

Folgore Never Stops: From Milan to the Trenches, Paratroopers Prepare for Modern Combat

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Folgore never stops. While some of its paratroopers are deployed in Milan to help ensure territorial security as part of Operation **Strade Sicure**, other elements of the Brigade remain focused on their core mission: **preparing for combat**, updating procedures, doctrine, and operational capabilities in light of lessons learned from contemporary conflicts.

This is the context for the seminar dedicated to **trench warfare**, organized by Brigata Paracadutisti "Folgore" at the Base Logistico Addestrativa in Cecina and the Valle Ugione training area, in the province of Livorno.

The initiative brought together Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and enlisted personnel from the Forze Operative Terrestri to share experiences, compare procedures, and examine combat methods in fortified environments, integrating traditional techniques with new technological capabilities.

The activity is particularly significant in the current international environment, where the return of high-intensity combat has brought tactics once thought to belong to the past back into focus—tactics now being profoundly transformed by the use of drones, sensors, and electronic warfare systems.



The return of trench warfare: an old tactic on an entirely new battlefield

Trench warfare inevitably evokes images of the First World War, when extensive systems of field fortifications formed the backbone of opposing defenses.

The war in Ukraine, however, has demonstrated that trenches, communication trenches, dug-in positions, and fortified strongpoints retain tactical relevance even in the 21st century.

The proliferation of aerial surveillance systems, armed drones, loitering munitions, and precision artillery has made it increasingly difficult to move and concentrate forces on the ground without being detected.

In this operational environment, field defensive works have once again become essential tools for ensuring protection, maintaining a presence on the ground, and sustaining operations.

But modern trench warfare is profoundly different from that of the past.

Fortified positions are no longer merely physical protective works. They are part of a battlefield characterized by near-continuous surveillance, digital communications, distributed sensors, and threats also emerging from the third dimension.

Unit operations must therefore contend with a combination of traditional and technological risks: indirect fire, reconnaissance and attack drones, communications jamming, and difficulties in maintaining tactical situational awareness.

For infantry units, fighting in this environment requires specialized preparation, coordination, and the ability to adapt.

This is not simply a matter of knowing how to seize or defend a fortified position, but of operating in a context where **tactical superiority increasingly depends on the integration of ground combat, information, and control of the electromagnetic spectrum**.

It is precisely on this evolution that Folgore's doctrinal work is focused.

During the seminar, the **Brigade's tactical manual on trench warfare** was presented. The document integrates traditional assault and defense techniques with emerging technological and procedural innovations.

The presentation was accompanied by a practical demonstration of a tactical action in a trench, providing participants with a concrete reference point for the subsequent professional discussion.



CEMA: when combat extends into the electromagnetic spectrum

One of the most interesting aspects of the initiative was the presentation of **CEMA (Cyber and Electromagnetic Activities)** equipment, a field of growing importance in modern military

operations.

The CEMA concept encompasses the integration and coordination of activities in cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum, including electronic warfare capabilities, communications protection, spectrum management, and information support to operations.

In operational terms, this means recognizing that combat no longer unfolds exclusively through the movement of forces and the employment of weapons, but also through the ability to use and protect communications networks, radio links, and electronic systems.

Drones provide a particularly clear example.

Depending on their technological characteristics and employment methods, these systems rely on radio links, navigation systems, and data transmission. The ability to interfere with such links or protect them from enemy jamming can significantly affect the effectiveness of action on the ground.

CEMA capabilities can therefore help detect electronic emissions, support the protection of friendly systems, counter specific threats, and improve operational situational awareness.

NATO has long emphasized that electromagnetic warfare has taken on a cross-cutting role across all operational domains, affecting communications, navigation, radar, and intelligence collection.

In trench warfare, where units may operate in confined spaces and under constant observation, **the integration of CEMA capabilities is becoming increasingly important to the survivability and effectiveness of forces on the ground**.

The availability of advanced technologies alone, however, is not sufficient. Trained personnel, shared procedures, and the ability to coordinate electronic effects with those produced by combat units are also required.

This is one of the reasons why initiatives such as the one organized by Folgore have value beyond a simple display of materiel and equipment.



Drones, combined-arms capabilities, and discussion of new procedures

Following the theoretical and demonstration activities, seminar participants were divided into thematic working groups tasked with examining the integration of drones and other emerging capabilities into combat scenarios.

Particular attention was devoted to the **combined-arms** environment, in which different specialties and operational components must contribute to achieving a common objective.

The use of drones, for example, cannot be considered separately from the actions of ground units, fire support, engineer activities, and communications and electronic warfare capabilities.

The availability of timely information and its proper sharing can help improve the planning, coordination, and safety of operations.

The working groups also examined different maneuver options and the opportunities offered by the integrated employment of different types of forces.

The initiative's value lies above all in the **conversion of operational experience and lessons learned into shared procedures** that can drive the Army's doctrinal and training updates.

Through the development of the tactical manual and the organization of the seminar, Folgore is thus contributing to an adaptation process involving the entire ground component.

From Milan to Combat scenarios: a Brigade engaged on multiple fronts

The seminar in Cecina takes on even greater significance when viewed in the context of the Brigade's current commitments.

Since October 24, **500 Folgore paratroopers have been deployed in Milan** as part of the strengthened security posture for Operation Strade Sicure.

The contingent, under the Brigade's command, supports the Raggruppamento Lombardia already deployed in the area, contributing to surveillance and control activities in the most sensitive areas, in cooperation with the police forces.

This is a significant commitment in terms of personnel, organization, and responsibility.

However, deployment on national territory does not interrupt the Grande Unità's combat preparation process.

While some paratroopers operate on the streets of Milan, others continue preparing for Combat scenarios, where training must address the threats and technological changes that have emerged in the most recent conflicts.

This dual dimension characterizes Folgore: on the one hand, the ability to respond to immediate operational requirements; on the other, the need to maintain and develop the capabilities of a combat Grande Unità.

The seminar dedicated to trench warfare is part of a training program already underway during 2026.

In March, the **187th Parachute Regiment “Folgore”** conducted trench-combat training activities in high-intensity scenarios characterized by the presence of conventional and asymmetric threats, as well as unmanned systems.

A further indication of the Brigade's growing focus on contemporary land combat and the integration of new technologies.

Combat readiness remains the priority

The lesson emerging from the initiative in Cecina is clear: land warfare continues to evolve, but it has not abandoned some of its most traditional forms.

Trenches, fortifications, and close combat now coexist with drones, digital systems, and electromagnetic warfare.

Addressing this transformation requires more than acquiring new equipment. It is necessary to continuously update doctrine, test procedures, and above all train personnel to operate in increasingly complex conditions.

Folgore is demonstrating its determination to maintain a strong focus on this process, contributing to the dissemination of knowledge and experience gained within the land component.

From Milan to the training areas of Tuscany, the Brigade therefore continues to operate on multiple fronts without losing sight of its identity as a major combat unit.

Because, beyond the different tasks assigned, operational readiness remains the fundamental prerequisite for ensuring units' responsiveness.

Folgore never stops. And while ensuring its contribution to national security, it continues training to meet the challenges of the modern battlefield.

News link: https://www.esercito.difesa.it/comunicazione/workshop-sul-trench-warfare-per-le-forze-operative-terrestri/213817.html