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Canadian Ops - Mediterranean Area
Extracts from War Diaries and Memoranda (Series 25)

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K.H. Tremain

(K.H. Tremain),
Lieut.-Colonel, G.S.,
for Chief of the General Staff.

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LCM 24/AAI/1/5 (Hist)

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CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

16 Aug 44

CANADIAN OPERATIONS - MEDITERRANEAN AREA
Extracts from War Diaries and Memoranda - (Series 25)

1. Further to my 24/AAI/1/5 (Hist), dated 8 Aug 44, attached are further extracts from War Diaries and Memoranda dealing with the operations of Canadian formations and units in the Mediterranean Area.

2. The present series comprises further reports, etc., of Canadian formations and units on the operations in the Liri Valley, 15 May - 4 Jun 44.

3. These extracts are circulated for general information only, and opionions stated are not to be considered as necessarily expressions of official doctrine.

(Signed) M.H. Penhale. Brig.,
for (K.Stuart) Lieut-General,
Chief of Staff
CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

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24/AAI/1/5 (Hist)

CANADIAN OPERATIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

MAY - JUNE 1944

EXTRACTS FROM WAR DIARIES AND MEMORANDA

(SERIES 25)

1. EXTRACTS FROM "REPORT, HITLER LINE DEFENCES, BY G.S. 1 CDN INF DIV" (JUNE, 1944)

THE HITLER LINE

2. General

The HITLER LINE had NOT been completed by the enemy when attacked. The line was anchored on the hills on either side of the LIRI R and followed a slight rise in ground running through the two important towns of AQUINO and PONTECORVO. Between the LIRI and the stream FORME D'AQUINO was a stretch of the line 5300 yds long and with an average depth of 900 yds. In front of the line was a 1000 yds of flat ground with thick abundant crops, which limited observation from both the high ground of the HITLER LINE and our own posns. Although the enemy, because of time and disorganization, had failed to establish any outposts on this flat, any movement on it was subjected to intense mortaring, arty and nebelwerfer fire.

The only natural inf obstacle was along our right flank - the FORME D'AQUINO. Wire was continuous across the front with small 10 foot gaps covered by fire. A few anti-personnel mines were scattered among the wire behind. Tank going across the whole front was good in certain places, only there being an anti-tank ditch 2000 yds long cutting off the approach to PONTECORVO on the main road PIGNATARO - PONTECORVO. Teller mines had been hurriedly laid in front of this ditch and within range of Anti-Tank gun fire. Also laid among the Tellers were wooden box mines.

The main def of the HITLER LINE was A Tk and these defs had received priority in construction. Nine Mk V tank turrets on well-built concrete bases, with living quarters below ground, were the A Tk nodal points. Grouped around these in every case were two to three towed 75 and 50mm A Tk guns; these guns were however not dug in. Inf posns were divided between two-man LMG pillboxes and the conventional slit trench. The majority of the posns were in simple earthworks. A few inf bases prepared for the Mk V turrets, and TOBRUK STELLUNGS; most demolished houses hid MG's.....

THE DEFENCES

.....

15. A Tk Defences

(a) Natural Obstacles - The principal natural obstacle was the FORME D'AQUINO. This stream varies in width from 10 to 30 yds and is fordable North of 19 Easting. At places it is merely a marsh. The banks slope steeply on either side and at the top of the banks the span varies from between 50 to 60 yds. In the area Pt 106 (7317) and pt 11

(7319) tk approaches to the lateral behind the line ran through defiles. The town of PONTECORVO is sited on high ground protected by a stream to the East. This ground was a tk obstacle.

(b) A Tk Ditch - An A Tk ditch NOT in itself a tk obstacle extended, with some small gaps, across the front from the FORME D'AQUINO at 749198 to the LIRI.....This ditch had been constructed by means of a series of craters. Average width of the ditch was approx 15 - 30 ft and approx 8 - 15 ft deep. The sides of the ditch were NOT sheer. This ditch was covered by fire and tk comds state that crossing would have exposed the gear boxes of the tks. At places crators caused by our own previous air bombings were A Tk obstacles .....

