

= German cruiser Deutschland =

Deutschland was the lead ship of her class of heavy cruisers ( often termed a pocket battleship ) which served with the Kriegsmarine of Nazi Germany during World War II . Ordered by the Weimar government for the Reichsmarine , she was laid down at the Deutsche Werke shipyard in Kiel in February 1929 and completed by April 1933 . Originally classified as an armored ship ( Panzerschiff ) by the Reichsmarine , in February 1940 the Germans reclassified the remaining two ships of this class as heavy cruisers . In 1940 , she was renamed Lützow , after the Admiral Hipper class heavy cruiser Lützow was handed over to the Soviet Union .

The ship saw significant action with the Kriegsmarine , including several non intervention patrols in the Spanish Civil War , during which she was attacked by Republican bombers . At the outbreak of World War II , she was cruising the North Atlantic , prepared to attack Allied merchant traffic . Bad weather hampered her efforts , and she only sank or captured a handful of vessels before returning to Germany . She then participated in Operation Weserübung , the invasion of Norway . Damaged at the Battle of Drøbak Sound , she was recalled to Germany for repairs . While en route , she was torpedoed and seriously damaged by a British submarine .

Repairs were completed by March 1941 , Lützow returned to Norway to join the forces arrayed against Allied shipping to the Soviet Union . She ran aground during a planned attack on convoy PQ 17 , which necessitated another return to Germany for repairs . She next saw action at the Battle of the Barents Sea with the heavy cruiser Admiral Hipper , which ended with a failure to destroy the convoy JW 51B . Engine problems forced a series of repairs culminating in a complete overhaul at the end of 1943 , after which the ship remained in the Baltic . Sunk in shallow waters in the Kaiserfahrt in April 1945 by Royal Air Force ( RAF ) bombers , Lützow was used as a gun battery to support German troops fighting the Soviet Army until 4 May 1945 , when she was disabled by her crew . Raised by the Soviet Navy in 1947 , she was subsequently sunk as a target in the Baltic .

= = Construction = =

Deutschland was ordered by the Reichsmarine from the Deutsche Werke shipyard in Kiel as Ersatz Preussen , a replacement for the old battleship Preussen . Her keel was laid on 5 February 1929 , under construction number 219 . The ship was launched on 19 May 1931 ; at her launching , she was christened by German Chancellor Heinrich Brüning . The ship accidentally started sliding down the slipway while Brüning was giving his christening speech . After the completion of fitting out work , initial sea trials began in November 1932 . The ship was commissioned into the Reichsmarine on 1 April 1933 .

Deutschland was 186 meters ( 610 ft ) long overall and had a beam of 20 @. 69 m ( 67 @. 9 ft ) and a maximum draft of 7 @. 25 m ( 23 @. 8 ft ) . The ship had a design displacement of 12 @. 630 t ( 12 @. 430 long tons ; 13 @. 920 short tons ) and a full load displacement of 14 @. 290 long tons ( 14 @. 520 t ) , though the ship was officially stated to be within the 10 @. 000 long tons ( 10 @. 000 t ) limit of the Treaty of Versailles . Deutschland was powered by four sets of MAN 9 @- cylinder double @- acting two @- stroke diesel engines . The ship 's top speed was 28 knots ( 52 km / h ; 32 mph ) , at 54 @. 000 shaft horsepower ( 40 @. 000 kW ) . At a cruising speed of 20 knots ( 37 km / h ; 23 mph ) , the ship could steam for 10 @. 000 nautical miles ( 19 @. 000 km ; 12 @. 000 mi ) . As designed , her standard complement consisted of 33 officers and 586 enlisted men , though after 1935 this was significantly increased to 30 officers and 921 ? 1 @. 040 sailors .

