

INFORMATION ON GERMAN U-BOATS NO. 1

*Obtained from interviews with survivors
and diaries-recovered from bodies.*

- A. U-85 Sunk by USS Roper, April 14, 1942
- B. U-352 Sunk by USCG Icarus, May 9, 1942
- C. U-701 Sunk by Army AC, July 7, 1942

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A

*Report of the History of the U-85,
a German Submarine sunk by USS Roper, April 14, 1942.*

Compiled from Diaries recovered from Bodies of the Crew.

- I Introductory Remarks.
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I

Introductory Remarks

U-85 was sunk in latitude 35.55 N., longitude 75.19 W. by the U.S.S. Roper in the early morning of April 14, 1942. Twenty-nine bodies were recovered some hours later. It is from material found on some of the bodies that the information contained in this report was obtained. Most of this material was of little direct value, consisting of personal correspondence, receipts and machinists' notations of parts to be repaired or replaced. There were, however, three items of great interest: the diary of Chief Machinist (Stabsobermaschinist) Eugen Ungethüm, the diary of Erich Degenkolb, rating not known, and the submarine school notebook of Machinist (Obermaschinist) Heinrich Adrian.

The career of the U-85, as reconstructed from the two diaries, consists of a preliminary training period carried out in Norwegian waters, and four war cruises as follows:

1. July 26, 1941 - August 28. Cruise to Norway and training.
2. August 28 - late September. First war cruise. From Trondheim.
3. October 16 - late November. Second war cruise. From Saint Nazaire.
4. January 10, 1942 - February 23. Third war cruise. From Lorient.
5. March 21 - April 13. Fourth and last war cruise. From Saint Nazaire.

Ungethüm's diary covers the first four of these periods, that of Degenkolb the last two only, so that the two sources coincide for only one cruise, the third war cruise. The diaries will be found reproduced in full in appendices (iii) and (iv).

U-85 belonged to the 7th U-boat Flotilla.

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Crew of U-85

In the absence of other information as to the complement of U-85 it can be assumed that it consisted of some 45 officers and men, the usual complement of a 500-ton U-boat. Appendix (i) lists the names, and, when known, the ratings of the 29 bodies recovered. A list of officers and men presumed from other evidence to have been on board is presented in Appendix (ii). There is nothing in the material at hand to permit an estimate of the state of morale among the crew.

British sources indicated that the commanding officer of U-85 was Eberhard Greger of the class of 1935, whose advancement to Oberleutnant took place on October 1, 1939. It is probable that he had been promoted to Kapitän-leutnant since that time. The only corroborating evidence that Greger was actually in command is a certificate of possession of the Iron Cross, 2d class, issued to one of the crew members, dated "On board, October 14, 1941," and signed by Greger.

What appears to be a promotion certificate of Maschinen-gefreiter (Fireman 2d class) Kleibrink, whose exact significance has not yet been evaluated, bears the name of Oberleutnant Lechler. Lechler was of the class of 1937 and had received his commission as Leutnant on May 1, 1940. It is not clear whether Kleibrink had been advanced by Oberleutnant Lechler, in which case it would have to be assumed that Lechler was in command of U-85, or whether the certificate in Kleibrink's possession is evidence of two promotions, his own and that of Lechler. In the latter case Lechler would have been the First or Second Watch Officer.

Only one of the 29 bodies recovered could be identified as that of an officer, namely Oberleutnant (Ingenieur) Hans Sanger of the class of April 1937. The 1940 German Naval List shows that he had been commissioned Leutnant on August 1, 1939, being named first of all those receiving commissions on that date.

Early History of U-85

From interrogation of prisoners in Britain U-85 was known to be a 500-ton boat of type VII B, whose dockyard number, while under construction at the Flenderwerke, Lübeck, was "Flender 281". She was commissioned on June 7, 1941.

On July 26 the U-85 got underway for Norway, possibly from her original port of Lübeck, at 0500 and tied up alongside the Blücher bridge at Horten, Oslofjord, at 1350 the following day. From Sunday, July 27, to Wednesday, August 6, she remained at Horten, part of her crew being given liberty to visit Oslo on July 30 and 31.

She left Horten on August 6 at 1800 in convoy for Trondheim via Kristiansand, Stavanger, Moldøjne and Aalesund. Arriving in Lofjord on August 10, she tied up alongside the HERTHA, a depot ship for submarines.

From Monday, August 11, to Thursday, August 28, U-85 held firing practice in Trondheimfjord. At 1035, August 13, she was rammed in 14 meters (45 feet) of water by the small destroyer T-151. Number one diving tank and the steering gear were damaged.

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First War Cruise of U-85

U-85 left port for her first war cruise on August 28 at 1000, passing north of the North Sea into the North Atlantic. Airplane alarms forced her to submerge on the first and second days. Of two steamers sighted on the third and fourth days the first escaped, and an attack on the second was abandoned when it was observed to be a small lookout vessel of only 300 or 400 tons.

September 2, the sixth day of the cruise, was marked by two events. At 1609 a plane dropped three bombs or depth charges. U-85 resurfaced at 1645 and proceeded. At 2135 U-105 was sighted, with whom she exchanged recognition signals and some account of experiences. Ungethüm notes that twilight began at 2315 and that there were Northern lights.

By September 4 U-85 had reached an area to southward of the Denmark Straits. There was one airplane alarm on that day and two on the following day.

On September 9 at 0750, U-85 now being Southeast of Greenland, detonations were heard, and a glow was seen bearing 350. A plume of smoke from the convoy was observed at 1056. At 1204 there was an airplane alarm. The time of U-85's first attack on the convoy is not clear. Ungethüm notes that five torpedoes were fired without result, ascribing the lack of success to the fact that they were "hot tube runners". Surfacing at 1545, she sighted two steamers. The nearer one was assumed to be a lookout vessel (Bewacher). The far ship was stopped. Suspicious of a submarine trap, U-85 ran away submerged but surfaced an hour later to maintain contact with the convoy. There was one further airplane alarm on that day.

