

= SMS Thüringen =

SMS Thüringen was the third vessel of the Helgoland class of dreadnought battleships of the German Imperial Navy . Thüringen 's keel was laid in November 1908 at the AG Weser dockyard in Bremen . She was launched on 27 November 1909 and commissioned into the fleet on 1 July 1911 . The ship was equipped with twelve 30 @. @ 5 @- @ centimeter (12 @. @ 0 in) guns in six twin turrets , and had a top speed of 21 knots (39 km / h ; 24 mph) . Thüringen was assigned to the I Battle Squadron of the High Seas Fleet for the majority of her career , including World War I.

Along with her three sister ships , Helgoland , Ostfriesland , and Oldenburg , Thüringen participated in all of the major fleet operations of World War I in the North Sea against the British Grand Fleet . This included the Battle of Jutland on 31 May and 1 June 1916 , the largest naval battle of the war . Thüringen was involved in the heavy night fighting at Jutland , including the destruction of the armored cruiser HMS Black Prince . The ship also saw action against the Imperial Russian Navy in the Baltic Sea , where she participated in the unsuccessful first incursion into the Gulf of Riga in August 1915 .

After the German collapse in November 1918 , most of the High Seas Fleet was interned in Scapa Flow during the peace negotiations . The four Helgoland @- @ class ships were allowed to remain in Germany and were therefore spared the destruction of the fleet in Scapa Flow . Thüringen and her sisters were eventually ceded to the victorious Allied powers as war reparations ; Thüringen was transferred to France in April 1920 and used as a target ship for the French Navy . She was sunk off Gavres and broken up in situ in 1923 ? 1933 , though some sections of the ship remain .

= = Construction = =

Thüringen was ordered by the German Imperial Navy (Kaiserliche Marine) under the provisional name Ersatz Beowulf , as a replacement for the old coastal defense ship Beowulf . The contract for the ship was awarded to the AG Weser dockyard in Bremen under construction number 166 . Work began on 2 November 1908 with the laying of her keel , and the ship was launched a year later on 27 November 1909 . She was christened by Duchess Adelheid von Sachsen @- @ Altenburg , and Grand Duke Wilhelm Ernst gave the speech . Fitting @- @ out , including completion of the superstructure and the installation of armament , lasted until June 1911 . Following her completion , six pontoon barges were attached to the new battleship to reduce her draft to allow her to be towed down the Weser River to the North Sea . Thüringen , named for Thuringia , a state in central Germany , was commissioned into the High Seas Fleet on 1 June 1911 , less than three years after work commenced , at a cost of 46 @. @ 314 million gold marks , the most expensive unit of her class .

The ship was 167 @. @ 2 m (548 ft 7 in) long overall , had a beam of 28 @. @ 5 m (93 ft 6 in) and a draft of 8 @. @ 94 m (29 ft 4 in) , and displaced 24 @, @ 700 metric tons (24 @, @ 310 long tons) at full load . She was powered by three vertical triple expansion steam engines and fifteen water @- @ tube boilers . The engines were rated at 27 @, @ 617 ihp (20 @, @ 594 kW) and were capable of producing a top speed of 21 knots (39 km / h ; 24 mph) . Thüringen stored up to 3 @, @ 200 metric tons (3 @, @ 100 long tons) of coal , which allowed her to steam for 5 @, @ 500 nautical miles (10 @, @ 200 km ; 6 @, @ 300 mi) at a speed of 10 knots (19 km / h ; 12 mph) . After 1915 , the boilers were modified to spray oil on the coal to increase its burn rate ; the ship could carry up to 197 metric tons (194 long tons) of fuel oil .

