

A new FREMM for the Navy: welcome Spartaco Schergat

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On April 15, 2025, the ninth FREMM frigate, named **SPARTACO SCHERGAT**, was officially delivered to the Italian Navy at the Fincantieri shipyard in Muggiano (La Spezia). The ship is named after the heroic raider of the Xª Flottiglia MAS, distinguished for the attack on the British naval base in Alexandria, Egypt, on December 19, 1941, an action that led to the sinking of the battleships Queen Elizabeth and Valiant. Schergat, decorated with the Gold Medal for Military Valor, is a symbolic figure of the courage, technical preparation, and determination of the Italian Navy.

The SPARTACO SCHERGAT represents another step forward in the FREMM program, which has revolutionized the Italian fleet in terms of modernity, operational versatility, and strategic projection. Along with the upcoming **EMILIO BIANCHI**, scheduled for July 2025, it forms the pair of frigates in **ASW Enhanced** configuration – enhanced for anti-submarine warfare – intended to replace the namesake units in GP (General Purpose) configuration, sold to the Egyptian Navy.

The FREMM program (European Multi-Mission Frigates) is the result of cooperation between Italy and France, but it has evolved independently in the two countries. In Italy, it is managed by **Orizzonte Sistemi Navali (OSN)**, a joint venture that brings together two giants of the Italian defense industry: **Fincantieri** (51%) and **Leonardo** (49%). The program today represents a milestone of the national naval industry and an essential component of the Italian maritime strategy.



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Elite technology and operational capabilities

On the eve of the official delivery, the SPARTACO SCHERGAT made its first sea outing with a technical delegation on board led by the CEO of OSN, Giovanni Sorrentino, and the Director of NAVARM, Admiral Giuseppe Abbamonte. During the navigation, it was possible to verify the **exceptional stability**, the **operational silence** – a crucial element for anti-submarine warfare – and the high level of **ergonomics and livability** of the internal spaces. These aspects not only improve operational effectiveness but also the quality of life for the crew on board during long missions.

The FREMMs in **ASW Enhanced** configuration retain some characteristics of the previous anti-submarine versions, such as the variable depth sonar **Thales CAPTAS-4**, consisting of an ultra-low frequency active “fish” and a hydrophone array for capturing radiated noise and reflected signals. This equipment is complemented by significant technological innovations:

- **127 mm bow gun**, with assisted firing capability against the coast, ideal for ground support operations.
- **New electronic warfare (EW) suite** entirely developed by **ELTGroup**, derived from the **ZEUS** suite of the Naval Law units. This suite includes advanced systems for radar and communication emissions detection and analysis (RESM/CESM) and an electronic countermeasures (ECM) system to disrupt anti-ship missile radars and seekers.
- A more advanced **COP (Platform Operational Center) interface**, which improves situational awareness and crew response speed.

The operational versatility of these frigates allows them to be employed in both anti-submarine missions and escort, patrol, ground support operations, and maritime traffic control. In this sense, the FREMM truly represents a “multi-mission” ship as the acronym itself suggests.



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A successful program between past and future

With 315,000 engine hours accumulated by the entire class, the FREMM program has achieved extraordinary operational results. This figure is equivalent to about 35 years of continuous navigation, a milestone that only the historic **MAESTRALE** class had approached in its long career. The FREMMs have operated in all major Mediterranean scenarios and beyond, standing out for reliability and adaptability.

The SPARTACO SCHERGAT embodies not only technological progress but also the link between the history and future of the Navy. Naming a modern ship after a hero of the past is not a mere

symbolic gesture: it is the tangible sign of continuity between generations of Italian sailors, between those who wrote history and those who today inherit it to project it into tomorrow.

The FREMM program also represents an exportable industrial success. Italy has already transferred four FREMMs to the Egyptian Navy, and new opportunities are being explored for other countries interested in acquiring modern, modular, and highly interoperable naval platforms. This strengthens Italy's role in the European defense landscape and NATO cooperation, in line with shared security strategies.

With the delivery of the EMILIO BIANCHI in July 2025, the FREMM program for the Navy will come to its conclusion. However, the skills, technological solutions, and experience accumulated will continue to live on in future programs, including European ones such as the **European Patrol Corvette (EPC)** and the new post-FREMM generation frigates.

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