70th Wing: Airplane Pilot Wings awarded to Cadets of the first course of the Air Force Academy

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At the **70th Wing "G. C. Graziani" in Latina**, the traditional **ceremony of awarding the Airplane Pilot Wings** to **36 Cadet Pilots** of the first regular course of the **Air Force Academy**, future **Grifo VI**, who successfully completed the flight selection process, took place on Thursday, January 22.

A milestone that represents the first true operational step in the journey to becoming military pilots of the **Italian Air Force**, and that assumes an even deeper value for the human and professional context in which it matured.

A ceremony between pride and memory

The event took place in the presence of the highest civil and military authorities of the Armed Forces, with the participation of the **Chief of Staff of the Italian Air Force**, Air Squadron

General **Antonio Conserva**.

The ceremony was inevitably marked by a **deep and heartfelt emotion** in memory of the tragic accident that occurred last October, in which **Cadet Officer Pilot Lorenzo Nucheli** and the **Commander of the 70th Wing, Air Brigade General Simone Mettini**, lost their lives. An event that indelibly impacted the course participants, who were called to complete an extremely demanding selection process marked by rigor, responsibility, and honor.

The awarding of the Wings thus became an **act of courage and moral legacy**, a testament to a continuity of values that transcends pain and strengthens the sense of belonging.

The hangar of the 70th Wing “G. C. Graziani” in Latina, filled with civil and military authorities, during the ceremony - Copyright Italian Air Force

The meaning of the Golden Eagle

The **Golden Eagle**, symbol of obtaining the **Airplane Pilot License (BPA)**, is the first formal recognition of passing the flight selection. From today, the Cadets will wear it on their uniforms as a visible sign of the effort made and the responsibility assumed.

It is an initial, but decisive, milestone within a training path that combines **technique, discipline, emotional balance, and the ability to operate in complex contexts**.

The golden eagle, emblem of obtaining the Airplane Pilot License - Copyright Italian Air Force

The message from the Commander of the 70th Wing

Welcoming the authorities was the **Commander of the 70th Wing, Colonel Ambrogio Zanette**, who thanked the personnel of the unit, the **Pilot Instructors of the 207th Flight Group**, and the families of the Cadets, an integral part of the human and professional journey of the brevet recipients.

Addressing the young pilots directly, Colonel Zanette remembered with deep emotion General Simone Mettini and Cadet Lorenzo Nucheli:

«Both will accompany you throughout your life. Today they are among us and rejoice in this achievement of yours».

A clear invitation not to be influenced by superficial judgments about their generation, but to demonstrate value through daily commitment, responsibility, and the courage of choices. The final message recalled the fundamentals of the profession:

«Be prepared pilots, integral officers, men and women capable of teamwork. The sky that awaits you is vast and challenging, but today we can say with conviction: you are ready to take flight».

The Commander of the 70th Wing, Colonel Ambrogio Zanette in his speech - Copyright Italian Air Force

Spadini and symbolic continuity

The ceremony was also an occasion for the **awarding of the Spadini** to **15 Cadets** who, engaged in the path to obtaining the BPA, could not participate in the previous ceremony held in December at the Air Force Academy in Pozzuoli.

The **Commander of the Air Force Academy, Air Division General Davide Cipelletti**, emphasized the symbolic value of the event with words of strong intensity:

«A feather from each of the eagles you wear on your chest today ideally joins that of your emblem, forming a single great eagle to be entrusted to the memory of Lorenzo Nucheli».

A reminder of the ability demonstrated by the Cadets to transform difficulties into energy and growth, qualities essential for those called to assume ever greater responsibilities.

The awarding of the Spadini to the 15 Cadets - Copyright Italian Air Force

The future outlook of the Italian Air Force

Concluding the speeches, **General Antonio Conserva** addressed a clear and forward-looking message to the Cadet Pilots, emphasizing how **the future of the Armed Forces is built in training centers**, where the transition to **sixth-generation platforms and systems** is prepared.

Not only flight technique, but **method, resilience, the ability to work in teams, and to manage increasingly complex systems**, with the pilot at the center of an integrated architecture essential for the country's security.

«You have shown that you can overcome even the toughest tests. The brevet on your chest is proof that you are ready to face future challenges and to guard our skies with courage and competence».

The speech of Air Squadron General Antonio Conserva - Copyright Italian Air Force

The Airplane Pilot License

The **BPA** is divided into two phases:

- **theoretical phase (ground school)**, which includes the study of systems, meteorology, air traffic control, aeronautical medicine, radio phraseology in English, and flight procedures;
- **practical phase (flying training)**, with **12 training missions** on the **SF-260EA** aircraft, during which the Cadets progressively acquire the skills necessary for the safe conduct of flight.

The most anticipated moment is the **“solo”**, the final exam before obtaining the license, followed by the traditional **bath in the “pingue tank”**, a playful and auspicious rite that represents a true aeronautical baptism.

The cadets of the first regular course of the Air Force Academy, future Grifo VI, at the Flight School in Latina - Copyright Italian Air Force

The role of the 70th Wing

Under the command of the **Italian Air Force Schools Command and 3rd Air Region**, the **70th Wing in Latina** has represented for over sixty years a **national and international center of excellence** in military flight selection.

The Pontine Flight School has issued **over 15,000 pilot licenses** and accumulated about **500,000 flight hours**, training pilots of the Italian Air Force, other Armed Forces, State Armed Corps, and numerous foreign nations.

A deep bond, that between the 70th Wing and the city of Latina, which on this occasion was renewed in the name of professionalism, memory, and a look towards the future.

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