

# Survey report

## ELBING IX

(ELBING 9)

### **Position:**

Baltic Sea - Lithuania, Klaipeda

### **Survey date:**

23.09.2019

26.09.2019

27.09.2019

### **Author:**

Holger Buss

### **Version:**

01.09.2020



|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Introduction</b>                               | <b>4</b>  |
| Position  | 4         |
| Description of the wreck                          | 4         |
| <b>Sidescan</b>                                   | <b>5</b>  |
| The Baltic Sea Heritage Rescue Project            | 6         |
| Gezeitentaucher (tide divers)                     | 6         |
| Ghost nets  | 7         |
| Diving protocols:                                 | 8         |
| 23.09.2019 + 27.09.2019                           | 8         |
| 26.09.2019  | 8         |
| Measuring method                                  | 9         |
| Sketch of the site                                | 9         |
| Objects of the wreck                              | 10        |
| Ship builders's plate                             | 10        |
| Cargo:  | 11        |
| Electrical light                                  | 11        |
| Forks   | 11        |
| Steering wheel                                    | 12        |
| 3D-Model of the steering wheel                    | 12        |
| Ship's bell                                       | 13        |
| 3D-Model of the bell                              | 14        |
| Recovery of the bell in August 2020               | 15        |
| Anchor  | 15        |
| Spare anchor                                      | 16        |
| 3D-Model of the spare anchor                      | 16        |
| Bulwark at bridge construction                    | 17        |
| Sextant   | 17        |
| Steam winches                                     | 17        |
| Starboard screw                                   | 18        |
| Portside - screw                                  | 18        |
| Spare screw                                       | 19        |
| Mold of screws                                    | 19        |
| Tiled floor                                       | 20        |
| <b>ELBING IX</b>                                  | <b>21</b> |
| Crew  | 21        |
| Sister ship                                       | 23        |
| SS Köln ex. ELBING VIII                           | 23        |
| Similar ships                                     | 25        |
| Badenia #881                                      | 25        |
| Westfalia: #882                                   | 25        |
| <b>Sinking</b>                                    | <b>26</b> |
| The sinking of the armored cruiser Friedrich Carl | 26        |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Sinking of Elbing IX                     | 28        |
| Victims                                  | 28        |
| Telegrams                                | 29        |
| Sea mines                                | 30        |
| <b>Looting / Stealing of objects</b>     | <b>30</b> |
| <b>Summary</b>                           | <b>31</b> |
| Identification of the wreck              | 31        |
| Summary of the sinking                   | 32        |
| <b>Attachment</b>                        | <b>33</b> |
| Books                                    | 33        |
| Marine Square Map                        | 34        |
| Author                                   | 35        |
| Videos                                   | 35        |
| Translations and location of this report | 35        |



ELBING IX in Duisburg 1913

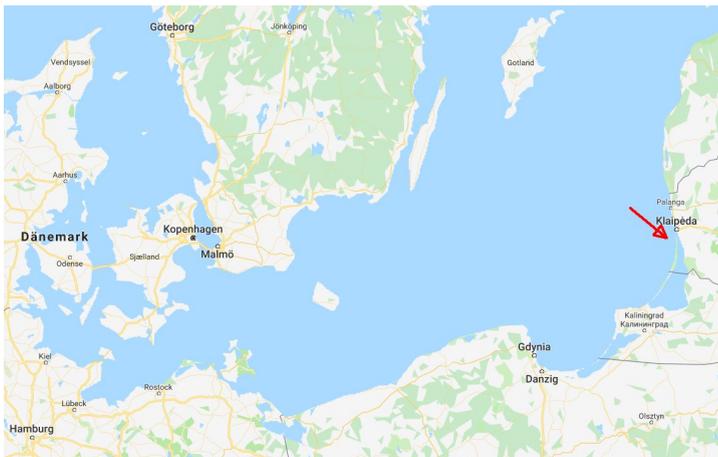
Source: Book: Die Elbinger Seedampfer

## Introduction

In this survey report, the wreckage of a cargo steamer in the Baltic Sea near Lithuania is described. The discovery of the bell and the ship's plate by the team of the 'Baltic Sea Heritage Rescue Project' in 2018 allowed the identification. It is the ship ELBING IX, which was built in 1913 by the shipyard "Ferdinand Schichau, Elbing". On Nov. 17th 1914 (World War I), the ship sank after a mine hit when it was on the way to rescue the people of a sinking warship.

## Position

55°41'N 020°37'E      Lithuania- Klaipeda (Memel)  
In approx. 30 km distance to the coast



## Description of the wreck

It is a steel ship with a length of 66m above all. It stands upright on sandy soil in about 50m depth. The original shape of the hull can still be seen clearly. The bridge or the top structures are collapsed and largely missing. The ship had three holds; two in front and one behind the bridge construction. The wooden floor of the fore ship is well preserved. The stumps of two large masts stand on deck. Several large winches are located directly on the masts. In the bow area, a large spare anchor leans against a wall. The ship had two screws. One is starboard from the rudder blade. The port side screw lies between crashed remains of the stern. On deck of the stern is a spare screw. Several double cross bollards are on deck. A well-preserved wooden steering wheel was found under nets in the middle of the ship.

A ship's bell with the inscription "ELBING IX" was found under nets at the windlass in the bow. In the second hold is the ship's plate with the inscription "N: 886 F.Schichau Elbing 1913". The wreck has large holes in the rear, resulting from an explosion.



Sabine Kerkau



Sabine Kerkau



Sabine Kerkau



Sabine Kerkau

Photos: Sabine Kerkau

## Sidescan

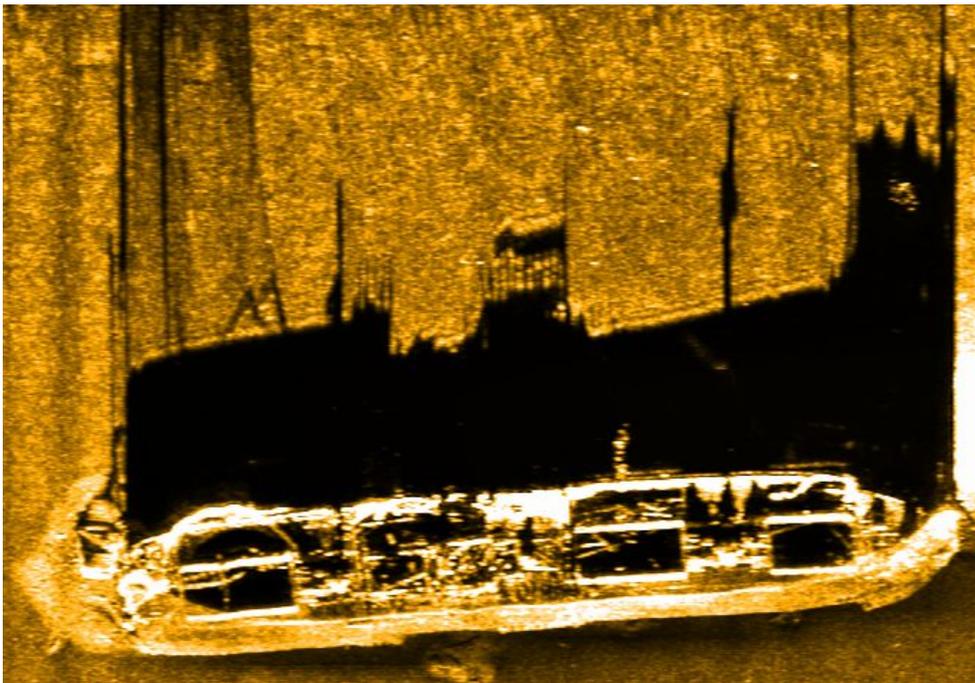


Photo: Linas Duoblys - captain of the ship NZ55

## The Baltic Sea Heritage Rescue Project

The Baltic Sea Heritage Rescue Project is an organization in which people from many countries volunteer for protection of the Baltic Sea. They find and remove lost ghost nets, search, identify and document wrecks to protect them and keep their stories alive. It finances itself through donations and public funds. As a registered and recognized non-profit organization, donation receipts may be issued. The Baltic Sea Heritage Rescue Project works closely with the University of Klaipėda and relevant ministries and archaeologists as well as the museum.



