

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND

No.

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AIR STAFF, VISIT REPORTS
FEB. - AUG. 1947

M.I.

at SA is the other program of a visit
to the latter.

if any shift officers have any points they
wish to be attached to at any of the
stations on the itinerary would they please
let us know

Chadwick
Mr. I.

187.

3567

FILE

From : Air Forces Branch,
Allied Force Headquarters.

To : Ministry of Defense Air,
Attn. Col. Valentini.

Date : 7th August, 1947.

Ref : AFB/26/Air.

Ext. 546.

Herewith for your information copy of a Visit Report which was rendered by W/Cdr. C.M.M. Grace to the Director of this Branch on the termination of his recent visit to I.A.F. stations in the North.

C.M.M. Grace

for C.M.M. GRACE, W/Cdr,
Air Commodore,
Director, AML, AFHQ.

3566

VISIT REPORT

Report on visit by W/Cdr. Grece and W/Cdr. Collingwood to the I.A.F. Stations
in the North of Italy from the 21st to the 25th July 1947.

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REPORTACTION

We left Rome at 0900 hours on Monday the 21st July accompanied by Major Rindone of the Operations Branch of the Stato Maggiore. We arrived at Milan airfield (Linate) shortly before 1100 hours and met Colonel Beccaria (Station Commander) and Major Fiorio (C.O. of the Spitfire Store Holding Unit) and Lt. King (C.O. of the Baltimore Branch). We made a quick tour of the airfield and station and noted the following points: -

Director.

Deputy Director.

- a) The grass was becoming very long and the C.O. told us that it was shortly to be cut by the Aero Club of Italy.
- b) The Baltimore Detachment have three aircraft and four crews and are engaged upon operational air sea rescue sorties, navigation training and training flights over the sea using the HFDR stations at Milan, Bologna and Elmas. They are also carrying out about four flights a week when they take four or five infants accompanied by a nurse to a height of approximately 4000 meters for one hour for medical reasons.
- c) The Baltimore flight does not operate on a fixed programme but on a programme made up from day to day by the flight Commander. There is also one crew and aircraft standing by for air sea rescue.

At 12.30 hours we proceeded to Headquarters of the 1st Z.A.T. and met General Drago and Colonel Kellenman (Chief of Staff). We discussed the airfields in the Milan area and the present position seems to be as follows: -

Two areas have long been considered as possibilities for the Milan civil airport. One was Lonate to the North-West end, 35 kms. away. The other was an area about 11 miles from Milan, called Sesto.

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REPORT

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It was finally decided a few weeks ago to develop the civil airport at Linate and, in order to avoid confusion, to call this new airport Turbigo. It is intended to lay down a runway 2000 meters long of pressed steel planking. This material would be obtained from Marcoriano and Crespino.

General Drago stated that the plan had been agreed upon between the Municipality of Milan and the Italian Air Ministry and the I.A.F. would provide a Commanding Officer, radio facilities, airfield facilities and guards. All the rest of it should be provided from civilian sources. He anticipated that the runway would be ready for use by the end of October when the fog would set in at Milan airport (Linate).

General Drago emphasized that the four engined aircraft at present using Orio al Serio airfield were causing considerable damage to the runway surface and unless these aircraft were diverted very soon the runway would not be safe for the Spitfires which have now arrived. With regard to Milan airport (Linate) General Drago said that this airfield would also be useful in Summer for civil aircraft up to the Dakota type and that for this reason the 600 meters runway will be repaired by the I.A.F. and 400 meters of P.A.P. will be added to it making a total length of 1000 meters.

General Drago also stated that there was a project under consideration for the construction of a civil airport for Turin at Castello Torinese (12 miles from the city). This is an ex military airfield which will no longer be required by the I.A.F. and the suggestion is to use the material still there and also that from another ex military airfield called Mirafiori in order to build up a new civil airport. The reasons for this project are that the present Turin airport is private property of the FIAT Company, that it suffers from extremely bad fog in winter, and that it is impossible to build a long runway with unobstructed approaches.

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REPORT

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General Drago also mentioned the possibilities of developing Albenga aerodrome which is approximately 15 kms. from San Remo. All these airfields are in the fruit producing area and have therefore considerable commercial value.

In the afternoon I flew over and inspected Turbigo (Linate Poemolo). This is a very dry and rather barren piece of land with no buildings or constructions. There are two old airfields there and it is proposed to lay down a new runway across them both. There is a distance of about 8 kms. to the high way which leads to Milan. The area is slightly raised and as far as I can see is the most suitable in the vicinity of Milan for a civil airport.

