

= SMS Mecklenburg =

SMS Mecklenburg (" His Majesty 's Ship Mecklenburg ") was the fifth ship of the Wittelsbach class of pre - dreadnought battleships of the German Imperial Navy . Laid down in May 1900 at the AG Vulcan shipyard in Stettin , she was finished in May 1903 . Her sisters were Wittelsbach , Zähringen , Wettin , and Schwaben ; they were the first capital ships built under the Navy Law of 1898 , brought about by Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz . Mecklenburg was armed with a main battery of four 24 - centimeter (9 . 4 in) guns and had a top speed of 18 knots (33 km / h ; 21 mph) .

Mecklenburg spent the first period of her active duty career in the I Squadron of the German fleet . During this period , she participated in the peacetime routine of training cruises and exercises . After the start of World War I in August 1914 , the ship was mobilized with her sisters as the IV Battle Squadron . She saw limited duty both in the Baltic Sea against Russian naval forces , and as a guard ship in the North Sea . The threat from submarines and naval mines had grown significantly by 1916 , and coupled with severe shortages in personnel , forced the German High Command to withdraw the ship from active service in January 1916 . For the remainder of her career , Mecklenburg served as a prison ship and as a barracks ship based in Kiel . The ship was stricken from the navy list in January 1920 and sold for scrapping the following year .

= Description =

Mecklenburg was 126 . 8 m (416 ft 0 in) long overall ; she had a beam of 22 . 8 m (74 ft 10 in) and a draft of 7 . 95 m (26 ft 1 in) forward . The ship was powered by three 3 - cylinder vertical triple - expansion engines that drove three screws . Steam was provided by six coal - fired Thornycroft boilers and six coal - fired cylindrical boilers . Mecklenburg 's powerplant was rated at 14 , 000 metric horsepower (13 , 808 ihp ; 10 , 297 kW) , which gave her a top speed of 18 knots (33 km / h ; 21 mph) . She had a crew of 30 officers and 650 enlisted men .

Mecklenburg 's main armament consisted of a main battery of four 24 cm (9 . 4 in) SK L / 40 guns in twin gun turrets , one fore and one aft of the central superstructure . Her secondary armament consisted of eighteen 15 cm (5 . 9 inch) SK L / 40 guns and twelve 8 . 8 cm (3 . 45 in) SK L / 30 quick - firing guns . Her weaponry was rounded out with six 45 cm (18 in) torpedo tubes , all submerged in the hull ; one was in the bow , one in the stern , and the other four were on the broadside . Her armored belt was 225 millimeters (8 . 9 in) thick in the central portion that protected her magazines and machinery spaces , and the deck was 50 mm (2 . 0 in) thick . The main battery turrets had 250 mm (9 . 8 in) of armor plating .

= Service history =

Mecklenburg 's keel was laid on 15 May 1900 , at the AG Vulcan in Stettin , under construction number 248 . She was ordered under the contract name " F " , as a new unit for the fleet . The vessel was the last member of the first class of battleships built under the direction of State Secretary Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz , according to the terms of the Navy Law of 1898 . Mecklenburg , the last vessel of her class , was launched on 9 November 1901 ; the ceremony was attended by Frederick Francis IV , Grand Duke of Mecklenburg - Schwerin . Fitting out work proceeded faster on Mecklenburg than on her sister Schwaben , and so the former was commissioned first , on 25 May 1903 , a full year before Schwaben . The ship 's cost totaled 22 , 329 , 000 marks .

Following her commissioning , Mecklenburg began sea trials , which lasted until mid - December 1903 . She was assigned to the II Division of the I Squadron , alongside the battleships Kaiser Karl der Grosse and Kaiser Wilhelm II . Mecklenburg had to enter the drydock at Kaiserliche Werft (Imperial Shipyard) at Wilhelmshaven for minor improvements and repairs following her trials ; this work lasted until the end of February 1904 . After completion of these modifications , Mecklenburg took part in individual and squadron training exercises , and a fleet review for the

visiting British King Edward VII in June . The following month , the German fleet went on a cruise to Britain , the Netherlands , and Norway that lasted until August . Mecklenburg then participated in the annual autumn fleet exercises , which took place in late August and September , and a winter training cruise in November and December .

Starting in mid @-@ December , Mecklenburg went into dock at Wilhelmshaven for periodic maintenance ; this work lasted until the beginning of March 1905 . After emerging from drydock , Mecklenburg joined her sister ship Wittelsbach on a cruise through the Skagerrak to Kiel . While steaming through the Great Belt on 3 March , Mecklenburg struck the Hatter Reef off Denmark and became stuck . Her other sister Wettin and the light cruiser Ariadne were sent to assist Wittelsbach in pulling Mecklenburg free from the reef . Mecklenburg then steamed to Kiel under her own power , where dockyard workers discovered a large dent in her bottom . Repair work was completed at the Kaiserliche Werft in Wilhelmshaven by 20 April . She thereafter participated in the normal routine of training cruises and maneuvers with the rest of the fleet for the remainder of the year . During this period , the British Channel Fleet visited the German fleet while it was moored in Swinemünde . From mid @-@ February to the end of March 1906 , Mecklenburg was in the Kaiserliche Werft in Wilhelmshaven for her annual overhaul . The training routine continued without incident through 1907 , though in early April 1908 , a major accident in one of her broadside torpedo rooms nearly sank the ship . Water began to flood the ship and could only be stopped by sealing the torpedo tubes from the outside . Repairs lasted until May .