Due to the depth of the wrecks, only so-called technical divers are used who dive with helium mixtures at depth and increased levels of oxygen in the decompression phase.

The Baltic Sea Heritage Rescue Project is a non-profit organization founded in July 2018 in Klaipėda, Lithuania by Rolandas Schön, Sabine Kerkau and Linas Duoblys. In 2019 six project weeks took place.

<https://www.bshrp.org>

### **In addition, the following aspects are examined:**

- Is the wreck looted or damaged by third parties?
- How is the wreck changing over the years?
- How can the wreck be protected in terms of robbery and damage

## Gezeitentaucher (tide divers)

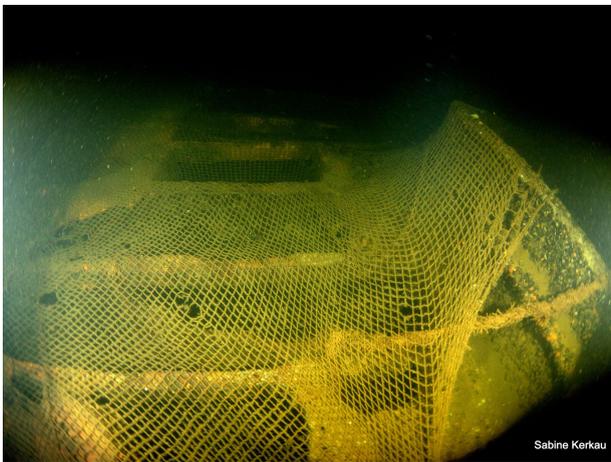
The Gezeitentaucher examine wrecks in the North Sea near the East Frisian Islands. They support the Baltic Sea Team in the investigation and documentation of the wrecks.

Gezeitentaucher (from the left): Ulrich Hofmann, Dirk Terbeek, Dirk Heinemann, Wilfried de Jonge, Thorsten Bakker, Oliver Hirsch und Holger Buss (missing: Thorsten Lex)



## Ghost nets

The wreck was covered with fishing nets over large areas. For the animals this is a problem, because these nets continue to fish and kill fishes and other marine animals that are caught in the nets. They do this over many years.



Photos: Sabine Kerkau



In 2019, teams from the Baltic Sea Heritage Rescue project were able to recover and dispose all major nets on the wreckage of the ELBING IX. This also revealed interesting details that were hidden under the nets.

## Diving protocols:

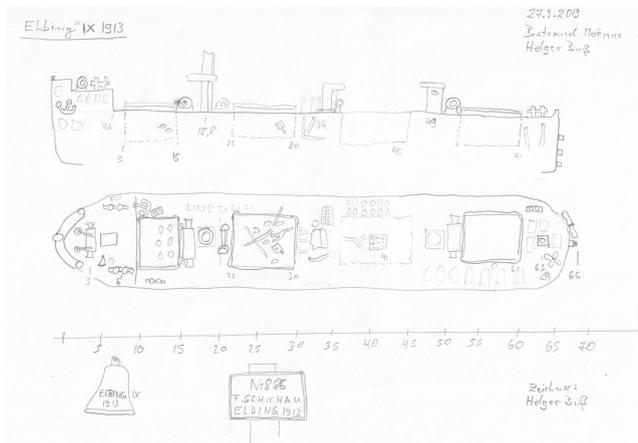
Ship: NZ55 Cpt: Linas Duoblys

23.09.2019 + 27.09.2019

Divers: Holger Buss, Bertrand Moenne, Rolandas Schön, Sabine Kerkau  
Localization of holds and interesting objects. Documentation and video recordings for creating 3D models

26.09.2019

Divers: Holger Buss, Bertrand Moenne, Rolandas Schön, Sabine Kerkau  
First measurements of the ship lengthwise.



Drawing: Holger Buss



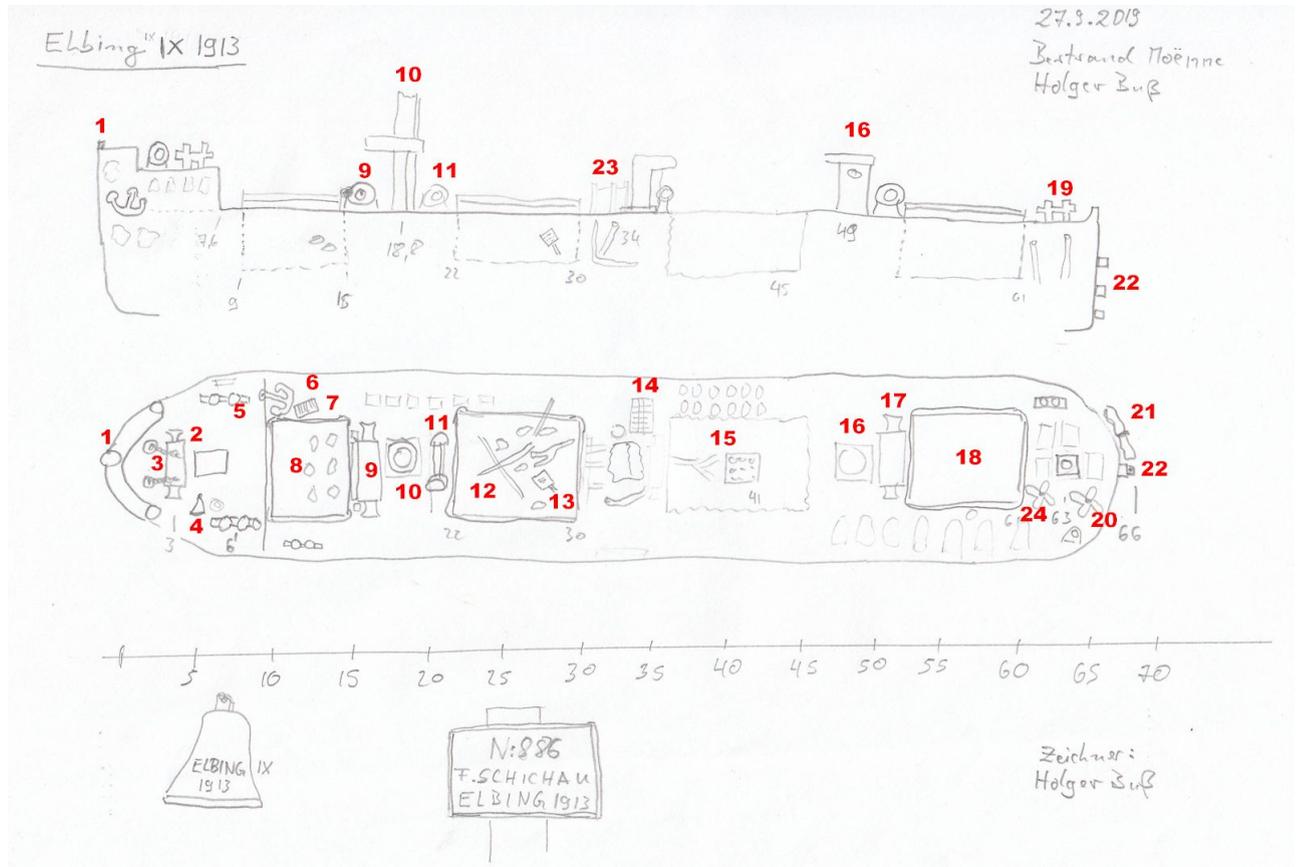
Divers of the 6th project week 2019 on the ship NZ55

Video documentation of the survey: <https://youtu.be/FDIOoIAhUGw>

## Measuring method

A reference line is attached to the front stern. The distance from the bow to the interesting objects is measured (X value). Furthermore, important objects are still measured individually. The Y value from the orthogonal method is not measured. The measurement error is estimated about 1m.

