

The First Known Submarine Reservist Stein

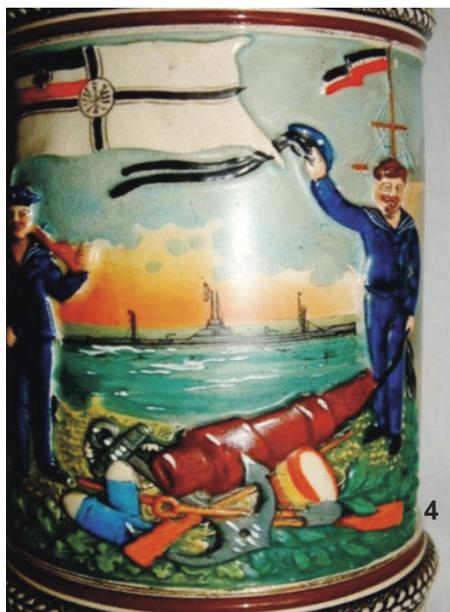
By Günther Kij and Peter Meinlschmidt

Now, finally, one of the always suspected, but thus far never seen, submarine steins has “surfaced” (Pictures 1,2,3,4,5).

It is a 14.6 inch tall 1 Liter pottery stein with a slightly raised decorative frame around the center motif. It is made up of two standing sailors with the left one holding up the Imperial War Flag and the one on the right waving his cap in salute. In the middle between the two sailors a surfaced submarine (without bow number) is depicted and underneath an agglomeration of navy gear, such as a gun barrel, two artillery shells, an anchor, a paddle and a drum are shown.

The left lateral view of the stein shows a sailor walking with his girl friend and the writing below says “*In der Heimat*” (In the homeland). Further below a bandeau carries the inscription “*Zur Erinnerung an meine Dienstzeit*” (In remembrance of my service time), which is only completed below the scene in the right lateral view by “*an Bord d. 2. Unterseeb.-Halbflotille 11/14*” (aboard the 2nd submarine half-flotilla (1911 - 1914). The right lateral view shows a barroom with two sailors seated at a table. A large beer barrel has been put on the table from which an apron-clad barmaid is just tapping some fresh beer. This “scene of celebration” is crowned with the well-known slogan “*Brüder, stoßt die Gläser an, es lebe der Reservemann*” which translates to: “*Brothers, clank the beer glasses, long live the reservists.*”

The stein has a tall domed pewter lid the finial of which is again a standing sailor who is holding a painted Imperial War Flag near his head (Picture 6). The



conical lid dome is decorated with the scene of a naval battle in slight relief. The thumblift finial is an imperial eagle sitting on a ball with a “blind” Stanhope lens inserted in the ball roost. The upper

part of the handle is also decorated with the colored face of a sailor wearing a dark blue cap. The rear side of the stein has a roster behind the handle on which only two names are in-

scribed, one of which being Reservist Kröhn (Pictures 7, 8).



The 7 cm high stein base has five circular (slightly flattened at the bottom) medallions with incised reservist scenes wrapped around the entire base. These scenes have inscriptions (starting from the center) such as “*Bock reiss aus*” (billy goat get running), “*Jetzt ist uns’re Dienstzeit aus*” (now, our service time is over), “*Mutter mach die Türe offen*” (Mother, open the door), “*So ist der Dienst schön*” (service is nice like this) and “*Hoch lebe der Reservemann*” (Long live the reservist). The picture medallions are separated by two gold-colored oak leaf twigs, each.

The original owner’s name is written in the center of the bottom side of the base, i.e. “Reservist Kröhn”. Also to be noted is a thick vermilion final stroke drawn around the base. The underside of the stein base has the mold number “6190” incised. This type of stein, even though being a late dated stein, has only two lateral views.

Note: The described type of stein, of which additional navy related varieties are known, has exclusively been used for Navy steins (see the sailors depicted in the incised scenes). Furthermore, other variants (with different lid types) are known which only differ by a dark blue “final stroke” around the bottom of the base instead of a vermilion one. The stein manufacturer is not known.

As a point of interest, the stein only carries the inscription of the navy unit, i.e. the “2. Unterseeboots-Halbflottille” (2nd Submarine Half-Flotilla) but does not indicate a specific submarine on which the stein owner may have served. This may be associated with security regulations at the beginning of WW I. The memoirs of one submarine commander indicate that no outsider below the rank of admiral was permitted to visit and inspect a submarine.

