

= Italian cruiser Elba =

Elba was a protected cruiser of the Italian Regia Marina (Royal Navy) . She was the fifth of six Regioni @-@ class ships , all of which were named for regions of Italy , with the exception of Elba , which was named for the island . Elba was built by the Regio Cantieri di Castellammare di Stabia ; her keel was laid in September 1890 , she was launched in August 1893 , and she was commissioned in February 1896 . The ship was equipped with a main armament of four 15 cm (5 @. @ 9 in) and six 12 cm (4 @. @ 7 in) guns , and she could steam at a speed of nearly 18 knots (33 km / h ; 21 mph) .

Elba spent much of her career abroad . She participated in the blockade of Venezuela during the Venezuelan crisis of 1902 ? 03 and was present in East Asia during the Russo @-@ Japanese War in 1904 ? 05 . In February 1904 , her crew witnessed the Battle of Chemulpo Bay between Japanese and Russian warships ; after the battle ended in Russian defeat , Elba and British and French cruisers picked up survivors . She took part in the Italo @-@ Turkish War in 1911 ? 12 but saw no action , being used primarily to blockade Turkish ports in the Red Sea . In 1914 , Elba was converted into the first seaplane tender of the Regia Marina , with equipment to handle three seaplanes . This service did not last long , however , as she was too small and too old . Decommissioned by 1916 , the old warship was sold for scrap in January 1920 and broken up .

= = Design = =

Elba was slightly larger than her sister ships . She was 88 @. @ 2 meters (289 ft) long overall and had a beam of 12 @. @ 72 m (41 @. @ 7 ft) and a draft of 4 @. @ 86 m (15 @. @ 9 ft) . She displaced up to 3 @, @ 110 metric tons (3 @, @ 060 long tons ; 3 @, @ 430 short tons) at full load . Her propulsion system consisted of a pair of horizontal triple @-@ expansion engines , with steam supplied by four cylindrical water @-@ tube boilers . On her speed trials , she reached a maximum of 17 @. @ 9 knots (33 @. @ 2 km / h ; 20 @. @ 6 mph) at 7 @, @ 471 indicated horsepower (5 @, @ 571 kW) . The ship had a cruising radius of about 2 @, @ 100 nautical miles (3 @, @ 900 km ; 2 @, @ 400 mi) at a speed of 10 knots (19 km / h ; 12 mph) . She had a crew of between 213 ? 278 . Also unlike her sisters , she had a copper @-@ sheathed hull , which reduced fouling during lengthy periods between dockyard maintenance .

Elba was armed with a main battery of four 15 cm (5 @. @ 9 in) L / 40 guns mounted singly , with two side by side forward and two side by side aft . Six 12 cm (4 @. @ 7 in) L / 40 guns were placed between them , with three on each broadside . Light armament included ten 57 mm (2 @. @ 2 in) guns , six 37 mm (1 @. @ 5 in) guns , and a pair of machine guns . She was also equipped with two 45 cm (18 in) torpedo tubes . Elba was protected by a 50 mm (2 @. @ 0 in) thick deck , and her conning tower had 50 mm thick sides .

= = Service history = =

The keel for Elba was laid down at the Regio Cantieri di Castellammare di Stabia in the eponymous city on 22 September 1890 . Her completed hull was launched on 12 August 1893 , and fitting @-@ out work proceeded at a leisurely pace . Elba was finally ready for service on 27 February 1896 . Elba was stationed in East Asian waters in 1899 , along with the armored cruiser Marco Polo and the old sail cruiser Amerigo Vespucci . In 1901 she was replaced by her sister Lombardia and returned to Italy . Elba was sent to Venezuelan waters in 1902 during the Venezuelan crisis of 1902 ? 03 , when an international force of British , German , and Italian warships blockaded Venezuela over the country 's refusal to pay foreign debts . Elba was joined by the protected cruiser Giovanni Bausan and the armored cruiser Carlo Alberto .

Elba was present , along with the British cruiser HMS Talbot , the French cruiser Pascal , and the United States ' gunboat USS Vicksburg during the Battle of Chemulpo Bay on 9 February 1904 during the Russo @-@ Japanese War . Elba , Talbot , and Pascal cleared for action in the event that the Japanese warships opened fire on them . After the battle ended in a Russian defeat , the

three cruisers sent boats to pick up the survivors from the sinking cruiser Varyag and gunboat Korietz . Elba took off a total of 6 officers and 172 enlisted men from the two vessels , out of a total of 27 officers and 654 enlisted saved from the ships . Elba thereafter went to Seoul to protect the Italian embassy there . On 24 February , the cruiser Piemonte arrived to relieve Elba . The latter ship departed the following morning for Hong Kong , where she would deposit the Russian sailors . It was not until 10 March , however , that a French mail ship was available for Elba to discharge her passengers for their return trip to Europe .

Starting in October 1907 , Elba was modified to handle an observation balloon . The balloon was linked to the ship via a telephone line , and was used to spot naval mines . During the annual fleet maneuvers in 1908 , Elba and her balloon were used to keep watch on the harbor entrance of Augusta , Sicily , which proved to be effective in alerting defenders to attacking warships . By the outbreak of the Italo @-@ Turkish War in September 1911 , Elba had been stationed in Italy 's East African colonies , Eritrea and Somaliland . In January 1912 , she and her sister Liguria escorted a pair of mail steamships to the Red Sea , where they were used to enforce the blockade of several Ottoman ports . Elba remained in the region for the remainder of the war , assisting in the blockade effort . Ottoman naval forces had already been defeated at the Battle of Kurfud Bay , so there was no chance for Elba to see action . The Ottomans eventually agreed to surrender in October , ending the war .

Elba operated the observation balloon through 1913 . The following year , she was modified to serve as a depot ship for three seaplanes , and she entered service in this new role on 4 June 1914 . During this period she operated Nieuport IV seaplanes . She was the first dedicated seaplane tender of the Italian navy , though seaplanes had already been operated aboard several battleships and cruisers . Elba was nevertheless too small and too old for her intended role , and she was retired in 1916 . She remained in the Italian inventory until 4 January 1920 , when she was sold for scrap .