

# U 201: Remscheid & The Snowman

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# Part I - The Boat

#### Introduction

A large number of Kreigsmarine U-boats had insignia painted on their conning towers. The insignia were varied in terms of their origin, meaning and quality. Some were nothing more than hastily prepared sketches (*malings*) which did not adorn the conning towers for long. Other designs (*emblemes*) lasted for numerous patrols. Another type of insignia was the *bootswappen*, which were coat of arms belonging to a German town or city.

One of the most memorable and enduring of *emblemes* is the snowman of U 201. When modellers choose which of the 700 or so Type VII boats they wish to model, the visual impact of the snowman, together with the aesthetics of U 201's wavy camouflage scheme, ensures that U 201 is one of the most popular choices. Alongside U 96 and U 552, it is arguably one of the three most popular VIIC boats. U 201 also displayed two versions of the Remscheid coat of arms (*wappen*), the latter version being present alongside the snowman.

This article discusses the various insignia of U 201 in the hope that it may assist modellers who have purchased a set of decals from Accurate Model Parts. In Part IV, a summary of U 201's insignia and modification dates has been presented in table format; patrol dates are also provided. The modification dates and patrol dates are essential guides for trying to determine when photos of U 201 were taken. Successful dating of period photos can then allow us to establish when the various insignia and features were present on U 201. More details of the modifications - netcutter, breakwater and wind deflector - can be found on pages 80 to 83 of the downloadable file *The Wolf Pack: A Collection Of U-Boat Modelling Articles*.

#### U 201

U 201 was a Type VIIC built by the *Friedrich Krupp Germaniawerft A.G.* shipyards in Kiel. Launched on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 1940, the boat was commissioned into the Kriegsmarine on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 1941. The boat's first commander, Oberleutnant zur See Adalbert "Adi" Schnee, had previously commanded U 6, U 60 and U 121, all Type IIs of various variants. Schnee would command U 201 for seven patrols, during which his tally of enemy shipping steadily mounted. Some important milestones in Schnee's naval career are listed below -

Φ.	30th August 1941	Knights Cross
Φ.	1st March 1942	Promotion to Kapitänleutnant
Φ .	15th July 1942	Knights Cross with Oak Leaves
<del>Ф</del>	1st December 1944	Promotion to Korvettenkapitän

In the boat's first seven patrols, Schnee sank 21 ships and damaged another two ships. His very successful seventh patrol - in which he sank 41,036 tons - saw him awarded the Knights Cross with Oak Leaves. He then left the boat to take up a shore position on the BdU staff. Near the end of the war he returned to operational duties, commanding the Type XXI U 2511. U 2511 and U 3008 were the only two Type XXIs to undertake a war patrol. Schnee's patrol started on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1945 and ended, due to the German capitulation, three days later on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 1945. Just after the cease fire orders were issued on the 4<sup>th</sup> May, Schnee conducted a simulated attack on the London-class heavy cruiser HMS *Norfolk* before successfully evading the escorting destroyers. One of the most popular commanders, "Adi" Schnee survived the war.

The second and final commander of U 201 was Günther Rosenberg, who sank three ships during the boat's eighth patrol. By the time U 201 sailed on her ninth war patrol in January 1943, the boat had sunk 24 ships of 109,055 tons and damaged 2 ships of 13,386 tons. There would be no further successes. On the 17<sup>th</sup> February 1943, U 201 was located by HF/DF, then depth charged to the surface by the destroyer HMS *Viscount* near ONS.165 (at 50°36N/41°07W - 480 miles eastnorth-east of St. Johns in Canada). All 49 crewmembers were killed when the U-boat was sunk.

# **Part II - Remscheid Coat Of Arms**

#### The Remscheid coat of arms

One very popular practice concerning U-boat insignia was the adoption of civic heraldry. Many German towns and cities sponsored individual U-boats, contributing money towards their construction. In this scheme - known as *patenschaft* – the boat would have the city's crest painted, or mounted on a shield, on the tower. The crew would often have an association with the city, sometimes even visiting the city during a period of leave. According to a list in Georg Högel's update booklet *Embleme Wappen Malings: Deutscher U-Boote von 1939-1945*, at least 137 U-boats sported *bootswappen* via the *patenschaft* scheme.

