

= SMS Mainz =

SMS Mainz 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 , Cöln , and Augsburg . She was built by the AG Vulcan shipyard in Stettin ; her hull was laid down in 1908 and she was launched in January 1909 . She was commissioned into the High Seas Fleet in October 1909 . 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 . She was assigned to patrols off the island of Heligoland at the outbreak of World War I in early August 1914 . 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 . Mainz was initially stationed in support of the forces on the patrol line . She attempted to reinforce the beleaguered German forces , and encountered a much stronger force of British cruisers and destroyers . They scored several damaging hits with gunfire and a torpedo that disabled Mainz and prompted her commander to abandon ship . The British rescued 348 men from the crew before the ship rolled over and sank . Eighty @-@ nine men were killed in the battle , including her commanding officer .

= = Design = =

Mainz was ordered under the contract name Ersatz Jagd and was laid down in 1907 at the AG Vulcan shipyard in Stettin . She was launched on 23 January 1909 and christened by the mayor of Mainz , Karl Emil Göttelmann , after which fitting @-@ out work commenced . She was commissioned into the High Seas Fleet on 1 October 1909 . The ship was 130 @. @ 5 meters ( 428 ft ) long overall and had a beam of 14 m ( 46 ft ) and a draft of 5 @. @ 58 m ( 18 @. @ 3 ft ) forward . She displaced 4 @, @ 915 t ( 4 @, @ 837 long tons ; 5 @, @ 418 short tons ) at full combat load . Her propulsion system consisted of two sets of AEG @-@ Curtiss steam turbines driving two 3 @. @ 45 @-@ meter ( 11 @. @ 3 ft ) 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 26 knots ( 48 km / h ; 30 mph ) . Mainz carried 1 @, @ 010 t ( 990 long tons ; 1 @, @ 110 short tons ) of coal that gave her a range of approximately 3 @, @ 630 nautical miles ( 6 @, @ 720 km ; 4 @, @ 180 mi ) at 14 knots ( 26 km / h ; 16 mph ) . Mainz 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 = =

After her commissioning in 1909 , Mainz served with the reconnaissance forces of the German fleet . Her first commander was Fregattenkapitän ( commander ) Friedrich Tiesmeyer , the uncle of Ernst Lindemann ; he held the command until January 1910 . She was assigned to the II Scouting Group , which screened for the battlecruisers of the I Scouting Group . 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 . As part of this operation , Mainz conducted a patrol on the night of 16 August with the VIII Torpedo @-@ boat Flotilla , without incident .

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 , Mainz was at anchor in the mouth of the Ems ; her sister Cöln , the flagship of Rear Admiral Leberecht Maass was re @-@ coaling in Wilhelmshaven , 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 . In the ensuing Battle of Heligoland Bight , Stettin engaged the British force first , and was quickly reinforced by Frauenlob . At 09 : 47 , Mainz was ordered to steam out behind the British to cut off their line of retreat . She got under way by 10 : 00 , and operated in conjunction with a floatplane used for reconnaissance .

At around 12 : 30 , Mainz encountered the British cruiser Arethusa and several destroyers . The ships engaged each other for the next forty @-@ five minutes . Fifteen minutes into the engagement , three British cruisers appeared ; Mainz broke off the engagement and attempted to escape from the superior British forces . The pursuing British cruisers scored several hits , but by 12 : 55 , Mainz had escaped under cover of a dense smoke screen . Another British cruiser , Fearless , and six destroyers , appeared on Mainz 's port side , however , and attacked the fleeing German ship . Mainz quickly scored hits on the destroyers Laurel , Liberty and Laertes ; Laurel was damaged and forced to withdraw and Laertes was disabled by a salvo that hit her engine room .

A shell from one of the British cruisers hit Mainz at around 13 : 00 , which jammed her rudder at ten degrees to starboard . Her crew shut off the port engine in an attempt to correct the ship 's course , but she continued to turn to starboard . By 13 : 20 , the majority of the ship 's guns had been disabled and the ship 's superstructure had been shot to pieces . Her center and aft funnel collapsed after suffering several hits . A torpedo from the destroyer Lydiard then hit the ship on her port side , amidships ; this prompted the ship 's commander to order the crew to abandon the stricken cruiser . He then left the conning tower with the navigation officer , both of whom were immediately killed by a shell hit . The ship 's communication system was out of service , and so the order to abandon ship did not reach the entire crew . The ship 's executive officer then reached the bridge , and reiterated the order to abandon the crippled ship at 13 : 35 .

Mainz was by now completely disabled . Her engines were stopped and her guns had ceased firing . Shortly before 14 : 00 , Lurcher came alongside and took off the wounded German sailors . At 14 : 10 , Mainz rolled over to port and quickly sank at the position 53 ° 58 ' N and 6 ° 42 ' E ; the survivors now in the water gave three cheers for their ship . The British rescued 348 survivors ; 89 men , including the ship 's commander , were killed in the battle . Among the survivors was Oberleutnant zur See ( Sub @-@ Lieutenant ) Wolfgang von Tirpitz , the son of Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz , the architect of the German fleet . Winston Churchill , then the First Lord of the Admiralty , informed Tirpitz via the US embassy in Berlin that his son survived the battle . In the course of the engagement , the British sank two more German cruisers : Mainz 's sister Cöln and Ariadne , with minimal losses to themselves .

= = Wreck = =

In August 2015 , members of the Dutch sport @-@ diving club Duikteam Zeester dove on the wreck of the Mainz and retrieved a variety of prosaic artifacts , including a sextant and the engine telegraph . Their actions provoked criticism from German sources , who noted that the wreck was a war grave containing the remains of 89 crew members and thus should not be disturbed . The German Federal Police were investigating the incident .