

= German cruiser Admiral Hipper =

Admiral Hipper , the first of five ships of her class , was the lead ship of the Admiral Hipper class of heavy cruisers which served with Nazi Germany 's Kriegsmarine during World War II . The ship was laid down at the Blohm & Voss shipyard in Hamburg in July 1935 and launched February 1937 ; Admiral Hipper entered service shortly before the outbreak of war , in April 1939 . The ship was named after Admiral Franz von Hipper , commander of the German battlecruiser squadron during the Battle of Jutland in 1916 and later commander @-@ in @-@ chief of the German High Seas Fleet .

Admiral Hipper saw a significant amount of action during the war . She led the assault on Trondheim during Operation Weserübung ; while en route to her objective , she sank the British destroyer HMS Glowworm . In December 1940 , she broke out into the Atlantic Ocean to operate against Allied merchant shipping , though this operation ended without significant success . In February 1941 , Admiral Hipper sortied again , sinking several merchant vessels before eventually returning to Germany via the Denmark Strait . The ship was then transferred to northern Norway to participate in operations against convoys to the Soviet Union , culminating in the Battle of the Barents Sea on 31 December 1942 , where she sank the destroyer Achates and the minesweeper Bramble but was in turn damaged and forced to withdraw by the light cruisers HMS Sheffield and HMS Jamaica .

Disappointed by the failure to sink merchant ships in that battle , Adolf Hitler ordered the majority of the surface warships scrapped , though Admiral Karl Dönitz was able to convince Hitler to retain the surface fleet . As a result , Admiral Hipper was returned to Germany and decommissioned for repairs . The ship was never restored to operational status , however , and on 3 May 1945 , Royal Air Force bombers severely damaged her while she was in Kiel . Her crew scuttled the ship at her moorings , and in July 1945 , she was raised and towed to Heikendorfer Bay . She was ultimately broken up for scrap in 1948 ? 1952 and her bell is currently on display at the Laboe Naval Memorial .

= = Construction = =

Admiral Hipper was ordered by the Kriegsmarine from the Blohm & Voss shipyard in Hamburg . Her keel was laid on 6 July 1935 , under construction number 246 . The ship was launched on 6 February 1937 , and was completed on 29 April 1939 , the day she was commissioned into the German fleet . The Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief of the Kriegsmarine , Großadmiral (Grand Admiral) Erich Raeder , who had been Franz von Hipper 's chief of staff during World War I , gave the christening speech and his wife Erika Raeder performed the christening . As built , the ship had a straight stem , though after her launch this was replaced with a clipper bow . A raked funnel cap was also installed .

Admiral Hipper was 202 @.@ 8 meters (665 ft) long overall and had a beam of 21 @.@ 3 m (70 ft) and a maximum draft of 7 @.@ 2 m (24 ft) . After the installation of a clipper bow during fitting out , her overall length increased to 205 @.@ 9 meters (676 ft) . The ship had a design displacement of 16 @,@ 170 t (15 @,@ 910 long tons ; 17 @,@ 820 short tons) and a full load displacement of 18 @,@ 200 long tons (18 @,@ 500 t) . Admiral Hipper was powered by three sets of geared steam turbines , which were supplied with steam by twelve ultra @-@ high pressure oil @-@ fired boilers . The ship 's top speed was 32 knots (59 km / h ; 37 mph) , at 132 @,@ 000 shaft horsepower (98 @,@ 000 kW) . As designed , her standard complement consisted of 42 officers and 1 @,@ 340 enlisted men .

