

ACC 10000/143/2532 140/EH HUME E.E. BRIG. GENERAL

Feb. 1944

FILE

MINUTE SHEET

No. of sheet	Date	File no. of Ans'd Ltr.	From whom	Subject
1.	29 Jan		From Col. Brown to Capt May.	A letter to the postal section about stamps
2	2 Feb		To Deputy C of S.	Report on Postal Situation
3.	25 Nov			about the order to overprint stamps.
4.	9 "		Fielders Report	on Issuance of overprinted stamps.
5.	11 Feb		" "	
6.	19 Feb		Brig Stone	Report on stamp situation.

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY
ALLIED MILITARY GOVERNMENT
APO-464, U. S. ARMY.

19 February 1944

SUBJECT: Overprinted Stamps.

TO : The Executive Commissioner, Main Headquarters,
Allied Control Commission, APO-394, U.S. Army.

1. Reference is made to unnumbered letter dated 10 February 1944, beginning: "It has been reported to me that Italian postage stamps with the overprint 'Governo Militare Alleato' have recently been on sale for a limited period in Naples."

2. During the period that the writer was in charge of Region 3, certain Italian postage stamps were overprinted for local use, on account of a need for stamps that could be differentiated from the ordinary stamps. The entire available stock of ordinary stamps of the needed denominations was overprinted and placed on sale to the public in the Naples Post Office. Such stamps were available to the public for purchase when the writer turned over the administration of Region 3 to his successor. The overprinting was carried out because Headquarters, Allied Military Government did not comply with our requests for a supply of the Allied Military Government stamps that had been printed in Washington, and which are still used in Sicily.

3. The questions asked in paragraph 2 of the letter of inquiry are thus specifically answered:

a. "Why was overprinting considered necessary?"

Answer: Because the best information available at the time indicated that many post offices had been looted and the ordinary stamps stolen, thereby making them available for use by thieves or those who later obtained them. Thus stamps might have been purchased illegally for a fraction of their face value, and even the small purchase price thus-obtained

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would not have reached the Italian Post Office. Moreover, these stamps were available to the Germans who might have made misuse of them to our detriment. The same reason existed for using special stamps in Naples as in Sicily or in any other occupied area. The use of overprinted stamps during periods of military occupation is a common and well recognized procedure, one that has been used by Britain, the United States and many other countries.

b. "What denominations of stamps were so treated?"

Answer: The current stamps of 20, 35 and 50 centesimi were overprinted. Only these three values were overprinted for the following reason: Postage for post cards and open envelopes (the only mail then permitted in Naples) was fixed at 50 centesimi, hence the stamp of that value was overprinted. The Post Office in Naples had on hand a large stock of stamped post cards of 15 and 30 centesimi value. The 20 and 35 centesimal stamps were for use on such cards, thus bringing up the total to the required 50 centesimi, and thereby making such cards available for use.

c. "How many of each denomination were sold to the public?"

Answer: The entire stock of overprinted stamps was sold to the public. The number of 20 centesimi stamps overprinted was 360,000; that of the 35 stamps was 70,000; and that of the 50 centesimal stamps was 700,000. The number of stamps overprinted was approximately the number on hand in the Post Office. The quantities of stamps remaining in the Post Office after the overprinting was 20 centesimi, 5729; 35 centesimi, 2528; and 50 centesimi, 10,890. In other words, all available 20, 35 and 50 centesimi stamps were overprinted. The writer has no direct knowledge of this, the data being supplied by the officer in charge of the Post Office at the time (Major Rogers, Region 3).

d. "When were they introduced?"

Answer: The stamps were placed on sale in the Post Office of Naples on 10 December 1943, having been prepared some days prior thereto.

e. "When were they discontinued?"

Answer: The writer has no knowledge that they were ever "discontinued." They were still on sale when the writer turned over Region 3 to his successor. Major Rogers stated that the stamps were maintained on sale to the public until the supply was exhausted.

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F. "Why were they discontinued?" Answer: See last paragraph.

G. "Who authorized such measures?" Answer: The overprinting of stamps for local use in Naples was authorized by the writer as Regional Civil Affairs Officer, Region 3. It was, and is, considered a matter of regional administration.

4. The letter to which this is a reply states that A.M.G. postage stamps are already provided to replace the Italian series when necessary. They were seemingly not available for use in Naples, since every effort by the Finance Division of Region 3 to obtain them was fruitless. The writer also asked the officer in charge of Headquarters, Allied Military Government, as well as the Chief of the Finance Division thereof, to have a supply of the desired stamps sent to Naples. No such stamps were ever forthcoming, so that when the date for the opening of the Naples Post Office drew nigh, the overprinting was authorized as a substitute. On visits to Headquarters, Allied Military Government, the Finance Officer, Region 3 and the Chief of Staff were, on separate occasions, told that no such stamps would be sent to Naples; and they so reported to the Regional Civil Affairs Officer.

