Emergency in Monfalcone: the 3rd Engineers Neutralize 170 Ordnances

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At the end of last March, along the embankment of the Locovaz canal, in the municipality of Monfalcone (GO), numerous chemical-loaded war remnants were discovered. At the request of the Prefecture of Gorizia, a unit of the 3rd Engineers Regiment of the Army conducted, on March 27, an initial intervention of recognition and cataloging: **85 grenades were recorded, without fuses and not launched, but potentially unstable due to the chemical propellant**. **On April 1, a second activity by the same unit led to the discovery of an additional 85 ordnances, for a total of 170 pieces of various calibers.**

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Each grenade was safely stored at the site of discovery, awaiting the arrival of the Interforce NBC Technical Logistics Center (CETLI) of Civitavecchia, the only national entity authorized to intervene on materials containing chemical agents. The preliminary operations of the 3rd Engineers Regiment – under the Brigade “Pozzuolo del Friuli” and under the control of the Northern Operational Forces Command in Padua – required the adoption of individual protection procedures and mechanical barriers to isolate the ammunition and ensure environmental protection.

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Synergy between CBRN bomb disposal experts and safe transport

On May 6, 7, and 8, the two specialized units – Conventional Munition Disposal (CMD) of the 3rd Engineers Regiment and the NBC unit of CETLI – operated in close synergy. Thanks to a coordinated plan, safety corridors, public delimitations, and containment systems were set up to prevent the dispersion of chemical agents in case of accidental breakage of the metal shells.

The CETLI NBC, heir to the Chemical Physical and Biological Military Technical Center and the NBC Defense Materials Military Establishment (merged in 2004 at the Santa Lucia Military Complex), provided specialists, detection equipment, and sealed containers for transfer. Each grenade was loaded into anti-perforation boxes and transported with military convoys to Civitavecchia, where final neutralization is underway according to the procedures provided by the 1993 Paris Convention. The operations concluded without incidents, ensuring maximum safety for the population and the personnel involved.

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Prevention and strategic role of the units involved

The 3rd Engineers Regiment, based in Udine and staffed by volunteer personnel, has the daily task of clearing the territory of Friuli Venezia Giulia and the provinces of Treviso and Belluno of war remnants from the two world conflicts. Decorated with Silver and Bronze Medals for Military Valor and Army Valor, the Regiment stands out for its expertise, audacity, and spirit of sacrifice: its anniversary falls on June 24, in memory of the Battle of the Piave (1918).

The CETLI NBC, in addition to clearance activities, conducts research in the CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear) sector, supports the procurement of protection and

decontamination materials and means, and conducts technical investigations on devices used by the Defense. The Entity is also responsible for the recovery and destruction of obsolete chemical weapons found on national territory.

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