

THE REANIMATION OF THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN NAVY TRADITION IN CENTRAL EUROPE

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Alexander Sixtus von Reden:

...Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends, dragi priljatelji, cari amici, kedves bárataim!

May I introduce ourselves first: This is my friend Fregatte-captain architect Walter Höller, Vice-Commander of Military Chancellery, head of Navy Section and Commander of K.u.k. Yachtgeschwader (Imperial and Royal Yacht Squadron).

I am Colonel Alexander Sixtus von Reden and I am the Commander of Military Chancellery.

Ja sam veoma sretan da budem ovoje u Rijeki. Gdj je moj pradjed Günther von Reden preko sto godina posjetio poznatu pomorsku akedimiu. Pred kraj je bio komandant ad torpedo broda i korvetkapitan u Puli i Sibeniku. Sibenik je bio grad gdje je se moj otac u februaru tisucu devesto osamneste rodio...

What is Military Chancellery?

We are the so called “General Staff” for the various traditional regiments in the territory of former Austro-Hungarian Empire. Those regiments are existing in whole Austria, South-Tirol, Gorizia, Trieste, Slovenia, Czech Republik, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland. The most of them were founded after 1989, when it was possible to show the own history. The regiments have a strength of about 25.000 members – including music bands in historical uniforms. There are not only infantry, but also cavalry, artillery, motor-corps and navy.

We are organizing events in whole Central Europe, helping to get right uniforms and original weapons and we research in military history.

How it all began

In my early youth I saw a photography in an Austrian navy book which impressed me very deeply: The take in of Austrian war-flag on battleship “Viribus Unitis” on the 31st of October 1918 – a very small and sad ceremony. After that the Austro-

Hungarian fleet was given to the South-Slavic Assembly by emperor Charles I., hoping that South-Slavic provinces would be part of the new Austrian federal state under the rule of Habsburg. We know, it didn't happen. Krain, Croatia, Dalmacia, Bosnia-Hercegovina and the Vojvodina became part of the Yugoslav state under the Serbian dynasty.

Now, the former Croatian Habsburg-countries are a free and independent state and so the present Croatian fleet is the legal successor of old Austro-Hungarian navy.

Another picture: Exactly 80 years after the take in of Austrian war-flag our regiments were setting on the 18th of July 1998 the red-white-red flag again at Lissa/Vis- island, former part of the Austrian kingdom of Dalmacia. The occasion was the battle of Lissa's day.

What happened in the meantime?

10 years ago Military Chancellery started with "practical navy tradition" in Austria with the first contacts to K.u.k. Yachtgeschwader.

Walter Höller:

The History of the K.u.k. Yachtgeschwader (Imperial and Royal Yacht Squadron)

The Imperial and Royal Yacht Squadron was founded by officers of the Austro-Hungarian Navy under the highest protection of his Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty, the Emperor and King Franz Joseph I. in Pola/Pula in August 1891.

The first Commodore was Archduke Karl Stephan, Admiral of the Austrian fleet.

Exactly 100 years after the first foundation, sailing enthusiasts reestablished the club at the Union Yacht Club Attersee in Upper Austria, as a traditional sailing club during a traditional sailing meeting on the 6th of August 1991.

The 12 foundation members formed the first executive committee. Its purpose is the tending and maintenance of traditional yachts and their use in boat races (sailing regattas). For this reason the start of the sailing season, the International Austrian Sailing Week, the final sailing and the general meeting are held every year. Furthermore seeing tours with our members are regularly organized.

Part and beginning of the sailing week is the fleet sailing, where all yachts are flagged over top and pass the club in keel line. Several groups of traditional regiments are greeting and a platoon of artillery with an ancient canon is shooting salutes.

Today we have 52 members who all try to keep up the old yachting traditions.

Most of the members have their own yachts in the Salzkammergut at the lakes Wolfgangsee, Traunsee, Mondsee and mainly Attersee.

We have a lot of Sonderboats, dragons, 5,5 metre, J-Jawls, Z-Jawls and some unique specimen.

At least you can see that the club is living history. Not to preserve ashes, but to stir and blow up the fire to give it forward to the next generation.

Alexander Sixtus von Reden:

Our staff

In 1996 we started with a own Navy Section for Military Chancellery. Our staff now:

- Fregatte-captain architect Dipl.-Ing. Walter Höller, Commander of Navy Section (Schörfling/Upper Austria)
- Corvette-captain Dr. András Margitay-Becht, Commander of Danube Fleet (Budapest/Hungary)
- Corvette-captain Prof. Dr. Manfred Kunze, Vice-Commander of Navy Section (Vienna/Austria)
- Captain Ing. Heinz Pokora, Liason-officer lake Neusiedlersee and chief of cabinet of Military Chancellery (Halbturn/Austria)
- Captain Mag. Jan Moravek, Liason-officer Bohemia (Prague/Czech Republic).

