

= SMS Dresden (1907) =

SMS Dresden (" His Majesty 's Ship Dresden ") was a German light cruiser built for the Kaiserliche Marine (Imperial Navy) , the lead ship of her class . She was laid down at the Blohm & Voss shipyard in Hamburg in 1906 , launched in October 1907 , and completed in November 1908 . Her entrance into service was delayed by accidents during sea trials , including a collision with another vessel that necessitated major repairs . Like the preceding Königsberg @-@ class cruisers upon which her design was based , Dresden was armed with ten 10 @.@ 5 cm (4 @.@ 1 in) guns and two torpedo tubes .

Dresden spent much of her career overseas . After commissioning , she visited the United States in 1909 during the Hudson @-@ Fulton Celebration , before returning to Germany to serve in the reconnaissance force of the High Seas Fleet for three years . In 1913 , she was assigned to the Mediterranean Division . She was then sent to the Caribbean to protect German nationals during the Mexican Revolution . In mid @-@ 1914 , she carried the former dictator Victoriano Huerta to Jamaica , where the British had granted him asylum . She was due to return to Germany in July 1914 , but was prevented by the outbreak of World War I from doing so . At the onset of hostilities , Dresden operated as a commerce raider in South American waters in the Atlantic , then moved to the Pacific Ocean in September and joined Maximilian von Spee 's East Asia Squadron .

Dresden saw action in the Battle of Coronel in November , where she engaged the British cruiser HMS Glasgow , and at the Battle of the Falkland Islands in December , where she was the only German warship to escape destruction . She eluded her British pursuers for several more months , until she put into Robinson Crusoe Island in March 1915 . Her engines were worn out and she had almost no coal left for her boilers , so the ship 's captain contacted the local Chilean authorities to have Dresden interned . She was trapped by British cruisers , including her old opponent Glasgow . The British violated Chilean neutrality and opened fire on the ship in the Battle of Más a Tierra . The Germans scuttled Dresden and the majority of the crew escaped to be interned in Chile for the duration of the war . The wreck remains in the harbor ; several artifacts , including her bell and compass , have been returned to Germany .

= = Design = =

Dresden was 118 @.@ 3 meters (388 ft 1 in) long overall with a beam of 13 @.@ 5 m (44 ft 3 in) and a draft of 5 @.@ 53 m (18 ft 2 in) forward . She displaced 4 @,@ 268 t (4 @,@ 201 long tons) at full combat load . Her propulsion system consisted of two Parsons steam turbines , designed to give 14 @,@ 794 shp (11 @,@ 032 kW) for a top speed of 24 knots (44 km / h ; 28 mph) . The engines were powered by twelve coal @-@ fired water @-@ tube boilers . Dresden carried up to 860 tonnes (850 long tons) of coal , which gave her a range of 3 @,@ 600 nautical miles (6 @,@ 700 km ; 4 @,@ 100 mi) at 14 knots (26 km / h ; 16 mph) . She had a crew of 18 officers and 343 enlisted men .

The ship was armed with ten 10 @.@ 5 cm SK L / 40 guns in single mounts . Two were placed side by side forward on the forecastle , six were located amidships , three on either side , and two were placed side by side aft . The guns could engage targets out to 12 @,@ 200 m (13 @,@ 300 yd) . They were supplied with 1 @,@ 500 rounds of ammunition , for 150 shells per gun . The secondary battery comprised eight 5 @.@ 2 cm (2 @.@ 0 in) SK L / 55 guns , with 4 @,@ 000 rounds of ammunition . She was also equipped with two 45 cm (17 @.@ 7 in) torpedo tubes with four torpedoes , mounted on the deck . The ship was protected by an armored deck that was up to 80 mm (3 @.@ 1 in) thick . The conning tower had 100 mm (3 @.@ 9 in) thick sides , and the guns were protected by 50 mm (2 @.@ 0 in) thick shields .

= = Service history = =

Dresden was ordered under the contract name Ersatz Comet . She was laid down at the Blohm & Voss shipyard in Hamburg in 1906 and launched on 5 October 1907 . The Oberbürgermeister of her

namesake city , Otto Beutler , christened the ship . Fitting @-@ out work then commenced , and Dresden was commissioned into the High Seas Fleet on 14 November 1908 . Following her commissioning , Dresden began her sea trials . On 28 November she accidentally collided with and sank the Swedish galeas Cäcilie outside Kiel . Dresden 's starboard propeller shaft was shoved in 30 mm (1 @. @ 2 in) , and she required six months of repair work . She resumed sea trials in 1909 , but a turbine accident necessitated further repairs , which lasted until September .