The evolutionary history of the submarine in Germany and in other countries can be seen in the internet or in related books. Here, it should suffice to say that the German Imperial Navy (Kaiserliche Marine) funded the construction of submarines (*Uboot* in German) and to build up a submarine fleet starting in 1905 with the first fully operational submarine U-1 being commissioned on 14 December 1906. Three men were instrumental in this; Emperor Wilhelm II Commander in Chief of the German Imperial Navy (Picture 9), Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, the creator and organizer of the German Navy (1897-1917, Picture 10) and Fregattenkapitan (Commander) Herman Bauer, Captain of the German submarine forces (Picture 11).



The U-1 was 139 ft long, 12.5 ft wide, and had a crew of 12. It was propelled by two (400 HP) kerosene and two electric motors, could remain for 12 hours at a maximum depth of 98.5 ft, could sail above water at a maximum speed of 12.5 mph, and had a torpedo tube from which three torpedoes could be launched. The SM U-1, His Majesty's Uboat, can still be seen in the Deutsches Museum in Munich.

This first submarine was soon followed up by additionally built subs that were sequentially numbered and continuously technically improved.

Overview of the commission date and fate of the subs of the 2nd Submarine Half-Flotilla			
Uboot #	Commissioned	Fate	
U-11	21 Sep 1911	9 Dec 1914	total loss due to a mine
U-12	13 Aug 1911	10 Mar 1915	rammed, 20 dead, 10 survivors
U-13	25 Apr 1912	12 Aug 1914	mine or accident, 25 dead
U-14	24 Apr 1912	5 Jun 1915	sunk, 1 dead, 27 survivors
U-15	7 Jul 1915	9 Aug 1914	rammed, 23 dead
U-16	28 Dec 1911	8 Feb 1919	sunk in transit
U-17	3 Nov 1912	27 Jan 1919	scrapped in Kiel
U-18	17 Nov 1912	23 Nov 1914	rammed, 1 dead, 22 survivors

While the other technical specifications remained roughly the same - the length of the sub was increased. Thus U-17 and U-18 were roughly 33 ft longer than U-11.



two bow and two stern torpedo tubes, six torpedoes, one revolver gun and one two inch gun, crew: four officers, and 25 other ranks.

received an Imperial submarine badge (Picture 13).

FINAL REMARKS



13

With respect to the 2. Unterseeboots-Halbflotille indicated on the stein, it could be learned that it consisted of the so-called "kerosene subs" U-11 (Picture 12) through U 18, and was based in (the isle of) Helgoland (Heligoland) in the North Sea at the beginning of WW I. Due to Reservist Kröhn's service time (1911-1914), he might have served aboard the submarines U-11 (commissioned on 21 Sep 1910), U-12 (commissioned on 13 Aug 1911) or U-16 (commissioned on 28 Dec 1911). Other submarines were commissioned at later dates.

Built by the wharf at Danzig, the U-11 had a length 175 ft, width of 20 ft, maximum diving depth of 164 ft, diving time was 50-90 seconds, propelled by (1,000 HP) kerosene and electric motors, speed above water was 16.4 mph, below water was 9.3 mph, armament:

Germany entered WW I with a total of 28 submarines distributed over four half-flotillas. Starting from submarine U 19 diesel engines were used. During the war years a total of 374 submarines were deployed which undertook 3,274 sorties in the course of 52 months. 178 submarines were sunk by the enemy with 5,249 submariners getting killed which corresponds to nearly half the number of submarine crews (total being 12,500). Even though the submarines did not change the outcome of the war, they nevertheless sunk a total of 6,394 merchant ships and 100 warships and were dreaded by the enemy. Contrary to WW II, the subs were invisible and undetectable during WW I when submerged.

Instituted by Kaiser Wilhelm II on 1 Feb 1918, every submariner who had taken part in at least three offensive sorties

Returning once more to Reservist Kröhn's submarine stein, it is almost certain that he would not have been released into civilian life in 1914 but would have had to serve for the duration of WWI. As a point of interest, a passage of the German 1917 Fleet Association Calendar reads with respect to "Careers in the Imperial Navy" that "submarine personnel must have exceptionally good hearing abilities". Theoretically, there should at least be a few more submarine steins around, but for unknown reasons this is not the case. It seems that submarine steins are even rarer than the prized aviation steins.

