

ACC

10000/135/19

10000/135/19

IAF FIGHTER WING
SEPT. 1944 - JAN. 1945

File 134

Headquarters,
BALKAN AIR FORCE
Royal Air Force,
C.M.F.

LFS/DO/45.

27th January, 1945.

Dear *AM*

134

Reference my LFS/DO/45 dated 14th January.
We now understand from our Italian Liaison Officer that
the cases of ill treatment were not in YUGOSLAVIA but in
ALBANIA. I have, therefore, written to McLEAN and told
him this as we do not want to accuse the YUGOSLAVS of mis-
behaviour when they are innocent of offences against
Italian airmen.

As far as ALBANIA goes, there is nothing we
can really do now as the war has moved on from that Country.
I see the point of the Italian's complaints and admire them
for operating over ALBANIA, but on the other hand I see the
ALBANIANS point of view as well and, therefore, consider
we had best let the matter drop.

Yours

Sincerely
McLean

Air Vice Marshal Bowen Buscarlet,
Air Forces Sub-Commission,
Allied Commission,
ROME.

890

AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION,
ROME.

TOP SECRET.

AFSC/R/S. 1/ALP.

20th January, 1945.

Dear

I am attaching to this letter a copy of a letter which I have just received from General Almondo-Cat. This is the first reaction to your letter JCS. 1076 of the 15th January 1945.

2. You will see that in paragraphs 2 to 4 he says that he is unable to give a more detailed reply until he has examined some of the problems, and until the new Command of the Operational Group (Units Area) has become effective. I am hoping that when this does happen matters will improve, as at the moment there does not seem to be anybody in effective command at Bari.

3. In paragraph 5 you will see that the General returns to the change on the subject of using the fighters on the Italian front. He does not seem to have appreciated our point about lack of airfield accommodation, but I shall hammer this into him.

4. It has just been reported to me that three Baltimore crews refused to attack objectives at POLA on the grounds that they would not attack Italian civilians. I have taken this matter up strongly with the General and pointed out that such a state of mind would preclude the employment of the Baltimores on the Italian front. I have had a verbal reply from him in which he stated that he did not think that the Baltimores would be suitable for employment on this front, and I am going to take this matter up with him further.

5. I am still very concerned about the state of affairs in the Fighter Group. It is obvious that they still consider themselves as somewhat of a Republic. In spite of definite orders there has been an attempt to bring the much discussed 3rd Gruppo into the line as a Unit. This is not only contrary to our orders, but to those of the Air Ministry, and the Units Area, and the responsibility must rest with Colonel FANAL. Under the circumstances it would be fatal to remove him, as the morale of the Wing could not, in my view, support the loss in action of Major MARIOTTI and the removal of FANAL, but I hope that when Colonel FANAL gets to Bari he may be able to improve matters. He has a tremendous influence with the fighters, and the mere fact of his appointment to his job should improve things. I have suggested to the General that we send for Colonel FANAL to come to Rome, and give him a good dressing down.

6. Meanwhile I have sent Flying Officer Rovira to the Fighter wing. He has spent a long time with them, and from my personal observations he gets on with them extremely well, and I hope that by his influence, and by talking to individuals, he will be able to get them out of their somewhat peculiar state of mind.

2. You will see that in paragraphs 2 to 4 he says that he is unable to give a more detailed reply until he has examined some of the problems, and until the new Command of the Operational Group (Unita Aerea) has become effective. I am hoping that when this does happen matters will improve, as at the moment there does not seem to be anybody in effective command at Bari.

3. In paragraph 5 you will see that the General returns to the charge on the subject of using the fighters on the Italian front. He does not seem to have appreciated our point about lack of airfield accommodation, but I shall hammer this into him.

4. It has just been reported to me that three Baltimore crews refused to attack objectives at POLA on the grounds that they would not attack Italian civilians. I have taken this matter up strongly with the General and pointed out that such a state of mind would preclude the employment of the Baltimore on the Italian front. I have had a verbal reply from him in which he stated that he did not think that the Baltimores would be suitable for employment on this front, and I am going to take this matter up with him further.

5. I am still very concerned about the state of affairs in the Fighter Group. It is obvious that they still consider themselves as somewhat of a Republic. In spite of definite orders there has been an attempt to bring the much discussed 9th Gruppo into the line as a Unit. This is not only contrary to our orders, but to those of the Air Ministry, and the Unita Aerea, and the responsibility must rest with Colonel FANALI. Under the circumstances it would be fatal to remove him, as the morale of the Wing could not, in my view, support the loss in action of Major IMBIGNI and the removal of FANALI, but I hope that when Colonel FRANCES gets to Bari he may be able to improve matters. He has a tremendous influence with the fighters, and the mere fact of his appointment to his job should improve things. I have suggested to the General that we send for Colonel FANALI to come to Rome, and give him a good dressing down.

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7. The last paragraph of the General's letter refers to increases in pay, about which I have no further news, and to any concessions that we may be able to make in the way of additional food, etc.

Yours

WR

Air Marshal Sir John Slessor, KCB, DSO, MC,
Headquarters,
R.A.A.F.
C.M.F.

AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION,
ROME.

AFSC/R/10/1/AIR.

26th January, 1945.

I was rung up on the telephone late last night by Group Captain Denny, from Bari. He tells me that, in spite of orders to the contrary from Colonel Fessi, Colonel Fanali insists on taking 16 aircraft for the 9th Gruppo, to come, from out of the reserve of aircraft at Lecce.

2. This is exactly equivalent to bringing the 9th Gruppo into the line as an operational unit, and as you know this has been forbidden by the A.C.G-in-2, for very good reasons.

3. I gave permission for pilots of the 9th Gruppo to relieve tired pilots in the other two Gruppi, and nothing else. If these aircraft are taken from the reserve pool there is an end to any attempt at systematic maintenance. The Airacobra aircraft in the 10th and 12th Gruppi are not worn out by any manner of means, and engines and aircraft must run to the schedule of hours laid down or chaos will result, and the Airacobra Stormo will become inactive through shortage of aircraft.

