



17° Stormo Incursori: Colonel Mauro D'Agostino Assumes Command

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FURBARA — A high-profile change of command at the **17° Stormo Incursori**. On Thursday, **1° October 2026**, the handover ceremony between the outgoing commander, Colonel Michele Anelli, and his successor, Colonel Mauro D'Agostino, was held at the "U. Gordesco" Military Airport in Furbara.

The event, a key occasion for the excellence of the Aeronautica Militare's Special Forces, was presided over by Colonel **Salvatore Florio**, commander of the **1^ Brigata Aerea Operazioni Speciali (1^ BAOS)**. Also attending the formal ceremony were Admiral Paolo Pezzutti, commander of Comando Forze Speciali (COFS), along with numerous civilian, military and religious authorities. The formal transfer of authority was sealed by the handover of the War Flag between the two commanders.

Two years of challenges and geopolitical scenarios

Reflecting on his two years at the helm of the unit, Colonel **Michele Anelli** offered heartfelt thanks to the personnel for the extraordinary dedication and professionalism they demonstrated in domestic and international operational theaters.

Anelli placed his tenure within a particularly uncertain and dynamic global geopolitical context, marked by hybrid threats and growing instability. In this complex environment, the outgoing commander reiterated that Special Forces represent an indispensable strategic asset for the country, called upon to prevent, anticipate and neutralize crises with surgical precision.

Continuity and prestige: the new Commander's vision

Upon assuming command, Colonel **Mauro D'Agostino** expressed his deep gratitude to the Armed Force leadership for the confidence placed in him. Describing the post as «the most prestigious and demanding assignment in an Air Force career», D'Agostino pledged strategic and operational continuity, confirming the unit's constant readiness in high-risk environments, to be tackled with enthusiasm, rigor and an absolute sense of duty.

Strategic Autonomy and NATO Interoperability

In his remarks, Colonel **Salvatore Florio** underscored the ethical and operational value of continuity in military tradition, noting that every commander has a duty to hand over a strengthened unit to their successors.

Admiral **Paolo Pezzutti** echoed this view, emphasizing the need for modern Special Forces to operate with increasing autonomy and through lean, vertical and responsive chains of command, confirming the leading role assumed by the Aeronautica Militare in this field.

The ceremony concluded with a spectacular operational demonstration: a parachute insertion by raiders from an **HH-101A** helicopter of the **9° Stormo di Grazzanise**, a vital unit that provides close air support and conducts *Personnel Recovery* missions (recovery of isolated personnel) at home and abroad.

Profile and Capabilities of the 17° Stormo Incursori (Tier 1)

Hierarchically assigned to 1[^] BAOS and COFS as a **TIER 1** Special Forces unit, the 17° Stormo selects, trains and prepares Aeronautica Militare raiders, ensuring full integration and interoperability with the Defense's other special forces.

The unit plays a unique role in the national landscape:

- **Air-Surface Integration:** It implements the *Special Operations Air to Land Integration* (SOALI) doctrine, coordinating air and ground power against targets.
- **Exclusive Combat Controllers:** It is the only Italian unit exclusively fielding the *Combat Controller* capability, certified by the U.S. *Air Force Special Operations Command* (AFSOC) — a distinction that made Italy the first NATO nation to obtain this accreditation for *Global Access Operation* (GAO) operations.
- **Management of Hostile Theaters:** Operators specialize in assessing and safely managing landings and takeoffs on semi-prepared or improvised airstrips, including in remote, austere or high-risk areas, integrating military and civilian air traffic control in highly complex scenarios.

News link: <https://www.aeronautica.difesa.it/news/forze-speciali-avvicendamento-al-comando-del-17-stormo-incursori-di-furbara/>