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MANITOVA - GENERAL . 1st Cover

June-July 1945

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A.T.V. 184-7717

PI/v COMANDO GRUPPO DI COMBATTIMENTO "MANTOVA" 23
 Ufficio del Capo di S.M. - Sezione Op. e Int.

n. 01/4500 di prov.

P.M. 104 - 17 luglio 1945

Oggetto : Dislocazione reparti.

AT H.Q. MILITARY MISSION

App. 711

Riferimento foglio O/N 7550 /FI del 29/6/1945

Si omette la trasmissione della situazione richiesta
 con il foglio a riferimento, essendo questo Gruppo in via
 di trasferimento. in zona Liguria - Lombardia (comando a Varazze)

Appena raggiunta la nuova zona, sarà premura di que-
 sto Comando inviare d'urgenza la dislocazione dei reparti
 dipendenti.

IN

Data 07/7

31/7

OUT

1645

28/7

d'ordine

IL TEN. COLONNELLO CAPO DI S.M.

(A. Gualano)

3558

A. Gualano

Subject :- Report on Combat Group MANTOVA.

MEMO. (6)

Copy to :- RTC ICF. (2)
1 District. (2)
HMT. (4)

PART I - GENERAL

OBJECTS.

1. The objects of this report are :-
 - (a) To estimate the degree of success achieved in preparing the Group for war.
 - (b) To record any lessons which might be useful in the event of a similar enterprise being undertaken with some other army.
 - (c) To assess the value of the Combat Group as a basis for the post war Italian Army.

BRIEF HISTORY.

2. In September 1943 the MANTOVA Division formed part of the garrison of CALABRIA. In November 1944 it was moved to the S. GIUSEPPE area, and 56 BLD was attached to it. By 1 Jan 45 it was nearly complete in personnel, a small training and maintenance scale of British equipment had been issued, and a cadre of Italian officers and NCO's had been trained in British weapons. Serious training began with the New Year, but was hampered by bad weather, inadequate equipment, and poor living conditions. The equipping of the Group began early in March, and was almost complete by 15 April, when the Group moved to the area PAVIA near SIENA. By 2 May, when the war in Italy ended, the move had been completed, and the programme of training for a holding role had been finished except for two final exercises. It is thought that the Group could have been in position a few weeks earlier if equipping had begun at the end of January.

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SUMMARY OF TRAINING.

3. The operational roles for which the Group was to be trained were defined by the IMT as follows :-

- (a) To take over a defensive sector on the Italian front, and carry out an active defence.
- (b) After experience in that role to participate in attacks in conjunction with Allied troops.

4. Particulars of training by area are shown below in the report on 3557. The policy of the BLU was to leave the Italian commanders to teach their own troops by Italian Army methods.

The part played by the British officers was :-

- (a) To instruct in British methods when Italian methods were inapplicable with British equipment.

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(b) To instruct in tactical and technical methods which were developed since 1943, when the majority of Italian officers lost contact with modern military thought.

(c) To advise Italian officers in overhauling such parts of the operational and administrative system as were found to be out of date and inefficient.

5. The "all areas" aspect of training was conducted as follows :-

(a) A series of cloth model discussions was held, to decide standard layouts and methods for :-

Tactical layout of the Group in defence.
Administrative layout of the Group in defence.
Signal plans.
Layout of Main and Rear HQ.
Etc.

The conclusions reached were recorded and issued to the Group. The cloth model appeals to Italian officers and was most successful as a method of instruction.

(b) A series of exercises was held, with and without troops, including signals exercises based on the above layouts.

NOTE :- In view of the static role defined in para 3 above, mobile exercises were not practised above battalion level.

(c) The final exercise was to have been a defensive exercise, lasting four days, in which the whole Group was to take part, and in which reliefs in the field were to be carried out.

(d) In addition a good deal of miscellaneous training was carried out including :-

- (i) Recce and written orders by Group HQ.
- (ii) Lectures and training films.
- (iii) Demonstrations by the CMSC.

