

Bath 33 Norway Trip 2009

This report details the dive sites dived during the clubs trip to Norway in August 2009 where we sailed from Bodo across to Rost at the southern tip of the Lofoten Island chain. Sailing Northeast up Vestfjorden to Narvik

SS.(D/S) Rabat

The steamship Rabat found her grave in in the waters in Bodø harbor October 4th. 1943 after an allied air attack where the vessel was hit by a bomb and sunk a short time afterwards .

The attack resulted in two sunken and six damaged ships. Two planes were also shot down, among these a Junker 52 and one Heinkel 115.

Before the outbreak of second world war, the Rabat was trafficking between Germany, Portugal and Spain, but was set in to serve in the German navy during the war. The ship was also marked for service in the forthcoming invasion planned on England in 1941.

The wreck lies on depths from twenty meters and down to a maximum of forty three meters.

MV. Hadsel

The steamer Hadsel was one of many vessels that had to do service under the Coastal express after WW2 (since , after losses , the company didn't have enough ships)

She was originally laid down in Moss in 1940, and was put to service with the Vesterålske steamship company . She was then transferred to serve with the Coastal express in November 1945.

The Hadsel did service until April 1950, and after which she was taken out of the company and was used as a cargo and passenger freighter.

Norway, 2009

Written by Peter Burriss

Saturday, 02 October 2010 16:23 - Last Updated Sunday, 03 October 2010 14:10

On the 29th of January 1958 ended the story , under a strong current she became stranded near Nakkmean outside Reine , and went down within an hour at a depth of thirty five to forty five meters, and rests on her keel .

SS. (DS) Romanby

The ore steamer D/S Romanby was built in 1921 in England by Wm. Gray & Co. West Hartlepool. The ship was by anchor in Narvik when it was torpedoed 1940 on the 10th of April (The 1st Battle)

The ship was 130 meters long, 18 meters wide and had a crew of 34 men. 4887 Tonnes.

Today Romanby stands on her right keel in a depth of 16-29 meters.

Depth: 15- 29 metres

M/S Hamburg

The M.S. Hamburg was a German fish factory ship used for transporting fish oil and glycerine (used in the construction of munitions) during the Second World War.

On March 1st 1941 a Special Services Battalion designated No.3 and No.4 Commando and lead by Lt Colonel Durnford-Slater and Lt Colonel Lister respectively left the Faroe Islands for the Norwegian coast.

Comprising some 500 British Special Forces Commandos and 50 Norwegian Sailors the fleet had originally left Scapa Flow in the Orkney Islands in February under the command of Brigadier Haydon. Preparations complete, HMS Queen Emma, Princess Beatrix and a naval escort of 5 British Destroyers arrived for the first raid on the Lofoten Islands Operation Claymore on March 4th 1941.

The Germans were taken completely by surprise assuming no one would attempt a raid in such

foul weather conditions and within hours German officers and soldiers were rounded up. 11 factories (800,000 gallons of herring oil) and 5 ships were systematically destroyed (including the M.S. Hamburg which was sunk by one of the British destroyers whilst she was moored in the harbour).

Top of wreck 0-15m. Bottom 18-23m. Lies at 90 degrees on starboard side. Rear part is cut off .

MS(D/S) Karmoy

Built at Alloa, delivered in Apr.-1921. Under German control. Reported in July 1943, and Sept. 13-1944 in Norway-Germany trade. Reported surveyed during April-June 1944. Sunk by the Fleet Air Arm (from HMS Implacable) in Lødingen on Oct. 28-1944, on a voyage Ballangen-Holtenau - 6 died.

Z22 - Anton Schmitt

Anton Schmitt - a German destroyer with the designation Z21 and was a sister ship to Wilhelm Heidkamp , Dieter von Roeder and Herman Kunne . The ship was build in 1938 in Bremen, it was 123 metre's long and had a crew of 323 men and a top speed in 36 knots.

At anchor to the rear of the fueller Jan Wellem , with her sister ship the Wilhelm Heidkamp , the Anton Schmitt was engaged by both Hunter and Havock , whilst Hardy engaged the Wilhelm Heidkamp – hitting her with one torpedo that hit her After Magazine and destroyed her , 81 men died in the blast . The Anton Schmitt was hit by one torpedo and a number of shells from Hostile , Havock then engaged her , a torpedo hitting her No.3 Boiler Room , the detonation breaking her in two , sinking her in a few moments – 63 men dying. These detonations causing the engines on the Herman Kunne to seize , rendering her immobile for some time.

