

**SHORE BOMBARDMENT ACTIONS OF AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN
CAPITAL SHIPS DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR***

During the First World War, both sides used their capital ships for shore bombardment. The first such action signaled the beginning of the hostilities in the Mediterranean: on 4 August 1914, the German battlecruiser *Goeben* shelled Philippeville in French Algeria. After that, action shifted to the eastern coast of England where on 3 November, the German battlecruisers raided Yarmouth, and on 16 December 1914, Scarborough, Hartlepool and Whitby were bombarded. No more actions occurred until 25 April 1916, when the German battlecruisers shelled Yarmouth and Lowestoft.

On the Entente side, the most prominent example of the shore bombardments is the Dardanelles campaign in 1915. In this campaign, in addition to the numerous British and French pre-dreadnoughts, one of the most modern fast battleships of the Royal Navy, HMS *Queen Elizabeth* also participated. On 18 March 1915, three pre-dreadnoughts were mined and sunk and another three were severely damaged. The above-mentioned German raids had no strategic value, but the Dardanelles campaign was a failure.¹

Later in the war on the Flanders front, the Royal Navy achieved much better results with purpose-built vessels. Britain was the only World War I naval power to build vessels specially designed for shore bombardment that were armed with battleship caliber guns. These warships were called monitors, the first being the *Abercrombie* class with its four units armed with American 35.6 cm (14-inch) guns. The American firm Bethlehem Steel Co. had sold Britain the four gun turrets originally manufactured for the Greek dreadnought *Salamis*.² The availability of complete gun turrets made it possible to build these monitors in six months. The next monitors were the eight units of the *Lord Clive* class. Because there were no more new gun turrets available, they were fitted with the 30.5 cm (12-inch) gun turrets removed from the old pre-dreadnoughts of the *Majestic* class. Two *Lord Clive*-class monitors were deployed to the Adriatic in 1917, where they were used to shell Austro-Hungarian positions. Later a few 38.1 cm (15-inch) monitors were built when 38.1 cm gun turrets became available. Two monitors, *General Wolfe* and *Lord Clive* were rearmed with the largest naval gun of the

* I am especially thankful to Tony DiGiulian, the owner of the NavWeaps.com website, who took on the task of proofreading the manuscript. I would like to thank also to Tibor Balla, András Hatala, Gábor Kiss, László Kiss, Ferenc Pollmann and Jan Vaňata.

¹ The lack of success was partly explained by the ineffectiveness of the contemporary naval gunnery and fire control against small or not directly visible land targets. See *Scott* 1919. pp. 309–315.

² The *Salamis* had been ordered from the German shipyard Vulkan but due to the outbreak of the war, the Bethlehem Steel Co. did not deliver the gun turrets.

First World War, the 45.7 cm/40 (18-inch) Mark I.³ Most monitors were used to shell the Flanders front while others were deployed to the Mediterranean. The Italians built two self-propelled floating batteries armed with 38.1 cm (15-inch) guns manufactured for the never finished *Caracciolo* class fast battleships. These batteries lacked any sea-going capabilities. There is evidence that the Austro-Hungarian Navy was considering building floating batteries using the 35 cm/45 (13.8-inch) guns manufactured for the never-built “Improved *Tegetthoff*”-class battleships. Unfortunately, we have no detailed information about this project.⁴

As it lacked purpose-built vessels, the Austro-Hungarian Navy used what it had for shore bombardment missions: torpedo boats, destroyers, cruisers and different kinds of capital ships, from old coastal defense ships to the most modern dreadnoughts. It is important to clarify here which ships could be classified as capital ships in the Austro-Hungarian Navy. Aside the true battleships of the *Radetzky* and the *Tegetthoff* classes, capital ships were the small pre-dreadnoughts of the *Erzherzog Karl* and the *Habsburg* classes, and even the old and obsolete coastal defense ships of the *Monarch* class. In the Austro-Hungarian Navy, the armored cruisers also fell into this category, at least the two latest

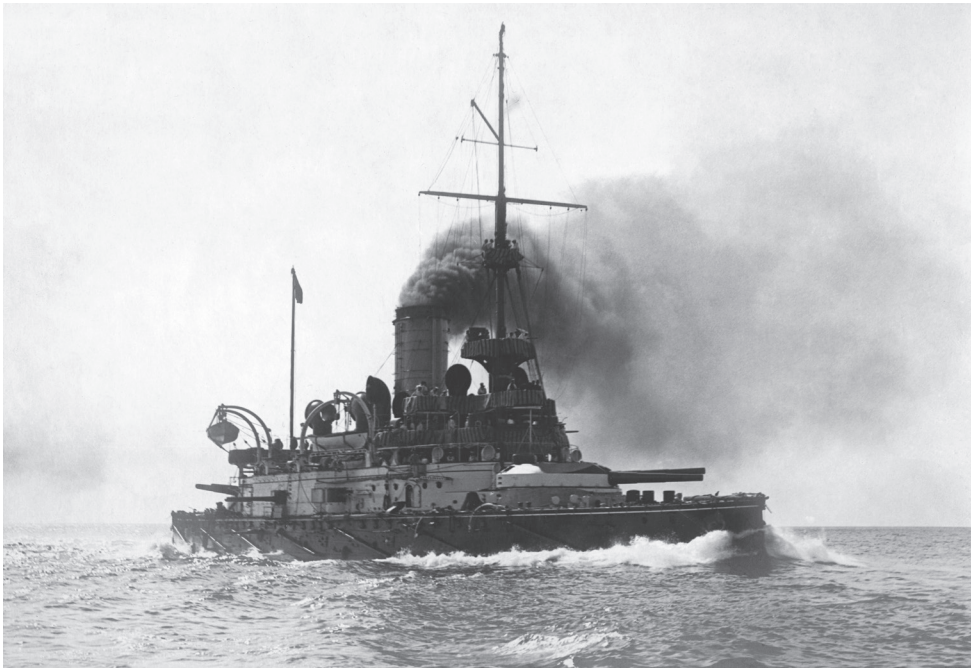


Illustration N°1: A Monarch-class coastal defense ship (Fortepan/Tarbay Júlia)

³ See NavWeaps.com: http://www.navweaps.com/Weapons/WNBR_18-40_mk1.php.

⁴ In the State Regional Archives (SOA) of Plzeň there is a description made by Škoda of a twin 35 cm mount for a floating battery. Its original design number is 53T/1647. Thanks to Jan Vaňata for this document.

ones, the *Kaiser Karl VI* and the *Sankt Georg*. They had the same caliber (24 cm) main guns as the pre-dreadnoughts, and the possible thickest armor. They were intended for use in the battle line instead of being protectors of trade or commerce raiders. Their main wartime purpose was to complete the numerically inferior battleship squadrons by forming a “fast wing” of the battle line.⁵ Naturally, the Navy preferred to use the older, “disposable” capital ships for these shore bombardment missions as they had their risks: mines or torpedoes could send even the largest units to the bottom. Consequently, the modern battleships were sent out only once against the enemy coastline, an event that took place immediately after the Italian declaration of war in May 1915.

The Naval War in the Adriatic

On 28 July 1914, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, which triggered a general European war within two weeks. The hope of localizing the war ended within days. At the beginning of the war, every belligerent thought that the fighting would not last long. Contrary to these hopes, the war lasted over four years and cost more than ten million lives. The war led to the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and to the overthrow of the Romanovs, the Habsburgs and the Hohenzollerns.

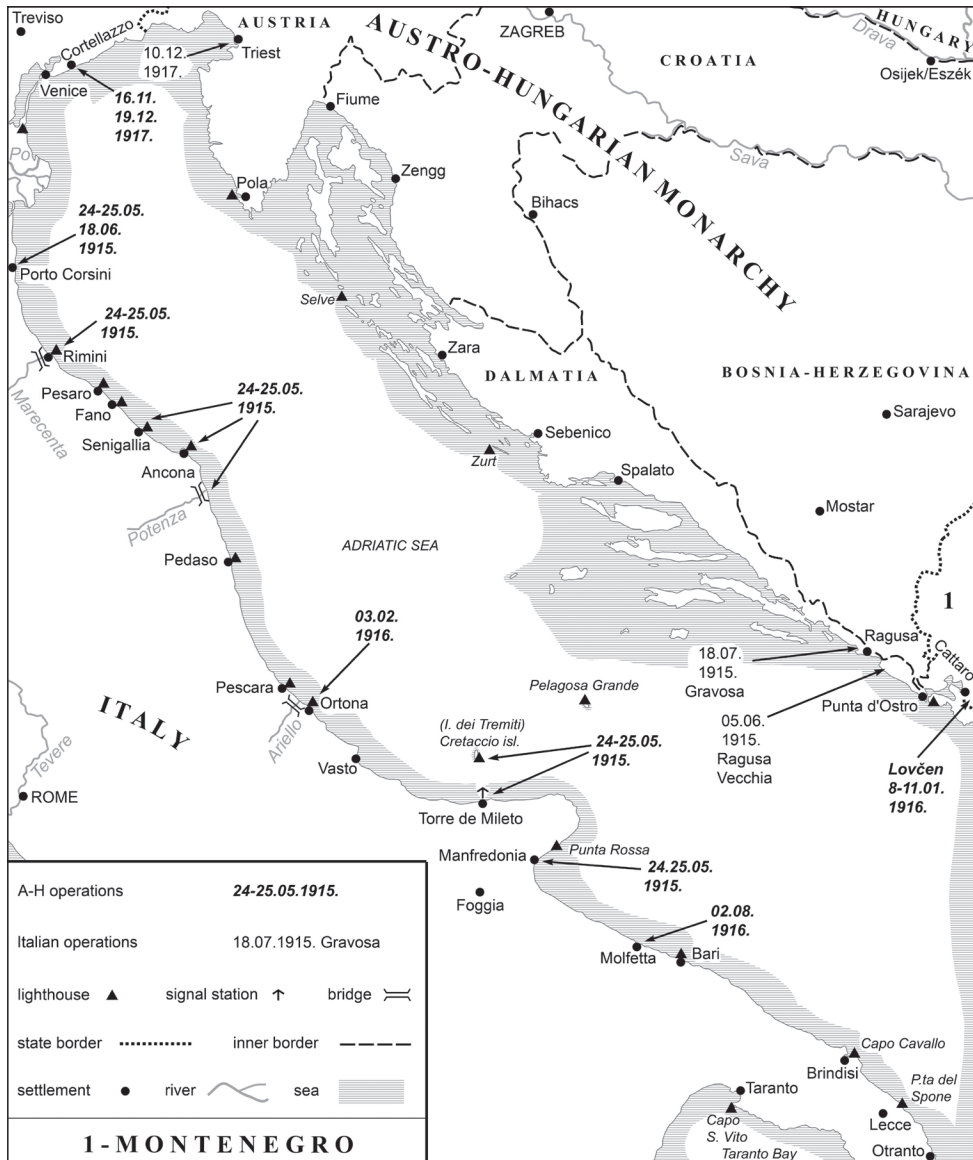
Thanks to the Naval Convention of the Triple Alliance of November 1913,⁶ in the first days of the Great War it seemed that the joint Austro-Hungarian–Italian fleet would conduct offensive operations against the French Navy. In July 1914, the sides were nearly equal: the French Navy reinforced with British units would face the combined Italian and Austro-Hungarian Navies reinforced with the German battlecruiser *Goeben*. This situation changed radically within days, to the detriment of the Dual Monarchy. In the very first days of the war, the Italian Navy made steps to fulfill its obligation under the naval convention. On 29 July, the Chief of the Staff of the Italian Navy, viceammiraglio⁷ Paolo Thaon di Revel ordered the 1st and the 2nd battleship squadrons to begin the preparations for mobilization.⁸ However, a few days later, on 2 August 1914, the Italian neutrality became official, which torpedoed the prewar plans. The Naval Convention of the Triple Alliance ceased to exist on this day.

⁵ KA MS/PK I-4/9 2667 ex 1905 and *Krámlí* 2021. p. 41.

⁶ The Triple Alliance was renewed in December 1912. The Italians proposed to renew the naval convention of 1900 in a revised form. This convention, which concentrated on the Mediterranean, went into effect on 1 November 1913. The main goal of the convention was to defeat the enemy and seize control over the Mediterranean by the joint Italian–Austro-Hungarian fleet in the event of war with France.

⁷ For the Austro-Hungarian, Italian and French naval ranks and the Austro-Hungarian military ranks, I chose to follow the method of some prominent American naval historians and use the original forms. See these ranks in the *Appendix*.

⁸ *Halpern* 1971. pp. 275–276.



Map N°1: The Adriatic Theater of War, 1914–1917

In mid-August 1914, the Austro-Hungarian Navy, the world’s eighth largest navy, found itself standing alone against the world’s fifth largest navy, the French, reinforced by British units. The only greater nightmare would be an enemy coalition of Britain, France, and the old rival Italy. This nightmare came true in May 1915, when Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary. No wonder then, that Admiral Anton Haus wrote these lines in September 1914, explaining his position: “So long as the possibility exists that

Italy will declare war against us, I consider my first duty to keep our fleet intact [...] for the decisive struggle against this, our most dangerous foe”.⁹

The strategic situation mentioned above forced the Austro-Hungarian Navy to abandon all offensive plans, and the only possible option was to defend their own coastline. The Austro-Hungarian Navy was bottled up in the Adriatic, but in exchange, the eastern half of the Adriatic became practically an Austro-Hungarian lake. The French in 1914, the Italians in 1915, and the Americans in 1918, all conceived plans of amphibious operations against the Dalmatian coasts, but all these plans were rejected, mainly due to the lack of available soldiers, who were all needed on the Western Front.

On the Adriatic, especially after the summer of 1915, the conflict evolved into a so-called “little war,” fulfilling the 1880’s prophecy of Archduke Albrecht.¹⁰ The Adriatic war was fought almost exclusively with submarines and light surface forces. It was soon found out by both sides that the confined waters of the Adriatic were unhealthy for large units due to the submarine menace. It is worth noting that even the most modern battleships of the Mediterranean Powers lacked an effective torpedo protection system, and the navies were more or less aware of this fact. In addition, after the experiences of the battles of Dogger Bank (24 January 1915) and Jutland (31 May – 1 June 1916), which showed the vulnerability of the capital ships to extensive damage and sinking, neither side was enthusiastic to risk its battle fleet in an open battle. This was especially true for Italy and Austria-Hungary who had limited numbers of first-rate warships.¹¹ So from 1915 onwards, the Allied heavy units did not want to enter into the Adriatic while for their part the Austro-Hungarian battleships were reluctant to leave their naval base at Pola. However, the threat that the seven modern Austro-Hungarian battleships posed as a “fleet in being” did tie up some Allied forces to keep them at home.

As the menace of enemy heavy units in the Adriatic practically disappeared after July 1915, Austro-Hungarian capital ships were put out to sea during the war mostly for shore bombardment missions. Moreover, these ships fired their guns in anger exclusively on land targets. A part of these missions were executed in the “backyard” of the Navy: Austro-Hungarian units shelled from their own naval base the Montenegrin batteries on the Mount Lovčén towering over the southern, Montenegrin side of the Gulf of Cattaro, those batteries posing a threat to the Cattaro naval base. As Italy remained neutral during this period, apart from Montenegro, the Austro-Hungarian Navy had no other coastal targets until the Italian declaration of war on the Dual Monarchy on 23 May 1915.

⁹ *Sondhaus* 1994, p. 261.

¹⁰ In July 1880, a committee chaired by Archduke Albrecht met in Vienna to decide on the future development of the Navy. The Archduke concluded that it was enough to maintain the Navy’s strength instead of developing it. He advised to pursue a coastal defense strategy, and conduct a *Verteidigungskrieg im Kleinen* (defensive war on a small scale) in a future war against Italy. *Reiter* 1948, pp. 68–70.

¹¹ On the Austro-Hungarian side see: *Krámlí* 2016.

On the eve of the war the Austro-Hungarian Navy possessed seventeen capital ships in commission: three dreadnoughts (*Tegetthoff* class), three mixed large-caliber battleships (*Radetzky* class), six older battleships, designated as “Panzerschiff” (armored ship), the *Erzherzog Karl* and *Habsburg* classes, plus three old and hopelessly obsolete coastal defense ships (*Monarch* class) and two armored cruisers (*Sankt Georg* and *Kaiser Karl VI*). Only the dreadnoughts and the *Radetzky*s had truly modern and potent guns, 30.5 cm/45s (12-inch). The other units were armed with slightly different variants of the 24 cm/40 guns (9.4-inch). In November 1915, the fourth and last dreadnought of the Austro-Hungarian Navy, the *Szent István* joined the fleet. The most potent part of the Navy was the First Battleship Squadron composed of the First Battleship Division (*Tegetthoff* class) and the Second Battleship Division (*Radetzky* class). Its commander was Vizeadmiral Maximilian Njegovan. The flagship of the entire operative fleet, commanded by Admiral Anton Haus, was the dreadnought *Viribus Unitis*. Njegovan’s flagship was the dreadnought *Tegetthoff*. The Second Battleship Squadron was composed of the Third Battleship Division (*Erzherzog Karl* class) and the Fourth Battleship Division (*Habsburg* class). Its commander was Kontreadmiral Franz Löffler, and his flagship was the *Erzherzog Karl*. While before the war it was planned to decommission the obsolescent *Monarch*-class coastal defense ships, they remained in active service and the Fifth Battleship Division was formed from them. The armored cruisers belonged to the Cruiser-flotilla (Kreuzerflotille) composed of the First Cruiser Division and the First and the Second Torpedo-flotilla (Torpedoflotille). Its commander was Vizeadmiral Paul von Fiedler and his flagship was the armored cruiser *Sankt Georg*. The two armored cruisers were assigned to the First Cruiser Division.

Admiral Anton Haus had been appointed Commander of the Austro-Hungarian Navy in February 1913. He was the Marinekommandant, the commander of the Navy, and the Chef der Marinesektion,¹² the head of the naval administration, in one person, as all his predecessors had been since 1868. In accordance with the prewar plans, Haus was appointed Flottenkommandant, the commander of the operative fleet. In 1916, he was promoted to Großadmiral.¹³ On 8 February 1917, Anton Haus died from pneumonia aboard his flagship. The new Emperor, Karl I attempted to reorganize the Navy, which included the separation of the administrative command from the operational command. Maximilian Njegovan was appointed Flottenkommandant and he was promoted to full Admiral but the post of Marinekommandant remained vacant. In April 1917, Njegovan

¹² Contrary to the other naval powers, Austria-Hungary had no separate Naval Ministry. The Marinesektion (Naval Department) was part of the common Ministry of War. It was a “quasi ministry” inside the Ministry of War, its Chef was deputy-minister and it had a separate building, but the common minister of war was still responsible for the Navy. Since Vizeadmiral Wilhelm von Tegetthoff (1868–1871), the Marinekommandants have also been Chefs der Marinesektion.

