

Survey report

Cargo paddle steamer Express I (Expreß I)

Location:

Baltic Sea
West of island Møn (Dänemark)

Survey date:

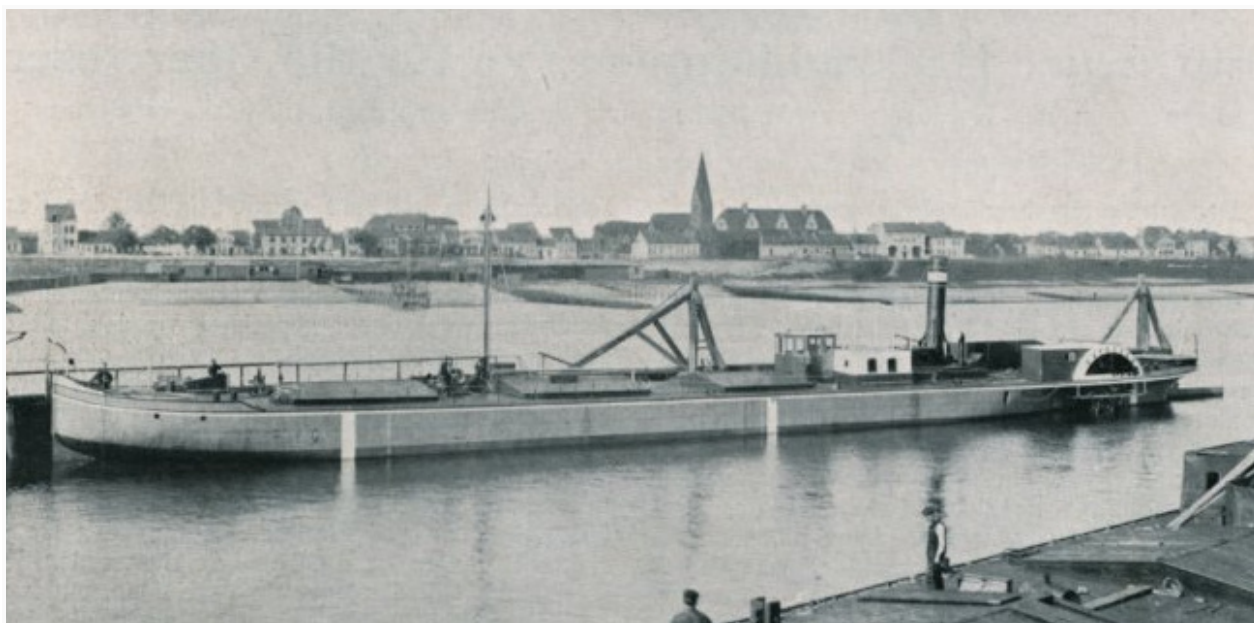
17.08.2024

Author:

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Introduction

This survey report describes the wreck of a previously unidentified 57m long paddle steamer near Møn (Denmark). It was dived, examined and 3D modeled as part of the "Marine Research Germany" project. It was long suspected by Danish divers that it was the wreck of the paddle steamer LAUENBURG IV / HANS, but at 38m it was much too small and much narrower and could therefore be ruled out. The Danish divers found Wehrmacht material in the wreck years ago. We therefore assumed that the ship was used by the Kriegsmarine. After some research in 'GRÖNER - The German Warships', we came across the sternwheeler EXPRESS I under the category "Passenger steamers in East Prussian waters 1939-1945", whose length, width and presumption of sinking fit well. Historical photos and sketches were compared with the wreck and documents were examined in the Freiburg and Koblenz war archives.

Description of the wreck site



Upright steel wreck in approx. 20m water depth on a sandy bottom. Large parts of it are washed into the sand. The upper deck with its four loading hatches can still be clearly seen. There are two paddle wheels in the rear that do not protrude beyond the side walls. There are nine attachments for shovels. Only one of the movable blades remains. The two-cylinder steam engine rests on a machine foundation made up of three strong steel parts. Also aft is the steam boiler with two fire tubes 3.4m long and 2.8m in diameter. The fire pipes face the machine. Further forward, directly in front of cargo space 3, is the control console with remains of the steering wheel. The hexagonal shape of the wheelhouse can still be seen on the deck. The timing chains extend 90 degrees from it. In the front third of the wreck there is a folding mast that is positioned aft. A sturdy bulkhead separates the bow section from hold 1. On deck you can find the rubber wheels, which, according to Danish divers (who have been diving the wreck for a long time), originally belonged to two motorcycles. At the very front there is a winch on the head. Four vertical double bollards can be seen on each side of the ship.

On December 12, 2003 the wreck was included in the nautical charts:
 HH333/700/03 12.12.03 WK 19.8MTRS IN 5456.90N, 1238.28E [WGD]. LENGTH APPROX
 56MTRS. (DANISH NM 48/1143/03). - NM 444/04 ([Quelle](#))

Position of the wreck:

West of insland Møn (Dänemark)
 54°56,901'N 012°38,26'O

Photogrammetric recording of the wreck

Photogrammetry images were taken in a 45-minute dive on August 17, 2023. The video recordings from the six specially arranged cameras were broken down into 9,485 individual images and processed by the PC software Agisoft Metashape. A 3D object of the wreck was created using 2.5 million triangles.

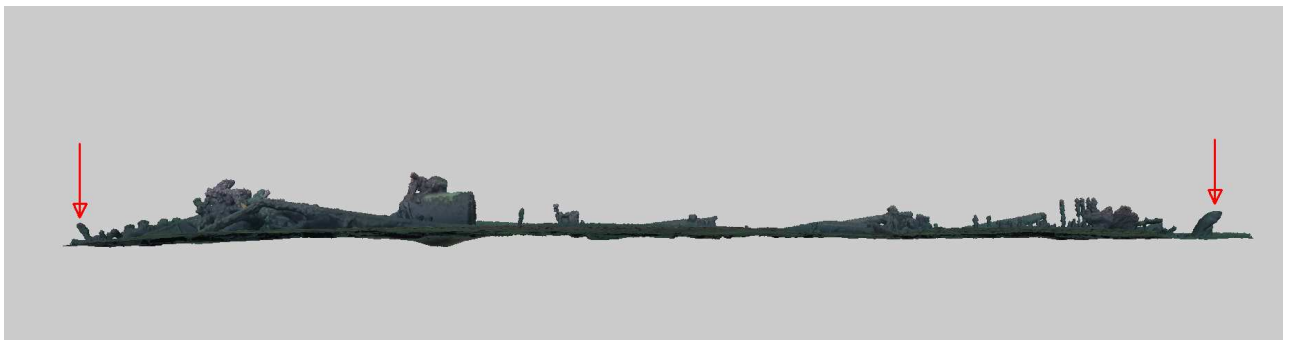
Area examined

The examined area of 1900m² has a core dimension of approx. 93x20m. A larger area of an additional 20m each was examined in the bow and stern areas to ensure that the entire length of the ship was included in the scan. In this way, it can be ruled out that, for example, the ship was longer aft if the area in the stern was silted up.



Fore and aft stems

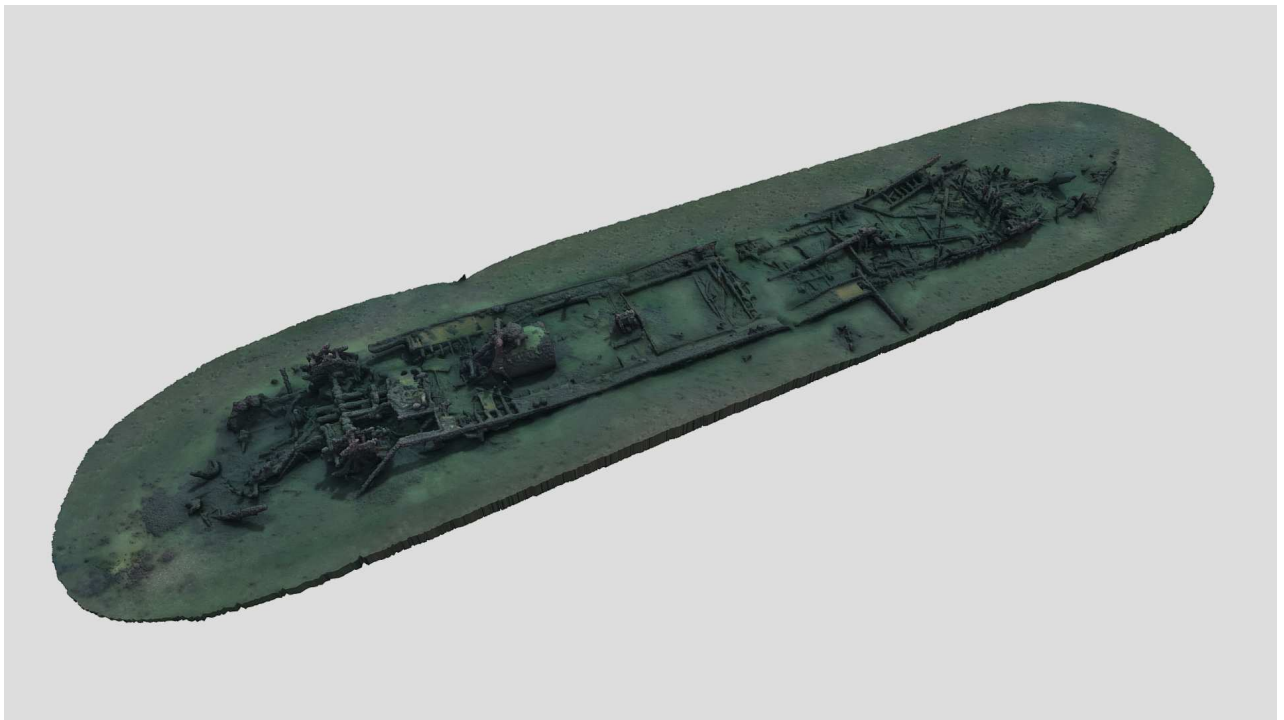
In the photogrammetry you can clearly see the stem and sternpost. This way we can ensure that we have scanned the entire wreck.



Achtersteven
Side view

Vordersteven

Entire 3D model



Created by author Holger Buss

The 3D model can be viewed as a rotating object here: [Sketchfab](#)

Orthofoto

From the photogrammetry, a scaled orthophoto could be created with a resolution of 1cm per pixel.



Link: [Orthofoto](#)

Printed 3D-Model

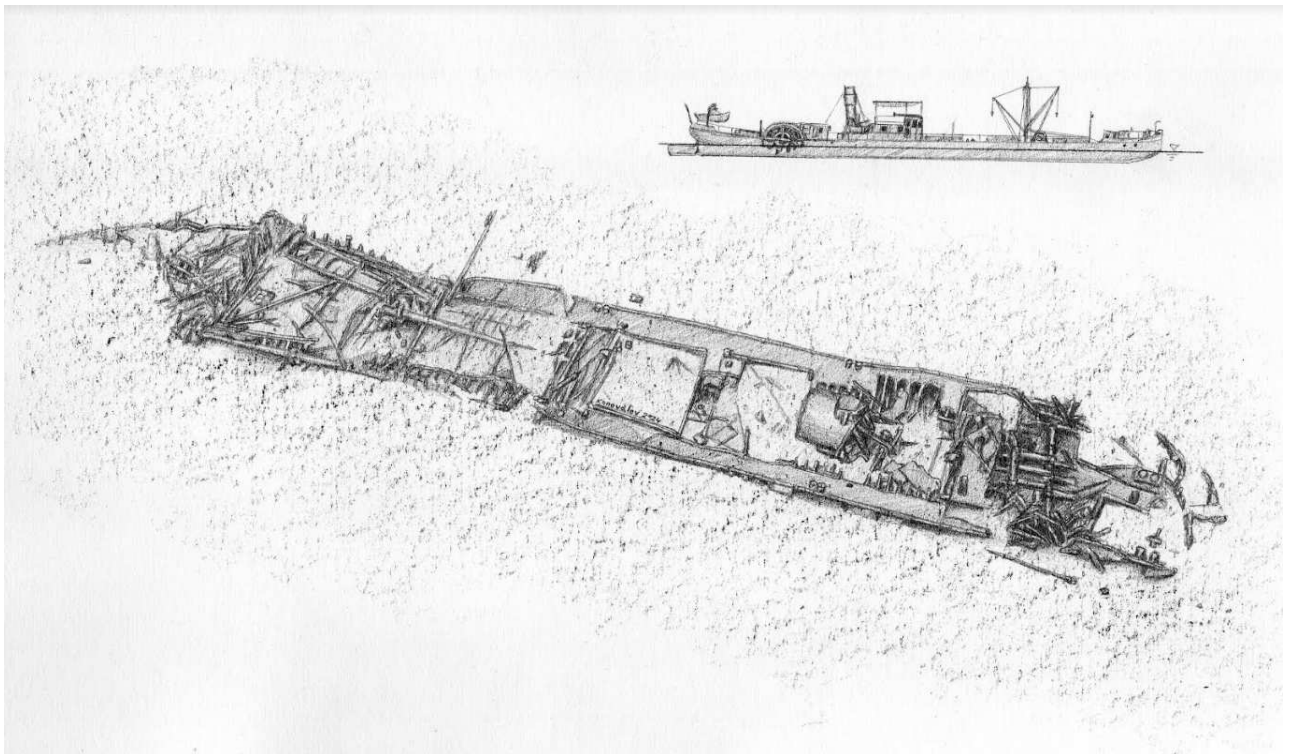
A 60cm model was made from the digital data. Printing time: 12 hours. Colorized by hand.



