

Challenging Oneself

by LTC Mark Rosenstein

Striving for professional excellence is a fundamental trademark of all professional military organizations. From ancient times military forces sought challenges to test physical and mental endurance. The "Argonauts" of Greek mythology, the Centurions of ancient Rome, the volunteers of the French Foreign Legion, the British SAS and our present-day military fighting forces; all have one common bond, the desire to be challenged physically and mentally, to demonstrate strength, proficiency and leadership.

Today, the passion to test oneself physically and mentally remains one of our finest military traditions. Through its sports clubs and multi-national contingents, the NATO Rapid Deployment Corps – Italy (NRDC-ITA) provides its members with opportunities to challenge their physical and mental stamina. Two programs in particular are Italian parachute training and German military proficiency training.



COL Anthony Puckett and LTC Grzegorz Kotowski (POL) after receiving their Italian Jump Wings from MG Antonio Satta.

LTC John Williams (UK), WO2 Sean Goldsworthy (UK) and LTC Mark Rosenstein with their instructors, Mr. Luigi CAVALLINI and Mr. Sergio LURASCHI, on "Jump Day" at Montagnana-Baschirotto Airfield



LTC John Williams (UK), WO2 Sean Goldsworthy (UK) and LTC Mark Rosenstein prepared to get into the plane at Montagnana-Baschirotto Airfield





Parachute Training: The Italian National Airborne Association offers a parachute training program which culminates in the award of the coveted Italian Parachute Brevet Jump Wing Badge. Additionally, the training is reported to the Italian Airborne School in Pisa and a certificate signed by the School Commander is provided to each trainee. Successful completion of training qualifies the trainee to attend airborne training at the Italian Airborne School.

Military Proficiency Training: The German Army offers a military proficiency training program which culminates in the award of the coveted German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency (*Leistungsabzeichen*). The award has three levels based on proficiency achieved (Gold, Silver and Bronze). In addition to Proficiency Badge, awardees also receive the German sports ribbon (*Sportabzeichen*). Requirements to earn the badge:



- Physical and Moral Fitness.
- First Aid Training.
- Sports Events (event requirements determined by age):
 - 100-meter timed sprint.
 - 3-kilometer timed run.
 - Measured High-jump and Long-jump.
 - 200-meter timed swim (any stroke).
 - Measured Shot-put or Stone-put.
- 25-meter Marksmanship Event (9mm pistol only).
- Road March Event (battle uniform, boots, rucksack with at least 10 kg).



COL Peter Gruenebach (DEU SNR) and his spouse Marianne stand with two recent awardees of the German Badge for Military Proficiency (COL Anthony Puckett, USA and LTC Mark Rosenstein, USA). The award ceremony took place during the 2008 NRDC-Italy International Day event.

LTC Mark Rosenstein (USA) receives the coveted German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency from COL Peter Gruenebach (DEU SNR).



Soldiers interested in either of the two programs should contact any member of the German Army contingent for the German Military Proficiency Training or LTC Fabio Sandonnini for the Italian Parachute Training.