

ACC

10000/120/5149

SD/41

1000012015149

SD/41

CREMONA INF DIV GENERAL

July 1945 - June 1946

319
329

Cover 1

TRANSLATION

FROM: M. of W.
TO : M.M.I.A.

REF: 3314/Ord/1
DATE: 24/6/46

SUBJECT: Park Coy of "Cremona Division"

- 1) From investigations carried out it results that "Folgore Division" has under his command the 1st Field Park Coy (stationed at Scandicci) -
- 2) The 2nd Field Park Coy assigned to the "Cremona Division" has personnel belonging the "Folgore" because when this Coy was being formed, it was completed by said Division-

It does not seem possible to transfer to "Folgore Division" the a/m 2nd Coy.

Arrangements will be made ^{to} transferring from ~~to~~ the 2nd Field Park Coy some personnel of the "Folgore" who are ~~required~~ by the Commander of the "Cremona." *(not required)*

Sgd. LIUZZI

Gen.

329

SODISA
A/C SD/AI —
'A'
RE

MMIA - 'G'
FILE <u>SD/41.</u>
DATE <u>Reg 28/6.</u>

BGS	
GSO I (SD)	
Dep G II	
GSO II (SD)	
GSO II ()	
GSO II ()	
GSO II ()	
G II ()	

280900

PERSONAL

Col A/O. SP. THE 1st
6501
Brig. 1st

Lt Col J.B. SLATER
51 British Liaison Unit

15 Oct 45
CREMONA

Dear General,

I have been commanding 51 BLU for over a month now, and knowing that you had asked Col WEBB CARTER for an occasional D.O. letter, I trust that I am following your wishes in sending you the following notes on CREMONA Group.

1. The visit of the Minister for War on Sep 15 and 16 was a great success. The parades in TURIN and PAVIA, the presentations of medals, and the speeches, were well received.

2. About an hour after the Minister had left INTRA on Lake Maggiore, a group of III In 22 Regt staged a public demonstration. They marched out of barracks in a body - about 15 to 20 strong - carrying placards: "Right to Vote for the Soldiers"; "Demobilisation of Older Classes"; "Down with the Monarchy"; "Purge of reactionary officers". The picquet officer tried to close the gates, to keep the men in barracks, but they forced their way out, and marched into the public square. Handbills were distributed, but the demonstration met with little popular support, and soon broke up of its own accord. The In Comd, Major MELOZZI, who met the party on the way to the square also tried to stop them and failed.

The demonstration was obviously inspired by the one at FORLI, and by left wing political agitators at INTRA. The re-action of most of the older soldiers was disgust at the demonstrators, especially at the end of a day of ceremonial parades when CREMONA had made such a good impression on the public.

Next day part of the demonstrators were arrested, and later there were 15 soldiers identified and remanded for Court Martial. Since then, up to the completion of the trial four days ago, an intense propaganda has been carried on, designed to help the prisoners. The communist paper UNTRA has published articles in their defence: "Their only crime was having cried out the truth, and of asking when a bit of democracy would be introduced into the army". Partisan and workers representatives have written to and called on the Regt Comd, and called on Brig GRAHAM Comd 7 AGRA asking him to intervene. Posters appeared on the walls in MILAN: "Everything is mobilised for the liberation of the glorious soldiers of Cremona Group" - signed Communist Federation of Milan.

The Court Martial sentenced four ringleaders to two years imprisonment, two others to one year, 4 suspended sentences of less than one year, and there were 6 acquittals. Defending counsel thanked the President for a very fair trial, and said it was the first democratic justice they had seen for 20 years.

The ringleaders were ren found in possession of documents showing their connection with outside agitators; they probably received payment for their work. No adverse press comment on the trial has been made to date, and it is hoped that the incident is closed.

3. General HENDRIK visited 7 AGRA a fortnight ago and I was asked to take General PRIMARI and the Chief of Staff to meet him. The GOC spoke in very straight terms to General PRIMARI, stressing that it was up to him and Cremona to fit themselves for the maintenance of law and order in Italy; that all possible training and disciplinary measures must be taken to the

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4. General HEYDEMANN then asked General PRIMERI about the reliability of Cremona Gruppo. He got a vague, rather unsatisfactory answer, and I am sure he went away with a poor impression of Cremona. The fact is that General PRIMERI had been greatly shaken by the IVRA incident, and he felt he had to answer that there are a number of doubtful elements in the Gruppo. General PRIMERI knows that his men are subject to strong communist propaganda, and is doing what he can to combat it; by siting his units in the safer places, and organising unit canteens and barracks to prevent the men drifting out to cafes, and by keeping the men actively employed. The whole question of reliability is an impossible one to answer. We cannot be sure. The artillery is sound, and there is a marked upward trend throughout the infantry. I rather feel that General PRIMERI's answer to General HEYDEMANN was over pessimistic. The Chief of Staff certainly thinks so.

