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REPORTS ON BANDS IN ENEMY C

1944

REPORTS ON BANDS IN ENEMY OCCUPIED TERRITORY

1944

Def 60/Pat.
(From the daily paper "Unità" of 27/7/4)

The "Brigata Romagnola"

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These are the words of "Dola" partisan for 8 months of a Garibaldi brigade operating in the mountains of ROMAGNA - "A fine Unit, a real small organised army".

A few days after the Armistice "Libero" from Trieste, who had fought under Tito, formed the "Brigata Romagnola". At the start it was composed of seven to eight young men armed only with revolvers. (Later on it was formed of 3 Garibaldi formations). They armed themselves fighting. Many recruits joined the brigade. It grew so large that it was divided into companies, it had a recruiting centre and an administrative service. It became a real organisation.

The first activities of the Brigade was to clear away all the fascists of the area. Attacks were made every night against carabinieri and fascist militia garrisons and Commands. Having liberated the area for a radius of many kilometres, attacks were then made on the German lines of communication and arms and prisoners were captured. The population helped in every way and was helped in return by the Patriots who distributed corn taken from the Germans and gave money to the poor. Of great importance was the support given to the workers in the strikes of November and May at Imola and Cesena.

Sant'Agata Feltrina was a well defended town, strong with machine gun sitings and a number of fascist units. The partisans of the Garibaldi Brigade, one night came down from the mountains and with a stratagem (they entered the town in the Mercato Saraceno bus having obliged the passengers to get out before reaching it) and taking the fascists by surprise captured most of them. The old mediaeval tower was attacked by three partisans armed only with hand grenades and it was captured without a single shot being fired from the machine gun covering the entrance. 800 quintals of corn, 10 quintals of sugar and pasta and cloth from 2 warehouses were distributed. At night, when the partisans returned to the mountains, the population accompanied them for several miles.

German reprisal was pitiless and brutal. An entire Nazi division and a number of fascist battalions were sent to attack the partisans. In the subsequent fighting the German losses could be rated at 50/1 against partisan losses. The Germans unable to capture the patriots, revenged themselves on the civil population and villages. All those villages between Stia and Castagnolo were destroyed.

At Freggheto a severe fight took place between the Brigade lead by its commander "Falco" and the Germans. Many Germans were killed. The partisan losses were: 2 dead, many slightly wounded who were carried away by their comrades in the retreat for 4 nights and days. 3 partisans were seriously wounded and could not be saved.

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The 2 Patriots killed were brothers - they died a few minutes one after the other. The first cried out to his brother "I am dying, kill them all, Long live Stalin". The second brother cried out - Mother! Long live Communism!

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TO THE COMMAND OF THE PARTISAN BRIGADE

ROME

The undersigned ARCATI GIUSEPPE declares following:

On September 8th 1943 the undersigned was working in Guidonia when the Germans arrived and occupied the camp. We all left our work. The Germans disarmed two divisions by Botte, from which place I and other fellows started to transfer arms and munitions to a locality called Ponte Lucano to put them in a safe place. We carried away 10 heavy machine-guns, 4 cases of grenades and other munitions. Later on I went back to the Guidonia camp and was able to take a radio, which could not be operated for the Partisans as we were not able to put it into operation. After which I and other Partisans moved on to Monte Gennaro where there were also some English, American and South-African prisoners who had escaped from concentration camps of the Abruzzi. One morning one of our informers let us know that German platoons were coming toward Monte Gennaro to mop up prisoners; we then fled to Monte Libretti.

Here more Allied prisoners were gathering, so that we decided to fetch a fairly large quantity of the arms we had concealed at Monte Lucano and to carry them, always at night, to Favale (near Monte Gennaro).

On January 1944 a republican fascist denounced us to the German Command for having taken cattle to feed ourselves and from that moment we were continuously harassed. Food supplies were scanty and life became very hardy

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One day we heard machine-gun fire on a vast front: the Germans were mopping up prisoners. Four among the Anglo - American prisoners were taken by armes and therefore we had to move up to another place. We moved on to the Morricone mountains and started to organize the sabotage of the telephone lines.

Two more of our mates were attacked and captured and kept as hostages for having sabotaged telephone lines.

The situation got worse owing to the shortage of food, as the civilians who had been helping us had nothing left to

give us and besides they were afraid the Germans would take them as hostages.

I then decided to come to Rome and ask for assistance.

I had the opportunity of making an acquaintance of Colonel Citarella-Tufano Uberto (of the Transport) who was living with a family I knew, whose head, ERRATI CRESTE, a Jew, was hiding in my house in Rome. Although seriously damaged by the air raid of July 9, 1941, my house still had one room which could be, not too comfortably, inhabited.

I tried to explain things to said Colonel as I had found out that he too was an officer, hiding under a false name. But as he did know me, he showed but little interest in my situation; he nevertheless told to call on him again. A few days later I called again and we arranged to meet again two days later. We met and he informed me that he probably would, through an acquaintance of his, give me some assistance; of a priest and of a gentleman in civilian clothes who, as I later got to know, were Father Anselmo Musters, a Dutch subject, and Major (of the Transport) Capparelli Alberto. Colonel Citarella told them what I wanted. The following day I received from Colonel Citarella instructions to take delivery of some clothes and food and for the transfer of a first group of allied prisoners to Rome and for their concealment there. A few days later I took delivery of some suit-cases with food and clothes which had been purveyed by Lt. Colonel Vincitorio Umberto and by Major Caffarelli Alberto.

