

= SMS Königsberg (1915) =

SMS Königsberg was the lead ship of the Königsberg class of light cruisers , built for the German Imperial Navy during World War I. She took the name of the earlier Königsberg , which had been destroyed during the Battle of Rufiji Delta in 1915 . The new ship was laid down in 1914 at the AG Weser shipyard , launched in December 1915 , and commissioned into the High Seas Fleet in August 1916 . Armed with eight 15 cm SK L / 45 guns , the ship had a top speed of 27 @. @ 5 kn (50 @. @ 9 km / h ; 31 @. @ 6 mph) .

Königsberg saw action with the II Scouting Group ; in September 1917 she participated in Operation Albion , a large amphibious operation against the Baltic islands in the Gulf of Riga . Two months later , she was attacked by British battlecruisers in the Second Battle of Heligoland Bight . She was hit by the battlecruiser HMS Repulse , which caused a large fire and reduced her speed significantly . She escaped behind the cover of two German battleships , however . She was to have taken part in a sortie by the entire High Seas Fleet to attack the British Grand Fleet in the final days of the war , but unrest broke out that forced the cancellation of the plan . The ship carried Rear Admiral Hugo Meurer to Scapa Flow to negotiate the plan for interning the High Seas Fleet . Königsberg was not interned , however , so she escaped the scuttling of the German fleet and was instead ceded to France as a war prize . She was renamed Metz and served with the French Navy until 1933 , before being scrapped in 1936 .

= = Construction and specifications = =

Königsberg was ordered under the contract name " Ersatz Gazelle " and was laid down at the AG Weser shipyard in Bremen in 1914 . She was launched on 18 December 1915 , after which fitting @-@ out work commenced . She was commissioned into the High Seas Fleet on 12 August 1916 . The ship was 151 @. @ 4 meters (497 ft) long overall and had a beam of 14 @. @ 2 m (47 ft) and a draft of 5 @. @ 96 m (19 @. @ 6 ft) forward . She displaced 7 @, @ 125 t (7 @, @ 012 long tons ; 7 @, @ 854 short tons) at full combat load . Her propulsion system consisted of two sets of steam turbines powered by ten coal @-@ fired and two oil @-@ fired Marine @-@ type boilers . These provided a top speed of 27 @. @ 5 kn (50 @. @ 9 km / h ; 31 @. @ 6 mph) and a range of 4 @, @ 850 nautical miles (8 @, @ 980 km ; 5 @, @ 580 mi) at 12 kn (22 km / h ; 14 mph) .

The ship was armed with eight 15 cm SK L / 45 guns in single pedestal mounts . Two were placed side by side forward on the forecastle , four were located amidships , two on either side , and two were arranged in a super firing pair aft . They were supplied with 1 @, @ 040 rounds of ammunition , for 130 shells per gun . Königsberg also carried two 8 @. @ 8 cm SK L / 45 anti @-@ aircraft guns mounted on the centerline astern of the funnels . She was also equipped with a pair of 60 cm (24 in) torpedo tubes with eight torpedoes in deck @-@ mounted swivel launchers amidships . She also carried 200 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 60 mm thick armor plate .

= = Service history = =

= = = Operation Albion = = =

In early September 1917 , following the German conquest of the Russian port of Riga , the German navy decided to eliminate the Russian naval forces that still held the Gulf of Riga . The Admiralstab (the Navy High Command) planned an operation to seize the Baltic island of Ösel , and specifically the Russian gun batteries on the Sworbe Peninsula . On 18 September , the order was issued for a joint operation with the army to capture Ösel and Moon Islands ; the primary naval component was to comprise the flagship , Moltke , along with the III and IV Battle Squadrons of the High Seas Fleet . The invasion force amounted to approximately 24 @, @ 600 officers and enlisted men . Königsberg

and the rest of the II Scouting Group provided the cruiser screen for the task force .

