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Declassified E.O. 17356 Section 3.3/NND No.

785017

10000/135/658

MORALE OF THE ITALIAN AIR FORCE
JAN. - APR. 1945

SECRET

ROYAL AIR FORCE.

File Number.

APSC/41/ATR

Date of Opening

17TH JAN. 1950.

References to other papers.

UNIT OR BRANCH.

AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION, BRIT.

SUBJECT.

ORALS OF THE ITALIAN AIR FORCE

115 7675

Referred to	Min. or Enc.	Date	Initials of Sender	Referred to	Min. or Enc.	Date	Initials of Sender
<i>[Handwritten signature]</i>							

THIS FOLDER
CONTAINS PAPERS

135/658

THIS FOLDER
CONTAINS PAPERS

785017

Authority to P.A.
(This must be Signed by a responsible officer.)

From:- S/O de Beneducci
Air Forces Sub-Commission,
Biserno Detachment,
c/o 254 Wing, R.A.F.

To:- Air Officer Commanding
Air Forces Sub-Commission,
Allied Commission, RAAF.

Date:- 17th April, 1945.

RE-ENTRY REPORT.

Sir,
I have purposely held over my bi-monthly report on the Italian Balloon Squadrons in view of your visit with A. M. Vico, ~~Major General~~, the result of which, I feel certain, provided conclusive evidence of the vast improvement in their morale.

In my humble opinion I do not expect any marked deterioration in the near future and any fluctuation which may become apparent from time to time will I am sure be of only local concern and, therefore, of very minor proportions.

The two outstanding problems from the Italian Air Force point of view are still, of course, (a) a guarantee that Italy may eventually receive the status of an ally, and (b) that pay may be increased for all ranks to correspond as nearly as possible to that accorded to R.A.F. ranks.

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST.

The visit on April 10th of Prince ~~Wladimir~~, Lieut. General of the Realm, Signor ~~Casimiro~~ Italian Minister for Air and other VIP's was on the whole popular and favourably received, although a few with Republican tendencies accepted it in the light of it being a necessary duty which had to be carried out.

The suspicions aroused by alleged telephone calls to Trinidad have proved, as I expected, unfounded.

I am, Sir,
your very obedient servant.

A. de Beneducci
7/10

FROM : Air Forces Sub Commission, Lecce.

TO : Air Forces Sub Commission, Rome.
(Copy to A.F.S.C. Bari).

DATE : 2nd. April 1945.

REF. : AFSC/I/12/P.(R.A.)

Report on Robert Obbe 20 dated 17/1/45.

There is little to report as the morale of the Italian personnel here appears to remain quite high.

During the month of March the bomber-transport squadrons broke their previous best operational record and this has given everyone great satisfaction.

2. The difficulty regarding the hydraulic systems of these a/c already reported has now been overcome and serviceability is reasonably good.

3. A marked improvement in the food and clothing situation is also obvious.

W. Dawson Jr

OFFICER COMMANDING
Air Forces Sub Commission

25/3/AIR
4/4

8346

FROM: P/O de BERNARDINI
AIR FORCES S.I. COMMISSION,
MILANO DETACHMENT.
c/o 234 WING, R.A.F.

TO: AIR OFFICER COMMANDING
AIR FORCES S.I. COMMISSION,
ALLIED COMMISSION,
ROME.
(COPY TO GROUP CAPTAIN D. C. STANTON.)
(COPY TO WING COMMANDER. V.B. 20 CE.)

DATE: 2nd APRIL, 1945.

BI-MONTHLY REPORT.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the following report:-

Our visit accompanied by other officers of our Commission and a forerunner to other visits by General ~~AMER~~'s American representative at R.A.A.F. high ranking Italian Air Force officers from Rome and Bari and also of a representative from the 'Union Jack', has had a most favourable reaction on the personnel of the Baltimore Squadrons, who can no longer complain that they have been left out in the cold; a complaint so often voiced last winter.

Changes such as the grant of pay given to officers retaining their rank but filling establishment posts vacated by a higher ranking officer which at first appear to be of no consequence, are now accepted in their true spirit, that of wishing to give them as many concessions as are practically possible. Remuneration which is to be given to the aircrews who brought their 'planes over from Italian and enemy occupied territory, comes under the same category.