6. The problem of instruction in driving and maintenance was a very big one. Several hundred drivers had to be trained, and the number of vehicles for instructional purposes was inadequate. Driving schools were formed, which

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6. The problem of instruction in driving and maintenance was a very big one. Several hundred drivers had to be trained, and the number of vehicles for instructional purposes was inadequate. Driving schools were formed, which visited units in turn. The policy was, first to "brush up" and "pass out" men with some previous experience, and afterwards to train beginners until they were safe on the road, leaving their final training to be carried out under unit arrangements.

7. Except for a small number of officers, the state of training in December 1944 was very low, but the great majority of all ranks worked with enthusiasm and the standard reached was satisfactory. It is thought that had the war continued through the summer the Group would have carried out a holding role with success. The short term policy of the HJ had not, however, eliminated the following weaknesses :-

- (a) Inability of senior Italian officers to grasp the fundamental defects in their military system.
- (b) Failure to delegate authority.
- (c) Failure to concentrate supporting arms and administrative resources.

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(d) "Rank consciousness". Examples :-

- (i) Senior officers consider it derogatory to take orders from staff officers of a higher formation who are junior to them in rank.
- (ii) Commanders will not accept technical advice from Medical Officers, Signal Officers etc.
- (iii) A competent British-trained officer is sometimes suddenly superseded by the posting of a senior officer who has no knowledge of British methods.
- (e) Failure to insist on adequate professional standards. Commanders sometimes show great reluctance to remove an inefficient subordinate.
- (f) Failure to insist on compliance with orders. An Italian commander is apt to think that his duty is done when he has issued an order. Officers rarely make thorough inspections to ensure that their orders are carried out.
- (g) Weak power of command of officers. Italian officers seldom understand that the way to treat men is to treat them well but strictly, and to arrange alternating periods of hard work and complete rest. Instead, they are apt to neglect their wants, and treat them softly.
- (h) The complete absence of a Staff system as understood in the British Army.
- (i) Low standard of junior officers. The great majority are in every way inferior to those in the British Army.
- (j) Almost complete absence of good NCO's. There are a certain number of good technical NCO's, but nothing equivalent to the WO's and NCO's of the British Army.

ORGANIZATION.

- 8. The Combat Group is thought in the main to have been suitably organized. A larger and more complex formation would have been difficult to manage.

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ORGANIZATION.

2. The Combat Group is thought in the main to have been suitably organized. A larger and more complex formation would have been difficult to manage. The following comments are not exhaustive, but are intended as a guide for any future enterprise of a similar nature.

(a) The HQ was suitably organized. Certain additional personnel were required, and were obtained without difficulty through O2E.

(b) Though suitable for a holding role, the Group is too small to be the basic formation of a post war army. An army composed of Groups could never take on an army composed of the old Army units.

(c) The following were found to be sources of weakness :-

(1) Over centralized Group HQ staff.

(14) Distribution of 6 pr Atk guns to inf regts and bns. It is thought that an Atk Regt of one bn ³⁵⁵ 8 - 17 prs and three 12 gun 6 pr batteries would have ensured better co-ordination.

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- (iii) Organization of the 25 pte. Four 4 gun batteries supporting two Infantry regiments is unsatisfactory, especially as there is no provision for artillery representation at Infantry Regiment HQ.
- (iv) Inclusion of the Signal Coy in the Engineer Battalion.
- (v) Organization of the Provost in two independent sections, with no Provost HQ, increases the difficulty of traffic control.

It is thought that the policy of ensuring simplicity by interfering as little as possible with the existing Italian organization was a sound short term policy. It is, however, thought that such various weaknesses as those named above should not have been accepted.

ADMINISTRATION.

