

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No.

785017

ACC

10000/109/1176
(VOL. I)

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785017

10000/109/1176
(VOL. I)

TROOPS IN BOLZANO
JULY-OCT. 1945

Chief Commissioner

(99)

(98)

Approval
Attached is submitted for your signature
infiltration

Exec Comm MS (2/12) Issue
012 as
2/22/2000

2123

785017

Executive Committee (45)

Please see 1st and accompanying report.

Generally speaking it would seem that complaints against the
 troops were exaggerated and that they have done nothing that
 any other group would not do.

25K49

Si 4/9

sp (46)

Chief Commissioner

Clearly a careful & impartial investigation
 has been held and I think we should agree
 with General Brown's recommendation. We
 should however do our best to increase CARR
 in Ballymore & I will see that this is done - if
 possible.

Inform H. Galt.

178/44x

Be must also

SEP 5 1972

E.C.

175 (47)

Donner. Is not same report
 to PFHQ indicated? 2:22

END cc

10/9

176 (48)

Chief Commissioner

Clearly a careful & impartial investigation has been held and I think we should agree with General Browning's recommendation. We should however do our best to increase ECR in Bodysan & I will see that this is done - if possible.
 Dis/41x Be must also
 inform W. Galt.

SEP 5 1972

175(47)

F.C.

Donner. Is not zone report to FHQ indicated?

2:22

10/9

End cc

175(48)

Chief Commissioner

I would recommend no action

1715 175(45)
 SEP 11 1972

175(49)

F.C.

See p 34

175(50)

Donner CC
 Draft to W. Galt

2:21

Chief Commissioner

24/8. In signature.

35

35

A/Executive Commissioner

You should see folios ^{135 137 138} H, H2 & H3. ~~H4~~.

Folios ~~82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107~~ refer.

21/viii/45

1. 4 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501 502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792 793 794 795 796 797 798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815 816 817 818 819 820 821 822 823 824 825 826 827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872 873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887 888 889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896 897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946 947 948 949 950 951 952 953 954 955 956 957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970 971 972 973 974 975 976 977 978 979 980 981 982 983 984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995 996 997 998 999 1000

CSO. Drop signs to RC Venezia asking for any specific incidents of misbehavior of Forster Gruppe. Popper letter to PM asking for specific details. There may be in possession of Italian Govt.

21/8

A/Executive Commissioner

Ref your ¹¹⁴115 above, drafts at ¹¹⁷117 and ¹¹⁸118 are submitted for approval.

22 Aug. 45.

23/8 drafts approved. 2.

A/Executive Commissioner

Ref ¹²⁰120, letter at ¹²⁴124 is submitted for Chief Commissioner's signature. Signal to RC Venezia Region has been despatched at ¹²²122.

23 Aug. 45.

2419

C.S.O. ⁴⁴⁽⁴⁾ Submitted for answer in draft reply to P.M.'s letter of 22/10/48
25/10/48

issue as amended

Evluat

44(15)

21/9/48

letter submitted for C.C.'s signature

25/10/48

21/10/48

See 102

C.S.O. letter, as amended, recommendations for C.C.'s signature 25/10/48

44(17)

F.C. Lamm
C.S.O.

To clarify the position of troop movements in the Bologna case.

1. The exchange of the Sin beams and Grimaldi regiments has been noted for some time and that it seems now is a coincidence.

2. The Bologna-Finelli exchange has reached the stage at which ⁽¹³⁾ where

A.F.M.G. has asked 5 Army for its views

25/10/48

22

AUG 15 1948

Chief Commissioner

Draft telegram 15/10/48 is reply to ²⁸ from

22/18

V Army submitted.

MS 14/8

22

Issue. (24/10/48)

C.C. agree.

See 102

11/10/8

C.S.O. Letter, as amended, submissions for C.S.'s signature 10/10/8.

F. C. C. S. O.

10/10/8

- To clarify the position of troop movements in the Bologna area.
1. The exchange of the San Berno and Garibaldi regiments has been noted for some time and that it seems now is a coincidence.
 2. The Bologna - Finelli exchange has reached its stage at 10/10/8 where A.F.N.Q. has asked 5 Army for its views.

10/10/8

22

Aug 15 1945

22

reference to 1. 22 from

2. 18

Draft telegram 15/10/8

V Army submitted.

10/10/8

MS 14/8

22

18/10/8 - 22/10/8

C.S. agree.

10/10/8

C.S.O.

Please see

27 Feb 45
735-

A. R. S. G. & Co.

1

Note Ref photo (5) + (2). spoke

Let. Inquiries - 28/7. He is replying to

82A. giving recommendations concerning

both letters for CC to transmit to the HQ

if he approves

28/7 PA

See

Executive Commissioner:

9 10

Ref. folios 82B and 82A. At 90 is a copy letter to C-5 enclosing translation of Parri's letter re the relief of the Folgore Div. in Alto Adige for your signature, and at 91 is a letter acknowledging folio 82B for signature of CC.

Signature, see

10.11.45

2/8/45.

CSO.

505/50

2nd October, 1945

1st Regional Commissioner
Venetian Region

1. On receipt of your LIL/100.11 of 23 September 45 in which, accompanied on a report from Provincial Commissioner Bolzano you advocated an increase payment or temporary of Allied Troops (from 6th and 12th) in Bolzano Province, I instructed you to ascertain the same and report.

2. I have now received your LIL/100.12 of 23 September written after your recent visit to Bolzano in which you rightly point out that 10th is now less concerned than other 8th (No. 2 District) in the area. In the same letter you point out that are coming some 500 10th Troops of 8th Div there are in Bolzano 6th and 12th and 1st Italian Div's own from 10th Div under command 217 Area, but that these troops are distributed from Verona to the Trentino guarding German prisoners.

3. You refer to the unhappiness already existing between Folgore (Italian) Div and local inhabitants and movements tentatively the move to south of the 10th of this Division for training, the move south of the Friuli Div (to Verona Province Trento area) and the move to Bolzano-Belluno area of troops from 6th and 12th. You transmit with your letter a report containing their unhappiness and appeals from the Bishop of Udine and the South Tyrolean Party asking for removal of the Italian troops.

4. The conduct of the Folgore Division has been the subject of much discussion here and at 10th. Following on report from the British Liaison Officer which did not report earlier criticism of the Folgore Division and in view of the fact that the 10th and 12th regiments had been replaced by the Garibaldi regiments, the Chief Commissioner decided not to press his request for the removal of the Folgore Division on the score of unhappiness towards the civilian population.

5. The question of moving additional Allied troops into the Bolzano-Belluno area and in that the whole discussion of troops both Allied and Italian is a matter which is being considered.

2,116

5. The question of moving unemployed Allied troops into the Balkans remains unresolved in that the whole disposition of troops both Allied and Italian in a sector primarily for the No. 2 Mission where reconstructions work would require before examining action affecting the 6th Army Division.

3

785017

101

6. I am sending Major General Boyden copy of this letter and am asking him either to send a senior staff officer to meet you and the Provincial Commissioner at Helms to discuss the problem on the spot or to discuss the matter with you at his H.Q. You are authorized to speak at such circumstances in the name of the Chief Commissioner bearing in mind the paramount concern of the territory to the Italian Government and the detached role which Allied troops must of necessity play once this has taken place.

FOR THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER

M. S. F. Lush

REPRESENTATIVE
Executive Commissioner

Copy to: No. 2 District
APM 6-5 (Section)
Police
C.I.F.
Land Forces B/O

2415

2nd October, 1963

Rev C. C. C. No. 2 District

I attach copy of letter addressed to Regional Commissioner, Versais Region, in reply to recommendations received from him. I think you will agree with the conclusion set out in para 5 and if so I would ask you to be good enough to arrange for discussion as suggested in paragraph 6. I should be glad to know your views and recommendations formed as the result of these discussions.

FOR THE ONLY COMMISSIONER

1st M. S. Lush.

BRIGADE
Executive Commission

Copy to: Regional Commissioner,
Versais Region

2/14

Draft/

585/BC

2nd October 45

To: Regional Commissioner,
Venetian Region

1. On receipt of your RXII/850.13 of 23 September 45 in which, consequent on a report from Provincial Commissioner Bolzano you advocated an increase permanent or temporary of Allied Troops (from 6th Armad Div) in Bolzano Province, I instructed you to consult HQ PES and report.

2. I have now received your RXII/850.12 of 28 September written after your recent visit to Bolzano in which you rightly point out that PES is now less concerned than other HQ (No. 2 District) in the area. In the same letter you point out that not counting some 300 US Troops of 88 Div there are in Bolzano 68th Pz Regt and 1st Battalion King's Own from 10th Div under command 217 Area, but that these troops are distributed from Verona to the Brenna guarding German Prisoners.

3. You refer to the animosity already existing between Folgore (Italian) Div and local inhabitants and recommend tentatively the move to south of the PO of this Division for training, the move south of the ^{Friuli} Pedesti Div (to Verona Vicenza Trento area) and the move to Bolzano-Belluno area of troops from 6th Armad Div. You transmit with your letter report confirming their animosity and appeals from the Bishop, Brissinone and the South Tyrolean Party asking for removal of the Italian Troops.

4. The conduct of the Folgore Division has been the subject of much discussion here and at AFHQ. Following on report from the

2 of 13

PES and report.

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much discussion here and at AFHQ. Following on report from the British Liaison Officer and in view of the fact that the San

Marco regiment had been replaced by the Garabaldine regiment, the Chief Commissioner decided to ^{withdrew} ~~withdraw~~ his request for the removal of the Folgore division on the score of conduct towards the civilian population.

5. The question of moving additional Allied troops into the Bolzano Belluno area and in fact the whole disposition of troops both Allied and Italian is a matter primarily for GOC No. 2 District whose recommendations AFHQ would require before considering action affecting the 6th Armd Division.

-2-

97

6. I am sending Major General Heydeman copy of his letter and am asking him either to send a senior staff officer to meet you and the P.C. at Bolzano to discuss the problem on the spot or to discuss the matter with you at his H.Q. You are authorized to speak at such discussions in the name of the Chief Commissioner bearing in mind the imminent turn over of the territory to the Italian Government and the detached rôle which Allied troops must of necessity play once this has taken place.

Brig

Copy to: No. 2 District
AFHQ G-5 (Section)
Polads
C.A.S.

Land Forces

Bri

2412

and the detached rôle which Allied troops must of necessity play
once this has taken place.

COPY to: No. 2 District
AFHQ C-5 (Section)
Polads
C.I.S.

Land Forces

785017

SECRET AND URGENT

HEADQUARTER

VENEZIE REGION

ALLIED MILITARY GOVERNMENT

APO 394

To : H.Q. Allied Commission.

Subject: Bolzano Incidents.

File No: R XII/850.12

Date 30 September 1945

001-11945

1. Reference 585/30 of 27 September sent to this H.Q. and AC/I4191/4/P.S of 27 September sent to P.C. Bolzano, copy to this Headquarters.

2. Both the above quoted letters deal with the same report from South Tirol sources, which has obviously been left at several addresses in Rome. It will probably save further cross references if I deal with the matter in one letter.

3. There are three main allegations in the letter submitted by the priest Michael Gamber. They concern incidents at :-

- a) LANA on September 9th.
- b) S. CRISTINA on May 15th.
- c) VINTSCHGAU on July 3rd.

4. Of these the two last seem to stand in a different category from the first. On May 15 the countryside was still in a very disturbed state, feeling between the Italian Partisans at Belluno and the pro-German Tirolese of Bolzano was very high. It is quite possible that evil deeds of the kind quoted were done. I do not think that much good would follow an attempt on our part to trace the Perpetrators.

The affair of Vintschgau was a murder following a dispute and scuffle between a soldier and a farmer about a hen. It may have a political significance, but it is not a big matter upon which to hang the complaint of a whole countryside.

5. The case of Lana on 9 September is something different and more serious because it concerns a brawl between Italian soldiers and Sud Tiroler at a traditional local festival. Moreover an American Officer and soldiers were involved. In this case I have already sent you, in my letter of 28 September, a factual report received from P.C. Bolzano. You will see that the account submitted to you by Priest Michael Gamber is overdrawn, nevertheless the incident is disquieting.

6. I have already written to you at length in my R XI/850.12 of 28 September on the position as regards troops in the Bolzano Area. It is worth pointing out that the troops involved at Lana are the newly arrived Garibaldi Regiment who relieved the 8th Mountain Division.

001419Y/4/P.S of 27 September sent to P.O. Bolzano, copy to this Headquarters.

2. Both the above quoted letters deal with the same report from South Tirol sources, which has obviously been left at several addressees in Rome. It will probably save further cross references if I deal with the matter in one letter.
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5. The case of Lana on 9 September is something different and more serious because it concerns a brawl between Italian soldiers and Sud Tiroler at a traditional local festival. Moreover an American Officer and soldiers were involved. In this case I have already sent you, in my letter of 26 September, a factual report received from P.O. Bolzano. You will see that the account submitted to you by Priest Michael Gamber is overdrawn, nevertheless the incident is disquieting.

6. I have already written to you at length in my R21/10.12 of 26 September on the position as regards Troops in the Bolzano Area. It is worth pointing out that the Troops involved at Lana are the newly arrived Garibaldi Regiment who relieved the San Marco, they wear Alpini hats.

7. You know that on September 8 as a result of hard work on the part of De Angelis and Lt. Col. McBratney the two parties, C.I.N. and Sud Tirol Volkspartei signed a concordat. It is my own opinion that if left to themselves the local Italians and the Sud Tiroler might work together in amity. They will not have a chance of doing so if the situation is aggravated by Italian or German elements coming in from outside.

Copy to :-

Public Safety Sub-Commission

F.S. Allied Commission.

F.S. Bolzano

Public Safety Div. Venezia Region.

SEE F. 211

Regional Commissioner.

785017

6220

052
585

Land Bureau (95)

ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS
G-5 Section
APO 512

COB/prb

5 OCT 1945

G-5: 091.711-1 Italy

29 September 1945

SUBJECT: Conduct of Folgore Gruppo.

TO : Headquarters, Allied Commission,
APO 394.

(N/K)

17.2

(94)

Reference MMIA's letter A 052 dated 24 September.

1. It appears that this Headquarters' letter G-5: 091.711-1 Italy, subject as above, dated 20 September was linked with the wrong letter. It was intended as an expedite to G-5: 091.711-1 Italy, same subject, dated 6 September, not G-5: 091.711-1 dated 6 September, subject "Italian Army Casualties Documentation".

(51)

2. It would be appreciated if an answer to G-5: 091.711-1 Italy, dated 6 September, subject "Conduct of Folgore Gruppo", could be given.

For the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-5:

Charlton

C. O. BENSON
Major, R.A.

2410

(Carb. Charalton)

785017

ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS.
G-5 Section
APO 512

94

G-5: 091.711-1 Italy

20 September 1945

SUBJECT : Conduct of Folgore Gruppo

TO : Headquarters Allied Commission
APO 394

51

Please return the letter enclosed in G-5: 091.711-1 dated 6 September, together with your comments, as soon as possible.

For the Asst. Chief of Staff, G-5:

(sgd)
C.O. BENSON,
Major.

2409

See 95
✓

785017

585
HEADQUARTERS
VENEZIE REGION

ALLIED MILITARY GOVERNMENT
APO 394

29 SEP 1945

SECRET

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONER RXII/850.12

Subject Bolzano Province
To Headquarters A.C.
(attn Executive Commissioner)

28th Sept.

