

= SMS Strassburg =

SMS Strassburg was a light cruiser of the Magdeburg class in the German Kaiserliche Marine ( Imperial Navy ) . Her class included three other ships : Magdeburg , Breslau , and Stralsund . Strassburg was built at the Kaiserliche Werft shipyard in Wilhelmshaven from 1910 to October 1912 , when she was commissioned into the High Seas Fleet . The ship was armed with a main battery of twelve 10 @. @ 5 cm ( 4 @. @ 1 in ) SK L / 45 guns and had a top speed of 27 @. @ 5 knots ( 50 @. @ 9 km / h ; 31 @. @ 6 mph ) .

Strassburg spent the first year of her service overseas , after which she was assigned to the reconnaissance forces of the High Seas Fleet . She saw significant action at the Battle of Heligoland Bight in August 1914 and participated in the raid on Scarborough , Hartlepool and Whitby in December 1914 . By 1916 , the ship was transferred to the Baltic to operate against the Russian Navy . She saw action during Operation Albion in the Gulf of Riga in October 1917 , including screening for the battleships König and Markgraf during the Battle of Moon Sound . She returned to the North Sea for the planned final operation against the British Grand Fleet in the last weeks of the war , and was involved in the mutinies that forced the cancellation of the operation .

The ship served briefly in the new Reichsmarine in 1919 before being transferred to Italy as a war prize . She was formally transferred in July 1920 and renamed Taranto for service in the Italian Navy . In 1936 ? 1937 , she was rebuilt for colonial duties and additional anti @-@ aircraft guns were installed . She saw no significant action during World War II until the Armistice that ended Italy 's participation in the war . She was scuttled by the Italian Navy , captured and raised by the Germans , and sunk by Allied bombers in October 1943 . The Germans raised the ship again , which was sunk a second time by bombers in September 1944 . Taranto was finally broken up for scrap in 1946 ? 1947 .

= = Design = =

Strassburg was ordered under the contract name Ersatz Condor and was laid down at the Kaiserliche Werft shipyard in Wilhelmshaven in 1910 and launched on 24 August 1911 , after which fitting @-@ out work commenced . She was commissioned into the High Seas Fleet on 9 October 1912 . The ship was 138 @. @ 70 m ( 455 ft 1 in ) long overall and had a beam of 13 @. @ 50 m ( 13 @. @ 50 m ) and a draft of 4 @. @ 25 m ( 4 @. @ 25 m ) forward . She displaced 5 @, @ 281 t ( 5 @, @ 198 long tons ; 5 @, @ 821 short tons ) at full combat load . Her propulsion system consisted of two sets of AEG @-@ Vulcan steam turbines driving two 3 @. @ 40 @-@ meter ( 11 ft 2 in ) propellers . They were designed to give 25 @, @ 000 metric horsepower ( 18 @, @ 390 kW ; 24 @, @ 660 shp ) , but reached 33 @, @ 482 PS ( 24 @, @ 626 kW ; 33 @, @ 024 shp ) in service . These were powered by sixteen coal @-@ fired Marine @-@ type water @-@ tube boilers , although they were later altered to use fuel oil that was sprayed on the coal to increase its burn rate . These gave the ship a top speed of 27 @. @ 5 knots ( 50 @. @ 9 km / h ; 31 @. @ 6 mph ) . Strassburg carried 1 @, @ 200 tonnes ( 1 @, @ 200 long tons ) of coal , and an additional 106 tonnes ( 104 long tons ) of oil that gave her a range of approximately 5 @, @ 820 nautical miles ( 10 @, @ 780 km ; 6 @, @ 700 mi ) at 12 knots ( 22 km / h ; 14 mph ) . Strassburg had a crew of 18 officers and 336 enlisted men .

The ship was armed with twelve 10 @. @ 5 cm SK L / 45 guns in single pedestal mounts . Two were placed side by side forward on the forecastle , eight were located amidships , four on either side , and two were 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 @, @ 800 rounds of ammunition , for 150 shells per gun . She was also equipped with a pair of 50 cm ( 19 @. @ 7 in ) torpedo tubes with five torpedoes submerged in the hull on the broadside . She could also carry 120 mines . The ship was protected by a waterline armored belt that was 60 mm ( 2 @. @ 4 in ) thick amidships . The conning tower had 100 mm ( 3 @. @ 9 in ) thick sides , and the deck was covered with up to 60 mm thick armor plate .

