

**A GUIDE FOR
US ARMY OFFICERS ATTENDING
ISTITUTO SUPERIORE DI STATO MAGGIORE INTERFORZE
(ISSMI),
CENTRO ALTI STUDI PER LA DIFESA (CASD)**



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Preface:

Living and working in Rome is obviously an incredible privilege and will undoubtedly be a great experience. However, there are a few things to understand about the year ahead that will make life much easier. Possibly the greatest source of potential frustration, at least early in the tour, is that the ISSMI position does not fit neatly into any unit or office. This can lead to confusion with respect to where to go for help with an issue. That said, there are plenty of resources in Rome or just a phone call or email away. Answers may take a bit more time, but they are out there. In time, you will become familiar with who does what.

For military actions, the ISSMI officer falls under the Military Personnel Exchange Program/Schools of Other Nations (MPEP/SON), USAREUR G3 in Wiesbaden, Germany. Orders to ISSMI will generally show the ISSMI officer assigned to the US Army Student Detachment at Fort Jackson, SC and attached to MPEP/SON. MPEP/SON is probably best viewed as the ISSMI officer's S1. It is an office of only three people: a civilian head and two personnel (42A) NCO's. Feel free to reach out to them for any question. They are responsible for all Army exchange officers and students attending foreign ILE in the USAREUR AOR and are a great resource.

The ISSMI student position also falls under the Chief of Mission, US Embassy Rome. As such, the embassy office with responsibility for the ISSMI officer is the Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC), which is led by an Army O-6. Unlike those in the ODC, and unlike the Army O-6 attending the *IstitutoAltiStudi per la Difesa* (IASD), the upper school within the *CentroAltiStudi per la Difesa* (CASD), the ISSMI officer is not a diplomat accredited with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). This is disappointing because there are advantages to being accredited with the MFA. It also means the ISSMI officer has a few additional hoops to jump through. Without accreditation, the ISSMI officer must take care of a few things at Naval Support Activity (NSA) Naples that accredited officers normally take care of at the embassy. NSA Naples is yet another organization that plays a part in the ISSMI officer's life while in Italy.

As of late 2016, the ODC has delegated day-to-day supervision of the ISSMI officer to the Army O-6 attending IASD. This means that if the ISSMI officer has an issue requiring help they should first raise it with the IASD officer or MPEP/SON, depending on the issue. The Current ODC Chief was extremely involved with our course, but this could change depending on who the ODC Chief is and whether they want to delegate that responsibility. If all of this seems a bit confusing it will hopefully become clear by the end of this document.

The important thing to remember is that few things in Italy are as clear and defined as they generally are in the US and especially in the US military. It can be downright frustrating at times. If you can accept this and plan accordingly you are likely to have a more enjoyable experience in Rome. As the incoming ISSMI officer you are about to spend 12 months living in the "Eternal City" and the Army is going to pay you very well to do it. Take advantage of this time to learn about the Italian military and to explore Italy and Europe.

The following pages will attempt to explain the long list of things the ISSMI officer must do on the one hand and may want to consider on the other hand. Remember, everything is subject to change so this is only a guide. This document is arranged chronologically with respect to what must or

should be done. It is further broken down into four sections: pre-arrival, post-arrival, notes on ISSMI, and finally redeployment. Congratulations and enjoy this once in a lifetime opportunity.

Part I: Pre-Arrival

Orders: First things first, get your orders. There are many things you will need to accomplish, but they can only be done once you have orders. If recent trends continue, notification of selection should occur within a few weeks of the release of the O-4 board results. You should have a RFO in January and orders 8-12 weeks later depending on how long it takes to get EFMP screening results, if applicable. If you have dependents that will accompany you to Rome it is recommended that you accomplish the EFMP screening as soon as you can after receiving your RFO. EFMP screening is the most time-consuming requirement before orders can be cut. EFMP screening will likely take an additional two to four weeks for officers not stationed on an Army base as it must be sent to the nearest Army hospital. If you do not have orders by April it could create problems.

ISSMI start date in mid-September. Since 2014, ISSMI has either started the last Monday of September or the first Monday of October. **It is recommended you write the school an e-mail to determine your year's start date, and to make sure the school is tracking your arrival. The administrative e-mail is segrcorsi.issmi@casd.difesa.it. The phone number is 06-46913.228 /458 /226 /007**

NLT 10 July reporting is highly encouraged since it can be extremely difficult to get housing especially on the years were 2 US Students (Army / Navy) attend. If you have issues getting branch to authorize early reporting you can request that MPEP/SON provide a memo from an O-6, or equivalent, authorizing early reporting to your branch manager. Early reporting is still encouraged even when falling-in on your predecessor's apartment since it is not assured that the apartment owner will renew the lease, another good reason for early reporting is the need to get kids into school. Those officers who have accrued a substantial number of leave days may still want to depart their losing unit as early as possible to get household goods shipped sooner and therefore receive them sooner. Additionally, prior to the start of ISSMI is the best time to travel throughout Europe, unless you need the time to find an apartment. There are not as many three and four day weekends in Italy as there are in the US.

Passports: You should be able to start the official Passport request with your RFO. Try to identify who the passport agent is for your unit and begin a dialogue with them early, since many of them are not truly familiar or unwilling to initiate the process without Orders, however Orders should only be required when it comes to VISA processing. This person should be in the S1/G1/J1 office and be able to obtain an official passport for you and no-fee passports for your dependents. No fee passports, while appearing like a normal blue tourist passport, grant certain privileges to the bearer that standard blue tourist passports do not. You can discuss the privileges with the passport agent in your unit. Expect to have to pay out of pocket for passport photos for dependent no-fee passports. Otherwise there are no expenses for official or no-fee passports. Official and no-fee passports can take 6-8 weeks to receive.

Once you receive the no-fee passports for your dependents you will need to have the passport agent in your unit submit them for Italian visas (you will need official orders IOT process visas). Confirm early with your passport agent so you can gather information on how to do this while you are waiting for your official and no-fee passports to arrive. Visas can take another 4-6 weeks to obtain. This is

yet another reason why you want orders as soon as possible. If you have not received orders by mid-April contact USAREUR G3 MPEP/SON office to see if you can get a memo authorizing the initiation of official and no-fee passports: usarmy.wiesbaden.usareur.list.usareur-g3scd-mpep-son-program@mail.mil

One important note, and confirm with the passport agent in your unit, but you and your dependents should not conduct personal travel while attending ISSMI, even within Schengen countries, using official or no-fee passports. This means that you and your dependents will also need standard blue tourist passports. These can take about eight weeks to receive so plan accordingly. Fortunately, you can submit applications for blue tourist passports concurrently with your official/no-fee passport applications. Use your standard blue tourist passports to check into hotels and so on while on vacation or personal travel.

As of late 2016, you cannot have the same photos for no-fee passports and blue tourist passports. Confirm with the passport agent in your unit. If this information remains correct, you and your dependents may want to bring extra shirts to your passport photo appointment or come back another day for a second set of photos.¹

International Driver Permit: You and any dependents wanting to drive while in Italy are required to obtain an Allied Forces Italy (AFI) driver's license. However, you may also want to obtain an AAA International Driver Permit (IDP) prior to arrival: <http://www.aaa.com/vacation/idpf.html>. The fee is \$20 per permit, but unlike the AFI license, it is valid outside of Italy. Your US state issued driver license is valid in Europe. However, the IDP is an official translation and could save you headaches in the event you are in a vehicle accident or have a traffic violation outside of Italy. If you plan to drive in Italy you must obtain the AFI license from NSA Naples or arrive on a diplomatic passport and be accredited with the MFA. The embassy in Rome can provide you with a translation of your license, which should also suffice for renting a car for use inside Italy.

Lodging: You have two options when it comes to lodging, you can either stay in a hotel or Airbnb, but whatever your choice is, it is recommended that you make your reservations as early as possible since your arrival coincides with the high tourist season. If you use the major US hotel chains like Marriott, Hilton, Westin, etc. you can generally cancel or change your reservation without penalty up to 24 hours before check in. Another advantage of staying with one of the major US chains is you will earn rewards points that can be used for trips while in Italy or upon your return to the US. Book a room as soon as you have a general idea when you want to arrive in Rome. Do not wait for orders. It is a good idea to schedule the check-in date before you need it and schedule the check-out date 60 days later. It is easier to remove dates you do not need than it is to add additional days in a city like Rome during the summer. Once you schedule your flight to Italy you can finalize your hotel reservation for the exact dates.

There are several considerations when choosing a hotel. Access to public transportation is important as you will need it to get around the city for a variety of reasons. Another

¹ All individuals traveling to Italy on the ISSMI assignment will need two passports. The first set is a normal blue tourist passport. The second set includes an official passport (for the officer) and a no-fee passport (for the dependent). With two photos required for each passport this is a total of four photos required per person, but the two sets of two photos should not be the same.

consideration is proximity to the embassy. You will be spending at least a day or two at the embassy upon arrival to in-process.

The Westin Excelsior and the Marriott Grand Hotel Flora are the two US chain hotels closest to the embassy. Rooms in the Marriott are more modern and comfortable whereas rooms in the Westin are a bit more opulent, think Versailles. The Westin provides free coffee in the morning whereas the Marriott provides a full buffet American style breakfast including coffee for those staying an extended period, but you must request it upon arrival. Do not pay for it in advance. If you plan to put more than three people in a room expect US-based representatives to give you difficulty. European hotel rooms are not typically able to accommodate more than three guests. This is more a matter of policy than space limitations. More than likely you will not be able to make the reservation online as the number of people will exceed the capacity of the room. If a US-based representative makes the reservation for you, confirm directly with the hotel later to ensure there will be no issues. You do not want any surprises on the day of check in. The best solution is to email or call the hotel directly if you need a room for more than three people. Both Westin and Marriott have a full staff of English language speakers who can help you if necessary. The Westin may offer a second room at a discounted rate whereas the Marriott will allow you to put more than three, up to a point, in their junior suite.

The Marriot and Westin will also most likely only let you make a reservation for two weeks, at least online. If this happens, simply make the reservation and then email or call the hotel directly. They can immediately extend the reservation as long as you need.

