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USS *Lexington* (CV 16) Turns 79



"This ship represents veterans and their service to this country, and we just love sharing the history with our guests."

Steve Banta
Executive Director
USS *Lexington* Museum

The USS *Lexington* is commemorating 79 years since the historic ship was commissioned on 17 February 1943. Steve Banta, the Executive Director for the USS *Lexington* said she was the fifth ship to bear the name "Lexington."

"She served honorably during the war, and of course then after in the Cold War. Then in the 1960s, this ship was turned into the training carrier for the U.S. Navy and served out of Pensacola. The USS *Lexington* was also the longest serving *Essex*-class aircraft carrier of World War II. The ship, also known as the "Blue Ghost," displays military artifacts and more than 20 aircraft.

"It made sense it would come here as a museum in the 1990s. The ship was decommissioned in 1991. One year later, in 1992, it

opened as a museum here in the Coastal Bend in Corpus Christi," Banta said.

Banta said it was the quickest turn around for any ship to become a museum and it's all thanks to the Coastal Bend community.

"This ship represents naval aviation during World War II and into the Cold War, and then as a training carrier into the 1960s through the 1990s. But it really represents all veterans, and that is what we are proud of. This ship represents veterans and their service to this country, and we just love sharing the history with our guests," said Banta.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

News Around the Fleet

■ *Clamagore* Closes to Visitors Indefinitely

Clamagore submarine at Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum has been closed to visitors indefinitely for safety reasons.

Patriots Point's maintenance staff checks the museum's vessels weekly, and, during one recent inspection, a leak was detected in the main ballast tank.

"We're taking an abundance of caution to maintain our visitors' safety," museum Director Rorie Cartier said. The leak can't be repaired right now, for several reasons, Cartier said, making it "very, very unlikely" the ship will ever be reopened to the public.

One thing preventing a repair is the fragile condition of the vessel.

"It's really hard to patch anything on that submarine, because you can't weld metal plates to rust," Cartier said.

To do any repairs, the museum would also need approval from a marine chemist because of the chemicals that used to be inside the sub. Getting that approval would be unlikely, he said.

Clamagore has been docked at the state-owned museum and tourist attraction in Mount Pleasant since 1981.

Nicknamed the "Gray Ghost of the Florida Coast," *Clamagore* served for 30 years, mostly in the Atlantic and the Caribbean.

Patriots Point describes it as "the only GUPPY III submarine preserved in the U.S."

Its fate has been debated for years by state officials, museum leaders, veterans and fans of the vessel.



Maintenance staff at Patriots Point found a leak in the main ballast tank of the *Clamagore* submarine. (FILE/GAVIN MCINT YRE/STAFF)

Right now, *Clamagore's* longterm future is still unclear.

There are two main options still in consideration, Cartier said: scrapping the sub or sinking it to be used as an artificial reef.

In early 2020, it appeared *Clamagore's* future had been decided.

State lawmakers allocated \$2.7 million to reef the sub. When Gov. McMaster rejected that line item, lawmakers overrode his veto.

The museum received bids for the reefing, but all of them exceeded the \$2.7 million sum set aside for the project.

Bidding closed in mid-March 2020, just as the coronavirus pandemic was taking hold in South Carolina. The General Assembly later gave the museum permission to use the funds on other operating expenses as the attraction faced the financial challenges of COVID-19.

"It's really hard to patch anything on that submarine, because you can't weld metal plates to rust."

Rorie Cartier
Museum Director
Patriots Point

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

■ CAMM 2022 Annual Conference

The 2022 CAMM conference will be held in person at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, Maryland, April 27-29. Enjoy three days of informative sessions, and a special post-conference tour to Tangier Island on Saturday April 30. We look forward to seeing you in St. Michaels!

To register for the conference, please complete this form. Payment may be made via PayPal, credit card, or check. It is important to save your completed registration form and email a copy to Paul Fontenoy, the CAMM Administrator, at CAMMTreasury@gmail.com



[GO TO THE CONFERENCE PAGE](#)

[CURRENT AGENDA](#)

A block of rooms has been reserved at the St. Michaels Inn, 1228 S. Talbot Street, St. Michaels.

■ The Short Life of the Navy's First Carrier



US Navy aircraft carrier USS Langley in 1927 (Naval History and Heritage Command)

On the morning of 27 February 1942, US Navy seaplane tender USS *Langley* and two destroyers broke off from a large Allied supply convoy and headed for the island of Java.

The Japanese were well into their invasion of the Dutch East Indies and were poised to attack Java. *Langley* was carrying cargo that was badly needed to defend the island: 32 Curtiss P-40 Warhawk fighters of the 13th Pursuit Squadron.

Just before noon, however,

Japanese aircraft pounced on *Langley*. The onslaught sunk what was, for a few years at least, the US Navy's first aircraft carrier.

USS Langley began life not as a seaplane tender or an aircraft carrier but as the *Proteus*-class collier USS *Jupiter*.

Jupiter was laid down in 1911, launched in 1912, and commissioned into service in 1913. It was the Navy's first turbo-electric-powered ship, making it high-tech for a vessel that was not meant for combat.

The ship was used exclusively to transport personnel and supplies, particularly coal. It conducted the first ever west-to-east Panama Canal transit in 1914, dutifully carried out supply missions along the US's East and West coasts, and even conducted two coaling operations in France during World War I.

After *Jupiter* brought troops back to the US from Europe in 1919, it was decided to convert it into an aircraft carrier. Britain's HMS *Argus* had shown the value of such a vessel, and with HMS *Hermes* under construction, the US did not want to fall behind.

