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Estandart Reyau d'a Cheneralísma, prencipal bandera carlista d'a primera guerra bordada por María Francisca de Braganza em 1833 Royal Standard of the General in Chief, main Carlist flag of the First War embroidered by Maria Francisca de Braganza in 1833). Wikimedia Commons

The Purported Resupply of German Submarines in Spain Notes on a failed WW1-Project

by GERHARD LANG-VALCHS¹

ABSTRACT: The present article tells the story of the attempt of the German Naval Staff to create a re-supply service for their submarines in Spain during WW1. Based on the report of its Naval Attaché charged with the fitting-out of such a service the contrastable facts analysed, however, oblige us to come to the conclusion that, contrary to common belief, such a service never saw the light of day.

KEY WORDS: FIRST WORLD WAR (WW1), SUBMARINES, (RE-)SUPPLY, SPAIN, VON KROHN (NAVAL ATTACHÉ)

The net

“I” m convinced, I should rather say, I’m nearly absolutely sure, that this person [Hans von Krohn, the later German Naval Attaché in Spain] has organised in exquisite detail for the last straight months the submarine supply service ...”² This questionable certainty expressed by the French Military Attaché in the Spanish capital in September 1915, suggests the existence and operation of a German-guided and -controlled net of agents in several harbours of the Spanish coasts that are prepared to provide German submarine mainly with food, lubricants and fuel. The same appreciation can be found without exception in each and every official or internal statement of French diplomatic representatives or military officers on this subject throughout the duration of the war.

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2 González; Aubert; 2014: 53/54. Translated extract of the report of the French Military Attaché in Spain *Pour empêcher le ravitaillement des sous-marins allemands en Espagne* del 9 de septiembre de 1915. Von Krohn was in reality, only Imperial Naval agent, and not yet officially accepted by the Spanish King as Military Attaché before September 1916. We’ll, nevertheless, refer to him as if he already had been.

The same view was also shared by the British Admiralty and its Naval Intelligence Officer responsible for the Western Mediterranean, Colonel Charles Julian Thoroton whose biographer refers to a very telling story closely related to it. It is the story of a weird, seemingly civilian wartime tour along the coasts of southern Spain. The British yacht *Vergemere* served as the base for a group of foolishly behaving old-age pensioners, all agents of the British intelligence services, throwing one party after another on board in different harbours and inviting local guests who were frequently looking for information on the sites where German submarines could be hiding and/or were being supplied. After several months of unsuccessful search, the operation is finally cancelled. (Vickers, 2013: 63-64)

Up to the present, this opinion has been repeated and spread by nearly all European and American writers and historians, who investigated into and wrote on the subject.³ But, curiously, none of them so far has dealt with the question of how this supposedly existing service had been established. The most important source of all the documents related to this context, the German Naval Attaché's report, was not taken into consideration, although they explained the events from the allied representatives' point of view or, in some cases, from the aspect of the submarine's commander (del Río; 2016: 27-51). Beside the related details, Krohn in his report also gave a critical evaluation of the action, showing detailed considerations on account of basic conditions, the consequences of potential further actions and the arrangements at the site.⁴

On the basis of the German Naval Attaché's report, but by no means limited to it, this article will attempt to make its readers become acquainted with the problems which had to be resolved prior to the arrival of a submarine and, particularly, the predicaments that had to be faced after the submarine had left, while, simultaneously, taking into consideration the difficulties of the creation of such a service in neutral Spain in wartime, as regards questioning and finally revising common opinion on this subject.

The submarines, a new and unknown weapon

At the beginning of the 20th century the submarines were a novelty, a strange and widely unknown weapon of naval forces worldwide. They had not yet been included in the final version of the Hague Convention of 1907, some kind of

3 Here is a short, by far not complete list: Beesly (1982: 103, 201), García (2014: 102/103, 156), González; Aubert (2014: 320), Höhne (1976: 48-51), Müller (2006: 33), Niebel (35-37), Rosenbusch (2015: 205) Tojo, Tojo (2008: 416).

4 BA, MA, RM 5/ 2408, # 379 - 399 [= Krohn-report], dated May 12, 1915, sent by mail to Berlin.

international legislation on naval warfare.⁵ At the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, the navies of Great Britain, France and Germany respectively had between 20 and 40 vessels of this class in service, even Italy, Austria and Spain had some units at their disposal.

