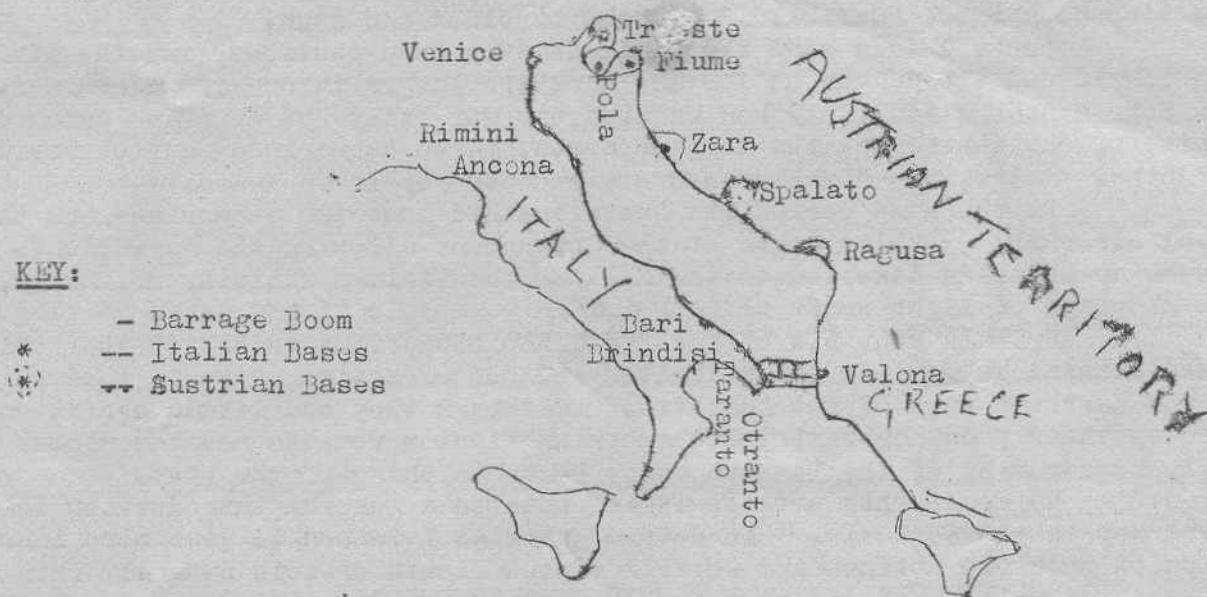


NAVAL WARFARE IN THE ADRIATIC IN WORLD WAR 1

(INCOMPETENCE VERSUS INADEQUACY)

KEY:

- Barrage Boom
- * -- Italian Bases
- (*) -- Austrian Bases

From the outbreak of World War 1, the Adriatic was a major problem for the Allied Command. The Austrian fleet, although small, was powerful and possessed several major bases which were within striking distance of the supply routes to Egypt, Serbia and Gallipoli. The German Naval Command had appreciated this problem and sent 6 U - Boats, commanded by the best German Commanders, ~~in~~ into the Mediterranean. Ten smaller U - Boats were sent by rail (in bits) to Pola, where they were assembled in the Austrian Dockyard.

At first Italy was neutral, But in April 1915, she denounced adherence to the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria and herself, but did not declare war on anyone. She declared war on Austria in May 1915 and Turkey in August 1915. War with Germany was not declared until August 1916!! This strange behaviour caused many problems for the Allies. Any operations against Austrian bases were confused by Italy not being at war with Germany. Also, in the view of the British, Italy's entry into the war removed a capable Allied Command and replaced it with an Italian Navy which was acutely nationalist and who considered the Adriatic to be its responsibility. (It was also incompetent).

Under the terms of the Naval Convention agreed between the Allies, the Italian fleet in the Adriatic was to be reinforced by 12 destroyers (French), and as many torpedo boats, submarines and minesweepers as the French could spare, 6 seaplanes and a seaplane carrier, also 4 British Light Cruisers and 4 pre-Dreadnoughts were to be placed under Italian Command. A blockade of the Straits of Otranto was begun with a fleet of drifters and trawlers laying their nets across a 45 mile stretch of water. This was intended to stop Austrian and German submarines leaving the Adriatic (It actually caught about three throughout the entire war)!

On the night of Italy's entry into the war, Austrian warships bombarded Rimini, Ancona and other small ports, catching Italian ships still unready for action. Little damage was done, but the Italian public was incensed.

