

November 4: Italy Celebrates National Unity and the Armed Forces, in Remembrance of the Fallen and in Service to the Nation

Published on 04/11/2026

November 4 marks one of the most significant anniversaries in Italian national history. It is the day on which the country commemorates the completion of its territorial unification, pays tribute to those who sacrificed their lives for the Fatherland, and celebrates the Armed Forces, guardians of democratic institutions and key actors in national defense and security.

A day that ideally links the generations of Great War combatants with the service members who today serve in Italy and in international operational theaters, united by enduring values such as duty, honor, discipline, and a spirit of service.

The historical significance of November 4, 1918

On November 4, 1918, the Armistizio di Villa Giusti, signed the previous day between the Kingdom of Italy and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, entered into force, marking the cessation of hostilities on the Italian front of the First World War.

The Italian victory enabled Trento and Trieste to be reunited with the national territory, completing the unification process begun during the Risorgimento.

However, it was a victory won at an enormous cost. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers lost their lives, millions of men were mobilized, and entire communities suffered the consequences of a conflict that profoundly affected Italian society.

November 4 thus became not only a celebration of victory, but above all a moment of remembrance and gratitude for all those who fought and sacrificed their lives.

In 1921, on November 4 itself, the Milite Ignoto was interred at the Altare della Patria in Rome, becoming the symbol of all Italian soldiers who fell without their remains being identified.



Trieste, November 3, 1918 – The landing of Italian troops on the eve of the entry into force of the Armistizio di Villa Giusti, which ended hostilities on the Italian front of the First World War. Source: Wikimedia Commons, public domain.

Giornata dell'Unità Nazionale e delle Forze Armate

Over the decades, the significance of the anniversary has gradually broadened, becoming a moment of unity between the Nation and its Armed Forces.

With Law No. 27 of March 1, 2024, the Republic officially recognized November 4 as the Giornata dell'Unità Nazionale e delle Forze Armate, confirming its historical and institutional significance.

The anniversary is not a public holiday with an impact on the work calendar, but it retains a central role in the country's collective memory.

It is a day dedicated to the Esercito Italiano, the Marina Militare, the Aeronautica Militare, and the Arma dei Carabinieri, as well as to all those who, through military service, have contributed and continue to contribute to the defense of Italy.



Rome, November 4, 1919 – Troops assembled at Piazza di Siena on the first anniversary of the Italian victory in the First World War. Source: «L'Illustrazione Italiana», 1919 – Wikimedia Commons (public domain).

The November 4, 2026 celebrations

This year's national celebrations opened in Rome with the traditional laying of a laurel wreath at the Shrine of the Unknown Soldier, at the Altare della Patria, by President of the Republic Sergio Mattarella.

The ceremony was attended by Defense Minister Guido Crosetto, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, the Speakers of both Houses of Parliament, the highest institutional authorities, and senior military leaders.

The Head of State reviewed the units assembled in Piazza Venezia, paying tribute to the sacrifice of the Fallen and the service of the Armed Forces.

The national program continues in Florence, at Piazzale Michelangelo, with a military ceremony that this year also carries particular historical significance: marking the 60th anniversary of the November 4, 1966 flood, during which military personnel contributed to relief operations for the population.

The message chosen by the Ministry of Defense for 2026 is **«Armed Forces Defending Our Freedom»**, a reminder of the value of freedom and the responsibility to preserve it through the daily commitment of institutions and citizens.



Rome, November 4, 2026 – President of the Republic Sergio Mattarella during the laying of a laurel wreath at the Shrine of the Unknown Soldier, at the Altare della Patria, on the occasion of National Unity and Armed Forces Day. Source: Ministry of Defense

The Italian Armed Forces between tradition and new challenges

Today, the Armed Forces represent an essential component of national security and of Italy's participation in international commitments.

Alongside their traditional role of defending national territory and sovereignty, military personnel conduct deterrence, surveillance, international cooperation, counter-cyber threat, and emergency support operations for affected populations.

From international missions to domestic deployments, from air and naval operations to airspace protection activities, and through to the new challenges posed by technology and the cyber domain, the Armed Forces continue to evolve in response to an increasingly complex strategic

environment.

A commitment that requires readiness, adaptability, professionalism, and above all a willingness to make personal sacrifices.



June 6, 2026 – Personnel of the 7° Reggimento Alpini prepare to launch drones during the «Alabarda d'Argento 2026» exercise, demonstrating the technological evolution and new operational capabilities of the Esercito Italiano. Source: Esercito Italiano – Wikimedia Commons (CC BY 2.5).

Remembering those who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty

November 4 is also, and above all, a day of remembrance.

Our thoughts turn to the soldiers who fell in past wars, the military personnel who lost their lives on international missions, and those who died in the line of duty, at home and abroad.

This remembrance takes on particularly profound meaning this year, just days after the October 29 tragedy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in which four Italian service members lost their lives while carrying out an activity as part of Operation EUFOR Althea.

Simone Ruggia, Claudio Marchesi, Franco Adriano Zecchillo and Laura Procacci are names added to the long history of service and sacrifice of women and men in uniform.

Their memory, together with that of all the Fallen, evokes the deepest meaning of military service: accepting even onerous responsibilities in the interest of the community, while remaining faithful to the oath taken.

A day that belongs to all Italians

November 4 is not merely a military observance, but a shared heritage of the entire Nation.

It is a day for the Tricolor, remembrance, unity, and recognition of those who helped build, defend, and preserve Italy.

For those who wear the uniform today, as for those who wore it in the past, it also represents a moment of belonging and continuity between different generations, united by the same principles of service to the homeland.

Remembering the past means recognizing the value of the sacrifices made, but also renewing the commitment to safeguard freedom, peace, and national unity.

In this meaning lies the most authentic legacy of November 4: a day on which Italy honors its Fallen, expresses gratitude to its Armed Forces, and reaffirms the values that form the foundation of the Republic.

Long live Italy. Long live the Armed Forces.