

= SMS Irene =

SMS Irene was a protected cruiser or Kreuzerkorvette of the German Imperial Navy (Kaiserliche Marine) and the lead ship of the Irene class . She had one sister , Prinzess Wilhelm ; the two ships were the first protected cruisers built by the German Navy . Irene was laid down in 1886 at the AG Vulcan shipyard in Stettin , launched in July 1887 , and commissioned into the fleet in May 1888 . The cruiser was named after Princess Irene of Hesse and by Rhine , sister @-@ in @-@ law of Kaiser Wilhelm II . As built , the ship was armed with a main battery of fourteen 15 cm (5 @. @ 9 in) guns and had a top speed of 18 knots (33 km / h ; 21 mph) .

Irene saw extensive service with the German fleet in the first years of her career , frequently escorting Kaiser Wilhelm II 's yacht on cruises throughout Europe . In 1894 , she was deployed to East Asian waters ; she was in dock for engine maintenance in November 1897 when Otto von Diederichs seized the naval base Kiaochow Bay , and so she was not present during the operation . She was present in the Philippines in the immediate aftermath of the Battle of Manila Bay between American and Spanish squadrons during the Spanish ? American War in 1898 . Irene eventually returned to Germany in 1901 . She remained in service until early 1914 , when she was retired from front @-@ line service and converted into a submarine tender . She served in this capacity until 1921 , when she was sold for scrap and broken up the following year .

= = Design = =

Irene was the first protected cruiser built by the German navy . She was ordered under the contract name " Ersatz Elisabeth " and was laid down at the AG Vulcan shipyard in Stettin in 1886 . She was launched on 23 July 1887 , after which fitting @-@ out work commenced . She was commissioned into the German navy on 25 May 1888 . The ship was 103 @. @ 7 meters (340 ft) long overall and had a beam of 14 @. @ 2 m (47 ft) and a draft of 6 @. @ 74 m (22 @. @ 1 ft) forward . She displaced 5 @, @ 027 t (4 @, @ 948 long tons ; 5 @, @ 541 short tons) at full combat load . Her propulsion system consisted of two horizontal Wolsche 2 @-@ cylinder double @-@ expansion steam engines powered by four coal @-@ fired cylindrical double @-@ boilers . These provided a top speed of 18 kn (33 km / h ; 21 mph) and a range of approximately 2 @, @ 490 nautical miles (4 @, @ 610 km ; 2 @, @ 870 mi) at 9 kn (17 km / h ; 10 mph) . She had a crew of 28 officers and 337 enlisted men .

The ship was armed with four 15 cm K L / 30 guns in single pedestal mounts , supplied with 400 rounds of ammunition in total . They had a range of 8 @, @ 500 m (27 @, @ 900 ft) . Irene also carried ten shorter @-@ barreled 15 cm K L / 22 guns in single mounts . These guns had a much shorter range , at 5 @, @ 400 m (17 @, @ 700 ft) . The gun armament was rounded out by six 3 @. @ 7 cm revolver cannon . She was also equipped with three 35 cm (14 in) torpedo tubes with eight torpedoes , two launchers were mounted on the deck and the third was in the bow , below the waterline . In 1893 , the ship was modernized in Wilhelmshaven in 1903 ; work lasted until 1905 . The ship 's armament was significantly improved ; the four L / 30 guns were replaced with a new model with an increased range of 10 @, @ 000 m (33 @, @ 000 ft) . Eight 10 @. @ 5 cm SK L / 35 quick @-@ firing (QF) guns were installed in place of the L / 22 guns , and six 5 cm SK L / 10 QF guns were added .

