**Civezzano opens the doors of the newly restored ‘painted’ fort**

**VISITING THE NETWORK OF FORTS ALONG THE PEACE TRAIL**

**During the summer visitors will be able to admire once again the newly restored Tagliata Superiore (road defence fortification) of Civezzano, an important Austro-Hungarian artefact part of the military works of the fortified belt around Trento. The Tagliata is unique in that it preserves, on the sides of the two gunports, the artillery firing directions**

Trentino has a network of 19 museums dedicated to WWI, that includes forts, battle trenches, communication trenches, tunnels and other works of military engineering that bring back to life the events that occurred a century ago in these mountain sites, turning them into a giant “Remembrance Park”. Among the mementoes that have survived the ravages of time and of mankind there are also the **80 or so Austro-Hungarian fortresses** that today are part of the cultural and geographical landscape of this land and that belong to what is now known as the “**Rete dei Forti in Trentino**” (Network of Trentino Forts). With their imposing presence, these forts are testimonials to the role played by Trentino in that war, while the great architectural variety and the different types of buildings and construction materials used illustrate the evolution from the military arts of the 19th century to those of modern times, based on the progress towards increasingly powerful weapons.

Today these forts are the doors to the main WWI remembrance trail that can be travelled on foot and for long segments even by mountain bike. It is called the **Sentiero della Pace**, The Peace Trail, and offers visitors a **meditation path** in an attempt to reconcile with a tormented past. It is **520 kilometres long** and winds its way along the front lines through the Trentino mountains, from Stelvio to Marmolada, interconnecting entrenchments, strongholds and fortifications, emplacements, war cemeteries and large and small war museums.

The best preserved fortifications have been exhaustively restored and recovered, with the purpose of making them available for visits by refurbishing the internal routes between the various sectors, and have been turned into **landmarks of divulgation** of the history of those times. These restoration works, started a few years ago by the Autonomous Province of Trento’s Commission for Fine Arts – Architectural Heritage Office, will allow opening to the public **in the summer of 2016** yet another Austro-Hungarian military artefact, known as the **Tagliata Superiore di Civezzano** (upper road defence fortification of Civezzano) that stands just a few kilometres from Trento.

The Tagliata is the most important structure of the so-called **Sbarramento di Civezzano** (Civezzano Barrage), the largest permanent fortified complex of the Calisio area, both in terms of military history and of architecture, built **between 1867 and 1872** to become the main western stronghold of the fortified belt planned to be built around the city of Trento.

It is a rare, integral example open to visits of a permanent mountain fortification and is the only one with the **firing directions** for the two cannons still visible on the walls. Also clearly visible are the two sentences written above the concrete arches of the gunports: *Got mit uns (God is with us)* to the south, and *Eink(h)eit macht stark* (*Unity makes strength*) to the north.

**How to get there**: from the town of Civezzano, travel the provincial road in the direction of Cognola-Villamontagna until you reach the Tagliata.

**THE NETWORK OF FORTS IN TRENTINO**

In Trentino’s Alto Garda (upper Lake Garda) area, the Riva del Garda stronghold was one of the most solid defence structures of the southern border, second in the number of works only to that of Trento. In addition to the Tagliata del Ponale and to Forte San Nicolò, it included in particular the complex of fortifications built on Mount Brione**:** the **Batteria di Mezzo** (Middle Battery),well camouflagedon the mountain’s peak and reachable via an easy path from Porto San Nicolò that then continues on to **Forte Garda,** another fort that also enjoys near-invisibility thanks to its morphology (www.museoaltogarda.it). This complex once also included **Forte di Nago,** built to prevent any infiltrations into Valle dell'Adige via Passo San Giovanni, Mori and Rovereto (www.comune.nago-torbole.tn.it).

Southern Trentino also hosts the fortifications built in Valle del Chiese starting in the 1800’s to guard this important throughway. **Forte Larino** was a fortification part of the so-called Sbarramento di Lardaro stronghold, together with another two forts. Near Praso, higher up over the valley, is the nicely restored **Forte Corno** complex; both are open to the public (www.visitchiese.it).

In the second half of the 19th century, Passo Tonale too became a massively guarded border, as indicated by the road defence fortification of **Forte Strino**, built as early as 1860 but then disarmed in 1915 after proving to be inadequate, while another three forts - Zaccarana, Pozzi Alti and Mero – were built around the Tonale pass (www.valdisole.net).

