

= German submarine U 38 ( 1938 ) =

German submarine U 38 was a Type IXA U 38 boat of Nazi Germany 's Kriegsmarine that operated during World War II .

Her keel was laid down on 15 April 1937 , by DeSchiMAG AG Weser of Bremen as yard number 943 . She was launched on 9 August 1938 and commissioned on 24 October with Kapitänleutnant Heinrich Liebe in command .

U 38 conducted eleven patrols , as part of several flotillas . During her career , she sank over 30 enemy vessels and damaged a further one . U 38 ranks as one of the most successful U 38 boats in World War II . She was scuttled west of Wesermünde ( modern Bremerhaven ) on 5 May 1945 . Throughout the war , the U 38 Boat suffered no losses among her crew .

= = Design = =

As one of the eight original German Type IX submarines , later designated IXA , U 38 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 38 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 ; 12,000 mi ) at 10 knots ( 19 km / h ; 12 mph ) . U 38 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 = = =

U 38 left the port of Wilhelmshaven on 19 August 1939 . The boat operated off the coast of Lisbon , returning to port on 18 September . During this four week period , she sank two ships .

On 5 September 1939 U 38 stopped the French ship Pluaise , examined her papers and released her . Pluaise broadcast the event , warning others of the U 38 boat . For this , Liebe was reprimanded .

The British steam freighter SS Manaar was sunk on 6 September 1939 . U 38 opened fire on the freighter and she returned fire . This was the first time that a merchantman fired at a U 38 boat . U 38 sank Manaar with torpedoes . As Manaar had fired at him , Liebe did not assist the survivors . Radio Officer James Turner remained at his post until the last moment . As he was leaving he found two Lascars , one badly injured . Turner rescued both men while under continuous fire from U 38 , for this he was awarded the Empire Gallantry Medal .

On 11 September 1939 , while flying the Irish tricolour , Inverliffey was shelled and sunk . In spite of

Captain William Trowsdale 's protestation that they were Irish , Liebe said that they " were sorry " but they would sink Inverliffey as she was carrying contraband petrol to England . The crew took to the lifeboats . Inverliffey burned fiercely , endangering the lifeboats . At risk to herself , the German submarine approached , threw lines to the lifeboats and towed them to safety . As Captain Trowsdale 's lifeboat was damaged , the occupants were allowed to board the U @-@ boat . The captain did not have a lifebelt , so he was given one . U @-@ 38 stopped the American tanker R.G. Stewart and put Inverliffey 's crew on board . Just two days earlier , Inver tankers transferred its ships from the Irish to the British registry .

= = = 2nd Patrol = = =

After nearly two months in port , U @-@ 38 left Wilhelmshaven , again with Heinrich Liebe in command , on 12 November 1939 . This second patrol was to see the boat operate in the waters northwest of Norway .

On 17 November 1939 , Naval High Command ( SKL ) issued orders for U @-@ 38 and U @-@ 36 to scout the location for Basis Nord , a secret German naval base to be used for raids on allied shipping which was located off the Kola Peninsula and provided by the Soviet Union . The mission required coded messages to be flashed to Soviet naval vessels patrolling the area preceding a Soviet escort to the prospective base location .

U @-@ 36 never left the Norwegian Sea and was sunk by the British submarine HMS Salmon . U @-@ 38 rounded the North Cape uneventfully and arrived in Teriberka Bay by mid @-@ afternoon on 26 November . Running silently into the bay , U @-@ 38 had to avoid being spotted by merchant vessels in order to help maintain the Soviet Union 's attempted appearance of neutrality at that time . U @-@ 38 's captain commented that , while in the area of the North Cape and the Kola Peninsula , he had observed thirty to forty targets and regrettably had been " harmless to [ all ] of them . "

After completing the clandestine reconnaissance mission , U @-@ 38 returned to raiding duties and sank three ships , two British and one Greek . The British steam freighter SS Thomas Walton was sunk on 7 December . The Greek steam freighter SS Garoufalia was destroyed on 11 December , as was the British steam freighter Deptford on 13 December . After an operational period of four and a half weeks , U @-@ 38 returned to Wilhelmshaven on 16 December .