Pictures: Holger Buss

Here is the 3D data to reproduce: www.dive3d.eu

Drawing of the wreck



Drawing by expedition participant Alexey Konovalov (<https://www.wrackzeichner.de/>)

Cargo paddle steamer EXPRESS I-III

Three identical sternwheel cargo steamers were built by the Atlas shipyard

Year of construction:	1911
Shipyard:	Atlas Bremen
Length:	57m
Width:	7.80m
Side height:	2.2m
Draft:	1.2m
Speed:	14 km/h
Coal bunker:	15t
Machine power:	185 psi

Express I

Yard nr.: 67

1911: built for Wilhelm Reese, Bodenwerder

10.1912: Hagens, Anthony & Co., Morsum

12.1912: Bremer tugboat company, Bremen

12.1939: Bremen-Mindener Tugboat Company, Bremen

10.1940: Johannes Ick, Danzig

3.1945: Haff Flotilla, casualty transport

May 9, 1945: launched from Hela and sank on the way west

Express II

Yard nr.: 68

1911: built for Wilhelm Reese, Bodenwerder

10.1912: Hagens, Anthony & Co., Morsum

12.1912: Bremer tugboat company, Bremen

12.1939: Bremen-Mindener Tugboat Company, Bremen

10.1940: Johannes Ick, Danzig

5.1945: blown up in Danzig (Danzig-Heubude)

Express III

Yard nr.: 69

1911: built for Mrs. Sauerland, Kemnade

10.1912: Hagens, Anthony & Co., Morsum

12.1912: Bremer tugboat company, Bremen

12.1939: Bremen-Mindener Tugboat Company, Bremen

5.1940: August Niemeyer, Oedelsheim; HO Bremen

7.1940: Bremen-Mindener Tugboat Company, Bremen

10.1940: Johannes Ick, Danzig

3.1945: Haff Flotilla, casualty transport

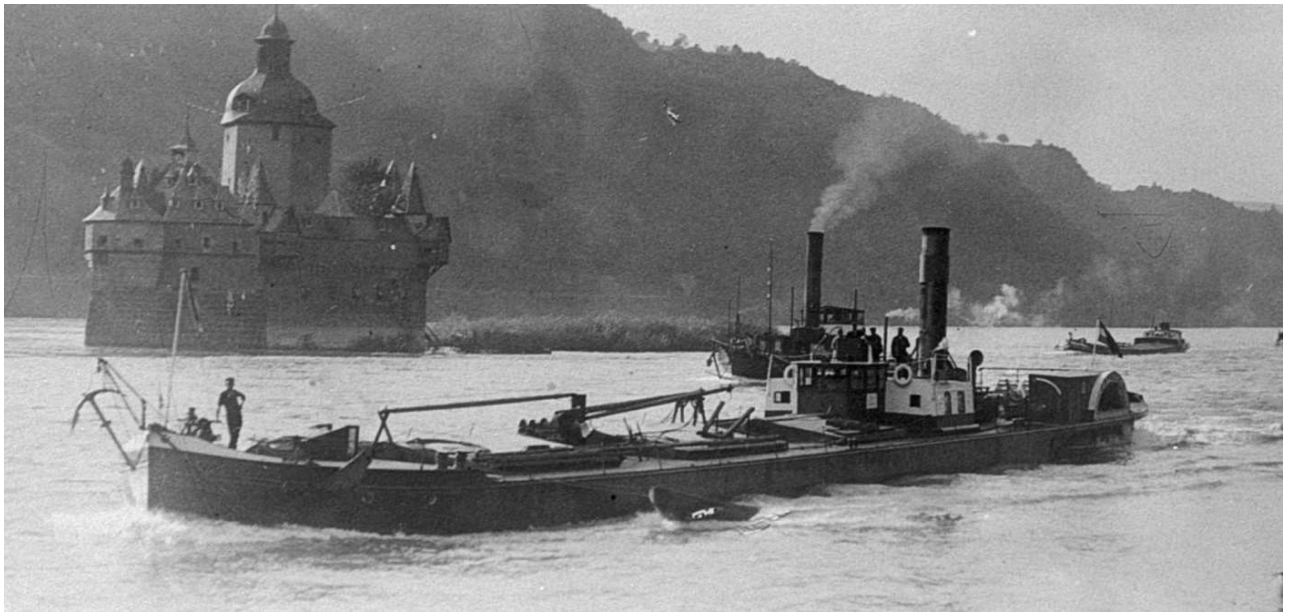
9.1945: Johannes Ick KG., Lübeck

1949: Martin Jansen, Westrhauderfehn, HO Leer

Yard number 91 ?

In the handwritten construction list from the Atlas shipyard by Reinhard Schmelzkopf: "Strandgut 1 1982 Atlas-Werke", a fourth sternwheeler with number 91 is mentioned. After comparing the list with the original list from the Krupp archive in Essen, this turns out to be an error.

Special model of a sternwheeler



Source: [1] Weekly Prometheus, 1912 Steamboat on the Weser in old views
The ship in front of Pfalzgrafenstein Castle in the Rhine at high water



Shipbuilding magazine October 25, 1911 ([Link](#))

The development and production of the special type of stern-wheel cargo steamer was commissioned by the Hagens, Anthony & Co. Bremen company from Norddeutsche Maschinen- und Armaturenfabrik GmbH in Bremen (renamed Atlas-Werke Bremen from 1911). The characteristics of the three planned ships, which were originally intended for shipping on the Weser, were determined as follows:

- The largest possible hull adapted to the locks
- Shallow draft due to the often shallow fairway
- Easy to use with as few staff as possible

The paddle steamer was generally considered as the type that could sail in shallow waters. However, due to the wheels being extended to the sides, the classic side wheel steamers have an extraordinary width that would not fit into the lock systems. So the development of a pure

sternwheel steamer began. As the name suggests, it has united the wheels at the stern in such a way that their outer edge is still within the alignment line of the central nave. In order to balance the ship, the engines and steam system would actually have had to be separated, with the boiler standing in the foredeck. However, this arrangement would have required more operating personnel. In addition, the long steam pipe would have caused unnecessary loss of power. So the decision was made to reunite the boiler and engine in the stern. The extremely important balancing of the ship in the empty draft with this arrangement could only be achieved by switching from the pure sternwheel steamer to the stern side wheel steamer type. In this case, the wheels are separated and a narrowed continuation of the hull is pushed between them. This type of displacement distribution, in conjunction with a water tank installed in the foredeck, made it possible to maintain the shallow draft permitted at the rear. Due to the difficulty of balancing, this type of stern-side paddle steamer with boiler and engine systems combined in the stern was only built in three copies. In any case, no other such ships are known.

The Norddeutsche Maschinen- und Armaturenfabrik had the most economically advantageous shape of the ship's hull tested and optimized in towing tests carried out by Norddeutscher Lloyd in Bremerhaven. Due to bridges, the paddle wheels including wheel arches could not be too large. The mast also received one folding device and the chimney even had two folding devices. The rudder received steam assistance and the ship could also be steered via a smaller second steering wheel on the deck of the cabin. This gave the captain a better overview. The rudder quadrant was moved by control chains. For better controllability at slow speeds, the ship also had a bow rudder blade that conformed to the shape of the bow and was controlled via a separate tiller. There were four double bollards on the sides of the ship as mooring lines.

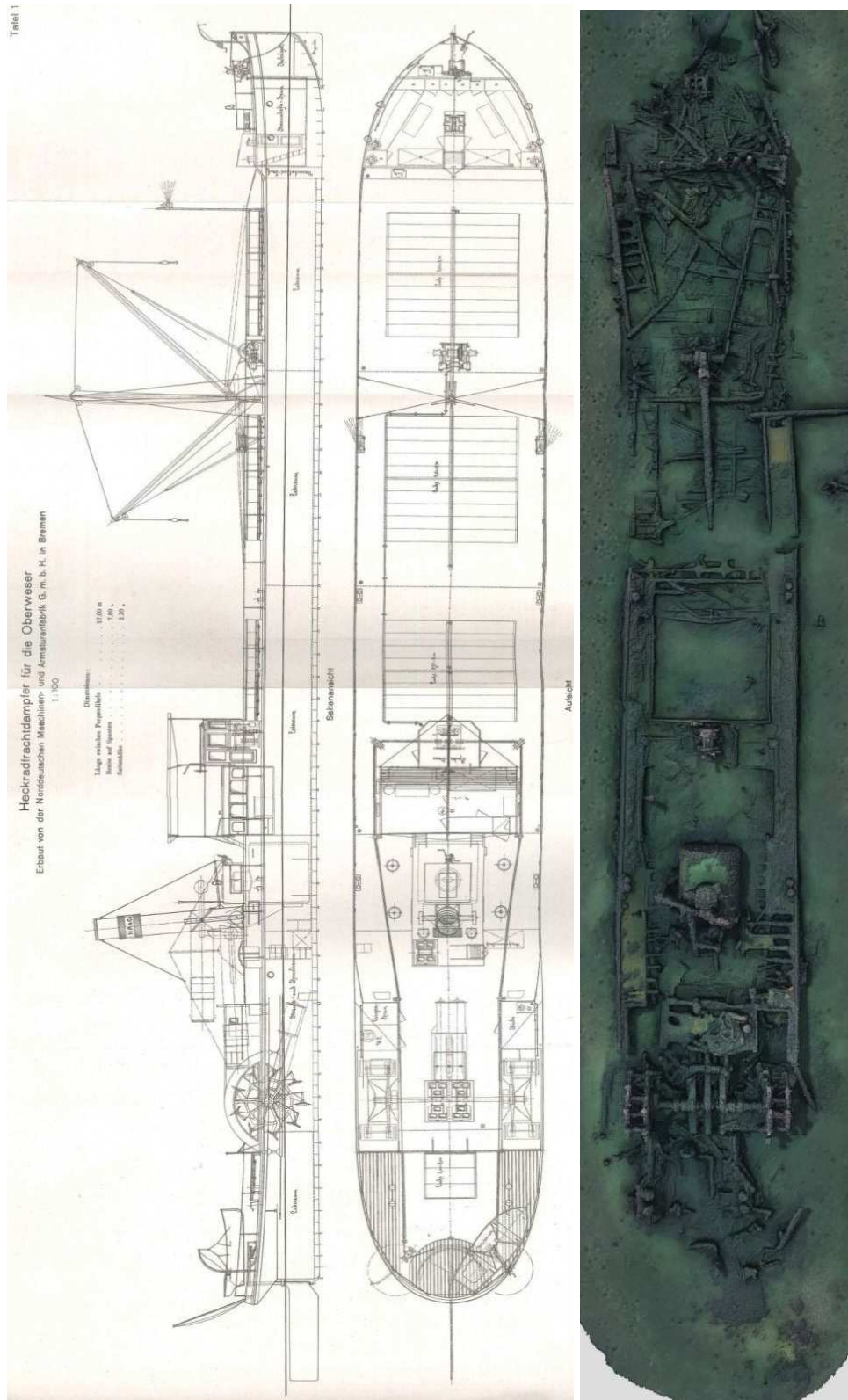
The main hold extends into three compartments, which were separated from each other by watertight bulkheads. The width of the hatches in the three holds was 5.4m. There is a smaller cargo space installed behind the cargo space. The mast was designed for 1t and could be folded down using a folding device. The two crew rooms were located in the foredeck and were separated from the water tank by a water bulkhead. They were paneled with wood and contained bunks, cupboards, a bench and a table. The steam-powered anchor winch was also in the foredeck. The cabin structure contained two rooms and was slightly lowered to provide more ceiling height. In the two side wheel arch houses there was the kitchen on the starboard side and the toilet and lamp room on the port side. The coal bunkers were located next to the boiler. The machine foundation consisted of three strong steel girders, which also served as the boiler foundation and longitudinal beams for the ship.

