

= German submarine U 43 (1939) =

German submarine U 43 was a Type IXA U boat of Nazi Germany 's Kriegsmarine during World War II . The keel for U 43 was laid down in August 1938 at Bremen ; she was launched in May 1939 and commissioned in August .

Between November 1939 and July 1943 , the U boat conducted 14 combat patrols , sinking 21 merchant ships for a total of 117 ,036 gross register tons (GRT) , damaging one ship of 10 ,350 GRT and another of 9 ,131 GRT - enough for it to be declared a total loss .

U 43 was sunk on 30 July 1943 southwest of the Azores by a torpedo dropped by a United States Navy aircraft ; all 55 hands were lost .

= = Construction = =

U 43 was ordered for the Kriegsmarine on 21 November 1936 (as part of Plan Z and in violation of the Treaty of Versailles) . Her keel was laid down on 15 August 1938 by AG Weser , Bremen as yard number 946 . She was launched on 23 May 1939 and commissioned on 26 August of that same year under the command of Korvettenkapitän Wilhelm Ambrosius .

= = Design = =

As one of the eight original German Type IX submarines , later designated IXA , U 43 had a displacement of 1 ,032 tonnes (1 ,016 long tons) when at the surface and 1 ,153 tonnes (1 ,135 long tons) while submerged . The U boat had a total length of 76 .50 m (251 ft) , a pressure hull length of 58 .75 m (192 ft 9 in) , a beam of 6 .51 m (21 ft 4 in) , a height of 9 .40 m (30 ft 10 in) , and a draught of 4 .70 m (15 ft 5 in) . The submarine was powered by two MAN M 9 V 40 / 46 supercharged four - stroke , nine - cylinder diesel engines producing a total of 4 ,400 metric horsepower (3 ,240 kW ; 4 ,340 shp) for use while surfaced , two Siemens - Schuckert 2 GU 345 / 34 double - acting electric motors producing a total of 1 ,000 metric horsepower (740 kW ; 990 shp) for use while submerged . She had two shafts and two 1 .92 m (6 ft) propellers . The boat was capable of operating at depths of up to 230 metres (750 ft) .

The submarine had a maximum surface speed of 18 .2 knots (33 .7 km / h ; 20 .9 mph) and a maximum submerged speed of 7 .7 knots (14 .3 km / h ; 8 .9 mph) . When submerged , the boat could operate for 65 ? 78 nautical miles (120 ? 144 km ; 75 ? 90 mi) at 4 knots (7 .4 km / h ; 4 .6 mph) ; when surfaced , she could travel 10 ,500 nautical miles (19 ,400 km ; 12 ,100 mi) at 10 knots (19 km / h ; 12 mph) . U 43 was fitted with six 53 .3 cm (21 in) torpedo tubes (four fitted at the bow and two at the stern) , 22 torpedoes , one 10 .5 cm (4 .13 in) SK C / 32 naval gun , 180 rounds , and a 3 .7 cm (1 .5 in) as well as a 2 cm (0 .79 in) anti - aircraft gun . The boat had a complement of forty - eight .

= = Service history = =

= = = 1st patrol = = =

Commissioned into the 6th U boat Flotilla , based at Kiel , U 43 left for her first combat patrol of the war on 6 November 1939 , sailing around the British Isles and into the Atlantic . There , on 16 November , she attacked the 4 ,915 ton British merchant ship Arlington Court , a straggler from Convoy SL 7A , en route from Rosario , Argentina to Hull with a cargo of 7 ,340 tons of maize . The ship was hit by a single torpedo 320 nautical miles (590 km ; 370 mi) west - south - west of Start Point in Devon . The crew abandoned ship , the U boat fired another torpedo , which sank the ship within 30 minutes . Seven of the crew were lost , the

survivors were picked up by Dutch and Norwegian freighters . After the attack , U @-@ 43 was hunted by convoy escorts for 20 hours , sustaining some damage from depth charges .

Continuing with her patrol , U @-@ 43 attacked Convoy 14 @-@ BS in the Bay of Biscay , and sank the 4 @,@ 374 ton French merchant ship Arijon on 22 November . Convoy escorts counter @-@ attacked with 23 depth charges , but U @-@ 43 escaped without damage .

