



Italian Air Force, change at the top of the 1st Special Operations Air Brigade: Colonel Florio new commander

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On Tuesday, September 15, at the military airport "**Mario Ugo Gordesco**" in **Furbara**, the change of command ceremony of the **1st Air Brigade Special Operations (BAOS)** of the Italian Air Force took place.

Colonel Pilot Salvatore Florio assumed command from **Air Brigade General Diego Sismondini**, who led the Brigade since October 21, 2024.

The ceremony was presided over by **Air Squad General Mauro Lunardi**, Commander of the Air Squad-1st Air Region.

Sismondini leaves after nearly two years leading BAOS

In his address, General Sismondini reviewed the main activities carried out by the department during his period of command, initially paying tribute to the War Flags and the fallen.

Particular attention was devoted to the **17th Incursori Wing**, whose operators were described by the outgoing commander as the "beating heart of the department", and the **9th Wing of Grazzanise**, with the **21st Group**, engaged in recent years in multiple operational deployments.

Sismondini also recalled the role of **STOS - Tactical Support for Special Operations** operators, identifying them as one of the pillars of the Italian Air Force's **Personnel Recovery** capability.

One of the most significant results achieved during his command, however, was the completion of the certification process for the **Special Operations Air Task Group** capability, an element destined to assume a central role in the Italian air component dedicated to Special Operations.

The certification of the Special Operations Air Task Group

The certification was obtained on **July 10, 2026**, during the "**Tende Scaglia**" exercise, and enables Italy to have a specialized structure for planning, command and conduct of the air component in support of Special Operations.

During the ceremony, General Lunardi emphasized the importance of the result, highlighting how, thanks to this capability, Italy ranks among NATO countries equipped with a **Joint** structure dedicated to managing air capabilities for Special Operations.

Achieving the certification required intensive work by the Brigade's specialists and dependent units, engaged in standardizing procedures and integrating the various operational components.

Florio: "Ours is a silent service"

Upon assuming command of the Brigade, Colonel Salvatore Florio thanked the authorities for the trust received, emphasizing the complexity and responsibility of the assignment.

In his address, he described the nature of the department's activities with a particularly significant phrase:

«Ours is a silent service: probably none of our individual names will be remembered tomorrow, but the indelible trace of what we will have accomplished will remain».

Florio also thanked his predecessor for handing over a Brigade «perfectly trained, equipped and ready to act».

The new commander already knows the sector deeply: in his professional career, he has indeed held the previous position of **Commander of the 9° Stormo di Grazzanise**, one of the two Stormi that report directly to the 1ª BAOS.

The role of the 1ª Air Brigade Special Operations

The **1ª Air Brigade Special Operations** represents the main hub of the Air Force dedicated to the preparation and employment of air capabilities related to Special Operations.

The Brigade handles the qualification, training, specialization and preparation of the **Air Force Special Forces**, represented by the Incursori, together with the capabilities of **Air Support to Special Operations (SAOS)** and **Personnel Recovery**.

Its tasks also include the standardization of tactics, techniques and procedures and the development of interoperability at the Armed Force, inter-service and international level.

The BAOS must also be able to generate a **Joint Special Operations Air Task Group (JSOATG)** structure, designed to plan and coordinate the air components involved in support of Special Operations in national or multinational scenarios.

The Brigade oversees the **17° Stormo Incursori di Furbara** and the **9° Stormo “Francesco Baracca” di Grazzanise**.

The 1ª BAOS reports hierarchically to the **Air Squadron Command-1ª Air Region**.

Source: Air Force – 1ª Air Brigade Special Operations

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