

= Italian battleship Giulio Cesare =

Giulio Cesare was one of three Conte di Cavour class dreadnought battleships built for the Royal Italian Navy (Regia Marina) in the 1910s . She served in both World Wars , although she was little used and saw no combat during the former . The ship supported operations during the Corfu Incident in 1923 and spent much of the rest of the decade in reserve . She was rebuilt between 1933 and 1937 with more powerful guns , additional armor and considerably more speed than before .

Both Giulio Cesare and her sister ship , Conte di Cavour , participated in the Battle of Calabria in July 1940 , when the former was lightly damaged . They were both present when British torpedo bombers attacked the fleet at Taranto in November 1940 , but Giulio Cesare was not damaged . She escorted several convoys to North Africa and participated in the Battle of Cape Spartivento in late 1940 and the First Battle of Sirte in late 1941 . She was designated as a training ship in early 1942 , and escaped to Malta after Italy surrendered . The ship was transferred to the Soviet Union in 1949 and renamed Novorossiysk . The Soviets also used her for training until she was sunk when an old German mine exploded in 1955 . She was salvaged the following year and later scrapped .

= = Description = =

Named after Julius Caesar , Giulio Cesare was 168 m 9 meters (554 ft 2 in) long at the waterline , and 176 meters (577 ft 5 in) overall . The ship had a beam of 28 meters (91 ft 10 in) , and a draft of 9 m 3 meters (30 ft 6 in) . She displaced 23 088 long tons (23 045 t) at normal load , and 25 086 long tons (25 049 t) at deep load . She had a crew of 31 officers and 969 enlisted men . The ship 's machinery consisted of four Parsons steam turbines , each driving one propeller shaft . Steam for the turbines was provided by 24 Babcock & Wilcox boilers , half of which burned fuel oil and the other half burning both oil and coal . Designed to reach a maximum speed of 22 m 5 knots (41 m 7 km / h ; 25 m 9 mph) from 31 000 shaft horsepower (23 000 kW) , Giulio Cesare failed to reach this goal on her sea trials , despite generally exceeding the rated power of her turbines . The ship only made a maximum speed of 21 m 56 knots (39 m 93 km / h ; 24 m 81 mph) using 30 700 shp (22 900 kW) . She had a cruising radius of 4 800 nautical miles (8 900 km ; 5 500 mi) at 10 knots (19 km / h ; 12 mph) .

The ship was armed with a main battery of thirteen 305 mm (12 m 0 in) guns in three triple gun turret and two twin gun turrets , designated ' A ' , ' B ' , ' Q ' , ' X ' , and ' Y ' from front to rear . The secondary battery comprised eighteen 120 mm (4 m 7 in) guns , all mounted in casemates in the sides of the hull . Giulio Cesare was also armed with fourteen 76 mm (3 m 0 in) guns . As was customary for capital ships of the period , she was equipped with three submerged 450 mm (17 m 7 in) torpedo tubes . She was protected with Krupp cemented steel manufactured by Terni . The belt armor was 250 mm (9 m 8 in) thick and the main deck was 40 mm (1 m 6 in) thick . The conning tower and main battery turrets were protected with 280 mm (11 in) worth of armor plating .

= = Modifications and reconstruction = =

Shortly after the end of World War I , the number of 50 caliber 76 mm guns was reduced to 13 , all mounted on the turret tops , and six new 40 caliber 76 mm anti aircraft (AA) guns were installed abreast the aft funnel . In addition two license built 2 pounder AA guns were mounted on the forecastle deck . In 1925 the foremast was replaced by a four legged mast , which was moved forward of the funnels , the rangefinders were upgraded , and the ship was equipped to handle a Macchi M.18 seaplane mounted on the center turret . Around that same time , either one or both of the ships was equipped with a fixed aircraft catapult on the port side of the forecastle .

Giulio Cesare began an extensive reconstruction in October 1933 at the Cantieri del Tirreno

shipyard in Genoa that lasted until October 1937 . A new bow section was grafted over the existing bow which increased her length by 10 @. @ 31 meters (33 ft 10 in) to 186 @. @ 4 meters (611 ft 7 in) and her beam increased to 28 @. @ 6 meters (93 ft 10 in) . The ship 's draft at deep load increased to 10 @. @ 02 meters (32 ft 10 in) . All of the changes made increased her displacement to 26 @, @ 140 long tons (26 @, @ 560 t) at standard load and 29 @, @ 100 long tons (29 @, @ 600 t) at deep load . The ship 's crew increased to 1 @, @ 260 officers and enlisted men . Two of the propeller shafts were removed and the existing turbines were replaced by two Belluzzo geared steam turbines rated at 75 @, @ 000 shp (56 @, @ 000 kW) . The boilers were replaced by eight Yarrow boilers . On her sea trials in December 1936 , before her reconstruction was fully completed , Giulio Cesare reached a speed of 28 @. @ 24 knots (52 @. @ 30 km / h ; 32 @. @ 50 mph) from 93 @, @ 430 shp (69 @, @ 670 kW) . In service her maximum speed was about 27 knots (50 km / h ; 31 mph) and she had a range of 6 @, @ 400 nautical miles (11 @, @ 900 km ; 7 @, @ 400 mi) at a speed of 13 knots (24 km / h ; 15 mph) .