Sceptical aits military value, quite a lot of naval experts took it for a passing trendy fancy, others thought it was not really a reliable and effective instrument of war. So it was not surprising that submarines played no essential part in the Naval Staff's plans for war. And as none of those vessels had ever been used or tested in real combat action at high sea, their actual abilities remained undiscovered, and they were built and prepared mainly for use in coastal areas.

The vessels of the German so-called UB I-series and the improved boats of the UC I-type were the first operational minelaying submarines in the world. The boats' armament consisted of six internal mine tubes with up to 12 mines and a machine gun on deck. The very cramped conditions on board with hardly enough space for the crew's own operations did not allow additional crew members, the transport of goods, weapons or personnel. Their limited fuel storing capacity and their dependence on tenders for their supply made them unemployable for long-range or high-sea missions. Thus, both types were used to operate mainly near the German North Sea's coast and in the English Channel.

Changing the point of view

On September 5, 1914, *Kapitänleutnant* Otto Hersing, commander of the German submarine SM U-21, was on his way along the coast of Scotland with a new type of greater German ocean-going submarine, equipped with torpedoes and a 8.8 canon on deck. Near St. Abbs Head he met the British scout cruiser *HMS Pathfinder* and sent her to bottom. It was the first time a submarine had used a self-propelled torpedo to sink an enemy ship. Barely three weeks later, on September 22, another German submarine, the U-9, successfully torpedoed and sunk three famed British heavy armoured cruisers: *HMS Aboukir*, *HMS Hogue* and *HMS Cressy*.

The sinking of those vessels marked a turning point in the perception of the usefulness of this new weapon. The unexpected effectiveness led the Imperial Naval Staff to the development of a plan to send submarines to the Eastern Mediterranean in order to support German and Turkish vessels and units in their campaign at Gallipoli.⁶

5 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hague_Conventions_of_1899_and_1907

6 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallipoli_campaign

Once the agreement with the Austrian-Hungary allies about the use of their facilities of the Adriatic harbours of Cattaro and Pola/Pula, at this time part of their empire, had been concluded, both sites were immediately converted into German submarine bases, used for maintenance, supply of food, oil, fuel and ammunition with an anchoring place for the supply ship *Gäa*, that served as a resting area for the crews. In April, the first small coastal submarines were sent in sections to the arsenal at the Dalmatian coast where they were assembled.

But the Naval Staff also wanted to display some of the successful torpedo-equipped boats in the Eastern Mediterranean (Halpern; 1987: 107-110). However, the transfer of the vessels to their new base had to be a direct one, across the sea, because it was impossible to haul the bigger boats by rail, even in unassembled segments. They had to cover that distance unaccompanied by any military escort, proceeding around the British Isles and, after sailing along the Spanish and Portuguese Western coasts, they had to pass through the Strait of Gibraltar on their way to the Eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, a challenge of uncertain prospect of success when trying to achieve it in one move. Convinced that at least one resupply-stop somewhere in the middle of the route would be unavoidable, the German Naval Staff ordered the Naval Attaché in Spain, Hans von Krohn, to prepare secret meeting points somewhere along the coast of neutral Spain, where food, lubricants and fuel could be transhipped without being detected.⁷

Preparations

When the German Kaiser finally sanctioned the deployment of the submarines in the Austrian harbours on March 30, the Naval Staff had already urged the Naval Attaché to prepare the supply of an incoming submarine in neutral Spain and look for adequate combustible.⁸ Two points at the Spanish coast had to be set up, the first one, Barcelona, had already been determined beforehand, the other one, somewhere at the Northern coast, had still to be decided on by the attaché. Suitable types of fuel for the Diesel engines were agreed upon. As the imperial decision on the transfer had not yet been taken, von Krohn was advised to order 30-50 tons of fuel, but without authorization of signing a binding order.⁹ The combustible was expected to be at a disposal within a 3 to 4 week's delay. Von Krohn started immediately preparing the arrangement.¹⁰

7 References to not conserved telegrams (see note 7) confirm that the first corresponding instructions were given in early March.

8 NAK, ADM 223-638, telegram # 34, March 13th and # 36, March 15th, Berlin to Madrid.

9 NAK, ADM 223-638, telegram # 37, March 17th.

10 NAK, ADM 223-639, #72 telegram from Madrid to Berlin from March 16th.

Concurrently, the Naval Staff was looking for a submarine commander willing to undertake the risky cruise. Otto Hersing, the experienced commander who had sunk the first British ship in the war, agreed to undertake that first long-range trip to the Mediterranean, certainly accompanied by a doctor.¹¹

Von Krohn was informed that all details of the meeting at the Spanish coast had to be settled before Hersing's departure, because during the cruise there was no opportunity to contact the boat in order to complete or update orders.