The machine consisted of a two-cylinder steam engine with 350mm and 650mm cylinder diameters and 1000mm stroke. It did 31 rpm. The wheels had nine movable blades. The boiler was a horizontal cylinder boiler with two fire tubes and 70 square meters of heating surface. The three steamers largely fulfilled the requirements, so a fourth was immediately commissioned (*). No other steamers of the same design are known. The sternwheeler steamers traveled the route from Bremen to Kassel in one week.

*However, a fourth sternwheeler was not built and only three appear in the original Atlas shipyard construction list.

Comparison of the wreck vs. technical drawing

The discovery of the technical drawing was a great stroke of luck, because this drawing allows the wreck to be compared very precisely with the stern-wheel cargo steamer from Bremen. At this point I would like to thank the user "Muranfan" from the inland navigation forum, who quickly provided the drawing.



Sizes

According to the technical information, the ship had the following dimensions:

Length from rudder axis to stem: 57m

Width: 7.8m

Width of the loading hatches: 5.4m

Through a special and defined arrangement of the camera frame used in photogrammetry, the wreck can be subsequently measured on the PC.

These dimensions undoubtedly correspond to the dimensions of the wreck.

Length: 57,0m



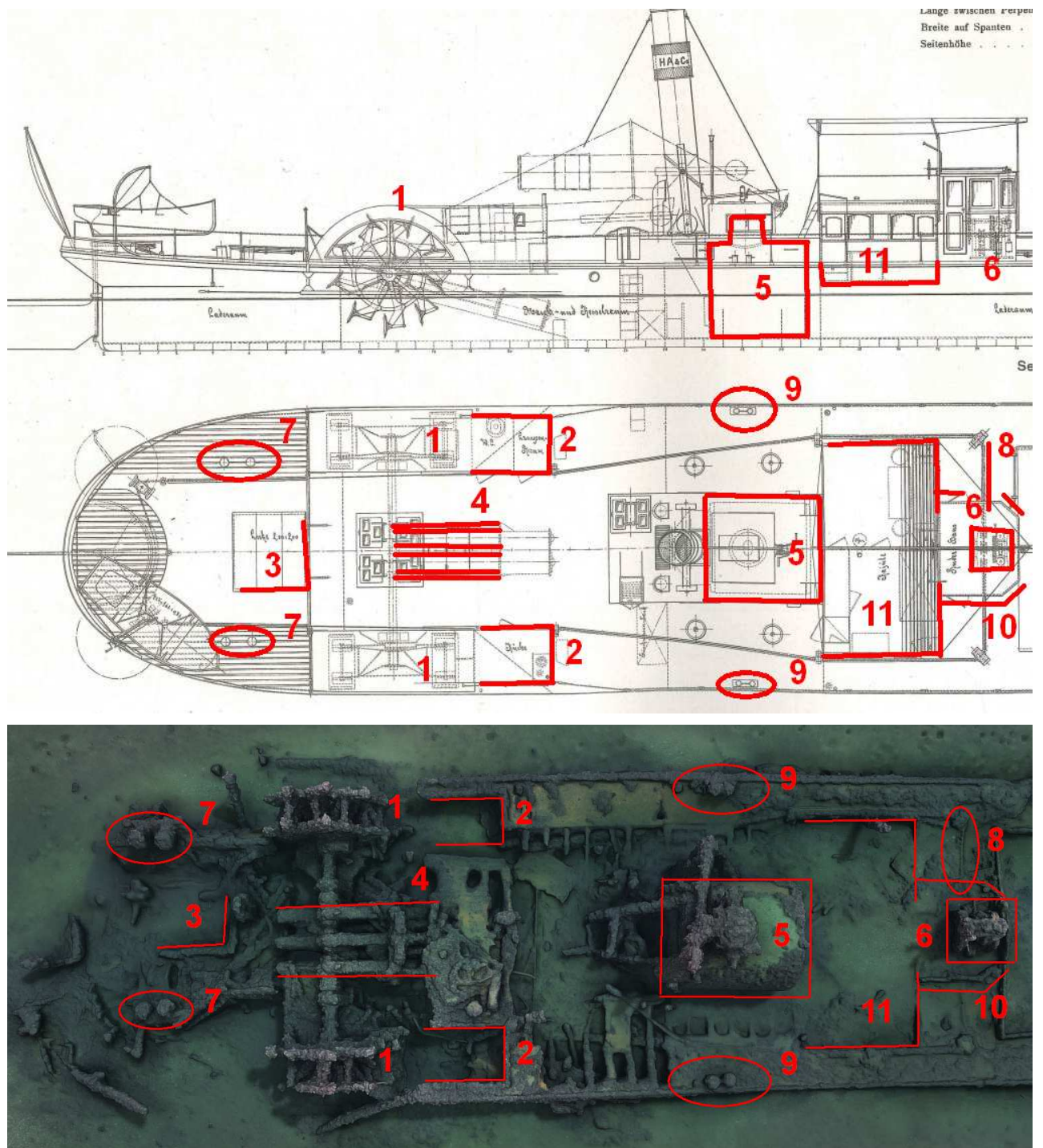
Width: 7,83m



Cargo hole: 5,41m

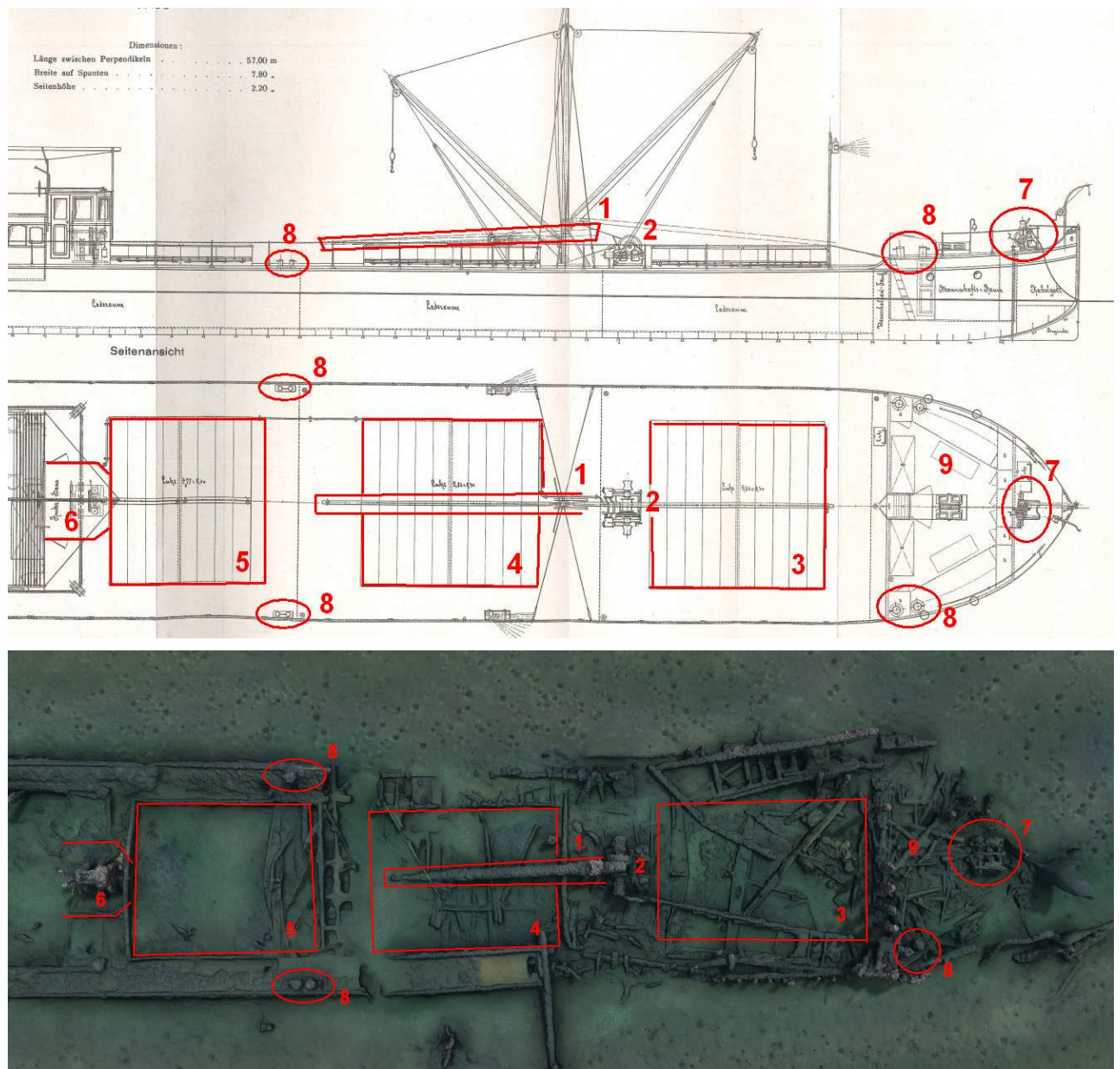


Details at the stern



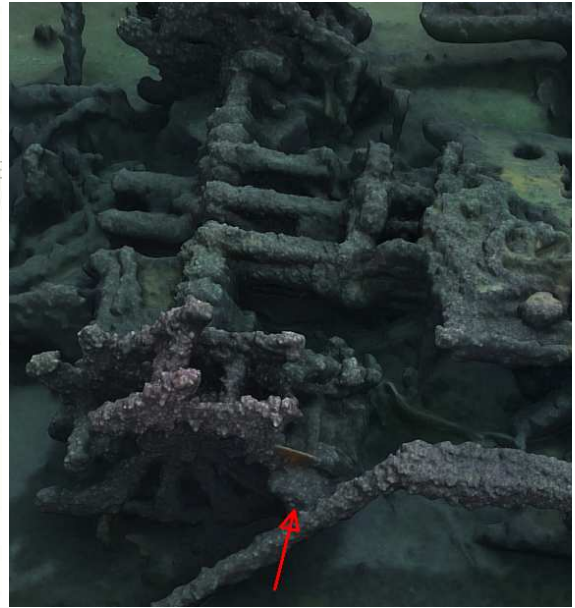
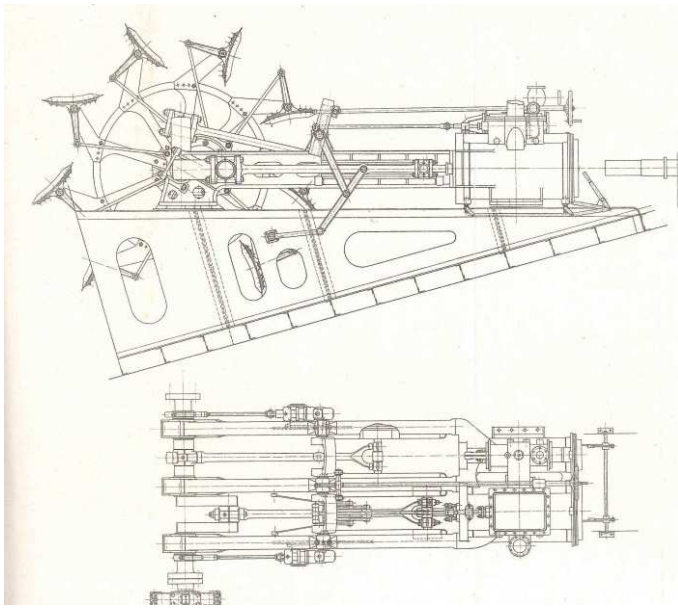
1. Paddle wheels with nine blades - do not protrude beyond the side wall
2. wheel arch houses
3. Rear cargo space
4. Steam engine with machine foundation on three steel supports
5. Steam boiler with fire opening facing the machine
6. Rudder system
7. Double bollards in the rear
8. Timing chain
9. Double bollards on the side
10. Shape of the wheelhouse
11. Lowered cabin structure

Details at the bow



1. Foldable mast
2. derrick winch
3. Cargo space 1
4. Cargo space 2
5. Cargo space 3
6. Wheelhouse
7. Windlass
8. Double bollards
9. Wooden furnishings in the team rooms

Machine and paddle wheels



The two-stage steam engine drove the two wheels directly and synchronously via a crankshaft. The actual blades were movable and controlled via an eccentric. As a result, the angle of the individual blades changed as the wheel rotated so that they immersed themselves more optimally in the water and generated better feed. Only one of the blades is still visible today (red arrow).

