

ACC

10000/135/712

10000/135/712

MORALE IN IAF
JAN. - MAY 1945

FROM : Air Forces Sub Commission, Lecce.
 TO : Air Forces Sub Commission, Rome.

(Copy to A.F.S.C. Bari, Inf. W/Omdr. Royce.)

DATE : 1st. May 1945.

REF. : **L/4/Air 1**

OPERATIONS BY ITALIAN A/C.

On the afternoon of 30th. April, 334 Wing Ops. told us that current targets were now finished and asked us to consider targets between 45 - 47° N. At the same time Lt. Col. Butler of U.S. 54, Brindisi arrived at Lecce and said he proposed to move the supply store as our operations were terminated. I told the A.O.C. this and was instructed to take the matter up with S.A.S.O, B.A.F. who had the previous day asked us to undertake more operations.

2. On 1st. May, I asked Col's Leone and Colavolpe to let me have their opinions on the new targets, and also discussed the matter with G/C Woodhall C.O. 334 Wing who promised to take it up with S.A.S.O. B.A.F. on my behalf. It appears that S.A.S.O. B.A.F. wanted us to take on more operations only in the event of his American Squadrons being moved. The targets being served by them however were beyond our range already.

3. After discussion with his officers, Col. Leone was again interviewed by me and after further discussion it was agreed that only two targets were within range of S.M. 82's and none for Cant Z 1007 but it was very unlikely that many aircraft could make the round trips due to technical reasons as the flights would mean seven hours flying and would inevitably increase technical failures.

2146

33

2. On 1st May, I asked Col. Leone and Col. Leone for their opinions on the new targets, and also discussed the matter with G/C Woodhall O.C. 334 Wing who promised to take it up with S.A.S.O. B.A.F. on my behalf. It appears that S.A.S.O. B.A.F. wanted us to take on more operations only in the event of his American Squadrons being moved. The targets being served by them however were beyond our range already.

2146

3. After discussion with his officers, Col. Leone was again interviewed by me and after further discussion it was agreed that only two targets were within range of S.M. 82's and none for Cant Z 1007 but it was very unlikely that many aircraft could make the round trips due to technical reasons as the flights would mean seven hours flying and would inevitably increase technical failures.

4. Since the fall of Trieste, there has been an undercurrent of despondency here and I consider this is partly responsible for the unwillingness to operate so far into Yugoslavia, nevertheless I do think 7 hours flying would be too much for the engines of these aircraft.

5. In view of the foregoing, I informed Col. Leone I would report this matter to 334 Wing and S.A.S.O. B.A.F. O.C. 334 Wing considers that the two targets now in range may well pack up any time in view of the fluidity of the war situation. I have also told Col. Leone that he must report in writing to UNITA Area the situation which has now arisen.

6. It would be appreciated if any instructions regarding other work for these aircraft could be forwarded as soon as possible;

W. A. Dragon G.C.

1 P.T.O.
L.F.O.C.

Spike W. Royce asked him to pass to Lee that I have
a plan for the 82's not yet completed. Agreed 100%
not much use for Northern Courier Service. Royce to
confirm with B.A.F. that none of 82's will not affect
them except for occasional Triani trip which can
be arranged a day or two before.

3/5 1615 hr
JWS
3/5 1800 hr

3148

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

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

Date:- 17th April, 1945.

BI-MONTHLY REPORT.

Sir,
I have purposely held over my bi-monthly report on the Italian Baltimore Squadrons in view of your visit with AIR VICE MARSHAL BRODIE, 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 UMBERTO, Lieut. General of the Realm, Signor GASPEROTTO 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 Brindisi have proved, as I expected, unfounded.

2145

I am, Sir,

your very obedient servant.

F. de Beneducci
F/O.

To see

Mr. Gorman
Mr. Reave
actions in
the Brenta

10/1/45

31^A
 H/O de Beneducci
 Air Forces Sub-Commission
 Biferno Detachment
 4th 254 Wing, R.A.F.
 3rd April, 1945

Sir,

30^A
 Since completing my bi-monthly report yesterday, I have been told, in confidence, that 283 Wing (O.C. Group Captain Macdonald) has reported to the S.I.B. that the Italians on the Baltimore Stomms have been holding frequent conversations on the telephone with civilians via the military lines to Brindisi.

I don't doubt that this matter can be satisfactorily explained, but shall refrain from taking preliminary action in order not to interfere with the investigation to be carried out by a Security Officer.

I shall certainly let you know, Sir, if any breach of security has been verified.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant
I. Volpe de Benedicci

AIR OFFICER COMMANDING
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION
ALLIED COMMISSION.
ROME.

30^A

FROM: F/O de BENEDEUCCI
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION,
BIFERNO DETACHMENT.
c/o 254 WING, R.A.F.

TO: AIR OFFICER COMMANDING
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION,
ALLIED COMMISSION,
ROME.
(COPY TO GROUP CAPTAIN D. C. STAPLETON.)
(COPY TO WING COMMANDER. W.B. RYCE.)

DATE: 2nd APRIL, 1945.

BI-MONTHLY REPORT.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the following report:-

Your visit accompanied by other officers of our Commission and a forerunner to other visits by General EAKER's American representative at M.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 practicably possible. Remuneration which is to be given to the aircrews who brought their 'planes over from ~~ITALIAN~~ 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 Stormo would be keen on Italy declaring war on Japan, if some clarification of Italy's position after the war were forthcoming. 2143

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST ARE:-

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

(2) General GAETA has just left after having spent Easter with the Stormo. On this visit he observed the reaction amongst the men ^{on} the Japanese question.

(3) Lt. Col. OCI 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 AN-M64 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 aircrews 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 Squadrons, an arrangement whereby a small number of controlled prostitutes be allowed to live and co-habitate exclusively with the Squadrons PERSONNEL is under consideration.

(8) F/Lt WATTS who is in charge of the R.S.U. has contacted B.A.F. with a view to posting to our Commission two Maltese Corporal fitters He 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 I.

I have asked both the representatives of the P.W.B. 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

A. Evelyn de Beneducci
H/O.

2142

FROM : Air Forces Sub Commission, Lecce. 29^A

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

DATE : 2nd. April 1945.

REF. : AFSC/1/12/P.(R.A.)

Report on Robert Obos 20 dated 12/1/45.

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. Quason Jr

OFFICER COMMANDING
Air Forces Sub Commission
LECCO

2141

FROM : Air Forces Sub Commission, Lecce.
 TO : Air Forces Sub Commission, Rome.
 (Copy to A.F.S.C. Bari).
 DATE : 16th. March 1945.
 REF. : AFSC/L/12/P.(R.A.).

Report on Robert Cooe 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 shortage and poor quality of labour. The Italian authorities provided civilians but these were not acceptable to M.E. 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 and

28

[Handwritten signature]

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 shortage and poor quality of labour. The Italian authorities provided civilians but these were not acceptable to M.E. 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 ~~used~~ 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, ^{here} and W/Cmdr. Gladstone at BARI are taking all possible steps to overcome this difficulty.

W. Cleason
OFFICER COMMANDING
Air Forces Sub Commission

2000 00 00 12

MOST SECRET. 27

FROM: F/O de BENDUCCI
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION,
BIFERNO DETACHMENT.

TO: AIR OFFICER COMMANDING (COPIES TO G/CPT. F.M. DENTY
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, AND
ALLIED COMMISSION, ROME. G/CPT. D.C. STAPLETON)

DATE: 15th MARCH, 1945.

BI-MONTHLY REPORT.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit my mid-March report.

Morale at the Italian Baltimore Squadrons is now very satisfactory and I have received no complaints. The ameliorated weather conditions appear to have invigorated the men and I have noticed a marked increase of interest taken in the upkeep of their camp.

I have had occasion to report to Lt. Col. ROVEDA, two cases of misuse of transport, but this should not recur and our D.M.T. sergeant is keeping a constant check on outgoing and incoming traffic.

Lt. Col. Roveda has gradually weeded out the 'undesirables' and his only headache at present, is a few isolated instances of men who overstay their leave, with the probable intention of deserting and looking for work, under the pretext that they could not get transport back to camp.

A pleasing feature which I have not mentioned before, is the friendly spirit shown towards the two Italian Squadrons not only by the Wing but also by its Allied Squadrons. Invitations to social camp gatherings are the rule rather than the exception and this is not solely confined to the officers but also to the N.C.O's and airmen. The operational relationship between the Wing and the Italian Squadrons is most harmonious and the fact that the R.A.F. and S.A.A.F. Squadrons are shown no favouritism has made a lasting impression on Lt. COL. ROVEDA and his staff. A state of ~~KKK~~ affairs which I think you will agree Sir, is ~~KKK~~ an added source of encouragement to the Italians. 2139

The authority from M.A.A.F. for Italian aircrew to receive additional rations from the nearest D.I.D. and for a general increase in flour and olive oil has been well received. I tried my utmost to draw the maximum quantity of rations from the date of promulgation, but unfortunately was only granted four extra days rations prior to the first indent.

