

# When the LUTZOW Went Down

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The true story of the Battle of Jutland, claimed by both the English and the Germans as a victory, is printed in the English language here for the first time. P. Krug, one of the Lutzow survivors, prepared a pamphlet, which was printed at The Hague in Dutch, telling his experiences on board Admiral Hipper's flagship before it went down a victim to British marksmanship. So vivid are the recollections of the frightful scenes during the battle that the author lives through the harrowing details again; he seems to be fighting the battle over once more. This booklet has never been printed in the German language. The Evening Ledger has secured by cable the exclusive rights to this pamphlet in the United States and Canada.

By P. KRUG, a Survivor

The North Sea lies quiet before us. A light breeze blows from the north. The weather is dismal, and it seems as if any moment might bring rain, but the weather remains constant. Far away on the horizon the water is in fierce commotion and is being cut by a dark object. A torpedo boat painted black is hurtling through the waves as if it were chasing a prey. Others follow behind, and very soon more boats of the cruiser class appear on the horizon. Suddenly a gigantic smoke plume is observed. It is the approach of a fleet.

Five large battle cruisers are coming nearer. At the head is the proud cruiser Lutzow acting as flagship. On board is the staff with Admiral Hipper. Behind the Lutzow follow the battle cruisers Derfflinger, Seydlitz, Moltke and Von der Tann, surrounded by light cruisers and torpedo boats.

The staff of the Lutzow is in the armored conning tower. The officers are bent over their maps and are discussing the course which they will have to take in case of danger. In the center of the conning tower is the compass, before which the wheelman is standing directing the war monster. Around the guns on the fighting decks and in the fighting towers sailors are smoking, reading or playing cards. Only one man is standing near each gun with the receiver of the telephone attached to his head in order to warn the whole crew by a single signal in time of danger.

Between decks things look different. There the firemen who have just come off watch are standing or lying around in the hammocks. Every one is in his own place and waiting for an eventual alarm. In the fire rooms we see standing before the fires the stokers, black and dirty with coal dust, their bodies half naked. They are working double time, for the vessel is steaming fast and all strength must be exerted in order to furnish the required head of steam.

## First Signs of the Enemy

But let us go back to the conning tower. It is five o'clock in the afternoon and the officers are still bent over the maps. Suddenly a door is thrown open and an orderly enters. He halts before Admiral Hipper, and as the Admiral looks at him asks him to hand him a strip of paper, a Marconi cablegram. The Admiral reads the cablegram, his face assumes a serious look, but calmly and with assurance in his voice he directs his officers and says: "Gentlemen, the scoutboat signals enemy vessels. Sound the alarm immediately!" The officers leave quickly, every one goes to his post and the next moment the alarm gong sounds in even the most remote spaces of the ship.

"Alarm!" No other word has the power to rouse more commotion and excitement on a warship. Determination is shown in every one's face. They all know that the next moment may carry death with it. A last thought of wife and children, of father and mother and then only a feeling of duty to be fulfilled, a feeling so strong that it replaces all other thoughts.

The five German cruisers are now in fighting formation. The first enemy torpedo boats appear on the horizon, followed by three enormous battle cruisers. Suddenly the Lutzow roars and trembles. It seems as if the iron colossus will break in twain. The first broadside of the heavy guns has been discharged. The telescopes of the staff officers observed the result through the portholes of the conning tower.

One of the older officers approaches Admiral Hipper and in saluting him announces: "Square hit. A large cruiser shot on fire." The Admiral thanks him and gives other orders. The happy result is quickly communicated to other cruisers, and after a few seconds they also belch out their heavy broadsides.

But, on the other side, the English cruisers have not been idle, and their shots, which at first were too short, are now coming very close and are throwing up huge geysers all around the poor Lutzow. There are three English battle cruisers and about thirty torpedo boat destroyers in sight. Will they risk it to engage the five German cruisers? But look! look! Far off on the horizon smoke plumes become visible. British battleships of the heaviest caliber are coming to the rescue. Their heavy gunfire can now be heard.

The thoughts of the Lutzow's crew are now centered on the question: "What shall now be the fate of the five German cruisers against such a superior force?" The English shots are thundering against our armor plates, but we are answering them in German fashion. It is 7 o'clock and no help for the German vessels is yet in sight. Every one still shows the same determination, for nobody is ready to believe that such a huge, modern cruiser with its heavy armor plates could be seriously damaged.

## The Lutzow Struck by Shell

Suddenly a shudder passes through the ship. The colossus is moved bodily aside and all that is not made fast tumbles down. The first bull's-eye! The torpedo penetrates the foreship and burrows through the heavy armor plates, finally to stop well inside the vessel. A terrific explosion results. Iron, steel, wood, all kinds of metals, human limbs, ship plates torn asunder and enormous puddles of blood are mixed together, and all of this calmly illuminated by the electric lights, which curiously were undamaged.

