

A BLOODY CHRISTMAS

ORTONA
1943



Produced by
sd cinematografica

A documentary of 52 minutes
by **FABIO TONCELLI**



A BLOODY CHRISTMAS



*What terrible secret does the Battle of Ortona conceal?
Why does no one want to remember?
What really happened?*

*The true story of the bloodiest and most mysterious
battle of the Second World War in Italy.*

ORTONA 1943: A BLOODY CHRISTMAS

by
Fabio Toncelli

from an idea by Michele Barca

Based on the book "La Stalingrado d'Italia" by Marco Patricelli

*The Allied Forces decided to launch a massive attack
on the small coastal town of Ortona in Abruzzo,
in central Italy, convinced that victory would rapidly
be theirs. But the Germans were waiting for them...*



Conquering Piazza Vittoria, intersection of 5 major streets



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CAPTION: “ORTONA: ABRUZZO, CENTRAL ITALY, 1994”

The noise of a bulldozer, pneumatic drills, men’s voices on a building site. A group of workers are busy demolishing the foundations of a building. Mechanical diggers are excavating the earth. Suddenly, the digger operator stops. He has spotted something unearthed by the digging. It is a German helmet from World War II, and nearby are some scraps of a German uniform, bearing the insignia of the parachute regiment.

We see a brief clip from a local newscast reporting on the discovery of the remains of a German soldier from World War II.

Near the uniform, half-covered in earth, lies a human skull. The image slowly fades into....

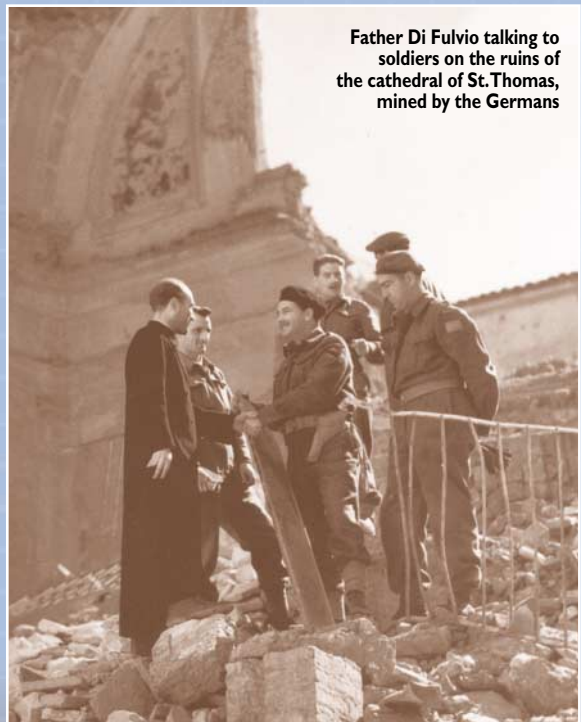
Someone in Germany will finally have a tomb to weep over, over sixty years later....

CAPTION: “ALLIED MILITARY CEMETERY IN ORTONA”

...among the spring flowers of the peaceful Italian countryside we see rows of graves of the Allied dead. Here lie the heroes, the victors of the Battle of Ortona and the bloody campaign to approach the town. This cemetery was constructed immediately after the Abruzzo town was taken and is the final resting place of soldiers from all over the Commonwealth and beyond: Britons, New Zealanders, Australians, South Africans, Indians, Egyptians, Serbians...but, above all, Canadians. It was they who paid the highest price. Soldiers who were little more than boys, 18-20 years old, who served their country not because they were drafted but because they volunteered.

Let’s read some of the moving epitaphs en-

Father Di Fulvio talking to soldiers on the ruins of the cathedral of St. Thomas, mined by the Germans



A BLOODY CHRISTMAS



ORTONA 1943



graved on the identical white headstones: the voices of an aging father, of a wife, of a son, a brother and others, one after another in poignant memory of those who are no more.

The branches of the trees sway in the breeze, the green leaves tremble. A few clouds scud across the sky. There is a sense of peace here but, at the same time, of intense emotion and grief.

The Allies fought the Germans in Ortona in the autumn and winter of 1943 in the most ferocious, bitter, bloody battle of the Italian campaign. Thousands of soldiers fell, as the fighting continued day after day, with artillery, air strikes, and for the first time in the conflict, hand to hand combat. They literally fought street by street, house by house, room by room. Many of them died on Christmas Day 1943. Over a thousand Italian civilians were also killed during the struggle.

Why? Who decided that the Battle of Ortona was so crucial to the war? Did its capture really affect the outcome of the war in Italy, or was in futile? Why on earth does Montgomery not mention it in his memoirs? And above all, why did the few surviving German paratroopers suddenly abandon the town on the morning of 28 December?

Some of the witnesses and the young soldiers who were there are still alive. For them, too, the time has come to reveal what really happened that bloody December of 1943. To reveal a shocking, previously unknown truth.



