

= SMS Falke =

SMS Falke (" His Majesty 's Ship Falke ? Falcon ") was an unprotected cruiser of the Bussard class , built for the Imperial German Navy . She was the second member of the class of six vessels . The cruiser was laid down in 1890 , launched in April 1891 , and commissioned into the fleet in September of that month . Designed for overseas service , she carried a main battery of eight 10 @. @ 5 @- @ centimeter (4 @. @ 1 in) guns and had a top speed of 15 @. @ 5 knots (28 @. @ 7 km / h ; 17 @. @ 8 mph) .

Falke served abroad for the majority of her career , seeing duty in East Asia , the Central Pacific , and the Americas . She assisted in the suppression of a revolt in Samoa in 1893 , and was damaged in a later uprising there in 1899 . In 1901 , Falke was transferred to the American Station , and the following year she took part in the Venezuela Crisis of 1902 ? 03 , during which she helped enforce an Anglo @- @ German blockade of the Venezuelan coast . In 1907 , Falke was recalled to Germany . She was stricken from the naval register in late 1912 and subsequently broken up for scrap .

= = Design = =

Falke was 82 @. @ 6 meters (271 ft) long overall and had a beam of 12 @. @ 5 m (41 ft) and a draft of 4 @. @ 45 m (14 @. @ 6 ft) forward . She displaced 1 @, @ 868 t (1 @, @ 838 long tons ; 2 @, @ 059 short tons) at full combat load . Her propulsion system consisted of two horizontal 3 @- @ cylinder triple @- @ expansion steam engines powered by four coal @- @ fired cylindrical boilers . These provided a top speed of 15 @. @ 5 kn (28 @. @ 7 km / h ; 17 @. @ 8 mph) and a range of approximately 2 @, @ 990 nautical miles (5 @, @ 540 km ; 3 @, @ 440 mi) at 9 kn (17 km / h ; 10 mph) . She had a crew of 9 officers and 152 enlisted men .

The ship was armed with eight 10 @. @ 5 cm SK L / 35 quick @- @ firing guns in single pedestal mounts , supplied with 800 rounds of ammunition in total . They had a range of 10 @, @ 800 m (35 @, @ 400 ft) . Two guns were placed side by side forward , two on each broadside in sponsons , and two side by side aft . The gun armament was rounded out by five revolver cannon . She was also equipped with two 35 cm (14 in) torpedo tubes with five torpedoes , both of which were mounted on the deck .

= = Service history = =

Falke was laid down at the Kaiserliche Werft (Imperial Shipyard) in Kiel in January 1890 under the contract name " D " . She was launched on 4 April 1891 ; at the ceremony , Prince Heinrich gave a speech and his wife , Princess Irene , christened the ship . Falke was commissioned on 14 September of that year for sea trials . While steaming off Bornholm , the ship ran aground but was pulled free by other vessels . She was temporarily decommissioned in Kiel on 31 October . Falke was recommissioned on 14 August 1892 in order to participate in the annual fleet training maneuvers that began that month and continued into September . She was assigned to the III Division , along with the coastal defense ship Siegfried .

= = = Deployment to West Africa = = =

Falke was transferred to Germany 's West African colonies in western Africa after the conclusion of the maneuvers , departing Kiel on 16 October to replace the gunboat Habicht . After arriving in western Africa , Falke went to Dahomey , where the Second Franco @- @ Dahomean War had recently broken out . In December , her captain unsuccessfully attempted to negotiate the release of two German merchants who were being held by Dahomean soldiers . On 31 December , Falke returned to Duala , the main German port in Kamerun , where she joined the second warship stationed in the colony , the gunboat Hyäne .

The borders of German South @- @ West Africa had been settled via treaties with Portugal (1886)

and Britain (1890) , but the coast line had not been surveyed in detail . Falke was tasked with locating a suitable port to connect to the capital at Windhuk . She departed Luanda on 23 January 1893 and arrived in Cape Cross four days later . The ship surveyed the area thoroughly , and discovered a Portuguese padrão . It had been placed there by the Portuguese explorer Diogo Cão in the late 15th century . Falke 's crew removed it to protect it from further weathering and placed a wooden cross to mark the location . The ship 's crew received a period of rest from 14 to 16 March , after which time Falke steamed back to Kamerun , stopping in several ports along the way and arriving in Duala on 29 April . There , the stone monument was unloaded and later transported back to Berlin for preservation by the steamer Stettin , which departed Duala on 29 October . A granite copy , carried by the cruiser Sperber , was installed in its place in 1895 .