The conversion process began in 1920 and finished in 1922. In March of that year, the ship was recommissioned as USS *Langley* and designated CV-1, the US Navy's first carrier designation.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

[SIGN UP FOR THE UPCOMING WEBINAR ON *LANGLEY* FROM THE NAVAL HISTORICAL FOUNDATION](#)

■ Lyon Shipyard to Drydock...a Drydock



The Navy's Mid-Atlantic Regional Maintenance Center (MARMC) has awarded Lyon Shipyard a \$16.3 million contract to complete the dry-docked availability phased maintenance availability onboard the USS *Dynamic* (AFDL-6) and Barge (YFND-30).

Delivered in 1944 by the Chicago Bridge and Iron Company, Eureka, Calif., USS *Dynamic* is an auxiliary floating dry dock, while YFND-30 is its supporting work barge.

The work will be performed in Norfolk, VA, where both MARMC and Lyon Shipyard are located and is expected to be completed by January 2023.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

*An LCU seen being drydocked in USS Dyamic (AFDL 6) at MARMC.
(U.S. Navy Photo by Hendrick L. Dickson)*

■ Constitution Museum Hosts LEGO Event

The USS *Constitution* Museum in Charlestown is welcoming Lego lovers to build ship models in a hybrid contest where participants can join both in person and from home. The competition began on Saturday and will run until Feb. 27, 2022. Everyone can visit the museum from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. to build an original ship and enter the contest.

Boston University News Service photo editor Mild Laohapoonrungsee captured the fun at the museum on Presidents Day.



*LEGO pieces in all colors are provided for contestants to choose.
(Charlestown, Massachusetts, Feb. 21, 2022) (Photo by Mild Laohapoonrungsee/BU News Service)*



A contestant building the base of her ship model. (Charlestown, Massachusetts, Feb. 21, 2022) (Photo by Mild Laohapoonrungsee/BU News Service)



A contestant finding a spot to place his ship model. (Charlestown, Massachusetts, Feb. 21, 2022) (Photo by Mild Laohapoonrungsee/BU News Service)

■ Orleck Leaving Drydock -- Still Work to be Done

On 24 February 2022, USS *Orleck* exited the drydock at the Gulf Copper and Manufacturing Corporation in Port Arthur, TX.

Orleck is destined for tow to Jacksonville at this moment to be part of the Jacksonville Naval Museum.

There is still work to be done on the topside of the USS *Orleck*, but work on the ship is "nearing completion soon," according to a news release from the Jacksonville Naval Museum.

The ship could be ready for tow in mid-March, the news release states. The tow to Jacksonville is expected to take about 10 to 12

days, and once it gets to Jacksonville, the Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association will continue to prepare the museum ship for visitors.

The museum said the goal is to have the museum open by June.

You can support *Orleck* through the [Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association](#), purchase a museum membership, or merchandise!

We have included a before and after shot of *Orleck* for comparison (December 21, 2021 vs. February 24, 2022). Bravo Zulu, shipmates!

[VIEW BROCHURE](#)



■ Kidd Featured in Local News Highlight

(Original article text from KATC 3 Lafayette, LA)

We headed east toward the capital city of Baton Rouge, where the riverfront revitalization continues. A rare World War II destroyer named USS *Kidd* has graced the riverfront for more than 40 years. She saw action in both the Atlantic and the Pacific during World War II, and also served during the Korean War. Even though USS *Kidd* was designed to be on the open seas, she now rests on the Mississippi River, rising and falling with the water level.

Who is the namesake for USS *Kidd*? "His name was Admiral Isaac Campbell Kidd. He was the Admiral aboard

the USS *Arizona*." says Rosehn Gipe, the Executive Director for the USS *Kidd* Veterans Museum.

She continues, "Everybody remembers the *Arizona*, it was the ship that was sunk at Pearl Harbor, and there's a memorial there now. He was a flag officer on board, and was the first flag officer killed in World War II."

[FULL STORY](#)

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)



(All Photos by KATC Lafayette, LA)

■ Unique Tour of Submarine in Philly Still Available



USS *Becuna*, a submarine first commissioned in 1944, served on five war patrols during World War II, two of which were deemed successful. After the conflict, the ship traveled around the United States in assistance to the Navy until 1949.

Since 1976, Submarine *Becuna* has been on display off of Christopher Columbus Boulevard, and is now part of the Independence Seaport Museum.

Now, history buffs who want to learn a more personified history of the naval ship can climb aboard for a unique tour offered through Airbnb Experiences. "Sub Stories" will tell the stories of people who served on the submarine and show visitors parts of the ship that have never been open to the public.

The next tour run Feb. 26 and March 26 – both Saturdays – from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Tickets are available through Airbnb Experiences, beginning at \$40 per person. Group packages also are available for up to 10 people.

Tours will begin with a brief, contextualized history of the Submarine *Becuna* and its

significance to World War II and to U.S. Naval history.

Then, visitors will make multiple stops in the ship's compartments, many of which are not accessible during regular tours.

One of these stops is in the *Becuna's* conning tower – where the commanding officer would issue orders. There, guests will hear stories about the lives of people serving on the ship, rather than of the vehicle itself. The tower is vertical, so skirts or similar clothing is not recommended.

Other "sub stories" include a flooding incident, a tale of wartime espionage and a "disappointing tale of missing the biggest target a submariner could dream of," said host Gregory Williams, the manager and shipboard educator of Submarine *Becuna*.

Masks are required, regardless of vaccination status. Cameras are allowed and encouraged.

[PURCHASE TICKETS](#)



Historic Naval Ships Association

To Support the Preservation of Historic Naval Vessels &
To Honor Those Who Serve at Sea

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