

German U-Boat

[Home](#) » [U-Boat Articles](#) » [U-Boats in the Far East](#)

U-Boats in the Far East

Historical Overview

- ✚ [Battle of Atlantic](#)
- ✚ [Historical Battles](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Tactics](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat](#)
- [Personalities](#)
- ✚ [Medals & Awards](#)
- ✚ [Photo Gallery](#)
- ✚ [Video Library](#)
- ✚ [Articles](#)
 - [U-Boats in the Far East](#)
 - [Most Successful U-Boat Attacks](#)
 - [U-Boat Museum & Exhibits](#)
 - [U-Boat Bunkers](#)
 - [The German Naval Grid System](#)
 - [Wooden Torpedoes](#)
 - [The German Crisis](#)
 - [Escaping from a Sunken U-Boat](#)
 - [Life Aboard a U-Boat](#)
 - [The Only War Criminal](#)
 - [Rocket U-Boat Program](#)

U-Boat Reference

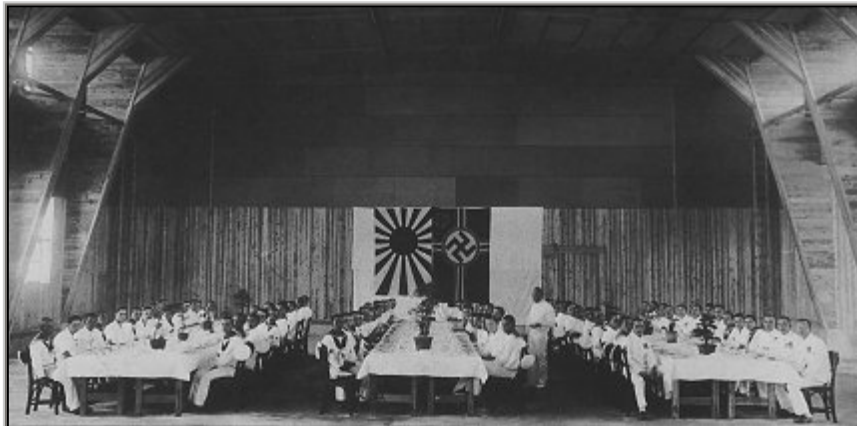
- ✚ [U-Boat Types](#)
- ✚ [Midget Submarines](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Weapons](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Equipment](#)
- ✚ [Bridge Conversion](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Crew](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Insignia](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Marches](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Sounds](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Scale Models](#)

Others

- ✚ [Links Directory](#)
- ✚ [Contact Us](#)
- ✚ [Our Awards](#)
- ✚ [Guestbook](#)

- [Contents of this chapter](#)
- [German Interest in the Far East](#)
- [Italian Transport Submarines - Aquila and Merkator](#)
- [Gruppe Monsun Boats](#)
- [Fate of the Far Eastern Boats](#)

The main theatre of the U-boat offensive was in the North Atlantic, but U-boats had actually operated in every ocean in the world except for the Antarctic. Although U-boats operating in the Far East is less well known, but it demanded considerable resources and involved a large number of boats. Distant operations were unfavorable because of the limited range of U-boats and in order to support such operations, Germany needed a U-boat base in Asia. Nevertheless, in a strategic decision made in late 1942, Nazi Germany dispatched dozens of U-boats to the Far East to attack allied shipping and ferry back rubber and other scarce raw materials. But of the forty one boats dispatched to the Far East, only two would return to Germany.



Under the Rising Sun and an incorrectly hung German Nazi flag, the two allies often sent submarines between Japan and Europe to ferry personnel, strategic supplies, and the latest military hardware.

The first group of German U-boats to sail was Gruppe Monsun, which consisted of a pack of eleven U-boats. This story traces the reasons behind German interest in Asiatic waters, the logistical difficulties faced and the ultimate fate of the U-boats that participated in these operations.

Next: [German Interest in the Far East](#)



German U-Boat



[Home](#) » [U-Boat Articles](#) » [U-Boats in the Far East](#) » [German Interest in the Far East](#)

Historical Overview

- ✚ [Battle of Atlantic](#)
- ✚ [Historical Battles](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Tactics](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat](#)
- [Personalities](#)
- ✚ [Medals & Awards](#)
- ✚ [Photo Gallery](#)
- ✚ [Video Library](#)
- ✚ [Articles](#)
 - [U-Boats in the Far East](#)
 - [Most Successful U-Boat Attacks](#)
 - [U-Boat Museum & Exhibits](#)
 - [U-Boat Bunkers](#)
 - [The German Naval Grid System](#)
 - [Wooden Torpedoes](#)
 - [The German Crisis](#)
 - [Escaping from a Sunken U-Boat](#)
 - [Life Aboard a U-Boat](#)
 - [The Only War Criminal](#)
 - [Rocket U-Boat Program](#)

U-Boat Reference

- ✚ [U-Boat Types](#)
- ✚ [Midget Submarines](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Weapons](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Equipment](#)
- ✚ [Bridge Conversion](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Crew](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Insignia](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Marches](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Sounds](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Scale Models](#)

Others

- ✚ [Links Directory](#)
- ✚ [Contact Us](#)
- ✚ [Our Awards](#)
- ✚ [Guestbook](#)

U-Boats in the Far East

German Interest in the Far East

German records indicate that discussions for a German U-boat base in Peninsula Malaya (modern day Malaysia) had begun as early as August 1942. The base was intended for the provision and support of U-boats operating in the Indian Ocean. The Germans did not have overseas bases and with few exceptions, were they able to use neutral ports. Setting up an Eastern base was no easy task and demanded considerable resources which could have been otherwise channeled for the Atlantic campaign. Why then was Germany interested in an Eastern base?

One of the reasons was due to necessity. Before the German invasion of Russia (Operation Barbarossa) commenced in June 1941, land and air transportation between Germany and Japan was possible. The two allies often seek to exchange knowledge and other raw materials. Germany needed rubber, metals such as copper and bismuth, and medicines such as quinine. On the reverse, Japan needed steel, mercury and optical glass. In addition, the two nations were interested in each other's latest military hardware, including prototypes of the latest weapons and blueprints for research.



Imperial Japanese submarine I-8 in Brest, France. A number of Japanese submarines made it to Europe, ferrying personnel, raw materials, and the latest military hardware.

After the invasion of Russia, the only practical means of exchange was by sea. Initially, this was met by surface blockade-runners running to and from the Far East. But the British blitz in 1942 disrupted the flow of materials that by the end of 1942, it became clear that German supply lines were being threatened and the situation could not continue as it is. As a consequence, a proposal was put forth by Admiral Donitz on February 1943 to use submarines for transport purposes. In order to provision for U-boats traversing the Indian Ocean, an Eastern base was clearly required.

