

# Ex Eagle Winter

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## Snow Master 2004

In the last mid February a big group from HQ NRDC-IT Staff, Signal Brigade and its subordinate Regiments, attended a training week in Passo del Tonale area. Aim of the activity, named Snow Master 2004, was to introduce the personnel to the mountain winter environment practising both the snow terrain movement and the alpine skiing.

In the morning of Monday 16th February the group left Solbiate ready to face the new challenge, a lot of them did not ever see a pair of skies... The arrival at Passo del Tonale was really impressive, a wonderful sunny day full of light with the white snow produced a postcard landscape.

The first day passed very quickly for the equipment set up even if the first contact with the "terrific" snowshoes scared someone.

The morning after all were ready to start the game, a march was scheduled and on the map it didn't appear so demanding... the weather was wonderful and the entire conditions ideal to test the enemy. The first part of the itinerary was quite easy but, after a while, the snow conditions changed dramatically and the tragedy begun. The snowshoes that fit perfectly in the barracks seemed to have changed dimensions, after few steps

they untied from the boots forcing people to stop and to rescue them under half a meter of snow...

But the very strong determination of NRDC-IT heroes allowed winning the battle even if the valley echoed with bad words in several languages.

The first step was done, in the evening the morale was very high because of the day after the skiing activity should start. And so, in another blue-sky day, our braves were ready, and fully equipped, to emulate Alberto Tomba's performances. The "experts" started very proudly to show the others the secrets of skiing, the "beginners" (most of them absolute) started their personal battle with the treacherous pieces of wood...

Anyway everything went well, the civilian ski instructors who cooperated with us gave their experience and, at the end of the day, everybody could appreciate the skiing pleasure... fantastic!

But nothing so perfect could last too long... the morning after, another march was scheduled, a surprise welcomed the group at wake-up. The weather remembered that it was mid February and changed dramatically, a real snowstorm was ongoing in the Tonale area. After a couple of hours of waiting the situation didn't change and the activity of the day was cancelled. A mix-



*Following the ski instructors on the slopes.*



*Patrols on a snow track.*



*Checking the snow equipment before starting the daily activity.*



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ture of feelings pervaded the crew, sadness for not enjoying the mountain pleasures and, on the other side, happiness for the avoided fatigue. However the spare time was exploited for delivering some lectures on the



*A lot of snow really.*



*Morning meeting at the IT Army Logistic Base of Passo del Tonale.*



*An amazing sight of the winter training area.*

mountain environment and specific winter aspects focussing on dangers, WO Beikircher had the opportunity to show his knowledge and professionalism on the topic.

The other three days are history, the weather remained unchanged until the end of the exercise but the activity didn't stop. Every morning our heroes went skiing despite the zero visibility, the 100 Km hrs speed wind, and the absolute impossible snow conditions... everything was against us!

At the end it is possible to say that the objectives were achieved, all the participants had a better comprehension of what is the mountain winter environment and which preparation, training and equipment are necessary to cope with it specially in bad weather conditions and so, tired but completely satisfied, everybody came back to Solbiate happy of this experience.



*Ready for a glorious downhill ski run.*