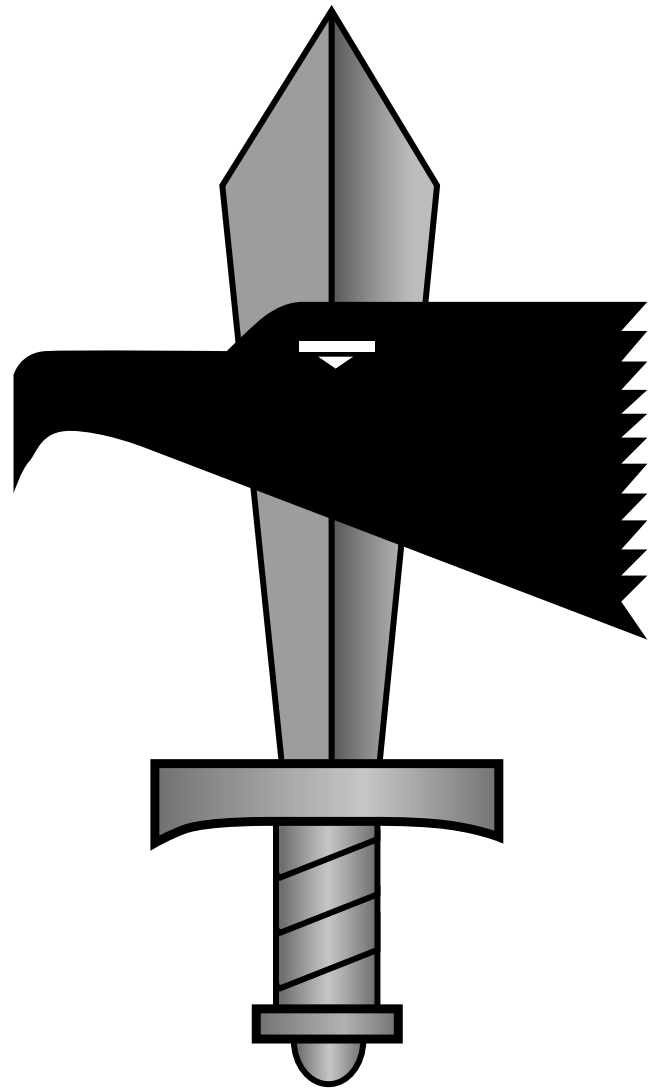


er  
verywhere apidly

September 2019

**The Magazine of the NATO  
Rapid Deployable Corps - Italy**



# EAGLE TOUR 19



**Special  
Edition**



## NATO Rapid Deployable Corps - Italy *Ubique Celere*

# CONTENTS

**BATTLEFIELD TOUR/STAFF RIDE DIDACTIC VALUE:  
THE IMPORTANCE AND ROLE OF MILITARY HISTORY,  
BATTLEFIELD TOURS AND STAFF RIDES FOR MULTINATIONAL  
HEADQUARTERS IN THE 21ST CENTURY.**

Maj. Gen. (ret.) **Scollo**, Italian Army

### 1 THE GOTHIC LINE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Col. **Cacciagrano**, Italian Army

### 2 JOINT FIRE PLAN

Col. **Smith**, British Army

### 3 CONDUCT AN ARMORED ATTACK AGAINST A DEFENSIVE LINE

Col. **Cacciagrano**, Italian Army

### 4 MOUNTAIN WARFARE, TERRAIN EXPLOITATION AND LOGISTIC CONSTRAINTS

Ltc. **Sotlar**, Slovenian Army, Ltc. **Baessato**, Italian Army  
and Maj. **Hoxhaj**, Albanian Navy

### 5 EXPLOITATION OF SUCCESS AND RESERVE COMMITMENT

Maj. **Snitko-Dottarelli**, Lituianian Army

### 6 AIR AND NAVAL SUPPORT TO OPERATIONS

Col. **Andreozzi**, Italian Air Force  
and Commander **Marzollo** Italian Navy

### 7 HOW TO INTEGRATE COMBAT AND COMBAT SUPPORT UNITS IN DIFFICULT ENVIRONMENTS IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN TEMPO

Col. **Cacciagrano**, Italian Army

### 8 INVOLVEMENT OF A NEUTRAL COUNTRY IN THE WAR

Col. **Greggersen**, German Army, Col. **Zouggari** French Army and  
Col. **Bauska**, Latvian Army

### 9 COMPARE THE CONDUCT OF THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN, FOCUSED ON THE ARMY CORPS, WITH THE MULTI- CORPS LCC

Maj. **Rodà**, Italian Army

### 10 ASSESS IF THE CURRENT FRAMEWORK OF THE OPERATIONS (DEEP, CLOSE AND REAR) IS APPLICABLE TO THE WWII EVENTS IN THE GOTHIC LINE AND COMPARE THOSE EVENTS (WWII) WITH THE CURRENT DOCTRINE

Col. **Dario** and the Staff of Friuli Division, Italian Army

### MILITARY HISTORY STUDY AND THE ART OF COMMAND



Everywhere Rapidly is the authorized official publication of the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps, Italy. All editorial content of the Everywhere Rapidly is approved by the NRDC-ITA Commander, at "Ugo Mara" barracks, via per Busto Arsizio, 20 - 21058 Solbiate Olona, Varese, Italy.

Everywhere Rapidly is published by the Public Affairs Office. Contents of the Everywhere Rapidly are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Nations thereby represented. All intellectual property rights, including copyright in the content displayed on the everywhere rapidly, belong to their respective owners. All material and information, including comments, are governed by the doctrine of fair use. The Publication and the content may only be used for lawful purposes. For this purpose alone one may print out, reproduce, or photocopy as needed. The editor reserves the right to edit all submissions for style, brevity and clarity.

Printed by: Grafica Olona

er  
everywhere rapidly



*War is a complex endeavor composed of many variables including terrain, the composition and organization of forces, human aspects, and chance. The interdependency and dynamics among these variables leads to a certain degree of entropy that, under the umbrella of the principles of the art of war, the intellectual abilities and knowledge of commanders (at all levels) seek to clarify in order to understand the battle. The absence of major state conflicts over the past 70 years and recent experiences in asymmetric conflicts, have heavily contributed to a shift in interest and training of staff away from the basic principles of large scale conflicts in a near-peer confrontation scenario.*

*Even with the recent increase in the frequency of hybrid conflicts, the re-alignment of staff's mindset toward high intensity warfighting is a valuable exercise for military leaders. The accurate and in-depth study of Military History remains useful to prepare both those in positions of authority and their supporting staff. To that end, staff rides and battlefield tours are natural and effective tools to illustrate the theoretical concepts learned by studying previous conflicts, experiences and lessons learned.*

*Detailed preparatory studies, accurate maps, review of the impacts of the terrain, a critical approach and an open mindset are essential to facilitate quality staff rides/battlefield tours. Through highlighting the 'so what' from events of past conflicts, they enhance the knowledge of staff which can be effectively applied to the real-world planning and execution of the Corps' operations.*

*NRDC-ITA, in its efforts to re-align to the Corps role, is proactively evolving its structure, procedures and training to enable it to operate in any contemporary environment. In this context, the senior staff of NRDC-ITA conducted a week-long Battlefield Tour, from 31 March to 7 April 2019, focusing on the operations related to the breakthrough of the Gothic Line during the summer of 1944. The aim of this event was to increase the knowledge and the decision making skills for the senior officer attendees by exploring a multi-Corps high intensity conflict.*

*This special edition of the ER magazine will illustrate the procedures used by NRDC-ITA to conduct staff rides/battlefield tours and share the lessons drawn from the study of a multi-Corps campaign, based on the Allies' breakthrough of the Gothic Line in World War II.*

# FORWARD

er  
verywhere rapidly

# BATTLEFIELD TOUR/STAFF RIDE DIDACTIC VALUE: THE IMPORTANCE AND ROLE OF MILITARY HISTORY, BATTLEFIELD TOURS AND STAFF RIDES FOR MULTINATIONAL HEADQUARTERS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY.

Maj. Gen. (retld.) **Scollo**, Italian Army

**It is well known to all officers of NATO armies that training of the officer cadre is one of the most demanding issues that trainers have to face. It is not only training but, more appropriately, education of minds and personalities. Military leaders must be trained to analyse complex issues and situations in which the level of uncertainty is normally high, grasp quickly the core aspects of the situations and take sound and swift decisions to seize and maintain the initiative. It is universally recognized that the study of military history, campaigns and battles are an invaluable part of an officer's education.**

The study, however, should not be limited to researching only the accuracy of the position of units on the terrain, as this actually has little value. "Those who believe that exactness is really important never have known war or must have forgotten it. For the issue of any operation of war is decided not by what the situation actually is, but what the rival commanders think it is"<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the study has to be conducted to draw useful contemporary lessons and to develop officers' ability to solve problems independently. To that aim three types of different exercises have been developed: the Battlefield Tour, the Staff Ride and the Tactical Exercise Without Troops (TEWT) (supported by maps). Though these terms are quite often interchanged, they have different functions and describe a different type of exercise.

A Battlefield Tour is generally concerned at looking at past operations for general interest: systematic preparation for this activity is more the exception

than the norm. Attendees may express some considerations about the military operation which is being studied but no formal follow on activity is expected.

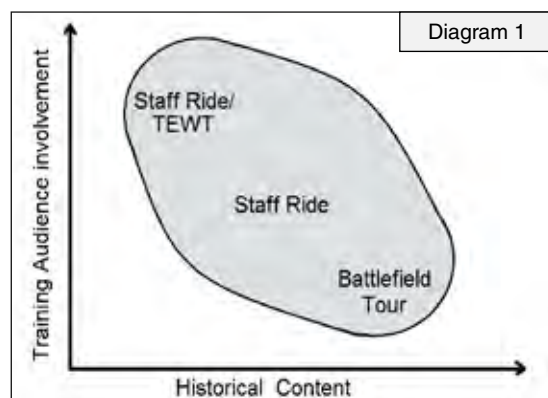
The Staff Ride is something more professional and consists of a preliminary study of a selected military campaign, an extensive visit to the actual associated sites, and an opportunity to integrate the relevant lessons from each. This is achieved through an in-depth analysis of selected training objectives for each day in order to draw lessons applicable to modern warfare. It is normally divided into preliminary study, field study and follow-on integration in an after action review.

TEWT is a further development of the Staff Ride which can be played both at operational and tactical levels. In this activity, the historical events of the past are in the background while the terrain is the main training tool. A detailed study of the terrain

1 See B.H. Liddell Hart "Sherman, Soldier, Realist, American" Da Capo Press, 1994 p. xiv.

is a preliminary step to conduct a MAPEX (map exercise) with a fictitious scenario in which attendees should employ contemporary operational art, tactics, techniques and procedures to play an operation that may recall in broad terms a campaign of the past. Apart from the terrain study and the preliminary recce, a TEWT can be played also on maps, even in garrison.

The level of involvement of the Training Audience in the three activities is depicted in Diagram 1 below.



A key point of the diagram is that the Staff Ride appears to be the best possible compromise that matches the knowledge of military history with the study and application of current NATO doctrine to military operations.

Preparation of a Staff Ride requires an early conceptual engagement across the HQ: firstly it must be focused on the appropriate training phase of the HQ, secondly the historical period has to be carefully selected in order to consider a battle in which all HQ Divisions and Branches may be conveniently trained<sup>2</sup>, then it has to be focused on certain fields of interest (e.g. Joint Fires, Engineers, Air Operations and so forth), and lastly it has to take into account the need to involve relevant specialists of the HQ in the decision making process related to specific issues (LEGAD, POLAD, STRATCOM, Provost Marshal, just to name a few). Finally, a list of training objectives and related discussion themes has to be drafted, to be matched with the main events of the campaign or the battle under consideration. In the Table below, we can see how different training events may match (generic) training objectives.

TRAINING OBJECTIVE	TRAINING EVENT		
	Battlefield Tour	Staff Ride	TEWT
To demonstrate the principles of war and the links between strategy, operational art and tactics.	Less likely	Very likely	Likely
To study command, leadership, morale and cohesion.	Yes	Yes	Less Likely
To expose the reality of war and its human dimension (losses, destructions).	Yes	Yes	Less Likely
To examine the dynamics of battle in terms of space and time, taking into account weather, terrain and climate.	Yes	Yes	Yes
To study the conduct of complex operations (Joint, Combined), taking into account the implications of multinational environment, and different military backgrounds.	Likely (IAW the battle selected)	From Likely To Yes (IAW the battle selected)	Yes
To promote in the Training Audience professional interest in military history and to provide the conceptual tools for self-study of a military campaign.	Yes	Yes	Less likely
To provide a number of case studies to understand Joint operations, combined arms tactics, information operations, Joint Fires, logistics, etc.	Yes	Yes	Likely
To understand the impact of technology, training and doctrine on military operations.	Less Likely	Very Likely	Yes
To improve military skills including decision making at senior level.	Less Likely	Yes	Yes

<sup>2</sup> To train a Multinational Joint HQ or a Corps level HQ, only campaigns/battles fought in the last century may be taken into consideration. Though it may be interesting from the purely historical standpoint, XIX century wars unfortunately do not have the required level of complexity to conveniently train commanders and staff.



To gain the maximum results and benefits from the activity, and to avoid the Training Audience (or at least a portion of it) staying comfortably in a 'receive only' mode, each attending staff officer has to brief the audience on a specific topic to stimulate discussion. The desired conduct at each scheduled briefing point during the Ride could therefore be the following:

- brief terrain orientation conducted by a staff officer or by the historian;
- a concise historical description of the events, linking them to the terrain, highlighting the conditions under which the battle was fought in the specific places, and the relevant decisions of the commanders during the fight. This also is led by the historian;
- then a selected staff officer should focus the Training Audience on a relevant discussion theme that matches the historical event and the terrain; discussion amongst the training audience with questions posed to the historian or /and the staff officer, in order to seek clarifications, consider options or comment on particular issues;
- lastly the senior officer can summarize the most relevant topics and conclusions. A member of the directing staff should act as a note-taker to get records of the discussion.

NRDC ITA has developed a recurring cycle of staff rides focused mainly on 2<sup>nd</sup> World War battles and campaigns. Great emphasis is placed on the joint and combined dimension choosing historical events that may challenge the training audience. Operations in Crete in 1941 were chosen because "Operation Mercury" remains the only operation in history in which a major strategic objective was assaulted and successfully secured by airborne troops. Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily in 1944, is an interesting example of joint multinational operations on both sides, and also the most complex amphibious assault in the Mediterranean during the war. Operation Olive and the battle of the Gothic Line in 1944, allows the study of mountain warfare, of different styles

of command and leadership: mission command vs detailed orders. Furthermore, it incorporates the interactions between regular armies and guerrilla and partisan formations, a feature increasingly important in 21<sup>st</sup> Century hybrid and asymmetric warfare. Other battles such as Cassino, the Ardennes in 1940 or Operation MARKET GARDEN in the Netherlands, may be considered for the future. The attendance of officers belonging to NRDC-ITA's affiliated and subordinated formations also added value to the exercise, sharing professional views and increasing mutual confidence and understanding.

## Conclusion

The Staff Ride is a well proven training method that may enhance and harden staff officers' professional skills. Its main value, like any other military education event, lies in the clear and early definition of training objectives, the selection of speakers (both civilian and military), in the detailed reconnaissance of historical places by planning and directing staff and, last but not least, by the professional and willing contribution of the training audience too.

