



Courtesy photos

The Italian Ranger training includes an amphibious phase where candidates learn how to move and survive in a water environment.



Italian Rangers have participated in many recent operations including those in Iraq and Afghanistan.

ITALIAN RANGERS LINK UP WITH U.S. COUNTERPARTS

From September 18-25, 2005, the commander of the 4th Italian Ranger Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Ivan Caruso, and S3, Captain Massimiliano Bar, visited the Ranger Training Brigade and the headquarters of the 75th Ranger Regiment.

The purpose of the visit was to collect information about the training conducted at the U.S. Ranger School, establish a close link with the U.S. Army's 75th Ranger Regiment, and to plan cross-training with this Special Operations unit.

The 4th Italian Ranger Regiment was first born as "Monte Cervino" Battalion (the italo-swiss Matterhorn mountain, named from the Italian side) at the beginning of World War I during the winter of 1915. It fought at Passo della Borcola, on the Pasubio, on Monte Vodice, and on Monte Grappa.

Disbanded in 1919, it was brought back again in 1940 as a skiing battalion and fought in Greece and Albania during World War II. In November 1941, it fought on the Russian front, where it was heavily involved in hard and long fighting.

The constitution of the Alpini Airborne Platoons occurred in 1952, and the constitution of the Alpini Airborne Company occurred in 1964. In 1996 this company became the Ranger



The last 16 weeks of the Italian Ranger course focuses on mountain training.

Battalion Monte Cervino, and it finally became the 4th Ranger Regiment in September 2004.

In the last 20 years, the 4th Ranger Regiment has participated in many worldwide operations including those in Mozambique, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

The 4th Italian Ranger Regiment is prepared to plan and conduct direct actions and carry out light infantry tasks at strategic and operational levels.

Today, they are accomplishing missions in Nasiriya and Baghdad, Iraq, and in Kabul and Herat, Afghanistan.

The headquarters of the Italian Ranger Regiment is located in Bolzano, in northeast Italy near one of the most beautiful mountain landscapes of the world: the Dolomite mountains. The Italian Rangers use this terrain to train themselves to move, fight, and survive in the hardest environment for soldiers: the mountains.

Gaining the Italian Ranger qualification is a long and hard process. First, volunteers have to become military parachutists. After the four-week school, Rangers next spend 17 weeks in Bolzano for basic training.

During this phase, instructors focus their attention on the physical and psychological attitude of the soldiers. Physical training, land navigation, shooting and patrol procedures are the minimum capabilities that they have to learn.

After this phase, candidates attend the Ranger course (six weeks), which is the most important part of the training. They

have to prepare and conduct at least four missions (direct actions), and Ranger instructors evaluate candidates as patrol leader, medic, RTO, and weapons squad leader.

The amphibious course is the phase that follows the Ranger course. In these two weeks, candidates learn how to move and survive in a water environment.

The last 16 weeks of the course are focused on mountain training. During the first eight weeks of this last phase, Rangers learn what it means to move, survive, and fight in a mountain environment. The purpose of this phase is to teach them the different techniques for climbing with weapons, patrol equipment and in all weather conditions. Many hours are spent teaching knots and rappelling methods. At the end of the course, the best qualified candidates will be sent to Italian Alpini Military School to become climbing instructors. Within the unit, more than 50 Rangers are climbing instructors.

From January to March, Rangers attend the skiing phase. This is usually the more dangerous part of the course because candidates

have to patrol in a winter environment on skis carrying a lot of weight.

At the end of this long training period, candidates move to one of the two Ranger companies. But soldiers' training is not finished; usually in a year they will conduct at least four live-fire exercises by day and night at platoon level, two live-fire exercises by day and night at company level, one live-fire exercise by day and night at battalion level as well as air assault exercises with army aviation.

Only few selected soldiers are gathered in the "Recon platoon" where they specialize their training with the free fall jump course.

This platoon conducts tactical reconnaissance, surveillance and direct action operations in support of the Ranger Regiment, pathfinder operations, mark drop zones and conduct operations with other SOF.

Currently, the 4th Italian Ranger Regiment has two officers and two NCOs who graduated from the U.S. Ranger School. One of this two NCOs, Master Sergeant Luca Bertozzo is also qualified as an instructor for the U.S. school and spent last year working as an instructor in the school's mountain phase.

The 4th Italian Ranger Regiment commander hopes to continue sending others officers or NCOs to the U.S. Ranger course and to improve cross-training between the Italian Rangers and 75th Ranger Regiment.



Italian Ranger volunteers must first become military parachutists.