

The Z-Plan Kriegsmarine

The Z- Plan Kriegsmarine Part 1

by Agis Neugebauer (with some serious help of Rich L. Bax and the rest of the "Salty Seadog" VaS playtest group)

Big thanks to Michael Emmerich whose website (<http://www.german-navy.de/kriegsmarine/zplan/index.html>) was a great primary sources for all the ship data and ship pictures. Please bear in mind that this list is not intended to provide an unbeatable fleet list but to add an additional level of "What If" games to Victory at Sea. Use it in friendly games and have fun.



The Z-Plan was Germany's fleet building program started shortly before World War 2. In the mid 1930s a major discussion about a new fleet program started in Germany. There were two strong opinions as to what kind of program should be chosen. One plan was focused on a large submarine fleet and a

relatively small surface fleet for coastal protection, this plan was preferred by the U-Boat fraction in the Kriegsmarine command. The other alternative was a mixed fleet of various surface ships and a much smaller U-Boat fleet, quite similar to the Imperial Navy in World War I or the British Royal Navy. In the end, this plan was chosen as the new fleet building program, after several modifications it was called the "Z-Plan".

According to this plan, the German Kriegsmarine would have grown to about 800 units, centred on:

- 13 battleships and Battlecruiser,
- 4 aircraft carriers,
- 15 Panzerschiffe,
- 23 cruisers and
- 22 so called "Spähkreuzer" which were basically large destroyers.

These ships would have been built between 1939 and 1946, and in this time, the personal of the Kriegsmarine would have grown to 201,000 men and over 33 billion Reichsmark would have been spent building these new units.

This project was never really based in reality. It was highly unlikely that the German industry would have had the resources for such a construction program and equally unlikely that the other European Nations would have stood still and not react to this program. The realization of the Z-Plan started on January 29th, 1939, when two H-Class battleships were laid down. Three months later Germany quit the fleet treaty with England and the dream of "No more war against Britain" was gone. Four months later Germany attacked Poland and work on all Z-Plan projects was suspended. Within a few months, all incomplete ships of the Z-plan were scrapped and the material used to build additional submarines.

Battleships

The six battleships of the H-class were the projected successors of the battleships *Bismarck* and *Tirpitz*.

These ships would have been the core of the Z-Plan fleet, and were mainly enlarged and improved versions of their predecessors.



Designed with a commerce war in mind; diesel engines were selected instead of the usual high pressure steam turbines typically used for ships of this size.

Design of these ships started in 1937, and a total construction time of 50 months was projected to complete a ship of this class. All ships were scheduled to be completed by 1944. Only two of the ships were actually started, *Schlachtschiff H* at Blohm & Voss, Hamburg on June 15th, 1939 and *Schlachtschiff J* at AG Weser, Bremen on August 15th, 1939. Construction was stopped on October 10th, 1939 as the focus in German naval construction

The Z-Plan Kriegsmarine

switched to the construction of more U-boats instead of battleships. To date, 1200 tons of steel was already used for the *Schlachtschiff H*, 3500 tons were in construction and another 12000 tons on order. (*Schlachtschiff J* was still in an earlier phase of construction). In 1940, the used material was wrecked on the shipyard and used elsewhere.

The Z-Plan Kriegsmarine List

The following list supplements the official Kriegsmarine fleet list of the main Victory at Sea rulebook:

Priority Level: Skirmish

M-Class Cruiser

“Spähkreuzer” - Recon Cruiser

Priority Level: Battle

O, P, Q-Class Battlecruiser

Priority Level: Raid

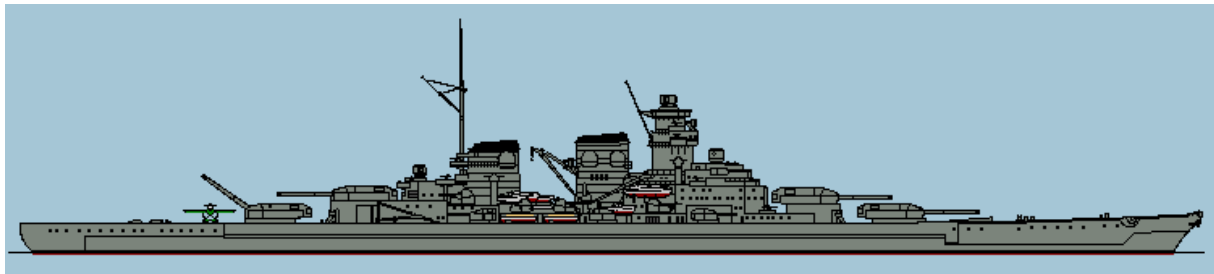
P-Class Cruiser

Priority Level: War

H-39-Class Battleship

H-39-Class Battleship

Possible ship names of this class: **Hindenburg**



In keeping with the decision to have heavy German warships resemble each other, the H Class design was to appear as an enlarged Bismarck at first glance. However, the design of the H Class varied in many important points from the earlier battleship. The design was started and laid down under the H-39 design. The most noticeable difference between the two was the two-stack arrangement of the H Class. If you look at the funnel caps to the new design you'll find a series of circular exhaust vents in each cap instead of the open grates at the caps of the stacks of Bismarck and Tirpitz. The earlier design employed a conventional steam plant for propulsion but the ships of the H Class were designed for diesel plants. The large volume required for intakes and uptakes for twelve propulsion diesels, providing a top speed of 30-knots, and twelve diesel generators necessitated two stacks. These space requirements also prevented a hangar/catapult arrangement amidships as in Bismarck. The hangars for four Ar-196 floatplanes were placed in the aft superstructure with rails running on either side of the aft turrets to a centreline catapult aft of turret D. Long range was desired for these battleships and the diesel powered design had significantly greater range than designs based on steam plants. The H-39 design gave the ship a range of 16,000 nm at 19-knots compared to the range of Bismarck of 9,500 nm at 19 knots. At first glance the turrets of the H Class ships appeared the same as those on Bismarck but of course they were larger in order to mount a new class of 16-inch guns.

Speed: 6”

Turning: 1

Target: 4+

Armour: 6+

Damage: 51/17

Crew: 92/30

Special Traits: Aircraft 4, Torpedo Belt, Armoured Deck, Radar

In Service: 1944 (Planned)

Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
A Turret (2 x 16 in)	41”	2	3	AP
B Turret (2 x 16 in)	41”	2	3	AP
X Turret (2 x 16 in)	41”	2	3	AP
Y Turret (2 x 16 in)	41”	2	3	AP
Secondary Armament	17”	5	1	Weak
AAA	8”	6	-	
Port Torpedoes	10”	2	3	AP, Slow-Loading
Starboard Torpedoes	10”	2	3	AP, Slow-Loading

Length: 872 ft.

Displacement: 62.496 t

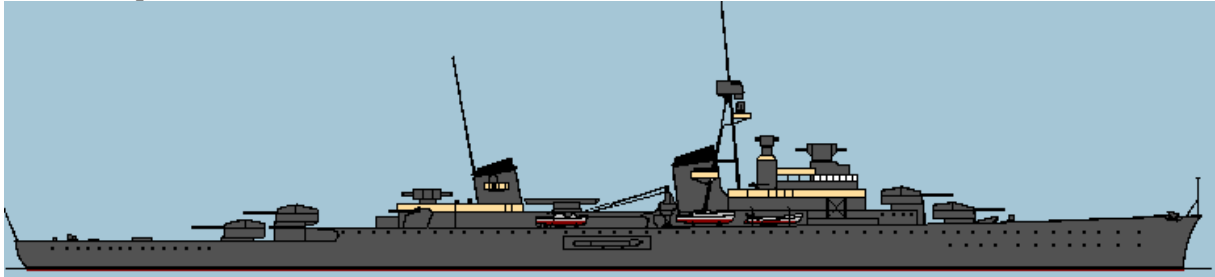
Speed: 30 kts.

Crew: 2.300

The Z-Plan Kriegsmarine

M-Class Cruiser

Possible ship names of this class: unknown



The planned M-Class Light Cruiser (leichte Kreuzer) were long range escorts intended for detached open-ocean battle groups. The M-Class Light Cruisers were to accompany O, P, Q-class battle cruiser and then proceed on missions independently. At least two of each would screen the main hunting groups.