I. Further to my RXII/850. 12
today's date.

I send you herewith:-

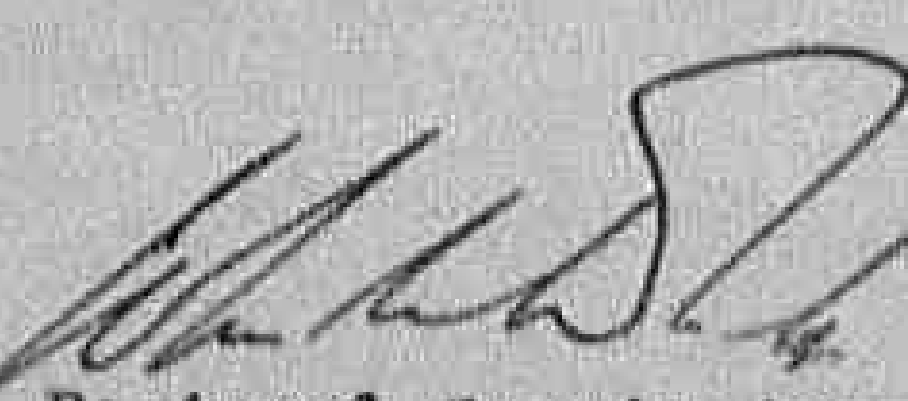
(a) All the original papers in the case of a
brawl between Italian soldiers of the Garibaldi
Regiment (Folgore Division) and local Tiroler at
Lana near Merano.

(b) An original appeal written by the Bishop
of Bressanone.

(c) A memoria from the President and Secretary
of the South Tiroler Party.

2. I feel that the contents of these papers
should be brought to your attention. I therefore
have not waited to have copies made.

Copy to PC Bolzano


Regional Commissioner

2108

785017

BOLZANO PROVINCE
VENEZIE REGION

ALLIED MILITARY GOVERNMENT

A. P. O. 394.

SUBJECT: Event Involving Military Personnel

DATE: 20 Sept. 1945
WEL/ac

TO: Regional Commissioner
Edgtra Venezia Region A.M.G.

REF. R.XII/BZ/148

On 9 Sept. 45 an event occurred at the small town of LANA (A 3582) S.W. of Merano, which, I believe indicates the attitude and actions to be expected from Italian troops in this area.

The attached condensed report by my PPSO and copies of statements by witnesses is herewith.

My opinion is that the whole affair from the Italian military side was manufactured.

The feast of St. Mary is celebrated in these parts by a simple religious (St. Tyrolian) procession after which people gather and over a glass of beer to sing songs and converse together. Such an event occurred on the 9th Sept. and up to the point of the entry of Italian soldiers - it was orderly. Certain contributory events may have incensed them but the fact remains that in a few minutes after the first soldiers were in the garden and at a whistle about 50 soldiers armed - many with automatic weapons, and under command of three officers came from various directions and maltreated the civilians and fired their weapons quite freely. One cannot arrange even such a small operation in a few moments. Also two heavy machine guns were placed at the ends of the street.

On a peaceful Sunday evening the presence of fully armed soldiers - ready for action seems very unnecessary and again leads me to believe that the whole affair was pre-arranged with provocative intentions.

An inquiry was held a few days ago which principally the 53 A.L.F., the Italian Command, the British

(91)

G/O Field Regt. and my P.R.S.O. were present. Witnesses were called and evidence taken. I understand the Italian Command will hold their own inquiry shortly.

William E. McBratney

WILLIAM E. McBRATNEY
Lt. Col., S.R.,
Provincial Commissioner

Encl. (Report)

785017

BOLZANO PROVIN
VENEZIE REGION
ALLIED MILITARY GOVERNMENT
A. P. O. 394.

90

SUBJECT: Incident at Lana

DATE: 20th September 45

TO: Provincial Commissioner - Province of Bolzano - Bolzano

REF. R XII/BZ/

75-88

1. I enclose 8 statements regarding an incident between Italian Troops of the Garibaldi Regt. and Civilians at Lana on Sept. 9 1945.
2. As a result of an investigation into this incident, the main points brought to light are as follows:
 - (a) On 9 September a Tyrolean Festival was held at Lana and about 18.30 hrs. a large number of local residents had gathered in the Brewery "Forst" (a large Inn) taking part in the festivities.
 - (b) Two Italian Soldiers entered the Brewery and were ordered to leave by an American Sergt. (unknown) who was under the influence of drink (Statements No. 6-7)
 - (c) As a result 6 or 7 other Italian Soldiers on being told of this, entered the Brewery and there began an argument which ended in a general melee in which chairs and fists were used by both sides. An American Officer (Lt. Hagy) and two American Soldiers were present.
 - (d) That 40 or 50 Italian Soldiers armed with machineguns and rifles were called out under control of Officers to deal with this incident, which lasted only a few minutes.
 - (e) That the Soldiers opened fire and that one was seen with a hand grenade in his hand, but was prevented from throwing it. (Statement No. 2)
 - (f) No person was wounded by firearms but a number of civilians received minor injuries through being rough handed by Italian Soldiers.
 - (g) Many Civilians were arrested by the Soldiers but were later released by the CCRR who detained nine persons.

./.

- 2 -

89

- (h) A number of Soldiers entered another Inn ordering the people out and one pointed a pistol at the head of a Civilian and also struck him in the face. (Statement No.4).
- (i) An American Soldier was detained by two Italian Soldiers at the point of a machine pistol, for about an hour. (Statement No.2)
- (j) That the Italian Officer in charge stated that he considered the incident sufficiently grave for military intervention because the honour of Italy was at stake as a result of Italian Soldiers having been told to leave the Beerhouse.
- (k) Two unarmed German Soldiers (POW.s) were present. These men were drivers of two cars from the Separation Centre and under the control of Lt. Hagy.

G.W. Brown
G.W. Brown - Captain
P.P.S.O. - Bolzano Province

785017

HEADQUARTERS 349th INF.
SEPARATION CENTER

88

10 September 1945

Subject : Riot in Lana.
To : S-3 349th Inf. Regt. APO 88

1. Yesterday evening, 9 September 1945, I accompanied Father Patrick, a Franciscan monk who is helping us here at the Separation Center, to a native festival in Lana, a small town in the vicinity of Merano. Pfc. Leo Secunda, another prisoner interrogator at the headquarters went along, and we were both there as a result of a long-standing invitation to this event tendered by the local South Tyroleans.

2. I was aware at the time that there existed considerable difficulty between the Italian garrison and the South Tyroleans, but was assured that this was a festival which had been held every year for some two hundred and fifty years, and that permission had been granted from the local prefecture for the parade in the afternoon and the festivities at night. However, due to the events which occurred, in which I became unwittingly involved, I wish to render an account of what I witnessed, and how I was concerned.

3. There was a lot of work to do here, so that I was not free to go until 18,30. I had been thinking of calling off the trip until I heard that our regiment was relieved of the alert it had received the night before. With Father Patrick and Pfc. Secunda I took off for Lana. We arrived there late in the festivities, but were heartily welcomed, and invited into the house to eat. There were many colorfully dressed people, including an orchestra, and the general attitude was one of good fellowship and cheer. Another American soldier entered in, and he was taken in tow by some people at another table across the room from mine. Food was brought in, and my group started to eat.

4. In the middle of our meal, six or seven Italian soldiers walked into the room. They were unarmed as far as I could see, and hesitated when they saw Americans were present, withdrew outside for a moment. They then returned, and going up to civilian at the table next to mine, started arguing with him very loudly and lustily.

2:01

- 2 -

He remained quiet for the most part, giving restrained answers, and although I could not understand the rapid Italian, it appeared that he was trying to avoid an argument. The three foremost Italians crowded around and were the ones apparently trying to carry the point. From what I gathered, they were referring to some incident earlier in the day in which the closest Italian claimed he had been insulted. He was of medium height, heavily built, with a mustache and a oval face. I do not know the color of his hair because none of them bothered to remove their hats. Before it came to blows, I got up, having stood about as much of the loud talk as I cared to hear, and told the Italians in my best facsimile of the language, that if they wished to argue or fight they could leave, or that if they wished to stay, they could sit down at a table and eat like the rest of us. Secunda, in slightly better Italian, was saying the same thing to the ones at the tail end of the procession. An Italian Carabinieri appeared, and I told him to tell the people either to sit down or get out. After which he apparently did his best to get them to leave, so with Secunda I returned to our table and resumed eating. Up to this time there had been no violence.

5. On the way out, the Italian soldiers once again picked a quarrel with another civilian, this time one sitting at the table of the other American there, whose name I did not know. This time the other American became involved, and loud voices led to a brawl in which confusion reigned. There were still no weapons in evidence. By the time I could get to the center of the brawl, three of the Italians had run out the door into the court which faced the street. The fight broke up and the Italian soldiers were quarreling with the civilians outside.

6. The people had started to fight again in small groups when I saw an automobile draw up in the street outside, and a man (who I later learned to be an Italian Tenente) jumped out and started to blow a whistle. From every street and from behind every building came armed groups of Italian soldiers as if by pre-arranged signal. The unarmed Italians quarreling with the civilians began to yell "Garibaldi" and soon the yard was overrun with armed men. Not carrying any arms myself, I began to worry for Father Patrick and my car and German driver which stood outside in the street. Taking him by the arm (Father Patrick) I pushed him and myself through the gates, which had been closed by about a squad of the Garibaldi. Going to my car, I told the Father to climb in and wait. I then went to the Italian officer who was standing in the middle of the street and told him that I was an American officer, I started to add that I had to enlisted men inside who I wanted to get out, but he never let me finish. He said that he was an Italian tenente

t. o. p.

- 3 -

and in command here. I was about to teach him some manners when a CIC man in civilian clothes pulled me aside, showed me his papers, and told me to leave there. I made another check of the building and court and could find no trace of the American soldiers. Realizing the futility of arguing with what appeared to be at least a company of armed men, I decided to go to Merano and get some reinforcements, to bring out the two Americans involved. In the meantime machine-guns had been set up on the corners and riot guns were everywhere in evidence in the hands of the Garibaldi. Getting into my car we drove to Merano where I went at once to the Hotel Continental and notified Lt. Murphy, duty officer at 3rd Battalion C. P. With his assistance and the help of the company commander of L Company, 349th Inf. Regt. I got two armed Americans and a jeep to go along with Lt. Murphy and I back to the scene of the trouble.

6. Lt. Murphy and I went back to Lana, where after passing through many roadblocks, we finally were stopped and had to dismount. There was some shooting in the neighborhood of the Fürsterbrunn, the place where the festival was going on, which I heard on the way of town towards Merano, and as we returned, we also heard several volleys being fired, but during the time that we were actually in the vicinity of the Hotel in which the Company commander was situated, only one rifle shot was heard, after which an Italian soldier appeared escorting a civilian wounded in the elbow.

7. When escorted into the presence of the company commander of the Italian group, I told him (he spoke fluent German and we conversed in this language for the most part) what had occurred and that I wanted the two Americans involved released. He hastened to assure us that everything in the town was under control but that no Americans were being held. He sent a man around to check the places where his troops were holding men, and told us that he would notify us if the men were located. The names of my enlisted men and mine were given and Lt. Murphy and I went outside the hotel to wait for the result. We waited about thirty minutes before Lt. Murphy decided that our people had taken off on foot and hitch-hiked to Merano. I returned with him to the Hotel Continental and prepared to go back to Lana.

8. Before I could get my car turned around, Secunda came walking up to the hotel. He had been held prisoner in a hall by two Italians for about one hour, and had apparently been released shortly after Lt. Murphy and I arrived in Lana. He had taken one of the trams back, realizing that the closest trans-

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partation w to be gotten at the Cent ental. I do not know what happen to the second American t I had been in Lana, but since my party was once again complete, I turned and went back to Bolzano. (85)

9. This is as accurate and unbiased an account of what occurred there in Lana. If I have any personal sentiment, I have tried to keep them from interfering in my relation. I have told Pfc. Secunda to prepare a statement, which he will be as uncolored as possible.

10. I do not wish to become involved in any way with the local politics in this area. I started out solely with the intention of spending a nice, sociable evening slightly out of the ordinary. Any action which I have taken was done to extricate the American Forces concerned, and for no other purpose. I swear that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the above statements are true and factual.

signed : Eugene A. Hegy
1st Lt. F. A.
IPW Sep. Cen.
Bolzano.

HEADQUARTERS 349 TH I.
SEPARATION CENTER

21 September 1945

Subject : Riot in Lana.
To : Whom it may concern.

1. I Leo A. Secunda, wish to make the following statement to clarify the situation in which I became involved on the 9th of September at Lana, Italy.

2. I am presently working as a POW interrogator at the 349th Inf. Separation Center. There I met Father Patrick a Franciscan Monk who works here as a special agent for S-2 349th Inf. Regt. I had often had occasion to work with Father Patrick on various cases and so we became friendly. He often invited me to attend some of the Native festivals. Sometime ago he invited me to a festival to take place at Lana on Sept. 9th. He explained to me that this is a Catholic festival which is being held every year for the last 250 years or more. As often in the past I was almost not able to make the festival because of the large amount of work here at the Separation Center. Also invited, was Lt. Hegy, and Major Wagner, the C. O. of the 349th Inf. Separation Center.

3. Major Wagner was sick and could not attend. Lt. Hegy and myself in the company of Father Patrick, left Bolzano at about 18.30 hours, and arrived in Lana about 15 minutes later. Father Patrick brought us to a restaurant in which the evening festivities were to take place. As we entered, we were greeted by a jovial crowd and a happy and festive mood. We were invited to eat and were promised some real native entertainment.

4. We were just starting to eat our meals, when a group of about six or eight Italian soldiers walked into the place. They were pushing people aside and inspecting the place in a very arrogant manner. When they came to our table they stopped short, turned around and walked out. No word was said; either by the Italians, or the civilians. About five minutes later, this same group came back to the restaurant, walked over to a civilian sitting at a table next to us, and started an argument. The civilian was obviously annoyed, and was trying to avoid a fight. All the Italian soldiers crowded around him, also Italian civilians stood up and general shouting and yelling began. An Italian police man came into the place, I walked over to him and asked him to intercede, but he was of no avail. I went over to the Italian soldiers and tried to explain to them to please sit down and enjoy themselves, and not to pick and argument. He spoke to me in a very insulting manner, of which I understood I was to shut up. Among other things, I was called a disguised German and a Nazi. I got pretty mad and told him that as an American soldier, I demand respect from him, since it was us

(93)

Americans that fought and won this war. Seeing that I was pretty mad, and also after Lt. Hegy had tried to calm things down, they started to leave the place. The Italian police man was following them. I was just returning to my table when a new brawl broke out in the garden. I went outside to investigate. As I came to the garden, the fight has already begun. The Italian police man was standing at the side looking on. Seeing that the situation was serious, I tried to get back to Lt. Hegy and Father Patrick. I was pushed outside of the restaurant by the Italians. At that time a civilian car came up to the restaurant, an Italian officer got out. I went over to him and asked him to please intercede on our behalf. He just shrugged his shoulders and turned his back to me. In the meanwhile, shots were being fired all over the place. Italian soldiers came running from all over carrying arms. A machine-gun was set up and a general riot was in progress. I returned to the restaurant by a side door, and tried to telephone the M. P.'s Merano, but was refused connection by the Italian operator. I left the restaurant again and tried to get help. At this time I saw Italian soldiers beating unarmed civilians and carrying them off. I asked my way to the telephone office. As I walked down the street, an Italian soldier tried to throw a hand grenade at the general vicinity where I was standing, and I naturally sought cover in a near by house. Two Italian soldiers came behind me and held me in this house at the point of a machine pistol for about an hour. It was already dark when the two were called outside by another soldier. They left me standing there and for a while I did not know whether or not it was safe for me to leave. I left the place about two minutes later, went down to the street-car and into Merano. I got off in Merano, went to a restaurant, and tried to phone some American unit. After a while I talked to somebody, and I was instructed to stay where I was, and that they were to come and get me. I waited for about 15 minutes, and when nobody came, I left the place. I stopped a German medical vehicle which drove me to the nearest American unit, who in turn took me to the Hotel Continental. There I met Lt. Hegy, and we both returned to Bolzano.

5. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the above statement is correct.

2397

Pfc. Leo. A. Secunda
32519595

The incident of Lana on September the 9th 45 related by:
Father Patrick, Vice- President of the Red Cross.

Like every year the population of Lana according to an old costume feasted the day of "Our Lady's Name" on Sunday after Mary's Birth. This year the population wanted to give a particular solemnity to this feast so as to show their gratitude for the preservation of the country from devastation and for the return of their men from the camp of P.O.W. Just two days before fore a number of men had returned. In order to show their gratitude and in sign of respect the population of Lana invited the A.M.C. to this their feast knowing the Allies were interested in the Tyrolean costumes.

So Major Wagner and his officers were invited, but they could not accept having too much work to do. At six, viz. at the end of working time Lt. Hegy and Serg. Secunda drove to Lana with me. At our arrival at Lana at about seven, I remarked at once that the feast must have been disturbed and that there was danger of it being spoilt. I principally observed that always more and more Italian soldiers were gathering together assuming a provoking attitude. When we entered the garden I saw an American Serg. in a sharp dispute with an Italian soldier. The population received us with manifestations of joy, a fact which can be understood the more if one remembers that many of the men had just been released from the camp through the help of the officers.

I was at once surrounded by men asking me about the prisoners of war. I saw that Lt. Hegy and Serg. Secunda were accompanied to the room by boys and girls in their local costumes. Remembering that the situation did not seem normal to me, I dined up with Mr. Hock Sepp, a distinguished citizen of Lana to meet in a private house and have jolly time. He promised to bring a singing group too. Thereupon I returned to the population asking me about details concerning P.O.W. I saw that the Italian people present were assuming an attitude that was becoming more and more threatening. I went to our cars and waited there. All at once we heard screaming from inside the garden and the people rushed out. The Italian soldiers standing at the gates closed them so as to avoid escape of the people. Among the people rushing out I saw Lt. Hegy and Serg. Secunda. As the situation was very dangerous I pulled open the gate notwithstanding the resistance of the Italian soldiers so as to enable Lt. Hegy and Serg. Secunda to get to the car and going to Meran to fetch American help, which has already been asked for the population. Serg. Secunda wanted to run to the telephone to fetch help. Since that moment we lost sign of him. Lt. Hegy was for looking for him, but as the situation was becoming worse and the Italian began to shoot I asked the Lt. Hegy to drive at once to Meran and bring help along. In driving away I saw how the Italian attacked the South Tyroleans with the ~~2395~~ end of their rifles, being 5 or 6 times superiour in number, and the whole place was filled with the cry of hatred from civilians

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(81)

"Down with the cruchi!" - "To the wall with them!"
"Slaughter them all!"
Cruchi is an offensive nickname for the South Tyrolean.

My opinion on the incident is the following:
The fault of the incident has to be attributed to those persons, who cannot understand that even the South Tyrolean population has the right to live according to their secular traditions. The wrong interpretation, according to which even the religious procession, held in the morning, was a political demonstration covered by a religious manifestation, reveals that during the whole day there was a dangerous tension.

It is my opinion that the motives which created this incident have been in existence from time back of the day in question presented the proper setting for its realization.

In the course of the incident one could observe a certain connection, that is:

1. Quick and comparatively large assemblance of soldiers.
2. Sudden appearance with weapons.
3. Previous invitation and secret to all Italian girls to leave the place.
4. Disturbance and cutting off of the telephonic line, which can be proved by the fact that neither Serg. Secunda could get at Bolzano or Merano, nor could we from Merano get at Lana on the phone.

At the end I must add that the carabinieri instead of working for placation and peace, went with the soldiers and beat the civilians, who of course were unarmed.

This is the report on the incident of Lana which I state to the best of my knowledge and conscience,

Signed: Father Patrick
Vice - President of the Red Cross

(80)

The incident of Lana on September 9th 45 related by :
Gronich Stephanie - Gronich Ferdinando - Holz Siegfried.

Sunday the 9th Sept. we were sitting in the garden of the Brewery Forst at Lana. We remained in the garden until it began to rain, then we went into the inn. We were sitting at one table, and at the other table in front of us, some American Officers and Father Patrick were seated. This was about 1900 hours. At our table there was also a certain Hubert Lösch, who told us, that, whilst in company of an Amer. soldier, he was stopped by an Italian soldier (alpino) who invited him to leave the inn; Lösch refused. After that he had entered again the inn and sat down with us. About 10 minutes later 6 or 7 alpini entered the room and invited Lösch again to leave, in our presence. But he told them, that, if they had something to tell him, they should do it where he was sitting. All was quiet, but the atmosphere was already intense. The discussion became violent, because there was a considerable lot of alpini. They were being incited by an unknown civilian and we suppose this was the cause of the incident. This civilian said to Lösch: "Are you an Italian?" Lösch answered: "No".- Then the unknown said: "Out with you, this is Italian territory!" The Amer. Lt. then intervened and said, that this zone was commanded by Allies. The Amer. Lt. persuaded the Italian soldiers to leave, and they did so after a short time. But sometime later they came back (Holz saw two armed alpini) and Father Patrick and the Amer. Officers left. In the meantime we heard a brawl in the garden. The daughter of the inn-keeper came in and asked if there was somebody able to drive a car. Lösch offered himself as driver and went out. Immediately after there was shooting outside. Carabinieri Baldi, who was present was quite correct and calm; he came to our table and asked us courteously if we were armed. After ten or twelve we left the place, and moved to another inn (Albergo del Cervo) near the Forst Brewery. After half an hour of peaceful conversation, everything was quiet at the Albergo del Cervo, when the door was opened and 4 or 5 alpini came in shouting: "It seems that you are sitting much too comfortable and quiet in here, out of this place!" My friends (it is Holz speaking now) stood up, but I remained still sitting, because I intended to drink my wine, and then one of the alpini held his pistol pointed against my head, and slapped me in the face, with the other hand.

In the meantime other alpini were putting in position a machine gun in the room, pointed against us, whilst another was shouting: "If you come out, I will put you against the wall and kill you!" Afterwards we left the place.

Signed: Gronich Stephanie
Gronich Ferdinando
Holz Siegfried
2394

Boisano, 14th September 45.

(79)

The incident of _____ on September 9th 45 reported by:
Carabiniere Vasco Baldi.

About at 18.30 of the 9th Sept. being off service, I passed near the Brewery Forest of Lana. Passing nearby I heard noises and applause. I stopped and as I saw two sergeants from the alpini Bn. Aosta, I asked them to enter with me the Brewery, in order to see what was going on. As we entered the place, we noticed an Amer. Serg. (two stripes on his jacket). This man was pushing out two soldiers of the Italian Red Cross. We noticed that in one of the rooms of the brewery there was an Amer. Serg. Officer and with one soldier I approached him and he asked me if I was the Police. I answered yes, and he told me to stop the arguing, affirming that the Italian soldiers liked to enter the place only for fighting with South Tyroleans. Whilst I was speaking, a certain Schweitzer arrived and he started immediately the arguing with the two alpini serg. and then the brawl started. Schweitzer started to fight. I was speaking with the American Officer and as I saw the fight I went near in order to separate them, then they struck me with a blow on my head, throwing my cap two meters away. I was holding Schweitzer as his brother arrived and the whole crowd was against us. I left him and moved out from the brewery. After about 80 meters in Via Roma I met the CC.RR. patrol (Appuntato Signori and the two carabinieri Dalle Crode and Stefani). I notified them of the incident and they came back to the brewery with me. As I arrived I noticed that the gates were blocked by the alpini. In the brewery there were about 20 persons and about 15 on the terrace. We searched all, and everybody was calm whilst in the neighbourhood the soldiers were posted.

Questions:

1. The two soldiers of the Red Cross were those I saw to-day at Bolzano.
2. The troop was commanded by an officer. The alpini were outside, but not insulting the civilians, even if some civilian had been stopped by them. Nobody had anything to complain about. I arrested the two Schweitzer and handed them over to the appuntato, because they had assaulted me as representative of the law. I don't know why the Schweitzer assaulted the alpini. There was a general confusion.
3. I heard a pistol shot followed by the burst of machine gun fire, whilst near the brewery.

Signed : Vasco Baldi.

Bolzano, 14th September 1945.

(78)

The incident at Lana on September 9th 45 related by :
Fugliese Eugenio.

On the evening of the 9th Sept. 45 I entered the Brewery Forst at Lana with Private Averna. We took place at the table where women were sitting and asked for beer. An Amer. Serg. approached us (he had 3 stripes on his arm) and said: " Out with you Italians!" I said to my friend, that it was better to leave the restaurant owing to the fact that the Brewery was crowded. On moving out, the Amer. Serg. followed us, surrounded by Germans, who were applauding. One South Tyrolean shouted: " Out of here, shit!" I saw in the distance other soldiers when I was leaving the place.

Questions:

1. You had a fight with Americans?
During the arguing I had no fight with Americans.
2. When you left the place, had the brawl already started?
No, the brawl had not yet started.
3. I didn't see in Lana the two Americans, who were at Bolzano this morning.
4. Did you hear music in the local?
There was no music in the local, when I entered.
5. Did you see soldiers in the Brewery?
There were no Italian soldiers in the Brewery.
6. Did you meet somebody, when you left the Brewery?
No, I met nobody on my way towards the hospital.
7. Did you stay long time in the Brewery?
About three minutes, since the American started to push us out.

Signed : Fugliese Eugenio.

Bolzano, 14th September 45.

(77)

The incident of Lana on September the 9th 45 related by:
Soldier Aversa Vincenzo.

On the 9th Sept at 18.40 hours a friend and I went to the Brewery Forst. As we entered the place we asked for a beer. At this moment the Amer. Serg. arrived who told us that we couldn't stay there.

We had the intention to drink and then to leave at once. But the Serg. wouldn't hear us and he pushed us out with violence and all Germans immediately surrounded us. The Amer. Serg. said "out of here" and everybody was shouting against us. Whilst he was pushing he had the intention to fight with us. We got near to the railing whilst the Germans were pushing more and more. During the arguing about four Italian Soldiers from my unit arrived on the place, together with alpini from the Bn. Aosta and entered the brewer., owing to the fact that a brawl started. I left the place with my friend.

Questions:

1. Did the Amer. Lt. speak with you?
I didn't see the Amer. Lt. because I don't know him.
I just saw two Americans.
2. Did you hear music in the local?
No, I didn't.
3. Did you see German soldiers in uniform?
No, I didn't see any.
4. Was the Amer. soldier drunk?
He was a little drunk.
5. When did you leave the local?
I left the local before the incident.
6. Were the four alpini armed?
No, I didn't see. My friend saw a pistol in the hand of a German.
7. Came the American against you without reason?
Jes, he came at once to me, although I was sitting at another table.
8. Who else was sitting at your table?
There were two women, who were speaking Italian, with two civilians, and we sat down because there was plenty of room.

Signed : Aversa Vincenzo

Belgano, 14th September 45 .

Translation

R. INERT GARIBALDI
Command of the Battalion Aosta

Ref.No. 1331

P.N. 146 - Sept. 10th, 45

Subject : Report about the Riot happened at Lana di Sopra on
September 9th, 1945.

To the COMMAND OF THE REGIMENT GARIBALDI, BOLZANO.

The evening of September 9, 1945, at Lana di Sopra near the
brewery Forster Bru there was a concert of a band for the feast
of the village.

Many civilians, some Germans (three in military uniform), a
2nd Lt. and a non-commissioned officer of the Company Com. 349, Ame-
rican Inf. Regt. of Bolzano, were present.

Two soldiers of the C.R. 331 (of the Red Cross incharged with
the service for the Refugees from Germany) one AVANZA Vincenzo (born
1921) and one FUMIESE Eugenio (born 1921) were in the brewery and
had ordered a beer. The American sergeant who was sitting near them,
suddenly gave them to understand that Italian soldiers were not
admitted in the place. Of course he was applauded by the present per-
sons, who did their best to expell the soldiers from the inn; a German,
who could not be well identified, took his pistol and pointed it a-
gainst the soldiers.

In the meantime Sgt. VIGNON of the Company "Armi & Accompa-
gnamento del Battaglione", Sgt. Gallazzi of the Company Command and
the Carabinieri Baldi of the local Station C.C. RR. of Lana entered
the brewery in order to see what was happening. There they were at-
tacked by four German speaking youngmen, but they were able to expell
them and to bring them to the townhall with the aid of other C.C. RR.
and soldiers of the Garibaldi Regt., who had just come.

Alarm was given to the village (at 1200 hrs.) and in a short
time the building was surrounded by soldiers of the detachment of
Lana, under the command of the undersigned, aided by the officers who
were present.

The German, however, who had pointed the pistol, with other
Germans and two Americans, went away with a motor vehicle which was
standing near the Brewery, before the doors were blocked. The C.C. RR.
aided by the soldiers of the Garibaldi Regt., made accurate inquiries

- 2 -

in the Brewery I arrested several persons. All the roads leading to the Brewery on a large radius were blocked and the civilians sent by the CC.RR. in the building of the 3rd Company (Inn Taisa) and taken in custody by the same.

During these operations, from a group of buildings which could not be identified, two shots of pistol were fired in the direction of a group of soldiers on guard of the bridge. In answer a machine-gun was fired, in order to intimidate. Because of the darkness one could not identify the provenience of these pistol shots, nor could the author be found. The owner of a small inn of the surroundings was stopped and delivered to the CC.RR. for the proper inquiries.

At about 21,30 hrs. the Commander of the Company of CC.RR. of Morano came and the whole matter was put into his hands for competence. The latter, after having questioned the arrested, released part of them and had others shut in the safety room of the barracks of the CC.RR. of Lema.

On September 10th, with trucks of the 3rd Company, the arrested were transferred to Bolzano, escorted by a patrol of cars and by the CC.RR., by order of the Commander of the Company CC.RR.

This Command has not made any further inquiries, because the competent authority of the CC.RR. has taken over the matter.

Signed:

THE COMMANDER OF THE BATTALION
Capt. Fanetti Paolo

785017

BOLZANO PROVINCE
VENEZIE REGION
ALLIED MILITARY GOVERNMENT
A. P. O. 394.

74

SUBJECT: Report from the Prince Bishop
of Bressanone

DATE: 21 Sept. 1945

WEM/ann

TO: Regional Commissioner
HQ Venetia Region, AMG.

REF: R XII / BZ / 118

73

I attach in its original form a report and appeal from the Bishop of Bressanone for protection for his people from the acts of the Italian troops, present and to come.

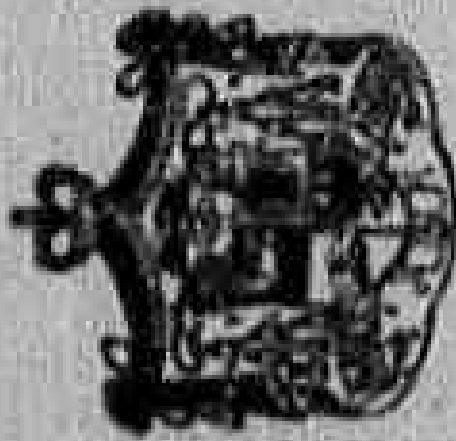
I have always found the Bishop to be a person to be depended upon for accurate and unexaggerated opinions and therefore the attached represents an appeal which has doubtless good and truthful grounds.