An American by the name of JOHNSON from the PSYCHOLOG-

GICAL WARFARE BRANCH is, much to their delight in the process of sketching and caricaturing at the Italian Squadrons and he is also compiling a write up for the Italian printed American magazine 'MONDO NUOVO' (NEW WORLD) published in Italy and in the United States, which is a substitute to the old 'MONDO LIBERO' (FREE WORLD).

4/c
org
This para on file: 451/ACCTS.

Lt. MORZENTI who is in charge of the Italian R.S.U. section has asked me to bring to your notice the fact that whilst Italian airmen attached to Allied Labour Corps at Brindisi and Bari are receiving an extra 20 lire each per day, those working here are receiving no extra pay. If this information is correct, it bears investigation as to how the extra pay originated. It is certainly causing dissatisfaction amongst his men who feel that as specialists they are entitled to more consideration than men employed on the usual labour corps manual labour duties. Fortunately Lt. MORZENTI is a first class man and very popular with a hundred per cent backing

Adj
What is
This para on file: 108/P3.

Finally, Sir, I would present the case of my interpreters who through no fault of their own are still ACH/GD's. I have already mentioned in a private letter to the Adjutant F/LT WILLIAMSON that I think these boys should be made acting Sergeants and every opportunity be given them to pass a trade test as Interpreters Group IV or Interpreters Technical Group II. For obvious reasons it is unfortunate that they were not detached as N.C.O's. All of them, without exception are very willing and will do anything for me and I, therefore, do not wish them to think that they are being neglected.

I am, Sir,

your obedient servant

Lt. Morzenti
7/0.

Adj
Say yes
P.S. Do you wish, Sir, that I should send a copy in future to the Officer Commanding Air Forces Sub-Commission, Bari?

Pass
S/C Pearce
S/C Denny
F/C White ✓

2138

19/3

MOST SECRET. 26^A
File

FROM: F/O de BENEDEUCCI
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION
BIFERNO DETACHMENT.

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

DATE:

Sir,

The loss of Major Erasi 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 their proximity to the Yugoslavs, is that the latter have been inciting the Italian personnel with communistic 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

F. de Beneducci
Ho.

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 Choe 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 have no doubt in anyones mind.

2. The bad flying discipline reported recently has been entirely eliminated with the return of Col. Fanali from Canne and Wing Cmdr Klocker 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

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 anyone's mind.

2. The bad flying discipline reported recently has been entirely eliminated with the return of Col. Fanali from Canne and Wing Commander Knocker 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 with complaints and requests for supply of new ones. A consignment 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. Quason Jr

AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION,
ROME.

AFSC/R/22/SIEC INT.

13th March, 1945.

With reference to your letter 5903/2185. Coll dated 12th March 1945, I have to inform you that I am taking action with H.Q. M.A.A.F. in respect of this matter.

I have the honour to be,
Your obedient Servant,


W.A.B. BOWENBURCARLET,
AIR VICE-MARSHAL,
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING.

2135

H.E. Doctor Luigi Gasparotto,
Minister for Air,
Italian Air Ministry,
Rome.

23^A

FROM: AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION,
ALLIED COMMISSION, ROME.

TO: HEADQUARTERS, M.A.A.F. C.M.F.
FOR ATTENTION ALLIED LIAISON SECTION.

DATE: 13TH MARCH, 1945.

REF: AFSC/R/22/SPEC INT.

SECRET.

Attached herewith is a copy of a translation of a letter received from the Air Minister.

2. This is a similar case to that reported under our letter of even reference dated 2nd February, 1945.

3. This Sub-Commission is keeping a careful watch on these incidents. The Italian Government feels very strongly about it, and if more of the same kind occur, it will be necessary to ask you to take some drastic action.


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

2134

From : AIR MINISTRY - CABINET

To : A.V.M. W.A.B. BOWEN BUSCARLET A.F.S.C.

Date : 12th March 45

Ref. : 5903/2185

Airman KALMETTA Natale

1. ~~With reference to~~ Further to our 2049/S dated Jan. 30th 3276/S dated Feb. 5th and 4933 dated Feb. 14th 45 relating to the increase of propaganda on the part of Yugoslav organisations in Italy.

2. A new case of desertion, probably forced, in favour of the Yugoslav partisans, is to be deplored.

3. It relates to airman KALMETTA Natale, whose parents are at Zara, and for that reason was obliged to join the said partisans, according to their known systems.

4. ^{Yours} This Sub Commission is requested to attach the importance it deserves to this incident, ~~and~~ point ~~out~~ out to the competent Allied authorities the necessity of eliminating from liberated Italy all activities of the above organisations which are very similar to the police and propaganda activities in force in foreign countries which Democracy has always, very rightly, unreservedly condemned.

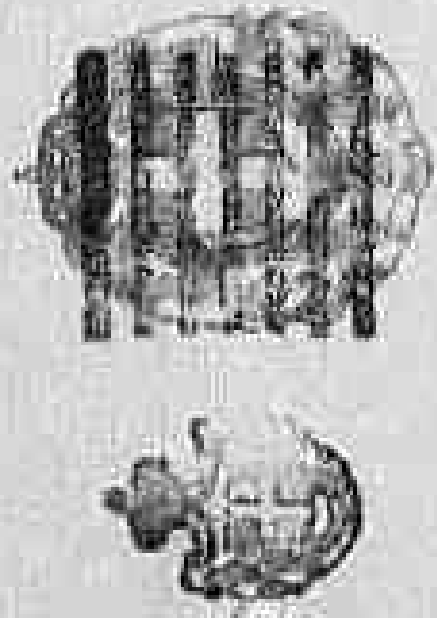
(Signed) *Buscarlet*

2133

23^B

*6/10/45
File 708/P1/69 B
copy to file 14*

1203



I-831

12 MAR 1945

Ministro dell'Interno
GABINETTO DEL MINISTRO

Segreteria

A. V. M.
W. A. B. Bowen BUSCARLET
C. B. E. APC - A. F. S. C. -
A. C.
= ROMA =

5903
17185
18/3

OGGETTO 1° Aviere di governo KALMETTA Natale. =

1. Si fa seguito ai fogli n°2049/S in data 30 Gennaio c.a., 3276/S in data 5 febbraio c.a. e 4933 in data 14 febbraio c.a., relativi all'inasprirsi della propaganda delle organizzazioni jugoslave in Italia.
2. Si ha da lamentare un nuovo caso di diserzione, con ogni probabilità forzata, a favore dei partigiani jugoslavi.
3. Si tratta del 1° Aviere di governo KALMETTA Natale, avente i propri genitori in Zara e per tale motivo, con sistemi ormai noti, costretto ad arruolarsi con i detti partigiani.
4. Si prega codesta Sottocommissione di voler dare al fenomeno quell'importanza che merita, segnalando alle competenti Autorità Alleate la necessità di eliminare dall'Italia liberata ogni attività delle organizzazioni in questione, che ricordano molto da vicino analoghe attività di propaganda e di polizia in Paesi stranieri, di cui la Democrazia ha sempre espresso, giustamente,

Il primo foglio per ogni foglio non deve essere consegnato alla segreteria

2132

3276/S in data 5 febbraio c.a. e 4933 in data 14 febbraio c.a., relativi all'inasprirsi della propaganda delle organizzazioni jugoslave in Italia.

2. Si ha da lamentare un nuovo caso di diserzione, con ogni probabilità forzata, a favore dei partigiani jugoslavi.

3. Si tratta del 1° Aviere di governo KALMETTA Natale, avente i propri genitori in Zara e per tale motivo, con sistemi ormai noti, costretto ad arruolarsi con i detti partigiani.

4. Si prega codesta Sottocommissione di voler dare al fenomeno quell'importanza che merita, segnalando alle competenti Autorità Alleate la necessità di eliminare dall'Italia liberata ogni attività delle organizzazioni in questione, che ricordano molto da vicino analoghe attività di propaganda e di polizia in Paesi stranieri, di cui la Democrazia ha sempre espresso, giustamente, la propria incondizionata condanna.=

2132

IL MINISTRO

L. Farinacci

A
22

AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION.
ROME.

AFSC/R/22/SHC INT.

13th March, 1945.

Dear

A
21

Thank you for your interesting report dated March 9th. I am glad to hear that the fighter boys are keeping their morale up.

As regards Colonel Fanali, I hope that his successor will be accepted, and will do well. From what I know of him, he is a good chap.