Here and there above the chaos a mangled human body protrudes, but the next moment it tumbles back amidst the ruins. Two decks below in the Diesel dynamo room life is not extinct. That compartment has not been hit, and twenty-seven human beings in the prime of their lives have been spared. But the compartment is shut off from all others, for the automatic water-tight doors have been operated. If the ship does not return to some port or other they are doomed. Amidships there is a state of commotion and disorganization, for, after having recovered from the first consternation, every one is trying to reach the forward end. This is heavy work, for the bulkheads and doors have been completely distorted by the explosion. However, the attempt is successful.

A young assistant doctor, equipped with smoke helmet, is ahead in order to render first aid to the victims. Among the dead he

finds a young colleague, who had been stationed in the fatal section. Something stirs in one of the corners of the bathroom. The doctor approaches quickly. Before him lies a fireman with his back entirely torn open. He whines softly. The doctor gives him an injection. He gives orders to carry the wounded man to the dressing room in the afterdeck. Twenty hands get busy and slowly the procession moves thither. More wounded follow.

In the meantime, the Germans guns have not been silenced, and on the other side two big cruisers can be seen sinking, while a third is completely enveloped in smoke and flame. A new broadside, again directed against the Lutzow, falls short, but a torpedo boat which passes close by the Lutzow is the victim. The torpedo boat has disappeared. Only a few pieces of wreckage and a ship boat cut in half are floating in its wake.

It is now half-past 7 and the enemy cordon gets closer and closer. The Lutzow and Seydlitz are lying with their bows deeply submerged. Both have suffered heavily. The other cruisers, too, have been damaged. A small cruiser is sinking. The lieutenant commander of the Lutzow, who is standing in the crow's nest, suddenly discovers the long expected. On the horizon a fresh German fleet appears. "Heaven be praised!" falls from his lips, and with a strong voice he announces through the telephone, "The second squadron is in sight, north-northeast!"

In the conning tower one order now follows the other, and signals are sent in all directions, for it will now be necessary to break through with the big battle cruisers so as to give the German fleet a free view to prevent being hit by their own fire, and by clever maneuvering, notwithstanding the fact that the Lutzow again is struck several times, they succeeded. The forward part of the ship is now thoroughly on fire, but quick hands and minds are already busied in extinguishing the blaze. Two of the heavy conning towers are also put out of action and some of the gun ports are entirely destroyed; but retiring is out of question.

## Sights on the Lutzow Horrible

Again the big guns roar, and the shots in quick succession are raining against the armor plates. Shell splinters are flying all around and what is hit by them is lost. The scenes on the Lutzow in the meantime have become horrible, and steel nerves are necessary to stand the misery and at the same time render aid where possible. Hundreds of men in the full vigor of their lives have sacrificed themselves on this single ship. Many others, tortured by the most terrible agonies, are lying down. Still the battle is raging. The lower decks are dyed red with blood, and in nearly all corners mangled limbs and other parts of human bodies are scattered. The blood emits a sickening, sweet odor, but notwithstanding all this, every survivor is still standing at his post and every one contemplates that the next moment may be the messenger of his death.

The bow is now entirely crumpled up and completely submerged. The heavy armor plates are distorted and in some places have doubled themselves. Carpenters and firemen are busy trying to re-enforce the bulkhead which separates the forward part from midships, but the pressure of the water is too great and new volumes of water are continuously rushing through the gaps. The four propellers emerge from the water half way, so that the Lutzow cannot make more than eight or nine knots per hour (normal speed thirty-two knots per hour). How long will she be able to keep it up, for the battle is not finished at all? The enemy is there with strongly superior forces, and the retirement without additional heavy losses is not conceivable.

Now, however, when German help is in sight, the fight is renewed with fresh courage. As the Lutzow has lost too much in fighting value, the Admiral decides to transfer to the Moltke, from there to take charge of the fight. A torpedo boat is called through flag signals and the single handshake given by the Admiral to Captain Harder says more than words could express, for every commander loves his vessel. Captain Harder is ordered to save the vessel with the survivors if possible, whereupon the Admiral with his staff leaves the damaged leviathan after waving a last fatherly farewell to those present.

About a thousand yards away from the Lutzow the battleship Pommern is sinking at a remarkably fast rate. Through a square hit in the munition magazines a terrific explosion takes place, and the beautiful ship goes down with all on board.

