

ACC 10000/143/2614

149.01/AP

PIRAS ANTONIO

SEPT. - OCT. 1944

SECRET

HEADQUARTERS

ACC

PUBLIC SAFETY SUB-COMMISSION

SECURITY DIVISION

AF0.394.

SB/II3.5/I49.

23RD. October, 1944.

SUBJECT. Piras Antonio. (Enemy Agent)

TO.

A.C. of S., G-2 (CI) H.Q., Fifth Army.

The Director, Public Safety Sub-Commission. HQ. ACC.

- I. With further reference to Subject.
2. On the 20th. October, 1944, Subject was arraigned before a General Allied Military Court, which sat at Florence, charged with Espionage.
3. The Court was composed as follows:-
 Wing Cmdr. H.M. Dickie. (E) President.
 Major M.C. Holt. (B)
 Capt. I. Cox. (A)
4. The Prosecution was conducted by:-
 Capt. E.S. Blacklock. (B)
 and the Defence was conducted by:-
 Capt. C.F. Dellbridge. (A)
5. Owing to the serious nature of the charge and the possibility of a sentence of death should a verdict of 'Guilty' be returned, the Court entered a plea of 'Not Guilty' on Subject's behalf.
6. The trial lasted one and a half days, and after hearing the evidence for the Prosecution, and the Subject who gave evidence on his own behalf, the Court returned a verdict of

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and the Defence was conducted by:- (A)
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6. The trial lasted one and a half days, and after hearing the evidence for the Prosecution, and the Subject who gave evidence on his own behalf, the Court returned a verdict of 'Guilty' and sentenced Subject to be "Shot to Death".

Howe
W.R.HARE.
Major.

Copy for Maj. Hawk

ALLIED MILITARY GOVERNMENT : General Military Court.

At Court of Assize:

In Florence on

15th Oct. 1944

at 0900 hrs.

ALLIED MILITARY GOVERNMENT

VERSUS

Piras Antonio, at present a Prisoner in
the Prison of Santa Teresa, in Florence.

The Charge against the Prisoner is:

Violation of Proclamation No. 1, Part IV, Art. Sec. 1,
Serving the Enemy as a Spy.

In that

He the said Piras Antonio in the City of Florence or vicinity thereof on or about 25th August 1944 subsequent to the Allied-Occupation, entered furtively and remained clandestinely in the precincts of the City in pursuance of instructions from the Germans to secure for them military information about the Allies subsequent to the evacuation of the City by the Enemy with the object thereafter of re-crossing the German Lines by means of a Pass-word and imparting to them the information so obtained: and he did thus serve the Enemy as a Spy.

V. N. Watson

Capt. Kings Own

Scottish Borders. Legal Staff ANG.

Prosecuting Officer.

In that

He the said Pires Antonio in the City of Florence or vicinity thereof on or about 25th August 1944 subsequent to the Allied-Occupation, entered furtively and remained clandestinely in the precincts of the City in pursuance of instructions from the Germans to secure for them military information about the Allies subsequent to the evacuation of the City by the Enemy with the object thereafter of re-crossing the German Lines by means of a Pass-word and imparting to them the information so obtained: and he did thus serve the Enemy as a Spy.

*V.N. Wabun.*Wapt. Kings Own

Scottish Borderers. Legal Staff AMB.
Prosecuting Officer.

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HEADQUARTERS, FIFTH ARMY
Office of the A.C. of S., G-2
A.P.O. #464, U. S. Army

AMB/am
12 October 1944

Subject: PIRAS, Antonio, Alleged Enemy Agent

To: Judge Advocate, Fifth Army, A.P.O. #464, U.S. Army

1. Attached hereto papers in reference to the apprehension and interrogation of Antonio PIRAS, confessed enemy agent.
2. It is requested that subject be brought to trial as soon as practicable.
3. For security reasons it is considered that the trial should be held in Camera.
4. It is further requested that the President of the Court advise the accused at the opening of the Court, that in the event he is acquitted, he will nevertheless be interned immediately after the trial as he is considered a danger to Allied security.
5. All witnesses are available and may be contacted through this office. PIRAS is confined in the Santa Teresa Prison, Florence.

