

## MOSKVA-CLASS CVHG

By Dimitris Dranidis

**Users:** USSR/Russia, Ukraine

**Roles & Missions:** The deployment of the Regulus cruise missile by US Navy submarines in the mid-50s created new headaches for Soviet naval planners. The hitherto available naval forces, tailored to preemptively strike NATO aircraft carriers, were wholly unsuited to deal with this new nuclear threat to the Soviet landmass. The result of this, combined with the subsequent commencement of US Polaris-equipped SSBN patrols, forced the Soviet Navy into a crash ASW program. Among the first fruits of this shift of priorities was the Moskva class.

The design concept of the first Soviet helicopter-carrying antisubmarine cruiser first received governmental support in 1958, and the Nevskoye Planning and Design Bureau was instructed to implement the aforementioned concept into the Project 1123 ship. The class was designed to carry 14 of the new Ka-25 antisubmarine warfare helicopters, themselves just entering service at the time.

When the Moskvias first appeared in the late 1960s, they were the largest warships completed for the Soviet Navy since the Bolshevik revolution. Although a large production run was originally envisaged, eventually only two units were completed (Moskva and Leningrad). The appearance of the Polaris SLBM was one of the primary reasons for this: by virtue of its much larger range, it increased the area that had to be scrutinized by Soviet ASW forces by several orders of magnitude – thus rendering the Moskvias obsolete. The two ships spent their entire operational career as flagships in the Black Sea. Leningrad was used as a trials ship for the Yak-36 Freehand and Yak-38 Forger VSTOL fighters.

**Strengths:** The Moskvias were among the first Soviet ships with a credible ASW capability against contemporary NATO submarines, courtesy of a powerful low-frequency bow-mounted sonar plus a VDS, plentiful armament (including nuclear-tipped ASW rockets) and lots of helicopters. They also sported capable AAW equipment and comprehensive EW systems. Their large displacement afforded them the fuel (and stores) endurance needed for extended patrols (by Soviet standards), and turned them into natural flagships for the naval forces of the Black Sea fleet.



**Weaknesses:** While a significant ASW improvement over previous classes, the Moskvas still lagged on the ASW game compared to their western counterparts and in particular against their intended preys, NATO SSGs & SSBNs. Their sonar sensors were degraded by the lack of any self-silencing measures, and their non-existent point-defences (highly unusual for any Soviet ship, much less a capital unit), left them vulnerable against a massed air/missile strike. Compared with their very limited ASuW weaponry (2 twin-barreled 57mm guns), this meant that they heavily relied on other escort units for effective all-round protection. The bow-mounted sonar also caused the entire ship to trim low forward, reducing its seakeeping ability. This is fact was one of the reasons that the two ships rarely ventured out of the relatively calm waters of the Black Sea and the eastern Mediterranean.



**Scenario Employment:** Both Moskva and Leningrad were permanently stationed in the Black Sea, acting as fleet flagships when a Kiev-class carrier was not present. They would normally lead the Black Sea Fleet forces as well as any detachments from the Northern Fleet, using their copious helicopters to mass-sanitize an area. Although it would be possible for them to be used in their original anti-SSGN/SSBN role (as depicted, for example, in the recent scenario "Polaris Hunters"), it is more likely that they would offer their ASW and AAW capabilities to other high-value units (flagships, tenders, amphibians etc.) that would need them.



**Game Stats:**

Maximum Speed: 31 knts.  
 Displacement: 14000 Tons  
 Damage Points: 310 DP  
 Length: 189 meters  
 Crew: 840  
 Aviation: Typically 14x Ka-25 helicopters. Yak-38 fighters can also be embarked.

**Equipment – PK Moskva (1980s) - DB2000 v6.3.2**

**Radars**

Type & Quantity	Max Range	Abilities	Notes
Don series (2)	25nm	Surface Search, Range Information, Bearing Information	Navigational radar
Head Net C	70nm	Surface Search, Air Search, Range Information, Bearing Information, Altitude Information, IFF Information	Secondary surveillance radar
Top Sail	300nm	Surface Search, Air Search, Range Information, Bearing Information, Altitude Information, IFF Information	Primary surveillance radar
Head Light A (2)	25nm	Surface Search, Air Search, Range Information, Bearing Information, Altitude Information	Illuminator for SA-N-3 SAM
Muff Cobb (2)	15nm	Surface Search, Range Information, Bearing Information, IFF Information	Fire-control for 57mm guns

**Electronic Warfare**

Type & Quantity	Max Range	Abilities	Notes
Bell Clout (2)	550nm	Surface Search, Air Search, Bearing Information, Classification	ESM system
Bell Slam (2)	550nm	Surface Search, Air Search, Bearing Information,	ESM system

# WAYPOINT

		Classification	
<b>Bell Tap (4)</b>	550nm	Surface Search, Air Search, Bearing Information, Classification	ESM system
<b>Side Globe ESM (8)</b>	220nm	Surface Search, Air Search, Bearing Information, Classification	ESM system
<b>Side Globe ECM (8)</b>	N/A		Defensive Jammer

## IR/EO Sensors:

Type and Quantity	Max Range	Abilities	Notes
<b>Tee Plinth (2)</b>	10 nm	Surface Search, Air Search, Bearing Information, IFF Information, Classification	EO device

## Sonars

Type & Quantity	Max Range	Abilities	Notes
<b>Moose Jaw (Orion)</b>	10nm	Sub Search, Range Information, Bearing Information	Bow-mounted sonar. Active-passive.
<b>Mare Tail (MG-325 Vega)</b>	5nm	Sub Search, Bearing Information, Range Information	Variable-depth sonar. Active-on

## Mounts

Type & Quantity	ROF	Capacity	Weapon (Service Date)
<b>SA-N-3A (2)</b>	15	24	SA-N-3A Goblet (1967?)
<b>RBU-6000 (2)</b>	1	1 (salvo)	RBU-6000 ASW/Anti-torpedo rocket
<b>SUW-N-1</b>	30	18	FRAS-1B rocket-propelled DC FRAS-1A Nuclear DC
<b>AK-725 57mm/80 Twin (2)</b>	1	75 (burst)	AK-725 57mm/80 Twin DP
<b>Chaff/Flare launcher</b>	1	8	Chaff, Flare

## Versions (H3-DB2000)

- **PK Moskva (1980s):** As described.

## Current service

Both Moskva (1996) and Leningrad (1991) have been retired and scrapped.

*This article first appeared on the 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of the Waypoint magazine, February 2003. All original author rights reserved. No replication of any part of this article is allowed without the author's explicit consent.*