Another reason for German interest in an Eastern base seem to suggest that while the Atlantic campaign was going well for the Germans, U-boat operations gradually extended southwards, down the African coast and finally up to the Cape of Good Hope. In its quest for more fertile fields, it was only logical to further extend into the Indian Ocean, where it is believed that Allied ASW capabilities were not as sophisticated as those in the Atlantic. Finally, with the collapse of the Atlantic campaign in May 1943, U-boats needed to be on the offensive elsewhere and with that, U-boats were dispatched to their Far Eastern bases in mid 1943 to undertake offensive operations in the Indian Ocean. Planning however for these bases had already begun, as early as late 1942.



Wilhelm Dommès in the rear left with Captain Ariizumi (center) in the former British seaplane base in Penang.



KK Wilhelm Dommès, commander of the U-boat base in the Far East.

Mailing List

Signup for our **free newsletter** to receive news on **U-Boat updates**.

Email:

Finally, other indications suggest that the Japanese themselves had on several occasions requested for German U-boats to operate in the Indian Ocean. Donitz was unreceptive of the proposal and viewed it as an unnecessary diversion from the Atlantic campaign. But with the collapse of the Atlantic campaign in May of 1943, the approval was finally given.


The motivation for German interest in the Far East is likely due to a combination of factors – but one thing is absolutely clear. On February 20 1943, a strategic decision was made to send the first wave of submarines to the Far East. These were not German U-boats, but Italian transport submarines, codenamed Aquila and Merkator. Their mission was to ply to and from Asia, ferrying rubber and other scarce raw materials.

Barely a month later, on March 28 1943, U-178 departed from France and en route to the Indian Ocean, BdU sent a message that she was to sail to Malaya and set up a U-boat base there. After having replenished from a surface tanker in the Indian Ocean, the U-178 arrived in Penang at the Malayan Peninsula on August 1943. KK Wilhelm Dommès became the first commander of the German U-boat base in Asia.

Penang, situated on the west coast of Peninsula Malaya was under Japanese occupation and was selected as the main U-boat base. A second base was established at Kobe, Japan, and a small repair base was located at Singapore, Jakarta and Surabaya.



Next: [Italian Transport Submarines - Aquila and Merkator](#)



U-995 German Type VIIC U-Boat
"The Definitive Guide to the Type VIIC U-Boat for Modelers, Researchers and U-Boat Fans"
[Click Here!](#)

Directory

- [Battle of The Atlantic](#) [Historical Battles](#) [U-Boat Tactics](#) [U-Boat Personalities](#) [Medals & Awards](#)
- [Photo Gallery](#) [Video Library](#) [Articles](#) [U-Boat Types](#) [Midget Submarines](#) [U-Boat Weapons](#) [U-Boat Equipment](#)
- [Bridge Conversion](#) [U-Boat Crew](#) [U-Boat Insignia](#) [U-Boat Marches](#) [U-Boat Sounds](#) [U-Boat Scale Models](#)
- [Links Directory](#) [Contact Us](#) [Our Awards](#) [Guestbook](#)

Copyright 2005-2009 © Uboataces. All rights reserved.

German U-Boat



Home » [U-Boat Articles](#) » [U-Boats in the Far East](#) » Italian Transport Submarines - Aquila and Merkator

Historical Overview

- ✚ [Battle of Atlantic](#)
- ✚ [Historical Battles](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Tactics](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat](#)
- [Personalities](#)
- ✚ [Medals & Awards](#)
- ✚ [Photo Gallery](#)
- ✚ [Video Library](#)
- ✚ [Articles](#)
 - [U-Boats in the Far East](#)
 - [Most Successful U-Boat Attacks](#)
 - [U-Boat Museum & Exhibits](#)
 - [U-Boat Bunkers](#)
 - [The German Naval Grid System](#)
 - [Wooden Torpedoes](#)
 - [The German Crisis](#)
 - [Escaping from a Sunken U-Boat](#)
 - [Life Aboard a U-Boat](#)
 - [The Only War Criminal](#)
 - [Rocket U-Boat Program](#)

U-Boat Reference

- ✚ [U-Boat Types](#)
- ✚ [Midget Submarines](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Weapons](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Equipment](#)
- ✚ [Bridge Conversion](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Crew](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Insignia](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Marches](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Sounds](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Scale Models](#)

Others

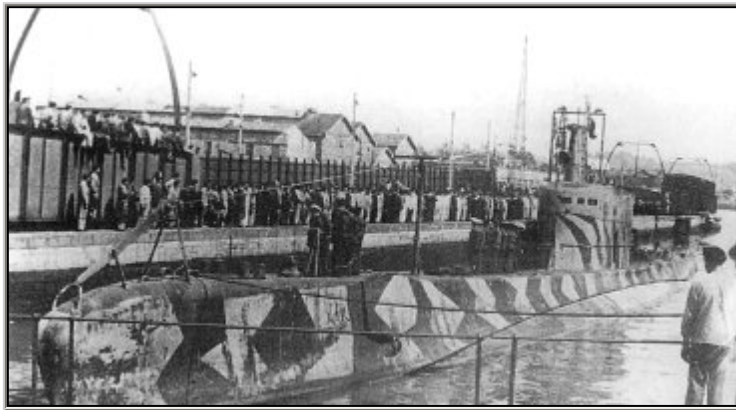
- ✚ [Links Directory](#)
- ✚ [Contact Us](#)
- ✚ [Our Awards](#)
- ✚ [Guestbook](#)

U-Boats in the Far East

Italian Transport Submarines - Aquila and Merkator

At a Naval Conference on February 20 1943, Grossadmiral Donitz, who was newly appointed Grand Admiral of the Kriegsmarine briefed Adolf Hitler about the unacceptably high losses of German surface ships transporting war materials to and from the Far East. During that conference, Donitz suggested that the large Italian submarines were unsuitable for warfare in the Atlantic and that they should be converted for transport duties to the Far East.

Codenamed **Aquila**, the plan called for ten Italian submarines operating out of Bordeaux to undergo a six weeks conversion program, which by then they could carry up to 150 tons of cargo. They were still manned by Italian crews and in exchange for their ten Atlantic boats, the Germans provided ten new Type VIICs to the Italian Navy. Hitler gave his approval but in the event, two were sunk during their homeward journey, leaving only eight for conversion. The two that were sunk were the Archimede (April 16 1943) off the Brazilian coast and the Leonardo da Vinci (May 24 1943) in the Bay of Biscay.



The Italian Archimede was sunk before it could be converted.

