

= SMS Pommern =

SMS Pommern was one of five Deutschland class pre dreadnought battleships built for the Kaiserliche Marine between 1904 and 1906 . Named after the Prussian province of Pomerania , she was built at the AG Vulcan yard at Stettin , where she was laid down on 22 March 1904 and launched on 2 December 1905 . She was commissioned into the navy on 6 August 1907 . The ships of her class were already outdated by the time they entered the service , being inferior in size , armor , firepower , and speed to the revolutionary new battleship HMS Dreadnought .

After commissioning , Pommern was assigned to the II Battle Squadron of the High Seas Fleet , where she served throughout her peacetime career and the first two years of World War I. During this period , Pommern participated in several fruitless sorties into the North Sea in attempts to lure out and destroy a portion of the British Grand Fleet . The ship was present at the Battle of Jutland on 31 May - 1 June 1916 . She and her sisters briefly engaged the British battlecruisers commanded by David Beatty ; Pommern was hit once by a 12 in ( 30 @ 5 cm ) shell from the battlecruiser HMS Indomitable . During the confused night actions in the early hours of 1 June , she was hit by one , or possibly two , torpedoes from the British destroyer HMS Onslaught , which detonated one of Pommern 's 17 @ centimeter ( 6 @ 7 in ) gun magazines . The resulting explosion broke the ship in half and killed the entire crew . Pommern was the only battleship of either side sunk during the battle .

= = Construction = =

Pommern was ordered under the contract name " O " . She was laid down on 22 March 1904 at the AG Vulcan dockyard in Stettin . She was originally scheduled to be launched on 19 November 1905 , but the water level in the harbor was too low . As a result , the ship could not be launched until 2 December . The Oberpräsident of Pommern , Helmuth von Maltzahn , gave the launching speech . In July 1907 Pommern was transferred to Kiel where she had her main battery of four 28 cm ( 11 in ) guns installed . She was commissioned for trials on 6 August ; during her speed run , she made 18 @ 7 knots ( 34 @ 6 km / h ; 21 @ 5 mph ) , which made her the fastest pre dreadnought battleship in the world .

The ship was 127 @ 6 m ( 418 ft 8 in ) long and had a beam of 22 @ 2 m ( 72 ft 10 in ) , and a draft of 8 @ 21 m ( 26 ft 11 in ) . Her full @ load displacement was 14 @, @ 218 metric tons ( 13 @, @ 993 long tons ) . She was equipped with triple expansion engines that were rated at 17 @, @ 453 indicated horsepower ( 13 @, @ 015 kW ) and a top speed of 18 knots ( 33 km / h ; 21 mph ) . Steam was provided by twelve Schulz @ Thornycroft boilers . In addition to being the fastest ship of her class , Pommern was the most fuel efficient . At a cruising speed of 10 knots ( 19 km / h ; 12 mph ) , she could steam for 5 @, @ 830 nautical miles ( 10 @, @ 800 km ; 6 @, @ 710 mi ) . The ship had a peacetime crew of 35 officers and 708 enlisted men , though during military operations , the size of the crew expanded .

Pommern 's primary armament consisted of four 28 cm ( 11 in ) SK L / 40 guns in two twin turrets . She was equipped with fourteen 17 cm ( 6 @ 7 in ) guns mounted in casemates and twenty 8 @ 8 cm ( 3 @ 5 in ) guns in pivot mounts . The ship was also armed with six 45 cm ( 17 @ 7 in ) torpedo tubes , all submerged in the hull . One was in the bow , one in the stern , and four on the broadside . Her armored belt was 240 mm ( 9 @ 4 in ) thick amidships and she had a 40 mm ( 1 @ 6 in ) thick armored deck . The main battery turrets had 280 mm ( 11 in ) thick sides .

= = Service history = =

Pommern was assigned to the II Battle Squadron of the High Seas Fleet alongside her sisters . She took part in the annual training cruises and maneuvers with the rest of the High Seas Fleet between 1908 and 1914 . This included fleet training in the Baltic in 1908 and a cruise into the Atlantic the following year . In May 1910 Pommern took part in fleet training in the Kattegat between Denmark and Norway , followed by a cruise to Norway in the summer . At the end of 1910 , the fleet

conducted another cruise into the Baltic . The next two years followed a similar pattern , though the summer cruise in 1912 was interrupted by the Agadir Crisis . As a result , the cruise was only into the Baltic . Later in the year Pommern took part in maneuvers off the island of Helgoland in the North Sea .

