



Defense: General Portolano Awards Badges to New Raiders of the 9th Regiment

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PISA, November 21, 2025 – The ceremony for awarding the badge to the new **paratrooper raiders** of the 9th Assault Regiment “Col Moschin”, one of the most reserved and strategic units in the national military landscape, took place at the Raider Training Base in Pisa. In the presence of the Chief of Defense Staff, General Luciano Portolano, the new operators officially joined the exclusive and silent community of the **Special Forces**.

In his speech, General Portolano highlighted the renewed centrality of raiders in an operational world characterized by technological complexity and rapid decision-making. He reminded that it is always the man – with intelligence, composure, ethics, and resilience – who makes the difference in the most delicate missions, often destined to remain in the shadows.

The 9th Regiment operates under the Command of the Army's **Special Forces** for its framework, while operational deployment depends on the COFS. With the recent reorganization,

the unit is structured into three main components: the Raider Battalion, the Operational Support Battalion, and the RAFOS, responsible for training and selection. Each operational detachment integrates specialized capabilities such as tactical medics, bomb disposal experts, snipers, JTAC, and information operators.

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The Selection: the Toughest Process in the Italian Armed Forces

Access to the 9th Regiment involves a **selection** considered among the toughest in Europe. The initial phase includes endurance tests, apnea, swimming in uniform, timed marches, and rope climbs. These tests are designed to identify only the most determined, physically prepared, and mentally resilient candidates.

The selection internship then tests courage and clarity through daring activities, water exercises, war courses, and marches with heavy loads. Candidates who pass this first hurdle enter the common training phase, which includes the static line parachuting badge and the OBOS course, where skills such as land navigation, communications, combat techniques, and basic tactical medicine are consolidated.

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Advanced Training and the Final Badge

The specialist phase, the core of the entire path, lasts 52 weeks and is considered one of the most comprehensive **advanced training** programs in the European special operations landscape. Here, trainees face extremely challenging modules: survival, resistance to interrogation, explosive techniques, advanced tactical health, special communications, and FS Technical Tactical Procedures.

This is followed by the Advanced Combat Course, dedicated to urban combat, discriminated shooting, and breaches. Specializations include amphibious mobility, free-fall parachuting, summer and winter mountaineering, ski training, and English language courses.

At the end of this process, which overall exceeds 24 months, candidates earn the prestigious **paratrooper raider** badge and are assigned to the operational detachments of the 9th Regiment "Col Moschin", becoming part of the absolute elite of the Italian military instrument.

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