



I RIBELLI DELLA MONTAGNA

L'ULTIMA NOTTE DI MONTELUPO

Italy, 1944
a historical fiction larp
set during the last days of Nazi occupation

PLAYERS' GUIDE



VILLAGGIO DELLE STELLE, LUSERNETTA (TORINO) - 10-11-12 JULY / 17-18-19 JULY, 2015

a larp by _____

ANDREA CAPONE

ELIO BIFFI

ALADINO AMANTINI

ANDREANA VIGONE

ANNALISA CORBO

FEDERICO BARCELLA

MATTEO MICELI

MAURO VETTORI

PAOLO BENEDETTI

guide translated by _____



PIERPAOLO VITTORIA

ELENA MENIETTI

ELIO BIFFI

EMILIANO ECHEVERRIA

ENRICO FRANCESE

JACOPO ARRIGONI

MATTEO VERZELETTI

STEFANO KEWAN LEE



PLAYER'S HANDBOOK

"I RIBELLI DELLA MONTAGNA"



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ABOUT "THE REBELS..."

CREATIVE AGENDA

"Those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it"

I ribelli della montagna (**The Rebels on the Mountain**) is a historical fiction larp set during the Second World War and inspired by the Marzabotto massacre of 1944, a grievous episode of retaliation against civilians for the surging guerrilla resistance towards the end of the conflict. It will take place in July near Turin. The plot will revolve around life in a fictitious mountain village in central Italy during the last days of Nazi occupation, where the personal stories of freedom fighters, Axis soldiers and common folk entwine towards a dramatic ending.

With this event we wish to join in the wake of 2015's nationwide commemorations on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Italy from Nazi-Fascist rule; our work won recognition from the "ANPI", the Italian Association of Partisans, that gave her patronage. Though it is not meant to be a reenactment of the original story, it is based on solid research and it will try to portray as credibly as possible those complex and painful times. The characters, for one, are shaped around known personalities of the war and the fictional facts that will unfold during the event were written with historical records constantly at hand for inspiration. The event is produced by a group of authors with explicit anti-totalitarian views; still, we have a goal to explore the obvious political theme with an attitude of impartiality. Where consistent, we will show violence and brutality from all sides, and we have done the utmost to provide you with dramatic and believable characters, that are first and foremost persons in their complexity, not pictures of flat, single-minded "fascists" or "communists". Our ultimate goal is to offer an insightful, in-depth roleplaying experience and to allow a glimpse at life in a rural community in occupied Italy in the Fall of '44.



A HISTORICAL LARP

Just as historical novels are set in the past, in a real time and a real place, a historical larp such as **The Rebels on the Mountain** is based on a real setting, with an effort to reproduce it in the most accurate way: we consider habits, clothes, traditions, beliefs, ideas and issues of the historic period, and refer to several historical personalities and facts. However, our Larp does not pretend to become re-enactment: exactly like in a good novel, we will mix facts and imagination. And, exactly as a historical movie, our creativity will be rooted in history, careful to be true to the facts that will be the background of our story. **The Rebels on the Mountain** aims towards creating an accurate and realistic scenario, where the characters will experience life during 1944 Italian Civil War, with complete freedom in choosing their course of action. All our efforts notwithstanding, this aim cannot be reached without a strong commitment from the players to understand the setting and integrate it in their character's psychology, virtually letting themselves slide into the past, in a world so far and at the same time so close to ours.

A LARP ABOUT ETHICS

The Rebels on the Mountain is a larp that focuses on important and complex topics. We will give great attention to the ethical choices the characters will be forced to face in game by the events. Will their faith still be strong, when blood will wet the church's steps? Will they be true to their ideas and their beliefs? How much is wealth worth, when the life of your loved ones is at stake? Will family and emotional ties prevail over the need to survive? What is bringing someone to die for an idea? **The Rebels on the Mountain** hopes to stimulate this sort of considerations. Every choice will require reflection, and everyone will have to take sides, sooner or later. Reality, anyway, is seldom black and white, especially in a situation as complex as the partisan war was. The characters will be caught between the hammer and the anvil, torn between personal interests and ideals, rebellion and obedience, hope and despair. They will be asked impossible choices, with no possible compromises, and they'll have to learn that history is not just made of great events, but of people's decisions. One of our ambitious aims is to allow players to think deeply over a complex time of our recent history. We would really like them to try and tackle the tough question of "What would have I done, if I were there?"

AN IMMERSIVE LARP

The Rebels on the Mountain will be an immersive larp, an event which is not only focused on theatrical drama, nor on some gaming elements: we are not looking for amazing acting, or the swift accomplishment of tasks. The aim of an immersive larp is to favour the identification in the characters and in the setting, by recreating everyday life and offering characters with a specific personality, upon which the players can base their in game decisions. It's not just fiction or acting, it's a simulation of reality: everything in the playing field will be part of the world, and every action the characters will want to take will have to be represented realistically.



AN EXPERIENCE LARP

The involvement of the players in **The Rebels on the Mountain** will not be limited to the psychological and behavioural component of the character, it will also include physical interactions and experiences: from baking bread to chases in the woods, from sleeping in the open to plucking a chicken, even hunger and sleep deprivation because of tension and guard duty. This larp strives to recreate the feelings and sensations of the men and women who experienced the tragedy of war in Italy in 1944: living some of the same practical situations will be an essential part.

During the event we will stage relatively frequent situations of hardship like the ones described above -we believe successfully immersing oneself in an extreme setting like this one requires being subject to some extreme(ish) conditions, albeit for a limited amount of time. Naturally, the game of "militarized" groups, such as partisans and nazi-fascists, will be the most hardcore on the physical side. The inhabitants of Montelupo will experience much less exertion, but they will face toughness in other ways, nonetheless dramatically convincing.



A POLITICAL LARP

The Rebels on the Mountain will be deeply focused on thinking about politics and ideals, as it is unavoidable when working on the Resistance and Nazifascist occupation. The organizers, and especially the screenplay staff, do not refrain from declaring themselves anti-fascist, anti-nazi, and against any totalitarianism. However, it would be a mistake to think of our event as a mere partial representation, solely aimed at celebrating the fight of the Resistance. We would like, on the contrary, to underline the humanity and the complexity of the political and ideological situation of the time, highlighting the personal motivations and the ideals that were driving each and every one of the characters. Our screenplay will take contributions from historical sources and witnesses from both parties: we want to tell a realistic story, and to remember that everyone involved, besides being nazi, partisan, fascist, communist, anarchist, royalist, was a human being.

THEMES: OPPRESSION, CHOICE, REBELLION

The Rebels on the Mountain concentrates its storytelling on a handful of topics, and will try to explore their impact on the characters. First of all, war will be the basic theme: the event takes place at the end of one of the most tragic conflicts in history, a war that has directly involved every town and family in Italy. The characters will have to face the effects of the war on everyday life, the disruption that war causes on family and friendship ties, the falling of certainties, or, on the contrary, the bold attachment to one's beliefs and ideals, that for someone will be the sole landmarks during wartime. Another theme that we think is fundamental is the relationship with an oppressive authority: being part of it or enduring it, each character will have to relate with despotic power and its vexations and choose how to react. Finally, the main driving force of the entire event will be the choices that characters will be asked to take. Can violence be justified by the abuses suffered, or by given authority? Can the protection of our loved ones, or of ourselves justify injustice? Does duty come before justice and mercy? Should a fighter use the same methods as his enemy, or should he have limits, and respect his orders? These are some of the dilemmas the players will have to face, and the answers their characters will give will guide their actions.

GAME STYLE

MINIMALISTIC RULESET

AND "PLAY TO LOSE" APPROACH

The Rebels on the Mountain is a larp focused on immersion and drama: the event's goal is to build a rich, multi-faceted choral narrative while allowing the players to experience 'on their skin' the emotions, feelings and dilemmas that shaped the Italian Resistance Movement. We kept the rules to the barest minimum and every rule is there just to support a convincing and moving narrative. Rules only address those situations that would be hazardous in real life, or potentially controversial (fighting scenes, physical contact etc.). This is not a gamist event, there is no leveling up nor victory points to be earned, no "winners" in the competitive sense of the word, and no referees. The rules should always be considered subordinate to the players' common sense and to the ongoing narrative. And since the goal is not to defeat a foe, but to experience intense and rewarding scenes, we expect that now and then you will find natural and even gratifying to "concede" the scene to an opponent, ending up on the losing side of a fight or caving in to their requests. This role-playing philosophy is often referred to as "play to lose".

WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET

Our Larp tries to recreate a realistic, convincing setting. The game location will be accurately prepared with props and sets so as to allow a very natural interaction with the environment (cooking with actual food and fire, calling through a working telephone, etc.). Whatever you want to do, just 'do' it. The idea is "What you see is what you get", or WYSIWG, in short. The limit is safety and common sense: our take on realism does not include damaging people or property (except for the occasional throwaway prop) so you can't really hurt someone, or set a shack on fire, or toss your blank revolver into the river to get rid of it. If this sounds obvious to you, we are on the same page.

PHYSICAL CONTACT AND SAFEWORDS

Physical contact between players is accepted and encouraged. In principle, should your character get mad at someone, don't be afraid to yank them and shove them and





play out a successful brawl scene together: as long as nobody really gets hurt, it's perfectly fine and it will make everything more intense. In the same way, if you have to carry a wounded companion, do it for real. If you and your spouse or lover in game want to play out an intimate scene, feel free. Consent is the keyword here: it's up to the players involved in a scene to act responsibly and to carefully regulate intensity, with the aid of a simple system of Safe Words.

DRAMATIC RESOLUTION OF FIGHT AND INJURIES

The Rebels on the Mountain will involve face-offs and stand-offs, firefights with firearm replicas, brawls, fights and beatings. These fights should be played out with narrative in mind and the outcome will depend on the players' choices. In any case, we will require you to restrain the level of tension and violence in the beginning, so that large-scale fights, serious wounds and killings will only be staged in the final stretch of the event. There will be no precise rule to establish how serious and crippling an in game injury is: the interpretation is pretty much up to the ones suffering them. Some characters (the doctor, the nurse, the old herbalist, etc.) will be able to attend to the wounded and suggest the severity of their condition, simulating surgeries, bandaging, etc.

See further in this booklet for a more detailed breakdown of guidelines for interaction.

SETTING

HISTORY AND FICTION

THE TURBULENT ITALIAN CONTEXT IN 1944

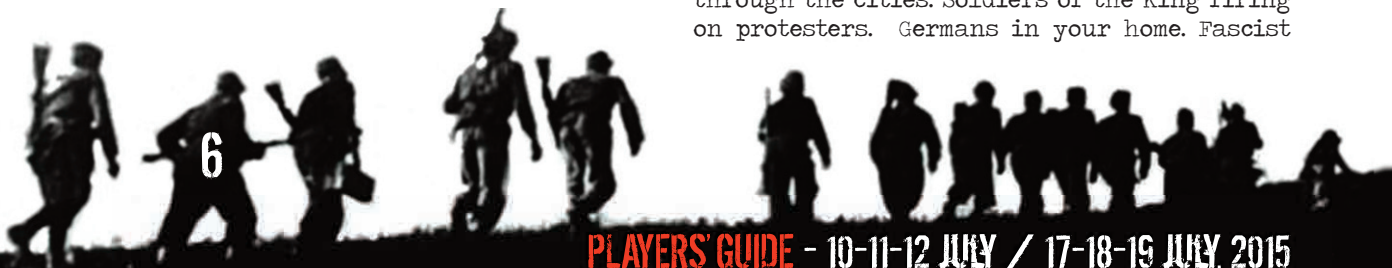
"[...] the State that will emerge from the immense trouble will be yours and as such you will defend it against anyone dreaming impossible comebacks. Our will, our courage and your faith will give Italy her face back, her future, her life possibilities and her place in the world. More than hope, this ought to be, for you all, a supreme certainty".

"Long live Italy! Long live the Republican Fascist Party!"

The words of Benito Mussolini on Radio Monaco still resound in the loudspeakers in the squares of cities and villages in northern Italy, what is now called Repubblica Sociale Italiana ('RSI', in short). A state in the state, opposed to the Kingdom in the South, kept up by the fugitive king, Vittorio Emanuele III, and high commander, General Badoglio, taking refuge in Apulia. A government born of a coup, a discharge, an arrest. And a liberation. The Allies -Americans, Brits, Canadians- landed in Sicily July 10, 1943 and less than two months later Italy was signing the armistice in Cassibile, Sicily, on September 8. Mussolini had been freed of his captivity on the Gran Sasso massif thanks to a daring raid conducted by German paratrooper forces, who flew to the target aboard glider planes, silent as eagles. Not a shot had been fired and the Repubblica Sociale had been founded, out of the will of the Duce and the Führer. The need for territory to deny the Allies the room to maneuver their forces on the peninsula was part of the German 'retention plan'. They expected the Italians to betray. Thus began Operation Achse and with it the nazifascist occupation of centre-north Italy.

After the armistice, for a time, there was hope, breathing the scent of a freedom still afar. The population, however, felt guideless, lost with no one at the helm. Still the new wind, that feeling of lack of real rules, after a moment of confusion, freed the conscience of the citizens from the bounds that the regime at first, and the King or the Duce of RSI later, tried to impose on the populace.

Freedom with curfew. Censorship. Police cordons through the cities. Soldiers of the King firing on protesters. Germans in your home. Fascist





hierarchs hidden and protected by the Royal Army. The illusion of peace melted away like snow in the sun.

The war was going on.

Yet the rule of force as the sole mean to regulate life, the quashing of rights and the exploitation of the populace had lit a flame that dwelt, hidden, under the embers of an iron will. It gave life to a struggle growing from the bottom, out of those who felt the urge to take part in what would become the liberation of Italy. The armistice with the Allies was just a way for the establishment to remain in power and the people, weary and disoriented, were tired of being witness -and unwilling actor- of their own tragedy. So arose the first partisan groups - "by self generation, not by legacy" - (G. Bocca).

It ceased being a war of army versus army, nation versus nation, soldier versus soldier. Now it was a war between Italians following an ideal and Italians following another ideal. A civil war running in the background of the occupation. Hard, violent, merciless, the Nazi-fascists were desperately holding their ground against increasing pressure from the Anglo-American army marching north under the command of general Alexander. The minute spreading of Wehrmacht units in hundreds of Italian towns and villages brought about the nazi 'final solution' over Italy as well, with massive round-ups and deportations. Jews, political opponents, bandits, rebels, soldiers still loyal to the King... no one was spared.

While the Allied forces gained ground, partisan formations steadily grew in numbers, recruiting common people young and old, men and women alike. Most formations referred to the Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale (CLN, in short) as an umbrella authority, and independents, not recognized by the CLN, were often treated like rogues by other anti-fascists, sometimes even executed. As the formations increased their number and efficiency, strikes against fascist and nazi targets intensified. It wasn't traditional warfare -partisans were still no match for regular units- it was guerrilla, fought on the mountains, in the forests, along the valleys. The bolder the feats of the

"bandits" became, the harsher the nazi would retaliate against civilians. Be it out of desperation at seeing the Allied armies pressing on, frustration for being unable to strike back at the rebels, or simply longing for revenge against a population that hated them, nazi troops acted with thorough brutality on several occasions.

THE GOTHIC LINE

After September 8, 1943 armistice, the strategy of Field-Marshal Albert Kesselring, German Commander-in-Chief South, was that of a fighting retreat. Faced with superior numbers, he planned to fall back on a fortified line after another, preserving his forces as much as possible while inflicting the highest damage on the enemy, hopefully grinding the Allied onslaught to a halt before reaching northern Italy and thus denying them access to the heart of Europe. The best of said defense lines lay across the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines from Massa on the Tyrrhenian coast to Pesaro on the Adriatic, passing through the Arno river valley and the provinces of Modena and Bologna. Imposing forced labour on thousands of Italian civilians in the so called Organisation Todt, they heavily fortified their positions along the line, building countless trenches, bunkers, gun pits and machine-gun nests and finally named it *Gotenstellung*, or 'the Gothic line'. The Allies reached it in the summer of 1944 and quickly laid down Operation Olive to try and overcome the German defenses before the autumn rains made it all but impossible, delaying their advance until the next spring. For this feat to be accomplished, one of the critical breakthrough points was the area or Monte Sole, with the Futa and Giogo mountain passes leading into the Padan Plain and to Bologna. The Germans stood a good chance of holding long enough but partisans could be a game changer in that crucial territory, so, on august 12, 1944 Kesselring issued a General Order to quash any resistance fighting, practically according German commanders free rein on how to achieve the goal.

12 AUGUST 1944: KESSELRING'S GENERAL ORDER

(Abstract)

"1. Begin the most vigorous actions against armed bands of rebels, against saboteurs and criminals that in any way with their injurious activity hamper the conduct of the war and perturbate public order and safety.

