

= Italian ironclad Regina Maria Pia =

Regina Maria Pia was the lead ship of the Regina Maria Pia class of ironclad warships built in French shipyards for the Italian Regia Marina in the 1860s . She and her three sister ships were broadside ironclads , mounting a battery of four 8 @-@ inch (203 mm) and twenty @-@ two 164 mm (6 @.@ 5 in) guns on the broadside . Regina Maria Pia was laid down in July 1862 , was launched in April 1863 , and was completed in April 1864 .

Regina Maria Pia took part in the Battle of Lissa during the Third Italian War of Independence in 1866 . She attacked the unarmored frigates in the Austrian second division , and damaged two vessels . Her career was limited after the war , owing to the emergence of more modern ironclads and a severe reduction in the Italian naval budget following their defeat at Lissa . She was rebuilt as a central battery ship some time after Lissa , and was modernized again in the late 1880s . Regina Maria Pia was eventually broken up for scrap in 1904 .

= = Design = =

Regina Maria Pia was 81 @.@ 2 meters (266 ft 5 in) long overall ; she had a beam of 15 @.@ 24 m (50 ft 0 in) and an average draft of 6 @.@ 35 m (20 ft 10 in) . She displaced 4 @,@ 201 metric tons (4 @,@ 135 long tons ; 4 @,@ 631 short tons) normally and up to 4 @,@ 527 t (4 @,@ 456 long tons ; 4 @,@ 990 short tons) at full load . Regina Maria Pia was a broadside ironclad , and she was initially armed with a main battery of four 8 inches (203 mm) guns and twenty @-@ two 164 millimeters (6 @.@ 5 in) guns , though her armament changed throughout her career . The ship was protected by iron belt armor that was 4 @.@ 75 in (121 mm) thick and extended for the entire length of the hull at the waterline . The battery deck was protected by 4 @.@ 3 in (109 mm) of iron plate . She had a crew of 480 ? 485 officers and men .

The ship 's propulsion system consisted of one single @-@ expansion steam engine that drove a single screw propeller , with steam supplied by six coal @-@ fired , rectangular boilers . Her engine produced a top speed of 12 @.@ 96 knots (24 @.@ 00 km / h ; 14 @.@ 91 mph) from 2 @,@ 924 indicated horsepower (2 @,@ 180 kW) . She could steam for 2 @,@ 600 nautical miles (4 @,@ 800 km ; 3 @,@ 000 mi) at a speed of 10 knots (19 km / h ; 12 mph) . The ship was initially schooner @-@ rigged to supplement the steam engine , though her masts were later reduced to a barque rig . Ultimately , she lost her sailing rig completely , having it replaced with a pair of military masts with fighting tops .

= = Service history = =

Regina Maria Pia was built at the French shipyard Société Nouvelle des Forges et Chantiers de la Méditerranée in La Seyne . Her keel was laid down on 22 July 1862 and her completed hull was launched on 28 April 1863 . The ship was completed on 17 April 1864 and delivered to the Italian fleet . In June 1866 , Italy declared war on Austria , as part of the Third Italian War of Independence , which was fought concurrently with the Austro @-@ Prussian War . The Italian fleet commander , Admiral Carlo Pellion di Persano , initially adopted a cautious course of action ; he was unwilling to risk battle with the Austrian Navy , despite the fact that the Austrian fleet was much weaker than his own . Persano claimed he was simply waiting on the ironclad ram Affondatore , en route from Britain , but his inaction weakened morale in the fleet , with many of his subordinates openly accusing him of cowardice .

Rear Admiral Wilhelm von Tegetthoff brought the Austrian fleet to Ancona on June 27 , in an attempt to draw out the Italians . At the time , many of the Italian ships were in disarray ; several ships did not have their entire armament , and several others had problems with their engines . Regina Maria Pia was one of the few ironclads fit for action , so she , Castelfidardo , San Martino , and Principe di Carignano formed up to prepare to attack Tegetthoff 's ships . Persano held a council of war aboard Principe di Carignano to determine whether he should sortie to engage Tegetthoff , but by that time , the Austrians had withdrawn , making the decision moot . The Minister

of the Navy , Agostino Depretis , urged Persano to act and suggested the island of Lissa , to restore Italian confidence after their defeat at the Battle of Custoza the previous month . On 7 July , Persano left Ancona and conducted a sweep into the Adriatic , but encountered no Austrian ships and returned on the 13th .