1. In December 1944 the Administrative staff and units shared the general defects of the rest of the Combat Group. In particular they suffered from :-

- (a) Inability to organize on a divisional level.
- (b) Failure to appreciate the importance of concentrating their resources.
- (c) Refusal to accept responsibility.
- (d) Lack of "drive", in submitting incidents or following up temporary non-availabilities.
- (e) The fact that the service units are regarded as very inferior to any of the arms.
- (f) In addition they were faced with a great problem due to the complete reorganization of nearly all the service units. The 5th Coy, Carabinieri Sections, Ordnance Field Park and the Medical Sections were all on a modified British establishment. The stores and equipment they were handling, the system of communicating, supply, replacement and evacuation were foreign and for only a slight resemblance to their own far less acceptable organization.

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10. Training was therefore directed to remedying the chief faults outlined above.

- (a) A system of "Officers' Days" was started at which lectures and clinics which officers were held to teach officers and WO's the establishment and principles of operation for the Group administrative organization.
- (b) Exercises were held for all ranks, and later, when vehicles and equipment were received, these took place on the ground.
- (c) Technical training of all kinds was started and courses held both inside and outside the Group. A great deal of outside assistance was readily forthcoming from the RASC, RACQ, RMLL and RMLC.
- (d) Unit administrative staffs and personnel of the infantry and artillery were all trained in the new methods of supply.

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- (e) Every effort was made to enhance the prestige of the service units in the eyes of the Group by a series of demonstrations.
 - (f) By reorganization both of the Group and Regimental Staffs it was possible to decentralize to some extent and to force junior officers to accept a greater amount of responsibility.
11. A good measure of success was attained in the service units themselves and these soon became capable of maintaining the Group with little difficulty. On the other hand it rapidly became obvious that it was well nigh impossible to train the administrative personnel of the arms (Artillery, Infantry and Engineers) in their duties. This was due to the fact that all "AQ" functions are regarded as rather degrading and for this reason are allotted to the less intelligent and able officers.

The role of Adjutant in a bn will be allotted to an inefficient Coy Commander. It is thought that to make a success of administration in the post war Italian Army the following points require to be stressed in training.

- (a) A complete reorganization of the system of supply which eliminates the present rigid Regimental Depot system.
- (b) The importance of all service units, and the fact that without them the fighting troops are as helpless as if they were disembled.
- (c) The importance of the staff and commanders accepting and putting into effect the advice of the technical officers e.g. Medical, EMB.
- (d) A complete clean up of the Commissariat Corps. This Corps appears to be very out of date and slack and is further tied down by an endless amount of paper work. It deals with nearly all articles both of permanent and consumable supply with the exception of ammunition, vehicles and weapons. From the experience gained with this Combat Group it would appear that this system is unsatisfactory and that the Commissariat Corps should be broken down into clearly defined sections in order to deal with the various commodities and stores handled. The old system of ammunition supply through the Artillery has been superseded in this Group, but only a temporary method is now in use which is not altogether satisfactory, and will obviously require amendment. The Ordnance Corps has had immense success and the British system of supply of vehicles and stores has both

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(e) The training of all officers of the services who are to occupy important positions on Divisional, Corps etc staffs at a school where the principles of war and the problems of the various arms are taught and discussed with members of the fighting arms present. This should cover the system, only partly amended in this Group, where a service unit officer was not allowed to site even a hospital or dump, but had to accept a staff decision, often made off a map.

(f) The formation of a large reserve of technicians. It has been found that very few of the Italian officers or WCO's have technical sense which can now be associated with nearly all Allied WCO's and WCO's. They lack not only the knowledge, but also the desire to acquire the skills necessary to operate and maintain the instruments and machines now at their disposal.

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No. 10 RA Training Team before the formation of the Combat Group, and the School of Artillery since, have said it possible for them to adopt British weapons and to a certain degree British methods.

Experience alone will teach co-operation with the infantry, and speed in producing fire. There has been produced quickly and accurately, but the old Italian traditions are hard, and the urgency of well timed and adequately concentrated fire is not appreciated.

The ability of the anti-tank and anti-aircraft detachments is reasonably good but their respective co-ordinations have not been tested.

A firm and impartial discipline and the punishment of officers and NCO's rather than men for avoidable mistakes and losses has reflected itself unmistakably in this Regiment. A fair standard of welfare has resulted, also a negligible degree of loss of clothing and equipment, a fair standard of discipline on the roads, and a reasonably low proportion of absentees.

