

La Folgore at Leapfest 2026: International Military Parachuting Takes Center Stage in Rhode Island

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The **Leapfest 2026** remains one of the most important international events dedicated to military parachuting with a static line, known in the Anglo-Saxon world as *static line*.

Organized by the **Rhode Island Army National Guard**, the competition brought together active-duty parachutists from the United States and numerous allied and partner nations in Exeter, in the American state of Rhode Island.

More than just a competition, Leapfest represents an opportunity for airborne units to engage with each other, where military personnel with different experiences, procedures, and equipment can operate side by side and strengthen international cooperation.



An International Participation

The 2026 edition saw the presence of numerous units from the U.S. Armed Forces, including personnel from the **USAF 336th Training Group SERE**, the **404th Civil Affairs Battalion**, and various detachments of the **1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne)**.

The international participation was also particularly significant.

The United Kingdom deployed personnel from the **Royal Air Force of Brize Norton** and several teams from the **16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team**.

Representatives from Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Malaysia, Brazil, Qatar, Singapore, Bangladesh, Guatemala, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Hungary, Kenya, Spain, Greece, and Poland also took part in the competition.

Such a wide presence confirms the value of Leapfest as a meeting point for the international airborne community.

The Folgore Parachute Brigade at Leapfest

Among the participants was also a team from the **Folgore Parachute Brigade**.

For the Italian parachutists, Leapfest represents an important training and professional opportunity. The direct engagement with military personnel from over twenty nations allows them to observe different techniques, share operational experiences, and strengthen relationships with allied airborne units.

The presence of the Folgore thus takes on a significance that goes beyond the sporting result: participating in a competition of this level means keeping the international dialogue alive and consolidating interoperability among units increasingly called to operate in multinational contexts.

How the Competition Takes Place

The parachutists compete in teams composed of four military personnel.

The jumps are conducted from **CH-47 Chinook** helicopters at an altitude of about **1,500 feet**, equivalent to just over 450 meters, using **MC-6** military parachutes.

After landing and executing the planned parachute fall, the competitor must reach the precision point located on the drop zone as quickly as possible.

The individual result is determined by the time taken between ground contact and reaching the target. The times of the team members then contribute to the final ranking.

The format makes the competition particularly challenging, as it evaluates not only the precision of the landing but also the parachutist's ability to react immediately after touching down.

The Foreign Jump Exchange

One of the most characteristic moments of Leapfest is the **Foreign Jump Exchange**, the day dedicated to the international exchange of parachuting badges.

During this activity, military personnel can perform jumps under the direction of *Jumpmasters* from other nations and obtain, upon completion of the required procedure, the corresponding foreign parachutist wings.

The exchange of badges has a strong symbolic value. The foreign wings represent the bond built between military personnel from different units but united by the same airborne culture.

Leapfest thus continues to unite competition, training, and international cooperation, offering the parachutists of the Folgore and other participating countries a unique opportunity for professional and human engagement.

#Leapfest #Folgore #Parachutists

News link: https://www.leapfest.com/