

Floating batteries

PROTECTEUR class (cancelled 1848)
 DEVASTATION class (launched 1855)
 REMPART class (cancelled 1861)

PROTECTEUR class floating batteries

The French showed interest in steam floating batteries as early as 1821-22, when construction of one ship similar to USS Fulton I was scheduled at Rochefort. On 9.12.46 the ministry asked the dockyards to submit plans for two steam floating batteries to be laid down in 1847: Protecteur at Lorient and Tonnant at Brest. Their mission--similar to that of the contemporary English steam blockships--was to protect the entrances to the main French rivers. They were to have 450nhp screw engines. Specifications established in 6.47 called for at least 60 guns, including both 22cm No.1 shell and 36p guns, wood sides covered with iron plates, a maximum draft of 16ft 5in, a speed of 5-6kts, and a light rig. The navy lost interest in the project at the end of 1847, when it rejected a proposal for experiments with artillery against iron plates at Gâvres, and in 3.48 a recommendation was made to use old ships of the line and frigates instead.

DEVASTATION class floating batteries

Displacement:	1640t
Dimensions:	173ft 11in wl, 173ft 11in oa x 42ft 0in mld, 43ft 1in wl, 43ft 10in max x 8ft 6in mean, 8ft 10in max. Depth 8ft 3in
Same, meters:	53.00, 53.02 x 12.80, 13.14, 13.35 x 2.60, 2.70m. 2.52m
Machinery:	150nhp (Schneider). 2 cylinders, high pressure, trials 317ihp = 3.70kts. Coal 100t
Hull material:	Wood
Armour:	4.3in side
Armament:	(1855) GD 16-50p. SD 2-18p or 12p carr. (<u>Foudroyante</u> 1859) GD 4-50p, 12-16cm shell. SD 1-12cm shell. (<u>Dévastation</u> 1867, training ship) GD 6-19cm. SD 2-24cm, 3-16cm M1860, 1-22cm shell. (<u>Foudroyante</u> 1870) GD 10-16cm M1864 BLR; SD 2-14cm No.2 MLR.
Complement:	282

Name	Builder	Laid down	Launched	Commiss.	Fate
DEVASTATION	Cherbourg	5.9.54	17.4.55	25.4.55	Stk. 9.5.71
TONNANTE	Brest	5.9.54	17.3.55	23.4.55	Stk. 31.8.71
LAVE	Lorient	20.8.54	26.5.55	18.5.55	Stk. 9.5.71
FOUDROYANTE	Lorient	20.8.54	2.6.55	4.6.55	Stk. 29.11.71
CONGREVE	Rochefort	4.9.54	1.6.55	2.6.55	Stk. 13.5.67

Class. These ships were ordered 28.7.54 on plans by Guieysse and built as quickly as possible. During construction two more boilers were added in hopes of raising the power of the machinery to 225nhp, but speed trials were disappointing. Lave began to go into commission before she was launched. She, Dévastation, and Tonnante were towed to the Black Sea in about 45 days by, respectively, the paddle frigates Magellan, Albatros, and Darien. They demonstrated the value of armor during the bombardment of the Russian forts at Kinburn on 17.10.55. The other two were scheduled for the Baltic but operations there were over before they were ready and they stayed at Cherbourg. The original sail area of Tonnante was 1470 sq.yd. on three masts with square sails on the fore and main. The rig of the class was reduced to 419 sq.yd. after the Crimean War. In 1866 Dévastation became an annex to the gunnery training ship Louis XIV.

Disposals. Congrève was BU in 1867, Dévastation in 1871, Tonnante and Lave in 1873, and Foudroyante in 1875.

REMPART class floating batteries

In 5.60 a coast defense commission recommended construction of 11 floating batteries to give France a total of 20 for the defense of her main military and commercial ports. (The nine already in hand were the five Dévastation class and the four Palestro class, described in Conway 1860-1905.) On 16.11.60 the navy decided to build five iron-hulled ships in the dockyards (Rempart and Réveil at Cherbourg, Indomptable and Courageuse at Lorient, and one at Brest) and six by contract. Two sets of plans by Lemoine were given preliminary approval in 7.61. In early 11.61 the orders were redistributed: Rempart at Cherbourg, Indomptable and Courageuse at Lorient, Réveil at Brest, four Refuge class at Arman, Bordeaux, and three Arrogante class at Gouin, Nantes. The contract ships were built on Lemoine's two plans and are described in Conway 1860-1905, but the four dockyard ships, which were similar to the Refuge class, were cancelled on 28.11.61.