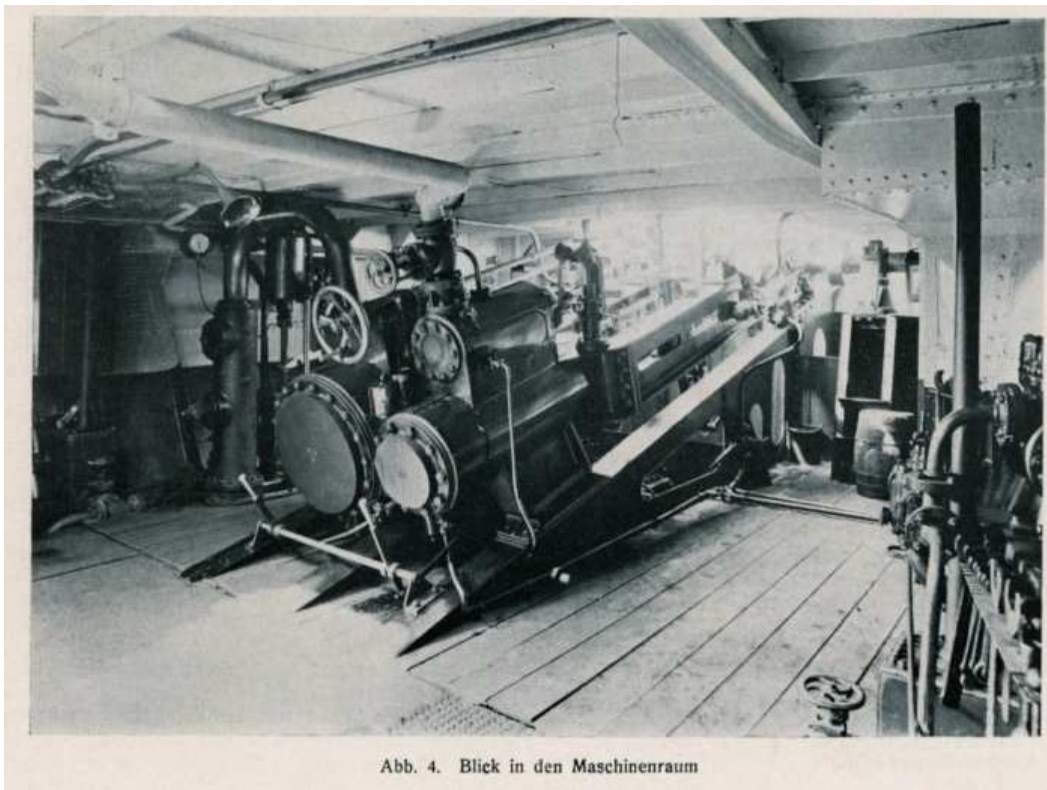
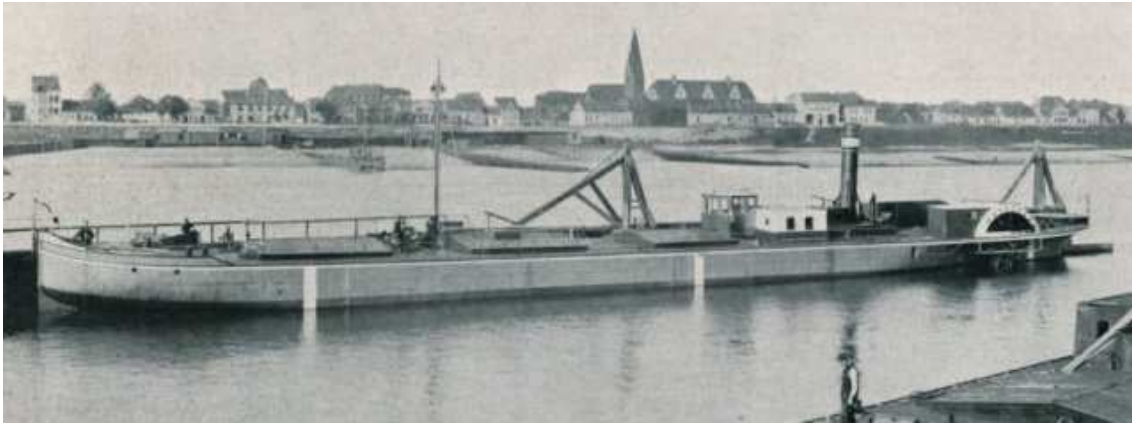


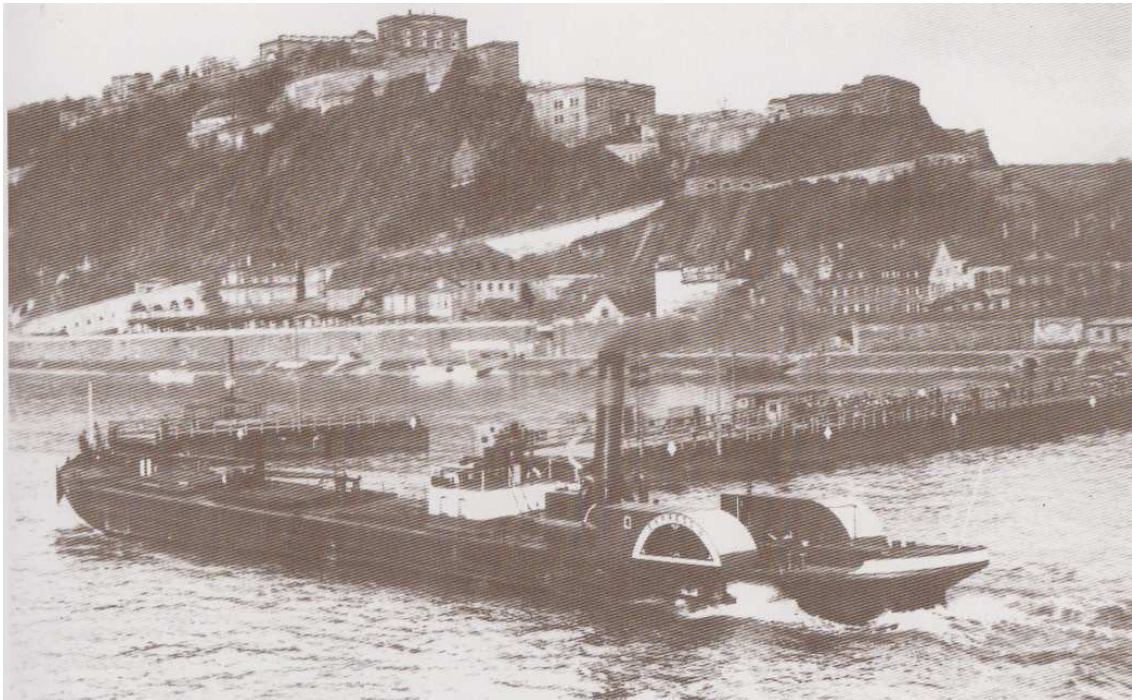
Abb. 4. Blick in den Maschinenraum

Shipbuilding magazine October 25, 1911 ([Link](#))

Historical photos



Source: Schiffbau Zeitschrift 25.Oktober 1911 ([Link](#))



Alfred Oehmig: Dampfer auf der Weser in alten Ansichten



Heckraddampfer für 250 t Ladung für die Weser, eines der ersten selbstfahrenden Eil-Frachtschiffe (Atlas-Archiv).

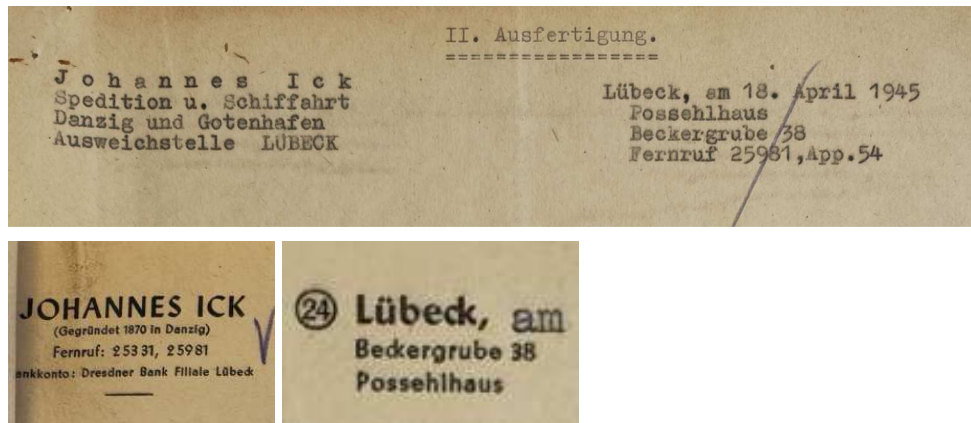
Source: Auf dem Garten, Klaus: "Boote, Yachten, Kleinschiffe aus Bremen"

The shipping company Johannes Ick

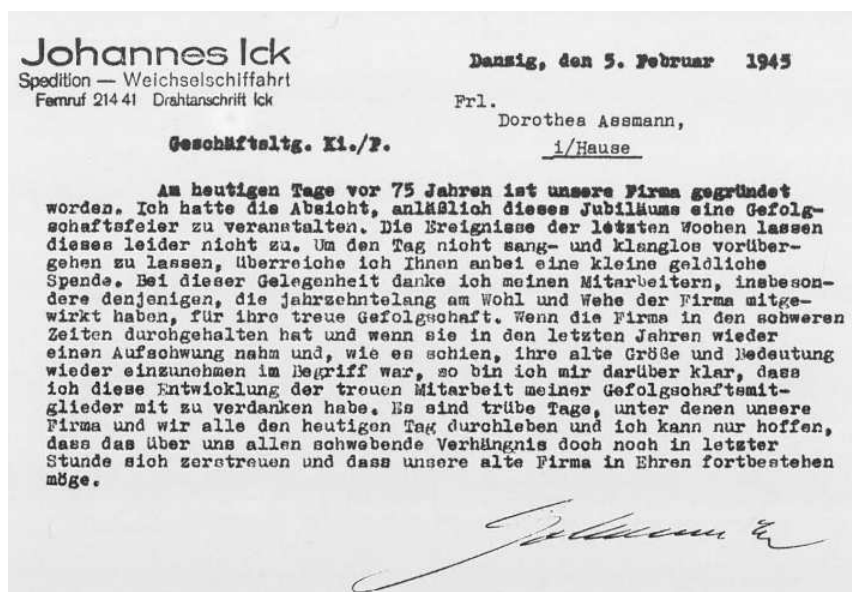
At the time of the sinking, the ship belonged to the Johannes Ick shipping company, which had to make the ships available to the Navy as casualty transport and refugee transport. There were branches in Danzig (Gotenhafen), Lübeck and Hamburg.

The company was founded as a shipping company on February 5, 1870 in Danzig under the name Dauben & Ick.

Since 1918, the Hamburg and Danzig branches have separated. There is an extensive archive in Hamburg (Hanseatic Economic Archive Foundation), which unfortunately does not contain documents from the Danzig branch.



The years 1933 to 1939 were not favorable for the Johannes Ick company's headquarters in Danzig. The company had to lay off many employees and rented out some of the office space in its office building. After the German Empire's campaign against Poland, the situation improved. The Bromberg branch, which had closed in 1919, was reopened and a number of ships were purchased for river traffic. On February 5, 1945, the day of its 75th anniversary, the company still existed, but a few weeks later everything was lost.



Source: "Deutsche Reedereien Band 7" GUD-Verlag

Report from the Johannes Ick shipping company about the loss of their ships

JOHANNES ICK-DANZIG
 gegründet 1870 Spedition/
 Binnenschifffahrt/Reederei/
 Reparaturverft/Lagerhäuser
 AUSWEICHSTELLE LÜBECK

② Lübeck,
 Possehlhaus, Backergrube
 Fernruf: 25331, 25981

Zusammenstellung
 der verloren gegangenen Fahrzeuge.

