

Did you know: The world's first military submarine is just a big wooden crate?

This large wooden barrel is the first military submarine in the world.

The ability of a **submarine** to be able to go underwater without being ambushed by the enemy ship and discovered has attracted military leaders in the world since ancient times. Legend has it that **Alexander the Great** himself created the original submarine form to conduct underwater reconnaissance.

One of the first concepts of an underwater paddle boat was sketched by an Englishman named **William Bourne** in 1578, but it was not until 1620 that this plan was finally discovered by **Cornelis Drebbel** - the Ha Lan. Cornelis Drebbel's submarine is **made of wood** and pushed with paddles, which can dive underwater for hours. Lifesaving buoys with tubes carry air from above the surface for all the people in the ship to sink under the sea. Cornelis Drebbel demonstrated the submarine's ability by submerging the ship to the Thames River and underwater for a certain period of time. According to rumors - for three hours, thousands of people in London were on the shore to watch the " *marvelous* " performance, completely convincing the observers from the shore.

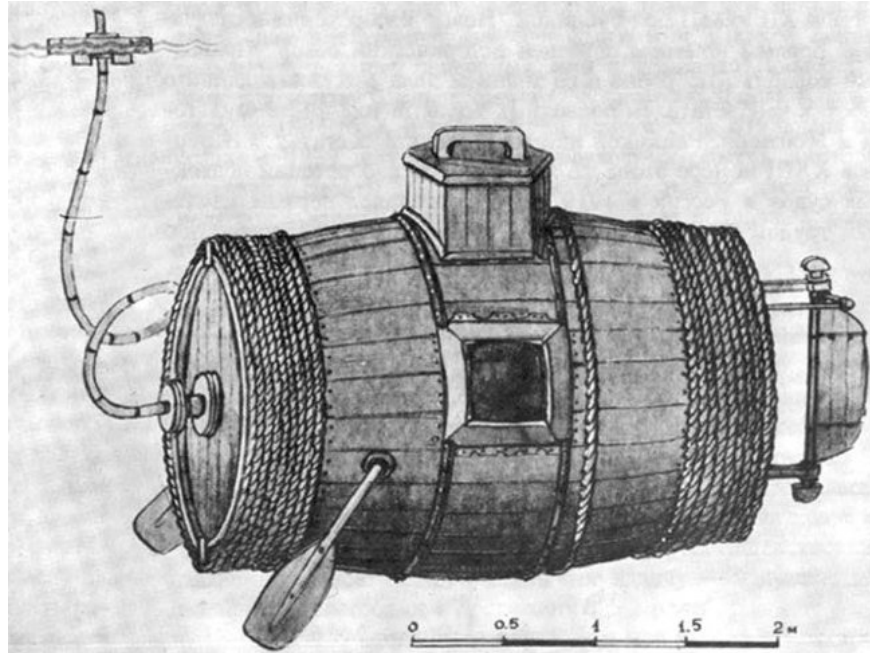


A copy of the submarine of Yefim Nikonov, believed to be the first military submarine in Sestroretsk, St Petersburg, on the Neva River. Photo source: Serguei Fadeev / Wikimedia

The poet, also the composer **Constantijn Huygens** of the Netherlands - who witnessed all the experiments, then wrote that this " *bold invention* " could be used in wartime, attack and hit. how to sink a ship's enemy when it is securely fixed at the anchor position. Like Huygens, many others also recognized the submarine's military capabilities although it would take more than 100 years to successfully build the first military ship.

In 1718, a Russian carpenter named **Yefim Nikonov** wrote to Peter the Great claiming that he could build a " *secret ship* " that could move underwater and destroy all enemy ships. by cannon. Because of curiosity and concern, **Tsar** (*Tsar*) invited Nikonov to Saint-Petersburg and asked him to conduct submarine construction.

In 1721, Nikonov completed the ship model and tested it before Peter was present. **Peter the Great** was very pleased with this result and asked Nikonov to build a large, secret warship.