= = Service history = =

Strassburg spent the first year of service overseas , from 1913 to 1914 . She was selected to participate in a long @-@ distance cruise to test the reliability of the new turbine propulsion system in the battleships Kaiser and König Albert . The three ships were organized in a special " Detached Division " . The trio departed Germany on 9 December 1913 and proceeded to the German colonies in western Africa . The ships visited Lomé in Togoland , Duala and Victoria in Kamerun , and Swakopmund in German South @-@ West Africa . From Africa , the ships sailed to St. Helena and then on to Rio de Janeiro , arriving on 15 February 1914 . Strassburg was detached to visit Buenos Aires , Argentina before returning to meet the two battleships in Montevideo , Uruguay . The three ships sailed south around Cape Horn and then north to Valparaiso , Chile , arriving on 2 April and remaining for over a week .

On 11 April , the ships departed Valparaiso for the long journey back to Germany . On the return trip , the ships visited several more ports , including Bahía Blanca , Argentina , before returning to Rio de Janeiro . On 16 May the ships left Rio de Janeiro for the Atlantic leg of the journey ; they stopped in Cape Verde , Madeira , and Vigo , Spain while en route to Germany . Strassburg , Kaiser , and König Albert arrived in Kiel on 17 June 1914 . In the course of the voyage , the ships traveled some 20 @,@ 000 nautical miles ( 37 @,@ 000 km ; 23 @,@ 000 mi ) . A week later , on 24 June , the Detached Division was dissolved . After returning to Germany , Strassburg spent majority of her career in the reconnaissance forces of the High Seas Fleet . On 16 August , some two weeks after the outbreak of World War I , Strassburg and Stralsund conducted a sweep into the Hoofden to search for British reconnaissance forces . The two cruisers encountered a group of sixteen British destroyers and a light cruiser at a distance of about 10 @,@ 000 m ( 33 @,@ 000 ft ) . Significantly outnumbered , the two German cruisers broke contact and returned to port .

Strassburg was heavily engaged at the Battle of Heligoland Bight less than two weeks later , on 28 August . British battlecruisers and light cruisers raided the German reconnaissance screen commanded by Rear Admiral Leberecht Maass in the Heligoland Bight . Strassburg was the first German cruiser to leave port to reinforce the German reconnaissance forces . At 11 : 00 , she encountered the badly damaged British cruiser HMS Arethusa , which had been hit several times by Stettin and SMS Frauenlob . Strassburg attacked Arethusa , but was driven off by the 1st Destroyer Flotilla . She lost contact with the British in the mist , but located them again after 13 : 10 from the sound of British gunfire that destroyed the cruiser Mainz . Along with Cöln , she badly damaged three British destroyers ? Laertes , Laurel , and Liberty ? before being driven off again . Shortly thereafter , the British battlecruisers intervened and sank Ariadne and Maass 's flagship Cöln . Strassburg and the rest of the surviving light cruisers retreated into the haze and were reinforced by the battlecruisers of the I Scouting Group .

Strassburg was present during the raid on Scarborough , Hartlepool and Whitby on 15 ? 16 December , as part of the screening force for the battlecruisers of Rear Admiral Franz von Hipper 's I Scouting Group . After completing the bombardment of the towns , the Germans began to withdraw , though British forces moved to intercept them . Strassburg , two of the other screening cruisers , and two flotillas of torpedo boats steamed between two British squadrons . In the heavy mist , which reduced visibility to less than 4 @,@ 000 yd ( 3 @,@ 700 m ) , only her sister ship Stralsund was spotted , though only briefly . The Germans were able to use the bad weather to cover their withdrawal . The ship had been transferred to the Baltic by 1916 , and so missed the Battle of Jutland on 31 May 1916 .

