

= SMS Cöln (1909) =

SMS Cöln (" His Majesty 's Ship Cologne ") was a Kolberg @-@ class light cruiser of the German Kaiserliche Marine (Imperial Navy) during the First World War . She had three sister ships , SMS Kolberg , Mainz , and Augsburg . She was built by the Germaniawerft ; her hull was laid down in 1908 and she was launched in June 1909 . Cöln was commissioned into the High Seas Fleet in June 1911 . She was armed with a main battery of twelve 10 @.@ 5 cm SK L / 45 guns and had a top speed of 25 @.@ 5 kn (47 @.@ 2 km / h ; 29 @.@ 3 mph) . After her commissioning , she served with the II Scouting Group , part of the reconnaissance forces of the High Seas Fleet .

Cöln was assigned to patrols off the island of Heligoland at the outbreak of World War I in early August 1914 , as the flagship of Rear Admiral Leberecht Maass . At the Battle of Heligoland Bight on 28 August 1914 , the German patrol forces were attacked by superior British forces , including five battlecruisers and several light cruisers . Cöln was initially stationed in support of the forces on the patrol line . She attempted to reinforce the beleaguered German forces , and encountered Vice Admiral David Beatty 's battlecruisers . She was hit several times by the battlecruisers ' large @-@ caliber guns , but managed to escape in the haze . She inadvertently turned back toward them , however , and was quickly disabled when the battle resumed . The crew abandoned Cöln , but German vessels did not search the area for three days , and only one man survived .

= = Design = =

Cöln was 130 @.@ 5 meters (428 ft) long overall and had a beam of 14 m (46 ft) and a draft of 5 @.@ 73 m (18 @.@ 8 ft) forward . She displaced 4 @, @ 915 t (4 @, @ 837 long tons ; 5 @, @ 418 short tons) at full combat load . Cöln was initially to be powered by two sets of Zoelly steam turbines manufactured by Escher Wyss & Cie. in Zürich . Her propulsion system was revised and instead consisted of two sets of Germaniawerft steam turbines driving four propellers . They were designed to give 19 @, @ 000 shaft horsepower (14 @, @ 000 kW) . These were powered by fifteen coal @-@ fired Marine water @-@ tube boilers . These gave the ship a top speed of 25 @.@ 5 knots (47 @.@ 2 km / h ; 29 @.@ 3 mph) . Cöln carried 960 t (940 long tons ; 1 @, @ 060 short tons) of coal that gave her a range of approximately 3 @, @ 500 nautical miles (6 @, @ 500 km ; 4 @, @ 000 mi) at 14 knots (26 km / h ; 16 mph) .

Cöln had a crew of eighteen officers and 349 enlisted men . The ship was armed with twelve 10 @.@ 5 cm SK L / 45 guns in single pedestal mounts . Two were placed side by side forward on the forecastle , eight were located amidships , four on either side , and two were side by side aft . She also carried four 5 @.@ 2 cm SK L / 55 anti @-@ aircraft guns . She was also equipped with a pair of 45 cm (17 @.@ 7 in) torpedo tubes submerged in the hull . She could also carry 100 mines . The conning tower had 100 mm (3 @.@ 9 in) thick sides , and the deck was covered with up to 40 mm (1 @.@ 6 in) thick armor plate .

= = Service history = =

Cöln was ordered under the contract name Ersatz Schwalbe and was laid down on 25 May 1908 at the Germaniawerft shipyard in Kiel . She was launched on 5 June 1909 and christened by the mayor of Cöln , Max Wallraf , after which fitting @-@ out work commenced . During the builders ' sea trials , the Zoelly turbines were found to be poor quality and they were replaced with Germaniawerft @-@ produced models . This work significantly delayed her completion . She was commissioned into the High Seas Fleet on 16 June 1911 , and she began her acceptance trials . These were interrupted by a fleet parade for Kaiser Wilhelm II on 5 September . On 10 October , she was assigned to the II Scouting Group , which screened for the battlecruisers of the I Scouting Group . She participated in the normal peacetime routine of individual , squadron , and fleet exercises and cruises over the next two years without incident . Fregattenkapitän Hans Zenker served as her commander from October 1911 to September 1913 .