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Meanwhile the Polish soldier sent word that German troops were about to leave for the front and then with the help of the Pole we threw sand and emery into hubs of the wheels; we thus caused 5 heavy trucks to stop and remain immovable near Guidonia.

On the agreed day I started the transport of a first group of prisoners across the country. I reached the appointed place (Piazza delle Crociate) early in the morning. Colonel Citarella, Major Caffarelli and Father Anselmo were waiting for me with a military motor car.

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I handed over to them the prisoners who were taken to their appointed lodgings by Major Caffarelli and Father Anselmo. This service of placing the prisoners in safety lasted about 2 months. 18 prisoners were transported by ordinary means, traveling across the country to avoid high-way police. The last transport of 5 prisoners was rather exciting: on their arrival in Rome, Major Caffarelli had not been able to purvey two cars, so that two trips were necessary. After the first trip Major Caffarelli found out that he was being spied upon so that he had to change his itinerary and take the prisoners somewhere else and then give up his second trip.

He immediately sent word to Colonel Ciferella and let him know that for that day the two prisoners which had been left back could not be arranged for. I was able to shelter and conceal the two prisoners, but only on the third morning did we succeed in taking them walking through the town across the Duca d'Aosta bridge and in handing them over to Major Caffarelli. In order to disguise the two prisoners and avert suspicions, I and Colonel Ciferella gave them our coats, which we never got back owing to the subsequent events which I shall now relate. In effect, as our activities were spied upon and Major Caffarelli was strongly suspected, the republican fascists and the Germans broke through one of the houses where the prisoners and other persons were hiding, while the prisoners were able to escape.

We had to give up the transport of the prisoners as we were under suspicion. Meanwhile Father Anselmo had been arrested and Major Caffarelli and the other officers of the Montello Barracks who were helping us were closely watched by German and republican fascist espionage. They had also arrested a Lt. of the transport

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places. I reported to him all the information I could gather on the movements of the Germans and the Major handed them over to Major Caffarelli.

Our situation was getting much worse as we could no longer get supplies from Rome. We had also two very sick prisoners whom I had to take to a grotto and assist as best I could.

Twice I went to Orbetello to spy upon the movements of the Germans and then informed as usual Colonel Citarella.

Once I was told that the Germans and the Republican fascists had searched my house without finding anything which would involve me.

A republican fascist of Monte Celio denounced prisoners who were hiding at Grottoni and together with the Germans succeeded in capturing two of them. In order to punish this traitor who even in the past had done so much harm to our cause, I decided to wait for him to pass, hiding on a tree. Two days later he was killed.

Later on I heard from the Pole that they were seeking me; I then transferred my family to the uninhabited country, where they led a life of utter hardship. (my wife and three daughters)

Several times the Pole came into the woods to give me informations which I passed to Colonel Citarella.

I also received a bicycle from the Montello Barracks (Major Caffarella and Col. Vincitorio), so that I could go about and do my work as an informer. Moreover with the help of the Pole we signalled to the allied airplanes when German troops were moving, using torch-lights belonging to two pilots, prisoners.

The last period was terrible: we could not stay in any place

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The last period was terrible: we could not stay in any place as the Germans were seeking and chasing us through republican spies.

We tried several times to blow up the Lucano bridge, but could never effect our plan as the bridge was strictly watched by German guards, who even fired on us one night.

Together with the whole gang we sabotaged the telephone wires at Settecaminini, Pagni, Monte Celio, Guidonia, Ponte Lucano, Monte Libretti, - this was the area where we worked, as the center was Monte Gennaro.

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Once the Germans captured my brother and sent him to work in the camp of Guidonia, but I was able to cut the barbed wire entanglements so that he and three other men escaped and joined our gang in the maquis.

Twice a week I went to Rome to report to the Officers of the Montello Barracks on the doings of the Germans. On June 5th on my reaching Monte Celio I saw the Germans, retiring; I brought our gang together and placed the machine guns, while our women with the mules brought the munitions and fired on the rearwards. We destroyed two light trucks and killed 5 Germans of a S.S. battalion.

A little before 12 the Allies came.

LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE PARTISAN BAND

Leader	ARCATI GIUSEPPE
Informers	LANCIAI PILO
"	PASQUARELLI GIULIO
"	ARCATI EDMONDO
"	GREGI MARCELLO
"	DE ANGELIS ANGELO
"	DE ANGELIS GIROLAMO
"	LANCIANI GIUSEPPE
"	CICCOTTI MICHELE
"	SOZZI GINO
"	PIZZUTI ANNIBALE
PARTIGIANA	ARCATI ANNA
"	ARCATI GIULIANA
"	ARCATI MARIA

PARTIGIANA

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"	CICCOTTI MICHELE
"	SOZZI GINO
"	PIEZUTI ANTONIO
"	ARCATI ANNA
PARTIGIANA	ARCATI GIULIANA
"	ARCATI MARIA
"	GREGI EMMA

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All the women lived in the maquis and cooperated carrying
food supplies for everybody, prisoners included, and getting
into touch with Rome.

The Leader of the Band
(Arcati Giuseppe)

Piazza Tiburtina 8

Rome

