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COVER PICTURE

[ by NRDC-ITA PAO ]



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# Commander NRDC-ITA

[ Lieutenant General **Giorgio Battisti**, Italian Army ]

Three years have passed since I assumed the command of NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy and the positive outcome of all the past activities was strong evidence of the Corps being a reliable Headquarters of the Alliance.

It was with enthusiasm and stimulation that I came back from Afghanistan in January 2014, where the most of the Corps' personnel performed complex and demanding duties. It has been a long period of intense activity and tasks accomplished in a very challenging environment, throughout the delicate transition phase of the Campaign. It was an important test bed for NRDC-ITA at operational level, and the greatest lesson learned is that teamwork binds us together, paving the way for cooperation in restoring stability.

Meanwhile, the Corps' Staff continued to work hard to develop Joint Task Force HQ capability, as a consequence of NATO's requirement to adapt its Command and Control structure in response to world crisis. I am proud to remind you that our commendable achievements (like our Joint Logistic Support Group validation and employment in NRF 2014) are proof of professionalism and commitment, both in supporting deployed personnel

and keeping the NRDC-ITA flag flying. Your outstanding efforts have already been recognized by NATO and Italian Military and Civilian Authorities.

Please, extend my sincere and deep gratitude to our families, the beating heart of NRDC-ITA. Their stable and constant support enabled us to succeed in all of our past responsibilities and their warm affection will provide us with the strength to face future challenges.

Looking ahead, our responsibilities are not over yet. From the end of 2014, NRDC-ITA will be fully engaged in facing significant challenges for our Full Operational Capability as a Joint Task Force Headquarters. This transition will allow the Corps to complete the tasks assigned for the period 2015-2016 and to be confirmed as a key NATO asset and a Centre of Excellence for the Italian Army on doctrine, training and procedures. Hence, I expect that all Contributing Nations representatives share their experience and ideas, exploiting our diversity to our maximum advantage, strengthening our organization and confirming our pivotal role in the process. Problems are to be addressed by blending different traditions, cultures, ways of thinking and languages, paving the way for more effective and reliable

achievements. Multinationality is one of our key strengths.

NRDC-ITA is established on well-resourced training, expeditionary attitude and readiness to deploy. Readiness and celerity are abilities we need to build up in order to deploy even more rapidly, wherever the Alliance requires us to. Therefore, I want you all to ensure that NRDC-ITA perfectly masters the new HQ Core procedures and processes.

Finally, the JTF concept requires a joint mind-set. Air, Maritime and Civilian elements have to blend together with the Land expertise in order to combine the different knowledge and various fieldworks to achieve our common goals. Therefore, an open-mind attitude is to be assumed by each man and woman of NRDC-ITA, enabling the collaboration to achieve the desired joint effects.

Despite the uncertainty of the future security environment, I am absolutely confident that the Headquarters will persevere in the effort of enhancing its capabilities, that all NRDC-ITA personnel will not stop developing the required aptitudes and increase the needed skills to face always more challenging tasks.

Be proud of what you have achieved so far, keep going and "UBIQUE CELERE".

[ Warrant Officer Class 1 **Pasquale Dionisio**, Italian Army ]



It must be remembered that not everybody came home. On behalf of all personnel and families of the NRDC-

**I**t has been some months since the last time I had the opportunity to dedicate a few lines to you all. On that occasion, I offered you an update on the forthcoming events facing HQ NRDC ITA, in particular the deployment to Afghanistan with our Commander Lieutenant General Giorgio BATTISTI, prominent as Chief of Staff of the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, and as the Italian Senior National Representative.

I had the privilege to be deployed to Kabul as member of a special team consisting of strong contributors to our International NRDC-ITA Family. My personal ISAF experience saw me working for the NATO Senior Civilian Representative. This appointment gave me the possibility to broaden my knowledge of the Alliance and observe its strategic approach to the mission - all this at a critical time for the population of Afghanistan. Our pre - deployment training and education was thorough and well planned and we departed for Afghanistan well prepared. This allowed us to overcome the many challenges that were presented to us throughout the tour and to conclude it having achieved a great deal.

While most of us were deployed for 6 months, some of our fellow colleagues spent more than one year on the tour. The contribution of NRDC personnel to achievements of the mission is highlighted by the presentation of numerous commendations and awards. I must emphasize that all NRDC-ITA soldiers made a valuable contribution

to the mission. The professionalism, knowledge and expertise shown by the members of our unique unit were recognized, without exception, by the 49 ISAF Troop Contributing Nations. I am pleased, also, to be able to take this opportunity to extend a very big personal thank you to the families of the NRDC-ITA soldiers. These families supported us exceptionally well during our deployment and many of us have felt close to them whilst away, despite the geographical separation. Support from our families is something so important to maintaining operational

## Command Sergeant Major

effectiveness. During the Afghanistan deployment it very much helped us to achieve all that we did. This support continues now that we are home - and it is something that we continue to be enormously grateful for. I must also point out that the support provided by our Headquarters here in Solbiate Olona has been superb as well. Therefore let me express a special thanks to our Deputy Commander, Major General Sir George NORTON, our Chief of Staff, Major General Rosario CASTELLANO and importantly to all the members of our unique Headquarters that worked so hard whilst we were away.

ITA, special thoughts go to all those who made the ultimate sacrifice for a better Afghanistan; the fallen warriors who passed away and never returned to their families and friends.

Liberty is a precious gift whose benefits we all enjoy every day, but too often we give little thought to the price paid for it.

Their tremendous sacrifices should never be forgotten and in fact should be remembered on a daily basis. Therefore I am sure that you will agree with me in saying "Make Every Day Memorial Day!"

# Exercise EAGLE BLADE 14

[ Lt Col **Rob Dickinson**, UK Army ]

**I**t is probably worth putting into context the time at which I am writing this article. HQ NRDC-ITA is currently in the midst of Crisis Response Planning (CRP) for Ex EAGLE JOKER 14, the next major training event in October in Southern Italy and currently undergoing National Evaluation by the Italian Joint Force Headquarters. Part of this process was Ex EAGLE BLADE 14 (EB14), a Command Post Exercise that took place 17 - 28 Feb 2014 in Solbiate.

The Joint Operational Planning Group was deployed into the infamous Hangar 28 for over 28 days of intense and productive planning...and the Concept of Operations document has now been submitted to the Deputy Commander for his consideration and deliberation. Ex EB14 was the first attempt by HQ NRDC-ITA to deliver the SHAPE - mandated capability to provide a Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTFHQ), one that would command either an initial entry Small Joint Operation (Land) or act as a follow on JTFHQ for a Major Joint Operation.

Since arriving as SO1 Chief G3/5 in July 2013 it is not an exaggeration to state that the Headquarters has had to transform 'in contact'. 2013 saw a significant proportion of the Headquarters deployed in support of the ISAF Mission in Afghanistan, several of

who completed a very challenging 12 - month tour.

Concurrently the stay-behind staff led the project to effectively lift the eyes, minds and outputs of the Headquarters to deliver both the demands of operating at the Joint (Operational) level whilst also delivering the more traditional HQ NRDC-ITA capability, that of a Land Component Command (LCC) Headquarters (at the Tactical level). Originally Ex EB14 had been planned and projected by J7 as a LCC exercise to effectively reintegrate the returning staff from the Afghanistan deployment and the considerable number of new staff who arrived in the latter part of 2013 (including myself).

In early October and after much staff consultation the Command Group made the bold decision to transform the training event from a Land Tactical exercise into a Joint exercise. It is clear that as we prepare for Ex EAGLE JOKER in October 14 and subsequently NATO Certification on Ex TRIDENT JAGUAR in May 2015 we simply would not be in the current state of preparedness if it had not been for that brave decision. Whilst there is still much to be done in the next 12 months before standing up as a contingent JTFHQ at High Readiness on the Long Term Rotation Plan,

Ex EB 14 and the associated Battle Staff Training events have placed us well on the path to success.

Put simply, we have achieved much... but there is still much to achieve.

Ex EB consisted of over 90% of headquarters personnel deploying as the Primary Training Audience to Hangar 28 and associated buildings at the back of Ugo Mara Barracks. The Joint Logistic Support Group deployed to the rear of the HQ Main Building and Exercise Control and the supporting staff deployed approximately 100 KMs away.

Using the fictitious SKOLKAN 1 scenario, HQ NRDC-ITA 'deployed' to Tallinn in Estonia to support a fellow NATO country against Bothnia.

Bothnia had over the last 6 months become increasingly belligerent and eventually committed acts of conventional and asymmetric aggression against Estonia despite the strong resolve of NATO and considerable deterrence forces of Baltic and Estonia Force (BEFOR).