For the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2:

ARTHUR R. BLOW,
Major, Infantry,
Asst. A.C. of S., G-2.

Incl:

Ltrs., Security Branch, Hqs. AGC,
6 October 1944 and 12 October 1944,
subject: PIRAS, Antonio (alleged
Enemy Agent) in duplicate w/inclosures.

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HEADQUARTERS
ACC
Security Branch
APO 394

12 October 1944
WRH/he

SB/311.5/149

Subject: PIRAS Antonio (Alleged Enemy Agent)

To: A.G. of S., G-2(CI), Fifth Army.

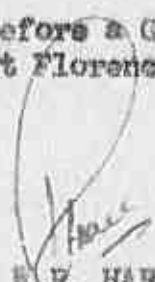
1. With further reference to Subject and especially my report of 29 September 1944.
2. Owing to circumstances beyond our control, there seems no likelihood of tracing the missing witness VIRNO. Enquiries are still being made and should he be traced he will be made available to the Court to give evidence.
3. I have made further enquiries in this case and attached is a statement of--SALVADORI Franca, of 25 Viale Principe Amedeo, FLORENCE.
4. It will be seen from the statement of this new witness that she is the daughter of the owner of a Pensione.
5. Until the Germans evacuated Florence the Salvadori family conducted the Pensione Salvadori, at No. 34 Via Lungo il Mugnone, Florence. After the Germans evacuated Florence, a mine exploded which destroyed this Pensione. The family then moved to 25 Viale Principe Amedeo, Florence.
6. Whilst at the first mentioned address, Subject resided with the Salvadori family during the months of June and July 1944, and then left without saying where he was going.
7. Subject returned to the new address of the Salvadori family on the last Saturday of August 1944, which it will be seen was the 26th August--the day he said the Germans took him to Florence.
8. This I consider of some importance as the prosecutor can now show that Subject was in Florence during 26th August, but it is not known definitely whether he left the house or not on that day. Subject slept in the house that night and the following day--Sunday he went bathing in the river Arno with members of the Salvadori family. Subject slept the second night at the house of the Salvadori family. The following morning Subject was entering the bar Le GIURNE ROSSE, Florence, when he was arrested.
9. Although Subject has not said he did not intend to carry out his mission, it is reasonable to assume that he will put forward this as his defence at his trial.

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10. With this additional evidence we have a prima facie case against Subject, as he made no effort to report his presence to an Allied Command-- in fact, it points to Subject having every intention of carrying out his mission.

11. I now suggest Subject be arraigned before a General Allied Military Court and charged with having acted as a spy at Florence between 26th and 28th August 1944.


W.R. HANE
Major

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No. 3 S.O.I. Unit
C. M. F.

11.10.1944.

STATEMENT OF SALVADORI FRANCESCA OF 25 VIALE PRINCIPE AMEDEO, FLORENCE.

PIRAS Antonio lived at the Pensione Salvadori, Florence, from the month of June until the end of the month of July 1944 (Via Lungo il Mugnone No. 54).

Upon presenting the documents necessary before lodging at the Pensione he produced a sheet of paper with a photograph bearing a German stamp, the particulars being written in Italian.

During his stay in the Pensione, PIRAS expressed himself with pro-German and pro-Fascist phrases, moreover expressing great admiration for the Duce.

Discussions on Political Subjects, commenced on more than one occasion, were never brought to a conclusion as PIRAS, at a certain point, displayed a reticence and broke off all discussions.

Speaking of himself, PIRAS declared that he owned money of his own and that he was awaiting the arrival of the Allies in order to be able to return to his family at Tunis.

On the 25th July 1944 the Germans requisitioned a ~~house~~ ^{house} belonging to Signor SALVADORI; PIRAS on this occasion offered the possibility of being able to arrange for its return by means of his acquaintance with a Captain or Lieutenant of the German S.S.

