



Jonathan Bird's Blue World

Episode 10 • Exploring the Prinz Eugen • Study Guide

Once the pride of the German Navy, the Prinz Eugen is a 700 foot long heavy cruiser which was used by the U.S. as a test target for not one but two atom bombs at Bikini atoll. Today, at the bottom of the ocean, the radiation levels of the Prinz Eugen are low enough for safe exploration. Jonathan joins historian Mark Miller on a trip to explore this mysterious shipwreck. What they find about the condition of this wreck is surprising. The real question is...what is this German wreck doing in the Pacific with Japanese wrecks in the first place?

Objectives

1. Provides an introduction to the study of history through underwater exploration.
2. Introduces the Bikini atomic bomb testing in the Pacific.
3. Demonstrates the exploration of a World War II era shipwreck.

Questions for before watching the program

1. What would an atom bomb do to a ship?
2. Who were the major players in the Pacific theatre during WWII?
3. What is *Bikini atoll*?
4. Can archaeologists learn about the past by working underwater?

Discussion for after watching the program

1. Find Bikini Atoll on a map. Why do you think atom bomb tests were conducted there?
2. The Bikini atom bomb tests were conducted from Kwajalein Atoll. Find that on a map. How far from Bikini is it? Why so far?
3. How did the *Prinz Eugen* (a German ship) end up at Bikini? Why was it taken to Kwajalein and why did it sink there?
4. What makes wreck diving dangerous and what should divers do when exploring wrecks to be safe?
5. Why is the *Prinz Eugen* easy to find today?
6. How many atomic blasts did the *Prinz Eugen* survive? Do you think they were direct hits? Do some research on-line to find out how the two blasts were delivered.