

= SMS Königsberg ( 1905 ) =

SMS Königsberg ( " His Majesty 's Ship Königsberg " ) was the lead ship of her class of light cruisers built by the German Kaiserliche Marine ( Imperial Navy ) . Named after Königsberg , the capital of East Prussia , she was laid down in January 1905 , launched in December of that year , and completed by June 1906 . Her class included three other ships : Stettin , Stuttgart , and Nürnberg . Königsberg was armed with a main battery of ten 10 @. @ 5 @-@ centimeter ( 4 @. @ 1 in ) guns and had a top speed of 24 @. @ 1 knots ( 44 @. @ 6 km / h ; 27 @. @ 7 mph ) .

After her commissioning , Königsberg served with the High Seas Fleet 's reconnaissance force . During this period , she frequently escorted Kaiser Wilhelm II 's yacht on visits to foreign countries . In April 1914 , the ship was sent on what was to have been a two @-@ year deployment to German East Africa , but this was interrupted by the outbreak of World War I in August of that year . Königsberg initially attempted to raid British and French commercial traffic in the region , but only destroyed one merchant ship in the course of her career . Coal shortages hampered her ability to attack shipping . On 20 September 1914 , she surprised and sank the British protected cruiser HMS Pegasus in the Battle of Zanzibar .

Königsberg then retreated into the Rufiji River to repair her engines . Before the repairs could be completed , British cruisers located Königsberg , and , unable to steam into the river to destroy her , set up a blockade . After several attempts to sink the ship during the Battle of Rufiji Delta , the British sent two monitors , Mersey and Severn , to destroy the German cruiser . On 11 July 1915 , the two monitors got close enough to severely damage Königsberg , forcing her crew to scuttle the ship . The surviving crew salvaged all ten of her main guns and joined Lieutenant Colonel Paul von Lettow @-@ Vorbeck 's guerrilla campaign in East Africa . Königsberg was partially broken up in 1963 ? 65 for scrap , and the remains sank into the riverbed .

= = Design = =

Königsberg and her sisters were designed to serve both as fleet scouts in home waters and in Germany 's colonial empire . This was a result of budgetary constraints that prevented the Kaiserliche Marine from building more specialized cruisers suitable for both roles .

Königsberg was 115 @. @ 3 meters ( 378 ft 3 in ) long overall and had a beam of 13 @. @ 2 m ( 43 ft 4 in ) and a draft of 5 @. @ 29 m ( 17 ft 4 in ) forward . She displaced 3 @, @ 814 t ( 3 @, @ 754 long tons ; 4 @, @ 204 short tons ) at full combat load . Her propulsion system consisted of two 3 @-@ cylinder triple @-@ expansion steam engines powered by eleven coal @-@ fired water @-@ tube boilers rated at 13 @, @ 020 indicated horsepower ( 9 @, @ 709 kW ) . These provided a top speed of 24 @. @ 1 knots ( 44 @. @ 6 km / h ; 27 @. @ 7 mph ) and a range of approximately 5 @, @ 750 nautical miles ( 10 @, @ 650 km ; 6 @, @ 620 mi ) at 12 knots ( 22 km / h ; 14 mph ) . Königsberg had a crew of 14 officers and 308 enlisted men .

The ship was armed with ten 10 @. @ 5 cm SK L / 45 guns in single pedestal mounts . There were two side by side forward on the forecastle , six amidships , three on either side , and two side by side aft . The guns had a maximum elevation of 30 degrees , which allowed them to engage targets out to 12 @, @ 700 m ( 41 @, @ 700 ft ) . They were supplied with 1 @, @ 500 rounds of ammunition , for 150 shells per gun . Königsberg also carried ten 5 @. @ 2 cm ( 2 @. @ 0 in ) SK guns in single mounts . She was also equipped with a pair of 45 cm ( 17 @. @ 7 in ) torpedo tubes with five torpedoes submerged in the hull on the broadside . The ship was protected by an armored deck that was 80 mm ( 3 @. @ 1 in ) thick amidships . The conning tower sides were 100 mm ( 3 @. @ 9 in ) thick .