Ultimately, and with North Atlantic Council approval, BEFOR took military action to restore Estonian Territorial integrity and by the time ENDEX was called on 27 Feb 14, HQ NRDC-ITA, as a JTFHQ, was in the final stages of defeating Bothnian forces on Hiiumaa Island and isolating the

residual elements of the 2nd Echelon Forces of the 43rd Amphibious Brigade on the mainland.

The exercise asked much of the staff and Command Group; principally lifting the focus and planning horizon beyond the 4 - 5 days usual for a LCC.

Soldiers enjoy tactical planning and execution; it is a natural activity for them. However, many of us have found it extremely challenging to now think about the Maritime and Air Component, Special Operations, Strategic Communications, Comprehensive Pre-

paration of the Operating Environment Knowledge Development and Gender perspective. These are some of the many directed areas to consider within the SHAPE Conceptual Framework document (dated March 2013) when operating as a JTFHQ.

Ex EB14 gave us an excellent initial 'in house' training opportunity to explore these concepts and see how they fit within our Core Process (i.e. Commander's Decision Making Cycle) of Assess, Plan, Refine and Execute. Whilst we have a plethora of newly retitled Multi-Disciplinary Working

Groups within the Headquarters and have seen a considerable amount of 'Operational' and 'Joint' headings inserted into our lexicon, actually the basics of what we are being asked to achieve are simply to:

- Plan and think deeper and further into the future as a JTFHQ
- Integrate not just Air (a common consideration for a LCC HQ for many years), but also Maritime, Special Forces and Joint Logistics effects into the planning and execute stages
- Consider the Comprehensive Approach in planning and execution,





particularly focusing on the coordination of, and integration between, the military and non-military actors (Non-Governmental Organisations, Other Government Departments etc) operating in the Joint Operational Area

- Deliver Joint Synchronisation and Tactical Coordination concurrently

Or, as General Hodges, Commander LANDCOM, put it more succinctly in April 14 whilst visiting HQ NRDC-ITA, 'focus not on the doctrinal argument of whether you are a true JTFHQ... focus on how you deliver the effect of running a Land - centric Small Joint Operation'. After two days of Communication Information Systems set-up and induction training with the supporting brigades, the HQ conducted 4 days of branch training as a slow warm up to the main event; a 4-day Battle Rhythm starting with a Joint Assessment Board where



**Photo 1:** Lt Col Rob Dickinson briefs COMD, COS and DCOM HQ NRDC-ITA on the refined aspects of the contingency plan to re - take Hiiumaa Island (Ex EB 14).

the Commander gave Direction and Guidance to the staff to develop and draft a Joint Coordination Order (effectively a Joint Operations Order). This was submitted for the Commander's approval at the Joint Coordination Board at the end of the cycle. Concurrent to this longer term

Joint Synchronisation, the staff also met on a daily basis to deliver the Tactical Coordination as the LCC HQ. With its new and emerging JTFHQ processes and procedures ahead of Ex EAGLE JOKER 14 and Ex TRIDENT JAGUAR 15, Ex EB 14 proved to be an incredibly valuable run out for HQ NRDC-ITA. I sense that we all realise the need to contract - in more Joint experience. This will be achieved through the changes to the Peace Establishment (principally Air and Maritime personnel posted in) across the HQ. In addition we will need to train and integrate the significant number of Crisis Establishment posts ahead of any activation as well as conducting further academic and battle staff training. We have much to learn from our comrades in the other services, higher headquarters and civilian institutions. There is also no doubt that conducting liaison visits and exchange training between the other members of the NRDC community can only enhance our capability and progress as we venture into an area that transcends both the Operational and Tactical Art.

**Photo 2:** Deputy Commander HQ NRDC-ITA is briefed by Assistance Chief of Staff J3 and HQ NRDC-ITA staff on the 'Go / No Go' Decision Brief to launch the Air Assault onto Hiiumaa Island (Ex EAGLE BLADE).







# Exercise STEADFAST COBALT 2014 (SFCT 14)

## Low risk Interoperability

[ Col **Carmine Pompa**, Italian Army ] [ Cap **Clemente Casoria**, Italian Army ]

Ex SFCT 14 is primarily a Communications Information Systems (CIS) test exercise for NATO Response Force (NRF) 2015. It also allowed nations not participating in NRF to act as a Secondary Training Audience and test their Functional Services, thereby gaining the benefit of the experience of the Subject Matter Experts involved. Ex SFCT has developed into the biggest and most comprehensive annual NATO CIS Functional Services exercise; this year it was held in Kaunas (Lithuania) and involved 10 units from 19 NATO countries, either as the training audience or observers. The exercise was demanding; for the first time it demonstrated an operational scenario and all phases of CIS deployment were tested. Joint Force Command Naples acted as Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTF HQ). All services were initially provided from Naples and then, as the deployment progressed, from Kaunas where JTF HQ was deployed.

After setting up CIS architecture in the first week of exercise (01 - 08 May), all services were successfully tested.

Tests were mainly focused on the following key areas:

- Communication (Voice, Radio and Video Teleconference);
- Information System / Core Services;
- Functional Services.

Starting from 30 April, NRDC-ITA deployed containers and Command Post shelters and personnel under a J6 lead. From 3 May all CIS Satellite links, Video Teleconferences, Voice and all NATO networks were available.

The active phase ran from 10 to 23 May, and for first time all services were extended back to Solbiate Olona in order to reflect the deployment of CIS on a JTF HQ operation and enable non-deployed personnel to participate. The 1st Signal Regiment a Task Force was well-trained. On deployment, they built up a Command Post and delivered services very quickly. Ex SFCT provided a good opportunity to improve the NRDC-ITA knowledge of NATO CIS and work alongside CIS professionals from other nations.

During the exercise NRDC-ITA established effective cooperation with Al-

lied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps. There was an excellent exchange of information and experience in support of their respective JTF HQ validations next year. Even though the two Headquarters were only participating as Secondary Training Audience, they took part in the same test events as the Primary Training Audience.

One of the most important Functional Services that was tested during the exercise was the core Geospatial Information Systems (GIS). Core GIS is a mapping service able to manage and provide geospatial data (maps and imagery) and make it available to all Functional Services.

Maps and Geo data are created by Geo Operators using ArcGIS desktop software and uploaded onto storage managed by Core GIS.

This allows the storage and sharing of geospatial data in a centralized coherent manner. Moreover it allows bandwidth saving and provides a high quality service.

During the testing phase, where the functionality of all Functional Services was confirmed, NRDC ITA greatly assisted in troubleshooting and problem solving. This work was most appreciated by SHAPE J6 and the NATO CIS community.



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# Eagle Eye 14 Seminar

[ Col. **Cosimo Orlando**, Italian Army ]

The Eagle Eye 14 (EE14) seminar took place on 26 March 2014 in Ugo Mara barracks. With NRDC-ITA preparing to standby as a Joint Task Force (JTF) HQ for 12 months from July 2015, the seminar's aim was to convey to the international community the context in which this transformation was taking place. Speakers at the seminar provided this context with regard to NATO responses to changes in the global security situation.

## An Open Mindset

In his opening remarks the NRDC-ITA commander, General Giorgio Battisti, emphasized not only the importance of technology but also the need to adopt a new mindset in order to adapt to the challenges of the transformation process.

## Commitment to Collective Defence

The EE 14 seminar confirmed that Article 5 remains the priority for the Alliance. As its role constantly evolves, Collective Defence is still the heart of NATO's mission. Additionally it was acknowledged that other challenges within Europe (such as currently exist in Ukraine) and elsewhere (such as Syria) may present themselves in the future. So despite this commitment, NATO has a role as an international actor, and can no longer be confined to the exclusive accomplishment of the specific task of collective defence. NATO has recently



expanded eastwards and has responsibilities to those new members and Partners in Eastern Europe.

This, combined with a number of other factors, such as the medium to long-term interests of the US, will help to shape future NATO policies.

## Ukraine

EE14 recognised that although NATO cannot do much in the short term about Ukraine crisis, it advocated giving a very strong signal to influence the medium to long-term consequences of it, and to remain a credible organisation. It was discussed that NATO should continue to reassure its Allies in Eastern Europe and dissuade Russia from further intervention by increasing its activity and presence on its eastern flank. Possible options to achieve this might include the entire eastern border of the Alliance seeing a greater presence of forces through the conduct of exercises, the deployment

of forces, or the opening of new bases, all of which are not without controversy and would be political decisions.

## From "Deployment" to "Ready"

There is little doubt that 2014 is a turning point for NATO. With the conclusion of operations in Afghanistan and crises emerging in Ukraine and other parts of the world, a new strategic era is forming in an evolving global security background. The reduced involvement in Afghanistan will ultimately see NATO move from a "Deployment" Phase to a "Ready" one in anticipation of future operations. It has been suggested by some that the NATO - led operation in Afghanistan suffered from a lack of integration at the supranational level amongst the various international agencies involved in achieving the common strategic goal. EE14 discussed some of the lessons identified from the Afghanistan campaign



to explore possible improvements to NATO's unity of purpose and effort for future operations.

