

= SMS Elbing =

SMS Elbing was a light cruiser ordered by the Imperial Russian navy under the name Admiral Nevelskoy from the Schichau & Werke shipyard in Danzig in 1913 . Following the outbreak of World War I , the ship was confiscated in August 1914 and launched on 21 November 1914 as SMS Elbing . She had one sister ship , Pillau , the lead ship of their class . The ship was commissioned into the High Seas Fleet in September 1914 . She was armed with a main battery of eight 15 cm SK L / 45 guns and had a top speed of 27 @ 5 kn (50 @ 9 km / h ; 31 @ 6 mph) .

Elbing participated in only two major operations during her career . The first , the bombardment of Yarmouth and Lowestoft , occurred in April 1916 ; there , she briefly engaged the British Harwich Force . A month later , she took part in the Battle of Jutland , where she scored the first hit of the engagement . She was heavily engaged in the confused fighting on the night of 31 May ? 1 June , and shortly after midnight she was accidentally rammed by the battleship Posen , which tore a hole in the ship 's hull . Flooding disabled the ship 's engines and electrical generators , rendering her immobilized and without power . At around 02 : 00 , a German torpedo boat took off most of her crew , and an hour later the remaining men scuttled the ship ; they escaped in the ship 's cutter and were later picked up by a Dutch steamer .

= = Design = =

Elbing was ordered by the Imperial Russian Navy as Admiral Nevelskoy from the Schichau & Werke shipyard in Danzig . She was laid down in 1913 , requisitioned by the German Navy on 5 August 1914 , and was renamed Elbing . She was launched on 21 November 1914 , after which fitting & out work commenced . She was commissioned into the High Seas Fleet on 4 September 1915 . The ship was 135 @ 3 meters (444 ft) long overall and had a beam of 13 @ 6 m (45 ft) and a draft of 5 @ 98 m (19 @ 6 ft) forward . She displaced 5 @, 252 t (5 @, 169 long tons ; 5 @, 789 short tons) at full combat load . Her propulsion system consisted of two sets of Marine steam turbines driving two 3 @ 5 @- meter (11 ft) propellers . They were designed to give 30 @, 000 shaft horsepower (22 @, 000 kW) . These were powered by six coal @- fired Yarrow water @- tube boilers , and four oil @- fired Yarrow boilers . These gave the ship a top speed of 27 @ 5 knots (50 @ 9 km / h ; 31 @ 6 mph) . Elbing carried 620 tonnes (610 long tons) of coal , and an additional 580 tonnes (570 long tons) of oil that gave her a range of approximately 4 @, 300 nautical miles (8 @, 000 km ; 4 @, 900 mi) at 12 knots (22 km / h ; 14 mph) . Elbing had a standard crew of twenty @- one officers and 421 enlisted men , though this was expanded in wartime .

The ship was armed with eight 15 cm SK L / 45 guns in single pedestal mounts . Two were placed side by side forward on the forecastle , four were located amidships , two on either side , and two were side by side aft . She also carried four 5 @ 2 cm SK L / 55 anti @- aircraft guns , though these were replaced with a pair of two 8 @ 8 cm SK L / 45 anti @- aircraft guns . She was also equipped with a pair of 50 cm (19 @ 7 in) torpedo tubes mounted on the deck . She could also carry 120 mines . The conning tower had 75 mm (3 @ 0 in) thick sides , and the deck was covered with up to 80 mm (3 @ 1 in) thick armor plate .

= = Service history = =

After her commissioning , Elbing was assigned to the II Scouting Group , which typically operated alongside the battlecruisers of the I Scouting Group . Her first major operation was the bombardment of Yarmouth and Lowestoft on 24 ? 25 April . On the approach to Lowestoft , Elbing and Rostock spotted the Harwich Force , a squadron of three light cruisers and eighteen destroyers , approaching the German formation from the south at 04 : 50 . Rear Admiral Friedrich Boedicker , the German commander , initially ordered his battlecruisers to continue with the bombardment , while Elbing and the other five light cruisers concentrated to engage the Harwich Force . At around 05 : 30 , the British and German light forces clashed , firing mostly at long range . The battlecruisers

arrived on the scene at 05 : 47 , prompting the British squadron to retreat at high speed . A light cruiser and destroyer were damaged before Boedicker broke off the engagement after receiving reports of submarines in the area .

