

Civitella,
Arezzo.

7th November, 1944.

STATEMENT OF:-

ROSSI Lina,
Civitella,
Arezzo.

Female.
35 years.

Who saith,

I am the niece of the late priest DON ALCIDE LAZZERI, he was murdered by the Germans on the 29th June, 1944. He was fifty seven (57) years of age and priest in CIVITELLA at the church of the ASSUMPTION. He had lived in CIVITELLA for five years previous to which he lived at PONTICINO.

On the night of the 18th June, 1944, about 20.00 hours, I was in the house near the church when I heard a few shots apparently from just outside the house. This noise frightened me so I called my uncle who arrived a few minutes later. My uncle had not heard the shots but because the people outside were running about and shouting we realized that something had happened in the village. It was about 23.00 hours the same evening when we were told that two (2) German soldiers had been killed in the DOLOLAVORO CLUB. We were also told that these soldiers had been killed by Partisans. We passed the night watching in case other Germans should return and take reprisals on the village.

The next morning, Monday, 19th June, 1944, my uncle left CIVITELLA for the farm of BONICOLINI, which is about three (3) kilometres south of the village. I remained in the village, my uncle returned about 17.00 hours the same evening.

On Tuesday, 20th June, 1944, some German soldiers came into the village and they sent for my uncle. He was taken by them to the DOLOLAVORO CLUB and stood by whilst the Germans removed the papers from the pockets of the dead soldiers. Then the Germans had finished they told my uncle through means of an interpreter that they would return for the bodies at 17.00 hours the same day. However they returned at 14.00 hours, and sent for my uncle, he was out attending to something but when he returned about 15.00 hours he went with them immediately. He accompanied the Germans to the cemetery and performed the burial service. When the Germans returned to the village about 17.00 hours they were very angry, they saw some young men who were afraid and running away, they immediately fired at them, no one however was hurt.

After this my uncle and I went to the farm of BONICOLINI where we remained until Thursday, 22nd June, 1944, when we returned to the village about 06.30 hours in the morning.

Everything went well in the village until Tuesday, 27th June, 1944, up to then we never saw any more Germans although during this time everyone seemed to be in fear of what may happen and somehow expecting reprisals. Between 14.00 hours and 15.00 hours, on Tuesday, two German

soldiers called at/....

/to German soldiers,

called at the house of my uncle. They asked for wireless sets, typewriters or arms, my uncle informed them that he had a wireless set. They took the wireless (value 3000 lire), my uncle tried to persuade them to leave it but they said, "WE WILL TAKE IT WITH US IF YOU DO NOT GIVE IT TO US". They asked my uncle to come and show them the wireless sets in the village but he refused. My uncle then told them that he had seen several partisans in the village of late and asked them to leave quickly and to avoid trouble. They told my uncle that they had orders to kill fifty (50) civilians for each soldier killed by partisans and that they would leave when they were ready. They left shortly after and did take several wireless sets from the villagers.

On Thursday, 29th June, 1944, I went to the church with my uncle at 07.00 hours, it being the day of St Peter and St Paul. About 07.15 hours some people started coming into the church they appeared afraid and there was a lot of whispering. It was about this time when I heard some firing. I asked someone what was wrong and they told me that the Germans were in the village and they were placing machine guns outside the church. I informed my uncle of this in consequence of this he stopped the service and said to the people, "I do not know what is happening but I think that the Germans are retreating and the British are occupying the village. If the Germans try to take anything let them have it and so avoid trouble". Then my uncle carried on with the service, when it was finished he told the people that they should remain in the church until the fighting was finished.

About 08.30 hours a German soldier came into the church, he was shouting and waving a pistol about at everyone. He was followed a few minutes later by a second German soldier and they both came to the front of the church when they ordered everyone outside. My uncle tried to reason with these soldiers but one of them stuck a pistol in his face and told him to go outside also. When we got outside, (my uncle and I), we saw German soldiers lying behind machine guns and others standing about in the square all with weapons of some description held in front of their bodies. At one side of the square there was a group of men from the village they were under an armed guard. My uncle seemed to realize what was going to happen and asked permission to say benediction to his people, this was granted and none of the Germans spoke as he went through the service.

When he finished the Germans started going through every ones pockets taking watches, wallets or anything of value. After a while a German soldier came up to me, as I was still holding my uncle's arm and told me to go away, I refused. He pulled me off my uncle's arm, then held a pistol at my head and forced me to walk up the street. All the village at this time appeared to be ablaze and I enquired where I was supposed to go. The German told me to get right out of the village. By this time we had reached the hospital and lying outside I saw a pile of old men, they had all been shot and were lying in a pool of blood. The road out of the village seemed to be littered with the bodies of men. German

soldiers were laughing/....

/bodies of men.

German soldiers were laughing as they carried these bodies and threw them into houses that were on fire and blazing furiously. I noticed that all the women and children were going in the direction of FUGLIANI so I followed and got to the orphanage there between 10.00 and 11.00 hours that morning.

I remained here for about eight (8) days and then went to FORTE S. SAVINO. I returned to CIVITELLA on 17th July, 1944, when the British were here. I asked who had buried my uncle it was LAMBIONI Luigi of CIVITELLA.

My uncle was never connected with the Partisans or any political party. He had been a priest for 35 years and always belonged to the church.

I remember a little about the Germans, they were all dressed in camouflaged jackets and wore steel helmets.

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

(Sgd) LINA ROSSI.

Statement written down in Italian and signature witnessed by MUSICARO ALBERTO, Interpreter, in the presence of Sgt CLEMLOW both of 78 Section, A.I.B. on the 7th November, 1944, at CIVITELLA.

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

Musicaro Alberto
MUSICARO ALBERTO.