

= Yugoslav monitor Vardar =

The Yugoslav monitor Vardar was a Sava class river monitor built for the Austro-Hungarian Navy as SMS Bosna , but was renamed SMS Temes (II) before she went into service . During World War I she was the flagship of the Danube Flotilla , and fought the Serbian Army , the Romanian Navy and Army , and the French Army . She reverted to the name Bosna in May 1917 , after the original SMS Temes was raised and returned to service . After World War I , she was transferred to the newly created Kingdom of Serbs , Croats and Slovenes (later Yugoslavia) , and renamed Vardar .

During the German led Axis invasion of Yugoslavia in April 1941 , she was the flagship of the 1st Monitor Division , and along with her fellow monitor Sava , she laid mines in the Danube near the Romanian border during the first few days of the invasion . The two monitors fought off several attacks by the Luftwaffe , but were forced to withdraw to Belgrade . Due to high river levels and low bridges , the monitors ' navigation was difficult , and they were scuttled by their crews on 11 April . Some of her crew may have been killed when a demolished bridge collapsed onto a tugboat after they abandoned ship . A number tried to escape cross country towards the southern Adriatic coast , but most were obliged to surrender to the Germans at Sarajevo on 14 April . The remainder made their way to the Bay of Kotor , where they were captured by the Italian XVII Corps on 17 April .

= = Description and construction = =

Vardar was a Sava class river monitor built for the Austro-Hungarian Navy by Stabilimento Tecnico Triestino , and was laid down as Bosna at Linz in 1914 , as part of the Austro-Hungarian 1914 ? 15 Naval Program . She was named after the river Bosna , but was renamed Temes (II) during construction , after the sinking of the original SMS Temes by a mine on the Sava River on 23 October 1914 . Along with her sister ship Sava , she had an overall length of 62 m (203 ft 5 in) , a beam of 10 .3 m (33 ft 10 in) , and a normal draught of 1 .3 m (4 ft 3 in) . Her displacement was 580 tonnes (570 long tons) , and her crew consisted of 91 officers and enlisted men . The ship was powered using steam generated by two Yarrow boilers driving two triple expansion steam engines , and the ship carried 75 tonnes (74 long tons) of fuel oil . Its engines were rated at 1 ,750 ihp (1 ,300 kW) and she was designed to reach a top speed of 13 .5 knots (25 .0 km / h ; 15 .5 mph) .

Her main armament was a twin gun turret of 120 mm (4 .7 in) / L45 guns forward of the conning tower and a twin turret of 120 mm (4 .7 in) / L10 howitzers aft of the conning tower . She also mounted twin 66 mm (2 .6 in) / L26 anti-aircraft guns , two 47 mm (1 .9 in) / L44 guns , and seven machine guns . The maximum range of her 120 mm (4 .7 in) L / 45 guns was 15 kilometres (9 .3 mi) . Her armour consisted of belt and bulkheads 40 mm (1 .6 in) thick , deck armour 25 mm (0 .98 in) thick , and her conning tower , gun turrets and cupolas were 50 mm (2 .0 in) thick . Temes was completed on 9 July 1915 .

= = Career = =

= = = World War I = = =

Temes was commissioned into the Danube Flotilla in 1915 , and was in action against the Serbian Army at Belgrade in early October , when the Serbs evacuated the city in the face of an Austro-Hungarian assault . During the final river crossing and reinforcement of the resulting bridgehead , Temes provided close support . During this task , she attempted to draw fire away from the battle-damaged monitor Enns but after receiving a direct hit in the crew quarters aft , she had to move out of range . She was run ashore to put out fires and stop leaks , before being towed out of the battle area by an armed steamer , and taken to Budapest for repairs .

