

= SMS Prinzess Wilhelm =

SMS Prinzess Wilhelm ( " His Majesty 's Ship Princess Wilhelm " ) was a protected cruiser of the German Imperial Navy ( Kaiserliche Marine ) . She was the second Irene class cruiser ; her only sister ship was SMS Irene . Prinzess Wilhelm was laid down in 1886 at the Germaniawerft shipyard in Kiel , launched in September 1887 , and commissioned into the fleet in November 1889 . As built , the ship was armed with a main battery of fourteen 15 cm ( 5 @. 9 in ) guns and had a top speed of 18 knots ( 33 km / h ; 21 mph ) .

In 1895 , Prinzess Wilhelm was deployed to East Asian waters , where she frequently served as the flagship of the East Asia Cruiser Division . She was one of the three ships that participated in the seizure of Kiaochow Bay under the command of Rear Admiral Otto von Diederichs . She subsequently was present in the Philippines in the immediate aftermath of the Battle of Manila Bay between American and Spanish squadrons during the Spanish ? American War in 1898 . Prinzess Wilhelm returned to Germany in 1899 and was modernized in 1899 ? 1903 . She was reduced to a mine hulk in February 1914 and ultimately broken up for scrap in 1922 .

= = Design = =

Prinzess Wilhelm was the second protected cruiser built by the German navy . She was ordered under the contract name " Ersatz Ariadne " and was laid down at the Germaniawerft shipyard in Kiel in 1886 . She was launched on 22 September 1887 , after which fitting @-@ out work commenced . She was commissioned into the German navy on 13 November 1889 . The ship was 103 @. 7 meters ( 340 ft ) long overall and had a beam of 14 @. 2 m ( 47 ft ) and a draft of 6 @. 74 m ( 22 @. 1 ft ) forward . She displaced 5 @, 027 t ( 4 @, 948 long tons ; 5 @, 541 short tons ) at full combat load . Her propulsion system consisted of two horizontal AG Germania 2 @-@ cylinder double @-@ expansion steam engines powered by four coal @-@ fired cylindrical double @-@ boilers . These provided a top speed of 18 kn ( 33 km / h ; 21 mph ) and a range of approximately 2 @, 490 nautical miles ( 4 @, 610 km ; 2 @, 870 mi ) at 9 kn ( 17 km / h ; 10 mph ) . She had a crew of 28 officers and 337 enlisted men .

The ship was armed with four 15 cm K L / 30 guns in single pedestal mounts , supplied with 400 rounds of ammunition in total . They had a range of 8 @, 500 m ( 27 @, 900 ft ) . Prinzess Wilhelm also carried ten shorter @-@ barreled 15 cm K L / 22 guns in single mounts . These guns had a much shorter range , at 5 @, 400 m ( 17 @, 700 ft ) . The gun armament was rounded out by six 3 @. 7 cm revolver cannon . She was also equipped with three 35 cm ( 14 in ) torpedo tubes with eight torpedoes , two launchers were mounted on the deck and the third was in the bow , below the waterline . In 1893 , the ship was modernized in Wilhelmshaven in 1903 ; work lasted until 1905 . The ship 's armament was significantly improved ; the four L / 30 guns were replaced with a new model with an increased range of 10 @, 000 m ( 33 @, 000 ft ) . Eight 10 @. 5 cm SK L / 35 quick @-@ firing ( QF ) guns were installed in place of the L / 22 guns , and six 5 cm SK L / 10 QF guns were added .

= = Service history = =

In the first maneuvers of 1890 , the newly commissioned Prinzess Wilhelm operated as the opposing force with several old corvettes . In September 1892 , the ship was sent to Genoa to represent Germany in the 400th anniversary of the voyage of Christopher Columbus . She was the only German ship sent to the ceremonies , a result of cooling relations between Germany and Italy at the time . In the 1894 autumn maneuvers , Prinzess Wilhelm served as the flagship of a reconnaissance flotilla . In January 1895 , Prinzess Wilhelm was dispatched to Asian to reinforce the Cruiser Division stationed there . After she joined her sister Irene in East Asian waters , the Division was reinforced with the rebuilt old ironclad Kaiser , the light cruiser Cormoran , the corvette Arcona , and the gunboat Itis . In June 1896 , Alfred von Tirpitz took command of the Cruiser Division . By November , Prinzess Wilhelm was in bad need of maintenance , as engine problems limited her to

half @-@ speed .

In June 1897 , Rear Admiral Otto von Diederichs arrived in Asia to take command of the Cruiser Division ; Prinzess Wilhelm , Irene , and Arcona were in Chefoo conducting gunnery training . Diederichs , aboard Kaiser , joined the rest of the Division in Chefoo at the end of the month . There , he held a series of ceremonial visits with the captains of each of his ships . On 1 July , Diederichs boarded Prinzess Wilhelm to make a visit to the Chinese capital at Peking . There , he attempted to negotiate with the Chinese government to acquire a permanent naval base for the Cruiser Division . Diederichs , who sought the port of Kiaochou , was unsuccessful in his attempt , and so he returned to Prinzess Wilhelm on 11 July . While leaving Peking , he examined the Taku Forts that guarded the entrance to Peking . Diederichs returned to the Division on 16 July , after which he conducted a tour of Asian ports with the entire Division .