The first three sailed in May 1943, followed by two more in June. Each submarine carried stores of ammunition, including spare torpedoes, blueprints and other materials vital to establish a U-boat base. These submarines sailed in advance of Gruppe Monsun, the planned first wave of German U-boats destined for the Far East, and in part was to provide the necessary provisions to replenish the operating boats. Another two Italian submarines were preparing to leave Bordeaux and the final boat was still at sea when the Italian armistice was announced. With the Italian surrender, the operation was renamed to **Merkator**.

Of the eight transports, only three managed to reach Singapore in July and August 1943. Their mission was to ferry supplies back to Germany. However, not one made it back to Europe. A summary of their operations is described below.



One of the submarines converted for transport role, the Italian Alpino Bagnolini. She was renamed to UIT-22 under German command.
Photo credits:- www.regiamarina.net/subs/submarines/bagnolini/bagnolini_it.htm

Mailing List

Signup for our **free newsletter** to receive news on **U-Boat updates**.

Email:

Operational History

Five submarines departed Bordeaux in May and June 1943. They are the Reginaldo Giuliani (Aquila II), Commandante Cappellini (Aquila III), Luigi Torelli (Aquila VI), Barbarigo (Aquila V) and Enrico Tazzoli. Of the five, two were sunk en route; the Barbarigo was sunk on June 19 1943, probably by aircraft off the Azores and the Enrico Tazzoli disappeared on May 22 1943, cause and location unknown. The remaining three submarines arrived in Singapore between July and August 1943. As Italy's surrender seemed imminent, the Japanese grounds all three submarines.

Meanwhile, another two submarines were preparing to leave Bordeaux. The Giuseppe Finzi and Alpino Bagnolini were also both grounded by the Germans, also due to the imminent Italian surrender.

September 9 1943, the Italians surrendered. The last boat for conversion, Ammiraglio Cagni, was still at sea and the Italian crew surrendered to the British at Durban, South Africa. The Japanese seized the three submarines at Singapore, but after some negotiations, they were handed over to the Germans.



The Enrico Tazzoli was the first submarine to be lost, after having lost contact on May 22 1943.



Engine problems kept the Finzi (UIT-21) in port. She never left European waters and was scuttled on August 1944.

Photo credits:- www.regiamarina.net/subs/submarines/finzi/finzi_it.htm

Under the Germans, the operation was changed to **Merkator** and the submarines were given new designations. The three boats in Singapore became UIT-23 (ex-Giuliani), UIT-24 (ex-Cappellini) and UIT-25 (ex-Torelli). The two boats at Bordeaux were renamed UIT-21 (ex-Finzi) and UIT-22 (ex-Bagnolini).

The two boats at Bordeaux attempted to sail to the Far East, but the UIT-21 was riddled with engine defects and finally scuttled in August 1944. The UIT-21 never left Bordeaux. Meanwhile the UIT-22 departed Bordeaux on January 26 1944. En route to round the Cape of Good Hope, she was damaged in an aircraft attack off the Ascension Islands and lost a lot of fuel. As a result, the U-178 which was homeward bound to France was ordered to rendezvous with UIT-22 for a refueling operation some 600 nautical miles southwest of the Cape of Good Hope. The U-178 having recently replenished from the tanker Charlotte Schliemann was also to collect a new radar warning device and Enigma keys from UIT-22.

Having broken the German Naval Code, the British knew all about the rendezvous operation through intercepted messages. They were however hesitant to attack for fear of arousing German suspicions that their communications were no longer secure. But when U-178 sent a long radio message on March 5, which was picked up and DFed (direction fixed) by the South African Navy, the British decided that it was safe to attack. On March 8 1944, British and South African aircraft found and attacked U-178, but she managed to elude the attackers. Then on March 11, a British Catalina aircraft while searching for U-178 had found UIT-22 instead. Several more Catalinas were directed to the scene and in a surprise coordinated attack, the UIT-22 was sunk with all hands off Cape Town.

Of the original eight Italian submarines, only three remained, which were UIT-23, UIT-24 and UIT-25 in Singapore. The UIT-23 would be the next victim. On February 13 1944, she departed Singapore and made for Penang. On the next day, February 14, the British submarine HMS Tallyho torpedoed and sank her in the Straits of Malacca, off the Malayan Peninsula.

The last two surviving Italian submarines, the UIT-24 and UIT-25 had the most fascinating careers, which took the crew halfway around the world, to Japan and with no sure way of getting home. The UIT-24 attempted to return to Europe on February 8 1944. Laden with 115 tons of rubber, 55 tons of tin, and 10 tons of other materials, including quinine, the plan was for her to replenish from the tanker Charlotte Schliemann in the Indian Ocean before proceeding round the African Cape and back to Europe. But after the tanker Charlotte Schliemann was sunk on March 11, the replenishment was tasked to the tanker Brake. When the Brake was also sunk on March 12, the U-532 was sent to replenish the UIT-24. Insufficient fuel and coupled with engine problems however, forced the UIT-24 to return to Penang, where she arrived on May 4 1944. Having unloaded her stores, she sails for Kobe, Japan for an engine overhaul. The UIT-25 follows suit shortly after. The overhauls were complete by August 1944, but with the network of tankers destroyed, the crew found themselves stranded in Asia with no way of getting home. The two submarines were put to good use however, ferrying goods between Southeast Asia and Japan.



British submarine HMS Tallyho torpedoed and sank the Reginaldo Giuliani (UIT-23) in the Straits of Malacca on February 14 1944.

When Germany surrendered on May 10 1945, the two boats were undergoing overhauls in Kobe, Japan. With the surrender, the German flag was lowered and in its place, the Japanese flag was raised on the conning tower. The UIT-24 was commissioned into the Japanese Navy as I-503 and UIT-25 as I-504. These two submarines were the only two submarines which flew all three flags of the Axis powers of the Second World War.

Their final fate. Both I-503 and I-504 was scuttled by the US Navy on April 16 1946 in Japan.



The Italian Cappellini was one of the two submarines which flew all three flags of the Axis powers.

Photo credits:- www.regiamarina.net/others/foreast/foreast_us.htm

Fate of the Italian Boats

Of the eight transport boats, only three reach the Far East, while the remainder were either sunk, scuttled, or surrendered. Of the three that made it, one was sunk in the Straits of Malacca and the other two eventually served under the Japanese and

surrendered with the war's end. Not one succeeded in ferrying the much needed supplies back to Germany.

