

The German Type VIIC/41 submarine U-1023 (Exhibited in Bristol in June 1945)



Notes on the German submarine U-1023

(Exhibited in Bristol 12 to 14 June 1945)

Specification

The German submarine U-1023 was one of the 91 Type VIIC/41 boats built in World War Two. They required a crew of between 44 and 52 depending on their mission, and were a slightly modified version of the successful Type VIIC, having basically the same engine layout, power, and armament as its predecessor. However, the biggest difference was that the Type VIIC/41 had a stronger pressure hull allowing it to dive to a greater depth when under attack, its operational depth being approximately 120 metres, while its test depth was 230 metres, with a calculated crush depth of 250 to 295 metres. Type VIIC/41 boats, which had a range of 8500 miles at speed of 10 knots on the surface and 80 miles at 4 knots submerged, also had lighter machinery to compensate for the added steel in the hull making them actually slightly lighter than the earlier Type VIIC.

Type VIIC/41 boats, which were 9.60 metres high and had a draft of 4.74 meters, displaced 769 tons on the surface and 871 tons submerged. Their overall length was 67.10 metres and that of the pressure hull 50.50 metres, while overall their beam measured 6.20 metres and the pressure hull 4.70 metres. The submarines were powered by two Germaniawerft F46 four-stroke, six-cylinder supercharged diesel engines producing a maximum of 3200 metric horsepower for use while surfaced, and two Brown, Boveri & Cie GG UB 720/8 double-acting electric motors producing a total of 750 metric horsepower for use while submerged. These drove two shafts and two 1.23 metre propellers, which gave them a top speed of 17.7 knots on the surface and 7.6 knots submerged. The U-1023 was also one of the boats that used the Schnorchel underwater breathing apparatus.

With regard to armament, while on mine-laying missions Type VIIC/41 boats, including the U-1023, could carry up to 26 Type TMA or 39 Type TMB mines. Alternatively, while on commerce raiding missions they were loaded with 14 of the G7e torpedoes, which could be fired from either of the four bow tubes, or the one in the stern. In addition, for air defence whilst on the surface the U-1023 was fitted with a single 3.7 cm Flakzwillig M42U gun on the LM 43U mount and two twin 2 centimetre C/30 anti-aircraft guns, all of which were installed behind the conning tower.

Construction, Commissioning, and Operational Career

The U-1023 was launched on 3 May 1944 at the Blohm & Voss shipyard in Hamburg, and from her commissioning by Oberleutnant Wolfgang Strenger on 15 June 1944 until 28 February she was attached to the 31.U-Flottille,

Ausbildungsboot (the 31st U-boat Training and Replacement Flotilla) at Hamburg. Consequently no war patrols were undertaken during that period. Strenger's last task with the U-1023 was to transfer her from Germany to Bergen in Norway via the Horten Naval Base, prior to her becoming operational. The first leg began at Kiel on 20 February 1945 and ended at Horten on 23 February, and it was there on 1 March that the U-1023 was officially assigned to the 11.U-Flottille, Frontboot (11th U-Boat Operational Flotilla) then based at Bergen. As a result she left Horten on 2 March, before finally arriving at Bergen on the 9th. The following day Strenger relinquished command of the U-1023, which was then transferred to Kapitänleutnant Heinrich-Andreas Schroeteler, a position he was to hold until 10 May 1945.

On 25 March 1945 the U-1023 departed from Bergen on her one and only war patrol, and on 23 April she came upon convoy TBC-135 which was sailing off St Ives in the Bristol Channel. Then, at 15.35 hours, the U-boat fired a spread of two torpedoes at one of the vessels, which turned out to be the 7345 ton merchant ship SS Riverton, owned by R. Chapman & Son of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and commanded by Thomas William Morris, which was then at 50° 25'N, 5° 25'W en-route from Antwerp to Mumbles in ballast. The attack resulted in the crew hearing a single explosion, followed by sinking noises, and although the attack caused serious damage when the stern broke off and sank, the fore part of the SS Riverton was successfully beached in St Ives Bay. In August 1945 that part was towed to Swansea where the ship was eventually repaired and returned to service. Of the crew of 48 three men lost their lives, all Royal Navy DEMS gunners on board to protect the ship. They were Petty Officer D/JX 167744, Frank William Mitchell (26); and Able Seamen P/JX 261072, Clifford Akroyd (28) and D/JX 333986, William John Edwards (22).

The other encounter with an allied vessel took place on 7 May 1945 off Lyme Bay at 50° 22'N, 3° 09'W where at 21.45 hrs the U-1023 fired a torpedo at the 335 ton Norwegian fleet minesweeper HNoMS NYMS-382 which was commanded by Lieutenant Trygve Sjøvold. Sadly she sank in just two minutes with the loss of the commander and 21 other crew members. However, ten injured survivors were picked up by HNoMS NYMS-379 and HNoMS NYMS-381 of the 3rd Minesweeping Unit stationed in Cherbourg, the unit to which the minesweeper also belonged.