Anton Schmitt was sunk near Wilhelm Heidkamp on April 10th 1940 and lies today on the starboard tack In 16-27 metres of water

Z13 Erich Koellner

The Erich Koellner was a Leberecht Maass Class Destroyer with a displacement of 2200 tons, and a complement of 315 officers and men. She was 374 feet long, 37 feet in the beam, and had a draught of nine and a half feet. Her machinery, performance, and armament was similar to the Dieter Von Roeder Class, except that she had four 3.7cm and six 20mm guns.

Launched on the 18th May 1937 the Erich Koellner, Z13, was completed on 8th August 1939. She then conducted offensive mining operations around the North Sea. She was not a lucky ship and in February 1940 she was involved in a bizarre incident, when in company with other destroyers she attacked elements of the British Fishing Fleet in the North Sea. In the midst of the engagement a German aircraft came along and happily bombed the hell out of the German Destroyers who fled in panic into a previously unknown British minefield. Two Destroyers, Z1 and Z3 were sunk, and the Erich Koellner, in an effort to rescue some of their stricken crews, managed to drown some of her own whilst launching the rescue boat. The Skipper then thought he saw torpedo tracks so abandoned the rest of the sailors in his attempt to escape, almost ramming the wreckage of the Z1, which he mistook for a submarine's conning tower.

It must have come as some relief for the Z13's Skipper, Korvette Kapitain Schulze-Hinrichs, when on the 7th April 1940 he became part of Group 1, (Narvik). He embarked two hundred troops at Wesermunde, and after meeting up with the taskforce lead by the Battleship Hipper, the Z13 arrived at Narvik on the 9th April after an extremely rough passage. She landed her troops at Elvegard at the head of Herjangsfjord where she anchored for the night in company with Z9 and Z12. Just before dawn on the 10th April five British Destroyers, Hardy, Hunter, Hotspur, Hostile, and Havelock slipped past the two U-boats guarding the entrance to Ofotfjord and sailed twenty five miles up the Fjord to completely surprise the Five German Destroyers lying peacefully in Narvik Harbour.

Narvik harbour after the first Battle. Two German Destroyers were sunk at once and three were fatally crippled. The British only suffered a minor hit and were gleefully withdrawing when Z13, Z9 and Z12 emerged from Herjangsfjord and surprised them. In the fight that followed (First battle of Narvik) the British were caught in a crossfire as two other German Destroyers, Z2 and Z11 charged out of Ballangenfjord. A running battle soon developed and the Hardy was blasted by gunfire and forced aground. Soon Hunter was hard hit and to make matters worse was rammed by Hotspur who had been badly damaged by gunfire. Hotspur managed to untangle herself, but Hunter could not be saved and sank.

As the British escaped, the Erich Koellner and the two other German Destroyers briefly gave chase but soon broke off the engagement. This proved to be unfortunate for the Germans as the British came across the Ammunition ship Rauenfels loaded to the gunnels with desperately needed 5 inch shells. She was literally blown to pieces, and her remains can still be seen scattered all over the nearby hills.

On the 11th April Z13 was fully operational and was one of the few ships that had managed to refuel. As she was moved to her dispersal point in Ballungenfjord, the Skipper misjudged the depth, ran aground, ripped open her bottom flooding No 2 and 3 boiler rooms, her torpedo warhead room and her transmitting area. Although she effectively carried out damage control and managed to stay afloat, she was by now only fit to be used as a floating gun battery. By the time of the Second Battle of Narvik two days later, the Z13 was in the process of being escorted to Taarstadt by Z19 where she was to lay in ambush for the next expected British attack. Soon reports reached her that the British Force was already steaming down the Fjord. Z19 went ahead to assess the situation, leaving the Z13 to make her way to Djupvik in the hope of still being able to effect an ambush.

The Erich Koellner hit for the first time. Unfortunately for her spotter planes from the Battleship Warspite reported her position, and the Tribal Class Destroyers, Bedouin and Eskimo were sent around the point north of Djupvik where they engaged the Z13 at a range of three and a half thousand yards. Unable to manoeuvre, the Z13 was an easy target. She was hit in her boilers and turbine room, and then a torpedo blew her bows off. To finish her off, Warspite came up and pounded her with two salvos forcing her Captain to scuttle her to save needless loss of life. Even so thirty one men were killed and many more wounded.

