

= SMS Hannover =

SMS Hannover (" His Majesty 's Ship Hannover ") was the second of five Deutschland @-@ class pre @-@ dreadnoughts of the German Imperial Navy (Kaiserliche Marine) . Hannover and the three subsequently constructed ships differed slightly in both design and construction from the lead ship Deutschland in their propulsion systems and slightly thicker armor . Hannover was laid down in November 1904 and commissioned into the High Seas Fleet in October 1907 ; this was ten months after the revolutionary " all @-@ big @-@ gun " HMS Dreadnought was commissioned into the Royal Navy . As a result , Hannover was obsolete as a capital ship before she was even completed ; Dreadnought 's more powerful main battery and higher speed would have made it unwise for a ship like Hannover to engage her in the line of battle . The ship was named after the Prussian province of Hannover , now in Lower Saxony .

Hannover and her sisters saw extensive service with the fleet . The ship took part in all major training maneuvers until World War I broke out in July 1914 . Hannover and her sisters were immediately pressed into guard duties in the mouth of the Elbe River while the rest of the fleet mobilized . The ship took part in a number of fleet advances , which culminated in the Battle of Jutland on 31 May ? 1 June 1916 . During the battle , Hannover served as the flagship for the IV Division of the II Battle Squadron . After Jutland , Hannover and her three surviving sisters were removed from active duty with the fleet to serve as guard ships . In 1917 , Hannover was briefly used as a target ship before being returned to guard duties in the Baltic Sea . The ship was decommissioned in December 1918 , shortly after the end of the war .

Hannover was brought back to active service in the Reichsmarine , the post @-@ war Germany navy . She served with the fleet for ten years , from 1921 to 1931 , before she was again decommissioned . The navy planned to convert the ship into a radio @-@ controlled target ship for aircraft , but this was never carried out . The ship was ultimately broken up for scrap between 1944 and 1946 in Bremerhaven . Her bell is preserved at the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr in Dresden .

= = Construction = =

Hannover was intended to fight in the German battle line with the other battleships of the High Seas Fleet . The ship was laid down on 7 November 1904 at the Kaiserliche Werft shipyard in Wilhelmshaven . She was launched on 29 May 1905 and commissioned for trials on 1 October 1907 , but the fleet exercises in the Skagerrak in November interrupted the trials . Trials resumed after the maneuvers were completed , and by 13 February 1908 Hannover was ready to join the active fleet . She was assigned to the II Battle Squadron of the High Seas Fleet , joining her sisters Deutschland and Pommern . However , the new British battleship HMS Dreadnought ? armed with ten 12 @-@ inch (30 @.@ 5 cm) guns ? was commissioned in December 1906 , well before Hannover entered service . Dreadnought 's revolutionary design rendered obsolete every ship of the German navy , including the brand @-@ new Hannover .

Hannover was 127 @.@ 60 m (418 ft 8 in) long , had a beam of 22 @.@ 20 m (72 ft 10 in) , and a draft of 8 @.@ 21 m (26 ft 11 in) . She had a full @-@ load displacement of 14 @.@ 218 metric tons (13 @.@ 993 long tons) . The ship was equipped with triple expansion engines that produced a rated 17 @.@ 524 indicated horsepower (13 @.@ 068 kW) and a top speed of 18 knots (33 km / h ; 21 mph) . At a cruising speed of 10 knots (19 km / h ; 12 mph) , she could steam for 4 @.@ 520 nautical miles (8 @.@ 370 km ; 5 @.@ 200 mi) .

The ship 's primary armament consisted of four 28 cm (11 in) SK L / 40 guns in two twin turrets . She was also equipped with fourteen 17 cm (6 @.@ 7 in) guns mounted in casemates and twenty 8 @.@ 8 cm (3 @.@ 46 in) guns in pivot mounts . The ship was also armed with six 45 cm (17 @.@ 72 in) torpedo tubes , all of which were submerged in the hull .

= = Service = =

Upon her commissioning , Hannover joined the II Battle Squadron . From May to June 1908 , Hannover took part in maneuvers in the North Sea . From the following month until August , the fleet conducted a training cruise into the Atlantic . During the cruise , Hannover stopped in Ponta Delgado in the Azores from 23 July to 1 August . The annual autumn exercises began in September ; after these were completed Hannover was transferred to the I Squadron , where she served as the flagship for two years . In November , fleet and unit exercises were conducted in the Baltic Sea .

