

In issue 90, we recounted the story — albeit briefly — concerning the massacre of the Italian garrison on the island of Cephalonia in 1943. Although the death toll was second only to the killing of thousands of Polish officers by the Soviets in the Katyn forest (see *After the Battle* No. 92), only the commander of the XXII. Gebirgs-Armee Korps, General Hubert Lanz, was ever brought to trial. After the war, the Italian authorities were very lukewarm in following up the massacre in spite of the details of the atrocity having been published in Italy in 1946, and even a memorial was not unveiled on Cephalonia until 1980. Although the German police made some enquiries in the 1960s, sufficient evidence was not forthcoming against any individual as basically there was no real motivation in Germany at that time to revisit the past. In May 2009, Gail Parker visited the island and, being fluent in Greek, was able to interview local historian Dionissios Arvanitakis, who has extensively researched the massacre.

The Greek island of Cephalonia is only 200 miles from the Italian coast at the mouth of the Gulf of Corinth. On September 8, 1943 — the day Italy's surrender to the Allies was announced and Italy changed sides in the war — the Italian Acqui Division which was the garrison on the island greatly outnumbered the Germans, but the island is so close to the mainland of Greece that the Germans were in a position to send massive reinforcements quickly while the nearby aerodromes on the mainland gave Germany air superiority. On Cephalonia the Germans committed a crime against humanity by massacring all the large Italian garrison when they surrendered after hard fighting. Only the military chaplains were spared, and if it were not for them it would be impossible to piece together the horrific story.

On September 9, the first day after the Italian Armistice, the German and Italian units remained in their positions amid a cold silence, although some German soldiers had joined in when the Italian soldiers rejoiced at the news of the Armistice that they thought was the end of the war for them. At eight in the evening Lieutenant-General Antonio Gandin commanding the Acqui Division received the order from his Italian superior General Carlo Vecchiarelli in Athens that his troops were to 'cede' all their weapons, including artillery, to the Germans, and would in due course be sent back to Italy by sea.



RETURN TO CEPHALONIA

By Richard Lamb

General Gandin was amazed by this order because it contradicted the order sent by the Italian War Office from Rome during the preceding night to treat the Germans as 'enemies'. He cabled to Athens that he rejected it because it contradicted the spirit and facts of

the Anglo-American Armistice (also it was partly indecipherable). In vain Gandin tried to contact the Italian War Office (which was



Although the 2001 film *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, based on the best-selling novel of the same name written by Louis de Bernières and published in 1993, aroused interest in the war in Cephalonia, unfortunately it failed to portray the enormity of the crime, the execution scenes in the movie (*top and above*) showing just a couple of dozen soldiers being shot instead of upwards of 3,300 in over 25 different locations. Nevertheless, the publicity prompted the German authorities to re-open the investigation into one par-

ticular officer's direct involvement in the execution of General Antonio Gandin, the commander of the Italian 33rd Acqui Division. However the former German lieutenant, Ottmar Mühlhauser, then 88 years old, claimed that he was only doing his duty as the Italians were considered traitors. In the end, Mühlhauser's death in July 2009 brought that line of investigation to a close although more recently two other elderly German pensioners have come under suspicion.

During the last 500 years, Cephalonia has had a variety of masters: Venetian (1500-1797); French and Russian (1797-1809); and British from 1809 to 1864 at which point the island was unified with Greece. On October 28, 1940, Mussolini attempted to flex his muscles by demanding the right to occupy certain strategic positions within the country but his subsequent attack was routed by the Greek Army in three weeks. However the tables were turned five months later when Axis forces invaded Greece and Yugoslavia in April 1941. Within three weeks, the Greeks had surrendered and the 50,000-strong British force was pulled out after having lost 12,000 men killed or captured. On April 30, Italian paratroops landed on Cephalonia which was then occupied by the 33rd Acqui Division commanded by General Antonio Gandin.



ITALIAN 33rd ACQUI MOUNTAIN INFANTRY DIVISION ON CEPHALONIA

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 17th 'Acqui' Infantry Regiment | 33rd Mortar Battalion |
| 317th Infantry Regiment | 33rd Signal Company |
| 33rd Artillery Regiment | 31st Pioneer Company |
| 101st Machine Gun Battalion
(2nd and 4th Companies) | 3rd Medical Section |
| 27th CCNN Legion (Blackshirts) | 4th Supply Section |
| 18th CCNN Battalion (Blackshirts) | 9th Field Bakery |
| | 7th Carabinieri Section |

The division's third regiment, the 18th Acqui Infantry Regiment, and part of the 33rd Artillery Regiment were stationed on Corfu.