Morale, on the whole, has been fairly good and the main interest this last fortnight seems to lie in the War News Bulletins which are followed generally by animated discussions on the future of Italy, raising doubts in some quarters as to the recognition of their war effort by the Allies. I gather that 85-90% on the Storno would be keen on Italy declaring war on Japan, if some clarification of Italy's position after the war were forthcoming.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST ARE:-

(1) The American Colonel who paid a visit to the Squadrons with General ~~GASTA~~ ^{COL. FRANCIS}, promised them every assistance from his commander-in-chief General ~~AMER~~.

(2) General GASTA has just left after having spent Easter with the Storno. On this visit he observed the reaction ~~of~~ ^{the new} towards the Japanese question.

(3) Lt. Col. Moci has been to Lecce to arrange for aircrew replacements.

(4) 250lb British medium capacity and general purpose bombs are for the time being partly substituted for 500lb British bombs, owing to shortage of the latter. However, if four 500lb American bombs A-164 can be installed on Baltimores, these may be used in future.

(5) The S.I.O. of 254 Wing is forwarding enlargements of the operational photographs you requested.

(6) The S.M.O. of 254 Wing, at the request of MAAF, is to assess the health of the Italian Baltimore aircrew as a result of the new surplus ration scheme.

(7) In view of the fairly high percentage of V.D. cases on the Italian Baltimore Squadron, an arrangement whereby a small number of controlled prostitutes be allowed to live and co-habitat exclusively with the Squadron's personnel is under consideration.

(8) P/Lt WATTS who is in charge of the R.S.U. has contacted F.A.F. with a view to posting to our Commission two Maltese Corporal fitters 1st on 254 Wing acting as interpreters on his section, and then arrange for them to be attached to 254 Wing as A/Sgts. I have pointed out that our establishment for fitters will probably have to be raised in order to include these two men as due to the difference in the trade groups they should remain in Group 1.

I have asked both the representatives of the F.A.F. and the 'Union Jack', Mr Johnson and P/O Herbert respectively, to call on you, Sir, before publishing their articles, and hope they will if they have not already done so. The 'Union Jack' representative appeared to be very keen on a 'write up' dealing with the R.S.U.

I am, Sir,

your obedient servant

Lucy de Teneducci
P/O.

FROM : Air Forces Sub Commission, Lecce.

TO : Air Forces Sub Commission, Rome.
(Copy to A.P.C.C. Bari).

DATE : 18th. March 1945.

REF. : 4830/II/12/P. (R.A.).

Report on Report 3006 20 dated 17/1/45.

The morale of all Italian personnel here seems to be very good indeed and there is little to report.

2. The recent demand for Unità Aerea to provide 700 men for the American authorities has caused some consternation here and a minor labour difficulty has resulted. On occasions it has been very difficult to get all aircraft loaded in time to take off on missions, due to shortages and poor quality of labour. The Italian authorities provided civilians but these were not acceptable to L.B. 54 who control the provisioning for missions. General Gaeta has arranged for 100 men to be posted from Sardinia to make up deficiencies, until these arrive it appears the problem of loading is likely to be difficult.

3. A recent engineering problem has arisen which is likely to reduce our serviceability considerably. It appears that the Italians used the wrong type of hydraulic oil with the pure rubber washers employed in their systems. This has caused rapid deterioration of the rubber

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5. A recent engineering problem has arisen which is likely to reduce our serviceability considerably. It appears that the Italians used the wrong type of hydraulic oil with the pure rubber washers employed in their systems. This has caused rapid deterioration of the rubber with consequent increase in aircraft unserviceability. The Italians are obviously very worried about this but the A.F.S.C. engineer officer and W/air. Gladstone at BARI are taking all possible steps to overcome this difficulty.



W. Gladstone

MOST SECRET.

FROM: F/O de BENEDEUGGI
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION
BIRMINGHAM DETACHMENT.