= = = Battle of Jutland = = =

In May 1916 , Admiral Reinhard Scheer , the fleet commander , planned to lure a portion of the British fleet away from its bases and destroy it with the entire High Seas Fleet . Elbing remained in the II Scouting Group , attached to the I Scouting Group , for the operation . The squadron left the Jade roadstead at 02 : 00 on 31 May , bound for the waters of the Skagerrak . The main body of the fleet followed an hour and a half later . At 15 : 00 , lookouts on Elbing spotted the Danish steamer N. J. Fjord ; Elbing detached a pair of torpedo boats to investigate the steamer . Two British cruisers , HMS Galatea and Phaeton , were simultaneously steaming to inspect the steamer , and upon spotting the German torpedo boats , opened fire shortly before 15 : 30 . Elbing turned to support the destroyers , opening fire at 15 : 32 . She quickly scored the first hit of the battle , on Galatea , though the shell failed to explode . The British turned to the north back toward the 1st Battlecruiser Squadron , with Elbing still firing at long range . She was joined by Frankfurt and Pillau , but the three cruisers had to cease fire by 16 : 17 , as the British had drawn out of range . About fifteen minutes later , the three cruisers engaged a seaplane launched by the seaplane tender HMS Engadine . They failed to score any hits , but the aircraft was forced off after which its engine broke down and it was forced to land . The three cruisers then returned to their stations ahead of the German battlecruisers .

At around 18 : 30 , Elbing and the rest of the II Scouting Group encountered the cruiser HMS Chester ; they opened fire and scored several hits on the ship . As both sides ' cruisers disengaged , Rear Admiral Horace Hood 's three battlecruisers intervened . His flagship HMS Invincible scored a hit on Wiesbaden that exploded in her engine room and disabled the ship . Elbing and Frankfurt each fired a torpedo at the British battlecruisers , though both missed . Elbing was briefly engaged by the battlecruisers at very long range , though she was not hit . At around 20 : 15 , Elbing lost her port engine due to leaks in her boiler condensers . This limited her speed to 20 kn (37 km / h ; 23 mph) for the next four hours .

The II Scouting Group , along with the battlecruisers Seydlitz and Moltke had been ordered to take station ahead of the German line for its night cruising formation . Elbing was still having problems with her boiler condensers , and was unable to keep up the speed necessary to reach the front of the line , and so she fell in with the IV Scouting Group . At 23 : 15 , Elbing and Hamburg spotted the British cruiser Castor and several destroyers . They used the British recognition signal and closed to 1 @ , @ 100 yards (1 @ , @ 000 m) before turning on their searchlights and opening fire . Castor was hit seven times and set on fire , forcing the British to turn away . As they did , they fired several torpedoes at Elbing and Hamburg . One passed underneath Elbing but failed to explode . While this engagement was still on @ - @ going , the 2nd Light Cruiser Squadron arrived and engaged the IV Scouting Group . Elbing was hit once , which destroyed her wireless transmitting station and killed four men and wounded twelve .

Shortly after midnight , the German fleet ran into the British rear destroyer screen . Elbing was by this time steaming on the port side of the German line along with Hamburg and Rostock . The dreadnought Westfalen ? the first ship in the German line ? opened fire first , followed quickly by Elbing , the other two cruisers , and the battleships Nassau and Rheinland . The British destroyers launched a torpedo attack , which forced the three cruisers to turn to starboard to avoid them . This pointed the cruisers directly at the German line . Elbing attempted to steam between Nassau and Posen , but Posen 's captain wasn 't aware of the movement until it was too late to avoid a collision . Posen turned hard to starboard , but still collided with Elbing 's starboard quarter . The cruiser was holed below the waterline , which flooded the starboard engine room first . She initially took on a list of eighteen degrees , which allowed water to spread to the port engine room . With the engines shut down , steam began to condense in the pipes , which disabled the electric generators and caused the ship to lose electrical power . As water spread throughout the ship 's engine compartments , the

list was reduced . The ship was completely immobilized , though she was not in danger of sinking .

At 02 : 00 , the torpedo boat S53 came alongside and took off 477 officers and men of Elbing 's crew . Her commander and a small group of officers and men remained on board . They rigged an improvised sail in an attempt to bring the ship closer to shore , but at around 03 : 00 , British destroyers were spotted to the south and the order to scuttle the ship was given . They then lowered the ship 's cutter into the water and set off ; while steaming back to port , they rescued the surgeon from the destroyer HMS Tipperary . At around 07 : 00 , a Dutch trawler met the cutter and took the men to Holland . In the course of the Battle of Jutland , Elbing had fired 230 rounds of 15 cm ammunition and a single torpedo . Four of her crew were killed and twelve more were wounded .