



Ship Alpino and Nikolajewka: a motto that unites Navy and Army

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On the **83rd anniversary of the battle of Nikolajewka**, the Italian Navy joins in remembering one of the most dramatic and symbolic episodes of the retreat from Russia, paying tribute to the sacrifice of the **Alpine Corps and the values that still today identify the “Black Feathers”**.

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An anniversary that speaks to the present

January 26 recalls the battle fought in 1943 on the Russian steppe, during the retreat of Axis troops from the Don front. It was the clash in which the retreating column attempted to break the Soviet encirclement under extreme conditions: exhausting marches, severe cold, losses, and disarray.

Today, the anniversary is also an event recognized by the State: **Law May 5, 2022, no. 44** established **January 26** as the “**National Day of Memory and Sacrifice of the Alpini**”, to preserve the memory of Nikolajewka and promote the values explicitly recalled by the law (defense of sovereignty and national interest, civic participation, solidarity, and volunteering).

Nikolajewka 1943: the breakthrough in the snow

Historical reconstructions converge on some essential elements: Nikolajewka was a “breakout” battle, fought to open a passage westward and escape the enemy pincer. The Alpine Division **Tridentina** played a decisive role in the attack and breakthrough, in a context where the military dimension was compounded by the very human emergency of the survivors, often at their limits.

Decades later, local commemorations continue to convey memory and meaning: even in January 2026, for example, Genoa commemorated the anniversary with a ceremony in Staglieno, emphasizing the value of remembrance as a “warning of peace and collective responsibility.”

The interforce bond: the Alpino frigate as a symbol

On this day, the Italian Navy highlights the **synergy and common values** that unite Navy and Army. The emblem of this bond is **Ship Alpino**, an anti-submarine frigate: its very name recalls the historic specialty of the Italian Army and makes visible, even at sea, a heritage of shared traditions.

Ship Alpino (F594) is a **FREMM** unit in **ASW (Anti Submarine Warfare)** configuration: launched in 2014 and delivered to the Navy in 2016, it currently operates from Taranto under the command of the Second Naval Division.

“No one passes here”: a motto, a history

Further sealing the bridge between land and sea is the motto: **“No one passes here”**. It is the motto of Ship Alpino and, at the same time, of the Black Feathers and the National Alpini Association: a phrase born in the 19th century and kept alive as a call to steadfastness and sense of duty.

According to tradition also reported by Navy documentation, the motto was coined by **General Luigi Pelloux**, the first general inspector of the Alpini Corps, during a parade in Rome on **October 18, 1888**.

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Memory, respect, responsibility

Remembering **Nikolajewka means coming to terms with the harshness of war and the human cost paid** by thousands of men, often far from home and overwhelmed by events larger than themselves. It is a memory that, without simplifications, can become civic education: **respect for the fallen, solidarity towards those who serve the State, responsibility in passing on to new generations the meaning of what happened**.

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