

= SM U @-@ 70 =

SM U @-@ 70 was a Type U 66 submarine or U @-@ boat for the German Imperial Navy (German : Kaiserliche Marine) during the First World War . She had been laid down in February 1914 as U @-@ 11 the final boat of the U @-@ 7 class for the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy (German : Kaiserliche und Königliche Kriegsmarine or K.u.K. Kriegsmarine) but was sold to Germany , along with the others in her class , in November 1914 .

The submarine was ordered as U @-@ 11 from Germaniawerft of Kiel as the last of five boats of the U @-@ 7 class for the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy . After the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 , the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy became convinced that none of the submarines of the class could be delivered to the Adriatic via Gibraltar . As a consequence , the entire class , including U @-@ 11 , was sold to the German Imperial Navy in November 1914 . Under German control , the class became known as the U 66 type and the boats were renumbered ; U @-@ 11 became U @-@ 70 , and all were redesigned and reconstructed to German specifications . U @-@ 70 was launched in July 1915 and commissioned in September . As completed , she displaced 791 tonnes (779 long tons) , surfaced , and 933 tonnes (918 long tons) , submerged . The boat was 69 @. 50 metres (228 ft) long and was armed with five torpedo tubes and a deck gun .

A part of the 4th Flotilla throughout the war , U @-@ 70 sank 53 merchant ships with a combined gross register tonnage (GRT) of 137 @, 775 . Included in that total was Southland ? at 11 @, 899 GRT , one of the largest ships of the war sunk by a U @-@ boat ? sunk in June 1917 . In addition she sank one British Flower @-@ class sloop and damaged four merchant ships (20 @, 369 GRT) . On 20 November 1918 , nine days after the Armistice , U @-@ 70 was surrendered to the British . She was broken up at Bo 'ness in 1919 ? 20 .

= = Design and construction = =

After the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy had competitively evaluated three foreign submarine designs , it selected the Germaniawerft 506d design , also known as the Type UD , for its new U @-@ 7 class of five submarines . The Navy ordered five boats on 1 February 1913 .

The U @-@ 7 class was seen by the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy as an improved version of its U @-@ 3 class , which was also a Germaniawerft design . As designed for the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy , the boats were to displace 695 tonnes (684 long tons) on the surface and 885 tonnes (871 long tons) while submerged . The doubled @-@ hulled boats were to be 69 @. 50 metres (228 ft) long overall with a beam of 6 @. 30 metres (20 @. 7 ft) and a draft of 3 @. 79 metres (12 @. 4 ft) . The Austrian specifications called for two shafts with twin diesel engines (2 @, 300 metric horsepower (2 @, 269 bhp ; 1 @, 692 kW) total) for surface running at up to 17 knots (31 km / h ; 20 mph) , and twin electric motors (1 @, 240 metric horsepower (1 @, 223 shp ; 912 kW) total) for a maximum of 11 knots (20 km / h ; 13 mph) when submerged . The boats were designed with five 45 cm (17 @. 7 in) torpedo tubes ; four located in the bow , one in the stern . The boats ' armament was to also include a single 6 @. 6 cm (2 @. 6 in) deck gun .

U @-@ 11 was laid down on 11 February 1914 , the final boat of the class begun . Her construction was slated to be complete within 29 to 33 months .

Neither U @-@ 11 nor any of her sister boats were complete when World War I began in August 1914 . With the boats under construction at Kiel , the Austrians became convinced that it would be impossible to take delivery of the boats , which would need to be towed into the Mediterranean past Gibraltar , a British territory . As a result , U @-@ 11 and her four sisters were sold to the Imperial German Navy on 28 November 1914 .

U @-@ 11 was renumbered by the Germans as U @-@ 70 when her class was redesignated as the Type U 66 . The Imperial German Navy had the submarines redesigned and reconstructed to German standards , which increased the surface displacement by 96 tonnes (94 long tons) and the submerged by 48 tonnes (47 long tons) . The torpedo load was increased by a third , from 9 to 12 , and the deck gun was upgraded from the 6 @. 6 cm (2 @. 6 in) gun originally specified to an 8 @. 8 cm (3 @. 5 in) one .

= = Early career = =

U 70 was launched on 20 July 1915 . On 22 September , SM U 70 was commissioned into the German Imperial Navy under the command of Kapitänleutnant Otto Wünsche . U 70 was the second U 70 boat command for the 30 year old officer ; he had commanded U 25 from August 1914 until a week before assignment to U 70 . In January 1916 , Wünsche and U 70 escorted the German blockade runner Marie through the North Sea . On 9 February , U 70 was assigned to the 4th Flotilla (German : IV . Uhalbflotille) in which she remained for the duration of the war . U 70 served as an escort again in late February , when she accompanied the German merchant raider Greif .

= = The second German offensive = =

Germany began its second submarine offensive against shipping in February 1916 , the month U 70 had joined the 4th Flotilla . As in the first submarine offensive , U 70 boats were sent independently around Scotland to patrol the Irish Sea and the western entrance to the English Channel . U 70 sank her first ship on 16 March , when she dispatched the British sailing vessel Willie 60 nautical miles (110 km ; 69 mi) northwest by west of Fastnet Rock . The same day she also damaged the British cargo ship Berwindale , en route to Avonmouth with a load of wheat from Galveston , Texas . Throughout the rest of March and into early April , U 70 sank an additional five ships of 14 ,@ 557 gross register tons (GRT) ; the largest being the British cargo vessel Eagle Point , carrying a load of hay and oats from Saint John , New Brunswick , torpedoed and sunk on 28 March . Near the end of April 1916 , Admiral Reinhard Scheer , the new commander @-@ in @-@ chief of the High Seas Fleet (under which U 70 's 4th Flotilla operated) , called off the merchant shipping offensive and ordered all boats at sea to return , and all boats in port to remain there .