Deutschland 's primary armament was six 28 cm ( 11 @. 0 in ) SK C / 28 guns mounted in two triple gun turrets , one forward and one aft of the superstructure . The ship carried a secondary battery of eight 15 cm ( 5 @. 9 in ) SK C / 28 guns in single turrets grouped amidships . Her anti @- aircraft battery originally consisted of three 8 @. 8 cm ( 3 @. 5 in ) L / 45 guns , though in 1935 these were replaced with six 8 @. 8 cm L / 78 guns . In 1940 , the 8 @. 8 cm guns were removed , and six 10 @. 5 cm ( 4 @. 1 in ) L / 65 guns , four 3 @. 7 cm ( 1 @. 5 in ) guns , and ten 2 cm ( 0 @. 79 in ) guns were installed in their place . By the end of the war , her anti

@-@ aircraft battery had again been reorganized , consisting of six 4 cm ( 1 @.@ 6 in ) guns , ten 3 @.@ 7 cm guns , and twenty @-@ eight 2 cm guns .

The ship also carried a pair of quadruple 53 @.@ 3 cm ( 21 @.@ 0 in ) deck @-@ mounted torpedo launchers placed on her stern . The ship was equipped with two Arado Ar 196 seaplanes and one catapult . Deutschland 's armored belt was 60 to 80 mm ( 2 @.@ 4 to 3 @.@ 1 in ) thick ; her upper deck was 17 mm ( 0 @.@ 67 in ) thick while the main armored deck was 17 to 45 mm ( 0 @.@ 67 to 1 @.@ 77 in ) thick . The main battery turrets had 140 mm ( 5 @.@ 5 in ) thick faces and 80 mm thick sides . Radar initially consisted of a FMG G ( gO ) " Seetakt " set ; in 1942 , a FuMO 26 set was also installed .

= = History = =

Deutschland spent the majority of 1933 and 1934 conducting training maneuvers ; early speed trials in May 1933 indicated that a top speed of 25 knots ( 46 km / h ; 29 mph ) was preferable , but the ship comfortably reached 28 knots ( 52 km / h ; 32 mph ) on speed trials in June . Trials were completed by December 1933 , and the ship was ready for active service with the fleet . The ship also made a series of goodwill visits to foreign ports , including visits to Gothenburg , Sweden , and in October 1934 , a formal state visit to Edinburgh , Scotland . In April 1934 , Adolf Hitler visited the ship ; he reportedly toured the ship alone , speaking informally with crewmen .

The ship conducted a series of long distance training voyages into the Atlantic in 1935 . In March 1935 , she sailed as far as the Caribbean and South American waters . After returning to Germany , she went into dock for routine maintenance work , as well as installation of additional equipment . She had her aircraft catapult installed in this period , and was provided with two Heinkel He 60 floatplanes . Deutschland participated in fleet maneuvers in German waters in early 1936 . She was joined by her newly commissioned sister ship Admiral Scheer for a cruise into the mid @-@ Atlantic , which included a stop in Madeira .

= = = Spanish Civil War = = =

Following the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 , Deutschland and Admiral Scheer were deployed to the Spanish coast on 23 July 1936 to conduct non @-@ intervention patrols off the Republican @-@ held coast of Spain . During the deployment , her gun turrets were painted with large black , white , and red bands to aid in identification from the air and indicate her neutral status . Her duties during the deployment included evacuating refugees fleeing from the fighting , protecting German ships carrying supplies for Francisco Franco 's Nationalists , and gathering intelligence for the Nationalists .

In May 1937 , the ship was docked in the port of Palma on the island of Majorca , along with several other neutral warships , including vessels from the British and Italian navies . The port was attacked by Republican aircraft , though anti @-@ aircraft fire from the warships drove them off . The torpedo boats Seeadler and Albatross escorted Deutschland to the island of Ibiza on 24 May . While moored in port there , she was again attacked by Republican bombers ; a pair of Soviet @-@ built SB @-@ 2 bombers , secretly flown by Soviet Air Force pilots , bombed the ship . Two bombs struck the ship ; the first penetrated the upper deck near the bridge and exploded above the main armored deck while the second hit near the third starboard 15 cm gun , causing serious fires below decks . The attack killed 31 German sailors and wounded 74 .

Deutschland quickly weighed anchor and left port . She rendezvoused with Admiral Scheer to take on additional doctors before proceeding to Gibraltar where the dead were buried with full military honors . Ten days later , however , Hitler ordered the men be exhumed and returned for burial in Germany . The ship 's wounded men were also evacuated in Gibraltar for treatment . Hitler , furious over the attack , ordered Admiral Scheer to bombard the port of Almería in retaliation for the so @-@ called " Deutschland incident " . Stalin subsequently issued orders that further attacks on German and Italian warships were strictly prohibited .