Speed: 7" **Armour:** 3+ **Special Traits:** Aircraft 2, Radar
Turning: 2 **Damage:** 11/3 **In Service:** 1943 (Planned)
Target: 5+ **Crew:** 37/12

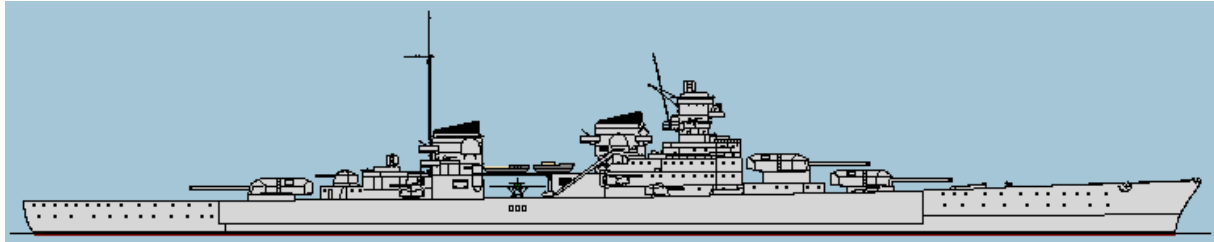
Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
A Turret (2 x 5.9 in)	26"	1	1	Weak
B Turret (2 x 5.9 in)	26"	1	1	Weak
C Turret (2 x 5.9 in)	26"	1	1	Weak
D Turret (2 x 5.9 in)	26"	1	1	Weak
Secondary Armament	13"	1	1	Weak
AAA	8"	1	-	
Port Torpedoes	10"	2	3	AP, One-Shot
Starboard Torpedoes	10"	2	3	AP, One-Shot

Length: 584 ft. **Displacement:** 10.400 t **Speed:** 35.5 kts. **Crew:** 920

The Z-Plan Kriegsmarine

O,P,Q-Class Battlecruiser (Schlachtskreuzer)

Possible ship names of this class: unknown



In addition to the battleships of the H-Class, a group of 12 new armoured ships (*Kreuzer P*), successors to the famous *Admiral Graf Spee*, *Admiral Scheer* and *Lützow*, were part of the Z-Plan. The design studies for the three battlecruisers of the O-class (*Schlachtskreuzer O*, *Schlachtskreuzer P*, *Schlachtskreuzer Q*) were simultaneous to those of the new Panzerschiff design (*Kreuzer P*) in 1937.

In 1939 an option was explored to replace the three existing Panzerschiffe with the same number of new battlecruisers. Construction orders were given to Deutsche Werke, Kiel, and the Kriegsmarinewerft in Wilhelmshaven and the Germaniawerft in Kiel in the same year, but none of the ships were started.

These ships were planned with the idea of commerce war in mind. Therefore, they would get a mixed propulsion system, diesel engines for long range medium speed cruising and additional turbines for high speed combat action. The main role of these battlecruisers was to engage enemy convoys and destroy transports and cargo ships. However, unlike the heavily protected H-Class battleships, these battlecruisers had armour protection only slightly better to that of a cruiser. So it's very doubtful that one of these ships would have been able to attack a well protected allied convoy.

Speed: 7" **Armour:** 4+ **Special Traits:** Aircraft 4, Radar
Turning: 1 **Damage:** 33/11 **In Service:** 1944 (Planned)
Target: 4+ **Crew:** 78/26

