

= Italian cruiser Marsala =

Marsala was a protected cruiser built by the Italian Regia Marina (Royal Navy) in the 1910s . She was the second and final member of the Nino Bixio class , which were built as scouts for the main Italian fleet . She was equipped with a main battery of six 120 @-@ millimeter (4 @.@ 7 in) guns and had a top speed in excess of 26 knots (48 km / h ; 30 mph) , but her engines proved to be troublesome in service . Marsala spent World War I based at Brindisi ; she was involved in the Battle of the Otranto Straits in May 1917 , where she briefly engaged Austro @-@ Hungarian cruisers . Marsala 's career was cut short in November 1927 when she was stricken from the naval register and sold for scrap , the result of her unreliable engines and drastic cuts to the naval budget .

= = Design = =

Marsala was 140 @.@ 3 meters (460 ft) long at the waterline , with a beam of 13 m (43 ft) and a draft of 4 @.@ 1 m (13 ft) . She displaced up to 4 @,@ 141 metric tons (4 @,@ 076 long tons ; 4 @,@ 565 short tons) at full load . Her crew consisted 13 officers and 283 enlisted men . The ship 's propulsion system consisted of three steam turbines , each driving a screw propeller . Steam was provided by fourteen mixed coal and oil firing Blechynden boilers . The engines were rated at 23 @,@ 000 shaft horsepower (17 @,@ 000 kW) for a top speed of 27 @.@ 66 knots (51 @.@ 23 km / h ; 31 @.@ 83 mph) . She had a range of 1 @,@ 400 nautical miles (2 @,@ 600 km ; 1 @,@ 600 mi) at a cruising speed of 13 knots (24 km / h ; 15 mph) .

Marsala was armed with a main battery of six 120 mm (4 @.@ 7 in) L / 50 guns mounted singly . She was also equipped with six 76 mm (3 @.@ 0 in) L / 50 guns and two 450 mm (18 in) torpedo tubes . The ship was only lightly armored , with a 38 mm (1 @.@ 5 in) thick deck , and 100 mm (3 @.@ 9 in) thick plating on her main conning tower .

= = Service history = =

Marsala 's keel was laid down at the Castellammare shipyard on 15 February 1911 , the same day as Nino Bixio . Work on Marsala proceeded slower than on her sister , and she was launched on 24 March 1912 , where she was named for the city where Giuseppe Garibaldi launched the Expedition of the Thousand in 1860 . After completing fitting @-@ out work , the ship was commissioned into the Italian fleet on 4 August 1914 . Italy declared neutrality at the start of World War I in August 1914 , but by May 1915 , the Triple Entente had convinced the Italians to enter the war against the Central Powers . Admiral Paolo Thaon di Revel , the Italian naval chief of staff , believed that Austro @-@ Hungarian submarines could operate too effectively in the narrow waters of the Adriatic , which could also be easily seeded with minefields . The threat from these underwater weapons was too serious for him to use the fleet in an active way . Instead , Revel decided to implement a blockade at the relatively safer southern end of the Adriatic with the main fleet , while smaller vessels , such as the MAS boats , conducted raids on Austro @-@ Hungarian ships and installations .

Marsala , Nino Bixio , and the cruiser Quarto were based at Brindisi during the war , where they could patrol the path from the narrow Adriatic to the Mediterranean . By May 1917 , the reconnaissance forces at Brindisi had come under the command of Rear Admiral Alfredo Acton . On the night of 14 ? 15 May , the Austro @-@ Hungarian cruisers Helgoland , Novara , and Saida and several destroyers raided the Otranto Barrage ? a patrol line of drifters intended to block Austro @-@ Hungarian and German U @-@ boats . Marsala was the only Italian cruiser with steam up in her boilers when word of the Austro @-@ Hungarian attack reached Brindisi . The British cruisers HMS Dartmouth and Bristol departed first , along with five Italian destroyers . Marsala , the flotilla leader Racchia , and three destroyers followed thereafter . Marsala briefly engaged the fleeing Austro @-@ Hungarians in the Battle of the Otranto Straits , before Acton broke off the pursuit and ordered a return to port .

Following the end of the war in November 1918 , the Regia Marina demobilized ; severely reduced

naval budgets ? the result of a weakened Italian economy in the early 1920s ? led to further draw @-@ downs . Marsala 's engines were plagued with problems throughout her career , which made the ship an obvious target in the effort to trim the Regia Marina 's budget . She was stricken from the naval register on 27 November 1927 and subsequently broken up for scrap .