From 28 August to 21 September , she served as the flagship for Konteradmiral (Rear Admiral)

Franz von Hipper , then the deputy commander of the reconnaissance forces , while Hipper was temporarily displaced from his usual flagship , the battlecruiser Von der Tann . Hipper left briefly , but returned on 26 September and remained aboard through the following year . During the autumn fleet maneuvers in September 1913 , Cöln attempted to warn the crew of zeppelin L 1 of the deteriorating weather conditions , but they did not receive the message . As a result , the zeppelin crashed off the island of Helgoland . After the conclusion of the maneuvers , Hipper lowered his flag , and he was replaced by Kommodore (Commodore) Leberecht Maass . The year 1914 began with the normal training routine , but as tensions rose following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria on 28 June forced the cancellation of the planned fleet exercises for the end of July . Starting on 30 July , as war loomed , Cöln was stationed in the German Bight to monitor maritime traffic .

After the outbreak of World War I at the beginning of August 1914 , she and several other cruisers were tasked with patrol duties in the Heligoland Bight . The cruisers were divided with the torpedo boat flotillas , and assigned to rotate through nightly patrols into the North Sea . From 1 to 7 August , Cöln lay in the Schillig roadstead . She thereafter went to the mouth of the Weser , where she was joined by the cruiser Hamburg and the IV Torpedo @-@ boat Flotilla . As part of the patrol operations , Cöln conducted a sortie on the night of 15 August with Stuttgart and the I and II Torpedo @-@ boat Flotillas , without incident .

= = = Battle of Heligoland Bight = = =

At the same time , British submarines began reconnoitering the German patrol lines . On 23 August , several British commanders submitted a plan to attack the patrol line with the light cruisers and destroyers of the Harwich Force , commanded by Commodore Reginald Tyrwhitt . These ships would be supported by submarines and Vice Admiral David Beatty 's battlecruisers and associated light forces . The plan was approved and set for 28 August . The British forces began to leave port on the evening of 26 August , beginning with the submarines assigned to the operation . Most of the surface forces went to sea early on the following morning ; the 7th Cruiser Squadron , which had been added to provide further support to the Harwich Force , left port later in the day .

On the morning of 28 August , Cöln was re @-@ coaling in Wilhelmshaven . Her sister , Mainz , was at anchor in the mouth of the Ems , and Ariadne lay in the entrance to the Weser . These three cruisers were assigned to support the cruisers Stettin and Frauenlob , and the aviso Hela , which were stationed on the patrol line that morning . At 07 : 57 , the Harwich Force encountered the outer German torpedo boats , which fled back to the German cruisers on the patrol line . In the ensuing Battle of Heligoland Bight , Stettin engaged the British force first , and was quickly reinforced by Frauenlob . Upon receiving reports of the action , Rear Admiral Franz von Hipper , the commander of the reconnaissance forces , ordered Maass to deploy his cruisers to support the engaged vessels . At 09 : 30 , Cöln steamed out of port .

Cöln steamed to aid her sister Mainz , which was under heavy fire from several British cruisers and battlecruisers . At around 13 : 25 , she came upon the damaged cruiser HMS Arethusa and several destroyers . Cöln engaged the British ships briefly , but was interrupted by the appearance of the British battlecruisers . At 13 : 37 , Cöln made a 16 @-@ point turn and returned fire at the battlecruisers ; the British ships turned to port to steam closer to Cöln , which in turn similarly altered course to escape . She was hit several times , however , including one hit that killed Maass . At 13 : 56 , another German cruiser arrived on the scene , which distracted the British ships and allowed Cöln to slip away to the north . About fifteen minutes later , she turned back south @-@ east to return to port .

The reversal of course brought her back in range of the British battlecruisers , however , which quickly opened fire and scored several damaging hits . The order to abandon ship was given , and men began gathering on the deck . Engineers set scuttling charges while the men topside prepared to go into the water . At 14 : 25 , the ship rolled over and sank . The survivors expected the British to pick them up , but they instead departed . German ships searched the area three days later , to find only one survivor , Leading Stoker Neumann ; the rest of the crew had died in the water . The wreck

was moved in August 1979 to render it less of an underwater hazard . Some parts of the ship were salvaged and are now preserved in the Cuxhaven Shipwreck Museum .