

This Day in History... April 11, 1900

USS *Holland*

THE DOLPHIN PIN



The U.S. Navy Submarine Force insignia is a pin featuring a pair of dolphins flanking a sub with its bow planes rigged for diving.

The pin is gold plated for officers, silver plated for enlisted personnel. Training prepares submariners not only for day-to-day responsibilities such as navigation and depth control, but also for the most extreme situations, from floods and fires to fighting the enemy. Only after the ability to handle these difficult scenarios has been confirmed can a candidate finally wear the coveted "dolphins."



This set of five stamps was issued for the 100th anniversary of the US submarine fleet, which began with the USS Holland.

On April 11, 1900, the US Navy acquired the USS *Holland*, their first modern commissioned submarine.

The *Holland* wasn't the first submarine – submersible vessels had been in use for over a century, but the *Holland* was the first that had the power to remain submerged for a considerable distance.

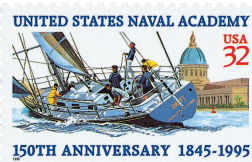
Irish-born John Philip *Holland* built the *Holland*. *Holland* became interested in submersibles while working as a teacher in Cork, Ireland. While reading about the battle of the *Monitor* and *Merrimack* during the American Civil War, he realized that the best way to defeat these ships would have been to attack from below the waterline. Soon he developed a design for a submersible, but was unable to obtain funding.

Holland moved to the United States in 1873 and resumed work on his submarine design. Two years later, he submitted his plans to the US Navy, but they turned him down claiming it was unworkable. An Irish organization known as the Fenians believed in his work and funded his research so he could continue. In 1881, he produced a submarine for them, the *Fenian Ram*. However, they soon parted ways over a money issue.

Holland continued to improve his plans and built a series of experimental boats. On May 17, 1897, he launched what would become the USS *Holland*. It was the first submarine to combine electric motors for underwater travel with gasoline engines for moving along the surface. This made it the first submarine to be able to travel submerged for a significant amount of time.

Having built the submarine and proved its effectiveness, *Holland* finally convinced the US Navy, and they purchased it on April 11, 1900 for \$150,000. The Navy then put the vessel through months of rigorous testing before officially commissioning it as the USS *Holland* on October 12, 1900. The Navy then ordered six more submarines to be built based on *Holland*'s design. They would be known as the *Plunger*-class and represented the nation's first fleet of underwater vessels. The design would also be used by the Royal Navy and a similar version by the Imperial Japanese Navy.

Shortly after its commissioning, the *Holland* was brought to Maryland where it was used to train midshipmen at the US Naval Academy. It was also used to collect data for use in building newer submarines. The *Holland* spent its career in Annapolis training cadets. It was decommissioned in 1905 and removed from the naval register in 1910. The *Holland* was sold as scrap but placed on display for several years before being scrapped in 1932.



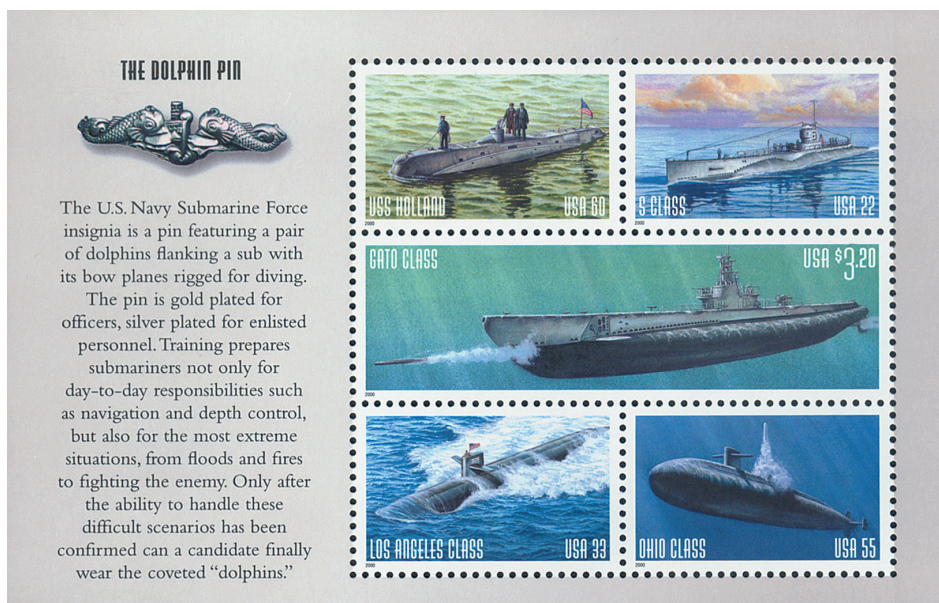
Issued for the US Naval Academy's 150th anniversary.



From the 1995 Civil War Sheet

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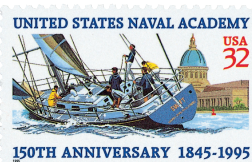
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