Another advantage of staying close to the embassy is the use of the washing machine and dryer in the embassy. The alternative is to pay a fortune to have the hotel do your laundry or to spend time in a laundromat. Laundry is free at the embassy but you must provide your own detergent and fabric softener. There is also a playground on the embassy compound and a TV room with toys and children's movies. Both can be used to entertain kids, if necessary, while doing laundry.

Another option is to reserve an Airbnb. The major advantage of staying in an Airbnb is comfort, especially if you arrive with a large family or pets. The three major drawbacks to an Airbnb: Payment is usually required to be made upfront; you should reserve only Airbnbs that have a 24 hour cancellation policy, this will allow for flexibility once you find an apartment. There is no daily maid service (but you can arrange for cleaning service to occur several times a week. Airbnb apartments typically have cooking facilities which means your per diem rate (meals) will be cut in half (this can be compensated by cooking at home and are partially offset by pet fees). You are asking for trouble if you do not reserve a hotel room as a backup since Airbnb owners can cancel reservation within 48 hours prior to your arrival (Airbnb usually issues a credit towards another Airbnb unit and given your high TLA allowance you will have no problem on

finding a new one). Confirm with your Airbnb host 48-72 hours prior to arrival to ensure everything is on track and if it is you can cancel your hotel reservation without penalty. Just make sure you select the room rate that permits you to cancel up to 24 hours before check in.

Be sure you understand how to calculate TLA, which is use or lose, incidentally. Lodging and per diem rates are very generous in Rome but the exact rate depends on the number of people on the orders. Finance is willing to help you understand your entitlements.

Finance: USAREUR finance in the 21st TSC is an amazing resource. Calculate your TLA costs and then reach out to finance to ensure you have the math right. With nightly hotel allowances for Rome in the range of \$300-700 depending on your family size multiplier you literally cannot afford to be wrong. Steven di Tomaso is the finance chief and is more than willing to work with the ISSMI student to avoid a financial catastrophe. His email address is steven.a.ditomaso.civ@mail.mil.

Household Goods: Consult the consignment guide for Italy well in advance of your HHG date to know exactly what you can and cannot take to Italy. The consignment guide can be found on the DPS website after logging in to www.move.mil. If you have any questions ask your local transportation office for the Italy consignment guide.

You will probably want to create three separate moves within DPS. The first will be unaccompanied baggage (UB) to Italy, the second will be a standard HHG shipment to Italy, and finally you will need to create a non-temporary storage (NTS) shipment since certain items (e.g. washers and dryers) cannot be shipped to Italy. At a minimum, you will need to schedule two shipments in DPS: HHG and NTS.

UB is similar to STRATAIR. It arrives in Naples via air shipment in a matter of days (but don't expect it to ship right after pick up). This should be a small shipment of valuable items and/or things you need shortly after your arrival. Just be prepared to receive these items while living in a hotel and plan accordingly. It is wise to hand carry one complete set of ASUs and ship additional sets in UB. The daily uniform at ISSMI is the Class B uniform, but the first day is the Class A/ASU.

Here are a few examples of items you might want to consider having shipped with UB. If you have children in diapers it is worth stocking up on diapers and wipes. Pack at least enough to get through the first few months until you get the hang of ordering through Amazon and the time it takes for shipments to arrive, or you can simply buy locally but prices are not as good and it is less common to find diapers sold in bulk. Peanut butter can be found at the NEX and some local grocery stores, but both can be expensive. Shipping a few Costco size containers is recommended if you have kids who love PB&J sandwiches. You can also ship your favorite household cleaning products in UB so long as they have never been opened. Some popular American cleaning products can be found at the NEX and prices are reasonable.

HHG will almost certainly take 6-8 weeks to arrive so ship as early as possible. The shipping companies are given a required delivery date (RDD) either by Surface Deployment and Distribution Command or the local Joint Personnel Property Shipping Office. Ask your shipping contractor what the RDD is for your shipment. It will likely be around 7-8 weeks after pack out. A word to the wise, follow up with the shipping contractor to ensure everything ships on time. If you have not heard from them two weeks after they pick up your items you might want to call or email them and then follow up weekly to ensure there are no hiccups. If the

shipping contractor does not deliver your HHG by the RDD you are entitled to financial compensation.

Incidentally, the shipping contractor is not the same as the company that packs your HHG. The shipping contractor will send you an email informing you they are your move coordinator. They are responsible for getting your HHG to Italy. They hire the local moving companies that pack and deliver your HHG, but these local moving companies do not have visibility on the status of your HHG. Only the move coordinator/shipping contractor can answer those questions.

Those items that cannot be shipped to Italy, or you do not want to ship to Italy, will be stored in a warehouse near your current duty station and will be forwarded to your follow-on duty station upon returning from Italy. Apartments in Italy are often smaller and have less storage space than we are accustomed to in the US. This is a good time to leave non-essential items behind. If you ship something to Italy and it does not fit through the door, or you cannot make room for it in the apartment, you will be financially responsible for finding a storage location in Rome.

Electricity: Electrical voltage in Italy is 220 volts at 50 cycles per second whereas in the US it is 110 volts at 60 cycles per second. Whether you want to trust very expensive electronics to last an entire year on a power converter is a personal decision, but now might be a good time to start looking on the backs, bottoms and sides of your electrical devices to see whether they will work in Italy with a simple plug adapter. If it says 110 and 60 it will not work without a converter. Fortunately, many devices now are made to work globally and are either 100-240 volts 50/60 or 110-220 50/60. Either will work with a simple plug adapter to fit an Italian wall socket. No power converter needed for these devices. You will, however, receive two heavy duty power converters from the NSA Naples housing office.

Schools: If you have school age dependent children, chances are they will attend one of the many excellent international schools in Rome. Once you have your orders you will want to reach out to Non-DoD Schools Program (NDSP). Their email address is NDSP.Management@hq.dodea.edu and the web address is <http://www.dodea.edu/nonDoD/>. DoD Educational Activity (DODEA) is the proponent for overseas schools on bases, but there are no DoD schools in Rome so you will apply through the NDSP. The NDSP pays generously for dependent children to attend prestigious international schools. This is a fantastic organization that will handle everything for you. You simply need to register online once you have your orders, inform them which school you plan to send your child to, and then complete the orientation and budget planning tool you will receive from NDSP via email once your application has been approved. Donot be surprised if the school has already been paid before your child attends the first day.

Determining which school to send your child to is an important decision. After conducting research, you may want to consider applying to more than one school in the event your first choice is already full and unable to accept your child (another reason to get an early start on orders). Each school will have their own requirements, but expect to be required to submit a school-specific physical form signed by your child's PCM as well as their vaccination record.

Of note, NDSP only pays for children attending kindergarten and up. All DoD personnel are responsible for paying pre-school costs out of pocket as it is not deemed essential or necessary. As with anything, this could change so be sure to confirm with the NDSP. The good news is you can send three and four year olds to an Italian public school where they are very likely to pick up a bit of the language. See Part II Post-Arrival for information regarding the enrollment

process for preschoolers. This cannot be done prior to arrival in Italy as school assignment is based on your address.

Cell Phones: Additional details regarding cell phones in Italy will be provided in Part II below. However, if you want to bring your current smartphone with you there are potentially a few things you must do prior to arrival. You will need to get your phone unlocked by your provider if it is not already unlocked. Generally, cell phone companies in the US will not unlock a smartphone unless it is paid off. The good news is that your cell phone company may waive any remaining balance owed on the smart phone if you pay on an installment plan. AT&T will waive any balance owed under their Next plans with a copy of your orders. Unfortunately, they will not do this until after you request to have service terminated or suspended, which will likely be the day after you depart for Italy if you want to have a cell phone up until you depart. This means you cannot have your phone unlocked until after you arrive in Italy and you may be forced to deal with any problems online via chat from their website, a VOIP app like Viber, or you can pay to make a call to the US. It might be wise to purchase a \$20 burner phone from Target and use it for the final week you are in the US so you can be sure to have your phone unlocked prior to departure. If the burner phone is also unlocked you can use it for family members if they come to visit as SIM cards and monthly plans are cheap.

Customer Service Center: After receiving orders you will want to reach out to the CSC in the embassy. Everyone who falls under the Chief of Mission umbrella will in-process the CSC. This office is a great resource. Their email address is RomeCSC@state.gov. Well before your departure you will want to send them copies of your official and any no fee passports with visas so they can request *Codice Fiscale* for you and any dependents. The *codice* is like a social security card and is required to conduct certain transactions in Italy. You will also schedule an orientation appointment with them for shortly after your arrival in Rome. During orientation, they will give you a tour of the embassy and answer your questions. Word to the wise, bring a civilian coat and tie for in-processing day to make a favorable impression. Family members need not dress up, but it would not hurt for the military member to make a good first impression.

Community Liaison Office: The Community Liaison Office, or CLO, is another great resource. They will provide you with an embassy extranet account so you can view and register for a variety of embassy events ranging from tourism to cooking classes to children's activities. Their email address is CLOROME2@state.gov. The extranet website is <https://extranet.usembassy.it/>. The CLO can also help with finding daycare and private preschool options. This is the office responsible for the embassy newsletter, the *Veneto Views*. Send the CLO a request to begin receiving the newsletter once you receive your extranet account.

Documentation: Be sure to bring original copies of birth certificates and marriage licenses/certificates as these are required to obtain the *Permesso di Soggiorno* for dependents. These should be hand carried as you will need them immediately upon arrival. The embassy health clinic is a State Department organization and is unable to access DoD medical records. At a minimum, they will require immunization records for the service member and dependents. Medical records may need to be hand carried or forwarded for individuals with unique conditions requiring special care. It is a good idea to bring an external hard drive with scanned copies of important documents. You can also post them to iCloud or Google Drive if you prefer.

Arrival Airport: Some ISSMI students have flown into Naples, in-processed a few places down there, and then headed to Rome. Others have flown directly to Rome and then gone down to Naples later, once their POV arrived or rented a vehicle, for example. Unless directed by the ODC or MPEP/SON, either is fine. It is a personal choice, but if you shipped a POV it is not likely to be in Naples when you first arrive so you will have to return at some point. There is no critical in-processing that must be done in Naples. NSA Naples is the place to handle vehicle license and registration matters, none of which is time sensitive and none of it can be done until your vehicle arrives. All critical in-processing will be done via email with the MPEP/SON office in Wiesbaden.

