



The Snorting Bull Insignia

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Part I - Introduction

One of the most common of all U-boat *bootswappen* (insignia or emblem) was the snorting bull. The white outline of a snorting bull featured upon a large number of Type VIIB and VIIC U-boats. It was first used upon U 47 as the personal insignia of the boat's commander Günther Prien. After the loss of Prien in March 1941, it was then used as the official flotilla insignia of the 7th U-Flottille.

This short article will cover the original snorting bull version through to its use on multiple U-boats within the 7th U-Flottille in order to guide customers purchasing from the range of snorting bull decals produced by Accurate Model Parts.

Part II - Original Bull Of Scapa Flow Insignia

The origins of the bull can be traced back the night of the 13th/14th October 1939. On this fateful night, the Type VIIB U 47 penetrated the main Royal Navy base at Scapa Flow and sank the 29,150-ton battleship HMS *Royal Oak*. The legendary attack, which has been described as “the greatest submarine raid of all time,” elevated the boat's commander Günther Prien to the status of hero in Germany.

U 47 returned to Germany from the Scapa Flow raid during the period between the 14th October 1939 and the 17th October 1939. During this time, an insignia consisting of a white outline of a snorting bull was painted on either side of U 47's conning tower. Known as the “The Bull Of Scapa Flow” (*Der Stier von Scapa Flow*), the insignia would become arguably the most famous of all U-boat insignia.

Numerous paintings and illustrations depicting U 47 during the Scapa Flow attack on the night of the 13th/14th October 1939 include a bull on the U-boat's tower. However, as the bulls were applied during the return to Germany, these illustrations are erroneous.

Right (1): The original snorting bull insignia on the starboard side of U 47's tower in October 1939. Above is Günther Prien, the boat's legendary commander.



The bull insignia was devised by U 47's First Watch Officer, Oberleutnant zur See Engelbert Endrass. The first of the three influences which prompted Endrass to produce the bull insignia was a comment made by the Second Watch Officer, Oberleutnant zur See Amelung von Varendorff, during the time U 47 had been cruising around on the surface inside the Scapa Flow harbour. The young officer had just been chastised by Prien for taking a stroll on the deck without signing himself off the bridge. Upon reporting back to the tower, von Varendorff is supposed to have remarked, "Herr Kaleu, there is nothing wrong in this bullfighting arena; where are the war horses?" The second influence came from a character in a comic paper that was popular among the crew before the Scapa Flow raid. The character, *Harry Hotspur*, was a bull with smoking nostrils which pawed the ground. Lastly, it was felt that the insignia depicted the aggressive character and spirit of U 47's legendary commander, Günther Prien.

With these three influences in mind, Endrass designed the bull on the way home to Germany from the successful Scapa Flow mission. Bootsman (Chief Petty Officer) Hans Sammann and Matrose Gefreiter (Able Seaman) Peter Dittmer enlarged the drawing and made a stencil from paper. Using this stencil, the white outline of a snorting bull was painted upon both sides of U 47's conning tower.

Günther Prien, from whom the bulls on either side of the conning tower had been kept secret until they had been completed, was both surprised and pleased with the result. Both he and U 47 were thereafter popularly known as *Der Stier von Scapa Flow* - "The Bull of Scapa Flow."

During the course of U 47's career, the boat went into a shipyard for repairs after each patrol. In most cases the boat spent some of the refit time in dry-dock. The boat would usually be repainted during these refits, and start each patrol with a fresh coat of paint. The exception to this was when the boat was in the shipyard for only a short time; a fresh coat of paint may not have been applied in these circumstances.

When U 47 was repainted, the snorting bull insignia would also benefit from a makeover. Since a stencil was not used when painting U 47's bulls, each snorting bull would differ slightly from previous examples. With the photos that are available to us, we can be sure that there were at least 8 versions used upon U 47. Separate bulls were definitely present during patrols 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.



Above (2): This image was taken on the 6th July 1940, at the end of U 47's successful 6th patrol. Beside the snorting bull is "66587to." - the tonnage figure Prien believed they had sunk during the patrol.