Close to Trento, **Forte Cadine** was the typical valley barrage that today, after being restored and opened to the public, provides a thematic voyage through the entire fortified system of Trentino also thanks to interactive and multimedia systems (www.museostorico.tn.it).

In the nearby Valsugana, **Forte Tenna** was built in the late 19th century on the hill dividing the lakes of Levico and Caldonazzo to defend the passage to Trento and to control the access to the fortifications of Lavarone. Together with Forte Tenna, **Forte Colle delle Benne,** located at the feet of Mount Panarotta, encircled Valsugana at the height of Levico Terme. After being restored, it was opened to the public in the summer of 2015 (www.visitvalsugana.it).

Further up, on the plateaux of Folgaria, Lavarone and Luserna, between 1908 and 1914 a formidable fortified belt was erected, designed for both defence and offence, consisting of seven forts. The most spectacular of these so-called “Emperor’s fortresses” is the wonderfully preserved **Forte Belvedere-Gschwent**,built from 1909 up to 1912. Today it hosts a museum that, narrates the story of the ‘Great War’ thanks to an itinerary based on multimedia installations (www.fortebelvedere.org).

**Forte Cherle** was built to help control, together with Forte Belvedere, the Val d’Astico below. It was heavily bombed by the Italian large-calibre howitzers without suffering great damage, which was caused instead, in the 1930’s, by those who stripped it of its iron roofings (www.alpecimbra.it).

Recently restored and reopened to the public in the summer of 2015, **Forte Pozzacchio** is a rare example of fortress entirely built inside a rock promontory guarding over Vallarsa and the access road to the province of Vicenza (www.visitrovereto.it).

**EVENTS**

For the summer of 2016, the Rete dei Forti del Trentino has planned a series of events in cooperation with several provincial and national cultural organisations.

The first of these initiatives was designed by the Art Studio guided by Giordano Raffaelli, the three-venetian delegate of the **Associazione Nazionale delle Gallerie di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea** (National Association of Modern and Contemporary Art Galleries), consisting in the use of several of the Network’s forts as venues for a wide-ranging contemporary art exhibition on the theme “**Babele di linguaggi e simboli della Grande Guerra**” (Babel of Languages and Symbols of the Great War). Some of the forts selected for the initiative are **Forte Garda** in Riva del Garda, **Forte Strino** in Vermiglio, **Forte Larino** in Lardaro, **Forte Cadin**e in Trento, **Forte Belvedere** in Lavarone, **Forte Alto** in Nago and **Forte Pozzacchio** in Trambileno. The project also envisages the assistance of **Mart**, the Modern and Contemporary Art Museum of Trento and Rovereto. The second initiative is aimed at the rediscovery of the **Sentiero della Pace** (Peace Trail), based on excursions as well as easy walks to and from some of the forts, accompanied and animated by historical reflections on the Great War in the Trentino area. At the end of each excursion there will be a show held either inside or nearby the fort. The shows shall be of various kinds: musical, dance, theatre.

Finally, on **Thursday, 28 July 2016**, contemporarily in all of the forts involved and at the same hour, visitors shall be invited to read out excerpts, memories and narrations, in order to create a chain of human voices. This initiative shall be carried out in collaboration with the local libraries.

**THE YOUNG VISIT THE FORTS SO AS TO NEVER FORGET**

To keep alive the memory of a tragic chapter of mankind’s most recent history is the main objective of a series of initiatives dedicated to young people and students, planned within the context of the project “Trentino Grande Guerra”. One of the most noteworthy of these initiatives is the school tourism project called **“Dalla Guerra alla Pace”** (From War to Peace), intended for 4th and 5th primary school grade children as well as for those of 6th, 7th and 8th secondary school grade. The event involves the municipalities of Rovereto and Vallagarina, Trento, and the Altipiani Cimbri (plateaux of Folgaria, Lavarone and Luserna). For this public of very young visitors, packages of one or two nights have been created, starting at a price of **59 euros**, that include: stay in localities of the province that were once involved in World War I; visits to the Museo Storico Italiano della Guerra (Italian Historical War Museum) and to Rovereto’s Bell of the Fallen; a choice of activities, such as the visit to various forts of the ‘Network’ and excursions to the trenches in Vallagarina, to the Cold War Museum of Base Tuono in Folgaria, to the ‘Gianni Caproni’ Aeronautical Museum. The packages also include didactic workshops at Mart in Rovereto and guided visits to the Muse in Trento.

(m.b.)

Trento, April 2016