

ACC

100000/120/4121

44

Balloon Unit

Jan. 3, 1945 - Feb

10000/120/4121

44 Balloon Units

Jan. 3, 1945 - Feb. 9, 1945

640  
649

Balloon Units

RCV/jad

Sr LFSCAC 9 Feb  
MMIA LO (MMIA) 1945

1. Reference your SD/47 of 23 January 1945.
2. Investigation reveals that all men not listed on nominal roll were dispatched for Trani from Livorno on the 13th of January 1945.

R.C. VAN KIRK,  
Major, Infantry,  
Sr. (MMIA) L.O.,  
5th Army

Attached Letter from 986 Balloon Squadron

RCV/jed

Sr LFSCAC 4 Feb  
MMIA IO (MMIA) 1945

For your information and any further distribution  
you think necessary.

R.C.VAN KIRK,  
Major, Infantry,  
Sr. (MMIA) L.O.,  
5th Army

Italian Army Personnel

RCV/jad

Sr LFSGAC 24 Jan  
MMIA LO (MMIA) 1945

1. Further in reference to your SD/47 of 15 December 1944.

2. Looks to me like these poor devils are "Orphans of the Storm". Suggest that somebody should acknowledge paternity of the child or eliminate it.

R.C.VAN KIRK,  
Major, Infantry,  
Sr. (MMIA) L.O.,  
5th Army

Equipment

RCV/jad

Sr LFSOAC 19 Jan  
MMIA (MMIA) 1945  
LO

1. Reference your SD/47 of 13 January 1945.
2. Request you forward the attached letter to the Allied Liaison Section HQ MAAF. I have, however, complied with your request to instruct the 986 Squadron R.A.F. as to whom they contact and have also told Flight Commander the same thing personally. It is my thought, however, that if the condition of this Italian unit is again called to the attention of HQ MAAF that action may be expedited.

R.C. VAN KIRK,  
Major, Infantry,  
Sr. (MMIA) L.O.,  
5th Army

646

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY  
A.P.O. # 464, U. S. Army

RCV/jad  
16 January 1945

Subject: Balloon Barrage Personnel.

To : Squadron Leader Woods, R.A.F.  
Navy House, Leghorn.

1. Reference your 986S/S.110/2 Org.
2. Personnel mentioned in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 are airmen and the concern of the Allied Liaison Section HQ MAAF from whom you should obtain the necessary information.

R.C.VAN KIRK,  
Major, Infantry,  
Sr. (MMIA) L.O.,  
5th Army

Italian Army Personnel

RCV/jad

xxx  
xxx  
Sr LFSCAC 9 Jan  
MMIA LO (MMIA) 1945

1. Reference your SD/47 of 15 December 1944.

2. Letter attached from Squadron Leader Woods for your further information.

R.C.VAN KIRK,  
Major, Infantry,  
Sr. (MMIA) L.O.,  
5th Army

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY  
A.P.O. #464, U. S. Army

RCV/jad  
4 January 1945

Subject: Transfer of Army Personnel, Fourth Balloon Barrage Company  
to the Italian Air Force.

To : Squadron Leader Woods, R.A.F.  
Navy House, Leghorn.

1. In accordance with MMIA letter, copy attached, SD/47 of 15 December 1944, request you cause to be despatched to TRANI Camp, the following personnel:

| <u>RANK</u> | <u>NAME</u>        | <u>DATE OF BIRTH</u> |
|-------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Tenente     | CHIESA, Pietro     | 1916                 |
| Geniere     | GIORDANO, Cosimo   | 1915                 |
| Geniere     | QUIRICCHONI, Vasco | 1920                 |
| Geniere     | RESTUCCIA, Antonio | 1915                 |
| Geniere     | SAVINI, Domenico   | 1915                 |

2. The officer and men named appear not to be on the nominal roll furnished me by my HQ and must be sent to TRANI Camp. Lt. CHIESA should be placed in charge and impressed with the importance of delivering himself and the 4 men to the C.O. TRANI Camp, and he should also report to the MMIA LO there.

3. Existing Allied transport facilities can be used by these men for this movement.

4. Enclosed is copy of my inspection report which I am forwarding to my headquarters.

R.C.VAN KIRK,  
Major, Infantry,  
Sr. (MMIA) L.O.,  
5th Army

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## INSPECTION REPORT OF ITALIAN UNIT

3 January 1945

1. Unit 4 Balloon Co
2. Location LAUCHORN near ARDENZA
3. SerialRef. your SD/47, 15 Dec 44
4. Required for ASSIGNED TO FIFTH ARMY
5. Strength: OFFICERS EM ANIMALS CARTS VEHICLES  
986 Balloon Sqd. R.A.F. Squadron Leader Woods (B) Cmdg.  
(by types)

|             |   |     |  |  |                                             |
|-------------|---|-----|--|--|---------------------------------------------|
| Officers    | 5 | 128 |  |  | See Vehicle Report<br>previously forwarded. |
| On leave    |   | 23  |  |  |                                             |
| In Hospital |   | 2   |  |  |                                             |
| Total       | 5 | 153 |  |  |                                             |

6. Name of Commanding Officer Tenente MANCINI Renato
7. Origin: (Whether formed from an existing unit or from depots, re-organization camps, etc.)  
Formed from engineers and infantry and to be transferred to the Italian Air Corps. Orders have not yet been received by unit from S.M.R.S. for this transfer.

