

= Japanese battleship Yashima =

Yashima ( 1601 , Yashima ) was a Fuji class pre dreadnought battleship built for the Imperial Japanese Navy ( IJN ) in the 1890s . As Japan lacked the industrial capacity to build such warships herself , the ship was designed and built in the United Kingdom . She participated in the early stages of the Russo Japanese War of 1904 ? 1905 , including the Battle of Port Arthur on the second day of the war . She was involved in the subsequent operations until she struck two mines off Port Arthur in May 1904 . She did not sink immediately , but capsized while under tow a number of hours later . The Japanese were able to keep her loss a secret from the Russians for over a year so they did not try to take advantage of her loss .

= = Description = =

Yashima was 412 feet ( 125 @. @ 6 m ) long overall and had a beam of 73 feet 6 inches ( 22 @. @ 4 m ) and a full @-@ load draught of 26 feet ( 7 @. @ 925 m ) . She normally displaced 12 @, @ 230 long tons ( 12 @, @ 430 t ) and had a crew of 650 officers and enlisted men . Unlike her sister ship Fuji , she was fitted as an admiral 's flagship .

The ship was powered by two vertical triple @-@ expansion steam engines using steam generated by ten cylindrical boilers . The engines were rated at 13 @, @ 500 indicated horsepower ( 10 @, @ 100 kW ) , using forced draught , and designed to reach a top speed of 18 @. @ 25 knots ( 33 @. @ 80 km / h ; 21 @. @ 00 mph ) . Yashima , however , reached a top speed of 19 @. @ 46 knots ( 36 @. @ 04 km / h ; 22 @. @ 39 mph ) from 14 @, @ 075 ihp ( 10 @, @ 496 kW ) on her sea trials . She carried a maximum of 1 @, @ 200 tonnes ( 1 @, @ 200 long tons ) of coal which allowed her to steam for 4 @, @ 000 nautical miles ( 7 @, @ 400 km ; 4 @, @ 600 mi ) at a speed of 10 knots ( 19 km / h ; 12 mph ) .

Yashima 's main battery consisted of four 12 @-@ inch ( 305 mm ) guns mounted in two twin gun turrets , one each fore and aft of the superstructure . The secondary battery consisted of ten 6 @-@ inch ( 152 mm ) quick @-@ firing guns , four mounted in casemates on the sides of the hull and six mounted on the upper deck , protected by gun shields . A number of smaller guns were carried for defence against torpedo boats . These included fourteen 47 @-@ millimetre ( 1 @. @ 9 in ) 3 @-@ pounder guns and ten 2 @. @ 5 @-@ pounder Hotchkiss guns of the same calibre . She was also armed with five 18 @-@ inch torpedo tubes . Yashima 's waterline armour belt consisted of Harvey armour and was 14 ? 18 inches ( 356 ? 457 mm ) thick . The armour of her gun turrets was six inches thick and her deck was 2 @. @ 5 inches ( 64 mm ) thick .

In 1901 , the ship exchanged 16 of her 47 mm guns for an equal number of QF 12 pounder 12 cwt guns . This raised the number of crewmen to 652 and later to 741 .

= = Construction and career = =

Yashima , an old name for Japan , was ordered as part of the 1894 Naval Programme and the ship was laid down by Armstrong Whitworth at their Elswick shipyard on 6 December 1894 as yard number 625 . The ship was launched on 28 December 1896 and completed on 17 August 1897 , at a total cost of ¥ 10 @, @ 500 @, @ 000 . She conducted her sea trials during the following month . Yashima departed the UK on 15 September and arrived at Yokosuka on 30 November .

She was initially assigned to the Standing Fleet , the IJN 's primary combat fleet , but was reduced to reserve on 20 November . The ship was reclassified as a first @-@ class battleship on 21 March 1898 and reassigned to the Standing Fleet . Two years later , Yashima was again placed in reserve where she remained until reactivated on 28 December 1903 and assigned to the 1st Division of the 1st Fleet of the Combined Fleet .

