

= HMS Cressy (1899) =

HMS Cressy was a Cressy class armoured cruiser built for the Royal Navy around 1900 . Upon completion she was assigned to the China Station . In 1907 she was transferred to the North America and West Indies Station before being placed in reserve in 1909 . Recommissioned at the start of World War I , she played a minor role in the Battle of Heligoland Bight a few weeks after the beginning of the war . Cressy , together with two of her sister ships , was torpedoed and sunk by the German submarine U 9 on 22 September 1914 with the loss of 560 of her crew .

= = Design and description = =

Cressy was designed to displace 12 000 long tons (12 190 t) . The ship had an overall length of 472 feet (143 .9 m) , a beam of 69 feet 9 inches (21 .3 m) and a deep draught of 26 feet 9 inches (8 .2 m) . She was powered by two 4 cylinder triple expansion steam engines , each driving one shaft , which produced a total of 21 000 indicated horsepower (15 660 kW) and gave a maximum speed of 21 knots (39 km / h ; 24 mph) . The engines were powered by 30 Belleville boilers . On her sea trials , Cressy only reached 20 .7 knots (38 .3 km / h ; 23 .8 mph) , the slowest performance of any of her class . She carried a maximum of 1 600 long tons (1 600 t) of coal and her complement ranged from 725 to 760 officers and enlisted men .

Her main armament consisted of two breech loading (BL) 9 .2 inch (234 mm) Mk X guns in single gun turrets , one each fore and aft of the superstructure . They fired 380 pound (170 kg) shells to a range of 15 500 yards (14 200 m) . Her secondary armament of twelve BL 6 inch Mk VII guns was arranged in casemates amidships . Eight of these were mounted on the main deck and were only usable in calm weather . They had a maximum range of approximately 12 200 yards (11 200 m) with their 100 pound (45 kg) shells . A dozen quick firing (QF) 12 pounder 12 cwt guns were fitted for defence against torpedo boats , eight on casemates on the upper deck and four in the superstructure . The ship also carried three 3 pounder Hotchkiss guns and two submerged torpedo tubes .

The ship 's waterline armour belt had a maximum thickness of 6 inches (152 mm) and was closed off by 5 inch (127 mm) transverse bulkheads . The armour of the gun turrets and their barbettes was 6 inches thick while the casemate armour was 5 inches thick . The protective deck armour ranged in thickness from 1 ? 3 inches (25 ? 76 mm) and the conning tower was protected by 12 inches (305 mm) of armour .

= = Service history = =

Cressy , named after the 1346 Battle of Crécy , was laid down by Fairfield Shipbuilding at their shipyard in Govan , Scotland on 12 October 1898 and launched on 4 December 1899 . After finishing her sea trials she passed into the fleet reserve at Portsmouth on 24 May 1901 . She was commissioned by Captain Henry Tudor for service on the China Station on 28 May 1901 , but her departure was delayed for several months when her steering gear broke down shortly after leaving the base and she had to return . She eventually left home waters in early October 1901 , arriving at Colombo on 7 November , and then Singapore on 16 November . She was assigned to the North America and West Indies Station from 1907 through 1909 and placed in reserve upon her return home .

The ship was assigned to the 7th Cruiser Squadron shortly after the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 . The squadron was tasked with patrolling the Broad Fourteens of the North Sea in support of a force of destroyers and submarines based at Harwich which protected the eastern end of the English Channel from German warships attempting to attack the supply route between England and France . During the Battle of Heligoland Bight on 28 August , the ship was part of Cruiser Force ' C ' , in reserve off the Dutch coast , and saw no action . After the battle , Rear Admiral Arthur Christian ordered Cressy to take aboard 165 unwounded German survivors from the

badly damaged ships of Commodore Reginald Tyrwhitt 's Harwich Force . Escorted by her sister Bacchante , she set sail for the Nore to unload their prisoners .

= = = Fate = = =

On the morning of 22 September , Cressy and her sisters , Aboukir and Hogue , were on patrol without any escorting destroyers as these had been forced to seek shelter from bad weather . The three sisters were steaming in line abreast about 2 @, @ 000 yards (1 @, @ 800 m) apart at a speed of 10 knots (19 km / h ; 12 mph) . They were not expecting submarine attack , but had lookouts posted and one gun manned on each side to attack any submarines sighted . The weather had moderated earlier that morning and Tyrwhitt was en route to reinforce the cruisers with eight destroyers .

U @-@ 9 , commanded by Kapitänleutnant Otto Weddigen , had been ordered to attack British transports at Ostend , but had been forced to dive and take shelter from the storm . On surfacing , she spotted the British ships and moved to attack . She fired one torpedo at 06 : 20 at Aboukir which struck her on the starboard side ; the ship 's captain thought he had struck a mine and ordered the other two ships to close to transfer his wounded men . Aboukir quickly began listing and capsized around 06 : 55 despite counterflooding compartments on the opposite side to right her .

As Hogue approached her sinking sister , her captain , Wilmot Nicholson , realized that it had been a submarine attack and signaled Cressy to look for a periscope although his ship continued to close on Aboukir as her crew threw overboard anything that would float to aid the survivors in the water . Having stopped and lowered all her boats , Hogue was struck by two torpedoes around 06 : 55 . The sudden weight loss of the two torpedoes caused U @-@ 9 to broach the surface and Hogue 's gunners opened fire without effect before the submarine could submerge again . The cruiser capsized about ten minutes after being torpedoed and sank at 07 : 15 .

Cressy attempted to ram the submarine , but did not succeed and resumed her rescue efforts until she too was torpedoed at 07 : 20 . Weddigen had fired two torpedoes from his stern tubes , but only one hit . U @-@ 9 had to maneuver to bring her bow around with her last torpedo and fired it at a range of about 550 yards (500 m) at 07 : 30 . The torpedo struck on the port side and ruptured several boilers , scalding the men in the compartment . As her sisters had done , Cressy took on a heavy list and then capsized before sinking at 07 : 55 . Several Dutch ships began rescuing survivors at 08 : 30 and were joined by British fishing trawlers before Tyrwhitt and his ships arrived at 10 : 45 . From all three ships 837 men were rescued and 62 officers and 1 @, @ 397 enlisted men lost : 560 of those lost were from Cressy .

In 1954 the British government sold the salvage rights to all three ships to a German company and they were subsequently sold again to a Dutch company which began salvaging the wrecks ' metal in 2011 .