Below (3): The starboard bull at the start of U 47's 9th patrol on the 3rd November 1940. The three final snorting bull versions were applied during refits in port. As we would expect, these versions are much neater renditions of the famous insignia than some of the earlier versions applied at sea.



Right (4): The starboard bull at the start of the tenth and last patrol on the 20th February 1941. This version of U 47's snorting bull is the final one, which the U-boat sported when lost on the 7th March 1941.



Part III - Snorting Bull On 7th U-Flottille U-Boats

After Günther Prien was lost aboard U 47 on the 7th March 1941, the flotilla which U 47 had been assigned to - the 7th U-Flottille - issued a written order to the U-boats belonging to the flotilla to paint the snorting bull insignia on the towers. This order was issued by the chief of the flotilla Herbert Sohler. As a consequence, the snorting bull became the official flotilla insignia of the 7th U-Flottille. Any U-boat with the bull would therefore belong to that flotilla.

This order was intended to honour Prien, the legendary U-boat commander renowned for his daring penetration of Scapa Flow. News of his death was deemed to be such a blow to the German nation's morale that it was not announced until the 23rd May 1941. Although the official announcement wasn't made until this date, the 7th U-Flottille was clearly aware of Prien's demise soon after it happened. To prove this, one only needs to look at photos of U 69 returning from her 3rd patrol with a unique version of the bull adorning the conning tower. U 69's "bull," which shall be discussed later, was applied before the 3rd patrol commenced on the 5th May 1941. It follows that the order given by the 7th U-Flottille must have been issued some time before the official announcement of Prien's death to the German public.

Since the snorting bull was used on numerous U-boats, there were inevitably differences between the individual designs. Each time the boat was repainted a slightly different bull design would appear. Not only were there variances between the designs themselves, but the size and location on the towers also varied. Sometimes even the same boat had bulls of a different size and location over time.

Usually both bulls faced forward. But there were exceptions: U 46 and U 93 both featured bulls which faced to the left. Many of the bulls were roughly the same size as the U 47 bulls had been, with some slightly smaller. But a number of boats had much larger bulls located towards the front of the towers. Some of the 7th U-Flottille boats had only one bull located at the front of the tower. In these cases a personal insignia often occupied the favoured position at the side of the tower.

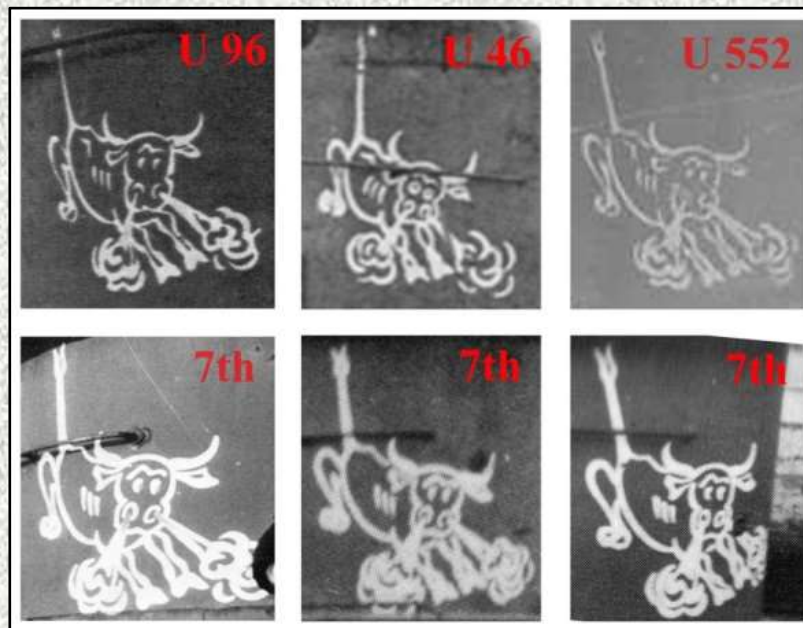
Despite these various factors, the 7th U-Flottille bull designs were often quite similar. Many of these snorting bulls had the following characteristics -

- fat body
- straight tail
- a crooked line between the bottom of the tail and horn
- three lines within the body
- the body is depicted below the face
- only one hind leg



Left: A drawing of the snorting bull used on U-boats of the 7th U-Flottille.