Nikonov submarine

Nikonov's submarine is made of wood shaped like a barrel. It is equipped with a " *fire tube* " - a weapon like flamethrowers. Submarines are used to approach enemy ships, placing " *tubes* " out of the water and destroying enemy ships with a fire mixture. In addition, Nikonov also built a windlock for those deep in the water to breathe to control submarines and destroy the bottom of enemy ships.

The first test of submarines was conducted in the autumn of 1724. It was a drama. The submarine sank, fell to the seabed and broke the bottom of the ship. Unfortunately, Nikonov and four rowers are inside the ship. At that time, the only miracle was that the crew had to save themselves.

Peter supported and encouraged Nikonov to improve the design. But continuous failures made it difficult for Nikonov, especially after the death of the patron of the patron - Tsar Peter. In the spring of 1725, the second test of the " *secret ship* " ended in failure and the third time in 1727 was the same. Finally, the patience of the Russian Imperial Navy Board collapsed. Nikonov was accused of abusing public funds, landing on a normal carpenter and going to work at a shipyard on the Volga.



Photo source: Alex Panfiloff / Panoramio

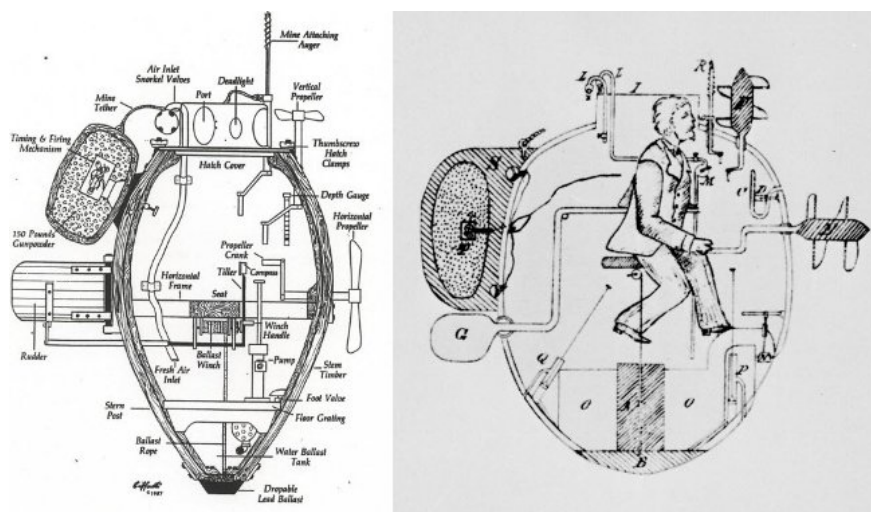


Image source: zavodfoto.livejournal.com

The first time a successful submarine was used, it was during the battle that occurred at the American Revolution in 1775. This submarine was called **Turtle** - designed by the American inventor named **David Bushnell**. . Turtle is an egg-shaped hand-powered device that can hold only one person and it is also the first submarine capable of operating and moving independently underwater. **Turtle** submerged into the water by pouring water into the bottom of the ship and up by pushing out the water using a manual pump. Hand-operated propellers move straight up or level up to a maximum speed of 4.8 km / h. This submarine can hold enough air for 30 minutes.

During the American Revolution, the Turtle submarine was controlled by Sgt. Ezra Lee, tried but failed to be ordered to attack a British warship - **HMS Eagle** . According to the statistics of the attacks, Lee was discovered before performing the assigned attack mission, forcing him to leave the submarine. However, in the written documents only each US attack was recorded and there was no record of the British attack. This makes many historians doubt about the accuracy of the story. Some argue that the whole story of the Turtle submarine was fabricated to distract the enemy and misrepresent the mission.

Copies of the Turtle submarine are currently on display in many museums in the United States, as well as the Royal Navy Submarine Museum in Gosport, England.



Bushnell-Turtle



The full size of the Turtle submarine was built by David Bushnell at the US Naval Submarine Library and Museum, Groton CT. Photo source: divemasterking2000 / Wikimedia

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