¹³ Großadmiral is the equivalent of “Admiral of the Fleet”. The only active duty officer ever to have received this rank was Anton Haus. Other Großadmirals were the members of the Habsburg and the Hohenzollern families.

was appointed Marinekommandant and Chef der Marinesektion. In his one-year tenure, Njegovan continued his predecessor's cautious policy but he lacked the undoubted authority of Haus. The Cattaro Mutiny of 1–3 February 1918 ended Njegovan's career, and he was forced to retire. The Emperor wanted a young and energetic admiral as Flottenkommandant, so Linienschiffskapitän Miklós Horthy, the hero of the Otranto Straits Raid (15 May 1917), was promoted to Kontreadmiral and he was appointed Flottenkommandant on 27 February 1918. The Emperor resumed the command of the Navy personally, at least formally. He was represented in practice by Vizeadmiral Franz von Keil who was appointed to "Admiral zur Disposition zur allerhöchste Oberbefehls" (Admiral at the disposition of High Command).¹⁴

The Bombardment of Mount Lovćen between August and October 1914

On 28 July 1914, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy declared war on Serbia. With the beginning of the hostilities with Russia in August, the Serbian front became a secondary theater. The commander in chief of the Austro-Hungarian Balkan forces was Feldzeugmeister Oskar Potiorek and the ill-fated offensives against Serbia in 1914 were colloquially called the "Potiorek offensives". His narcissistic personality, harshness to his own troops, and the lack of the decisive superiority of his forces did not predestine him for success. As he had been responsible for the security in Sarajevo during the Heir of the Throne's ill-fated visit in June 1914, after the assassination of Franz Ferdinand he was seeking revenge on Serbia, so the war in 1914 was also a personal matter for him. Unfortunately, the Emperor gave him practically free hand on 21 August.¹⁵

Potiorek's only task since 6 August had been to avert any Serbian sortie into the territory of the Monarchy, but he was determined to attack. He launched an offensive on 12 August. The offensive failed within two weeks, and all Austro-Hungarian troops had retreated behind the border by 24 August. On 6 September, Serbian troops crossed the Sava River, but by 14 September, they had all been pushed back into Serbian territory. On 7 September, a new Austro-Hungarian offensive began, but by October Serbian resistance had stopped this advance. On 1 November, Potiorek restarted the offensive and by mid-November, the Serbian Army was near to the collapse, but the Chief of the General Staff, Voivoda Radomir Putnik decided to fight to the end. The Serbian Army retreated in the direction of Kragujevac, and on 2 December Austro-Hungarian troops captured the Serbian capital, Belgrade. Upon the arrival of a large French arms supply, a successful Serbian counteroffensive was launched on 3 December. By 18 December, the last Austro-Hungarian troops had been pushed out of Serbia. This defeat in Serbia had serious consequences: the Dual Monarchy lost 270,000 men (dead, missing,

¹⁴ Wagner 1961. p. 113. and Turbucz 2022. pp. 154–157.

¹⁵ Pollmann 2003. p. 42. and Hajdú – Pollmann 2014. pp. 79–84.

wounded, etc.) and the loss of face was serious. Bulgaria did not join the Central Powers while Italy and Romania were drawn nearer to the Entente. The failure in Serbia ended Potiorek's career, he was dismissed on 22 December.¹⁶

In addition, Serbia's ally, the tiny Kingdom of Montenegro, declared war on Austria-Hungary on 7 August 1914. After mobilization, the Montenegrin Army numbered 50,000 troops with 200 guns. Montenegrin soldiers participated in the fighting in Serbia, and in early October, Serbian and Montenegrin troops raided southern Bosnia together. For the Austro-Hungarian Navy the greatest concern after the Montenegrin declaration of war was the strategic Mount Lovćen. This 1749-meter-high mountain towered over the Gulf of Cattaro (Bocche di Cattaro, Boka Kotorska) on its southern, Montenegrin side. In the Gulf of Cattaro, often called the Bocche, was the southernmost and second most important naval base of the Navy. Montenegrin guns posted on the Lovćen could threaten a good part of the Bocche, and the Montenegrins provided valuable intelligence to their allies by immediately reporting all movements of the Austro-Hungarian warships to the Entente. These factors seriously limited the use of Cattaro as a naval base.

Six days before the outbreak of the war, on 22 July, Marinekommandant Admiral Anton Haus had sent the Second Battleship Division, the three battleships of the *Radetzky* class, under the command of Kontreadmiral Anton Willenik to Cattaro. The battleships were escorted by three *Huszár*-class destroyers and five 200 ton torpedo boats. Haus reminded Willenik that he was allowed to spend only a limited amount of ammunition on shore bombardment missions, saving the larger part of the allowance for a possible naval battle. The Marinekommandant strictly forbade sending landing parties ashore.¹⁷ The battleships had been ordered back to Pola well before the Montenegrin declaration of war.

Effectively, the war did not begin in the Adriatic for the Austro-Hungarian Navy until Montenegro declared war on the Dual Monarchy. On the morning of 8 August 1914, the cruisers *Zenta* and *Szigetvár* together with the destroyer *Uskoke* shelled the Montenegrin port of Antivari destroying the harbor and the radio station.¹⁸ Two days later, the Austro-Hungarian Navy declared the blockade of the Montenegrin coasts. On 13 August, the senior Entente commander in the Mediterranean, the French vice amiral Augustin Boué de Lapeyrère, received word of the French and British declarations of war on Austria-Hungary. He was ordered to sail into the Adriatic with all available French and British forces. Lapeyrère chose the tiny Austro-Hungarian blockading force off Montenegro as his first target. Proceeding from the direction of Malta, Lapeyrère's vastly superior force consisting of fourteen battleships plus smaller warships succeeded in taking the obsolete small cruiser *Zenta* and the destroyer *Ulan* by surprise between Antivari and

¹⁶ Pollmann 2010. pp. 44–48. and Hajdú – Pollmann 2014. pp. 85–93.

¹⁷ KA MS/OK 3150 ex 1914.

¹⁸ HL I. VH carton 4503 “S. M. S. Szigetvár Res. Nr. Op. 2”.

Cape Mendere on 16 August. Thanks to her greater speed, the *Ulan* managed to escape, but the much slower cruiser did not have a chance. The heavy shells of the French battleships sank the *Zenta* within forty minutes, and the cruiser went down with 173 hands.¹⁹ With the thundering of the guns of Lapeyrère's ships off Cape Mendere, the first phase of the Adriatic naval war, colloquially known as the "French War", began. On 1 September, a dozen French battleships escorted by armored cruisers and lighter units sailed to Cattaro where they bombarded the forts at the entrance of the Bocche. That month, the French carried out four sorties into the Adriatic, in October another three.

The Montenegrins deployed considerable artillery to the Mount Lovćen between 950 and 1400 meters above sea level: they had twelve 12 cm guns at Pestingrad, eight 15 cm guns and four 21 cm howitzers at Krstac, six 21 cm and twenty 15 cm howitzers at Kuk. This group of batteries, called Lovćen-batteries, began to shell the Cattaro naval base on 8 August.²⁰ When Montenegro declared war on Austria-Hungary the only large, armored ship stationed at Cattaro was the armored cruiser *Kaiser Karl VI*. After a meeting of the cruiser's commander and the commanders of the local Army troops, the armored cruiser at 2 p.m. on 7 August moved into a position from where she could bombard the Montenegrin batteries at Kuk and Krstac. The ship did not fire a single round on that day because no order had arrived to start firing. On 8 August, an aircraft was to assist the fire control of the *Kaiser Karl VI*, but the strong westerly wind prevented the aircraft from taking off. The commander did not want to waste the ammunition so the ship's guns remained silent on that day as well.²¹

At 1:20 a.m. on 9 August, an urgent telegram arrived that the Montenegrins had attacked the Austro-Hungarian fort Gorazda. The *Kaiser Karl VI* immediately turned four of her searchlights on the forefield of the fort and fired one round from her fore 24 cm gun. The attackers fled. This was the first occasion in the war when an Austro-Hungarian capital ship fired her main battery in anger. From this day forward, on the request of the Verteidigungsbezirkskommando (Defence District Command) the locations where the enemy could launch an attack were illuminated continuously with searchlights from dusk until daybreak. In this same period, the starboard 15 cm battery of the armored cruiser was in constant readiness. In addition, a 7 cm landing gun and all the machine guns of the ship were set up on the afterdeck. On the afternoon of 9 August, strong wind again prevented the observation aircraft from taking off, but the *Kaiser Karl VI* fired four 24 cm rounds on Kuk and one on Krstac. It was thought that two of these shells had devastating effects on the Kuk battery; at least the battery remained silent for the rest of the day. At 11:15 a.m. on 10 August, a flying boat could finally take off and spot fire. The armored cruiser fired two 24 cm shells at the Montenegrin

¹⁹ Merényi-Metzger 2009. pp. 680–686.

²⁰ Sokol 1933. p. 133.

²¹ KA MS/OK 4429 ex 1916.

batteries. The observer of the aircraft reported that one of the three Montenegrin batteries had been hit and seriously damaged. On the afternoon, another flying boat flew over the Mount Lovčen and the *Kaiser Karl VI* fired twelve 24 cm shells on Kuk. Due to the primitive technology of the time, it took two hours for these early, underpowered aircrafts to reach the altitude of 2000 meters needed for observing, so they could spend only limited time above the targets. On 11 August, the armored cruiser fired five 24 cm shells on Kuk and one on Krstac. The next day, the ship fired three 24 cm shells on Kuk and three on Krstac. The aircrafts reported that a few projectiles directly hit the dolines (sinkholes) in which the batteries were placed. On the morning of 13 August, *Kaiser Karl VI* left her position and she was relieved by the coastal defense ships of the Fifth Battleship Division. Between 9 and 12 August, the cruiser had fired thirty-two HE projectiles with a full propellant load.²²

On 11 August 1914, the Fifth Battleship Division composed of the three old and obsolete *Monarch*-class coastal defense ships were sent by the Marinekommando to Cattaro together with the even older cruiser *Kaiser Franz Joseph I* and the destroyer *Scharfschütze* under the command of Kontreadmiral Richard von Barry. The two oldest of the three coastal defense ships, *Monarch* and *Wien*, had been decommissioned in May 1914 but were commissioned again in the first days of the war. From 14 August to mid-September, the coastal defense ships shelled the Montenegrin batteries on a couple of occasions but without significant success. On 16 August, the *Monarch* was on patrol off the Montenegrin coasts when they spotted the advancing French fleet. The old ship turned back immediately and sailed to Punta d'Ostro. A column of white smoke on the horizon was all that they saw of the destruction of the cruiser *Zenta*.

Due to the critical situation on the Western Front, the French had limited means to support their tiny ally, Montenegro. On 17 September, a large French squadron escorted a steamer to Antivari that carried a French detachment of two officers and 140 men with four 15 cm and four 12 cm naval guns. The guns were transported to the Height Kuk of Mount Lovčen 1380 meters above sea level. The French battery was ready on 18 October and the next day it began to bombard Teodo and the forts Vermac and Gorazda. The French *charge d'affaires* in the Montenegrin capital, Cetinje, assured King Nikola I that the Austro-Hungarian fortresses in the Bocche soon would be destroyed. The French gunfire actually caused little damage to the fortresses.

As the old ships with their 24 cm/40 guns proved not to be very effective against the Lovčen-batteries and with the new threat of the French battery, Admiral Haus immediately decided to send there something more powerful that could handle the increased threat. On 20 October, he ordered Linienschiffskapitän Vitus von Vončina, the commander of the battleship *Radetzky*, to sail the next day to Cattaro and bombard the French batteries. However, the battleship remained the part of the operative fleet during

²² KA MS/OK 4429 ex 1914.

the detachment, and Haus ordered Vončina to strictly limit the use of ammunition for bombardment (twenty 30.5 HE projectiles per gun and forty 24 cm HE projectiles per gun) as the ship always needed to be ready for an engagement on the open sea. *Radetzky* left Pola in the early hours of 21 October. In the afternoon, she met the Torpedo Boat 16 sent from Sebenico near Lucetta. At 2 a.m., they met near Donzella the minesweeping torpedo boat group sent from Cattaro. The battleship and her escort arrived in Cattaro after 3 a.m. on 22 October.²³

On 19 October, the *Wien*, the *Budapest*, the *Kaiser Karl VI*, and the *Kaiser Franz Joseph I* began to bombard the French and the Montenegrin batteries. The *Radetzky* joined them on 23 October and she began to bombard the batteries on the Kuk with her much less worn and more accurate 30.5 cm and 24 cm guns. Range was 11 kilometers and for spotting they used an observation balloon reeled from her afterdeck. From this time to 27 October, the *Radetzky* fired twenty-three 30.5 cm and fifty-six 24 cm HE projectiles. The battleship scored two direct hits on target no. 22 and one direct hit on target no. 28, destroying two French guns. The *Kaiser Karl VI* fired thirty-three 24 cm HE and fifteen 24 cm AP projectiles; three projectiles exploded in the air, while the driving bands were peeled off from two. The *Wien* fired eighteen 24 cm HE projectiles, two 24 cm AP projectiles and thirty-five 15 cm HE projectiles. The *Budapest* fired fourteen 24 cm HE projectiles, one of them exploded in the air.²⁴ Under the threat from naval guns, the other French guns were removed from the battery.

Capitaine de frégate Grellier, commander of the French detachment, in his report suggested to his superiors not to waste any more French lives and to hand over the remaining guns to the Montenegrins, because he believed that it would be impossible for the Montenegrin forces to take the Bocche. In November 1914, the French detachment was withdrawn from Montenegro and its guns were left behind as Grellier had proposed. Only a handful of French remained in Montenegro and they operated the newly built high-powered radio station that transmitted the reports on the movements of the Austro-Hungarian ships in the Bocche to the French fleet. The *Radetzky* returned to Pola on 16 December. This success earned the Austro-Hungarian squadron in the Bocche some respect from the French.

The Bombardment of Ancona on 24 May 1915

At 4:15 a.m. on 24 May 1915, Péter Móricz, the Austro-Hungarian Consul General in Ancona was tipped out of bed by two violent detonations followed by the thundering of guns. At 5 a.m., now on the street, an Italian police officer angrily told him: “Your

²³ HL I. VH carton 4503 “K.u.k. Flottenkommando Res. Nr. 158/Op.”.

²⁴ HL I. VH carton 4503 „MS/OK Nr. 6375 ex 1914”.

nation is bombarding an open city!” Later he learned from another police officer that seventeen Austro-Hungarian warships had appeared in front of Ancona and bombarded it.²⁵

On the previous day, on 23 May 1915, Italy had declared war on its former ally, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Italy had been regarded the weakest link in the Triple Alliance and the country’s archenemy was the Dual Monarchy. At the beginning of the war, on 2 August 1914, Italy had declared its neutrality. Most of the disputed territories claimed by the Italians were part of the Habsburg Empire, so it is not surprising that during the diplomatic bargaining after the outbreak of the war, the Central Powers could not offer much. Over the winter of 1914–1915, Italian Foreign Minister Sydney Sonnino negotiated with both sides in an effort to secure the best deal for Italy in exchange for its entering the war. Germany pressed the Monarchy to appease the Italians, but this was a difficult, if not impossible, task. Italy asked a price too high even for its neutrality: Trentino and Trieste. In March 1915, Austro-Hungarian common Foreign Minister István Burián offered the Italian-speaking part of Tyrol, but it was too little, too late.

The Entente was in the position to offer a much more attractive deal, not to mention that they did not have to sacrifice their own territories. In the Treaty of London signed on 26 April 1915, the Triple Entente promised to Italy territories having not only Italian but also an ethnic German and Slav population. A part of Tyrol, Trieste and the entire Istrian Peninsula, a part of Northern Dalmatia including the cities Zara and Sebenico, and many of the islands along the Dalmatian coast would go to Italy in a post-war settlement. The Entente confirmed also the possession of Valona and a sphere of influence in Albania.

The third article of the Treaty of London provided for the naval cooperation. The naval discussions started on 2 May in Paris and after some hard bargaining a formal naval convention was concluded on 10 May. The convention called for the establishment of the so-called First Allied Fleet and the Second Allied Fleet, respectively. After Italy’s entry into the war, bearing the burden of operating against the Austro-Hungarian was primarily the task of the First Allied Fleet. This fleet was composed of the modern Italian units, a contingent of a dozen French destroyers and six submarines, plus four British old pre-dreadnoughts and four small cruisers. The Second Allied Fleet was de facto Lapeyrère’s force. While the commander in chief of the Anglo-French force in the Mediterranean was the French vice-amiral Augustin Boué de Lapeyrère, in the Adriatic Sea, all French and British commanders were subordinated to the Italian commander in chief. The commander in chief of the Italian Navy between 1914 and 1917 was Prince Luigi Amedeo Duca degli Abruzzi, a polar explorer and cousin of King Vittorio Emanuele III.

²⁵ HL I. VH carton 4502 “Bericht des Generalkonsuls Peter von Moricz über dessen Wahrnehmungen in Ancona”.

Oddly enough, the three parties had no specific operational plan when Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary. This was not the case with the Austro-Hungarian Navy.

Political and military leaders of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy were well aware of the diplomatic activity between the Triple Entente and Italy. On 27 April, the Armeecommando (Army Higher Command)²⁶ warned Haus that Italy might launch an attack without declaring war. However, Haus was well aware of the situation even without this warning as he regularly read the reports of the naval intelligence service as well as the Italian newspapers. In accordance with the Treaty of London, Italy officially left the Triple Alliance on 4 May, so it became evident that the hostilities would soon begin between the Monarchy and Italy. Korvettenkapitän Albrecht Freiherr von Freyberg, the German naval attaché in Berlin and a great enemy of Haus since August 1914, urged the Austro-Hungarian Navy to strike first, even before a formal declaration of war. The Marinesektion told him that no attack could be launched without the authorization of the Emperor.²⁷

Haus had plans since August 1914 for a strike against Ancona and the eastern coastline of Italy to be executed immediately after the Italian declaration of war. From 19 May, the cruisers *Helgoland* and *Admiral Spaun* and several destroyers patrolled the routes between Gargano, Lagosta, and Pelagosa, watching the lower Adriatic to prevent any unpleasant surprise from the south. Torpedo boats and submarines searched the waters before Ancona twice to make sure that the Italians had not laid mines there. When word of the Italian mobilization ordered on 22 May reached Pola, the fleet was ready for an action against Ancona. It seemed probable that Italy would declare war on Austria-Hungary the next day, so on 23 May the fleet stood ready to put to sea after darkness fell.²⁸

The Bombardment of Ancona was the largest action of the Austro-Hungarian Navy during the war. This was also the only successful large fleet action against the enemy. The detailed orders for the strike against Ancona and the Italian coastline were issued on 9 May.²⁹ As this was a great moment in Admiral Haus' life, the Marinekommandant and Flottenkommandant as commander of the operative fleet wanted to lead his fleet personally against Italy. For the time of the strike against Ancona Haus chose the *Habsburg*, the oldest battleship that was to participate in the action, as his flagship instead of the *Viribus Unitis*. The reason behind this decision was that Haus did not intend to risk a dreadnought if he would run on a mine leading his fleet. The First Battleship Squadron was commanded by Viceadmiral Njegovan.