As regards the transport, the fact that the Italians have only raised 6 old lorries for their three Squadrons at CANIAE is entirely their own fault. In the first instance it is they who should supply the transport. As you know the two MACCHI Squadrons are more-or-less grounded at INOCCE, and they should be able to provide enough transport to keep the CANIAE Squadrons going. In any case, however, I will tell Mitchell to go into the question.

I will also ask Mitchell about a car for you, but as you know it is almost impossible to get a car of any sort or description at present. We might be able to do something about a motor-bike. In any case, when the F.I.S. arrives you should be better situated.

There is now no question about your taking on both BIFERNO and CANIAE, so do not worry about that.

The question of Sergeants GULL and TAYLOR was gone into very carefully by Group Captain Denny, and I do not think that I can interfere with his ruling. I think you ought to be able to teach TAYLOR to do the Flying Control work, which after all is really not very complicated. In any case GULL is well overdue for home, being tour-expired, or so I am told.

All the best,
Yours

W.B.

W.A.B. DOWEN-BUSCALET,
AIR VICE-MARSHAL,
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING.

2131

Flying Officer J.J. Rovira,
A.P.S.C. Liaison Officer,
Headquarters,
284 Wing, R.A.F. C.M.F.

From: No J. J. Kovitz Attached HQ. 201 Wing. RAF.

To: AVM. W. H. B. Bowen - Baselet. CBE. DFC. 21

A. F. S. C. Rome.

date: March 9th 1945.

Subject: Confidential report on Italian Fighter Wing.

1. Morale

This is very high at present. The boys are very keen indeed. I think that the increase in rations is paying handsome dividends.

The dismissal of Colonel Fanali has caused astonishment. The new CO. will have a difficult job.

2. Welfare.

I have succeeded in getting a football from BAF. (unofficially - of course.)

3. Public Relations.

On the occasion of the 100th Squadron's anniversary 21/3/45

in parties is paying handsome dividends.

The dismissal of Colonel Tanali has caused astonishment. The new C.O. will have a difficult job.

2. Wellness.

I have succeeded in getting a football from B.A.F. (unofficially - of course.)

3. Public Relations.

On the occasion of the Jug Squadrons returning to their Country they threw a party and asked me to bring 6 Italian Officers. With fear and trepidation I accepted - but everything went off very well. (Previously - our Policy had been to keep the Jugs and the Italians apart on social occasions.)

No. 6 Sqdn (R.A.F. R.P. Hurricanes) also entertained us last week. Tomorrow the Italians invite 10 R.A.F. Officers from all The Squadrons and next Wednesday 281 Wing are inviting 12 Italian Officers to dinner.

21/30

page 2.

4. Operations.

The results by both No 12 + No 20 are excellent.

Close support demands pin point accuracy and as far (touch words) we have not failed.

I had 150 or three difficult moments, though, but after careful investigation I managed to convince everyone that the culprits were not our boys.

(1) The Partisans accused 4 Italian Mc of dropping 8 bombs on a Jug Sanatorium.

We were actually airborne at that time but only ~~over~~ 3 P.39's with 1 bomb each were anywhere near the town named. The Jug squadron were also on the same Op and they corroborated our story. In any case we only had 3 Mc + they only carried 1 bomb each.

It was conclusively proved to be Mustangs of another wing altogether.

(2) The modesty of our pilots nearly landed them ^{in jail} ~~trouble~~

We were actually airborne at ~~the~~ 3 P.39's with 1 bomb each were anywhere near the town named. The Jug squadron were also on the same op and they corroborated our story. In any case we only had 3 Mc + they only carried 1 bomb each. It was conclusively proved to be Mustangs of another wing altogether.

(2) The modesty of our pilots nearly landed them ~~291213~~ trouble.

I think they have a rather inexperienced I.O. at Vis and when our pilots said they had seen no result to their bombing - the Openn states that the bombs had not exploded. This happened 2 or 3 times in succession so an investigation was carried out. ^{from the stations} ~~that~~ on the first Today, Vis have received word ~~that~~ on the first job our bombs had exploded some distance below ground and ~~a~~ made the roof and walls collapse. I think they must have been bombed up with

page 3.

Amens being delays action bombs.

(3) We were suddenly blotted out by fog and so all our airborne Mc were diverted to other dropzones.

4 Spits landed at San Severo - They were not accommodated and so had to go to Tora where they spent 813 here for a bed and food. I did not send transport for them (as if I had any) because we needed them back at Canne at 15th high.

I made the proper representation through Regional Flying Control and eventually received an apology from the Co. - which I passed on to the Spits Co. The boys realize it is all a mistake and will not let me reimburse them.

(4) On the same afternoon 2 P.29's landed at Cerignola - Here they were very well received and looked after but their Ops. Officer did not advise Regional Flying Control of the arrival of the 2 P.29's. We were scratching like fury!!

from the Co. - which I passed on to the Spits C.O.
The Boys realize it is all a mistake and will
not let me reimburse them.

(4) on the same afternoon 2 R-39's landed at
-Ceniguala - Here they were very well received and
looked after but their Ops. Officer did not advise
Regional Flying Control of the arrival of the 2
own scheduled aircraft. We were panicking like fury!!
2128

PRKos C/G. (ZARA)

For political reasons we cannot now use this M/L/G.

5. Gooly Chits

I have now received 98 Yugoslav Gooly Chits and
some more Russian "Union Jacks" are on order.

6. No 10 Squadron

This Squadron has now arrived and goes into Ops.
on Monday next.

7. M/T

page 4.

CANNE = 3 Squads = 6 old ITALIAN horses
 Biferne = 2 Squads. = 20 British horses
 and 100 Cycles.

The above equation is meant to be self-explanatory.

It must be evident that our difficulties are tremendous. Is it not possible to effect a more equitable distribution of transport?

Flo J. J. Kovila

Sir - may I be supplied with a car?

I put in a full day's work each and every day and we now often ~~get~~ get off at first light. Briefing is always at 1900 hours - and it often happens that the target is changed later on. By keeping life on walking I have so far done my duties to the entire satisfaction

J. G. Cpt. Boye.

2127

to Bari and back on Friday

Flo J. J. Kovak

the way I be supplies with a car?

I put in a full day's work each and every day and we now often ~~get~~ get off at first light.

Briefing is always at 1900 hours — and it often happens that the target is changed later on.

By begging lifts or walking I have so far done my duties to the entire satisfaction

of G/Cpt. Boys.

2127

I hitch-hikes to Bari and back on Friday in order to get a bath & a haircut — and our M/T Officer apparently knew nothing about my having requested transport.

I know it is not easy — but I think (and so does G/Cpt. Boys) that I am a really deserting case.

8. 74L.S.

74L.S. are beginning to arrive here but they will apparently not function until the dump moves.

I think their T.O. should at least put in an appearance as at the moment I am doing every body's job around here.

9. Came and Biferno

Reference your question as to whether I could tackle both jobs - I think this will be possible when 74L.S. have taken over.

At the moment I have too much to do on my own, Sir, and possibly I would probably end up by doing both jobs badly.

10. Sgt. Birnie went to Vis on the 5th instant on flying control duties.

at 11.00. I understand he has been posted to Frocinone.

2126

page 5.

Reference your question as to whether it will be possible to tackle both jobs - I think this will be possible when F.H.S. have taken over.

At the moment I have too much to do on my own, Sir, and candidly I would probably end up by doing both jobs badly.

10/ Sgt. Birnie went to visit on the 5th instant 2126

on flying control duties.

Sgt. Gwili has today been posted to Foreman.

As I am to have Sgt. Taylor in replacement (and as I know their respective qualities) may I suggest that Sgt. Gwili remain here?

I have a good, hard working and happy little team.

Would not one of the less experienced interpreters do for the school?

I mention this, Sir, because possibly one

page 6.

"P" staff have picked a name out of the hat without realising the work he is doing here. They boys are not just interpreters they are on flying control all day long, and we also handle the Ballo when Biperno is "out".

Hand 5. 7/0.

P.S. I want to hand over the fighter wing to the H.S. as a going concern.

2125

20

AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION,
ROME.

AFSC/R/22/SFBC LIT. ✓

23rd February, 1945.

Dear

15, 12^ASpec int^A
2/32

Thank you very much for your reports, and for your letter about the blankets etc. Please do not worry about this - I had already forgotten it; even Tott exaggerates a little when he says that I was "hopping mad". I consider that you are doing a good job of work at Camps, and I hope you can keep it up.

2. Please do your best to stem any rising hopes in respect of any increases in pay or large increases in food, as these are not likely to take place, and we do not want to lead these people up the garden path.

Yours

WR.

Flying Officer J.J. Ravira,
A.F.S.C. Liaison Officer,
c/o 281 Wing,
R.A.F. C.M.F.