That evening we met Colonel Kemp with the Miles Aerovan and watched the flying demonstration from Linate.

The following morning I went out with Major Rindone to Orio al Serio and spent the whole day there. I met The G.O., Colonel Canale, and the three Squadron Commanders. Two of the Squadrons have now been equipped with Spitfires. The aircrew of these Squadrons have been converted to type and the pilots of the 3rd Squadron were carrying out their first solos whilst I was there. One pilot had a burst tyre on his first landing, but managed to prevent damage to the aircraft.

I inspected the runway which is in rather poor condition and is in a very urgent need of a top service. It is impossible for Spitfires to use the outfield as this is also too busy and hard.

Progress on the permanent buildings, barracks and messes is good but they still need such specific buildings as armory, firing butts, and oxygen workshops.

I visited all three Squadrons' officers but they had no progress charts and there is no training programme.

-4-

REPORT

ACTION

I discussed certain details for training with the Wing and Squadron Commanders and they all seem keen to develop a detailed programme and put it into action as soon as possible. They are held up for the time being due to lack of petrol, tyres, oxygen tubes, ammunition, ranges, homars etc. Col. Canada went off the following day to Bari and Lecce to deliver Macchis to the pilot school and said he would raise these points with Generale Gaeta and Indovico and suggest a general training conference.

I found the general morale of these aircrew greatly improved since their move to the North and the arrival of the Spitfires.

The following day we went on to Vicenza where we met the C.O. Colonel Molinari and the two Majors commanding the 20th and 21st Squadrons of the 51st Wing. The first thing we did was to discuss training. The position in these squadrons is very much the same as at Orto al Serio, there is no detailed flying training programme. The squadrons have had Spitfires for a year by now and are fully proficient. Their formation flying and aerobatics are excellent, but they have had no experience of night flying, high altitude flying, use of homer, use of radar, air firing or bombing. It seems to me that they have become so accustomed not to shoot and not to do any simulated operational flying that such matters as ranges, drogues and training programmes have been rather ignored. I told the officers you were keen to see the squadrons get down to some ops training and they seemed being pleased and agreed to join the other Wings and the Fighter Group Headquarters in a training conference.

We then walked around and inspected the station and found that great progress had been made by the Works Department in making it a comfortable peace time station. The runway is now in good condition and 1000 yards long; it is proposed to prepare the extension of the runway and this will make 1400 yards. P.S.P. has arrived for taxi track and is being laid. We saw the pre-war firing butts and amory which are in fair condition and need only slight repairs. With regard to ranges the C.O. found that the best area would be Piave for bombing and air to ground firing where there is a small sandy island in the sea.

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REPORT

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We staid to lunch at Vicenza and that evening we moved on to Treviso.

At Treviso there was the nucleus of the 155th Squadron of the 51st Wing. The position with regard to flying and ground training of this squadron was identical to those at Vicenza. 5 aircraft came up from Lecco while we were there and we watched them make a good formation flight over and landing.

Air

We moved that evening to Udine to visit Headquarters the following morning before returning to Rome.

Chubb

C.M.M. GREGE, W/Cdr,
Air L.

31st July, 1947.
AFB/26/Air.

From : Air Forces Branch,
Allied Force Headquarters.

To : Italian Air Ministry,
Stato Maggiore, (Deputy Chief of Air Staff).

Date : 23rd July, 1947.

Ref : AFB/26/Air.

Ext. 546.

VISIT BY R.A.F. OFFICERS TO STATIONS IN THE NORTH.

Now that Wing Commanders Greco and Collingwood have returned from the tour of visits to Italian Air Force stations in Northern Italy, this office would like to express to the Stato Maggiore its appreciation and thanks for sending along Major Rindone as liaison officer.

2. Major Rindone was most helpful in all respects in the visits and we would like you to notify the Head of his Department of this fact.

Chubb

C.M.M. GRECO, W/Cdr,
for Air Commodore,
Director, AFB, AFHQ.

From : W/Cdr. C.H.M. GREGG, D.F.O.

Air Forces Branch
Allied Force Headquarters
R O M E

DO/AFB/26/Air.

28th July, 1947.

Dear Colonel,

Now that we have returned to Rome from our tour of visits in Northern Italy, Wing Commander Collingwood and I would like to express to you our appreciation and thanks for the kindness and hospitality which we received within the zone of your Command.

My very best greetings to you and your officers.

Yours sincerely



Colonel Meiri,
Presidio Aeronautico,
U M I N E.

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From : W/Cdr. C.M.M. CHIFF, D.F.C.