U-85's position in the early hours of September 10 is given as off the East coast of Greenland. In spite of being pursued and attacked with gunfire and at least one depth charge by a destroyer, she maintained contact with the convoy. Taking a position in advance of it, she obtained a hit on a 7,000 ton steamer at 1642 and one hit on each of two 5,000 ton steamers at 1719 and 1720, according to claims made in Ungethüm's diary. Submerging, she was then subjected to a heavy depth charge counter-attack which resulted in many failures within the U-85. Two hours later she attempted to surface three times, each time being forced to dive immediately because of the presence of aircraft which, the last time, dropped three depth charges. Ungethüm notes that the convoy was protected by "modern American destroyers, numerous lookouts, submarine traps and airplanes".

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IV. First War Cruise - Cont'd.

At 0032, September 11, U-85 surfaced to repair the damage. A test dive at 0945 showed the boat to be in a "state of limited readiness to submerge" (beschränkt tauchklar). She then proceeded homeward on course 125, apparently to Saint Nazaire, for it was from there that she sailed on her second war cruise.

Second War Cruise of U-85

Information on U-85's second war cruise is limited due to the fact that Ungethum made fewer entries for this than for the other cruises. Guided by aircraft she chased two convoys, but the record gives no evidence of any successes.

U-85 left Saint Nazaire on October 16 at 1445. After four days, whose only recorded incident was the sighting of a plane, she pursued a convoy, whose presence and position were made known to her by cooperating aircraft. After a two day hunt the chase had to be given up because of bad weather. Seas were so heavy that the watch could see nothing, and torpedoes would not run in any event. Furthermore the boat was depth charged by a four motor long range American type bomber.

On October 24, U-85, with other boats, began the search for a convoy sighted in the neighborhood of Newfoundland. One of the U-boats got three steamers from the convoy, after which it dispersed, part of it escaping in the fog, part fleeing into Canadian waters.

U-85 was hunting for another convoy on November 3, but the weather was so bad there seemed to be little chance for success. In the evening a valve broke in starboard number one cylinder, requiring 22 hours of uninterrupted work to repair. As this is Ungethum's last entry for the trip, it may be assumed that U-85 soon set out for home without registering a single success of any kind.

THIRD WAR CRUISE OF U-85

The diaries of both Ungethüm and Degenkolb are available as sources for the U-85's third war cruise. On leaving Lorient on January 10, 1942, course was set for the Mediterranean. After a week's cruise marked by three airplane alarms, one alarm for a destroyer, some engine trouble and the beginning of a convoy chase, a new operation order was received on January 17 directing U-85 to proceed to America.

On January 21 a destroyer was sighted and then a steamer. U-85 submerged, fired a spread of four torpedoes at 1842 and heard two detonations at 1852. Surfacing at 1917, she observed the steamer with a list on bearing 100. After submerging to approach U-85 searched for debris from 1942 to 0035 without success. Degenkolb's notation that a 10,000 ton steamer was sunk with a spread of four at 7:35 in the evening tallies with the foregoing from Ungethüm's diary.

According to indications in both diaries a steamer sighted on the following day outran the U-85. Both relate also that on January 24th she prepared to attack a steamer that lay stopped but broke off the attack for fear of a submarine trap.

Off Newfoundland U-85 underwent attack by aircraft. Degenkolb's notes this as their baptism of fire and dates it on the 27th. Ungethüm gives the date as January 28, indicating a near hit but no damage. February 1 a vessel was sighted which escaped in a rain squall. U-85 submerged twice on February 5 after sighting planes. February 6 she set course for "New York". The diary notes course "75°" but this is evidently an error or not properly legible.

On February 8 operations began against a convoy, course 180, course being altered the following day to 347. Course was changed again to 104 at 1110 when a vessel was sighted. An unsuccessful attack was made. The vessel fled, pursued on the surface by U-85, general course 235. After a seven hour chase U-85 submerged, attacking with a spread of three at 2020. She surfaced immediately, but the vessel had already sunk. This incident was not recorded by Degenkolb. Pursuit of the convoy was continued until interrupted by an airplane alarm. That evening course 85 was set for home because of fuel shortage.

U-85 was in the Bay of Biscay on February 20, cruising submerged for Saint Nazaire, which she entered on February 23, having sunk two steamers on this cruise, according to the diaries.

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Fourth and Last War Cruise of U-85

As Ungethum made no further entries after U-85's arrival in Saint Nazaire on February 23, Degenkolb's diary constitutes the only record of the last cruise. Most of his entries are without significance, relating to the weather or radio receptions. It might be noted that he is stirred by the thought of his proximity to Washington, remarking on one occasion that they are 300 miles from land and 660 from Washington, and on another "off Washington".

The U-85 sailed from Saint Nazaire at 1800 on March 21, proceeding submerged the next two days, on the first of which depth charges were heard in the distance. The fourth day of the cruise it was judged safe to proceed on the surface. Degenkolb notes fine weather and a sea as smooth as a table. March 27 heavy seas caused torpedoes to shift. March 30 Degenkolb notes heavy seas again and damage to the electric motors.

U-85 was "just off America" on April 4 according to the diary. On April 7, however, she was still "300 miles from land-660 from Washington". An alarm was sounded April 9 for what turned out to be a buoy. The next day, April 10, U-85 scored her only success of the cruise, sinking a steamer at 0100 with two hits from a spread of two torpedoes. On April 11 at 1240 U-85 was "off Washington" in 50 meters (164 feet) of water. She cruised submerged for a time. Degenkolb notes $8\frac{1}{2}$ meters (28 feet) of water under the keel at 1830. Three steamers were heard during the day, but the record gives no indication of any attack. U-85 spent April 12 lying on the bottom. Degenkolb notes for the night of April 12: "All quiet off New York", and for April 13: "American beacons and searchlights visible at night".

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Sinking of U-85

On the night of April 13-14 at 0006 (EWT) in latitude 35-55 N., longitude 75-15 W. the U.S.S. ROPER while on course 182 T. at speed 18 knots made a radar contact bearing 190 T., range 2700 yards. Decision was made to investigate and the ship was brought to 193 T. The range decreased very slowly, but the bearing began drawing to the left. At the time the range became 2100 yards a wake and a small silhouette were noted. The vessel appeared to be running away. The high speed of the vessel was the chief cause for belief that it might be a submarine. The speed of the ROPER was increased to 20 knots, and it was possible to gain slowly at this speed. A position very slightly on the starboard quarter was maintained as the vessel successively changed to about 175 T., 155 T., and 115 T. With the range reduced to about 700 the track of a torpedo was noted passing close aboard down the port side.

