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ARTY, A/TK AND FD

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ARTY, A/TK AND FO

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UG. 1947

G.S.O. I - 179.

12 British Liaison Unit

C M F

Sel: DMLAX
Ext: 5A5

Ref: 842

14 August 47.

Report on L.G.'s visit to Italian Field Artillery
Manoeuvres.

1. Regiments visited

- (a) 17th Regt. Artiglieria, Cassino Division.
(b) 14th Regt. Artiglieria, Lariano Division.

2. Detail of programme

- 26 Jul 47 Visit to Comando Artigl, Cassino Div, TURIN
29 Jul 47 Visit to firing exercises of the 17th Regt.
Artigl, North East of IVREA.
30 Jul 47 Visit to Comando Artigl, Lariano Div, BOSCONO.
31st Jul -
1st Aug 47 Visit to the firing exercises of the 14th Regt.
Artigl, BRANTO.

3. Training General.

- (a) The two regiments visited were in the final week of their practice camp and were preparing for the combined Infantry and Artillery manoeuvres.
(b) British artillery methods were in use throughout and only a conservative minority appeared to be reluctant to admit the superiority of these methods over the former Italian methods. 4755
(c) The good effect of the teaching of the School of Artillery BRANTO, was well in evidence combined with the inherited knowledge acquired during the war of liberation.
(d) The limitations of the teaching at BRANTO was, however, equally in evidence. However the general principles as taught at BRANTO were well understood there was considerable discrepancy between batteries in the employment of these principles and very considerable lack of knowledge as regards the details of the British drill other than the actual gunnery itself. This unfortunate state of affairs will continue until such time as BRANTO is able to organise specialist courses for the various officer & WO fire control technicians.
(e) The gunnery was very accurate but due to the above was (by British standards) slow. Some fairly good findings were,

(a) 17th Regt. Artigliaria, Cuneo Division.
(b) 11th Regt. Artigliaria, Lanzo Division.

2. Detail of program:

28 Jul 47 Visit to Comando Artigl. Cuneo Div, TURIN
29 Jul 47 Visit to firing exercises of the 17th Regt.
Artigl. North East of IVREA.
30 Jul 47 Visit to Comando Artigl. Lanzo Div, BELLINZAGO.
31st Jul -
1st Aug 47 Visit to the firing exercises of the 11th Regt.
Artigl. BRATO.

3. Training General.

- (a) The two regiments visited were in the final week of their practice camp and were preparing for the combined Infantry and Artillery manoeuvres.
- (b) British Artillery methods were in use throughout and only a conservative minority appeared to be reluctant to admit the superiority of these methods over the former Italian methods.
- (c) The good effect of the teaching of the School of Artillery BRADFIELD, was well in evidence combined with the inherent knowledge acquired during the war of liberation.
- (d) The limitations of the teaching at BRADFIELD was, however, equally in evidence. There was the general principles as taught at BRADFIELD were well understood there was considerable discrepancy between batteries in the employment of these principles and very considerable lack of knowledge as regards the details of the British drill other than the actual gunnery itself. This unfortunate state of affairs will continue until such time as BRADFIELD is able to organise specialist courses for the various officers & WO fire control technicians.
- (e) The gunnery was very accurate but due to the above was (by British standards) slow. Some fairly good timings were, however, achieved by isolated batteries; for example one troop came into action, established an observation post, effectively engaged a target and resumed the advance in 25 mins. The conditions were rather worse than normal as the country was mountainous.
- (f) There was a definite need for an Italian instructor in gunnery to be present during the manoeuvres to give decisions on technical points in doubt. Units did not even

possesses the complete set of British instructions supplied by WIA after last year's tour of the Army Units.

The reluctance on the part of senior Italian officers to admit the need for this technical advice is but part of the general unwillingness to admit that GIs do not necessarily know every little detail in the drill of their subordinates.

Recruit Training.

The recruits gave a very fine display indeed. They were well drilled & well turned out, full of enthusiasm and interested in the care of their equipment. As a proving ground for recruits the practice camps were highly successful.

Officer Training.

(a) Officers did not appear to get much training value from the exercises. Actual training was more or less confined to engagement of targets by observed fire using M.2. It may be added that the Italian Army Officer has always been very good at this aspect of his work. From a demonstration point of view, therefore, the practice camps were highly successful.

(b) Fire and movement exercises were of a limited nature due to the necessity of using pre-arranged gun positions where cooperation had already been agreed to.

(c) No smoke shells were fired. The reason given being that of fear of starting fires. Considerable danger does exist in dry weather.

(d) No Airburst IZ was fired.

(e) Ammunition was limited but, by British posttime standards, plentiful.

