

1684

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No.

785020

ACC

10000/120/1318

ST
CP

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ST/75/7 Reports - Catering - Adviser
opened Ap. 20, 1945 - closed Ap. 23, 1945
Ap. 1945

I.O.M.

3.

To : Col. Q

ST/75/7

23 April 45.

Ref attached Catering Officer's Report:-

1. Para 5.

I think it would be useful to have Italian Catering Advisers as suggested:-

say	1 for each Admin. Div.	=	8
	1 for each Gruppo	=	5
	1 at Cesano	=	1
	1 at each B.R.D.	=	3
			<u>17</u>

In addition a W.O. or W.C.O. Instructor would be required for each officer, i.e. 17.
Alternatively, do we wish to adopt this suggestion at this stage of the war. What is our policy?
The officers and W.O's could undergo a course of training at the RASC(T.D.) at NOLA.

2. Para 7.

The school of instruction mentioned is commencing on 30/4/45. This will take 18 students.

3. Paras 11 & 12.

The points raised in these paras I suggest should "lie on the table".
You will, no doubt, agree we cannot increase the existing ration scale.

K. J. L. L. L.

Lt.Col.
ADST.

KTC/gmc

COPY

Suggested Syllabus of Training for the
Italian School of Cooking, C.M.F.

1. Duration of Course - Fortnight
2. Number of Students - 16
3. Number of Instructors - CHEI plus two WCOs (all Italian)
4. Classes - Courses be divided into three classes of 6 per class, each Instructor being responsible for complete course training of his six students.
5. Timing - (a) 1st Day - M.

Students arrive, nominal roll taken, notebooks and any recipes or pamphlets issued, accommodation allotted, division into classes, by midday.

PM. Opening talk by Chief Instructor, explanation of objects of Course, School rules, importance of note and log books, etc.

(b) 2/11 Days (Sundays being rest days) - The importance of each class starting from scratch and building up complete "show" during course and using apparatus built, cannot be overstressed.

(i) Siting of cookhouse, stoves, wash-up etc areas.

(ii) Inspection of suitable apparatus, i.e.
three x 4 1/2 gallon drums boiler trench,
firebox for adaption to oil and water, propane burner or firewood firing. To include notes on suitable materials to be used and how obtained.
Stress unit effort.

(iii) Economical use of Army fuel

(iv) Explanation of Italian Field Service Ration Scale -
Issue pamphlet on scale and the suitable
specimens of Ration Cash Allowance.

(v) Care and storage of Rations

(vi) Preparation and Cooking of suitable Italian dishes
to include:

Coffee making
Pulse & Vegetable Soups
Correct handling of Dehydrated Vegetables
Treatment of Pulse & Dried Fruits
Correct handling of Fresh Vegetables
Preserved Meat Dishes
Tinned Fish Dishes
Suitable Pasta Dishes
Cheese Dishes

mediation allotter, division into classes, by midday.

III. Opening talk by Chief Instructor, explanation of objects of course, school rules, importance of note and log books, etc.

(b) 2/11 Days (Sundays being rest days) - The importance of each class starting from scratch and building up complete "shop" during course and using apparatus built, cannot be overstressed.

(i) Siting of cookhouse, stores, wash-up etc areas.
(ii) Improvisation of suitable apparatus, i.e. three x 4 ft tall brass boiler trench, firebox for adaption to oil and water, trombone burner or firewood firing. To include notes on suitable materials to be used and how obtained.
Stress unit effort.

(iii) Economical use of Army fuel
(iv) Explanation of Italian Field Service Ration Scale - Issue pamphlet on scale and the suitable spending of Ration Cash Allowance.

