

= German destroyer Z11 Bernd von Arnim =

Z11 Bernd von Arnim was a Type 1934A @-@ class destroyer built for Nazi Germany 's Kriegsmarine in the late 1930s . At the beginning of World War II , the ship was initially deployed to blockade the Polish coast , but she was quickly transferred to the German Bight to lay minefields in German waters . In late 1939 the ship made one successful minelaying sortie off the English coast that claimed one British warship and seven merchant ships . During the early stages of the Norwegian Campaign , Bernd von Arnim fought the British destroyer Glowworm while transporting troops to the Narvik area in early April 1940 , but neither ship was damaged during the action . The ship fought in both naval Battles of Narvik several days later and had to be scuttled after she exhausted her ammunition .

= = Design and description = =

Bernd von Arnim had an overall length of 119 meters (390 ft 5 in) and was 114 meters (374 ft 0 in) long at the waterline . The ship had a beam of 11 @.@ 30 meters (37 ft 1 in) , and a maximum draft of 4 @.@ 23 meters (13 ft 11 in) . She displaced 2 @, @ 171 long tons (2 @, @ 206 t) at standard load and 3 @, @ 190 long tons (3 @, @ 240 t) at deep load . The Wagner geared steam turbines were designed to produce 70 @, @ 000 metric horsepower (51 @, @ 000 kW ; 69 @, @ 000 shp) which would propel the ship at 36 knots (67 km / h ; 41 mph) . Steam was provided to the turbines by six high @-@ pressure Benson boilers with superheaters . Bernd von Arnim carried a maximum of 752 metric tons (740 long tons) of fuel oil which was intended to give a range of 4 @, @ 400 nautical miles (8 @, @ 100 km ; 5 @, @ 100 mi) at 19 knots (35 km / h ; 22 mph) , but the ship proved top @-@ heavy in service and 30 % of the fuel had to be retained as ballast low in the ship . The effective range proved to be only 1 @, @ 530 nmi (2 @, @ 830 km ; 1 @, @ 760 mi) at 19 knots (35 km / h ; 22 mph) .

Bernd von Arnim carried five 12 @.@ 7 cm SK C / 34 guns in single mounts with gun shields , two each superimposed , fore and aft . The fifth gun was carried on top of the rear deckhouse . Her anti @-@ aircraft armament consisted of four 3 @.@ 7 cm SK C / 30 guns in two twin mounts abreast the rear funnel and six 2 cm C / 30 guns in single mounts . The ship carried eight above @-@ water 53 @.@ 3 @-@ centimeter (21 @.@ 0 in) torpedo tubes in two power @-@ operated mounts . A pair of reload torpedoes were provided for each mount . Four depth charge throwers were mounted on the sides of the rear deckhouse and they were supplemented by six racks for individual depth charges on the sides of the stern . Enough depth charges were carried for either two or four patterns of 16 charges each . Mine rails could be fitted on the rear deck that had a maximum capacity of 60 mines . ' GHG ' (Gruppenhorchgerät) passive hydrophones were fitted to detect submarines .

= = Career = =

The ship was ordered on 4 August 1934 and laid down at Germania , Kiel on 26 March 1935 as yard number G537 . She was launched on 8 July 1936 and completed on 6 July 1938 . When World War II began in September 1939 , Bernd von Arnim was initially deployed in the Baltic to operate against the Polish Navy and to enforce a blockade of Poland , but she was soon transferred to the German Bight where she joined her sisters in laying defensive minefields . The ship also patrolled the Skagerrak to inspect neutral shipping for contraband goods . Bernd von Arnim joined the other destroyers in laying minefields off the British coast in November , when Bernd von Arnim , Hermann Künne and Wilhelm Heidkamp laid about 180 magnetic mines in the middle of the Thames Estuary on the night of 17 / 18 November . The destroyer HMS Gipsy , one trawler , and seven other ships totalling 27 @, @ 565 Gross Register Tons (GRT) were sunk by this minefield . Four days later , she was one of the destroyers escorting the battleships Gneisenau and Scharnhorst through the North Sea to break out into the North Atlantic . Together with her sisters Hans Lody and Erich Giese , Bernd von Arnim was to lay a minefield off Cromer during the night of 6 / 7 December , but she had trouble with two of her boilers and had to shut them down . The ship was ordered to return to port

while the other two destroyers continued their mission .

