

= SMS Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia =

SMS Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia (" Empress and Queen Maria Theresa ") was an armored cruiser used by the imperial Austro -@ Hungarian Navy from 1895 to 1917 ; she was the first ship of that type built by the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy . The ship was a unique design , built by the Stabilimento Tecnico Triestino shipyard in Trieste ; she was laid down in July 1891 , launched in April 1893 , and completed in November 1894 . Armed with a main battery of two 24 @-@ centimeter (9 @.@ 4 in) guns and eight 15 cm (5 @.@ 9 in) guns , the ship provided the basis for two subsequent armored cruiser designs for the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy .

In 1898 , Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia was deployed to the Caribbean to safeguard Austro @-@ Hungarian interests during the Spanish ? American War ; she inadvertently arrived off Santiago de Cuba on the morning the Spanish squadron attempted to escape from the American blockade , and was nearly attacked herself . In 1900 , she was sent to China to assist in the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion , and remained in East Asian waters until 1902 . She was heavily modernized between 1906 and 1910 , and served in the 1st Cruiser Division after returning to the fleet . She was used first as a harbor guard ship and then as a barracks ship during World War I. After the end of the war , she was surrendered to Britain as a war prize and broken up for scrap in 1920 .

= = Design = =

In the 1890s , the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy began building large , modern cruisers , beginning with the protected cruisers of the Kaiser Franz Joseph I class . The Marinesektion , the executive committee of the Navy , decided to follow the Kaiser Franz Joseph I @-@ class ships with a more powerful vessel , a larger , better armed armored cruiser , as the type had begun to gain prominence in foreign navies . The Austro @-@ Hungarians requested design proposals from five British shipyards , though none of them were awarded the contract . The Navy gave the contract for " torpedo @-@ ram cruiser C " , as it was provisionally titled , to Stabilimento Tecnico Triestino , the Austrian dockyard in Trieste . The two subsequent armored cruisers , Kaiser Karl VI and Sankt Georg , were improved versions of this design .

Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia was 111 @.@ 67 meters (366 @.@ 4 ft) long at the waterline and 113 @.@ 7 m (373 ft) long overall . She had a beam of 16 @.@ 25 m (53 @.@ 3 ft) and a draft of 6 @.@ 81 m (22 @.@ 3 ft) . As designed , the ship displaced 5 @,@ 330 metric tons (5 @,@ 250 long tons ; 5 @,@ 880 short tons) , and at full load she displaced 6 @,@ 026 t (5 @,@ 931 long tons ; 6 @,@ 643 short tons) . She had a crew of 475 officers and men . The ship was powered by two 3 @-@ cylinder , horizontal triple expansion engines rated at 9 @,@ 755 indicated horsepower (7 @,@ 274 kW) . This gave the ship a top speed of 19 @.@ 35 knots (35 @.@ 84 km / h ; 22 @.@ 27 mph) .

Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia was armed with a main battery of two 24 cm K L / 35 guns , manufactured by Krupp , and mounted in two single turrets , one forward and one aft . These guns were the primary offensive armament . For defense against torpedo boats , she also carried eight Krupp 8 cm SK L / 35 guns , twelve Skoda 4 @.@ 7 cm SK L / 44 guns , six Hotchkiss 47 mm L / 33 guns , and a pair of 7 cm L / 15 landing guns ; these guns were primarily mounted in casemates or sponsons . The landing guns could be taken ashore to provide support for a landing party . Her armament was rounded out by four 45 cm (18 in) torpedo tubes , one in the bow , one in the stern , and one on each side . Both the main battery turrets and the armored belt were protected by 100 mm (3 @.@ 9 in) thick steel armor . The main deck was 38 to 57 mm (1 @.@ 5 to 2 @.@ 2 in) thick . The casemates were armored with 80 mm (3 @.@ 1 in) of steel , and the conning tower had 50 mm (2 @.@ 0 in) thick sides .

= = Service history = =

Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia was laid down on 1 June 1891 , launched on 29 April 1893 ,

and commissioned into the fleet in November 1894 . In 1895 , Archduke Charles Stephen of Austria took a squadron of warships , including Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia , to Germany to participate in the celebrations for the opening of the Kiel Canal . The squadron called on the port of Brest , France on the way , and stopped in Portsmouth on the return voyage . In early 1897 , the ship joined the massive international fleet that demonstrated off Crete to protest the Greek annexation of the island from the Ottoman Empire . The Austro - Hungarian fleet was the third largest contingent , after the Italians and British . The Austro - Hungarians and Germans were dissatisfied with the compromise worked out , and so withdrew their contingents early , in March 1898 .

In 1898 , Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia was dispatched to Cuba during the Spanish - American War , to evacuate Austrian and German nationals in the city of Santiago . The ship arrived off Santiago on 3 July , the day the Spanish admiral Pascual Cervera y Topete attempted to break out of the harbor , through the American blockade . The American auxiliary vessel USS Resolute spotted Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia approaching US Army transports off Siboney and Daiquirí . Resolute informed the battleship USS Indiana about a " Spanish battleship " attacking the army ships , after which Indiana steamed to engage the supposed Spanish warship . After closing to 6 ,000 yards (5 ,500 m) , Indiana 's captain identified Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia shortly before his gunners would have opened fire . The Austrian cruiser had similar run - ins with other vessels of the American fleet as it sought permission from the American commander to perform its evacuation . After inspecting her , Admiral William T. Sampson , the American commander , permitted the Austrian cruiser to enter the harbor for her mission . After picking up the evacuees , Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia went to Port Royal , Jamaica , and remained in the Caribbean until the end of the war . On 9 May , she departed , bound for Pola , and arrived on 9 December . Over the winter of 1898 - 1899 , the ship served in the winter training squadron along with the battleship Budapest .

As anti - foreign violence began to rise in China in early 1900 , the Great Powers began to send warships to the Far East to increase the pressure on the Chinese government to reign in the violence . At the peak of the Boxer Rebellion , Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia was deployed to the area under the command of Victor Ritter Bless von Sambuchi , along with numerous other European warships . She left Pola in June , and was followed by the cruisers Kaiserin Elisabeth and Aspern the next month . The ships joined the international fleet off Taku in September 1900 , though by that time , most of the fighting had already occurred . Nevertheless , Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia and Aspern remained in East Asian waters for an extended deployment . Captain Anton Haus took command of the ship , and in June 1901 , he took the ship to Hankow up the Yangtze River ; she was the largest ship to have steamed that far up the river . She returned to Austria - Hungary in 1902 , and was replaced in China by the new armored cruiser Kaiser Karl VI .

Between 1906 - 1908 and 1909 - 1910 , the ship was rebuilt and equipped with more modern main guns . The 24 cm guns were replaced with quick - firing 19 cm L / 42 guns manufactured by Skoda . Four 37 mm Vickers revolving cannon were also installed . The ship 's heavy fighting masts were removed . In 1912 , the ship was sent to Salonika to safeguard Austro - Hungarian interests during the Balkan Wars . She was then assigned to the 1st Cruiser Division , and remained in that unit after the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 . It consisted of the other two armored cruisers in the fleet , and three light cruisers , under the command of Vice Admiral Paul Fiedler . She was used as a harbor guard ship in Tiberik starting in 1914 . In 1916 , she was withdrawn from service and disarmed the following year for use as a barracks ship for German U - boat crews operating out of the Austrian naval base at Pola . Her guns were converted for use on land and sent to the Italian front . After the end of the war , in 1920 , Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia was allocated to Britain as a war prize . The British sold her to an Italian ship - breaking firm , which broke her up for scrap .