Admiral Hipper 's primary armament was eight 20 @.@ 3 cm (8 @.@ 0 in) SK L / 60 guns mounted in four twin gun turrets , placed in superfiring pairs forward and aft . Her anti @-@ aircraft battery was to have consisted of twelve 10 @.@ 5 cm (4 @.@ 1 in) L / 65 guns , twelve 3 @.@ 7 cm (1 @.@ 5 in) guns , and eight 2 cm (0 @.@ 79 in) guns . The ship also would have carried a pair of triple 53 @.@ 3 cm (21 @.@ 0 in) torpedo launchers abreast of the rear superstructure . The ship was to have been equipped with three Arado Ar 196 seaplanes and one catapult . Admiral

Hipper 's armored belt was 70 to 80 mm (2 @. @ 8 to 3 @. @ 1 in) thick ; her upper deck was 12 to 30 mm (0 @. @ 47 to 1 @. @ 18 in) thick while the main armored deck was 20 to 50 mm (0 @. @ 79 to 1 @. @ 97 in) thick . The main battery turrets had 105 mm (4 @. @ 1 in) thick faces and 70 mm thick sides .

= = History = =

Kapitän zur See (Captain at Sea) Hellmuth Heye was given command of the ship at her commissioning . After her commissioning in April 1939 , Admiral Hipper steamed into the Baltic Sea to conduct training maneuvers . The ship also made port calls to various Baltic ports , including cities in Estonia and Sweden . In August , the ship conducted live fire drills in the Baltic . At the outbreak of World War II in September 1939 , the ship was still conducting gunnery trials . She was briefly used to patrol the Baltic , but she did not see combat , and was quickly returned to training exercises . In November 1939 , the ship returned to the Blohm & Voss dockyard for modifications ; these included the replacement of the straight stem with a clipper bow and the installation of the funnel cap .

Sea trials in the Baltic resumed in January 1940 , but severe ice restrained the ship to port . On 17 February , the Kriegsmarine pronounced the ship fully operational , and on the following day , Admiral Hipper began her first major wartime patrol . She joined the battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau and the destroyers Karl Galster and Wilhelm Heidkamp in a sortie into the North Sea off Bergen , Norway . A third destroyer , Wolfgang Zenker , was forced to turn back after sustaining damage from ice . The ships operated under the command of Admiral Wilhelm Marschall . The ships attempted to locate British merchant shipping , but failed and returned to port on 20 February .

= = Operation Weserübung = =

Following her return from the North Sea sortie , Admiral Hipper was assigned to the forces tasked with the invasion of Norway , codenamed Operation Weserübung . The ship was assigned as the flagship of Group 2 , along with the destroyers Paul Jakobi , Theodor Riedel , Friedrich Eckoldt , and Bruno Heinemann . KzS Heye was given command of Group 2 during the operation . The five ships carried a total of 1 @, @ 700 Wehrmacht mountain troops , whose objective was the port of Trondheim ; the ships loaded the troops in Cuxhaven . The ships steamed to the Schillig roadstead outside Wilhelmshaven , where they joined Group 1 , consisting of ten destroyers , and the battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau , which were assigned to cover Groups 1 and 2 . The ships steamed out of the roadstead at midnight on the night of 6 ? 7 April .

While steaming off the Norwegian coast , Admiral Hipper was ordered to divert course to locate the destroyer Bernd von Arnim , which had fallen behind Group 1 . In the mist , the destroyer encountered the British destroyer HMS Glowworm ; the two destroyers engaged each other until Bernd von Arnim 's commander requested assistance from Admiral Hipper . Upon arriving on the scene , Admiral Hipper was initially misidentified by Glowworm to be a friendly vessel , which allowed the German ship to close the distance and fire first . Admiral Hipper rained fire on Glowworm , scoring several hits . Glowworm attempted to flee , but when it became apparent she could not break away from the pursuing cruiser , she turned toward Admiral Hipper and fired a spread of torpedoes , all of which missed . The British destroyer scored one hit on Admiral Hipper 's starboard bow before a rudder malfunction set the ship on a collision course with the German cruiser .

