



November 12, 2003 - November 12, 2025, remembering the fallen of Nassiriya

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Twenty-two years later, Italy gathers in remembrance of the Nassiriya massacre, the most severe attack suffered by our contingents abroad since the end of the Second World War. It was **November 12, 2003, at 10:40 local time, 08:40 in Italy**, when a tanker truck loaded with explosives was detonated in front of the entrance to the **“Maestrale” base** of the **MSU (Multinational Specialized Unit) of the Carabinieri** in the town center of **Nassiriya**. The shock wave, followed by the explosion of the ammunition depot, caused **28 victims: 19 Italians and 9 Iraqis**, in addition to dozens of injured.

On that morning, **Appuntato Andrea Filippa**, on guard at the main gate, managed to neutralize the two attackers: the vehicle did not penetrate inside the barracks and exploded at the gate, preventing an even more catastrophic outcome. The **first aid** came from the Carabinieri themselves, the newly formed Iraqi police, and the city's civilians.

The operational context

The **Command of the Italian Joint Task Force (IJTF)** operated about **7 km** from Nassiriya, at the **“White Horse” base**, not far from the U.S. command in **Tallil**. The **MSU/IRAQ**, composed of **Italian Carabinieri** and **Romanian Gendarmerie** (with the addition, from the end of November 2003, of **120 men from the Portuguese Republican National Guard**), was stationed at two bases **in the city center**:

- **Maestrale** (known as *Animal House*), headquarters of the **maneuver unit**;
- **Libeccio**, where the **MSU Battalion** and the **MSU/IRAQ Regiment Command** were located.

The choice to remain **in contact with the population** — unlike the Army, which was more secluded for security reasons — was dictated by the **stability policing** mandate of the MSU.

The attack and its consequences

The explosion **reduced Maestrale to a skeleton of concrete** and also **damaged** the nearby **Libeccio** base. Among those involved were the crew of director **Stefano Rolla**, in the city to shoot a drama about the reconstruction entrusted to the Italians, and Army soldiers escorting them.

Two months later, the **Carabinieri Regiment** also left **Libeccio**, moving to **Camp Mittica** at the former airport of **Tallil**, **7 km** from Nassiriya.

The Italian victims

Carabinieri

- **Giovanni Cavallaro**, Second Lieutenant
- **Filippo Merlino**, Second Lieutenant
- **Enzo Fregosi**, Warrant Officer
- **Massimiliano Bruno**, Chief Warrant Officer
- **Alfio Ragazzi**, Chief Warrant Officer

- **Alfonso Trincone**, Chief Warrant Officer
- **Daniele Ghione**, Chief Warrant Officer
- **Giuseppe Coletta**, Brigadier
- **Ivan Ghitti**, Brigadier
- **Domenico Intravaia**, Deputy Brigadier
- **Andrea Filippa**, Appuntato
- **Horacio Majorana**, Appuntato

Italian Army

- **Massimo Ficuciello**, Captain
- **Silvio Olla**, Chief Warrant Officer
- **Alessandro Carrisi**, First Corporal Major
- **Emanuele Ferraro**, Chief Corporal Major Chosen
- **Pietro Petrucci**, Corporal Major

Civilians

- **Marco Beci**, International Aid Worker
- **Stefano Rolla**, Director

The Fallen came from various territorial and mobile units of the Carabinieri (including **13th Carabinieri “Friuli Venezia Giulia”** and **7th Carabinieri “Trentino-Alto Adige”**) and from Army units (**Regiment Lagunari “Serenissima”, Brigade Folgore, 66th Airborne Infantry Regiment “Trieste”, Savoia Cavalleria, Regiment Trasimeno**, soldiers from the **Brigade “Sassari”** escorting the crew and **3 from the 6th Transport Regiment** of the Projection Logistics Brigade escorting aid worker Beci).

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Italy's farewell

The **chapel of rest** was set up at the **Sacrario delle Bandiere del Vittoriano**, where a long pilgrimage of citizens took place. The **State funerals**, held on **November 18, 2003** in the **Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls** and officiated by Cardinal **Camillo Ruini**, saw the

presence of the highest state authorities and a **moved popular participation** estimated at **about 50,000 people**. On this occasion, a **national day of mourning** was declared.

Memory and significance

Nassiriya is **wound and memory**. It is the symbol of the price paid by those who work **for security, stability, and reconstruction** in complex contexts, with tasks ranging from **territorial control** to **proximity policing**, from **civilian protection** to **support for local institutions**.

Twenty-two years later, the duty of remembrance joins the commitment to **transmit the values** that those military and civilians embodied: **courage, professionalism, responsibility, service**.