## Sketch of the site



- |                         |                                  |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Bow                  | 13. ship plate                   |
| 2. windlass             | 14. Tiled floor                  |
| 3. Location of the bell | 15. Remains of the construction  |
| 4. Bell today           | 16. mast                         |
| 5. double bollard       | 17. winch                        |
| 6. spare anchor         | 18. Third loading space          |
| 7. cable drum           | 19. double bollard               |
| 8. First cargo space    | 20. Portside propeller           |
| 9. winch                | 21. Starboard propeller          |
| 10. mast                | 22. Rowing Steven                |
| 11. winch               | 23. Sidewall of the construction |
| 12. Second cargo space  | 24. spare propeller              |

## Objects of the wreck

Here are some prominent points of the wreck, which could be used for identification. With the help of the link in the Youtube video of the dive every detail can be verified. The link leads to the corresponding time code of the video.

### Ship builders's plate



<https://youtu.be/RFKtSRjävUo?t=454>

In the second hold is the ship plate with the inscription:

**N:886**

**F.Schichau**

**Elbing 1913**

The plate is firmly connected to steel girders and therefore clearly belongs to the ship.

### 3-D Model of the ship's plate



Created by Robert Szymaniuk: <https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/plate-e3c32b...>

Only the plate: <https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/plate-elbing-v2-20k-919b6...>

## Cargo:

In the holds is hard coal and some wood.



<https://youtu.be/RFKtSRjavUo?t=1160>

<https://youtu.be/RFKtSRjavUo?t=1228>

## Electrical light



## Forks



<https://youtu.be/RFKtSRjavUo?t=1360>

## Steering wheel



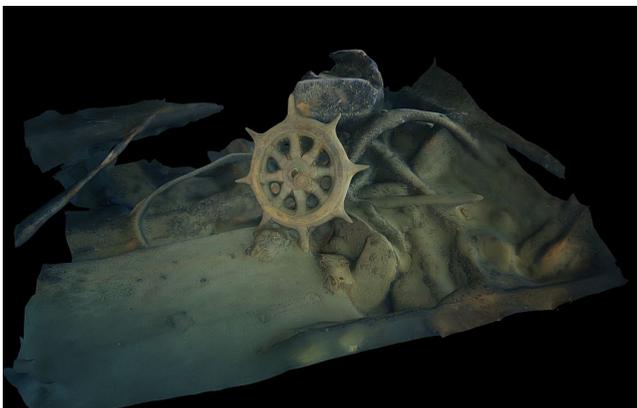
The steering wheel at the discovery on 11th July 2018



<https://youtu.be/nEHgVETySaw?t=2565>

Note: the steering wheel has been set up for video recordings. After the recordings, it was placed in a sheltered place inside the wreck.

## 3D-Model of the steering wheel



The model can be seen here:

Created by Thorsten Bakker: <https://sketchfab.com...>

Created by Robert Szymaniuk: <https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/steering-wheel-from-elbing-ix>

## Ship's bell

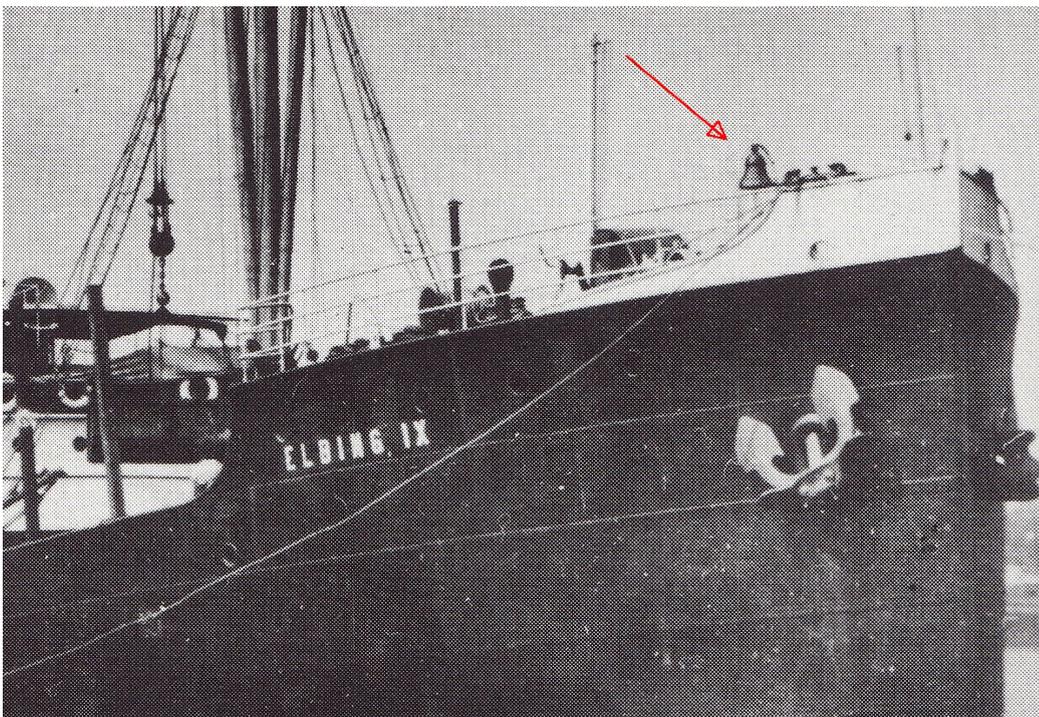


The bell at its discovery on July 11th 2018. It lay at the starboard anchor chain in the bow.



Bell today on the foredeck

<https://youtu.be/nEHgVETySaw?t=1795>



### 3D-Model of the bell



Here is the model for 3D-viewing, created by Robert Szymaniuk:  
<https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/bell-from-elbing-ix-holger-buss-...>



Replicats of the bell. 3d-Print and hand painted by Holger Buss

## Recovery of the bell in August 2020

In the last project week of the Baltic Sea Heritage Rescue Project 2020, the bell of Elbing IX was recovered on behalf of the Lithuanian Sea Museum in Klaipeda.

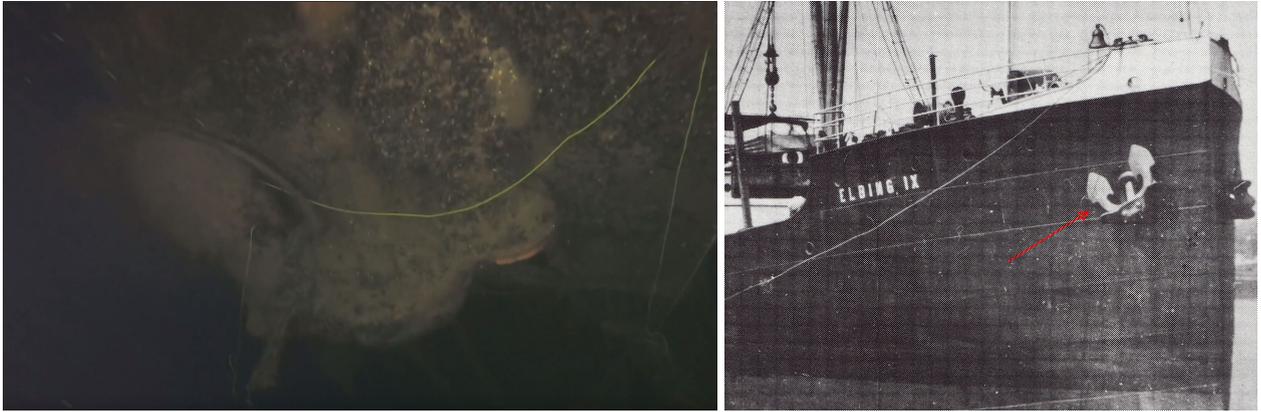


handed over to the museum



Photo: Sabine Kerkau / [Facebook](#)

## Anchor



<https://youtu.be/RFKtSRjavUo?t=219>

Both anchors at the bow are at their anchorage positions.

## Spare anchor



<https://youtu.be/nEHgVETySaw?t=3165>

<https://youtu.be/RFKtSRjavUo?t=159>

Starboard in the bow area leans a spare anchor on the wall to the fore ship.

