



## Paola Del Din turns 103: Italy's first female paratrooper in a combat jump

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Born in **Pieve di Cadore** on **August 22, 1923**, Paola Del Din traversed the most difficult years of national history, transforming herself from a young student into a protagonist in the struggle against German occupation.

After September 8, 1943, she joined the **Brigata Osoppo** together with her brother Renato Del Din, a second lieutenant of the Alpini and former student of the Milan Military School, who fell in April 1944 during an action against a barracks in Tolmezzo.

Paola, who during clandestinity used the battle name **“Renata”**, continued her activities by carrying out liaison missions, transporting information and documents through territories controlled by German forces.

### The jump in the Friuli sky

One of the best-known pages of her story unfolded in the final days of the war.

After managing to cross the lines to reach the Allies and deliver important operational documents, Paola Del Din requested to return to Friuli to continue her mission.

She was then trained in parachuting as part of the operations of the **British Special Operations Executive (SOE)**.

On **April 9, 1945** she took off for Friuli and jumped with her parachute behind enemy lines. With that action she became **the first Italian female paratrooper to carry out a combat jump**.

The landing was anything but simple: Del Din suffered a serious ankle injury, but nevertheless managed to carry out her mission and reestablish communications with the units present in the territory.

In the final days of the conflict she continued to carry out missions crossing the lines to transmit information to advancing Allied units.

## **The Gold Medal for Military Valor**

For her activities during the war, Paola Del Din was awarded the **Gold Medal for Military Valor**, one of Italy's highest military decorations.

The citation emphasizes the ability with which she faced the tasks assigned to her, the courage demonstrated in her missions, and her complete dedication to the cause for which she fought.

Her name has remained closely linked over the years to the Armed Forces and to veterans' and corps associations.

For a long time she participated in the major national ceremonies at the **Redipuglia Military Shrine**, where she was repeatedly entrusted with the task of reading the citation for the Gold Medal for Military Valor awarded to the Unknown Soldier. The Office of the President of the Republic documents her presence in this role at numerous official celebrations.

## **The bond with paratroopers and the Teulié**

Particularly strong is Paola Del Din's relationship with the world of Italian parachuting.

Since **2020 she has been Honorary President of the National Association of Italian Paratroopers**, which over the years has dedicated numerous initiatives and celebrations to

her.

Also important is her relationship with the **“Teulié” Military School in Milan**, attended in the past by her brother Renato.

In 1999 Paola Del Din was **patroness of the School's Flag**, officially presented to the Institute during a ceremony at the Sforza Castle in Milan. She was also patroness of the **“Del Din” course** of the same Military School.

## **At 103 still a witness to Italian history**

Paola Del Din is not merely a witness to the past.

Still in **2026**, a few months before her 103rd birthday, she participated in the celebrations for the **80 years of the Republic at the Redipuglia Shrine**, speaking publicly on the values of individual responsibility and commitment to the country.

A presence that makes the milestone achieved today all the more extraordinary.

**103 years for a woman who has lived through war, the Resistance and the birth of the Republic, carrying throughout her life the meaning of service, courage and love for Italy.**

Happy birthday **Paola Del Din**, Gold Medal for Military Valor and Italian Paratrooper.

## **Sources**

- **[National Association of Italian Paratroopers - Paola Del Din, Honorary President](#)**
- **[Italian Army - Military Review, interview with Paola Del Din](#)**
- **[National Association of Former Students of the Teulié Military School - Paola Del Din Patroness of the Flag](#)**