= = = Norwegian campaign = = =

Bernd von Arnim was allocated to Group 1 for the Norwegian portion of Operation Weserübung in April 1940 . The group 's task was to transport the 139th Mountain Infantry Regiment (139 . Gebirgsjäger Regiment) and the headquarters of the 3rd Mountain Division (3 . Gebirgs @-@ Division) to seize Narvik . The ships began loading troops on 6 April and set sail the next day . Bernd von Arnim was spotted by the British destroyer Glowworm in a storm on the morning of 8 April and the ship turned away to the north @-@ west at full speed after laying a smoke screen . The German ship was suffering damage from the heavy seas at 35 knots (65 km / h ; 40 mph) and was forced to reduce speed to 27 knots (50 km / h ; 31 mph) after she had lost two men overboard . The British destroyer was better suited for the conditions and began to close on Bernd von Arnim . Lieutenant Commander (Korvettenkapitän) Curt Rechel , captain of von Arnim , turned his ship to the north @-@ east , closer to the heavy cruiser Admiral Hipper . The ships exchanged fire without effect for an hour until Hipper came within range and sank Glowworm shortly afterward .

The German destroyers reached the Ofotfjord on the morning of 9 April and Commodore Friedrich Bonte took his flagship Wilhelm Heidkamp , Bernd von Arnim and Georg Thiele down the fjord to Narvik . A heavy snowstorm allowed von Arnim and Thiele to enter the harbor without challenge and tie up at a pier . The mountain troops immediately began disembarking , but the ship was spotted by the coast defense ship Norge a few minutes later . The latter ship immediately opened fire and was able to fire approximately 13 shells at 600 ? 800 meters (660 ? 870 yd) range before von Arnim was able to fire seven torpedoes . Only two struck the Norwegian ship , but they detonated one or more of the ship 's magazines and she immediately capsized and sank . None of the Norwegian shells hit either of the two German destroyers due to the darkness and falling snow , despite the short range . Von Arnim lowered boats to rescue the surviving Norwegian sailors and was able to pick up 96 men together with boats from the merchantmen in harbor .

Von Arnim and Thiele were the first to refuel from the single tanker that had made it safely to Narvik and later moved to the Ballangenfjord , a southern arm of the Ofotfjord , closer to the entrance . Shortly before dawn on 10 April , the five destroyers of the British 2nd Destroyer Flotilla surprised the five German destroyers in Narvik harbor . They torpedoed two destroyers and badly damaged the other three while suffering only minor damage themselves . As they were beginning to withdraw they encountered the three destroyers of the 4th Flotilla which had been alerted in the Herjansfjord when the British began their attack . The Germans opened fire first , but the gunnery for both sides was not effective due to the mist and the smoke screen laid by the British as they retreated down the Ofotfjord . The German ships had to turn away to avoid a salvo of three torpedoes fired by one of the destroyers in Narvik , but von Arnim and Thiele had also been alerted and were coming up to engage the British .

The two German destroyers crossed the T of the British flotilla and were able to fire full broadsides at a range of only 4 @, @ 000 meters (13 @, @ 000 ft) . They first engaged the British flagship , HMS Hardy , and badly damaged her . Both of her forward guns were knocked out and the forward superstructure was set afire . Hardy was forced to beach herself lest she sink , and the German ships switched their fire to HMS Havock , the next ship in line . Their fire was relatively ineffective and both sides fired torpedoes without scoring any hits . Havock pulled out and dropped to the rear to fight off any pursuit by the ships of the 4th Flotilla . This placed HMS Hunter in the lead and she was quickly set on fire by the German ships . Thiele probably also hit her with a torpedo and she was rammed from behind by HMS Hotspur when the latter ship lost steering control . Hotspur was able to disengage , but Hunter capsized shortly afterward . The three remaining British ships were able to escape from the Germans under the cover of a smoke screen . Von Arnim had been hit by five British shells , which had knocked out one boiler . This was repaired by the morning of 13 April and she received six torpedoes from the badly damaged destroyers .

On the night of 12 April , Commander Erich Bey , the senior surviving German officer , received word to expect an attack the following day by British capital ships escorted by a large number of

destroyers and supported by carrier aircraft . The battleship Warspite and nine destroyers duly appeared on 13 April , although earlier than Commander Bey had expected , and caught the Germans out of position . The five operable destroyers , including Bernd von Arnim , charged out of Narvik harbor and engaged the British ships . Although no hits were scored , they did inflict splinter damage on several of the destroyers . The ship was able to make a torpedo attack on the British destroyers before being driven off , but her torpedoes all missed . Lack of ammunition forced the German ships to retreat to the Rombaksfjorden (the easternmost branch of the Ofotfjord) , east of Narvik , where they might attempt to ambush pursuing British destroyers . Von Arnim had exhausted her ammunition and she was beached at the head of the fjord . Her crew placed demolition charges and abandoned the ship . By the time the British reached the ship she had rolled over onto her side . The ship 's crew joined the German troops ashore and participated in the campaign until the British evacuated the area in June .