



June 2nd - La Folgore Launches the Flag over Rome

Published on 02/06/2026

ROME, June 2nd — The sky above the Imperial Forums is painted green, white, and red. At the end of the traditional Republic Day parade, the eyes of President Sergio Mattarella and the thousands of citizens present turn upwards. At an altitude of 1,500 meters, an NH90 helicopter of the Italian Army positions itself vertically over the parade area. From that hatch, the five specialists of the Military Athletes Group, professionals in the discipline of "landing accuracy," detach.

On the occasion of the June 2nd celebrations, the military parade is thus enriched with one of the most spectacular and technically demanding moments: the launch of the Paratroopers Brigade "Folgore". A complex operation that combines military rigor, elite training, and millimetric precision in the heart of the Capital.



June 2nd - La Folgore Launches the Flag over Rome

Tactical Planning and Live Broadcast

Leading the formation in flight is Sergeant Major Fabrizio Mangia, originally from Lecce and a veteran of this event. It is his honor and duty to carry the white smoke canister, the central element of the aerial Tricolor.

«We will jump from 1,500 meters divided into two groups: the first composed of three people and the second of two», explains Sergeant Major Mangia on the eve of the mission. «The first will descend with the tricolor smoke canisters, I will be the white. The other colleagues will have a national flag of 200 square meters and a dedicated camera to film us. For the first time, in fact, we will be able to connect live from the sky directly with Rai, offering viewers a unique perspective of the descent».

The launch schedule is tight and allows no room for error. The parachute opening is planned at about a thousand meters altitude, calculated after only five to seven seconds of free fall. This interval ensures the safe deployment of the canopies and the synchronized ignition of the smoke canisters, initiating the chromatic trail in the Roman skies.

The Voice of the Unit: *«A unique emotion, a great pride, a test of responsibility given to us by the Defense. It is an important task for which my comrades and I express deep gratitude: experiencing such a significant moment for all Italians on the stage of the Capital is an absolute privilege». — Sergeant Major Fabrizio Mangia*



June 2nd - La Folgore Launches the Flag over Rome

References from Above and the Team

Landing in a dense urban context like the historic center of Rome presents significant challenges, mainly related to thermal currents and the narrowness of the *drop zone*.

«Visually, we can clearly see the landing zone because it is nestled between the Colosseum and the Altare della Patria, two reference points simply impossible to confuse», describes Mangia. However, visual orientation is supported by onboard technology: *«The helicopter's GPS system provides us with the exact launch point. The operational objective is stringent: we will all land within a radius of just fifty meters, right in front of the presidential stage»*.

A similar result is possible only thanks to perfect teamwork and an international-level athletic profile. The team, framed in the Paratrooper Training Center of the "Folgore" Brigade in Pisa, includes specialists from various Italian regions:

- **Serg. Maj. Fabrizio Mangia:** Formation Leader and White Smoke (from Lecce - Pisa Training Center).
- **Serg. Maj. Fabio Filippini:** Red Smoke (the only "Roman" of the group by marital connection).
- **Graduate Niccolò Cardelli:** Green Smoke (Tuscan).
- **Serg. Maj. Massimo Agnellini:** In-Flight Video Operator for Rai live broadcast (from Abruzzo).
- **Marshal Alessandro Binello:** Bearer of the 200 sqm National Flag (from Piedmont).

Sporting Achievements and International Commitments

The paratroopers involved are not only elite soldiers but top military athletes who regularly compete in the world circuits of the "Landing Accuracy" discipline. Just last Sunday, the team won first place in the team category at the prestigious Swiss Championships in Locarno in the Open category. In the individual event, the Italian team dominated the rankings, securing first place overall and third place with Graduate Cardelli, surpassing ten fierce Swiss teams and the Carabinieri selection.

The daily bread of these professionals consists of jumping from a thousand meters and, using the maximum sensitivity of the canopy controls, hitting a yellow dot just two centimeters in diameter placed on an electronic disc on the ground. An obsessive training that finds its highest expression both in operational contexts and in institutional events of this magnitude.

The next goal for the Folgore team is already set: the Military World Championships in Slovakia, where the team will aim to confirm the tricolor at the top of world sport parachuting.