William E. McBratney
WILLIAM E. McBRATNEY
Lt. Col., S.R.,
Provincial Commissioner

1 Encl.

2388

Brixen-Bressanone, 19 September 1945.

JOHANNES XI
Episcopus Brixinensis et Princps

Hon.

Mr. William McBRATNEY

Lt. Col.

Provincial Commissioner of the A.M.G.

at Bozen-Bolzano.

From various sides and by persons of standing several times I was asked to make a petition to the Allies in order that in the interest of public peace the Italian occupation troops might be removed. Although this would have been the general wish of the native population, I so far always refused to do so.

Since however at the present moment their anxiety has reached such a degree, I as the representative of the Church judge it my duty to present this petition to you. I decided upon this the more easily, since I heard that also the Südtiroler Volkspartei approached you with the same request. The country-folk especially are afraid of the excesses from the part of the Italian soldiers at the present, most critical moment. Terror-acts of these soldiers which are publicly known, like murders, violation, frequent unauthorized searching of houses have left a sense of uneasiness in the minds of our population. This has been increased by the many threats of these soldiers. They said: "When the country turns Austrian, before we leave, we shall put fire on your house."

Hon.

MR. WILLIAM McBRATNEY

Lt. Col.

Provincial Commissioner of the A.M.C.

at Bozen-Solzano.

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2387

2387

Considering this General fear and asked by many people I beg to present you this petition, that at least during this critical period of decision and political tension the Italian occupation-troops may be substituted by Allied forces.

I am sure, the native population will show their gratitude by exemplary conduct and behaviour.

Most respectfully yours

Johannes Giesler
Bishop



21 SEP 1945

Memorandum

71

In South Tyrol there is a strong Italian occupation troop, whose strength is meant to be of 18,000 men and 240 tanks. These troops have been developing ~~an~~ lately a strong activity by demonstration-trips with trucks filled with soldiers, who with guns etc. pointed at the ressemblable population with machine-pistols and weapons of all kinds, in all directions of our province.

As this great amount of troops is impossible meant as a defence against foreign states not against the Italian population, the South Tyrolese of course realize that only they are included in these threats, and as they have not given any reason nor foundation for such a way of acting, they feel it not only useless, but as an indication of oppression and provocation.

No day, even an hour goes by, where from different parts of the country acts of violence managed by soldiers are to be learned. Several facts have already been signalled to the A.N.G. Only on account of the calm and disciplined behaviour of our population not more - and more earnest - facts have happened, for they prefer to keep silence and to remain quiet, rather than to rouse a quarrel. By the time through this provoking behaviour and these undisciplined actions can't be born any more and our population indeed doesn't deserve to be obliged to subject herself to these.

Besides our population is looking, as tidings from all parts of our land show, with great fear and apprehension towards the day when the final decision about our country will have been made known. Whatever that may be, the South-Tyrolese people are worried that it will be the signal for acts of violence and transgressions against the South-Tyrolese, whether because one is wanting to show them that they are now completely under Italian power and no protection from another power can be expected by the population, or because one is wanting to unload thus freely ones anger by an act **2386** to date.

These apprehensions are based on a fact and again repeated threats and threats, which can be heard daily also from these soldiers.

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Whatever our population is feeling, as time goes from all parts of our land show, with great fear and apprehension towards the day when the final decision about our country will have been made known. Whatever that may be, the South-Tyrolese people are worried that it will be the signal for acts of violence and transgressions against the South-Tyrolese, whether because one is waiting to show that they are now completely under Italian power and no protection from another power can be expected by the population, or because one is waiting to uphold their freely chosen order by an undoubted decision.

These apprehensions are based on again and again repeated remarks and threats, which can be heard daily also from these soldiers themselves, so that the people can't expect any support from them, on the contrary, they have to fear such actions just from them, in front of which they're remaining weak-police.

These fears have gotten stronger by the many times repeated declarations that next the administration of the province will be handed over to the Italian authorities. The A.M.S. population sees in this change - to right or to wrong - the end of the Allied protection, whom they trust thoroughly and under which they feel themselves safe.

2386

- 2 -

70
 Typical are inscriptions on walls like: "Away the 'corredidi'! Away the Allied!" (Hedderford-Villalanza), the soldiers' declarations: "here we are the rulers, the Americans haven't to say anything!" which witness that they consider the presence of the Allied the only hindrance against these acts of violence.

To prove these aims one mentions the facts of Ison, where the Italian soldiers not only have disturbed a feast which had been arranged by the Police-leaders in occasion of a high religious holiday, and shot at the harmless population and have beaten them, but acted in a least offensive manner against an American officer and two American sergeants who were present there.

Also from the point of view of the international rights we could suggest that a territory which state-apparentness has not yet been established definitively should not be kept occupied by one of the fighting powers, but by the Allies.

In order to guarantee the maintenance of calm and order for all cases we beg to ask of you that the following cases will be taken resp. and set in order:

- 1.) Withdrawal of the Italian occupation-troops.
- 2.) Re-enforcement of the Allied occupation-troops and of the Allied Police.
- 3.) Development of the safety-services only by organs entrusted to that, who had to this purpose by a Police composed by local elements, whose erection ought to be allowed immediately.
- 4.) Let the Allied Military Government be in charge till the decision, and for all cases for a certain span of time after that event.

2385

JYD/zm

585

HEADQUARTERS
VENETIAN REGION
Allied Military Government
APO 394

~~SECRET~~
and IMMEDIATE

29 SEP 1945

TO : HQ Allied Commission (2 copies) 28 Sept 1945

SUBJECT : Bolzano Province

FILE NO : RXII/850.12

1. Ref. my RXII/850.13 of 23 September and your
585/191/EC of 25 September.

2. I have just completed a tour in the Provinces of
Verona, Vicenza, Trento, Bolzano and Udine during which I have
been able to meet with most of the AMG Officials and military
Commanders concerned.

3. I am therefore submitting this further report to
you rather than taking immediate action on the lines of your
letter of the 25 Sept. Moreover I believe that the Commanding
General PBS is perhaps now less concerned than others with
the troops in the area.

4. It will probably be most convenient if I review
briefly the present distribution of troops in the general area
of the North Western half of the Region. (Disregarding the
province of Rovigo and the XIII Corps Provinces of Udine, Tre-
viso and Venezia).

5. British troops in this area are, for administrative
purposes, under 217 area (Brig Tennant) with its Headquarters
at Bologna. 217 area is, in turn under No. 2 District (Major
General Heydeman) at Milan. 6th British Armoured Division
(Major General Murray) HQ at Padova, is for operation immediately
under AFHQ

6. United States troops in the area are under C.G. P.E.S.

7. The two Italian Gruppi, Folgore and Friuli, are, as
is understood, at present under No. 2 District but will shortly
come under the command of the Italian Ministry of

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6. United States troops in the area are under C.G. P.B.S.
7. The two Italian gruppi, Folgore and Friuli, ^{side of} ~~side of~~ is understood, at present under No. 2 District but will shortly come under the command of the Italian Ministry of War.
8. I propose to deal with troop disposition in the order, U.S., British, Italian.
9. The only substantial body of U.S. Troops still in the area comprises some 300 men of 349 Regt of the 88 Div. with HQ at Bolzano.
88 Div. is in process of moving into Venezia Giulia to relieve 34 Division, now due to return to the United States. It is therefore not expected that the 349 Regt. will remain much longer at Bolzano.
10. British troops are located as under:

Ser F93

(C10)

- 2 -

68

a) 6 British Armoured Div.: HQ - Padova (Major General Murray)
 3 Regts. of Div. Arty - Abano North Padova
 Derbyshire Yeo: W. of Padova

2nd Armoured Brigade. (Beys, 9. Lancers, 6 R. Tanks,
 1 KRRC)
 Vicenza and N.W. there of.

61st Inf.: PDE. (R. Sussex. Welch. Camerons)
 Verona and W. there of.

b) From 10 Ind. Division (Detached from Division and under
 Command 217 Area)

68th (South Midland) Pd. Regt. Lt. Col. Ashmore
 HQ. One Bty Bolzano
 One Bty Merano
 One Bty Bressanone

1 Kings Own Lt. Col. Hall
 HQ Bolzano

Troops distributed Verona to the Brenner guarding
 German prisoners etc.

c) There are other technical British Units in the Area.
 R.E. at Belluno etc. which do not effect the general
 position.

11.

There are two main Italian formations in the Area

(a) Gruppo Friuli - Major General Scattini
 HQ at Levico (S.E. of Trento)

Troops distributed in the general area - Trento - Belluno -
 Passano del Grappa -

(b) Gruppo Folgore - Major General Pialorsi
 HQ Bressanone
 Garibaldi Regt.

HQ Merano
 Bn. Appiano
 Bn. Isana
 Bn. Silandro
 HQ Dobbiaco
 Bn. Brunico
 Bn. S. Candido
 Bn. Auronzo

Nembo Regt.

Div. Arty Area Isarco - Brennero - Vipiteno - Chiuso -
 Postumia

Div. Eng. Ortisei - Chiusi

2383

both (South Atlantic) FC. Regt. Lt. Col. Ashmore

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One Bty Merano
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Bassano del Grappa -

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HQ Bressanone
Garibaldi Regt.

HQ Merano
Bn. Appiano
Bn. Lana
Bn. Silandro
HQ Dobbiaco
Bn. Brunico
Bn. S. Candido
Bn. Auronzo

Membo Regt.

2383

Div. Arty Area Isarco - Brennero - Vipiteno - Chiuso -
Postumia

Div. Eng. Ortisei - Chiusi

(c) There is the HQ of any Administrative Army Corps at Bolzano
(Lt. Gen. Megroni) but he does not have any command over
the two "Gruppi".

12. I am forwarding under separate cover further re-
presentations sent to me by Provincial Commissioner Bolzano
on the behaviour of the Folgore Division. I have spoken to
both General Pialorsi and to Lt. Col. Taylor British E.L.O.
of the Division. General Pialorsi has only fairly recently
taken command of the Division, he has the reputation of being
a fearless disciplinarian and, from my personal impression,
I am entirely inclined to agree with Col. Taylor's opinion,
that the General intends to make the Division something very

different from its recent state.

In this connection I am moreover bound to state that, on the cursory opportunities provided by a tour, I am inclined to say that the men of the Artillery and Nembo Regiments (I saw few of the Garibaldini) were smarter and better turned out than on the occasions of previous visits.

Nevertheless my personal opinion is that the finest efforts of General Pialorsi will not be able to overcome, with sufficient rapidity, his two outstanding difficulties: first the exceedingly dispersed state of his Division, rendering control difficult, and secondly the bad feeling already existing between the Division and the local inhabitants.

13. It may be true to say, as Lt. Col. Taylor maintains that there are faults on both sides. The fact remains that the animosity is there and that it is poisoning the local political and ethnical situation.

14. I was much impressed with a discussion I had with General Scattini commanding Friuli Group. He is exceedingly anxious to get his men into a part of the country where there are large barracks so that he can really get his Division in hand.

General Pialorsi had the same general intention but pointed out that his men are of necessity scattered over the countryside guarding scores of small dumps. They are also, incidentally operating a large number of road blocks, many of doubtful utility.

General Pialorsi questioned whether the time had not come for these dumps to be sold or handed over to civilian contractors who would be responsible for moving them South, and in the meantime would provide their own civilian watchmen.

15. On the other hand at Verona, Vicenza and elsewhere there are large barracks now occupied by troops of 6 Armd. Div. Comdr. 61 Inf. Bde told me that the barracks were administratively convenient but not very popular with its veteran troops who had just come out of Austrian castles and hotels. ²³⁸²

16. The "Arm Chair" solution would appear to be (a) to move Folgore down South of the Po for training. (b) To move Friuli to the area Verona - Vicenza - Trento. For training and local duties. (c) To move troops of 6 Armd. Div. up into Polzano - Belluno.

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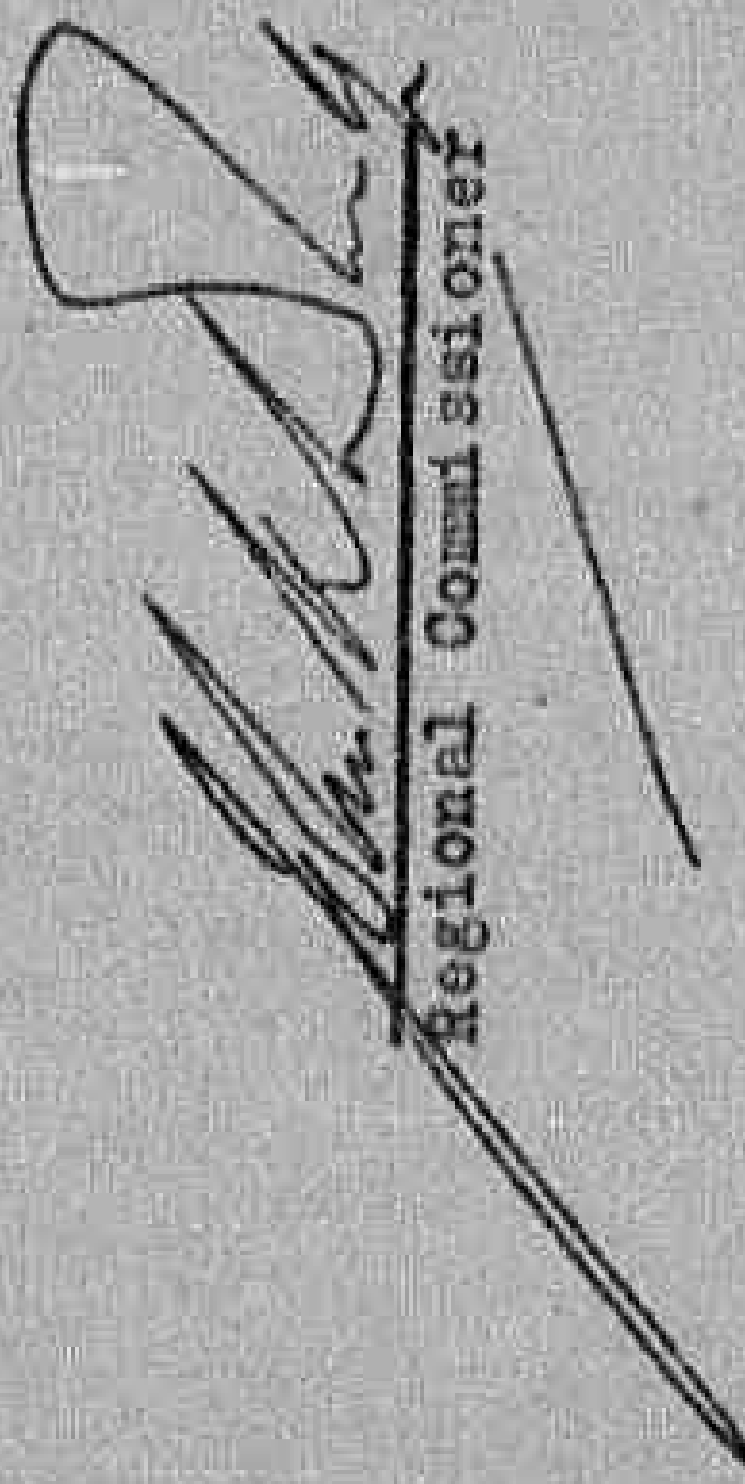
This however to be subject to the rapid abolition of any need for Guard duty on the dumps. It might be good to put a Bn of Alpini or Bersaglieri under command in the Bolzano area to do the technical frontier control.