Where to Live: (BLUF) As of 2022, the ISSMI student is a member of the Embassy Housing Pool and receives and Housing Assignment from the Embassy Housing Office. The Embassy Housing Office divides the housing into three separate Zones. You will submit your preferred housing assignments through the Housing Questionnaire provided by the Housing Office. Based on the availability and your preferences, you will be assigned a location. This assignment cannot occur until you have orders. Expediting your orders will leave you in a more favorable position when the summer move cycle starts for the Embassy. Many organizations start their move cycles earlier than the DOD and will have their people in the housing pool before you. It is recommended that you reach out to the ODC once you have an RFO and see if they will write a memo to the Housing Office on your behalf to start the process sooner. The Housing Pool is intensively competitive so do not be surprised if you get your last pick of Zones. The longer it takes you to get your orders, the less likely you are to get a “downtown” Zone. Below is some useful information about the different Zones.

Zone 1: Living in the center can be a bit hectic, but you are actually living in Rome and experiencing the city on a daily basis. Most international schools in Rome provide bus service, which is paid for by NDSP. This makes it easier for ISSMI students to live closer to work and for officers and their spouses to not have to contend with Rome’s traffic on a daily basis. A great compromise between living in the historic center and the northern suburbs is Prati, the area just east of the Vatican. Via Cola di Rienzo is full of amazing shops and restaurants, close to the metro, and dead ends into the Vatican to the west and Piazza del Popolo across the Tiber to the east. There are a number of great apartments in 19th century palaces in this area.

Zone 2: Parioli is another popular area that is family friendly (by Rome standards), but much closer to the center than the northern suburbs. It is just north of Villa Borghese. Many embassy families live in this area. There is no metro access in Parioli so other forms of transportation must be used. Prati is walking distance to CASD while Parioli is probably not a walk you want to make every day, especially when the weather is bad. Bottom line, quality of life is probably best in Prati and Parioli.

Zone 3: Families with children attending international schools often want to live in the northern areas of Cassia, Flaminia, and Camillucia. The advantage of these areas is that they are less hectic than the central areas of Rome and are close to the international schools. The disadvantage to these areas is they are not at all well- connected to the center of Rome, not even close. To live in one of these “suburbs” would require a constant effort to actually see and experience Rome during a short 10-month tour. If you decide to live in the periphery your best bet for getting into town is to drive and park in the garage under the south end of Villa Borghese. The parking garage is connected to the Spagna metro stop.

Transportation:

To Bring a Vehicle or Not: Whether to bring a vehicle or not is a personal decision. Much will

depend on where you choose to live and what you intend to do while in Italy. Just know that there is no parking for cars within CASD and parking in the area is incredibly limited. Commuting by car to ISSMI is simply not practical.

One consideration for whether to ship your POV or store it in the US is how much traveling you plan to do while in Italy. Using the train for travel within Italy might make more sense for a single officer than an officer with a family with small children and the extra baggage they require. As an example, a round trip train to Florence from Rome could cost a family of four approximately \$200 on a Freccia train. Once at the train station the family would then have to walk or taxi to the hotel and back if staying the night while carrying their luggage and trying to keep small children from running in front of cars. Gas and tolls are likely to cost less than \$100 combined. Parking in Florence can cost as little as 2€ per hour, usually with overnight stays costing around 20-30€. Considering this, a car could be more economical, not to mention more convenient, for families to get out and see the rest of Italy. Then again, taking the high-speed train to cities like Venice, Bolzano, Milan and Torino save so much time that it is probably worthwhile to take the train.

The size of your vehicle matters. Full-size American minivans, SUVs and full size sedans are not practical cars for the center of Rome. They are fine provided the vehicle remains on the outskirts and you use other means to enter the city. Families with two or less kids should go as small as possible while families with three or more kids may need to be more creative. Small minivans with three rows of seating like the Mazda 5 work well in Rome. The Fiat 550L seems to be a popular choice for families in Italy, but it does not have a third row. Single officers have more options, but in Rome smaller is almost always better. Yakima and Thule roof racks with cargo boxes are worth considering. However, keep in mind that most parking garages in Europe have a max height of 2.35 to 2.65 meters. You may have to remove roof mounted cargo boxes for storage at home and at times while on vacation.

The reality is you probably won't drive outside of Italy unless it is during Christmas or Easter break, or before or after ISSMI. Three and four day weekends are very limited while attending ISSMI. If you want to visit London, Paris, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, etc. you will almost certainly have to fly unless you do it during a long break. It is important to reconcile what your needs are with what you want to see and do while in Italy.

The lemon lot at NSA Naples is another option for officers attending ISSMI. There are quite a few people stationed at NSA Naples and the summer is peak PCS season. The drawback is there is no way to know what will be available when you need it.

Having your POV stored at USG expense is an option to consider even if you want to have a car in Italy. You can always buy a used vehicle at the lemon lot and sell it at the lemon lot before returning home. Driving in Rome is a full contact sport. Romans do not have even the slightest problem bumping into other cars. If you have a nice POV that you want to keep nice you may want to consider leaving it at home and buying something short term.

Car & motorcycle insurance is unbelievably expensive in Italy. It can run from \$3,000 to over \$5,000 a year depending on the car and your driving record. Nothing in the US compares. Feel free to ask around, but it seems the only authorized

providers of car insurance for US servicemembers in Italy are USAA and GEICO. It is wise to contact both insurance companies well in advance of shipping a POV to get estimates for Rome. Give them the embassy's address for the purpose of an estimate.

If you bring a car make sure it has all-season tires or be prepared to buy them in Italy. The sidewall of your tires should have either a M+S to indicate mud and snow or a snowflake logo. This means you have all-season tires. Chains are mandatory items to keep in your vehicle from 15 NOV to 15 APR. If you are pulled over and do not have chains in your vehicle, regardless of whether there is snow, you will be fined. This is a requirement only in certain areas of Italy, but if you plan on driving north from Rome on the *Autostrada* you will need chains in your vehicle. In other European countries, such as Germany, it is not enough to have chains. All-season tires are mandatory or you will be fined, even if you have chains and even if there is no snow. It is highly recommended that you put all-season tires on your car and get a set of chains while still in the US.

References: <http://www.blackcircles.com/tyres/winter-tyres/laws-and-legislation> and <http://www.eur.army.mil/pdf/usareurfactsheet-winter-driving.pdf>

Bottom line, if you do not need a car in Rome you can save as much as \$210 a month in fuel coupons depending on how much you drive, \$250-500 a month in parking depending on where you live, \$3,000-5,000 a year in car insurance, and another \$100 a month on tolls depending on how much you use the *Autostrada*. If you decide to bring a car, these are the types of costs COLA helps to offset. However, to make these expenses worth incurring in the first place you must travel by car on a regular basis. Otherwise the savings related to the example of driving to Florence above are negated.

Parking: Parking in Rome is not cheap if you live in the center and have a POV. Expect to pay anywhere from 200€ to 500€ a month for a spot in a parking garage. Some garages will give you a dedicated spot while others are more of a valet service requiring you to leave your keys with them. A few garages in the city center will require you to leave your keys and give them 24 hours' notice if you want to use your car. You call a day ahead of time and they'll have it ready for you when you need it. This is common with garages that store your vehicle off-site. Sometimes parking can be negotiated into the lease (i.e. rent) and sometimes it cannot. The further you live from the center of Rome the more likely you are to find an apartment that either comes with a garage or has a lot for the apartment complex. These garages and lots are generally an additional 100-200€ a month. Parking rates are cheaper the further you get from the center. Again, COLA helps to offset monthly costs like these. Of all the areas close to center, Parioli is probably the most parking friendly. Some apartment buildings have underground garages.

Shipping a POV: Shipping a POV overseas can be a very simple process. If you wait until the last minute to schedule a drop off appointment it could become a nightmare. It is done separately from HHG. Rather than looking to move.mil you must go to www.pcsmypov.com. Click the link for "turning in" and follow the instructions. You can schedule an appointment with International Auto Logistics online or by calling the toll-free number on their website. Familiarize yourself with

this website if you do not have experience shipping a POV overseas as part of a PCS. Be sure to click the link for locations to find the Vehicle Processing Center (VPC) closest to you. Shipping your POV may require a long drive on your part to reach a VPC.

Lien Authorization: If you plan to ship a vehicle that is financed you must receive written approval from the bank to ship it overseas. Not all banks will permit this. Consequently, do not wait until the last month to do this or you could end up being forced to leave your vehicle in storage or refinance it through another bank. IAL will not ship a vehicle with a lien against it without an authorization letter from the lienholder.

Car Seats: One thing families always want to know is whether car seats are required in Italy. The answer is no. They are not required in taxis or in your POV. It is still a good idea, and there may be consequences regarding Tricare covering certain things if a child is in a vehicle accident and not in a car seat, but no taxi driver in Italy will insist that even an infant be in a car seat. This is a decision point for families: do you lug the car seats on the plane and keep them in the hotel when you probably won't use them while you wait for your POV, or just ship them with HHG or UB? For families with only one car seat it may be less of an issue.

Train Metro and Bus: You can purchase a ATAC pass at large metro stations, the pass gives you access to Regional Train, Metro, Bus and Tram the cost differs depending on the time you want them for; the annual pass has a cost of 250 EU. The train is the most reliable source of transportation if you live in the outskirts of Rome, and it is rarely affected by labor strikes (Sciopero), the closest train stop to CASD is Roma S. Pietro located about 1.2 KM (10 min walk). The metro in Rome is not nearly as good as the metro in Washington DC or New York. It is more like the metro in Philadelphia. There are only two primary lines, the A and the B, with trams and busses making up the rest. Line C is under construction as of late 2016. The bus is hit or miss. It could work out great or require so many transfers that it is not worth the trouble. The nearest metro stop to CASD is Ottaviano. It is an approximately 12 minute walk from Ottaviano to CASD.

