

= Reinhold von Werner =

Reinhold von Werner (10 May 1825 ? 26 February 1909) was a Prussian and later Imperial German naval officer in the 19th century , eventually reaching the rank of vice admiral . He commanded warships during the three wars of German Unification , the Second Schleswig War , the Austro @-@ Prussian War , and the Franco @-@ Prussian War in 1864 , 1866 , and 1870 ? 1871 , respectively , and during a naval intervention during a revolution in Spain in 1873 . His actions off Spain , considered extreme by Chancellor Otto von Bismarck , resulted in his court @-@ martial . He was promoted two years after the intervention in Spain , but was forced into retirement after a major feud with Albrecht von Stosch three years later . Werner wrote numerous books during and after his naval career , and also founded a periodical on maritime topics . He was ennobled in 1901 and died in February 1909 .

= = Early life = =

Reinhold Werner was born on 10 May 1825 , in the town of Weferlingen , Prussia in what is now Saxony @-@ Anhalt . He served for several years in the merchant marine in the 1830s and 1840s , during which he made several voyages to the East Indies . While in the merchant marine , he was given the nickname Schweizer (Swiss) , as his North German shipmates found his accent to be particularly foreign compared to their native Plattdeutsch .

= = Naval career = =

In 1849 , Werner became an officer in the German Reichsflotte (Imperial Fleet) , which had been organized the year before . In 1852 , he transferred to the Preussische Marine (Prussian Navy) , at the age of 22 . The Preussische Marine accepted only ten applicants to the officer corps that year . Werner was the only officer in the first group who was directly commissioned as a lieutenant ; the other nine became officer cadets . He was promoted to the rank of kapitänleutnant (captain lieutenant) in 1856 . While commanding the warship Elbe , he participated in a naval expedition to the Far East in 1859 ? 1862 .

= = = Wars of German Unification = = =

During the Second Schleswig War of 1864 , Werner commanded a corvette against Danish naval forces . Werner fought with distinction at the Battle of Jasmund , under the command of Eduard von Jachmann ; Werner 's ship , Nympe , was badly damaged during the engagement and her crew suffered 13 casualties . The Danes successfully blocked the Prussian attempt to break through the Danish blockade , however , and forced them to return to Swinemünde . Werner and the rest of the fleet stationed there remained in port for the rest of the war .

At the outbreak of the Austro @-@ Prussian War , in the summer of 1866 , Werner was given command of a small squadron in the North Sea consisting of the ironclad warship SMS Arminius and a flotilla of small steam gunboats . Werner used the force to launch several troop landings against the Kingdom of Hanover , an ally of Austria . Werner led most of the landings himself ; his activities forced the surrender of several Hanoverian coastal batteries and several cities , including Emden and Stade . On 15 June , Werner and his squadron assisted 13 @,@ 500 men commanded by General Edwin von Manteuffel in their crossing of the Elbe River and assault of the city of Hanover .

After the Austro @-@ Prussian War , Werner was given command of the dock facilities in Danzig , a position he held until 1873 . In 1870 , the Franco @-@ Prussian War broke out , during which Werner was given command of the new ironclad Kronprinz . The two other broadside ironclads , Friedrich Carl and SMS König Wilhelm , suffered from chronic engine problems which prevented Admiral Jachmann from using the force offensively . Nevertheless , Werner sortied from Wilhelmshaven several times to trade shots with the blockading French fleet . Directly after the war

with France , Werner pledged his support to General Albrecht von Stosch , who had been proposed as the new commander of the German fleet . In the fall of 1872 , Werner commanded a training cruise to South America ; his squadron consisted of Friedrich Carl , Elisabeth , Albatross , and Vineta . While on the cruise , Werner received orders to return most of the squadron to Europe to participate in an international intervention in Spain . Only Albatross remained in the Americas .