17. I have said that the above is an "Arm Chair" solution. I have not discussed it with any of the Commanders involved. It raises political questions in the case of the move of Folgore. It means a further move for British troops who have only just

- 4 -

66
got settled in, after a move from Austria or Venezia Giulia.
It does move part of a GHQ reserve Division away from a central
locality.

I propose therefore to take no further action till I
have had your comments and, if you think fit, your instructions.


Regional Commissioner

Copy to : Provincial Commissioner Bolzano

2381

(65)

Ref: 585/20

27 September 1945

SUBJECT: Incidents in South Tyrol

TO : Regional Commissioner, Venetia Region

62-63

1. Attached is a copy of a report left at Allied Commission Headquarters by a South Tyrolean priest by name Michael Camper.
2. Please have these incidents investigated and a report submitted.

F. H. M. C. C.

Brigadier
Executive Commissioner

1 Incl:
as above

SEP 96

B/K
6/10
16/10/45

2389

785017

Grave incidents in South-Tyrol

 This was sent us by 63
 Tyrol. Priest was called
 Commission 100
 100 ago. 3 to 100 in night to
 ad. Brig. D. in 100 to 100

According to a publication of the "Ansa" and the "Giornale del Mattino", Sept. 14th 1945, De Angelis, prefect of Bozen announced that South-Tyrol would be shortly released from the control of the Allies and given over exclusively to the Italian administration. This announcement contradicts a recent allied publication, that the provinces of Bozen as well as of Trent, Belluno and Udine would remain under allied control even if in the other North Italian provinces it would end in the near future. The statement of the prefect caused serious alarm in South-Tyrol. It is the unanimous opinion of the population, that the recent bloody attacks of Italian soldiers on South-Tyrolean citizens imperiously call for the maintenance of allied control.

(1) Alpini invade a popular festival.

(M.F. 19. 10. 1945)
 100 to 100 for 100
 on 2 and 3

Since more than two and a half centuries, at Lana near Meran, St. Mary's birthday is celebrated with a religious procession in which participate not only the inhabitants of this important rural community, but also visitors from the neighbouring villages. The festival also attracts many visitors from the farther neighbourhood and offers, on account of the partakers picturesque rural costumes a folkloristic-interesting spectacle. This time also, September 9th, numerous allied soldiers arrived, who manifested a sincere rejoicing of this genuine expression of Tyrolean life. There gathered also from different places Italian soldiers who regarded the festival as a political manifestation of aboriginal customs and therefore decided to disturb it. With this obvious intention, in the afternoon of the holiday, they broke into a traditional popular festival that followed the procession. To the peaceful native partakers and to the present American soldiers the Italians pretended that only they were the masters of the country, having fought for it six years. Finally they struck with steele the partakers of the garden-festival who defended themselves equally. Meanwhile more numerous Alpini came up with fire-weapon and began to shoot into the assembly. The wounded partakers were put away by the Italian. At the writing down of this report, Sept. 10th, the number and kind of the woundings could not as yet been assured, as well as the whereabouts of the wounded - which greatly alarms the population. Of nearly a hundred partakers who were arrested with drawn revolvers most of them were released during the following night, twenty were yet in arrest the following day, when this statement was written. Two days before, the prefect of Bozen requested the political parties to conclude a pact of pacification, which they actually did. According to fit the parties bound themselves to cooperate at the pacification of the population, eventual disturbances had to be considered and condemned as an "expression of a remnant of fascist and nazist mind". The Allies participating at the festival are insuspectable witnesses that Italians broke into a peaceful popular festival, therefore it is easy to state, where the "remnant of fascist mind" has to be looked for.

785017

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(M.M.L.A. visited also
him to see for reports
on 2 and 3)

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(2) A tragedy of kidnapping at Gröden.

From Bozen the following mysterious case was announced August 24th: In the early morning of May 15th 1945 a gang of partisans went from Belluno to St. Cristina (valley of Gröden) and pulled out of his bed the schoolmaster Ploner, arrested him, nearly unvested, and threw him into an

62
autocar. The same occurred to Adolf Senone. Josef Demetz was arrested about 11 a.m. when he was occupied at the office of rationing and thrown upon an autocar, the same occurred to Riffesser Gabriel when they bound them from backwards, with wire, likewise Pitschneider Joseph. When the prisoners were transported to Corvara, where they were seen by ocular witnesses. Rossi Demetz was bound with wire to a column. He must have been much mistreated because his face was mutilated. Riffesser was hanged up on a wire; when he was nearly unconscious the partisans let him drop and threw him, hands bound backwards, down a stair. Then all the prisoners were transported by auto to Lienz. It is not exactly known, where they had been put to death. Rumor goes that yet living, they were vetted with petrol and burned. Fact is that the kidnapped were not seen anymore. The victims were: Senoner Adolf, mayor and merchant in Wolkenstein, father of four children, Pioner Engelbert, teacher in St. Cristine, father of two girls and two boys, one of them killed in action and the other one missing. Riffesser Gabriel, married, his son perished in an accident. Pitschneider Joseph, assistant teacher, father of three children.

(3) A Tyrolese peasant murdered by an Italian soldier.

Stecher, parish priest of St. Valentin under Zelde (Vinschgau, near the border of South-Tyrol and Switzerland) reports, July 1947, as follows: Joseph Eberhard, 50 years old, dwelling in St. Valentin auf der Heide (Vinschgau, on July 3rd 1945, at 12.30 p.m. was knifed and killed by a soldier of the Italian Garrison, division San Marco.

The man went to the peasant and asked from him a hen. The peasant refused, stating that he had only five hens, all laying eggs which he needed in his housekeeping. The soldier answered that he would take the hen himself and went into the stable; the peasant followed and tried to hinder him, whereas the soldier pulled out his knife and killed him with two stabs. The murdered man was father of five little children. The foul deed caused general alarm and indignation in the whole region.

Only the presence of allied forces of occupation (the more the better) is considered by the population as a guarantee against an increase of such brutal aggressions. Therefore it is the population's fervent desire, that the allied control might be continued in South-Tyrol, and they repeat the prayer (already submitted to the Allies) that South-Tyrol as well as the other contested Italian regions (Venezia Giulia, Val d'Aosta) be exclusively occupied by allied forces and that the Italian troops be removed from the country.

Rome, Sept. 15th 1945

2377

785017

Ref: 583/19820.

25 September 45.

SUBJECT: BOLEANO Province.

TO : G-3 Section,
AFHQ.

I enclose copy of a letter received from the Regional Commissioner,
Venezia. I have instructed him to consult CG, PHS on this matter.

For the Chief Commissioner:

H. TALBOT
Brigadier,
Executive Commissioner.

Incl.

2376

785017

Ref: 585/191/SC.

25 September 45.

SUBJECT: Bolzano Province.

TO : Regional Commissioner,
Venetia Region.

1. Reference your EXII/850.13 dated 23 September 45, enclosing a letter from the Provincial Commissioner regarding the situation in Bolzano.
2. Will you please consult with CG, PBS with regard to the possible movement of troops and inform this HQ of the result of your consultations.

✓ BOI
Brigadier,
Executive Commissioner.

Copy to: CG, PBS.

See 61 + 69

B/V
3/10

2375

585

~~SECRET~~
~~URGENT~~

HEADQUARTERS
VENETIAN REGION
Allied Military Government
APO 394

23 September 1945.

SEP 24 1945

TO : Headquarters, Allied Commission
Att'n: Executive Commissioner.

SUBJECT : BOLZANO PROVINCE.

FILE NO : RXII/850.13

1. I forward herewith an important letter received on the subject from Provincial Commissioner, BOLZANO.
2. I shall be in BOLZANO myself on Monday evening and shall discuss the situation further with Lt. Col. McBRATNEY.
3. Since the writing of the letter on the 18 September there are indications that the London Conference may postpone the pronouncement of a decision in the case of Italy's Frontiers. This may avert a present crisis though it may lead to a continued state of tension.
4. I have already indicated to you the desire, held by the Provincial Commissioner and myself, that the present Italian Government should make a definite and bold pronouncement of local autonomy.
5. As you know, 6 BRIT. ARMED. DIVISION with 2 ARMED BDE under command is moving into the area PADOVA - VICENZA - VERONA. It would not, I think, be too difficult to secure the move northward of units of this Division, possibly displacing VOLGONE Group southwards. In any case it might be an excellent thing for 6 ARMED DIV to carry out reconnoitring tours northwards into BOLZANO, TRENTO and BELLUNO.
6. LT. COL. McBRATNEY is, as you know, leaving for release at the end of this week. I propose, subject to your concurrence, to leave LT. Col J.B. THOMPSON in charge at BOLZANO, and, so long as I am available, to keep in close personal touch with the BOLZANO situation.

[Signature]
Regional Commissioner

2374

Encl. (1)

Copy to : Provincial Commissioner,
Bolzano.

(CSO)

See 60461

F102

COPY
(58)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
~~SECRET~~

Security within the Province of Bolzano.

19 Sept. 1945.
WEM/gi.

Hqtrs Venetia Region A.M.G. Padova.

108.

As the result of a conference with the Prefect of Bolzano I report that on the event that the London Conference decides that the Province of Bolzano is to remain a part of the Kingdom of Italy - there is a possibility that some South Tyrolian elements may create breaches of the peace.

I do not wish to indicate that any such events will necessarily have the approval of the South Tyrolian Party but that such outbreaks of feelings will be sporadic individual ones - possibly violent, certainly of an inflammatory nature.

If this situation comes to pass and I sincerely hope it does not - the methods of suppressing it by Italian troops may well be of a somewhat too vigorous nature - all of which will lead to reprisals and set in train further regrettable incidents.

Gr - Italian Troops signaling the definition of the boundaries of the Province - may by provocative acclaim or by irritating actions induce South Tyrolian retaliation.

The moment in the Province is a delicate one. I do not see that it is advisable to forwarn the South Tyrolian population for this may well suggest that violent events are expected and therefore any action of warning may be of the nature of inducement.

I believe - have always done so - that the presence of a considerable body of Allied Troops under good discipline and stationed throughout the Province would have this advantage -

1. To moderate the potential of outbreaks
2. If outbreaks occur - to impress Italian Troops to act with extreme moderation if military intervention becomes necessary.

Certainly, I think that armed military intervention should be the very last resort and that the GORE should be the medium for police duty, up to the point that it is beyond their power and then, that such armed intervention be placed in the hands of Allied Troops who will have been properly informed of the measures to be taken for public security.

-2-

54

I even would go a step further. I would advocate that orders be issued to prevent Italian troops participating in the quelling of riots and disorders up to the point that they may be attacked in their barracks (an unlikely event) where they should be, as far as possible, kept immediately after the announcement by the London Conference.

The major step to take at the moment is to get Allied Troops into the area in sufficient numbers to accommodate any untoward events that may occur - or get the Italian Troops entirely out of the area now and until after elections take place.

WILLIAM E. McBRATNEY
Lt.Col., S.R.,
Provincial Commissioner.

785017

Ref: 555/20

14 September 1945

SUBJECT: Discipline of Folgore Division

TO : Regional Commissioner, Venetia Region

I have received your letter of 6 September and noted your paragraph 5.

E. TALBOT
✓ Brigadier
Executive Commissioner

2371

Ref: 505/179/10.

15 September 1945.

SUBJECT: Folgore Division.

TO : C-5 Section,
AFHQ.

1. In your signal PX 36822 dated 10 August 45 you asked for information concerning the Folgore Division to be sent to Fifth Army, copy to you.

2. G.O.C., M.M.L.A. instituted an enquiry on the spot by his Senior Liaison Officer who accompanied an officer of Fifth Army. Their conclusions read as follows:-

"As a result of the above interviews and further discussion with the G.O.C.'s of 50 and 53 M.M.'s, I consider that there has undoubtedly been looking on a fairly extensive scale in the Folgore, and probably on a lesser scale in the Pyrali Group. Nevertheless, however, can hardly be said to exist. The original cadres of the Folgore in this particular zone was unfortunate, but I understand that it was a loss-up which of the two groups was sent.

The arrival of Gen. Maloral has undoubtedly done a great deal of good. The removal of the officers guilty of deserting by the illegal disposal of goods is essential. A general clean-out amongst the men of the M.M.L.A. Regiment is desirable, but the Regiment should be allowed to maintain its identity. No change-over of the Group is now necessary in view of general reports of cordial relations between soldiers and civilians. Indeed, the arrival of a new Group might cause an outbreak of fresh incidents.

The constitution of the Prefect of BOLZANO by a more impartial man might ease the situation, but this is a matter outside the scope of this report."

3. I accept these conclusions and regret if I have appeared to exaggerate the misdeeds of the Division, and withdraw my request for their removal.

For the Chief Commissioner

237/95H

1. In your signal BX 36922 dated 20 August 43 you asked for information concerning the Folgore Division to be sent to Fifth Army, copy to you.

2. S.O., M.M.I.A. instituted an enquiry on the spot by his Senior Liaison Officer who accompanied an officer of Fifth Army. Their communications read as follows:-

"As a result of the above interview and further discussion with the G.O. of 90 and 93 MM's, I consider that there has undoubtedly been looting on a fairly extensive scale in the Folgore, and probably on a lesser scale in the Pruli Group. The original division of the Folgore in this particular zone was unfortunate, but I understand that it was a cross-up which of the two groups was sent.

The arrival of Gen. Malorni has undoubtedly done a great deal of good. The removal of the officers guilty of benefiting by the illegal disposal of goods is essential. A general cash-out against the men of the 90th Regiment is desirable, but the Regiment should be allowed to maintain its identity.

No change-over of the Group is now necessary in view of general reports of amicable relations between soldiers and civilians. Indeed, the arrival of a new Group might cause an outbreak of fresh incidents.

The substitution of the Prefect of BELLUNO by a more impartial man might ease the situation, but this is a matter outside the scope of this report."

3. I accept these conclusions and regret if I have appeared to underestimate the misdeeds of the Division, and withdrew my request for their removal.

For the Chief Commissioner

M. S. 237135H

Prigione,
Executive Commissioner.

54

53
5.
1 c.s.o. Please see folio 4. In view of report to hand should we
signal Brig. Dunder to cease fire on this?
PwK 11/9.

2369

(See 56)

2368

785017

3685

58546

Ex Comm

63

HEADQUARTERS
VENEZIE REGION
Allied Military Government
APO 394

6 September, 1945

TO : Headquarters, Allied Commission SEP 11 1945

SUBJECT : Discipline of Folgore Division

FILE NO : RXII/ADM/148.3

1. Reference your telegram, 4081 of 23/847.
2. I have been in communication with Provincial Commissioner, Bolzano on this subject and have also discussed the matter with him.
3. He explains that Headquarters, 5th Army has, within the last few days, called on him for an exactly similar report, and that the entire file was sent to A.M.G. 5th Army.
4. In general the trouble is due to a number of small incidents rather than to one or two grave crimes. In sum, however, the Folgore Division have succeeded in creating an unfavourable impression on the local population. Part of this is certainly due to the "tough" aspect in bearing and behaviour which has characterised the division, and especially the Nembo Regiment since Sardinia days.
5. On receipt of the complete file from Provincial Commissioner, Bolzano I shall communicate with you again.

2367
[Signature]
Regional Commissioner

JKD/lgc

[Signature]
(Mr Rensley) J.K. BA 17/9

[Signature]
F-524
F-526

785017

Ref: 585/20

10 September 1945

SUBJECT: Conduct of Folgore Gruppe

TO : Civil Affairs Section
Land Forces Subcommittee

1. Reference is made to Fifth Army report of the investigation of the conduct of the Folgore Gruppe submitted by Col. E.G.P. Chavasse and dated 22 August 45.

