

# MILITARY SPORT AND CIVILIAN SOCIETY

Colonel PEROTTO (Italy)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- a. The relationship between Military Sport and Civilian Society is a problem, which presents aspects common to many nations: at least, to all nations with compulsory military service.
- b. Purpose of this presentation is to show a « model of co-operation », that Italy has successfully adopted in the last 20 years (not to examine sociological aspects or philosophical elements).
- c. Such a « model » is logically connected with the project « Sport for All », which was the subject of my presentation last year in Warendorf. This important project, developed since 1994 by the Italian National Olympic Committee (C.O.N.I.), is now in a significant phase of its implementation, with the installation of 20 Committees at « regional » level. When all these Committees will be active (by 1999), the co-ordination of all regional resources (personnel, infrastructure, finances,..) will determine a relevant improvement of the cost/effectiveness aspect for sport for all activity.

## 2. MILITARY/CIVILIAN CO-OPERATION IN SPORT

Examining this wide and complex theme, I consider as particularly significant the following 4 « areas », in which the military/civilian co-operation can usually be developed:

- a. « mass-sport » for military personnel;
- b. « Elite-sport » for soldiers/athletes at top national level;
- c. Military support to the most important national and international sports events;
- d. Agreements between C.O.N.I. and Ministry of Defence for the construction and utilisation of sport infrastructures.

a. **Mass-Sport** for soldiers during their compulsory military service.

There are big differences depending on:

- level of school performed;
- type of military unit;
- personal engagement,

but there is a common aim: give the soldiers the best physical training, in order to accomplish their military duties.

b. **Elite-sport** for soldiers, which are athletes at the « top national level ».

They are serving in « Special Athletes Units »: 3 for Italian Army, 2 for Navy, 1 for Air Force, 2 for Carabinieri (=Military Police) and 3 for « Border Guards ». Lt-Col DE CANIO, since 3 years Commander of 1st Special Athletes Unit in the Army, will present his experiences in this difficult but challenging job.

c. **Military support** (with personnel, logistical means and equipment) to the most important national and international sports events.

For example: in 1996 ( 142 events, in support of National Federations, like Track and Field, Soccer, Fencing, Shooting, Rowing,...) including:

- 35 performances of military bands;
- more than 400 buses;
- more than 250 cars and lorries;
- more than 120 ambulances;

in 1997 (108 events, including « Mediterranean Games » and « University World Championships » with;

- 28 performances of military bands;
- more than 500 buses;
- more than 200 cars and lorries;
- more than 100 ambulances.

Question: who is paying for this support?

The Italian National Olympic Committee provides a contribution of some 3 Mil. US \$ ((in 1997) for supporting sport activities of 9 Military Groups (including the Armed Forces and the different Corps of Police) and for the reimbursement of military support given to the National Sports Federations.

d. **Agreement** between CONI and Ministry of Defence for the construction (with 50% contribution from both sides) and the utilisation of sport infrastructures on military ground. The CONI contribution in 1997 amounts to ± 1,3 Mil. US \$. It is very important (for practical utilisation of these infrastructures) the definition of many elements, like timetables, trainers and assistants availability, fees for maintenance, electricity, ... all those elements have to be agreed upon - at local level - between Military Garrison Commander and CONI Provincial President.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The « model of co-operation » I have just presented may be « not exportable », but - for sure - it is very effective to the Italian sport reality, with reference to the international results during last years.

In any case, this « Italian system for military sport » could be a « term of comparison » and a « contribution of ideas » for further discussion: and this was the real purpose of my presentation.

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