Those who lost their lives were all members of the Royal Norwegian Navy, and the officers who died were Lieutenants (U/lt I) Trygve Sjøvold, Hans Fuhr, and Paul Jacobsen, along with Sub-Lieutenant (U/f) Abraham Marcussen; while the Non-Commissioned Officers were Petty Officers (U/l dm) Mauritz Magnus Jespersen and Torkel Lindevalsen, and Petty Officers (Kvm) Steffen Jespersen and John Nordahl. The five Stokers (U/mm) who died were John Helge Evensen, Ingvald Johan Madsen, Kaare Tveiten, Trygve Værøyvik, and Jørgen Einar Wang, while the nine Seamen (U/dm) were Mons Peder Henriksen, Snorre Jøsevold, Karlsten Kristian, Karsten Jørgen Nilsen, Martin Roald, Hans Olai Robberstad, Atle Kornelius Sandvær, Asbjørn Stein, and Olaf Lundolf Østensjø.

The NYMS-382 was the last Allied warship to be sunk by a German U-boat, and when hostilities ceased on 8 May the boats still at sea were ordered to head for one of a number of designated ports. The U-1023 was directed to the Portland Naval Base at Weymouth where, on the 10 May 1945, her surrender by Kapitänleutnant Heinrich-Andreas Schroeteler was formally accepted.

Exhibition tour of the British West Coast ports – May to August 1945

As the Tripartite Naval Commission had set the deadline of 15 February 1946 for the destruction of all the surviving U-boats, the Royal Navy formulated a plan known as 'Operation Deadlight' to dispose of the 116 boats for which it was responsible. This involved gathering them together in Northern Ireland, and at Loch Ryan near Stranraer on the southwest coast of Scotland, before towing them out into the deep waters around the coast of Northern Ireland and sinking them.

While this was being finalized, another plan was drawn up by the Admiralty which felt that there would be significant public interest in viewing the U-boats and in so doing would provide an excellent opportunity to raise money to help some of their victims. It was therefore agreed that two of the surrendered boats would be chosen to take part in a nationwide publicity tour so that people could go aboard and inspect them, and hopefully make donations to the King George's Fund for Sailors, a charity set up after the First World War to help those affected by the war at sea.

Due to their relatively good condition the two U-boats chosen to take part were the Type VIIC boat U-776, which had been given the Royal Navy pennant N65, and Type VIIC/41 boat U-1023, pennant N83, both of which were moored at the Portland Naval Base. From there they were to set out in opposite directions, with the U-1023 heading west to visit various selected port on the West Coast, prior to crossing to Loch Foyle to await its fate. At the same time the U-776 was to make its way up the East Coast before sailing for Loch Ryan near Stranraer on the east coast of Scotland to await destruction.

For the tour of the West Coast ports the U-1023, under the command of Lieutenant-Commander Hubert Anthony Lucius Marsham OBE, had a crew of forty, including five officers, all of whom were volunteers from the submarine service. The original German crew, one of the British officers later explained, were, with the exception of those in charge, oldish and willing co-operate in every way possible on the trial runs, although the officers were truculent and sullen after it had been made clear to them that no show of arrogance would be tolerated.

The exhibitions began on 15 May 1945 when the U-1024, which was then moored close the eastern breakwater in the Portland Naval Dock, was opened for public viewing. The next took place at the inner basin of the Millbay Docks at Plymouth between 26 May and 4 June, while on 6 and 7 June the U-boat was at Brixham, and on 9 and 10 June it was

moored at the King's Jetty in Falmouth Docks. Then, between 12 and 14 June, it was Bristol's turn to have a close-up view of the U-1023.

Although it was intended that the submarine was to have arrived in the city during the evening of 11 June, she suffered engine trouble shortly after passing Barry causing her to miss the tide and forcing her to anchor for the night in Walton Bay. As arrangements had been made for the Lord Mayor, William Frederick Cottrell, to travel on board for the last part of the journey accompanied by a small civic party, at 9 a.m. on 12 June the U-1023 had been moored off Avonmouth to allow them to board. Consequently, when the coastal service craft HMS New Roseland conveying the party down the river, rounded the South Pier at Avonmouth they found the submarine lying off some 400 yards from the port bow. However, the Lady Mayoress, her daughter, and one or two friends elected remain on the service craft which, under the command of Petty Officer P. Chapman, was to escort the U-boat up the River Avon on her hour long journey to the mooring prepared for her at the Broad Quay.

