



The Folgore and the Honor of Arms: A Recognition Between Heroism and Oblivion

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In World War II, **the honor of arms** represented a tribute of extraordinary moral value, granted to those military units that, although defeated, demonstrated exemplary courage and tenacity. This ancient chivalric recognition from the Roman era, which allowed the defeated army to maintain its dignity through symbolic gestures of respect, included among its protagonists not only the 185th Paratroopers Division "Folgore" but also other valiant Italian and foreign units.

Although it is important to recognize that our beloved "Folgore" was not the only Italian unit to receive such honor during the conflict — as demonstrated by the examples of the men commanded by the Duke of Aosta at the siege of Amba Alagi and the Italian forces in the battle of CulQualber — the case of the "Folgore" remains emblematic for its exceptional resistance during the second battle of El Alamein.

An entire Division decimated in order to resist the enemy. Of the 5,000 Paratroopers who arrived in Africa in the summer of 1942, just under 300 remained alive, surrendering last on November 6, and against their will as often declared by Paratrooper Captain Renato Migliavacca who fought that battle.

Despite the significant attestation of valor, the honor of arms granted to Italian military units has often been in the shadow of Italian collective memory, forgotten by a society and politics that have rarely been able to value moments of heroic sacrifice and resistance. This oblivion risks erasing from history not only the courage of those soldiers but also the depth of the recognition it implies: a gesture of esteem between adversaries that transcends mere military victory to celebrate humanity and integrity even in war.

The "Folgore", with its stoic defense, embodied the principles of honor, courage, and sacrifice that should define how we remember and honor those who stood out in moments of intense challenge and resistance. The fact that such memory takes a back seat in public discourse highlights a gap in our ability to adequately honor the valor and dedication of Italian soldiers who distinguished themselves with their heroic actions up to the ultimate sacrifice.

Rediscovering and valuing the honor of arms does not only mean doing justice to the "Folgore" and the other units that received such recognition, but also reflecting on our collective identity and how we choose to remember the past. Offering these episodes of courage and dignity the place they deserve in Italian history is a crucial step towards a deeper understanding of the meaning of sacrifice, heroism, and mutual respect that should illuminate our remembrance of historical events.

It is natural that within the [Folgore Paratroopers Brigade](#) these acts of valiant heroism are frequently commemorated, both in daily life and on official occasions such as the specialty's celebration day.

However, it is necessary for the Italian political class and society to take a further step forward, committing to spreading the memory of such heroic deeds beyond the barracks, so that the sacrifice and integrity demonstrated are not lost in the oblivion of history but remain as a shining example for future generations.