When the range had decreased to 300 yards the vessel cut sharply to starboard. At this instant, by the use of the searchlight, the vessel was identified as a submarine. The submarine continued to turn to starboard, inside the turning circle of the ship. The 24" searchlight was played upon the submarine and fire was opened first with machine gun battery and then with 3" battery. The machine guns, particularly #1, cut down Germans rushing to man their gun. A direct hit in the conning tower at about the water line was made by #5 3" gun as the submarine commenced to sink.

The submarine apparently was scuttled as she settled slowly stern first. About forty of her crew were on deck and sighted in the water.

A depth charge attack based on an excellent sound contact in the apparent position of the submarine was made. An eleven charge pattern was dropped, on course 105 T., the bearing varying little and the speed of the submarine negligible. No debris could be detected because of the darkness. The situation of the ROPER was considered too dangerous to permit any rescue work before daylight.

At 0717, April 14, 1942, the attention of the ROPER was called to bodies in the water by planes, and twenty-nine bodies were recovered. Among other things six escape lungs were found. Two bodies had mouth-piece tubing in their mouths, indicating escape after the submarine sank. While picking up the bodies, a number of empty life jackets were noted. Two additional bodies were permitted to sink after their clothing was searched by an officer in the boat.

IX

Summary of Attacks on U-85

During the first three war cruises it is recorded that four airplane attacks were made on U-85. Three depth charges were felt in the case of the first two attacks in September, two sets of three at the third attack in October, 1941, and at the fourth in January, 1942, a direct hit was scored by one bomb.

A total of eighteen entries of airplanes sighted including the four mentioned, was made in the diaries, but some of these obviously refer to the same plane sighted more than once. U-85 remained submerged at least a half hour each time a plane was sighted, often very much longer.

Two attacks by a destroyer were made on U-85 during the first war cruise off the East coast of Greenland on the same day. The earlier attack was made by gunfire followed by a depth charge after U-85 submerged, and the second attack consisted of numerous depth charges as a counter attack after U-85 attacked a convoy.

No attacks nor planes sighted are mentioned during the fourth and last war cruise of U-85.

X

Technical Details of U-85

No information. (But see Section XV.)

XI

Other U-Boats

(i) U-6.

Ungethüm's notebook indicates that he was undergoing instruction on U-6 from January 1 to January 28, 1940. On February 4 he was ordered to the U-bootsausbildungsabteilung (U-boat training division) at Flön. This order was apparently changed on February 7 to direct him to go to the Baubelehrung (Construction school) at Lubeck.

(ii) U-94.

The German radio announced on April 8, 1942, that Oberleutnant Otto Ites had been awarded the Knight Insignia of the Iron Cross. He was stated to have sunk eleven armed enemy merchant ships, including the tanker SAN FLORENTINO, and to have made ten successful operational cruises.

(iii) U-105.

Ungethüm's diary states that five days out of Trondheim U-85 sighted U-105 on September 2, 1941 at 2135 and that the two boats exchanged recognition signals and an account of their experiences.

(iv) U-106.

A German communique of February 7, 1942, stated that the U-boat of Kapitän-leutnant Rasch had particularly distinguished itself in the sinking of six enemy merchant vessels with a total displacement of 38,000 tons off the North American coast.

(v) U-123.

Kapitänleutnant Hardegen has been mentioned twice in connection with successes off the North American coast and in the Atlantic. A German communique of January 24, 1942, stated that Hardegen had sunk eight merchant ships totaling 53,000 tons, among which were three tankers off New York. In a communique of April 14 Hardegen and Lassen were said to have distinguished themselves in successes in the Atlantic. At the same time it was claimed that twelve enemy merchant vessels totaling 104,000 tons had been sunk in the Atlantic and that nearly all these ships, which included seven large tankers, were torpedoed off the coast of America. Hardegen is known to command the U-123. It is not known what boat is under the command of Lassen.

(vi) U-124.

A German communique of March 24, 1942, stated that a U-boat under the command of Kapitänleutnant Mohr had played a prominent part in successes off the American coast. It was also claimed that thirteen merchant ships totaling 80,300 tons, including seven

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XI. Other U-Boats - Cont'd.

tankers, had been sunk off the American coast, and that an additional ship of 11,000 tons had been so heavily torpedoed that it may be considered lost.

(vii) U-126.

A German communique of March 15, 1942, stated that Kapitänleutnant Bauer had distinguished himself in the course of operations in waters of the West Indies. It was claimed at the same time that twelve merchant vessels totaling 70,000 tons, including three tankers, had been sunk in the Caribbean, an additional vessel being damaged by a torpedo hit.

(viii) U-129.

It was stated in a German communique of March 12, 1942, that submarines under Kapitanleutnant Achilles and Kapitanleutnant Niko Clausen had distinguished themselves particularly off the American coast. Clausen is known to have been in command of the U-129 in 1941. The same communique claimed the sinking in North and Central American waters of 17 merchant ships totaling 109,000 tons, one large coast guard vessel and a submarine chaser.

The Offenburger Tageblatt of March 16, 1942, found on the body of a crew member of U-85, announced the award of the Knight Insignia of the Iron Cross to Niko Clausen. It was stated that he had sunk 20 armed enemy merchant vessels totaling 30,000 g.r.t., seven of which, totaling 30,000 g.r.t., had been sunk off the American coast. He was said also to have taken aboard and brought safely to land the crew of a German ship which had been sunk by a British cruiser.

(ix) U-203.

A German communique of April 20, 1942, stated that a submarine under the command of Korvettenkapitan Mutzelburg had distinguished itself particularly in successes off the United States coast. Mützelburg is believed to command the U-203.

(x) U-504.

In a German communique of March 21, 1942, Korvettenkapitän Poske was stated to have distinguished himself in operations in American waters.

(xi) U-552.

A German communique of April 11, 1942, stated that Kapitanleutnant Topp had again distinguished himself in U-boat operations off the American coast, having sunk a total of 31 ships of 208,000 tons, including one destroyer and one coast guard ship.

XI. Other U-Boats - Cont'd.

(xii) U-558.