4. I have the greatest respect for Colonel Fanali as a fighter pilot and leader, but it is clear that he does not understand the necessity for a systematic organisation in the maintenance of his aircraft.

5. Also, while I am sympathetic to the aspirations of the 9th Gruppo, I have made it quite clear, both to the Staff and to Colonel Fanali, that they can never be allowed to go into the line as a Unit. The decision to this effect was taken by the Italian Air Force, and it must be maintained.

W.A.B. Bowen-Buccafur.

W.A.B. BOWEN-BUCCAFUR,
AIR VICE-MARSHAL 888,
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING.

H.E. General Almona-Cat,
Chief of Staff,
Italian Air Ministry,
ROME.



STATO MAGGIORE DELLA R. AERONAUTICA

Roma li

22 GEN. 1945

Prot. no 10879/S.17

A.V.M. BOWEN BUSCARLETT

CAPO A.F.S.C.

= R O M A =

Mi riferisco alla nota AFSC/R/10/1/AIR in data odierna.-

- 1.-In seguito a comunicazione telefonica avuta con Bari, confermo che non è il 9° Gruppo che si trasferirà a Canne, bensì uno dei due Gruppi 10° o 12°.-
- 2.-Il Tenente Colonnello FANELLI ha predisposto il movimento -che dovrebbe avere inizio domani - di 16 velivoli costituenti l'organico di linea del Gruppo da trasferire, scelti tra i migliori dei 46 in forza ai due Gruppi P. 39.-
- 3.-La questione relativa al funzionamento del Comando Unita Aerea, sarà superata con l'attuazione dei provvedimenti da me proposti e da lei accolti circa la costituzione del nuovo Comando.-

IL CAPO DI STATO MAGGIORE

10/1/1945.

887

AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION,
ROME.

14A

AFSC/P/10/1/AIR.

22nd January, 1945.

I have had a telephone call from Group Captain Denny at Bari. He tells me that the old trouble about the 9th Gruppo is still continuing. Colonel Pinaldi wants to send the aircraft and the personnel of this Gruppo into Canne.

2. In view of what Sir John Blesser told you it is quite clear that the question of the 9th Gruppo must be relinquished for good and all. Quite apart from this there is not the accommodation at Canne for the aircraft and personnel.

3. At the moment Group Captain Denny says that there appears to be nobody in authority at the Italia Aerea, so I should be grateful if you would send a signal to Colonel Pinaldi and tell him that this matter has got to be dropped finally.

W.B.

W.A.B. BOWEN-MUSCARLET,
AIR VICE-MARSHAL,
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING.

H.E. GENERAL GASPARIOTTO,
ITALIAN AIR MINISTRY,
ROME.

885

13A

Headquarters Balkan Air Force,
RAF. CBF.

14th January, 1945.

LFS/DO/45.

Dear

AM

Many thanks for your letter AFSC/R/10/1/AIR
dated 10 January, 1945.

I have taken up the two points you have raised in connection with the treatment of pilots forced landing among the Yugoslavs and the lack of news from the field of those who have baled out or been shot down.

In the first place I have written to Fitzroy MacLean pointing out the state of affairs as described by you, and in addition we have signalled all the missions in the field asking them to be kind to Italians and to make sure we get news of any who come down in their territory.

I hope that this will ginger things up a bit.

Yours

Sincerely,

P. MacLean.

Air Vice Marshal Bowen Boscarlet,
Air Forces Sub-Commission,
Allied Commission,
ROME.

883

12A.

AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION,
ROME.

SECRET.

AFSC/E/10/1/ALP.

10th January, 1945.

Dear

I have just had a long document from the new Chief of Staff at the Italian Air Ministry. It appears that there has been a drop in the morale of the Italian Fighter Wing, partly due to the slack time they had in December which as you know was unavoidable, and partly to the fact their ambition to fight on the Italian front has not yet been realised.

2. I am taking steps to see that everything possible is done to put matters right again, but there are two points on which I think you will be able to help me. Number one is that the Wing complains of the ill treatment afforded to pilots who are shot down or force land among Tito's troops. They are treated more or less as prisoners of war until they are handed over to the Allies, and while I think it is more their feelings than their persons that get hurt, I think that it is possible you will be able to do something about it through your Liaison Section.

3. Secondly they complain that they can never get any news of pilots who are shot down or force land on the other side. The first news they get, or so they claim, is when the pilot actually arrives back in Italy, and nothing more is heard of those who are killed or go to hospital. I am inclined to think that this is exaggerated, but here again your Liaison Section may be able to help.

Yours

W.B.

Air Commodore L.F. Sinclair, CC, CBE, DSO, DFC,
Headquarters,
Balkan Air Force,
C.M.F.

882

File 11A

OUTGOING MESSAGE

From: Air Forces Sub-Commission, Rome
 To: H.Q. M.A.A.P., S.S.O.

ROLG. 081700 FOR BAKER FROM BUSCARLET (.) SECRET

Following received from RAP:

BEGINS:

Personal for A.V.M. Bowen Buscarlet from Sinclair (.)

Para 1. In view of the fact that the Italian Fighter Stofro can no (R) no longer operate from Lecce steps are being taken to move FLS together with spitfire and two aerocobra squadrons to CANNE (.) These squadrons will be called upon to operate over Jugoslavie using Vis as ALG (.)

Para 2. It is intended to move 281 Wing to the Zadar area in the near future so that although H.Q. FLS will have but little to do during the early stages at Canne they will be called upon to function in a normal manner as soon as 281 Wing has vacated the airfield (.)

Para 3. There will be no (R) no room to accommodate the two Macchi squadrons during the initial stages at Canne but on the move of 281 Wing there will be ample dispersal for their aircraft (.) It is thought however that the useful life of the Macchis of these two squadrons is nearly over and that to operate them daily over Jugoslavie with a long sea crossing and the difficulty of landing at Vis for refuelling is asking too much of them (.)

Para 4. It is therefore thought that there is a strong case

Personal for A.V.S. Bowen Buscarlet from Sinclair (.)

