



COFS and Italian Air Force: a new Joint Training Area is born in Furbara

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The **Joint Command for Special Forces Operations (COFS)** was established on **December 1, 2004** and is directly under the command of the **Chief of Defense Staff**. Its primary task is the **planning, coordination, and execution** of operations by the Special Forces belonging to all four Armed Forces.

The COFS has operational responsibility over Italy's elite units: the **9th Paratrooper Assault Regiment "Col Moschin"** of the Army, the **Operational Raiders Group (GOI)** of the Navy, the **17th Raiders Wing** of the Air Force, the **Special Intervention Group (GIS)** of the Carabinieri (for Defense needs), as well as the **4th Alpine Paratroopers Regiment "Ranger"** and the **185th Paratroopers Reconnaissance and Target Acquisition Regiment "Folgore"**, both of the Army.

The **symbol of COFS** is inspired by the painting *The Oath of the Horatii* by Jacques-Louis David (1784), housed in the Louvre. In the image, a father hands swords to his three sons, ready to

fight for Rome against the Curiatii. This moment ideally represents the transmission of responsibility and honor in defending the Homeland. The symbol is enclosed in **a Roman shield**, and the **three swords** represent the operational dimensions of the Special Forces: **land, sea, and air**.

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To crown the command's identity, the motto **“Etiam si omnes, ego non”** (“Even if all, not I”), taken from the Gospel according to Matthew, expresses the individual determination to follow one's moral and spiritual principles even in solitude, embodying the valor, courage, and ethics of the Special Forces fighter.

The COFS thus represents **the pinnacle of Italian joint operational capability**, and the establishment of the JTA in Furbara fully aligns with its strategic vision: advanced training, integration between operational domains, and preparation for real deployment, to ensure the Italian Defense an elite tool that is always ready, effective, and modern.

Furbara at the center of the new joint training area for Special Forces

In June 2025, a strategically significant agreement was signed between the Air Force General Staff and the Joint Command for Special Forces Operations (COFS), based in Rome Centocelle. The agreement, signed by Air Force General Alberto Biavati – then Commander of the Air Force Command – 1st Air Region – and Admiral Paolo Pezzutti for the COFS, officially designated the military airport of Furbara as the **site of a new Joint Training Area (JTA)**.

The choice fell on Furbara due to its **strategic geographical position** and the **presence of already operational infrastructures** that have long supported specific activities of the Special Forces. The airport hosts both the **17th Raiders Wing** and the **1st Special Operations Air Brigade (BAOS)**, fundamental units of the Air Force's operational sector. This logistical and operational synergy makes Furbara the ideal place to host a training hub dedicated to the needs of such a specialized and high-readiness sector.

An advanced training hub serving special operations

The new **Joint Training Area (JTA)** in Furbara will be a pivotal point for the advanced training of Italian and allied Special Forces. Designed to accommodate activities in a **joint, single service**, and for authorized foreign **Special Operations Forces (SOF)** units, the JTA will allow for complex exercises in a complete and realistic operational context.

The planned activities range from **precision shooting** to **air, land, and sea mobility**, including **hostage rescue operations** and the **setup of field structures** to simulate crisis scenarios with full activation of command and control functions. This training framework aims to constantly improve **tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP)** and enhance the **operational readiness** of the units involved.

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Interoperability will be the guiding principle of the entire project. Through the standardization of processes and doctrinal alignment, the JTA will contribute to creating a common language among units belonging to different forces, facilitating cooperation in the most complex operational theaters. A distinctive element will also be the application of the **SOALI - Special Operations Air to Land Integration** doctrine, which aims to synchronize air and land operations to generate **synergistic effects on common objectives**.

The absolute protagonist of the activities in Furbara will be the **17th Raiders Wing**, an elite unit of the Air Force. The AM raiders are selected, trained, and prepared to be **completely interchangeable with other special forces**, but with an additional task: **integrating air power into special operations**. Their ability to operate effectively in highly complex scenarios makes them an essential resource in both national and multinational contexts.

Alongside them, the **1st Special Operations Air Brigade (BAOS)** ensures the organization, specialization, and operational readiness not only of the raiders but also of the **Special Operations Air Support Forces (SAOS)** and **Personnel Recovery** activities. The BAOS is also responsible for the creation and management of a **Joint Special Operation Air Task**

Group (JSOATG): a modular, highly specialized operational structure ready to intervene quickly.

The BAOS, which hierarchically depends on the **Air Force Command - 1st Air Region** in Milan, directly coordinates both the 17th Wing in Furbara and the **9th Wing in Grazzanise**, ensuring a structured and coherent national level. The **Special Operations Sector (COMOS)** of the Air Force also maintains a **technical link with the COFS**, further confirming operational integration.

With this agreement, Furbara consolidates as a **center of excellence for the training of Italian Special Forces**, capable of combining experience, infrastructure, and strategic vision in an advanced system fully integrated into the Defense's joint network.

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