Taxis: Taxis are a great way to get around the city, but are too expensive to make daily or regular use of. Download the mytaxi app to your smartphone and never be caught looking for a taxi stand. There are a few important notes about taxis in Rome. Only use the white taxis with a taxi sign on top of the car. They should also have rates published on the door of the taxi to and from the airport. These taxis are sanctioned by the government. The others will try to rip you off. A taxi from Fiumicino to the center costs 48€ as of late 2016. You may have to pay a bit more if you have a lot of luggage and require a van taxi, possibly up to 100€. Uber is also an option in Rome, but it is usually more expensive and less reliable than the established taxi service.

Dichiarazione di Valore: As of AY 2017-2020, ISSMI is partnered with *Università di Torino (UNITO)* to provide a Master's Degree *Secondo Livello* in Strategic Military Studies. To obtain the master's degree second level you must first obtain a *dichiarazione di valore* for high school, undergraduate and Master's Degree from a US University.

It is a time-consuming process so allow three to five months to obtain it, make sure to contact the university graduate services desk for help with the Apostille and notarization process as more times than none they will take care of that part of the process for you. Information can be found on the Italian Embassy's website, but you will have to obtain the *dichiarazione di valore* from the consulate with jurisdiction for the academic institutions you attended. Requirements vary slightly from consulate to consulate so be sure to understand the requirements if dealing with more than one consulate.

BLUF Visit the Italian embassy website and follow the instructions stated there. The process involves obtaining notarized official transcripts. Standard official transcripts sealed by the school or university are insufficient. The notarized transcripts can then either be mailed or hand delivered to the Secretary of State of the state in which the academic institution is located. If everything is correct, the Secretary of State will issue an *apostille*. The Italian Consulate with geographic responsibility for your academic institution will then issue the *dichiarazione di valore* based on the *apostille*. Here is a link for starters: http://www.ambwashingtondc.esteri.it/ambasciata_washington/en/informazioni_e_servizi/il-riconoscimento-dei-titoli-di_0.html

Declarazione di Valore should absolutely be your first choice since it's backed by the Italian department of education, but if you find yourself in a bind for some reason there is company named CIMEA <http://cis.cimea.it> that also does accreditation equivalencies for a fee between 140-250 Euros depending on the requested timeline, UNITO accepts this company's validation. If for some reason the university was to change you should call the university's Sezione di Mobilita e Didattica Internazionale (area internazionazionale) before you spend up to 250 for no reason.

Having a master's degree from UNITO is likely to make you stand out among your peers during future promotion boards. However, the degree is not automatically recognized in the US. You will need to through a process similar to obtaining the *dichiarazione* once you get back to the US to have it recognized and added to your military record. See Part IV for those instructions. Good luck.

Military Packing List: This is very simple. You will be in your Class B uniform every day, occasionally in the ASU. You would be wise to obtain at least two, but probably three to four pairs of pants and shirts (both long and short sleeve) so you have something to wear while the used ones are being dry cleaned or laundered. Marlow White, just outside of Fort Leavenworth, is a great place to purchase military uniforms while attending the P950 pre- course. There is also a branch in Woodbridge, VA for officers already assigned to the Washington DC area. Marlow White's uniforms are superior quality. Headgear is the beret, but it would not be a bad idea to also have the bus driver cap. It is your decision which one to wear as you are the only Army officer attending ISSMI and DA Pam 670-1 authorizes either for wear with the ASU. Headgear is rarely used, however. One camouflage uniform is sufficient. You may or may not need it. ISSMI is broken down into four sections. On a weeklong trip throughout Italy one section was required to wear the camo uniform. The others were in the Class A/ASU equivalent (with Rain Coat). You should also seriously consider purchasing the cardigan or pullover sweater, or both, as well as the windbreaker/bi- swing jacket. It gets chilly in the rooms at ISSMI and you don't want to be forced to wear your ASU coat to stay warm. You will easily get your money's worth out of the sweater and

windbreaker. The windbreaker is arguably more useful as you can easily take it off and put it on and it comes with a removable liner for particularly cold days.

Fort Leavenworth Pre-Course (P920 and P950): All officers attending foreign ILE and Marine Corps ILE are required to attend the two-week P950 ILE pre-course at the Command and General Staff College on Fort Leavenworth. There are no test to take during the pre-course, its goal is to give you a general overview on how the Army functions and plans at levels below CORPS. This is what your U.S. counterparts will see during their first three months of the CGSC in FT Leavenworth. It will accomplish its goal, but would be better suited as a concept course on your way back from the Italian Joint Course (ISSMI) since they are apples and oranges. The uniform is ACUs and there are no PT tests. As stated previously, this is a good time to stock up on uniform supplies at Marlow White. The course is worthwhile and a good refresher on doctrine. You will also meet some great fellow officers. P920 is done online prior to attending P950.

Pets: Italy is a remarkably dog friendly city. Most apartments allow small dogs and people take dogs into just about any establishment. Getting your dog to Italy is another matter. Most airlines, if not all airlines, will not ship a dog when temperatures are forecasted to reach above 85 degrees Fahrenheit at any stop along the way. You should check the pet-safe policy before booking your airline tickets with SATO since they are restricted to certain airlines depending on point of departure ie American (no pet-safe policy) vs United (strong pet-safe policy). Remember that SATO will only issue tickets from your current station or vehicle shipping point. This is particularly challenging when PCSing during the summer. Smaller dogs are much less of a concern as they can travel in the cabin with you. Cats should be fine as well. One possible option is to take a Patriot Express flight out of Baltimore-Washington International Airport or Norfolk: <http://www.amc.af.mil/Home/AMC-Travel-Site/>. Contact them regarding their pet shipping policy. Reach out to the CSC for additional questions regarding bringing your pet to Italy. They may be able to explain the process better or put you in touch with someone who can.

Understand that bringing a pet to Italy will likely present a few problems. For starters, pet fees in a hotel are not reimbursable, most hotels have a no pet left alone policy, so you would have to take your pet while looking for an apartment. Additionally, although there are many dogs in Rome, not all landlords may accept a pet, (but most will). Lastly, your ability to travel while living in Rome will be more limited unless you find a pet sitter (there are many pet hotels in the city). If bringing your pet it is advisable to stay in an Airbnb during your initial stay. If you go the cargo route you probably will not be able to ship your pet until mid-October when daytime temperatures drop below 85F. Keep in mind that you may also need to ship your pet home no later than mid-May to avoid temperature issues during the return home.

Scuola Lingue Estere dell'Esercito: (Army is not currently paying for this and the Navy sends its officers to DLI) This is the Italian Army's version of the Defense Language Institute. It is in Perugia. They teach foreign languages to the Italian Army and occasionally to the other branches as well. They also teach an Italian course for foreign students attending ISSMI. Each year about one third to one half of ISSMI's foreign officers take this three-and-a-half-month course. It typically starts in mid-April and ends in late July. It may not be possible to get approval to attend this course given that it conflicts with the pre- course at Fort Leavenworth. However, it may be worth attending in a TDY status if

possible. Just know that attending this course may interfere with other planning aspects of attending ISSMI, like obtaining passports and visas. Classes are M-F and start at 0800. M, W, and F classes are eight hours long whereas T and Th classes are six hours long. There are approximately five students per class and the level ranges from advanced beginner to advanced. SLEE tests students then places them in the appropriate class. The curriculum includes basic Italian culture, but it also includes many of the same subjects covered during ISSMI, though not nearly at the same level of detail. Nevertheless, it serves to give officers a general understanding of the subject while developing the technical vocabulary necessary to successfully manage these subjects during ISSMI.

Strollers: Rome is not a stroller friendly city. Tandem strollers are probably a best bet if you have two or more children and even still you might find yourself at times struggling to push between narrow spaces. Elevators can be challenging to find and are often very small. Be prepared to break down your stroller and carry up or down stairs. For smaller children, consider some type of baby carrier (e.g. Ergo Carrier). Double-wide strollers work fine in places like the embassy or the malls, but can be extremely challenging in the city.

Travel Strategy: BLUF: Plan ahead, your best chance to travel will be AUGUST or between the end of July and the beginning of your course (last wk of Sep or first week of October). Rent a car or make reservations at least 1 wk ahead in order to get a good rate.

You should strongly consider developing a travel strategy prior to your arrival. See Part III ISSMI below for additional details regarding holidays and when you can travel. Identify the things you absolutely must see while you are in Italy/Europe and anticipate that other points of interest will arise during the year as you learn more about what there is to see and do in Italy and in Europe. The first thing you will want to do once you have a rough idea what you want to see and do during your time in Italy is obtain the ISSMI calendar. It is a spreadsheet entitled *Sviluppo di Massima del Programma*. This will display the entire year broken down into months, weeks and days overlaid with all academic subjects. Identify the long weekends (including bridge days, more on these in part III) and, if necessary, compare them to school holidays for your children. Once you know when you will be available for traveling you can begin to plan your desired trips. Also, be sure to consult the *Calendario delle Attività Didattiche*. This will ensure you do not plan any trips the weekend before exams, which invariably fall on Mondays or Tuesdays.

If, for example, you want to visit Naples and see Pompei, Ercolano, climb Vesuvius, visit Naples proper, Sorrento and maybe even Capri or Ischia you will need at least a four-day weekend. If, on the other hand, you want to see the Leaning Tower of Pisa, you can drive or train up and back in the same day, or maybe combine it with a trip to Florence and use a three-day weekend. If you do not have a travel strategy you will quickly find yourself in March or April with only 8-12 weekends remaining before ISSMI finishes and you will likely be unable to travel because of exams and group/individual thesis presentation preparations. Do not expect to take a *licenza* after May 1st due to your workload. Good time management skills during the workweek can help offset some of these issues, but best not to rely on that. Of course, leave a few days of *licenza* in the event you or a family member becomes ill and you need time off, but do not expect to be able to cram in any last-minute trips beyond perhaps a Friday through Sunday trip.

Weather and the number of expected tourists in any given location are important factors to consider when it comes to developing your travel strategy. For example, if you want to get out of Italy and see countries in northern or eastern Europe during the Christmas break, you should recognize that it will be much colder than it would otherwise be in Rome. This is more important if you have small children. Fortunately, during this time there will also be fewer tourists thus making it easier to enjoy certain places. Many cities also still have Christmas decorations and lights in the town squares which, along with a glass of hot mulled red wine (*vinbrule / gluwine*), adds a nice holiday touch.

