

= HMS Royal Sovereign (1891) =

HMS Royal Sovereign was the lead ship of the seven ships in her class of pre-dreadnought battleships built for the Royal Navy in the 1890s . The ship was commissioned in 1892 and served as the flagship of the Channel Fleet for the next five years . She was transferred to the Mediterranean Fleet in 1897 and returned home in 1902 , and was briefly assigned as a coast guard ship before she began a lengthy refit in 1903 ? 04 . Royal Sovereign was reduced to reserve in 1905 and was taken out of service in 1909 . The ship was sold for scrap four years later and subsequently broken up in Italy .

= = Design and description = =

The design of the Royal Sovereign class ships was derived from that of the Admiral class ironclad battleships , greatly enlarged to improve seakeeping and to provide space for a secondary armament as in the preceding Trafalgar class ironclad battleships . The ships displaced 14 ,@ 150 long tons (14 @, @ 380 t) at normal load and 15 @, @ 580 long tons (15 @, @ 830 t) at deep load . They had a length between perpendiculars of 380 feet (115 @. @ 8 m) and an overall length of 410 feet 6 inches (125 @. @ 1 m) , a beam of 75 feet (22 @. @ 9 m) , and a draught of 27 feet 6 inches (8 @. @ 4 m) . Their crew consisted of 670 officers and ratings .

The Royal Sovereigns were powered by a pair of three @-@ cylinder , vertical triple @-@ expansion steam engines , each driving one shaft . Her Humphrys & Tennant engines were designed to produce a total of 11 @, @ 000 indicated horsepower (8 @, @ 200 kW) and a maximum speed of 17 @. @ 5 knots (32 @. @ 4 km / h ; 20 @. @ 1 mph) using steam provided by eight cylindrical boilers with forced draught . Royal Sovereign was the first ship of the class to be completed , and was put through a lengthy set of steam trials of which only a few sets of figures have survived . She made 16 @. @ 41 knots (30 @. @ 39 km / h ; 18 @. @ 88 mph) over eight hours from 9 @, @ 661 ihp (7 @, @ 204 kW) using normal draught and 18 knots (33 km / h ; 21 mph) over three hours from 13 @, @ 360 ihp (9 @, @ 960 kW) using forced draught . Some of her boiler tubes were observed to crack and leak under the pressures involved ; as a result , the Navy decided not to push the boilers of the Royal Sovereign class past 11 @, @ 000 ihp to prevent similar damage . The ships carried a maximum of 1 @, @ 420 long tons (1 @, @ 443 t) of coal , which gave them a range of 4 @, @ 720 nautical miles (8 @, @ 740 km ; 5 @, @ 430 mi) at a speed of 10 knots (19 km / h ; 12 mph) .

Their main armament consisted of four breech @-@ loading (BL) 13 @. @ 5 @-@ inch (343 mm) guns mounted in two twin @-@ gun barbetstes , one each fore and aft of the superstructure . Each gun was provided with 80 rounds . Their secondary armament consisted of ten quick @-@ firing (QF) 6 @-@ inch (152 mm) guns . 200 rounds per gun were carried by the ships . Sixteen QF 6 @-@ pounder (2 @. @ 2 in (57 mm)) and a dozen QF 3 @-@ pounder (1 @. @ 9 in (47 mm)) Hotchkiss guns were fitted for defence against torpedo boats . The two 3 @-@ pounders in the upper fighting top were removed in 1903 ? 04 and all of the remaining light guns from the lower fighting tops and main deck followed in 1905 ? 09 . The Royal Sovereign @-@ class ships mounted seven 14 @-@ inch (356 mm) torpedo tubes , although Royal Sovereign had four of hers removed in 1903 ? 04 .

