



September 17, 2009, Kabul: the day Folgore lost six of its men. Six amaranth berets that Italy does not forget.

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The **17 September 2009** is one of the most painful dates in the recent history of the Italian Army and the **Folgore Parachute Brigade**.

In Kabul it is just past **12:10**, local time. Two Italian armored vehicles **VTLM Lince** are traveling the road connecting the airport to the city. On board are ten soldiers.

A car loaded with explosives reaches the convoy and inserts itself between the vehicles. The suicide bomber triggers the detonation.

The explosion violently strikes both Lince vehicles.

For six Paratroopers there is no escape.

Another **four Italian soldiers were wounded**. The attack also struck hard the Afghan population, causing casualties and numerous wounded among civilians.

The attack at 12:10 in the heart of Kabul

The soldiers were engaged in the context of the ISAF mission, the International Security Assistance Force under NATO command. In 2009 Italy deployed thousands of soldiers in Afghanistan, with a presence concentrated especially in the western region of the country and in the capital.

That morning the two **VTLM Lince** were engaged in a normal but delicate escort service. The patrol, commanded by Lieutenant **Antonio Fortunato**, had reached Kabul airport to pick up some soldiers who had just returned from Italy after a period of leave and accompany them to the base. Among them was also Master Sergeant **Roberto Valente**, back in Afghanistan just at the end of a fifteen-day leave.

Four of the six fallen belonged to the 186° Reggimento Paracadutisti Folgore: Fortunato, Mureddu, Pistonami and Ricchiuto. Roberto Valente came from the 187° Reggimento Paracadutisti Folgore, while Massimiliano Randino was assigned to the 183° Reggimento Paracadutisti Nembo.

They were men from different units, united by the same maroon beret and the same mission. The transfer from the airport to the base was one of the many transfers that daily punctuated the life of the Italian contingent in Kabul.

At **12:10**, near the **Massoud roundabout**, that routine was shattered by the attack.

The car bomb managed to reach contact with the convoy.

The violence of the detonation was such as to devastate the surrounding area. On the two Lince traveled **ten Italian soldiers**: six died and four were wounded.

The attack was claimed by the **Taliban**.

For Italy it was one of the most tragic moments of the entire mission in Afghanistan.

But behind the numbers were six lives.

Six families.

Six stories that were interrupted that day thousands of kilometers from home.

Six names to remember

- **Antonio Fortunato**
- **Roberto Valente**
- **Matteo Mureddu**
- **Gian Domenico Pistonami**
- **Massimiliano Randino**
- **Davide Ricchiuto**

Repeating their names is not a detail.

It is perhaps the most important part of every anniversary.

Because as years pass, missions end, contingents return home, units change personnel and commanders, and even wars that occupied newspaper headlines for years gradually become history.

The names, instead, must remain.

In December 2009, the six soldiers were posthumously awarded the **Cross of Honor to the victims of acts of terrorism or hostile acts engaged in military and civil operations abroad**.

Seventeen years later

Today, **17 September 2026**, seventeen years have passed.

The Afghanistan of that time no longer exists in the same form. ISAF ended, the subsequent Resolute Support mission concluded, and Western Armed Forces left the country in 2021.

But the passage of time does not change what happened on the road to Kabul.

For the Folgore, 17 September remains a wound and, above all, a day of remembrance.

Not only for those who wear the crimson beret today, but for all those who have worn it and for those who recognize the significance of the service carried out by Italian military personnel in foreign missions.

Remembering does not mean transforming those six men into distant or rhetorical figures.

It means continuing to pronounce their names.

It means remembering that behind every uniform there were families, friends, comrades, plans, and everyday lives.

It means preventing time from transforming sacrifice into a mere line on a calendar.

- **Lieutenant Antonio Fortunato**
- **Sergeant Major Roberto Valente**
- **First Master Corporal Matteo Mureddu**
- **First Master Corporal Gian Domenico Pistonami**
- **First Master Corporal Massimiliano Randino**
- **First Master Corporal Davide Ricchiuto**

Present!