Most of the boats in the series of twelve boats following U 201 were sponsored by towns or cities. U 201 had the crest of Remscheid on her tower, indicating that the boat was sponsored by that city. Situated to the south side of the Ruhr, Remscheid was heavily damaged in July 1943 by Allied bombing. The main industries in the town at that time were mechanical engineering and toolmaking. Many U-boat men had previous engineering skills, so the adoption of a city with such an industrial background is quite fitting.

According to the Heraldry of the World website, the arms of Remscheid were officially granted on the 18<sup>th</sup> February 1854. This website further states -

"Remscheid became a city in 1808 and the arms were based on a seal from 1556, and show in the upper part the lion of the Counts of Berg, who ruled the area in the 16th century. The sickle represents the speciality of the local forges, who were well known in a wide area. The arms were granted with a mural crown, a Prussian eagle behind the shield and a forger and his assistant as supporters. The supporters were removed before 1914, the Prussian eagle after 1918 and the crown around 1930."

Right (HER-1939): A drawing of the former coat of arms of Remscheid - dated 1939 - from the Heraldry Of The World website (http://www.ngw.nl/int/dld/r/remschei.htm).



In this 1939 drawing (HER-1939), there is a forger and assistant, a parapet and a Prussian and with grown. In the ten helf of shield there is a red lien upon a pale

eagle with crown. In the top half of shield there is a red lion upon a pale blue background; in the lower half there is a sickle (light blue blade and brown handle) upon a medium blue background.

The same website also includes a drawing of the current Remscheid coat of arms (HER-PRESENT). The top half of this coat of arms includes a red lion upon a silver background; the lower half shows a sickle (silver blade and yellow handle) upon a light to medium blue background. Note that several of the features of the 1939 version - yellow brick parapet, eagle, forger and assistant - are absent from this present version.



#### Remscheid early version (REM-E)

Above (HER-PRESENT): The current coat of arms of Remscheid is a simplified version, without several features of the 1939 version.

Now that we know a little of the background of the Remscheid coat of arms we can discuss the shield insignia on U 201. There were in fact two distinct versions of the shield upon Schnee's boat. We shall use the codes REM-E for the early version and REM-L for the late version.

The early version of U 201's Remscheid shield (REM-E) is very similar to the current coat of arms, as seen in the artwork HER-PRESENT above. The most immediate difference is the presence of the parapet, which may be a throwback to the 1939 coat of arms.



Left (1): The first version of Remscheid shield - REM-E - as found on U 201 in July 1941. This design includes a *parapet*. Situated at the top of a castle, a parapet is a wall-like barrier with a sawtooth shaped top. Another name for the parapet is a *crenelation*; this consists of high areas called *merlons* and low areas called *crenels*.

Right (AMP1): The AMP drawing of REM-E. There is just enough detail in photo 1 to discern five merlons and four crenels on each of the three towers; this detail has been incorporated into the AMP design.



The following colours were used in the AMP design for REM-E -

<u>Parapet</u> - Although the parapet in the 1939 arms is brick yellow, this is clearly not the case on REM-E. In the black and white photo 1, the parapet looks the same shade as the red lion so red was incorporated into the AMP drawing. Some darker red was used to provide depth to the drawing. <u>Sickle blade and lion background</u> - The definitive work on U-boat insignia is *U-Boat Emblems Of World War II 1939-1945* by Georg Högel. Högel asserts that the following colours were used – "red half lion on silver field, silver buckle on blue field". The "buckle" refers to a sickle – a tool with a curved handle used for harvesting crops. In photo 1, the sickle blade matches the background around the lion, which is reportedly silver. Accordingly, silver was used for both the blade and the lion background in the AMP version.

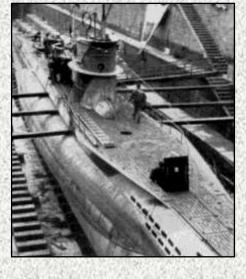
<u>Sickle handle</u> - The colour of the sickle handle is yellow in HER-PRESENT. However, in photo 1 the handle is much too dark for yellow. Dark brown was chosen for sickle handle in the AMP version for two reasons. Firstly, the handle would likely have been made of wood; and secondly brown is the colour used in the 1939 version (HER-1939).