Although Dresden had not completed the required testing , her trials were declared over on 7 September , as she had been ordered to visit the United States . The purpose of the voyage was to represent Germany at the Hudson @-@ Fulton Celebration in New York ; Dresden was joined by the protected cruisers Hertha and Victoria Louise and the light cruiser Bremen . Dresden left Wilhelmshaven on 11 September and stopped in Newport , where she met the rest of the ships of the squadron . The ships arrived in New York on 24 September , remained there until 9 October , and arrived back in Germany on 22 October .

Dresden then joined the reconnaissance force for the High Seas Fleet ; the following two years consisted of the peacetime routine of squadron exercises , training cruises , and annual fleet exercises . On 16 February 1910 , she collided with the light cruiser Königsberg . The collision caused significant damage to Dresden , though no one on either vessel was injured . She made it back to Kiel for repairs , which lasted eight days . Dresden visited Hamburg on 13 ? 17 May that year . From 14 to 20 April 1912 , she was temporarily transferred to the Training Squadron , along with the armored cruiser Friedrich Carl and the light cruiser Mainz . For the year 1911 ? 12 , Dresden won the Kaiser 's Schießpreis (Shooting Prize) for excellent gunnery amongst the light cruisers of the High Seas Fleet . From September 1912 through September 1913 , she was commanded by Fregattenkapitän (Frigate Captain) Fritz Lüdecke , who would command the ship again during World War I.

On 6 April 1913 , she and the cruiser Strassburg were sent from Kiel to the Adriatic Sea , where she joined the Mittelmeer @-@ Division (Mediterranean Division) , centered on the battlecruiser Goeben and commanded by Konteradmiral (Rear Admiral) Konrad Trummel . The ships cruised the eastern Mediterranean for several months , and in late August , Dresden was ordered to return to Germany . After arriving in Kiel on 23 September , she was taken into the Kaiserliche Werft (Imperial Shipyard) for an overhaul that lasted until the end of December . She was scheduled to return to the Mediterranean Division , but the Admiralstab (Admiralty Staff) reassigned Dresden to the North American station to protect German interests in the Mexican Revolution . The cruiser Bremen , then in North American waters , was also due to return to Germany , but her intended replacement , Karlsruhe , had not yet entered service . On 27 December 1913 , Dresden departed Germany and arrived off Vera Cruz on 21 January 1914 , under the command of Fregattenkapitän Erich Köhler . The United States had already sent a squadron of warships to the city , as had several other countries .

The Admiralstab ordered Hertha , which had been on a training cruise for naval cadets , to join Dresden off Mexico . Bremen was also recalled to reinforce the German naval contingent ; after arriving , she was tasked with transferring European nationals to German HAPAG liners . Dresden and the British cruiser HMS Hermione rescued 900 American citizens trapped in a hotel in Vera Cruz and transferred them to American warships . The German consul in Mexico City requested additional forces , and so Dresden provided a landing party of a maat (Junior Petty Officer) and ten sailors , armed with two MG 08 machine guns . On 15 April 1914 , Dresden steamed to Tampico on Mexico 's Caribbean coast . That month , the German @-@ flagged merchant ship SS Ypiranga arrived in Mexico , carrying a load of small arms for the regime of Mexican dictator Victoriano Huerta . The United States had put an arms embargo into effect in an attempt to reduce the violence of the civil war . The US Navy intercepted Ypiranga on 21 April . Dresden arrived , confiscated the merchantman , and pressed her into naval service to transport German refugees out of Mexico . Despite the American embargo , the Germans delivered the weapons and ammunition to the Mexican government on 28 May .

On 20 July , after the Huerta regime was toppled , Dresden carried Huerta , his vice president , Aureliano Blanquet , and their families to Kingston , Jamaica , where Britain had granted them

asylum . Upon arriving in Kingston on the 25th , Köhler learned of the rising political tensions in Europe during the July Crisis that followed the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand . By this time , the ship was in need of a refit in Germany , and met with her replacement , Karlsruhe , in Port au Prince , Haiti , the following day . Lüdecke , who had arrived in command of Karlsruhe , traded places with Köhler aboard Dresden . The Admiralstab initially ordered Dresden to return to Germany for overhaul , but the heightened threat of war by the 31st led the staff to countermand the order , instead instructing Lüdecke to prepare to conduct Handelskrieg (trade war) in the Atlantic .

