

= HMS Indefatigable (1909) =

HMS Indefatigable was a battlecruiser of the Royal Navy and the lead ship of her class . Her keel was laid down in 1909 and she was commissioned in 1911 . She was an enlarged version of the earlier Invincible class with a revised protection scheme and additional length amidships to allow her two middle turrets to fire on either broadside .

When the First World War began , Indefatigable was serving with the 2nd Battlecruiser Squadron (BCS) in the Mediterranean , where she unsuccessfully pursued the battlecruiser Goeben and the light cruiser Breslau of the German Imperial Navy as they fled towards the Ottoman Empire . The ship bombarded Ottoman fortifications defending the Dardanelles on 3 November 1914 , then , following a refit in Malta , returned to the United Kingdom in February where she rejoined the 2nd BCS .

Indefatigable was sunk on 31 May 1916 during the Battle of Jutland , the largest naval battle of the war . Part of Vice -Admiral Sir David Beatty 's Battlecruiser Fleet , she was hit several times in the first minutes of the " Run to the South " , the opening phase of the battlecruiser action . Shells from the German battlecruiser Von der Tann caused an explosion ripping a hole in her hull , and a second explosion hurled large pieces of the ship 200 feet (60 m) in the air . Only two of the crew of 1,019 survived .

= = Design and description = =

No battlecruisers were ordered after the three Invincible class ships in 1905 until Indefatigable became the lone battlecruiser of the 1908 - 09 Naval Programme . A new Liberal Government had taken power in January 1906 and demanded reductions in naval spending , and the Admiralty submitted a reduced programme , requesting dreadnoughts but no battlecruisers . The Cabinet rejected this proposal in favour of two outmoded armoured cruisers but finally acceded to a request for one battlecruiser instead , after the Admiralty pointed out the need to match the recently published German naval construction plan and to maintain the heavy gun and armour industries . Indefatigable 's outline design was prepared in March 1908 , and the final design , slightly larger than Invincible with a revised protection arrangement , was approved in November 1908 . A larger design with more armour and better underwater protection was rejected as too expensive . Note ; plan is of Invincible class battlecruisers ; the Indefatigable class has a third superstructure element with ' P ' & ' Q ' turrets more widely spaced .

The ship had an overall length of 590 feet (179 m) , a beam of 80 feet (24 m) , and a draught of 29 feet 9 inches (9 m) at deep load . She normally displaced 18,500 long tons (18,500 t) and 22,130 long tons (22,130 t) at deep load . Her turbines were designed to produce a total of 43,000 shaft horsepower (32,000 kW) , but reached over 55,000 shp (41,000 kW) during sea trials in 1911 . She was designed for 25 knots (46 km / h ; 29 mph) , but reached 26.89 knots (49.80 km / h ; 30.94 mph) during trials .

Indefatigable 's main armament was eight breech -loading BL 12 -inch Mark X guns mounted in four hydraulically powered twin turrets . Two turrets were mounted fore and aft on the centreline , identified as ' A ' and ' X ' respectively . The other two were wing turrets mounted amidships and staggered diagonally : ' P ' was forward and to port of the centre funnel , while ' Q ' was situated starboard and aft . ' P ' and ' Q ' turrets had some limited ability to fire to the opposite side . Her secondary armament consisted of sixteen BL 4 -inch Mark VII guns positioned in the superstructure . She mounted two 17.72 -inch (450 mm) submerged torpedo tubes , one on each side aft of ' X ' barrette , and twelve torpedoes were carried .

Indefatigable was unique among British battlecruisers in having an armoured spotting and signal tower behind the conning tower , protected by 4 inches (102 mm) of armour . However , the spotting tower was of limited use , as its view was obscured by the conning tower in front of it and the legs of the foremast and superstructure behind it . During a pre -war refit , a 9 -foot (2.7 m) rangefinder was added to the rear of the ' A ' turret roof , and this turret was equipped to

control the entire main armament as an emergency backup for the normal fire @-@ control positions .

