

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

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Nov. - Dec.

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S. O.

Nov. - Dec. 1944

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Lt Col R. Burns R.A.

69 Hy. A.A. Regiment A.A.

C.M.F.

Major J.A. LOESS.
Military Mission Italian Army.
C.M.F.

21 Dec 44.

DO/E

Dear Colonel Burns

I wonder if you would be willing to part with 891276
Serjeant R. BECKHAM of 200 H.A. Battery.

As you may know there are British Liaison Units attached
to various Italian formations. Serjeant-interpreters are held on
the W.E. and Sjt BECKHAM could probably fill one of the vacancies.
Serjeants BRONSDON and LINDERGAR are of course doing the same job now
and proving very useful.

If you agree to a transfer could you signal MEIA, copy to
G(I) (British) AFHQ ? I can quite understand, though, that you
may need him still in the Regiment.

I hope very much that things are going well with you.

Yours W

2016

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891276 Sgt. L. Beckham.
200 44 77 44 R 17
C. W. F.

13 . 12 . 44

Dear Sir,

As you know, the job
that I had with Lt. Moore,
is now finished and I find
myself back in the Battery.

I was fortunate enough to
meet Lt. Moore recently, who
told me that M. W. F. F. were still
wanting Sgts for the B. L. U.,
in which case I beg to
submit my application for duty
with them.

I now speak and write
quite fluent Italian.

There is also another ^{one} ~~one~~ here
who is not a very fluent
speaker but should be quite
useful to you sir, if needed.

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I have not applied through
my regiment, as I am not
certain how to go about it.

Trusting that you are
now in the best of health
again, and thanking you
in anticipation.

I am sir,
your obedient servant.

Robert Beckham. Lt.

785020

PERSONALLand Forces Sub-Com. A. C.
(M.M.I.A.)10/29/40
3 December 1944

My Dear

I am glad to have your letter of 28 Nov.

I know well what you and your officers have done in VOLGORE. On the other hand, as you realize, it was necessary to be quite clear on this vital matter of principle.

In view of your explanation, there is no need to continue discussion of this matter.

What it boils down to is that PERULI, CREMONA and LEONANO B.L.U.'s have agreed to wear their Divisional sign on BLUE on a white shield, with a thin streak of RED and GREEN at each side as a distinguishing mark for B.L.U.'s as a whole. This is cut out of the strip the Italians wear (see sketch). It does not mean wearing the Italian colours which are RED, WHITE and GREEN in 3 equal parts. That seems to me to be a sensible arrangement on all counts.

For uniformity, I should like you in VOLGORE to wear the same.

No need to answer this. Colonel RIDLEY will be visiting you shortly and you can discuss the matter further with him if you wish.

Meanwhile, I am sure you will continue the good work and produce a worthy combat group in VOLGORE.

