

= SMS Geier =

SMS Geier (" His Majesty 's Ship Geier ? Vulture ") was an unprotected cruiser of the Bussard class built for the German Imperial Navy (Kaiserliche Marine) . She was laid down in 1893 at the Imperial Dockyard in Wilhelmshaven , launched in October 1894 , and commissioned into the fleet a year later in October 1895 . The ship was designed for service in Germany 's overseas colonies , which required the comparatively heavy armament of eight 10 @. @ 5 cm (4 @. @ 1 in) guns and a long cruising radius . She had a top speed of 15 @. @ 5 kn (28 @. @ 7 km / h ; 17 @. @ 8 mph) .

Geier spent the majority of her career on foreign stations , including tours in the Americas , East Asia , and Africa . In 1897 , she was deployed to the Caribbean , and the following year she became involved in the Spanish ? American War , crossing the blockade lines around Cuban ports to ferry Europeans out of the war zone to Mexico . After being transferred to the western coast of the Americas in 1899 , Geier was reassigned to China to help suppress the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 . She remained in East Asian waters through 1905 before being recalled to Germany for major repairs . In 1911 , the ship was assigned to the colony in German East Africa , though she served little time in the area , as the Italo @-@ Turkish War of 1911 ? 1912 and the Balkan Wars of 1912 ? 13 required German warships in the Mediterranean to safeguard German interests . Geier returned to East Africa in early 1914 , but in June that month , the new light cruiser Königsberg arrived , relieving Geier for a second deployment to China .

Geier was still en route to the German base in Tsingtao when war broke out in Europe in August 1914 . She slipped out of still @-@ neutral British Singapore days before Britain declared war on Germany and crossed the central Pacific in an attempt to link up with Maximilian von Spee 's East Asia Squadron . While at sea , she captured one British freighter , but did not sink her . In need of engine repairs and coal , Geier put into the neutral United States port at Honolulu , Hawaii in October 1914 , where she was eventually interned . After the American entrance into the war in April 1917 , the US Navy seized Geier and commissioned her as USS Schurz and placed her on convoy duty . She was ultimately sunk following a collision with a freighter off the coast of North Carolina , with one man killed and twelve injured . She rests at a depth of 115 feet (35 m) and is a popular scuba diving site .

= = Design = =

Geier was 83 @. @ 9 meters (275 ft) long overall and had a beam of 10 @. @ 6 m (35 ft) and a draft of 4 @. @ 74 m (15 @. @ 6 ft) forward . She displaced 1 @, @ 918 t (1 @, @ 888 long tons ; 2 @, @ 114 short tons) at full combat load . Her propulsion system consisted of two horizontal 3 @-@ cylinder triple @-@ expansion steam engines powered by four coal @-@ fired cylindrical boilers . These provided a top speed of 15 @. @ 5 kn (28 @. @ 7 km / h ; 17 @. @ 8 mph) and a range of approximately 3 @, @ 610 nautical miles (6 @, @ 690 km ; 4 @, @ 150 mi) at 9 kn (17 km / h ; 10 mph) . She had a crew of 9 officers and 152 enlisted men .

The ship was armed with eight 10 @. @ 5 cm SK L / 35 quick @-@ firing (QF) guns in single pedestal mounts , supplied with 800 rounds of ammunition in total . They had a range of 10 @, @ 800 m (35 @, @ 400 ft) . Two guns were placed side by side forward , two on each broadside , and two side by side aft . The gun armament was rounded out by five revolver cannon . She was also equipped with two 45 cm (18 in) torpedo tubes with five torpedoes , both of which were mounted on the deck .

= = Service history = =

Geier was ordered under the contract name " F " and was laid down at the Imperial Dockyard in Wilhelmshaven in 1893 . She was launched on 18 October 1894 , after which fitting @-@ out work commenced . During her launching ceremony , Vizeadmiral (Vice Admiral) Victor Valois christened the ship . She was commissioned into the German Navy on 24 October 1895 for sea trials . Her trials were completed on 21 January 1896 , and she was decommissioned temporarily in Kiel .