In July 1914 , about two weeks after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo , Pommern was with the High Seas Fleet during its annual summer cruise to Norway . As a result of rising international tensions , the cruise was cut short and the German fleet was back in Wilhelmshaven by 29 July . At midnight on 4 August , the United Kingdom declared war on Germany . Pommern remained with the High Seas Fleet throughout the first two years of the naval war . At the outbreak of war , the ship and her sisters in the II Battle Squadron were deployed to the mouth of the Elbe River to guard the area from possible British incursions .

Pommern and the rest of the II Battle Squadron then rejoined the High Seas Fleet as part of the battleship support for the battlecruisers in the I Scouting Group that bombarded Scarborough , Hartlepool , and Whitby on 15 ? 16 December 1914 . During the operation , the German battle fleet of some twelve dreadnoughts and eight pre @-@ dreadnoughts came to within 10 nmi ( 19 km ; 12 mi ) of an isolated squadron of six British battleships . However , skirmishes between the rival destroyer screens convinced Admiral Friedrich von Ingenohl that he was confronted with the entire Grand Fleet , and so he broke off the engagement and turned for home . Two fruitless fleet advances followed on 17 ? 18 and 21 ? 23 April 1915 . A third took place on 17 ? 18 May , and a fourth occurred on 23 ? 24 October .

On 24 ? 25 April 1916 , Pommern and her sisters joined the dreadnoughts of the High Seas Fleet to support the battlecruisers , which were again tasked with conducting a raid of the English coast . While en route to the target , the battlecruiser Seydlitz was damaged by a mine . Seydlitz was detached to return home , and the rest of the ships continued with the mission . Due to poor visibility , the battlecruisers conducted a brief bombardment of the ports of Yarmouth and Lowestoft . The operation was quickly called off , which prevented the British fleet from being able to intervene .

= = = Battle of Jutland = = =

Vice Admiral Reinhard Scheer , the new commander of the High Seas Fleet , immediately planned another foray into the North Sea , but the damage to Seydlitz delayed the operation until the end of May . Pommern remained assigned to the II Battle Squadron , now under the command of Rear Admiral Franz Mauve . The squadron was positioned at the rear of the German line . During the " Run to the North , " Scheer ordered the fleet to pursue the British V Battle Squadron at top speed . The slower Deutschland @-@ class ships could not keep up with the faster dreadnoughts and quickly fell behind .

Later in the evening of the first day of the battle , the hard @-@ pressed battlecruisers of the I Scouting Group were being pursued by their British opponents . Pommern and the other so @-@ called " five @-@ minute ships " came to their aid by steaming in between the opposing battlecruiser squadrons . Pommern could not make out a target in the darkness , though her several of her sisters could . Despite this , their shooting was ineffective . The British battlecruisers scored several hits on the German ships , including one on Pommern by a 12 in ( 30 @.@ 5 cm ) shell fired by Indomitable , forcing her to haul out of line . Admiral Mauve ordered an 8 @-@ point turn to the south to disengage from the British , and they did not follow .

At 3 : 10 on the morning of 1 June , Pommern was torpedoed by the British destroyer Onslaught . At least one torpedo , and possibly a second , struck the ship , detonating one of the 17 cm ammunition magazines . A tremendous explosion broke the ship in half . The stern capsized and remained afloat for at least 20 minutes with her propellers jutting into the air . Hannover , the ship directly astern of Pommern , was forced to haul out of line to avoid the wreck . Pommern 's entire crew of 839 officers and enlisted men were killed when the ship sank . She was the only battleship , pre @-@ dreadnought or dreadnought , in either fleet to be sunk at Jutland ; her loss , coupled with the vulnerabilities of the surviving pre @-@ dreadnoughts , prompted Scheer to leave them behind during the sortie of 18 ? 19 August 1916 .