Beyond the benefit to each individual's education, the Staff Ride is crucial to prepare staff to operate in a well prepared and effective HQ. In an HQ such as NRDC-ITA, due to the multinationalism of the staff, the high tempo of activities and its many different roles, the time allocated for the exercise would be optimized by performing 'enhanced' Staff Rides, with a solid historical background and follow-on study to draw lessons for current operations. This would preserve the value of the event as an educational applied study of military history and as a valuable individual experience, and make the best possible use of the available resources.

## About the Author:

*Luigi P. SCOLLO Maj. Gen. (ret.) Italian Army is the selected Academic for historic support for NRDC-ITA Battlefield Tour/Staff Rides.*



British Churchill tank moves in a sandy terrain near Castel Borsetti – Gothic Line Eastern Sector

# THE GOTHIC LINE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Col. Cacciagrano, Italian Army

This article provides the reader with the historical framework of the attack of the “Gothic Line” with particular focus on the strategic situation, planning, and opposing forces during the Italian campaign of the Second World War.

*The biggest difference of opinion on military strategy between Britain and the U.S. came over the proposal to land a force in the south of France to join the forces in Normandy in drives into Germany. Churchill argued against it, maintaining that it would divert from Italy troops which could otherwise push north and east into the Balkans. Roosevelt insisted on the original plan, and landings were made. The weakened forces in Italy were stalled, and Russian armies swept into Eastern Europe (from “Life International”).*

Most would agree that 1944 was the crucial year of WWII. For two years German Forces consistently withdrew under Allied military pressure from territories they had recently conquered. In the face of the Reich's imminent collapse, strategic differences arose amongst Allied leaders that decisively affected the course of post-war Europe. President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill agreed that when Allies landed in Normandy the Italian front would become secondary in priority to support the main effort directed to the heart of Germany from France. However, Churchill never faltered in his belief that the control of Mediterranean meant the control of Western World. He remained strongly committed to the idea that a decisive victory in Italy would lead to influence and control of the Balkans and Eastern Europe, balancing the presence of the Soviet Union. Conversely, Roosevelt and his advisors did not share Churchill's vision and confirmed Italy as a secondary theatre by diverting experienced troops to the French theatre. This “important divergence”, as it was called by Churchill, materialised in the summer 1944 after the fall of Rome, when the Americans stopped their pursuit of the Germans to divert troops in France and, on the other side, the British prepared their own forces to strike the Axis defences along the Apennines to follow Churchill's strategic vision.

## German Strategy from 1943

From late 1943, Adolf Hitler's strategy was to strengthen the German forces in Western Europe at the expense of those on the Eastern Front. With the benefit of hindsight Hitler's strategy remains inexplicable to most western historians. In view of the danger of a cross-channel Anglo-US invasion

of Western Europe, seemingly imminent by early 1944, the loss of portions of his eastern conquests evidently seemed less serious to Hitler. He continued to insist on the primacy of the war in the West after the start of the Allied invasion of northern France in June 1944, and while his armies made strenuous efforts to contain the Allied bridgehead in Normandy for the next two months, Hitler accepted the annihilation of the German Army Group Centre on the Eastern Front by the Soviet summer offensive, from June 1944, which quickly brought the Red Army, within a few weeks, to the Vistula River and the borders of East Prussia.

There were two German military Commanders with different views about the Italian Peninsula's defence in 1943 and 1944: Field Marshalls Albrecht Kesselring and Erwin Rommel. Kesselring wanted a defence of Italian territory that exploited the geographical length of the country, committing forces in the south. Given the Allied air and land equipment superiority, Rommel argued for a withdrawal to the more defensible North, with a shorter logistics chain and where the concentration of force could be exploited. Hitler's distaste for trading ground for forces was more favourable to Kesselring's strategy than Rommel's controlled withdrawal strategy.

Quite the opposite of the Allies' vision of Italy as a secondary theatre, Hitler was convinced that the defence of the Peninsula was a German priority to consolidate and re-assure internal public opinion of the army's capabilities to defend the Motherland. The defence of the Axis Southern front would be vital both for ensuring Italian industrial and agricultural support to the German war effort

er  
verywhere rapidly

and also to keep Allied troops pinned down in a long campaign on easily defensible terrain.

## Axis Planning and Preparation

When developing the Gothic Line in the northern Apennines, the Germans created a defensive zone of considerable depth. The origins of the defenses actually preceded the Italian campaign. In August 1943, before the Allied landings in southern Italy, Field Marshal Rommel, then *Army Group B* Com-

mander in northern Italy, had begun reconnaissance for defensive positions in the northern Apennines, whence the Germans might withdraw in the event of an Allied invasion of Italy. Reconnaissance for the projected defensive zone continued during the remaining months of 1943, but actual work only began in the following spring under a paramilitary German Construction agency, Organization Todt. The construction effort employed several thousand civilians, 15,000 Italians and 2,000 Slovenians. From the vicinity of Massa on the Ligurian coast about 64km northwest of Livorno, the Gothic Line extended eastward along the ridge line of the main Apennines chain to foothills north of the Foglia River. From there the line ran along the crest of one of the range's many spurs to Pesaro on the Adriatic coast, some 60km northwest of Ancona. The line covered a total straight line distance of some 290km. When Kesselring became the Senior German Commander in Italy, he shifted focus from the northern Apennines, in keeping with his plan, to stand instead in the South. Until the spring of

1944 little of the Gothic Line existed, but the rapid collapse of the front south of Rome in late May and early June, as well as instructions from the high command, finally prompted Kesselring to refocus on the northern Apennines. In early summer anti-tank defenses on the more exposed sectors of the projected line were strengthened with mine fields and the civilian population was evacuated from a "dead zone" 20 kilometers deep in front of what would become the main line of resistance. Within that zone all roads, bridges, and communications facilities were either to be destroyed or prepared for demolition.



Gebirgsjäger MG 42 position – Gothic Line Central Sector

mander in northern Italy, had begun reconnaissance for defensive positions in the northern Apennines, whence the Germans might withdraw in the event of an Allied invasion of Italy. Reconnaissance for the projected defensive zone continued during the remaining months of 1943, but actual work only began in the following spring under a paramilitary German Construction agency, Organization Todt. The construction effort employed several thousand civilians, 15,000 Italians and 2,000 Slovenians. From the vicinity of Massa on the Ligurian coast about 64km northwest of Livorno, the Gothic Line extended eastward along the ridge line of the main Apennines chain to foothills north of the Foglia River. From there the line ran along the crest of one of the range's many spurs to Pesaro on the Adriatic coast, some 60km northwest of Ancona. The line covered a total straight line distance of some 290km. When Kesselring became the Senior German Commander in Italy, he shifted focus from the northern Apennines, in keeping with his plan, to stand instead in the South. Until the spring of

The two most vulnerable sectors of the Apennines defensive zone were in the central sector north of Florence, where the range is at its narrowest and on the Eastern Sector south of Rimini, where the mountains descend into low foothills and to a narrow coastal plain. In the central sector north of Florence, Highway 65 linked that city with Bologna, 80km away, across two passes: the Futa and the Radicosa. A good secondary road from Florence via Firenzuola to Imola, in the Po Valley 30km southeast of Bologna, crossed the mountains over the Giogo Pass. In the Eastern Sector, the coastal corridor offered a wider choice of passage to the Po Valley. Although Kesselring had long regarded those two sectors as the most likely targets of an Allied offensive, construction on defensive works in both sectors fell behind schedule until well into the summer of 1944.

With time running out, Kesselring decided to rely instead upon a combination of antitank emplacements within the main line of resistance and a mo-



bile reserve of self-propelled antitank guns, a tactic that had worked well in the Caesar Line south of Rome. Yet it had one serious shortcoming: vulnerability to Allied airpower. Since the Allies dominated the skies, shifting antitank guns or anything else during daylight was always hazardous. Furthermore, about 150 FLAK 88-mm. guns would be needed and it was doubtful whether that many would be available in time.

Beside the physical obstacle created by manmade barriers, German defensive plans were based upon the concept of 'mobility' of troops and the controlled withdrawal of defensive positions. The forces were not sufficient to permanently man the defensive line with a credible concentration and this deficiency was resolved by ensuring the rapid movement and deployment of the units between the Line's strongpoints. Combining exploiting terrain features and the rapid concentration of forces where needed most, the Axis troops dramatically enhanced the stopping power of the Gothic Line. The use of reserve forces to counter-attack and successive controlled withdrawal aimed to increase attrition in the most defensible areas, whilst exploiting to the maximum the scarce resources available compared to the overrunning Allied forces.

## Allied Planning and Preparation

Even as Kesselring's engineers rushed to finalize their defensive works in the Apennines, British Field Marshal Alexander made significant changes to his plan to break through the defences.

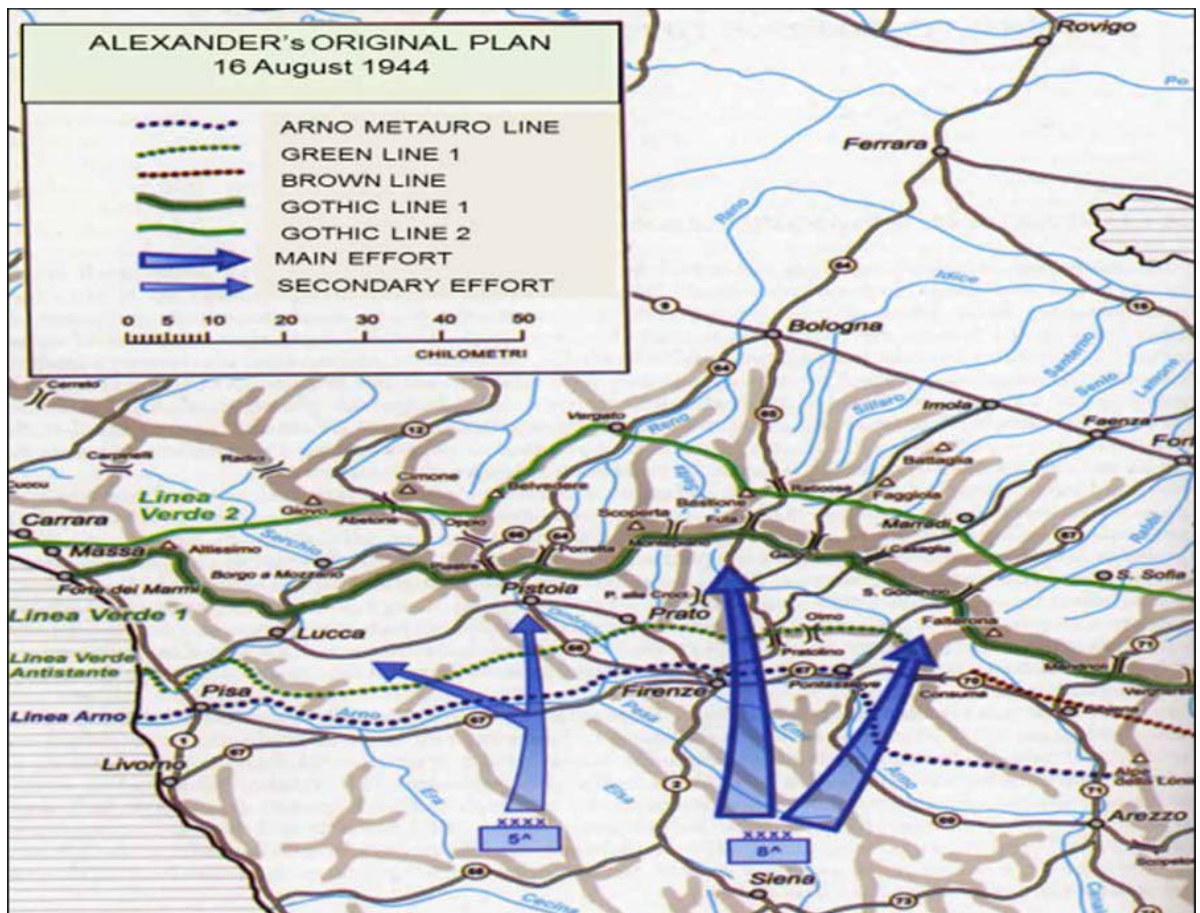
Alexander had originally planned for the Fifth and

Eighth Armies, their strength concentrated on contiguous wings, to launch a joint offensive by four army corps, controlling fourteen divisions, against the Gothic Line's, central sector north of Florence. The Armies were to attack simultaneously along parallel axes: the Eighth along the main routes between Florence and Bologna and the Fifth from either Lucca or Pistoia (preferably the latter) toward Modena, in the Po Valley 40km northwest of Bologna.

Since Alexander doubted that Clark's forces would be strong enough to exploit much beyond Modena and since the Eighth Army was larger, the Allied commander gave General Leese's Army the task of exploiting to the Po river. Yet as the pause along the Arno lengthened into weeks, Leese was convinced that the geographically vulnerable Adriatic flank and not the central sector north of Florence would be the most favourable point for the main attack against the Gothic Line. Kesselring had reached a similar conclusion and had shifted the center of gravity of his army group to a 40km wide sector on the Tenth Army's left flank. General Leese's argument ran something like this: with the departure of the French Expeditionary Corps, units of the Allied armies trained and experienced in mountain warfare were limited. An offensive concentrated not in the mountains, but against the Eastern flank of the Apennines chain, where the mountains give way to a low range of foothills overlooking a narrow coastal plain, would offer terrain better suited to the Eighth Army's mobile capabilities. There Leese could also better exploit the advantage of his superior firepower in support of a series of set-piece attacks against successive positions in the low hills between the Metauro and Foglia Rivers. Furthermore, a breakthrough in that sector would carry Allied troops more quickly



New Zealand Tankers maintain their vehicle – Gothic Line Eastern Sector



onto the plain north of the Apennines than from the central sector north of Florence; also, General Leese believed, erroneously, that Kesselring expected no major Allied effort in the east. An attack in the east would also reduce the forces needed for flank protection as Clark's Fifth Army represented sufficient protection for the left flank of the main attack, and shifting eastward toward the coast would enable General Leese to rely on the coast itself for right flank protection, plus a small fleet of destroyers and gunboats. The new plan called for naval bombardment and small-scale amphibious assaults against the enemy's Adriatic flank.

Although unstated at the time, the shift of the main offensive would also harmonize more closely with the strategic goals upheld in Allied councils by Prime Minister Churchill: a thrust from north-eastern Italy through Slovenia, toward which Tito and his Yugoslav partisan army were moving, and into the valley of the mid-Danube, the objective of the southern wing of the Red Army. Later in the month, after the Russians overran Rumania, the military logic of Churchill's arguments and Alexander's eastward shift of the location of his main offensive would seem compelling in British eyes. To what degree, if any, Churchill's views influenced or indeed determined Alexander's decision to change his original plans for the Gothic Line offensive can, at best, only be inferred. In any case, Leese's argument appealed to Alexander who readily accepted it. Yet when he first submitted the new concept to the theater commander for approval, General

Wilson's Joint Planning Staff, strongly influenced by General Devers, was less than enthusiastic. The staff, for example, considered the naval and amphibious operations planned against the enemy's left flank too ambitious.

Neither the structure of the coast in the Ravenna area nor the resources available would permit significant operations along the coast. Only two gunboats with 6-inch guns could be made available to supplement a small destroyer force already in the Adriatic. Nevertheless, since most operational requirements, including air support, seemed well within the theatre's capabilities, Wilson approved the plan in principle, and on 6 August Alexander issued orders for preliminary operations designed to set the stage for the main offensive to be mounted from the right flank instead of the center. Yet right up to the eve of the offensive many doubts as to the plan's feasibility lingered on at Allied headquarters, especially among the American members of Wilson's Joint Planning Staff.

