

= SMS Kaiser Friedrich III =

SMS Kaiser Friedrich III ( " His Majesty 's Ship Emperor Frederick III " ) was the lead ship of the Kaiser Friedrich III class of pre - dreadnought battleships . She was laid down at the Kaiserliche Werft in Wilhelmshaven in 1895 , and finished in October 1898 . The ship was armed with a main battery of four 24 - centimeter ( 9 @ 4 in ) guns in two twin gun turrets .

After she was commissioned on 7 October 1898 , the ship became the flagship of Prince Henry in the I Squadron of the German Heimatflotte ( Home Fleet ) . In 1901 , the ship was severely damaged after striking an underwater obstacle in the Baltic , though she was subsequently repaired . The ship took part in extensive fleet maneuvers in 1900 and 1902 . In 1907 , the Heimatflotte was reorganized as the Hochseeflotte ( High Seas Fleet ) . In 1908 , Kaiser Friedrich III was modernized ; her secondary guns were reorganized and her superstructure was cut down to reduce top @ heaviness .

Obsolete by the beginning of World War I , Kaiser Friedrich III and her sister ships served in a limited capacity as coastal defense ships in the V Battle Squadron in the early months of the war . By January 1915 , Kaiser Friedrich was withdrawn from service and employed as a prison ship . She was scrapped in 1919 , following the end of the war .

= = Design = =

Kaiser Friedrich III was 125 @ 3 m ( 411 ft 1 in ) long overall and had a beam of 20 @ 4 m ( 66 ft 11 in ) and a draft of 7 @ 89 m ( 25 ft 11 in ) forward and 8 @ 25 m ( 27 ft 1 in ) aft . The ship was powered by three 3 @ - cylinder vertical triple @ - expansion steam engines that drove three screw propellers . Steam was provided by four Marine @ - type and eight cylindrical boilers , all of which burned coal . Kaiser Friedrich III 's powerplant was rated at 13 @ , 000 metric horsepower ( 12 @ , 822 ihp ; 9 @ , 561 kW ) , which generated a top speed of 17 @ . 5 knots ( 32 @ . 4 km / h ; 20 @ . 1 mph ) .

Kaiser Friedrich III 's armament consisted of a main battery of four 24 cm ( 9 @ . 4 in ) SK L / 40 guns in twin gun turrets , one fore and one aft of the central superstructure . Her secondary armament consisted of eighteen 15 cm ( 5 @ . 9 inch ) SK L / 40 guns and twelve 8 @ . 8 cm ( 3 @ . 45 in ) SK L / 30 quick @ - firing guns . She also carried twelve machine guns , but these were later removed . The armament suite was rounded out with six 45 cm ( 18 in ) torpedo tubes , all in above @ - water swivel mounts . The ship 's belt armor was 300 mm ( 11 @ . 8 in ) thick , and the deck was 65 mm ( 2 @ . 6 in ) thick . The conning tower and main battery turrets were protected with 250 mm ( 9 @ . 8 in ) of armor plating , and the secondary casemates received 150 mm ( 5 @ . 9 in ) of armor protection .

= = Service history = =

Kaiser Friedrich III 's keel was laid on 5 March 1895 , at the Kaiserliche Werft in Wilhelmshaven , under construction number 22 . Kaiser Wilhelm II , the son of the ship 's namesake , hammered the first rivet into the keel . She was ordered under the contract name Ersatz Preussen , to replace the elderly armored frigate Preussen . Kaiser Friedrich III was launched on 1 July 1896 and Wilhelm II was again present , this time to give the launching speech . The ship was commissioned on 7 October 1898 and began sea trials in the Baltic Sea .

After commissioning , Kaiser Friedrich III was assigned to the I Squadron of the Heimatflotte ( Home Fleet ) . Prince Henry ? the commander in chief of the I Squadron ? raised his flag aboard Kaiser Friedrich III . From 15 August 1900 to 15 September , the Heimatflotte conducted a series of fleet maneuvers in the North and Baltic seas . The four Brandenburg @ - class battleships were deployed to China to assist in the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion , so the fleet was greatly reduced in strength . Kaiser Friedrich III and her sister Kaiser Wilhelm II were the only battleships available for the maneuvers . They were joined by the armored frigates Sachsen and Württemberg and six Siegfried and Odin @ - class coastal defense ships . Throughout the maneuvers , Kaiser

Friedrich III was assigned to the " German " force , which had to combat a hostile " Yellow " squadron .