(d) Enemy A Tk Weapons - Nine Mk V Panther Tk turrets were part of the defs and were set in rubble. 75 mm guns were sited in these pillboxes. The main gun for def, however, was the towed 75 mm and PAK 42. A few towed 5 cm PAK guns were met. Mobile guns employed included 88 mm, Hy A Tk SP (Hornets) mounted on Mk IV tk chassis, 5 cm PAK guns mounted on Mk III tk chassis, 75 mm assault guns mounted on either Mk III tk chassis or on armd half-track. Total A Tk guns appears to have been about 62 of which some 25 were SP. The line was well provided with FAUSTPATRONE and OFENROHR...

(e) Role and Employment A Tk Guns - The guns in the turrets sited close up covered the obstacle throughout its length. No attempt was made to obtain defiladed shoots. The towed guns were employed in pairs to protect the turrets and were sited approx 150 to 200 yds behind or to the flank of the turrets with a limited fd of fire. Other A Tk guns, both SP and towed, were employed singly to cover the defiles already mentioned and other approaches deeper in the line. The majority of the SP guns were not employed in the fixed A tk gun def plan. The role of the SP guns appears to have been to take offensive action against our tks and to give depth to the def.

(f) Siting - As stated above no attempt was made to obtain defiladed shoots from the turrets. The pairs of guns to sp the turrets were sited behind houses, in sunken rds, in thick cover, etc., and although having limited fd of fire, made maximum use of defilade. The guns of each pair were usually sited "back to back". The guns covering defiles were sited for frontal shoots. SP guns, when employed, made skilful use of mobility and ground to obtain most advantageous shoots.

(g) Fds of Fire - The guns in the turrets had 360 degree traverse and excellent fds of fire with the exception of certain blind areas to the rear and flanks which were covered by the towed guns sited in pairs. These latter guns had very limited fds of fire being sited solely to sp the turrets and seldom had more than 10 degree arc of fire. The guns to cover defiles and approaches were generally sited at the top end in the defile, and thus had an extremely limited fd of fire.

(h) Range - Instances occurred of guns in the turrets opening fire at maximum effective range (1200 yds) Majority of guns however, withhold fire to about 800 yds.

(j) Tks in Counter Attack Role - Total tks available to the enemy are now estimated at 10 tks, mostly Mk IV, but incl one or two Mk V. The aggressive use of SP guns caused a good deal of confusion regarding the number and role of tks for counter attack. No organized counter attack by tk fmns took place. Counter attacks were put in by inf, sp by up to say 5 tks or SP guns or mixed tks and guns. These attacks were mainly directed against our inf prior to the arrival of our tks on the ground. A few instances occurred of enemy tks attempting to overwhelm our tk stragglers. The odd enemy tk seemed to fight independently amongst our inf.

(k) Effect of our own Arty - All a tank defs, except the guns in the turrets were effectively neutralized by our barrage. Instances occurred where inf following close on the barrage found guns deserted. The barrage served to knock camouflage away from the turrets exposing them to fire from the tks, but on the whole did not prevent accurate fire by these guns. One instance occurred where a med shell destroyed the dug-out beneath one of the turrets. The barrage destroyed a few SP guns. Arty concs forced enemy tks and SPs to withdraw. The rate of arty fire, one-half rd per gun per min, during the pause was ineffective in neutralizing tks and SPs. 7 turrets were destroyed by 75 mm guns of the Sherman tks and the 6 pdr guns of the Churchills. It was not possible to get RCA or inf A Tk guns close enough to engage the turrets. (x)

(l) Effectiveness - The A Tk defs on the whole were effective. If the enemy had completed his preparations and received better sp from his inf the attack would have been more costly. The 25 Tk Bde incurred losses in tks roughly equivalent to one regt (a large number of which were later recovered.) The majority of these losses were due to the A Tk guns in the turrets. The minefd definitely separated our tks and inf. The ditch partially cana-

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(x) Report of C.C.R.A. 1 Cdn Corps, however, includes the following passage: "One item of particular interest took place on 2... May. One 17-pr from 1 Cdn A Tk Regt was brought forward to engage what was thought to be a hull down tank. Five rounds were fired four of which were direct hits at 1,600 yards. When the area was examined it turned out to be a Panther turret mounted on a steel and concrete emplacement. The gun was completely knocked out and the gun crew killed. One SP 3" M.10 of 7 Cdn A Tk Regt was employed for the same purpose and knocked out another of these prepared anti tank positions.