## Preliminary Moves

Alexander declared that the heavy dissipation of Allied strength over the preceding few months, especially the US Fifth Army's loss of two corps and several divisions during Operation ANVIL-DRA-GOON, had greatly reduced the chances for success of a joint attack by both Armies against the sector north of Florence. With the shift of the main attack from the central to the eastern sector on the



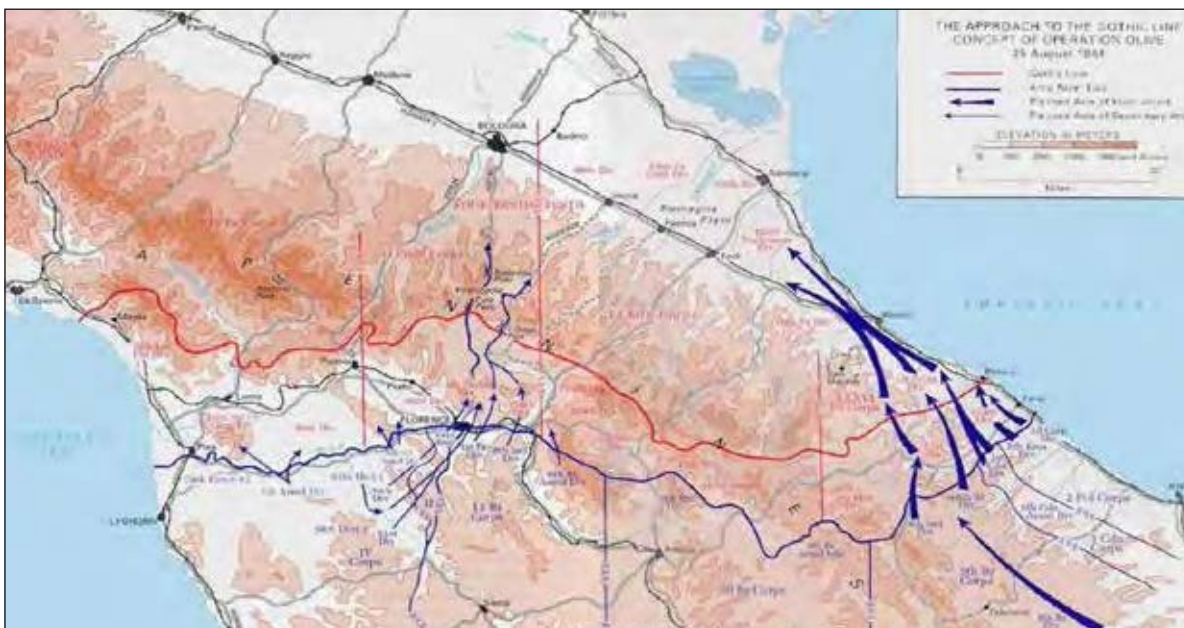


US patrol approaching a farm on the Apennines – Gothic Line Central Sector

Eighth Army's right flank, the US Fifth Army, rather than attack as originally planned toward both Pistoia and Lucca, was to move only against Pistoia, for an attack against both objectives would further dissipate Clark's already greatly reduced resources. Leese's Eighth Army was to make the main Allied effort beginning on 25<sup>th</sup> August with a three-corps attack against the German left flank along the Adriatic, to be followed at a date to be determined by Alexander, by the Fifth Army's attack against the central sector of the Gothic Line. Clark's attack would begin after Alexander had determined Kesselring had weakened the central sector by shifting forces to check Leese's attack. The operation was to be, the Allied Commander

observed as he had when planning the offensive south of Rome, "a one-two punch".

General Clark readily agreed that the new concept, especially on the matter of timing, was sound. He could easily hold his left flank with the few forces available, even if the Pisano massif remained in enemy hands, and shift the rest to the central sector for the attack. His only concern was his right flank, where the distance and possible lack of co-ordination between an American attack toward Pistoia and that of the British 13<sup>th</sup> Corps on the Eighth Army's left flank constituted, in Clark's opinion, a real hazard to the success of operations in the central sector.



er  
everywhere rapidly



German PAK 40 ready to open fire along an approach route – Gothic Line Eastern Sector

In raising the objection, Clark shrewdly saw an opportunity to trade off a shift of the Allies' main effort from the center to the British-controlled right for Anglo-American unity of command in the center. He appeared to be intent upon reconstructing in his own sector the concept that Alexander had just abandoned for the army group. An effective operation against the enemy's center, even if secondary, would require both Clark's Army and the British 13<sup>th</sup> Corps to be under the operational control of one commander and that their axes of attack be along the shortest distance across the mountains, that is, from Florence to Bologna.

## OPPOSING FORCES

### Axis Forces

In 1944 the German Divisional structure was reduced from 3 to 2 Infantry Regiments for a total of 6 Battalions of 250 men each. Additional available units included one reconnaissance Battalion, one Artillery Group, one Anti-Tank Battalion and one Engineer Battalion. In order to man the Gothic Line, Kesselring deployed on the Adriatic side the 10<sup>th</sup> Armee commanded by Heinrich von Vietinghoff-Scheel and on the Tirrenian side Joachim Lemelsen's 14<sup>th</sup> Armee. In total, 18 divisions were available.

The 14<sup>th</sup> Armee sector from the Tirrenian Sea to the Sieve River had 2 Corps: the 14<sup>th</sup> Armoured commanded by General Fridolin Von Senger und Etterlin and the experienced 1<sup>st</sup> Fallschirmjäger Corps of General Alfred Schlemm. In addition, there were

General Graziani's Italian Army with counter-guerrilla tasks in the rear area of the 14<sup>th</sup> Corps and the 20<sup>th</sup> Luftwaffe Infantry Division as Army Reserve. The 10<sup>th</sup> Armee from Sieve River to the Adriatic Sea was composed of the 51<sup>st</sup> Mountain Troops Corps commanded by General Valentin Feuerstein and the 76<sup>th</sup> Armoured along the coast, where terrain was more suitable for tanks, commanded by Traugott Herr. The 29<sup>th</sup> Panzer Grenadier Division, deployed north of Rimini, was the Army Reserve and some Italian units at Regiment level were stationed in the rear area to counter the partisans.

The strength of the Axis troops totaled 340,000 against 900,000 Allied. In terms of equipment the Germans were also outnumbered by the Allied troops, with ratios of 7: 1 for tanks and 5:1 for artillery. The Axis Air Force was also overwhelmed by its opponent and the Sea power was firmly in the Royal Navy's hands.

### Allied Forces

After the approval of Operation OLIVE, Allied disposition changed to the new plan with the complete shift of the 8<sup>th</sup> Army on the eastern sector and, for the 5<sup>th</sup> Army, replacement of the forces already departed for France for Operation DRAGOON - AN-VII.

In the Western Sector, the new disposition had the 5<sup>th</sup> Army (US) commanded by General Clark, comprising (from west to east) the 4<sup>th</sup> (US) Corps commanded by General Crittenger, the 2<sup>nd</sup> (US)



Corps commanded by General Keyes, (deployed on a narrow AOO along the Apennine passes of the FUTA and GIOGO), and in the area contiguous to the British Army sector, General Kirkman's 13<sup>th</sup> (UK) Corps given to the 5<sup>th</sup> Army in order to accommodate Leese's plan.

The 8<sup>th</sup> British Army commanded by General Leese had in the west the 10<sup>th</sup> (UK) Corps of General McCreery, with Indian troops. The powerful 5<sup>th</sup> Corps of General Keightley was deployed in the centre of the British AOO and, at the relatively flat coastal area there were the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Corps commanded by General Burns and General Anders' 2<sup>nd</sup> Polish Corps.

## Conclusion

Considering the contemporary geo-political environment, where a symmetric confrontation is possible, the study of the WWII Italian Campaign offers important lessons to apply in conducting operations against a near-peer adversary in demanding terrain. Despite advances in technology, some principles and commanders' decisions from operations in 1944 still offer valid insight for our HQ and staff.

The Allied assault of Axis positions in Italy was one of the most time and resource-consuming operations of WWII. Due to the extremely difficult terrain and well-organized defences, the overwhelming Allied Army Group was bogged down in a slow advance where every position was taken at high

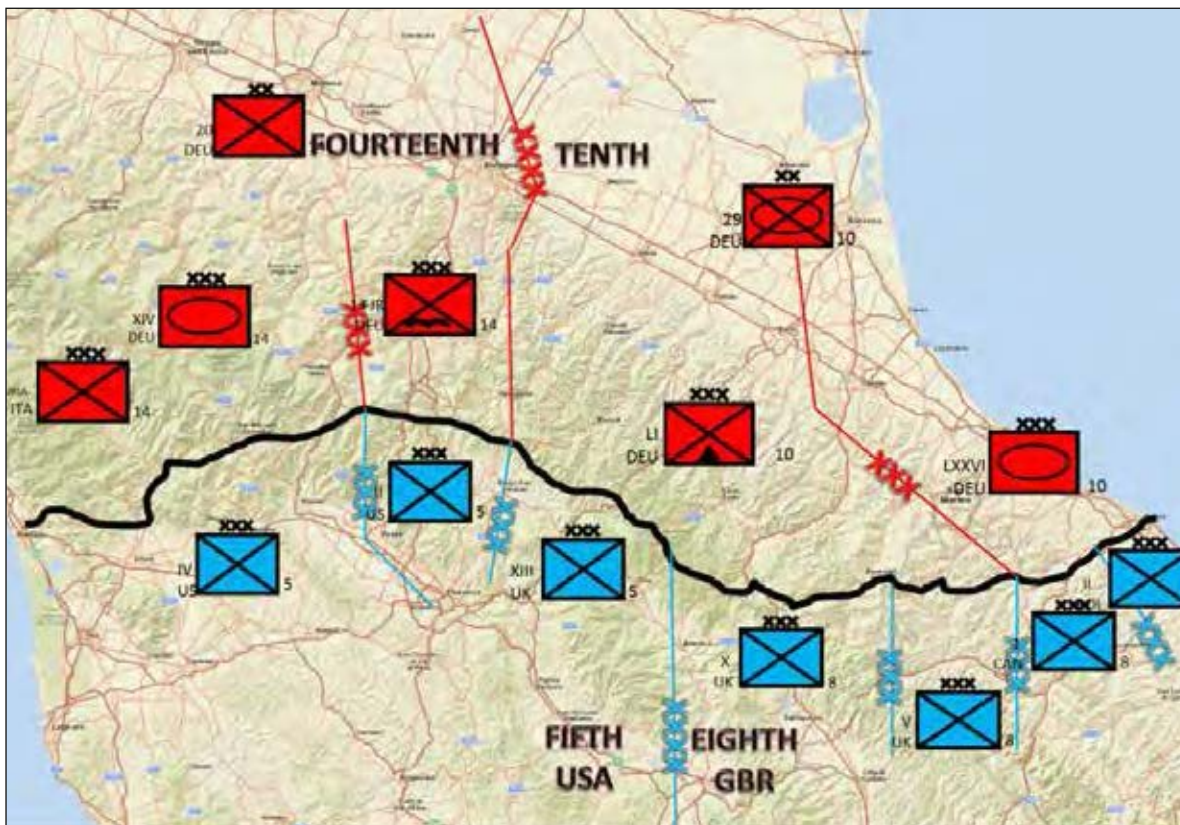


US infantry unit takes cover behind a river bank – Gothic Line Western Sector

cost. Furthermore, different views about strategic objectives amongst the Allies, caused planning and execution difficulties. Nevertheless, the campaign established fundamental procedures, especially at joint level, that are still relevant for our current doctrine, such as Mission Command planning and execution, Air and Naval cooperation, joint fire, and engineer support.

## About the Author

*Col. Pier Francesco Cacciagrano currently work as ACOS Engineer of NRDC-ITA.*



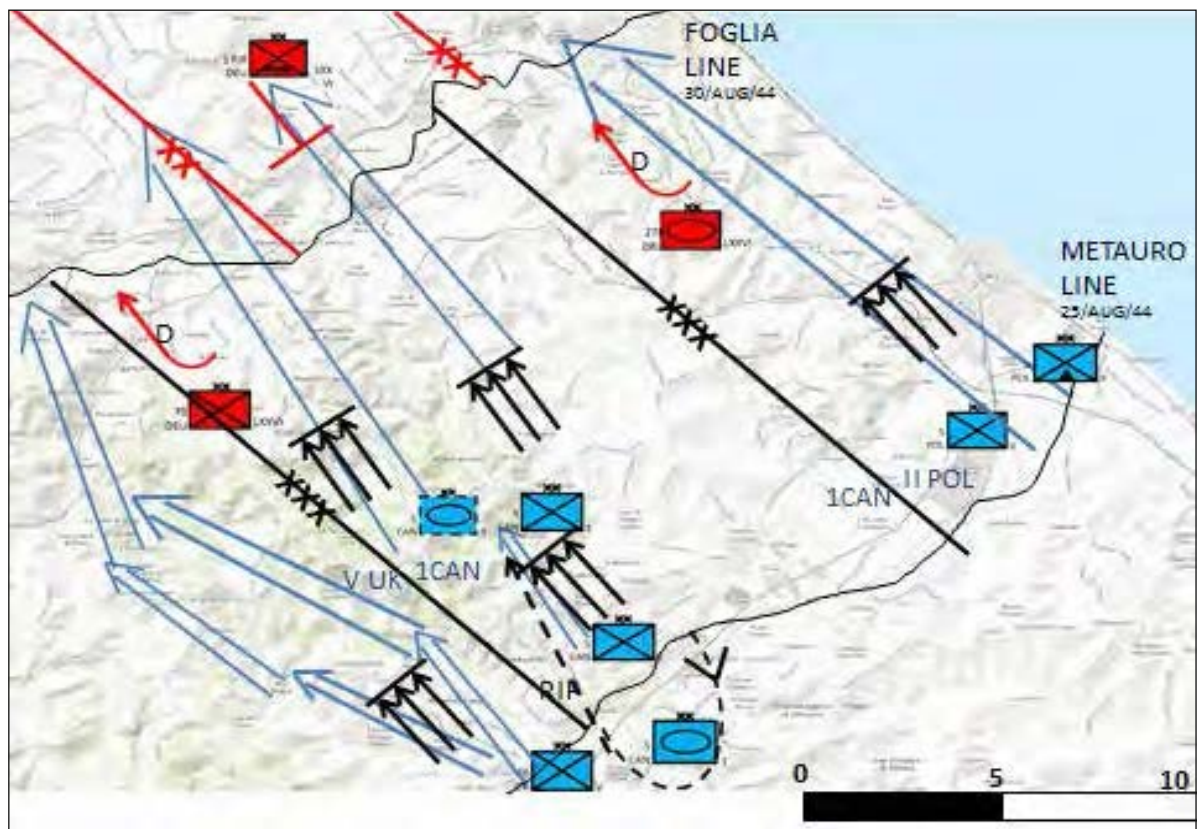
The "Gothic Line" – Forces disposition

# JOINT FIRE PLAN

Col. Smith, British Army

The advance to the 'Gothic Line' (Operation OLIVE) was an offensive operation planned with overwhelming force ratio and strong fire support. The Allied operations offer an example of a Joint Fire Plan and its effects on the Campaign.