Just to give one example of a weather/tourist consideration, Sicilians will likely tell you that you should never visit Sicily outside of the summer because the beach plays an important role in any Sicilian experience. However, if you are more interested in seeing the archeological sites in places like Taormina and Agrigento, the beaches are much less important. The same Sicilians will likely be forced to admit that the best beaches in Italy are in Sardinia anyway. Therefore, you may want to consider Sicily during Christmas or Easter and Sardinia prior to or after ISSMI. Regardless, if the decision is between Sicily or northern/eastern Europe you are much more likely to have enjoyable weather in Sicily during the Christmas break. Additionally, Sicily is brutally hot in the summer. The decision is entirely personal. The important thing is to consider the factors related to each trip and what you hope to get out of each trip. By doing so you are more likely to have an enjoyable experience.

It is worth thinking of vacations in broad terms initially. For example, you know you have 28 days to work with and need a few days just in case. Armed with that information you can begin to see how many days of vacation you expect to take. If you take a two-week vacation during Christmas and a one week vacation during Easter they will not count against your days of *licenza*. This means you can may be able to take *licenza* during the week of the bilateral trip in May. Unlike in the US, you do not have to count weekends as days of *licenza* at ISSMI. Therefore, consider departing on Friday immediately after you get out of ISSMI and returning the following Saturday or Sunday to maximize the amount of time available for tourism. Having used five days of *licenza* during the bilateral trip you will have used 5 days out of 28 available. With the remaining 23 days, or 15-17 if you prefer to leave a buffer for the unexpected illness, you can then start programming one or two additional three and four day weekends each month. With such a program, you will have three significant periods of vacation: Christmas, Easter and the bilateral. This does not account for any trips you may want to take before or after ISSMI.

Last piece of travel advice: make all lodging reservations at least 7 days in advance. This is sound advice year around in Europe, but it is especially important June through September. If you think you are going to be able to reserve an *agriturismo* in Val d'Orcia (near Pienza where Ridley Scott filmed those amazing scenes of Maximus' cypress tree-lined home in the *Gladiator*) with just a few weeks' notice during this period you are mistaken.

Part II: POST ARRIVAL

Departing Fiumicino Airport: There is a good chance you will have quite a load of luggage when you arrive. The easiest solution is probably to arrange with the USO in Rome in advance to pick you up. The stated price on the official white taxis is 48€ but that does not include luggage. The total price of a taxi for a family of four or five with luggage can approach or even exceed 100€. Taxi fees can be claimed on your travel voucher. Another dependable service is <https://www.romeairporttransportation.com/>.

MPEP/SON: The MPEP/SON office will be your POC for all traditional military in-processing. They will send you an email with documents you need to provide them. They will take your travel voucher (DD Form 1351-2), TLA claims, DA Form 2367 and DA Form 5960. Be sure to submit this documentation ASAP to get your pay settled. Everything can be done via email. Their group email address is: usarmy.wiesbaden.usareur.list.usareur-g3scd-mpep-son-program@mail.mil

In-Processing the Embassy: The CSC will be responsible for scheduling and conducting your in-processing at the embassy. You should already have an in-processing appointment prior to your arrival. Children are welcome to attend the orientation. However, if you feel they will be a distraction and prevent you from being able to focus you may want to consider asking the CSC for an orientation for you and a separate orientation for your spouse later. This is not terribly critical for the CSC orientation since it will probably just be you and your family. This is more of a concern with the Regional Security Office (RSO) Briefing. The RSO Briefing is a mandatory security briefing for anyone wishing to obtain permanent party passes to the embassy. The RSO briefing is conducted on a set schedule and there will likely be several other embassy employees and their spouses in attendance. If you are worried about your children keeping quiet and not disturbing you or others, this is the time to schedule separate appointments. An alternative is to work with the CLO or your predecessor to obtain a recommendation for a babysitter.

Codice Fiscale: The *Codice Fiscale* should be one of the first things you receive from the CSC when you in-process the embassy. If you sent them copies of passports and visas at least 30 days prior to your arrival you should receive them early in your stay. Italians can be inconsistent when requesting documentation. You may need the *codice* to obtain an Italian SIM card for your cell phone or they may accept your passport instead. You will, however, need the *codice* at ISSMI and your family will need theirs to obtain the *Permesso di Soggiorno*.

Permesso di Soggiorno: The *Permesso di Soggiorno* is supposed to be done within the first eight days of arrival in Italy. The US Sending State Office (USSSO) within the embassy will

schedule the appointment on your behalf. There is no need to reach out to them more than a week or two before your arrival in Rome. You can also wait until after arrival as the eight- day requirement is not enforced. Sabrina Valente is the USSSO POC as of late 2016. Her email is valentes@state.gov. If you are unable to reach her you can contact either the CSC or the ODC for instructions. The USSSO will want you to email pdf copies of passports, visas, birth certificates, and marriage certificates as necessary in order to schedule the appointment. During the appointment, the Italian authorities will require originals (maybe). You will also need four passport photos to take to the appointment. These can be the same photos as your passport photos or you can have them done in one of the photo booths at a metro stop.

The appointment for the *permesso* will last approximately two hours, but you will leave with the *permesso* in hand. You and all dependents living with you in Italy must be present for the interview with the Italian customs office. The *Questura* is located at Via Teofilo Patini, 23. This is where you will go to obtain the *permesso*. There are two entrances at the *Questura*. The first entrance is likely where you will find guards inspecting visitors. However, there is a second entrance if you walk past the first entrance. There may not be anyone at that entrance, but if you have an appointment from the USSSO this is where you must go. Ring the bell and you will be buzzed in. If you have any doubts just explain the situation to a guard and ask where to go. Upon entering the security station explain that you have an appointment from the US Embassy. They will have you go through a security scan and give you directions. The secretary is on the second floor at the far end of the hall. Check in and wait for them to call you into a separate room.

Cell Phone Plan: The first few days in Rome are much smoother if you have a cell phone ready to go and just need an Italian SIM, or if you are willing to buy a new smartphone upon arrival. This is especially true if you are house hunting. The NEX at NSA Naples has a Vodafone store. They are more likely to walk you through getting set up than Vodafone shops in Rome. The NEX Vodafone store may be able to offer a monthly plan similar to the US with less severe early termination penalties. Otherwise, a pay as you go plan or *recaricabile* plan is what most embassy personnel use. It renews every four weeks as opposed to a certain day of the month. These plans start at 10-12 euro a month but can be augmented with additional minutes or text messages for a few additional euro a month.

Important: Unfortunately, TIM does not get service at ISSMI. A functioning cell phone at ISSMI is a must so consider only Vodafone or possibly Wind.

A very popular app within Italy is WhatsApp. It is used as the primary method for texting as it is free over a Wi-Fi connection and pulls from the cellular network when not connected to Wi-Fi. This app is popular with other ISSMI students so expect to make extensive use of it. Simply put, you cannot survive in ISSMI without WhatsApp.

Apartments: (As of 2022, this section no longer applies as you will be in the Embassy Housing Pool and will be assigned an apartment.) The most important thing to know about apartment hunting in Italy is that it is next to impossible in August. The entire country comes close to shutting down while the Italians flock to the beaches and mountains. It is highly recommended that you visit Rome in June or July for one week of Permissive TDY. You will accomplish more in one week than you will the entire month of August. Use www.idealista.it and www.immobiliare.it to look for apartments. The following are real estate agents that can also help:

Carol and Karen: Croft Rome +39 06 5743170, E-mail: info@romeproperty.com web: www.romeproperty.com
Franco Aiello: +39 338 831 3411 E-mail f.aiello@yahoo.it<<mailto:f.aiello@yahoo.it>>
Serena Mastrangelo: +39 328 128 0310, E-mail: serenaconsuelo.mastrangelo@gmail.com
Anna & Laura (Rivoli Immobiliare) +39 06483456 Cell. +39 3395803757/3286969572, E-mail: rivolimmobiliare@gmail.com
Marialuisa DeMartino: +39 065916760 cell 328 6789744 E-mail: info@mldcustomercare.com web: www.mldcustomercare.com
Meta immobiliare Cell. +39 3334729116 +39 0685357528 E-mail: info@immobiliaremeta.it web www.immobiliaremeta.it

There are four apartments ISSMI students have used in the past. There are obviously others, but only these four have been recorded. One is located at Via Giovanni Giraud 4, another is at Via di San Sotero, 38 and the third is Via del Banco di Santo Spirito, 52 and the fourth is Via Cassia 1170 B/6, Roma 00189. The Giovanni Giraud apt. is near Piazza Navona in the heart of the Centro Storico and is only a ten min. walk to ISSMI. San Sotero is a nicely renovated two-bedroom apartment about a 20-minute walk west of CASD. Santo Spirito (**number one choice due to size and proximity**) is a large four-bedroom apartment in the heart of Rome and about eight minutes walking distance from CASD. Via Cassia apartment is located just outside of the outer ring, it is the bigger of the three with 5 bedrooms and an office space (300m²), it has an Olympic size pool. The downfall is its location, it takes 45 min to get to the CASD via public transportation. All choices are excellent apartments, already approved by the embassy, and the landlords are US military friendly. If the areas seem acceptable to you then it is in your best interests to reach out to the landlords early. Your POC for all thing housing is Luca (see housing notes). The landlord for the Giovanni Giraud apt. is Prof. Antonio Grimaldi. He speaks English well. His number is +39 335 6367585. The landlord for San Sotero is Tea Moroni. She does not speak much English. Her mobile number is +39 347 7536442. She is on WhatsApp so that is probably the best way to reach her. The POC for **Santo Spirito** is Donatella Honorati. Her mobile number is +39 347 6976480. She is also on WhatsApp and her English is great. Via Cassia POC is Michelle Greco +39 388 787-8296 (doesn't speak English).

Check the OHA calculator online to obtain current OHA rates for Rome:

<http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/ohaCalc.cfm>. Luca Viglietti (see below) can and will negotiate several things not typically considered "rent" into your monthly rent (e.g. landline phone, condominium fees, water and electricity, satellite TV, parking). This can be a huge advantage. The more the actual rent is below the OHA rate for Rome the more Luca can negotiate with the landlord to cram things into "rent." OHA is use or lose so it is in your interests to get the best place money can buy. Unlike BAH you do not get to pocket what you do not spend.