The collision with Glowworm tore off a 40 @- @ meter (130 ft) section of Admiral Hipper 's armored belt on the starboard side , as well as the ship 's starboard torpedo launcher . Minor flooding caused a four degree list to starboard , though the ship was able to continue with the mission . Glowworm 's boilers exploded shortly after the collision , causing her to sink quickly . Forty survivors were picked up by the German ship . Admiral Hipper then resumed course toward Trondheim . The British destroyer had survived long enough to send a wireless message to the Royal Navy headquarters , which allowed the battlecruiser Renown time to move into position to engage Scharnhorst and

Gneisenau , though the German battleships used their superior speed to break off contact .

One of Admiral Hipper 's Arado seaplanes had to make an emergency landing in Eide , Norway on 8 April . After trying to purchase fuel from locals , the aircrew were detained and handed over to the police . The Royal Norwegian Navy Air Service captured the Arado , which was painted in Norwegian colors and used by the Norwegians until 18 April when it was evacuated to Britain .

After arriving off Trondheim , Admiral Hipper successfully passed herself off as a British warship long enough to steam past the Norwegian coastal artillery batteries . The ship entered the harbor and docked shortly before 05 : 30 to debark the mountain troops . After the ground troops seized control of the coastal batteries , the ship left Trondheim , bound for Germany . She was escorted by Friedrich Eckoldt ; she reached Wilhelmshaven on 12 April , and went into drydock . The dockyard workers discovered the ship had been damaged more severely by the collision with Glowworm than had previously been thought . Nevertheless , repairs were completed in the span of two weeks .

Admiral Marschall organized a mission to seize Harstad in early June 1940 ; Admiral Hipper , the battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau , and four destroyers were tasked with the operation . The ships departed on 4 June , and while en route , Admiral Hipper encountered and sank the empty troopship Orama on 9 June . Before they reached Harstad , the Germans learned that the Allies had already abandoned the port . Marschall 's squadron was then tasked with intercepting an Allied convoy that was reported to be in the area . The ships failed to find the convoy , and returned to Trondheim to refuel .

On 13 June , the ship 's anti - aircraft gunners shot down an attacking British bomber . On 25 July , Admiral Hipper steamed out on a commerce raiding patrol in the area between Spitzbergen and Tromsø ; the cruise lasted until 9 August . While on the patrol , Admiral Hipper encountered the Finnish freighter Ester Thorden , which was found to be carrying 1 @. 75 t (1 @. 72 long tons ; 1 @. 93 short tons) of gold . The ship was seized and sent to occupied Norway with a prize crew .

= = = Atlantic operations = = =

Admiral Hipper left the Norwegian theater in September 1940 for an overhaul in Wilhelmshaven . After the routine maintenance was completed toward the end of the month , the ship attempted to break out into the Atlantic Ocean to raid merchant traffic . The engine oil feed system caught fire and was severely damaged . The fire forced the crew to shut down the ship 's propulsion system until the blaze could be brought under control ; this rendered Admiral Hipper motionless for several hours on the open sea . British reconnaissance failed to locate the ship , and after the fire was extinguished , the ship returned to Hamburg 's Blohm & Voss shipyard , where repairs lasted slightly over a week .

The ship made a second attempt to break out into the Atlantic on 30 November ; she successfully navigated the Denmark Strait undetected on 6 December . Admiral Hipper intercepted a convoy of 20 troopships on 24 December , some 700 nautical miles (1 @. 300 km ; 810 mi) west of Cape Finisterre . Five of the twenty ships were allocated to Operation Excess . The convoy was protected by a powerful escort composed of the aircraft carriers Furious and Argus , the cruisers Berwick , Bonaventure , and Dunedin , and six destroyers . Admiral Hipper did not initially spot the escorting warships , and so began attacking the convoy . With her main guns she badly damaged two ships , one of which was the 13 @. 994 @- long @- ton (14 @. 219 t) transport Empire Trooper , before spotting the heavy cruiser Berwick and destroyers steaming toward her . She quickly withdrew , using her main guns to keep the destroyers at bay .

