

Beat: Miscellaneous

Italian soldier dies during firefight in western Afghanistan

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USPA News - An Italian soldier was killed Thursday and three other troops were injured during a firefight in the western region of Afghanistan, the Italian defense ministry said on Friday. The death raises the number of Italian service members killed in Afghanistan so far to 47. The incident happened at Bakwa in Farah province, located in Afghanistan's west, where Italian troops were involved in a firefight.

The defense ministry gave no specific details about the attack, and it remained unclear who the soldiers were exchanging fire with or if the firefight was part of an operation against insurgents. The ministry said 24-year-old Corporal Tiziano Chierotti, from the Italian Riviera resort of San Remo, was pronounced dead at 7:45 p.m. local time in Afghanistan after he was rushed to a medical center at Camp Bastion. The soldier had been seriously injured after being shot in the abdomen and his condition later deteriorated. The conditions of the three other soldiers was not believed to be life-threatening. Italian President Giorgio Napolitano, Prime Minister Mario Monti, and Defense Minister Giampaolo Di Paola all expressed their condolences to the family of the deceased soldier. "He was a generous and brave man," Di Paola said. "And this was proven up until his very last moment." The death on Thursday raises the number of coalition troops killed in Afghanistan so far this year to 365, according to unofficial figures. A total of 566 ISAF troops were killed in Afghanistan in 2011, down from 711 in 2010. A majority of the fallen troops were American and were killed in the country's south, which is plagued by IED attacks on troops and civilians. There are currently nearly 105,000 ISAF troops in Afghanistan, including some 68,000 U.S. troops and 4,000 Italian soldiers. U.S. President Barack Obama previously ordered a drawdown of 23,000 U.S. troops by the end of this summer, and all but 1,000 of them have left in recent weeks. Foreign combat troops are due to leave Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

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