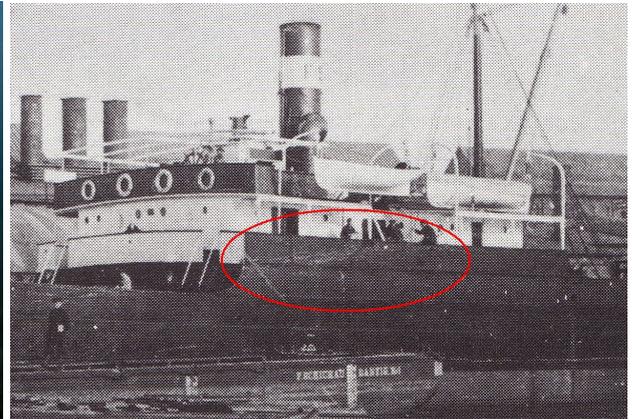
## 3D-Model of the spare anchor



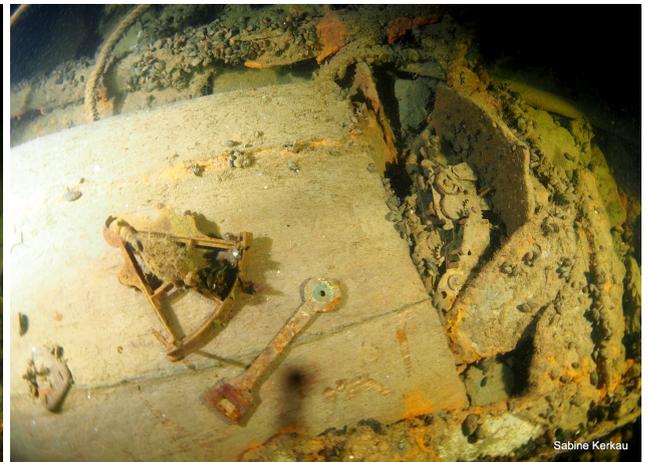
Here is the 3D-model for viewing, created by Robert Szymaniuk:

<https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/elbling-ix-anchor-holger-buss...>

### Bulwark at bridge construction



### Sextant



### Steam winches



<https://youtu.be/RFKtSRjavUo?t=382>

## Starboard screw



<https://youtu.be/RFKtSRjavUo?t=745>

This screw is located starboard side of the rudder blade.  
Three blades of the screw are broken off.

## Portside - screw



<https://youtu.be/RFKtSRjavUo?t=1540>

<https://youtu.be/RFKtSRjavUo?t=782>

This screw is located in the rear area between remains of the stern.

## Spare screw



<https://youtu.be/RFKtSRjavUo?t=1586>

<https://youtu.be/nEHgVETySaw?t=524>

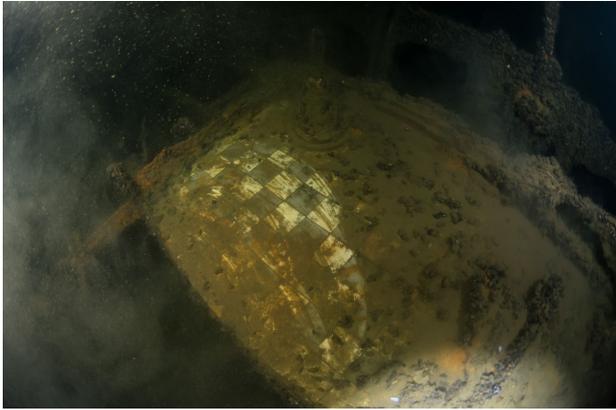
A spare screw is located on deck in the rear behind the last hold. It is not connected to a drive shaft.

## Mold of screws



The picture shows two clay shapers of the Schichau shipyard building the propeller mold.

Tiled floor



Tiled floor

Section below the floor



<https://youtu.be/nEHgVETySaw?t=944>

Probably the bathroom of the passenger deck.

## ELBING IX

The ship was built as a Rhine-Sea-Steamer and did lots of freight traffic between the Rhine and the Baltic Sea. It sank on November 17th, 1914 on a mine barrier laid by Russians on Oct. 31st 1914 (World War I).

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Nationality:          | German  |
| Purpose:              | transportation  |
| Type:                 | Cargo cargo ship  |
| Drive:                | steam   |
| Date of construction: | 1913  |
| Tonnage:              | 886 grt   |
| Dimensions:           | 66.8m x 10.2 m  |
| Engine:               | 2 x 3 cyl. triple expansion engines, dual shaft, 2 screws |
| Speed:                | 9 knots   |
| Date dlost:           | 17th Nov. 1914  |
| Shipbuilder:          | Schichau F. Werft (Ferdinand Schichau)                    |
| Launched:             | Elbing  |
| Owner:                | Elbinger Dampfs Rhederei, Elbing                          |
| Signal:               | HJKV  |

In year 1913 the Schichau shipping company could afford to plan and build another steamship just one year after the loss of the ELBING VII, ELBING VIII and ELBING IX.

During planning, the experiences with ELBING I, ELBING II and ELBING VII took effect: two motors and two screws were given to the ship. The current on the often fast flowing Rhine required a better maneuverability. Of course, this profit had to be paid by increasing the number of men: not less than 16 men for a steamer 882 gross registered tons (731 register tones below deck) and 1397 cubic meters. But the principles of the Schichau shipping company was: Safety first. They learned from the sinking of the ELBING VII and wanted to apply improvements. The business situation allowed the realization of such plans. The steamers ELBING VIII and ELBING IX were 67.19 meters long; so they would be fit exactly in the 69 meter long Schichau dock of Pillau, if a quick repair or inspection was necessary. Even with the width of 10.21 meters they were on the safe side: the width-to-length ratio was 1 to 6.6. The accidented ELBING VII had a ratio of 1 to 7.3. Side height and depth was determined by "Frisches Haff" (*Zalew Wiślany*) and the Rhine: 4.10 and 3.84 meters were maximum. The hull form was similar to the ELBING: Back (7.89 meters long), bridge (15.96 meters) and quarterdeck (20.22 meters); the long quarterdeck increased the cargo volume. The load capacity increased to 1340 tons deadweight. The engine room was extended to 12.49 meters, since it had to accommodate two machines. These had the dimensions: cylinders of 30, 50 and 80 centimeters in diameter and 45 centimeters piston stroke. Together 750 horsepower. The two associated boilers had a steam pressure of 13.5 bar and had 221.4 (?) Square meters of heating surface.

Captain of the steamer was Willy Krummreich who already was on ELBING I. Of all Schichau sea steamers, the ELBING IX had the shortest service life. The loss of the ELBING IX so close to the German coast was the signal for the Schichau shipping company, to move the other Rhine-Sea steamers ELBING I, ELBING II and ELBING VIII to Duisburg, where they were believed safer than on the Baltic Sea.

## Crew

The crew consisted of:

- 1 captain
- 1 helmsman (steering)
- 1 boatman
- 5 sailors
- 2 engineers
- 5 heaters
- 1 steward

Known by name:

- Captain Willy Krummreich
- Stoker Julius Köck, \* 30.12.1857 in Balga (Frisches Haff)  
→ the only victim of the sinking

