of service span three wars — WWII, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. It was built during World War II and was decommissioned in 1975. It serves as a fitting memorial to the Navy’s submarine service during the Cold War between Western democracies and the Soviet Union and its satellite states.

The Cold War was a defining period of international tension and nuclear peril, and the Clamagore offers a unique example of the rugged conditions under which some submariners served.

Turning it into a reef would cost Patriots Point an estimated \$2 million. That could serve as a down payment for its restoration.

The Clamagore deserves any consideration it can get from the Patriots Point board, veterans groups and the state, for a plan that will restore the vessel and keep it at the naval museum. Don’t give up the ship.