5. The statement is made that "the effect of such a restricted issue is to create a scarcity of value." Any scarcity in the stamps is due to the whole stock having been sold - a fate that must ultimately await every issue of postage stamps.

6. If not out of keeping with existing policy, the writer would appreciate being told why this matter is thus referred to him. The sale of stamps in Naples is obviously the concern of Region 3 and not of AMG, Fifth Army. The letter of enquiry states that the stamps in question had recently been on sale in Naples. The writer has given such information as he has of his own knowledge, and has had to make inquiries of a Region 3 officer (Major Rogers) for the additional data.

EDGAR WRSKINE HUME,
Brigadier General, G. S. C.,
S.C.A.O., AMG, Fifth Army.

HEADQUARTERS.
ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION.
Security Intelligence Section.

11th February, 1944.

Subject:- Issue of overprinted stamps in Naples by Region 3.

To :- Col. A.E.Young.

1. With further reference to my report, dated 9th February, 1944, regarding the above subject, to-day I called at a stamp dealers' shop at 18 Via Medina, opposite the A.C.C. motor pool. The dealer's name over the shop has been smashed and I could not ascertain the name.

2. In the window I saw 20 centesimi and 50 centesimi unused stamps exhibited, but not priced. I enquired within and was told that I could purchase a 20 and a 50 centesimi stamp at 20 LIRA per pair. I was also offered 35 centesimi stamps at 100 LIRA each. The shop assistant, who spoke English, said both used and unused stamps of these denominations, were in stock.

Richard Pendergast
Captain.

22/2/44

Stamps still same Price.

Richard Pendergast
Capt.

*Confidential*HEADQUARTERS.
ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION.

Security Intelligence Branch.

9th February, 1944. (4)

Subject:- Issue of overprinted stamps in Naples by Region 3.

To :- Colonel A.E.Young.

1. With reference to the above subject, I have now interviewed Lt. Col. Progers, Postal and Telecommunications Sub-Commission, at Salerno, and Lt. Macnamara.

2. The facts briefly are that after the occupation of Naples, Region 3 issued certain Italian Postage stamps bearing an overprint "GOVERNO MILITARE ALLEATO". Only a limited number were on sale and then the issued either ran out, or was cancelled.

3. Lt.Col. Progers saw Brigadier Hume and Major Rogers, of Region 3, about the third week in November, 1943, and discussed various postal matters as Lt.Col.Progers wished to make sure that the same policy was being pursued in both Salerno and Naples over all postal matters. He asked why it had been necessary to overprint on Italian stamps and Brigadier Hume said because he had information that a large quantity of Italian stamps had been stolen, and that by issuing overprinted stamps it was making the stolen ones valueless. Lt.Col.Progers said that he considered the overprinting quite unnecessary.

4. A copy of Lt.Col.Progers' report, dated 25-II-43, is attached. This report was sent to Captain Stone, A.C.C.Brindisi, who replied saying he did not consider overprinting necessary. Lt.Col.Progers has only used Italian stamps in Salerno-Provence.

5. It gradually came to the notice of Lt.Col.Progers that a "Black Market" in these overprinted stamps had been started due to the limited quantity available. He drafted a report on the subject, copy attached, dated 2-2-44, but the report has not yet been submitted, but it is useful as it sets out the position as known to Lt.Col.Progers.

6. I have also seen Col.Henderson at Salerno, ~~copy attached~~ who showed me a letter, from Lt.Col. A.G.Brown to Captain M. Hay, dated 29-I-44. Copy attached, original in the possession of Col.Henderson. The letter sets out in no uncertain terms Lt.Col.Brown's views about the overprinting of these stamps.

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It confirms that only 20, 35 and 50 centesimi were overprinted and gives figures for the total number of stamps overprinted. It is not known if these figures are correct.

7. According to Lt.Col. Progers the Italian postal authorities had available in Naples at the time of the Allied entry a quantity of stamped post cards bearing 15 and 30 centesimi stamps. The 15 was for delivery inside the City and the 30 centesimi was for delivery outside Naples. The Allies decided to make a flat rate of 50 centesimi for all deliveries inside and outside Naples, both post cards and letters, so that it was necessary to put 35 and 20 centesimi stamps on the post cards and 50 centesimi on letters.