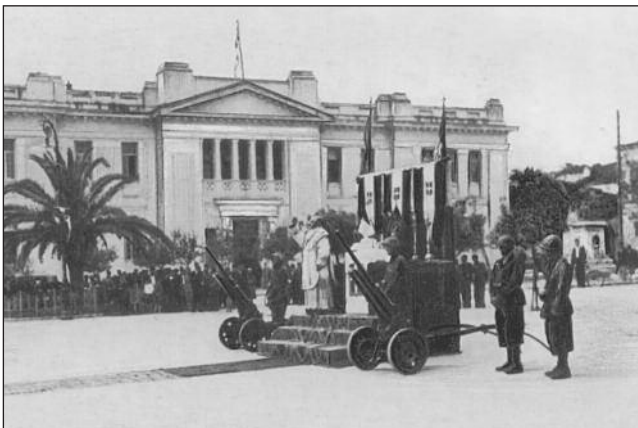
General Gandin (left) had a force of 11,500 men and 525 officers on Cephalonia. For two years, the island became a backwater as the war raged in North Africa but when Sicily was invaded by the Allies in July 1943, Mussolini's days were numbered. On July 19, Mussolini met Hitler on the Austrian-Italian border but he failed to warn the Führer that Italy was in no fit state to continue the war. The Gerarchi — the senior officials of the Italian Fascist Party — were not pleased and they demanded that Mussolini summon a meeting of the Grand Council. At the so-called 'Night of the Fascist Grand Council' (see *After the Battle* No. 77), a motion was passed calling for the King, Victor Emmanuel III, to dismiss Il Duce. He was arrested on the evening of July 25 (although later rescued by German commandos — see *After the Battle* No. 22) and Marshal Pietro Badoglio installed as Prime Minister.

en route to Brindisi from Rome), and Italian headquarters on the other Greek islands. A number of his more senior officers felt that it was 'dishonourable' to fight against the Germans, until the day before their allies. However, Captain Renzo Apollonio (who was strongly anti-Fascist and anti-German) and others warned Gandin that if the order was given to lay down arms, the bulk of the troops would refuse to obey. Apollonio was in touch with a band of Greek guerrillas and Greek officers, who offered the collaboration of a Greek battalion.

On the morning of September 11 the Germans put Gandin on the horns of a

dilemma with an ultimatum: by seven in the evening he must make up his mind. He held a conference of senior officers, and consulted the chaplains. Both advised surrender. General Gandin agreed with them, personally; but meanwhile he had at last succeeded in setting up radio communication with the Italian War Office in its new headquarters in Brindisi; and there had been skirmishes, initiated by the Germans, in which the Italians had suffered casualties. Gandin complained bitterly to the German officer who was negotiating the surrender, Oberstleutnant Hans Barge, commander of Festungs-Grenadier-Regi-

ment 966, the German unit stationed on the island, and as a delaying tactic asked for the negotiations to be carried on in future by a German of at least the rank of General. Then came news that Colonel Luigi Lusignani, in command on the neighbouring island of Corfu, had overcome German attacks and had the island under his complete control. Lusignani also reported that on other islands the Germans were disregarding their promise to repatriate Italian soldiers, sending them instead to internment camps in Germany. Stragglers who arrived in Cephalonia from the nearby island of Santa Maura confirmed this news.



A church parade by the Acqui Division, unfortunately undated, being held in Court House Square in Argostoli, the capital of Cephalonia.



In August 1953, the town suffered a huge earthquake measuring 7.3 on the Richter scale, which destroyed virtually every building and made over 100,000 people homeless.



With the fall of Mussolini, the Germans wasted no time in preparing for the inevitable capitulation and Oberstleutnant Hans Barge (above), the commander of Festungs-Grenadier-Regiment 966, arrived on the island with a force 2,000 strong the same month, ready to disarm members of the Italian military. However it was not until August 3 that the first moves were made by the Italians to change sides and, even then, negotiations with the Allies dragged on for another four weeks.

