



## MAIL CALL

### Research Assistance - Canal Defense Light

I am searching for information on the Canal Defense Light (CDL), sometimes called a 'Gizmo' by the troops or by its official name 'Leaflet' tank, and Project Cassock etc. I am putting together a documentary honoring the soldiers involved in this top-secret project. My grandfather was a T5 in the 736th Medium Tank Bn (SP). I did not know what he was involved with during his time in the service as he did not share much of his experiences. After his passing in 2000, I learned a lot more. I had the

### Karl Probst Bantam Drawings

In the article by Duncan Rolls on his Bantam Pilot recreation in *Army Motors* #128, he mentions that the Karl Probst drawings were missing.

Perhaps I can shed a little light on this. An article in the *New York Times* dated August 27, 1963, on page 37, states the plans and bids were found at his bedside when he passed away. There is also a second and more comprehensive article but, at the time of writing, I have yet to locate it.

I called his daughter-in-law as I had a deep interest in the Bantam prototype. She mentioned he was always lost in thought sitting at a table mulling over the drawings and that there was much more he wanted to accomplish. Bantam tried so hard to adhere to the ridiculous weight specifications it was their downfall. Willys of course outperformed Bantam with their higher horsepower engine.

### Front Cover:

1941 Ford C11ADF, V8 95 bhp, 4x2, Station Wagon/Heavy Utility, equipped with 9.00-13 desert-type sand flotation tires. MVPA member Bob Schutt #1465 Monto, Queensland, Australia restored this right hand drive staff car over a number of years. Article on page 22 of this issue.

### Rear Cover:

1944 Chevrolet C15A, (15 cwt, 4x4) truck in Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) markings. This Canadian Military Pattern (CMP) 13 is fitted with a General Service (GS) cargo body and canvas-top cab found on some CMP Chevrolets and Fords assembled in Australia. Owned by Mike O'Sullivan, Brisbane, Queensland and driven on the 2009 ANZAC convoy to Normandy.

honor of meeting some of the remaining members of the 736th Co. 'A' that he was a member of and I am looking forward to the battalion reunion and meeting more. These soldiers are heroes.

To my understanding the 701st, 736th, 738th, 739th, 740th, 748th Tank Battalions Medium Special, the 150th Station Hospital, the 554th Ordnance Heavy Maintenance Company, and the 166th Quartermaster battalion were all involved with training at Camp Bouse, Arizona.

If anyone has information and is willing to share it with me, I would be very grateful. The more information I can obtain helps to ensure a more accurate story.

For more details, please contact me via e-mail.

Thank you,

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The weight factor then went out the window. After acceptance, more weight was added with the axe and shovel and the addition of the gas can on the back etc. Again Ford can be credited with the axe and shovel on the side having used them on their Model Ts in World War I.

In hindsight and in fairness to Bantam *they* should have received the contract for the vehicle and Willys for the engine. Much water has gone under the bridge since I called his daughter-in-law and I no longer have her phone number or address. I hope that the immediate family has the plans safely tucked away. The challenge is now for someone else to solve.