Source: Book: Die Elbinger Seedampfer

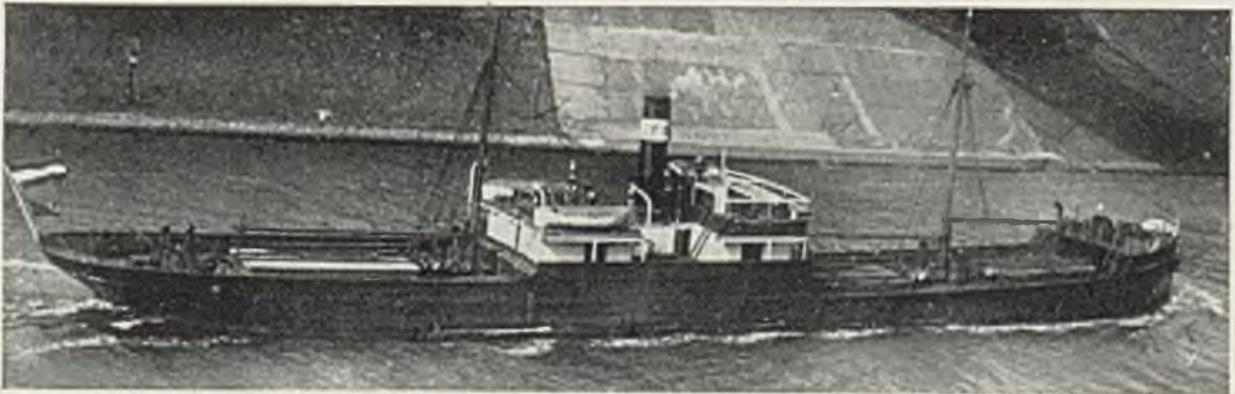
## Sister ship

|     |                             |               |   |      |
|-----|-----------------------------|---------------|---|------|
| 881 | <a href="#">Badenia</a>     | cargo ship    | Rhein und Seeschiffahrts Gesellschaft, Coln | 1912 |
| 882 | <a href="#">Westfalia</a>   | cargo ship    | Rhein und Seeschiffahrts Gesellschaft, Coln | 1912 |
| 883 | <a href="#">Elbing VIII</a> | cargo ship    | F. Schichau, Elbing                         | 1912 |
| 884 | <a href="#">Trinity Bay</a> | dredger       | Government of Queensland                    |      |
| 885 | <a href="#">Lutzow</a>      | battlecruiser | German Navy                                 | 1913 |
| 886 | <a href="#">Elbing IX</a>   | cargo ship    | F. Schichau, Elbing                         | 1912 |
| 887 | <a href="#">S Kierbedz</a>  | dredger       | Railway Direction, St. Petersburg           |      |

Source: List of ships of the shipyard Ferdinand Schichau 1855-1917

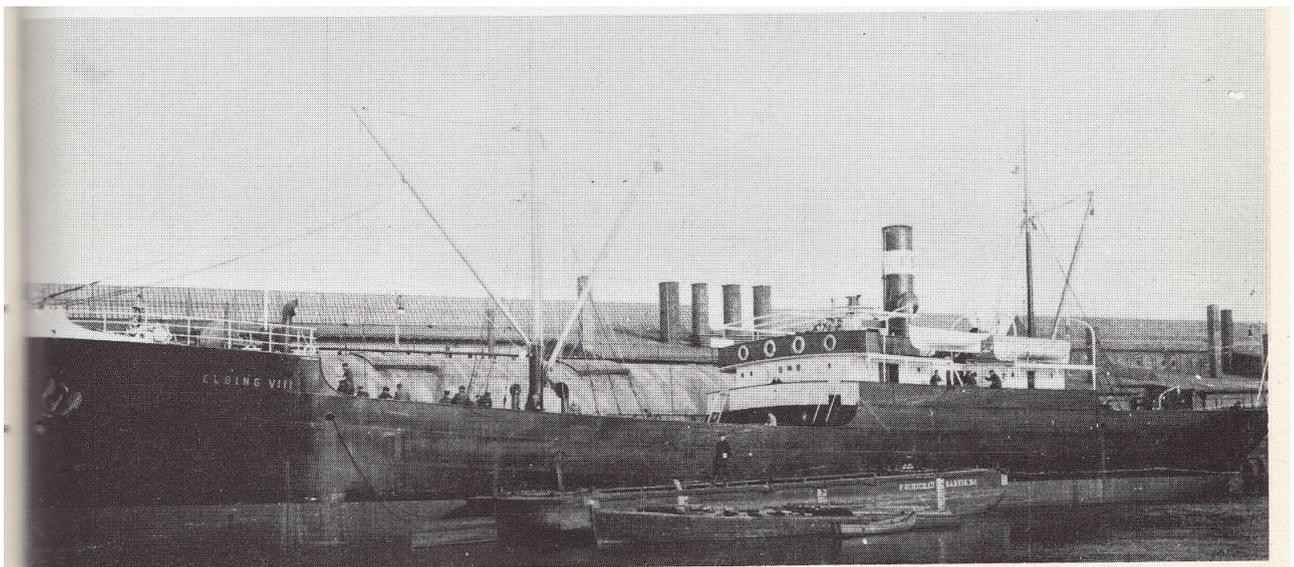
<http://oceania.pbworks.com/w/page/8469970/Schichau%20Elbing>

## SS Köln ex. ELBING VIII

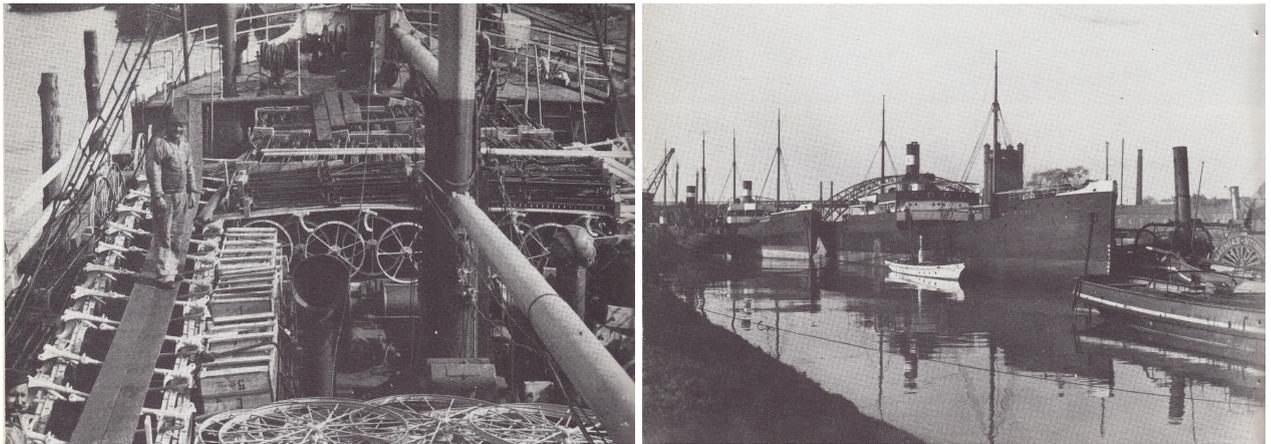


Rheinseedampfer „Elbing VIII“

[http://delibra.bg.polsl.pl/Content/35503/BCPS\\_39388\\_1926\\_Elbing.pdf](http://delibra.bg.polsl.pl/Content/35503/BCPS_39388_1926_Elbing.pdf) (Seite 137)



Source: Book: Die Elbinger Seedampfer



Sister ship ELBING VIII in Duisburg in 1913 with agricultural machinery

Source: Book: The Elbinger Sea Steamer

Lloyd's London 1945:

|       |                          |        |                   |       |      |                      |  |                        |                   |                                    |   |
|-------|--------------------------|--------|-------------------|-------|------|----------------------|--|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 27892 | Köln<br>(ex Elbing VIII) | TwinSc | 882<br>731<br>486 | 61/45 | 1912 | F.Schichau<br>Elbing | Schiffahrt-u. Asse-<br>kuranz-Ges E. Russ<br>& Co. | 220'4"   33'5"   12'6" | Hamburg<br>German | T 6 Cy 11 7/8" 191' 8 1/4" 17 1/2" | G |
|-------|--------------------------|--------|-------------------|-------|------|----------------------|--|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|---|

Im Jahre 1912 erhielt die Reederei ansehnlichen Zuwachs durch Einstellung der beiden auf eigener Werft erbauten Rhein-See-Dampfer „Elbing VIII“ und „Elbing IX“. Die je 1300 t Tragfähigkeit aufweisenden Doppelschraubendampfer hatten in der Rhein-Ostsee-Fahrt einen lebhaften Frachtverkehr zu bewältigen, bis der Weltkrieg ausbrach und die ganze Schichausche Hochseeflotte brachlegte. „Elbing I“, II und VIII mußten in Ruhrort liegen bleiben, „Elbing IX“ lief unweit Memel auf eine russische Mine und ging verloren.

