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Appendix "A" to Fifth Army G-2 Report No. 581

10th FLOTILLA MAS

A. The 10th Flotilla MAS has a history which dates back to the last war. During the earlier years of the present war it played a prominent part as the formation controlling the attacks made by midget assault craft, human torpedoes and limpeteers of the Italian Navy against Allied shipping in harbors throughout the Mediterranean area. Since the Italian Armistice, the Flotilla, under its able and energetic commander, Prince BORGHESE, has expanded in scope and importance to a point where, in addition to controlling practically the entire remnants of the Italian Navy still in action against the Allies, it disposes of considerable land forces. Members of the Flotilla have also played a prominent part in sabotage activities directed against Allied forces in Italy. Furthermore, the Flotilla now represents an important factor in any political survey of Fascist Republican Italy.

On the proclamation of the Armistice on 8 September 1943 10th Flotilla MAS, in common with most other Italian units, was dissolved by the Germans and its personnel sent on indefinite leave. Before this process of dissolution had been completed, however, Prince BORGHESE approached the German authorities and reached an agreement with them that the Flotilla should continue to exist as an independent Italian formation, officered by Italians, fighting the Allies under the Italian flag. He stipulated that the Flotilla should be free from internal interference by the Germans, and that none of its units or personnel should be sent to Germany for training. Granted these conditions, he declared himself willing to fight on to redeem Italian honor.

Measures were at once initiated to re-form the Flotilla. It was reorganized on a somewhat wider basis than before. BORGHESE is an ambitious and able officer, and he seems to have been determined to unite under his own command the majority of the surviving units of the Italian Navy. In addition, the SAN MARCO Regt of marine infantry was re-formed and came under his command, thus constituting the "Land Forces" section of the new Flotilla.

In October Prince BORGHESE had an interview with Admiral DOENITZ in BERLIN. Agreement was reached that the major part of the naval section should come under command of the German Navy for operational purposes, while the sabotage personnel would operate under the general direction of Abteilung II of the Abwehr. Details of the agreement are not known, nor are the proportions of control vested in the respective Italian and German authorities quite clear.

By November 1943 the process of reforming the Flotilla was well under way. Personnel for the various naval units had all begun to assemble and train. The SAN MARCO Regt had begun a process of rapid expansion. By the beginning of the New Year the BARBARIGO and LUPO Bns were practically formed, and the first months of 1944 saw seven or eight additional battalions in process of formation. This expansion continued rapidly during 1944.

B. THE PRESENT COMPOSITION OF THE FLOTILLA.

1. Headquarters Group.

The CO is Prince BORGHESE himself. The Chief of Staff has been variously reported as Commander AGOSTINI and Lieutenant Commander SCARELLI, both officers clearly occupying important posts in the Hq of the Flotilla. Other personalities mentioned as holding prominent positions are Commander (?) TORTORA and Capt RICCIO.

2. Naval Section.

The CO of this section is Commander ARILLO. It has been variously reported by PWs as the "Sezione Navale," "X MARE," and "2° Raggruppamento da Combattimento, X Flottiglia MAS." It is believed that the

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latter is the correct designation. Included in ARILLO's command are the midget assault craft, the limpeteers (these may now form an independent unit directly under BORGHESE) and the human torpedoes, as well as MTBs.

3. Land Forces Section (Marine Infantry)

This section of the Flotilla was until recently commanded by Commander CARILLO (or CORALLO). When he was killed in December 1944 while fighting against the Partisans, his post was, it is believed, taken over by Commander BEDESCHI.

The Land Forces section is a formation of approximately divisional size. It represents an expansion of the SAN MARCO Regt. The formation has been variously reported by PWs as "Decima Divisione" (i.e. 10th Div); "Decima (BORGHESE) Divisione"; "Divisione BORGHESE"; "Decima Divisione MAS"; and "1° Raggruppamento da Combattimento."

