



History of the Maroon Beret and the Folgore Insignia

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June 10, 1967 marks a watershed date for the [History of Italian Paratroopers](#). On that day, the **Paratrooper Brigade** was authorized to bear the name "**Folgore**". A direct tribute to the **Folgore Paratrooper Division**, which had written one of the most glorious pages of our military history in the sands of [El Alamein](#) in 1942.

But tradition does not stop at names. The identity of a unit also passes through the **visual symbols** that represent it, and during that period two fundamental elements were introduced, which every Italian paratrooper still wears with extreme pride today:

- The **maroon beret**
- The **metal insignia with the parachute and the dagger**

The Maroon Beret: the headgear of those who attack from the sky

The adoption of the Maroon Beret – which took place on **July 1, 1967, in San Rossore**, in the **province of Pisa**, at the end of the airdrop exercise "**Aquila Rossa**" – **was not a random choice**. In line with a **consolidated international tradition**, which wants **elite troops to be immediately recognizable** by the color of their headgear, **Italy also chose a distinctive color for its Paratroopers**



San Rossore, Pisa, July 1, 1967: President of the Republic Giuseppe Saragat presents the Maroon Beret to the Commander of the Folgore, General Alberto Li Gobbi.

The **maroon beret**, already a symbol of British airborne troops and other special units worldwide, became the recognition mark of Italian Paratroopers. Not just a simple uniform element, but a **symbol of valor**, of selection, of hard training, and of belonging to a **brotherhood that extends beyond time and generations**.



The maroon beret represents a distinctive and strongly identifying symbol of the Italian Paratroopers.

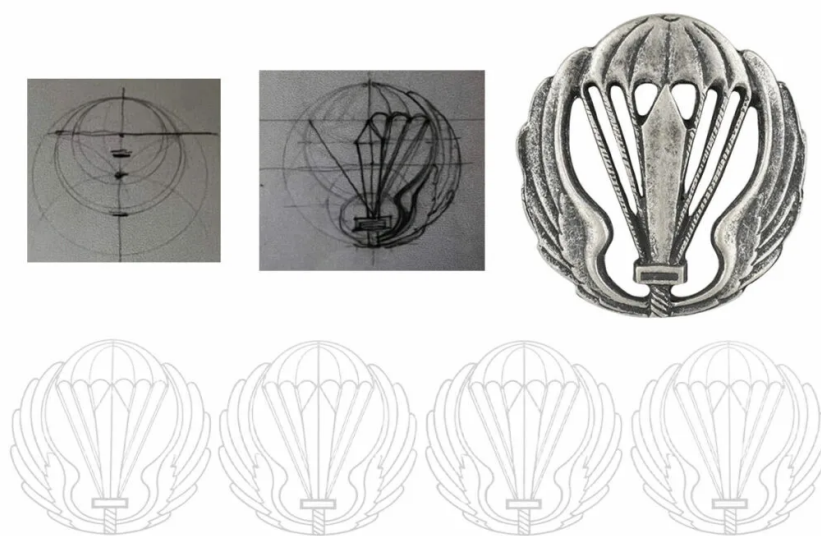
The insignia: designed by those who wore the beret

In that context of change, a young Paratrooper serving at the **Command Company of the “Gamerra” Barracks in Pisa, Giulio Renzo Sarrica**, was tasked with **designing the new insignia intended for the Maroon Beret**.

The choice did not fall on just any designer, but on a **military member of the unit**, a Paratrooper, an “insider”, who knew from within the spirit and meaning of what was to be represented. The result was a **technical, precise, and symbolically powerful work**, based on a geometric structure **built from the circle**, as a testament to the **discipline, harmony, and centrality** of the paratrooper in the structure of the Armed Forces.

The **insignia**, designed for **metal die-casting**, shows an **open parachute** with perfectly symmetrical canopies, at the center of which stands a **vertical dagger** – a symbol of readiness, determination, and offensive strength. A design that, in a few strokes, manages to condense the essence of the Paratrooper: an assault man, but also a precise, determined soldier ready to operate in complex conditions.

The project, created in 1967 by Sarrica, is fully part of the **iconographic history of the Folgore**.



Top left, the original project drawings made by Giulio Sarrica in 1967.

The “unit flea”: a heartfelt and respected variant

In the following years, a **variant** appeared: the insignia with **the addition of the “flea”**, that is, the **specific symbol of the unit** of belonging (for example 183°, 186°, 187° for the

Regiments, and 2º, 5º, etc. for the Battalions) inserted **within the original design**.

This version is **worn with equal pride**, as it allows Paratroopers to **make their history and journey within the Folgore visible**.



The insignia with the unit flea allows Paratroopers to make their history and journey within the Folgore visible.

It's not just metal: it's belonging

The maroon beret and the insignia are not accessories. They are **honor, sacrifice, brotherhood, daring**. They represent hours and days of training, jumps, and challenges overcome.

Wearing them does not just mean belonging to an elite corps: it means carrying **on the head and in the heart the history of those who preceded us**, of those who sacrificed themselves even **to the ultimate sacrifice for Italy and with the Folgore in their heart**, and at the same time assuming the **moral responsibility to honor that past every day**.

The insignia designed by **Paratrooper Giulio Sarrica** in **1967** is an **extraordinary example of military art** and **Folgore tradition**: a work capable of encapsulating, in a **metallic symbol**, the **very soul of the Folgore**.