

WAR OF THE BLACK PRINCE

AN ARDENT FASCIST, ITALIAN PRINCE JUNIO BORGHESE
WOULD REVOLUTIONIZE UNCONVENTIONAL UNDERWATER WARFARE
BY KELLY BELL

During the Spanish Civil War, Borghese was in command of the obsolete sub *Iride* when he carried out his unsuccessful attack on HMS *Havock*.



Badge of *Decima Flottiglia MAS*.

When Prince Junio Valerio Borghese was born in Artene, Province of Rome of the Kingdom of Italy on 6 June 1906, there were high hopes all around for the latest male scion of this traditionally prominent and noble family. The clan had a long history of being significant and prominent in civic and political affairs. After all, three centuries earlier, one of them, Camillo Borghese, had become better known as His Holiness Pope Paul V. This line had long moved

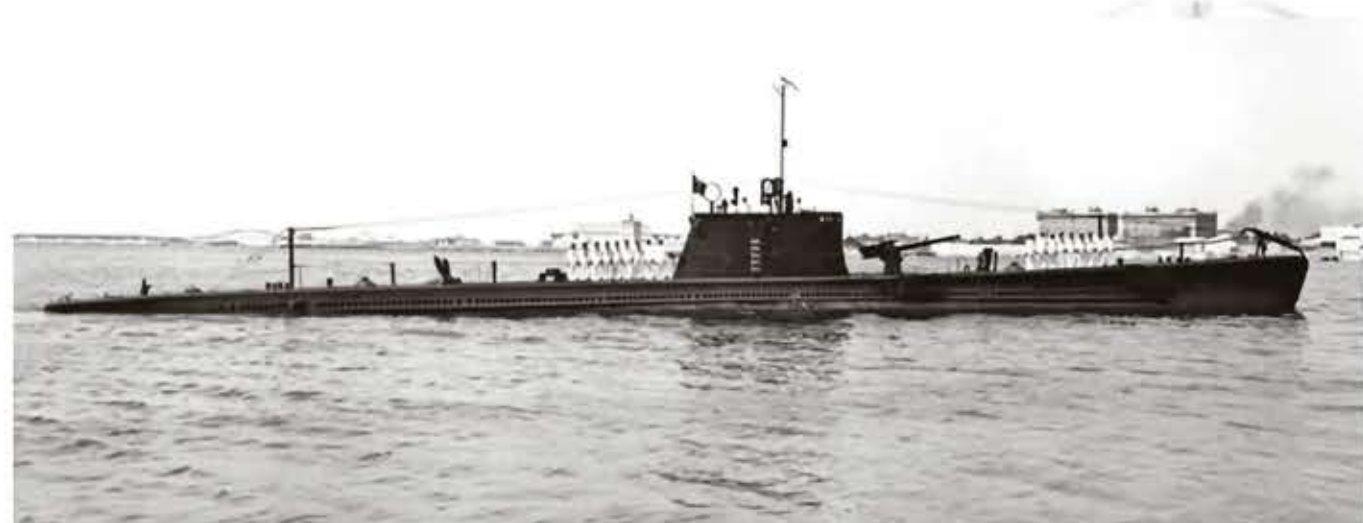
in naval circles and at age 17 young Junio reported to the Royal Italian Navy Academy.

By this point he had already been schooled in London, becoming proficient in English. In 1929, after absorbing all the day's classroom preparations, he officially enlisted in the Royal Italian Navy to commence a career that doubtless made his forebears proud.

During 1933 he was assigned the post of submarine commander. After endlessly drilling and polishing

a succession of crews he endured uneventful patrol duty during his country's 1935 conquest of Ethiopia. During this time, Borghese developed his radical beliefs.

During the Spanish Civil War he was in command of the *Perla*-class submarine *Iride* when she came under depth charge attack by the Royal Navy destroyer HMS *Havock*. Although the British weapons crippled his boat and killed two of his crewmen, Borghese managed to escape and return the



Scire was an *Adua*-class submarine that was completed on 25 March 1938. The sub would be utilized by Borghese for many of his daring attacks.