

Conferences of Army Decorated: Inspiration and Values for Young Soldiers

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The **Italian Army** renews its commitment with determination in the **moral and professional training** of young soldiers, through an initiative with strong symbolic and educational content: a series of **conferences held by personnel decorated for acts of heroism**.

These meetings, held in cities such as **Modena, Capua, Verona, Milan, L'Aquila, Ascoli, and Viterbo**, at prestigious institutions like the **Military Academy**, the **Non-Commissioned Officers School**, the **Military School "Teulié"**, and the **Volunteer Training Regiments (RAV)**, represented a moment of high-value profile.

Through the narration of their experiences, the **Decorated of the Army** conveyed to the young trainees the **founding values of the Institution**: **honor**, **courage**, **discipline**, **spirit of sacrifice**, and **sense of duty**. The conferences fostered not only technical learning but also the **construction of identity and belonging**, fundamental elements for the cohesion of the

Armed Force.



Warrant Officer Gabriele Pizzichetti, Silver Medal for Military Valor, for the exceptional courage demonstrated during a special forces infiltration operation in Shindand, Afghanistan. Helicopter gunner under intense enemy fire, he ensured the re-embarkation of ground personnel with his intervention, consciously exposing himself to danger.

Courage and leadership: a legacy to preserve

During the conferences, **direct testimonies of operations conducted in Afghanistan and Iraq** were shared, high-intensity operational theaters where it was essential to act with **promptness**, **determination**, and **esprit de corps**.

Sergeant Major Andrea Adorno, **Gold Medal for Military Valor**, recounted his experience during **Operation Maashin IV**, offering an authentic reflection on the meaning of **commitment**, **responsibility**, and **personal sacrifice** in the most critical war contexts.

Major General Alessandro Albamonte emphasized the importance of **military values in leadership training**, highlighting how command, to be effective, must be based on **ethics**, **decisional clarity**, and **awareness of one's role**.

Other decorated personnel, including **Assistant Graduate Giacomo Patti**, **Selected Graduate Stefano La Mattina**, **First Warrant Officer Enrico Mercuri**, and **Warrant Officer Gabriele Pizzichetti**, also provided valuable contributions. Graduates Patti and La Mattina shared episodes experienced during **missions abroad**, highlighting the centrality of **individual resilience** and **determination** in facing unpredictable situations. Warrant Officers Mercuri and Pizzichetti, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of **technical training**

and **psychological preparation**, essential elements for operating safely and effectively in **high-complexity scenarios**.



Selected Paratrooper Graduate Stefano La Mattina, Gold Medal for Army Valor, for the heroic behavior shown during the battle of Parmakan (Afghanistan), on September 23, 2009. Severely wounded in one arm while providing covering fire to his comrades under enemy ambush, he continued firing with his still able arm, managing to repel the attack.

Serving the Nation with awareness and honor

All the interventions conveyed to the participants a clear, incisive, and profound message: **the military career is not just a job option, but a true vocation**, a conscious life choice rooted in the values of **dedication**, **discipline**, **sense of duty**, and **responsibility towards the community**. Serving the Italian Army means adhering to a moral code that imposes rigor, spirit of sacrifice, and the willingness to put the common good above individual interests.

In an era characterized by rapid changes and new global challenges, the **direct confrontation with soldiers decorated for acts of heroism** – men who have lived, with clarity and courage, high-risk operational contexts – represents an educational opportunity of extraordinary importance. Their testimonies, full of meaning and experience, had a strong emotional and educational impact on young soldiers, contributing to **strengthening the sense of belonging to the Institution** and consolidating the value bonds that form the basis of internal cohesion.

Through these moments of exchange, course attendees were able to understand how essential it is to **assume their role within the Armed Force with awareness and responsibility**, recognizing in their choice a moral commitment to the Nation and their comrades. The example

of those who acted with promptness, altruism, and firmness in extreme situations constitutes a model to follow, a concrete reference for those preparing to serve Italy in increasingly complex contexts.

Thanks to these testimonies, the students had the opportunity to **reflect on the deeper meaning of military service**, developing a clearer and more responsible vision of the path undertaken.



Alpine Paratrooper Sergeant Major Andrea Adorno, Gold Medal for Military Valor, awarded for the heroism demonstrated during Operation “Maashin IV” in Bala Morghab (Afghanistan), on July 16, 2010. Realizing that another team from his platoon was about to be hit by enemy fire, he voluntarily placed himself between his comrades and the threat, managing to neutralize the adversary's action. During the action, he was seriously wounded in the lower limbs.

Conclusion

The initiative promoted by the Italian Army is part of a broader project to enhance the **historical memory** and transmission of the value heritage of the Armed Forces. The conferences of the Decorated represent a bridge between **tradition and future**, between those who have lived duty in its highest form and those who are preparing today to take their place in the service of the Nation.

A concrete example of how the Army, even in operational modernity, continues to train not only soldiers but also **conscious citizens**, **loyal**, and **ready to serve with honor**.