

Ex Snow Master

By Lt. M. STOCUTO, SO I Info Ops

The mountain challenge

From 23 to 30 January 2006 the Eagle flew to his mountain nest.

The famous Alpine winter resort of La Thuile in Valle d'Aosta, with its slopes reaching across hundreds of kilometers of the Franco-Italian border, hosted HQ NRDC-Italy's Exercise EAGLE SNOWMASTER 2006.

With instructional and logistic support from the Italian Military Alpine Training Centre, this remarkable arena assured the HQ's 70 participants, fresh from Kabul, a different and more relaxing environment from their recent experiences in the Hindu Kush, although opportunities for risk and personal trial were to be found aplenty as individuals tested their alpine skills in such a challenging winter mountain scenario.

NRDC-IT personnel were hosted in the "Monte Bianco" Barracks. The facility, built in 1934 for the Italian Border Troops deployed on the western border, is now the seat of the 88th Alpine Coy who provided the adventure training exercise with excellent support. The old-style barracks, which exterior hasn't changed since it was built, creates an atmosphere of frontier, calling forth images of a time when soldiers were alone to face the mystery and perils of the mountain.



The exercise aim without any doubt was fully accomplished: teamwork and team building!

The marvelous snow-white environment surrounding La Thuile offered a splendid scenario, amplifying the excitement of all skiing activities. Both skiing and snowboarding were practiced according to students' individual abilities.

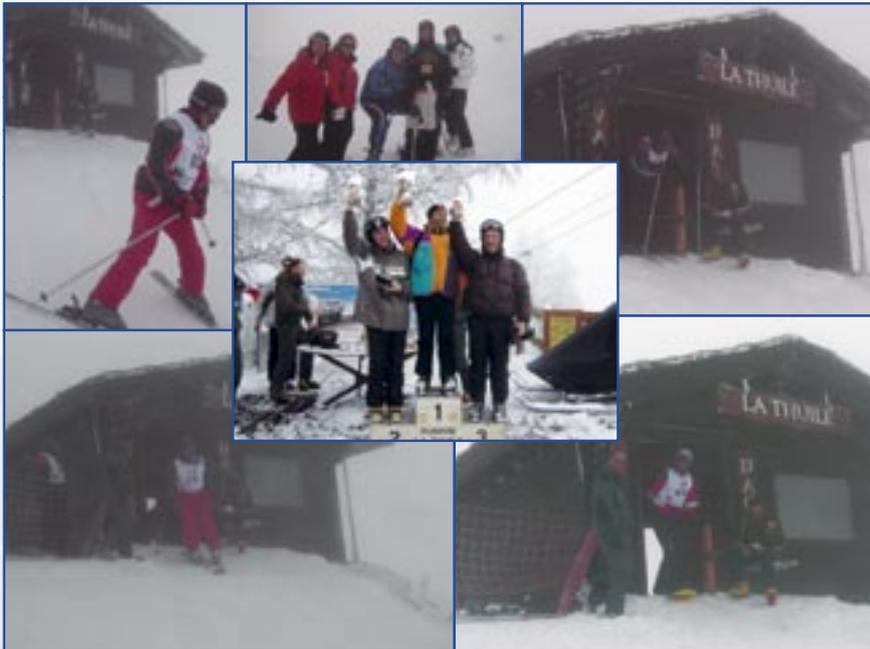
The Participants, from 6 Nations, were divided in 9 groups, and led by a military instructor of the Alpine Training Centre and from the local skiing school so they could improve daily their technique and familiarity with the skiing environment.

More than 150 Km of slopes of La Thuile (IT) and La Rosiere (FR) were tracked by our fellows, daily becoming more and more confident in their descents. The white landscape of the skiing arena facing the massif of Monte

1st NRDC-IT Giant slalom Trophy



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Bianco, at 4,848m Europe's highest peak, offered some breathtaking backdrops.

The weather represented the only missing cherry on the sweet cake of this superb training period, instead proving an obstacle to the quality of the training. Initially charmed by splendid sunshine, the second part of the training week was disturbed by low clouds and snowfalls. Nevertheless no one let it affect the pleasure of descending even the more challenging slopes, under the skilful direction of instructors, teachers and sometimes just more experienced colleagues.

The practice developed day by day whilst beginners, intermediates and experts improved own personal capabilities which culminated with the 1st NRDC-IT Giant Slalom Trophy, raced by all participants on Monday 30th January, despite the extreme weather conditions which added an extra challenge to the event.

The Trophy, arranged by the Director of La Thuile Lifting Service, Dr. Giordano and under the outstanding organization of the Director of La Thuile Ski Club, WO Tognetto, was raced in a foggy day, but all participants were guided through the poles by the light of De Coubertin spirit. All could experience once in their life the feeling of the epic feats of Alberto Tomba and Herman Mayer, albeit at

the finish the gaps in the rank-list were negated by the common "esprit the corps" and everyone warranted a place on the highest step of the podium.

The NRDC-IT organization team would like to thank the many members' families whose presence helped in achieving the most important of the results: to contribute to team building and reciprocal better knowledge. The valuable effect of gathering staff members and relatives was soon clear when the groups started to meet for lunch or just to drink a typical "Bombardino" at one of the several typical fashion bars in the skiing arena during pauses between lessons.

The two social events organized were also a great success.

The first was a typical dinner in a Local "Baita", reached by snowmobiles along the snow-covered San Bernardino pass road. The guests were warmly welcomed with an outdoor aperitif of "vinbrulé" which allayed the -17 °C night-time temperature.

The "Raclette" speciality entree and a friendly "caffé a la Valdostain", drunk from a typical wooden "Grolla", to wrap up the dinner, helped to reinforce the good mood and new friendships.



La Thuile 2006



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The second social event was a formal thank you from NRDC-IT and addressed to all whose support had been vital to the success of the exercise.

Organised in one of the best pubs in the village, it was an opportunity to deliver presents, prizes and NRDC-IT gadgets to the instructors, Military Alpine School members and local supporters and friends as recognition for their efforts. It was also a final opportunity to bring together once more the participants in a pleasant, informal and relaxed environment.

The NRDC-IT senior representative, BG NAGY, took the opportunity to address those gathered, outlining how "...such a kind of activity is important to pave better understanding among the multinational HQ environment and improve thereby also the working relationships". He continued "...welcoming the participation of the members' family in preparation of a mutual supportive NRDC-IT community when the HQ deploys".

Look forward to next year's Eagle SNOWMASTER!

1ST NRDC-IT GIANT SLALOM TROPHY

	Beginners	Intermediate	Advanced
1 st	CMS NARDACCI	CMS FESTUCCIA L	CAPT GENTILE
2 nd	WO MAGNI	CMS PRONESTÌ	LT COL ARRIGHI
3 rd	WO STAGLIANO'	CMS FESTUCCIA E	LT COL STOCCUTO



The Team:

Ltc. ARRIGHI
Ltc. STOCCUTO
Capt. TARTAGLIONE
WO1 IANNONE