Thüringen was armed with a main battery of twelve 30 @. @ 5 cm (12 @. @ 0 in) SK L / 50 guns in six twin gun turrets , with one turret fore , one aft , and two on each flank of the ship . The ship 's secondary armament consisted of fourteen 15 cm (5 @. @ 9 in) SK L / 45 guns and fourteen 8 @. @ 8 cm (3 @. @ 5 in) SK L / 45 guns . After 1914 , two of the 8 @. @ 8 cm guns were removed and replaced by 8 @. @ 8 cm anti @- @ aircraft guns . Thüringen was also armed with six 50 cm (20 in) submerged torpedo tubes ; one was in the bow , one in the stern , and two on each broadside . Her main belt of armor was 300 mm (12 in) thick , with the same thickness of armor on her main battery turrets . Her deck was 63 @. @ 5 mm (2 @. @ 50 in) thick .

= = Service history = =

After her commissioning on 1 July 1911 , Thüringen conducted sea trials , which were completed by 10 September . On 19 September , she was assigned to the I Battle Squadron of the High Seas Fleet , alongside her sisters . She then went on to conduct individual ship training exercises , which were followed by I Squadron exercises and then fleet maneuvers in November . The annual summer cruise in July and August , which typically went to Norway , was interrupted by the Agadir Crisis . As a result , the cruise only went into the Baltic . Thüringen and the rest of the fleet then fell into a pattern of individual ship , squadron , and full fleet exercises over the next two years . In October 1913 , William Michaelis became the ship 's commanding officer ; he held the post until February 1915 .

On 14 July 1914 , the annual summer cruise to Norway began . During the last peacetime cruise of the Imperial Navy , the fleet conducted drills off Skagen before proceeding to the Norwegian fjords on 25 July . The following day the fleet began to steam back to Germany , as a result of Austria @-@ Hungary 's ultimatum to Serbia . On 27 July , the entire fleet assembled off Cape Skudenenes before returning to port , where they remained at a heightened state of readiness . War between Austria @-@ Hungary and Serbia broke out the following day , and within a week all the major European powers had joined the conflict . By 29 July Thüringen and the rest of I Squadron were back in Wilhelmshaven . During the first year of the war , the future anti @-@ Nazi Lutheran pastor Martin Niemöller served aboard the ship as an officer .

= = = World War I = = =

Thüringen was present during the first sortie by the German fleet into the North Sea , which took place on 2 ? 3 November 1914 . No British forces were encountered during the operation . A second operation followed on 15 ? 16 December . This sortie was the initiation of a strategy adopted by Admiral Friedrich von Ingenohl , the commander of the High Seas Fleet . Admiral von Ingenohl intended to use the battlecruisers of Konteradmiral (Rear Admiral) Franz von Hipper 's I Scouting Group to raid British coastal towns to lure out portions of the Grand Fleet where they could be destroyed by the High Seas Fleet . Early on 15 December the fleet left port to raid the towns of Scarborough , Hartlepool , and Whitby on the English coast . That evening , the German battle fleet of some twelve dreadnoughts ? including Thüringen and her three sisters ? and eight pre @-@ dreadnoughts came to within 10 nmi (19 km ; 12 mi) of an isolated squadron of six British battleships . Skirmishes between the rival destroyer screens in the darkness convinced von Ingenohl that he was faced with the entire Grand Fleet . Under orders from Kaiser Wilhelm II to avoid risking the fleet unnecessarily , von Ingenohl broke off the engagement and turned the battle fleet back toward Germany .

The Battle of Dogger Bank , in which Vice Admiral David Beatty 's 1st and 2nd Battlecruiser Squadrons ambushed the I Scouting Group battlecruisers , occurred on 24 January 1915 . Thüringen and the rest of I Squadron were sortied to reinforce the outnumbered German battlecruisers ; I Squadron left port at 12 : 33 CET , along with the pre @-@ dreadnoughts of II Squadron . The High Seas Fleet was too late , so it failed to locate any British forces . By 19 : 05 , the fleet had returned to the Schillig Roads outside Wilhelmshaven . In the meantime , the armored cruiser Blücher had been overwhelmed by concentrated British fire and sunk , while the battlecruiser Seydlitz was severely damaged by an ammunition fire . As a result , Wilhelm II removed von Ingenohl from his post and replaced him with Admiral Hugo von Pohl on 2 February .

