

= SMS Karlsruhe (1916) =

SMS Karlsruhe was a light cruiser of the Königsberg class , built for the Kaiserliche Marine (Imperial Navy) during World War I. She was named after the earlier Karlsruhe , which had sunk in November 1914 , from an accidental explosion . The new cruiser was laid down in 1914 at the Kaiserliche Werft shipyard in Kiel , launched in January 1916 , and commissioned into the High Seas Fleet in November 1916 . Armed with eight 15 cm SK L / 45 guns , the ship had a top speed of 27 @. @ 5 kn (50 @. @ 9 km / h ; 31 @. @ 6 mph) .

She saw relatively limited service during the war , due to her commissioning late in the conflict . She was present during a brief engagement with British light forces in August 1917 , though she did not actively participate in the battle . She joined the large task force assigned to Operation Albion in October 1917 , but did not see significant action during that operation either . She was assigned to what was to have been the final sortie of the High Seas Fleet in the closing days of the war , but a large @-@ scale mutiny in significant parts of the fleet forced the cancellation of the plan . Karlsruhe was interned in Scapa Flow after the end of the war , and scuttled there on 21 June 1919 . Unlike most of the other ships sunk there , her wreck was never raised .

= = Construction = =

Karlsruhe was ordered under the contract name " Ersatz Niobe " and was laid down at the Kaiserliche Werft shipyard in Kiel in 1915 . She was launched on 31 January 1916 , after which fitting @-@ out work commenced . She was commissioned into the High Seas Fleet on 15 November 1916 . The ship was 151 @. @ 4 meters (496 ft 9 in) long overall and had a beam of 14 @. @ 2 m (46 ft 7 in) and a draft of 5 @. @ 96 m (19 ft 7 in) forward . She displaced 7 @, @ 125 t (7 @, @ 012 long tons) at full combat load . Her propulsion system consisted of two sets of steam turbines powered by ten coal @-@ fired and two oil @-@ fired Marine @-@ type water @-@ tube boilers . These provided a top speed of 27 @. @ 5 knots (50 @. @ 9 km / h ; 31 @. @ 6 mph) and a range of 4 @, @ 850 nautical miles (8 @, @ 980 km ; 5 @, @ 580 mi) at 12 kn (22 km / h ; 14 mph) .

The ship was armed with eight 15 cm SK L / 45 guns in single pedestal mounts . Two were placed side by side forward on the forecastle , four were located amidships , two on either side , and two were arranged in a super @-@ firing pair aft . They were supplied with 1 @, @ 040 rounds of ammunition , for 130 shells per gun . Karlsruhe also carried two 8 @. @ 8 cm (3 @. @ 5 in) L / 45 anti @-@ aircraft guns mounted on the centerline astern of the funnels . She was also equipped with a pair of 60 cm (24 in) torpedo tubes with eight torpedoes in deck @-@ mounted swivel launchers amidships . She also carried 200 mines . The ship was protected by a waterline armored belt that was 60 mm (2 @. @ 4 in) thick amidships . The conning tower had 100 mm (3 @. @ 9 in) thick sides , and the deck was covered with 60 mm thick armor plate .

= = Service history = =

On 16 August 1917 , Karlsruhe participated in a mine @-@ sweeping operation in the North Sea . The minesweepers were clearing Route Yellow , one of the channels in the minefields used by U @-@ boats to leave and return to port . Karlsruhe was joined by the cruiser SMS Frankfurt and three torpedo boats . At 12 : 55 , lookouts on one of the minesweepers spotted a British squadron of three light cruisers and sixteen destroyers approaching . The minesweepers fled south under cover of smoke screens , after which the British broke off the attack . Karlsruhe and the rest of the escort failed to come to their aid , however , and the commander of the operation was subsequently relieved of command .

In early September 1917 , following the German conquest of the Russian port of Riga , the German navy decided to eliminate the Russian naval forces that still held the Gulf of Riga . The Admiralstab (Navy High Command) planned Operation Albion to seize the Baltic island of Ösel , and specifically the Russian gun batteries on the Sworbe Peninsula . On 18 September , the order was issued for a

joint operation with the army to capture Ösel and Moon Islands ; the primary naval component comprised the flagship , the battlecruiser Moltke , along with the III and IV Battle Squadrons of the High Seas Fleet . The invasion force amounted to approximately 24 @, @ 600 officers and enlisted men . Karlsruhe and the rest of the II Scouting Group provided the cruiser screen for the task force .

The operation began on the morning of 12 October , when Moltke and the III Squadron ships engaged Russian positions in Tagga Bay while the IV Squadron shelled Russian gun batteries on the Sworbe Peninsula on Ösel . On 18 ? 19 October , Karlsruhe and the rest of the II Scouting Group covered minesweepers operating off the island of Dagö , but due to an insufficient number of minesweepers and bad weather , the operation was postponed . By 20 October , the islands were under German control and the Russian naval forces had either been destroyed or forced to withdraw . The Admiralstab then ordered the naval component to return to the North Sea .

In October 1918 , Karlsruhe and the rest of the II Scouting Group were to lead a final attack on the British navy . Karlsruhe , Nürnberg , and Graudenz were to bombard targets in Flanders while Pillau , Cöln , Dresden , and Königsberg were to attack merchant shipping in the Thames estuary , to draw out the British Grand Fleet . Admirals Reinhard Scheer and Franz von Hipper intended to inflict as much damage as possible on the British navy , to secure a better bargaining position for Germany , whatever the cost to the fleet . 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 . The unrest ultimately forced Hipper and Scheer to cancel the operation .

Following the capitulation of Germany in November 1918 , most of the High Seas Fleet 's ships , under the command of Rear Admiral Ludwig von Reuter , were interned in the British naval base in Scapa Flow . Karlsruhe was among the ships interned . The fleet remained in captivity during the negotiations that ultimately produced the Versailles Treaty . Von Reuter believed that the British intended to seize the German ships on 21 June 1919 , which was the deadline for Germany to have signed the peace treaty . Unaware that the deadline had been extended to the 23rd , Reuter ordered the ships to be sunk at the next opportunity . On the morning of 21 June , the British fleet left Scapa Flow to conduct training maneuvers , and at 11 : 20 Reuter transmitted the order to his ships ; Karlsruhe sank at 15 : 50 . She was never raised for scrapping . The rights to her wreck were sold in 1962 .