

= Italian battleship Regina Margherita =

Regina Margherita was the lead ship of her class of pre-dreadnought battleships built for the Italian Regia Marina between 1898 and 1904 . She had one sister ship , Benedetto Brin . Regina Margherita saw action in the Italo-Turkish War of 1911 ? 1912 . By the outbreak of World War I in 1914 , the battleship had been reduced to a training ship . She struck two naval mines on the night of 11 ? 12 December 1916 while steaming off Valona . She sank with heavy loss of life : 675 men were killed , and only 270 survived .

= = Design = =

Regina Margherita was 138 @. @ 65 meters (454 @. @ 9 ft) long overall and had a beam of 23 @. @ 84 m (78 @. @ 2 ft) and a draft of 8 @. @ 81 m (28 @. @ 9 ft) . She displaced 14 @, @ 093 metric tons (13 @, @ 870 long tons ; 15 @, @ 535 short tons) at full combat load . Her propulsion system consisted of two triple expansion engines . Steam for the engines was provided by twenty @- @ eight coal @- @ fired Niclausse boilers . The ship 's propulsion system provided a top speed of 20 @. @ 3 knots (37 @. @ 6 km / h ; 23 @. @ 4 mph) and a range of approximately 10 @, @ 000 nautical miles (19 @, @ 000 km ; 12 @, @ 000 mi) at 10 knots (19 km / h ; 12 mph) . Regina Margherita had a crew of 812 officers and enlisted men .

As built , the ship was armed with four 12 in (300 mm) 40 @- @ caliber guns placed in two twin gun turrets , one forward and one aft . The ship was also equipped with four 8 in (200 mm) 40 @- @ cal. guns in casemates in the superstructure , and twelve 6 in (150 mm) 40 @- @ cal. guns , also in casemates in the side of the hull . Close @- @ range defense against torpedo boats was provided by a battery of twenty 3 in (76 mm) 40 @- @ cal. guns . The ship also carried a pair of 47 mm (1 @. @ 9 in) guns , two 37 mm (1 @. @ 5 in) guns , and two 10 mm (0 @. @ 39 in) Maxim guns . Regina Margherita was also equipped with four 17 @. @ 7 in (450 mm) torpedo tubes placed in the hull below the waterline . Regina Margherita was protected with Harvey steel manufactured in Terni . The main belt was 6 in (150 mm) thick , and the deck was 3 @. @ 1 in (79 mm) thick . The conning tower and the casemate guns were also protected by 6 in of armor plating . The main battery guns had stronger armor protection , at 8 in (200 mm) thick .

= = Service = =

Regina Margherita laid down at the La Spezia shipyard on 20 November 1898 . She was launched on 30 May 1901 in the presence of King Victor Emmanuel , and completed three years later ; she was commissioned into the Italian fleet on 14 April 1904 . Work progressed slowly on the ship in large part due to non @- @ delivery of material , particularly the heavy armor . In July , the ship conducted her speed trials in the Gulf of Genoa . Following her completion , she was assigned to the Mediterranean Squadron . The ships in the squadron were typically only on active duty for seven months of the year for training ; the rest of the year they were placed in reserve . In 1907 , the Mediterranean Squadron consisted of Regina Margherita , her sister Benedetto Brin , and three of the Regina Elena @- @ class battleships . The ships participated in the annual maneuvers in late September and early October as the flagship of Vice Admiral Alfonso di Brocchetti .

On 29 September 1911 , Italy declared war on the Ottoman Empire in order to seize Libya . During the Italo @- @ Turkish War Regina Margherita was assigned to the 1st Division of the 2nd Squadron , along with her sister and the two Ammiraglio di Saint Bon @- @ class battleships . She joined the squadron on 5 October , a week after the war started . On 13 April 1912 , Regina Margherita and the rest of the Squadron sailed from Tobruk to the Aegean Sea to rendezvous with the 1st Squadron . The two squadrons met off Stampalia on 17 April . The next day , the fleet steamed into the northern Aegean and cut several Turkish submarine cables . Most of the ships of the Italian fleet then bombarded the fortresses protecting the Dardanelles in an unsuccessful attempt to lure out the Turkish fleet . While they were doing this , Regina Margherita , Benedetto Brin , and two torpedo boats were detached to cut additional cables between Rhodes and Marmaris . On 18 May , Regina

Margherita bombarded Marmaris . While debarking troops on the island of Scarpanto in the Aegean , the ship 's anchor chain accidentally slipped loose and killed the ship 's executive officer , Captain Proli ; five other men were injured in the accident . In July , Regina Margherita and the rest of the Division had withdrawn to Italy to replace worn @-@ out gun barrels , along with other repairs . In 1912 , the ship had four 3 @-@ inch guns added , increasing her battery from 20 to 24 pieces .

Italy declared neutrality after the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 , but by July 1915 , the Triple Entente had convinced the Italians to enter the war against the Central Powers . 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 . By this time , Regina Margherita was long @-@ since obsolescent , and was reduced to a training ship in the 3rd Division , along with her sister ship . On the night of 11 ? 12 December 1916 , while sailing from the port of Valona in heavy sea conditions , she struck two mines laid by the German submarine SM UC @-@ 14 and blew up . There were 270 survivors and 675 men perished . The ship 's loss was not announced until January 1917 . Lieutenant General Oreste Bandini , the commander of the Italian Albania Expeditionary Corps , was on the ship and was among those who were killed in the sinking .