

75TH BATTLE OF LEROS

international meeting, municipal theater of Lakki - Leros, sept 26th 2018

HANS PETER EISENBACH

The Guns of Leros

*Guns and Gun Emplacements on Scumbarda and Diapori - Once and Now
A comparison of wartime photos and current photos from 2016*

When Leros became part of the Italian Empire, Italy began to fortify the island, which, with its natural blue water harbour, provided an important naval base in the East Mediterranean. All over the island, gun batteries were built and equipped with a variety of ordnance, from 152mm L50 long barrel naval artillery to BREDA 12mm machine guns. Pictures of such gun emplacements were shown during the Leros conference in 2016. The following briefing will show you the pre-war gun positions and guns and the IDENTIFIED gun positions as you can visit them nowadays on the hills of Scumbarda and Diapori.

Some gun positions were destroyed in 1943 by bombs, but most of the positions were demolished by the British after WW II when handing over Leros to Greece due to a Turkish requirement. In 1957 Alistair Mac Lean wrote the novel "The Guns of Navarone". Mac Lean was inspired for this purely fictitious story with deep snow on the mountains of Navarone by the Battle of Leros in November 1943. In 1961 the producer Carl Foreman made out of the novel the film "The Guns of Navarone" with Gregory Peck, David Niven and Anthony Quinn. In imitation to the title of the novel and film, the today's presentation is called "The Guns of Mount Scumbarda and Diapori", showing you the real "Guns of Navarone".

In the first part of the briefing, I will show you reference photos of the 152mm, 102mm and 76mm guns used on Scumbarda and Diapori. Amongst these photos there are pictures from the Naval Museum "Museo tecnico navale" in La Spezia and the "Clandestine Immigration and Naval Museum" in Haifa, showing the guns in excellent condition and very colourful.

In the second part of the briefing I will show you Mount Scumbarda and its 152mm naval gun positions alongside photos taken by the Royal Italian Navy before the Second World War on Scumbarda and photos taken by myself during my visit on LEROS in recent years.

In the third part of the briefing I will show you the 76mm Air Defence Gun positions then and today on Radio Pylon Hill attached to Mount Scumbarda.

The fourth part of my briefing is dedicated to the pictures of the 20mm BREDA Anti Air Gun training of the Italian sailors on Mount Scumbarda with some surprising reference photos from nowadays.

The fifth part of my briefing is showing the 102mm medium artillery gun positions at Diapori facing over bay of Serocampo to the island of Kalymnos.

At the end of the briefing I will show you some photos of 1943, when the German campaign against British troops on Leros started. The anti-ship and air defense guns represented a major threat for the German landing forces in November 1943. Due to the fact that the Italian batteries were running out of ammunition the guns became

75TH BATTLE OF LEROS

international meeting, municipal theater of Lakki - Leros, sept 26th 2018

useless in course of the battle. Nevertheless the gun positions were a primary target for the attacking German bombers and dive bombers from September to November 1943.

Total amount of 152mm to 76 mm guns on Leros:

4 x	152 mm	L 50
7 x	152 mm	L 40
9 x	120 mm	L 45
19 x	102 mm	L 35
6 x	90 mm	L 53
8 x	76 mm	L 50
50 x	76 mm	L 40

75TH BATTLE OF LEROS

international meeting, municipal theater of Lakki - Leros, sept 26th 2018

YORGOS IATROU

MemOria, abstracts from the documentary

The documentary "memORIA" was produced in 2015 to highlight the greatest tragedy of the Mediterranean, the shipwreck of the ORIA steamer on February 12, 1944, near the island of Patroklos, not far from cape Sounion.

ORIA sailed from Rhodes, passed from the port of Leros but never arrived to its destination. More than 4,100 Italian soldiers and officers, prisoners of the Germans, drowned that night.

We, the citizens of Keratea, to which the beach of Harakas belongs, where the corpses were washed out, have not forgotten this tragedy. Our cultural association was the one which took the necessary initiatives, together with the local government, to erect a monument for ORIA on the coastal road near the island, published in Greek the book "The Caravan at the bottom of the sea" of Paolo Ciampi, and was the producer of the documentary.

The documentary lasts 70 minutes, but you will only follow some excerpts chosen by the organizers of the event. I dedicate this summary to the memory of my uncle from Keratea, Sotiriou Iatrou, sailor at "Queen Olga", lost here, in the battle of Leros.

Gaius Valerius Catullus - Liber, Carmina CI

*Multas per gentes et multa per aequora vectus
advenio has miseras, frater, ad inferias,
ut te postremo donarem munere mortis
et mutam nequiquam alloquerer cinerem.
Quandoquidem fortuna mihi tete abstulit ipsum.
Heu miser indigne frater adempte mihi,
nunc tamen interea haec, prisco quae more parentum
tradita sunt tristi munere ad inferias,
accipe fraterno multum manantia fletu,
atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale.*

Through many peoples and many seas
have I travelled to thee, brother,
and these wretched rites of death
I bring a last gift
but I speak in vain
only to your ashes.
Take from my hands these sad gifts
covered by brother's tears.
Now and forever, brother,
hail and farewell.