The eight I Squadron ships went into the Baltic on 22 February 1915 for unit training , which lasted until 13 March . Following their return to the North Sea , the ships participated in a series of uneventful fleet sorties on 29 ? 30 March , 17 ? 18 April , 21 ? 22 April , 17 ? 18 May , and 29 ? 30 May . Thüringen and the rest of the fleet then remained in port until 4 August , when the I Squadron returned to the Baltic for another round of training maneuvers . From there , the squadron was attached to the naval force that attempted to sweep the Gulf of Riga of Russian naval forces in

August 1915 . The assault force included the eight I Squadron battleships , the battlecruisers Von der Tann , Moltke , and Seydlitz , several light cruisers , 32 destroyers and 13 minesweepers . The plan called for channels to be swept in Russian minefields so that the Russian naval presence , which included the pre @-@ dreadnought Slava , could be eliminated . The Germans would then lay minefields of their own to prevent Russian ships from returning to the Gulf . Thüringen and the majority of the other big ships of the High Seas Fleet remained outside the Gulf for the entirety of the operation . The dreadnoughts Nassau and Posen were detached on 16 August to escort the minesweepers and to destroy Slava , though they failed to sink the old battleship . After three days , the Russian minefields had been cleared , and the flotilla entered the Gulf on 19 August ; reports of Allied submarines in the area prompted a German withdrawal from the Gulf the following day . By 26 August , the I Squadron had returned to Wilhelmshaven .

On 23 ? 24 October , the High Seas Fleet undertook its last major offensive operation under the command of von Pohl , though it ended without contact with British forces . By January 1916 hepatic cancer had weakened von Pohl to the point where he was no longer able to carry out his duties , and he was replaced by Vice Admiral Reinhard Scheer in January . Scheer proposed a more aggressive policy designed to force a confrontation with the British Grand Fleet ; he received approval from the Kaiser in February . Scheer 's first operation was a sweep into the North Sea on 5 ? 7 March , followed by two more on 21 ? 22 March and 25 ? 26 March . During Scheer 's next operation , Thüringen supported a raid on the English coast on 24 April 1916 conducted by the German battlecruiser force . The battlecruisers left the Jade Estuary at 10 : 55 and the rest of the High Seas Fleet followed at 13 : 40 . The battlecruiser Seydlitz struck a mine while en route to the target , and had to withdraw . The other battlecruisers bombarded the town of Lowestoft unopposed , but during the approach to Yarmouth , they encountered the British cruisers of the Harwich Force . A short gun duel ensued before the Harwich Force withdrew . Reports of British submarines in the area prompted the retreat of the I Scouting Group . At this point , Scheer , who had been warned of the sortie of the Grand Fleet from its base in Scapa Flow , also withdrew to safer German waters .

= = = = Battle of Jutland = = = =

Thüringen was present during the fleet operation that resulted in the battle of Jutland which took place on 31 May and 1 June 1916 . The German fleet again sought to draw out and isolate a portion of the Grand Fleet and destroy it before the main British fleet could retaliate . During the operation , Thüringen was the second ship in the I Division of I Squadron and the tenth ship in the line , directly astern of the squadron flagship Ostfriesland and ahead of another sister Helgoland . The I Squadron was the center of the German line , behind the eight König- and Kaiser @-@ class battleships of III Squadron . The six elderly pre @-@ dreadnoughts of the III and IV Divisions , II Battle Squadron , formed the rear of the formation .

Shortly before 16 : 00 , the battlecruisers of the I Scouting Group encountered the British 1st Battlecruiser Squadron under the command of David Beatty . The opposing ships began an artillery duel that saw the destruction of Indefatigable , shortly after 17 : 00 , and Queen Mary , less than half an hour later . By this time , the German battlecruisers were steaming south to draw the British ships toward the main body of the High Seas Fleet . At 17 : 30 , the crew of the leading German battleship , König , spotted both the I Scouting Group and the 1st Battlecruiser Squadron approaching . The German battlecruisers were steaming to starboard , while the British ships steamed to port . At 17 : 45 , Scheer ordered a two @-@ point turn to port to bring his ships closer to the British battlecruisers , and a minute later , the order to open fire was given .

