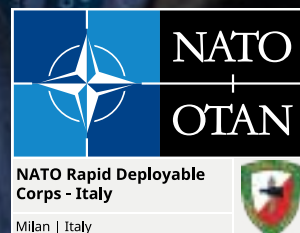


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OUR COMMUNITY OUR STRENGTH

Issue 35 - Summer 2023



The Magazine of the NATO
Rapid Deployable Corps - Italy



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NRDC-ITA



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COMMUNITY

CSEL

BEAUTIES AROUND US



FOREWORD by Commander NRDC-ITA



I feel so fortunate for being part of the Team: as you join NRDC-ITA, you have an expectation to train and improve as a soldier; however, these pages remind me of the great community and the wealth of opportunities we get in a multinational Headquarters where twenty Nations are represented.

It is beyond training: it is growing as a capability for the Alliance, and it is beyond the service members, it is about creating the team, learning to live together and developing an understanding of the rich heritage that each of us bring into NATO, making it stronger, more resilient and rewarding to serve for. We become better soldiers for the Alliance if there is a shared sense of belonging, rooted in a community of values that extends to our families that so much do to support us. Not only they support us directly, their activities do a lot to reach into the local community to the benefit of all of us, and of the Alliance armed forces. Well done to our spouses and families... Julia and I are extremely grateful to them.

I anticipate the next few months will be a busy, yet exciting period. As I write these lines, our Nations are preparing for an important NATO Summit, the decisions of which will determine our future role and mission. I count on you to respond with the usual enthusiasm, teamwork and pragmatism; I count on your families to support your generous contribution. I look forward to another great season of training and enjoyment of our community life.

Basic Life Support and Defibrillation training for all the NRDC-ITA community

Sergeant Major
ITA Army
Mario ANGHELEDDU



More than 600. This is the number of NRDC-ITA personnel and family members belonging to NISICS and other organizations connected to this HQ who have qualified in BLS-D skills since NRDC-ITA was recognized as a training site in 2016 and in accordance with the American Heart Association (AHA) guidelines and procedures. JMED Branch firmly believes in this project, seeing it as critical in spreading knowledge and the ability to help others who are experiencing a sudden heart attack and subsequent cardiac arrest.

As such, JMED staff plan and organize a BLS course every month, for a session of 12 participants where the instructors train and evaluate the classes in CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation) techniques and the use of the AED (Automated External Defibrillator) for adults, children and infants. The CPR procedure varies depending on the age. For example, the depth of chest compressions is different for infants, children and adults. High-quality CPR is critical for victim survival, which is why the courses intentionally embrace all different levels of maturity so that every student will be better equipped to act as a first responder in a medical emergency, whether this is inside or outside the workplace, inside or outside a theater during a mission abroad.

But what is BLS-D?

Basic Life Support (and Defibrillation), or BLS-D, commonly refers to the kind of care that first-responders, healthcare providers and public safety professionals provide to any person who is suffering from a cardiac arrest, respiratory distress or obstructed airways. It requires knowledge and skills in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), using automated external defibrillators (AED) and relieving airway obstructions in patients of every age.

What is CPR?

CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) is a lifesaving procedure. It aims to keep blood and oxygen flowing through the body when a person's vital functions stop. Survival after cardiopulmonary arrest is generally low and depends



on rapid intervention, the quality of the cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and prompt defibrillation. Early administration of CPR before the arrival of the emergency medical team provides better chances of survival and increases the rate of hospital discharge.

What is an AED?

The AED (Automated External Defibrillator) is easy to use, even for non-professionals. It works by delivering an electric shock to the victim's heart to revive its function. The device is programmed in a way that it can diagnose a victim whose heart condition is in a shockable rhythm. Without the AED, it would be almost impossible to revive cardiac arrest victims. Unfortunately, even though the AED is available in most public facilities, not many people are skilled or have the confidence to use it. Therefore, specific preventive measures apply despite the device being easy to use. As such, JMED Branch firmly believes it is paramount to train as many personnel as possible in BLS skills. In this Barracks we have several AEDs located in key locations that are easy to reach in case of an emergency. Two of them are located in this HQ and another three are at the gym entrance, close to the summer garden and in the dining facility. Plus, the medical center also has such equipment, of course.



How can you recognize the symptoms of cardiac arrest?

There are specific symptoms common to victims of cardiac arrest. For example, the victim might collapse and fall unconscious. However, they might experience light-headedness, chest pain or discomfort, shortness of breath, and difficulty breathing.

Another crucial skill we teach students is how to relieve airway obstructions in patients of all ages. Unfortunately, this is another common medical emergency that can occur at any moment in our lives and can involve anybody around us.

What's the difference between heart attack and cardiac arrest?

A heart attack is when one of the coronary arteries becomes obstructed, resulting in the heart muscle being



deprived of its vital blood supply and, if left untreated, it will begin to die since it is not receiving enough oxygen. A cardiac arrest is when a person's heart stops pumping blood around their body and they stop breathing normally.

In conclusion, all the aforementioned skills are taught each year to more than 100 students who do the BLS-D course for the first time and others who have already attended this type of course before. This is crucial because the guidelines change and are reviewed every 5 years. This allows us to keep staff up to date with the latest AHA guidelines and procedures. The ability to perform BLS-D maneuvers is also critical in our work and forms an important part of the annual military training and combat readiness required of everyone at HQ, not to mention the first aid skills required for pre-deployment preparation.

Having said this, we – the BLS instructors at NRDC-ITA – will continue to train as many staff and family members from NISICS as possible every year, embracing the American Heart Association's Mission of "Building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke." Why? Because life is why.

Fun fact about BLS-D

Did you know that to keep the correct rhythm for compressions it can help to use these popular songs? 'Staying alive' by the Bee Gees, 'Row, row, row, your boat' and last but not least 'Baby shark' (I bet you are singing the last one in your mind right now...).



Eagle Snow Master: improving mountain skills with alpine troops

In the stunning setting of the north-western Alps, at the foot of Monte Bianco (or Mont Blanc), the highest peak in Europe, lies the village of La Thuile (Aosta) home of the Monte Bianco Barracks, the military facility that hosted the Eagle Snowmaster 2023 winter exercise from 15 to 22 March. In this amazing location 150 men and women of all ranks from all the Allied Countries of the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy (NRDC-ITA) took part in the exercise. Personnel from the Ugo Mara Barracks were deployed to this Alpine area because of its characteristics and high training potential, providing an opportunity for them to challenge themselves in one of the key training events of the year, during which they were faced with moving and surviving in extreme weather conditions.

Lieutenant Colonel
ITA Army
Pasquale MASONE



During the exercise they were deployed in snow-covered terrain and faced an intense training program aimed at honing their personal skills in moving and surviving in extreme cold. The planned program was already very intense, but it became even more demanding because of the terrible weather and adverse snow conditions, of course, this made the activities even more instructive.

The combination of civilian and military ski instructors (provided by Centro Addestramento Alpino) offered a unique opportunity for all the personnel to improve their ski skills regardless of their entry level. Training was also provided on survival skills, avalanche awareness and search and rescue, with both theoretical lessons and practical activities, such as searching for missing personnel. The exercise was well resourced and all participants undertook the activities in teams under the leadership of military instructors, who also provided fantastic support and helped achieve significant results, including



the crowning achievement of building a tactical snow shelter.

Moreover, the numerous training activities improved the physical condition of those taking part and taught them how to cope with the challenging mountain terrain whilst staying positive throughout the exercise. The ethos of

a valuable bonding moment for NRDC-ITA personnel, helping to build constructive relationships, increase teamwork, improve fitness and boost self-confidence. The remarkable outcome of Eagle Snowmaster 23 could not have been achieved without the logistical and technical support of Comando Truppe Alpine, Centro Addestramento

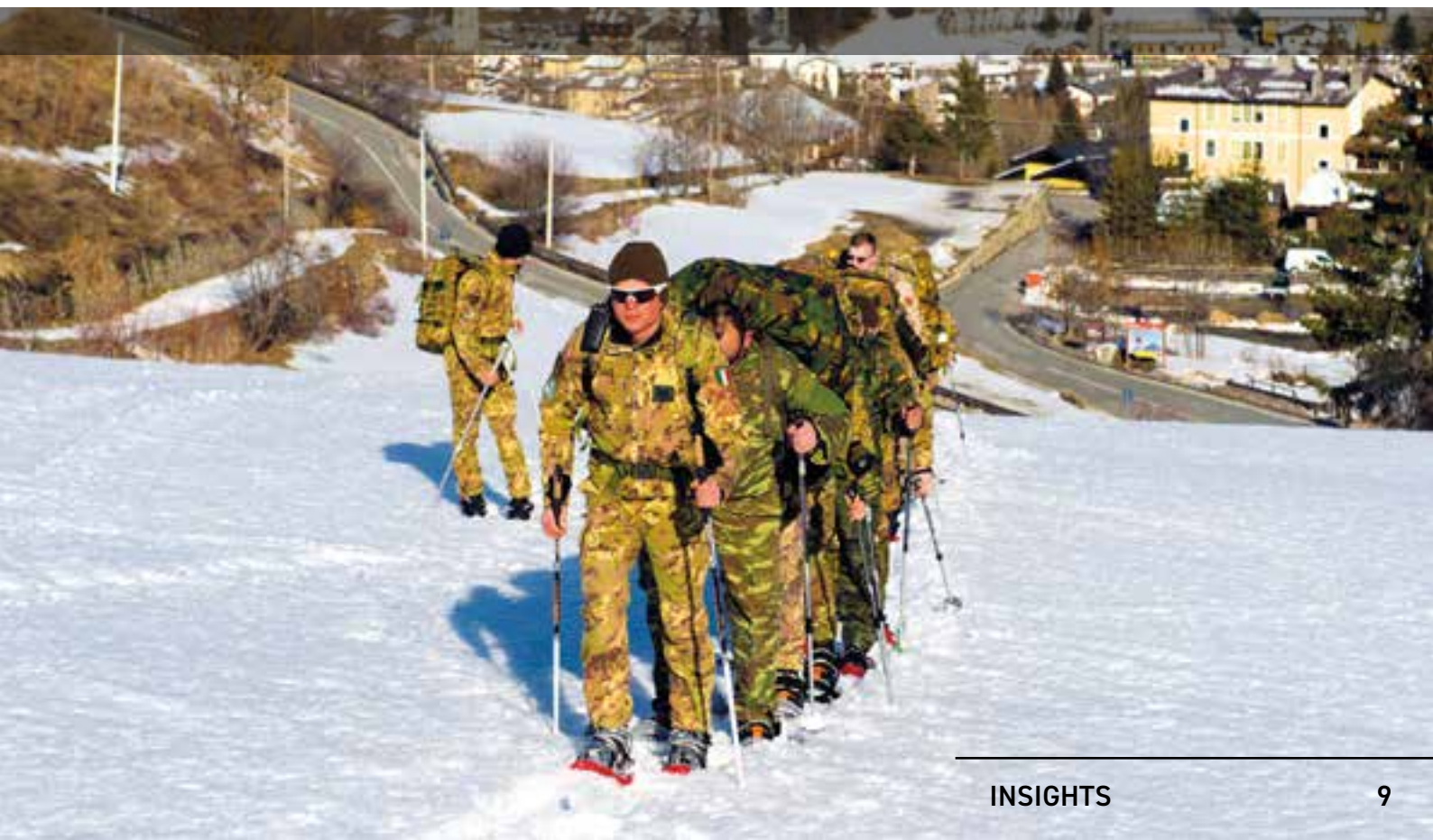


teamwork prevailed at all times and added significantly to the capability of the group. Everyone involved embraced the Alpine training in this harsh environment and this provided the basis for them not only to improve physically and professionally but also to forge closer bonds among the NRDC-ITA multinational community and consequently improve the esprit de corps.

It is not surprising that the training had such a strong bonding effect on the multinational personnel, as the activities were not merely a way to improve physically or hone techniques, but also an almost spiritual opportunity for those involved to enhance their self-awareness and learn to cope with difficulties in a beautiful, if unforgiving, environment. The Eagle Snowmaster 2023 exercise was

Alpino and the Monte Bianco Barracks. The contribution of the military instructors was also instrumental to the success of the endeavour.

Every year Eagle Snowmaster offers moments to share, and moments that spread harmony among the training audience and the surrounding nature, such as those special social moments where it was possible to enjoy fabulous Alpine choirs with their warming songs and voices. These choirs are part of a very deeply rooted Italian mountain tradition and represent a link between the Alpine Troops and local society, with their songs telling the history of our homeland and its soldiers from the time of the great wars to the present day.



Steadfast Cobalt 2023

NATO's largest communications and information system exercise

The Steadfast Cobalt exercise series is NATO's main command and control exercise and it is designed to primarily test and evaluate the communication systems that support the NATO Response Force (NRF). The 2023 edition was held from March to May 2023 and was the largest Communications and Information System (CIS) exercise. It was conducted by the Allied Joint Force Command (JFC) in Brunssum (NLD) and the NATO CIS Group (NCISG) in Mons (BEL) to kick start NRF 24 preparations.

This year's Steadfast Cobalt exercise was once again in the virtual realm, but this in no way diminishes its scope. The Training Audience tackled configuration and coordination problems from a peacetime location, ultimately learning how to interface, interact and problem solve.



