



# MARINAI d'ITALIA

## NEWSLETTER USA GROUPS



### Ocean Stories, an Italian Navy Exhibit



World Oceans Day is held annually on June 8 to raise awareness of the vital importance of our oceans and the role they play in sustaining a healthy planet. It is a global celebration, aiming to bring together people and organizations from around the world in a series of events that highlight how we can all help protect and conserve the oceans. On World Oceans Day, people across our blue planet celebrate and honor our ocean, which unites us all.

By working together, we can – and will – protect and restore our oceans not separated but considered all interconnected as one and shared by all.

Originally an idea put forward by the Canadian government at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, World Oceans Day has been organized by the Ocean Project group since 2002. In 2008, the day gained official recognition from the United Nations General Assembly, a push to raise the profile of the day and its goals. The number of countries and organizations celebrating World Oceans Day grows every year in recognition



of the importance of the oceans around the world. It is therefore no coincidence that also in this context the Italian Navy is planning an exhibition titled Ocean Stories to be displayed in the lobby of the United Nations headquarters in New York.

The exhibition at the UN will open on June 3rd and will last two weeks.

The goal of the exhibition is to introduce the complex and diversified world of the Italian Navy to a wide audience, with a variety of cultures, nationalities, and ages. From what we have learned so far, the exhibition will illustrate the activities of the Navy according to three main themes.

**The Planet Ocean** – Too often defined as a multitude of oceans and seas, when in fact it is only one and thrives when all its parts prosper, seen through the eyes of our Sailors who sail its waves, who love it and are dedicated to preserving it.

**Time** – A journey that through captivating images shows the gestures and actions of the men and women of the Navy and their interaction with the elements, especially the wind and the waves.

**Men at the Helm** – The story of our Navy told through our values, the activities carried out and the people who are part of it, trained and engaged not only in military operations, but dedicated to humanitarian activities and environmental protection. The history of an organization with deep roots in its traditions, well positioned in the present and projected toward the future.

A section of the exhibition will be dedicated to the Amerigo Vespucci, who has recently resumed his circumnavigation of the globe. Visitors will be able to admire a large-scale model (1:25) of the Queen of the Seas and it will also be able to virtually explore the interior of the Amerigo Vespucci thanks to a virtual 3D reproduction created by the University of Florence.

For sure it will be a beautiful exhibition not to be missed, but if it is not possible to attend the event in New York for any reason, the exhibition will be relocated to the Italian Embassy in Washington, DC, where it will be open to the public from June 27 to July 12.



MARCH - APRIL 2024



# Operation "WoW - Wheels on Waves Around the World 2023-2025"

As is well known, the Italian Department of Defense has always paid the utmost attention to its personnel and, in line with the policy of "never leaving anyone behind", it also keeps in service the soldiers who have become disabled in the fulfilment of their duty by passing them into the Roll of Honor, a unique institution in the world, recognized as a reference model also in the international arena. A collaboration agreement has been signed with the "Lo Spirito di Stella" Association, a non-profit organization that promotes projects of high social value, with specific reference to the world of disability. In particular, the President, Dr. Andrea Stella, has built the world's first boat completely free of architectural

Spirito di Stella made a stop in Miami, one of the many ports she will visit in the United States during the world tour.

Andrea Stella was born in Sandrigo in 1976 and graduated from the Faculty of Law at the University of Trento in 2000. In August of the same year, during a graduation trip to the United States, he was involved in an senseless shooting in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, resulting in permanent paraplegia of his lower limbs.

A keen sailor, Andrea Stella dreamed of being able to return to sailing. With the support of his family, he decided to build



barriers, Lo Spirito di Stella, which in 2023 started a second equatorial circumnavigation around the world, with a crew made up of military and civilians with disabilities.

The round-the-world on a catamaran is a project wanted and supported by the Ministry of Defense. The initiative, during the 80 stages and ports stops of the tour, offers the opportunity to involve not only the personnel of the Italian Arm Forces (including the athletes of the Paralympic Sports

a catamaran accessible to all. The results of his work have demonstrated that attention to accessibility in the design of objects and spaces is an added value, beneficial not only to disabled people, but to society as a whole.

In 2003, Andrea Stella founded the non-profit association "Lo Spirito di Stella", which has since embarked on a campaign to promote the removal of architectural barriers and raise awareness of disability. Succeeding in arousing interest and mobilizing resources, Andrea em-



Group of the Defense - GSPD), but also the counterparts of the foreign Armed Forces, as well as many other disabled people from all over the world, in living and experiencing the excitement derived by riding the waves driven by the winds on a one-of-a-kind boat. Last January, the

barked on the construction of a sailing boat that would enable crew members with reduced mobility to access ocean sailing.

## "WoW " - Spirito di Stella visits Miami on Jan 31st 2024

The architectural choice naturally fell on a 50-foot catamaran, as Andrea explains:

*"Because of its interior volumes and the two separate hulls, the catamaran was the ideal platform to implement our project. An optimal environment was created to accommodate wheelchair users. In designing the accessible spaces, a worldwide standard width of 68 to 69 cm, corresponding to wheelchair dimensions, was used as a reference to ensure functional circulation from one area to another. As a result, each area has a minimum width of 71 cm.*

*For the positioning of buttons and switches, a height of 70 cm has been chosen to ensure easy access for the disabled. Just as on a conventional catamaran, the main crew quarter is located in the central part, which houses the dining area and the galley on the starboard side, where crew activities take place."*

Thanks to its single-level cockpit, access to the boat can be gained either from the aft deck, or from the bulwark if the boat is moored alongside. Access to the main quarter is via a small tilting ramp with an 8° incline electrically operated.