The training regimen in which Hannover participated followed a similar pattern over the next five years . This included another cruise into the Atlantic , from 7 July to 1 August 1909 . February 1910 saw the I Squadron conduct individual training in the Baltic . The unit was subsequently transferred from Kiel to the base in Wilhelmshaven on 1 April . Fleet maneuvers were conducted shortly thereafter , followed by a summer cruise to Norway , and additional fleet training in the fall . On 3 October 1911 , the ship was transferred back to the II Squadron . Due to the Agadir Crisis in July , the summer cruise only went into the Baltic . On 14 July 1914 , the annual summer cruise to Norway began , but the threat of war in Europe caused the excursion to be cut short ; within two weeks Hannover and the rest of the II Squadron had returned to Wilhelmshaven .

= = = World War I = = =

Following the outbreak of World War I , Hannover was tasked with guard duty in the Altenbruch roadstead in the mouth of the Elbe River during the period of mobilization for the rest of the fleet . In late October , the ships were sent to Kiel to have modifications made to their underwater protection systems to make them more resilient . Hannover then joined the battleship support for the battlecruisers that bombarded Scarborough , Hartlepool , and Whitby on 15 ? 16 December 1914 . During the operation , the German battle fleet of some 12 dreadnoughts and eight pre @-@ dreadnoughts came to within 10 nmi (19 km ; 12 mi) of an isolated squadron of six British battleships . However , skirmishes between the rival destroyer screens convinced the German commander , Admiral Friedrich von Ingenohl , that he was confronted with the entire Grand Fleet , and so he broke off the engagement and turned for home .

Hannover put to sea during the Battle of Dogger Bank on 24 January 1915 to support the beleaguered German battlecruisers , but quickly returned to port . On 17 ? 18 April , Hannover supported a minelaying operation off the Swarte Bank by the light cruisers of the II Reconnaissance Group . A fleet advance to the Dogger Bank followed on 21 ? 22 April . On 16 May , Hannover was sent to Kiel to have one of her 28 cm guns replaced . The ship returned to Kiel on 28 June to have supplemental oil firing installed for her boilers ; work lasted until 12 July . On 11 ? 12 September , II Reconnaissance Group conducted another minelaying operation off the Swarte Bank with Hannover and the rest of II Squadron in support . This was followed by another resultless sweep by the fleet on 23 ? 24 October . During the fleet advance of 5 ? 7 March 1916 , Hannover and the rest of II Squadron remained in the German Bight , ready to sail in support . They then rejoined the fleet during the operation to bombard Yarmouth and Lowestoft on 24 ? 25 April . During this operation , the battlecruiser Seydlitz was damaged by a British mine and had to return to port prematurely . Visibility was poor , so the operation was quickly called off before the British fleet could intervene .

= = = = Battle of Jutland = = = =

Admiral Reinhard Scheer , the commander of the German fleet , immediately planned another advance into the North Sea , but the damage to Seydlitz delayed the operation until the end of May . Hannover was the flagship in the IV Division of the II Battle Squadron , which was positioned at the rear of the German line . The II Battle Squadron was commanded by Rear Admiral Franz Mauve . During the " Run to the North " , Scheer ordered the fleet to pursue the retreating battleships of the British V Battle Squadron at top speed . Hannover and her sisters were significantly slower than the faster dreadnoughts and quickly fell behind . During this period , Scheer directed Hannover to place herself at the rear of the German line , so he would have a flagship on either end of the formation . By 19 : 30 , the Grand Fleet had arrived on the scene and confronted Scheer with significant

numerical superiority . The German fleet was severely hampered by the presence of the slower Deutschland @-@ class ships ; if Scheer ordered an immediate turn towards Germany , he would have to sacrifice the slower ships to make good his escape .

Scheer decided to reverse the course of the fleet with the Gefechtskehrtwendung , a maneuver that required every unit in the German line to turn 180 ° simultaneously . As a result of their having fallen behind , the ships of the II Battle Squadron could not conform to the new course following the turn . Hannover and the other five ships of the squadron therefore were located on the disengaged side of the German line . Mauve considered moving his ships to the rear of the line , astern of the III Battle Squadron dreadnoughts , but decided against it when he realized the movement would interfere with the maneuvering of Admiral Franz von Hipper 's battlecruisers . Instead , he attempted to place his ships at the head of the line .