Captain Harder notices this through his telescope. As it is impossible for him to render assistance, he gives orders to swing the rudder around, and slowly the Lutzow is removed from the battle line. But very soon this retiring maneuver is observed from a British cruiser, and the Lutzow has not gone quite a mile before she is struck by a broadside of four thirty-eight centimeter guns, which have an unbelievable effect, for all four shots hit squarely. The electric lights go out completely. The reserve lighting plant is destroyed. The crew has been knocked down by the terrific impact, and everywhere groans full of pain and misery are audible. Here and there a small electric pocket lantern glimmers in the darkness. The men that can be seen in this weak light have donned gas masks, and most of them are literally drenched with blood. A sad and terrible spectacle. The whole ship is pervaded by the poisonous gas of the enemy's shells, and those who have not sufficient presence of mind to make use of their gas masks are doomed to quick suffocation.

It all lasts about three-quarters of an hour before electric lights are reinstalled. Only now one can obtain a clear idea of the extent of the damage caused by the last enemy broadside. One of the shells had landed squarely in the dressing room for wounded. In the different compartments of this section there were three doctors and fifteen men of the ambulance service, together with from one hundred and sixty to one hundred and eighty wounded.

Of all these only four remained to tell the tale. These four were hurled into the next compartment by the enormous air pressure without being hurt to any great extent. All doctors, as well as the personnel of the ambulance service, had been killed outright.

The compartment itself looks like a rough mountain side, for not a smooth section of plate or bulkhead has been left. The floor is strewn with human remains, while a few fingers are sticking against a piece of bulkhead. On one of the steam heaters a few skulls are lying as if they had been laid down to be dried. Against the torn-up bulkhead a pile of entrails is lying, forming a picture too ghastly for description.

## A Frightful Scene of Carnage

The second shell hits the electric workroom. Thirteen men stationed there are killed and everything is splintered into shreds. The third and fourth hits land again in the forward end, which result in the vessel submerging its bow still further, so that the propellers are virtually completely above water, thus reducing the vessel's speed more and more.

The Lutzow has now become a total wreck. Along her sides corpses are slowly floating past. The ship is now submerged from her forward end until the first thirty-centimeter conning tower. The other conning towers are entirely put out of action. The muzzles of the guns are pointing in all directions. On the decks the corpses of the sailors in their torn uniforms are lying between empty cartridge shells. From the masts pieces of flags and signal lines and sections of the wireless antennae are dangling down. The wooden deck planks are torn loose, and the heavy armor, cracked in many places, protrudes. If it had not been for the lookout and the three officers standing on the bridge the Lutzow would have appeared as the very carrier of death.

Underneath the main deck and in the coal bunkers countless wounded men are suffering, but no doctor is present to offer assistance to the wretched people. The firemen, still able to do so, are trying to dress wounds with dirty hands and dirty rags. Still, humor has stayed with many. On the main deck the officers' quarters are inspected, and whatever can be used is brought downstairs. Cigars and cigarettes are distributed and wine is handed to the wounded.

At 3 o'clock that night the convoying torpedo boats are informed by wireless from one of their sister ships in the same neighborhood that two English cruisers and five torpedo boat destroyers are approaching. The captain of the Lutzow gives orders to stop, and although only three fifteen-centimeter guns have remained operative, he immediately makes up his mind to renew the battle if such proves necessary. The torpedo boat which announced the danger approaches at top speed and announces that the enemy seems to be searching around. When the captain receives this information he cannot repress a cynical smile, for he knows quite well it is his ship that is being sought to be singled out for total destruction.

However, he is determined to defend his vessel to the utmost. Just now the telephone rings in the conning tower and advises that a moment ago the bulkhead separating the forward compartments from the midships had succumbed to the enormous water pressure and that the water was now rushing midships without any means available to stop the inrush. Orders are given to transport all wounded quickly toward the afterdeck. Any moment the enemy may make his appearance in order to complete his work of destruction.

## Preparing to Desert the Lutzow

There sounds the order, "All hands assemble in section formation on the afterdeck!" An uproar takes place on the lower decks, for every one knows that the last chance to save his life has now arrived. It is impossible to carry in this short period all wounded upstairs, for they are spread throughout the ship. Only eighteen people are fortunate enough to be carried up. All others that cannot walk or crawl must be left behind, and a specter of death pervades the ship. The twenty-seven men that are locked up in the Diesel dynamo room have heard the final orders through the telephone. Many can be heard crying out in frenzy, and several are reported through the telephone locked in irons, having become raving mad. These doomed people, inspired by their love for duty, continue their heavy tasks and manage to continue the vessel's light supply.

