

= Italian ironclad Formidabile =

Formidabile was the lead ship of the Formidabile class ironclad warships , the first ships of that type to be built for the newly formed Italian Regia Marina ( Royal Navy ) . Formidabile and her sister , Terribile , were both built in France ; Formidabile was laid down in December 1860 , was launched in October 1861 , and was completed in May 1862 . She was a broadside ironclad , equipped with four 203 mm ( 8 in ) and sixteen 164 mm ( 6 in ) guns .

The ship took part in the operation off Lissa in 1866 during the Third Italian War of Independence . There , she silenced the Austrian coastal batteries protecting the main port , but she was too badly damaged to take part in the ensuing Battle of Lissa . The ship 's postwar career was limited due to a combination of drastically reduced naval budgets and the appearance of more modern ironclads . Formidabile was used as a training ship starting in 1887 ; she was discarded in 1903 and broken up for scrap .

= Design =

Formidabile was 65 m ( 215 ft 11 in ) long overall ; she had a beam of 14 m ( 47 ft 5 in ) and an average draft of 5 m ( 17 ft 11 in ) . She displaced 2,682 metric tons ( 2,640 long tons ; 2,956 short tons ) normally and up to 2,807 t ( 2,763 long tons ; 3,094 short tons ) at full load . She had a crew of 371 . Her 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 10 knots ( 19 km / h ; 12 mph ) from 1,080 indicated horsepower ( 810 kW ) . She could steam for about 1,300 nautical miles ( 2,400 km ; 1,500 mi ) at her top speed . To supplement her steam engine , the ship was schooner rigged .

Formidabile was a broadside ironclad , carrying all of her guns in the traditional broadside arrangement . She was armed with a main battery of four 203 mm ( 8 in ) guns and sixteen 164 mm ( 6 in ) rifled muzzle loading guns . The ship 's wooden hull was sheathed with wrought iron belt armor that was 4 in ( 109 mm ) thick .

= Service history =

Formidabile was laid down at the Société Nouvelle des Forges et Chantiers de la Méditerranée shipyard in La Seyne , France in December 1860 , originally ordered by the Navy of the Kingdom of Sardinia . She was launched on 1 October 1861 and was completed in May 1862 ; by this time , the Sardinian fleet had been reformed as the Regia Marina ( Royal Navy ) of the newly unified Kingdom of Italy . 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 27 June , in attempt to draw out the Italians . Persano held a council of war aboard the ironclad 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 he capture 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 . Formidabile was at that time in the 3rd Division , along with her sister Terribile , the ironclads Re di Portogallo and Regina Maria Pia , 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 ordered Formidabile to enter the harbor at Vis and attack the Madonna battery , supported by the ironclads Castelfidardo , Ancona , and Principe di Carignano .

Upon entering the small harbor , the Italians found it impossible for the four ships to attack simultaneously , and so Formidabile was left to engage the Madonna battery alone . Following the conclusion of the bombardment , the ship 's captain , Simone Antonio Saint @-@ Bon , reported to Persano that his ship had suffered over 50 casualties , and it had been significantly damaged by Austrian fire , though its armor had not been penetrated . Saint @-@ Bon took his battered ship to the west , where he transferred his wounded to a hospital ship . The following day , while Formidabile was with the hospital ship , the Austrian fleet under Tegetthoff appeared . Persano had ordered Formidabile to return to the line , but Saint @-@ Bon informed Persano that his ship was unable to fight , and instead he withdrew to Ancona . The Italians were defeated in the ensuing battle , with the ironclads Re d 'Italia and Palestro sunk .

= = = Later career = = =

After the battle , Persano was replaced by Admiral Giovanni Vacca ; he was ordered to attack the main Austrian naval base at Pola , but the war ended before the operation could be carried out . After the end of the war , the government lost confidence in the fleet and drastically reduced the naval budget . The cuts were so severe 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 . In addition , Formidabile was rapidly surpassed , first by central battery and then turret ships , which made the first generation of ironclads like Formidabile and her sister obsolete . In 1872 ? 73 , the ship received new boilers . Her armament was significantly reduced in 1878 to eight 8 @-@ inch guns . In 1887 , the ship was withdrawn from front @-@ line service and was thereafter employed as a gunnery training ship . At this time , her armament was reduced to six 4 @. @ 7 in ( 120 mm ) guns . She served in this capacity until 1903 , when she was stricken from the naval register and subsequently broken up for scrap .