Source: Book: "100 Jahre Schichau 1837-1937" Page 51

**Elbing VIII** (1912 bis 1926)

Renamed to **SS Köln** (1926)

Owners

[1] Ferdinand Schichau 1912 bis 1926

**SS Elbing VIII**

[2] Hamburg Amerikanische Packetfahrt A.G. - Hamburg-Amerika Linie - HAPAG,

**SS Köln** period 1926 ~ 1934

[3] Russ Ernst - Schiffahrt & Assekuranz Ges E. Russ & Co., Hamburg

**SS Köln** (+1945) period 1934 ~ 1945

[https://www.historisches-marinearchiv.de/projekte/weseruebung/ausgabe.php?where\\_value=37](https://www.historisches-marinearchiv.de/projekte/weseruebung/ausgabe.php?where_value=37)

Attention: There are photos of an "Elbing VIII" on the internet that was later built by a different shipyard. This 'false' Elbing VIII had the mark "AZ" on the chimney.

## Similar ships

### Badenia #881

Lloyds London 1931:

|       |            |          |        |            |        |            |                              |                |             |                      |         |                             |   |
|-------|------------|----------|--------|------------|--------|------------|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|----------------------|---------|-----------------------------|---|
| 64993 | Badenia    | Steel    | TwinSc | 921        | 1912   | F.Schichau | Köln                         | Kesserei       | 219°8'33"5" | 13°4'                | Cologne | T.6Cy.11½",19½" & 31½"-17½" | G |
| HWCM  | Elec.Licht | Sub.Sig. | 1Dk    | 707<br>510 | Elbing | A.G.       | (Edmund<br>Halm & Co. Mgrs.) | Q66' B52' F26' | German      | W.F.Schichau, Elbing | 84NIP   | *                           |   |

Lloyds London 1946:

|       |         |            |        |                         |                |              |                      |                              |         |                             |   |
|-------|---------|------------|--------|-------------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|---|
| 19893 | Badenia | TwinSc     | 921    | 1912                    | F.Schichau     | Rhein-London | 219°8'33"5"          | 13°4'                        | Cologne | T.6Cy.11½",19½" & 31½"-17½" | G |
| DGWA  | 1Dk     | 707<br>510 | Elbing | Linie, A. Kirsten & Co. | Q66' B52' F26' | German       | W.F.Schichau, Elbing | W.F.S. Aker Mek. Verks. Oslo |         |                             |   |

1912 BADENIA, A.Kirsten, Hamburg.

1939 TITANIA, same owners.

1945 Taken by Allies at Rendsberg.

1946 EMPIRE CONEXE, MOWT.

1947 RINGDOVE, General Steam Nav.Co, London.

1950 Scrapped Bo'ness.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS\\_Badenia\\_\(1912\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_Badenia_(1912))

### Westfalia: #882

date built: 1912

tonnage: 944 grt

dimensions: 67.2 x 10.2 x -- m

material: steel

engine: 2 x 3 cyl. triple expansion engines, dual shaft, 2 screws

speed: 9 knots

yard no.: 882

lost: mine date lost: 26/01/1917 [dd/mm/yyyy]

SS Westfalia was on passage Rotterdam to Copenhagen carrying a cargo of coal, when she sank after an explosion (mine or torpedo, not sure) North of Terschelling, with the loss of 1 person: the Dutch captain.

<https://www.wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?1121>

<http://www.wrakkenmuseum.nl>

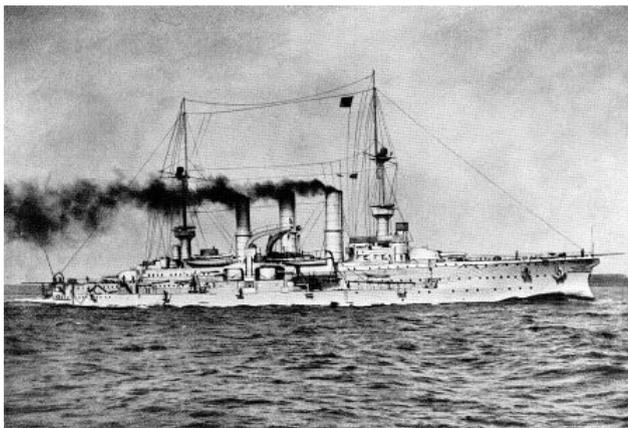
## Sinking

0360.) ss **ELBING IX** HJKV  
 Februar/- 1913 F. Schichau, Elbing (886)  
 886/497 2511/1408 1365  
 67,14-10,24-3,85-4,10 m  
 2x3fE 300x500x800/450 750 2 13,5 221 2 Schrauben  
 Werft 16  
 "Elbing IX" Elbinger Dampfschiffs Reederei Ferd. Schichau, Elbing  
 (DEU). 17.11.1914 W Memel nach Minentreffer in der russischen  
 Minensperre Nr. 1 gesunken, wollte Schiffsbrüchige vom deutschen  
 Panzerkreuzer SMS "Friedrich Carl" retten.

Source: Schiffsregister von Abert (aus dem DSM)

The destinies of the armored cruiser Friedrich Karl and the Elbing IX are connected according to the ship register. Therefore, we researched the events of Nov. 17th 1914 and found answers in a book from 1921: "The war in the Baltic Sea".

## The sinking of the armored cruiser Friedrich Carl



Friedrich Carl

Source: Wikipedia

On the evening of November 16th, Admiral Behring, with "Friedrich Carl" and "Amazone" were on the way from Gdansk. After a submarine had been reported to Gotland by the ship "Augsburg", "Friedrich Carl" expected to be meet submarines.

On the morning of November 17th at 1:46 o'clock, when "Friedrich Carl" was 33 nautical miles west of Memel, a violent shock was felt in the ship. It initially gave the impression that the ship had overrun and hit a submarine. For a hit of a torpedo or a mine, the vibration appeared to be too low. The soon-to-come message about entry of water into the ship but soon led to the conviction that the battleship was hit by a torpedo or a mine. Admiral Behring was itself under the impressions of a torpedo hit by submarine and ordered the commander to turn at high speed to port side (left) to avoid further attacks. Captain Loesch turned west with a maximum speed of 12 nautical miles per hour, which was later only 10 nautical miles due to the loss of steam. At 1:59 a second, much more violent detonation came on port side of the battleship, which resulted in a strong thrust of the ship to starboard and a significant water entry. By failure of the port side machine, the speed was reduced to 8 nautical miles.

At 2:17 pm, a lookout post thought he was seeing a red light, initially held for the firelight firing a torpedo of an enemy torpedo boat. Still, the ship's command was under the impression of a torpedo hit by a submarine or torpedo boat. The commander turned towards the light, but then returned to the east because of new orders of the admiral. Suddenly the rudder failed in that rotation and stayed on portside 20°. The two rudder rooms were under water after the second detonation. The rudder machine had continued to run for 24 minutes in the water and then stopped at 2:23. The ship could no longer be kept on course and slowly drove in circles. It did not seem advisable to stop, because in that case they would be an easy target for enemy attacks. The position of the battleship was critically. The water in the ship rose steadily, and in spite of the excellent work of the leak-control service under the direction of the First Officer, Lieutenant Commander Schleusener, and the attitude of the whole crew, it was impossible to keep the ship buoyant for long time. Help could not be called at first, because after the first detonation the two antennas had come from above, and were torn. The entire radio equipment had failed. Under the personal work of the Captain of the Admiralty, Captain Gercke, the antennas had got back in order just when the second detonation had taken place. The electrical machine and the lighting in the whole ship and the electric current completely failed for some time. It was not possible to operate the portable land station with the reserve antenna, which was independent of the ship's energy, because both were stored in a cargo room that was already flooding. At 2:48 it was possible to fix the transmitter and the electric machine.