In the meantime , Falke had been sent to Liberia on 27 May in response to unrest in the country . She arrived in Monrovia on 9 June , and temporarily took Joseph James Cheeseman , the President of Liberia , aboard to protect him from the rebels . Falke wa back in Duala by 22 July . She was sent to Cape Town in South Africa for an overhaul that began on 30 November , but a rebellion among the Khoikhoi in German South @-@ West Africa forced a postponement of the work ; by 5 December the ship was in the colony to join the effort to suppress the rebels . Her presence proved to be unnecessary , and so she was sent back to Cape Town later in the month . After she arrived , the Admiralstab (Admiralty Staff) transferred Falke to the colony in German New Guinea . Falke departed on 23 December , arriving in Melbourne via Sydney .

= = = Deployment to the Pacific = = =

Upon arriving in Melbourne on 8 February 1894 , Falke met her sister ship Bussard and the gunboat Möwe . The three ships then departed for Apia in the Caroline Islands , arriving on 16 April , where they conducted gunnery training . Falke remained in Samoa until early October when she returned to Sydney for repair work ; at the time , Sydney possessed the only shipyard with the facilities necessary for major repairs , which meant that the Germans were dependent on the Australian port to keep their warships operational . A lengthy overhaul took place in Sydney from March to July 1895 . From 29 July to 10 November , Falke was again in Samoa . During this period , the ship surveyed the port at Salua , north of the main island of Upolu . In mid @-@ November , the governor of the Marshall Islands requested the presence of Falke , and in late December she left the Marshalls for Kaiser @-@ Wilhelmsland , arriving in Matupi Harbor in January 1896 . There she met Möwe ; Falke 's tour of Germany 's Pacific colonies ended that month .

Another overhaul in Sydney followed from 4 February to 4 April . On 15 April , Falke dropped anchor once again in Apia . At the end of August , the ship steamed to Auckland , New Zealand , where she met Bussard and Möwe . The threat of rebellion in the Marshalls forced Falke to make another trip there in early November . Her cruise through the colonies ended with a stop in Sydney on 18 February 1897 . She departed for another visit to Auckland on 23 April . She also stopped in Tonga before continuing on to Apia , arriving on 16 May . The following month , three Germans , including Curt von Hagen , the governor of the colony , were murdered in Kaiser @-@ Wilhelmsland . Falke was sent to Stephansort (south of modern Madang) on 24 June to apprehend the murderers ; she transported a police detachment from the capital at Herbertshöhe to Ali Island and contributed a landing party from her crew . On 10 November Falke returned to Apia , but two days later she departed for Sydney via Auckland for repairs . A new crew had also arrived in Sydney from Germany . On 24 April 1898 , she departed Sydney for a tour of the colonies . After the conclusion of the cruise , Falke returned to Sydney , where her new commander , Korvettenkapitän (Corvette Captain) Victor Schönfelder had arrived ; he formally took control of the ship on 1 September .

On 1 October , Falke left Sydney for Apia before making visits to the New Hebrides , Fiji , and Tonga on the 15th . Four weeks later , Bussard departed the central Pacific , bound for Germany ; Falke was now alone in the region , despite the rising international tensions concerning a succession crisis in Samoa . In March 1899 , Falke was in the harbor at Apia . Unrest on the island , instigated by Mata 'afa Iosefo , prompted the American cruiser USS Philadelphia and the British sloop HMS Royalist and torpedo cruiser HMS Porpoise to shell the rebel positions . Their gunfire

was poorly aimed , however , and several shells hit Falke . Schönfelder kept his crew from escalating the situation to prevent a more serious diplomatic crisis from developing . Eventually , the Second Samoan Civil War was resolved by splitting the islands into German and American colonies , while Britain received concessions elsewhere . By June , the fighting was over and the situation had calmed .

Falke 's sister ship Cormoran arrived at that time to relieve her . Falke then began the journey back to Germany on 1 July , stopping in Sydney , Batavia , Colombo , Mahé , and Lisbon . She reached Hamburg on 14 October . Her crew conducted a landing exercise to demonstrate how they had practiced it during their tour abroad . Kaiser Wilhelm II greeted Schönfelder and congratulated him for his skillful and levelheaded handling of the crisis in Samoa . On 27 October , Falke steamed to Danzig , where she was decommissioned on 3 November . The Kaiserliche Werft in Danzig conducted a lengthy overhaul and modernization .