= = = Battle of Lissa = = =

On 16 July , Persano took the Italian fleet out of Ancona , bound for Lissa , where they arrived on the 18th . With them , they brought troop transports carrying 3 @, @ 000 soldiers ; the Italian warships began bombarding the Austrian forts on the island , with the intention of landing the soldiers once the fortresses had been silenced . In response , the Austrian Navy sent the fleet under Tegetthoff to attack the Italian ships . Regina Maria Pia was at that time in the 3rd Division , commanded by Captain Augusto Riboty , along with the ironclads Terribile , Formidabile , and Re di Portogallo , and the coastal defense ship Varese . After spending the 18th unsuccessfully bombarding the Austrian fortresses , the Italians withdrew late in the day , preparing to launch another attack the following morning . Persano sent most of his ships to bombard the town of Vis , but he was unable to effect the landing .

The next morning , Persano ordered another attack ; four ironclads would force the harbor defenses at Vis while Regina Maria Pia and the rest of the fleet would attempt to suppress the outer fortifications . This second attack also proved to be a failure , but Persano decided to make a third attempt the next day . Regina Maria Pia and the bulk of the fleet would again try to disable the outer forts in preparation for the landing . Before the Italians could begin the attack , the dispatch boat Esploratore arrived , bringing news of Tegetthoff 's approach . Persano 's fleet was in disarray ; the three ships of Admiral Giovanni Vacca 's 1st Division were three miles to the northeast from Persano 's main force , and three other ironclads were further away to the west . Persano immediately ordered his ships to form up with Vacca 's , first in line abreast formation , and then in line ahead formation . Regina Maria Pia initially was the last ship in the line , though Varese later joined up behind her .

Shortly before the action began , Persano decided to leave his flagship Re d 'Italia and transfer to Affondatore , though none of his subordinates on the other ships were aware of the change . They were thus left to fight as individuals without direction . More dangerously , by stopping Re d 'Italia , he allowed a significant gap to open up between Vacca 's three ships and the rest of the fleet . Tegetthoff took his fleet through the gap between Vacca 's and Persano 's ships , in an attempt to split the Italian line and initiate a melee . He failed to ram any Italian vessels on the first pass , so he turned back toward Persano 's ships , and took Re d 'Italia , San Martino , and Palestro under heavy fire . The Austrians quickly inflicted serious damage on Re d 'Italia and Palestro . While Tegetthoff 's ironclads were attacking Persano 's division , Riboty 's division , including Regina Maria Pia , engaged Anton von Petz 's division of unarmored steam frigates . In the melee , Regina Maria Pia collided with San Martino , damaging the latter 's ram bow .

After Palestro withdrew , the Austrian ironclads turned their attention to the ships of Riboty 's division . By this time , Re d 'Italia had been rammed and sunk , and Palestro was burning furiously . Persano broke off the engagement to consolidate his forces , but his ships , low on coal and ammunition , and with badly demoralized crews , could not be rallied by Persano 's half @-@ hearted attempt to launch an attack . The Italian fleet began to withdraw , followed by the Austrians ; as night began to fall , the opposing fleets disengaged completely , heading for Ancona and Pola , respectively . Regina Maria Pia had had one iron plate destroyed , and another had a steel shot lodged in it . She had been badly burned , and the flames had nearly reached her powder magazine . In return , she had damaged the Austrian ship of the line SMS Kaiser and the ironclad Prinz Eugen . After the battle , Vacca replaced Persano ; he was ordered to attack the main Austrian naval base at Pola , but the war ended before the operation could be carried out .

= = = Later career = = =

For the rest of her long career , Regina Maria Pia served in a variety of roles , both in the main fleet and in Italy 's colonial empire . In the immediate aftermath of the war , the Italian naval budget was drastically reduced ; so significant were the cuts that the fleet had great difficulty in mobilizing its ironclad squadron to attack the port of Civitavecchia in September 1870 , as part of the wars of Italian unification . Instead , the ships were laid up and the sailors conscripted to man them were sent home . Some time after 1866 , the ship was rebuilt as a central battery ship , with most of her guns located in a central , armored casemate . Two other guns were placed in the bow as chase guns , with a third mounted as a stern chaser . At this time , her armament was also revised , to two 220 mm (8 @ .@ 7 in) guns in the bow and nine 8 in guns , four on each broadside and the last in the stern .

Regina Maria Pia took part in the launching ceremony for the ironclad Italia on 29 September 1880 ; also present were the Italian ironclad Principe Amedeo and King Umberto I aboard his yacht , and the British ironclads HMS Monarch and Thunderer with Vice Admiral George Tryon , both members of the Mediterranean Fleet . Between 1888 and 1890 , the ship had her barque rig replaced with military masts . By this time , she had been rearmed with eight 6 in (150 mm) guns in the casemate and several smaller guns for close @-@ range defense against torpedo boats . These included five 4 @ .@ 7 in (120 mm) guns , four 57 mm (2 @ .@ 2 in) guns , and eight 37 mm (1 @ .@ 5 in) Hotchkiss revolver cannon . She also received three torpedo tubes . The ship was stricken from the naval register in 1904 and subsequently broken up for scrap .