

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

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Gruppi Reports - Frinli (SO B. L. U. 7)

July 1945

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL.

Lt Col. A.R.C. SOUTHEY, RE.
50 British Liaison Unit
C.M.F.

24 JULY 45

Dear General.

My fortnightly report as below.

1. Locations.

Ref Map ITALY 1:200,000 Sheets 5 and 6.

50 ELU }
FRIULI ICG }
67 Inf Regt } No change

88 Inf Regt LONIGO F 964.7

35 Arty Regt TRENTO A 7723

2. Employment.

(a) No change

(b) Troops have been requested by AMG to guard VICENZA gaol (100 all ranks) and to strengthen the OC RR in the area BELLUNO (one coy and one pl)

(c) Training has, as anticipated, made little progress although some effort is being made to run courses for specialists of whom the Group is once again some 470 deficient.

3. Efficiency, discipline and morale.

(a) General: No change

(b) MR Discipline. Now non-existent.

(c) FIFTH ARMY and 1 DISTRICT are handing over sufficient captured cars adequately to fill the Group's requirements.

(d) POLITICS.

There is no doubt that considerable dumps, as previously reported, do in fact exist, and there is considerable uneasiness among the civilians as to what will happen when Allied troops are withdrawn.

No change

87 Inf Regt }
 88 Inf Regt }
 35 Arty Regt }
 LONIGO F 9647
 TRENTO A 7723

2.

Employment.

(a) No change

(b) Troops have been requested by AMG to guard VICENZA gaol (100 all ranks) and to strengthen the CC RR in the area RELLUNO (one coy and one pl).

(c) Training has, as anticipated, made little progress although some effort is being made to run courses for specialists of whom the Group is once again some 470 deficient.

3.

Efficiency, discipline and morale.

(a) General: No change

(b) MT Discipline. Now non-existent.

(c) FIFTH ARMY and 1 DISTRICT are handing over sufficient captured cars adequately to fill the Group's requirements.

(d) POLITICS.

There is no doubt that considerable dumps, as previously reported, do in fact exist, and there is considerable uneasiness among the civilians as to what will happen when Allied troops are withdrawn.

(e) The reduction of the soldiers pay, and the decision to grant a War Gratuity to Officers and, I think, NCOs but not to Rank and File, could hardly have come at a more unfortunate moment from the morale point of view.

(f) The decision to move a large proportion of the Group's heavy equipment must also affect morale adversely, although the decision is eminently sound from the point of view of the equipment at present being ruined by lack of maintenance.

Yours sincerely

Major-General L. BROWNING, CB, CBE, MC,
 Land Forces Sub Commission A.C. (M.M.I.A.)
 RCE.

Sick
7/13/47

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL.

Lt. Col. A.R.C. SOUTHEY, RB.
50 British Liaison Unit.
C.M.P.

9 July 45.

Dear General,

My fortnightly report as below. There is not very much in it, and nothing very new.

1. Locations.

Ref Map ITALY 1:200,000 Sheets 5 and 6.

50 3LU. }
FRIULI ICG. } No change.
87 Inf Regt. }

88 Inf Regt. VILLAFRANCA F 5345.

35 Arty Regt. SCHIO F 9484.

2. Employment.

(a) No change.

Part of our previous most outlying commitments to WEST and SOUTH have been taken over by CHERVENA and LEGNANO ICG, but in compensation we are being asked to extend our Northern boundary to take over a further area from POLIGORE ICG.

(b) The Gp Comd has issued a directive on training which if enforced will allow one Coy per bn to train for a month at a time. Courses for specialists are also projected. The arty plan to co-operate with inf training.

(c) A British Training Major has been sent out to each Inf Regt HQ to assist, but until a ruling on policy is received from you the position of these British officers is extremely nebulous.

(d) My own opinion is that the quite good provisions in Gen. SCATTINI's training directive will be largely disregarded at lower levels, on every conceivable excuse, and that vigorous training will NOT be insisted on from above.

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Locations.

Ref Map ITALY 1:200,000 Sheets 5 and 6.

50 BLU. }
FRIULI ICG. } No change.
87 Inf Regt. }

88 Inf Regt. VILLAFRANCA F 5345.
35 Arty Regt. SCHIO F 9484

Employment.

No change.

Part of our previous most outlying commitments to WEST and SOUTH have been taken over by CREMONA and LEGHANO ICG, but in compensation we are being asked to extend our Northern boundary to take over a further area from FOLGORE ICG.

The Gp Comd has issued a directive on training which if enforced will allow one Coy per bn to train for a month at a time. Courses for specialists are also projected. The arty plan to co-operate with inf training.

A British Training Major has been sent out to each Inf Regt HQ to assist, but until a ruling on policy is received from you the position of these British officers is extremely nebulous.

My own opinion is that the quite good provisions in Gen. SCATTINI's training directive will be largely disregarded at lower levels, on every conceivable excuse, and that vigorous training will NOT be insisted on from above.

Efficiency, discipline and morale.

General. Little change.