Located in the hulls, 2 of the 4 cabins are wheelchair-accessible, via an electric elevator. The shower rooms allocated to the cabins have been designed to offer simplified access. On deck, crew members can move



*"We want to prove that if we can outfit a sailboat for disabled people, then it's possible to do the same for those who stay ashore."*



**Selfie with Capt. BAGNI Italian Naval Attache in Washington DC**

from stern to bow via a sliding seat, allowing them to move forward. All maneuvers are brought back to the cockpit and are easily accessible. Below is pictured the sliding seat for front deck access. As soon as the catamaran was launched in Genoa, Andrea set course for Miami to return to the place where the whole adventure began. This was followed by her first round-the-world voyage, which lasted 4 years, during which the catamaran went to meet crippled crew members who could no longer sail. On the strength of this first successful experience, Andrea has just set off on a new round-the-world voyage during which the Spirito di Stella will sail some of the legs alongside the famous four-masted Amerigo Vespucci, a well-known ambassador of Italy, which has just started the second also half of his world tour.

The aim of this second circumnavigation remains the same: to raise public awareness of the cause of disabled people:



## REMEMBERING THE VICTIMS OF THE FOIBE MASSACRES

February 10 of each year in Italy is the "Day of Remembrance", a day to commemorate of the victims of the Foibe massacre and the Istrian-Dalmatian exodus during and after the Second World War.

A "foiba", plural "foibe", is a natural, deep, and vast vertical cavern, formed by water erosion, typical of the carsick region. Between 1943 and 1947, Marshal Josip Broz Tito, leader of the Yugoslav communist partisans, occupied the Italian territories of Dalmatia and Istria. There, his forces began a campaign with the intent of carrying out ethnic cleansing against the local population of Italian ethnicity.

Soldiers and civilians were shot and their bodies were thrown into the foibe. Many Italians also died in Yugoslav concentration camps and prisons.

As a result of these killings, some 300,000 Italians were exiled en masse from Istria and Dalmatia when the territories were transferred from Italy to Yugoslavia following the Paris Peace Treaty of February 10, 1947.

February 10 was declared National Day of Remembrance in 2004 by the then President of the Republic Carlo Azeglio Ciampi with the aim of keeping alive the memory of the victims of the post-World

War II period on the eastern border, and of the forced exodus of Istrians, Fiumans and Dalmatians from their lands. Since then, every year a ceremony is held at the Consulate General of Italy in New York to honor and keep alive the memory of the estimated fifteen thousand victims of "one of the barbarities of the last century" as it was defined in 2007 by the then president Giorgio Napolitano, and a "tragedy, which cannot be forgotten" as President Sergio Mattarella defined it this year in his commemorative speech. The ceremony held last February in New York was

attended by the Consul General, Fabrizio Di Michele, the Italian Senator Francesca La Marca, the Rev. Ellis Tommaseo, promoter of the event, and numerous delegations from various institutions, organizations, and associations. During this year event journalist Viviana Facchinetti commented on a video shown to honor the memory of Norma Cossetto, a young Istrian student, Gold Medal for Civil Valor, killed by the Yugoslav partisans.



A delegation from the ANMI Group of New York, Amerigo Vespucci, led by its President Rocco Munna attended the ceremony in representation of ANMI, the National Association of Italian Sailors.

## A day in the countryside for all members of the ANMI USA Groups, their families, and friends



On Sunday, May 26th, in the middle of Memorial Day weekend, the ANMI Groups in the United States will meet in Lambertville, NJ at a winery owned by one of the members of the Alberto Banfi Group of New Jersey. The locality is central to all the groups, with the exception of the Christopher Columbus Group of Boston, which is located much further north. The purpose of the meeting is to meet again in person, to get to know each other better, and to decide together how to proceed for the future. Our Groups often have common problems that, if faced together, could lead to the identification of some opportunities that are increasing-

ly difficult to seize alone. It will be a very informal day divided into two phases. The first will be a meeting between the members who will share ideas and programs for the near future.

The second phase will be purely convivial with tasting of mostly Italian products and wines produced on site. For those who decide to stay in the area at the end of the meeting there are many accommodation options nearby.

We are all invited to participate in order to spend a few hours of pleasant conversation together, some of which will be dedicated to planning our level of involvement with the various activities associated with the conspicuous presence of Italian Navy ships in US ports during the summer months. We will also be involved with the Exhibition about the activities of the Italian Navy for the protection of the Ocean environment that will take place at the United Nations Building in New York from June 3<sup>rd</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>, and at the Italian Embassy in Washington, DC, from June 27<sup>th</sup> to July 12<sup>th</sup>.

Have fun and enjoy the tasting! Don't forget to take pictures that will be published in the May - June 2024 Newsletter!

