



Folgore from the sky: simultaneous airdrop from C-130J and C-27J

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A complex joint training activity took place at the **Altopascio Drop Zone**, in the province of Lucca, featuring over **130 paratroopers from the Folgore Brigade**, simultaneously airdropped from three transport aircraft of the Italian Air Force. The operation, conducted in **joint formation by two C-130J Hercules and a C-27J Spartan** of the **46th Air Brigade**, is a concrete example of interoperability between the operational components of the Army and the Air Force. Taking off from the Pisa air base, the aircraft flew over the drop zone in coordinated formation, allowing the execution of a **synchronized mass airdrop**, one of the most complex in the Italian and international airborne sector.

The activity is part of the joint cooperation program aimed at ensuring a constant level of **operational readiness**, rapid deployment, and **strategic projection capability** of the Italian Armed Forces. Operations of this type represent a crucial testing ground for the refinement of shared procedures, tactical cohesion between units, and the efficiency of the logistical and operational system. The training also allowed for the validation of the flight crews' and airdrop

teams' capabilities, confirming the high level of professionalism and training achieved by both units involved, both nationally and in the context of complex multinational scenarios.

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Simultaneous airdrop: operational excellence and joint integration

The **46th Air Brigade**, based in Pisa, is a strategic unit of the Italian Air Force equipped with **C-130J** and **C-27J** transport aircraft, employable in multiple support missions: **air landing, personnel and material airdrop, transport of vehicles, equipment, and tactical operations**. It is operational every day of the year, with assets and personnel ready to intervene on a global scale, even in emergency contexts or in high-criticality international scenarios. The crews of the 46th are specialized in formation flying and support for complex operations, requiring absolute precision, operational flexibility, and multidomain coordination, essential elements for the success of airborne missions.

The **Folgore Paratroopers Brigade**, historically the spearhead of the Italian Army, is a Large Unit with **specialized airborne capability**. Capable of conducting high-intensity operations, both offensive and defensive, the Folgore operates in perfect inter-arm and joint integration. Its capabilities also extend to multinational operations, in full compliance with the operational doctrines of the **Atlantic Alliance**. The Altopascio activity provided the opportunity to confirm the flexibility, rapid deployment, and response capability of the Folgore, demonstrating the value of a structure ready to intervene in any operational scenario, with timeliness, effectiveness, and decision-making ability.

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Towards Swift Response 2025: NATO interoperability

The exercise is part of a broader preparation context for **Swift Response 2025**, one of NATO's main multinational exercises, scheduled from **May 11 to 31, 2025**. Italy will participate with its own assets and personnel, including the Folgore Brigade, contributing to the conduct of coordinated operations with allied forces. Swift Response 25 includes **five simultaneous**

airdrops, HIRAIN (High Readiness Insertion) training, exercises with field hospitals, and live-fire activities in **Norway, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, and Finland**, in areas selected for their strategic value.

The initiative's goal is to test and demonstrate the **multinational power projection capability on the field**, with particular attention to the Arctic and Baltic dimensions. The integration between air and ground forces, the coordinated use of advanced technologies, and the standardization of operational procedures represent the pillars of NATO's deterrence and defense strategy. The Italian participation, and in particular the synergistic employment of the Folgore Brigade and the 46th Air Brigade, confirms the active and credible role of national Defense within the Alliance and its ability to operate in coalition contexts.

The airdrop conducted at Altopascio thus represents not only a high-profile training moment but also a clear signal of the **readiness, versatility, and determination of the Italian Armed Forces** to operate in joint and multinational contexts, respecting contemporary strategic needs and future operational challenges that will characterize the next decade.