

The Legal Status of U-boat 576

Under international law, nations have a duty to cooperatively protect maritime heritage for the benefit of the public. The German government confirms it retains ownership of U-576 and has requested that the United States government preserve and protect the vessel as it would one of its own.

The U.S. recognizes Germany's ownership, and that as a sovereign vessel, it is immune from arrest under the law of salvage and otherwise. It is U.S. policy to use its laws to protect foreign sunken warships like the U-576.

Further, NOAA and Germany agree that U-576 and other sunken vessels are maritime graves that should be treated with respect and not disturbed without authorization. See the [Presidential Statement on United States Policy for the Protection of Sunken State Craft](#). Federal Register Volume 69, Number 24 (Thursday, February 5, 2004)[[Pages 5647-5648].

Source: NOAA Office of General Counsel