= = Service history = =

Königsberg was ordered under the contract name " Ersatz Meteor " and was laid down at the Imperial Dockyard in Kiel on 12 January 1905 . She was launched on 12 December 1905 , when the Oberbürgermeister of Königsberg , Siegfried Körte , christened the ship , after which fitting @-@ out

work commenced . She was commissioned into the High Seas Fleet for sea trials on 6 April 1907 . Her trials were interrupted at the beginning of June when she was tasked with escorting Kaiser Wilhelm II 's yacht Hohenzollern during three sailing regattas including Kiel Week . The two ships then cruised the North Sea and stopped at Nordkapp , where from 3 to 6 August , Wilhelm II met Czar Nicholas II of Russia . After returning to Germany , Königsberg resumed her sea trials , which lasted from 9 August to 9 September . She visited her namesake city from 21 to 23 September and was later assigned to the fleet scouting forces to replace the cruiser Medusa on 5 November . At this time , Königsberg was again used to escort Wilhelm II 's yacht , this time in company with the new armored cruiser Scharnhorst and the dispatch boat Sleipner on a visit to Britain . The ships stopped in Portsmouth and the Thames , and were visited by Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands .

On 17 December , Königsberg was tasked with another goodwill visit , this time escorting the Kaiser 's brother , Prince Heinrich , and a delegation of naval officers to Malmö , Sweden to meet King Oscar II . The visit lasted until 20 December . Königsberg participated in the normal peacetime routine of individual and squadron training for 1908 without incident . The year ended with a major training cruise , first in the Baltic and North Sea and later into the Atlantic , that ended in early December . The ship then went into drydock over the winter of 1908 ? 09 for periodic maintenance , emerging for service again in early February 1909 . A typical training routine followed for the next two years , interrupted only by a collision with the new cruiser Dresden on 16 February 1910 in the Kiel Bay , and two trips escorting the Kaiser in 1910 ; the first to Helgoland on 9 ? 13 March and the second to Britain from 8 to 27 May . The collision with Dresden caused significant damage to both ships , though no one on either vessel was injured . Both ships were repaired in Kiel . Dresden also won the Kaiser 's Schießpreis ( Shooting Prize ) for excellent gunnery in the reconnaissance force during this period . From December 1909 to September 1910 , Fregattenkapitän ( Frigate Captain ) Adolf von Trotha served as the ship 's commander .

From 8 March to 22 May 1911 , Königsberg cruised in the Mediterranean Sea with Wilhelm II aboard Hohenzollern . On 10 June , Königsberg was replaced in the reconnaissance force by the new cruiser Kolberg ; Königsberg was transferred to Danzig , where she was placed out of service on 14 June for modernization work . On 22 January 1913 , the ship was recommissioned for service with the fleet , to replace the cruiser Mainz which was also being modernized . This service lasted until 19 June , when Königsberg was again placed in reserve in Kiel . During this period of active service , she was assigned to the training squadron from 1 to 18 April . In early 1914 , the high command decided to send Königsberg to German East Africa , where she would replace the current station ship , the old unprotected cruiser Geier .

On 1 April 1914 , Fregattenkapitän Max Loeff took command of the ship . Königsberg left Kiel on 25 April , stopped in Wilhelmshaven , and then left three days later for a two @-@ year deployment to German East Africa . She steamed into the Mediterranean Sea and stopped in Spanish and Italian ports before entering the Suez Canal . After passing through the canal , she stopped briefly in Aden before arriving in Dar es Salaam , the capital of German East Africa , on 5 June . Two days later , the Schutztruppe ( Protection Force ) celebrated their 25th anniversary in the colony ; the deputy commander of the Schutztruppe presented Loeff with a model of the cruiser Schwalbe , which had been the longest serving warship with the unit . Königsberg surveyed the harbor at Bagamoyo later in the year . The African colonial subjects considered the ship to be quite impressive , particularly her three funnels , which were assumed to signify a warship more powerful than one with only two funnels . The ship acquired the nickname Manowari na bomba tatu , or " the man of war with three pipes " .