Ten minutes later , Berwick reappeared off Admiral Hipper 's port bow ; the German cruiser fired several salvos from her forward turrets and scored hits on the British cruiser 's rear turrets , waterline , and forward superstructure . Admiral Hipper then disengaged , to prevent the British destroyers from closing to launch a torpedo attack . By now , the ship was running low on fuel , and so she put into Brest in occupied France on 27 December . While en route , Admiral Hipper encountered and sank the isolated 6 @. 078 @- long @- ton (6 @. 176 t) cargo ship Jumna . Another round of routine maintenance work was effected while the ship was in Brest ,

readying her for another sortie into the Atlantic shipping lanes .

On 1 February 1941 , Admiral Hipper embarked on her second Atlantic sortie . The Kriegsmarine had initially sought to send the battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau to operate in concert with Admiral Hipper , but Gneisenau suffered storm damage in December that prevented the participation of the two ships . Repairs were effected quickly , however , and the two battleships broke out into the Atlantic in early February . Admiral Hipper rendezvoused with a tanker off the Azores to top up her fuel tanks . On 11 February , the ship encountered and sank an isolated transport from convoy HG 53 , which had been dispersed by U @-@ boat and Luftwaffe attacks . That evening , she picked up the unescorted convoy SLS 64 , which contained nineteen merchant ships . The following morning , Admiral Hipper closed in and sank several of the ships . The British reported only seven ships were lost , totaling 32 @,@ 806 long tons (33 @,@ 332 t) , along with damage to two more . The Germans claimed Admiral Hipper had sunk thirteen of the nineteen freighters , while some survivors reported fourteen ships of the convoy were sunk .

Following the attack on convoy SLS 64 , Admiral Hipper 's fuel stocks were running low . She therefore returned to Brest on 15 February . British bombers were regularly attacking the port , however , and the Kriegsmarine therefore decided Admiral Hipper should return to Germany , where she could be better protected . Before the ship could leave , damage caused to the ship 's hull by wrecks in the harbor had to be repaired . On 15 March , the ship slipped out of Brest , unobserved , and passed through the Denmark Strait eight days later . While en route , Admiral Hipper stopped to refuel in Bergen . By 28 March , the cruiser was docked in Kiel , having made the entire journey without being detected by the British . Upon arrival , the ship went into the Deutsche Werke shipyard for an extensive overhaul , which lasted for seven months . After completion of the refit , Admiral Hipper conducted sea trials in the Baltic before putting into Gotenhafen on 21 December for some minor refitting . In January 1942 , the ship had her steam turbines overhauled at the Blohm & Voss shipyard ; a degaussing coil was fitted to the ship 's hull during this overhaul . By March , the ship was again fully operational .

= = = Deployment to Norway = = =

On 19 March 1942 , Admiral Hipper steamed to Trondheim , escorted by the destroyers Z24 , Z26 , and Z30 and the torpedo boats T15 , T16 , and T17 . Several British submarines were patrolling the area , but failed to intercept the German flotilla . Admiral Hipper and her escorts reached their destination on 21 March . There , they joined the heavy cruisers Lützow and Prinz Eugen , though the latter soon returned to Germany for repairs after being torpedoed . On 3 July , Admiral Hipper joined the cruisers Lützow and Admiral Scheer and the battleship Tirpitz for Operation Rösselsprung , an attack on convoy PQ 17 . Escorting the convoy were the battleships HMS Duke of York and USS Washington and the aircraft carrier HMS Victorious . Admiral Hipper , Tirpitz , and six destroyers sortied from Trondheim , while a second task force consisting of Lützow , Admiral Scheer , and six destroyers operated out of Narvik . Lützow and three of the destroyers struck uncharted rocks while en route to the rendezvous and had to return to port . Swedish intelligence had meanwhile reported the German departures to the British Admiralty , which ordered the convoy to disperse . Aware that they had been detected , the Germans aborted the operation and turned over the attack to U @-@ boats and the Luftwaffe . The scattered vessels could no longer be protected by the convoy escorts , and the Germans sank 21 of the 34 isolated transports .