2124

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 ^{occupations} 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. Gruppo 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.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 ²¹²³

S 1 2 2 0
19
FD 192

Miles is being watched

crews which has improved 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. Gruppo 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.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. W. Mason Gc

OFFICER COMMANDING
Air Forces Sub Commission
L. B. O. O. L.

AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION,
ROME.

SECRET.

AFSC/R/22/SPEC INT. ✓

23rd February, 1945.

Dear

Thank you for your report dated 15th February. I have no objection at all to any publicity for the I.A.F. provided, of course, that it goes through Allied censorship.

2. I think that you should tell Group Captain Stapleton that part of your duties are to keep a watch in brief on the morale of the Italian Air Force, and that I have said that if he wishes to have the reports sent through him, I have no objection whatever. I note that you do not make any serious criticism of him or of his Wing Headquarters.

3. I do hope you will do all you can to stem any rising hopes as to increases in pay or large increases in fuel, because I fear there will be little hope, and we must not lead people astray over this.

Thank you for your interesting report.

Yours

W.B.

Pilot Officer T.W.J.E. De Beneducci,
A.F.S.C. Liaison Officer,
o/o 254 Wing,
Royal Air Force,
C.M.F.

2122

OST SECRET. A

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

TO: AIR OFFICER COMMANDING (COPY TO G/CPT. DENNY)
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.

2121

2

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. Lucif. de Beneducci
E/p.

Received in this office
open.

2120

FROM: P/O DE HENEDUCCT
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION
BIETRNO DETACHMENT.

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

DATE: 19TH ^{FEBRUARY} ~~December~~ 1945.

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.

his 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

2119

2

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

T. Evelyn de Beneducci
E/p.

2118

From: Mo J. J. Rosty
 To: A/V/M WAB. Bowen-Pencaster CBE. etc.
 A/Sec. ROME.

C/o Hq. 281 Wing. Rpt. CMF. A 51
 15 22

Date: Feb. 19th 1945.

Subject: Report on Italian Fighter Wing.

1. Outline.

This took a definite downward trend when the Communiqué from "the Big 3" mentions nothing about Italy.

General Gaeta and Colonel Francisco visited the boys on the same day - and gave them the usual pep talk - the result of which is problematical.

Today the Air Minister arrived - and created quite a favourable impression.

2. Observations.

2117

the Communique from the Big 3 mentions
about Italy.

General Gault and Colonel Francois visited the
boys on the same day - and gave them the
usual pep talk - the result of which is
spectacular.

Today the Air Minister arrived - and created quite
a favorable impression.

2. Operations.

2117

Yes Sir. The boys are definitely reaping excellent
results.

Capt. Stodacchini's No. 20 Sqn have already
got 4 hours destroyed to their credit and today
Group "D" had the following Citation:-

"The Corps Commander is grateful for the prompt
substitution of your pilots and congratulates the pilots
on their excellent results."

Page 2.

No. 12 Squadron's pilots lack experience. Their take offs and landings are thrilling and spectacular - the results being visible in the Serviceability state. On account of their short range they have to land at Vis to refuel and this L/G has a sort of hoodoo for them - everytime No 12 lands at Vis something happens.

The usual and periodical Italian Black was put up by them there 2 days ago when they crashed 1 and damaged another. There was also some trouble about some jets which were not seen.

Since they are away from Vis they certainly do shooting work and a great feather in their cap is their being the only squadron in No 281 Wing

to spot and successfully strike a really difficult target.

1 Italian Air Force is popular here on account

2116

1 and damaged another. There was also some trouble about some roads which were not seen.

Once they are away from Rio they certainly do sterling work and a great feather in their cap is their being the only squadron in No 281 Wing to spot and successfully strike a really difficult

target.

2116

My Italian Air Force is popular here on account of their punctuality, keenness, persistency and, also very important, their general behaviour.

They invited 12 British Officers to a Dinner the other evening so I invited 2 R.A.F. Officers from each Squadron and the rest from the wing H.Q.

It was very successful - and one of the R.A.F. Squadron is awaiting the monthly liquor issue from N.A.A.F.I. to have a return. ~~to~~

page 3.

3. A/L/GJ.

We are using Vis and PKOS (near Zaza)

In order to obviate any further Vis "Blacks" which are partly due to the language difficulty

I have suggested to G/Cpt Boyd that Sgt. Bivie be sent there on Flying Control duties to Vis.

They 3 Sgts are all engaged on Flying Control duties and our experience in "V" is at long

last being usefully employed by the RAAF.

The G/Cpt has signalled Bari for submission to transfer Bivie but, curiously, we have not yet had a reply.

I am quite naturally, peruse replacement and I suggest any 2 of the following: Alletine.

Bussell and Brown. — but whatever the power

that he decide I would like to impress the necessity for having experienced types on a job

2115

last being usefully employed by the R.A.F.
The G/Capt has signalled Bari for permission
to transfer Bonni but, curiously, we have
not yet had a reply.

I will quite naturally, request replacements
and I suggest any 2 of the following: Albertini,
Bussacchi and Brown. — but whatever the power
that he decide I would like to impress the
necessity for having experienced types on a job
of this sort.

4. Horning.

I am surprised that our chaps have never received
instructions on Horning (in English.)
I have therefore started classes and the pilots are
quickly picking up the few (relatively) phrases
and numbers so that they can be brought home.
They repeat the phrases ~~part~~ fashion and in English
too.

page 4.

may I suggest that the other boys at Leese be taught by F.L.S. — who are doing nothing anyway. So that when we are ready to take another squadron they will know what it is all about?

5. Goody Chit's

We have now received some Union facts ~~on~~ on the back of which is an explanatory note in Russian.

There is as yet nothing in Yugoslav.

6. Wellfare.

Is there any chance of obtaining a football, etc. for the Italians? Playing Cards would also help. I don't Air Force gave us some Cards but these are now all useless. (That was over 1 Year ago)

My Sergeants and I would also appreciate some

2. 1st 51. 1st

6. Welfare.

Is there any chance of obtaining a football, etc.

Is there any chance of obtaining Cards would also help.

Is there any chance of obtaining Cards but there

is not the force gave us some Cards (that was one year ago)

are now all

useless. I would also appreciate some

by Sergeants and I would also appreciate some

books, playing Cards and 3 Valor Oil Stores

as this camp is lonely and extremely

2114

Colli.

7. M/T.

I would once again stress the necessity for a vehicle. I cannot really do a real

job of work without one. Only yesterday

a spit came in with only one wheel down

and by carrying lifts just manages to

move

page 5.
 the bill in time. I cannot keep on begging
 lifts - the incident just mentioned happened
 a lunch time and the H.O. left his meal to
 help me and therefore the #750.

I honestly feel, Sir, that the #750. can help
 the obs. people (who really work hard) much
 more in many ways.

Well, Sir, I think that is all for today.

Your obedient servant

W. J. H. 76.

Your Che deent, Servant

~~2011-7/6~~

2113

FROM: AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION,
ALLIED COMMISSION, ROME.

TO: H.Q. M.A.A.F. C.M.F.
FOR THE ATTENTION OF ALLIED LIAISON SECTION.

DATE: 2nd February, 1945.

REF: AFSC/R/708/T1.

COPY.

14^A

R/708/R/708^A

SECRET.

Attached herewith are two copies of the translation of a letter received from the Italian Air Ministry.

2. The letter reports that a certain airman of the 28th Baltimore Squadron has deserted and enlisted with Marshal Tito's partisans.

3. This Sub-Commission is unable to assess the political implications of this, but it is pointed out that desertions to the partisans, if left unpunished, will only result in a complete loss of morale and discipline in the Italian Air Force.

(Sgd). W.A.B. Bowen-Bucarlet,
Air Vice-Marshal,
Air Officer Commanding.

2112

FROM: ITALIAN AIR MINISTRY, CABINET OF THE MINISTER.
 TO: A.F.S.C. (THROUGH LIAISON OFFICE).
 DATE: 30TH JANUARY, 1945.
 REF: 2049/3/1661.Coll.

Translet
 Copy 14
 In original see
 R/702/P1 69^A

L.A.C. FITTER DRUSETTA ANTONIO.

This Ministry would like to inform you of the propaganda made by Yugoslav Recruiting Centre to the I.A.F. military personnel, persuading them to desert in order to follow the partisans of Marshal Tito.

2. L.A.C. fitter Drusetto Antonio yielding to this propaganda left 28th Wing, Baltimore Squadron, and he informed his enlistment with Marshal Tito's partisans by addressing a letter to Lt. Pil. MENCZZI Fiorentino of the same Squadron.

3. It is requested to this Sub-Commission to take the necessary steps in order that L.A.C. fitter Drusetta Antonio be transferred to his Unit.