Para 1. In view of the fact that the Italian Fighter Squadron can no (R) no longer operate from Lecce steps are being taken to move FLS together with Spitfire and two aerocobra squadrons to CANNE (.) These squadrons will be called upon to operate over Yugoslavia using Vis as ALG (.)

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Para 4. It is therefore thought that there is a strong case for the rearming of these two squadrons with modern (R) modern aircraft (.) Shortage of aircraft would doubtless prevent the rearming of both squadrons simultaneously but it might prove possible for MAAP to provide sufficient Spitfires for

Continued/one squadron

(2)

one squadron (.)

Para 5. Such a step would keep a proportion of Flying Personnel of the two Macchi squadrons occupied with rearming during the overlap period of the Stormo with 281 Wing on Canne airfield (.) Furthermore it would provide a valuable addition to Balkan Air Force when the Squadrons become operational at Canne (.)

Para 6. Should you be in agreement with this proposal it is suggested that you approach H. Q. MAAF with a view to ascertaining their reactions (.) We would be only too prepared to substantiate the good work carried out by the Stormo in the past and point out to them the value that such rearmament would be (.)

ENDS.

My comment (.) Am in complete agreement overmove of spitfires and aerocobras to Vis (.) Agree also that Macchis are most uneconomical to maintain although recent find of Namler Benz engines in France and Hurricane radiators which can be modified to fit Macchis would give extension to life of both types of Macchi (.) In spite of this maintenance will always be uneconomical (.) If Macchis are scrapped it would affect civilian factories at Benevento and Pomigliano and thus increase unemployment in these areas, but 214 Group might be able to use their facilities (.) Italians will probably try to hang on to Macchis as training aircraft and I suggest ^{we} offer ^{us} ^{we} may be able to make be conditional on their scrapping type of Macchi affected entirely (.)

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TO BE ENCRYPTED
IF TRANSMITTED OVER W/T

PRIORITY ROUTINE

W. S. K.
J. WALTON
Squadron Leader
AIR VICE-MARSHAL
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING

AFSC/E/10/1/ALF.

TOP SECRET.

9th January, 1945.

Dear

I am forwarding you a translation of a letter I have just received from General Aimone Cat, as I think that you will certainly wish to make some comments on its contents when you meet the General on the 13th. I have re-paragraphed the letter myself in order to be able to refer to it easily in my comments which follow.

2. It is clear that since my visit to Lecce with General Aimone Cat some trouble has worked itself up in the Fighter Wing. This has been due I think to:-

- (1) The slack time they had in December due to weather and the enemy being almost out of range.
- (ii) The departure of Piacentini.
- (iii) The order to move two squadrons to CANE.

3. The hopes of the Fighter Wing are stated shortly in paragraph 4 of the Chief of Staff's letter, and the order to move the Squadrons to CANE must have dispelled any hopes which they might have had for the first of these aspirations, namely the employment of the Fighter Wing on the Italian front. I may say that I had been in communication with Pussly Foster who said that he was so overcrowded on his airfields that he could barely accommodate his own aircraft, and I have taken steps to have this put about among the fighters, so that the order to move to CANE cannot have come altogether as a surprise.

4. Paragraph 5 gives the operational advantages which the Fighter Wing consider they would gain if they were employed on the Italian front. What it does not take into consideration is that the use of Macchis would probably be quite impossible owing to their already being in use by the Republican Air Force; that our pilots at M.A.F., just as much as the Italians, have to fly over the water to reach the Balkans; that during the whole time they have been operating at Lecce they have lost no-one in the water, and to the best of my knowledge only two, or at the most three, since March 1944 when I took over the Sub-Commission, and that the sea crossing from CANE to VIS is little, if any, longer than that from the Italian coast in a direct line to the area in which they have been working in Albania.

5. With regard to paragraph 5(c) of the letter, I do not agree that the morale of the pilots is really low. There was certainly no trace of it at Christmas and I think that the only thing that is wrong with them is a certain amount of disappointment and a lack of work.

6. Paragraph 6 which deals with the second aspiration of the pilots...

1 2 4 7
Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785017

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5. With regard to paragraph 5(c) of the letter, I do not agree that the morale of the pilots is really low. There was certainly no trace of it at Christmas and I think that the only thing that is wrong with them is a certain amount of disappointment and a lack of work.

6. Paragraph 6 which deals with the second aspiration of the Fighter Wing is really a plea to be regarded on the status of an Ally, but the various points raised certainly call for some comment:-

(a) It may equally be pointed out that our own Fighter Squadrons have been under canvas for at least a similar period, and that their conditions are no better than the Italians.

(b) This is certainly true, and for six months I have been fighting this tooth and nail, and so far I have got no change. Everyone agrees that the rations for operational crews are insufficient, but in spite of assistance from M.A.A.F. we have been unable to get anything done.

Continued /2.....