/1.3

lized the tk move. The use by the enemy of FAUSTPATRONE was limited owing to the reluctance of the enemy inf to expose themselves when our inf was at hand.

(m) Attempts to Overcome - Minefds were gapped under fire by sappers using Polish mine detectors where necessary, but usually the mines had been laid in such haste that detection was visual. Smoke and counter-mortar sp for the sappers was effective. Where only one gap was used on a bde front, it was found to be inadequate. Attempts to destroy the turrets by gunfire other than by the guns on the tks were unsuccessful. Inf successfully overran towed A tk guns in sp of the turrets and were successful with PIATs against SP guns. Hy concs of arty neutralized A Tk guns. During pauses in the attack, lesser arty measures to neutralize ineffective. Smoke blinded effectively the A Tk guns but also hampered our own tks.....

l... MG Defs

(a) Role and Employment - Little distinction appears to have been made between the roles of LMG's and MMG's. The majority of the guns were employed to give direct sp at close ranges, preventing infiltration of the A Tk nodal defs. MG's were mutually sp except where crops and incomplete demolitions interfered.

(b) Siting - Ten armd pillboxes were sited 50 - 70 yds from the wire. These 'mobile' armd pillboxes are a two man, one gun emplacement about 7' high, sunk in the ground to a depth of 4', surrounded by wire and entered from a small door in the rear. The outline plan is that of a quarter circle, the loop-hole being at the apex. There are two periscopes and a foot-operated ventilation system. Approx 100 yds behind the armd pillboxes was a row of concrete emplacements.
These emplacements appeared to be similar to TOBRUK STRONGPOINTS the principal disadvantages being that it was necessary for the crew to expose themselves almost from chest up in order to fire the gun. Some MG's were sited in earthworks reinforced with logs. The shape of the earthwork varied, but some had two, even three fire bays. Most of these posns were from 600 - 800 yds in rear of the wire. The balance of the MG's were sited in whatever bldgs could be found within or in rear of the line. The majority of the MG's were sited to cover the fwd area.

(c) Fields of Fire and Ranges - All posns were sited to give a wide arc, and those constructed in concrete emplacements, to cover 360 degrees. Ranges varied from 40 yds for pits at ground level to between 300 and 400 yds for those raised well above ground level. The armd mobile pillboxes had dead ground within 100 yds, extending in one case out to 500 yds. Observation was then good throughout most of the arc up to 1000 to 1200 yds.

(d) Indirect Fire - No indirect fire was encountered other than a small amount of light harassing fire. Some overhead fire, thought to be indirect at one time, is now thought to have been merely searching fire from MG's on vehs.

(e) Fixed Line Fire - All gaps in the wire, the wire itself, known approaches from our side, etc., were covered by fixed line fire. A small amount of night firing on fixed lines was carried out.

(f) Effectiveness - All MG defs were neutralized by the arty barrage and our inf had little difficulty getting past MG posns provided the barrage was followed closely. After the barrage had passed it was found that the MG's in bldgs and in earthwork were the first to come into action and the most effective. Evidence indicated little sustained MG fire from any posn.

(g) Attempt to Overcome - As stated above, the MG defs, both armd and concrete, close to the wire were quickly neutralized by our arty, and in some cases our inf found them deserted. The earthwork and posns in houses sited in rear were more difficult as they had the opportunity of resuming fire during pauses. PIAT's were useful in knocking out posns in bldgs or rubble. Earthworks were overcome by normal inf pl battle drill, employing brens and 2" mortars.....