GERMAN ORDER OF BATTLE ON CEPHALONIA

Stationed on the island as occupation force from July 1943:

Festungs-Grenadier-Regiment 966 (Oberstleutnant Hans Barge)
 Festungs-Bataillon 909 (Hauptmann Joachim Hans von Stoephasius)
 Festungs-Bataillon 910 (Major Otto Nennstiel)
 2. Batterie (Oberleutnant Jakob Fauth) of StuG-Abteilung 201

Arriving as reinforcements between September 13-20:

From 1. Gebirgs-Division:

III. Bataillon (Major Reinhold Klebe) of Gebirgsjäger-Regiment 98
 11. Kompanie (Oberleutnant Sigwart Göller)
 12. Kompanie (Oberleutnant Willi Röser)
 13. Kompanie (Oberleutnant Martin Hörmann)
 14. Kompanie (Oberleutnant Martin Böhm)
 15. Kompanie (Oberleutnant Zwack)

Gebirgsjäger-Bataillon 54 (Major Wilhelm Spindler)
 1. Kompanie (Hauptmann Alfred Schröppel)
 2. Kompanie (Oberleutnant Werner Burkhard)
 3. Kompanie (Oberleutnant Dieter Humann)
 4. Kompanie (Oberleutnant Reichel)

Gebirgs-Artillerie-Regiment 79

From II. Abteilung:

One Zug (platoon) (Leutnant Friedrich Kiessling) of 4. Batterie

From III. Abteilung (Major Franz Wagner):

7. Batterie (Oberleutnant Fritz Thoma)

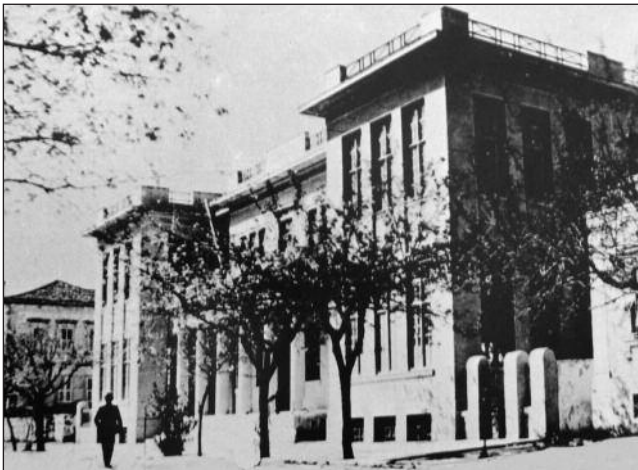
9. Batterie (Oberleutnant Heinz Ziegler)

(III./Geb.Regt. 98 and Gebirgs-Bn 54 were formed into a Kampfgruppe under Major Klebe)

From 114. Jäger-Division:

I. Bataillon (Major Gerhard Hartmann) of Jäger-Regiment 724.

The reinforcements were grouped in an Angriffsgruppe (Assault Group) under Major Harald von Hirschfeld (commander of II. Bataillon of Gebirgsjäger-Regiment 98). It is these units — Barge's regiment and the reinforcements under Hirschfeld — that perpetrated the massacres.



Left: This was the German headquarters in Argostoli — another building totally destroyed by the post-war earthquake (right).



As far as the Italians were concerned, their War Office in Rome had issued conflicting orders. First their troops were to adopt almost a neutral position and not side with either the Greek partisans or the Anglo-Americans. Then on September 8 the Italian military were ordered 'not to use their arms if the Germans do not offer armed violence' but two days later 'to treat

the Germans as enemies and fight them with all force available'. Left: Here General Gandin is pictured with Lieutenant-Colonel Ernesto Cessari, the commander of the 17th Infantry Regiment, and Colonel Antonio Briganti, chief of the Ufficio Sanita. Right: The location was shown to Gail Parker by local historian Dionissies Arvanitakis (left).

On September 9, Barge met with General Gandin to negotiate the laying down of arms. That same day the General received an order from his superior, General Carlo Vecchiarelli in Athens, that his troops were now to hand over their weapons and in return they would be repatriated to Italy. General Gandin was perturbed because the instruction clearly conflicted with that of the previous day to treat the Germans as enemies. Consequently he delayed issuing the order pending further confirmation but on the morning of the 11th the Germans issued a deadline: his men must lay down their arms by 7 p.m. that evening. Although the General still adopted delaying tactics, matters escalated on the morning of the 13th when one of his officers ordered the shelling of a German convoy approaching Argostoli, sinking one vessel.

