San Marco Marine Brigade in the Heart of the Great North

Published on 20/03/2026

In the austere silence of the high latitudes, where the sea meets snow-capped mountains and the sky lights up with the colors of the northern lights, the Italian Navy took part in **Cold Response 2026**, one of NATO's most important multinational exercises in the Arctic and sub-Arctic environment.

In this fascinating yet challenging scenario, **Nave San Giusto** and the **Landing Force of the San Marco Marine Brigade**, with the **Venezia Battalion of the 1st San Marco Regiment**, ensured a significant presence of the Italian amphibious component in the **High North** theater.

Navigating through deep fjords and icy waters, the amphibious unit of the Italian Navy operated as a **projection platform from the sea** and **command center** for the landing force activities, contributing to joint operations alongside the navies and armed forces of allied countries.

The exercise saw the participation of **24,000 military personnel**, along with numerous naval, land, and air assets of the Alliance, with the aim of strengthening **operational readiness** and

collective response capability in one of the strategically most relevant scenarios for Euro-Atlantic security.

San Marco Marine Brigade in the Heart of the Great North

Operating and Training in the Arctic Environment

For the crews and embarked Marines, operating in the Great North meant facing harsh environmental conditions: freezing temperatures, short days, and a sea that demands respect and determination. It is precisely in these circumstances that the special harmony between ship and crew, which has always characterized the units of the Italian Navy, is consolidated.

Not infrequently, during the hours of nighttime navigation, the Arctic sky offered the silent spectacle of the **northern lights**: a green arc of light generated by the solar wind, capable of dancing above the sea and reminding those who navigate how remote, extraordinary, and challenging these places are.

During **Cold Response 2026**, **Nave San Giusto** enabled the staffs of the **CATF** (*Commander Amphibious Task Force*) and the **CLF** (*Commander Landing Force*) to plan and conduct training activities oriented towards **amphibious projection from the sea** and **tactical maneuvering in a polar environment**. The operations included phases of amphibious planning, tactical training on land, and activities aimed at verifying the **logistical and operational sustainability** of the forces in extreme climatic conditions.

San Marco Marine Brigade in the Heart of the Great North

Interoperability, Readiness, and NATO Credibility

The Italian participation also represented an important opportunity to consolidate **interoperability** with the forces of allied countries, improving common procedures, operational integration, and command and control capabilities within NATO. In this context, the deployment of the embarked Landing Force further strengthened the full integration between the naval component and the landing force, a distinctive element of the Italian Navy's **expeditionary** capability.

The activities carried out during the exercise also allowed for the validation of **procedures, equipment, and logistical and medical support measures** in the Arctic environment, contributing to increasing the resilience and operational readiness of the personnel employed, as well as gathering valuable lessons for future deployments.

Amid the cold wind blowing from the fjords and the glow of the aurora illuminating the northern sky, **Nave San Giusto** and the **Landing Force of the San Marco Marine Brigade** thus brought the presence and professionalism of the Italian Navy to one of the most fascinating and challenging operational theaters of the Atlantic Alliance, contributing to **collective security**, the **stability of the High North region**, and the strengthening of **Italian credibility** on the international stage.

News link: https://www.marina.difesa.it/media-cultura/Notiziario-online/Pagine/20230319Cold-Response-2026-Nave-San-Giusto-e-la-Landing-Force-della-Brigata-Marina-San-Marco-nel-cuore-del-Grande-Nord.aspx