18. Fixed Defs - Barbed Wire

.....(e) Concrete-Steel LMG Emplacements - These were built to conform with the surrounding terrain, and/or in many cases to conform with or blend with demolished bldgs. All were rectangular in shape and consisted of two parts in the main:-

(i) LMG Post
(ii) Fabricated Steel Shelter

Both were incorporated in the same emplacement, concrete having been poured on the outside and roof with a single rectangular form. The concrete mixture approximated 4:2:1 and ½" steel rod reinforcement was set in the concrete at varying centres, i.e., 10" - 12". Liberal use of these steel rods seems to have been made though this could not fully be observed. A communication trench normally led into the emplacement centrally at the rear with steps on one side leading to the LMG posn and steps, usually down, on the other side to the steel shelter. The LMG posn on the inside was of octagon shape with a 33" circular opening at the top. Around the sides of the circular opening was fitted a steel angle iron ring, probably used as a traverse for the LMG mounting. The shelter itself was of pre-fabricated welded steel, (40mm throughout) set in concrete. Built inside this was a blast wall and a second doorway which led into the body of the shelter proper. Ventilation was provided by means of a 6" pipe protruding 4" above ground level at far end and extending back down into end of shelter. In some shelters the concrete had not been poured, but instead rubble was used in the walls and roof. This applied particularly where the emplacement was sited centrally in a demolished bldg. The

rubble of the demolished bldg, in such cases, tapered gently from the highest point of the emplacement to ground level. Other points noted were that at some places large stones were laid (broken ashlar fashion) to form the protecting wall around the steel shelter.

(f) 75mm A Tk Emplacement - These, in nearly all respects, were identical with the LMG emplacement except that Mk V Turrets were super-imposed upon the top and pre-fabricated steel shelters incorporated immediately below. Hence, the whole emplacement, 17' x 17', was poured from a single square outside form - mixture 4:2:1. Here again a communication trench, revetted with brush and at places hand placed gravel, cast building blocks, led to the entrance at either rear or side. Where entrances were from the side, rubble fill provided protection. Leading off at right angles from the side was a 'building Block' revetted, timber covered, amn trench - as with the LMG emplacement these were normally constructed on the site of an existing bldg and rubble used for added protection and camouflage. It is entirely possible that these emplacements were constructed within the intact bldg, the bldg later being demolished on top and rubble levelled out. Many excavations of a size and depth in keeping with the shape of both above mentioned emplacements were observed and practically all were sited next to a bldg. Camouflage was afforded the excavations by stringing wire over them and interlacing bamboo grass, etc., on the wires.

19. MINEFIELDS

Belts of mines overlapping each other extended on either side of the road leading into PONTECORVO, though in some places gaps had not at the time of the attack been filled. This was due to the speed of the attack following the fall of the GUSTAV LINE for mines were available in large supply - large dumps were left intact North of PONTECORVO.

All mines reported were of A Tk design and included Italian Igniters Box T MI 42 and T MI 43's - Italian box mines having been used in large numbers. On the road and verges leading into PONTECORVO, both Italian Box T MI's 42 and 43 were laid in large numbers, the Italian box mine in particular laid very hastily. In many cases the mines were armed and laid on the surface with little or no attempt at covering. Most of the T MI's encountered were double Tellers, i.e., one super-imposed on the other, sometimes with the top mine bottom side up and vice-versa. It was particularly noted that in the case of the Teller mines located, the Germans had incorporated a rather new idea of digging the holes for laying the mines of just a slightly larger diameter than the mines themselves. This, in a rather hard surfaced road, had the advantage of making removal very difficult. It was overcome by loosening dirt as much as possible and pulling the mine with a length of cable passed over the levering stick. (a stick so placed that the pull of the cable over the stick has the effect of lifting the mine rather than pulling it sideways.) As stated before no mines of anti-personnel nature were encountered, nor were any of the A Tk variety lifted found to be booby-trapped. 'S' mines were reported to exist between the perimeter barbed wire fence.

Spot checking was carried out but no 'S' mines were located. Here again it may be noted that there is the possibility of some existing as the whole area could not be checked in the time available. Generally speaking the mines laid had a very good delaying effect (especially on the road as this is the main route into PONTECORVO) and, due to heavy enemy fire, were lifted for the most part at night.