8. State of Clothing and Personal Equipment:  
Unsatisfactory. Unit is not equipped to scale. Shortages exist in all items. Have 200 pairs of shoes which need repair. If unit had leather and nails, they could repair their own shoes for they have two cobblers.

9. Tentage: 64  
Billleted in buildings, have no tents.

10. Cooking Equipment:

(by types)

Horses Mules

|             |   |     |                       |
|-------------|---|-----|-----------------------|
| Officers    | 5 | 123 | See Vehicle Report    |
| On leave    |   | 23  | previously forwarded. |
| In Hospital |   | 2   |                       |
| Total       | 5 | 153 |                       |

6. Name of Commanding Officer Tenente MANICONI Renato

7. Origin: (Whether formed from an existing unit or from depots, re-organization camps, etc.)

Formed from engineers and infantry and to be transferred to the Italian Air Corps. Orders have not yet been received by unit from S.M.A. for this transfer.

8. State of Clothing and Personal Equipment:

Unsatisfactory. Unit is not equipped to scale. Shortages exist in all items. Have 200 pairs of shoes which need repair. If unit had leather and nails, they could repair their own shoes for they have two cobblers.

9. Tentage:

Billeted in buildings, have no tents.

10. Cooking Equipment:

Satisfactory. Have built a cook house similar to the one the British are using.

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11. Technical Equipment and Vehicles: None.

Sqd. Leader Woods (E) informs me that the personnel of the unit have taken a keen interest in Barrage Balloons. The new British manual on Barrage Balloons has been translated from English into Italian by Sergeant Armeni. See reference to him below.

12. Condition of Animals:

None

13. Arms and Ammunition: (Include number of rounds per arm)

Small rifles. Approximately 10 rounds per man.

14. Command & Discipline: (Whether Officers & EM appeared to have control of their men)

Appeared to be very satisfactory. Morale of troops appeared to be good.

15. State of Training (Particularly in regard to job for which required including any remarks of lack of specialists)

641

16. Interpreters (Names of)

Sgt. Armeni Egeo, born in Luxemburg, is an outstanding non-commissioned officer and should be promoted if possible. He speaks 4 languages fluently and is recommended most highly by Sqd. Leader Woods.

17. Date Unit is to move (or did move) to Destination:

Moved to Leghorn during July 1944.

18. General Remarks: (Appearance, fitness, keenness)

See attached page.

13. Arms and Ammunition: (Include number of rounds per arm)  
Small rifles. Approximately 10 rounds per man.

14. Command & Discipline: (Whether Officers & EM appeared to have control of their men)  
appeared to be very satisfactory. Morale of troops appeared to be good.

15. State of Training (Particularly in regard to job for which required including any remarks of lack of specialists)

641

16. Interpreters (Names of)

Sgt. Armeni Egeo, born in Luxemburg, is an outstanding non-commissioned officer and should be promoted if possible. He speaks 4 languages fluently and is recommended most highly by Sgt. Leader Woods.

17. Date Unit is to move (or did move) to Destination:  
Moved to Leghorn during July 1944.

18. General Remarks: (Appearance, fitness, keenness)  
See attached page.

Date: 14 July 1944  
Station: 5th Army

Signed: R.C. VAN KIRK,  
Major, Infantry,  
Gr. (MIA) L.O.,  
5th Army

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General Remarks:

1. This is a unit which is doing a good piece of work in handling the barrage balloons in and around Leghorn, but needs attention both from the Allied and Italian sides for the unit lacks proper clothing, shoes, and also rations do not appear adequate for the heavy work these men are doing in raising, lowering and handling the balloons. There appears to be a definite insufficiency of the Italian components of the ration. Capt. Dadini (Italian) is supposed to be the Italian L.O. for this unit at Leghorn and for the one at Ancona which is also under command of Sqd. Leader Woods, but Dadini has not been heard from in months. It is rumored he is in jail, having been picked up by the British M.Ps. near Taranto. In any event, Woods says he is no use to him and should be replaced. He also states that S.M.R.E. has sent Lt. Rosetti to relieve Lt. Tempesti at Ancona, but he does not approve of this transfer for Tempesti is performing his work satisfactorily.

2. Reference paragraphs 4 and 5 basic communication, all personnel present were listed on nominal roll attached as appendix "A" except those on appendix "B" attached. In accordance with your instructions, I have given orders for the men listed on "B" and not on the original nominal roll to be sent to TRANI, attached is copy of my letter to Squadron Leader Woods. Attached as appendix "C" is the list of men now present with the company, including those which are shown on "B" and are to be sent to TRANI. The effective strength of the unit after the officer and the men named leave for TRANI will be 4 officers and 149 enlisted men available for transfer to the Italian Air Corps.

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