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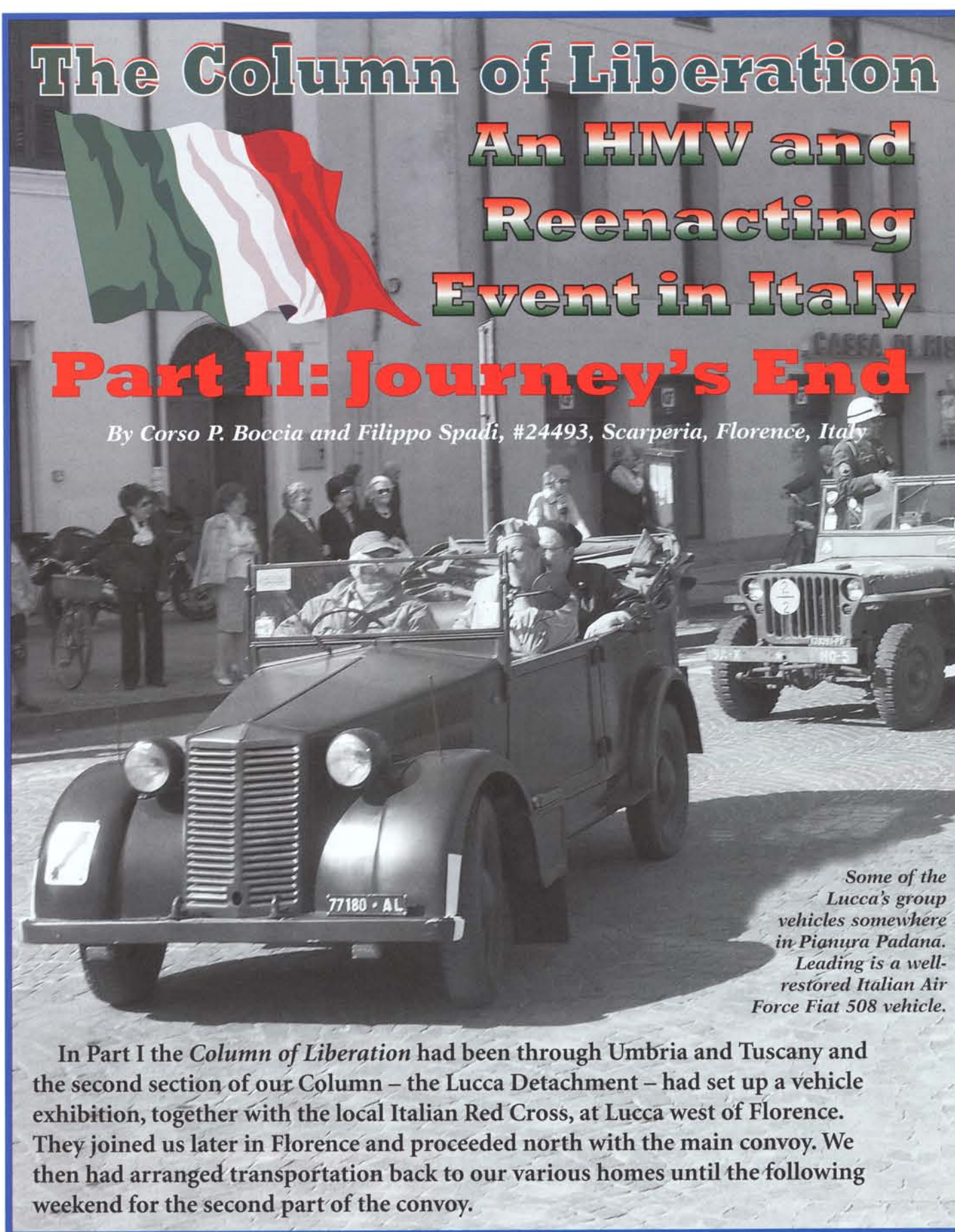
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# The Column of Liberation An HMV and Reenacting Event in Italy

## Part II: Journey's End

By Corso P. Boccia and Filippo Spadi, #24493, Scarperia, Florence, Italy



Some of the Lucca's group vehicles somewhere in Pianura Padana. Leading is a well-restored Italian Air Force Fiat 508 vehicle.

In Part I the *Column of Liberation* had been through Umbria and Tuscany and the second section of our Column – the Lucca Detachment – had set up a vehicle exhibition, together with the local Italian Red Cross, at Lucca west of Florence. They joined us later in Florence and proceeded north with the main convoy. We then had arranged transportation back to our various homes until the following weekend for the second part of the convoy.





HMVs parked in Castiglion Fiorentino Square near Arezzo at the conclusion of the first weekend of the convoy.



Natalie Nevins of the Airborne Demonstration Team (ADT), riding in a Dodge WC51 at Piazzale Michelangelo in Florence.



Many Italian people waited patiently for the 'Column of Liberation' to pass through the many towns enroute. Here the convoy is traversing the centre of Scarperia.

