



Commander Alfa, among the founders of the GIS of the Carabinieri, has passed away

Published on 19/07/2026

Commander Alfa, a historical figure of the Carabinieri and among the founders of the **Gruppo di Intervento Speciale**, the Special Forces unit of the Carabinieri known by the acronym GIS, has died at the age of 75.

The news of his passing was announced on the evening of July 19 through the Facebook page dedicated to him, with a message inviting people to experience the moment of mourning with discretion and sensitivity.

Behind the code name "Alfa" was a Carabinieri lieutenant born in 1951 in Castelvetro, in the province of Trapani. His personal identity remained protected even after his retirement, respecting the confidentiality that characterized his entire operational career.

From Tuscania to the birth of the GIS

A paratrooper Carabiniere, he served in the Battaglione "Tuscania" when, in the spring of 1977, he was summoned along with four other soldiers to participate in the establishment of a new special unit.

Thus was born the **Gruppo di Intervento Speciale of the Carabinieri**, created during a period when Italy was severely affected by terrorism and needed specially trained units to handle kidnappings, hijackings, prison riots, and hostage situations.

Over the years, the GIS would become one of Italy's main units for high-risk interventions, operating against terrorism and organized crime, in hostage rescues, capturing dangerous fugitives, and military missions abroad.

Within the unit, the Carabinieri initially known by the nickname "Cigno" received the operational name by which he would become known: **Commander Alfa**.

The baptism of fire in the Trani prison

One of the most important interventions of the GIS's early operational phase occurred in December 1980, during the riot that broke out in the maximum-security prison of Trani.

The inmates had taken some guards hostage and occupied part of the facility. The GIS intervention represented the first major test for the unit and concluded with the liberation of the hostages.

That operation helped to make known, even within the institutions, the capabilities of a then very young formation, composed mainly of men from the world of paratrooper Carabinieri.

Forty years of operations in Italy and abroad

Over more than forty years of service, Commander Alfa participated in numerous operations against terrorism and organized crime, as well as delicate protection services for magistrates, authorities, and high-risk individuals.

His activities also took place in international theaters. Official biographies recall assignments and missions in Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Iraq, including the IFOR and SFOR operations, the Ancient Babylon mission in Nassiriya, and the NATO Training Mission activities in Iraq.

Over time, he also became an instructor, contributing to the training of new generations of operators and the professional growth of the GIS.

Although known as “Commander Alfa,” he left active service with the rank of Lieutenant and during his career received numerous Italian and foreign honors.

Among the recognitions awarded to Commander Alfa are the **Medaglia Mauriziana**, the **Gold Cross for Merit of the Carabinieri**, honors of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic, and recognitions related to missions carried out in Afghanistan and Iraq.

He was generally remembered as one of the most decorated soldiers and Carabinieri in Italy.

Beyond the medals, however, his name remained especially linked to the birth and development of a unit that, starting from a small group of men, would become a fundamental component of Italy's system for counter-terrorism and high-risk crisis management.

A life told without revealing identity

After spending much of his professional life in anonymity, Commander Alfa decided to share some of his experiences through books, conferences, and public meetings.

Among his works are “**Cuore di rondine**”, “**Io vivo nell’ombra**”, “**Missioni segrete**”, “**Dietro il mephisto**”, “**Parola d’ordine: proteggere**”, and the volume dedicated to the intervention in the Trani prison “**Liberate gli ostaggi. L’esordio del GIS: l’assalto al supercarcere di Trani**”.

Through these stories, he described not only operations, training, and missions but also the fears, personal sacrifices, and the burden that a life spent in the shadows can have on a man and his family.

In recent years, he had mainly met with young people and students, addressing themes of legality, the sense of duty, and service to institutions.

The memory of a man who lived in the shadows

With the death of Commander Alfa, one of the last witnesses of the pioneering phase of Italian special units disappears.

A Paratrooper Carabinieri who helped build the GIS from scratch and who went through some of the most difficult periods in the country's recent history, from the years of terrorism to international missions.

His true identity remained protected.

What remains is the operational name, the black mephisto, and above all **the professional legacy passed on to the men** who, after him, continued to serve in the Gruppo di Intervento Speciale.