

THE TENTH MULTIPURPOSE FRIGATE “EMILIO BIANCHI” LAUNCHED***It is the last unit of the Italo-French FREMM program***

Trieste, January 25, 2020 – The launching ceremony of the “**Emilio Bianchi**” frigate, the tenth and last FREMM vessel – Multi Mission European Frigates, took place today at the integrated shipyard of Riva Trigoso (Genoa) in the presence of the **Italian Minister of Defence, Lorenzo Guerini**. The 10 vessels have been commissioned to Fincantieri by the Italian Navy within the framework of an Italo-French cooperation program under the coordination of OCCAR (Organisation Conjointe de Cooperation sur l’Armement, the international organization for cooperation on arms).

Godmother of the ceremony was Mrs. Maria Elisabetta Bianchi, first daughter of Emilio Bianchi, Golden Medal for Military Value.

For Fincantieri the President **Giampiero Massolo** welcome, on behalf of the Chief of Defence, General Enzo Vecciarelli, the Chief of Staff of the Italian Navy, Admiral **Giuseppe Cavo Dragone**, the Governor of the Liguria Region **Giovanni Toti**, in addition to a number of authorities.

After the launching, fitting activities will continue in the integrated naval shipyard of Muggiano (La Spezia), with delivery scheduled in 2021. The “Emilio Bianchi” vessel, like the other units, will feature a high degree of flexibility, capable of operating in all tactical situations. 144 metres long with a beam of 19.7 metres, the ship will have a displacement at full load of approximately 6,700 tonnes. The vessel will have a maximum speed of over 27 knots and will have a maximum accommodation capacity for a 200-person crew.

The FREMM program, representing the European and Italian defence state of the art, stems from the renewal need of the Italian Navy line “Lupo” (already removed) and “Maestrale” (some of them already decommissioned, the remaining close to the attainment of operational limit) class frigates, both built by Fincantieri in the 1970s.

The vessels “Carlo Bergamini” and “Virginio Fasan” have been delivered in 2013, the “Carlo Margottini” in 2014, the “Carabiniere” in 2015, the “Alpino” in 2016, the “Luigi Rizzo” in 2017, the “Federico Martinengo” in 2018, and the “Antonio Marcegaglia” in 2019. The Italian program has been fully implemented with the option exercised in April 2015, regarding the construction of the ninth and tenth vessel, whose delivery is scheduled after 2020. Orizzonte Sistemi Navali (51% Fincantieri, 49% Leonardo) acts as prime contractor for Italy in the initiative, while Armaris (Naval Group + Thales) is prime contractor for France.

This cooperation has applied the positive experience gained in the previous Italo-French program “Orizzonte” that has led to the construction for the Italian Navy of the two frigates “Andrea Doria” and “Caio Duilio”.

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Head of the 3rd Palombaro Class Emilio Bianchi – Golden Medal for Military Value

He was born in Sondalo (Sondrio) on the 22nd October 1912. Volunteer for the Royal Navy since March 1932 and designated to the *Palombari* category, he attended the specialization course at the Varignano (La Spezia) C.R.E.M. school and at the end he boarded the hydrographic ship Admiral Magnaghi, on which he made two hydrographic cruises in the Aegean and the Red Sea.

In 1934, he embarked on the Fiume cruiser, where he was promoted to petty officer, and in 1936 he was assigned to the 1st Submarine Group of La Spezia. After the promotion to sergeant in 1937, he moved on the 1st MAS fleet, starting the training to become an underwater assault ships operator.

During the war he participated, as 2nd Chief, in the two attempts to force the English base in Gibraltar (October and November 1940), then in the audacious forcing of the base in Alexandria as 2nd operator of the SLC (“maiale”) n. 221 led by vessel commander Luigi Durand de La Penne. He departed from the Sciré submarine in the night of December 18, and after overcoming the barriers, he entered the port with the chief operator taking his explosive craft under the keel of the English battleship Valiant. It sank after the explosion at dawn on December 19. Due to the hard effort he made during the 5-hour diving, he was struck by oxygen intoxication during the journey, and forced to come back to the surface. He was spotted by the watchmen and, together with his commander, confined in separate cabins below the waterline. Saved by chance after the burst of the mine, which caused the sinking of the ship, he was taken to a prison camp and repatriated at the end of the war. He was promoted to Head of 3rd and 2nd Class in 1954 for war credits, and to Head of 1st *Palombaro* Class.

As officer of the C.E.M.M., he then served at the Varignano Diving Center, at the *Nucleo Sminamento* of Genoa and in the end at the Naval Academy of Livorno, ending his career as lieutenant commander.

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Fincantieri is one of the world's largest shipbuilding groups and number one for diversification and innovation. It is leader in cruise ship design and construction and a reference player in all high-tech shipbuilding industry sectors, from naval to offshore vessels, from high-complexity special vessels and ferries to mega yachts, as well as in ship repairs and conversions, production of systems and mechanical and electrical component equipment and after-sales services. With over 230 years of history and more than 7,000 vessels built, Fincantieri has always kept its management offices, as well as all the engineering and production skills, in Italy.

With over 8,900 employees in Italy and a supplier network that employs nearly 50,000 people, Fincantieri has enhanced a fragmented production capacity over several shipyards into strength, acquiring the widest portfolio of clients and products in the cruise segment. To hold its own in relation to competition and assert itself at global level, Fincantieri has broadened its product portfolio becoming world leader in the sectors in which it operates.

With globalization, the Group has around 20 shipyards in 4 continents, over 19,000 employees and is the leading Western shipbuilder. It has among its clients the world's major cruise operators, the Italian and the US Navy, in addition to several foreign navies, and it is partner of some of the main European defense companies within supranational programs. Fincantieri's business is widely diversified by end markets, geographical exposure and by client base, with revenue mainly

generated from cruise ship, naval and Offshore and Specialized vessel construction. Compared with less diversified players, such diversification allows it to mitigate the effects of any fluctuations in demand on the end markets served.

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