As the U-1023 was slowly towed out of the docks by a Port of Bristol Authority pilot boat ships sounded a salute on their hooters and dockers raised a cheer, while at Pill several hundred children lining the waterfront cheered and waved flags as she passed by. The Lord Mayor, who throughout the trip remained standing in the conning tower, acknowledged the greeting with wave of his handkerchief. Similar scenes were repeated all along the Avon, and at all the vantage points small crowds had gathered. Salutes were exchanged as the U-boat, flying the White Ensign, passed HMS Flying Fox on her final part the journey, while at Broad Quay more than 2000 workers utilised their lunch hour to get their first glimpse of the German submarine which was still displaying two emblems on her conning tower. On the front was a Wolf's Head, while the starboard side carried a red shield containing white crossed hammers, the badge of the German miners. She was finally opened to the public from 2 p.m. until 7 p.m. and from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on the following day. The exhibition completed, at 11 a.m. on the morning of 15 June the U-1023 left Bristol and, after crossing the Bristol Channel, reached Cardiff pier-head about 1.15 p.m. where curious crowds surged around the West Bute Dock Basin to see her arrive.

The submarine remained at Cardiff until 18 June, after which she was exhibited at Swansea from 20 to 22 June; Holyhead 22 to 25 June; and Liverpool's Canning Dock 27 to 30 June. Between 1 and 4 July the U-1023 was on view at Birkenhead's Morpeth Dock, followed by Manchester's Pomona Dock from 6 to 11 July. It was then the turn of Fleetwood where she was open to the public on the 14th while, after crossing to Ireland, people could visit her at the Pollock Dock in Belfast on 16, 17, 19 and 20 July. After leaving Northern Ireland she sailed over to Scotland and was moored in Rothesay Bay from 21 to 29 July. The U-1023 then undertook the final part of her tour, which involved exhibitions at the Lancefield Quay in Glasgow from 30 July until 4 August followed by Greenock from 6 to 9 July and finally at the Railway Pier at Oban between 11 and 13 August 1945. On the following day the U-1023 set out for the Royal Navy base at Lisahally, on the River Foyle just north-east of Londonderry, to await its fate. 'Operation Deadlight' eventually caught up with her on 9

January 1946 when, on her way to being scuttled, she foundered north-west of Malin Head at 55.49N, 08.24W while being towed by the tug 'Saucy'.

The Commanders of the U-1023

Oberleutnant Wolfgang Strenger

Oberleutnant Wolfgang Strenger, the first commander of the U-1023, had been born on 9 February 1919 at Steinau an der Oderin, Lower Silesia in Germany, now known as Scinawa, Dolnoslaskie, in Poland. He entered the Kriegsmarine on 9 October 1937 before being appointed a Seekadett on 28 June 1938. Strenger was subsequently promoted to Fähnrich zur See on 1 April 1939; Oberfähnrich zur See on 1 March 1940; Leutnant zur See on 1 May 1940; and finally Oberleutnant zur See on 1 April 1942. From 1937 until 1939 he was engaged in basic sea training and attending cadet courses, but was then sent on a temporary detachment to the Luftwaffe which lasted until August 1941.

That was followed a short posting to the Marine-Oberkommando Ost (Naval High Command in the East) before, on 10 October 1941 being receiving the Dienstauszeichnung IV. Klasse (Service Award IV Class). Also in October 1941 he was transferred to the Zerstörer und Torpedobootsstammabteilung (Destroyer and Torpedoboat Administration Department). Then, between March and September 1942, Strenger underwent submarine training, before acting as I. Wachoffizier (First Watch Officer) aboard the U-553 from September to December 1942. That was followed in January and February 1943 by a submarine commander's course, in preparation for his first command, the U-10.

That lasted from February 1943 until February 1944, but during that time he undertook no war patrols with her. Strenger was then appointed the commander of the minesweeper units of the 21.U-Flottille, Ausbildungsboot (21st U-boat Training and Replacement Flotilla) at Pillau, prior being transferred to the 8. Kriegsschiffbaulehrabteilung (8th Warship Building Department) at Hamburg in order to study the construction of the U-1023, which he commissioned and took command of on 15 June 1944. However, as the boat had been assigned to the 31.U-Flottille Ausbildungsboot, (31st U-boat Training and Replacement Flotilla) at Hamburg, again no war patrols were undertaken. Oberleutnant Wolfgang Strenger continued serving as the commander of U-1023 until 9 March 1945, while from then until the end of hostilities he was attached to the 5.U-Flottille, Ausbildungsboot (31st U-boat Training and Replacement Flotilla) at Kiel.

Kapitänleutnant Heinrich-Andreas Schroeteler

Kapitänleutnant Heinrich-Andreas Schroeteler, the second commander of the U-1023, had been born on 10 December 1915 at Essen-Katernberg in Germany, and had been appointed an Offiziersanwärter in the Kriegsmarine on 3 April 1936;

a Seekadett on 10 September 1936; and a Fähnrich zur See on 1 May 1937. He was then promoted to Oberfähnrich zur See on 1 July 1938; Leutnant zur See on 1 October 1938; Oberleutnant zur See on 1 October 1940; and finally Kapitänleutnant on 1 April 1943. In September 1939 he began two years of service on minesweepers, but in September 1941 was transferred to the U-boat force. After initial training he was posted to the U-96 under the command of Hans-Jürgen Hellriegel, aboard which he served as a Kommandantenschüler (Commander-in-Training) during a patrol which lasted from 23 April to 15 July 1942.