IL CAPO DI CABINETTO.

2111

AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION,
ROME.

AISC/R/22/SEEC INT.

CONFIDENTIAL.

12th February, 1945.

Dear

Thank you very much for your Confidential Report on the Italian Fighter Wing of the 5th February, which I am afraid took rather a long time to reach us. It is a really excellent report, and I am very grateful to you for it. I am glad to hear that the fighters are at last getting cracking, and have had some results.

2. The morale, as you describe it, is very reassuring, and I hope that they will keep it up; they would not be pilots if they did not have means!

3. I have already cracked a signal off to Bari about the clothing, and I hope that we may get some immediate results. You know how difficult the question is, but I hope we really can do something.

4. I have also taken some action about the geeky chits. I cannot believe that they have anything to do with us since R.A.F. have the Balkan Liaison Section who would naturally supply the chits. However, I have told Bari to get cracking about it.

5. As regards rations I am afraid that so far there is nothing definite to report, although I knew that the C-in-C has been at work on it.

6. I can read between the lines as regards the report on the 9th Gruppo and had more than a suspicion that this was the case. I absolutely agree with you that we must have more personal contact between the Officers of this staff and people in the Wings.

7. I will take up the question of telling the fighters once and for all that they have little hope of operating over the Italian front. It has been made abundantly clear to the Staff here in Rome, and they should have passed it on. The Minister and Chief of Staff have been detained in Rome for a very good reason or they would have been down with you a week ago; however, they are starting for you very shortly.

8. I will see what I can do for you as regards a car. If I get one for you do you think that you could tackle BIERNO as well as CAFFE, thus releasing Beneducci for LEACH and Reed can then come up here. If I had a car I would certainly let you have it at once, but I hope to be in Bari on Thursday, and I will see if anything can be done. I did not have a man because you kept the

2110

that they have anything to do with us since R.A.P. have the Belgian Liaison Section who would naturally supply the chits. However, I have told Bari to get cracking about it.

5. As regards rations I am afraid that so far there is nothing definite to report, although I know that the C-in-C has been at work on it.

6. I can read between the lines as regards the report on the 9th Gruppo and had more than a suspicion that this was the case. I absolutely agree with you that we must have more personal contact between the Officers of this staff and people in the Wings.

7. I will take up the question of telling the fighters once and for all that they have little hope of operating over the Italian front. It has been made abundantly clear to the Staff here in Rome, and they should have passed it on. The Minister and Chief of Staff have been detained in Rome for a very good reason or they would have been down with you a week ago; however, they are starting for you very shortly.

8. I will see what I can do for you as regards a car. If I get one for you do you think that you could tackle BIGNO as well as CAME, thus releasing Benedetti for LECHE and Reed can then come up here. If I had a car I would certainly let you have it at once, but I hope to be in Bari on Thursday, and I will see if anything can be done. I did not have a man because you kept the Fordson as I knew all along that it had had an accident. I was rather put out because I thought that a smaller car should have been used to take one chap on the journey, because as you know the Fordson is very valuable to us here.

Yours

Flying Officer J.J. Rovira,
CAME.

From: 710 J. J. Hantz Cannes 4G. 12^A

To: 911/M WAB. Benen - Buccarlet C.B.E. D.O.
Air Force Sub Commission Rome.

Date: Feb. 5th 1945.

Subject: Confidential report on The Italian Fighter Wing.

1. Aeronautics

The hangar of the Domestic site is excellent.
 The Italians have made themselves, as usual, very comfortable - even more so than 281 Wing.

It is a great pity that the dispersals are so far removed that everyone here realizes that this cannot be helped owing to the great congestion of AF in this 4G.

2. Medical.

Hereunder are the arrangements made - and which I think will take care of all possible eventualities.

which is a bit of a problem at the moment.

It is a great pity that the thousands are so far removed that everyone here realizes that this cannot be helped owing to the great congestion of Mc in this U.S.

2. Medical.

Hereunder are the arrangements made - and which I think will take care of all possible eventualities.

Slight Casualties	Treated by the J.A.F. M.O.
Moderate	- - - S.M.O. of 281 Wing.
Serious	- - - S.M.O. of 254 Wing.
Surgical	- - - S.M.O. of 254 Wing.

The responsibility for General Sanitation and disposal of kitchen refuse, etc. has been undertaken by the Italians.

So for everything is OK.

page 2.

3. Operations.

If I may say so - The ops. side has always been pretty well under control.

I have had no difficulty at all in picking up from where I left off - the cooperation is 100% and all my instructions are being followed.

Although weather has been our worst handicap, we have managed 2 Trans (1 Goods + 1 Hook carrier) with really excellent results. Both BAF. and The RAF. are pleased as they were difficult targets. With the arrival of the fine weather (and the P.39's) our action and results should begin an upward trend.

4. Morale.

I have paid particular attention to morale during the period of bitterly cold weather and am pleased to report that everyone carries on with their jobs in an admirable manner.

2108

The Fighter Boys are still as keen as ever.

are pleased as they were difficult targets.
With the arrival of the fine weather (and the P.39's) our
action and results should begin an upward trend.

4. Morale.

I have paid particular attention to morale during
the period of bitterly cold weather and am pleased
to report that everyone carries on with their jobs
in an admirable manner.

2108

The Fighter Boys are still as keen as ever,
and I am positive that they will not let you
down in any way.

Naturally there were moans - but they compared
well with those of the R.A.F. boys of 231 Wing.

Indeed - I have heard many more around the
breakfast table at The Flota on several occasions!

5. Clothing.

Page 3.

This is very bad indeed.

Cannot something be done urgently as regards some of Macintoshes and mittens or gloves?

I know this cold spell will shortly disappear (I hope) but I am writing this on a most miserable day indeed and am therefore reporting on things as they appear to me today.

It is really pitiful to see the Ground crew working in this snow and mud and tentential downpour whilst just alongside one can see the Jugoslavians and Luft. boys all properly clad — and, remember, all 3 Air Force ^{are} doing the same job-o'-work.

There are still not enough boots to go round. On a drone like Canine everyone ought to ~~be~~ have proper clothing and boots.

Colonel Farnali has demanded from Mungwaia rubber boots and other items including Macintoshes but

page 107

in the snow and mud and ~~concrete~~ down pour
 whilst just alongside one can see the Yugoslavs
 and R.A.F. boys all properly clad - and, remember,
 all 3 Air Forces ^{are} doing the same job - i.e. work.

There are still not enough boots to go round.
 on a drone like Canine everyone ought to ~~be~~ have
 proper clothing and boots.

Colonel Farah has demanded from Mungwaia rubber boots
 and other items including brass knuckles but ~~page~~ 2107
 his conversation I can see that he has no faith
 in this people. I know this is the fault of the
 Italian themselves and all the other old and usual
 arguments which are but forward but I am
 not at all satisfied that even we know what
 they have really got at Mungwaia.

b. Identity Cards. and Gory Chits.

Is there any decision on the Identity Card Question?

page 4.

The Gody chits that we possess are Albanian. Can't we have some in Jugoslav and Russian?

One of the Italian Pilots who showed his Albanian chit to a Jugoslav was only saved by the arrival of an Italian Missionary.

One of the R.A.F. pilots flew in and baled out over the Russian lines. I think our Pilots could be protected from any further unfortunate incidents by giving proper and up to date Gody chits.

G.A.F. say this is The A.T.S.C.'s pigeon.

7. Nations

Has any decision been reached re: The promised increase in nations?

8. 9th Groups.

You will have no more trouble, Sir.

Colonel Fawcett said he has never had intentions of going against your orders.

2106

7. Rationis

Has any decision been reached re: The promised increase in rations?

8. 9th Groups.

You will have no more trouble, Sir.

Colonel Janali said he has never had any ²¹⁰⁶ intentions of going against your orders.

He would like, however, ~~to present~~ misunderstandings of this sort to cease and suggests that this could have been avoided if W/Cdr Gladstone had spoken to him directly on the subject.

Apparently some of his pilots had become attached to their MC and said they'd like to take them on OAs. W/Cdr Gladstone arrives on the scene and the story has since then been twisted.

If the W/Cdr. had contacted Cpl. Janali this could

Page 8.

have been quickly straightened out.

The Colonel also mentions that W.C. Gladstone seldom contacts him whilst on these visits and he feels that this is wrong inasmuch as he is the Commanding Officer of the Fighter Wing and responsible for what happens.

He often finds his people are carrying out jobs and orders about which he knows nothing.

Mt. Collier also mentions to me that the W.C. does not always contact him either and that at present West-Thomas had words with W.C. Gladstone on this very same subject.

