

= Russian battleship Sevastopol (1895) =

Sevastopol (Russian : ?????????) was the last of three ships in the Petropavlovsk class of pre-dreadnought battleships built for the Imperial Russian Navy in the 1890s .

Named for the siege of Sevastopol during the Crimean War , the ship was commissioned into the First Pacific Squadron of the Russian Pacific Fleet and was stationed at Port Arthur (today Lüshunkou District , Dalian , Liaoning , China) , a Russian naval base acquired from China in 1898 as part of the Kwantung Leased Territory . One of the first ships to use Harvey nickel-steel armor and Popov radios , she displaced 11,854 long tons (12,044 t) at full load and was 369 feet (112.5 m) long overall , and mounted a main battery of four 12-inch (305 mm) guns in two twin turrets . She was laid down in May 1892 , launched on 1 June 1895 and completed in 1899 . Her sea trials lasted until 1900 .

Sevastopol saw service in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 . Slightly damaged during a surprise attack on Port Arthur in early February , the ship later participated in several attempts to break out from the besieged port . The most notable of these was the Battle of the Yellow Sea , where she was damaged by several shells but managed to make it back to port with the remnants of the Russian Fleet , leaving one crewman dead and 62 wounded . Immediately after the surrender of Port Arthur , Sevastopol was scuttled to prevent her capture by the Imperial Japanese Navy . The Japanese never raised her . The remains of the ship still lie outside the entrance to the port .

= Design =

The first design for Sevastopol and her sister ships of the Petropavlovsk class was approved in January 1891 . She was to be an improved version of the battleship Imperator Nikolai I , but with most of her armament in barbettes , including four 12-inch (305 mm) guns . The class was designed with a displacement of 10,960 long tons (11,136 t) at full load . She had a full waterline belt , and the upper hull featured a tumblehome . Imperator Nikolai I was chosen as a starting point for the design because of her good seakeeping and seaworthiness . Some characteristics were also copied from the French battleship Brennus and the American Indiana-class battleships , such as the flush-deck hull and Brennus' high freeboard .

Following a redesign of the class , Sevastopol ceased to resemble Imperator Nikolai I. The armor plating was changed before construction , and plans for the armament were modified while the ship was being built . The barbettes were replaced with turrets , including wing turrets for some of the secondary 6-inch (152 mm) guns modeled after those on Brennus , with electric hoists . The propulsion was based on the machinery on Georgii Pobedonosets . Sevastopol had Harvey nickel-steel armor imported from the United States .

= Characteristics =

Sevastopol displaced 11,842 long tons (12,032 t) and was 376 feet (114.6 m) long overall . She had a beam of 70 feet (21.3 m) and a maximum draft of 28 feet 3 inches (8.6 m) . She was powered by 16 cylindrical coal-burning boilers , and could carry 1,050 long tons (1,070 t) of coal . This gave her a range of 3,750 nautical miles (6,940 km ; 4,320 mi) at a cruising speed of 10 knots (19 km / h ; 12 mph) . She had a crew of 662 .

The ship's main armament consisted of a battery of four 12-inch (305 mm) guns in two twin turrets . This was supplemented by a secondary battery of twelve 6-inch (152 mm) guns . Sevastopol's armament was rounded out with ten 47-millimeter (1.9 in) guns , twenty-eight 37-millimeter (1.5 in) anti-torpedo boat guns , and six 14-inch (356 mm) torpedo tubes , four of which were submerged .

= Construction =

Sevastopol , named for the siege of Sevastopol during the Crimean War , was laid down at the Galernii Island shipyard in Saint Petersburg on 7 March 1892 . Construction was led by two engineers , E. P. Andruschenko and N. I. Afanasyev , and began on 7 May 1892 , about the same time as the battleship Sissoi Veliky was laid down . The ceremony was attended by Alexander III of Russia and then @-@ Tsesarevich Nicholas II . Sevastopol was launched on 1 June 1895 and , after the completion of her hull and decks in 1898 , was transferred to Kronstadt where her armor and guns were installed . Sevastopol was finished in 1899 and Nikolai Chernishev became her captain , a post which he would retain until 17 March 1904 , when Nikolai Essen assumed command .

= = Service history = =

Sevastopol began her sea trials on 16 October 1899 , and was commissioned after their conclusion into the Imperial Russian Navy . She and her sister ships were transferred to Port Arthur , which was then the port of the First Squadron of the Russian Pacific Fleet . In September 1900 , Popov radios were installed on Sevastopol and her sister Poltava , the first Russian battleships to have them . They were also painted white , the same color as the other ships in the First Pacific Squadron . She then left for Port Arthur and arrived at on 13 April 1901 . As Russia was not at war with any Far East countries at that time , Sevastopol stayed in port , inactive .

