



Lampo-25: Paratrooper General Cardea Exercises the Italian Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ)

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The exercise *Lampo-25*, taking place from May 12 to 17, 2025, represents a fundamental moment to test the capabilities of the [Italian Joint Force Headquarters \(ITA JFHQ\)](#), commanded by Paratrooper General Sergio Cardea. This event is held in federation with the Joint Stars (JOST) of the Joint Operational Command (COVI) and aims **to verify the command's readiness to execute non-combatant evacuation operations (NEO) from crisis areas**. The mission also includes the management of joint operations, with a particular focus on logistics and command and control of the forces involved.

Who is General Sergio Cardea, former Commander of the 183° Nembo

Brigadier General Sergio Cardea, born in Salerno in 1969, has a long military career marked by numerous successes and significant assignments. After attending the Military Academy of

Modena in 1988, Cardea embarked on an operational path that led him to hold command roles at both national and international levels. Among the most significant missions of his career are his participation in operations in Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and his leadership in *Swift Response 2015*, the largest airborne operation in Europe since World War II.

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In 2014, Cardea commanded the 183° Paratrooper Regiment “Nembo” and was subsequently employed at the Joint Operational Command (COVI) as J3 and Head of the Operations Center. Among his international experiences, notable are assignments at the US CENTCOM Command and participation in decisive missions such as the **evacuation of non-combatants from Afghanistan in 2021**. His career, marked by numerous commendations and decorations, including the United States Legion of Merit, is a clear reflection of his command abilities and competence in complex operations and crisis situations.

Since 2022, General Cardea has held the role of commander of the ITA JFHQ, where he continues to ensure operational effectiveness and command readiness in international missions and emergency operations. His experience, particularly in evacuation operations and humanitarian assistance operations, is crucial for the success of the *Lampo-25* exercise, which simulates an evacuation mission from a crisis zone.

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Objectives of the Lampo-25 Exercise

The *Lampo-25* exercise is an important training activity involving about 80 units of the Italian Armed Forces. The main objective is to test the JFHQ's ability to conduct a Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) using a Joint Evacuation Task Force. The operations take place in Sardinia, where specific training camps and areas have been set up. The mission includes the rapid deployment of a forward command post and the coordination of joint logistical capabilities, which are crucial for the mission's success.

Moreover, the exercise involves transitioning from small-scale operations to conventional operations, with particular attention to managing complex situations such as civilian

evacuations from crisis areas and humanitarian assistance operations. The ITA JFHQ, under General Cardea's leadership, has demonstrated its ability to adapt to operational needs and respond quickly and effectively in high-intensity scenarios.

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Capabilities and Structure of the Italian Joint Force Headquarters

The ITA JFHQ is a high-readiness joint command, part of the Joint Rapid Response Forces (JRRFs), with the objective of planning and conducting Small Scale Operations in global scenarios. This command can rapidly deploy in emergencies, with minimal planning, and assume responsibility for the command and control of the involved forces, which include land, naval, and air components.

The JFHQ, thanks to its flexible structure and ability to operate autonomously, is essential for promptly responding to international crises. Among the main activities of the command are reconnaissance operations, non-combatant evacuations, and humanitarian assistance missions. Additionally, the ITA JFHQ is a reference point for coordinating Italian and allied joint forces, ensuring that operations are conducted effectively and with the highest level of interoperability.