

= SMS Erzherzog Ferdinand Max (1865) =

SMS Erzherzog Ferdinand Max was the lead ship of the Erzherzog Ferdinand Max class of broadside ironclads built for the Austrian Navy in the 1860s . She was built by the Stabilimento Tecnico Triestino , with her keel laying in October 1863 , launching in May 1865 , and commissioning in June 1866 at the outbreak of the Third Italian War of Independence and the Austro -@ Prussian War , fought concurrently . The ship was armed with a main battery of sixteen 48 @-@ pounder guns , though the rifled guns originally intended , which had been ordered from Prussia , had to be replaced with old smoothbore guns until after the conflicts ended .

Stationed in the Adriatic Sea , Erzherzog Ferdinand Max served as the flagship of the Austrian fleet under Rear Admiral Wilhelm von Tegetthoff . She saw action at the Battle of Lissa in July 1866 , where she rammed and sank the Italian ironclad Re d 'Italia . Slightly damaged in the collision , Erzherzog Ferdinand Max had her bow repaired in Malta after the war . She remained in the Austro @-@ Hungarian fleet for the next twenty years , but severely reduced naval budgets owing to Hungarian disinterest in naval matters led to an uneventful career . She was rearmed with newer guns in 1874 and again in 1882 . Stricken from the naval register in May 1886 , Erzherzog Ferdinand Max was employed as a tender to the gunnery training school from 1889 to 1908 . She remained in the inventory until 1916 when she was broken up for scrap .

= = Design = =

Erzherzog Ferdinand Max was 83 @.@ 75 meters (274 @.@ 8 ft) long overall ; she had a beam of 15 @.@ 96 m (52 @.@ 4 ft) and an average draft of 7 @.@ 14 m (23 @.@ 4 ft) . She displaced 5 @, @ 130 metric tons (5 @, @ 050 long tons ; 5 @, @ 650 short tons) . She had a crew of 511 . Her propulsion system consisted of one single @-@ expansion steam engine , manufactured by the Stabilimento Tecnico shipyard in Fiume , that drove a single screw propeller . The number and type of her coal @-@ fired boilers have not survived . Her engine produced a top speed of 12 @.@ 54 knots (23 @.@ 22 km / h ; 14 @.@ 43 mph) from 2 @, @ 925 indicated horsepower (2 @, @ 181 kW) .

Erzherzog Ferdinand Max was a broadside ironclad , and she was armed with a main battery of sixteen 48 @-@ pounder muzzle @-@ loading guns . She also carried several smaller guns , including four 8 @-@ pounder guns and two 3 @-@ pounders . The ship 's hull was sheathed with wrought iron armor that was 123 mm (5 in) thick on the battery and reduced to 87 mm (3 @.@ 4 in) at the bow and stern .

= = Service history = =

Erzherzog Ferdinand Max was laid down at the Stabilimento Tecnico Triestino shipyard in Trieste on 6 May 1863 . She was launched on 24 May 1865 ; the builders were forced to complete fitting @-@ out work quickly , as tensions with neighboring Prussia and Italy erupted into the concurrent Austro @-@ Prussian War and the Third Italian War of Independence in June 1866 . Erzherzog Ferdinand Max 's rifled heavy guns were still on order from Krupp , and they could not be delivered due to the conflict with Prussia . Instead , the ship was armed with old smooth @-@ bore guns . Rear Admiral Wilhelm von Tegetthoff , the commander of the Austrian Fleet , immediately began to mobilize his fleet . As the ships became fully manned , they began to conduct training exercises in Fasana . With his flag aboard Erzherzog Ferdinand Max , Tegetthoff brought the Austrian fleet to Ancona on 26 June in an attempt to draw out the Italians , but the Italian commander , Admiral Carlo Pellion di Persano , refused to engage Tegetthoff . Tegetthoff made another sortie on 6 July , but again could not bring the Italian fleet to battle .

= = = Battle of Lissa = = =

On 16 July , Persano took the Italian fleet , with twelve ironclads , out of Ancona , bound for the

island of Lissa , where they arrived on the 18th . With them , they brought troop transports carrying 3 @, @ 000 soldiers . Persano then spent the next two days bombarding the Austrian defenses of the island and unsuccessfully attempting to force a landing . Tegetthoff received a series of telegrams between the 17 and 19 July notifying him of the Italian attack , which he initially believed to be a feint to draw the Austrian fleet away from its main bases at Pola and Venice . By the morning of the 19th , however , he was convinced that Lissa was in fact the Italian objective , and so he requested permission to attack . As Tegetthoff 's fleet arrived off Lissa on the morning of 20 July , Persano 's fleet was arrayed for another landing attempt . The latter 's ships were divided into three groups , with only the first two able to concentrate in time to meet the Austrians . Tegetthoff had arranged his ironclad ships into a wedge @-@ shaped formation , leading with Erzherzog Ferdinand Max at the center ; the wooden warships of the second and third divisions followed behind in the same formation .

