

RIPARBELLA

17 - Un luogo della memoria: l'eccidio delle Marie – 6 km – 240 difference in height

I would have liked to have found the opportunity to describe a ring that connected the various places of this event, but the asphaltting of the road that leads to Strido and the need to travel 4 km on the provincial road that leads from Miemo to La Sterza dissuaded me.

So we will limit ourselves to a round trip, however trying to understand the historical and geographical characteristics of the place where the massacre took place.

We will start from Riparbella, driving past the town in the direction of the Il Doccino residence and park in a small clearing on the right before arriving at the residence.

We will continue on foot on the same road, which at times becomes a dirt road and leads uphill to the wind farm.

Arriving at the top of the ridge, of the three roads that branch off from this point, we will take the central one that indicates for Pantano and Strido.

Going down towards the Valdera we will encounter an internal panorama of considerable beauty, up to the memorial stone that commemorates the massacre. The Le Marie farm (later rebuilt and then abandoned) is located at the end of the small road that starts to the right of the stone.

The event took place on 25 June 1944, when the Americans were now arriving: on 4 July they would free Riparbella and on 9 July the Germans had by now abandoned Miemo, on whose territory the allies would settle.

The place where we are was a territory with a significant partisan presence: the detachments of the Brigata Garibaldi "Rino" and "Gattoli", which became the protagonists of various actions in the area.

The road that passes below from Casaglia and Miemo was strategically important: it connected the Cecina valley with the Era valley and was used by the Germans to go north. In Casaglia there was a powder magazine of the Republican National Guard, while the Germans arrived in Miemo on 6 May and set up a military hospital in the villa-farm. The Podere delle Marie was part of the Fattoria del Pantano, where the German command was installed.

It is evident that the farm *delle Marie* was therefore a place of continuous passage of the German soldiers who moved between Casaglia, Miemo and the Pantano. We also know that, nevertheless, the Cini family gave hospitality to passing partisans in their barn and supplied food to the brigades quartered in the nearby woods.

In the early afternoon of that day seven people are locked up in a room of the house: 3 from the peasant family who lived here (Cini Sebastiano of 37, Lambardi Ernesta of 38 and perhaps expecting a child, Cini Armida of 11), 3 evacuees from Riparbella (Gronchi Tersilio aged 50, Tedeschi Filomena aged 50 and Bartalesi Raffaello aged 65), a casual worker (Giovanni Corneli aged 30). Hand grenades are thrown inside the house and, subsequently, machine guns intervene too; Corneli was the only one who managed to save himself, albeit with serious injuries, and he could tell that the little girl, after the explosion of the bombs, was still alive and had screamed for her mother, despite the fact that he had begged her to pretend to be dead as he did. Armida was killed with machine gun shots. Three other people were killed on the same day at the Casone farm.

We just have to retrace our steps, unless we want to continue a little longer either in the direction of Strido (continuing the paved road) or in the direction of Miemo (first path on the

right going down after the stone). This is a nice downhill path on the outward journey and uphill on the way back.