Even in my humble job I have noticed this behaviour on the part of other officers, and I've taken a dim view of things when I've had to straighten things out after they 24085 gone.

that at Vietnam's West Thonson had words with
Went. Gladstone on this 1973 same subject.

When in my humble job I have noticed this
behavior on the part of other officers, and
I've taken a dim view of things when I've
had to straighten things out after they 240055
gone.

I think a little more tact and personal contact
rather than these "hit and run" methods are required,
and I'm sure that this would make for smoother
working and better and easier results.

9. The move to COMUS.

This came as a great shock to the staff. "They had been led to believe by their Alto Comandos that with the good weather they would be given the honor

Page 6.

of operating over the lines."

Anyhow I have explained the situation and they are quite OK.

I have always found them easy to deal with and cannot but feel that bad feeling of this sort could easily be obliterated by the appointment of a qualified and competent Liaison Officer.

As you already know, Sir, they never have had much faith in their very Senior Officers, especially those at the Ministere.

General Fracantini is very definitely the one they prefer and mourn.

I know this does not tally with your Rome Office Intelligence but I am writing this "manuscript" in all sincerity and in the hope that it may be of positive help.

The present top-watchers are not highly thought of and I think that a visit from them

those at the ministers.

General Bracken is very definitely the one they prefer and mourn.

I know this does not tally with your Rouse
Orie Intelligence but I am writing this "manuscript"
in all sincerity and in the hope that it may
be of future help.

The present topnotchers are not highly thought
of, and I think that a visit from them
during the recent cold spell would at least
have done some moral good - but I suppose
they will all come when the weather is
really fine!!

10. The Economic situation.

I must give you the odd picture as this
might easily affect the Operational angle in the
very near future.

page 7.

A number of our skilled tradesmen and mechanics are being (or have been) employed by the Americans who pay much higher wages.

Colonel Janaki thinks this might develop into something serious from the J.A.F. Ops point of view.

from here at Canine - our Mess waiters are being paid over 700 here per day!

the Pilots are not particularly affected because all pilots become attached to flying, irrespective of any financial gain in other spheres, and they fly because they like to do so.

the skilled tradesmen are and will continue to be the main problem.

11. Conclusion.

Well, Sir, I shan't keep you much longer.

2102

the pilots are not particularly affected because all pilots become attached to flying, irrespective of any financial gain in other spheres, and they fly because they like to do so. The skilled tradesmen are and will continue to be the main problem.

11. Conclusion.

Well, Sir, I can't keep you much longer. 2100
I must say the position here is certainly not as black as it was painted. 2102

The boys are keen, willing and already earning the respect of the other pilots by their punctuality and results.

I can truthfully say I have everything pretty well under control.

Res'tg. 76.

11
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/L/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 Cant 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.

it was quite freely stated and agreed that the Cant 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.

2101

W. Dawson
OFFICER COMMANDING
Air Forces Sub Commission
L. B. O. O. H.

REPORT IN ACCORDANCE WITH ROBERT OBOE 20, dated 17.1.45.

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

1. GENERAL AINOONE 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. LECNE 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 smug cases 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

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 ~~some~~ cases 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~~ ^{the} 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 have 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

Greene F/O

NOTE OF ACTION.

Saw H.E.GASPAROTTO on Encl. /OA/B. I told him we had already taken up matter of Yugoslav propaganda with M.A.A.F., who had set wheels in motion.

Any facts he could let us have, names, addresses, documents, would be forwarded and would be of great help in dealing with the matter.

A.V.M.

9th. February 1945.

2099

TRANSLATION.A
10

FROM: H.E.GASPAROTTO,
MINISTER FOR AIR,
ROME.

TO: AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION. (THROUGH LIAISON SECTION.)
ROME.

DATE: 5TH. FEBRUARY 1945.

REF: PROCT.NO.3276/1714 COLL.

SUBJECT: ACTIVITIES OF YUGOSLAVIAN PARTISANS' ORGANISATIONS
IN ITALY.

We are writing to the Air Forces Sub-Commission to request that the competent Allied authorities intervene in order to put a stop to the propaganda activities which are being carried out by Yugoslavian organisations in Italian Air Force units.

2. As has been previously pointed out, these activities are causing disintegration, for they tend to provoke desertion and they are definitely damaging to the Allied War effort.

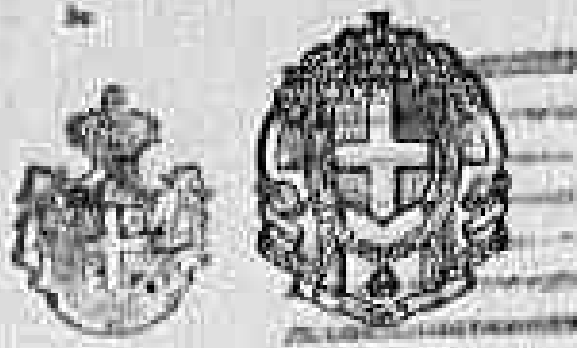
3. It is known that two Italian deserters, namely, Second Lieut. S.P.E.Ruggi and Sergeant Semoli, are serving in the Yugoslavian Fighter Units, and our information is that others will join them in the near future.

4. It is requested that the Air Forces Sub-Commission will consider the possibility of preventing this personnel from serving in Italian territory.

L.GASPAROTTO,

Minister for Air.

2098



Ministero dell'Aeronautica

GABINETTO DEL MINISTRO

Segreteria

Prot. N.

3276

17/11/43
Allegati

Roma, 5 FEB 1943

ALL'AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION. A.C.
(tramite Ufficio Collegamento)

= R C M A =

Risposta al f. del
Dir. Gen. N.

OGGETTO: Attività di organizzazioni partigiane jugoslave in Italia.-

Si prega trattare per ogni lettera un solo argomento e indicare nella risposta il GI. di protocollo e la Divisione a cui si risponde.

Si segnala a codesta Sottocommissione, perché voglia interessare in merito le competenti Autorità Alleate, che perdura l'attività propagandistica delle organizzazioni jugoslave presso i reparti della R.Aeronautica.-

2. Come altra volta segnalato, tale attività risulta di aggregatrice, perché tendente a provocare diserzioni, ed in definitiva è dannosa allo sforzo bellico alleato.-

3. Risulta, pertanto, dannoso che sull'aeroporto di Canne, presso i reparti jugoslavi da caccia, prestino servizio disertori italiani, quale il Sottotenente Pilota in S.P.E. RUGGI ed il Sergente Pilota SEMOLI, e che, secondo segnalazione per venuta, altri ne dovrebbero affluire in un prossimo avvenire.

4. Si prega codesta Sottocommissione di voler prendere in esame la possibilità che tale personale non sia ammesso a prestare servizio in territorio italiano.-

IL MINISTRO

Laupman

2097

94

COMMUNIST ELEMENTS IN ITALIAN AIR FORCE.

For some time past we have heard talk about the communist elements in the I.A.F. It has now been learned on good authority that a nucleus has been formed of officers having communist tendencies to which has been given the nomenclature of "Nucleo Aviat-cori Dissidenti".

The members of this nucleus are said to be the instigators of the Press campaign against Colonel Remondino, Vice-Chief of Air Staff, and other officers, and they are spreading propaganda in conjunction with Yugoslav and Russian emissaries.

Below are given the names of the principal adherents and organisers of the Italian movement. Colonel Federici, who, it will be seen, is a member of the band, has been under our suspicion for some little time. He is at present in control of an office which has been created to deal with the affairs of the Air Force Clandestine Front. Captain Cinicchi is posted to the Cavour Barracks at Rome where, it will readily be understood, he is able to give full scope to his communist activities.

It must be admitted that the Italian Air Force has some cause for dissatisfaction. However, if it is possible to increase, no matter how slightly, the rations of the air-crews and give them some satisfaction as regards their pay, it is felt that the situation will generally improve.

Col. Baccan
Colonel Federici.
" Meriani.
" Milanti.
" Quaglini.
" Spotti.
" Liuzzi.

Lt.Col. Sonnicella. Sonnicella.

will be seen, is a member of the band, has been under control of an office for some little time. He is at present in control of an office which has been created to deal with the affairs of the Air Force Clandestine Front. Captain Cinicchi is posted to the Cavour Barracks at Rome where, it will readily be understood, he is able to give full scope to his communist activities.

It must be admitted that the Italian Air Force has some cause for dissatisfaction. However, if it is possible to increase, no matter how slightly, the rations of the air-crews and give them some satisfaction as regards their pay, it is felt that the situation will generally improve.

Ltd. Baccan
 Colonel Federici. -
 " Mariani.
 " Milanti.
 " Quaglia.
 " Spotti.
 " Liuzzi.
 Lt. Col. Sonnicella. *Sonnicella*
 " Ascoli Merchetti.
 Capt. Cinicchi. -

2096

We are attaching a translation of a letter which has just come in from the Italian Air Minister, together with details of another desertion in the I.A.F.

