

= HMS Aurora ( 1887 ) =

HMS Aurora was one of seven Orlando class armoured cruisers built for the Royal Navy in the mid 1880s . The ship spent a brief time in reserve before she was assigned to the Channel Squadron for two years in 1890 . In 1893 Aurora became a coast guard ship in Ireland for two years before she was placed in reserve again . The ship recommissioned in 1899 for service on the China Station and some of her crew participated in the Battle of Tientsin in 1900 during the Boxer Rebellion . Aurora returned home two years later and was again reduced to reserve . She was taken out of service in 1905 and sold for scrap on 2 October 1907 .

= = Design and description = =

The Orlando class cruisers were enlarged versions of the Mersey class with more armour and a more powerful armament . Like their predecessors , they were intended to protect British shipping . Aurora had a length between perpendiculars of 300 feet ( 91 m ) , a beam of 56 feet ( 17 m ) and a draught of 24 feet ( 7 m ) . Designed to displace 5,040 long tons ( 5,120 t ) , all of the Orlando class ships proved to be overweight and displaced approximately 5,535 long tons ( 5,624 t ) . The ships were powered by a pair of three cylinder triple expansion steam engines , each driving one shaft , which were designed to produce a total of 8,500 indicated horsepower ( 6,300 kW ) and a maximum speed of 18 knots ( 33 km / h ; 21 mph ) using steam provided by four boilers with forced draught . The ship carried a maximum of 900 long tons ( 910 t ) of coal which was designed to give her a range of 8,000 nautical miles ( 15,000 km ; 9,200 mi ) at a speed of 10 knots ( 19 km / h ; 12 mph ) . The ship's complement was 484 officers and enlisted men .

Aurora's main armament consisted of two breech loading ( BL ) 9.2 inch ( 234 mm ) Mk V guns , one gun fore and aft of the superstructure on pivot mounts . Her secondary armament was ten BL 6 inch ( 152 mm ) guns , five on each broadside . Protection against torpedo boats was provided by six quick firing ( QF ) 6 pounder Hotchkiss guns and ten QF 3 pounder Hotchkiss guns , most of which were mounted on the main deck in broadside positions . The ship was also armed with six 18 inch ( 457 mm ) torpedo tubes : four on the broadside above water and one each in the bow and stern below water .

The ship was protected by a waterline compound armour belt 10 inches ( 254 mm ) thick . It covered the middle 200 feet ( 61 m ) of the ship and was 5 feet 6 inches ( 1.7 m ) high . Because the ship was overweight , the top of the armour belt was 2 feet ( 0.61 m ) below the waterline when she was fully loaded . The ends of the armour belt were closed off by transverse bulkheads 16 inches ( 406 mm ) . The lower deck was 2 3/4 inches ( 51.8 mm ) thick over the full length of the hull . The conning tower was protected by 12 inches ( 305 mm ) of armour .

= = Construction and service = =

Aurora , named for the eponymous Roman goddess of the dawn , was the eighth ship of her name to serve in the Royal Navy . She was laid down on 1 February 1886 by Pembroke Dockyard . The ship was launched on 28 October 1887 by Mrs. Sophia Morant , wife of Captain George Morant , Captain and Superintendent of the dockyard and completed in July 1889 at a cost of £ 258,390 .

Aurora went straight into reserve at Devonport after completion , but was commissioned for service with the Channel Squadron in 1890 . She was transferred to Bantry , Ireland , in 1893 to serve as the local coastguard ship until 1895 . That year the ship was reassigned to the Devonport Reserve and remained there until 1899 . Aurora participated in Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Fleet review on 26 June 1897 at Spithead .

Aurora was recommissioned for service in the Far East in 1899 under the command of Captain Edward Bayly and some of her crew , including Bayly , took part in the Battle of Tientsin in July 1900 during the Boxer Rebellion . In early February 1902 she was ordered to leave , homebound , arriving

at Aden on 3 March , at Malta 17 March , and at Plymouth on 26 March . Officers and crew received the China War Medal ( 1900 ) on 15 April , before she paid off at Devonport two days later . Aurora was refitted in Clydebank upon her return and was placed in Devonport Reserve in 1904 before she was taken out of service the following year . The ship was sold for scrap to Payton , of Milford Haven , Wales , on 2 October 1907 .