The operation began on the morning of 12 October , when Moltke and the III Squadron ships engaged Russian positions in Tagga Bay while the IV Squadron shelled Russian gun batteries on the Sworbe Peninsula on Saaremaa . Königsberg , still Reuter 's flagship , steamed in Tagga Bay , with the commander of the ground troops General Ludwig von Estorff and his staff aboard . Estorff coordinated the operations of the German infantry , who quickly subdued Russian opposition . On 18 ? 19 October , Königsberg and the rest of the II Scouting Group covered minesweepers operating off the island of Dagö , but due to insufficient minesweepers and bad weather , the operation was postponed . On the 19th , Königsberg , her sister ship Nürnberg , and the cruiser Danzig were sent to intercept two Russian torpedo boats reported to be in the area . Reuter could not locate the vessels , and broke off the operation . By 20 October , the islands were under German control and the Russian naval forces had either been destroyed or forced to withdraw . The Admiralstab ordered the naval component to return to the North Sea .

= = = Actions in the North Sea = = =

On 17 November 1917 , Königsberg saw action at the Second Battle of Heligoland Bight . At the time , she was assigned to the II Scouting Group as the flagship of Rear Admiral Ludwig von Reuter . Along with three other cruisers from the II Scouting Group , Königsberg escorted minesweepers clearing paths in minefields laid by the British . The dreadnought battleships Kaiser and Kaiserin stood by in distant support . Six British battlecruisers supported a force of light cruisers that attacked the German minesweepers . Königsberg and the other three cruisers covered the fleeing minesweepers before retreating under a smoke screen . During the engagement , the battlecruiser HMS Repulse scored a hit on Königsberg , which did minor damage but started a serious fire . The shell hit reduced her speed to 17 kn (31 km / h ; 20 mph) , though by then the German battleships had intervened . The British broke off the attack when the German battleships arrived on the scene , after which the Germans also withdrew .

On 23 ? 24 April 1918 , the ship participated in an abortive fleet operation to attack British convoys to Norway . The I Scouting Group and II Scouting Group , along with the Second Torpedo @-@ Boat Flotilla were to attack a heavily guarded British convoy to Norway , with the rest of the High Seas Fleet steaming in support . The Germans failed to locate the convoy , which had in fact sailed the day before the fleet left port . As a result , Admiral Reinhard Scheer broke off the operation and returned to port .

= = = Fate = = =

In October 1918 , Königsberg and the rest of the II Scouting Group were to lead a final attack on the British navy . Königsberg , Cöln , Dresden , and Pillau were to attack merchant shipping in the Thames estuary while Karlsruhe , Nürnberg , and Graudenz were to bombard targets in Flanders , to draw out the British Grand Fleet . Scheer , promoted to Großadmiral and give the position of the commander in chief of the fleet , and the new fleet commander Admiral Franz von 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 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 . When informed of the situation , the Kaiser stated , " I no longer have a navy . "

While disorder consumed the bulk of the fleet , Kommodore Andreas Michelsen organized a group to attack any British attempt to take advantage of the fleet 's disarray . He pieced together a group of around sixty ships , including Königsberg and several other light cruisers . On 9 November , reports of British activity in the German Bight prompted Königsberg and several destroyers to make a sweep . After the reports proved false , the flotilla returned to Borkum , where they learned of the Kaiser 's abdication . Following the Armistice that ended the fighting , Königsberg took Rear Admiral

Hugo Meurer to Scapa Flow to negotiate with Admiral David Beatty , the commander of the Grand Fleet , for the place of internment of the German fleet . The ship arrived in Scapa Flow on 15 November , flying a white flag . The accepted arrangement was for the High Seas Fleet to meet the combined Allied fleet in the North Sea and proceed to the Firth of Forth before transferring to Scapa Flow , where they would be interned .

Most of the High Seas Fleet 's ships , including Königsberg 's sister ships Karlsruhe , Emden , and Nürnberg , were interned in the British naval base in Scapa Flow , under the command of Reuter . Königsberg instead remained in Germany , returning Meurer from the negotiations with Beatty by the time the fleet left for internment . On 21 June 1919 , Reuter ordered the scuttling of the fleet . Königsberg was meanwhile stricken from the naval register on 31 May 1920 and ceded to France as " A " . The ship was taken to Cherbourg on 20 July . She was renamed Metz and served with the French Navy until 1933 . She was ultimately broken up for scrap in 1936 .