= = = Intervention in Spain = = =

In early 1873 , the First Spanish Republic was beset with the Cantonal Revolution . Werner commanded the ironclad Friedrich Carl (his flagship) and a pair of unarmored vessels on a naval intervention mission . The ships joined a British squadron that had been patrolling the southern Spanish coast . Admiral Werner , the senior commander in the group , was given command of the Anglo @-@ German force . A rebel faction of the Spanish Navy had seized four of the country 's seven ironclads . Werner 's squadron blockaded two rebel ironclads in the port of Cartagena after they had bombarded a coastal town . While steaming off Alicante , Friedrich Carl encountered the rebel armed steamer Vigilante , seized the vessel , and returned it to the Spanish national government .

Werner ordered Friedrich Carl and the British ironclad HMS Swiftsure to attack two of the rebel ships ? Vitoria and Almansa ? without authorization from London or Berlin . The rebel vessels had attempted to extort the port of Almería . In the brief engagement , the Anglo @-@ German force overwhelmed the rebels and seized both ships , which were subsequently turned over to the Spanish government . A captured rebel leader was briefly held on board Friedrich Carl . The rebels considered declaring war on Germany over the affair , but eventually decided against it . Admiral Werner 's blockade eventually forced the rebels to surrender , after which Friedrich Carl returned to Germany . Upon being informed of Werner 's actions , Chancellor Otto von Bismarck relieved him of command . Bismarck ordered a court @-@ martial for Werner on the charge of exceeding his orders . Bismarck also prohibited the Imperial Navy from conducting " gunboat diplomacy " in the future . Werner 's career as a sea @-@ going captain was effectively ended despite support from Kaiser Wilhelm I and his grandson , Wilhelm II ; he held only shore commands for the remainder of his career . He commanded the imperial dockyard in Wilhelmshaven for a year before being transferred to Kiel as the commander of the Baltic station . Werner partly blamed Stosch , who had agreed with Bismarck in his assessment of Werner 's activities , for his disgrace . This marked the beginning of a long and public feud between the two officers .

= = = Forced retirement = = =

In 1875 , Werner was promoted to konteradmiral (rear admiral) . In the aftermath of the accidental collision between SMS König Wilhelm and SMS Grosser Kurfürst , which resulted in the loss of the latter , Werner and Stosch argued , a disagreement that ultimately resulted in Werner 's forced retirement . Werner , then the chief of the Baltic station , presided over a commission that investigated the handling of the incident by Konteradmiral Batsch , a protégé of Stosch . The investigation heavily criticized Batsch as well as Stosch 's policies . Many naval officers ? including Batsch ? felt Stosch 's policies were more appropriate for the army than the navy . Alfred von Tirpitz , later the architect of the German High Seas Fleet , characterized Stosch 's policies as more befitting an infantry regiment than an armored warship , which was a " complicated microcosm of technology . " Stosch fought back against his critics , and targeted Werner in particular , who Stosch felt was primarily responsible for allowing the investigation to become a forum for officers opposed to Stosch . In addition to revenge for the handling of the investigation , Stosch sought to force Werner from the navy to remove one of only two officers senior in rank to Batsch , his protégé . Despite his popularity , particularly with Kaiser Wilhelm I and his son , Werner was unable to resist Stosch 's efforts to force his ouster . On 15 October 1878 , he requested retirement . In 1898 , the navy nominated him to be promoted to vizeadmiral (vice admiral) .

= = Later life = =

After leaving the navy , Werner became an author and ardent supporter of German naval expansion . He continued his feud with Stosch , going so far as to ally himself with Otto von Bismarck , who had sought Werner 's imprisonment five years earlier for his conduct off Spain . He also joined the rightist Free Union for Naval Lectures , founded on 16 November 1899 ; the union conducted a series of public lectures on the importance of the navy throughout Germany . Werner had begun writing in the 1860s , while still in the navy . He wrote a series of books , including accounts of the German expedition to the Far East from 1859 to 1862 and the development and expansion of the German fleet . In 1864 , he founded the periodical Hansa in Hamburg , which was concerned with topics relating to seamanship and coast guard activities . He was elevated to the nobility in 1901 and granted the right to use " von " in his name , and died on 26 February 1909 .