= = = World War I = = =

After receiving the order to remain in the Atlantic , Lüdecke turned his ship south while maintaining radio silence to prevent hostile warships from discovering his vessel . On the night of 4 ? 5 August , he received a radio report informing him of Britain 's declaration of war on Germany . He chose the South Atlantic as Dresden 's operational area , and steamed to the Brazilian coast . Off the mouth of the Amazon River , he stopped a British merchant ship on 6 August . The ship , SS Drumcliffe , whose captain professed to know nothing of Britain 's entry into the war , was permitted to proceed unmolested in accordance with the rules set forth in the Hague Convention of 1907 . Dresden rendezvoused with the German collier SS Corrientes , a converted HSDG vessel . The cruiser moved to the Rocas Atoll on the 12th , along with the HAPAG steamers Prussia , Baden , and Persia . After departing the atoll , en route to Trinidad , Dresden caught the British steamer SS Hyades ; Lüdecke took off the ship 's crew and then sank the merchantman . Dresden captured the British collier SS Holmwood on 24 August and sank her after evacuating her crew . After arriving in Trinidad , she rendezvoused with the gunboat Eber and several steamers .

On 26 August , while steaming off the mouth of the Río de la Plata , she caught two more British steamers , but the poor condition of Dresden 's engines curtailed further operations . On 5 September , Dresden put into Hoste Island for engine maintenance until the 16th . While the ship was there , the HAPAG steamer Santa Isabel arrived from Punta Arenas with news of the war , and the heavy merchant traffic off the western coast of South America . Lüdecke decided to steam there , and on 18 September Dresden passed the Strait of Magellan . While en route , Dresden encountered the French steamer SS Ortega ; Lüdecke refrained from attacking the transport ship , since she had fled into neutral waters . After steaming up the Chilean coast , she stopped in the Juan Fernández Islands , where she made radio contact with the light cruiser Leipzig , which was operating on the Pacific coast of South America . Dresden saw no further success against British shipping , and on 12 October , she joined Vizeadmiral (Vice Admiral) Maximilian von Spee 's East Asia Squadron , which had crossed the Pacific and was coaling at Easter Island . The following day , Lüdecke was promoted to Kapitän zur See (Captain at Sea) .

On 18 October , Dresden and the East Asia Squadron , centered on the armored cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau , departed Easter Island for the South American coast . They arrived at Más a Fuera island on 26 October . The following evening , the German cruisers escorted the auxiliary cruiser SS Prinz Eitel Friedrich and the merchant ships SS Yorck and SS Göttingen to Chile . The flotilla arrived off Valparaíso on 30 October , and the following evening , von Spee received intelligence that a British cruiser was at the Chilean port of Coronel . Von Spee decided that his squadron should ambush the cruiser ? HMS Glasgow ? when it was forced to leave port due to Chile 's neutral status , which required belligerent warships to leave after twenty @-@ four hours . Von Spee did not realize that Glasgow was in the company of Rear Admiral Christopher Craddock 's 4th Cruiser Squadron , which also included the armored cruisers Monmouth and Good Hope and the auxiliary cruiser Otranto .

= = = Battle of Coronel = = =

Early on the morning of 1 November , von Spee took his squadron out of Valparaíso , steaming at 14 knots (26 km / h ; 16 mph) south toward Coronel . At around 16 : 00 , Leipzig spotted the smoke

column from the leading British cruiser . By 16 : 25 , the other two ships had been spotted . The two squadrons slowly closed the distance , until the Germans opened fire at 18 : 34 , at a range of 10 @ , @ 400 m (11 @ , @ 400 yd) . The German ships engaged their opposite numbers , with Dresden firing on Otranto . After Dresden 's third salvo , Otranto turned away ; the Germans claimed a hit that caused a fire , though Otranto reported taking no damage . Following Otranto 's departure , Dresden shifted her fire to Glasgow , which was also targeted by Leipzig . The two German cruisers hit their British opponent five times .

At around 19 : 30 , von Spee ordered Dresden and Leipzig to launch a torpedo attack against the damaged British armored cruisers . Dresden increased speed to position herself off the British bows , and briefly spotted Glasgow as she was withdrawing , but the British cruiser disappeared in the haze and gathering darkness . Dresden then encountered Leipzig ; both ships initially thought the other was hostile . Dresden 's crew was loading a torpedo when the two ships confirmed each other 's identity . By 22 : 00 , Dresden and the other two light cruisers were deployed in a line that searched unsuccessfully for the British cruisers . Dresden had emerged from the battle completely unscathed .

