

GIUSEPPE GARIBALDI



1807 • 2007

EROE DEI DUE MONDI
HERO OF TWO WORLDS

Giuseppe Garibaldi led many of the military campaigns that brought about the formation of a unified Italy. He is called the "Hero of the Two Worlds," in tribute to his military expeditions in South America and Europe.

Garibaldi was born on July 4, 1807 in the former Italian city of Nice, taken under French control in 1860. Garibaldi's family was involved in coastal trade and he was certified in 1832 as a merchant marine captain.

During a visit to Taganrog, Russia, in April 1833 he met Giovanni Battista Cuneo, a member of the secret movement "Young Italy" (La Giovine Italia). Garibaldi joined and took an oath for the liberation of Italy from Austrian dominance.

In Geneva in November 1833, Garibaldi met Giuseppe Mazzini, an impassioned proponent of Italian unification as a liberal republic through political and social reforms. He joined the Carbonari revolutionary association and in 1834 he participated in a failed Mazzinian insurrection in Piedmont, and was sentenced to death in absentia by a Genoese court. He escaped to Tunisia eventually finding his way to Brazil, where he encountered Anna Maria Ribeiro da Silva, "Anita," a woman of Portuguese and Indian descent, who became his companion in arms, and wife.

In 1843 Garibaldi formed the Italian Legion, whose black flag represented Italy in mourning while the volcano at its center symbolized the dormant power in their homeland. While in Uruguay the legion first sported the red shirts, which became the symbol of Garibaldi and his followers.

Garibaldi victories in the battles of 1846 assured the freedom of Uruguay and made him and his followers heroes in Italy and Europe.

With the election of Giovanni Mastai-Ferretti as Pope Pius IX in 1846, Garibaldi offered the papal nuncio the service of his Italian Legion for the liberation of the peninsula. Garibaldi returned to Italy among the turmoil's of the revolutions of 1848. At Mazzini's urging, Garibaldi took up the command of the defense of Rome. His wife, Anita, fought with him. The city fell on June 30, 1849, and Garibaldi was forced to

flee to the north. Anita died near Ravenna during the retreat.

In 1850 he became a resident of New York, where he met and lived with Antonio Meucci. For some time he worked and lived as a candle maker on Staten Island. Afterward he made several voyages to the Pacific, during which he visited Andean revolutionary heroine Manuela Sáenz in Peru. Garibaldi returned to Italy in 1854. In 1859, the Austro-Piedmontese War broke out and

Garibaldi was appointed major general. He formed a volunteer unit, the "Hunters of the Alps." At the war's end Garibaldi was displeased because Nice was ceded to the French. In 1860 Garibaldi defeated a 3,000-strong Bourbon French garrison at Calatafimi on May 13. The next day, he declared himself dictator of Sicily in the name of Victor Emmanuel II of Italy. In his famous meeting with Victor Emmanuel II at Teano on October 26, 1860, Garibaldi greeted him as King of Italy and shook his hand. Garibaldi rode into Naples at the king's side on November 7, then retired to the rocky island of Caprera, refusing to accept any reward for his services.

At the outbreak of the American Civil War (1861), Garibaldi volunteered his services to President Lincoln and was invited to serve as a major general in the Union Army. Garibaldi took up arms again in 1866 against Austria-Hungary in the hope of taking Venetia from Austrian rule. After the war, Garibaldi led a political party that agitated for the capture of Rome, the peninsula's ancient capital. Following this, he spent the remainder of his life on Caprera and died on June 2, 1882.

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