



From the Front

Part 1

August 1918

It will be remembered from the aftermath of the 2nd Battle of the Marne that the German's had been halted not only by severe military action but also by the failure of their lines of supply. This brought about the failure of the German Spring Offensive launched on the 21st March 1918.

The Allies moved swiftly to counter attack, on the 24th July Foch had declared that “the moment has come to abandon the general defensive attitude and pass to the offensive” by the end of the Battle of the Marne they had been so successful that the Germans were forced back to their original lines.

As the fighting waned around the 6th August 1918 the British were preparing for a second assault near Amiens. Originally this had been conceived by the commander of the British



Expeditionary Force, Sir Douglas Haig and was intended to open rail lines near



the city. Seeing an opportunity to continue the success achieved on the Marne Foch insisted that the French First Army be part of the plan. This was resisted by Haig because the Fourth Army, under Lieutenant General Sir Henry Rawlinson had already developed assault plans. These had intended to skip the typical preliminary artillery bombardment in favour of a surprise attack involving the

large scale use of tanks. The French lacked large number of tanks and therefore a bombardment would be necessary to soften up the German defences on their sector of the line.

A compromise was struck at a meeting of the French and British commanders in that the French First Army would be included in the assault subject to a delay of forty five minutes which would allow Rawlinson to achieve surprise but still would be augmented by the Australians under Lieutenant General Sir John Monash who, on the 12 August 1918, at Château de Bertangles, Monash was knighted as a Knight



Commander of the Order of the Bath on the battlefield by King George V, and the Canadians under Lieutenant General Sir Arthur Currie.



Diversionsary plans were set in motion, including the dispatching of two battalions and a radio unit from the Canadian corps to Ypres in an effort to convince the Germans that the entire corps was being shifted to that area.

At 4.20 am on August 8th the British artillery opened fire, in dense fog, on



specific German targets and provided a creeping barrage ahead of the main assault. The French Army under General Debeney opened up its barrage at the same time and began its advance 45 minutes later. The attack was so unexpected that German Forces only began to return fire after five minutes and even then at the positions where the Allied forces had assembled at the start of the battle

and had long since left.

The final plan for the Fourth Army involved 1,386 field guns and howitzers and 684 heavy guns making up 27 medium artillery brigades and thirteen heavy

batteries. The fire plan for the fourth Army was devised by Monash's senior artillery officer, Major general C. E. D .Budworth based upon advances in sound ranging artillery techniques and improved aerial photographic reconnaissance which made it possible to dispense with "Ranging Shots" to ensure accurate fire. Budworth had produced a timetable which allowed 504 out of 530 German guns to be hit at "zero hour" while a creeping barrage preceded the infantry.

There were also 580 tanks. The Canadian and Australian Corps were each allocated a brigade of four battalions with 108 Mar V fighting tanks, 36 Mark V



"star" and 24 unarmed tanks to carry supplies and ammunition. This became known as the Battle of Amiens or the Third Battle of

Picardy and was regarded as the beginning of the Hundred Days Offensive which ultimately led to the conclusion of the War.

The British struck at the Second Army of General Georg von der Marwitz and achieved complete surprise. South of the Somme the

Australians and Canadians had captured their first objective by 7.20 AM and to the North the III Corps had occupied their objective by 7.30 AM after advancing 4,000 yards and opening a gaping fifteen-mile hole in the German lines.

By 11.00 AM the Australians and Canadians had moved

forward three miles and with the enemy falling back British Cavalry moved forward to exploit the breach. The advance north of the river was slower as III Corps was supported by fewer tanks and had encountered heavy resistance along a wooded ridge near Chipilly. The French had also met with success and moved forward approximately five miles before nightfall. The average gain by the Allies on the 8th August was seven miles with the Canadians penetrating eight. The advance continued over the next two days albeit at a slower rate



because the rapid advance outran the supporting artillery and ran short of supplies. On the 10th August the Germans began to pull out of the salient, which they had managed to occupy during Operation Michael in March, towards the Hindenburg Line.

By the end of the first phase on the 11th August the Germans had been returned



to their original pre-Spring Offensive lines. General Erich Ludendorff referred to August 8th as the “Schwarzer Tag des deutschen Heeres” the “Blackest Day of the German Army.”