On June 9th., the British Light Cruiser "Dublin" was torpedoed and the Italians lost the submarine "Medusa" and the rigid airship M.2, which ran out of fuel whilst bombing Fiume! The Austrians also bombarded Bari which was the constituency of the Italian Prime Minister. This caused the Italians to station 5 armoured cruisers at Venice. This was a strange decision as they were not fast enough to prevent the Austrian ships from bombarding Ancona or to cut them off on their return home. On July 7th., one of these cruisers - the "Amalfi" - was sunk by an Austrian submarine, illustrating the danger of

using heavy warships in these waters. In true Italian tradition the cruisers were not ordered to leave Venice, in spite of their obvious uselessness there, but were ordered not to put to sea again!! Another cruiser - the "Guiseppe Garibaldi" - was lost on July 18th. She, and others of her division based at Brindisi, had been sent to destroy the railway bridges at Ragusa. They were sighted by an Austrian aircraft and a submarine was sent to intercept them. One torpedo hit the "Garibaldi" and she capsized and sank.

These losses made the Italians even more cautious, and the Adriatic was considered too dangerous for any warships larger than a light cruiser. In the four months since Italy had entered the war Italy had lost two armoured cruisers, one destroyer, two torpedo boats, three submarines and two rigid airships. Also, the "Dublin" was still under repair in Malta.

In the same period the Austrians had lost two submarines and three naval aircraft. Public anger at the Government allowing the Adriatic to become an Austrian lake led to the fall of the Italian Ministry of Marine, as the shortage of light craft and submarines were laid at his door.

Britain sent six of her "D" Class submarines to assist the Italians. These coastal submarines had a limited radius of action but were well suited to the narrow waters of the Adriatic. Although they had little operational success their presence restricted Austrian fleet movements and the almost daily bombardment of the Italian coast became a thing of the past.

NOTE: This article is intended as a general introduction to the Naval War in the Adriatic. In future articles I intend to give more information on specific actions and details of the fleets of both sides. This information will be of direct relevance to the two-day mini campaign which will take place on March 29/30th.

ADVERT: HELP WANTED: ARE YOU COWARDLY, INCOMPETENT, AND GENERALLY UNTRUSTWORTHY? IF SO, YOU'RE THE MAN WE WANT TO LEAD THE ITALIAN NAVY TO GREATER DISASTERS!!!
Apply: Terry Spencer,
Main Austrian Naval Base,
Trieste. (p.s. Not Wednesdays, as I'm
away Bombarding Italy).

...KULTURE TIME - ... KULTURE TIME ... KULTURE TIME ... KULTURE TIME ...

FILMS: I have booked the films you have asked for, with the exception of "The Duellists", which is not available until after June 1980.

17th. February - "Northwest Frontier"
(Sorry, 18th. Century
Canada, not 1980
Afghanistan!!)

16th. March. - "The Seven Samurai"

This means you don't have a film for 6th. April, so, if you want to select another title please check through the catalogue and let Jim know what you want so that he can get it/them booked.

BOOKS: We now have the following books in the Club Library:-

1. "Hitler's Panzers"
2. "Sea War in the Pacific"
3. "Battlegame Book 3 - Galactic War"
4. "British Battlefields"
5. "French AFVs No.1 -
Battle Tanks (Bellona)

Jim.

Not much, but it's a start. If anyone wants to make some space at home, or has a copy of some useful books (even Featherstone!) just bring them along. You never know when you might want some information. (Ed.)

A CHESTNUT LODGE PRODUCTION.
48, Palace Road, London. S.W.2

March 29/30th. W.W.1 Naval. (Now you've got to read the front page!)

Contact Terry Spencer.

*June 28/29th. Vietnam Local Political/
Military struggle.

(Real Acropolis now stuff - puts a strain on your temple!)

(Contact Jim)

MINI CAMPAIGNS - 1980.

Preparations are coming along (see MM20x for dates) and the following items are set so far (watch future MM's for further details, however, as the other two mini campaigns mentioned (*) are still in the planning stage).
*.September 27/28th. Viking Fleet Raid.
(Now, for the last time, it's kill all the men and rape all the women!.....)

(Contact Pete).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Adriatic was dominated by Austria Hungary almost from the outbreak of war. Italy, in typical fashion declared war on Austria in May 1915 (but not on Germany until August 1916) but forgot to prepare her fleet for sea. The Austrians carried out bombardments of Rimini, Ancona, and Bari while the Italians were still at anchor. In reply the Italians sent an airship to bomb Fiume (It ran out of fuel while bombing the harbour). By September the Austrian submarines had sunk a number of Italian cruisers and convinced the Italian Naval Command that it was impossible to use capital ships in the Adriatic.

THE CAMPAIGN

Players will command various Divisions of ships (mainly light cruisers, destroyers and torpedo boats) I will supply complete lists of both navies and their bases many ships will be refitting or earmarked for other operations (i.e. hiding!) Each side will be given a mission or missions to perform with ships being allocated by the Naval Command (Unpire). In the unlikely event that both sides actually find each other the Unpire will resolve the battle (or Debacle).

I aim to allocate commands by 2 March. Maps, Intelligence reports, and Mission briefs will then be issued. Initial orders, patrol arrangements etc should be given in by 16 March and the campaign action will commence on 29 March.