= = = 3rd Patrol = = =

Once again , U @-@ 38 would spend considerable time in port , prior to sailing on 26 February 1940 , for operations in the Western Approaches .

U @-@ 38 sank six ships . First sent to the bottom was the neutral Irish steam trawler ST Leukos on 9 March , with a single shell at point @-@ blank range off Tory Island , all 11 crew were lost . The Leukos was fishing in the company of British trawlers ; it has been speculated that she positioned herself between the surfacing U @-@ boat and the fleeing British in the belief that her neutral markings would protect her . This event was followed by the sinking of the Danish motor freighters SS Argentina on 17 March and SS Algier and SS Christiansborg on 21 March . The Norwegian motor freighter MV Cometa was sunk on 26 March . The sixth and final ship sunk during this third patrol was the Finnish steam freighter SS Signe on 2 April . After nearly six weeks on the high seas , U @-@ 38 returned to Wilhelmshaven on 5 April 1940 .

= = = 4th Patrol = = =

U @-@ 38 left her home port of Wilhelmshaven with Heinrich Liebe in command on 8 April 1940 . She would sweep the waters off Norway , supporting the occupation of that country by Nazi troops . During this patrol , U @-@ 38 reported problems with her torpedoes , after HMS Effingham was fired upon with no result . U @-@ 38 would return to port on 27 April .

There were two naval battles of Narvik on 10 and 13 April 1940 . U @-@ 38 and U @-@ 65 were positioned at the entrance to the fjord . When the Royal Navy arrived , U @-@ 38 fired at HMS

Valiant and at HMS Southampton missing both . In the second battle , U @-@ 38 fired at Effingham , but the torpedoes malfunctioned , ( exploding prematurely ) .

== = 5th Patrol == =

For her fifth patrol , U @-@ 38 would again depart from Wilhelmshaven with Heinrich Liebe in command on 6 June 1940 . She was to patrol the waters off southern Ireland . During this operation , Liebe would hit six ships , two of which were sailing in convoy at the time . On 14 June , U @-@ 38 sank the Greek steam freighter SS Mount Myrto . The next day , U @-@ 38 sank two ships , both sailing as part of Convoy HX @-@ 47 , sailing from Halifax to England . First sunk was the Canadian steam freighter SS Erik Boye , followed by the Norwegian motor tanker MV Italia . Five days later , on 20 June , the Swedish steam freighter SS Tilia Gorthon was torpedoed and sunk . The Belgian steam freighter SS Luxembourg was destroyed on 21 June , followed by the Greek steam freighter SS Neion the following day . After three weeks at sea , U @-@ 38 returned to Wilhelmshaven on 2 July .

During this patrol , U @-@ 38 was able to land Walter Simon , a Nazi agent , at Dingle Bay in Ireland on 12 June . Not realising that the passenger services of the Tralee and Dingle Light Railway had been closed fourteen months earlier , he asked when the next train to Dublin was . He was arrested and interned in the Curragh Camp for the duration of the war .

== = 6th Patrol == =

U @-@ 38 would depart Wilhelmshaven for the last time on 1 August 1940 , again with Heinrich Liebe in command . On this month @-@ long patrol off the western coast of Ireland , U @-@ 38 would hit and sink three ships , all of which were in convoy at the time of attack . On 7 August the Egyptian liner SS Mohamed Ali El @-@ Kebir was sunk while traveling with HX @-@ 61 , from Halifax to Gibraltar , 320 died . The British steam freighter SS Llanfair was hit and sunk , travelling as part of SL @-@ 41 from Sierra Leone to England . The third and final ship hit on the sixth patrol of U @-@ 38 was the British steam freighter SS Har Zion , while travelling with the Convoy OB @-@ 225 , from Liverpool to the United States . After four weeks at sea Liebe returned U @-@ 38 to her new home port of Lorient in France on 3 September 1940 .

