

Captain Ivo Visin and the Barque SPLENDIDO

by Flotsam

Captain Ivo Visin (1806-1868) of Prcanj (Boka kotorska, Montenegro) was the commander of the barque [a two-masted sailing ship] "Splendido" on which he sailed around the world from 1852 to 1859. Visin was the first Croatian, and only the sixth sailor in the world to repeat what Magellan did. For his accomplishment he was awarded the Austrian White Honor Flag, Merito navale, awarded in peacetime for the results and successes in navigation on distant seas, in development of naval trade, in rescuing at sea or some other exceptional deed, merchant-ship captains for nautical merits. Visin is the only recipient of this honor. The flag is shown flying over the ship "Splendido" is the Honor Flag with an imperial double eagle on a white field.



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The map in the background is Vincenzo Maria Coronelli's (1650/1718) map, Disegno Topografico Del Canale di Cattaro (Topographical Design of the Canals of Kotor (Boka Katorska)), 1688. It is a detailed topographical map of the Gulf of Venice and Sea of Dalmatia, in the Hercag-Novi region of Serbia and Montenegro. It was published in Coronelli's 13 volume atlas in 1688, and included in his Isolario dell' Atlante Veneto published in 1696. The map shows the bay, in Venetian possession, with the exception of Vitaljina and Prevlaka. The Venetians captured the town of Kotor in 1520 and expanded their conquest in 1540 and again in 1683-1699.

HONOUR FLAGS

A curious establishment Austria has is the so called "Honour Flags" for Merchant-ship's captains, which were created in the year 1850.

There are red and white Honour Flags. The former serves as a reward for skippers, who through nautical accomplishments and the propagation and furtherance of the Austrian shipping and the Austrian overseas trade in high deg-

ree have deserved well of their country or through the saving of castaways or other similar commendable acts have distinguished themselves. The Honour Flags are made of silk, have the black double eagle with an appropriate inscription and are after the death of the possessor preserved for all times in the municipal halls of the place of his birth.

SYMBOL OF APPRECIATION

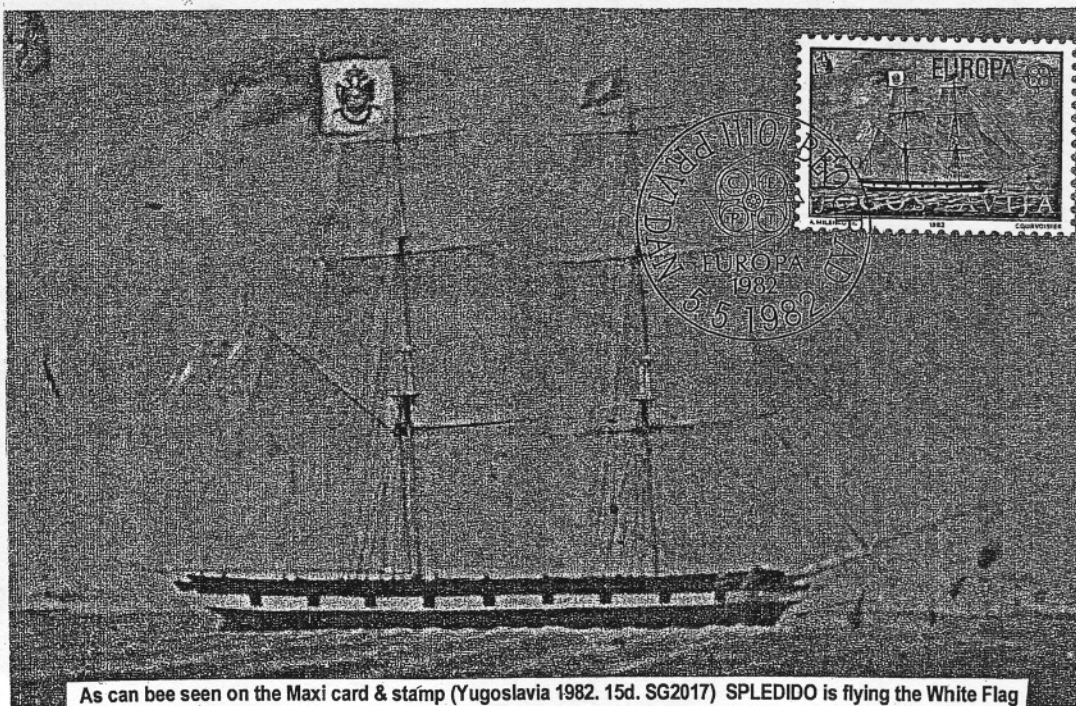
The white honour flag (for nautical merits) and the red honour flag (for warlike merits) bore the Imperial Double Eagle with a black diagonal band in the obverse that contained the words 'Merito navali' or 'Fortitudini navali' respectively. The reverse was decorated with the motto 'Viribus unitis'.

The honorary naval flags called Merito navali and Fortitudini navali were established in the Austrian-Hungarian navy [navy here means both military and merchant marine] as a symbol of Appreciation of deeds at sea and special merit in the navy. The flags were established by the Imperial patent [decree] of 16th April 1850 and they were of two colours bearing the same symbol - the imperial double eagle [i.e. the coat of arms with shield, collar, shields of crown-lands around, imperial crown above, sword and orb] and were inscribed "Viribus unitis" [together we shall win - the motto of the imperial navy].

The white flag - Merito navali - was awarded in peacetime for the results and successes in navigation on distant seas, in development of naval trade, in rescuing at sea or some other exceptional deed. The other, red flag - Fortitudini navali - was awarded for evident courage and exceptional deeds in combat on sea.

Both of these flags, the white and the red, were awarded by Austria-Hungary only once each, and both were given to Croatian seamen. The white honorary flag was awarded to Captain Ivo Visin of Pranj (Boka kotorska, today in Montenegro).

Source : Various ancient manuscripts and translations too numerous to mention



As can be seen on the Maxi card & stamp (Yugoslavia 1982. 15d. SG2017) SPLENDIDO is flying the White Flag