= = Service history = =

In the summer of 1888 , Irene joined the fleet that steamed to Great Britain to celebrate the coronation of Kaiser Wilhelm II . She was assigned to the I Division , along with the ironclad corvettes Sachsen and Baden and the casemate ironclad Oldenburg . The Kaiser 's brother , Prince Heinrich commanded the Division , his flag flying in Irene . The fleet then held training maneuvers in the North Sea under command of Rear Admiral Friedrich Hollmann . Over the winter of 1889 ? 1890 , Irene and the II Division of the fleet went into the Mediterranean to escort the Kaiser 's yacht , Hohenzollern . Prince Heinrich remained in command of Irene during the cruise . The Kaiser made

state visits to Turkey and Italy , and called in ports throughout the region , including Athens and Venice . Irene and the rest of the squadron returned to Germany in April 1890 .

In August 1890 , Irene again escorted Hohenzollern to Britain , to participate in the Cowes Regatta . Directly thereafter , the two ships steamed to the island of Helgoland to celebrate the ceremonial transfer from Britain ; there , the entire German fleet joined Irene and Hohenzollern for the ceremonies . In late November 1894 , Irene was dispatched to Casablanca to protest the murder of a German businessman in the city . She then proceeded on to Asian waters to join the German naval presence in the region in the aftermath of the First Sino - Japanese War . Under Rear Admiral Paul Hoffmann , Irene became the flagship of the Cruiser Division , along with three older cruisers . By 1895 , she had been joined by her sister Prinzess Wilhelm , the rebuilt old ironclad Kaiser , the light cruiser Cormoran , the corvette Arcona , and the gunboat Iltis .

In 1896 , Otto von Diederichs arrived in Asia to command the Cruiser Division ; he spent the year reconnoitering the region for a suitable naval base . Late in the year , Irene had to put into Hong Kong for extensive engine maintenance , which was completed on 30 November . She rejoined the fleet on 3 December . In the meantime , Diederichs had completed the seizure of the Kiaochou Bay concession ; the Cruiser Division was sent reinforcements and promoted to the East Asia Squadron . Irene was assigned to the I Division of the Squadron . In the Spring of 1898 , Irene was sent to Shanghai for periodic maintenance .

During the Spanish - American War in 1898 , Irene steamed to Manila in the Philippines in the aftermath of the Battle of Manila Bay ; she arrived in the harbor on 6 May . By 27 June , Irene had been joined by several other German warships , including Kaiserin Augusta , Diederichs 's flagship . On the 27th , Irene was steaming into Manila Bay when she was stopped by the American revenue cutter Hugh McCulloch . On 5 July , Diederichs dispatched Irene to survey Subic Bay and to evacuate any German nationals in the area that were threatened by Filipino insurgents . While steaming off Isla Grande , Irene encountered the rebel ship Companie de Filipinas , which was threatening the Spanish garrison at Isla Grande . The rebel commander came aboard Irene to inform her captain of his activities ; Obenheimer informed him that any act of war committed under the rebel flag was an act of piracy under international law . The rebels therefore agreed to return to port . Obenheimer inspected both the Spanish garrison on the island and the nearby rebel base in Olongapo . After unsuccessfully searching for German nationals in the area , Irene evacuated the noncombatants on Isla Grande on 7 July ; while steaming out of Subic Bay , Irene encountered the American warships Raleigh and Concord without issue .

The American press exaggerated the encounter between Irene and the American ships , which prompted Diederichs to decide to send Irene away from the area to deflate tensions between the two countries . After returning to Manila and debarking the non - combatants , Irene was ordered to depart the Philippines . Irene relieved Arcona in Kiaochou , which was in turn ordered to steam to the Caroline and Mariana Islands to observe the American capture of Guam . Irene coaled in Mariveles before departing for Kiaochou on 9 July . While in Kiaochou , Irene conducted crew training . She returned to Manila in November , but remained there only briefly , before she was replaced by Kaiserin Augusta . Irene returned to Germany after 1901 ; in 1903 she went into drydock at the Imperial Shipyard in Wilhelmshaven for modernization , which was completed by 1905 . She was stricken on 17 February 1914 and used as a submarine tender , based in Kiel . In 1916 , she was transferred to Wilhelmshaven . She remained there until 26 November 1921 , when she was sold for scrapping for 909 ,000 Marks . She was broken up the following year in Wilhelmshaven .