On 3 November , von Spee took Scharnhorst , Gneisenau , and Nürnberg back to Valparaíso for provisioning and to consult with the Admiralstab . Neutrality laws permitted only three belligerent warships in a port at a given time . Dresden and Leipzig remained with the squadron 's colliers in Más a Fuera . Von Spee returned to Más a Fuera on 6 November , and detached Dresden and Leipzig for a visit to Valparaíso , where they also restocked their supplies . The two cruisers arrived on 12 November , left the following day , and met the rest of the squadron at sea on 18 November . Three days later , the squadron anchored in St. Quentin Bay in the Gulf of Penas , where they coaled . The Royal Navy had deployed Vice Admiral Doveton Sturdee 's pair of battlecruisers , Invincible and Inflexible , to hunt down the German squadron . They left Britain on 11 November , and arrived in the Falkland Islands on 7 December . There , they joined the armored cruisers Cornwall , Kent , and Carnarvon , and the light cruisers Glasgow and Bristol .

On 26 November , the German East Asia Squadron left St. Quentin Bay , bound for the Atlantic . On 2 December , they caught the Canadian sailing ship Drummuir , which was carrying 2 @ , @ 750 metric tons (2 @ , @ 710 long tons ; 3 @ , @ 030 short tons) of high @ - @ grade Cardiff coal . The following morning , the Germans anchored off Picton Island , where they unloaded the coal from Drummuir into their own auxiliaries . On the morning of 6 December , von Spee held a council aboard Scharnhorst to discuss their next moves . With the support of the captains of Scharnhorst and Gneisenau , he successfully argued for an attack on the Falklands to destroy the British wireless station and coal stocks there . Lüdecke and the captains of Leipzig and Nürnberg all opposed the plan , and were in favor of bypassing the Falklands and proceeding to the La Plata area to continue to raid British shipping .

= = = Battle of the Falkland Islands = = =

On the afternoon of 6 December , the German ships departed Picton Island , bound for the Falklands . On 7 December , they rounded Tierra del Fuego and turned north into the Atlantic . They arrived off the Falklands at around 02 : 00 ; three hours later , von Spee detached Gneisenau and Nürnberg to land a party ashore . By 08 : 30 , the ships were approaching Port Stanley , when they noticed thick columns of smoke rising from the harbor . After closing to the harbor entrance , they quickly realized they were confronted by a much more powerful squadron , which was just getting up steam . Von Spee immediately broke off the operation and turned east to flee before the British ships could catch his squadron . By 10 : 45 , Gneisenau and Nürnberg had rejoined the fleet , and the German auxiliaries were detached to seek shelter in the maze of islands off Cape Horn .

The British ships set off in pursuit , and by 12 : 50 , Sturdee 's two battlecruisers had overtaken the Germans . A minute later , he gave the order to open fire at the trailing German ship , Leipzig . Von Spee ordered the three small cruisers to try to escape to the south , while he turned back with Scharnhorst and Gneisenau in an attempt to hold off the British squadron . Sturdee had foreseen this possibility , and so had ordered his armored and light cruisers to pursue the German light

cruisers . The battlecruisers quickly overwhelmed von Spee 's armored cruisers , and destroyed them with heavy loss of life . Dresden , with her turbine engines , was able to outpace her pursuers , and was the only German warship to escape destruction . Lüdecke decided to take his ship into the islands off South America to keep a steady supply of coal available .

On 9 December , she passed back around Cape Horn to return to the Pacific . That day , she anchored in Sholl Bay , with only 160 t (160 long tons ; 180 short tons) of coal aboard . Oberleutnant zur See (lieutenant at sea) Wilhelm Canaris convinced the Chilean naval representative for the region to permit Dresden to remain in the area for an extra twenty @-@ four hours so enough coal could be taken aboard to reach Punta Arenas . She arrived there on 12 December , and received 750 t (740 long tons ; 830 short tons) of coal from a German steamer . The Admiralstab hoped that Dresden would be able to break through to the Atlantic and return to Germany , but the poor condition of her engines precluded this . Lüdecke instead decided to attempt to cross the Pacific via Easter Island , the Solomon Islands , and the Dutch East Indies and raid commerce in the Indian Ocean . Dresden took on another 1 @,@ 600 t (1 @,@ 600 long tons ; 1 @,@ 800 short tons) of coal on 19 January . On 14 February , Dresden left the islands off the South American coast for the South Pacific . On 27 February , the cruiser captured the British barque Conway Castle south of Más a Tierra . From December to February , the German liner Sierra Cordoba had supplied Dresden and had accompanied her northward to a final coaling at Juan Fernández Islands just before the cruiser was sunk .