Air Forces Branch
Allied Force Headquarters
R.O.M.E.

DO/AFB/26/Air.

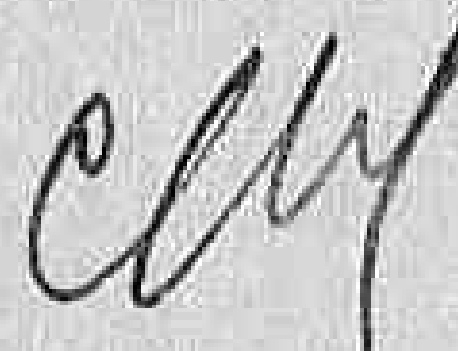
28th July, 1947.

Dear Colonel,

Now that we have returned to Rome from our tour of visits in Northern Italy, Wing Commander Collingwood and I would like to express to you our appreciation and thanks for the kindness and hospitality which we received on your Station.

My very best greetings to you and your officers.

Yours sincerely,



Colonel Molinari,
Vicenza Airport.

3558

From : W/Cdr. C.M.M. GEMME, D.F.C.

Air Forces Branch
Allied Forces Headquarters
R O M E

DO/AFB/26/Air.

28th July, 1947.

Dear Colonel,

Now that I have returned to Rome from my tour of visits in Northern Italy, I would like to express to you my appreciation and thanks for the kindness and hospitality which I received on your Station.

My very best greetings to you and your officers.

Yours sincerely

CMY

Colonel Canada,
Oric al Serio Airfield,
Bergamo.

3557

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FROM : W/Cdr. C.M.M. GEDDE, D.F.C.

Air Forces Branch
Allied Force Headquarters
R.O.M.E.

AFB/26/Air.

28th July, 1947.

Dear General,

Now that we have returned to Rome from our visit to Northern Italy, Wing Commander Collingwood and I would like to express to you our appreciation and thanks for the kindness and hospitality which we received within the zone of your Command.

My very best greetings to you and your officers.

Yours sincerely



General Drago,
H.Q. 1st Z.A.T.,
MILAN

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AIR FORCE BRANCH PLANNED FORCE HEADQUARTERS

AIR HEADQUARTERS UNIT. R.A.P..

DEALS

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A. 422 (-)

W/CPL. GREGG W/CPL. CHAMBERLAIN ARRIVED TREVISO IN 23 JULY ON ROUTE TO ITALIAN
 AIR FORCE (-) DEPARTING TREVISO 24. FOR URBINO AND LEAVE FOR ROME NEXT DAY (-)
 REQUEST ACCOMMODATION AT DAVENPORT AND ITALIA HOUSES (-)

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MAXIM

AIR I

A.C. MERTON

6A

09.11.60. JUL. 47.

AIR FORCE BRANCH, AMO, FONE

AIR BRANCH, ITALY.

UNCLASSIFIED.

P.599 (.) AIR FORCE BRANCH AND WITH OCEANIC COASTGUARD AIRCRAFT
 BY ITALIAN AIRCRAFT A.M. THURSDAY 13/7 (.) AIRCRAFT TRANSPORT TO MEET AND ACCOM-
 PANY FIGHT 10-11 IN AIRCRAFT (.)

26/4

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URGENT
 DIRECTOR, A.F.B.

5A.

PROGRAMME OF VISITS TO I.A.F. UNITS IN THE NORTH

Set up below is the proposed itinerary of Wing Commander Collingwood, Wing Commander Greco and Major Annone (Stato Maggiore) for their visits to I.A.F. stations in the North.

MONDAY 21st.

- 08.30 - Leave Centocelle by air for Linate.
- 11.30 - Arrive at Linate and carry out a tour of the airfield facilities.
- 12.30 - Visit Headquarters of the 1st Z.A.T. and acquaint General Drago with the purposes of the visit.
- 15.30 - W/Cdr. Greco and Maj. Annone with officers of the 1st Z.A.T. visit Linate Pessolo airfield to see progress in development.
- W/Cdr. Collingwood to I.A.F. school at Gallarate.
- Stay the night at Excelsior Hotel, Milan.

TUESDAY 22nd.

W/Cdr. Collingwood to continue visit at Gallarate.
W/Cdr. Greco and Major Annone visit Bergamo, Orto al Serio and spend the whole day with the 5th Stormo.
Stay the night at Excelsior Hotel.

WEDNESDAY 23rd.