= = = Wartime modifications = = =

Indefatigable received a single QF 3 @-@ inch 20 cwt anti @-@ aircraft gun on a high @-@ angle Mark II mount in March 1915 . It was provided with 500 rounds . All of her 4 @-@ inch guns were enclosed in casemates and given gun shields during a refit in November 1915 to better protect the gun crews from weather and enemy action , although two aft guns were removed at the same time .

She received a fire @-@ control director between mid @-@ 1915 and May 1916 that centralised fire control under the director officer who now fired the guns . The turret crewmen merely had to follow pointers transmitted from the director to align their guns on the target . This greatly increased accuracy since the ship 's roll no longer dispersed the shells as each turret fired on its own ; also , the fire @-@ control director could more easily spot the fall of the shells .

= = Service = =

= = = Early career = = =

Indefatigable was laid down at the Devonport Dockyard , Plymouth on 23 February 1909 . She was launched on 28 October 1909 and was completed on 24 February 1911 . Upon commissioning , Indefatigable served in the 1st Cruiser Squadron , which in January 1913 was renamed the 1st Battlecruiser Squadron (BCS) . In December 1913 , she transferred to the Mediterranean , where she joined the 2nd Battlecruiser Squadron .

= = = Pursuit of Goeben and Breslau = = =

Indefatigable , accompanied by the battlecruiser Indomitable and under the command of Admiral Sir Berkeley Milne , encountered the German battlecruiser Goeben and the light cruiser Breslau on the morning of 4 August 1914 , which were headed east after a cursory bombardment of the French Algerian port of Philippeville . Britain and Germany were not yet at war , so Milne turned to shadow the Germans as they headed back to Messina to re @-@ coal . All three battlecruisers had problems with their boilers , but Goeben and Breslau were able to break contact and reached Messina by the morning of the 5th . By this time Germany had invaded Belgium and war had been declared , but an Admiralty order to respect Italian neutrality and stay more than six miles (10 km) from the Italian coast precluded entering the Strait of Messina , from which they could have observed the port directly . Therefore , Milne stationed Inflexible and Indefatigable at the northern exit of the strait , expecting the Germans to break out to the west where they could attack French troop transports . He stationed the light cruiser Gloucester at the southern exit , and sent Indomitable to coal at Bizerte , where she was ready for action in the Western Mediterranean .

The Germans sortied from Messina on 6 August and headed east , towards Constantinople , trailed by Gloucester . Milne , still expecting Rear @-@ Admiral Wilhelm Souchon to turn west , kept the battlecruisers at Malta until shortly after midnight on 8 August when he set sail at a leisurely 12 knots (22 km / h ; 14 mph) for Cape Matapan , where Goeben had been spotted eight hours earlier . At 2 : 30 p.m. he received an incorrect message from the Admiralty stating that Britain was at war with Austria @-@ Hungary . War would not actually be declared until 12 August , and the order was countermanded four hours later , but Milne gave up the hunt for Goeben , following his standing orders to guard the Adriatic against an Austrian break @-@ out attempt . On 9 August Milne was given clear orders to " chase Goeben which had passed Cape Matapan on the 7th steering north @-@ east . " Milne still did not believe that Souchon was heading for the Dardanelles , and so he resolved to guard the exit from the Aegean , unaware that the Goeben did not intend to come out .

On 3 November 1914 , Winston Churchill , then First Lord of the Admiralty , ordered the first British

attack on the Dardanelles following the commencement of hostilities between Ottoman Turkey and Russia . The attack was carried out by Indomitable and Indefatigable , as well as the French pre-dreadnought battleships Suffren and Vérité . The intention of the attack was to test the fortifications and measure the Turkish response . The results were deceptively encouraging . In a twenty minute bombardment , a single shell struck the magazine of the fort at Sedd el Bahr at the tip of the Gallipoli peninsula , displacing (but not destroying) 10 guns and killing 86 Turkish soldiers . The most significant consequence was that the attention of the Turks was drawn to strengthening their defences , and they set about expanding the mine field . This attack actually took place before Britain 's formal declaration of war on 6 November against the Ottoman Empire . Indefatigable remained in the Mediterranean until she was relieved by Inflexible on 24 January 1915 and proceeded to Malta for a refit ; she then sailed to England on 14 February and joined the 2nd BCS upon her arrival . The ship conducted uneventful patrols of the North Sea for the next year and a half . She was the temporary flagship of the 2nd BCS during April ? May 1916 , while her half sister HMAS Australia was under repair after colliding with Indefatigable 's other half sister HMS New Zealand .