Fate of the Italian Boats					
Original Name	Under Italian	Under German	Under Japanese	Depart	Fate
Reginaldo Giuliani	Aquila II	UIT-23	-	Bordeaux, May 1943	Arrives at Singapore, July 26 1943 Commissioned as UIT-23, Sep 10 1943 Sunk by HMS Tallyho, Feb 14 1944 in Straits of Malacca
Commandante Cappellini	Aquila III	UIT-24	I-503	Bordeaux, May 11 1943	Arrives at Sabang (Sumatra), July 9 1943 Departs Sabang, July 10 1943 Arrives at Singapore, July 13 1943 Commissioned as UIT-24, Sep 10 1943 Commissioned as I-503, May 10 1943 Surrendered at Kobe, Aug 30 1945 Scuttled by US Navy, Apr 16 1946
Enrico Tazzoli	Aquila I	-	-	Bordeaux, May 16 1943	Sunk May 22 1943, location unknown
Luigi Torelli	Aquila VI	UIT-25	I-504	Bordeaux, Jun 14 1943	Arrives at Sabang (Sumatra), August 26 1943 Arrives at Penang, August 29 1943 Arrives at Singapore, August 31 1943 Commissioned as UIT-25, Sep 10 1943 Commissioned as I-504, May 10 1943 Surrendered at Kobe, Aug 30 1945
Barbarigo	Aquila V	-	-	Bordeaux, Jun 16 1943	Sunk June 19 1943, off Azores
Giuseppe Finzi	-	UIT-21	-	Never departed	Scuttled July 25 1944, France
Alpino Bagnolini	-	UIT-22	-	Bordeaux, Jan 26 1944	Sunk Mar 11 1944, off Cape Town
Ammiraglio Cagni	-	-	-	-	Surrendered to the British Sep 9 1943, Durban (S. Africa)

Next: [Gruppe Monsun Boats](#)





German U-Boat



[Home](#) » [U-Boat Articles](#) » [U-Boats in the Far East](#) » [Gruppe Monsun Boats](#)

Historical Overview

- [Battle of Atlantic](#)
- [Historical Battles](#)
- [U-Boat Tactics](#)
- [U-Boat](#)
- [Personalities](#)
- [Medals & Awards](#)
- [Photo Gallery](#)
- [Video Library](#)
- [Articles](#)
- [U-Boats in the Far East](#)
- [Most Successful U-Boat Attacks](#)
- [U-Boat Museum & Exhibits](#)
- [U-Boat Bunkers](#)
- [The German Naval Grid System](#)
- [Wooden Torpedoes](#)
- [The German Crisis](#)
- [Escaping from a Sunken U-Boat](#)
- [Life Aboard a U-Boat](#)
- [The Only War Criminal](#)
- [Rocket U-Boat Program](#)

U-Boat Reference

- [U-Boat Types](#)
- [Midget Submarines](#)
- [U-Boat Weapons](#)
- [U-Boat Equipment](#)
- [Bridge Conversion](#)
- [U-Boat Crew](#)
- [U-Boat Insignia](#)
- [U-Boat Marches](#)
- [U-Boat Sounds](#)
- [U-Boat Scale Models](#)

Others

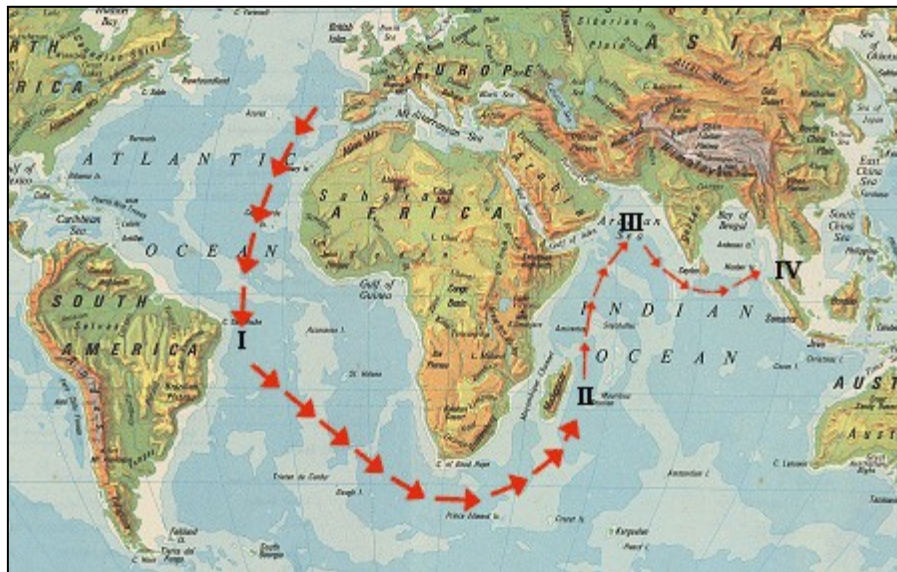
- [Links Directory](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Our Awards](#)
- [Guestbook](#)

U-Boats in the Far East

Gruppe Monsun Boats

After the Italian transport submarines, **Gruppe Monsun** was the first wave of German U-boats to be dispatched to the Far East. Destined for offensive operations in the Arabian Sea, a group of nine Type IXCs and two Type IXD2s set sail from Europe in mid 1943. Due to necessity, each U-boat was also loaded with special cargo for delivery to Japan, although this had meant reduced effectiveness for the boats at performing dual roles. The limited range of the Type IXCs also meant that the boats had to be refueled during the outbound journey and were to arrive in their operational zones in September 1943, right after the Monsoon season – thus the name given to the operating boats.

The refueling difficulties incurred by **Gruppe Monsun** illustrate just how complicated and hazardous mid-ocean replenishment could be. In the plan, two mid-ocean replenishments were necessary. The first replenishment was scheduled to be conducted by U-462, a Type XIV U-tanker at a location east of St. Paul's Rock, off the Brazilian coast in the South Atlantic. The group would then sail to Mauritius in the Indian Ocean for a second replenishment by a surface tanker. Thereafter, they were to take up offensive operations in the Arabian Sea, before sailing to the U-boat base in Penang for replenishment. From then on, they were to be based in Penang, where they could sortie against Allied shipping in the Indian Ocean.



