



Combined Resolve 26-07: Ukrainian Drone Unit Deals Heavy Blow to U.S. Armored Brigade

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Against the backdrop of growing tactical and doctrinal synergies between NATO forces and Kyiv's specialized units, the **Combined Resolve 26-07** exercise, held in spring 2026 at the U.S. Army training center in Hohenfels, Bavaria, provided a practical demonstration of how drone warfare is reshaping high-intensity combat.

Testing U.S. defenses was a detachment from the **412° Unmanned Systems Regiment Ucraino (noto come "Nemesis")**, deployed as the opposing force (*OPFOR*) against the **3ª Brigata Corazzata "Greywolf" della 1ª Divisione di Cavalleria dell'U.S.Army**.

The "baptism of fire" at Hohenfels

Data from the initial phases of the simulation paint a troubling picture for conventional armored formations:

- **Devastating effectiveness:** During the first three days of maneuvers, Ukrainian drone operators inflicted about **70% of total losses** suffered by the U.S. armored brigade.
- **Attack volume:** Over the course of the 10-day rotation, the opposing force initiated tactical engagements using UAS more than **750 times**, both through direct attacks and as forward observers for artillery.
- **Logistical vulnerability:** Drone hunters systematically targeted supply lines, doubling the projected time required for the brigade's logistical resupply.

In an analysis published in the professional journal *Military Review*, Colonel Michael Ziegelhofer (commander of the "Greywolf" brigade) and six of his officers described the impact of this threat, emphasizing that the brigade was forced to radically change its tactical approach in order to survive.

Tactical adaptation and reduction of the electronic signature

By the third day of the exercise, the U.S. brigade had managed to reduce the impact of enemy drones, bringing UAS-attributable losses to **less than 30%**. This result was achieved not only through the use of high-tech assets, but primarily by restoring fundamental field tactical disciplines (*fieldcraft*):

1. **Limits of jamming and fiber-optic drones:** Brigade-level electronic warfare (EW) interference bubbles — capable of shielding sectors up to 2 km — required static positioning, leaving vehicles exposed while on the move. In addition, EW systems proved ineffective against **fiber-optically guided** drones, which are immune to radio-frequency jamming.
2. **Reduced electromagnetic signature:** To avoid detection, crews switched off *Blue Force Tracker* systems, minimized radio transmissions, and even deactivated *Starshield* satellite terminals.
3. **Dispersion and movement:** More than half of the formation relied on camouflage, secondary routes, dispersed columns, and rapid reaction maneuvers to evade drone-directed artillery bombardments.

"About 60% of brigade-level counter-drone defense consists of basic training and tactical discipline in the field," emphasize the authors of the report in *Military Review*.

The offensive response: more than 700 drones deployed

In the subsequent offensive phase, the "Greywolf" brigade responded by integrating the **3° Battaglione del 504° Reggimento Fanteria Paracadutisti** (an experimental unit for the mass employment of drones) and deploying **more than 700 unmanned aircraft** in the field.

Tactical Parameter	Operational Detail
Operational Range	Through the use of relay drones, operational range was extended to 25-40 km , covering the entire training area (14x27 km).
Command Decentralization	A shift from centralized control to directives based on the commander's <i>intent</i> , giving drone units the freedom to hunt independently.
Priority Targeting	Top engagement priority was assigned to enemy drone ground control stations (<i>GCS</i>).
Fire Integration	The fire coordination line was moved forward to strike beyond the cavalry without further authorization.

Thanks to this restructuring, the brigade successfully conducted **two simultaneous penetrations** through dense woodland 6 km apart, neutralizing enemy reserves before they could be committed.

Recommendations for the future of armored forces

As also reported in firsthand accounts by company commanders in *Task & Purpose*, the experience of Ukrainian units provided a genuine "*masterclass in rapidly managing the sensor-to-shooter engagement chain*".

Among the main recommendations put forward by U.S. officersArmy, the following are planned for the evolution of armored brigades:

- **New Multifunction Attack Companies:** Creation of dedicated units comprising three specialized platoons (long-range reconnaissance beyond 40 km, medium/heavy bombers,

and kamikaze drones with radio relays).

- **Common Operating Picture (COP):** Adoption of a single airspace-tracking and management platform for all brigade drones, modeled on the Ukrainian battlefield management system **Delta**.
- **Counter-Drone Protection on the Move:** Need for active defense (*hard-kill*) systems and search radars installed directly on every combat vehicle.