As tensions in Europe rose in the aftermath of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria , Loeff decided to abandon the normal peacetime training schedule and returned to Dar es Salaam on 24 July to replenish his coal and other stores . He also made efforts to organize a coast watcher network to report enemy ships and to protect German shipping in the area . On 27 July , Loeff received a message from the Admiralstab ( Admiralty Staff ) informing him of the worsening political situation in Europe . Concurrently , the cruisers of the British Cape Squadron , HMS Astraea , Hyacinth , and Pegasus , arrived with the intention of bottling up Königsberg at the colony 's capital Dar es Salaam . Loeff got his ship ready to sail and left port on the afternoon of 31 July 1914 , with

the three slower British ships shadowing him . Loeff used a rain squall and his ship 's superior speed to break contact with his British pursuers the following day . Königsberg steamed off Aden until 5 August , when word of the outbreak of hostilities between Britain and Germany belatedly reached the ship .

= = = World War I = = =

At the outbreak of World War I , Königsberg was ordered to attack British commerce around the entrance to the Red Sea . A lack of coal hampered Loeff 's efforts ; the British prevented his collier Koenig from leaving Dar es Salaam and purchased all the coal in Portuguese East Africa to deny it to Königsberg . Loeff then radioed the German steamer Zieten to warn her against using the Suez Canal , where she would have been confiscated . Königsberg chased after the German freighter Goldenfels , whose officers mistook the ship for a British cruiser and refused to stop . Königsberg was forced to fire a warning shot across the bow of Goldenfels to force the ship to stop so that Loeff could warn her captain of the state of war .

On 6 August , Königsberg found a British ship off the coast of Oman , the freighter City of Winchester . A prize crew took the ship along with Königsberg , and the two vessels met Zieten four days later in the Khuriya Muriya Islands , where coal from City of Winchester was transferred to Königsberg . The freighter was thereafter sunk . The British crew was taken aboard Zieten , which departed the following day and stopped in Mozambique . Meanwhile , the steamer Somali , under the command of Korvettenkapitän ( Corvette Captain ) Zimmer , had left Dar es Salaam with a cargo of 1 @, @ 200 t ( 1 @, @ 200 long tons ; 1 @, @ 300 short tons ) of coal on the night of 3 ? 4 August to resupply Königsberg ; the two ships met ten days later . By the time Loeff rendezvoused with Somali , his ship was down to a mere 14 t ( 14 long tons ; 15 short tons ) of coal . Somali transferred some 850 t ( 840 long tons ; 940 short tons ) of coal to the cruiser , which permitted a sweep to Madagascar . No British or French ships were found , however , and so Königsberg met Somali again on 23 August and took on coal for four days of cruising .

In the meantime , British warships bombarded Dar es Salaam and destroyed the German wireless station there . By this time , Königsberg 's engines required a thorough overhaul , and Loeff needed to find a secluded area where the work could be completed . He settled on the Rufiji Delta , which had recently been surveyed by the survey ship Möwe . On 3 September 1914 at high tide , Königsberg passed over the bar at the mouth of the Rufiji and slowly made her way up the river . Coast watchers were stationed at the mouth of the river and telegraph lines were run to ensure the Germans would not be surprised by British ships searching for them . Zimmer , who was sending small coastal steamers to resupply Königsberg , observed a British cruiser ? Pegasus ? patrolling the coast for two weeks . He deduced that the ship would likely have to coal at Zanzibar on Sundays , and so Loeff decided to attack the ship in port before he began his overhaul . He considered the action justified , since Britain had rejected a German proposal to keep central Africa neutral according to the Congo Act of 1885 .

On 19 September , Königsberg left the Rufiji and arrived off Zanzibar the following morning . She opened fire at a range of about 7 @, @ 000 meters ( 23 @, @ 000 ft ) at 05 : 10 , starting the Battle of Zanzibar ; within 45 minutes , Pegasus caught fire , rolled over to port , and sank . Crewmen aboard Pegasus had raised a white flag , but it could not be seen aboard Königsberg due to the heavy smoke . Pegasus 's crew suffered 38 dead and 55 wounded , while Königsberg was undamaged and had no casualties . After sinking Pegasus , Königsberg bombarded the wireless station and dumped barrels filled with sand into the harbor entrance to simulate mines . While leaving the harbor , Königsberg spotted the picket ship Helmut and sank her with three shells .