On this occasion PIRAS offered the family SALVADORI the sum of 1,000 lire.

About the 29th or 30th July, 1944 PIRAS consigned to the Signorina Francesca SALVADORI a suitcase containing clothing and informed her that he would be absent from the Pensione for some days, without giving any explanation.

Towards the end of August 1944 PIRAS again appeared (the last Saturday of the month) and together with a friend called on the family SALVADORI at their new house at 25 Viale Principe Amedeo, Florence, as their old house had been destroyed in the blowing up of the bridges by the Germans.

The Signorina Francesca asked PIRAS where he had been all this time and he, without replying directly to the question, declared he had gone away from the old house as he foresaw its destruction on the explosion of the mine.

Again PIRAS offered the family SALVADORI the sum of 2,000 lire, which the family accepted in view of the precarious economic condition in which they found themselves. PIRAS was looking for a dwelling; was received this time by the family SALVADORI in recognition of the financial aid lent by him to them.

On the Saturday PIRAS remained at the dwelling of the family SALVADORI, who are unable to say if PIRAS remained at home or went out.

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Regarding of himself, FIRAS declared that he had been able to return to his family at Tunis.

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About the 29th or 30th July, 1944 FIRAS consigned to the Signorina Franca SALVADORI a suitcase containing clothing and informed her that he would be absent from the pensions for some days, without giving any explanation.

Towards the end of August 1944 FIRAS again appeared (the last Saturday of the month) and together with a friend called on the family SALVADORI at their new house at 25 Viale Principe Amedeo, Florence, as their old house had been destroyed in the blowing up of the bridges by the Germans.

The Signorina Franca asked FIRAS where he had been all this time and he, without replying directly to the question, declared he had gone away from the old house as he foresaw its destruction on the explosion of the mine.

Again FIRAS offered the family SALVADORI the sum of 2,000 lire, which the family accepted in view of the precarious economic condition in which they found themselves. FIRAS was looking for a dwelling; was received this time by the family SALVADORI in recognition of the financial aid lent by him to them.

On the Saturday FIRAS remained at the dwelling of the family SALVADORI, who are unable to say if FIRAS remained at home or went out.

Sunday he passed in company of family SALVADORI, morning remaining at home, and the afternoon going with that family to bathe in the river Arno.

Monday morning he went out with the Signorina SALVADORI Franca and while they were entering the bar LA GIUBBE ROSA he was arrested by two carabinieri and a civilian.

FLORENCE 6th. October, 1944.

(signed) SALVADORI Franca,
25 Viale Principe Amedeo,
FLORENCE.

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HEADQUARTERS
A. C. C.
SECURITY BRANCH
APO 8394

WPH/ajm
29th September 1944

SB/311-5/149

SUBJECT: PIRAS, Antonio (Alleged Enemy Agent)

TO : A.C. of S., G-2, (CI) Fifth Army

1. With reference to Subject and his alleged activities as an enemy agent, I would say here and now that it is a very flimsy case to take before a General Allied Military Court.

2. Attached are statements from:—

a. VINCENZO CASCINO, a Lieutenant in the 2nd Regiment of Grenadiers of Sardinia.

b. Major MALCOLM HECTOR SMITH, O.C., No 3, S.C.I. Unit.

These two officers are the only available witnesses at the moment. The c is another witness, who may or may not, strengthen the evidence for the prosecution. This is a Lieutenant VIRNO of the Italian Army. Every effort is being made to trace VIRNO and it is anticipated that he will be available during the next few days.

3. It will be seen from the statement of the witness Lt. CASCINO that from the time of the Armistice --11th September 1943-- he became a member of the Italian Underground Movement. On the 20th March 1944 with three other officers, he offered himself to the Germans, to work as a Saboteur.

4. The object of this was to discover who the other Saboteurs were. Lt. CASCINO was sent to a school for Saboteurs at VERIS in GROSSETO.