The most serious defect in the organization is the failure of the WE to provide any mechanics for repair of ord fault finding in vehicles, other than the regiment's LAD.

17. Engineers.

(a) Standard of Training Achieved.

- (i) Policy. The engineer training policy laid down by AFHQ was that the engineer units should receive training only in the use of British equipment with which they were not familiar and that they were not to be trained in RE, Mechanical Equipment or Wet Bridging. In other respects the units were to be considered as trained. In practice the task was much more difficult and by the time the units were reorganized to the new WE they were virtually new and had to be trained from scratch.

- (ii) Method. Training was carried out by Italian officers and NCO's who had attended courses at the School of Mechanical Engineering. The number of trained instructors were not considered suitable for Combat

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(ii)

Method. Training was carried out by Italian officers and NCO's who had attended courses at the School of Mechanical Engineering. The number of trained instructors were not considered suitable for Combat Group Engineers, ensuring that the original selection had not been done with sufficient thoroughness.

(iii)

Syllabus. Training carried out was :-

1. Line Warfare.
2. Elementary Dry Battery Bridging.
3. Fieldworks and Roadworks.
4. Demolitions and use of British Service Explosives.
5. Driving and Maintenance of Vehicles.
6. General Military Training including Weapon Training.

(iv)

Conclusion. It is considered that the bulk of training the engineers has been achieved i.e. they are trained sufficiently to be able to operate in a defensive role. They are not capable of mobile operations.

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(b) Suggested Improvements in Training for the Future.

- (i) Discipline. The principle cause of the shortcomings of the engineer units is bad discipline, resulting in bad organization in training and works. Any future training must be designed to obviate this fundamental failing.
- (ii) Training. Generally the Italian officer has very little idea of how to train his men. Officers and NCO's will have to be more thoroughly trained at Military Training Establishments before this can be improved.
- (iii) Junior Officers and NCO's. The present standard is poor. Junior officers are quite well informed but they lack the drive to put their ideas into practice. NCO's are very poor. Steps should be taken to produce a much improved type of Junior officer and NCO.

(c) Engineers in Post War Italian Army.

The present organization is unsuitable for divisional engineers.

Suggested improvements are :-

- (i) Engineers and Signals should be completely separate.
- (ii) CRE should have adequate staff.
- (iii) Transport of Field Coys should be increased to equal the British scale to make them completely mobile.
- (iv) Field Coys should be equipped and trained in RE and Mechanical Equipment.
- (v) Training should commence from the beginning with individual training. Sappers must learn to be soldiers first.

13. Signals.

- (a) Degree of Success achieved in Preparing the Group for War.

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- (v) Training should commence from the beginning with individual training. Sappers must learn to be soldiers first.

12. Signals.

- (a) Degree of Success Achieved in Preparing the Group for War.
 - (i) Training. It was found that the majority of Signal personnel (Signal Coy personnel and Regimental Signallers) were already partially technically trained. The training undertaken consisted therefore for the major part, of training in the use of British equipment. Such new ground had to be covered, however, especially in the case of Signal Office organization and procedure, which were practically non-existent in the Italian Army.
 - (ii) Equipment. All individual training was successfully completed and on exercises held to date communications have proved satisfactory.

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- (b) Equipment.

Equipping of the Group with Signal equipment, was satisfactorily completed.

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(c) Lessons Learned.

(i) The major change considered essential is the splitting of the Signal Coy from the Engineer Battalion. The Signal Coy can never function properly in action as a coy of the Engineer Battalion, nor can one officer be expected to cope with the work of a CBE and a Cmd Signal.

(ii) The Combat Group staff are not sufficiently signal minded. They do not understand the correct use of the signal communications at their disposal. Consequently liaison between staff and signals has been poor. It is felt however that this would have greatly improved after a period in the line.