After two weeks of exploratory work, on April 30th the attaché invited the four most directly implicated persons in the planned action to attend a meeting at Bilbao: the German consuls of Bilbao and Vivero, a small harbour at the Galician part of the Northern coast, the captain of the German steamer *Belgrano*, interned since 1914 at the Galician harbour of La Coruña, and von Krohn's agent responsible for the organization of the mission in the Barcelona and Valencia area. They had to discuss and to resolve three main problems: (1) to organize the transport of the fuel, (2) to find the best site for the transshipping and (3) to coordinate the execution of the mission as a whole.

The Imperial Naval Staff had ordered to provide 40 tons of fuel and 8 tons of lubricants beside the distilled and drinking water and the fresh food for the first meeting point.¹² For the second meeting near the Balearic Islands another steamer with half the quantity of supplies had to be prepared.

The transport by ship of the already ordered and prepared charge to the meeting point was the favoured solution, taking into account that most of the fuel was stored at a warehouse at the Bilbao estuary. So, the *Marcela*, a 147 GRT coastal cargo liner, owned by a Santander-sited shipping company, was chartered.¹³ A phoney load for Villagarcía de Arosa was declared to justify the cruise along the coast of the Cantabrian Sea. The only thing related to the load that could not be organized in advance was the purchase of the fresh food.

Closely related to the question of where to supply the submarine there was one further problem to be solved previously or simultaneously: How to conduct the transfer? Delivering all supplies at one site and/or all at once or split up the transfer into various deliveries. In order to minimize the risk of being discovered one only handing-over was the logical and eventually preferred option. A full supply or partial supply in one of the smaller Northern harbours was decided against,

11 Olshausen, G. (1935): *An Bord von U 21. Auf der Fahrt von Wilhelmshaven nach Konstantinopel von 25. IV. bis 5. VI. 1915. Vor zwanzig Jahren*. Deutsche Medizinische Wochenschrift, 61(25): 1008-1011.

12 NAK, ADM 223-639, #53, March 28th, telegram from Berlin to Madrid

13 The name of the ship in the different documents shows a changing spelling.

because the risk of detection was considered to be extremely high.

A supercargo, the captain of the *Belgrano*, would guarantee the accurate execution of the plan and bring the specified instructions to fulfilment. The transfer of the 30 to 40 tons of liquids would presumably take quite a number of hours, requiring a calm and hidden location with a guaranteed opportunity to escape in the event of being discovered. So, the spot finally decided on was the *Ría de Corcubión*, Corcubion bay, a scarcely inhabited area with few shipping traffic and quiet waters.¹⁴

The coastal cargo liner *Marcela*, registered at Santander, was eventually chartered to transport the fuel and oil containers as well as the distilled and drinking water to the Galician coast. The Naval Staff had sent the recognition signals, von Krohn had communicated the information on the established meeting line to Germany. On April 18, the *Marcela* left Bilbao and slowly approached La Coruña, recalling in various harbours on her way. On April 25, the U-21 left the German harbour of Wilhelmshaven to start her one-week-cruise to the Spanish coast.

The purchase of the fresh food was completed by the captain of the *Belgrano*, one day before the calculated arrival of the U-21, as if the food was destined for his own interned ship. Some time later, the *Marcela* entered the harbour and came alongside the *Belgrano*. After the transshipping of the fresh food, the captain of the *Belgrano* also went aboard to do his job as supercargo during the most important part of the mission. Then he left La Coruña, heading for the rendez-vous-line at the Western part of the coast sailing for the Bay of Corcubión.¹⁵

Although May 2 was a rainy day, the encounter did not raise any problems and the submarine followed the steamer entering the bay. After dropping anchor near Cape Cee the submarine was brought alongside the *Marcela*. With the help of the German vice-consul of Concurbióñ a pilot boat was furnished and took von Krohn, who personally wanted to watch over the transfer, to the ship. All went well, but the transfer of the fuel took more time than planned. Just before sunrise, the refilling of fuel had not yet been finished and had to be stopped. A new meeting at Arosa bay, further south of the current place, was agreed upon for the following evening.

