



80 years of fervent identity: the Associazione Nazionale Paracadutisti d'Italia between memory and continuity (1946-2026)

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The A.N.P.d'I. has just turned **80 years** since its inception. It is not just any anniversary: it is a measure of time necessary to understand if an idea is truly **solid, useful, alive**. In eighty years, the Association has not simply “endured”; it has **held together people, values, memory, and the future of Italian Parachuting**, even when the social, political, and military context changed profoundly.

Be careful because the Military Associations have an extremely delicate task: not to replace the Armed Forces, not to engage in politics, not to indulge in nostalgia. Their value lies in **preserving and transmitting a sense of belonging, animated by a deep and sincere passion**.

The A.N.P.d'I. does this according to a **tradition** and an **identity** that are its own.

The Military Association where values are preserved and transmitted

Tradition and identity with an unmistakable style because it is the **Military Association of Parachutists**: men and women who have internalized an idea of service based on discipline, responsibility, daring, and esprit de corps. When the uniform is put away, those values do not disappear; they risk being dispersed. **The Association is the place where they continue to be practiced, not just remembered.**

Founded on January 11, 1946, as API (Associazione Paracadutisti Italiani), it was officially recognized by decree **of the President of the Republic No. 620 of February 10, 1956** and identified by the 2010 regulations as the **only associative body dedicated to Italian Parachutists**, the A.N.P.d'I. is also among the founders of the European Union of Parachutists.

We are not dealing with a legal detail: the History of the A.N.P.d'I. is the reflection of a **credibility built over time**, in the consistency between what is declared and what is done. The Association welcomes Parachutists who are ex-combatants, in service, retired, or people from the civilian world who simply wish to approach the world of our Specialty, maintaining a clear identity threshold: **real, not symbolic belonging.**

The heart of the A.N.P.d'I. is **generational continuity**. In over 130 sections spread across the national territory, yesterday's Parachutist meets today's. Not to tell stories about themselves, but to transmit experience. Memory here is not sterile celebration: it is a **criterion**.

It serves to understand why certain traditions exist, why certain gestures matter, why the language of the Specialty is not folklore but a synthesis of an operational and human culture born in that **August of 1918**, when a young Lieutenant **Alessandro Tandura** did something that was then unthinkable: **he jumped behind enemy lines with a parachute**, effectively entering the history of military parachuting.

Here tradition is not only inherited: it **is born**.

We are the country that, after the battery with Volta and the radio with Marconi, has also written a foundational page that is the heritage of all Italians.

And it is also for this reason that, over the decades, the Association has maintained a structured and respectful relationship with the units, collaborating in training, disseminating history, and caring for anniversaries. Because parachute training has always been **a means, not an end**: what matters is the transmission of the values that make it possible.

Courage and discipline are not slogans; they are habits cultivated over time, even in civilian life.

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Social presence understood not as visibility, but as responsibility

There is also an often underestimated aspect: the A.N.P.d'I. is a **social presence**. It is so when it supports civil protection initiatives, when it supports members in difficulty, when it invests in scholarships, when it publishes and disseminates historical and technical culture through the magazine *Folgore* and the official website (www.assopar.it).

It is the way in which the ethics of service continue to produce concrete effects, away from the spotlight.

Today the Association is led by **Marco Bertolini**, General of the Army Corps (ret.), Parachutist Incursor.

A leadership that embodies the direct link between operational experience, respect for institutions, and awareness of the cultural role that a Military Association must have in the present and the future.

Joining the A.N.P.d'I. on its eightieth anniversary is not a formal gesture. It is a **choice of responsibility**. It means recognizing that the parachutist identity is not confined to the past, but

The A.N.P.d'I. is not only the glue between the Parachutists of yesterday and those of today; it is also the Association, the only one, that **keeps alive, in civilian life, the profound meaning of being an Italian Parachutist.**

Eighty years after its birth, the value of the A.N.P.d'I. is measured in this way: in **continuity** more than in noise, in **example** more than in rhetoric.