

= CSS Missouri =

CSS Missouri was a Confederate States Navy casemate ironclad paddle steamer deployed on the Red River during the American Civil War . For most of the war she was trapped in the Shreveport , Louisiana area by low water on the Red River . The ship was surrendered in June 1865 to the United States Navy and sold in November .

= = Description = =

Missouri was 183 feet ( 55 @. @ 8 m ) long overall , had a beam of 53 feet 8 inches ( 16 @. @ 4 m ) and a draft of 8 feet 6 inches ( 2 @. @ 6 m ) . Her casemate extended for most of the length of the ship and was 130 feet 6 inches ( 39 @. @ 8 m ) long . It partially enclosed her 22 @-@ foot @-@ 6 @-@ inch ( 6 @. @ 9 m ) diameter center paddle wheel in a recess at the aft end of the casemate ; the upper 8 feet 4 inches ( 2 @. @ 5 m ) of the paddle wheel protruded above the casemate and was totally unprotected . The stern wheel was powered by two steam engines taken from the steamboat Grand Era ; four boilers provided steam to the engines and were connected to a single funnel . The ship had a maximum speed of 6 miles per hour ( 5 @. @ 2 kn ) .

Missouri 's armor consisted of railroad " T @-@ rails " , laid alternately with the crowns up and down . They were spiked to the backing of 23 @-@ inch ( 580 mm ) of yellow pine , but not closely together enough to give them a solid surface . On the sides of the ship , they were laid diagonally , but were vertical on the bow and stern faces of the casemate . The armor extended approximately 6 feet ( 1 @. @ 8 m ) below the waterline . The casemate was sloped at an angle of 30 ° . The deck fore and aft of the casemate was also protected by " T @-@ rails " . At the forward end of the casemate was a pilothouse that was raised 19 inches ( 480 mm ) above the deck . She was built of green timber , caulked with cotton and leaked like a sieve . Despite her three rudders , her stern wheel made her difficult to steer .

The casemate had eight gun ports , two in the bow face and three on each side , although only three guns were mounted in the ship . A smoothbore 11 @-@ inch ( 279 mm ) Dahlgren pivot gun was mounted in the starboard forward position . It could fire out of the starboard bow port or the forward starboard broadside port . It weighed approximately 16 @, @ 000 pounds ( 7 @, @ 300 kg ) and could fire a 136 @-@ pound ( 61 @. @ 7 kg ) shell up to a range of 3 @, @ 650 yards ( 3 @, @ 340 m ) at an elevation of 15 ° . An old 32 @-@ pounder ( 14 @. @ 5 kg ) siege gun was in the equivalent position on the port side of the ship . The characteristics of this gun cannot be reliably determined because the United States produced a multitude of 32 @-@ pounder guns before the Civil War , but none of them were designated as siege guns . The third gun was a smoothbore 9 @-@ inch ( 229 mm ) Dahlgren pivot gun that could fire out of either of the two aft broadside gun ports . It weighed approximately 9 @, @ 200 pounds ( 4 @, @ 200 kg ) and could fire a 72 @. @ 5 @-@ pound ( 32 @. @ 9 kg ) shell up to a range of 3 @, @ 357 yards ( 3 @, @ 070 m ) at an elevation of 15 ° .

= = Construction and service = =

The Confederate Navy Department authorized the construction of one or more ironclad warships at Shreveport on 3 October 1862 and Lieutenant Jonathan H. Carter signed a contract for two ships on 1 November . The keel of the first ship was laid the following month and she was launched on 14 April 1863 . The ship was commissioned on 12 September 1863 with the name of Missouri , after the high water season on the Red River had ended . Lieutenant Commander Charles Fauntleroy was appointed as her captain , although he told Lieutenant Carter that " he hoped the damned boat would sink " and that he " never intended to serve on her if he could help it " . The low water prevented Missouri from playing any part in the Red River Campaign of early 1864 . In September , Lieutenant Carter commanded an unsuccessful attempt to seize the gunboat USS Rattler using men from the crews of Missouri and CSS Webb .

In March 1865 , the river began to rise and Missouri was able to leave the Shreveport area for the

first time . She reached Alexandria , Louisiana on 8 April and anchored where she could defend the town . Lieutenant Carter surrendered the ship to Union forces on 3 June , the last Confederate ironclad to surrender . After her armor was removed , Missouri was sold at public auction on 29 November .