

= HMS Monmouth (1901) =

HMS Monmouth was the lead ship of her class of 10 armoured cruisers built for the Royal Navy in the first decade of the 20th century . She was assigned to the 1st Cruiser Squadron of the Channel Fleet upon completion in 1903 . She was transferred to the China Station in 1906 , and remained there until she returned home in 1913 and was assigned to the reserve Third Fleet . When World War I began in August 1914 , the ship was recommissioned and assigned to the 5th Cruiser Squadron in the Central Atlantic to search for German commerce raiders and protect Allied shipping . She was detached upon arrival to patrol the Brazilian coast for German ships , and was later ordered to the South Atlantic to join Rear Admiral Christopher Cradock 's squadron in their search for the German East Asia Squadron . He found the German squadron on 1 November off the coast of Chile . The German squadron outnumbered Cradock 's force and were individually more powerful ; they sank Cradock 's two armoured cruisers in the Battle of Coronel . Monmouth was lost with all hands .

= = Design and description = =

Monmouth was designed to displace 9 @, @ 800 long tons (10 @, @ 000 t) . The ship had an overall length of 463 feet 6 inches (141 @. @ 3 m) , a beam of 66 feet (20 @. @ 1 m) and a deep draught of 25 feet (7 @. @ 6 m) . She was powered by two 4 @- @ cylinder triple @- @ expansion steam engines , each driving one shaft , which produced a total of 22 @, @ 000 indicated horsepower (16 @, @ 000 kW) designed to give a maximum speed of 23 knots (43 km / h ; 26 mph) . Monmouth , however , was one of three of the Monmouths that failed to meet her designed speed . The engines were powered by 31 Belleville boilers . She carried a maximum of 1 @, @ 600 long tons (1 @, @ 600 t) of coal and her complement consisted of 678 officers and enlisted men .

Her main armament consisted of fourteen breech @- @ loading (BL) 6 @- @ inch Mk VII guns . Four of these guns were mounted in two twin @- @ gun turrets , one each fore and aft of the superstructure and the others positioned in casemates amidships . Six of these were mounted on the main deck and were only usable in calm weather . They had a maximum range of approximately 12 @, @ 200 yards (11 @, @ 200 m) with their 100 @- @ pound (45 kg) shells . Ten quick @- @ firing (QF) 12 @- @ pounder 12 cwt guns were fitted for defence against torpedo boats . Monmouth also carried three 3 @- @ pounder Hotchkiss guns and two submerged 18 @- @ inch torpedo tubes .

The ship 's waterline armour belt had a maximum thickness of four inches (102 mm) and was closed off by five @- @ inch (127 mm) transverse bulkheads . The armour of the gun turrets and their barbettes was four inches thick while the casemate armour was five inches thick . The protective deck armour ranged in thickness from .75 ? 2 inches (19 ? 51 mm) and the conning tower was protected by ten inches (254 mm) of armour .

= = Construction and service = =

Monmouth , named for the Welsh county , was laid down by London and Glasgow Shipbuilding at their shipyard in Govan on 29 August 1899 , and launched on 13 November 1901 . Her completion was delayed due to a collision with the liner Assyria in Glasgow harbour in late March 1902 , and she was finally completed on 2 December 1903 , when she was initially assigned to the 1st Cruiser Squadron of the Channel Fleet . She was briefly placed in reserve in Devonport at the end of January 1906 , before being recommissioned in April for service on the China Station . Monmouth remained there until 1913 , when she returned home and was assigned to the reserve Third Fleet .

She was mobilised on 4 August with a crew that mostly consisted of reservists , and sent to the 5th Cruiser Squadron of Rear Admiral Archibald Stoddart on the Cape Verde ? Canary Islands station . Upon her arrival on 13 August , Stoddart detached her to the Brazilian coast to search for the German light cruisers known to be in the area . She came under Cradock 's command in mid @- @ September . At the end of September , Cradock made his first fruitless search of the Tierra del

Fuego area and later detached Monmouth and two other ships to search up the Chilean coast , reaching Valparaiso on 15 October , while his flagship , Good Hope returned to Port Stanley , in the Falkland Islands , to recoal and to reestablish communications with the Admiralty . He received word on 7 October that German Vice Admiral Spee 's ships were definitely bound for the Cape Horn region and waited for the elderly predreadnought battleship Canopus to reinforce his squadron . She was in poor mechanical condition when she arrived at Port Stanley and required time to make repairs . Good Hope sailed on 22 October without her , going around Cape Horn , while Canopus and three colliers departed the following day , taking the shorter route through the Strait of Magellan .