2. Following instructions received from AFHQ, Subcommittees as under, are requested to investigate the practicability of implementing the under-mentioned recommendations contained in the last page of the report.

(a) Land Forces S/C in conjunction with Finance S/C

(1) that the Italian Government be asked to reconsider the pay-out.

(b) Civil Affairs Section (Public Safety S/c)

(2) more civil carabinieri be installed in Bolzano in addition to the troops required there.

3. AFHQ do not propose to take any action with regard to recommendations 2 and 3 of the above report.

4. The report is passed to Civil Affairs Section herewith for information.

1 Incl:
as above

Copy to: Finance S/C

R.W. KATZ
Chief Staff Officer
To Executive Commissioner

2366

B/V
19/9
Noted

(52)

(Sent to C.A.S.)
SI

785017

585
CONFIDENTIAL

ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS
G-5 Section
APO 512

3548

501

Ex. Co. 51

G-5: 091.711-1 Italy

6 September 1945

SEP - 9 1945

SUBJECT: Conduct of Fulgore Gruppo

TO : Headquarters, Allied Commission
APO 394.

1. Enclosed herewith is a letter from Headquarters 5th Army subject as above, dated 24 August 1945 covering a report of 22 August made by Colonel Chavasse of the British Liaison Section of 5th Army on conditions in the Fulgore and Friuli Group Area.

2. By direction of the Chief of Staff AFHQ, you are requested to investigate the practicability of implementing the recommendations numbered 1. and 4. on sheet six of the enclosed report.

3. For your information it is understood that Gen. Pislorsi who has recently taken over command of the Gruppo has already removed a number of unsuitable officers and has recommended to the Italian War Ministry the removal of a further 23 from the Nembo Regt. No further action is now contemplated by this Headquarters regarding recommendation No. 2. Similarly no action is being taken with respect to recommendation number 3 pending decision on current proposals for the disposal of CEM dumps, or alternatively for the relief of Italian troops from guard duties.

4. It is requested that the enclosed letter and report be returned to this Headquarters together with your views on recommendations 1. and 4. as called for above.

Incl:
as above



A. L. HAMBLIN
Brigadier General, G.S.C.
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-5

236 Folio 52
495

CONFIDENTIAL
(1 SPARE COPY ON LETTER)

785017

585
p
144

SUBJECT: Report re POLGORE Combat Group

LAND FORCES SUB-COM, A.C. (MMIA)

SD/46

3
Sep 45

TO : EXECUTIVE COMMISSIONER
: HQ ALLIED COMMISSION

(43) SEP - 4 1945

1. Will you please see copy of report attached from our Senior LO, Lt. Col. BOERTON, who accompanied Col. CHAVASSE of 5 ARMY on an investigation into the FRIULI - POLGORE Exchange.
2. Gen. BROWNING recommends that this whole matter now be considered dead and that no exchange of Gps takes place.

L. M. Ingledew
Lt. Col.
Major General
MMIA

WS

(Not Rungue)

2364
45-50

folio 55

Subject: Reply re FULGORI Combat Group.

CONFIDENTIAL

Land Forces Sub-Comm. A.C.
H.Q. M.M.I.A.

Ref LO/GA.

28 Aug 48.

- A. This report concerns a special visit paid by the Senior L.O. to the FULGORI Combat Group, in company with Col. K.G.F. Chavasse, DSO, of H.Q. 5 Army, from 19-22 Aug 45.

The visit was the result of the following exchange of communications, and I accompanied Col. Chavasse at the request of 5 Army.

1. AFHQ signal FX35175 of 7 Aug, added 5 Army with copy to Diawo and Aloca, requesting 5 Army to investigate cases of terrorism on the part of the FULGORI Group and asking whether substitution by the FRUITI Group in that area would assist matters.

2. 5 Army signal 7774 of 9 Aug in reply to above, saying that substitution would not help matters as existing conditions were due to the fact that Italian troops were not well disciplined and that there was no choice between the two Gruppi.

This signal went on to say that the Provincial Commissioner of BULZANO and the Provincial Commissioner of TRENTO agreed that no improvement would result from the suggested change-over. The switch would take a long time owing to the dispersed lay-out of both Gruppi and was NOT recommended.

3. ALOCA signal 3776 of 16 Aug which pointed out that the Italian Govt had specifically asked for the change-over and that on political grounds it was considered most necessary. The Regional Commissioners fully supported this view and felt that his Provincial Commissioners were probably swayed by their desire to have no troops at all. If complete Group not removed, the signal requested that the NEMO Regt, as most undesirable, should be substituted.

4. AFHQ signal FX36257 of 17 Aug, in reply to (2) above, presumes allegations re FULGORI substantially true. Such a state of unsatisfactory discipline will not be tolerated. Agreed that relief was not desirable. There would be no useful purpose in replacing FULGORI by Allied troops as in any case Italians would have to assume responsibility in September. Senior Allied Commander directs that action be taken urgently in conjunction with MIA to raise standard of discipline in FULGORI; 5 Army to forward comments and recommendations.

5. AFHQ signal FX36521 of 18 Aug. Confirms acceptance of 5 Army recommendation of non change-over (see 2 above) and goes on to say that 5 Army and later Diawo will doubtless replace all or part of FULGORI if such future action considered necessary.

C.I. 43

785017

5 Army, from 19-22 Aug 45.
The visit was the result of the following exchange of communications, and I accompanied Col. Chavasse at the request of 5 Army.

1. AFHQ signal FK33475 of 7 Aug, added 5 Army with copy to Distwo and Alcom, requesting 5 Army to investigate cases of terrorism on the part of the FOLGORE Group and asking whether substitution by the FRIULI Group in that area would assist matters.

2. 5 Army signal 7771 of 9 Aug in reply to above, saying that substitution would not help matters as existing conditions were due to the fact that Italian troops were not well disciplined and that there was no choice between the two Gruppi.

This signal went on to say that the Provincial Commissioner of BOLZANO and the Provincial Commissioner of TRIESTE agreed that no improvement would result from the suggested change-over. The switch would take a long time owing to the dispersed lay-out of both Gruppi and was NOT recommended.

3. ALCOM signal 3776 of 16 Aug which pointed out that the Italian Govt had specifically asked for the change-over and that on political grounds it was considered most necessary. The Regional Commissioners fully supported this view and felt that his Provincial Commissioners were probably swayed by their desire to have no troops at all. If complete Group not removed, the signal requested that the NEMBO Regt, as most undesirable, should be substituted.

4. AFHQ signal FK36237 of 17 Aug, in reply to (2) above, premises allegations re FOLGORE substantially true. Such a state of unsatisfactory discipline will not be tolerated. Agreed that relief was not desirable. There would be no useful purpose in replacing FOLGORE by Allied troops as in any case Italians would have to assume responsibility in September. Senior Allied Commander directs that action be taken urgently in conjunction with MIA to raise standard of discipline in FOLGORE; 5 Army to forward comments and recommendations.

5. AFHQ signal FK36524 of 18 Aug. Confirms acceptance of 5 Army recommendation of non change-over (see 2 above) and goes on to say that 5 Army and later Distwo will doubtless replace all or part of FOLGORE if such future action considered necessary.

6. 53 BLU signal O 135 of 10 Aug and 50 BLU signal O 136 of 10 Aug (in both cases copies to MIA) recommend that change-over is NOT effected.

B. The following individuals were interviewed by Col. Chavasse and myself.

1. Provincial Commissioner BOLZANO (Lt. Col. Macfarlane)
2. Cmd FOLGORE Combat Group (Gen. Pialorsi)
3. Sindaco of BRUNICO.
4. Cmd 3rd Bn NEMBO Regt (Major Déazy)
5. Cmd NEMBO Regt (Col. Ronco)
6. Secretary of Sindaco of CORTINA d'AMPEZZO.
7. Cmd IV Territorial HQ BOLZANO (Gen. Negroni)
8. Provincial Commissioner TRIESTE (Major Davis)
9. Cmd FRIULI Combat Group (Gen. Scattini)

(2)

In addition, the matter was discussed with GSO 1's of 50 and 53 ELU's.

One large dump of captured enemy material concerning which there had been reports of losses, and which was guarded by men of the NEMBO Regt, was visited. A summary of points noted will be found later on in this report.

C. As a result of our questioning, the following information was brought to light.

1. Lt. Col. MacBratney (AMG Prov Cosmar BOLZANO)

There have in the past been a large number of petty complaints and some major ones against the FOLGORI. These complaints have fallen off recently and the Prov Cosmar has ceased to bother about them. No major cases have been reported recently. There was one recent case of a black market cognac deal in which soldiers were involved. Also, on 12 and 13 August, some men of the FOLGORI in company with civilians, demonstrated outside the Police Barracks at BRESCIA and demanded the release of some other civilians who had been arrested. Shots were fired by the CC.RR but no casualties had resulted and the demonstrators dispersed.

Prov Cosmar said that the local German-speaking population probably regarded the arrival of the FOLGORI as the first demonstration of Italian Govt control over Southern TIROL. At the back of their minds they do not want to belong to ITALY. It was significant that most of the houses which had suffered thefts were Tyrolean and not Italian.

Prov Cosmar reckoned that nearly all the soldiers had feathered their nests and had at least 10,000 lire in their pockets. He quoted an instance of a FOLGORI man offering half a million lire for a car, and producing the money out of his pocket.

Said that CC.RR might be better than the FOLGORI, but NOT another Gruppo, as there was the danger that a new Gruppo might copy the previous one and start lining their own pockets.

Said that the Prefect of BOLZANO is Socialist and has always recommended the substitution of the FOLGORI by CC.RR.

Prov Cosmar's general opinion is that things are now quiet and that the behaviour of the FOLGORI has improved.

2362

2. General Pialorsi (Omd FOLGORI Combat Group)

On taking over the Gruppo from Gen. Morigi, he found it much better than he had been led to expect. He has got rid of several fairly senior officers and has forwarded a further list of 25 officers to the Ministry of War for removal.

Believes that the present state of discipline is fairly good, and is confident that the men will obey the orders of their officers if they have to act in aid of the civil power.

Invited us to speak to local civil authorities and obtain their views.

The General has spoken to the NEMBO and told them not to be so "paratroop".

Said he was favourably impressed by the first 500 men of the Garibaldi Regt, who are replacing the San Marco Marine Regt, but says that the new Regt is at least 1000 better.

major ones against the POLSORE. These complaints have fallen off recently and the Prov Comar has ceased to bother about them. No major cases have been reported recently. There was one recent case of a black market cognac deal in which soldiers were involved. Also, on 12 and 13 August, some men of the POLSORE in company with civilians, demonstrated outside the Police Barracks at BRESCIA and demanded the release of some other civilians who had been arrested. Shots were fired by the CC, RR but no casualties had resulted and the demonstrators dispersed.

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Believes that the present state of discipline is fairly good, and is confident that the men will obey the orders of their officers if they have to act in aid of the civil power.

Invited us to speak to local civil authorities and obtain their views.

The General has spoken to the NEBO and told them not to be so "paratroop".

Said he was favourably impressed by the first 500 men of the Garibaldi Regt, who are replacing the San Marco Marine Regt, but says that the new Regt is at least 1000 below strength as compared to the San Marco.

Would welcome northerners as reinforcements to make up this deficiency, particularly in view of fact that the Garibaldi Regt are largely Alpine troops. He is working out a plan for their training, but it will be very difficult in view of dump-guarding duties.

The Vice-Comd and Chief of Staff of the Gruppo were present at this interview.

3. Mayor of RUMICCO.

Tyrolean. Said that the men of the POLSORE had definitely stolen quite a lot of people's property, but that the civilians had also done so; it was mainly due to the lack of carabinieri in the district.

For example, the troops took tyres and sold them to civilians. It was impossible to trace the receivers. There had not been much theft lately as there was not much left to steal. Had not heard of any money being stolen.

(3)

Mayor of REUNIO (continued)

There had been trouble in the local hotel owing to the troops demanding food and creating a disturbance when supplies ran out. The Mayor had obtained help from the local military commander (Major Desay) who had posted H.C.O.'s at the hotel during meal hours. This had put a stop to further incidents.

There had been no cases of shooting, no trouble in connection with the female population, and no major incidents of any kind. On the whole, relations between soldiers and civilians were good.

4. Major Desay (Cmd 3rd Bn NEMBO Regt at REUNIO)

This officer gave a very favourable impression. He has been in REUNIO only about 3 weeks, during which time there have been no major incidents. He keeps in close touch with the Mayor and has told him to come and report any trouble at once.

He has assisted local authorities by repairing bridges, etc, and relations are cordial.

Part of his command are permanently engaged on searching for German escaped SS men in the mountains.

5. Colonel Ramco (Cmd NEMBO Regt ; Hq at DOBRIACO)

Stated that there had been only two major incidents in the Regiment during the past 3 months :-

- (a) A case of murder, which was not unprovoked. Two men of the Regt had been severely beaten up by about 20 local pro-nazis. As a reprisal two Sardinian soldiers of the Regt had gone to the house of one of the ring-leaders, and after some altercation, shot him. The culprit has since been awarded 18 years imprisonment. Col. Ramco paid for the funeral expenses and gave the widow 5000 Lire.
- (b) A case of rape, which is still under investigation. Col. Ramco says however that he has a statement from the girl concerned to the effect that she consented, but had to invent the story of rape in order to justify her condition to her fiancé. This same girl was stated to have had her hair cut off by the soldiers ; the Colonel has seen her and states that this is not the case.

The Colonel stated that on arrival in the area he had been asked whether the appointments of Mayors should go to Italians or to Tyroleans. He had replied that in view of the fact that two thirds of the local population were German-speaking, the local Mayors should be Tyroleans. He himself is on very good terms with the civil authorities and has given them assistance in many ways. His Regt is non-political, it is anything anti-communist.

Said that there was a definite Nazi element amongst the Sud-Tyrol Volkspartei, which is an organisation working for the return of the S. Tyrol to Austria. These extremists (a minority in the Party) invent

4. Major Perry (Cmd 3rd Bn MEMO Regt at BRUNICO)

This officer gave a very favourable impression. He has been in BRUNICO only about 3 weeks, during which time there have been no major incidents. He keeps in close touch with the Mayor and has told him to cease and report any trouble at once.

Has assisted local authorities by repairing bridges, etc., and relations are cordial.

Part of his command are permanently engaged on searching for German escaped SS men in the mountains.

5. Colonel Ronco (Cmd MEMO Regt ; BQ at DOBIACO)

Stated that there had been only two major incidents in the Regiment during the past 3 months :-

- (a) A case of murder, which was not unprovoked. Two men of the Regt had been severely beaten up by about 20 local pro-nazis. As a reprisal two Sardinian soldiers of the Regt had gone to the house of one of the ring-leaders, and after some altercation, shot him. The culprit has since been awarded 18 years imprisonment. Col. Ronco paid for the funeral expenses and gave the widow 5000 Lire.

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The Colonel stated that on arrival in the area he had been asked whether the appointants of Mayors should go to Italians or to Tyroleans. He had replied that in view of the fact that two thirds of the local population were German-speaking, the local Mayors should be Tyroleans. He himself is on very good terms with the civil authorities and has given them assistance in many ways. His Regt is non-political, but is anything anti-communist.

Said that there was a definite Nazi element amongst the Sud-Tyrol Volkspartei, which is an organisation working for the return of the S. TYROL to AUSTRIA. These extremists (a minority in the Party) invent and spread stories about POLCORE misdoings, which are generally unfounded. In Col. Ronco's opinion the Prefect of BOLZANO, though a self-professed Socialist, is in reality ultra-Communist and is at the bottom of the trouble and magnifies small incidents to the detriment of the POLCORE.