== = 7th Patrol == =

For her first patrol from Lorient and her seventh overall , U @-@ 38 would again be under the command of Heinrich Liebe . She departed on 25 September , for the Northwest Approaches . She would attack five ships on this patrol , sinking four of them . On 1 October , the British motor freighter MV Highland Patriot was torpedoed . After two weeks of no victories , U @-@ 38 was successful against the Greek steam freighter SS Aenos on 17 October , sailing as part of Convoy SC 7 , from Sydney , Nova Scotia to England . The following day , the British steam freighter SS Carsbreck was damaged , but not sunk , while traveling with the SC @-@ 7 convoy from Sydney to Grimsby , England . On 19 October , two ships were hit , both sailing as part of the HX 79 convoy : the Dutch SS Bilderdijk and the British steam freighter SS Matheran . Following these victories , U @-@ 38 returned to Lorient on 24 October 1940 .

== = 8th Patrol == =

U @-@ 38 would depart Lorient with Liebe in command once again on 18 December 1940 . The eighth war patrol of her career would involve operations again in the Northwest Approaches . During this patrol , the submarine would hit and sink two ships . On 27 December , U @-@ 38 destroyed the British ship SS Waioira , and on 31 December , she sank the Swedish motor freighter SS Valparaiso , sailing as part of the HX @-@ 97 convoy from Halifax to Glasgow . U @-@ 38 returned to port on 22 January 1941 .

### == 9th Patrol ==

U @-@ 38 would spend two and a half months in port , before leaving for operations off the west coast of Africa on 9 April 1941 . This would prove to be her most successful patrol , with the sinking of eight ships . On 4 May , the Swedish steam freighter SS Japan was torpedoed while traveling with Convoy OB @-@ 310 from England to the United States . The following day , the British motor freighter MV Queen Maud was hit and sunk . On 23 May , the Dutch motor freighter SS Berhala was sunk while traveling with the Convoy OB 318 , from England to America . The British steam freighter SS Vulcain was torpedoed and sunk on 24 May . Six days later , on 29 May , the British steam freighter SS Tabaristan was another victim . The following day the destruction continued , the British steam freighter SS Empire Protector was sent to the bottom , as was the Norwegian steam freighter SS Rinda on the 31st . The eighth and final ship sunk during U @-@ 38 's eighth patrol was the British cargo steamship SS Kingston Hill on 8 June . The boat then returned to Lorient on 29 June 1941 , after spending eleven and a half weeks at sea .

### == 10th Patrol ==

For the first time in her career , U @-@ 38 would head to sea with a new commander , Korvettenkapitän Heinrich Schuch . She left on 6 August , for a five @-@ week patrol in the North Atlantic . During this time one ship was hit , the Panamanian steam freighter SS Longtanker on 18 August . U @-@ 38 returned to Lorient on 14 September 1941 .

### == 11th and 12th Patrols ==

U @-@ 38 would depart from Lorient for the last time on 15 October , again with Heinrich Schuch in command . Her eleventh patrol was to take place in the North Atlantic . However , during a period of five weeks , not a single ship was hit . U @-@ 38 traveled to the U @-@ boat base in Bergen , Norway on 21 November . She would later depart Bergen on the 23rd and arrive in Stettin on 29 November .

### == Life after active duty ==

From December 1941 until November 1943 , U @-@ 38 was used as a training boat in the 24th and 21st U @-@ boat Flotillas . She was then used as a testing boat , until she was scuttled by her crew on 5 May 1945 .

### == Wolfpacks ==

U @-@ 38 took part in five wolfpacks , namely .  
Prien ( 12 ? 17 June 1940 )  
Grönland ( 10 ? 27 August 1941 )  
Markgraf ( 27 August ? 3 September 1941 )  
Schlagetot ( 20 October ? 1 November 1941 )  
Raubritter ( 1 ? 11 November 1941 )

### == Summary of raiding history ==

During her service in the Kriegsmarine , U @-@ 38 sank 35 commercial ships for 188 @,@ 967 gross register tons ( GRT ) , and damaged another of 3 @,@ 670 GRT .