In addition to the territorial losses the British Fourth Army had taken 13,000 prisoners while the French captured a further 3,000, Total German losses were estimated at 30,000 on the 8th August whilst the Fourth Army’s losses, including

Australian and Canadian forces, were approximately 8,800 exclusive of tank and air losses.

On the 15th August Foch demanded that Haig continue the Amiens offensive even though the attack was faltering and German reserves

being drafted into the area. Haig, however, refused and prepared to launch a fresh attack by the Third Army, under Sir Julian Byng against Albert which opened up on the 21st August. The offensive was a success pushing the German 2nd Army back over a 34 mile front. Albert itself was captured on the 22nd August. The attack was widened to the



South by the French 10th Army, who started the Second Battle of Noyon on the 17th August capturing the town of Noyon on the 29th August. The next stage of the battle was actually a complex two operation affair which can be categorised as the Second Battle of Arras and the Second Battle of Bapaume. The main objective was to exhaust the enemy who were already retreating eastward. On the 26th August to the north of the Somme the First Army, under Sir Henry Horne launched the attack on Arras with the Canadian Corps under General

Arthur Currie and succeeded in widening the front by another 7 miles. With the



Second Battle of Bapaume on the 29th August Bapaume fell, at the third attempt by the New Zealand Division.

Bapaume itself was a small town linked by rail to Albert and Arras, there were also four major roads running through the town; running to Albert in the south-west, to Peronne in the south-east; to Cambrai in the east and to the north lay

Arras. Captured by the forces of Imperial Germany in the

early stages of the war, it had been the focus of the British forces on the opening day of the Battle of Somme in 1916. Still in German hands, it had been largely destroyed in early 1917 following their withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line.

Extensive booby traps had also been left and these troubled the Australians that moved into the town Spring Offensive. The land surrounding Bapaume was relatively flat and thus was afterwards. It was subsequently recaptured by the Germans during the conducive to the use of tanks

Overnight, Bapaume was abandoned, a state of affairs confirmed by patrols of the 3rd Rifle Battalion entering the town from the north. They observed retreating Germans making for Bancourt to the east. Meanwhile, 2nd Auckland Battalion entered Bapaume from the south. Likewise, the Germans had retreated from Thillooy and the 5th Manchester Battalion, of 42nd Division, moved through the village and secured it.



After the protracted fighting of the previous few days, Bapaume was now in the hands of the New Zealanders. Before the town was abandoned by the Germans, numerous booby traps had been set which had to be found and deactivated over the next days. In the meantime, the Rifle Brigade moved forward and established a new line 1,400 m (1,500 yd) east of

Bapaume. A similar distance beyond this lay the villages of Frémicourt and Bancourt, to which the Germans had retreated

The battle was not yet over for the New Zealand Division as it was ordered to continue to chase the Germans and secure the Bancourt Ridge, in front of which the villages of Bancourt and Frémicourt lay. The advance was renewed on 30 August, with two battalions of the 1st Infantry Brigade tasked with capturing Bancourt while the New Zealand Rifle Brigade was to take Frémicourt. They were then to push onto Bancourt Ridge.

Meanwhile the Canadians had achieved success following the assault launched on the 26th August at 3.00 AM. The 2nd Division was on the right, south of the



Cambrai Road; the 3rd Division, between the road and the Scarpe; the 51st Highland Division, on the left, north of the Scarpe. Supported by a powerful artillery and machine gun barrage, the attack made good progress. The 3rd

Division captured Monchy, the first objective, with a skilfully executed encircling manoeuvre that was praised long after the tactical feat. On the right, the 2nd Division captured the villages of Guemappe and Wancourt during the afternoon. By nightfall, the Canadian line extended about 914 metres east of Monchy.

General Currie's orders for the 27th were to break through the Fresnes-Rouvroy Line and thereby advance by eight kilometres. It took two more days of bitter fighting before this defence system near Boiry-Notre-Dame was penetrated, and when the Battle of the Scarpe ended on August 30, resolute German garrisons were still stubbornly clinging to it.

In the first three days of the battle, the 2nd and 3rd Divisions had advanced more than eight kilometres over rough, broken land furrowed with extremely well-fortified trenches. Nevertheless, the Canadians succeeded in reaching the great majority of their objectives and captured 3,300 prisoners and a large number of guns.

