

European Union Naval Force – Mediterranean

Cavour

Aircraft Carriers - Classe Cavour

“In arduis servare mentem”



The Ship

Aircraft carrier Cavour is the outcome of a joint project between the Directorate-General of Naval Weaponry (NAVARM) and Fincantieri signed in November 2000. The keel laying took place in the Riva Trigoso shipyards, Genoa, on July 17, 2001. Due to the size of the Unit, the fore section was built in the Muggiano shipyards, La Spezia, while the stern in Riva Trigoso; the two sections were then sealed together.

The stern was launched on July 20, 2004 in the Genoa shipyard; and then displaced to Muggiano to be matched with the fore part. That was the first stage of the construction of the new flagship of the Italian Navy: Aircraft Carrier “Cavour.” The sea trials started on December 18, 2006, while the Unit was delivered to the Italian Navy on March 27, 2008. On June 10, 2009, ITS Cavour was finally launched and, on the same occasion, received the Combat Flag.

ITS Cavour is the first unit of the Italian Navy to be classified as aircraft carrier (CV) since her delivery. In fact, the Italian Navy’s new operational activities required a “dual use” unit like the Cavour, featuring high Command and Control skills for interforce and international operations, equipped to carry out different tasks within the broad range of operations in charge of the Defense General Staff.

This aircraft carrier can operate 8 AV-8B Harrier II or JSF. She can also operate utility, anti-submarine and airborne surveillance helicopters including 12 EH-101, (fitted also for NH-90 and SH-3D). The Cavour can accommodate heavy transport helicopters. A typical air group would be a mix of 20 - 24 V/STOL Harriers and helicopters.

The Cavour is fitted with a sky-jump ramp; the runway for takeoff is 183 m. long. The flight deck features 6 helicopter take off spots, plus one spot for SAR. This vessel allows flight operations up to the sea state 6.

The Command center has over 150 workstations for 230 people, to manage naval, air and amphibious operations of the Italian Navy.



There are also four smaller elevators for ammunition and service purposes. The hangar/garage can accommodate various combinations of aircraft, helicopters or vehicles (including up to 24 MBT or 50 amphibious assault vehicles). This ship also provides accommodation for 325 marines of the San Marco regiment, thus adding amphibious assault capacity. This vessel can be also used to support peacekeeping operations and humanitarian missions.

The Cavour aircraft carrier is armed with 2 eight-cell vertical launch systems for 32 Aster 15 surface-to-air missiles; active radar homing to 30 km (16 n miles). Other weapons include 2 Oto Melara 3 in (76-mm)/62 Super Rapid Strales and 3 Oto Melara KBA 25/80mm. Countermeasures of this aircraft carrier include 2 Breda SCLAR -H 20-barrel trainable chaff/decoy launchers and anti-torpedo defense system.

This aircraft carrier is fitted with 4 GE/Fiat LM2500 gas turbines, developing 22,000 hp each, locally built by Fiat Avio under license. Gas turbines drive two 5-blade shafts. Maximum speed is over 28 knots. This ship has a range of 7,000 nautical miles (13,000 km) at 16 knots. Cavour consumes 3 t of diesel per hour at cruising speed and 25 t at full speed.

This Unit meets the requirements to operate at national and international level, assisting and protecting fellow citizens and allied governments in accordance with existing agreements, carry out peace keeping operations, and other UN interventions.

Considering her features, one can describe ITS Cavour as a fourfold ship: in fact she can be an aircraft carrier, an amphibious and logistics platform, a command and control unit, and a hospital ship.

The air craft carrier is named after Camillo Benso Count of Cavour, the great Italian Statesman and one of the founding Fathers of the Italian Navy.

In the central part of the Crest, is the ship's silhouette with the bow coming out, a symbol of projection overseas. Behind the ship is the half-length portrait of Camillo Benso Count of Cavour taken from a medal coined in 1911, on the occasion of the launch of the famous battleship "Conte di Cavour."

The figure is delimited by a circular ring, showing on the top the ship's motto (*In arduis servare mentem*) and on the bottom the international pennant (550).

The crest is surmounted by the towered crown with rostra, symbol of the old sea tradition. On the bottom of the crest, the pennant with the ship's name.



Source: Italian Navy website
<http://www.marina.difesa.it/EN/thefleet/ships/Pagine/cavour.aspx>

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