A German communique of March 26, 1942, stated that Kapitänleutnant Krech had distinguished himself in attacks on a convoy. It was claimed that as a result of this fight, which lasted for days, seven ships aggregating 52,000 tons, including one tanker, were so seriously damaged that they may be considered lost.

U-BOATS LOST.

(i) U-352.

U-Boat under command of Kapitänleutnant Hellmut Rathke sunk on May 9, 1942, is believed to be the U-352.

(ii) U-567.

A German communique of April 1, 1942, announced that the U-Boat of Oberleutnant Endrass had failed to return and must be presumed to be lost.

U-BOAT COMMANDERS.

Below are listed U.Boat commanders mentioned in recent German communiqes as operating successfully in the Atlantic:

<u>U-Boat Commander</u>	<u>Date of Communique</u>	<u>Area of Operations</u>
Achilles	March 12, 1942	American waters.
Cremer	May 11.	American waters.
Igels	March 30.	North Atlantic.
Kalk	January 30.	American and Canadian waters.
Keichert	May 4.	Arctic Ocean.
Lassen	April 14.	Atlantic.
Lüth	January 14.	Atlantic.
Merten	April 8.	Atlantic.
Rostin	March 18.	American coast.
Wattenberg	May 14.	Atlantic.
Zapp	January 27.	North American and Canadian coast.

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XII

Other Ships

None

XIII

General Remarks on U-Boats

None

XIV

Bases

None

Report of Interrogation of Survivors
from a German U-Boat sunk by U.S.C.G. ICARUS
in Position 34.12.05 N., 76.35.W
at 1714 EWT on May 9, 1942.

Number: U-352

Size: 500 tons.

Type: VII c.

Commander: Kapitanleutnant Hellmut Rathke.

Conning Tower Device: Coat of Arms of Town Flensburg.

Built: Flensburg.

Flotilla: Probably 7th if no "USA Flotilla" has been organized.

Base of Operations: St. Nazaire.

Officers: Klt. H. Rathke, Oblt. (Ing) Teetz (x), Lt.z. See Ernst (x), Lt.z. See (Anwarter) Oscar Bernhard, Fahrnich z. See Ernst Kammerer.

Crew: 4 officers and 42 men of which 2 officers and 12 men dead.
(List of crew and deceased members appended).

Early History of U-352

Course of instruction for crew during final phases of construction during June, July, August, and September, 1941. Life saving gear stamped by makers with date, 15 August, 1941. Date of commissioning, in October 1941. Trials with U-Boat Acceptance Commission mid-October to mid-November. During this time U-352 was based on Kiel and made one trip to Gotenhafen returning to Kiel and then to Flensburg where U-352 went into dock for adjustments on or about 28 November 1941.

Members of the crew had "staggered" periods of leave throughout December, the last to depart returning on or about 29 December, 1941, to Flensburg. One member received punishment which involved detention on board and loss of leave for getting drunk and being "adrift" on shore.

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1st War Cruise

It appeared probable that U-352 left Flensburg on or about 20 January 1942, and may well have called at Trondheim or some other Norwegian port for final exercises before proceeding to the Atlantic although there is no confirmation of this apart from Norwegian money in the pockets of survivors. She arrived in St. Nazaire on approximately 5 March 1942. One prisoner stated she had sunk nothing en route but this statement need not necessarily be correct. More leave was granted to the crew during their stay in St. Nazaire, two members returning to Germany to be married. At this time the crew were accommodated in the U-Boatmen's home. Left St. Nazaire towards middle of April.

2nd War Cruise

Were out just over three weeks when sunk. Proceeded on surface and submerged. Frequently sighted aircraft, and once (on May 7, 1942) about two days before sinking, were bombed with two bombs dropped by an a/c. Two prisoners stated that U-352 sunk nothing at all. Crew were most reticent about movements but denied sighting USA coast on any occasion. Radio concerts were permitted on board and Jazz music - of which they were fond - was relayed over the ship's loud speakers from USA stations. Food was good. Fresh meat, vegetables and canned fruit being typical dinner. A small quantity of alcohol was permitted. Crew were allowed to take sun baths in small numbers.

Sinking

It appeared that on sighting ICARUS, "Action Stations" was sounded and the crew went to their posts. Rathke manoeuvred into position at periscope depth and fired one bow torpedo. Shortly after, an explosion was heard. According to the Commander the torpedo (believed to have been electric) appears to have dived to the bottom and exploded upon contact. This may have thrown up the mud seen by ICARUS. Rathke's next move was to submerge until he grounded his U-boat approximately beneath the position of the torpedo explosion. In doing this he may have hoped to avoid anti-sub detecting devices and/or to escape the full effect of depth charges. The grounding of U-boats in shallow waters may be the required avoiding action prescribed by Admiral U-Boats.

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Sinking - Cont'd

Prisoners stated that the next thing heard was a hail of depth charges, some of which were extremely close. There is strong evidence to support the belief that the principal damage caused within the U-boat was the failure of the electric motors. At least part of the lighting equipment fused. Gauges and glasses were smashed in the control room and deck was littered with broken fragments. Lockers were burst open and crockery and other loose gear shattered and flung about the boat. The crew were bruised and shaken. A major leak was denied and there appeared to have been no development of chlorine gas.

Rathke then decided to destroy the boat and ordered all men to put on lungs and lifejackets. He then blew the tanks, and as U-352 surfaced the command was given to abandon ship. There was little doubt that scuttling charges were set and detonated as members of the crew admit hearing two muffled explosions while swimming. All men suffered severely from headache when rescued--a state of affairs which they attributed to the sudden surfacing of the U-boat. One man was cut by the jagged edge of U-352's bridge fairwater which was already under fire from ICARUS. The U-boat's gunner stated that they intended to man the 2 cm A/A gun on surfacing but were speedily dissuaded by the accurate fire of ICARUS.

Details of U-352

U-352 was similar in every respect to U-570 captured by the British and renamed H.M.S. GRAPH (a full description of which has already been published). No additional details of interest was brought to light during interrogation.

Raid on St. Nazaire

U-352 is believed to have been present in St. Nazaire during the March 27 raid by British Commando forces but those of the crew who were not on leave were quartered in a U-Boatmen's "Home" some way from the docks at the time. Many of the prisoners admitted reading or hearing of the raid but all, without exception, obstinately refused to divulge any information concerning damage done. Interrogators were left with the impression that prisoners had been required to swear an additional oath of secrecy before leaving St. Nazaire. One prisoner stated that he would undoubtedly be stood against a wall and shot on returning to Germany should it ever become known that he had given away any information.

