

= SMS Schwaben =

SMS Schwaben (" His Majesty 's Ship Swabia ") was the fourth ship of the Wittelsbach class of pre-dreadnought battleships of the German Imperial Navy . Schwaben was built at the Imperial Dockyard in Wilhelmshaven . She was laid down in 1900 , and completed in April 1904 , at the cost of 21 678 000 marks . Her sisters were Wittelsbach , Zähringen , Wettin and Mecklenburg ; they were the first capital ships built under the Navy Law of 1898 , brought about by Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz . Schwaben 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) .

Schwaben spent the majority of her career as a gunnery training ship from 1904 to 1914 , though she frequently participated in the large scale fleet exercises during this period . 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 in the North Sea as a guard ship and in the Baltic Sea against Russian forces . The threat from British submarines forced the ship to withdraw from the Baltic in 1916 . For the remainder of the war , Schwaben served as an engineering training ship for navy cadets . She was retained by the Reichsmarine after the war and reactivated in 1919 . During this period , she served as a depot ship for F-type minesweepers in the Baltic until June 1920 . The ship was stricken from the navy list in March 1921 and sold for scrapping in that year .

= Description =

Schwaben was 126 8 m (416 ft 0 in) long overall and 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 water-tube and six cylindrical coal-fired boilers . Schwaben 's powerplant was rated at 14 000 metric horsepower (13 808 ihp ; 10 297 kW) , which generated a top speed of 18 knots (33 km / h ; 21 mph) . She had a crew of 30 officers and 650 enlisted men .

Schwaben 's 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 . The armament system 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 =

Schwaben 's keel was laid 15 September 1900 , at the Imperial Dockyard in Wilhelmshaven , under construction number 27 . She was ordered under the contract name " G " , as a new unit for the fleet . The vessel was a member of the first class of battleships built under the direction of Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz , the State Secretary of the Reichsmarineamt (RMA ? Imperial Navy Office) , according to the terms of the Navy Law of 1898 . Schwaben was launched on 19 August 1901 ; during the launching ceremony , King Wilhelm II of Württemberg gave a speech and his wife Queen Charlotte of Württemberg christened the ship . She was commissioned on 13 April 1904 , the last ship of her class to enter active service . The ship 's cost totaled 21 678 000 marks .

There was a dispute over where Schwaben should be assigned after her commissioning in April 1904 . Admiral Hans von Koester , the fleet commander , wanted the ship to be assigned to the active duty squadron , but Tirpitz wanted to use the new battleship as a training vessel , since the Training Squadron only possessed cruisers and obsolescent ships . Tirpitz won the debate , and so Schwaben was to replace the ancient ironclad frigate Friedrich Carl in the Training Squadron . There , she was to serve as a torpedo training ship . On 18 May , Schwaben departed Wilhelmshaven and passed through the Skagerrak to the Baltic Sea , arriving in Kiel on 22 May .

While on sea trials , she struck an uncharted shoal off the northern tip of the island of Fehmarn . The impact damaged a 30 @-@ meter (98 ft) length of the ship 's hull and holed it in several places . After repairs were completed , she resumed her trials , which lasted until the end of 1904 . The trials were interrupted by the annual autumn maneuvers , during which Schwaben joined the active fleet in the North Sea . On 11 January 1905 , she was formally assigned to the Training Squadron , but as an artillery training ship to replace the old vessel Mars . The ship was based in Sonderburg in the Baltic , along with the armored cruisers Prinz Heinrich and Prinz Adalbert , and several other training ships . She began an annual routine of gunnery training in the western Baltic that was interrupted only by yearly gunnery drills with the entire High Seas Fleet in October . During these fleet exercises , Schwaben was supported by the tender Ulan . Schwaben also went into drydock from the end of October to the middle of December every year for periodic maintenance .

Schwaben participated in exercises in the Swinemünde Bay in April and May 1906 , and the annual fleet gunnery drills took place off Helgoland in August . Her annual overhaul was completed early , in November . In March 1907 , Schwaben participated in gunnery training with the fleet . She joined the flagship of the Reserve Squadron , the coastal defense ship Frithjof , for maneuvers off the coast of Farther Pomerania in July . The following month , Schwaben served as the flagship of Vizeadmiral (Vice Admiral) Hugo Zeye for a training squadron during the fleet maneuvers in the North Sea . Directly after the conclusion of the fleet maneuvers in mid @-@ September , Schwaben participated in fleet gunnery drills off Helgoland . The year was concluded with an overhaul in the Imperial Dockyard in Wilhelmshaven .

