

= HMS Agamemnon (1906) =

HMS Agamemnon was one of two Lord Nelson class pre dreadnought battleships launched in 1906 and completed in 1908 . She was the Royal Navy 's second to last pre dreadnought battleship to be built , followed by her sister ship , Lord Nelson . She was assigned to the Channel Fleet when World War I began in 1914 . The ship was transferred to the Mediterranean Sea with Lord Nelson in early 1915 to participate in the Dardanelles Campaign . She made a number of bombardments against Turkish fortifications and in support of British troops . Agamemnon remained in the Mediterranean after the conclusion of that campaign to prevent the German battlecruiser SMS Goeben and light cruiser Breslau from breaking out into the Mediterranean . Agamemnon shot down the German Zeppelin LZ85 during a bombing mission over Salonica in 1916 . On 30 October 1918 , the Ottoman Empire signed the Armistice of Mudros on board the ship while she was anchored at Lemnos in the northern Aegean Sea . She was converted to a radio controlled target ship following her return to the United Kingdom in March 1919 and began service in 1921 . Agamemnon was replaced by Centurion at the end of 1926 and sold for scrap in January 1927 , the last pre dreadnought in service with the Royal Navy .

= = Construction and description = =

HMS Agamemnon was ordered in 1904 and was the first warship built by the William Beardmore and Company 's Dalmuir Naval Construction Works . She was laid down on 15 May 1905 and launched on 23 June 1906 before the dockyards themselves were finished . Her completion was greatly delayed by labour troubles and by the diversion of the 12 inch (305 mm) guns intended for her to expedite completion of HMS Dreadnought , and she was not finally completed until June 1908 , six months before her sister Lord Nelson .

Agamemnon displaced 17,683 long tons (17,697 t) at deep load as built , with a length of 443 feet 6 inches (135 @ 2 m) , a beam of 79 feet 6 inches (24 @ 2 m) and a draft of 26 feet 9 inches (8 @ 2 m) . She was powered by two inverted vertical triple expansion four cylinder steam engines , which developed a total of 16,750 indicated horsepower (12,490 kW) and gave a maximum speed of 18 knots (33 km / h ; 21 mph) .

The ship was armed with four BL 12 inch Mk X guns arranged in two twin gun turrets , one each fore and aft . Her secondary armament consisted of ten BL 9 @ 2 inch Mk XI guns , in twin gun turrets on each corner of the superstructure , and a single gun turret between them , plus 24 QF 12 pounder 18 cwt guns . She also mounted five submerged 17 @ 7 inch (457 mm) torpedo tubes for which 23 torpedoes were stowed aboard .

Agamemnon had an armour belt at her waterline that was 12 inches (305 mm) thick , as were the faces and sides of her gun turrets .

= = Service = =

HMS Agamemnon commissioned on 25 June 1908 at Chatham Dockyard for service in the Nore Division of the Home Fleet . On 11 February 1911 , she grazed an uncharted rock in the harbour at Ferrol , Spain , and damaged her bottom . She was temporarily attached in September 1913 to the 4th Battle Squadron .

After the First World War began in August 1914 , Agamemnon was assigned to the 5th Battle Squadron in the Channel Fleet and was based at Portland . With other ships , she covered the safe transport of the British Expeditionary Force , under the command of Sir John French , to France . On 14 November 1914 she transferred to Sheerness to guard the English coast against the possibility of a German invasion . She returned to Portland on 30 December 1914 and was employed in the defence of the southern ports of England and patrols of the English Channel until February 1915 .

= = Dardanelles campaign , 1915 ? 16 = =

In February 1915 , Agamemnon was ordered to participate in the Dardanelles Campaign . She departed Portland on 9 February , and joined the British Dardanelles Squadron at Mudros 10 days later . That was the second day of the opening bombardment of the Ottoman Turkish forts guarding the entrance to the Dardanelles and the ship immediately joined the attack . She also took part in the subsequent bombardment of the inner forts later in February . Agamemnon was hit by seven 240 @-@ millimetre (9 @-@ 4 @-@ inch) shells in ten minutes on 25 February and was holed above the waterline , suffering three dead .

She supported the small amphibious landings of 4 March and participated in another bombardment on 6 March 1915 . She came under heavy fire from Fort Hamidieh on 7 March , taking eight hits from large @-@ calibre shells ; one of them , allegedly a 14 @-@ inch (356 mm) round , blew a large hole in her quarterdeck and wrecked the wardroom and the gunroom . She also took several hits by light shells that day , and , although she suffered damage to her superstructure , her fighting and steaming capabilities were not seriously impaired .

The ship also participated in the main attack on the Dardanelles forts on 18 March . This time a 6 @-@ inch (152 mm) howitzer battery opened fire on Agamemnon and hit her 12 times in 25 minutes ; five of the howitzer shells hit her armour and did no damage , but the seven that hit outside her armour protection did considerable structural damage and temporarily put one of her 12 @-@ inch (305 @-@ mm) guns out of action .