Lissa/Vis-activities since 1991

The main activities in the years between 1996 and 2001 focused in our events on Vis Island:

- 1996: The 130th anniversary of the battle of Lissa
- 1998: The re-foundation of the “Lion of Lissa”
- 2001: The 135th anniversary of the battle of Lissa.

But first we came to Vis in 1991 – to the 125th anniversary. It was a very sad situation. Croatia was at the edge of war and so only 4 officers came from Austria and also a few representatives of the community of Vis. It was a very, very small ceremony – but we swore: We’ll be back when Croatia is free – and we did so five years later.

In 1996 we came in a strength of about 150 persons, all members of Upper Austrian, Styrian, Viennese and Moravian regiments. And in this year, the idea was born to restore the “Lion of Lissa”-monument, erected after the victory of admiral Tegetthoff over the Italian fleet in 1866. As you know the lion’s monument was stolen by the Italians in 1919, standing now in the areal of Navy Academy in Livorno. It was no chance to get the original monument back.

Wilhelm von Tegetthoff is in Austria a very popular historical person, but only a few people know the Lissa-story – so our project, to restore the lion’s monument was not very popular. But we could not believe it: We found a lot of sponsors in the circle of Austrian industry, navy-interested persons, Austrian federal countries, like Upper Austria and Carinthia and also in organisations of Austrian army officers.

So we could realize that project: Building a new lion and organize a big event at the Isle of Vis.

The lion was build by Vienese sculptor Gerhard Laber – not in original size, that was impossible because of a lot of trees and new monuments on the San Girolamo-cemetery. But we put the monument on the original place. To the original text on the plates we added a message for the future and for the peaceful living of all our countries in a United Europe:

“JEDINSTVO EUROPE, POČIVA NA RAZNOLIKOSTI
NJENIH POVIJESNIH KONFLIKATA.
GLEDAJTE VALOVE JADRANA, KAKO NA SVE OBALE
NOSE PORUKU MIRA I RAZUMIJEVANJA.”

More than 1000 people – inkluding a music band of 60 members – from whole Central Europe and also a lot of Austrian sailing boats came to the ceremony of unveiling of lion’s monument to the Isle of Vis on the 18th of July 1998, also a member of Austrian imperial family, the archduke Johann Salvator. It was a great party for three days.

And: What is very important to say and was a great honor for us: The Croatian Navy took part in this event with gunboat “Kralj Petar Kresimir” as well in 1996 with “Minelayer 82”.

It was also a great honor that Alkari-group from Sinj joined us in 1996 and in 1998 the historical group from Smokvica – Isle of Korcula was visiting our Vis-event.

What was the sence of this action? First to bring back history and for the second to give the wonderful Island of Vis a new chance in tourism.

Further activities and parallel situations

Finally I mention that we took part in the re-opening of Austro-Hungarian Navy Cemetery in Pola/Pula in 1997 – and we find friends in Hungary: 3 Officers and about 15 sailors of the Danube fleet and Leitha-Foundation. So our traditional navy got support. More about Leitha-Foundation you can hear in another speech.

In our book “Vivat Lissa!”, which tells the story of erecting the “Lion of Lissa”, we show some photographs. For example:

- 28th of April 1905: Fregatte-Lieutenant Günther von Reden is going to the Isle of Brioni by boat – and:

- 91 years later, 21st of July 1996: Members of the Austrian traditional regiments on the Austrian trabacle “Nuovo Trionfo” in the harbour of Vis.
- 16th of June 1914: Excursion of the imperial and royal cadet-school in Sarajevo to the lion’s monument in Vis – and:
- 84 years later, 18th of July 1998: Myself with 2 Croatian navy-officers in front of the lion’s monument in Vis.
- March 1916: Captain Günther von Reden with wife and comrades in the cabin of an Austrian torpedoboat – and:
- 80 years later, 20th of July 1996: Myself with Austrian and Bohemian comrades in the cabin of Croatian “Minelayer 82” at the coast of Vis.
- April 1916: Captain Günther von Reden with comrades on board of Austrian battleship “Prinz Eugen” – and:
- 80 years later, 20th of July 1996: Myself with Austrian and Bohemian comrades on board of Croatian “Minelayer 82”.

You see: After 90 years we make things very similar like 100 years ago. Our wish for the future. To have more close relations to Croatian Navy and Croatian Navy-friends in the spirit of our common history. In our short story you could see: There are existing a lot of relations to Croatia in the past and in the presence.