As an example of cordial relations existing between military and civilians, Col. Ronco said that over 100 civilians had recently attended the funeral of one of his men who had been accidentally killed ; this was entirely spontaneous and on their own initiative.

(4)

6. Secretary to Mayor of CORTINA.

Had nothing but good words for the behaviour of the NEMEO men stationed in this town. There had been no trouble whatsoever.

7. General Negroni (Cmd IV Territorial HQ, BOLZANO)

Said that he had never had the POLONE under his command, but only administratively. Could therefore speak frankly as a looker-on.

On arrival in the area the POLONE looked like everyone else. It was the result of disturbed conditions at the end of hostilities, and the same had occurred after the last war. What the civilians resented was that the Gruppo had behaved like occupying troops of a foreign power, and not like liberators of their own land.

There had been a mass of captured material and the temptation to turn things to their own advantage had been too much for them. There was also the desire to keep as much material in ITALY and prevent it falling into Allied hands and leaving the country. Officers as well as men were in the racket and for this reason the discipline of the Gruppo had been undermined. The officers could no longer order the troops to desist as the latter all knew that their officers had also benefitted. This state of affairs had apparently been tolerated by Gen. Morigl.

The arrival of Gen. Pialorsi had greatly improved the situation. He was an honest man, energetic and quick to take action. He has removed some of the culprits amongst the officers and is combing out more.

Gen. Negroni regards the substitution of the San Marco Regt by the Garibaldi as a good thing. He would like to see the NEMEO removed too, or anyway "expurated". There is no need to touch the HQ, Services, Artillery Regt or Engineer Bn of the POLONE, who are all good.

Relations between the Gruppo and civilians has now greatly improved and there is no resentment as regards the retention of the Gruppo in the area except on political grounds. For instance, the "Volkspartei" do not like having Italian troops in the area. The Prefect of BOLZANO originally advocated administrative autonomy for TRENTO and BOLZANO, which was all right as far as it went. He subsequently started spreading socialist republican propaganda instead of keeping to a policy of reconstruction. The Prefect now regards the presence of the POLONE in the area as an obstacle to his political aims in view of the forthcoming elections.

He receives reports from his party and exaggerates them to bring disfavor on the Gruppo.

Gen. Negroni thinks that the original choice of an Italian Combat Group for this particular area was a mistake. Carabinieri would be more popular as they go down well with the German-speaking population. The necessity for troops would, however, remain. The OLPR would maintain public order

occurred after the last war. That the civilians resented was that the Gruppo had behaved like occupying troops of a foreign power, and not like liberators of their own land.

There had been a mass of captured material and the temptation to turn things to their own advantage had been too much for them. There was also the desire to keep as much material in ITALY and prevent it falling into Allied hands and leaving the country. Officers as well as men were in the racket and for this reason the discipline of the Gruppo had been undermined. The officers could no longer order the troops to desist as the latter all knew that their officers had also benefitted. This state of affairs had apparently been tolerated by Gen. Morigi.

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Gen. Negroni regards the substitution of the San Marco Regt by the Garibaldi as a good thing. He would like to see the MASMO removed too, or anyway "expatriated". There is no need to touch the HQ, Services, Artillery Regt or Engineer Bn of the POLCORE, who are all good.

Relations between the Gruppo and civilians has now greatly improved and there is no resentment as regards the retention of the Gruppo in the area except on political grounds. For instance, the "Volkspartei" do not like having Italian troops in the area. The Prefect of BOLZANO originally advocated administrative autonomy for TRENTO and BOLZANO, which was all right as far as it went. He subsequently started spreading socialist republican propaganda instead of keeping to a policy of reconstruction. The Prefect now regards the presence of the POLCORE in the area as an obstacle to his political aims in view of the forthcoming elections.

He receives reports from his party and exaggerates them to bring disfavor on the Gruppo.

2369

Gen. Negroni thinks that the original choice of an Italian Combat Group for this particular area was a mistake. Garabinieri would be more popular as they go down well with the German-speaking population. The necessity for troops would however remain. The CC.RR would maintain public order but would require the backing of the troops for any major disturbance.

A French Mission was in the BOLZANO area last May. The apparent idea was to unite the people of ALTO ADIGE to form a bloc under French protection against Russian influence. This Mission was requested to leave by the Americans.

Gen. Negroni stated that in his opinion the PRIMI Group had not had the same temptations and opportunities for looting as the POLCORE. The PRIMI was composed of a more stable type of men, largely German, and their discipline had been better and fewer changes had been necessary.

The Volkspartei do not give any trouble. They are quiet and unthreatening and are rather waiting to see what the future will bring. They will probably co-operate peacefully with ITALY, as it would be to their advantage economically.

Gen. Negroni concluded by expressing a hope that the Allies will remain for some time in this part of ITALY, at any rate until the Italians can themselves organise things on sound lines.

(5)

39

8. Major Mavis (AMEZ TRUNTO)

Confirmed that relations between military and civilians were satisfactory. There had been no serious incidents in TRUNTO.

He had had experience of both Gruppi and did not consider the FRILLI any better than the POLGORS.

In his opinion the Italian Guards over dumps sell material to the civil population. (Comd 50 HLU states that he has had no reports to this effect from Major Mavis).

Said that road blocks afford opportunity for extracting hush money from civilians carrying doubtful cargoes.

There are about 700 OC.HR in the district but they are widely dispersed and cannot check up on everything.

9. Gen. Scattini (Comd FRILLI Combat Group)

Was much opposed to change-over of the two Gruppi as he considered that morale would suffer.

Considers that relations between his men and local civilians are cordial. Was reticent about "incidents" but gave the impression that there had been several of minor importance.

10. Visit to Captured Enemy Material Dump near BRUMIO.

The dump is a few miles East of BRUMIO and is off the main road and concealed in a wood. There are several huts containing a quantity of valuable material including wireless parts, whilst other material and vehicles are parked or stacked in the open under the trees.

German personnel are engaged in sorting the stores under U.S. supervision. The Guard however is provided by the HESBO Regt.

A theft of wireless valves had occurred some time previously. On being questioned, the Italian Lieutenant (who has 17 men available for Guard duties) stated that the valves had disappeared during the time when German personnel were sleeping in the huts, and before his men took over.

As this was all "old history" and the subject of an enquiry carried out about two months ago by 5 Army, we did not pursue the matter further; but it is interesting to note that this is possibly an instance of the Italians being wrongly blamed for loss of stores.

The Licutenant has now made a complete inventory of all the stores and seems to have the situation in hand. It was pointed out to him that the two existing sentries by night are insufficient for such a large dump, to which access can easily be gained through the very scanty wire surround.

B. Conclusion.

2354

As a result of the above interviews and further discussion with the GSO 1's of 50 and 53 HLU's, I consider that there has undoubtedly been looting on a fairly extensive scale in the POLGORS, and probably on a lesser scale in the FRILLI Group.

9. Gen. Scattini (Command Friuli Combat Group)

Was much opposed to change-over of the two Gruppi as he considered that morale would suffer.

Considers that relations between his men and local civilians are cordial. Was reticent about "incidents" but gave the impression that there had been several of minor importance.

10. Visit to Captured Enemy Material Dump near BUDNICO.

The dump is a few miles East of BUDNICO and is off the main road and concealed in a wood. There are several huts containing a quantity of valuable material including wireless parts, whilst other material and vehicles are parked or stacked in the open under the trees.

German personnel are engaged in sorting the stores under U.S. supervision. The Guard however is provided by the NEMBO Regt.

A theft of wireless valves had occurred some time previously. On being questioned, the Italian Lieutenant (who has 17 men available for Guard duties) stated that the valves had disappeared during the time when German personnel were sleeping in the huts, and before his men took over.

As this was all "old history" and the subject of an enquiry carried out about two months ago by 5 Army, we did not pursue the matter further; but it is interesting to note that this is possibly an instance of the Italians being wrongly blamed for loss of stores.

The Lieutnant has now made a complete inventory of all the stores and seems to have the situation in hand. It was pointed out to him that the two existing sentries by night are insufficient for such a large dump, to which access can easily be gained through the very scanty wire surround.

D. Conclusion.

2359

As a result of the above interviews and further discussion with the GSO 1's of 50 and 53 HLI's, I consider that there has undoubtedly been looting on a fairly extensive scale in the POLCORE, and probably on a lesser scale in the FRIULI Group.

Terrorisation, however, can hardly be said to exist.

The original choice of the POLCORE in this particular zone was unfortunate, but I understand that it was a toss-up which of the two groups was sent.

The arrival of Gen. Pialorsi has undoubtedly done a great deal of good. The removal of the officers guilty of benefitting by the illegal disposal of goods is essential. A gradual comb-out amongst the men of the NEMBO Regt is desirable, but the Regt should be allowed to maintain its identity.

No change-over of the Gruppi is now necessary in view of general reports of cordial relations between soldiers and civilians. Indeed, the arrival of a new Gruppo might cause an outbreak of fresh incidents.

The substitution of the Prefect of BOLZANO by a more impartial man might ease the situation, but this is a matter outside the scope of this report.

Gen. Scattini

ad/P.M.M. BURNHAM, Lieut-Col. G.S.O. 1 (L)
M.M.I.A.

785017

(36)
122

RO VENETIE REGION

4081

23 August 1945

ROUTINE

~~SECRET~~ PD

PREFECT OF BOLZANO HAS COMPLAINED TO ITALIAN GOVERNMENT OF LACK OF
DISCIPLINE OF FOLGORE GRUPPO PD

PAREN TO AMB VENEZIA REGION FOR REGIONAL COMMISSIONER FROM HQ ALCON
CITE ACEXO PAREN

PLEASE SEND SOONEST REPORT ON ANY SPECIFIC INCIDENTS OF MISBEHAVIOUR
OF FOLGORE GRUPPO

Copy to:

Land Forces S/O (MIA)
C.A. Suc

R. W. KEMPLET
Exec. Officer.

284

J.O.A.

2358

(BU folio 12/17)
31/9 NOTED
PA
Sent 17/11/45
25/9

785017

Ref: 585/121/EC.

34 August 1945.

My dear Mr. Prime Minister,

With further reference to your letter number 557 of 20 July 1945, on the subject of the misbehaviour of the Folgore Gruppo in the Alto Adige and your request that they be removed from that area, Allied Force Headquarters have now asked for a report on any specific incidents of misbehaviour of the Folgore Gruppo.

I should be grateful, therefore, my dear Mr. Prime Minister, if you would send me any such details you can obtain or have at your disposal so that I may forward them to Allied Force Headquarters.

Yours very truly,

ELMER W. STONE
Rear Admiral, USNR
Chief Commissioner

Professor Ferruccio Parri
President of the Council of Ministers
Italian Government
ROME

2357

Copies 101

CHIEF C-MR
C. A. Sec.
HARD FORCUS S.C.

See Annex 1

785017

SECRET

Ex Comme

(30)

EX 36922

AUG 20 1945

EX 36922

AUG 21 1945

IMPORTANT

From: AREA STATED CAPTION CHIEF FIRST

TO: ALLIED COMMISSION RPT 5th ARMY, DISTRO, MELA

AUG 21 1945

7/11

SECRET.

Ref request in para 2 5 AREA signal 3699 of 19th August. Please forward all relevant information direct to 5th ARMY forthwith copy to this HQ.

DIST

ACTION LAND FORCES 2
INFO CHIEF COMMISSION
EX COMMISSION 2
C A 100
P 100
FILE

CONFIDENTIAL

SECRET

(Das Kerner)

HEADQUARTERS
21 AUG 1945
2356
see 19/15-1/16

785017

DRAFT

Ref: 585/ /EO

August 1945

My dear Mr. Prime Minister,

With further reference to your letter number 557 of 20 July 1945, on the subject of the misbehaviour of the POLGORE ~~truppe~~ Divisions in the Alto Adige, and your request that they be removed from that area, Allied Force Headquarters have now asked for a report on any specific incidents of misbehaviour of the POLGORE GRUPPO.

I should be grateful, therefore, my dear Mr. Prime Minister, if you would send me any such details ^{as obtain or} you have at your disposal so that I may forward them to Allied Force Headquarters.

Yours very truly,

ELLERY W. STONE
Rear Admiral, USNR
Chief Commissioner

Professor Ferruccio Parri
President of the Council of Ministers
Italian Government
ROME

32
H8
2355

785017

(29)

DRAFT

OUTGOING MESSAGE

TO: RC VAREZZE REGION

4081

22 August 1945

ROUTINE

~~SECRET~~
~~RECOMMENDED~~ PD

Prefect of Bolzano has complained to Italian Port of call of discipline of Folgore Gruppo.
Please send soonest report on any specific incidents

PAREN

PAREN

of misbehaviour of FOLGORE Gruppo.

Copy to:

Land Forces Sub-Comm. (MMIA)

Office of Exec. Comm.

284

2354

785017

SECRET3699
AUG 1914308F/1529
AUG 2009308
PRIORITY

From: 5 ARMY

To: AFHQ RTD TWBIST, ALCOM, MSLA

AUG 20 1945

SECRET.

1. Felt our AD 7771 largely misinterpreted. Single intent was to present opinion this HQ that no advantage would be gained by exchange of Italian GRUPP C-1 in BOLEANO area. No acceptance of responsibility on part of FO SCORRE group for matters charged in AFHQ radio FX 39175 was intended.

2. Investigation directed in FREEDOM's radio FX 36237 will be conducted forthwith and any action found to be necessary as result thereof will be taken. To assist in this and to ensure common understanding it is requested that all pertinent reported (?) in the hands of your HQ with detailed description of known disorders or instances of misbehavior charged to members of Italian GRUPP C-1 be furnished this HQ at once.

DIST

INFO-ACTION: L. Forces SC
INFO: Chief Commissioner
Ex Commissioner 2
CA Sec
P. Safety SC
File

SECRET

SEE PIN - 140 - 141

(Per Kennedy)

785017

8251 285
INCOMING MESSAGE

HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMUNICATION

Originator's Reference: **FX 36521**

Date/Time of Origin: **AUG 18 1945**

Message Centre No: **F/4402**

Date Time Rec'd: **AUG 19 0900**

Precedence: **ROUTINE**

FROM: **AFHQ SIGNED SACRED CITE PHOOT**

TO: **ACTION ALCOM INFO 5 ARMY DISTWO**

AUG 20 1945

SECRET.

Reference your 3776 of 16 August.

1. 5th Army's recommendations in their 7771 of 9 August accepted by this HQ
our FX 36237 of 17 August refers.

2. 5th Army and later DISTWO will doubtless replace all or part of VOLGORE GRUPPO
IFV in future such action is considered desirable.

HEADQUARTERS

19 AUG 1945

DIST

ACTION: Ex Commissioner 3

INFO: Chief Commissioner

CA Sec

L. Process 30

P. Safety 30

File

SECRET

2352 (140141)

(A. K. K. K.)

785017

~~SECRET~~EX 36237
AUG 17 1945F/4164
AUG 17 1945
URGENTFRENCH SIGNED SIGNED CITE MONT
ACTION 5TH ARMY INFO DISTWO, ALCON

HEADQUARTERS

18 AUG 1945

AUG 18 1945

A. C.

~~SECRET~~

Reference your 7771.

1. Presume from your para 1 that allegations regarding conduct of the FOLGONE GRUPPO which have reached this headquarters are substantially true. Such a state of unsatisfactory discipline will not be tolerated it is agreed that mutual relief of FRIELI and FOLGONE is undesirable. In view of para 1 of our FX 32362 no useful purpose would be served in replacing FOLGONE GRUPPO by Allied troops at this time, since Italian troops would have to reassume responsibility in September.

