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Signals General

1st Corps

MAR 1945

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DISTRIBUTION - APPRECIATION OF ITALIAN ARMY SIGNALS

G.S.O., A.F.H.Q.

Internal: MA FOR G.O.C.
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G.I.

A.I. See and file. *WP*

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APPRECIATION OF ITALIAN ARMY SIGNALS.1. COMBAT GROUPS.

(a) Five Combat Groups are formed - FRIULI, CREMONA, LEGNANO, FOLGORE and MANTOVA. Each Group has a Signal Company which is part of the Genio Bn. The S.E. of each Signal Coy is 7 Officers 327 O.NE.

Each Combat Group has with it a B.L.U. on the strength of which is an S.G.R. Signals (Capt). Signal Officers at present filling these vacancies are as follows:-

FRIULI	50 B.L.U.	Capt. J.H. GREE
CREMONA	51 B.L.U.	Capt. A.N. ALEXANDER
LEGNANO	52 B.L.U.	Capt. R.J.M. GOULD-ADAMS
FOLGORE	53 B.L.U.	Capt. J. GHAR
MANTOVA	56 B.L.U.	Capt. I.D.B. WILKINGTON

Each B.L.U. has a Rear Link Signals. W.E. 20.

(b) Personnel.

The personnel position within the Groups is in the main satisfactory. The two main deficiencies are Operators and Instrument Mechanics. The shortage of Operators is principally in the Artillery and Infantry. Efforts are being made to find semi-trained personnel to augment the normal training output of the Italian Signal School.

(c) Technical Maintenance.

Each Signal Coy within the Groups has S.E. for 15 Instrument Mechanics. Second line repairs are done by the Technical Maintenance Sections attached to the Groups. Originally three of these Sections were formed - one for each two Groups. This, however, proved impracticable owing to the scattered locations of the Groups. It was therefore decided to split the three Sections into six, thus providing one for each Group.

The position regarding Instrument Mechanics within the Italian

FOIDORE 59 S.L.U. Capt. J. DEAR
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The position regarding Instrument Mechanics within the Italian Army is bad. There is a definite shortage and all the Groups have deficiencies. The position whilst bad is not acute. To make up these deficiencies there are at present approximately 15/20 under training at NOCERA. They will be available approx. beginning 1943. In addition, all Service Units and other sources are being encouraged for men who either are of, or could be trained in this trade. The duration of the present course is four months. It is realised that this is far too short to produce an Instrument Mechanic, they will, however, at the end of that period have a good "grounding" in the basic work.

In addition to the Instrument Mechanics within the Signal Coy and the Tech. Maint. Section, there are R.E.M.E. Workshops, each of which has a small Telecom. Sec. carrying one Instrument Mechanic. At present R.E.M.E. have no Instrument Mechanics. I have therefore agreed to train five for them at the Signals School.

In general, whilst the position is not completely satisfactory, I do not foresee any serious breakdown in the Technical Maintenance of the equipment. A certain amount of assistance will of course be given by the Corps or Army workshops under whose command the Groups will be.

Continued Sheet 2....

Sheet 2(d) Equipment.

The present position of the Groups is that four are at present within the Army area, Mantova only remaining. Each Group before proceeding to the Forward Area was practically 100% equipped; there were no major items deficient. Mantova Group has now received approx. 93% of its controlled G1095, and in that respect is ready to move.

A G1093 was drawn up for these Groups, but as this type of formation was a completely new venture, changes and amendments were to be expected. Experience has proved the scale to be insufficient in certain respects, principally, switchboards and telephones. Certain amendments are at present being considered by A.F.H.Q.

(e) Training.

To deal with the training, a Signals School was set up at NOCIERA INFERRIORE last October. As most of the personnel of the Groups were trained, the main object of the School was to train them in the use of British equipment. An average of 120 personnel, officers and O.N.s of each Group passed through the School. The total of 120 vacancies was divided proportionately between Signals, Artillery and Infantry. On their return to the Groups, training was carried out under the direction of the B.L.S. Signal Officer.