These included National caveats, dependence on different chains of command, early withdrawal by some members, and management of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

Ways to make improvements to these matters both operationally and within Afghan institutions were explored during the seminar.

### Interoperability

Despite the inevitable lessons to make improvement, the overall success of the mission in Afghanistan has been of benefit to NATO for many reasons. Years of joint operations there have improved NATO interoperability, and the Afghanistan mission will be used as a starting point for the development of even greater interoperability between the NATO contributing Nations in the future. With an emphasis not just on NATO members but also partners, the EE14 Seminar discussed the requirement to extend this interoperability



to Partners Nations as well as NATO members. Challenges in the field of security remain complex while the perception of a more stabilized world has led to a significant reduction in military investment. This has led to the NATO 'Capacity Building Initiative'. Deeper NATO integration will enhance capability, something being driven by the 'Connected Forces Initiative' and the related concept of 'Smart Defence'. This includes integrated education, training and procedure development. This initiative aims to guarantee to the Alliance the ability to preserve current integration whilst further developing work together and with NATO Partners.

### Technology

To remain credible and effective, NATO forces must be able to operate not just on land, at sea and in the air, but wherever potential adversaries may operate. These include space and cyberspace and so the potential to be technologically outmatched becomes considerable. Improving technology will help NATO overcome this threat as well as assisting with the challenge to resolve conflicts with smaller forces. Technological development is recognised as a sensitive issue for member nations as it involves not only national security but also has economic implications. Keeping NATO forces at the forefront of technological advances, and further developing some of these advances, requires cooperation and significant investment, not something easy to justify against a background of reductions in military spending, particularly in Europe.

It was debated at EE14 whether attacks in Cyberspace could be considered in an Article 5 context. At that time, it was suggested that this was something which may enter the agenda for the forthcoming NATO summit in the UK in September where challenges that confront the Alliance post 2014 will be discussed.

The lively discussion on this and throughout the EE14 demonstrated the high level of interest generated by the seminar.

**P**rimaries EE14 contributors were the Italian NATO permanent representative, Ambassador Gabriele Checchia, who underlined the importance of the Connected Forces Initiative (CFI), Professor Lindley - French who provided an insight into the future of NATO forces. A Cyber Defence perspective was given by Professor Marco Lombardi and Colonel Tor Hylin from SHAPE who explained the new strategic challenges and provided perspective on Civil-Military analysis.





# Implementation of the Knowledge Development capability

[ Lt. Col. **Antonio Romano**, Italian Army ]

**I**t is not possible to introduce any topic related to the Knowledge Development (KD) concept without speaking about the Comprehensive Approach (CA) concept, from which KD takes its origin.

After the experiences from the Balkans and Afghanistan, NATO has recognized that facing a modern situation of crisis requires a "full spectrum approach". This means involving the international community as a combination of organized and integrated civil and military components, cooperating in order to reach common objectives. In light of this, the 2010 Lisbon Summit Declaration and the new Strategic Concept officially introduced the CA concept as the core base of the NATO Crisis Management role. Its primary intent is the anticipating of crises and, where appropriate, the taking of active steps to avoid their evolution and transformation into larger conflicts. Although an official definition of the CA concept does not yet exist, it is considered to be a "way of continuously behaving" and a mindset to work with so called "non-NATO entities" (NNEs). This approach therefore makes best use of individual and collective talents and capabilities in order to understand, influence, plan, prepare and execute missions. In practical terms, the implementation of the CA concept foresees a deep interaction between military and civil dimensions aimed to:

- Exchange information.
- Exchange lessons learned.

- Organize common phases of training.
- Involve the NNEs into the military planning activity.
- Enhance activities of cooperation.
- Coordinate public messaging.

To improve NATO Crisis Management intent, (ie to better anticipate crises and prevent their evolution into larger conflicts) additional information gathering instruments will be developed with relevant civil actors. Many NNEs (such as International Organizations, Non-governmental Organizations, Institutions, Universities, and so on) may already operate within the engagement space or able to provide information on it. Developing relationships with them will open up additional sources of information and enhance open source material and the traditional intelligence sources already used by NATO.

## Knowledge Development originating from the Comprehensive Approach

KD can be briefly defined as "a process, carried out at strategic, operational and tactical levels of command, to provide the decision makers with a comprehensive understanding of complex environments. This will include relationships and interactions between systems and actors within the engagement space". The KD approach enables decision makers to better

understand the effects that the use of the instruments of State power (military, political, economic and civil powers) can have on the different systems (political, military, economic, social, infrastructure and information). It must be underlined that with the term "decision makers" includes the military Commander and their Staff as well as the civilian authorities. The two most important characteristics of this new concept are:

- the use of civil analysts (in addition to military ones) to provide a vision from a civil point of view, not influenced by a military education and/or perspective
- the exchange of information with the NNEs.
- Building on the mindset of the CA, the development of a KD capability became a NRDC-ITA priority since 2012. Since then, NRDC-ITA has been deeply involved in the study and implementation of the KD concept in its structure and procedures. As a result, a KD structure was created in September 2013. This new structure, able to collect and analyze information, produce and spread knowledge, was experimented during Exercise "Eagle Blade 14", in September 2014, with very encouraging results. After having created the new KD structure, NRDC-ITA concentrated its efforts by creating links with the civil





dimension and involving it in order to implement an effective interaction that could give to the KD personnel a real contribution in the field of training and education and that could play a significant role in a potential area of crisis. The NRDC-ITA overall aspiration is to improve its ability to interact with the NNEs with potential to be involved with crisis management. This will develop into information sharing with the civil dimension in order to better interact with, and understand the operational environment.

With this in mind, NRDC-ITA initially created a list of 30 National and Multinational Organizations, Institutions and Universities with which it considered would be useful to cooperate with. In doing so it was important to define the potential role of each of these new contacts.

Therefore, before starting to fill the list of possible contacts, the following competencies / roles in specific fields were examined for potential NNEs to fill:

- International cooperation.
- Humanitarian relief.
- International politics.
- International humanitarian law.
- Development.
- Economics.
- Logistics.
- Refugees and displaced people.
- Criminality and public order.
- Migration.
- Cultural heritage's protection.
- Justice.
- Juvenile condition.

The first list of contacts was created after lengthy discussions between KD, J9 personnel and other people with experience in the field of the International Organizations and Institutions. In deciding which organizations would make the shortlist, consideration was given to those with experiences in dealing with a range of crises that could make the difference between success and failure of a mission.

Taking into account that every crisis is different from the others and has to be analyzed in its own context (political, social, economic etc), the Universities are also of paramount importance, but it was considered that they could have a different role.

Like all the others NNEs they can provide information on specific topics but, in addition, they can help the analysis of particular phenomena on the basis of the data provided by military sources, open sources and other NNEs.

To propose a project of interaction, and in November 2013, KD personnel began contacting the selected NNEs and attended informal meetings with their representatives. For most of the International Organizations, this was the first contact they had with NATO and all the NNEs were very interested about NATO's willingness to interact with the civil dimension. This cooperation led to a "KD Visitors Day" on the 25th of February 2014 at Ugo Mara Barracks, during Exercise Eagle Blade 14. This aim of the day was to give the NNEs

an insight into the NRDC-ITA current and future roles (in a Joint Task Force Headquarters configuration), to show a NATO HQ at work, and explain how NRDC-ITA would apply the CA and KD concepts.

The day was attended by most of the invited NNEs and it can be considered a successful first step. It is intended that it leads to real and effective interaction with the civil world, something specifically to exchange information and cooperate for the mutual benefit of NRDC-ITA and the NNEs in managing crises, and shaping a common vision of the engagement space.

NRDC-ITA's intent is to go ahead with the implementation of the CA and KD concepts, and to improve the interaction already established with the civil dimension.

With the support of the higher echelons (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe and Joint Force Commands), NRDC-ITA hopes to increase the number on NNEs with which it interacts. In line with other NATO organizations, KD has become a section within J2 and is focusing on the Comprehensive Preparation of the Operational Environment.

This means focusing its efforts on non-military aspects of a crisis such as economic, political and social analysis. The KD team is currently heavily involved in exercise preparation to help in our current efforts to become a NATO certified Joint Task Force Headquarters for Small Joint Operations in 2015.

# Taps

[ Lieutenant Colonel **Tommaso Martello**, Italian Army ]

**I**n almost every military ceremony there is a particular moment, during which comrades who lost their lives during the accomplishment of their duties are honoured by the attending civilians and soldiers. Each branch of service and Nation follows its own protocol, but with some common features.

