RIJEKA AND THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN NAVY

Rijeka i austrougarska mornarica

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Summary

I. Introduction. Rijeka is the largest commercial port of Croatia, situated in the Kvarner, the innermost part of the Adriatic Sea. The town and its harbor have the best connection with their hinterland, by road and by train. A toll-bridge leads to the international airport on the isle of Krk. Some islands and Dalmatian ports can be reached by ferry-boats.

II. First Austrian Navies: Venice, Trieste, Pula. After the fall of the Republic of Venice (1797) the Austro-Venetian Navy and the Naval College (Collegio di Marina a Venezia ) continued the maritime tradition. Some famous names like Tegetthoff, Sterneck, Littrow and many others could be found there. The years of revolution (1848/1849) made it necessary to transfer the remaining warships and the Naval College to Trieste ("Triester Marine"). Few years later (1856) the cornerstone of the Sea Arsenal in Pula/ Pola was laid (great celebrations in 2006!) and this historic istrian place then became the site of the new Austrian Navy. At the same time in Rijeka/ Fiume famous fast sailing vessels, the "clippers" were being built.

III. Discovery of Franz Josef-Land (Carl Weyprecht and Julius Payer ). The purpose of the most important expedition of the Austro-Hungarian Navy during the 19th century was to find the so called North-East Passage from Europe to the Far East.
- The schooner ADMIRAL TEGETTHOFF was built in Bremerhaven, but the crew came mostly from the Adriatic (Istria, Rijeka, Dalmatia). Captain Weyprecht and Rijeka's harbour master Littrow selected 15 sailors. Altogether there were 24 persons and a few dogs on board.

IV. The Imperial and Royal Naval Academy. In 1856 the cornerstone of a new large building was laid in Fiume/ Rijeka. Soon after started the lessons and four years later first young cadets could leave the Academy. During the WW 1 the Academy moved to Vienna, than to Schloßhof and to Braunau. Since the end of the war the ex-Academy building in Rijeka has lodged the municipal hospital.

V. Luppis, Whitehead and the Torpedo Factory. Captain G.B. Luppis invented the first primitive torpedo ("coast savior"). But Luppis couldn’t resolve technical problems
and didn’t receive enough money to finish his studies. Engineer Robert Whitehead constructed the real offensive fish-torpedoes and opened the Whitehead Torpedo factory in Rijeka. Later on a well-working and still existing torpedo-launching station was built there.

VI. Rijeka: Torpedo boats, submarines and one battleship. Before and during the WW1 a lot of different torpedo-boats were built in the Danubius shipyard (now shipyard “3rd May” in Rijeka, Kantrida). They all had a number followed by the letter F (F= Fiume/ Rijeka) on their bow. T-boats built in Trieste or Monfalcone had the letter T, respectively M.

The construction of submarines in Rijeka started in 1908. Nine units came to action and six were not yet ready when war was over in 1918. Submarines in service had famous captains.

The battleship Szent István was built in Rijeka’s dockyard, launched in 1914 and then towed to Pula’s Sea Arsenal. In June 1918 the Admirality decided to force the Straits of Otranto. The dreadnaught Szent István was torpedoed by an Italian MAS (torpedo motorboat) near the Isle of Premuda and sank.

I. INTRODUCTION

There are two ways leading to the port of Rijeka by ship: from Trieste, Venice or Ancona through the “Big door” (Vela vrata) “between Istria and the island of Cres. Arriving from the southern Adriatic through the “Middle door” (Srednja vrata) between the islands of Cres and Krk. On their way to Rijeka harbour ships cross the large Bay of Rijeka. A third possibility to reach Rijeka (only small vessels!) is through the narrow channel (Mala vrata) between Krk and the mainland. The wind here often blows very strong (bora in the Velebit channel).

It frequently happens that bora blows in the North-Adriatic and in the central and sirocco in the South-Adriatic at the same time. The typical bora does not

Figure 1. General-Post-und Straßenkarte
Figure 2. Fiume/Rijeka, Lighthouse c. 1878 (Archives: M. Smokvina)
cause large waves but very small ones. The north wind or tramontana is similar to bora and usually blows from the Nord. (28) (25)

Rijeka (45°20’ N, 14°25’ E) is the largest and the busiest commercial port of Croatia, is opened to international sailing and a permanent port of entry with customs and health authorities.