2. Take a percentage of the population hostage in those places





where armed bands are known to operate and shoot said hostages every time an episode of sabotage should happen in one of those places

3. Execute acts of retaliation up to the point of burning the houses that stand in areas where gunfire should be directed against German units or individual soldiers.
4. Publicly hang individuals identified as killers or bosses of armed bands.
5. Hold the inhabitants responsible in those villages where roads or telegraph lines should be subject of sabotage.
6. The preceding points are to be made known to the citizens, who must effectively cooperate in order to prevent elements in the pay of the enemy from committing the aforementioned crimes".

The Allies launched Operation Olive on August 25, 1944, concentrating their forces on the Adriatic coast to penetrate the Gothic Line on the side and in its centre, aiming towards reaching Bologna. Florence had already been liberated, now it was all about passing the Apennines to descend into the Padan Plain. The Anglo-Americans broke through on the coast towards Rimini and between September 18 and 21 they managed to conquer the Gigo and the Futa passes too. Only the Raticosa pass was missing, but German forces showed remarkable skill in blunting their strikes. The time was ticking and on September 27 the Allies renewed their onslaught to try and overcome the Apennines, advancing their positions to just in front of the Raticosa pass, a few kilometers away from Monte Sole.

WHERE HISTORY BLURS INTO FICTION: MONTELUPO AND ITS VALLEYS

Montelupo is a fictional small village huddled on the slopes of Monte Sole, just north of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennine ridge. In our narrative, it's "the first village beyond the Raticosa pass". To the east would lie Monzuno, to the west Grizzana Morandi, to the north Marzabotto and Sasso

Marconi and beyond, Bologna.

Of the few villages spread out just beyond the mountain passes separating Tuscany and Aemilia our Montelupo is the first in the line and the most relevant: it is a necessary point of passage for the Allied troops on their way to the Padan Plain. A few stone huts, a communal oven, an inn... even a brothel, offering discounted rates for the military. The war is coming to an end, or at least that's what the local population thinks. The Germans are clearly about to retreat, in the past weeks they have been dismantling gun positions, comm lines, airdrops, even whole sections of railway track. Sooner or later, life is bound to return to normality. The people of Montelupo are at peace, it is hearsay that the Anglo-Americans are just beyond the mountain pass, and someone even claims to have spotted their vanguards on the heights with a binocular. News of the liberation of Florence is confirmed by now, Bologna will be next and the time can't be far. The local partisans are coming more and more out of their hideouts, sometimes even breaking their cover allowing themselves to be seen in the village. Stella Rossa, the red star, is the name of the independent partisan brigade founded by Ettore Gamberini -battle name Sirio. They control the woods around Montelupo and fight the guerrilla warfare against the German oppressor. The village priests do what they can to mediate, or better said, Don Cattani does: it is rumored that Don Montanari joined the partisans instead. The 'Podestà', the mayor, Giulio Castaldi, in accord with the chief of the 'Brigate Nere' fascist militia, Augusto Malagoli, tries to preserve the balance. Maybe, once the war is over, winners and losers, whoever they may be, will be able to sit together for a glass of wine at the inn and life will return to normality, like before, when war was just a distant fear. Currently, Montelupo is inhabited mostly by women and, like many other women all over Italy, they had to roll up their sleeves to get by, Mussolini's 1938 laws restraining women labor notwithstanding. Most men are gone: some are serving in the military, some went missing in the woods, some are simply dead. The children have been sent off to safer places down the valley, away from the frontline, staying at friends' or relatives'. Hopefully their mothers will soon be able to go and fetch them back.



DAILY LIFE IN THE VILLAGE

Life in occupied Italy is a daily struggle to survive the perils of war, though the people of Montelupo may be finally close to seeing the end of it. Most men left the village, sooner or later during the war. Some will never come back. A few remained to keep things going but it's the women who are now at the core of village life. Someone had to take care of the fields, the animals, everything. Gone the able men, sisters, wives and a few old parents were left in charge. They try to get by, day after day: they collect what little supplies are available through their ration books, they bake bread, take care of the chickens, mend clothes, waiting for the end of these troubled times. After all, who cares for a small village like Montelupo? The young, reckless, or maybe brave, have left their homes to live in the woods, sleeping one night in a shack, another under the starlit sky and a third... who knows where? Living finally free of all the bounds that were imposed on them in the preceding years, to make their voice heard, to fight against the fascist regime and the nazi occupation. The villagers of Montelupo are concerned each with their own, they don't think as a group. One is saved alone, one way or another. They're afraid of fires, retaliations, anything that can take away their house and what little they've got left. Those who don't want to take sides must still succumb to the demands of the German invaders, too strong and ruthless to accept a refusal. The only feasible strategy is not to compromise oneself with the partisans, pretending there's no occupation and the German rule is legitimate.

Sure, in the hamlet of Montelupo, like everywhere in the RSI, one can find fascist loyalists, close to the Brigade Nere and the Guardia Nazionale Repubblicana, as well as supporters of the rebels, secretly providing them with food, clothes and valuable information. Yet the vast majority just wants to survive at all costs. They dislike the German occupants, but they accede to their requests in order to be spared. At the same time they do something for the rebels too, even if it's dangerous, in a tricky game of balance. They walk on a thin line trying not to fall out of grace with either side, anxiously waiting for the arrival of the Allied forces to liberate them. After all, the Germans are really going away soon.

Yes, liberation, the end of the war. The Allies are near and hope is timidly beating again in the heart of the inhabitants of Montelupo, just at a time when a feeling of helplessness and exhaustion is slowly overcoming those who spent themselves too much in the strenuous last few years.

CHARACTER GROUPS

THE RESISTANCE FORMATIONS

Inspirational: "A private affair", Beppe Fenoglio; "The Path to the Spiders' Nests", Italo Calvino; "Partisan Wedding", Renata Viganò.

"STELLA ROSSA" (RED STAR) BRIGADE

"From the beautiful cities we gave to the enemy

one day we fled to the dry mountains
looking for freedom between the peaks
against the slavery of a betrayed land.
We left homes, schools and factories,
we turned into barracks the old farmhouses,
we armed our hands with bombs and grapeshot,
we forged in battle our muscles and hearts.
We are the rebels on the mountain..."

"I ribelli della montagna" (The Rebels on the Mountain), Emilio Casalini, 1944

A resistance formation born of free will and not by force, men that took up arms without draft cards or injunctions. A large formation rooted in the territory that in less than a year grew to over a thousand effectives. An autonomous formation, where communists, anarchists, socialists, monarchists, ex-gendarmes, ex-soldiers, farmers, women, common people, can meet under a single idea: anti fascism.

With no politics, a total lack of connection to communist and catholic political committees, it goes on its way towards its only objective: crushing the foreign oppressor. They can count on the backing of the local population, providing hideouts, food, help and support. No rewards, no privileges. Hidden within the woods, cloaked by vegetation, concealed by the mountains.

Even with inadequate equipment and inferior weaponry, in less than a year of guerrilla and sabotage they managed to inflict steady losses and considerable damage to the German forces. They fight for a different Italy, a better future -if not for themselves, at least for their children. Men and women without heroics nor rhetoric, that lifted the spirits of the Italian people and are willing to give their lives for the cause. A formation called "Red Star".



"FIAMME VERDI" (GREEN FLAMES) BRIGADE

"We, the bold Italian rebels
in fire and frost forged,
we went to the mountains
to defend our homeland and honour.
Old Alpine's green flames
still adorn our chests,
we want our country free
or for Italy we'll all die!
Green Flames hymn, first stanza

Loyal, honest, of noble spirit, calm and upright: these are the features of a Green Flames' patriot, clearly written on their founding act. Father Domenico "Carlo" Orlandini founded the Green Flames Brigade after getting into irreconcilable disagreements with the Communist-aligned resistance in the region, whose political debate, indiscriminate looting and inept commanders he wanted to replace with exemplary discipline and capable, brave men. And this is what Carlo's Green Flames are: an avowedly Catholic, yet independent brigade that counts among its members proud and upright men, that pay as much attention to the behaviour in war of their allies as to that of their enemies. Offended by the very idea of taking personal advantage while damaging their own brothers or their country, they do not fight for the thrill of adventure, nor to obtain privileges or escape individual troubles. Having faith in God's help, this small band of the Green Flames Brigade settled in the Lavino river valley fights the invaders honourably and treats them with dignity even when they are defeated and broken: the patriots' cause is too important to have it blemished with anything less than noble.