(f) Petrol was very limited.

(g) The combination of the above meant that little tactical training was possible. Officers appeared to be in the expectancy of 1/6 demonstrations rather than that of students undergoing training.

Equipment.

(a) Regiments possess sufficient equipment for only two batteries. Regimental reserves, concentrations of fire, and regular survey was therefore of a much more simplified nature. Furthermore the need for the special drill followed for regimental concentrations was not always obvious as the same result could be achieved by the simpler method of link shooting. It might have been advisable to combine the two divisional regiments for certain exercises.

(b) Unless instrumental charges are made available to the Italian Army for use with 45 mm the Italian Army criticism that the 25 mm is unsuitable for much of the terrain in Italy will

Officer Training.

- (a) Officers did not appear to get much training value from the exercises. Actual training was more or less confined to engagement of targets by observed fire using H.E. It may be added that the Italian Army Officer has always been very good at this aspect of his work. From a demonstration point of view, therefore, the practice ranges were highly successful.
- (b) Fire and movement exercises were of a limited nature due to the necessity of using pre-determined gun positions where cooperation had already been agreed to.
- (c) No smoke shell was fired. The reason given being that of fear of starting fires. Considerable danger does exist in dry weather.
- (d) No Aircraft III was fired.
- (e) Ammunition was limited but, by British prescriptive standards, plentiful.
- (f) Petrol was very limited.
- (g) The combination of the above meant that little tactical training was possible. Officers appeared to be in the category of 1/c demonstrations rather than that of students undergoing training.

Equipment.

- (a) Regiments possess sufficient equipment for only two battalions. Regimental weapons, concentrations of fire, and regimental survey was therefore of a much more simplified nature. Furthermore the need for the special drill followed for regimental concentrations was not always obvious as the same result could be achieved by the simpler method of line shooting. It might have been advisable to combine the two divisional regiments for certain exercises.
- (b) Bulwark incremental charges are made available to the Italian Army for use with 25 pr the Italian Army criticism that the 25 pr is unsuitable for much of the terrain in Italy will continue to hold good.
- Incremental charges were described by this theatre in time of war as the most valuable conditions prevalent in many parts of Italy demand that the 25 pr has more choice of trajectories than those provided by the normal three charges.

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Transport.

The transport was very old and none of the batteries visited were up to strength.

Conclusions.

- (a) The exercises were of very definite value to the recruits but beyond giving practice in observation of fire of little practical use to the officers.
 - (b) There was no method of obtaining clarification of British technical methods if the CO himself did not know the answer. Each regiment requires a complete copy of the new British Artillery Instructions as soon as they become available.
 - (c) Italian instructors in Gunnery should be trained to assist at these practice camps.
 - (d) Little tactical training is possible unless resources are pooled even further in order to provide full scale regiments or at least full scale command posts. The element of surprise was lacking.
 - (e) Specialist courses are required for officers & technical NCOs in order to train them in detailed British fire control drill and in order to eradicate false teaching inherited from the past.
- That at least a few incremental changes (together with the relevant data) be obtained for study by the Italian Army Inspectorate.

Copy to: Director LIFE
GSO I CRE
GSO I 12 BAW
File

Surgeon General
I.G. 12 BAW

4703

16/2/47

TRANSLATION

From: M. of W.
To : Rome Mil. Terr. Command
MMIA (for information)

Ref: 220/Ord/11

Date: 11/2/47

Subject: Depot for Artillery recruits advanced
training centre - Civitavecchia. -

Further to letter 229/Ord/1 of 4th February 1947.

1. - Ref 20th February next, the depot of the 8^o heavy field artillery will assume the denomination of "depot artillery recruits advanced training centre" passing - for all purposes - under the command of the commandant of said centre.
2. - All the duties formerly carried out by regimental depots in the pre-war organisation are entrusted to a/a depot i.e. administration, stores, registration. The commandant of the depot will be the "Audit Officer" and will have the rank of lt.col. -
3. - As it is necessary for the depot to be accommodated at the same location as the C.A.A.R., your command will submit proposals for the gradual transfer, as soon as possible, of the unit in question to Civitavecchia.
4. - The depot of the artillery recruits advanced training centre will continue to carry out the duties of rear party for the units absorbed in the past by the depot of the 8^o heavy artillery, as well as temporarily carrying out the registration duties for the artillery school at Bracciano.
5. - Confirm on completion of transfer. -

Copy to S.D.

RAG POND
WLL

TO SEE	
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GSO 2 TRG	
GSO 3 TRG	1/2
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GSO 4	

sgd.

Luzzi
Gen.

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TRG
File 7R 31/6/2/1
Date 13.2.47

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