1. Güterschiff	"Express I"	347 tons	185 PS	Rm.	70.000.--
2. "	"Express II"	350 "	185 "	"	70.000.--
3. "	"Express III"	349 "	185 "	"	70.000.--
4. "	Neuenburg	289 "	185 "	"	68.000.--
5. "	Leslau	140 "	125 "	"	40.000.--
6. "	Dirschau	175 "	100 "	"	30.000.--
7. Schleppschiff	Herm. Brämer	-	300 "	"	65.000.--
8. "	Alb. Neumann	-	270 "	"	60.000.--
9. "	Amanda	40 "	40 "	"	4.800.--
10. "	Werner	40 "	60 "	"	12.500.--
11. Fahrgast- und Schleppschiff	Bromberg	350 Personen	102 "	"	25.000.--
12. "	Kulm	350 "	90 "	"	30.000.--
13. "	Fordon	400 "	120 "	"	40.000.--
14. "	Gertrud	100 "	120 "	"	20.000.--
15. Lomme	Tiege	44 tons	15 "	"	2.200.--
16. Prahm	Ick I	150 "	-	"	450.--
17. "	Ick II	150 "	-	"	450.--
18. Schute	G 25	110 "	-	"	5.500.--
19. "	G 26	100 "	-	"	5.500.--
20. "	G 32	180 "	-	"	7.600.--
		2.424 tons	2082 PS	Rm.	627.000.--
		1.200 Personen			

Compilation of the lost ships on July 13, 1945

JOHANNES ICK-DANZIG
 Gegründet 1870 Spedition/
 Binnenschifffahrt/Reederei/
 Reparaturverft/Lagerhäuser
 AUSWEICHSTELLE LÜBECK

Der Admiral
 der Kriegsmarine
 Possehlhaus, Backergrube
 Dat. - 6. AUG. 1945
 Buch-St.

d. 13. Juli 1945
 Fernruf: 25331, 25981

An die
 Kriegsmarinedienststelle
 Kiel

Admiral KMD, Hamburg, Zweigt. Kiel
 Eing. 21. JULI 1945
 B. Nr. 437

Petr. Zuweisung von Ersatzfahrzeugen für meine verloren gegangenen Schiffe.

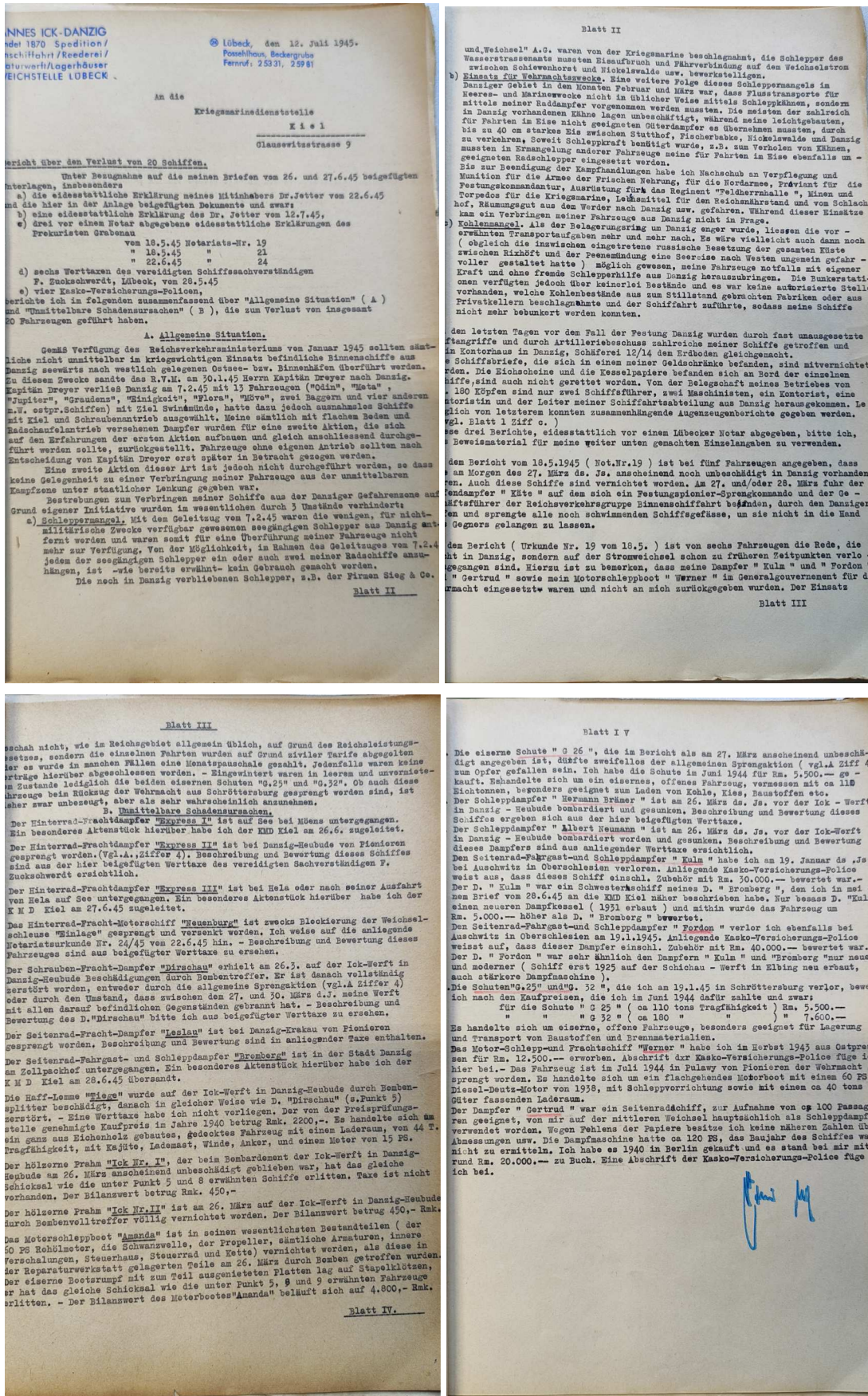
Im Anschluss an meinen der KMD Kiel übergebenen Antrag vom 27.6.1945 und in Ergänzung meines Antrages betr. 3 im Dienst der Kriegsmarine verloren gegangene Dampfer überreiche ich beifolgend einen zusammenfassenden Bericht nebst Nachweisen über die insgesamt erlittenen Schiffswerte. Danach habe ich im Wehrmachteinsatz, durch Kampfhandlungen und durch Sprengungen auf Grund behördlicher Anordnung ausser den Dampfern "Express I", "Express III" und "Bromberg" weitere 17 Einheiten d.h. insgesamt 20 Wasserfahrzeuge im Werte von Rm. 627.000.-- (laut beiliegender Aufstellung) verloren.

Mein Wunsch und meine Bitte gehen dahin, mir durch Zuweisung von geeigneten Fahrzeugen aus den Beständen der Kriegsmarine den Wiederaufbau meines Betriebes zu ermöglichen und mir Gelegenheit zu geben, mich mit meinen langjährigen Erfahrungen an der Durchführung ernährungs- und rohstoffwirtschaftlich wichtiger Transporte mit Fluss- und Küstenschiffen tatkräftig zu beteiligen.

Ich gestatte mir noch zu bemerken, dass ich durch die Kampfhandlungen in Danzig im März 1945 weitere erhebliche Verluste erlitten habe, u.a. durch Zerstörung meiner Schiffsreparaturverft, meines Bürohauses, dreier Lagerhäuser sowie sämtlicher Landfahrzeuge.

Für recht baldige Bearbeitung meines Antrages und beschleunigte Zuweisung von Ersatzfahrzeugen wäre ich besonders dankbar.

In this document, the place where our sternwheeler EXPRESS I sank - near Möen - is named:



Source: Militärarchiv Koblenz

Identification

There is no doubt that our wreck is the special type of stern-side wheel steamer built in 1911 by the Atlaswerke in Bremen. The findings on the wreck correspond 100 percent with the ship drawings. All that needs to be clarified is which of the three identical ships it is.

To do this, we look at the whereabouts of the three express ships:

Express I

May 9, 1945: launched from Hela and sank on the way west

Express I (14.3.11) Heckrad-S/P; Antoni Hagens, Bremen; 19.. Bremer Schleppschiffahrt; 1940 Joh. Ick, Danzig; 28.3.45 VTS, Haff-Fl.; 9.5.45 † von Hela nach Westen laufend / ...

Source: GRÖNER - Die deutschen Kriegsschiffe Band 8

Express II

1945: blown up in Danzig by German pioneers.

Der Hinterrad-Frachtdampfer "Express II" ist bei Danzig-Heubude von Pionieren gesprengt worden. (Vgl. A., Ziffer 4). Beschreibung und Bewertung dieses Schiffes sind aus der hier beigefügten Werttaxe des vereidigten Sachverständigen F. Zuckschwerdt ersichtlich.

Letter from the J. Ick shipping company to the Kiel Navy Office June 12, 1945 [9]

"The rear-wheel cargo steamer "Express II" was blown up by pioneers near Danzig-Heubude."

Express III

1949: Martin Jansen, Westrhauderfehn, HO Leer - Germany

Unambiguous identification by letter from the shipping company:

B. Unmittelbare Schadensursachen.
Der Hinterrad-Frachtdampfer "Express I" ist auf See bei Möens untergegangen. Ein besonderes Aktenstück hierüber habe ich der KMD Kiel am 26.6. zugeleitet.
Der Hinterrad-Frachtdampfer "Express II" ist bei Danzig-Heubude von Pionieren gesprengt worden. (Vgl. A., Ziffer 4). Beschreibung und Bewertung dieses Schiffes sind aus der hier beigefügten Werttaxe des vereidigten Sachverständigen F. Zuckschwerdt ersichtlich.

Letter dated July 12, 1945 from the Ick shipping company to the Kiel Navy Office

It is mentioned here that **Express I** sank at "**Möens**". So exactly where our wreck lies. So there is no doubt that our wreck is this ship.

Wrong identification: steam wheeler HANS

It has long been suspected (at least since 2001) that the wreck was the sternwheeler tug steamer HANS Ex. Lauenburg IV. However, at 38m, this was significantly smaller and narrower.

MODTAGE⁺ 28 NOV. 2004
Revideret dato: 31.12.2001

Hans

GPS pos.: Datum: WGS 84 54°56,941 N 12°38,376 E Datum: 54°56,93 N 12°38,30 E	DECCA pos.: Kæde: N E Type: N E PG: N E	Angivet pos. ved forlis: Type: N E PG: N E	Geografisk område: 3 sm øst for Men, Danmark Top / bunddybde: 23
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Havn: Freddy Breitenstein

Type: Flodhuldamp-skæbelsk

Kaldesignal: Lauenburg II, Lauenburg, Lauenburg IV

Ex. hjem: ? mid. ? år: 1945

Hjemsted: Memel, Tyskland

Kaptajn: Last: Militært udstyr (flygtninge?)

Alget fra: Memel, Tyskland

Destination: København, Danmark

Nødtелефон:

Alarmering / Psykologhjælp:

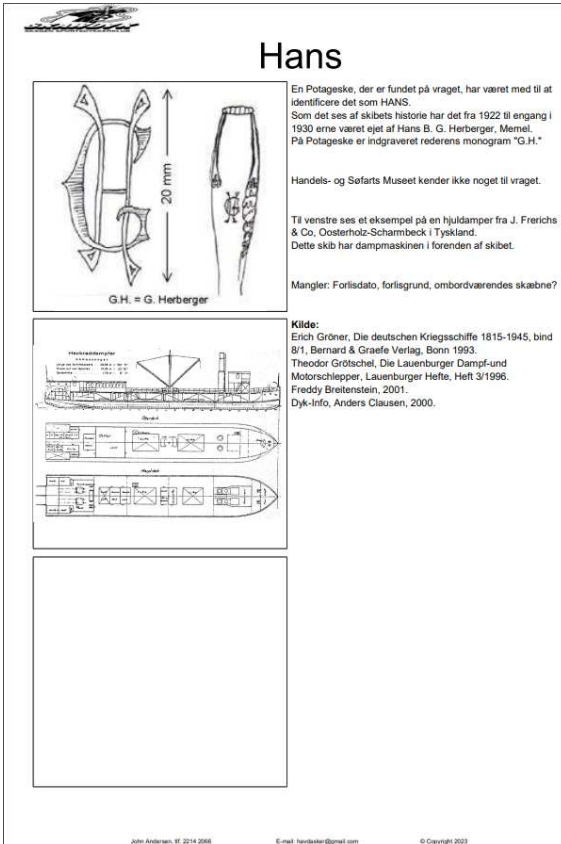
Lokale kontakter: Freddy Breitenstein

Længde ca 54 m **Tegning: Omtrent således som den er afbildet**

Bygget i 1888 hos Aron & Gollnow, Stettin, bygge-nr. 260, ca. 130 t, 38,4 x 4,14/7,49 x 0,75 m, sidehøjde 1,95 m, 1 compound dampmaskine, 1 kessel, 180 hk.