-2-

- (c) This is largely the Italian Air Force's own fault as they had considerable stocks of clothing in their stores at Mungivacca, but preferred to try and get clothing out of us. As regards boots, we have already effected a considerable improvement, but here again the difficulty is that one cannot trust the Italians to ask for their bare requirements, they always ask for far more than they actually need.
- (d) This is a matter over which I am afraid we have no control, although it is easy to imagine that it is not conducive to good morale.
- (e) I am afraid that these sort of incidents happen only too often, but the difficulty is that the Italians will never report them properly. I believe that the incident referred to occurred near Lecce about the New Year, but I am quite unable to obtain any proper report on the subject. The fact, however, remains that Military Policemen, particularly Americans, are apt to disregard entirely the rank of Italian Officers when searching vehicles, and often display what almost amounts to violence in dealing with them; in this case I believe that pistols were drawn.
- (f) Here again we suffer from lack of up-to-date information from the Italians, but I gather my Group Captain in Bari has taken the matter up with B.A.F.
- (g) Here again it is a matter for proper liaison and getting in touch with B.A.F. I know that we and B.A.F. have done what we can, but in view of the confused state of the country in the Balkans, it is not surprising that information is scanty.
- (h) The complaints in this paragraph probably go back to the old days when we had such difficulty as regards supply of equipment for the Airacobras, which as you know was not our fault. As regards the statement that we control supplies with diffidence and lack of faith, this is not to be wondered at in view of the tendency of the Italians to over-demand, which I have commented upon before. The example chosen of the Oxygen Masks is singularly unfortunate for the Italians as we have given them about 300 of these which is more than enough for their three fighter squadrons and two Baltimore Squadrons and Reserve, by a considerable margin. Actually 24 Oxygen Masks were issued for the Spitfire squadron, and the direct inference is that they are using more pilots in the Spitfire squadron than their establishment.
- (i) This one makes me really angry. When we had the conference to decide which squadron was to get the Spitfires, I made it very clear that if they gave it to a squadron which was not one of those already in training at Vesuvius, we would never consider any question of a third Airacobra squadron. To make this quite clear I reiterated it more than once. There is no doubt that the Staff, probably abetted by the squadrons, have been trying to pull a fast one on us ever since. I have again and again explained the reasons why this squadron cannot be used as a front line operational squadron, and it must be the responsibility of the Italian Staff to bring the reasons home to the Fighter pilot.
6. Paragraph 7 of the letter is quite a new one to me. I know of course that the Fighter Wing remained loyal to the Rastaglio Government before we took control of them, and that there were many individual acts of great bravery in bringing the aircraft over to our side, but I have never been told that

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6. Paragraph 7 of the letter is quite a new one to me. I know of course that the Fighter Wing remained loyal to the Rastaglio Government before we took control of them, and that there were many individual acts of great bravery in bringing the aircraft over to our side, but I have never been told that there was any desire for any particular recognition of this fact.

7. The measures referred to in paragraph 8 of the letter were merely that I was asked if they could use pilots who had hitherto been considered as reserve pilots, to relieve those who were tired after their efforts of November and December. While we might think that the individual number of sorties carried out by individual pilots was small, it must be remembered that they are definitely not properly fed. I gave orders to General Piacentini to do this a long time ago, and had no hesitation in telling General Alzone Cat, through Remorino, that he could use reserve pilots in any way that he wished.

8. As regards 10(a) I took this matter up with General Piacentini several times, and about a week ago I wrote to the Minister asking if he could do something to obtain an increase of pay for all ranks. As regards 10(b) I have referred to this in my preceding paragraph.

Continued /3.....

-3-

9. At first I felt rather disappointed that General Almona had written a letter of this kind, but after some thought I feel that he is only setting forward the views of the Fighter Wing. These young men are extremely temperamental, in fact their temperament is something quite outside our normal experience; they also have the Italian mental characteristic of obstinacy in that however many times a thing is pointed out as being impossible or impracticable they still consider it a grievance if they are not given it. They, and the Italian Air Ministry, suffer from a totally wrong conception of the depth of Allied resources. I have never stopped trying to convince them that we are extremely hard-up for a number of things and can never afford to relax. I am afraid that they are not convinced, and I doubt if anyone ever could convince them.
10. You will no doubt want to know what my views are as to what you say to the General. I feel that you will have to be rather hard with him and point out that it is not possible to transfer the Italian Fighter Wing to the Italian front just because the pilots wish it. The practical reasons which prevent it can be pointed out to the General, and he must have these clear to the pilots.
- You should point out that they are helping to clear the Germans out of Italy just as much by fighting over Yugoslavia as they would be fighting over Italy.
- I think he should also be told that while we are undoubtedly to blame over the question of the food for operational crews, many of the troubles of equipment shortages are their own fault, partly due to their bad organization which causes them to demand stuff which they are already in possession of, and partly to their habit of over-demanding.
11. It should be made quite clear to him that our resources are not unlimited, and that we have had to stint ourselves in some cases to provide the Italians. Our experience is that rather than go to the trouble of obtaining an item of equipment which they obviously possess, though it may not be ready to hand, they would far rather go and get it out of the Allies.
12. I think he should be told that the Italians are not in a position to demand the status of an Ally, and that the position is that the more good work they can do for us, the better they will be treated at the Peace Table, and that he must impress this on his pilots.
13. I think he should be told that he will stand or fall by whether he is able to put this over properly. On our side we may be able to hold out some hopes as regards re-arming with Allied types, or even a change of theatre. It might be possible to work out some scheme of permit which would be recognised by the Allies and would avoid incidents such as those described in his letter.
14. We should, I think, do everything possible to bring the food question to an immediate head.
15. I am afraid this is rather long winded, but I know you will want to be fully in the picture when you meet the General.

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I think he should also be told that while we are undoubtedly to blame over the question of the food for operational crews, many of the troubles of equipment shortages are their own fault, partly due to their bad organization which causes them to demand staff which they are already in possession of, and partly to their habit of over-demanding.

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12. I think he should be told that the Italians are not in a position to demand the status of an Ally, and that the position is that the more good work they can do for us, the better they will be treated at the Peace Table, and that he must impress this on his pilots.

13. I think he should be told that he will stand or fall by whether he is able to put this over properly. On our side we may be able to hold out some hopes as regards re-arming with Allied types, or even a change of theatre. It might be possible to work out some scheme of permit which would be recognised by the Allies and would avoid incidents such as those described in his letter.

14. We should, I think, do everything possible to bring the food question to an immediate head.

15. I am afraid this is rather long winded, but I know you will want to be fully in the picture when you meet the General.

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Yours



Air Marshal Sir John Slessor, KCB, DSO, MC,
Headquarters,
M.A.A.F.
C.M.F.

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Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785017

Translation

From : I.A.F. CHIEF OF STAFF

To : A.V.M. BOWEN-BUSCARLET

Date : 7th January 1945

Dear Air Vice-Marshal,

Faithful to my promise verbally expressed to you to collaborate with the utmost frankness in order better to deal with the small crises arising in the Air Units and their backgrounds from Sept. 8th 43 to the present day, I wish to clarify in this personal letter the verbal arrangements made by me by telephone to Col. PEZZI while you and W/Cdr DE HAAN were present in my office.

