

= SMS Viribus Unitis =

SMS Viribus Unitis was the first Austro-Hungarian dreadnought battleship of the Tegetthoff class. Its name, meaning "Joint Forces", was the personal motto of Emperor Franz Joseph I.

Viribus Unitis was ordered by the Austro-Hungarian navy in 1908. As the first of the newly created Tegetthoff class battleships, she was laid down in Stabilimento Tecnico Triestino shipyard in Trieste on 24 July 1910. Viribus Unitis was launched from the shipyard on 24 June 1911 and was formally commissioned into the Austro-Hungarian Navy on 5 December 1912.

During World War I, Viribus Unitis took part in the flight of the German warships SMS Goeben and Breslau. In May 1915, she also took part in the bombardment of the Italian port city of Ancona. Viribus Unitis was sunk by a limpet mine planted by frogmen of the Italian Regia Marina on 1 November 1918.

= Construction and design =

= Construction =

Viribus Unitis was ordered in 1908 as the first of a class of four, the first dreadnoughts to be built for the Austro-Hungarian Navy. Initially intended to be named Tegetthoff, she was renamed on the personal order of Emperor Franz Josef; following this, the second ship of the class was named Tegetthoff. The ship was laid down in the Stabilimento Tecnico Triestino shipyard in Trieste on 24 July 1910. Following eleven months of construction, Viribus Unitis was launched on 24 June 1911. Following her fitting out, she was commissioned into the Austro-Hungarian Navy on 5 December 1912.

= Characteristics =

Viribus Unitis had an overall length of 152 metres (498 ft 8 in), a beam of 27.9 metres (91 ft 6 in), and a draught of 8.7 metres (28 ft 7 in) at deep load. She displaced 20,000 tonnes (19,684 long tons) at load and 21,689 tonnes (21,346 long tons) at deep load.

Viribus Unitis had four Parsons steam turbines, each of which was housed in a separate engine room. The turbines were powered by twelve Babcock & Wilcox boilers. The turbines were designed to produce a total of 27,000 shaft horsepower (20,134 kW), which was theoretically enough to attain her designed speed of 20 knots (23 mph; 37 km/h), but no figures from her speed trials are known to exist. She carried 1,844.5 tonnes (1,815.4 long tons) of coal, and an additional 267.2 tonnes (263.0 long tons) of fuel oil that was to be sprayed on the coal to increase its burn rate. At full capacity, she could steam for 4,200 nautical miles (7,800 km) at a speed of 10 knots (12 mph; 19 km/h).

Viribus Unitis mounted twelve 305-millimetre (12 in) / 45-caliber K 10 guns in four triple turrets. Her secondary armament consisted of twelve 15-centimetre (5.91 in) / 50 K 10 guns mounted in casemates amidships. Twelve 66-millimetre (3 in) / 50 K 10 guns were mounted on open pivots on the upper deck above the casemates. Three more 66-mm K 10 guns were mounted on the upper turrets for anti-aircraft duties. Four 21-inch (530 mm) submerged torpedo tubes were fitted, one each in the bow, stern and on each broadside; twelve torpedoes were carried.

= Service history =

= Archduke Franz Ferdinand's visit to Sarajevo =

Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria traveled aboard Viribus Unitis in late June 1914 en route to Bosnia to observe military maneuvers . On 25 June , he boarded the ship in Trieste Harbor and travelled to the mouth of the Neretva River , where he transferred to another vessel . On 30 June , two days after Ferdinand and his wife were killed by Gavrilo Princip in the Bosnian city of Sarajevo , Viribus Unitis transported their bodies back to Trieste .

= = = World War I = = =

Prior to the war , Viribus Unitis was assigned to the 1st Battleship Division of Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy . During World War I , the battleship saw limited service due to the Otranto Barrage which prohibited Austro @-@ Hungarian battleships from leaving the Adriatic sea . As a result , she hardly ever left Pola .

Viribus Unitis , along with her sister ships Tegetthoff , Prinz Eugen and the remainder of the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy , was mobilized on the eve of World War I to support the flight of SMS Goeben and Breslau . The two German ships were stationed in the Mediterranean and were attempting to break out of the strait of Messina , which was surrounded by British troops and vessels and make their way to Turkey . After the Germans successfully broke out of Messina , the navy was recalled . The fleet had by that time advanced as far south as Brindisi in south eastern Italy . Viribus Unitis also participated in the bombardment of the Italian city of Ancona in May 1915 . Following these operations Viribus Unitis remained in Pola for most of the remainder of the war .

Her tenure in Pola was livened up by a visit from the new Emperor Charles I on 15 December 1916 and another by Kaiser Wilhelm II on 12 December 1917 during his inspection of the German submarine base there . The Italians conducted no less than eighty air raids on Pola between 1915 and 1917 .