E. B. Baccan
 Intelligence Staff,
 Air Forces Sub-Commission,
 ROME.

Feb. 6 '45.

Copy Deleted Report

YUGOSLAV COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA IN THE ITALIAN AIR FORCE.-

From several different sources, military and civilian, there is evidence of a growing Yugoslav propaganda in the area of Brindisi and Lecce which is not without effect on certain elements among Italian Air Force Baltimore air crews.-

A short while ago a few of the Baltimore personnel (operating under B.A.F.) refused to take off on a bombing mission to Pola. The Chief of Staff did not inform Air Forces Sub Commission and, when he became aware that we knew of the incident, wrote to say that he "did not think it worth while to report a simple instance of excessive and deformed introspection".-

However, further enquiry proved that the men concerned were not suffering from "deformed introspection" but had been influenced by Yugoslav propaganda.-

Since that incident we have news of a case of desertion by an O.R. from this Unit, for the same reason.-

It appears that in Lecce there is an organized centre of Yugoslav propaganda. Contact with Italian Air Force officers and personnel is maintained through a woman, whose identity for the moment is unknown.-

The gist of the propaganda is political, to the effect that Italians must not undertake war activity in regions where Yugoslav nationals might be involved (i.e. Trieste, Fiume, Pola etc.) as such will inevitably constitute prejudice when the war is over and allow Yugoslavia to establish territorial claims against Italy.-

The Chief of Staff, though he maintained that the Baltimore incident was the result of propaganda, did as a result send two officers to the Unit for the purpose of checking. One of these officers admitted in conversation with the writer that such propaganda does exist according to the terms outlined above.-

Additional sources also report that in the area of Brindisi

ned were not suffering from "deformed introspection" but had been influenced by Yugoslav propaganda.-

Since that incident we have news of a case of desertion by an O.R. from this Unit, for the same reason.-

It appears that in Lecce there is an organized centre of Yugoslav propaganda. Contact with Italian Air Force officers and personnel is maintained through a woman, whose identity for the moment is unknown.-

The gist of the propaganda is political, to the effect that Italians must not undertake war activity in regions where Yugoslav nationals might be involved (i.e. Trieste, Fiume, Pola etc.) as such will inevitably constitute prejudice when the war is over and allow Yugoslavia to establish territorial claims against Italy.-

The Chief of Staff, though he maintained that the Bal timore incident was the result of propaganda, did as a result send two officers to the Unit for the purpose of checking. One of these officers admitted in conversation with the writer that such propaganda does exist according to the terms outlined above.-

Civilian sources also report that in the area of Brindisi and Lecce Italian Army and Navy circles are influenced by a similar propaganda.-

Reference is made to the smuggling of arms into Italy through Yugoslav agents at the port of Monopoli, which handles shipping from the Adriatic coast.-

With regard to the general Yugoslav aspirations, herewith a quotation (which sums up the matter fairly) from a report by an Italian officer who was shot down last year in Yugoslavia and rescued by partisans.

" Members of the Yugoslav communist partisans are 100% believers. They are confident they can establish a confederate government and, at the end of the war, receive Russian protection. For that reason they are confident they can establish a confederate government and, at the end of the war, receive Russian protection. For that reason they are convinced that Spalato, Zara,

" Pola, Fiume, Trieste and a large part of Istria will be annexed to Yugoslavia. They intend to depend entirely on Russian aid in all matters concerning economic, political and social problems, and they suspect, though do not approve, that Italy is to remain a zone of Anglo-American influence."

That appears to be the essence of the problem so far as the Italians are concerned. Used as propaganda it is particularly effective since Italians are extremely sensitive about the future of the Dalmatian coast.--

H. L. Morrow

3rd February 1945

H. L. MORROW S/LDR INT
W/CDR INT.

2094

DECLASSIFICATION 5/2/84
W/CDE INT.

001 February 1943

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

TO: AIR OFFICER COMMANDING (G/CPT. F.M. DENNY.)
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 Stormo'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.

I. Luchini de Beneducci
P/O.

MEMORANDUM FOR A.V.M. W.A.B. BOWEN-BUSCARLET

BALTIMORE INCIDENT

The incident of personnel refusing to take off on a mission to Foia was not a case of "excessive and deformed introspection" as Gen. Almone Cat states in his letter of the 27th. It is a surface indication of certain propaganda going on among I.A.F. personnel in the Lecce region. Reference to this activity was made in a report from the "I" Office some weeks ago. It appears that, after enquiries on the spot, there has been a considerable amount of Yugoslav propaganda among operational crews, through, it is thought, the port of Monopoli, where traffic from the other side ties up. There is also a centre of propaganda in Lecce itself, the head of which is an attractive woman who is in close contact with Italian Air Crews. The core of this propaganda is centered round the political situation in the region of Poles, Fiume and Trieste. The Italian crews are being told that war action by them against Yugoslav nationals will have the worst possible effect on Italy's future status in the Adriatic. The general line of the argument is "if you so much as bomb a single Yugoslav in these areas the Yugoslavs will later be able to use your action to establish a territorial claim against Italy".

This evidence, apart from the above statement, is corroborated also from independent civilian sources.

30th January 1945

H.I. MORTON S/IDR INT

H.I. Morton

267

6A

itself, the head of which is an attractive woman and is in close contact with Italian Air Crews. The core of this propaganda is centered round the political situation in the region of Pola, Piume and Trieste. The Italian crews are being told that war action by them against Yugoslav nationals will have the worst possible effect on Italy's future status in the Adriatic. The general line of the argument is "if you so much as bomb a single Yugoslav in these areas the Yugoslavs will later be able to use your action to establish a territorial claim against Italy".

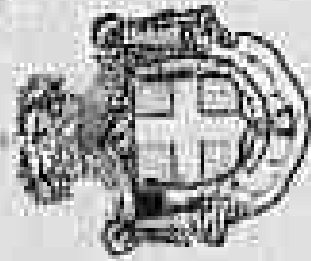
This evidence, apart from the above statement, is corroborated also from independent civilian sources.

H. Morris

E.L. MORROW 3/1DR INT

30th January 1945

2092



STATO MAGGIORE DELLA R. AERONAUTICA

Roma, li 27 gennaio 1945

Prot. n° 010272 Sq/5 All'Air Vice Marshal
W.A.E. - E. BUSCARLET

R C M A
3 160/AIR 10.

Rispondo alle sue note del 25 e 26 gennaio 1945.

1. Circa l'incidente accaduto ai Repanti Baltimore, ero stato informato del fatto pochi giorni dopo l'avvenimento. Non avevo creduto di comunicarlo perché erano già stati presi i provvedimenti del caso e perché gli stessi interessati avevano deplorato la loro disobbedienza.
2. Le circostanze che Le sono state comunicate non sono esatte: esse dovevano essere riferite a due equipaggi e non a tre. Dei tre aerei che non sono partiti, uno è rimasto a terra per inefficienza tecnica indipendente dalla volontà del pilota e regolamentata controllata; due, il Tenente Greppi ed il Maresciallo Quodoo, non sono partiti per la ragione che Le è stata comunicata.
3. Il Comandante dello Stormo è subito ed energicamente intervenuto. Se i due piloti non hanno più potuto partire, con-

2091

to informato del fatto pochi giorni dopo.
Non avevo creduto di comunicarglielo perché erano già stati presi i provvedimenti del caso e perché gli stessi interessati avevano deplorato la loro disobbedienza.

2. Le circostanze che Le sono state comunicate non sono esatte: esse dovevano essere riferite a due equipaggi e non a tre. Dei tre aerei che non sono partiti, uno è rimasto a terra per inefficienza tecnica indipendente dalla volontà del pilota e regolarmente controllata; due, il Tenente Crespi ed il Maresciallo Omodeo, non sono partiti per la ragione che Le è stata comunicata.

3. Il Comandante dello Stormo è subito ed energicamente intervenuto. Se i due piloti non hanno più potuto partire, come hanno poi chiesto, essi stessi, si è perché la formazione era già lontana dalla base.

Il Tenente Crespi è stato punito con 10 giorni di arresti di rigore e 10 giorni di arresti semplici; il Maresciallo Omodeo, con 7 giorni di arresti di rigore e 7 giorni di arresti semplici.

Il Tenente Crespi si è successivamente presentato al Comandante dello Stormo per deplorare ancora il proprio at-

./.

teggimento e per prendere formale impegno di non più incorrere in fatti simili. Egli ha inoltre ringraziato il Comandante per avergli inflitto una punizione che per quanto grave, egli stesso considera esigua nei confronti della infrazione disciplinare commessa.