On 25 April , Agamemnon supported the main landings as part of the 5th Squadron , and after that she patrolled to protect Allied minesweeping and netlaying vessels operating in the Dardanelles . In action against Ottoman field batteries , she took two hits between 28 April and 30 April , and she provided fire support for Allied troops during a Turkish counterattack on 1 May . Agamemnon bombarded Ottoman artillery batteries on 6 May prior to the Second Battle of Krithia .

Agamemnon was withdrawn to Malta later in May to undergo a refit and returned to the Dardanelles in June . On 2 December , the ship joined the protected cruiser Endymion and monitor M33 in bombarding the Kavak bridge , destroying several spans of it and interdicting Ottoman communications to the Gallipoli Peninsula .

== Mediterranean operations , 1916 ? 18 ==

With the end of the Dardanelles Campaign in January 1916 , British naval forces in the area were reorganized , and Agamemnon became part of the Eastern Mediterranean Squadron , which was re @-@ designated the Aegean Squadron in August 1917 . Under both names , the squadron was dispersed throughout the area to protect Allied @-@ held islands , support the British Army at Salonika , and guard against any attempted breakout from the Dardanelles by the German battlecruiser Goeben and light cruiser Breslau . Agamemnon spent the remainder of the war based at Salonika and Mudros , alternating between the two bases with her sister Lord Nelson ; Agamemnon was based mostly at Mudros , Lord Nelson mostly at Salonika . While carrying out these duties , Agamemnon damaged the German Zeppelin LZ85 on 5 May at Salonika with a shell from a 12 @-@ pounder and forced it to crash @-@ land .

Of all the responsibilities given the two ships , the most important was to guard the Eastern Mediterranean against a breakout by Goeben , but when Goeben and Breslau finally made their breakout attempt on 20 January 1918 , Lord Nelson was away at Salonika and Agamemnon could not get steam up to depart Mudros in time to participate in the resulting Battle of Imbros . After both German ships struck mines , Breslau sank and Goeben returned to the Dardanelles before Agamemnon could arrive on the scene .

Agamemnon underwent a refit at Malta in 1918 . On 30 October the Ottoman Empire signed the Armistice of Mudros on board Agamemnon while she was anchored at Lemnos in the northern Aegean Sea .

== Post @-@ World War I ==

Agamemnon was part of the British squadron that went to Constantinople in November 1918

following the armistice . She returned to the United Kingdom in March 1919 , where she paid off at Chatham Dockyard and went into reserve on 20 March .

In September 1918 , the Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief , Grand Fleet , Admiral David Beatty , had called for a large target to be provided which would allow realistic gunnery practice for the battleships of the Grand Fleet , which had seen little action since the Battle of Jutland in 1916 . Tests against armour plate in 1919 demonstrated that firing 15 @-@ inch (381 @-@ mm) guns at any pre @-@ dreadnought would sink her quickly , but the use of a pre @-@ dreadnought for target practice and tests by guns of 6 @-@ inch calibre (152 @-@ mm) or smaller seemed practical . At first the pre @-@ dreadnought Hibernia was suggested for target duties , but ultimately Agamemnon became available and was selected instead .

She was modified at Chatham Dockyard for use as a target ship between 6 December 1920 and 8 April 1921 . The ship was rewired for radio control and stripped ; the 12 @-@ inch turrets remained aboard , but all of her guns and their equipment were removed , as were her torpedo equipment , flying deck , sea cabins , main derrick and boat equipment , lower conning tower , masts and yards , most of her crew amenities , and other unnecessary equipment . Unnecessary hatches , coamings , scuttles , and lifts were removed and plated over , and she was ballasted differently than she had been as a battleship . It was not intended to sink her , so she was assigned a crew of 153 to maintain and operate her when she was not under fire .

Agamemnon 's first target service took place before her modifications were completed . On 19 March 1921 , she was exposed to a cloud of poisonous gas to determine the effect of gas on a battleship . It was found that gas could penetrate the ship via her various openings , but the ship had not been sealed against gas before the trial and no accurate results applicable to a commissioned battleship could be obtained . On 21 September , she was subjected to machine @-@ gun fire by strafing aircraft . These trials showed that such strafing could harass a battleship , but could not impair her fighting or steaming capabilities , and helped to determine protection for bridge personnel .

Agamemnon also was used to test the vulnerability of battleships to 6 @-@ inch (152 @-@ mm) , 5 @-@ 5 @-@ inch (140 @-@ mm) , and 4 @-@ 7 @-@ inch (120 @-@ mm) rounds fired at her by ships such as the battlecruisers Renown and Repulse while she maneuvered under radio control . These tests showed that ships protected as well as Agamemnon , such as the later dreadnoughts , would suffer damage to their upper works if struck by such shells , but would not have their steaming or fighting capability seriously impaired even by numerous smaller @-@ caliber hits .

= = Disposal = =

Agamemnon was relieved as target ship by the dreadnought Centurion in December 1926 . By then the last British pre @-@ dreadnought battleship in existence , she was sold to J Cashmore of Newport , South Wales on 24 January 1927 for scrap , and departed Portsmouth Dockyard on 1 March to be broken up at Newport .