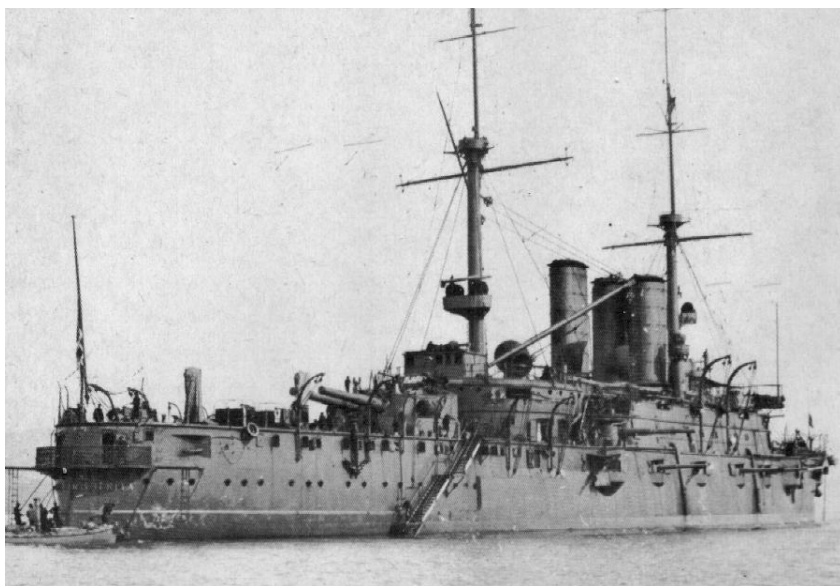


REGINA MARGHERITA 2005

(Official Press Release)

During a stormed night, on the 11th of December 1916 at around 21.30, the Regia Nave battleship *Regina Margherita* bumped into two mines vanishing mysteriously near the exit of the bay of Valona (Albania), between the Saseno Island and the Punta Linguetta. The sinking brought with itself 674 seamen and caused important effects in the Regia Marina (Royal Italian Navy) leaders and in the naval war strategy. The Italian Commanders supposed an fortuitous contact with an explosive device of the defensive blockage, the Austro-Hungarian Navy borne out the sinking to the German mine-laying submarine UC-14.



At 09.50 on the 30th of July 2005, the wreck of the Regia Nave *Regina Margherita* was discovered from the IANTD Instructor Trainer Cesare Balzi, the enterprise started from the impulse of the Italian Ambassador in Tirana, Mr. Attilio Massimo Iannucci and cooperation with the Italian General Consul in Valona, Mr Lorenzo Tomassoni, the Commander of the 28th Naval Group (Italian Navy), Alberto Fiorentino and myself (have a look to the previous press release).

After this discovery, an official IANTD expedition was organized to produce a photo and video documentation of this important wreck; the expedition took place between the 10th and 16th of August, 2005 with the aegis of the Consulate General of Italy in Valona that took care with efficiency and professional competence the relations with the Albanian Authority.



The dives on this shipwreck of enormous historical significance were did by ten IANTD instructors and divers, experts in using trimix and nitrox gas mixtures and proven possessive of the skills necessary for such diving expedition. The team consisted of: Fabio Ruberti, expedition leader; Cesare Balzi, deputy expedition leader and organiser; Massimiliano Canossa, video operator; Carla Binelli, organisation manager; Fabio Agostinelli, dive safety manager; Andrea Bolzoni, photographer; Nicola Boninsegna, photographer; Michele Cocco, diver; Jacopo Ruberti, diver; Ilir Capuni, diver.

The project was supported by the following IANTD Training Facilities: Acquamarina, Marina di Pisa; Nautica Mare Dive, Verona; Hydromania, Trento; Polo Sub, Genova; Elba Diving Center, Marciana Marina and by the diving equipment companies Acquamarina® and Dive Rite®.

The expedition was composed of three operational teams with specific dive targets: one team for the safety management, one team for photo and video documentation, one specific team dedicated to explore the wreck of the hospital ship *Po*, the second shipwreck explored during the expedition, in fact not too far from position of the battleship *Regina Margherita* lies this important historical find. The sinking of the hospital ship *Po* occurred by English torpedo bombers on the 14th of March 1941, caused great sensation both for the seriousness of the event and for the solemnity of the fact that Edda Ciano Mussolini – eldest daughter of the Duce - was working on board as a red-cross nurse.



The course of a dive expedition with technical dives planned to document an exceptional discovery a few time after it occurred, of a wreck like the *Regina Margherita* is an important event; not only for the huge dimension of the ship (13.427 tons., more than 138 meters of overall length) and for the operational depth (70 meters), but also for the necessity to carry to the place all the equipments and the technical support necessary, because of the total infrastructure absence. This fact required a great engagement that all the team members faced, like always, with passion and competence.

The discovery and the following expedition, caused a great interest for all the international news agencies and found a large space in all the national newspapers as well as the Sunday night edition of the TG1, the main Italian news TV channel, of the 4th of September 2005.

Fabio Ruberti
IANTD S.r.l.

Marina di Pisa, September 14th 2005