The original plan for Gruppe Monsun :-

- I - 1st refueling point by Type XIV U-462, off the Brazilian coast
- II - 2nd refueling point by a surface tanker, off Mauritius
- III - Offensive operations in the Arabian Sea
- IV - Sail to Penang for station in the Far East

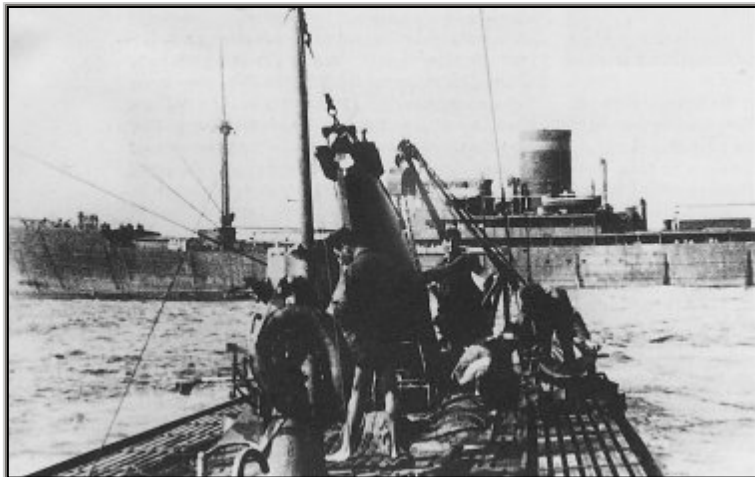
As the group prepared to depart, the U-200 was the first to set sail from Norway on June 11 1943. Barely two weeks later, on June 24, the first hitch occurred when she was sunk with all hands southwest of Iceland while on the way to join the group. The remaining ten boats set sail soon after, and while en route to their first replenishment area in the South Atlantic, three more members of the group were sunk. The U-514, U-506 and U-509 were sunk by aircraft while trying to break through into the Atlantic. This left seven more boats to continue their journey.

The next hitch occurred with the U-847, a long range Type IXD2. In an emergency situation, she was diverted to refuel other boats in the Sargasso Sea. These were the homeward bound boats from the American coast, after they had run out of fuel when their replenishment tankers were sunk. Having completed her mission, she sailed to the southwest of the Azores for yet another emergency refueling operation. This operation however, turned out to be her last as she was sunk by US Navy aircraft on August 27 1943, southwest of the Azores.



Meanwhile, the group's designated U-tanker, the Type XIV U-462 was seriously damaged by Allied aircraft while crossing the Bay of Biscay. In the planned operation, she was to sail with the pack and refuel the Monsun boats in the South Atlantic. Serious damage however forced the U-462 to return to port for repairs, leaving the Monsun boats without a replenishment tanker. BdU then hastily cobbled together a new replenishment plan, which turned out to be somewhat of a fiasco.

In the revised plan, another Type XIV, the U-487 already at sea was diverted to refuel the Monsun boats at a location some 800 miles south of the Azores. Unfortunately, the U-487 had already replenished eight other U-boats and had insufficient diesel fuel to replenish all of the Monsun boats. As such, another Type IXC in the area, the outward bound U-160 was ordered to rendezvous with the U-487 and to transfer to the tanker all the diesel fuel it required, and then returning to France.



Mid-ocean replenishment such as this from the supply ship Kormoran to the U-124 were extremely hazardous. Through intercepted messages, the Allies often knew the whereabouts of supply tankers or U-tankers and they were meticulously hunted and destroyed between 1942 and 1943. By June 1944, the entire network of U-tankers had been destroyed.

Mailing List

Signup for our **free newsletter** to receive news on **U-Boat updates**.

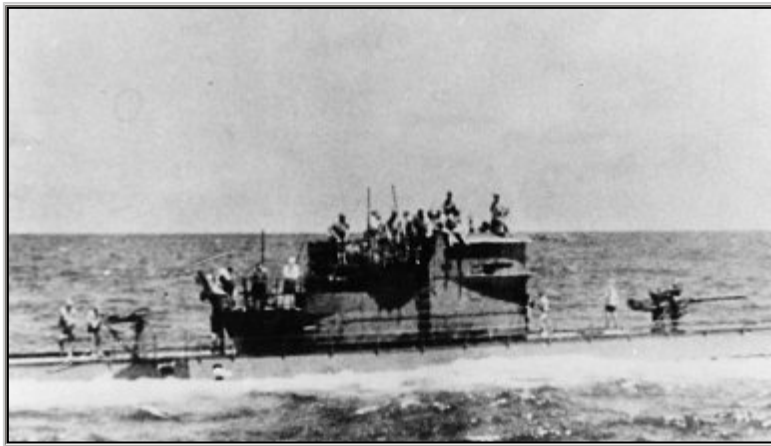
Email:

A great deal of radio messages had to be sent in order to set up such an arrangement. These messages were intercepted and the Allies learnt all about the arrangement. Thus, on July 13 1943, after taking on fuel from the U-160, the tanker U-487 was attacked by US Navy aircraft from the USS Core. The crew put up a good fight with their AA guns and managed to shoot down one F4F Wildcat. Despite the impressive showdown, the U-487 was sunk with 31 dead. There were 33 survivors.

Unknown to the group that the tanker U-487 had been sunk, Gruppe Monsun arrived at the replenishment zone on July 14 and found the area empty. After scouring for three days, BdU concluded that the tanker had been lost. The U-160 who had topped up the ill-fated tanker was still around, but had already transferred its fuel to the tanker and had insufficient fuel for all the remaining six Monsun boats.

To overcome this, yet another Type IXC in the area, the U-155 was sent to the rescue. Together with the U-160, they both had just enough fuel for the Monsun boats. Then just as the operation swung into action, the U-160 itself went missing. Later records indicate that she was sunk by aircraft on July 14.

With no other boats left in the area, Gruppe Monsun was short of the required fuel it needed to sail to the second replenishment zone. Thus as a last resort, BdU decided to sacrifice one of the Monsun boats itself so that the others may continue onto the second leg of the journey. The unfortunate Monsun boat was U-516 (Tillessen), which was instructed to transfer to the other boats all the fuel it could spare and then return to France.



The latest Type IXD2 had just entered the battlefield, but they were commandeered by experienced skippers. The U-847, a member of the Monsun Group is diverted as a tanker, and subsequently sunk by aircraft.

Herbert Kuppisch, the man destined to be the commander of the Penang base. But was KIA when his boat (U-847) was sunk southwest of the Azores.

Only five Monsun boats now remain to proceed to the second replenishment zone. The five remaining boats, U-168, U-183, U-188, U-532 and U-533 proceeded around the Cape to the second rendezvous point and refueled from the surface tanker Brake without incident. The refueling operation took place over September 11 to 13 1943, at a location 450 miles south of Mauritius.

Upon refueling, the Monsun boats sailed for the Arabian Sea where as a group, they sank six ships for 33843 tons and damaged two for 15822 tons for a loss of one of their own. The U-533 was sunk in the Gulf of Aden on October 16 1943. Thereafter, the four remaining boats put to port in Penang, arriving there in October and November 1943, or almost four months after they had set sail from Europe.