While he was forming up his ships , Persano transferred from his flagship , Re d 'Italia to the turret ship Affondatore . This created a gap in the Italian line , and Tegetthoff seized the opportunity to divide the Italian fleet and create a melee . He made a pass through the gap , but failed to ram any of the Italian ships , forcing him to turn around and make another attempt . During the second attempt , Austrian gunfire had disabled Re d 'Italia 's rudder , leaving her incapable of maneuvering . Tegetthoff seized the opportunity to ram the Italian vessel , and ordered his ship to maximum speed . After two collisions that occurred at angles too oblique to inflict serious damage , Erzherzog Ferdinand Max struck the ship more directly . The Austrian ship 's ram tore a gaping hole in Re d 'Italia 's hull on the port side , though Erzherzog Ferdinand Max sustained no significant damage herself . Tegetthoff reversed course , allowing the Italian ironclad to lurch back to port and quickly sink . Tegetthoff initially ordered his crew to lower boats to pick up the Italians struggling in the water , but the Italian ironclad San Martino was approaching , and he could not allow his ship to become a stationary target . Instead , he ordered the aviso Kaiserin Elizabeth to remain behind and pick up the survivors while Erzherzog Ferdinand Max engaged San Martino . The other Italian ships , however , did not realize Kaiserin Elizabeth was attempting to pick up the Italian survivors , and so opened fire on her , driving her away from the men in the water .

By this time , Re d 'Italia had been rammed and sunk and the coastal defense ship Palestro was burning badly , soon to be destroyed by a magazine explosion . Persano broke off the engagement , and though his ships still outnumbered the Austrians , he refused to counter @-@ attack with his badly demoralized forces . In addition , the fleet was low on coal and ammunition . The Italian fleet began to withdraw , followed by the Austrians ; Tegetthoff , having gotten the better of the action , kept his distance so as not to risk his success . Additionally , the Austrian ships were slower than their Italian counterparts , and so they could not force a second engagement . As night began to fall , the opposing fleets disengaged completely , heading for Ancona and Pola , respectively . Erzherzog Ferdinand Max had fired 156 shells in the course of the battle . She had kept boarding parties on her deck , ready to attack Italian vessels , but the opportunity had not presented itself in the engagement ; steam powered ships could simply reverse course and disengage before a boarding party could cross over . Erzherzog Ferdinand Max was not significantly damaged by Italian fire or the ramming attempts . A few armor plates were slightly dislodged , the paint had been stripped from the hull where she had collided with Re d 'Italia , and she had a minor leak from the concussion , but she was otherwise unscathed .

== = Later career == =

After returning to Pola , Tegetthoff kept his fleet in the northern Adriatic , where it patrolled against a possible Italian attack . The Italian ships never came , and on 12 August , the two countries signed the Armistice of Cormons ; this ended the fighting and led to the Treaty of Vienna . Though Austria had defeated Italy at Lissa and on land at the Battle of Custoza , the Austrian army was decisively defeated by Prussia at the Battle of Königgrätz . With the war over , Erzherzog Ferdinand Max went into the British Royal Navy shipyard in Malta to have her bow repaired . As a result of Austria 's defeat , Kaiser Franz Joseph was forced to accede to Hungarian demands for greater autonomy ,

and the country became Austria @-@ Hungary in the Ausgleich of 1867 . The two halves of the Dual Monarchy held veto power over the other , and Hungarian disinterest in naval expansion led to severely reduced budgets for the fleet .

In 1869 , Kaiser Franz Joseph took a tour of the Mediterranean Sea in his imperial yacht Greif ; Erzherzog Ferdinand Max , her sister ship Habsburg , and a pair of paddle steamers escorted the Kaiser for the trip to Port Said at the mouth of the Suez Canal . The two ironclads remained in the Mediterranean while the other vessels passed through the Canal into the Red Sea in company with Empress Eugenie of France aboard her own yacht . The Austro @-@ Hungarian ships eventually returned to Trieste in December . In 1874 she was rearmed with a battery of fourteen 7 in (180 mm) muzzle @-@ loading Armstrong guns and four light guns . Her battery was revised again in 1882 , with the addition of four 9 cm (3 @.@ 5 in) breech @-@ loader guns , two 7 cm (2 @.@ 8 in) breech @-@ loaders , a pair of 47 mm (1 @.@ 9 in) quick @-@ firing revolver guns , and three 25 mm (0 @.@ 98 in) auto @-@ cannons . Erzherzog Ferdinand Max was stricken from the naval register on 19 May 1886 and her armament was reduced to eight 10 cm (3 @.@ 9 in) guns . The following year , these were removed and a single 26 cm (10 in) gun and a 24 cm (9 @.@ 4 in) gun were installed . From 1889 to 1908 , she served as a tender to the gunnery training school . The ship was ultimately broken up for scrap in 1916 during World War I.