They often comprise a guard of honour, a parade, sometimes the firing of volleys, the laying of a wreath at the base of the flagpole, but almost all incorporate a military band or a lone bugler or piper to play a special tune during the most touching moment of the ceremony.

Although these melodies are different around the world, they are similar in their heart - rending ability to move the participants to a silent moment of thoughtfulness while delivering their note of finality.

"La sonnerie aux morts" (The ringtone of the dead) for France, "Ich hatt' einen Kameraden" (I had a comrade) for Germany, the "Il Silenzio" (The Silence) for Italy, "La muerte no es el final" (Death is not the End) for Spain, "The Last post" for the British and "Taps" for the USA. Listening to their slow and somewhat trembling notes is always awe-inspiring, powerful and beautiful. The tragic significance of these pieces of music is something definitely overwhelming.

Even if most of these tunes are derived from old traditional military bugle calls to signal the end of the day, or from religious or traditional songs, during the years the origin of some of them has become rather a legend. The story of the US tune, "Taps" is a very good example of this.

According to official sources, "Taps" is a variation of an earlier bugle call known as the "Scott Tattoo" which was used in the U.S. from 1835 until 1860. Taps, in its present form, was arranged by the Union Army Brigadier General Daniel Butterfield, an American Civil War general and Medal of Honour recipient.

It replaced a previous French bugle call used to signal "lights out" in camps and barracks. Butterfield's bugler, Oliver Wilcox Norton, of East Springfield, Pennsylvania, was the first to sound the new call.

Within months, "Taps" was used by both Union and Confederate forces. It was officially recognized by the United States Army in 1874. However, there is an alternative story on the origin of Taps. According to legend, in 1862 Robert Ellicombe, Captain of the Union Army, was stationed with his men in Virginia to fight the Confederate Army in an attempt to capture the Confederate capital of Richmond.

As his men settled for the night, Ellicombe heard the moaning of a soldier who lay mortally wounded on the no-

man's-land in front of them. Immediately he decided to risk his own life to make his way to where the soldier lay so he could bring the man back to camp to receive medical attention.

Through gunfire and darkness, Ellicombe crawled on the disturbed earth until he reached the soldier, quickly trailing him to the encampment. When the Captain reached his own lines, he soon discovered the man to be a dead Confederate soldier, but as the Captain lit the lantern he saw something terrible; losing his breath and going numb with







shock, Ellicombe could see through the dim light that the Confederate soldier was his own son - a boy who had been studying music in the South when the war broke.

Without telling his father, Ellicombe's son had volunteered in the Confederate Army.

The following morning, a heartbroken and disconsolate father sought out his superiors, for permission to give his son a full military burial despite his enemy status. His request was partially granted, since he was denied

the request of having an Army band playing at his sons' funeral.

Though out of respect for the Captain, he was granted only one musician.

Ellicombe chose a bugler, and asked the musician to play a sequence of musical notes taken from a folded piece of paper that he found in the pocket of his dead son's uniform.

As the story goes, it was on this day that the bugler began playing the haunting melody now known as Taps, which has become the world's most recognizable sound to com-

memorate soldiers lost in combat. For years, the story of Captain Ellicombe has circulated the internet as a touching tale of the first use of the Taps song.

Whatever the truth is, the origin of the song's creation transcends beyond the legend that has long been told.

What really counts is making sure that the sacrifices made by our comrades are not forgotten and their spirit is perpetuated, remembering and honouring them, and drawing inspiration as an example in our daily duties.



### TAPS

Day is done,  
Gone the sun,  
From the lakes,  
From the hills,  
From the sky,  
All is well,  
Safely rest,  
God is nigh  
Fading light,  
Dims the sight,  
And a star,  
Gems the sky,  
Gleaming bright,  
From afar,  
Drawing nigh,  
Falls the night  
Thanks and praise,  
For our days,  
Neath the sun,  
Neath the stars,  
Neath the sky,  
As we go,  
This we know,  
God is nigh.



# Personnel inside NRDC-ITA...

[ Major **Thomas Wallis**, UK Army ]

**I**n the first of a series of interest articles regarding the personnel of NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy (NRDC-ITA), we focus on Officers and Soldiers representing some of the 11 non - Italian contributing nations who serve here together at Solbaite Olona. The editorial team tracked down Lt Col Svetozar Petrov from Bulgaria and persuaded him to answer a number of questions about his situation. He was kind enough to share his answers for publication in this edition of Everywhere Rapidly:

"I am very proud and honoured to be the only Bulgarian representative here."

## **Colonel, can you explain your usual role in your Armed Forces?**

"Sure. I was commissioned as an Artillery Officer and have served at different levels in this field - from Battery to Army HQ. I am a graduate of the Bulgarian Army Military Academy, the Defence and Staff College".

## **What was your previous position before you were assigned to NRDC-ITA?**

"Before coming here, my previous assignment was in a senior position within the Human Resources Directorate at the Bulgarian Ministry of Defence".

## **What is your current role within NATO RDC - ITA, and when did you get here?**

"Last Autumn was a turning point in my professional career, as I was chosen to

take the position here as Staff Officer 2 in the Fire Coordination Ops Section. I arrived in Italy at the end of 2013 and I am very proud and honoured to be the only Bulgarian representative here. I am enjoying this wonderful opportunity to work together with very skilled and professional colleagues from other NATO countries".

## **How long will you be with us, and have you served in a multinational job before?**

"The end of my tour is going to be in October 2016, because Bulgarian assignments abroad usually last 3 years. It is actually my first multinational assignment, something that is of course a great privilege and wonderful opportunity, but on the other it is a great challenge with responsibilities".

## **What opportunities will this bring?**

"For my career, working at NRDC-ITA will give me the opportunity to improve my professional skills.

Now seems to be a very demanding time for all of us; bearing in mind that the HQ is soon to face two important certifications at National and NATO levels. Working as part of this is exciting for me and I am confident that NRDC - ITA will accomplish its mission in the best way. Not only do I believe this appointment will have a positive impact for career, it is a great opportunity for my family to discover a new country with ancient culture and amazing nature".

## **What are your hobbies/pastimes and can you do them here at NRDC-ITA?**



My hobbies are fishing, listening to music and reading. I can do these here of course, but I have since discovered a new and exciting hobby; to learn and find out as much as possible about Italy!"

## **Are there any particular cultural differences that really stand out here, compared to your country or Armed Forces at home?**

One difference which I noticed pretty quickly here are the gestures. When Bulgarians shake their heads from top to bottom it means "No", but for most of Europe, you don't need telling, but it means "Yes". And the same goes for when Bulgarians shake their head horizontally it actually means "Yes" and of course for the rest of Europe the opposite! This was a surprise to me and I am sure you would be surprised by this in Bulgaria! I had some very funny situations because of these cultural differences, especially in the shops!

## **Thank you Colonel, we wish you success working at NRDC-ITA and we very much hope you and your family enjoy your time in Italy!**

"Molte Grazie!"





# Aspects of ISAF redeployment

[ Lieutenant Colonel **Fulvio Maugiatti**, 1 Signal Regiment ]

The transportation of soldiers and materiel to and from operations is a complex logistic activity and a very challenging duty. All equipment and personnel must travel safely, at the right time, in the right way and with a minimum of inconveniences and discomfort. This of course applies before, during and after the flight phase of the deployment. In a military environment this kind of deployment can feel like the Tom Cruise movie "Mission Impossible"! This article will seek to describe the activities that were conducted by a small team from HQ NRDC-ITA, led by

the author, who were responsible for the deployment and redeployment of the headquarters to and from Kabul.

Throughout 2013 NRDC-ITA HQ has been fully involved in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Operation in Kabul, Afghanistan.

To be honest, when you consider all the moving parts, the high intensity scenario, the distance to cover, the needs of individuals and organisations and every manner of small detail, it is very difficult to describe in words the complexity of this operation. There

are so many things to be done just to ensure the basic part of our task - ensuring the right man ends up in the right place - but we are professional soldiers, well trained for this kind of activity, and so we undertook this challenge and performed it to the best of our ability.

With the exception of some senior officers and other personnel who stayed in Kabul for more than one year, the majority of the personnel from HQ NRDC-ITA were in Afghanistan for six months working in one of the

two main Headquarters, ISAF Joint Command or ISAF HQ.

Therefore NRDC-ITA personnel were sent in two large rotations: Jan 13 to Jul 13 (about 250 personnel) and Jul 13 to Jan 14 (about 90 personnel). At the same time, the remainder of NRDC-ITA staff remained at the Ugo Mara barracks, working on main-stream activities and preparing for the return of those from Afghanistan.

Before going into detail, we should be aware of how contributing Nations normally deploy their soldiers and materiel in order to have a clear picture of the breadth of these activities. There are many NATO Headquarters which supervise and realize this kind of logistic activity, such as Joint Force Command Brunssum (JFC). Our Headquarters therefore utilised this NATO Command and the Italian National Air Bridge for both deployment and redeployment. This was coordinated closely with national and International stakeholders.

