



Mangusta 2025 Begins, the Folgore's Premier Exercise: a Challenge Against One's Own Limits

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After an initial deployment phase that began on November 10, what is called the **“Paratrooper's University”** is about to start: the multinational exercise **“Mangusta 2025”**, a unique event worldwide where **the entire international Airborne Community** can test its real capabilities.

The activity will take place from November 17 to 28, 2025 and will involve **the entire Tuscany**, covering the provinces of **Siena, Grosseto, Pisa, Pistoia, and Livorno**.

The exercise will be orchestrated by the **Commander** of the **Paratroopers Brigade “Folgore”**, **Brigadier General Federico Bernacca (Aquila 1)**, and has matured over the years to reach a level of absolute excellence, distinguished by its international and joint nature.



Paratroopers disembarking from Chinook CH47 helicopter - Copyright Italian Army

What is the Mangusta Exercise

For those who have served in the **Paratroopers Brigade “Folgore”**, Mangusta needs no introduction, it is a name that has been part of the Brigade's daily lexicon for decades.

For everyone else, let's try to explain what it is about.

The ex. **Mangusta** is the most important annual exercise of the Folgore, an activity aimed at training the Brigade in the **planning and conducting of airborne operations**, along with all the tactical activities that derive from it: offensive, defensive, support maneuvers, etc.

It takes place in a **hybrid conflict context**—which can include regular and irregular threats—and in a mostly **hostile** environment, simulating modern and realistic scenarios with the aim of conducting a combat campaign aimed at **taking an objective or holding a conquered one**.

Interdiction and counter-interdiction chase each other with a clear objective: to train the units, verify the procedures and, in a geopolitical context like the current one, raise the level of interoperability with the forces of **partner countries**.

In summary, Mangusta is the **“operational gym”** of the Folgore, where the units test their capabilities in highly realistic contexts, preparing to face any possible operational situation.



Mangusta enhances the entire spectrum of the Folgore's operational skills, from airdrop to airlift - Copyright Italian Army

The Personal Challenge: More Against Oneself Than the Enemy

For two weeks, the paratroopers will have to confront **themselves before the enemy**.

The writer experienced it as a **young Paratrooper**, when in the Folgore it seemed there were only two categories of Paratroopers: those who had already done the Mangusta... and those who had only heard it told.

Precisely for this reason, we consider the **Mangusta** a tough and authentic test of endurance and resilience, where the soldiers will have to face:

- **Environmental adversities:** Cold, rain, fatigue, lack of sleep.
- **Physical effort:** immense loads to carry over steep hills, often at night, in the mud.
- **Orientation:** the need to find the right night paths, without the possibility of bypassing natural obstacles or the underbrush.



Environmental adversities, physical effort, and orientation represent the continuous challenge for the Paratrooper in the ex. Mangusta - Copyright photo Italian Army

Italian and International Paratroopers and Special Forces

The exercise sees the deployment of the best Italian excellences, from the **Paratroopers** of the [Folgore](#) to the **Special Forces** of the [COMFOSE](#), which will conduct high-altitude infiltration techniques **HALO (High Altitude Low Opening)** and **HAHO (High Altitude High Opening)**:

- **Raiders** of the [9th Paratroopers Assault Regiment "Col Moschin"](#)
- **Rangers** of the [4th Alpini Paratroopers Regiment](#)
- **Target Acquirers** of the [185th RAO Regiment "Folgore"](#)

The Italian airborne component will be complete with all the Folgore regiments:

- [183rd Paratroopers Regiment Nembo](#)
- [186th Paratroopers Regiment Folgore](#)
- [187th Paratroopers Regiment Folgore](#)
- [185th Paratroopers Artillery Regiment Folgore](#)
- [8th Paratroopers Engineers Regiment Folgore](#)
- [3rd Savoia Cavalry Regiment](#)

The 2025 event **brings together paratroopers from numerous countries**, ready to test their skills in Italy, including **the 173rd Airborne Brigade from Vicenza**, Japanese soldiers, and paratrooper contingents from **Germany, United Kingdom, Spain, Poland, and France**.

The operation **employs a wide range of transport and combat air assets** – including **C-130J** – and **helicopters**, deployed by the **air component** which includes **aircraft from the 46th Air Brigade of Pisa** and other Italian units, alongside **fixed and rotary-wing platforms** provided by other participating nations, including the **US Air Force** and the **German Luftwaffe**.



The operation deploys a wide range of transport and combat air assets from the involved nations - Copyright Italian Army

Conclusions: a Legacy Beyond Training

Ultimately, **Mangusta** is not just an exercise: it is a formative rite, a test that tempers character even before technical skills.

Every paratrooper who has faced it carries with them the memory of difficult nights, heavy backpacks, biting cold, and endless marches, but also the awareness of having surpassed their own limits together with their comrades.

It is this spirit – made of **sacrifice, discipline, and brotherhood** – that continues to make **the Folgore one of the most respected and prepared units on the international scene**.

The Mangusta represents a legacy in the hearts of Paratroopers and, every year, reminds that **first you win inside, then on the field**.