Beretta NARP: The New Italian Assault Rifle Challenging the Giants

Published on 24/04/2026

Gardone Val Trompia – It's not just a rifle, it's an "evolving ecosystem." With these words, Beretta officially presented the NARP (New Assault Rifle Platform), the weapon set to become the new standard issue for the Italian Army, gradually replacing the ARX-160.

Developed in close collaboration with the Italian special forces (including the 9th Regiment "Col Moschin" and the 185th RRAO), the NARP is not the classic product born from a ministerial tender, but the result of a "clean sheet" design process started in 2017.

An Architecture Born from Failures

During the presentation video with James Reeves (TFB TV), the Beretta research and development team admitted with unusual candor that the project went through **three macro-iterations**.

- **The first version** was too bulky, as it tried to maintain compatibility with the 7.62x51 caliber.
- **The second** saw a total redesign of the ergonomics to approach the feel of the AR-15, the gold standard for modern soldiers.
- **The third** is the definitive one: a short-stroke piston platform that combines the reliability of piston systems with the precision and ergonomics of direct gas impingement systems.

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Beyond Limits: 30,000 Rounds Without Stop

The most impressive data from the tests concerns reliability. The NARP surpassed the **NATO AC-225** protocols, facing mud, sand, and temperatures from **-40°C to +50°C**.

> *"We tested the platform beyond 30,000 rounds without any jams or structural failures," stated Riccardo, Project Manager of the program and former member of the Special Forces.*

The rifle guarantees consistent performance even in **"Over the Beach"** tests: it is possible to immerse the weapon in water (sea or lake), extract it, and fire immediately without risk of explosion or malfunctions.

Technical Features and Innovations

The NARP introduces several solutions that distinguish it from its predecessors:

- **Multiple Calibers:** Natively designed for the 5.56x45mm NATO, it is already ready for intermediate calibers like .300 Blackout, 6.5 Grendel, and 6mm ARC.
- **Bufferless Design:** Thanks to a bolt group and recoil spring entirely contained in the upper receiver, the NARP does not require a buffer tube. This allows the use of folding stocks that do not impede access to the main controls.
- **Handguard Quick-Detach:** The handguard can be quickly removed to clean the piston, but the four-point attachment system ensures **return to zero** for laser pointers.
- **"Match" Trigger:** Described by testers as "phenomenal," the two-stage trigger is so smooth that it allows even an inexperienced shooter to engage targets at 500 meters with ease.

Why "It's Not What You Expect"?

For years, Beretta focused on futuristic polymers (as in the ARX-160). With the NARP, the company returns to a more pragmatic and metallic approach, focusing on **consistency in large-scale production**. The challenge was not to create a single perfect rifle, but to ensure that the 10,000th unit off the assembly line had the same tolerances and performance as the handcrafted prototype.

The NARP is not an endpoint, but a platform that will continue to evolve over the next five years based on feedback from the battlefield. Italy seems to have finally found a worthy heir for the challenges of the 21st century.