Lieutenant Colonel
ITA Army
Paolo CARTILLONE



The aim of this CIS activity is to improve readiness and increase speed by ensuring that all contributing units, partners and nations are ready and prepared to deploy CISs in support of NRF Missions on land, in the air and at sea, as well as to support space and cyber assets. The goal of the exercise is to combine and integrate CIS equipment, and find solutions to enable NRF units and Alliance members to integrate and synchronize capabilities across a multi-domain environment to achieve a strategic advantage over potential op-



ponents. The primary training audience of Steadfast Cobalt 2023 includes the NRF2024 units from France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, and the United Kingdom. In addition, numerous Allied countries – Belgium, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, and the United States – attended the exercise. Partners – Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Jordan, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, and Ukraine – were invited and served as observers. Other units, not in the NRF rotation, attended the exercise as “sparring partners”. The numbers speak for themselves. According to an Alliance press release, 15 NATO Command Structures and 14 NATO Force Structure units and headquarters attended. Up to 1,000 personnel from NATO’s 2024 NRF contributing nations took part, as well as military and civilian personnel.

What did Steadfast Cobalt test? Steadfast Cobalt 2023 validated CIS connectivity and interoperability among participating NRF units through data exchanges and sustained communication among joint and component headquarters and supporting units of the NRF worldwide. In this edition more than 7,000 separate CIS tests were performed during the exercise. Moreover, about 300 staff and specialists from the NATO CIS Group and Information Technologies Subject Matter Experts assisted with all the planning, preparation and execution phases of the months-long exercise.

During the exercise, selected specialists tested deployable and static communications systems and networks. This included everything from tactical Very/Ultra High Fre-

quency (V/UHF: 30 megahertz/MHz to three gigahertz/GHz) networks used by individual armies up to strategic systems like NATO’s Sixth-Generation SATCOM Services. Thrown into this mix were multinational NATO networks like the Link-11¹ and Link-16² tactical datalinks.

Alliance high performance warfighting waveforms like Saturn³ and Havequick-I/II⁴ were also put through their paces.

Unsurprisingly, NATO is completely reliant on communications to ensure the NRF can perform its missions. Alli-



1 2MHz to 29.9MHz, 225MHz to 399.975MHz.

2 960MHz to 1.215GHz.

3 Second Generation Anti-Jam Tactical UHF Radio for NATO: 30MHz-400MHz.

4 It is an ECM-resistant frequency-hopping system used to protect military aeronautical mobile (OR) radio traffic: 225MHz-380MHz.



CIS equipment, radio and satellite material) contributions from NATO and non-NATO nations and entities.

The Mission Networks framework provides a governed single instance of capability, including the Communication and Information Systems, management, processes and procedures created for the purpose of an operation, exercise, training event, or interoperability verification activity. In the framework of innovation and experimentation the 1st Signal Regiment (Signal unit permanently associated to NRDC-ITA) performed a series of CIS tests to improve the connectivity between the Permanent HQ and the deployed command post. This test bed included Italian Satellite Communication resources (SICRAL) and it was an opportunity to reinforce the relationship between the Signal unit in Milan and teleports in "Fucino" (AQ) and in "Vigna di Valle" (RM) improving collaboration with Telespazio.

ance members, and the Alliance itself, use a puzzling array of tactical, operational and strategic communications networks. As NATO is a supranational organization it is imperative these can all easily share traffic (voice, data or imagery) in classified or unclassified environments. It is important to ensure that networks all mesh nicely in peacetime, rather than finding out they do not in a crisis. The data information exchange process is facilitated by using NATO's Mission Network Service Management Authority (MNSMA) Federated Mission Networking (FMN) framework. FMN connects national communications systems to NATO networks. The framework itself facilitates the performance of the same role both during war and/or multinational crises.

The Mission Networking model is a capability aimed at supporting command and control and decision-making in multi-domain operations through improved information sharing. It provides the agility, flexibility, sustainability, redundancy and scalability needed to manage the emerging requirements of any mission environment in military (NATO and non-NATO) operations. Federated Mission Networking is based on principles that include cost effectiveness and maximum reuse of existing standards and the capabilities owned by each partner.

Mission Networks are established using a flexible and tailored set of non-material (i.e. policy, processes, procedures and standards) and material (i.e. static and deployed networks, services, supporting infrastructures,



The established CIS architecture provided an opportunity to connect a very light Command Post, requiring high mobility – "New Generation Smart Command Element" –, testing and measuring the deployable speed-up for CIS services, ensuring business continuity and using only military and protected links.

Through Steadfast Cobalt 2023, NATO Allies remain united with a strong commitment and ability to defend the Alliance. This CIS exercise enables the interoperability, skills and capabilities required to combat increasingly complex security threats. According to the Director of STC023, the exercise affirms the Alliance's capability and capacity to evolve rapidly, turning challenges into opportunities.



A CIMIC Workshop on resilience and resistance in military operations

Resilience and resistance cannot be improvised. The military must understand the modern battlefield where military operations will be conducted within a complex operating environment with large numbers of civilians affected.

Ukraine shows that protecting civilians and allowing civilians to protect themselves can make a difference in defeating the enemy. We need to continue to improve our ability to integrate them into our operations, understanding the links that governs these complex issues.

Lieutenant Colonel
ITA Army
Alberto STRINA



In the framework of the development and implementation of the NATO Policy for the Protection of Civilians (POC) across staff in all functional areas and phases of an operation, NRDC-ITA decided to take a clear step forward by hosting a workshop on 11 and 12 May 2023 that focused on 'Resilience and Resistance in Military Operations'. Following NATO's commitment in this sphere, NRDC-ITA chose to deep dive into the relations between military operations and post-conflict rehabilitation, providing continuity to the overarching concept of human security and ultimately aiming at increasing knowledge and understanding of the concepts of 'resilience' and resistance' and their potential impact on military operations.





As the keynote speaker, Lieutenant General Lorenzo D'Addario, NRDC-ITA Commander, framed the discussion based on the good results achieved in the Steadfast Jackal 22 Exercise where human security/POC approaches were successfully addressed. Now is the time to strengthen this commitment and to deal with resilience and resistance as the basis for ensuring the protection of human beings and their values in terms of national identity. Therefore, in line with the upcoming roles for NRDC-ITA, our staff should implement those approaches seeking to generate synergy of effects in future operations.

The Commander introduced the two topics of the workshop that might characterize the modern battlefield on which NRDC-ITA could be operating in the near future: resilience as a pre-designed ability to maintain the basic needs and services of society and resistance as a will of freedom.



These two topics need to be analysed in a PAN HQ effort, because they are inherent in human security and the overall concept of national integrity in the UN Charter.

A series of notable speakers joined NRDC-ITA for the workshop, including representatives from J9 JFC Brunsumm, Mr. Davey De Leenheer, Mr. Marco Grandi from the NGO "PAX for Peace", Mr. Felip Daza, Professor from the University of Catalonia, Mr. Otto Fiala, a strategic thinker from ACT, and Colonel Glyn Llewellyn, Deputy Commander Army Special Operations Brigade.

The speakers explored contemporary perspectives in order to understand the challenges of resilience and resistance in military operations conducted in a complex modern operating environment with large numbers of civilians, providing ideas about how the Alliance should develop new training programs that deal with the challenges that resilience and resistance post.

NATO has done a good job in framing resilience through Civil Preparedness (RtCP) as a national responsibility combining civil preparedness and military capabilities, but as was explained, NATO has yet to properly address the extent to which the civilian environment impacts our operations and how this may have implications that could hamper NATO's political cohesion.

Civilians are a key part of the current Ukraine conflict. Regardless of whether civil resistance is violent or non-violent, the role of the civil component in enabling military operations is critical to mission success. NATO's primary role in supporting national resistance will be linked to our ability to protect them and to protect their C2 and logistical structures.

CONCLUSIONS

To better address the concepts of resilience and resistance and their potential impact on military operations, the civil environment must be recognised as a decisive factor to be analysed when planning an operation. Doing this will require a mind-set shift to a cross-functional effort for all military planners supported by dedicated subject matter experts to enable PoC to be integrated into military planning.

Resistance and resilience in an area of operations cannot be improvised and therefore NATO must continue to develop resilience and resistance training and education programs through multiple activities and in different formats in order to frame the overall process. In this regard, it is crucial to strengthen the analysis of the civil environment to ensure the integration of human security and the dynamic impact of resistance and resilience in an area of operations. NATO's military role in liberated or occupied territories, who and against whom to conduct STRATCOM campaigns, the legal framework for combatants, the role of the law enforcement forces or how to deal with opposition, among other issues, should be fully defined in advance. Failure to do so could leave NATO vulnerable to a lack cohesion and support from host nations.



SFA Seminar 2023

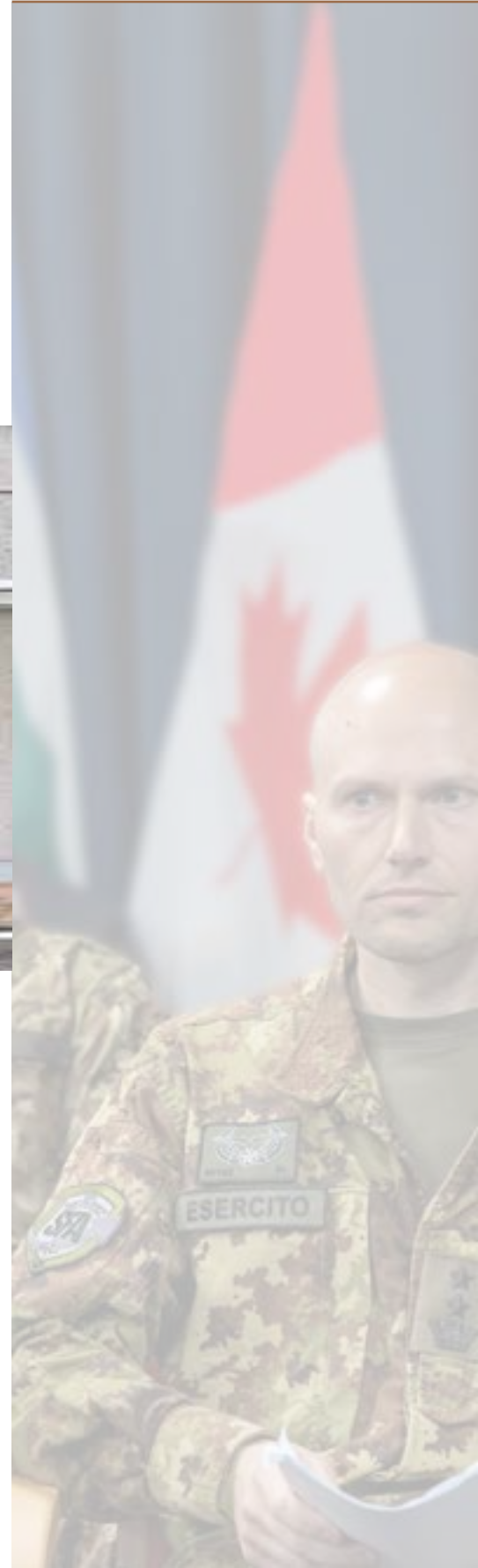
Security Force Assistance within continuum of competition

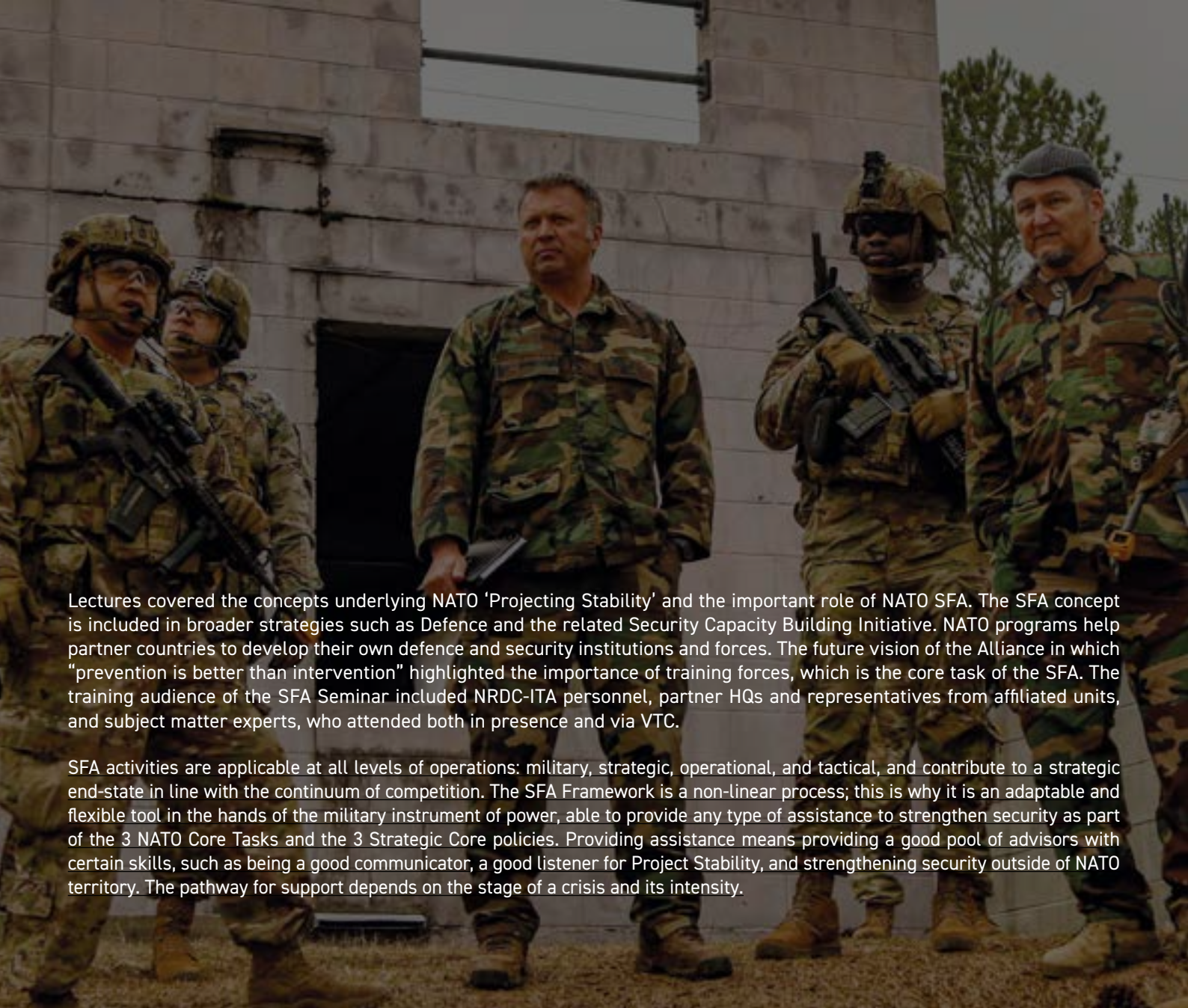
The NRDC-ITA Security Force Assistance (SFA) Seminar 2023 was held at the Ugo Mara barracks in Solbiate Olona (Varese) on 10 May 23, with external guests allowed to attend. The focus was on “SFA within the continuum of competition”. The aim of the seminar was to share knowledge and encourage a deep-dive discussion on the SFA’s role in relation to NATO three core tasks: deterrence and defense, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security. The seminar supported NRDC-ITA’s recalibration process to a Warfighting Corps HQ while it simultaneously contributed to maintaining its readiness as a JTF HQ.