Minebelts off to the sides of the road were also well sited and accounted for a number of our tanks. This was partly due to the rather confined space in which our tanks operated and due in part also to the main road being known to be mined. (Three known vehicles struck mines on the main route prior to them being lifted). A point to note in termination is that, as in the case above, lifting and clearing of mines under direct enemy observation is practically impossible, or at least very costly.

20. Arty Defs

(a) Role and Employment - In the opinion of the FOOs on the ground and the inf bn comds, the enemy did not have any DF tasks and shelling was continually thickened up by mortars. Guns must have been moved about from the time our fire plan started because, intermittently, the fire would let up and suddenly become quite heavy. No linear DFs used. All enemy fire was arty concs. Observed fire was put down on dust clouds raised by our vehs and tks and whenever tanks appeared they drew fire. The enemy arty fire was not brought near their own tps at any time. From observation our inf think enemy arty and inf co-operation was poor. However enemy mortars fired anywhere regardless of posn of their own tps. Enemy arty opened up approx 5 mins after our own fire plan began. One very important thing that all our inf stress strongly is that each time one of our OPs takes to the air, enemy arty stops firing and our inf speak very highly of the work done by our air OP throughout the attack. Regarding German counter-barrage, there was none, and whatever fire was brought down was straight arty concs, about 6 - 10 rds

(b) Types of German Guns used - General impression is that there were no guns above 150 mm How used. The types of guns employed were - 88 mm,105 mm and 150 mm How. The approximate number of enemy guns was 150 ....

(d) Ranges - The maximum range of enemy guns was 16,000 yds and guns were sited quite far back. Our own FDLs were the areas mostly affected by shelling, however, a few did get back to our gun lines.

(e) German OPs - Good OPs were responsible for achieving the accurate shelling in the early stages and many shoots were obtained on the rds leading to our bn areas and on any tk and veh movement....

(f) Smoke - German arty employed smoke on numerous occasions during the day, but only on the flanks. This, it is felt, was to deny us any flank observation of supporting fire from our flanks for observed shooting.

(g) Effect own CB - CBO reported 55 locns of enemy guns. 41 of these were bombarded during the CB programme. A large proportion of these shoots was successful because the amount of arty was considerably reduced from about 1200 hrs 23 May onwards. However, at night, shelling again increased by some hy guns, which were detected and subsequently silenced by fire of AGRA.

(h) German CB - The enemy had practically no CBpolicy and the only report so far heard is that one of our Med gun emplacements had been hit and this emplacement was very close to a rd which was being shelled throughout the day.

21 MORTAR LAYOUT

The following weapons were encountered:-

(a) Guns and Eqpt - 8.1 cm, 10 cm Nebelwerfer, 12 cm Nebelwerfer (6 barrel) 21 cm Nebelwerfer (5 barrel) 28 cm Wurfgerrets (H.E.) fired from iron frame container. No reports or indications of 5 cm mortar. A half-track mortar veh capable of carrying two men in front and at least six men in rear and built to pull trailer, although no trailer was in evidence, was used in conjunction with 8.1 cm and also 12 cm. The 12 cm mortar appeared to be Russian and to have ample supply of ammunition as bombards were usually 6 - 10 bombs, and in many cases 16 - 20. Some Italian amn was in use. In all cases the 8.1 cm mortar was sp by MGs (34 or 42). The lack of preparation, mortars being sited mainly in sunken roads with very little cover, leads to the belief that 8.1 cm mortars were switched with each change of unit and hastily placed by each successive unit according to their own plans. Sunken roads particularly end cut banks should be searched rather than reverse slopes of hills. Some smoke was laid with no apparent reason for it.

(b) Employment - Static defence appears to have been based on heavy mortars (10, 12, 15 and 21 cm). While some 12 cm Nebelwerfers were found very far fwd, i.e., 1000 to 1500 yds from FDL, mainly they appeared based on aline 4000 - 6000 yds behind FDL, 8.1 cm mortar appeared to be used entirely as inf weapon and not based on any static plan...

(d) Ranges - 8.1 cm and some 12 cm - 1000 - 2000 yds. All heavier mortars 4000 - 6000 yds...

(h) OP's - Appeared to be very little attempt at observation solely for mortars. Reports indicate that in some cases movement brought immediate fire, but generally it was slow...One or two instances of mortars at heads of valleys were noted. These may have been responsible for immediate fire experienced.