The word of the Italian declaration of war reached Pola at 4 p.m. on 23 May 1915. Árpád Ambrózy, a military judge who served on the battleship *Erzherzog Friedrich*,

²⁶ It was the command center for all land and naval forces of the Dual Monarchy.

²⁷ *Halpern* 1998, p. 225.

²⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 226–227. – There were hopes both in Austria-Hungary and in Germany that a quick and successful strike against Italy would turn Italian public opinion against the war.

²⁹ HL I. VH carton 4502 “S. M. S. Radetzky Res. Nr. 381 Gefechtsbericht”.

writes about this day in his diary: “On the morning of 23 May, the Korvettenkapitän brought a German text to the officers’ mess which came from the flagship. ‘It has to be announced to the crew.’ I have translated it into Hungarian. It began with the statement that the war with Italy could break out at any moment. We announced it to the crew on the afterdeck at 10:30 a.m., in all languages.³⁰ The enthusiasm was enormous. After this, Maschinebetriebsleiter Zolner took a group photo of the officers. In the afternoon we received the message ‘mit 12 Kessel Dampfklar’ [reach the working pressure in 12 boilers]. A little later a telegram arrived: Italy had declared war. [...] The Marinekommandant went on board the *Habsburg*. Every ship greeted him with loud cheering. He was waving his hand in a friendly manner.”³¹

The fleet began to raise steam and the first reconnaissance groups left Pola at 7 p.m. Half an hour later, Admiral Haus went on board the *Habsburg*. The twelve battleships left the harbor between 8 and 8:30 p.m. At the head of the column sailed the Fourth Battleship Division of the Second Battleship Squadron (the three *Habsburgs*), commanded personally by Haus and by Kontreadmiral Karl Seidensacher, followed by the First Battleship Squadron (First Division: the three *Tegetthoffs* in commission, Second Division: the three *Radetzky*s), commanded by Vizeadmiral Maximilian Njegovan. They were followed by the Third Battleship Division of the Second Battleship Squadron (the three *Erzherzog Karls*), commanded by Kontreadmiral Franz Löffler. En route to Ancona the *Radetzky* was detached from the fleet at 1:07 a.m. and the *Zrínyi* at 1:45 a.m. on 24 May. The target of the *Radetzky* was the mouth of the Potenza River, while the *Zrínyi* sailed to Senigallia. At 1:45 a.m., the remaining four battleships of the First Battleship Squadron reduced speed and dropped behind as the Second Battleship Squadron was to attack Ancona from the southern route and the First Battleship Squadron from the northern route. After 3 a.m., the fleet arrived near Ancona. Between 3:12 and 3:47 a.m., the torpedo boat groups that searched the waters in front of the city reported one after another that the southern and the northern routes were free of mines.³²

At 3:46 a.m. on 24 May, the three *Habsburgs* followed by the three *Erzherzog Karls* turned to the southern route and the ships increased speed from 6 knots to 10 knots. At 4:00 a.m., the ships hoisted the “kleine Flaggen-gala”³³ and at 4:04 a.m.,³⁴ the *Habsburg* opened fire. The three *Habsburgs* fired on different targets: the *Habsburg* on the batteries Gardetto and Carlo Cipelli and on the railway station; the *Babenberg* fired on

³⁰ The Austro-Hungarian Navy, as the Empire itself, was a polyglot force. The largest nationality groups in the Navy were Croats, Austrians, Hungarians, Italians, Czechs, and there were in minor numbers Serbs, Slovenes, Slovaks, Romanians, Polish, etc.

³¹ Rainer 2018. pp. 10–11.

³² HL I. VH carton 4502 “K. u. k. I. Geschwaderkommando Res. Nr. 680/m Gefechtsrelation über aktion gegen Küste bei Ancona”; “K. u. k. II. Geschwaderkommando Res. Nr. 436/m Gefechtsrelation über die Beschiessung von Ancona”.

³³ This consisted of the jack and the national ensign at the stern and at the mast tops.

³⁴ Other reports mention 4:05 and 4:06 a.m.

the shipyard and the electric works; the *Árpád* fired on gasworks and waterworks. At 4:10 a.m., Haus gave the order not to fire on churches. The ships of the Fourth Battleship Division ceased fire between 4:32 and 4:45 a.m. They fired half salvos with their 15 cm batteries, and their 24 cm guns fired individually at an average one round per few minutes rate. The three ships fired altogether thirty-seven 24 cm and three hundred and two 15 cm HE projectiles.³⁵ Fregattenleutnant András Kussevich, who served on the *Babenberg*, recalled the action in a private letter: “At morning twilight we were off Ancona. The *Babenberg* was nearest to the shore. Everything could be seen clearly. The most interesting thing was that the Italians did not notice us until the last moment. I was standing beside our gunnery officer and because I knew Ancona well I could give him good advice. Every ship had her own targets. We destroyed the shipyard of Ancona and a train within five minutes. After every round we were cheering in our joy that the treacherous Italians received what they deserved.”³⁶

The three *Habsburgs* were followed by the three *Erzherzog Karls*. In the first phase some of their designated targets, the military barracks, were shielded by Mount Conero, south of the port of Ancona. They fired some rounds over the mount, but they could not observe the hits. The *Erzherzog Karl* fired first on the old batteries near a tower, which was not on their map; later her 19 cm battery fired on the port and the shipyard. The battleship fired twenty 24 cm and eighty-five 19 cm HE projectiles. At 4:08 a.m., the *Erzherzog Ferdinand Max* opened fire on the semaphore station, the radio station, later on the petrol tanks and the battery on the mole. She fired twenty 24 cm and seventy-four 19 cm HE projectiles. Her commander, Linienschiffskapitän Gustav Nauta, wrote in his report that they had been aware of sparing churches and art monuments. The *Erzherzog Friedrich* fired on the castle and the shipyard. The ship fired twenty 24 cm and ninety-six 19 cm HE projectiles. During the bombardment of the city, they spotted a submarine, but it soon turned out to be a part of some fishing equipment.³⁷ Kontreadmiral Löffler in his report complained about frequent “Geschosskrepierungen” (ammunition failures): some projectiles broke into pieces shortly after leaving the barrel while dense white smoke poured from them. Löffler blamed the manufacturing quality of these projectiles.³⁸

Árpád Ambrózy’s entry in his diary about the bombardment reads as follows: “Sometimes I went up to the deck to breathe some fresh air and to look around. Little after midnight suddenly the order ‘Attention’ was given. [...] During the bombardment came

³⁵ HL I. VH carton 4052 “K. u. k. IV Divisionkommando Res. Nr. 109 Gefechtsrelation über die Beschiessung von Ancona am 24 Mai”.

³⁶ Rainer 2018, p. 13.

³⁷ HL I. VH carton 4502 “S.M.S. Erzherzog Karl Res. Nr. 314”, “S.M.S. Erzherzog Ferdinand Max Res. Nr. 381”, „S.M.S. Erzherzog Friedrich Res. Nr. 350”.

³⁸ HL I. VH carton 4502 “K. u. k. II. Geschwaderkommando Res. Nr. 436/m Gefechtsrelation über die Beschiessung von Ancona”. – These projectiles probably cracked inside the barrel and their burster charge caught fire, but instead of exploding, it burned. Thanks to András Hatala for this explanation.

down G... and when I asked him what the results of the bombardment were he reported gladly that the Italian guns in the castle were almost silenced and the castle itself was significantly damaged. I was waiting for the first hit to our ship. I was calm, I had not the least fear because I had come to terms with the idea of death a long time ago. Certainly, I was nervous. We were firing for 42 minutes. After we ceased fire because we left behind the city and the castle, I ran up to the deck for a moment. I saw the city and the castle some 2,500 paces away to the port. The latter was in ruins now. It was still being hit by shells, which created large clouds of smoke and dust.”³⁹

At 4:05 a.m., Haus ordered Vizeadmiral Njegovan to come closer. Njegovan with his four battleships, the three dreadnoughts and the *Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand*, made a turn and followed the Second Battleship Squadron. At 4:34 a.m., Njegovan’s flagship, the *Tegetthoff*, opened fire from a distance of 6,400 meters. In the next few minutes the other three battleships joined her. The last of them, the *Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand*, opened fire at 4:48 a.m. Njegovan’s ships ceased fire between 4:55 and 5 a.m. While August von Ramberg’s painting on the Bombardment of Ancona suggests that the main batteries of Njegovan’s ships were thundering continuously, in fact the ammunition was used sparingly and only a few heavy shells were expended. The *Tegetthoff* fired twelve, the *Prinz Eugen* five, and the *Viribus Unitis* an unknown number of 30.5 cm projectiles, while *Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand* fired not a single one of those and only three 24 cm shots. At 5:06 a.m., Njegovan’s ships left the scene on Haus’ order and accelerated to full speed to join the Second Battleship Squadron. At this time the Italian airship M.2 *Città di Ferrara*⁴⁰ appeared in the air, and the *Tegetthoff* fired six rounds from her 7 cm AA guns on it without any effect.⁴¹ It is interesting to note that the Italian airships were nicknamed in the Austro-Hungarian Navy as “Staniolhund” (tin foil dog).⁴² At 5:06 a.m., the central 30.5 cm gun in the gun turret No. II (fore superimposed) of the *Tegetthoff* became loose in the slide due to the malfunction of the locking system. It was soon fixed and no damage was found.⁴³

After she was detached from the fleet, the *Radetzky*, escorted by two torpedo boats, sailed to a point eight nautical miles off the mouth of the Potenza River. The battleship stopped there as the torpedo boats searched her intended course for mines. During this operation the contact sweep broke and had to be replaced, which caused some delay. At 4:20 a.m., the *Radetzky* reached the point where she turned to the course leading to

³⁹ Rainer 2018. p. 12.

⁴⁰ The Italians sent two airships against the Austro-Hungarian ships but one of them had to turn back due to engine problems. On 8 June 1915, *Città di Ferrara* was shot down by an Austro-Hungarian flying boat near the Island of Lussin (Lošinj).

⁴¹ HL I. VH carton 4502 “K. u. K. I. Geschwaderkommando Res. Nr. 680/m Gefechtsrelation über Aktion gegen Küste bei Ancona”, “S. M. S. Tegetthoff Res. Nr. 339/A”, “S. M. S. Viribus Unitis Res. Nr. 425”, “S. M. S. Prinz Eugen Gefechtsbericht”, “S. M. S. Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand Res. Nr. 328”.

⁴² Sifferlinger 2003. p. 136.

⁴³ HL I. VH carton 4502 “S. M. S. Tegetthoff Res. Nr. 339/A”.



Illustration N°2: *The Bombardment of Ancona*, oil painting by August von Ramberg
(Wikipedia Commons)

her firing position. At 4:37 a.m., she opened fire on the stone bridge over the Potenza River from a distance of 3,000 m. The large dust clouds caused by the hits covered the whole mouth of the river, so she had to cease fire for a while. When the dust cloud dissipated the *Radetzky* opened fire again, this time on the railway bridge. The battleship ceased fire at 4:50 a.m. and left the mouth of the Potenza River. During this action she fired five 30.5 cm, five 24 cm and seventeen 10 cm HE projectiles. One of the 30.5 cm projectiles exploded in the air 600 m from the ship.⁴⁴ The *Radetzky* united with the fleet after 5:15 a.m.⁴⁵

The *Zrínyi* arrived near Senigallia sometime before 3:30 a.m. Between 3:35 and 4:00 a.m. the two escorting torpedo boats searched the waters in front of the city. At 4:03 a.m., the battleship opened fire from a distance of 3,400 m. Due to the shallow water, a torpedo boat sailed slowly ahead of the battleship, constantly sounding the depth. The *Zrínyi*'s guns fired on the port, the water tower, the railway bridge and the railway station. When they fired on the station, a train approaching from the north was spotted, so that was also destroyed with the 24 cm and 10 cm guns. At 4:38 a.m., the *Zrínyi* ceased fire and turned at the course leading to the meeting point with the fleet. Linien-schiffskapitän Daublebsky did not mention in his report the number of the projectiles fired. At 4:45 a.m., they spotted the Italian airship *Città di Ferrara* approaching from

⁴⁴ The projectile may have exploded because it lost its ballistic cap during the flight. The sudden increase of the breaking force acting on the projectile when the ballistic cap fell could have been enough to actuate the sensitive base fuze. Thanks to András Hatala for this explanation.

⁴⁵ HL I. VH carton 4502 "S. M. S. Radetzky Res. Nr. 381 Gefechtsbericht".

the direction of Fano. From the afterdeck of the *Zrínyi* a few dozen sailors commanded by two officers opened fire on the airship with machine guns and rifles, and the commander of the ship, Linienschiffskapitän Maximilian Daublebsky ordered an increase in speed and to zigzag. The *Città di Ferrara* dropped five bombs, all of which missed the battleship by 50–100 meters. The airship had started a new attack on the *Zrínyi*, but when two Austro-Hungarian flying boats appeared, the Italians fled, increasing their altitude. As it was mentioned above, fifteen minutes later the airship encountered Njegovan's squadron. The *Zrínyi* united with the fleet at 5:25 a.m.⁴⁶

The target of the armored cruiser *Sankt Georg* was the railway bridge of Rimini. The commander of the Cruiser-flotilla, Vizeadmiral Paul Fiedler was on board. En route to Rimini at 1:10 a.m. on 24 May, they spotted a white light. It turned out that it belonged to a merchant steamer. The armored cruiser maneuvered along the steamer after 1:30 a.m. An armed steam barge was sent to search the steamer. The ship was a neutral, Greek merchant steamer without cargo. At 2:30 a.m., the *Sankt Georg* continued her way to Rimini. At 3:50 a.m., an Italian airship was spotted. The cruiser opened fire on it with 4.7 cm guns and machine guns. The airship turned away and soon disappeared. The *Sankt Georg* arrived near Rimini at 4:50 a.m., and she opened fire first on the small railway bridge north from the city with her 24 cm guns. At 5:10 a.m., she began to fire on the large railway bridge with her 19 cm and 15 cm guns. The shelling of the large railway bridge ran into an unexpected objection: on their map there was a strip of barren land between the shore and the bridge while in fact this land was fully built up with houses that blocked the large, three-part bridge. Even from the “crow's nests” on the upper part of the masts one could only see the uppermost parts of the bridge. The gunlayers could therefore aim only with the help of markers showed to them from the deck. Clouds of dust and smoke generated by the exploding projectiles soon covered the bridge, so they gave up the attempt to destroy it. Other possible targets like the railway station were also not visible from the ship. The *Sankt Georg* fired only eight 24 cm, ten 19 cm and two 15 cm HE projectiles.⁴⁷ Vizeadmiral Fiedler and his Chief of Staff, Linienschiffskapitän Erich Heyssler, observed the bombardment from the fighting top. Heyssler was annoyed by the nervousness of Fiedler.⁴⁸ According to Citterich, the Austro-Hungarian Vice-consul in Brindisi (see below), the railway bridge survived the Bombardment of Rimini unscratched.⁴⁹

Other Austro-Hungarian units bombarded different locations near Ancona on the eastern coastline of Italy. The scout cruiser *Admiral Spaun* bombarded the signal sta-

⁴⁶ HL I. VH carton 4502. “S. M. S. Zrínyi Res. Nr. 331 Gefechtsbericht.” – Lajos Györi, who served on the *Zrínyi*, provides a colorful description of the encounter with the Italian airships in his book. *Györi* 1935.

⁴⁷ HL I VH carton 4502 “K.u.k. Kreuzerflottillenkommando Res. Nr. 792”.

⁴⁸ *Sifferlinger* 2003, p. 133.

⁴⁹ HL I. VH carton 4502 MS/OK Nr. 3939/1915.

tion at Cretaccio Island, while the destroyer *Streiter* attacked the signal station at Torre di Mileto. The scout cruiser *Novara*, commanded by Linienschiffskapitän Miklós Horthy, the later Flottenkommandant, escorted by three light crafts, entered the Corsini Channel and bombarded Porto Corsini. The *Novara* was the only ship suffering damages and casualties during the operation, when she was hit by an Italian shore battery. Six men were killed and ten wounded from her crew of 325.⁵⁰ A squadron composed of the scout cruiser *Helgoland* and four destroyers ran into the Italian destroyer *Turbine* and sank her. The destroyers *Tátra* and *Csepel* shelled Manfredonia. The fleet returned to Pola after an uneventful voyage around 11 a.m.

In Ancona, the guns of the battleships caused serious damage. The port facilities, the railway station, the old barracks that served as military hospital at that time, as well as several private houses were hit. Despite the definite order of Haus, the Ancona Cathedral, the Duomo San Ciriaco, was also damaged. Different sources put the number of deaths between 63 and 70 in Ancona alone. The majority of the victims lost their lives when the military hospital was hit. In contrast to the first Austro-Hungarian reports and despite their hopes, the Italian railway line running along the eastern coastline was only lightly damaged. It is worth noting that it was always a very hard task to evaluate the damage to land targets from on board a ship. Vice-consul Citterich travelled incognito with his wife on the day of the bombardment along the railway line from Brindisi to Jesi via Ancona and Rimini. The train could cross all the railway bridges that had been shelled a few hours earlier, and the damaged railway facilities were already under repair or even had been repaired by then. In his report he states that the greatest damage was done in Senigallia. In Ancona his train stopped for a longer time and he could overhear the conversations of Italian military officers at the station. They spoke disparagingly of the performance of the Austro-Hungarian naval gunners. One said: “Sono degli imbecili che non conoscono affatto il loro mestiere!” (They are imbeciles who do not know their trade at all!)⁵¹

The Italian Press wrote about the “barbaric enemy” after the Bombardment of Ancona. Upon further investigation, it was discovered that while Italian government had privately decided to declare Ancona an open city in 1914, this decision had not been made public nor was this made known to the Austro-Hungarian government. In addition, the inactivity of the Italian Navy during these actions and its inability to protect the cities from bombardment greatly angered the Italian public.

After the action of 24 May, during the summer of 1915, the Austro-Hungarian Navy shelled Italian land targets on a few more occasions, but in these operations only cruisers or smaller units participated. The largest and most modern battleships (*Tegetthoffs*, *Radetzky*s) remained in the well-defended naval base for (almost) the rest of the war.

⁵⁰ HL I. VH carton 4502 “S. M. S. Novara Res. Nr. 313”.

⁵¹ HL I. VH carton 4502 MS/OK Nr. 3939/1915.

The only capital ship taking part in the actions against the Italian coasts during the first months after the Italian declaration of war was the armored cruiser *Sankt Georg*. In the remainder of the war the largest Austro-Hungarian warship involved in a shore bombardment mission was the *Habsburg* class battleship *Árpád*.

