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Italian Soldiers On Lissa - VIS

Dec 1944 - Jan 1945

OFFICE OF THE REPRESENTATIVE AT BARI
OF THE RESIDENT MINISTER
CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN

36 Via Salvatore Cognetti,
BARI.

H. Hopkinson Esq., C.M.G.

LT. COL. DEAKIN'S
WITH MR. CORREIA'S COMPLIMENTS

3rd January, 1945.

Hand free
+ return.

Seen
28 Jan 45

S/C for info.
2/5/45

K. Hall
for H.V.P. (R.V.)
Id. Sec.

OFFICE OF THE REPRESENTATIVE AT BARI
OF THE RESIDENT MINISTER
CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN

BARI.

3rd January, 1945.

Please see my letter to you of the 31st December regarding the evacuation of Italian troops from Yugoslavia.

I learn from Rear Headquarters 37 Military Mission that there are some 350 Italian soldiers on Vis and other Dalmatian islands. Of these, the greater number are on Vis. I understand that the Italian High Command made an application in August 1944 for the return of these soldiers on Vis - it is not clear to whom - and that the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs have reported to the Allied Commission that the remainder were being ill treated by the Partisans. G.5 Section at Allied Force Headquarters have been in correspondence on the subject with Rear Headquarters 37 Military Mission.

There will be no difficulty in effecting the evacuation of the Italian soldiers on Vis in vessels which are maintaining the British troops on the island. The question remains, however, of obtaining the permission of the Partisan authorities. This I suggest might best be taken up by the Italian High Command direct with Marshal Tito as a supplementary request to that for the evacuation of the Garibaldi Division.

I am sending copies of this letter to Henry Hopkinson and to John Clarke.

(Sgd) F. W. DEAKIN.

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Philip Broad Sec.,
Office of the Resident Minister
Central Mediterranean,
Allied Force Headquarters.

AH

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ROUGH TRANSLATION

MINISTERO DEGLI AFFARI ESTERI

IL SEGRETARIO GENERALE

Rome, 2nd December, 1944

Dear Admiral,

With Memorandum no. 5511 of July 5th, 1944, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs drew the attention of the competent Allied Authorities on the distressing situation of the Italian soldiers who, having escaped capture by the Germans and voluntarily joined Marshal Tito's partisans, had been detained by the partisan Command in the Island of Lissa and other nearby islands and there subjected to inhuman treatment. With letter no. 15/1832/123 addressed to you, we requested you, Dear Admiral, to interpose your authority in order to obtain that the request forwarded by the Italian General Staff to the Military Allied Authorities tending to obtain the early repatriation of all the Italian soldiers and sailors detained on those islands, should receive favourable consideration. You were so kind as to answer to this letter on October 5th ult. expressing the hope that a satisfactory solution of the question could be attained in the near future.

The War Ministry has now forwarded to this Ministry copy of a letter dated Nov. 1st addressed to the Minister of War by one of the Italian soldiers detained on a Dalmatian island and according to which they are still kept in concentration camps and subjected to ill-treatments. They also complained that "the promise made to them to repatriate them to Italy so that

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Admiral Ellery Stone
Chief Commissioner of the Allied Commission
ROME

p.s.o.

they could fight in the ranks of the Italian Army" has not been maintained.

It is needless for me to repeat to you, dear Admiral, how distressing this state of affairs appears to us and how anxious we are to bring to an end the sufferances of those gallant and loyal soldiers who have overcome great dangers and difficulties in order to realize their desire of fighting against the Germans; the moral injury caused by the injustice of which they are victims appears to be even graver than their material privations.

I take the liberty, my dear Admiral, of resorting again to your good offices in order to obtain the repatriation of the Italian soldiers detained on Dalmatian Islands at the earliest possible opportunity and I beg you to accept with my warmest thanks the expressions of my high consideration.

Cordially yours

