



The entrance porches and the Court of Honour



ITALIAN MILITARY MEMORIALS ABROAD (2nd W.W.)



EL ALAMEIN EGYPT

(FREE OF CHARGE)

MINISTERO DELLA DIFESA

COMMISSARIATO GÉNÉRALE
PER LE ONORANZE AI CADUTI IN GUERRA

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It is located on a ridge at the 120 km mark on the coastal road between Alexandria (Al Iskandariyah) and Marsa Matruh.

The Arab name "Tel El Alamein" literally means "the hill of the twin peaks". The ridge, on which the Memorial stands, has been granted to Italy by the Egyptian Government on a 99-year lease and surrounded by the vast desert which was the theatre of the battles of El Alamein.

The construction, which was designed by Eng. Paolo Caccia Dominioni who during the war served as an officer of the Alpine Engineers and in North Africa was Commander of the 31st Battalion of Engineers, comprises three distinct features: the Memorial, the series of structure along the coastal road and the Italian base at "Level 33".

The Memorial is sub-divided in:

- an octagonal tower slightly tapered towards the top and widening at the base into a large pavilion; War Deaths are commemorated in the tower;
- a semi circular gallery with 5 wide windows which give a panoramic view to the sea and ensure lighting of the loggia and the entrance feature.

The altar is placed in the middle of the gallery and is surmounted by a high cross raised along the inside of the tower.

The structure along the road includes from left to right:

- the Libyan "Askari" Cemetery containing 228 War Graves annexed by a Mosque;
- the entrance porches with a Court of Honour;
- the public area including a museum and a video -film projecting room.

Flanking the front entrance porches there are 4 (Four) 47 mm guns taken from the turrets of the tanks belonging to the XI Battalion - Division "Trieste". A monument to the "Desert Tank men" is erected inside the Court of Honour.

The Italian base at "Level 33" was a spiritual centre for Italian officials who for many years devoted their time to the search and exhumation of the remains of the War Deaths in the "longed-for" battlefield.

The building facing the sea and dominating the ridge 500 m from the Memorial has also become museum in memory of LII Group of 152/37 guns destroyed on that ridge in the hard fighting of 1942.

An Italian non-commissioned officer of the Minister of Defence "Commissariato Generale" and accredited to the Italian Consulate General's office in Alexandria is responsible for the maintenance and care of the Memorial and assisted in this task by six local guardians and gardeners.



The octagonal tower containing War Graves



The semi-circular gallery with the altar and the large 5 windows looking towards the sea

In 1943 the British authorities built an Italian-German Cemetery at the foot of Level 33 of El Alamein.

Construction was carried out by using the labour of Italian and German prisoners. The Cemetery was used to bury the remains of Italian and German Fallen gradually gathered from the various Cemeteries in the area up to the Libyan border.

This activity was completed in the years from 1949 to 1960 under the supervision of the "ONORCADUTI" team led by Lt. Col. Paolo Caccia Dominioni, who devoted himself to the sympathetic task.

The search and exhumation of the remains, scattered over the vast battlefield, was extremely arduous and complex due to the presence in the area of extensive live minefields. During the 10 years of work these mines caused the death of seven local workers.

It was later decided to build two separate burial areas. These were constructed between 1954 and 1958. Italian Fallen were buried in the area of the old Cemetery; Germans were buried in a Memorial in the shape of a medieval tower, which stands on a ridge in the immediate vicinity.

The Memorial contains the remains of 4,634 War Deaths of which 2,447 are "known" and 2,187 are "unknown".

In 1960 a chapel was built under the porches to hold the remains of 100 Italian workers who died while working in the construction of barrages (dams) at Aswan, Edfina and Esna.