In October 1942 he commissioned the U-667, and commanded her until May 1944, during which time he undertook five patrols. The first, from Kiel to St Nazaire was carried out between 20 May and 26 July 1943 and that was followed by four from St Nazaire and back between 14 to 16 September 1943; 18 September to 11 October 1943; 18 November 1943 to 6 January 1944; and finally 8 March to 19 May 1944. Schroeteler then left to become a member of the U-Boat Operational Staff before, in January 1945, serving for a month as training officer in the 27.U-Flottille, Ausbildungsboot (27th U-Boat Training and Replacement Flotilla) at Gotenhafen, prior to taking command of the U-1023 on 10 March 1945.

By that time Schroeteler had been awarded a number of military decorations, beginning with the Iron Cross 2nd Class on 24 October 1940; followed by the Iron Cross First Class on 14 April 1941; the Minesweeper War Badge on 14 November 1940; the U-boat Badge (1939) on 6 July 1942; the U-boat Front Clasp on 7 October 1944; the German Cross in Gold on 10 November 1944; and finally the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross on 2 May 1945.

After surrendering he spent three years as a prisoner of war in England, before returning to Germany in 1948. There he worked as a freelance painter in Bochum, while at the age of 50 he took up the study of art history, archaeology and medieval history at the Ruhr University in Bochum. After graduating in 1969 Schroeteler worked as a research associate at the Institute of Archaeology, heading up the modelling workshop and acting as a curator of collections, while his success in reconstructing ancient works of art was honoured with the University Medal from the Ruhr University in 1981. Kapitänleutnant Heinrich-Andreas Schroeteler finally passed away on 19 January 2000 at Bochum aged 84.

Lieutenant-Commander Hubert Anthony Lucius Marsham

The last commander of the U-1023 was Lieutenant-Commander Hubert Anthony Lucius Marsham, who had been born at Windsor in Berkshire on 29 June 1905, and had joined the Royal Navy on 29 June 1919. He was commissioned Acting Sub-Lieutenant on 15 September 1925; before being promoted to Sub-Lieutenant on 30 April 1926; to Lieutenant on 30 June 1928; and finally to Lieutenant-Commander on 30 June 1938. He was an experienced submariner having commanded the submarine HMS Rover (N62) from 19 April 1939 until 19 March 1941; then HMS Alecrto (J10), a submarine depot ship from 4 March 1943 until 23 August 1943; and the submarine HMS Porpoise (N14) from 23 August

1943 until 21 November 1944. Marsham, who had been awarded an OBE on 30 June 1942, retired from the Royal Navy on 1 July 1948, and finally passed away at Fordingbridge in Hampshire on 30 September 1991 aged 86.



For anti-aircraft defence the U-1023 was fitted with a single 3.7 cm Flakzwillig M42U gun on a LM 43U mount, and two twin 2 centimetre C/30 FlaK guns with 280 round magazines on rotating carriages similar to this installation on the U-995.



