

= Russian battleship Oslyabya =

Oslyabya (Russian : ?????) was the second of the three Peresvet class second class pre dreadnought battleships built for the Imperial Russian Navy at the end of the nineteenth century , although construction delays meant that she was the last to be completed . The ship was part of the Second Pacific Squadron sent to the Far East during the Russo Japanese War of 1904 - 05 , and served as the flagship of Rear Admiral Baron Dmitry von Fölkersam . Oslyabya was sunk on 27 May 1905 at the Battle of Tsushima , and was the first all steel battleship to be sunk by naval gunfire alone . Sources differ on the exact number of casualties , but over half her crew went down with the ship .

= = Design and description = =

The design of the Peresvet class was inspired by the British second class battleships of the Centurion class . The British ships were intended to defeat commerce raiders like the Russian armored cruisers *Rossia* and *Rurik* ; the Peresvet class ships were designed to support the Russian cruisers . This role placed a premium on high speed and long range at the expense of heavy armament and armor .

Oslyabya had a length of 434 feet 5 inches (132 . 4 m) overall , a beam of 71 feet 6 inches (21 . 79 m) and a draft of 26 feet 3 inches (8 . 0 m) . Designed to displace 12 , 674 long tons (12 , 877 t) , she was almost 2 , 000 long tons (2 , 000 t) overweight and displaced 14 , 408 long tons (14 , 639 t) when built . Her crew consisted of 27 officers and 744 enlisted men . The ship was powered by three vertical triple expansion steam engines using steam generated by 30 Belleville boilers . The engines were rated at 14 , 500 indicated horsepower (10 , 800 kW) , using forced draft , and designed to reach a top speed of 18 knots (33 km / h ; 21 mph) . Oslyabya , however , reached a top speed of 18 . 33 knots (33 . 95 km / h ; 21 . 09 mph) from 15 , 051 indicated horsepower (11 , 224 kW) during her sea trials in September 1902 . She carried a maximum of 2 , 060 long tons (2 , 090 t) of coal which allowed her to steam for 6 , 200 nautical miles (11 , 500 km ; 7 , 100 mi) at a speed of 10 knots (19 km / h ; 12 mph) .

The ship 's main battery consisted of four 10 - inch (254 mm) guns mounted in two twin gun turrets , one forward and one aft of the superstructure . The secondary armament consisted of eleven Canet 6 - inch (152 mm) quick firing (QF) guns , mounted in casemates on the sides of the hull and in the bow , underneath the forecastle . Smaller guns were carried for defense against torpedo boats . These included twenty 75 - millimeter (3 . 0 in) QF guns , twenty 47 - millimeter (1 . 9 in) Hotchkiss guns and eight 37 - millimeter (1 . 5 in) guns . She was also armed with five 15 - inch (381 mm) torpedo tubes , three above water and two submerged . The ship carried 45 mines to be used to protect her anchorage .

Oslyabya 's waterline armor belt consisted of Harvey armor and was four to nine inches (102 to 229 mm) thick . The belt was 7 feet 9 inches (2 . 4 m) high , of which the upper 36 inches (910 mm) was intended to be above the waterline , but the ship was significantly overweight and only had three inches (76 mm) showing at normal load . At full load , the belt was completely submerged and her only protection was the four - inch upper belt . The Krupp cemented armor of her gun turrets had a maximum thickness of nine inches and her deck ranged from two to three inches (51 to 76 mm) thick .

= = Construction and career = =

Oslyabya , named for Rodion Oslyabya , a 14th century monk of the Troitse Sergiyeva Lavra and a hero of the Battle of Kulikovo in 1380 , was laid down on 21 November 1895 by the New Admiralty Shipyard in Saint Petersburg and launched on 8 November 1898 . Problems at the New Admiralty Shipyard delayed her completion until 1903 at a cost of 11 , 340 , 000 rubles . The ship sailed for Port Arthur on 7 August 1903 with the armored cruiser *Bayan* , but

Oslyabya ran aground in the Strait of Gibraltar on 21 August and was under repair until late November , first in Algeria , then at La Spezia , Italy . After repairs , the ship resumed her voyage to the Far East , but she was recalled to join the Baltic Fleet on 12 February 1904 , following the start of the Russo - Japanese War three days previously . After arrival at St. Petersburg in April , Oslyabya was fitted with 4 x 5 inch (1 x 4 m) Barr & Stroud rangefinders , telescopic gun sights , a new ventilation system , and Telefunken radio equipment .