Below (5a-5f): The top three bulls show some of the versions that were present on the famous 7th U-Flottille boats U 46, U 96 and U 552. The bottom three show the insignia on unidentified boats. The similarities in design and size between the bottom three suggest that a stencil was used to apply these bulls. Note that as these six images were taken at various angles to the tower, the proportions we see are not as they necessarily were.



Many U-boats, such as U 48, U 94 and U 552, had the snorting bull flotilla insignia in addition to their personal insignia. Earlier in these boats careers, before the order to display the bull flotilla insignia had been given, these three boats sported only their personal insignia.

When First Watch Officers received their own commands, they sometimes instructed that the insignia of their old boat should be painted on their new boat. Such was the case when Oberleutnant zur See Engelbert Endrass took command of U 46 on the 22nd May 1940. The copying of the bull insignia by Endrass is hardly surprising, given his part in the creation of the famous drawing. Endrass definitely used the bulls on U 46 as a personal insignia rather than a flotilla insignia. The order for boats of the 7th U-Flottille to adopt a snorting bull did not take place until after Prien's demise in 1941, long after U 46 had been prowling around with bulls on her conning tower.

Right (6): The port side of U 552, commanded by Erich Topp. Since Topp's red devil personal insignia is at the front of the tower, the snorting bull has been positioned at the rear of the tower bulwark. A similar red devil and bull were present in the same locations on the starboard side.



Left (7): The port snorting bull on a damaged U 46, commanded by Engelbert Endrass. The eyes of U 46's bulls were circles rather than dots. The starboard bull was unusual as it also faced to the left, just as the very first snorting bull design did.

After serving on U 46, Endrass took command of the Type VIIC U 567. The short propaganda film which was shot aboard U 567 shows that a particularly large pair of bulls adorned the boat's tower. Another interesting fact which can be ascertained from the film is that the crew of U 567 also wore snorting bull badges on their caps.

Right (8): A large snorting bull being applied by stencil to U 567, commanded by Engelbert Endrass.





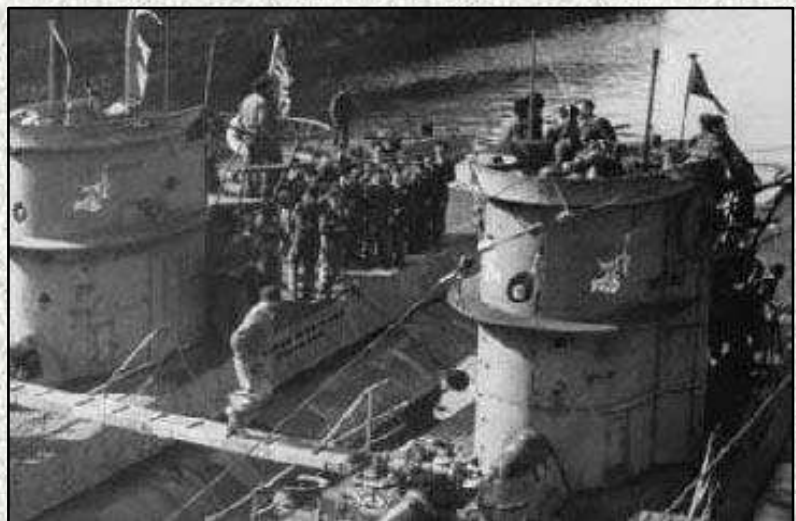
Above left (9): The snorting bull on U 593 differed from most boats. The white bull was imposed upon a black circle, around which was a white border. The personal insignia can be seen at the front of the tower.

Above right (10): The one snorting bull, facing to the left, at the front of U 213's conning tower. The Type VIID U-boat was commanded by Oberleutnant zur See Amelung von Varendorff, who served as a Watch Officer aboard U 47 from patrols 2 to 9. When he assumed command of his own boat, von Varendorff used the snorting bull as his personal insignia.

