

= German cruiser Karlsruhe =

Karlsruhe was a light cruiser , the second member of the Königsberg class , and was operated between 1929 and April 1940 , including service in World War II . She was operated by two German navies , the Reichsmarine and the Kriegsmarine . She had two sister ships , Königsberg and Köln . Karlsruhe was built by the Deutsche Werke shipyard in Kiel ; she was laid down in July 1926 , launched in August 1927 , and commissioned into the Reichsmarine in November 1929 . She was armed with a main battery of nine 15 cm SK C / 25 guns in three triple turrets and had a top speed of 32 knots (59 km / h ; 37 mph) .

Like her sisters , Karlsruhe served as a training cruiser for naval cadets throughout the 1930s . During the Spanish Civil War , she joined the non @-@ intervention patrols off the Spanish coast . She was in the process of being modernized at the outbreak of World War II in September 1939 , and so she was not ready for action until April 1940 , when she participated in Operation Weserübung , the invasion of Norway . She landed troops at Kristiansand , and while returning to Germany , she was attacked by the British submarine HMS Truant ; two torpedoes hit the ship and caused significant damage . Unable to return to port , Karlsruhe was scuttled by one of the escorting torpedo boats .

= = Characteristics = =

Karlsruhe was 174 meters (571 ft) long overall and had a beam of 15 @. @ 2 m (50 ft) and a maximum draft of 6 @. @ 28 m (20 @. @ 6 ft) . She displaced 7 @, @ 700 long tons (7 @, @ 800 t) at full combat load . Her propulsion system consisted of four steam turbines and a pair of 10 @-@ cylinder four @-@ stroke diesel engines . Steam for the turbines was provided by six Marine @-@ type double @-@ ended oil @-@ fired boilers . The ship 's propulsion system provided a top speed of 32 knots (59 km / h ; 37 mph) and a range of approximately 5 @, @ 700 nautical miles (10 @, @ 600 km ; 6 @, @ 600 mi) at 19 knots (35 km / h ; 22 mph) . Karlsruhe had a crew of 21 officers and 493 enlisted men .

The ship was armed with nine 15 cm SK C / 25 guns mounted in three triple gun turrets . One was located forward , and two were placed in a superfiring pair aft . The rear gun turrets were offset to increase their arc of fire . They were supplied with 1 @, @ 080 rounds of ammunition , for 120 shells per gun . The ship was also equipped with two 8 @. @ 8 cm SK L / 45 anti @-@ aircraft guns in single mounts ; they had 400 rounds of ammunition each . Karlsruhe also carried four triple torpedo tube mounts located amidships ; they were supplied with twenty @-@ four 50 cm (20 in) torpedoes . She was also capable of carrying 120 naval mines . The ship was protected by an armored deck that was 40 mm (1 @. @ 6 in) thick amidships and an armored belt that was 50 mm (2 @. @ 0 in) thick . The conning tower had 100 mm (3 @. @ 9 in) thick sides .

= = Service history = =

The new cruiser was ordered as " Cruiser C " and given the temporary name Ersatz Medusa as a replacement for the old cruiser Medusa . Construction of Karlsruhe began on 27 July 1926 with her keel laying at the Deutsche Werke shipyard in Kiel . She was launched on 20 August 1927 , and she was commissioned into the Reichsmarine on 6 November 1929 . Karlsruhe completed sea trials in the Baltic Sea after entering service , after which she was assigned to training ship duty . In May 1930 , she departed on her first overseas training cruise , to Africa and South America . After returning to Germany , she was modernized late in the year ; her foremast was shortened , and her rear superstructure was slightly enlarged . Over the next five years , she embarked on four more world cruises for naval cadets , traveling as far as Japan . Between each cruise , she conducted exercises with the rest of the fleet in German waters . Günther Lütjens served as the ship 's commander from September 1934 to September 1935 . In 1935 , she had more modifications made , including the installation of a pole mast aft of the funnels , along with an aircraft catapult amidships with a crane to handle floatplanes .

On her last training cruise in 1936 , Karlsruhe was badly damaged by a tropical storm in the Pacific Ocean . Structural weaknesses in her mostly @-@ welded hull plating caused significant damage , and the cruiser was forced to put in to San Diego in April for repairs . There , her hull was repaired and strengthened , which increased her displacement and beam slightly . She returned to Germany in June 1936 , and immediately went into drydock for more permanent repairs and a major overhaul . During this period in dockyard hands , she had her two single @-@ mount 8 @.@ 8 cm anti @-@ aircraft guns replaced with three twin @-@ mounts . Fire control directors were also installed for these guns . After emerging from this refit , she conducted sea trials and then joined the non @-@ intervention patrols during the Spanish Civil War , though she only remained off Spain for a few months .

= = = World War II = = =

After returning to Germany , she resumed training duties in the Baltic . She was withdrawn from service in May 1938 for a major modernization . The funnels were modified with raked caps and searchlight platforms on their sides . The ship 's 8 @.@ 8 cm guns were replaced with more powerful 10 @.@ 5 cm guns . Work lasted until November 1939 , shortly after the outbreak of World War II . She spent the next several months on trials and training maneuvers . On 4 January , Karlsruhe and the minelayer Schiff 23 were sent to intercept the Swedish steamer Konung Oscar , which was transporting Polish refugees from Riga to Sweden . Karlsruhe caught the Swedish vessel , declared it a prize , and sent it and the 41 Poles aboard to Memel . She was not ready for combat operations by the start of Operation Weserübung , so she was used as a troop transport for the attack on Kristiansand . The attack force also included an E @-@ boat tender , four large torpedo boats , and several E @-@ boats .

The invasion force left Bremerhaven early on 8 April 1940 , bound for Kristiansand . When they arrived , a heavy fog obscured the city , making the passage of the fjord outside the harbor very dangerous . As a result , they had to wait until the following morning to begin the attack . As Karlsruhe entered the fjord , she came under heavy fire from the Norwegian coastal guns . The cruiser turned in the fjord to bring her full broadside into action ; the artillery duel lasted for about two hours before heavy fog again covered the port , forcing both sides to cease fire . The Norwegians surrendered an hour later , and the German ships landed their soldiers .

Karlsruhe then left Kristiansand with three of the torpedo boats as escorts . The British submarine HMS Truant was positioned outside the fjord , and when her crew spotted the German ships , she fired a spread of torpedoes . Karlsruhe zig @-@ zagged to evade the torpedoes , but two still hit the ship ; one struck her bow and the other hit amidships . They blasted large holes in the hull and allowed thousands of tons of water to flood the ship . The flooding disabled her engines and electricity generators , which cut off power to the pumps that were trying to keep pace with the progressively worsening flooding . With the pumps shut off , there was no hope to save Karlsruhe , and so her commander , Friedrich Rieve issued the order to abandon her two hours after the attack . The torpedo boat Greif took off her crew and fired two more torpedoes into the ship to ensure that she sank .

Rieve and his executive officer were both severely criticized for failing to take all possible steps to save Karlsruhe in a later investigation into the sinking . The report concluded that since the ship was still afloat after two hours , and two torpedoes were required to sink her , it might have been possible to take her under tow back to Kristiansand or another port . In addition , the forward pumps still had power , and so the flooding could have been slowed enough to permit a return to a safe harbor .