

= SMS Niobe =

SMS Niobe (" His Majesty 's Ship Niobe ") was the second member of the ten @-@ ship Gazelle class of light cruisers built by the Imperial German Navy . She was built by the AG Weser shipyard in Bremen , laid down in 1898 , launched in July 1899 , and commissioned into the High Seas Fleet in June 1900 . She was named after Niobe , a figure from Greek mythology . Armed with a main battery of ten 10 @. @ 5 cm (4 @. @ 1 in) guns and two 45 cm (18 in) torpedo tubes , Niobe was capable of a top speed of 21 @. @ 5 knots (39 @. @ 8 km / h ; 24 @. @ 7 mph) . The ship had a long career , serving in all three German navies , along with the Yugoslav and Italian fleets over the span of over 40 years in service .

Niobe served in both home and overseas waters in the Imperial Navy , before being reduced to a coastal defense ship after the outbreak of World War I. She survived the conflict and was one of six cruisers permitted to the Reichsmarine by the Treaty of Versailles . In 1925 , the German Navy sold the ship to the Kingdom of Serbs , Croats and Slovenes (later Yugoslavia) . There , she was renamed Dalmacija and served until April 1941 , when she was captured by the Italians during the Axis invasion of Yugoslavia . Renamed Cattaro , she served in the Italian Regia Marina until the Italian surrender in September 1943 . She was then seized by the German occupiers of Italy , who restored her original name . She was used in the Adriatic briefly until December 1943 , when she ran aground on the island of Silba , and was subsequently destroyed by British Motor Torpedo Boats . The wreck was ultimately salvaged and broken up for scrap in 1947 ? 49 .

= = Design = =

Niobe was 105 meters (344 ft) long overall and had a beam of 12 @. @ 2 m (40 ft) and a draft of 5 @. @ 03 m (16 @. @ 5 ft) forward . She displaced 2 @, @ 963 t (2 @, @ 916 long tons ; 3 @, @ 266 short tons) at full combat load . Her propulsion system consisted of two triple @-@ expansion engines manufactured by AG @-@ Germania . They were designed to give 8 @, @ 000 shaft horsepower (6 @, @ 000 kW) , for a top speed of 21 @. @ 5 knots (39 @. @ 8 km / h ; 24 @. @ 7 mph) . The engines were powered by eight coal @-@ fired Thornycroft water @-@ tube boilers . Niobe carried 500 tonnes (490 long tons) of coal , which gave her a range of 3 @, @ 570 nautical miles (6 @, @ 610 km ; 4 @, @ 110 mi) at 10 knots (19 km / h ; 12 mph) . She had a crew of 14 officers and 243 enlisted men .

The ship was armed with ten 10 @. @ 5 cm SK L / 40 guns in single mounts . Two were placed side by side forward on the forecastle , six were located amidships , three on either side , and two were placed side by side aft . The guns could engage targets out to 12 @, @ 200 m (40 @, @ 000 ft) . They were supplied with 1 @, @ 000 rounds of ammunition , for 100 shells per gun . She was also equipped with two 45 cm (17 @. @ 7 in) torpedo tubes with five torpedoes . They were submerged in the hull on the broadside . The ship was protected by an armored deck that was 20 to 25 mm (0 @. @ 79 to 0 @. @ 98 in) thick . The conning tower had 80 mm (3 @. @ 1 in) thick sides , and the guns were protected by 50 mm (2 @. @ 0 in) thick shields .