Oberleutnant Wolfgang Strenger



**Kapitänleutnant Heinrich-
Andreas Schroeteler**

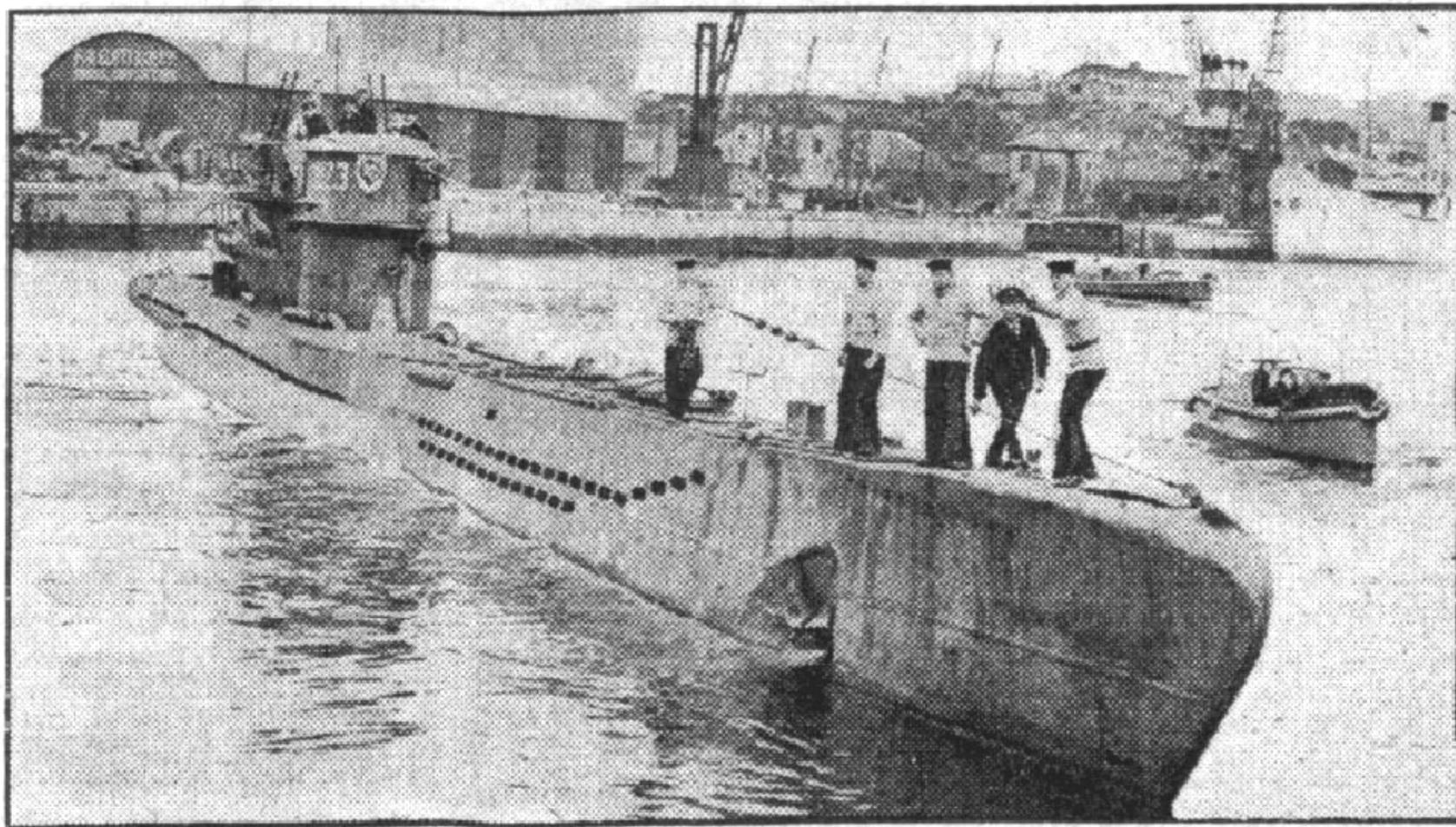


The U249 (left) and U-1023 (right) at Portland Naval Base on 26 May 1945

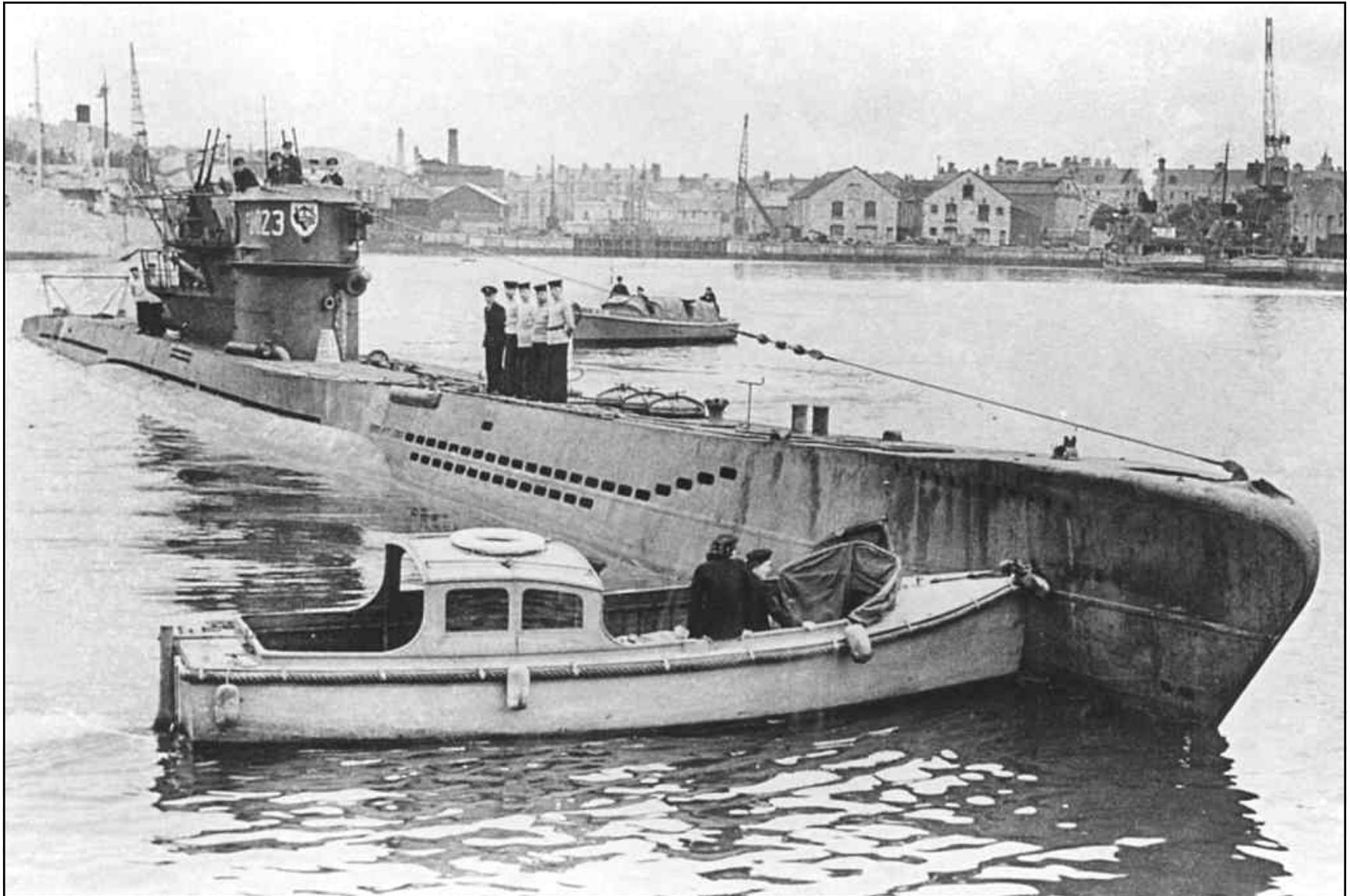


The U249 (left) and U-1023 (right) at Portland Naval Base on 26 May 1945

U-BOAT ARRIVES AT PLYMOUTH



U. 1023 arriving from Portland at Millbay Docks, Plymouth, where she is to be exhibited to the public in connection with the Royal and Merchant Navies Week.