The cruiser then returned to the Rufiji River so work could begin on overhauling her engines ; the parts would need to be transported overland to the shipyard in Dar es Salaam where they could be rebuilt . While moored in the town of Salale , the ship was heavily camouflaged and defensive arrangements were erected . These included positioning soldiers and field guns to defend the approaches to the cruiser and establishing a network of coast watchers and telegraph lines to watch for hostile ships . An improvised minefield was also laid in the delta to keep the British ships from

entering the river .

Concerned with the threat Königsberg posed to troop transports from India , the British reinforced the flotilla tasked with tracking down the elusive German raider , and placed the ships under the command of Captain Sidney R. Drury @-@ Lowe . The sinking of Pegasus convinced the British that Königsberg must still be in German East Africa . On 19 October , the cruiser Chatham found the German East Africa Line ship Präsident at Lindi . A boarding party searched the ship and discovered documents indicating she had supplied Königsberg with coal in the Rufiji the previous month . On 30 October , the cruiser Dartmouth located Königsberg and Somali in the delta . The cruisers Chatham , Dartmouth , and Weymouth blockaded the Rufiji Delta to ensure Königsberg could not escape .

= = = = Battle of Rufiji Delta = = = =

On 3 November , the British began a bombardment in an attempt to destroy or neutralize Königsberg and Somali . Königsberg was protected by the thick mangrove swamps , which concealed the ship and offered a degree of cover from British shellfire , especially while the British ships remained outside the river . A collier , Newbridge , was converted into a blockship to be sunk in the main channel of the delta to prevent Königsberg 's escape . Despite heavy German fire from both sides of the river , the British successfully sank Newbridge across one of the delta mouths on 10 November , though the German raider could still put to sea via other channels . Loeff decided to move his ship further upriver , to make it more difficult for the British to destroy her . In doing so , his ship would occupy a disproportionate number of British vessels that could otherwise have been employed elsewhere . In the course of the campaign , the British reinforced the squadron blockading the Rufiji with additional cruisers , including Pyramus and the Australian HMAS Pioneer .

A civilian pilot , Denis Cutler of Durban , South Africa , was commissioned into the Royal Marines and persuaded to make his private Curtiss seaplane available for the British Empire . The Royal Navy requisitioned the passenger ship Kinfauns Castle to serve as a makeshift tender for Cutler 's aircraft . On his first attempt to locate the cruiser , Cutler , who did not have a compass , got lost and was forced to land on a desert island . On his second flight , he successfully located Königsberg , and a third flight with a Royal Navy observer confirmed his observations . His aircraft 's radiator was damaged on the flight and he was grounded until replacement parts could be brought from Mombasa . A pair of Royal Naval Air Service Sopwiths were brought up with the intention of scouting and even bombing the ship . They soon fell apart in the tropical conditions . A trio of Short seaplanes fared a little better , though they too were quickly disabled by the conditions .

Also in November , the British sought to use the 12 @-@ inch ( 305 mm ) guns of the old battleship Goliath to sink the cruiser . The attempt was unsuccessful , once again because the shallow waters prevented the battleship from getting within range . In December , Oberstleutnant ( Lieutenant Colonel ) Paul von Lettow @-@ Vorbeck requested as many crew members from the ship as possible for the East Africa Campaign against the British ; a total of 220 men were left aboard to keep the ship in fighting condition . This was not enough , however , to permit the ship to go to sea . Königsberg moved further up the river on 18 December . On 23 December , the British used a pair of shallow @-@ draft ships to sail up the delta . They hit Somali once before German defensive fire forced them to retreat .