MT Discipline. Appalling and if possible getting worse. Unless both Allies and Italians can insist forthwith on the prohibition of carrying civilians in WD transport, I consider it is necessary for the BLU to cease any attempt to get existing orders obeyed. We are already in a ridiculous position. Americans and FOLGORE openly flout all authority and it is hard to expect FRIULI to be the

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only disciplined formation in N. ITALY. particularly when no single officer in the Group seems to have any pride on the matter whatever.

(c) There is no improvement in availability of cars.

(d) Politics.

(i) No active or drastic steps seem to be being taken by AMG effectively to disarm partisans in the area.

(ii) As a result 44 prisoners awaiting trial at SCHIO F 9484, were yesterday dragged from the prison and murdered, while in the BELLUNO area partisans move openly, fully armed, in captured enemy transport and boast publicly of hidden dumps of arms, ammunition and transport ready for use at a later date.

(iii) Russian and Slav agents are also known to be active in the area.

(iv) Representations to AMG BELLUNO have so far proved unavailing.

(v) No open clashes have taken place with the troops but positive action is surely indicated. Can you do anything in ROMA to obtain it?

(e) I have had some trouble with the MALTESE officers who object to doing routine translation of letters and documents. This work should normally be done by British Sgt Interpreters, but both of ours have gone to UK on FIVEH, and no replacements are forthcoming.

I asked five weeks ago for posting orders for three redundant MALTESE officers out of the seven we have, but nothing has come of the request.

(f) We remain on our old WE. If you can give me any indication of how long RLUs, and therefore our jobs, are expected to live, we would be more than grateful, and would also have a chance of looking for something else!

Yours sincerely

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- (iv) Representations to AME BELLENO have so far proved unavailing.
- (v) No open clashes have taken place with the troops but positive action is surely indicated. Can you do anything in ROME to obtain it?
- (e) I have had some trouble with the MALTESE officers who object to doing routine translation of letters and documents. This work should normally be done by British Sgt Interpreters, but both of ours have gone to UK on FYPROM, and no replacements are forthcoming.

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- (f) We remain on our old WE. If you can give me any indication of how long HJIs, and therefore our jobs, are expected to live, we would be more than grateful, and would also have a chance of looking for something else!

Yours sincerely

Die Lorient

Major-General L. BROWNING, CB, OBE, MC,
Land Forces Sub Commission A.C. (M.M.I.A.)
ROME.

73:0

73:0

Title Note.

35. Regg. Artig. guerra.
cc. "FRUHLI".

{ Regt. history of the 35th Regt.
of Artillery in FRUHLI. Combat }
Group. is in separate
cover.

10/11/71

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

Lt. Col. A.R.C. SOUTHEY, RB.
50 British Liaison Unit.
C.M.F.

25 June 45.

Dear General.

I am afraid my first fortnightly report is late, but I have delayed it in order to give you the latest locations: various HQ have been moving during the last week.

1. Locations. Ref map ITALY 1:200,000 Sheets 5 and 8.

(a) 50 BLU HQ.

GRAND' ALBERGO DI TERME,
LEVICO A 9117 (2½ hrs up Route 12
from VERONA to TRENTO thence Route
47).

50 BLU Mess and Camp.

GRAND' ALBERGO BELLA VISTA, LEVICO.

FRIULI ICG HQ

GRAND' ALBERGO DI TERME, LEVICO.

87 Inf Regt HQ

BASSANO B 2488.

88 Inf Regt HQ

BOVALONE F 7434.

35 Arty Regt HQ

SANGUINETTO F 8126.

2. Employment.

(a)

The Group is employed guarding dumps of captured material of all kinds, also providing staffs for three refugee camps. The Group is also responsible for the maintenance of law and order within the area, which is vast: incl BELLUNO - excl TREVISO - all incl VICENZA - MODENA - PARMA - PIACENZA - CREMONA - BRESCIA - ROVERETO - excl TRENTO - incl FELTRE. Some 30 straggler PW have been taken during the last week.

(b)

The group is fully employed less one inf bn and four gps of arty.

3.

Efficiency, discipline and morale.

The group is working efficiently.

have delayed it in order to give the
HQ have been moving during the last week.

1. Locations. Ref map ITALY 1:200,000 Sheets 5 and 8.

(a) 50 BIU HQ.

GRAND' ALBERGO DI TERME,
LEVICO A 9117 (2½ hrs up Route 12
from VERONA to TRENTO thence Route
47).

50 BIU Mess and Camp.

GRAND' ALBERGO BELLA VISTA, LEVICO.

FRUITI ICG HQ

GRAND' ALBERGO DI TERME, LEVICO.

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(b)

The group is fully employed less one inf bn and four gps of arty.

3.

Efficiency, discipline and morale.

(a)

The Group is carrying out its duties on the whole efficiently.

One clash-of-personality case occurred between an ITALIAN and an AMERICAN officer, guarding and working on the same dump respectively. Both were at fault. The incident has been smoothed over.

(b)

Efficiency as reflected in care and maintenance of arms, equipment and MT continues low.

(c)

Discipline is fair. General SCATTINI appears genuinely determined to maintain and enforce discipline.

