

= French battleship *Brennus* =

Brennus was the first pre-dreadnought battleship of the French Navy built in the late 19th century . She was laid down in January 1889 , launched in October 1891 , and completed in 1896 . Her design was unique and departed from earlier ironclad battleship designs by introducing a number of innovations . These included a main battery of heavy guns mounted on the centerline and the first use of Belleville boilers . She formed the basis for several subsequent designs , beginning with *Charles Martel* .

Brennus spent the majority of her career in the Mediterranean Squadron , and she served as its flagship early in her career . In 1900 , she accidentally rammed and sank the destroyer *Framée* . As newer battleships were commissioned into the fleet , *Brennus* was relegated to the Reserve Squadron in the early 1900s . By the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 , her old age and poor condition prevented her from seeing action . She was ultimately stricken from the naval register in 1919 and sold for scrap three years later .

= = Design = =

An earlier vessel , also named *Brennus* , was laid down in 1884 and cancelled under the tenure of Admiral Théophile Aube . The vessel , along with a sister ship named *Charles Martel* , was a modified version of the *Marceau* class ironclad battleships . After Aube 's retirement , the plans for the ships were reworked entirely for the ships actually completed , though they are sometimes conflated with the earlier , cancelled vessels . This confusion may be a result of the same shipyard working on both of the ships named *Brennus* , along with use of material assembled for the first vessel to build the second . The two pairs of ships were , nevertheless , distinct vessels . The second *Brennus* was ordered in 1888 .

Brennus was the first pre-dreadnought style battleship built in the French Navy ; the previous *Magenta* class ships were barbette ships , a type of ironclad battleship . *Brennus* formed the basis for the subsequent group of five broadly similar battleships built to the same design specifications , begun with *Charles Martel* , though they reverted to the armament layout of the earlier *Magentas* which saw the main guns distributed in single turrets in a lozenge pattern .

= = = General characteristics and machinery = = =

Brennus was 110 m (361 ft 10 in) long between perpendiculars , and had a beam of 20 m (66 ft 11 in) and a draft of 8 m (27 ft 2 in) . She had a displacement of 11 000 tonnes (11 000 long tons) . As built , the ship was significantly overweight , and her draft was .38 m (1 ft 3 in) greater than intended , without a full load of ammunition . Most of her armored belt was submerged . Her superstructure had to be cut down and her mainmast , intended to be a fighting mast , had to be replaced with a lighter pole mast . Unlike most battleships of the period , she was built without a ram bow . *Brennus* had a crew of 673 officers and enlisted men .

Brennus had two vertical triple expansion engines each driving a single screw , with steam supplied by thirty two Belleville water tube boilers . The decision to fit *Brennus* with water tube boilers was made in 1887 , and she was the first large ship to be equipped with them . Her propulsion system was rated at 13 000 indicated horsepower (10 000 kW) , which allowed the ship to steam at a speed of 17 to 18 knots (32 to 33 km / h ; 20 to 20 mph) . As built , she could carry 600 t (590 long tons ; 660 short tons) of coal , though additional space allowed for up to 980 t (960 long tons ; 1 080 short tons) in total .

= = = Armament and armor = = =

Brennus 's main armament consisted of three Canon de 340 mm / 42 Modèle 1887 guns , two in a twin turret forward , and the third in a single turret aft . Her secondary armament consisted of ten Canon de 164 mm Modèle 1893 guns , four of which were mounted in single turrets amidships ; the

other six were located directly underneath them in casemates . The ship also carried four 9 @-@ pounder quick @-@ firing guns , fourteen 3 @-@ pounders , and eight 1 @-@ pounder guns , and six 1 @-@ pounder revolver cannons . Her armament suite was rounded out by four above @-@ water 450 mm (18 in) torpedo tubes , all of which were later removed .

The ship 's armor was constructed with both steel and compound armor . The main belt was 460 mm (18 in) thick amidships , and tapered down to 305 mm (12 @. @ 0 in) at the lower edge . On either end of the central citadel , the belt was reduced to 305 mm at the waterline and 250 mm (9 @. @ 8 in) on the lower edge ; the belt extended for the entire length of the hull . Above the belt was 100 mm (3 @. @ 9 in) thick side armor . The main battery guns were protected with a maximum thickness of 460 mm of armor , and the secondary turrets had 100 mm thick sides . The main armored deck was 60 mm (2 @. @ 4 in) thick . The conning tower had 150 mm (5 @. @ 9 in) thick sides .

= = Service career = =

Brennus was laid down at the Lorient dockyard in January 1889 and launched on 17 October 1891 . Fitting @-@ out work was completed in 1896 and she was commissioned into the French Navy . In 1897 , the French Navy issued a new doctrine for gunnery control . During gunnery training exercises to test the new system , Brennus and the ironclad battleships Neptune and Marceau got 26 % hits at a range of 3 @, @ 000 to 4 @, @ 000 m (3 @, @ 300 to 4 @, @ 400 yd) . Their success prompted the Navy to make the method the standard for the fleet in February 1898 .

In July and August 1900 , the French fleet conducted maneuvers in the English Channel . At the time , Brennus was the flagship of the Mediterranean Squadron , under Vice Admiral Fournier . On 10 August off Cape St. Vincent , while returning from the maneuvers , she collided with the destroyer Framée . The destroyer quickly sank , and only fourteen men from her crew of 50 were rescued . By 1903 , Brennus was transferred to the Reserve Squadron , along with three other battleships and three armored cruisers . There , she flew the flag of Rear Admiral Besson during the annual summer maneuvers in July ? August 1903 .

Brennus continued on in the Reserve Squadron through 1907 , during which time she was again the flagship of Vice Admiral Fournier . Fournier was the commander in chief of the annual summer maneuvers , which began in late June and concluded on 4 August 1907 . The following year , the Mediterranean Fleet was reorganized into three squadrons ; Brennus again repeated her role as flagship , of the Third Squadron , under the command of Rear Admiral Germinet . Due to her age and condition by the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 , Brennus was not mobilized and did not see action . Brennus was ultimately stricken from the naval register in 1919 and sold for scrapping in 1922 .