<u>Lower half of shield</u> - If we look closely at photo 1, we can see that the red lion is darker than the blue field below. This suggests that the blue field was a light to medium blue shade.

Right (2): U 201 in a Lorient dry-dock after patrol 1. Note that the 88mm has been removed for maintenance. The breakwaters are still in place but would soon be removed. The netcutter had probably been removed by this stage.

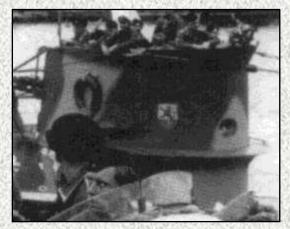
Below (3): U 201 before leaving Lorient on patrol 2 on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 1941. The breakwaters have been newly removed, replaced by a semi-circular line of 26 evenly-spaced holes of variable size.





Below left (4): Taken moments after photo 3, this shows the freshly painted U 201 on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 1941. We are now afforded a glimpse of REM-E; an identical shield was present in the same position on the port side of the tower.

Below (5): Adalbert Schnee returns U 201 from patrol 2 on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 1941. The exact size and position of REM-E can be determined using this photo. The wind deflector flange has not yet been fitted to U 201 at this time.



Many U-boat insignia were merely painted onto the towers. However, on some boats a real shield - either wood or metal - was fixed to the tower. The early Remscheid insignia looks to have been a thin shield mounted upon the tower side.

It is unclear when U 201 first sported the Remscheid coat of arms. There is one photo of the boat on her commissioning day on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 1941. Unfortunately the front of the tower is not shown on this photo; as such it is unclear whether

version 1 was present when the boat was commissioned. As a point of interest, it appears the boat did not yet sport her distinctive wavy camouflage pattern when commissioned.

U 201 did have a camouflage pattern, and REM-E, during her first war patrol. This can established by photo 2, which shows the boat in a Lorient dry-dock between patrol 1 and patrol 2. The boat is clearly painted in a camouflage pattern at this point, heavily weathered during the rigour of the boat's first patrol. What is harder to distinguish is the presence of REM-E, but it *can* just be discerned on the tower.

#### Remscheid late version (REM-L)

Towards the latter half of 1941, a new improved shield (REM-L) was introduced. The two smaller shields (REM-E) were removed in favour of one larger shield in the centre of the tower.

REM-L was a more professional rendition of the Remscheid shield, incorporating a wealth of raised 3D detail. The parapet, lion, sickle handle and sickle blade were all depicted in raised detail. New features such as defined edges and a brick pattern also featured in raised detail.



Above (6a): Our next photo of U 201 shows the boat a little later, probably around the autumn of 1941, with REM-L mounted in a central location. A number of slogans were added to the tower, most likely during the course of a patrol.



Left (6b): The slight curve in REM-L can be discerned. Some of the 3D elements - the parapet, lion and sickle blade - are all evident. Three mounting brackets - one on either side of the shield and another at the base - can also be seen. Four bolt heads are also visible - two around the top of the lion and one either side of the sickle handle.

Right (AMP2): The AMP drawing of REM-L. Note the three rectangular mounting brackets have been included. Some shadows were incorporated into the design (including the lion) to help produce a more realistic decal.



The following colours were used in the AMP design for REM-L -

<u>Parapet</u> - In photo 6b, the shade of the parapet looks identical to the shade of the red lion. Once again red was chosen for the parapet.

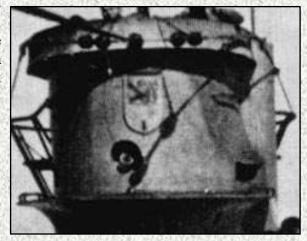
<u>Sickle blade and lion background</u> - As with REM-E, silver was used as the colour of the sickle blade and the background of the lion.

Sickle handle - Dark brown once again.

<u>Lower half of shield</u> - The area behind the sickle is much lighter on REM-L than on REM-E. Indeed, in photo 6b it can be seen that this area is very light in shade. A very light blue was initially considered for the AMP decals. However blue was not chosen for two reasons. Firstly, it would

have to be a very pale blue to have matched the shade in photo 6b. Secondly, the raised detail appears to depict brickwork, and blue tends not to be a colour used for bricks. In the 1939 coat of arms a pale yellow brick colour was used for the parapet bricks. Considering these reasons, pale yellow was used for the brickwork on the decals for REM-L.

