



Sandwiching in History Tour

USS *Razorback*

Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum, North Little Rock

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Special thanks to: Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum



Welcome to the first Sandwiching in History tour of 2023! As a matter of fact, you might call this one our *Submarine Sandwich in History*...

Well, anyway, I'm Ashley Sides, Preservation Outreach Coordinator at the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

We're so glad you've joined us today; welcome back to in-person tours! We intend to keep in them all in person again from this point on. There will be one tour each month, mostly in Little Rock and North Little Rock, but we have a few that will take us to some other parts of the state. The final schedule is still being confirmed, but you can take a handout that gives a preview of most of the early tours. (I don't expect these to change, but please get confirmation before showing up to a tour, just to be sure.)

Today's tour is being held in partnership with the Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum. They have graciously opened their doors and their ship to us today for free for the sake of this tour. So I want to give my special thanks to Joe Mathis, John Hoganson, Camille Smith, Tyler Bowie, Michael Hemann, director Greg Zonner, and the rest of the museum staff. They have been extremely helpful in making this tour possible. In fact, after I give a brief intro, I'm going to turn it over to them, since they are the best people to give a tour of the *Razorback*.

We're going to hear the history of the submarine while we are all gathered out here. Then, those who want to go inside the sub for a tour will break into groups that will go through in shifts.

Please note: Visitors must be 5 or older to enter the submarine. Also, it's cramped quarters in there, and the equipment is mostly intact, so all tours have to be supervised and there's a limit to how many people can be in there at a time. You should be aware that the only way into and out of the submarine is via vertical ladders, and at various points you will be ducking and passing through narrow openings. If anyone is unable or uninterested in going into the sub, you will still be able to see photos and videos of the interior up here. You can also explore the rest of the Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum. Meanwhile, we will try to video the tour on the sub, but if our cell signal drops, we might lose our Facebook live feed. As we always do, we'll post a recording of this tour on our YouTube and social channels a few days after the fact.

Today we are visiting one of central Arkansas's most unique historic resources. When you think of the National Register of Historic Places, you're most likely to think of a **building** or maybe a historic **district**. But many kinds of properties can qualify as historic places, including **objects** like monuments or statues, **sites** like battlefields or trails, and **structures** such as bridges or ships.

The USS *Razorback* was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on September 1, 2005 as a structure with **national significance**. This is one of very few properties in Arkansas listed on the National Register with national significance. She was listed under **Criterion A (historic events)** for her role in United States maritime and military history and under **Criterion C (historic design or construction)** as an excellent example of a *Balao*-class submarine with Guppy IIA modifications added in 1952-1953 ("GUPPY" is an acronym for Greater Underwater Power Propulsion Program).

She was initially commissioned in 1944 as part of the United States Navy where she served until 1970. She was then decommissioned and sold to the Turkish navy, where she was recommissioned as the TCG *Muratreis*, named after a famous sixteenth-century Ottoman naval admiral. She was operated by the Turkish navy until 2001, at which point she was decommissioned for the last time. With nearly 56 years of active duty, she is believed to have been the longest-serving submarine in the world at the time of her decommissioning.

She was returned to the United States in 2002 due to the efforts of veterans who had served on the *Razorback*. They raised money and worked with the city of North Little Rock to give her a

permanent home. The USS *Razorback* got her name from a common name for fin whale. It was the name USS *Razorback* that eventually led this submarine to Arkansas, but she was not named for the school mascot.

With that brief introduction, I'm going to turn it over to Joe Mathis for a more detailed history of the USS *Razorback*...

Bibliography

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