

= Italian cruiser Piemonte =

Piemonte was a unique protected cruiser built for the Italian Regia Marina ( Royal Navy ) in the 1880s by the British shipyard Armstrong Whitworth . She was the first major warship armed entirely with quick @-@ firing ( QF ) guns and she was also the fastest cruiser in the world upon her completion in 1889 . Piemonte was frequently deployed overseas , including a lengthy tour in East Asian waters from 1901 to 1904 . She saw significant action during the Italo @-@ Turkish War in 1911 ? 12 in the Red Sea , where she frequently bombarded Ottoman ports . During the Battle of Kurfur Bay in January 1912 , she and two destroyers sank four Ottoman gunboats and forced ashore three more . Piemonte participated in World War I but she saw little action during the conflict . She remained in service until 1920 , when she was scrapped .

= = Design = =

The first design by the newly hired naval architect Philips Watts for Armstrong Whitworth , Piemonte was designed as an improved version of the Italian cruiser Dogali . The ship was built as a speculative venture and was purchased by Italy on 30 July 1888 for delivery in six months . Her intended armament consisted of two 8 @-@ inch ( 203 mm ) and four 6 @-@ inch ( 152 mm ) guns , all breech @-@ loading weapons , but the Italians insisted that she be equipped with six 6 @-@ inch QF guns . The changes to the magazines and the addition of large sponsons to accommodate the QF guns significantly delayed her completion . Piemonte was the first major warship to be armed with medium @-@ caliber , quick @-@ firing guns ; these weapons would become the standard armament for cruisers in the 1890s .

= = = General characteristics = = =

Piemonte was 310 feet ( 94 @. @ 5 m ) between perpendiculars , with a beam of 38 feet ( 11 @. @ 6 m ) . She had a mean draft of 15 feet ( 4 @. @ 6 m ) and displaced 2 @, @ 473 long tons ( 2 @, @ 513 t ) . The ship had a crew of 12 officers and 245 enlisted crew . Piemonte was fitted with two heavy military masts and had a partial double bottom . The large sponsons extended down to about a foot ( 305 millimeters ) of the water and proved to be very wet in service . She proved to be rather overgunned for her size and her freeboard was only 8 feet 3 inches ( 2 @. @ 51 m ) a normal load and 6 feet 9 inches ( 2 @. @ 06 m ) at deep load .

The ship was powered by two 4 @-@ cylinder Humphrys , Tennant vertical triple @-@ expansion steam engines , each driving one propeller shaft . The stroke of her engines was 27 inches ( 690 mm ) and the bores of their cylinders were 36 inches ( 910 mm ) , 55 inches ( 1 @, @ 400 mm ) and 60 inches ( 1 @, @ 500 mm ) . The low @-@ pressure cylinder of Piemonte ' engines was split in two for smoother running and she was the first warship thus equipped . Steam for the engines was supplied by four double @-@ ended Scotch marine boilers at a pressure of 155 psi ( 1 @, @ 069 kPa ; 11 kgf / cm<sup>2</sup> ) and their exhausts were trunked into a pair of funnels amidships . Designed for a maximum output of 12 @, @ 000 indicated horsepower ( 8 @, @ 900 kW ) , her engines produced 7 @, @ 040 ihp ( 5 @, @ 250 kW ) , using natural draught , and gave the ship a speed of 20 @. @ 4 knots ( 37 @. @ 8 km / h ; 23 @. @ 5 mph ) during her sea trials in May 1889 . Using forced draught increased her engine output to 12 @, @ 600 ihp ( 9 @, @ 400 kW ) and her speed to 22 @. @ 3 knots ( 41 @. @ 3 km / h ; 25 @. @ 7 mph ) . This made her the fastest cruiser in the world . The ship normally embarked a total of 200 long tons ( 203 t ) of coal , but could carry a maximum of 600 long tons ( 610 t ) . Piemonte had a cruising radius of about 7 @, @ 000 nautical miles ( 13 @, @ 000 km ; 8 @, @ 100 mi ) at a speed of 10 knots ( 19 km / h ; 12 mph ) . At full speed , she could steam for 1 @, @ 950 nmi ( 3 @, @ 610 km ; 2 @, @ 240 mi ) .

= = = Armament = = =

Piemonte was armed with a main battery of six 6 @-@ inch L / 40 guns in single mounts . One gun

was placed forward and one aft , with two on each broadside abreast of the masts . These guns were mounted in sponsons to allow direct ahead and astern firing . They were supported by a secondary battery of six 4 @. 7 @- inch ( 120 mm ) L / 40 guns in single mounts , three on each side between the 15 cm guns . Light weapons included ten 57 @- millimeter ( 2 @. 2 in ) 6 @- pounder Hotchkiss L / 40 guns , six 37 @- millimeter ( 1 @. 5 in ) 1 @- pounder Hotchkiss L / 20 guns , and four 10 @- millimetre ( 0 @. 39 in ) Maxim machine guns . Four of 1 @- pounder and all of the machine guns were mounted in the military masts . She was also equipped with 14 @- inch ( 356 mm ) torpedo tubes . One was mounted in the bow and the other two were on the broadside in rotating mounts , all above water .

Armor protection consisted of a sloped deck that ranged in thickness from 1 inch ( 25 mm ) on the flat and 2 ? 3 inches ( 51 ? 76 mm ) on the slopes . The armor protecting her conning tower consisted of three inches of steel plating . The guns of her main and secondary armament were protected by gun shields 4 @. 5 inches ( 110 mm ) thick .

