



SUMMARY of ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR 2012

By means of this document, ARIDO (the Association) makes available to its members, to the public institutions with which it relates, and to whoever is interested in the Association's scope, a summary of its missions and activities for the year 2012.

This summary has - within the planning and control process - a key role between past, present and future of the Association's management, representing not only an accountability report, but above all a governance tool.

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The Association

On August 7, 2011 ARIDO was formally constituted with the aim of conveying the initiatives already active in other areas, and in particular in the Project for search of burials, into a freely and legally constituted Association that had the capability to aggregate scholars and experts to the pursuit of its statutory objectives.

As of November 2012 (15 months from its foundation) the Association has 70 members, a positive result obtained thanks to the activity that distinguishes it and to its constant commitment, despite the times not really favorable to the life of associations,

But certainly it could be improved and for that purpose new initiatives will be taken or are already in the planning stage (e.g. missions with relatives of soldiers who fought at Alamein and in North Africa) and share for the year 2013 subscriptions.

Membership cards for 2013 have been already printed, and the aim is to introduce new cards every year, with different logos, so to become collectible items.

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The Web Site

The ARIDO Web Site (www.arido.eu) has been published in 2011; in addition to articles, infos and news of general interest, it contains reports about all of the research missions.

The ARIDO site is in co-ordination, and collaborates with the QATTARA Web Site (www.qattara.it), which is the national and international reference web site for the events which did take place in North Africa.

Following to the increasing successes and contacts with foreigner Public Organisations (Ministries and Universities) and Associations, and due to the continuous requesta, with the scope to facilitate the communication and publishing of the news concerning qattara.it and, moreover, arido.eu, both sites propose, since January 2012 and in addition to the Italian content, also English and Arab pages.

Both sites are also enriched by a section dedicated to Dr Asad Zaky (ARIDO partner), of the Cairo University, Tourism and Hotel Faculty, and by a section dedicated to the works of the Egyptian students.

Unfortunately, in the second Semester of 2012, the site www.arido.eu has not been accessible, due to technical and operational problems, and also for the unavailability of the Webmaster, who had to leave for other business. Site re-opening is forecast before end of November 2012, and its management will be performed by a founding member of the Association.

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Initiatives, Meetings, Conventions, Exhibitions

The Offices of ARID EGYPT, ARIDO's partner, providing support and coaching for institutional and research activities in Egypt and local reference for those needing on-site support and facilities, are operational since January 1st, 2012.

ARID EGYPT manages contacts with governmental bodies and institutions and takes charge of documentary researches in the Egyptians archives (rich of unreleased material). In addition, ARID EGYPT takes care of the logistics and organizational part of research and tutorial missions and enjoys financial autonomy.

ARIDO EGYPT Staff:

- **Andrea Mariotti** (President ARIDO egypt)
Managing Director
- **Nagat Ali Mohamed**
Segretary & P.R.
- **Asaad Zaki**
Researcher & Data Collector
- **Nassef Nagy Aghila**
Chief Scout & Logistic Co-ordinator

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Since February 2012 is also active ADA (ARIDO DESERT ACADEMY), whose activities are described in the **Hess al Gabal project**; activity is in progress and in the November-December 2012 time-frame there will be additional missions and lessons.

From January 2012, after some meetings held in Cairo in the weeks before, it finally started the collaboration between ARIDO and the University of Sadat City-Cairo, Faculty for Tourism and Hotels. Such a collaboration, strongly pursued by Dr Asaad Zaki, Professor at the University of Sadat City-Cairo and the Managing Director of ARIDO EGYPT, Dr Andrea Mariotti, did lead - between December 30, 2011 and May 31, 2012 - to the organisation of educational missions to El Alamein, with on-the-job lessons at the Italian, German and Commonwealth cemeteries, which are located along the coastal road Alexandria/Marsa Matruh. Such missions have all been carried out with great success.

On March 24, 2012, in Chiavari (Italy), there has been the presentation of the book "Lo schiocco del merlo" (The blackbird pop): Qattara.it and ARIDO, as is now customary, jointly participated by sending several iconographic material in support of the presentation, and a video. The latter has been so well received, that a request was made to offer it to schools and for other occasions.

The Casagrande Institute [Cesi-Terni] for the 25 April anniversary, has organised a week of activities with meetings, conferences and an exhibition of vintage uniforms and artifacts (artifacts and uniforms provided by Nastro Azzurro

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Institute and private collectors). ARIDO participated with material and a movie projected during the whole event.

On April 29, 2012 ARIDO did ran a mission for Egyptian students at the Alamein military memorials and cemeteris.