Right (7): Taken at some stage after photo 6, possibly in late 1941, we can see REM-L in the centre of the tower. This photo allows us to gauge the size – a much larger shield than REM-E. The wind deflector flange is now present at the top of the tower.



## Part III - Schnee & The Snowman

#### **Snowman version 1 (SNOW-V1)**

On many occasions U-boat sported personal insignia in addition to patenschaft or flotilla

insignia. The Remscheid shield was clearly a patenschaft insignia, belonging to the boat rather than her commander. At some point midway in her career - perhaps late in 1941 or even early in 1942 - a personal insignia belonging to the boat's commander Adalbert Schnee was introduced. This consisted of a snowman figure painted on both sides of the tower. The snowman quite obviously derived from the commander's surname Schnee, which is German for "snow". Note

Below (8): U 201 returns to Brest on the 21st May 1942. At this time version 1 of the snowman (SNOW-V1) was in place on both sides of the tower. The Remscheid shield (REM-L) remained in place in the centre of the tower.



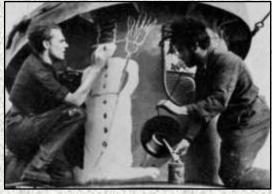
there were at least two distinct versions of the snowman; these will be referred to as SNOW-V1 and SNOW-V2, for versions 1 and 2 respectively.

Photo 8 shows the boat returning from patrol 6. In photo 9 below, two crewmen are in the process of painting version 1 (SNOW-V1) of the snowman; they may be applying the snowman from scratch or they may be re-touching features of an existing snowman. Close examination of photos 8 and 9 reveal two differences. In photo 8, the edges of the coat are straight and the broom is fully white. However, in photo 9 the edges of the coat are wavy, and only white lines are present on the broom.

When designing the AMP decals, we had to decide whether to draw SNOW-V1 as it appears in photo 8 or as it appears in photo 9. We opted for photo 8, which shows the boat returning from patrol 6 on the 21<sup>st</sup> May 1942, since it provides definitive proof that the straight coat edges and full white broom was definitely used upon U 201 at this time. Photo 9 was not used as it may show an in-progress shot of SNOW-V1 - the two crewmen may have painted a full white broom in the hour following the moment the photo was taken.

Note that the broom is over the right hand shoulder in both photo 8 and photo 9. When we consider that photo 8 shows the port snowman, and photo 9 shows the starboard snowman, it follows that the two snowmen were not symmetrical - the broom must have been over the right hand shoulder on both sides. This is why the

AMP design for SNOW-V1 has both port and starboard versions with the broom over the right shoulder.





Above right (9): Two crewmen bringing the early snowman to life. They may have painted the entire snowman or are possibly touching up some of the features of an existing design. Note the broom and hat both extend to the same height as the supports for the wind deflector flange.

Left (AMP3): The AMP drawing of the early snowman on the starboard side. There are no obvious clues as to exactly when the snowman was first introduced to U 201. The dates when each version of the Remscheid shield and snowmen was present on U 201 are covered in Part IV: Patrol & Combination Dates.

#### Snowman version 2 (SNOW-V2)

Significant numbers of freshly painted U-boats leaving on patrol indicate the likelihood that Uboats were often fully repainted in dry-dock following the end of a war patrol. A full repaint was particularly likely if boats had been to sea for many weeks. When repainting occurred, the insignia would often have to be repainted from scratch or touched up. The snorting bull of U 47 provides us with valuable insight into this practice: the bull was repainted after each patrol, resulting in numerous versions throughout the boat's career.

With such a practice, it is not surprising that we find a different version of the snowman (SNOW-V2) present on the tower on patrol 7. Photos of the boat returning to Brest at the end of patrol 7 show two differences to the previous version: the hat was now fully black and there was now no black belt around the waist.

Another obvious difference occurs at the snowman's feet. In SNOW-V1 there was a large white area extending down to the spray deflector - this may be the snowman's feet or perhaps melted snow. The feet/melted snow feature is not present in SNOW-V2. Modellers should note the position of SNOW-V2 - there was a significant gap between the bottom of the snowman and the spray deflector.

