

# Battlefields Tours

by Capt G. FORMIGNANI, Engineer DIV

## Marengo Battlefield Tour

The Junior Officers Battlefield Tour (BT) took place in Marengo village close to Alessandria during the period 06-10 October 03. The Battlefield Tour was one of the two annual BTs planned by HQ NRDC-IT and lead by Chief Engineer, it was aimed primarily to Junior Staff Officers of this HQ. The focus for this BT was the analysis of all operational aspects of the Battle fought between the Napoleon French Army and the Allied and the Austrian troops on June the 14th 1800. The exercise started in "Ugo Mara Barracks" with a number of introduction briefings carried out by two historical guest speakers (Mr MASSOBRIO and Mr GIOANNINI from the Cultural Department of Alessandria) aimed to provide a battle overview, continued on 08 and 09 Oct with a direct visit to the battlefield area and ended with informal discussions allowing comments and understanding of key elements of the battle.

The aim of Marengo BT was to examine tactics, execution of operations and develop a discussion on the aspects relevant at Corp level such as terrain, enemy/friendly capabilities, commanders' intent, scheme of maneuver. Main objectives can be



The welcome advertisement to the museum

considered:

- to analyse and discuss tactics;
- to examine the operational environment;
- to develop the aspects connected to manoeuvre, intelligence, fire, logistics, engineering and C3;
- to discuss the historical event as lessons learnt.

The Exercise started the 7th October inside the barracks with a general overview on the historical events that resulted in the Marengo Battle. Strategic outlines were presented and main features of the battlefield area and the opposite armies were introduced by the two civilian experts. Day two and three (8th and 9th October) were spent in Marengo. The whole area of the battle was visited and participants had the opportunity to go directly to old defence positions, the plane that hosted the French counter attack (San Giuliano) and the bridge (Stortigliona farm house) used by the Austrian attacking formations. The Napoleon Headquarters site in Torre Garofoli concluded the tour in Marengo.



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by Maj G. FALESSI, G3AIR S03TH

## Cassino Battlefield Tour

From Oct 13, 2003 to Oct 16, 2003 the NRDC-IT took part in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battle Tour in CASSINO (FR) to study and discuss one of the most important battle fought in ITALY during the WWII: The Battle of Montecassino. More than 35 people among the key-positions of the NRDC-IT personnel, including the Commander (LTG Castagnetti), the Deputy Commander (MG MONRO) the Chief of Staff (MG Pellegrino), took part in the visits.



The battle tour started visiting the war cemeteries, which contain more than 30.000 Polish, Commonwealth, German, and Italian Graves. These holy place are still a painful and admonitory reminder of the devastation of the II W W:

- Commonwealth cemetery on the road to S. Angelo in Theodice;
- German cemetery in Colle Marino, near Caira;
- Italian cemetery in Mignano Montelungo;
- Polish cemetery on Montecassino.



Then from the peck of Montelungo started the briefing of our guest guide(MG ret. Pinna) showing the famed Gustav Line: the core of the Axis defensive positions and in front of the these, the Allied positions.

Then the personnel moved to others locations where all the phases of the battles were discussed making comparison with the capability a modern Corps has today, and making assumptions on what we could have done if we were there at the time.

It is a foregone conclusion that the 2 opponents the German one (Gen. Von Senger )and the Allied one( Marshal Alexander) fought at the best of their will, exploiting the means they had end the environment where they fought.



The battle tour ended with the visit of the famous rebuilt Benedict Monastery of Montecassino, that was reduced to a heap of debris in only three hours of bombing in February 15, 1944 because it was on the firing line between the two armies.