*On 26<sup>th</sup> August 1944 the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill arrived in Montemaggiore to see the initial phase of the Operation "Olive". He visited the Command Post of the II Polish Corps and together with Gen. Alexander and Gen. Leese went on the top of the hill to appreciate the battleground. On the day before massive artillery barrage was fired against the German position, starting from 23.55. In this sector the Canadian Corps was employed. At 23.15 the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Bde (Brig. Calder), the 48<sup>th</sup> Regt. Highlanders of Canada, and the Royal Canadian Regt. crossed the Metauro and advanced to Lucrezia and Cartoceto villages. At 23.35, 2nd Canadian Bde (Brig. Gibson) started its advance with "Princess Patricia" and "Royal Edmonton" Regt. in direction of Mt. Bartolo and Serraungarina. At this stage, there was little resistance from the German side. The intense artillery preparation fire (1.500 guns- about 25.000 shells) did not hit the enemy units that were withdrawing on the Foglia River. Both the Polish and the Canadian Corps were progressing slowly but steadily to Pesaro.*



Attack to 'Gothic Line' – (15<sup>th</sup> Army Group Eastern Sector)

## Scope

A Fire Plan is a tactical plan for using the weapons of a unit or formation (both those owned OPCOM and those allocated by higher) so that

their fire will be directed and coordinated to meet the Commander's intent. The Commander is responsible for all aspects of the tactical plan, including the fire plan. The relevant Fires Com-



commander understands and interprets the Commander's requirements and integrates all allocated fires systems into the fire plan. For this reason, mutual trust and confidence between the Commander and his Fires Commander, at all levels, is absolutely critical. It is sometimes referred to as a "sacred bond".

Translating the Commander's intent and planning outputs into a Fires Plan is a part art and part science. The science is the weaponeering so as to ensure the most suitable munitions are fired against suitable targets, the selection of weapon system, area of target, weapon effects, fuse settings, trajectory, and errors in probability, for example, are all 'known knowns' and will be understood throughout the Joint Fires chain of command. The art, therefore, is a blend of experience, knowledge, judgement and balance of risks both from the professional artillery officer, but also in his understanding of the Commander's intent, plan and appetite for risk etc.

The Fire Plan has to be articulated and transmitted throughout the formation. Every man involved has to know their part in that plan. A comprehensive Fires Synch Matrix is constructed that will include details on the assets, the targets, the timings, the authorities, the rates of fire and the alternative options. The Fires Staff at the highest HQ will write this plan, but then in its distribution and dissemination every level must draw their own specified and implied tasks from it, locations of guns, times to be ready, survivability moves, actions on attack, etc. etc..

To sum up, the overarching principle is that the Fire Plan and the assets involved are commanded at the highest level, but then controlled at the lowest. This has been the practice and the mantra of artillery officers from the First World War onwards. It remains absolutely applicable to today's battlefield.

## Historical Considerations

- (Positive) General support to the division - artillery groups were formed from 3 to 6 battalions with different types of cannons; for example, II Corp had four Field Arty groups;
- (Positive) Long range harassment, destruction, interdiction and counterbattery fires were the role of the Corps Artillery Group;
- (Positive) Extensive use was made of Air Observation Posts (AOPs). There were two aircraft in each artillery battalion to facilitate this capability;
- (Positive) Cleared airspace - because of the use of Variable Time (VT) fuses and the presence of the AOP aircraft, it was necessary to clear the aircraft from the line of fires;
- (Positive) Air-Artillery Committee - this was very similar to the Targeting Working Group (TWG) that is a central part of the Corps Battle Rhythm. This Committee, which consisted

of representatives from G-2, Photo Interpretation, G-3, Air Force and Artillery, met daily and selected profitable targets for both artillery harassing and air shoots. This was 'Air-Land and Integration' as we know now it;

- (Positive) Precision Attack was available and used regularly. We sometimes think 'precision' attack is a new thing manifested only by the arrival of GPS. However, 240mm guns played the very important role of destroying pillboxes and strong points: with accurate survey, good meteorological data, accurate target grid references they could do so quickly and without firing hundreds of rounds;
- (Negative) Gun emplacement and movement was not well synchronized with the manoeuvre of infantry forces, especially in a rapid moving situation. Artillery units should have moved with the infantry and into new positions where close fire support to the manoeuvre units could be provided from at least 2/3 the maximum range;
- (Negative) Divisions' fire assets for direct support were not sufficient to provide enough close fire support to their manoeuvre units during offensive ops. The infantry still had a hard fight once close in with the enemy;
- (Positive) Impact of Fires on morale. For the Axis it was low; constant harassment by fires impacted on their day to day life and routine. For the Allies it was a positive effect. The Air and Fire campaigns of Allies had a huge impact over the Axis leadership and soldiers. Air superiority was gained and maintained during all ops by Allies; provided enormous advantage over the adversary throughout Op OLIVE.

## Modern Warfare

- Strategic/Operational/Tactical targets should be multinational within the operational design;
- Air superiority provides enormous advantage over the adversary;
- Air support, Attack helicopters, Joint Fires support, use of precision ammo, use Info ops all help to achieve tactical success;
- Lines of communication disruption to the enemy, from 'home base' to forward lines drastically reduces warfighting capabilities.

## Conclusion

A significant number of lessons can be drawn from the 1944-45 period through to the contemporary operating environment that must consider the possibility of a near-peer confrontation with warfighting procedures to apply. Especially, considering the Corps level, NRDC-ITA staff might bear in mind the following considerations in planning operations:

er  
verywhere rapidly



Winston Churchill observing the attack to Gothic Line – Montemaggiore al Metauro

- Deep Ops and shaping operations (for decisive close) are a Corps HQ's responsibility. An accurate Fire Plan will enable the Corps to meet the operational objectives;
- The assets to enable Deep Ops should be aligned to Corps level. Fires, ISTAR, Aviation might be controlled directly by Corps in order to maximize their effectiveness and optimize their timely employment;
- We must always think 'Deep, Close & Rear'; 'Shaping, Sustaining & Decisive'; and 'time, space & resources'. Corps staff must always plan accordingly to the aforementioned integrated battle framework in order to effectively reach operational objectives and maximize the tactical operations;
- We should never under-value the impact and effects of fires over ground manoeuvre; in warfighting, firepower is a key factor of success in shaping operations and maintaining fire superiority often allows effective manoeuvre.

In conclusion, given its complexity in terms of terrain and forces, using the Italian Campaign as a scenario for specialized training and con-

sidering it with our current capabilities would be an extremely useful opportunity in allowing the Corps' staff to re-orient its mindset to the tactical level.

## About the Author

*Col. Richard SMITH currently is the ACOS Joint Fire for NRDC-ITA and he is responsible for advising about the Corps Fire Plan.*



# CONDUCT AN ARMORED ATTACK AGAINST A DEFENSIVE LINE

Col. Cacciagrano, Italian Army

**Despite the unfavorable terrain, Allied forces effectively used Armoured troops against the Axis defensive positions. Detailed planning was a key factor of success for fully exploiting the advantages of Armoured units.**

*On 1<sup>st</sup> September 1944 the 8<sup>th</sup> British Army attacked the Gothic line with the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Corps towards Tavullia. The 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Armoured Division fought the battle of Tavullia employing the Lord Strathcona's Horse Royal Canadians, the Perth Regiment and the British Columbia Dragoons. The 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Infantry Div. (MG Hawkesworth), belonging to the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Corps, was launched on the direction from the River Foglia to Tavullia. On 30<sup>th</sup> August the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Corps launched an attack against the German position on the Foglia river held by the 4<sup>th</sup> Para Reg. and Kampfgruppe Schmal, catching the German defenders by surprise. The attack against Borgo S. Maria was blocked by German troops defending minefields and an antitank ditch. On the evening of 30<sup>th</sup> Aug. the Perth Regiment, 11<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Bde became the first unit to break the Gothic Line, when its D Coy captured Point 111 (Ca' Caprotti) with a bayonet charge, followed by A Coy outflanking and seizing point 147 (Ca' Viterbo-Gnucci). The German defenders surrendered to the attacker after a short fight. These initial gains were exploited on 31<sup>st</sup> August by units of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Div. (1<sup>st</sup> Infantry and 5<sup>th</sup> Armoured). Although intense fire prevented the Perths from joining the British Columbia Dragoons (BCD) of the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Armoured Bde, the Tank regiment boldly advanced and seized Point 204, the Green Line lynch pin position in this sector. That evening the Perths and the Lord Strathcona's Tanks relieved BCD and held point 204 against three determined counter attacks by 4<sup>th</sup> Para Regiment and tanks from 26<sup>th</sup> Panzer Regiment Tank.*

## Scope

The attack of a fortified position follows the basic principles of tactical manoeuvre. However, greater emphasis is placed upon detailed planning, special training and rehearsals, increased fire support and the use of special equipment. The degree of special preparation depends upon the character and extent of the defences. The deliberate nature of defences requires a deliberate approach for the attack. These types of operations are time consuming and leaders must develop schemes of manoeuvre that systematically reduce the area. Initially, these attacks should be limited in scope, focusing on individual positions and intermediate terrain objectives. Leaders must establish clear bypass criteria and position destruction criteria as well as allocate forces to secure cleared enemy positions. Failure in this will likely result in enemy reoccupying the positions, isolating lead elements and ambushing follow-on units. During planning, the leader's level of detail should identify each aperture (opening or firing port) of his assigned fortification(s) and consider assign-

ing these as a specific target when planning fires. Contingency plans are made for the possibility of encountering previously undetected fortifications along the route to the objective, and for neutralizing underground defences when encountered.

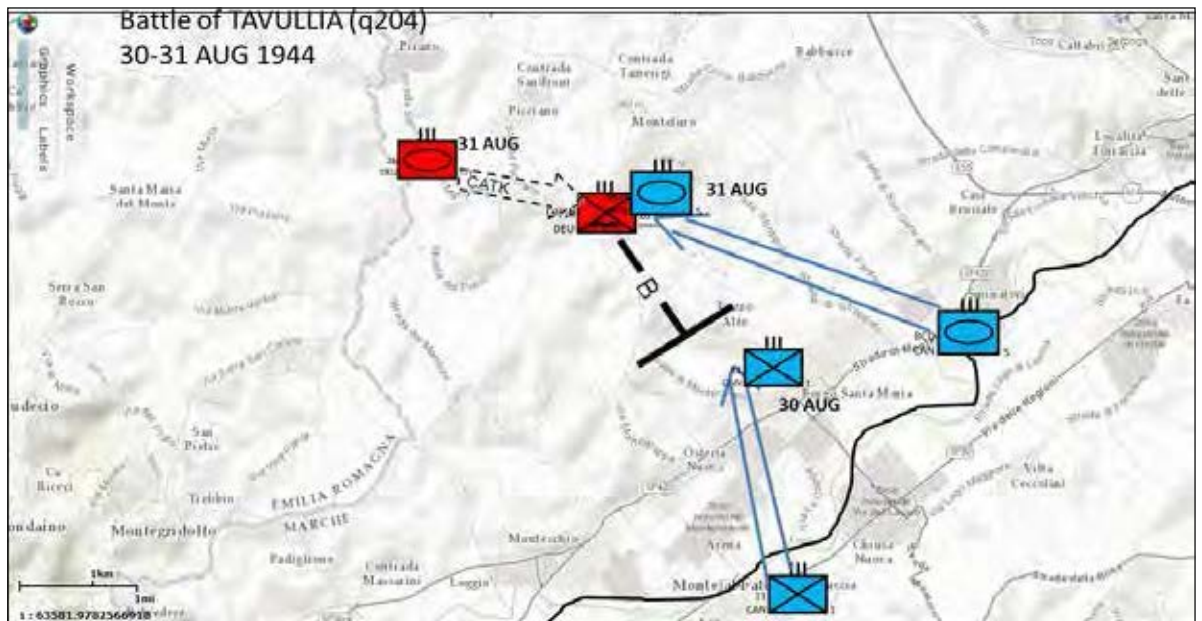
## Historical Considerations

- (Negative) Mostly frontal attack at high costs in terms of resources;
- (Negative) Hasty at Bn level, deliberate at Div/Corps level;
- (Positive) Balanced and synchronized Ops at Corps/Div.

## Modern Warfare

- Strategic/Operational/Tactical objectives should be compatible;
- Manoeuvre with Battle grouped tactical units after IPB, mostly during the night time;
- Air support, Attack helicopters, Joint Fires support and use of precision ammo, use Info Ops to achieve tactical success.

er  
everywhere rapidly



Battle of Tavullia (30 August to 01 September 1944)

## Conclusion

Considering its complexity and intrinsic risks, a direct attack on a fortified position protected by active and passive obstacles, should always be avoided. If a direct attack is necessary, this operation must be accurately planned in all phases. Troops must be adequately prepared to optimize and coordinate their employment with fire and combat support assets. Training must provide realistic, detailed procedures in terms of coordination and objectives, down to the lowest level of command.

The deliberate attack on a fortified position must be planned and supported by an accurate intelligence preparation to harmonize the task organization involving combat and combat support units, and to define all the possible aspects related to the stopping power of the fortified po-

sition in terms of combined fire and obstacles. Due to its complexity, deliberate attacks must be carried out by combined units with significant fire and engineer support. The first being necessary to weaken the objective during the approach and then to isolate the enemy position. The latter being important to ensure mobility by breaching the obstacles placed in defence. In sum, the deliberate attack on a fortified position is a complex action that should be avoided due to its intrinsic high loss ratio. If the attack is required, it should be accurately prepared with detailed planning, intelligence and pre-attack training.

## About the Author

*Col. Pier Francesco CACCIAGRANO currently works as ACOS Engineer in NRDC-ITA.*



Hit Churchill tank near Gothic Line – Eastern Sector

# MOUNTAIN WARFARE, TERRAIN EXPLOITATION AND LOGISTIC CONSTRAINTS

Lt. **Sotlar**, Slovenian Army, Lt. **Baessato**, Italian Army and Maj. **Hoxhaj**, Albanian Navy

Along the Apennines mountains, the terrain played a fundamental role in enhancing the capabilities of the defenders, almost zeroing the overwhelming force ratio of the attacking forces. A detailed study of the terrain can reduce losses, improve resource effectiveness and ensure responsive logistics support.

**Passo del Giogo Battle:** German defences on Monte Altuzzo were the forward edge of the defensive line on the Giogo pass. The German lines consisted of field fortifications and bunkers made of timber logs. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps Commander, Gen. Keyes ordered the 12<sup>th</sup> Div. to attack along the Giogo Pass against Mt. Altuzzo and Mt. Monticelli. The 383<sup>rd</sup> Inf. Regt started the initial attack on 12<sup>th</sup> Sept. by night. The 338<sup>th</sup> Regt. advanced along the route from L'Omo Morto to the Giogo Pass (Highway 6524,) but after 1200 m they were halted by artillery, mortar and small arms fire. The 363<sup>rd</sup> Regt. attacked Monticelli, but the troops were pinned down by artillery and mortar fire and on the eastern flank, 339<sup>th</sup> Inf. Regt failed to take Mt Verruca. On the night of 12<sup>th</sup> Sept. an additional German platoon was sent to reinforce the defence of the Giogo Pass. On 14<sup>th</sup> Sept Company B /338<sup>th</sup> Regt. was sent to take Mt. Altuzzo, but in the end it was only able to seize the Western Peak (Peabody Peak). Germans launched 3 counter-attacks, which were repelled by the US, but a fourth German counterattack was successful in driving back the attackers. On 15<sup>th</sup> Sept. the first Knob was quickly taken by the 338<sup>th</sup> Regt. units and the advance to the second Knob went on, but in the end an order to withdraw to one of the rear platoons was misinterpreted and the US troops left Knob 1 to come back to their initial positions. The 338<sup>th</sup> Inf. Regt. was sent to secure Monticelli, Giogo Pass and Mt. Altuzzo and on 16<sup>th</sup> Sept. a new attack started: Knob 1 was reached without heavy casualties and by 03.00 Knob 2 was captured after a short fight; shortly after they were able to reach the top of Mt. Altuzzo. In the morning of 17<sup>th</sup> Sept. Germans launched other 2 counter-attacks to Mt. Altuzzo, allowing the remaining German troops to withdraw. The US troops counter-attacked the German position. It became untenable for German troops that in the end withdrew. After the 338<sup>th</sup> Inf. Regt. reached Giogo pass, the US troops secured also Monticelli and Mt. Verruca.