The British submarine Tigris unsuccessfully attempted to torpedo Admiral Hipper on 10 September , while the ship was patrolling with Admiral Scheer and the light cruiser Köln . The cruiser escorted the destroyers Z23 , Z28 , Z29 , and Z30 on 24 ? 28 September to lay a minefield off the north @-@ west coast of Novaya Zemlya . The goal of the operation was to funnel merchant traffic further south , closer to the reach of German naval units in Norway . After her return to port , Admiral Hipper was transferred to Bogen Bay near Narvik for repairs to her propulsion system . On 28 ? 29 October , Admiral Hipper and the destroyers Friedrich Eckoldt and Richard Beitzen were transferred further north from Narvik to the Altafjord . Starting on 5 November , Admiral Hipper and the 5th Destroyer Flotilla , composed of Z27 , Z30 , Richard Beitzen , and Friedrich Eckoldt , patrolled for Allied

shipping in the Arctic . Vizeadmiral Oskar Kummetz commanded the squadron from Admiral Hipper . On 7 November , the cruiser 's Arado Ar 196 floatplane located the 7 @, @ 925 @-@ long @-@ ton (8 @, @ 052 t) Soviet tanker Donbass and its escort , the auxiliary warship BO @-@ 78 . Kummetz dispatched the destroyer Z27 to sink the two Soviet ships .

= = = = Battle of the Barents Sea = = = =

In December 1942 , convoy traffic to the Soviet Union resumed . Großadmiral Raeder ordered a plan , Operation Regenbogen , to use the available surface units in Norway to launch an attack on the convoys . The first convoy of the month , JW 51A , passed to the Soviet Union without incident . However , the second , convoy JW 51B , was spotted by the submarine U @-@ 354 south of Bear Island . Raeder ordered the forces assigned to Operation Regenbogen into action . Admiral Hipper , again served as Kummetz 's flagship ; the squadron comprised Lützow and the destroyers Friederich Eckoldt , Richard Beitzen , Theodor Riedel , Z29 , Z30 , and Z31 . The force left Altafjord at 18 : 00 on 30 December , under orders to avoid confrontation with even an equal opponent .

Kummetz 's plan was to divide his force in half ; he would take Admiral Hipper and three destroyers north of the convoy to attack it and draw away the escorts . Lützow and the remaining three destroyers would then attack the undefended convoy from the south . At 09 : 15 on the 31st , the British destroyer Obdurate spotted the three destroyers screening for Admiral Hipper ; the Germans opened fire first . Four of the other five destroyers escorting the convoy rushed to join the fight , while Achates laid a smoke screen to cover the convoy . Admiral Hipper fired several salvos at Achates , raining shell splinters on the destroyer that severed steam lines and reduced her speed to 15 knots (28 km / h ; 17 mph) . Kummetz then turned back north to draw the destroyers away . Captain Robert Sherbrooke , the British escort commander , left two destroyers to cover the convoy while he took the remaining four to pursue Admiral Hipper .

Rear Admiral Robert Burnett 's Force R , centered on the cruisers Sheffield and Jamaica , standing by in distant support of the Allied convoy , raced to the scene . The cruisers engaged Admiral Hipper , which had been firing to port at the destroyer Obedient . Burnett 's ships approached from Admiral Hipper 's starboard side and achieved complete surprise . In the initial series of salvos from the British cruisers , Admiral Hipper was hit three times . One of the hits damaged the ship 's propulsion system ; the No. 3 boiler filled with a mix of oil and water , which forced the crew to turn off the starboard turbine engine . This reduced her speed to 23 knots (43 km / h ; 26 mph) . The other two hits started a fire in her aircraft hangar . She fired a single salvo at the cruisers before turning toward them , her escorting destroyers screening her with smoke .