Advancing down Corso Matteotti

A BLOODY CHRISTMAS



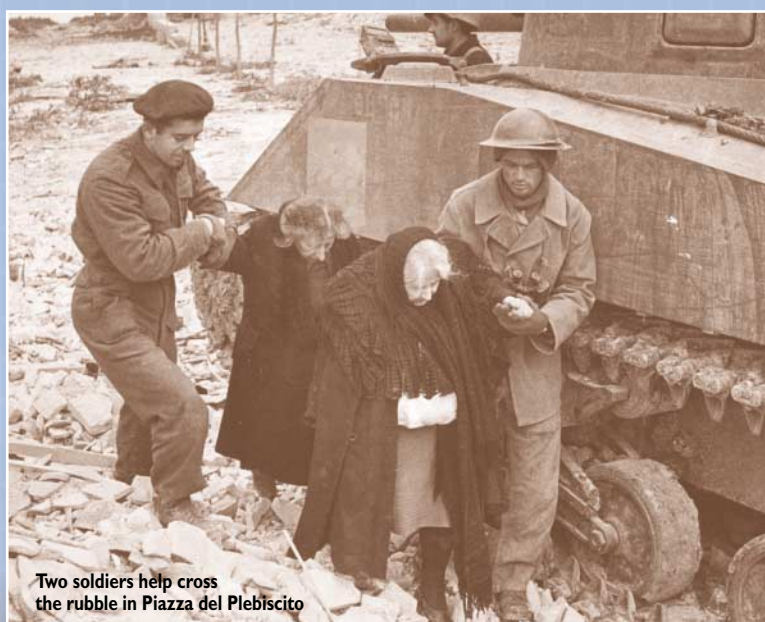
ORTONA 1943



“It was the first great battle in the streets of an inhabited area and we learnt a great deal from it.” This is how Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister, replied to a journalist who asked him about the conquest of Ortona in January 1944.

“The Battle of Ortona” between the **Germans** and **Canadians** is not as evocative as “the Siege of Stalingrad” or “the Normandy Landings”, but it was just as important for the Italian campaign in the Second World War. The terrible violence of the conflict (over 3,500 dead in a few days) and the lack of a ceasefire on **Christmas Day** make it a painful and dramatic event that has left deep scars on the souls of the survivors and has given rise to some uncomfortable questions.

Why did the German troops make such an effort to defend a town of no strategic importance? Why did the Canadians want to conquer Ortona at all costs? Why did so many Ortona veterans among the Canadian troops need psychological help when they returned home, despite the fact that they were the victors?



Two soldiers help cross the rubble in Piazza del Plebiscito

A BLOODY CHRISTMAS



ORTONA 1943



Reconstructions and re-enactments, an extraordinary, incredibly realistic **model of the war-torn town**, as well as **Italian, German and Canadian** experts and historians help us to place the battle in its historic and human context. **Exclusive interviews** with the survivors guide us through the inferno that was Ortona during the battle. Incredible audio, video and photographic **archive material**, seen **for the very first time**, will be our window into the past.

An original cinematographic point of view will put us side by side with the soldiers, advancing with them yard by yard along the town's short main street. We will see them fall, despair or exalt when victory seems at hand. We will relive the Canadians' and Germans' **surreal Christmas lunch**, wolfed down so they could get straight back to fighting a few yards away, where death was awaiting them.

We will tell **unheard stories** of courage and of surprising honour between enemies in the heat of battle and of brief, impromptu ceasefires to allow a mother to save her children by crossing the battle lines. Nevertheless, for some it was all too much. Like the German officer who, unable to face the horror of battle, decided to put an end to it all. He lit a cigarette, walked out into the centre of the square and waited for the inevitable. The Canadian snipers shot him down immediately.



Canadian soldiers enter Via Cavour

A BLOODY CHRISTMAS

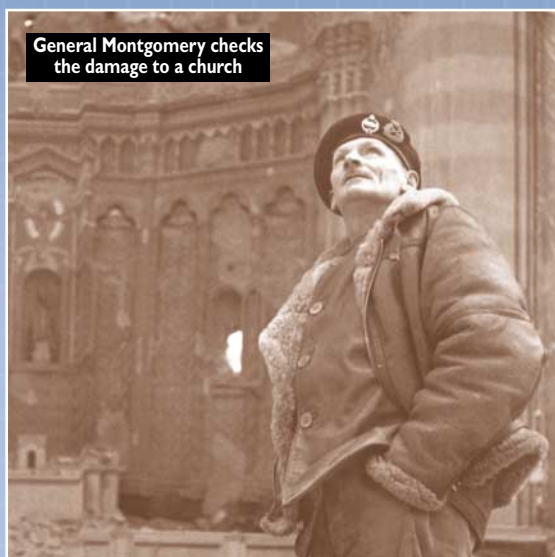


ORTONA 1943



A BLOODY CHRISTMAS

At the beginning of the autumn of 1943, the Allied troops lead by General Montgomery had reached the centre of Italy, occupying a position near what was known as the Gothic Line. The Italian campaign had been relatively simple and Allies had not met heavy resistance from German troops. So when Montgomery reached the



General Montgomery checks the damage to a church

gates to the city of Ortona, he believed that the Germans would retreat to the north, to an area where the terrain was easier to defend. But to his surprise the Germans had prepared a plan to defend the city of Ortona. Thus began a ferocious battle that lasted for several days over Christmas 1943. On one side were the Allied troops, with the Canadian infantry of the Loyal Edmonton Regiment and the Seaforth Highlanders. On the other side, a German unit made of the 1st Parachute Division, Hitler's elite troops, well equipped, highly trained, fresh and ideologically committed.