(iii) The question of repair of signal equipment has been very pressing throughout owing to the shortage of trained instrument mechanics. It is thought that if the Group had gone into action it would have been necessary to call upon a REGE Telecomm Section to assist with the repair of Signal equipment.

(d) Value as a Basis for the Post War Italian Army.

(i) It is thought that the training given to the Signal Coys in the various Combat Groups and the experience gained by those that have been in operations will prove invaluable after the war.

(ii) Before the signals in the post war Italian Army can however be satisfactory it is considered that the under mentioned are essential :-

The formation of a separate Signal Corps and the setting up of a Signal Training Centre for training officers and OR's. It is thought that the best of the officers from the Signal Coys of the five Combat Groups could form a cadre of instructors for the Signal Training Centre.

The organization of the Signal Corps on British lines &c.

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The organization of the Signal Corps on British lines G.S. Divisional Signals, L of C Signals, etc.

A complete revision of the present train of thought as regards signal communications in the field.

The latest views of signals in the field should be taught at the Italian Staff College. Signal training should be an integral part of all officers' training.

Development of signal equipment for the Italian army. The Italian signal equipment for field use is in many cases cumbersome and obsolete.

19. Infantry.(a) Standard Achieved.

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(i) The Group has reached the standard laid down in DWT Directive. It is now sufficiently trained to take over and hold a sector, and would, after battle experience be capable of participation in attacks with limited objectives.

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- (14) Defence has been much emphasized during training. Commanders have been taught to think along safe lines. Starting weaknesses of the Italian systems have been eradicated.
- (15) Senior officers are slow to convince and retain a unshaking regard for Italian methods.
- (16) Junior officers are generally bright and keen and anxious to demonstrate that Italians are just as good soldiers as the British. They realize (the senior officers do not) that antiquated methods and lack of foresight and planning contributed more to their defeat than antiquated equipment and lack of tanks and guns.
- (17) NCO's are poor compared with British equivalents, they have no disciplinary control over their men. Much time is wasted in chatter and argument on parade. One recalls NCO's fraternize with inevitable "lone of fence".
- (18) The rank and file are extremely hoody. They are awfully witty and keen. They show interest in their new weapons and equipment. Technically they learn fast. Mortars, wireless etc are great hobbies to the men and they were excellently to perfect themselves. They show the normal soldiers aversion to drudgery but are none the less capable of enormous feats of labor on very little food.

(b) Methods.

- (1) The system adopted in training has proved a success. The six majors were each charged with a battalion unit. In addition each major was put at the head of a school or department A.S. Carrier School, Motor School, Submarine School, Senior Officers PWTS, Junior Leaders Course etc. In this way there was continuity of thought and method between the specialists and the battalions.
- (2) Group schools were run for specialists, with the object of obtaining a level standard of training in the group.

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- (vi) The rank and file are extremely hardy. They are mostly city and keen. They show interest in their new weapons and equipment. Technically they learn fast. Mortars, wireless etc are great hobbies to the men and they work excellently to perfect themselves. They show the normal soldiers aversion to drudgery but are none the less capable of enormous feats of labor on very little food.

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- In this way there was continuity of thought and help between the specialists and the Battalion.
- (ii) Group schools were run for specialists, with the object of obtaining a level standard of training in the Group, to instruct officers and ON's in the manual and to teach the Italian instructors to use British instructional methods. All these objects have been achieved. Group schools were supervised by British officers and sergeants.
- (iii) At a later stage the Group schools were divided into regimental schools, where advanced and tactical handling was taught.
- (iv) Finally when senior officers were considered to have had all training was done at battalion level, under a British Italian supervision. The high standard of the anti-tank, mortar and carrier personnel has justified this policy.

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- (v) British WCO's were invaluable in the schools, particularly for maintaining drills and for supervising care and maintenance periods.

(c) Basis for Post War Army.

- (1) The regiment is not a tactically sound organization. The HQ as at present constituted is not sound. Too much 'A' & 'Q' work is thrown on the HQ as these subjects are barely touched at Battalion HQ.