(v) Care and storage of Rations
(vi) Preparation and Cooking of suitable Italian dishes
to include:

Coffee making
Pulse & Vegetable Soups
Correct handling of Dehydrated Vegetables
Treatment of Pulse & Dried Fruits
Correct Handling of Fresh Vegetables
Preserved Meat Dishes
Tinned Fish Dishes
Suitable Pasta Dishes
Cheese Dishes

(vii) Cookhouse organisation including hygiene, cleanliness of cooks, sanitary rules, compilation of menu record books, swill and 'clean-as-you-go' system, wash-up arrangements, etc.

(viii) Improvisation of utensils (from salvage), care of equipment, knife drill etc.
(ix) Food service, including meal issue of bread instead of one complete day's issue to individuals - (usually bread in men's bivouacs)

(c) 12/15 Days -
Each student to be made to build own apparatus (small) and given a day's bill of fare to cook as a test, and a certificate of competency issued.

(1) 14th Day -
Dispersed and assembly of new course.

I.O.M.

TO : Col. 2

ST/75/7

13 April 45.

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5464

Lt.Col.
ADST.

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I.C.M.

TO : ADST.

SE/GA/9

SUBJECT:-- Visit to Eighth and Fifth Armies.

1. The principal purposes of this tour were

- (a) to establish personal contact with officers chiefly concerned;
- (b) to gain some preliminary knowledge of the problems to be encountered in establishing some form of catering organisation for the Italian forces;
- (c) to consider the possibility of establishing schools of instruction in messing administration etc. for Italian personnel.

2. Contacts were made with S.T.O's of this HQ at Eighth and Fifth Armies, with 52 and 53 HIN, with HQ 231 Div and with HQ 228 Div. In addition, a conference was held at RAVENNA with Catering Advisers, Eighth Army, 10 Corps and 5 Corps to discuss the institution of Italian Schools in the Army Areas, and to outline a tentative syllabus (copy attached at Appendix 'A'). Italian feeding problems were also discussed with D.D's.S.T. at Eighth and Fifth Army, both of whom are very much interested, and with Catering Adviser of the latter formation.

3. In general, the major problems apparently arising in the feeding of Italian troops may be summarised as follows:-

- (a) Lack of organisation in the handling and preparation of the ration.
- (b) Failure to make the fullest use of certain items of the ration, such as dried pulses and dehydrated vegetables. 443
- (c) Cleanliness of cook-houses and store-rooms.
- (d) Lack of variety in meals provided.
- (e) Poor apparatus and equipment to which may be attributed most of the weaknesses noted in (b) and (d) above.
- (f) Great difficulty in spending to full advantage the 20 lire cash allowance, due to
 - (i) Paucity of local food resources

(c) to consider the possibility of establishing schools of instruction in messing administration etc. for Italian personnel.

2. Contacts were made with S.L.O.'s of this HQ at Eighth and Fifth Armies, with 52 and 53 INF, with HQ 234 Div and with HQ 228 Div. In addition, a conference was held at RAVENNA with Catering Advisers, Eighth Army, 10 Corps and 5 Corps to discuss the institution of Italian Schools in the Army Areas, and to outline a tentative syllabus (copy attached at Appendix 'A'). Italian feeding problems were also discussed with D.D.'s S.T. at Eighth and Fifth Army, both of whom are very much interested, and with Catering Adviser of the latter formation.

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- (f) Great difficulty in spending to full advantage the 20 lire cash allowance, due to
 - (i) Paucity of local food resources
 - (ii) Shortage of unit transport.

4. Most of the problems outlined above are possible of solution, as has been proved through the experience of the British Army, where similar weaknesses have been overcome during recent years. It is, however, the fact that in many cases, the root of the trouble lies with the complete lack of any administrative sense on the part of Unit Officers.

5. It is therefore suggested that the policy be adopted of providing Italian Officers for duty as catering advisers to both combatant and I. of C. formations, on similar lines to the system prevailing in the British Army. This proposition was discussed at some length with both British and Italian representatives, and it was generally agreed that, if such a system could be introduced, it would be of the greatest benefit, especially if each catering officer could have attached to him an Italian W.O., of suitable experience, for duty as a "Supervising Travelling Instructor",

1. And for same time Plan 1 W.O. in position with unit Officer ... 2

Cyprus
P.R.D.

whose task it would be to spend varying periods of time with Units and organize their messing arrangements on the right lines. Officers and WO's with some civilian experience of catering would, of course, be most suitable for these duties.