Late on 25 November 1939 , about 120 nautical miles (220 km ; 140 mi) west @-@ north @-@ west of Cape Finisterre (northwest Spain) , U @-@ 43 attacked the unescorted 2 @,@ 483 ton British collier Uskmouth . Both G7a torpedoes malfunctioned (a common problem in the early years of the war) , so the U @-@ boat opened fire with her deck gun . After a while she fired another torpedo , but missed , so recommenced shelling . After firing 149 rounds , U @-@ 43 left the ship on fire and slowly sinking . Two crewmen were killed , while 23 survivors were picked up by an Italian merchant ship .

On the morning of 8 December U @-@ 43 was attacked by an unidentified aircraft and severely damaged . She returned to Wilhelmshaven six days later , on the 14th .

= = = 2nd patrol = = =

After the 6th U @-@ boat Flotilla was disbanded in December 1939 , U @-@ 43 was assigned to the 2nd U @-@ boat Flotilla based in Wilhelmshaven . U @-@ 43 departed from there on 13 March 1940 and sailed along the coast of Norway , north of Scotland , and into the waters west of Ireland , but had no success . The First Watch Officer (second @-@ in @-@ command of the U @-@ boat) Oberleutnant zur See Hans @-@ Wilhelm Behrens fell overboard and was lost on 31 March . U @-@ 43 returned to Wilhelmshaven , after 25 days at sea , on 6 April .

= = = 3rd patrol = = =

U @-@ 43 's third voyage began on 12 April 1940 . She patrolled the North Sea and along the Norwegian coast , supporting the invasion of that country . On 22 April she was bombed by two British Hudson aircraft and suffered slight damage . She returned to Wilhelmshaven the next day .

= = = 4th patrol = = =

U @-@ 43 sailed from Wilhelmshaven on 13 May 1940 and out into the Atlantic . Her first attack took place on 28 May , south @-@ west of Land 's End , when she fired a torpedo at the British merchant ship Alca . She missed , and then opened fire with her deck gun . The armed ship returned fire , but neither vessel made any hits ; the U @-@ boat broke off the attack .

U @-@ 43 finally found success on 21 June when she attacked Convoy 65 @-@ X south @-@ west of Figueira da Foz , Portugal , hitting the 8 @,@ 627 ton British tanker Yarraville with a single torpedo . The ship caught fire and sank . Five crew members were killed , the 45 survivors were picked up by a French trawler .

Late on 30 June U @-@ 43 hit the 13 @,@ 376 ton British merchant ship SS Avelona Star with a single torpedo 220 nautical miles (410 km ; 250 mi) northwest of Cape Finisterre . The ship , part of Convoy SL @-@ 36 , was en route from Buenos Aires to London with a cargo of 5 @,@ 630 tons of frozen meat and 1 @,@ 000 tons of oranges . The crew abandoned the ship , which foundered the next day . One crewman was killed in the attack , the 84 survivors were picked up by the British merchant ship Beignon , which was subsequently torpedoed and sunk by U @-@ 30 on 1 July . Three survivors from Avelona Star were killed .

On the evening of 9 July U @-@ 43 sank the unescorted 3 @,@ 944 ton British merchant ship Aylesbury about 200 nautical miles (370 km ; 230 mi) southeast of Ireland . Hit by two torpedoes , the ship sank in 15 minutes . All 35 crew survived .

U @-@ 43 's fourth and final success on her fourth patrol took place on the morning of 17 July when she sank the 3 @,@ 509 @-@ ton British merchant ship Fellside , a straggler from convoy OA @-@ 184 , about 135 nautical miles (250 km ; 155 mi) north @-@ west of Bloody Foreland (Cnoc

Fola) , Donegal . The U @-@ boat 's first torpedo passed under the vessel , but the second struck the ship and caused her to sink within five minutes . Twelve of the crew were killed , 21 survivors were rescued . U @-@ 43 arrived back at Wilhelmshaven on 22 July after 71 days at sea .