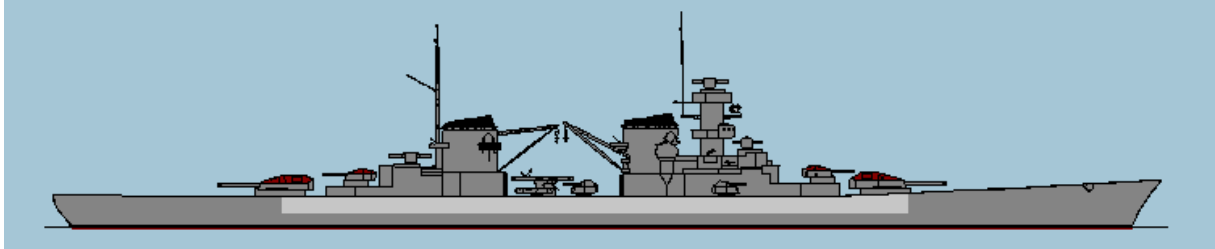
Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
A Turret (2 x 15 in)	40"	2	3	AP
B Turret (2 x 15 in)	40"	2	3	AP
C Turret (2 x 15 in)	40"	2	3	AP
Secondary Armament	17"	2	1	Weak
AAA	8"	3	-	
Port Torpedoes	10"	2	3	AP, One-Shot
Starboard Torpedoes	10"	2	3	AP, One-Shot

Length: 814 ft. **Displacement:** 35.720 t **Speed:** 33.4 kts. **Crew:** 1.950

The Z-Plan Kriegsmarine

P-Class Cruiser (Panzerschiff)

Possible ship names of this class: unknown



In 1938 the first design studies for a Panzerschiff successor were made. The new Panzerschiff was called *Kreuzer P*, its specifications showed a bigger, faster and better protected version of the original design. In many respects it was a modification of the design of the *Panzerkreuzer D* and *Panzerkreuzer E*, the planned successors of the *Deutschland* class which were later modified to *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*. As these ships were intended to be used for commerce war, they were designed to be superior to a heavy cruiser, in terms of artillery and faster than existing battleships.

It was planned to lay down four of these ships per year, starting in 1939 so that the complete Z-Plan battle fleet would be operational by 1947. The first three of these ships would get the 28cm (11") turrets removed from the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* during their conversion to 38 cm (15") guns. However, by 1939 it was obvious that the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* conversion could not be completed by 1941/42, when it was originally scheduled. Therefore, three of the planned *Kreuzer P* would be modified to get 38 cm turrets which were already in production, resulting in the Battlecruiser *O-Class*.

Although the ships were already assigned to shipyards, none of the *Kreuzer P* was ever ordered because of the start of World War 2.

Speed: 7"
Turning: 1
Target: 4+

Armour: 3+
Damage: 26/8
Crew: 48/16

Special Traits: Aircraft 2, Radar
In Service: 1942 (Planned)

Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
A Turret (3 x 11 in)	45"	3	1	
B Turret (3 x 11 in)	45"	3	1	
Secondary Armament	17"	2	1	Weak
AAA	8"	2	-	
Port Torpedoes	10"	2	3	AP, One-Shot
Starboard Torpedoes	10"	2	3	AP, One-Shot

Length: 732 ft.

Displacement: 25.689 t

Speed: 33 kts.

Crew: 1.200

The Z-Plan Kriegsmarine

“Spähkreuzer” - Scout Cruiser

Possible ship names of this class: unknown

During the design process for the M-Class light cruiser, the construction office proposed a scheme for a super destroyer suitable for Atlantic employment. This became the Spähkreuzer, (literally "scout cruiser") designed to have superior armament to a Fleet destroyer, and be able to outrun any enemy cruiser. They would probably have scouted for the heavy units in North Atlantic. In action the Spähkreuzer would likely have screened the heavy units of the hunting group against the destroyers escorting the convoy.

Speed: 7” **Armour:** 2+ **Special Traits:** Radar
Turning: 2 **Damage:** 6/2 **In Service:** 1943 (Planned)
Target: 6+ **Crew:** 23/7

Weapon	Range	AD	DD	Special
A Turret (2 x 5.9 in)	26”	1	1	Weak
C Turret (2 x 5.9 in)	26”	1	1	Weak
D Turret (2 x 5.9 in)	26”	1	1	Weak
AAA	8”	1	-	
Port Torpedoes	10"	3	3	AP, One-Shot
Starboard Torpedoes	10"	3	3	AP, One-Shot

Length: 476 ft. **Displacement:** 5.713 t **Speed:** 35.5 kts. **Crew:** 583