= = = The Otranto Raid = = =

By 1918 , the new commander of the Austrian fleet , Konteradmiral Miklós Horthy , decided to conduct another attack on the Otranto Barrage to allow more German and Austro @-@ Hungarian U @-@ boats to safely get through the heavily defended strait . During the night of 8 June , Horthy left the naval base of Pola with Viribus Unitis and Prinz Eugen . The other two dreadnoughts , Szent István and Tegetthoff , along with one destroyer and six torpedo boats departed Pola on 9 June . At about 3 : 15 on the morning of 10 June , two Italian MAS boats , MAS 15 and MAS 21 , spotted the Austrian fleet . The MAS platoon was commanded by Capitano di fregata Luigi Rizzo while the individual boats were commanded by Capo timoniere Armando Gori and Guardiamarina di complemento Giuseppe Aonzo respectively . Both boats successfully penetrated the escort screen and split to engage each of the dreadnoughts . MAS 21 attacked Tegetthoff , but her torpedoes failed . MAS 15 managed to hit Szent István with her torpedoes at about 3 : 25 am . Both boats were then chased away from the scene by the Austrian escort vessels .

Despite attempts to take the crippled Szent István into tow by Tegetthoff , the ship continued to sink and the attempt was abandoned . A few minutes after 6 : 00 am Szent István sank . Admiral Horthy , commander of the proposed attack , soon canceled the attack because he thought that the Italians had discovered his plan and ordered the ships to return to Pola . On the contrary , the Italians did not even discover that the Austrian dreadnoughts had departed Pola until later on 10 June when aerial reconnaissance photos revealed that they were no longer there . This was the last military operation that the Viribus Unitis was to take part in and she spent the rest of her career at port in Pola .

= = = Italian sabotage and sinking = = =

After it was clear that Austria @-@ Hungary had lost World War I , the Austrian government decided to give the ship , along with much of the fleet , to the newly formed State of Slovenes , Croats and Serbs . This move would have avoided handing the fleet to the Allies , since the new

state had declared neutrality . Following the transfer of Viribus Unitis to the State of Slovenes , Croats and Serbs , she was renamed Jugoslavija .

On 1 November 1918 , two men of the Regia Marina , Raffaele Paolucci and Raffaele Rossetti , rode a primitive manned torpedo (nicknamed Mignatta or " leech ") into the Austro @-@ Hungarian naval base at Pola . Using limpet mines , they then sank Viribus Unitis now wearing the Croatian flag on its mast as well as the freighter Wien . It is not clear if the Italians participating in the action knew that the ship no longer belonged to Austria @-@ Hungary .

Traveling down the rows of Austrian battleships , the two men encountered Viribus Unitis at around 4 : 40 am . Rossetti placed one canister of TNT on the hull of the battleship , timed to explode at 6 : 30 am . He then flooded the second canister , sinking it on the harbor floor close to the ship . This second canister exploded close to the Austrian freighter Wien , resulting in her sinking . The men had no breathing sets , and therefore had to keep their heads above water . They were discovered and taken prisoner just after placing the explosives under the battleship 's hull . The two @-@ man team were captured and taken aboard Viribus Unitis , where they informed the new captain of the battleship what they had done but did not reveal the exact position of the explosives . Admiral Vukovi? then arranged for the two prisoners to be taken safely to the sister ship Tegetthoff , and ordered the evacuation of the ship . The explosion did not happen at 6 : 30 as predicted and Vukovi? returned to the ship with many sailors (believing mistakenly that the Italians had lied) . He therefore remained on his ship and went down with her and 300 ? 400 of her crew when the mines exploded shortly afterwards at 6 : 44 . Following the explosion , the battleship sank in 15 minutes .

The two Italian crew were interned for a few days until the end of the war and were honored by the Kingdom of Italy with the Gold Medal of Military Valor .

= = Commemorations = =

SMS Viribus Unitis was selected as the main motif of a high value collectors ' coin : the Austrian SMS Viribus Unitis commemorative coin , minted on 13 September 2006 . The obverse side shows the flagship Viribus Unitis as seen from the deck of an accompanying ship in the fleet . Two other ships of an older class can be seen in the background . The reverse of the coin is a tribute to the old Austro @-@ Hungarian Imperial Navy , showing the SMS Viribus Unitis from a front angle . A naval biplane circles overhead and a submarine surfaces in the foreground . The coin commemorates not only the ship Viribus Unitis , but also the three main arms of the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy in the First World War . The coin was the last of the series " Austria on the High Seas " .

There is a cutaway model of Viribus Unitis in the Museum of Military History in Vienna . The model is at a scale of 1 : 25 and has a total length of 6 metres . It was built between 1913 and 1917 by eight craftsmen of the shipyard Stabilimento Tecnico Triestino . The model is true to the original in structure , layout , and engine system . It is accurate to the point that , for instance , the painting in the wardroom of the model exactly replicates the original not only in subject but also in the painting technique (oil on canvas) .