For this reason, we selected Malpensa Airport as first option for our Airport of Embarkation/Disembarkation and Cameri Airport as the alternate. Planning and coordination meetings were conducted with Airport authorities such as the Malpensa management director, Director of Italian Flying Agency, Customs branch and the Security officials.

This ensured that all the relevant



aspects of airport travel were covered in order to smooth all required procedures and reduce unnecessary disruption to our soldiers.

During this period, two working cells were created; The Deployment Coordination Team in Solbiate (DCTS) and the Deployment Coordination Team in Kabul (DCTK), each with the clear intent of supporting the HQ from the two different locations. I was employed in DCTS during the Deployment and, due to a shortage of personnel during the Redeployment phase, I was moved to the DCTK.

This experience has given me a broad knowledge and understanding of the entire operation from the point of view of deployment and redeployment, seen from both theatres. This has given me the opportunity to author

this article and share some of these experiences.

The Deployment phase was organized in Solbiate with sufficient planning time for extensive liaison with all relevant internal and external departments. These included the Support Brigade, the selected Airport of Embarkation (Malpensa) and JFC Brunssum - our link to the NATO Air Bridge and the utilisation of C 17 aircraft. Concurrent to this planning, the DCTK went to Kabul to arrange the Reception, Staging, and Onward Movement of the first rotation.

Separately, the deployment of the Command Group was arranged using National aircraft, due to requirements which did not comply with NATO procedure and limitations.

With full cooperation between our organisation and all the actors, we worked efficiently to implement our plan and achieve an efficient and smooth deployment. The satisfying result was that each passenger departed from Malpensa Airport during normal working hours and the flight duration was only seven hours. This represents



**everywhere rapidly**

a great improvement in comparison to the past missions (especially from 2003 to 2007) when we used less comfortable C 130 from Pisa, via the United Arab Emirates, to Kabul which took between 20 and 22 hrs.

The only negative aspect of our recent deployment was that the authorized size for hand-baggage was limited. Perhaps even this can be improved for next time!

The last part of Redeployment phase, at the end of January 2014, affected the Commander NRDC-ITA, his outer office and small number of people (about 90).

It required a more sophisticated plan because, instead of using the C-17 flights, it was decided to use only the Italian National Air Bridge for the journey from Kabul to Al Bateen. Then, for the final part of the itinerary a civilian aircraft was to be used to reach Malpensa.

This imposed additional limitations on us in terms of weight and seat allowances. Also, unfortunately, the departing passengers at the end of their mission had increased their baggage - due to typical shopping acquisitions!

So, what in theory might seem a simple thing to achieve turned out in reality to be quite tricky to accomplish.

We faced up to the issue by using two containers to store and send back the heaviest material and the extra personal baggage. It must be noted that in order to achieve this, the containers did not depart until the beginning of February. They travelled by both aircraft and ship and arrived safely in Solbiate at the end of April.



I mentioned that for the redeployment I was sent to join the DCTK in Kabul. There I found the working conditions more critical than in Italy and there was only a small team, composed of only between 6 to 8 people, to manage the situation. The team was split between two different places in Kabul; Kabul International Airport (KAIA) and ISAF HQ.

On top of that, many other contingents, such as the Americans and Germans, were rotating their forces.

This created another challenge for the team as there was a shortage of temporary accommodation for passengers needing to stay in KAIA the week before departure.

A detailed logistic and administrative order was written to regulate all the phases of this complex activity. Just to give you an idea, I would like to highlight that the initial draft was only two pages but, at the end, it became six pages of redeployment instructions. We tried to cover all the details and some people were astonished





when they read some of them, such as the wearing of uniform on the day of departure. This might be considered by some to be unnecessary detail, but believe me - when people are going to be sent home after a long period, it is a natural human tendency to start feeling relaxed!

I followed guidance to keep all orders sharp and clear to the last moment. We should not forget we were in Afghanistan! My main focus was actually to avoid any loss of time or extra questions from my passengers

and to minimise the time spent in redeployment activities (such as anti-drug control). We organized people in groups and disseminated timings and locations for people to be processed through such activities.

All personnel contributed very well to this schedule and there were no complaints.

You may have heard the phrase "Soldiering is difficult". This experience proved it once again. Although it was a challenging, bureaucratic and highly demanding activity, the redeployment

was a real success; not only because we succeeded perfectly in every step of our plan, but a success for my education!

It gave me the opportunity to improve my logistical knowledge, acquire new concepts, and better understand the difference between theory and practice.

Last but not least, I hope all my colleagues who went through this process appreciated the effort by the members of the Deployment Coordination Teams in both Solbiate and Kabul!

# The renewal of Communications Information Systems - a major change for NRDC-Italy

[ Captain **Domenico D'Alò**, Italian Army ]

**G**ordon E. Moore is a popular visionary within the information technology world and the co-founder of the famous "Intel" Corporation. He gave his name to a "law" regarding computing hardware: "Rapid advances in processing power typically render PCs and Servers obsolete every 24 to 36 months." Until last May, in spite of Moore's Law, the computer hardware at NRDC-ITA Headquarters had been in use for 10 years - and was in need of upgrade. The old server farm was unsuitable for the huge amounts of data processing required for core process and it was incapable of supporting the requirements of deploying staff. The management of the old servers was time - consuming and manpower - intensive. To compound this, a lack of resources and architectural complexity rendered the existing modus operandi unsustainable. NRDC-ITA users have experienced the "Cybernetic Revolution": They are part of "Generation Y", the young-adult generation where use of the internet is no longer a luxury, but

a necessity! In response to this high level of expectation amongst its users, the Headquarters Communication Information Systems (CIS) providers have reacted by developing a motivated "service oriented" approach.

For this reason, J6 started with a significant transformation in terms of education and investment.

This has resulted in a new approach to problem solving and the branch has been reorganized as a "Single Service Framework" (NATO policy for service providers).

In order to meet the challenges presented as we move towards becoming a Joint Task Force Headquarters, the CIS teams need a solid infrastructure able to support both current requirements and forthcoming challenges - challenges sure to involve huge amounts of information to be processed!

For these reasons, J6 has been tasked to lead this change. Assistant Chief of Staff (ACOS) J6 (OF5 Pompa) was appointed as the project's executive officer and obtained a significant

amount of money from the Italian General Staff.

His mission was to draw up a Business Plan and implement it.

The level of ambition was high and the aim was to implement:

1. A Datacentre
2. A complete upgrade of the data network (from 1GB up to 10GB)
3. An upgrade of the client Workstations, introducing NATO tools and the latest versions of Functional Services (FSs) and Microsoft Lync software.

The solution was to create an infrastructure based on the TOP RANK Blade Server (Cisco Unified Computing System), running over a TOP Cisco switching network. Server technology combines Computing, Networking and Solid-State accelerator applications into a single integrated architecture. It operates as a platform supporting either core business or critical applications for business (in military terms our Command and Control systems and all required FSs) and has strong backing from civilian

businesses worldwide. With this ambitious approach, J6 was able to design and deploy a complete upgrade of the Datacentre. It took considerable effort, but the impact of the change to the users was reduced to a minimum.

After receiving strategic instructions, coordinating invited tenders and receiving the official announcement of the Contract, J6 ran "NRDC-ITA CIS renewal" as a project.

ACOS J6 created a team with a "Project In Controlled Environment" trained officer (OF2 D'Alò), a Permanent HQ engineer (OF3 Pasquino) and the J6 Network Technical Systems SO1 (OF3 Equizi) responsible for coordinating and executing the plan.

They worked with the support of:

- ITA Defence General Staff
- ITA Army General Staff
- NRDC-ITA Support Brigade
- 1<sup>ST</sup> Sig Rgt

- Several Civilian Contractors (i.e. CISCO Ltd. And ITALTEL SpA).

The project has been closely directed by ACOS J6, using the following approach: Design Phase-Started in Feb 12, Information Exchange Requirement Coordinator OF2 Fassi.

- This was the analysis and evaluation of the ability to upgrade existing infrastructure and hardware.

• The outputs made up the Operational requirement to the Italian General Staff and the initial fund requirement estimate. Transition Phase-Started July13, Project Manager OF2 D'Alò.

- The Project team defined and created a test environment within Solbiate Olona. The outputs were the creation of a Project Board, a "Reports and Returns" flow, the problem solving system, the rollback procedure lists and the enabling of rules).

Delivery Phase - By Sep 2013, Under OF3 Pasquino.

- This was the implementation of working practices for complex activities, coordinating and monitoring delivery, managing project risk and informing users to minimize the impact.

Post Delivery phase - By June 2014, Project Manager OF3 Equizi.