The Bombardment of Rimini by the Sankt Georg on 18 June 1915

A few weeks after the Bombardment of Ancona, another, but smaller-scale operation was planned against the Italian Adriatic coast. This was to be executed by the Cruiser-flotilla. The forces assigned to this action were divided into three groups. The northern group consisted of the cruisers *Novara* and *Admiral Spaun* escorted by the destroyers *Wildfang*, *Ulan*, *Uskoke*, and *Scharfschütze*. Their purpose was to seek and destroy any light enemy unit in the Gulf of Trieste between 10 and 15 June and to provide protection for the attack group from the north. The second group had the actual task of bombarding the Italian targets. This group consisted of the only large unit, the armored cruiser *Sankt Georg* and the small cruiser *Szigetvár* escorted by the torpedo boats 57T, 58T, 63T, 64F, 67F, 69F, 75T, 76T, and 79T. The *Sankt Georg* was to bombard Rimini and the *Szigetvár* was to shell Fano or Pesaro. According to the plan the third group, consisting of the cruisers *Helgoland* and *Saida* escorted by three destroyers and three torpedo boats, was scheduled to put to sea from Sebenico with the mission of watching the lower Adriatic to prevent any surprises from the south. Due to stormy weather, however, the action was postponed to 17/18 June 1915.⁵²

The cruisers *Sankt Georg* and *Szigetvár* with their escort group left Pola at 9 p.m. on 17 June. At 1:45 a.m. on 18 June, 25 nautical miles off Rimini, the *Szigetvár* with two torpedo boats was detached and turned towards Fano. The Italian coast was spotted from the *Sankt Georg* at 3:19 a.m. The torpedo boats searched the water for Italian mines then the armored cruiser opened fire from her 24 cm, 19 cm and 15 cm guns from a distance of 4,200 meters at 4:41 a.m. She ceased fire at 4:48 a.m., and opened fire again at 5:06. At 5:18 a.m., the *Sankt Georg* finished the bombardment, then at 5:25 a.m. accelerated to 15 knots and left Rimini. During the action she had fired nine 24 cm, thirty-four 19 cm, and twenty-three 15 cm HE projectiles. The *Sankt Georg*'s main target was the large railway bridge over the harbor canal. Because the bridge was hidden by houses and couldn't be seen from gun turrets and casemates, they could only fire indirectly using an auxiliary target. Due to poor visibility, smoke and dust caused by the hitting and exploding projectiles, it was almost impossible to evaluate correctly the damage done to the bridge.⁵³

⁵² *Sifferlinger* 2003, p. 139.

⁵³ *Ibid.* pp. 139–141.

The value of this action from military point of view was rather small but the populations of the above cities were angered by the inactivity of the Italian Navy and its inability to protect them. Partly as a reaction to the Austro-Hungarian actions against the Italian coasts and the outcries of the citizens, the four newest and largest Italian armored cruisers, *Pisa*, *Amalfi*, *San Giorgio*, and *San Marco* were deployed to Venice to support the Army's operations and also to attack and destroy enemy naval forces in the Northern Adriatic. The commander of the British Adriatic Squadron, Rear-Admiral Cecil F. Thursby heavily criticized this move: "The Admiralty have sent the 4 Pisas up there now which I personally think is a mistake as in my opinion the Gulfs of Venice & Trieste are suitable for small craft & submarines only, & of course minelayers. Submarines if properly worked should make it impossible for big ships."⁵⁴ He was right: on the night of 6/7 July 1915 the *Amalfi* was torpedoed near Venice by the "Austro-Hungarian" submarine U 26. In fact, this submarine was the German UB 14 painted as an Austro-Hungarian submarine and flying the Austro-Hungarian flag. An Austro-Hungarian naval officer was on board since Germany and Italy were not at war at this time. The armored cruiser sank in less than thirty minutes.⁵⁵

The Italian Navy also had plans to carry out attacks against the Southern Dalmatian coasts. On the morning of 5 June, the four armored cruisers of the Italian 5th Cruiser Division⁵⁶ commanded by contrammiraglio Eugenio Trifari bombarded the Ragusa–Cattaro railway line near Ragusa Vecchia. The railway was damaged and repair work lasted for weeks. The returning Italian ships also damaged the lighthouse of Donzella.⁵⁷ The 5th Cruiser Division made another sortie the next month: they bombarded Gravosa on the morning of 18 July. That day the Italians had bad luck and they lost a second armored cruiser within two weeks. The Austro-Hungarian submarine U 4 commanded by Linienschiffsleutnant Rudolf Singule torpedoed the *Giuseppe Garibaldi* near Molfetta. The armored cruiser was hit by two torpedoes and sank in less than 10 minutes.⁵⁸ The Italian Navy had to revise its plans and gave up the idea of sending the vulnerable large armored units against the coasts of the Dual Monarchy. Owing to the serious losses of the Italian Navy in the first months of the war, the reputation of the Regia Marina was ravaged in the eyes of the Italian public. In addition to losing two armored cruisers (one new and one old), in September a serious accident occurred: the battleship *Benedetto Brin* blew up in Brindisi with great loss of life. By the end of summer 1915 the war in the Adriatic was a stalemate and this stalemate lasted practically until October 1918.

⁵⁴ Sifferlinger 2003. p. 141.

⁵⁵ KA MS/OK 5101 ex 1915. – The submarine was commanded by Oberleutnant zur See Heino von Heimburg. The Austro-Hungarian officer on board was Linienschiffsleutnant Eugen Hornyák.

⁵⁶ The 5th Cruiser Division was composed of the three *Giuseppe Garibaldi*-class armored cruisers and the armored cruiser *Vettor Pisani*. The division stationed at Brindisi.

⁵⁷ KA MS/OK Nr. 4615 ex 1915.

⁵⁸ HL I. VH carton 4502 "S.M. Unterseeboot 4 Res. Nr. 137".

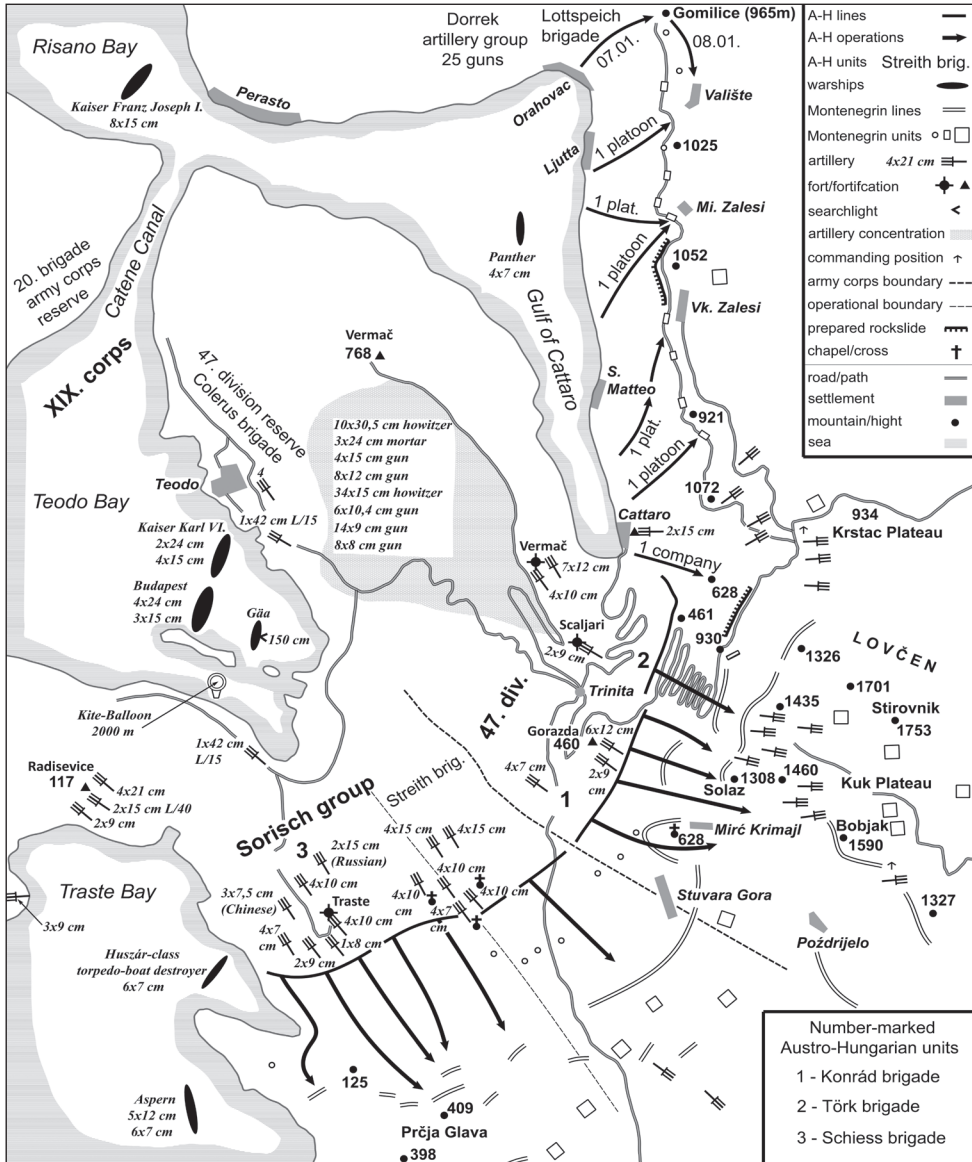
The Conquest of Mount Lovćen on 8–11 January 1916

The failure of the so called “Potiorek offensives” against Serbia in 1914 caused grave losses in manpower for the Dual Monarchy and the loss of face was also serious. In the campaigns of 1914 Serbia was also totally exhausted which was aggravated by a typhus pandemic that swept through the country during the first months of 1915. It is therefore not surprising that despite strong pressure from its allies Serbia was reluctant to launch an offensive against Austria-Hungary when Italy declared war on 23 May 1915. All the more so, because the territorial promises of the Treaty of London violated Serbia’s interests.

After the success of the Gorlice–Tarnow offensive causing the collapse of the Russian lines, the Central Powers briefly turned their attention to the Balkans. The German political leadership was eager to create a connection to Turkey, which they considered a very important ally, and they pressed the military leadership to launch an offensive against Serbia to accomplish this goal.⁵⁹ After a long hesitation, Bulgaria joined the Central Powers on 6 September 1915. In a secret treaty, Macedonia and other Serbian territories were promised to Bulgaria. Turkey, on German pressure, transferred a corridor to the Aegean Sea to Bulgaria. A joint, German–Austro-Hungarian–Bulgarian army group was created, and the German Generalfeldmarschall August von Mackensen was appointed its commander.

The offensive against Serbia began on 5 October 1915. German and Austro-Hungarian troops crossed the Sava and Drina rivers on 6 October and the Danube on 7 October. On 14 October, the Bulgarian Army crossed the Serbian border. With the Bulgarian breakthrough, the Serbian position became untenable. It became clear that the Allied troops at Thessaloniki would provide little help if any. The Serbian Army was forced back to Kosovo. On 25 November, Voivoda Putnik ordered a full retreat through the Albanian mountains to the Albanian ports. Tens of thousands of civilians followed the retreating army. Many of the civilians and soldiers lost their lives during the retreat due to harsh winter conditions, lack of food, disease, and attacks by the Albanians who sought revenge for the massacre of Albanians during the two Balkan Wars. The remnant of the Serbian Army embarked on Allied ships, which carried them to Greek islands, most of them to Corfu. The evacuation lasted until 10 February 1916. The Serbian historiography calls this retreat the “Serbian Golgotha”. The Serbians decided to bring with them nearly thirty-thousand Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war. Many of them never reached the Adriatic coast, and the survivors were transported to Italian islands. The Austrian and Hungarian historiography calls the ordeal of these POWs the “Albanian Death March”.

⁵⁹ The military leadership of Austria-Hungary disagreed with the German plan but the Dual Monarchy was forced to join to the German offensive.



Map No. 2: The Situation at Mount Lovćen on 8-11 January 1916

On 5 January 1916, the Austro-Hungarian Army attacked Serbia's ally, the tiny Montenegro. The Austro-Hungarian Chief of General Staff, Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf wanted to eliminate the problem of Mount Lovćen and relieve the Cattaro naval base of the Montenegrin threat. In addition, he wanted to advance further south to northern Albania, which region was considered an Austro-Hungarian sphere of interest, and to drive out the Italian troops from there. Despite the heroic resistance of the Montenegrin

Army, the outcome was certain and the Montenegrin defeat was imminent. On 11 January, when Austro-Hungarian troops reached the capital, Cetinje, the small kingdom requested an armistice. Austro-Hungarian troops soon occupied the country as peace talks were interrupted,⁶⁰ and they continued their advance to the south. Until the end of the winter they occupied a good part of the Italian controlled Albania including the ports Durazzo and San Giovanni di Medua, but Valona remained in Italian hands.

The storming of Mount Lovčen was one of the few Austro-Hungarian military operations in which the Army and the Navy cooperated successfully, almost textbook-like style. The XIX Corps under Feldmarschalleutnant Ignaz Trollmann was to lead the decisive operation against the Lovčen massif. Geographic conditions were on the defenders' side, not to mention the well-hidden batteries and machine gun positions in caves dynamited into the rocks. Despite the considerable number of troops, the operational plans of the XIX Corps were based on the assumption that a frontal assault of the massif would either be impossible or would involve heavy casualties. Trollmann thus opted for an attack from the southern Lovčen Plateau and the Krstac Pass in the north.⁶¹ To support the infantry considerable field and heavy siege artillery was deployed to the area: twelve 15 cm batteries, one 12 cm battery, three 10 cm batteries, two 24 cm howitzers, five 30.5 cm howitzers and two 42 cm howitzers. This force was supplemented with the guns of the forts of the Cattaro naval base and with guns of the ships of the Fifth Division commanded by Kontreadmiral Alexander Hansa. To help the fire control and observation, three aircraft and one observation balloon division together with two searchlights were placed under the command of Oberst Rudolf von Portenschlag whose task was the coordination of all artillery units including the naval vessels.⁶²

The first plan of the offensive was issued by Feldmarschalleutnant Trollmann on 26 December 1915.⁶³ On 1 January 1916, Trollmann sent the detailed plans for the operation of the naval units to Kontreadmiral Hansa. The following units were to participate in the offensive: the armored cruiser *Kaiser Karl VI*, the coastal defense ship *Budapest*, the cruisers *Aspern*, *Kaiser Franz Joseph I* and *Panther* (the latter two were fit only for harbor watch duty due to their ages), and the destroyer *Huszár*. All the units except one were to deploy to different positions in the Gulf of Cattaro. The cruiser *Aspern* was the only ship that had to leave the Bocche with an escort of four 200 ton torpedo boats to support the right flank with her 12 cm guns from the open sea.⁶⁴ On 2 January, Hansa sent his orders to the commanding officers of the ships of the Fifth Division. One of them is of peculiar interest and sheds light on the economizing so characteristic for the

⁶⁰ On 25 January 1916, King Nikita of Montenegro fled to Brindisi and called for resistance, which rendered impossible to sign a peace treaty. See *Hajdú – Pollmann* 2014. pp. 180–183.

⁶¹ *Ortner* 2019. pp. 200–201.

⁶² HL I. VH carton 4503 “Kuk XIX Korpskommando Op. Nr. 643/2”.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ HL I. VH carton 4503 “Kuk XIX Korpskommando Op. Nr. 643/3”.

Navy: Hansa limited the use of ammunition to the one fourth of the normal allowance. This order was not applied to the *Aspern*.⁶⁵ On 3 January, Trollmann issued new detailed orders and fixed the date of the offensive to 8 January.⁶⁶

On 4 January, Oberst Portenschlag held a conference on board of the *Budapest* and they agreed on the targets that the coastal defense ship should bombard as well as on the methods of the fire control and of the spotting and correcting. As it was mentioned above, Portenschlag's task was to coordinate the artillery fire. His position was on High Vermac. He communicated his orders to the two heavy naval units by light signals or by telephone. In the latter case the orders were transmitted by flag signals from the shore, where the telephone line ended. The observation position was at the Chapel Sveti Rando, which was connected to High Vermac and to the shore by telephone lines. One of the *Budapest*'s officers was detached to the observation position and a few sailors were sent to the telephone centrals. The *Budapest* had to be in the Kukuljina Bay ready for action at 6 a.m. on 8 January. It was also agreed that in case the ship came under enemy gunfire the heavy siege artillery would try to silence the Montenegrin batteries in question.⁶⁷

Linienschiffsleutnant Baron György Karg, who served on the *Budapest*, published an article in 1921 on the participation of the Navy in the seizure of Mount Lovčen. His description of the state of the ship's 24 cm guns reads as follows:

“The guns were so worn out that the projectiles had to be rammed forward almost to the one third of the barrel to reach the rifling and the driving band could stick into it regularly. This caused the distance between the projectile and the propellant sometimes exceeded one meter so the propellant had an explosive effect on the projectile, which resulted in enormous dispersion of range. Sometimes the projectile exploded immediately after leaving the barrel and a shower of splinters hit the deck of our own ship. When the projectile was not rammed so far and its bottom touched the lid of the cartridge duly, a good part of the propellant gases escaped around the projectile and the range dropped significantly. To remedy these problems the projectiles were fitted with an extra driving band. This enabled to load the projectile regularly and its bottom touched the cartridge, but even this method couldn't help because the rotation of the projectile peeled off this extra driving band, often while still in the barrel, and the dispersion of the range was even greater.”⁶⁸

At 5 a.m. on 8 January, *Budapest* left Gjenovic and sailed to the Kukuljina Bay. Because the targets were high up on the mount, usually more than 1,000 meters above the sea level, some trim cells were flooded. The resulting list of few degrees was needed for the ship's guns to reach the required elevation. At 6:25 a.m. the Army batteries opened fire. At 7:35 a.m., when the targets were now clearly visible from the ship, the 15 cm

⁶⁵ HL I. VH carton 4503 “K.u.k. Dionskmdo Res. Nr. 20. ad.”

⁶⁶ HL I. VH carton 4503 “Kuk XIX Korpskommando Op. Nr. 650/5”.

⁶⁷ HL I. VH carton 4503 “S.M.S. Budapest Res. Nr. 34. Gefechtsbericht”.

