



From ADRA to Incursori: at MUSAM a journey through the history of the Air Force Special Forces

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On Friday, January 30, at the **Historical Museum of the Air Force (MUSAM)** in Vigna di Valle, a new and significant exhibition area dedicated to the history of the Air Force Special Forces was inaugurated. A section designed to tell, through relics, documents, and images, the evolution of an elite operational capability that has its roots in World War II and reaches up to the current Incursori of the A.M.

An institutional high-profile event

The ceremony was opened by **Colonel Dario Bovino**, Commander of the Vigna di Valle Airport, and **Colonel Michele Anelli**, Commander of the **17th Incursori Wing** of Furbara, who greeted the authorities and the many guests present. Among them, representatives of the Defense General Staff and the Air Force, members of the **Special Forces Command**, the interforce

sector of the Special Forces, the Armed Forces Associations, and the world of information.

Special guest was **Professor Mauro De Angelis**, son of Major Arnaldo De Angelis, former commander of the ADRA Battalion, as a testament to the strong link between historical memory and current operations.

The new exhibition space: from origins to present

The event, attended by the Commander of the **Rome Air Force Command**, Air Squadron General **Alberto Biavati**, and moderated by Rai journalist **Fabio Chiucconi**, was introduced by the Director of MUSAM, **Lt. Col. Paolo De Vita**, and **Dr. Susanna Ognibene**, responsible for the scientific curation.

The exhibition path represents an additional piece in the modernization process of the Museum, completed in 2023 on the occasion of the Air Force's Centennial. The visitor is guided through a chronological narrative that starts from the first paratroopers and pioneering figures, reaching the **ADRA - Arditi Distruttori della Regia Aeronautica**, the first special forces unit of the A.M., established in 1942 in Tarquinia and protagonist of daring actions on strategic targets during World War II.

The path continues with the **“Blue Falcons”**, the acrobatic parachuting team born in the mid-seventies, from which the current Incursori of the Air Force originate: highly selected and trained personnel to operate across the full spectrum of Special Operations, from special reconnaissance to direct actions, from military assistance to counterterrorism and hostage release operations.

The historical and doctrinal debate

Following, a discussion forum featured interventions by **Prof. Gastone Breccia** (University of Pavia), **Gen. B. (res.) Cristiano De Chigi**, military historian and former Deputy Commander of the Paratroopers Brigade “Folgore”, **Prof. Federico Ciavattone** (ANPDI), and **Gen. Sq. Riccardo Rinaldi**, among the first Incursori of the A.M. and former Commander of the 17th Wing and the 1st Air Brigade Special Operations.

An excursus that highlighted the strategic importance of the Special Forces, their operational peculiarities, and their growing role in contemporary scenarios.

The 17th Wing and the SOALI doctrine

The final focus was dedicated to the current configuration of the **17th Incursori Wing**, with an intervention by an operator of the Unit who delved into the technical, operational, and human aspects of today's employment. Central was the reference to the **SOALI (Special Operations Air to Land Integration)** doctrine, which distinctively characterizes the Incursori of the Air Force and is expressed especially in the **Combat Controller** capability, a key element to integrate and synchronize air power with ground operations.

In this context, the Commander of the 17th Wing presented to Air Brigade General **Diego Sismondini**, Commander of the Air Brigade Special Operations, the plaque with which the **Air Force Special Operations Command** certified the training process for the release of the Combat Controller qualification carried out by the Unit. A recognition of absolute importance: Italy is the only European country to have obtained it and the second in NATO after the United Kingdom, confirming full interoperability with the U.S. Armed Forces in Global Access Operations.

Memory, identity, and dissemination

To close the event, General Biavati's intervention emphasized the value of those who have paved the way for air special operations and the very high selective level required today of the Incursori. The MUSAM, once again, confirms itself not only as a custodian of the history of the Armed Force but also as a place for transmitting the human and professional experiences of those who have written important pages of Italy's history.

During the day, thanks to the collaboration of the Bunker Soratte Association and military history enthusiasts, a famous image of the ADRA preparing for a parachute drop on an SM-82 aircraft for North Africa was also reenacted, while the 17th Wing set up a display of equipment at the SKEMA hangar representing its operational capabilities.

An inauguration that was not only a celebration of the past but also an affirmation of an ideal and operational continuity that links the ADRA to today's Incursori of the Air Force, projected

towards the most complex challenges of the present and the future.

Source of news and images Italian Air Force

News link: <https://www.aeronautica.difesa.it/news/dagli-adra-agli-incursori-al-musam-presentata-larea-espositiva-dedicata-alla-storia-delle-forze-speciali-della-m/>