

by LtC P. LAMACCHIA. G7 Training

## Eagle Adventure 2004



At the end of July the second phase of the Summer Adventure Training took place. The exercise, named Eagle Adventure 04 (just to stay in the Eagles series), was designed to show NRDC-IT personnel the austerity and beauty of the Alpine environment. The place chosen for the activity was La Thuile, a typical alpine village in the heart of the Aosta Valley and among the highest mountains of Europe. The accommodation was in the "Monte Bianco" Barracks which is the home base of the 88<sup>th</sup> Alpieri Company belonging to the Italian Military Alpine School. The programme drafted by the Training Branch was tailored to train all participants aware in different alpine environments, including the peaceful woods of Val Ferret and the severe high altitude landscape of "Rifugio Vittorio Emanuele" in the heart of Gran Paradiso Massif, culminating in the incredible, breathtaking "Punta Helbronner" at the height of 3600 m.

The adventure started amongst typical alpine scenery, the beautiful Val Ferret was the perfect kick off. Theoretically it is the best point for enjoying the sight of the impressive Grand Jorasses Massif but the weather wasn't on our side. In fact very low and dark clouds accompanied us all morning and, once at the "Rifugio Bertone", the skies opened giving us the chance to train in a *wet* mountain environment! Before the following day's challenge there was the opportunity to relax; in the evening we tasted the local folklore attending a concert by an Aosta Valley Choir, "Les Hironnelles", who dedicated their performance to our

Headquarters.

Day 2's goal was to reach the "Rifugio Vittorio Emanuele" and, looking at the maps, everybody realised that it would not be easy. But in reality the sunshine and the incredible landscape allowed us to ignore the fatigue and, in less than three hours, we were all taking photos at the Rifugio, enjoying the view and, for some, the food...



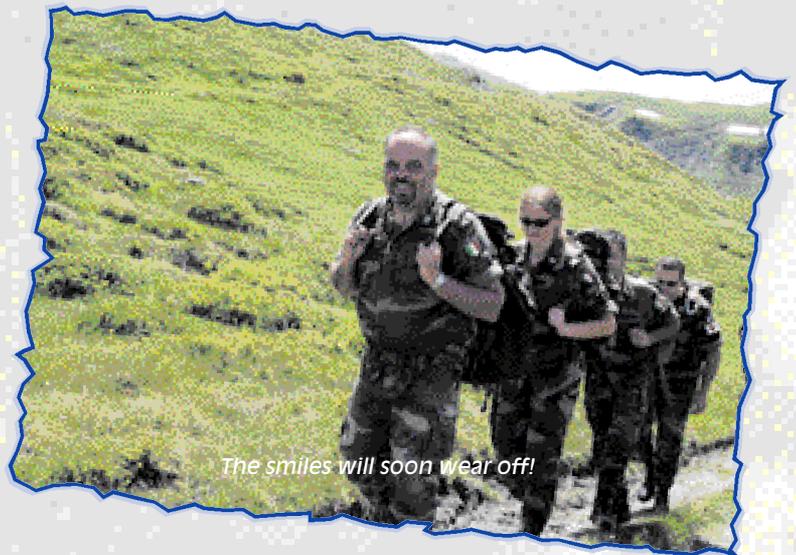
Approaching the helo

On the third day the adventure took on a third dimension! After a very pleasant walk in the Piccolo San Bernardo area we reached the border with France where a couple of helicopters from the Venaria base joined us. The afternoon was spent training in order to make everyone confident in helicopter procedures. As a result everybody had the once-in-a-lifetime experience

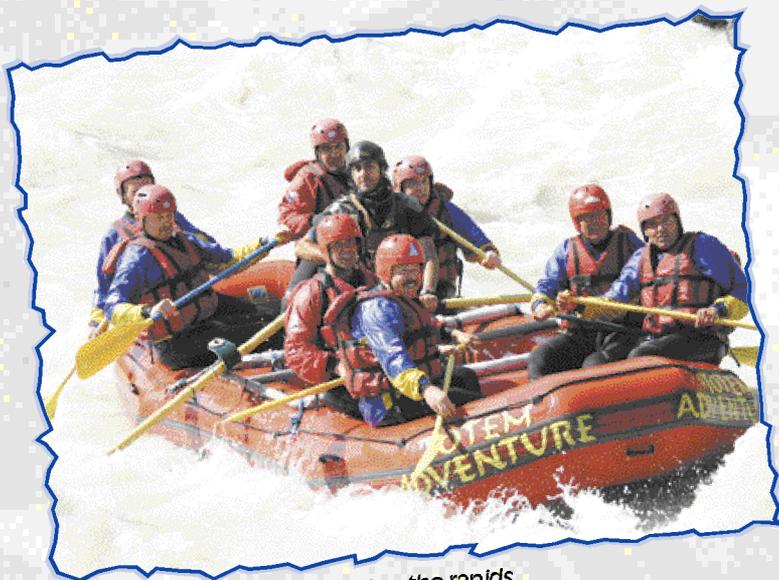


# Training

rience of flying on the Mont Blanc Massif. The day after the last trekking activity we took to the skies and reached the Mont Fallere area, just in the middle of the Aosta Valley and after which we returned to a small village where the buses were waiting, taking us first to visit the Castle "Generale Cantore" where the HQ Italian Alpine Military School is based.



*The smiles will soon wear off!*



*Riding the rapids*

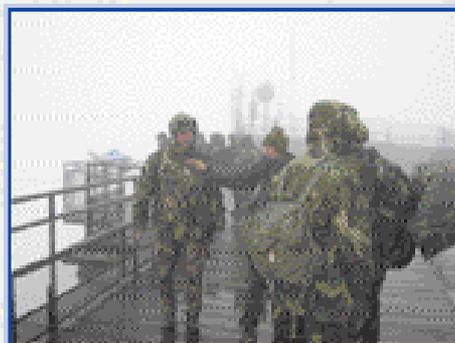
Incredibly all the marches were over! Everybody was very satisfied of what they had achieved, but the adventure was still ongoing... On Saturday we took the cable car and reached the Punta Helbronner Area but... the weather still wasn't playing... we actually spent two hours in the middle of nowhere, the only clue of being at such a height was the quality of the air, very thin and fresh... and the snow, of course... in July!!!

Eventually, as in all stories, the end came but there was still time for the last challenge: a rafting ride was organised and all had the opportunity to try a very exciting downhill on the white waters of the River Dora Baltea.

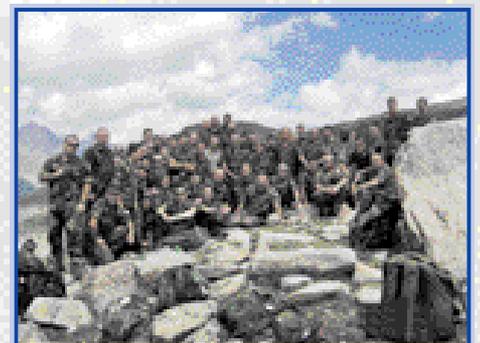
In conclusion it is possible to say that all the objectives were achieved, all the participants came back to Solbiate absolutely fascinated with what they had seen and enjoyed during a fantastic week's training.



*An Aosta Valley Choir welcome*



*Its still summer, honestly!*



*Survivor's photo*