



Krassin

a.k.a. *Krasin*, *Leonid Krassin*, *Svyatogor*

Builder: Armstrong-Whitworth & Company, Newcastle-on-Tyne, England

Length: 323.25

Beam: 70' 10"

Draft: 30'

Displacement: 10,620 tons

Cost: ?

Launched: ?

Commissioned: 1917 (Russia)

Decommissioned: ?

Disposition: "Thoroughly converted" at Wisman at VEB Mathias-Thesen-Werft from August 1953 to June 1960 under the East German war reparations program to the Soviet Union. As of 1998, she was owned by the International Fund for the History of Science, Murmansk. She was registered at St. Petersburg and is docked there as a floating museum.

Machinery: Reciprocating steam engine, 10,000 shp, triple screws

Complement: 190 (USSR)

Electronics: None (USCG would have added: 2 x Navy model TBA-5 radio H/F transmitters, modified for A-3 emission; 1 x Navy model TAJ intermediate

frequency transmitter; 2 x Coast Guard type R-100 radio intermediate frequency receivers; 4 x Coast Guard type R-116 H/F radio receivers; 1 x commercial model RDF; 1 x Navy model LM-8 frequency meter; 1 x portable Navy model TBX trans-receiver; 1 x supersonic type fathometer; unspecified underwater sound equipment.

Armament: None (USCG would have added 2 x 4"/50 caliber, single mounts)

History:

On 18 July 1941, the Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, wrote to the Acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles: "In order to meet the immediate needs of this country . . . it is recommended that negotiations be entered into with the Russian Government for the purchase of one or more of their modern ice breakers." Appended to the letter was a list of ships "in order of their desirability. . . ." They were the *Krasin* [sic], *Stephen Makarof*, *Krisjanie Valdemars*, and *Lenin*. The Secretary of State approached the Soviet ambassador. The ambassador pointed out that three of the ships were blockaded in the Baltic and not accessible, and that he would forward the inquiry to Moscow. On 1 August 1941, Secretary Welles informed Secretary Morgenthau "that the Soviet Government would be pleased to place at the disposal of the American Government for a period of approximately eight months the Soviet ice breaker *Krassin*, which is at present near the Bearing Straits." The letter noted that the vessel was in need of repairs.

Eight months was not much time. The Coast Guard wished to employ the icebreaker on the east coast of Greenland. Subtracting the 80-day round-trip transit between Seattle and Ivigtut, Greenland, plus the overhaul, only four months' operational time would remain. The Commandant, RADM Russell Waesche, advised that "the *Krasin* [sic] should be made available to the United States for at least a year, in order to obtain real service. . . ." Morgenthau wrote to Welles that the Coast Guard would accept the Soviet offer if the ship were made available for one year.

In the fall of 1941, the *Krassin* arrived at Bremerton, Washington, and a Coast Guard party surveyed her. She was indeed in need of repairs. The party noted that there were 50,000 leaky rivets and preliminary estimates as to the cost of repairing her and converting her to Coast Guard use, including adding additional berthing, armament, and electronics, totaled about \$500,000. On 16 October 1941 the full amount was allocated from President Franklin D. Roosevelt's

"Emergency Fund for the President."

Nevertheless the attempt to lease the *Krassin* came to an abrupt end on 25 November 1941. Secretary of War John Bell wrote:

"Day before yesterday the Russian Chargé d' Affaires, called on Secretary Morgenthau and said that the icebreaker was needed immediately by the Russians in the Archangel district. . . .Admiral Waesche said the Coast Guard had consulted with the Secretary and that in compliance with the wishes of the Russian Chargé d' Affaires it had been decided to terminate all negotiations for use by the United States of the *Krassin*. . . ."

Although the *Krassin* never served in the Coast Guard, the service did learn about icebreakers and their characteristics from studying her design. That knowledge was put to use in the design of the Coast Guard's Wind-Class icebreakers that saw service towards the latter part of World War II.*



Krassin. No caption/photo number; date/photographer unknown.

Here *Krassin* is tied up in Bremerton, Washington, where she was surveyed by a Coast Guard party.

Elements of her design were incorporated into the "Wind" class icebreakers that began entering service in 1944.

Sources:

Krassin file, Coast Guard Historian's Office.

*Robert Scheina. *U.S. Coast Guard Cutters & Craft of World War II*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1982, p. 63.