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CLN

("Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale", National Liberation Committee)

"We saw, within hand's reach,
Behind the tree trunk, the bush, the canes,
a more humane tomorrow
fairer, freer, happier."
'Oltre il Ponte' (Beyond the bridge), Italo
Calvino, 1961

The National Liberation Committee, the office that coordinates virtually all Italian rebel formations, has no doubts: the first step is to defeat the enemy, only then we can discuss what shape the reborn Italy will have. And the choice will belong to the Italian people. Could you think of anything else, after an Italy invaded by German troops announced an armistice with the Allies? How could you trust your government, having seen your King flee his capital after

declaring it an Open City? Italians have had enough of inept representatives, now they'll take their future into their own hands. And, as many believe, it will be a happier future, fairer, where differences and waste will not be tolerated. A new world, a just country. But nowadays disorder reigns, and the fight against occupying forces must have absolute priority; in the meantime, any social or political division has to be set aside.

And while the fight rages on someone has to take care of running the country: the CLN will do that. Its members are not only brave fighters, but farsighted men with clean consciences; they think about how Italy will be when it'll be free, when Italy's destiny will be decided by the Italians themselves. On the hills of Rome or in the woods of Monte Sole, the members of the CLN will always be there to remind their fellow countrypeople that's in the darkest hour that you need to look up again and direct your gaze to the light of tomorrow.

FASCISTS AND NAZIS

Inspirational: "L'ordre SS: éthique et idéologie", Edwige Thibaut; "Kaputt", Curzio Malaparte

"BRIGATE NERE" (BLACK BRIGADES) MILITIA

"Black Brigades, Death's spearhead
we're fight's and horror's flag,
we're pride turned cohort
to defend Italy's honor.
Long live Italy! Fascists, to us!
Fascio is many heroes' badge
Black Brigades, stout-hearted
against enemies from the inside and the
outside!"

Black Brigades Hymn, 1944

Something had to be done: the holy motherland was defiled by foreign enemies' boots, and the duty of every true Italian, every true fascist, is to defend it, after the King's infamous betrayal. Many proud members of the local Fascist Party had this in mind, when they left their villages on the Apennines on their way to Bologna, at the beginning of July 1944, to enlist with the XXIII Black Brigade "Eugenio Facchini", the newly formed Party Militia. Led by Augusto Malagoli, handsome and manly in their hastily patched black uniforms, they were ready to depart for the Gothic Line, rifles in their hands and Italy in their hearts. Much to their surprise, they were sent back home instead, to Montelupo and other small villages. They labeled them "reserves", gave them old pistols and one duty: fight "for the defense of





the Italian Social Republic's order, the struggle against bandits and outlaws and the annihilation of enemy paratrooper cells". What it really meant: to kill rebel fellow villagers, and the first of the Allies to infiltrate past the Gothic Line. More than a few of the Black Brigade men harbor doubts about their future, and that of their Republic and their Duce. But their categorical imperative still holds its weight: "Believe, Obey, Fight". And the Black Brigades will do what's expected from them.

GENDARMES OF THE GNR

GUARDIA NAZIONALE REPUBBLICANA

(Republican National Guard)

"Within Italian borders

Italian people have been made anew

Mussolini remade them

for tomorrow's war

for labor's joy

for peace and laurels

to put on the pillory

those who reneged Italy."

'Giovinezza' (Youth), unofficial hymn of the RSI

After the foundation of the RSI, the **Italian Social Republic**, Fascism is back, fiercer than ever, flaunting its renovation and the new vigor of a political party that many had given up for dead. It doesn't matter that probably Mussolini is just a puppet of the Führer now, true fascists will never give up. "Semper fidelis". For the Duce. For the Motherland. For Honor.

The GNR is the RSI military police and territorial force, it was founded by the Duce on December 8, 1943 assembling veterans from the Royal Army, the Royal Gendarmerie ("Carabinieri") and a few paramilitary corps. Brave and integer men, that would never betray the cause they're sworn to defend. The Anglo-American enemies advance, pushing against the borders of the motherland, and little can be done to stop them. The Germans have lost their faith in their old ally and nowadays perhaps they see Italy as just another occupied country. The National Guard itself is shrinking, as

resources are diverted to the new party militia. Little does it matter: many enemies means much honour, and what's left of the GNR won't budge an inch. Every Republican can find within the camarade beside him the most precious treasure, and everyone is indispensable to defend Italy's land and what matters most: its honor. Death to those who give up!

WOMEN OF THE SAF ("SERVIZIO AUSILIARIO

FEMMINILE", WOMEN'S AUXILIARY SERVICE)

"Lord of Heaven and Earth, welcome the humble, fervent prayer of us, Italian women, that put you, O Lord, and our homeland above even our dearest loved ones. [...] Bless Italy over the seas, over its bloodied and oppressed lands, over all the skies, the Republican flag, free, powerful, safe. Bless the dead, forever alive in our hearts, that raise towards You, high, the Italian flag that will never furl. Preserve the Duce. Bless"

The Auxiliary's Prayer, 1943

SAF volunteers are a priceless resource for the Italian Social Republic military: air defense technicians, wireless operators, tailors, nurses, clerks, they perform their work with care, dedication and accuracy, in the barracks and on the battlefields. Living embodiment of the fascist woman ideal, they support RSI troops surrounded by an aura of charm and iron resolve. The hardships of military life do not scare the 6,000 girls led by the unyielding *Brigadier General* Piera Gatteschi Fondelli, and when needed the volunteers do not hesitate to take up arms side by side with Fascist Soldiers or Militia. Italy's true women, amazons in wartime as they are household angels in peace, they relentlessly wave the tricolor flag, singing songs that mark Fascism's certain victory against its vile enemies.

SS-PANZER-AUFKLÄRUNGS-ABTEILUNG 16

(16TH SS ARMORED RECONNAISSANCE BATTALION)

"May God the Almighty give his grace to our work, steer our will, bless our wisdom and fill us with people's trust! Because we wish to fight not for ourselves, but for Germany!"

excerpt from an Adolf Hitler's radio speech

Among the Waffen SS deployed in Italy, a specific unit is tasked with the most sensitive and risky operations on the Gothic Line during the military occupation in 1944. They are a special detachment of the



16th Reconnaissance Battalion of the 16th SS Panzergrenadier-Division "Reichsführer-SS". They are led by Hauptsturmführer (Captain) Siegfried Von Hoffman, diehard follower of Major Walter Reder, who commands the entire Battalion from a stronghold in the north of Tuscany. Among their numbers, severely depleted by the long war against the rebels, there are men coming from every corner of Germany: decorated officers from other campaigns, volunteers eager to serve the Reich, but also members of the Hitlerjugend, almost kids, sometimes drafted and sent straight to the frontlines, far away from their homes and their land.

Men of different trades and social backgrounds, united by their deep faith in the Führer and their motherland. Men eager to serve and die for a higher cause, the supremacy of the German people and the defeat of the Anglo-American capitalism, so the world could know the peace and prosperity that only the Third Reich could guarantee. And to make the Führer's dreams come true, the 16th's men are ready to eliminate any obstacle on Germany's path, be it a traitor, a communist, a Jew, one of their supporters, or one of those bandits that Italians keep calling "partisans".

WOMEN FOLLOWING THE WAFEN-SS

Kinder, Küche, Kirche
(children, kitchen, church)
Kaiser Wilhelm II, on German women

The German army would be powerless without the huge apparatus of support corps and second line troops that follow and provide for the combat troops. In the same way that a trained athlete cannot land a blow without the participation of their whole body, Germany cannot win this war without the help of the whole population, the working muscles of the Reich. So on the Gothic Line too, following the soldiers of the 16th Battalion, many non-combatants come along to contribute to Germany's victory. Most are men, such as engineers, artificers, orderlies and clerks, well oiled cogs inside the war machinery. Several, though, are women: cooks, nurses, but also officers' wives and daughters. Whoever thought of second lines as a refuge for inepts and cripples would be dead wrong: everyone has a duty to fulfill, and a task to accomplish, efficiently and without waste. Man or woman, everyone is part of the magnificent and neat organism that is the Reich: everyone is a small cell, peripheral, but still essential and necessary, connected with millions of other cells and commanded by the German people's Führer and the National Socialist Party that he chairs.

THE CITIZENS OF MONTELUPO

Inspirational: "Fausto and Anna", Carlo Cassola; "The Twenty-three Days of the City of Alba" (second part), Beppe Fenoglio

Even in some remote mountain hamlet the effects of the conflict are overpowering. Abuse, skirmishes, retaliation, shootings. It's not easy to live close to the frontline in the summer of '44. Most of the inhabitants so far tried to follow the flow of events and keep a low profile to avoid trouble. But war looms above them, it's just on the other side of the hills: there's no more time for indecisiveness. Many have joined the rebel formations, some with Sirio and his Red Star, others going farther into the mountains. Then there are those who think of the partisans as rebels, vile traitors that help the invading armies; some of these joined the RSI military and were assigned to distant posts on orders from the Duce. Some keep wondering how much loyalty do they owe to the King, the Army, the Party. Many others still haven't made their choice, or maybe they just haven't made up their mind about what side would be more convenient for them.