The Royal Sovereigns ' armour scheme was similar to that of the Trafalgars , as the waterline belt of compound armour only protected the area between the barbetsstes . The 14 ? 18 @-@ inch (356 ? 457 mm) belt and transverse bulkheads 14 ? 16 inches (356 ? 406 mm) thick closed off the ends of the belt . Above the belt was a strake of 4 @-@ inch (102 mm) Harvey armour closed off by 3 @-@ inch (76 mm) oblique bulkheads . The barbetsstes were protected by compound armour , ranging in thickness from 11 to 17 inches (279 to 432 mm) and the casemates for the 6 @-@ inch guns were protected by an equal thickness of armour . The thicknesses of the armour deck ranged from 2 @. @ 5 to 3 inches (64 to 76 mm) . The walls of the forward conning tower were 12 ? 14 inches (305 ? 356 mm) thick and the aft conning tower was protected by 3 @-@ inch plates .

= = Construction and career = =

The Royal Sovereign class was ordered as part of the Naval Defence Act 1889 that was a supplement to the normal naval estimates . Royal Sovereign , the seventh ship of her name to serve with the Royal Navy , was laid down on 30 September 1889 in a drydock because Portsmouth Dockyard lacked a slipway long enough to accommodate her . The ship was floated out of dock on 26 February 1891 and christened by Queen Victoria . She completed her sea trials in May 1892 and was commissioned on 31 May at a cost of £ 913 @, @ 986 . Royal Sovereign relieved the battleship HMS Camperdown as flagship of the Channel Squadron . From then until 13 August 1892 , she served as the flagship of the " Red Fleet " in the annual manoeuvres off the coast of Ireland . She reprised her role as the flagship of the Red Fleet , from 27 July to 6 August 1893 during the manoeuvres in the Irish Sea and the Western Approaches . To reduce her rolling , she was fitted with bilge keels in 1894 ? 95 . In June 1895 , Royal Sovereign and three of her sister ships were part of a British naval squadron that attended the opening of the Kaiser Wilhelm Canal in Germany . During the third week of July 1896 , the ship took part in annual manoeuvres in the Irish Sea and off the southwest coast of England as part of " Fleet A " .

On 7 June 1897 , Royal Sovereign paid off and her crew was transferred to the battleship Mars which relieved her in the Channel Squadron . The next day , she recommissioned to relieve the battleship Trafalgar in the Mediterranean Sea . Before departing for the Mediterranean , she took part in the Fleet Review for the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria at Spithead on 26 June 1897 , and from 7 ? 11 July took part in annual manoeuvres off the coast of Ireland . She finally departed England for the Mediterranean in September . Upon arrival , Royal Sovereign joined the Mediterranean Fleet . On 18 January 1899 , Rear @-@ Admiral Gerard Noel , Second @-@ in @-@ Command of the Mediterranean Fleet , hoisted his flag aboard the ship and Captain Charles Henry Adair was appointed in command two days later . The following month the ship toured Italian waters , visiting Naples , Genoa , Palermo and Syracuse . On 14 July , she visited Fiume (modern Rijeka) , Croatia , in company with four other battleships , departing five days later . On the 28th , one man was killed aboard Royal Sovereign in a gun accident and he was buried at sea that evening .

On 9 November 1901 , off Greece , one of her six @-@ inch guns exploded when the breech was not fully closed , killing one officer and five Royal Marines and injuring one officer (Sir Robert Keith Arbuthnot , 4th Bt) and 19 seamen . Captain Frederick Inglefield was appointed in command on 26 November 1901 . After being relieved in the Mediterranean by the battleship London , Royal Sovereign departed Gibraltar on 9 July 1902 , arriving at Portsmouth , England , on 14 July 1902 . On 30 August 1902 , she commissioned under Captain George Primrose as a coast guard ship there . From 5 ? 9 August 1903 , the ship participated in manoeuvres off the coast of Portugal . From 1903 to 1904 , she underwent an extensive refit at Portsmouth during which six @-@ inch armoured casemates were added for the six @-@ inch guns . On 9 February 1907 , Royal Sovereign commissioned as a special service vessel in reserve . As such , she was incorporated into the 4th Division of the Home Fleet with other such vessels in April 1909 . In September 1909 , Royal Sovereign was taken out of service and she was sold for scrap to G. Clarkson & Son for £ 40 @, @ 000 on 7 October 1913 . They resold her to GB Berterello of Genoa and the ship was demolished there .