

87th Anniversary of the Establishment of the 132nd Armored Brigade “Ariete”

Published on 02/02/2026

The **132nd Armored Brigade Ariete** celebrates the 87th anniversary of its establishment. The ceremony took place this morning at the “Mittica” barracks, in the presence of military and civilian authorities and some local schoolchildren, as a testament to the deep bond between the Brigade and the local community.

"ARIETE surrounded. ARIETE tanks fight": memory, identity, and values of a legendary unit

During the event, the Brigade Commander, **Domenico Leotta**, paid tribute to all those who sacrificed their lives for the Homeland, recalling how the “Ariete” Brigade represents, yesterday as today, a **forge and guardian of the founding values of the Armed Forces**: discipline, honor, loyalty, and sense of duty.

A moral heritage that runs through the history of the Unit and continues to guide its actions in the present.

These values are rooted in the history of the **132nd Armored Division Ariete**, a major unit of the Royal Army and, in the post-war period, of the Italian Army.

The “Ariete” was the **first armored division established by the Royal Army**, born on **February 1, 1939** from the transformation of the 2nd Armored Brigade, marking Italy's entry into the modern dimension of maneuver and armored warfare.

During World War II, the Division was deployed in **North Africa**, operating alongside units of the **Deutsches Afrikakorps** and the motorized Division “Trieste”. In that harsh theater, the Ariete earned a reputation for **tenacity and combativeness**, being repeatedly mentioned in Italian and German war bulletins.

Its fate was sealed in the **Second Battle of El Alamein**, where the Division was destroyed fighting to the last tank, leaving one of the most dramatic and symbolic pages in Italian military history.

Emblematic remains the last radio communication transmitted before the Division's destruction, which has become over time a phrase etched in the collective memory:

> *«Enemy tanks broke through south of ARIETE Division. Thus ARIETE surrounded.*
> *Located about 5 kilometers northwest of Bir el Abd.*
> ***ARIETE tanks fight!**»*
> *(3:30 PM on November 4, 1942)*

An essential, almost brutal message that encapsulates the very essence of the “Ariete”: **to fight even when all seems lost**, without retreating, without rhetoric.

Reconstituted in 1943 as the **135th Armored Cavalry Division “Ariete”**, with different units and personnel, the Great Unit played a role in the days following the armistice of September 8 in the **defense of Rome**.

In the post-war period, once again reconstituted with the original units and many veterans of the African campaign, the Ariete was reorganized in **1948**, with command first in Rome and then in **Pordenone**, assuming a key role in the garrison of the **eastern border** in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, in a context marked by tensions with Yugoslavia.

It is from this historical continuity, made of **sacrifice, reconstruction, and service**, that the identity of the current Armored Brigade “Ariete” is born: a unit that does not live on nostalgia, but draws strength from its past to face the present and prepare for future challenges.

Innovation and new operational capabilities

Alongside tradition, the “Ariete” Brigade is today a protagonist of a complex process of **technological and doctrinal innovation**, necessary to face increasingly complex operational scenarios.

In 2025, the use of **drones** was implemented through specific training and educational activities. The Brigade can count on about a hundred qualified operators in the operation of **UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles)**, employed to experiment with advanced tactical procedures in support of direct and indirect combat, area surveillance, and personnel protection on the ground.

The Units of the “Ariete” Brigade are constantly engaged **in the service of the Country**, both on national territory, as part of the operation **Strade Sicure**, and in major foreign operational theaters.

Currently, men and women of the Brigade are operating in **Bulgaria, Kosovo, Lebanon, Latvia, Iraq, and Libya**, contributing to collective security, crisis area stabilization, and Italy's international commitments.

A Brigade between history and future

In his speech, General Leotta also emphasized the **close collaboration with state and local institutions**, thanks to which the Brigade has promoted and supported numerous cultural and charitable initiatives.

Particular attention has been paid to the realities of the Pordenone area, such as the association **“Voce Donna”**, committed to protecting women victims of violence, and the **LILT**, active in the fight against cancer.

Eighty-seven years after its establishment, the Armored Brigade “Ariete” continues to represent a point of reference for the Italian Army: **rooted in history**, yet at the same time **projected towards the future**, capable of combining tradition, innovation, and service to the Country, in

the wake of values that remain unchanged over time.