

Kindu, 65 years later: Pisa commemorates the 13 airmen of the 46ª Aerobrigata

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On Wednesday **11 November**, at the **Sacrario dei Caduti di Kindu** of the 46^ Brigata Aerea in Pisa, a ceremony was held to mark the **65th anniversary** of the massacre. The commemoration honored the thirteen airmen of the 46ª Aerobrigata who were killed in the Congo in November 1961 while taking part in a United Nations support mission.

During the ceremony, a wreath was laid in memory of the fallen and Holy Mass was celebrated. The Prefect, Mayor, Police Commissioner, institutional and garrison authorities, representatives of the **46ª Brigata Aerea**, and relatives of the fallen service members attended.

The two crews that arrived in Kindu

Between **11 and 12 November 1961**, thirteen airmen of the 46ª Aerobrigata lost their lives in the Congo. They belonged to the two crews of **C-119** transport aircraft, identified by the call

signs Lyra 5 and Lupo 33.

The aircraft had arrived in Kindu on 11 November to deliver supplies to the UN contingent. During their stay, the airmen were captured and killed by Congolese soldiers. The event profoundly marked the history of the Aeronautica Militare and the nation’s collective memory.

Holy Mass was presided over by **Monsignor Gian Franco Saba**, Military Ordinary for Italy. It was concelebrated by the episcopal vicar for the Aeronautica, **don Antonio Coppola**.

In his homily, Monsignor Saba recalled the calling of men and women in uniform to serve peace and defend the homeland. He also remembered their fidelity to duty and willingness to give their lives.

Memory entrusted to new generations

The ceremony concluded with remarks by the commander of the **46ª Brigata Aerea**, Colonel Fabio De Michele, and the head of the Ufficio per la Tutela della Cultura e della Memoria della Difesa, Colonel Gerardo Contristano.

Colonel Fabio De Michele described memory as a legacy to be preserved and passed on, recalling the example set by the thirteen airmen. Their sacrifice remains a point of reference for personnel of the 46ª Brigata Aerea and for new generations of service members.

In his remarks, De Michele linked this example to the values of service, responsibility, and fidelity to duty. According to the commander, these are principles that younger service members are called upon to embrace and uphold.

The participation of **Colonel Gerardo Contristano** highlighted the role of the Ufficio per la Tutela della Cultura e della Memoria della Difesa. The office promotes and safeguards the memory of the fallen, preserving it within the history and identity of the Armed Forces.

The 46ª Brigata preserves the memory

The commemoration was organized under the auspices of the **Ufficio per la Tutela della Cultura e della Memoria della Difesa** (U.T.C.M.D.). For the 46ª Brigata Aerea, it is an occasion dedicated to remembering the two crews and their fate.

Sixty-five years after the massacre, the Italian Air Force and the nation continue to remember the thirteen airmen of Kindu. The commemoration renewed the call to service, duty, and commitment to peace.

News link: https://www.aeronautica.difesa.it/news/kindu-65-anni-dalleccidio-a-pisa-una-cerimonia-per-ricordare-i-tredici-aviatori-della-46a-aerobrigata/