The situation is very confusing, it's hard to tell what's right and what's wrong. Even the presence of the German allies, often not exactly the picture of the loyal companion that official propaganda depicts, can't really bring order. The village is almost completely populated by women and old people: men are gone and afar, no matter what path did they choose. The children have been sent away, to safer places with relatives. The only men of arms-bearing age are the landlords, the physician and the priest: they're too rich, too wise or too coward to dirty their own hands. Women on the contrary are strong and resolute, mountain people, and they know very well how to get their hands dirty. They try to help their men as much as they can. For some, this means helping brothers, husbands or relatives that went up the mountains. For others, being loyal to the Duce and the Party, looking down upon young partisan couriers, ready to do anything to make the rebels leave the valley. There are also those who just pray every hour of the day for this accursed war to quickly come to an end, and for the bloodshed to stop.



HOW TO PLAY



RULES AND GUIDELINES: A NARRATIVE AID

Remember: every note in this document, every "rule" of this game was conceived with narrative effectiveness in mind. There is nothing to "win" for the players, no checkpoints to reach faster than someone else, no victory points to gain. The whole larp is intended as a big collective narration, just as if we were sitting around a table taking turns in telling a piece of the story. Please play accordingly: be willing to go with a scene even if the result is "against" you, ride the plots towards this vision, be inclusive and spread narrative cues around: a larp is a social experience, one will truly have fun only if everybody else does. Moreover, remember there is no such thing as a "right" or "wrong" narrative choice: nobody, let alone the authors, is entitled to have a say about what you'll decide to do with your character.

RHYTHM

We designed the story arc of this larp in the form of a *crescendo*. We feel this event will be most enjoyable with a bit of railroading and we ask you to cooperate in synch-ing the pace with us. The beginning should be as quiet as believable for the setting, to give everybody a chance to immerse and savour the reconstruction of daily life in 1944, occupied Italy. We

will not trigger serious plots from the outside for the first 20 hours or so. Please do the same and let the tension build slowly. Take your time to live this more experiential first part of the event, nurture your conflicts without letting them explode yet. Don't go looking for you arch-enemy or start a vicious firefight in the beginning, nor quietly sit on the porch sipping a glass of milk in the end. The afternoon of Saturday will be a good time to start escalating things a bit, we will stage external events that should naturally give you the cue for that. By Sunday morning the narrative threads should be climbing to their extreme consequences: plots will heat up, just go with the flow and let the situation precipitate, we would like to close with a bang around Sunday noon.

NARRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS AND FATE ENVELOPES

The larp will run nonstop for almost two days so make the best of the pre-game time to ask questions and consult with the staff. At check-in we will hand out every player a sheet we call a "Prologue", containing plot cues, a brief description of the character's initial state of mind and his goals and concerns. It is meant to be an aid for a richer roleplay, we suggest you start along its line, then you are of course free to bring your game wherever your self tells you. There is just one kind of indication we ask you to stick to, it's called a "Fate". It is an action that is required of a character to ensure the advancement of the broader plots, in a game style that limits the presence of NPCs: since we like to leave the agency with you, we have to ask you the occasional service to the plot architecture. Not that there's a need for a huge amount: only a handful of players will be asked for this kind of help, if you find a fate in you sheet, like "Be at your cousin's place Friday at 10pm" or "Anytime before Saturday afternoon, pick an opportunity to publicly accuse your boss of treason", we ask you to please do exactly as requested to the best of your capabilities. Should you feel the Fate is strongly in contrast with the story arc you have been building with your character, have a private talk with the staff member assigned to your group (see below, "Bridge characters"). In exceptional situations, we may find it necessary to assign you a Fate during runtime; should this necessity arise, your group's staff member will come to you with an off-game envelope stamped with the logo of the larp: it means we feel we really need your help, please go to a quiet place, read the instructions in the envelope and execute them in due time.



INTENSITY AND SAFETY

By taking part in *The Rebels on the Mountain* you commit to refraining from actions that may be dangerous or excessively bothersome, for yourself or for the other participants. At the same time, you accept that within these borders you will have a realistic physical and verbal interaction with the other players: you accept that, with due attention to safety and decency, you will be hugged, grabbed, insulted, arm carried, kissed, searched, threatened, hit with foam weapons, tied. We would like to especially stress a few recommendations:

- » always, always check with your common sense before taking action and make sure there is no potential danger in it
- » be prudent and gradual in your interaction: don't go from zero to smacking someone you don't even know right in the face, start with poking or careful pushing and see if they seem ok with getting into a staged scuffle
- » be extremely careful when using blank-firing guns, as improper handling might result in burns and hearing impairment (see below, "Weapons")
- » physical contact is just meant to let the players stage cool scenes cooperatively; never, ever try to force your will on someone else by means of physical strength: if the other is resisting your physical cue, by all means let it go (rest assured they would maybe fake resistance, but quickly give in, if they were ok with it); this said we hope that you are ok with border crossings that are normal business in performing arts, like a hug, a kiss on the lips or a slap on your cheek.

SAFECODES

The game employs three safecodes as a mean to help the player agree the intensity of their interaction, should the need arise. They are pre-set codewords you can speak out to ask the other to lower the bar, or to raise it. Everyone is expected to know and respect them. As the majority of the players in this larp are Italian, we believe it will be more effective to stay with safecodes in Italian. We will help International players familiarize with them during the pre-larp workshops.

The three codes are:

- » **"Vacci Piano"** (/ˈvattʃi ˈpjano/) - It translates to "take it easy" and it conveys the request not to raise the bar any higher and actually take it back a notch. If you are addressed with a "Vacci Piano" it means what you just did



was uncomfortable or unpleasant for the other, albeit not critically so, and they are allowing you to go on interacting, as long as you chill out a bit. So you can keep on playing but slow down, interrupt the physical contact, change the topic... basically give the other a break while keeping contact.

- » **"È tutto qui?"** (/ɛ ˈtutto ˈkwi/) - It translates to "is that all?" and it conveys a suggestion to raise the intensity. It means the other is enjoying whatever you are doing and wishes for more, that it's not disturbing them at all and you shouldn't worry to seem too aggressive or too physical. In this case, if you are addressed with the safeword, you are not obliged to comply, as what is ok for the other may not be ok for you. If you do agree on raising the bar, still do it gradually.
- » **"PAUSA"** (/ˈpawza/) - It translates to "pause" and it's a request for an immediate "cut" to the action. It means: "what you are doing is really hurting me physically or emotionally, I'm too annoyed to keep on playing, let's break off". Remember, you are the sole judge of your comfort and nobody has the right to question your feelings. If you feel bad, do not hesitate to call out "Pausa". If you are addressed with the safeword, immediately stop whatever you are doing or saying, break contact and go after something else to give the other some quiet time with themselves.

For example:

- » Franco captures the partisan Lince and ties his wrists together, pulling tight. Lince says "Vacci Piano" and Franco loosens the rope a bit.
- » Franco binds Lince loosely, with a shoe-string bow. Lince says "È tutto qui?": Franco pulls the rope a little bit tighter and ties a more realistic knot.
- » Franco starts to tie Lince down, but the player has a sprained shoulder, or maybe has some emotional problems with ropes and knots, and calls out "Pausa". Franco stops immediately, puts the rope aside and leaves Lince alone for a while.



SENSITIVE SCENES: RESPECT IS THE KEY

- » **Body searches:** they will just have to be done by physically searching someone, and we expect players not to touch intimate parts like breasts or buttocks during a search so we also ask you to carry your personal effects well away from them. Keep things in purses, pouches, hip pockets... whatever is easy to reach and search without discomfort or embarrassment for either party.
- » **Confiscating or stealing property:** our take on realism includes allowing characters to take other character's possessions; again, this is meant to enhance drama so do it only if it fuels meaningful play, not just because you can, and always treat the object(s) with the utmost respect; keep them only for as long as it makes sense to and have the greatest care not to damage them. In any case, we advise against bringing clothes and props that are very dear to you in game, lest you feel bad about being separated from them.
- » **Binding, blindfolding, arm carrying:** aside from paying attention to safewords, in all these cases you have to put special care into safety; if you bind and/or blindfold someone, it's your responsibility to lead them around without them getting hurt; even if the other doesn't call out for restraint, don't bind someone's wrists behind their back, nor bind the neck anyhow; in general, avoid situations that can be dangerous or annoying (e.g. don't arm carry someone down a steep flight of stairs)



- » **Intimacy:** when getting into hugging, cuddling and kissing, be very gradual and extra careful of safewords; whatever, don't try to do anything the other might find unpleasant. And please abstain completely from playing abusive scenes, even with consent: many find it disturbing that they happen at all, so let's agree on a taboo here.
- » **Getting drunk:** you can fake it but we ask you not to do it for real, even though alcohol is allowed in the event. Please drink with great moderation and if you realize you've miscalculated and you're getting

tipsy, stop drinking and avoid any physical interaction until you're perfectly sober again. We are very serious on this point, if we notice you're drunk you will be removed from the game for a few hours, or even until the next morning, if necessary.