**Monte Battaglia Battle:** the 350<sup>th</sup> US infantry Regt. (88<sup>th</sup> US infantry Div.), on the 26<sup>th</sup> September, occupied Monte Battaglia establishing a defensive position but they didn't exploited the new gap in the German defences. On 27<sup>th</sup> Sept. US positions were attacked by German troops. In the following days the 350<sup>th</sup> US Inf. Regt. faced other five days hard battle until the 4<sup>th</sup> October when the Blue Devils were relieved by the British 1<sup>st</sup> Guards Bde, which took-over their positions. The initially successful attack was able to break the enemy lines, but it became useless without effective exploitation.

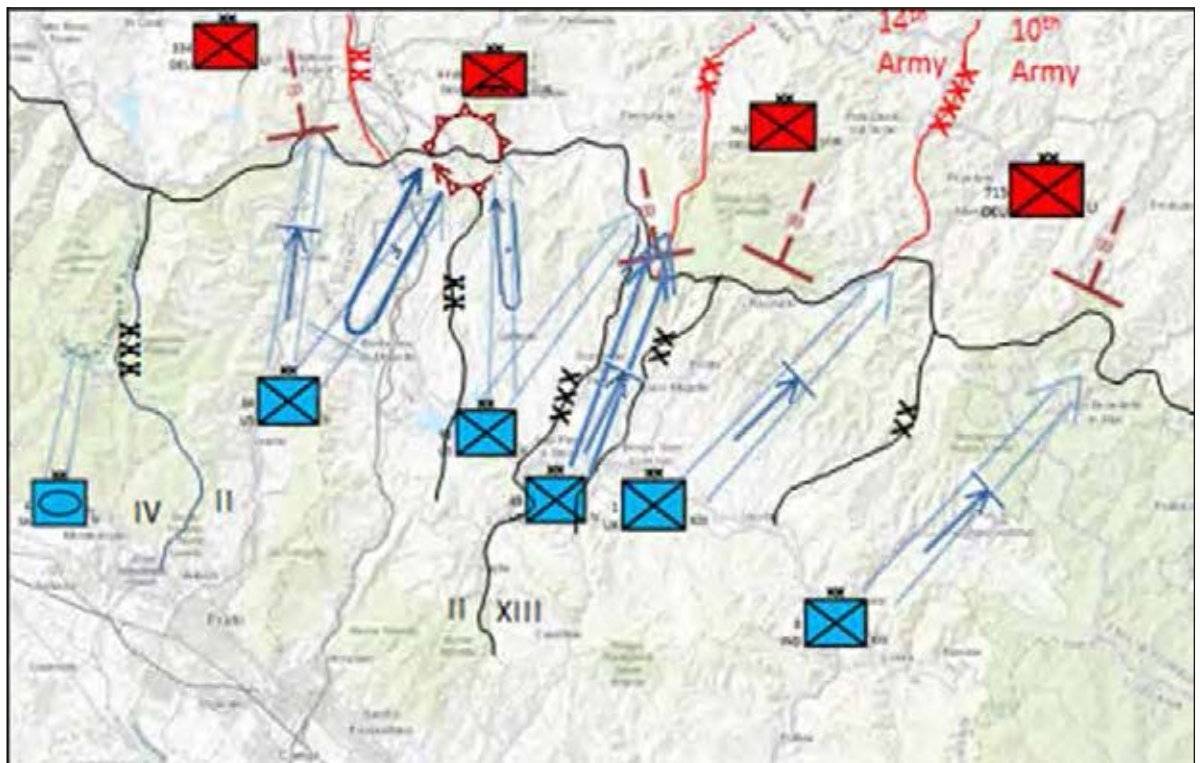
## Scope

**Terrain Analysis** is the second step of the Intelligence Preparation of Operational Environment (IPOE) process, called Describe the Area of Operations (AO). From a military prospective we do not describe the terrain features, but its aspects that effect military operations for friendly and enemy forces. The military aspects include: Observations and Fields of Fires; Avenues of

Approach; Cover and Concealment; Obstacles; and Key Terrain (OACOK). The mounted terrain in Monticelli and Monte Altuzzo (Passo del Giogo – Apennines) favoured the German defensive forces and provided few Mobility Corridors for Allied attacking forces. This kind of terrain restricted the movement to only dismounted troops, whilst armoured vehicles were not used. In most cases the mobility corridors allowed only the passage of a Coy size unit and in some

er  
everywhere rapidly



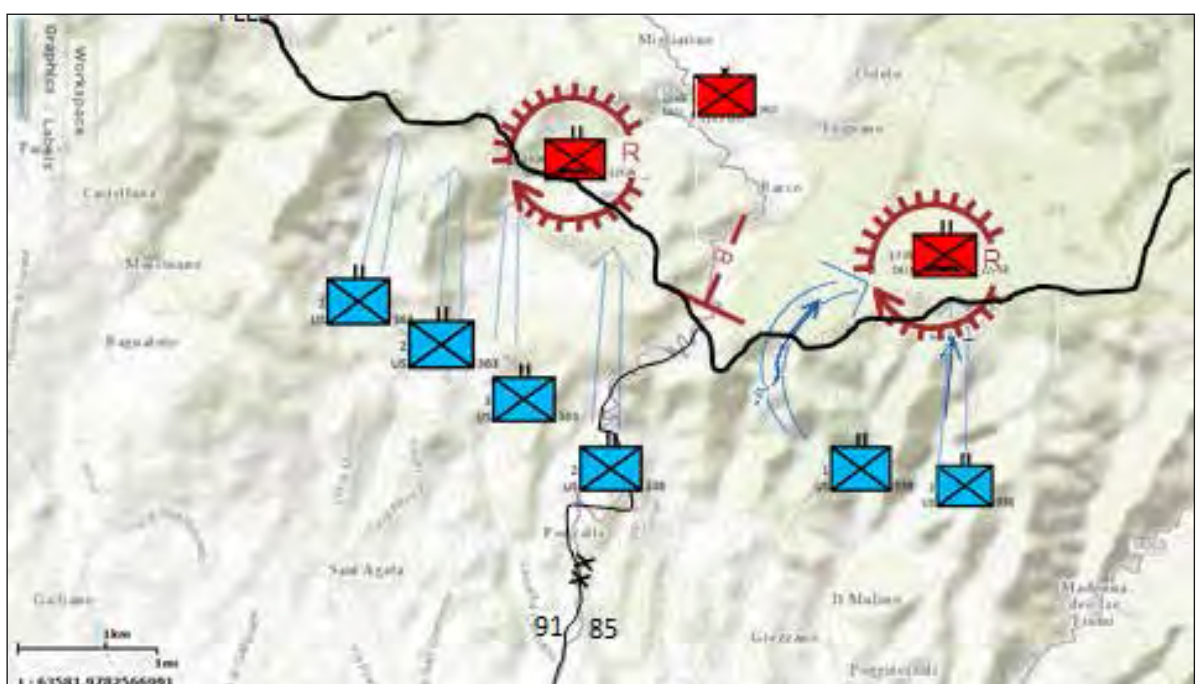


II US Corps Attack (15<sup>th</sup> Army Group Central Sector)

cases only a platoon. This disrupted Allied forces, and despite having a two Divisions frontline, they were able to conduct operations with only two battalions. Given the difficult topography, mountain terrain is more suited to defenders, allowing fortified positions to become force multipliers.

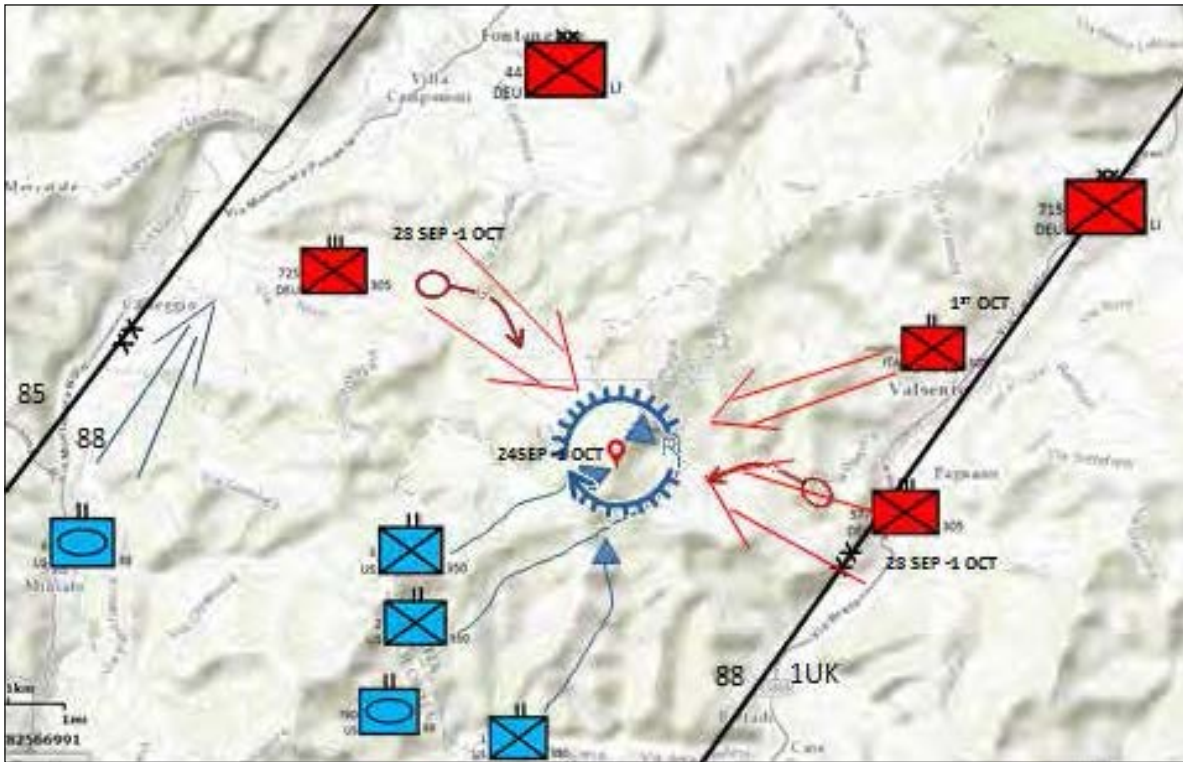
Field fortifications were extensively used by the Germans during the Italian campaign, as they made it possible to considerably increase the already significant natural obstacles typical of the Apennine terrain. Field fortifications, especially

since WWI are formidable bulwarks. Artillery fire, as demonstrated during both WWI and the Italian Campaign battles of Montecassino and Passo del Giogo, is never decisive by itself. Of note, the use of camouflage and masking with the surrounding environment to make the fortification not only a resistant objective but above all difficult to identify. In German defensive procedures during WWII, engineer assets and engineer expertise were always planned and detached to the lowest level, to allow the maximum adherence to manoeuvre and enhancing the field fortification delay or blocking power.



Passo del Giogo Attack (10 to 18 September 1944)





Passo del Giogo Attack (10 to 18 September 1944)

Logistic support in difficult terrain, like the mountains, requires the highest planning and execution consideration for Commanders to maintain operational tempo. In the Italian Campaign the mountainous terrain restricted mobility, required special equipment, and increased resource consumption. The proper support for front line units could be obtained only by using small units, often throughout direct engagement of the same units. So, a small size (but at same time dynamic) 1<sup>st</sup> line is required. Consequently, for the forces employed on mountain terrain, the training has to be focused on survivability

and towards the 'proper personal care of reduced but higher quality equipment available'. Greater dimensions of the support could be available only in favour of the follow on forces where the opportunity to consolidate mobility and force protection is assured.

## Historical Considerations

- (Negative) Poor employment of Mountain troops (Mountain troops used in flat terrain or urbanized areas – Greek mountain Div employed in Rimini);



Fallschirmjäger in an observation post along the Apennine Mountains

- (Positive) Defenders fully applied the mission command procedures;
- (Positive) Mountain terrain suitable for defenders and enhancement of fortification value.

## Modern Warfare

- Adapted training and equipment for mountain troops;
- Preparatory study of the terrain.

## Conclusion

- Understanding mountainous terrain. While conducting the Intelligence Preparation of Battlefield, staff should carefully analyze the military aspects of the mountainous terrain considering the opportunities for cover and concealment, and setting appropriate key terrain. Since the frontline in the mountain terrain is smaller and the troops are organized in small formations, the staff should consider mobility corridors at the appropriate levels despite the doctrinal reference as two levels down;
- Proper employment of troops (INF vs MTN). It is important to use proper troops. As mountain troops are most suitable, their availability is usually limited and infantry units are often used in this role. In this case it is important to provide the maximum possible training to these units both in soldier mountain skills as well as in leadership tasks;
- Operations. It is important to note that operations in mountains require adjusting planning assumptions. Terrain will restrict operations and reduce the frontage, so units must

operate at a smaller scale. Small unit tactics and leadership will also play a crucial role. Units will require more autonomy and plans to allow for decentralized execution (low level C2 initiative). Communications must also be maintained constantly with higher command but especially with flanking units and often low technology solutions will be useful. Fire planning and execution will be especially challenging;

- Supply and special equipment. Quality rather than quantity is the golden rule. The need for a light and dynamic approach to combat the enemy in unfavourable terrain places stress on the flow of supplies, with a predominance of 1° line support (self-sustained) and the requirement of proper, dedicated «case by case» equipment;
- Training. Physical fitness is the cornerstone of the mountain warfare. But also units will require training to operate in small units, the usage of mountain terrain, operating in extreme weather, marksmanship and communicating;
- Field fortification training. Every soldier must be trained in preparing field fortifications, since strong fortified positions in mountain terrain are a force multiplier. Engineers might be used extensively in preparing strong defensive positions.

