

= SMS Preussen ( 1873 ) =

For the battleship of the same name , see SMS Preussen

SMS Preussen was an armored frigate of the German Kaiserliche Marine . The ship was built by the AG Vulcan shipyard in Stettin in 1871 ? 1876 ; she was commissioned into the fleet in July 1876 . She was the first large warship of the German navy built by a private shipyard ; all previous vessels had been ordered abroad or built by Royal or Imperial dockyards . Her main battery of four 26 cm ( 10 in ) guns was mounted in a pair of twin gun turrets amidships .

Preussen served with the fleet from her commissioning until 1891 , though she was frequently placed in reserve throughout her career . She cruised the Mediterranean Sea several times during her service , including during a mission in 1877 after unrest in the Ottoman Empire threatened German citizens living there . The ship was withdrawn from service at the end of 1891 and used as a harbor guard ship until 1896 , when she was relegated to being a supply ship in Wilhelmshaven . She ended her career as a coal hulk for torpedo boats . In 1903 , she was renamed Saturn so her name could be reused . The ship was ultimately sold to shipbreakers in 1919 .

= = Construction = =

Preussen was ordered by the Imperial Navy from the AG Vulcan shipyard in Stettin ; her keel was laid in 1871 under construction number 66 . This was the first time a private German shipbuilder was given a contract to build a large warship for the navy . The ship was launched on 22 November 1873 and commissioned into the German fleet on 4 July 1876 . Preussen cost the German government 7 @, @ 303 @, @ 000 gold marks . Although she was the third and final ship in her class to be laid down , she was the first to be launched and commissioned . This was because her two sisters , Friedrich der Grosse and Grosser Kurfürst , were built by newly established Imperial dockyards , while Preussen was built by an experienced commercial ship builder .

The ship was 96 @. @ 59 meters ( 316 @. @ 9 ft ) long overall and had a beam of 16 @. @ 30 m ( 53 @. @ 5 ft ) and a draft of 7 @. @ 12 m ( 23 @. @ 4 ft ) forward . Preussen was powered by one 3 @- @ cylinder single @- @ expansion steam engine , which was supplied with steam by six coal @- @ fired transverse trunk boilers . The ship 's top speed was 14 knots ( 26 km / h ; 16 mph ) , at 5 @, @ 471 indicated horsepower ( 4 @, @ 080 kW ) . She was also equipped with a full ship rig . Her standard complement consisted of 46 officers and 454 enlisted men .

She was armed with four 26 cm ( 10 @. @ 2 in ) L / 22 guns mounted in a pair of gun turrets placed amidships . As built , the ship was also equipped with two 17 cm ( 6 @. @ 7 in ) L / 25 chase guns . After being rebuilt in 1888 ? 1890 , her armament was increased by six and later ten 8 @. @ 8 cm ( 3 @. @ 5 in ) L / 30 quick @- @ firing guns , a pair of machine guns , and five 35 cm ( 14 in ) torpedo tubes , all submerged in the ship 's hull . Preussen 's armor was made of wrought iron and backed with teak . The armored belt was arrayed in two strakes . The upper strake was 203 mm ( 8 @. @ 0 in ) thick ; the lower strake ranged in thickness from 102 to 229 mm ( 4 @. @ 0 to 9 @. @ 0 in ) . Both were backed with 234 to 260 mm ( 9 @. @ 2 to 10 @. @ 2 in ) of teak . The gun turrets were protected by 203 to 254 mm ( 8 @. @ 0 to 10 @. @ 0 in ) armor on the sides , backed by 260 mm of teak .

= = Service history = =

After her commissioning in July 1876 , Preussen served with the fleet . She joined a squadron sent to the Mediterranean Sea in 1877 in response to unrest in the Ottoman Empire related to the Russo @- @ Turkish War ; the violence threatened German citizens living there . The squadron , under the command of Rear Admiral Carl Ferdinand Batsch , steamed to the ports of Haifa and Jaffa in July 1877 , but found no significant tensions ashore . Batsch then departed and cruised the Mediterranean for the remainder of the summer , returning to Germany in October .