6. Should the necessary personnel for these employments be available, they could be given a period of intensive training at the ACC Training Centre in British messing organisation, and in the full exploitation of the Italian Ration Scale.

7. In addition, it is considered absolutely essential that Schools of Instruction in catering should be established for Italian personnel, and it is proposed to open such a school for troops under command Eighth Army before the end of April, ~~the~~ A provisional site has been found with 458 I.P. Coy. For this purpose, a subaltern and two NCO's have been provided by 228 Div - the officer for administrative and disciplinary duties, and the NCO's as instructors. The latter are being given an intensive course at 86 Area School of Cooking, and GSI SALUNO ACC is being despatched immediately to supervise the opening of the Italian school. It is hoped that the experience gained in the early stages of undertaking will prove of great value in the establishment of further schools. Arrangements are in hand for the nomination of further WO's and NCO's by the Ministry of War, and the Chief Catering Adviser, AFHQ, has been requested to provide facilities for their training at the ACC Training Centre.

8. In addition to the routine training of Italian OR at such schools, it is intended also to use them as "exhibition centres" for Italian regimental officers, where practical demonstration could be given of the correct way to design and site cook-houses, of methods of improvisation, and the general organisation of a Unit's messing arrangements.

9. Over all, it was noted in visits to several Italian units in the Army areas, that the standard of feeding varied very widely. In some cases there was a tendency to rely solely on the "stew pot", and meals consisted almost entirely of minestrone and pasta with a tomato sauce. In other cases, however, it was found that good use was being made of both the ration and the cash allowance, and that quite varied and substantial meals were provided, including such items as meat rissoles, fish cakes, vegetable patties, salads etc. It is therefore considered that the introduction of some form of catering supervision and training could produce considerable results, since there is no reason why the standards observed in the administered units should not prevail generally.

10. It was found generally that there was little complaint as to the present Italian Ration Scale, especially in Eighth Army where a portion of the flour ration is being commuted for pasta made under S. & W. arrangements. The greatest complaint is everywhere the shortage of fresh vegetables, and in some cases, of the quality of the dried vegetables in issue, particularly dried peas. Arrangements have been made for a sample of the latter to be tried out at 86 Area School of Cooking, with a view to improvement. Italian

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11. The question of the daily ration cash allowance was discussed at some lengths on various occasions, and it seems generally agreed that the present situation is not entirely satisfactory. The suggestion made by most Italian officers is that the cash element be reduced by perhaps as much as 50%, and the ration in kind correspondingly increased, preferably in the meat and/or fish, and the sugar elements. It is presumed, however, that there is little likelihood of such a concession, and it is therefore suggested that consideration be given to the possibility of some form of central buying agencies to be established at suitable centres, for the bulk purchase of such local produce as may be available for the military.

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12. Two Italian military hospitals were visited in CESENA, and it was found that the standard of feeding was fairly good, although there appeared to be a grave shortage of trained personnel, and it was obvious that there was room for very great improvement in the presentation of the food. As a hospital diet, the Italian ration is open to serious criticism, as lacking in the proteins necessary for the "building up" of sick personnel and the preparation of suitable special diets is also extremely difficult, owing to the shortage of milk. Other principal complaints are the lack of fresh vegetables and fruit. It is proposed, however, to investigate the whole hospital position in the near future, and to make more detailed recommendations. It was noted, however, that 250 Hospital an excellent kitchen garden had been established by the Commandant, and it is thought that this idea might be widely extended, as a partial solution of the fresh vegetable problem referred to above.

R. J. Bowler

Major
Catering Adviser
Land Forces Sub Com. AC. (MILA).

5611

20 April 45.

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