Keep in mind that any apartment you find must be inspected by GSO housing at the embassy prior to signing a lease. The entire process from the time the embassy is notified that they need to conduct an inspection until they provide approval or denial should take just less than 30 days. This means if you do not find an apartment until early to mid-September it may be early to mid-October before you learn the results of the inspection. Once the landlord knows what upgrades are required (and there are always upgrades required), the work can be started, assuming the landlord agrees to make the upgrades. Once the work is easily take 60 days from the time you find an apartment you like until you are able to move in. If the embassy inspection comes back unfavorable you are back to square one, looking

for an apartment. Inquire with GSO housing as to what aspects in an apartment you should avoid. For example, the embassy is very unlikely to approve anything on the ground floor.

NSA Naples Housing Office: (As of 2022, the ISSMI student falls under the GSO Housing Pool.) Many US Embassy employees fall under the GSO housing pool. However, DoD does not pay ICASS funds for GSO housing (apart from those assigned to the Defense Attaché Office) so we are on our own to find an apartment. You cannot sign a lease without first receiving an embassy inspection and then approval from Luca Viglietti. Luca is a local national who works in the housing section at NSA Naples. He is a GS-12. One of his many responsibilities is to coordinate leases for all US service members living in Rome but not part of the Defense Attaché Office. His email address is luca.viglietti.it@eu.navy.mil and his phone number is +39 366 6800263. Meet with him shortly after your arrival (he has an annex office in Rome and comes up often) and keep him updated regularly if you are not moving into one of the two apartments listed above. He will also be the one to approve your TLA memos before submission to USAREUR so it is important that he knows you are actively looking for apartments.

The NSA Naples housing office will provide the following items to all DoD personnel living in Rome: one clothes dryer, one washing machine, one armoire for each family member, one microwave, one full-size American refrigerator or deep freezer, two heavy duty power converters and one AFN decoder box. You are responsible for purchasing your own satellite dish and associated cables and equipment and installing everything.

If you decide you want AFN TV, contact Federico Dionisio at the embassy. His email address is federicodionisio@hotmail.com. He is the AFN guru and will set everything up for you, including purchasing a satellite dish and mounting equipment. He can install everything for approximately 150€. There are no monthly fees associated with AFN.

MVRO & the VPC:

AFI License: The first thing you will do when you arrive at the Motor Vehicle Registration Office (MVRO) at NSA Naples is take the 48-question road sign test. You can only miss two questions and still pass the test, but this is Italy so they will help you pass after an initial failed attempt, hopefully. They understand you are coming from Rome, hopefully. Once you pass the road sign test they will send you back to get your POV registered. Contact the MVRO or Stefano Imparato at the email addresses below to obtain the study guide.

Vehicle registration: Vehicle registration for ISSMI students is also done at the NSA Naples MVRO. The MVRO is located on the first floor of the hotel on base. This office only deals with an ISSMI student once a year so your situation is likely to cause initial confusion. The best solution is to reach out to the director via email if you run into issues. His name is Stefano Imparato and his email address is stefano.imparato.it@eu.navy.mil. The general group email address is cmvro@eu.navy.mil and the phone is +39 081 8114050. Vehicle registration is a surprisingly simple process. You will need to provide registration and insurance information and pay 20€ (not dollars), cash only, per vehicle. USAA will send an email with coverage amounts that the MVRO will accept to start the process. Once you have your actual Italian plate numbers the MVRO will dial USAA for you and put you in touch with a

representative who will take your plate information. Once that is done USAA will email the MVRO your Italian insurance information. Just like that you will have your AFI license, a registered POV and Italian license plates. The whole process will take as little as two hours if you pass the road sign test the first time. Once you have your license, plates, registration and updated insurance you can walk over to the VPC and pick up your POV.

Vehicle Processing Center: The VPC is located behind the hospital in building 2081. Their phone number is +39 081 811 6521 or 6522. They do not list a generic email address, but you could try the following: barbara.williamson@ialpov.us or sofia.catalano@ialpov.us. Both worked at the Naples VPC as of late June 2017. If you call Sofia and ask her how to get to the VPC from Rome she may offer to send one of her subordinates to pick you up at the train station and drop you off at the MVRO. On that note, to get to NSA Naples via train, purchase a train ticket to Aversa. Do not buy a ticket to Napoli Centrale. NSA Naples is three to four kilometers to the northeast of Aversa Stazione. If you must taxi expect to pay at least 20€one way. The good news is the taxi driver does not need to be able to get on base. They can drop you off at the main gate and you can walk to the hotel from there. It's the massive building directly in front of you when you enter the main gate.

The VPC will need a copy of the inspection sheet you received when dropping off your POV at the VPC near your last duty station. They should mount your Italian plates for you, conduct a joint inspection, and then you are on your way. Expect to be at the VPC for 30 minutes if they are not too busy.

Once you have picked up your POV you will need to head to the NEX auto port for a safety inspection. It will take about 30 minutes. This is a good time to walk across the way to the NEX to see what they offer. The inspection is roughly \$10 (not euro), but they will also charge you for a safety triangle and two high visibility vests that must be kept in your POV at all times while in Italy. The total will be just over \$20. Payment can be cash or card. After the inspection, you will receive a document that must be returned immediately to the MVRO.

After the MVRO receives the safety inspection document you will be fully entered into the system and good to go. You will also be enrolled at that point in the NATO fuel coupon program. When you leave the MVRO after dropping off the safety inspection document you can go to the NEX in the hotel complex and obtain fuel coupons or you can go to the main NEX and purchase them there. As of late 2016, fuel coupons are being sold for \$74 for 100 liters (or about 26 gallons). Your monthly authorization for fuel coupons is likely to be 300 liters. Anything beyond that and you will have to pay the local rate for fuel. Coupons can be redeemed at Eni/Agip stations. It seems only the larger Eni/Agip stations in Rome accept "*buoni* NATO."

Motorcycles: Motorcycles are handled similar to cars in some respects. The difference is you can ship motorcycles in your HHG and you must take a safety course in Naples before you can register and drive it in Rome. Since ISSMI officers live and work in Rome it works a little differently than it does for those stationed in

Naples. The motorcycle will arrive in your HHG if that is how you shipped it. However, well before it arrives you need to contact the NSA Naples Safety Office to explain the situation. As with the MVRO, they do not deal with ISSMI students very often so it may take a minute to explain the situation to them. The NSA Naples Safety Office should provide you with the memo you need to register your motorcycle with the MVRO. This memo states that you have successfully completed Basic Riders Course 2 or the Advanced Riders Course. Of course, it is not possible to actually complete the course since your motorcycle is still in transit, but they will provide the letter on the condition you return to NSA Naples, preferably on your own bike, and take the course within 60 days of issuing you the letter. The next step is to go to the MVRO with the letter the safety office provides as well as your registration and insurance information. At this point the process is very similar to registering your POV. At the end of your appointment at the MVRO you will have motorcycle plates and updated registration to take back to Rome. When your HHG arrive, you can install your Italian plates and be able to legally operate your motorcycle in Italy. It is your responsibility to return to Naples within 60 days to take the class or your motorcycle endorsement from your AFI license will be removed and you will not legally be able to operate a motorcycle in Italy. As of late 2016, the POC for motorcycle safety in Italy is Jim Dickinson at james.dickinson@eu.navy.mil.

The MVRO will probably initially insist you drive your motorcycle back down to NSA Naples at some point for the VIN and safety inspections. It is possible to take the BRC 2 and get the safety inspection done on the same day. However, if you are not comfortable riding your motorcycle in Italy they will accept a photo of your VIN. The motorcycle safety course also has loaner motorcycles you can use while taking BRC 2.

Italian Public Preschools: This is a great option for three and four-year-old children as NDSP will not pay for preschool or daycare. Private preschools and daycares cost anywhere from 300-800€ a month. Public Italian preschools cost approximately 80€ per month. That money pays for food and includes a light breakfast, a substantial lunch, and an afternoon snack. The schools have dieticians on hand to work with parents who have children with specific dietary requirements. The hours for preschool are 0800-1400 Monday through Friday. Parents also have the option to pick up their child at 1530 or 1700. There are no naps. The kids are constantly busy. The school will work with parents who want to pick up their child before 1400. Instruction is obviously conducted entirely in Italian. Confirm with the CSC at the embassy to ensure the embassy cannot provide you and your dependents with resident status. They likely cannot as this is something only accredited diplomats receive. This would be the easiest solution, however. If the embassy cannot help you then you can still obtain resident status on your own. The process of enrolling your child in a *scuola d'infanzia* is relatively straightforward but requires a few weeks and a lot of documentation (e.g. lease agreement, birth certificate, *permesso di soggiorno*, *codice fiscale*, passport, Italian military ID card issued by CASD, etc). The *Comune di Roma* will handle everything. You may need to contact a different office if you do not live in Rome proper, but they will be able to point you in the right direction. The POC as of January 2017 is Signora Giorgia Forte. She works in the *Ufficio di Scuola* in the *Comune di Roma*. Their address

is Via Luigi Petroselli 50. Her phone number is +39 06 69601647 and her direct email address is giorgia.forte@comune.roma.it. The office also has a group email address which is municipio01.scuole@comune.roma.it.

The first step is to apply for residency for at least one parent and any children that will be attending public schools. This can either be done in person or by email, but the application (*dichiarazione di residenza*) and instructions for supporting documentation will likely need to be obtained directly from the main office on Via Petroselli. Once the application has been filled out and all supporting documentation scanned into pdf you can send everything to cambiresidenza.municipioroma01@comune.roma.it. Alternatively, the packet can be hand carried back to the office on Via Petroselli. Within days of submitting the application you will either receive an email stating what you need to fix or you will receive an attachment containing the *inizioprocedimento* which means your application is being processed.

The second step is for an official from the municipal government to come to your home and verify you live there. This must be a face-to-face encounter. The Roman authorities want to ensure you live there because, much like in most of the US, the school your child will attend is determined by your address. More than likely they will not tell you when they are coming.

Once you have been verified you can reach back out to Ms. Forte to begin the school application process, known as the *iscrizione allascuolacomunaledell'infanzia*. She will explain the process, but it requires about two hours and must be done in her office at Via Petroselli. During this meeting, you will receive contact information for the school administrator where your child will attend as well as determine the start date if the academic year has already begun.