00.00 1888 Leveret til Lauenburger Dampschiffahrts AG, Lauenburg/Elbe, som Lauenburg IV.
00.00 1905 Solgt til Matthias Burmester, Lauenburg/Elbe.
00.00 1914 Solgt til Sachs, Pinsk, hjemhav Thorn/Weichsel, omdøbt til Lauenburg.
00.00 1916 Overtaget af militærisk skibsfartsselskab FECH (Feldseisenbahnen) som Lauenburg II, og indsat i fart på Weichselfloden.
00.00 1922 Solgt til Hans B. G. Herberger, Memel, og omdøbt til HANS.
00.00 1937 Solgt til Jegminat, Memel.
00.00 1944 Brugt til værne (flygtninge) - transporter fra Memel til Pillau, Zoppot og Golenhofen.
00.00 1945 På vej til København sunket 3 sm øst for Men.

Vraget i dag:
Målt på havbunden synes skibet at være 54 m langt, men det kan skyldes at skroget er meget nedbrudt. Der ligger Mauser-riller type 98K og DKW motorcykler på vraket. Maskinen, kessel og skovthjul, der placeret i hver side i agterskibet, står stadig intakt tilbage.



Source: John Andersen, Henrik Absalon

LAUENBURG IV

(7)

Typ: Seitenraddampfer, geb. 1888, Bnr. 260, Aron & Gollnow, Stettin.
Lpp. 36,00; LÜA. 38,10; BSpt. 4,15; BÜA. 7,50; H 1,95; T 0,75;
Zweizylinderexpansionsmaschine mit Einspritzkondensation, 180 PS,
1 Kessel 66 m² HF.

1905 verkauft an Matthias Burmester. (8)
1914 zur Weichsel verkauft, Eigentümer Sachs in Pinsk, Heimattort nach Thorn verlegt.
1916 Einsatz beim AB. Chef des Feldeisenbahnwesens SGN Bromberg und SGN Warschau.
1922 an Hans B.G. Herberger in Memel verkauft.
193? an die Firma Jegminat in Memel verkauft, Name HANS.
November bis Dezember 1944 bei Räumungstransporten um Memel eingesetzt.

Source: Die lauenburger Dampf-und Motorschlepper (Archiv Henrik Absalon)

HANS (1888, Aron & Gollnow, Stettin, 260) 180 PSi; 36,6 m Lpp., 38,1 m LÜA., 4,15/7,50 m B.; 0,75 m Tfg., 1,95 m SH; ZDR; erb. f. Lauenburger Dampfschiffahrts AG, Lauenburg/E., **LAUENBURG IV**; 1905 Matthias Burmester, Lauenburg/E.; 1914 Sachs, Pinsk/RUS, HO: Thorn, **LAUENBURG**; 1916 Schiffsahrtsabt. FECH, **LAUENBURG II**; 1922 Hans B.G. Herberger, Memel, **HANS**; 1923 bei Nochim Heller, Pinsk/PL; 193. Jegminat, Memel; 11. – 12. 1944 Räumungstransporte Memel; + 1945 3 sm östlich Mön mit Wehrmachts-gut {54°56,941 N/ 12°38,376 O (GPS)}

This incorrect assumption is also listed in the volume: Inland vessels between East Prussia and Silesia by Bernd Schwarz. (Binnenschiffe zwischen Ostpreussen und Schlesien von Bernd Schwarz)

The circumstances in May 1945 - shortly before the end of the war

Express I left the Hela Peninsula near Danzig on May 9, 1945. The conditions there were dramatic, many people tried to escape from the Russian forces, but there was a lack of ships. At the beginning of May, 77,000 people were waiting to be evacuated on the peninsula.

Lage Ostsee am 5. Mai 1945, 0800 Uhr

1.) Östl. Ostsee:

Landfront auf Nehrung 500 m breit, SW Kahlberg. Hela Ruhe.
Am 2. und 3. insgesamt nur 1 Dampfer von Hela nach Westen.
Durch Schiffsmangel Menschenstau auf Hela 3.5. auf 77.000
Nichtkämpfer angewachsen.

- 1.) Wenn wir in Nordwestdeutschland, Dänemark und Holland die
Waffen niederlegen, so geschieht es, weil der Kampf gegen
die Westmächte seinen Sinn verloren hat. Im Osten jedoch
geht der Kampf weiter, um möglichst viele deutsche Menschen
vor der Bolschewisierung und Versklavung zu retten.

Radio message from the Naval War Command on May 7, 1945

Zusatz für H.Gr. Kurland und AOK Ostpreußen:

Alle bis zum 9. Mai 1945, 01.00 Uhr gegebenen Möglich-
keiten zum Abtransport über See sind unter äußerster Anspannung
aller Kräfte auszunutzen. Alle Schiffe müssen bis zu diesem
Zeitpunkt ausgelaufen sein.

gez. Dönitz
OKW/WFSt Nr. 89003/45 g.K.Chefs.

From the war diary of the Naval War Command on May 9, 1945:

Zusammenstellung der Rücktransporte durch MOK Ost, 9.5.1945 (Abschrift)

Marineoberkommando Ost
FS

Mürwik, den 9. Mai 1945

Zusammenstellung Rücktransporte

1) Nach Westen

aus den Häfen Königsberg, Pillau, Danzig, Gotenhafen und
Hela

Flüchtlg.:
679.541

Verwundete:
345.477

Soldaten:
181.775

insgesamt: 1.025.018 Menschen
=====

Wound transport

EXPRESS I and EXPRESS III were confiscated by the Navy since March 1945 and used as refugee and wounded transport.

Captain of EXPRESS III Josef Winker wrote in an affidavit on June 22, 1945:

"On Monday, March 26th, at 5 a.m., I drove the ship to Danzig Heubude to get a little out of the fire zone. At about 10 a.m. a medical officer appeared on board and declared the ship confiscated for the transport of wounded and refugees. By 1 p.m., the steamer "Express III" was fully loaded with seriously and slightly wounded people, as well as civilian refugees; The seriously wounded lay below deck on the load of wood; the others were spread out on the deck and in the cabin. Hela was given to me as a travel destination. It later emerged that the Navy Office in Danzig, Mr. Korv. Captain Steinkraus, led the entire removal operation with various river vessels, including the steamer "Express III", so that I had to follow his further orders.

After arriving in Hela, for the first time on the evening of March 26th, I was busy several times in the following days picking up refugees and wounded Wehrmacht members in the shuttle service between Ost-Neufähr and Hela-Staatshafen, as well as between Hela-Hafen and Hela-Reede. I received the respective orders over a number of days from Marine Lieutenant Schulte from KMD Hela and later from Captain Möhring from Vehicle Operations at the Kriegsmarine Arsenal Hela. During this operation in the Hela area, the steamer sustained minor damage from bomb fragments and gunfire from Russian aircraft on several occasions. The wheel arch was severely dented by the action of the sea. When a naval ferry ran astern of the steamer "Express III" and bent the rudder floor, the steam rowing engine suffered an accident that could not be repaired on Hela, which reduced its maneuverability by around 50%. From around April 15th, units of the Kriegsmarine, the anti-aircraft gun and the Wehrmacht, began to plunder the wood load on the steamer "Express III" on a daily basis. In the presence of officers who told me that the wooden floorboards were needed for bunker construction and splinter protection on other ships, the entire cargo, apart from some oak lumber, was gradually taken away from me without ever giving a receipt."

Kriegsmarinedienststelle Danzig

z. Zt. L ü b e c k

Gr. Burgstraße

Anbei überreiche ich zwei Rechnungen über Vergütung für die Inanspruchnahme meiner beiden Güter- und Schleppdampfer "Express I" und "Express III". Die Inanspruchnahme geschah ohne Übernahmeverhandlung im feindlichen Feuer bei Danzig - Heubude, durch Herrn Korvettenkapitän S t e i n k r a u s s am 25. März ds.Js. Vom 26.3. bis 2.4. befand sich auch der Unterzeichnete an Bord dieser Schiffe, die ab 25. März von Plehnendorf, Östl. Neufähr, Bohnsack usw. Verwundete und Flüchtlinge nach Hela fuhren und auf der Reede von Hela als Ab- leichterungsfahrzeuge für Kriegsmarinefahrzeuge, die Verwundete zu den Seetransportschiffen brachten, dienten. Am 1.4. erklärte Herr Fregattenkapitän B a r t e l auf der Dienststelle der KMD in Hela dem Unterzeichneten, dass meine beiden Schiffe Express I und III entgegen meinem Wunsche um Überführung nach einem Hafen der west- lichen Ostsee noch weiterhin im Einsatz bei Hela zu bleiben hätten, bis keine Verwundeten mehr zu verschiffen seien.

Source: [9]

Invoices from the shipping company Johannes Ick - Danzig (Lübeck alternative location) to the Danzig Navy Office (also Lübeck alternative location) for the use of the steamers I and III to transport wounded and refugees between the Danzig coast and the Hela peninsula.

II. Ausfertigung.

Johannes Ick
Spedition u. Schifffahrt
Danzig und Gotenhafen
Ausweichstelle LÜBECK

Lübeck, am 18. April 1945
Foschellhaus
Beckergrube 38
Fernruf 25981, App. 54

An die
Kriegsmarinedienststelle Danzig
z.Zt. Lübeck
Gr. Burgstraße

RECHNUNG

Über Vergütung für Inanspruchnahme meines Güter- u. Schleppdampfers
"Express I" (349 Tonnen, 185 PS) zum Transport von Verwun-
deten und Flüchtlingen zwischen der Danziger Küste und Hela.

Vergütung für 30 Tage vom 25.3. bis 23.4.45
zu Rmk 83,- je Tag Rmk. 2.490,--

Kohlenbestand bei der Übernahme
15 tons zu Rmk 28,30 je To. " 424,50

Heuer der Schiffbesatzung:

Schiffsführer Winker	375,- + 20,- = 395,-
Maschinist Adamski	355,- + 20,- = 375,-
Steuermann Stronk	325,- + 20,- = 345,-
Heizer Gizewski	185,- + 20,- = 205,-
Matrose Cichowlas	185,- + 20,- = 205,-
Matrose Fijalkowski	185,- + 20,- = 205,-
	Rmk 1720,-
+ 16 % Sozialpauschale	275,20
	Rmk. 1.995,20
	zu Ihren Lasten!

Ich bitte um Überweisung des Betrages auf mein Konto Nr. 9019
bei der Dresdner Bank, Filiale Lübeck.

angem. 20.4.45
28. J. 20/4

II. Ausfertigung.

JOHANNES ICK
Spedition u. Schifffahrt
Danzig und Gotenhafen
Ausweichstelle LÜBECK

Lübeck, am 18. April 1945
Foschellhaus
Beckergrube 38
Fernruf 25981, App. 54

An die
Kriegsmarinedienststelle Danzig
z.Zt. Lübeck
Gr. Burgstraße

RECHNUNG

Über Vergütung für Inanspruchnahme meines Güter- u. Schleppdampfers
"Express III" (347 Tonnen, 165 PS) zum Transport von Verwun-
deten u. Flüchtlingen zwischen der Danziger Küste und Hela.

Vergütung für 30 Tage vom 25.3. bis 23.4.45
zu Rmk 83,- je Tag Rmk. 2.490,--

Kohlenbestand bei der Übernahme
20 tons zu Rmk 28,30 je To. " 566,--

Heuer der Schiffbesatzung:

Schiffsführer Czuba	375 + 20 + 20 = 415,-
Maschinist Puczynski	355 + 20 + 10 = 385,-
Steuermann Zarembski	325 = 325,-
Heizer Ciscia	195 = 195,-
Matrose Blachowski	185 + 20 = 205,-
Matrose Kawalsinski	185 = 185,-
	Rmk 1710,-
+ 16 % Sozialpauschale	272,60
	Rmk. 1.982,60
	zu Ihren Lasten!

Ich bitte um Überweisung des Betrages auf mein Konto Nr. 9019
bei der Dresdner Bank, Filiale Lübeck.

angem. 20.4.45
28. J. 20/4

Source: [8]

It is certain that the ship names in the two invoices were swapped because Czuba was the captain on Express I and not III. And Josef Winker and engineer Adamski belonged to Express III, according to Capt. Winker's statements

The ship's crew is listed in the document as follows:

	Express III	Express I
Captain	Josef Winker	Alfons Czuba
Machinist	Adamski	Puczynski
Helmsman	Stronk	Zarembski
Stoker	Gizewski	Ciscia
Sailor	Cichowlas	Blachowski
Sailor	Fijalkowski	Kawalsinski



Besatzung von EXPRESS 3 (aus: Dasenbrock, Stadt Land Weser Fluß).

