

ACC 10000/125/173

51/9/ENG/PAT.

WEEKLY REPORTS - LANCIANO

OCT. 1944

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51/9 8 OCT recd 115C.

TO : HQ ACC Patriots Branch.

FROM : HQ AMG Abruzzi-Marche Region.

SUBJECT : Situation at Lanciano (Report)

REF : R5/507/24.

DATE : 7 Oct 44.

Herewith enclosed report received from Capt CAOMPAGNOLI COMPAGNUCCI, Patriot Representative at Chieti.

Forwarded for your information please.

FOR REGIONAL COMMISSIONER:

SEEN.	INITIALS	DATE
Col. Mc. C. HY		
Maj. MAGNUS	P.N.	
Maj. DRAGE		
Maj. S. V. DORI		
Col. FAVA		
SP/WEC.		

S. PICKERING,
Lt Col.
R.E.S.O.



Please see, especially "A" in p. 3
P.N. 6173

TO HEADQUARTERS, ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION
Patriot Branch

For information - Headquarters, Central Italy
Group of Patriot Bands,
Via Napoli, 42.
" " - AMG, Chieti

SUBJECT: Situation at Lanciano.

Following the general report on the Province (Ref. No. 2), I have sent detailed reports on the Palombaro band (Ref no. 5) and reports on the present situation at Guardiagrele (Ref. No. 3). Next is a

REPORT ON THE SITUATION AT LANCIANO during the period of German occupation.

On 14 September 1943, a nucleus of patriots composed of about 20 persons was formed at Lanciano and began acts of sabotage and damage against the Nazi-Fascist elements (interception of cars calling the young men to arms, destruction of notices on the walls and direction signs, cutting of telephone wires, etc.) Some members were sent into the country roundabout to add other patriots to the group, so that quickly a force of about 150 men was obtained. This group never had any direct link with the British authorities, although it did everything possible to send news, maps and data to the Allies by means of people who crossed the lines. On the night of 2-3 October a blow was organized against the headquarters of the militia and the patriots obtained about 250 rifles, (number illegible) machine guns, four cases of grenades and numerous boxes of ammunition. The Patriot commander, a certain Amerigo Di Wemmo attempted to put himself in touch with the local command of the carabinieri, but found hostility and only three carabinieri joined the movement.

On the 4th October the disposition of the patriots was as follows: Two groups scattered in the country around Lanciano and one group in the city; this latter had its arms hidden in the local shooting range. German elements, informed of the particulars and of the composition of one band, headed on the 5th October in two trucks toward the arms deposit. These trucks were attacked by the patriots, the soldiers on them driven off and the vehicles burned. Two patriots were taken prisoner by the Germans, but one of them was able to flee the following day.

Certain of serious repercussions, the patriots of Lanciano met and prepared for a defense. On the morning of 6 October about 50 Germans approached the city and approximately half a kilometer from the city disposed themselves to take advantage of the terrain. As soon as the Germans' purpose was clear, the patriots opened fire but were not at first able to overcome the superiority in arms of the enemy. Finally, with the arrival of reinforcements, the German unit was decimated and later destroyed. While this action was taking place, another large group of the enemy approached another side of the city, but were stopped by the prepared defense. About 10 Germans

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Certain of serious repercussions, the patriots of Lanciano met and prepared for a defense. On the morning of 6 October about 30 Germans approached the city and approximately half a kilometer from the city disposed themselves to take advantage of the terrain. As soon as the Germans' purpose was clear, the patriots opened fire but were not at first able to overcome the superiority in arms of the enemy. Finally, with the arrival of reinforcements, the German unit was decimated and later destroyed. While this action was taking place, another large group of the enemy approached another side of the city, but were stopped by the prepared defense. About 10 Germans were killed and others were seriously wounded. The battle, begun about 9 o'clock in the morning was carried on victoriously until 1 o'clock in the afternoon, when news came that strong German units were advancing on the city.

