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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

(Official Press Release)

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On 10th of August 1942 the Italian Royal Submarine Scirè of the X[^] MAS Flotilla was getting ready to attack the port of Haifa which at that time was under British control. Eleven commandos, "Gamma Men" as they were known at the time, were aboard. Their hope was to repeat previous



successes at Gibraltar, and above all, the raid on Alexandria where in the December of the previous year, under the command of Prince Junio Valerio Borghese, the Scirè had sunk two British battleships, HMS Valiant and HMS Queen Elizabeth, and the tanker Sagona. The three sinkings had been carried out using SLCs (human torpedoes), the so-called "Pigs", and the action was rewarded with the addition of a Gold Medal to the submarine's flag. However, when the Scirè arrived at Haifa, all hell broke

loose: the coastal artillery, aircraft and ships seemed to be expecting her and after a merciless chase, the Scirè was sunk with her commander Bruno Zelik and all the sailors and the raiders aboard. It has always been thought that the British knew about the raid in advance and recent research by IANTD Expeditions has found proof of this in the World War II archives of Bletchley Park and Kew (West London). The Scirè entered into history and is still today one of the most famous naval vessels in the world. After a long period of oblivion, in 1984 the wreck was the subject of an Italian Navy expedition tasked with recovering the remains of the Scirè's sailors and commandos. Israeli underwater archaeologist Ehud Galili was part of that team and was the first to re-discover her. This expedition was followed by a second in 2001. Since then, the wreck has been visited only occasionally by Israeli divers but very rarely by Italians. From 22nd to 28th September, 2008. IANTD, under the patronage of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, acting in the interests of international cultural promotion and cooperation, organised and conducted an expedition on this important shipwreck. The goals of the expedition were both archaeological and scientific. Primarily the aim was to conduct a survey of the site and assess the condition of the wreck. Nine IANTD

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