

= French battleship Voltaire =

Voltaire was one of the six Danton class semi @-@ dreadnought battleships built for the French Navy in the late 1900s . Shortly after World War I began , the ship participated in the Battle of Antivari in the Adriatic Sea and helped to sink an Austro @-@ Hungarian protected cruiser . She spent most of the rest of the war blockading the Straits of Otranto and the Dardanelles to prevent German , Austro @-@ Hungarian and Turkish warships from breaking out into the Mediterranean . Voltaire was hit by two torpedoes fired by a German submarine in October 1918 , but was not seriously damaged . After the war , she was modernized in 1923 ? 25 and subsequently became a training ship . She was condemned in 1935 and later sold for scrap .

= = Design and description = =

Although the Danton @-@ class battleships were a significant improvement from the preceding Libert  class , they were outclassed by the advent of the dreadnought well before they were completed . They were not well liked by the navy , although their numerous rapid @-@ firing guns were of some use in the Mediterranean .

Voltaire was 146 @.@ 6 meters ( 481 ft 0 in ) long overall and had a beam of 25 @.@ 8 meters ( 84 ft 8 in ) and a full @-@ load draft of 9 @.@ 2 meters ( 30 ft 2 in ) . She displaced 19 @,@ 736 metric tons ( 19 @,@ 424 long tons ) at deep load and had a crew of 681 officers and enlisted men . The ship was powered by four Parsons steam turbines using steam generated by twenty @-@ six Belleville boilers . The turbines were rated at 22 @,@ 500 shaft horsepower ( 16 @,@ 800 kW ) and provided a top speed of around 19 knots ( 35 km / h ; 22 mph ) . Voltaire , however , reached a top speed of 20 @.@ 7 knots ( 38 @.@ 3 km / h ; 23 @.@ 8 mph ) during her sea trials . She carried a maximum of 2 @,@ 027 tonnes ( 1 @,@ 995 long tons ) of coal which allowed her to steam for 3 @,@ 370 nautical miles ( 6 @,@ 240 km ; 3 @,@ 880 mi ) at a speed of 10 knots ( 19 km / h ; 12 mph ) .

Voltaire 's main battery consisted of four 305mm / 45 Mod le 1906 guns mounted in two twin gun turrets , one forward and one aft . The secondary battery consisted of twelve 240mm / 50 Mod le 1902 guns in twin turrets , three on each side of the ship . A number of smaller guns were carried for defense against torpedo boats . These included sixteen 75 mm ( 3 @.@ 0 in ) L / 65 guns and ten 47 mm ( 1 @.@ 9 in ) Hotchkiss guns . The ship was also armed with two submerged 450 mm ( 17 @.@ 7 in ) torpedo tubes . The ship 's waterline armor belt was 270 mm ( 10 @.@ 6 in ) thick and the main battery was protected by up to 300 mm ( 11 @.@ 8 in ) of armor . The conning tower also had 300 mm thick sides .

= = Wartime modifications = =

During the war 75 mm anti @-@ aircraft guns were installed on the roofs of the ship 's two forward 240 mm gun turrets . During 1918 , the mainmast was shortened to allow the ship to fly a captive kite balloon and the elevation of the 240 mm guns was increased which extended their range to 18 @,@ 000 meters ( 20 @,@ 000 yd ) .

= = Career = =

Construction of Voltaire was begun on 26 December 1906 by Forges et Chantiers de la M diterran e in La Seyne @-@ sur @-@ Mer and the ship was laid down on 20 July 1907 . She was launched on 16 January 1909 and was completed on 5 August 1911 . The ship was assigned to the Second Division of the 1st Squadron ( escadre ) of the Mediterranean Fleet when she was commissioned . The ship participated in combined fleet maneuvers between Provence and Tunisia in May ? June 1913 and the subsequent naval review conducted by the President of France , Raymond Poincar  on 7 June 1913 . Afterwards , Voltaire joined her squadron in its tour of the Eastern Mediterranean in October ? December 1913 and participated in the grand fleet exercise in

the Mediterranean in May 1914 .

= = = World War I = = =

In early August 1914 , the ship cruised the Strait of Sicily in an attempt to prevent the German battlecruiser Goeben and the light cruiser Breslau from breaking out to the West . On 16 August 1914 the combined Anglo @-@ French Fleet under Admiral Auguste Boué de Lapeyrère , including Voltaire , made a sweep of the Adriatic Sea . The Allied ships encountered the Austro @-@ Hungarian cruiser SMS Zenta , escorted by the destroyer SMS Ulan , blockading the coast of Montenegro . There were too many ships for Zenta to escape , so she remained behind to allow Ulan to get away and was sunk by gunfire during the Battle of Antivari off the coast of Bar , Montenegro . Voltaire subsequently participated in a number of raids into the Adriatic later in the year and patrolled the Ionian Islands . From December 1914 to 1916 , the ship participated in the distant blockade of the Straits of Otranto while based in Corfu . On 1 December 1916 , some of her sailors , transported to Athens by her sister Mirabeau , participated in the Allied attempt to ensure Greek acquiescence to Allied operations in Macedonia . Voltaire spent part of 1917 through April 1918 based at Mudros to prevent Goeben from breaking out into the Mediterranean .

The ship was overhauled from May to October 1918 in Toulon . While returning to Mudros on 10 October , the ship was torpedoed by UB @-@ 48 off the island of Milos . Despite being struck by two torpedoes , she able to make temporary repairs at Milos before sailing to Bizerte for permanent repairs . Voltaire was based in Toulon throughout 1919 and was modernized in 1922 ? 25 to improve her underwater protection . The ship became a training ship in 1927 and was condemned in on 17 March 1937 . She was scuttled in Quiberon Bay on 31 May 1938 for long @-@ term use as a target ; the wreck was sold in December 1949 and broken up from March 1950 onwards .