

Crown Prince Wilhelm and Crown Prince Carol of Romania Visit the Pathfinders (1912)

Abstract

The German Pathfinders [*Pfadfinder*] was a youth organization formed in 1909, by two veterans of the war in Southwest Africa (Dr. Alexander Lion and Captain Maximilian Bayer). This was only one year after British officer Robert Baden-Powell, based on his own experiences in the Boer War, had set up the Scouting movement in Great Britain. Like the Scouts, the Pathfinders was a youth organization for boys aged 12 and older, it was intended to teach its members physical fitness, a sense of responsibility, and scouting skills. Much of the allure of the Pathfinders for the boys was its "colonial frontier freedom," with outdoor activities (away from the city and parental discipline). Yet many of the Pathfinders' activities were structured as pre-military training, as we see in this film, where we see field signaling using a field telephone, a heliograph, and semaphore flags. By 1914, the Pathfinders had 280 branches across Germany with over 60,000 members.

This film footage from 1912 shows Crown Prince Wilhelm (the eldest son of German Emperor Wilhelm II, wearing a spiked helmet) and Crown Prince Carol of Romania (the future King Carol II) visiting a group of Pathfinders in Eichkamp, a district on the western outskirts of Berlin. The sports-loving Wilhelm and his guest, both in uniform, observe the Pathfinders' field exercises and girl Pathfinders' sporting competition.

Carol, a member of the Hohenzollern dynasty, served as an officer in a Prussian guard regiment from 1913 until war broke out in 1914. Initially remaining neutral during the First World War, Romania would eventually enter the war on the side of the Entente in 1916 in order to assert its territorial claims over parts of Austria-Hungary.

Source

Intertitles:

The Crown Prince Visits the Scouts.

Eichkamp (Berlin). The German Crown Prince and Prince Carol of Romania attend the Boy Scouts' exercises.

Exercise to rescue downed pilots.

Inspecting the cable reel telephone.

Source: *Der deutsche Kronprinz bei den Pfadfindern* (archive title), 1912. Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv Filmwerk ID: 15770. <https://digitaler-lesesaal.bundesarchiv.de/video/15770/685579>

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