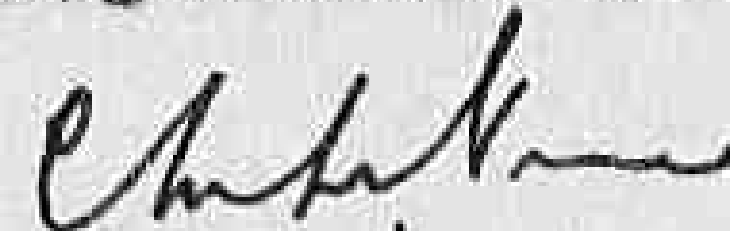
All officers to fly to Vicenza and spend the day with the two Gruppos on the airfield.
At approximately 1800 hours proceed to Treviso and stay the night there.

THURSDAY 24th.

W/Cdr. Greco and Maj. Annone to spend the day with the Squadron at Treviso.
W/Cdr. Collingwood to visit 357 H.U.
Leave at approximately 1800 hours for Udine.

FRIDAY 25th.

Visit Air Headquarters Italy in the morning and return to Rome by air.



C. H. M. GRECO, W/Cdr,
C.O. AFB, AFHQ.

18th July, 1947.
AFB/26/Air.

3553

VISIT REPORT

Report on visit by W/Cdr. Grace to Air Headquarters Udine on 21st April, 1947.

REPORTACTION

On Monday, 21st April 1947, I paid a short visit to Air Headquarters Udine and so the A.O.C., Air Commodore Ranken, S/Ldr. Higham, Air Staff, S/Ldr. Davis, Intelligence, W/Cdr. Dorsan, S.P.S.O. and S/Ldr. Wright, M.T.S.O.

I returned to Rome by air on the morning of Tuesday 22nd April.

I spoke with the A.O.C. and Air Staff concerning the withdrawal of the Italian Baltimore Flight from Linate and they agree that this should no longer be required by Allied military personnel for communication purposes and said that it could be withdrawn subject to the Italian Air Force making suitable arrangements for the Air Sea Rescue in that area.

The A.O.C. is anxious to hand over as much as possible of Campofornido airfield to the I.A.F. in the very near future. The British Air Ministry have approached the Italian Government through the Foreign Office for Allied aircraft to use the airfield after R + 90 for the purpose of Allied officials going to and from the free state of Trieste. The A.O.C. is anxious to know whether the Italian Government are in agreement with this reservation before he actually hands over control of Campofornido to the I.A.F. He asked if we could ascertain the answer to this question by the time he comes here on Friday next the 25th April.

I discussed the question of making available to the British Air Attaché Air Staff maps and navigation instruments etc. now in the operations room at R.A.F. station at Ciampino. I was given authority to negotiate direct with the O.C. Ciampino on this matter and to take over all the staff that may be needed.

I made arrangements for Col. Bucci, I.A.F., to be attached to

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REPORT

ACTION

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RAAF station, Treviso for approximately 10 days with effect from the end of this week; Col. Bucchi will go there to brush up his knowledge of army air close support and co-operation.

S/Ldr. Davis, S.I.O. will make arrangements with Medne for the Medne and Air Ministry summaries and J.I.B. correspondence to be sent direct from Medne to the Air Attaché after the closing down of Air Forces Branch.

The question of the Aerial Survey which the I.A.M. have raised and which has up to now been dealt with through A.H.Q.I. has now been handed over to us and we have been asked to deal direct with the central R.A.F. film library at Benson.

The 2 MT vehicles assigned to the British Embassy are now ready and will be brought down by road tomorrow 23rd April.

Chubb

C.M.M. GREECE, W/Cdr,
Senior Air Staff Officer,
Air Forces Branch.

22nd April, 1947.

*File m
25/4*

*SH/c.T.O.
26/4*

(50)

Italian Air Ministry -
Air Staff Office

AFB/26/AIR.

Visit Report.

2nd April 1947

Attached is a copy of the report on visit to Frasinese Navigation
School by Wing Commander Green and Lt. Irwin on the 1st of April 1947.

Chibell

C.M.M. GREEN W/Cdr.,
for Air Commodore,
Director,
Air Force Branch,
Allied Force Headquarters.

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VISIT REPORT.

REPORT ON VISIT TO PROSINONE BY W/CDR GREEK AND LT. IRWIN
ON TUESDAY 1ST APRIL 47.

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REPORTACTION

On Tuesday 1st of April 47 I visited the I.A.F. Navigation School at Prosinoe. I was accompanied by Lt. Irwin. We arrived on the station at 11.30 hrs and left again at 12.30 hrs. During our visit we were accompanied by the Station Commander, Colonel Giannelli, and by a visiting Officer from Units' Area who was there in order to invigilate the oral examinations which were taking place on the completion of the five months Navigation course.