5. The activity of the Gruppo has been considerable. A large number of raids for hidden arms have been carried out. Two of the best yielding seven and five 3-torner loads. Several hundred men helped AMG in searching for grain, and found large quantities. AMG have reported most favourably on the bearing and conduct of the troops. About 700 men are engaged on frontier guards, guards on farms, etc. In addition Cremona has pushed on with the training of about 1200 reinforcements who came from CESANO with only little training. Over 1000 local recruits have been raised. The training of these 2200, who have been arriving week by week during the last three months, has been a heavy burden, much heavier of course than if they had arrived in one bunch.

Normal unit training has re-commenced in earnest during the last month. We are going all out to raise the standard of all units, and improve discipline and morale by keeping the men busy, and giving them a professional pride in their progress and achievements. Reports on the keenness and turn-out of men on training exercises are encouraging.

6. But all these activities require leaders and instructors, and that is what we lack. Many good officers, and a large proportion of the good NCOs who formed the backbone of the Gruppo in the line have been demobilised. I have represented our weaknesses to Col MACKAY, Lt Col ECKERTON, Major MEDLAM and Lt Col SIVO, urging them to do all in their power to keep demands on Cremona to a minimum. We are no longer the Cremona Group which fought under 8th Army. Loss of specialists, ineptitude of many officers, heavy guard and operational commitments, insidious political propaganda even including payments to troops as an incitement to mutiny, the burden of recruits and reinforcements, all these are problems to be tackled if we are to avoid the Gruppo disintegrating before our eyes. That is why we have begged for more officers, for permission not to send officers on courses, and for CESANO's demands on us for instructors to be kept to a minimum.

7. Living in PIEMONTE, with its communist plots, rumours of risings, hidden arms dumps, banditry and lawlessness, we are excessively conscious of our operational role. Every order from ROE which may weaken the Gruppo cuts the Generale to the heart, even though it may be for the ultimate good of the Italian army. For example General PRIMERI had agreed to meet the modest demands of Lt Col SIVO when he was disressed to learn that a dozen officers now at CESANO will be kept on as instructors at the end of their course, instead of returning.

This week has been a week of crisis in IVRA, with the danger of two large strikes and possibly public disturbances. One was to be organised by the political parties over accommodation, and the other by the trades union over a refusal to grant increased pay to the workers. For the moment things are quieter, as both difficulties appear to have been settled.

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227

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This week has been a week/crisis in TURIN, with the danger of two large strikes and possibly public disturbances. One was to be organised by the political parties over accommodation, and the other by the trades union over a refusal to grant increased pay to the workers. For the moment things are quieter, as both difficulties appear to have been settled.

...../3

8. It appears that your interest in getting the best out of the group for the future of the Italian army, is contrary to the interest of General IEREMIAN in keeping the group operationally strong in view of the tense situation in which we live, and the many weaknesses of the group. I must, however, assure you that since you demand priority for your large training scheme, and knowing the facts, you have made that clear in your letter G/Trg/23 of 5 Oct to the Ministry of War, I shall ensure that your demands on Cremona Group are fully met, and I do not intend to refer any more to the question of whether or not Cremona can spare men. In this connection I would like to add that I told General PRIMERI that he would have to meet the Ministry's demands, referring to your letter, and suggesting that if necessary he must stop officers' leave for two months just as the British Army has delayed release for four months.

9. Our officer situation is bad. Our return to MIA on 8 Oct showed the following officer replacements required to cover present deficiencies, imminent releases, and loss of officer university candidates :-

Infantry - 36 ; Artillery - 15 ; Workshops - 4 ; Sappers - 17 ; Medical + 2 ;
CC RR - 1 --- Total 75.

The Generale states that he is not getting much work out of the officers who are shortly due for release, and that replacements are most urgently needed. Without them he cannot maintain the standard of activity to which he is constantly being urged.

When asked a fortnight ago to accept untrained reinforcements to enable MIA to clear CESAMO, the Generale agreed to accept 1600 subject to having an additional 10 per cent of officers. The men are coming, but no officer reinforcements have been notified so far. I am sure you will agree that these 1600 reinforcements are quite a heavy commitment for the Gruppo to take on, involving as it does, the detachment of officers and NCOs from their units to run the recruit training centres we are forming to receive these men.

10. Present locations are :-

GRUPPO HQ and 51 BLU	-	TURIN
24 INF REGT	-	ASTI
22 INF REGT	-	VERCELLI
7 ARMY REGT	-	CHIERI, near TURIN
CENIO	-	CASALE, near ALESSANDRIA.