NRDC-ITA Commander, LTG Lorenzo D’Addario, who delivered the opening remarks, chaired the seminar and DCOS COMM, BG Laszlo Gangler, who welcomed all the external guests and participants, spoke after him. The seminar was divided into two panels, where Panel 1 paved the way and laid a common basis of academic and doctrinal knowledge, while Panel 2 included lessons learned and best practices from NATO operations and exercises. Both panels allowed time for questions and open discussion moderated by Prof. Fabrizio W. Luciulli from La Sapienza University in Rome and President of the Italian Atlantic Committee. The list of briefers included NATO SFA Centre of Excellence instructors as well as both NATO and Italian MoD command SMEs, specifically, JFCNP Section Head at Partnerships and Defense Capacity Building Section at NSD-S Hub, Multinational Cimic Group Commander, Center Studies Post Conflict Operation head of study and doctrine department, and Number 2 Company of 1st Battalion Irish Guards, GBR Army.

Lieutenant Colonel
ITA Army
Gianfranco COLOSIMO





Lectures covered the concepts underlying NATO 'Projecting Stability' and the important role of NATO SFA. The SFA concept is included in broader strategies such as Defence and the related Security Capacity Building Initiative. NATO programs help partner countries to develop their own defence and security institutions and forces. The future vision of the Alliance in which "prevention is better than intervention" highlighted the importance of training forces, which is the core task of the SFA. The training audience of the SFA Seminar included NRDC-ITA personnel, partner HQs and representatives from affiliated units, and subject matter experts, who attended both in presence and via VTC.

SFA activities are applicable at all levels of operations: military, strategic, operational, and tactical, and contribute to a strategic end-state in line with the continuum of competition. The SFA Framework is a non-linear process; this is why it is an adaptable and flexible tool in the hands of the military instrument of power, able to provide any type of assistance to strengthen security as part of the 3 NATO Core Tasks and the 3 Strategic Core policies. Providing assistance means providing a good pool of advisors with certain skills, such as being a good communicator, a good listener for Project Stability, and strengthening security outside of NATO territory. The pathway for support depends on the stage of a crisis and its intensity.



► Steadfast Jackal 2022

Mission accomplished! Our Corps is certified

After an intense year of planning and training, the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy (NRDC-ITA) achieved official NATO recognition as a Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTF - HQ) at the end of the Steadfast Jackal 22 Exercise.

This is a role of responsibility for international security that testifies to the ability of the men and women of NATO's only Italian-led HQ that can respond rapidly in areas affected by complex international crises.

The exercise was the culmination of the many training situations that had been examined and faced throughout 2022 as part of the preparations for the exercise held on Norwegian soil at the NATO training and validation facility in Stavanger.

The exercise saw the involvement of personnel from no less than 38 nations and numerous resources from right across the armed forces, as well as the participation of representatives of the various governmental and non-governmental agencies.

All of this required a major organisational command and control effort. It was a particularly complex challenge because of the communication in English and the involvement of people from different operational backgrounds. Opportunities for meetings and scheduling intensive training cycles made it possible to refine command and control techniques, using procedures that the NATO HQ in Solbiate Olona has standardised through 20 years of experience in the field.



Lieutenant Colonel
ITA Army
Antonio BERNARDO

The key was to break down the physical distance between the various units at different levels, which were integrated down to the lowest level within the NRDC-ITA Command. During planning, extensive preparation was done for the simulation of meetings at various levels, with these meeting then conducted by the Commander with senior representatives of the host nation's local political community and the international community (key leader engagement). In this context, the protection of civilians (human security) was always seen as a key factor both in the planning and in the conduct of operations.

The experience gained on the ground during previous missions in crisis areas, and the resulting awareness of the importance of the human factor in successful operations led to a streamlining of the chain of command and control.

This improvement was critical as even the simplest tactical act performed by an individual soldier can be critical to the success of the entire mission. In practice, the HQ Command handled the many activations of tactical units in the field. This procedure encouraged cohesion and rapid decision-making from the highest to the lowest levels, with positive repercussions for the protection of civilians in the area of operations.

As part of the exercise, the Commander's Key Leader Engagements (KLEs) took a central role. An intensive series of meetings with senior political, military, local and international leaders was held as part of a sensitive approach to resolving issues and tensions tied to the situation created by the operational context. Moreover, this was done as part of the delicate targeting process, which is a careful methodology that is subject to the Commander's decision to identify, select and prioritise targets on which to use lethal and non-lethal measures.

Such meetings specifically gave the Commander the chance to convey the strategic messages for the mission and to gain a good understanding of the presence of the multinational contingent and the usefulness of the mission, as requested by the host nation and endorsed by the international community as a whole. In these circumstances, a robust, cooperative attitude facilitated the gathering of critical information and facts that were then useful in determining the best possible response to resolve the ongoing crisis, with the support of the international community and maintaining credibility in the eyes of the institutions and the local population.

In line with the Commander's meetings, the other key leaders of the NATO contingent at lower levels also held a series of meetings with representatives of civil society and the host nation's military. This non-lethal approach created optimal security conditions by denying insurgents the opportunity to corrupt or otherwise penetrate the fragile social environment. This was a favourable situation for

the multinational contingent, which created a vast and diverse network of contacts at the same time that enabled units at various levels to prevent hostile actions.

"What we do here is at the heart of defence and deterrence. Every day, our strong interoperability, not only among soldiers, but also among politicians, senior military leaders and our partners is the real strength of NATO; it is the greatest weapon in our arsenal."

General Lorenzo D'Addario, Commander of NRDC-ITA, spoke these words during the execution phase of the exercise to emphasise the need for a comprehensive approach in the management of modern missions, integrating political, economic, social, security, economic development, rule of law and humanitarian aspects along with strictly military aspects.



This is necessary because modern missions are increasingly characterised by complexity precisely because of the many interrelated and interdependent factors.

Key Leader Engagement was not only crucial to the success of military operations while they were being conducted, but also served a basic function in the analysis and evaluation of planners on the planning side (J5). In particular, right from the start of the exercise, the assessment of the success of an operation served as a



reference point for the development of new plans aimed at the progressive achievement of all the objectives set out in the international mandate. Such a situation made it possible to move from one phase of the plan to the next knowing that the assigned mission had been successfully accomplished.

The '*way ahead early thinking*' process, known in the English-speaking world as '*blue sky thinking*', is a pragmatic approach to issues that the Commander took up in strategic meetings with international stakeholders. Basically, it involves preparing in advance for what might happen in relation to an action that might affect the contingent crisis.

This *modus operandi*, which tends to create a cohesion of purpose, was also viewed positively by the people tasked with assessing the exercise as they recognised the importance of maintaining a long-term perspective in the context of a non-article 5 operation so as to achieve sustainable peace supported by all the parties involved.

Finally, the human aspect has always played a crucial role in both the implementation and planning phases. In particular, protecting the civilian population in the crisis



area was taken into account in all phases of the operations, through the activation of CIMIC (Civil-Military Cooperation) assets, which maintained close relations with civil society institutional representatives.

As a result, the population always received appropriate attention and humanitarian assistance, in full compliance with international law, which contributed concretely to consolidating the relationship of trust and credibility with the multinational contingent. This approach was also conveyed to local institutions and military forces with a view to a future handover of governance and security responsibilities.



CONCLUSIONS

NRDC-ITA enhanced its capabilities during the Steadfast Jackal 2022 Exercise by successfully managing complex operational issues using an approach that extended to all mission stakeholders, both international and local. Today, armed with new awareness based on the lessons learned at the end of the exercise, the HQ is ready to deploy rapidly, wherever it is needed, to respond at very short notice to the full range of contemporary security challenges, from crisis management to collective defence.



Financial Controllers' Conference 2022: Funding NATO 2030

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Finance (J8) is not usually one of the most noticeable functions within the military. However, we also know – especially those of us who work in this field – that the military does not come cheap, and all those funds must be managed within a spider web of policies, regulations, rules and procedures. It is not usually an inviting territory for non-finance staff. Having said that, I will aim to write an article on current finances. Hopefully all readers will be able to understand, and it might even be stimulating for some.



The Financial Controllers' Conference

To support our military activity, funds must be received from others, meaning other taxpayers, even other nations. We are talking about hard earned money, and no money is ever given easily. Strict rules on how to spend it usually come with the same package. In the case of NRDCs, the authority providing the funds is represented by the Senior Resources Committee (SRC). The SRC is composed of all the participating nations and calls for strict control of the funds. This control is ensured and embodied by the heads of finance, i.e. the Financial Controllers (FINCONs).

On a yearly rotational basis, each Graduated Response Force Land HQ (GRF(L) HQ) is tasked with organizing the Financial Controllers' Conference. In 2022 NRDC-ITA was responsible. After a three-year break due to COVID, the conference was hosted once again in person, in the baroque HQ of NRDC-ITA - Cusani Palace - in the elegant Brera district at the heart of Milan, for three days from 4 to 6 October. The FINCON Conference is an annual gathering where current topics, practices and challenges related to the financial management of GRF(L) HQs are discussed and decisions are taken.

The outcome is then submitted to the SRC for their approval. The primary participants are FINCONs from NATO Force Structure (NFS) HQs, but for the first time in its history, NATO Command Structure (NCS) representatives were invited to attend the conference. The presence of Mr Eric Brintet, FINCON JFC Naples, and two representatives from JFC Brunssum marked an important milestone and a great opportunity to set up a new network of cooperative support between NCS and NFS structures. Lt. Gen. Lorenzo D'Addario, Commander NRDC-ITA welcomed the participants via VTC from our operational HQ in Solbiate

awakened by the invasion were expressed as early as March 2022, at the NATO Budget Officers' Conference. The financial community started to examine the lag between the short notice to move NRDCs and lengthy NATO funding availability. There was – and there still is – no clear guidance on when, where and to whom budget requests should be submitted in an actual deployment in a situation that is eligible for common funds.

Amidst the usual technical side of financial discussions, cooperation between NCS and NFS became the centerpiece of discussions at the 2022 FINCON Conference. Col.



Olona, emphasizing that GRF(L) HQ's are spearheading the changes brought about by the Ukrainian crisis, and that the new Long-Term Commitment Plan will have consequences for our finances as well.

Cooperation Between NATO Command Structure (NCS) and NATO Force Structure (NFS)

NCS is funded by all NATO members, which is why the term "common funded" is used to describe it. On the other hand, NFS entities are funded only by a group of participating nations--they are multinational or "shared funded". Since the group of nations providing the funds is different, so are the set of rules that apply. Funding of NCS is governed by NATO Financial Regulations (NFRs), while that of NFS by the GRF(L) HQs' Financial Administrative Procedures (FAPS). In certain cases, however, NFS can exceptionally become eligible for NATO common funds, and consequently have to follow NFRs. A recent example of this was Steadfast Jackal 2022, an NRDC-ITA validation exercise. Now, to put it bluntly, we as NFS have limited expertise with NFRs and common funds.

The invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 created a new context in the maybe less visible financial domain, too. The long neglected need for increased financial cooperation between NCS and NFS has suddenly arisen. Talks followed, in conference after conference. The concerns

Roberto Greco, FINCON NRDC-ITA, addressed NCS representatives directly in his out of the ordinary briefing on the subject. As he anticipated, the new NATO Force Model, delivering an allied response at much greater scale and at higher readiness than ever before, will equally have a great impact on future commitments and financial procedures. Col. Greco questioned if the current NATO guidelines provided the right answers to funding NFS deployment. How will the budget be in place with a short notice-to-move? Who pays in advance if the budget approval takes longer? How will we overcome the problem of using different IT platforms for accounting support? How can NFS implement NCS recommended guidelines, such as the one on internal control, without receiving the official documents from SHAPE, and the related technical support? He also invited NCS to support NFS J8s during exercises, to validate the documents, procedures and activities, which has not exactly been the case in the past.

The points generated deeper discussions among NCS and GRF(L) HQ FINCONs. FINCONs finally wrapped up with a common statement, acknowledging the funding and financial issues related to deployment, and inviting NCS to conduct a workshop/TTX to address the concerns and to increase the collective understanding in this mission critical area. The statement was officially forwarded to JFC Naples, JFC Brunssum and LANDCOM Izmir.