Yours

What it boils down to is that FRIULI, CREMONA and
LEONANO B.L.U.'s have agreed to wear their Divisional Sign on BLUE
on a white shield, with a thin streak of RED and GREEN at each
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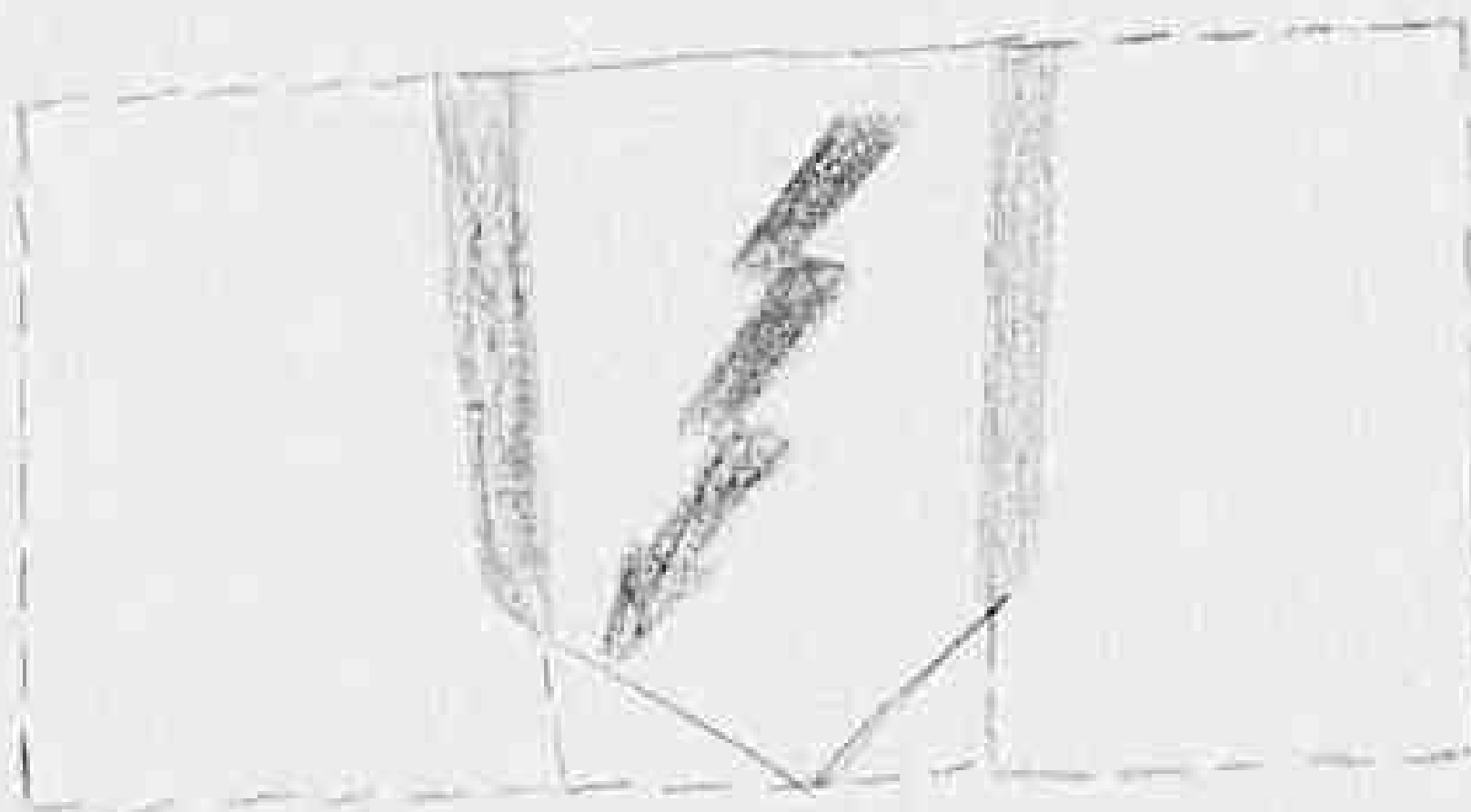
Yours

Major General

Lt. Col. G.H. BROOKS.
O.C. 53 B.L.U.

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NOT TO SCALE

9913

PERSONAL.55 British Liaison Unit,
C.M.R.

28 Nov 1944.

Dear General

I thank you for your letter of the 25th Nov about the wearing of Italian National Colours by BLU personnel. First of all I would like to make quite clear that both I and my officers are most keen and interested in our mission here and we have always done our very best for the Folgore Group. Apart from our normal duties all of us have gone to extra special lengths to obtain clothing and equipment for the group and this has involved many long journeys and sometimes unpleasant interviews with higher authority in order to get necessities. A large amount of equipment and clothing obtained to date has only been received owing to our personal efforts. Our efforts and work on the Training side have been no less. On the social side I have held Guest Nights each week and all senior officers in the group down to Lt. Colonels and heads of services have been entertained. This hospitality has been returned by the Italians. I can, therefore, confidently assure you that the liaison and understanding between the BLU and the Group is fully up to the spirit and standard that you expect.