In June a delegation of ARIDO made the honors at the 'Piccola Caprera' to mortal remains of GG.FF. A. Cioci, curator of the annexed museum.

On June 28, 2012 the President and the Vice-President of ARIDO were guests at a local TV channel (TV Expansion) for an interview on the research activities of the Association.

On 26 July ARIDO has organised a mass for the victims of war in North Africa at the Basilica of St. Catherine in Alexandria [Egypt], and on this occasion the cross which was erected in the cemetery of Gebel Sanhur was blessed.

On August 6, 2012 a delegation of carabinieri paratroopers of the Tuscania did visit the Italian Sacratio accompanied by the ARIDO team.

Since August 2012 ARIDO is present with its own page on Facebook; the hit counter shows the success of the initiative, which will be expanded.

In September ARIDO organized a visit by 64 ANPd'I (Italian Parachutists National Association) members, to the Alamein battlefiled.

International Research Missions

From November 2011 to November 2012 research activities by locals, financed by the ARIDO team, did obtain excellent achievements. At present,

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including the Vice-President missions, the Association has identified over 25 battlefield cemeteries, in addition to other significant places, for a total of 110 exploratory missions.

In April 2012, south of the Greek cemetery, ARIDO did identify an English cemetery (40 x 45 metres); the relevant data were immediately made available to the TWGPP (The War Graves Photographic Project).

From 10 to 15 March 2012 took place the mission 'Santo Pelliccia', which was intended primarily to restore the position of the still alive and active Folgore division parachutist, position which was identified, with ARIDO support, during the November 2011 mission. After the restoration, a commemorative plate was placed on the spot.

On that occasion, at the Italian Memorial, there was a meeting with students of the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel of Cairo University.

In the month of May the news that ARIDO researchers have found, in February 2012, a wreck of a British plane in the Egyptian desert (P40 Kittyhawk) was made public: that did create much sensation in the international media with numerous articles in international magazines and newspapers.

After that, a total of three missions were carried out on-site, the last of which brought to the discovery of human remains (to be identified); contacts with U.K. and Egyptians Authorities are ongoing.

From 16 to 21 October 2012 there was the mission for the 70th anniversary of the battle, with great success in attendance.

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Research Projects – Completed Works

As of November 2012, the following projects are defined:

The “Forgotten Cemeteries” Project. Research activities related to this project continue (about 25 cemeteries and other significant places including a field church in the desert, surveyed in November 2012), and short a full report will be released.

During the mission for the 70th anniversary of El Alamein, the Km.42 cemetery, on the Pista dell’Acqua (water piste), has been restored and the altar rebuilt, at the base of which a plaque with the words of Colonel Bechi Luserna was placed at the end of the second world war.

The “Database Design” Project. This project was aimed at the collection of and easy access to data concerning soldiers buried in the Italian Sacrario, complete of photos of each tombstone, of the exhumation and burial log, and copies of relevant documents such as matriculation papers, writings, letters, photographs.

The project involves all partners of ARIDO, and is followed by Daniele Moretto and Andrea Mariotti.

In July 2012 ARIDO received from ONORCADUTI (Ministry of Defence) a letter of denial of authorization, because that administration did not see its need, as it already has a database and also because certain activities would be inappropriate to the sacredness of the place

Thus, this Project is forcibly postponed.

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The “Hass El Gabal” Project. Training for High School students, over 18 years old, enrolled in the Hospitality and Tourism field, aimed at the planning, development and organization of excursions, expeditions and missions in the desert environment.

The “Spiritual Testament” Project. A project in which veterans will be asked to write a spiritual testament to be buried in the desert sands, within an urn, in order to survive the times. It shall become an archaeological testimony, to convey feelings about humility of man against the desert and document courage and commitment of our fathers.

The project was approved and some collected wills were buried with a touching ceremony attended by the veteran Santo Pelliccia, during the mission for the 70th anniversary of the battle.

This is an ongoing Project.

The “ARIDO – Ministry of Defence” Project. The signature of the Ministry of Defence is still pending, due to external raisons.

The project is followed by Massimo Malandrino.

The “Rasoul Monument” Project. This project, for a monument to Abedl Rasoul Aghila, late guardian of the Italian Memorial in El Alamein, has been completed, and the monument erected in January 2012.

The monument, located in the court of the Libyan Ascari of the Italian Memorial, was officially inaugurated by the President of the Lower Italian

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Parliament, On.le Gianfranco Fini, during the ceremony of the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Alamein.

The organization has been carried out by partner ARIDO Egypt.

Video Documentaries – Reportages – Magazines and Newspapers

On April 14 and 15, ARIDO was present at the "Militaria to the tower" exhibition, in Bologna, with a stand which gathered much interest. This initiative has been organized by Daniele Moretto.