CONCLUSIONS: FUNDING NATO 2030

In finance, too, we are experiencing unprecedented changes that were unimaginable just a very short time ago. Until recently the primary funding mechanism for NATO operations was that nations absorb any and all costs associated with their participation, also known as the “costs lie where they fall” system. This means that if one country sends one soldier to a NATO operation, it pays for one, while if it sends a battalion, it pays for a battalion. This has been replaced by NATO common funding only in exceptional cases, with a case-by-case decision made by the NATO Resource Policy and Planning Board (RPPB).

The demands of the new NATO Force Model

have also challenged this traditional funding mechanism. Although – for the moment – in small initial and limited steps, NATO common funding eligibility has expanded to non-NCS requirements, which is considered revolutionary within the financial community. It is changing the face of the Alliance, with positive effects. Since the 2022 FINCON Conference common funding eligibility for participation in NATO exercises has been broadened, and it has also been extended to NFS entities performing NCS functions – importantly for us on the verge of interim ARF.

In a certain way at our FINCON Conference we anticipated what is happening nowadays. We did so because we are a NATO Rapid Deployable Corps.



NRDC ITA's pathfinders in action!

Eagle Flight deployment to North Macedonia

For the first time, an Operational Liaison and Reconnaissance Team (OLRT) from HQ sustained by the Support Brigade was deployed in a real country, North Macedonia, from 11 to 15 June. Lead by DCOS Support, Brigadier General Paolo Fortezza, it was a unique opportunity to maintain joint level skills as NRDC ITA is covering the JTF HQ role for NATO in 2023.

One of the reasons for the Eagle Flight 23 exercise was because of the importance of enhancing interoperability and common understanding with other Allied Nations, including North Macedonia, a vital member of the Alliance that plays a pivotal role in maintaining peace and stability in the fragile political and security balance of the Western Balkans. The Commander emphasized this, seeking to consolidate NRDC-ITA's reputation as a highly skilled and responsive 3-star HQ that is fully prepared to plan and execute the full spectrum of NATO Operations.

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Michele FERRARI DI VALBONA



During this exercise, OLRT members were able to meet with actual high level authorities from North Macedonia's Ministry of Defence to discuss the role of our HQ and mutual training opportunities. This is particularly relevant as our HQ is about to welcome a North Macedonian Officer in the coming weeks.





But what is an OLRT actually meant to be?

The OLRT's mission is described in short as "(...) responsible to liaise and coordinate with the host nation authorities, international organizations/non-governmental organizations (IOs/NGOs), and other stakeholders, in the potential theatre of operations to provide reliable and timely information to the Joint Operational Planning Group (JOPG)," adding that the OLRT "contributes to gaining early, first-hand situational awareness in theatre, facilitating the rapid establishment of liaison and conducting reconnaissance in a designated area." Thus, the OLRT is seen as the JTF Commander and the JOPG's tool to both gain information and establish a liaison between the command and the foreseen host nation.

A well-prepared OLRT is able to begin to engage with the host nation immediately after arriving in the country

Theoretically, good initial preparation for the OLRT prior to deployment is imperative to allow the OLRT a

realistic chance of success in the typically ambiguous environment in which it will be engaging. A well-prepared OLRT is able to begin engaging the host nation immediately after arriving in the country.

Simply put, the OLRT is able to build rapport quickly with their host nation counterparts if they are well-prepared; if poorly prepared, there is a real chance of damaging that rapport, which could also reduce the effectiveness of the mission. There are three key areas that must be addressed to ensure that a JTF's OLRT is well-prepared for its mission: team-wide preparation; detailed subject matter preparation; and command guidance documents.

Some information must be clearly understood by the OLRT personnel as a whole in order to ensure that the team speaks with one voice to the host nation. Team-wide preparation is normally accomplished with formal briefings from the JOPG in conjunction with other Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in the Sending Headquarters.

These briefings are important because OLRTs and JOPGs are often just beginning their working

relationship with each other due to personnel turnover or ad hoc staffing. This set of formal briefings from the JOPG to the OLRT, with the Command Group in attendance, should describe the areas that the Command needs the OLRT to focus on. Normally,



two different broad subject areas should be covered: deployment and employment. These two areas can be briefed together or in separate briefings. The deployment part of the briefing is normally relatively straightforward and generic. The topics can include deployment times and means; the legal status of the OLRT; instructions for carrying weapons; living and working arrangements once in the country, and general Public Affairs (PA) guidance.

The employment part of the brief should be tailored to the specific issues that the JOPG and Command Group need the team in general to focus on and the background data required to successfully accomplish this mission. The employment briefing is much more open as far as subject matter is concerned, but some items that could be included are: key RFIs (Requests for Information) in order of importance, existing arrangements between NATO and the host nation, the general size and scope of the envisaged NATO deployment, background data on potential areas of negotiation with the host nation, notes on key individuals that the team will regularly or initially

engage with, known details on logistics mechanisms that the JOPG is considering, the multinational groups of which the host nation is a member and the relations between those groups and NATO, and any preparatory work that the JOPG staff members have done together with the host nation authorities and military staff prior to sending the OLRT.

Therefore, in addition to the preparation of meeting agendas, the team did two full days of training, including engagement training as well as information on and use of CIS Equipment. Such a training exercise gives participants an opportunity to train for engagements with real partners in a non-fiction environment. Indeed, the challenge was not only the deployment itself but also testing HQ's CIS mobile connectivity abroad, as this enabled the deployed team to be in constant contact with the HQ in Italy and exchange not only unclassified voice messages and emails but also the capability to raise the classification on request, depending on the subject being dealt with.

Thus, the Eagle Flight 23 exercise should be seen as a success not only because it was an opportunity



to connect more deeply with North Macedonia, but also a chance to open a path to fruitful collaboration down the line. NRDC-ITA HQ is committed to enhancing mutual knowledge and building trust with North Macedonia's Defence Institutions, while at the same time exploring opportunities and cooperation. NATO as a whole is committed to assisting countries in the Western Balkan in pursuing democracy, freedom, stability and development and commends North Macedonia's strong dedication to NATO's values. Deeper ties with North Macedonia will be beneficial, not only for NRDC-ITA and the security of South-Eastern Europe, but for the entire NATO community.



The role of NATO Stability Policing in Cultural Property Protection

NATO defines Stability Policing (SP) as “**police-related activities intended to reinforce or temporarily replace the indigenous police to contribute to the restoration and/or upholding of the public order and security, rule of law, and the protection of human rights.**” (AJP-3.22 and NATO Agreed term). This means NATO possesses the military capability to police civilians and can also operate in a Cultural Property Protection (CPP) perspective. In fact, both SP missions of police capacity building and substituting Host Nation law enforcement agencies can also be applied to protect art, monuments, historical sites, and museums, just to name a few.

In this view, the NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence in Vicenza (Italy), the hub of expertise for innovation and the transformation of the Alliance in the field of SP, and the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy (NRDC-ITA) have often supported each other, including through exchange of Subject Matter Experts and by participating in events they organized, such as the Conference on the role of SP in CPP, held in Vicenza from 15 to 18 November 2021 or the more recent Workshop on Resilience and Resistance in Military Operations, held by NRDC-ITA from 11 to 12 May 2023. This highlights the fundamental mutual support between CoEs, such as think tanks and experts, on the one hand, and Allied units, such as requestors, users, and sources of inspiration for products of CoEs, on the other hand, which keeps the Alliance fit for purpose in a 360-degree approach that also extends to CPP.

NATO sees CPP as a cross-cutting topic within the broader context of Human Security, in line with the “Policy for the Protection of Civilians” (endorsed at the Warsaw Summit in 2016) and its Implementation Action Plan. A recent Bi-Strategic Command Directive¹ provides comprehensive direction and guidance for CPP in the preparation, planning and conduct of NATO and NATO-led operations and missions, as well as the relevant training, education, and evaluation. It recognises fundamental international treaties, starting from United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2347 (dated 24 March 2017, it is exclusively focused on CPP) and the 1970 “UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property”, which are often overlooked by military practitioners. The Bi-SCD aims to mainstream CPP throughout the NATO doctrinal corpus, including the “Allied Joint Doctrine for Stability Policing” (AJP-3.22)².



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1 Bi-SCD 086-005 Implementing Cultural Property Protection in NATO Operations and Missions dated 01 April 2019

2 While Annex A of AJP-3.22 does not specifically list CPP as an SP task, many mentioned tasks contribute to it

3 “Stability Policing are police-related activities intended to reinforce or temporarily replace the indigenous police in order to contribute to the restoration and/or upholding of the public order and security, rule of law, and the protection of human rights.” AJP-3.22 (NATO Agreed term)

4 The capability/capacity void between the police-related needs of the civilian population and the inadequacy of the IPF (if present), other relevant actors and the “traditional”, combat-oriented NATO military instrument of power, to address these challenges properly

5 Consisting of Monitoring, Mentoring, Advising, Training, Reforming and Partnering with IPF (MMARTP). The Writing Team for ATP-103 Reinforcement and Replacement of Indigenous Police Forces, is discussing the adoption of the Security Force Assistance framework “Generate, Organize, Train, Enable, Advise, Mentor (GOTEM)”

6 “Legal targeting, enforce international and applicable HN law to create effect on the adversary” is not a NATO Agreed term

7 AJP-3.4.4 “Allied Joint Doctrine for Counter Insurgency” defines them as “The use or threat of force by irregular forces, groups or individuals, frequently ideologically or criminally motivated, to affect or prevent change as a challenge to governance and authority”

8 Forces, services, assets, subject matter experts (SME) etc.

9 The Carabinieri TPC was instituted in 1969, one year prior to the UNESCO Paris Convention in 1970, whereby all UNESCO Member States were invited to institute specific services with a view to protecting the cultural heritage of the individual nation. More info: <http://www.carabinieri.it/multilingua/en/the-carabinieri-tpc>

10 As per the 1954 Hague Convention, art. 2: “...the protection of cultural property shall comprise the safeguarding of and respect for such property”



NATO operations in (armed) conflicts and crises in general and CPP in particular benefit from the inclusion of military capability for SP³ to bridge the “policing gap” in a comprehensive approach, solving this (military) challenge with a 360-degree tailored response⁴, which may range from an SP reinforcement mission⁵ of the Indigenous Police Forces (IPF) to their temporary replacement. This is the case when the IPF do not exist or are unreliable or unwilling to carry out their duties, and SP may be at the same time the only solution and a complementary tool to expand the Alliance’s reach as a combat and warfighting instrument that is also able to protect the Host Nation’s (HN) heritage. This is normally sanctioned by a UNSCR that initiates a North Atlantic Council decision or by a specific request from the Host Nation.

In fact, by preventing, deterring and investigating crimes such as iconoclasm, unauthorised excavations, looting, forgeries and fencing, SP is performing a civilian policing role hitherto neglected by NATO. SP assets may be employed to identify CP trafficking routes, investigate and bring to justice those involved in this serious crime – such people are often involved in Organised Crime Groups or are terrorists and war criminals – as well as to disrupt their networks. This is the so-called “legal targeting”⁶ in the context of affirmative lawfare, i.e. arresting these irregular actors⁷ so as to prosecute them in HN, international or hybrid courts. Thus, SP fights the enemy through other means, addressing the war-crime overlap and complementing the “traditional” war-fighting

instrument. Indeed, *“all⁸ can contribute to SP, but not everyone can do everything”*. In fact, a vast array of forces can contribute to SP, starting from Gendarmerie-type forces, *“which are the first choice”*, MPs and other military and even non-military actors, *“on the basis of the mandate and the environment being permissive”*.

Moreover, SP assets specialised in CPP, such as the members of the Carabinieri Headquarters for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (TPC)⁹, can be deployed and identify in the local context and geo-locate CP, feed no-target-lists and develop priorities for safeguarding and respecting¹⁰ items, sites and people (e.g. artefacts and relics, museums and monuments, archaeological digs, curators and directors of museums). SP assets also collect and analyse CP-related police and criminal information, feed the intelligence cycle and help improve overall situational awareness. Illicit revenue flows stemming from crimes related to CP recovered by SP and redirected to the HN boost the perception of the Alliance in the battle of narratives, thus moving consensus from NATO’s opponents towards the Allied force and positively influencing audiences from local to international level. By disrupting attacks on CP and crimes of violence against the collective memory and the community identity, SP helps to win the war and to build the peace.

DISCLAIMER: this paper is a product of the NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence and its content does not reflect NATO policies or positions, nor represent NATO in any way, but only the NSPCoE or author(s) depending on the circumstances.



► CBRN defence evaluation of the 33rd “Ambrosiano”

The Tactical and Logistical Support Regiment successfully tested its Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear defence capability

The annual Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) evaluation was held on 11 May 2023 at the Ugo Mara Barracks in Solbiate Olona, involving the men and women of the “Ambrosiano” 33rd Tactical and Logistics Support Regiment. This was the crowning moment of a two-week training course during which the participating personnel carried out theoretical and practical activities tied to implementing the tactical and operational measures to be taken in an unconventional attack involving chemical, biological, radioactive or nuclear agents.

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CBRN defence capability is a specific component of the unit's operational activities and the assessment, or self-assessment in this case, covers the operational functions and the analysis of three macro areas – “organisation”, “equipment” and “training” –, identifying the various activities in static and dynamic moments, which are separate but interrelated and essentially divided into two phases.