On the morning of September 13, two motorised lighters full of armed German troops tried to enter the port of Argostoli. On the orders of Captain Apollonio, without consultation with Gandin, the Italian artillery opened fire and sank one lighter; the other put up the white flag. The artillery, inspired by Apollonio, also opened fire on German positions on the island. Gandin ordered this artillery fire to cease while he reopened negotiations with the Germans. Then a German bearing a flag of truce arrived by sea with a senior Italian air force officer who had gone over to the Fascists. They asked Gandin to leave his division on the island until it could be sent back to Italy,



while Gandin himself was asked to take over the job of Chief-of-Staff with the new Republican Army. Gandin sent messages to all his units that negotiations were in progress with the Germans and a settlement was likely in which the whole division could retain its weapons.

The next morning, September 14, General der Gebirgstruppen Hubert Lanz commanding the XXII. Gebirgs-Armeeekorps arrived by boat. He sent an angry telephone message to General Gandin that firing at the German lighters was 'an act of hostility', and by the hand of Oberstleutnant Barge a signed order that the Acqui were to lay down their arms immediately. By now, after tortuous changes

of mind, Gandin had decided to throw in his lot with Marshal Pietro Badoglio, the new prime minister, and the King, Vittorio Emanuele III. His staff told him that soundings taken among the troops revealed them to be almost 100 per cent in favour of fighting the Germans. And, finally, a written order had arrived by sea from the War Office in Brindisi that the Acqui were to fight the Germans. According to the Italian official history, 'By now an irresistible hatred of the Germans was growing ever stronger among the soldiers and their impatience had reached a point where it could not be curbed'. Three Italian officers who tried to organise a surrender were shot by their troops.



General Hubert Lanz (*left*) arrived on Cephalonia on the morning of September 14 in command of the XXII. Gebirgs-Armeeekorps. Reinforcements under Major Harald von Hirschfeld (*below left*) came ashore in Aghia Kiriaki Bay (*above and below*).



During the morning of September 14 General Gandin ordered his division to occupy positions from which they could launch an attack on the Germans, and told the Germans that hostilities would begin 'at 9 a.m. on the 15th' unless he received 'a favourable offer'. At that moment came the ominous news from the island of Zante that General Luigi Paderni had laid down his arms and his 400 soldiers had been sent as 'internees' to Germany.

During the morning of the 15th, German Stukas of Fliegerkorps X from the mainland made frequent bombing raids; they also machine-gunned the Italian positions and dropped propaganda leaflets threatening that any Italians taken prisoner while fighting would never see Italy again.

In their initial attacks, the Acqui captured 400 prisoners and the self-propelled guns of the 2. Batterie of StuG-Abteilung 201, but the Stukas were causing serious casualties. German seaborne reinforcements landed in the dark, and bitter fighting continued until the 19th, with the Germans gradually becoming superior in numbers and the Stukas devastating the Italian positions. Gandin asked Brindisi to send air and sea help to prevent the German landings, which were now taking place in daylight. The Italian War Office replied that this was 'impossible'.

Here lies a mystery. On September 9, over 300 Italian warplanes with pilots loyal to the Badoglio regime had landed on the aerodromes of Lecce and Brindisi behind the British Eighth Army lines. The pilots wanted to go into action immediately against the Germans. One Italian air force officer said afterwards to the author: 'We asked for petrol and ammunition. Instead, we were told to fly our aircraft to Tunis, out of range of the hard-pressed Italian troops on Cephalonia'. Meanwhile, Gandin had sent a motor boat belonging to the Red Cross to Brindisi with details of the situation, requesting immediate help by sea and air, and more ammunition: after three days of fighting his dumps were nearly exhausted whereas plenty of German supplies were coming in by sea.



The same day that General Lanz arrived, an order came from the Italian War Office that the Acqui Division were to oppose the Germans; consequently hostilities began on the 15th. Bitter fighting continued for the next four days by which time German forces had gained the upper hand with the help of Stuka dive-bombers. In spite of General Gandin appealing for assistance and asking for further supplies of ammunition, there was no response, either from Italy or the Allies, and at 11 a.m. on September 22 he was forced to surrender. This is the moment of truth at his headquarters in the Villa Vallianos in Keramies.

No Italian ships intervened. Under the terms of the Armistice they had mostly gone to Malta, far from the war zone. If some Italian destroyers had instead been sent to Augusta in Sicily, they could have intervened in Cephalonia. Allied warships were also available, but none were sent. However, on the 19th, 20th and 21st, the Allies allowed Italian fighter planes to make sorties to Cephalonia from Lecce. There were too few of them to have a real effect on the battle, but they shot down one Messerschmitt and machine-gunned German positions.