= = Service history = =

= = = Construction and early career = = =

Niobe was ordered under the contract name " B " and was laid down at the AG Weser shipyard in Bremen on 30 August 1898 and launched on 18 July 1899 , after which fitting @-@ out work commenced . She was commissioned on 25 June 1900 to begin sea trials , which lasted until 22 August . She was thereafter placed in reserve . On 11 April 1901 , the ship returned to service and was assigned as the flagship of the I Torpedo @-@ boat Flotilla on the 18th , replacing the elderly aviso Blitz , which was by then worn out . Niobe served in this position until 26 June , and during this period , took part in training exercises in the Baltic Sea and the Kattegat . On 28 June , she left the I

Flotilla and escorted the imperial yacht Hohenzollern on a trip to Norway . The visit was cut short following the death of Kaiser Wilhelm II 's mother , Victoria . Niobe then joined the I Squadron for the annual fleet exercises in late August and early September . Following the conclusion of the maneuvers , Niobe was again tasked with escorting Wilhelm II in Hohenzollern , this time to meet with Russian Tsar Nicholas II from 11 to 13 September . Niobe then returned to Wilhelmshaven , where she went into drydock for alterations that lasted from 1 October to 1 April 1902 .

After Niobe returned to active service in April 1902 , she returned to duty with the I Torpedo @-@ boat Flotilla , and was stationed in the Baltic . On 2 July , she was transferred back to the I Squadron for the annual training exercises and a winter cruise toward the end of the year . During this period , Korvettenkapitän (Corvette Captain) Franz von Hipper served as the ship 's commander . In early 1903 , she again returned to the I Torpedo @-@ boat Flotilla , her last stint as the flotilla flagship . The Navy initially planned on sending Niobe to reinforce the squadron participating in the Venezuelan crisis of 1902 ? 03 , but the incident concluded before she could be sent . Instead , on 1 March , she joined the cruisers of the I Scouting Group for a trip to Norway . She remained in the I Scouting Group for the annual maneuvers that followed later in the year , and through 1904 as well . Following the fleet maneuvers in August and September 1904 , Niobe was decommissioned on 29 September . She spent the following two years out of service , during which time she underwent a major overhaul .

On 19 June 1906 , Niobe was recommissioned for service in the East Asia Squadron . She left Wilhelmshaven on 9 July and rendezvoused with the squadron , the flagship of which was the armored cruiser Fürst Bismarck , on 8 September . The ship cruised Chinese and Japanese waters for the next three years ; her time in the East Asia Squadron was uneventful . On 31 January 1909 , Niobe steamed out of the main German port in the region , Tsingtao , and made the return voyage to Germany . She reached Kiel on 21 March , and having become badly worn out during her three years abroad , she was decommissioned on the 31st .

= = = World War I = = =

After the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 , Niobe was recommissioned for coastal defense , stationed in the German Bight . Between 28 August to 2 September , and from 23 December , Niobe 's commander also served as the commander of the torpedo @-@ boat flotillas defending the Jade Bight and the mouth of the Weser . She was removed from front @-@ line service on 5 September 1915 , and her crew was reduced four days later . The commander of the torpedo @-@ boat flotillas returned to Niobe on 14 January 1916 , as his previous flagship , the old coastal defense ship Siegfried , was decommissioned . Niobe nevertheless remained in service with a reduced crew . Kommodore (Commodore) Ludwig von Reuter , the commander of the IV Scouting Group , and his staff briefly used Niobe as a headquarters ship , from 6 June to 3 July . Starting on 20 August , she became the headquarters ship for now @-@ Konteradmiral (Rear Admiral) von Hipper , the commander of the I Scouting Group .

During this period , Hipper organized the office of Befehlshabers der Sicherung der Nordsee (BSN ? Commander of the Defense of the North Sea) , which was also stationed on Niobe . In 1917 , she was disarmed so her guns could be used to reinforce the defenses of Wilhelmshaven . In October that year , Konteradmiral Friedrich Boedicker , then the commander of the I Squadron , came aboard Niobe ; the bulk of the High Seas Fleet had gone into the Baltic to launch Operation Albion , and Boedicker temporarily took control of the BSN . Hipper and his staff left Niobe on 11 August 1918 , having been promoted to command of the High Seas Fleet . The BSN remained aboard Niobe until January 1919 , two months after the war ended with the Armistice ; it was then transferred to the old pre @-@ dreadnought battleship Kaiser Wilhelm II , also in use as a headquarters ship . Niobe was then decommissioned on 3 February .

