

= Italian cruiser Nino Bixio =

Nino Bixio was a protected cruiser built by the Italian Regia Marina (Royal Navy) in the early 1910s . She was the lead ship of the Nino Bixio class , which were built as scouts for the main Italian fleet . She was equipped with a main battery of six 120 mm (4.7 in) guns and had a top speed in excess of 26 knots (48 km / h ; 30 mph) , but her engines proved to be troublesome in service . Nino Bixio saw service during World War I and briefly engaged the Austro-Hungarian cruiser SMS Helgoland in 1915 . Her career was cut short in the post-war period due to severe cuts to the Italian naval budget , coupled with her unreliable engines . Nino Bixio was stricken from the naval register in March 1929 and sold for scrap .

= = Design = =

Nino Bixio was 140 meters (460 ft) long at the waterline , with a beam of 13 m (43 ft) and a draft of 4.1 m (13 ft) . She displaced up to 4,141 metric tons (4,076 long tons ; 4,565 short tons) at full load . Her crew consisted 13 officers and 283 enlisted men . The ship's propulsion system consisted of three Curtiss steam turbines , each driving a screw propeller . Steam was provided by fourteen mixed coal and oil firing Blechynden boilers . The engines were rated at 23,000 shaft horsepower (17,000 kW) for a top speed of 26.82 knots (49.67 km / h ; 30.86 mph) . She had a range of 1,400 nautical miles (2,600 km ; 1,600 mi) at a cruising speed of 13 knots (24 km / h ; 15 mph) .

The ship was armed with a main battery of six 120 mm (4.7 in) L / 50 guns mounted singly . She was also equipped with six 76 mm (3.0 in) L / 50 guns and two 450 mm (18 in) torpedo tubes . Nino Bixio was only lightly armored , with a 38 mm (1.5 in) thick deck , and 100 mm (3.9 in) thick plating on her main conning tower .

= = Service history = =

Nino Bixio , named for the soldier and politician , was built at the Castellammare shipyard ; her keel was laid down on 15 February 1911 , the same day as her sister Marsala . Nino Bixio's completed hull was launched ten months later on 30 December , after which fitting-out work commenced . The ship was completed by 5 May 1914 , when she was commissioned into the Italian fleet . Italy declared neutrality at the start of World War I in August 1914 , but by May 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 . Nino Bixio , Marsala , and the cruiser Quarto were based at Brindisi during the war , where they could patrol the path from the narrow Adriatic to the Mediterranean .

In December 1915 , an Austro-Hungarian force of two cruisers and five destroyers attempted to intercept transports supplying the Serbian Army trapped in Albania . Quarto departed first , along with the British cruiser HMS Dartmouth and five French destroyers ; Nino Bixio followed two hours later with HMS Weymouth and four Italian destroyers . The first flotilla engaged in a running battle with the fleeing Austro-Hungarian cruiser SMS Helgoland but Nino Bixio's group was too far behind to join the fray . By May 1917 , the reconnaissance forces at Brindisi had come under the command of Rear Admiral Alfredo Acton . On the night of 14-15 May , the Austro-Hungarian cruisers Helgoland , Novara , and Saida raided the Otranto Barrage , a patrol line of drifters intended to block Austro-Hungarian and German U-boats . She did not participate in the ensuing Battle of the Otranto Straits because she did not have steam up in her boilers when the Italian-British forces counterattacked .

The Regia Marina demobilized after the end of the war in 1918 and the draw @-@ down continued into the 1920s in large part due to severe budgetary shortfalls in the postwar period . The engines installed on Nino Bixio and her sister proved to be problematic throughout her time in service , which ultimately cut her career short . She was stricken from the naval register on 15 March 1929 and subsequently broken up for scrap ; in contrast , the much more efficient Quarto , which had been built before Nino Bixio , remained in service for another decade .