

Two German Submarines Sunk in the Irish Sea During World War II: U246 and U1024

(this info is kindly supplied by Adrian Corkill, of the IOM)

U1024

Position: 53 44.026 N 04 57.500 W
Status: Accurate
Datum: WGS84
Location: 23.0 nm northwest of Holyhead

Vessel

The German Type VIIC submarine U1024, 750 tons, was constructed by Blohm and Voss, of Hamburg and was launched on 3rd May 1944 and commissioned on 28th June 1944. She was commanded by KL. Hans-Joachim Gutteck and her crew numbered 45 men. She was 251.0 feet in length, had a beam of 20.5 feet and a draught of 15.8 feet (76.5 m x 6.25 m x 4.8 m).

History

From 28th June 1944 to 31st January 1945, U1024 and her crew undertook training with 31 Flotille. Her first and last patrol as a front boat was with 11 Flotille between 1st February 1945 and 12th April 1945.

At 5.23 p.m. on 7th April 1945 U1024 attacked the Liberty Ship James W Nesmith, 7,176 tons, sailing with Convoy HX-346, when off Holyhead. The American steamer was carrying 3,375 tons of tobacco, fertiliser, lumber, crated aircraft parts and eight P-47 aircraft as deck cargo. The torpedo hit the steamer on her port side and she was taken in tow by HMCS Belleville and taken to Holyhead temporarily before being moved to Liverpool, arriving 23rd April. She was declared a total loss and later towed to Bremerhaven where she was loaded with surplus chemical ammunition. She was then scuttled in the North Sea in June 1946.

On 12th April 1945, the American Liberty ship Will Rogers was bound from New York to Liverpool with a cargo of landing mats and flour when she was torpedoed by the German submarine U1024 when in a position of 53 48 N, 04 46 W. Damaged, but not in danger of sinking, the Will Rogers was towed to Holyhead and beached. The ship was the last to be torpedoed by an enemy submarine in this area of the Irish Sea.

On the same day as her attack on the Will Rogers the U1024 was detected by HMS Loch Glendhu of EG8. Although the frigate's 147B set was not working, a Squid pattern was fired at 2042 and three minutes later a U-Boat broke surface in position 53.39 N 05.03 W. All ships in the Group opened fire and HMS Achray moved in to drop a pattern of depth charges. Gutteck was one of the first coming out of the conning tower and was wounded in the hand, after which he shot himself. Fire was checked when it was realised that the U-Boat was being abandoned. Boarding parties went over and secured the boat, which was taken in tow by HMS Loch More. However, the weather deteriorated during the night and in thick fog, which reduced visibility to 50 feet, the tow parted and she foundered 23 miles northwest of Holyhead.

Eight of U1024's crew were killed whilst one officer, five senior ratings and thirty one junior ratings survived.

The men who were killed were:

Rank	Surname	First Name(s)	Born
MaschOGfr	Becher	Hermann	19 Oct 1923
OLt.ing.d.R	Grohmann	Günter	27 Jan 1923
KpLt.01.11.43.	Gutteck	Hans-Joachim	10 Apr 1914

FkOGfr	Krüger	Paul	16 Aug 1925
OMaschMT	Stocker	Franz	10 Nov 1915
?	?	?	
?	?	?	
?	?	?	

The survivors were:

Rank	Surname	First Name(s)	Born
MaschGfr	Barthel	Johannes	
MaschMt	Becker	Robert	
FkMt	Bouillon	Hannes	
MaschGfr	Brückler	Alois	
MtrGfr	Buchwald	Karl-Heinz	
MaschGfr	Crecelius	Johann (Arnold)	
FkOGfr	Forschbach	Heinz	
MtrOGfr	Gutekunst		
MtrOGfr	Hamer	Karl	
MtrGfr	Hartner	Josef	
MtrOGfr	Heil	Kurt	
MechOGfr	Holtrup	Karl	
MaschMt	Hümel van	Hans	
MaschOGfr	Junior	Willi	
MechMt	Kaiser	Hans	
OBstMt	Kerth	Phillipp	
MtrOGfr	Kleen	Gerhard	
MechGfr	Knöpfler	Johann (Kurt)	
OStrm	Lange	Heinrich	
BtsMt	Legat	Karl	
OBtsMt	Löhr	Johannes	
SanOGfr	Mantey	Georg	
Mtr.II	Meissner	Johann (Herbert)	
MtrOGfr	Moritz	Otto	
OLt.z.S	Müller	Horst-Günter	
OMasch	Müller	Karl-Hermann	
MaschOGfr	Pietsch	Horst	
MaschMt	Präger	Arno	
MaschOGfr	Preuss	Heinz	
MtrOGfr	Rosemeyr	Friederich	
MaschMt	Röske	Kurt	
MtrOGfr	Schmidt	Johann (Wilhelm)	
MaschMt	Schneider	Franz	
MaschMt	Schoppmann	Herbert	
MaschOGfr	Tröger	Josef	
Mtr.I	Wagenhofer	Peter-Alois	
FkMt	Wege	Heinz	

