

## **VOLPE BIANCA series**

### **Purpose of Volpe Bianca series**

Volpe Bianca exercise – CaSTA represent an occasion for testing the Mountain Troops' training level, both individually and collectively. It consists in a series of training activities, conducted in full compliance with the requirements for the containment of the COVID 19 pandemic, that is seeing Italian Army Alpine Troops operating jointly with US paratroopers and elements of French Army Mountain Troops, during five training moments spanning the full spectrum of typical Alpine Troops activities.

This activity is placed in the wake of the Alpine Troops Ski Championships (CaSTA), which, since 1931, have always characterized and marked Alpine Troops history, but it also represent a moment of evolution aimed at evaluating not only the aspects related to movement in a mountain environment, but also, in a comprehensive way, all existing technical and tactical capacity system which has always characterized Alpine Troops.

### **Volpe Bianca as a training *continuum***

Volpe Bianca exercise encloses in a training *continuum* multiple activities, which culminates in two-weeks exercise but which, in a broader sense, represents the final moment of training in winter mountain environment, that characterizes and times the daily life of Alpine Troops Units for the winter period.

In this context, has to be recalled the ski training courses and the Mountain Warfare courses, conducted at the Alpine Training Center in Aosta, but also in the traditional training areas used by Taurinense Alpine Brigade and Julia Alpine Brigade.

During these courses, each single soldier improves his capacity of living, moving, operating and fighting in a winter compartmentalized terrain at high altitude. These activities constitute the central element of mountain warfare.

### **The souls of Volpe Bianca exercise**

In this context and on those basis, Volpe Bianca exercise wants to be the moment of verification of such abilities in a winter operative environment with arctic characteristics, that involves for two weeks more than 1.000 Alpines together with foreign army units, supported by various type of helicopters and more than 180 vehicles. A synergic effort, translating into a series of training activities:

- Ice Patrol represent an occasion for testing the training level achieved in the use of the mountain warfare techniques at patrol level involving representatives of all Alpine Troops units;
- Ice Challenge tests individual skills in mountain movement and shooting, through an activity comparable, by way of example, to a military biathlon, involving not only all Alpine Troops units, but also units affiliated to Alpine tradition;
- Steel Blizzard, represent an occasion for testing the training level achieved, at task group level, in the conduct of tactical activities, including movement and combat in a winter mountain environment, in a joint, combined and multidimensional context. Based on modern operational scenarios related to the Atlantic Alliance

missions, this exercise includes two training moments that are aimed at the verification of specific skills and that also include cooperation with high-level specialized Army units in the high altitude mountain environment;

- Winter Rescue, is the emblem of cooperation in mountain rescue, developed in an interagency context, with units of National Alpine and Speleological Rescue Corps and Finance Police. An exercise that will also develop in the third dimension and that will simulate rescue interventions in winter during a calamitous event.

A set of training activities that, using simulation tools and using all the techniques of movement, combat and rescue, represent a fundamental moment of verification of the six macro skills that represent the Alpine Troops capacitive training core.

In this way, alongside mountain warfare, we develop the movement in the mountain, the rescue in a mountain environment, the command and control and, last but not least, the techniques of weather observation and prediction of avalanche phenomena.

### **Why is it important**

The importance of Volpe Bianca exercise rests in two percentages: 6% and 50%.

Arctic and Antarctic regions constitute about the 6% of Earth's surface and they are increasingly at the center of complex geopolitical dynamics.

At the same time, mountains represent about half of Earth's surface and represent an environment that has always been complex and articulated.

These data effectively summarize the importance of Alpine Troops that, in representing a pride for the Italian Army and the Italian Armed Forces, can be seen as a strategic resource to be used in the context of current and crucial geopolitical dynamics. These elements find in multinationality a natural and spontaneous field of development as well as an indispensable condition in modern operative scenarios.

For these reasons, Alpine Troops are a highly specialized asset within the Italian Army, readily employable, flexible and suitable to operate in complex operative scenarios with a multidimensional and multinational context.

A final reference is to be addressed to the concepts, already introduced, of arcticity and multinationality that, together with that of verticality, represent the emblematic elements of the modern Alpine essence.