Warspite completing the Erich Koellner's destruction After the War the Erich Koellner was heavily salvaged and today all that is left is a huge pile of scrap, most of which is in about sixty ft of water. However just about everything that is brass is here, especially valve chests by the ton. the real oddity however is the amount of uniform clothing that is still lying around. Jackets, shirts and some pullovers are to be found and other items are leather sea-boots and shoes.

Z19 - Hermann Künne

The Herman Kunne, together with the Hans Luderman, Wilhelm Heidcamp, Dieter von Roeder, and Anton Schmitt were all Dieter Von Roeder class destroyers. They had a displacement of 2400 tons and a complement of 313 officers and men. They were 384 feet long, 38 feet in the beam with a draught of 9 feet. The Destroyers were powered by two shaft geared turbines with six boilers producing a total of 70,000 horsepower which gave a top speed of around 38 knots. She had a complement of 323 men. Laid down in Oct 1936, launched in Dec 1937.

Their armament was impressive consisting of five 5inch guns all in single, hand worked mountings, which fired ten rounds per gun per minute. In addition she had six 3.7 cm automatic aircraft guns in two twin, and two single mountings and twelve 20mm guns in five twin and two single mountings. As well as all this the destroyers also carried eight 21 inch Mark G7A

torpedo's in quad mountings. The only fly in the ointment was the fact that the 5 inch guns only had 100 rounds a gun, and that in the end, more than anything else, sealed their fate.

At four thirty on the morning of 10th April 1940 the German Destroyers Herman Kunne and Hans Luderman lay alongside the fuel tanker Jan Wellam, and were both in the process of refuelling. Nearby in the harbour were also anchored the Destroyers Dieter Von Roeder, Anton Schmitt, and the Wilhelm Heidkamp, along with about twenty five other cargo ships. It was snowing hard and visibility was down to under a thousand yards. It was then that the British Destroyers struck, sweeping into the harbour sinking the Anton Schmitt and Wilhelm Heidcamp. There was total confusion amongst the Germans who at first thought that they were under air attack. As the British turned around in the Beisfjord, the Dieter Von Roeder was hit and caught fire. The Herman Kunne was not actually hit in these exchanges but suffered some engine damage as a result of the shock waves from the explosions in the harbour.

To better organize his forces, Captain Bey decided to sacrifice the Erich Kollner, which was very badly damaged. He turned her into a floating gun battery, taking off most of the crew and only leaving enough men to man the guns. She then limped out to Tarstad with orders to engage the British Fleet when they appeared. The Herman Kunne followed her out to Tjeldbotn. An hour later, a Swordfish Aircraft from the Battleship Warspite was spotted by the Herman Kunne, with the result that the British lost the element of surprise. In the event it didn't matter much. The Warspite pulverized the Erich Koellner and sunk her. The Herman Kunne was badly damaged, but managed to retire behind a smoke screen to Narvik.

In the harbour the rest of the German Destroyers came out of the harbour to face the British who were steaming towards them. For over an hour the battle raged without either side really making any impression. The Germans however were in real trouble because nearly all their ammunition had been used up in the fierce fire fight, so Captain Bey ordered them to withdraw to Rombaken. The Herman Kunne, never received that order and sailed into the Herjangsfjord with the British Destroyers Eskimo and Forrester in pursuit. Out of ammunition, Korvettenkapitan Koethe decided to beach his ship, land his crew and then scuttle the ship.

He drove the vessel ashore at Trollvika, Herjangsfjord at ten past two in the afternoon. All the crew managed to scramble ashore which was just as well, because ten minutes later Eskimo and Forrester fired three torpedo's, into the Herman Kunne which caused an enormous explosion and set her on fire. As the smoke from her funeral pyre darkened the sky she finally slid beneath the waves.

Gudrun Gisladdottir

Norway, 2009

Written by Peter Burriss

Saturday, 02 October 2010 16:23 - Last Updated Sunday, 03 October 2010 14:10

The Icelandic trawler Gudrun Gisladdottir hit ground in Nappstraumen 18. June 2002. The day after the damaged ship was tried to be towed towards land, but sank southwest of Skagen, near Ballstad in Lofoten.

The ship that had quite a good portion of oil and fish on board, was earmarked to be removed, but after much debate in the political life only parts of the oil was removed. The Icelandic company Fæsti HF received 200 million in insurance money for the loss of their ship.

The wreck of Gudrun Gisladdottir rest on her keel with a listing towards starboard on a depth of 27 to 40 meters.