Deutschland spent the majority of 1938 and 1939 conducting training maneuvers with the rest of

the fleet and making goodwill visits to various foreign ports . She made an official visit to Spain following the Nationalist victory in the Spanish Civil War 1939 . The ship participated in a major fleet exercise into the Atlantic with her sister Admiral Graf Spee , the light cruisers Köln , Leipzig , and Nürnberg , and several destroyers , U @-@ boats , and support vessels .

= = = World War II = = =

On 24 August 1939 , a week before the German invasion of Poland , Deutschland set sail from Wilhelmshaven , bound for a position south of Greenland . Here , she would be ready to attack Allied merchant traffic in the event of a general war following the attack on Poland . The supply ship Westerwald was assigned to support Deutschland during the operation . Deutschland was ordered to strictly observe prize rules , which required raiders to stop and search ships for contraband before sinking them , and to ensure that their crews are safely evacuated . The ship was also ordered to avoid combat with even inferior naval forces , as commerce disruption was the primary objective . Hitler hoped to secure a negotiated peace with Britain and France after he overran Poland , and he therefore did not authorize Deutschland to begin her raiding mission against British and French shipping until 26 September . By this time , Deutschland had moved south to hunt in the Bermuda @-@ Azores sea lane .

On 5 October , she found and sank the British transport ship Stonegate , though not before the freighter was able to send a distress signal informing vessels in the area of Deutschland 's presence . She then turned north to the Halifax route , where on 9 October , she encountered the American ship City of Flint . The 4 @,@ 963 gross register tons ( GRT ) freighter was found to be carrying contraband , and so was seized . A prize crew was dispatched to the ship ; they took the ship with the original crew held prisoner to Germany via Murmansk . The ship was seized by Norway when she anchored in Haugesund , however , and control of the ship was returned to the original crew . Meanwhile , on 14 October , Deutschland encountered and sank the Norwegian transport Lorentz W Hansen , of some 1 @,@ 918 GRT . The same day , she stopped the neutral Danish steamer Kongsdal , though when it became apparent that she was headed for a neutral port , the prisoners from Lorentz W Hansen were placed aboard her and she was allowed to proceed . Kongsdal would eventually report to the British Royal Navy the incident and confirm Deutschland as the raider operating in the North Atlantic .

Severe weather in the North Atlantic hampered Deutschland 's raiding mission , though she did tie down several British warships assigned to track her down . The French Force de Raid , centered on the battleship Dunkerque , was occupied with protecting convoys around Britain to prevent them from being attacked by Deutschland . In early November , the Naval High Command recalled Deutschland ; she passed through the Denmark Strait on 15 November and anchored in Gotenhafen on the 17th . In the course of her raiding mission , she sank only two vessels and captured a third . In 1940 , the ship underwent a major overhaul , during which a raked clipper bow was installed to improve the sea @-@ keeping qualities of the ship . At this time , she was re @-@ rated as a heavy cruiser and renamed Lützow . Hitler in person made the decision to rename the ship , recognizing the propaganda value of the sinking of a ship that bore the name of its country . Admiral Erich Raeder , the commander in chief of the Kriegsmarine , also hoped that renaming the ship would confuse Allied intelligence ; the Admiral Hipper @-@ class cruiser Lützow was designated for sale to the Soviet Navy , and it was hoped that the usage of her name for Deutschland would hide the transaction . The refit lasted until March 1940 , after which it was intended to send the ship on another commerce raiding operation into the South Atlantic . In April , however , she was assigned to forces participating in the invasion of Norway .

= = = = Operation Weserübung = = = =

Lützow was assigned to Group 5 , alongside the new heavy cruiser Blücher and the light cruiser Emden under the command of Konteradmiral Oskar Kummetz . Kummetz flew his flag in Blücher . Group 5 was tasked with capturing Oslo , the capital of Norway , and transported a force of 2 @,@

000 mountain troops from the Wehrmacht . Lützow embarked over 400 of the soldiers for the voyage to Norway . The force left Germany on 8 April and passed through the Kattegat . While en route , the British submarine HMS Triton attacked the flotilla , though her torpedoes missed . German torpedo boats attacked the submarine and drove her off .

