

Publication Number: M1446

Publication Title: Correspondence of the Military Intelligence Division Relating to General, Political, Economic, and Military Conditions in Italy, 1918-1941

Date Published: n.d.

CORRESPONDENCE OF THE MILITARY INTELLIGENCE DIVISION
RELATING TO GENERAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND
MILITARY CONDITIONS IN ITALY, 1918-1941

Introduction

The 26 rolls of this microfilm publication reproduce correspondence and record cards of the Military Intelligence Division (MID) that relate to conditions in Italy from 1918 to 1941. The documents reproduced are largely reports from the U.S. military attaché assigned to Italy and his assistants. The MID correspondence from which the six files reproduced on this microfilm publication was extracted and the related record cards are part of Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group (RG) 165.

Background

The Military Intelligence Division originated in 1885, when Adjutant General Richard C. Drum directed Maj. William J. Volkmar of the Military Reservation Division to organize a Division of Military Information. Drum's action was in response to an increasing need for the systematic collection and dissemination of information relating to foreign and U.S. military services. Initially, the Military Information Division, as it became known, functioned as an adjunct of the Military Information Division. A congressional appropriations act of September 22, 1888 (25 Stat. 481) laid the necessary financial groundwork for the Adjutant General's confidential order of April 12, 1889, which established the Military Information Division as "a separate division under the personal supervision of the Adjutant General."

An act of February 14, 1903 (32 Stat. 830), reorganize War Department hierarchy, creating a War Department General Staff headed by a Chief of Staff. Six months later, Secretary of War Elihu Root's order of August 8 directed the transfer of the Military Information Division and its records to the Office of the Chief of Staff, effective August 15, 1903. Under the new organization, what had been the Military Information Division became the Second Division (of three divisions) of the General Staff. War Department General Order 128, dated August 12, 1908, provided for the reorganization of the General Staff into sections and there under into such committees as necessary for the transaction of business. As a result of this order, the Second Division (military information) was merged with the Third Division (military planning and education) to form the Second

Section. A reorganization of September 26, 1910, abolished the Section and transferred its responsibilities, including military information, to a new War College Division.

The entry of the United States into World War I on April 6, 1917, greatly increased the work of the War College Division. To deal with the growing intelligence workload, the Chief Of Staff, in a memorandum dated April 28, 1917, directed that a separate military intelligence section be established within the War College Division. Most records relating to foreign intelligence created or accumulated by the Military Intelligence Section were filed in the central correspondence of the War College Division. A reorganization of the General Staff, under authority of War Department General Order 14, dated February, 9 1918, abolished the War College Division. All intelligent functions passed to the Military Intelligence Branch of a newly created Executive Division. This branch began keeping its own records, separate from those of other branches or divisions of the General Staff. Subsequently, some files relating to intelligence matters were withdrawn from the War College Division records (now inherited by the War Plans Division) and incorporated into the separate series of Military Intelligence Branch records. A second major wartime reorganization of the War Department General Staff occurred under authority of General Order 80, dated August 26, 1918, which established a separate Military Intelligence Division (MID). The order also provided that the MID was to be headed by an officer designated as director of military Intelligence who would function as an assistant to the Chief of Staff. The MID continued keeping the separate series of records maintained by the former Military Intelligence Branch.

As a result of War Department General Order 41, dated August 16, 1921, the MID was given the additional designation of G-2 and was constituted as one of the five General Staff divisions each under the immediate control of an Assistant Chief of Staff. This organizational structure remained largely unchanged through World War II.

The major function of the MID and its predecessors was the collection of military information about foreign countries. Military attaches and observers assigned to those countries were the principal means by which the MID collected such information. The congressional appropriation act of September 22, 1888 (25 Stat. 481), provided for "the pay of a clerk attendant on the collection and classification of military information from abroad." It also specified that officers detailed to obtain military information would be entitled to allowances for mileage and transportation, and to commutation of quarters. As a result of this act, the first U.S. military attaches were detailed during 1889 to U.S. diplomatic posts at London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and St. Petersburg. The main duties of a military attaché were to observe and to report on the organization, training, equipment, doctrine, and operations of foreign military forces. In addition, the attaché reported on political, economic and social conditions in the country to which he was assigned, especially as they influenced military affairs. To carry out this work, the attaché had a small staff, including assistant military attaches who prepared their own reports, to assist him.

