

= HMS Illustrious (1896) =

The third HMS Illustrious of the British Royal Navy was a Majestic class pre dreadnought battleship . The ship was built at the Chatham Dockyard ; her keel was laid down in March 1895 , her completed hull was launched in September 1896 , and she was commissioned into the fleet in April 1898 . She was armed with a main battery of four 12 inch (300 mm) guns and a secondary battery of twelve 6 inch (150 mm) guns . The ship had a top speed of 16 knots (30 km / h ; 18 mph) .

Illustrious was assigned to the Mediterranean Fleet until 1904 . Transferred to the Channel Fleet (which was subsequently reorganised to the Atlantic Fleet) she underwent a refit which was duly completed in early 1906 . Rendered obsolete by the emergence of the new dreadnoughts , she served with the Home Fleet from 1908 . One of the oldest battleships in the Royal Navy when World War I broke out , she served as a guard ship at various regions around Northern England until late 1915 . Her main armament was removed and she then served as a store ship for the remainder of the war . She was decommissioned in 1919 and scrapped the following year .

= = Design = =

Illustrious was 421 feet (128 m) long overall and had a beam of 75 ft (23 m) and a draft of 27 ft (8 m) . She displaced up to 16,060 t (15,810 long tons ; 17,700 short tons) at full combat load . Her propulsion system consisted of two 3 cylinder triple expansion engines powered by eight coal fired cylindrical boilers . By 1907 - 1908 , she was re-boilered with oil fired models . Her engines provided a top speed of 16 knots (30 km / h ; 18 mph) at 10,000 indicated horsepower (7,350 kW) . The Majestics were considered good seaboats with an easy roll and good steamers , although they suffered from high fuel consumption . She had a crew of 672 officers and enlisted men .

The ship was armed with four BL 12 inch Mk VIII guns in twin turrets , one forward and one aft . The turrets were placed on circular barbettes , unlike six of her sisters , which retained earlier pear shaped barbettes . Illustrious also carried twelve QF 6 inch / 40 guns . They were mounted in casemates in two gun decks amidships . She also carried sixteen QF 12 pounder guns and twelve QF 2 pounder guns . She was also equipped with five 18 in (460 mm) torpedo tubes , four of which were submerged in the ship 's hull , with the last in a deck mounted launcher . Illustrious and the other ships of her class had 9 inches (229 mm) of Harvey armour , which allowed equal protection with less cost in weight compared to previous types of armour . This allowed Illustrious and her sisters to have a deeper and lighter belt than previous battleships without any loss in protection . The barbettes for the main battery were protected with 14 in (360 mm) of armour , and the conning tower had the same thickness of steel on the sides . The ship 's armoured deck was 2.5 to 4.5 in (64 to 114 mm) thick .

= = Service history = =

The keel for HMS Illustrious was laid down at the Chatham Dockyard on 11 March 1895 and the ship was launched on 17 September 1896 . She commissioned at Chatham for service in the Fleet Reserve on 15 April 1898 , Captain Sir Richard Poore in command . She went into full commission there on 10 May 1898 for service in the Mediterranean Fleet . While in the Mediterranean , she participated between September and December 1898 in operations at Crete during the Greco - Turkish uprising there , and in 1901 underwent a refit at Malta . Captain Francis John Foley was appointed in command on 24 March 1902 , and the following June she was the lead ship in a coronation fête at Gibraltar . In July 1904 , Illustrious transferred to the Channel Fleet . As a result of a reorganization on 1 January 1905 , the Channel Fleet became the Atlantic Fleet , and she became an Atlantic Fleet unit . Illustrious ended her Atlantic Fleet service in September 1905 and began a refit at Chatham .

Emerging from the refit , she commissioned into the Reserve at Chatham on 14 March 1906 , then

went into full commission for service in the new Channel Fleet (formerly the Home Fleet) on 3 April 1906 , serving as Flagship , Rear Admiral . She collided with schooner Christa in the English Channel in fog on 13 June 1906 . She was relieved as flagship and ended her Channel Fleet service on 1 June 1908 , paying off at Chatham . Illustrious recommissioned at Chatham on 2 June 1908 for service with the Portsmouth Division of the new Home Fleet . On 22 March 1909 she collided with third @-@ class cruiser HMS Amethyst in Portsmouth Harbour , but suffered no damage . She suffered another mishap on 21 August 1909 when she damaged her bottom by striking a reef in Babbacombe Bay . She underwent a refit in 1912 , and later that year was transferred to the 3rd Fleet and participated in maneuvers as Flagship , Vice Admiral , 7th Battle Squadron .

In late July 1914 , the Royal Navy began a precautionary mobilization , as war seemed imminent . The Majestic @-@ class ships were by then the oldest and least effective battleships in service in the Royal Navy . At first , it was planned that Illustrious would pay off to provide crewmen for the new dreadnought battleship HMS Erin , but instead she was placed in full commission to serve as a guard ship for the Grand Fleet once World War I began in August 1914 . She began guard ship duty at Loch Ewe on 23 August 1914 , transferring to Loch Na Keal on 17 October 1914 , to the Tyne in November 1914 , and to Grimsby on the Humber in December 1914 . She remained on guard ship duty on the Humber until November 1915 .

Illustrious paid off at Grimsby on 26 November 1915 to be converted to a disarmed harbour ship ; two of her 12 @-@ inch (305 @-@ mm) guns were re @-@ used in the Tyne Turrets . Her conversion was completed in March 1916 . She served at Grimsby in her new role until August 1916 , when she transferred to Chatham . Illustrious commissioned there on 20 November 1916 for use as a munitions storeship , and on 24 November 1916 she transferred to the Tyne to serve in this role . In November 1917 , she transferred to Portsmouth to continue service as a munitions storeship there . Illustrious paid off on 21 April 1919 and was placed on the sale list at Portsmouth on 24 March 1920 . She was sold for scrapping on 18 June 1920 , and was broken up at Barrow .

= = Endnotes = =

Notes

Citations