

152592 - Monument to the Tuscan-Emilian Resistance 1943/45 - Biagioni

The monument celebrates the Resistance in the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines 1943-1944. It represents a man in the act of removing the straitjacket imposed on him by the Nazi-Fascist dictatorship, with a sail behind him as a symbol of freedom and aspiration for peace. The attached plaque shows the names of the fallen killed by the Nazi-Fascists in the locality of Biagioni (Upper Reno Terme), July 4, 1944.

Biagioni is a small locality in the municipality of Alto Reno Terme. In June 1944, a number of SS units arrived in the area near this location, because the area, crossed by the Bologna-Pistoia railroad, had become of neuralgic importance for the establishment of the Gothic Line and the fight against partisan bands had intensified. These were soldiers belonging to the second company, perhaps even the first, of the III Freiwilligen Bataillon Italien, which was formed between 1943 and 1944 together with five other equal ones, mostly led by the German officers of the Shultzpolizei, municipal and city police. It was generally composed by Italian military personnel, soldiers and graduates, non-commissioned officers and Italian military officers, captured after 8 September 1943, imprisoned in Germany who had chosen to enrol in the German police. The SS began a series of round-ups in search of draft dodgers and men to be employed in the TODT (Wehrmacht Auxiliary Organisation entrusted with the construction of fortifications and defensive infrastructure along the Gothic Line with labour recruited from the occupied countries or prisoners). The climate was made even more tense by the delusions of some local fascists who instilled fear in draft dodgers and their families. The attacks carried out by partisans along the Porrettana railway and in the areas near Biagioni led the German

commands to consider the area 'infested by gangs'. On 4th July 1944, the SS command in Pracchia, in agreement with the one in Molino del Pallone (both locations close to Biagioni) decided to implement a raid in search of partisans and draft dodgers. During this round-up, two young men who were hiding in Biagioni were captured. During the raking it happened that an SS man was killed, presumably by his own comrades. This fact became the pretext to round up other men in the village and carry out a massacre: in all, 9 men were killed and the houses of Biagioni devastated.

The monument was erected on the site of the massacre, in the small square in front of the Biagioni church. It is dedicated to the Tuscan-Emilian Resistance 1943-1945. It depicts a man in the act of removing the straitjacket imposed on him by the Nazi-Fascist dictatorship with a sail on his shoulders, a symbol of freedom and a longing for peace. It was unveiled on 25 April 1974 in the presence of the Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies Benigno Zaccagnini, the President of the Regional Council of Emilia Romagna Silvano Armaroli and the President of the Regional Council of Tuscany Elio Gabbuggiani.

Next, attached to the monument, is the memorial plaque in memory of the victims of the Biagioni massacre, commissioned after the war by the local population. This plaque bears the names of those killed: Vivarelli Attilio (cl. 1923, recognised partisan), Bruni Saverio (cl. 1919), Mori Rosolino (cl. 1913), Fornaciari Giovanni (cl. 1880), Calistri Paolo (cl. 1879), Vivarelli Marte (cl. 1883), Vivarelli Guglielmo (cl. 1872), Vivarelli Eugenio (cl. 1879), Vivarelli Armando (cl. 1912). The same list also includes the name of Paccagnini Augusto (cl. 1926, recognised partisan), killed by the Germans on 16th September 1944 in Monteacuto delle Alpi (Lizzano in Belvedere).

A plaque has recently been affixed to the wall of the small square that briefly recounts the events.