TO: AIR OFFICER COMMANDING
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION
ALLIED COMMISSION
ROME.
(COPY TO C/CPT DENNY)
(COPY TO C/CPT STAPLETON)

DATE:

Sir,
The loss of Major Brasi has been acutely felt at I32 Squadron where in the capacity of Commanding Officer he was held in great esteem by his men. Lt. Col Roveda feels that Capt. Graziani the second in command is the only person capable of replacing him, a decision which has been received with mixed feelings by the majority on his squadron, due to his practice of bestowing favouritism on some and the taking of severe disciplinary measures on others.

Capt. Graziani is a first class operational leader and as, I am given to understand, he has shown signs, since occupying his new post, of wishing to regain the respect of his men, it would perhaps be just as well to allow him to carry on.

One further scrap of information with which you may already be cognisant and which, so far, has only affected the Italian Fighter Squadrons at Canne owing to the proximity to the Yugoslavs, is that the latter have been inciting the Italian personnel with communist propaganda and have even suggested that they should desert from the Italian Air Force and join Tito's armies as volunteers.

I remember such cases of desertion taking place as far back as January 1944 at Bari, and if similar enticement were to spread in this area it may have disastrous effects on the morale of the I.A.F. personnel.

In future I shall send an extra copy of my report to Group Captain Stapleton and I shall most certainly Sir, take care not to raise the hopes of the Italians in regard to pay and rations.

I am Sir, your obedient servant

TadP.

150
FROM : Air Forces Sub Commission, Lecce.

TO : Air Forces Sub Commission, Rome.
(Copy to A.F.S.C. Bari).

DATE : 1st. March 1945.

REF. : AFSC/L/12/P.(RA).

Report on Robert Obce 20 dated 17.1.1945.

During the last fortnight, this station has been visited by the new Air Minister and party. He seems an extremely popular choice and cheered up all personnel here. As one senior officer said " It makes us very happy to know we have a good leader ". Col. Remondino was here on that visit and his popularity was unquestionable. The reception he received by all could leave no doubt in anyones mind.

2. The bad flying discipline reported recently has been entirely eliminated with the return of Col. Tanali from Casne and Wing Cmdr Knecker from Africa. They had a concerted drive on this subject when they knew what the situation was and several offenders have been punished.

3. The morale of the Bomber personnel is extremely good due to a series of very successful operations carried out recently. One cause for slight despondency was lack of tyres and I was met at every turning

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3. The morale of the Bomber personnel is extremely good due to a series of very successful operations carried out recently. One cause for slight despondency was lack of tyres and I was met at every turn with complaints and requests for supply of new ones. A commitment of 14 tyres received on 28/2/45 has caused a marked change in outlook of all engineering and flying personnel. Their pleasure was particularly noticeable, after the series of complaints already referred to.

W. C. Deacon, Jr.

FROM: P/O DE HEREDUCCT
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION
BALTIMORE DETACHMENT.

TO: AIR OFFICER COMMANDING (COPY TO C/CPT. JENNY).
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION
ALLIED COMMISSION,
ROME.

DATE: 19TH FEBRUARY 1945.
~~December~~

Sir,

I am taking the initiative of submitting a short supplementary report, in and above the normal bi-monthly one, dealing with to-day's visit to the Baltimore Squadrons of the Italian Minister for Air.

As I was present during his tour of inspection and also during speechmaking and you will be pleased to know Sir, that he made an excellent all round impression not only by the sincerity of his 'pep talk' but also by the interest he displayed in the sanitary conditions on the camp--one officer exclaimed with surprise that Signor Gasperotto was the first Air Minister in his long military experience who had entered a tent to judge for himself under what conditions they were living.

The following points were raised in the Minister's speech: (a) The fact, on which he placed great emphasis, of his visit having been made at your suggestion, (b) the 2,000,000 lire monthly family allowances allotted to the I.A.F. (c) the increase in pay and rations, (d) the assurance of further concessions, (e) the need for discipline and no party politics whilst in the armed services, (f) the necessity for good behaviour at the cessation of hostilities and non participation in any demonstrations which may arise as a result of the armistice in Europe, (g) the Crimea Conference of which, although he is certain Italy must have been discussed, there had been no official announcement, (h) the confidence and esteem which he has in you as a friend of Italy and of the cause of the Italian Air Force, (i) the fact that the Italian Armed Forces must continue the struggle on the side of the Allies without respite and double their efforts for the recognition for which the Italian Government hopes, and which, if it

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had depended on you and the other members of your staff in Rome it would have had already received.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
your obedient servant

A. Luigi de Benedicci
Dep.

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SECRET.

