

# MIDGET FOR THE NAVY

NOT ONLY WAS THE SS X-1 THE US NAVY'S ONLY MIDGET SUBMARINE,  
IT WAS ALSO THE ONLY NAVY SHIP BUILT BY AN AIRCRAFT COMPANY!

BY RAY FITZGERALD



Jacket Insignia for the X-1.

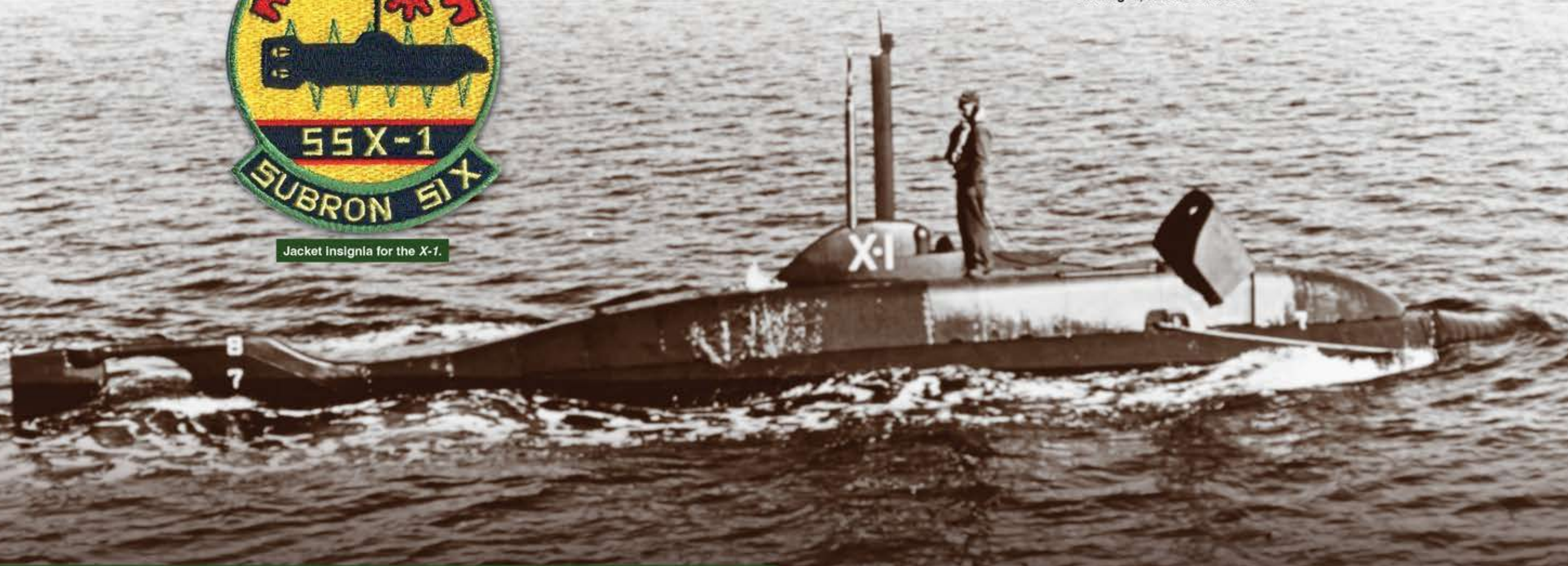
During 1953, a few high-ranking officers in the US Navy began thinking about midget submarines. During WWII, such craft had enjoyed a certain amount of success when deployed on the side of the Axis. Great Britain, Germany, Italy, and Japan all fielded midget subs. The US Navy considered the type but decided not to build any but the British program for the midgets was carefully studied.

After some 150 years of development and use, in 1949 permanent seacoast fortifications and other coastal defense sites ceased to be part of overall US military policy. Budget cuts played a role in this decision but it was also realized that by late WWII, such coastal/harbor defense systems were just not very effective in stemming a sea-borne invasion.

By this point, it was obvious that coastal attack by air and/or submarine rendered the previous methods of defense as obsolete. In 1950, the



The X-1 in Long Island Sound during 1955. The vessel weighed in at 37 tons submerged, 32 tons surfaced.



USS X-1 underway on 7 October 1955 in Long Island Sound. The X-1 was 49-ft 6-in long.