14 The *Ría de Corcubión* with its untypically wide bay-alike extension, ending in two or three coves, is typically not mentioned as one of the *Rías Bajas/Baixas*, four fjord-alike up to 30 miles long and narrow estuaries at the Western coast of Galicia. See as well: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rías_Baixas

15 A very detailed and documented account of the previous arrangements and the supply itself, can be found at: del Río (2016), p. 29-35.

The failure

On the following afternoon, both vessels met near the second of the Galician bays, the *Ría de Arosa*, to complete the transfer of the lubricating oil and fuel from the *Marcela*. When Krohn, who had rejoined the meeting, conferred with Hersing on the factual situation, he became aware that the action had flopped, at least partially. The quality of the fuel did not suffice. Hersing, meanwhile, had tested the supplied stuff, but the viscosity of the fuel was not up to the required standard since the point of ignition was too low. Even when mixed with the remaining oil of the initial charge, there was no safe way to use the recently delivered combustible.¹⁶

It might have been Hersing's premonitory suspicion or the misfortune that the fuel containers simply could not be more easily emptied into the ballast tanks than into the usually provided fuel tanks. Whatever the cause, the delivered fuel had not yet been mixed with the fuel of the initial load.

When Hersing discovered that von Krohn's fuel was of insufficient quality, he refused to take over the remaining part of the load. He also declined to join the pre-arranged rendezvous with the other chartered supply ship near the Balearic Isles and headed straight for Cattaro where he arrived on May 13, merely relying on the initial load of fuel.

The fuel containers transported by the *Marcela*, whether emptied or not, had to be thrown overboard to hide every kind of compelling evidence of any implication in the supply action, in case any control on board would have to be faced.¹⁷ However, when the huge number of containers floating in the sea was discovered by local fishermen some days later, it became clear to the Spanish authorities as well as to the allied diplomats informed by their agents, what had happened at the Galician coast.

The whole action was not very far from ending up in a complete disaster. Since the beginning of the war the British Naval Intelligence regularly intercepted the radiotelegraphic communication between the German Embassy in Madrid and the Naval Staff and/or the Foreign Office in Berlin.¹⁸ From the beginning of 1915 Room 40 was able to decipher nearly all German communications with Spain (Beesly; 1982: 46-62; Gannon; 2020: 87-91). The obtained corresponding information was obviously not taken seriously, probably because such an enter-

16 Strangely, von Krohn speaks of 12,5 tons of fuel and 1,9 tons of lubricates transferred to the U-21, whereas Hersing speaks of 18 and 4 tons.

17 NAK, ADM 223-639, # 86. Explicit instructions from the Naval Staff sent on April 18th

18 NAK, ADM 223-639-646. The whole of the communication about the Corcubión-action was intercepted and deciphered.

prise had never been executed before.¹⁹ Thus, no measures or attempts to thwart the supply action were adopted.

A feed-back and future prospects

Certainly, the wrong quality of the fuel carried to Corcubión was the decisive link in a chain of organisational miscues, although it did not affect Hersing's orders and plans because of the lucky coincidence mentioned above. But it was not the only one: The *Atlas*, a Dutch steamer von Krohn had chartered and ordered to load the same inadequate type of fuel, had left the harbour of Barcelona before the arranged date and, instead of waiting at the indicated rendez-vous-line near the isle of Formentera, had carried on and had already arrived at Valencia when the U-21 was about to arrive at the Spanish coast. As this harbour was her officially declared destination, she was not allowed to leave it prior to her unloading the carried fuel.

As a replacement, another steamer, the *Jucar*, could be quickly chartered, prepared and loaded with the inappropriate fuel. But, coincidentally, there started a new and severe control campaign of the customs administration, that followed the rules laid down in a brand-new regulation of the transport and export of combustibles (del Río; 2016: 47). Until then, the internal transfer of fuel among Spanish harbours had not been accurately controlled and some bribe money often solved the 'problem' of the "loss" of (=smuggled) fuel. Now, a sole and only emergency supply would be possible, but the "loss" of fuel would henceforth be inevitably discovered and the ship would not be allowed to leave her port of destination. Thus, the covering-up procedure and the whole organization, probably up to the Naval Attaché, would have been compromised and, most probably, have a disastrous and fatal outcome in the event of discovery.