In summary of the Gruppe Monsun boats. Of the original eleven boats in the pack; four had been sunk en route, while its designated U-tanker was damaged and had to return to port. In the revised plan, two boats summoned to the rescue were both sunk, while two of the Monsun boats itself had to be diverted for other emergency refueling operations. One of them was sunk in the process and the other was compelled to return to France. All these was a heavy price to pay for just five Type IXCs to be able to operate in the Arabian Sea. The logistic problems faced by Gruppe Monsun demonstrates that distant operations were hardly profitable and why logistic support was such a serious problem for U-boats and their crew. In addition, the steady destruction of the Type XIV Milk Cow U-boat tankers which refueled and replenish the boats at sea made these distant operations even more difficult.

Fate of the Monsun Boats

During the outbound journey, Gruppe Monsun boats sank 6 ships for 33842 tons and damaged 2 ships for 15822 tons. Only three boats in the pack conducted successful attacks.

Fate of the Gruppe Monsun Boats				
Boat	Type	Commander	Depart	Fate
U-200	IXD2	KL Heinrich Schoder	Norway, Jun 11 1943	Sunk, Jun 24 1943
U-514	IXC	KL Hans-Jurgen Auffermann	France, July 3 1943	Sunk, Jul 8 1943
U-509	IXC	KL Werner Witte	France, Jul 3 1943	Sunk, Jul 15 1943
U-506	IXC	KL Erich Wurdemann	France, Jul 6 1943	Sunk, Jul 12 1943
U-847	IXD2	KL Herbert Kuppisch	Norway, Jul 29 1943	Diverted as tanker Sunk, Aug 27 1943
U-516	IXC	KL Hans-Rutger Tillessen	France, Jul 8 1943	Diverted as tanker Aborted to France, Aug 23 1943
U-533	IXC/40	KL Helmut Hennig	France, Jul 6 1943	Arrived for operations in the Arabian Sea Sunk in the Arabian Sea, Oct 16 1943
U-188	IXC/40	KL Siegfried Ludden	France, Jun 30 1943	Arrives at Penang, Oct 31 1943

U-168	IXC/40	KL Helmut Pich	France, Jul 3 1943	Arrives at Penang, Nov 11 1943
U-532	IXC/40	FK Ottoheinrich Junker	France, Jul 3 1943	Arrives at Penang, Oct 31 1943
U-183	IXC/40	KK Heinrich Schafer	France, Jul 7 1943	Arrives at Penang, Oct 27 1943

Next: [German Transport Boats](#)



Directory

[Battle of The Atlantic](#) [Historical Battles](#) [U-Boat Tactics](#) [U-Boat Personalities](#) [Medals & Awards](#)
[Photo Gallery](#) [Video Library](#) [Articles](#) [U-Boat Types](#) [Midget Submarines](#) [U-Boat Weapons](#) [U-Boat Equipment](#)
[Bridge Conversion](#) [U-Boat Crew](#) [U-Boat Insignia](#) [U-Boat Marches](#) [U-Boat Sounds](#) [U-Boat Scale Models](#)
[Links Directory](#) [Contact Us](#) [Our Awards](#) [Guestbook](#)

Copyright 2005-2009 © Uboataces. All rights reserved.

German U-Boat



[Home](#) » [U-Boat Articles](#) » [U-Boats in the Far East](#) » German Transport Boats

Historical Overview

- ✚ [Battle of Atlantic](#)
- ✚ [Historical Battles](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Tactics](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Personalities](#)
- ✚ [Medals & Awards](#)
- ✚ [Photo Gallery](#)
- ✚ [Video Library](#)
- ✚ [Articles](#)
 - [U-Boats in the Far East](#)
 - [Most Successful U-Boat Attacks](#)
 - [U-Boat Museum & Exhibits](#)
 - [U-Boat Bunkers](#)
 - [The German Naval Grid System](#)
 - [Wooden Torpedoes](#)
 - [The German Crisis](#)
 - [Escaping from a Sunken U-Boat](#)
 - [Life Aboard a U-Boat](#)
 - [The Only War Criminal](#)
 - [Rocket U-Boat Program](#)

U-Boat Reference

- ✚ [U-Boat Types](#)
- ✚ [Midget Submarines](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Weapons](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Equipment](#)
- ✚ [Bridge Conversion](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Crew](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Insignia](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Marches](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Sounds](#)
- ✚ [U-Boat Scale Models](#)

Others

- ✚ [Links Directory](#)
- ✚ [Contact Us](#)
- ✚ [Our Awards](#)
- ✚ [Guestbook](#)

U-Boats in the Far East

German Transport Boats

Along with Gruppe Monsun and the Italian Transport submarines, another group of U-boats sailed to the Far East for a specific mission – the **German Transport boats**.

Long before the idea of the Italian Transport submarine was proposed, design work had already started on specialized U-boats for transport duties. These transport boats were to be unarmed and the design was based on the large Type XB minelayer. Design work first started in mid 1942, and as many as thirty had been laid down by 1943. These projects included the Type XIX, XX, XXIE and XXIT and could carry up to 800 tons of cargo. However, none were ever completed due to the Allied progress in Europe.

This however did not stop the conversion of existing boats for specialized transport duties. Four Type VIIs were built as specialized torpedo carriers. Their official designation was Type VIIF and depending on the loadout, each could carry up to 41 torpedoes. Two Type VIIFs were sent to the Far East, the U-1059 and U-1062. Both set sail from Norway in January and February 1944, but the U-1059 was sunk en route to the Far East. The U-1062 managed to reach Penang in April 19 1944 and successfully delivered its full load of torpedoes. With its bilges and storerooms loaded to the brim, the U-1062 set out on its return voyage on June 19 1944, but had to abort back to Penang due to engine trouble. On July 15, it set sail again but was sunk off the Cape Verde Islands on September 30 1944.



U-234 enters Portsmouth with American sailors crowded on the bridge and deck.



Among the cargo of U-234 is 0.55 tons of Uranium Oxide, the use of which is one of the mysteries of the war.

Two fast-running Type IXDs were built as transport boats, the U-180 and U-195. Known as the Type IXD1, they were initially designated as long range attack boats, but when their diesel E-boat engines proved unsatisfactory, they were converted as transport boats. Having completed their conversion, the Type IXD1s were unarmed (except for AA weapons) but could carry up to 252 tons of cargo. The U-180 and U-195 both departed for the Far East on August 20 1944. The U-180 did not get very far, having disappeared in the Bay of Biscay three days later, presumably after having struck by a mine. The U-195 reached Jakarta on December 28 1944 and delivered some very valuable cargo to the Japanese, among it optical glass, mercury, torpedoes, electronic equipment such as radars and military weapons such as a dismantled V-1 Flying bomb and its pulse jet motor. It set out on its return voyage on January 19 1945, but engine trouble forced it back to the repair base at Surabaya. With the German surrender in May 1945, the U-195 was seized by the Japanese and commissioned as I-506. She was finally surrendered at the end of the war in August 1945.



