

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785020

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10000/120/3498

Q 4

opened Feb

Feb. -

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Q 4

Workshops Policy

241
247

opened Feb. 19, 1946 - Closed Aug. 12, 1946
FEB. - AUG. 1946

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1
Subject :- Visit to No 2 Terr Comd Wkops

1
CONFIDENTIAL

1 British Liaison Unit
Q 4

12 Aug 46

To :- No 2 British Liaison Unit
GENOA

Att report is forwarded for your infm. It is suggested that no action is taken by you in this matter, as Lt Col BLANT who is in possession of further facts is in U.K. at present and presumably he will take this matter up on return.

Would you please keep a careful watch on this matter and inform this office if you have any further facts.

WAI
Lt Col
GSO I

246

Subject :- Visit to Div Workshops

1 British Liaison Unit
Q 4

25 Sep 46

To :- No 1 Terr Comd, TURIN.

This morning I visited the Div Workshops and saw a large number of British Pattern Rifles and other small arms which had come in for repair.

I was shocked beyond measure at their condition. Most of them covered with rust, barrels full of fouling etc.

The Officer i/c Workshops informed me that a number of units always send in weapons in bad condition.

It was also obvious from the number of broken weapons that care of arms is lacking.

The condition of Rifles and other weapons rapidly deteriorates unless they are cleaned daily and particular attention is always necessary for several days after firing, as the barrel continues to sweat. The use of boiling water is strongly recommended after firing and of course weapons should be kept in a dry place.

Full instructions on the subject of care of arms are laid down in the relevant pamphlets.

I would suggest that all units are informed that weapons will not be accepted by workshops unless clean and that Officer i/c Workshops should be authorised to refuse to accept any dirty weapons and to render a report on the subject so that disciplinary action can be taken.

In my opinion dirty weapons are a direct reflection upon the Unit and Coy Commanders and I consider that the question of responsibility should be very forcibly pointed out to units.

A unit should always take pride in the condition of its weapons.

It will be noted that a similar report was forwarded by the condition of weapons to Comando Territoriale last March.

246

172 Lt Col

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246

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Lt Col
GSO I

Subject :- Visit to Mo 2 Terr Comd

CONFIDENTIAL

EME 1 British Liaison Unit

To :- ADME

10 Aug 46

HQ Land Forces Sub Comd AC (MILA)
ROME

GSO I

1 British Liaison Unit

*Capt Nodding sent letter to GSO I
with covering letter to GSO I
with direct action to be kept
there pending further action
to be kept there
Blunt 2 BVO is open
used*

Ref your visit to Mantova HQ recently.

1. It will be recalled that the CME and Chief of Staff complained of lack of money to help in the repair programme. On 9 inst I called a conference at 2 ELU offices and invited the undermentioned officers to attend :-

Major PIRANI
Lt Col GARGIULO
Capt Di SARRACO
- Director of Repairs 2 Comando Territoriale
- O.C. 2 Reparto Reparazione
- A/CME Mantova Div

The object of the conference being to co-ordinate the repair system in 2 Terr Comd.

2. During this conference I discovered the following facts, after much persuasion and continually forcing an answer from them.

Mantova Div has Ministry of War authy to spend :-

10,000 lira every three months presumably on Wisp maintenance.
100,000 lira every 12 months on each load carrier.
75,000 lira every 12 months on each EU and 3/ear.

They were very loath to give the above figures and I cannot help feeling that the reason for this sluggishness confirms our suspicions after we visited the Div last month.

3. These sums of money represent a considerable sum when taken for the whole Div and using the WT of "Crenna" which is similar we get these figures :-

WE of Load Carriers etc	-	1249 (all types)	245
FU's, jeeps and S/cars	-	107	
M/C	-	397	

Excluding the M/C we get

1249 vehs at 100,000 lira annually
107 vehs at 75,000 lira annually

= 124,900,000
= 8,025,000

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M/C	-	397	

Excluding the M/C we get

1249 vehs at 100,000 Lira annually
107 vehs at 75,000 Lira annually
10,000 Lira each three months

=	124,900,000
=	8,025,000
=	40,000
	132,965,000

Dividing this figure by 12, we get the monthly allowance of 11,080,600 Lira approx.

Allowing as in Cremona a maximum expenditure of 60,000 Lira per veh on 3rd Ech overhaul, Mantova Div can overhaul to 3 Ech category 184 vehs a month (normal output of all repairs is approx 50 vehs a month).

4. From the above figures it is perfectly obvious that the Ministry of War have made a very generous allotment to the Div.

5. In my Sitrep No 6 of 28 March, I made certain references to Major PIRANI, mentioning that the system whereby vehs are passed to civilian shops for repairs leaves much to be desired. The facts are that weekly, I receive a return of vehs in civilian firms for repairs. With this latest return in March, I made a visit to Ditta CMAR, Corso Torino, GENOVA and made a physical check of VOR., three vehs could not be accounted for and I was told that they had been completed and passed out. I then went to the office and no trace of these vehs could be found. Major PIRANI then told me that this civilian firm was very lax and very often forgot to book a veh when it entered or submit a bill for repairs.
6. From the above it seems obvious that all it not well in the handling of public money in GENOVA and I pass these facts to you for your info and guidance.

