

## **New Suffolk** **By Joel Reitman**

This essay is like the title, small, interesting to a few, and legendary. Therefore I'll just drop a few crumbs along the pathway of crushed shells, and let you explore more on your own. I will keep to one topic, submarines that were berthed in New Suffolk. Believe it or not, submarines were really there. At least two signs point to a fleet of underwater boats. There's one sign along the Main Road (US Submarine Veterans Memorial Highway), and another one (with names and dates) along a rough edge of Peconic Bay that attest to the presence of submarines.

Crumb number one is the name Holland as in John Phillip, a school teacher who was born in Ireland. Following the success of the Monitor and Merrimack he, John P. Holland, thought iron clad boats could render the British navy useless. He emigrated to America in 1872 bringing along his well-developed plans of ironclad torpedo boats and offered them to the US Navy The Irish Republican Brotherhood saw the opportunity and funded the development of his submarines. The first one sunk in 1878; the second was successful in 1881. It was 30 long and powered by a combustion engine.

Crumb number two happens 16 years later when the dual powered USS Holland is commissioned by the US Navy.

Crumb number three, and here is where it relates to that small hamlet. The presence of foreign governments spying on the submarines being tested in the open waters of New York Harbor forced Holland and his new partner to move to the quiet and secluded waters of New Suffolk. They leased the use of the Goldsmith and Tuttle shipyard for \$10 per month. Testing continued with US senators and naval VIP's aboard while Clara Barton scolded them for creating an instrument of war.

Crumb number four, on April 11, 1900 the Navy purchased the Holland for \$150,000.00 and put it into service on October 12, 1900 as the first commissioned submarine in US Naval history.

You can follow the crumbs, find the signs, explore the New Suffolk Shipyard and find out more about this tiny hamlets glorious past.

*Epilogue:* The Holland Torpedo Boat Station was moved to Groton Connecticut. It's still there as a part of General Dynamics. To get a look, take a trip on the Orient ferry. Then drive over to the Naval Submarine Base New London and visit the nuclear Submarine Force Museum which is home to the USS Nautilus.

*Of Interest:* Photos and a model of the Holland are on display at the Horton Point Lighthouse.