

= SM U 31 (Austria Hungary) =

SM U 31 or U XXXI was a U 27 class U boat or submarine for the Austro Hungarian Navy . U 31 , built by the Hungarian firm of Ganz Danubius at Fiume , was launched in March 1917 and commissioned in April .

U 31 had a single hull and was just over 121 feet (37 m) in length . She displaced nearly 265 metric tons (261 long tons) when surfaced and over 300 metric tons (295 long tons) when submerged . Her two diesel engines moved her at up to 9 knots (17 km / h ; 10 mph) on the surface , while her twin electric motors propelled her at up to 7 @ 5 knots (13 @ 9 km / h ; 8 @ 6 mph) while underwater . She was armed with two bow torpedo tubes and could carry a load of up to four torpedoes . She was also equipped with a 75 mm (3 @ 0 in) deck gun and a machine gun .

In October 1917 , U 31 sank while in port at Porto Bergudi and was out of service through April 1918 while she was raised and repaired . During her service career , U 31 sank two ships and damaged one warship , sending a combined tonnage of 4 @, @ 088 GRT to the bottom . U 31 was at Cattaro at war 's end and was awarded to France as war reparation in 1920 , towed to Bizerta and scrapped there .

= = Design and construction = =

Austria Hungary 's U boat fleet was largely obsolete at the outbreak of World War I. The Austro Hungarian Navy satisfied its most urgent needs by purchasing five Type UB I submarines that comprised the U 10 class from Germany , by raising and recommissioning the sunken French submarine Curie as U 14 , and by building four submarines of the U 20 class that were based on the 1911 Danish Havmanden class .

After these steps alleviated their most urgent needs , the Austro Hungarian Navy selected the German Type UB II design for its newest submarines in mid 1915 . The Germans were reluctant to allocate any of their wartime resources to Austro Hungarian construction , but were willing to sell plans for up to six of the UB II boats to be constructed under license in Austria Hungary . The Austro Hungarian Navy agreed to the proposal and purchased the plans from AG Weser of Bremen .

U 31 displaced 264 metric tons (260 long tons) surfaced and 301 metric tons (296 long tons) submerged . She had a single hull with saddle tanks , and was 121 feet 1 inch (36 @ 91 m) long with a beam of 14 feet 4 inches (4 @ 37 m) and a draft of 12 feet 2 inches (3 @ 71 m) . For propulsion , she had two shafts , twin diesel engines of 270 bhp (200 kW) for surface running , and twin electric motors of 280 shp (210 kW) for submerged travel . She was capable of 9 knots (16 @ 7 km / h) while surfaced and 7 @ 5 knots (13 @ 9 km / h) while submerged . Although there is no specific notation of a range for U 31 in Conway 's All the World 's Fighting Ships , 1906 ? 1921 , the German UB II boats , upon which the U 27 class was based , had a range of over 6 @, @ 000 nautical miles (11 @, @ 000 km) at 5 knots (9 @ 3 km / h) surfaced , and 45 nautical miles (83 km) at 4 knots (7 @ 4 km / h) submerged . U 27 @-@ class boats were designed for a crew of 23 ? 24 .

U 31 was armed with two 45 cm (17 @ 7 in) bow torpedo tubes and could carry a complement of four torpedoes . She was also equipped with a 75 mm / 26 (3 @ 0 in) deck gun and an 8 mm (0 @ 31 in) machine gun .

After intricate political negotiations to allocate production of the class between Austrian and Hungarian firms , U 27 was ordered from Ganz Danubius on 12 October 1915 . She was laid down on 4 July 1916 at Fiume and launched on 20 March 1917 .

= = Service career = =

After undergoing trials at Fiume during March , U 31 made a training voyage to Brioni in April . On 24 April 1917 , SM U 31 was commissioned into the Austro Hungarian Navy under

the command of Linien-Schiffsleutnant Franz Nejebsy . Nejebsy , a 32 @-@ year @-@ old native of Teplitz @-@ Schönaú , Bohemia (present @-@ day Czech Republic) , had previously served two stints as commander of U @-@ 1 . U @-@ 31 departed from Pola on 29 May to patrol along the Adriatic coast of Italy and returned on 5 June . U @-@ 31 departed for a patrol in the Mediterranean on 19 June . After a problem with a pump required a stop at Brioni , the U @-@ boat continued on . Nejebsy launched a torpedo attack on an armed yacht west of Strovathi on 25 June , but the torpedoes missed their mark . U @-@ 31 ended her patrol at Cattaro after ventilation problems kept the temperature in the engine room from falling below 45 ° C (113 ° F) .

