

ACC 10000/125/370

121/3/PAT.

PATRIOT CENTER - FLORENCE

DEC. 1944 - June 1945

PATRIOT CENTER - FLORENCE

DEC. 1944 - June 1945

Closed Oct. 20, 1945

FILE

12/13/1947 (Pail)

MINUTE SHEET No. 2

DATE

PAGE

Civil Affairs Section

4

(26) passed to you for information
in accordance with para 3 of
Minutes of V.P.'s Meeting on 25
May (No 99).

2 June 48

V.P. Information (26)

M. Pasby for Civil
Patrol Branch.

5

Pail

Thank you. By all means
let the Govt take over the Florence
camp, but a difficulty will arise over
banding over W.D. stores.

3 June

Pail

1660

FILE	MINUTE SHEET No. 1	PAGE
12/3		
Feb. 9	To Col Fava. (11) Please discuss Folio 7 with me. <i>W. J. Sines</i> <i>Rajinla</i>	7
Apr 26 th	Para 4 of Folio 14 seems to me subtly reasonable. <i>W. J. Sines</i> Para 7 - packets are not in <i>in</i> special force. <i>W. J. Sines</i> Para 15 - tried to visit the camp to interrogate them or recruit them. even recruiting, they should become our responsibility. <i>W. J. Sines</i>	
	<u>Col Fava.</u> (16) does not appear to have been sent to the M.O.O.I. Could you therefore take up with the Ministry please. the point raised in para 2? 2.	16
2 Apr 45.	<i>M. Ruby for Col</i> <i>for Director Patrole Branch.</i>	1659

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUB-COMMISSION

PATRIOTS BRANCH

Notes on conversation on 1 JUNE 1945
between Colonel CRIPPS and H. E. CHIRI,
High Commissioner for War Veterans.

COL. CRIPPS informed H.E. that he had received a letter from the Regional Commissioner of TOSCANA Region querying what is to be done with the Patriot Centre at FLORENCE. This Centre is accommodating 150-200 Patriots per day. It had been suggested that the centre should close down on 10 June, for residents at any rate, as this was the date when military rations cease. The Regional Commissioner had said in his letter that if it was thought that this date was too early to close the camp, he would carry on on civilian rations.

The question of rations for Patriots was being investigated and we were trying to find out whether the Food Sub-Commission would be able to carry the load of Patriot rations; failing this AME would be asked if we may be allowed to carry on with the Patriot military ration. Colonel CRIPPS added that so far as the provision of a ration by the Food Sub-Commission was concerned, they were trying to build up a reasonable ration from civilian rations available; nevertheless, some items, such as milk, would be lacking.

The question of feeding, in the opinion of Colonel CRIPPS, did not really arise since there would be either the military ration or a ration supplied by Food Sub-Commission. There was little chance of neither of these extra rations being made available, and in any case the ordinary civilian ration would be available.

Colonel CRIPPS thought it was as well to keep the camp going and said it was a good opportunity for H.E.'s staff to step in and take control of it.

H. E. CHIRI said that if AME was thinking of handing over, they would like to take over the whole thing, equipment, etc., and run the camp. H.E. enquired whether there were many more centres in Northern Italy.

COL. CRIPPS said that there were many Patriot camps in the North but there was some doubt as to how many would remain open. Col. CRIPPS said that there were 7 barracks in MILAN but he had suggested this be reduced to 4.

COL. CRIPPS said that H.E. would be able to get an idea of the position of the camp at FLORENCE on his trip and suggested the establishment of an office in FLORENCE. Colonel CRIPPS said that he would write to FLORENCE suggesting the camp should be taken over by the High Commissioner for War Veterans.

H. E. CHIRI said that he had heard a lot about the camp at FLORENCE and had been told that it was an excellent camp.

COL. CRIPPS suggested that H.E. might like to see what was happening in ¹⁶⁵⁸ the camp as he himself was rather in the dark concerning it. Colonel CRIPPS added that he saw no reason for keeping it open, except that there were some Patriots in hospital there. Colonel CRIPPS said that the hospital was being run by the Ministry of Occupied Italy; originally supplied by army

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H. E. CHIRI said that he foresaw that a great number of people requiring hospitalisation would come from GERMANY and it would have to be discussed who would take care of them; hospital accommodation would have to be made available.