The U-1023 arriving at Plymouth on 26 May 1945



The U-1023 arriving at Plymouth on 26 May 1945



The U-1023 at Brixham on 6 June 1945



The U-1023 at Falmouth on 9 June 1945



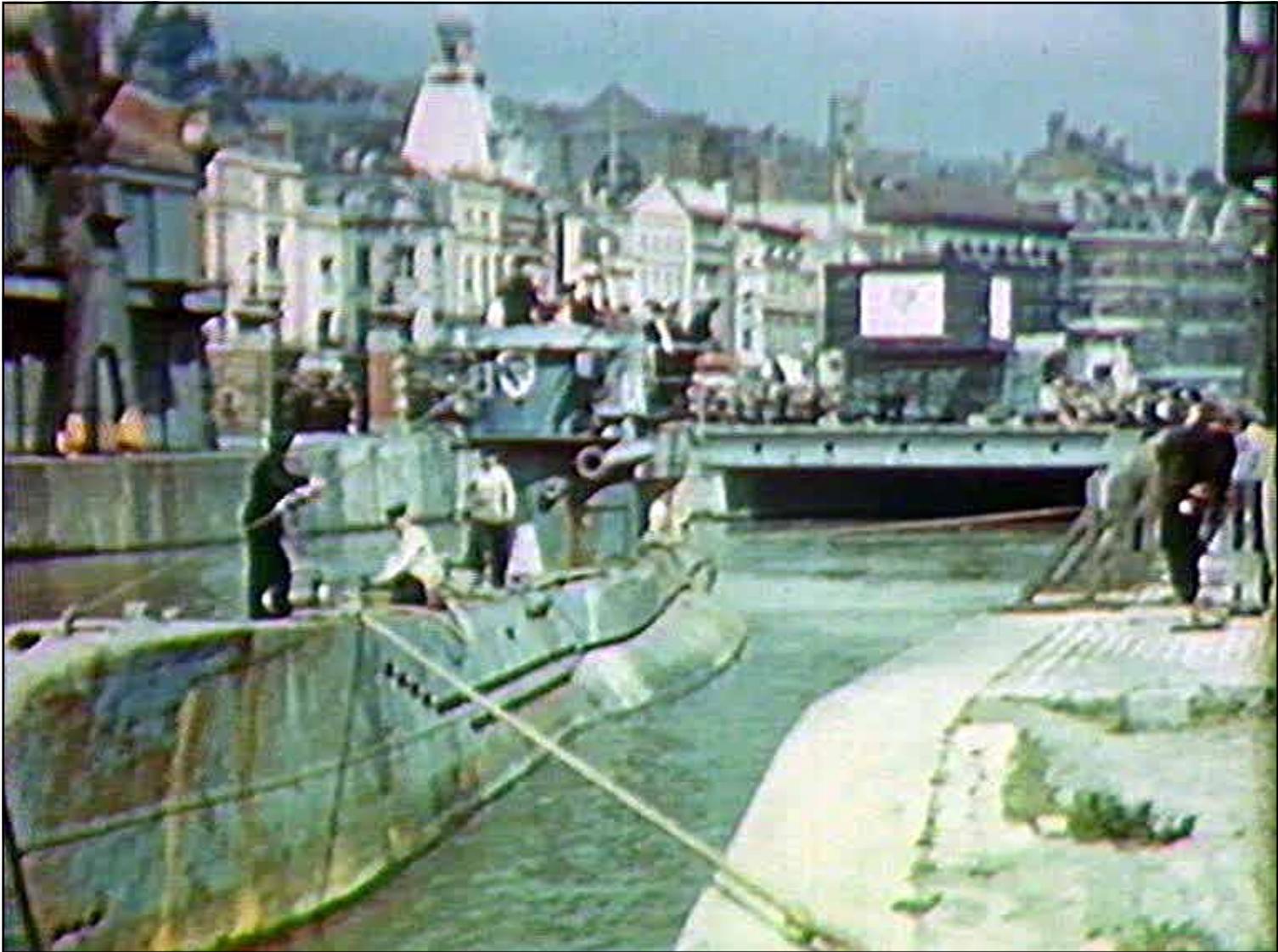
The U-1023 at Falmouth on 9 June 1945



A frame from a film of the U-1023 arriving at Bristol on 12 June 1944



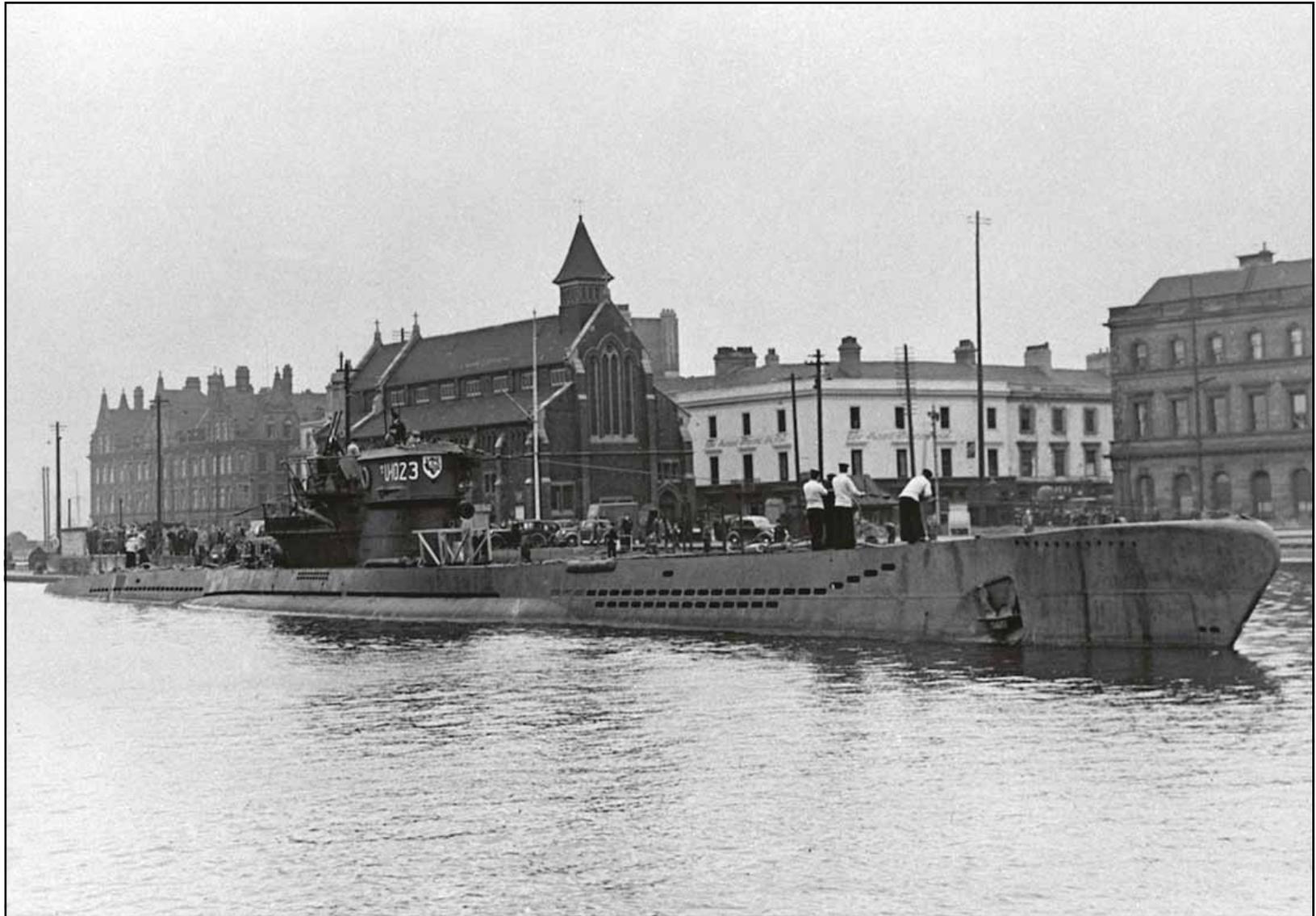
A frame from a film of the U-1023 arriving at Bristol on 12 June 1944