In the first phase, the three aforementioned macro areas were examined in detail. For the organisation of CBRN defence, the evaluation involved inspecting the relevant documentation and checking *task force* staff knowledge of the procedures. For equipment, consistency and efficiency were checked. This aspect concluded with an assessment of individual and collective training, in which the participating personnel were subjected to specific tests that had to be carried out individually or as part of a *team*. During the second phase, departmental training in CBRN defence was carried out in the form of a comprehensive technical and tactical exercise in an operational scenario lasting 24 hours.

The exercise, as part of a *Crisis Response Operation* led by NRDC ITA Command, simulated a suspected CBRN attack by local terrorists at the local international airport.

The CBRN defensive activities were developed following these key steps:

- identification and detection of a chemical weapon or agent during a vehicle patrol;
- decontaminating vehicles and personnel at the purpose-created decontamination area.

The demonstration was the culmination of an intensive cycle of personnel training to improve CBRN defence capabilities.



Participation in “2nd Space National Day”

Professor Amalia Finzi Ercoli special guest at the 1st Signal Regiment



Colonel
ITA Army
Valerio GOLINO

For a long time to come, 15 December 2022 will be a milestone in the regiment's history. This was a day on which three unique, key events took place at the Santa Barbara Barracks, with Professor Amalia Finzi-Ercoli as the undeniable protagonist.

The day began with the inauguration of the professor as “honorary” patroness (or godmother, in a more familiar form) of the regiment, followed by a Mass for the coming of Christmas celebrated by Monsignor Angelo Frigerio in the beautiful chapel of the barracks, recently restored, and finally an interview with the professor herself in the regiment's famous rooms.

The ‘excuse’ for this occasion was the second Italian Space Day, which was established by the Italian government in 2021 and promoted with a series of activities sponsored by the Italian Space Agency. In this way, tradition, spirituality and looking to the future were condensed into a single end-of-year day at the regiment.

But let's proceed with more order.

It all began in October 2022, during an awards ceremony for Professor Amalia Finzi-Ercoli organised by the Asilo Mariuccia Foundation at the City of Milan's Alessi Hall, where the then Regimental Commander, Colonel Valerio Golino, got to know the extraordinary personality and inexhaustible charisma of a woman who is deeply passionate about her work.

Without a doubt, she is an extraordinary spiritual leader and an amazing person whose past and actions should be an example for younger generations and, above all, for an Italian army regiment that bases its daily operations on values and love of country.

The professor ‘shares’ the city of Milan with the regiment as it is the place where she lives and

works, and she also is joined to the regiment by space, at least in some of its possible forms.

These were the reasons that drove the regiment to ask the professor to become its honorary patroness. It took her less than 48 hours to get back to the Commander and her answer was surprising: the professor accepted, moved and full of gratitude, without any qualms, making herself unconditionally available to the Commander's will. This was truly the response of a great person and someone we can all learn from.

In addition, since the 1st Signal Regiment is a key player in the management of CIS services that support of a key NATO HQ – certainly the most important in Italy – and the HQ itself consciously plays a

part in space services, it was logical to become part of the Italian Space Agency's programme to celebrate the second Italian Space Day. Then, given the professor's willingness to help the regiment, it seemed logical to organise an interview with her, one of the most important Italian people in space research, the first female aerospace engineer and a professor at the Milan Polytechnic. Space has regained an important role in the international geopolitical scenario, but also more than ever in research and the economy, with the revived ambition to take people first back to the Moon and then to Mars.

Talking about space with those who have made space the essence of their lives is no easy task, and so we sought the help of a journalist that is very close to the regiment, Antonio Sanfrancesco, who currently writes for Famiglia Cristiana. He agreed, with pride and curiosity, to interview the professor (whom he had already had the opportunity to interview in the past) in the Santa Barbara Barracks, which he had always seen from the outside and had never seen from inside.

Additionally, the regiment had been working for over a year to restore and reopen the chapel, a little jewel inside the barracks. Monsignor Frigerio's conviction and the passion of a group of specialists from the regimental

headquarters made this feat possible in just under a year. Its reopening was designed to be a sign of revival in the spirituality of the many people who live and work in the barracks. What better occasion to reopen it than the day the professor officially became the regiment's patroness and the subsequent interview?

So, that is the background complete. The Santa Barbara Barracks was the perfect setting to focus on space and the key people in the world of space. Proceedings kicked off at 9 am on a decidedly wintry day, with the arrival of the professor at the regiment. As soon as she got out of the car, Ercoli found the Commander and the 1st Regiment waiting for her on the forecourt. This was certainly

a moment buzzing with anticipation. The regiment, standing to attention, saluted her and the Commander, accompanied by the Senior NCO, led the way as she took up her place in the centre, near the war memorial. It was very much a moment of mutual curiosity, in which the silence almost seemed investigatory.

But it did not take much to break this silence. After a nod from the Commander and a few introductory words about the regiment and its functions, the professor, with sincere closeness to the values that every soldier has sworn to uphold, wanted to express her deep emotion for the honour received and, filled with her life experience that included world war, she said that she was proud of



what Italian soldiers do for Italy. Her powerful, sweeping words affected all the women and men of the regiment to the point that nothing else was talked about for days.

The ceremony then continued with the presentation of the investiture scroll by the Commander and a small gift that had been handmade by NCO Giambruno as a token of affection from the regiment's NCOs for their new patroness. The gestures were simple, but provided evidence of an unbreakable bond being established at the first meeting. The ceremony ended with a parade of the units honouring the new patroness. There was just time for a short break and then the day continued with the chaplain celebrating mass in the chapel.

The beautiful chapel, recently decorated with two paintings by Father Johnatan, a military chaplain and talented iconographer, was filled with associations linked to the barracks' units, with representatives of the regiment and the horse artillery group, which put on a parade in historical uniforms. It was a simple celebration, enriched by the songs of the barracks choir, during which Monsignor Frigerio, with the parable of the farmer and the priest – *"I look at Him and He looks at me"* – recalled the sense of spirituality,



whether one is a soldier, a scientist or a priest. Father Angelo closed the celebration with a short presentation of the work done and with thanks to the professor and all those present.

The day then continued in the representative quarters of the barracks, in the room recently named after General Sacco, a pioneer of Italian cryptography, where Antonio Sanfrancescano conducted an interview lasting about 50 minutes with the new patroness (now available on the main streaming platforms), in the presence of several guests, including students from the Teullie' Military School. The Professor spoke on a wide array of

topics, from the Rosetta mission to humankind's new challenge to go to Mars, to some practical tips on how to live life and follow your passions. It was especially interesting how, in the straightforward way of a great science populariser, she explained the life of comets and their orbits in the solar system. Prompted by a knowledgeable reporter, the newly appointed patroness and international luminary gave an extraordinary lesson of science and life.

**All this in a single day!
Extraordinarily real.**



Who is Amalia Finzi-Ercoli

Born in 1937, the first woman to graduate in aeronautical engineering in Italy, Professor Emeritus of Orbital Mechanics at the Milan Polytechnic, where she headed the Department of Aeronautical Engineering, with which she still collaborates, Amalia Finzi-Ercoli is a consultant to NASA, ASI (Italian Space Agency) and ESA (European Space Agency) and has been awarded the title of Grande Ufficiale dell'Ordine al merito della Repubblica Italiana (Grand Officer of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic).

Nicknamed "The Comet Lady", she has authored more than 150 scientific publications and presentations at national and international conferences.

On the famous Rosetta mission, which began in 2004 and was successfully completed in 2016, she was Principal Investigator for the drill mounted on the Philae probe to drill into the surface of a comet and provide soil samples for analysis, successfully taking the drill she designed 500 million kilometres from Earth.

As of 2018, asteroid 24890, which orbits between Mars and Jupiter at an average distance of 400 million kilometres from the Sun, was given her name as a sign of the International Astronomical Union's recognition of her work for the international scientific community in the field of space mechanics and space mission design.

MWA special celebrations

“Christmas market for children: the enchantment of the holidays among stalls and treats!”

What would it be like if a Christmas market made it all the way to the barracks? The idea was adopted as soon as it came to light! “*Christmas Children’s Market 2022*”, the second edition of the Christmas Market at the Ugo Mara Barracks, was an opportunity to show our entire community, our family members, local dignitaries and guests for the evening that anything is possible in the international environment of NRDC-ITA. In what has become a fine tradition, the NRDC-ITA community of families gathered together on 13 December to share, with loved ones and friends, the atmosphere of the approaching Christmas season.



Despite the bitter cold, the Ugo Mara forecourt was full of stalls, including “traditional” ones selling mulled wine, pizzoccheri and beer directly from Poland, as well as other opportunities to try out, such as the climbing wall organised by the Italian Alpine Club of Busto Arsizio, golf, tennis, soft air and the circuits of Spartan kids.

The event was filled with entertainment, including live music from the Eagle Band, which was always at the heart of the event, and the participants in “*NRDC-ITA’s Got Talent*”. There was also the multicultural aspect of the event, with beautiful Christmas hampers from all the countries represented at the NRDC-ITA HQ.

For the children, a real Santa Claus and his friends, the much-loved reindeer, were set up as a photo set! The evening was full of surprises: Santa Claus

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Silvio BRESCIA





arrived in person with his magical sleigh and was a real treat for all the children, who delivered their little letters in exchange for hot chocolate and sweets.

It was an unforgettable meeting with the legendary master of feasts.

magic of the holidays and do good for others. This was organised by NISIC, the international club of all military spouses, with a fund-raising event and voluntary donations to a local charity to help those in need.

The Christmas market was the perfect place to enjoy the festive atmosphere and share joyful moments with colleagues and family in an even brighter and cosier barracks during the most special time of the year.

May the spirit of Christmas stay with us all year long!



There was also a board game area and creative workshops for younger children, giving them a chance to craft their own Santa Claus using paper, glue and scissors. In the food area, there was no shortage of special Christmas delights from the countries of our allies, along with traditional hot chocolate, pandoro and panettone.

But the Christmas market was not just about food and entertainment. It was also an opportunity to soak up the



“NRDC-ITA Carnival: An Explosion of Joy and Costumes!”

The first carnival party organised by the staff of the *Office of Morale and Welfare* after the forced break due to Covid was a great success on Friday 17 February!

In an afternoon of masks and streamers, it really was a lot of fun for many kids. Traditions and colours mingled to create a wonderful event, with the young people of the *Eagle Band* spurring on the evening and accompanying a magnificent parade of colourful masks and costumes.

As the event was sold out, largely to families with children in costume, it was clear how much our community enjoyed the event and shared the desire to celebrate together one of the most beloved holidays, a holiday that transcends convention and brings together people of many different nationalities, cultures and traditions into one big family.

Madness, joy and togetherness were the magical ingredients of this unforgettable evening: many children, young people and adults dressed up in costumes delighted the participants and created an atmosphere that had not been seen for a long time. The people who helped organise such a successful and involving event were aware of how difficult it was for the children to have had to give up the magic of Carnival for so long, but their sacrifice was rewarded with fun, happiness and colour, provided by a



travelling magic show, modelling balloons and ubiquitous children's make-up.

By the end of the evening, as the costumes and paints were put away, excitement for the next carnival party had already begun to build. Our whole community is once again ready to sparkle and experience pure joy and fun. May Carnival continue to bring smiles and laughter for many years to come!



Family Support Centre

A focal point for families across NRDC-ITA

Major
ITA Army
Silvio BRESCIA



The *Family Support Centre* (FSC) is a section of the *Morale and Welfare Office*, which provides daily support to the military families at NRDC-ITA. The centre provides a wide range of services to help the families of all NRDC-ITA military personnel overcome the initial difficulties of arriving in a new work environment and to improve their quality of life: finding housing, assistance with household utility contracts, finding schools and the like, signing multiple contracts to purchase goods and services at subsidised rates (hotels, restaurants, schools, businesses, professionals, etc.), organising cultural and recreational outings and activities. The latter are particularly important not only in strengthening the spirit of community and helping the members of the various units to get to know each other, but also providing an irreplaceable opportunity for allied colleagues to discover and appreciate the cultural and gastronomic wonders of Italy.

In addition, the FSC operates two important community services, the Social Protection Entities (bar, restaurant, pizzeria and a guest house with 4 rooms) and the HQ nursery, which can accommodate up to 52 children from 0 to 36 months of age.

The *International Fellows Team* (IFT), established as part of the FSC in 2021, is a team specifically tasked with providing specialised support to NRDC-ITA HQ allied military personnel and their families. In addition to the services mentioned above, the IFT offers specific services for allied personnel, such as the management of paperwork for the issuing or renewal of residence permits, tax codes and health cards, language assistance and paperwork for the opening of bank accounts or to purchase tax-exempt cars, using long-established procedures adopted by the Varese Excise, Customs and Monopolies Office.





However, it was during the Covid-19 pandemic that the FSC really came to the fore. Thanks to the helpfulness and ingenuity of its staff, all the families of our isolated or quarantined military were regularly contacted by telephone to check on them, and many received food and medicines delivered to their doorsteps, procured by a team available round the clock to support the community at such a tricky time.

The *Family Support Centre* was created to deal with these and many other challenges and offer tangible support to

families in need. It is made up of a team of highly qualified professionals who are enthusiastic, full of initiative and able to provide individualised support to families based on their specific needs.

