

= SM U 23 (Austria Hungary) =

SM U 23 or U XXIII was a U 20 class submarine or U boat built for and operated by the Austro Hungarian Navy (German : Kaiserliche und Königliche Kriegsmarine or K.u.K. Kriegsmarine) during the First World War . The design for U 23 was based on submarines of the Royal Danish Navy 's Havmanden class (three of which had been built in Austria Hungary) , and was largely obsolete by the beginning of the war .

U 23 was just over 127 feet (39 m) long and was armed with two bow torpedo tubes , a deck gun , and a machine gun . In February 1918 , U 23 was sunk with all hands by the Italian torpedo boat [[Italian torpedo boat Airone (1907) | Airone]] while attempting an attack on the Italian transport Memfi . U 23 had no wartime successes .

= = Design and construction = =

When it became apparent to the Austro Hungarian Navy that the First World War would not be a short one , they moved to bolster their U boat fleet by seizing the plans for the Danish Havmanden class submarines , three of which had been built at Whitehead & Co. in Fiume . Although the Austro Hungarian Navy was not happy with the design , which was largely obsolete , it was the only design for which plans were available and which could be begun immediately in domestic shipyards . The Austro Hungarian Navy unenthusiastically placed orders for U 23 and her three sister boats on 27 March 1915 .

U 23 was one of two boats of the class to be built at the Hungarian UBAG yard in Fiume . Due to demands by the Hungarian government , subcontracts for the class were divided between Hungarian and Austrian firms , and this politically expedient solution worsened technical problems with the design , resulting in numerous modifications and delays for the class in general .

U 23 was an ocean going submarine that displaced 173 tonnes (191 short tons) surfaced and 210 tonnes (231 short tons) submerged and was designed for a complement of 18 . She was 127 feet 2 inches (38 @ 76 m) long with a beam of 13 feet (4 @ 0 m) and a draft of 9 feet (2 @ 7 m) . For propulsion , she featured a single shaft , a single 450 bhp (340 kW) diesel engine for surface running , and a single 160 shp (120 kW) electric motor for submerged travel . She was capable of 12 knots (22 km / h) while surfaced and 9 knots (17 km / h) while submerged . Although there is no specific notation of a range for U 23 , the Havmanden class , upon which the U 20 class was based , had a range of 1 @ 400 nautical miles (2 @ 600 km) at 10 knots (19 km / h) , surfaced , and 23 nautical miles (43 km) at 8 knots (15 km / h) submerged .

U 23 was armed with two 45 cm (17 @ 7 in) torpedo tubes located in the front and carried a complement of two torpedoes . She was also equipped with a 66 mm / 26 (2 @ 6 in) deck gun and an 8 mm (0 @ 31 in) machine gun .

= = Service career = =

U 23 was launched on 5 January 1917 , but It is not known with certainty when U 23 was commissioned . Author Paul Halpern reports that U 23 and her three sisters all entered service between August and November 1917 . Although there are no specific reports of problems with U 23 , the U 20 class as a whole suffered from unreliable engines which compounded the poor handling characteristics of the boats . On 21 February 1918 , Linienschiffsleutnant Klemens Ritter von Bézard , U 23 's only commanding officer , was guiding the boat in an attack on the Italian transport Memfi in the Straits of Otranto . U 23 came under attack by the Italian torpedo boat Airone which first tried to ram the U boat , and then deployed an explosive paravane . When the paravane contacted the submerged U 23 , it blew debris into the air , sinking the submarine with all hands . Like all of her sister boats , U 23 had no wartime successes .