## About the Authors:

*Ltc. Vojko SOTLAR is Deputy ACOS Operations, Ltc. Alberto BAESSATO is Logistic Planner in NRDC-ITA G4 and Maj. Edion HOXHAI is Staff Officer in the NRDC-ITA G2.*



1945 Italian auxliary troops bringing supplies to Pietra Colora - Ghotic Line Central Sector



# EXPLOITATION OF SUCCESS AND RESERVE COMMITMENT

Maj. **Snitko-Dottarelli**, Lituanian Army

**Commanders at all levels must plan and conduct operations to exploit local success and effectively employ all available resources.**

*The VIII British Army broke through the Axis lines along the Adriatic coast with the Canadian Corps as spearhead. Along the VIII Army central sector, where the terrain was more favourable for defenders, the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Division was pinned down by stubborn resistance. General LEESE's directed the Canadian Corps to stop and defend, and reinforced the Central Sector, missing the opportunity to exploit the success and crash the last Axis line.*

*On 19<sup>th</sup> September 1944 General Leese's plan was to employ the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Div, led by MG Hull, to exploit a breach in the German lines. The Division had to cross the Ausa River and proceed on hilly terrain, to seize Hill 153, the village of S. Ermete, the Marecchia River and then turn right, IOT entrap the German Paratroopers in Rimini. The attack was to be led by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dragoon Guards 'The Queen's Bays', an armored Bn supported by the 9<sup>th</sup> Lancers and the King's Royal Rifles Corps (KRRC) as the Div. Recce Bn. The Queen's Bays moved to the Ausa river. The weather was rainy and the country roads were clogged by mud. One of the 3 Coys of the Bn was short of ammo and fuel and Lt Col Asquith, the Bn CO decided to stop, resupply and postpone the attack to the day after. At dawn, Kampfgruppe Stollbock counterattacked and seized Ca' Cima and Ca' Cantoni. There was a violent fight between the Germans and the KRRC. Lt Col Asquith judged the situation critical and asked to BG Goodboy to delay the attack, but Gen. Kreighley, the Corps Commander, instead, confirmed the order. The terrain was an open slope with German foxholes manned by the 9<sup>th</sup> Coy / 361<sup>st</sup> Inf, the Pz Jager Bn and tanks on the left flank. At 11.50 of 20<sup>th</sup> Sept. the charge was launched and the Shermans of the Queen's Bays appeared from the ridges and moved to hill 153. They were accompanied by the KRRC as supporting infantry. As soon as they moved, the KRRC were pinned down by the German MGs, while the tanks continued to advance. When they were at about 100 meters from the German trenches, the Shermans got a volley of Panzerfausts and small arms fire. In a few minutes, out of 27 Shermans only 3 managed to withdraw safely to the line of departure. All the others were destroyed or heavily damaged.*

## Scope

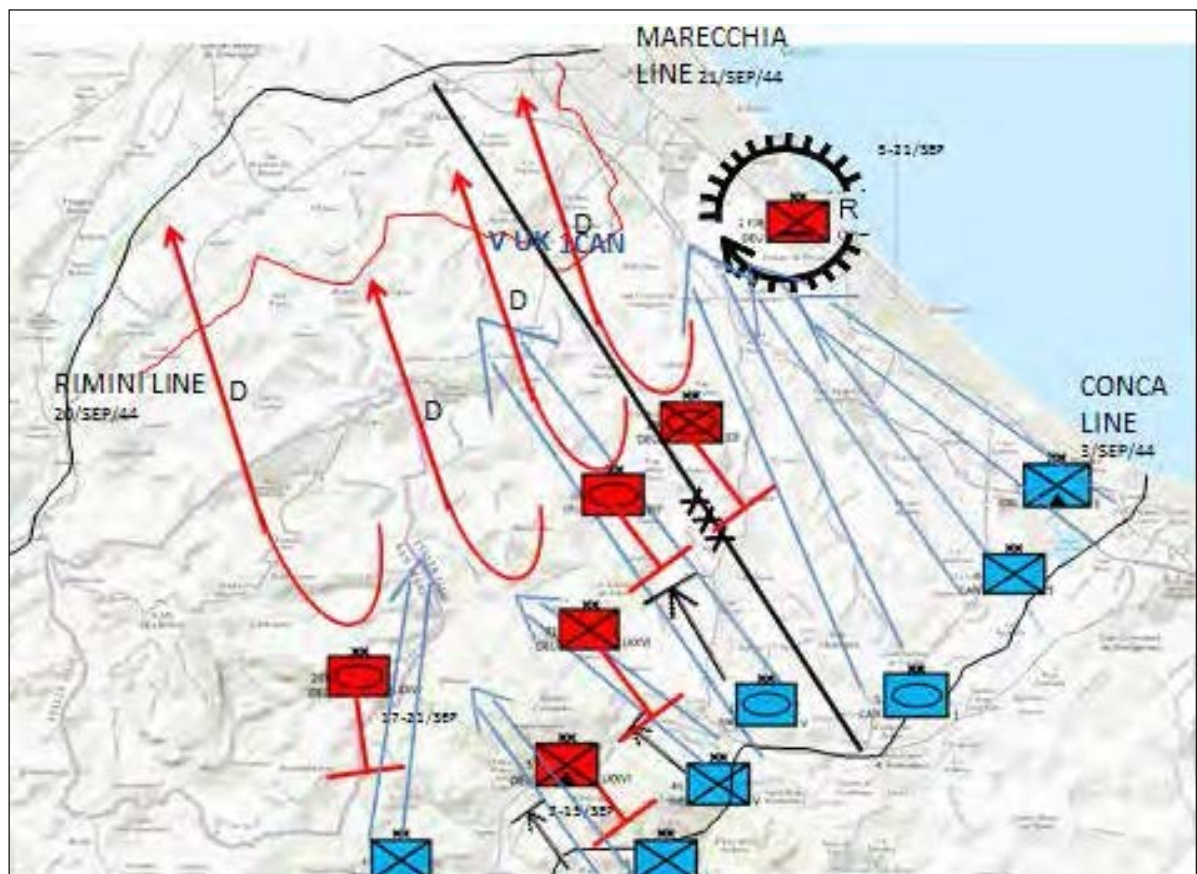
In the framework of mission command and the manoeuvrist approach, exploitation is the primary means of translating tactical success into operational advantage. It reinforces enemy force disorganization and confusion in the enemy's command and control (C2) system caused by tactical defeat. It is an integral part of the concept of offense. The heavy losses of the Queen's Bays in Montecicco are proof of the failure to aggressively exploit success at every turn, giving the enemy time to reconstitute an effective defence by shifting his forces or by regaining the initiative through a counterattack. The commander designs his exploitation to maintain pressure on the enemy, compound and take advantage of his disorganization, shatter his will to resist, and seize decisive or key terrain. Exploitation takes advantage of this reduction in enemy

capabilities to make permanent what would be only a temporary tactical effect if an exploitation were not conducted. Exploitation may be decisive in ensuring the decisive effect to the attacking force. Conduct of a major exploitation is a specific contingency mission assigned to a large unit in anticipation of offensive success by another unit of equivalent size. Divisions and brigades are the echelons that conduct a major exploitation although a corps can conduct a major exploitation as part of a multi-corps operation.

In exploitation it is critical for offensive activity to:

- Maintain the high tempo of attack and the initiative;
- Have a strong and complete force with a sufficient Combat Power;
- Apply decentralized execution to sub-units;

er  
verywhere rapidly



Attack to Marecchia Line (15<sup>th</sup> Army Group Eastern Sector)

- Make a clear intent of the objectives;
- Have flexibility;
- Maintain situational awareness in order to keep contact.

**Reserves** are required to meet the unexpected. They may be committed to influence the battle, to exploit success or to respond to countermoves. Reserves provide a commander with flexibility and balance. Once reserves are committed, the commander must reconstitute it as soon as possible, even if this means a change in task organization. Operations that lack a detailed intelligence picture or that may meet unanticipated situations should hold significant forces in reserve if possible.

Many campaigns and operations will present significant geographic challenges. Many AOOs and enemy situations will not allow for a linear and/or contiguous deployment. Co-ordination, cooperation and mutual support between elements will be more difficult. Mission command philosophy (see AJP-3.2) and the use of well-practiced reserves at all levels become increasingly important under such circumstances. Commitment of the Reserve. The decision on how and when a reserve is to be committed is one of the most important a commander must make. Reserves should be located where they are best able to react when they are required. Routes may need to be planned and prepared to cover likely deployment options. The commander will designate his decision criteria to assure the timely commitment of his reserves. These

will need to be updated as the battle progresses and the enemy's intentions become more apparent. When it is committed, the reserve action may well become the formation main effort. The success of the reserve action depends on its timely commitment, mass, surprise, speed and boldness.

## Historical Considerations

- (Negative) 8<sup>th</sup> UK Army failure to exploit the breakthrough on the Adriatic side shifting the effort to the center;
- (Positive) Germans carried out effective delay operations withdrawing on successive well planned and prepared fortified positions at high cost for attackers;
- (Negative) Missed use of 8<sup>th</sup> UK Army reserve in exploiting the success.

## Modern Warfare

- Improved situational awareness allows commanders to promptly adapt their manoeuvre to current conditions and exploit success without delay;
- Modern communication systems allow commanders to promptly coordinate subordinate units efforts, adapting the manoeuvre to changing conditions;
- Troops mobility remains a key-factor in shifting the effort where needed. Airborne troops and/or armoured troops can support





British Sherman tanks ready to move - Gothic Line Eastern Sector

the exploitation of success, reinforcing the effort where it is necessary. Engineers might be in support of manoeuvre units.

## Conclusion

In the contemporary operational environment, with multiple actors and fluid situations, commanders at all levels are challenged in maintaining an updated situational awareness. Having a clear vision of the battlefield is essential to properly balance forces and to maintain tempo in the pursuit the mission objectives. Commanders and their staff must accurately plan

the main effort of the action to allow the timely exploitation of success and provide the proper allocation and synchronization of resources. Besides the planning, in the execution phase the exploitation of success is pursued by enabling the mission command concept, understanding the commander's intent and maintaining situation awareness in order to timely dedicate forces where and when needed.

## About the Author

*Maj. Irina SNITKO-DOTTARELLI currently works as a planner in the NRDC-ITA G5.*



British column moving along flooded roads - Gothic Line Eastern Sector

# AIR AND NAVAL SUPPORT TO OPERATIONS

Col. **Andreozzi**, Italian Air Force and Commander **Marzollo** Italian Navy

**Many of the assumptions used in planning modern joint and combined military operations have their foundation in the Italian campaign of World War II, especially the roles and contribution of airpower to joint warfighting.**

## Scope

**Airpower** played four main roles in the Allied Mediterranean strategy, as described by Air Vice Marshal J.H.D'Albiac, the Deputy Commander of the Tactical Forces in Italy in 1945. They were: Air Superiority, Air Interdiction (AI), Close Air Support (CAS) and Strategic bombing. The close relationship between the Italian Campaign's Airpower strategy and the current strategy, is illustrated by the similarity in the doctrinal description of the roles. In the current AJP 3.3, the roles of Airpower are Counter Air, which contributes to the achievement of Air Superiority, and Attack, which can be further subdivided into Strategic Attack and Counter Surface Air

Operations (CAS and AI). The Italian Campaign illustrated the requirement for armies to have Air Superiority to conduct successful offensive ground operations, yet also showed that Air Superiority does not guarantee success on the ground. The Air Superiority battle started well before the events on the Gothic Line, with Operation HUSKY and the invasion of Sicily. After gaining Air Superiority, the Allies were able to dedicate a significant portion of the Air assets to interdicting German lines of communication. Air Interdiction is defined as air operations conducted to divert, disrupt, delay, degrade or destroy an adversary's military potential before it can be brought to bear effectively and at such distance that detailed integration of each air



RAF North American B25 Mitchell bomber in action – North Italy

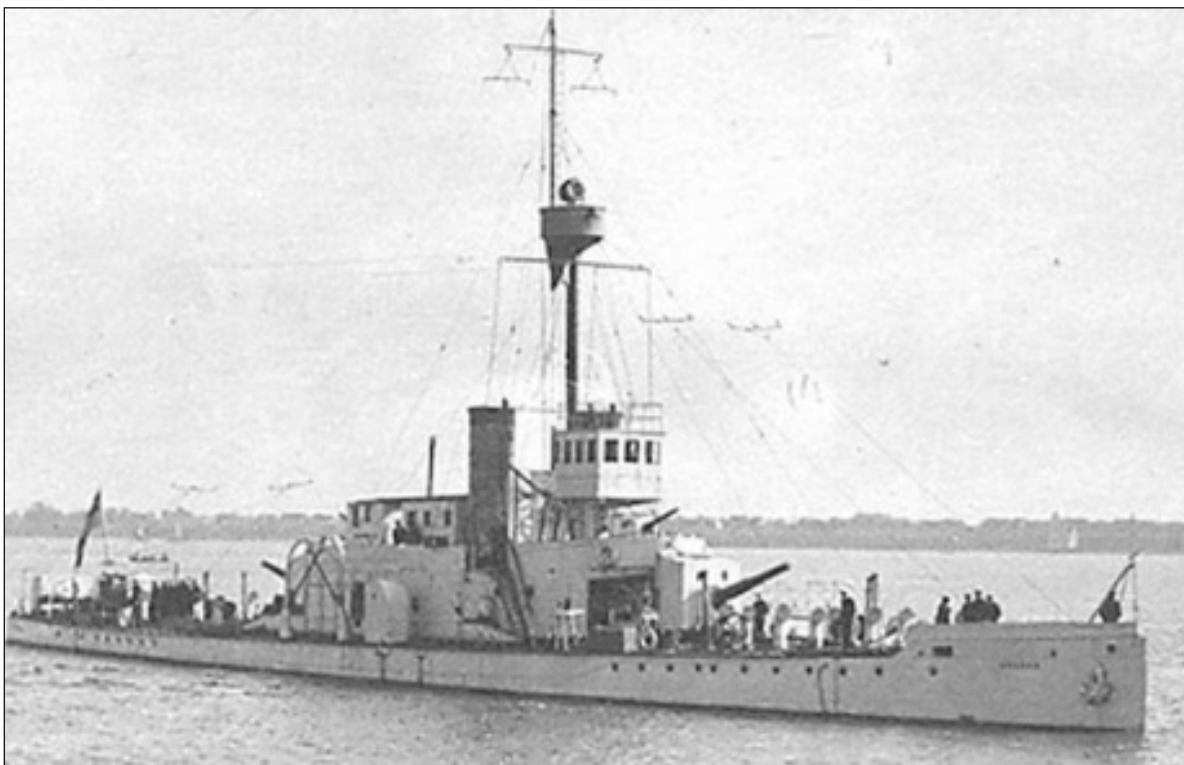
mission, with the fire and manoeuvre of friendly forces, is normally not required. When the Allies observed the resilience of the Axis forces and their ability to overcome the problems caused by the interdiction of the Po river, they switched to communication lines concentrating on trains, railways, marshalling areas and even transformer stations (to force the Axis to use steam powered trains).

Like many airpower roles, CAS also came of age in the Italian campaign. Several aspects of CAS taken for granted in modern air forces were developed in the mud and skies of Italy. The Allies experienced problems in air-ground coordination, communications and identification of friendlies, but also implemented several solutions that survive in today's battlespace. One solution was a daily meeting between Army and Air Force staffs to review the day's activities and the Army representatives would nominate the targets they wanted attacked the next day. This meeting was the forerunner of today's Battle Rhythm events such as daily synchronization meetings and the Joint Targeting Board, at which similar issues are still discussed. Another solution was 'prearranged CAS' sorties, missions over the next 24 hours initiated at division level. These requests made their way to a Joint Army-Air Force Group that created an air programme (now called the Air Tasking Order or ATO). In addition, some fighter-bomber squadrons were reserved for 'on-call missions' which took into account changes in the battle situation that favoured attacks against targets of opportunity.

**Naval Fire Support (NFS)** is one of the main activities performed by a Naval Task Force in support of Land Operations together with Naval Air Strike support and Amphibious Operations. In mid-August 1944, two of the 12 river gunboats Insect Class, HMS Aphis and HMS Scarab, resumed duty with the Mediterranean Fleet and in September they were deployed to the Adriatic Sea in support of Army operations, based at Ancona. They returned to Malta in January 1945.