Following the order to transfer two Groups to CANNE, Lt/Col. FANALI demonstrated to Col. PEZZI the dissatisfaction of the personnel, which is due to the peculiar mentality created in the operational units at the time of the Sept. 8th crisis.

This dissatisfaction is based essentially on the fact that, in spite of the considerable sacrifices made by the men in a year of hard work under particularly unfortunate conditions (organisational difficulties, accommodation, lack of clothes and equipment, inadequate food and insufficient incomes) and notwithstanding the generous appreciation obtained, the ambitions the Fighter Wing hoped to realize, by merit and through the appreciation of the Allies, seem yet to be unattainable.

These aspirations (fostered and encouraged before I assumed my present work, by whom I do not know) would appear to be the following :

1. Employment of the Fighter Wing on the Italian front.
2. Fusion of the Fighter Wing with an Allied Command which would permit Italian personnel the satisfaction of obtaining material necessities on a par with personnel of other Allied ~~groups~~ operating with the R.A.F.

With regard to the first argument the Fighter Wing Command observes that the operational advantages to be gained are :

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With regard to the first argument the Fighter Wing Command observes that the operational advantages to be gained are :

- a) Full employment of all a/c of the Wing, including the Macchis which otherwise would remain inactive on account of their limited range.
- b) Elimination of over-water flying, which as it increases in distance affects the psychology of the pilots, due to the unreliability of their engines. This has been proved also by the numbers of a/c returning damaged by ack-ack.
- c) Raising the morale of pilots, which is at the moment low. They would feel rewarded in their efforts by the realization of their most personal ambition - the liberation of Italian Territory.

With regard to the second argument, the same Command observes that this concession would eliminate the depressing effects on morale such as caused by the following:

- The men have lived continually under canvass for 12 months under disadvantageous conditions.
- The food rations have been cut down and are completely insufficient.
- Clothing is scarce and inadequate.
- The economic situation is such that a fighting man has no peace of mind.
- The men have no juridical position or document to protect them. They are exposed to serious humiliation and offence (e.g. the case of Major VALENTINI who, in spite of the fact he wore a uniform, was subjected to public search with raised arms, like any vulgar bandit).
- Pilots who, following combat have to force-land or bail out in Albania have to suffer humiliating and offensive treatment equalled only by those who are outside the law, as testified already by the statements of Lt. DELL'ASTA, Lt. GIUSTO, 2/LT SPINELLI BARRILE and Lt. BALLISTA.
- In spite of the occupation of the Balkan territory, where Italian pilots sometimes fall in the course of duty, there is no way of getting news of their fate or whereabouts.
- The supply of Allied material is always late and not achieved without numerous difficulties, and by means of controls the manner of which unfortunately display profound diffidence and lack of faith. Even today our Spitfire pilots are forced to exchange the little equipment they have obtained, particularly with regard to oxygen masks, the exchange of which is unhygienic.
- Notwithstanding repeated requests motivated by a desire to do something, the existence of the 9th Group has been ignored. It has never had an opportunity to fly a single aircraft; nor has it ever been considered as a reserve.
- This sum of misery, humiliation and sad losses is sustained with serenity and dignity by men who are desirous of upholding the best of traditions of the Italian Fighter Units; men whose only ambition is to achieve the reconstruction of their homeland.

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- This sum of misery, humiliation and sad losses is sustained with serenity and dignity by men who are desirous of upholding the best of traditions of the Italian Fighter Units; men whose only ambition is to achieve the reconstruction of their homeland.

Furthermore and for the same reasons the Fighter Group would be pleased to have the satisfaction to see recognized in the near future by the Allied Authorities the fact that this same Fighter Group, by its own initiative, tenaciously defended its existence after Sept. 8th and before the Allied Commands intervened with their reorganization.

Holding to account the situation as found by me on assuming my work and that the authority permitted me can only have a limited effect (I have no direct influence on operational units or on their living conditions) I have attempted to stem the momentary demoralization of the Fighter Wing by recourse to the measures which Col. REMONDINO has already spoken to you of on my orders.

I therefore state the truth of the situation without exaggeration, the synthesis of which is the following:

As far as I am concerned I have already intervened, within the limits I am confined to, attempting

- to obtain an increase of pay which would improve conditions which are rendered extremely difficult in comparison with the Allies, in view of the enormous increase in local prices and the consequent lowering of our personnel's purchasing power;
- to obtain a substitution of front-line personnel in order that they may enjoy a measure of rest, organising as soon as possible a rest camp where they can live quietly and at a minimum of expense - something which will require time and the surmounting of considerable difficulties;

However, apart from a few disciplinary defects which I have already dealt with, I cannot but identify myself with what Col. FANALI has said concerning the aspirations of the Fighter Wing personnel, and above all with problems regarding :

- The technical and material conditions of the Units which they wish to be put on an equal basis with Units of other Nations in service with the R.A.F.
- The juridical recognition of military personnel in order to avoid distressing cases such as that which provoked the resignation of Major VALENTINI
- Employment as soon as possible on the Italian front in order to avoid contact with Balkan Military and Political Authorities and the sad spectacle of harsh treatment inflicted in those territories on Italians. Such incidents induce a belief that our efforts are useless and our participation in the war little appreciated, not to mention their demoralising repercussions on the spirit of our men.

A part of these arguments anticipate those I intended to raise with you (though I have not yet a perfectly clear picture of the situation) in order to obtain a directive on the whole matter, which is of some delicacy and difficulty both as regards the clauses of the Armistice in so far as the Allies apply them, and the establishment of equilibrium between what is past, what is present and what the future is likely to require of us, comforting or disconcerting as it might be.

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I send you my most cordial good wishes

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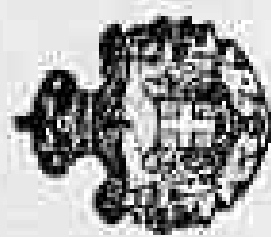
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I send you my most cordial good wishes

(Signed) Aimone Cat



STATO MAGGIORE R. AERONAUTICA

IL CAPO DI STATO MAGGIORE

li 194

Prot. N. Alleg. Risposta al foglio N. del

OGGETTO:

Al W.A.B. BOWEN-BUSCARLETT

Air Vice Marshal

Air Officer Commanding

A.C. - A.F.S.C.

