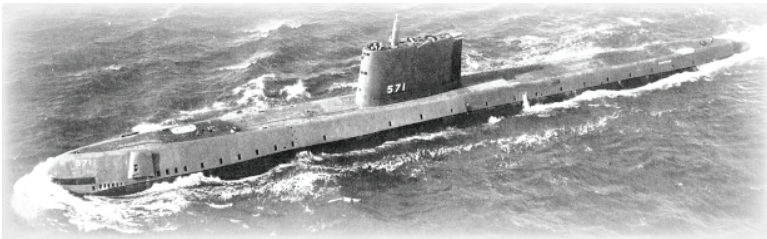




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# USS Nautilus Submarine



museum & workshop

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## What was this boat used for?

The USS *Nautilus* (SSN 571) was the first operational nuclear-powered submarine in the world. The *Nautilus* was able to operate submerged for extended periods of time without resurfacing or refueling.<sup>1</sup> The uranium-powered atomic engine needed no air and required only a small amount of nuclear fuel. Its nuclear reactor produced steam that drove propulsion turbines, allowing the submarine to travel underwater at speeds over 20 knots.<sup>2</sup> Early in its career, *Nautilus* traveled south to Puerto Rico, and remained submerged for 89.8 hours and 1,381 miles, the longest submerged cruise at that time. It also made a successful transit through the geographic North Pole, from Seattle to Greenland on the highly secretive mission “Operation Sunshine”.<sup>3</sup> *Nautilus* was often involved in surveillance and reconnaissance missions during the cold war era, and made goodwill visits to various countries, promoting international relations.

## Who used this boat and where?

The USS *Nautilus* was used exclusively by the United States Navy. It was commissioned in Groton, CT under its first commander Eugene P. Wilkinson. The *Nautilus* operated out of the Naval Submarine Base in New London, CT, where the effects of a high-powered submarine were tested on warfare practices of the time.<sup>4</sup> After being decommissioned, *Nautilus* was named the official state ship of Connecticut in 1983.<sup>5</sup>

## When was this boat used?

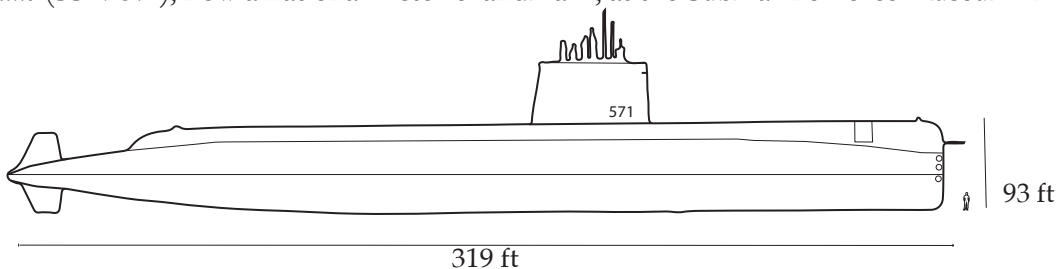
In July, 1951, Congress authorized the world’s first nuclear powered submarine to be built. The keel of the USS *Nautilus* was laid by President Harry S. Truman at the Electric Boat Shipyard in Groton, CT on June 14, 1952. It was commissioned on September 30, 1954 and decommissioned on March 3, 1980.<sup>6</sup> During its 25+ years of use by the US Navy, the *Nautilus* logged well over 300,000 nautical miles.<sup>7</sup>

## How was this boat made?

The construction of *Nautilus* was possible due to the success of the nuclear propulsion plant at the Naval Reactors Branch of the Atomic Energy Commission. Built by General Dynamics Electric Boat company, and under the direction of U.S. navy captain Hyman G. Rickover, naval architects and engineers created the submarine’s construction plan. The *Nautilus* stretched 319 feet and displaced 3,180 tons.<sup>8</sup> The hull was made of steel plates, and the construction process involved shaping and welding the plates together. Inside the hull were crew accommodations, control rooms, machinery spaces, and storage areas. Propulsion systems, navigation systems, communication systems, sonar, and other essential equipment were installed for the submarine’s operation.<sup>9</sup>

## Where to Visit:

Visit the USS *Nautilus* (SSN-571), now a national historic landmark, at the Submarine Force Museum in Groton, CT.<sup>10</sup>



- 1,3,4,7,8. <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/ships/submarines/uss-nautilus.html>
2. <https://ussnautilus.org/the-nuclear-submarine/>
5. <https://portal.ct.gov/About/State-Symbols/The-State-Ship#:~:text=The%20USS%20Nautilus%2C%20named%20Connecticut's,at%20Goss%20Cove%20in%20Groton.>
6. <https://connecticuthistory.org/launching-of-the-uss-nautilus-1954/#:~:text=In%20July%20of%201951%2C%20Congress,ship%20to%20hold%20that%20name.>
9. <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Portals/9/DCO%20Documents/5p/5ps/NVIC/1986/n5-86.pdf>
10. <https://ussnautilus.org/>