= = Service history = =

Piemonte was built by the British shipyard Armstrong Whitworth in Elswick . Her keel was laid down in 1887 and she was launched on 23 August 1888 . After completing fitting @- out work , the new cruiser was completed on 8 September 1889 and delivered to the Regia Marina . In 1890 , Piemonte participated in the annual fleet maneuvers in the First Squadron , along with the ironclad Lepanto , Dogali , and several torpedo boats . The exercises were conducted in the Tyrrhenian Sea , where the First Squadron was tasked with defending against an attacking " hostile " squadron . By 1891 , the Italian Navy had determined that Piemonte 's armament was too heavy , and so the four broadside 6 @- inch guns were replaced with lighter 4 @. 7 @- inch guns and their sponsons removed . In addition , the heavy military masts were replaced by light pole masts . In the following years , the ship served in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean in addition to the Mediterranean . In mid @- 1896 , violence against Italians in Brazil prompted the Italian government to dispatch Piemonte on a mission to secure the interests of Italian nationals in the country . The attempt at gunboat diplomacy secured an official apology from the Brazilian government , as well as an arrangement to adjudicate Italian claims of damages by the United States ' and German ambassadors .

In late 1901 , Piemonte was assigned to the East Asian station after a year @- long modernization . She passed through the Suez Canal and the Red Sea and stopped to coal in British Aden while en route to Asian waters . In September 1902 she was in Nagasaki , Japan , with the Italian cruiser Lombardia . Piemonte met the British cruiser HMS Talbot in the British colony at Weihaiwei . A party of officers and men from Piemonte visited the British ship on 28 July . That year , she was joined by the armored cruiser Vettor Pisani and the protected cruiser Elba . The following year , the armored cruiser Marco Polo and the protected cruiser Puglia were scheduled to replace Vettor Pisani and Piemonte , respectively , but due to the outbreak of the Russo @- Japanese War on 8 February 1904 , Piemonte remained in the region . On 24 February , Piemonte arrived in Seoul and landed a contingent of infantry to augment the guards at the Italian embassy . Piemonte was finally recalled to Italy in April ; she stopped in Singapore on 22 April to coal , departing two days later for home .

By 1908 , Piemonte had been assigned as the flagship of the torpedo flotilla of the main fleet , which consisted of seventeen destroyers and fifty first and second class torpedo boats . In August that year , Piemonte participated in the annual summer maneuvers of the Italian fleet . She was assigned to a squadron and was tasked with defending against an opponent fleet that attempted to force an amphibious landing . The maneuvers were modeled on a potential war with Italy 's nominal ally Austria @- Hungary , and the fact that the relative strengths of the two squadrons mirrored the Italian and Austro @- Hungarian navies was not lost on analysts in Vienna . The Maneuvers concluded with a fleet review on 18 October . Piemonte then spent 1909 deployed again to the Far East .

== Italo @-@ Turkish War ==

At the outbreak of the Italo @-@ Turkish War in September 1911 , Piemonte was stationed in the Red Sea with four other cruisers . In December , she and the other cruisers patrolled the Ottoman ports in the Red Sea for ships that might be preparing to carry a rumored invasion force across the narrow sea to Italian Eritrea . 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 . Piemonte and the destroyers Artigliere and Garibaldino searched for the gunboats while the cruisers Calabria and Puglia carried out diversionary bombardments against Jebel Tahr , and Al Lu?ayyah . 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 . The next day , the Italian warships sent a shore party to destroy the grounded gunboats .

Piemonte 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 . Piemonte accidentally damaged the railroad that was being built by a French company when she bombarded the port of Djebana . As a result , the French firm sued the Italian government for the sum of 200 @,@ 000 lire . By April , Piemonte was serving as the flagship of the Italian squadron in the Red Sea . On 27 July and 12 August , Piemonte , the torpedo cruisers Caprera and Aretusa conducted two bombardments of Al Hudaydah . During the 12 August attack , they destroyed an Ottoman ammunition dump . Piemonte thereafter left the Red Sea with four destroyers . The Ottomans eventually agreed to surrender in October , ending the war .

== Later career ==

Then @-@ Lieutenant Alessandro Guidoni proposed in 1912 to convert Piemonte into an aircraft carrier capable of operating seaplanes and fixed @-@ wheel aircraft . His projected reconstruction would have seen an inclined flight deck erected on the aft half of the ship , tall enough to clear the ships ' funnels . The Regia Marina were not interested in operating wheeled aircraft at sea and so the idea was not pursued . In 1913 , the last two of the ship 's 6 @-@ inch guns were replaced with 4 @.@ 7 @-@ inch guns in another attempt to lighten the ship .

When Italy entered World War I on 23 May 1915 , Piemonte was based in Brindisi and was assigned to the Second Fleet , which included the Regina Elena and Regina Margherita @-@ class pre @-@ dreadnought battleships and the Pisa and San Giorgio @-@ class armored cruisers . The primary naval opponent for the duration of the war was the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy ; the Naval Chief of Staff , Admiral Paolo Thaon di Revel , planned a distant blockade with the battle fleet , while smaller vessels , such as the MAS boats conducted raids . The heavy ships of the Italian fleet would be preserved for a potential major battle in the Austro @-@ Hungarian fleet should emerge from its bases . As a result , the ship 's activities during the war was limited and she spent much of it based at Salonica , Greece as part of the Anglo @-@ French Levant Squadron . Plans to use her for torpedo trials after the war came to nothing and Piemonte was stricken from the Navy List on 15 May 1920 and broken up shortly afterwards .