The United States first assigned a military attaché to Italy in 1890. Thereafter there was a U.S. military attaché in Italy nearly continually until January 1942, following the rupture of diplomatic relations between the United States and Italy in World War II.

Records Description

Arrangement

The Military Intelligence Division filed correspondence in accordance with the "record card system," utilized widely in the late 19th and early 20th century by the War Department. On each incoming and outgoing communication and on each enclosure, a record clerk placed in the upper-right corner of the first page a master number representing the main subject of the communication. Following the master number, the record clerk some times entered an alphabetical or numerical suffix representing a subfile under the subject of the master number, and an additional number representing the transaction under the subfile (e.g., MID 2657-E-1, or 2022-611/181). In other instances, when no subfile was involved, the clerk simply added a numerical suffix to the master number to indicate the next sequential transaction (e.g., 2086-239).

After the clerk had assigned a file designation to the communication, he summarized its contents on a record card and placed the same file designation on the record card. Record cards were subsequently annotated to show the routing and ultimate destination or disposition of a communication. The clerk then prepared name, subject, and geographic index cards as finding aids to the communication and the record card. The index cards were filed alphabetically. The communications and the record cards were filed numerically by their assigned file designations. In addition, the MID kept chronological lists ("Dispatch Lists") of all communications received from an attaché at a particular post.

This publication reproduces the six principal MID files relating exclusively to Italy for the period 1918 to 1941. General Conditions in Italy, MID 2062; Political Conditions, Italy, MID 2657-E; Economic Conditions, Italy, MID 2655-E; and Army, Navy, and Aeronautics in Italy, MID 2022, 2125, and 2086, respectively. In its filing scheme the MID used letters to designate particular countries; E represented Italy. Most of the individual documents under these designations were numbered in chronological order by date received. Some however have subfile numbers for more specific subject categories, with sequential numbers following. For instance, reports on Italian support for the revolutionaries in the Spanish Civil War are filed under 2657-E-353 with individual documents on the subject numbered 1 to 140. Thus a typical file number containing all these elements would be 2657-E-353/125.

There are gaps in the sequential numbers following subject numbers. There are two principal explanations for the gaps. First, during the late 1920's the War Department destroyed a large number of individual documents as "useless papers," an action authorized by an act of Congress dated February 16, 1889 (25 Stat. 672). There normally are lists, filmed at the beginning of each master number, enumerating the sequential

numbers that were destroyed under that number. Second, on August 7, 1941, the MID abandoned its numeric file system and adopted the War Department decimal file scheme. At that time, the numeric file was closed and many documents were transferred to the new G-2 decimal file. For most communications transferred a clerk prepared a card and inserted it in the old numeric file where the communication had been. Each card cites the decimal file designation to which the communication was transferred. These transferred documents are in the G-2 decimal file, which is now part of Records of the Army Staff, RG 319.

Content

The records filed under the three master numbers pertaining to more general subjects have been filmed first (general, political, and economic conditions), followed by those relating to more specific topics (army, navy, and aeronautics). Within each master number most documents have been filmed in file designation order.

Record Cards

The record cards for the six master numbers of MID correspondence relating to Italy appear on roll 1 of this microfilm publication. The record cards are filmed in the same sequence as the six master numbers. They provide a synopsis of each document including those destroyed in 1929 by the War Department and those dated before mid-1941 that were transferred to the decimal file. The record cards also serve as a finding aid to the extant documents filmed in this publication.

Correspondence

The documents reproduced on this microfilm publication are largely military attaché reports but also include documents created by other U.S. Government agencies and foreign governments.

"General Conditions in Italy" (MID 2062)--Records pertaining to political, economic social, and military events and conditions. Much of the information was drawn from newspapers or periodicals, and each report frequently covers several diverse subjects in an abbreviated format.

There are periodic reports from the military attaché in Rome submitted weekly from September 1922 to February 1924 (MID 2062-703) and monthly from August 1925 to July 1941 (MID 2062-716) that discuss current events in Italy. Other documents relate to such specific topics as the variety of political forGes in Italy in 1918 (MID 2062-116), Italian immigration as it affected relations between the United States and Italy (MID 2062-216), and military measures taken by the Italian Government during a general strike in Rome on April 10, 1919 (MID 2062-440).