- » **Captivity:** should you take a character prisoner, don't leave them alone: have someone interact with them at all times and make sure they get food and water if they need it; if the situation is getting boring find a plausible way to end it: you could exchange hostages with their faction, or negotiate a release (and the prisoner should honestly make some in game concession to the captors), or even give them a chance to escape by faking a moment of distraction (in this case leaving them alone, pretending to have other business, could be a good idea, instead: a simple and effective way of giving them the cue while having an excuse for your 'negligence'). In any case, you shouldn't keep someone prisoner for longer than an hour: find a credible solution and let the story progress, captivity is meant to create more play, not to curb it. It should be a great chance to explore police/prison tropes and to add flavour to conflict between factions, opening the door to diplomacy, threatening, rescue attempts etc.
- » **Torture:** torture scenes can make for great intensity, still if you're the torturer be careful not to get too carried away and pay attention that you can clearly acknowledge a safeword being called out (it may seem obvious but, for example, if there's great commotion around, you might not notice); if you're the subject of torture in game, please give in after a few minutes and when you do roleplay clearly that you are yielding, so from that point on your torturers know you are in their power; once you've given in, honestly cooperate: reveal information, confess your guilt, accept to sign confessions of crimes you have not committed, etc. Towards the end of the event, you can decide your character died under torture instead of giving in, and the torturers can't prevent it in any way
- » **Executions:** when death in game becomes possible (from Saturday night), executions become implicitly possible; if you execute someone remember to do it in a way that can be (safely) represented without extra props or tools, so don't try to portray beheading or scalping or dismembering of any kind, nor hanging or shooting point-blank to the head like in the movies; a good shot to the heart from a few meters away is definitely the best option (also very appropriate to the context).



COMBAT AND WOUNDS

ESCALATING VIOLENCE

As we stated before, we designed this larp with a *crescendo* of intensity in mind. This also applies to violence and aggression, so that the event lives a time with little fighting and people still trying to resolve conflicts through law and discussion, before things go warlike for real and shootings become the norm (again, Saturday afternoon will be a turning point). We wouldn't want to funnel your game too much, still we would be happy if you tried to follow this suggested escalation path:

- » **Friday evening and Saturday morning** people would still be wary of weapons and bow to just being threatened with one; nobody would think of firing a gun or inflict more than light wounds with melee weapons (unless it's something staged by the staff).
- » **Saturday afternoon**, characters start feeling bolder and may challenge the threat of melee weapons, while still submitting to firearms pointed at them. Gun holders will be happy with that and not shoot unless given an order by their commander. Wounds can be serious at this stage, even partially incapacitating.
- » **From Saturday night on**, the gloves come off and anything goes: challenging any kind of threat, shooting at will, dying. The fact that you can doesn't mean you want to: don't jump on the bandwagon if you think it's not consistent with your roleplay that far.



UNARMED COMBAT

Staged scuffles and fistfights make for great scenes and we expect everyone to be able to hold their part in a small fight in a safe, dramatic and convincing way, appropriate for their character: we will devote workshop time to this. Generally unarmed combat should not lead to in game

wounds, unless the receiver feels it makes sense for their story arc: it's up to you to decide to come out unscathed or with a varying level of discomfort and no one is entitled to question your decision even it looks inconsistent to them. For example, a partisan courier girl beaten by fascists could just stand up again with a grimace on her face, or go lie on her bed for a while or even lay there in pain until help comes.

ARMED MELEE COMBAT

The melee weapons you'll find in game, knives and batons, are not very likely to lead to duels or real fights, it will probably be more like one has it and the other doesn't. In any case, combat with these weapons should be conducted like if they were real, just withholding your strength so as to land soft blows. Make wide, theatrical motions when attacking and react dramatically to being hit, this sort of things. Such weapons do cause wounds (see below).

FIREFIGHTS

Gun combat will have a mostly dramatic resolution too: the toy guns we will employ make a loud bang but shoot no projectile. It's up to you to decide if it makes sense you've been hit, on credibility and narrative grounds. We will try this out in the workshops. In general:

- » the closest you are to the firer, the most likely you have been hit
- » the more you are under cover (behind a tree, a rock, a wall...) the least likely you are to have been hit
- » if you are caught in the open in the middle of a firefight between opposing parties, you can be almost certain a bullet will hit you, from one side or the other
- » if you're being shot from behind it's ok you don't fall if you're not sure you're the target, it would really be lame if you did and the gun was aiming somewhere else: in such cases shooters are advised to recall the attention of the target if they want to have a chance of suggesting a hit ("Stop, Franco, or I'll shoot!" or "This is for you, Rossetti!")
- » shooting someone bound a few meters away (like in an execution) always hits
- » Bullet hits cause wounds, easily serious ones (see below).

GRENADES AND EXPLOSIVES

We will use a handful of pyrotechnic devices for boom and smoke effects. Generally speaking, when you are within ten meters or so of an



explosion or a cloud of colored smoke, take it as being Seriously Wounded (see below).

WOUNDS

Roleplaying wounds is clearly very much up to your judgement, we have some guidelines and a set of 'medical' characters ruling wound seriousness but no one will bother to object if you feel you healed miraculously fast or your wounds turned worse than expected. If you want to stray away from the guidelines, please remember the "play to lose" attitude and do it because it fuels play, not for performance. Here's the guidelines:

- » a few baton hits, a single knife stab, a long beating with improvised weapons should make you "wounded", i.e. still able to move and ask for help, and free to choose how to roleplay the wound; a cure scene with a medical character will tell you more (see below)
- » a very tough group beating (more like a lynching), several stabs with a knife or a gunshot will make you "Seriously Wounded", i.e. you shouldn't be able to walk without assistance, but you should still be able to talk, interact and call for help; on Sunday you may also decide your character bled to death if left unattended for too long in this state
- » a spray of gunshots, executions, taking more gunshots after being already wounded, being stabbed by a small mob... any major harm scene of this kind should bring the character to an invariable death; still, everyone is entitled to their "Last Words", a cool last scene, like parting with their beloved or cursing their enemies: if you don't see it coming and you can't play it before being struck down, you are allowed to remain alive a few moments more to have a chance to enjoy one, and your killers should cooperate

LASTING EFFECTS OF WOUNDS

Simulating the real healing process of a wound is inapplicable to most larps, it would simply be very boring. Sometimes, you're allowed to consider yourself fully healed in a matter of minutes. We want to make it slightly trickier in this larp, so wound will not really "heal": after receiving medical attention and resting some time you can consider yourself more or less "able again", but still wounded and very possibly with some lasting effects. Side effects will be suggested to you by the medical characters that will treat you (e.g. "you need surgery to extract the bullet, stay in bed for a few hours after the operation") and you can consider whatever they tell you



"real" in game. We hope you will stick to these effects, expect them to be fairly hampering. We conceived this system to encourage taking wounds seriously: even if your character is brave, putting yourself in the line of fire should scare the heck out of you and not be taken lightly. So, don't go too hard on someone in the early stages of the larp and think twice before challenging armed foes: everything will have a price.

OFF GAME LANGUAGES

For the first time in a Terre Spezzate Larp, we will experiment with the use of different languages in game. The languages will be regulated rather strictly in order to give congruence to the narrative as well as to ensure the involvement of International Players. In particular, the narrative will allow for the use of only two languages, Italian and English.

We will actually have the SS characters use a handful of callouts in German too, but just as 'a touch of color'. English and Italian, instead, will be used as an integral element to the larp dynamics. Some characters, labeled as "Anglofono" (English speaking) in the character sheet, will have to be interpreted by players possessing a good knowledge of the English language: they will be the only ones, besides the International Players, to actually speak and understand English in the larp setting. This will allow them to interact seamlessly with the International Players, but also to understand radio communications, letters and notes written in English. On the other hand, all the other players will play characters completely ignorant of any foreign language: in game they won't understand whoever talks to them in English, nor any written text.



