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

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CONVERSION TO ALLIED AIRCRAFT
JULY – SEPT. 1944

1582

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TO: THE MINISTER.

I have to inform you that I have received a letter from the Headquarters American Forces in the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations which states that Washington has decided that all Airacobra Aircraft and Equipment which have been lent to the Italian Air Force have to be returned to the American Army at the conclusion of the present war.

2. Would you kindly take steps to inform the Italian Government of this decision.

W.A.B. Bowen-Buscarlet

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

Air Forces Sub-Commission,
Allied Control Commission,
Bari.
Ref: S.15/AIR.
Date: 10th September 1944.

SECRET

4714

ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION

INCOMING MESSAGE

TO: AFSC ACC ROME (R) AFSC ACC BARI (R) AFSC ACC NAPLES (R) MAAF
SPECIAL SIGNALS OFFICE — SIGNAL MESSAGE CENTER No: 55/07

FROM: HQ BALKAN AIR FORCE — CLASSIFICATION: SECRET

REFERENCE No: O 426 — PRECEDENCE: IMPORTANT

DATE AND TIME OF ORIGIN: SEP 06 — OFFICE OF ORIGIN:

FOR BOWEN BUSCARLETT REPEAT BAKER FROM ELLIOT.

YOUR RA 144 SEPT 4 NOT TO LAST ADDRESSEE. AM OF OPINION THAT YOU WILL OBTAIN BETTER TECHNICAL SERVICE IF SPITFIRE CONVERSION IS CARRIED OUT AT VESUVIUS. APRECIATE THE DIFFICULTY REGARDING MORALE OF P39 SQUADRONS BUT CONSIDER THE ADVANTAGES OF TRAINING AT VESUVIUS COMBINED WITH MORAL UPLIFT WHICH ACQUISITION OF SPITFIRES WILL PRODUCE OUTWEIGH THIS FACTOR. ONE OF YOUR P39 SQUADRONS SHOULD HAVE LEFT BEFORE ARRIVAL OF SPITFIRES WHICH AIRCRAFT WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE UNTIL MUSTANGES FERRIED IN TO 249 SQUADRON SAY MID SEPT. DURING SHORT TRAINING PERIOD YOUR ENGINEER OFFICER WILL BE IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO MAINTENANCE DEPOTS WHERE SPITFIRE ENGINE, AIRFRAME AND GROUND EQUIPMENT CAN BE OBTAINED. SEE MY IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING REGARDING ALL WEATHER AIRFIELD IN PLACE OF LEVERANO.

DIST

ACTION - Air SC
INFO - A/CC
FILE

1104

ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION · AIR FORCES SUB COMMISSION
274/A
919

1583

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[illegible] BETTER TECHNICAL SERVICE IF SPITFIRE CONVERSION IS CARRIED OUT AT VESUVIUS. APRECIATE THE DIFFICULTY REGARDING MORALE OF P39 SQUADRONS BUT CONSIDER THE ADVANTAGES OF TRAINING AT VESUVIUS COMBINED WITH MORAL UPLIFT WHICH ACQUISITION OF SPITFIRES WILL PRODUCE OUTWEIGH THIS FACTOR. ONE OF YOUR P39 SQUADRONS SHOULD HAVE LEFT BEFORE ARRIVAL OF SPITFIRES WHICH AIRCRAFT WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE UNTIL MUSTANGES FERRIED IN TO 249 SQUADRON SAY MID SEPT. DURING SHORT TRAINING PERIOD YOUR ENGINEER OFFICER WILL BE IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO MAINTENANCE DEPOTS WHERE SPITFIRE ENGINE, AIRFRAME AND GROUND EQUIPMENT CAN BE OBTAINED. SEE MY IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING REGARDING ALL WEATHER AIRFIELD IN PLACE OF LEVERANO.

DIST

ACTION - Air SC
INFO - A/CC
FILE

1104

274/A
919

HEADQUARTERS
SEP 194
A. C. C.

