

## Riding the Mountains

by BG (GRC A) Efstathios KOTRONIS



Pre-historic Nordic people and Samis invented skiing to assist hunting, military maneuvers and as a means of practical transportation. Of course today people use skiing for different reasons than the past. Now days skiing and snowboarding are very popular sports in countries that have a cold climate. Both skiing and snowboarding are sports of short moments and contrasts -the gentle winter wonderland ride up the chair lift, anticipation and hesitation at the top of the mountain. Then there is a last deep breath, the sound of the poles and the board crunching into the ice and it is off to the races. You feel the cool breeze on your face and thrill of slicing down a hill. You keep pushing yourself. Every run has a different challenge.

But it is not only this, skiing and snowboarding require a number of athletic abilities including technical, physical and mental skills. Often compared to running and swimming as a cardiovascular work out, it is not surprising that many people engage in this activity to stay fit and warm! The reason why these sports are so similar is because health professionals consider these are different forms of aerobic exercise. People will have to exert a lot of physical effort and use up to a lot of oxygen to keep moving. One important benefit of skiing and snowboarding is that it improves the individual's circulatory system. This increases alertness making it easy for the person to respond to anything or perform normal duties with minimum effort.

Is this perhaps why this year 225 individuals (many of them belonging to the same family) are members of the NRDC-ITA ski and snowboard club? No! These individuals did not decide to participate to the club only because of the above mentioned but also because of the fact that belonging to a ski club they have the opportunity to be outdoors, exercising and not sitting in front of computers and TV screens. Participating in the ski events the club organizes enables the entire family to be together in on an exhilarating and snowy mountaintop, it reinforces its relationships and provides excellent quality time together. It also helps in cementing friendships amongst



members of the staff that did not know each other prior to this and brings families of different nationalities Together.

The NRDC-ITA ski and snowboard club can consider this year as one of the most successful to date. The figures speak for themselves:

- The Club currently has 220 actual members
- Membership is split between the NRDC-ITA HQ; The Spt Bde the RESTAL and 1st Sign Rgt.
- Personnel on active duty, represent 65%, and the 58 kids under 16 and the 45 wives make up the rest of this Club.
- The Club started officially this years activity on the 8 December 2009 and will end on 18 Apr;
- During the current skiing season 11 skiing events will be occurring and the participation range to an average of 130 members each time.
- Also this year there will be a Giant Slalom competition. Last year it had 112 members divided into 4 categories (children under 12; Ladies; Snowboarders and Men).
- Departing both from Solbiate, the Club drives 3 busses to the best resorts of Aosta Valley such as: Pila; Gressoney; Champorcher; Champoluc; Valtournanche; La Thuile; Cervinia.
- The Club is member of the FIS (Italian Winter Sport Association)

I am very glad that I have the opportunity to be member of the club and to enjoy with my family and friends skiing in some of the most beautiful places of our host nation. We are not members of the ski and snowboard club just for skiing or snowboarding. We are members, because we enjoy mountain scenery, the amazing mountain air, the unique feelings that someone experiences drinking hot chocolate and having a suntan session on a restaurant terrace surrounded by snow capped mountain peaks. From time to time we need to really get away everything but most importantly because share the escape with friends, in an enthusiastic atmosphere and the positive attitude that we all share in this club. During skiing and snowboarding we feel excited when we are sliding down but at the end of the day we return to our homes having the sensation that we still fly over the mountains we were riding just a few minutes ago.

## NIWIC Christmas Charity Fair 2010

by MAJ (GBR A) Christopher Tom SARGENT

Members of the NRDC-ITA Wives International Club, held a very successful charity fair at the Officer's Club in Ugo Mara Barracks in the lead up to Christmas. The fair which saw members of the Wives's community baking homemade cakes and then selling them to raise profits for two charities, War Child and the Italian Red Cross, was a huge success raising over 1500 Euros in total.

The NIWIC, which allows wives from across the 14 nations at the NRDC-ITA to interact and socialise with each other meets regularly and organises cultural trips for its members. Two trips are planned for the first half of this year. The first is a visit the world famous Turin Shroud which is to be exhibited for the first time in 10 years and the second to the beautiful city of Venice.

The NIWIC is a vital part of the NRDC-ITA and contributes to the ongoing development of international relations within the multinational community that is the backbone of the NRDC-ITA

