

= Italian ironclad Castelfidardo =

Castelfidardo was the third of four Regina Maria Pia @-@ class ironclad warships built in French shipyards for the Italian Regia Marina (Royal Navy) in the 1860s . Castelfidardo was laid down in July 1862 , was launched in August 1863 , and was completed in May 1864 . She and her three sister ships were broadside ironclads , mounting a battery of four 8 @-@ inch (200 mm) and twenty @-@ two 164 mm (6 @. @ 5 in) guns on the broadside .

Castelfidardo participated in the Battle of Lissa during the Third Italian War of Independence in 1866 . She was stationed in the van of the Italian fleet , which became separated from the rest of the fleet and was not heavily engaged . 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 several more times in the 1870s and 1880s . From 1900 to 1910 she served as a training ship before being broken up for scrap .

= = Design = =

Castelfidardo was 81 @. @ 8 meters (268 ft) long overall ; she had a beam of 15 @. @ 16 m (49 @. @ 7 ft) and an average draft of 6 @. @ 35 m (20 @. @ 8 ft) . She displaced 4 @, @ 192 metric tons (4 @, @ 126 long tons ; 4 @, @ 621 short tons) normally and up to 4 @, @ 527 t (4 @, @ 456 long tons ; 4 @, @ 990 short tons) at full load . She had a crew of 480 ? 485 officers and men . Castelfidardo was a broadside ironclad , and she was initially armed with a main battery of four 8 in (203 mm) guns and twenty @-@ two 164 mm (6 @. @ 5 in) guns , though her armament changed throughout her career . The ship was protected by iron belt armor that was 4 @. @ 3 in (109 mm) thick and extended for the entire length of the hull at the waterline . The side armor extended up to the battery deck with the same thickness of iron plate .

Her propulsion system consisted of one single @-@ expansion steam engine that drove a single screw propeller , with steam supplied by eight coal @-@ fired , rectangular boilers . Her engine produced a top speed of 12 @. @ 1 knots (22 @. @ 4 km / h ; 13 @. @ 9 mph) from 2 @, @ 125 indicated horsepower (1 @, @ 585 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 = =

Castelfidardo was laid down on 27 July 1862 at the Gouin et Guibert shipyard in St. Nazaire , France . She was launched on 1 August 1863 and completed in May 1864 . 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 . Castelfidardo was one of the few ironclads fit for action , so she , Regina Maria Pia , 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 . Castelfidardo was at that time assigned to the 1st Division , commanded by Admiral Giovanni Vacca , along with the ironclads Ancona and Principe di Carignano , the divisional flagship . After arriving off Lissa on the 18th , Persano ordered the 1st Division to bombard the Austrian fortresses protecting the island , but Vacca informed him that his ships ' guns could not elevate high enough to hit the high fortifications . Persano then sent Vacca 's division to Vis to force the harbor defenses , but by the time they arrived , night was approaching , and so he cancelled the attack .

The next morning , Persano ordered the ironclad Formidabile to enter the harbor Vis and attack the Madonna battery , supported by Castelfidardo and the rest of the 1st Division . Vacca found it impossible to employ his ships in the confined waters , and so he left Formidabile to handle the battery . With the day 's attacks again having yielded no results , Persano decided to make another attempt on the 20th . Vacca would take his three ships to patrol to the north @-@ east of the island while the rest of the fleet would again try to land the soldiers . Before the Italians could begin the attack , the dispatch boat Esploratore arrived , bringing news of Tegetthoff 's approach . Persano 's fleet was in disarray ; Vacca 's ships 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 . Castelfidardo initially reported trouble with her engines , but her crew was able to repair them before the battle began .

Shortly before the action began , Persano left his flagship , Re d 'Italia , and transferred to the turret ship Affondatore , though none of his subordinates on the other ships were aware of the change . They there 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 . Vacca turned Principe di Carignano and Castelfidardo to port , taking them away from the Austrian ships hammering Persano 's division . He briefly attempted to engage the Austrian wooden ships in the rear , but was driven off by heavy fire from three steam frigates .

Castelfidardo , Principe di Carignano , and the coastal defense ship Varese engaged the wooden ship of the line Kaiser , but failed to inflict fatal damage to her before she withdrew . By this time , Re d 'Italia had been rammed and sunk , and Palestro had been set on fire , soon to be destroyed by a magazine explosion . Persano broke off the engagement , and though his ships still outnumbered the Austrians , Persano refused to counter @-@ attack with his badly demoralized forces . 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 . Castelfidardo had emerged from the battle relatively unscathed , though the captain 's cabin had been set on fire by an Austrian shell . 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 , Castelfidardo served in a variety of roles , both in the main fleet and in Italy 's colonial empire . 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 . 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 . Around 1871 , her armament was also revised , to two 10 in (250 mm) guns in the bow and eight 8 in guns , four on each broadside . By 1880 , her armament had been changed another time , with two 220 mm (8 @.@ 7 in) guns replacing the 10 in guns , and a ninth 8 in gun being added in the stern . The ship was modernized in 1884 , with her armament replaced with eight 6 in (150 mm) guns , six 4 @.@ 7 in (120 mm) guns , four 57 mm (2 @.@ 2 in) quick firing (QF) guns , and eight 37 mm (1 @.@ 5 in) Hotchkiss revolver cannons .

For the annual fleet maneuvers held in 1885 , Castelfidardo served in the " Eastern Squadron " , joined by the ironclad Principe Amedeo , the corvette Amerigo Vespucci , a sloop , and four torpedo boats . The " Eastern Squadron " defended against an attacking " Western Squadron " , simulating a Franco @-@ Italian conflict , with operations conducted off Sardinia . By 1899 , Castelfidardo had been assigned to the 2nd Division , which also included the ironclads Affondatore and Sicilia and the torpedo cruisers Partenope and Urania . The following year , she was converted into a torpedo training ship . Her armament now consisted of one 3 in (76 mm) QF gun , one 75 mm (3 @.@ 0 in) gun , four 57 mm guns , one 47 mm (1 @.@ 9 in) gun , two of the 37 mm revolver cannons , and two torpedo tubes . She served in this capacity until she was stricken from the naval register in 1910 , thereafter being broken up for scrap .