



La Folgore in the Netherlands at Falcon Leap 24 for the 80th Anniversary of Operation Market Garden

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The [Brigata Paracadutisti Folgore](https://www.brigatafolgore.net) recently participated in the multinational exercise "**FALCON LEAP 24**", held in the Netherlands **on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of Operation "Market Garden"**, the historic operation conducted by the Allies in 1944 during World War II, which represents the largest deployment of airborne troops ever.

Falcon Leap 24: A Prestigious Exercise for the Airborne Community

The "FALCON LEAP" exercise is now an annual event for international airborne forces. The event represents a fundamental opportunity for training and cooperation for paratroopers from different nations, aimed at improving levels of interoperability and integration among units of

the so-called "Airborne Community". During this edition, the Folgore participated in tactical and mass airdrops, using both automatic and manual opening techniques, alongside personnel from various countries.

Exchange of Experiences and Materials

Participation in the "FALCON LEAP" exercise is not only an operational challenge but also an opportunity for growth. During the activities in the Netherlands, over 1,200 paratroopers from 12 different nations conducted airdrops using a variety of materials, aircraft, and procedures belonging to the various participating nations. This exchange of experiences and knowledge allowed all participants to enhance their skills, improving cohesion and the ability to operate in synergy with other paratrooper forces.

Cooperation and Joint Training Among International Airborne Forces

Participation in the "FALCON LEAP 24" exercise testifies to the importance of cooperation and joint training among international airborne forces. The "Folgore" Paratroopers Brigade continues to demonstrate its professionalism and preparation, consolidating its position within the "Airborne Community" and maintaining a high level of readiness for the needs of Italian Defense.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgIFs9Fxf0&t=15s>

A Bit of History: Operation "Market Garden"

Operation Market Garden in 1944 was an ambitious attempt by the Allies to quickly end World War II by crossing the Netherlands and penetrating Germany through the Ruhr industrial region. The plan involved the use of airborne troops to capture five crucial bridges that would allow for the rapid advancement of ground forces.

It represents the largest deployment of airborne troops in World War II.

It was designed to exploit German weakness after the defeat in the Falaise pocket, where the Allies had achieved a decisive victory. However, the execution of the operation was rushed and saw a lack of coordination between airborne and ground forces, as well as underestimating the

presence of well-equipped German troops, particularly in Arnhem, where two SS armored divisions were positioned.

American and British airborne troops, along with a Polish brigade, managed to capture some of the planned bridges, but not the final one at Arnhem, which was the key objective of the operation. The unexpected presence of German armored forces prevented the Allied troops from maintaining control of the bridge, leading to the failure of the operation, forcing the Allies to halt the advance before the Rhine, effectively prolonging the war in Europe. However, the operation succeeded in liberating much of the Netherlands occupied by the Nazis.

Operation Market Garden showed the effects of rivalry among Allied commanders, particularly between British General Montgomery and American Generals Patton and Bradley, each of whom had different opinions on the best strategies to adopt. Furthermore, it demonstrated the German ability to quickly reorganize and effectively resist an offensive despite the moment of weakness.

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Map of Northwestern Europe in 1944 - Operations of the 21st Army Group from September 15 to December 15

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Paratroopers over the skies of the Netherlands during the early phases of the operation.

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American Paratroopers of the 101st in the Netherlands inspect a crashed glider during Op. Market Garden.

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A Bren Gun Carrier armored vehicle with British soldiers and American markings escorts a column of German prisoners.

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The grave of an unknown British paratrooper in Arnhem, photographed after the liberation of the city in 1945.