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Italian Emblems 1: Fighter Units

By [Chris Banyai-Riepl](#)

Italian aviation units carried some of the most interesting unit insignia during the Second World War. Here are some of the more common ones seen on fighters throughout the conflict. Thanks to the help of many readers, I have added information on many of these emblems.



15° Stormo d'Assalto

This unit badge was carried by ground attack fighters such as Fiat CR.42s in late 1942. A duck carrying bombs help identify this as a ground attack unit.



153° Gruppo, Regia Aeronautica I° Gruppo, Aeronautica Nazionale Repubblicana

This unit badge "Asso di Bastoni", or 'Ace of Clubs', continued on after the split of the Italian Air Force during 1943. Originally it could be found on Macchi MC200s and MC202s with the Regia Aeronautica, and later it was present on ANR Bf109s and Fiat G.55s.



3a Squadriglia, II° Gruppo

Obviously relating to the alternate 9° Gruppo unit badge, this features the iron leg on a halberd. This form was seen on the cowlings of Bf109Gs and a few Fiat G.55s of the Aeronautica Nazionale Repubblicana.



70a Squadriglia, 23° Gruppo

This interesting stinging wasp emblem was seen on Macchi MC205s and Bf109s of the Regia Aeronautica in 1943. More information on this one would be appreciated.



9° Gruppo (Alternate Badge)

While the prancing horse was the standard badge worn by 9° Gruppo aircraft, this 'iron leg' badge was also carried on some planes. Its origins are unknown to me, but I believe it was associated with the one-time group leader, Maggiore Botto.

3° Gruppo, Regia Aeronautica 2a Squadriglia, II° Gruppo, ANR



This popular emblem was another one that continued on after the split of Italian forces in 1943. Originally it was seen on Regia Aeronautica Bf109s. In the ANR the badge continued being seen on Bf109s and also found its way onto Fiat G.55s.

150° Gruppo, Regia Aeronautica 1a Squadriglia, II° Gruppo, ANR



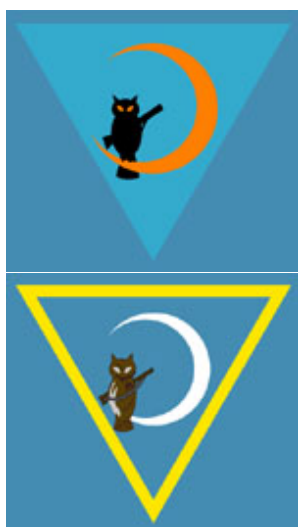
The phrase "Gigi Tre Osei" was the nickname of Luigi Caneppele, an Italian Olympic glider pilot that served as a transport pilot in North Africa. Caneppele died in a crash while saving the lives of a group of specialists being ferried to an advanced field. The three birds are from the glider pilot's license carried by Caneppele. After his death, the phrase & birds were adopted by Cmd. Ltn. Di Robilant for the 150° Gruppo emblem. It was carried on Macchi MC202s and Bf109s in the Regia Aeronautica and Fiat G.55s in the ANR.

17° Gruppo, Regia Aeronautica 3a Squadriglia, I° Gruppo, ANR



The 17° Gruppo unit badge is a popular one, being seen on Fiat CR.42s and Macchi MC202s in the Regia Aeronautica and Fiat G.55s in the ANR. A simple design of white and black, it features an archer drawing down on a target and the phrase "Incocca tende scaglia" (nocks, pulls, shoots) inscribed in white on a black hexagon. This generally was found on the white fuselage bands of the 17° Gruppo fighters, but was also found under the cockpit.

377a Squadriglia Autonoma Intercettori



This unit badge, and the alternate example below, were carried by Fiat CR.42s (and possibly MC200s & MC202s of 377a Squadriglia) that were used in the night fighting role. There were several variations on this emblem, but they all employed an owl sitting on a moon, armed with a rifle.

377a Squadriglia Autonoma Intercettori, Alternate

This unit badge is an alternate depiction to the one above.



18° Gruppo

This unit badge is most often seen on Fiat CR.42s and features the motto "Ocio che te copo" which translates to "Beware! I can kill you." This badge was introduced by Major Vossilla after flying in combat over Spain during the Spanish Civil War.

9° Gruppo



The 9° Gruppo unit badge consists of a prancing horse on a shield, topped with a crown. A similar badge is found on 10° Gruppo planes, although that one has a black horse on a white shield. Another example can be found on a Fiat CR.42 that has the horse in red and the shield replaced by a black outline of Africa. In addition to Fiat CR.42s this badge could be found on MC202s and in the Co-Belligerent Air Force it was present on MC205s and P-39s.



162a Squadriglia, 161° Gruppo

This squadron badge was carried by Fiat CR.42s and features a cat on a white (or ivory) triangle. The phrase "Varda che te sbrego!" is in a Veneto dialect and means "Beware, I'll tear you open!". The 162a Squadriglia was formed in 1941 at Scarpanto to patrol the Aegean Islands.

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