Shortly before midnight on the night of 8 April , Group 5 , with Blücher in the lead , passed the outer ring of Norwegian coastal batteries . Lützow followed directly behind the flagship , with Emden astern . Heavy fog and neutrality requirements , which required the Norwegians to fire warning shots , permitted the Germans to avoid damage . The Norwegians , including those manning the guns at the Oscarsborg Fortress were on alert , however . Steaming into the Oslofjord at a speed of 12 knots ( 22 km / h ; 14 mph ) , the Germans came into range of the Norwegian guns ; the 28 cm , 15 cm and 57 mm guns opened fire on the invaders . During the ensuing Battle of Drøbak Sound , Blücher was hit by many shells and two torpedoes . She quickly capsized and sank with the loss of approximately 1 @, @ 000 sailors and soldiers . Lützow was hit three times by 15 cm shells from Oscarsborg 's Kopås battery , causing significant damage .

Lützow 's forward gun turret was hit by one of the 15 cm rounds , which disabled the center gun and damaged the right barrel . Four men were wounded . A second shell struck the ship 's deck and penetrated the upper and main armored decks ; starting a fire in the cruiser 's hospital and operating theater , killing two soldiers and severely wounding six others . A third struck her superstructure behind the port @-@ side aircraft crane . One of the aircraft on board was damaged , and four gunners were killed by the third shell . The ship was only able to fire her secondary battery in return . The heavy damage forced Lützow and the rest of the squadron to reverse course and exit the fjord . She eventually landed her troop complement in Verle Bay , after which she used her operational 28 cm guns to provide fire support . By the afternoon of 9 April , most of the Norwegian fortresses had been captured and the commander of the remaining Norwegian forces opened negotiations for surrender . The delay had , however , allowed enough time for the Norwegian government and royal family to flee Oslo .

The damage Lützow sustained prompted the Kriegsmarine to order her to return to Germany for repairs . The rest of Group 5 remained in Norway , so Lützow cruised at top speed to avoid submarines . Nevertheless , the British submarine HMS Spearfish attacked the ship and scored a serious hit . The torpedo destroyed Lützow 's stern , causing it to collapse and nearly fall off , and blew off her steering gear . Unable to steer , she was towed back to port and decommissioned for repairs , which lasted for nearly a year . During the attack on Norway , the ship suffered nineteen dead , and another fifteen were killed by the torpedo strike . Despite the setback , KzS August Thiele , Lützow 's commander , was awarded the Knight 's Cross of the Iron Cross for his actions during the Battle of Drøbak Sound , during which he took command of the task force after the loss of Blücher .

She was recommissioned for service on 31 March 1941 , after which the Kriegsmarine initially planned to send the ship on the commerce raiding operation planned the previous year . Her sister Admiral Scheer was to join Lützow for the operation , and on 12 June , she departed for Norway with an escort of destroyers . British torpedo bombers attacked the ship off Egersund and scored a single hit that disabled her electrical system and rendered the ship motionless . She took on a severe list to port and the port shaft was damaged . The crew effected emergency repairs that allowed her to return to Germany ; repair work in Kiel lasted for six months . By 10 May 1942 , the ship was finally pronounced ready for action .

== == Deployment to Norway == ==

Lützow left Germany on 15 May 1942 for Norway ; by 25 May she had joined Admiral Scheer in Bogen Bay . She was made the flagship of the now Vizeadmiral Kummetz , the commander of Kampfgruppe 2 . Fuel shortages restricted operations , although Lützow and Admiral Scheer were able to conduct limited battle training exercises . Kampfgruppe 2 was assigned to Operation Rösselsprung , a planned attack on the Allied convoy PQ 17 , which was headed to the Soviet Union . On 3 July , the force left their anchorages , and in heavy fog Lützow and three destroyers

ran aground and suffered significant damage . The British detected the German departure and ordered the convoy to scatter . Aware that surprise had been lost , the Germans broke off the surface attack and turned the destruction of PQ @-@ 17 over to the U @-@ boats and Luftwaffe . Twenty @-@ four of the convoy 's thirty @-@ five transports were sunk . Lützow returned to Germany for repairs , which lasted until the end of October . She began a brief set of trials starting on 30 October . She returned to Norway in early November with a destroyer escort , arriving in Narvik on the 12th .