One Italian air force officer told the author at the time that the Allied Command was too

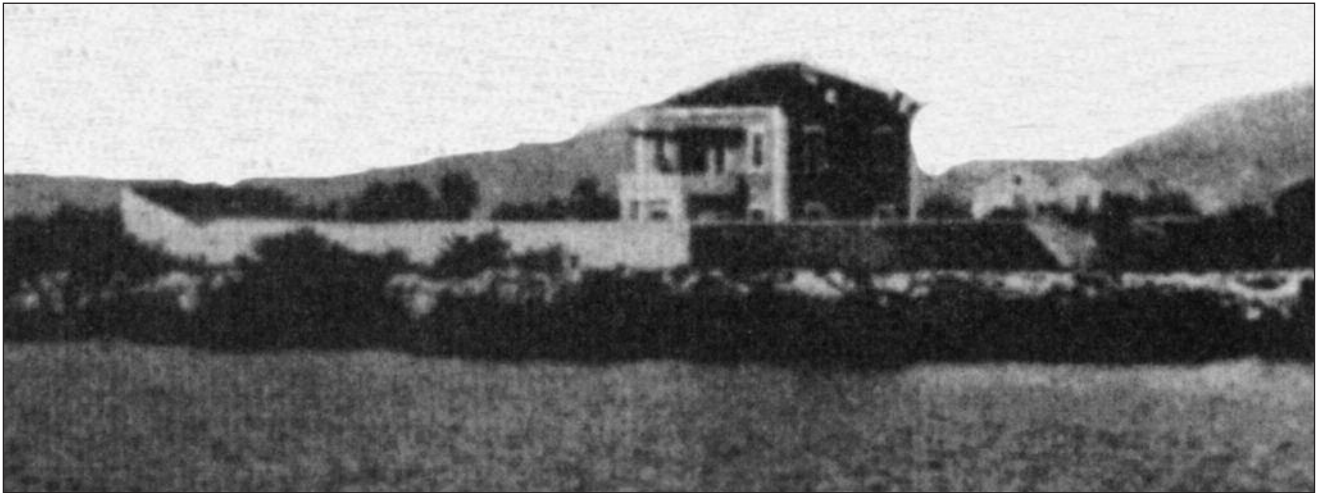
frightened that the pilots would transfer their allegiance to the Germans to allow strong Italian air intervention over Cephalonia, and the Italian War Office suggestion of an Italian naval force under Admiral Mario Bonetti was turned down for the same reason. Only on the 24th, a few hours after both islands had surrendered, did the Allies consent to seven Italian destroyers going to Cephalonia and Corfu.

On September 20, reinforced German troops made a decisive attack supported by relays of Stuka bombers. Gandin's troops fought until their ammunition was nearly exhausted, and at 11 a.m. on September 22 they put up the white flag.



When Gail visited the village of Keramies she was asonished to find the surrender house still standing. Not only had it survived the earthquake but the owners, living in a modern house

nearby, had preserved the ruin just as it had been left . . . a unique and moving piece in the jigsaw of the tragedy which was soon to follow.



Meanwhile General Lanz had received orders that all Italian soldiers on Cephalonia were to be shot. Firing squads comprising eight men led by an officer were detailed to carry out the

executions, General Gandin being the first to die here at the Casetta Rossa — the Red House — together with his staff officers.

The XXII. Gebirgs-Armeeekorps had received a special Führer order to massacre all the Italian soldiers who had fought on Cephalonia. As the German soldiers entered the positions of the surrendering Italians, they mowed them down with machine guns. General Lanz gave orders that all officers belonging to the Acqui except Fascists, those of German birth, doctors and chaplains, were to be killed. The Acqui troops not shot in cold blood in their positions were marched down to San Teodoro. There they were incarcerated in the 'Casetta Rossa' town hall, next to a convent. The first to be shot was General Gandin, followed by all his staff officers.



Right: The Red House still stands on the promontory overlooking the Bay of Argostoli.



The bodies were thrown into two nearby pits. One has since been filled in, the other (*above*) preserved as a memorial.



It was only due to the diligence of Father Romualdo Formato (left) that the true extent of the massacre became known. Above: Here, on October 24, 1948, Father Formato conducts Mass at the spot where the General and his officers were shot.

The German orders specified that the Acqui troops were to be shot just outside the town by detachments of eight German soldiers, each under an officer. Staff officers were to be killed singly; others in groups of two or three. Inside the town hall the chaplains administered the last rites, and one, Father Romualdo Formato, has written movingly of three officers who linked arms as they walked out to be executed, saying: 'We have been companions in life. Let us go together to paradise'.