After several days of fighting on the outskirts of the town, in particular around Casa Berardi, the German HQ, the Allied units were ordered to enter the town. The first to enter, crossing Piazza Vittoria on 20th December 1943, were a battalion of the Loyal Edmonton Regiment. In front of them, Corso Vittorio Emanuele led straight to Piazza del Municipio in the heart of the town. The narrow streets to the side were blocked with barricades and the ruins of demolished buildings. The Corso was thus the only street the armoured vehicles could use to reach the centre.

But it was too dangerous. The Canadian infantry was forced to try to open a way for themselves through the houses to the side of the Corso, an operation full of hidden dangers. The Germans had foreseen this and many of the side streets and buildings were mined. **Carl Bayerlein**, a corporal in the German Parachute regiment, had been ordered to mine the area and turn the abandoned houses into terrible traps: when the Canadians occupied a house, the Germans blew it up... Furthermore, the Germans had placed machine guns and anti-tank artillery near the ruins.



ORTONA 1943



A BLOODY CHRISTMAS

For their part, the Canadians used their short-range 6-inch mortars to pound the houses and blow off the roofs where the Germans were hiding. When grenades were not enough to blow a hole through the thick walls, the Canadians hurled them through the windows, so that they exploded inside, destroying everything. Thus the Canadian infantry was able to move through the houses, without ever showing themselves in the street, and take their enemy by surprise.

Ted Griffiths was driving a tank of the Three Rivers Regiment. The column of tanks was advancing slowly, due to the rubble of the ruined buildings, but they couldn't stop because the tanks were needed to supply the troops with arms and evacuate the wounded.



A tank advances through the ghost town

Between the two opposing forces were the people of Ortona, trapped inside the church, in cellars, shelters and the hospital, without either food or water, in filthy, terrible conditions. **Stefano Durante** was among them.

“This is **Matthew Halton** from CBC, speaking from Italy...” With this introduction, homes all over Canada heard the voice of the only war correspondent to report on the battle. Although there was strict military censorship regulating war correspondents, banning them from naming regiments or giving casualty numbers, Matthew Halton provided detailed reports. With great chivalry, he also stressed the courage of the enemy troops, something rare in those days.



ORTONA 1943



At Christmas, against all expectations, the Seaforth Highlanders Regiment managed to arrange a real Christmas dinner in the church of Santa Maria di Costantinopoli: *“The setting for the dinner was complete, long rows of tables with white tablecloths. We had a bottle of beer per man, candies, cigarettes, nuts, oranges and apples. Colonel S.W. Thomson laid on that the Companies would eat in relays... as each company finished their dinner, they would go forward and relieve the next company... there was an atmosphere of cheer and good fellowship in the church. A true Christmas spirit. No one had looked for a celebration this day. December 25th was to be another day of hardship, discomfort, fear and danger, another day of war.”*

(Extract from Seaforth Highlanders Regiment, War Diary, December 25th, 1943)



Even the German troops ate a hot meal on Christmas Day. A motorcycle had managed to get through the lines and had brought mashed potatoes, vegetables, bread and a bag of oranges. They were delighted; they even had a Christmas tree.

For the civilians, the situation was more difficult, due to the lack of supplies. But for **Antonio di Luzio** Christmas was a special day: a friend had risked his life to bring him a steaming plate of *rigatoni*, a brave gesture.

But they were only a few moments of peace and tranquillity, the battle did not stop and not far away bullets were still flying and grenades exploding. At dawn on 28 December, a strange silence pervaded the town. The roar of cannons and boom of exploding mines had fallen silent. The last German pockets of resistance had been overcome and the fighting had come to a halt. At around 8.15, Ortona had been liberated. But the Allies could not afford to lower their guard. Unexploded mines among the ruins and snipers protecting the German retreat still posed dangers.

The scene facing the survivors that morning was terrible: Ortona had been almost raised to the ground. The corpses of Canadian and German soldiers, as well as Italian civilians, poked out from the ruins. The town had been turned into an open-air cemetery.

A BLOODY CHRISTMAS



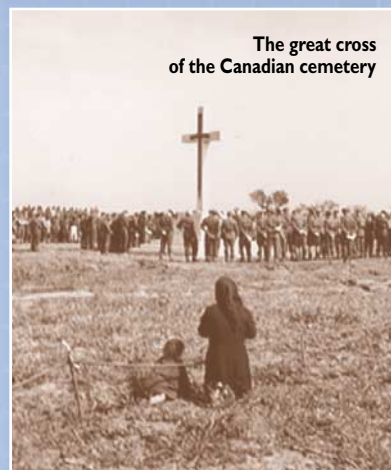
ORTONA 1943



In the Battle of Ortona alone, Canadian casualties numbered 176 officers and 2,163 men, including 1,372 dead. To put this into perspective: in the crossing first of Sicily, then of mainland Italy, Canada lost a total of 5,900 men.