(i) Effectiveness - Very effective, and a high proportion of our casualties due to mortar fire. These casualties sustained in three ways - harassing fire - fire on approaches, etc., - and practice of letting bns reach certain pre-arranged areas and then bringing down very heavy fire before they could dig-in.

(j) Own Counter Measures - All reports confirm that when our mortars fired enemy mortar activity lessened very considerably. Inspection of mortar posns within our range shows that in most cases they were well neutralized. Due to slit trenches, dug-outs, etc., it would be necessary to have continuous neutralization or else immediate counter-fire to catch personnel at their poorly protected mortars. The number of suspected mortar posns which, on inspection, were found to be non-existant would indicate that a greater time than was available before the HITLER LINE is necessary to accurately locate their posns for a set-piece attack. Static or semi-static 10 cm and larger mortars were placed in almost all cases from half way up slope to within three or four feet of top of hill. It was found our fire fell mainly in valley bottoms and fwd slopes of hill behind posns. It appears our mortars must search higher up on reverse slopes and just over crest of hill.

2. SIGNALS IN THE LIRI VALLEY BATTLES, 11 MAY - 4 JUN 44; REPORT BY C.S.O., 1 CDN CORPS, 6 JUN 44 (EXTRACT FROM WAR DIARY, C.S.O., 1 CDN CORPS, JUNE, 1944.)

1. DRLS

Worked satisfactorily and in spite of heavy traffic somehow the men managed to make the runs pretty well on time. The men kept in close touch with the Provost and the latter helped them through the traffic.

2. WIRELESS

(a) The large number of sets on the air in a small area necessitated operating with close frequencies and accepting considerable interference.

(b) These conditions must be accepted and output kept to the minimum or the interference is simply increased.

(c) Absolutely accurate netting is essential.

(d) Sometimes in the case of weak telephone transmission speaking loudly into the mouthpiece helps. This is not so in the case of wireless and actually makes the transmission worse.

(e) With frequencies close and in fact even actually repeated between adjacent Corps, in some cases the only solution is to wait until a conversation ends and then try and get in.

(f) At the Corps level there are only three spare sets. Frequently one had to be sent to a Div for use with Rover David and the second one to a Bridging Coy. These three sets are none too many and their use should be kept under the strict control of the BGS through the CSO. For example, the Medical Service was asking for one of them for passing reports to Army, when in fact a much better set was on the WT link Rear Corps to Army, was not unduly busy, and could very rapidly handle traffic to Army.

3. [illegible]

(a) Traffic conditions on roads was the limiting factor, not the rate of building. In one case a detachment sent to build a line was halted in a column for four hours and in another case three hours, before the work could be reached. Cable trucks can rarely stop on the roads to build lines, with the result that they have to go to some such place as a gateway and then pull the cable off by hand and carry back poles and stay-wire, etc.

(b) In many cases the cable dets had to sweep for and lift mines, thereby delaying construction.

(c) Approximately 75% of the trouble on lines was caused by tanks and MT destroying lines, including knocking down poles and trees to which lines had been fixed and tearing lines out of trees and bushes. In not one single case did the driver report the damage - it was left for Signals to find the line was out and then send parties looking for the location of the trouble. As long as this situation is permitted to continue lines will go out frequently and there will be delay in getting them repaired.

(d) On account of traffic conditions and to save time, it became absolutely essential to post many maintenance parties along routes, as very often the only way of getting to trouble was to walk to it and carry repair equipment. This made an enormous demand on the Line Sections, to which they responded without a complaint, often working 24 hrs without a break and with small parties going short of water and living for several days on hard rations. At one stage Corps Signals had maintenance parties from TERENTINO to COX's CORNER.

(e) To deal with the above difficulties (particularly the congested traffic conditions on roads) it is necessary to build cable well ahead and to do this it is absolutely necessary to have laid down well in advance the routes to be followed by Corps and Div HQs.