I am sorry if this letter is distressingly long, but I wanted to give you an outline of Cremona Group's activities and problems,

Yours

Sincerely
Blata.

Major General L. BROWNING CB CBE MC
HQ MIA

326

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328

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Sincerely
L. Brooming

Major General L. BROOMING CB CBE MC
HQ MMIA
ROME.

*G.I. I will deal
with A point, will
you handle the
P.R.O. problem*

WP

*A good report. Surely we can
find them if you spare?*
*If yes, we start, NCO's must
be given more responsibility.*

LB
17 Oct

5

BBB

Subject : Wireless Equipment.

Land Forces Sub Comm, A.C. (MIL)

SD/41

19 Oct 45

to : 2 Dist.

Ref your letter 2019 C (O) of 11 Oct.

We are in agreement with you that, for the very short period that the Cremona Infantry Division (Italian) is likely to remain under your command, it is not worth while to increase the Division's holding of British wireless equipment.

L.M. Ingledew
for Major General,
M. M. I. A. *J.C. Col*

Info ; MEA LO MILAN

Internal : Sigs

jc

325

4A

SUBJECT : Wireless Equipment

HQ 2 District CMP
2019 G(O)

11 Oct 45

MMIA

CT
See 5
4B

1. Enclosed copy of HQ 7 AGRA letter G/26/38 dated 24 Sep 45 recommending an increase in the British stores holding (Wireless Equipment) of the CREMONA GRUPPO.
2. This increase is recommended while the Gruppo remains under command of this HQ, but as they are likely to revert to the Italian Government in the near future, do you consider the proposal to be worth while.?

	ASST	<i>[Signature]</i>
	ASST (Cpe)	<i>[Signature]</i>
/de	ASST (ED)	<i>[Signature]</i>
	ASST (S)	<i>[Signature]</i>

[Signature]
for Lieutenant Colonel
General Staff

MMIA-'G'
50/41
R/15/10

327

15 12 10

C O FSubject : Wireless Eqpt

G/26/38

Hq 7 AGRA

24 Sep 45 See 4A.2 District (2)

The CREMONA Gruppi are now in process of deployment which will cover the whole of PIEMONTE (less the frontier zone) with their Hq est at TURIN. The current 'phone comms under normal conditions are adequate, but I am not satisfied that they have suitable wireless eqpt to maintain their comms in the event of trouble in this area.

I therefore, recommend that the following eqpt be made available to the CREMONA Gruppo:-

five No 19 set High Power Conversion Kits.

These are necessary to provide the range of comms required by this tactical layout.

C O F
JARGBrigadier
Commander

324

Copies to: 51 BIU
Sigs 7 AGRA

3462

Li Zoroco

ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS
APO 512

6 SEP 1945

3

AG 091.711/033 GOT-0

5 September 1945

SUBJECT: Future of ITALIAN Army

TO: Chief Commissioner
Allied Commission
APO 394

FOR: Land Forces Sub Commission (MMIA) *Primeri.*

1. The attached letter from General Clemente, Commanding General of the CREMONA Combat Group, together with a copy of the reply, is forwarded for your information.
2. In considering the points raised in this correspondence, it is requested that you take the necessary action to dispel the erroneous impression which has been imparted by the Italian Minister of War in the matter of Allied policy concerning the demobilization of the older classes of the Italian Army.

BY COMMAND OF FIELD MARSIAL ALEXANDER:

C. W. Christensenberry
C. W. CHRISTENSENBERRY
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

- 2 Incls
- Incl 1 - Ltr from CG
CREMONA Gp, dated 20 August 1945
- Incl 2 - Ltr from C/S, AFHQ, dated 3 September 1945

Major Dohls.

*Please speak
WP
8/9.*

MMIA-'G'
30/42
DATE: 8/17/45

32

*Speak to Minister about this today. We agree on wrong pro-
cedure in PRIMERI & will
speak to him to get the action
LTS 17/45*

GRUPPO DI COMBATTIMENTO "CRESCITA"

COPY

IL GENERALE COMANDANTE

Dear Field Marshal,

I was extremely touched by your letter of 7th August and it emboldens me to lay before you some of the more urgent problems which concern me very deeply. I trust you will pardon my temerity in writing to you but it is an expression of trust in you and your understanding of our difficulties.

On 10, 11 and 12 August a Conference was held at ROME presided over by the Minister of War and General CADORNA, and attended by all Div Comds. Of the various subjects discussed the two most pressing in my opinion were those of demobilization and pay.