German losses, including those taken prisoner, totalled 867. The figures were compiled by Rudolf Donth, who was promoted to lieutenant and company commander at the end of the battle. Donth has consulted the archives of the Bund Deutscher Fallschirmjäger and the Deutsche Dienststelle in Berlin, as well as the notes of Ludwig Kade, in *So Wird Man Fallschirmjäger*.

And then there were the civilian casualties: 1,314 from the beginning of the offensive to the town's liberation.



The great cross of the Canadian cemetery

THE HIDDEN TRUTH

Using unseen documents and eye-witness accounts, the documentary will try to answer a number of mysterious questions raised by events in Ortona.

The total number of dead is shocking and out of proportion for an objective that was not considered of vital importance.

For years, historians have asked themselves why this battle took place. There are many questions that still cannot be answered.

Why did the Germans defend a small coastal town of little strategic value with such ferocity? Had Ortona become an important symbol, like Rome, or had the capture of the town become a question of national pride?

Why did a bloody battle, involving civilians as well as soldiers, break out on Christmas Eve?

Was the aim really to move on Rome from the east? Is that why they talked about Christmas in Rome?

Why did Montgomery fail to mention this battle in his memoirs, despite the fact that Ortona was the first urban battle that the Allied troops had fought on European soil? What is more, at the end of the offensive, Montgomery was transferred to London to organise D-Day and the final attack against Hitler. So why didn't he cite this victory?

A BLOODY CHRISTMAS



ORTONA
1943



A BLOODY CHRISTMAS

► THE HIDDEN TRUTH

11

A terrible truth emerges from a reconstruction of the events: the importance of the Battle of Ortona resulted from a tragic mistake on the part of Allied Command, and a trap laid by the Germans. But it soon turned into a clash with enormous psychological and media significance. At the time, public morale in America, Britain and Canada was in need of a major victory and Ortona was a godsend for Allied propaganda. In that sense, the victory was not at all in vain. But from a military point of view?

*As soon as the battle was over, a number of guests arrived secretly in Abruzzo in order to see for themselves just how fierce the recently finished battle had been. A photograph provides incontrovertible evidence. It shows a number of Russian officers in Ortona. The aim of the visit was to convince Stalin of the intensity of the fighting in Italy and show that his complaints that the Allies were not fighting seriously on the Western Front in order to make the Soviets bear the brunt of the war were unjustified. Thus, in a certain sense the Battle of Ortona had to be particularly ferocious in order to serve its **political purpose** in relations with the Soviet allies.*

As well as strategic matters, The Battle of Ortona has raised other questions.

First of all, many survivors required counselling when they got home. Historian Bill McAndrew of the History Department of the National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa published a study in 1990 entitled *Battle Exhaustion: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Canadian Army in the Second World War*, in which he examines the clinical files of Ortona veterans treated for “shock and nervous exhaustion due to stress on the battlefield”.



General Volkes presides over an officers' meeting



ORTONA 1943



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A BLOODY CHRISTMAS

McAndrew criticises the view held by many officers that iron discipline and good training to create high morale should be enough to prevent psychological problems among troops. Why did so many veterans of Ortona need therapy?

Another question raised by the Battle of Ortona is the creation of a special cemetery for the victims. For many years, the remains of German troops have been found in the countryside and in the city and the city's authorities have received many requests for news from the families of missing servicemen. **Andrea di Marco**, a respected Ortona lawyer, has carried out research to try to identify the bodies and give them a decent burial; a small consolation for families who lost loved ones.

No one has ever told one particularly incredible story: despite the terrible bombardment and the presence of snipers, when the Germans were unable to recover a comrade's fallen body, they took note of his exact position. In the 1950s, an official arrived from Germany and began to meticulously search for those who were lost, identifying many and having them buried. This small, simple German was then transferred to Cassino, where the rest of the fallen troopers were laid to rest. A moving story of human compassion and military and administrative efficiency.



The bronze statue known as *The Price of Peace*, showing a Canadian soldier bending over in the act of helping a wounded comrade. This work by Canadian artist Robert Surette, along with a commemorative plaque, has been installed in the main square in Ortona to symbolise how the history of a small

contributed to the final victory and liberation.

The body of a German soldier. Beside him, a photograph of his family. His blood mingles with the mud on the road.



ORTONA
1943



The survivors of the appalling battle are the witnesses who will guide us through the inferno that was the city of Ortona. Through them, we relive the emotions they felt during those dreadful events.