- (ii) The three company infantry battalion is unsound. Four coys could be formed from existing strength. 'A' & 'Q' must be considered at battalion level and staffs provided for this purpose.

20. Supply & Transport.

(a) Standard of Training Achieved.

- (i) It is considered that the 104 Supply & Transport Coy has been trained and has developed sufficiently on British lines and system to carry out its role under active service conditions.

The biggest problem in training is to ensure that the company maintains its staff at a high enough standard to enable the company to meet all commitments allotted to it.

The PLASC system of vehicle maintenance and inspection, and the 16 task system has been adopted.

Technical instruction on supplies has been implemented by means of courses at the PLASC and also by daily handling of all supplies whilst engaged in the normal role of the maintenance.

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The RASC system of vehicle maintenance and inspection, and the 16 task system has been adopted.

Technical instruction on supplies has been implemented by means of courses at the RASCOT and also by daily handling of casualties whilst engaged in the normal role of div maintenance.

It is considered that both officers and OR's of the company respond well to instruction and have displayed a high degree of enthusiasm, but a lack of initiative on the part of junior officers and WO's, tends to produce a weakness in the unit as a whole. This weakness is principally displayed in interior economy, discipline and man management, and failure to ensure that system and drill when taught is carried out with the utmost efficiency. The OC Company, a regular soldier, has shown excellent insight and clarity in understanding the British administration system in the field. He has worked extremely hard and his unit has shown a good standard of efficiency.

(41) 348 Field Bakery has had very little opportunity to work completely on British methods owing to lack of equipment and essential vehicles. The unit, however, has always functioned, by using requisitioned civilian premises, and the technical quality of their work is high.

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(b) Lessons Learned.

- (i) At first the Italians did not appreciate very clearly the true need for thorough and systemised MT maintenance. However it is now thought that the Italians are beginning to appreciate the need of such a system in relation to their own responsibilities and war role.
- (ii) It is considered that the training in British methods will not have been in vain, and if the future Italian Army is to be based on British Army principles, the Supply & Transport Coy will have a firm foundation on which to develop.

21. Medical.(a) Equipment.

Equipment was complete to enable and sufficient to enable medical services to function efficiently in the field.

(b) Medical Officers.

The majority had no experience, but suffered from an inferiority complex and were considered by officers of other services to represent only a "Doctor" and not an officer capable of performing regimental duties.

The ADMS previously had very little authority and played very little part in organizing his units e.g. sitting unit locations. Regimental Medical Officers lacked sufficient authority to advise regiment and battalion commanders. Appeal to the ADMS in cases where regimental commanders refused advice made very little difference.

Taking into account the short time available, attempts to increase the authority of the ADMS and his generally, were satisfactory and promising. Satisfactory progress in instructing officers was also made in the following subjects :-

- (1) Tactical considerations in sitting units.

- (2) Map reading.

The majority had war experience, but suffered from an inferiority complex and were considered by officers of other services to represent only a "Doctor" and not an officer capable of performing regimental duties.

The ADMS previously had very little authority and played very little part in organizing his units e.g. sitting unit locations. Regimental Medical Officers lacked sufficient authority to advise regiment and battalion commanders. Appeal to the ADMS in cases where regimental commanders refused advice made very little difference.

Taking into account the short time available, attempts to increase the authority of the ADMS and WO's generally, were satisfactory and promising. Satisfactory progress in instructing officers was also made in the following subjects :-

- (i) Tactical considerations in sitting units.
- (ii) Map reading.
- (iii) Interior economy.
- (iv) Welfare of men.
- (v) The officers responsibility for the care, maintenance and inspection of unit vehicles and weapons.

(c) Hygiene and Sanitation.

This at first was bad and it was found necessary to take the following steps :-

- (i) To bring home the necessity for stringent rules for hygiene and sanitation where large bodies of men are concerned.
- (ii) To instruct all concerned in even the most elementary precautions.

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(iii) To ensure that regimental officers realize their responsibility to the CO for all hygiene and sanitation orders issued by the AMS through the Group HQ.

