

The Air Operations

by Maj M. MANTEGAZZA AOCC

The Air Operations Coordination Centre is an Air Force agency integrated into the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps – Italy but functionally subordinate to the Air Commander in any joint scenario. It is manned by Air Force personnel skilled in the planning and coordination of air operations and is tasked to conduct smooth coordination between Land Component (or Corps) and Air Component ops. In general terms the AOCC has two main tasks. First, it advises the NRDC Commander as to the best use of air capabilities and airspace. Secondly, it keeps the Air Component informed on NRDC's intent, scheme of manoeuvre and progress of Land operations.

To perform these tasks, the Air Agency is organised into different branches. The AOCC consists of Air Force personnel from a number of nations including Italy, United Kingdom, Hungary, Greece and the United States.

The structure consists of a Commander, an Offensive Operations Air Section, a Defensive Air Operations Section, an Intel Section and an Admin Cell.

The Offensive Air Operations Section coordinates close air support assets and carries out missions in direct support of HQ. Using the ICC system and in close contact with



CAOC, the section monitors the execution and evaluates the results of the mission informing the respective Command Group Cell.

The Defensive Air Operation Section coordinates all Air Defence, Ground Base Air Defence (GBAD) and Airspace management within friendly territories with the Combined Air Operations Centre. The Air

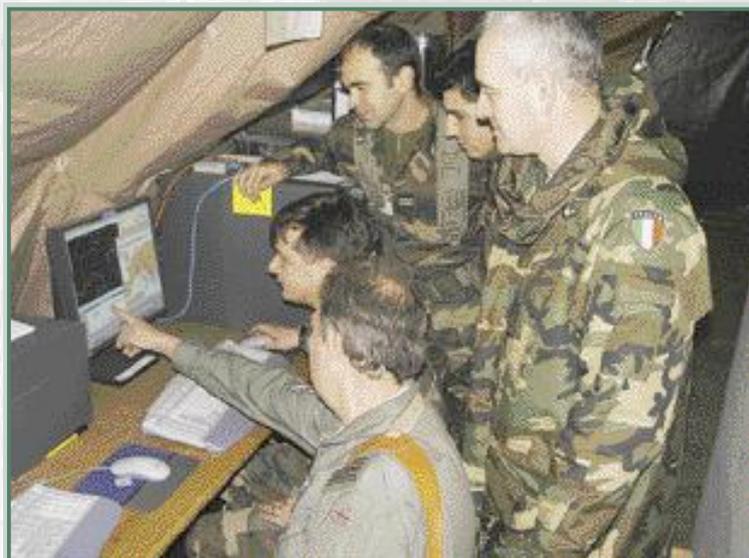
Defence Section Chief is also the AOCC Deputy Chief and is normally posted in the Rear Alternate Step-up (RAS) HQ when it is deployed on exercise or in real operations.

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The Intelligence Section coordinates air-related intelligence. Besides assessing the impact that opposing air forces may have on NRDC ops, it also contributes to the coordination of

Joint ISTAR, Targeting and BDA efforts.

The Agency normally employs high-tech state-of-the-art technology and hardware to achieve its purpose. AOCC receives the so-called Recognized Air Picture (RAP) from the designated CAOC and disseminates it to specific HQ agencies and subordinate Units. The Air Agency also receives reports through the Integrated Command & Control System (ICC). This fundamental asset is an integrated C3I tool that provides information management and



The AOCC team working on the ICC system.



Coordination Centre (AOCC)

decisional support to NATO Combined Air Operations Centre (CAOC) at the air operations level during peacetime, exercises and wartime.

NRDC AOCC is equipped with the most up-to-date hardware equipment and software within the Alliance. It is equipped with a large number of Sun Blade 2000 workstations with 18-inch LCDs. A standard HQ configuration would employ three servers and three back-up servers to provide three different LANs, but in line with NATO operational requirements, the ICC system is capable of operating six different LANs simultaneously, simply by reconfiguring the three back-up servers as main servers. All information is stored on removable hard disks and if needed on digital tapes. The hardware is already capable of operating directly with satellites through smart card-type devices. In case of power loss, the system will continue to operate thanks to an auxiliary power unit. Through a specific card the ICC System is already able to receive input from various radar sources.

In conclusion, both know-how and equipment are at their highest possible levels, and can fully interface Air and Land Commanders worldwide in real time.