FROM: P/O de BENEDEUCCI
LIAISON OFFICER
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION
BIFERNO DETACHMENT

TO: AIR OFFICER COMMANDING (COPY TO O/CPT. DERRY)
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION
ALLIED COMMISSION
ROME.

DATE: 15th FEBRUARY 1945.

Sir, I have the honour to inform you that since my last report the return from Rome of Lt. Col. ROVEDA with concealed promises to his men regarding an increase in their allowances combined with the visit of General GAETA and Col. FRANCOIS to the Baltimore Squadrons, has had an appreciably favourable effect on their morale.

Another stimulant to their morale has verified itself during the last fortnight in rather a strange manner, in that, whereas only a few weeks ago the Italians were disappointed over the slow progress on the Italian front, they are now consoling themselves with the thought that if the present activity on the western and eastern fronts leads to an early cessation of hostilities in Europe, the North of Italy would automatically be liberated and its preservation be further impaired by the ravaging which would naturally follow a large scale attack.

The only apparent drawback to this welcome change is the fact that they take politics so much to heart that any misinterpretation on their part can have far reaching effects. In this particular instance they feel that a deaf ear is being turned towards Signor Bonomi's appeal that Italy's status be raised from that of co-belligerent to that of an ally and Signor De Gasperi's request to the Allies that terms of the Italian Armistice as well as economic and financial problems and the repatriation of Italian prisoners of war, be re-examined.

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The O.C. 254 Wing has suggested to a member of the Public Relations branch at present on this Wing, that this officer in conjunction with a photographer of the same branch should write an article with photographs, on the activities of the Italian Baltimore Squadrons whose experience and results have so far proved them superior to the other squadrons on this Wing. The Public Relations Officer is reluctant to do this as he says it has been covered before in Allied publications. I think any such articles are a splendid morale booster for the Italians, provided close up photographs of the crews who have relations in occupied territory are not taken, but, of course, I have pointed out to this Officer that permission would first have to be granted by you. What is your opinion, Sir?

In conclusion, may I be permitted, Sir, to mention that in view of the fact that I type these reports myself and send them under sealed cover, I run the risk of being severely reprimanded by G/CPT STAPLETON should he find out that I have been sending reports of a delicate nature without his knowledge. My position is unenviable could it be clarified?

I am Sir,

your very obedient servant

A. L. DeBenedictis
A/p.

124

FROM : Air Forces Sub Commission, Lecce.
TO : Air Forces Sub Commission, Rome.
(Copy to A.F.S.C. Bari).
DATE : 15th; February 1945.

Report on Robert Oboe 20 dated 17.1.45.

The morale of the Bomber personnel here seems to be quite high. This I think is due almost entirely to the increased operational activity during this month and consequent increase in interest. Further, I have fostered a competitive spirit between the Cant Z and S.M. 82 crews which has improved ^{operations} considerably and seems to have raised the morale of all concerned by stimulating interest. To date 98 sorties have been flown.

2. The food in the mess where we normally mess i.e. 1st. Cruppo S.M. 82's has improved considerably recently, and this, I feel has led to a generally more contented frame of mind among personnel.
3. A report from S/L. Kaye, Ops, Officer F.I.S. states that the situation is satisfactory, and fighter personnel are particularly heartened by the work being done by the aircraft at CANNE. I consider that the flying discipline at LECCE is very bad especially among

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3. A report from S/L. Kaye, Ops, Officer F.L.S. states that the situation is satisfactory, and fighter personnel are particularly heartened by the work being done by the aircraft at CANNE. I consider that the flying discipline at LECCE is very bad especially among fighters, possibly due to lack of diversion. This is being watched carefully and every thing possible is being done to stamp it out, but I consider it will not improve materially until the fighters are fully occupied on productive flying.

W. C. Cullen Gc

OFFICER COMMANDING
Air Forces SUB Commission
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

FROM: P/O de BENEDEUCCI
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION
BIRMINGHAM DETACHMENT.

TO: AIR OFFICER COMMANDING (C/PT. F.M. JERRY.)
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION
ALLIED COMMISSION,
ROME.