H.Q. - ROMA

N. 00001/87 GEN 1945

Caro Maresciallo,

fedele al mio proposito già verbalmente espresso di collaborare con assoluta franchezza con lei per la migliore risoluzione delle difficoltà e delle piccole crisi dovute alla situazione attuale delle Unità Aeree ed ai precedenti della loro vita dall'8 settembre 1943 ad oggi, desidero chiarire con questa mia lettera di carattere personale gli accenni verbali fatti da me a seguito della telefonata con il Colonnello PEZZI mentre lei ed il Ten. Colonnello DE HAAN erano presenti nel mio ufficio.

A seguito dell'ordine di trasferire due Gruppi a Canne, il Ten. Colonnello FANALI manifestava al Colonnello PEZZI il disappunto del personale dipendente, derivato dalla particolare mentalità creatasi nei Reparti fin dalla crisi dell'8 settembre.

Tale disappunto è basato essenzialmente sul fatto che malgrado i notevoli sacrifici sostenuti dagli uomini in un anno di intenso lavoro, svolto in condizioni particolarmente disagiate, per forze deficience di organizzazioni, di mezzi aeroportuali, di vestiario ed equipaggiamento, di sussistenza e per il modestissimo ed insufficiente trattamento economico, e nonostante i numerosi ed ambiti elogi ottenuti, le

N. 010051/77 6 FEB 1945

AL W.A.B. BOWEN-BUSCARIET

Air Vice Marshal

Air Officer Commanding

A.C. - A.F.S.C.

H.Q. - RCMA

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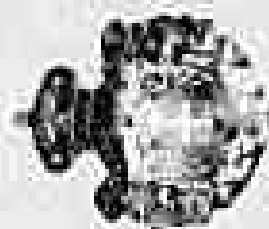
Queste aspirazioni che non so come siano state impostate ed alimentate, prima della mia assunzione alla carica che attualmente rivestisco, si riassumerebbero principalmente nei seguenti termini:

- 1°. impiego del Raggruppamento Caccia sul fronte italiano;
- 2°. aggancio del Raggruppamento Caccia ad un Comando Alleanato che permetta il soddisfacimento delle necessità del personale e del materiale alla pari delle Unità e dei piloti di altre Nazioni che operano in seno alla R.A.F.

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Circa il primo argomento il Comando Raggruppamento Caccia osserva che i vantaggi operativi derivanti dall'impiego sul fronte italiano sarebbero i seguenti:

- "a) impiego totale di tutti i velivoli del Raggruppamento, compresi i Macchi che altrimenti dovrebbero rimanere inoperosi; dato il loro breve raggio di azione;
- "b) eliminazione del volo sul mare che, aumentando di durata, influisce sullo spirito dei piloti sia per la poca sicurezza dei motori già tanto provati sia per i numerosi rientri dalle azioni con i velivoli colpiti dalla reazione contraerea;
- "c) potenziamento del morale dei piloti che già in condizioni di spirito depresse, vedrebbero premiate la propria fatica e raggiungerebbero la suprema aspirazione nell'opera di liberazione del territorio italiano."

Circa il secondo argomento lo stesso Comando osserva che un simile provvedimento eliminerebbe i seguenti inconvenienti depressivi per il morale del personale e che egli prospetta come segue:

- "- il personale seguita a vivere da 12 mesi in tenda, in condizioni disagiatissime;
- "- la razione viveri è stata diminuita ed è completamente insufficiente; **872**
- "- vestiario scarso ed inadeguato;
- "- la situazione economica è giunta ad un punto impossibile per la tranquillità di spirito di un combattente;

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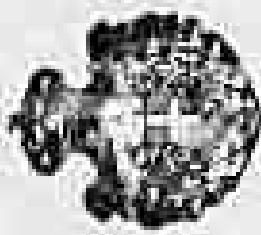
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- "- la situazione economica è giunta ad un punto impossibile per la tranquillità di spirito di un combattente;
- "- il personale non ha ancora un documento ufficiale che dia una personalità giuridica all'individuo, ancora esposto a gravi umiliazioni ed offese, quali quella inferta al Maggiore VALENZINI che malgrado fosse in divisa subiva l'affronto di una pubblica perquisizione a mani alzate, come un volgare bandito;
- "- i piloti che in seguito a combattimenti vengono colpiti e sono costretti ad atterrare od a lanciarsi col paracadute in territorio albanese subiscono un trattamento umiliante ed offensivo pari soltanto a quello che può subire un fuorilegge; come testimoniano le relazioni già trasmesse dai piloti Ten. DALL'ASTA Enzo, Ten. GIUSTO Raffaele, S.Ten. SPINELLI BARRILE Giuseppe, Ten. BALLISTA Alberto;

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- "- malgrado l'occupazione dei territori balcanici, dove i nostri piloti caddero nell'adempimento del loro dovere, non si è ancora riusciti ad avere notizia sulla loro sorte;
- "- L'approvvigionamento del materiale alleato è sempre fatto con ritardo ed attraverso numerose difficoltà e con controlli che purtroppo manifestano alquanto diffidenza e sfiducia; ancora oggi i piloti degli Spitfire sono costretti a sbarcarsi i pochi equipaggiamenti ottenuti, con verticolare sacrificio per la parte igienica data dallo scambio delle maschere dell'ossigeno;
- "- malgrado le richieste motivate da sole volontà di impiego è stato sempre negato il riconoscimento del 9° Gruppo che, pur avendo fatto sempre il proprio dovere, non ha avuto la possibilità di far volare un solo aeroplano, neppure considerato come riserva.
- " tale somma di sacrifici, di umiliazioni, di dolorose perdite sempre affrontate con serenità e dignità di uomini consapevoli dell'alto fine dell'opera intrapresa e con lo scopo di conservare le tradizioni nobilissime dei Reparti italiani da Caccia, ha sempre avuto per sola ambizione il raggiungimento del primato nell'opera di ricostruzione della Patria."