The city and the harbour have the best communication with their hinterland, by road and by train. A toll-bridge leads to the international airport on the isle of Krk. Some islands and dalmatian ports can be reached by ferry-boats. – During some centuries Rijeka, the dalmatian coast and the islands had to be defended against frequent attacks of pirates. In 1719 Rijeka (like Trieste) became a booming free port.

II. FIRST AUSTRIAN NAVIES: VENICE, TRIESTE, POLA/PULA

After the fall of the Republic of Venice (1797) the Austro-Venetian Navy and the Naval College (Collegio di Marina a Venezia) continued the maritime tradition. There we could find some famous names like Tegetthoff, Sterneck, Littrow and many others. The years of revolution (1848/49) made it necessary to transfer the remaining warships and the Naval College to Trieste in three different sites (“Triester Marine”). Few years later (1856) in Pola/Pula the

![Figure 3. L. Rubelli: ERZHSRZOG FERDINAND MAX, battle near Lissa/Vis 1866 N. Karkovich (Hvar) with the captured Italian flag (on the right) (On the bridge: Tegetthoff, Minutillo, Sterneck)
cornerstone of the Sea-Arsenal (great celebrations in December 2006) was laid. In 1858 the Linienschiff KAISER was launched in that new austrian base (KAISER: 5194 ts, 12 knots, 800 HP, Crew: 904 men). 1866: battle near Lissa/Vis. (42) (14) (13) (12) (Capt. Paolo Muner, Trieste: “Il Leone di Lissa”)

To commemorate the dead seamen the Austrian Navy erected the monumental “Lion of Lissa” (original in Livorno/Italy). Many of the men killed in action had slav (dalmatian) family names: Svićarović – Cerković – Borovic – Kottić – Stanić – Benkovic – Soić – Janković – Palluvicoyich ... and others. Later on the KAISER was the training-ship BELLONA in Pola/Pula (21). That historic harbour in Istria now became the site of the new Austrian Navy. – At the same time in Rijeka/Fiume were built famous fast sailing-vessels, the “clippers”. They reached Australia, the Far East and many other countries.
Nearly 140 years ago the first Austrian expedition started with the sailing-boat ISBJÖRN (=Polar-Bear) to install a depot at Nowaya Zemlya to help the next principal expedition. Meanwhile at Bremerhaven in northern Germany was launched the ADMIRAL TEGETTHOFF: a 3-mast-schooner (220 ts, 110 x 25 feet, 25 HP, double keel). The flag red-white-red/red-white-green showed that the ADMIRAL TEGETTHOFF wasn’t a warship but a merchantship. Next step: selection of the crew in Rijeka, organized by the local Royal Hungarian Maritime Office. Governor Josef count Zichy allowed about 200 interested sailors of the Austrian Navy to come to Rijeka; there Carl Weyprecht and Heinrich von Littrow gave the necessary information: “Return to your home and tell your families what the expected difficulties of such an expedition are! You will find a good ship but the worst weather-conditions ice, cold, hard work, no coffee-houses, no inns, no possibility to write a letter to your family at home”. – Finally (at the second call) the crew consisted of 15 sailors coming from Istria (Volosko ...), Rijeka, Dalmatia mainland and some islands. Nine more men were: Linienschiffsleutnant Carl Weyprecht (Comanding officer on board), Alpin-Oberleutnant (Comanding officer on land), 2 Navy officers (Orel, Brosch), hungarian doctor Julius Keppes, machinist Otto Krisch, 2 tyrolian mountaineers, 1 norwegian ice-master and harpoonier, and a dozen of well trained dogs.

Tromsø/North Norway, July 14th, 1872. Last letters were imposed, addressed to the families and to the Governor count Zichy; “We all stay very well – Noi tutti del TEGETTHOFF vi salutiamo! – Do videnja” The ship rounded the North Cape, course Nowaya Zemlya. There they met with Admiral Sterneck and count Wilczek on board the ISBJÖRN, (34) had a good meal in occasion of the birthday of the Emperor (August 18th). ISBJÖRN returned southward. Two days later the ADMIRAL TEGETTHOFF was enclosed by ice and drifted northeastward. On August 30th boatsman Lusina (originally from the isle of Cres but now captain in Rijeka) called: “Terra – terra, land, I see land!” Only two months later the men could step on the new land and named it “Franz Josef-Land.”

It was impossible to free the ship from ice and snow, Payer made some excursions with the sledges to some capes and sounds: Cape Trieste, Cape Fiume, Cape Littrow, Sterneck-Sound, Austria-Sound...