During construction , her design was slightly modified based on experience from her sister ships that had already completed their sea trials . Geier 's displacement was increased slightly by around 50 t (49 long tons ; 55 short tons) compared to the other ships of the class and her stern was modified .

= = = First deployment abroad = = =

Geier was recommissioned on 1 December 1897 for her first deployment abroad , to the West Indies . Until then , Germany had relied on school ships to protect German nationals in the region . Rising tensions in Haiti prompted the Admiralstab (Admiralty Staff) to send Geier to the Caribbean , replacing the old ironclad Oldenburg that had been scheduled to deploy there . The ironclad König Wilhelm , which had recently been rebuilt into an armored cruiser , was sent to strengthen the German naval contingent . Geier departed Kiel on 9 December and arrived in Charlotte Amalie in the Danish West Indies on 3 January 1898 , where she rendezvoused with the school ships Charlotte and Stein . Charlotte and Stein had already taken care of the situation in Haiti , so Geier went to Santiago de Cuba , where she stayed from 24 March to 6 April . She then received an order to visit Brazilian and Argentinian ports ; stops included Pernambuco in Brazil (16 ? 20 April) and Bahía Blanca in Argentina (23 April) . While she was in the latter port , her tour of South America was cut short due to the outbreak of the Spanish ? American War .

On 6 May she arrived in Saint Thomas . She thereafter made trips to Santiago de Cuba and San Juan . While in San Juan on 13 ? 14 May , Geier witnessed an American squadron under Rear Admiral William T. Sampson bombard the city . The US government permitted Geier to cross the blockade line outside Havana to evacuate twenty civilians of various nationalities and take them to Veracruz in Mexico , arriving on the 29th . There , the governor of the city and the artillery officer from the training ship Zaragoza visited Geier for some practice torpedo launches . While Geier was in Mexico , the German ambassador invited her commander and 27 men to visit Mexico City , where they were received by President Porfirio Díaz . Geier thereafter returned to Cuba . On 16 June , the ship called on the port of Cienfuegos in Cuba . She passed through the American blockade of Santiago de Cuba twice , on 22 ? 29 June and 1 ? 4 August .

After the war ended , Geier visited New Orleans on 14 October , departing eleven days later for the Caribbean . She then resumed her tour of South America that had been interrupted by the war . She typically stopped in ports where significant numbers of Germans had emigrated . While in Buenos Aires , she received an order to proceed to the west coast of the continent . She transited the Straits of Magellan on 20 ? 23 February 1899 and made stops in Valparaíso , Chile , Callao , Peru , and Panama . From 11 to 17 May , she stopped in Puerto San José , Guatemala , where she met a British cruiser ; the two ships were sent there to settle financial disputes with the Guatemalan government . Geier 's tour continued , with stops in Corinto , Nicaragua , Guayaquil , Ecuador , and Puntarenas , Costa Rica . While in Corinto , she received orders to proceed further north , to the western coast of the United States and Canada . She stopped in Acapulco before arriving in San Francisco on 14 August , where she underwent a boiler overhaul . On 18 September , she departed San Francisco bound for Vancouver , stopping in Esquimalt en route . On 18 October , she left Vancouver and began her return voyage south . She visited Chilean harbors in January and February 1900 , including Puerto Montt on 14 February , before turning back north , as she had been assigned to the newly @-@ created West American station .

While in Acapulco on 9 July , Geier was ordered to cross the Pacific to join the forces of the Eight Nation Alliance fighting the Boxer Rebellion in Qing China . She left port on 11 July for Yokohama , Japan , by way of Honolulu , Hawaii . She arrived in Chefoo on 29 August , where she joined the ships of the East Asia Squadron . Geier first patrolled the Bohai Sea before docking in Tsingtao at the German @-@ held Kiautschou Bay concession in October . On 28 October , she steamed to Shanghai , where she remained until February 1901 . Geier then steamed up the Yangtze to Chungking , where she replaced her sister ship Bussard . On 5 April , Geier returned to Tsingtao ; on the 29th , she was transferred to the coast of central China , where she replaced another sister , Seeadler . Geier returned to Tsingtao on 18 July , and began a tour of Korean and Japanese ports four days later with the flagship of the East Asia Squadron , Fürst Bismarck . The next twelve

months were filled with cruises in the region .

