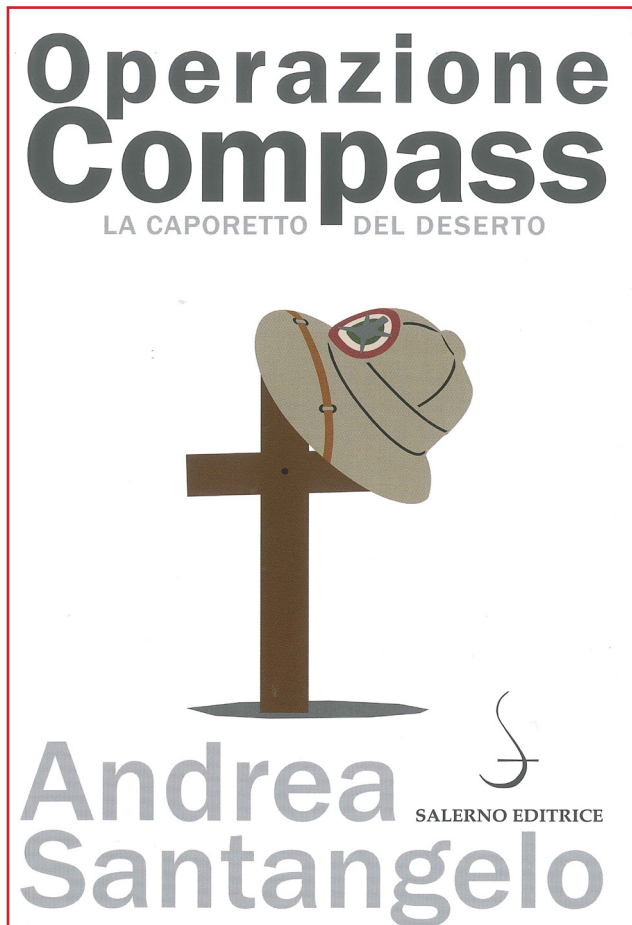


The greatest **military** **defeat** on the Italian history



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There are countries that have established their own cultural identity on a defeat, others who live their setbacks as the push to win the final battle. The Italian military history is studded, however, of defeats that resulted primarily sterile controversies and deplorable buck.

This book reconstructs a defeat that is never mentioned, so that does not even have a definite place name with which to identify, but it is known among specialists for the code name that the British, in December 1940, gave to their offensive against the '10th Army of Graziani' in Libya, *Compass Operation*. It is a defeat so large and humiliating for the way it happened, that could almost take the place of the Caporetto's one, in Italian collective imagination. It may become the very paradigm of the shameful defeat and without extenuating circumstances. But the collapse and surrender of the 10th Italian Army in Libya, if, on one hand is emblematic for its outcome, of the lack of preparation for war of the fascist Italy, on the other hand, is together with Caporetto a disaster from which the Italian army was able to learn, achieving an highest standards of combat. This time, however, unlike what had happened in the First World War, History does not give it the time to learn the lesson until the end.

Andrea Santangelo is an editorial director of historical-archaeological series and handles military history. His publications include *Tre anni di guerra in Africa Settentrionale* (2007) and hundreds of articles for magazines and specialist web sites.



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