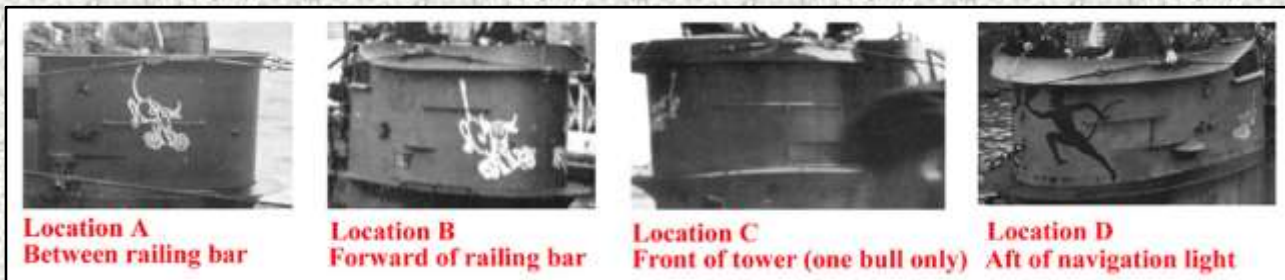
Left (11): A large bull insignia on the starboard side of a U-boat belonging to the 7th U-Flottille. Given the size and design of this insignia, the stencil used on U 567 may have been used when this bull was painted.

Below left (12): Colour photos of U-boats with the snorting bull insignia are extremely rare. This shot shows a 7th U-Flottille boat arriving back from patrol at St. Nazaire in bright sunshine.

Below right (13): Two U-boats of the 7th U-Flottille lying side by side.



According to *U-Boat Emblems Of World War II 1939-1945* by Georg Högel, the following U-boats sported the snorting bull insignia at some stages in their careers: U 46, U 47, U 48, U 69, U 73, U 74, U 75, U 77, U 93, U 94, U 96, U 98, U 101, U 103, U 135, U 207, U 213, U 221, U 224, U 227, U 266, U 267, U 281, U 358, U 359, U 382, U 390, U 406, U 409, U 415, U 434, U 436, U 442, U 454, U 455, U 528, U 531, U 551, U 552, U 553, U 561, U 567, U 575, U 576, U 578, U 590, U 593, U 594, U 600, U 607, U 617, U 618, U 614, U 641, U 650, U 662, U 667, U 707, U 709, U 714, U 751 and U 976. Therefore, at least 62 U-boats sported the snorting bull insignia. At least 58 U-boats adopted the bull as a flotilla insignia, while U 47, U 46, U 567 and U 213 adopted the bull as a personal insignia.



The positions and size of the snorting bulls are given for the boats below. **All sizes are the normal size unless otherwise specified.** It was usual for both bulls to face forward but there were exceptions (U 46 and U 93). Note that the sizes and positions may have varied throughout a boat's career. The location codes A to D codes are explained above.

Above (14a-14d): A guide to the different locations on U-boat towers. Location D was often used if a personal insignia was present in the more normal location A or B.

Snorting bull positions	
Boat	Position
U 46	Location A, the eyes were circles rather than dots, both bulls facing to left. At a later stage, when U 46 operated out of St. Nazaire, there were two large bulls in location A.
U 48	Located just below railing bar (location A) and 401623 tonnage figure. These bulls appeared only at the end of operational career on the 22 nd June 1941.
U 73	Bulls present at start of career in late 1940 in location D. They were removed soon afterwards when L-shaped air trunks were added over this location.
U 93	One bull in location A below railing bar, both facing to left.
U 94	Personal insignia on either side in April 1941. Then one bull was added in location C, facing to left. By June 1942 the personal insignia had been removed, leaving only the one bull in location C.
U 96	Two sawfish personal insignia in April 1941. Then one bull (in location C, facing to left) was added in spring/early summer 1941. By October 1941 the sawfishes had been removed, and there were two bulls in location B. Later there were two large bulls in location B. At the end of the boat's operational career there were again two normal sized bulls in location B.
U 213	One bull in location C, facing to left.
U 455	Location B in February 1942.
U 552	Location D.
U 553	Large bulls in location B.
U 567	Large bulls in location B.
U 575	Location B in August 1942. Large bulls in location B at another time.
U 593	Location B, on black circle with white border.
U 617	Location B.