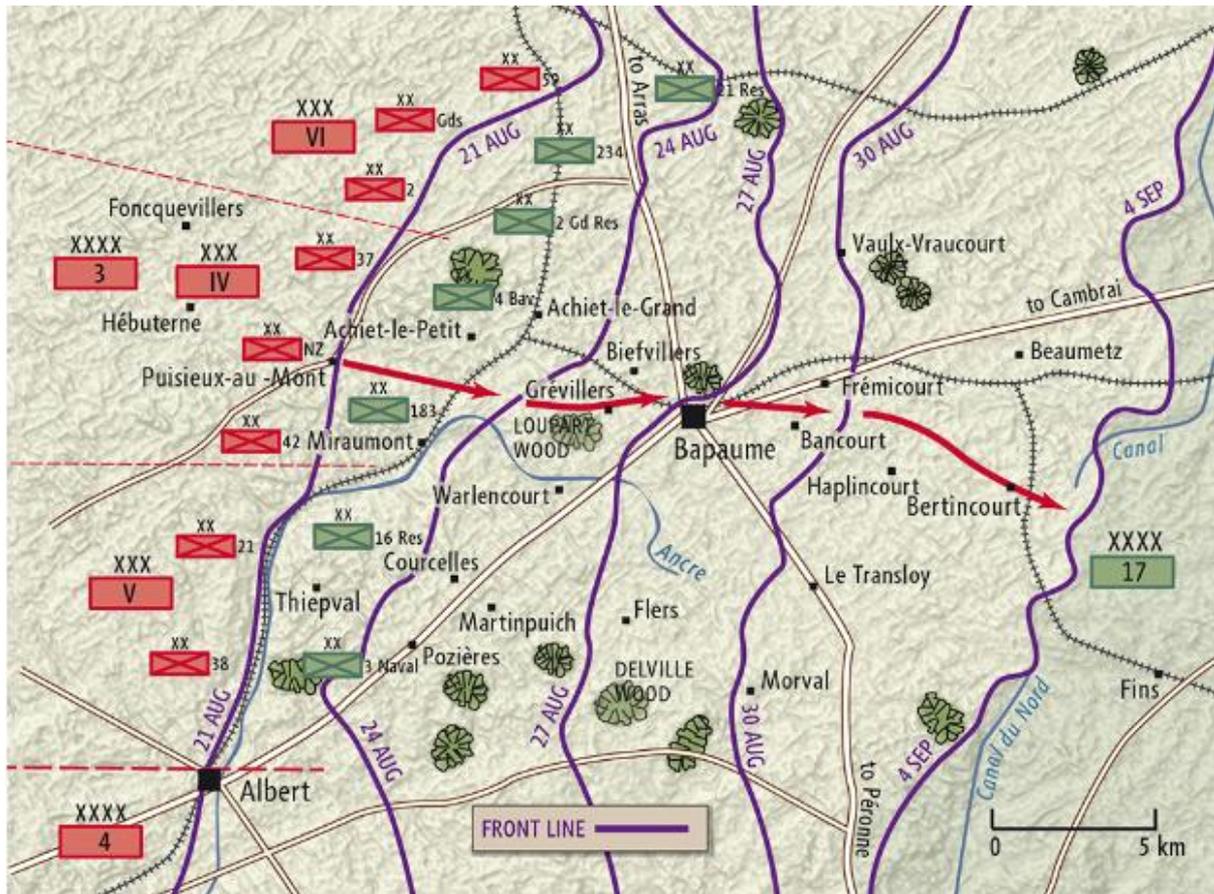
It now seemed certain that trench warfare had become obsolete and proof of this lay in the fact that the Allied troops, backed by 456 tanks and 2,000 guns and howitzers, had overwhelmed the Germans on a 14-mile front east of Amiens. For the first time since the war began, a large German force collapsed under fire. Their demoralisation began to show, Chief of Staff Field Marshall Paul

Von Hindenburg noted that the Allied use of surprise and destruction of German lines of communication had hampered potential counter attacks by his troops by isolating command positions. There was a sudden willingness to capitulate and surrender, Ludendorff himself noted instances of retreating troops shouting to fresh reinforcements “you are prolonging the War” accompanied by shouts of “Blackleg” as the reserves moved up.