In April 1878 , Preussen participated in the fleet maneuvers , again under the command of Rear Admiral Batsch . By this time , she was joined by her two sister ships , Friedrich der Grosse and

Grosser Kurfürst . While steaming in the English Channel on 31 May , the armored frigate König Wilhelm accidentally rammed Grosser Kurfürst ; the latter quickly sank with the loss of 276 men . After assisting in the rescue attempt , Preussen escorted the damaged König Wilhelm to Portsmouth , where the Royal Navy made available a dry dock for emergency repairs . Albrecht von Stosch , the chief of the Kaiserliche Marine , ordered Rear Admiral Batsch and his staff to return to Germany immediately aboard Preussen and the dispatch vessel Falke . The annual summer maneuvers for 1878 were canceled within a week of the sinking .

In May 1879 , the armored squadron was reactivated , composed of Preussen , her sister Friedrich der Grosse , and the old armored frigates Kronprinz and Friedrich Carl . The annual summer training cruise was primarily conducted in just the Baltic Sea , apart from a short voyage in June to the coast of Norway . The four ships returned to Kiel in September , where they were demobilized for the winter . The new armored corvette Sachsen replaced Kronprinz in the squadron in 1880 . Wilhelm von Wickede , a former Austrian naval officer , replaced Batsch as the squadron commander . Again , the squadron remained in the Baltic for the summer cruise , with the exception of a short visit to Wilhelmshaven and Cuxhaven in August .

The summer cruise in 1881 followed the same pattern as the year previous , though Kronprinz returned in place of Sachsen , which was plagued with engine problems . Wickede again served as the commander . In July , the ships hosted a visit by the British reserve squadron , which by this time included the first British ironclad , HMS Warrior . Preussen and the rest of the squadron visited Danzig in September during a meeting between Kaiser Wilhelm I and the Russian Tsar Alexander III . The 1882 summer cruise included the same four ironclads from the previous year , and was again commanded by Wickede , who had by then been promoted to Rear Admiral . Preussen was kept in reserve during the annual summer maneuvers starting in 1883 , as new ships , including the rest of the Sachsen @-@ class ironclads entered service .

In August 1889 , Preussen was reactivated to participate in Kaiser Wilhelm II 's visit to Great Britain . The ship was assigned to the II Division , along with her sister Friedrich der Grosse and the central battery ironclads Kaiser and Deutschland , under command of Rear Admiral Friedrich Hollmann . The fleet then conducted maneuvers in the North Sea before returning to Germany . Preussen and the rest of the II Division became the training squadron for the fleet in 1889 ? 1890 , the first year the Kaiserliche Marine maintained a year @-@ round ironclad force . The squadron escorted Wilhelm II 's imperial yacht to the Mediterranean ; the voyage included state visits to Italy and the Ottoman Empire . The squadron remained in the Mediterranean until April 1890 , when it returned to Germany .

Preussen 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 . The II Division , including Preussen , served as the training squadron in the winter of 1890 ? 1891 . The squadron again cruised the Mediterranean , under the command of Rear Admiral Wilhelm Schröder . Preussen saw one final round of fleet maneuvers with the II Division in 1891 . She was removed from fleet duty to serve as a harbor guard ship at the end of 1891 .

She was based in Wilhelmshaven as a harbor ship starting on 16 November 1896 . She was renamed Saturn on 12 November 1903 , so her name could be reused on the new battleship Preussen . The ship was formally stricken from the naval register on 21 May 1906 . She was subsequently used as a coal hulk for torpedo boats . After being converted for this use , Saturn could hold up to 5 @,@ 000 t ( 4 @,@ 900 long tons ; 5 @,@ 500 short tons ) of coal . She was eventually sold for scrapping on 27 June 1919 and broken up that year in Wilhelmshaven . Her figurehead is on display in the Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr in Dresden , while her bow ornament is located in the Deutsches Museum in Munich .