DATE: 1st FEBRUARY 1945.

BI-MONTHLY SPECIAL REPORT.

Sir,

I have little to add to my first report on the morale of the Italian Baltimore Squadrons aircrews, except that "feelers" are being put out by their Commanding Officers to their H.Q. Bari and Air Ministry, Rome in regard to the Storno's contention that the rate of pay should at least equal that given to civilian tradesmen.

They are particularly bitter because special allowances due to the higher cost of living, are given to Italian personnel stationed at Rome who they consider are in a comfortable sedentary job, not experiencing the discomforts of camp life and often living with their families.

I am Sir,

your obedient servant.

F. Evelyn de Beneducci
P/O.

1017

From : Air Forces Sub Commission Detachment, Lecce.
To : Air Forces Sub Commission, Rome. (Copy A.F.S.C. Bari).
Date : 2nd February 1945.
Ref. : AFSC/I/12/P (RA).

The attached report is forwarded in accordance with your Robert Oboe 20 dated 17th January 1945. While this may not be exactly what was asked for, it shows something of the R.A. mental process and matters influencing their thoughts.

2. The General morale of the bombers appears normal but since the visit of the Engineering Commission their chief topic has been the future of the Bomber Transport aircraft. During the above visit it was quite freely stated and agreed that the Cent Z was a very poor transport proposition. The Italians agree with this and are now looking forward to being re-equipped. This is causing much surmise but some Italians are very sceptical. I do not know whether they are aware of the latest ruling, but I do feel that it is time they were put in the picture. At present they are quite happy to patch up and carry on, in the hope that they will be re-equipped but I think the pilots and engineers are getting rather tired of continuous trouble with engines etc.

3. May I suggest that action be taken to acquaint Italians with the latest policy regarding the R.A. as it does not appear to have percolated through here as yet.

hnp

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W. Dawson
CHIEF ENGINEERING
AIR FORCE COMMISSION

5507

911

REPORT IN ACCORDANCE WITH ROBERT GBOE 20, dated 17.1.45.

The following are several points which cropped up during the course of casual conversation with Col. LEONE :

1. GENERAL ALIOME CAT'S SPEECH TO ITALIAN PERSONNEL AT LECCE.

The General said that the present Italian Air Force was to be liquidated, all old inefficient methods scrapped, and a new Air Force formed with a reduced, compact organisation.

It is also understood that he said something about the new Air Force coming under the Command of only one General.

2. MORALE.

Col. LEONE said that the personnel of the Italian Air Force are greatly influenced by the present unsettled political and economical situations, although they realise that the former problem is not one in which they as members of the Forces can have or should have any direct participation.

The question of inadequate pay is also very strongly felt by all ranks. Many civilian workmen at the moment are paid more than even the senior officers receive. This situation has lowered the local prestige and personnel are in ~~successes~~ snubbed by the population.

The Italians are not being given any precise directives as to present or future policy, and are unable to see that their efforts, the work they are doing, are bringing any compensation in the way of helping to improve the general internal situation of the country.

It is understood that the Italian Fighters are going as far as to say in the memorandum they are sending to ROME, it is thought to the Prime Minister, that they do not feel they can carry on with their task

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It is understood that the Italian Fighters are going as far as to say in the memorandum they are sending to ROME, it is thought to the Prime Minister, that they do not feel they can carry on with their task if the present conditions are not improved and hopes for the future raised.

The Commanding Officer of 254 Wing, to which the Italian Baltimores are attached, has said that one of the Italian squadrons has put up the best performance of these under his charge. The Italian personnel concerned has had to work under very difficult conditions and have said that they will find it most difficult to maintain their efforts without some added incentive.

31. 1. 45

Col. IECOME F/O

1 6 2 0

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

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FROM: AIR FORCE SUB-COMMISSION, BART.

TO: AIR FORCE SUB-COMMISSION, ROMA.

SECRET (.) 0.293 (.) 26TH. JANUARY, 1945 (.) PERSONAL FOR A.V.M.
POWER-BROOKHURST FROM DENNY (.) HAVE GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE I.A.F.
USING VILLA GIAMMATTO NO. 7 AT VILLASPIRE NEAR GARAGE "COMISTA"
FOR BLACK MARKET ACTIVITIES (.) THREE VEHICLES LEFT 25TH. JANUARY
FOR ROMA PROBABLY UNLOADING AFTER DARK TWILIGHT.

