



Extreme Training for the Folgore: the Trench of “Giant Leap 2025”

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In the Tuscan countryside, near the **Altopascio (Lucca) drop zone**, the multi-arm exercise **“Giant Leap 2025”** concluded in recent days, involving the units of the **Paratroopers Brigade Folgore** in a **high-intensity combat** scenario inspired by **contemporary conflicts**. The main participants were the **paratroopers of the 187th Regiment “Folgore”**, supported by the **8th Paratrooper Engineer Regiment** and the **Folgore Logistic Regiment**. The objective: to test the ability to **conduct breaching and bypassing operations of passive and active obstacles** — such as **minefields, trenches, and fortifications** — in an advanced conventional warfare context, but contaminated by **new technological threats**.

The exercise represented the final phase of a **complex training cycle**, designed to restore to the paratrooper units the **tactical awareness** that **modern warfare** requires. The idea was not only to practice procedures and coordination but also to **train the soldier's mind** to operate under pressure, in a context made complex by the constant use of **drones** and

precision weapons.

All with a guiding principle: **simulate maximum realism**. Not by chance, “Giant Leap 2025” reproduced **techniques, tactics, and procedures** typical of ongoing conflicts on the global stage, where the line between **defense and offense**, between **positional warfare and dynamic maneuver**, is increasingly thin.

The Trench in the 21st Century: The Return of a War Symbol

The choice to train for **trench warfare** is neither random nor nostalgic: it represents a **strategic return** to a dimension that, after decades of asymmetric wars, is now **dramatically relevant** again.

Images from the fronts of Eastern Europe and the Middle East have brought the **trench** back to the forefront as a **tactical and psychological element**: a place of resistance, but also of **extreme vulnerability**. For this reason, the **Folgore** — traditionally oriented towards **airborne and maneuver operations** — wanted to confront scenarios of **static warfare**, where survival and effectiveness depend on the ability to **move, observe, and react in minimal time**.

During “Giant Leap 2025”, the **paratroopers of the 187th Regiment** faced a **platoon stronghold protected by trenches and multiple obstacles**, in a sequence that reproduced the realism of a **symmetric clash**.

The offensive maneuver was preceded by **tactical reconnaissance conducted with quadcopter drones**, now **essential for battlefield control** and information gathering. Subsequently, the **breaching phase** followed: opening gaps in the wire fences and minefields using **explosive charges**, all under a **massive volume of simulated fire**.



The objective was twofold: on one hand, to **consolidate cooperation between infantry, engineers, and logistics**; on the other, to **measure the human factor**, that is, the soldiers' ability to **maintain clarity, coordination, and offensive spirit** under extreme conditions. The realism of the context, combined with the **cognitive and physical pressure of the action**, made the activity not only a technical exercise but also a **lesson in military resilience**.

As emphasized by the brigade command, the **cognitive dimension** is now a decisive component of modern training: **recognizing, understanding, and reacting** to an evolving threat is today as important as the ability to handle a weapon or move on the ground.

Training as a Pillar of Operational Readiness

Brigadier General Federico Bernacca, commander of the **Folgore**, personally attended the central phases of the exercise, **congratulating the personnel** for the quality of their commitment and the results achieved.

In his words, the **operational philosophy of the Brigade** is reflected: **"This type of training represents one of the pillars of the paratrooper's preparation**, who must be ready to operate at any time and in any context, even where the principles of conventional warfare merge with the **continuous technological threat**."



Phase of an attack within the trenches

The **Folgore**, heir to a **long tradition of courage and professionalism**, continues to stand out for its ability to **combine fighting spirit and innovation**.

The training conducted in Tuscany confirms how the **Italian Armed Forces** are today engaged in a process of **mental and technical modernization**, aimed at preparing their men and women to operate in scenarios where the **technological superiority of the adversary** can only be balanced by **discipline, adaptability, and interforce coordination**.

“Giant Leap 2025” is therefore not just an exercise, but a **statement of method**: facing the future with the awareness that **war changes, but the value of the soldier remains unchanged**.

And if today the trench returns to being a **symbol of defense and sacrifice**, the **Folgore** once again demonstrates that even in the challenges of the 21st century, **the greatest leap remains that of courage**.

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