

SECRET Susa, May 23, 1945

SUBJECT: ITALIAN GARRISON AT MONCENISIO

The Italian detachment Commander of Moncenisio, Sergeant Steo CLARETTO, sent to us at 1830 hours a messenger who told us that at 1630 hours the French Captain who is Commander of the French garrison at Ospizio (Italian territory) ordered the Italian soldiers who stay there to immediately leave the place. In the same time French soldiers took down the Italian flag and took it away.

The Italian partisans, who are not accustomed in being maltreated protested strongly, but did not show any resistance, but we can imagine that if this continues there, serious trouble could happen, and this we repeat, against the will of the Italians who want to avoid it.

Meantime the Italian garrison will stay where it is waiting for orders from Superiours.

Piazza Commander
(aldo Laghi)

Vice Commander
Major MUTI

SECRET

DETACHMENT OF MONCENISIO

SUBJECT: Report of the Provocation on Part of the French Troops to the Detachment of Moncenisio

Yesterday, 23 May 1945, about 1830 hours, a French lieutenant of the Chasseurs Francais came to remove us from our station from where I had to go down to station No.5 with my men and all the material. I told him that I could not obey his orders as my orders came only from A.M.G. and Commanding Officer. I was told that if I would not comply with their order they would use forcible means against my men and me. Then I went to the French Command which is down a few meters from Ospizio and found a Captain of the Chasseurs and a chaplain lieutenant. After asking explanations of that strange order; I was told that the order had come from Colonel Vallette D'Ossia, Susa, and that they were executing it. I told them that I could not leave my post unless authorized to do so from A.M.G. and my Commanding Officer. An Officer then told me that Moncenisio is french and only France can dispose of this territory. I got an hour's delay and went immediately to the Frontier where the mentioned Officers had me accompanied by an armed guard. I wanted to telephone from that station to the American Detachment in Susa but found that the wires had been cut. At once I reported our troubles to Susa by the men who had carried up the food. While I was speaking with the French officers some soldiers who were upstairs in our station-house tore the Italian flag down. When that happened I went back to the French Command to protest and after a half hour I got the flag back, with the help of the chaplain lieutenant. I tried to send two armed men as far as the dike to get a phone call through to Susa but when my men went out of Ospizio some French soldiers ordered them not to move and also tried to disarm, them. Several armed soldiers who were openly hostile at us forbided us to leave the station. At 1800 hours a number of armed soldiers accompanied by an Officer ordered us to pack our knapsacks and leave. We were also ordered to leave the material which we could not carry in corner of the room and the French took care of that. They then ordered me to go down to No. 5 Post because I am "An Undesirable Element on the Highlands of Moncenisio". I obtained refuge for my men at the frontier with the American garrison. I was told that they did not allow us to live at Moncenisio because they needed our premises.

At 1830 hours I was accompanied to No.5 Post by two French soldiers and a partisan whom I got with me. I was not allowed to make a list of things that had been consigned to us and we had left at our station. They ordered me to leave the command to one of my soldiers who took care of everything. Half an hour after I had arrived at No 5 near our partisan station, a French officer came and said that I could not remain there and that they were going to send me to Susa on the first truck that passed. No truck arrived before 2230 hours and at that time I came on the truck used to carry food. When I arrived at Susa I went at once to the C.I.C., Villa Michelette, where I made a summary of what had happened to the Agents who were present.

PERSONAL NOTES

SECRET

I have noticed the greater and greater hostility of French against us, and they try every way to provoke us. On 22 May 1945, at Antica Porta, two French soldiers originally from Italy, shook hands with us. A Captain of the troops who were going to leave that same night saw the handshaking and approached them angrily saying "Why did you shake hands with those fellows, don't you remember what they done to France in 1940? Turn your back when you see them; don't shake hands with them".

The majority of the French soldiers tells us that the Americans are like Germans; in France they made many vexations; they don't fight and they send the French where there is danger; and the war is not over as they are waiting help from Russia in order to fight against the Americans and British. I heard this horrible propaganda from the French Officers also.

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Sgt.-Major CLARETTA STEU

SECRET