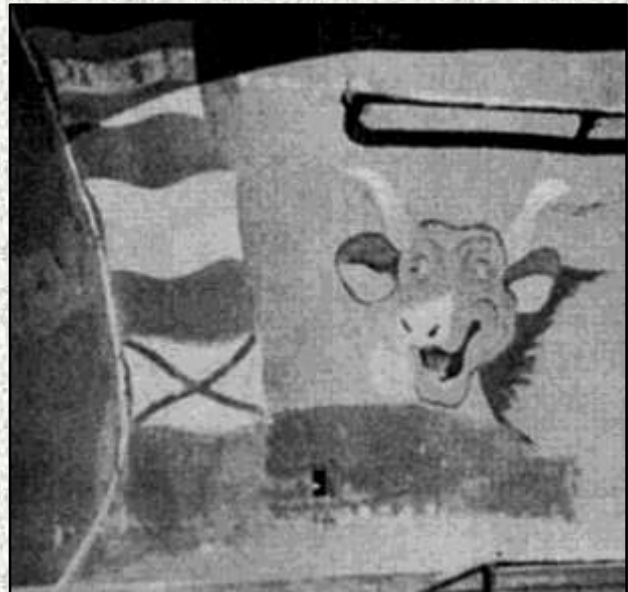
U 667	One bull in location C, facing to left, in October 1943.
U 707	Location B, just ahead of armoured box, in October 1943.

Part IV - The Laughing Cow Of Lorient

When the crew of U 69, the fifth Type VIIC to be assigned to the 7th U-Flottille, received instructions to paint the snorting bull insignia on their boat's tower, no picture of the insignia was enclosed. The old hands who knew what the Bull Of Scapa Flow looked like were, by chance, on leave. Consequently, nobody serving aboard U 69 knew exactly what the snorting bull should look like. Nor was anybody willing to enquire about what the insignia of their own flotilla should look like, lest they appear foolish.

The attempts of U 69's First Watch Officer, Oberleutnant zur See Hans-Jürgen Auffermann, to design a bull drawing of his own were not successful. Instead he instructed a shipyard worker to copy the head of a laughing cow which appeared on the lid of a crate belonging to a popular French dairy product firm. The shipyard worker faithfully copied the laughing cow from the crate lid, together with the words that were present upon the French milk containers beneath it: "La Vache qui rit." The words became synonymous with U 69, as did the laughing cow insignia. U 69's new insignia was a source of great amusement. Instead of the aggressive symbol of the 7th U-Flottille - the raging, snorting "Bull Of Scapa Flow" - U 69 was adorned with its alter ego, the "Laughing Cow Of Lorient!"

The Laughing Cow was applied to U 69 in Lorient between the end of the boat's 2nd patrol on the 11th April 1941 and the beginning of the 3rd patrol to West Africa on the 5th May 1941.



Above (15): The three flags to the left of the Laughing Cow belong to U 69's original "Horridoh" insignia. The "La Vache qui rit" markings that previously appeared below the cow have been painted over.

Part V - AMP Decals

Snorting bull positions			
Code	Scale	Size	Suitable kits
C72-N	72	Normal	Revell VIIC RV5015, VIIC/41 RV5045
D72-L	72	Large	Revell VIIC RV5015, VIIC/41 RV5045
E-144N	144	Normal	Revell VIIC RV5038, VIID RV5009
F-144L	144	Large	Revell VIIC RV5038, VIID RV5009
G35-N	32 / 35 / 40	Normal	Accurate Armour, Andrea, OTW, Robbe
H35-L	32 / 35 / 40	Large	Accurate Armour, Andrea, OTW, Robbe
M48-N	48	Normal	Trumpeter
N48-L	48	Large	Trumpeter

Part VI - References & Photograph Sources

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