While the leading battleships engaged the British battlecruiser squadron , Thüringen and ten other battleships , too far out of range to attack the British battlecruisers , fired on the British 2nd Light Cruiser Squadron . Thüringen and Kronprinz engaged the cruiser Dublin , though both ships failed to score a hit . Thüringen fired for eight minutes at ranges of 18 @,@ 600 to 20 @,@ 800 yd (17 @,@ 000 to 19 @,@ 000 m) , expending twenty @-@ nine 30 @.@ 5 cm shells . The British destroyers Nestor and Nomad , which had been disabled earlier in the engagement , laid directly in the path of the advancing High Seas Fleet . Thüringen and three other battleships destroyed Nestor

with their primary and secondary guns while several III Squadron battleships sank Nomad . Shortly after 19 : 15 , the British dreadnought Warspite came into range ; Thüringen opened fire at 19 : 25 with her main and secondary battery guns , at ranges of 10 @, @ 600 to 11 @, @ 800 yd (9 @, @ 700 to 10 @, @ 800 m) . The ship fired twenty @-@ one 30 @. @ 5 cm and thirty @-@ seven 15 cm shells in the span of five or six minutes , after which Thüringen 's gunners lost sight of Warspite , without scoring any hits . They then shifted fire to Malaya . Thüringen fired twenty main battery rounds at Malaya , also unsuccessfully , over seven minutes at a range of 14 @, @ 100 yd (12 @, @ 900 m) before conforming to a 180 degree turn ordered by Scheer to disengage from the British fleet .

At around 23 : 30 , the German fleet reorganized into the night @-@ cruising formation . Thüringen was the seventh ship , stationed toward the front of the 24 @-@ ship line . An hour later , the leading units of the German line encountered British light forces and a violent firefight at close range ensued . Sometime around 01 : 10 , the armored cruiser Black Prince stumbled into the German line . Thüringen illuminated the vessel with her spotlights and poured salvos of 30 @. @ 5 cm rounds into the ship at point @-@ blank range . The first salvo struck near Black Prince 's rear gun turret , which appears to have been blown overboard . Thüringen fired a total of ten 30 @. @ 5 cm , twenty @-@ seven 15 cm , and twenty @-@ four 8 @. @ 8 cm shells . She was joined by three other battleships , and Black Prince was soon destroyed by a huge ammunition explosion . Around a half an hour later , Thüringen spotted what appeared to be a Birkenhead @-@ class cruiser . She fired a starshell to illuminate the British cruiser and opened fire with her secondary guns . The ship was actually the destroyer Turbulent . Thüringen fired eighteen 15 cm and six 8 @. @ 8 cm shells before launching another starshell . Turbulent appeared to be capsized to starboard , though she remained afloat and was dispatched later by the cruiser Regensburg and the destroyers V71 and V73 .

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 . A few hours later , the fleet arrived in the Jade ; Thüringen , Helgoland , Nassau , and Westfalen took up defensive positions in the outer roadstead and four undamaged III Squadron ships anchored just outside the entrance locks to Wilhelmshaven . The remaining eight dreadnoughts entered port , where those that were still in fighting condition restocked ammunition and fuel . In the course of the engagement , Thüringen had fired one @-@ hundred and seven 30 @. @ 5 cm , one @-@ hundred and fifteen 15 cm , and twenty @-@ two 8 @. @ 8 cm shells , while she and her crew emerged from the battle unscathed .