⁶⁸ Karg 1921. pp. 127–128.

battery of the *Budapest* opened fire on the Montenegrin lines. At 7:47 a.m., the first enemy shell hit the water near the coastal defense ship. This was followed by many other small and medium caliber shells but the Montenegrin batteries were unable to hit the ship. Seeing this, the commander of the *Budapest*, Linienschiffskapitän Marius Ratković, decided to keep the ship's position. As it had been agreed, Ratković sent a telegram to Oberst Portenschlag with the probable position of the Montenegrin batteries that were firing on the ship. At 8:25 a.m., two heavy Army batteries began to bombard the reported positions. On Portenschlag's order the fore 24 cm twin turret opened fire on Babjak at 9:36 a.m. A few minutes later an enemy shell flew over the gun turret and exploded in the water 20 meters from the ship. This was the last enemy shell fired on the *Budapest* for a few hours. After 10 a.m., due to the fog beginning to cover some targets from time to time, the 15 cm and the 24 cm batteries had to cease fire. At 11:35 a.m.,⁶⁹ the armored cruiser *Kaiser Karl VI* arrived at the Kukuljina Bay and dropped anchor near the *Budapest*. At 11:57 a.m., her 15 cm battery opened fire on target no. 20 while the other target (no. 26) was covered in fog so the 24 cm guns remained silent. At 12:51 p.m., the 15 cm battery also ceased fire due to the fog. At 3:18 p.m., two enemy shells splashed into the water near the *Budapest*. Because the visibility was poor, the two ships left the Kukuljina Bay and dropped anchor at Teodo at 3:40 p.m.⁷⁰

On the morning of 9 January, Ratković sent a young officer to Teodo to ask about the targets of the day and the situation on the front. However, the answer from Portenschlag did not arrive until 9 a.m. He selected the targets no. 20 and no. 28, the latter being on the Height Kuk. He added that the situation on Mount Lovčen had not changed significantly during the night. At 9:05 a.m., *Budapest* with *Kaiser Karl VI* left Teodo and fifteen minutes later they dropped anchor in the Kukuljina Bay. The targets were not visible from the ships because they were hidden by heavy rain and low clouds. Not until 12:05 p.m. could the 15 cm batteries opened fire on Zanjevdo. At 1:15 p.m., Montenegrin troops were spotted in a forest near Zanjevdo. The 15 cm guns fired on the troops and the forest. At 1:50 p.m., the *Budapest* ceased fire because friendly troops were spotted in the area. As the bora, the winter storms of the Adriatic, were blowing harder and harder, the two ships left the Kukuljina Bay at 3:55 p.m. and dropped anchor at Teodo at 4:30 p.m. At 5 p.m., Ratković asked orders from Oberst Portenschlag for the next day. Portenschlag's answer arrived at 6:30 p.m.: the *Budapest* and the *Kaiser Karl VI* should shell Krstac and Pestingrad from the inner Bocche.⁷¹

At 6:30 a.m. on 10 January, the *Budapest* left Teodo. Earlier in the morning, Ratković sent an officer to High Vermac. This officer was Linienschiffleutnant György Karg. A new telephone line and a new signal station were set up. The *Budapest* and

⁶⁹ The reports of the two ships contain slightly different times and it is impossible to decide which are correct.

⁷⁰ HL I. VH carton 4503 "S.M.S. Budapest Res. Nr. 34. Gefechtsbericht".

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

the *Kaiser Karl VI* dropped anchor near the *Kaiser Franz Joseph I* and the *Panther*. They could not communicate with Oberst Portenschlag until 10 a.m. when Ratković reported to him that his ship was ready to bombard the targets. The answer that Krstac had no friendly troops present arrived at 10:55 a.m., and the *Budapest* opened fire from her 15 cm battery at 11:05 a.m. but fired only two rounds because fog rendered spotting impossible. During the next two hours they were waiting for new orders. At 1:10 p.m., Portenschlag's telegram arrived: "The participation of the ships is no longer necessary." The *Budapest* left the inner Bocche at 1:45 p.m. and dropped anchor at Teodo at 3 p.m. Her participation in the fighting for Mount Lovčen had ended. The old coastal defense ship during these three days had fired twelve 24 cm HE projectiles and eighty 15 cm HE projectiles in all.⁷²

On 5 January, Oberst Portenschlag sent the *Kaiser Karl VI* the list of the targets to be bombarded by the armored cruiser. The methods of communication, fire control and observation were practically the same as in the case of the *Budapest* as described above. A petty officer from the armored cruiser was detached to the main gunnery central at High Vermac. It was computed that in order to reach the targets high on the mount with the 15 cm battery that ship needed to generate a list of seven degrees by flooding the trim cells so that the guns would have sufficient elevation.⁷³

At 3 a.m. on 8 January, the *Kaiser Karl VI* began to raise steam, and at 6 a.m., she left Teodo and sailed to the Krtolo Bay. At 7:42 a.m., the armored cruiser opened fire with her 24 cm guns, and her 15 cm battery joined at 8:08 a.m. Three groups of bushes served as auxiliary targets but these were barely visible with the low magnification telescopes of the gun sights. The Montenegrin batteries opened fire on the ship but all their shells missed the cruiser. The nearest one hit the water only 5 meters behind the stern. To avoid hits from the Montenegrin guns the *Kaiser Karl VI* weighed anchor at 9:09 a.m. and sailed to Otok that was outside of the range of the enemy guns. The ship was ready to open fire again with her 24 cm guns but the visibility deteriorated so that they could not see the targets. At 11:40 a.m., an order arrived to sail to the Kukuljina Bay.⁷⁴

At 12:40 p.m., they received order from Oberst Portenschlag to open fire on target no. 70. This target was not visible but they could see the muzzle-flashes of the Montenegrin guns near it, so Linienschiffskapitän Herrmann, commander of the *Kaiser Karl VI*, decided to open fire on them. The 24 cm guns of the armored cruiser silenced these guns. The visibility soon deteriorated as low lying clouds appeared. Around 1 p.m., the whole Lovčen was enveloped in thick, dark rain clouds. At 4:25 p.m., the cruiser left the Kukuljina Bay and dropped anchor at Teodo at 4:50 p.m.. During the day the ship fired twenty-five 24 cm and twelve 15 cm projectiles.⁷⁵

⁷² HL I. VH carton 4503 "S.M.S. Budapest Res. Nr. 34. Gefechtsbericht".

⁷³ HL I. VH carton 4503 "S.M.S. Kaiser Karl VI Res. Nr. 20."

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

The *Kaiser Karl VI* dropped anchor in the Kukuljina Bay again, together with the *Budapest*, at 9:30 a.m. on 9 January. Target no. 70 was entirely hidden by low clouds so the armored cruiser's guns remained silent. Around 1 p.m. the wind blew away the clouds and the target became clearly visible but before opening fire an order arrived not to fire on target no. 70 because Austro-Hungarian troops had reached the area. Because no new order arrived, the cruiser weighed anchor at 3:30 p.m., and returned to Teodo.⁷⁶

At 7:32 a.m. on 10 January, the *Kaiser Karl VI* dropped anchor near Perasto in the inner Bocche together with the *Budapest*. The armored cruiser opened fire at 11:00 a.m. She fired three rounds from her 15 cm guns and three rounds from her aft 24 cm turret. At 11:50 a.m., the riffling of the aft 24 cm gun suffered some damage, so this gun could not continue the bombardment. When Portenschlag's order arrived to cease fire, the *Kaiser Karl VI* weighed anchor and returned to Teodo where she dropped anchor at 3 p.m. The next morning, steam was raised in nine of her twelve boilers, and she was ready to bombard Montenegrin targets but no orders arrived. On Kontreadmiral Hansa's order the fires in the boilers were extinguished at 2:30 p.m.⁷⁷

On 10 January, two days after the launch of the offensive, the top of Mount Lovćen was in Austro-Hungarian hands. By this time, the Montenegrins had lost almost all of their artillery. The Montenegrin Army Command ordered the Montenegrin troops to recapture the summit on the night of 10/11 January, but their attempt failed due to the exhaustion of the troops. Seeing the collapse of the defense of Mount Lovćen the Montenegrin political leadership requested an armistice on 11 January.⁷⁸

The most active ship during this operation was the cruiser *Aspern*, under the command of Fregattenkapitän Emil Konek, that supported the advance of the right flank from the open sea and fired almost four hundred 12 cm HE and shrapnel projectiles. German reconnaissance planes helped her aim through radio communication.⁷⁹ The old torpedo-cruiser *Panther* fired four-hundred and forty-four rounds from her 7 cm and 4.7 cm guns.⁸⁰ The small, 400 ton destroyer *Huszár* could provide only "moral support" because she rolled heavily in the rough seas and was unable to use her guns.⁸¹ These destroyers of British Yarrow design were notorious for their bad seakeeping abilities and tendency to roll even in moderate seas. In Force 6 wind a large part of their crews were seasick. On 11 January, Feldmarschalleutnant Trollmann sent a letter to Kontreadmiral Hansa in which he expressed his thanks for the participation of the units of the Fifth Division.⁸²

⁷⁶ HL I. VH carton 4503 "S.M.S. Kaiser Karl VI Res. Nr. 20."

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ortner* 2019, p. 203.

⁷⁹ HL I. VH carton 4503 "S.M.S. Aspern Res. Nr. 15. Gefechtsbericht".

⁸⁰ HL I. VH carton 4503 "S.M.S. Panther Res. Nr. 14. Gefechtsbericht".

⁸¹ HL I. VH carton 4503 "K. u. k. V. Divisionskommando Res. Nr." (The number of the document is missing.) – This is Hansa's report on the action to the Marinekommando.

⁸² HL I. VH carton 4503 "K. u. k. XIX Korpskommando Op. Nr. 659/24."

Even if the collapse of Montenegro did not have any strategic impact on the overall military situation, the victory over a defense system previously considered impenetrable must be seen as a remarkable success. On the Adriatic theater, this was by far the most successful joint operation of the Army and the Navy. Other successful operations were on the Danube on the Serbian and on the Romanian front, respectively. For the Navy the conquest of Mount Lovćen had a major importance: the Cattaro naval base had become fully serviceable and free of enemy opposition at last. The threat of the Montenegrin batteries was eliminated, and the Allies could no longer be informed immediately about every movement of the naval vessels in the Bocche.

The Bombardment of Ortona by the Sankt Georg on 3 February 1916

In January 1916, a decision was made to deploy the armored cruiser *Sankt Georg* to Cattaro as earlier in this month the French armored cruisers *Jules Michelet*, *Edgar Quinet*, and *Victor Hugo* had been deployed to Brindisi. It was planned that the *Sankt Georg* and the cruiser *Helgoland*, which were en route from Pola to Cattaro, would turn to Ortona to bombard the railway line. The armored cruiser was docked in Pola between 18 and 26 January, and her underwater hull was cleaned. After the docking she was loaded with supply material for the Cattaro naval base including an aircraft and forty naval mines.⁸³

The *Sankt Georg* and the *Helgoland*, escorted by the destroyer *Wildfang* and torpedo boats 83F, 84F, 87F, and 98M, left Pola at 6 p.m. on 2 February 1916. Originally, the armored cruiser *Kaiser Karl VI* and destroyer *Balaton* would have participated in the action but the repair works were not finished on them in time. At midnight, the ships increased their speed to 15 knots, but decreased it to 10 knots after 5 p.m. The Italian coast was spotted at 6:45 a.m. on 3 February. The weather was rainy and the visibility was poor. The *Wildfang* was sent to reconnoiter the port for enemy submarines. The cruiser *Helgoland* did not participate in the action, her task was providing protection from the open sea. The destroyer shelled the railway station and the railway cars at the station and reported that there were only fishing boats in the harbor. It turned out soon that this town was not Ortona, but San Vito, south of it. The railway stations of both towns were very similar, this and the poor visibility could be the reason of this mistake. Once the *Sankt Georg* was there she bombarded San Vito between 7:30 and 7:50 a.m. from a distance of 1,000 meters demolishing the railway station, the nearby warehouse, and a factory. The armored cruiser fired five 19 cm, twenty 15 cm and ninety-eight 7 cm HE projectiles.⁸⁴

At 7:55 a.m. the *Sankt Georg*, the *Wildfang*, and the escorting torpedo boats turned north and reached Ortona at 8:22 a.m. The *Sankt Georg* opened fire and bombarded the

⁸³ Sifferlinger 2003, pp. 147–148.

⁸⁴ HL I. VH carton 4503 “K.u.k. Kreuzerflottenkommando Res. Nr. 280”.

railway station until 8:38 a.m. destroying the station building, some railway cars, the warehouse and the water tank. The armored cruiser spent eighteen 19 cm and twenty 15 cm HE projectiles. The *Wildfang* fired on pontoons in the port. The next target was the railway bridge over the Ariello River. This bridge was a massive brick construction with five arches and four piers. The *Sankt Georg* opened fire on the bridge at 9:10 a.m. from a distance of 1,500 meters. One pier was destroyed, two others were damaged, and one of the five arches collapsed.⁸⁵ The armored cruiser spent ten 24 cm and eight 19 cm HE projectiles until she ceased fire at 9:23 a.m. During the bombardment of the Ariello railway bridge one of the ammunition hoists of the 24 cm twin turret was lightly damaged.⁸⁶

The *Sankt Georg*, the *Wildfang* and the escorting torpedo boats turned to the 35° course after 9:40 a.m., and increased their speed to 12 knots. At 9:54, they saw a dozen muzzle flashes on the Italian coast, which was now more than 5,000 meters behind them. A few projectiles hit the water 500–600 meters behind the *Sankt Georg*.⁸⁷ on board they thought they were under fire from an Italian field battery, but they were wrong. In fact, it was the armed train (*treno armato*) T. A. VI of the Italian Navy armed with 15 cm/40 naval guns, which was sent there when the word of the bombardment of San Vito and Ortona reached the headquarters. The Italian Navy had constructed twelve armed trains in 1915 to protect the ports and the coastline, T. A. VI was one of them.⁸⁸

The torpedo boat 98M was sent back to Pola and the *Sankt Georg*, the *Wildfang* and the remaining three torpedo boats united with the *Helgoland* at 11:57 a.m. The journey to Cattaro was uneventful, the only action being the *Wildfang* sinking two drifting mines. At 0:30 a.m. on 4 February, the six vessels dropped anchor at Gjenovic, in the Gulf of Cattaro.⁸⁹

Demonstration against the Italian Coasts on 29 August 1916

This was not a true shore bombardment action but it is worth mentioning as this was the last occasion when Austro-Hungarian armored cruisers left port for the Italian coasts. In the early morning of 2 August, the destroyers *Wildfang* and *Warasdiner* shelled Molfetta. After 9 a.m., the two destroyers and the cruiser *Aspern* clashed briefly with

⁸⁵ Mr. Sifferlinger published in his book a sketch of the damaged bridge which was attached to the original file in Vienna. *Sifferlinger* 2003. p. 151.

⁸⁶ HL I. VH carton 4503 “K.u.k. Kreuzerflottillenkommando Res. Nr. 280”.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ These trains had no armor, and they were armed with naval guns and manned by naval personnel. Some Italian literature state that the appearance of the armed train T. A. VI coerced the *Sankt Georg* to halt the shelling of the Italian coast. In fact, the Austro-Hungarian armored cruiser was already en route to Cattaro after finishing her task when the armed train fired on her.

⁸⁹ HL I. VH carton 4503 “K.u.k. Kreuzerflottillenkommando Res. Nr. 280”.

French and Italian destroyers 25 nautical miles SW of Punta d'Ostro. The fight was indecisive and lasted some forty minutes.⁹⁰ This event inspired Vizeadmiral Paul Fiedler, commander of the Cruiser-flotilla, to set a trap for the enemy units. According to the plan, the armored cruisers *Sankt Georg* and *Kaiser Karl VI*, the cruisers *Novara* and *Helgoland*, the destroyers *Orjen*, *Balaton*, *Wildfang*, *Warasdiner* and *Turul*, as well as the torpedo boats 83F, 85F, 87F and 88F were to sail along the Italian coast near Monte Gargano, producing dense clouds of smoke, thus luring the enemy units in front of the torpedo tubes of the five submarines (U 4, U 11, U 15, U 16 and U 17) waiting between Vieste and Barletta. Linienschiffskapitän Erich Heyssler, the Chief of Staff of the Cruiser-flotilla, mentions another reason for the action: "Meanwhile, the Italians had set up radio stations on their coast to determine the position of our units at sea and attack them. Admiral Fiedler wanted to take advantage of this to set a trap for the enemy pursuers. The *Novara*, the *Helgoland* and the destroyers were sent out in the direction of Bari with the order to send several radio-telegrams while on 29 August we sailed with the *Sankt Georg* and the *Kaiser Karl VI*, keeping radio silence, against Monte Gargano to attack any enemy cruiser that might be hunting."⁹¹

It was only at noon on 28 August that the ships' crews learned that they would leave Cattaro in the evening for the Italian coast. Some of them speculated that this would be the answer to the Italian declaration of war on Germany, which had happened on the same day.⁹² The ships began to raise steam after 5 p.m. and left Cattaro after 8 p.m. Vizeadmiral Fiedler was aboard his flagship, the *Sankt Georg*. As the flagship had problems with her compass, the *Kaiser Karl VI* took over the lead. At 3 a.m. on 29 August, a dense fog began to form. Reaching the Italian coast, the *Sankt George* took back the lead from the *Kaiser Karl VI*. After 6 a.m., the two armored cruisers were stopped due to the dense fog. They spent more than two hours motionless near the enemy coast. This was a very dangerous situation thus everyone aboard was nervous. At 9:17 a.m., the torpedo boat 87F reported a submarine, and at 9:22 the *Kaiser Karl VI* opened fire on a submarine. It turned out that the "enemy submarine" was the torpedo boat 87F which was mistaken for a submarine in the fog. Luckily, the guns of the *Kaiser Karl VI* missed the boat. After the incident, the ships turned back to Cattaro and dropped anchor at Gjenovic at 4:40 p.m.⁹³

The action of 29 August was unsuccessful, mainly due to the weather. Only three Italian units, the cruiser *Nino Bixio* and two destroyers, had left Brindisi, and the Austro-Hungarian submarines had no chance to launch their torpedoes. The U 17 spotted a French submarine and launched a torpedo on her, but missed the target.

⁹⁰ HL I. VH carton 4503 "K.u.k. Kreuzerflottillenkommando Res. Nr. 1910".

⁹¹ *Sifferlinger* 2003. p. 160.

⁹² *Ibid.* p. 164.

⁹³ *Ibid.* pp. 164–166.

The Bombardment of the Batteries at Cortellazzo on 16 November 1917

The Eleventh Battle of Isonzo (18 August – 12 September 1917) was fought between the Italian and the Austro-Hungarian Army on the Italian front, mostly on the territory of today's Slovenia. The Italian Chief of Staff, Luigi Cadorna wanted to break through the Austro-Hungarian lines. The Italian offensive extended from Tolmein to the Adriatic. After bloody fighting and minor, temporary successes, the Italian offensive wore out. During the battle two British *Lord Clive*-class monitors deployed to the Adriatic, the *Earl of Peterborough* and the *Sir Thomas Picton*, as well as the Italian "monitors" *Faà di Bruno* and *Alfredo Cappellini*⁹⁴ shelled the front and the city of Trieste with their 30.5 cm and 38.1 cm guns. The British monitors fired from a position west of Grado while the Italian ones from the Primero Canal.