H. E. CHIRI said that he thought he would like to take over the camp at FLORENCE.

COL. CRIPPS suggested that when H.E. was in FLORENCE he should find out whether they were ready to hand over on 10 June.

H. E. CHIRI said he would stop at FLORENCE on his way back from Northern Italy.

COL. CRIPPS said that by that time Colonel KIRKWOOD would have received a letter from him (Colonel CRIPPS) concerning the hand-over of the camp.
/COL. CRIPPS informed.....

2.

COL. CRIPPS informed H. E. that while he was visiting the camp at FLORENCE he would no doubt be afforded an opportunity to inspect the complete documentation of Patriots which had been made by IIPRs. These would provide the information H. E. required concerning the grades of trades, etc., which was necessary for the planning of future employment of soldier and patriot veterans.

H. E. CHIRI said that he would call on Colonel CRIPPS when he returned to Rome after his visit to the North.

R. R. CRIPPS, Colonel,
Director,
LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUB-COMMISSION
(PATRIOTS BRANCH)

1657

R. R. CRIFFS, Colonel,
Director,
LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUB-COMMISSION
(PATRIOTS BRANCH)

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND

No. 785016

1657

HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION
APO 394
LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUB-COMMISSION
PATRIOTS BRANCH

Ref: 121/3/PAT

2 June 1945

SUBJECT: Patriot Centre - FLORENCE.

TO: Regional Commissioner, TOSCANA

Reference your R-VIII/11/G/82 dated 26 May 1945.

1. It is considered that the closing of the Florence Patriot Centre entirely on 10 June is premature as it is anticipated there may be a number of patriots still in transit at that time and the centre itself would be useful for accommodating them.
2. The question of feeding patriots after 10 June is at present under discussion with the Food Sub-Commission and every endeavour is being made to provide a suitable patriot ration. You will in due course be advised of the result of these discussions.
3. In the meantime, the High Commissioner for War Veterans, whose office is responsible for dealing with patriots after demobilisation and all those in Italian Government Territory, has been contacted. He has been requested to call on you during the tour which he is at present making of the Northern Provinces, with a view to taking over the organisation of the Florence Centre and making arrangements to deal with transient patriots. The High Commissioner, H. E. CHURCH, has been given a letter of introduction to you and it is anticipated that he will be in Florence in about a week's time.
4. The final date for closure of this camp, therefore, must remain to be decided when it has been seen for what numbers it is necessary to provide.

R. R. Chipp
R. R. CHIPP, Colonel,
Director,
LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUB-COMMISSION
(PATRIOTS BRANCH)

1656

641

30 MAY Recd 5/15

Saves 2D

HEADQUARTERS
TOSCANA REGION
ALLIED MILITARY GOVERNMENT

30 MAY 1945

FILE : R-VIII/41/G/82

26 May 1945.

SUBJECT : Patriot Centres - Florence.

TO : Civil Affairs Section,
H.Q., A.C. - C.M.P. ✓
(Patriots Branch)

29 MAY 1945

A. G.

1. I wish to draw attention to the conditions maintaining at the Patriot Centre No. 1 Florence and to ask for directions in connection therewith.

2. The work of the centre as concerning the partisans of Florence Province is practically finished. Most of the local partisans have been returned to their homes and only a few now remaining at the centre.

3. Nevertheless the average number of persons in the centre daily is between 150 and 200. They are largely made-up of partisans coming from the north and making their way southwards to their homes and who are, in effect, using the centre as a transit camp.

4. It is not thought that it is intended that partisan centres should be so used, but it is extremely difficult for the Italian Officer in charge to refuse entry to such persons. Moreover in these days when so many partisans and others are on the move through Italy it may perhaps not be a bad thing that such accommodation should be available for transient partisans particularly as those coming from the northern Provinces are more likely to have been engaged recently in combat and to be deserving of such assistance as can be given to them from Allied sources.

5. Nevertheless I feel that a definite date should be fixed for closing down this centre and I suggest that a convenient date would be the 10th June, (which is the date on which the present rationing system will cease and also the date on which it is possible that A.M.G. will cease to function, as such, in this Region).