Last December the question of training of reinforcements for both Groups and Service Units was reviewed, and it was decided to set up a Signal Training Centre. A suggested establishment and syllabus was produced and submitted to C.O.A.F.H.Q. for consideration. The suggestion was approved and the W.A. passed. The School at NOCIERA will form the nucleus of this Training Centre, which will form part of the R.F.C. I.C.F. The School is still at NOCIERA pending completion of work on barracks at BRACCIANO. The move from NOCIERA to BRACCIANO is planned for the first week in April. On arrival at the new location the establishment of NOCIERA will be implemented. The new Training Centre will be capable of training approx 500 students at one time. This will include Artillery and Infantry Regimental Signallers.

A deviation from the British system has been made in so far that all Artillery and Infantry Signallers will be trained at the Centre and not cadres as is the British system. This Centre is intended to train not only reinforcements for the Groups but also for Service units.

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(F) General.

Much experience has been gained as the formations of each Group has progressed. Each Group Signal Officer found different conditions prevailing, and usually had his own ideas as to correction of errors. These ideas were co-ordinated at bi-monthly conferences held with B.L.V. Signal Officers, thus all ideas were circulated and discussed and uniformity finally obtained on the main issues.

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Such things as procedure, appointments code, Signal Office organisation etc, did not exist within the Italian Army. These have now been compiled and issued to all the Groups. In addition, a directive roughly corresponding to our F.S.P.B. has been produced in two parts - one for all officers and one for Signal officers.

All essential pamphlets and instruction handbooks on British equipment have been translated into Italian and issued.

2. SERVICE UNITS (BR-ITI).

Service Units mainly comprise Italian Line Sections. Under instructions from CSO A.F.H.Q. twenty of these sections are to be formed with three Italian Line Coy's to act as administrative H.Q's.

Sheet 3

2. SERVICE UNITS (28-171). (Contd)

The state of formation is as follows:-

171 Italian Line Coy HQ	Formed
172 " " " "	"
173 " " " "	"
501 - 515 Italian Line Sections	Forming under
516 " " " "	CSO 3 District.
517 - 518 " " " "	Not yet formed
519 - 520 " " " "	Formed from 210
	11sta Genio.

To train linemen for these sections a Line School was formed at FRANCAVILLA FONTANA. This School takes 120 men for each course which lasts one month. On completion of the course the men are sent to CSO 3 District for Section forming under 173 Italian Line Coy HQ at NOGERA.

On completion of the formation of these sections, the Line School will close at FRANCAVILLA and will be absorbed into the Signal Training Centre at BRACCIANO, where it will carry out training of reinforcements of linemen for both Combat Groups and Service Units.

In addition to these Line Sections there are two Signal Service Units and one Wireless Security Section.

3. GENERAL.Personnel.

In the main the Italian soldier is a fair workman. He is more keen in the Combat Groups than in the Service Units. This is easily understood as the work is more interesting and varied. ^{By his own hand} as a technician he is good and he learns quickly. Discipline, according to our standards, does not come easily to him.

The Signale Training Centre conforms to British standards; in so far that men are made to parade for classes, and general barrack cleanliness is insisted upon.

4. ITALIAN GENIO (ITI-ITI).

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4. ITALIAN GENIO (ITI-ITI).

The Italian signal organisation within this category has been reorganised. Previously there existed a type of composite company called Telegrafisti Coy which contained a little of every trade. These are being broken up and a number of specific sections, i.e. Operating Secs, Line Secs and T.S.B.O. Secs are being formed in lieu. The numbers of each type of section being formed is in conformity with the new Territorial H.Q. covering the whole of Italy. This reorganisation is due to be completed by the end of March. Each section will have a scale of equipment and transport where necessary. These sections will operate under a small Admin Coy HQ, one for each of the principal cities at which a Territorial HQ will be situated.

5. ITALIAN ARMY SIGNAL EQUIPMENT.

No accurate records are in existence of stocks of signal equipment held. Such records as do exist are inaccurate and out of date. I have discussed this question with the Italian Genio with the result that an Italian Colonel has been detailed to liaise and to organise all depots in which material exists. This is progressing and records are being compiled and retained by me. All releases of signal material to both Allied and Italian forces are controlled by M.M.I.A.

Much of the material held is in need of repair. Workshops are being set up at ROME, BARI and NAPLES to effect these repairs.

24 Mar 45

S.O.R. Sigs. Major.

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