DATE and Time of RECEIPT SEP 071430B

Distribution:

SECRET

1584

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

OUTGOING MESSAGE.

FROM: AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, A.C.C. ROME.

TO: HEADQUARTERS B.A.F. C.M.F.
(R) AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, A.C.C. BARI.
(R) AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, A.C.C. NAPLES.

CONFIDENTIAL RA.143 1ST SEPTEMBER (.)

FOR WING COMMANDER HUTTLEY FROM SUSCARLET (.)

PARTY OF TWENTY FIVE AS ORIGINALLY ARRANGED WITH YOU PLUS ADDITIONAL ONE ITALIAN TECHNICAL OFFICER MIL WITH TENTAGE AND BEDDING HAVE BEEN PROMISED TO ARRIVE AT CAIRO ON MONDAY SEPTEMBER 4TH (.)

WOULD APPRECIATE IF YOU WOULD INFORM AC IMMEDIATELY SHOULD THEY FAIL TO ARRIVE (.)

TO BE ENCYPHERED
IF SENT BY W/T.

T.O.O. 011630B

PRIORITY. IMPORTANT.

1103

W.A.D. BOWEN-SUSCARLET,
AIR VICE-MARSHAL,
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING.

1586

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

OUTGOING MESSAGE.

FROM: AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, A.C.C. ROME.

TO: H.Q. B.A.F. C.M.F.
(R) AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, A.C.C. BARI.
(R) AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, A.C.C. NAPLES.

CONFIDENTIAL NA.144 4TH SEPTEMBER (.)

FOR A.V-M ELLIOTT FROM BREARLEY (.)

ITALIAN GENERAL STAFF HAS SUGGESTED THAT CONVERSION SPITFIRES SHOULD BE DONE AT LUVERNO OR WHICHEVER AIRFIELD IS CHOSEN AS A WINTER SUBSTITUTE (.) VENOSTUS IS VERY OVERCROWDED AND IT WOULD GET THEM AWAY FROM THE RATHER DEPRESSED ATMOSPHERE CAUSED BY BAD CONDITION OF AIRCRAFT (.) ALL PILOTS FOR SPITFIRE SQUADRON WILL BE FULLY OPERATIONAL SOME HAVE ACTUALLY FLOWN SPITFIRE AND CONSIDER THAT CONVERSION WOULD BE VERY EASY MATTER AND TAKE A SHORT TIME (.) MAY I HAVE YOUR VIEWS (.)

TO BE ENCYPHERED
IF SENT BY W/T.

T.O.O. 040935 1101

PRIORITY: IMMEDIATE

W.A.E. POWER-BUSCARLET,
AIR VICE-MARSHAL,
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING.

1587

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

0 4A

CONFIDENTIAL.

[illegible]:- [illegible] AIR FORCES MEDITERRANEAN, A.C.C. BARI.

TO:- AIR MARSHAL [illegible] commanding, A.C.C. BARI.
(for attention of Wing Commander DAVIES.)

DATE:- 16th. August, 1944.

REF:- AFHQ/S. 15/Air.

R.A.F. REPRESENTATION AT MEDITERRANEAN ALLIED AIR FORCES.

Regarding the attached copy of a letter 2120/016/ G/Ops. dated 15th. August, 1944.

In view of AFHQ signal F.A. 11316 August which refers to para 14 of the minutes of the meeting held at R.A.A.F. Headquarters on 13th. August, it is considered that the above mentioned letter should be actioned as per.

R. Peck

R.Y. PECK (W/CDR.),
S.A.S.O.,
AIR FORCES MEDITERRANEAN,
R.A.F. BARI.

1100

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Rome Copy.

