



ITA ARMY RESPONSE TO COVID-19

"4th newsletter - December 2020 update"

In Italy, the current trend of the epidemiological phenomenon has recently led to a significant increase in the number of infections from SARS-COV-2, with a consequent increment of the activities carried out by the National Health Service (NHS) to prevent and contain the spread of the virus. Since the pandemic outbreak, the ITA Army has always been at the forefront to support Civil Authorities by improving the operational readiness of its forces while providing its contribution in terms of capacities, structures and infrastructures to ensure a prompt large-scale response. In the new footing, the protection of forces has always been the main effort: as a general rule, in the framework of the national initiatives undertaken to counter the epidemiological emergency, all measures have been taken in the field of prevention and containment, in accordance with the provisions issued by the Ministry of Health.

"STRADE SICURE" OPERATION

In line with the decisions of the Government, the number of military personnel deployed in the Operation was increased of 753 soldiers, attesting the total level of forces to 7.803.

Besides its original mission, the "Strade Sicure" Operation will continue to be oriented to fight the spread of the pandemic. In this regard, an Army CONPLAN has been issued to assure, on order, the deployment of up to 5.500 soldiers to support National Security Authorities across the national territory and to ensure the continuity of the Operation replacing infected personnel.

MILITARY HEALTH FACILITIES

The initiatives undertaken by the ITA Army in this specific sphere were mainly focused at increasing its health care capabilities to ease the pressure on NHS facilities. In this respect, a second COVID Centre has been set up at the Medical Hospital Centre (COM) in Milan to support the NHS in Northern Italy. Likewise, in April the Military Polyclinic "Celio" had already been turned into a specialized antiCOVID hub for Central and Southern regions, upgrading



the existing receptive capacities to host up to 100 patients in ordinary COVID-19 hospitalization and 52 for high-intensive care (46 in the ward and 6 "sheltered").

In addition, the Army made available its Olympic Centre facilities for health surveillance purposes and its logistic bases of Colle Isarco (BZ), Cecina (LI) and Valtournanche (AO) to host people who need a place to spend health isolation periods.



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ITALIAN ARMY FIELD HOSPITALS



In addition to existing structures, the ITA Army deployed 2 field hospitals in the cities of Crema and Piacenza at the beginning of the emergency. Recently, 3 additional field hospitals have been lined up in Perugia (37 beds, of which 3 are sub intensive care), Cosenza (43 beds, of which 3 are in sub-intensive care) and Aosta (22 beds, of which 2 are sub-intensive care), as requested by the respective regional Authorities, to offer

clinical assistance services to patients with COVID-19 infection. Similar requests were submitted by most Italian Regions to have field facilities set up in close proximity of civil hospitals (up to 49 heated tents have been deployed). Moreover, ITA Army granted ambulance transports to support the functionality of those hospitals particularly under pressure due to current recrudescence of the epidemiological emergency.



SUPPORT TO THE NATIONAL HEALTH SYSTEM

"...Defense - stated the Minister of Defense Lorenzo Guerini - has been on the field since the beginning of this emergency and immediately made all its capabilities and means available. Even in this phase, men and women of all the Armed Forces will continue to work at the service of citizens with commitment and determination ...".



The Military Health System (MHS), with its knowledge in medical and research fields, has demonstrated in the last months the importance of collaborating with the Ministry of Health to guarantee an even more widespread response across the country. The ITA Army has set up 10 Health Task Forces that, within the respective Areas of Responsibility, have made available quick health care capacities both for home care in favor of military/civilian personnel, and for NHS structures.



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In addition:

- Army regiments have been supplied with large capacity remediation devices, for a total of 81 employable teams to be deployed in case of need in support of local civil Authorities;
- laboratories in the Medical Hospital Center (COM) in Milan and in the Departments of Forensic Medicine (DMML) in Padua, Messina and Cagliari were made available to increase NHS swab analysis capabilities, with each one of them capable of processing approximately 300 swabs per day (in addition to the 1.200 daily processed by the Military Policlinic "Celio");
- 2 field laboratories (Rapid Deployable Outbreak Investigation Teams - RDOIT), in Caserta and Cosenza, with a 12.000/week analysis capability.

In October 2020, the Italian Defence launched the IGEA operation. At the moment, the Army has lined up 108 Defence Drive-Through (DDT) across the peninsula to ease the pressure on NHS facilities, with a 20.000/day swab analysis capability. Patients, always remaining in their car, can have a rapid swab performed by military doctors and quickly receive the result in the nearby parking lot.



EOS OPERATION



Launched on 26th December 2020, the ITA Defence EOS Operation initially operated for the national-wide distribution of the first doses of the Pfizer vaccine to allow the entire Country to join the "European vaccine day" on Sunday 27th December. From the Spallanzani Hospital, part of the vaccines were transported to military airport located in Pratica di Mare, from where 5 aircrafts began the distribution. The remaining vaccines reached their final destinations by land with a total commitment of 60 Army vehicles and about 250 soldiers.

In the second phase, once available the "cold" vaccines produced by other pharmaceutical companies (AstraZeneca, Moderna, etc.), the ITA Army will be engaged in logistic transportation across the national territory. From the main storage hub at the military airport in Pratica di Mare, the vaccine doses will reach 21 military "Sub Hubs" before being delivered to the



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final users. The plan foresees the use of 11 aircrafts, 73 helicopters and over 360 land vehicles. In accordance with the requests of the Regional/Local Health Services, the ITA Army also plans to set up fixed and mobile vaccination stations converting existing "Drive-Through Sites". Upon request, the military medical staff will also be available with mobile teams to support low-mobility individuals both in hospices or at home.

For other details/requests contact the International Activities Office:

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