



Milan, Medaglia d'Oro Ten. Col. Paracadutista Gianfranco Paglia meets Strade Sicure troops: «People admire you»

The lieutenant colonel, Medaglia d'Oro, met personnel engaged in urban security operations in Milan and neighboring provinces.

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A visit marked by closeness, listening, and recognition of the service performed daily by Italian Army personnel. **Paratrooper Lieutenant Colonel Gianfranco Paglia, Medaglia d'Oro al Valor Militare (MOVVM), met with personnel engaged in Operation "Strade Sicure" in Milan,** focusing in particular on the security detail deployed in Piazza Duomo, one of the most iconic locations in the Lombardy capital.

The meeting comes amid the recent expansion of the operation, **which since October 24, 2026, has seen the deployment of an additional 500 troops from Brigata**

Paracadutisti “Folgore”, tasked with reinforcing the security presence already in the city in support of law enforcement agencies.

More than a purely formal visit, it was **an opportunity to meet the men and women in uniform directly, hear about their experiences, and recognize the importance of a duty that demands professionalism, discipline, vigilance, and a sense of responsibility.**

«People admire you»: the Medaglia d'Oro's words to the troops

During the meeting, Lieutenant Colonel Paglia addressed the troops with a few simple yet particularly meaningful words:

«People admire you».

A message with particular significance given the personal and military history of the man who spoke it.

Gianfranco Paglia is one of the leading figures in Italian military history. On **July 2, 1993**, during the Battaglia del Pastificio in Mogadishu, Somalia, then-Second Lieutenant and Paracadutisti platoon commander, **he was seriously wounded while attempting to voluntarily return to the combat zone.**

For the courage, selflessness, and exceptional sense of duty he demonstrated on that occasion, **he was awarded the Medaglia d'Oro al Valor Militare, Italy's highest military valor decoration.**

More than thirty years after those events, Paglia continues to serve as a point of reference for Italian soldiers and for all those who see the values of service, solidarity, and responsibility as the foundations of the military profession.

His presence among the troops deployed in Milan therefore also symbolizes a bond between different generations of soldiers, **united by their choice to serve the country.**

A note with just one word: «Thank you»

An incident during the visit made the meeting especially meaningful.

An elderly citizen approached the troops on guard duty and handed them a small note. Only one word was written on it:

«Thank you».

No speech, no special formality. Just a spontaneous gesture of gratitude toward those who don the uniform every day and carry out their duties in the city's streets.

An episode that gave substance to the words spoken shortly before by Lieutenant Colonel Paglia.

That note is direct testimony to the relationship that can develop between citizens and service members, based on a daily presence, availability, and mutual trust.

For those who serve for many hours in public places, often facing demanding shifts and difficult weather conditions, such a gesture is a form of recognition that goes beyond the operational aspects of the mission.

It is a sign that their work is seen and appreciated by those who encounter service members every day in squares, stations, and the most heavily frequented locations.

The value of daily service and the relationship with citizens

The “Strade Sicure” operation, launched in 2008, has for years been a component of the national security framework, with Army personnel employed alongside the Police Forces.

It is an activity with different characteristics from traditional military missions, but one that nonetheless requires professional preparation, the ability to assess situations, self-control, and adherence to operational procedures.

The presence of service members on the streets also represents a direct point of contact between the Armed Forces and the public.

A citizen who encounters a soldier outside a railway station, in a square, or near a sensitive site sees a component of the State actively engaged in a public service.

In this context, individual conduct takes on fundamental importance. **Professionalism, balance, and availability help build the relationship of trust that is one of the most significant aspects of the activity carried out.**

The note handed by the elderly citizen to the service members in Piazza Duomo embodies precisely this human dimension of service, often less visible than the organizational and operational aspects of the mission.

A «Thank You» that captures the meaning of the visit

The Milan meeting focused above all on people: **the service members engaged in duty every day and the citizens who benefit from their presence.**

The words of Medaglia d'Oro Gianfranco Paglia, «People admire you», **found tangible confirmation in the small note spontaneously handed over by an elderly man.**

An episode that, despite its simplicity, tells an important story about the relationship between the Armed Forces and civil society.

Alongside surveillance, prevention, and support tasks for law enforcement agencies, there is also a dimension made up of daily encounters, small gestures, and spontaneous recognition.

For the service members engaged in the “Strade Sicure” operation, that simple «Thank You» represents far more than words written on a sheet of paper: **it is recognition of their commitment, professionalism, and the service they provide to the community every day.**

News link: <https://www.esercito.difesa.it/comunicazione/il-ten-col-movm-gianfranco-paglia-incontra-i-militari-di-strade-sicure-la-gente-vi-ammira/213099.html>