To be enciphered if sent by W/T.

T.O.O. 261100A.

Priority: ~~XXXXXXXX~~
~~XXXXXXXX~~

F.M. DENNY, G/Capt.,
Air Vice-Marshal,
Air Officer Commanding.

8007

TO AIR OFFICER COMMANDING (Copy to GROUP CAPTAIN DUMINY)
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION
ROME.

FROM: PILOT OFFICER de HEMEDUCCI.
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION
RIVERO DETACHMENT.

DATE: 20 JANUARY, 1945.

C. 112.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit to you a report on the reaction of Italian Air Force personnel to the attack on Colonel REMONDINO published in the newspaper 'Voce Repubblicana'.

I was handicapped by having to institute discreet enquiries during casual conversation without any previous knowledge of the subject in question. Colonel REMONDINO, however, is known to me and thus my approach was facilitated.

I found that Colonel REMONDINO is very popular in the Italian Air Force circles, and is not considered a Germanophile. His failure to report at Forligno in order to join his unit in Sardinia after the Armistice on the 8th September, is unexplained by some and explained as an act of wishing to remain with his family in Rome in the hope that Rome would be liberated in a matter of days after the Armistice, by others.

Other information gathered was that he was a member of the clandestine front and was given orders by General SANDALLI to keep an eye on the Italian Air Ministry in Rome with a view to preserving important documents and to keeping the archives intact.

It is the opinion of my informants that the attack on Colonel REMONDINO was unjustified and was instigated by an officer of the I.A.F. (no suggestions as to identity supplied) who must bear him a grudge and who took advantage of his extraordinary behaviour at the time of the Armistice.

If, Sir, you wish me to submit a further report, the receipt of a cutting of the article from the 14th January edition of the 'Voce Repubblicana' for my perusal would be of great value in permitting me to construct questions to any suitable answers which I may think interesting for transmission on to you.

I am, Sir,

of the subject in question. Colonel REMONDINO, however, is known to me and thus my approach was facilitated.

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I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant

I. Evelyn de Beneducis
Tpo.

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6A
TOP SECRET.

To: AIR OFFICER COMMANDING (Copy to GROUP CAPTAIN DENNY.)
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION
ALLIED COMMISSION
ROME.

From: P/O de FENEDUCCI
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION
LIFERO DETACHMENT.

Sir,

In answer to your request received today, I have the honour to submit the first of my bi-monthly unbiased reports on the morale of the operational aircrews on the Italian Baltimore Squadrons.

My impression is that a high percentage of the crews, who financially are poorly remunerated and who have little to gain therefrom, are helping the Allied cause for patriotic reasons and not because their conscience pricks them for having assisted a totalitarian government in the past, nor for any other political conviction. They have been told time and again that anything they do to help the Allied cause will have favourable reactions at the Peace Conference and it is this assumption added to the fact that as flying men they share with their counterparts of other nations their keenness for flying which more than anything else is proving a saving grace.

The reasons for their morale being at a fairly low ebb are varied and hereunder I enumerate those known to me in a few self explanatory words as they come to mind and, therefore, not necessarily in the order of importance:

- (1) They consider the political aims of the Italian Government uncertain and it is felt that little interest is taken in the activity of the I.A.F. The general opinion amongst aircrews who are strong Royalists is one of non-confidence.
- (2) They distrust Communism and fear a repetition of events in Greece taking place in Italy.
- (3) They desire a further purge of Italian officers of high rank in order to facilitate the promotion of junior officers at present not given the opportunity to prove their worth.
- (4) Captain Scapellato, Flight Commander on 28 Squadron very unpopular with his crews.

therefrom, are helping the Allied cause for patriotic reasons and not because their conscience pricks them for having assisted a totalitarian government in the past, nor for any other political conviction. They have been told time and again that anything they do to help the Allied cause will have favourable reactions at the Peace Conference and it is this assumption added to the fact that as flying men they share with their counterparts of other nations their keenness for flying which more than anything else is proving a saving grace.