THE VETERANS

Canadian veteran **Ted Griffiths** began the war in the infantry of the Royal Canadian Regiment, but transferred to the 12th Armoured Corps of the Three Rivers Regiment “because he was interested in tanks, the new weapon on the field of battle”, as he recalls. Griffiths became first gunner, then commander of his tank, but in battle also served as unit commander.



During the Battle of Ortona, he commanded a tank supporting the Seaforth Highlanders. He remembers that the hardest task was destroying the church and hospital on Christmas Day, “because they were both heavily fortified and defended by the Germans”. Having to kill a German soldier tormented him:

“I heard footsteps approaching, but couldn’t use my pistol because the shot would have drawn other Germans. I took my knife and stabbed him before he could utter a sound. It was the first time I’d killed someone like that. My war was rather impersonal; I was sitting in a tank turret and I used to shoot people at a distance. Two or three days later I saw this body still lying where I had left it. I took out his field service book, and I found he was seventeen. It was very hard thing to live with the memory of that.”

He recalls Ortona: “I’d never taken part in a battle like that before, and I didn’t take part in a battle like that again.”

The German veteran **Carl Bayerlein**, a corporal in the 3rd company of the Pioneer battalion of the Parachute division, was the last German soldier to leave Ortona on December 28 1943.

At the beginning of the battle, Bayerlein found himself in the San Silvestro area, between Francavilla and Chieti; his company’s task was to protect the coast against potential landings. On 18 December, his unit was ordered to strike camp, load their weapons and head for Ortona.



A BLOODY
CHRISTMAS



ORTONA
1943



The closer they got to the town, the clearer the signs of battle were. The roads were under heavy artillery fire, the trees torn to shreds, the houses damaged.

On Christmas Day they were assigned the task of destroying a building near Piazza di San Tommaso, where the Canadians were barricaded in.

His recollection of the withdrawal:

“Between 27th and 28th December we started the march out of town. We’d blown up some houses to slow the enemy down. We were so tired we could hardly walk. Although General Vokes had ordered us to follow the retreating Germans, I want to point out that neither at Ortona nor at Cassino were we followed. The town of Ortona was evacuated. We were forced to surrender by the Allies, who outnumbered us eight to one.”

From the diary of German radio operator **Siegfried Bahr** we learn that at 20 years of age he was called up and sent to fight in Russia. After making a request to join the Parachute regiment, in 1943 he was transferred to Italy. His memory of working on the Siegfried Line was that he got on very well with the Italians, who he found to be cheerful people. They all thought that they were going to have a quiet Christmas, but then everything changed. On 15 December, the order arrived to leave for Ortona. They were given new uniforms and immediately sent to the front. Bahr is no longer alive, but during those dreadful days he wrote everything down in a diary, which his wife kept. We will use this to recount his experiences.

THE ITALIAN CIVILIANS

Father Tommaso Sancitale was a young priest who found himself administering the faith during the darkest period of Italian history. It was his mother’s tears that saved him when, seeking refuge in the Peticcio caves, a German soldier aimed his gun at him and seemed about to shoot.

Antonio di Luzio was trapped in the city throughout the battle. During that time, he wrote down all the events he witnessed in his notebook, which later became a diary. His recollections cover the period from the destruction of the clock tower that was the symbol of the town, to the miraculous baking of bread during the siege, up to the arrival of his friend Saverio Albanese, who managed to bring him a plate of steaming rigatoni on Christmas Day, despite the fact that di Luzio was trapped in his house in the centre of Ortona in the middle of the fighting.

A BLOODY CHRISTMAS



ORTONA 1943



A BLOODY CHRISTMAS

► THE WITNESSES

15

Rossana Caraceni was 15 years old in '43. After the bombing of Milan, her family had decided to move to stay with relatives in Ortona, believing that they would be safer there. During the siege, she hid in the caves near the town, and it wasn't until 31 December 1943 that she managed to return to her relatives' home. Meanwhile, thanks to a Fascist party membership card, she managed to save her brother detained by the British parachutists.

Stefano Durante, now a retired professor, was forced to stay in the town because his father was a policeman guarding the mayor of Ortona. On 17 December, the Germans mined the family house and he was forced to seek refuge in the hospital with other citizens, under the most terrible, filthy conditions.

Nicola Paolini, then 10 years old, witnessed all the fighting around the Casa Berardi, where for ten days the Allied and German troops were engaged in violent combat.

Fernando Berardi, the son of Guido Berardi, the engineer, was forced to abandon the family home, which the Germans had seized and used as their headquarters. They took refuge in some barns.

Among the eyewitness reports of the fighting, some of the most crucial are the radio reports of Canadian journalist **Matthew Halton**, CBC Canada correspondent and the only accredited journalist to follow the battle.



A basket held everything the woman had managed to save



ORTONA 1943



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THE STORIES

The voices of experts and historians help us to place the Battle of Ortona in its historical and human context.

Andrea di Marco, a local lawyer, talks about the matter of the German cemetery. After much research through the headstones, he was able to identify many German soldiers and give them a decent burial, some consolation to the grieving families.