After emerging from the smoke screen , Hipper was again engaged by Burnett 's cruisers . Owing to the uncertainty over the condition of his flagship and the ferocity of the British defense , Kummetz issued the following order at 10 : 37 : " Break off action and retire to the west . " Mistakenly identifying Sheffield as Admiral Hipper , the destroyer Friederich Eckoldt approached too closely and was sunk . Meanwhile , Lützow closed to within 3 nmi (5 @. @ 6 km ; 3 @. @ 5 mi) of the convoy , but due to poor visibility , she held her fire . She then received Kummetz 's order , and turned west to rendezvous with Admiral Hipper . Lützow inadvertently came alongside Sheffield and Jamaica , and after identifying them as hostile , engaged them . The British cruisers turned toward Lützow and came under fire from both German cruisers . Admiral Hipper 's firing was more accurate and quickly straddled Sheffield , though the British cruiser escaped unscathed . Burnett quickly decided to withdraw in the face of superior German firepower ; his ships were armed with 6 in (150 mm) guns , while Admiral Hipper and Lützow carried 20 @. @ 3 cm (8 @. @ 0 in) and 28 cm (11 in) guns , respectively .

Based on the order issued at the outset of the operation to avoid action with a force equal in strength to his own , poor visibility , and the damage to his flagship , Kummetz decided to abort the attack . In the course of the battle , the British destroyer Achates was sunk by the damage inflicted by Admiral Hipper . The Germans also sank the minesweeper Bramble and damaged the destroyers Onslow , Obedient , and Obdurate . In return , the British sank Friederich Eckoldt and damaged Admiral Hipper , and forced the Germans to abandon the attack on the convoy . In the aftermath of

the failed operation , a furious Hitler proclaimed that the Kriegsmarine 's surface forces would be paid off and dismantled , and their guns used to reinforce the fortifications of the Atlantic Wall . Admiral Karl Dönitz , Raeder 's successor , convinced Hitler to retain the surface fleet , however . After returning to Altafjord , emergency repairs to Admiral Hipper were effected , which allowed her to return to Bogen Bay on 23 January 1943 . That day , Admiral Hipper , Köln , and the destroyer Richard Beitzen left the Altafjord to return to Germany . The three ships stopped in Narvik on 25 January , and in Trondheim from 30 January to 2 February . After resuming the voyage south , the ships searched for Norwegian blockade runners in the Skagerrak on 6 February before putting into port at Kiel on 8 February . On 28 February , the ship was decommissioned in accordance with Hitler 's decree .

= = = Fate = = =

Despite being decommissioned , repair work on the ship continued . The ship was moved in April to Pillau in the Baltic , to put Admiral Hipper out of the reach of Allied bombers . A year later , the ship was moved to Gotenhafen ; the Kriegsmarine intended to re @-@ commission the ship so she could be used in the Baltic . Over the next five months , Admiral Hipper ran a series of sea trials in the Baltic , but failed to reach operational status . As the Soviet army pushed the Germans back on the Eastern Front , her crew was drafted into construction work on the defenses of the city , further impairing Admiral Hipper 's ability to enter active service . The Royal Air Force also laid an extensive minefield around the port , which forced the ship to remain in the harbor .

By the end of 1944 , the ship was due for another overhaul ; work was to have lasted for three months . The Soviet Army had advanced so far , however , that it was necessary to move the ship farther away from the front , despite the fact that she had only one working turbine . On 29 January 1945 , the ship left Gotenhafen , arriving in Kiel on 2 February . She entered the Germaniawerft shipyard for refitting . On 3 May , RAF bombers attacked the harbor and severely damaged the ship . Her crew scuttled the wrecked ship at her moorings at 04 : 25 on 3 May . In July 1945 , after the end of the war , Admiral Hipper was raised and towed to Heikendorfer Bay and subsequently broken up for scrap in 1948 ? 1952 . Her bell was on display at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich . The bell has since been returned to Germany and is on display at the Laboe Naval Memorial .