I am very much upset that this good work and enthusiasm of the officers of the BLU should be doubted because of our objection to wearing an emblem and I am personally very worried that my continuance in this job, which I like so much and of which I feel I am making a success, depends not on my work but on the question of the wearing of the Italian National Colours.

With regard to the first paragraph of your letter I do not think that the facts, as I know them, are quite clear to you. The first time the matter was raised was by Colonel Pidsley during his visit here on the 8th Nov. He showed us certain proposed designs, one of which was a divisional colour sign submitted I think by 51 BLU, his own design which was the normal group flash cut down to make it differ from those worn by the Italian rank and file and he also informed us that 52 BLU suggested the same design in the shape of a shield. I did not make any strong objection at the time but the question of the desirability of the Italian Colours was raised and discussed. No agreement was reached at this time and Colonel Pidsley said there was a personal D.O. letter about the matter on the way from him to me and that after reading this and giving the matter further consideration I was to submit my proposals to him. The expected letter from Colonel Pidsley has never arrived so without waiting any further I sent off a letter on the 16th Nov submitting my proposed sign which incorporated the Folgore divisional sign on a blue ground.

On the 19th Nov MAIA letter No. S/G/29/13/2 dated 15th Nov was received. This letter states that "As the opinions of all G.S.O.I differed the following

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On the 19th Nov MIA letter No. S/G/29/15/2 dated 15th Nov was received. This letter states that "As the opinions of all C.S.O. I differed the following compromise has been decided on", i.e. the shield.

This does not seem to agree with the information given you ~~that~~ **21**
O.C. BLU were consulted and agreement was reached.

We are all very strongly in favour of wearing the Folgore Divisional sign which we feel will clearly identify this BLU as being closely linked with this Group in particular and the other Combat Groups in general.

With regard to the inclusion of the Italian National Colours I feel there are certain objections. Italy is not yet an Ally. Certain Italians are fighting against us although in many cases, perhaps, under compulsion but still under the Italian Colours, and finally the Italians themselves may not be in favour of other nationals wearing their own colours.

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2.

I certainly do not want to prejudice the scheme with regard to the Combat Groups or the wider aspect of Italian relationships by taking up an intolerant attitude and if you consider that such will be the case if we do not wear the Italian colours I and my officers are perfectly prepared to abide by your decision in the matter.

I am sorry my letter gave rise to the conclusion that I was not 100% behind the scheme but I think you will agree that the matter was not fully discussed nor was full agreement reached and I was, therefore, not unnaturally annoyed when the decision was made about the colours before our proposals were received or considered.

Yours Sincerely,

L. H. Mors

Major General Browning, OBE. MC. IA

2211

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DC/3

Land Forces Sub-Com. A. C.
(M.M.I.A.)

30 November 1944

Dear

In reply to your DC of 28 Nov 44, may I first of all offer you my congratulations on your promotion. I am glad to feel I shall have a friend in high places to care for my "baby Gruppi".

Secondly, may I thank you for what you are now doing for LECNANO and POLCORE.

THIRDLY may I tell you my next troubles i.e. MANTOVA (now coming into S. GIORGIO area). The Reinforcement Depot (at present at TEANO but moving we hope to BRASCIANO Area North of ROMA, and likely to become a big commitment as far as equipment is concerned. And then PICENO whose fate is still doubtful, but the men of whom meanwhile must be clothed and fed.

This business of putting an extra 63,000 in the line is bigger than many people have catered for and I realise all the difficulties, but we have to overcome them somehow and am sure that with your help we shall do so.

Yours,

HP

2010

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Brigadier R. G. THURBURN
Q(AS) Branch
ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS
C.I.F.

28/11/44

Dear

Pidsley

Thank you for your DO/3 of the 24 Nov. 44. Your
considerations are appreciated.