NFS reached its zenith during the WWII, when the availability of man-portable radio systems and sophisticated relay networks allowed forward observers to transmit targeting information and provide almost instant accuracy reports, once troops had landed. Battleships, cruisers and destroyers would attack shore installations, sometimes for days, in the hope of reducing fortifications and the strength of defending forces. Noting, that naval guns generally have a rather flat trajectory and even at long ranges the shells don't fall at a particularly steep angle.

Moving to current operations, NFS is one of the capabilities which constitutes the power projection activity of Naval Forces. Technology has changed the way NFS is performed; WWII warships were equipped with many guns, while modern ones employ different weapon systems. Guns are normally fitted from small corvette to big battleships: guns are cheaper, have high rates of fire and longer endurance, but the low range exposes the firing platform to counter attack from shore fire. Alternatively, missiles are expensive and available only for the most modern Naval Forces. Their range, sometimes over



HMS Scarab – Adriatic Sea

er  
verywhere rapidly



600 nautical miles, does not expose the platform to the counter fire threat: they are used when accuracy and low collateral damage are required.

When NFS is employed in support of land operations, the NFS Operations Centre is established onboard a ship to process NFS requests for support and control the execution of NFS plans. It is an agency of the Naval Force Commander, and it normally includes a representative of the supported Land Forces.

## Historical Considerations:

- (Positive) New Air and Maritime Tactics Techniques and Procedures (TTPs) and coordination;
- (Negative) Limited employment of Naval fire support;
- (Negative) Non amphibious ops conducted;
- (Negative) AI targeting.

## Modern Warfare:

- Air Space Management and Battle Space Management;
- Synch targeting process;
- New domains;

- New technologies.

## Conclusion

Current doctrine for joint operations and for Air and Naval support has its foundations in the WWII experience. Given the complexity of the battlefield, Land Commanders must think of the battlespace in all three dimensions and, moreover, try to also exploit the flexibility and force multiplier that naval support can offer. Coordination among services is a responsibility at all levels of command and its interaction is a key factor of success; all commanders must exploit this potential and put in place all the necessary training for applying these cooperation procedures effectively. As shown during the Italian Campaign, the evolution of inter-services cooperation brought the Allies strategic advantage over the Axis by applying new procedures based upon enduring lesson learned directly in the field.

## About the Authors

*Col. Enrico ANDREOZZI is the NRDC-ITA Air Advisor for the NRDC-ITA COM.*

*Commander Mauro MARZOLLO is the Navy Advisor for the NRDC-ITA COM.*



RAF B 25 Mitchell Bomber over Padana plains

# HOW TO INTEGRATE COMBAT AND COMBAT SUPPORT UNITS IN DIFFICULT ENVIRONMENTS IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN TEMPO

Col. Cacciagrano, Italian Army

**Terrain dictates operations. Combat support units are a force enabler and force multiplier when operating in difficult terrain noting that employing these forces requires detailed planning and coordinated execution.**

*The Argenta Gap battle was the last important engagement of Allied Forces during WW2 on the Italian Front. In winter 1945 the Senio River became the frontline between the advancing 8<sup>th</sup> British Army and the Axis Troops still defending the Po plain. On 11<sup>th</sup> April 1945 in the northern part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Army Front, the British 56<sup>th</sup> Inf. Div. launched the Operation "Impact Plain": the amphibious operation on the southern west sector of the Comacchio Lagoon. While the 40<sup>th</sup> Royal Marine Commando was attacking on the right flank north of Menate, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 5<sup>th</sup> Queen's Regiment of the 169<sup>th</sup> Bde set off in their Fantails from Idrovora Umana at 08.45 and crossed the flooded area. During the day they established a bridgehead from Menate to Longastrino and the following night the Royal Fusiliers and the London Scottish Regiment forces linked up with incoming elements of the 167<sup>th</sup> Bde. Then, on 13<sup>th</sup> April, the Operation "Impact Royal" started; the small village of Fiorana was a tactical objective due to its bridges on the Fossa Marina canal. The attacking force left the Umana Pumping Station at 05.15 of 13<sup>th</sup> April. During their course to the Bando Canal, north of Fiorana, they were spotted by a coy level German unit deployed in Fiorana. The defenders also laid minefields along the north bank of the Pioppa Canal. When the leading elements got stuck in the mud and were unable to reach the Bando canal, the follow-on British units made a sharp turn to the South to reach the Pioppa canal and dry land. After other attacks on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> April other tactical objectives were secured. On 17<sup>th</sup> April the third attempt to cross the Fossa Marina canal was successful and at 16.00 a Bailey bridge was completed, replacing an existing damaged road bridge. The Coldstream Guards then moved on from La Fiorana to Il Bando, which was reached on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1945.*

## Scope

Terrain significantly impacts military operations. For example, large areas of flooded countryside can limit movements, swampy areas can retard and restrict mobility, could reduce the effect of indirect artillery fire, and make communications and supply difficult. At the tactical level mobility is supported by Combat Engineers with other specific tasks performed by Corps Level Engineers: Combat Engineers are trained and equipped to support a TF. Main tasks regarding mobility are:

- Combined Arms Breaching operations: to overcome mined areas or obstacles includ-

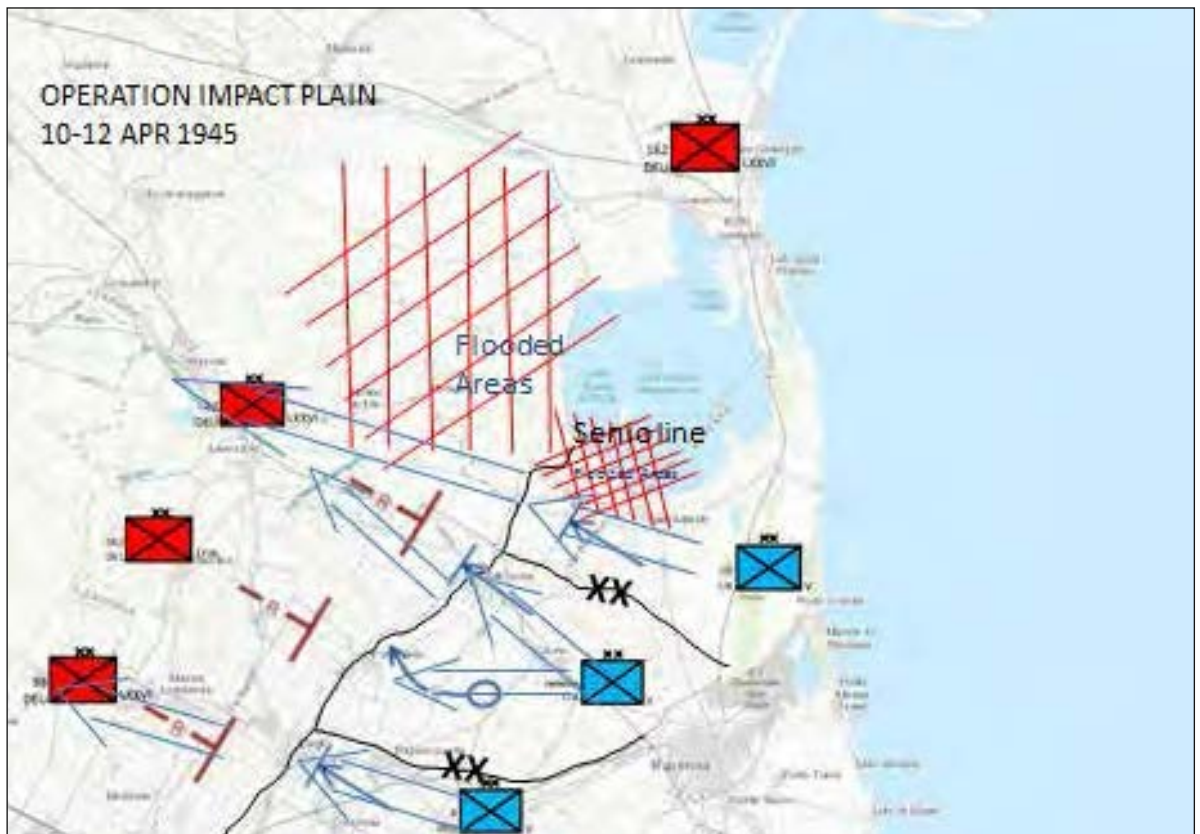
ing water crossings, in cooperation with a TF, in a Close Combat environment;

- Clearing Operations: to detect and eliminate obstacles, not in a Close Combat environment (i.e. Route Clearance in the Rear Area);
- Road Maintenance: including bridging restoration or research for a bypass.

Considering most obstacles are observed by the enemy and protected by fire, before approaching the obstacle area Combat Engineers are focused on Reconnaissance, including obstacle intelligence and developing appropriate TTPs to clear/overcome the obstacle. In these situations Combat Engineers may require augmentation

er  
everywhere rapidly





Operation Impact Plain, Comacchio Valley (10-12 April 1945)

from Corps Level Engineers to accomplish the mission.

Considering the case of flooded areas, it may also be necessary to consider the handling of civilian displaced persons or refugees to avoid any negative impact on a military operation.

To plan and conduct these kinds of operations properly, the following aspects must be taken in consideration:

- Centralized command and control, IOT have clear coordination of all units, engineers and fire support;



US vehicles stuck in a river – Gothic Line Central Sector





British Engineers setup a Bailey Bridge – Gothic line Eastern Sector

- Clear definition of commander's intent defining, in particular, objectives at the lowest level, to better assess the trend of the battle;
- Availability of special equipment;
- Engineer augmentation.
- high operational tempo;
- Communication assets are essential to allow the effective coordination in a joint and combined environment.

## Historical Considerations

- (Negative) Use of new equipment without training hampered the effectiveness of new technologies in the battle;
- (Negative) Terrain dictates manoeuvre - poor consideration of the terrain's features dramatically reduced the favourable force ratio of Allied forces;
- (Positive) Integration of Combat Engineers with manoeuvre units in breaching obstacles was an effective measure in maintaining the operational tempo in difficult terrain.

## Modern Warfare

- Enhanced ISTAR assets will help to have complete and clear situational awareness and terrain knowledge;
- Shared procedures for obstacle breaching and river crossing operations facilitates the coordination in such operations (STANAG 2085);
- Task organized units allow maintenance of a

## Conclusion

This historical case study represents an iconic example of how terrain drives operations. Rivers, marshes, swampy areas, and other restrictive terrain still impact military operations. During the planning phase, it is essential to identify how terrain impacts your operational area to both improve friendly opportunities and reduce enemy opportunities. Friendly forces must accurately plan to use specialized assets that are normally allocated to Corps level or higher echelons. Additionally, the inherent complexity of deliberate wet gap crossing operations is detailed in a dedicated STANAG that details C2, force organization, crossing site organization, crossing timings and fire support. Both planning and execution phase of deliberate crossing of difficult terrain must be detailed in order to allow a successful execution.

## About the Author

*Col. Pier Francesco CACCIAGRANO currently works as ACOS Engineer in NRDC-ITA.*

**er**  
everywhere rapidly

# INVOLVEMENT OF A NEUTRAL COUNTRY IN THE WAR

Col. **Greggersen**, German Army, Col. **Zouggari** French Army and Col. **Bauska**, Latvian Army

**Considering the Political and Legal implications in dealing with a neutral Country is paramount for planning military operations.**

*San Marino is the only surviving medieval microstate in the Italian peninsula and is one of the most ancient republics in the world. San Marino declared its neutrality during the first and the second world wars and was a safe haven for more the 100.000 refugees during summer in 1944 due to the fighting along the Gothic Line. The number of refugees supported by San Marino was impressive since the population during the war was approximately 15.000.*

*Despite their declared neutrality, on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1944, San Marino was bombed by the British Royal Air Force, resulting in 63 civilian casualties. The bombing was ordered as San Marino was believed to have been overrun by German Forces and was being used to store ammunitions and observation post.*

*In September 1944 the Germans and Allies clashed within San Marino territory during the battle of Monte Pulito and then, for three months, San Marino was invaded by the Allies on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1944 to chase the fleeing Germans northwards.*

## Scope

According to the HAGUE CONVENTION 1907 the following articles might have been considered for violation of San Marino's neutrality:

- ARTICLE 1: the territory of neutral authority is inviolable, conflict parties are not allowed to enter in the area;
- ARTICLE 5, 10: a neutral State must defend its neutrality. Then if a neutral State rejects violations of its neutrality, even by force, it cannot be regarded as an act of hostility;
- ARTICLE 12, 13: the neutral Authority shall supply refugees and prisoners of war with food, clothing and accommodation, assign them a place of residence;
- ARTICLE 20: the provision of this agreement shall apply only between contracting authorities and only if all of the belligerents are parties of the convention.

## Historical Considerations

The principle of neutrality was undoubtedly at a cross-roads due to the Second World War, with some arguing that the War led to obsolescence of the principle of neutrality. After the war, international critics of the neutrals accused them of economically benefiting from the war. Examples include the Swiss gold and Sweden trading iron with Germany. Neutral countries also suf-

fered during WWII, with only 8 of the original 20 neutral states remaining when the War ended. The new post-war concept of collective security resulted in many neutral countries joining new economic and security alliances such as NATO and the EU, based on the idea that integration and collective security would better solve their security concerns. Ultimately, this campaign and the broader international conflict illustrated that the concept of neutrality was incompatible with new threats including terrorism, mass migration or nationalism.

## Modern Warfare

- International Organizations are involved at the earliest step of military operations;
- Public opinion support is an objective for commanders;
- Refugee management is coordinated with main actors in a given operational theatre (IOs, NGOs, HN).

## Conclusion

From the San Marino case study, it is possible to draw the following lessons:

- Know your adversary: a sound Comprehensive Preparation of the Operational Environment (CPOE) performed by the Allies would have given hints about German consider-



British Officer in an observation post near San Marino – Gothic line Eastern Sector

ations regarding the principle of neutrality. It leads us to address this phase of the core planning process with a sound analysis to better frame our potential adversary's capabilities and strategy;

- Learn from the past: this episode of San Marino reminds us that the implementation and the proper use of the lessons learned process is useful to avoid being surprised by our adversary. It reduces the uncertainty and offers opportunities in terms of planning and execution of operations;
- Use existing laws: NATO countries are bound by laws, but articles of existing organizations or conventions can also be exploited to overcome the principle of neutrality (possibility to rely on the support of neutral countries based on EU Art 42.7 or the Geneva Convention);
- Plan for the worst case scenario: our potential adversary might not be legally or morally bound. Therefore, we should always plan (contingently) for possible violation of neu-

tral countries by the adversary in our potential area of operations;

- Respect of neutrality: articles + Geneva Convention + culture + environment and the important roles of LEGAD, POLAD (planning and execution phase);
- Clear direction and guidance, accompanied by delegation of authority to lower HQs (divisions/brigades);
- CIMIC as part of both planning and execution phases of operations.

## About the Authors

*Col. Thomas GREGGERSEN is deputy DCOS Influence in NRDC-ITA;*

*Col. Daniel ZOUGGARI is the Strategic Communication Advisor to NRDC-ITA COM;*

*Col. Vilis BAUSKA is ACOS G9 in NRDC-ITA.*



San Marino bombings September 1944



# COMPARE THE CONDUCT OF THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN, FOCUSED ON THE ARMY CORPS, WITH THE MULTI- CORPS LCC

Maj. Rodà, Italian Army

During the Italian Campaign, the Allied C2 organization was adapted to be effective in planning and executing the operational objectives. The integration of specialized and joint assets allowed effective use of available resources and power to pursue the mission objectives.