= = = Seizure of Kiaochou = = =

In October , Diederichs planned to rotate his ships through repair facilities in the region for periodic maintenance ; Prinzess Wilhelm was scheduled to dock in Shanghai . He requested permission to take Prinzess Wilhelm and Kaiser to Kiaochou for autumn gunnery training and to leave Prinzess Wilhelm stationed there during the winter , which was denied . Diederichs was able to make use of the murder of a pair of German priests on 6 November in Shangtung , however , to justify his move against Kiaochou . At the time , the only ships available for the attack were Prinzess Wilhelm and Kaiser . Cormoran joined the two ships after a few days , and by 10 November , the ships were ready . Prinzess Wilhelm left port on the 11th , to rendezvous with Kaiser and Cormoran at sea .

On the night 12 November , the three ships met and formed into line ; the attack was scheduled to begin on the morning of 14 November with a bombardment from the warships . The crews of Prinzess Wilhelm and Kaiser were to form a landing party to seize the harbor . The flotilla arrived on the morning of the 13th . The following morning , the landing party of some 700 officers and men was landed on the main pier in the harbor . The Chinese were caught completely by surprise , and the Germans secured their objectives within two hours ; Diederichs convinced the Chinese commander , General Chang , to withdraw from Kiaochou . The Imperial flag was raised in the town and Prinzess Wilhelm fired a 21 @-@ gun salute . The landing party remained in Kiaochou to garrison the port , and several 3 @.@ 7 cm guns were removed from the ships to provide artillery to the force .

Diederichs requested reinforcements from Germany , and the Kaiser authorized a second Division to deploy to the East Asia station . The unit was therefore reorganized as the East Asia Squadron ; Prinzess Wilhelm was assigned to the I Division of the Squadron . On 27 November , Diederichs was promoted to Vice Admiral for his success in seizing Kiaochou , and given command of the new Squadron . Chinese forces converged on the port by the end of the month . Prinzess Wilhelm and Kaiser moved into the harbor to provide artillery support . General Chang , who had been placed under house arrest , was discovered to have been attempting to subvert the German occupation ; Diederichs therefore placed him under arrest aboard Prinzess Wilhelm . A brief skirmish ensued , which quickly resulted in a Chinese rout . On 8 January , a force of 50 men from Prinzess Wilhelm 's crew was sent to Chi @-@ mo to defend against Chinese raids in the area .

= = = The Philippines during the Spanish ? American War = = =

In the Spring of 1898 , Prince Heinrich arrived in Asia . While awaiting his arrival , Diederichs planned to rotate his ships through dockyards for periodic maintenance . On 4 May , Diederichs made Prinzess Wilhelm his flagship and sent Kaiser to Nagasaki and followed the next day , after Prince Heinrich reached Kiaochou . The Spanish ? American War had broken out on 25 April and Commodore George Dewey had defeated the Spanish squadron at the Battle of Manila Bay on 1 May . Diederichs planned to use the crisis as an opportunity to seize another base for the Squadron in Asia . Upon arriving in Nagasaki , Diederichs learned the shipyard had not yet completed repairs to Kaiser , and so was unable to refit Prinzess Wilhelm for some time . He therefore ordered

Kaiserin Augusta to meet him in Nagasaki , which he would use as his temporary flagship . Prinzess Wilhelm and Kaiser were to rejoin Diederichs once their repairs were completed .

On 20 June , Prinzess Wilhelm arrived in the Philippines ; Diederichs now had a force of five warships : Prinzess Wilhelm , Kaiser , Irene , Kaiserin Augusta , and Cormoran . After her arrival , Prinzess Wilhelm proceeded to Mariveles to replenish her coal supplies and receive new crewmen from the transport Darmstadt . On 9 August , the American squadron in the Bay ordered the neutral warships in the harbor to leave the bombardment zone , and so Prinzess Wilhelm and the other German ships went to Mariveles . Following the fall of the city , most of the German ships departed the Philippines ; only Prinzess Wilhelm remained on station to protect German nationals in the islands . She was replaced by Arcona in October . In mid @-@ November , Kaiser ran aground and had to go into drydock for repairs ; Diederichs therefore made Prinzess Wilhelm his flagship . The ship remained in Asia for only a few more months , returning to European waters in 1899 .

= = = Fate = = =

After returning to Germany in 1899 , she went into drydock at the Imperial Dockyard in Wilhelmshaven for modernization ; work lasted until 1902 . She was stricken from the naval register on 17 February 1914 and used as a mine hulk . She was initially based in Danzig , but later moved to Kiel and Wilhelmshaven . On 26 November 1921 , Prinzess Wilhelm was sold for 909 @,@ 000 Marks . She was broken up the following year in Wilhelmshaven .