

= Regina Maria Pia @-@ class ironclad =

The Regina Maria Pia class was a group of four ironclad warships built for the Italian Regia Marina (Royal Navy) in the 1860s . The class comprised four ships , Regina Maria Pia , San Martino , Castelfidardo , and Ancona . They were built by French shipyards , since Italian yards were unable to meet the demand of the rapidly expanding Italian fleet . The ships were broadside ironclads and mounted a battery of twenty @-@ six muzzle loading guns .

All four ships saw action at the Battle of Lissa during the Third Italian War of Independence in 1866 . Regina Maria Pia was badly burned in the battle , but the other three vessels were not seriously damaged . The ships served in a variety of roles for the remainder of their long careers ; they were modernized in the late 1880s and thereafter used as a training ships . Regina Maria Pia , San Martino , and Ancona were discarded in 1903 ? 04 , and Castelfidardo joined them in the breaker 's yard in 1910 .

= = Design = =

Following the unification of Italy in 1861 , the new Regia Marina (Royal Navy) began a construction program to prepare a fleet of ironclad warships capable of defeating the Austrian Navy . Italy considered the Austrian Empire to be its main rival , since it controlled predominantly Italian areas , including Venice . The nascent Italian shipyards were incapable of building the number of ships the new fleet would require , so most of this first generation of ironclads were built by foreign ship builders . In 1862 , the four ships of the Regina Maria Pia class were ordered from French shipyards , under the direction of Vice Admiral Carlo Pellion di Persano , then the Italian Navy Minister . These ships were designed by the French builders .

= = General characteristics and machinery = = =

The ships of the Regina Maria Pia class varied in their dimensions . Regina Maria Pia and San Martino , built by the same shipyard , were identical in size , while Castelfidardo and Ancona , though each built by different shipyards , also were identical . The first two ships were 75 @.@ 48 meters (247 @.@ 6 ft) long between perpendiculars and 81 @.@ 2 m (266 ft) long overall , and they had a beam of 15 @.@ 24 m (50 @.@ 0 ft) and an average draft of 6 @.@ 35 m (20 @.@ 8 ft) . Castelfidardo and Ancona were 76 m (249 ft) between perpendiculars and 81 @.@ 8 m (268 ft) overall , with a beam of 15 @.@ 16 m (49 @.@ 7 ft) and a draft of 6 @.@ 35 m . The first two ships displaced 4 @,@ 201 metric tons (4 @,@ 135 long tons ; 4 @,@ 631 short tons) normally and up to 4 @,@ 527 t (4 @,@ 456 long tons ; 4 @,@ 990 short tons) at full load , while Castelfidardo displaced 4 @,@ 191 t (4 @,@ 125 long tons ; 4 @,@ 620 short tons) normally and 4 @,@ 527 t (4 @,@ 456 long tons ; 4 @,@ 990 short tons) at full load . Curiously , Ancona was the lightest ship normally , at 4 @,@ 157 t (4 @,@ 091 long tons ; 4 @,@ 582 short tons) , but the heaviest at full load , at 4 @,@ 619 t (4 @,@ 546 long tons ; 5 @,@ 092 short tons) .

The ships were constructed with iron hulls . They were protected by iron belt armor that was 4 @.@ 75 inches (121 mm) thick and extended for the entire length of the hull at the waterline . The battery deck was protected by 4 @.@ 3 in (109 mm) of iron plate . Each vessel had a crew of 480 ? 485 officers and men . The ships were initially schooner @-@ rigged to supplement the steam engine , though their masts were later reduced to a barque rig . Ultimately , they lost their sailing rig completely , having it replaced with a pair of military masts with fighting tops .

The ships ' propulsion system consisted of one single @-@ expansion , two @-@ cylinder steam engine that drove a single screw propeller , with steam supplied by six coal @-@ fired , rectangular boilers . The boilers were trunked into a single funnel placed amidships . Her engine produced a top speed of 12 @.@ 96 knots (24 @.@ 00 km / h ; 14 @.@ 91 mph) from 2 @,@ 924 indicated horsepower (2 @,@ 180 kW) . Each ship had a capacity of 485 t (477 long tons ; 535 short tons) of coal , which allowed them to steam for 2 @,@ 600 nautical miles (4 @,@ 800 km ; 3 @,@ 000 mi) at a speed of 10 knots (19 km / h ; 12 mph) .

== Armament ==

The Regina Maria Pia class were broadside ironclads , and they were initially armed with a main battery of four 72 @-@ pounder smooth @-@ bore 8 in (203 mm) muzzle @-@ loading guns and twenty @-@ two 32 @-@ pounder rifled 164 mm (6 @.@ 5 in) muzzle loaders , though their armament changed throughout her career . Most of these guns were placed on the broadside , but two of the 164 mm guns were mounted in an armored bunker forward and a third was placed in a similar mount at the stern , as chase guns . The ships were also fitted with a ram bow that was 3 m (9 @.@ 8 ft) long .

In 1871 , all four ships were re @-@ armed with two 220 mm (8 @.@ 7 in) muzzle @-@ loading guns and eight 8 in muzzle @-@ loading guns , with a ninth 8 in gun added in 1880 . Regina Maria Pia and San Martino were later re @-@ equipped with eight 6 in (150 mm) quick @-@ firing (QF) guns , five 4 @.@ 7 in (120 mm) QF guns , four 57 mm (2 @.@ 2 in) QF guns , and eight 37 mm (1 @.@ 5 in) Hotchkiss revolver cannon . In 1884 , Castelfidardo received the same battery of light guns , though she had a sixth 4 @.@ 7 in gun . When Ancona was similarly re @-@ armed , she only had two of the 37 mm revolver cannon . All four ships were also equipped with three torpedo tubes , with the exception of Castelfidardo , which received two tubes .

== Ships ==

== Service history ==

All four ships of the class entered service in time to see action during the Third Italian War of Independence against the Austrian Navy in 1866 . Persano , now the commander of the Italian fleet , adopted a cautious strategy and conducted only one major offensive operation , which was directed at the island of Lissa . There , the Austrian fleet under Wilhelm von Tegetthoff attacked the Italians . The four Regina Maria Pias all took part in the ensuing Battle of Lissa . Regina Maria Pia had been set on fire and badly burned in the battle , and minor fires were started by Austrian shells aboard San Martino and Castelfidardo , but neither were seriously damaged . Ancona emerged relatively unscathed , with only minor damage to her iron plates .

After the war , the Italian naval budget was slashed ; 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 . As the Italian fleet began to rebuild in the 1870s , the Regina Maria Pias returned to active service in a variety of roles , both in the main fleet and in Italy 's overseas empire . All four ships were modernized in the late 1880s , and were thereafter used as training ships . Regina Maria Pia , Ancona , and San Martino were stricken from the naval register in 1903 ? 04 , while Castelfidardo lingered on as a torpedo training ship until 1910 , when she too was sold for scrapping .