According to the official Italian history, the soil of the island became a carpet of corpses. The Germans specified that the bodies must lie where they would not be seen by other German soldiers or civilians, and were not to be buried. Instead they were to be 'ballasted' — put on rafts and sunk in the sea. The Germans compelled 20 Italian sailors to do this, and when they had finished they too were shot to make sure they could not give evidence of this crime to the civilised world.

An official report from General Lanz to Heeresgruppe E stated that 5,000 of the Acqui Division who surrendered had been treated in accordance with the Führer's orders, that is, shot dead. Father Romualdo Formato's published account (*L'Eccidio Cefalonia*) details how 4,750 officers and men were shot dead, either at their posts under the white flag on the field of battle, or in San Teodoro.

Out of 12,000 Italian troops on Cephalonia on September 8, 1,250 fell in combat and almost 5,000 were put to death by the Germans after the surrender. These included sailors and nearly 100 medical orderlies with Red Cross armbands. About 4,000 who had surrendered their arms without fighting were imprisoned in a barracks on the island; they received only starvation rations and were subjected to severe hardships. In October they were embarked on three ships destined for Greece, all three of which hit mines and sank as soon as they left port. The Italian prisoners shut up in the holds had no chance; the few who jumped into the sea were machine-gunned by the Germans to prevent them escaping. The sea became a mass of corpses. About 1,000 Italian soldiers who had managed to escape from the Germans after the surrender joined up under Captain Apollonio with the Greek guerrillas. When the British captured the island in November 1944, 1,200 Italian soldiers (some of whom had escaped from other islands), who had fought with the Greek partisans against the Germans, were repatriated together with Captain Apollonio to Bari on British and Italian ships. In Bari, they all volunteered to fight with the Italian Army of Liberation under the Royal flag.

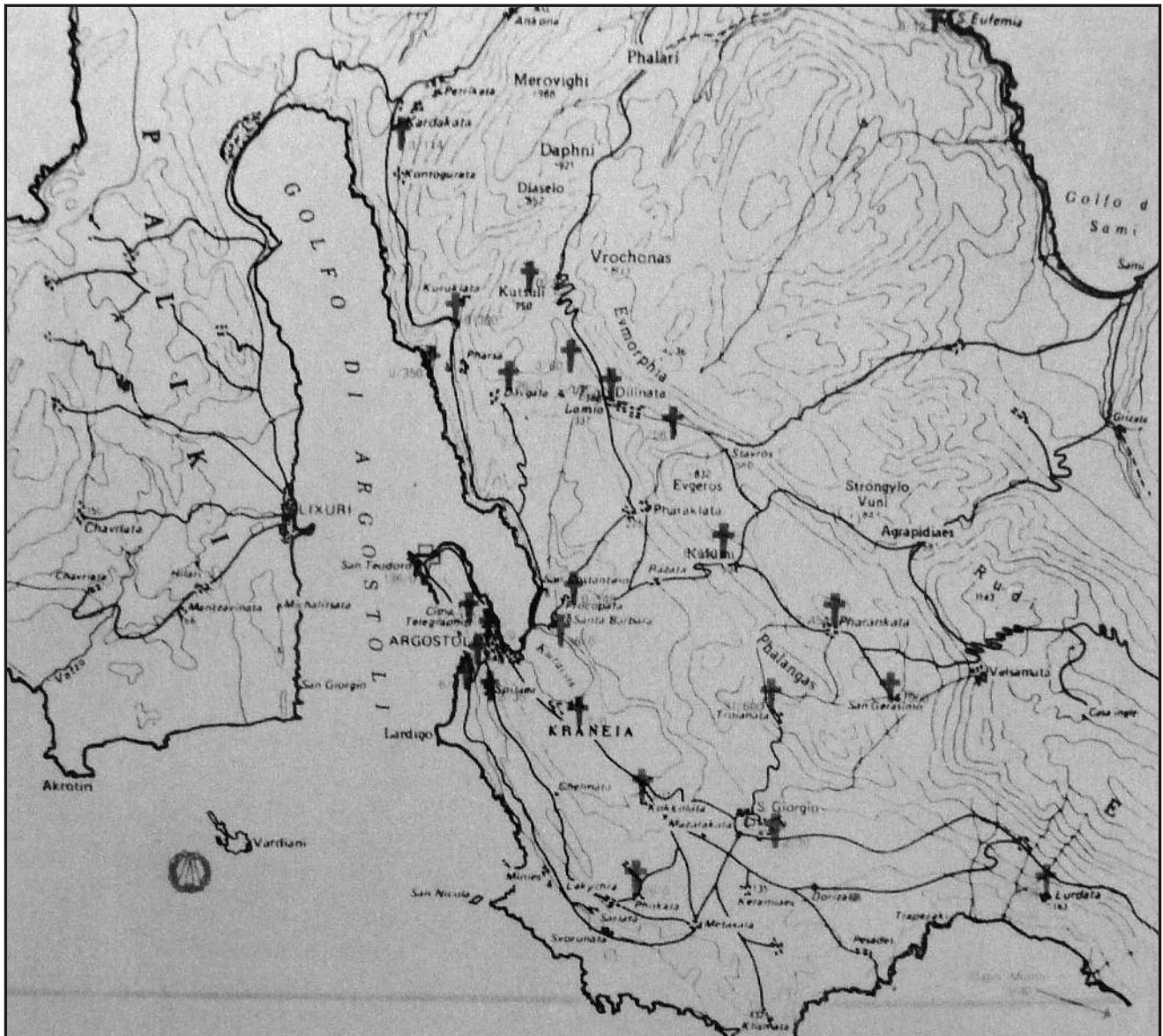
A 22-page account of the appalling events on Cephalonia was sent to Mussolini at Salò

