

= Regina Elena @-@ class battleship =

The Regina Elena class was a group of four pre @-@ dreadnought battleships built for the Italian Regia Marina between 1901 and 1908 . The class comprised four ships : Regina Elena , the lead ship , Vittorio Emanuele , Roma , and Napoli . Designed by Vittorio Cuniberti , they were armed with a main battery of two 12 @-@ inch ( 300 mm ) guns and twelve 8 in ( 200 mm ) guns , and were capable of a top speed of 22 knots ( 41 km / h ; 25 mph ) . They were the fastest battleships in the world at the time of their commissioning , faster even than the British turbine @-@ powered HMS Dreadnought .

The ships saw service during the Italo @-@ Turkish War of 1911 ? 1912 with the Ottoman Empire . They frequently supported Italian ground forces during the campaigns in North Africa and the islands of the eastern Mediterranean Sea . They served during World War I , in which Italy participated from 1915 to 1918 , but they saw no combat as a result of the cautious policies adopted by the Italian and Austro @-@ Hungarian navies . All four ships were discarded between 1923 and 1926 and broken up for scrap .

= = Design = =

Starting in 1899 , Vittorio Cuniberti began design work on a warship armed with a uniform battery of twelve 8 @-@ inch ( 203 mm ) guns , armored with 6 in ( 150 mm ) thick belt armor , and capable of a top speed of 22 knots ( 41 km / h ; 25 mph ) , on a displacement of 8 @, @ 000 metric tons ( 7 @, @ 900 long tons ; 8 @, @ 800 short tons ) . This proved to be the genesis of Cuniberti 's later designs , which culminated in the British all @-@ big @-@ gun HMS Dreadnought . When the 1899 design project was not accepted , Cuniberti turned his attention to a new design requirement for a 13 @, @ 000 @-@ metric @-@ ton ( 13 @, @ 000 @-@ long @-@ ton ; 14 @, @ 000 @-@ short @-@ ton ) battleship faster than all British and French battleships and stronger than the armored cruisers fielded by both navies . This resulted in a modified version of his earlier design , what came to be the Regina Elena class .

= = = General characteristics and machinery = = =

The ships of the Regina Elena class were 132 @. @ 6 meters ( 435 ft ) long at the waterline and 144 @. @ 6 m ( 474 ft ) long overall . They had a beam of 22 @. @ 4 m ( 73 ft ) and a draft of 7 @. @ 91 to 8 @. @ 58 m ( 26 @. @ 0 to 28 @. @ 1 ft ) . They displaced 12 @, @ 550 to 12 @, @ 658 long tons ( 12 @, @ 751 to 12 @, @ 861 t ) at normal loading and up to 13 @, @ 771 to 13 @, @ 914 long tons ( 13 @, @ 992 to 14 @, @ 137 t ) at full combat load . The ships had a crew of 742 ? 764 officers and enlisted men . The ships were initially fitted with two masts , but after refits early in their careers , Regina Elena 's and Napoli 's foremasts were removed .

The battleships ' propulsion system consisted of two vertical four @-@ cylinder triple expansion engines rated at 19 @, @ 299 to 21 @, @ 968 indicated horsepower ( 14 @, @ 391 to 16 @, @ 382 kW ) . Steam for the engines was provided by twenty @-@ eight coal @-@ fired Belleville boilers in the first two ships , and 28 Babcock & Wilcox boilers in the last two , split between three boiler rooms . The boilers were trunked into three tall funnels . The ships ' propulsion system provided a top speed in excess of 20 knots ( 37 km / h ; 23 mph ) ; Napoli , the fastest member of the class , reached 22 @. @ 15 knots ( 41 @. @ 02 km / h ; 25 @. @ 49 mph ) on her speed trials . The ships had a range of approximately 10 @, @ 000 nautical miles ( 19 @, @ 000 km ; 12 @, @ 000 mi ) at 10 knots ( 19 km / h ; 12 mph ) . At the time of their completion , they were the fastest battleships in the world , faster even than the steam turbine @-@ powered HMS Dreadnought .

= = = Armament and armor = = =

The Regina Elenas were armed with two 12 in ( 305 mm ) 40 @-@ caliber guns placed in two single gun turrets , one forward and one aft . The turrets were placed well clear of the superstructure

, giving them a wide arc of fire , close to 300 degrees of rotation . Electric power was used for training and elevation of the turrets and ammunition handling . The lighter main battery , compared to other pre @-@ dreadnought type battleships that typically carried twice as many heavy guns , was criticized by some observers , but Dr. Philip Alger writing in Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute noted that " it should be borne in mind that a pair of guns in a turret do not make twice as good shooting as a single gun , " and that given the limited displacement of the design , it " was the wisest choice that could be made . " Fire control for the guns was provided by Barr and Stroud rangefinders mounted on the conning tower . The ammunition magazines were fitted with refrigeration systems to minimize the risk of accidental explosions .

The ships were also equipped with twelve 8 in ( 203 mm ) 40 @-@ cal. guns in six twin turrets amidships , which also used electrical operation . The central turrets were placed a deck higher than the others to permit them firing directly ahead and astern . Close @-@ range defense against torpedo boats was provided by a battery of sixteen 3 in ( 76 mm ) 40 @-@ cal. guns , though Roma and Napoli both had an additional eight guns of this caliber . All four ships were also equipped with two 17 @-@ 7 in ( 450 mm ) torpedo tubes placed in the hull below the waterline .

The ships was protected with Krupp cemented steel manufactured in Terni . The main belt was 9 @-@ 8 in ( 249 mm ) thick amidships , reduced to 6 in ( 152 mm ) abreast of the main battery turrets , and 4 in ( 102 mm ) thick at the bow and stern . The deck was 1 @-@ 5 in ( 38 mm ) thick . The conning tower was protected by 10 in ( 254 mm ) of armor plating . The main battery guns had 8 in ( 203 mm ) thick plating , and the 8 @-@ inch gun turrets had 6 in thick sides .

= = Ships of the class = =

= = Service histories = =

The four ships of the Regina Elena class served in the active duty squadron after their commissioning through 1911 and participated in the peacetime routine of fleet training . On 29 September 1911 , Italy declared war on the Ottoman Empire , starting the Italo @-@ Turkish War . The four ships saw action during the war in the 1st Division of the 1st Squadron . They participated in the operations off North Africa in the first months of the war , including escorting the crossing of the Italian expeditionary army sent to conquer Cyrenaica . Later in the war , they took part in the seizure of Rhodes and the Dodecanese .

Italy initially remained neutral during World War I , but by 1915 , had been convinced by the Triple Entente to enter the war against Germany and Austria @-@ Hungary . Both the Italians and Austro @-@ Hungarians adopted a cautious fleet policy in the confined waters of the Adriatic Sea , and so the four Regina Elena @-@ class battleships did not see action . They spent the war rotating between the naval bases at Taranto , Brindisi , and Valona . After the end of the war , the ships of the class were included amongst the battleships that Italy could keep in service ( by the terms of the Washington Naval Treaty ) , but they were retained only for a few years . Between February 1923 and September 1926 , all four ships were stricken from the naval register and broken up for scrap .