

= SMS Gazelle =

SMS Gazelle was the lead ship of the ten *Gazelle* class, built by the Imperial German Navy. She was built by the Germaniawerft shipyard in Kiel, laid down in 1897, launched in March 1898, and commissioned into the High Seas Fleet in June 1901. Armed with a main battery of ten 10.5 cm (4.1 in) guns and two 45 cm (18 in) torpedo tubes, Gazelle was capable of a top speed of 19.5 knots (36.1 km/h; 22.4 mph).

Initially assigned to overseas service, Gazelle participated in the Venezuelan crisis of 1902–03. She returned to German waters in 1904, and served with the fleet until 1914. She was employed as a coastal defense ship after the outbreak of World War I in August 1914. She served in this role until the night of 25–26 January 1916, when she struck a mine off Cape Arkona. The Navy deemed Gazelle not worth repairing and reduced her to a mine storage hulk, a role she retained through the end of the war. In August 1920, she was stricken from the naval register and sold for scrap.

= Construction =

Gazelle was ordered under the contract name "G" and was laid down at the Germaniawerft shipyard in Kiel in 1897. She was launched on 31 March 1898, after which fitting out work commenced. She was commissioned into the High Seas Fleet on 15 June 1901. Gazelle was 105 meters (344 ft) long overall and had a beam of 12.2 m (40 ft) and a draft of 4.84 m (15.9 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 6,000 shaft horsepower (4,500 kW), for a top speed of 19.5 knots (36.1 km/h; 22.4 mph). The engines were powered by eight coal-fired Niclausse boilers. Gazelle 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.

Gazelle's armament consisted of 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 12,000 m (40,000 ft). They were supplied with 1,000 rounds of ammunition, for 100 shells per gun. She was also equipped with three 45 cm (17.7 in) torpedo tubes with eight torpedoes. One was submerged in the hull in the bow and two were mounted in deck launchers 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 =

After her commissioning, Gazelle was sent overseas from 1902 to 1904. She was assigned to the American Squadron; starting in December 1902, Gazelle participated in the Venezuelan crisis of 1902–03. An Anglo-German naval force instituted a blockade of the Venezuelan coast to secure payment of foreign debts. Gazelle and the unprotected cruiser Falke were the German contribution to the blockading squadron; they joined four British cruisers and three smaller vessels in enforcing the blockade. The Venezuelan gunboat Restaurador was seized during the blockade. The Germans took her into service as SMS Restaurador and put a crew from Gazelle on board under the command of Kapitänleutnant (Captain Lieutenant) Titus Türk. In February 1903 the Venezuelan government reached an agreement to pay its debts, concluding the confrontation. In January 1904, Gazelle conducted a goodwill visit to the port of New Orleans, along with Vineta and two other warships. During this period she was commanded by then Korvettenkapitän Reinhard Scheer, the later commander of the High Seas Fleet.

After returning to Germany, she served with the High Seas Fleet until 1914, when she was

reduced to a coastal defense vessel . She served in the Baltic Sea in the first two years after the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 . On 17 November , while patrolling in the Baltic , Gazelle was attacked by the British submarine HMS E9 . The submarine fired a pair of torpedoes at the cruiser , but both missed . On the night of 25 ? 26 January 1916 , she struck Russian mines to the north of Cape Arkona . The mine explosion tore off both of her screws and she had to be towed back to port . On 22 February , the German Navy decided the old cruiser was not worth repairing , and so she was placed out of service . She was converted into a hulk for minelayers , first at Danzig and then at Cuxhaven . In 1918 , she was moved to Wilhelmshaven . After the end of the war , Gazelle was formally stricken from the naval register on 28 August 1920 and broken up for scrap in Wilhelmshaven .