The second polar-winter passed. On May 20th, 1874 Weyprecht decided to leave the ADMIRAL TEGETTHOFF with the intention to find the open sea.

It was a terrible way back, 96 days with their sledges and boats. On August 14th finally free water. 10 days later: Russian fisherboats found the men and brought
them to Vardø/North Norway. The norwegian Hurtig-Line steamer FINNMARKEN continued to Hamburg, where Heinrich von Littrow expected the seamen. By train they reached (20) Vienna and Trieste. In Fiume/Rijeka the new Governor count Szapary – during a banquet – nominated Weyprecht honorary citizen of the town. During the long absence of their husbands or brothers or sons some wives had climbed the steps to the Madonna of Trsat where “ex voto” and “Per grazia ricevuta” were offered.

IV. THE IMPERIAL AND ROYAL NAVAL ACADEMY IN RIJEKA (24) (3) (25)

Opposite Rijeka’s railway-station you can find – nearly hidden by old trees – a large building in a beautiful garden: the municipal hospital. In 1855 major Poradowski von Korab designed first plans and one year later (March 26th, 1856) the cornerstone of the new building was laid in presence of the archduke Ferdinand Max, Commander in Chief of the Austrian Navy. By October 3rd, 1857 the building was ready and the lessons could start. There was enough place for 100 to 200 students, teaching personnel, leading officers, dormitories, the chapel and...the prison. 4 years of studies were normal, after what students left the Academy as cadets.

Figure 5. Schooner ADMIRAL TEGETTHOFF in ice and snow
In 1914 – when WW 1 started – the Academy transfers to Vienna (Stiftskaserne, 7th district), then to Schloßhof (river March, Lower Austria), and in 1915 to Braunau/Inn (Upper Austria), (17) Salzburger Vorstadt number 13. Boatstraining was possible at Wolfgangsee (Lake of St. Wolfgang, where some original boats (cutter), once property of the k.u.k. Eriegsmarine (see aquarelle Pranz Lauffer), still exist. At the end of WW 1 the academy-building in Rijeka served as field-hospital. – Originally the Marineakademie in Fiume/Rijeka was situated directly on the waterfront where different training-boats were ready for exercise. Later on (1873) was constructed the railway-station Fiume/Rijeka (line Pivka/ Sankt Peter im Karst – Matulj – Fiume/Rijeka). A nice aquarelle painted by Captain Franz Lauffer (1901) – Marine-Almanach 1918, page 517 – shows the situation. Now the Academy/Municipal hospital lays off the waterfront.

Each year some free places (scholarships) were given to diligent students, offered by various institutions, for instance Škoda/Plzen, A. Krupp, City of Vienna and the Council of Trieste and Fiume/Rijeka. Interesting is the following document, signed by the Commander of the k.u.k. Marineakademie: (12) (41)

“The See-Aspirant Felix Schmidt (Later: Félix vitéz Bornemisza), Marineakademie Flume, third year, has the permission to leave the Academy from 26/7/1914 – 15/9/1914 to reach Pozsony/Bratislava/ Preßburg”. – In 1910 the statistics said: In the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy existed 12 different languages; in the k.u.k. Kriegs-marine there were: 34% Croatian and Slovenian

![Figure 6. Die Marine-Akademie in Fiume, Aquarel von Franz Lauffer](image-url)
Figure 7. Felix Schmidt Permission to leave the Academy

Figure 8. On board the T-boat Kaiman (Photo: Krigersarchiv Wien)
speaking sailors, 20% Hungarian, 17% German speaking, 14% Italian, 11% Czechoslovakian, 4% Polish, Romanian and Ruthenian speaking sailors. (17)

The Marine-Almanach 1918, pages 563/564 gives the names of 15 professors, including prof. Desiderius Petrasovics, dr. theol. et phil., born in 1881. Page 657: 5 retired professors, among them E. Mayer, J. Wolf, J. Schuler (all with domicile Fiume), and P. Salcher (Trieste). (2)

V. LUPPIS, WHITEHEAD AND THE TORPEDO-FACTORY (35) (3) (38) (43)

Giovanni Biagio (Ivan Blaz) Luppis was born in Rijeka (24/1/1813 or 1814) where his father was a ship-owner and a captain. Young Luppis had the possibility to cross the seas together with his father. Then he frequented the Austrian “Collegio Navale” (Naval Academy) in Venice and left it as Cadet few years later (1835). Young officer served on board of various warships and in 1861 retired with the rank of Fregattenkapitän.

