

Civitella,
Arezzo.

14 November 44.

STATEMENT OF:-

TIRRELL Daniele, Male.
Civitella, Aged 18 years.
Arezzo.

The oath.

I am a student and have lived in CIVITELLA
all my life.

Between 2100 hours and 2130 hours on Sunday,
18th. June 1944, I was sitting on my balcony outside my house.
This balcony overlooks the street and the DOPO LAVORO Club is
in the same street about thirty metres from my house.

It was dark at this time and as was usual in
the village at this time of the evening everything was quiet
and nobody was in the street.

My attention was drawn to three figures which
were making their way in the direction of the club. They
were dodging from doorway to doorway in a furtive manner and
were obviously attempting to avoid attracting attention. It
was too dark for me to see them properly and I cannot describe
their appearance.

I lost sight of them and about ten minutes later
I heard the sound of what appeared to be two revolvers firing
from the direction of the club. There was the sound of several
shots. I immediately went indoors and on looking out from a
window I saw about eight men run out of the club and heard
them swearing in Italian. It was again too dark for me to
see them properly. Shortly afterwards my brother TIRRELL Bruno
(since killed on the 29 June 44), came indoors. He had been
in the club and was bleeding from the head. He was later
treated by Doctor GEMELLI.

The next morning many people left their homes in
CIVITELLA but none of my family did so.

About 0830 hours on Monday, 19th. June 1944, I
went to the DOPO LAVORO Club and in the room nearest to the
street I saw the bodies of two German soldiers lying on the
floor. They were dressed in grey-green jackets and trousers.
Both had belts with daggers attached.

About 1000 hours, the same day, I saw Signora
CAU or COU, in the street near the club. I had known this
woman for several months prior to this date and she had told me
that she was an official interpreter for the German soldiers at
FLORENCE. I describe her as being 180 centimetres in height,
thin, blonde and had a very long pointed nose.

When I saw her she was talking to a number of
women and I heard her say that she was going to the Germans
to inform them that two Germans had been killed and said that
she would intercede with the Germans on behalf of the citizens
of CIVITELLA in order to prevent reprisals for what had occurred.

On the afternoon of Tuesday, 20th. June 1944, a

party of about/....

/June 1944, a

party of about twelve German soldiers arrived in CIVITELLA for the funeral. All these Germans were dressed alike in light coloured trousers and jackets and field service caps. They wore no equipment but each carried a rifle. I did not see any markings on their uniforms. The bodies were carried on an Army lorry which I cannot describe other than it was a very large lorry covered in with canvas.

The priest, Don LAZZERI Aloide, conducted the service at the cemetery, and many Italian civilians attended the funeral.

About half an hour later I was in the attic of my house when I saw the Germans return to the Piazza from the funeral. Almost immediately they commenced firing at two men whom I could see in the OLD TOWER. These two men immediately surrendered to the Germans who took them away out of my sight.

I have seen both these men since this incident both apparently unharmed.

Later that evening I was indoors when I heard the sound of shots from the street outside my house. I looked out of the window and saw several German soldiers banging the doors of neighbouring houses with their rifle butts and firing their rifles into the air. I was still looking out of the window when I heard what I took to be a bullet, strike the window frame above my head. I immediately got away from the window. A short while afterwards there was a loud knocking on our street door and after waiting for a moment or two, my mother opened it.

A German soldier whom I took to be a Maresciallo, entered. I describe him as being 5ft. 10ins. tall, very fat, clean shaven and about 40 years old. He wore a grey green steel helmet, a camouflage smock which just reached his knees and secured round his waist with a belt. He was carrying an automatic rifle. He was not wearing any badge or rank. He did not speak very good Italian.

He forced me out of the house and took me to a clearing at the bottom of the town. There I was placed with about six men and about fifty women, all Italians. In this clearing were parked two small staff cars and two Army lorries with no canvas coverings. There were, as far as I can remember, no markings on these vehicles. Also in this clearing about thirtyfive to forty German soldiers. Five or six were dressed the same as Italian Air Force men in sky blue jackets and trousers with an eagle on the left breast, in brass. Each wore a Field service cap and carried an automatic rifle. The rest of the Germans were armed with pistols and rifles.

After a short consultation between the Germans some of us were asked for our identity papers and afterwards sent to our homes.

On Tuesday 27 June 44, I saw two German soldiers carrying a paper, to which they every now and again referred, call at several houses in CIVITELLA collecting wireless sets. They were dressed in light coloured colonial uniform and were

carrying revolvers but/....

/uniform and were

carrying revolvers but I was too far away from them to describe them properly.

On Thursday 29 June 44, I was assisting at a service at the church of S. MARIA ASSUNTA and the service was almost over, at about 0730 hours, when I noticed that the congregation, a large one, appeared to be restless. People were murmuring and whispering and in the distance I heard what I took to rifle shots. Some women left the church but the service went on but the firing came nearer and became louder. The service was practically over when there was an explosion outside the church door which sounded like a grenade bursting.

The priest told us all not to worry as he thought it was the Germans retreating and if they attempted to take any of our property we were not to interfere but to let them take whatever they wanted and avoid any friction.

An Italian civilian entered the church and I heard him tell the priest Don LAZZERI Aloide, that the Germans had fixed up three machine guns in the Piazza covering the church door.

Mass was finished but the congregation remained inside the church. Four German soldiers entered the church, three carried pistols and one an automatic rifle.

