



Military Authorities Salute Pozzuolo del Friuli: Paratrooper General Mandolesi Returns from Lebanon

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Gorizia warmly welcomed the return of the **Cavalry Brigade “Pozzuolo del Friuli”** from the **UNIFIL mission in Lebanon**. The ceremony took place on September 5, 2025, in Piazza della Vittoria, attended by the **Minister of Defense Guido Crosetto**, **Chief of Defense Staff General Luciano Portolano**, and **Chief of Army Staff General of the Army Corps Carmine Masiello**. Numerous civil and religious authorities were present, including **Prefect Ester Fedullo** and **Mayor Rodolfo Ziberna**, testifying to the deep bond between the city and its Brigade.

Minister Crosetto emphasized the human significance of the Italian commitment: “I could not miss being here today to welcome you back from a challenging mission. Our approach in international missions is not to show power, but to offer humanity, to enable countries to grow independently. In Lebanon, you served peace with sacrifice and honor. The entire nation of Italy

thanks you and your families.”

The solemn yet familial atmosphere of the ceremony highlighted how the “**Pozzuolo**” is perceived not only as a military force but also as a symbol of shared values, representing Italy worldwide with an approach of dialogue, support, and constructive presence.

The Strategic Context of Lebanon and Italy's Role

General Portolano, Chief of Defense Staff, reiterated how Lebanon's stability is crucial for the entire Mediterranean region: “Although small in size and population, **Lebanon** represents a social, political, and religious mosaic whose stability is also crucial for Europe. The **Italian Armed Forces**, through **UNIFIL**, play an essential role in supporting local institutions and ensuring Israel's security.”



General Portolano, Chief of Defense Staff.

This mission, in fact, is part of the **UN Resolution 1701 of 2006**, which provides for monitoring the cessation of hostilities along the “blue line,” the demarcation line between Lebanon and Israel. In this sensitive area, Italian soldiers have contributed to maintaining the fragile balance, with targeted actions both in territorial control and in supporting the civilian population and the **Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF)**.

The Brigade Commander, Brigadier General Nicola Mandolesi, led the units in a complex mission, in a context characterized by constant tensions and high risks. Over **1,000 Italian soldiers** operated in the western sector of the UNIFIL mission, alongside **2,600 blue helmets** from various nations, under the coordination of the **Joint Operational Command (COVI)**.

The Cavalry motto, **“with heart beyond the obstacle”**, was more than ever concrete in Lebanon, where the “Pozzuolo” managed to combine military firmness and proximity capability, strengthening Italy's credibility as a peace and stability actor.

The Values of the Brigade and the Bond with the Community

General of the Army Corps Masiello, Chief of Army Staff, expressed the pride of the entire Armed Forces: “Well done! You have upheld the Tricolor, demonstrating the values that guide every Italian soldier: readiness, discipline, loyalty, and spirit of sacrifice. You returned from a difficult mission, and you did so without ever losing sight of the honor of serving the country.”



General of the Army Corps Carmine Masiello, Chief of Army Staff.

These words resonated strongly in Gorizia, a city historically linked to the **“Pozzuolo del Friuli”**. The collective embrace of the community, present in the square to greet the soldiers, represented recognition not only for the task accomplished but also for the silent dedication of the families who supported the military during the six-month mission.

The Brigade, in its seventh experience in Lebanon under the **United Nations** flag, confirms itself as one of the most operational and representative realities of the **Italian Army**. The ability to face complex and changing scenarios, combined with the professionalism and humanity of its men and women, contributes to consolidating Italy's role in the Eastern Mediterranean and on the international stage.

The ceremony in **Gorizia** was not just a celebration of the return from a mission, but also a moment of reflection on the values that guide the **Armed Forces**: the defense of peace, support for people in difficulty, and fidelity to the oath to serve the country. Values that the **“Pozzuolo del Friuli”** has embodied once again, returning home with the honor of those who have given everything “with heart beyond the obstacle.”

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