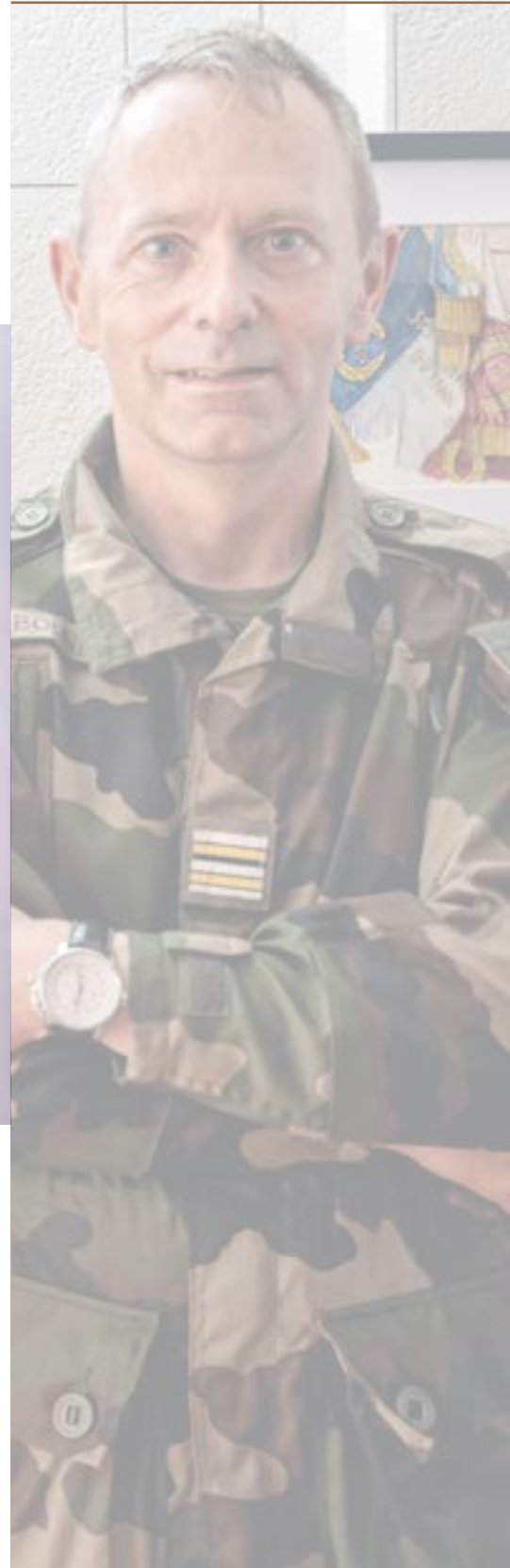
The Centre has received numerous awards for its work and continues to be a central point of reference for the entire community. For those who need help or simply information, the *Family Support Centre* is available and able to provide the necessary support and information.



Exploring the French military history: exhibition at Ugo Mara Barracks

From 30 March to 21 April 2023, the French contingent organized an exhibition of paintings depicting French logistics operations at the Ponte Goito Club at the UGO Mara Barracks. This unpretentious but original event was inaugurated with a private viewing attended by Lt Gen D'Addario along with senior national and division representatives, just prior to the Easter rotation plan. This opening was designed to coincide with the celebration of the creation of the *Arme du Train* (literally, Train Arm – the military supply capability) on 26 March 1812. Currently, there are only four French officers serving with NRDC-ITA, of which two are logisticians, Lt Col Bourillet and Lt Col Ben Aouda, who hosted the opening of the exhibition.

Lieutenant Colonel
FRA Army
Arnaud BOURILLET



This exhibition had 24 watercolors and an oil canvas highlighting the tradition of *Arme du Train* and the tasks of logistics soldiers. The main painting is a portrait of Napoleon Bonaparte who created the military logistics branch in Osterode, in the former Eastern Prussia. This portrait is inspired by a work by Paul Delaroche, a famous academic painter, and depicts the victorious emperor. Drawing on the model of both artillery and engineering supply capability, Napoleon responded to the shortcomings of private enterprises by



Other paintings depict units that are subordinate to the Logistics command in Lille and the Logistics Force HQ in Monthl ry. The General Command of the Logistics and Train school is seen as the "father of the arm" and the guarantor of traditions. A final element of the exhibition was dedicated to female French logistics soldiers, who now have access to all ranks and the full spectrum of operational duties and responsibilities. In the future, these paintings will undoubtedly be of great importance to NATO's Italian representatives at NRDC.

The exhibition features the work of Lt Col Arnaud Bourillet, currently serving as the French SO1 at the Joint Logistic Support Group (JLSG) Movement and Transportation Branch. His work focuses on portraits in front of typical landscapes generally using dark pencils to create opaque or murky sections, as one sees in comics.

Throughout his career, similar to many contemporary French Logistics Officers, Lt Col Bourillet has taken part in operations in the former Yugoslavia, Lebanon, Sahelian Africa – where he was deployed in Mali last year – and places in-between. This experience continues to shape his artistic inspiration in the French tradition of army painters. The exhibition ends with a portrait of an Italian officer during Steadfast Jackal 22, showing a link between the two armies that endures to this day.

During the exhibition, Col Brault, the French Senior National Representative, seized the opportunity to testify to the honor of the French contingent being able to serve within this NATO HQ and in particular, with the Italian Army under the command of Lt-Gen. D'Addario. Lt Col Bourillet highlighted the quality of the relationship with J4 and with each JLSG branch, expressing his gratitude to the JLSG commander, Brig Gen Kazakis (now replaced by Brig Gen Kokkinidis), Col Gecse and Col Carta for their kind confidence during the past months.

The exhibition was made possible thanks to the Ponte di Goito staff and the kind and very loyal support of the Moral and Welfare office.

replacing them with military and effective military means. *Arme du Train* featured in all campaigns – including Spain, Portugal and Russia, where it supported the Great Army. No cars returned from Moscow.

After Algeria, it was soon engaged with success in the colonial policy of the Third Republic (Tunisia, Morocco, Madagascar, Annam...)

During the Great War, *Arme du Train* is showed on the Sacred Way connecting Verdun to Bar-le-Duc with 6,000 vehicles daily: "*Verdun marked the victory of the French truck against the German railway*", Gen. von Falkenhayn said. During World War II, *Arme du Train* distinguished itself within the French expeditionary force in Italy, by supplying the units on a mobile front extending from Provence to Germany via Alsace.

It contributed to the final victory before being used in decolonization operations in Indochina and Algeria. It also contributed to expeditionary operations in Lebanon, the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and obviously the Sahel. Africa remains one of the major theatres of cross-border ethnic conflicts that are rooted in decolonization. In the Sahel, French logistics support troops face terrorist groups, setting up logistic battalions that integrate transport, traffic control, maintenance and medical support, and linking forward operations bases. The Sahelian theatre is rightly described as abrasive both for the soldiers and the equipment.

Arme du Train now pursues operational readiness according to the French national military concept of "*winning the war before the war*" and provides support to deployed troops in the Baltic States and Romania. A line of horses or a column of men and beasts could be called a train in French. The affectionate term "tringlot" finds its origin in the weapon used by cavalry corps soldiers. The carbine 1,71 had a metal rod going from the butt to the barrel.

Several paintings deal with the traditions of *Arme du Train*, with its history displayed on two screens at the end of the room during the private viewing.



NISIC challenges food insecurity

NISIC
Community Events Coordinator
Blair BENZ

Our commitment to support the “La Luna” organization for needy families

Although Lombardy is internationally known for its magnificent food culture there is also evidence of underlying food insecurity among its economically struggling population. In Busto Arsizio, a city of 85,000 citizens, there is a very special organization dedicated to helping people from all walks of life who are dealing with the challenges of not getting enough to eat. It is “La Luna-Banco di Solidarietà di Busto Arsizio”.



La Luna is a not-for-profit organization established in 2010 for the specific purpose of collecting and distributing food to hungry families. They operate with a very limited paid staff but a huge network of volunteers. This ensures that the food donations and the greatest percentage of the donated cash goes to support its mission: getting food into the mouths of the hungry. The food distributed through La Luna comes from a variety of sources. Each year during the Lenten season food collection campaigns occur; schools, churches and grocery stores are collection points. Distributing food is the job of volunteers who fill boxes with food from the Banco and deliver the cartons to needy families on a fortnightly or monthly basis. Some volunteers fill boxes with food they purchase directly from their local grocery stores thus multiplying their donation in the form of both time and money (in the form of food) given to La Luna and to those in need. According to La Luna it spends 3000 euros to feed a family for a year; they help approximately 300 people annually, and they accomplish this with over 200 volunteers.

Of course, cash donations to La Luna are essential to keeping the organization and its mission afloat. That's where NISIC enters the picture. In mid-December 2022 NISIC held its annual Christmas Market where hand-crafted items, specialty holiday baked goods and raffle tickets are sold. Thanks to the generosity of NRDC-ITA families, the proceeds from the event amounted to thousands of euros which NISIC gives back to the local community.

On 16 March 2023 NISIC members gathered at the Ugo Mara Barracks for an awards reception. Presenting the check to the representative of La Luna was Julia D'Addario, Honorary Board Chair of NISIC and wife of Lt. General Lorenzo D'Addario. General D'Addario cut into his busy schedule to briefly attend the event. In his remarks to the guests, he applauded the partnership between the multinational NATO community and the local Italian citizenry. Three cheers for all!

NISIC members gathering in the kitchen of chef Ilaria Castelli

Parmigiana, tortelli and dessert are the perfect ingredients for an enjoyable way to discover Italian cuisine

This was a new experience for the NISIC ladies who gathered in the kitchen of Chef Ilaria Castelli in Milan to learn the secrets of traditional Italian cuisine. These ladies, armed with enthusiasm and determination, prepared some typical Italian dishes under the guidance of the chef, who explained the techniques and procedures and also revealed some of the tricks of the trade. Making handmade tortelli was of particular interest, using a tried and tested recipe for home-made pasta that is known and loved all over the world. The chef taught the NISIC ladies how to make the right kind of dough, how to roll it out using a pasta machine and then how to stuff the tortelli.

The time spent preparing the dishes was a time of great social interaction in which English and Italian became fun and complementary languages of communication. Preparing an aubergine parmigiana – an iconic dish in Italian cuisine – was another recipe that attracted a lot of interest, sparking a discussion on the differences between 'Parmigiano Reggiano' and 'Parmesan'.

And what about dessert? This was a gift from the chef, who created a red fruit mousse with crunchy almonds especially for the ladies of NISIC. It was a wonderful opportunity for integration between different nations and cultures, strengthening the bond between the ladies present, and a chance to share experiences, recipes and Italian flavours.

At the end of the morning, the ladies sat around a table and tasted the dishes they had made, creating one of those very pleasant, cheerful, social and sharing moment that makes NISIC one big family.

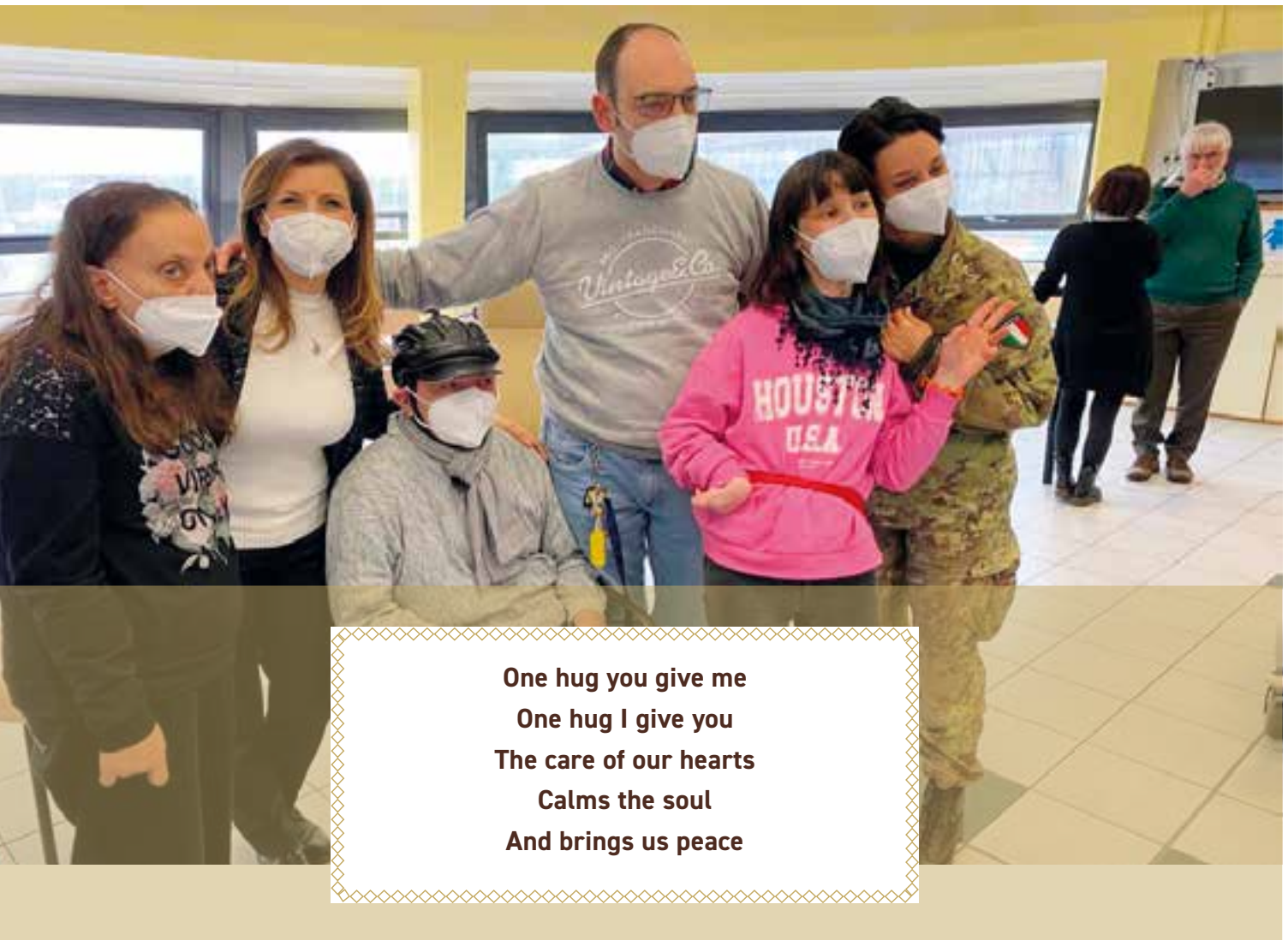
"The discovery of a new dish confers more happiness on humanity, than the discovery of a new star." (Anthelme Brillant- Savarin)

NISIC
Cultural Events Coordinator
Francesca SARETTA



► NISIC serving the community

Always on the frontline helping to support the most vulnerable people



These tender words are more than just a snippet of poetry. They are at the heart of the mission of the “Solidarietà e Servizi Adult Day Care Center” in Marnate. This organization provides social and educational services to a racially, ethnically and age diverse group of clients who require considerable care and attention because of their physical limitations. They are also people who have disabilities ranging from cognitive constraints and cerebral palsy to neurodegenerative diseases, dementias and more. Each day dozens of these

men and women come into the light and sun-filled rooms of the Center where they interact with the Center’s social workers and the educational and technical training staff. But, as important as the social and educational services are, perhaps the most important role the Center plays is tending to the emotional and social interactive needs of its clients. Here is a place where each person can sit next to another, and as the poem says “give hugs, care for our hearts and bring peace.”

