



## Exercise CASTA 2010

by LTC (ITA A) Giulio DI MARZIO

Once again a multinational team from the NRDC-ITA & Support Units headed to S.Candido to take part in the 62nd AlpiniTroops Ski Championship, or 'CaSTA'. Set in the stunningly scenic Pusteria Valley ski resort situated in the South Tirol's Dolomites, this unique and high profile competition is a great opportunity to test the Alpine skills of soldiers from across NATO and Partnership for Peace (PfP) countries. It is also a great opportunity to cement the bonds of the NATO Alliance with ties of friendship.

As a NATO HQ, the NRDC-ITA HQ ski team competed against lots of other teams in the Friendship Trophy – a competition open to all military teams from NATO and PfP nations, the trophy event comprises the following competitions: Giant Slalom, Cross-Country race (15 km males, 10 km females), Team Sprint and a Patrol Race (25 km with shooting).



Following a series of weekly skiing training sessions performed in the Aosta Valley from the first week of December, the giant slalom team was ready to join the competition proper albeit against a number of teams comprised solely of professional skiers. On the way, due to priorities HQ activities and injuries, we lost some elements supposed to race in cross country and ski mountaineering and so finally we raced only in giant slalom.

The competition was quite challenging, but unfortunately after the first manche of the race Corporal Villa Valeria fell at the start. At first it seemed not to be such a serious event, but after a while she decided her race was finished. All the rest of the team finished the race and SGT Joanne Hammick continued her good form last year with another good result, finishing forth in the female competition.

Despite the hard work and demanding competition, all the members of the NRDC-ITA HQ ski team enjoyed the challenge.

The team were fortunate to have both COS present at the opening ceremony, and appreciated the opportunity to have DCOM attending the race on the 5th February. Later we even had the opportunity to ski with him.

The competition provided a unique opportunity for HQ NRDC-ITA to train and compete in a world-class skiing competition against some of the best military skiers in the world.

For those who feel up to the challenge next year, they will be more than welcome.

The NRDC-ITA ski team comprised of the following personnel: LTC di Marzio GIULIO, LTC Sorvillo Francesco, Captain Vagnoni Gianfilippo, Captain Marco Equizi, WO Soldavini Marco, SGT Hammick Joanne, Corporal Villa Valeria.