6. If this is agreed I will cause the necessary steps to be taken to inform partisans that the centre will be closed from that date and to see that all formalities are complied with.

7. If it is thought that this date is too early and that the centre should remain open, I should like it to be confirmed in writing that it is understood that the centre is serving as a transit centre: that this is approved, and notifying me of the date of proposed closure.

Robert G. Kirkwood

ROBERT G. KIRKWOOD

Colonel, U.S. Army

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Robert C. Kierwood

ROBERT C. KIERWOOD
Colonel, F.A., U.S. Army,
Regional Commissioner.

1653

Copy to: R.P.S.O.

6089

21
Extracts from C. CRIEPPS' Tour Notes of 4 May 45, Folio 4 of 165/PAT

14. In Florence the Patriot Centres are holding very much reduced numbers. Some of these were found to have made their way to BOLOGNA, where they were attempting to be housed in a Patriot Centre which is being organised there. Officers were instructed that Patriots would not be allowed to take up permanent residence in BOLOGNA if their homes were available to go to.

PATRICK Extract from Col Eri's Tour Notes, R4 of 165/PAT

121/3

23. During the afternoon the Director visited the Patriot Centre at
FLORENCE. This is not now so overcrowded as previously and the
conditions can be described as satisfactory. For alien accommodation
has now been provided for, cooking arrangements seem adequate and food
sufficient. Cleanliness is good, particularly so by Italian standards.
The ADMS had visited this centre and was satisfied with its condition and
approved of the new type of latrines that are now being constructed.

PATRIST.

121/3 38. Visited the Patriot Centre, FLORENCE, where I gave a short address to the L. / course for Provincial Officers which had commenced that morning and stressed the point that Patriot Welfare was of great importance, but that residential centres such as those that would be seen by the

/ Students.

6.

students at FLORENCE and PERUGIA, should only be set up when vital necessity required and that the work generally should be done by establishing offices. The work of documentation, payment, etc. should be done through Italian Military Patriot Representatives.

39. Inspected the store of clothing for Patriots, which contains sufficient for immediate requirements. 1000 pairs of boots had just been received, together with a quantity of salvaged clothing, blankets and cooking utensils.

19

FOR ADVISE FIVEHUNDRED FOR AND

4865

5 April 1945

VIR-RIT

IN CLEAR PD

PAGE ONE PD PRESENT IN REQUESTED FOR CAPTAIN CASARA FRANCISCO TO WORKED
TO FURNISH FOR DATA AND OTHERS ONE PRISONER OF THE PD

PAGE TWO FOR ADVISE FIVEHUNDRED FOR AND FIVE IN ROOM EIGHT ACAT PAM.

PAGE TWO PD THE INSTANCES LT COL. P. D. G. I.

Entric to Branch

321

m.p.

Lt. Col. P. Craig,

see F100 of 9/2/PAT
+ F182 of 8/PAT

1654

600

5 APR Recd

12/3

Translated by J.D.R.

18

FROM : M.O.O.I.
TO : HQ. Patriots Branch
: Patriot Centre, FLORENCE.
DATE : 4 April 1945.
REF : 68/C
SUBJECT: FLORENCE Patriots Centre, Transfer of officers.

We wish to notify you for information that Capt. Cav. Compl.
CARRARA Francesco has been appointed to the FLORENCE Patriots centre
in place of Lt.Col. S.P.S. FEDALI Vincenzo who has been given a
different appointment.

THE CHIEF OF CABINET

(signed) BORELLI

1653

600



Ministero dell' Italia Occupata

Uff. Collegamento M.G.

Lett. A. 68/0

Allegato N. 2

Riposta al N. 2

del

Uff.

OGGETTO: Centro Raccolta
Patrioti Firenze-Trasferimento
Ufficiali;

JDR for translation, 5/8/45.