- The team continues to monitor improvements and support the new infrastructure with a service improvement approach.

The new system implementation was completed on 15 May 2014 and all targets have been achieved.

It was a big effort from all members of the team and J6 would like to pay tribute to the Sig Regt deployment team: OR5 Ruggeri, OR5 Buonincontri, OR5 Esposito and OR4 Torracco.

They confirmed the very high level of competences of NRDC-ITA technicians demonstrating great skill and ability.

## Italtel e Cisco per NRDC-ITA



**GOVERNANCE**  
**CLOUD COMPUTING** **CONTINUITÀ OPERATIVA**  
**AFFIDABILITÀ**  
**DEFENCE INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

Questo Data Center è stato realizzato dalla capogruppo ITALTEL SpA e dalla mandante Cisco Systems Italy S.r.l. in Raggruppamento Temporaneo di Imprese nell'ambito del contratto n. 10266 del 27/12/2012, stipulato con il Ministero della Difesa - Segretariato Generale della Difesa e Direzione Nazionale degli Armamenti - Direzione Informatica, Telematica e Tecnologie Avanzate.







# "Lieutenant General Giorgio Battisti",

an interview  
by Gianluca Rossi

**B**orn in the city of Mantua 1953 and with the deep - rooted vocation of an alpine trooper, Lieutenant General Giorgio Battisti has served in Somalia, Bosnia and, since 2001, four times in Afghanistan.

His last tour of duty there concluded in January this year, when he handed over the position the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) Chief of Staff. More than 400 Italian soldiers served under his command in a Task Force composed by personnel of 50 different Nations.

Gen. Battisti has been the Commander of the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy between 2011 and 2014, but beyond the military there is always a man.

As well as people being aware of the Generals military career, particulars about his interests, feelings and passions should also be told.

When he is off-duty, General Battisti likes to spend quality time with his family. He and his wife Simonetta have four children; Alessio (an Army Captain serving in the alpine airborne regiment), Umberto, Filippo and Cecilia. Like a real alpine trooper the General enjoys skiing and hiking in the mountains, and he has always been a good runner. It is not by chance that he ran at the head of his men during the last Stramilano event. But what he is really mad for is football. Therefore there is something that represents both a

blessing and a curse for him; it is named "Inter"! But let us start with work, which turns the mind to Afghanistan: "This land has seen great conflicts during the last forty years", Battisti explains. "Before us there were the Russians. They invaded Afghanistan, meanwhile in 2001 the International Community intervened according to a precise request for assistance by the provisional Afghan Government. The United Nations and other institutions were striving for a political solution and the International Military Force was employed to assure security to the population, throughout its social and institutional development".

## **How the situation is now?**

"At the time of our first arrival, thirteen years ago, the Afghan society was still tribal: no schools, scarcity, and destruction everywhere, women living on the fringes of society. Now young people chat, use Facebook and social media, nine million boys and girls have experienced primary school, and a large number of people have access to Medical services.

In Kabul alone there are at least 50 private TV channels, with the possibility for dialogue, a debate, even to express

criticism: something unimaginable only a few years ago. These rapid changes in Afghan society in little more than a decade have been assisted by the commitment of the 50 Nations that contribute to the mission, who continue to provide military support to Afghan security. From the initial situation, typical of a mediaeval feudal state, a sort of Afghan renaissance is arising. And even if it would take some time, it seems this wave of change will not be easily stopped.

***There has also been a tribute in blood; 2.300 soldiers have fallen during the 12 year mission so far, which includes 53 Italian personnel.***

"Young soldiers who died to give Afghanistan a chance. We have been living in peace for the last 50 years, and our soldiers had to train not only in preparation for direct engagement, but especially to familiarize themselves with a society that is extremely different from our own. I absolutely understand the feeling of having a child deployed, considering that one of mine is serving his sixth tour of duty abroad - but woe is he who gives up now! We are in the delicate phase





of handing over to Afghan Forces, who need to increase their capability for controlling territory. During the last year the International Force supported the local Army with advisors and specialists, without being involved in direct engagements. For us Italians the international agreements mean the keeping in place of a force of 500 - 600 personnel as trainers and military advisors.

A military presence remains necessary because in Afghanistan there are a lot of problems still to be solved, from attitudes to women to drug trafficking".

**Beyond the soldier, there is a man. How is life in Afghanistan during such a long tour of duty?**

"When we firstly arrived here in 2001, there was nothing, not even the heating, and we had to eat "meal - ready - to - eat" from packets. Then the base was equipped; after the supply of an oven we could even have a pizza dinner once a

week. Today life in the camp is definitely better, although in the outposts life is similar to one from the trenches of the First World War, with only the addition of some modern technology. Sometimes there are no comforts, but there is an ipad! These are the contradictions of our time. During any operational deployment it will always be important to disconnect and re-charge the batteries whenever possible, trying to reply to messages from home and take some time to reflect. Where I had time between engagements, I tried to make use of the gym as often as I could".

**What about Inter, your favourite team?**

"In 2007 Sky kindly donated a decoder to the camp, and thankfully with it we could follow some matches. In particular, I remember with pleasure the AC - Inter derby, played last Christmas, where Inter won with a goal scored with the heel of

Palacio near the end. Not everybody was happy (smiling). I, as Inter fan, had a great time indeed! Anyway the day after, in spite of the three hour time difference, our activity started as usual at 7 in the morning".

**Meanwhile you were in Afghanistan, Inter was sold to Tohir. What do you think about it?**

"I am looking at the change, as is everybody else. Even if football is changing, I am a little traditionalist because of the personal acquaintance with President Moratti and with my favourite player and captain of the team, Zanetti.

After all, a professional soldier cannot avoid loving flags. And, as every other Inter fan, I loved Mourinho and I will never forget the "Triplete".

**In the end, a Commander is like a football coach of a team composed by players from different countries.**

"NATO protocols are essential for this





reason, but you have to always keep in mind the situation you are working in - and add something more. Speaking fluent English or French in a Country with so different customs and traditions is not enough. There is the need of a particular sensitiveness, and for this reason we as Italians once again have been appraised, probably more by the other nationalities than by ourselves. For instance, in three months we have designed, built and inaugurated a war memorial in honour of the fallen of all the countries, with a beautiful quote from Kipling that has been engraved also in Dari and Pashtu as a sign of respect towards all.

Honouring the fallen is the first rule for the respect of the living ones. For this reason, every Sunday morning during our Memorial Service in honour of those who lost their lives that week, not a single Afghan has been forgotten, and the Imam was always together with our Chaplain. Team building, to foster involvement of everybody, is the golden rule. On the 4th of November, the anniversary of the First World War Armistice between Austria and Italy, I required the Memorial Day wreath to be laid by an Austrian and an Italian soldier.

In an international mission there should be recognition for everybody; from those contingents with 3000 men to those who participate in just three observers".



### **Sometimes a football match may help.**

"We played a friendly match against an afghan military team. We lost 6 - 0, as they had a couple of professional players among them from the national football team, but the atmosphere was really friendly.

In fact at a certain point we realized that our opponents had twelve on the pitch!

### **From little towns in a far land we came...**

"From little towns  
in a far land we came,  
To save our honour  
and a world aflame.

By little towns  
in a far land we sleep;  
And trust that world  
we won for you to keep"

The game ended with a laugh and a party, because they were better by far. The truth is that with extremely serious issues such as the reconciliation process of a unique country, everything counts. This is especially apparent when you are able to appreciate each other first as human beings and also then as soldiers. This is really something true, not merely a common saying".

This sentence is taken from the Epitaphs of the War by Rudyard Kipling and it has been engraved on the Memorial of the ISAF base in Kabul.

This monument was designed and built entirely by the Italian contingent to honour the fallen in the conflict in Afghanistan. The Memorial is a monolith of Kabul black and grey marble, with medallions fixed to represent NATO, ISAF, the Afghan Army and Afghan Police.

The quote from Kipling is engraved in English, Arabic and the two local languages of Dari and Pashtu along the four sides of the base.

This is to emphasize that the Monument belongs to all the fallen, without distinction of background, race or creed.

Gianluca Rossi is a professional Journalist, assignment editor and anchor - man for Telelombardia, Antenna 3 and other TV stations.

He serves as Officer of the Italian Army Reserve with the rank of Major.







# Marathon Training

**B**efore starting your preparation to run a marathon, firstly you need to undergo an examination from a specialist in sport medicine.

The specialist can provide you with a certificate of fitness to practice competitive sports, and once you have this you are ready to begin!

The next step is to buy the correct running shoes, specialized running clothing, arrange regular times for training, and last but not least, find a strength of will to endure the training programme and withstand sacrifices. It is not advisable to start the training if you are overweight as this can cause damage to ankles, knees and the spine - parts of the body that will endure the stresses and strains of prolonged training sessions, lasting as long as 3 and a half hours. Under running stresses, think of each kilo of body - weight being multiplied by 5 on your knees, ankles and spine. Overweight runners will find themselves forced to withstand an increased and, quite literally, almost back - breaking workload.