The main guns were bored out to 320 millimeters (12 @. @ 6 in) and the center turret and the torpedo tubes were removed . All of the existing secondary armament and AA guns were replaced by a dozen 120 mm guns in six twin @-@ gun turrets and eight 102 @-@ millimeter (4 @. @ 0 in) AA guns in twin turrets . In addition the ship was fitted with a dozen Breda 37 @-@ millimeter (1 @. @ 5 in) light AA guns in six twin @-@ gun mounts and twelve 13 @. @ 2 @-@ millimeter (0 @. @ 52 in) Breda M31 anti @-@ aircraft machine guns , also in twin mounts . In 1940 the 13 @. @ 2 mm machine guns were replaced by 20 @-@ millimeter (0 @. @ 8 in) AA guns in twin mounts . Giulio Cesare received two more twin mounts as well as four additional 37 mm guns in twin mounts on the forecastle between the two turrets in 1941 . The tetrapodal mast was replaced with a new forward conning tower , protected with 260 @-@ millimeter (10 @. @ 2 in) thick armor . Atop the conning tower there was a fire @-@ control director fitted with two large stereo @-@ rangefinders , with a base length of 7 @. @ 2 meters (23 @. @ 6 ft) .

The deck armor was increased during the reconstruction to a total of 135 millimeters (5 @. @ 3 in) over the engine and boiler rooms and 166 millimeters (6 @. @ 5 in) over the magazines , although its distribution over three decks , each with multiple layers , meant that it was considerably less effective than a single plate of the same thickness . The armor protecting the barbettes was reinforced with 50 @-@ millimeter (2 @. @ 0 in) plates . All this armor weighed a total of 3 @, @ 227 long tons (3 @, @ 279 t) . The existing underwater protection was replaced by the Pugliese torpedo defense system that consisted of a large cylinder surrounded by fuel oil or water that was intended to absorb the blast of a torpedo warhead . It lacked , however , enough depth to be fully effective against contemporary torpedoes . A major problem of the reconstruction was that the ship 's increased draft meant that their waterline armor belt was almost completely submerged with any significant load .

= = Construction and service = =

Giulio Cesare , named after Julius Caesar , was laid down at the Gio . Ansaldo & C. shipyard in Genoa on 24 June 1910 and launched on 15 October 1911 . She was completed on 14 May 1914 and served as a flagship in the southern Adriatic Sea during World War I. She saw no action , however , and spent little time at sea . Admiral Paolo Thaon di Revel , the Italian naval chief of staff , believed that Austro @-@ Hungarian submarines and minelayers could operate too effectively in the narrow waters of the Adriatic . The threat from these underwater weapons to his capital ships was too serious for him to use the fleet in an active way . Instead , Revel decided to implement a blockade at the relatively safer southern end of the Adriatic with the battle fleet , while smaller vessels , such as the MAS torpedo boats , conducted raids on Austro @-@ Hungarian ships and installations . Meanwhile , Revel 's battleships would be preserved to confront the Austro @-@ Hungarian battle fleet in the event that it sought a decisive engagement .

Giulio Cesare made port visits in the Levant in 1919 and 1920 . Both Giulio Cesare and Conte di Cavour supported Italian operations on Corfu in 1923 after an Italian general and his staff were murdered on Corfu ; Benito Mussolini was not satisfied with the Greek government 's response so

he ordered Italian troops to occupy the island . Cesare became a gunnery training ship in 1928 , after having been in reserve since 1926 . She was reconstructed at Cantieri del Tirreno , Genoa , between 1933 and 1937 . Both ships participated in a naval review by Adolf Hitler in the Bay of Naples in May 1938 and covered the invasion of Albania in May 1939 .

