

= HMS Black Prince ( 1904 ) =

HMS Black Prince was a Duke of Edinburgh class armoured cruiser built for the Royal Navy in the mid 1900s . She was stationed in the Mediterranean when the First World War began and participated in the pursuit of the German battlecruiser SMS Goeben and light cruiser SMS Breslau . After the German ships reached Ottoman waters , the ship was sent to the Red Sea in mid August to protect troop convoys arriving from India and to search for German merchant ships . After capturing two ships , Black Prince was transferred to the Grand Fleet in December 1914 and was sunk during the Battle of Jutland in May 1916 , with all hands killed .

= = Design and description = =

Two armoured cruisers of a new design , Duke of Edinburgh and Black Prince , the latter named for Edward , the Black Prince , were ordered for the Royal Navy as part of the 1902 ? 03 Naval Estimates . They were the first ships to be designed for the Royal Navy under the supervision of the new Director of Naval Construction , Sir Philip Watts . The new design was significantly larger than the previous Monmouth and Devonshire class cruisers , mounting a heavier main armament of six 9.2 in ( 234 mm ) guns in single turrets .

Black Prince displaced 12,590 long tons ( 12,790 t ) as built and 13,965 long tons ( 14,189 t ) fully loaded . The ship had an overall length of 505 feet 6 inches ( 154.1 m ) , a beam of 73 feet 6 inches ( 22.4 m ) and a draught of 27 feet ( 8.2 m ) . She was powered by four cylinder triple expansion steam engines , driving two shafts , which produced a total of 23,000 indicated horsepower ( 17,000 kW ) and gave a maximum speed of 23 knots ( 43 km / h ; 26 mph ) . The engines were powered by 20 Babcock & Wilcox water tube boilers and six cylindrical boilers . The ship carried a maximum of 2,150 long tons ( 2,180 t ) of coal and an additional 600 long tons ( 610 t ) of fuel oil that was sprayed on the coal to increase its burn rate . At full capacity , she could steam for 8,130 nautical miles ( 15,060 km ; 9,360 mi ) at a speed of 10 knots ( 19 km / h ; 12 mph ) . The ship 's complement was 789 officers and enlisted men .

Her main armament consisted of six BL 9.2 inch Mk X guns in single turrets , two on the centreline and two on each beam , giving a broadside of four 9.2 in guns . Her secondary armament of four BL 6 inch Mark XI guns was arranged in single casemates . They were mounted amidships on the main deck and were only usable in calm weather . Twenty Vickers QF 3 pounders were fitted , six on turret roofs and fourteen in the superstructure . The ship also mounted three submerged 18 inch torpedo tubes .

= = Operational history = =

Black Prince was laid down on 3 June 1903 at the Thames Ironworks and Shipbuilding Company 's shipyard at Blackwall , London . She was launched on 8 November 1904 and completed on 17 March 1906 . When completed , Black Prince served with the 2nd Squadron until 1907 , the 1st Cruiser Squadron from 1907 ? 1908 , the 5th Cruiser Squadron ( as part of the Atlantic Fleet ) from 1908 ? 1912 and the Third from 1912 ? 1913 .

At the beginning of the First World War , Black Prince was one of the four armoured cruisers serving in the 1st Cruiser Squadron of the Mediterranean Fleet , commanded by Rear Admiral Ernest Charles Thomas Troubridge . She participated in the pursuit of Goeben and Breslau . Following the escape of the two German ships to neutral Turkey , Black Prince and Duke of Edinburgh were sent into the Red Sea to search for German merchant ships , with Black Prince capturing the German ocean liners Südmark and Istria . On 6 November , she was ordered to Gibraltar to join a squadron of French and British ships to search for German warships still at sea off the African coast . This was cancelled on 19 November after the location of the German East Asia Squadron was revealed by survivors of the Battle of Coronel . Black Prince joined the Grand Fleet in December 1914 and was assigned to the 1st Cruiser Squadron under Rear Admiral Sir Robert

Keith Arbuthnot .

Black Prince was modified in March 1916 as a result of lessons learned at the Battle of Coronel , with the 6 @-@ inch guns removed from their casemates and replaced by six 6 @-@ inch guns mounted individually behind shields between the beam 9 @.@ 2 @-@ inch turrets .

= = = Loss = = =

The ship participated in the Battle of Jutland , where she was sunk with heavy loss of life . The circumstances under which she sank were mysterious for some years after . As the British had lost contact and did not see the ship destroyed , they were unsure as to whether a submarine or surface ship was responsible for sinking Black Prince . During the battle , the 1st Cruiser Squadron was deployed as part of a screening force several miles ahead of the main force of the Grand Fleet , but Black Prince lost contact with the rest of the Squadron as it came into contact with German forces , at about 17 : 42 . Soon after , two other members of the 1st Cruiser Squadron , Defence and Warrior were heavily engaged by German battleships and battlecruisers , with Defence blowing up and Warrior receiving heavy damage , which later caused her to sink .

There were no positive sightings of Black Prince by the British fleet after that , although a wireless signal from her was received at 20 : 45 , reporting a submarine sighting . During the night of 31 May ? 1 June , the British destroyer Spitfire , badly damaged after colliding with the German battleship Nassau , sighted what appeared to be a German battlecruiser , with two widely spaced funnels , described as being " ... a mass of fire from foremast to mainmast , on deck and between decks . Flames were issuing out of her from every corner . " The mystery ship exploded at about midnight . It was later thought that the burning ship may have been Black Prince , with the two midships funnels having collapsed or been shot away .

Recent historians , however , hold to the German account of the ship 's sinking . Black Prince briefly engaged the German battleship Rheinland at about 23 : 35 GMT , scoring two hits with 6 @-@ inch shells . Separated from the rest of the British fleet , Black Prince approached the German lines at approximately midnight . She turned away from the German battleships , but it was too late . The German battleship Thüringen fixed Black Prince in her searchlights and opened fire . Up to five other German ships , including the battleships Nassau , Ostfriesland , and Friedrich der Grosse , joined in the bombardment , with return fire from Black Prince being ineffective . Most of the German ships were between 750 and 1 @,@ 500 yards ( 690 and 1 @,@ 370 m ) of Black Prince ? effectively point @-@ blank range for contemporary naval gunnery . The ship was hit by at least twelve heavy shells and several smaller ones , sinking within 15 minutes . There were no survivors from her crew , all 857 being killed .

The wrecksite is designated as a protected place under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986 .

= = Popular culture = =

In the first episode of Series 4 of the SBS @-@ TV ( Australia ) series Who Do You Think You Are ? , Australian writer @-@ actor @-@ comedian Shaun Micallef discovered that his great @-@ grandfather Giovanni ( John ) Micallef , a steward on Black Prince , was among those killed .