

SMS Kronprinz Wilhelm Wreck - Scapa Flow

Nationality:	German
Launched:	21 February 1914
Commissioned:	8 August 1914
Builder:	Germaniawerft, Kiel
Construction number:	182
Type:	Battleship
Subtype/class:	König class
Displacement (standard):	25797 tonnes
Displacement (full load):	29669 tonnes
Length overall:	146m*
Beam:	28m
Draught:	6 – 8.5m
Complement:	1136**
Power:	46200 shp
Material:	Steel
Cause of loss:	Scuttled
Date lost:	21 June 1919; 13:15 hrs
Casualties (in scuttling):	1 (dead)
Propulsion:	3 oil fired and 12 coal fired marine type boilers, 3 sets of Parsons turbines, 3 propellers
Fuel:	3000 tonnes coal, 600 tonnes oil
Range:	8000 nautical miles at 8 knots
Speed:	21 knots
Armament:	10 x 30.5cm guns in 5 twin turrets, 14 x 15cm casemate guns. Fitted with 10 x 8.8cm anti-aircraft guns (6 removed after Jutland). 5 x 50cm submerged torpedo tubes
Armour:	Deck 60 – 100mm, forward control tower 300mm (on sides), lower belt 350mm, upper belt 180mm, turrets 300mm (sides), casemate 170mm

*measurements taken from the ships plans

**The ship would have carried an extra 82 men if it had been the squadron flagship

NB Torpedo nets were fitted to all the König class ships. These were removed after the Battle of Jutland having proved cumbersome and inadequate.

History of the vessel

Pre Jutland

- 2 January 1915 – The Kronprinz was in full operation during with no significant action.
- 8 May 1915 – She suffered a premature barrel explosion on
- 5 – 7 March 1916 – She took part in the advance on Terschilling.
- 24 – 25 April 1916 – She supported the raid on Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth. The raid was led by the German Battle cruisers. As the attack on the British coastal towns began the German fleet was met by two British cruisers and about 20 destroyers. However, false reports of the approach of a superior British force were received and so the fighting was broken off quickly.

31 May 1916 – Battle of Jutland

The Kronprinz was part of the vanguard of the fleet at the battle of Jutland but she remained unscathed and suffered no loss of life.

Post Jutland

4 November 1916 – The Kronprinz, as part of III Squadron, attended the recovery attempt for U20 and U30. On her return she was torpedoed by British submarine J1*. Following this she spent a month in dry dock at Wilhelmshaven for repairs.

- 5 March 1917 – The Kronprinz was rammed by the Großer Kurfürst whilst on manoeuvres in the Heligoland Bight; 600 tonnes of water flooded into the ship and so she went back to Wilhelmshaven for more repairs from 6 March – 14 May 1917.
- October 1917 – She took part in Operation Albion where she engaged the Russian pre-dreadnought battleship Graschdanin. She hit the Russian ship twice while remaining undamaged herself.
- 15 June 1918 – Her name was changed from Kronprinz to Kronprinz Wilhelm after the successor to the Imperial throne who became the last Kaiser of Germany.
- 19 November 1918 – The Kronprinz Wilhelm left Germany for the last time on bound for the UK and her final resting place – Scapa Flow.

*Pictures of the damage can be seen in Gary Staff's book German Battleships Volume Two and also German Battlecruisers.

People Associated with the Ship

Karl Bauer - a stoker from the Kronprinz Wilhelm, was seriously wounded and then killed by repeated firing from two drifters during the scuttling of the fleet on 21 June 1919. This action was a result of panic from the British guards on the drifters in their attempted to prevent the scuttling. Karl Bauer is buried in the naval cemetery at Lyness, Hoy.

November 1914 to August 1915 Captain Baron Gottfried von Dalwigk to Lichtenfels
August 1915 to November 1916 Captain Constanz Feldt (Captain during the Battle of Jutland)
November 1916 to August 1918 Captain Bernhard Rosing
August to December 1918 Captain Otto Seidensticker
December 1918 to June 1919 (internment) Lieutenant Hans Becker

Artefacts from the Wreck

In Lyness Museum:

Porthole
Brass switch (2007.8.9)
Porthole

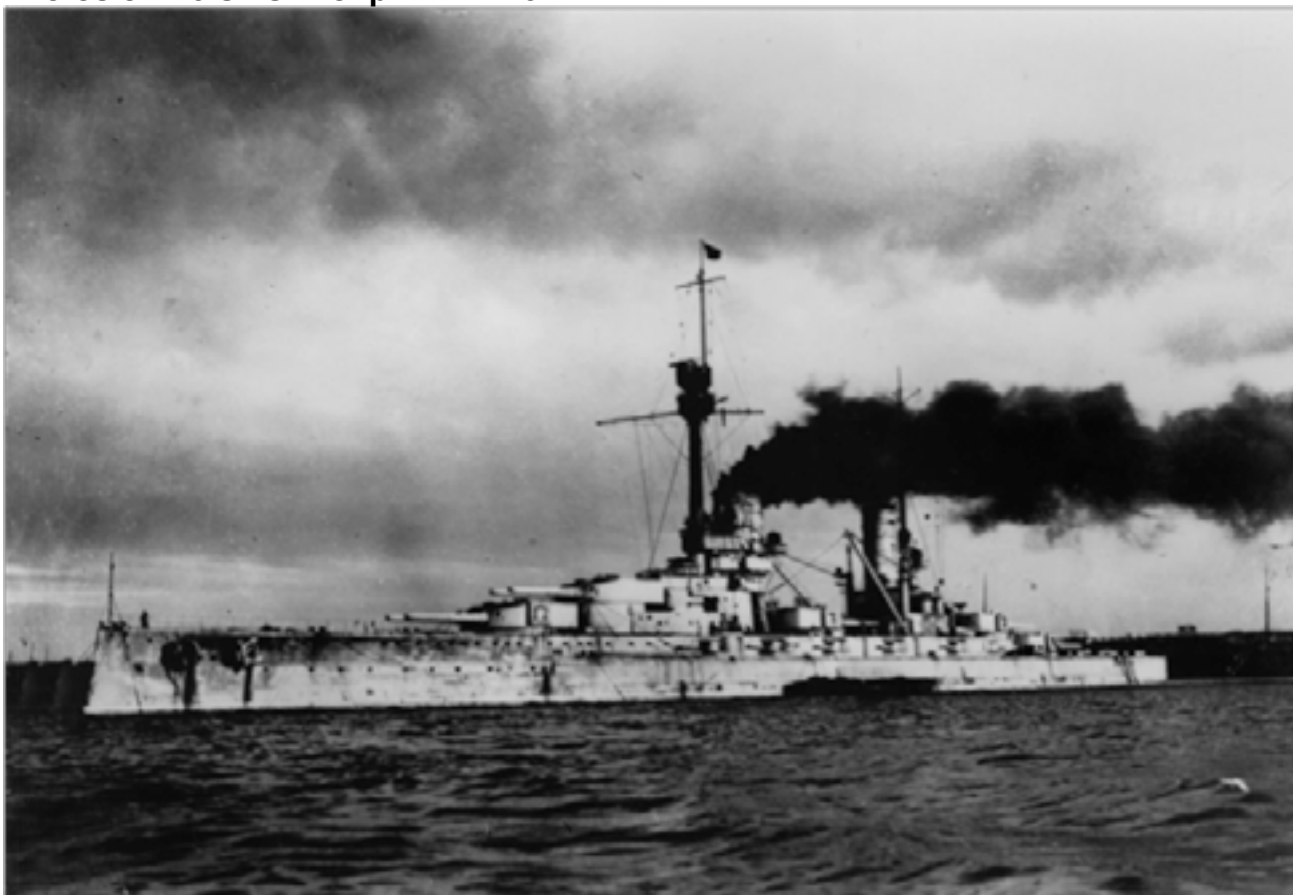
Material reported under RoW amnesty (2001):

A604 steam gauge, brass boiler plate, switch box and brass oiler: from debris field on seabed.
NMRS, MS/829/34.

A1873 1 porthole: from seabed
A2463 3 lamps: from seabed
A2740 1 'electric gear': from seabed
A3032 1 switch: from seabed
A3485 2 brass cage lamps, 1 brass switchbox, 1 brass junction box, 2 brass oil taps, 2 brass wing nuts: from seabed
A3688 1 curved piece brass: from seabed
A4294 1 voice pipe: from seabed.
NMRS, MS/829/35.

A4513 German Imperial Navy nameplate, marked 'Linker Aufzug', [and] electrical socket.
NMRS, MS/829/77.
Photos of the SMS König

Photos of the SMS Kronprinz Wilhelm



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