NISIC's role in the "Solidarietà e Servizi" Center began in the summer of 2022 during NRDC-ITA's International Day. At that celebration, soldiers and their families bought raffle tickets both for the fun of taking a chance to win lovely prizes and to support the work of the Center. Because of the considerable generosity of the NATO family, a very significant donation was made to the Center to enhance the physical facility. Specifically, it bought 30 tables and 50 chairs; however, they weren't just any tables and chairs but ergonomically designed pieces of furniture that appropriately accommodate wheelchairs, different leg-length, arm-length, sitting positions, and group configurations. According to Center staff, the new furnishings add greatly to the efficiency of the learning environment and to the comfort of its clients.

The Center's board and staff wanted to say THANK YOU for the NATO contingent's generosity. So, on 2 March 2023, the NISIC board was invited to an appreciation party. It was an opportunity to see the new furniture being used, meet the clients and be serenaded by the Center's choral group.

In acknowledging the Center's thanks, NISIC Honorary Board Chair, Julia D'Addario said, "Being part of NISIC is a great opportunity to meet other international spouses and participate in activities together. At the same time, we are able to provide crucial support to those in need, by raising funds for charities in the communities surrounding NRDC-ITA.

It's wonderful to receive their smiles and hugs of appreciation." As the event ended each board member left with a beautiful bouquet of flowers and the warmest of memories.



NISIC
Community Events Coordinator
Blair BENZ



Proud to be part of the 50th edition of the StraMilano

The 50th edition of the StraMilano race took place on Sunday 19 March, a true celebration for adults and children, athletes and enthusiasts, who coloured the streets of the centre of the Lombard capital. About 60,000 participants ran the 10 km (StraMilano) or the 5 km (StraMilanina), including more than 400 runners, with their relatives, from NRDC-ITA and subordinate units. After the group photo in Piazza Duomo, the running competition started with the traditional cannon shot fired by the Voloire Artillery Regiment: the thunder of the cannon of the Horse Artillery Regiment and the music performed by the ever-present Bersaglieri fanfare, alongside a Carabinieri band, have become a well-recognised sound that gets the participants on the road.

Serious runners had the chance to compete in the half marathon (21,097 km), with the participation of more than 20 members of the NRDC-ITA Running Club, which ran through the most beautiful streets of Milan. The Half Marathon, which is held alongside the Stramilano 10K, is a spectacular race of international renown. It was held for the first time in 1976, and in 1997 the Italian Olympic marathon champion Gelindo Bordin won the race. For this edition, Brigadier General Simone Giannuzzi deserves a special mention as the first to finish the race among the HQ runners with a time of 1h 25' 43'', while the first NRDC-ITA member to finish the 10K and reach the Arena Civica was Corporal Giuseppina Maio.

Traditionally, StraMilano is the first of the several events that involve the entire NRDC-ITALY community, a chance for families to meet up and enrich their relationships, in a warm and international community spirit.

This year, a new program for the entire NRDC-ITA community was run in preparation for StraMilano. In the weeks leading up to the event, the NRDC-ITA Running Club, the GYM staff and a FIDAL trainer ran a special athletic program called "Road to Stramilano 2023", aimed at helping the entire NRDC-ITA community take their first steps in the "running world" and be able to easily manage the three distances of the StraMilano event.

The next edition of this iconic race will be on Sunday 24 March 2024.

Lieutenant Colonel
ITA Army
Pierluigi SIGNOR



Atlantic Challenge

The story of Lauren Woodwiss and her attempt to row across the Atlantic



One year during high-school I faced a particularly lengthy assignment that would take me the whole semester to complete. I was bemoaning my lot to my mother, who wisely asked, "How do you eat an elephant?" I stared in bewilderment; she smiled and said, "one bite at a time."

Smart advice for anyone facing a seemingly Herculean task, even when that task is rowing across the Atlantic Ocean. When I sat down with NISIC member and Birmingham, England native, Lauren Woodwiss to discuss her attempt to row across the Atlantic, my first question harkened back to that elephant, "how in the world do you row across the Ocean." "Well, you just start rowing," was her humble response. And, she kept on rowing with her great friend and University of Reading roommate, Jemma Rix. They rowed for fifty days, five hours and fifty-three minutes, to be exact. Their journey took them from the Canary Islands to the island of Antigua in the eastern Caribbean Sea, as participants in the annual Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge. This grueling, three-thousand-mile competition draws teams from around the world and in 2019 Lauren and Jemma set the world record for the fastest pair of female racers to cross the Atlantic.

As with any large-scale endeavor it is the discipline of untold hours of training and meticulous and detailed planning in the run-up to the race that ultimately determines success or failure. Lauren and Jemma spent three totally committed years prior to the Challenge raising money and personally building and outfitting an ocean-worthy fiberglass craft. Every detail of their journey down to the two months of freeze-dried meals, which Jemma prepared in her own kitchen, was sweated over and fretted about.

Once the race was underway the two women stuck to their plan of rowing in two-hour shifts. Lauren would row for two hours and Jemma would sleep, perform maintenance on the boat, and tend to personal hygiene. These tasks included bandaging blisters and callouses on hands, taking care of sunburns, making sure they had adequate hydration and nutrition and even brushing teeth. These are the mundane tasks of life that are essential even when one is constantly rowing in the middle of nowhere. I asked Lauren how she coped with the mental challenge of being so isolated for so long. She said, "Perhaps Jemma and I are a little bit wacky to begin with, but we had each other in stitches the whole time. Ocean rowing has become more popular today, but at the time of our race, more people had been to the moon than had completed the row across the Atlantic."

Before pushing away from the dock on 12 December 2018, Lauren's now-husband, Major Charlie Collins GBR Army proposed marriage. Lauren said that Charlie had been her greatest supporter throughout the planning and preparation for the Atlantic Challenge. Just as soon as she reached Antigua in world record time, Lauren realized that the moment had come to start tackling new adventures with Charlie, as husband and wife.

NISIC
Community Events Coordinator
Blair BENZ



► A special day at “Santa Barbara” Barracks

An Open Day to bring together the families



The welfare of defence personnel also benefits from the barracks being close to the families. Human resources are undoubtedly the fundamental asset of any modern land component. As such “Take Care of People” is every commander’s mission.

Santa Barbara is a barracks full of history, enriched by a past in which the families, especially of the officers and non-commissioned officers, enjoyed many social gatherings and built a solid fabric of relationships that was also the bedrock of solidarity. As the military became a professional force, families tended to move away from the barracks to their own homes, often far from the city of Milan. In a new, modern concept, the barracks should not only be a place of work, but also a place of sharing, where facilities and services created for training/institutional purposes can be used. In addition, the same facilities can be an effective way to help the military move closer to the reality in which it is located. People living in the neighbourhood often have no idea what goes on behind the walls, leaving the two worlds unconnected. This dual need to shift the centre of gravity of military families back towards the barracks and to engage more with the local area was the rationale behind the ‘Special Day in Santa Barbara’ initiative last 9 September and other initiatives such as the Regimental Party (15 October) and the Christmas Party (16 December).

But above all, the Special Day was the milestone of this change that had long been in the minds of the people in the regiment. The original idea came from the desire to create a youth football team that could use the barracks’ sports

facilities, thus also providing an opportunity for the families of the personnel. However, the idea was perhaps somewhat lacking, largely because so many football clubs abound in these lands, and families often find it tricky to take their families to the barracks during the week. But the attempt had to be made. Drawing on its own internal resources of people already involved in local football clubs, the regiment was able to build ties with a well-established club. The best way to involve the children was to bring them to the barracks for a day and let them and their parents experience the barracks through a paradigm of fun and entertainment. Then, one soldier had an idea: **“Why don’t we add some other attractions for children? We have plenty of space and the children could have an unforgettable day outdoors.”**

A great idea. Thus, a team of military personnel began to explore whether various Milanese associations would be interested and the response was extraordinary: from dog associations to the Fire Department to soft air. Of course, it was also necessary to have some bouncy castles and inflatables. And there was no shortage of military activities



and the equestrian world of the Horse Artillery Group. Finally, the immediate response of A.N.I.R.E., which has a long history of helping children in need at the barracks, also helped, thanks to the involvement of a Lions district with a health prevention stand. In addition, to complement the day, the company that runs the barracks’ canteen ensured a message of proper nutrition for the children. A rich and very interesting circuit of activities consequently developed. The children had to complete all the activities in order to qualify as a **“soldier for a day”**.

Specifically, the circuit included:

- “firefighteropolis”, curated by the Fire Service, to help young children understand the dangers of fire;
- target practice: a game of precision run by regimental personnel to simulate the throwing of hand grenades;
- self-defence mat: run by the regiment's instructors in hand-to-hand combat;
- military gymnastics course: short course designed by regimental instructors using the typical obstacles found in military circuits;
- soft air and archery range: run by an outside association;
- simulation of a ride in the “wheel well” of an armoured vehicle;
- saddle christening: carried out by members of the Horse Artillery Group;
- inflatable slide;
- the ubiquitous children's make-up, done by the children of the regiment's military personnel;
- raft pulling: an activity run by regiment members where a raft was pulled across the pool by a rope;
- dog training and farrier demonstrations.

Everything was enriched by a welcome bag with a healthy snack and a stand with free eye tests and blood sugar check-ups. In other words, a true playground was created around the football pitch, the original core of the event. It was a children's entertainment area with lots of music and a food court for a coffee or a sandwich.

And all this at virtually no cost! It required the closeness of the associations and the great generosity of the military of the regiment and the Horse Artillery Group. From the moment we committed to this event, the invitation was extended to all NRDC-ITA staff, but also to the military authorities of the City of Milan and to the Asilo Mariuccia Foundation, which has always helped mothers and children in need. To involve such a large number of organisations, an advertising campaign was run with posters and an information team that physically visited every barracks in the Lombard capital and Solbiate Olona. The response was simply fantastic.

Large numbers were not expected, as this was the first time it was being held, and there is a known reluctance to return to the barracks outside working hours. But the bet paid off. At last count, more than 600 participants from all the units invited came, plus well over 30 children from the Asilo Mariuccia Foundation and many friends of the Regiment. At the end of the day, many family members also spoke directly to the Commander about their happiness to return to the barracks and see the places where their children, husbands, wives or partners spend their working day.

In short, the Special Day was the beginning of a new course in which families responded positively to the call to the barracks!



Colonel
ITA Army
Valerio GOLINO



NO LIMITS DAY 2023

No more limits for anyone!

“As a zero edition, we are keeping a low profile.” This was the mantra that guided organising NRDC-ITA NO LIMITS. Lt. Gen. D’Addario wanted to get this event off the ground, having been born from Folgore No Limits, which in the past took place in an area tied to the “Folgore” Paratroopers Brigade in Tuscany and Lazio.



When NRDC-ITA NO LIMITS was first conceived, it was only going to focus on the combination of sport and disability, but after meeting with the various associations working so hard in the field, it became clear that we needed to broaden our horizons, especially as we wanted to help all disabled people to discover their potential and increase their self-esteem.

When we close our eyes and think of disability, we immediately think of a wheelchair... but such an association is overly simplistic. We worked with the Italian Paralympic Committee in Lombardy, which deals specifically with physical disabilities, it is a fantastic world! But we also discovered the Special Olympics, an Italian Paralympic Committee charity with a mission: *“Through sport, we create a world where people with intellectual disabilities are recognised for their abilities and not discriminated against because of their differences. We provide opportunities to discover skills and talents, self-confidence and satisfaction, on the pitch and in life. By shining a spotlight on the abilities of athletes, we are making the whole of society more welcoming and inclusive.”*

We kept the profile low, but the enthusiasm we received was overwhelming! As the event took shape, it expanded

constantly because, in addition to the sporting associations, it was also an opportunity to give visibility to everything that might improve the well-being of those in need.

The possibility of having spaces for Pet Therapy came up and we could not say no to this fantastic opportunity. Not everyone knows that the use of companion animals for Pet Therapy has been recognised as an official treatment since February 2003. Horses, ponies and dogs brought their compassion by providing tranquillity and stimulating the minds of visitors to the special area.

“Stimulate the resources and potential of each individual by involving them in manual activities, recognising the psychophysically disabled person’s active position in society.” Through art, the boys and girls of Cooperativa Sociale Oasi showed, if it were needed, that disability is often a limitation we impose on ourselves. The exhibition of splendid “Designer Fakes” from Picasso to Salvador Dali, including Tamara de Lempicka, Modigliani and Joan Miro delighted us and left us speechless!