Inoltre, per le stesse ragioni, i cacciatori gradirebbero la soddisfazione di vedere riconosciute in un non lontano avvenire, dalle Autorità Alleate, le Unità da Caccia che sono per ora quadro e la cui esistenza fu da essi tenacemente difesa; di loro iniziativa, dopo l'8 settembre e prima che i Comandi Alleati intervenissero con il loro ordinamento.

della situazione da me trovata e che la mia auto-

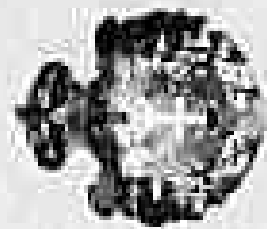
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Tenendo conto della situazione da me trovata e che la mia autorità può modificare solo limitatamente alle scarse possibilità di comando che mi sono consentite, in quanto non ho nè posso avere influenza diretta sull'attività bellica dei Reparti e sulla modificazione e miglioramento della loro vita materiale, ho cercato di superare la demoralizzazione momentanea del Raggruppamento, ricorrendo al provvedimento di cui ho parlato il Colonnello REMONDINO, da me appositamente inviato.

Tengo quindi ad esporre la verità della situazione senza peraltro esagerarne la consistenza e le conseguenze.

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Per parte mia sono già intervenuto, nei limiti del possibile, cercando:

- di ottenere l'estensione di un provvedimento economico che migliorerà alquanto la condizione dei singoli, oggi soprattutto fatta dalle molto più larghe disponibilità economiche degli Alleati, con imponente enorme aumento dei prezzi locali e quindi diminuzione di possibilità di acquisto da parte del nostro personale;
- di ottenere un avvicendamento del personale in linea, perché goda di un certo riposo, organizzando appena possibile un luogo ove possa vivere tranquillamente con la minima spesa. - Cosa che richiederà tempo e superamento di molte difficoltà per essere organizzata.

Tuttavia, a parte alcuni difetti della forma disciplinare, che ho già censurate, non posso a meno di concordare con l'esposto del Ten. Colonnello FANALI in quanto concerne la sostanza delle aspirazioni del personale del Raggruppamento Caccia e soprattutto con quei problemi che riguardano:

- la vita tecnica e materiale dei Reparti che essi vorrebbero in tutto simile a quella delle Unità di altre Nazioni in servizio nella R.A.F.;
- il riconoscimento giuridico della posizione militare ^{del} personale, ad evitare appunto casi dolorosi quale quello che ha provocato la presentazione delle dimissioni da parte del Maggiore VALENTINI;
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- l'invio appena possibile sul fronte italiano soprattutto ad evitare che i contatti con le Autorità Militari e Politiche dei Balcani ed il pietoso spettacolo del duro trattamento inflitto in quelle terre ai nostri connazionali, induca a ritenere inutile o poco apprezzata la nostra partecipazione alla guerra ed abbia ripercussioni demoralizzatrici sull'animo dei nostri uomini. --

Una parte di questi argomenti anticipa quelli che, pur non essendo ancora perfettamente al corrente della situazione, io avevo intenzione di esporre per ottenere direttive circa le complesse, delicate e difficili attività che devo svolgere, sia nell'applicazione delle

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clausole dell'armistizio in quella misura che gli Alleati impongono, sia nella sistemazione per quanto possibile organica ed equilibrata del nostro passato e del nostro presente, nella previsione di quel futuro che ci dovrebbe essere indicato, confortante o desolante che fosse.-

Le invio, con l'occasione, caro Maresciallo, i miei più cordiali saluti.-

Alte. maresciallo

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8A

From: Italian Air Force, Rome
To: A.F.S.C., A C , Rome.
Date: 3rd. January, 1945.
Ref: 25006/op.4.

FIGHTER UNIT STRENGTH

1. During yesterday's conversation you pointed out that the strength of the two Fighter Wings, which are to be transferred from Lecce to Canne, is about 800 men.
2. This number compared to the strength of two Allied Wings, 450 men, shows a notably higher figure, and therefore liable to be recruited for the B.A.F.
3. May I point that the difference is due:-
 - (a) To the fact that our Wings provide guard duties, using 30 men (two on alternate days);
 - (b) To the number of batmen and A.C.H./G.Ds. needed for the officers and various messes (about 20 per Wing);
 - (c) To the personnel reserved for the maintenance of motor vehicles, which due to their antiquity need continuous repairs and maintenance;
 - (d) To the necessity of having a mobile M.U. for each Wing to carry out small running repairs to aircraft, as trailers of the Queen Mary type are not available for the quick transportation of Aircobra aircraft from Canne to Lecce.
4. In any case the number of 800 seems a little high and I shall look into the matter.

868

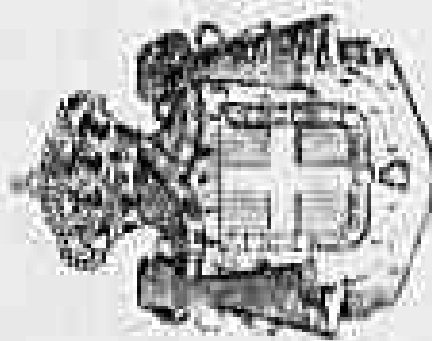


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4. In any case the number of 800 seems a little high and I shall look into the matter.

888

10/1/45





STATO MAGGIORE R. A.

STATO MAGGIORE R. NAUTICA

1^a Sezione Operazioni

Prot. N. 25006/10.11 Allegati

OGGETTO Forza del Reparto Caccia.

Risposta al Foglio del

Div.

Sez.

N.

Roma,

30 GEN 1945

19

all'A.F.S.C. - A.C.

per A.V.M. E. BUSCARIELLO

1°) - Nella conversazione di ieri si avete fatto notare che i due Gruppi di Caccia per qui è previsto il trasferimento da Lecce a Canne sono forti di circa 800 uomini.