Roma 4 aprile 1945

Trasmissione 6/4 JDR

ALLIED COMMISSION

PATRIOTS BRANCH

Uff. Coll. n. 10 (Col. Fava)

- Via Veneto

R O M A

e. p. o.:

AL CENTRO RACCOLTA

PATRIOTI

FIRENZE

Si comunica, per le pratiche di competenza
di codesto Ufficio, che il

Cap. Cav. Compl. CARRARA FRANCESCO

è assegnato al Centro Raccolta Patrioti di Firen-
ze in sostituzione del Ten. Col. Ftr. S.P.E. Fede-
li Vincenzo destinato ad altro incarico.

IL CAPO DI GABINETTO

1652

17

Translated by A.V.

FILE

FROM : HQ. AC. Patriots Branch
TO : M.O.O.I.
DATE : 3 April 1945.
REF : 124/3/PAT.
SUBJECT: Patriots Centre, Florence.

16

You are requested to let us know what steps have been taken in connection with the points raised by Lt.Col. FEDELI in para. 2 of his report Ref O/007 dated 14 March 45, on the activity of the Patriots Centre in Florence.

R.P.

Lt.Col. F. CRAIG,
Director, Patriots Branch.

/mlg.

1651

16
You are requested to let us know what steps have been taken in connection with the points raised by Lt.Col. PEDILLI in para. 2 of his report Ref O/007 dated 14 March 45, on the activity of the Patriots Centre in Florence.

R.P.

Lt.Col. F. GRAIG,
Director, Patriots Branch.

/mg.

1651

(14)

HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION
APO 394
CIVIL AFFAIRS SECTION
PATRIOTS BRANCH

Ref : 121/3/EAR.

3 Aprile 1945.

Oggetto: Centro Raccolta di Firenze.

Al : Ministero dell'Italia Occupata,
Roma.

16
Si prega far conoscere se e quale passo sia stato
fatto in merito a quanto segnalato dal Ten. Col. FIDELLI nel
paragrafo 2 della sua relazione in data 14/3/1943 n. 9/007
sull'attività del Centro di raccolta di Firenze.

F. CRAIG,
Lt. Colonel,
Director,
Patriots Branch.

AMV/mfg.

1630

Ref : 121/3/PAT.

3 Aprile 1945.

Oggetto: Centro Raccolta di Firenze.

Al : Ministero dell' Italia Occidentale,
Roma.

16
Si prega far conoscere se e quale passo sia stato
fatto in merito a quanto segnalato dal Ten. Col. FIDELI nel
paragrafo 2 della sua relazione in data 14/3/1943 n. 9/007
sull'attività del Centro di raccolta di Firenze.

P. ORATI,
Lt. Colonel,
Director,
Patriotic Branch.

AMT/mgs.

1650

(14)

121/3

16

Translated by J.D.R.

FROM : Patriot's Centre, Florence
 TO : HQ. AC. Patriots Branch, Rome.
 DATE : Florence 14/3/45
 REF : O/007 - Restricted, annexes 5.
 SUBJECT: Report on Patriot Centre Florence, covering period
 9 February to 14 March 1945.

1. The Centre is now running entirely satisfactorily and the improvements already carried out are satisfactory. With the improvement of the conditions and the constant propaganda, discipline has also considerably improved.

During the last days I have noticed signs of impatience because military operations are not yet moving at the pace necessary for the speedy liberation of the Northern provinces.

There are also rumours that the Allies wish to delay the occupation of Northern Italy as much as possible while the belief that to throw the invader out of Italy would not require a very great war effort, becomes more general.

Whilst early spring awakens in the partisans the desire for action, it also sharpens the longing to return to their homes and families from whom they have been separated for so long.

2. There is in Rome an "Executive Centre" of a so called "Avanguardia Partigiana" (33 Via Uffici del Vicario) which is sending to Florence small parties or isolated young people to "join the partisan comrades to fight the war of liberation". These youngsters join the Centre and are very surprised in finding out that there are no enlistants for special partisan formations. The Headquarters of the centre has so far arranged for their employment, but it is necessary that this influx should cease, because :
 - (a) Headquarters of the Centre ignore ~~any~~ any enlistment of that kind;
 - (b) The partisans are badly impressed by seeing too many bodies taking an interest in the patriotic movement, and they have good reasons to believe that these boys enlisted by the so called "Avanguardia partigiana" have never previously been active patriots.