8. It is reported that Brigadier Hume is a stamp collector, but none of the officers I have interviewed can positively confirm this.

9. Major Head of the Postal and Telecommunications Sub-Commission is at present checking the postal system of Region 3 with Major Rogers. I am hoping to see him to-day when I hope he can supply me with the following information, or obtain it in the near future during the course of his work:-

- (a) Who actually authorised the overprinting and for what reason.
- (b) The denomination of the stamps overprinted and the quantity.
- (c) Particulars of the stock of stamps held by the Italians at the time of the Allied entry.
- (d) Why overprinting was stopped and on whose authority.
- (e) The average number of stamps used weekly in Naples.

10. In the A.M.G.O.T Book of Instructions, 2nd Edition, on page 16, page 66, and page 178, page 6, mention is made of a special issue of A.M.G.O.T stamps to be used. These special stamps were apparently only used in Sicily and not in any other Region.

Richard J. P. P.
Captain.

TO:- Capt. Stone U.S.A.

FROM:- Lt. Col. Progers

SUBJECT:- Postal conditions at Salerno.

25 November 1943

With reference to previous report dated 21.11.43, resumption of mail service is still held up on censorship question.

Censorship An INC Section has been located at NAPLES, and the position at SALERNO has been discussed with them. They state that the standing regulations require at least partial censorship of any civil mail but they have wired to AF HQ asking if regulations may be relaxed in respect of local town service. They have also asked AF HQ to despatch censor staff to SALERNO. The section at Naples consists of four officers only and the volume of correspondence being dealt with (captured enemy correspondence etc) is such that none can be spared at present for SALERNO.

Stamps As regards use of stamps, Col. Hume of MAC, No 3 Region is of the opinion that Italian stamps referred to in previous report should be overprinted GOVERNO MILITARE ALLIATE. In view of expectation of Italian Govt taking over at early date, this is considered unnecessary especially in view of fact that stamps on hand are unobjectionable. They bear heads of early Caesars, present king, or figure of legendary wolf, and there is no Fascist reference. Perhaps a definite decision on the matter can be given.

Correspondence The accumulation of correspondence previously referred to is being removed for examination by INC.

Provincial Services - Transport As regards Provincial services, transfer of mails to and from towns and villages not served by railway, was previously performed by motor transport companies now no longer functioning owing either to loss or damage of vehicles or their requisitioning for other purposes. The question of finding alternative means of transport is being pursued.

Savings Bank etc. So far as Savings Bank and other financial services are concerned, the relative records are held in NAPLES and the question as to what information it will be necessary to obtain from NAPLES before the service can be resumed is being investigated.

A. Progers
Lt. Col.

HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION
(Reson Echelon)
APO 394

2 February 1944

SUBJECT: Postal Services.

TO : Deputy Chief of Staff (Operations)

1. Attention is drawn to the anomalous actions being taken in the Naples area in connection with postal services, which owing to their divergence from the system in vogue in the remainder of Italy will lead to difficulties in the resumption of centralized control.

2. Stamp: When services were re-opened in Sicily the stamps used were the Alto series. ~~When the mainland was reached it was some time before posts were re-established, except in Kings Italy, where full postal services had never ceased to function and where current Italian stamps of an unobjectionable design continued to be used. When Salerno re-commenced postal operations, the stamps used were similar to those in use in Kings Italy (authority for this was given in a signal from Hqs. A.C.C. Brindisi). Almost simultaneously, a local service was established in Naples City and, on the authority of Region 3, Italian stamps overprinted were used.~~

3. The peculiar position in Naples City has tended to create philatelic curiosities with the result that a Black Market in certain denominations of stamps has arisen. Of these most commonly in use, it is understood that the 20%, 35%, and 50% denominations are now out of stock but it is stated by AMI officers stationed in Naples that stamps of the 35% denomination are on sale at philatelists in the city, and may even be purchased on the pavement outside the postoffice, at 50 lire each. As far as can be ascertained much of the blame for the present state of affairs is attributable to the action of Allied personnel, many of whom purchased complete sheets of stamps.

4. It seems desirable that the position should be regularized by adoption of a uniform system throughout occupied Italy and by a clearly defined policy to be followed in territories which are liberated in the future, and it would be appreciated if this matter could receive early consideration.

5. In the meantime it is suggested that steps should be taken to counteract these Black Market activities which tend to reflect discredit upon the Allied administration, and to ease the stamp supply position which is becoming acute. To accomplish this end, three courses appear to be open and in considering these it is necessary to remember that the use of civil posts for communications between the civil population and members of the Allied forces is prohibited. The steps suggested are as follows:

(a) To place civil postoffices out of bounds to Allied personnel. None of the civil postoffice staff should be available to Allied personnel.

