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

785016

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Italian Soldiers of the Cuneo Division

Feb - Dec 1944

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Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NNN No. 785016

820.41

File No. P/820.41
Political Section
"Italian Soldiers of the
"Cuneo" Division"

7/1/59

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

785016

File No. E/820.41
Political Section

"Italian Soldiers of the
"Cured" Division"

10000/132/4A1

THIS FOLDER

CONTAINS PAPERS

FEB 44

DEC 44

ALPHABETICALLY

9/10/45

(2)

AFHQ is at the moment considering the status of co-operators versus Italian Army and it is felt this matter should be left over until a decision is reached.

NRMA.
9 Feb 45.

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To Political Sec.

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It was agreed some time ago that the Chinese Bureau was not P.O.W nor co-operators. Therefore do not see how the question of Status of co-operators in Italy affects the question. The Chinese Forces Sub.

Com. have requested the repatriation of some 3000 officers and 28,000 OR; P.O.W as representatives for the Italian Coastal Troops.

I would therefore have thought that the Italian Government's suggestion was worth early consideration. I cannot express an opinion as to the desirability of the Com. Div. as representatives for the Italian Army but I have always been informed they were good soldiers.

10 Feb 1945

Dr Campbell, Lt Col.
Dir. W & D, P.O.W. Sub Com.

Hayden

U.S. HALLOWAY
Asst Political Adm.
Political Section

L.M. Englebert
H-22 68

Ministero degli Affari Esteri

MEMORANDUM FOR THE POLITICAL SECTION A.E.

Subject: - Italian soldiers in Egypt -

According to a report submitted by the Chief of Staff of the "Dniep" Division, recently repatriated to Italy, the soldiers of his and of the "Regina" Division now in Egypt, wish to return to Italy in order to enroll themselves in the Combat Groups and take part in active operations against the Germans.

These soldiers fought in the Aegean Islands against the Germans and following the Islands' evacuation were transferred to Egypt and were considered as "cooperators".

The Allied Commission is aware of the steps taken by the General Staff and by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs with a view to examining that, according to the assurances previously received, a judicial enquiry be conducted into the alleged soldiers' behavior in harmony with the low attitude they maintained after their capture. The Italian Government.

Such steps, however, have not given till now the hoped for results. On the contrary, according to recent information, the general and local situation of these troops has further deteriorated.

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It has been pointed out that:

- the British military regulations have substituted the Italian ones;

- the British uniforms distributed to the troops arrived in Allied controlled territory have even replaced the Italian ones issued to P.O.W.;

- The hoisting of the Italian flag over the camps occupied by them has been forbidden;

- greater restrictions have been imposed on their freedom.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs recalls therefore their previous Memoranda on the subject, and in particular the Memo. no. 3/131/1943 of September 6th and has requested the competent Allied Authorities to again consider the case of these soldiers and the possibility of recognizing them the status of "co-belligerent" troops.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs furthermore believe that the request forwarded by the Chief of Staff of the "Chiese" Division affords a favourable opportunity of reaching a satisfactory solution of the question. While the recognition of these troops, in fact, would on the one hand give full satisfaction to their legitimate expectations of obtaining, through a special treatment, the moral acknowledgment of the contribution made to the common cause, it would, on the other, involve the recognition of a large number of soldiers as proven soldiers.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs therefore has the A.C. to interest the competent Allied Authorities in revising the juridical status of the Italian soldiers and in considering the possibility of carrying out their registration to Italy.

Rome, January 23rd 1945



HEAD-QUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION
WAR MATERIALS DISPOSAL AND
ITALIAN PRISONERS OF WAR SUB COMMISSION

IPW/29/82

19 December 1944

To: Comando Supremo, Italian Government, Rome.
Subject: Italian soldiers of the Cuneo Division.

- 1/. Reference your letter No. 14005/OP dated 3 July 1944.
- 2/. C.M.E., Middle East have reported the majority of the Cuneo Division have now been formed into companies, which are self contained, and, although they come into contact with co-operator companies in the course of their work, they retain separate identity.
- 3/. There is, however, a small number of skilled tradesmen from the Division who are being employed in their trades alongside co-operators. It would otherwise be impossible to make use of their skill, and no discontent appears to be caused by this measure.
- 4/. C.M.E., MIDEAST, have recommended that no further segregation of personnel in para 3 above should be carried out.

J.A. Campbell
J.A. CAMPBELL
Lieut.-Colonel
Director
WMO & IPOW Sub-Com.

cc: Political Section ✓
MHIA
Chief ~~Commissioner~~ *Staff*

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Copy

Prepared by:

Director WMD & IPW Sub.Comm.

Lt.Col. JAC/mms

In reply refer to:
A/CC 091.711-1

19 September 1944.

Subject: "Cuneo" Division.To: Allied Forces Headquarters, APO 512, U.S.Army.

The attached memorandum from the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs is forwarded.

In a letter from General Gamel dated 7 March, 1944, it was clearly stated that personnel of the "Cuneo" Division were not to be considered in any way as Prisoners of War.