In November 1915 , the other monitors were assembled at Rustschuk , Bulgaria . The geopolitical position of Romania was uncertain , with the Central Powers being aware that the Romanians were negotiating to enter the war on the side of the Entente . To protect the 480 @-@ kilometre (300 mi) Danubian border between Romania and Bulgaria , the flotilla established a sheltered base in the Belene Canal . When the Romanians entered the war on 27 August 1916 , the monitors were again at Rustschuk , having been joined by Temes after her repairs were completed . The monitors were immediately attacked by three improvised torpedo boats operating out of the Romanian river port of Giurgiu . The torpedoes that were fired missed the monitors , but struck a lighter loaded with fuel . The 1st Monitor Division , including Temes , was tasked with escorting supply ships back to the Belene anchorage . This was followed by forays of the Division both east and west of Belene , during which both Turnu M?gurele and Zimnicea were shelled . On 9 May 1917 , she was renamed SMS Bosna as the original SMS Temes was due to return to service after a complete rebuild .

In April 1918 , Bosna , along with three other monitors , two patrol boats and a tug were formed into Flottenabteilung Wulff (Fleet Division Wulff) under the command of Flottenkapitän (Fleet Captain) Olav Wulff . Flottenabteilung Wulff was sent through the mouth of the Danube and across the Black Sea to Odessa , where it spent several months supporting the Austro @-@ Hungarian troops enforcing the peace agreement with Russia . It returned to the Danube at the end of August , and was anchored at Br?ila on 12 September . On 16 October , Bosna and the rest of the 1st Monitor Division sailed from Br?ila to Belene . The Danube Flotilla then protected Austro @-@ Hungarian troops withdrawing towards Budapest , fighting French and irregular Serbian forces as they withdrew , and arrived on 6 November .

= = = Interwar period and World War II = = =

Immediately after the armistice , Bosna was crewed by sailors of the newly created Kingdom of Serbs , Croats and Slovenes (KSCS , later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) in 1918 ? 19 . Under the terms of the Treaty of Saint @-@ Germain @-@ en @-@ Laye concluded in September 1919 , Bosna was transferred to the KSCS along with a range of other vessels , including three other river monitors , but was officially handed over to the KSCS Navy and renamed Vardar in 1920 . In 1925 ? 26 , Vardar was refitted , but by the following year only two of the four river monitors of the KSCS Navy were being retained in full commission at any time . In 1932 , the British naval attaché reported that Yugoslav ships were engaging in little gunnery training , and few exercises or manoeuvres , due to reduced budgets .

On 6 April 1941 , the German @-@ led Axis invasion of Yugoslavia began , and Vardar was based at Dubovac , as the flagship of the 1st Monitor Division , responsible for the Romanian border on the Danube , under the operational control of the 3rd Infantry Division Dunavska . She was commanded by Poru?nik bojnog broda Milivoj Kockar . On that day , Vardar and her fellow monitor Sava fought off several attacks by individual Luftwaffe aircraft on their base . Over the next three days , the two monitors laid mines in the Danube near the Romanian border .

On 11 April , the two monitors were forced to withdraw from Dubovac towards Belgrade , during which they came under repeated attacks by Junkers Ju 87 Stuka dive bombers . Vardar and her fellow monitor were undamaged , and anchored at the confluence of the Danube and Sava near Belgrade about 20 : 00 , where they were joined by the monitor Morava . The three captains conferred , and decided to scuttle their vessels due to the high water levels in the rivers and low bridges , which meant there was insufficient clearance for the monitors to navigate freely . The crews of the monitors were transshipped to two tugboats , but when one of the tugboats was passing under a railway bridge , charges on the bridge accidentally exploded and the bridge fell onto the tugboat . Of the 110 officers and men aboard the vessel , 95 were killed .

After the scuttling of the monitors , around 450 officers and men from the Vardar and various other riverine vessels gathered at Obrenovac . Armed only with personal weapons and some machine guns stripped from the scuttled vessels , they started towards the Bay of Kotor in the southern Adriatic in two groups . The smaller of the two groups reached its objective , but the larger group only made it as far as Sarajevo by 14 April when they were obliged to surrender by German troops

approaching the city . The Bay of Kotor was captured by the Italian XVII Corps on 17 April .

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