

In the early sixties, two key men in the international submarine environment, the Frenchman Commander Jean Blanchard and the German Commander Adalbert Schnee had the opportunity to meet.

They both had brilliantly served on submarines during the Second World War.

Schnee, a key man in the German submarine force, was decorated with medals of merit. The two men shared their common experiences in submarines and became friends. The harsh reality of the war, in which they had fought on opposite sides with courage and determination was now over, and they found strong ties of solidarity and understanding.

As a result of this strong understanding, they planned to arrange a meeting between the submariners from both countries. No one is aware, which of the two proposed this gathering first. However, it is certain that the other one accepted immediately with such enthusiasm that perhaps he was about to ask the same thing. We can say that it was a spiritual need, like a surge of the soul deeply felt by both men.

Hence, in the spring of 1962, the first meeting took place in Paris, the success was so great that the following year another was arranged in the same place.

Meanwhile, the two Commanders got in touch with Admiral Perona, Commander of the Atlantic base of Italian boats in Bordeaux, who gladly decided to join the initiative. So, from 1963, the year of the second meeting in Paris there was a numerous participation of Italian Submariners. The first Italian meeting took place in Venice in 1965.

Since then these meetings have taken place every year in the rotation, starting in Germany then France and then Italy, with the only exceptions of 1968 and 1996.

After a few years Austria, Great Britain, and the United States decided to join. In recent years we have been joined by Russia, Poland, Chile, Israel, Argentina and the Ukraine. We are delighted to see our "family" growing with Poland and the Scandinavian countries participation.

We all feel real harmony, the brotherhood, and the solidarity that derives from us all being "sailors" and "submariners" and from our common experiences of life at sea, besides, of course, our strengthened friendship which has developed throughout the years.

This atmosphere is very much in tune with the times we are living, an era characterized by an ever-growing international flow of cultural, economic, political and tourist exchanges between various European and other nations, in search of a more stable integration and peace between nations.

The late Commander Schnee at NATO headquarters in Paris during the 5th meeting [1966] uttered words which are indelible in everyone's minds and hearts, words which now seem prophetic: There is someone who wants to build Europe starting from above us submariners will build it from below, the abyss... Without a doubt, the "construction" of Europe goes ahead, not lacking problems, in the belief that it should not stop. But us submariners can affirm in all modesty but with pride, that "our" Europe, "our" World has already been born

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