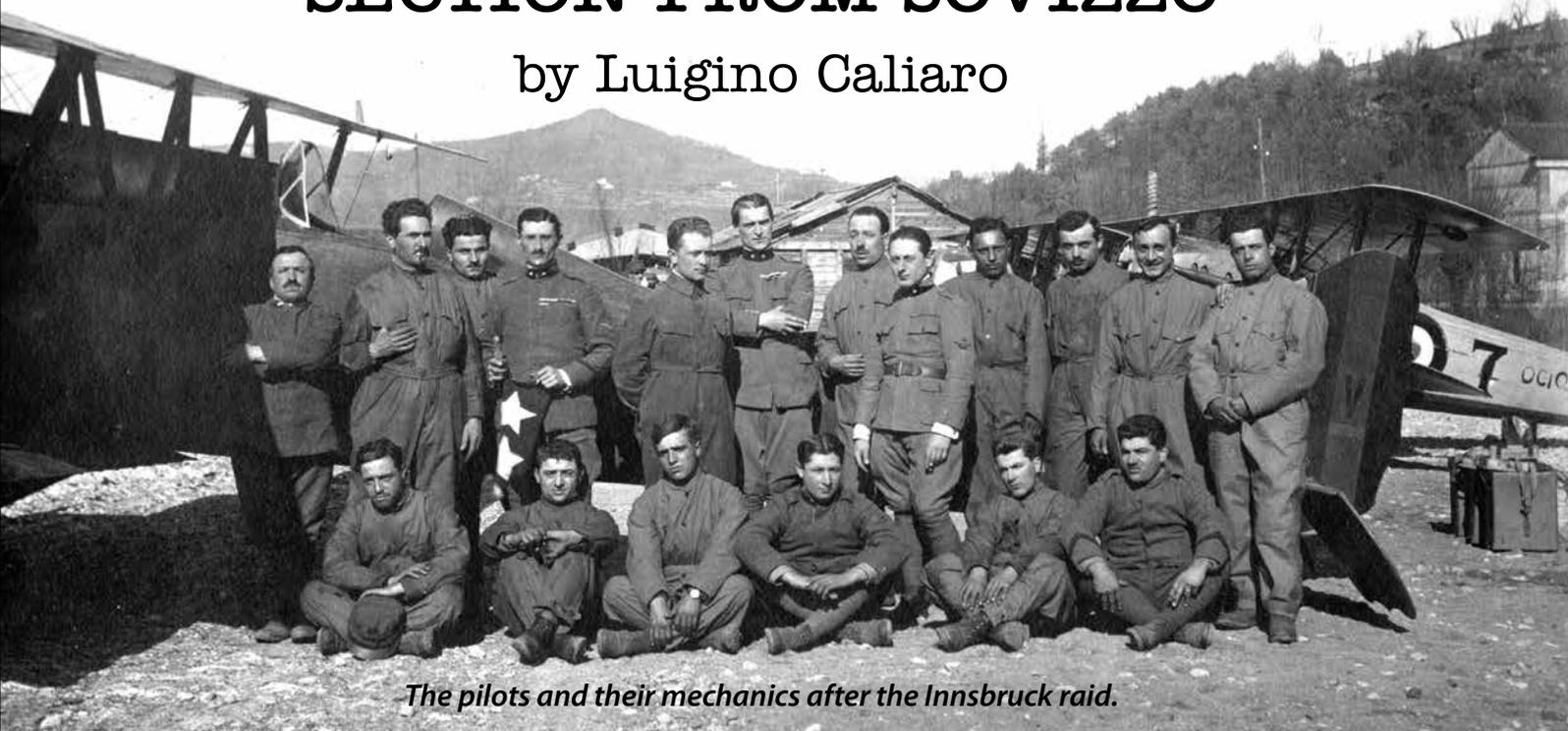


# MISSIONS FLOWN BY THE 1st SVA SECTION FROM SOVIZZO

by Luigino Caliaro



*The pilots and their mechanics after the Innsbruck raid.*

**T**HE PROPAGANDA RAID performed by the 87th Squadriglia over Vienna has undoubtedly proven to be action that made the Ansaldo SVA famous in the aviation world, the type being the best Italian aircraft produced during the war and one utilised principally for photographic reconnaissance during the last year of the conflict. Nevertheless, before the raid on Vienna and without the media clamour associated with the flight performed by D'Annunzio and the pilots of the Serenissima, in its first months of use, the SVA had been a protagonist in other particularly important operations which confirmed the qualities of both the aircraft and the Italian pilots. Amongst these must be recorded two bombing missions; one against the station at Bolzano on 4 January 1918 and another on the station at Innsbruck on 20 February 1918, performed by SVA

of the 1st Sezione (Section/Flight). These actions, performed by pilots of exceptional ability, prominent amongst who were Natale Palli and Giovanni Bartolomeo Arrigoni, are, even today, hardly recognised, although in reality, in consideration of the notable technical and environmental difficulties overcome in completing the mission, they were of particularly important significance, marking the first attack on Austrian territory by Italian aircraft during the conflict.

The SVA had been conceived in mid-1916 by its designers, Capitano Umberto Savoia and Rodolfo Verduzio, as the first entirely Italian built fighter aircraft. In fact, both the airframe, production of which had been assigned to the Ansaldo company, and the six cylinder in-line 180hp SPA engine were both produced in Italy. From the type's first flights it was clear that the project was particularly interesting, as it

*Two of the SVA's limitations as a fighting scout are apparent in this photograph, taken at Sovizzo in March 1918: the pilot's limited forward field of vision, caused by the long, deep engine cowling, and the inaccessibility of the guns in the event of a jam.  
:via author*



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