

= Russian monitor Veshchun =

Veshchun (Russian : ?????) was an Uragan @-@ class monitor built for the Imperial Russian Navy in Belgium in the mid @-@ 1860s . The design was based on the American Passaic @-@ class monitor , but was modified to suit Russian engines , guns and construction techniques . She was one of two ships of the class to be built in Belgium and assembled in Russia . Spending her entire career with the Baltic Fleet , the ship was only active when the Gulf of Finland was not frozen , but very little is known about her service . She was stricken in 1900 from the Navy List , converted into a coal barge in 1903 and renamed Barzha No. 44 then Barzha No. 327 . Abandoned by the Soviets in Finland in 1918 , the ship was later scrapped by the Finns .

= = Description = =

Veshchun was 201 feet (61 @.@ 3 m) long overall , with a beam of 46 feet (14 @.@ 0 m) and a draft of 10 @.@ 16 ? 10 @.@ 84 feet (3 @.@ 1 ? 3 @.@ 3 m) . She displaced 1 @.@ 500 ? 1 @.@ 600 long tons (1 @.@ 500 ? 1 @.@ 600 t) , and her crew numbered eight officers and 88 enlisted men in 1865 . They numbered 10 officers and 100 crewmen in 1877 .

The ship was fitted with a two @-@ cylinder , horizontal direct @-@ acting steam engine built by the Belgian Cockerill Company . It drove a single propeller using steam that was provided by two rectangular boilers . Specific information on the output of the ship 's engine has not survived , but it ranged between 340 ? 500 indicated horsepower (254 ? 373 kW) for all the ships of this class . During Veshchun 's sea trials on 21 July 1864 , she reached a maximum speed of 6 @.@ 75 knots (12 @.@ 50 km / h ; 7 @.@ 77 mph) . The ship carried a maximum of 190 long tons (190 t) of coal , which gave her a theoretical endurance of 1 @.@ 440 nmi (2 @.@ 670 km ; 1 @.@ 660 mi) at 6 knots (11 km / h ; 6 @.@ 9 mph) .

Veshchun was designed to be armed with a pair of 9 @-@ inch (229 mm) smoothbore muzzle @-@ loading guns purchased from Krupp of Germany and rifled in Russia , but the rifling project was seriously delayed and the ship was completed with nine @-@ inch smoothbores . These lacked the penetration power necessary to deal with ironclads and they were replaced by license @-@ built 15 @-@ inch (380 mm) smoothbore muzzle @-@ loading Rodman guns in 1867 ? 68 . The Rodman guns were replaced around 1876 with the originally intended nine @-@ inch rifled guns .

All of the wrought @-@ iron armor that was used in the Uragan @-@ class monitors was in 1 @-@ inch (25 mm) plates , just as in the Passaic @-@ class ships . The side of the ship was entirely covered with three to five layers of armor plates , of which the three innermost plates extended 42 inches (1 @.@ 1 m) below the waterline . This armor was backed by a wooden beam that had a maximum thickness of 36 inches (914 mm) . The gun turret and the pilothouse above it was protected by eleven layers of armor . Curved plates six layers thick protected the base of the funnel up to a height of 7 feet (2 @.@ 1 m) above the deck . Unlike their predecessors , the Uragans were built without deck armor to save weight , but Veshchun 's deck was later prepared for the addition of 0 @.@ 5 @-@ inch (12 @.@ 7 mm) armor plates , although they were never installed .

= = Construction and career = =

Construction of Veshchun began on 9 November 1863 by the Belgian firm of Cockerill for assembly in Saint Petersburg . The ship was laid down on 9 December 1863 and she was launched on 8 May 1864 . She entered service on 1865 and cost a total of 1 @.@ 237 @.@ 000 rubles , almost double her contract cost of 600 @.@ 000 rubles . The ship was assigned to the Baltic Fleet upon completion and she , and all of her sister ships except Latnik , made a port visit to Stockholm , Sweden in July ? August 1865 while under the command of General Admiral Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich .

Sometime after Veshchun was completed , an armored ring , 5 inches (127 mm) thick and 15 inches (381 mm) tall , was fitted around the base of the turret to prevent splinters from jamming it . Later , an armored , outward @-@ curving bulwark was fitted around the top of the turret to protect

any crewmen there . Three sponsons were later added , probably during the 1870s , to the upper portion of the turret . Each sponson , one above the gun ports and one on each side of the turret , mounted a light gun , probably a 1 @. @ 75 @- @ inch (44 mm) Engstrom gun , for defense against torpedo boats . A fourth gun was mounted on a platform aft of the funnel when a hurricane deck was built between the funnel and the turret , also probably during the 1870s .

Little is known about the ship 's career other than that she was laid up each winter when the Gulf of Finland froze . Veshchun was reclassified as a coast @- @ defense ironclad on 13 February 1892 and turned over to the Port of Kronstadt for disposal on 6 July 1900 , although she was not stricken until 17 August . During 1903 , the ship was converted into a coal barge by the removal of her turret , her side armor , and its wooden backing , and by the division of her hull into three holds . She was redesignated as Barzha No. 44 and , in 1914 , Barzha No. 327 . The ship was abandoned by the Soviets when they were forced to withdraw from Finland in April 1918 according to the terms of the Treaty of Brest @- @ Litovsk and was later scrapped by the Finns .