On 30 December , Lützow , the heavy cruiser Admiral Hipper , and six destroyers left Narvik for Operation Regenbogen , an attack on convoy JW 51B , which was reported by German intelligence to be lightly escorted . Kummetz 's plan was to divide his force in half ; he would take Admiral Hipper and three destroyers north of the convoy to attack it and draw away the escorts . Lützow and the remaining three destroyers would then attack the undefended convoy from the south . At 09 : 15 on the 31st , the British destroyer Obdurate spotted the three destroyers screening for Admiral Hipper ; the Germans opened fire first . Four of the other five destroyers escorting the convoy rushed to join the fight , while Achates laid a smoke screen to cover the convoy . Kummetz then turned back north to draw the destroyers away . Captain Robert Sherbrooke , the British escort commander , left two destroyers to cover the convoy while he took the remaining four to pursue Admiral Hipper .

Lützow meanwhile steamed toward the convoy from the south , and at 11 : 42 she opened fire . The harsh conditions negatively affected her shooting , which ceased by 12 : 03 without any hits . Rear Admiral Robert Burnett 's Force R , centered on the cruisers Sheffield and Jamaica , standing by in distant support of the Allied convoy , raced to the scene . The cruisers engaged Admiral Hipper , which had been firing to port at the destroyer Obedient . Burnett 's ships approached from Admiral Hipper 's starboard side and achieved complete surprise . Lützow was then ordered to break off the attack on the convoy and reinforce Admiral Hipper . Lützow inadvertently came alongside Sheffield and Jamaica , and after identifying them as hostile , engaged them , though her fire remained inaccurate . The British cruisers turned toward Lützow and came under fire from both German cruisers . Burnett quickly decided to withdraw in the face of superior German firepower ; his ships were armed with 6 in ( 150 mm ) guns , while Admiral Hipper and Lützow carried 20 @.@ 3 cm ( 8 @.@ 0 in ) and 28 cm ( 11 in ) guns , respectively .

= = = Operations in the Baltic = = =

Hitler was furious over the failure to destroy the convoy , and ordered that all remaining German major warships be broken up for scrap . In protest , Raeder resigned ; Hitler replaced him with Admiral Karl Dönitz , who persuaded Hitler to rescind the order to dismantle the Kriegsmarine 's surface ships . In March , Lützow moved to Altafjord , where she experienced problems with her diesel engines . The propulsion system proved to be so problematic that repairs in Germany were necessary . She briefly returned to Norway , but by the end of September 1943 , a thorough overhaul was required . The work was completed in Kiel by January 1944 , after which she remained in the Baltic Sea to conduct training cruises for new naval personnel .

On 13 April 1945 , twenty @-@ four Avro Lancaster bombers attacked Lützow and Prinz Eugen without success due to cloud cover . The RAF made another failed attack two days later , but on 16 April , a force of eighteen Lancasters scored a single hit and several near misses on Lützow with Tallboy bombs in the Kaiserfahrt . The water was shallow enough that her main deck was still 2 m ( 6 ft 7 in ) above water , permitting her use as a stationary gun battery against advancing Soviet forces under control of Task Force Thiele . She continued in this role until 4 May , by which time she had expended her main battery ammunition . Her crew rigged scuttling charges to destroy the hull , but a fire caused the explosives to detonate prematurely . The ultimate fate of Lützow was long unclear , as with most of the ships seized by the Soviet Navy . According to historians Erich Gröner and M. J. Whitley , the Soviet Navy raised the ship in September 1947 and broke her up for scrap in 1948 ? 1949 . Historians Hildebrand , Röhr and Steinmetz , in their book *Die Deutschen Kriegsschiffe* , state that she instead sank off Kolberg , claiming that the Lützow broken up in the late 1940s was instead the Admiral Hipper @-@ class cruiser Lützow that had been sold to the

Soviet Union in 1940 . The historian Hans Georg Prager examined the former Soviet archives in the early 2000s , and discovered that Lützow actually had been sunk in weapons tests in July 1947 , sinking in the Baltic Sea off ?winouj?cie , Poland , on 22 July 1947 .