(f) Carrier equipment down to Divs has proved most valuable - gives a secure line, on long lines the speech volume can be increased, and it permits an additional circuit on one pair of wires. This often made it possible to give communications on one pair for wires back to Rear Corps and from there on to Army without going through Rear Corps switchboard.

4. MOVES OF HQs

(a) Corps and 1 Cdn Inf Div moved satisfactorily by the step-up method, with the result that communications were not dropped at the old HQ until established at the new. Although they moved neither farther nor faster than the Infantry Div, the Armd Divs did not follow this practice, with the result that for hours they were frequently out of line communication, and with interference due to close frequencies, wireless on the move was not entirely satisfactory.

(b) Army was unable to keep its circuits up to Corps on account of frequent moves of the latter and very often we had to make circuits back to Main and Tac Army available. CSO Army stated he was most thankful for this assistance and that without it it would have been impossible for Army to have permitted Corps HQ to

move as it did as Army could not build fast enough.

(c) It is absolutely essential that Divs give Corps early and exact information about moves so that lines may be built to the new location as quickly as possible. Three examples of how not to do it were provided by 6 S.A. Armd Div - in the afternoon of 1 Jun this formation advised us that they were going to open at 515279; at 1630 hrs we had the line and an officer waiting there. No information of any change of plan was received; at 2100 hrs our Lines Officer found the Div HQ at 495290; the line was got there by 0200 hrs, having to be laid at night through heavy traffic with the result that it could not be well built and was in and out frequently on 2 Jun. On 2 Jun the Div sent a L.O. who arrived at 1830 hrs to say the Div was closing in its present location at 1700 hrs and opening at 1900 hrs at 4536. No further information was received but the Div was located at 4234 at 2300 hrs. On 3 Jun the Div advised at 2200 hrs that it was moving at 0700 hrs on the 4th to 305468. Corps cable dets were turned out at 0400 hrs and started extending the line at 0500 hrs. On arriving at the new location two hours were wasted hunting for someone from the Div HQ to show exactly where the line was wanted as the Div Recce Party had returned to the old location without leaving any sign or any guide.

5. TRAFFIC CONTROL COMMS

It is impossible to lay sufficient lines. The solution is wireless sets in such quantities that they must be withdrawn from a unit as they are beyond Corps Signals' resources.

6. AGRA

(a) A 40-line F&F board is badly needed but Eighth Army is unable to provide.

(b) On more than one occasion discussion arose as to whose responsibility it was to lay a line from AGRA to a Div HQ, both AGRA and Div stating they were too busy. CSO Eighth Army is issuing an instruction. It was decided to have an instruction on an Army level rather than Corps level as AGRAs move in and out of Corps.

7. SUPPLY OF EQUIPMENT

(a) Cable is released by CSO to Divs and passed through Ord channels up to Div Ord Fd Pks, where units collect it - Corps Ord Fd Pk in the case of Corps units. Cable moved up through this channel altogether too slowly and in one case it was only possible to keep 1 Cdn Inf Div brigades fighting by withdrawing from 5 Cdn Armd Div and using an emergency supply kept in Signal Park. The matter has been taken up with DDOS and he is endeavouring to speed up the flow of cable and to build up to some reserve at Div and Corps levels.

(b) Other controlled stores were handled by keeping a lorry load of supplies from the Sig Park with each of the two leading Divs and using a third Sig Park vehicle to do a "milk run" refilling these lorries. This worked most satisfactorily.

(c) Having Signal Park travel with Main Corps rather than the Adm Area has proved a great improvement. DDST has been most helpful and co-operative in providing promptly anything from 10 to 20 lorries to lift the Park.

(d) Army had difficulty in keeping Corps supplied with poles - over 1400 were used.

8. SUBSCRIBERS' COMPLAINTS AND INQUIRIES

Switchboard operators, if they are to give good service, are much too busy to be always completely in the picture as to the condition of circuits and to converse with subscribers. Inquiries should be addressed to the Wireless Control Officer or the Duty Lines Officer, both of whom are on duty 24 hrs a day.- i.e., either the officer is there or a responsible NCO who is competent to deal with the matter or who will call the officer if the trouble is beyond the NCO's powers to deal with.