The Flottenkommando deployed two *Monarch*-class coastal defense ships, the *Wien* and the *Budapest* from Cattaro to Trieste to prevent any Italian landing attempts. Kontreadmiral Alfred von Koudelka, Bezirkskommandant of Trieste, was not very happy when the two old ships arrived at night of 26 August. When his friend, Generaloberst Svetozar Borojević, commander of the Isonzo Army jokingly asked him by telephone about the two ships the next morning, Koudelka told him: "Two more problem children! Brave old ships but their guns are so worn out that their range is very short. When the enemy is firing, I have to withdraw them behind the Muggia Peninsula. And the *Wien* needs six hours to raise steam. But maybe their presence will deter the Italians and they will give up diversions between Duino and Umago."⁹⁵ Less than two days after the arrival of the two coastal defense ships, the Italians began launching large-scale air strikes on Trieste. During an air raid a bomb hit the water between the pier and the *Wien* and detonated below the surface. This explosion damaged the underwater part of the hull. In mid-September, after the Eleventh Battle of Isonzo was over, the *Wien* and the *Budapest* sailed to Pola.

On 24 October 1917, the Battle of Caporetto, also known as the Twelfth Battle of Isonzo, began which brought one of the greatest successes for the Central Powers. The Austro-Hungarian forces, reinforced with German units, were able to break into the Italian front and rout the Italian troops. The Central Powers advanced some 150 kilometers and pushed back the Italians behind the Piave River. The Battle of Caporetto was a real disaster for Italy, the defeat forcing the Italian Chief of Staff, Luigi Cadorna to retire. After the battle, Britain and France sent reinforcement to the Italians. These British

⁹⁴ In fact, these two units were self-propelled pontoons rather than true monitors. The *Bruno* was purpose-built while the *Capellini* was originally a floating crane. Each of them was armed with two 38.1 cm/40 guns, originally intended for the never completed *Caracciolo*-class fast battleships. Both units were named after captains who died at the Battle of Lissa of 1866.

⁹⁵ Koudelka 1987. p. 262.

and French divisions were deployed along the Mincio River. The Italians were able to establish a new defensive line along the Piave River and stabilize the front.

On 27 October, Kontreadmiral Koudelka sent three 110 ton torpedo boats from Trieste against the Italian shore battery of Sdobba. The Italian 15 cm guns in this battery were not able to score a single hit on the torpedo boats. Characteristic of the panic among Italian forces after the defeat on 24 October, the Italian gunners were so scared of the tiny 3.7 cm guns of the torpedo boats that they blew up their guns and fled. On 29 October, Koudelka played with the idea of seizing Grado with his troops. He sent a naval pioneer company to reconnoiter the situation at the island-town. The next day it was reported to him that the Italians had evacuated Grado during the night.⁹⁶

The two British monitors mentioned above played an important role in the evacuation. The Italians blew up every material item that they could not carry away with them. A 15 cm naval battery was stationed in Grado, named after the French naval pilot Jean Roulhier who had been shot down by the famous Austro-Hungarian naval pilot Gottfried von Banfield, the “Eagle of Trieste”, over Trieste in 1916. The guns and ammunition of this battery, commanded by tenente di vascello Bruno Bodrigioni, were also blown up on the night of 29 October. In the first days of November 1917, the battery was reorganized and equipped with four 15 cm guns. The battery, now named after its commander (Batteria di Bodrigioni), was deployed to Cortellazzo, at the western side of the mouth of the Piave Vecchio dug in the sand dunes.⁹⁷ The Austro-Hungarian troops reached the eastern bank of the Piave Vecchio on 11 November, and held a position behind the dam some 400 meters from the Italian battery.

During the Battle of Caporetto, the two coastal defense ships *Wien* and *Budapest* returned to Trieste in the first days of November. On 16 November, Koudelka sent the two old ships against the Italian battery at Cortellazzo. The Kontreadmiral later justified his decision by saying that he wanted to show the Italians that their positions were vulnerable from the sea and to show the Army that the Navy was not always idle. As Koudelka decided on the operation on his own authority, without consulting the Army, Oberst Theodor von Körner, the Chief of Staff of the Isonzo Army (President of Austria from 1951 to 1957), later expressed his displeasure. Koudelka retorted that it was the Army that had warned him earlier that the Italians were tapping the telephone lines, and therefore did not want to inform the enemy of the ships’ departure. He took exception to the suggestion that the ships were endangering the Austro-Hungarian troops, saying that a battleship’s commander can tell the right bank of a river from the left.⁹⁸

The *Budapest* and the *Wien* left the Muggia Bay at 3:30 a.m. on 16 November 1917. Their escort consisted of three 250 ton torpedo boats and eight older, small torpedo

⁹⁶ Koudelka 1987. pp. 264–265.

⁹⁷ *Scarabello* 1933. p. 256.

⁹⁸ Koudelka 1987. pp. 272–273.

boats used in pairs as minesweepers. The leading ship was the *Budapest*. The weather was nice, the sea was calm with the wind force varying between 2 and 3 on the Beaufort scale and the visibility was excellent. The squadron sailed near to the shore, on the route that had previously been searched for mines. They had passed the mouth of the Tagliamento River at 9:25 a.m., when they spotted the first Italian observation balloon in the direction of Cortellazzo. At 10:35 a.m., 10 kilometers from Cortellazzo the ships turned to port by 30 degrees and reduced their speed to the point that they were still just steerable. The two coastal defense ships opened fire with their 24 cm main batteries on the battery of Cortellazzo. The Bordigioni Battery returned the fire immediately, while a second observation balloon rose up near the first. Soon a third balloon appeared in the air in the direction of Zuccherina.⁹⁹

When the distance dropped below 9,000 meters, the 15 cm guns of the two coastal defense ships opened fire too. According to the *Wien*'s commander's report, the fourth 24 cm salvo of the ship hit the Italian battery.¹⁰⁰ The Italian battery had not made a single hit on the ships during the morning. At 10:50 a.m., seven or eight Italian planes attacked the two ships. Some of their bombs exploded in the water near the vessels. At 11:20 a.m., two more Italian planes attacked the coastal defense ships while four others bombed the torpedo boats, but they scored not a single hit. The commander of the *Budapest* ordered to cease fire at 11:45 a.m., because he feared that they were endangering the own troops from that position.¹⁰¹

Flying boats of the Austro-Hungarian Navy also participated in the operation against Cortellazzo. The Italian planes shot down three of them. Two of the damaged flying boats landed near the torpedo boats, while the third landed near Caorle. The pilot of the flying boat that was first hit was found dead and the observer was severely wounded. The physician of the *Budapest* dressed the observer's injuries and the ship's commander ordered the Torpedo Boat 92 to take the dead body and the wounded back to Trieste. Later the torpedo boats towed all the three flying boats back to Trieste.¹⁰²

When the word of the bombardment of Cortellazzo reached the naval base of Venice, the Italian Navy sent two old pre-dreadnoughts, the *Ammiraglio di Saint Bon* and the *Emanuele Filiberto* and five destroyers. Three torpedo-armed motorboats (MAS) under the command of capitano di corvetta Costanzo Ciano also left Venice. His son was Galeazzo Ciano, the Foreign Minister of Mussolini, while Costanzo Ciano was also serving as Minister in the second half of the 1920s. According to the recollection of Bordigioni, after ceasing fire the Austro-Hungarian ships retreated in disorder because they spotted the approaching Italian destroyers.¹⁰³ In fact, the Austro-Hungarian units

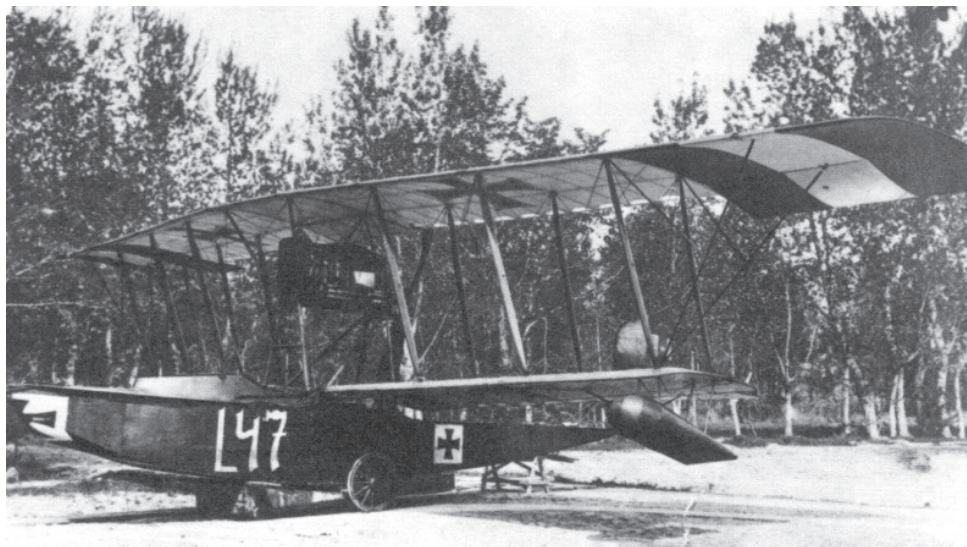
⁹⁹ HL I. VH carton 4504 "S.M.S. Budapest Res. Nr. 745/1917".

¹⁰⁰ HL I. VH carton 4504 "S.M.S. Wien Res. Nr. 832/1917".

¹⁰¹ HL I. VH carton 4504 "S.M.S. Budapest Res. Nr. 745/1917".

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Scarabello* 1933. p. 287.



*Illustration N°3: A Lohner flying boat of the Austro-Hungarian Navy
(Wikipedia Commons)*

did not retreat and the cause of ceasing fire was not the appearance of the Italian ships, because they noticed the Italian destroyer much later.

At 1:30 p.m. that day, the Italian destroyers were reported approaching from Venice. At the same time, five ships were spotted on the western horizon. The Austro-Hungarian squadron turned in the direction of the approaching Italians and at the same time drew nearer to the battery of Cortellazzo. The *Budapest* ordered the minesweeping groups to release their cables in order to participate in the repelling of the Italian attack. An Austro-Hungarian flying boat dropped a written message in which informed the *Budapest* about two coming large units; these were the two Italian pre-dreadnoughts but they were still under the horizon. At 1:35 p.m., the two coastal defense ships opened fire on the Italian battery from a distance of 6,500 meters.¹⁰⁴

The Italian destroyers soon turned back to Venice thanks to an erroneous or misinterpreted order from Venice.¹⁰⁵ At 2 p.m., the three MAS boats commanded by Ciano launched an attack on the two Austro-Hungarian coastal defense ships. This was an episode of peculiar interest because it was partly for this action that Ciano was later made a count (Conte di Cortellazzo and Buccari). His other feat was the “Beffa di Buccari” (Buccari Mockery) in February 1918 when three MAS boats commanded by Ciano attacked the small Croatian port Buccari (Bakar).¹⁰⁶ The Italian and the Austro-Hungarian

¹⁰⁴ HL I. VH carton 4504 “S.M.S. Budapest Res. Nr. 745/1917”.

¹⁰⁵ *Scarabello* 1933. p. 395.

¹⁰⁶ This rather propagandistic raid on the night of 10/11 February 1918 was lead by a “dream team” of capitano di fregata Costanzo Ciano, capitano di corvetta Luigi Rizzo, and the poet Gabriele D’Annunzio. They could reach their targets unnoticed and fired their torpedoes, although they scored no hits.

reports differ even in the number of the MAS boats: according to Ciano one of the boats turned back to Venice before reaching Cortellazzo due to an engine failure, and only the MAS 13 and 15 continued their way, while the reports of the *Wien* and the *Budapest* mention three attacking boats. The Italian report describes a truly bold attack: ignoring the hail of shells they approached the two coastal defense ships at 800–900 meters and launched all of their four torpedoes. The Austro-Hungarians were so panicked that they immediately interrupted the bombardment of Cortellazzo and fled to Trieste.¹⁰⁷ The Austro-Hungarian reports paint a bit different picture: the two ships opened fire with their 15 cm and 4.7 cm guns from a distance of 4,000 meters. When a 15 cm shell near-missed the first MAS vessel the boats turned away and gave up the attack. According to the *Wien*'s report, at that moment the boats were at a distance of 3,000–4,000 meters. However, even the commander of the *Wien* remarked that this was a bold action in daylight.¹⁰⁸ Contrary to the allegation of the Italian report, the Austro-Hungarian ships continued the bombardment of the Bordigioni Battery after the attack of Ciano's boats.

During the afternoon, partly due to the shorter distance, the 15 cm guns of the Italian battery scored a few hits on the two coastal defense ships. The *Budapest* was hit once on the underwater part of her main belt without any effect. The *Wien* was hit seven times but the Italian shells inflicted only minor damages. More problems were caused by some technical faults and the fact that the ships were not fully manned because parts of their crews had been sent to Grado. The two coastal defense ships ceased fire at 2:35 p.m. and turned back to Trieste. On the way back, the ships were attacked by Italian planes one last time but all of the bombs missed. The Austro-Hungarian squadron arrived at Trieste at 6:35 p.m. On board of the ships everyone was convinced that they had inflicted great damages to the Italian battery. This belief was corroborated by Fregattenleutnant Fedrigoni who flew with his flying boat over the batteries of Cortellazzo after the bombardment.¹⁰⁹ According to the Italians, the battery did not suffer severe damages and only a few gunners were lightly wounded. This is a good example of how difficult it was to evaluate the damage done to a land target, like a battery, from a ship or a plane.

The boats escaped successfully. Despite the lack of material success, the attack was heavily publicized by D'Annunzio and it helped to raise the Italian morale. On the other hand, the Italians largely overestimated the blow to Austria-Hungary's morale.

¹⁰⁷ *Scarabello* 1933. p. 395.

¹⁰⁸ HL I. VH carton 4504 "S.M.S. Wien Res. Nr. 832/1917".

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* and "S.M.S. Budapest Res. Nr. 745/1917".

The Sinking of the Wien

On 10 December 1917, after midnight, Kontreadmiral Koudelka was tipped out of bed by detonations of torpedoes. In the next moment the telephone rang and Gottfried von Banfield reported from the flying boat station that the two coastal defense ships had been attacked and one of them was sinking. By the time Koudelka arrived, the *Wien* was lying on the bottom of the Muggia Bay. The casualties amounted to three dead and twenty-nine missing. The torpedo intended for the *Budapest* missed its target, hit the seashore and exploded. Sailors on watch recounted that they saw a motor boat.¹¹⁰

The Italian MAS commanders at Venice had urged a night attack against the two Austro-Hungarian coastal defense ships since their arrival in Trieste, but the senior officers opposed the idea. After the bombardment of Cortellazzo, the leading officers of the Venice Naval Base changed their mind. They decided for a night attack on the two ships in the Muggia Bay, and sottotenente di vascello Luigi Rizzo was entrusted with the task. Rizzo had distinguished himself in 1916 during the defense of Grado and in May 1917 with the capture of two Austro-Hungarian naval pilots. Two MAS boats were selected for the action: the MAS 9 was commanded by Rizzo, the MAS 13 by Andrea Ferrarini. Two torpedo boats towed the two MAS boats from Venice to the Gulf of Trieste. After releasing the towing cables, the MAS boats continued their way using their silent electric motors. They spent two hours with cutting the seven steel cables that defended the harbor entrance. Oddly enough, no one discovered the two MAS boats during this period.

Reaching the two coastal defense ships at anchor, the two Italian boats launched their torpedoes at 2:30 a.m. on 10 December. Rizzo's MAS 9 hit the *Wien* while Ferrarini's MAS 13 missed the *Budapest*. The *Wien* was hit on the starboard side at the fore boiler room, between the conning tower and the funnel. The small coastal defense ship, which lacked any torpedo protection, sank in ten minutes (other sources state that in five minutes). A possible explanation for the rapid sinking of the *Wien* was that her watertight doors in the bulkheads were open despite the strict orders issued at the beginning of the war.¹¹¹ Meanwhile, the two MAS boats left the harbor with full throttle and reached the waiting torpedo boats unscratched.

Koudelka immediately ordered an investigation to find out how the MAS boats were able to slip into the harbor unnoticed. It soon turned out that the commanders of the two coastal defense ships had not executed Koudelka's written orders. The two ships were to have established lookout posts equipped with machine guns at the end of the breakwater as soon as they arrived in Trieste, but the commanders considered them unnecessary. Koudelka had also specified that an armed steam barge should be constantly

¹¹⁰ Koudelka 1987. p. 273.

¹¹¹ Ramoser 1998. p. 441.

patrolling the harbor, but this order was also sabotaged, on the grounds of saving coal. Koudelka's foes tried to use the sinking of the *Wien* to remove him from his position of Bezirkskommandant of Trieste, but he succeeded in defending himself against these accusations. They needed a scapegoat, so Linienschiffskapitän Hermann von Marchetti, the commander of local coastal defense, was used as a pawn sacrifice, even though he had been on holiday at the time of the attack.¹¹² Marchetti, who was reactivated after the outbreak of the war, was forced to retire. After the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, he was reactivated again and was appointed to harbor commander of Mariupol, which was occupied by the Austro-Hungarian Army. This position brought him even more bad luck: en route to Mariupol he was killed by Bolsheviks.

Luigi Rizzo established his fame with the sinking of the *Wien*. For this action he was decorated with the Gold Medal for Military Valor (Medaglia d'oro di valore militare) and was promoted to tenente di vascello. Exactly six months later he earned the greatest success of his career: on 10 June 1918, he torpedoed and sank the Austro-Hungarian dreadnought *Szent István* near Premuda Island. Later he was made a Count (Conte di Grado e Premuda). He was nicknamed the "Sinker" (Affondatore) or the "Pirate of Milazzo".

The wreck of the *Wien* lay at a depth of 18 meters. The Navy attempted to salvage her, but all work was suspended in June 1918 and postponed after the end of the war. In 1923, an Italian firm bought the wreck and began to demolish it two years later. A part of the stern with the ship's name was transferred to Venice and it was displayed there. The human remains found inside the wreck were buried in an ossuary in the Santa Anna Cemetery in Trieste. The partly demolished wreck still lies on the seafloor in the Muggia Bay.

The Bombardment of the Italian Batteries at Cortellazzo on 19 December 1917

The day after the sinking of the *Wien*, 11 December, the scout cruiser *Admiral Spaun*, the flagship of the 2nd Torpedo Flotilla commanded by Linienschiffskapitän Janko Vuković de Podkapelski, arrived in Trieste together with the destroyers *Triglav II*, *Lika II*, *Dukla*, *Uzsok*, *Scharfschütze*, *Turul*, and *Streiter*. On 17 December, the pre-dreadnought *Árpád* joined them. These ships, together with the *Budapest*, participated in the second raid on Cortellazzo, this time coordinated with the Army.