(iv) To ensure that the AMS had sufficient authority on the HQ staff to enforce orders.

Very satisfactory progress was made in this direction. The present AMS understands the need for stringent precautions and has succeeded in raising the standard of hygiene and sanitation in the Group to a satisfactory standard.

(d) Medical OR's.

The majority have had war experience, and in most cases little training was necessary to bring them to a satisfactory standard. The average soldier was found to be an enthusiastic trainee. At first they were content to live under very bad conditions. They have now been shown a new standard comparable to that existing in the British Army, but it is thought that they will retain this standard only if they are forced to do so by the presence of British trained officers.

(e) General Medical Organization.

The organization is not such that the medical units could support the Group satisfactorily and efficiently in the field.

(f) Lessons Learned.

(i) Ranks of Medical Officers. It is thought that the rank of the AMS could well be increased to that of Lt-Col, and the S.D.'s to regiments, CO's Medical Section and hospitals should carry the rank of major.

(ii) The OR's are capable and willing, provided they have a good type of officer.

(iii) It is thought that HQ's should receive current publications in some form similar to the British "Army Medical Bulletin".

(iv) At present senior medical officers are not staff trained and until they are no real progress can be expected.

(c) General Medical Organization.

The organization is now such that the medical units could support the Group satisfactorily and efficiently in the field.

(d) Lessons Learned.

- (i) Rank of Medical Officers. It is thought that the rank of the AMES could well be increased to that of Lt-Col, and the S.O.'s to regiments, OC's Medical Section and hospitals should carry the rank of major.
- (ii) TC OR's are capable and willing, provided they have a good type of officer.
- (iii) It is thought that SO's should receive current publications in some form similar to the British "Army Medical Bulletin".
- (iv) At present senior medical officers are not staff trained and until they are no real progress can be expected.
- (v) It is thought that instead of a hygiene and anti-malaria platoon attached to the medical section, a separate hygiene and anti-malaria section should be formed commanded by a major.

(g) Value as Basis for Post War Italian Army.

It is thought that the majority of medical officers, especially the AMES have learned about and appreciate British methods. If the post war Italian Army is to be based on the British Army it is felt that with further staff college experience these officers would be of value in forming such an army.

Similarly the medical units who have absorbed to a certain extent British methods, should have their value in forming the new army.

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22. Ordnance.Standard of Training Achieved.

- (a) The training of the ORP has proceeded satisfactorily and it is considered that they could function reasonably well in an operational role.
- (b) Officers, clerks and storemen attended a 14 day course at the RAC School of Instruction, the results being most beneficial.
- (c) In the event of a similar enterprise being undertaken in future it is essential that two officers be trained in administrative duties, similar to those of DAPOS, one being responsible for Vata 9 Stores, the other for Vata 7 & 8 Stores.
- (d) Great stress has been placed on interior economy, unit sanitation, care and maintenance of arms and equipment and it is felt that this, with the British system of supply in the field will be of value in the formation of the post war Italian Army.

23. Mechanical Engineers.

- (a) The Mechanical Engineer units have been mobilized to approximately 50% of personnel, the main deficiencies being skilled technicians who are not available from any source at present, e.g. Radio Mechanics, Electricians, Instrument Mechanics etc. The remaining personnel have adapted themselves easily to British equipment and methods.
- (b) British equipment, tools and machinery lorries have been received practically to scale, the only serious substitution is 30 cwt breakdown vehicles in lieu of the 5 ton type.
- (c) The lack of experienced engineering and workshop officers and warrant officers is apparent and a strong OC workshop would ease the responsibility of the Group Chief Mechanical Engineer.
- (d) The LAD's have not been mobilized any length of time but given the necessary information, as the workshops of their respective brigades and units, they should function satisfactorily.