IN-GAME STAFF MEMBERS

THE VILLAGE GRANNIES

In our pursuit of a WYSIWYG experience we do not employ conventional gestures to signal oneself "out of game", so when Staff members need to move around the game area for logistical purposes (e.g. replenishing supplies, setting up a prop or just getting away to come back as an NPC) they will disguise themselves, wrapping themselves up in a large green cloak and pretending they are just old village grannies, irrelevant to the story. Don't bother with them, they are not really NPCs and nothing they hear or do will matter to the characters, just let them be. If you inadvertently engage them, they will squeal they are just poor old grannies ("una povera vecchina") and tread on about their business.



THE BRIDGE-CHARACTERS

Every faction will include a character played by a staff member with support duties. We sometimes refer to this role as "Bridge". Not the typical NPC, this *staff character* won't be involved in plots: don't try to drag them into one, consider them harmless and above any suspect... they are a bit like a part of the scenery. You can roleplay with them on general terms, of course. Their main purpose is to be there for you if you need to report any off-game concern, or if you really need a private talk about how your game is going. They are also responsible for the food preparation for every group, helped by the *corvée* characters.

THE "ISTITUTO LUCE" VIDEOMAKERS

The *Istituto Luce* was the state-controlled movie production company at the time. We will have real life photographers and videomakers discreetly wandering around the

game area disguised as a period movie crew. They will try to work as close as possible to the players without interfering, so as to make a good work of documenting this larp. It is totally historical for photographers and documentarists to be on the frontline in WW2 (actually, it still happens today) so that's their alibi. Just ignore them and hopefully you'll get great pictures of yourself as a reward. The reporters might also try to approach you for an in-game interview to your character if they see you slacking off, citing the *Istituto Luce*: feel free to accept or deny, your pick. In any case, they are substantially out the fiction, don't even roleplay with them, leave them in the background. Once the larp is over part of the material collected will be used to make a documentary of the event. If you are at all uncomfortable with this idea you can deny consent for the use of your image in writing before game start (they can't really avoid you on the run but you'll be edited out afterwards), though we sincerely hope you'll let us use it.

THE GAME AREA

BOUNDARIES

The game area is quite wide. It will be showed you during the workshops. To give you an idea, it includes the whole hillside on which the hamlet rests, way up to the hostel that will house the Nazi-fascist groups and down to the stream that runs on the bottom of the valley. Left and right, consider no more than a kilometer away from the village. Generally speaking, the action will happen below the paved road, don't climb above it or you'll end up in an off-game car park. The most relevant areas will be the village and the woods descending towards the stream. Fictionally, your character can't leave the game area.

"NO ENTRY" AREAS

The larp will be played in almost every room of the village buildings, as well as in its outsides and in the woods. You will find, however, some rooms or buildings with a no entry sign reading "*Elettricità, pericolo di morte*" (it means "lethal danger, electricity"). Please do not enter any such place: they are "backstage" or private (there actually are a couple of normal inhabited houses in the village).



"SERVICE" AREAS

Some of the rooms or pieces of furniture in the village house do look more modern than appropriate for the '40s, typically bathrooms, showers and fridges. We couldn't take them away (and after all they are not bad to have), so just sideline them in your mind and try to avoid staging cool scenes thereabout. Don't propose while opening the fridge or hide in the toilet during a nazi attack. We also think it's a good idea to limit action play in the bedrooms so don't hide your treasure under the pillow.

THE BLACK BOX

It wouldn't be surprising if **The Rebels on the Mountain** evoked profound reflections on such a controversial historical period, that we just know from books, or on contemporary topics, or even on life itself. Should you feel like writing them down, like in a diary, we devised something for you: we will set up a black box you will be able to access by asking a Bridge-character; there you will find a camera you can use to make a video log entry; this can be solely for your personal use (we will give you a digital copy at the end) or it could be used, with your permission, in building a documentary on this larp. Whichever the case, we thought of this as an interesting and useful way of taking a break off character to vent out, yet without really straying afar. Plus it will make nice memories for you to keep and go over again.

THE END

We designed the larp to have a final climax, and once this scene is played out, we will air a pre-recorded voice which will narrate the epilogue of the larp. When you realize this recording is playing, slow down to a halt and listen, while the voice carries you gently off game. The sound will be diffused either in the village square or near the Nazifascist building, depending on where the players' choices will have brought the game to its end. Very plainly, if Sunday noon is approaching and you're out in the woods for some reason, we strongly suggest you steer towards going to the settled area and join everyone else for the finale.

PRACTICAL

SCHEDULE

The Rebels on the Mountain is a 3-day larp and it will run twice, with different players, in the weekends of 10-12 July 2015 and 17-19 July 2015. Arrival at the venue is set for Friday at 14:00, unless you prefer to come Thursday night; in that case you can also join us for an optional pre-larp dinner. The game will start in the evening of Friday and run non-stop until the early afternoon of Sunday, for a net runtime of around 43 hours. Here is a more detailed timetable:

Thursday

- » from 16:00 arrival for those who sleep at the venue on Thursday (optional)
- » 21:00 to 00:00 pre-larp dinner and evening (optional)

Friday

- » 11:00 to 15:00 photographer available for souvenir pictures
- » 14:00 main meeting: for Villagers, Fascist Party and Red Star partisans at the village, for everybody else at the Rooster's Hostel (to avoid spoilers, please don't leave your designated meeting point until the game starts)
- » 14:00 to 15:00 check-in (important: make sure you are at the venue no later than 15:00 sharp, we can't guarantee we can find the time to brief you and insert you with machines rolling)
- » 15:00 to 19:00 sorting out costumes and sleeping places, workshops, pre-larp buffet
- » 19:00 game start

Saturday

- » (24-hour in game)

Sunday

- » sometime between 13:00 and 14:00 expected game over
- » 14:00 to 16:00 post-larp buffet
- » 14:30 to 16:00 photographer available for souvenir pictures
- » 16:00 and on most players pack and leave

Monday

- » 12:00 latest possible check-out for those who stayed sunday night

This general timetable may still incur in minor changes. Players will be informed via e-mail or Facebook posts of any amendments. Please keep in mind that once the larp begins you will be responsible of your own timetable and well-being.



there will be no structural breaks for eating, drinking, washing and resting, you will have to make time for it in your playing. It may be hot, it will be physical, please make sure you drink enough water and get a sufficient amount of sleep. Especially try to spare some energies in the beginning; as anticipated plot events will be in a crescendo so the larp will likely be fairly hectic towards the end.

ARRIVING ON THURSDAY:

PRE-LARP DINNER AND BRUNCH

The day before the larp, on both runs (Thursday, July 9th and 16th) we'll have a dinner at the game venue, at 21:00 sharp. The dinner will be out-of-character, but we'll hand (character) name tags out, to help players get to know each other.

It will be a complete Italian dinner: starters, first course, second course, desserts, wine & coffee; cooked and served by some of our staff. The menu will be friendly both for those who eat meat and for those who don't; it won't include vegan options though. The cost per person is €15 and the proceeds will be used to finance our future larp projects.

On Friday morning, we'll serve a simple yet nourishing brunch: coffee, tea, milk, pastries, sandwiches, scrambled eggs, bacon and the like. The cost will be 7.50€ per person and the brunch will be served from 10:30 to 13:00.

To book a place for Thursday's dinner, and/or Friday's brunch, please use the [online form](#). Please note lodging at the venue for that night is still a free option for everyone: you can, if you so wish, come to the Village on Thursday (from 16:00), bring your own food and sleep there at no extra charge; no need for booking.

MEALS

You will be offered an off game buffet meal before the event begins on Friday and another on Sunday after the end. During the larp, meals will be managed in game and will be an integral part of the experience. The (uneven?) distribution of food, the choice of raw ingredients, the need to prepare your own meal are design elements, so we ask you not to bring extra food or beverages in game. If you have special dietary requirements (e.g. allergies, veganism, etc.) please get in touch with us promptly via email (elio.biffi@gmail.com) so we can find a custom solution for you. Mind you, as the larp is overtly hardcore-ish, we will also try to recreate a certain sense of scarcity of food, as it was in fact in 1944. You will find lots of vegetables, a fair amount of whole-grain flour and legumes, some



nuts, very little meat; you may have little whereas someone else has more; your food could be stolen or requisitioned. We will have staff members in game as non-player characters who will try to make sure no one is left with too little. Still, it may happen you end up skipping an occasional meal, and a little bit of feeling of hunger can be considered part of the experience of living in wartime. You may want to stuff yourself well up at the pre-game buffet, just in case.