Although the first supply attempt had not been really satisfactory and successful, von Krohn did not yet throw in the towel. His report does not only contain the facts and details relating to the events around the Corcubión activities. The attaché, based on his lessons learned, also added somehow rather confusing propositions of hopeful thinking in order to improve the procedure and its outcome in case of a next attempt.

The report states that the future supply service will consist of two branches. The first one, will be run from Barcelona and will concentrate its efforts on supplying submarines operating in the blockade of the French harbours and coast.

¹⁹ See del Río, p. 30-32. Transcription of the letter of the British consul at La Coruña to the British ambassador from April 24th, 1915 (AHN, AMAE, H3125).

The second group of activities will attend vessels in transit from Germany to the Mediterranean Sea. These are, astonishingly, all the details he explains about future plans. What follows deals with the transit branch. But with the exception of the final suggestion to go to Seville and Malaga to prepare possibly necessary future supply actions, what remains are criticisms and explanations of the problems and difficulties that can be expected (#397/398).

The current severely controlled restrictions of the export of combustibles and food would most likely allow only one, at most two more supply attempts, when taking into account the stocks of fuel providently purchased and stored in different places.²⁰ The procedure of declaring the freight for Portugal is no longer possible.

The purchase of fresh food in small coastal villages or towns would probably attract the attention of local police and/or allied agents impeding the use of the local harbour for a resupply without being discovered. For an adequate selection of the type and quantity of the products needed in a submarine, a corresponding list is required. However, the cook of the vessel sorely missed and reclaimed the typical German dark rye bread, the *pumpernickels*, that were not under any circumstances available in Spain, as von Krohn expressly underlined. Generally, more time is needed to duly prepare future action.

Another important problem would be posed by the crew of the supply ship. The ships belong to companies of neutral countries. The real aim and purpose of the chartered run would have to be kept in secret. The waste of time detouring and straying from the track in search of the established meeting line could not be concealed for long from the crew. At the latest, when the submarine emerges, the tale of a smuggling tour, possibly accepted at the first moment, would turn out to be not really convincing and raise the question of collaboration, submission and obedience among the crew. At Corcubión von Krohn would have to pay hush-money to the whole crew. He was sure it would work, but who would warrant it?²¹

As far as the most important and critical aspect, the quality of the fuel, was concerned, von Krohn concluded that he should not have trusted the information he got from the contacted representatives of the oil-selling companies. To prevent further difficulties and surprises, he sent samples of the different types of the already purchased fuels together with his report to the Naval Staff for a thorough analysis to a German laboratory²²

20 It should not escape the reader's attention, that the attaché is referring to inadequate combustibles.

21 Certainly, the overall cost of the current action amounted to at least 100.000 pesetas. Future actions will be undoubtedly much more expensive.

22 BA, MA, RM 5/2409, #3, July 1915

As von Krohn had emphasised towards the end of his report, he'd continue trying to find out how to get genuine American gasoil. At the beginning he had asked for the Rumanian fuel that the Naval Staff had initially recommended. But as there was no opportunity to ship it to Spain, he tried to find an American connection through the Naval Attaché at Washington.²³

The efforts to find an American oil company willing to ship the needed submarine gasoil to Spain were promising. When this part of the problem seemed to be manageable, it turned out that the major problem appeared in Spain. It was impossible to find a Spanish firm willing to take the risk to import American gasoil and to sell it to someone involved with the German government having to elude the severe controls by Spanish authorities and the vigilance of the allied agents, venturing to be put on the allies' black list, if the background of the deal was discovered.

Meanwhile the final results of the analysis had arrived and the conclusion was shattering. Not a single one of the Spanish samples had been taken from a type of fuel that could be admitted for the use in submarine diesels. There was only one type of fuel that could be used with utmost caution in case of a really extreme emergency.²⁴

Despite those shady prospects, von Krohn, incomprehensibly, continued explaining the structure of the supply organisation he had established at the Cantabrian harbour of Bilbao, with storage facilities in the *hinterland*, seemingly relying on his own useless fuel, when the American deal was still undecided and of unpredictable outcome. He even referred to a new, yet operational supply point at the Cantabrian coast of Santander.²⁵

Then, towards the end of the month of December, the submarine supply problem had suddenly come to an end. As from the beginning of the new year, we cannot find any document related to the former or to further plans or corresponding activities. The project was definitely abandoned and disappeared from the table. However, von Krohn, shortly afterwards submitted the draft of a new submarine project to the Naval Staff, suggesting the construction of a new type of civil cargo submarine to replace the censured, unsure and largely interrupted postal communications between Spain and Germany.²⁶

23 BA, MA, RM 5/2409, # 75-77, (July 23th)

24 BA, MA, RM 5/2409, #316-17 (October 4th, as sent by mail on 20th, probably not received before November). Some of the proofs had to be sent several times, because they arrived wasted and/or unusable for analysis.