= = = 5th patrol = = =

U @-@ 43 sailed from Wilhelmshaven on 9 September 1940 , stopping at Bergen , Norway for three days before sailing on the 15th for another Atlantic patrol . She sank only one ship , the 5 @,@ 802 ton British merchantman Sulairia , separated from Convoy OB @-@ 217 , on 25 September . The U @-@ boat hit the ship with a single torpedo causing her to sink 356 nautical miles (659 km ; 410 mi) west of Achill Head , County Mayo . One man was lost , the remaining 56 crewmen were picked up by HMCS Ottawa .

U @-@ 43 then made for her new home port at Lorient in France , where the 2nd U @-@ boat Flotilla had relocated in June after the fall of that country , arriving there on 18 October . Her commander , Wilhelm Ambrosius , was promoted to Korvettenkapitän on 1 November , and left U @-@ 43 , going on to take command of the 22nd U @-@ boat Flotilla in January 1941 . Command of the U @-@ boat passed to Oberleutnant zur See Wolfgang Lüth , who would go on to become the second most successful German submarine commander of the war .

= = = 6th patrol = = =

Under her new captain , U @-@ 43 left Lorient on 10 November 1940 and returned to the waters west of Ireland , where she sank three more merchant ships and damaged a fourth .

On the morning of 2 December she attacked Convoy OB @-@ 251 west @-@ south @-@ west of Rockall and sank two ships . Her first victim was the 7 @,@ 113 ton British merchant ship Pacific President , which was hit by two torpedoes and quickly sank with the loss of her crew of 50 men . Forty @-@ five minutes later U @-@ 43 hit the 12 @,@ 247 ton British oil tanker Victor Ross with two torpedoes . A third torpedo was fired five minutes later , but missed , the U @-@ boat evaded a ramming attempt by crash @-@ diving shortly afterwards . However , she persisted and hit the ship with a fourth torpedo 20 minutes later , sinking her . There were no survivors from her 44 crew .

In the evening of 6 December , U @-@ 43 spotted a ship and pursued her for three and a half hours before firing a single torpedo , which missed . The U @-@ boat fired another torpedo 20 minutes later , hitting the unknown ship and sinking her in 63 seconds . The vessel is believed to be the 1 @,@ 902 ton Norwegian merchant ship Skrim , which had lost contact with Convoy OB @-@ 252 two days before in heavy weather and was never seen again .

Finally , on 13 December , U @-@ 43 fired two torpedoes at the unescorted 10 @,@ 350 ton British merchant ship Orari about 450 nautical miles (830 km ; 520 mi) southwest of Ireland . One torpedo hit the ship in the stern . However , U @-@ 43 had no torpedoes left , and the sea was too rough for her to use her deck gun . The crew of the ship managed to plug the hole with tarpaulins , and the ship made it under her own power to the Clyde .

U @-@ 43 returned to Lorient on 17 December 1940 after a patrol of 38 days . On 4 February 1941 , while at Lorient docks , U @-@ 43 was sunk after a valve was accidentally left open , putting the U @-@ boat out of action for the next three months .

= = = 7th patrol = = =

After this enforced absence U @-@ 43 began her next patrol on 11 May 1941 , still under the command of Wolfgang Lüth , who had been promoted to Kapitänleutnant on 1 January . Once again she sailed out into the mid @-@ Atlantic , where she sank three ships .

Early on the morning of 15 May U @-@ 43 opened fire with her deck gun and anti @-@ aircraft guns on the 488 ton French three @-@ masted sailing ship Notre Dame du Châtelet , en route from St. Malo to the Grand Banks of Newfoundland to fish . After being hit by 45 shells the ship sank . Lüth suspected that the vessel was reporting the positions of U @-@ boats to Allied forces , while

the 10 survivors thought they had been attacked by a British submarine . They , from her crew of 38 , abandoned ship in two lifeboats . Two were picked up by the Italian submarine Otaria on 23 May .

On the evening of 6 June U @-@ 43 put two torpedoes into the 4 @,@ 802 ton Dutch merchant ship Yselhaven about 600 nautical miles (1 @,@ 100 km ; 690 mi) east of Newfoundland . The ship , separated from Convoy OB @-@ 328 , sank within two minutes . Only 10 of her crew of 34 survived to be rescued by the Finnish merchantman Hammarland on 15 June .

