

= SMS Cöln (1916) =

SMS Cöln was a light cruiser in the German Kaiserliche Marine , the second to bear this name , after her predecessor SMS Cöln had been lost in the Battle of Heligoland Bight . Cöln , first of her class , was launched on 5 October 1916 at Blohm & Voss in Hamburg and completed over a year later in January 1918 . She and her sister Dresden were the last two light cruisers built by the Kaiserliche Marine ; eight of her sisters were scrapped before they could be completed . The ships were an incremental improvement over the preceding Königsberg @-@ class cruisers .

Cöln was commissioned into service with the High Seas Fleet ten months before the end of World War I ; as a result , her service career was limited and she did not see action . She participated in a fleet operation to Norway to attack British convoys to Scandinavia , but they failed to locate any convoys and returned to port . Cöln was to have participated in a climactic sortie in the final days of the war , but a revolt in the fleet forced Admirals Reinhard Scheer and Franz von Hipper to cancel the operation . The ship was interned in Scapa Flow after the end of the war and scuttled with the fleet there on 21 June 1919 , under orders from the fleet commander Rear Admiral Ludwig von Reuter . Unlike many of the other ships scuttled there , Cöln was never raised for scrapping .

= = Construction = =

Cöln was ordered under the contract name " Ersatz Ariadne " and was laid down at the Blohm & Voss shipyard in Hamburg in 1915 . She was launched on 5 October 1916 , after which fitting @-@ out work commenced . She was commissioned into the High Seas Fleet on 17 January 1918 . The ship was 155 @.@ 5 meters (510 ft) long overall and had a beam of 14 @.@ 2 m (47 ft) and a draft of 6 @.@ 01 m (19 @.@ 7 ft) forward . She displaced 7 @, @ 486 t (7 @, @ 368 long tons) at full combat load . Her propulsion system consisted of two sets of steam turbines powered by eight coal @-@ fired and six oil @-@ fired Marine @-@ type boilers . These provided a top speed of 27 @.@ 5 kn (50 @.@ 9 km / h ; 31 @.@ 6 mph) and a range of approximately 6 @, @ 000 nautical miles (11 @, @ 000 km ; 6 @, @ 900 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 . These guns fired a 45 @.@ 3 @-@ kilogram (100 lb) shell at a muzzle velocity of 840 meters per second (2 @, @ 800 ft / s) . The guns had a maximum elevation of 30 degrees , which allowed them to engage targets out to 17 @, @ 600 m (57 @, @ 700 ft) . They were supplied with 1 @, @ 040 rounds of ammunition , for 130 shells per gun . Cöln also carried three 8 @.@ 8 cm SK L / 45 anti @-@ aircraft guns mounted on the centerline astern of the funnels , though one was removed in 1918 . She was also equipped with a pair of 60 cm (23 @.@ 6 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 = =

After their commissioning under the command of Erich Raeder (17 January 1918 ? October 1918) , Cöln and Dresden joined the High Seas Fleet . They were assigned to the II Scouting Group , alongside the cruisers Königsberg , Pillau , Graudenz , Nürnberg , and Karlsruhe . The ships were in service in time for the major fleet operation to Norway in 23 ? 24 April 1918 . The I Scouting Group and II Scouting Group , along with the Second Torpedo @-@ Boat Flotilla were to attack a heavily guarded British convoy to Norway , with the rest of the High Seas Fleet steaming in support . The Germans failed to locate the convoy , which had in fact sailed the day before the fleet left port . As a result , Admiral Reinhard Scheer broke off the operation and returned to port .

In October 1918 , the two ships and the rest of the II Scouting Group were to lead a final attack on the British navy . Cöln , Dresden , Pillau , and Königsberg were to attack merchant shipping in the

Thames estuary while the rest of the Group were to bombard targets in Flanders , to draw out the British Grand Fleet . Großadmiral Reinhard Scheer , the commander in chief of the fleet , intended to inflict as much damage as possible on the British navy , in order 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 . When 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 's ships , under the command of Rear Admiral Ludwig von Reuter , were interned in the British naval base in Scapa Flow . Cöln was among the ships interned . On the voyage there , her captain radioed the fleet commander that one of the ship 's steam turbines had a leaking condenser . Reuter dispatched another light cruiser to remain with the ship in the event that she needed to be towed . Despite the problematic turbine , Cöln managed to steam into port , the last ship in the German line .

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 . Cöln sank at 13 : 50 and was never raised for scrapping .