There are in the Army a large number of men of the 1915 - 16 - 17 - 18 Classes. These men have been under arms now for some 7 - 8 years. Apart, however, from their natural discontent at being so long away from home is the fact that glaring inequalities exist. Thus in some provinces some men of these classes are now released and others are not. In others the younger classes have NOT been called while the older classes still serve. The Italian is attuned to the idea of military obligation for all and does NOT accept inequalities.

We were informed at the Conference that the Allies are opposed to the release of the older classes. The reasons being the impracticability of calling up younger classes, difficulties of clothing new men, etc. Meanwhile the dissatisfaction of the older classes is increasing and in my opinion if NOT released a number will take the law into their own hands and desert. This would have a deplorable effect on discipline and also would result to a similar position as regards strength as if the men had been discharged legally.

It is also proposed at an early date to stop the extra increment of pay to personnel of the Gruppi. This amounted to 45 Lire a day operational pay and 20 Lire a day Ration Allowance. While I am in full agreement with the principle that no reason can now be advanced for preferential treatment being given to the Gruppi, I feel most strongly that, at a time when all civil rates of pay are being increased, the cutting down of Army emoluments will have a bad effect on military morale. Surely a more equitable solution would be a levelling of Army pay upwards. I am aware of the deplorable state of our national finances but the ordinary soldier must fail to understand why his should be the only pay which is curtailed.

In my view the answer is to have a smaller and contented army rather than 140,000 discontented soldiers. Even before the war it was unusual for Italy to have so many men under arms. In every year there was a period when the "maximum force" was under arms, i.e. when the two classes were embodied simultaneously, and also a longer period when one or sometimes less than one class was under arms. If before the national disaster Italy was unable to support so large a force, how can my country hope to do it now with its shattered finances?

On last point. I feel that during the next year, while the Army is finding its feet and the whole political situation is obscure, the Italian Army should be used sparingly for internal security. If as far as practicable such duties were carried out by the various police forces it might spare the Army becoming identified with one or other of the parties.

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I repeat that I trust you will forgive my writing to you direct but I do so as a true son of Italy and as an Officer who has the welfare and honour of its Army at heart.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd) ?????????

Field Marshal The Hon. Sir Harold ALEXANDER, G.C.B. C.S.I., D.S.O., M.C., A.D.C.,
Allied Force Headquarters,
C.M.F.

3 September 1945

Dear

Field Marshal Alexander has asked me to reply to your letter of 20 August 1945.

The issues which you have raised are properly the concern of the Military Mission to the Italian Army, with whom they have now been taken up.

Your letter, however, reveals one important misunderstanding of Allied policy, in connection with the progress of demobilization, which I am anxious to correct without further delay. The Field Marshal is fully aware of the importance of the early release of the older classes of the Italian Army, which the Italian War Ministry has accordingly been instructed to carry out as expeditiously as possible. As a result, the 1915 class is being demobilized at the present time, and demobilization of both the 1916 and 1917 classes should have been completed by the end of September. These measures are being accomplished without any fresh call up, replacements being found from younger classes of Italians from units which are being released from British and U.S. control. The whole question of demobilization is, of course, bound up with the possibility of fresh call ups, which is at present being retarded by a shortage of equipment. Every effort is, however, being made to overcome this difficulty.

Field Marshal Alexander is fully in sympathy with your remarks upon the undesirability of employing the Italian Army in an internal security role. However, if the situation does become such that troops are required to reinforce the Carabinieri in the maintenance of law and order, he is of the opinion that Italian units must be used for this purpose in preference to other Allied troops.

↑

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Yours

W. D. MORGAN,
Lieutenant General,
Chief of Staff.

3211

Brigadier General I.G.S. PRIMIERI CLEMENTE,
Commanding General,
CREMONA Combat Group.

Incc # 2

COPY INCOMING SIGNAL

FROM : 51 B.L.U.
TO : M.M.I.A. - ROME
REF : 0.332

041000B
ROUTINE
CONFIDENTIAL

C R E M O N A GRUPO-0-1 NOW SITUATED AREA
A L E S S A N D R I A J 7505 (J 7505) (.)
LOCATION STATEMENT FOLLOWS (.)

SD DISTRIBUTION

Action Copy: SD/41
Info: A
Q(Two)
Q (OS)
ARMY RECORDS
ORD RECORDS
MOV (Two)
ST
MED
REME
LAB
RE
X
WELFARE
SIGS OFFICE

GSO 1 _____
GSO 2 (C/M) _____
GSO 2 (S) X ~~_____~~ X
GSO 2 (W) _____
GSO 2 (L) _____
GSO 3 (S) X ~~_____~~ X
GSO 3 (O/Ad) _____
GSO 3 (I) _____

WPS

JG/5/7/45

319