9. LENGTH OF CONVERSATIONS

These are still much too long due to subscribers engaging in incidental and non-essential chat and to not planning what is the minimum conversation that will meet the situation. In one case (G(SD) retained the only line to Army for 20 minutes.

10. LOCATIONS - CORPS TPS

The heads of Services responsible for Corps Tps are very lax in notifying the Signal Office of locations of units with the result that DRs are delayed in delivering.

11. CODES AND WIRELESS SECURITY

Wireless security on the whole was good, showing that training and practice bear fruit. Codex is certainly slow and the policy is to change to Slidex immediately the latter equipment becomes available. Slidex is considered much speedier.

12. CIPHER

Immediately communications are required with French or USA troops an American Cipher Det should be despatched to this HQ.

(C.S. McKee) Brigadier
C.S.O. 1 Cdn Corps

3. ARMY SERVICE CORPS IN THE LIRI VALLEY BATTLES (EXTRACT FROM WAR DIARY, H.Q., R.C.A.S.C., 1 CDN INF DIV, JUNE 1944).

1 Jun - Spent a quiet afternoon. In view of the events of the last two weeks, I feel compelled to write the following letter to the AA & QMG Main HQ 1 Cdn Div, with copies to 1st, 2nd and 3rd Cdn Inf Bde commanders, the GSO 1, the DAQMG, Staff Captain Q Ops and my four company commanders:-

"A Good Pattern to follow to Ensure Maximum Efficiency in the Employment of 2nd Line RCASC Tpt for Troop Lifting and for Normal Div Maintenance.

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1. These comments are made for the sole purpose of increasing the S & T contribution to the progress and welfare of our infantry, i.e. the Queen of Battles. No criticism is - directly or indirectly - implied towards any individual of any rank of any arm or service.

2. The Importance of Early Information

(a) S&T Appreciations require to be made considerably in advance of the making of any S&T Plan - due to the nature of the machinery of normal maintenance and the fact that our tpt is subject to commitment by Q for a wide variety of other purposes including assistance to 1 Cdn Corps.

(b) Normally, first priority must be given to maintaining the flow of Amn, petrol and rations. Any increase in the demand for any of these commodities results in the employment of more than the normal amount of tpt until such demand is met.

(c) Excepting a few lorries that are semi-permanently used to carry bread or meat - no tpt is specifically allotted to any one commodity or type of task. All vehicles are employed on the "pool" principle and are subject to direction, from this HQ, into whatever channel of maintenance that requires emphasis at the time. Flexibility and availability are all important. Neither is possible without the other. Unless circumstances are unusual, commodities in hand are invariably off-loaded thus making all vehs available for other tasks.

(d) Early information as to future plans that may affect the tpt situation is absolutely vital for maximum efficiency. There is an RCASC offr at each bde H.Q. He is our main source of infm as to plans at that level. We have an RCA offr permanently attached to our own HQ for liaison purposes. There is a Div Tps RCASC offr. Constant liaison is established by C., RASC with AA & QMG. The organization is there so please make the maximum use of it. We are definitely interested in the 'G' plan. We will do our own thinking and planning but to do so we must have some idea as to what immediate future intentions are in the minds of 'G'.

3. The Importance of Centralized Control.

(a) The maximum use of tpt can only be ensured if all vehs are returned the moment the task in hand is completed.

(b) Only the HQ which has the broad over-all picture can successfully make the most use of our tpt facilities.

4. The Importance of Sticking to Firm Arrangements

(a) Just as inf can be "pinned down by mortar and shell fire" so can tpt be pinned down by abnormal traffic or weather conditions.

(b) It follows then that, if a guide is detailed to be at a certain RV to meet tpt at a certain hour and the tpt does not arrive promptly, it remains the bounden duty of the guide to stay put until the tpt does arrive - no matter how long after the appointed time. It takes all hell to stop one of our details after it is on its way to a task and it will get there sooner or later. You can depend on that.

5. Please, then give us a break and keep your RCASC offr informed on the 'G' plan. Action against resistance means an increase in your amn requirements. Movement means more pet and, perhaps, vehs from us. Rations go on forever. We will continue to do our very damndest to serve you well but we cannot read your minds."