I have had a meeting this afternoon with representatives
of 53 and 54 B.L.U. to discuss the equipment questions relating to
Folgore and Legnano Gruppi. We went into some detail on the
question of their requirements and how we can meet them and we took
note of a number of outstanding points on which we hope to be able
to help them. I am proposing to issue a letter in the course of a
few days to you outlining our proposals in confirmation of our
discussion this afternoon.

A great deal of ^{the} troubles that have arisen have been due
to provision of equipment not having caught up with the decision
to form ~~the~~ Gruppi, and we have simply not had the clothing etc.,
in the Country with which to equip these Gruppi at the same time
as we have to meet the operational requirements of AAL. We all
appreciate the desirability of clothing as warmly and as well as
possible at the Gruppi, but this process must be related to our
available stocks.

I hope that if we work to a definite phased programme
(of which we shall send you a copy) that many of the difficulties
that have previously arisen may be avoided in future.

Yours *in*

Roy Thurburn

Col. Pidsley,
Land Force Sub Commission AC. (ASIA).

RGT/JB.

Major Head to see and file

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LAND FORCES SUB-COM. A.C.
(M.M.I.A.)

DO/3

November 1944

Please could you let me know as soon as possible
if you have any trace of a SAFARI BED belonging to

Lt. W. R. TREVELYAN, 256126
THE RIFLE BRIGADE

It was apparently despatched from the AREZZO Area
sometime in August by the 10th Bn The Rifle Brigade.
You had no news of it at the beginning of October when
I was last in Naples. I am still making inquiries about
the date of despatch from the Bn.

W. R. Trevelyan
Lieutenant,
M. M. I. A.

TO:

M.F.O.
NAPLES

2008

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785020

CC/3

Land Forces Sub-Com. A.C.
(M.F.I.A.)

25 Nov 44

Dear Col Muriety

I expect you know Col. RAVAGLI. He is the head of the liaison office at the Ministry of War.

His home will probably be "liberated" very soon. If you have any means of getting this message to his wife it would be a great comfort for both of them.

Yours

[Signature]

Letter sent to original:

Ex 11/11

2207

PERSONAL.

Land Forces Sub Com, A.C.
(M.M.I.A.)

DO/29/40

25 November 44.

My Dear

I am much disturbed on reading your Q3 - 13 of 20 Nov re
"Distinguishing Marks" for B.L.U.s.

Originally, I understand, you said you had "no very definite opinions one way or the other." All O.C. HUs were consulted and agreement was reached that B.L.U. officers should wear a shield of red, white and green (with Div sign superimposed) on their arm. This appeared to me to be a sensible solution. The colours were purely for the Italians to be able to know their own B.L.U. Officers.

Now you talk about being "forced to wear a defeated enemy Nation's colours." In the first place, there is no question of "forced." You and all the other B.L.U.s were consulted at all stages. Secondly - and this is the disturbing part - you have got the 'atmosphere' of this business all wrong. Our Government has officially accepted the Italians as co-belligerents. We are looking forward to the future instead of back into the past.

Gen. ALEXANDER himself said to G.O.s.C. FRIULI and CORMONA: "you are now inside the family. You will be accepted and treated by us just like any other of my Allied armies. You are now one of us." He added privately to me: "If these people are prepared to die for us, as they are, they deserve the best we can give them."

Apart from all this, anything we can do to re-establish Italian morale or self respect will obviously have wide repercussions both now and post-war. If your B.L.U. is not willing to have the same sort of distinguishing mark as the others, obviously comparisons will be drawn, to the detriment of ALLIED.

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Apart from all this, anything we can do to re-establish Italian morale or self respect will obviously have wide repercussions both now and post-war. If your E.L.U. is not willing to have the same sort of distinguishing mark as the others, obviously comparisons will be drawn, to the detriment of POLCORE.

Your attitude, I am constrained to say, seems to me to be personal and pe sonal, without regard to the wider aspect and the object for which you were constituted. Perhaps you and yours have not really considered these aspects of the business. In any event, you have put me in an awkward situation, particularly as all the other E.L.U.s have agreed.

