

1-6-42

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785020

ACC

10000 | 120 | 541

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785020

10000/120/541

SD/29/B ORG' of COMBAT GROUPS (GENERAL)
Opened MAR 26, 1945 - Closed Ap. 3, 1945
MAR. - AP. 1945

1644

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785020

13

COPY INCOMING SIGNAL.

FROM : A/AFHQ SIGNED SACRED CITE FHGCT 011457 A
TO : 8th ARMY
INFO : 5th ARMY.
MMIA ROME
15 ARMY GROUP.
REF : FX 53355

8

5th ARMY FOR BRIT INCR (.)
YOUR SD 2574 OF 28 MAR (.)
REVIEW WE CM/508/1 DEFERRED UNTIL 23 APR (.)
EMPHASISE THAT RECOMMENDATIONS DUE TROOPERS 25 APR (.)
GRATEFUL FOR RECOMMENDATIONS EARLIEST FOR COORDINATION HERE (.)

2770

SD DISTRIBUTION:

SD/29

JAWK

ju 3 April 45

ues

LAND FORCES SUB COL. A.C.
(M.M.I.A.)

DO/
April 45

TO : MMIA LO 8 Army
MMIA LO 5 Army, Br Iner

50 BLU,
51 Blu.
52 BLU,
53 BLU,
56 BLU,
"P" BLU

Copies to:-

Dear

Prompted by Lt. Col. HOWARD's Liaison report to GOC MMIA after his last visit to the Armies, I am taking this opportunity of putting you in the picture and answering certain specific questions which he raised.

Firstly the relationship of MMIA to the BLUs. As soon as a Combat Group comes under command of an army the BLU becomes rather like a British Div HQ entirely dependent on its next higher commander of all G and Q matters, but, being Italian, the A matters pass largely through Italian channels, so MMIA still comes in here. I attach a copy of AFHQ letter, AG 091.112/119 GCT-O of 20 December 1944, which is the latest order on the subject and must be obeyed, which means of course, you are no longer as much our child as you used to be!

Naturally we cannot help continuing to take a keen interest in children of our own begetting, but obviously must let their present employers have full control of them operationally and continue in the background to do our utmost for them as far as we are permitted.

Secondly the question of the method of trying men accused of serious crimes and the proposal to attach a legal officer to Group (or Adm Divs concerned) is being considered at this moment and a decision will be given you as soon as the investigations are complete. It is a question of fully qualified officers, there are also Italian legal questions involved.

Thirdly the question of stoppages of pay to make good losses of equipment is being examined. If the punishment is to have any deterrent value it would seem that certain items of personal equipment and attractive stores must be given a higher value than the actual cost price to the British Govt (in view of Black Market prices and their temptation); on the other hand the cost of damage to M.T. or armaments could obviously not be charged in full. We will give you guidance as soon as we can.

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Fourthly the question of W.E.'s is entirely one for Armies concerned and we are not in a position to act on recommendations until the matter is referred to us by Army HQ.

Fifthly It is admitted that up to now the Reinforcements Training Centre at CESANO has not been able to produce what the Groups wanted and reinforcements have inevitably been sent up badly clothed and not fully trained.

I should like to emphasise that the RTC is a very different thing now from what it was a few weeks ago. There are over 11,000 men there under training. As you can well realise, it has been quite a business starting CESANO but Field-Marshal ALEXANDER visited it himself on May 12 and was very pleased and satisfied to find it a live and rapidly developing concern. A letter describing fully this organisation and the kind of training that is carried out is being sent to you. The equipment situation is well in hand now and as from the middle of April, all infantry reinforcements will have had at least eight weeks training.

MMIA - 'G'

FILE: 5247

DATE: 44

- 2 -

In this question of reinforcements we are trying to establish the principle of direct contact between the Groups and the RTC. The same applies to the BLU's and "P" BLU at RTC. If Combat Group officers can visit the RTC and explain their reinforcements problems, so much the better, and Lieut/Col HACKAY, the commander of "P" BLU has told me that he will always be pleased to see officers of BLU's, whenever they can be spared. "F" BLU is on a similar W.E. to the Combat Group BLU with a GSOL and a representation of each Service.