In the meantime , conditions were deteriorating on Königsberg . There were shortages of coal , ammunition , food , and medical supplies . Although safe from the British , the crew was ravaged by malaria and other tropical ailments . Generally cut off from the outside world , the morale of the sailors fell . However , the situation was marginally improved with a scheme to resupply the ship and give her a fighting chance to return home . A captured British merchant ship , Rubens , was renamed Kronborg . It was given a Danish flag , papers , and a crew of German sailors selected for their ability to speak Danish . It was then packed with coal , field guns , ammunition , small arms , and various supplies . As the freighter approached East Africa , Königsberg prepared to sortie to meet the ship and attempt to break out and return to Germany . Instead , Königsberg was trapped in the river by two cruisers and several smaller vessels . Hyacinth intercepted Kronborg as she

approached , and chased her to Manza Bay . The trapped ship was forced aground and set on fire , but the Germans salvaged much of her cargo and put it to use later in the East Africa Campaign .

Finally , in April 1915 , the British Admiralty agreed to a plan submitted by Drury @@ Lowe the previous November , which envisioned attacking the German cruiser with shallow @@ draft monitors , capable of navigating the Rufiji River . Two of the warships , Mersey and Severn , armed with a pair of 6 in ( 152 mm ) guns each , were brought from Britain . Königsberg had in the meantime been moved a third time , even further upriver . On 6 July 1915 , the two monitors crossed the outer sandbar and steamed up the river , despite heavy fire from German positions on the river banks . They stopped at a point they thought to be 10 @,@ 000 yd ( 9 @,@ 100 m ) from Königsberg , which would be in range of their own guns but farther than the smaller German guns could reply . Aircraft were used to spot the fall of shot . The monitors ' navigation was faulty , however , and after opening fire , they found themselves to be within range of Königsberg 's guns . She hit Mersey twice in the engagement ; one shell disabled the forward 6 @-@ inch gun , and another holed the ship below the waterline . Königsberg was hit four times in return , one shell striking beneath the waterline and causing some flooding . In the span of three hours , Königsberg forced both British ships to withdraw .

They returned again on 11 July , after having repaired the damage sustained in the first attempt . The two monitors conducted a five @-@ hour bombardment . Königsberg opened fire at 12 : 12 , initially with four guns , but only three guns remained in action after 12 : 42 , two guns after 12 : 44 , and one gun after 12 : 53 . The two monitors did not respond until 12 : 31 , once they had been anchored into their firing positions , and scored several serious hits that caused a major fire at the ship 's stern and inflicted heavy casualties . By 13 : 40 , Königsberg had run low on ammunition and her gun crews had suffered very heavy casualties , and so Loeff ordered the crew to abandon ship and to drop the breech blocks for the guns overboard to disable them . Two torpedo warheads were detonated in the ship 's bow to scuttle her ; the ship rolled over slightly to starboard and sank up to the upper deck with her flags still flying . Nineteen men had been killed in the battle , with another forty @-@ five wounded , including Loeff .

Later that day , the crew returned to haul down the ship 's flag and gave three cheers for the Kaiser . The guns and other usable equipment were salvaged from the wreck starting the following day . The guns were converted into field artillery pieces and coastal guns ; together with the ship 's crew , they went on to see service in the East African land campaign under Lettow @-@ Vorbeck . All ten guns were repaired in Dar es Salaam over the next two months ; one was mounted on the converted ferry Götzen of the inland Lake Tanganyika fleet . The surviving sailors , organized as the Königsberg @-@ Abteilung ( Königsberg @-@ Detachment ) , eventually surrendered on 26 November 1917 and were interned in British Egypt . In 1919 , after the war , the men took part in a parade through the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin to celebrate their service and that of their ship .

In 1924 , John Ingle , the former captain of Pegasus , was tasked with clearing wrecks from the harbor in Dar es Salaam . At that time , he bought the salvage rights to Königsberg for the price of £ 200 ; he sent divers to extract non @-@ ferrous scrap metal from the wreck and in turn sold the rights . Salvage work continued into the 1930s , and by the 1940s the hull had rolled over to her starboard side . As late as 1965 , salvage work continued , but in 1966 the wreck collapsed and finally sank into the riverbed . Three of the ship 's 10 @.@ 5 cm guns are preserved , one in Pretoria , South Africa , one in Jinja , Uganda , and one in Mombasa , along with a gun from Pegasus .