5. Lt. CASCINO was ordered to Florence and there he met many German Agents and Saboteurs, whom he had not met at VERIS.

6. One of these was Subject; who informed Lt. CASCINO, that he - Subject - had deposited 20 dumps of Sabotage Material in Rome and that he - Subject - and others had been detailed for a mission in Allied Occupied Territory, but did not say what the mission was.

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7. The last time Lt. CASCINO saw Subject, was in Florence about 14 days before the Allies arrived there.

8. The next we hear of Subject is during the morning of 28 August 1944 when Lt. VIGNO -- the missing witness -- took Subject to the office of Major Malcolm Hector Smith at the Hotel Excelsior, Florence.

9. The attached statement of Major Smith is self-explanatory and need not be dealt with in detail here.

10. The major point to be considered is that Subject admitted directly he was asked by Major Smith, that he was a German Agent and gave details of his association and training with the German Intelligence Service.

11. From a prosecution point of view, the interesting part is at the end where Subject states he was brought into Florence during the night of 25/26 August 1944 by a German Patrol with instructions to remain in Allied Territory for one month and return to the Germans with Military and Political information. He was instructed to use the password "SANTA CLARA" when returning to the German Lines.

12. If this is not contested there is a case of Espionage against Subject between the 26th and 28th August 1944 at Florence.

13. I asked Major Smith if Subject said he intended to carry on the mission and Major Smith informed me that Subject made no statement to that effect, neither did the Major ask him the question directly.

14. It may be suggested that Subject should have surrendered to an Allied Military Command, but it must be remembered he had been in Florence barely 48 hours when he was arrested.

15. It is on the importance of this point that I feel that before it is contemplated taking this case before a General Allied Military Court, the witness Lt. VIGNO must be available.

16. I would point out that all the evidence and Subject's admission that he attended a Sabotage Course is not conclusive evidence that he intended to carry out an espionage mission or commit sabotage once in Allied Territory.

17. No thing of interest was found on the Subject when he was searched and the only money he had was 3,245 lire in Italian currency. Major Smith was present when Subject was searched and the money found in his wallet.

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18. Under these circumstances, I suggest this case be held over until the witness Lt. VIFNO has been seen, when a further report will be submitted.


J. R. HARR,
MAJOR

SECRET

No. 3 S.C.I. Unit,
FLORENCE.

29th. September, 1944.

STATEMENT OF CALISTO VINCENZO, AGED 25 YEARS, A LIEUTENANT
IN THE ITALIAN ARMY, 2nd. REGIMENT OF GRENADEERS OF SARDINIA,
VI. SAN TUMMO, No. 1, ROME.

(At present residing at ALBERGO STELLA D'ITALIA, FLORENCE),
who saith,

I have been engaged in the Italian Underground
Movement ever since the 5th. September, 1943.³ On the 20th. March
1944, with three other officers of the Underground Movement I
volunteered to the Germans to attend their school for saboteurs
at VENIS in CROATIA, with the object of knowing who the saboteurs
were. On the 10th. April, 1944, with my three other friends and
twenty one other Italians, I went to VENIS in CROATIA. After
attending the course, I was given a mission by the Germans in
FLORENCE. Whilst in FLORENCE before the arrival of the Allies I
met several of the German Agents at the S.S., HQ., in FLORENCE.
One of these was an Italian named PIRAS who I would know if I
saw again. In fact, I saw him many times in FLORENCE before the
Allies arrived. On one occasion - before the Allies arrived -
he told me he had deposited twenty dumps of sabotage material
in ROME. He did NOT tell me what his mission was, but he did say
that he and other men had a mission to perform and return to the
German lines as quickly as possible, but he did NOT say what the
mission was. The last time I saw PIRAS was in FLORENCE about 14
days before the Allies arrived.

I reported to the Underground Movement in FLORENCE as
soon as I arrived, and to the Allies as soon as they arrived.

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I reported to the Underground Movement in FLORENCE as soon as I arrived, and to the Allies as soon as they arrived.

CERTIFICO CHE QUANTO SOPRA MI E STATO LETTO IN ITALIANO DA UN INTERPRETE E CORRISPONDE A VERITA;

(signed) VINCENZO CASCINO.