= = = Battle of Jutland = = =

On 31 May 1916 , the 2nd BCS consisted of New Zealand (flagship of Rear Admiral William Pakenham) and Indefatigable . The squadron was assigned to Admiral Beatty 's Battlecruiser Fleet which had put to sea to intercept a sortie by the High Seas Fleet into the North Sea . The British were able to decode the German radio messages and left their bases before the Germans put to sea . Admiral Franz von Hipper 's battlecruisers spotted the Battlecruiser Fleet to their west at 3 : 20 p.m. , but Beatty 's ships did not spot the Germans to their east until 3 : 30 . Two minutes later , he ordered a course change to east south east to position himself astride the German 's line of retreat and called his ships ' crews to action stations . He also ordered the 2nd BCS , which had been leading , to fall in astern of the 1st BCS . Hipper ordered his ships to turn to starboard , away from the British , to assume a south easterly course , and to reduce speed to 18 knots (33 km / h ; 21 mph) to allow three light cruisers of the 2nd Scouting Group to catch up . With this turn Hipper was falling back on the High Seas Fleet , then about 60 miles (97 km) behind him . Around this time Beatty altered course to the east as it was quickly apparent that he was still too far north to cut off Hipper .

This began what was to be called the " Run to the South " as Beatty changed course to steer east south east at 3 : 45 , paralleling Hipper 's course , now that the range closed to under 18 ,000 yards (16 ,000 m) . The Germans opened fire first at 3 : 48 , followed by the British . The British ships were still in the process of making their turn as only the two leading ships , Lion and Princess Royal , had steadied on their course when the Germans opened fire . The British formation was echeloned to the right with Indefatigable in the rear and furthest to the west , and New Zealand ahead of her and slightly further east . The German fire was accurate from the beginning , but the British overestimated the range as the German ships blended into the haze . Indefatigable aimed at Von der Tann and New Zealand targeted Moltke while remaining unengaged herself . By 3 : 54 , the range was down to 12 ,900 yards (11 ,800 m) and Beatty ordered a course change two points to starboard to open up the range at 3 : 57 .

Around 4 : 00 , Indefatigable was hit around the rear turret by two or three shells from Von der Tann . She fell out of formation to starboard and started sinking towards the stern and listing to port . Her magazines exploded at 4 : 03 after more hits , one on the forecastle and another on the forward turret . Smoke and flames gushed from the forward part of the ship and large pieces were thrown 200 feet (61 m) into the air . The most likely cause of her loss was a deflagration or low order explosion in ' X ' magazine that blew out her bottom and severed the steering control shafts , followed by the explosion of her forward magazines from the second volley . Von der Tann fired only fifty two 28 cm (11 in) shells at Indefatigable before she exploded . Of her crew of 1 ,019 , only two survived . While still in the water , two survivors found Indefatigable 's captain , C. F. Sowerby , who was badly wounded and died before they could be rescued . The two survivors

, Able Seaman Frederick Arthur Gordon Elliott and Leading Signaller Charles Farmer , were rescued by the German torpedo boat S16 . A third survivor , Signaller John Bowyer , was picked up by another unknown German ship . He was incorrectly reported as a crew member from HMS Nestor in " The Times " on 24 June 1916 .

= = Indefatigable today = =

Indefatigable , along with the other Jutland wrecks , was belatedly declared a protected place under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986 , to discourage further damage to the resting place of 1 @, @ 017 men . Mount Indefatigable in the Canadian Rockies was named after the battlecruiser in 1917 . The wreck was identified by nautical archaeologist Innes McCartney in 2001 , when it was found to have been heavily salvaged sometime in the past .