

The Royal Engineers soon learnt the necessities of trench warfare in solid rock, and instructed over 300 men in each division in rock drilling.

The schools which had been established by Sir Herbert Plumer have been developed and increased. The instruction given there to our own officers, non-commissioned officers and men most conclusively proves the value of such institutions. The training ground in the School Area is ideal and the hills are high and steep enough to give practical instruction in mountain warfare. The interchange of officers between Italian and British Schools continues to work satisfactorily and with equal benefit to both nations. I cannot sufficiently thank the Instructors for the care and thoroughness which they have shown in the instruction of the various classes held.

All services, including the supply of ammunition and rations and the distribution of the mails, have worked with smoothness. For this we are much indebted to the Direzione Trasporti at Bologna as well as to Lieutenant-General Sir H. M. Lawson, K.C.B., and Major-General J. A. Strick, D.S.O.

Arrangements for the sick and wounded have been thorough and complete. The difficulties of evacuation by mountain paths and roads were successfully overcome in the action of June 15th. An epidemic of influenza, which appeared to threaten serious diminution of the Force at one time, has completely passed away.

The services of the Y.M.C.A. and Church Army have as usual been of the greatest value to our men.

His Excellency General Montuori, under whose command I have had the honour to serve, has always been ready to assist me by his wise counsel. The interest he has taken in the British troops has been intense, and he has met all our demands in a spirit of the most loyal comradeship. I owe him the deepest debt of gratitude.

In questions of policy as regards the British Forces, His Excellency General Diaz has most kindly given me several interviews and allowed me to state my views freely. Both he and

General Badoglio, the Sub-Chief of the Staff, could not have been more considerate.

The delicate and difficult task of fully interpreting orders and wishes of two Staffs speaking a different language has been tactfully and well carried out. My special thanks are due to Colonel Ragioni and Lieutenant-Colonel Sarfatti of the Italian Mission attached to my headquarters.

General Graziani, Commanding the 12th French Corps, has ever been ready to assist us on our right flank, and the same happy cordiality has existed between us as I have always found in France. Commandant de Massignac has been invaluable as Liaison Officer between myself and General Graziani.

The British Mission under the skilful guidance of Brigadier-General C. Delme Radcliffe, C.B., C.M.G., C.V.O., has performed its duties with tact and energy, and that branch, whose work has been to keep me in direct touch with the Sixth Italian Army, has performed this task to my complete satisfaction.

I am most happy to report that the relations between ourselves and the Italian and French troops on either flank are most cordial and have never given me one moment of uneasiness.

The inhabitants of this beautiful region have shown the most hospitable spirit to our men, and no serious complaint has reached me of damage to property, or incivility on either side. It is clearly the wish of the Italian nation to make their Allies happy and comfortable, and in this they have most royally succeeded.

In conclusion I beg to bring to your Lordship's notice the invaluable services rendered by my Brigadier-General, General Staff, Brigadier-General The Hon. J. F. Gathorne-Hardy, C.B., has invariably succeeded in arriving at agreement on details, sometimes difficult and always delicate. His frequent reconnaissances of the whole of the forward areas have been of the greatest help to me in making important decisions.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's most obedient Servant,

Cavan,

General,

Commanding the British Forces in Italy.

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