On 15 October 1902 , Geier began a long cruise south to the Dutch East Indies , which also included a stop in Singapore . The ship entered the dry dock in Nagasaki , Japan , for a major overhaul on 2 March 1903 , which lasted until 26 April . At this time , Geier was formally assigned to the East Asia Squadron . The ship resumed its normal routine of cruises in East Asian waters with stops in various ports . In February 1904 , the Russo @-@ Japanese War broke out ; from April to August , Geier was in Chemulpo , which had been captured by the Japanese . By 1905 , the ship was worn out , having spent over seven years on foreign stations . The repair facilities in Tsingtao were insufficient for the amount of work that needed to be done , and so Geier was ordered to return to Germany . She left Tsingtao on 14 January and arrived in Kiel on 16 March , where she was decommissioned for a significant period of repair work . Her three @-@ masted schooner barque rig was reduced to a two @-@ masted topsail schooner rig .

= = = Second overseas deployment = = =

In early 1911 , Geier was recommissioned to replace the unprotected cruiser Sperber on the East African Station , based in German East Africa . On 2 May she left Danzig , arriving in Kiel the following day . There , she was equipped for the deployment abroad . The ship left Kiel on 8 May and arrived in Dar es Salaam on 9 July , where she joined Seeadler . She cruised the colony 's coast , but at the end of September she was ordered to the Mediterranean Sea , as the Italo @-@ Turkish War had broken out on the 29th . At the time , the only German warship in the Mediterranean was the old aviso Loreley , the station ship in Constantinople ; this was a result of the heightened tensions in Europe following the Agadir Crisis in July , as most German warships in European waters had been recalled to Germany .

Geier 's departure for the Mediterranean was delayed by a coal fire in Dar es Salaam , which required her crew to put out . She left East Africa on 2 October and arrived in Piraeus , Greece on 16 October , where she remained until January 1912 . She was then formally assigned to the Mediterranean Division , along with the recently @-@ arrived battlecruiser Goeben . From mid @-@ April to mid @-@ July , she made trips to provide humanitarian assistance in Libya , Palestine , and the Red Sea . These were interrupted by the arrival of Kaiser Wilhelm II 's yacht Hohenzollern ; the two ships cruised to the island of Corfu in early May . On 17 July , Geier went to Trieste in Austria @-@ Hungary for an overhaul that lasted until 30 September . She thereafter went on a cruise of the eastern Mediterranean and visited several ports .

While she was loading coal in Haifa on 31 January 1913 , a coal dust explosion killed two crew members . While cruising Turkish waters in August , she was ordered to replace the light cruiser Breslau in the international naval blockade of Montenegro during the Second Balkan War . She arrived off the mouth of the Bojana River in Montenegro on 11 August , which she patrolled until 14 October , when she was released for a major overhaul in Triest . After repairs were completed on 4 January 1914 , she was ordered to return to the East Africa Station . She arrived there on 22 February and conducted a survey of the harbor at Tanga . On 6 May , the ship was formally reclassified as a gunboat . The light cruiser Königsberg arrived on 5 June to replace Geier , which was then reassigned to the South Seas Station , where she would in turn replace her sister Condor .

= = = World War I = = =

Geier 's captain learned of the rising tensions in Europe following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria while en route to the Pacific . The ship coaled in Singapore on 25 ? 29 July , departing the day after Austria @-@ Hungary declared war on Serbia . Geier thereafter proceeded southeast through the Gaspar Strait , rather than north to Tsingtao , where he would be expected to go . While off Batavia on 1 August , Geier received the order from Maximilian von Spee , the commander of the East Asia Squadron , to join him at Yap . On 3 . August , she received word of the German mobilization and the order to begin cruiser warfare . She coaled at Jampea from the

steamer Elms horn of the Deutsch @-@ Australische Dampfschiffs @-@ Gesellschaft (DADG) on 6 August before steaming north through the Buton Strait . Off Celebes she rendezvoused with the DADG steamer Bochum , which acted as her collier .

