

= SMS Bayern (1878) =

SMS Bayern was one of four Sachsen @-@ class armored frigates of the German Imperial Navy . Her sister ships were Sachsen , Baden , and Württemberg . Named for Bavaria , Bayern was built by the Imperial Dockyard in Kiel from 1874 to 1881 . The ship was commissioned into the Imperial Navy in August 1881 . She was armed with a main battery of six 26 cm (10 in) guns in two open barbettes .

After her commissioning , Bayern served with the fleet on numerous training exercises and cruises . She participated in several cruises escorting Kaiser Wilhelm II on state visits to Great Britain and to various cities in the Baltic Sea in the late 1880s and early 1890s . During 1895 ? 1898 , the ship was modernized at the Schichau @-@ Werke dockyard in Danzig ; she served for another decade with the fleet before being withdrawn from active service in 1910 . She was used as a target ship after 1911 , until she was sold in 1919 and broken up for scrap .

= = Construction = =

Bayern was ordered by the Imperial Navy under the contract name " A , " which denoted that the vessel was a new addition to the fleet . She was built at the Imperial Dockyard in Wilhelmshaven ; her keel was laid in 1874 under construction number 3 . The ship was launched on 13 May 1878 and commissioned into the German fleet on 4 August 1881 . Along with her three sisters , Bayern was the first large , armored warship built for the German navy that relied entirely on engines for propulsion .

The ship was 98 @.@ 2 meters (322 ft) long overall and had a beam of 18 @.@ 4 m (60 ft) and a draft of 6 @.@ 32 m (20 @.@ 7 ft) forward . Bayern was powered by two 3 @-@ cylinder triple expansion engines , which were supplied with steam by eight coal @-@ fired Dürr boilers . The ship 's top speed was 13 knots (24 km / h ; 15 mph) , at 5 @,@ 600 indicated horsepower (4 @,@ 200 kW) Her standard complement consisted of 32 officers and 285 enlisted men , though while serving as a squadron flagship this was augmented by another 7 officers and 34 men .

She was armed with six 26 cm (10 in) guns , two of which were single @-@ mounted in an open barbette forward of the conning tower and the remaining four mounted amidships , also on single mounts in an open barbette . As built , the ship was also equipped with six 8 @.@ 7 cm (3 @.@ 4 in) L / 24 guns and eight 3 @.@ 7 cm (1 @.@ 5 in) Hotchkiss revolver cannons . Bayern 's armor was made of wrought iron , and was concentrated in an armored citadel amidships . The armor ranged from 203 to 254 mm (8 @.@ 0 to 10 @.@ 0 in) on the armored citadel , and between 50 ? 75 mm (2 @.@ 0 ? 3 @.@ 0 in) on the deck . The barbette armor was 254 mm of wrought iron backed by 250 mm of teak .

= = Service history = =

After her commissioning in August 1881 , Bayern was placed in reserve . She was not activated for service with the fleet until 1884 ; this in part had to do with the poor performance of her sister Sachsen in the fleet maneuvers of 1880 . Among the problems associated with the Sachsen @-@ class ships was a tendency to roll dangerously due to their flat bottoms , which greatly reduced the accuracy of their guns . The ships were also poorly armored , compared to their contemporaries . In addition , they were slow and suffered from poor maneuverability . Nevertheless , Bayern and her three sisters served as the I Division in the 1884 fleet maneuvers , under the command of Rear Admiral Alexander von Monts .

Bayern remained with the fleet for the 1885 maneuvers , though she was joined only by the older ironclads Friedrich Carl and Hansa . The maneuvers were begun with a visit to Ålesund , Norway , after which the fleet went to the Baltic Sea for training exercises . Bayern was demobilized at the close of maneuvers . In October 1885 , August von Thomsen , who had been appointed chief gunner , set up the first long range gunnery experiments on Bayern . He went on to gain fame as " the father of German naval artillery . " Bayern 's three sisters and the new ironclad Oldenburg

comprised the training squadron for 1886 . Bayern returned to active duty in 1888 , when she participated in a tour of the Baltic by the newly crowned Kaiser Wilhelm II . The fleet stopped in St. Petersburg , Stockholm , and Copenhagen on the seventeen @-@ day cruise .

Bayern participated in the ceremonial transfer of the island of Helgoland from British to German control in the summer of 1890 . She was present during the fleet maneuvers in September , where the entire eight @-@ ship armored squadron simulated a Russian fleet blockading Kiel . She remained with the I Division in 1891 ; the year 's maneuvers simulated a two @-@ front war against Russia and either France or Denmark . Bayern participated in the 1892 fleet maneuvers as well . Three separate simulations were conducted , which included French blockades of the German North Sea coast and a Russian attack on Kiel . Vice Admiral Wilhelm Schröder commanded the fleet maneuvers of 1893 , which simulated a protracted campaign against a superior French fleet . Bayern and her three sisters served as the Russian Baltic Fleet during the 1894 maneuvers .

The four Sachsen @-@ class ships were transferred to the II Division before the winter cruise of 1894 ? 1895 , following the completion of the four Brandenburg @-@ class battleships . The German fleet now possessed two homogenous squadrons of four ships each . The two divisions steamed to Orkney and the Shetland Islands in the spring of 1895 . Bayern joined a massive fleet review on 21 July 1895 for the opening of the Kaiser Wilhelm Canal , which connected Kiel to the North Sea . The Autumn 1895 maneuvers simulated a high @-@ seas battle between the I and II Divisions in the North Sea , followed by combined maneuvers with the rest of the fleet in the Baltic .

After the conclusion of the 1895 maneuvers , Bayern was taken into drydock at the Schichau @-@ Werke in Danzig for reconstruction . The ship 's old wrought iron and teak armor was replaced with new Krupp nickel @-@ steel armor . The four funnels were trunked into a single large funnel and new engines were also installed , which increased the ship 's speed to 15 @. @ 4 kn (28 @. @ 5 km / h ; 17 @. @ 7 mph) . The ship 's 8 @. @ 7 cm guns were replaced with quick @-@ firing 8 @. @ 8 cm (3 @. @ 5 in) SK L / 30 guns and four 3 @. @ 7 cm (1 @. @ 5 in) autocannons . Work was completed in 1898 . Bayern 's three sisters were similarly modified between 1896 and 1899 . Bayern remained with the fleet until 19 February 1910 , when the ship was stricken from the naval register . She was converted into a target ship for the fleet and served in this capacity off Stollergrund after 1911 . On 5 May 1919 , Bayern was sold for scrapping and broken up in Kiel .