



Grand Crossing 2025: Italian Engineers at the Forefront in NATO

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In recent days, a reinforced company-level unit of the **Engineer Brigade**, based on the **2nd Pontieri Engineer Regiment** of Piacenza and the **Railway Engineer Regiment** of Castel Maggiore, participated in **Germany** in the multinational exercise “**Grand Crossing 2025**”. The activity, organized by the **9th German Armored Brigade**, aimed to test and validate, at the NATO level, the capabilities of the **130th Anglo-German Amphibious Battalion** in crossing unfordable watercourses (Wide Wet Gap Crossing).

The Italian unit faced a challenging operational scenario, which included **day and night road movements for about 660 km**, with overnight stays in tactical camps. The entire exercise required a significant logistical effort, made possible by the perfect coordination between operational and support components.

The pontieri company, mainly composed of soldiers from the **2nd Pontieri Engineer Regiment**, operated along the **Rhine** and **Weser** rivers, carrying out a **ferrying service** and

the installation of a **motorized floating bridge PGM** in support of the Anglo-German battalion and in cooperation with a Dutch engineer company. The initiative once again highlighted the level of preparation and high professional standard of the Italian military engineers, even in an international context.

A 90-meter Floating Bridge: Excellence and Interoperability

The highlight of the exercise saw the **Italian pontieri** as protagonists in the installation of a **motorized floating bridge PGM** of about **90 meters** on the **Weser** river, maintained in operation for a full **eight hours** and crossed by **over 300 armored and logistical vehicles** of the German Armored Grand Unit. The PGM bridge, in service with the Italian Armed Forces since 1994, once again demonstrated its operational reliability even in comparison with more recently designed allied systems.

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The activity also served as a **testing ground for the technical validation of the PGM**, highlighting Italy's ability to keep amphibious logistical projection systems active and performing even in advanced operational environments. The **Railway Engineer Regiment**, unique nationally and within NATO for its rail logistics capabilities, ensured the **strategic transport of materials** – about **1 km linear** – using a **disassemblable military loading plan**. This segment of the operation also allowed for the exercise of the specificity of railway projection capabilities, which represent a unique feature in Europe.

The exercise strengthened the **interoperability** among the engineer forces of different countries (Italy, United Kingdom, Germany, and the Netherlands), thanks to the **sharing of doctrine, techniques, and procedures**. It was also an important training opportunity for the **junior leaders**, who were able to engage in the field with foreign colleagues, expanding their skills, approach, and operational vision.

Joint Training, Deterrence Message, and Shared Security

The entire exercise took place in **contexts open to the public**, offering a clear signal of the presence and readiness of NATO Forces, not only to local communities but also as a **message of deterrence and strategic cohesion**. The professionalism of the Italian units did not go

unnoticed: German military authorities publicly appreciated the commitment of the Italian Army Engineer units, highlighting the added value of their participation, especially considering the distance from the homeland and the logistical complexity successfully faced.

In this context, the **Engineer Brigade** continues to play a central role in the **preparation and training of its units**, in line with the typical tasks of the **General Support Engineers**. The ability to quickly deploy, operate in complex environments, and integrate with allied forces makes the Italian Engineers an indispensable component in multilateral operations.

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The **commitment in joint exercises** like “Grand Crossing 2025” is not just a moment of technical training: it is a **strategic tool** to strengthen the national security and defense posture, improve Italy's credibility within NATO, and contribute to a culture of operational cooperation among allies.

The **participation of the Italian pontieri** highlighted the importance of the professionalism rooted in the **historic Engineer units of the Army**, which can operate effectively even outside national territory. The Italian presence in Germany is therefore the concrete symbol of a commitment to collective security, founded on technical skills, strategic vision, and a spirit of collaboration.