The Allied generals now had hundreds of improved tanks to spearhead their attacks, they had more accurate and better-organised artillery which could deliver the new innovation of the creeping barrage and they had learnt, finally how to combine artillery, infantry, tanks and aircraft. Additionally more troops were becoming more available as men returned from the Palestine and Middle Eastern fronts. Lloyd George, trusting Haig not to squander lives on the scale of the great offensives of 1916/17 finally released drafts of men who had been kept in reserve in England

In truth the campaign in France was not economical with the lives of soldiers, the “poor, bloody infantry” still died in droves and this was reflected in the casualty figures for Dewsbury during August when 36 men from this Ancient Borough paid the supreme sacrifice. But at last the “Way to Berlin” was opened and whilst it took a little while to appreciate this fact by the high command, at least the opportunity was presenting itself.

ASK/ 26/June/2018



The U-boat story

In this series many aspects of the war have been examined and many of the threats to Britain's survival have been the focus of attention, however, perhaps the greatest of these threats has not been mentioned. Not since the 1870's Golden Age of Agriculture came to an end had it been possible for British farmers been able to meet the needs of a rapidly expanding population in terms of home grown produce. We had come to rely upon imports from the United States and Canada for our daily bread and that is the basic reason why this country had almost been brought to her knees by the menace of the German submarines or Unterseeboot.



[U-995](#), a typical U-boat



The first submarine built in Germany, the three-man *Brandtaucher*, sank to the bottom of Kiel harbour on 1 February 1851 during a test dive. The inventor and engineer Wilhelm Bauer had designed this vessel in 1850, and Schweffel & Howaldt constructed it in Kiel. Dredging operations in 1887 rediscovered

Brandtaucher; it was later raised and put on historical display in Germany.

There followed in 1890 the boats *WW1* and *WW2*, built to a Nordenfelt design. In 1903 the Friedrich Krupp Germaniawerft dockyard in Kiel completed the first fully functional German-built submarine, *Forelle*, which Krupp sold to Russia during the Russo-Japanese War in April 1904. The *SM U-1* was a completely redesigned Karp-class submarine and only one was built. The Imperial German Navy commissioned it on 14 December 1906. It had a double hull, a Körting kerosene engine, and a single torpedo



tube. The 50%-larger *SM U-2* (commissioned in 1908) had two torpedo tubes. The *U-19* class of 1912–13 saw the first diesel engine installed in a German navy boat. At the start of World War I in 1914, Germany had 48 submarines of 13 classes in service or under construction. During that war the Imperial German Navy used *SM U-1* for training. Retired in 1919, it remains on display at the Deutsches Museum in Munich.

In 1914, the submarine was seen as a weapon of marginal importance. On the contrary, influenced by the legacy of Nelson and the theories of the American thinker AT Mahan, it was widely believed that a conflict between Britain and Germany would begin with a new Trafalgar: a decisive clash between British and German battleships.

On 5 September 1914, HMS *Pathfinder* was sunk by *SM U-21*, the first ship to have been sunk by a submarine using a self-propelled torpedo. On 22 September, *U-9* sank the obsolete British warships HMS *Aboukir*, HMS *Cressy* and HMS *Hogue* (the "Live Bait Squadron") in a single hour.



In the Gallipoli Campaign in early 1915 in the eastern Mediterranean, German U-boats, notably the *U-21*, prevented close support of allied troops by 18 pre-Dreadnought battleships by sinking two of them.

For the first few months of the war, U-boat anticommerce actions observed the "prize rules" of the time, which governed the treatment of enemy civilian ships and their occupants. On 20 October 1914, *SM U-17* sank the first merchant ship, the *SS Glitra*, off Norway. Surface commerce raiders were proving to be ineffective, and on 4 February 1915, the Kaiser assented to the declaration of a war zone in the waters around the British Isles. This was cited as retaliation for British minefields and shipping blockades. Under the instructions given to U-boat captains, they could sink merchant ships, even potentially neutral ones, without warning. Before the war, the submarine was regarded as a morally dubious weapon, subject to international agreements. Submarines were supposed to surface and give crews time to abandon ship before sinking their vessels. This sacrificed surprise, one of the submarine's major advantages, and left the submarine vulnerable to attack while on the surface.