In 1908 , the training ships based in the Baltic were placed under the command of Rear Admiral Hugo von Pohl , who would go on to command the High Seas Fleet in 1915 during World War I. That year followed the same pattern as the previous year , but Schwaben did not participate in the autumn fleet maneuvers . She instead remained at Sonderburg and Alsen during the exercises . In 1909 , after the autumn maneuvers , Schwaben was assigned as the flagship of the Reserve Fleet , again under the command of Admiral Zeye . During her yearly overhaul at the Imperial Dockyard in Wilhelmshaven , her guns were fitted with new motors produced in Germany to test their reliability over foreign @-@ manufactured motors . The tests proved to be successful . While steaming in the Flensburg Firth on 10 ? 12 December , she had to assist the training ship Württemberg in heavy fog .

In 1910 , after the normal training routine in the first half of the year , Schwaben was assigned to the III Battle Squadron of the High Seas Fleet for the autumn maneuvers , which lasted from 19 August to 11 September . She served in this role to replace the battleships Kurfürst Friedrich Wilhelm and Weissenburg , which had been sold to the Ottoman Empire just before the start of the maneuvers . On 14 October , she joined up with the battleship Elsass and steamed through the Kaiser Wilhelm Canal to Kiel for her yearly overhaul at the Imperial Dockyard there . These repairs lasted until 4 January 1911 . Schwaben served in the III Battle Squadron during the autumn maneuvers again in 1911 . By 1911 , the eight Nassau and Helgoland classes of dreadnought battleships had entered service ; these ships were assigned to the I Battle Squadron , which displaced the newer pre @-@ dreadnoughts of the Deutschland and Braunschweig classes to the II and III Battle Squadrons . As a result , Schwaben was decommissioned in Wilhelmshaven on 30 December 1911 and assigned to the Reserve Division in the North Sea . She was briefly placed back in service briefly from 9 to 12 May 1912 to move the ship to Kiel . Schwaben returned to service again to participate in the autumn maneuvers from 14 August to 28 September , as the flagship of then @-@ Konteradmiral Maximilian von Spee .

= = = World War I = = =

After the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 , Schwaben and the rest of her class were mobilized to serve in the IV Battle Squadron , under the command of Vice Admiral Ehrhard Schmidt . After it reached full combat readiness , the Squadron was employed both as a defense force in the German Bight ? usually stationed in the mouth of the Elbe ? and for operations in the Baltic . Starting on 3 September , the IV Squadron , assisted by the armored cruiser Blücher , conducted a

sweep into the Baltic . The operation lasted until 9 September and failed to bring Russian naval units to battle . In May 1915 , IV Squadron , including Schwaben , was transferred to support the German Army in the Baltic Sea area . Schwaben and her sisters were then based in Kiel . During this period , she served as the flagship of the second command admiral of the Squadron , Konteradmiral Alberts .

On 6 May , the IV Squadron ships were tasked with providing support to the assault on Libau . Schwaben 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 . The increasingly active British submarines forced the Germans to employ more destroyers to protect the capital ships . As a result , Schwaben 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 . On 29 August , Kapitän zur See (Captain at Sea) Walter Engelhardt replaced Alberts aboard Schwaben . She was then used as a guard ship in Libau , starting on 24 September . On 10 ? 11 November , Schwaben , her sisters Wittelsbach and Wettin , and Prinz Heinrich left Libau , bound for Kiel .

By late 1915 , the increasing threat from British submarines in the Baltic convinced the German navy to withdraw the elderly Wittelsbach @-@ class ships from active service . On 20 November Schwaben steamed to Wilhelmshaven , where she replaced Kaiser Karl der Grosse as a training ship for engineers , a role she held for the remainder of the war . After the Battle of Jutland on 31 May ? 1 June , in which Schwaben did not take part , Rear Admiral Franz von Hipper , the commander of the German battlecruiser squadron , sent his four surviving battlecruisers to dock for repairs . Hipper made Schwaben , which was stationed in Wilhelmshaven , his temporary command ship while his force was being repaired . In 1916 , Schwaben was partially disarmed ; the four 24 cm guns were removed , her battery of 15 cm guns was reduced to six weapons , and only four 8 @.@ 8 cm guns were left aboard .

= = = Postwar service = = =

The ship was briefly retained by the Reichsmarine after the end of the war , and was reactivated for service on 1 August 1919 . According to Articles 182 and 193 of the Treaty of Versailles , Germany was obliged to keep sufficient vessels in commission to sweep mines from large areas in the North and Baltic Seas . Schwaben was therefore converted into a depot ship for F @-@ type minesweepers to assist in meeting Germany 's treaty obligations , which entailed removal of her remaining weaponry and construction of platforms to hold the minesweepers . She was assigned to the 6th Baltic Minesweeping Half @-@ Flotilla , though this service did not last long , as the minesweeping work was completed by 19 June 1920 . The old battleship was stricken from the naval register on 8 March 1921 . She was sold for 3 @,@ 090 @,@ 000 marks and broken up for scrap that year in Kiel @-@ Nordmole .