“A person’s disability is relative to their environment: if I have to go into a shop and there are five steps, I can’t go in if I have a wheelchair, but I can if I have a prosthesis. So the moment we all have the opportunity to do something, the word disability no longer exists. If we wanted to imagine a utopian world where there are ‘ramps’ for





Warrant officer
ITA Army
Francesco D'AGOSTINO

everyone, I mean even technological aids for all kinds of disabilities, well, the concept itself would no longer exist." This is Bebe Vio's reasoning. All of this is encapsulated in what you are trying to provide through the metaverse, a virtual space connected to the real world and populated by avatars. Teams of neuroscientists see this "new world" as a concrete therapeutic aid in the care and treatment of psychiatric or neurological conditions such as phobias, eating disorders, autism, and in the rehabilitation of people who have suffered a stroke to regain the function of an arm or leg. Thanks to Olimaint, everyone who took part in NRDC-ITA NO LIMITS was given this opportunity.

Last but not least, more than 40 "GT Supercars" created the chance to fulfil the dream of a lap in a Lamborghini, Ferrari, Porsche, etc. riding through the streets of the Ugo Mara barracks that were turned into a small circuit for the occasion.

NO LIMITS... no barriers and no limits!



Cohesion is all about trust

Command Senior Enlisted Leader Conference at Ugo Mara Barracks

Warrant officer (1st class)
ITA Army
Stefano GENCO



It has been a very exciting period at NRDC-ITA. We were recently able to host the 6th LANDCOM Command Senior Enlisted Leader (CSEL) Conference (2 to 4 May 2023) that included 26 CSELs from the NATO Command Structure, the NATO Force Structure, and the educational structure. In addition, just one week later, we welcomed the CSELs of the Swedish and Finnish Armies.

The CSEL conference was a tremendous opportunity to learn about the strategic and operational point of view and to better understand all the real issues that NCOs are facing, including on a tactical level. Finnish and Swedish CSELs also provided great insight into their forces, capabilities and current issues. The shared and most important takeaways from both events related to the empowerment of NCOs, to improving the interoperability and integration of different forces and to maintaining and reinforcing cohesion among military personnel.

The recent crisis in Ukraine has without doubt reinvigorated NATO as a military alliance. At the same time, it has strengthened cohesion within each NATO organization, including NRDC-ITA. In this very demanding and challenging technological and Multi Domain environment, NCOs continue to play the leading role in which cohesion and a sense of belonging are still extraordinary force multipliers. NCOs are an essential element, they are specialized, capable and professional and can rely on unique cohesion to sustain their will and commitment to each other, the unit and the mission or combat accomplishment, despite combat or mission stress. A cohesive team is not only always better able face problems and solve different challenges, but also enjoys improved performance.





In our army, as well as in every army, cohesion is all about trust. Social cohesion encourages soldiers to trust each other as individuals. Task cohesion reassures soldiers that they can trust their teammates in accomplishing the mission/task. And collective cohesion inspires trust in the team and the units.

Moreover, a cohesive team is able to understand people with difficulties and prevent stressful situations. Such awareness, together with unity, means such teams will always be ready to support and help each other. Cohesion is also a key factor in having a unit with high morale, positively shaping the working environment and building stronger motivation.

In relation to the above, NRDC-ITA organizes different social and team building events to facilitate staff interaction. We are also planning sport events that should be great fun and because fatigue and sacrifice help strengthen the spirit of cohesion. Training opportunities and exercises

also contribute to the cohesion process. Recently, our HQ had the opportunity and the privilege to host the 1st NRDC-ITA No Limits event for people with disabilities. It truly was a great achievement both on the military and civilian side. I saw a common sense of belonging in all the people involved in that special day.

We are already taking different steps that I believe are in the right direction. However, cohesion is a long path that needs to be bolstered constantly. We have a strong leadership that encourages and promotes cohesion and teamwork. Also in this case, NCOs are paramount to increasing cohesion among NRDC-ITA personnel. In particular, Senior NCOs have the experience to understand the different dynamics and to approach different issues properly. At NRDC-ITA we exploit every single opportunity to create a stronger, better team. These events and activities also have to include the personnel from the SPT BDE and their regiments to create and build up NRDC-ITA as a unique entity.

In closure, I would like to recall two of the key points from the CSEL Conference: integration and cohesion. The organization of both events, the conference and the No Limits Day, required an incredible effort from all the actors involved, mainly NCOs. NRDC-ITA personnel together with SPT BDE, 33rd Regiment and 1st Regiment did an outstanding job. It was always clear that everybody was focused on representing our HQ optimally. And I was impressed by the strong cohesion among all the members. Everybody worked as a single, great team to achieve a unique goal and to demonstrate the true professionalism of NRDC-ITA members. Thank you all!!!



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Discover Busto Arsizio: the Manchester of Italy

In the 19th century, the town of Busto Arsizio was nicknamed the Manchester of Italy on the back of its rapid industrial expansion, particularly in the textile sector, which boosted the economy of the entire province. Spinning and weaving mills from that time could still be found until the 1960s, when a rapid decline began and most of them disappeared, but not without leaving indelible traces of their past on the town, the landscape and even the culture.

Today Busto Arsizio is a modern industrial and retail town whose origins probably date back to the late Roman period, between the second and fourth centuries AD. As early as the Middle Ages, Busto Arsizio had a major textile industry, which continued for centuries. In the late 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th century, foundries and mechanical industries started to develop alongside the textile industry, ushering in a long period of great prosperity.

The dome of the basilica of San Giovanni Battista



Strolling through the streets of the town centre, you can see several historic buildings and churches from the pre-industrial era. These include the Church of San Michele, one of the key religious sites in the town, with a bell tower dating back to the 9th or 10th century, making it the oldest building in the town; the 17th century Basilica of San Giovanni Battista, the original nucleus of which dates back to the Lombard period; and the Sanctuary of Santa Maria della Piazza, built on the site of a small church dating back to the 13th or 14th century that, in turn, was built over a chapel from the early-Christian period. It is also worth seeing the Museum of Textile and Industrial Tradition, which has objects, machines, products and documents about the local textile industry and other sectors of Busto's industrial tradition.

Let's take a closer look at the tourist attractions that this beautiful town has to offer. This information should be useful for those who wish to spend a few enjoyable hours exploring Busto Arsizio.

Lieutenant Colonel
ITA Army
Gianluca GRECO

The altar of the basilica of San Giovanni Battista



Museum of Textile and Industrial Tradition

This museum is about the industrial history of Busto Arsizio and its textile traditions. It was founded on 30 January 1997 to collect and preserve objects, machines, products and documents from the local textile industry and other sectors of Busto Arsizio's industrial tradition. The museum also promotes cultural and popularisation activities to help scientific and historical research in this field. The museum is also meant to disseminate the history of textile production, its labour processes and the industrial and social repercussions, as part of spreading knowledge of the textile know-how that has been acquired in the town. The museum is located in the building that once housed the spinning department of one of the area's largest factories, the Carlo Ottolini then Bustese Cotton Mill, a key example of the town's industrial archaeology.



**FOR MORE INFO ABOUT
THE MUSEUM SCAN HERE**



Palazzo Marliani Cicogna Mozzoni

In the heart of the old centre of Busto Arsizio, Palazzo Marliani-Cicogna overlooks Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II. This 18th-century building is considered one of the masterpieces of baroque architecture in Lombardy.

After buying a 16th-century building from the Rasini family, Count Luigi Marliani also bought the part of the moat there so he could build his own residence. Between 1624 and 1653, a series of major alterations and extensions were overseen by Luigi and his grandson Carlo. The layout of the Marliani mansion was further modified in the first half of the eighteenth century. Around 1820, the Cicogna Mozzoni family, who had acquired the right to the building from the Counts of Gamberana, sold it to the municipal administration, which set up the municipal and district offices there. In those years, new prison cells were opened at the back of the building, housed in the building designed by Francesco Croce in 1762, originally as a juvenile prison and work house.

After the Municipal Delegation moved to Palazzo Gilardoni, in 1862 it was decided to repair the edifice to adapt it to its future use as the Circuit Court.

The judicial offices were moved to a new location around 1970. Today the building houses not only the municipal library but also a museum with the Civic Art Collection.

In 1958, in the centre of the square in front of it, a monument was erected by the artist Enrico Manfrini in memory of those who died at work, made up of two pink granite steles depicting three naked men falling—the monument is the reason the square is popularly known as "Piazza tri Cù" (literally "Square of the Three Asses").

**FOR MORE INFO ABOUT
THE BUILDING SCAN
HERE**



Basilica of San Giovanni Battista

This church is one of the most important works of the baroque period in the province of Varese. The first stone of the new basilica was laid on 26 May 1609, but it was not until 1614 that the first service was held on the occasion of the patron saint's day, and the work had still not been completed by this time. At that time, only the apse and the transept with their chapels had been built: the nave and two aisles did not exist yet. Work continued, and the dome was completed in 1635, 26 years after construction began.

The imposing façade has a lower order of twinned Ionic pilasters, a Lombard porch with an arched pediment, copper and bronze doors with bas-reliefs depicting the life of St. John the Baptist, statues of St. Ambrose, St. Charles Borromeo, Faith and Charity, and countless other works from different periods. However, the façade was still incomplete: the upper part was completed between 1699 and 1701 by Domenico Valmagini, who added a large oval window, a double broken curved pediment, statues of St. Peter, St. Paul and four prophets and the central statue of St. John the Baptist, which is the highest point of the façade. Inside, the church has barrel and ribbed vaults; the nave and twin aisles are separated by rows of Ionic pillars and columns. Large canvases depicting the life of St. John the Baptist hang under the arches. The left transept houses two 17th-century frescoes (Rest during the Flight into Egypt and Nativity) that are said to be the work of Antonio Crespì Castoldi.

Outside the church, on the right, is the "mortuary", a small temple by an unknown designer, built between 6 September 1689 and 2 November 1692, to remind passers-by of the mystery of death through a display of skulls, which are still visible from Via Milano. Inside there are paintings of angels and symbols of the Passion.



FOR MORE INFO ABOUT
THE BASILICA SCAN HERE



WWF Bosco di Vanzago reserve

Just a few kilometres from Busto Arsizio lies this beautiful nature reserve. The reserve is home to a wide variety of plants and wildlife, including deer, foxes, badgers and many species of birds.

Thousands of years ago, forests covered the entire Po Valley. At the time of the last Ice Age, pines and birches took over, and with the return of a milder climate, beeches, oaks, elms and lindens spread.

The WWF Bosco di Vanzago reserve is a remnant of those ancient times when forests covered the Po Valley. The protected area, managed by the WWF Foundation, covers about 200 hectares in the municipalities of Vanzago, Arluno and Pogliano Milanese.

In addition to the forest, the reserve includes two lakes, various wetlands, ponds and pools, and several areas of organic farming.



FOR MORE INFO ABOUT
THE PARK SCAN HERE



Villa Ottolini - Tosi

Villa Ottolini-Tosi is a splendid example of Liberty architecture (the Italian variant of art nouveau) and decoration. It is generally viewed as one of the most spectacular residences in Busto Arsizio. The villa was built for Ernesto Ottolini, the son of Carlo Ottolini, the owner of cotton mill bearing his name, not far from the family's other homes.

Built in 1902, the villa is set in a large park, although today it is smaller than the original. It was designed by the architect Camillo Crespi Balbi, who combined elements of Romanesque architecture with a Liberty style.

The building has a keep on the north-east side and has three floors, including a basement for service activities. The exterior is of exposed stone and brick, with quirky details such as a rose window, mullioned windows, loggias, and curved and triangular pediments. The numerous wrought iron decorations include griffins, sunflowers, corncobs, pomegranates, skeletons and dragon heads. The most famous and impressive of these is undoubtedly the main gate, a remnant of a much larger fence. Made by the workshop of Alessandro Mazzucotelli, it is an intricate weave of plant motifs, abstractions and medieval-inspired fantastical creatures, in which iron seems to be moulded as if it were wax.

The interiors are rich and varied, decorated in art nouveau style. There are also beautiful stained glass windows and wrought iron and marble features, such as the grand staircase.

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THE VILLA SCAN HERE**



The most prestigious room is the Wedding Hall, decorated with mosaics, an ornate ceiling with exposed beams, a polychrome marble fireplace and magnificent stained glass windows with figurative medallions. The hall is entirely frescoed, with eight large figures on the door frames. They are the allegorical figures of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Music, Virtue and Peace and, in one painting, *Romeo and Juliet*.

Owned by the Busto Arsizio Municipality since 1969, Villa Ottolini-Tosi now houses the offices of Parco Alto Milanese and the Gioacchino Rossini Music School.

Villa Ottolini - Tovaglieri

This is one of the most beautiful villas in Busto Arsizio and was owned by Enrico Ottolini, Ernesto's brother and the son of Carlo Ottolini, the owner of the cotton mill of the same name. The villa is a true monument to the economic power of the industrial bourgeoisie in Busto Arsizio.

The villa is located on the northern edge of the old village, near the church of San Michele. It is located a short distance from the other two residences that housed the family of Enrico and Antonio Ottolini.

The building was built in 1903. Today it houses the town's Department of Culture. Camillo Crespi Balbi chose to design the villa in the style of a city mansion. The building has three floors plus a basement used for cellars.

The interior shows a strong taste for decoration, with polychrome floors, frescoed walls and an elaborate ceiling with exposed beams. The play of light filtered through the stained glass windows is remarkable.



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