Qattara.it has released a video, from yet unpublished footages shot on board the SM.82 transport aircraft of Lt. MBVM (Medaglia di Bronzo al Valor Militare) Fortunato Cavazzoni Pederzini. The video has received much appreciation, and it is viewable on the web. This initiative has been accomplished by Diego Tonelli and Daniele Moretto.

The monthly Italian magazine Volare, June and August 2012 issues, devoted two exhaustive articles to the discovery of the P40 and human relics.

Numerous news agencies and newspapers have written about ARIDO activities: La Stampa, La Repubblica, Il Messaggero, local and foreign newspapers, ADN Kronos, Ag. Il Velino, BBC, Daily Mirror etc.

A video has been made, and published on-line, about the ceremony of the 70th anniversary of the battle online. This initiative has been taken by Diego Tonelli.

Agreements and Partnerships

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It's active the partnership with ARIDO Egypt.

It's active the partnership with the City of Centallo and ANRRA.

It's active the partnership between ARIDO, Qattara.it and TWGPP (The War Graves Photographic Project), which in turn is a partner of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and there are already contacts for the exchange of material (articles about rediscovered cemeteries), and the publication of the TWGPP newsletter on the Qattara and ARIDO web sites. Holder of the contacts is Andrea Mariotti.

In the month of April 2012 it was signed a partnership with Italian GEI.

In June it has been signed a partnership with the prestigious site www.sahara.it.

The Italian Ministry of Defence is in the process of accepting a draft agreement between ARIDO and its Commissariato Generale per le Onoranze ai Caduti, to promote, organize and manage collaborative projects concerning all military memorials and cemeteries in Italy and abroad. The scope is to improve them to Centers for "the memory and honor for our Fallen" and for "promotion of culture of the history of our country". It has also the aim of attracting young people and school students of all levels and gender, cultural and veteran associations, and their family members, to the historical memory of our Country and our Fallen. Holder of contacts is Massimo Malandrino.

A collaboration agreement has been signed with ASSAM (Fort Bramafam) and now the Fort is home to the ARIDO museum.

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In 2012 it has been signed an important partnership with ITALEGYC Egyptian, an company working in the imports and exports field, supplies for the oil business, supplies for oil platforms, etc.. ITALEGYC is an official sponsor, and provides logistical support to the many activities of ARIDO.

On April 13, the director of ARIDO Egypt, Dr. Andrea Mariotti, and Dr. Asaad Zaky ARIDO Egypt, Senior Researcher, met with Prof. Doctor Saleh Aros, Deputy Director of the "Educational and Student Affairs" of the Monofeia University in Sadat City.

Dr. Andrea Mariotti and Dr Asaad Zaky were able to develop with Professor Saleh Aros the logistics of the project Hess El Gabal, which will bring students of the University to the Western Desert, where, groups of eight, ten people at the time will participate in tutorial ARIDO activities, together with Italian students.

Tutorial Activity

Since December 2011 there has been three training sessions of study and information dissemination, organised by our partner ARIDO Egypt, for students of the Sadat City - Cairo "Faculty of Tourism and Hotel", with much success.

It is at an advanced stage the feasibility study, in collaboration with the Hotel Institute of Terni (Italy), for a joint mission in the desert and for participation in the project database and to the ARIDO Desert Academy of Egypt.

This agreement should be concluded by the end of June 2013.

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Documentation Centre

Thanks to major donations, hundreds of books and publications, videos, journals, magazines, iconographic documents and archives about the war in the desert and the II World War, have been collected.

Such material, both in paper and in digital form, is being reorganized and ARIDO is currently one of the most important documentary centers nationwide.

During a mission in July, the original drawings of the Italian Memorial of Alamein, were discovered.

University Collaboration

It is active the collaboration with the University of Cairo and Prof. Asaad Zaky for the preparation of specialty thesis about military shrines and cemeteries in Egypt.

Information about missing and death soldiers

There is a constant flow of requests for information by family members of dead, prisoners, and missing soldiers.

As of to date ARIDO has made about seventy researches, and in more than 70% of the cases it was able to reconstruct the events or to identify the burial place of the soldier, and photograph it.

In fact ARIDO, even in this area, is emerging as an important center of reference (as well as institutional) for anyone who needs to have information about relatives who participated in the African campaign.

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In particular, thanks to qattara.it and arido.eu, families of many soldiers finally know where are the remains of their relatives. ARIDO Egypt proceeded to photograph the graves, find documentary information and send the data to the families.

The ARIDO President

Daniele Moretto MD

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Moretto', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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