2. All Italian GRUPPI are to be included in a force of 140000 which will be handed back to Italian Government in September. As stated in para 1 of our FX32362 it is the policy of this headquarters to make this force of 140000 as efficient as possible.

3. The Supreme Allied Commander directs that you take action urgently in conjunction with MMIA, to raise the standard of discipline in FOLGONE GRUPPO and forward any further comments or recommendations regarding the question to this headquarters.

~~SECRET~~

DIST
INFO-ACTION: Land Forces
INFO-ACTION: CA Sec
INFO: Chief Commissioner
Ry Commissioner 2
Pub Safety
File 2
Fleet

785017

25

G-5, AMHQ FOR ACTION RPT FIVE ARMY AND DISTWO FOR INFO

3871

18 August 45

ROUTINE

SECRET ID

244

REPEATED THIS NOW QUEN SIGNAL THREE SEVEN SEVEN SIX OF ONE SIX AUGUST PD
PARISH TO GEORGE DASH FIVE AMHQ FOR ACTION RPT FOR INFO TO FIVE ARMY AND
DISTWO FROM HQ ALARM CITY ALARM PARISH

IN THIRD LINE PARA TWO FOR QUOTE BECO UNQUOTE READ QUOTE NERD UNQUOTE
RECEIVED

Amended

CC:

Chief Counselor
QA Section
Lead Forces Sub-Com.

Office of Exec. Comm.

451

2350

785017

3871

107
24

G-5, AFHQ FOR ACTION REPEAT FIVE ARMY AND DISTWO FOR INFO

3776

16 AUGUST 45

ROUTINE

CONFIDENTIAL
SECRET

20

PARA ONE PD REFERENCE FIVE ARMY TELEGRAM SEVEN SEVEN ONE OF NINE AUGUST CMA
I WOULD ASK YOU TO NOTE THAT THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS SPECIFICALLY ASKED FOR
THE SUBSTITUTION OF THE FRIULI FOR THE FOLGORE AND THAT ON POLITICAL GROUNDS IT
IS DEEMED MOST NECESSARY THAT THE SUBSTITUTION SHOULD TAKE PLACE PD REGIONAL
COMMISSIONER WITH WHOM I HAVE DISCUSSED THE MATTER IN ROME FULLY SUPPORTS THIS
RECOMMENDATION AND FEELS THAT HIS PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONERS ARE POSSIBLY SWAYED
BY THEIR DESIRE TO HAVE NO REPEAT NO ITALIAN TROOPS AT ALL PD

PARA TWO TO GEORGE DASH FIVE AFHQ FOR ACTION REPTD FOR INFO TO FIVE ARMY AND DISTWO
FROM HQ ALCON CITE ACRXC PARA

PARA TWO PD IF CMA IN SPITE OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT AND
THIS COMMISSION CMA SUBSTITUTION IS NOT MADE IN TOTO CMA I WOULD ASK THAT AT ANY
RATE THE ¹²⁷⁸⁰ ~~REMO~~ REGIMENT WHICH IS THE MOST UNDESIRABLE OF THE FOLGORE GRUPPO CMA
BE SUBSTITUTED WITHOUT DELAY PD

See File 132

Office of Exec Commr

A. E. ARNOLDY.

C. A. Sec.

Chief Commr

C. A. Sec.

LAND FORCES S.C.

22423) F 25
17
16
9

(DRAFT).

TO : AFHQ for G-5. Info: 5th Army District

1. Reference 5 Army telegram 774 of 9 August, I would ask you to note that the Italian Government has specifically asked for the substitution of the FRIVOLI for the FOLCORE and that on political grounds it is deemed most necessary that the substitution should take place. Regional Commissioner with whom I have discussed the matter in ROME fully supports this recommendation and feels that his Provincial Commissioners are possibly swayed by their desire to have no repeat no Italian troops at all.

2. If, in spite of the recommendations of the Italian Government and this Commission, substitution is not made in toto, I would ask that at any rate the ~~XXXXXX~~ Regt which is the most undesirable of the FOLCORE GRUPPO, be substituted without delay.

3776

Cleared with PMIA (Colson) - no comments

MP 14/8

2348

(29)

would ask you to note that the Italian Government has specifically asked for the substitution of the FRIULI for the FOLGORE and that on political grounds it is deemed most necessary that the substitution should take place. Regional Commissioner with whom I have discussed the matter in ROME fully supports this recommendation and feels that his Provincial Commissioners are possibly seayed by their desire to have no repeat no Italian troops at all.

2. If, in spite of the recommendations of the Italian Government and this Commission, substitution is not made in toto, I would ask that at any rate the ~~XXXX~~ Regt which is the most undesirable of the FOLGORE GROUP, be substituted without delay.

3776

Cleared with AMIA (Edison) - no comments

MP 4/8

23/8

(129)

(see)

785017

~~SECRET~~

585

EXEC Com 10

7771

AUG 091755B

F/3320

AUG 101115B

ROUTINE

5TH ARMY

AFHQ. INFO: DISTWO, ALOCH

CONFIDENTIAL

AUG 10 1945

~~SECRET~~

Investigation conducted as directed AFHQ HAD P33175 of 7th August indicates unsatisfactory conditions attributed to FOLCORE GRUPPO will not be corrected by substitution of PRIULI GRUPPO for FOLCORE GRUPPO. Conditions existing are caused by fact that Italian troops are not well disciplined and there is no choice between the 2 gruppes mentioned in this respect.

2. Provincial Commissioners of BOLZANO and TRENTO agree that no improvement in situation will result from shift of gruppes.

3. The switch is possible but would take an appreciable period of time due to fact that both gruppes are widely spread.

4. Recommend substitution of PRIULI for FOLCORE not be directed.

Dist

Info-Action - Land Forces 2

Info - Chief Commissioner

Exec Commr 2

CA Sect

P Safety

File

RECEIVED

10 AUG 1945

CONFIDENTIAL

~~SECRET~~

2047

(MAY K) 2047

785017

585
ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS
G-5 Section
APO 512

Ex. Com
TRJ/as
(19)
970

G-5: 091.711-1

8 August 1945

SUBJECT: Relief of Folgore Division.

TO : Headquarters, Allied Commission, APO 512. (10) AUG 9 1945

1. Reference is made to your 585/90/EC of 2 August. (13)
2. Your attention is drawn to this HQ signal FK33175 of 7 August information copy to you.

For the Asst. Chief of Staff, G-5:

9 AUG 1945

T. B. Jackson
T. B. JACKMAN
Lt. Colonel

2346

(max)

785017

18

Ref: 585/102/EC.

16 August 1945.

My dear Mr. Prime Minister:

With reference to your letter of 30 July 1945, No. 557, and further to my letter of 5 August 1945, reference 585/90/EC, I agree that it is desirable to reinforce the CO,RR in Bologna.

In Allied Military Government territory, however, CO,RR stations are barely at their proper strength and I should be opposed to reducing these stations below strength in order to reinforce Bologna.

Would it be possible for you to consider reinforcing the CO,RR in Bologna by transfer of a number from any areas in Italian Government territory where they are over strength and whence they can be spared. I will arrange for an officer of the Public Safety Sub-Commission to discuss details with the General Commanding, CO,RR.

Yours very truly,

/s/ Ellery W. Stone

ELLERY W. STONE
Rear Admiral, USNR
Chief Commissioner

Professor Ferruccio Parri,
President of the Council of Ministers,
Italian Government,
ROME.

Copies To:

CHIEF COMAK
HANO FORCES SC
CA-SUC

2345

11/14-17
11/14-17
4/9

CONFIDENTIAL

33175

AUG 07/1945

AFHQ 310000 PACIFIC CITE FROCT
5th ARMY INFO DISTWO, AIGCM

7/3433

AUG 07/1945

INAD-ITY

AUG 6 1945

CONFIDENTIAL

Para 1. FROCT GRP/0 reported unsatisfactory in present role and location, owing
looting and provocative behaviour towards inhabitants.

Para 2. Request you investigate and report whether substitution of FROCT GRP/0
would improve situation and whether this possible.

Para 3. If feasible and desirable request you arrange earliest.

INFO

INFO-ACTION
INFO

LAND FORCES 2
CHIEF COMUS-TOEN
MIL COMMISSIONER 2
C A SEC
P SAFETY SC
FILE

Sec M/D

1F 20

CONFIDENTIAL

HEADQUARTERS

8 AUG 1945

(NN K)

Ref: 985/90/80.

3 Aug. 45.

My dear Mr. Prime Minister,

A copy of your letter No: 557 of 20 July on the relief of the Folgore Division in the Alto Adige has been passed to A.P.H.C., under whom the Italian Coast Groups are now operating. Should it be considered appropriate and possible to move the Folgore Group, I am sure it will be done.

Yours very truly,

[s/] Henry W. Stone

HENRY W. STONE,
Rear Admiral, USNR,
Chief Commissioner.

Professor Ferruccio Parri,
The President of the Council of Ministers,
Italian Government,
R o m e.

Copy to Land Forces S/C.

(BU 10)
3/8

785017

10

Ref: 585/90/EC.

2 Aug. 45.

Subject: Relief of Folgore Division.

To: G-5,
AFHQ.

Attached is a copy of a letter from the President of the Council of Ministers regarding the relief of the Folgore Division in the Alto Adige. A similar request has been addressed by the Minister for War to Major General Browning.

The Land Forces Sub-Commission have no objection to the proposal to replace the Folgore Division.

An interim reply has been sent to Professor Parri informing him that a copy of his letter has been forwarded to you for your ruling.

For Chief Commissioner:

(Sav) M. S. LUSH

Brigadier,
Executive Commissioner.

Encl - 1.

Copy to Land Forces S/C.

SECT
BU 13
25
NOTED

785017

SUBJECT: Reli of FLCORN Division

LAND FORCES SUB-COM, A.C. (MMIA)

SD/46

31 July 45

TO : EXECUTIVE COMMISSIONER, A.C.

AUG 1 1945

1. Ref your letter 585/EC of 26 July, att is draft reply which I recommend be sent by Chief Commissioner A.C. to Italian Prime Minister.

2. I should like to add that the Minister of War, when I had a meeting with him recently, was very upset that PARRI had not consulted him (IACINI) before sending you his (PARRI's) letter. He was going to protest to PARRI. The correct channel of approach should have been PARRI - IACINI - MMIA - You. Perhaps you will consider mentioning this to PARRI.

3. Actually in my DO/2 of 25 July I sent you a communication from the Minister of War on this matter. These Combat Groups are of course under operational command of AFHQ through Districts.

L. Browning

Major General
MMIA

*Note spoke Col. Hughes who says
Land forces etc can be with proposed
move -*

8/2/45

he 10

2341

(S/Comm. PARRI)

785017

Att to MMIA letter SD/46
dated 31 Jul 48

DRAFT.

Ref : SD/46

Jul 1948

SUBJECT: Relief of FOLGORE Division

My dear Mr Prime Minister,

A copy of your letter No. 557 of 20 Jul, subject as above, has been passed to A.F.H.Q. under whom the Italian Combat Groups are now operating. Should it be considered appropriate and possible to move the FOLGORE Group, I am sure it will be done.

Yours very truly

ELISHA W. STONE
Rear Admiral USNR
Chief Commissioner.

Prof. S. Ferruccio PARRI
President of the Council of Ministers.
Italian Government - ROME.

2349

785017

585

Ex. Comm 9495

(5)

Land Forces Sub Commission, A.C.
(M.M.I.A.)
R O M E.
IO/2

25 July, 1945.

JUL 27 1945

To : H.Q. A.C.

(4)

I send you the attached letter from the Minister of War
in case you feel it necessary to take the matter up with A.P.H.Q.

L. Browning

Major General,
M.M.I.A.

/ago

See F.F.

See 11.6-7

2/3/47

1/8

Noted

(5/1/47)

785017

TRANSLATION

(4)

FROM: The Minister for War

REF: 21622/11

TO: Maj. Gen. Browning, W.M.I.A.

DATE: 24 July 1945

Dear General,

The Minister for Foreign Affairs has pointed out to me that a delicate situation is being caused in Alto Adige because of the presence over the frontier of French troops who have recently arrived there as occupational units for Central Austria.

The lively temperament of the parachutists of the "Nembo" Regiment is well known and the authorities responsible fear that close contact with the French in the frontier area may provoke incidents which may have serious repercussions on the delicate political situation of the moment.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs has therefore earnestly begged me to approach you with a view to your being so kind as to inform the competent Allied Command of the wish of the Italian Government to replace the Folgore Group in Alto Adige with another Combat Group as soon as possible.

Sgd. JACINI 2538
Minister for War.

O.D.

See 5

HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION

APO 394

Office of the Executive Commissioner

3

Ref: 985/BR/RO.

Subject: Ex-Vichy French.

To: RO, Venezia Region.

27 July 45.

With reference to the report that there are some 12,000 ex-Vichy French hiding in BOLZANO Province, I shall be grateful if you will let me know what steps you are proposing to take to round up these people. The Political Advisers at this Headquarters think it important that in any scheme for collecting these ex-Vichy French the fewest possible number of French persons should be employed and the operation should be carried out as expeditiously as possible.

SGD E-TALBOT

Brigadier,
Executive Commissioner.

Copies Pol Act A+B

SGD F-1942

2537

Handwritten initials and signatures, including "FV", "5/8", and "10/11/45".

785017

FILE



Ref: 565/20.

26 July 1945.

SUBJECT: Relief of Polgare Division.

TO : G.O.C.,
Local Forces Sub-Commission (M.M.I.A.)



1. Reference the attached letter 567 dated 20 July 1945, subject as above, from the Prime Minister.

2. I am directed to request you to consider the above letter, to prepare a draft reply thereto for signature by the Chief Commissioner, and to submit same on your file through this office.

E. Talbot

Brigadier,
Executive Commissioner.

Copy to: Civil Affairs Section.
(For comment, with particular reference to the ultimate paragraph of enclosed letter).

2336

BU
1/8
Noted

785017

Translation

The President of the Council of Ministers
P1
n. 557

Rome, 20.7.1945

Dear Admiral,

considering the delicate situation in Alto Adige and the necessity for the government action, on the part of the Allied Authorities and in agreement with the Italian Government, to take place in the best conditions of order and public spirit, I draw your attention on the incidents caused by the 'Folgore' divisions and on the danger caused by the fact of having these units stay on in this zone.

Their attitude of contempt towards the German speaking population, the looting, the singing of fascist hymns, the organized trade of spare parts for cars, arbitrary perquisitions and requisitions, caused towards the end of June the intervention of the provincial A.M.G., which deprived the division of all tanks of town police. At present the Folgore is rounding up the SS and German soldiers scattered on the mountain and watches deposits and military and civilian warehouses.

Considering these facts, I cannot but approve the opinion expressed and the request made by the Prefect of Bolzano for the 'Folgore' division to be replaced. I think it is essential that the Italian military forces stationed in the province during the delicate period when the electoral lists are being revised and a rapprochement made with the German element, should keep a perfectly correct and impartial attitude.

According to the informations I obtained, I think the 'Friuli' division which is now stationed in the Veneto would prove adequate. However, I leave this point to the judgement of the Allied Authorities and War Department.

I also take this opportunity to suggest reinforcing the detachment of the Bolzano Garabincers.

Truly yours,

S. Ferruccio Pizzi

2335

Admiral Stone
Chief Commissioner
Allied Commission
Rome

trans. s/c

reg. n. 5
820

See 24.11.

0 6 2 7 |