= = = Deployment to the Americas = = =

On 2 October 1901 , Falke was recommissioned for another tour abroad , this time to the Americas . She was sent to reinforce the protected cruiser Vineta due to unrest in the Caribbean and South America . Three days later , she departed Neufahrwasser and crossed the Atlantic , arriving in Castries on Saint Lucia on 14 November . Falke visited several ports in the area before joining the training ships Moltke and Stein and the light cruiser Gazelle . Falke was then ordered to steam up the Amazon River ; she entered the Amazon via the Pará River on 7 March 1902 and reached Manaus by 23 March . There , she met several HAPAG and NDL steamers . Falke continued upriver , her voyage hampered by a lack of accurate maps and insufficiently knowledgeable river pilots . She finally reached San Ignacio in Peru on 17 April . By this point , the river was 114 m (374 ft) above sea level and only 400 nmi (740 km ; 460 mi) from the Pacific coast ; Falke had travelled around 5 @, @ 200 nmi (9 @, @ 600 km ; 6 @, @ 000 mi) up the river ; a shortage of coal prevented her from proceeding further . On 30 April , she arrived back at the mouth of the river .

On 8 May , Falke arrived in Port of Spain in Trinidad before being ordered to the coast of Venezuela to safeguard German interests during a period of unrest there . While en route , she stopped in Fort @-@ de @-@ France , Martinique to pick up a load of food and medical supplies for the people living around Mont Pelee , which had recently erupted . She then proceeded to Carúpano in Venezuela to protect German nationals from expected fighting . She was based out of the port of Charlotte Amalie in the Virgin Islands . During this period , she made stops in Carúpano , La Guaira , and Puerto Cabello , along with a visit to Willemstad in Curaçao . On 30 September , she was sent to Port @-@ au @-@ Prince , Haiti , to protect German nationals there during a revolution in the country . At times , landing parties had to be sent ashore to protect the German consulate in Gonaïves .

By this time , the situation in Venezuela had worsened , necessitating foreign warships to remain of the coast to protect foreign nationals in the country . In December , Falke ran aground while leaving Willemstad ; the training ship Stosch pulled her free only with great difficulty . The ship was nevertheless not damaged in the accident . On 16 December , the East American Cruiser Division was formally established by the German Navy , led by the flagship Vineta . Falke was thereafter occupied with operations during the Venezuela Crisis of 1902 ? 1903 . The Germans operated in concert with the British Royal Navy and the Italian Regia Marina ; they sought to compel the Venezuelan government to make reparations for grievances related to internal conflicts in the over the previous decade . The crisis began when a British merchant ship was boarded and its crew arrested by Venezuelan forces on 13 December ; in response , British forces bombarded the forts at Puerto Cabello , and enlisted the German squadron to assist them in punishing the Venezuelans . Falke and Gazelle were tasked with blockading the Venezuelan coast , in cooperation with the British squadron .

On 28 February 1903 , Falke went to the Bermudas , where she stayed from 8 to 13 March . From October 1903 to November 1905 , Paul Behncke served as the ship 's commander . In January 1904 , the ship visited New Orleans with the rest of the American Squadron , which at that time

included Vineta , Gazelle , and the gunboat Panther . She stopped in Newport News in the United States from 26 May to 16 June 1904 . She then cruised south to visit several Brazilian ports , starting on 17 July . On 23 September , she stopped in Buenos Aires , and four weeks later , continued south around Cape Horn via the Strait of Magellan . She continued as far north as Peru by the end of 1904 and stopped in several Argentinian and Chilean ports along the way , including Valparaiso on 20 December . In the meantime , the East American Cruiser Division was disbanded . Starting on 6 January 1905 , Falke resumed her voyage up the Pacific coast of the Americas , stopping in Peru , Colombia , and several Central American countries . On 15 June she reached San Francisco , where she stayed for three weeks . On 10 July she resumed her cruise northward and visited harbors in Canada and southern Alaska .

On the return voyage , she steamed up the Columbia River and toured the Gulf of California . She spent Christmas and New Year 's Day in Mazatlán in Mexico and also stopped in Callao . While cruising off the coast of Chile in August , she was damaged by a severe storm . Repairs were effected in Talcahuano ; while she was being repaired , an earthquake struck Valparaiso . Once she was ready for sea , Falke carried food and medical supplies to the city between 28 August and 2 September . The ship returned to Chile to be present during the inauguration ceremony for President Pedro Montt on 18 September . She then returned to Talcahuano to complete her repairs . On 4 September , she departed and steamed down to Punta Arenas , where she stayed from 2 to 15 December . Falke then crossed back to the Atlantic and steamed up to Montevideo in January 1907 ; there , she received the order to return to Germany .

Falke departed Montevideo and crossed the Atlantic to Dakar , proceeding to Las Palmas and then Lisbon . There she was visited by Frederick Augustus III of Saxony . She arrived in Danzig on 15 April , after five and a half years abroad . The ship was decommissioned on 20 January , and an evaluation determined that she was not worth overhauling . She was accordingly stricken from the naval register on 25 October 1912 and broken up the following year at the Kaiserliche Werft in Danzig .