



Historic All-Female Jump by the 173rd Airborne Brigade USA in Italy

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In an unprecedented feat celebrating female courage and determination, over 100 paratroopers from six battalions of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team of the United States Army, stationed between Germany and Italy, gathered at Aviano Air Base to participate in the first all-female airborne operation.

On a bright day, caressed by a gentle breeze, the Paratroopers executed the jump from two C-130 cargo planes, flying over the northeastern town of Vajont. During the descent, their parachutes unfolded harmoniously, offering a veiled view of the Dolomite mountains and landing on the green fields of the "Juliet" Drop Zone.

The event is part of Women's History Month celebrated in the United States ([Women's History Month](#)), representing a testament to the commitment of women in positions of great responsibility, highlighting how their contribution is essential for both American national security and NATO countries, through the support and promotion of skills and competencies acquired in a field, the military, that opened to women in the USA only in the last century, and only 30 years

ago guaranteed them equal rights and duties compared to their male colleagues.

The exclusively female involvement, extending to jump directors and security personnel, emphasized a strong sense of community and mutual support among the participants.

The operation highlights the capabilities and courage of the female soldiers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, also representing a significant moment in military history, demonstrating that value and competence know no gender distinction.

Women in the U.S. Army

The United States Army included women among its forces on May 15, 1942, starting with the formation of the Women's Army Corps (WAC), a section dedicated to women, under Public Law 554. The WAC was later elevated to full active service status in 1943 and dissolved in 1978, the year in which women were integrated into units previously reserved for men only.

Since the 1978 integration, women in the American army have served in the same units as men. This integration marked a path of progressive equal treatment, culminating about 30 years ago, when women in the American army were formally placed on par with their male colleagues, with the possibility, starting in 1994, of being in, or in the immediate vicinity of, combat situations.

The 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team

The 173rd Airborne Brigade (Sky Soldiers) or 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team of the United States Army, based at Caserma Ederle in Vicenza, has origins dating back to 1915, initially formed as the 173rd Infantry Brigade. Transformed into an airborne unit, it played a key role during the Vietnam War from 1965 to 1971, becoming the first major U.S. Army ground unit to enter combat and participating in intense battles, including the Battle of Dak To.

The brigade returned to the United States in 1972, where the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 503rd Infantry were integrated into the 3rd Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), while the 3rd Battalion of the 319th Field Artillery was reassigned to the 101st Division Artillery. The remaining units of the 173rd were disbanded.

Reconstituted in 2000, its command is divided between Italy, at Camp Del Din, and Germany, where the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron is located in Grafenwöhr along with a paratrooper battalion.

Subsequently, it took part in the second Gulf War and three tours of duty in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

In response to the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, four companies were deployed to Latvia and 200 men to Ukraine for the annual NATO Rapid Dragon exercise in Lviv.

The 173rd is composed of about 3300 personnel distributed across six battalions, including specialized units such as the 54th Brigade Engineer Battalion (formerly 173rd Special Troop Battalion), two paratrooper infantry battalions of the 503rd regiment, the 1st Battalion (Airborne) of the 143rd Infantry Regiment, an armored cavalry squadron, a paratrooper field artillery battalion, and a logistics support battalion, all qualified as paratrooper units.

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