

## The Origin of Sub Pay

Should Teddy Roosevelt be the patron saint of submariners?

Roosevelt was the first American President to go aboard a submarine and to make a dive. Roosevelt ventured beneath the waters of Long Island Sound aboard USS *Plunger* (SS-2) on March 25, 1905. *Plunger* was the United States' second submarine, commissioned in September 1903.

Beyond this historical first, however, is the fact that Roosevelt was the man directly responsible for submarine pay. The Naval hierarchy in 1905 considered submarine duty, neither unusual nor dangerous, and classified it as shore duty. Therefore, submariners received twenty-five percent less pay than sailors going to sea in destroyers, cruisers and similar surface ships.

The beginning of submarine pay!

Roosevelt's two-hour trip on *Plunger* convinced him that this discrimination was unfair. He described submarine duty as hazardous and difficult, and he found that submariners "have to be trained to the highest possible point as well as to show iron nerve in order to be of any use in their positions..."

Roosevelt directed that officer service on submarines be equated with duty on surface ships. Enlisted men qualified in submarines were to receive ten dollars per month in addition to the pay of their rating. They were also to be paid a dollar for every day in which they were submerged while underway. Enlisted men assigned to submarines but not yet qualified received an additional five dollars per month. Roosevelt did not dilly-dally once he made a decision. He issued an Executive Order directing the extra pay for enlisted personnel. This was the beginning of submarine pay!