This information was passed to the Italian Government by letter on 16 March, 1944.

On the July 10th, 1944, I wrote forwarding a translation of a letter from the Italian Comando Supremo complaining that they had received information that the Command in Cairo had issued an order stating that Italian soldiers of the "Cuneo" Division were to be treated as Cooperating Prisoners of War. I requested that I be informed as to the position so that I could reply to the Comando Supremo, but so far I have received no reply to my letter.

I shall be pleased therefore if I may now receive an early reply to this letter so that I may be able to answer the enclosed letter from the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs dated 6 September, 1944.

ELERY W. STONE
Captain, U.S.N.R.
Acting Chief Commissioner.

Encl. Memo from Italian Minister
of Foreign Affairs dated 6 September, 1944.

Copy to Political Section.

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C O P Y

Nr 6/431/196

MINISTERO DEGLI
AFFARI ESTERI

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION
POLITICAL SECTION

The Allied Control Commission is aware that troops of the "Cuneo" and "Regina" divisions, as well as elements of the Italian Air Force and of the Royal Navy, after having gallantly fought alongside the Allied against the Germans in some of the Aegean Islands were, after the evacuation of the Islands, sent to Egypt.

In the aggregate they amount to 7000 men. The exact position of these men who have never been taken prisoners by the Allies with whom, instead, they have fought, has been made clear in two letters addressed to Marshall Messe by General Duschesne and Admiral Stone, respectively dated 18th February and 16th March, 1944, wherein it is specified that they would be employed under the same conditions as those obtaining for the units of the Italian Army in the rear of the Allied Armies and in no case were they to be considered as prisoners of war.

According, however, to subsequent information received from various sources it appears that the British Command in the Middle East has ruled that the Italian servicemen in question are to be considered as "co-operating prisoners" and not as "co-belligerents". The difference is considerable not only from the juridical and moral standpoint, but also from that of the material treatment afforded to them.

The Italian General Staff has already invited, on 3rd July, the technically competent Military Section of the Allied Control Commission to examine the question: however, given that the question bears also a political character, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs deems it advisable to draw the attention also of the Political Section on the matter.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would therefore much appreciate the kind intervention of the Allied Control Commission in order to obtain that the treatment that was originally accorded to the Italian troops who have fought alongside the Allies and which was probably inadvertently modified by the British Command in the Middle East be re-established without undue delay.

/s/ GdB.

Rome, 6th September 1944.

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September 10, 1944.

MEMORANDUM TO: General Browning,
Army Sub-Commission

From paragraph 4 of the attached Memorandum it appears that the Italian General Staff have already taken up with you the question of the treatment of the CUNEO and REGINA Divisions. In order to make sure that we do not cross wires, may I know whether this is correct, and if so, what action you took. Also whether you would wish us to support any action from a political point of view.

Harold Caccia

Attached: F.O 6/431 Sept 6

File.
COPY

In reply refer to:
DCC 091.711

16 March 1944

Subject: Cuneo Division

Dear Marshal Messe:

General Macfarlane has forwarded your memorandum file N. 11395/OP dated 26 February, in regard to the employment of the Cuneo Division, and I telegraphed further on the subject as a result of General Infante's note to me dated 11 March. Because of your personal interest in this matter, I regret to have to inform you that considerations of equipment supply prevent reconsideration of the earlier decision as to the disposition of the Cuneo division.

With reference to the treatment of the personnel of the Division, Allied Force Headquarters states that the personnel of the Division are employed in Egypt under terms similar to those existing for Italian Army units in the rear of the Allied Armies, and are not considered in any way as prisoners of war.

As to the suggestion that a policy of gradual repatriation be established for the personnel of the Division, it is felt to be premature to consider such a project at this time due to existing priority of movement of personnel from the Middle East and the importance of the work on which the Division is employed.

Yours very truly,

ELLERY W. STONE
Captain, USNR
Deputy Chief Commissioner

His Excellency Marshal Messe
Chief of the Supreme General Staff
Comando Supremo

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CopySubject:- CUNEO DIV

Army Sub Commission A.C.C.
Main H.Q. (MHA)
LEQUITE (LECCE)
G/6/20
18 Feb 44.

His Excellency, Marshal Messe
Chief of the Supreme General Staff

Your Excellency,

1. I forward herewith copy of instructions received from Allied Force Headquarters :-

"As already decided CUNEO Div will be retained in PALESTINE and personnel, except surplus officers, will be employed as tradesmen where practicable and balance organised as Pioneer Coys in MIDEAST. Agreed Gen SOLDARELLI be allowed to pay visit of 7 days duration only to Division in PALESTINE to communicate to the Div the instructions regarding its disposal. Arrange passage SOLDARELLI direct ITALY to PALESTINE and immediate return after 7 days."

2. If you will confirm that Gen SOLDARELLI is immediately available I will arrange air passage.

(Sgd) C.C. DUCHESNE.
Brigadier,
Army Sub Comm A.C.C.

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