A frame from a film of the U-1023 arriving at Bristol on 12 June 1944



A frame from a film of the U-1023 arriving at Bristol on 12 June 1944



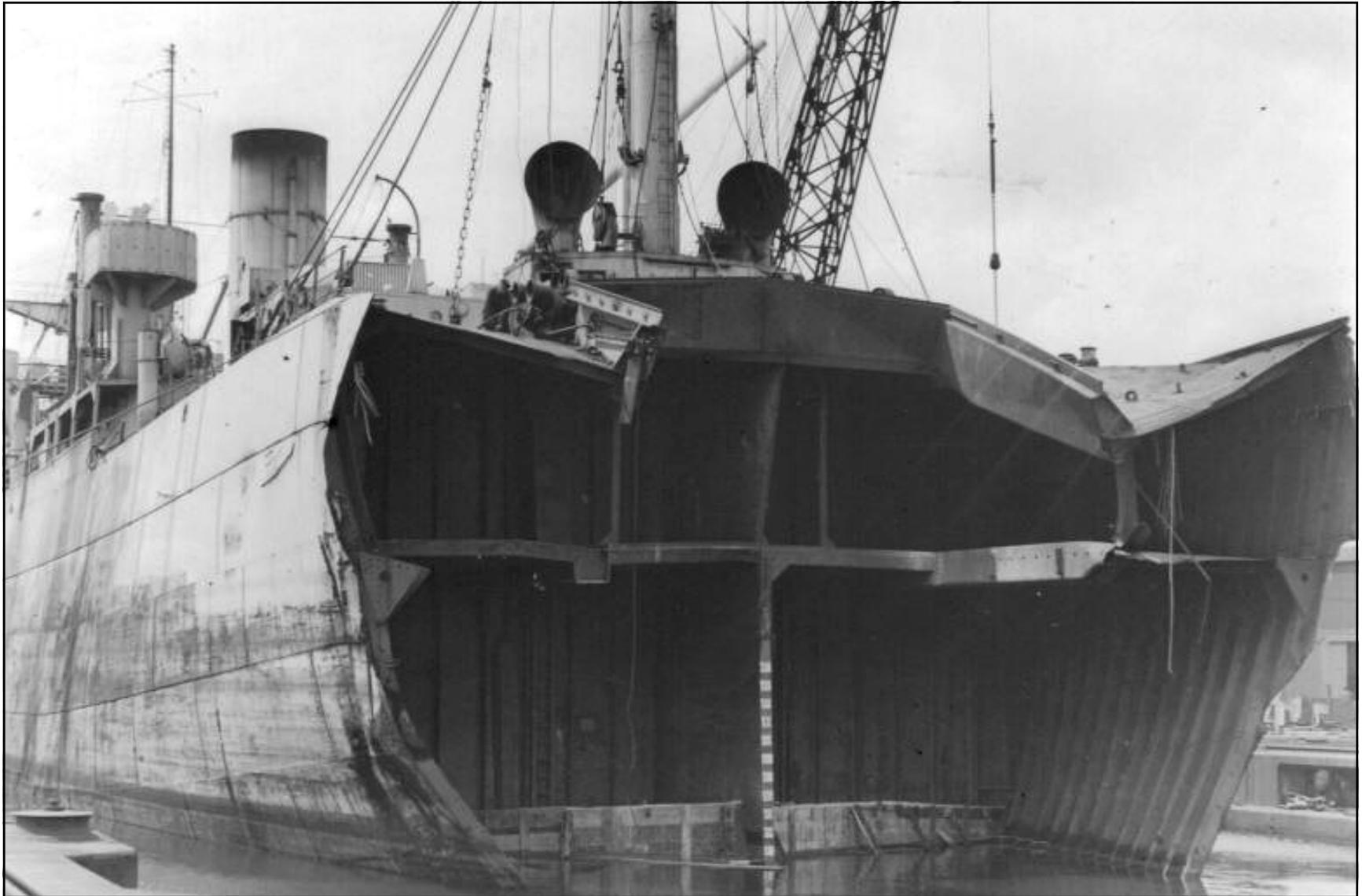
The U-1023 at West Bute Dock in Cardiff on 16 June 1945



The 7345 ton SS Riverton photographed at Vancouver in 1936



The damaged SS Riverton arriving for repair at Swansea in August 1945



The SS Riverton at Swansea showing where her stern had been blown off



The 335 ton Norwegian fleet minesweeper HNoMS NYMS-382



The U-995, a Type VIIC/41 submarine, is now a museum ship at the Laboe Naval Memorial at Schleswig-Holstein in Germany. It is the last of that type of U-boat surviving anywhere in the world.