The reasons for their morale being at a fairly low ebb are varied and hereunder I enumerate those known to me in a few self explanatory words as they come to mind and, therefore, not necessarily in the order of importance:

- (1) They consider the political aims of the Italian Government uncertain and it is felt that little interest is taken in the activity of the I.A.F. The general opinion amongst aircrews who are strong Royalists is one of non-confidence.
- (2) They distrust Communism and fear a repetition of events in Greece taking place in Italy.
- (3) They desire a further surge of Italian officers of high rank in order to facilitate the promotion of junior officers at present not given the opportunity to prove their worth.
- (4) Captain Scapellato, Flight Commander on 28 Squadron very unpopular with his crews.
- (5) The bombing of what they consider Italian territory.
- (6) The lack of consideration given to the I.A.F. by Allied Forces not immediately connected with it, even in cases where I.A.F. personnel definitely identified itself through written credentials of its operative participation in the Allied cause.
- (7) The low rates of pay.

With reference to (5), when I was with the fighters, Lt. Col. Fanali told me that he was eager to operate on the Italian front and in this respect he was backed by most of his pilots. The bombers, however, the nature of whose work is different, are not so keen, and I was told in confidence that the first time they were asked to operate over the Arsa Channel, one of the crews refused to go. They have, no doubt, seen sense since then as there have been no further incidents.

The supply of Allied aircraft has been a great morale booster, as at one time when I first went to Leverano, I had occasion to mention to you Sir, on your visit after the arrival of the Spitfires that the fighter crews were under the impression that we, the Allies,

were playing the double game of promising them a certain amount of material and then deliberately slowing up the progress of delivery in order to be able to say that their effort was of no consequence.

6. Although it does not directly affect the Baltimore Squadrons I firmly believe that any further supplies of Allied aircraft will produce an all round morale raising effect on the I.A.F.

7. Furthermore, I consider that articles such as those which appeared in a communist publication some time ago and in the Voce Repubblicana, for which I hope Sir, to send you a report to-morrow, are a disturbing influence on the Italian military war effort.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant.

I. Gelpi de Benedetti
RP

17th January 1945

SECRET

TO : Air Officer Commanding,
Air Forces Sub Commission.

FROM : Officer Commanding,
Air Forces Sub Commission,
L e c c e .

DATE : 23 . JAN . 45.

REF. : AMSS / L / 12 / P (R.A.)

C. III

The attached report is submitted in accordance with your Signal Rover Obse SO dated 16th Jan. 1945.

2. At least one responsible officer here who was questioned was completely unaware of the attack. Also there seems no indication of it cropping up in general conversation, thus it is felt that no one has worried unduly over it.

3. P/O Read broached the subject during conversation with Col. Leono and he has reproduced the attached report which is in fact a report of the whole conversation and story told by Col. Leono.

W. J. Dawson Cpl

Air Forces Sub Commission

Distribution :

A.O.C. Air Forces Sub Commission.

1-627

785017

The attached report is submitted in accordance with your Signal Roger Obce 20 dated 16th Jan. 1945.

2. At least one responsible officer here who was questioned was completely unaware of the attack. Also there seems no indication of it cropping up in general conversation, thus it is felt that no one has worried unduly over it.

3. W/O Read broached the subject during conversation with Col. Leone and he has reproduced the attached report which is in fact a report of the whole conversation and story told by Col. Leone.

Wm. C. Mason Jr

Air Forces Sub Commission

Distribution :

A.C.C. Air Forces Sub Commission.

C/Cpt. Denny.

File.

5430

SECRET

4A

REPORT ON REGULAR COLON 20.

Having no previous information on the subject of the attack on Colonel REMONDINO, the Commanding Officer of the Italian Bomber and Transport Wing at TESS, Col. LEONE was approached during the course of casual conversation and gave the following picture:

At the time of the Italian Armistice a large number of Italian Air Force personnel found themselves on the German side of the battle line. Colonel REMONDINO was one of these, and up to the time the Allies moved into Rome, it appears that he played a double game by being a member of the Republican Air Force working with the Germans and at the same time doing all he could to assist the Allies. It also seems that the Colonel sorted out some of the bad types among the Regia Aeronautica personnel - those who were not good pilots or technicians and those whose past records were unfavourable - and did not take them into his confidence. Those bad types were, it seems, the ones who eventually denounced the Colonel for the part he played with the Germans. These people are also envious of the Colonel for having been reinstated in the Regia Aeronautica and given such a responsible position.