Bill McAndrew is a Canadian historian, former Director of the History Department at the National Defence Headquarter in Ottawa, and author of a number of texts examining the psychological effects of battle stress in general, and that of the Battle of Ortona in particular.

Roger Absolom, historian, lived in Italy in the 1950s before returning to England, where he taught Italian language, literature and history, first at Cambridge, then in Sheffield. He is currently engaged in historical research at the Cultural Research Institute of Sheffield Hallam University. As a historian he is particularly interested in Italian history at the time of the Second World War and during the post-war reconstruction.

Claudio Gentile is currently a researcher at the Martin-Buber-Institut für Judaistik at Cologne University. He has acted as a legal consultant to the Italian and German authorities in war crimes cases. He has published numerous papers in German and Italian on a variety of subjects relating to the German occupation of Italy, Nazi war criminals and photographic sources.

Marco Patricelli, journalist and historian, and author of *La Stalingrado d'Italia* and *Liberate il Duce. Gran Sasso 1943: la vera storia dell'Operazione Quercia* (2001 Premio Polidori).



Poor but proud survivors can't help grooming their children

A BLOODY
CHRISTMAS



ORTONA
1943



Fabio Toncelli

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE



CINEMA

- 2001, script of the film *“Se fossi in te”*, Cattleya Film
- 1998, director and writer of documentary film *“Quando comincia il giorno: Tosamaganga, un ospedale africano”* (Tanzania).
- 1995, script of the film *“Cirano e i suoi fratelli”*, by Antonello Aglioti, selected for the 52nd Venice International Film Festival in the section “Finestra sulle immagini”.
- 1992, script with Luca Morsella of the film *“Non nobis: lo scrigno”*. Balcar Film
- 1990, script of the film *“Nessuno mi crede”*, by A. Carlucci, Surf Cinematografica MDL
- 1988, script with Sergio Leone of the film *“Un posto che solo Mary conosce”*. Leone Film.

TELEVISION

- 2005/2006 writer and director of the documentary *“Andrea Doria”*, for **PBS** (USA), **RAI** (Italy) - **ZDF** (Germany) **SD Cinematografica**
- 2003/2004, writer and director of the documentary *“Flying over Everest”* for **BR** (Germany), **ARTE** (France), **RAI** (Italy) - **SD Cinematografica**
 - 1° prize at Chamois International Film Festival (Italy 2004)
 - Prix de l'exploit al St. Hilarie - Coupe Icaro Film festival (France 2004)
 - 1° prize at Festival internazionale del cinema naturalistico e ambientale - Teramo (Italy 2004)
 - Prize “Politecnico di Bari” at Catellana Grotte International film festival (Italy 2005)
 - Prize **“Sport Extreme”** at **Moscow Filmfestival (Russia 2005)**
 - Prize **“Best adventure Film”** at **Wildsouth Film Award (New Zealand 2005)**
 - Prize “Silver Screen” at US International Film e Video Festival (USA 2005)
 - Prize **“Best adventure Film”** at **Mountainfilm in Telluride (USA 2005)**
 - Special award at Cervino International Film Festival (Italy 2005)
 - 1° Prize **“Man and Mountains”** at **Film Festival Teplice nad Metuji (Czech Republic 2005)**
 - Special award at Jonio International Film Festival (Italy 2005)
 - Special award at Festival International du film d'aventure de Dijon (France 2005)
 - 1° Prize at **Montreal International Adventure Film Festival (Canada 2005)**
 - Special award at Sport Movies & TV 2005 (Italy 2005)
 - Prize “Most Inspiring Adventure Film” at Wild scenic environmental film festival (USA 2006)
 - 1° prize “Leggimontagna” (Italy 2006)
 - Special prize at Festival Internazionale del documentario ornitologico (Italy 2006)