3. Political tendencies - I wish to confirm what I reported in my letter ref # O/001 restricted dated 26/1/45.

4. Enlistment - 114.
5. Reemployment - 123
6. Repatriation - 446
7. Hospitalisation - 17.

1649

During the last days I have noticed signs of impatience because military operations are not yet moving at the pace necessary for the speedy liberation of the Northern provinces.

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- 3. Political tendencies - I wish to confirm what I reported in my letter ref ~~as~~ 0/001 restricted dated 28/1/45.

- 4. Enlistment - 114.
- 5. Reemployment - 123
- 6. Repatriation - 446
- 7. Hospitalisation - 17.

1649

(Signed) THE ITALIAN OFFICER OF THE CENTRE
Lt.Col. Enzo Fedeli.

The report bears attached 5 orders of the day issued by Lt.Col. Fedeli, concerning the hygienic conditions of the centre, instructions for the "Day of the partisan and of the soldier" (which was celebrated on 18 February), and general discipline rules for the centre.

EXTRACT from letter dated 17 March 45 from Officer i/c
Patriot Centre Florence.

.....

4. Subject to your approval it is my intention to inform Special Forces that the name of any man who is to be taken by them for Service must be reported to the Italian Commandante of this Camp, and that after a further twenty four hours such men must leave the Camp and become the responsibility of Special Forces to accommodate feed and cloth.

.....

/mg.

-
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-

/mg.

200

25 MAR Recd

PATRIOT SECTION

Florence

Florence, 16 March 1945

To
Patriot Branch H.C. H.A.Subject: Italian Representative Reports

1. Herewith report of my Italian Patriot Representative for the period 19 Feb. / 14 March.
2. It has been reported that the Italian Representative at your H.C. has not seen previous reports. These were despatched through Patriot Officer 5th Army.

*Ref. memo and Capt. H.A.*PATRIOT OFFICER
PATRIOT TRANSIT
N. 1 PATRIOT TRACKS
BARRACKS

11. copy sent to Ministry of Occup. Italy
H.C. 30/3/45

1647

J.d.R.
for Translation, please

26/3/945 16A

Trans. 28/3
J.d.R.

To Patriot Branch H.C. H.C.

Subject: Italian Representative Reports

1. Herewith report of any Italian Patriot Representative for the period 19 Feb. / 14 March.

2. It has been reported that the Italian Representative at your H.C. has not seen previous reports. These were despatched through Patriot Officer 5th Army.

Ref. on and called.

PATRIOT OFFICER
N.1 PATRIOT TRANSIT
BARRACKS

*1. copy sent to Ministry of Camp. Italy
M.C. 30/3/45*

1847

15
FILE
TRANSMISSIONS ALIEN ORIGIN
APO 204
CIVIL AFFAIRS SECTION
PATRIOTS BRANCH

Ref : 124/3/944. 29 March 1945.

Subject: Recruitment in Patriotic Centre
to Special Forces

To : Officer i/c No. 1 Patriotic Centre, Florence.

Copy : R.O. (M) Madison Street, Rome.
(with extract from letter referred to
in para 1 below).

1. This Branch is in complete agreement with the action suggested in para 4 of your letter dated 17 March 45.
2. It is understood that officers from No. 1 Special Force may wish to visit the Centre from time to time to be interviewed, or to recruit them as suggested in para 4 referred to above, but once recruited, the individuals concerned should be entirely the responsibility of No. 1 Special Force.

W
P. CRAIG,
Lt. Colonel,
Director,
Patriotic Branch.

Ref : 724/3/512.

Subject: Recruitment in Patriotic Force
No. 1 Special Force.

To : Officer i/c No. 1 Patriotic Centre, Florence.

Copy : S.O. (M) Liaison Staff, Rome.
(with extract from letter referred to
in para 2 below).

1. This Branch is in complete agreement with the action suggested in para 4 of your letter dated 17 March 45.
2. It is understood that officers from No. 1 Special Force may wish to visit the Centre from time to time to investigate suitable, or to recruit them as suggested in para 4 referred to above, but once recruited, the individuals concerned should be entirely the responsibility of No. 1 Special Force.