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Raid on St. Nazaire - Cont'd.

One prisoner stated that there had been no damage in the town but some damage in the harbor area. He stated he believed that the main lock gates were undamaged but that the British destroyer had exploded.

The majority of those few prisoners who were persuaded to say as much as a word concerning the raid repeated the German propaganda story that the raid was beaten off before any damage was done. Two prisoners grudgingly acknowledged that the raid was a "most daring attack".

Other U-Boats

From prisoners statements there is some reason to believe that another U-boat was in the area when U-352 was sunk.

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REPORT ON INTERROGATION OF SURVIVORS FROM
U-701

*A German Submarine sunk by
U. S. Army Shock Bomber No. 9-29-392,
Unit 296 B.S., 7 July 1942.*

- SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS -

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

U-701 was sunk at approximately 1512 Eastern War Time, 7 July 1942, by U.S. Army Attack Bomber No. 9-29-392, Unit 296 B.S., off Cape Hatteras, in a position which has not yet been definitely established.

The interrogation of the seven survivors was begun within three hours after they had been picked up from the sea. Survivors were covered with oil and badly burned by the sun. It is likely that sunburn might have been even more severe had it not been for the coating of oil on the men's shoulders and arms. They had been in the water approximately 50 hours and were landed ashore by a Coast Guard plane. While it was evident that crew members had been instructed in security, the condition of the survivors unquestionably weakened their resistance to accurate questioning.

It has been noted that submarine crews are now instructed to state that U-boats are no longer numbered but are known only by the name of the Commanding Officer.

It is noteworthy that no documentary evidence of any nature whatsoever was recovered. Among seven survivors there were only four pairs of swimming trunks, two escape lungs and one rubber lifejacket. Had it not been for the prompt interrogation of the survivors it is doubtful whether a satisfactory result could have been obtained.

While the statements in this preliminary report are believed to be accurate, due consideration must be given to the lack of any confirming documentary evidence, as well as to the rapidity with which it has been produced.

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CHAPTER II

CREW OF U-701 -----

The crew of U-701 is believed to have consisted of four officers and forty men. A fifth officer, Leutnant z. See (Ensign) Weinitschke, left the U-boat after the completion of trials in December, 1941. The Captain, Kapitänleutnant (Lieutenant) Horst Degen, who was one of the seven survivors, is twenty-nine years old. He was of the 1933 Naval Term which has supplied many of Germany's most famous U-Boat Commanders. He is a qualified Torpedo and Radio Officer having completed the latest courses in both branches. He stated during interrogation that he had only been with U-Boats two years. He had made one round the world voyage in the cruiser "Karlsruhe" in 1934, when he visited Honolulu, San Diego, Panama, Honduras, Boston and New York. Before the outbreak of war, he was transferred to destroyers, and among others served on "Hans Lody". He took part in the Norwegian campaign when he was at Trondheim but not at Narvik. He stated that his destroyer was in the vicinity when "Scharnhorst" sank H.M.S. "Glorious" on 8th June, 1940. Shortly after this engagement he transferred to the U Boat arm and underwent instruction as a "Kommandantenschüler", (Commander Pupil), at Kiel. He made one trip as a Kommandantenschüler with Kapitän-Leutnant Erich Topp, in U-552, leaving St. Nazaire on 7th April, 1941. An account of this cruise appears in the chapter headed "Other U-Boats". Returning to St. Nazaire Degen went straight to Hamburg where he stood by U-701 during the final phases of her construction.

It is obvious from the remarks of the rest of the survivors that he was a respected and popular commander. Had he not been so, it is doubtful whether he would have survived. During the fifty hours he spent in the water, following the sinking of his U-Boat, he was unconscious for long periods and was supported by his companions who cradled his head in their own life jackets or escape lungs.

He stated that he found life as a U-Boat Commander satisfactory and flattering; that while on a surface ship he was only one officer among many of equal rank, on a U-Boat he was his own master. He enjoyed the added responsibility. He stated he had suffered from stomach troubles for some time past.

He appears to have been more reckless and daring than the general run of U-Boat Commanders, and it is worthy of notice that practically all his attacks on warships and merchant shipping were carried out in broad daylight, regardless of possible escort vessels or protecting aircraft. Politically and mentally there is no reason to believe that he was anything other than a typical National Socialist. The reason that he was more willing to talk than most U-Boat Officers is because he was interrogated immediately after his arrival on land. At that time he had reached the limit of his endurance and had no longer the strength to stand up to incisive questioning.

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Little is known of the two watch-keeping Officers Oberleutenant zur See (Lieutenant j.g.) Junker and Lt. zur See (Ensign) Bazies, both of whom were casualties. Junker was of the 1937 Naval Term; Bazies does not appear in the 1940 German Navy List and was probably a Reserve Officer. The Engineer Officer, Oberleutnant (Ing) Bahr was of the 1937 Term. It was stated that he went mad after many hours in the water and later drowned. The U-Boat also carried a Midshipman Engineer, Fahrnich (Ing) Lange who did not survive. Prisoners believed that Junker, Bazies, Lange, and a rating struck out for land following the sinking of U-701, and must certainly have been drowned.

Of the rating survivors, Obersteuermann (Boatswain) Gunter Kunert, age 28, was an experienced seaman, having spent some years in the merchant service and in sailing ships. He was a huge, jovial, barrel-chested man who appeared none the worse for his ordeal. He was smoking a cigarette within ten minutes of being brought ashore and spent the time of his interrogation rolling luxuriously on his bed, chuckling to himself and cracking jokes at his interrogators, until he was called to order. According to another prisoner, Kunert had made some cruises with a U-Boat Commander named Schultze and on one occasion, while in that U Boat, had been depth charged for 15 hours. (ONI Note: This could have been either Korveltenkapitan (Lieutenant Commander) Herbert Schultze, formerly commander of U 48, or Kapitanleutnant (Lieutenant) Wolfgang Schultze, believed to command U-432). Funkmaat (Radioman 3rd class) Herbert Grotheer, age 24, was in full possession of his senses when interrogated and would reveal little of importance.