== World War II ==

Early in World War II , the ship took part in the Battle of Calabria (also known as the Battle of Punto Stilo) , together with Conte di Cavour , on 9 July 1940 , as part of the 1st Battle Squadron , commanded by Admiral Inigo Campioni , during which she engaged major elements of the British Mediterranean Fleet . The British were escorting a convoy from Malta to Alexandria , while the Italians had finished escorting another from Naples to Benghazi , Libya . Admiral Andrew Cunningham , commander of the Mediterranean Fleet , attempted to interpose his ships between the Italians and their base at Taranto . Crew on the fleets spotted each other in the middle of the afternoon and the battleships opened fire at 15 : 53 at a range of nearly 27 @,@ 000 meters (29 @,@ 000 yd) . The two leading British battleships , HMS Warspite and Malaya , replied a minute later . Three minutes after she opened fire , shells from Giulio Cesare began to straddle Warspite which made a small turn and increased speed , to throw off the Italian ship 's aim , at 16 : 00 . At that same time , a shell from Warspite struck Giulio Cesare at a distance of about 24 @,@ 000 meters (26 @,@ 000 yd) . The shell pierced the rear funnel and detonated inside it , blowing out a hole nearly 6 @.@ 1 meters (20 ft) across . Fragments started several fires and their smoke was drawn into the boiler rooms , forcing four boilers off @-@ line as their operators could not breathe . This reduced the ship 's speed to 18 knots (33 km / h ; 21 mph) . Uncertain how severe the damage was , Campioni ordered his battleships to turn away in the face of superior British numbers and they successfully disengaged . Repairs to Giulio Cesare were completed by the end of August and both ships unsuccessfully attempted to intercept British convoys to Malta in August and September .

On the night of 11 November 1940 , Giulio Cesare and the other Italian battleships were at anchor in Taranto harbor when they were attacked by 21 Fairey Swordfish torpedo bombers from the British aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious , along with several other warships . One torpedo sank Conte di Cavour in shallow water , but Giulio Cesare was not hit during the attack . She participated in the Battle of Cape Spartivento on 27 November 1940 , but never got close enough to any British ships to fire at them . The ship was damaged in January 1941 by splinters from a near miss during an air raid on Naples by Vickers Wellington bombers of the Royal Air Force ; repairs at Genoa were completed in early February . On 8 February , she sailed from to the Straits of Bonifacio to intercept what the Italians thought was a Malta convoy , but was actually a raid on Genoa . She failed to make contact with any British forces . She participated in the First Battle of Sirte on 17 December 1941 , providing distant cover for a convoy bound for Libya , again never firing her main armament . She also provided distant cover for another convoy to North Africa in early January 1942 . Giulio Cesare was reduced to a training ship afterwards at Taranto and later Pola . The German submarine U @-@ 596 unsuccessfully attacked the ship in the Gulf of Taranto in early March 1944 . After the Italian surrender on 9 September 1943 , she steamed to Taranto , putting down a mutiny and enduring an ineffective attack by five German aircraft en route . She then sailed for Malta where she arrived on 12 September to be interned . The ship remained there until 17 June 1944 when she returned to Taranto where she remained for the next four years .

== Soviet service ==

After the war , Giulio Cesare was allocated to the Soviet Union as part of the war reparations and she was moved to Augusta , Sicily on 9 December 1948 where an unsuccessful attempt was made to sabotage the ship . The ship was stricken from the naval register on 15 December and turned over to the Soviets on 6 February 1949 under the temporary name of Z11 in Vlorë , Albania . She was renamed by them as Novorossiysk , after the Soviet city on the Black Sea . The Soviets used

her as a training ship when she was not undergoing one of her eight refits in their hands . In 1953 , all remaining Italian light AA guns were replaced by eighteen 37 mm 70 @-@ K AA guns in six twin mounts and six singles . They also replaced her fire @-@ control systems and added radars , although the exact changes are unknown . The Soviets intended to rearm her with their own 305 mm guns , but this was forestalled by her loss . While at anchor in Sevastopol on the night of 28 / 29 October 1955 , she most likely detonated a large German mine left over from World War II . The explosion blew a hole completely through the ship , making a 4 @-@ by @-@ 14 @-@ meter (13 by 46 ft) hole in the forecastle forward of ' A ' turret . The flooding could not be controlled and she later capsized with the loss of 608 men , including men sent from other ships to assist .

The cause of the explosion is still unclear . The officially named cause , regarded as the most probable , was a magnetic RMH or LMB bottom mine , laid by the Germans during World War II and triggered by the dragging of the battleship 's anchor chain before mooring for the last time . Subsequent searches located 32 mines of these types , some of them within 50 meters (160 ft) of the explosion . The damage was consistent with an explosion of 1 @, @ 000 ? 1 @, @ 200 kilograms (2 @, @ 200 ? 2 @, @ 600 lb) of TNT and more than one mine may have detonated . Nonetheless , other explanations for the ship 's loss have been proposed and the most popular of these is that she was sunk by Italian frogmen of the wartime special operations unit Decima Flottiglia MAS who ? more than ten years after the cessation of hostilities ? were either avenging the transfer of the former Italian battleship to the USSR or sinking it on behalf of NATO . Novorossiysk was stricken from the naval register on 24 February 1956 , salvaged on 4 May 1957 , and subsequently scrapped .