As preamble for a fair comparison between the Italian Campaign WWII and a current NATO war-fighting scenario (MJO+), given the multinationalism, modern technologies and fire power, we must consider that the WWII Armies (5<sup>th</sup> US and 8<sup>th</sup> UK) as a modern Corps and the relative Corps as the modern Divisions. The WWII 15<sup>th</sup> Army Group is to be considered as a modern LCC.

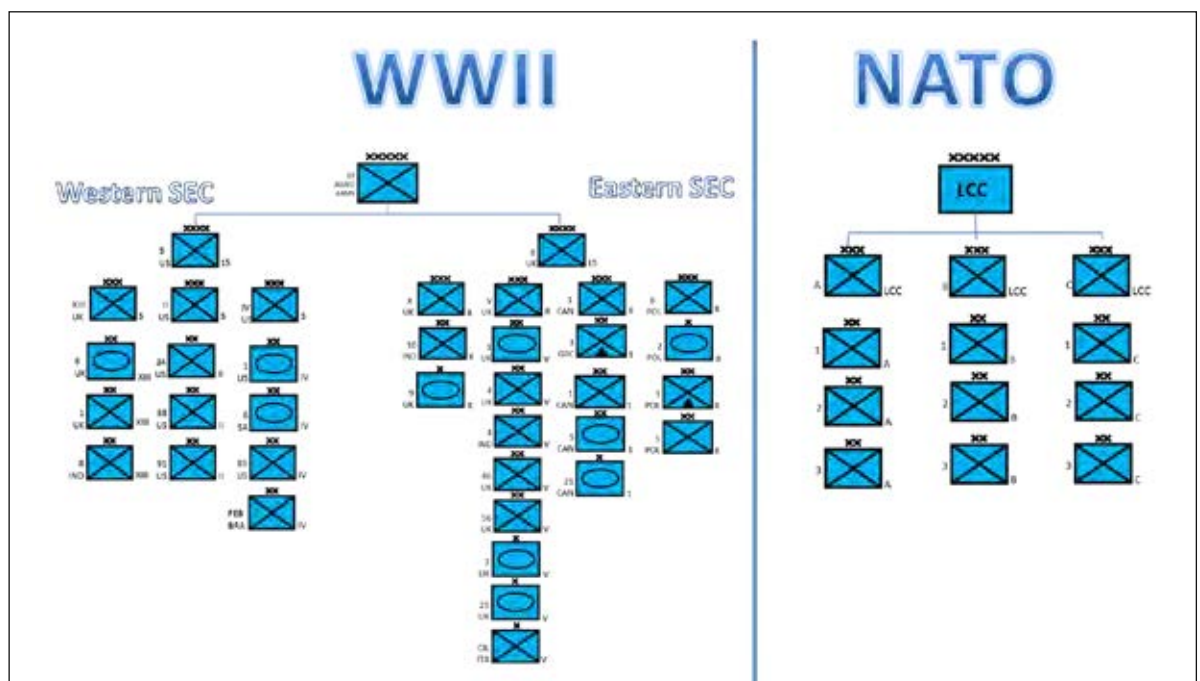
## Scope

The WWII Army Group had all the characteristics and relative tasks that the current NATO doctrine allocates to an LCC, in particular using the modern battlespace framework:

- Deep: Developed the collection plan and integrated joint and land assets to strike iden-

tified targets beyond the Corps' capabilities (see the air campaign prior to Operation OLIVE or the photo interpretation both for intelligence and BDA);

- Close: Allocated and apportioned joint and Operations Areas - wide land assets to support Corps' operations (see movement of Corps between Armies in order to support the ME XIII from 8<sup>th</sup> Army to 5<sup>th</sup> Army), synchronized the tactical objectives in order to support operational effects;
- Rear: Coordinated Intra-Operational area sustainment, integrated follow-on land forces into operational area (i.e. the creation of pipelines and the management of the rear MSRs in order to maintain the continuous flow of supply to Corps).



During the Italian campaign, the management of warfighting units and their synchronization to meet the strategic and operational objectives were played by the Land Component HQ (15<sup>th</sup> Army Group).

## Historical Considerations:

- (Negative) Allied forces had more interoperability problems than Axis forces which were more uniform;
- (Positive) Corps had full complement of Combat Support and Combat Service Support units;
- (Positive) Specialized Combat Support, Heavy Artillery and Intelligence Units were retained at Army level;
- (Positive) Army Group HQ (both sides) directed the operational campaign;
- (Positive) Mission Command (auftragstaktik) concept was developed and fully applied by Axis.

## Modern Warfare:

- Joint and Combined HQ within NATO forces;
- Corps has a complete set of specialized assets in order to carry out the full spectrum of missions;
- LCC focusses on the following roles:
  - o Synchronize Land activities with the HN and Higher HQs;
  - o Frame the Land operations in accordance with operational/strategic objectives;
  - o Shift priorities, modify execution;
  - o Ensure access to Joint enablers.

## Conclusion

Due to its inherent characteristics, complex terrain, high tempo, force composition, resources and the divergent strategic vision, the WWII Italian Campaign was complex both in planning and execution. From an organizational point of view, studying the Italian Campaign offers lessons in organizing and conducting multi-Corps

operations.

- HQs' organization: Armies and Army Group integrated joint and combined assets changing their internal organization to keep the decision making process more coherent with the operational objectives. Joint and combined staffs were organized in 4 different ways in order to deal with planning and execution:
  - o Integrated Staff (for units well integrated in procedures and supply);
  - o Incremented Staff (for units that often change or assigned in limited time);
  - o Mission tailored staffs (for large units with small national attachments);
  - o Liaison (for units with little interoperability or minimal presence).
- Operational level objectives might match strategic objectives for an effective campaign and tactical conduct. Divergent strategic objectives within the force contributors might hamper the campaign conduct in pursuing operational and tactical objectives. The unity of effort is ensured by a unique command vision and procedure. A clear mission objective, at all levels, must be shared at the very beginning of the campaign in order to ensure that all resources and actions are focused on its accomplishment;
- The Mission Command concept must be developed and implemented at all levels of command to maintain tactical manoeuvre adherent to operational objectives (i.e. success exploitation) and ensure the proper degree of flexibility in changing operational environment. During the studied campaign, the defenders were able to optimize and maximize the scarce resources, applying mission command to the lowest level of command. Consequently they were an extremely flexible and adaptable organization able to respond promptly.

Bearing in mind the previously mentioned considerations identified in this WWII event study, a multi-corps HQ may have clear mission objectives that would ensure the adherence between the strategic/operational objectives and the tactical conduct of the operations. Moreover, the HQ should have a flexible organization in order to quickly adapt to a changing fluid situation and to exploit to the maximum extent the available resources. Flexibility will ensure the rapid prioritization and shifting of resources and assets when and where needed and, furthermore, is a key factor in employing effectively the joint enablers.

## About the Author

*Maj Mario RODA' currently works as staff officer in the NRDC-ITA Engineer branch.*



General Mark W. CLARK – Gothic Line Central Sector

er  
verywhere rapidly

# ASSESS IF THE CURRENT FRAMEWORK OF THE OPERATIONS (DEEP, CLOSE AND REAR) IS APPLICABLE TO THE WWII EVENTS IN THE GOTHIC LINE AND COMPARE THOSE EVENTS (WWII) WITH THE CURRENT DOCTRINE

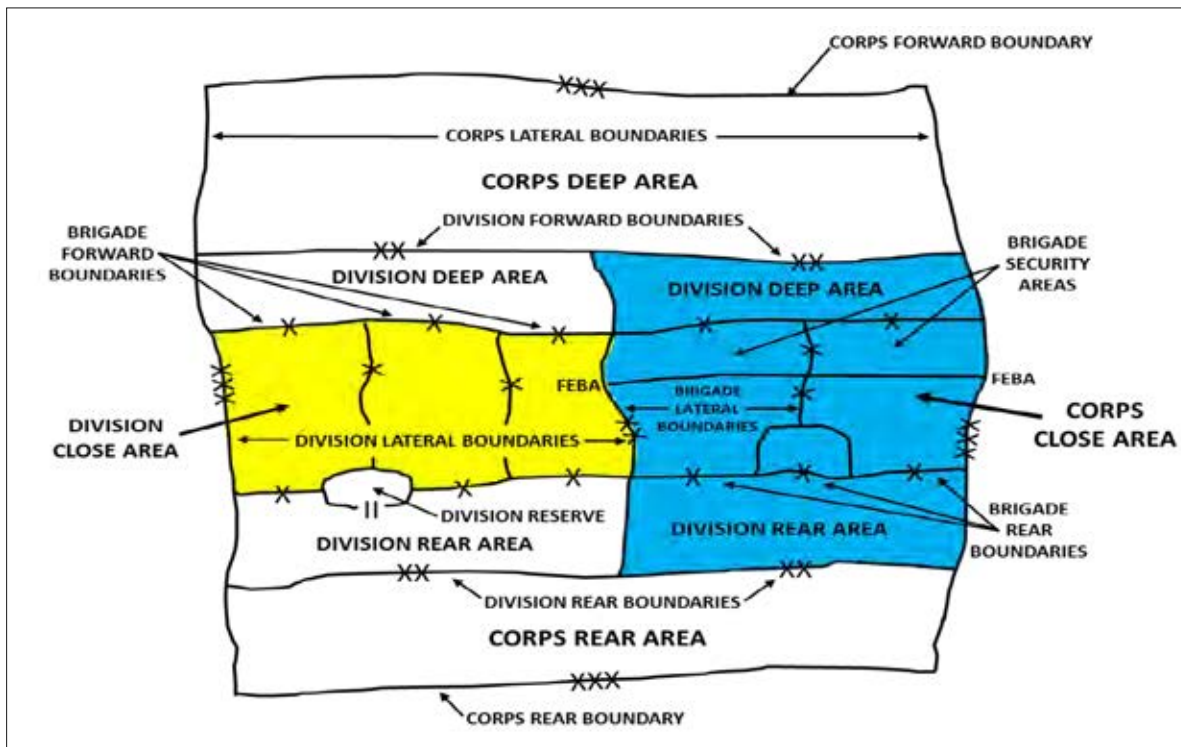
Col. **Dario** and the Staff of Friuli Division, Italian Army

**The Italian Campaign offered examples of how to manage the Battlespace. Having a clear understanding of the area of operations allows commanders to better prioritize efforts.**

**Historical Considerations**, applicability of deep close rear framework to the 'Gothic Line' battle area (contiguous area).

	DEEP OPS	CLOSE OPS	REAR OPS
ALLIED FORCES	YES	YES	YES
	Limiting the enemy's freedom of action via air interdiction and partizan activity; Denying the enemy the capability to concentrate his forces; Destroying the enemy's will to fight.	Heavy use of joint fires IOT degrade the enemy combat power; Conduct deliberate attack IOT seize area;	FOM and logistic sustainment. No major security measures were issued due to the SASE in the liberated areas.
AXIS FORCES	NO	YES	YES
	N/A due to the lack of capability in terms of aircraft or assets.	Very effective delay operations aimed to gain time and deny space to the enemy; Very well conducted mobile defence; Use of small scale counter attack with arty fires and task organized platoon size units.	Counter insurgency (partizan) operation IOT maintain FOM; LOGISTIC based on pre organized stockpile and concealed depot – movement/resupply only during night time.





## Modern Warfare

- Areas of operation help commanders quickly prioritize and focus resources and efforts. Commanders organize their battlefield with control measures to assign responsibilities, to coordinate fires and manoeuvre, and to control other activities;
- Battles and engagements are at times linear with deep, close, and rear components. Although these components may be noncontiguous, they are not separate and distinct activities. They are synchronized efforts throughout the entire depth of the battlefield.

The deep-close-rear framework has historically been associated with terrain, orientation but can be applied to temporal and organizational orientations as well.

## Deep Ops

Deep operations involve efforts to disrupt uncommitted enemy forces. The purpose of deep operations frequently ties to other events distant in time and space.

## Close Ops

Close operations involve efforts to have immediate effects with committed friendly forces-potentially in direct contact with enemy forces-to include enemy reserves available for immediate commitment.

## Rear Ops

Rear operations involve efforts to provide early and accurate warning of enemy operations, pro-

vide the force with time and manoeuvre space within which to react to the enemy, protect the force from surprise, and develop the situation so the commander can effectively use the force.

## Conclusion

Framing the battlespace will allow commanders to effectively allocate and leverage available resources and forces. As observed in the Italian Campaign, for the Allied and Axis forces, the key factor of effective corps operations and battlespace management was updated situational awareness and an effective use of forces and fires. The following aspects might be considered in applying the battlespace framework to corps level:

- Modern CIS capabilities improve C2 and ensure the adherence of manoeuvre to the commander's intent;
- Then and now, the use of ISTAR/recce assets enables the deep operations;
- Use of guided weapons improve strike precision on small size targets reducing collateral effect;
- Air and Army Aviation employment (CAS/transport/recce) provide 3<sup>rd</sup> dimension support.

In conclusion, framing the battlespace will ease the control of tactical forces and allow the proper degree of flexibility and speed in adapting the operations to current conditions.

## About the Author

*Col. Giovanni DARIO currently works as DCOS OPS of the Friuli Division.*

er  
everywhere rapidly

# MILITARY HISTORY STUDY AND THE ART OF COMMAND

The contemporary operational environment requires a high degree of adaptation for military forces. Units must be prepared to face capable peer adversaries, promptly respond to different threats, both symmetric and asymmetric, all from different sources. NRDC-ITA will not know where, when and against whom it may be called to fight. However, the Nations and military authorities that are represented within our Joint, multinational team represent a capable, prepared and effective staff.

NRDC-ITA is a learning organization that uses multiple tools to further develop the personal and professional skills of its personnel. Accordingly, the analysis of military history is essential to prepare military leaders and their staffs, especially when highlighting operations in which Army, Corps and Division commanders and staff were challenged by unpredictable, adaptive and resilient adversaries.

The NRDC-ITA staff, in studying the final months of the Italian Campaign during WWII, reached the appropriate level of granularity

by focusing on the Corps level, examining all phases of the land manoeuvre and the dynamics related to the 'human factors' of the commanders involved in that event. Studying military history and the associated leaders offered several important lessons to apply: first, to have leaders that are guided by initiative (mission command), always prompt in effective decision making; secondly, in line with NRDC-ITA's developing concept of Forward Command Post, at the Tactical level commanders must remain close enough to the battlefield where they can exercise their command in the most efficient and timely manner in order to counter the unpredictability of the adversary and other external events.

Staff Rides and Battlefield Tours are a powerful tool to study and understand military history. The lessons learned from historical case studies allow the ready, multinational and well-trained staff of NRDC-ITA to better understand how to succeed when facing any future complex operational commitment.



British Sherman crosses the ruins of Impruneta near Florence





**nrdcita**  
Milan

⋮



**WE ARE  
UNITED  
WE ARE  
SAFE**



**#WEARENATO**



**nrdcita** Follow us on our Official Social Media Accounts.

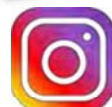
**NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy #WeAreNATO**



**FACEBOOK**  
[/nrdcitaly](#)



**TWITTER**  
[@NRDCITA](#)



**INSTAGRAM**  
[@nrdcita](#)



**YOUTUBE**  
[nrdc ita](#)





# er

verywhere apidly



[nrdc-ita.nato.int](https://nrdc-ita.nato.int)