

= SMS Elsass =

SMS Elsass. was the second of five pre-dreadnought battleships of the Braunschweig class in the German Imperial Navy , laid down in 1901 and commissioned 1904 . She was named for the German province of Elsass , now the French region of Alsace . Her sister ships were Braunschweig , Hessen , Preussen and Lothringen .

The ship served in the II Squadron of the German fleet after commissioning , though by the outbreak of World War I , she had been moved to the IV Squadron . Elsass saw action in the Baltic Sea against the Russian Navy . In August 1915 , she participated in the Battle of the Gulf of Riga , during which she engaged the Russian battleship Slava . In 1916 , however , she was placed in reserve because of crew shortages , and spent the remainder of the war as a training ship .

Under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles , she was retained after the end of the war and was modernized in 1923 . Elsass served in the Reichsmarine with the surface fleet until 1930 , when she was again placed in reserve . She was stricken in 1931 and used for a short time as a hulk in Wilhelmshaven . The out-dated battleship was sold to Norddeutscher Lloyd in late 1935 and was broken up for scrap the following year .

= = Construction = =

Elsass was laid down in 1901 at the Schichau-Werke in Danzig under construction number 97 . The second unit of her class , she was ordered under the contract name " J " as a new unit for the fleet . She cost 24 ,373 ,000 marks . Elsass was launched on 26 May 1903 and commissioned into the fleet on 29 November 1904 .

The ship was 127 m ( 419 ft 0 in ) long overall and had a beam of 22 m ( 72 ft 10 in ) and a draft of 8 m ( 26 ft 7 in ) forward . The ship was powered by three 3-cylinder vertical triple expansion engines that drove three screws . Steam was provided by eight naval and six cylindrical boilers , all of which burned coal . Elsass 's powerplant was rated at 16 ,000 indicated horsepower ( 12 ,000 kW ) , which generated a top speed of 18 knots ( 33 km / h ; 21 mph ) .

Elsass 's armament consisted of a main battery of four 28 cm ( 11 in ) SK L / 40 guns in twin gun turrets , , one fore and one aft of the central superstructure . Her secondary armament was composed of fourteen 17 cm ( 6 .7 in ) SK L / 40 guns and eighteen 8 .8 cm ( 3 .5 in ) SK L / 35 quick-firing guns . Her armament was further increased by six 45 cm ( 18 in ) torpedo tubes , all mounted submerged in the hull .

= = Service history = =

Upon her commissioning in November 1904 , Elsass was assigned to the IV Division of the II Squadron of the German fleet . She joined her sister Braunschweig and the old battleship Weissenburg . The German Navy in 1905 consisted of four divisions of three battleships each , with two divisions per squadron . This was supported by a cruiser division , composed of two armored cruisers and six protected cruisers . Kapitän zur See Reinhard Scheer assumed command of the vessel in 1907 ; he would go on to command the entire High Seas Fleet at the Battle of Jutland and eventually serve as the Chief of Naval Staff . Scheer held command of the ship for two years .

In 1909 , the ship was transferred to the III Division , II Squadron alongside her sisters Hessen and Preussen ; by this time , enough battleships had been built to increase the size of each division from three to four vessels . In March 1909 , a mine exploded aboard the ship during training in Kiel . Two sailors were killed and six more were wounded .

After World War I began in August 1914 , Elsass was assigned to the IV Battle Squadron of the High Seas Fleet . The squadron was commanded by Vice Admiral Ehrhard Schmidt . In July 1915 , following the loss of the minelaying cruiser SMS Albatross in the Baltic , the IV Squadron ships were transferred to reinforce the German naval forces in the area . On 11 and 19 July , German cruisers , with the IV Squadron ships in support , conducted sweeps in the Baltic , though without engaging

any Russian forces .

In August 1915 , the German fleet attempted to clear the Gulf of Riga of Russian naval forces to assist the German Army then advancing on the city . The IV Squadron was joined by the I Squadron , which consisted of the eight Nassau and Helgoland @-@ class battleships , from the High Seas Fleet , as well as three battlecruisers and many smaller craft . The task force commanded Vice Admiral Franz von Hipper , though operational command remained with Vice Admiral Schmidt . On the morning of 8 August , the German fleet made its initial push into the Gulf . Elsass and Braunschweig were assigned to engage the Russian pre @-@ dreadnought Slava and preventing her from disrupting the German minesweepers . When it became clear that the minesweepers could not clear the minefield before nightfall , however , Schmidt called off the attempt . A second attempt was made on 16 August . Elsass remained outside the Gulf , while the dreadnoughts Nassau and Posen dealt with Slava . By 19 August , the Russian minefields had been cleared and the flotilla entered the Gulf . However , reports of Allied submarines in the area prompted the German fleet to call off the operation the following day .

Due to manpower shortages , the ships of the IV Squadron were demobilized . On 25 July 1916 , Elsass became a drill ship and a floating barracks , based in Kiel . The Treaty of Versailles , which ended the war , specified that Germany was permitted to retain six battleships of the older " Deutschland or Lothringen class . " Elsass was kept and used as a training ship in the Reichsmarine .

In 1923 , the aging ship underwent a major overhaul . Elsass was dry @-@ docked in the Reichsmarinewerft in Wilhelmshaven , where the conning tower was rebuilt . Work was completed the following year . She and Braunschweig , with the Deutschland @-@ class battleship Schlesien , were assigned to the North Sea Station . Elsass served with the fleet until she was withdrawn from active service on 25 February 1930 . She was stricken from the naval register on 31 March 1931 and served as a hulk in Wilhelmshaven until 31 October 1935 , when the Reichsmarine sold her to Technischer Betrieb des Norddeutscher Lloyd . Elsass was broken up for scrap the following year .