At the start of the Russo @-@ Japanese War , Yashima , commanded by Captain Hajime Sakamoto , participated in the Battle of Port Arthur on 9 February 1904 when Admiral T?g? Heihachir? led the 1st Fleet in an attack on the Russian ships of the Pacific Squadron anchored just outside Port Arthur . T?g? had expected the surprise night attack by his destroyers to be much more

successful than it was , anticipating that the Russians would be badly disorganized and weakened , but they had recovered from their surprise and were ready for his attack . The Japanese ships were spotted by the protected cruiser Boyarin , which was patrolling offshore and alerted the Russian defences . T?g? chose to attack the Russian coastal defences with his main armament and engage the ships with his secondary guns . Splitting his fire proved to be a poor decision as the Japanese eight 8-inch ( 203 mm ) and six 6-inch guns inflicted little damage on the Russian ships , which concentrated all their fire on the Japanese ships with some effect . Although many ships on both sides were hit , Russian casualties numbered only 17 , while the Japanese suffered 60 killed and wounded before T?g? disengaged . Yashima was not hit during the battle .

On 10 March , Yashima and her sister Fuji , under the command of Rear Admiral Nashiba Tokioki , blindly bombarded the harbour of Port Arthur from Pigeon Bay , on the southwest side of the Liaodong Peninsula , at a range of 9 @. 5 kilometres ( 5 @. 9 mi ) . They fired 154 twelve 12-inch shells , but did little damage . When they tried again on 22 March , they were attacked by Russian coast defence guns that had been transferred there by the new Russian commander , Vice Admiral Stepan Makarov , and also from several Russian ships in Port Arthur using observers overlooking Pigeon Bay . The Japanese ships disengaged after Fuji was hit by a 12 12-inch shell .

Yashima participated in the action of 13 April when T?g? successfully lured out a portion of the Pacific Squadron , including Makarov 's flagship , the battleship Petropavlovsk . When Makarov spotted the five battleships of the 1st Division , he turned back for Port Arthur and Petropavlovsk struck a minefield laid by the Japanese the previous night . The Russian battleship sank in less than two minutes after one of her magazines exploded , Makarov one of the 677 killed . Emboldened by his success , T?g? resumed long 12 @-12 @ range bombardment missions , which prompted the Russians to lay more minefields .

On 14 May 1904 , Nashiba put to sea with the battleships Hatsuse ( flagship ) , Shikishima , and Yashima , the protected cruiser Kasagi , and the dispatch boat Tatsuta to relieve the Japanese blockading force off Port Arthur . On the following morning , the squadron encountered a minefield laid by the Russian minelayer Amur . Hatsuse struck one mine that disabled her steering around 11 : 10 and Yashima struck two others when moving to assist Hatsuse . One blew a hole in her starboard aft boiler room and the other detonated on the starboard forward side of her hull , near the underwater torpedo room . After the second detonation the ship had a 9 ° list to starboard that gradually increased during the day .

Yashima was towed away from the minefield , north towards the Japanese base in the Elliott Islands . She was still taking on water at an uncontrollable rate and Captain Sakamoto ordered the ship anchored around 17 : 00 near Encounter Rock to allow the crew to easily abandon ship . He assembled the crew , which sang the Japanese national anthem , Kimigayo , and then abandoned ship . Kasagi took Yashima in tow , but the battleship 's list continued to increase and she capsized about three hours later , after the cruiser was forced to cast off the tow , roughly at coordinates 38 ° 34 ' N 121 ° 40 ' E. No Russians observed Yashima sink so the Japanese were able to conceal her loss for more than a year . As part of the deception , the surviving crewmen were assigned to four auxiliary gunboats that were assigned to guard Port Arthur for the rest of the war and addressed their letters as if they were still aboard the battleship .