

Cornia,
Arezzo.

21 December 44.

STATEMENT OF :-

VENTURINI Fortunato,
Cornia,
Arezzo.

Male 42 years.

Who saith,

I am a smallholder and have lived at the above address all my life. I am the brother of VENTURINI Alfredo, aged 52 years who was killed at CIVITELLA on 29 June 44.

About 0700 hours on Thursday 29 June 44 I was feeding my oxen near my home when I heard the sound of machine gun fire and saw smoke rising from the valley about one kilometre from my house. I kept careful watch but at that time did not go away from my house.

About 0830 hours I saw five or six German soldiers advancing in open formation across the fields towards CORNIA. They were at this time about five hundred metres away, too far for me to see them very clearly and consequently I cannot describe them.

I went into my house and told my wife what I had seen and we went into the woods to hide, about five hundred metres away from the village. On our way we were fired at. I heard the sound of machine gun fire and heard bullets whistling over our heads. Neither of us were hit and managed to reach our place of concealment unharmed.

From where I was, I saw, at intervals, parties of Germans converging on CORNIA in a similar manner to the first party, from different directions until there must have been at least fifty German soldiers in the village.

For the next hour or so I heard the sounds of grenades bursting, machine gun, rifle fire and the crying out of the women who were left inside CORNIA.

About 1000 hours I saw flames arising from the houses but from my position it was impossible to observe the actions of the German troops. About midday I heard an armoured car passing along the road and going into the village and coming from the direction of CORNIA. I could not see this car without giving my position away but I know the sound that an armoured car makes, and examined the road about two hours later and saw the marks made by the tracks of the car.

I returned to the village about 1400 hours the same day and saw the houses still burning fiercely. In the road I found the dead body of PONTIANI ROSA, aged 52 years. The lower part of her body was burned and laying on top of her was a dead bear. The body of the woman was unclothed and

the burns on/...

/was unclothed and
the burns on the bear corresponded with the burns on her body.

My own house was burning too fiercely for me to
extinguish the fire so I took my wife and my family into the
woods to spend the night.

On Friday, 30 June, 1944 I was again in CORNIA
when two escaped South African prisoners-of-war arrived in the
village carrying the dead bodies of my brother VENTURINI Alfredo
and BERNARDONI Zelindo aged 62 years. They told me that both
men had been killed in CIVITELLA on the previous day. I ident-
ified both bodies by their features and saw that each had been
shot in the head. All these bodies, among others, were buried
in CORNIA cemetery on subsequent days.

My home was completely gutted by fire and my be-
longings destroyed with it.

My brother was not a Partisan and had never assist-
ed them in any way as far as I know.

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

(Sgd.) VENTURINI Fortunato.

Statement written down in Italian and signature
witnessed by MAGINI Livia, interpreter, in the presence of
Sgt. CHARLES both of 78 Section A.I.B. on Thursday 21 December,
1944. at CORNIA.

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

Magini Livia
MAGINI Livia.