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Then groups of patriots were sent to attack the enemy units on their line of march; these patriot units placed themselves at favorable positions and opened fire sharply despite the numerical and armament superiority of the enemy. Finally the German troops achieved superiority and entered the city, where they started (while the battle was still going on) to burn houses and businesses in the center of town with the evident purpose of razing the whole city to the ground. At the same time other German forces went from house to house ordering all the people away.

The archbishop of Lanciano, Monsignor Treasuri, pleaded with the German command to have the city spared the horrors of destruction and obtained a truce, of which the patriots took advantage to go away from the place.

The band's center of activity was then transferred to Rocca San Giovanni, Villa Scorsioza and the Sangro river zone, and every means was tried to put it in contact with allied authorities, meanwhile continuing the work of sabotage.

The Germans had already tortured the patriot Trantino Barba, maltreating him, blinding him and then shooting him, began a barbarous campaign of repression against the patriots still in the city, and old women and children were shot without distinction. (The tortures inflicted on the patriot Barba ~~were~~ caused a protest even by a German medical major, who, to make sure what had happened, had the body disinterred and ordered an autopsy.)

In this and later actions and repressions, 23 patriots were killed. Traces can still be seen in the city of the devastation left by the fires the Germans started.

REPORT ON THE PRESENT SITUATION AT LANCIANO.

As soon as the city was liberated, on the 27th December, 1943, the remaining patriots united to pay tribute to the fallen and to establish a Patriots' Section, which now contains about 130 members and about 100 so-called "collaborators" who took no active part in the operations (against the Germans).

The section is directed by Amerigo Di Memmo, a radio technician, and by a certain Dr. Carlo Schonheim. 127

Di Memmo came from a working family, is employed and is non-political. He was named communal counselor and co-operates actively with the local authorities. I have the impression that he is a person to be trusted and that he has complete sympathy for the Allies.

Dr. Carlo Schonheim, a native of Arad, Hungary, is a former political internee. He now lives at Lanciano, where the Allied authorities obtained for him a position as doctor in the

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Dr. Carlo Schonheim, a native of Arec, Hungary, is a former political internee. He now lives at Lanciano, where the Allied authorities obtained for him a position as doctor in the local hospital. He is capable in his profession, and strictly anti-communist in political tendencies. He is a person to be trusted and has the respect of the local authorities.

Among the "collaborators" of the section there are some whose precedents are not such that they can be trusted and therefore I have suggested the directors to eliminate them, so as to be able to answer fully for the character of all of those who are connected with the Section.

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The directors are faithful to all instructions given to them and I believe that they can be counted on for conducting properly the activity of the Section.

I found that political groups, among them the Party of Action and the Communist Party, were trying to filter into the ranks and to manipulate the Section into political activities; I have warned the directors against such a possibility and I believe that such maneuvers will be prevented at the proper time. This is the more important because these parties are represented in the committee of liberation by doubtful elements, in whom little faith can be placed--like Nicola Fazio of the Action party, who is unemployed; and Mola, a so-called professor who lacks recommendations and who is given to drink, representing the Communist party. Fernando Mercadante, secretary of the committee of liberation, is himself used by Mola and is distrusted by the authorities.

Therefore, despite the efforts of certain elements, the Patriot Group can be considered non-political.

In its ranks there are large numbers of unemployed; I cite in their favor that they were previously under arms; these were turned over to the Allies upon their arrival and consisted in 250 rifles, a machine gun and four cases of grenades. I shall try as much as possible to find whether there are still some in their hands, despite the assurances given me by the directors of the Section.

There are excellent relations between the civilian authorities, the carabinieri and the directors of the section, which is considered to be well-organized and likely to be a strong force in the future; and already, beyond the members previously sent as volunteers to the front, about 40 enlistment requests have been sent to this office.

CHIETI - 4 October 1944

The Military Delegate

Captain E. Compagnucci Compagnoli

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