The port and starboard versions, being painted by hand rather than stencil, were not identical. With this in mind, the port and starboard snowmen on the AMP decals have

Below (10): U 201 returns to Brest on the 8th August 1942. A lifebelt from one victim is hanging in celebration from the forward jumping wire. The inscription "HMS T137" reveals that the lifebelt originated from the 545-ton trawler HMS Laertes, sunk by U 201 on the 25th July 1942.



been purposefully drawn with some minor differences. Modellers should be aware that the starboard version has five black buttons and a carrot nose pointing to the right, whereas the port version has six coat buttons and a nose pointing to the left. One of the buttons on the starboard snowman may have disappeared due to weathering during the patrol.

During patrol 7 - Adalbert Schnee's final and most successful patrol - he was awarded the coveted Knight's Cross with Oakleaves (Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes mit Eichenlaub). The



award, bestowed upon him on the 15th July 1942, was a real cause of celebration for his crew. Consequently, when the boat entered Brest at the end of the patrol, real leaves were placed around the tower bulwark and at the top of the attack periscope housing.

On SNOW-V2, a cross is present around the neck of the snowman. This is clearly a reference to the Knight's Cross award, which was worn on a ribbon tied around commanders' necks. However, it appears that the cross around SNOW-V2 was not to celebrate Schnee's Knight's Cross award, which he received almost a year earlier (30th August 1941). The snowman's cross, newly introduced during patrol 7 in 1942, must have been added to celebrate his Knight's Cross with Oakleaves, which was awarded on the 15th July 1942.

Left (AMP4): The AMP drawing of SNOW-V2 on the port side. Note that the starboard version has a carrot nose pointing to the right while the port snowman's nose points to the left.

Modellers who are depicting U 201 during the early stages of patrol 7 should be aware that the cross around the snowman was probably not present *before* the crew were informed that their commander was to be awarded the oakleaves. The application of white paint over the snowman's cross would ensure historical accuracy in this case.

The white flags flying from the attack periscope are victory pennant flags (*erfolgswimpeln*). A popular way for U-boatmen to celebrate their successes, they were commonly found hanging in a line from the extended attack periscope to the tower railings of returning U-boats. The victory pennants have been added in 1/72<sup>nd</sup> scale to the AMP flag range (DK-UBPEN-072).

#### Günther Rosenberg

Following the departure of the original skipper to a shore position, U 201 was next commanded by Kapitänleutnant Günther Rosenberg. Although Rosenberg had previously commanded the VIIC U 351, his first opportunity to command a war patrol came in September 1942, when he took U 201 on

Below (11): Adalbert Schnee returns U 201 from a war patrol for the seventh and final time. With the leaves around the tower, the victory pennants flying, the later version of the Remscheid shield (REM-L), the later version of the snowman (SNOW-V2), and Schnee's recent prestigious award, this is an ideal time to depict U 201.



her penultimate patrol (patrol 8). The ninth patrol, with Rosenberg again in command, would be the final patrol of U 201.

The photos of U 201 in common circulation all show the boat under the command of Schnee. As such it is impossible to ascertain what insignia was present upon the boat during the latter stages of the boat's career, when Rosenberg was in command. It is not even clear if the camouflage scheme was retained upon the boat.

It is likely that the Remscheid shield would have been retained when Rosenberg commanded U 201. As part of the ongoing *patenschaft* scheme, the shield belonged to the boat rather than a commander. There would be no reason for Rosenberg to discard this very well designed 3D shield, especially considering the time and materials that must have been required to produce it.

The question of whether the snowman was retained has quite different considerations. Many commanders removed the personal insignia of their predecessors in order to assert their own personality upon the boat and the crew. The large imposing snowman was a uniquely *personal* reminder of the previous incumbent, who had enjoyed such great success with the boat. Many men in Rosenberg's shoes would have removed the snowman insignia. This is, of course, mere speculation, offered solely due to the absence of any real evidence. Unless photos showing the boat under Rosenberg's stewardship become available, we will not be able to determine if the snowman was retained during the last two patrols.