Two of the large Type XB minelayers, the U-219 and U-234 were also pressed into service as transport boats. The U-219 had little modification and left Norway on October 22 1943. En route, she was attacked by US Navy aircraft but ironically the U-219 came out the victor, having shot down an Avenger and escaped. She arrived in Jakarta on December 11 1944 and along with the U-195, delivered some very valuable cargo to the Japanese. It was still there in May 1945 when the Japanese took over and commissioned it as I-505. She was finally surrendered to the Allies in August 1945.

The other Type XB, the U-234 had a very unique career. Loaded with 260 tons of cargo, among it blueprints for advanced German weapons and equipment disassembled into crates, but the most unusual item was 0.55 tons (560 kg) of Uranium Oxide. The U-234 sailed from Norway on April 16 1945, when Germany was on the verge of defeat and on May 4, received the order to surrender. She sailed into Portsmouth, New Hampshire and to this date, the purpose and use of the Uranium Oxide have remained one of the mysteries of World War Two.

Mailing List

Signup for our **free newsletter** to receive news on **U-Boat updates**.

Email:

The final German Transport boat was U-864, a Type IXD2. She sailed from Norway on February 5 1945, but was sunk en route on February 9 1945 in the North Sea by a British submarine, the HMS Venturer. The engagement took place underwater and is the only known engagement in which both submarines were fully submerged throughout.

Fate of the German Transport Boats

Fate of the Gruppe Monsun Boats				
Boat	Type	Commander	Depart	Fate
U-1059	VIIF	OL Gunter Leupold	Norway, Feb 12 1944	Sunk Mar 19 1944, off Cape Verde Islands
U-1062	VIIF	OL Karl Albrecht	Norway Jan 3 1944	Arrives at Penang, April 19 1944 Sailed for Europe on Jul 15 1944 Sunk on homeward voyage, Sep 30 1944, off Cape Verde Islands
U-180	IXD1	OL Rolf Riesen	France Aug 20 1944	Disappeared, Aug 23 1944, in the Bay of Biscay Presumably struck a mine and sunk
U-195	IXD1	OL Friedrich Steinfeldt	France Aug 20 1944	Arrives at Jakarta, Dec 28 1944 Commissioned under Japanese as I-506, May 1945 Surrendered, Aug 1945
U-219	XB	KK Walter Burghagen	Norway Oct 22 1943	Arrives at Jakarta, Dec 11 1944 Commissioned under Japanese as I-505, May 1945 Surrendered, Aug 1945
U-234	XB	KL Johann-Heinrich Fehler	Norway Apr 16 1945	The final transport to Japan Surrendered, May 16 1945, Portsmouth, NH
U-864	IXD2	KK Ralf-Reimar Wolfram	Norway Feb 5 1945	Sunk Feb 9 1945, North Sea

Next: [Fate of the Far Eastern Boats](#)



[Directory](#)

German U-Boat



[Home](#) » [U-Boat Articles](#) » [U-Boats in the Far East](#) » [Fate of the Far Eastern Boats](#)

Historical Overview

- [Battle of Atlantic](#)
- [Historical Battles](#)
- [U-Boat Tactics](#)
- [U-Boat](#)
- [Personalities](#)
- [Medals & Awards](#)
- [Photo Gallery](#)
- [Video Library](#)
- [Articles](#)
 - [U-Boats in the Far East](#)
 - [Most Successful U-Boat Attacks](#)
 - [U-Boat Museum & Exhibits](#)
 - [U-Boat Bunkers](#)
 - [The German Naval Grid System](#)
 - [Wooden Torpedoes](#)
 - [The German Crisis](#)
 - [Escaping from a Sunken U-Boat](#)
 - [Life Aboard a U-Boat](#)
 - [The Only War Criminal](#)
 - [Rocket U-Boat Program](#)

U-Boat Reference

- [U-Boat Types](#)
- [Midget Submarines](#)
- [U-Boat Weapons](#)
- [U-Boat Equipment](#)
- [Bridge Conversion](#)
- [U-Boat Crew](#)
- [U-Boat Insignia](#)
- [U-Boat Marches](#)
- [U-Boat Sounds](#)
- [U-Boat Scale](#)
- [Models](#)

Others

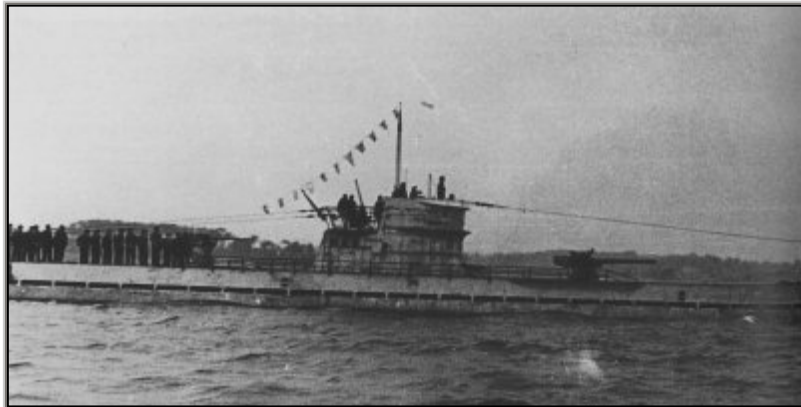
- [Links Directory](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Our Awards](#)
- [Guestbook](#)

U-Boats in the Far East

Fate of the Far Eastern Boats

A total of 41 German U-boats sailed to Far East to undertake various operations from transport duties to operations against shipping to U-boats to be presented to Japan. These boats paid a high price for their journey, as of the forty one which had set sail, only six would return to Europe, and only two of those successfully delivered their cargo back to Germany.

The U-843, U-861, U-510 and U-532 reached European waters, only to be sunk, stranded with insufficient fuel or to surrender with the German capitulation. Only the U-178 and U-188 successfully delivered its cargo. This section lists all U-boats which had set sail on their ill-fated journey to their Far Eastern bases, but does not include the Italian transport boats or boats which sortied to the Indian Ocean but were based from European bases.



U-198, one of the casualties. Sunk off the Seychelles (Indian Ocean) on 12 August 1944 with the entire crew perishing.