Maschinenmaat (Machinist's Mate 3rd class) Ludwig Vaupel was delirious and hysterical when brought ashore. He wept copiously and bemoaned the fate of so many good companions and the sorrow of those they had left behind them. Throughout this exhibition he remained adamantly security conscious.

By a strange coincidence Mechanikergefreiter (Fireman 3rd class) Bruno Faust, age 19, had previously served under Oberleutnant Greger in U-85, which was sunk on the night of 13th/14th April, 1942 by USS ROPER, and was the first of the U-Boats sunk in American waters which have been positively identified. Faust left U-85 in December, 1941, while that U Boat was in Lorient, having caught a bad chill. The two remaining survivors Maschinengefreiter (Fireman 3rd class) Schwendel, age 19, and Mechanikergefreiter (Fireman 3rd class) Werner Seldte, age 21, were the most communicative. With Faust, they had drifted away from their captain in the water and it was obvious that they had none but their own ideas on security. They would talk freely on many subjects but would remain silent on others of seemingly lesser importance. Kunert, Grotheer and Vaupel, on the other hand, had remained with Degen and it would appear that they had received a security lecture before their captain became unconscious.

The rating of Faust and Seldte has been translated literally as "Fireman 3rd class"; both actually belonged to torpedo crews, Seldte at the bow tubes and Faust at the stern.

CHAPTER IIIEARLY HISTORY AND TRIALS OF U-701

U-701 was the first of a series of 500 ton, Type VIIC, U-Boats built by the Stülkenwerft, Hamburg. Prisoners stated that some plans for her construction were supplied by the Blohm and Vose Yards, at Hamburg and others by the Germaniawerft at Kiel. This resulted in considerable constructional difficulties and it was alleged that not only was the U-Boat falsely wired electrically, but that the air and oil pipe line systems were incorrectly fitted and connected.

No information is yet available as to when U-701 was laid down or launched, but building time is believed to have been exceptionally long. Prisoners stated that they were ordered to the Stülkenwerft to stand by the U-Boat during the final phases of her construction in March and April, 1941.

It was confirmed that U-701 was commissioned on 16th July, 1941, and was destined for the 3rd U-Boat Flotilla. Her complement at this time was five officers and forty men. Leaving the Stülkenwerft shortly after commissioning, U-701 proceeded to Kiel by way of the Kaiser Wilhelm Canal. At Kiel she was taken over by members of the U-Boat Acceptance Commission. A short period of working up trials followed and during this time U-701 put in to Gotenhafen and to Danzig where she was taken over by the Danzigerwerft Yards for adjustments. Apparently nothing satisfactory could be done at the Danzigerwerft, for the U-Boat was ordered back to Hamburg by the U-Boat Acceptance Commission for a more thorough overhaul. She arrived back at the Stülkenwerft towards the end of August and remained there for six weeks. A second period of trials began early in October and lasted for about one month, during which time U-701 made repeated cruises from Kiel and on one occasion visited Warnemunde where torpedo firing practice was carried out. Towards the middle of November U-701 again returned to her Hamburg Yard for a second overhaul. It appeared that she finally left the Stülkenwerft on, or about, 20th December, 1941. She traveled by her usual route to Kiel where she completed with fuel and took torpedoes on board. Leutnant zur See Weinitschke who had been on board U-701 during trials had now left the U-Boat.

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CHAPTER IV

FIRST WAR CRUISE OF U-701

U-701 left Kiel for her first war cruise on 27th December, 1941. She proceeded to the North Sea via the Kattegat. Prisoners were emphatic that they did not put in to any Norwegian port, but made straight for an operational area covering the North Western approaches to England. The sole success on this cruise was the sinking of a 3 to 4 thousand ton freighter in the Rockall area. This sinking occurred two to three weeks after leaving Kiel. The attack was carried out in broad daylight. Two electric torpedoes were used, both scoring hits. Prisoners stated that the freighter was sailing unescorted. (ONI Note: British sources suggest that this freighter may have been "Baron Erskine" sunk in the Rockall area in January, 1942, exact date and position unknown). After approximately five weeks at sea, U-701 was recalled to the U-Boat Base at St. Nazaire, where she arrived early in February, 1942.

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CHAPTER V

SECOND WAR CRUISE OF U-701

It was stated that U-701 left St. Nazaire on her second war cruise at the beginning of March and proceeded to an operational area off Iceland. The captain claimed that on this cruise he sank four armed trawlers on consecutive days, each with one electric torpedo. Some, if not all, of these attacks were in daylight. (ONI Note: British sources state that in point of fact only two such vessels were lost in this area at this time. They were the H.M.T. "Notts County" sunk in position 63° 10' North, 13° 16' West at 2350 on 8th March and H.M.S. "Stella Capella" which left Seidisfjord about the same date and was lost without trace. In addition, "Hengist", a fish carrier, was torpedoed in position 59° 34' N., 10° 8' W. between 8th March and 10th March. H.M.T. "Angle" may also have been attacked unsuccessfully in this period).

Prisoners stated that at the end of their cruise they were instructed not to return to St. Nazaire but to Brest. The reason for this change of base was stated by prisoners to have been that the St. Nazaire base was over-crowded with U-boats, but it is not impossible that the true explanation is that St. Nazaire had been made temporarily unserviceable by the British Commando raid of 27th of March, 1942. U-701 arrived at Brest on 15th April and was docked in a U-boat shelter for overhaul. One prisoner stated that the U-boat shelter at Brest could contain a maximum of nine U-boats.

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CHAPTER VII

SINKING OF U-701

According to prisoners, U-701 was attacked by aircraft almost daily while in American waters. It was their custom to lie on the bottom during the day, but occasionally the air became intolerable in the boat and they came up for breathers. On one such an occasion, on 7th July, 1942, a sleepy lookout failed to sight an approaching Army A-29x bomber in time. A desperate attempt was made to crash dive but it was too late. One or two bombs made direct hits aft, when the U-Boat was just below the surface. The pressure hull was torn open and water poured in. Only incoherent accounts of what happened next have been obtained and it is possible that the prisoners will never remember the exact sequence of events during the next few seconds. The captain remembered blowing the tanks and that later the C/T hatch opened easily. One Torpedo Rating stated that he was asleep in the bow compartment at the time of the attack. The main lighting failed but the emergency lighting was still on and he made his way to the Control Room to ask whether they were to abandon ship. He then struggled back to the bow compartment, to get either life saving apparatus or a treasured personal possession, and when he again reached the Control Room water was already waist deep. Prisoners, including the captain, are convinced that the U-Boat was submerged when they got the conning tower hatch open and escaped to the surface. The captain said that he had neither escape lung nor life belt on and he remembers swimming upward for an interminable space of time. It is not thought that much reliance can be placed on this statement as Degen also alleged that the U-Boat had sunk to a depth of 240 feet before he escaped. This statement, which is obviously absurd, is typical of the confusion of mind of the prisoners regarding this stage of the sinking. It is more probable that, the tanks having been blown, U-701 was arrested in a temporary state of suspension on, or near, the surface and in this short time the 17 men who left the boat escaped.