By 1917 , she was assigned to the VI Scouting Group , which saw action during Operation Albion against the Russian naval forces in the Gulf of Riga . At 06 : 00 on 14 October 1917 , Strassburg , Kolberg , and Augsburg left Libau to escort minesweeping operations in the Gulf of Riga . They were attacked by Russian 12 @-@ inch ( 300 mm ) coastal guns on their approach and were temporarily forced to turn away . By 08 : 45 , however , they had anchored off the Mikailovsk Bank and the minesweepers began to clear a path in the minefields . Two days later , Strassburg and Kolberg joined the dreadnoughts König and Kronprinz for a sweep of the Gulf of Riga . In the ensuing Battle of Moon Sound , the battleships destroyed the old pre @-@ dreadnought Slava and forced the pre

@-@ dreadnought Grazhdanin to leave the Gulf . On 21 October , Strassburg and the battleship Markgraf were tasked with assaulting the island of Kyno . The two ships bombarded the island ; Strassburg expended approximately 55 rounds on the port of Salismünde . On 31 October , Strassburg carried the first military governor of the captured islands from Libau to Arensburg .

By October 1918 , Strassburg was assigned to the IV Scouting Group , which was to participate in a final , climactic attack by the High Seas Fleet . Admirals Reinhard Scheer and Hipper intended to inflict as much damage as possible on the British navy , in order to secure a better bargaining position for Germany , whatever the cost to the fleet . On the morning of 27 October , days before the operation was scheduled to begin , around 45 crew members from Strassburg 's engine room slipped over the side of the ship and went into Wilhelmshaven . The crewmen had to be rounded up and returned to the ship , after which the IV Scouting Group moved to Cuxhaven . Here , men from all six cruisers in the unit refused to work in protest of the war , and in support of the armistice proposed by Prince Maximilian . On the morning of 29 October 1918 , the order was given to sail from Wilhelmshaven the following day . Starting on the night of 29 October , sailors on Thüringen and then on several other battleships mutinied . The unrest ultimately forced Hipper and Scheer to cancel the operation . In early November , Strassburg and Brummer steamed to Sassnitz . There , the commander of Strassburg took command of the naval forces in the port and invited a sailor 's council to be formed to assist in controlling the forces there .

= = = Italian service = = =

After the war , Strassburg served briefly with the reorganized Reichsmarine in 1919 . She was stricken from the naval register on 10 March 1920 and ceded to Italy as a war prize . She was transferred under the name " O " on 20 July 1920 in the French port of Cherbourg . Strassburg was commissioned into the Italian Regia Marina ( Royal Navy ) on 2 June 1925 and her name was changed to Taranto . Her two 8 @. @ 8 cm anti @-@ aircraft guns were replaced with two Italian 3 @-@ inch / 40 anti @-@ aircraft guns . The following year , she was modified to handle a Macchi M.7 reconnaissance seaplane . Taranto was reclassified as a cruiser on 19 July 1929 , and in 1931 , her M.7 seaplane was replaced with a CANT 24 R seaplane .

The ship was rebuilt for colonial service in 1936 ? 37 . Two boilers and the forward funnel were removed , which reduced the ship 's speed to 21 knots ( 39 km / h ; 24 mph ) , though by World War II only 18 knots ( 33 km / h ; 21 mph ) could be maintained . Eight 20 mm ( 0 @. @ 79 in ) / 65 and ten 13 @. @ 2 mm ( 0 @. @ 52 in ) machine guns were added for close @-@ range anti @-@ aircraft defense . She did not see significant service during World War II , though in early July 1940 , Taranto , two minelayers , and a pair of destroyers laid a series of minefields in the Gulf of Taranto and in the southern Adriatic , totaling 2 @, @ 335 mines . She was scuttled in La Spezia on 9 September 1943 , a day after the armistice that ended the war for Italy was declared . The Germans captured the ship and re @-@ floated her , though she was sunk by Allied bombers on 23 October . The Germans re @-@ floated the ship again , and again she was sunk by bombers , on 23 September 1944 in the outer La Spezia roadstead . Taranto was ultimately broken up for scrap in 1946 ? 1947 .