A BLOODY
CHRISTMAS



ORTONA
1943





A BLOODY CHRISTMAS

- 2002, writer and director of the documentary **“Il Mistero del Lupo”**, for National Geographic Channel – SD Cinematografica
- 2002, writer and director of the documentary **“Sfida nella foresta”**, for National Geographic Channel – SD Cinematografica
- 2002, writer and director of the documentary **“Potosì: l’ospedale più alto del mondo”**, for Ministero degli Affari Esteri – Progetto Hospital Daniel Bracamonte, Bolivia
- 2000-2003, author of the programme **“Cominciamo bene”**, Raitre
- 1999, scriptwriter of the television film **“Millennium Bug”**, an Italo-American co-production Andrea Leone Film
- 1999, author of the programme **“Alle falde del Killimangiaro”**, Raitre
- 1998/99, co-author of scripts by Tullio Solenghi, **“Domenica In ‘98-‘99”**, Raiuno
- 1998, author and director of the advertising spot **“Campagna Acqua”** promoted by the Ministry of Public Works and the European Community, RAI – Direzione Promozione e Immagine
- 1997/98, author of the programme in 216 episodes **“Speciale Rai International”**, daily television, arts and culture magazine, Rai International.
- 1997, author and director of the RAI promotional film **“Verso il futuro con la Rai”**, produced with RAI - Direzione Promozione e Immagine.
- 1997, director and author of the programme in 8 episodes **“Il dilemma: storie di famiglie allargate”**, FORMAT, Raitre.
- 1997, director and author of **“Un giorno a Londra con Gianfranco Zola”**, FORMAT, Raitre.
- 1996, director and author of the programme in 10 episodes **“Compagni di banco”**, FORMAT, Raidue.
- 1995, scriptwriter of the serial in 40 episodes **“Davvero”**, FORMAT, Raidue.
- 1994, director and author of the documentary film **“Agostino Di Bartolomei: morte di un campione”**, MIXER, Raidue.
- 1993-94, drafts of subjects and treatments for the series **“Colt”**, from an idea by Sergio Leone. Italo-Franco-American co-production CanalPlus/ Solaris/ Andrea Leone Film /Propaganda.
- 1993, writer on the daily programme **“Cocktail di scampoli”**, Telemontecarlo.
- 1991-93, author, with Enrico Vaime, of the live weekly programme **“La più bella sei tu”**, Telemontecarlo, for three consecutive series.
- 1990-91, author of the live weekly programme **“Ho fatto 13!!!”**, Telemontecarlo.
- 1984-85, producer-director of the live weekly programme **“Il gioco dei mestieri”**, Raiuno.



ORTONA 1943





SD Cinematografica has been in the audiovisual field (in particular television production and editing) since **1961**. In 1981 it became a limited Company.

With Frédéric Rossif, the well-known French documentary maker, it has produced many television series: from "**L'APOCALISSE DEGLI ANIMALI**", to "**L'OPERA SELVAGGIA**" to art documentaries on **MATISSE**, **MATHIEU**, **PICASSO** and **MORANDI**, following the editorial line of the multi-award winning "**LA VIOLENZA E LA PIETÀ**", on the restoration of Michelangelo's Pietà, that received an Academy Awards nomination (documentary section).

The wildlife series "**PAN – Animals of the Mediterranean**", co-produced with RAI and shot on film, was broadcast in primetime in Italy. Thanks to its high quality and scientific value, it was sold to 38 countries.

Several nature documentaries produced for RAI's **GEO&GEO** have been entered in international festivals and have won major prizes.

Recently SD Cinematografica has produced two 50-minute documentaries for the **National Geographic Channels**, as well as 50 fillers.

"Flying over Everest" produced in 2004 after two years of shootings won **17 prizes** at important International Festivals and was broadcasted by RAI and **Discovery Channel** (Italy), **TFI** and **ARTE** (France), **NHK** (Japan), **ARD** (Germany), **RTSI** and **SFI** (Switzerland), **MTV3** (Finland) and many others.

With the recent "**The sinking of Andrea Doria**" SD Cinematografica is proud to include the American **PBS** and the German **ZDF** in its list of international coproducers.

It has a catalogue of around 250 hours of programming, including over 40 films, and production, editing (analogue and digital) and dubbing facilities.

For several years it has also been involved in television and home-video distribution.

**A BLOODY
CHRISTMAS**



**ORTONA
1943**



Most significant the PRODUCTIONS of recent years

■ DOCUMENTARY:

THE SINKING OF ANDREA DORIA 75 min. and 52 min.
RAI / PBS / ZDF / ISTITUTO LUCE

FLYING OVER EVEREST 60 min. and 2 x 45 min. RAIUNO / BR / ARTE

- 1° prize at Chamois International Film Festival (Italy 2004)
- Prix de l'exploit al St. Hilarie - Coupe Icaro Film festival (France 2004)
- 1° prize at Festival internazionale del cinema naturalistico e ambientale - Teramo (Italy 2004)
- Prize "Politecnico di Bari" at Catellana Grotte International film festival (Italy 2005)
- Prize "Sport Extreme" at Moscow Filmfestival (Russia 2005)
- Prize "Best adventure Film" at Wildsouth Film Award (New Zealand 2005)
- Prize "Silver Screen" at US International Film e Video Festival (USA 2005)
- Prize "Best adventure Film" at Mountainfilm in Telluride (USA 2005)
- Special award at Cervino International Film Festival (Italy 2005)
- 1° Prize "Man and Mountains" at Film Festival Teplice nad Metuji (Czech Republic 2005)
- Special award at Jonio International Film Festival (Italy 2005)
- Special award at Festival International du film d'aventure de Dijon (France 2005)
- 1° Prize at Montreal International Adventure Film Festival (Canada 2005)
- Special award at Sport Movies & TV 2005 (Italy 2005)
- Prize "Most Inspiring Adventure Film" at Wild scenic environmental film festival (USA 2006)
- 1° prize "Leggimontagna" (Italy 2006)
- Special prize at Festival Internazionale del documentario ornitologico (Italy 2006)

THE MYSTERY OF THE WOLF 52 min. NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

- Special award at Bergfilm Festival Tegernsee (Germany 2004)
- Special award at Festival Internazionale della Lessinia (Italy 2004)
- Prize "Best Italian documentary" at Festival of Cogne "Stambecco d'oro" (Italy 2005)

