



2e Régiment Étranger de Parachutistes (2e REP): the elite of the Foreign Legion

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The 2e Régiment Étranger de Parachutistes (2e REP) is one of the most prestigious and decorated units of the French army. Founded in 1948 under the name 2e Bataillon Étranger de Parachutistes (2e BEP), this formation represents the only parachute unit of the Foreign Legion, a branch of the Armée de Terre that welcomes volunteers from all over the world. Its history is rooted in the challenging period of decolonization, operating heroically first in Indochina and then in Algeria, where it distinguished itself in high-intensity combat.

After Algeria's independence and the reorganization of French forces, the 2e REP was permanently stationed in Calvi, Corsica, in 1967. Since then, the regiment has developed an operational identity based on extreme discipline, esprit de corps, and readiness for deployment in any operational theater. It is an integral part of the 11e Brigade Parachutiste (11e BP), the main airborne light infantry formation of the French army.

Its legionnaires — coming from dozens of countries and united by an oath of loyalty to the Legion and France — undergo rigorous physical and moral training. The uniqueness of the 2e REP lies not only in its military capability but also in its interethnic cohesion and absolute loyalty, making it one of the most feared and respected formations internationally.

Organization and Operational Capabilities: A Multirole Force for Complex Missions

The 2e REP is a true elite unit ready to be deployed anywhere in the world within a few hours. Composed of about 1,400 legionnaires, the regiment is divided into several companies, each specialized in a specific operational environment. This structure allows the regiment to tackle a wide range of scenarios, from counter-terrorism operations in urban environments to raids in desert, mountain, and amphibious settings.

The main companies are:

- **Combat companies (1st-4th):** each with a specific environmental specialization (mountain, desert, nautical, urban combat).
- **Command and logistics company (CCS):** the organizational and logistical heart of the regiment.
- **Support company (CEA):** with snipers, mortars, engineers, and other specialists.
- **Operational reserve company (5th):** composed of legionnaires on extended service or personnel in advanced training.

In addition to basic parachute training, the legionnaires of the 2e REP regularly undergo cycles of tactical and technical updates, with particular attention to irregular warfare, close combat, and survival in hostile environments. They are also trained in the use of light assault vehicles, precision weaponry, and tactical communication systems.

The regiment's motto, "**More Majorum**" ("In the manner of the ancestors"), reflects the warrior attitude and respect for tradition, elements that blend with operational innovation to ensure the 2e REP a tactical advantage in every mission.

Missions and International Reputation: From Africa to Afghanistan, Always on the Front Line

The 2e REP has participated in all major French military operations in recent decades. One of the most famous was **Operation Bonite (Kolwezi)** in 1978, when the regiment was parachuted into the mining town of Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) to free hundreds of European hostages held by pro-communist rebels. The operation was an extraordinary tactical and propaganda success, though it cost the lives of several legionnaires, who are still commemorated with respect and pride today.

In the following years, the 2e REP has operated in Lebanon, Chad, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Mali, the Central African Republic, Afghanistan, and the Sahel, where it is engaged in countering jihadism as part of operations **Serval**, **Barkhane**, and more recently, **Alae**. In each of these missions, the legionnaires of the 2e REP have distinguished themselves for combat capability, rapid intervention, and resilience.

The presence of the 2e REP is often requested in humanitarian intervention or civilian evacuation contexts in unstable areas. The ability to operate autonomously for days, with a high level of mobility and coordination with other special forces, makes the regiment an extremely flexible military tool.

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Within the French army and the NATO context, the 2e REP enjoys an excellent reputation. It is often considered on par with the most renowned special units, such as the British SAS or the Italian 9^o Reggimento Col Moschin. The regiment regularly participates in joint exercises with allied forces, contributing to the building of strategic interoperability essential for multinational operations.

The 2e Régiment Étranger de Parachutistes is not just a military unit: it is a living symbol of excellence, discipline, and internationalism in the service of France. Rooted in the tradition of

the Foreign Legion but projected towards future challenges, it continues to represent a guarantee of effectiveness and honor in the world's most difficult theaters.

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