The problem is increased by the way in which the Group is dispersed, by the lack of adequate numbers of any sort of cars in which Staff

FILE: 5/36/1
DATE: 29/6

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Officers or Regtl Officers can get about to visit detachments and guards, and by the fact that the Italians seem not to have any organized system of daily inspection by subalterns of the Day or Captains of the Week as we do.

- (d) MT discipline remains lamentable.
- (e) Turn out, particularly of small isolated guards or detachments, is poor.
- (f) Close order drill, as a means of improving discipline, bearing, and turn out, is considered to be a Fascist method and there is an absolute refusal to hold drill parades of any sort.
- (g) Morale is not good, almost entirely as a result of general dissatisfaction that no definite or acceptable policy for release and call up has yet been made available for explanation to the troops.

The feeling is that men with the colours have done more than their share as compared with the vast majority of the nation who have not fought and who are now profiting by legal and illegal opportunities to do business and dig themselves into good jobs.

Absentees "on strength" average 450, in spite of being struck off strength after 30 days absence.

General SCATTINI is of opinion that at present the situation in his group is in hand, but is unwilling to opine how long it will remain so unless positive action is taken on the release/call up question.

Politics.

Relations with local Partisans are good. The Grenadier Bn in each Regt (Inf) is a potential danger spot because they are quite openly Monarchist.

There is no concrete evidence of subversive communism in the Group, though there is a certain amount of lawful communist propaganda.

General SCATTINI insists that he will keep his Group entirely non-political, and will tolerate neither subversive communism nor active monarchism. He invariably adds the rider that he must be assured of Allied support if he is to accomplish this aim.

The Field Security Section is unpopular with Senior Officers

Let's get something into the Partisan movement

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The Field Security Section is unpopular with Senior Officers and an attempt was made recently to disband and amalgamate it with the CC RR, without any reference to me, or through me to Allied Authority. I have forbidden this course, pending reference to GOC 1 DISTRICT. I consider that at the present moment the PSS has a most useful function, in that it can provide reports on "safe-morale" etc from the lower end of the scale as well as its ordinary tasks. These reports may of course not co-incide with the official "morale-state" with which I am fed on Gp and Regt HQ level. The British PS Staff Sgt is of opinion that the Gp Staff wish to eliminate the PSS for fear it may disclose not only communist propaganda but also active right wing activity among the officers. This view is being investigated.

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(g)

Let's get
Security
into LIA
Patriot
more

(h)

noting
in
Liaison
active

(iv) (a)

- 3 -

The chief outstanding problem is that of training policy. At present none is being carried out although by adopting a simple coy guard/duty roster at least one coy per bn etc could in rotation continue useful training all the time. Unless orders are received that training will continue and that some such system will be adopted, I am of opinion that the Italians themselves will continue for ever quietly to do nothing. I further believe that no matter what orders are given no useful training will in fact be done unless British officers remain to supervise it. The Group will rapidly deteriorate through sheer idleness, which will be particularly unfortunate if a large intake of new conscripts is to replace the present at least semi-trained men due for release.

(b)

The new WE for BLUs is thought to be inadequate and unsuitable for present commitments. Fifth Army agree. I have sent my comments already officially to your office.

(c)

Several officers have been dismissed by General SCATTINI for black market activity.

(d)

An unfortunate case has arisen, decision on which I await from General SCATTINI, in that Col LA STELLA, head of the Personnel Section, has obtained privately the release of his two sons, both in the Republican Forces, one as an officer and one as an officer cadet, has clandestinely brought them to and kept them for weeks at Gp HQ, without having submitted them to screening in a PW Cage as laid down. A number of very precise orders have been flouted, and it is felt that action must be taken, particularly as the matter is widely known and much resented by other ranks of the Gp.

(e)

At BELLUNO there is a body of 200 partisans, still armed, and whom the Gp have been ordered to ration. A British officer has been sent to investigate and reports to me that there is no apparent reason why they should not be disarmed, that they are doing no work to entitle them to rations, but that the local AMG Officer is himself a professed communist. The matter is being raised with 1 DISTRICT.

I am afraid we are a very long way from ROME, but it is a very pleasant place for a HQ and we could most gladly put up either yourself or any of your Staff if you could pay us a visit.

The Regt Comd of 35 Arty Regt asks me to forward herewith to you an account of his Regt which was produced on the occasion of a recent Regimental Festival.

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(e) At BERGAMO there is a body of 200 partisans, still armed, and whom the Gp have been ordered to ration. A British officer has been sent to investigate and reports to me that there is no apparent reason why they should not be disarmed, that they are doing no work to entitle them to rations, but that the local ALM Officer is himself a professed communist. The matter is being raised with 1 DISTRICT.

I am afraid we are a very long way from ROME, but it is a very pleasant place for a HQ and we could most gladly put up either yourself or any of your Staff if you could pay us a visit.

The Regt Comd of 35 Arty Regt asks me to forward herewith to you an account of his Regt which was produced on the occasion of a recent Regimental Festival.

Yours sincerely

Major-General L. BROWNING, CB, OBE, MC,
Land Forces Sub Commission A.C. (MFA),
ROME.

Rich. Browning

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