

= SMS Undine =

SMS Undine was the last member of the ten ship Gazelle class, built by the Imperial German Navy. She was built by the Howaldtswerke shipyard in Kiel, laid down in 1901, launched in December 1902, and commissioned into the High Seas Fleet in January 1904. Armed with a main battery of ten 10.5 cm (4.1 in) guns and two 45 cm (18 in) torpedo tubes, Undine was capable of a top speed of 21.5 knots (39.8 km/h; 24.7 mph).

Undine was initially used as an artillery training ship for the gunners of the German fleet. In November 1904, she accidentally rammed and sank the torpedo boat SMS S26 while on maneuvers off Kiel; thirty-three men were killed in the incident. After the outbreak of World War I in August 1914, Undine was deployed to the Baltic Sea for use as a coastal defense ship. She was attacked by the British submarine HMS E19 on 7 November 1915 and was hit by two torpedoes, the second of which detonated the ship's ammunition magazines. Undine exploded and sank, but only 14 men were killed in the attack.

= Construction =

Undine was ordered under the contract name "J" and was laid down at the Howaldtswerke shipyard in Kiel in 1901 and launched on 11 December 1902, after which fitting out work commenced. She was commissioned into the High Seas Fleet on 5 January 1904. The ship was 105 meters (344 ft) long overall and had a beam of 12.4 m (41 ft) and a draft of 4.81 m (15.8 ft) forward. She displaced 3,112 t (3,063 long tons; 3,430 short tons) at full combat load. Her propulsion system consisted of two triple expansion engines manufactured by Howaldtswerke. They were designed to give 6,000 shaft horsepower (4,500 kW), for a top speed of 21.5 knots (39.8 km/h; 24.7 mph). The engines were powered by eight coal-fired Marine-type water tube boilers. Undine carried 700 tonnes (690 long tons) of coal, which gave her a range of 4,400 nautical miles (8,100 km; 5,000 mi) at 12 knots (22 km/h; 14 mph). She had a crew of 14 officers and 256 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 12,000 m (40,000 ft). They were supplied with 1,500 rounds of ammunition, for 150 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 =

After her commissioning, Undine was assigned to the training squadron for use as a gunnery training ship. On the night of 17 November 1904, Undine collided with the torpedo boat S26 while on maneuvers just outside Kiel. S26, along with the rest of her unit, the IV Torpedo Boat Flotilla, was conducting a mock night attack on Undine. The cruiser was steaming with her lights off, and when the torpedo boats approached, Undine turned her search lights on, which blinded the crew of S26. The torpedo boat inadvertently ran in front of Undine, and the latter rammed and sank the former. One officer and thirty-two enlisted men aboard S26 were killed in the accident.

After the outbreak of World War I in August 1914, Undine was employed as a coastal defense ship in the Baltic. On 7 November 1915, Undine was steaming north of Arkona with a pair of destroyers when she was attacked by the British submarine E19, under the command of Lieutenant Commander Francis Cromie. E19 launched a pair of torpedoes at Undine at a range of 1,000 meters (3,300 ft), both of which hit. The second torpedo detonated her ammunition magazines and blew up the ship. Undine sank quickly at 13:08; only fourteen men were killed in

the attack , and the majority of her crew was rescued by the escorting destroyers . The loss of Undine came on the heels of the sinking of the armored cruiser Prinz Adalbert two weeks earlier . These two losses were significant enough to compel the German Navy to curtail the movements of the fleet in the Baltic for the remainder of the year .