

= SMS Kaiser ( 1874 ) =

SMS Kaiser was the lead ship of the Kaiser @-@ class ironclads ; SMS Deutschland was her sister ship . Named for the title " Kaiser " ( German : Emperor ) , held by the leader of the then newly created German Empire , the ship was laid down in the Samuda Brothers shipyard in London in 1871 . The ship was launched in March 1874 and commissioned into the German fleet in February 1875 . Kaiser mounted a main battery of eight 26 cm ( 10 in ) guns in a central battery amidships .

Kaiser served with the fleet from her commissioning until 1896 , though she was frequently placed in reserve throughout her career . The ship was a regular participant in the annual fleet training maneuvers conducted with the exception of the mid @-@ 1880s , when she was temporarily replaced by newer vessels . She participated in several cruises in the Baltic and Mediterranean , often escorting Kaiser Wilhelm II on official state visits . Kaiser was rebuilt in the early 1890s as an armored cruiser , though she was too slow to perform satisfactorily in this role . Nevertheless , she spent several years as the flagship of the East Asia Squadron before returning to Germany in 1899 . She was used in secondary roles after 1904 , until after the end of World War I in 1919 , when she was broken up for scrap .

= = Construction = =

Kaiser was ordered by the Imperial Navy from the Samuda Brothers shipyard in London , UK ; her keel was laid in 1871 . Kaiser and her sister Deutschland were ordered shortly after the end of the Franco @-@ Prussian War , under the assumption that the French would quickly attempt a war of revenge . The ship was launched on 19 March 1874 and commissioned into the German fleet on 13 February 1875 . Kaiser cost the German government 8 @, @ 226 @, @ 000 gold marks .

The ship was 89 @. @ 34 meters ( 293 @. @ 1 ft ) long overall and had a beam of 19 @. @ 10 m ( 62 @. @ 7 ft ) and a draft of 7 @. @ 39 m ( 24 @. @ 2 ft ) forward . Kaiser was powered by one 2 @-@ cylinder single expansion engine , which was supplied with steam by eight coal @-@ fired trunk boilers . The ship 's top speed was 14 @. @ 6 knots ( 27 @. @ 0 km / h ; 16 @. @ 8 mph ) , at 5 @, @ 779 indicated horsepower ( 4 @, @ 309 kW ) . She was also equipped with a full ship rig . Her standard complement consisted of 32 officers and 568 enlisted men .

She was armed with eight 26 cm ( 10 in ) L / 20 guns mounted in a central battery amidships . As built , the ship was also equipped with a single 21 cm ( 8 @. @ 3 in ) L / 22 gun . After being rebuilt in 1891 ? 1895 , her armament was increased by six 8 @. @ 8 cm ( 3 @. @ 5 in ) L / 22 and one 8 @. @ 8 cm L / 30 guns , four and later twelve 3 @. @ 7 cm ( 1 @. @ 5 in ) auto @-@ cannons , and five 35 cm ( 14 in ) torpedo tubes , all mounted in the ship 's hull . Kaiser 's armor was made of wrought iron and backed with teak . The armored belt was 127 to 254 mm ( 5 @. @ 0 to 10 @. @ 0 in ) thick ; this was backed with 90 to 226 mm ( 3 @. @ 5 to 8 @. @ 9 in ) of teak .

= = Service history = =

After commissioning in February 1875 , Kaiser spent the spring working up her engines to be ready for the annual summer training cruise . She joined the older ironclads Kronprinz and König Wilhelm and the new Hansa , under the command of Vice Admiral Ludwig von Henk . The four @-@ ship squadron remained in German waters for the entirety of the cruise , which finished with a review of the flotilla in Rostock by Kaiser Wilhelm I in September . The squadron was reactivated the next spring ; Rear Admiral Carl Ferdinand Batsch replaced Henk as the squadron commander . Kaiser served as the flagship of Batsch 's squadron , which also included Kaiser 's sister Deutschland , Kronprinz , and Friedrich Carl .

At around the time Batsch 's squadron was working up for the summer cruise , Henry Abbott , the German consul in Salonika , then in the Ottoman Empire , was murdered . Further attacks on German citizens living in the area were feared , and so Batsch was ordered to sail to the Mediterranean Sea to stage a naval demonstration in June 1876 . After arriving with the four ironclads , he was reinforced by three unarmored vessels . After the threat of violence subsided in

August , Batsch departed with Kaiser and Deutschland ; the other two ironclads remained in the Mediterranean for the rest of the summer .

Kaiser joined the 1877 summer squadron , composed of Deutschland , Friedrich Carl , and the new turret ironclad Preussen . The squadron was again sent to the Mediterranean , in response to unrest in the Ottoman Empire related to the Russo @-@ Turkish War ; the violence threatened German citizens living there . The squadron , again under the command of Batsch , steamed to the ports of Haifa and Jaffa in July 1877 , but found no significant tensions ashore . Batsch then departed and cruised the Mediterranean for the remainder of the summer , returning to Germany in October . The newly commissioned Friedrich der Grosse and Grosser Kurfürst , sister ships of Preussen , replaced Kaiser and Deutschland in the 1878 maneuvers , during which Grosser Kurfürst was accidentally rammed and sank with great loss of life .

Kaiser and her sister Deutschland remained in reserve for the next six years . They were reactivated in the spring of 1883 for the summer maneuvers under the command of Wilhelm von Wickede . Due to their long period out of service , their engines proved troublesome during the training cruise . Regardless , the 1883 cruise was the first year the German navy completely abandoned the use of sails on its large ironclads . Kaiser went into reserve during the 1884 maneuvers , which were conducted by a homogenous squadron composed of the four Sachsen @-@ class ironclads . The ship did not see active duty again until August 1887 , when she joined König Wihelm and Oldenburg as the I Squadron for three weeks of maneuvers with the rest of the fleet .

