

= Italian cruiser Puglia =

Puglia was a protected cruiser of the Italian Regia Marina (Royal Navy) . She was the last of six Regioni @-@ class ships , all of which were named for regions of Italy . She was built in Taranto between October 1893 and May 1901 , when she was commissioned into the fleet . 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 20 knots (37 km / h ; 23 mph) .

Puglia served abroad for much of her early career , including periods in South American and East Asian waters . She saw action in the Italo @-@ Turkish War in 1911 ? 12 , primarily in the Red Sea . During the war she bombarded Ottoman ports in Arabia and assisted in enforcing a blockade on maritime traffic in the area . She was still in service during World War I ; the only action in which she participated was the evacuation of units from the Serbian Army from Durazzo in February 1916 . During the evacuation , she bombarded the pursuing Austro @-@ Hungarian Army .

After the war , Puglia was involved in the occupation of the Dalmatian coast , and in 1920 her captain was murdered in a violent confrontation in Split with Croatian nationalists . The old cruiser was sold for scrapping in 1923 , but much of her bow was preserved at the Vittoriale degli italiani museum .

= = Design = =

Puglia was slightly larger than her sister ships . 88 @.@ 25 meters (289 @.@ 5 ft) long overall and had a beam of 12 @.@ 13 m (39 @.@ 8 ft) and a draft of 5 @.@ 45 m (17 @.@ 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 vertical triple @-@ expansion engines , with steam supplied by four cylindrical water @-@ tube boilers . Puglia was capable of steaming at a top speed of 20 knots (37 km / h ; 23 mph) . 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 ? 78 .

Puglia 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 eight 57 mm (2 @.@ 2 in) guns , eight 37 mm (1 @.@ 5 in) guns , and a pair of machine guns . She was also equipped with two 45 cm (18 in) torpedo tubes . Puglia was protected by a 25 mm (0 @.@ 98 in) thick deck , unlike her sisters which all had decks twice as thick . Her conning tower had 50 mm thick sides .

= = Service history = =

Puglia was built by the new Regia Marina shipyard in Taranto , the first major warship to be built there . Her keel was laid down in October 1893 , and she was launched on 22 September 1898 . Fitting @-@ out work proved to be a lengthy process , and she was not ready for service until 26 May 1901 . By this time , her design was over ten years old and the ship was rapidly becoming obsolescent ; in comparison , Germany had already commissioned the world 's first light cruisers , the Gazelle class , which were significantly faster and better armed . This new type of ship rapidly replaced protected cruisers like Puglia .

Puglia was immediately deployed to East Asian waters following her commissioning . In July , she was in Australia during the visit of the British Prince George , son of then @-@ King Edward VI . The ship was still on the China station as of 1904 . Puglia was present in Rio de Janeiro in January 1908 when the Great White Fleet arrived in the port . She greeted the American fleet with a 15 @-@ gun salute . The German cruiser SMS Bremen was also moored in the harbor at the time , as was the Brazilian fleet .

= = = Italo @-@ Turkish War = = =

At the outbreak of Italo @-@ Turkish War in September 1911 , Puglia was stationed in eastern Africa , where Italy had colonies in Eritrea and Somaliland . She was joined there by her sisters Italian cruiser Elba and Liguria and the cruisers Piemonte and Etna . Puglia and the cruiser Calabria , which had recently arrived from Asian waters , bombarded the Turkish port of Aqaba on 19 November to disperse a contingent of Ottoman soldiers there . Hostilities were temporarily ceased while the British King George V passed through the Red Sea following his coronation ceremony in India ? the ceasefire lasted until 26 November .

In early 1912 , the Italian Red Sea fleet searched for a group of seven Ottoman gunboats thought to be planning an attack on Eritrea , though they were in fact immobilized due to a lack of coal . Puglia and Calabria carried out diversionary bombardments against Jebel Tahr , and Al Lu?ayyah , while Piemonte and the destroyers Artigliere and Garibaldino searched for the gunboats . On 7 January , they found the gunboats and quickly sank four in the Battle of Kunfuda Bay ; the other three were forced to beach to avoid sinking as well . Puglia and the rest of the Italian ships returned to bombarding the Turkish ports in the Red Sea before declaring a blockade of the city of Al Hudaydah on 26 January . The cruiser fleet in the Red Sea then began a campaign of coastal bombardments of Ottoman ports in the area . A blockade was proclaimed of the Ottoman ports , which included Al Lu?ayyah and Al Hudaydah . The Ottomans eventually agreed to surrender in October , ending the war .

= = = World War I = = =

Italy declared neutrality at the start of World War I , but by July 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 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 .

The closest Puglia came to engaging a hostile vessel came on 27 January 1915 , when while patrolling off Durazzo , she encountered the Austro @-@ Hungarian scout cruiser Novara , but the Austro @-@ Hungarian ship retreated without either vessel firing a shot . In late February 1916 , Puglia and the cruiser Libia covered the withdrawal of elements of the Serbian Army from Durazzo . The Austro @-@ Hungarian Army was pursuing the retreating Serbians , and Puglia provided gunfire support to delay the Austro @-@ Hungarian advance . She was converted into a minelayer later that year . She entered service in this role on 1 July , and she remained on active duty through the early 1920s .

After the war , Puglia had been assigned to patrol the Dalmatian coast . On 11 July 1920 , men from the ship became involved in the unrest in Split . During a violent confrontation with a group of Croats , the ship 's captain and a sailor were shot and killed . Puglia was sold for scrapping on 22 March 1923 . While the ship was being dismantled , the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini donated the ship 's bow section to the writer and ardent nationalist Gabriele D 'Annunzio , who had it installed at his estate as part of the Vittoriale degli italiani museum .