3A
Misc 40

From:- Flying Officer L.C. Atkins,
Air Forces Sub-Commission, detached Algiers

To :- Senior Equipment Officer,
Senior Technical Officer, Ward

Date:- 9th August, 1943

Ref :- AFSC/A/3

SUPPLEMENTARY EQUIPMENT FOR 301 MAINTENANCE UNIT

1. In addition to the list of items sent by air directly to Vesuvius (copy of which left at Naples office), the following additional items have now been forwarded. It is regretted that at the moment I am not able to give precise details as vouchers were enclosed with the equipment, but the following will serve as a guide and possibly assist when checking.

V443 Bolts (16 types), and Nuts, Light Alloy (3 types)
V444 Clips and Couplings (22 types)
V445 Eyelets, Filters, Gelats, Lockbits, Nuts - Brass, Light Alloy and Dimensin)
V446 Nuts - Dimensin and Steel (2 types)
V447 Rivets, Split Pins (16 types)
V448 Shield, Dimensin, Wire Cliking, Copper Tubing, Duralumin, Solder, Spelter Brass
V449 Plywood, Spruce Sitka
V450 Acid, Ammonia, Benzene, Borax, Carbon Tetrachloride, Celloplume, Cellulose Acetate, Chalk, Emery Cloth, Glass Cloth
V451 Glass Cloth, French Chalk, Engine Compound, Compound sparking plug cleaning, Corrosion Inhibitator, Glue, Immature sealing compound, Graphite, Lanolin, Synthetic resin powder, Anti-dimming solution, Sodium silicate
V452 Hydraulic Fluid, Grease and Oils x
V453 Oil Gun Cleaning xx
V454 Wire Iron, Iron Cliking, Steel, Solid, Steel tubing
V455 Whitworth nuts and bolts, Washers, Eyelets
V456 Dope, Brush Wash, Dope Thinners x
V457 Lines, Flexalette
V458 Goggles, Flying x
V459 Fuses x
V460 Accumulators 2v, Batteries 15v and 120v x
V461 Calibration charts for inverator 1081 xx
V462 Test set type 3a
V463 Test set type 10 x

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V461 Test set type D x
V465 Instrument Testing Trolley xx
V466 Rivetter, Chobert x
V467 Oxygen Charging Indicator xx
V468 Tyres and tubes for Baltimore x
V469 Propellers x
V470 Link Loading Machine and Gauges x
V471 Cleaning rods, brushes and cases x
V472 Light Series racks x

x - known to have been issued xx - not issued.
Of the remaining items about 80 per cent issued

2. It is again emphasised that the above details are merely to serve as a a guide. Vouchers were enclosed with the equipment and copies of all vouchers will be brought back with me. V400 to V442 had been taken up on the previous list submitted.

L.G. Watkins,
Flying Officer,
for Air Vice-Marshall,
Air Forces Sub-Commission,
Allied Control Commission

Copies Bari 1
Naples 1
Rome 1
Senior Technical Officer 1

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FROM: A FORCES SUB-COMMISSION,
ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION,
BARI.

TO: THE MINISTER.
COPY: HEADQUARTERS, B.A.F. C.M.F.

DATE: 25th JULY 1944.

REF: AFSC/S.15/AIR.

SECRET.

I have to inform you that authority has been given by H.Q. M.A.A.F. to regroup the Italian Air Force as follows :-

(i) ITALIAN FIGHTER WING.

No.155 I.A.F. Squadron.	16 a/c Macchi 205.	Organised into one Stormo, the number of which can be chosen by the I.A.F.
No.102 I.A.F. Squadron.	16 a/c Macchi 202.	
No. 9 I.A.F. Squadron.	16 a/c Airacobra.	Ditto.
No. 10 I.A.F. Squadron.	16 a/c Airacobra.	
No. 12 I.A.F. Squadron.	16 a/c Airacobra.	