8.-9. May 1945

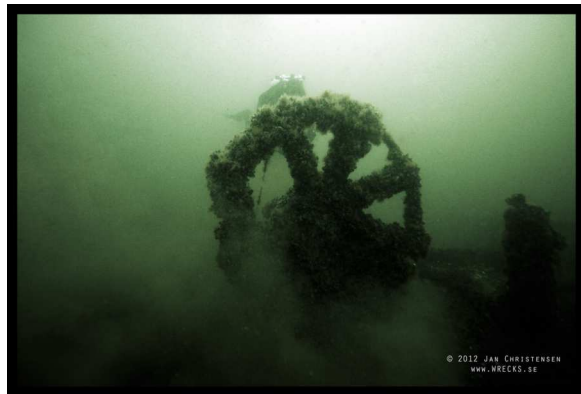
On May 8, 1945, the high command of the German Wehrmacht signed the declaration of surrender. This meant that the ships with refugees had to have left the Hela peninsula by 1:00 a.m. (midnight English time) on May 9, 1945 at the latest (see radio message from Karl Dönitz - successor to Adolf Hitler).

Findings in the wreck

Danish divers found two motorcycles, (silver?) cutlery and K98 rifles. The K98 was the German army's standard rifle during World War II.



Cutlery and K98 found by Danish divers in 2010. Source: [Link](#)



Motorcycle and steering wheel - photos 2012 by Jan Christensen - www.wrecks.se

Whereabouts of Express III

We know that the sister ship, which also served as a casualty and refugee transport, also left Hela on May 8, 1945. A company of 300 men fled west with the ships and was left behind in the Danish port of Præstø.

It was then in Copenhagen until September 7th, 1945 and reached Lübeck on September 12th.

Captain of EXPRESS III Josef Winker wrote in his affidavit on June 22, 1945:

Am 4. Mai lag ich mit Dampfer "Express III" im Kriegshafen in Hela, als Oberleutnant Bischof von der Helaer Küstenflak mitteilte, daß er mit seiner Einheit, ca. 300 Mann, den Dampfer "Express III" dazu verwenden wolle, sich von Hela nach einem westlichen Hafen abzusetzen; ich brauche nicht an Bord zu bleiben, er habe volle Schiffsbesatzung. Ich fragte Herrn Oberleutnant Bischof, ob die Inanspruchnahme im Einvernehmen mit der Kriegsmarine-Dienststelle stehe, worauf er mir erwiderte, daß er diese Angelegenheit bereits mit der Kriegsmarine geregelt habe. Ich konnte leider Niemand von der KMD mehr ausfindig machen. Das Schiff wurde vom Kriegshafen verholt und zwar durch die neue Besatzung (nur der bisherige Maschinist Adamski blieb an Bord) um die Landzunge herum zu einer, auf der Nordseite der Halbinsel gebauten Landungsbrücke.

"On May 4th I was in the naval harbor in Hela with the steamer "Express III" when First Lieutenant Bishop from the Helaer Coastal Flak informed me that he and his unit, around 300 men, wanted to use the steamer "Express III" to get away from... to drop Hela off at a western port. I don't need to stay on board because he has a full crew. I asked Mr. First Lieutenant Bischof whether the claim was in agreement with the Navy office, to which he replied that he had already settled this matter with the Navy. Unfortunately I couldn't find anyone from the KMD anymore. The ship was moved from the naval port by the new crew (only the previous engineer Adamski remained on board) around the headland to a jetty built on the north side of the peninsula." [9]

Captain Josef Winker assumed that the ship sank:

5.) Vom Dampfer "Express III" habe ich nie wieder etwas gesehen oder gehört. Ich halte es für ausgeschlossen, daß er bei dem, in jeden Tagen auf See herrschenden, Stürmen eine Seereise ausgehalten haben kann.

"I never saw or heard from the steamer EXPRESS III again. I consider it impossible that he could have endured a sea voyage in the storms that prevailed at sea in those days."

Express III was initially reported lost, but was then found in the port of Præstø (Denmark):

Petr. Verlustmeldung über meine 20 Schiffe.
 In meinem an die KMD Kiel an 25. v.Mts. gerichteten Schreiben, von dem ich annehme, dass es an Sie weitergeleitet worden ist, teilte ich mit, dass von meinen als verloren gemeldeten Schiffen ein einziges Schiff, und zwar der Dampfer "E x p r e s s III" im Hafen Præstø in Dänemark aufgefunden worden ist. Nunmehr kann ich Ihnen berichten, dass dieses Schiff auf meine Bitte hin auf Veranlassung der britischen Dienststelle "Ministry of War Transports" Lübeck, durch die Kriegsmarinedienststelle Kopenhagen am 4. September von Kopenhagen nach Lübeck gesandt und mir hier am 13. ds. übergeben worden ist.

Loss report from the shipping company dated September 17, 1945 [9]

"...I inform you that of my ships that were lost, only one ship, namely the steamer "EXPRESS III", has been found in the port of Præstø in Denmark".

The ship was then brought to Copenhagen, where it sailed on September 4th, 1945 towards Lübeck, where it was handed over on September 13th, 1945.

At the time, Captain of Express III Alfred Fuchs complained about the partially 'robbed and damaged' condition. From 1949 the ship belonged to the Jansen shipyard (Martin Jansen), Westrhauderfehn / Leer

A b s c h r i f t .
Bericht
 des Handelsschiff-Kapitäns Alfred F u c h s auf D! "Express III"

 Am 4. September 1945 empfang ich von der Kriegsmarine-Dienststelle in K o p e n h a g e n den Auftrag, das der Reederei Johannes Ick, Danzig, gehörige Flußschiff "Express III", welches in Kopenhagen lag, nach L ü b e c k zu überführen und dortselbst der Firma Johannes Ick, Ausweichstelle Lübeck, zu übergeben.
 Mit einer am 1.9.45 an Bord genommenen Besatzung von 1 Maschisten, 2 Heizern, 2 Matrosen, 1 Köchin und 1 Stewardess fuhr ich das Schiff am 7. September aus Kopenhagen und traf am 12. September wohlbehalten in Lübeck ein. Am 13. September erfolgte eine Revision durch die Britische Hafenbehörde in Lübeck und danach die Übergabe an die Reederei Johannes Ick.
 Das Schiff befand sich bei meiner Übernahme in Kopenhagen in teilweise beraubtem und beschädigtem Zustande. Am Inventar war an Bord:

Source: Militärarchiv Freiburg [8]

Captain Alfons Czuba

In the Freiburg Military Archives [8] we found documents from the sister ship Express III. Even after the end of the war, the Johannes Ick shipping company billed the Hamburg Navy Office for damage to the ship and missing inventory in September 1945. In a letter, Alfons Czuba from Lübeck writes that he was captain of the Express I and that ships I - III were equipped in exactly the same way. He also writes that the ships were lying next to each other in Hela (Gdansk) until May 8, 1945.

The bill for 5,475 Reichsmarks was paid in February 1946.

Liste des fehlenden Inventars auf D. "Express III"
bei der Ankunft in L ü b e c k am 12. September 1945

Ich, der unterschriebene Schiffsführer Alfons Czuba aus Danzig, früherer Schiffsführer auf D. Express I, war in H e l a in der Zeit vom 27. März bis 7. Mai d. J. fast täglich auf dem neben meinem Dampfer liegenden Schwesterschiff "Express III" und kenne daher Umfang und Beschaffenheit des auf D. "Express III" zur Zeit der Inanspruchnahme durch die Kriegsmarine vorhanden gewesenen Inventars. Im übrigen waren die Express-Dampfer I, II und III völlig gleichartig ausgerüstet, sodass ich auch allein aus der Kenntnis des auf D. "Express I" befindlichen Inventars ohne weiteres darüber im Bilde bin, was von dem Inventar in der Zeit zwischen Abfahrt von Hela am 8. Mai bis zur Ankunft in Lübeck am 12. September verschwunden ist.

Es fehlen:

- 1 Personenling (Lukensplan über Laderaum I) 6,40 x 6 m
- 1 dto. " " " II 6,50 x 6 m
- 1 dto. " " " III 5,40 x 6 m
- 1 dto. " " " 5,60 x 2,70 m
- 1 Schleppbau-Drabt von ca. 200 m Länge, 18 mm ϕ
- 1 hölzernes Weiboot mit flachem Boden, Länge ca. 7 m, Breite in der Mitte am Boden 1,30 m, Tragfähigkeit 1000 kg
- 2 Bootstälchen
- 1 transportable Motor-Bergungspumpe
- 2 Handpumpen für die Laderäume, 2,90 m lang, 10 cm ϕ
- 1 zerlegbares Ruderhaus, 2,50 m hoch, 2,00 x 1,10 m im Geviert
- 1 Ankerkettel von ca. 45 m Länge
- 4 Boockhalen an 8 m langen Stangen
- 1 hölzerner Lukendeckel über Raum II
- 7 Fensterscheiben 80 x 50 cm
- 1 Feldschmiede
- 1 Schraubstock
- 1 Top-Laterne

ferner:

sämtliche für 6 Besatzungsmitglieder von der Reederei s.Zt. angeschaffte Ess-, Trink-, Koch- und Wasch-Geschirre, mindestens 4 verzinkte Eimer, div. Schlagprüten, Besen, Schrubber etc.

1 Feuerlösch-Schlauch, ca. 50 m lang, mit Spritzmundstück,

ferner:

sämtliche Schlafdecken, Bettbezüge, Tischdecken, Gardinen, Petroleumtischlampen, Wandspiegel, Schiffshuhren und div. Kleinigkeiten aus dem Räjuten des Schiffsführers und des Maschinisten wie aus den in Vorderschiff gelegenen 2 Mannschaftsräumen, die 4 Kojen enthalten.

Bei der Schiffsankunft feststellbare Beschädigungen:

Bei meiner oberflächlichen Besichtigung (Schiffsboden wurde nicht untersucht) stellte ich folgende Beschädigungen an und im Schiff fest:

- 55 qm Fußbodenbretter sind zerbrochen und müssen erneuert werden
- 21 Lukendeckel sind beschädigt und müssen angefliekt werden,
- 1 Radkasten-Abweiser, ca. 7 m lang, 16 x 15 cm stark, ist weggebrochen und muss erneuert werden, dabei sind die 2 eis. Halter des Abweisers auszurichten und zu befestigen.

Die Reeling ist in einer Länge von ca. 3,70 m verbogen und muss gerichtet werden.

b. wenden!

4 qm Holzbelag an Deck sind zerbrochen und müssen erneuert werden.
 Das Ruderblatt ist am Ende ca. 50 cm lang umgebogen; falls Ausrichten nicht gelingt, muss abgeschnitten, angesetzt und angeschweisst werden.
 10 Geländerstützen sind verbogen und müssen gerichtet werden,
 6 fehlende Geländerstützen sind zu ersetzen
 Von der Geländerkette fehlen ca. 42 m und müssen ersetzt werden.
 Der Schornstein hat starke Beschädigungen im mittleren Blechsteif und droht an der Stelle durchzubrechen.
 Die Dampfdruckmaschine funktioniert nicht, muss repariert werden.

Lübeck, den 15. September 1945.

Verbehaltenlich Ergänzung und Berichtigung,
 da sich am Bord weder Inventarverzeichnis noch Schiffs- oder Kesselpapiere mehr befinden.