At the eastern bank of the Piave Vecchio, at the mouth of the river, the 41st Royal Hungarian Honvéd Division¹¹³ had been facing the Italian batteries since 11 November. The division planned to cross the Piave, advance to the Sile Canal and occupy the bridgehead Cava Zuccherina on the morning of 19 December. The day before they

¹¹² Koudelka 1987. p. 273.

¹¹³ About the history of the 41st Honvéd Division at the Italian front see Balla 2017.

held a meeting about the cooperation of the Navy and the 41st Honvéd Division at Koudelka's office in Trieste. The commander of the division, Feldmarschalleutnant Rezső Schamschula said that they would attack the next day anyway, even if the fleet could not participate due to bad weather. The same day, a battalion of the 41st Honvéd Division crossed the Piave. In the evening of 18 December, Vuković issued the detailed attack orders to the ships' commanders.¹¹⁴

The squadron assigned for the bombardment of Cortellazzo was composed of the cruiser *Admiral Spaun* as flagship, the pre-dreadnought *Árpád*, the coastal defense ship *Budapest*, the six destroyers mentioned above, and six 250 ton torpedo boats (84, 92, 94, 98, 99 and 100). Fifteen old torpedo boats joined the squadron, twelve of which were used in pairs as minesweepers. The departure was scheduled for 3:30 a.m. on 19 December. To help navigate in the dark, five lighthouses between Trieste and Caorle, which were otherwise darkened due to the war, were to be lit in succession between 3:15 and 7:00 a.m. The ships were planned to reach the position at 8:00 a.m., from where the larger units could open fire on the Italian batteries.¹¹⁵

On the morning of 19 December, everything went according to the plans, at least until 8:00 a.m. The larger units left the harbor at 3:30 a.m. and united with the escorting torpedo boats at 4:00 a.m. The sky was cloudy but otherwise the visibility was good until 7:00 a.m., when a dense fog began to descend. At 8:00 a.m. they reached the position



Illustration N°4: The battleship Árpád fires her aft 24 cm gun (courtesy of László Kiss)

¹¹⁴ HL I. VH carton 4504 “K.u.K. 2. Torpedoflottillenkommando zu Res. Nr. 1620/0”.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* – The lighthouses were Santa Teresa, Miramar, Grado, Tagliamento and Caorle.

which was 10 kilometers from Cortellazzo and turned course to 210°. Due to the fog, the *Árpád* and the *Budapest* could not open fire hence they wanted to sail closer to the batteries. This was delayed because the minesweeping groups found six naval mines and the two ships had to stop for a while. At 8:26 a.m., the *Admiral Spaun* opened fire with her 10 cm guns from a distance of 7,000 meters. Four minutes later the two heavy units opened fire with their 24 cm and 15 cm guns. The *Admiral Spaun* ceased fire at 8:45 a.m. because the deadline for bombarding Cortellazzo agreed with the 41st Honvéd Division the day before had expired. The *Árpád* and the *Budapest* continued to fire on the Italian positions at Cava Zuccherina, which they could do without endangering their own troops until 8:55 a.m. when they also ceased fire.¹¹⁶

At 8:45 a.m., the ships tried to contact the 41st Honvéd Division as agreed on the previous day, first with light signals, then with radio, but there was no response. As no one on the ships knew whether the troops had begun the crossing or not, the heavy units following the minesweeping groups turned in the direction of the open sea and after making a full circle turn, went back to their firing position at 9:26 a.m. Because they had no information about the position of friendly troops and the fog became even denser, Vuković called off the action and ordered a return to Trieste. The squadron formed a cruising formation and began to sail back to Trieste at 10 knots.¹¹⁷ On 19 December, the 41st Honvéd Division's crossing of the Piave failed, and on 20 December the battalion, which had crossed the river on 18 December, was withdrawn.

Ten naval planes also participated in the action against the batteries of Cortellazzo. At 6:45 a.m., six bomber flying boats took off from Trieste, followed by four fighters at 7:45 a.m. One bomber had to land on sea due to engine failure and was towed back to Trieste by a torpedo boat. The remaining five bombers dropped two 150 kg and eight smaller bombs, as well as thirty gas bombs on the Italian batteries around 8 a.m. As no enemy planes had appeared, the arriving fighters fired the Italian positions with their machine guns between 8:40 and 9:15 a.m. The fighters landed at Trieste around 10 a.m. It was a black day for the returning bombers even though they did not encounter any enemy plane. One of them, the K 202 crashed near the Tagliamento lighthouse, killing the observer and severely wounding the pilot. Due to the fog, the remaining four flying boats landed near Grado around 10 a.m. One of them, the K 381 ran into a dam, killing the observer.¹¹⁸

Vuković gave the order to drop anchor near Baseleghe at 10:26 a.m., as the minesweeping groups could not continue their work due to the dense fog. The ships at anchor used their foghorns, which was criticized heavily by Koudelka, because their sounds lured Italian light units to them. Fortunately, the shore batteries at Caorle drove away

¹¹⁶ HL I. VH carton 4504 "K.u.K. 2. Torpedoflottillenkommando zu Res. Nr. 1620/0".

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ HL I. VH carton 4504 "K.u.K. Seeflugstation Triest Res. Nr. 851".

four Italian torpedo boats. They reported to Koudelka by telephone that they could not see their own ships but they could hear them.¹¹⁹ The ships weighed anchor at 11:53 a.m. and arrived in Trieste at 3:30 p.m.¹²⁰ On 21 December, the *Admiral Spaun*, the *Árpád* and the *Budapest* together with the destroyers returned to Pola. For the remainder of the war no Austro-Hungarian capital ships participated in shore bombardment actions.

* * *

Soon after the second bombardment of Cortellazzo, the number of the Austro-Hungarian capital ships in commission was greatly reduced. This began under Marinekommandant and Flottenkommandant Admiral Njegovan and continued under his successor, Kontreadmiral Miklós Horthy, who was appointed Flottenkommandant on 27 February 1918. In January 1918, the three *Habsburg*-class battleships were the first to be decommissioned. Later, in March the *Monarch* and the *Budapest* followed. In April 1918, the armored cruiser *Kaiser Karl VI* was decommissioned in Sebenico, the *Sankt Georg* in Cattaro. The principal reason for the decommissioning of the seven older capital ships was the effort for a better distribution of limited resources.

Lack of officers, sailors and shortage of fuel and other materials plagued the Navy, especially in 1918. After the Cattaro mutiny of February 1918, many sailors were arrested or dismissed and they did not succeed to replace them. The appointment of Miklós Horthy as Flottenkommandant, who had bypassed several officers higher in rank than himself, caused some turmoil in the officer corps. A good number of flag and senior officers were retired in the following months.¹²¹ From April the Austro-Hungarian Navy possessed ten capital ships in active service, the four dreadnoughts and the three *Radezkys* in Pola and from May the three *Erzherzog Karls* in Cattaro. This number dropped to nine on 10 June 1918, when the dreadnought *Szent István* was torpedoed and sunk by an Italian MAS boat. Her sinking led to the early abortion of the last planned Austro-Hungarian fleet action, the “Operation Korfu”.¹²²

In April and May 1918, the three *Erzherzog Karls* were deployed to Cattaro. In April, the command of the Kreuzerflottille moved from the *Sankt Georg* to the *Erzherzog Karl*. They never put to sea against the Italian coasts, mostly, as Linienschiffskapitän Heyssler, the commander of the Kreuzerflottille, later explained, “for lack of targets”. On 28 May 1918, a British aircraft on reconnaissance mission spotted the

¹¹⁹ Koudelka 1987, p. 274.

¹²⁰ HL I. VH carton 4504 “K.u.K. 2. Torpedoflottenkommando zu Res. Nr. 1620/0”.

¹²¹ *Turbucz* 2022, pp. 162–165.

¹²² The target of “Operation Korfu” was the Otranto Barrage, as in May 1917, however this time with not only light forces but supporting battleships as well. Seven battleships, the four dreadnoughts and the three *Erzherzog Karls*, were to be employed to set a trap for the intercepting Allied cruisers and destroyers. The raid on the Otranto Barrage was scheduled for the dawn of 11 June 1918. See *Krámlí* 2021, pp. 137–146.

three *Erzherzog Karls* leaving the Bocche. This caused a smaller panic in Brindisi because they did not know that the battleships went out only for gunnery practice.¹²³

Beside “Operation Korfu”, there were plans for a closer cooperation between the Army and the Navy on the Piave front. The Navy had promised ships to support the Army’s planned Piave offensive. The offensive was scheduled to 15 June 1918. The delegations of the Army and of the Flottenkommando were to discuss these plans at a conference scheduled for 10 June in the office of Vizeadmiral Alfred von Koudelka, the head of the Bezirkskommando of Trieste. To their surprise, instead of a delegation, only one naval officer, Linienschiffskapitän Hermann Jobst, arrived from Pola on 10 June. Jobst informed them of the sinking of the *Szent István* and of the decision that, due to changed circumstances, the fleet could not participate in the offensive of 15 June.¹²⁴ We have no information as to which ships the Navy would have offered for bombarding the Italian positions at the Piave River near the Adriatic coast. Possibly one of them was the coastal defense ship *Budapest* with her new howitzer.

Last but not least, it is worth mentioning the temporary “resurrection” of the *Budapest*, the veteran of the bombardments of Mount Lovčen and Cortellazzo. The *Budapest* was decommissioned in Pola on 11 March 1918. On 19 March, Vizeadmiral Franz von Keil, the “Admiral zur Disposition zur allerhöchste Oberbefehls” proposed to arm the old coastal defense ship with a Škoda 38 cm/17 heavy howitzer to bombard the batteries at Cortellazzo. The howitzer was to be installed in place of the fore 24 cm gun turret. Work to remove the turret and part of the barbette above the Oberdeck took place from 26 March to 4 June. The next day the howitzer fired three test rounds. The enormous recoiling force caused heavy rolling (up to 35 degrees). On 7 June, the *Budapest* was commissioned again, with a reduced crew. On 6 August, in the Fasana Channel, the howitzer reached a range of 13,000 meters but its accuracy on the small coastal defense ship was less than satisfactory. A new test was scheduled to 20 August but it was cancelled due to lack of ammunition. On 11 October, the 38 cm howitzer was removed from the ship. The *Budapest* was decommissioned again and she served as an accommodation ship for the remainder of the war.¹²⁵

Conclusions

During the First World War, the Adriatic was a secondary theater. I think it is safe to say that it was a secondary theater within the secondary theater of the Mediterranean. The nature of these theaters is such, that even the most brilliant or miraculous victory in them has little impact on the general outcome of the war. All the more as the Adriatic

¹²³ Sifferlinger 2003. pp. 200–202.

¹²⁴ Koudelka 1987. p. 282.

¹²⁵ Sieche 1999. pp. 253–255.

really did not witness many brilliant or miraculous victories. The overwhelming naval superiority of the enemy seriously limited the possibilities of the Austro-Hungarian Navy from the outbreak of the war. While on land the Dual Monarchy could rely on the help of its great ally, due to geography, German assistance at sea was limited to sending submarines to the Adriatic. These factors, combined with the known vulnerability of the capital ships to the mines and torpedoes in these confined waters shaped the nature of the Adriatic naval war.

In the first months of the war, the French Mediterranean naval commander, Boué de Lapeyrière tried to provoke a battle with the Austro-Hungarian fleet. The cautious Commander of the Austro-Hungarian Navy, Admiral Anton Haus remained in the well protected naval base of Pola as he intended to keep his fleet intact until the almost certain Italian declaration of war. The successes of the Austro-Hungarian submarines against the large French units in December 1914 and April 1915 discouraged the French from pursuing the idea of a great naval battle in the Adriatic. The sinking of two Italian armored cruisers by German and Austro-Hungarian submarines had a similar effect on the already cautious commanders of the Italian Navy. By August 1915 at the latest, it turned out that the Adriatic would not be the scene of great naval battles. The naval war in the Adriatic was characterized more by submarine warfare and the hit-and-run actions of light surface units.

Beside the “fleet in being”, the Austro-Hungarian Navy had two more options for using their capital ships in these circumstances: to send them to perform shore bombardment actions or to set a trap for a weaker enemy force deploying large armored units. The Navy did perform both during the war, but the majority of these missions involving capital ships were shore bombardment actions. Whether shore bombardment or “set the trap”, these were risky missions. Luck, which has always been an important factor in the history of warfare, favored the Austro-Hungarian Navy until December 1917, while Italy had lost two armored cruisers less than two months after its entering the war. The sinking of the *Wien* signaled the beginning of a series of unfortunate events for the Navy. The last large-scale fleet action, the “Operation Korfu” of June 1918, failed prematurely thanks to a chance meeting: Italian MAS boats encountered two Austro-Hungarian dreadnoughts that were en route to the zone of action and torpedoed and sank one of them, the *Szent István*.

In the first phase of the war, during the period of Italian neutrality, there were no targets for the Navy other than the few in Montenegro: the only port of the kingdom, Antivari and the Lovćen batteries. The Italian declaration of war in May 1915 rendered the entire Italian Adriatic coastline a possible target. Haus and the Austro-Hungarian Navy acted swiftly; in little more than twelve hours after the declaration of war the entire fleet bombarded Ancona and other Italian cities. The fleet returned to Pola practically unscratched. Enthusiastic politicians and army leaders later urged Haus to repeat this action. Haus, who was cautious, refused such urgings. He knew full well, that

a similar action without the element of surprise would be riskier against a better prepared opponent. As he calculated the possible benefits and risks, he concluded that the risks would outweigh the benefits of shelling such targets, which would have little impact on the course of the war. The real problem was that there were no targets of sufficient value to justify the efforts and risks involved in attacking them. The two quotes below shed light on this dilemma.

The French liaison officer at the First Allied Fleet, capitaine de vaisseau Renè Daveluy, provided a perfect analysis of the situation at the end of August 1915: “From these facts one can draw the following conclusion: submarines prohibit large warships from keeping to the sea, each party scratched their heads to ‘do something’ but one has not found any other thing to do except small operations which have no real significance and are, above all, intended to give the illusion one is acting. But, as one cannot fire indefinitely on the same bridge, the same station, the same railways, the same lighthouses and the same semaphores, it seems clear that now both the Italians and the Austrians are at the end of their resources; after having wanted to do ‘something’ no one longer knows ‘what to do’.”¹²⁶

Linienschiffskapitän Erich Heyssler, who was the Chief of Staff of the Cruiser-flo-tilla between 1914 and 1917, had similar thoughts: “The military situation in the Adriatic was such that it was not suitable for larger scale, promising actions. There were times in 1915 when our relative inactivity, compared to the performance of the Army, was weighing on our minds. We were always thinking ‘we must do something; we have to perform something again’. [...] Some of our attacks on the Italian coasts originated only from our desire ‘to do something’. Real strategic success was therefore not associated with them.”¹²⁷

Lastly, let us examine the results and the effects of the shore bombardment missions in which capital ships participated. In terms of material success, the bombardments of the Lovčen batteries were undoubtedly more successful than the actions against the Italian coasts. The silencing of the French batteries and the driving out of the French detachment in October 1914, even if it did not end the threat of the Montenegrin batteries, was a definite success. The January 1916 conquest of Mount Lovčen completely eliminated the threat of the Montenegrin batteries and prevented the Allies from obtaining information about what was happening at the Cattaro naval base. In addition, this was one of the rare examples of successful cooperation between the Army and the Navy. As Italy was a much larger country than Montenegro with a much stronger army and navy, it is no wonder that the raids on the Italian coasts had substantially less impact on the Italian front. The hopes of May 1915 that a quick and successful fleet action against the Italian coasts would turn the Italian public against the war proved to be il-

¹²⁶ Halpern 1987. p. 147.

¹²⁷ Sifferlinger 2003. p. 142.

lusory. The damages done to the Italian railway infrastructure by the action of 24 May 1915 were smaller than the Navy hoped for, and they hindered the use of the eastern coastal railway line for only short time. Definitely, it was not this action that saved Trieste from Italian occupation but rather the far from perfect performance of the Italian Army. However, it had a good psychological effect on the Austro-Hungarian Navy and was a serious loss of face for the Regia Marina. The 1917 operations against the Piave front were less successful than those against the Italian cities in 1915 and 1916.

Future research may reveal more details of the problems in the cooperation between the Army and the Navy on the Italian front. The Austro-Hungarian Navy is often criticized for its wartime inactivity, but the fact is that it conducted more shore bombardment missions and sent its capital ships against the enemy more often than did its arch-enemy, the Italian Navy.

Appendix

Austro-Hungarian WWI Naval and Army Officers' Ranks

Navy	Army
-	Feldmarschall
Großadmiral (from 1916)	Generaloberst (from 1915)
Admiral	General der Kavallerie General der Infanterie Feldzeugmeister
Vizeadmiral	Feldmarschalleutnant
Kontreadmiral	Generalmajor
Linien Schiffskapitän	Oberst
Fregattenkapitän	Oberstleutnant
Korvettenkapitän	Major
Linien Schiffleutnant	Hauptmann
Fregattenleutnant	Oberleutnant
Korvettenleutnant	Leutnant

French and Italian WWI Naval Officers' Ranks

French	Italian
-	ammiraglio
vice amiral	vice ammiraglio
contre amiral	contrammiraglio
capitaine de vaisseau	capitano di vascello

French	Italian
capitaine de frégate	capitano di fregata
capitaine de corvette	capitano di corvetta
lieutenant de vaisseau	tenente di vascello
enseigne de vaisseau de 1-ere class	sottotenente di vascello
enseigne de vaisseau de 2-eme class	guardiamarina

ABBREVIATIONS

HL I. VH	Hadtörténelmi Levéltár (Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum, Budapest), Első Világháborús Gyűjtemény (Military History Archives of the Military History Institute and Museum Budapest, WWI Collection)
KA MS/OK	Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Kriegsarchiv (Wien), Marinesektion/Operationskanzlei
SOA	Statni oblastni archive (Plzeň)

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Krámlí Mihály

OSZTRÁK–MAGYAR NEHÉZ HADIHAJÓK PARTOK ELLENI TÁMADÁSAI
AZ ELSŐ VILÁGHÁBORÚBAN

(Rezümé)

Az Adria, a Földközi-tenger e melléktengere az első világháború tengeri hadszínterei között mellékhadszíntérnek számított – hamar nyilvánvalóvá vált, hogy nem lesz nagy csaták helyszíne. Az adriai-tengeri hadviselést a tengeralattjárók alkalmazása mellett leginkább a könnyű, gyors felszíni egységek bevetése jellemezte. A Monarchia, és 1915 májusától legfőbb ellenfele, Olaszország is óvatos politikát folytatott, nagy, páncélos egységeik jól védett flottabázisaikon töltötték a háború jelentős részét, a „fleet in being” stratégiáját valósítva meg ezzel. Mindez nem jelenti azt, hogy soha ne futottak volna ki – különösen osztrák–magyar részről. Ezen akciók nagyobb része az ellenséges partok ellen irányult.