In May 1888 , Kaiser represented Germany at Barcelona 's World Fair , which held a naval review . During the summer of 1889 , Kaiser joined the fleet that steamed to Great Britain to celebrate the coronation of Kaiser Wilhelm II ; the ship joined her sister Deutschland and the turret ships Preussen and Friedrich der Grosse in the II Division . The fleet then held training maneuvers in the North Sea under command of Rear Admiral Friedrich Hollmann . Kaiser and the rest of the II Division became the training squadron for the fleet in 1889 ? 1890 , the first year the Kaiserliche Marine maintained a year @-@ round ironclad force . The squadron escorted Wilhelm II 's imperial yacht to the Mediterranean ; the voyage included state visits to Italy and the Ottoman Empire . The squadron remained in the Mediterranean until April 1890 , when it returned to Germany .

Kaiser participated in the ceremonial transfer of the island of Helgoland from British to German control in the summer of 1890 . She was present during the fleet maneuvers in September , where the entire eight @-@ ship armored squadron simulated a Russian fleet blockading Kiel . The II Division , including Kaiser , served as the training squadron in the winter of 1890 ? 1891 . The squadron again cruised the Mediterranean , under the command of Rear Admiral Wilhelm Schröder . Between 1891 and 1895 , Kaiser was rebuilt in the Imperial Dockyard in Wilhelmshaven . The ship was converted into an armored cruiser ; her heavy guns were removed and replaced with lighter weapons , including one 15 cm ( 5 @.@ 9 in ) , six 10 @.@ 5 cm ( 4 @.@ 1 in ) , and nine 8 @.@ 8 cm ( 3 @.@ 5 in ) guns . Her entire rigging equipment was removed and two heavy military masts were installed in place of the rigging . Despite the modernization , she remained quite slow . Deutschland and König Wilhelm were similarly converted .

= = = Service in East Asia = = =

In 1895 , Kaiser reinforced the East Asia Squadron , which also included the cruisers Irene and Prinzess Wilhelm and several smaller vessels . During the period of diplomatic tension between Britain and Germany caused by the Kruger telegram sent by Wilhelm II , Kaiser and several other overseas cruisers were ordered to return to German waters . This order was quickly reversed , as it was decided it would be seen as an act of weakness by Britain . In April 1896 , while entering the port of Amoy , Kaiser struck an uncharted rock . Only minor damage was done to the hull , but the ship was still out of service for twenty @-@ two days for repairs in Hong Kong . Kaiser served as the flagship of Rear Admiral Otto von Diederichs during his tenure as the squadron commander . Diederichs was tasked with locating a suitable concession to be used as the main port of the East Asia Squadron ; after surveying a number of sites aboard Kaiser , Diederichs settled on Kiautschou

Bay . In the wake of two violent incidents against Germans in China , Wilhelm II gave Diederichs permission to seize Kiautschou by force in November 1897 .

After dusk on 10 November , Kaiser left Shanghai and headed toward Kiautschou . Prinzess Wilhelm and Cormoran were to leave the following day to allay suspicion . The three ships rendezvoused on the 12th at sea ; Diederichs intended to steam into Kiautschou on the 14th and seize the port . At 06 : 00 on the 14th , Cormoran steamed into the bay to bring the Chinese forts under fire , while Kaiser and Prinzess Wilhelm sent a landing force of some 700 men ashore . In the span of two hours , Diederichs 's forces had captured the central and outlying forts and destroyed the Chinese telegraph , preventing them from notifying their superiors of the German attack . After negotiating with General Chang , the commander of the Kiautschou garrison , Diederichs succeeded in forcing the Chinese concession of Kiautschou to Germany , which he proclaimed at 14 : 20 . Diederichs was promoted to Vice Admiral following the successful seizure of the port .

In May 1898 , Diederichs sent Kaiser to Nagasaki for periodic maintenance . The Spanish ? American War , which saw action in the Philippines at the Battle of Manila Bay , necessitated a German naval presence in the area to protect German nationals . Kaiser was still in Nagasaki undergoing repairs , so Diederichs ordered her and Prinzess Wilhelm , also in dock for maintenance , to meet him in Manila as soon as was possible . Crew transfers during the repair process necessitated Irene and Cormoran to meet in Manila as well ; this concentration of five warships in the Philippines caused a serious crisis with the American Navy . Rear Admiral George Dewey objected to the size of the German force and to a meeting between Diederichs and Governor General Augustin , the Spanish governor of the Philippines . The German naval forces left the Philippines after the fall of Manila in August , though tensions with the United States continued for some time after .

Following his departure from Manila in August 1898 , Diederichs took Kaiser south to the Dutch East Indies . There , the ship represented Germany during celebrations for the coronation of Queen Wilhelmina . The ship then returned to Hong Kong via Singapore , before proceeding to Fuchow for gunnery practice . While steaming into the bay , however , the ship ran aground on an uncharted rock . Arcona and Cormoran arrived to tow Kaiser off the rocks , after which Diederichs sent her back to Hong Kong for repairs . Kaiser remained overseas until 1899 , when she returned to Germany . She was reduced to a harbor ship on 3 May 1904 and renamed Uranus on 12 October 1905 . The ship was stricken from the naval register on 21 May 1906 and used as a barracks ship for Württemberg in Flensburg . Uranus was ultimately broken up in 1920 in Harburg .