

= SMS Preussen ( 1903 ) =

SMS Preussen was the fourth of five pre @-@ dreadnought battleships of the Braunschweig class in the Kaiserliche Marine ( the German Imperial Navy ) laid down in 1902 and commissioned 1905 . She was named for the state of Prussia Her sister ships were Braunschweig , Elsass , Hessen , and Lothringen .

Preussen served in the II Battle Squadron of the German High Seas Fleet for the majority of her career . She participated in a fleet advance in December 1914 in support of the Raid on Scarborough , Hartlepool and Whitby during which the German fleet encountered and briefly clashed with a detachment of the British Grand Fleet . She had been temporarily assigned to guard ship duties in the Baltic in May 1916 , and so missed the Battle of Jutland . Due to her age , she did not rejoin the fleet , and instead continued to serve as a guard ship until 1917 , when she became a fleet tender .

After the war , Preussen was retained by the re @-@ formed Reichsmarine and converted into a depot ship for F @-@ type minesweepers . She was stricken in April 1929 and sold to ship breakers in 1931 . A 63 @-@ meter ( 207 ft ) section of her hull was retained as a target ; it was bombed and sunk in 1945 by Allied bombers at the end of World War II , and subsequently scrapped in 1954 .

= = Construction = =

Preussen was laid down in 1902 , at the AG Vulcan in Stettin under construction number 256 . The fourth unit of her class , she was ordered under the contract name " K " as a new unit for the fleet . The ship cost 23 @, @ 990 @, @ 000 marks . Preussen was launched on 30 October 1903 and commissioned into the fleet on 12 July 1905 .

The ship was 127 @. @ 7 m ( 419 ft ) long overall and had a beam of 22 @. @ 2 m ( 73 ft ) and a draft of 8 @. @ 1 m ( 27 ft ) forward . The ship was powered by three 3 @-@ cylinder vertical triple expansion engines that drove three screws . Steam was provided by eight naval and six cylindrical boilers , all of which burned coal . Preussen 's powerplant was rated at 16 @, @ 000 metric horsepower ( 15 @, @ 781 ihp ; 11 @, @ 768 kW ) , which generated a top speed of 18 knots ( 33 km / h ; 21 mph ) .

Preussen 's armament consisted of a main battery of four 28 cm ( 11 in ) SK L / 40 guns in twin gun turrets , one fore and one aft of the central superstructure . Her secondary armament consisted of fourteen 17 cm ( 6 @. @ 7 inch ) SK L / 40 guns and eighteen 8 @. @ 8 cm ( 3 @. @ 45 in ) SK L / 35 quick @-@ firing guns . The armament suite was rounded out with six 45 cm ( 18 in ) torpedo tubes , all mounted submerged in the hull .

= = Service history = =

After commissioning in 1905 , Preussen was assigned to the II Battle Squadron of the German fleet . There she joined her sisters Braunschweig , Elsass , and Hessen . By the end of 1911 , three of the four new Helgoland @-@ class dreadnoughts had entered active duty with the I Squadron ; the only pre @-@ dreadnought remaining in I Squadron was Preussen 's sister Elsass . Preussen and seven other Braunschweig and Deutschland @-@ class ships made up the II Squadron . Preussen was present during the fleet cruise to Norway in July 1914 , which was cut short by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and subsequent rise in international tensions . On 25 July the ship 's crew was made aware of Austria @-@ Hungary 's ultimatum to Serbia ; Preussen left Norway to rendezvous with the rest of the fleet the following day .

= = = World War I = = =

After the outbreak of war in August 1914 , the High Seas Fleet conducted a series of operations designed to lure out a portion of the numerically superior British Grand Fleet and destroy it . By achieving a rough equality of forces , the German navy could then force a decisive battle in the

southern portion of the North Sea . The first such operation in which the High Seas Fleet participated was the raid on Scarborough , Hartlepool and Whitby on 15 ? 16 December 1914 . The main fleet acted as distant support for Rear Admiral Franz von Hipper 's battlecruiser squadron while it raided the coastal towns . On the evening of 15 December , the fleet came to within 10 nmi ( 19 km ; 12 mi ) of an isolated squadron of six British battleships . However , skirmishes between the rival destroyer screens in the darkness convinced the German fleet commander , Admiral Friedrich von Ingenohl , that the entire Grand Fleet was deployed before him . Under orders from Kaiser Wilhelm II , von Ingenohl broke off the engagement and turned the battlefleet back towards Germany .

Preussen , though assigned to the II Squadron , missed the Battle of Jutland on 31 May ? 1 June 1916 . She had been temporarily transferred to the Baltic to serve as a guard ship . Her sister ship , Lothringen , also missed the battle , as she had been deemed to be in too poor a condition to participate in the fleet advance . Jutland proved to Vice Admiral Reinhard Scheer , the fleet commander , that the pre @-@ dreadnought battleships were too vulnerable to take part in a major fleet action , and so detached the II Squadron from the High Seas Fleet . As a result , Preussen remained in service as a guard ship in the Baltic . From 1917 to the end of the war , she served as a fleet tender based in Wilhelmshaven . Preussen briefly held Edouard Izac , a US Navy sailor captured after his ship was sunk by U @-@ 90 , in June 1918 ; Izac would go on to escape from a German prisoner of war camp and win the Medal of Honor .

= = = Post @-@ war career = = =

The Treaty of Versailles , which ended the war , specified that Germany was permitted to retain six battleships of the " Deutschland or Lothringen types . " Preussen was among those ships chosen to remain on active service with the newly reformed Reichsmarine . The ship was converted into a parent ship for F @-@ type minesweepers at the Kriegsmarinewerft in Wilhelmshaven in 1919 ; the ship was disarmed and platforms for holding the minesweepers were installed .

Preussen served in this capacity with the newly reformed Reichsmarine until 1929 . She was stricken from the naval register on 5 April 1929 ; the Reichsmarine sold her to ship breakers on 25 February 1931 for 216 @,@ 800 Reichsmarks . Preussen was subsequently broken up for scrap in Wilhelmshaven , though a 63 m ( 207 ft ) length of her hull was retained as a testing target for underwater weapons , including torpedoes and mines . The section of hull was nicknamed " SMS Vierkant ( " SMS Rectangle " ) . Allied bombers attacked and sank the section of Preussen 's hull in April 1945 . It was eventually raised and scrapped in late 1954 .