*Thank you and all good wishes, hvala ljepa i sve najbolje, mille grazie e tante auguri,
köszönöm szépen és minden jót!*

Sažetak**OŽIVLJAVANJE TRADICIJE AUSTROUGARSKE MORNARICE U SREDNJOJ EUROPI
U DUHU ZAJEDNIČKE PROŠLOSTI****Walter Höller, Alexander Sixtus von Reden**

Godine 1993. osnovan je Vojni ured za tradicionalne pukovnije (*Militärkanzlei für Traditionsregimenter*). To je ured za usklađivanje i rad s tradicionalnim pukovnijama s teritorija bivše Austro-Ugarske Monarhije, uključujući sve carske i kraljevske (k.u.k.) povijesne uniforme. Te regimente uključuju sve oblike vojnih formacija poput pješaštva, konjaništva, topništva, i korpusa s vozilima te ratnu mornaricu.

Postoje tri dijela organizacije ratne mornarice:

1. Sekcija ratne mornarice u Vojnom uredu s pet časnika.
2. K.u.k. eskadra brzih jedrilica osnovana 1891. u Puli, ponovno osnovana 1991. u *Seewalchen/Attersee* (Gornja Austrija) s oko 50 članova.
3. Fondacija Dunav – Monitor Leitha u Budimpešti s dva časnika i 15 jedriličara. Članovi Fondacije zadnjih su godina obnovili brod na Dunavu Leitha, izgrađen 1871. godine, jedini je postojeći bojni brod bivše austrougarske ratne mornarice.

Zadnjih deset godina Sekcija ratne mornarice u suradnji s Eskadrom brzih jedrilica i Fondacijom Leitha organizira brojna događanja poput:

- od 1993. – povijesne regate na jezeru *Attersee* (Gornja Austrija) zajedno s topničkim korpusom (uvijek krajem srpnja/početkom kolovoza)
- 1996. – 130. obljetnica bitke kod *Visa* na otoku *Visu* (Hrvatska)
- 1997. – proslava u povodu obnove groblja austrougarske ratne mornarice u Puli (Hrvatska)
- 1998. – ponovno osnivanje *Lava od Visa* na otoku *Visu*.
- 1998. – predstavljanje projekta broda monitora na Dunavu *Leitha* u Budimpešti (i 2000.)
- 2001. – 135. obljetnica bitke kod *Visa* na otoku *Visu*.

Sve proslave u Hrvatskoj i Mađarskoj organizirane su u tijesnoj suradnji s hrvatskom ratnom mornaricom i mađarskom vojskom u duhu zajedničke prošlosti tih zemalja.

Abstract

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CENTRAL EUROPE**

Walter Höller, Alexander Sixtus von Reden

In 1993 the "Militärkanzlei für Traditionsregimenter" (Military Cancellery for Traditional Regiments) was founded, The MC is a service- and coordination-bureau for traditional regiments at the territory of the former Austro-Hungarian empire, wearing all imperial and royal (k.u.k./c.i.k.) historical uniforms.

Those regiments includes all kinds of branches like infantry, cavalry, artillery, car-corps and also navy.

There are three parts of navy-organisations:

- 1) The Navy Section of Military Cancellery with five officers.*
- 2) The "K.u.k. Yachtgeschwader" (Imperial and Royal Yacht-Squadron), founded 1891 in Pula, re-founded 1991 in Seewalchen/Attersee (Upper Austria) with about 50 members.*
- 3) The "Foundation Danube-Monitor Leitha" in Budapest with two officers and 15 sailors. The members of the foundation restored this Danube-ship originally in the last years. "Leitha", built in 1871, is the only existing battle ship of the former Austro-Hungarian navy.*

In the last ten years, Navy Section in collaboration with Yachtgeschwader and Foundation Leitha organized a lot of events, like

- since 1993: Historical regattas at lake Attersee (Upper Austria) together with artillery-corps (always at the end of July/beginning of August). 1996: 130th anniversary of the battle of Lissa at Isle of Vis (Croatia) 1997: Celebrations on occasion of the re-opening of Austro-Hungarian Navy Cemetery in Pula/Croatia.*
- 1998: Re-foundation of the „Lion of Lissa" at Isle of Vis.*
- 1998: Presentation of Danube-Monitor „Leitha" at the City of Budapest (also in 2000)*
- 2001: 135. anniversary of the battle of Lissa at Isle of Vis.*

All celebrations in Croatia and Hungary were organized in close collaboration with Croatian Navy and Hungarian Army in the spirit of common past of all these countries.

