

Eagle Sailing

by CF A. ZAGO, Navy Advisor

In September HQ NRDC-IT found itself engaged in an unusual pursuit for a Land headquarters: Exercise Sail Adventure, a week of adventure training with the aim of familiarizing participants with small sailing craft of class Comet, Sun and Sprint.

The 8-day exercise was conducted on the Lake Maggiore with the involvement of numerous services and nationalities and served,

through the close confines of the 4-10 man boats and the pressure of time added to the practical challenges of sailing, to contribute to team building within the HQ.

Day 1 and after a short course introduction and crew training, the exercise was underway. The difference in experience was immediately evident, from the experienced to the landlubbers, but these differences would fade in the span of the next few days.



After the initial shock of this environment of moving floors, confined space, awkward sails and a new language to learn, from bowlines and booms to spinnaker and sloops, the sailing proceeded well. On return to solid land, this first day the adventurers found themselves reflecting the beauty of the lake and the efforts of sailing, with a little snooze on the coach home; albeit raring to go the next day.

And so the exercise continued. In such a stunning area, all appreciated the lake, marveling at its shores, the castle of Cannero, Maccagno, Laveno, Luino, Stresa Pallanza, the Boromean Islands, in particular Isola Bella with its typical Italian garden and in contrast Isola Madre and its English garden. All learned to tie that intriguing knot, to raise and lower the sails, to handle the sheets, to jib and tack, and the culmination of the course was the chance to pit their sailing against each other in a regatta. At the end of the exercise, the boats brought safely home, all had learnt important lessons of sharing the workload, working as a team, and living the adage "many hands make light work".

Eventually everyone managed, with the help of the instructor, to ready their vessels, splice the main brace and set sail! The instructors began to speak in an entirely different language; sheets not made of beds, port not for drinking, and some of those now trapped on board found themselves in a different world!