On 17 November 1900 , Kaiser Friedrich III was steaming to Kiel after conducting exercises with the fleet . Kaiser Wilhelm II attempted to pass Kaiser Friedrich III , so the latter stopped and allowed the former to pass to port . However , the order to resume steaming was given too quickly , so the ship accidentally rammed Kaiser Wilhelm II . Kaiser Friedrich III suffered minor damage to her bow , while her sister was slightly damaged in the compartment that housed the steering engines . Repairs were completed within three days , without the need for either vessel to enter drydock .

= = = Collision , 1901 = = =

While en route from Danzig to Kiel on 2 January 1901 , Kaiser Friedrich III struck an underwater obstacle while in company with Kaiser Wilhelm II . The impact damaged four of the ship 's watertight compartments , which then filled with water and caused the ship to list to port . The shock from the collision damaged the ship 's boilers and started a fire in the coal bunkers . All of the ship 's ammunition magazines , engine rooms , and storage compartments had to be flooded in order to prevent the fire from spreading . Two men were seriously injured while fighting the fire , and a third died of his injuries . Kaiser Wilhelm II took her sister in tow , although after several hours the fire was extinguished and the engines were restarted . Throughout the incident , Prince Henry adamantly refused requests that he depart the ship , stating " I shall be the last to leave the ship . "

The ships reached Kiel , where it was thoroughly examined . The dockyard workers found that eight of the ship 's boilers had been badly damaged , and many bulkheads had been bent from the pressure of the water . The keel was extensively damaged , with large holes torn in several places . All three of the ship 's propellers were damaged as well . Temporary repairs were effected in Kiel , which included sealing the holes with cement and wood . On 23 April the ship was moved to Wilhelmshaven , where she was completely repaired . A subsequent investigation found that the nearby lightship ? which was used to navigate the channel at night ? was 700 meters ( 2 @ , @ 296 ft 7 in ) from its assigned location , and there were several uncharted rocks in the area of the accident .

On 31 August 1902 , the annual summer maneuvers were begun by the fleet . Kaiser Friedrich III was assigned to the " hostile " force , and was first tasked with preventing the " German " squadron from passing through the Great Belt in the Baltic . Kaiser Friedrich III and several other battleships were then tasked with forcing an entry into the mouth of the Elbe River , where the Kaiser Wilhelm Canal and Hamburg could be seized . The " hostile " flotilla accomplished these tasks within three days .

In 1903 , the fleet , which was composed of only one squadron of battleships , was reorganized as the " Active Battle Fleet . " Kaiser Friedrich III remained in the I Squadron along with her sister ships and the newest Wittelsbach @-@ class battleships , while the older Brandenburg @-@ class ships were placed in reserve in order to be rebuilt .

= = = Fleet reorganization , 1905 = = =

In October 1905 , the Heimatflotte was again reorganized ; Kaiser Friedrich III was reassigned to the I Division of the II Squadron , alongside her sister @-@ ship Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse and the older battleship Wörth . The Heimatflotte in 1905 consisted of another division of three battleships in the II Squadron and two more three @-@ ship divisions in the I Squadron . This was supported by a cruiser division , composed of two armored cruisers and six protected cruisers . The divisions were not organized by ship class , as would be the case in later years . In 1907 , the newest Deutschland @-@ class battleships were coming into service ; along with the Braunschweig @-@ class battleships , these provided enough modern battleships to create two full battle squadrons . As a result , the Heimatflotte was renamed the Hochseeflotte ( High Seas Fleet ) .

In 1908 , Kaiser Friedrich III was taken into drydock for an extensive modernization , which lasted until 1909 . Four of her 15 cm guns were removed , though two 8 @ . @ 8 cm guns were added . All

twelve machine guns were removed , as was the ship 's stern @-@ mounted torpedo tube . Kaiser Friedrich III 's superstructure was also cut down to reduce the ship 's tendency to roll excessively . The ship 's funnels were also lengthened . Kaiser Friedrich III served with the active fleet for a total span of ten years , by which time the ship was moved to the III Squadron . However , in 1910 , the new dreadnought battleships were beginning to come into service . Kaiser Friedrich III was then decommissioned and placed into reserve .

= = = World War I = = =

At the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 , Kaiser Friedrich III and her sisters were brought back to active service and mobilized as the V Battle Squadron . They were assigned to coastal defense in the Baltic , though they served in this capacity for a very short time . In February 1915 , they were again withdrawn from service and placed in reserve . Kaiser Friedrich III was used as a floating prison stationed in Kiel after 1916 . The following year , the ship was moved to Flensburg , where she was used as a barracks ; later that year she was again moved to Swinemünde . Kaiser Friedrich III was stricken from the navy list on 6 December 1919 and subsequently sold to a ship @-@ breaking firm based in Berlin . The ship was ultimately broken up at Kiel @-@ Nordmole in 1920 . Her bow ornament is on display at the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr in Dresden .