25 BA, MA, RM 5/2409, #400-404 (October 18th); # 422/430, December 3rd and 5th)

26 BA, MA, RM 5/2411, # 78-81, January 8th

No fuel, no supply, no need

Recalling the initially quoted statement on the supposedly “exquisite” organization of the German submarine supply service in Spain, we became aware, when taking a closer look at the facts, that there was no adequate fuel for the diesel available in Spain nor could it be provided for by the EEUU through a Spanish importer. This is the main reason why such a service could not have its most essential product available and, consequently, was incapable and unequipped to operate successfully, even if a permanent personal structure to manage the supply had been set up. Without the adequate fuel a supply net was inoperable and did not make sense.

When, in July 1916, a year after the first and only supply attempt, the flying 24-hours visit of U-35 at Cartagena took place in order to deliver the famous letter from Kaiser Wilhelm II to the Spanish King Alfonso XIII, a fuel resupply of the submarine was not even planned or intended.²⁷ And in the later case of the UB-49 arrival at the Cadiz harbour Arsenal in September 1917, von Krohn did not find an opportunity to acquire the suitable combustible for her on the market during her nearly three months’ stay.²⁸

More than 30 German submarines in the Mediterranean were gradually deployed between 1915 and 1918. None of them needed a resupply on the way to her new base. Thus, it was clear that the cruise was perfectly feasible without having a stopover. No resupply as a result of a sudden emergency due to a shortage of combustible during one of the multiple patrols through the Western Mediterranean and sometimes even beyond the Strait of Gibraltar occurred or was found necessary either. The transfer of UC-20 in October/November 1916 demonstrated that even an additional special mission along the West African coast could be included in her itinerary from Germany to Cattaro without creating a supply problem (Spindler; 1932: 348-350).

In the light of these experiences, the Naval Staff and obviously their attaché in Spain finally abstained from organising a second supply action or declined to arrange for points of supply. There was no submarine supply net run by agents in Spain until more than 20 years later during World War II. The belief that the later admiral Wilhelm Canaris, chief of the *Abwehr* at the time of the Third Reich, had built up or reorganized such a net of agents during his stay in Spain between January and October 1916, is a widespread error, initially based on one of the earliest

27 Lang-Valchs, Gerhard (2022): *El submarino alemán U-35 y su visita relámpago a Cartagena*, Revista de Historia Naval, 156, (defensa.gob.es).

28 BA, MA, RM 97 / 829 = [War Diary UB-49].

biographies of his life.²⁹ This work is, unfortunately, a fairy tale as far as Canaris' WWI time in Spain is concerned and does not match with the easily contrastable facts and dates of Canaris' WWI time: The evidence of the sometimes weirdly purported actions or events is neither based on documents nor is it subject to critical verification (Suhr; 2018: 131-163).³⁰

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²⁹ Tojo, Tojo (2008: 416) even maintain, that Canaris and Majorcan banker and smuggler Juan March discussed in several meetings questions related to the supply of the German submarines.