Meanwhile, the organizers met with the US based WWII Airborne Demonstration Team (ADT) who were preparing to jump from a WWII C-47 aircraft. With them was Louis Napier, a 504th Parachute Infantry veteran who fought in Italy from Sicily to Anzio, then in Holland, the Battle of the

Bulge, and Germany. His presence was beyond words as we tried our best to express our gratitude. The ADT stayed at the Italian Army Parachute School at Pisa to see the jump towers and the large parachute rigging sheds. We got a warm welcome from the Commander and Deputy Commander of the school, Colonels Lupini and Chiarenza, the latter also an avid HVM collector.

Next day, we took our ADT guests from Pisa to the ABMC Florence American Cemetery and Memorial. Some of our American friends were able for the first time to pay their respect to relatives who died to liberate Italy in WWII. Then we went to Castiglion Fiorentino to drive the vehicles up the Po River valley.

Early on Friday, April 25, we reassembled in Castiglion Fiorentino, where a German StuG III Ausf F appropriately stands watch. This WWII relic was retrieved from its resting place; the retreating Wehrmacht had left it after it had broken down, bridging a small stream, during their retreat north in July 1944. The whole town seemed to be there.

We drove to Arezzo through cheering crowds then along the Arno river valley to Florence; home territory for us. Friends waved from the roadside including some who were in the Florence Police Historical Group. On vintage motorcycles, and in vintage uniforms, they guided us along the crowded route. By 1:00 p.m., we reached Rovezzano, a suburb of Florence. We were again the guests of the Italian Army, thanks to Col. Liverani, the commander of the Predieri barracks, home to the



Enrico Paggi's Ford GPA parked close to the Po River area during the aircraft exhibition.



Alessandro Mindotti photographed with his Harley-Davidson WLA somewhere in Tuscany. Motorcycle support was crucial for the convoy.

Italian contingent of EUROFOR, the joint deployment-ready force of the European Union. We parked by the flagpole on the barracks square by an old M4 and an M47 tank.

At lunch in the large barracks dining hall we introduced our ADT guests to the crowd. Veterans Luis Napier and Enrico Bosi (who fought in the Italian RSI 'Battaglione Azzurro' during WWII) received standing ovations and Colonel Liverani gave a gracious welcoming speech.

After lunch, we entered Florence along the Arno River to Piazzale Michelangelo. The weather was ideal. Crowds of tourists and visitors formed a perfect surrounding for Liberation Day, April 25. The Italian Red Cross, as in Castiglion Fiorentino, showed their vehicles and



Above: Campanini's 1-1/2 ton Chevrolet 4x4 K51 radio truck parked near the DUKW exhibition.

Right: The K51 Chevrolet 1-1/2 ton radio truck is fully equipped with functioning, original US Signal Corps radios.







*Gibertini's jeep, decked-out 'American style' in Ferrara.*



*Brancaleoni Eugenio's 34th US Infantry Division jeep. He is 87 years old and drove from Bologna to the Po River.*



*Luca Gonnelli looking very operational in his Willys MB inside the Italian Army base at Florence.*



*Right: A very rare and completely original 'Rover Joe' jeep. These special units were created during WWII in Italy, after the Sicily landings, to coordinate artillery and infantry.*

equipment. More HMVs arrived when the Lucca detachment joined us. Beppe Bendinelli in his amphibious Ford GPA brought the number of vehicles to about seventy-five.

Climbing Highway 65 towards the Mugello we headed to Scarperia; a hard route with the steep climbs and narrow roads for our old vehicles. We entered the medieval town to crowds of applauding people. They

wondered why no armored vehicles were present as in the 'Twin Cities Rally' in 2006. We said it was not feasible to get a column of Shermans up the peninsula from Rome to the Po!

The Scarperia Sporting Club association provided a great meal; next day we crossed the Apennines range covering in one peaceful day the same distance the Allied armies fought for from September 1944 to April 1945.



