



Twisting the Dragon's Tail H.M.S. Vindictive

H.M.S. Vindictive was an Arrogant-class protected cruiser built at H.M. Dockyard Portsmouth. She was launched in December 1897 and commissioned in July 1900, entering service with the Mediterranean Squadron. The *Arrogant* class was designed to operate with the main battle fleet; being intended to finish off crippled enemy ships by ramming, and were originally described as "Fleet Rams".

H.M.S. Vindictive (as built):	Armament (1900):
Displacement: 5,750 tons	4 × QF 6-inch (152 mm) guns
Length: 342 ft. (104 m)	6 × 4.7-inch (120 mm) guns
Beam: 57 ft. 6 in (17.5m)	8 × 12-pounder (3-inch, 76 mm) guns
Speed: 19 knots (35 km/h; 22 mph)	3 × 3-pounder (47 mm) guns
	3 × 18 inch (450 mm) torpedo tubes

She was refitted between 1909 and 1910 for service in the 3rd Division of the Home Fleet, during which the 4.7" guns were replaced by additional 6" guns.

Obsolescent by the outbreak of First World War, in August 1914 she was assigned to the 9th Cruiser Squadron and captured the German merchantmen *Schlesien* and *Slawentzitz* on 7 August and 8 September respectively. In 1915 she was stationed on the southeast coast of South America and from 1916 to late 1917 she served in the White Sea.

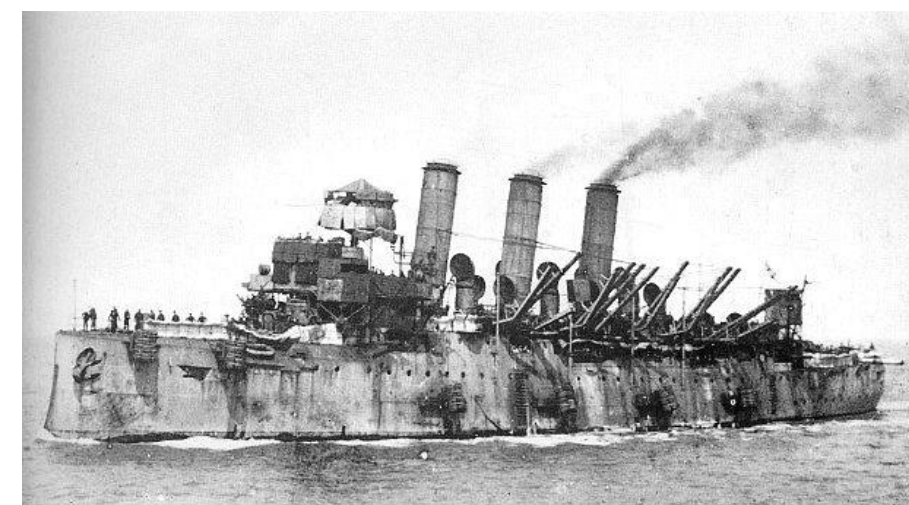
Early in 1918 she was extensively modified at H.M. Dockyard Chatham in preparation for the Zeebrugge Raid. She was fitted with an 11-inch howitzer on her quarter-deck and two 7.5 inch howitzers for engaging the German guns at the shore end of the Mole and for firing on the locks and seaplane base. In addition, she was provided with two large fixed flame throwers. In the foretop there were two pom-poms and six Lewis guns for firing over the Mole parapet, to help the assault. Parts of the upper works were protected by special splinter mats. She retained two 6-inch guns on either side of the upper deck, and had three pom-poms, ten Lewis guns and sixteen Stokes mortars on the port side.

In addition to her usual complement, she embarked Royal Marine gunners to man the supplementary armament, and a large raiding party comprising of two companies of the 4th Battalion, Royal Marine Light Infantry, along with two "companies" of seamen raiders.

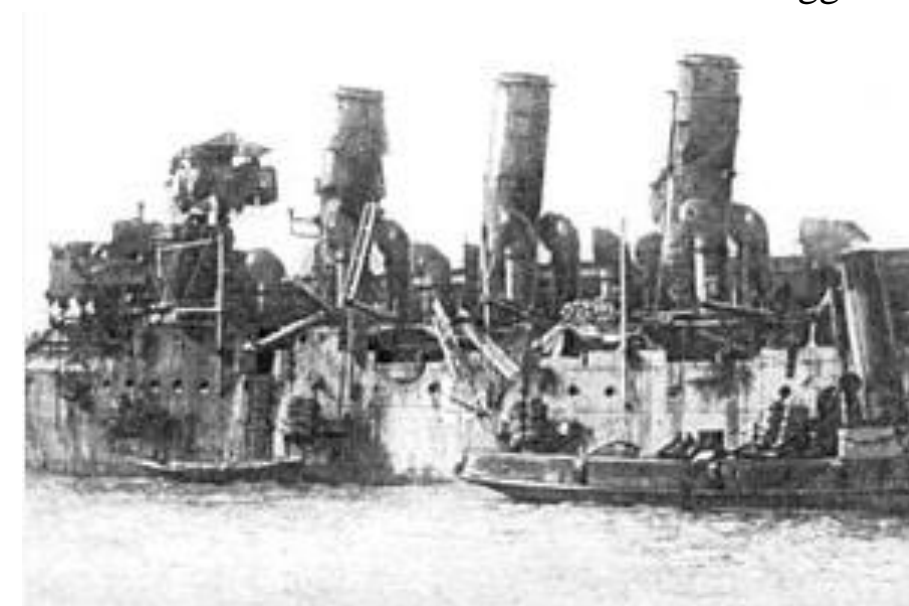
On 23 April 1918 she was in fierce action at Zeebrugge when she went alongside the mole, and her upperworks were badly damaged by gunfire.

Her Captain, Commander Alfred Carpenter, was awarded a Victoria Cross (selected by ballot) for his actions during the raid.

She was sunk as a blockship at Ostend during the Second Ostend Raid on 10 May 1918. The wreck was raised on 16 August 1920 and subsequently broken up. The bow section has been preserved in Ostend harbour serving as a memorial. One of H.M.S. Vindictive's 7.5-inch howitzers (part of the modifications for the raid) was acquired and preserved by the Imperial War Museum.



H.M.S. Vindictive as modified for the Zeebrugge raid



H.M.S. Vindictive after the Zeebrugge raid