= = Grand Fleet ambush = =

In mid @-@ May , Scheer completed plans to draw out part of the British Grand Fleet . The German High Seas Fleet would sortie for a raid on Sunderland , luring the British fleet across " ' nests ' of submarines and mine @-@ fields " . U 70 was one of four U 70 boats that put out to sea beginning on 18 May to scout the central North Sea for signs of the British fleet . Completing five days of scouting , U 70 , along with U 63 , U 51 , U 32 , sister boat U 66 , U 24 , and U 52 , took up position off the Firth of Forth on 23 May . The other two other boats , U 43 and U 44 , were stationed off Pentland Firth , in position to attack the British fleet leaving Scapa Flow . All the boats were to remain on station until 1 June and await a coded message which would report the sailing of the British fleet . Unfortunately for the Germans , the British Admiralty had intelligence reports of the departure of the submarines which , coupled with an absence of attacks on shipping , aroused British suspicions .

A delayed departure of the German fleet for its sortie (which had been redirected to the Skagerrak) and the failure of five U 70 boats to receive the coded message warning of the British advance caused Scheer 's anticipated ambush to be a " complete and disappointing failure " . Although U 70 had received the advance warning of the coded message , her crew did not ever see any part of the fleet . The failure of the submarine ambush to sink any British capital ships allowed the full Grand Fleet to engage the numerically inferior High Seas Fleet in the Battle of Jutland , which took place 31 May ? 1 June .

U 70 's next success came in December when she sank the 5 ,@ 587 @-@ ton British steamer Pascal on 17 December . Over the next month she sank an additional 15 ships (20 @ ,@ 545 GRT) .

= = Unrestricted submarine warfare = =

From the early stages of the war the British had blockaded Germany , preventing neutral shipping from reaching German ports . By the time of the so @-@ called " turnip winter " of 1916 ? 17 , the blockade had severely limited imports of food and fuel into Germany . Among the results were an increase in infant mortality and as many as 700 @,@ 000 deaths attributed to starvation or hypothermia during the war . With the blockade having such dire consequences , Kaiser Wilhelm II personally approved a resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare to begin on 1 February 1917 to help force the British to make peace . The new rules of engagement specified that no ship was to be left afloat .

The first recorded action of U @-@ 70 under the new rules of engagement occurred near the end of February 1917 , when the U @-@ boat shelled the British @-@ flagged SS San Patricio . The 9 @,@ 712 GRT tanker , encountered by U @-@ 70 off the Orkney Islands , survived the attack . In March , U @-@ 70 sank twelve ships totaling 25 @,@ 708 tons and damaged a thirteenth of 4 @,@ 666 tons .

During the month of April 1917 , German U @-@ boats succeeded in sinking 860 @,@ 334 tons of Allied and neutral shipping , a total unsurpassed by any month in either of the two world wars . U @-@ 70 's contribution came in the form of ten ships of 23 @,@ 530 tons sent to the bottom , four of them on the same day , 24 April .

Although the monthly total of tonnage sunk by all U @-@ boats had peaked in April , the losses were over 600 @,@ 000 tons in each of May and June . U @-@ 70 did not contribute to the May tally but her commanding officer , Wünsche , was awarded the House Order of Hohenzollern . U @-@ 70 began another productive month in June by sinking the American Line ocean liner Southland on 4 June . At 11 @,@ 899 GRT , Southland was the largest ship sunk by U @-@ 70 , and one of the largest ships sunk during the war by a U @-@ boat . Southland was carrying a general cargo from Liverpool to Philadelphia when U @-@ 70 sank her at position 56 ° 10 ' N 12 ° 14 ' W , some 140 nautical miles (260 km ; 160 mi) from Tory Island . Throughout the rest of June , U @-@ 70 sank another seven ships totaling 26 @,@ 131 tons .

After June 1917 , U @-@ 70 only sank another three ships throughout the rest of the war , one of which was the British Flower @-@ class sloop Rhododendron on 5 May 1918 . Rhododendron had been constructed in 1917 as a purpose built Q @-@ ship , a warship disguised as a merchant ship to lure German submarines within range of their concealed gun batteries . The sloop was patrolling off Mull Head in the Orkney Islands when struck by a single torpedo from U @-@ 70 . The captain , Lieutenant Commander Charles Arthur Peal , became disoriented in the aftermath of the explosion , and instead of ordering away a " panic party " to draw the submarine within range , ordered the complete evacuation of the ship , which was carried out in great haste and confusion . U @-@ 70 approached the burning ship and observed the chaotic evacuation , seizing a petty officer from a liferaft who revealed the ship 's true identity . U @-@ 70 shelled the wreck and escaped without coming under fire . Rhododendron capsized and sank the following morning , with the loss of 15 men , four killed in the explosion and 11 drowned during the evacuation . Peal and the rest of the crew were heavily criticized for their conduct under fire by an Admiralty board .

In total U @-@ 70 sank 54 ships with a combined tonnage of 139 @,@ 065 and damaged four with a tonnage of 20 @,@ 369 in her twelve war patrols . She was surrendered to the British on 20 November 1918 , nine days after the Armistice , and broken up at Bo 'ness in 1919 ? 20 .

= = Summary of raiding history = =