Set up an appointment to visit the school your child will attend once that information has been provided to you. There are typically open houses offered once a month. The school administrators and teachers will meet with you to explain the curriculum or activities, drop off and pick up procedures, and answer any other questions you may have. The meeting will almost certainly be in Italian.

Health Care: ISSMI students and their dependents will receive all primary care at the US Embassy. Dependents will be referred by the embassy to local specialty care providers as needed. The embassy will refer dependents to trusted doctors who also speak English. Dental treatment for service members can be done locally in Rome or at the dental clinic at NSA Naples. Dependents will be seen by dentists in Rome. The embassy has a list of trusted dentists in Rome that take Tricare/MetLife. If you are expecting to have or planning to have a baby in Rome you should reach out to the embassy health clinic as soon as possible. They can answer any questions you might have and possibly put you in touch with women who have recently given birth in Rome. It is actually fairly common. While not necessary, you may want to consider shipping any OTC medication you use on a regular basis. OTC medication such as aspirin is more expensive in Rome and you may not find the brands you are accustomed to. If you do not ship common OTC medication from the US, you can still find some brands at the NEX in the embassy or at the NEX and/or commissary in Naples. Express Scripts can be used to order Rx medication. They will ship to your DPO address at the embassy.

Mom's Groups: The primary mom's group used by embassy families is Roma Parents. The email address is romaparents@googlegroups.com. Email them for additional information.

Baby Sitting: The CLO office within the embassy can provide referrals for baby sitters. Rates run from €8-10 for one to two kids or €15 for three kids. Roma Parents can also provide recommendations for baby sitters. Occasionally there are baby sitters who have previously been interns at the embassy and have therefore been vetted. Confirm with the CLO if this is something you are looking for in a baby sitter. Otherwise there are several embassy families with teenage daughters willing to babysit. The best option is to talk to other embassy families to obtain recommendations.

NEX: The Navy Exchange in the embassy is great. It is small but they offer several items from the US that are difficult or impossible to find in Italy, namely peanut butter, American cereal brands, and one pound bags of ground and whole bean Starbucks coffee. They also offer a small selection of refrigerated and frozen items. Additionally, they can order items from the NEX and commissary in Naples and have them delivered to the embassy. You can order televisions, laptops, etc. Many families also request turkeys for Thanksgiving, spiral cut hams for Easter, and so on. There is also a barber, hair and nail salon, and a dry cleaner. The embassy also has a nice gym located in the Mel Sembler building. The gym offers yoga, Zumba and other classes. Kids can also take karate lessons at the gym.

Banco Nazionale di Lavoro: Inside of the embassy is a branch of BNL. You will need to open a BNL checking account shortly after your arrival to be able to pay your rent. There is a nominal fee of €1.90 each month to maintain the account. You will need your passport and/or *codicefiscale* to open an account. BNL provides very generous exchange rates and does not charge a service fee to embassy employees. You are authorized to transfer up to \$2,000 per day to your BNL account by writing a check. There is currently no other way to transfer money at the BNL counter. There are mobile apps like TransferWise Money Transfer, but they charge a service fee. In a pinch, it may be necessary to use an app. Otherwise it is more economical to transfer money via check at the BNL counter while running other errands at the embassy, like picking up mail, shopping or getting a haircut. US checks written as deposits to BNL accounts are available for immediate withdrawal or electronic transfer. Make sure you bring at least two complete books of checks, or about 50 checks total.

Mail: ISSMI students may receive a mailbox at the embassy. Large boxes will remain at the post office until you pick them up, but letters and small packages will be placed in your designated mailbox in the ODC. The address will likely be: Unit 9500, Box 195, DPO AE 09624. However, this is subject to change for ISSMI students, and you should check with the ODC upon arrival to ensure you will be authorized to send and receive mail from the embassy. There are many Italian post offices throughout the city, and it is very convenient to receive packages at the post offices as they will hold them for you to come pick up.

Telepass: Telepass is a transponder for toll roads similar to what many cities in the US offer. The device is obtained from the BNL branch at the embassy. There are dedicated lanes along the autostrada for Telepass users that expedite passage through the toll booths.

Grocery Shopping: Grocery shopping on Rome is very different than it is in the US. It is unheard of to see someone with a full shopping cart going up and down the aisles. The check-out counters are also just not equipped to handle such volume. Most Italians buy fresh food every two to three days. If you have kids this may not be practical. Some

embassy families will drive to the outskirts of Rome and shop at the larger grocery stores on a weekly basis, like the Conadon Corso di Francia or Auchan at the Porta di Roma mall. But these are only possible if your parking spot is within a reasonable walk to your apartment. More than likely you will be making many trips to the grocery store or neighborhood market for things like milk, which are almost exclusively sold in one liter bottles, or smaller. Italians are pretty serious about the freshness of their food. This might be a good year to adopt the “when in Rome” philosophy. Consider purchasing fresh local items from the specialty stores, like the meat store, the bread store, etc. The quality of these products is amazing. *Buon appetito!*

Markets: Two markets in Rome where you can find great produce are Campo de’ Fiori and Mercato Trionfale. Campo de’ Fiori is an outdoor market that offers fresh fruit, vegetables, souvenirs, flowers, restaurants and other unique items. Keep in mind that it is a tourist attraction and you might pay double or more than markets like Mercato Trionfale. Campo de’ Fiori is located at Piazza Campo de’ Fiori, 00186 Roma and is open Monday-Saturday until 1400.

Mercato Trionfale is an indoor market with plenty of produce, meats, poultry, bakeries, nuts, seafood and other items. Produce are fresh and the prices are great. Mercato Trionfale is located at Via la Goletta, 1, 00192 Roma and is open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday from 0700-1400 and Tuesday and Friday 0700-1900. The market is closed on weekends.

Thanksgiving turkeys can be ordered ahead of time from the local butcher shops. Macelleria Campo dei Fiori sells fresh, never frozen turkeys for Thanksgiving but you must order it at least several days in advance. They are located at Via dei Balestrari, 3, 00186 Roma. The NEX also takes turkey orders during the holidays.

Mercato dei Fiori is a flower market that is open to the public on Tuesdays from 0800-1300. It is a great place to buy fresh flowers and other plants. Their prices are probably the best in town for flowers and plants.

Part III: ISSMI

General: You may have heard that ISSMI or the Italian Joint Services Staff College is like our Command and General Staff College (CGSC) or that it is a course in NATO planning. Nothing could be further from the truth. The best way to think of ISSMI is to not think of it in terms of a traditional Army PME course like the officer basic or advanced courses. It is much more like a master’s degree in international relations in the US, with a few MBA courses, operational planning and a two week Combined Joint Exercise (CJEX) thrown in for good measure.

ISSMI is a unique experience. It is nothing like we are used to in the US Army. Simply put, you are not going to receive the doctrinal foundation you could have expected from CGSC but will absolutely broaden your point of view, gain knowledge and international experience.

Start Date Information: Expect not to receive any start date information until early September. It is important that you submit a short biography, photo and contact information to the ODC ASAP so they in turn can send it to Centro di Alti Studi per la Difesa (CASD) /ISSMI for the creation of the CASD / ISSMI Corso 2s website account. There you will find information such as start date, initial reporting uniform (usually ASUs)

and read ahead material. Contact ODC if no one has contacted you by mid-July .

Duration: ISSMI typically starts the last Monday in September or the first Monday in October. There is no need to walk over to CASD to find out when your course will start. ISSMI will most likely end between the 15th and 22th of June.

Absences& Accountability: ISSMI students are authorized to miss a total of 28 days of class time and still pass the course. Miss 29 days and you might have problems. The 28 days are comprised of full days off (*licenza*) and hours missed (*permesso*). If you need four or less hours off during the day you can request the time off using the *permesso*. Anything beyond four hours and you must take the entire day off. Many ISSMI students, at least the foreign ones, try to use these authorized absences to build in their own three and four day weekends. This is a great way to ensure sufficient time to see some of the more distant cities from Rome.

You will be assigned an Italian military ID card your first day at ISSMI. This card may seem like a CAC card in the US military, but it is essentially your time card. All ISSMI students must use the card to clock in upon arrival and departure from CASD. ISSMI students must clock in before 0800 and cannot clock out until 1630, no exceptions unless you submit a *licenza* or *permesso*. A *permesso* can be granted after the fact for emergencies and other unforeseen issues.

Structure & Organization: There are 14 small groups of approximately 10-12 people per group. Each small group is led by a tutor who was likely an ISSMI student within the past two years. There are four sections, each containing three to four small groups. Each section is led by a Vice Director who is a one star general/flag officer in the Army, Navy, Air Force or Carabinieri. The overall director of ISSMI is a two-star Air Force general and the overall director of CASD is a three-star Army general. The total number of students in each class is roughly 160-170. Of these, 30 are foreign students. Most of the Italians are military, but each group has one or two Ministry of Defense civilians.

The Italian military, at least at ISSMI, trains to time rather than to standard. As stated previously, you may not leave prior to 1630. The result is a lot of downtime. However, if used wisely you can significantly limit the amount of time you spend related to ISSMI at home. ISSMI does not assign homework, not even any reading despite a massive collection of reference books you will receive on the first day. There are tests to study for and there are papers to write. That is it. Most mornings from 0800-0850 you are at the disposition of the Vice Director, which means you sit in your small group room until 0850 doing nothing while you wait for class to start at 0900. This is a great time to study, conduct research, or write papers.

Lunch is daily from 1300-1400. There is a bar that serves sandwiches, a dining facility that serves a very substantial Italian lunch, or a restaurant that serves amazing food. Lunch at the dining facility runs about €4.50 a day.

The afternoons are generally spent doing group work or conducting research for the group theses or personal thesis.

Facilities: ISSMI will assign each student a locker to share with another student. You can leave a couple sets of full uniforms in the locker. As a matter of USAREUR policy, US Army officers are not authorized to wear any military uniform on the streets of Rome for safety/force protection reasons. The changing room and locker is very convenient in that regard.