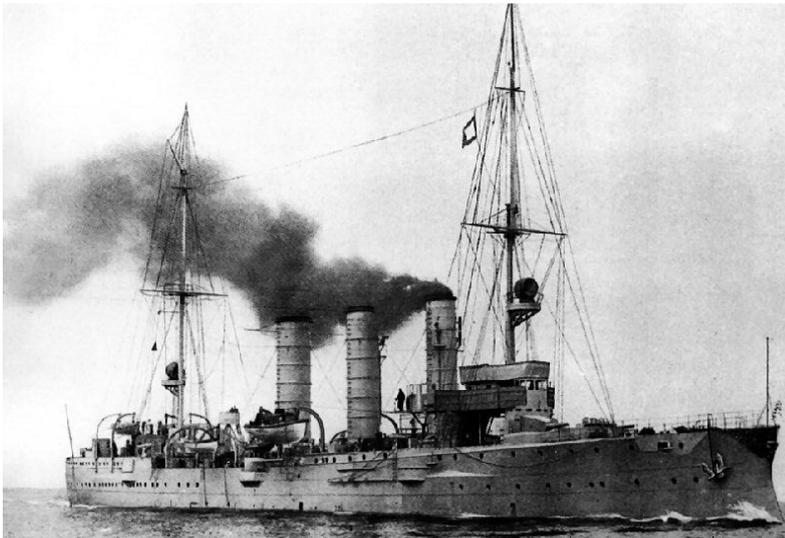
Telegrams were sent to "Augsburg", "Amazone", "Lübeck" and the other (20th) flotilla at 2:50 to come to the accident site with highest speed. After a long, anxious wait, the only answer came from "Augsburg" at 3:48. She was still 40 nautical miles away and drove with a speed of 20 miles per hour. So her arrival would take at least another two hours. [...]

After two hours had passed since the second detonation, without a new attack on the helpless ship had occurred, it became clear that both detonations were not due to torpedoes, but from mines and "Friedrich Carl" got into a minefield. In the ship the people fought for their lives against the rising water. The staff of the machine, under the brilliant guidance of engineer Hans Hoffmann, worked up to their necks in the water, using the hot valves with asbestos gloves and woolen blankets. Step by step and room by room was flooded by water.

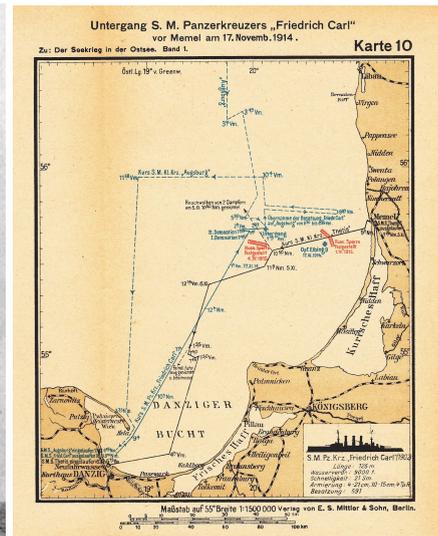
At 5:25, white signal stars on the horizon signaled the approaching "Augsburg." In a brilliant maneuver, Lieutenant Commander Horn launched like a torpedo boat on the sinking flagship, and from 6:20 to 6:35 the 591-headed crew of "Friedrich Carl" was taken on "Augsburg". [...]

"Friedrich Carl" capsized to 70° and sunk at 7:15.

[...] The "Augsburg" drove now to the east and wanted to run into Memel to let the crew of "Friedrich Carl" go ashore.



[https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMS\\_Augsburg](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMS_Augsburg)



Karte: Der Krieg zur See 1914-1918

## Sinking of Elbing IX

Close to Memel at 8.22 am, three vehicles appeared in front. One larger and two smaller ships. Because of the hazy weather they could not be identified. They suspected that it was a Russian minelayer with two accompanying destroyers. So "Augsburg" got ready to attack, especially as the vehicles did not answer the light signals. Before the fire was opened, the larger vehicle ran onto a mine and sank immediately. It was the steamer "ELBING IX" with a large motorboat and the Memel pilot steamer. They had been sent by the intelligence commissioner Gdansk, Lieutenant General Overhues, when he received the radio report from the accident of the "Friedrich Carl". Without sinking of the ELBING IX, "Augsburg" would probably have run with 1000 men on board on this (second) mine barrier.

"Augsburg" therefore steered back to the previous course, made a wide arc to the west and drove back to Neufahrwasser *Nowy Port (Gdańsk)*, where the cruiser came in at 16:45.

Source: Book: "Der Krieg in der Ostsee" von 1921

<https://archive.org/details/derkrieginderost01firl/page/242>

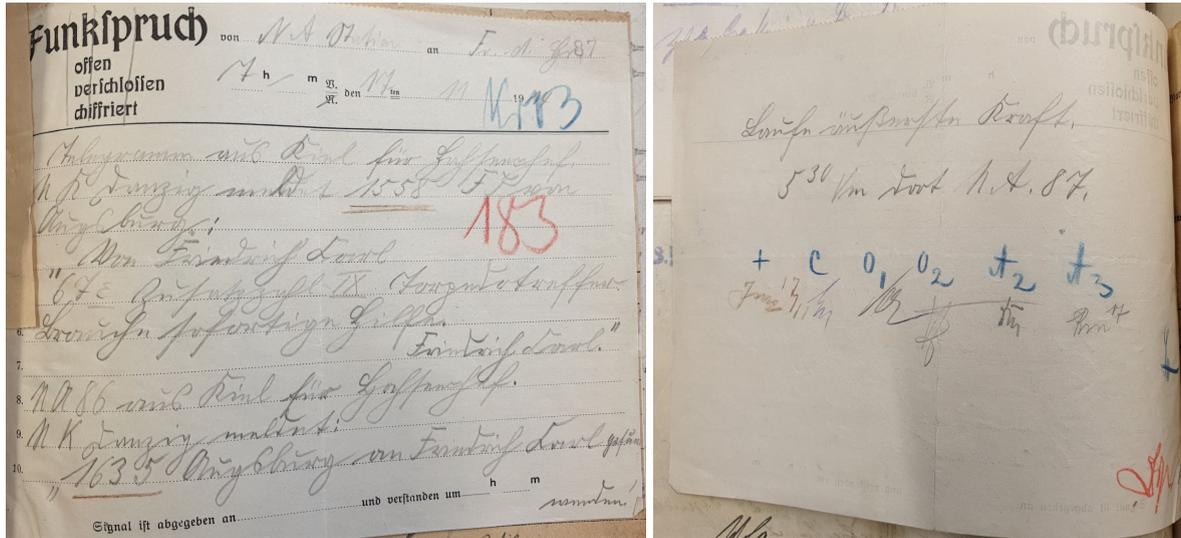
## Victims

The stoker Julius Köck, born on December 30, 1857 in Balga (Frisches Haff / *Zalew Wiślany*) drowned in the ELBING IX. He could not escape from the engine room because of the rapid rise of water. The rest of the crew survived. Friedrich Carl had seven dead people.

Source: The Elbinger Sea Steamer

## Telegrams

We found original documents of the telegram transcripts of the armored cruiser Friedrich Carl and cruiser Augsburg in German archives:



Transcript of the message:

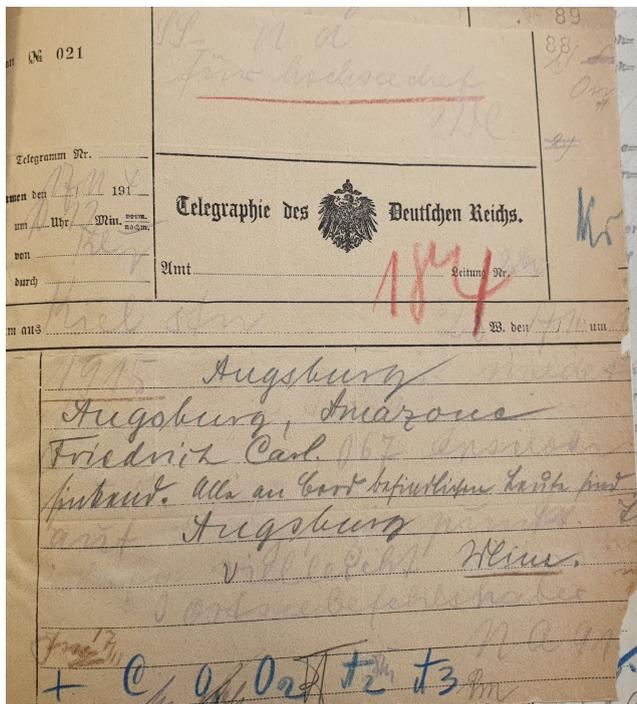
"Telegram from Kiel for High Seas Chief MK Danzig reports 1558 from Augsburg"

