



# THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC DAY IN KABUL

■ by WO1 (ITA A) Cosimo Argentieri

Afghanistan – Kabul: 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2009, To mark the occasion of 63<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the Italian Republic's birth, members of the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps - Italy participated in a ceremony in front of the HQ ISAF in the Afghan capital. With the raising of the Italian national flag the Italian national anthem, "Fratelli d'Italia" was sung by all Italian personnel present.

The Republic Day, Festa della Repubblica, marks the overthrow of the monarchy by a popular referendum in 1946. The colours on the Italian flag have two meanings - green for the countryside, white for the snow capped mountains and red for the blood shed in the fight for independence; or green for hope, white for faith and red for charity. The birth of the Italian Republic (officially on June 2, 1946) is a key event in Italian contemporary history. Until 1946, Italy was officially a monarchy, ruled by the House of Savoy, kings of Italy since the Risorgimento (and previously of Sardinia). However, Benito Mussolini, enjoying the support of the monarchy, imposed fascism after the October 28, 1922 march on Rome, which eventually led to engaging Italy in World War II alongside Nazi Germany. In 1946, Italy became a republic after the results of a popular referendum. Monarchists advanced suspicions of fraud that were nev-

er proved and at the same time a Constituent assembly was elected.

The ISAF Chief of Staff, General Marco Bertolini, gave a speech thanking the ambassador, His Excellency, Fernando Gentilini (SCR) and Senior NATO Civilian Representative in Afghanistan and those ISAF officers and the 45 national representatives for being present at the ceremony.

The COS ISAF and Italian Senior national representative said that "We are proud to operate side by side with the Afghans and the colleagues of many participating nations in the quest for the security and the development of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan" he added "we will remember these days and remember the example of courage and generosity that those who have lost their lives serving here in Afghanistan, we share with them the hopes and the dreams for an Afghanistan that is free and peaceful".

The NRDC-ITA contingent of 158 among of Officers, NCOs and Troops along with 42 other nations have been serving with the International Security Assistant Forces (ISAF) in Afghanistan since the middle of this January and will end their tour at the end of July. A job well done. ■