KH
P. CHIEF,
No. 1 Colonel,
Director,
Patriotic Branch.

/ms.

1646

(1006)

8 MAR Recd

ALLIED MILITARY GOVERNMENT

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY

PATRIOT SECTION

RCL/mm

REF. : IO9/5
 SUBJECT : Lt Col Fedeli.
 TO : Director Patriots Branch
 Headquarters Allied Commission.

DATE : 6.3.1945

12

1. I am in receipt of your communication dated the 28th February 1945, ref. I2I/3/PAT, relative to the above named.
2. I note your remark concerning the rations for Lt Col Fedeli and I can assure you it is extraordinarily difficult to obtain rations for him as it is difficult to draw for only one person. I propose however to discuss the matter with the Fifth Army Mess Sergeant and see what can be done and I will let you know any future developments.

R. C. LILBERT
 R. C. LILBERT,
 Captain, Gen. List,
 Patriots Officer,
 A.M.G. Fifth Army.

Col Fava to see.

1844

RCL/mm

REF. : IO9/5
SUBJECT : Lt Col Fedeli.
TO : Director Patriots Branch
Headquarters Allied Commission.

DATE : 6.3.1945

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R. C. Limbert
R. C. LIMBERT,
Captain, Gen. List,
Patriots Officer,
A.M.G. Fifth Army.

Col Fava to see. *M.P. 10/10/45* 1844

HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION
APO 394
CIVIL AFFAIRS SECTION
PATRIOTS BRANCH

Ref : i21/3/PAT.

23 February 1945.

Subject: Lt. Col. Fedeli.

To : Capt. LEMBERT,
A.M.G. V Army.

1. Lt. Col. Fedeli has mentioned that he has found no Allied body to issue him rations, or to billet him.
2. We appreciate that it may be difficult to make him member of a mess, but rationing should not be difficult.
3. Could you please let us have your comments.

A.P.
F. CRAIG,
Lt. Colonel,
Director,
Patriots Branch.

/mfg.

1643

842

49/PAT.

Col Fary

STATEMENT THAT LT.COL. P E D E L I GAVE ON
24 FEBRUARY 1945.

I visited the "Armando" Formation at the beginning of February because in my Centre (Florence Patriots Centre) I had many patriots who were asking to return as partisans, to the front line (which is strictly forbidden by the rules of the Centre).

The Formation strong of about 750 men was at the front in the sector Lizzano in Belvedere - Vidiciatico and was engaged in war operations together with Allied Units (on fixed position and on patrol duty).

I have had a very good impression of the band, both for discipline and fighting spirit).

Weapons : automatic weapons of all types.

Armando is a chief who has great authority with his men, he has been politically persecuted for many years and has passed several years in prison or in political concentration camps; he commanded a battalion of militiamen (red) during the civil war in Spain.

He was appointed Commander of his present formation by the United Command for the Emilia and Romagna regions of C.L.N. He began his activity by occupying the Carabinieri barracks of Pavullo with 15 men and disarming all Carabinieri and republican militiamen of the place.

He is surrounded by excellent collaborators on his staff, of which I wish to mention :

- (a) The Vice Commander "Guido" (this one also is an old political victim and a habitual customer of houses of detention),
- (b) "Mario il Modenese" (long detention in the prison of Castelfiore Emiliano),
- (c) "Angelo" a professor of philosophy who was acting Chief of Staff in the Unit,
- (d) "Tullio" Brigade Commander (7 years at the Civitavecchia penitentiary),
- (e) "The little father" , and many other.

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The German Command offered a truce to Armando who refused it. The German message also specified that the Formation would have been allowed to exist on condition that they refrained from operating against German convoys.

From Armando's report it appears that his Unit killed at least 8,000 Germans and has executed very many fascist officials (amongst whom the Prefet of Reggio).

Armando's attitude towards fascist militiamen was usually the following : to forgive the young ones and shoot on the spot the older ones, and those who had executive appointments. All capital sentences were passed by a regular War Court. Such Courts, when necessary, were also passing judgements on members of the Formation and quite a number of partisan chiefs and O.Rs. were executed amongst whom a partisan brigade commander, charged with theft and with having ordered the shooting of about 20 former members of the public safety of Modena who had applied to entrance of the Unit.