On 8 March , Dresden was drifting in dense fog when lookouts spotted Kent , which also had her engines off , about 15 nautical miles (28 km ; 17 mi) away . Both ships immediately raised steam , and Dresden escaped after a five @-@ hour chase . The strenuous effort depleted her coal stocks and overtaxed her engines . Lüdecke decided that his ship was no longer operational , and determined to have his ship interned to preserve it . The following morning , she put into Más a Fuera , dropping anchor in Cumberland Bay at 8 : 30 . The following day , Lüdecke received by wireless the Kaiser 's permission to let Dresden be interned , and so Lüdecke informed the local Chilean official of his intention to do so .

= = = = Battle of Más a Tierra = = = =

On the morning of 14 March , Kent and Glasgow approached Cumberland Bay ; their appearance was relayed back to Dresden by one of her pinnaces , which had been sent to patrol the entrance to the bay . Dresden was unable to maneuver , owing to her fuel shortage , and Lüdecke signaled that his ship was no longer a combatant . The British disregarded this message , as well as a Chilean vessel that approached them as they entered the bay . Glasgow opened fire , in violation of Chile 's neutrality ; Britain had already informed Chile that British warships would disregard international law if they located Dresden in Chilean territorial waters . Shortly thereafter , Kent joined in the bombardment as well . The German gunners fired off three shots in response , but the guns were quickly knocked out by British gunfire .

Lüdecke sent the signal " Am sending negotiator " to the British warships , and dispatched Canaris in a pinnacle ; Glasgow continued to bombard the defenseless cruiser . In another attempt to stop the attack , Lüdecke raised the white flag , which prompted Glasgow to cease fire . Canaris came aboard to speak with Captain John Luce ; the former strongly protested the latter 's violation of Chile 's neutrality . Luce simply replied that he had his orders , and demanded an unconditional surrender . Canaris explained that Dresden had already been interned by Chile , and thereafter returned to his ship , which had in the meantime been prepared for scuttling .

At 10 : 45 , the scuttling charge detonated in the bow and exploded the forward ammunition magazines . The bow was badly mangled ; in about half an hour , the ship had taken on enough water to sink . As it struck the sea floor , the bow was torn from the rest of the ship , which rolled over to starboard . As the rest of the hull settled below the waves , a second scuttling charge exploded in the ship 's engine rooms .

= = = Aftermath = = =

Most of the ship 's crew managed to escape ; only eight men were killed in the attack , with another twenty @-@ nine wounded . The British auxiliary cruiser HMS Orama took fifteen severely wounded men to Valparaiso ; four of them died . The destruction of his ship had left Lüdecke in shock , and so Canaris took responsibility for the fate of the ship 's crew . They remained on the island for five days until two Chilean warships brought a German passenger ship to take the men to Quiriquina Island , where they were interned for the duration of the war . Canaris escaped from the internment camp on 5 August 1915 and reached Germany exactly two months later . On 31 March 1917 , a small group of men escaped on the Chilean barque Tinto ; the voyage back to Germany lasted 120 days . The rest of the crew did not return to Germany until 1920 .

The wreck lies at a depth of 70 meters (230 ft) . In 2002 , the first survey of the wreck was done by a team led by James P. Delgado for the Sea Hunters documentary produced by the National Underwater and Marine Agency . The team included the archaeologist Dr. Willi Kramer , the first German to visit the wreck since she sank 88 years before . Dresden lies on her starboard side pointed north , toward the beach . The wreck is heavily damaged ; much of the upper works , including the bridge , the masts , the funnels , and many of the guns have been torn from the ship . The bow has been cut off by the scuttling charges detonated by the ship 's crew , and sits upright on the sea floor . The stern is also badly damaged , with the main deck blasted away and many shell holes in the ship 's side . Some of the damage to the aft of the ship appears to have been done by an undocumented salvage operation before Delgado 's survey . According to German records , Dresden was carrying gold coins from their colony at Tsingtau ; Delgado speculated that this salvage work was an attempt to retrieve these .

In 1965 , the ship 's compass and several flags were recovered and returned to Germany , where they are held at the German Naval Academy Mürwik in Flensburg @-@ Mürwik . In 2006 , Chilean and German divers found and recovered Dresden 's bell , which is now in Germany . CS Forester 's novel *Brown on Resolution* , and two subsequent movies , were inspired by the Dresden 's escape and subsequent destruction .