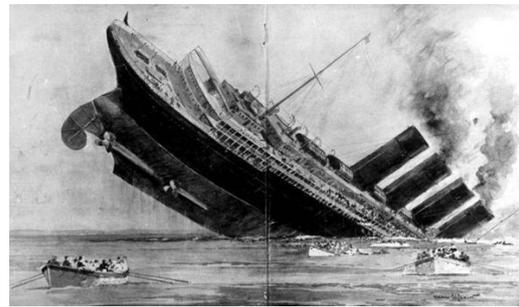
In February 1915 Germany decided to abandon these constraints, and moved towards unrestricted submarine warfare. The seas around the British Isles were declared a war zone, in which Allied merchant craft could be attacked without prior warning.

In February 1915, a submarine *U-6 (Lepsius)* was rammed and both periscopes



were destroyed off Beachy Head by the collier *SS Thordis* commanded by Captain John Bell RNR after firing a torpedo. On 7 May 1915, SM *U-20* sank the liner RMS *Lusitania*. The sinking claimed 1,198 lives, 128 of them American civilians, and the attack of this unarmed civilian ship deeply shocked the Allies. According to the ship's

manifest, *Lusitania* was carrying military cargo, though none of this information was relayed to the citizens of Britain and the United States who thought that the ship contained no ammunition or military weaponry whatsoever and it was an act of brutal murder. Munitions that it carried were thousands of crates full of ammunition for rifles, 3-inch artillery shells, and also various other standard ammunition used by infantry. The sinking of the *Lusitania* was widely used as propaganda against the German Empire and caused greater support for the war effort. A widespread reaction in the U.S was not seen until the sinking of the ferry *SS Sussex*. The sinking occurred in 1915 and the United States entered the war in 1917.



The campaign had sunk about 750,000 tons of Allied shipping, which was too little to make much of an impact on Britain's economy. The fleet of German long-range submarines was too small - at around 16 - to be really effective, and their commanders struggled to keep more than five on station at any one time.

The initial U.S. response was to threaten to sever diplomatic ties, which persuaded the Germans to issue the Sussex pledge that reimposed restrictions on U-boat activity. The U.S. reiterated its objections to German submarine warfare whenever U.S. civilians died as a result of German attacks, which prompted the Germans to fully reapply prize rules. This, however, removed the effectiveness of the U-boat fleet, and the Germans consequently sought a decisive surface action, a strategy that culminated in the Battle of Jutland.

World War One was a total war, and in such conflicts, restraints are cast aside. Both Britain and Germany strove to starve each other into submission through the use of naval blockades. The British had a huge advantage in that their surface fleet could intercept ships bound for Germany, and soon Germany's seaborne trade dwindled away. With its fleet bottled up, Germany had to use U-boats.

Although the Germans claimed victory at Jutland, the British Grand Fleet remained in control at sea. It was necessary to return to effective anticommerce warfare by U-boats. Vice-Admiral Reinhardt Scheer, Commander in Chief of the High Seas Fleet, pressed for all-out U-boat war, convinced that a high rate of shipping losses would force Britain to seek an early peace before the United States could react effectively. A longer-term threat to Britain was still, however, clearly possible, particularly as the German U-boat building programme was gathering speed. Particularly ominous was the fact that, in a return to unrestricted warfare in spring 1916, U-boats sank another 250,000 tons in the space of only a few weeks



Sinking of the Linda Blanche out of Liverpool by Willy Stöwer

Initially, the German campaign went well. At the end of 1916, U-boats operating under some restrictions were sinking about a third of a million tons of Allied shipping per month.

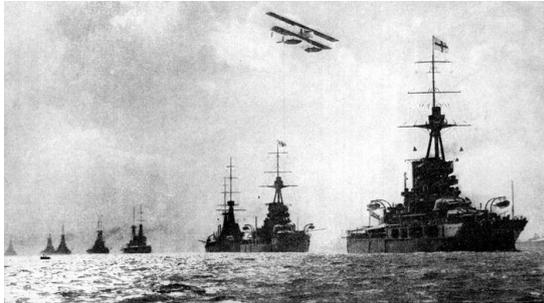
By the time the unrestricted campaign recommenced on 1 February 1917, the Germans could deploy over 110 submarines in all theatres, and the new types were technically superior to earlier models. The British authorities looked on in alarm as the tonnage of shipping lost in the Atlantic and other theatres such as the Mediterranean steadily mounted - to 465,000 tons in February, nearly 510,000 tons in March, and the horrifying total of 400,000 tons in the first half of April. There were real fears that Britain would not be able to feed its population

Such losses seemed to be unsustainable for Germany's enemies. There were real fears that Britain would not be able to feed its population, being down to only 6 weeks reserve of food. The entry of the USA in to the war against Germany on 6 April 1917 was good news, but only if Britain could hang on long enough for American power to make a difference.