This Wing is to come under the operational control of Headquarters, Balkan Air Force, and for this purpose a British Liaison Section, consisting of a Wing Commander, Operational and Intelligence Officers, and an appropriate staff will be provided. This Wing will have to provide its own Maintenance and Equipment backing. To assist in the maintenance and equipment organisation to be set up by the I.A.F, a British liaison section (under the Command of A.F.S.C) will be provided, consisting of a British Technical Officer and technical N.C.O's and a British Equipment Officer and N.C.O. The Wing will be entirely responsible for its own organisation, administration and discipline, which, for the present, may be organised on Italian lines. It is, however, the intention of B.A.F. that all these squadrons shall be fully mobile to British standards, and it is hoped, eventually, to allot sufficient transport from Allied sources for this purpose. A proposed establishment for the Maintenance and Equipment backing for the Wing will be forwarded to you very shortly.

(ii) ITALIAN LIGHT BOMBER STORMO.

No. 28 I.A.F. Squadron 16 a/c Baltimore.
No.132 I.A.F. Squadron 16 a/c Baltimore.

1097

This Stormo will come under the operational, technical and day-to-day administrative control of No.254 Wing, Balkan Air Force. The personnel, administration and discipline of the Stormo will come under the Italian Stormo Commander. Maintenance will be carried out through an R.S.U. and an A.S.P. These will be composite Units manned by Allied and Italian personnel. Details of the numbers of Italian personnel, by ranks and trades, to form the Italian increment to these Units will be forwarded to you very shortly. These personnel should be

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) chosen by the I.A.F.

No. 9 I.A.F. Squadron. 16 a/c Airacobra.)
No. 10 I.A.F. Squadron. 16 a/c Airacobra.) Ditto.
No. 12 I.A.F. Squadron. 16 a/c Airacobra.)

This Wing is to come under the operational control of Headquarters, Balkan Air Force, and for this purpose a British Liaison Section, consisting of a Wing Commander, Operational and Intelligence Officers, and an appropriate staff will be provided. This Wing will have to provide its own Maintenance and Equipment backing. To assist in the maintenance and equipment organisation to be set up by the I.A.F, a British liaison section (under the Command of A.F.S.C) will be provided, consisting of a British Technical Officer and technical N.C.O's and a British Equipment Officer and N.C.O. The Wing will be entirely responsible for its own organisation, administration and discipline, which, for the present, may be organised on Italian lines. It is, however, the intention of B.A.F. that all these squadrons shall be fully mobile to British standards, and it is hoped, eventually, to allot sufficient transport from Allied sources for this purpose. A proposed establishment for the Maintenance and Equipment backing for the Wing will be forwarded to you very shortly.

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(iii) ITALIAN BOMBER/TRANSPORT STORMO.

No. 88 I.A.F. Squadron 16 a/c Cant 1007.
No. 1 I.A.F. Squadron 16 a/c SM.82.

This Stormo will come under the operational control of No.334 Wing, Balkan Air Force. The administration, organisation and discipline of the Stormo will come under the Italian Stormo Commander. Maintenance arrangements will continue as at present in the I.A.F. S.R.A.M's.

Continued /2.....

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(iv) ITALIAN SEAPLANE WING.

This Wing will remain unaltered, and will continue to operate under No.242 Group, Royal Air Force.

(v) OPERATIONAL TRAINING UNIT - VESUVIUS.

This Unit is required for the conversion of Italian pilots and aircrew, onto the new types of aircraft. The unit will still be required after the 3 Airacobra and 2 Baltimore Squadrons become operational, as a supply of pilots and aircrew, to replace wastage, will always be necessary.

The present establishment in aircraft of this Unit is :-

Baltimores	12 a/c
Airacobras	12 a/c

It can be considered later as to whether any further changes in the establishment of aircraft will be necessary when the Unit has to provide replacements for wastage only.

In addition to its O.T.U. commitments, this Unit will provide training for maintenance personnel on Airacobras and Baltimores. If large numbers of either type of aircraft are received, additional to those required for the Squadrons and the operational training unit, Vesuvius should become the holding unit for reserve aircraft.

It is possible that this Unit may be moved to Leverano or elsewhere, at a later date.

(vi) FACTORY FOR MAJOR OVERHAULS OF ALLISON ENGINES AND AIRACOBRA AIRFRAMES.