(the document is marked 'Seen by the Duce'). It was written by a Foreign Office official named Segenti who had stayed on the island through the fighting and he described the atrocities in lurid detail. To Mussolini's eternal shame, he made no protests to the Germans after reading the document on January 14, 1944. Segenti was repatriated by the Germans via Berlin to Rome. His report made it clear that the Germans had no intention of treating the units who had fought against them as prisoners of war, and that after 'forced marches, whole units were machine-gunned, together with all the divisional staff'. According to him, only 40 officers out of the 500 in the Acqui Division escaped execution, although a few more might have joined the guerrillas or disguised themselves as ordinary soldiers in the internment camps.

It is a disgusting tale. The Cephalonia massacre was worse than Katyn (see *After the Battle* No. 92). General Lanz's crime was worse than those of his fellow generals Alfred Jodl and Wilhelm Keitel, both of whom were sentenced to death and hanged. Lanz was sentenced by the Military Tribunal at Nuremberg to 12 years' imprisonment, described by the official Italian war historian as 'a mild sentence'. In 1954 an Italian attempt to have Lanz arraigned before an Italian court came to nothing, the judge ruling that the evidence was insufficient.



Dionissies points out the location of the second burial pit which lies a hundred metres further down the road.



Between Benito Mussolini declaring war in June 1940 and the Armistice in September 1943, more than 110,000 of his countrymen had been killed in action. At the beginning of the fighting on Cephalonia, Italian troops on the island numbered some 12,000. Of these 1,250 were killed during the battle and over

3,300 were shot by the Germans in over 25 different locations (marked by crosses on this map) after they had surrendered. Of the remainder, 4,000 men were embarked at Argostoli on three ships for mainland Greece but tragically all of them struck mines and sank soon after leaving the harbour.

The reason for Lanz's light sentence was that the Nuremberg court, deceived by false evidence, did not believe the Cephalonia massacre ever took place. Lanz lied in his evidence to the court, stating that he had refused to obey the Führer's order to shoot all the Italian soldiers because he had been revolted by it. He claimed the report to Heeresgruppe E that 5,000 soldiers had been executed was a blind to deceive his superiors into believing he had obeyed the Führer. He stated that only a few of Gandin's officers had been shot with their commander after their guilt had been established by a court-martial, and that they were those mainly responsible for organising the resistance. He claimed that fewer than a dozen staff officers had been shot, and that the remainder of the Acqui Division had been transported first to Patras and then to Piraeus. Sworn affidavits from Germans who had been with Lanz in September 1943 were produced to corroborate his prevarications; they were from Germans, apparently of extreme respectability and leading impeccable post-war lives including General Peter von Butlar of Hitler's personal staff, who had been involved in giving the orders for the Rome



Here 37 survivors meet with Father Formato on the tenth anniversary in September 1953.

massacre in the Ardeatine caves (see *After the Battle* No. 52). They all swore the massacre had not taken place.