"Political Conditions, Italy" (MID 2657-E)--Records complementing the information on general conditions in MID 2062. This file contains reports that give considerable detail

concerning Italian politics and foreign relations, including military operations in Ethiopia, 1935 to 1938, and in the Spanish Civil War, 1936 to 1940.

In the early 1920's the military attaché reported extensively on the Socialist Party in Italy (MID 2657-E-17, -21, and -99) and on the rise of the Fascists (MID 2657-E-58/1 to 28). The file includes an August 1922 biographical sketch of Benito Mussolini (MID 2657-E-58/10). The consolidation of power by the Fascists and their internal organization, including various youth groups, are covered in detail from 1925 to 1941 (MID 2657-E-231/1 to 36 and 2657-E-284/1 to 14). Internal political conditions, such as the relationship between the Fascists and the Vatican (MID 2657-E-284/1 to 19) and political unrest from 1936 to 1941 (MID 2657-E-354/1 to 7), are described in this file. There are also reports on Italian Fascist activities outside of Italy, 1924 to 1936, particularly in the United States (MID 2657-E-205/1 to 17).

Italian foreign relations are the second principal focus of "Political Conditions, Italy" file. In particular the military attaché reported on relations between Italy and its Adriatic and Balkan neighbors (MID 2657-E-224/1 to 44). There are reports on such topics as the seizure of the Adriatic port of Fiume in 1920 by the Italian patriot D'Annunzio (MID 2657-E-7), the subsequent treaty with Yugoslavia, and annexation of Fiume by Italy (MID 2657-E-51, -63, -87, -92, and -109).

Although ostensibly on "political conditions," this file includes important information on Italian military operations during the interwar period, particularly in Africa. There are detailed reports on Italian military operations in Cyrenaica (Libya) from 1920 to 1934 (MID 2657-E-49/1 to 59) and on the pacification of Somaliland from 1925 to 1927 (MID 2657-E-195/1 to 10). Records on relations with Ethiopia from 1934 to 1938 and the Italo-Ethiopian War (MID 2657-E-336/1 to 190) include the final report of the U.S. military attaché in Ethiopia, dated June 30, 1936, (MID 2657-E-336/105) and a collection of Associated Press photographs relating to the war (MID 2657-E-336/127).

The file also contains reports on Italian relations with Spain from 1936 to 1940 and the role Italy played in the Spanish Civil War (MID 2657-E-353/1 to 140).

"Economic Conditions, Italy" (MID 2655-E)--Reports compiled in the office of the military attaché from published government statistics, interviews with industrialists and government officials, and articles appearing in newspapers and periodicals; also includes reports prepared by the U.S. commercial attaché.

These reports cover the period from 1919 to 1941 and include a wide range of topics, including German reparations to Italy following World War I (MID 2655-E-36), consumption of alcoholic beverages (MID 2655-E-54), livestock production (MID 2655-E-6, -53, and -103), reclamation of land for agricultural purposes (MID 2655-E-112), cost of living (MID 55-E-27, -76, and -131), strategic raw materials (MID 2655-E-111), and industrial mobilization for war (MID 2655-E-72 and -118). Many of the reports pertain to petroleum production, sources, and supplies (MID 2655-E-65, -69, -84, -107, -124, and -132).

Emigration of Italians was a major economic factor during this period because of Italy's excess population and limited resources. There is a 1925 assessment of the country's immigration problem (MID 2655-E-78), reports on the government's change in attitude towards emigration from 1923 (MID 2655-E-57) to 1927 (MID 2655-E-110), and accounts of Italian immigration in other countries (MID 2655-E-85).

"Army, Italy" (MID 2022)--Reports pertaining to general conditions in the military services (including information on military organization, leadership, national defense and preparedness, training, and maneuvers) and to the Italian Army in active operations.