The best way of giving the Combat Group a direct interest in the RTC, as suggested by Lt/Col HOWARD, would be to organise the reinforcements according to the Groups, an Infantry Bn for example being allotted to each Group, and being trained by officers of that Group. An arrangement of this kind is being made for the Naval Personnel of the San Marco Regiment.

I will see what can be done to extend this principle at the RTC, but I am advised by Lt/Col HACKAY that it raises certain difficulties on the training side. Also, ~~essentially~~ at one central place is far better than individual efforts of Groups forward. There is one thing that Groups can do to help. The SIRE is withdrawing surplus officers from the Groups. It would help enormously if the Groups send back not the duds, but officers who would make good instructors, preferably those who did courses at the CMTC and have now had some battle experience as well. I understand the SIRE has already put this point to the Groups with a far from warm response. On arrival at CESANO these officers could also look after the interests of their old Group.

Sixthly the cigarette problem has been rather a headache but we are still plugging away at it. Q tell me that "MACEDONIA" cigarettes are made in various grades in the same way as Allied makes. The "MACEDONIA" which is issued free is one of the cheap civilian brands (e.g. Woodbines). MILIT are slightly better grade and are usually the repayment brand. The quality of the free cigarettes will be checked with the government monopoly but they may have difficulty in raising the quality of the free issue (20% of their total output for the whole country). (In view of the quantities available for Br Increment BR-ITI tps, will NEWTON please say if Br Increment ST distribution for the 10 free per day is now satisfactory.)

Seventhly Withdrawal of Battle Dress from Combat Group Officers during summer. Orders for withdrawal of winter uniform will be issued by ARMIES. Suggest BLUs represent their views on this point through usual channels.

Eightly. Our Special Section ceased to exist on 31 March and we are having an internal reorganisation, as a result of which we hope to have **distinct** A and Trg branches as well as our present SD and AQ (which would become Q). I hope to send you a full "A" directive as soon as the proposals are approved.

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Lastly The General who, as you know, takes a great personal interest in you all is very delighted that the Groups are making their mark and being so well spoken of, and sends his best wishes.

Yours

W. F. D. - 20

Copy to: File G 31/8 ✓

ck

1. In order to clarify the Italian Gruppi when the latter pass from Sub-Commission towards the Italian Staff Headquarters of the Italian Army) under command of SURE (General Staff Headquarters of the Italian Army) to that of Allied formations, authorization is made for the Land Forces Sub-Commission to communicate direct with BLUs attached to Combat Groups under command of Allied formations on the following points:

- 2771
- a. All matters of purely Italian administration.
 - b. Strengths and reinforcements.
 - c. Discipline.
 - d. Conditions of service, welfare, etc.

2. Copies of all correspondence on the above matters should be sent to the Allied Headquarters concerned.

3. All operational, executive and policy matters, also proposals by BLUs or Combat Groups for changes in organization will be made through normal staff channels to the Allied Headquarters concerned for decisions or recommendation to MMIA.

By command of Field Marshal ALEXANDER:

/s/ R. H. Frese
/t/ R. H. FRESE
Captain, AGD,
Asst Adjutant General.

DISTRIBUTION:

2 - Addressee
1 - 15th Army Gp
1 - ALCOM
1 - G-3 Ops
1 - G-3 Org (B)
1 - G-1 (B)
1 - G-4 (B)
2 - G-3 (Org) Foreign
2 - AG Records
1 - AG M&D

SECRET

1651

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785020

COPY INCOMING SIGNAL

FROM : AFHQ SGD SACMED CITE FHGCT

302113A

TO : MMIA

RESTRICTED

INFO : 15 ARMY GROUP : RAAC

IMPORTANT

REF : FX 52647

9

NY FX 51132 OF 28 (*) AMEND CM/570/1 TO READ CM/510/1 (10 TRAINING
TEAM RA)

SD DISTRIBUTION :

Action copy : SD/29
SD/30
SD/31

Dme

2770

tv. 1 Apr.

JHRC

6/4.

