

Italian Navy, ceremony in memory of the heroes of the Xª MAS on the anniversary of the Alexandria operation

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In Piazza Bainsizza, in the heart of the First Municipality of Rome, the wreath-laying ceremony at the **“To the Sailors of Italy” Monument** took place on Friday, December 19, promoted by the **National Association of Italian Sailors (ANMI)** on the occasion of the anniversary of the Alexandria Operation, one of the most significant dates in the history of the Italian Navy (we discussed it in this article).

The event assumed a particular symbolic value: **for the first time** the anniversary was celebrated in front of the “To the Sailors of Italy” Monument, a place that represents the national maritime memory in the heart of the Capital, strengthening the bond between history, identity, and service.

The Alexandria Operation: the audacity that anticipated the future

On the night between **December 18 and 19, 1941**, the six Italian sailors belonging to the **Xª Flottiglia MAS**, **Luigi Durand de la Penne, Emilio Bianchi, Vincenzo Martellotta, Mario Marino, Antonio Marceglia, and Spartaco Schergat** managed to penetrate the fortified port of Alexandria, Egypt, inflicting severe damage on the British battleships **HMS *Queen Elizabeth*** and **HMS *Valiant*** and two other units using slow-running torpedoes, the famous **“Maiali”**. An action of exceptional military and human value, which remains one of the highest examples of audacity, technical preparation, and spirit of sacrifice in naval history.

However, it must be remembered that Alexandria **is not just a war chronicle episode**: it is a piece that helped define the culture of modern **naval special forces**.

It anticipated concepts that are central today in **asymmetric scenarios**: planning, targeted attack, surprise, infiltration, and the value of individual preparation. In the post-war period, many navies around the world **would invest precisely in that direction** and today the current Operational Raiders Group of COMSUBIN embodies in Italy that doctrinal and operational evolution.

Italy paved the way, as we explained in this series of articles on our sister platform **DIFESANEWS.COM**. Other countries followed that example: the **British SBS, the Spanish FGNE, the US Navy SEALs**, to name a few, **are nothing but the evolution of an operational concept born in the Mediterranean** from the vision of Italian sailors, and then adapted to different scenarios and strategic interests.

Flags change, geopolitical contexts change, but the principle remains the same: **small, highly selected units, trained to strike where conventional forces cannot reach**. A setup that has its roots precisely in those nights of 1941 and that still today defines the essence of modern naval special forces.



Operators of the Operational Raiders Group of COMSUBIN during the "Black Shadow 2019" exercise - Copyright Italian Navy

The authorities present

The ceremony was attended by representatives of ANMI, civil and military authorities, and a qualified component of the Italian Navy. The event was presided over by the National President of ANMI, Admiral **Pierluigi Rosati**, and Rear Admiral **Fabio Agostini**, Interregional Maritime Commander Center and Capital.

At the end of the commemoration, Admiral Agostini emphasized:

> *“As a Sailor and ANMI member, I share with all of you the pride of belonging to a family that, beyond active service, continues to bear witness to the founding values of the Navy:* ***Honor, Courage, Discipline, and Team Spirit****.”*



Rear Admiral Fabio Agostini wanted to recall the founding values of the Navy: Honor, Courage, Discipline, and Team Spirit - Copyright photo Italian Navy

President Rosati reiterated how the **“great maritime family”**, active personnel, ANMI members, and representatives of the Assoarma Honor Company, with a simple and touching ceremony, highlighted the importance of memory as a tool to live the present and build the future, preserving and passing on the feats that have forged the identity, prestige, and tradition of the Italian Navy.

A prestige, we add, true, without ifs and buts. A true excellence, the Italian Navy, which **continues to serve the country with professionalism and operational capabilities recognized well beyond our borders**.



From left: the National President of ANMI, Admiral Pierluigi Rosati, and Rear Admiral Fabio Agostini, Interregional Maritime Commander Center and Capital - Copyright photo Italian Navy

Living memory

The laying of the wreath at the “To the Sailors of Italy” Monument was not just a commemorative act, but a **collective commitment** to keep alive the bond between history and the daily service performed today by men and women in uniform.

That night continues to speak to the present, indicating a path made of competence, courage, and a sense of duty. **A truly Italian story**.

News link: https://www.marina.difesa.it/media-cultura/Notiziario-online/Pagine/20251219_Deposizione-corona-presso-il-Monumento-Ai-Marinai-d%E2%80%99Italia.aspx