I HAVE INTERPRETED THIS TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY

(signed) MARIA MICHAELIS OLSOUPIEFF.

No. 3 S.S.I. Unit,

C. H. P.

28th September, 1944.

Statement of Major Malcolm Hector Smith, No. 279248

Statement of Major Malcolm Hector Smith, No. 279248

O/S No. 3 S. C. I. Unit.

At about 1130 hours of 28th. August, 1944, Lt. VINO... of the Italian Army brought into my office at the Hotel EXCHL- STON, ROBINSON, a man called Antonio PIRAS, known to me by name from previous information as an enemy agent.

I do NOT remember the first words PIRAS uttered, but I started interrogating him in full daylight away, and after getting details of his personal history, I asked him how he had come to join the German Intelligence Service.

PIRAS replied that in December 1943 when in Rome, he had been introduced by a certain LENA EVOLDE alias BRILLANT to a man called MCKENNA. The latter had asked PIRAS if he would work for the Germans as a saboteur and PIRAS accepted.

PIRAS told me he was then taken to the German Embassy where a Major HARRIS told him he would be sent to the HAGUE, HOLLAND, on a sabotage course.

I asked PIRAS if he had ~~any~~ in fact attended the course and he said 'yes, he had' and added that he had left Rome on the 3rd. January 1944, in company with 12 other Italians. At first, PIRAS said he did NOT remember the names of the other members of the group but later gave all the names.

PIRAS stated that after a 6 week's course at SCHEVENINGEN PENN, in the HAGUE, he had been sent back to Rome where Major HARRIS gave him 15 days leave plus 7000 lire for expenses.

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I do NOT remember the first words PIRAS uttered, but I started interrogating him in full straight away, and after getting details of his personal history, I asked him how he had come to join the German Intelligence Service.

PIRAS replied that in December 1943 when in Rome, he had been introduced by a certain LINA, a blonde ailing Italian to a man called HARMONI. The latter had asked PIRAS if he would work for the Germans as a saboteur and PIRAS accepted.

PIRAS told me he was then taken to the German Embassy where a Major HASS told him he would be sent to the HAGUE, HOLLAND, on a sabotage course.

I asked PIRAS if he had ~~in~~ in fact attended the course and he said 'yes, he had' and added that he had left Rome on the 3rd. January 1944, in company with 12 other Italians. At first, PIRAS said he did NOT remember the names of the other members of the group but later gave all the names.

PIRAS stated that after a 6 week's course at SCHREVENINGEN PARK, in the HAGUE, he had been sent back to Rome where Major HASS gave him 15 days leave plus 7000 lire for expenses.

On returning from his leave, PIRAS stated that he had helped hide the dumps of sabotage material in Rome.

According to PIRAS, he did little else until May, 1944 when he was informed that he was to be parachuted into SICILY in company with a Lt. PERONE and a certain ANTONIOLI. PIRAS stated that he was given 50,000 lire at this stage and was sent to VERONA, but on the way north, his companions deserted and PIRAS reported alone to the German H.Q. at VERONA.

The Germans then, said PIRAS, decided to leave him in FLORENCE as a stay-behind agent to operate after the Allies arrival.

Page 2

SUBJECT : ANTONIO PIRAS

PIRAS said he was brought down to FLORENCE on the 4th. July 1944, but after a while he went back NORTH to PARMA and asked for further instructions. This time, according to PIRAS, he was told to stay in ALLIED territory for a month and then return with military and political information for the Germans.

PIRAS stated he was sent down to the German lines and was accompanied on the night of 25/26th. August 1944, to the outskirts of FLORENCE by a German Parachute Division patrol with instructions to use the password 'SANTA CLARA' when returning.

PIRAS stated that he went to the home of some friends in Via PRINCIPE AMEDEO 25, FLORENCE, and on the morning of 28th. August, 1944, he met VIRHO in the street and was then brought to my office.

Malcolm Smith

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