

Museum Report

By ROBERT T. McLAREN

A WALKING TOUR THROUGH THE USS COD (SS-224)

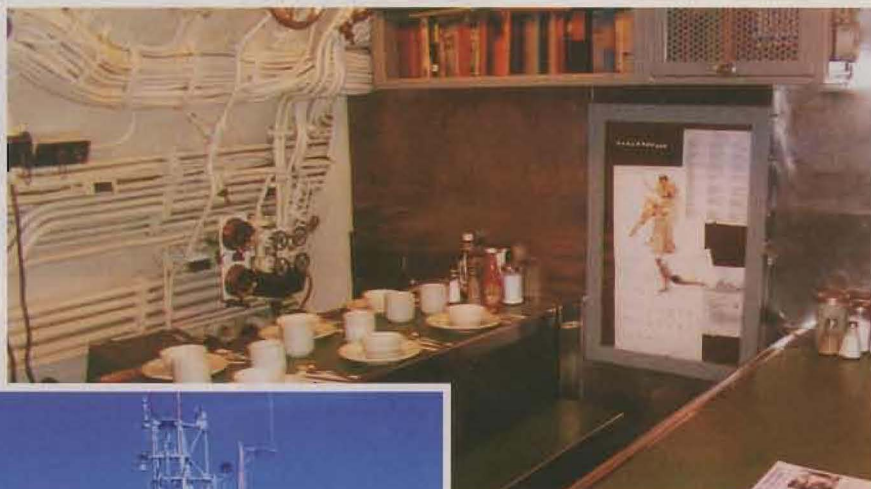
Want to see what life was really like in a World War II submarine? Then take a trip to the Lake Erie waterfront in Cleveland, Ohio, to the USS *Cod* (SS-224) Memorial. Secured to a pier there is the 312-foot *Gato*-class fleet submarine, which was commissioned 21 June 1943 at Groton, Connecticut. During World War II, she completed seven successful Pacific patrols, claiming 15 ships sunk and five damaged.

As a museum ship, she is unique among U.S. World War II submarine displays in that she is the only one that has not had her pressure hull cut open for public access. The only way a visitor gets on or off the boat on the self-guided tour is by way of the same hatches and vertical ladders used by her crew.

A tour begins at the forward escape hatch, which leads down into the forward torpedo room. As you step off the ladder to the deck plates you sense that you're intruding on the crew's berthing space. The 15 bunks are made-up with Navy blankets and bags for personal items. Six 21-inch torpedo tubes form the tour's dead end forward; aft through a watertight hatch leads you to the forward battery room and "officers' country." This compartment includes the officers' shower, pantry, staterooms, and wardroom. The only private cabin is the captain's, with a prominent compass and depth gauge at the foot of the bed.

On the other side of the next watertight hatch is the control room. With a push of a button, an audio recording plays, describing operations that took place during a dive or surface evolution. The red and green lights of the "Christmas Tree"—the hull opening indicator light panel—are also explained. Directly above the control room is the conning tower. This may be viewed by climbing halfway up a ladder to see its search and attack periscopes. The *Cod*'s radio shack is located on the aft bulkhead of the control room.

The crew mess and galley form the next compartment with the after battery room below. Three sittings were required for each meal, as the four mess tables accommodated



COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

The *Cod*'s mess (above) includes a table setting for six just below the sub's "library." Left: The USS *Cod* has been little altered from her wartime appearance. This includes access to the boat, which is by way of the same small hatches and narrow vertical ladders used by her crew in World War II.



24 Sailors at a time. The mess area also served as a movie theater and library; the bookshelf is full of vintage books. The sub's ice cream machine is in its original location and still works. Nearby is a picture of a former chief cook whose voice booms out at the press of a button to describe the galley's operation. This compartment also has berthing space for 54 crew members, with the bunks all ready for inspection. Two crew showers, two heads, a washroom, and laundry complete the space.

Two more compartments house the forward and after engine rooms. Each holds two of the *Cod*'s four 1,600-hp diesel engines, built nearby in Cleveland by the General Motors Corporation. While on the surface, the 16-cylinder engines drove four 1,100-kw DC generators, creating electric power to turn the sub's twin screws. Below the after engine room deck is a 500-hp auxiliary generator.

The next watertight hatch opens into the maneuvering room. There, motor-order telegraphs on both sides of control levers were used by the boats' electricians to control her speed; the maximum surface speed was 20.25 knots and 8.75 knots when submerged.

The last compartment is the after torpedo room, which accommodates four torpedo tubes, eight torpedoes, and berthing for 15 crew members. You leave the submarine from this compartment by climbing a ladder to the main deck.

Darrel "Boats" Flint, a volunteer at the memorial, noted: "I have been with the submarine since it came to Cleveland in 1987. *Cod* made her last dive in 1952 and was overhauled in 1958. The sub was used for training in the early 1970s."

The National Historic Landmark is open daily from 1 May to 30 September, 1000 to 1700. Admission for children under 12 and active-duty military is \$3, senior and retired military \$5, and adults \$6. For information call (216) 566-8770 or visit www.usscod.org.

Be warned: This is not a handicapped-friendly tour. The *Cod* has not been altered to accommodate the public. ⚓

Mr. McLaren is a retired Department of Energy employee. An Army and Merchant Marine veteran, he is a volunteer with the Liberty ship SS *John W. Brown*.