References

The U-Boat Offensive 1914-1945, Tarrant; Register of Type VII U-Boats, Adams and Lees; The Liberty Ships, LA Sawyer and WH Mitchell; U-Boats Destroyed, Paul Kemp; German U-Boat Losses During World War II, Axel Niestle.

Wreck Site

Diving

U1024 seems the most likely candidate for the wreck, but U246 cannot be ruled out.

The wreck lies in a general depth of 64 metres of water and rises to about 5 metres from the seabed. The wreck is about 150 metres in length and is orientated on a north/south axis.

Due to the depth of water, the wreck of the U1024 is only for the highly technical diver using tri-mix either in open circuit or in a rebreather. The U1024 will certainly be an excellent dive, as the wreck appears largely intact on sonar. Being located on a sand or shingle seabed should ensure visibility at 8 metres or so in the summer months and sometimes an excellent at 15 metres or more in calm weather and small tides (apart from the plankton bloom in May and early June when it is generally more limited).

Expect the slack waters to occur more or less at the predicted low and high water times and beginning about half an hour before to three quarters of an hour after. However, on spring tides expect this window of slack to be of a shorter duration. The flood tide flows from the west-southwest and the ebb from the east-northeast.

Angling

The wreck should produce pollack, coalfish and ling.

Images



U1024 being captured by the Royal Navy



Emblem of the U1024

U246

Position: 53 39.979 N 04 54.292 W
Status: Accurate
Datum: WGS84
Location: 23.0 nm S.S.W. of the Calf of Man

Vessel

The German Type VIIC submarine U246, 761 tons, was constructed by Germaniawerft, of Kiel and was launched on 7th December 1943 and commissioned on 11th January 1944. She was commanded by KL. E Raabe and her crew numbered forty eight men. She was 251.0 feet in length, had a beam of 20.5 feet and a draught of 15.8 feet (76.5 m x 6.25 m x 4.8 m).

History

From 11th January 1944 to 31st July 1944, U246 and her crew undertook training with 5 Flotille. Her first patrol as a front boat was with 3 Flotille between 1st August 1944 and 30th September 1944. Her second and fateful patrol began on 1st October 1944. On 25th October, an escort attacked her with depth charges and damaged her so seriously that she had to return to base for repairs. After recommencing her patrol, U246 radioed base for the last time on 7th March 1945 from position 56 20.00 N, 12 50.00 W while en route for her operational area in the Irish Sea.

Wreckage brought up from a contact attacked by HM Ships Hesperus and Havelock, assisted by Sunderland "H" of No 201 Squadron, on 30th April was conclusively identified as coming from U246. However, since U246 was to leave patrol and return home in early April, she must have been dead on the bottom when found and attacked by the two destroyers and the Sunderland aircraft. In the absence of any other attack to account for U246, her loss must be attributed to an accident, most likely a snorkel failure or battery explosion resulting from inadequate ventilation while charging. Whether the loss of U246 can be attributed to an attack by HMS Duckworth on 29th March has yet to be determined.

The 47 crewmen of U246 were as follows:

Rank	Surname	First Name(s)	Born
OStrm	Ahrlich	Johann	25 Feb 1915
MaschGfr	Beyer	Günter	29 Aug 1925
OmechMt	Böker	Ewald	12 Sep 1922
MaschOGfr	Ciuppa	Erich	11 May 1924
MaschGfr	Cleres	Erich	24 Oct 1924
BtsMt	Deisen	Peter	10 Apr 1921
Maschgfr	Dommick	Gerhard	22 Aug 1925
FkOGfr	Giesers	Heinrich	6 Dec 1924
OLt.z.s.	Glatzel	Hans-Heinrich	14 Nov 1922
OFkMt	Glindermann	Albert	24 Feb 1922
MaschMt	Görigk	Heinrich	4 May 1921
BtsMt	Grünmann	Karl	27 Jan 1922
MaschOGfr	Heyer	Jakob	23 Jul 1922
MaschMt	Hinneberg	Herbert	15 Oct 1919
MtrOGfr	Hofmann	Kurt	31 Aug 1922
FkMt	Horbach	Günter	29 Dec 1920
MaschMt	Hübner	Karl-Heinz	10 Oct 1921
Omasch	Hüls	Johannes	19 Dec 1912
MtrOGfr	Kemke	Helmut	31 Mar 1924
MaschMt	Körner	Fritz	6 Jul 1921
OLt.ing.	Kuckelkorn	Herbert	16 Sep 1917
Mtr	Lange	Gerhard	23 Jan 1925
MaschMt	Lony	Herbert	00 Sep 1921
MtrOGfr	Lorenz	Heinz	5 May 1924
BtsMt	Lüchau	Harald	10 Apr 1924
MaschOGfr	Müller	Helmut	00 Aug 1922
MtrOGfr	Müller	Kurt	10 Jul 1924
MaschOGfr	Müller	Rudolf	23 Dec 1924
MaschOGfr	Münchenberg	Hans	10 Aug 1924
OMasch	Münster	Hans	8 Mar 1916
FkGfr	Nettelroth	Horst	1 Jan 1922
MaschOGfr	Neumann	Günter	12 Sep 1924
MtrOGfr	Obermayer	Franz	22 Feb 1924
MaschOGfr	Peters	Wilhelm	16 Mar 1923
KpLt	Raabe	Ernst	5 Feb 1907
MechOGfr	Ratsch	Joachim-Hans	8 Aug 1924

OStrm	Rübcke	Gerhard	20 Aug 1920
OFahr.ing.	Schaaf	Gunter	1 May 1924
MtrOGfr	Schreiner	Kurt	9 Nov 1924
MtrOGfr	Schröder	Ernst	26 May 1925
MtrOGfr	Schröder	Peter	30 Nov 1924
MaschOGfr	Schuster	Johann	14 Sep 1920
MaschGfr	Sommer	Heinrich	18 Jan 1924
MtrHGfr	Staude	Siegfried	23 Nov 1923
Dr	Thurner	Ernst	16 Apr 1911
FkOGfr	Vogt	Paul	29 Sep 1924
MtrOGfr	Volkman	Erwin	13 Sep 1924

References

The U-Boat Offensive 1914-1945, Tarrant; Register of Type VII U-Boats, Adams and Lees; Search, Find and Kill, Franks; U-Boats Destroyed, Kemp; German U-Boat Losses During World War II, Niestle.

Wreck Site

Diving

U246 seems the most likely candidate for the wreck, but U1024 can not be ruled out and, indeed, after the war the wreck was thought to be the U242, but she has possibly been located elsewhere. U1024 surrendered to the Royal Navy and later sank under tow about 23 miles northwest of Anglesey on 13th April 1945. However, other reports suggest that the U1024 sank off Fleetwood while under tow. In addition, there are several U-boats that simply disappeared around the coast of the British Isles during the Second World War.

The wreck lies on its starboard side a general depth of 45 metres of water and rises to about 4 metres from the seabed. The wreck is about 70 metres in length and about 6 metres in width. It is orientated on an east/west axis.

The wreck of U246 makes for an excellent dive. It is quite broken up at both the stern and the bow. At the stern the propellers, torpedo tubes and torpedoes can be observed and likewise the bow torpedo tubes and torpedoes are also visible. The midships section is fairly intact and the conning tower is clearly visible with its distinctive D/F aerial, periscope and snorkel. Sand is piling up on the port side.

As the wreck lies in an area of sand so visibility is generally good at 8 metres or so in the summer months and sometimes excellent at 15 metres or more in calm weather and small tides (apart from the plankton bloom in May and early June when it is generally more limited). Due to her depth the wreck can be quite dark so a good torch is recommended.

Expect the slack waters to occur more or less at the predicted low and high water times and beginning about an hour before to low water. However, on spring tides expect this window of slack to be of a shorter duration. The flood tide flows from the west and the ebb from the east.

Angling

The wreck should produce pollack, coalfish and ling.

Images



Emblem of the U246