

= SMS Beowulf =

SMS Beowulf was the second vessel of the six member Siegfried class of coastal defense ships (Küstenpanzerschiffe) built for the German Imperial Navy . Her sister ships were Siegfried , Frithjof , Heimdall , Hildebrand , and Hagen . Beowulf was built by the AG Weser shipyard between 1890 and 1892 , and was armed with a main battery of three 24 centimeter (9 in) guns . She served in the German fleet throughout the 1890s and was rebuilt in 1900 - 1902 . She served in the VI Battle Squadron after the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 , but saw no action . Beowulf was demobilized in 1915 and used as a target ship for U boats thereafter . She was ultimately broken up for scrap in 1921 .

= = Design = =

Beowulf was 79 meters (259 ft) long overall and had a beam of 14 m (48 ft) and a maximum draft of 5 m (18 ft) . She displaced 3,741 long tons (3,801 t) at full combat load . Her propulsion system consisted of two vertical 3 cylinder triple expansion engines . Steam for the engines was provided by four coal fired boilers . The ship 's propulsion system provided a top speed of 15 kn (28 km / h ; 17 mph) and a range of approximately 1,490 nautical miles (2,760 km ; 1,710 mi) at 10 kn (19 km / h ; 12 mph) . Beowulf had a crew of 20 officers and 256 enlisted men .

The ship was armed with three 24 cm K L / 35 guns mounted in three single gun turrets . Two were placed side by side forward , and the third was located aft of the main superstructure . They were supplied with a total of 204 rounds of ammunition . The ship was also equipped with eight 8 cm SK L / 30 guns in single mounts . Beowulf also carried four 35 cm (14 in) torpedo tubes , all in swivel mounts on the deck . One was at the bow , another at the stern , and two amidships . The ship was protected by an armored belt that was 240 mm (9 in) amidships , and an armored deck that was 30 mm (1 in) thick . The conning tower had 80 mm (3 in) thick sides .

= = Service history = =

Beowulf was laid down in 1890 at the AG Weser shipyard in Bremen . She was launched on 8 November 1890 , and completed on 1 April 1892 . Among the crew that commissioned the ship was the officer Franz von Hipper , who would go on to command the German battle fleet during World War I. Directly after her commissioning , she joined the I Division of the fleet for its annual training exercises , along with the three ironclads Baden , Bayern , and Württemberg . Beowulf remained on active service through the winter of 1892 - 1893 , when she and her sister ship Siegfried joined the elderly ironclads König Wilhelm and Deutschland for a winter training cruise in the Mediterranean Sea .

In 1893 , Beowulf again participated in the annual fleet maneuvers , this time alongside her recently commissioned sister Frithjof and several old ironclads . On the first set of maneuvers , Beowulf and the other capital ships performed as the hostile French fleet , which was " attacked " by torpedo boats in the North Sea . The second set of maneuvers took place in the Baltic Sea , and Beowulf and the ironclads again simulated a French fleet . In 1897 , Beowulf again participated in the annual summer maneuvers in the III Division , along with Siegfried and Hildebrand . Her other three sisters were assigned to the IV Division . Following her service in the 1899 summer maneuvers , Beowulf was placed in reserve , as the flagship of the reserve squadron in the North Sea .

Beowulf served on active duty with the fleet until 1900 , when she was taken into drydock at the Kaiserliche Werft shipyard in Danzig for an extensive reconstruction . The ship was lengthened to 86 m (282 ft) , which increased displacement to 4,320 t (4,500 long tons ; 4,760 short tons) . Her old boilers were replaced with eight new Marine type boilers , and a second funnel was added . Her secondary battery was increased to ten 8 cm guns , and the

35 cm torpedo tubes were replaced with three 45 cm (18 in) tubes . Work was completed by 1902 . She then returned to service with the fleet , and in 1903 , was assigned to the II Division , along with three of her sister ships .

She remained in the fleet until the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 , when she was mobilized into the VI Battle Squadron for coastal defense , along with her sister ships . In May 1915 , Beowulf participated in a combined naval and ground assault on the port of Libau in the Baltic . The attack took place on 7 May , and consisted of Beowulf , the armored cruisers Prinz Adalbert , Roon , and Prinz Heinrich , and the light cruisers Augsburg , Thetis , and Lübeck . They were escorted by a number of destroyers , torpedo boats , and minesweepers . The IV Scouting Group of the High Seas Fleet was detached from the North Sea to provide cover for the operation . The bombardment went as planned , though the destroyer V107 struck a mine in Libau 's harbor , which blew off her bow and destroyed the ship . German ground forces were successful in their assault however , and took the city . On 31 August 1915 , the VI Battle Squadron was demobilized , and Beowulf 's crew was transferred to other warships . She was then used as a target ship for U @-@ boats . Starting in 1918 , she was used as an icebreaker in the Baltic Sea . On 17 June 1919 , she was stricken from the naval register . She was sold to Norddeutscher Tiefbaugesellschaft in Berlin . Beowulf was broken up for scrap in 1921 in Danzig .