== == Subsequent operations == ==

On 18 August , Admiral Scheer attempted to repeat the 31 May operation . The two serviceable German battlecruisers (Moltke and Von der Tann) , supported by three dreadnoughts , would bombard Sunderland in an attempt to draw out and destroy Beatty 's battlecruisers . The rest of the fleet , including Thüringen , would trail behind and provide cover . British signals intelligence informed Jellicoe of the German departure later in the day , and he sent the Grand Fleet out to intercept the Germans . On the approach to the English coast , Scheer turned north after receiving a false report from a zeppelin about a British unit in the area . As a result , the bombardment was not carried out , and by 14 : 35 on 19 August , Scheer had been warned of the Grand Fleet 's approach and so turned his forces around and retreated to German ports .

On 25 ? 26 September , Thüringen and the rest of I Squadron covered an advance conducted by the second commander of the torpedo @-@ boat flotillas (II Führer der Torpedoboote) to the Terschelling Bank . Scheer conducted another fleet operation on 18 ? 20 October in the direction of the Dogger Bank , though rudder damage prevented Thüringen from participating . For the majority of 1917 , Thüringen was assigned to guard duty in the German Bight . During Operation Albion , the amphibious assault on the Russian @-@ held islands in the Gulf of Riga , Thüringen and her three sisters were moved to the Danish straits to block any possible British attempt to intervene . On 28 October the four ships arrived in Putzig Wiek , and from there steamed to Arensburg on the 29th . On 2 November the operation was completed and Thüringen and her sisters began the voyage back to the North Sea . A final abortive fleet sortie took place on 23 ? 24 April 1918 . Thüringen ,

Ostfriesland , and Nassau were formed into a special unit for Operation Schlußstein , a planned occupation of St. Petersburg . The three ships reached the Baltic on 10 August , but the operation was postponed and eventually canceled . The special unit was dissolved on 21 August and the battleships were back in Wilhelmshaven on the 23rd .

= = = Fate = = =

Thüringen and her three sisters were to have taken part in a final fleet action at the end of October 1918 , days before the Armistice was to take effect . The bulk of the High Seas Fleet was to have sortied from their base in Wilhelmshaven to engage the British Grand Fleet ; Scheer ? by now the Grand Admiral (Großadmiral) of the fleet ? intended to inflict as much damage as possible on the British navy , to improve Germany 's bargaining position , despite the expected casualties . But many of the war @-@ weary sailors felt that the operation would disrupt the peace process and prolong the war . On the morning of 29 October 1918 , the order was given to sail from Wilhelmshaven the following day . Starting on the night of 29 October , sailors on Thüringen and then on several other battleships mutinied . Stokers turned off the boilers and refused to work . The following day , the torpedo boats B110 and B112 came alongside and the U @-@ boat U @-@ 135 pointed her guns at the ship . A significant portion of the crew , 314 sailors and 124 stokers , were arrested and taken off the ship . This was not enough to stop the mutiny , which quickly spread throughout the fleet . The unrest ultimately forced Hipper and Scheer to cancel the operation . Informed of the situation , the Kaiser stated " I no longer have a navy " .

Following the capitulation of Germany in November 1918 , most of the High Seas Fleet , under the command of Rear Admiral Ludwig von Reuter , was interned in the British naval base in Scapa Flow . Thüringen and her three sisters , along with the four Nassau @-@ class battleships , were permitted to remain in Germany during the peace negotiations . On the morning of 21 June , the British fleet left Scapa Flow to conduct training maneuvers , and in their absence Reuter ordered the crews to scuttle the ten battleships and five battlecruisers interned at Scapa Flow . Thüringen was decommissioned on 16 December 1918 and used as a barracks ship while she remained in Germany . She was stricken from the naval register on 5 November 1919 and placed out of commission . The fate of the eight remaining German battleships was determined in the Treaty of Versailles , which stated that the ships were to be disarmed and surrendered to the governments of the principal Allied powers . Thüringen was surrendered to the French Navy on 29 April 1920 under the name " L " . A skeleton crew took the ship to Cherbourg for the official transfer . Thüringen was briefly used as a target ship by the French Navy before sinking off Gavres . The ship was partially broken up in situ in 1923 ? 1933 , though significant portions of the ship remain off the French coast .