Alfons Czuba
Schiffsführer

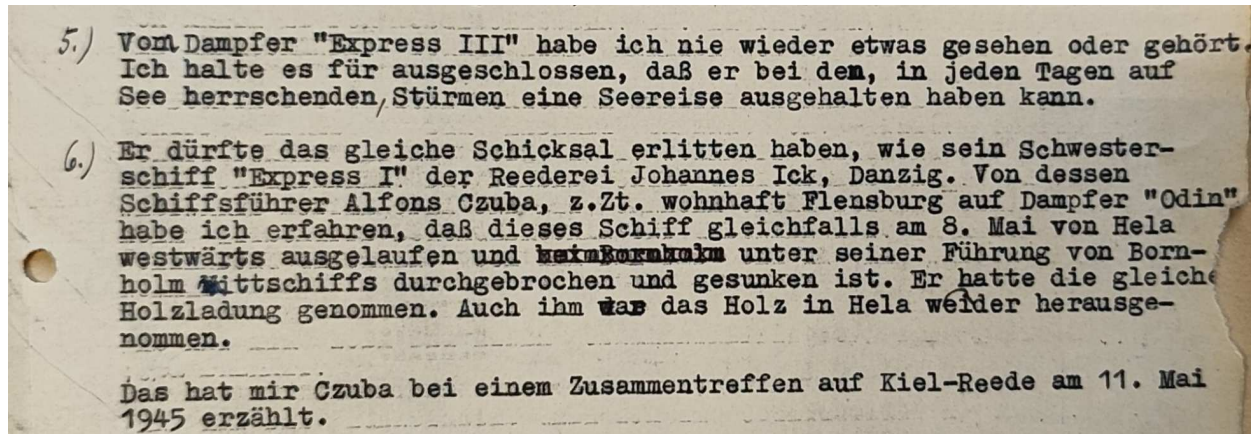
Source: Militärarchiv Freiburg RM 102/873

The sinking

Two places of damage can still be seen on the wreck today, which could have led to the sinking. Apart from a brief statement from the captain, we found no concrete description from an eyewitness.

Captain's statement

Captain of EXPRESS III Josef Winker wrote in his statement on June 22, 1945:



I never saw or heard from the steamer EXPRESS III again. I consider it impossible that he could have endured a sea voyage in the storms that prevailed at sea in those days. It probably suffered the same fate as its sister ship "EXPRESS I".

I learned from its skipper Alfons Czuba that this ship also sailed westward from Hela on May 8th and sank amidships ~~near Bornholm~~ under his command. [...] Czuba told me this at a meeting on Kiel-Reede on May 11, 1945.

It is interesting that the original phrase 'near Bornholm' was crossed out and replaced by the unusual phrase 'von Bornholm'. So 'Near Bornholm' is wrong. This fits with our wreck find, because we know that the ship did not sink near or off Bornholm, but 150km further west.

Weather

The ship was designed for inland waters and not at sea.

Captain Josef Winker mentioned the weather: "I consider it impossible that the steamer could have endured a sea voyage in the storms that prevailed at sea in those days."

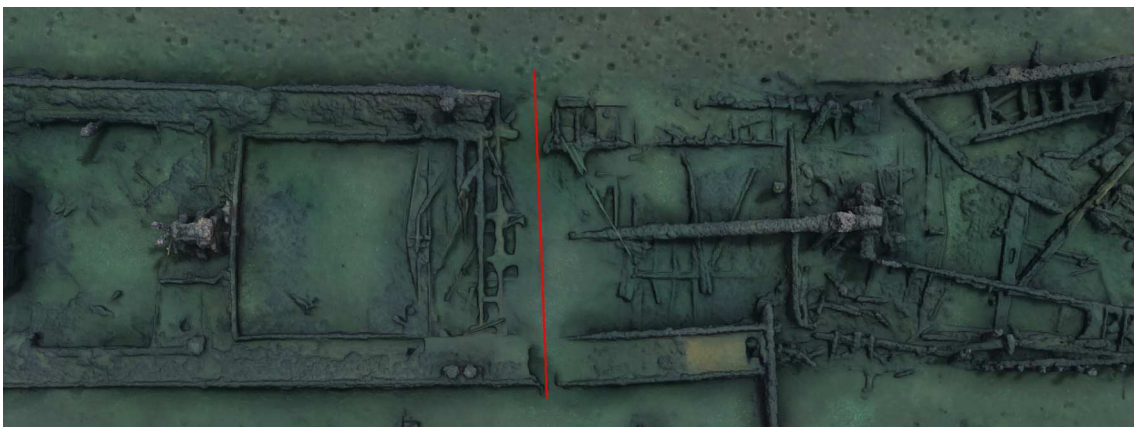
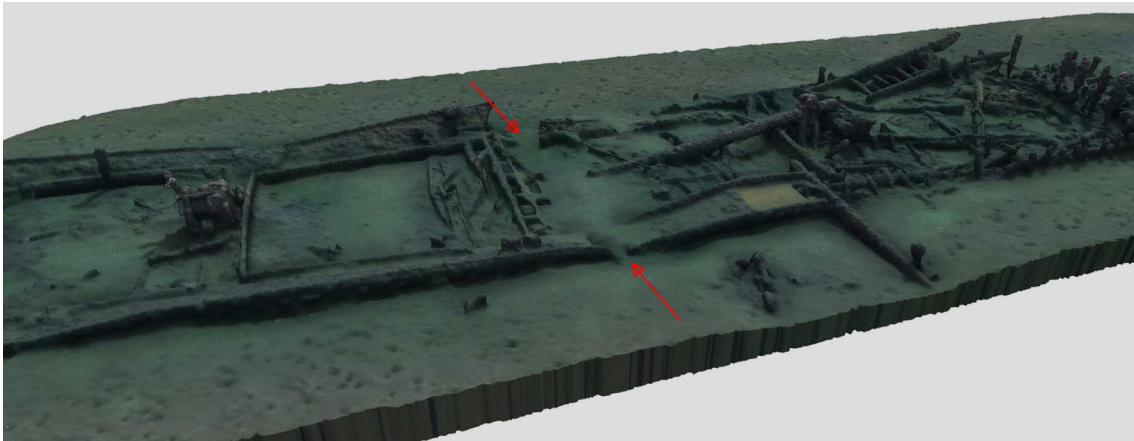
Damage to the rear area

The wreck is significantly damaged in the stern. On the starboard side, the side wall, the bollard and the deck including the cargo hold hatch are pushed towards the middle of the ship. This could have been caused by an explosion or collision, for example. However, it is unclear whether this damage occurred after the sinking, for example due to an anchor or trawl.



Damage amidships

The wreck shows a break amidships behind hold 2. This corresponds to the captain's statements that the ship had broken through.



Bruch mittschiffs

Summary/Conclusion

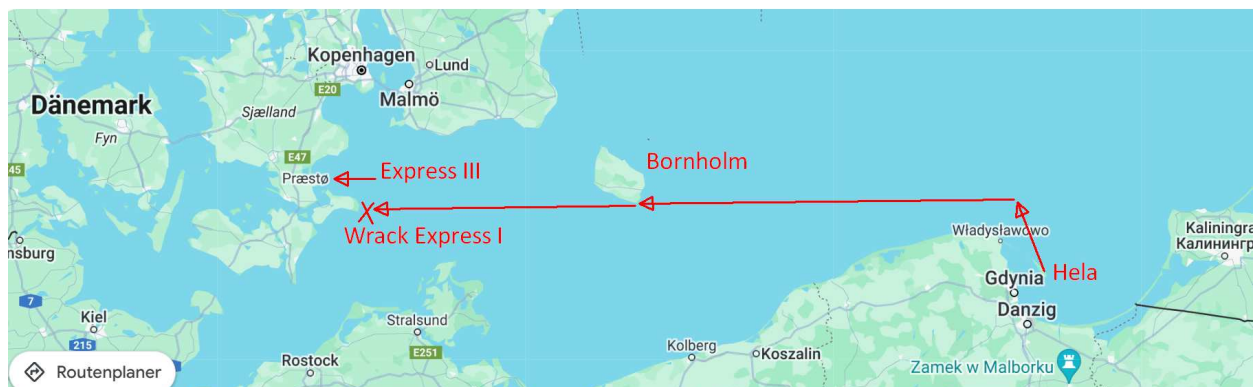
Comparing the wreck with the drawing leads to the conclusion that our wreck must clearly be one of the three sternwheel freight steamers of the Express series built by the Atlaswert. All the details of the ship fit: the basic structure with the engine and boiler aft. The shape and position of the helm, the loading hatches, the folding mast. Even the arrangement of the bollards is exactly the same.

This type of ship was very unusual even for its time and the arrangement of the boiler and engine in the stern had an unfavorable effect on the weight distribution, which had to be compensated for by a ballast tank in the bow. For this reason, this design did not become widespread, especially since paddle steam drives were completely replaced by screw drives anyway. Of the sternwheelers in this series, only EXPRESS I is considered sunk and missing. EXPRESS II was blown up by German troops in Danzig and EXPRESS III was sold to Leer in 1949.

In the military archives in Freiburg and Koblenz [9] we found documents that actually describe the location of our wreck - near the Danish island of Møn - as the place where EXPRESS I sank.

Towards the end of the Second World War (Germany's surrender on May 9, 1945) the conditions were dramatic. The war was lost and the soldiers realized that everything was in vain. Now 1.5 million Germans had to be evacuated from what is now Poland. Express I and III served as refugee and wounded transports on rivers and in protected harbors. Both started on May 8, 1945 from Hela (peninsula near Danzig) heading west. The German coastal anti-aircraft unit used the steamers to move away from Hela with around 300 men towards a western port in order to avoid ending up in Soviet prison camps. Either the soldiers were dropped off on the island of Bornholm, or they wanted to flee to Denmark.

In a document [9] we found references to 'weather conditions that were too bad for these ships'. The paddle steamers, designed as river steamers, were not designed for the conditions on the high seas. Captain Czuba testified that he was the ship's master of EXPRESS I when it was breached amidships. The longitudinal stresses caused by waves are much higher on the high seas than on rivers, which caused the ship to break through in the middle. In addition, the ship did not have enough freeboard, so the water from the waves went over the deck and into the holds. The sister ship EXPRESS III was left in the Danish port of Præstø, which is just a few kilometers from where the wreck was found.



The project: Marine Research Germany



The investigation of the wreck took place during the one-week diving expedition (12-18.8.2024) by the Marine Research Germany project under the leadership of Reinhard Öser and Ingo Oppelt. The tall ship RYVAR served as a diving vessel. There were 27 divers, 2 crew and a cook on board.

Link to the project page: <http://www.marine-research-germany.de/>

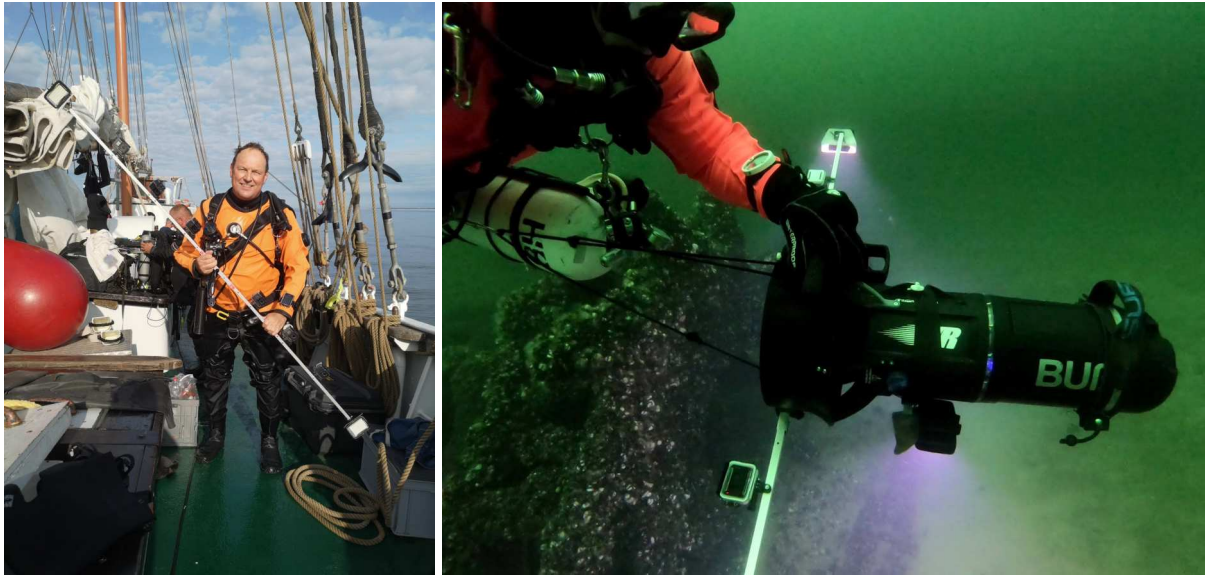
The following wrecks were dived:

- SV Gaarden
- SS Bonita
- SS Ares
- SS Minos (Helfried Bismarck)
- Unknown Paddle steamer (dieser Raddampfer)
- MV Zeearend

The wrecks have all been digitized. The links on the author's website here:

<https://dive3d.eu/baltic-sea-2024/>

Author



The author with the self-developed camera frame for photogrammetry on the RYVAR and on the wreck of the sternwheeler.

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Latest version of the report and German version:

<https://dive3d.eu/docs/berichte/> .

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