There are several reports on Italian Army operations in the final stages of World War I; for instance, *In the Battle of the Piave, June 15-July 6, 1918* (MID 2022-70), in the final Italian offensive of October 24-November 4, 1918 (MID 2022-99), and in Albania and Macedonia (MID 2022-76). Most of the reports retail to Italy's colonial campaigns, such as operations conducted in Tripolitania in 1922 and 1923 (MID 2022-292/1 to 28) and to the Italo-Ethiopian War (MID 2022-611/1 to 269). Notable among these records is a series of 10 reports submitted by Maj. Norman E. Fiske, the U.S. military observer with the Italian armies in East Africa, from March to September 1936 and printed by the Geographic Branch of the Military Intelligence Division in Washington. These reports are generously illustrated with maps and photographs (MID 2022-611/140, -141, -150, -153, -180, -182, -186, -187, -201, and -202). The file contains a few reports on Italy's military operations in Africa and Europe following her entry into World War II (MID 2022-662/1 to 17).

In addition to military operations there is considerable reporting on army organization (MID 2022-398/1 to 55), strength (MID 2022-374/1 to 30), and distribution (MID 2022-322/1 to 103). Periodically from 1924 to 1941 the U.S. military attaché analyzed the War Ministry budget for clues to long range military trends and strategy; for 1937 to 1941 there is a large consolidation of such reports (MID 2022-647/1 to 40). There are also reports on the Fascist (MID 2022-315), Nationalist (MID 2022-320), and National Security (MID 2022-320/1 to 137) militias and on premilitary and paramilitary youth organizations (MID 2022-521/1 to 15).

"Navy, Italy" (MID 2125)--Records chiefly pertaining to naval budgets, construction of warships, discipline, and maneuvers. The U.S. military attaché devoted some attention to Italian naval affairs even though the navy was not strictly within his sphere of responsibility.

Specific reports cover such subjects as the destruction of the Austrian Naval Base of Durazzo by Italian and Allied naval forces on October 2, 1918 (MID 2125-11), the desertion of two Italian naval ships to D'Annunzio at Fiume on December 6, 1920 (MID 2125-29), and the Franco-Italian Naval Pact of 1931 (MID 2125-92).

"Aeronautics, Italy" (MID 2086)--Reports prepared by the assistant military attaché for air, most relating to military aviation, but some relating to civil aeronautics. These reports

reflect the systematic effort by the assistant attaché for air to collect intelligence on the Italian Air Force.

Included are periodical air strength reports from 1923 to 1941, which discuss the numbers, types, and characteristics of Italian military aircraft as well as aeronautical appropriations, production, bases, organization, and training (MID 2086-372); "Aviation Technical Bulletins" on the latest tests and experiments relating to aeronautical engineering (MID 2086-223); and an analysis of the military aviation budget from 1937 to 1941 (MID 2086-908).

A number of reports relate to the use of aviation in active military operations in Italy's African colonies from 1931 to 1939 (MID 2086-738) and in the Italo-Ethiopian War (MID 2086-847). Beginning in 1922 the military attaché sent reports on the Italian airpower theorist Giulio Douhet and his ideas on the importance of control of the air in future wars and the best means to achieve it (MID 2086-277).

Additional reports relate to the purchase by the United States of the dirigible Roma from Italy and its subsequent crash on February 21, 1922, in Virginia (MID 2086-151); General Nobile's ill-fated 1928 polar expedition in the dirigible Italia (MID 2086-653); and various "propaganda flights" by Italian pilots, including Col. Francesco de Pinedo's 1927 flight across the Atlantic and America (MID 2086-567) and the 1933 flight of a squadron of Italian seaplanes from Rome to Chicago, commanded by Gen. Italo Balbo (MID 2086-750).

Security Classification

Many of the documents filmed in this microfilm publication were classified as secret, confidential, or restricted at the time of their creation and had those classification markings, stamped, typed, or written on them. The National Archives and the Department of the Army have reviewed and declassified all of the records filmed on this publication.

Related Records

In Record Group (RG) 165 are additional intelligence records concerning Italy. Information on Italy can be found under other file designations of the MID correspondence, 1918-41. Because the records under other file designations either do not deal exclusively with Italy, or deal with less significant subjects, they have not been reproduced here. Access to these records is by the name, subject, and geographic indexes to the MID correspondence and by the dispatch lists of incoming reports to the MID. The name index has been filmed as *Name Index to Correspondence of the Military Intelligence Division of the War Department General Staff 1917-1941*, M1194, and the dispatch lists as *Registers of Communications Received From Military Attaches and Other Intelligence Officers ("Dispatch Lists"), 1889-1941*, M1271, roll 4 of which contains the lists of reports from the military attaché in Italy.