It is understood that a few hours before the Colonel was to have been arrested he was warned by a carabinieri and was able to

3498

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It is understood that a few hours before the Colonel was to have been arrested he was warned by a carabinieri and was able to take the necessary measures to avoid this happening.

When Colonel LEONE, Lt. Col. FALLI and other senior Italian officers were in ROME to meet the new Air Minister and Gen. ALMONTE CAT, it is understood that they expressed their views on the subject and insisted that politics should not interfere with the functioning of the Regia Aeronautica and such frequent changes of C of S is bad for the whole set up. Apparently there are quite a few among the bad types with no special qualifications at all who, with the help of influence from certain quarters, are doing all they can to set back

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to the Air Force.

Col. LUCHE said that the Italian Fighters were most annoyed about the attack on Col. RUCCHINO, who is very popular, and have the idea of sending a memorandum to the leading Italian newspapers asking them to make sure of their facts before articles are published concerning the affairs of the Regia Aeronautica.

There appears to be no change whatsoever in the morale of any of the personnel of the R. A. at this station.

Goed F/O

Lecce, 20th. January 1945.

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

785017

Good F/O

5497

Lecca, 20th. January 1945.

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5496

FROM: AIN FROM AIR COMMISSION, BUREAU.

TO : C/C BRANCH, BUREAU.
W/O MEMORANDUM, BUREAU. (Two copies 1 for AFSC. Officer, BUREAU).

DATE: 17th January, 1945.

REF: AFSC/11/12.

The following signal has been received from the A.O.C. and is forwarded for your action. The message is self-explanatory, but it is desired to emphasize the need for secrecy.

BEGIN - " BUREAU FROM 20. BUREAU.
FOR IDENTITY FROM BUREAU STAFF BUREAU YOU SEND INSTRUCTIONS
UNDER SECRET COVER TO OUR SUB COMMISSION OFFICERS AT DEPT
BUREAU AND GIVE TO REPORT AT ONCE ON REACTION OF OPERATIONAL
CHIEFS AND OTHER PERSONNEL TO ATTACK ON COMMISSION. REMEMBERING
PUBLISHED IN NEWSPAPER VOICE REPUBLICAN OF 14 JANUARY STOR
THROUGH TACT NECESSARY IN OBTAINING THIS INFORMATION THAT
WILL FURTHER NOTICE THEY ARE TO SEND GENERAL REPORT ON
MATTER OF OPERATIONAL CHIEFS TO ME DIRECT ONLY TO
YOU ON FIRST AND FIFTEENTH DAY OF EVERY MONTH.

TOO 161612A

ENDS 2

P.A. DUNN, C/CHIEF.
AIR VICE-MARSHAL,
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING.

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

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CIPHER MSGE IMPORTANT 437/16

AFSC ALLIED COMMISSION BARI

FROM AFSC ALLIED COMMISSION ROME ROGER OBOE 20 SECRET

FOR DENNY FROM BUSCARLET STOP REQUEST YOU SEND INSTRUCTIONS
INDER SECRET COVER TO OUR SUB COMMISSION OFFICERS AT LECCE
BIFERNO AND CANNE TO REPORT AT ONCE ON REACTION OF OPERATIONAL
CREWS AND OTHER PERSONNEL TO ATTACK ON COLONEL REMONDINO
PUBLISHED IN NEWSPAPER VOCE REPUBRICANA OF 14 JANUARY STOP
UTMOST TACT NECESSARY IN OBTAINING THIS INFORMATION STOP
TILL FURTHER NOTICE THEY ARE TO SEND GENERAL REPORT ON
MORALE OF ~~DEKA~~ OPERATIONAL CREWS TO ME DIRECT COPY TO
YOU ON FIRST AND FITEENTH DAY OF EVERY MONTH.

TOO 161615A. TOR 162345A. DECY 170055A/25.

DISTZCA ASC BARI.

TOC EAW 0115.

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