

OMRI Honors 2025: Italy Awards General Cavoli and Partisan Paratrooper Paola Del Din

Published on 11/04/2025

As per tradition, the President of the Republic has conferred the honors of the Order "Al merito della Repubblica Italiana" (OMRI), published in the **Official Gazette of April 9, 2025**. Among the notable names are two symbolic figures from worlds that seem only apparently distant: on one side, the American General **Christopher Gerard Cavoli**, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR); on the other, the **Friulian partisan Paola Del Din**, already a gold medal for military valor, now decorated with the highest grade of the OMRI.

The Order "Al merito della Repubblica Italiana"

The OMRI, established by law in 1951, represents the highest honor of the Republic. It is intended to recognize merits towards the Nation acquired in the fields of culture, arts, economy, public service, social affairs, and – as in this case – in services rendered in **civil and military**

careers. The Order is divided into six grades: **Knight**, **Officer**, **Commander**, **Grand Officer**, **Knight Grand Cross**, and, in very rare cases, **Grand Cordon**.

It does not confer material advantages or formal privileges: its importance is exclusively moral and symbolic. The honors are conferred twice a year, on June 2 (Republic Day) and December 27 (anniversary of the Constitution), and published in the Official Gazette.



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General Cavoli: the face of Euro-Atlantic security

Born in Germany in 1964 to an Italian-American family, **Christopher Cavoli** is one of the most authoritative figures in the Western military landscape. After leading the United States European Command, he was appointed in 2022 as **SACEUR**, or Supreme Allied Commander Europe, the military operational head of NATO.

By decree of February 20, 2025, the general was awarded the title of **Grand Officer of the OMRI Order**, in recognition of the key role he plays in military cooperation between Italy and the Atlantic Alliance. His constant presence in major strategic theaters, diplomatic ability in multinational coordination, and support for the modernization of European armed forces are elements that led Italian authorities to publicly acknowledge his contribution.

This award is not only symbolic but also represents a **political message of closeness between Rome and Brussels**, in a period marked by geopolitical tensions and a renewed collective commitment to European defense.



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Paola Del Din: the honor to the living memory of the Resistance

If Cavoli represents the continuity of transatlantic security, **Paola Del Din** embodies the founding spirit of the Italian Republic. Born in 1923, from Friuli, she was a **partisan in the Osoppo Brigade**, the first Italian female paratrooper, agent of the **British SOE**, and protagonist of heroic actions behind Nazi lines during World War II.

In 2025, at 101 years old, she received the honor of **Knight Grand Cross**, the highest ordinary grade provided for living Italian citizens. The decoration seals a life in service of freedom and historical memory.

Her figure returned to the center of international attention on April 9, when **King Charles III** solemnly mentioned her in his speech to the Italian Parliament, recalling her courage and fundamental role in the Resistance. "I know that on this day we are all thinking of Paola, who is now 101 years old, and we pay tribute to her courage," declared the sovereign, celebrating her as "the only living gold medal for military valor of the Resistance."

Del Din was trained in London by British services and parachuted into Friuli in the spring of 1945. Previously, she had already crossed the front to deliver secret documents to the Allied Command. Her action was crucial for the success of operations “Bigelow,” and her name remains linked to values such as honor, intelligence, and determination.



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Mentioning just a few decorated military personnel

Alongside Cavoli and Del Din, numerous **officers of the Italian Armed Forces** have been awarded various grades of the OMRI. Among these, we mention:

- **Gen. di Corpo d'Armata Salvatore Luongo**, appointed **Knight Grand Cross** on November 13, 2024. One of the top figures in Italian defense, General Luongo has held strategic and top-level positions with dedication and rigor.
- **Gen. di Brigata Rino Coppola**, **Gen. di Brigata Stefano Cotugno**, and **Gen. di Brigata Marco Nasi**, all decorated with the grade of **Grand Officer** on March 12, 2025. The recognition confirms the quality of Italian military leadership, capable of combining field operations and institutional vision.

These names, while representing only a part of the decorated, are indicative of the commitment, preparation, and loyalty that distinguish the personnel of the Armed Forces, at home and abroad.

An act of justice and gratitude

The OMRI honors 2025 provide a snapshot of Italy that resists, protects, and remembers. A Republic that looks to the future without forgetting the past, and that recognizes the value of both its allies and its sons and daughters who have defended freedom with their lives.

The tribute to Cavoli and Del Din, although coming from distant experiences, converges on a single principle: **serving freedom is the highest of honors**.

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