W. H. H. H. H.

~~Sgt~~ Capt RME

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785020

Subject :- Small Arms Inspection

1 British Liaison Unit
Q 4

To :- No 1 Italian Terr Comd
TURIN

12 Mar 46

(5)

Ref your letter No 03/123/II dated 19 Jan 46.

1. An inspection of all small arms on charge of 22 Inf Regt was made during the period 28 Jan 46 to 12 Feb 46 by the REME staff of this unit.

2. GENERAL

All weapons of the 2nd Bn were found to be clean and in good condition and not one dirty rifle or MG was found during the inspection. The layout of arms was very good and the armourers shops were clean and tidy.

All weapons of the Sp Coy stationed at ROMAGNO were in very good condition and the armourers shop was well organised and clean.

All weapons of the 1st and 3rd Bn were in a very dirty condition, so bad were they that in some cases it was impossible to examine rifle barrels for defects as they were blocked with dirt and some cases rust. It is obvious that insufficient interest is taken in the care and maintenance of arms in these two Bns.

These two Bns complained of lack of cleaning materials. It is realised that stocks have never been abundant but they have always been reasonable and with care and supervision it is possible to keep all arms in a reasonable condition as is proved by the state of the arms of 2nd Bn and Sp Coy.

3. DETAIL

The following are details of defects and cases of improper care and maintenance.

(a) Some 40 broken pull-throughs were jammed in rifle barrels so tightly, that rifles had to be brought to weapons for attention. Gauge is being used too frequently and it is recommended that strict instructions be issued that this should not be allowed except under adequate supervision.

(b) Rifles are being banged on the ground much too hard with the result that this Regt now requires some 400 butt plates. These are not obtainable at the moment and great difficulty is being experienced in obtaining them.

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All weapons of the Sp Coy stationed at ROMAGNO were in very good condition and the armourers shop was well organised and clean.

All weapons of the 1st and 5th Bn were in a very dirty condition, so bad were they that in some cases it was impossible to examine rifle barrels for defects as they were blocked with dirt and some cases rust. It is obvious that insufficient interest is taken in the care and maintenance of arms in these two Bns.

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- (a) Some 40 broken pull-throughs were jammed in rifle barrels so tightly, that rifles had to be brought to workshops for attention. Gauge is being used too frequently and it is recommended that strict instructions be issued that this should not be allowed except under adequate supervision.
- (b) Rifles are being banged on the ground much too hard with the result that this Regt now requires some 400 butt plates. These are not obtainable at the moment and great difficulty is to be expected in obtaining replacements.

- 2 -

(c) Oils of incorrect grades are being used for lubricating moving parts. As these oils have a higher viscosity value the guns will not function properly during cold weather.

(d) In most cases Bren L.M.G. were produced for inspection with the wrong barrels. It seems probable that units do not realise the importance of this point and it is suggested that it should be stressed to units that the effect of fitting the wrong barrel to a Bren in most cases is that the cartridge head space is diminished and the gun will not fire on automatic.

(e) 2" Mortars are being kept in stores going rusty for want of oil.

(f) TSMGs have not been recently cleaned, and these units have no cleaning sticks or brushes for this purpose. In several cases the face of the bolt was found to be fractured. This is caused through grit and rust and there are no replacement stocks.

(g) 5" Mortars generally are not firing accurately due to wear in major components. Parts have been indented for and will be fitted to the mortars when they arrive.

(h) The practice is to keep all spare Bren and TSMG Magazines in stores filled. As this weakens the magazine springs it is suggested that only sufficient magazines be kept filled for immediate operational use and the remainder be stored empty, and a percentage change over be made at frequent intervals.

4. In order to remedy the defects in care and maintenance revealed by this inspection it is suggested that one officer and two good senior NCOs from each Bn be sent to the Div Wkps for a course on the care and maintenance of Arms. These officers and NCOs could then return to their units and instruct all coys.

5. It is suggested that active measures are required as a matter of urgency to put right the state of affairs revealed by this inspection, not only because the efficiency of the units concerned is seriously impaired but also because the difficulty and cost of maintenance and replacement will increase out of all proportion, the longer this state of affairs is allowed to continue.

- (e) 2" Mortars are being kept in stores going rusty for want of oil.
- (f) TSMGs have not been recently cleaned, and these units have no cleaning sticks or brushes for this purpose. In several cases the face of the bolt was found to be fractured. This is caused through grit and rust and there are no replacement stocks.
- (g) 3" Mortars Generally are not firing accurately due to wear in major components. Parts have been indented for and will be fitted to the mortars when they arrive.
- (h) The practice is to keep all spare Bren and TSMG Magazines in stores filled. As this weakens the magazine springs it is suggested that only sufficient magazines be kept filled for immediate operational use and the remainder be stored empty, and a percentage change over be made at frequent intervals.
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W. A. H.
Lt Col
GS

Subject : Care of Arms.

1 British Liaison Unit.

Q 4

HQ Land Forces Sub Comm A.C. (MIA).
ROME.

1. There is a general shortage of all cleaning materials throughout this Comd. In view of the proposed issue of arms from Ordnance sources to the C.A.Rs, this shortage has now assumed very serious proportions, as if the weapons are to be properly cared for at the C.A.Rs, an adequate supply of cleaning materials must be made available.

2. The last Progress Reports, Nos 3 and 4, have mentioned this subject, and I should be grateful if HQ MIA could take up this matter, before the arrival of British arms to the various C.A.Rs.

Field
14 Feb 46

J.W. Hammett
Major
GSO II

241

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