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USS ALBANY

Restored to former glory

Model ship will be unveiled at visitor's center next week

By Matthew Hamilton

Albany

In 1962, Wayne Van Amburgh helped commission the fourth USS Albany.

In 2013, he's set to do the same — just on a much smaller scale.

Van Amburgh will help unveil the brass model of the CG-class warship Monday at the Albany Heritage Area Visitors Center

as part of the center's 20th anniversary. It will join models of the first USS Albany, the current USS Albany submarine and memorabilia from the CG-class guided missile cruiser.

The model is 1/48th the size of the actual ship, which was decommissioned in 1980 after nearly two decades on the water. It's not a show replica, though, because the Navy had an actual use for it.

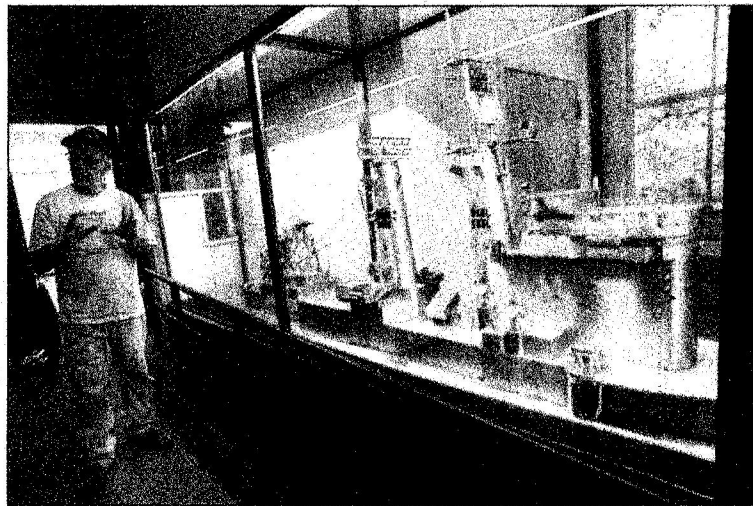
Van Amburgh, USS Albany Association exhibit chairman, said the Navy used brass models of the CG class ships in San

Diego in the late 1950s to help determine where antenna arrays would go on the actual-size ships.

"It was a lot easier to do it on a test pattern than to send a ship out and find out the antennas didn't work," he said.

Afterward, the brass model was tossed outside and left to decay in a San Diego scrap yard. While Van Amburgh sailed on the real ship from 1962 to 1964 and then for nearly 45 years after, the model greened from sea air before some of Van Am-

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Wayne Van Amburgh, USS Albany exhibit chairman, at the model's installation. For a video see <http://bit.ly/14TWz1z>

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burgh's shipmates from San Diego found it in 2007.

So began six years of work for Van Amburgh and others to bring the USS Albany model to its namesake city. He said the group first contacted the Navy in 2007 about obtaining the ship and a few years later Van Amburgh and shipmate Brent Hutchins of Maine were in San Diego to pick it up and talk to model makers about restoration work.

After bringing the model to the East Coast, they found a metal-restoration business in Maine that Van Amburgh said loved the project and got to work returning the brass ship to its former glory. Now the model is ready to go on display in Albany.

As for the real USS Albany, Van Amburgh was part of the commission that tried to bring it to the city's shores in the 1980s to serve as a floating memorial for New York veterans. But that plan never fully mate-

Meet the USS Albany

The USS Albany name has been used for five ships, including a submarine still in service. Here's a look at the fourth USS Albany, a model of which is on display at the Albany Heritage Area Visitors Center.

■ **Background:** The fourth USS Albany began its life as a CA-123 heavy cruiser in 1946 and was converted to a CG-10 guided missile cruiser in 1958.

■ **Commissioned:** Nov. 3, 1962

■ **Decommissioned:** August 1980

■ **Length:** 674 feet

■ **Speed:** 33 knots

■ **Crew size:** 75 officers, 1,187 enlisted sailors

Source: www.ussalbany.org

rialized because of political opposition, he said. The ship was dismantled in the 1990s.

"She's cut up and was sold for scrap," Van Amburgh said.

► mhamilton@timesunion.com • 518-454-5431 • @matt_hamilton10