4. I due suddetti piloti sono ottimi elementi, ma alquanto arpassati e impulsivi. Il loro gesto ben lungi dall'essere dovuto a sentimenti sovversivi, va attribuito esclusivamente all'eccesso ed alla deformazione del ragionamento interiore cui sono purtroppo soggetti molti italiani in questo duro periodo.

5. Prima ancora che mi giungesse la sua comunicazione ero già a conoscenza che i due piloti Crespi ed Onofeo avevano partecipato ad una rissottissima azione di bombardamento sul medesimo obiettivo che aveva provocato l'incidente.

6. In ogni modo il Generale Gaeta è informato ed ha ricevuto ordini intesi ad evitare il ripetersi di fatti del genere.

7. Il Generale Gaeta è al corrente di quanto lei mi ha comunicato con la sua del 26 gennaio relativa al Ten. Col. Tanelli. Fino a prova contraria stento a credere che il Tanelli possa essere incorso in così grave disobbedienza.

Il Gaeta ha l'ordine di intervenire, di riferirmi esattamente le cose e di inviarmi il Tanelli a Roma. Le terrà informata appena possibile.

2090

5. Prima ancora che mi giungesse la sua comunicazione ero già a conoscenza che i due piloti Crespi ed Onofeo avevano partecipato ad una rinfucitissima azione di bombardamento sul medesimo obiettivo che aveva provocato l'incidente.
6. In ogni modo il Generale Gaeta è informato ed ha ricevuto ordini intesi ad evitare il ripetersi di fatti del genere.
7. Il Generale Gaeta è al corrente di quanto Lei mi ha comunicato con la sua del 26 gennaio relativa al Ten. Col. Fanali. Fino a prova contraria stento a credere che il Fanali possa essere incorso in così grave disubbidienza. Il Gaeta ha l'ordine di intervenire, di riferirmi esattamente le cose e di inviarmi il Fanali a Roma. La terrò informata appena possibile.

2090

IL CAPO DI STATO MAGGIORE



From : General Mario AIMONE CAT - CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE I.A.F.

To : A.V.M. W.A.E. BOWEN-BUSCALET, ROME

Date : 27th January 1945

Ref. : Prot. no. 010273 Sg/U

In answer to your minutes of 25th and 26th January.

1.-

With regard to the incident which took place at the Fel timore squadrons, I had been informed of the matter a few days after it happened. I did not consider it necessary to inform you of the matter, as suitable measures had already been taken and the very persons implicated had deplored their disobedience.

2.-

The circumstances communicated to you are not accurate : two and not three crews were implicated. Of the three aircraft which did not start, one remained on the airfield because of some technical trouble which was regularly controlled; two officers Lt/ Crespi and W/C Onodeo, did not take off for the reasons communicated to you.

3.-

The C.O. of the Squadron intervened immediately and with energy. Even these two pilots then asked to be allowed to take off, but were not able to do so because the formation was already far on its way.

Lt. Crespi was punished with 10 days close arrest and 10 days simple arrest, W/C Onodeo with 7 days close arrest and 7 simple.

It. Crespi subsequently presented himself to the C.O. the Squadron to express his apologies for his conduct and make formal promise that it would not be repeated. He further thanked the C.O. for having inflicted a punishment, which though severe, he considered light in comparison with the disciplinary infraction he had committed.

4.-

The two above pilots are excellent elements, but rather hot-headed and impulsive. Their gesture was far from being

2089

two and not three crews were implicated. Of the three aircraft which did not start, one remained on the airfield because of some technical trouble which was regularly controlled; two officers Lt/ Crespi and W/O Omodeo, did not take off for the reasons communicated to you.

3.- The C.O. of the Squadron intervened immediately and with energy. Even these two pilots then asked to be allowed to take off, but were not able to do so because the formation was already far on its way.

Lt. Crespi was punished with 10 days close arrest and 10 days simple arrest, W/O Omodeo with 7 days close arrest and 7 simple.

Lt. Crespi subsequently presented himself to the C.O. the Squadron to express his apologies for his conduct and make formal promise that it would not be repeated. He further thanked the C.O. for having inflicted a punishment, which though severe, he considered light in comparison with the disciplinary infraction he had committed.

4.- The two above pilots are excellent elements, but rather hotheaded and impulsive. Their gesture was far from being the expression of subversive sentiments, and should be attributed merely to the excessive and deformed intuition to which, unluckily, many Italians are subject in these hard times.

5.- Before I received your communication I had already been informed that the two pilots Crespi and Omodeo had taken part in a very successful bombardment on the same objective which provoked the incident.

6.- In any case Gen. Gaeta has been informed and has received orders intended to avoid the repetition of such incidents.

7.- Gen. Gaeta has been informed of the contents of your letter of the 28th Jan. referring to Col. Fanali. Until the contrary has been proved I can hardly believe that Fanali has incurred so serious a disobedience. Gaeta has been ordered to intervene and give me an accurate report on this matter and send Fanali to me in Rome. I will keep you informed on this matter.
(Signed) Mario Minone Cat

2089

4^A
NOTE OF ACTION: (MORALE OF FIGHTER WING.)

In view of the state of the morale of the Fighter Wing and their attitude in respect of the 9th. Gruppo it was decided to send F/O Rovera to Canne.

He has lived with the fighters for a long time, knows them all personally and enjoys their confidence, and it is considered that he will be able to explain our point of view and help to bolster up morale. He is leave Rome on 27th. January.

EB

2088

Jan. 26th. 1945.

503

TOP SECRET

AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION,
ROME.

3A

SECRET.

AFSC/R/22/SPEC INF.

25th January, 1945.

It has been reported by the Officers of this Sub-Commission at Biferne that an unpleasant incident occurred there recently when certain Baltimore crews refused to take-off on a mission to bomb objectives at Pola. They gave as their reason that they would not take part in actions against Italian citizens. The flight had to go on its mission without three of its aircraft, as no replacements were available at short notice.

2. It is stated that there is evidence of the presence of subversive elements in this Group. This appears to me to be a very serious matter, and one which should be enquired into without delay. A state of affairs of this kind would preclude the use of the Baltimores over the Italian front, as proposed by Sir John Slessor.

3. It is suggested that it would be advisable to enquire into this as soon as possible, and that the best way to do it would be to post some reliable Officer or Officers to the Baltimore Wing.

W.B.

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

2087

H.E. General Almondo-Cat,
Chief of Staff,
Italian Air Ministry,
Rome.

TOP SECRET2ndMemorandum for A.V.M. Bowen-Buscarlet.Italian Bomber Group.

An unpleasant incident occurred recently when certain Baltimore crews refused to take off on a mission to bomb certain objectives at Pola. They gave as their reason that they would not take part in actions against Italian citizens. The flight had to go on its mission minus three of its aircraft, as no replacements were available at short notice.

There is evidence of the presence of subversive elements in this group and it would be advisable to enquire further into the affair.

25th January 45.

H.L. Morrow

H.L. Morrow. S/Ldr Int.

2086

MOST SECRET.

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

From: P/O de HENEDUCCI
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION
BIFERNO 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.

3.

because their conscience prevents them from doing so. The 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.
- (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.

4.

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,

5.

2

ere 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.

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.

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. G. De Benedetti

19th January 1945

2084

January 1945

2084

OUTGOING MESSAGE.

FROM: AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION, ROME.
TO: AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION, BARI.

SECRET NO.20 T.O.O 161615A JANUARY 1945 (.)

FOR DENNY FROM BUSCARLET (.)

REQUEST YOU SEND INSTRUCTIONS UNDER SECRET COVER TO OUR SUB-COMMISSION
OFFICERS AT LEGGE BIFERNO AND CANNE TO REPORT AT ONCE ON REACTION OF
OPERATIONAL CREWS AND OTHER PERSONNEL TO ATTACK ON COLONEL REMONDINO
PUBLISHED IN NEWSPAPER VOCE REPUBBLICANA OF 14TH JANUARY (.)
UTMOST TACT NECESSARY IN OBTAINING THIS INFORMATION (.)
TILL FURTHER NOTICE THEY ARE TO SEND GENERAL REPORT ON MORALE OF
OPERATIONAL CREWS TO ME DIRECT COPY TO YOU ON FIRST AND FIFTEENTH
DAY OF EVERY MONTH (.)

TO BE ENCRYPTED
IF SENT BY W/T.

PRIORITY: IMPORTANT

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

2083



MINISTERO DELLE CORPORAZIONI

SEGRETERIA PARTICOLARE DI S. E. IL MINISTRO

SEGNALAZIONI STAMPA

PER S. E. IL MINISTRO

SEGNALAZIONI STAMPA

PER S. E. IL MINISTRO

Roma,

I 286