In the early hours of 17 June , U @-@ 43 torpedoed and sank the 2 @,@ 727 ton British merchant ship Cathrine , part of Convoy SL @-@ 76 , which was loaded with 3 @,@ 700 tons of manganese ore , about 250 nautical miles (460 km ; 290 mi) south @-@ west of Cape Clear (southern Ireland) . Only three men survived from her crew of 27 ; they spent 33 days in a lifeboat before being found by a British trawler .

U @-@ 43 returned to Lorient on 1 July after a patrol lasting 52 days .

== 8th and 9th patrols ==

U @-@ 43 's next patrol , beginning on 2 August 1941 , took her back out into the mid @-@ Atlantic for 53 days , but she had no success before returning to Lorient on 23 September .

U @-@ 43 went to sea again on 10 November 1941 , this time she was more successful , sinking three ships near the Azores .

Early on the morning of 29 November , U @-@ 43 fired two torpedoes at the 5 @,@ 569 ton British merchant ship Thornliebank , part of Convoy OS @-@ 12 , and loaded with general cargo and munitions , about 240 nautical miles (440 km ; 280 mi) north @-@ north @-@ west of the Azores . Both torpedoes struck the ship , which exploded violently . There were no survivors from the crew of 75 men . Despite being about 1 @,@ 200 metres (0 @.@ 75 mi) distant , debris from the explosion struck the surfaced U @-@ boat , slightly injuring a crewman ; the next day an unfuzed 10 cm (3 @.@ 9 in) shell was found lodged in the conning tower .

On the evening of 30 November , the 4 @,@ 868 @-@ ton British merchant ship Ashby , a straggler from Convoy OS @-@ 12 , was hit by one of two torpedoes fired by U @-@ 43 , 170 nautical miles (310 km ; 200 mi) south @-@ south @-@ east of Flores in the Azores . The ship sank within four minutes with the loss of 17 of her crew of 50 . The survivors were picked up by the Portuguese destroyer Lima . After the attack the U @-@ boat was depth charged for several hours by convoy escorts , but managed to escape unharmed .

At about 17 : 00 on 1 December 1941 , U @-@ 43 and U @-@ 575 spotted the 7 @,@ 542 ton unescorted and unarmed tanker Astral . Both U @-@ boats gave chase , but after four hours U @-@ 575 , commanded by Kapitänleutnant Günther Heydemann , observed the large American flag painted on her side and abandoned the pursuit . U @-@ 43 continued to follow the neutral ship , firing a torpedo at her around midnight , which missed . The ship immediately began to sail a zigzag evasive course at full speed , but the U @-@ boat had no problem following her in the light of the full moon . The next morning U @-@ 43 hit the Astral with two torpedoes . The ship , loaded with 78 @,@ 200 barrels (12 @,@ 430 m3) of gasoline and kerosene , exploded and sank within minutes . There were no survivors from her crew of 37 . The Astral was the third of four American merchant ships sunk by U @-@ boats prior to America 's entry into the war .

U @-@ 43 returned to Lorient on 16 December .

== 10th patrol ==

Lüth 's last patrol with the boat began on 30 December 1941 , when U @-@ 43 sailed from Lorient into the mid @-@ Atlantic , where she sank three more ships . The first was the 5 @,@ 246 ton Swedish cargo ship Yngaren , straggling from convoy HX @-@ 168 due to bad weather , about 600 nautical miles (1 @,@ 100 km ; 690 mi) west of Ireland . On the morning of 12 January 1942 the ship was hit by two torpedoes and sank within a minute . Six British passengers and 32 crewmen were lost , the only two survivors were spotted on a raft on 10 February by a British patrol aircraft , which directed a fishing trawler to their position the next day .

Early in the morning of 14 January , U @-@ 43 attacked Convoy ON @-@ 55 south of Iceland and sank the 6 @,@ 641 ton British merchant ship Empire Surf . Only six of the crew of 53 survived to be picked up by HMS Alisma . About two hours later U @-@ 43 attacked the convoy again and sank the 5 @,@ 707 ton Panama @-@ registered American merchant ship Chepo . There were 21 survivors from her 38 crew .