Mecklenburg participated in a training cruise to the Azores in July and August 1908 . She also won the Kaiser 's Schießpreis (Shooting Prize) for the most accurate gunnery in her squadron , along with the battleship Lothringen . In mid @-@ December , she returned once again to Wilhelmshaven for the yearly overhaul . The years 1909 and 1910 passed uneventfully for Mecklenburg , with the same pattern of training cruises and maneuvers as in previous years . She began her annual overhaul on 2 December 1910 and returned to service on 7 March 1911 , though only briefly . On 31 July , Mecklenburg was replaced by the new dreadnought battleship Ostfriesland ; Mecklenburg was then decommissioned . After she was removed from active duty , Mecklenburg was assigned to the Reserve Division in the North Sea . On 9 May 1912 , she was transferred to the Reserve Division in the Baltic . She returned briefly to active service in 1912 from 9 to 12 May to move her from the North Sea to the Baltic , and again from 14 August to 28 September to participate in the fleet exercises that year . During the maneuvers , she served in the III Squadron .

= = = World War I = = =

After the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 , Mecklenburg and the rest of her class were mobilized to serve in the IV Battle Squadron , under the command of Vice Admiral Ehrhard Schmidt . The Squadron was initially allocated to the North Sea , but was temporarily transferred to the Baltic in September . Starting on 3 September , the IV Squadron , assisted by the armored cruiser Blücher , conducted a sweep into the eastern Baltic in the direction of the Svenska Högar islands . The operation lasted until 9 September and failed to bring Russian naval units to battle . The Squadron participated in a demonstration off Windau the following day . From 5 December to 2 April 1915 , Mecklenburg and the rest of the Squadron were assigned to guard duty in the North Sea , based in the mouth of the Elbe .

In May 1915 , IV Squadron , including Mecklenburg , was transferred to support the German Army in the Baltic Sea area . Mecklenburg and her sisters were then based in Kiel . From 8 to 12 May , she participated in a sweep toward Gotland and Bogskär , which provided support to the assault on Libau . Mecklenburg and the other ships stood off Gotland in order to intercept any Russian cruisers that might try to intervene in the landings , which the Russians did not attempt . On 10 May , after the invasion force had entered Libau , the British submarines HMS E1 and HMS E9 spotted the IV Squadron , but were too far away to make an attack . After the conclusion of the operation , Mecklenburg and the rest of the IV Squadron returned to the Elbe for guard duties , which lasted until 4 July . The following day , Mecklenburg departed for Kiel in preparation for a major operation in the Baltic . She then proceeded to Danzig , and on 11 July departed for a sweep to Gotska

Sandön ; another patrol to western Gotland followed on 21 ? 22 July . Mecklenburg then steamed from Danzig to Libau on 2 August , where she joined another foray toward Gotska Sandön from 7 to 10 August .

Mecklenburg and her sisters were not included in the German fleet that assaulted the Gulf of Riga in August 1915 , due to the scarcity of escorts . The increasingly active British submarines forced the Germans to employ more destroyers to protect the capital ships . Mecklenburg took part in two sweeps to Huvudskär on 9 ? 11 and 21 ? 23 September . On 17 December she ran aground in the entrance to the harbor of Libau , but was towed free without suffering any damage . She was to replace the worn @-@ out armored cruiser Prinz Heinrich in the reconnaissance forces of the fleet in the Baltic , but Mecklenburg and her sisters were removed from service shortly thereafter . By this stage of the war , the German Navy was facing severe shortages of crews , which could be alleviated by the decommissioning of older , less effective warships . In addition , the loss of the armored cruiser Friedrich Carl to Russian mines , and the increasing threat from British submarines and Russian mines by 1916 in the Baltic convinced the German navy to withdraw the elderly Wittelsbach @-@ class ships from active service . On 6 January 1916 , Mecklenburg left Libau bound for Kiel , arriving there the following day . She was decommissioned on 24 January and placed in reserve .

Mecklenburg was initially based in Kiel and used as a floating prison . In early 1918 , she became a barracks ship for the crews of U @-@ boats being repaired in Kiel . The ship was briefly retained after the German defeat at the end of World War I , but was to be discarded under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles , which limited the re @-@ formed Reichsmarine to eight pre @-@ dreadnought battleships of the Deutschland and Braunschweig classes , of which only six could be operational at any given time . Accordingly , on 25 January 1920 , Mecklenburg was stricken from the naval register . She was sold to Deutsche Werke , a ship @-@ builder based in Kiel , on 16 August 1921 for 1 @, @ 750 @, @ 000 Marks , and she was broken up for scrap metal that year at Kiel @-@ Nordmole .