= = = Wartime service = = =

In early February 1904 , the Japanese Navy launched a surprise attack on the Russian fleet at Port Arthur . Sevastopol was hit by one shell , either 6 inches (152 mm) or 8 inches (203 mm) in diameter , that wounded two men on her bridge . She soon turned in pursuit along with other ships of the Russian fleet , all firing their forward guns , but she failed to score any hits . On 26 March 1904 , Sevastopol was accidentally rammed by Peresvet , damaging a propeller . After the attack on Port Arthur , the First Pacific Squadron tried to break out several times . During one attempt on 23 June , Admiral Wilgelm Vitgeft , commanding the Pacific Fleet , retreated after encountering the Japanese fleet . Approaching the harbor , Sevastopol moved slightly out of formation and hit a mine that killed 11 and caused severe flooding , but managed to get inside the harbor and drop anchor . She was under repair for six weeks , during which time a fire broke out on deck , killing two and wounding 28 . The Russian battleships were too big to fit into the dry dock at Port Arthur , so large caissons were built to provide access to the ships ' hulls . On 9 August , with the Japanese Third Army assaulting the outer defenses of Port Arthur , the First Pacific Squadron sortied from its base . Even though Sevastopol was not fully repaired , she sailed with the rest of the fleet with one gun in her aft turret remaining inoperable . They later engaged the Japanese fleet in what would become the Battle of the Yellow Sea .

Although in the center of the Russian line during the battle , Sevastopol was only slightly damaged during the day . In the evening , the Russians massed their fire on the Japanese flagship Mikasa , at that time 11 kilometers (6 @.@ 8 mi) away . The Japanese battleships returned fire and Sevastopol suffered several shell hits to her superstructure , which killed one man and wounded 62 others . A few minutes later , Mikasa was hit by two 12 @-@ inch (305 mm) shells and one 6 @-@ inch (152 mm) shell from Retvizan and Sevastopol , which caused 40 casualties . Soon after that , when it seemed that the Russians would be able to escape to Vladivostok , two 12 @-@ inch shells from Asahi penetrated the conning tower of the Russian flagship Tsesarevich , killing Vitgeft and the helmsman , severely wounding the captain , and causing the ship to come to a dead stop after executing a sharp turn . Thinking that this was a maneuver planned by Vitgeft , the Russian line started to execute the same turn , causing all of the ships directly behind Tsesarevich , including Sevastopol , to maneuver wildly to avoid hitting the stationary flagship . Prince Pavel Ukhtomski , second in command of the squadron , who was on the Peresvet , proceeded to signal the other Russian ships via semaphore to steam back to Port Arthur , although the signals were only gradually recognized by Pobeda , Poltava , Pallada and Sevastopol . Sevastopol had one 6 @-@ inch (152

mm) and two 47 @-@ millimeter (1 @.@ 9 in) guns knocked out during the battle .

Returning to Port Arthur on 10 August , the squadron found that the city was already under siege by the Japanese Third Army led by Baron Nogi Maresuke . On 23 August , Sevastopol bombarded a Japanese battery in an effort to escape along with nine smaller ships , but after she neutralized the battery , she returned to port after a Japanese lookout spotted the approaching ships . As she was maneuvering back into Port Arthur , she struck another mine and required repairs . On 5 December the Third Army captured 203 Meter Hill , a crucial position that overlooked the harbor . From there , the Japanese were able to fire on Sevastopol and other ships of the First Pacific Squadron that had survived the Yellow Sea battle . The ships at that time were about 5 @.@ 7 kilometers (3 @.@ 5 mi) away from the hill , placing them within range of Japanese shore artillery . By 9 December four battleships and two cruisers had been sunk by the Japanese . Sevastopol , although hit five times by 11 @-@ inch (279 mm) shells , managed to move away from the western harbor and out of range of the guns to the minor harbor of White Wolf , where she could be defended by torpedo nets and booms . Within the defensive surroundings of White Wolf , Essen started to plan a sortie through the blockade to Vladivostok or a rendezvous with the Second Pacific Squadron , at that time coaling at Madagascar . At the same time , the commanding admiral of the Imperial Japanese Navy , Togo Heihachiro , as instructed by Emperor Meiji in Tokyo , ordered the destruction of the battleship by six waves of destroyers , along with some torpedo boats that were launched from the Fuji and Mikasa .

The torpedo boat and destroyer attacks lasted three weeks , during which 80 torpedoes were launched at Sevastopol . Of these , four hit . The four successful torpedoes were launched on 18 December . Three of them hit the torpedo nets that had been placed around the ship , while the other hit one of the ship 's propellers . Although severely damaged , Sevastopol remained afloat and sank two destroyers and damaged six others , killing 35 sailors and five officers . A Japanese cruiser attempting to attack Sevastopol was sunk by a mine in the harbor . When he received news of the surrender of the land fortifications on 2 January 1905 , Essen decided to surrender , but scuttled the ship in 55 meters (180 ft) of water by opening the seacocks on one side so that the ship could not be salvaged by the Japanese . His other option , a run to Vladivostok , had already been eliminated due to the damage to his propellers by the torpedo . For the act of scuttling Sevastopol , Essen was awarded the Order of St. George . Nevertheless , a dispatch from Tokyo reported that it sank as a result of a Japanese torpedo attack .

Due to the depth of water in which she had sunk , and her position , Sevastopol was the only battleship that was not salvaged by the Japanese at Port Arthur . What remains of her is still outside the entrance to Port Arthur . Poltava , one of her sister ships , was also scuttled at Port Arthur and re @-@ floated as the Japanese Tango .