From further interrogation it seems clear that all the various names given above do in fact refer to the same formation, and from a consensus of opinion among reliable PWs it seems that the correct title of the formation is either "1° Raggruppamento da Combattimento" or "X Divisione" (10th Div). The latter is inscribed on the "shield" worn by some members of the Land Forces section of the Flotilla on their left arm, but it appears that either is in fact valid.

As at present constituted, 10th Div comprises one mobile infantry battalion (FULMINE); five infantry battalions (LUFO, BARBARIGO, SAN GIUSTO, SAGITTARE SCIRE); one parachute infantry battalion (FOLGORE or FOLGORE 'I'); two artillery battalions (SAN GIORGIO and COLLEONI); one assault engineer battalion (LUCA TARIGO - formerly VALANGA); and one engineer battalion (FRECCIA); - i.e. a total of 11 battalions. There are in addition five battalions of which PWs report, but whose existence should be regarded as doubtful until confirmed. There is also the VEGA Bn, which is probably a headquarters controlling swimmer saboteurs; the VEGA and FOLGORE Bns (see above) are an expansion of the original NF Bn.

The FULMINE Mobile Bn of 300 Bersaglieri is reported reforming in the VENETO after suffering heavy losses in an anti-Partisan action in January 1945.

The LUFO Inf Bn, which formed part of the old SAN MARCO Marine Regt, held a sector on the SENIO under command of 362d Inf Div during February, and has now been withdrawn to rest and reform, reportedly at VICENZA.

The BARBARIGO Inf Bn fought at the ANZIO beachhead where it suffered heavy losses. It was engaged in mopping up operations in Piedmont in July 1944 and again in Lombardy in December 1944 and has recently lost a prisoner who claims that it is under command of 4th Front Div south of IMOLA. It is said to consist of four companies each about 100 strong.

The SAN GIUSTO Inf Bn was formed in TRIESTE in December 1944 from local personnel and was reported to be almost complete at VENICE at the end of February this year.

The SAGITTARIO Inf Bn was formed in PIEDMONT in December 1944 and was reported to be leaving for the front in February 1945. The battalion strength is thought to be about 300.

The SCIRE Inf Bn appears to be still in the process of forming. It is allegedly intended to be 500 strong.

The FOLGORE Front Inf Bn was formed from the disbanded FOLGORE Group in October 1944. It comprises three companies of parachute infantry, each company having one infantry, one MG and one AT platoon, and its total strength is estimated at 800. Engaged in anti-Partisan operations until recently it has likewise been reported ready to move to the front.

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The SAN GIORGIO Arty Bn is credited with a number of 88 mm guns but its armament is more likely to be on the lines of that of the COLLEONI Bn. It, too, is reported as a candidate for the front.

The COLLEONI Arty Bn was reported by a recent IW to be in the area LUGO, and its armament is said to include 45 mm and 81 mm mortars and 75 mm infantry guns.

Of the VALANGA or LUCA TARIGO Bn little is known. It appears to have some kind of an assault engineer role, and some of its personnel attended a demolition course at IESOLO in May 1944. Its strength is reported to be 600

The FRECCIA Eng Bn about 300 strong was last reported near CONEGLIANO.

Other battalions which IWs and refugees claim to have heard of include SERENISSIMA and 10th RISOLUTI Bns, but their existence lacks confirmation. The NI battalion now in the line on the SENIO east of LUGO is presumably analogous with either the VEGA or FOLGORE Bns referred to above.

Up to the present no headquarters of regimental size have been identified. The battalions have been used in widely separated areas in an autonomous role.

The land section of 10th Flotilla M.S. comes under the orders of the High Command of the German Army (OKH) and, more directly, of the C - in C SW. It seems to enjoy a greater measure of independence than that allowed to any other Republican units at present serving with the Germans.

The battalions are armed with Italian weapons, and unlike the Fascist Republican divisions, they do not have permanent German liaison staffs attached.

If the statement of recent IWs be accepted, RONGHESE has now under his command upwards of 50,000 to 60,000 men.

(Source: Eighth Army Intelligence Summary No. 896)

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