Degen stated definitely that his secret documents were left within the boat and that there was no time to explode scuttling charges even had these been necessary. No attempt was made to send a radio signal reporting the sinking to Admiral U-Boats.

The sinking occurred at 1512 hours on 7th July; it was not until 1605 on 9th July that any survivors were picked up. During these 50 hours the original 17 men who escaped had dwindled to seven. The remainder had drowned one by one after either becoming exhausted and unconscious, or mad, as in the case of the Engineer Officer Oberleutnant (Ing.) Bahr. The Captain had been unconscious for some hours before he was finally picked up and his first question, when he revived on being brought to land, was whether he had spent the previous night ashore. He related an obvious hallucination that during that night he remembered sitting on the shore, washing oil from his body, when a German speaking man had come up to him and told him that he had been mentioned in a German Higher Command Communique on either 29th or 30th June. Describing

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their ordeal prisoners stated that a number of the crew had gone mad with thirst and had raved for glasses of beer. Some of the men had neither escape lungs nor life jackets with them, but they received either one or the other from those who had both. As the days drew on all but the strongest succumbed. This explains why the survivors, with the exception of the Captain, were all particularly robust types. The Captain owed his life to his companions who supported him for some hours in the water, and to a naval airship which dropped a raft to his party on the morning of 9th July. Survivors were finally picked up in position 36° - 18N 73° - 32W, by a Coast Guard Seaplane, after drifting with the Gulf Stream some 65 miles from the estimated position of their sinking.

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CHAPTER VIII

DETAILS OF U-701

Tonnage: 500

Type: 7-C

Conning Tower Device: A red fish: described as a gurnard (Knorrhahn).

Building Yard: Stülkenwerft, Hamburg

Torpedo tubes: 4 bow, 1 stern

Torpedoes: 12 electric, 2 air.

The 12 electric torpedoes were housed with the U-Boat, 4 in the bow tubes, 4 in the bilges in the bow compartment, 2 on the bow compartment floor plates, 1 in the stern tube, and 1 on the floor plates aft. The 2 air torpedoes were housed in containers fitted on the upper deck. War heads for the air torpedoes were stowed within the boat and were not fitted until the torpedoes had been brought from the upper deck containers inside the hull. The work of bringing a torpedo from an upper deck container into the boat was said to be extremely difficult and dangerous. It could only be carried out in a flat sea and took several hours. No rails were fitted for maneuvering the torpedo from the upper deck container to the torpedo hatch forward as in the 740 ton class. A prisoner whose action station was at the torpedo tubes stated that U-701's torpedoes were not marked with red and green bands. No torpedoes were ever fired from U-701's stern tube except during exercises.

Guns: U-701 carried 1 8.8 cm. gun mounted forward of the conning tower and 1 2 cm. A.A. gun mounted on the conning tower.

Ammunition: SAP, HE, Shrapnel, and Incendiary shells were carried.

Machinery: Diesel engines were manufactured by Krupp, Essen, and the electric motors by Siemens.

RDF apparatus: The captain stated that U-701 was not fitted with RDF apparatus, but he agreed that it was possible that this was fitted to some of the new 740 ton U-boats.

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Mines: U-701 carried no mines.

S-Gear or German Asdic: The captain would not admit that U-701 was fitted with S-Gear and stated that he would have had very little use for it. He gave the impression that his opinion of this apparatus was not high.

Sweep eluding apparatus: The captain stated that U-701 did not carry an apparatus for creating an artificially disturbed patch of water with which an A-S vessel might maintain contact and enable a U-boat to elude a Radar or Asdic sweep. He did not appear ever to have heard of such an apparatus and added that if it existed it must be an entirely new invention.

Patron Town: U-701 had not been "adopted" by any German town.

Field Post Number: U-701's Field Post Number was M 44233.

Escape Lungs: These were made by the Draegerwerk, Lubeck, and were tested at these works on 20th September, 1941.

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CHAPTER IX

OTHER U-BOATS

Other U-boats: Prisoners stated that when U-701 was in Erest, between the 15th of April and the end of May, the U-boats of Korvettenkapitän (Lieutenant Commander Buechel and Oberleutnant z.S. (Lieutenant j.g.) Reinhard Suhren were also there. It was not known which U-boats Suhren and Buechel commanded. Buechel, who was previously believed to have been commander of the 22nd U-boat Flotilla at Gotenhafen, was stated by a prisoner to be now in command of a large mine-laying U-boat, probably of 740 tons.

Prisoners confirmed that Korvettenkapitän (Lieutenant Commander) Wattenberg, who was on the pocket battleship ADMIRAL GRAF SPEE at the time of the battle of the River Plate and later escaped from internment in the Argentine, is now in command of a U-boat of at least 740 tons which is operating in the Carribean or off the east coast of South America. This U-boat is believed to be based on Lorient. The captain stated Wattenberg has now been promoted to the rank of Fregattenkapitän (Commander). He is thought to be the oldest U-boat commander, but is said to be a man of remarkable energy.

U-85

Mechanikergefreiter (Fireman 3rd class) Bruno Faust, who had served on the U-85 under Greger during her second war cruise (October 16 to about November 30) confirmed earlier information on this cruise and stated that Greger was still in command on the cruise on which U-85 was sunk.

U-96

It was stated that Kapitänleutnant (Lieutenant) Lehmann-Willenbrock's boat carries as device a green sailfish. Lehmann-Willenbrock is believed to be in command of the U-96.