These soldiers all wore the same dress :- steel helmets, camouflage smocks and each had a red band with a black lettering on his sleeve between the shoulder and elbow. I cannot tell you anything about the lettering.

They were shouting to the congregation in Italian to get out of the church and menacing the people with the weapons which they carried. People started to file out of church with their hands above their heads and I, who was still dressed in the cassock which I had worn for the service, was one of the last to leave.

When I got to the church door, I saw in the Piazza outside, seven or eight machine guns fitted up, with German soldiers in position behind them. I heard a voice shouting "Keep your hands up", and I moved forward with the women, as I thought my cassock might conceal my identity.

There were also in the Piazza, about twentyfive more Germans mostly armed with revolvers and I saw that the women were being sent away down the street while the men were being lined up near the water cistern which is about twenty five yards away from the church.

I was still amongst several women when the same Maresciallo who had dragged me out of my house saw me, grabbed me by the arm and hustled me over to where the men were lined up.

As I stood there I saw several houses in the village were burning.

The Maresciallo came over to us and called out to some soldiers in German and they came over to where we were standing and searched us.

I saw them take wallets and wristwatches from

the Italians and/....

/and wristwatches from

the Italians and place them in their pockets but I did not lose my wallet which was in my hip pocket. I was searched but they did not discover it. The soldier who searched me said in an obvious Tuscan dialect, "Have you not got anything?" I am certain that he was an Italian by his speech.

After we had been searched I heard from the direction of the school, a voice shout in Italian, "Five", but I could not see who was shouting.

I then saw a German shove the priest Don LAZZERI Aloide, who had been lined up with us towards the school, in the direction of the school, which occupied the north east corner of the square. A road leads from the square along the west and north side of the school.

The priest said to the German, "We are innocent". "We have done nobody any harm and have done no wrong". The German shrugged his shoulders as though he did not understand and carried on pushing the priest towards the school.

The Maresciallo with his pistol in his hand said something in German and dragged four men out of the group. They, menaced by a German soldier on each side of them armed with an automatic rifle, were forced to march down the road and away out of my sight behind the school.

A minute or two later, I heard several distinct separated shots which I thought were caused by pistols.

I then saw a German soldier come up the road from the direction of the back of the school and he, in broken Italian shouted "Another five". The Maresciallo then caught hold of me and indicated for me to proceed. I walked towards the back of the school followed by another four men.

When I reached the back of the school I saw a machine gun on a tripod with a German laying behind it facing the Piazza. There were another three machine guns fitted up with Germans in position behind them, two on one side and one opposite the first one, all forming three sides of a square.

Laying in the square so formed were the five bodies of the first Italians to leave the Piazza. They were: Don LAZZERI Aloide, MENCHETTI Torquato, SABATINI Paolo, PASQUI Giuseppe, and TAVERNISI Agostino. All of their faces were covered in blood and they were apparently dead.

The five of us were formed up in a rough line by the German soldiers and another German soldier with a pistol came immediately afterwards and pushed each of us into a mere straight line. We were standing alongside the bodies with our backs to two machine guns. The last mentioned German soldier then stood clear of us and raised his pistol as though to signal to the machine gunners, on I saw the machine gunner on my left smile and nod to the machine gunner on my right and heard a click as of a machine action being cocked, behind me and acting on the spur of the moment, I turned to my left and ran.

I passed the German with the pistol and he, possibly taken by surprise, made no attempt to stop me. I ran as fast as I could along the back road of the village, zig zagging as I went.

When I had gone about twelve paces away, in full

view of the /.....

/away, in full

view of the execution squad I heard a burst of machine gun fire behind me and heard bullets whistling past me. I discovered afterwards two holes in my cassock and one in my trouser leg apparently caused by bullets but I was not hit by that burst.

I carried on running for about another twelve paces and then felt a blow on my right side. I fell down, but feeling no pain and hearing somebody running behind me, I got up and recommenced running.

I dodged behind a building about a hundred metres from the school and jumped over the town wall. This wall is not high on the town side but is about seven metres high on the other side.

The town of CIVITELLA is built on the top of a hill and the hillside at this point is terraced for cultivation purposes. I climbed over two walls and gradually made my way downhill. Each time I left the shelter of a wall I was fired at but was not again hit.

I hid at the bottom of one of these walls until I thought pursuit by the Germans had ceased and then with difficulty, because my wound had bled a lot and I was weak, in consequence, I made my way into the woods.

In the woods I hid in a clump of bushes and saw two German soldiers evidently searching for Italians. I was not far from CIVITELLA and could still hear explosions, and hear the women crying out in anguish. These two Germans were engaged in firing stray shots into the clumps of bushes. They fired into the clump in which I was hiding but I was not hit again.

After things had quietened down I attempted to move but found that I could not do so. I was discovered later in the day by my relatives who treated my wounds.

I had a wound in the back and another in my chest on the right side of my body, consistent with having been caused by a bullet passing through my body from back to chest.

The next day with assistance I returned to CIVITELLA but I saw no bodies in the streets.

Our house was destroyed and I was put to bed in my uncle's house. Two days afterwards Doctor ROSAI from BADIA al PINO visited me and treated me.

A few days later, hearing that the Germans were preparing to defend CIVITELLA against the British, I left the house and again took to the woods. Ten days later at night, I was picked up by members of the GERMAN GOERING REGIMENT and made to dig trenches near AREZZO.

I returned to CIVITELLA after the English had liberated the town.

I would definitely recognise the German Maresciallo referred to in this statement again.

I have read over this statement. It is true

and correct. I /....