

= Greek ironclad Spetsai =

Spetsai ( Greek : ? / ? ??????? ) was a Greek ironclad battleship of the Hydra class that served in the Royal Hellenic Navy from 1890 until 1920 . She was named after the Saronic Gulf island of Spetses , which played a key role in the war at sea during the Greek War of Independence . Spetsai she was ordered in 1885 in response to a crisis in the Balkans and Ottoman naval expansion . The ship was launched in 1889 and delivered to Greece by 1902 . She was armed with a main battery of three 10 @. @ 8 inches ( 270 millimetres ) guns and five 5 @. @ 9 inches ( 150 millimetres ) guns , and had a top speed of 17 knots ( 31 kilometres per hour ; 20 miles per hour ) .

Spetsai and her sisters saw extensive service with the Greek Navy . They participated in the Greco ? Turkish War in 1897 until the Great Powers intervened and prevented the Greek Navy from capitalizing on their superiority over the Ottoman Navy . Psara saw action in the First Balkan War at the Naval Battle of Elli and was present at the Naval Battle of Lemnos , but was too slow to actively engage the Ottoman forces . She did not see action during World War I , and was used as a naval communications school until 1929 , when she was sold for scrapping .

= = Construction = =

In 1885 , Greece ordered three new ironclads of the Hydra class . Spetsai was ordered from the Société Nouvelle des Forges et Chantiers de la Méditerranée shipyard in Le Havre , France during the premiership of Charilaos Trikoupis . The ship , named for the island of Spetsai , was launched on 26 October 1889 , and by 1892 , she and her sister @-@ ships Hydra and Psara were delivered to the Greek fleet . The ship was 334 feet 8 inches ( 102 @. @ 01 m ) long between perpendiculars and had a beam of 51 ft 10 in ( 15 @. @ 80 m ) and a mean draft of 18 ft ( 5 @. @ 5 m ) . She displaced 4 @, @ 808 metric tons ( 4 @, @ 732 long tons ; 5 @, @ 300 short tons ) as built . She was powered by a pair of steam engines of unknown type ; they were rated at 6 @, @ 700 indicated horsepower ( 5 @, @ 000 kW ) and provided a top speed of 17 knots ( 31 km / h ; 20 mph ) . Coal storage amounted to 500 t ( 490 long tons ; 550 short tons ) .

Spetsai 's main battery consisted of three 10 @. @ 8 @-@ inch ( 274 mm ) guns . Two guns were mounted forward in barbettes on either side of the forward superstructure ; these were L / 34 guns . The third gun , a L / 28 gun , was placed in a turret aft . The secondary battery consisted of four 5 @. @ 9 @-@ inch ( 150 mm ) L / 36 guns in casemates were mounted below the forward main battery , and a fifth 5 @. @ 9 @-@ inch gun was placed on the centerline on the same deck as the main battery . A number of smaller guns were carried for defense against torpedo boats . These included four 3 @. @ 4 @-@ inch ( 86 mm ) L / 22 guns , four 3 @-@ pounder guns , four 1 @-@ pounder guns , and six 1 @-@ pounder revolver cannons . The ship was also armed with three 14 @-@ inch ( 356 mm ) torpedo tubes . The ship was armored with a mix of Creusot and compound steel . The main belt was 12 in ( 300 mm ) thick and the main battery was protected by up to 14 in ( 360 mm ) of armor .

= = Service history = =

Spetsai saw limited action in the Greco ? Turkish War in 1897 , as the Royal Hellenic Navy was unable to make use of its superiority over the Ottoman Navy . The Ottoman Navy had remained in port during the conflict , but a major naval intervention of the Great Powers prevented the Greeks from capitalizing on their superiority . The conflict was centered on the island of Crete , which was the object of an international naval demonstration in 1897 ? 1898 ; the Great Powers mediated a solution to the conflict that saw Crete returned to Ottoman control , but with a Greek prince . In 1897 ? 1900 , Spetsai and her sister @-@ ships were partially rearmed ; Spetsai was modified at the La Seyne shipyard . Their small @-@ caliber guns were replaced with one 3 @. @ 9 @-@ inch ( 99 mm ) gun forward , eight 9 @-@ pounder guns , four 3 @-@ pounders , and ten 1 @-@ pounder revolver cannons . One of the 14 @-@ inch torpedo tubes was replaced with a 15 @-@ inch ( 381 mm ) weapon . In 1908 ? 1910 , the old 5 @. @ 9 in guns were replaced with new , longer L / 45

models .

The Balkan League , of which Greece was a member , declared war on the Ottoman Empire in October 1912 . Two months later , the Ottoman fleet attacked the Greek navy , in an attempt to disrupt the naval blockade surrounding the Dardanelles . The Ottoman fleet , which included the pre-@-@ dreadnought battleships Turgut Reis , Barbaros Hayreddin , the outdated ironclad battleships Mesudiye and Âsâr @-@ ? Tevfik , nine destroyers , and six torpedo boats , sortied from the Dardanelles in the morning , at 09 : 30 . The smaller ships remained at the mouth of the straits while the battleships sailed north , remaining near to the coast . The Greek flotilla , which included the armored cruiser Georgios Averof and Spetsai and her sisters , had been sailing from the island of Imbros to the patrol line outside the straits . When the Ottomans were sighted , the Greeks altered course to the northeast in order to block the advance of their opponents . In the ensuing Naval Battle of Elli , the Ottoman ships opened fire first , at 09 : 50 , from a range of about 15 @,@ 000 yards ( 14 @,@ 000 m ) ; the Greeks returned fire ten minutes later , by which time the range had decreased significantly to 8 @,@ 500 yards ( 7 @,@ 800 m ) . At 10 : 04 , the Ottoman ships completed a 16 @-@ point turn , which reversed their course , and steamed for the safety of the straits in a disorganized withdrawal . Within an hour , the routed Ottoman ships had withdrawn into the Dardanelles .

The Naval Battle of Lemnos resulted from an Ottoman plan to lure the faster Georgios Averof away from the Dardanelles . The protected cruiser Hamidiye evaded the Greek blockade and broke out into the Aegean Sea ; the assumption was that the Greeks would dispatch Georgios Averof to hunt down Hamidiye . Despite the threat to Greek lines of communication posed by the cruiser , the Greek commander refused to detach Georgios Averof from her position . Georgios Averof , Spetsai , and her two sisters appeared approximately 12 miles ( 19 km ) from Lemnos ; when the powerful Greek cruiser was spotted , the Ottomans turned to retreat with Georgios Averof in pursuit . She scored several hits on the fleeing Ottoman ships before breaking off the chase . Spetsai and her sisters were too slow to keep up with Georgios Averof , and played no active part in the engagement .

At the outbreak of World War I at the end of July 1914 , Greece 's pro @-@ German monarch , Constantine I , decided to remain neutral . The Entente powers landed troops in Salonika in 1915 , which was a source of tension between France and Greece . Ultimately , the French seized the Greek Navy on 19 October 1916 ; the heavy units of the Greek fleet were disarmed and placed in reserve for the remainder of the war . Spetsai was decommissioned in 1920 and used as a naval communications school until 1929 , when she was broken up for scrap .