Director

D.A.

2. We attended the oral examination and put a few pertinent questions to the pupils who seemed to have a good knowledge of elementary Navigation and Air Pilotsage. The school is still desperately short of modern navigational training equipment and no astro is taught there yet due to lack of sextants. As has been noted previously the highest standard shown by the pupils is in photography and map reading both of which are excellent; an improvement was noted in the D.R. navigational training, particularly the briefing and debriefing. The 24 pupils have another three days of examinations and clearance after which they will be given leave and then told to report to the Seaplane Wing at Taranto. Each pupil has averaged forty hours in the air on Baltimores and SM 79s. The SM 79s are excellent trainers since they are able to accommodate six or eight pupil navigators at work tables at a time, these aircraft have not however any R.T. intercommunication. Would it be possible for the C.S.O. to obtain this from R.A.F. sources? The Baltimores are getting short of spares and are very ready for the assistance which should be forthcoming from the R.A.F. pack-ups as and when they arrive. The school is at present using 4 Baltimores, five SM 79s and one 84.

S.S.O.

C.S.O.

S.E.O.

3. We took a general walk around the airfield and noticed that some clearance of debris had taken place since our last visit; holes and rats on the runways are being filled with stones and rolled in; a large Nissen Hut is being built as a cinema and should be open shortly; the airman's mess and cookhouse have been refurnished and music is provided there on a large speaker during the evenings; the general station morale is good. In the hangar we noticed one old 79 and one old 84 which appeared beyond reasonable repair and upon which

DIRECTOR

OR5.

- 2 -

REPORT

ACTION

skilled workmen were being employed; there were also in this hangar twelve old radial engines which looked rather sorry for themselves.

4. We called up to the Flying Control Tower on our arrival and departure and found reception very bad, this may be due to the bad weather. The Station Commander had however provided an English speaking operator for our benefit.

5. The tone of the aereodrome is very good chiefly due to the work of the Station Commander who in our view is an able officer.

C.T.O.

C.S.O.
intelligence

C.M.M. GREGG
C.M.M. GREGG
Wing Commander
Air I

F. IRWIN
F. IRWIN
Lt. A.C.
Air III.

1st April 1947.

File on Air Staff Visit Reports 12/4/47 5/3/47

To: W/Cdr. C.M.M. Grece

1

Report on Guidonia Airfield (Feb 28, 1947)

Guidonia airfield was inspected by Lt. Trudel on Feb. 28th 1947. The state of the airfield was found to be good considering the extensive damage that had been done to the buildings.

Site had been cleared and seven Nissen huts erected to store supplies and for use as aircraft repair buildings. Until enough permanent buildings have been salvaged and repaired, tents are being used by the Baltimore Wing for offices to conduct their business in.

The transport wing has a permanent building in good condition for use as office space.

There are no buildings available at present for billeting of officers or non-commissioned officers on the field, necessitating a long bus ride to and from Rome every day for these men.

Two buildings are being repaired however for this purpose and should be ready within a month. Furniture to furnish these buildings has also proven hard to obtain.

A new Officers mess is already in operation with adequate facilities to meet the present demands.

The existing enlisted personnel mess leaves much to be desired, but arrangements have been made to move it to a large permanent building as soon as supplies stored at present in this building can be transferred to Nissen huts. When this change has been made the enlisted mess should prove adequate and satisfactory.

Clearance of damaged buildings and hangars is being accomplished, although a large portion of the help available is currently being used to clear and repair buildings for immediate use.

The framework of two hangars have been completely repaired, and the hangars will be serviceable as soon as the roof and side coverings have been added.

Serviceability of the wings

The transport wing is able to keep approximately ninety per cent of its planes in flying condition at all times.

Availability of parts is not too pressing a matter as the planes being flown are of Italian manufacture.

The Baltimore wing however has been having great difficulty in obtaining necessary parts and therefore are only able to keep approximately seventy percent of their planes flyable.

The total hours flown for the crew for the month was 360 hours for sixty crews, or six hours per crew per month.

Very good considering the difficulties under which they are flying. The morale of the men is good especially considering the conditions existing at present.

The S.A.T.A. organization from what can be ascertained is functioning efficiently. The passengers reception room is neat and clean, but furnished with rather Spartan

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The S.A.W.A. organization from what can be ascertained is functioning efficiently. The passengers reception room is neat and clean, but furnished with rather Spartan simplicity.

J. J. Trudel
Lt. J. J. TRUDEL
Org. IV

7/27/44
25/4

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