U-57

The captain confirmed that at one time Kapitänleutnant (Lieutenant) Erich Topp had commanded the U-57. From British sources it was already known that this boat was later sunk while under the command of Kapitänleutnant (Lieutenant) Korth, was raised again and is now being used as a schoolboat.

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U-552

The captain stated that he had served as Kommandant-enschüler under Kapitänleutnant (Lieutenant) Topp in U-552 during April and May, 1941. They left St. Nazaire on 7 April, 1941, and returned some four weeks later. During this cruise they operated near Rockall in the Northwestern Approaches, sinking four ships in all. These ships were an armed trawler, a tanker, a freighter from a convoy and another large freighter travelling alone, making a total of approximately 24,000 tons. After the attack on the convoy their boat was counter-attacked by two or three British destroyers who strayed over their position for hours and dropped a large number of depth charges. They dived to a great depth in their avoiding action. Degen claimed, however, that only very minor damage was suffered in this engagement. He stated that he had heard the "ping" of asdics while with Topp. Degen stated that Topp's boat carried a red devil as device on the conning tower.

ONI Note: From British sources it was known that Topp left Saint Nazaire in U-552 on April 7 and again on May 23, 1941.

U-567

Degen, who claims to have been a close personal friend of Kapitänleutnant (lieutenant) Endrass, and other prisoners, stated that the fact that Endrass had been lost in U-567, "near Gibraltar at the end of December", became general knowledge among U-Boat men, early in January, 1942. A German High Command Communique, admitting the loss of Endrass, was issued on 31st March, 1942.

U-702

This U Boat, which should have followed U-701 from the stocks, was alleged by prisoners to have still been unfinished when U-701 finally left the Stulkenwerft in December, 1941. The faults which had been discovered in U-701 during trials, had been duplicated in U-702 and a large amount of reconstruction had become necessary. Prisoners could not remember the name of the prospective Captain of U-702 but knew him to be an Oberleutnant (Lieutenant j.g.)

U.B. (formerly H.M.S. "Seal")

Legen claimed that he had frequently examined U.B. after her capture. He considered the submarine slow and unwieldy. She took too long to dive and was useless for any but minelaying purposes.

U-553

According to a prisoner, a U-Boat commanded by Kapitänleutnant (Lieutenant) Thurmann is based on St. Nazaire. Thurmann is believed to command U-553.

U-123

Prisoners stated that Kapitänleutnant (Lieutenant) Hardegen is based on Lorient. He is known to command U-123.

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CHAPTER XATTACKS BY AIRCRAFT IN USA WATERS
ON U-701

Prisoners stated that they were attacked almost daily by aircraft and blimps while in USA waters; that is to say, roughly between 10th June and 7th July, 1942. It was their policy to lie on the bottom during the day time and only to rise to the surface by day when the air became intolerable within the boat. On such occasions there was an aircraft watch of four look-outs under an officer. Each look-out covered a sector of 90°.

Given fair visibility, Degen stated that he reckoned that his men could spot an approaching aircraft six miles away. His policy was to crash dive immediately. Another prisoner stated that the crew were trained to submerge the U-Boat within thirty seconds of sighting an aircraft. He thought that the record for crash-diving, starting with four men on the conning tower, was 28 seconds.

The Captain alleged that he had little fear of anything but a direct hit on the U-Boat, and he seemed to think that this entitled him to take chances. At the same time it was obvious that he considered that his movements were greatly hindered and restricted by the large number of aircraft on patrol on this side of the Atlantic.

The greater part of the voyage across the Atlantic was made on the surface, but the U-Boat submerged when nearing the USA coast.

It did not appear from interrogation that the U-701 was fitted with any device to receive, or confuse, Radar Transmissions.

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CHAPTER XI

U-BOAT BASES

BREST: The U-Boat shelters at Brest were alleged to be able to contain a maximum of nine U-Boats at a time.

Prisoners hinted that arrangements for fueling U-Boats at this Base were inadequate and that it was now the practice for U-Boats based on Brest to complete with oil at Lorient before setting out on their war cruises.

The most popular U-Boat ratings' haunt in Brest was stated to be the Cecilia Bar in the centre of the town. Here, Champagne was now six marks a bottle, compared with the price of two marks a bottle obtaining a year ago.

LA PALLICE: Mechanikergefreiter (Fireman 3rd class) Bruno Faust stated that from January to the end of April this year he worked at a Torpedo Regulating Establishment half-an-hour's bus ride North of La Rochelle and a few miles in from the coast. This "Torpedoregelstelle" was in a village the name of which began with "Chateau", the second word beginning possibly with the letter "M". It is suggested that this is "Chateau Musset", about a mile southwest of Serigny. Ratings working here lived in La Rochelle and travelled to the "Torpedoregelstelle" daily by bus. It is possible that this is a secret inland torpedo establishment supplying the La Pallice Base.

ST. NAZAIRE: It was confirmed that ratings based on St. Nazaire are housed in U-Boat men's homes in neighboring La Baule. The two most popular drinking haunts there are the "Gift Bude" and the "Maritza" Bar.

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CHAPTER XII

U-BOAT LOSSES OFF THE AMERICAN COAST

One prisoner claimed to have heard that five or six U-Boats had been lost off the American coast since the outbreak of war between this country and Germany. Degen considered this figure an exaggeration and estimated that losses on this side of the Atlantic were not more than three boats.

CHAPTER XIII

GENERAL REMARKS ON U-BOATS

One prisoner stated that he knew of the existence of 1000 ton U-Boats but had never actually seen one. He believed that they were exclusively used for mine-laying purposes.

CHAPTER XIV

U-BOAT BUILDING YARDS

Prisoners agreed that the small Stülkenwerft, Hamburg, was experiencing considerable difficulties in producing U-Boats. Some plans had been supplied by the Blohm and Vose Yards and others by the Germaniawerft, Kiel. The result was that many errors had been made fitting and connecting oil and air lines and in the electrical wiring of the U-Boats, besides other building defects. These errors had been discovered in the U-701 and had had to be corrected in subsequent U-Boats of the series. It was alleged that not more than seven or eight boats were building at the Yard and that the present rate of production was not more than one U-Boat every four or five months. This rate might now have been speeded up. The U-702 was stated to be still on the stocks when the U-701 finally left the Stülkenwerft in December, 1941.