# **Part IV - Patrol & Combination Dates**

### U 201 patrol dates

Patrol	Departure		Arrival		
1	22/04/41	Kiel	18/05/41	Lorient	
2	08/06/41	Lorient	19/07/41	Brest	
3	14/08/41	Brest	25/08/41	Brest	
4	14/09/41	Brest	30/09/41	Brest	
5	29/10/41	Brest	09/12/41	Brest	
6	24/03/42	Brest	21/05/42	Brest	
7	27/06/42	Brest	08/08/42	Brest	
8	06/09/42	Brest	26/10/42	Brest	
Sortie	27/12/42	Brest	29/12/42	Brest	
9	03/01/43	Brest	-	-	

# U 201 combination dates

Combination	Net-	Break-	Wind	REM	REM	SNOW	SNOW
	cutter	waters	deflector	E	$\mathbf{L}$	<b>V1</b>	<b>V2</b>
Combination A	Yes	Yes	No	?	No	No	No
Combination B	No*	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Combination C	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Combination D	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Combination E	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Combination F	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Combination G	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

<sup>\*</sup> The absence of the net cutter on the 1st patrol is likely but not certain

Combination	Date	Patrol	
A	25/01/41	Commissioning	
В	22/04/41-18/05/41	1	
C	08/06/41-19/07/41	2	
C or D»	14/08/41-25/08/41	3	
D or E»	14/09/41-30/09/41	4	
E or F»	29/10/41-09/12/41	5	
F	24/03/42-21/05/42	6	
G	27/06/42-08/08/42	7	

»If patrol 3 = combination C, then patrol 4 = combination D and patrol 5 = combination E If patrol 3 = combination D, then patrol 4 = combination E and patrol 5 = combination F

## Part V - AMP Decals

Seven sets of decals are available in the U 201 decal range from Accurate Model Parts. The designs can be seen in the drawings below. Due to the smaller size of the 144<sup>th</sup> decals, all of the designs are included in the SNOW144 set. However, in 72<sup>nd</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> scales, the designs are split into three groups – A, B and C. The table provides full details of which designs are included in each decal code.

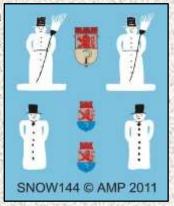
Decal	Scale	Includes
SNOW35A	32/35	REM-L + SNOW-V2
SNOW35B	32/35	REM-L + SNOW-V1
SNOW35C	32/35	REM-E
SNOW72A	72	REM-L + SNOW-V2
SNOW72B	72	REM-L + SNOW-V1
SNOW72C	72	REM-E
SNOW144	144	REM-E + REM-L,
		SNOW-V1 + SNOW-V2

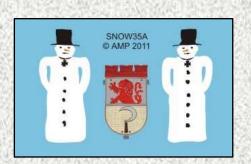
As can be seen from the table, the designs are the same for 72<sup>nd</sup> scale as they are for 35<sup>th</sup> scale. For example SNOW35A is merely a resized version of SNOW72A.

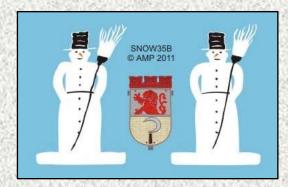
For positioning of the decals, please refer to the photographs included in this article. Please note that the snowman on the right of the sheet (with carrot nose pointing to the left) is for the port side of the tower.

All Type VIIC U-boats had waterline markings; these are available in the AMP decal range as A-72W, B-144W and I-32W.

Decals can be found at <a href="http://amp.rokket.biz/decals.shtml">http://amp.rokket.biz/decals.shtml</a>



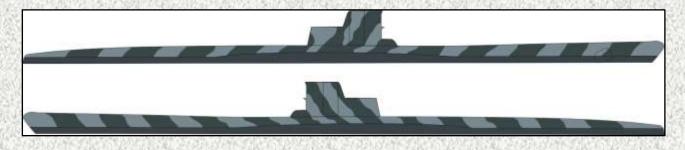






# Part VI - U 201 Camouflage Scheme

It should be noted that there would have been slight differences in the wavy stripes between patrols. There are not enough photographs in common circulation to be able to show all these different camouflage versions. Nor can we draw one version with absolute certainty. The scheme below is reasonably accurate in most respects to the scheme employed at an unknown time period perhaps late 1941. There are 13 stripes on either side in the drawing below, with a merging of two stripes in the central section on the starboard side.



# Part VII - References & Sources

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**♦** 4, 11.

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 $\bullet$  1, 2, 5.

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(http://www.ngw.nl/int/dld/r/remschei.htm)

HER-1939, HER-PRESENT.

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