Reading the evidence of Lanz and his defence witnesses reminds one vividly of the old adage that the bigger the lie the more likely it is to be believed. It also pinpoints how dangerous it is for historians to rely on evidence produced at the Nuremberg trials in reaching conclusions.

The judges accepted that Lanz had prevented the massacre and that it never took place. As a result Lanz received a lighter sentence than General Lothar Rendulic who had been responsible for executing several hundred Italian officers after bogus court-martials in Split and Yugoslavia. Rendulic was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment. Although his behaviour in the Balkans did not approach the enormity of Lanz at Cephalonia, devastating evidence of his brutality in Norway was produced at his trial.

It remains a mystery why no Italian evidence was produced at this Nuremberg trial. It began in June 1947 and sentences were passed on February 19, 1948. The terms of the Italian Peace Treaty had aroused



extreme indignation, and it is possible that the Italian Government refused to co-operate. The International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, which originally consisted of the British, the Americans, the French and the Russians, had been by now superseded by a purely American court. Details of the Cephalonia massacre were already well known in Italy as a result of books and newspaper articles by the chaplains and medical officers who had been spared, and by survivors who had escaped to the hills to join the Greek partisans.

Lanz's defence counsel made great play of the prosecution's failure to produce any Italian evidence, and claimed that General Gandin had no orders from the War Office in Brindisi to fight, so he and his division were therefore either 'mutineers or franc-tireurs' who had no right to be treated as POWs. It was also stated that a request from Gandin, after what was alleged to be his court-martial, to speak on the telephone to General Jodl (whom he knew) was refused.



Post-war research by Giovanni Giraudi listed the number of officers and men killed at each location: Argostoli 9, Bivio Lardigò-Faraò 3, Capo Munda 44, Davgata 26, Dilinata 23, Dilinata Est 59, Dilinata Nord 63, Faraò 13, Frankata 461, Kardakata 117, Koccolata 3, Kralena 7, Kulumi 156, Kuruklata 306, Kutzuli 300, Lardigò 6, Lurdata 31, Pharsa 350, Phocata 26, Procopata 148, Santa Barbara 36, San Eufemia 15, San Giorgio

Kastro 32, San Teodoro 136, Spilea 37, Troianata 631, Valsamata 301 — a total of 3,339. By far the largest killing took place in this stone-walled field at Troianata. (However, Massimo Filippini, the son of Major Federico Filippini who was shot at the Casetta Rossa, claims in his book *I Caduti di Cephalonia, Fine di Unmito*, that the total killed in combat and those that were executed was 1,647.)



Above: Wreath-laying at the spot where the officers shot at the Red House were temporarily buried. The memorial (below) stands nearby. After the war the remains of over 3,000 men were transferred to the Italian War Cemetery at Bari.

It is extremely unlikely that anything approaching a court-martial took place, and the defence produced no evidence of it. There was a clash between the defence counsels for Lanz and Generalfeldmarschall Maximilian von Weichs, the Oberbefehlshaber Süd-Ost (Supreme Commander South-East Europe), when it was claimed on behalf of Lanz that he was later considered 'unreliable' because of his failure to carry out the Führer's order for the Cephalonia massacre; von Weichs's counsel felt this was shifting guilt onto the General. Von Weichs was taken ill during the trial, and the case against him was dropped.

All the war crimes trials before the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg were unsatisfactory. When the British ran short of money and tired of the proceedings, the USA — the only nation which could afford to do so — embarked on a further series of trials (including that of Lanz), which they were entitled to do under Control Council Law No. 10, the authority for the original Nuremberg trials. Prosecution standards were even lower than in the earlier cases. For example, Richard von Weizsacker, the West German politician, was arraigned before this Tribunal and sentenced to seven years, even though it was made clear that he was anti-Nazi, and had risked his life to stop the war. His entreaties to the Pope not to intervene over the pogrom against Roman Jews or the Ardeatine cave massacre, which were questionable, were not even raised by the prosecution.

Major Harald von Hirschfeld, responsible for implementing the order, was killed in battle at Dukla Pass in Poland in 1945 (see *After the Battle* No. 139) but General Lanz was brought to trial in an American court in Nuremberg in June 1947. Because no evidence was produced by the Italians, Lanz's defence was made easier and he flatly denied that any massacre had taken place. He did admit that General Gandin and some of his staff officers had been shot but said that this was only after they had been found guilty of mutiny at a court-martial. As a result, on February 19, 1948, Lanz was sentenced to 12 years' only to be released in 1951. He died in 1982.

