

= Neosho @-@ class monitor =

The Neosho @-@ class monitors were a pair of ironclad river monitors laid down in the summer of 1862 . After completion in mid @-@ 1863 , both ships spent time patrolling the Mississippi River against Confederate raids and ambushes as part of Rear Admiral David Porter 's Mississippi Squadron . Both ships participated in the Red River Campaign in March ? May 1864 , although Osage supported the capture of Fort DeRussy in March and participated in the Battle of Blair 's Landing in April . Osage was grounded on a sandbar for six months after the end of the campaign while Neosho resumed her patrols on the Mississippi . The latter ship supported the Union Army 's operations on the Cumberland River and provided fire support during the Battle of Nashville in December .

Osage , after being refloated and repaired , was transferred to the West Gulf Blockading Squadron in early 1865 for the campaign against Mobile , Alabama . During the Battle of Spanish Fort in March 1865 she struck a mine and rapidly sank . The ship was later salvaged and sold in 1867 . Neosho was decommissioned after the war and remained in reserve until sold in 1873 .

= = Design and description = =

The original plans for the Neosho @-@ class ships , designed by James Eads , resembled the City @-@ class ironclads with a draft of 5 feet 6 inches (1 @.@ 7 m) , but the successful performance of the Monitor during the Battle of Hampton Roads caused the navy to revise its requirement to include a gun turret . Eads responded with an impressive design that included a turret with 8 inches (203 mm) of armor , a fully armored sternwheel and a draft of 4 feet 6 inches (1 @.@ 4 m) , but the navy wanted even less draft and rejected his design . Eads adopted a turtleback deck design that promised to only draw 3 feet 6 inches (1 @.@ 1 m) .

The steam @-@ powered turret was at the bow and they had a deckhouse between the funnel and the sternwheel , although another was later added between the turret and the funnel . The Neosho @-@ class ships were 180 feet (54 @.@ 9 m) long overall and had a beam of 45 feet (13 @.@ 7 m) . When launched , they proved to have a draft 1 foot (0 @.@ 3 m) deeper than planned and they measured 523 tons burthen . The ships had four steam boilers powering one two @-@ cylinder , western steamboat @-@ type engine that drove the sternwheel . The Neosho @-@ class ships had a maximum speed of 12 miles per hour (19 km / h) in service and they carried 50 long tons (51 t) of coal .

The ships ' main armament consisted of two smoothbore 11 @-@ inch (279 mm) Dahlgren guns mounted in a single turret that had an arc of fire of 300 ° . Firing the guns tended to jam the turret until modifications were made to the guns ' recoil system . Each gun weighed approximately 16 @,@ 000 pounds (7 @,@ 300 kg) . They 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 ° . The turret and the pilothouse were protected by 6 inches (152 mm) of wrought iron while the hull had 2 @.@ 5 inches (64 mm) of armor . The deck 's armor plates were 1 @.@ 25 inches (32 mm) thick .

= = Construction = =

= = Service = =

Neosho was commissioned at Cairo , Illinois on 13 May 1863 , but was not completed until 1 July . She left Cairo on 14 July 1863 and reached Vicksburg on 6 August , just over a month after it had surrendered after a lengthy siege . Neosho and other warships patrolled the Mississippi and its tributaries to prevent Confederate raiders and flying batteries from ambushing Union supply ships . One example was on 8 December 1863 when " a Confederate shore battery attacked and disabled merchant steamer Henry Von Phul ; Neosho and Signal steamed up to defend the ship and silenced the battery . "

From 12 March to 22 May 1864 , Neosho and Osage participated in the unsuccessful Red River Campaign under the command of Rear Admiral David Porter . During the retreat down the Red River , Neosho was trapped above the falls at Alexandria , Louisiana , along with most of the other ironclads of the Mississippi Squadron , when the river 's water level unexpectedly began to fall . Two temporary dams , known as Bailey 's Dam , had to be built in April ? May to raise the water level high enough to allow the ironclads to proceed downstream . During the Franklin @-@ Nashville Campaign in December 1864 Neosho , accompanied by the casemate ironclad Carondelet , bombarded Confederate artillery batteries on the Cumberland River , near Bell 's Mills , Tennessee , on 6 December . Despite being hit over 100 times , she was not seriously damaged . The monitor bombarded the Confederate right wing during the Battle of Nashville on 15 ? 16 December .

Neosho was decommissioned at Mound City , Illinois on 23 July 1865 and remained in ordinary . She was renamed Vixen 15 June 1869 and again renamed Osceola on 2 August 1869 . The monitor was sold at Mound City to David Campbell 17 August 1873 for \$ 13 @,@ 600 .

During the Red River Campaign Osage was commanded by Lieutenant Commander Thomas O. Selfridge , Jr . She participated in the capture of Fort DeRussy on 14 March 1864 , shortly after the beginning of the campaign . She successfully defended the navy transports attacked during the Battle of Blair 's Landing on 12 April , driving off the Confederate forces with heavy losses . After the end of the campaign in May she was assigned to patrol the Mississippi River . During that month she grounded on a sandbar near Helena , Arkansas and could not be refloated even when some of her armor was removed due to the rapidly falling water level . As the water receded Osage began to hog at the ends because only her middle was supported by the sand . This caused her longitudinal bulkheads to split and broke many rivets in her hull and on her deck . She was repaired in place before being refloated at the end of November .

After being towed to Mound City for more permanent repairs , Osage was transferred to the West Gulf Blockading Squadron on 1 February 1865 for the attack on Mobile , Alabama . She participated in the Battle of Spanish Fort , defending Mobile from the east , but struck a mine in a previously swept channel and sank rapidly on 29 March . Two crewmen were killed and some others wounded . The ship was later refloated and sold at auction at New Orleans 22 November 1867 , along with three ex @-@ Confederate ships , for \$ 20 @,@ 467 .