It is also worth mentioning that a runner's feet "hit" the ground between 600 to 800 times in the space of a kilometer, and therefore in a marathon (at 26,2 miles or 42km) up to 35.000 strides could be taken from the start to the finish.

Many beginners who are initiated with the story of the ancient Greek runner, Pheidippides, think that a good strategy for them is to just keep going until they cross the finishing line, believing it to be safe and without hazard. Afterwards they may try a scientific approach to their training sessions but, notwithstan-

ding the modesty of their ambition, they fail to reach their goal.

## **What have they done wrong?**

They failed to recognize that the seemingly un - assuming goal of running the race to the end was not within everybody's reach. It simply will not be achieved by everybody because there are many obstacles that can get in the way easily - and make them fail.

There are a few main reasons a runner will fail. This will happen if he: is overweight, has not undertaken sufficient training sessions, has unsuitable muscle fibers, has suboptimal control of the mind (or a combination of these).

**Overweight:** People with a weight problem are often accustomed to dietary restrictions - therefore they have very low glycogen stores (you don't need to store energy if you have food always available). Because of that some runners believe that it is better to start running fast, thinking "because the crisis is bound to happen anyway!" Of course it is not better to start running fast, but if an overweight runner started with a slow pace, the stores of energy might hardly last more than 25 km. Even if

he endures very long training sessions, ending them literally on his knees, it takes a long period to get fit enough to run the marathon.

**Insufficient training sessions:** Contenders who train just for 3 or 4 times a week may not be able to develop the aerobic capacity to a suitable level.

**Unsuitable muscle fibers:** People coming from the practice of other sports disciplines may have a sprinter's attitude (think of a soccer player). Adapting the fibers from a fast sprint to a low pace could take time, possibly years.

**Suboptimal control of the mind:** Running a marathon at any speed requires good control over the mind. Every tension in the mind can result in a loss of focus and might detract from the requirement of the marathon runner to concentrate on their plan for success. Tensions and distractions could lead to wasting energy and a breakdown in ability or determination.

## **"The Wall" at 30km**

"The wall" is a term for a condition caused by the depletion of glycogen stores in the liver and muscles, which







manifests itself by sudden fatigue and loss of energy. In a marathon this is common at around the 30km point. Please note: Running just 5 seconds per km faster than his actual skill level is a sure way for a runner to meet "The Wall". No professional runs 5 seconds per km above his skill level. Ambition is good - but usually overreaching it makes you hit the wall. The runner becomes deaf to reality; he wants to beat his record, run under 3 hrs, and so on. He connects to the pacemaker and runs... wherever his heart leads...until he meets a wall and crashes against it along with his broken dreams.

### **What is the evidence that a runner values his ambitions more than his true skills?**

Running the first 21km at a faster pace than the second 21km is an indicator that the runner overestimates his skills. It is not true that in a marathon "you need to capitalize on the early stages of your performances because you burn out eventually anyway" and, worse, it is nowadays common for the second half to be slower than the first. Therefore, when you hit the wall because of ambition, it is worth putting on "sackcloth and ashes" and make yourself humble so that your next marathon will be much easier.

### **Poor Training**

Obviously the term "poor" can assume many meanings, both in quality and quantity. It is important however to highlight in order of importance the most common mistakes:

1. Quantity: less than 60 km per week. Without a good quantity the probability to hit the wall is very high.
2. Very long ones: absence of at least three long distance sessions, one of which should be 35 - 36 km in the two months preceding the marathon. Again, there is a good chance of hitting the wall without them.
3. Athlete's weight: Overweight runners are likely to head straight into the wall.
4. Speed: absence in the training schedule of uniform and also brisk - paced (competition pace plus 10 seconds per km) training - this is important for the slower athletes.

Without speed over the marathon distance, the possibility of hitting the wall is high.

5. The last long distance training run is too close to the event.

This usually it needs to be carried out no less than 18 days before the competition. Running it afterwards greatly increases the probability of wall-bashing.

6. Training right up to the event. It is fundamental to taper (run less and rest more) for at least the week preceding the event.

One should avoid taking too much rest or too little, otherwise there remains a good probability that the dreaded wall will stand in the way of success.

7. Personal readiness: if the athlete is not a marathon runner he needs to take sufficient time to become one, it is not worth wearing yourself out with an excessive physical training in a short period.



## Points traditionally connected with specific mistakes

1. Thinking that good training for a marathon is just two sessions a week for a total of 30 - 40 km, or running 10 - 12 km five times a week. This is typical optimistic thinking of those who do not have time.

2. Thinking only 28 - 30 km is sufficient long distance training. Again, a mistake of those with insufficient time but also typical of those lacking the marathon runner mentality, perhaps thinking that, on the day of the event, he will somehow find the mental resource to run on for 3 to 5 hrs or more.

3. Practicing sport without caring about a proper diet. Everyone among us has a quantity of carbohydrates stored in the muscles and in the liver (glycogen). At the same level of muscle mass, someone with excess fat spends more energy (as he is heavier). Therefore, the fuel in the muscles is used up more quickly and the fatter runner will run out of energy sooner.

4. The athlete didn't run a very long distance at a speed close to competition pace.

By failing to do this, his marathon becomes completely unpredictable since he will not know how he will react to the distance. This is a typical mistake from an old school of thought is still supported by those afraid of over - training or not willing of putting in too much effort.

5. Many athletes allow three to four weeks before a marathon to recover from very long runs.

But if the athlete is not used to running all year except in short races, the physiological characteristic of prolonged rest, can take the subject backwards in his preparation.

6. Some athletes perform a preparation (for them) too hard and feel they need to recover completely, others live in uncertainty with training sessions that are too mild and they lose their shape. Others stuff themselves full of carbohydrates to make it through the marathon; not knowing that beyond a certain limit the body will simply retain it, and convert the rest to fat with an evident increase weight.

The last week should be lived with a lot of balance.

7. Perhaps the most difficult mistake to understand by many runners is that of making misleading comparisons. Friends who have been inactive in recent years might successfully run the marathon, but each of us has individual characteristics that change differently. It might be misleading to

compare yourself to others, but the tests above are what is important to understand a runner's predisposition to the distance. Do not underestimate these points - and the wall will flatten to become a simple bump.

You'll surely notice that the matter is very complex and that there is no "ideal solution".

Good Luck!

## One final comment:

The biggest mistake is to think you can take on energy (glucose etc) during the race to make up for insufficient training. The theoretical and practical limitations regarding the intake of carbohydrates in the race is limited to a few hundred calories!



# Magraid "Running across the steppe"

[ Warrant Officer First Class **Matteo Vitulano**, Italian Army ]

**M**agraid is a stage race for athletes who want to try a different experience; that of spending three days distance running in a charming and extraordinarily environment.

Over 13 - 15 June, over 200 athletes gathered for one of the toughest and fascinating stage races in the world, in a rocky and barren landscape similar to the steppes of Russia.

The Magraid event takes place on the rough ground between the rivers Cellina and Meduna in Pordenone district of northern Italy.

Loose, unconsolidated alluvial soil, varying from silt to gravel, makes the going really tough, particularly on the Magredi steppe. The soil is permeable,

but not due to a lack of rain, and vast areas of the river beds are dry.

Friday, June 13 at 14.00. On arrival at base camp in Parareit Cordenons (PN), it was evident that the boys of 132 Tank Regiment did a nice job!

Everything is in place: tents, showers, a kitchen, bathrooms and everything else needed for a base camp is set up. I withdraw my race packet with the bib number and the technical running shirt with "100 km" written on the back. Immediately I hide it in the car where it will remain until I cross the line of the hundredth kilometer.

I settle briefly into tent number 2 and get prepared for the first "Steppe" stage, 25 kilometers starting and finishing at

base camp. The flag raising ceremony commences at 1650hrs, and the start at 1700hrs! We are off! I easily grind out the miles, one after another, and hit the finish line in 2 hours and 25 minutes. I'm a little tired but fine. I take a nice shower, dine, and then immediately hit the sack to rest; tomorrow I will have a challenging day.

Saturday, June 14. I awake at 0700hrs and make final preparations to my equipment (all in a camelback pouch under a small Italian flag: 3 liters of water with magnesium and potassium, sunglasses, cap, energy bars, mobile phone and whistle).

At 0900hrs we are transferred to the "I Magredi" Farm camp, in San Giorgio della Richinvelda. The second stage, "Grave", starts at 1000hrs and is the hardest and longest; a daunting 55 kilometers.