The renewed German campaign was effective, sinking 1.4 million tons of shipping between October 1916 and January 1917. Despite this, the political situation demanded even greater pressure, and on 31 January 1917, Germany announced that its U-boats would engage in unrestricted submarine warfare

beginning 1 February. On 17 March, German submarines sank three American merchant vessels, and the U.S. declared war on Germany in April 1917.

In November 1916, Admiral Jellicoe created an Admiralty Anti-Submarine

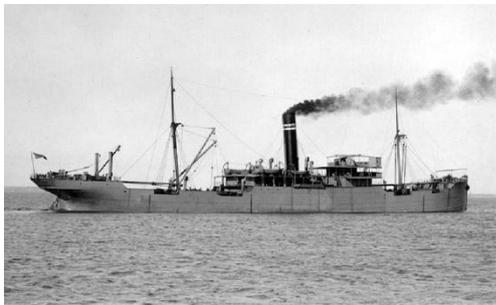


Division, but effective countermeasures arrived slowly. Most important was the introduction of convoys, in which merchant ships were grouped together and protected by warships the decision of April 1917, was vigorously promoted by the Prime Minister, Lloyd George, but many senior naval officers were doubtful

about the convoy, which they associated with the long-gone days of sail.

However, shipping losses began to decline, although they still ran at worryingly high levels for some months to come. In September, 316,000 tons were sunk, but in the Atlantic, by then, the crisis was over. The German gamble had failed. The British had not been defeated, and America had entered the war.

By this stage, some important anti-submarine techniques had emerged. The



Royal Navy employed a variety of craft, including armed trawlers and yachts, and used an acoustic listening device, the hydrophone, as well as mines and depth charges. The Q-Ship, a vessel masquerading as an innocent merchantman but carrying concealed guns, had some success in attacking surfaced U-boats.

Allied aircraft patrolled the seas to force the U-boats to submerge, and key areas were defended by anti-submarine nets. The Dover Barrage was a combination of nets, mines and searchlights, patrolled by light craft. In 1917-18, a similar defensive system was set up between Scotland and Norway, in which the US Navy played a major role. 'Room 40' (British Naval Intelligence) also helped to build up the intelligence picture.

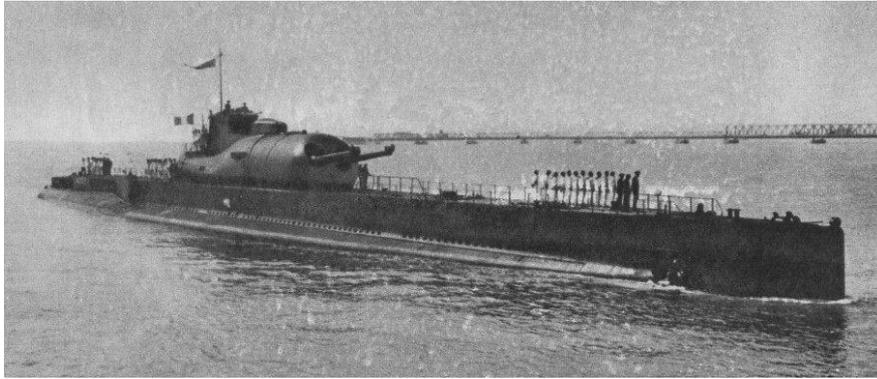
In addition, merchant ships were painted in dazzle camouflage, aircraft and



shore-based direction finding stations were introduced to locate U-boats, and warships acquired new weapons such as an early form of sonar and depth charges. On 23 April 1918, British naval forces attacked U-boat bases at Ostend and Zeebrugge. By

the **Armistice**, the U-boat threat had been neutralised.