Amongst other peculiarities of the Formation is the poor state of health of the members. In Alizzano Beldere a field hospital is in operation and there are very many cases of lung diseases (This is probably a consequence of the long operative cycle which the Formation has endeavoured with all inevitable hardships).

Previous to a particularly hard clash which took place at Monte Fiorino (three German Divisions attacked the Formation), the Unit had a strength of about 8,000 men.

Since that episode the Nazi Authorities published a manifesto in which the annihilation of the "Armando" band was announced. "Armando" replied assuring the population that his Unit was still very strong and active.

The last day of my visit, Armando requested me to ask the Allied Authorities to give him permission and help him to send over the lines leaflets encouraging the formations formerly under his orders to resist. I passed the request to Lt.Col. Di Marco, Italian Liaison Officer with the 5th Army.

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I now hear that at present the formation (about 750 men) has been withdrawn from the lines disarmed and concentrated near Peschia.

It must be remembered that Armando does not only command those 750 men, but that he can father on both sides of the lines a considerable and non specified number of partisans who at the proper moment will all answer his call.

The situation of the Armando Band is at present unsolved because these 750 men are now in Peschia, regimented by their chiefs but with no clear task. Such a situation can not be left to drag and should be resolved.

It is my opinion that there are three solutions:

1. Send the Formation back through the lines and have it continue its guerilla actions on the rear of the German lines. Should this solution be accepted by the Chiefs it would have a moral drawback: The population still under German occupation would see those strong parties of patriots return, and would believe that the time of liberation is still very far away.
2. Transform the formation into a partisan battalion, with an Officer of the Italian Army with very good knowledge of the partisans and their problems. The Battalion could be employed in the area near Modena and Bologna, and there would also be the advantage that all the members know the area very well.
3. Send the Formation to a training camp of the regular Army, trying to send small parties of partisans to the combat groups of the regular Army. This solution would be long and difficult because it would call for immediate recognition of partisan ranks, and there would probably be a certain hostility of the partisans to be separated after having been united for so many months in their fight.

I must also point out that in the ranks of the formation an ill hidden discontent can be noticed arising from the operational standstill, while all partisans are convinced of the facility to proceed and liberate their families. On the other hand the partisans would not accept any solution which would not allow them the satisfaction of returning with the first troops to the zones in which they fought so hard, suffered so many casualties and where they know they will find their homes burned down.

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28 FEB Recd / 12/3 Translated by J.d.R.

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FROM : Patriot Centre, Florence.
TO : HQ.AC. Patriots Branch
REF : O/001, Restricted.
DATE : 28 January 1945.
SUBJECT : Report from 17 to 28 January 1945.

1. I took over the centre on 17 January. In close and friendly collaboration with Capt. Hammond, Allied Officer at the Centre, we started the work of reorganisation.

It is my hope that within a month the Centre which is still in miserable conditions, will have taken a dignified outlook, and that there will be the possibility of offering real moral and material assistance to the veterans awaiting rehabilitation.

I will not make any particular suggestions for the time being. Our work on the place must be timely and have the necessary spirit of initiative to solve the numerous difficulties and necessities which arise.

The first necessity which arose is that that the center should have at its disposal a fund to be adjusted monthly, for the upkeep of the centre. The good will of Allied and Italian commands, and of the civil Bodies of the Town cannot always supply to the many and immediate small requirements of the centre. The fund should amount to about 50,000 lire monthly.

2. Political tendencies.

The patriots know and I often stress the point that it is strictly forbidden to make any kind of party propaganda in the centre. This rule is observed in a general way, and I will actively control the matter. However a first examination of the tendencies of the centre has shown, as was to be expected, that the majority is decidedly anti-monarchic and the general tendency is decidedly inclined to the left.

The presence of an Italian Officer at the centre is necessary on moral grounds as well as to give the centre the necessary order and organisation.

If the officer is active, earnest and has a past which cannot be criticized, and if he is gifted with the necessary tact and is well accepted by the patriots he can be very useful not only to ensure the good functioning of the centre, but also to create an approach between partisans and regular army.

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