



MORAL & WELFARE

NRDC-ITA Boosted links with external authorities for Family Benefits.

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Moral & Welfare is always paramount to everybody in any situation. It is within human beings' attitude to make the best attempts to achieve happiness in whichever way it could come. Family stability, safety and security as well as the kin's capability to run the daily routine as smoothly as when the head of the family is at home is the most relevant concern for a soldier deployed abroad in operation.

Many efforts have been done at NRDC-ITA (HQ), taking in account this principle, to enhance or create, when needed, contacts and mechanisms to make the family comfortable with daily issues even when the head of the family is deployed.

A two fold line of action has been implemented resulting in both internal improvements in link and support to families (through the Family Support Center) and

external in reinforcing the awareness and contacts with local Authorities.

Leaving back their job to FSC with their own presentation, hereunder we want to draw what was done and is still in progress to make closer and closer links with the environment other than the military, out of the barracks.

"Ugo MARA" premises were settled down since more than one century ago and they are well known to all the civil community around Solbiate Olona town and Varese province. These infrastructures have always been home for Italian Armed Forces, mainly for the Army with conscripts for years and years. Now, despite the efforts done, it is still hard for civilian to believe that such an important and unique HQ has been established in our barracks. The requirements have dramatically changed since the Italian

Army General Staff decided that “Ugo MARA” barracks would have become the house for such relevant International HQ with now 15 Contributing Nations, including Italy.

The social humus of “Ugo MARA” moved from the young conscripts to professional soldiers and international Staff personnel with families not speaking Italian language in many cases, far from their own native countries, with different culture and habits. Of course family means children, school requirements, doctors, flats to live in and all the every day life related issues.

Since the very beginning of the NRDC-ITA settlement a strong importance was entitled to assist the family both in peace and in crisis time. After completion of the tour in Afghanistan as ISAF VIII in 2005/2006, a huge experience was gained and more lessons were learned. A more strict interaction was essential to create a friendly environment for families spread out around Olona River Valley and in Varese and Milan counties.

So, in parallel with the individual and team training, exercises, the enhancement of staff skill and English language capability, the medical fitness, there has been the need to prepare and help the families to cope with every day life by firstly making stronger and stronger links with Authorities.



There are a number of evidences to confirm that the links between civilian Authorities and NRDC-ITA are excellent and that many issues have already been sorted out with mutual benefit through structure and mechanism that exist at “Ugo MARA” barracks. Nonetheless, COM NRDC-ITA want-

ed to boost the cooperation with external Authorities at the maximum extent, to create a win to win situation.

In this perspective COM NRDC-ITA convened a meeting between nearest towns Busto Arsizio and Solbiate Olona Mayors and Senior National Representatives. The meeting offered the opportunity to both Mayors and SNRs’ community to better know each other, exchange views and mainly to agree on the way ahead about very important issues such as:

■ **Safe and secure environment.**

There was the requirement to improve the overall security in the areas where foreign families live and to make arrangements to overpass language barriers in case of need and emergencies. Subsequent arrangements were done by the Support Brigade to NRDC-ITA (HQ) in this regard. Furthermore a “first aid” card was printed out and presented to dependants of ISAF 09/1 personnel with all the useful information. The card is to be handed over to any civil official in case of emergency. Police Forces were also made further aware of these arrangements in order to be ready to deal with dependants belonging to NATO members. In addition, as a whole, Busto Arsizio municipality is working with Police Forces (Carabinieri, State Police, Financial Police and Municipal / Local Police) to establish a better coordination through the already existing 24/7 video surveillance system of the town and surroundings. Solbiate Olona municipality has a similar system and an agreement is in place with a private security company which is performing checks to public buildings and local infrastructures once they are closed. This leads to a comprehensive surveillance system that should drive to a better and safer general environment.

■ **Bureaucracy and language barriers.**

Mayors committed themselves to break down language barriers and bureaucracy by putting in place language skilled employees to better deal with allied NRDC-ITA members and their families and to help in solving any issue related to municipalities such as residency registration and contacts

with other branches within the municipalities.

- **Schooling system.** The point was raised to know which schools within the municipalities could be approached to enroll the children (i.e. kindergarten, primary school, high school, college). Mayors were available to better examine the needs. Furthermore, Mr. Giuseppe Bianchi, Solbiate Olona's Mayor, after stating that a support teacher is presently already at work (so called Cultural mediator), mentioned that a massive enrolment would have an economic impact on a small town as Solbiate Olona. In this regards, Mr. Bianchi wished that the "Monterosa Village" could envisage a school as well as other facilities.
- **Mutual integration with local community.** Both Mayors stated they would be happy to promote integration process among families and the local community. Dedicate tickets and promotion of other agreements, as well as cultural and social activities for the benefit of the whole NRDC-ITA community were granted. NATO members and dependants will be involved in the whole range of social, cultural and artistic activities (i.e. Busto Arsizio film Festival) whose updates are available through the municipal web site.



Moreover, in the view of the highest consideration of them, all the Olona River Valley's Mayors were the first to know amongst civilian Authorities about the deployment of NRDC-ITA to ISAF 09/1, directly by COM

NRDC-ITA during another meeting held at "Ugo Mara" barracks in December 2008.

A press release followed with same detailed information.

Close contacts remain in place to grant continuous interactions with municipalities for mutual support. A good example to be considered is the deployment of specialized troops and means from "Ugo MARA" to free public service such as Hospitals and railway station from the snow after a call for help come from Busto Arsizio municipality: a timely action in night time was taken to support the civilian Authorities struggling against heavy snowfall output.



Nowadays NRDC-ITA is a well established reality, well-known within national, regional, provincial and local Authorities. Many opportunities to better know each other and interact have been investigated and exploited. The links with municipalities are very strong. The support that NRDC-ITA families receive from local Authorities are adequate and very satisfactory due to the mutual deeper knowledge. Internal and external structures and mechanisms are in place to help ISAF 09/1 deployed personnel's families as priority number one.

Actually, we are fully confident to state that NRDC-ITA (HQ) personnel deployed to ISAF 09/1 can count on a well driven support to their families. The links already existing with municipalities have become stronger, deeper and more effective to help families. On the other hand, families can consider "Ugo MARA" barracks as their home, a place where a problem finds a solution and where all the families are always very welcomed.