Late in the war, the German high command decided to take the submarine war to the coast of the US, using the large Type U-151 and Type U-139 U-boats. The Type U-151 carried 18 torpedoes (24 torpedoes on the Type U-139) and two 150 mm deck guns, and had a range of around 25,000 nautical miles



(46,300 km). Seven Type U-151 and three Type U-139 had been built, the Type U-151 originally as large merchant U-boats for shipping material to and from locations

otherwise denied German surface ships, such as the United States, and 6 Type U-151 were refitted for war duty in 1917. The Type U-139 was the largest U-boats of World War I. Perhaps the beginning of the end of this series was the successful sinking in May 1918 of a cruiser type submarine which was reported by the Secretary to the Admiralty, “One of our Atlantic escort submarines on return to her base reports that on May 11th in the latitude of Cape St. Vincent, sighted and sank a German submarine of the so-called cruiser type. A heavy sea was running at the time and there were no survivors. Shortly another enemy submarine was sighted but by swift diving she escaped the fate of her consort. In view of this being the first cruiser submarine to be destroyed, it has been decided to depart from the usual rule of not announcing the destruction of individual enemy submarines” This disproved the notion that submarines could not effectively fight submarines. The incident was regarded as a serious blow to the German Naval Staff who had placed great hopes in these vessels believing them to be practically invulnerable. About seventy officers and men were killed in this action.

By the early summer of 1918, the German submarines were clearly on the back



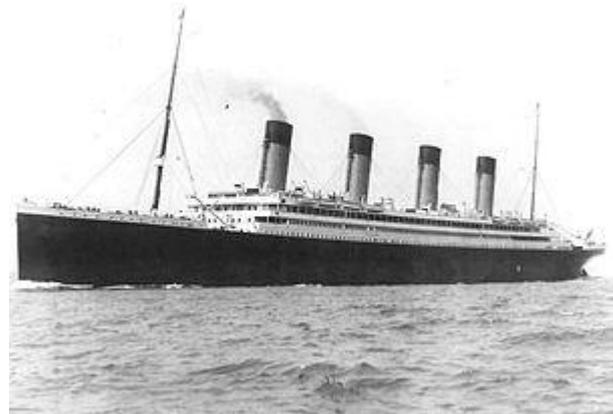
Types of Surrendered German 'U' Boats at Harwich, November 21st 1918.

foot. From August 1918 the Allied armies advanced steadily on the Western Front, and at the beginning of October the Germans were forced to abandon their naval bases on the Belgian coast. With the German army defeated, the end came on 11 November 1918. As part of

the surrender terms, the Royal Navy received 176 U-boats as spoils of war.

Without victory in the First Battle of the Atlantic, the Allies could not have won the war. That victory had been hard won - the German U-boats remained a threat almost to the end of the war. Losses on both sides had been heavy. At the end, few could have guessed that the battle would have to be refought a generation later.

An armistice became effective on 11 November 1918 and all surviving German submarines were surrendered. Of the 360 submarines that had been built, 178 were lost, but more than 11 million tons of shipping had been destroyed. Of the 178 submarines destroyed, SM *U-103* was sunk when the troopship RMS *Olympic* rammed it as it attempted to crash dive, killing all on board.



Gabriele D'Annunzio

Italian writer and political leader Gabriele D'Annunzio, who was born on the 12th March 1863 in Pescara, Italy and died on the 1st March 1938, at Gardone Riviera, Italy, was an Italian poet, novelist, dramatist, short-story writer, journalist, military hero, and political leader, the leading writer of Italy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.



The son of a politically prominent and wealthy Pescara landowner, D'Annunzio was educated at the University of Rome. When he was 16 his first poem "In Early Spring" was published, in 1879.

In 1894 D'Annunzio had begun a long liaison with the actress Eleonora Duse and had turned to writing plays for her, notably the tragedies *La Gioconda* first performed in 1899) and *Francesca da Rimini* performed 1901. He eventually broke off the relationship and exposed their intimacy in the erotic novel *The Flame of Life* published in 1900; New plays and a novel followed, but these failed to finance D'Annunzio's extravagant lifestyle, and his indebtedness forced him to flee to France in 1910. When World War I broke out, he returned to Italy to passionately urge his country's entry into the war. After Italy declared war he plunged into the fighting himself, seeking out dangerous assignments in several branches of the service, finally in the air force,



where he lost an eye in combat. D'Annunzio was fond of bold, individual military actions. Two of his best known came in 1918: his flight over Vienna, where he dropped thousands of propaganda leaflets over the city, and his prank at Buccari Bay a daring surprise attack on the Austrian fleet with power boats. The **Flight over Vienna** was a great feat of endurance during World War I which was undertaken by Italian poet and nationalist Gabriele D'Annunzio on 9