Also in RG 165 are the records of the War College Division of the War Department General Staff, which contain military attaché and other reports on Italy for the period 1903-17. The indexes to these records have been microfilmed as *Indexes to Records of the War College Division and Related General Staff Offices, 1903-1919*, M912.

Military attaché reports and other army intelligence records that relate to Italy and date from mid-1941 are in RG 319. Some information pertaining to the appointment of military attaches to Italy before 1916 is in 'Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, RG 94. Records relating to naval intelligence, including naval attaché reports, are in Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, RG 38.

Many records on U.S.-Italian relations are in General Records of the Department of State, RG 59. Microfilm publications of related records include *Dispatches from U.S. Ministers to the Italian States, 1832-1906*, M90; *Records Relating to Political Relations between the United States and Italy, 1910-29*, M529; *Records Relating to Internal Affairs of Italy, 1910-29*, M530; *Records Relating to Internal Affairs of Italy, 1910-29*, M527; and *Records Relating to Internal Affairs of Italy, 1930-39*, M1423. Other diplomatic records relating to Italy are in Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, RG 84.

APPENDIX

Military Attaches, Italy

Lt. Lingi Lomia; May-Sept. 1890
Capt. Theodore A. Bingham; Sept. 1892-Sept. 1894
Capt. George P. Striven; Oct. 1894-Jan. 1899
Maj. Frank A. Edwards; Oct. 1903-Apr. 1908
Maj. J. P. Reynolds Landis; May 1908-Apr. 1912
Col. George M. Dunn; May 1912-Apr. 1916
Maj. Elvin R. Heiberg; Apr. 1916-Mar. 1917
Lt. Col. Clement A. P. Flagler; Apr.-June 1917
Maj. Mervyn C. Buckey; July-Nov. 1917
Brig. Gen. George P. Scriven; Nov. 1917-Feb. 1918
Col. Mervyn C. Buckey; Feb. 1918-Sept. 1919
Col. Evan M. Johnson; Sept. 1919-Jan. 1922
Lt. Col. Edward T. Donnelly; Jan. 1922-Sept. 1924
Col. E. R. Warner McCabe; Sept. 1924-Sept. 1926
Maj. Robert C. Richardson, Jr.; Sept. 1926-Mar. 1928
Lt. Col. James L. Collins; Mar. 1928-Dec. 1931
Col. E. R. Warner McCabe; Dec. 1931-Nov. 1933
Col. Jerome G. Pillow; Nov. 1933-Oct. 1936
Col. George H. Paine; Oct. 1936-Nov. 1940
Lt. Col. Norman E. Fiske; Nov. 1940-Jan. 1942

CONTENTS

<u>Roll</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	Record Cards for 2062, 2657-E, 2655-E, 2022, 2125, and 2086
2	MID 2062-5 to 2062-731
3	MID 2657-E-2 to 2657-E-278
4	MID 2657-E-279 to 2657-E-336/127
5	MID 2657-E-336/128 to 2657-E-336/189
6	MID 2657-B-336/190
7	MID 2657-E-337 to 2657-E-368
8	MID 2655-E-1 to 2655-E-134
9	MID 2022-1 to 2022-321
10	MID 2022-322 to 2022-374
11	MID 2022-375 to 2022-427
12	MID 2022-428 to 2022-457
13	MID 2022-459 to 2022-541
14	MID 2022-542 to 2022-569
15	MID 2022-570 to 2022-610
16	MID 2022-611/1 to 2022-611/269
17	MID 2022-612 to 2022-638
18	MID 2022-639 to 2022-667
19	MID 2125-1 to 2125-96 and 2086-9 to 2086-223
20	MID 2086-232 to 2086-371
21	MID 2086-372 to 2086-435
22	MID 2086-436 to 2086-487
23	MID 2086-488 to 2086-642
24	MID 2086-643 to 2086-678
25	MID 2086-679 to 2086-773
26	MID 2086-774 to 2086-971