The navy officer g.b. Luppis built on board the BEllona (III) his (4) first model of a new weapon and he called it “coast-saviour” (salvacoste or Küstenretter). With this new weapon Luppis intended to defend the dalmatian coast against an eventually adversary arriving from the opposite coast of the Adriatic. But the new weapon also had to be offensive to destroy and eventually to sink enemy ships.

G. B. Luppis presented his invention in Vienna but the project was rejected. Captain Luppis turned home but he didn't forget his plans: the newest weapon was called “brulotto”. New, but in reality, very old idea: Greeks and Romans had once used this new weapon in their wars in Mediterranean. In German the brulotto was called “Brander”. In 1866 (the year of the battle of Lissa/Vis) G.B. Luppis presented his last project: The “Mine-Vessel” (later: Torpedo). This Torpedo was accepted. But it was not Luppis alone who created the Torpedo.

Only two years earlier a certain Robert Whitehead elaborated on the so called “Fish-Torpedo”. Captain Luppis de Rammer resigned and together with his wife Elisa de Zotty left Rijeka/Fiume. He died on January 11th 1875 in Milano. His grave can be found in the Monumental Cemetery Milan, Central Ossuary, wall 32, cell 35.

Robert Whitehead was born on the 3rd January 1823 in the County of Lancashire (England) as a son of a notable cloth-manufacturer. Robert found his first job in Manchester in his uncle's factory before he frequented the Mechanics Institute. As a ships-engineer he went to Marseille. In later years he worked in Milano but during the revolution of 1848 he preferred to stay in Trieste. “Österreichischer Lloyd”, “Stabilimento Tecnico Triestino” in Trieste and the
“Stabilimento Tecnico Fiumano” in Rijeka were places where Robert Whitehead worked for many years in the leading position. (35)

First Luppis and Whitehead worked together to finish the studies for the new weapon “Torpedo”. But Luppis retired. Therefore, Whitehead continued and constructed and manufactured the torpedo with the help of some specialists: These were John Whitehead, Robert’s son and Annibale Ploech whose family once came from Styria (Austria). They made many tests and launched torpedoes from the ex gunboats SEEHUND and GEMSE. In 1873 the german Imperial Navy concluded an important contract with “Torpedo”/Rijeka and in 1891 the austrian Kaiser Franz Josef I. visited the Whitehead factory in Rijeka. There had been built a well-working and still existing torpedo-launchingstation. 4 torpedoes were launched with the best success. “Es war sehr schön – es hat mich sehr gefreut” the Kaiser said as usually. It was very nice – I am very pleased. – In 1909/1910 the argentinian training-ship PRESIDENTE SARMIENTO visited Europe. On the “viaje de instruction” cadets could “visitar la base naval austriaca Pola” and “la fàbrica de torpedos Whitehead de Fiume/Rijeka. (33)

Many navies ordered the new weapon, torpedoes, and, before the WW 1 started in 1914, England, USA, Italy, Russia and France had established their torpedo factories deriving from the first factory in Rijeka.

In 1904 the Nautical Academy in Trieste (“II Nautico”) celebrated 150 years of existence. Therefore students and professors went by ship to Fiume/Rijeka in pilgrimage to the tomb of Padre Orlando, born in Fiume, who once founded the Nautico Trieste. (40)

During the First International Conference (2003) celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Whitehead torpedo factory in Rijeka and the 190th anniversary of G.B. Luppis’ birthday all guests coming from different parts of Europe had the opportunity to visit the important industrial heritage, the torpedo factory and the launching-ramp.
Figure 10. Pilgrimage to Fiume/Rijeka, 1904. (Archives: E. Schatz)
VI. RIJEKA: TORPEDOBOATS, SUBMARINES AND ONE BATTLESHP – AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN WARSHIPS BUILT IN FIUME/RIJEKA (16) (7)