1. Attention is drawn to the anomalous actions being taken in the Naples area in connection with postal services, which owing to their divergence from the system in vogue in the remainder of Italy will lead to difficulties in the resumption of centralized control.
2. Stamps: When services were re-opened in Sicily the stamps used were the ADOT series, ~~which were used in Sicily~~ and these are still in use there. When the mainland was reached it was some time before posts were re-established, except in Kings Italy, where full postal services had never ceased to function and where current Italian stamps of an unobjectionable design continued to be used. When Salerno re-commenced postal operations, the stamps used were similar to those in use in Kings Italy (authority for this was given in a signal from Hqs. A.C.C. Brindisi). Almost simultaneously, a local service was established in Naples City and, on the authority of Region 3, Italian stamps overprinted were used.
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 - (a) To place civil postoffices out of bounds to Allied personnel. None of the civil postoffice services are available to Allied personnel and this action would automatically prevent the sale of postage stamps to members of the forces.
 - (b) To restrict the sale to individual purchasers to a specified number at any one time. This step might smother the position but would not solve it because there would be nothing to prevent a succession of purchases at the same or other offices.
6. It is understood that the present shortage in Naples is being met by overprinting the stock of stamped post cards with an indication of a higher denomination but it is not known on whose authority this step was taken.
7. As previously stated, ADOT stamps only have been used in Sicily but there are certain stocks of Italian stamps held at all the chief postoffices in the island. An enquiry has been sent out to ascertain the total stocks held and, if these are in any way considerable, it is proposed to have them transferred to the mainland.

3. Postal Rates: Apparently it is intended in the near future to extend the present Naples City service to the south of the province (that portion south of a line from Nola to Naples) and during a recent discussion with the Finance Officer, Region 3, who controls the postal services, it was ascertained that it was proposed to charge 1 lire for that service. Such a charge would, of course, be out of step with the rates in the rest of Italy and some direction to Region 3 in the matter appears to be necessary. Similar instructions will also be necessary in Avellino and Benevento where it is understood that apostila service is about to be introduced.

9. Exchanges: In peacetime the Italian Postoffice sublets part of its letter-carrying monopoly to agencies which pay an annual fee for the privilege, and following the introduction of the local postcard service in Naples City, it was found that certain of these agencies commented on operations. As they had their receiving and distributing machinery it was difficult to ensure that correspondence posted through such channels was subjected to censorship and, on 25 Jan. 1944, it was declared illegal, on ASDM authority, for such agencies to deal with ordinary correspondence, although they were allowed to continue the delivery of daily newspapers and bonus cheques for the municipality. As similar conditions are likely to be met with in other large towns, it is essential that any pronouncement on the subject should be of general application and should be circulated through A.S.C. channels, and perhaps arrangements can be made for this to be done.

Transport: 10. A further difficulty which has arisen in connection with the conveyance of mails. The postal service in Italy relies to a great extent on road transport and much of that formerly used is, for various reasons, no longer available. It has been necessary, in most places, to make alternative arrangements but even such a course is necessary it seems desirable that any contracts so placed should be on a short term basis and should save the prior concurrence of the Italian Postoffice. A letter from the Under-Secretary of State for Posts & Telegraphs regarding the position at Naples is attached.

11. Staffing: According to the list recently published of officers due to be transferred to another theatre of operations, Major Head will probably be leaving in the near future and it is therefore imperative that arrangements for the staffing of the Postal Divn. of the Telecomm. Sub-Commission should be expedited. With the exception of Kings Italy and Salerno, the whole of the postal services throughout occupied Italy have been introduced by officers without Postal experience and, as a result, certain anomalies have arisen. The services may be said to be functioning but reports indicate that early postal supervision is imperative. It is therefore urgently represented that steps should be taken to obtain additional postal officers. It is considered that one additional officer should be attached to Headquarters, Salerno; one should be provided for the four provinces; one for Region 2; one for Naples; one to supervise the introduction of services in Avellino and Benevento and one to go forward, when practicable, to the Rome Area.

Colonel
Telecommunications Sub-Commission

9. Exemptions: In practice the Italian Postoffice sub-lets part of its letter-carrying monopoly to agencies which pay an annual fee for the privilege, and following the introduction of the local postcard service in Naples City, it was found that certain of these agencies continued operations. As they had their receiving and distributing machinery it was difficult to ensure that correspondence posted through such channels was subjected to censorship and, on 25 Jan. 1944, it was declared illegal, on APH authority, for such agencies to deal with ordinary correspondence, although they were allowed to continue the delivery of daily newspapers and bonus cheques for the municipality. As similar conditions are likely to be met with in other large towns, it is essential that any pronouncement on the subject should be of general application and should be circulated through A.S.C. channels, and perhaps arrangements can be made for this to be done.

