

= SM U @-@ 12 ( Austria @-@ Hungary ) =

SM U @-@ 12 or U @-@ XII was a U @-@ 5 @-@ class submarine or U @-@ boat built for and operated by the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy ( German : Kaiserliche und Königliche Kriegsmarine or K.u.K. Kriegsmarine ) before and during the First World War .

= = Introduction = =

Built on speculation by Whitehead & Co. of Fiume , the submarine was launched as SS @-@ 3 and featured improvements in the electrical and mechanical systems from the design by the American John Philip Holland , to which her older sister boats , SM U @-@ 5 and U @-@ 6 , had been built .

SS @-@ 3 was laid down in 1909 and launched in March 1911 . The double @-@ hulled submarine was just over 105 feet ( 32 m ) long and displaced between 240 and 273 tonnes ( 265 and 301 short tons ) , depending on whether surfaced or submerged . Whitehead 's tried selling SS @-@ 3 to several different navies , but she was finally bought by the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy after the outbreak of World War I , despite having been rejected by them twice before . She was commissioned as U @-@ 12 in August 1914 .

The submarine sank only one ship , a Greek cargo ship in May 1915 , but she had earlier captured six Montenegrin sailing vessels as prizes in March . U @-@ 12 also damaged , but did not sink , the French battleship Jean Bart in December 1914 . While searching for targets in the vicinity of Venice in August 1915 , U @-@ 12 struck a mine that blew her stern off , and sank with all hands , becoming the first Austro @-@ Hungarian submarine sunk in the war . Her wreck was salvaged the next year by the Italians , who interred U @-@ 12 's crewmen in a Venetian cemetery .

= = Design and construction = =

SS @-@ 3 was built on speculation by Whitehead & Co. of Fiume . Her design was based on the John Philip Holland design licensed by Whitehead for U @-@ 5 and U @-@ 6 , two submarines ordered by the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy and built 1907 ? 1910 , and featured improvements in the mechanical and electrical systems . SS @-@ 3 was laid down in 1909 and launched at Fiume on 14 March 1911 .

SS @-@ 3 's featured a single @-@ hull with a tear @-@ drop shaped body that bore a strong resemblance to modern nuclear submarines . She was 105 feet 4 inches ( 32 @.@ 11 m ) long by 13 feet 9 inches ( 4 @.@ 19 m ) abeam and had a draft of 12 feet 10 inches ( 3 @.@ 91 m ) . She displaced 240 tonnes ( 260 short tons ) surfaced , and 273 tonnes ( 301 short tons ) submerged . Her two 45 @-@ centimeter ( 17 @.@ 7 in ) bow torpedo tubes featured unique , cloverleaf @-@ shaped design hatches that rotated on a central axis , and the boat was designed to carry up to four torpedoes .

According to one source , SS @-@ 3 was initially propelled by a pair of electric motors for surface running , but had them replaced with twin 6 @-@ cylinder gasoline engines of 300 brake horsepower ( 220 kW ) each when they proved disappointing during trials . It is not specifically reported for U @-@ 12 , but the other U @-@ 5 @-@ class boats both suffered from inadequate ventilation , which resulted in frequent intoxication of the crew from the engine exhaust . SS @-@ 3 's underwater propulsion was by two electric motors that totaled 230 shaft horsepower ( 170 kW ) .

= = Career = =

After SS @-@ 3 's March 1911 launch , Whitehead 's tried to sell SS @-@ 3 to the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy , but because the evaluation of the first two U @-@ 5 @-@ class boats was still underway , they declined to purchase . Over the next three years Whitehead 's attempted to sell the boat to the navies of Peru , Portugal , the Netherlands , Brazil , and Bulgaria , before the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy rejected an offer for the second time . With the outbreak of war , however , the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy purchased the unsold submarine to quickly bolster its fleet .

Although provisionally assigned the designation U @-@ 7 , the submarine was commissioned as SM U @-@ 12 on 21 August 1914 , with Linienschiffsleutnant Egon Lerch in command . U @-@ 12 's activities over the early part of the war are not reported , but the boat 's armament was augmented by a 3 @. @ 7 cm / 23 ( 1 @. @ 5 in ) quick @-@ firing ( QF ) deck gun in November 1914 . Sister boat U @-@ 5 had her first radio receiver installed at the same time her deck gun was added , but it is not reported whether U @-@ 12 did as well .

On 21 December 1914 , Lerch and U @-@ 12 chanced upon the French dreadnought Jean Bart in the Straits of Otranto steaming at a leisurely 9 knots ( 17 km / h ) and unprotected by escort ships . U @-@ 12 hit French Admiral Lapeyrère 's flagship with a single torpedo in the bow , destroying the battleship 's wine storeroom but sparing her forward magazine . Jean Bart 's watertight compartments saved the ship , which made her way to Malta to undergo repairs at the British dockyards there .

U @-@ 12 survived an attack from an unknown French Brumaire @-@ class submarine on 27 February 1915 . U @-@ 12 's next success was the capture of two Montenegrin schooners on 22 March 1916 , Fiore Di Dulcigno and Hilussie . Nine days later the U @-@ boat captured another four Montenegrin boats , Buona Forte , Fiore I , Hailie , and Indaverdi . On 29 May , she sank the Greek steamer Virginia , which was the only ship reported sunk by U @-@ 12 . In June , U @-@ 12 underwent a refit that added an additional two torpedo tubes on her forward casing .

In early August , Lerch and U @-@ 12 set out from Pola for Venice to look for enemy ships to sink . On 6 August , the Italian destroyer Rosolino Pilo rammed U @-@ 12 , probably by chance , at about 05 : 00 in the Lido inlet of the Venetian Lagoon . Two days later , when Italian workers were dredging to try to determine the object Rosolino Pilo had hit , they heard a heavy explosion . When divers went down in the area , they discovered the wreck of U @-@ 12 with her stern blown off . U @-@ 12 's entire complement of 17 men was lost when she went down . U @-@ 12 was the first Austro @-@ Hungarian submarine sunk during the war .

In late 1916 , the Italians salvaged the hulk of U @-@ 12 and transported it to Venice . The bodies of U @-@ 12 's crew were interred at the San Michele cemetery in Venice , and U @-@ 12 's hulk , of no salvage value , was scrapped at the Venice naval arsenal . In her military service , U @-@ 12 sank one ship of 1 @, @ 065 GRT , damaged one warship ( 22 @, @ 189 GRT ) , and captured six ships as prizes .

= = Gallery = =