Niobe was among the ships permitted by the Treaty of Versailles after the end of the war , and so she continued on in service with the newly reorganized Reichsmarine . During this period , she was significantly modernized ; her old ram bow was replaced with a clipper bow . Her old 10 @. @ 5 cm SK L / 40 guns were replaced with newer SK L / 45 guns in U @-@ boat mountings and two 50 cm (

20 in) torpedo tubes in deck @-@ mounted launchers were installed . On 24 June 1925 , Niobe was stricken from the naval register and sold to the Kingdom of Serbs , Croats and Slovenes (later Yugoslavia) .

= = = Yugoslav service and World War II = = =

Yugoslavia had initially been given the ships of the old Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy after the dissolution of the Empire in the closing days of World War I , but the Allied powers quickly seized the majority of the ships and allocated them to the various Allied countries . Left with only twelve modern torpedo boats , Yugoslavia sought more powerful vessels . The Royal Yugoslav Navy therefore purchased Niobe when Germany placed her for sale in 1925 . Renamed Dalmacija (Dalmatia) , she was completely rearmed in 1926 before she entered Yugoslavian service . She was equipped with six 8 @. @ 5 cm / 55 quick @-@ firing guns , and initially four and later six 2 cm (0 @. @ 79 in) anti @-@ aircraft guns were added . After entering service , Dalmacija was employed as a gunnery training ship . In May and June 1929 , Dalmacija , the submarines Hrabri and Neboj?a , the submarine tender Hvar and six torpedo boats went on a cruise to Malta , the Greek island of Corfu in the Ionian Sea , and Bizerte in the French protectorate of Tunisia . According to the British naval attaché , the ships and crews made a very good impression while visiting Malta .

In April 1941 , during the Axis Invasion of Yugoslavia , Dalmacija remained in harbor and did not see action . Following the Yugoslav surrender , the ship was captured by the Italians in Kotor on 25 April . Renamed Cattaro , the ship was placed in service with the Regia Marina . On 31 July 1942 , the cruiser was attacked by the British submarine HMS Traveller south of Premantura but all of the torpedoes missed . The ship 's fate is somewhat unclear ; according to Hildebrand et. al . , Cattaro was later transferred to the Navy of the Independent State of Croatia , where she was commissioned as a training ship under the name Znam . She returned to German service in September 1943 after Italy surrendered to the Allies , significantly reducing the warships available to Germany in the Adriatic . A German and Croatian crew operated the ship , once again named Niobe , under the German flag . According to Gardiner and Chesneau , however , the ship remained in Italian hands until Germany seized it in September 1943 , thereafter turning her over to the Independent State of Croatia as Znam before retaking the ship and restoring her original name at some point thereafter .

Nevertheless , the ship 's armament was again revised after leaving Italian service , this time consisting of six 8 @. @ 4 cm (3 @. @ 3 in) anti @-@ aircraft guns , four 4 @. @ 7 cm (1 @. @ 9 in) anti @-@ aircraft guns , four 20 mm Oerlikon anti @-@ aircraft guns , and twenty @-@ six 20 mm Breda anti @-@ aircraft guns , and she was commissioned on 8 November . On the night of 21 ? 22 September , while she was still refitting , two British Motor Torpedo Boats ? MTB 226 and MTB 228 ? attacked the ship to the northwest of Zara without success . Niobe began escorting convoys in the Adriatic , the first taking place of 13 November . This convoy consisted of several transports carrying units from the 7th Infantry Division to the islands of Cres , Krk , and Lussino .

On 19 December , Niobe ran aground on the island of Silba . Three days later , the British Motor Torpedo Boats MTB 276 and MTB 298 attacked the ship and hit her with two torpedoes ; nineteen men were killed in the attack . The Germans then abandoned the wreck , which was later cannibalized for spare parts by the Yugoslav Partisans . The wreck remained on Silba until 1947 , when salvage operations began . She was raised and broken up for scrap by 1949 .