The U @-@ boat then sailed to Kiel , arriving on 22 January . Command of the U @-@ boat passed to her 1.WO , Oberleutnant zur See Hans @-@ Joachim Schwantke , as Lüth left to commission U @-@ 181 .

== = 11th patrol == =

U @-@ 43 's first patrol under her new commander began on 4 July 1942 , as she sailed from Kiel via the ' gap ' between Iceland and the Faroe Islands into the mid @-@ Atlantic . However , she achieved no success , and arrived back at Lorient on 15 August after 43 days at sea .

== = 12th patrol == =

U @-@ 43 's next patrol was more successful , departing from Lorient on 23 September 1942 , sailing across the Atlantic and into the Gulf of Saint Lawrence .

On the morning of 18 November , U @-@ 43 fired four torpedoes at Convoy SC @-@ 109 and hit the 9 @,@ 131 ton American tanker Brilliant , loaded with 90 @,@ 704 barrels (14 @,@ 420 @.@ 8 m3) of fuel oil . A 40 @-@ foot (12 m) diameter hole was made in her side , and the cargo caught fire . While some of the crew abandoned ship , those remaining aboard managed to put the fires out ; making only three knots , the ship limped the 300 nautical miles (560 km ; 350 mi) to Bonavista Bay , Newfoundland , arriving on 24 November . Brilliant eventually left Newfoundland on 18 January 1943 under tow , but after two days the ship broke in half . The fore section sank immediately , while the aft section drifted for some days before it was found and the 44 crew rescued . The aft section was taken in tow , but sank the next day . U @-@ 43 arrived back at Lorient on 9 December after a patrol of 78 days .

== = 13th patrol == =

U @-@ 43 's first patrol of 1943 began on 9 January , patrolling the waters between the Azores and the West African coast . On 3 March she spotted a vessel , identified it as a British Blue Star Line merchant ship , and hit it with three torpedoes , it sank it within two minutes . Only later did U @-@ 43 learn that it was the 5 @,@ 154 ton German blockade runner Doggerbank , formerly the British Speybank that had been captured by the auxiliary cruiser Atlantis in January 1941 . The ship was carrying 7 @,@ 000 tons of rubber , fats , fish oil , and other raw materials from Yokohama to France ; she was several days ahead of her scheduled arrival date .

U @-@ 43 returned to Lorient on 31 March after 82 days at sea .

== = 14th patrol == =

U @-@ 43 's final patrol began when she sailed from Lorient on 13 July 1943 and headed southwest into the Atlantic . On the evening of 19 July , in company with U @-@ 403 in the Bay of Biscay , the two U @-@ boats were attacked by a British Liberator Mk.V bomber of No. 86 Squadron RAF . U @-@ 403 crash @-@ dived immediately , covered by the AA fire of U @-@ 43 , which then dived . The Liberator was slightly damaged and a crewman wounded , but dropped two homing torpedoes . Neither U @-@ boat was damaged and both escaped .

== = = Sinking == = =

On 30 July 1943 , U @-@ 43 was attacked again , this time by a Grumman TBF Avenger torpedo

bomber from the American escort carrier USS Santee . The aircraft dropped a Mark 24 FIDO Torpedo and sank the U @-@ boat southwest of the Azores , in position 34 ° 57 ' N 35 ° 11 ' W. All 55 crew members went down with the submarine .

= = = Wolfpacks = = =

U @-@ 43 took part in 10 wolfpacks , namely .

Rösing (12 ? 15 June 1940)

West (17 May ? 16 June 1941)

Kurfürst (16 ? 20 June 1941)

Grönland (10 ? 27 August 1941)

Markgraf (27 August ? 12 September 1941)

Steuben (14 November ? 2 December 1941)

Wolf (13 ? 30 July 1942)

Pirat (31 July ? 3 August 1942)

Rochen (27 January ? 28 February 1943)

Tümmeler (1 ? 19 March 1943)

= = Summary of raiding history = =

During her service in the Kriegsmarine , U @-@ 43 sank 21 merchant ships for a total of 117 @,@ 036 GRT , damaged one vessel of 10 @,@ 350 GRT , and another of 9 @,@ 131 GRT - enough for it to be declared a total loss .