1652

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785020

10

MMIA

29

A

AFHQ

15 ARMY GP
56 BLU

SD/18

SD 2544

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION _____

IN REPLY YOUR A G 091.711/033 OCT-9 OF 22 MAR (.) SUBJECT
 PROPOSED W E FOR ITALIAN ARMY AIR INTERPRETATION UNIT (.)
 FIRST (.) COMBAT GP UNIT (.) ITALIAN WAR MINISTRY CONSIDERS
 PROPOSAL TOO LARGE AND STATES ONE OFFR AND ONE ORR ASKED TO
 W E OF INTEL SEC COMBAT GP H Q ON C M/523/1 SHOULD BE ASPLR
 (.) SECOND (.) CENTRAL H Q (.) ITALIAN WAR MINISTRY CONSIDERS
 A CENTRAL INDEPENDENT H Q NOT NECESSARY (.) THIRD (.)
 BOTH FIRST AND SECOND ABOVE ARE SUPPORTED BY
 MMIA

2709

PRECEDENCE _____

AUTHENTICATED _____

Internal: CST

A

File: SD/18

SD/29

WB

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785020

COPY INCOMING SIGNAL

FROM : MAIN 8 th ARMY
TO : A.F.H.Q.
INFO : 5 th ARMY FOR BRIT INCR;
M.M.I.A. ROME
15 ARMY GP
REF : SD 2574

281945 A

CONFIDENTIAL

REFERENCE AFHQ FX50982 OF 27 AND CONVERSATION P O W E R -
C U L V E R H O U S E (.) REQUEST REVIEW W E CM/508/1
POSTPONED IN VIEW
FACT WES AL UNITS I T A L I A N C O M B A T G P
INCL B L U NOW BEING CAREFULLY EXAMINED IN LIGHT OF
EXPERIENCE VIDE 8 A R M Y M 13680 SD2 OF 9 MAR

SD DISTRIBUTION: (SD/29)

jv 29 March

1654

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785020

COPY INCOMING SIGNAL

FROM : AFHQ SIGNED SACMED CITE FHGCT
TO : FIFTH ARMY FOR BR-INCR , 8 ARMY
MMIA, 56 BLU(BENEVENTO)
INFO : 15 ARMY GROUP
REF : FX 50982

272046A

CONFIDENTIAL

WE CM/508/1 QUOTE BLU FOR ITALIAN COMBAT GROUP UNQUOTE
DUE FOR REVIEW BY WEC 9 APRIL REQUEST YOUR COMMENTS REACH
THIS HQ NOT LATER THAN 3 APRIL FOR COORDINATION

SD DISTRIBUTION:

SD/29

2767

am 29 Mar 45

WES

1655

1

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT: WE - ITALIAN Combat Gp

50 Brit Liaison Unit

G/5/17

24 Mar 45

Main HQ 10 CORPS (4 copies)

Ref Main EIGHTH Army 1680 SD2 dated 9 Mar 45.

Herewith proposals divided into A comments on proposals already made and B new proposals.

1. Comments on proposals already made

1. Ref A ppx "A" to above mentioned letter.

a) 2IC Inf Bn considered essential.

b) The two offers unassigned in BR HQ have in this IOG been given roles of Inf Offr and MT Offr. OC HQ Coy has taken on the role of Q. While need for a Q is agreed, the need for a first class MT Offr is of paramount importance.

c) It is immaterial whether ITALIAN Inf Bn has one or two IOs, providing the ITALIAN Army can provide them.

d) In the experience of this IOG, IOs have NOT been used. In fact, it is considered that a junior ITALIAN Offr would be entrusted with no more intricate mission than that normally carried out by a DR.

The office from the former scouts pl in practice disappeared to a variety of jobs long ago. The scouts pl in fact existed only on paper, as by the time the ITALIANS asked this BLM what they were supposed to do with a scouts pl, this BLM had already got ILLA authority to disregard it.

IOs will NOT become a problem until IOGs start indulging in mob warfare, and then their value is probably very small as the command will always go himself rather than trust an IO.

e) Each Bn MUST have two jeeps: one for CO and one as S.B. ~~dis~~ ^{purpose} jeep.

f) If assault per seos are to function as assault per seos, each seos must have a vehicle which can carry the seos eqpt and explosives, half the time across country. White half track is the vehicle required.

g) Ref Annex

- 2 -

(iii) Cpt.

A comment on cars 4 str 4 x 2 and 2 str 4 x 2 is that here and throughout the ICG, they no often can NOT do NOT exist.

In few cases they have been substituted by jeeps which, of course, are better, or more often by 15-cwts US, which do NOT do the same job at all.

(iv) IMCs.