The torpedo boats now get busy in quickly taking over the Lutzow's crew, but those left behind are doomed to death. After Captain Harder, the last man leaves the Lutzow to take his station on one of the torpedo boats. He consults with the commander of this vessel, and it is resolved not to leave a single fragment of the Lutzow in the enemy's hands. After the necessary measures of the order "Fire!" is heard and a torpedo shoots through the dark waves toward the Lutzow. On the afterdeck seven men are running around in a frenzy. Evidently they have slept through it all in their state of overfatigue and have awakened too late.

Captain Harder at the moment the torpedo is fired raises his right hand to his cap and his voice is clearly distinguished above

all other sounds: "Three times hooray for his Majesty's ship Lutzow! Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!"

And hundreds of sailor throats repeat "Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!" The noise has scarcely subsided before the torpedo reaches the Lutzow. It plows through the armor plates midships. An explosion follows and a gigantic column of smoke rises skyward. But still the proud sea monster is floating. At last, however, the foreship dives under and the stern is lifted clean above the water, so that it now emerges vertically above the surface. Suddenly it tumbles over and the ship sinks, leaving in its wake a maelstrom of more than a hundred yards diameter, swallowing all and everything.

The four torpedo boats wait until no further trace of the Lutzow can be seen. Those saved are looking with deep emotion on the finish of their vessel, which so long had been their home.

The boats' sirens emit their shrill blasts and the engines are set full speed ahead. Back home to the Fatherland! But that trip, too, is soon to be interrupted. The torpedo boats have hardly steamed half an hour before the alarm gong is sounded once more. Alarm! The two British light cruisers and the five torpedo boat destroyers have arrived on the field.

## Another Attack by the British

Again it is necessary to give fight to the enemy, and a few seconds after the first alarm the guns are thundering once more. Shells are shrieking over the heads of the survivors and are exploding in all directions. Luckily, none of the boats receives a hit. At the same time the proper handling of the guns is made virtually impossible, because the decks are filled with people, so that the gunners can move only with difficulty. The torpedo boats are now making an effort to escape northward at all costs. After half an hour they succeed in outdistancing their pursuers. Miscellaneous shots are still falling around without doing damage, and at last all becomes quiet.

But there is more fighting in store, and again the small flotilla gets in touch with the enemy. Enemy destroyers have intercepted the German boats in their path. It is 5 o'clock in the morning of June 1, 1916, when German and Englishman again meet. The very first British shot makes a square hit in one of the German torpedo boats on which 400 men are huddled together, and a fifteen-centimeter shell plows its way into the engine room. The main steam piping has been destroyed and the twenty-three men in the engine room perish. Steam spreads throughout the vessel and slowly the stern end of the boat fills with water.

The survivors of the Lutzow and the crew jump overboard and try to reach the other vessels. Those unable to swim are doomed to death. But here also true comradeship is in evidence. A fireman is swimming around carrying on his back an unconscious man with a ghastly head wound. Sailors are trying to save their young officers, holding them above water by their hair. The three German boats have stopped dead and their crews pick up all those they can reach without paying attention to the continuous rain of shells poured over them by the British. Steam is blown off from all vessels, so that they may hide themselves in a cloud of vapor. The ammunition of the three boats is exhausted. One boat has one torpedo left. With the utmost care it is placed in the torpedo tube. The distance is carefully estimated. Now the captain orders "Fire!" and the torpedo plows through the water as a dolphin.

The effect is being watched with intense anxiety. On the British side a terrific explosion takes place. A light cruiser has been hit, and the hit must have squarely landed in the magazines, for a second explosion follows immediately and the cruiser is bodily shot skyward. The other enemy vessels, not knowing what forces may be opposing them, retreat, and at last the three German vessels are saved. Once more the engines are turning full speed ahead, carrying their precious burdens homeward. The survivors are standing on the decks. Some of them have no other covering than a torn shirt or trousers. They are trembling and shivering with cold. Every one is soaked and high seas are continuously washing over the vessels.

The homeward trip thus continues for eight long hours, until in the afternoon at 5 o'clock the German light cruiser H. M. S. Regensburg is sighted. It takes over all wounded and unwounded survivors of the Lutzow, after which a course for Wilhelmshafen is taken.

A feeling of relief comes over every one, and the hope of seeing the Fatherland again is revived. At 7 o'clock in the evening enemy forces are once more announced, but these do not attack the Regensburg, which calmly continues on her course. At about 10 o'clock the harbor is reached, and thousands of people are lining the shores to welcome the remaining heroes.

After a careful rollcall it appears that 1003 survivors remain of the Lutzow's crew. Five hundred and ninety-seven men have perished during the battle. And those that survived? As soon as they have recovered from the experiences they are questioned on other vessels of the fleet again to fight the enemy and to save themselves. "Shall there be a return for me this time?"