HUNTING FOR NGOTTO 52 min. NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

FOCUS IN ITALY 30 x 4 min.+ 20 x 2 min. NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

LA PENISOLA DEL TESORO (for GEO&GEO) 30 min. each RAITRE

Including:

- Cilento: un paradiso della natura
 - Special Award at International Festival of Lessinia (Italy 2000)
 - Special Award at International Festival de cinema Vila de Torellò (Spain 1997)
 - Prize "Parco Nazionale del Gran Paradiso" at Eco Film Festival of Canavese (Itali 2000)
- Le ultime superstiti
- Monti Sibillini: magica armonia
- Tra incudine e martello
 - Finalist at International Festival of Sondrio (Italy)
- Ritorno all'ombellico d'Italia
- Fragole e sangue
 - 2° Prize at International Festival of Sondrio (Italy)
- Un parco scolpito dal vento

A BLOODY CHRISTMAS



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CHRISTMAS

- Il respiro della foresta
- La valle dei Walzer
- Domus de Janas
- Mont Avic: una montagna d'acqua
- Rosso di sera
- Risvegli e precipizi
- Finalist at International Festival of Trento (Italy)
- Lo sperone dello stivale
- Yellowstone d'abruzzo
- Miraggi d'inverno
- Circeo: Natura e magia
- Sulle tracce dell'orso
- La montagna sacra
- Sorprese d'inverno
- Prize "Partha Sarathy" at International Festival of Sondrio (Italy 2002)
- Prize "Cerro D'Argento" at International Festival of Lessinia (Italy 2003)
- Il soffio del vulcano
- La leggenda dei Fanes
- Sinis: acqua, terra e rosso porpora
- L'arte di Arrampicare
- Prize "C.O.N.I." at International Festival of Trento (Italy 2002)
- Mi chiamano Aspromonte
- Matese, magico intreccio di storia e natura
- Ostinatamente appassionati
- Pierino, il lupo e i segreti del tufo

FORESTA FOSSILE DI DUNAROBBA	12 min. RAITRE
ALBERI DI CITTÀ	12 min. RAITRE
MEDICI DEGLI ALBERI	12 min. RAITRE
ARBORETO DI VALLOMBROSA	12 min. RAITRE
UOMINI SCOIATTOLO	12 min. RAITRE
OSPEDALE DEI RAPACI	12 min. RAITRE
IL VETRO	
UNA RISORSA ECOLOGICA	12 min. RAITRE
BURNING MAN	60 min. RAIDUE
IL RISO DELLE API	60 min. RTSI
SCUOLE D'ARTE	4 x 30 min. RAI EDUCATIONAL



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► THE PRODUCTION COMPANY

22

AMMINISTRARE NELL'ANNO 2000	30 min.	REGIONE LAZIO
VESUVIO: UN PARCO IN PRIMA LINEA - Finalist at International Festival of Lessinia (Italy 2000)	32 min.	PARCO VESUVIO
UN PARCO DA SCOPRIRE	30 min.	PAR. DOLOM. BELL.
IL PARCO DEL GARGANO MAJELLA	30 min. e 3x15 min.	PARCO GARGANO PARCO MAJELLA

■ ANIMATION:

FARHAT - <i>Prince of the desert</i>	Pilot	RAIUNO
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AND DURING THE YEARS:

SD Cinematografica credits also include the following major Italian television programmes:

■ FEATURE FILMS:

LA TECNICA E IL RITO	by Miklos Jancso	RAI
LA SCONOSCIUTA (4 episodes)	by Daniele Danza	RAIUNO

■ SHORT FEATURE FILMS:

PASSIONE MIA: EXIT	by Stefano Reali	RAIUNO
PASSIONE MIA: IN CERCA D'AMORE	by Aida Mangia	RAIUNO
MI MANDA LUBRANO (11 Episodes)	by Gino Cammarota	RAITRE
ULTIMO MINUTO	by Lorenzo Hendel	RAITRE

■ VARIETY SHOWS:

MOVIE MOVIE	33 episodes x 60 min.	RAIUNO
ITALIA SERA MODA	daily	RAIUNO
ODEON	Series	RAIDUE
COLOSSEUM	Series	RAIUNO
GIROMONDO	Series	SACIS



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■ ANIMATION:

I SAURINI - *The young dinos*

Pilot

■ DOCUMENTARIES:

LA VIOLENZA E LA PIETÀ

60 Min.

RAIUNO

- Nomination at Oscar (USA)

PAN - *Animals of the Mediterranean*

27 Eps. X 30 min

RAIUNO

- Best Exploration Film at International Festival of Trento (Italy 1987)

- Special Prize "Progetto Natura" at Festival of Cogne "Stambecco d'oro" (Italy 1987)

- 1° Prize at International Festival of Trento (Italy 1987)

QUARK

Some episodes

RAIUNO

IMMAGINA

Series

RAIUNO

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For further information don't hesitate to contact:

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