== Russo - Japanese War ==

The Russian strategy since 1897 had been for ships from the Baltic Fleet to be ordered to the Far East if war with Japan broke out , while the First Pacific Squadron in Port Arthur would avoid a general fleet battle until reinforcements arrived . On 15 October 1904 , Oslyabya set sail for Port Arthur from Libau as von Fölkersam 's flagship , along with the other vessels of the Second Pacific Squadron , under the overall command of Vice Admiral Zinovy Rozhdestvensky . Historian Mark Schrad said that : " This epic 18 ,000 mile (29 ,000 km) journey was the longest voyage of a coal - powered battleship fleet in history . " En route to Denmark , the battleship was slightly damaged when the destroyer Buistri collided with her . When his ships reached the port of Tangier , Morocco , on 28 October , Rozhdestvensky ordered his older battleships , under the command of von Fölkersam , to go through the Mediterranean and Red Sea to rendezvous with his main force in Madagascar . Rozhdestvensky led his squadron , including Oslyabya , down the Atlantic coast of Africa , rounding Cape Horn , and reached the island of Nosy Be off the northwest coast of Madagascar on 9 January 1905 , where they remained for two months while Rozhdestvensky finalized his coaling arrangements . By this time Port Arthur had surrendered to the Japanese and he could not count on resupplying there , nor rendezvousing with the First Pacific Squadron . Rozhdestvensky 's reunited squadron sailed for Camranh Bay , French Indochina , on 16 March and reached it almost a month later to await the obsolete ships of the Third Pacific Squadron , commanded by Rear Admiral Nikolai Nebogatov . These reached Camranh Bay on 9 May and the combined force sailed for Vladivostok on 14 May .

En route , Rozhdestvensky reorganized his ships into three tactical divisions for the forthcoming battle ; the first consisted of the four new Borodino - class battleships commanded by himself , von Fölkersam commanded the Second Division that consisted of the battleships Oslyabya , Navarin , Sissoi Veliky and the armored cruiser Admiral Nakhimov , and Nebogatov retained his ships as the Third Division . Von Fölkersam , ill with cancer , died on 26 May and Rozhdestvensky decided not to inform the fleet in order to keep morale up . Oslyabya 's Captain 1st Rank Vladimir Ber became the commander of the Second Division , while Nebogatov had no idea that he was now the squadron 's de facto second in command .

While figures are not available for Oslyabya , one Russian account after the battle said that the Borodinos were approximately 1 ,700 long tons (1 ,700 t) overweight as they were overloaded with coal and other supplies that were stored high in the ships , reducing their stability . Oslyabya 's main armor belt was fully submerged with a full load , much less any additional coal and supplies , and thus the four - inch thick upper armor was the only available protection for the ship 's waterline .

=== Battle of Tsushima ===

The Russians were spotted early on the morning of 27 May by Japanese ships as they entered the Korea Strait en route to Vladivostok . During the subsequent battle Oslyabya led the Second Division of the squadron and was initially the target of at least two battleships and a pair of armored cruisers when the Japanese opened fire at 14 : 10 . As the Japanese approached , Rozhdestvensky ordered the fleet to move from line ahead formation to parallel columns and Oslyabya was forced to almost stop in her tracks to avoid hitting the battleship Oryol , the last ship of Rozhdestvensky 's division , as she maneuvered . Almost immediately , the shells began inflicting damage , knocking out the rangefinder , wounding the gunnery officer and severing the cables connecting the guns to

the Geisler fire @-@ control system . Other hits shot away the mainmast and knocked out the forward gun turret as well as three of the port six @-@ inch guns . Splinters from one of the many hits entered her conning tower , killing the quartermaster and wounding most of the men inside . This caused the ship to fall out of line to starboard and she was engaged by six Japanese armored cruisers at short range . More serious were several large @-@ caliber shells that struck along the ship 's waterline about 15 minutes into the engagement that caused major flooding ; they opened up enough of the ship 's bow to the sea that her forward motion forced more and more water into her hull and she began listing to port . Flooding of her starboard forward magazine was ordered in an attempt to counteract the list , but it just added more weight forward and destroyed the ship 's stability . Oslyabya 's list increased to 12 degrees at 14 : 20 , flooding many of the lower turrets . Her funnels touched the water around 15 : 10 and Ber ordered " abandon ship " . The ship sank a few minutes later , with her starboard propeller still turning , taking Ber and 470 of her crew with her .