Consulting the last official Almanach of the Imperial and Royal Navy (war edition Pola 1918) you notice that its position among the navies of the world was a very good one: the k.u.k. Kriegsmarine held the 8th position, right after Great Britain, Germany, USA, France, Russia, Japan and Italy. (2)

a) Before and during the WW1, the Danubius-(ex Whitehead) shipyard (now “Shipyard 3. Maj” in Rijeka-Kantrida) built a lot of different torpedoboats. Some had on their bow a number followed by the letter “F” (=Fiume/Rijeka). T-boats built in Trieste or Monfalcone had the letter “T”, respectively “M”. In nine years, from 1908 to 1916, in Rijeka were launched 32 torpedoboats. Better armed and bigger T-boats were called destroyers (Torpedobootzerstörer or Zerstörer). 16 of this type were built in Rijeka. Nearly all of these T-boats and destroyers came in contact with enemy ships during the war. A good example is the sinking of two k.u.k. Zerstörers built in Rijeka: S.M. Zerstörer LIKA and S. M. Zerstörer TRIGLAV. Both belonged to the modern TATRA-class. Construction in 1911-1914, launched 1913, 850 ts, 33 knots, 84 x 7.5 x 2.5 m, crew 99, armament: 2x10 cm, 6x7 cm, 4 torpedoes. (16)

At the end of the year 1915 the rest of the beaten Serbian army tried to reach the Italian coast by ship. British warships protected the convoys and came in contact with the austro-hungarian T-boats. Near Durazzo (Albania) LIKA and TRIGLAV hit enemy mines and sank. Two new destroyers with the traditional names LIKA and TRIGLAV were built in Rijeka during the years 1916/17.

b) The construction of submarines in Fiume/Rijeka started in 1908. Nine units came to action and six were not ready when war was over in 1918. Submarines in service were U 5, U 6, U 7; U 21, U 22; U 29, U 30, U 31, U 32 and some had famous captains. (1) (23)
c) The battleship S.M.S. SZENT ISTVAN, S.M.S. means Seiner Majestät Schiff (sempre mancano soldi, sneered the people), or in English: H.M.S. = His Majesty Ship, was built in Rijeka’s dockyard, launched in 1914 and then towed to Pula’s Sea-Arsenal. The austro-hungarian big ships (battleships and cruisers) mostly were not offensive ones but remained in their bases (“fleet in being”). However in June 1918 the Admirality decided to force the Straits of Otranto. Near the isle of Premuda the dreadnaught SZENT ISTVAN was torpedoed by an italian MAS (torpedomotorboat) and sank. (10) (31)

*Figure 12. Szent Istvan 10/6/1918*
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I. Uvod
Rijeka je najveća trgovačka luka Hrvatske, smještena na Kvarneru, najunutarnijem dijelu Jadranskoga mora. Grad i njegova luka imaju najbolje cestovne i željeznice veze s unutrašnjosti. Naplatni most vodi do internacionalne zračne luke na otoku Krku. Do nekih otoka i dalmatinskih luka dolazi se trajektima.

II. Prve austrijske mornarice: Venecija, Trst, Pula
Nakon pada Republike Venecije (1797.) austro-venecijska mornarica i Viša mornarička škola (Collegio di Marina a Venezia) nastavile su pomorsku tradiciju. Tu su djelovala i neka poznata imena poput Tagetthoffa, Sternecka, Littrowa i mnogih drugih. Doba revolucije (1848.–1849.) dovelo je do premještanja sačuvanih ratnih brodova i Više mornaričke škole u Trstu (Triester Marine). Nekoliko godina poslije (1856.) položen je kamen temeljac morske oružnice u Puli (velika slavlja 2006.). Tada je ovaj povijesni istarski grad postao lokacija nove austrijske mornarice. U Rijeci su se u to vrijeme gradili neki poznati brzi brodovi, tzv. kliperi.

III. Otkriće Franza Jozefa – zemlja (Carl Weyprecht i Julius Payer)

IV. Carska i kraljevska pomorska akademija

V. Luppis, Whitehead i tvornica torpeda

VI. Rijeka: torpedni brodovi, podmornice i jedan bojni brod
Prije i za vrijeme Prvoga svjetskog rata mnogi su različiti torpedni brodovi sagrađeni u brodogradilištu “Dunav” (današnji “3. maj” u Rijeci na Kantridi). Na njihovim su

Sažetak

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Bojni brod “Szent Istvan” sagrađen je u riječkom brodogradilištu, pušten u more 1914. i onda potegnut u pulsku morsku oružnicu. U lipnju 1918. admiral su odlučili provaliti u tjesnac Otranto. U blizini otoka Premude talijanski MAS (motorni torpedni brod) torpedirao je dreadnot “Szent Istvan” i potopio ga.