



“Cefalonia” Trophy: at the “Vannucci” Barracks, the Folgore renews esprit de corps and parachutist tradition

Published on 06/05/2026

At the historic “Vannucci” Barracks in Livorno, the heart of the **187th Parachute Regiment “Folgore”** once again beat to the rhythm of tradition, training, and esprit de corps. The 2026 edition of the **“Cefalonia” Trophy** was not just an internal competition between the regiment's companies, but a true celebration of the identity of the maroon berets, custodians of one of the most prestigious legacies of the Italian airborne troops.

The event, held on May 4th, recalled the **first wartime jump of the Italian paratroopers**, which took place on April 30, 1941, in Cefalonia. An episode that still represents one of the founding moments of the specialty and continues to live in the pride and values passed down to the new generations of the Folgore.

Amid historical references, operational tests, and athletic challenges, the Trophy transformed the Livorno barracks into a concentration of energy, determination, and belonging. The

paratroopers of the 187th paid tribute to their predecessors led by Major Zanninovich, protagonists of a heroic page in Italian military history, reaffirming the deep bond between past and present.

The atmosphere was that of great occasions: fierce competition, adrenaline, and the desire to surpass one's limits. But above all, the “Cefalonia” Trophy showed how the Folgore continues to train soldiers through a blend of **discipline, sacrifice, and team spirit**, elements that have always been the hallmark of Italian paratroopers.

Extreme challenges between physical strength, technique, and cohesion

The central moment of the event was represented by the operational and athletic tests, designed to test physical endurance, mental clarity, and the ability to work under pressure. Not simple exercises, but activities capable of reproducing the difficulties that an airborne unit may face in real operational contexts.

Among the most spectacular tests was the transport of the Zodiac, the semi-rigid inflatable boat used in tactical operations. The paratroopers tackled the course by coordinating movements, efforts, and timing with absolute precision, demonstrating how **unit cohesion** is crucial in the most complex situations.



Teamwork in the transport of the Zodiac. Source: Italian Army.

Particularly intense was also the test dedicated to the transport of the wounded, a concrete symbol of the mutual trust that binds every soldier to their comrades. Effort, speed, and decision-making ability merged in an exercise where the group is worth more than the individual.

Technical activities were not lacking, including the assembly and disassembly of the **Mg 42-59** and precision throwing, tests that require coolness, speed, and concentration even after prolonged physical exertion. To complete the picture, the transport of ammunition boxes reiterated the core concept of the specialty: no goal is achieved alone.

Each exercise highlighted the fundamental values of the Folgore: **spirit of sacrifice, leadership, responsibility, and determination**. For the younger personnel, the Trophy represented a valuable opportunity for professional and personal growth, a moment to directly confront the operational and moral standards of the regiment.

In an international scenario characterized by increasingly dynamic threats, airborne units continue to represent a strategic component with high operational readiness. Events like the “Cefalonia” Trophy demonstrate how modern training can coexist with respect for traditions, strengthening the sense of belonging and operational efficiency.

The Folgore between historical memory and operational future

The closing ceremony, culminating with the awarding of the Trophy to the winning company, represented much more than a simple award ceremony. It was the recognition of commitment, tenacity, and the ability to face every challenge with compactness and fighting spirit, qualities that define the essence of the **187th Parachute Regiment “Folgore”**.

The event confirmed how the tradition of the Folgore does not belong only to the past but continues to live daily in the training and mentality of its men. Historical memory thus becomes a concrete training tool, capable of transmitting to the younger ones the profound sense of service and belonging.



The Army's Corps Sergeant Major awards the winning team. Source: Italian Army.

The new generations of paratroopers grow up knowing the feats of their predecessors not as mere stories but as examples of courage and dedication to be transformed into an operational lifestyle. It is precisely this connection with history that makes the Italian parachutist specialty unique.

Today, the Folgore continues to represent one of the most prestigious and ready components of the Italian Army, deployable in international missions, security operations, and support activities for the population. Rapid intervention, versatility, and preparation remain the distinctive characteristics of the maroon berets.

The “Cefalonia” Trophy thus confirms itself not only as a training competition but as a true identity symbol. An ideal bridge between the heroism of the past and the challenges of the future, where every test faced by the paratroopers becomes a concrete testimony of a motto that continues to live in the spirit of the Folgore: **honor the tradition while always looking forward.**

News link: <https://www.esercito.difesa.it/comunicazione/trofeo-cefalonia-per-i-baschi-amaranto/187034.html>