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Colonel
Telecommunications Sub-Commission

TRANSLATION

8/8.4/195 30 Jan. 1944

SUBJECT: Contracts with private companies for mail transport.

TO : A.G.C. , Brindisi.

Several P.S.T. provincial directors in provinces not yet united back to the Italian Government are often required to conclude contracts which involve heavy charges and have a lasting effect on future budgets.

As Naples for instance, a contract for mail transport has been filled at a monthly rate of 300,000 lire with provision for a further charge of 20 lire for each additional km. travelled outside the town boundaries (in this connection it is necessary to remember that the mail service operates only within the city boundary at present).

The appropriate Postal Director is forwarding a copy of the contract to the Ministry of Post and Telegraphs as submitted on the authority of the Allied Command. Similar necessities occurred in other districts.

The Under Secretary is pointing out that when obligations are entered which affect the cost of postal administration and have repercussions on future budgets, they should be examined and approved by the appropriate branch of the Ministry as well as by A.G.C. He also considers that, when necessary, the Ministry may send out an inspector to examine the problem on the spot and advise on the most satisfactory and economical solution.

The Under-Secretary of State

Mario Fano

At Naples for instance, a contract for mail transport has been fixed at a monthly rate of 30,000 lire with provision for a further charge of 20 lire for each additional km. travelled outside the term boundaries (in this connection it is necessary to remember that the mail service operates only within the city boundary at present).

The appropriate Postal Director is forwarding a copy of the contract to the Ministry and that the contract is concluded on the authority of the Allied Command. Similar arrangements occurred in other districts.

The Under Secretary explains that when obligations are assumed which affect the cost of postal administration and have repercussions on the public budget, they should be examined and approved by the appropriate branch of the Ministry as well as by A.S. He also considers that, when necessary, the Ministry may send out an inspector to examine the problem on the spot and advise on the most satisfactory and economical solution.

The Under-Secretary of State

Mario Fano

①
Captain M. Ray,
Communications Section, A.C.C.

My Dear Captain,

Since your section deals with postal matters, may I present an item which I believe merits consideration?

1. A short time ago certain AEB officers, including Major Rodgers arranged to have stamps of Italian Government issues nos. 20, 35 and 50 centesimi values, over printed "Governo Militare Alleato".

2. Very small quantities were overprinted in violation of tenets of "Angot Bible" - 100,000 each of 20 and 50 centesimi and 70,000 of 35 centesimi.

3. Information of small quantities quickly "leaked", probably by inside sources, to Italian stamp dealers and speculators and stamps were quickly bought up. Few, seemingly were sold to legitimate sources and Post Office supplies were quickly exhausted.

4. There are many legitimate amateur stamp collectors among armed forces. When these attempted to obtain stamps for their own collection they were offered 20 centesimi at prices from 3 to 8 lire and 35 centesimi at prices 75 to 100 lire.

5. The net effect of issuance by Major Rodgers ~~etc~~ of stamps in limited quantity is to give artificial profits to certain Italians and to encourage "Black Market". We were personally offered copies of 20 and 35 centesimi stamps on the steps of the Post Office building by a civilian who followed us away from the stamp window, after we had been unable to buy at the usual source.

6. The matter was brought to the attention of Major Rodgers, with suggestions that cure for situation was to print more of stamps and issue freely, which would immediately deflate artificial "Black Market" values.

7. Major Rodgers agreed to the suggestion of para. 6 was way to clear the situation, but interposed that there were no more 35 centesimi stamps in local Post Office to overprint. That is easy, since there are stocks amply large in Palermo and other major cities in Sicily. All that needs to be done is to send an officer by air to fetch the stamps. The overprinting can be with same type set up exactly the same way as earlier lot. Cases of violating tenets of AEB bible cleared.

8. It is hoped you will take effective action to correct the situation, with which I believe you are somewhat familiar. It will be much appreciated if you will advise what corrective measures you are able to effect.

Sincerely,

A.G. Brown.

Lieut. Colonel, A.U.S.

2. Very small quantities were overprinted in violation of tenets of "Margot bibel" - 100,000 each of 20 and 50 centesimi and 35 centesimi.

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Sincerely,

A.G. Brown.

Lieut. Colonel, A.U.S.

29 Jan 1944

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