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Civitella,
Arezzo.

1 November 44.

STATEMENT OF:-

SABATINI Laura Guasti, Female.
24 Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, Aged 39 years.
Civitella,
Arezzo.

Who saith,

I have lived here for the past eighteen months being an evacuee from FLORENCE. My husband SABATINI Paolo 54 years, was murdered by the Germans on the 29th. June 1944. I have three children, Paola a girl 16 years, Roberto a boy 11 years and Giuliana a girl of eight years.

About 2130 hours on Sunday, 18th. June 1944, my husband and I were in our home when we heard the sound of machine-gun fire which appeared to be very near. We opened one of the windows which overlooks the street and saw a lot of people running. After a while we were informed that some German soldiers had been shot in the DOPO LAVORO Club.

About 0500 hours the following morning, Monday, 19th. June 1944, I saw a lot of people leaving the village. They were afraid of German reprisals.

At 1000 hours, Signora CAU who was interpreter to the Germans in the district came to CIVITELLA. She, with the assistance of some other woman attended to the bodies of the German soldiers and prepared them for burial.

On Tuesday, 20th. June 1944, about 1030 hours, a German soldier came to the village in a white BALILLA FIAT. He spoke to CAU who was still here and together they went to the DOPO LAVORO Club.

Later that morning CAU came to me and asked for wood for the purpose of making coffins. This I gave her.

About 1400 hours the same day from the window of my house I saw German soldiers go to the DOPO LAVORO Club. They had come to collect the bodies and bury them.

After the funeral the German again returned to the village and sometime during the evening I heard some firing but did not know what was happening. A German soldier came to the house and he told us all to go to the village square. Here our identity cards were checked then we were permitted to return.

About 1300 hours on Wednesday, 27th. June 1944, two German soldiers came to my house and took away a wireless set.

On Thursday, 29th. June 1944, I, with my husband

and the two/....

/with my husband

and the two youngest children went to the SANTA MARIA ASSUNTA Church in CIVITELLA as it was the day of St. Peter and St. Paul.

About 0700 hours, just as Mass began a lot of machine gun fire could be heard and it appeared to come from somewhere in the village. Everyone in the Church thought that the firing was due to the Germans retreating and the British occupying the village. The priest Don Alcide LAZZERI thought the same and told us so, then carried on with the service.

The Mass was finished but everyone remained in the Church as they were afraid of the sound of the machine gun fire which everyone could still hear quite plainly. The priest then told us all that if the German soldiers attempted to take any property or food as they left the area not to interfere but to let them take whatever they pleased and in that way avoid trouble.

About 0800 hours, a German soldier entered the Church. He was carrying a pistol about twenty-five centimetres in length in his right hand. The soldier started to shout but as he spoke in German I could not understand him.

Everyone in the Church was in a terrible state of confusion and all made for the door.

As my husband and I got outside I saw three German soldiers standing beside the door. Each soldier was holding a rifle which was about sixty-six centimetres in length, in front of his body. These soldiers let us pass and no one spoke. In front of the church there is a small green and a number of German soldiers were lying there behind machine guns. I do not know how many there were. These soldiers were shouting and jeering at us as we left the Church.

We had walked about fifteen metres from the Church when a German soldier who we were passing gave my husband a push and told him to go with some other civilians who were standing beside a wall. These civilians were all men and were watched by German soldiers who carried machine guns.

I did not worry at first as I thought it was a check of identity papers as the Germans had done a few days previous. I had difficulty in getting my little girl to leave as she wanted to stay with her father. As I was trying to get her away a soldier came up to me and said:- "Women and children get away from here." This was spoken in perfect Italian.

I left my husband and took my children home. When I arrived there I found that the Germans were burning everything. In the hallway I had a large hallstand which was ablaze as well as several other things. German soldiers were leaning out of the upstairs windows and shouting at me to go away.

I was terrified/...

/to go away.

I was terrified and my children were by this time in a state, crying and screaming, that I left at once.

On walking up the street I met a German soldier and asked him where I had to go as his comrades were destroying my home. He told me to go away into the country.

I, together with my children left CIVITELLA by a road leading in a northerly direction to POGGIALI. This road was crammed with women and children, all running away from the village. I had just left the village when a woman PAGGI Elda came screaming down the road. She only wore a nightdress and was covered from head to foot in blood. PAGGI was screaming, "They have killed my husband." She, of course, meant that the Germans had killed her husband.

I got about two hundred metres from CIVITELLA when a boy came running from that direction. I asked him what was happening in the village and he said that the Germans were killing the men in groups of five.

After a while I left the road and proceeded to POGGIALI by way of the fields and arrived there at about 1100 hours, the same morning. There were a lot of women and children here and we were all in the Orphanage, where we remained until the following morning.

I left the Orphanage the next morning, Friday, 30th. June 1944, accompanied by my servant MORI Rosina, leaving my children in care of a friend at the Orphanage. As I entered CIVITELLA I could see that the village had been destroyed. Several houses were still burning.

Some women who were already in the village told me where my husband's body was and I at once went to the house they mentioned.

I found my husband's body lying in the passage-way just inside the front door. He had three bullet wounds in the side of his head. There were other bodies in this house and amongst them I also recognised TAVERNESI Agostino D'LORENZO Giuliani and SCARLETTI Dario.

Later the same morning with the assistance of my servant and another woman, using a door as a stretcher, we managed to get my husband's body from the house to the Church.

I then returned to my home and had a coffin made out of some planks of wood.

On the morning of Saturday, 1st. July 1944, about 1030 hours I returned to the Church with the coffin and put the body of my husband into it. Some man carried his body to the Municipal Cemetery, CIVITELLA, where it was buried later the same day.

That evening, I returned to POGGIALI where I

remained with my/....

/POGGIALI where I

remained with my children until Tuesday, 11th. July, 1944.
From here we went to MONTE SAN SAVINO where I remained until
Tuesday, 18th. July, 1944, when I returned to CIVITELLA.

My husband SABATINI Paolo, fifty-four years,
was an agricultural adviser and valuer. He had never been a
Partisan and had never assisted them.

I have read over this statement. It is true
and correct. I herewith append my signature.

(Sgd) LAURA GUASTI SABATINI.

Statement written down in Italian and signature
witnessed by FABBRONI Vasco, Interpreter, in the presence of
Sgt Clewlow, both of 78 Section, SIB, on 1st. November 44, at
CIVITELLA, AREZZO.

I certify that the above translation from Italian
is correct and true and to the best of my ability.

Fabbroni Vasco
FABBRONI VASCO.