If you feel so strongly about this, are you prepared to continue in the job and do you honestly think you can make a success of it?

I certainly would not force you to do anything in this business that was contrary to your principles. It is just that my views and yours appear to differ in regard to what is necessary for the cause as a whole.

I await your reply before putting the matter to higher authority.

Lt. Col. G.H. BROWN.
C.O. 53 E.L.U.

Yours. *h B*

Major General.

785020

Land Forces Sub-Gen. A. C.
(S.I.A.)

24 Nov 44

Dear Thurston

Congratulations on your appointment and at the same time my considerations on the job which you are to do. Here, for example, is an extract from a progress report which I have received from 331st who are with the FIDELITY Combat Group. It is typical of many such messages which we receive from us to them.

I realize the difficulties with which we are faced, and appreciate all that Ted HILL has done to overcome them. At the same time I feel sure you will not tire by pointing out our worries to you.

Yours, ever

W. P. Dsly

2005

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"3. RE-EQUIPMENT

(a) Clothing. Clothing situation has deteriorated since the last report and forecasts made have not been fulfilled. Although grade III battle dress has been collected and issued to units, it has been found to be very inferior in quality and in many cases completely unserviceable. Boots up to grade have been drawn. Those were advised as re-built boots but on examination were found to be almost completely unserviceable. They are covered in mud and very little attempt has been made to carry out any repairs. The boots are very often not even made up in pairs. Transport was sent to Bari to collect 10,000 blankets which had been released by A.F.M.C. and which 3 District had ordered us to collect, on arrival after a long journey only 4,000 blankets were available. There are only a few examples of the difficulties we are facing with a small staff and totally inadequate transport."

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DO/3

Col. W. PIDSLEY DSO MC
Land Forces Sub-Comm. A.C.
(M.I.A.)

Nov 44

Dear

I enclose some notes on British Infantry Weapons and tactics prepared by the Italian Officers who have been on courses at the C.M.T.C.. General BERARDI would like to distribute these to the Groups but has asked our approval first.

This is really a training matter, and I wondered if you would be good enough to look through these notes and let me know if they're all right. It would be a long job to translate them into English but fortunately you know Italian so that won't be necessary.

Yours,

Brig. A.C. BRANCHINGTON, U.B.E., M.C.
D.M.T.
A.F.H.Q.

2203

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SUBJECT: Visits.

Land Forces Sub-Commission A.C.
(M.D.I.A.)

DO/3
4

TO : G.S.D. 50 BLU
51 BLU
52 BLU
53 BLU
54 BLU
55 BLU

Dear

The frequent visits now taking place between Staff officers and those of your H.Q. are most useful (and pleasant) and will, I hope, continue, as they are the only means of coping with the extraordinary circumstances in which we find ourselves.

It is, however, essential that an officer preparing to visit another H.Q. should give notice as far ahead as possible so as to make sure that his opposite number is not himself away and also to enable arrangements to be made for accommodations, etc.

Will you please remind all your officers (and the Staff L.C.) of this and I will do the same here. We had a case the other day where a pair actually crossed in transit.

Yours

SP
2

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~~29/50~~
Land Forces Sub-Commission A.C.
(M.M.I.A.)

DO/1
1 Nov 44

Dear

Gelardi

Col. FIDSEY wants me to tell you that he is doing all he can to get Reinforcements cleared from the Depot. Lt/Col HOWARD is visiting the MANTOVA units in the BENEVENTO area and will see how many they can take. It's re-use pending them to TRIUNFI and CIRMONA, and apparently they're not the right type for LEGNANO and POLIGRANO.

Col. FIDSEY wants you to meet him at the Traffic Control Post VAIRANO at 1100 hrs Nov 5. He intends to spend a couple of hours with you and go into the whole question of the Depot.

The question of accommodation must be frightfully difficult but if you can do something to solve it, more power to your elbow.

Yours

✓
2261

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