August 1918. With 11 Ansaldo S.V.A. from his team, the 87ma squadron) called La Serenissima all bearing the Lion of St Mark painted on their fuselage sides as the squadron's insignia, he flew for over 1,200 km (700 miles) in a



roundtrip from the squadron's military airfield in Due Carrare to Vienna to drop thousands of propaganda leaflets. The flight took six hours and thirty five minutes at an average height of just over 16,000 feet. The machines were capable of 150 miles per hour. 200,000 leaflets were dropped from 3,000 feet urging the Austrians to throw off the yoke of Prussian militarism. He also reminded the Viennese that these leaflets might well have been bombs!



The action was planned the year before but technical problems, such as the [fuel capacity](#) of the planes, delayed it.

The first trial was attempted on the 2 August 1918, but the aircraft returned due to heavy fog. The second trial, on 8 August 1918, was cancelled due to strong wind, while the last one, on 9 August, was successful.

They flew over [Vienna](#) and [dropped 50,000 leaflets on a three-colored card](#) (green, white, and red: the colors of the [Italian flag](#)).



D'Annunzio himself and were not translated into [German](#).

They read:

"On this August morning, while the fourth year of your desperate convulsion comes to an end and luminously begins the year of our full power, suddenly there appears the three-color wing as an indication of the destiny that is turning.

Destiny turns. It turns

towards us with an iron certainty. The hour of that Germany that thrashes you, and humiliates you, and infects you is now forever passed.

Your hour is passed. As our faith was the strongest, behold how our will prevails and will prevail until the end. The victorious combatants of Piave, the victorious combatants of Marna feel it, they know it, and with an ecstasy that multiplies the impetus. But if the impetus were not enough, the number would be; and this is said for those that try fighting ten against one. The Atlantic is a path already closing, and it's a heroic path, as demonstrated by the new chasers who coloured the Ourcq with German blood.

On the wind of victory that rises from freedom's rivers, we didn't come except for the joy of the daring, we didn't come except to prove what we could venture and do whenever we want, in an hour of our choice.

The rumble of the young Italian wing does not sound like the one of the funeral bronze, in the morning sky. Nevertheless the joyful boldness suspends between Saint Stephen and the Graben an irrevocable sentence, o Viennese.

Long live Italy!"

Previously, critics of D'Annunzio had said: "He writes but does not act."

Because D'Annunzio Italian text was considered ineffectual and not translatable into German, [Ferdinand Martini](#) quipped: "Now he acts but does not write."

They also dropped 350,000 leaflets written by [Ugo Ojetti](#), which were translated into German:

In 1919 D'Annunzio and about 300 supporters, in defiance of the [Treaty of Versailles](#), occupied the Dalmatian port of [Fiume](#) ([Rijeka](#) in present-day Croatia), which the Italian government and the Allies were proposing to incorporate into the new Yugoslav state but which D'Annunzio believed rightly belonged to Italy. D'Annunzio ruled Fiume as dictator until



December 1920, at which time

Italian military forces compelled him to [abdicate](#) his rule. Nevertheless, by his bold action he had established Italy's interest in Fiume, and the port became Italian in 1924. D'Annunzio subsequently became an [ardent](#) Fascist and was rewarded by [Benito Mussolini](#) with a title and a national edition of his works, but he exercised no further influence on Italian politics and was [marginalized](#) by the regime. Yet he influenced the language of Italy more profoundly than anyone since Dante and leapt into the forefront of battle as a soldier at over fifty years of age!



He retired to Gardone Riviera in Lombardy and wrote some memoirs and confessions. There D'Annunzio built a stadium and displayed a ship half-buried in the hillside. After his death, a large [mausoleum](#) was constructed there to contain his remains. Gardone Riviera became not only his monument but a monument to Italian [nationalism](#) and one of Italy's most visited tourist sites.



D'Annunzio's colourful career, his scandalous amours, his daring in wartime, his eloquence and political leadership in two national crises, all contributed to make him one of the most striking personalities of his day. D'Annunzio's literary works are marked by their egocentric perspective, their fluent and melodious style, and an overriding emphasis on the gratification of the senses, whether through the love of women or of nature