A factory will be required for the major overhaul of Allison engines and Airacobra airframes. It is understood that you are already considering a suitable factory in the Rome area. It is calculated that an output of 48 overhauled Allison engines and 24 overhauled Airacobra airframes per month will be required.

2. PROGRESS.

(i) It is understood that, except for bombing and air firing the first Fighter Squadron trained on Airacobras will be ready for operations as soon as equipment and spares are available. It is also understood that the remaining squadrons will successively be ready for operation at intervals of two weeks following the first squadron, subject always to the satisfactory provision of equipment and spares. Will you kindly confirm this.

(ii) Baltimore training is entirely held up at the moment owing to the lack of tools, equipment and spares. Advantage is being taken of this period of inactivity to fit brakes and additional flying instruments into the front cockpits of dual Baltimores. It is understood that the first Baltimore squadron will be operationally ready within 6 weeks of the provision of adequate tools, equipment and spares, and that the second squadron will be operationally ready

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of aircraft will be necessary when the Unit has to provide replacements for wastage only.

In addition to its O.T.U. commitments, this Unit will provide training for maintenance personnel on Airacobras and Baltimores. If large numbers of either type of aircraft are received, additional to those required for the Squadrons and the operational training unit, Vesuvius should become the holding unit for reserve aircraft.

It is possible that this Unit may be moved to Leverano or elsewhere, at a later date.

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3. GENERAL.

(i) The Italian increment to the R.S.U. and A.S.P. supporting No.254 Wing should be got ready at once.

(ii) The Wing Maintenance and Equipment organisation for the Italian Fighter Wing should be formed at once, so that it can be ready to take on the maintenance of the Macchi and Airacobras.

(iii) The factory for the overhaul of Allison engines and Airacobra airframes should be got going without delay.

Continued /3.....

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(iv) As agreed previously the establishments of all Italian Squadrons should be revised to bring them as closely as possible into line with Allied establishments. This is particularly important on the Maintenance side, but steps should also be taken to bring the logistical side of the Squadrons as far as possible onto Allied lines, in so far as lack of transport and other facilities will allow.

(v) It is agreed that Italian aircraft, whether of Italian or Allied types, may carry the distinguishing badges of their Stormo.

(vi) It is agreed that Italian aircraft, whether of Italian or Allied types, may carry the I.A.F. identification roundels.

(vii) It is agreed that the Italian flag may be flown at all Headquarters and Camps of the Italian Air Force, even though they may be stationed on Allied airfields.

(viii) Any alterations to the Italian organisation or system of administration which may seem necessary to the Air Officer Commanding, Balkan Air Force, or to his subordinate Commanders, are to be put up to the Italian Air Ministry, through the Air Forces Sub-Commission.

4. It is requested that if any of the above points are not quite clear, I may be informed at once, as I shall be very pleased to answer any queries.

W.A.B. Bowen-Buscarlet.

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

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1A

FROM: AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION,
ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION,
BARI.

TO: HEADQUARTERS,
A.A.I.
C.M.F.

DATE: 21st July 1944.

REF: AFSC/S.15/AIR.

Reference your 203V7/42 dated 14th July 1944, it is regretted that Vesuvius Airfield has now been allotted to the Italian Air Force as an operational training unit and for the storing of Allied types of aircraft with which the Italian Air Force is being re-equipped.

2. Up to 150 aircraft may be on this airfield at any one time, and the amount of flying taking place from it will be considerable. It is regretted, therefore, that it would not be possible to use this as an ammunition depot. It is impossible at the moment to foresee how long this airfield will be occupied by the operational training unit, but at the moment no other airfield whatever is available.

3. It is suggested that the airfield at Pompei might be considered for your purpose, but in this case H.Q. A.A.I. should be approached as this airfield is not under the authority of the Air Forces Sub-Commission.

W.A.B. Brownlet.

W.A.B. BROWN-BRUCKLET,
AIR VICE-MARSHAL,
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING.

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