

= Greek ironclad Psara =

Psara (Greek : Ψαρά) was a steel built ironclad warship named for one of the Aegean Sea islands that played a key role in the war at sea during the Greek War of Independence . The final vessel of the Hydra class , she was ordered in 1885 in response to a crisis in the Balkans and Ottoman naval expansion . The ship was launched in 1889 and delivered to Greece by 1902 . She was armed with a main battery of three 10 in (270 mm) guns and five 5 in (150 mm) guns , and had a top speed of 17 kn (31 km / h ; 20 mph) .

Psara and her sisters saw extensive service with the Greek Navy . They participated in the Greco Turkish War in 1897 until the Great Powers intervened and prevented the Greek Navy from capitalizing on their superiority over the Ottoman Navy . Psara saw action in the First Balkan War at the Naval Battle of Elli and was present at the Naval Battle of Lemnos , but was too slow to actively engage the Ottoman forces . She did not see action during World War I , and was reduced to a training ship for stokers after the end of the war . She was ultimately broken up for scrap in 1932 .

= = Construction = =

In 1885 , Greece ordered three new ironclads of the Hydra class . Psara was ordered from the Société Nouvelle des Forges et Chantiers de la Méditerranée shipyard in Le Havre , France during the premiership of Charilaos Trikoupis . The ship , named for the island of Psara , was launched in 1890 , and by 1892 , she and her sister ships Spetsai and Hydra were delivered to the Greek fleet . The ship was 334 feet 8 inches (102 m) long between perpendiculars and had a beam of 51 ft 10 in (15 m) and a mean draft of 18 ft (5 m) . She displaced 4,808 metric tons (4,732 long tons ; 5,300 short tons) as built . She was powered by a pair of steam engines of unknown type ; they were rated at 6,700 indicated horsepower (5,000 kW) and provided a top speed of 17 knots (31 km / h ; 20 mph) . Coal storage amounted to 500 t (490 long tons ; 550 short tons) .

Psara 's main battery consisted of three 10 in (270 mm) guns . Two guns were mounted forward in barbettes on either side of the forward superstructure ; these were L / 34 guns . The third gun , a L / 28 gun , was placed in a turret aft . The secondary battery consisted of four 5 in (150 mm) L / 36 guns in casemates were mounted below the forward main battery , and a fifth 5 in (150 mm) gun was placed on the centerline on the same deck as the main battery . A number of smaller guns were carried for defense against torpedo boats . These included four 3 in (86 mm) L / 22 guns , four 3 pounder guns , four 1 pounder guns , and six 1 pounder revolver cannons . The ship was also armed with three 14 in (360 mm) torpedo tubes . The ship was armored with a mix of Creusot and compound steel . The main belt was 12 in (300 mm) thick and the main battery was protected by up to 14 in (360 mm) of armor .

= = Service history = =

Psara saw limited action in the Greco Turkish War in 1897 , as the Royal Hellenic Navy was unable to make use of its superiority over the Ottoman Navy . The Ottoman Navy had remained in port during the conflict , but a major naval intervention of the Great Powers prevented the Greeks from capitalizing on their superiority . The conflict was centered on the island of Crete , which was the object of an international naval demonstration in 1897 ? 1898 ; the Great Powers mediated a solution to the conflict that saw Crete returned to Ottoman control , but with a Greek prince . In 1897 ? 1900 , Psara and her sister ships were partially rearmed ; Psara was modified at the La Seyne shipyard . Their small caliber guns were replaced with one 3 in (99 mm) gun forward , eight 9 pounder guns , four 3 pounders , and ten 1 pounder revolver cannon . One of the 14 in (360 mm) torpedo tubes was replaced with a 15 in (380 mm) weapon . In 1908 ? 1910 , the old 5 in (150 mm) guns were replaced with new , longer L / 45 models .

The Balkan League , of which Greece was a member , declared war on the Ottoman Empire in October 1912 . Two months later , the Ottoman fleet attacked the Greek navy , in an attempt to

disrupt the naval blockade surrounding the Dardanelles . The Ottoman fleet , which included Turgut Reis , Barbaros Hayreddin , the outdated ironclad battleships Mesudiye and Âsâr-ı Tevfik , nine destroyers , and six torpedo boats , sortied from the Dardanelles at 9 : 30 . The smaller ships remained at the mouth of the straits while the battleships sailed north , remaining near to the coast . The Greek flotilla , which included the armored cruiser Georgios Averof and Psara and her sisters , had been sailing from the island of Imbros to the patrol line outside the straits . When the Ottomans were sighted , the Greeks altered course to the northeast in order to block the advance of their opponents . In the ensuing Naval Battle of Elli , the Ottoman ships opened fire first , at 9 : 50 , from a range of about 15 ,000 yards ; the Greeks returned fire ten minutes later , by which time the range had decreased significantly to 8 ,500 yards . At 10 : 04 , the Ottoman ships completed a 160° point turn , which reversed their course , and steamed for the safety of the straits in a disorganized withdrawal . Within an hour , the routed Ottoman ships had withdrawn into the Dardanelles .

The Naval Battle of Lemnos resulted from an Ottoman plan to lure the faster Georgios Averof away from the Dardanelles . The protected cruiser Hamidiye evaded the Greek blockade and broke out into the Aegean sea ; the assumption was that the Greeks would dispatch Georgios Averof to hunt down Hamidiye . Despite the threat to Greek lines of communication posed by the cruiser , the Greek commander refused to detach Georgios Averof from her position . Georgios Averof appeared approximately 12 miles from Lemnos ; when the powerful Greek ship was spotted , the Ottomans turned to retreat with Georgios Averof in pursuit . She scored several hits on the fleeing Ottoman ships before breaking off the chase . Psara and her sisters were too slow to keep up with Georgios Averof , and played no part in the engagement . Since Georgios Averof was needed to keep the blockade , Psara and four destroyers were detached to hunt down Hamidiye . Psara was much slower than the Turkish cruiser , and had no real chance of catching her , and Hamidiye remained at large until the end of the war in May 1913 .

By 1914 , Psara had been withdrawn from active duty to serve as a training ship for engine room personnel . At the outbreak of World War I at the end of July 1914 , Greece 's pro-German monarch , Constantine I , decided to remain neutral . The Entente powers landed troops in Salonika in 1915 , which was a source of tension between France and Greece . Ultimately , the French seized the Greek Navy on 19 October 1916 ; the heavy units of the Greek fleet were disarmed and placed in reserve for the remainder of the war . After the end of the war , Psara became a school for quartermasters and later a school for junior boys at Poros , until she was sold for scrap in 1932 .