



FURNAS 2026: the San Marco Marine Brigade in river operations in Brazil

Published on 13/07/2026

The instability of the international scenario and the need to operate in **increasingly diverse geographical environments**, from urban areas to deserts, to tropical forests and large river systems, require modern armed forces to have an increasingly high level of preparation. In this context, multinational exercises play a fundamental role, essential tools for refining the ability to cooperate among allied countries, sharing operational procedures, and developing a common response to contemporary security challenges.

Operations in riverine environments represent one of the most specialized sectors of amphibious capabilities. Rivers, lakes, and hydrographic networks are indeed strategic communication routes, but also extremely complex areas from a tactical point of view, where mobility, quick decision-making, and coordination among different components become determining elements for the success of the mission.

It is in this framework that **FURNAS 2026** takes place, an important international exercise hosted by Brazil between **June 21 and July 3**, which saw the participation of about **2,000 military personnel** from different countries. The activity developed along an operational axis of over **800 kilometers**, from Rio de Janeiro to the State of Minas Gerais, involving the area of the famous Lake Furnas, one of the largest artificial basins in South America.

The 2026 edition also assumed a particular symbolic value, celebrating the **centenary of the Brazilian Navy's presence** in the Lake Furnas region, confirming the strong link between naval tradition, development of operational capabilities, and international cooperation.

Among the protagonists of the exercise is the **San Marco Marine Brigade**, which participated in the activities together with the armed forces of **Brazil, France, Bolivia, and Paraguay**, contributing to increasing the level of interoperability and integration among units belonging to different military realities.

Jungle Training and Riverine Operations at the center of the training

The Italian participation focused on acquiring and perfecting the skills necessary to operate in **riverine and tropical environments**, where the terrain, climate, and vegetation require employment methods profoundly different from traditional European scenarios.

One of the central aspects of **FURNAS 2026** was indeed the **Jungle Training**, a training program designed to develop the ability to survive, move, and fight in a high-density vegetative forest environment. Operating in the forest means dealing with limited visibility, high humidity, logistical difficulties, and continuous natural obstacles, elements that require highly prepared personnel and consolidated procedures.



FURNAS 2026 Exercise. Source Marina Militare.

In parallel, the **Riverine Operations** took place, activities dedicated to the planning and conduct of operations along waterways and lake basins. The participating units faced missions that covered the entire operational cycle, from the planning phase to the execution of complex tactical actions.

Particular attention was paid to the **exchange of TTPs (Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures)**, a fundamental element in modern multinational operations. Through direct interaction among the different contingents, the military personnel could share operational methodologies, command and control procedures, techniques for employing means, and coordination methods, thus increasing the ability to work effectively within a multinational force.

Interoperability is today one of the main factors of effectiveness in international missions. Having crews trained according to common procedures allows for reducing decision-making times, improving operational safety, and ensuring a quicker response even in the most complex scenarios.

During the exercise, **amphibious vehicles, EDLiT armored boats**, and assets intended for reconnaissance, threat counteraction, and support of units engaged along waterways were also employed, simulating operational situations characterized by high dynamism.

Lake Furnas as a testing ground for international cooperation

The large basin of **Lake Furnas** provided an ideal environment to verify the operational capabilities of the participating units. Its geographical features, characterized by numerous river branches, articulated coasts, and vast navigable surfaces, allowed for simulating extremely realistic scenarios in which to test mobility, command and control, and rapid intervention.

For the **San Marco Marine Brigade**, an elite unit of the Marina Militare specialized in amphibious and sea projection operations, the exercise represented an important opportunity to engage with international partners who regularly operate in tropical and riverine environments.



FURNAS 2026 Exercise. Source Marina Militare.

During the activities, the units refined coordinated movement techniques, procedures for protecting units in navigation, management of tactical communications, and the ability to integrate land and naval platforms into a single operational architecture.

The exercise concluded with a **final amphibious (riverine) tactical act**, during which all the skills developed over the two weeks of training were integrated. The final phase allowed for verifying the effectiveness of shared procedures, the operational readiness of the units, and the level of interoperability achieved among the participating forces.

Experiences like **FURNAS 2026** confirm how international cooperation is today an essential tool for facing global security challenges. The possibility of training in different environmental contexts, sharing experiences and operational methodologies, indeed allows for developing forces that are increasingly flexible, interoperable, and ready to intervene in any operational theater.

For the **Italian Navy** and the **San Marco Marine Brigade**, participation in the Brazilian exercise constitutes an additional step in the path of professional growth and consolidation of the Italian presence in major international training activities, strengthening strategic relationships with partners from different continents and contributing to the development of a common operational culture based on professionalism, integration, and shared response capability.

News link: https://www.marina.difesa.it/media-cultura/Notiziario-online/Pagine/20260713_Esercitazione-FURNAS-2026-%E2%80%93-Jungle-Training,-Riverine-Operation-e-interoperabilit%C3%A0.aspx