2°) - Tale numero nei confronti di quello complessivo delle forze di 2 Gruppi alleati, 450 uomini, risulta notevolmente più elevato e pertanto potrà sollevare rilievi da parte del S.A.R.

3°) - Si permette segnalare che la differenza notata è dovuta:

a) al fatto che i nostri Gruppi debbono provvedere al servizio di guerra che assorbe un numero di 30 uomini (due nate un giorno ai ed uno no);

b) al numero di attendenti ed inservienti necessari agli ufficiali ed alle varie mense (circa 20 persone per Gruppo)

c) al personale addetto alla manutenzione degli automezzi che data la loro vetustà hanno continuo bisogno di riparazioni e manutenzione.

d) alla necessità di avere una M.U. mobile al seguito di ogni Gruppo per eseguire le piccole riparazioni ai veicoli. - Non si dispone in merito di rimorchi grandi tipo Queen Mary per il rapido trasporto dei veicoli Aereo da Canne a Lecce.

4°) - In ogni modo il numero di 800 segnalato sembra un po' elevato ed in merito si riserva di fare le precisazioni del caso.

IL CAPO DI STATO MAGGIORE

Amatore

6A

MEMORANDUM TO : COLONNELLO FERRI, COMANDANTE, UNITA AEREA.

The Air Vice Marshal has instructed me to express to you his appreciation of the large number of sorties against the enemy which the Fighter Wing is carrying out.

F.M. Denny

for F.M. DENNY, C/CAPT.
AIR VICE MARSHAL,
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING.

Air Forces Sub-Commission,
Allied Control Commission, BARI.
9th November, 1943.
AFSC/10/1/AIR.

AND POLYMER SUBSTITUTION, AND A POSITIONAL EFFECT,

44

2005/10/04/2005/10/04

9446 Carbonate 1916

Divers

I am rather afraid that your American friend may think that I have done him dirt as regards the matter of the Indian lighter being on board.

You will remember that we had a talk to Jim and his crowd that we could put up to 70 old stumps \$300 at once if we cleared away some of the old junk at the North End corner of the stadium.

I mentioned this fact at the conference at L.A., and Saturday last, and also the fact that we had operated two, and possibly at three, separate squares, plus day operations by the Cent. 40076, and harmonized with the heavies from loose. Thompson and we all said "by the hell not put all the Fisher King there", and saying that began to fight about reverse also at all for it to go, it took a fairly long solution.

We must insist on the Fisheries clearing up all the old junk which is littering the place. They have been allotted say an acre or two, and the Ontario Corvairs, and they should take their old rubbish off there. I will see the Minister about this.

Wonderful I know you will do all that you can, in view of your excellent relations with the American, to sweeten this for him. It is a little too decided and I would fear readers have soon the right on or left of their car, but it just doesn't exist.

W. B. Dwyer

do not mind so regarding the arrival of the Italian fighters on base.

You will remember that we had a talk to him and he agreed that we could put up to 70 old fighters I-530 in base if we cleaned away some of the old junk at the North East corner of the airfield.

I mentioned this fact at the conference at M.A.A. on Saturday last, and also the fact that we had operated two, and sometimes three, fighter squadrons, plus day operations by the Curt. 10076, simultaneously with the heavyies from base. Thereupon we and all said "why the hell not put all the fighters there", and seeing that there is just about nowhere else at all for it to go, it seems a fairly happy solution.

We must insist on the Italians clearing up all the old junk which is cluttering the place. They have been allotted any or all of Curtiss, P-51s and North Corsairs, and they should take their old rubbish off there. I will see the Minister about this.

Squadron I hope you will do all that you can, in view of your excellent relations with the Italians, to sweeten this for them. It is a M.A.A. decision and I would far rather have seen the fighters on an airfield of their own, but it just doesn't exist.

Yours

WB

Group Captain W. Russell,
TACON AIRFIELD

LGJP V LGPV NR3/110/8 ROUTINE.

T 3RD ADDS.

FROM AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION, BARI.
081750B.

TO H.Q. B.A.F. C.M.F. (R) H.Q. M.A.A.F. C.M.F. S.S.O.

(R) AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, A.C.C. ROME

(R) AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, A.C.C. NAPLES.

GR--- BT

CONFIDENTIAL A.952 8TH SEPTEMBER (.)

YOUR 0.425 SEPTEMBER 6TH AGREE GROTTAGLIE WOULD BE SUITABLE
ALTHOUGH IT IS RATHER FAR BACK HAVING IN VIEW SHORT RANGE OF
AIRACOBAS AND NACCHIS (.)

BT

TOO 081750B.

SENT EAM 08/2321B. BB++

RD NR 3 082315 DH AR K



24

7805

AIR FORCES SUB COMMISSION ACC NAPLES.

SEPT 2 1645 HRS

SECRET

53625

URGENT

A.F.S.C. DARE

SECRET. OUR REFERENCE ABLE SUGAR CHANNEL BLANT TWO FOUR DATED SEPT TWO. FOR DERRY FROM BUSCARLET (.) PLEASE PRESS BALKAN AIR FORCE FOR IMMEDIATE DECISION ON WINTER AIRFIELD IN SUBSTITUTION FOR LIVERNO (.) PAPER. TO AIR FORCES SUB COMMISSION DARE FROM AIR FORCES SUB COMMISSION NAPLES. PAPER. SET MATTER MAY START ANY DAY NOW AND ITALIAN STAFF ARE VERY ANXIOUS TO MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR MOVE (.) SIGNAL AN DECISION TO ROME AND INFORM COLONEL PRADI AND FASALI (.)

Ira V. Fordyce.

Capt. Inf.

M.A.I.A.

86?



(W.A.B. Bowen-Buscarlet)

Air Vice-Marshal, R.A.F.

SECRET

ROYAL AIR FORCE

ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION.

SUBJECT

A.G.S. AND GENERAL HARDWARE

648/Egg.

6/3/44.

Ref: to other
Enclosures.

MIN OR DATE ENCL: ACTIONED BY

To/

1276