Instruction: One major departure from CGSC that has significant consequences for learning, particularly in a foreign language, is ISSMI does not break up the class for instruction purposes, ever. Rather than having an instructor for each small group, or even section, they have only one instructor for the entire class. This is partly a result of ISSMI's ties with the University and the Masters program. For the purposes of quality control, only professors approved by the contracted university can teach the material. ISSMI is not like CGSC where there is a focus on doctrine, planning, etc. As a result, the military experiences of the students are less meaningful.

Unlike US academic institutions that utilize the seminar methodology, ISSMI is strictly lecture based. ISSMI does not cater to all four types of learners (using the VARK model). Occasionally there are no PowerPoint slides to reference. It is just the professor talking about incredibly dense material and the students trying to make sense of it. If your Italian is good and you are an auditory learner you are in great shape. But if your Italian is not great and/or you are a visual, reading/writing, or kinesthetic learner it is going to be a challenge. ISSMI is attempting to promote critical thinking and discussion type learning during the lectures, but this is a concept that will still take time to be implemented and with CASD changing universities every 2-3 years it will be difficult to do so. You will find your Italian colleagues to be extremely intelligent. Our mission at ISSMI is not to be the honor grad. Rather, it is to develop relationships and gain cultural understanding.

Tests: Tests are administered at the end of each block of instruction. Tests are in Italian and in essay format. They expect around responses of around 3,000 to 6,000 characters (not words). You'll have two hours to complete the test and upload it using the school's test network. Grades are based on a scale of 0 to 30. 30 is the best. To pass a test you must score an 18. Average grades vary but are generally in the 24-27 range.

You will have several group papers to submit, and one individual paper. The topics will be assigned to you. You will need to submit the paper and present a slideshow on your paper towards the end of the course (late April).

President: You will be expected to select an entire block of instruction during which you will serve as president of the material. The president is expected to manage group work in the afternoon and brief the group work in plenary during a given block of instruction. This is your "leadership" opportunity. The operational planning (PO) block of instruction, for example, lasts about two weeks and is conducted entirely in English. If you select this block you will be briefing in English. If you select any other block of instruction you will be briefing in Italian. The best advice is to pick a topic that interests you. Except for PPI and

DO, all subjects are at least somewhat relevant to an American. PPI and DO are unique in that they apply exclusively to Italy. You may want to consider avoiding these two subjects for your presidency unless you are interested in the Italian national budget, how contracts are awarded in Italy or how their penal code and the Italian version of UCMJ works.

You will be expected to participate heavily during PO regardless of whether you elect to be president or not. There are two reasons. First, it is the only section taught in English and they consider you to be the subject matter expert in English along with the British student. Second, you are American and therefore an expert military planner. Prepare yourself to take an active role during PO.

Vacation and Long Weekends: These happen but not with the regularity we are accustomed to in the US military. Often the Italians will celebrate a holiday that falls on a Thursday or a Tuesday. You are required to submit a *licenza* (basically a pass) if you want Friday or Monday off. They call these bridge days. Nearly the entire class takes these days off. If you do not you are expected to arrive at the normal time and leave at the normal time while spending all day in your small group room doing self-study. There is no formal instruction during bridge days. The good news is that a *licenza* does not count against your US leave, provided you do not depart Italy. **If you leave Italy you are expected to submit a DA Form 31 to USAREUR.**

There are only two long vacations during ISSMI. The first break is two weeks during Christmas and the New Year and the second is one week during Easter. Most Italian schools (including the international schools) will take a week off in mid to late February for what is known as *la settimanabianca*. The purpose of this week is to allow families to go skiing. ISSMI does not grant *la settimanabianca* so if you want the time off you must request it via *licenza*. These are the best opportunities, apart from before and maybe after ISSMI, to either travel beyond Italy or see a lot of Italy.

Trips: In late November, each section will spend one week visiting various parts of Italy to receive tours of their military-industrial complex. This trip should be free and not require Army TDY funds provided your status is *gratuito*. The Italian Army sends one student each year to Fort Leavenworth and CGSC covers all expenses for that officer. In exchange, one US officer can attend ISSMI at no cost to the US Army. More than likely your Navy colleague will not have the same status and will have to dip into TDY funds to participate in all away trips. If you find yourself in this position, check with MPEP/SON in Wiesbaden regarding the availability of TDY funds. Your orders should reference whether TDY funding is available. The alternative is to go to CASD each day for self-study or take a week of *licenza*. The ODC is the POC for learning what your status is at ISSMI.

In May of each year there is a CJEX in the UK, France, Spain, Germany and Rome. International officers are not able to do the CJEX in another country. The CJEX lasts two weeks.

Just before or just after the CJEX, depending on your section, there may be a “bilateral trip” in which you can visit another country and do a trip similar to the trip taken within Italy in November. ISSMI 2019-2020 did not do this trip. Possible regions range from Europe to Central Asia to the Middle East and North Africa. In 2016 the countries included Israel, Morocco, Estonia and Serbia. In 2015 one of the countries was Romania. Funding for this trip is not included in the agreement between ISSMI and CGSC. You will need TDY funding from USAREUR if you want to

attend. However, be aware that in previous years ISSMI required international officers to take five of their 28 days of *licenza* to attend the trip. You may want to consider whether the bilateral is worth your time and worth taking *licenza*. If you do not attend the bilateral trip and do not take a trip during this time you will sit through what can only be described as last minute arrangements to fill white space on the calendar. Do yourself a favor and take this week off and go somewhere nice with your family.

Personal Travel during ISSMI: A big part of our mission at ISSMI is cultural understanding. This is much deeper than cultural awareness. In order to gain that understanding it is necessary interact with Italians and travel within Italy. Traveling can be difficult, however, given the limited three and four day weekends. Hence the importance of the travel strategy outlined in Part I above.

Final Thoughts on ISSMI: Ultimately, ISSMI is a great experience that for the most part teaches subject matter that will make you a better officer. However, being the one American student, or one of only two students some years when the Navy sends an officer, can be awkward at times. An overwhelming part of the course focuses on the US as an example, good and bad, but mostly good. The professors can be critical of the US at times, but they are almost always fair and positive. ISSMI provides an interesting optic from which to view the US. When looking at it from the European perspective you will see just how critical the US is to maintaining the international order that has ensured peace in Europe since the end of the Second World War. This is not something the Europeans were ever able to do for very long on their own. For this reason, there is quite a bit of anxiety about US policy and where it is headed. Just be mindful of what you say and how you behave. Always remember this and represent the US in a way that is consistent with this perception. None of this should be an issue for an O-4 in the US Army.

Part IV: Redeployment

Staying in Rome After ISSMI: Staying in Rome after ISSMI is absolutely possible. This presents an opportunity to visit anything in Rome, Italy or Europe that you have not had a chance to see. How long you can stay beyond ISSMI will be determined by your follow-on orders and perhaps *permesso di soggiorno* expiration dates for dependents. You can reasonably expect to remain in Rome for up to one month beyond your ISSMI graduation, however the Student Detachment, Fort Jackson policy says that you are to begin PCS leave the 11th day following graduation. Check the policy for updates towards the end of your course.

Shipping a POV Home: The process is straightforward and almost identical to the process used to ship the vehicle to Italy from the US. Schedule the appointment online at www.pcsmypov.com. The only difference between shipping to and from Italy is you will need to return your Italian plates to the MVRO in Naples prior to shipping your POV.

Returning License Plates: Contact the MVRO once you have a confirmed POV shipment date to let them know when you will be coming by. They will schedule an appointment for you. Simply stop by the MVRO before or after your POV appointment and return any license plates you have for POVs or motorcycles.

HHG: Contact the NSA Naples personal property office once you have orders. They will more than likely take your orders and personally handle the arrangement of your HHG and

UB move. You will need to provide them with your desired dates and they will take care of the rest.

TLA: You are authorized 10 days of TLA in Rome before departing for the US. If you are remaining in Europe check with your finance office to understand your entitlements. Do not expect to receive more than two days of TLA and OHA overlap on your way out of Rome. If your HHG move will take two days, you can stay in a hotel AND receive TLA beginning on the first night of your move. You will need to provide MPEP/SON confirmation of your move dates and your lease must terminate when your HHG depart in order to receive TLA.

Ending Your Lease: More than likely you will need to mail your landlord a *raccomandataricevuta di ritorno* to end your lease. To do this you must go to any Italian post office and request the *raccomandata*. It will cost you approximately 5.90€. Type a letter, sign it, put it in an envelope, and take it to the post office. They will mail it to your landlord and this will serve as official notification. Check your lease, but you will want to submit the *raccomandata* at least three weeks prior to the desired end date. A better option is to submit the *raccomandata* once you've scheduled HHG appointments and booked your return flight. All of this can be done months in advance of your lease end date provided you have orders.

DA Form 1059: You will be responsible for completing your own DA Form 1059. Reach out to your predecessor to obtain his or her signed copy. Utilize similar language and submit it to your tutor for your Vice Director's signature. Either the tutor or the Vice Director can sign in block 15.a. An American official within USAREUR will likely need to sign block 15.b. in that case. Your tutor or Vice Director may want to do their own write up, which is fine, but someone will need to translate it into English if it is written in Italian. You should have your 1059 ready to go once you finish your individual thesis defense. Get the signatures (at least in block 15.a.) and send it off to USAREUR.

Getting the Italian MA Recognized in the US: To get the Master's degree added to your ORB (military and civilian education) consider going through NACES <http://naces.org/>, which is who the Army trusts for evaluating foreign degrees. However, seek guidance from your branch manager prior to doing anything. NACES website will display who their partner members are that will perform the service. Mail all original documents to the service provider. There are many services available. Fees vary based on level of detail and how soon you require the evaluation. The fast service with multiple copies, a course-by-course evaluation and multiple copies of official translations for all documents in Italian (including the ISSMI diploma) will cost about \$500. If your timeline is not stringent and you do not need multiple copies or a course-by-course evaluation, the fee will be much less.

Within two weeks you should receive everything by FedEx. At that point, you can visit your local S1/G1/J1. They will update your ORB and submit all documents for iPERMS upload (including the translations, etc.). The Army course code that your S1 needs to search for to add ISSMI to your Military Education on your ORB is "KJC: Italian Command & Staff College (CSC)". Finally, send scanned copies of the originals, translations, and evaluation report to your branch manager to have your civilian education updated. The degree should appear on your ORB in a matter of days.

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