= = = Battle of Coronel = = =

Good Hope rendezvoused with the rest of the squadron at Vallenar Roads , in the remote Chonos Archipelago of Chile on 27 October to recoal . They departed two days later , just as Canopus arrived , Cradock ordering the battleship to follow as soon as possible . He sent the light cruiser Glasgow to scout ahead and to enter Coronel , Chile to pick up any messages from the Admiralty and acquire intelligence regarding German activities . The cruiser began to pick up German radio signals from the light cruiser SMS Leipzig on the afternoon of 29 October , and delayed entering Coronel for two days with Cradock 's permission to avoid being trapped by the fast German ships . A German supply ship was already there and radioed Spee that Glasgow had entered the harbour around twilight . The cruiser departed on the morning of 1 November , but Spee had already made plans to catch her when informed of her presence the previous evening .

Glasgow departed Coronel at 09 : 15 after having picked up the squadron 's mail , and rendezvoused with the rest of the squadron four hours later . Cradock ordered his ships to form line abreast with a distance of 15 nautical miles (28 km ; 17 mi) between ships to maximise visibility at 13 : 50 and steered north at a speed of 10 knots (19 km / h ; 12 mph) . At 16 : 17 Leipzig spotted Glasgow , the easternmost British ship , to its west and she spotted Leipzig 's funnel smoke three minutes later . At 17 : 10 Cradock ordered his ships to head for Glasglow , the closest ship to the Germans . Once gathered together , he formed them into line astern , with Good Hope in the lead , steering southeasterly at 16 knots (30 km / h ; 18 mph) at 18 : 18 . As the sixteen 21 @-@ centimetre (8 @. @ 3 in) guns aboard the armoured cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau were only matched by the two 9 @. @ 2 @-@ inch guns on his flagship , he needed to close the range to bring his more numerous 6 @-@ inch guns to bear . The Force 7 winds and high seas , however , prevented the use of half of those guns as they were too close to the water . He also wanted to use the setting sun to his advantage so that its light would blind the German gunner . Spee was well aware of the British advantages and refused to allow Cradock to close the range . His ships were faster than the British , slowed by the 16 @-@ knot maximum speed of the armed merchant cruiser Otranto , and he opened up the range to 18 @, @ 000 yards (16 @, @ 000 m) until conditions changed to suit him . The sun set at 18 : 50 , which silhouetted the British ships against the light sky while the German ships became indistinguishable from the shoreline behind them .

Spee immediately turned to close and signalled his ships to open fire at 19 : 04 , when the range closed to 12 @, @ 300 yards (11 @, @ 200 m) . Spee 's flagship , Scharnhorst , engaged Good Hope while Gneisenau fired at Monmouth . The German shooting was very accurate , with both armoured cruisers quickly scoring hits on their British counterparts while still outside six @-@ inch gun range , starting fires on both ships . Cradock , knowing his only chance was to close the range , continued to do so despite the battering that Spee 's ships inflicted . By 19 : 23 the range was almost half of that when the battle began and the British ships bore onwards . One shell from Gneisenau blew the roof off Monmouth 's forward turret and started a fire , causing an ammunition explosion that completely blew the turret off the ship . Spee tried to open the range , fearing a torpedo attack , but the British were only 5 @, @ 500 yards (5 @, @ 000 m) away at 19 : 35 . Severely damaged , Monmouth began to slow and veered out of line .

Glasgow fought almost an entirely separate battle as the German armoured cruisers ignored her almost completely and she inconclusively dueled the light cruisers Leipzig and Dresden . Glasgow

broke contact with the German squadron at 20 : 05 and discovered Monmouth , listing and down by the bow , having extinguished her fires , 10 minutes later . She was trying to turn north to put her stern to the heavy northerly swell and was taking water at the bow . There was little that Glasgow could do to assist the larger ship as the moonlight illuminated both ships and the Germans were searching for them .

The light cruiser Nürnberg had been trailing the German squadron and spotted the plume of smoke from Glasgow at 20 : 35 , and then saw Monmouth with a 10 @-@ degree list to port shortly afterwards . As Nürnberg closed the range , Monmouth 's list increased so that none of the guns on her port side could be used . The German cruiser closed to within 600 yards (550 m) and illuminated her flag with its spotlight in the hopes that she would strike her colours and surrender . There was no response from the British ship and Nürnberg opened fire at 21 : 20 , aiming high , but there was still no response . The German ship then fired a torpedo which missed and turned off its searchlight . Monmouth then increased speed and turned towards Nürnberg , which caused her to open fire again . Monmouth capsized at 21 : 58 , taking her entire crew of 735 men with her as the seas were too rough to attempt any rescue effort .