Later on the first day of the battle , the hard @-@ pressed battlecruisers of the I Scouting Group were being pursued by their British opponents . Hannover and the other so @-@ called " five @-@ minute ships " came to their aid by steaming in between the opposing battlecruiser squadrons . The ships were very briefly engaged , owing in large part to the poor visibility . Hannover fired eight rounds from her 28 cm guns during this period . The British battlecruiser HMS Princess Royal fired on Hannover several times until the latter was obscured by smoke . Hannover was struck once by fragments from one of the 13 @.@ 5 @-@ inch (34 cm) shells fired by Princess Royal . Mauve decided it would be inadvisable to continue the fight against the much more powerful battlecruisers , and so ordered an 8 @-@ point turn to starboard .

Late on the 31st , the fleet organized for the night march back to Germany ; Deutschland , Pommern , and Hannover fell in behind König and the other dreadnoughts of the III Battle Squadron towards the rear of the line . Hannover was then joined by the Hessen , Schlesien , and Schleswig @-@ Holstein . Hessen situated herself between Hannover and Pommern , while the other two ships fell in at the rear of the line . Shortly after 01 : 00 , the leading ships of the German line came into contact with the armored cruiser HMS Black Prince ; Black Prince was quickly destroyed in a hail of gunfire from the German dreadnoughts . Nassau was forced to heel out of line to avoid the sinking British ship , and an hour later rejoined the formation directly ahead of Hannover . At around 03 : 00 , British destroyers conducted a series of attacks against the fleet , some of which targeted Hannover . Shortly thereafter , Pommern was struck by at least one torpedo from the destroyer Onslaught ; the hit detonated an ammunition magazine which destroyed the ship in a tremendous explosion . Hannover was astern of Pommern and was forced to turn hard to starboard in order to avoid the wreck . Simultaneously , a third torpedo from Onslaught passed closely astern of Hannover , which forced the ship to turn away . Shortly after 04 : 00 , Hannover and several other ships fired repeatedly at what were thought to be submarines ; in one instance , the firing from Hannover and Hessen nearly damaged the light cruisers Stettin and München , which prompted Scheer to order them to cease firing . Hannover and several other ships again fired at imaginary submarines shortly before 06 : 00 .

Despite the ferocity of the night fighting , the High Seas Fleet punched through the British destroyer forces and reached Horns Reef by 04 : 00 on 1 June . The German fleet reached Wilhelmshaven a few hours later , where the undamaged dreadnoughts of the Nassau and Helgoland classes took up defensive positions . Over the course of the battle , Hannover had fired eight 28 cm shells , twenty @-@ one 17 cm rounds , and forty @-@ four shells from her 8 @.@ 8 cm guns . She emerged from the battle completely unscathed .

== == Later actions == ==

After Jutland , Hannover went into dock for periodic maintenance on 4 November . Hannover and the rest of II Battle Squadron were then detached from the High Seas Fleet on 30 November and reassigned to picket duty in the mouth of the Elbe . In early 1917 , Hannover was used as a target ship in the Baltic . On 21 March , Hannover had some of her guns removed ; the ship was then converted into a guard ship from 25 June to 16 September . During this period , on 15 August , the II Battle Squadron was officially disbanded . On 27 September , Hessen was assigned to guard duties

in the Baltic , where she replaced the older battleship Lothringen .

= = = Postwar service = = =

On 11 November 1918 , Germany entered into the Armistice with the Western Allies . According to the terms of the Armistice , the most modern components of Germany 's surface fleet were interned in the British naval base at Scapa Flow , while the rest of the fleet was demilitarized . On the day the armistice took effect , Hannover was sent briefly to Swinemünde , before returning to Kiel on 14 ? 15 November along with Schlesien . Hannover was decommissioned a month later on 17 December in accordance with the terms of the Armistice .

The terms of the Treaty of Versailles , signed on 21 June 1919 , permitted Germany to retain a surface fleet of eight obsolete battleships . This amounted to three of the Deutschland @-@ class battleships , Hannover , Schleswig @-@ Holstein and Schlesien , as well as the five Braunschweig @-@ class battleships .

Hannover was the first of all the old battleships to come in service with the Reichsmarine in February 1921 as fleet flagship in the Baltic . Her first homeport was Swinemünde but she was transferred to Kiel in 1922 . In 1923 the German Navy adopted a new command structure and Braunschweig became flagship of the Fleet . In October 1925 , Hannover was moved to the North Sea station . She was decommissioned in March 1927 when Schlesien returned to active service . With newly built masts but still three funnels she entered service again replacing Elsass in February 1930 until September 1931 .

The ship was struck from the naval register in 1936 , after which the navy intended to rebuild Hannover for use as a target ship . The conversion , however , never occurred . Ultimately , the ship was broken up between May 1944 and October 1946 in Bremerhaven . Her bell now resides in the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr in Dresden .