23. Mechanical Engineers.

- (a) The Mechanical Engineer units have been mobilised to approximately 90% of personnel, the main deficiencies being skilled technicians who are not available from any source at present, e.g. Radio Mechanics, Electricians, Instrument Mechanicians etc. The remaining personnel have adapted themselves easily to British equipment and methods.
- (b) British equipment, tools and machinery ladders have been received practically to scale, the only serious substitution is 30 cwt breakdown vehicles in lieu of the 1 ton type.
- (c) The lack of experienced engineering and workshop officers and warrant officers is apparent and a strong OC workshop would ease the responsibility of the Group Chief Mechanical Engineer.
- (d) The IAF's have not been utilised any length of time but given the necessary information, as the workshops of these respective regiments and units, they should function satisfactorily.

24. Carabinieri.

- (a) Of all the units of the Combat Group the Carabinieri are probably the unit which responded the most to British methods of organisation, discipline and training. The Carabinieri Regiment is the equivalent to our Corps of Military Police, but are not formerly responsible for traffic control, only for discipline and field security. Traffic control was the task of a separate organisation, the Lovieri.
- (b) Training was therefore directed to the following points :-
- (1) Traffic control and route signing.
 - (ii) Disciplinary duties.
 - (iii) The achievement of a high standard of turn out and discipline.

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(b) contd. The sections were instructed by a Cpl of the CAP sent by the Provost Marshal's office. After and this NCO stayed with sections for six weeks. A high standard of training was achieved especially in (i) and (ii) and the units were inspected by a representative of the Provost Marshal who rendered a very satisfactory report.

(c) The chief faults noticed were :-

- (i) Lack of interest in the maintenance of vehicles and weapons.
- (ii) Lack of drive in checking soldiers for minor faults e.g. saluting.
- (iii) Lower standard of intelligence in signing roads. Signs often placed in stupid places or where they are not easily seen.

On the other hand the sections maintained a high standard of :-

- (iv) Shepherding convoys along difficult routes by use of motor cyclists.
- (v) Initiative in clearing up traffic jams.

Further they earned the respect of the soldiers of the Group and their presence is a big factor in maintaining good order when difficulties arise.

(d) Finally it is considered that the Carabinieri are capable of carrying out the role of British Provost in the post-war Italian Army providing that :-

- (i) A higher standard of intelligence is demanded for entry into the Corps.
- (ii) That their training is brought up to date and concentrated on traffic control and disciplinary duties. At the present moment the issue is confused by the fact that they are often called on to investigate matters which could be dealt with by the GIM or FSB. This type of work is too specialised to be handled efficiently by

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(i) A higher standard of intelligence is demanded for entry into the Corps.

(ii) That their training is brought up to date and concentrated on traffic control and disciplinary duties. At the present moment the issue is confused by the fact that they are often called on to investigate matters which could be dealt with by the SIB or FCS. This type of work is too specialised to be handled efficiently by Group police and should not be included in their duties.

CMP
AW/oc

W. Williams
Lt-Col.
GS.

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G. HH. I will write DO.

Q. In

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CONFIDENTIALLt-Col A.W. GIBBON
56 BLU
DO

14 June 45

Dear Colonel

We are just completing a move from RABDA to an area NORTH of RIMINI, where we are guarding German PW under 21 Tk Bde. Things are going fairly well, but we have enough difficulties to keep us from becoming bored. The spirit and discipline of the Group have fallen away since the end of the war, and a quick move, followed by taking over a large and complex series of guard duties, have somewhat puzzled the Italians, who are now seeing something of the thoroughness and sense of urgency of the British Army. It is a good lesson, and is doing them no harm.

Most of the Northerners have been on leave, and have come back happy.

We are still burdened with a great mass of valuable equipment, which they cannot use and will not maintain. I very much hope that the Group will be reduced to a more manageable scale as soon as possible. I have taken this question up with 1 District.

The BLU is much the same. Chadwyck-Healey is being released next week. I will be glad to hear if Madlam is confirmed in his new appointment.

I hope that Howard will come and see us soon. He knows the Group so well, that he will be able to give you a better picture than I can convey in a letter.

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We are living by the sea, and things could be much worse.

Yours *ever,*

Hubert Hilton

Colonel W. Pidsley DSO MC
MCIA

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