From Friedrich Carl: 67e additional number IX torpedo hit. Need immediate help. Friedrich Carl "

"MQ86 from Kiel for offshore chief MK Danzig announces:

1635 Augsburg: run full power. 5:30 there "

(Note: 67e and MQ86 are naval squares → secret position indication, see attachment)



Telegram from 'Augsburg':

"Augsburg, Amazone, Friedrich Carl sinking. All people on Augsburg. Possibly mine"

## Sea mines



<https://www.alamy.de/stockfoto-seekrieg-im-ersten-weltkrieg-russische-mine-gestrandet>

Maritime mines were laid by submarines or miners. They had a basis weight on a rope and drifted just below the water surface. Touch in conjunction with a time delay led to an explosion midships or in the stern area. These sections led rather to a sinking ship or permanent failure of the machine.

## Looting / Stealing of objects

Unfortunately the wreck has already been looted.



The following video shows a group divers plundering the wreck:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bohEByNnMNO>

It will only be a matter of time before the bell and steering wheel are stolen.

## Summary

The wreck lies in a depth of 50m. It was freed from ghost nets in six project weeks during 2019. We were able to create 3D models of different objects by the 'structure from motion' technique. In addition, the ship was documented in detail in this survey report. We could clarify the circumstances of the sinking. Looting (stealing) has taken place on the wreck in the past and it is worth considering how the steering wheel and other objects can be protected. That was the reason why the bell was recovered in August 2020 on behalf of the Lithuanian Sea Museum in Klaipeda.

## Identification of the wreck

The ship was clearly identified by the "Baltic sea heritage rescue" team. A ship's bell with the inscription "ELBING IX" and a ship builder's plate firmly attached to steel elements with the inscription: "# 886 F.Schichau Elbing 1913" were found in the ship. The yard number 886 and the year coincides with the ship ELBING IX. Control measurements of the length, position of holds and masts also confirm the identification. There were also eyewitnesses of the sinking at this position.

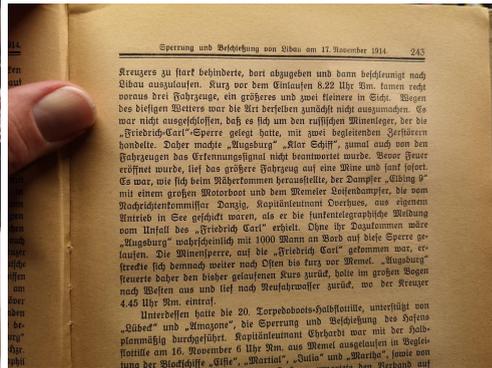
## Summary of the sinking



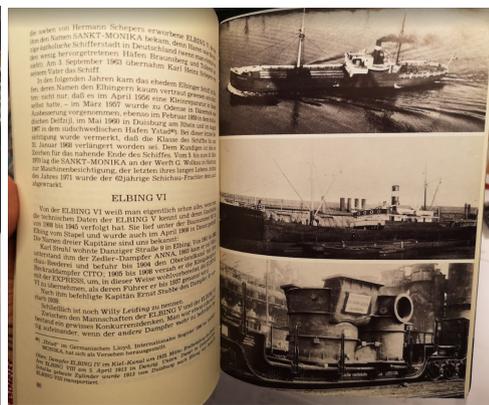
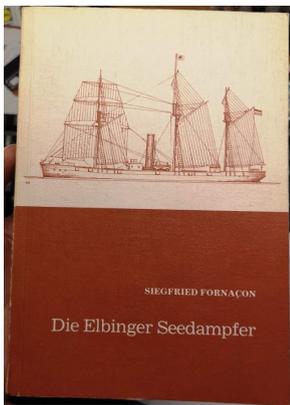
ELBING IX sank on 17th Nov. 1914 by a mine hit when it was on the way to help the armored cruiser Friedrich Carl. At 1:46 the armored cruiser Friedrich Carl ran onto a mine. The commander believed in a torpedo attack by a submarine and steered 90° port side (left). As a result, they came again into the minefield and they ran into a second mine. The ship ran full of water and started sinking. An emergency telegram was issued by radio to save the 691 man crew. Thereupon various ships were on the way to help. After two hours the cruiser "Augsburg" arrived and took over the crew before the "Friedrich Carl" sank. The "Augsburg" headed for Memel to drop off the people. Some mile before arriving Memel, three ships were sighted in front. They were also on the way to aid. These ships were the steamer ELBING IX, the Memeler Lotsendampfer (pilot steamer), and another ship. At 8.22 "Augsburg" saw ELBING IX running onto a mine and sinking quickly. The "Augsburg" was warned about a second mine barrier. They turned 180° and circled the first mine lock in a large arc. The misfortune of the "Elbing IX" saved so 1000 people's life. On Elbing IX one man died. The rest of the crew of the could be rescued by the other ships.

# Attachment

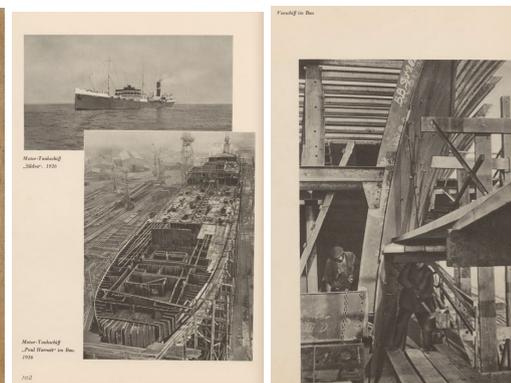
## Books



Der Krieg zur See - Ostsee Band 1 (The war in the baltic sea) from 1921



Siegfried Fornacon: Die Elbinger Seedampfer (The Elbinger Sea Steamer) from 1979



100 Jahre Schichau 1837 - 1937 (100 years of Schichau 1837 - 1937) from 1937

## Marine Square Map

The military used so-called marine squares, which divided a sea area into numbered squares. These maps were secret. Due to the deviation from the usual system with Log / Latitude, the enemy should not be able to check the position by recording telegrams. The advantage, however, was not long lasting, since the enemy managed to capture these cards early during the war.



Source: Militärarchiv Freiburg

Online-Tool to calculate the squares

<http://www.navalgrid.com/find/square/an959>

## Author



Holger Buß is a graduate engineer in electrical engineering and develops control systems for unmanned aerial vehicles. He is diving since 1999, is certified with TEC1 (GUE) and is also a volunteer rescue diver at the DLRG. Together with the "Gezeitentaucher" (tide divers) and the team "Baltic Sea Heritage Rescue Project" he investigates shipwrecks off the East Frisian Islands and in the Baltic Sea.

Dipl. Ing. Holger Buss  
Moormerlandstrasse 39  
D-26802 Moormerland  
[holger.buss@googlemail.com](mailto:holger.buss@googlemail.com)  
[www.gezeitentaucher.de](http://www.gezeitentaucher.de)

## Videos

23.09.2019 and 26.09.2019  
<https://youtu.be/nEHgVETySaw>

Measurements on 27.09.2019  
<https://youtu.be/RFKtSRjavUo>

Bell 3D-Print - Making of Video  
<https://youtu.be/Kyc2ZWfH1xl>

## Translations and location of this report

German / Deutsch:  
[http://files.mikrokoetter.de/Gezeitentaucher/ELBING\\_IX.pdf](http://files.mikrokoetter.de/Gezeitentaucher/ELBING_IX.pdf)

English:  
[http://files.mikrokoetter.de/Gezeitentaucher/\(EN\)\\_ELBING\\_IX.pdf](http://files.mikrokoetter.de/Gezeitentaucher/(EN)_ELBING_IX.pdf)