



Franco Angioni, the General Who Led Italy on a Peace Mission

Published on 28/10/2025

Franco Angioni passed away at 92 (Civitavecchia, August 25, 1933 – October 28, 2025), a general and politician, symbol of an Italian military that knew how to combine discipline, humanity, and diplomacy. A much-loved figure, he was the first commander of the Italian contingent in Lebanon at the beginning of the 1980s: from that mission was born the intervention model that would characterize all Italian peace operations worldwide.

From the classrooms of Nunziatella to the command of Folgore

Son of a Sardinian non-commissioned officer, originally from Norbello (Oristano), Angioni grew up with a sense of duty and love for the uniform.

He entered the **Nunziatella Military School** in Naples in 1949 and, after attending the **Military Academy of Modena**, became a second lieutenant in the Army in 1954.

He was among the most prepared officers of his generation: he attended the **Italian War School** and the Canadian one, and in 1962 he even obtained the **Ranger brevet** from the U.S. Army, a very rare recognition for an Italian.

During his career, he led paratrooper units, including the **Paratrooper Saboteur Battalion**, later becoming **Col Moschin**, and was deputy commander of the [Folgore Brigade](#). In military circles, his name was already synonymous with charisma, competence, and leadership ability.

Lebanon 1982: The Human Face of the Uniform

Franco Angioni's name entered history in 1982, when – with the rank of colonel – he was chosen to lead the Italian contingent of the **Multinational Force in Lebanon**, during one of the most delicate phases of the civil war.

The ITALCON mission, which started as a UN operation but was transformed into a national intervention after the USSR's veto, found itself operating in a context marked by pain, distrust, and instability. Yet, under Angioni's leadership, the Italians succeeded in an almost impossible feat: gaining the trust of the local population.

The general encouraged his men to read and understand the history and culture of Lebanon. He did not want soldiers who “occupied” but men who “met.”

He was the one who wanted a **field hospital** in Beirut, open to all the wounded, without distinctions of faction.

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Emblematic is the story of **little Mustafà Haoui**, treated by Italian doctors and becoming the mascot of the contingent. That child, saved from the war, would later find a new life and a job as a laboratory technician in Rome.

When the **Folgore** returned to Livorno in February 1984, the city welcomed the paratroopers as heroes. And with them, Angioni became a familiar face even to the public: a general who smiled at children, who spoke of peace and human dignity, not military victories.

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The Years at the Top and Service to the State

After Lebanon, Angioni's career continued at the highest levels. He was **Head of the 3rd Department of the Army General Staff**, then commander of the **Mobile Force of the Allied Command in Europe (NATO)**.

In 1989 he became **military advisor to Prime Minister Ciriaco De Mita**, then commander of the **III Army Corps of Milan**, president of the **Center for High Defense Studies** and, from 1994 to 1996, **Secretary General of Defense and National Armaments Director**.

An officer of rare competence, he was also esteemed abroad. Oriana Fallaci was inspired by him for the character of the "Condor" in the novel *Insciallah*, dedicated precisely to the Italian mission in Lebanon.

After ending his military career in 1996, Angioni did not stop serving the State.

In 1997 he was appointed **extraordinary commissioner of the Government** for the Italian support mission to Albania after the country's financial collapse.

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In 2001 he was elected **deputy** in the Rome-Monte Sacro constituency, as an independent on the **Democratici di Sinistra** lists. In Parliament, as **secretary of the Defense Commission** and member of the **NATO delegation**, he brought his field experience and his ethical vision of international politics.

A Moral Legacy

Franco Angioni embodied a different way of being a soldier: firm but empathetic, patriotic but never rhetorical. He believed that the task of the armed forces was not only to fight but to "protect life, even that of the enemy."

With his passing, Italy loses not only a general and a man of institutions but one of the protagonists in building a new Italian military identity: that of the **peace soldier**.

The funeral of Aquila 1, Gen. C. A. Franco Angioni, will be held on Friday 31st, at 11:30 am, at the church of S. Mattia, via Renato Fucini 285 - Rome