Geier 's crew made temporary repairs to the ship 's engines and boilers before proceeding north to the Palau Islands . Bochum took Geier under tow to conserve coal . On 20 August , she managed to contact the cruiser Emden , which was detached from the East Asia Squadron and operating as a commerce raider . Emden instructed Geier to rendezvous at the island of Anguar , but she was unable to reach the island before Emden departed . Nevertheless , the two ships met at sea the following day ; one of Geier 's cutters took her commander , Lieutenant Commander Curt Graßhoff , aboard Emden to meet with her captain . Emden then departed for the Molucca Strait , while Geier proceeded to Anguar . After arriving , Geier coaled from the HAPAG steamer Tsingtau . Graßhoff intended to rendezvous with the East Asia Squadron in the central Pacific , and proceeded through the Bismarck Archipelago before turning north to Kusaie . There , on 4 September , Geier captured the British freighter Southport and disabled the ship 's engines before departing . The freighter 's crew repaired the damage , however , and Southport made for Australia where she reported the German gunboat 's presence .

On 11 September , Geier arrived in Majuro , though the East Asia Squadron had already departed the island on 30 August . By this time , the ship 's engines were in such bad shape that she would have been unable to reach Tsingtau , though the point was moot , as Japanese forces had already besieged the port . In addition , opportunities for commerce raiding in the area were slim , and there were no suitably fast steamers available to arm as auxiliary cruisers . Graßhoff therefore decided to follow the East Asia Squadron to South America , despite the slow speed of his ship , which was reduced to 8 knots (15 km / h ; 9 @-@ 2 mph) . The Norddeutscher Lloyd (NDL) steamer Locksun towed Geier to the Marshall Islands , where further repairs were made from 17 to 20 September . By this time , the ship 's coal and water supplies were so low that the ship would not be able to continue past Hawaii . She arrived in Honolulu on 15 October , where the then @-@ neutral Americans requested that Geier be interned . Two Japanese ships ? the battleship , Hizen , and the armored cruiser , Asama ? had been patrolling in the area . Upon learning of the arrival of Geier , the two ships remained just outside the three mile limit to await Geier 's departure . Graßhoff was able to delay the internment request until 7 November owing to damage to the ship and poor weather . The following day , the US Navy interned Geier .

= = = Service as USS Schurz = = =

The United States entered the war on the side of the Allies on 6 April 1917 . The US Navy seized Geier and refitted her for service in the Navy . The ship was renamed USS Schurz on 9 June , and commissioned on 15 September 1917 , under the command of Commander Arthur Crenshaw . Schurz departed Pearl Harbor on 31 October and escorted Submarine Division 3 to San Diego . Arriving on 12 November , she continued on with the submarines K @-@ 3 , K @-@ 4 , K @-@ 7 , and K @-@ 8 , in early December . At the end of the month , the convoy transited the Panama Canal and proceeded to Honduras . On 4 January 1918 , Schurz was relieved of escort duty . She carried the American consul from Puerto Cortes to Omaso and back , after which she sailed for Key West . From Florida , she was transferred to New Orleans and then sailed for Charleston , South Carolina on 1 February where she entered dry dock for periodic maintenance .

Assigned to the American Patrol Detachment , Schurz departed Charleston toward the end of April and , for the next two months , conducted patrols and performed escort duty and towing missions along the east coast and in the Caribbean . On 19 June , she departed New York for Key West . At 0444 on the 21st , southwest of Cape Lookout lightship , she was rammed by the merchant ship Florida . The ship hit Schurz on the starboard side , crumpling that wing of the bridge , penetrating the well and berth deck about 12 feet , and cutting through bunker no . 3 to the forward fire room . One of Schurz 's crewmen was killed instantly ; twelve others were injured . Schurz was abandoned and sank three hours later . The ship was struck from the Navy list on 26 August 1918 .

= = Wreck = =

The wreckage rests at a depth of 115 feet (35 m) with the top of the wreck situated at 95 feet (29 m) . In 2000 , the ship was subject of a Phase II archaeological investigation headed by East Carolina University . The wreck is protected by sovereign immunity and it is therefore illegal to recover artifacts from the site without permission . In 2013 , Scuba Diving magazine named USS Schurz as one of the top ten wreck dives in North Carolina .