After a month of repairs at Cattaro , U @-@ 31 headed out on another patrol on 6 August . On each of the next two days the U @-@ boat had to crash dive to avoid bombing attacks by French airplanes , the second day 's attack damaging the boat slightly . On 10 August , Nejebsy and U @-@ 31 scored their first kill with the sinking of an Italian cargo ship . The 4 @,@ 021 @-@ ton *Lealta* was carrying ammunition from Syracuse to Malta when U @-@ 31 intercepted her in the Ionian Sea east of Malta . An escorting destroyer dropped a pattern of ten depth charges over U @-@ 31 . The following day , Nejebsy was maneuvering U @-@ 31 into position to attack a convoy when the U @-@ boat was rammed from behind by a destroyer . U @-@ 31 's periscope was hit and twisted by the impact , forcing Nejebsy to end his attack and U @-@ 31 's patrol . On the way back to Cattaro , U @-@ 31 was attacked by an aircraft in the Straits of Otranto , but reached the safety of the port on 15 August .

U @-@ 31 was assigned to patrol the Austro @-@ Hungarian and Albanian coasts over the next six weeks . She headed to Fiume via Spalato on 16 October , reaching there three days later . On 26 October U @-@ 31 sank from an unknown cause in the harbor at Porto Bergudi . When raised from her resting depth of 8 metres (26 ft) the next day , one crewman was found alive inside the boat . U @-@ 31 was taken first to the Danubius shipyard at nearby Fiume , and , later , on to Pola for repairs and trials .

In January , while U @-@ 31 's repairs were still ongoing , Nejebsy was reassigned , leaving the U @-@ boat without a commander for the next three months . On 11 March Linien-Schiffsleutnant Hermann Rigele was transferred from the helm of U @-@ 20 to assume command of U @-@ 31 . Rigele , who had been born in Sarajevo , was 26 years old and had also been in command of U @-@ 17 and , before that , U @-@ 10 at age 25 . Rigele and U @-@ 31 departed Pola on 30 April for a three @-@ day cruise to Cattaro via Sebenico . On 20 May , the boat left Cattaro for a Mediterranean patrol , but had to turn back with leaks after a day .

In June , the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy planned an assault on the Otranto Barrage , similar to a May 1917 action that evolved into the Battle of Otranto Straits . U @-@ 31 was deployed from Cattaro on 9 June in advance of the attack . One of the seven separate groups participating in the attack ? dreadnoughts *Tegetthoff* and *Szent István* ? came under attack from Italian MAS torpedo boats in the early morning hours of 10 June . *Szent István* was hit and sank just after 06 : 00 , and the entire operation was called off . U @-@ 31 returned to Cattaro on 12 June .

On 16 June , Rigele and U @-@ 31 again set out for a Mediterranean patrol , but had to immediately return with clutch problems . Two days later , the U @-@ boat set out again for the Mediterranean . The next day , 19 June , Rigele had to take the boat to a depth of 40 metres (130 ft) to avoid a depth charge attack . On 7 July , Rigele stopped the Italian sailing vessel *Giuseppino Padre* and , using explosive charges , sank the 67 @-@ ton ship . U @-@ 31 ended her patrol at Cattaro on 10 July . Over the next two months , the submarine operated in the Adriatic out of Cattaro and Pola , patrolling off Durazzo and the Albanian coast .

After the Armistice with Bulgaria on 29 September ended Bulgaria 's participation in the war , Durazzo gained importance to the remaining Central Powers as the main port for supplying their forces fighting in the Balkans . Anticipating this , the Allies put together a force to bombard Durazzo . While the second echelon of the attacking force got into position to shell the town , U @-@ 31 and sister boat U @-@ 29 , both patrolling off Durazzo , maneuvered to attack . Although U @-@ 29 was blocked by screening ships and experienced a heavy depth charge attack , U @-@ 31 was able to get in position to launch torpedoes at the British cruiser *Weymouth* . One of them hit its mark and blew the stern off of *Weymouth* , killing four sailors in the process . The other British cruisers

involved in the attack took the damaged Weymouth under tow and departed . United States Navy submarine chasers were involved in the depth charge attacks on U @-@ 29 and U @-@ 31 and erroneously claimed that they had sunk both of the submarines . U @-@ 31 was able to make her way back to Cattaro on 6 October .

Over the next three weeks , U @-@ 31 patrolled between Cattaro and Antivari , Montenegro . After her arrival back at Cattaro on 26 October , she remained there until she was awarded to France as a war reparation in 1920 . U @-@ 31 was towed , along with sister boats U @-@ 29 and U @-@ 41 , from Cattaro for scrapping at Bizerta . In total , U @-@ 31 sank two ships with a combined tonnage of 4 @,@ 088 , and damaged one warship .

= = Ships sunk or damaged = =

* damaged but not sunk