After a few kilometers I find myself on the bed of the river, running on pebbles and gravel, with weeds brushing the eyes; but lift your head for a moment and you will end with up with broken



everywhere rapidly



ankles! I run on and on, and try to cope with the summer heat and humidity. Fatigue begins to set in, but I am lucky - water appears at this point.

I am at one of the many crossing points of the two rivers that you have to pass. I cross with great pleasure, deliberately getting totally immersed!

After 6 hours and 44 minutes I cross the finish line at base camp, dedicating the accomplishment of this stage to all the military personnel of every rank who fell on duty during all wars and missions. I'm exhausted, with a small injury in my left calf, but pleased with myself. I enjoy a shower, a plentiful dinner and then I go to sleep because tomorrow there is the last stage.

Sunday, June 15. Again I waken at 0700hrs and conduct the usual tactical preparation. The third stage, "Resurgence", is 20 kilometers.

The start is at 1000hrs from base camp, but after just one kilometer - alas! - I sprain my left ankle for the first time, but top of all this, I sprain my ankle for the second time just a few meters further on. "MATTEO!" I scream "What are you up to?!" Now my adrenaline is pumped to the maximum and I have two sprains, a contracted muscle and face dozens of river crossings ahead.

It feels like my blood pressure is at 10 atmospheres as I eat up the last stage. Finally, as I cross the line I kneel down and launch an inhuman scream and raise my arms to the sky - I ran 100km! When I reflected, I was quite pleased with my result; 71st out of the 190 finishers. The Magraid event was something extremely rewarding and I thoroughly recommend it for runners considering unusual distance events... It was a fantastic experience for me.





# The Bersaglieri Company becomes "CELERE"

[ Corporal Jean **Carlos Pacati**, Italian Army ] [ Corporal **Valeria Villa**, Italian Army ]

**O**n April 8 2014, during a memorable military parade at Ugo Mara Barracks, the Bersaglieri Company was renamed "3rd Compagnia Bersaglieri Celere", officially adding "CELERE" - Rapidly - to their title. The 3rd Bersaglieri Company Celere is part of the Tactical and Logistic Support Regiment (HQ) NRDC-ITA in Solbiate Olona, a Regiment with responsibility for all aspects of Force Protection (the physical defence of the NRDC Headquarters, both within national territory and abroad).

The Company works with technical infantry, and is specialized in the following aspects:

- Convoy protection and escort. The Company assures convoy security with scouts and counter - ambush drills during deployment and re - deployment of Command Posts. This is regardless of whether the movement is by road, train, ship or airplane.
- VIP escort. The NRDC-ITA Commander or VIP is assured security whilst on the move within safe areas inside any theatre.
- Command Post Perimeter Security. Company guards assure the security in posts placed along the perimeter of bases, and security patrols assure the protection inside and around the area to provide 360° security.
- Command Post Close Security. The Company builds check points on routes

to Command and Observation Posts in order to monitor the entire area, and Bersaglieri personnel patrol through sensitive areas.

- Landing Zone Establishment and Defence: Company personnel identify potential Helicopter Landing Sites, considering numerous factors including the exploitation of radio communication, as well as securing suitable sites for aviation activity.

For the renaming ceremony, the Company formed - up in position on the parade ground in three platoons, each different from the others, wearing a variety of uniform articles connected with the "cremisi" (crimson colour) history. These were the wide brimmed black hat decorated with black capercaillie feathers, known as "Vaira", the new beret with plumage, and black gloves and boots.

Lieutenant General Benito Pochesci, President of Associazione Nazionale Bersaglieri (Bersaglieri National Association) attended the ceremony with numerous Bersaglieri veterans from localities in Lombardia, Veneto and Piemonte. This was evidence of the strong link that continues between military service organizations and local communities, with some representatives even wearing traditional historical uniforms for the parade. During this ceremony, Bersaglieri Company paraded to its traditional run and march

music and received the name "CELERE" from the 3rd Division "CELERE" Principe Amedeo Duca D'Aosta, together with a banner quoting the name and the motto "Palpitando irrompo". This Unit of the Regio Esercito (Royal Italian Army) were part of the Italian Expeditionary Forces in Russia during World War II, where they performed feats of heroism still remembered today.

The number 3 in the Company title reflects the 3rd Bersaglieri Regiment, located in Milan until 2009, and the "Celere" adjective mirrors in the NRDC-ITA slogan "Ubique Celere" - "Everywhere Rapidly". The date of 8th April is very important for the renaming parade, because on this day in 1848, the Bersaglieri Corp received its baptism of fire in the Battle of Goito, during the First Independence War.

Lieutenant General Giorgio Battisti, Commander of Nato Rapid Deployable Corps at the ceremony - together with the Lieutenant General Benito Pochesci presented to the Celere Company Commander, Captain Massimo Pupo, a parchment with the important historical dates and events that distinguished the Story of this Unit.

The ceremony ended with Bersaglieri, past and present, running whilst on parade together, confirming the motto "bersagliere a 20 anni, bersagliere tutta la vita" (A Bersagliere when you're 20, a Bersagliere for your whole life).

# Exercise "Eagle Snow Master 2014"

[ Lieutenant Colonel **Ugo Biasiotto**, Italian Army ] [ Captain **Paola Gori**, Italian Army ]

**a**mongst the beautiful scenery of Tonale (Trento) lies "Tonolini" Barracks, the location that hosted the annual exercise "Eagle Snow Master 2014", from the 15 to the 22 of March. Taking part were 150 men and women of all ranks from all the Allied Countries of the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy (NRDC-ITA).

The participants, including junior ranks, non - commissioned officers and officers from Ugo Mara Barracks were deployed to this specific Alpine area for the first time to enjoy one of their most important appointments of the year. During the two weeks they were deployed in the snow covered terrain, training was conducted as part of an intense program that included various methods of movement for the wintry environment.

The different activities proved to be very demanding. The NRDC-ITA personnel practised "Ciaspolada", a typical march wearing snow shoes as well as the development program for both beginners and skilled skiers.

The combination of military and civilian ski instructors offered a unique opportunity for all the personnel to improve their ski skills and gave everyone the opportunity to participate at the final race. Training was also given on survival skills, avalanche awareness, and search and rescue; which included theoretical

lessons and practical activities to locate missing personnel. Divided into teams, participants undertook the activities under the leadership of military instructors who provided excellent support which achieved the best results. The exercise was well resourced, culminating with the use of military helicopters to support the training. Of course, the numerous training activities enhanced

the participants' physical condition and individual skills to cope with challenging mountain terrain, but what stood out was the positive spirit that was present throughout the exercise. The ethos of teamwork prevailed at all times - and significantly contributed to the capability of the groups. The opportunity of alpine training in this harsh environment was embraced by all personnel and provided







the basis for them not only to improve physically and professionally, but to create and strengthen relationships amongst the multinational members of the NRDC-ITA.

As well as the main aim of the exercise to test military skills in a mountainous environment, it also consolidated the esprit de corps and the harmony of the NRDC staff.

It is unsurprising that the training had a strong bonding effect on the multinational personnel; when you consider the activities undertaken in the mountains were not just physical or a way of developing techniques, but it something almost spiritual. This inner teaching improved our awareness of ourselves as we faced difficulties in this beautiful but unforgiving natural en-

vironment. The Exercise "Eagle Snow Master 2014" event was a precious moment spent together for NRDC-ITA personnel, forming constructive relationships in order to build up co-operative working teams, improving fitness and self - confidence.

During exercise "Eagle Snow Master 2014", we welcomed the NRDC-ITA Commander, Lieutenant General, Giorgio Battisti.

On his visit on the 20th of March, he wanted to commemorate the fallen of all wars at a ceremony in the Passo del Tonale Military Shrine. Civilian representatives of all the Alpine Associations were present, and the military personnel marched to the shrine from Tonolini Barracks. There, the Commander of Alpine Troops, Lieutenant General Al-

berto Primicerj, joined General Battisti in laying a laurel wreath in memory of the fallen.

The NRDC-ITA Commander, General Battisti said at the end of the ceremony: "The multinational Command pays tribute to the fallen of a hundred years ago. Here in the mountains, with the sacrifice that unites all in difficulty, one can find in himself a spirit of the body to bring, through great professionalism, the conditions of peace and security." The exercise each year offers moments to share, ones that provide a harmony between the people taking part and the surrounding nature.

Also there are special social moments such as enjoying the fabulous Alpine choirs with their memorable songs and voices. These choirs are part of the mountain Italian tradition and represent a link between the Alpine Troops and the civil society, telling the story of our homeland and soldiers since the time of the great wars to the present day. During the whole period the logistical and technical support provided by the "Comando Truppe Alpine", the "Centro Addestramento Alpino" and the Tonolini Barracks was crucial and greatly appreciated. All the personnel and the military instructors contributed fully to the success of this exercise, gaining a deep experience of the wonderful mountain environment.







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