The ICG has proposed the establishment of IMCs. It is realized that this is NOT on, but it is suggested that if IMCs are available two each of the carrier pl could each be allotted two IMCs on the same principle as British inf units did when they too were denied the right of having IMCs.

That the IMC is extraordinarily useful if NOT indispensable in def warfare can scarcely be disputed.

2. Ref Appx "B" to A/4 letter.

(a) Proposal 1.

Agreed. In fact he has one and could NOT work satisfactorily without.

(b) Proposal 2(a) is supported wholeheartedly as is 2(b).

From Dec 44 onwards this BLW had a largely changing population of from 25 to 40 officers and anything up to 250 ORs with all the consequent admin problems. Proposal 2(c) was submitted to HQ 1 DIST in Jan but NOT considered because the requisite 3 or 4 months had NOT elapsed since the previous arbit. In order to assist him to carry out his duties this BLW's MT Cpl has been wearing the badges of Sgt for some months: rank is all important in the Italian Army and this NCO has to deal with a variety of caporalle, caporalle maggiore, sergente maggiore etc.

(c) Proposal 3.

Not considered necessary on the grounds put up i.e., as a S.B. Jeep. On the other hand the one M/C allotted to carry the Lt RMC, the G.III(I) and all his accessories (ARHQ WEC dated 1 Jan 45) is considered to be a somewhat overloaded machine.

(d) Proposal 4.

Datan for G.III(I) and Lt RMC agreed to. A total of three general dutymen already on establishment is quite adequate. A clerk is NOT required. The Officer i/c Italian Inco

- 3 -

4. Ref Appx "E" to e/m letter;

There can be no comment as far as this proposal is concerned. But it is considered that there should also be one SR Jeep per inf bn in addition (see para A1(e) of this letter).

5. Ref Appx "F" to e/m letter.

No comment.

6. Ref Appx "G" to e/m letter.

Vehs quoted are used as follows:-

One car 5 cwt 4 x 4.

-do-

-do-

-do-

-do-

One White Scout Car.

C.O. Sigs. Coy.

Res veh used where most needed and for line laying.

Each inf regt pl.

Arty Regt pl.

ICG HQ pl.

Used by C.O. Arty Regt for Comds Recce. Should be one each for C.O. Arty Regt and Comds Inf Regts.

7. Ref Appx "H" to e/m letter.

Agreed, but it is considered that, because of shortage of cars 5 cwt 4 x 4 on ICG (i.e. Div) LTO could manage with car 2 str and the 5 cwt 4 x 4 so released allotted where more operationally needed viz. arty or inf regts.

8. Ref Main EIGHTH ARMY letter M 680 DS2 dated 15 Mar 45.

These were originally proposed by this DMU.

9. Ref Main EIGHTH ARMY letter M 361/2 I(b) dated 17 Mar 45

- 4 -

- (c) With ref to Rear Link Sigs RR, it is pointed out that the RR rear link sigs in the COM channel of comm between the ICG and flank group or rear.

The original establishment allowed for wireless comm but seems to have ignored the fact that the main form of comm from a Div to flank or rear is by line or RR.

At present this British rear link has to borrow Italian RR to send LMS or RR to the various Allied units with which it is in contact. The volume of rear link traffic is presumably much the same as if any other Allied unit were fulfilling the role at present given to this ICG.

- (d) In considering that the RR, it is pointed out that efforts of the RR have such widely different functions that sharing of rpt is on almost all occasions bound to lead to considerable reduction in efficiency and potentiality of these efforts.

- (e) Proposals for additional ordnance personnel to RR have been submitted by DOS AFHQ in DOS/743 of 20 Feb 45. In view of this, this RR has no further proposals to make.

- (f) RR Trg Inor is proposed as vehicle maintenance in this ICG has been almost too bad to be believed due largely to complete ignorance on the part of Italians of American and British eqpts and also to complete disregard of maintenance of any kind in the Italian Army. The ranks of the proposed RR Inor are relatively high because these ORs will have to deal with Sergeants Mauriori and Mareschilli of the Italian Army and in an organization where "face" counts for so much - a high ranking Italian OR would be more likely to listen in front of his own juniors to advice from a reasonably high ranking British OR.

2. Proposal for Amendments to RR of RR, ICG.

The proposals amount to:

- (a) Subdivision of the RR into

Sec 1 Ops.) instead of being confined

