



ON EXERCISES AND DOCTRINE

The NRDC-ITA Support Brigade A National Unit on NATO Service

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At the end of a theatre show we are all able to appreciate and cheer actors for their performance and artistic skills; but many spectators really don't know what happens behind the stage curtains. Many workers, hair dressers, electricians, scriptwriters, carpenters worked to allow good actors to achieve their success. People from the Support Brigade are more or less like workers behind a theatre's stage curtains though this being an international contest, where the role players are multi national Corps personnel.

Today the Support Brigade has a specific role. The unit was specially created to provide direct support to NRDC-ITA (HQ) both in peacetime and crisis. Its tasks are essential for daily life in the NATO HQ such as routine activities inside the barracks in Solbiate Olona or during exercises and/or operations "outside the fence". In this latter case the entire brigade shows their best effort, providing the CPs (Command Posts) deployment and redeployment by road, sea, air and railways in a very short time. The deployment is the main part. Actually the hard work is building up all three Command Posts (Main, Main Alternate and Rear Support Command). In the first place, the Engineer COY (Company) is in charge of preparing the terrain, while specialists from the 1st Signal Regiment work on the network in order to connect the entire CP while establishing a combined radio and satellite communication network with other units. This stage is essential for the HQ to ensure there is communication capability at all times in order to exercise command and control (C2) over the assigned divisions and corps troops.

From the beginning of the deployment following the CP set up and, afterwards during exercises and/or operations, the "Bersaglieri" COY which belongs to the Support and Tactical Regiment, insure the force protection for the entire area including the CP and services. When everything already seems done, the real life support starts working without breaks, providing a "number one role", for health issues, accommodation, canteen services, laundry service, bakery, gym and other vital components.





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Something is changing. A year ago the Support Brigade started to study and experiment a new C2 concept in order to refine its own organization and improve command and control system for the NATO HQ. The first important step, in this procedure was "EAGLE DAGGER 2009" that took place near Civitavecchia, in the Lazio Region, and where the Support Brigade HQ deployed this sort of CP to test and exercise the command and control systems over its units instead of the NATO HQ (according to the national roles). The experience in

Civitavecchia was considered the milestone for the change, and everything went well in terms of real life support and coordination systems within the Brigades composition. But the road to achieve a final result was not easy and the exercise "EAGLE BLADE 09", which occurred last December at "Cameri" airfield, showed the necessity to radically change the structure of the Support Brigade CP.

A new challenge in approach for the Support Brigade.

This year is crucial for NRDC-ITA (HQ) and, of course for the Support Brigade, because of the CREVAL (Combat Readiness Evaluation) and the upcoming role of Land Component Command within the NATO Response Force. There is an Exercise in June called EAGLE METEOR 2010 that will take place in a training area close to the town of LECCE in the South East of Italy. The brigade is going to have two responsibilities: to allow NRDC-ITA (HQ) to pass the first step of the CREVAL in terms of direct support.

Col. Antonio PENNINO, Support Brigade Commander has confidence in the brigade's capacity and strongly believes in his personnel: a lot has been done, but much more still remains to be achieved.