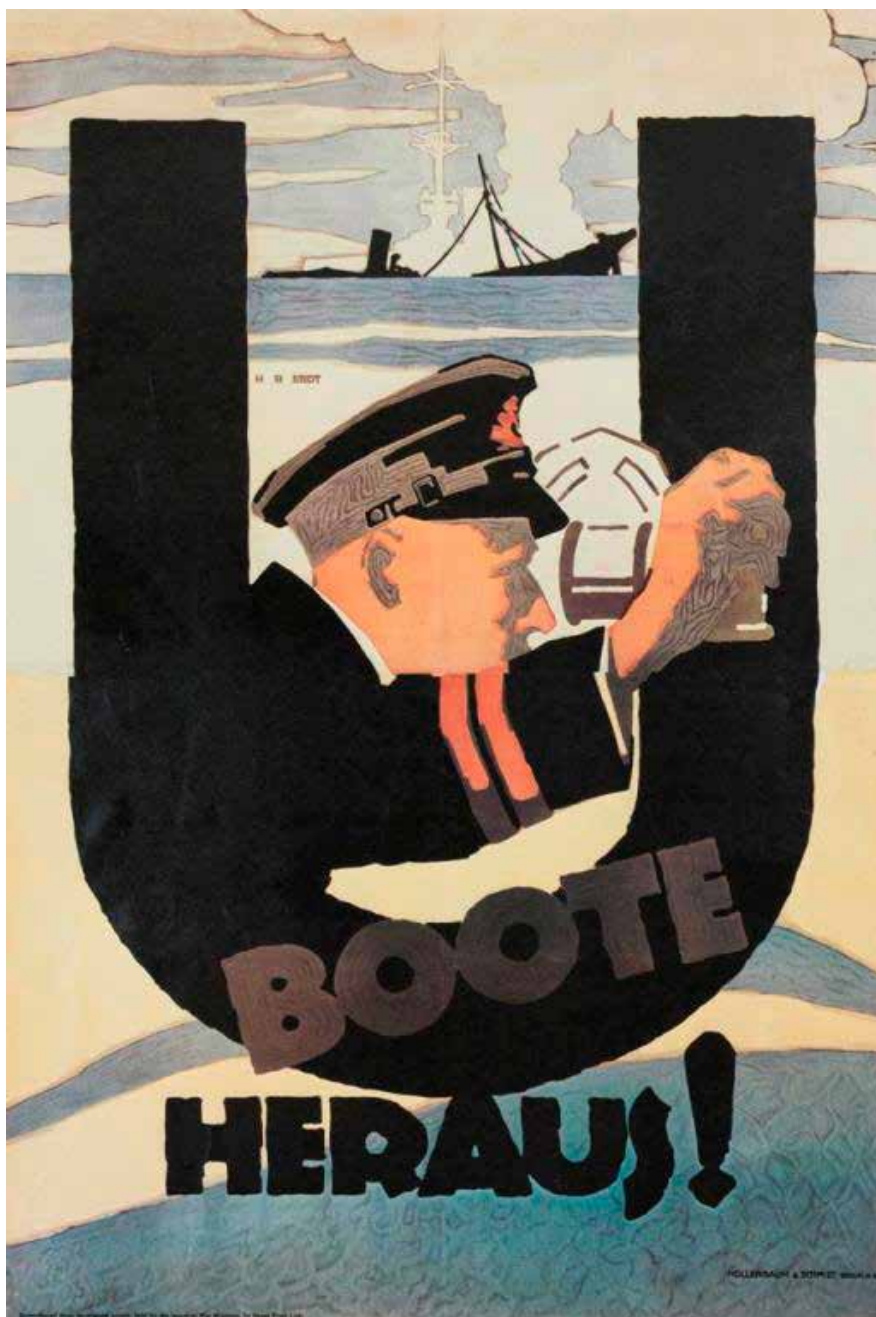
³⁰ Lang-Valchs, Gerhard (2024): *El mito del apoyo a los submarinos alemanes en las costas españolas del Mediterráneo durante la Gran Guerra (1914-1918)*, Revista de Historia Naval, 164, p. 83-106.

In mid-summer 1915, when Canaris had not yet escaped from the camp at the Chilean island of Quiriquina (August 5th), where he had been interned after the sinking of his ship in March, and before he decided to cross the whole South American continent and finally had to cross as well the ocean to arrive in November in Germany, Kiel locates him in Spain, at the farm of a Basque industrialist and shipyard owner, Horacio Echevarrieta, making plans (and later) arrangements for the construction of a submarine supply-flotilla. Those special ships were purportedly ordered and laid down in autumn 1915 to be launched in January 1916 (Kiel; 1950: 6-8).

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Propaganda poster “U-Boat Impact in the Mediterranean”, World War I. Printed by the Admiralty of the Navy (CC BY-NC-SA @ Museum Weißenfels - Schloss Neu-Augustusburg)



Hans Rudi Erdt, *U-boote heraus!*, Hollerbaum & Schmidt, Berlin, Königliche Bild-und-Film-Amt. Imperial War Museum, CC NC SA Wikimedia Commons..



William Balfour Ker (1877-1918), *Knights of Columbus*, 1917 / Poster showing a priest looking heavenward and raising a crucifix, blessing kneeling soldiers. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA. Reproduction Number: LC-USZC4-10131
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