*The head end of the 'Column of Liberation' stopped in Bondeno before the C-47 ADT jump. The residents had never seen so many military vehicles since WWII.*

Early Saturday morning at Barberino di Mugello, the mayor greeted us. He had supported our first HMV event in 2005. Then we climbed through the Futa and Raticosa passes, to Livergnano – 'Liver 'n Onions' to the GIs – and stopped at the monument celebrating the US 91st Infantry Division, who liberated the place at a high cost in 1944. Today's beautiful landscape does not hide mines, machine gun nests, and antitank guns. We waved to the people and bikers flashed their headlights, often veering to avoid our bulky vehicles.

At Livergnano, our friends of the Winter Line Association, co-sponsor of the event, met us. Other vehicles from the CVMS (an Italian HMV club) joined the convoy and traveled with us towards Bologna. We lunched at the Museo Memorial della Libertà, managed by the Anzaloni family. At the entrance, a large Italian flag flew over a huge welcoming sign to the *Column of Liberation*.

Most of us knew the Anzaloni family – Edo, Arturo and Carla – and the museum devoted to WWII and the Liberation of Bologna. They host a large military fair

several times a year; our column now exceeded ninety vehicles.

The route from Bologna to Ferrara, was a long one. The 'Germans' among us received a fair share of applause and appreciation. Perhaps events like ours are spreading with the acceptance of German vehicles and uniforms in a Liberation Day celebration.

We arrived for dinner at the Barbieri factory near Ferrara where a huge crowd greeted us. Colonels Lupini and Chiarenza from the parachute school were there for the opening of an historical exhibition on 'Operation Herring;' it was the last WWII combat jump by Italian parachute forces fighting alongside the Allies, near Ferrara in the early spring of 1945, concurrent with the Allied offensive in the Po Valley. The exhibition, which was linked to our event, was setup by the Ferrara chapter of the Italian Parachutists Association. Col. Chiarenza expertly described to the public each vehicle as it passed. He identified the types and function of our HMVs and the meaning of their colors and markings.





Dinner was a huge affair with hundreds of people and celebrations honoring several veterans such as Luis Napier and Enrico Bosi and also a Brazilian veteran from the Brazilian Expeditionary Force that fought on the Northern Apennines alongside the US 10th Mountain Division. Two more Italian veterans were present from the WWII Italian Parachute Troops, men who fought and survived the epic battle at El Alamein, or jumped in Operation Herring. They were all introduced and were welcomed by a huge applause, while the airborne mottos of different nationalities resounded in the air; voices singing at the top of their lungs in the veterans' honor. Neither nationalities nor considerations about which side one fought on more than sixty years ago matters now.

Italian Carabinieri guided us on the final leg of the journey to Ferrara. Parading through Ferrara's historic downtown area with our vehicles, we reached Piazza Ariostea; a very special moment for us. Many went to local hotels or the Ferrara Youth Hostel; others slept near the parked vehicles under tents set up by the local volunteers who also guarded the Piazza Ariostea.

Sunday, April 27, 2008 was our last day, a proper finale for all who covered the long distances and the many others who came for this last day. Our column now included 115 WWII HMVs plus a dozen more postwar vehicles. Among them were several historic vehicles from the Italian Fire Department, such as a DUKW and a Schwimmwagen used as fire fighting amphibious vehicles. There was a 1970s Alfa Romeo 'Giulia' in the

*Top: Clemente's San Remo WWII reenactor group camping near the Po River area.*

*Middle: A modified OT-810 Czech post-war armored vehicle built similar to the WWII SDKfz parked in the German reenactor camp.*

*Bottom: Life in the German camp. These reenactors cooked and slept there.*



*Top: The C-47 takes off from Villafranca Air Base close to Verona and only 15 minutes from Drop Zone.*

*Left: Original artwork and markings on the forward part of the aircraft.*

*Right: This plate, mounted inside, shows the military history of the aircraft.*

*Middle: The Folgore Italian group boarding the C-47. Each jump position was carefully assigned, as it was important for the jump sequence.*

*Bottom: The Folgore Italian group gathered for a short ceremony after the jump. In 1945 the Italian Allied corps wore British airborne uniforms and used British equipment.*