

= German cruiser Königsberg =

Königsberg was a German light cruiser that was operated between 1929 and April 1940 , including service in World War II . She was the lead vessel of her class and was operated by two German navies , the Reichsmarine and the Kriegsmarine . She had two sister ships , Karlsruhe and Köln . Königsberg was built by the Kriegsmarinewerft in Wilhelmshaven ; she was laid down in April 1926 , launched in March 1927 , and commissioned into the Reichsmarine in April 1929 . She was armed with a main battery of nine 15 cm SK C / 25 guns in three triple turrets and had a top speed of 32 knots (59 km / h ; 37 mph) .

Königsberg served as a training ship for naval cadets throughout the 1930s , and joined the non @-@ intervention patrols during the Spanish Civil War in the late 1930s . After the outbreak of World War II in September 1939 , she laid defensive minefields in the North Sea and then participated in Operation Weserübung , the invasion of Norway in April 1940 . While attacking Bergen , she was badly damaged by Norwegian coastal artillery , and sunk by British bombers the following day in the harbor . The wreck was eventually raised in 1942 and broken up for scrap the following year .

= = Characteristics = =

Königsberg was 174 meters (571 ft) long overall and had a beam of 15 @. @ 2 m (50 ft) and a maximum draft of 6 @. @ 28 m (20 @. @ 6 ft) . She displaced 7 @, @ 700 long tons (7 @, @ 800 t) at full combat load . Her propulsion system consisted of four steam turbines and a pair of 10 @-@ cylinder four @-@ stroke diesel engines . Steam for the turbines was provided by six Marine @-@ type double @-@ ended oil @-@ fired boilers . The ship 's propulsion system provided a top speed of 32 knots (59 km / h ; 37 mph) and a range of approximately 5 @, @ 700 nautical miles (10 @, @ 600 km ; 6 @, @ 600 mi) at 19 knots (35 km / h ; 22 mph) . Königsberg had a crew of 21 officers and 493 enlisted men .

The ship was armed with nine 15 cm SK C / 25 guns mounted in three triple gun turrets . One was located forward , and two were placed in a superfiring pair aft . The rear gun turrets were offset to increase their arc of fire . They were supplied with 1 @, @ 080 rounds of ammunition , for 120 shells per gun . The ship was also equipped with two 8 @. @ 8 cm SK L / 45 anti @-@ aircraft guns in single mounts ; they had 400 rounds of ammunition each . Königsberg also carried four triple torpedo tube mounts located amidships ; they were supplied with twenty @-@ four 50 cm (20 in) torpedoes . She was also capable of carrying 120 naval mines . The ship was protected by an armored deck that was 40 mm (1 @. @ 6 in) thick amidships and an armored belt that was 50 mm (2 @. @ 0 in) thick . The conning tower had 100 mm (3 @. @ 9 in) thick sides .

= = Service history = =

Königsberg was ordered as " Cruiser B " and given the temporary name Ersatz Thetis , since she was intended to replace the old cruiser Thetis . She was laid down at the Kriegsmarinewerft in Wilhelmshaven on 12 April 1926 and launched on 26 March 1927 . She was commissioned into the Reichsmarine on 17 April 1929 . After her commissioning , the ship was assigned as the flagship of the reconnaissance force for the German fleet . She thereafter conducted a series of training cruises for naval cadets and made numerous goodwill visits throughout the Mediterranean Sea . In 1931 , the ship 's first major modification took place ; her foremast was shortened and her rear superstructure was slightly lengthened . Otto von Schrader commanded the ship from September 1931 to September 1934 . Hubert Schmundt relieved him and served as the ship 's captain for the following year . In 1934 , a pair of 8 @. @ 8 cm (3 @. @ 5 in) anti @-@ aircraft guns in individual mounts were installed on her aft superstructure just forward of her main battery turrets . That same year , she and the cruiser Leipzig made the first goodwill visit to the United Kingdom since the end of World War I sixteen years earlier .