Az olasz hadba lépésig az egyetlen potenciális célpont a kicsiny Montenegró volt. A fő problémát a cattarói flottabázis mellett tornyosuló Lovčen hegyre telepített montenegrói ütegek jelentették. Ezen ütegek lövését 1914. augusztus 9-én kezdte meg a KAISER KARL VI páncélos cirkáló, majd néhány nap múlva a beérkező MONARCH-osztályú partvédő páncélosok csatlakoztak hozzá. Miután októberben a franciák további lövegeket telepítettek a hegyre, a flottaparancsnokság Cattaróba küldte a jóval potensebb RADEZKY csatahajót, amely két francia ágyút megsemmisített, mire a francia különítményt visszavonták.

Anton Haus tengernagy, a haditengerészet parancsnoka a háború kezdete óta arra készült, hogy az olasz hadüzenet esetén nagyszabású támadást intéz az olasz keleti partok ellen. Az 1915. május 23-ai hadüzenetet követően az egész flotta kifutott, és másnap hajnalban az olasz partokat lőtte. A flotta zöme Anconát ágyúzta, a RADEZKY a Potenza folyó torkolata ellen intézett támadást, a ZRÍNYI Senigalliát lőtte, a SANKT GEORG páncélos cirkáló pedig Riminit. A flotta sértetlenül tért vissza Polába. Június közepén a SANKT GEORG ismét Rimini ellen intézett támadást.

A központi hatalmak 1915 végi, Szerbia feletti győzelme után 1916 januárjában a Monarchia megtámadta Montenegrót. Az egyik fontos cél a Lovčenen lévő montenegrói állások végleges felszámolása és a cattarói haditengerészeti bázisnak az ellenséges lövegek fenyegetésétől való megszabadítása volt. A montenegrói ütegek lövésében és a támadó osztrák–magyar csapatok támogatásában a BUDAPEST partvédő páncélos és a KAISER KARL VI páncélos cirkáló vett részt. 1916. január 10-én sikerült a Lovčent elfoglalni.

1916. február 3-án a SANKT GEORG Ortonát ágyúzta. A délkeleti partok elleni utolsó akció, melyben nehéz egységek vettek részt, 1916. augusztus 29-én volt: a SANKT GEORG és a KAISER KARL VI demonstrációt hajtott végre az olasz partok előtt.

Az 1917. október–novemberi caporettoi áttörést követően az olaszok a Piave folyó mentén tudták újra stabilizálni a frontot. A Piave torkolatába, Cortellazzo telepített olasz ütegek ellen a haditengerészet két támadást hajtott végre. 1917. november 16-án a Triesztből kifutó WIEN és BUDAPEST partvédő páncélos lépett akcióba, ám december 10-én két olasz torpedóvető motorcsónak (MAS) hatolt be észrevétlenül a Trieszt melletti Muggia-öbölbe, és a WIEN-t sikerült elsüllyeszteniük. 1917. december 19-én a BUDAPEST és az ÁRPÁD intézett támadást Cortellazzo ellen, a köd miatt azonban ezt félbe kellett szakítani. A háború hátralévő részében az osztrák–magyar nehéz egységek nem hajtottak végre több partok elleni támadást.

Mihály Krámlí

SHORE BOMBARDMENT ACTIONS OF AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN CAPITAL SHIPS
DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

(Summary)

The Adriatic, a tributary of the Mediterranean, was a minor theatre of war in the naval theatres of the First World War – it soon became clear that it would not be the scene of major battles. Besides the use of submarines, naval warfare in the Adriatic was characterized by the deployment of light, fast surface units. The Monarchy and, from May 1915, its main adversary Italy, pursued a cautious policy, with their large armored units spending a good part of the war on their well-protected naval bases, thus implementing a ‘fleet in being’ strategy. All this does not mean that they were never put to sea – especially on the Austro-Hungarian side. Most of their actions were directed against enemy shores.

Until Italy entered the war, the only potential target was tiny Montenegro. The main problem was the Montenegrin batteries deployed on Mount Lovčen, near the Cattaro naval base. The armored cruiser *Kaiser Karl VI* began firing on 9 August 1914, and was joined a few days later by the incoming *Monarch*-class armored coastal defense crafts. After the French had deployed more guns on the hill in October, the fleet command sent the much more potent battleship *Radetzky* to Cattaro, which destroyed two French guns causing the French detachment to be withdrawn.

Since the beginning of the war, Admiral Anton Haus, commander of the Navy, had been preparing to launch a large-scale attack on the Italian east coast in the event of an Italian declaration of war, which happened on 23 May 1915. Following that, the entire fleet left harbor, and fired on the Italian coast at dawn the next day. The bulk of the fleet shelled Ancona, the *Radetzky* attacked the Potenza estuary, the *Zrinyi* shelled Senigallia and the armored cruiser *Sankt Georg* attacked Rimini. The fleet returned to Pola unscathed. In mid-June, *Sankt Georg* again attacked Rimini.

After the central powers’ victory over Serbia at the end of 1915, the Monarchy invaded Montenegro in January 1916. One important objective was the permanent elimination of the Montenegrin positions on Mount Lovčen and the removal of the naval base at Cattaro from the threat of enemy artillery fire. The coastal defense ship *Budapest* and the armored cruiser *Kaiser Karl VI* participated in the firing of the Montenegrin batteries and in the support of the attacking Austro-Hungarian troops. On 10 January 1916, Mount Lovčen was successfully captured.

On 3 February 1916, the *Sankt Georg* shelled Ortona. The last action against the south-east coast, involving heavy units, was on 29 August 1916: *Sankt Georg* and *Kaiser Karl VI* carried out a demonstration off the Italian coast.

Following the breakthrough at Caporetto in October-November 1917, the Italians were able to re-stabilize the front along the Piave River. On 16 November 1917, the *Wien* and *Budapest* coastal defense ships went into action leaving Trieste, but on 10 December two Italian torpedo launchers (MAS) entered the Muggia Bay near Trieste undetected and managed to sink the *Wien*. On 19 December 1917, *Budapest* and *Árpád* launched an attack on Cortellazzo, but their action had to be interrupted due to fog. For the remainder of the war, Austro-Hungarian heavy units did not carry out any further attacks on the coast.

Mihály Krámlí

KÜSTENANGRIFFE ÖSTERREICHISCH-UNGARISCHER GROSSKAMPFSCHIFFE
IM ERSTEN WELTKRIEG

(Resümee)

Die Adria, ein Seitenbecken des Mittelmeeres, galt als ein Nebenkriegsschauplatz der Seekriegsschauplätze des Ersten Weltkriegs – es wurde bald klar, dass sie nicht Schauplatz großer Schlachten sein würde. Neben dem Einsatz von U-Booten zeichnete sich die Seekriegsführung in der Adria durch den Einsatz von leichten und schnellen Überwassereinheiten aus. Die Monarchie und ab Mai 1915 auch ihr Hauptgegner Italien verfolgten eine vorsichtige Politik, indem sie mit ihren großen Panzerverbänden einen Großteil des Krieges auf ihren gut geschützten Marinestützpunkten verbrachten und so eine Strategie der „fleet in being“ umsetzten. All dies bedeutete nicht, dass sie nie ausgelaufen wären – insbesondere auf österreichisch-ungarischer Seite. Der größere Teil dieser Aktionen richtete sich gegen die feindlichen Küsten.

Bis zum Eintritt Italiens in den Krieg war das einzige potenzielle Ziel das kleine Montenegro. Das Hauptproblem waren die montenegrinischen Batterien, die auf dem Berg Lovčen in der Nähe des Marinestützpunkts Cattaro stationiert waren. Der Panzerkreuzer KAISER KARL VI. nahm am 9. August 1914 den Beschuss auf, und einige Tage später schlossen sich ihm die einlaufenden Küstenverteidiger der MONARCH-Klasse an. Nachdem die Franzosen im Oktober weitere Geschütze auf dem Hügel aufgestellt hatten, schickte das Flottenkommando das weit aus stärkere Schlachtschiff RADETZKY nach Cattaro, das zwei französische Geschütze zerstörte, bevor die französische Truppe abgezogen wurde.

Seit Kriegsbeginn hatte Admiral Anton Haus, der Befehlshaber der Marine, einen Großangriff auf die italienische Ostküste für den Fall einer italienischen Kriegserklärung vorbereitet. Nach der Kriegserklärung am 23. Mai 1915 stach die gesamte Flotte in See und beschoss im Morgengrauen des nächsten Tages die italienische Küste. Der Großteil der Flotte beschoss Ancona, die RADETZKY griff die Mündung des Flusses Potenza an, die ZRÍNYI beschoss die Stadt Senigallia und der Panzerkreuzer SANKT GEORG Rimini. Die Flotte kehrte unversehrt nach Pola zurück. Mitte Juni griff die SANKT GEORG erneut Rimini an.

Nach dem Sieg der Mittelmächte über Serbien Ende 1915 griff die Monarchie im Januar 1916 Montenegro an. Ein wichtiges Ziel war die endgültige Ausschaltung der montenegrinischen Stellungen bei Lovčen und die Befreiung des Marinestützpunkts Cattaro von der Bedrohung durch feindliches Geschützfeuer. Der Küstenverteidiger BUDAPEST und der Panzerkreuzer KAISER KARL VI. beteiligten sich an der Beschießung der montenegrinischen Batterien und an der Unterstützung der angreifenden österreichisch-ungarischen Truppen. Am 10. Januar 1916 wurde Lovčen erfolgreich eingenommen.

Am 3. Februar 1916 beschoss die SANKT GEORG die Stadt Ortona. Die letzte Aktion gegen die Südostküste, an der schwere Einheiten beteiligt waren, fand am 29. August 1916 statt: Die SANKT GEORG und die KAISER KARL VI. führten eine Demonstration vor der italienischen Küste durch.

Nach dem Durchbruch bei Caporetto im Oktober–November 1917 gelang es den Italienern, die Front entlang des Flusses Piave wieder zu stabilisieren. Die Marine führte zwei Angriffe gegen die in Cortellazzo an der Piave-Mündung stationierten italienischen Batterien durch. Am 16. November 1917 setzten sich die von Triest aus in See gestochenen Schlachtschiffe WIEN und BUDAPEST in Bewegung, doch am 10. Dezember drangen zwei italienische Torpedoboote (MAS) unbemerkt in die Muggia-Bucht bei Triest ein und konnten die WIEN versenken. Am

19. Dezember 1917 starteten die BUDAPEST und die ÁRPÁD einen Angriff auf Cortellazzo, der jedoch wegen Nebels abgebrochen werden musste. Für den Rest des Krieges führten die schweren österreichisch-ungarischen Einheiten keine weiteren Angriffe an der Küste durch.

Mihály Krámlí

BOMBARDEMENTS CÔTIERS PAR DES BÂTIMENTS ESSENTIELS
AUSTRO-HONGROIS DANS LA PREMIÈRE GUERRE MONDIALE

(Résumé)

L'Adriatique, bras de la Méditerranée, passait pour un théâtre d'opérations secondaire parmi les théâtres maritimes de la Première Guerre mondiale. Il est vite devenu évident qu'elle ne serait pas le théâtre de batailles majeures. Outre l'utilisation de sous-marins, la guerre navale sur l'Adriatique se caractérisait par le déploiement d'unités de surface légères et rapides. La Monarchie et, à partir de mai 1915, sa principale adversaire, l'Italie, ont mené une politique prudente, leurs grandes unités blindées passant une grande partie de la guerre dans leurs bases navales bien protégées, mettant ainsi en œuvre la stratégie « fleet in being ». Cela ne signifie pas pour autant qu'elles ne sont jamais sorties, en particulier du côté austro-hongrois. La plupart de ces actions furent dirigées contre les côtes ennemies.

Jusqu'à l'entrée en guerre de l'Italie, la seule cible potentielle était le petit Monténégro. Le principal problème fut les batteries monténégrines déployées sur le mont Lovčen au-dessus de la base navale de Cattaro. Le croiseur blindé KAISER KARL VI a commencé à bombarder ces batteries le 9 août 1914 avant d'être rejoint quelques jours plus tard par des navires de défense côtière de classe MONARCH. Après que les Français aient déployé d'autres canons sur le mont en octobre, le commandement de la flotte a envoyé à Cattaro le cuirassé RADEZKY, beaucoup plus puissant. Celui-ci a détruit deux canons français, ce qui a conduit au retrait du détachement français.

Dès le début de la guerre, l'amiral Anton Haus, commandant de la marine, envisageait de lancer une offensive contre les côtes est italiennes en cas de déclaration de guerre de l'Italie. Après la déclaration de guerre du 23 mai 1915, toute la flotte est sortie avant de tirer sur les côtes italiennes à l'aube du lendemain. Le gros de la flotte a bombardé Ancône, le RADEZKY a lancé une attaque contre l'embouchure du fleuve Potenza, le ZRÍNYI et le croiseur blindé SANKT GEORG ont respectivement bombardé Senigallia et Rimini. La flotte est rentrée indemne à Pola. À la mi-juin, le SANKT GEORG a attaqué à nouveau Rimini.

Après la victoire des puissances centrales sur la Serbie à la fin de l'année 1915, la Monarchie a attaqué le Monténégro en janvier 1916 afin d'éliminer définitivement les positions monténégrines sur le Lovčen et la menace des tirs ennemis visant la base navale de Cattaro. Le cuirassé de défense côtière BUDAPEST et le croiseur blindé KAISER KARL VI ont participé au bombardement des batteries monténégrines et au soutien des troupes austro-hongroises assaillantes. Le 10 janvier 1916, Lovčen fut pris.

Le 3 février 1916, le SANKT GEORG a bombardé Ortona. La dernière action contre la côte sud-est impliquant des unités lourdes a eu lieu le 29 août 1916 : le SANKT GEORG et le KAISER KARL VI ont effectué une démonstration au large des côtes italiennes.

Après la percée de Caporetto en octobre-novembre 1917, les Italiens ont réussi à restabiliser le front le long du fleuve Piave. La marine a mené deux attaques contre les batteries italiennes installées à Cortellazzo dans l'embouchure du Piave. Le 16 novembre 1917, les cuirassés de

défense côtière WIEN et BUDAPEST sortis du port de Trieste sont entrés en action, mais le 10 décembre, deux vedettes lance-torpilles italiennes (MAS) ont pénétré sans être détectées dans la baie de Muggia près de Trieste et réussi à faire couler le WIEN. Le 19 décembre 1917, le BUDAPEST et l'ARPÁD ont lancé une attaque contre Cortellazzo, mais celle-ci a dû être interrompue à cause du brouillard. Par la suite, les unités lourdes austro-hongroises n'ont plus bombardé les côtes durant la guerre.

Михай Крамли

БЕРЕГОВЫЕ БОМБАРДИРОВКИ АВСТРО-ВЕНГЕРСКИХ КРУПНЫХ ТЯЖЁЛЫХ
БОЕВЫХ КОРАБЛЕЙ ВО ВРЕМЯ ПЕРВОЙ МИРОВОЙ ВОЙНЫ

(Резюме)

Адриатика, это побережье Средиземного моря, считалась второстепенным театром военных действий среди военно-морских театров Первой мировой войны – вскоре стало очевидным, что он не будет являться местом для крупных сражений. Помимо использования подводных лодок, морская война на Адриатике характеризовалась в основном введением легких и быстрых надводных частей. Монархия, а с мая 1915-ого года и её главный противник Италия, также вел осторожную политику, их крупные бронированные части проводили значительную часть войны на своих хорошо защищенных базах флота, реализуя этим самым стратегию «флот в действии». Все это не означает то, что они никогда не выходили бы в море – особенно с австро-венгерской стороны. Большинство этих акций было направлено против берегов противника.

До вступления Италии в войну, единственной потенциальной целью была крошечная Черногория. Главную проблему означали черногорские батареи, установленные на возвышающейся горе Ловчен рядом с базой флота Каттаро. Бронированный крейсер «КАЙЗЕР КАРЛ VI.» начал вести стрельбу по этим батареям 9-ого августа 1914-ого года, а через несколько дней к нему присоединились подошедшие броненосцы береговой охраны класса «МОНАРХ». После того, как в октябре французы установили на горе дальнейшие орудия, командование флота направило в Каттаро гораздо более мощный боевой корабль «РАДЕЦКИ», который уничтожил два французских орудия на что французский отряд был отозван.

Командующий военно-морским флотом адмирал Антон Хаус с самого начала войны готовился к широкомасштабному наступлению на восточное побережье Италии в случае объявления Италией войны. Вслед за объявлением войны 23-его мая 1915-ого года весь флот вышел в море и на рассвете следующего дня обстрелял итальянское побережье. Основная часть флота обстреливала Анкону, «РАДЕЦКИ» атаковал устья реки Потенца, «Зрини» обстреливал Сенигаллию, а броненосный крейсер «САНКТ ГЕОРГ» обстрелял Римини. Флот вернулся в Полу невредимым. В середине июня «САНКТ ГЕОРГ» вновь атаковал Римини.

После победы центральных держав над Сербией в конце 1915-ого года Монархия в январе 1916-ого года напала на Черногорию. Одной из важных целей была окончательная ликвидация черногорских позиций на Ловчене и освобождение военно-морской базы Каттаро от угрозы вражеских орудий. Броненосец охраняющий берег «Будапешт» и броненосный крейсер «КАЙЗЕР КАРЛ VI.» принимали участие в ведении огня по черно-

горским батареям и в поддержке наступающих австро-венгерских войск. 10-ого января 1916-ого года удалось взять Ловчен.

3-его февраля 1916-ого года «САНКТ ГЕОРГ» обстрелял Ортону. Последняя акция против юго-восточного побережья с участием тяжелых частей состоялась 29-ого августа 1916-ого года: у берегов Италии осуществили акцию броненосец «САНКТ ГЕОРГ» и крейсер «КАЙЗЕР КАРЛ VI.»

После прорыва у Капоретто в октябре-ноябре 1917-ого года итальянцы смогли вновь стабилизировать фронт вдоль реки Пьяве. Военно-морской флот осуществил две атаки против итальянских батарей, установленных в Кортеллаццо, в устье Пьяве. 16-ого ноября 1917-ого года броненосцы береговой охраны «ВЕНА» и «БУДАПЕШТ», вышедшие из Триеста, вступили в бой, но 10-ого декабря два итальянских торпедных катера (Маш) незаметно проникли в залив Муджа у Триеста и сумели потопить «ВЕНА». 19-ого декабря 1917-ого года «БУДАПЕШТ» и «АРПАД» начали атаку на Кортеллаццо, но ее пришлось прервать из-за тумана. В течение оставшейся части войны австро-венгерские тяжелые части боевых кораблей береговых атак больше не осуществляли.

A HADTÖRTÉNETI INTÉZET ÉS MÚZEUM KÖNYVTÁRA

KEMÉNY KRISZTIÁN

A SZOLNOKI ÜTKÖZET

1849. MÁRCIUS 5.