Fate of the Far Eastern Boats

Fate of the Far Eastern Boats					
Boat	Commander	First Sailed	Role	Success (in Far East)	Fate
U-200	KL Heinrich Schonder	Norway Jun 11 1943	Attack	None	Sunk en route Jun 24 1943
U-188	KL Siegfried Ludden	France Jun 30 1943	Attack	Sunk 11 (49725grt) Damaged 1 (9977grt)	Successful return France Jun 19 1944
U-168	KL Helmuth Pich	France Jul 3 1943	Attack	Sunk 3 (8008grt) Damaged 1 (9804grt)	Sunk in Java Sea Oct 6 1944
U-509	KL Werner Witte	France Jul 3 1943	Attack	None	Sunk en route Jul 15 1943
U-514	KL Hans-Jurgen Auffermann	France Jul 3 1943	Attack	None	Sunk en route Jul 8 1943
U-532	FK Ottoheinrich Junker	France Jul 3 1943	Attack	Sunk 6 (33940grt) Damaged 2 (13128grt)	Returned to Europe Surrendered May 10 1945
U-183	KK Heinrich Schafer	France Jul 3 1943	Attack	Sunk 3 (17671grt)	Sunk in Java Sea Apr 23 1945
U-506	KL Erich Wurdemann	France Jul 6 1943	Attack	None	Sunk en route Jul 12 1943



**U-995 Type VIIC
Gallery DVD**

Mailing List

Signup for our **free newsletter** to receive news on **U-Boat updates**.

Email:

U-533	KL Helmut Hennig	France Jul 6 1943	Attack	None	Sunk in Indian Ocean Oct 16 1943
U-516	KL Hans-Rutger Tillessen	France Jul 8 1943	Attack	None	Mission aborted Returned to France Aug 23 1943
U-847	KL Herbert Kuppish	Norway Jul 29 1943	Attack	None	Sunk en route Aug 27 1943
U-178	KK Wilhelm Dommès	France Mar 28 1943	Attack	Sunk 12 (66911grt) Damaged 1 (6348)	Successful return France May 24 1944
U-511	KL Fritz Schneewind	France May 5 1943	Present	Sunk 2 (14370grt)	Surrendered Aug 1945
U-1224	Japanese crew	France 1944	Present	None	Sunk en route May 13 1944
U-219	KK Walter Burghagen	Norway Oct 22 1943	Transport	Delivered to Japan	Surrendered August 1945
U-510	KL Alfred Eick	France Oct 3 1943	Attack	Sunk 7 (41130grt)	Returned to Europe Surrendered Apr 24 1945
U-848	KK Wilhelm Rollman	Germany Sep 18 1943	Attack	Sunk 1 (4573grt)	Sunk en route Nov 5 1943
U-849	KL Heinz-Otto Schultze	Germany Oct 2 1943	Attack	None	Sunk en route Nov 25 1943
U-850	KK Klaus Ewerth	Germany Nov 18 1943	Attack	None	Sunk en route Dec 20 1943
U-177	KL Heinz Buchholz	France Jan 2 1944	Attack	None	Sunk en route Feb 6 1944
U-1062	OL Karl Albrecht	Norway Jan 3 1944	Transport	Delivered to Penang	Sunk homeward Sep 30 1944
U-852	KL Heinz Wilhelm Eck	Germany Jan 18 1944	Attack	Sunk 2 (9972grt)	Sunk en route Apr 3 1944
U-1059	OL Gunter Leupold	Norway Feb 12 1944	Transport	None	Sunk en route Mar 19 1944
U-843	KL Oskar Herwartz	France Feb 19 1944	Attack	Sunk 1 (8261grt)	Returned to Europe Sunk in Kattegat Apr 9 1945
U-801	KL Hans-Joachim Brans	France Feb 26 1944	Attack	None	Sunk en route Mar 16 1944
U-851	KK Hannes Weingartner	France Feb 26 1944	Attack	None	Sunk en route Mar 1944
U-181	FK Kurt Freiwald	France Mar 16 1944	Attack	Sunk 5 (35066grt)	Surrendered Aug 1945
U-196	KK Eitel-Friedrich Kentrat	France Mar 16 1944	Attack	Sunk 1 (35066grt)	Sunk in Java Sea Dec 1 1944
U-537	KL Peter Schrewe	France Mar 25 1944	Attack	None	Sunk in Java Sea Nov 9 1944
U-859	KK Johann Jebesen	Germany Apr 4 1944	Attack	Sunk 4 (26523grt)	Sunk off Penang Sep 23 1944
U-860	FK Paul Buchel	Germany Apr 11 1944	Attack	None	Sunk en route Jun 15 1944
U-198	OL Burkhard Heusinger von Waldegg	France Apr 20 1944	Attack	Sunk 4 (22912grt)	Sunk in Indian Ocean Aug 12 1944
U-861	KL Jurgen Oesten	Germany Apr 20 1944	Attack	Sunk 3 (16378grt) Damaged 1 (8139grt)	Returned to Europe Surrendered Apr 18 1945
U-490	OL Wilhelm Gerlach	Norway May 6 1944	Attack	None	Sunk en route Jun 12 1944
U-862	KL Heinrich Timm	Norway Jun 3 1944	Attack	Sunk 7 (35489grt)	Surrendered Aug 1945
U-863	KL Dietrich von der Esch	Norway Jul 26 1944	Attack	None	Sunk en route Sep 29 1944

U-180	OL Rolf Riesen	France Aug 20 1944	Transport	None	Sunk en route Aug 23 1944
U-195	OL Friedrich Steinfeldt	France Aug 20 1944	Transport	Delivered to Japan	Surrendered aug 1945
U-871	KL Erwin Ganzer	Norway Aug 31 1944	Attack	None	Sunk en route Sep 26 1944
U-864	KK Ralf-Reimar Wolfram	Norway Feb 5 1945	Transport	None	Sunk en route Feb 9 1945
U-234	KL Johann-Heinrich Fehler	Norway Apr 16 1945	Transport	None	Surrendered May 16 1945

Note: -

Success column indicates ships attacked as a result of the Far East operation. It does not include successes in the Atlantic or other theaters.

Commander column indicates the CO at time of first departure. Several boats had more than one commander while in the Far East.



Directory

[Battle of The Atlantic](#)
[Historical Battles](#)
[U-Boat Tactics](#)
[U-Boat Personalities](#)
[Medals & Awards](#)
[Photo Gallery](#)
[Video Library](#)
[Articles](#)
[U-Boat Types](#)
[Midget Submarines](#)
[U-Boat Weapons](#)
[U-Boat Equipment](#)
[Bridge Conversion](#)
[U-Boat Crew](#)
[U-Boat Insignia](#)
[U-Boat Marches](#)
[U-Boat Sounds](#)
[U-Boat Scale Models](#)
[Links Directory](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Our Awards](#)
[Guestbook](#)

Copyright 2005-2009 © Uboataces. All rights reserved.