In 1935 , the ship had an aircraft catapult installed , along with a crane to handle floatplanes . The following year , the single 8 @. @ 8 cm guns were replaced with a new triaxially stabilized twin @-@

mount ; two other twin mounts were added on the rear superstructure . Fire control directors for the anti @-@ aircraft guns were also installed . After emerging from this refit , Königsberg was employed as a gunnery training ship . During the Spanish Civil War in the late 1930s , the ship participated in non @-@ intervention patrols , during which she forced Republicans to surrender a German freighter they had seized .

After returning to Germany , Königsberg resumed her gunnery training duties , and also served as a testbed for radar prototypes . She was scheduled to be transferred to the U @-@ boat School , where she would be used as a target ship for U @-@ boat crews . This duty was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II in September 1939 . One day before the German invasion of Poland , on 31 August , Königsberg spotted the Polish destroyers Burza and B?yskawica in the Baltic . At the start of hostilities , she and several other German cruisers laid a defensive minefield in the North Sea . She then went into the Baltic Sea for training maneuvers . Kurt @-@ Caesar Hoffmann served as the ship 's captain from June to September 1939 . In late 1939 , a degaussing coil was installed on the ship 's hull . Königsberg returned to active duty in March 1940 , when she was assigned to the invasion force for the attack on Norway .

= = = Operation Weserübung = = =

The invasion of Norway took place in early April 1940 . Königsberg was assigned to Gruppe 3 , and was tasked with transporting 600 troops from the Wehrmacht 's 69th Infantry Division from Wilhelmshaven to Bergen , Norway . Gruppe 3 also included her sister ship Köln , the artillery training ship Bremse , and the torpedo boats Wolf and Leopard . The Germans left Wilhelmshaven on 8 April , and had reached their target the following day , where Königsberg transferred part of the landing party to several smaller vessels . She then made a high @-@ speed run into the port in an attempt to land the remainder of the infantry in the town directly . A 21 cm (8 @.@ 3 in) coastal battery at the Kvarven Fort took the ship under fire , and scored three hits , all forward . The hits caused severe flooding and fires in her boiler rooms that cut the ship 's power . Adrift , and unable to maneuver , Königsberg had to drop anchor , while she and Köln , Luftwaffe bombers , and the infantry neutralized the Norwegian guns .

Königsberg required major repairs before she would be able to return to Germany , so she was temporarily moored in the harbor with her broadside facing the harbor entrance . This would allow her to bring all of her main battery guns to bear against any British naval attack . The rest of Gruppe 3 returned to Germany . On the evening of 9 April , she was attacked by British bombers , but to no effect . The following morning , the British launched another air raid on the ship . The raid consisted of sixteen Blackburn Skua dive bombers of the British Fleet Air Arm (seven of 800 Naval Air Squadron and nine of 803 Naval Air Squadron) , launched from RNAS Hatston , Orkney . Königsberg 's thin deck armor rendered her quite vulnerable to dive bomber attack . The Skuas attacked in three groups : the nine of 803 NAS , six of 800 NAS , and one aircraft of 800 NAS which lost contact during the outward flight but found Königsberg independently . The dive bombers attacked at 7 : 20 , catching the ship 's crew off guard . Half of the dive bombers had completed their dives before the crew realized they were under attack . Only one large anti @-@ aircraft gun was reported as being manned with shells being fired once every five seconds from the aft of the ship with lighter anti @-@ air weapons firing from the shore and adjacent ships firing even later in the attack .

Königsberg was hit by at least five 100 @-@ pound (45 kg) bombs , which caused serious damage to the ship . One penetrated her thin deck armor , went through the ship , and exploded in the water , causing significant structural damage . Another hit destroyed the auxiliary boiler room . Two more bombs exploded in the water next to the ship ; the concussion from the blasts tore large holes in the hull . She took on a heavy list almost immediately , and the captain ordered the crew to abandon the ship . It took slightly less than three hours from the start of the attack for the ship to completely capsize and sink , which gave the crew enough time to evacuate many of the dead and wounded . They also had time to remove a significant amount of ammunition and equipment from the stricken cruiser . Only eighteen men were killed in the attack . The wreck was raised on 17 July

1942 , and slowly broken up for scrap thereafter . By 1943 , the wreck had been completely dismantled in situ .