LOCATION

The little mountain hamlet where our story will take place is an old settlement that, nigh abandoned, was turned into a rustic country resort. The new owner poetically baptised it 'Il Villaggio delle Stelle', 'The Village of the Stars', and named each of the huts after a celestial body. It lies at 780m above sea level in the first slopes of the Alps west of Turin, in the municipality of Luserna San Giovanni. It's made of a dozen small wood-and-stone buildings huddled on a hillside, enjoying a breathtaking view of the valley and the surrounding mountain peaks. Together with a nearby chalet, 'Il rifugio del Gallo' (the Rooster's Hostel), it can house up to 80 people. Electricity is available everywhere, though we will use it sparingly in game. The chalet and most of the huts have their own kitchen and bathroom, a couple depend on nearby communal facilities. Showers and warm water are present, though both in limited supply (e.g. there may be a single shower in a ten people common, and warm water is obtained through not-so-big boiler tanks). The bathrooms will be the only areas not really in game: basically you will still be in character but no one is supposed to disturb you while attending to your personal care and it's also the places where immersion breaks a bit as you may see modern furniture and use your modern toiletries. Part of the village is still a work in progress and those building which shouldn't be accessed (including a couple of inhabited houses) will be clearly marked. The original, wood-fired communal oven of the old settlement has been preserved, as well as a handful of sheds for barn animals: chickens, geese, rabbits, goats, sheeps, pigs and a mascot donkey called 'Paco' will share the village life with you in



game. Acres of woods extend around the village, hiding several abandoned huts, nowadays little more than ruins, that will be home to the partisan factions: basically it will be camping in the wilderness for them, no comforts and the starlit sky for a roof.

GPS Coordinates: N 44.792602, E 7.22649

PARKING

A parking lot will be available in the vicinity of the venue. Temporary signs will point to it, and a staff member will also be standing by the road in the early afternoon of Friday to show drivers the way. Please be advised that parking anywhere along the paved road is not an option, the local Council strictly forbids it: just stick to the parking lot, it's there for you. Car access to the Hostel and to the Village is possible via dirt roads and it will be allowed in the afternoons of Thursday and Friday to offload luggage (and after game-over to load up again, of course). Leave your stuff where the meeting point for your group is set (village for Villagers, Fascists and Red Star, hostel for everyone else), go parking and walk back for check-in.

GAME ENVIRONMENT

The Rebels on the Mountain aims towards a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) experience. This means we seek a natural interaction with the environment: you can (sensibly) touch, move, transport or operate any object you find in the game area, and whatever has any use in game will be present as a real object (or a realistic replica). Some objects may feel more "special" - e.g. a radio or a gun- but they will still be physical, working props blended in the setting just like the dishes in the cupboard or the flower pot on the window sill, all there to give the feeling of a 1944 town in the Apennines. The location itself is superbly themed: the place we chose to recreate the homes of the families of Montelupo and the communal spaces of the village (the inn, the doctor's office, the horse shed...) is a group of old, rustic mountain houses. Fully habitable, refurbished with necessary comforts, **yet so 1940s**, with wooden floors, stone walls, fireplaces, stoves, old furniture and low ceilings. What present day technology is there will be camouflaged or stripped -for example, only a handful of electric light bulbs will be working, and they will mostly be low-power ones, so you will often need to turn to oil lamps and torches. Everything inside will recall the past, aiding the suspension of disbelief and supporting you in immersing in your characters as deeply as pos-

sible. The village is surrounded by thick vegetation and you will be free to move around and extend your play on acres of woodland and mountain trails (though we advise against straying farther than a kilometer from the village, lest you lose contact with the bulk of the story). The pristine natural environment will allow for a very **real-feeling guerrilla warfare game** of hide and seek. Moreover, the deep woods conceal small buildings and ruins, that the **partisans** will be able to use as hide-outs, operation bases and shelters.

COSTUMES

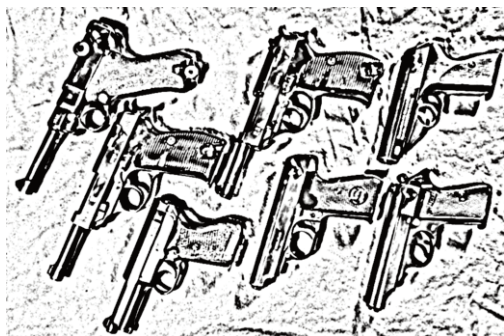
In line with the rest of the setting, costumes should contribute to the realistic visuals of the larp and look as close as possible to period clothing. International players, whatever their role, will be entitled to a costume loan at no extra charge. The Italian players assigned to groups dressing in civvies (Citizens of Montelupo, Partisans and Women of the SS) will have to take care of their own costume. By and large, civilian clothes of the 1940s -especially in terms of everyday, informal wear- were not that far from simple outfits still worn a few decades ago. Plain, traditional shirts and trousers, a waistcoat or casual jacket, a hat of any kind for men. A shirt-dress or a long skirt coupled with a blouse, plus a shawl and maybe a kerchief over the head for women. Finer or coarser for burgher or peasant, and that was basically it. The Italian players who chose characters in uniform (SS soldiers, Fascists men and women) will be required to rent a full costume through the organization, so that military corps can show consistent uniforms and insignia: we will source complete outfits at theatre costume shops. What everyone (including International players) will need to care for by themselves is appropriate underwear and shoes. Be extra careful with the shoes: nothing looking contemporary, especially sneakers or colorful technical footwear. Stick to plain leather shoes or old-fashioned hiking boots; for Allied soldiers leather combat boots, black or brown, are the all-rounder. The underwear should also look acceptable for the period (plain, dull-colored, unmarked... especially avoid modern prints and bright colours), as sometimes you will definitely be seen wearing it, at least by your closest peers: remember the game will run nonstop for two days and changing and resting will all be done in character, in the huts or in the woods. And since we are at it, being July in Italy, you may want to bring an extra change or two, and maybe some simple slack off outfit to give your costume a break. Finally, next to the costume, everyone's encouraged to build their character's little world of personal



belongings: alcohol flasks, pocket watches, rings, wallets, prayer cards, rosaries, neck crucifixes and so on. Second-hand shops or flea markets should offer a fair choice of cheap trinkets. Feel totally free to get in touch with us for suggestions and support, via e-mail (elio.biffi@gmail.com) or on Facebook.

PROPS

We set ourselves a high goal in the quality of props, certainly much closer to reenactment-grade than to symbolic representation. To name but a few highlights: a simulated broadcast with period music and news will be played out of fake 1940s radio sets; military characters will have real two-way radio equipment to talk to their commands; historically accurate fliers and posters will hang from the town walls. Political party member cards, IDs, contracts, ration books: all of this will be part of the initial set given to each player, according to their role. Food, beverages, cigarettes and



tobacco will be handed out to the players as goods to consume and barter in game, and rationing will make everything trickier. Most of the meals will not be prepared by the staff, but will be provided raw in the form of flour bags, eggs, beans, milk, canned food, salami, cheese, vegetables and such. Every house has stoves and kitchen tools and the inn space can be used as well to sort meals out.

WEAPONS

Partisan and Nazi-fascist characters will also receive scenic weapons as part of their character's equipment: a range of blank firearms and a handful of melee weapons, like batons and knives. These replicas are completely safe to use, the guns can only fire blank ammunition and are compliant with Italian safety regulations for use in re-enactment, the sticks are made of soft foam (plastazote) with a fibreglass core.

Firearms and ammo will be handed out by the staff on narrative considerations: whatever you'll get, trust us it's the best for the story. Scarcity or libe-

rality of resources, here too, will be food for play. You will see several different pistol and rifle types in game: there is very little choice of proper WW2, open sale blank replicas on the market and to meet the need of this event we will field a mixture of historical models (P38s, Colt 1911s) and "timeless classics" like revolvers, old Winchester rifles and Beretta 92s. To provide German troops with long weapons our set designers had to go as far as custom-building StG44-ish rifles by embedding Glock blank guns into emptied AK-47 frames. NPCs may carry some rare replicas (MP40, Sten, Thompson...) which are inert or have a more complex firing system: on safety and scenic grounds, players are requested not to take them, for any reason (even if the NPCs are dead and it makes all sense to steal their equipment, just pretend the weapon is not serviceable and leave it there). Safety and handling will be the subject of a full-fledged workshop; in short, these guns make a very loud bang and vent hot gases from above or the side so they should be fired with the arm well stretched out and paying attention that nobody is close to the weapon (especially on the sides); also, remember never to put them back in the holster with the hammer cocked.

Foam melee weapons pose an almost zero risk of injury, but you should still use a light touch as a good rule, make exaggerate movements to make it look real and then land a soft blow. They are just a dramatic tool like everything else, the opponent will react accordingly and pretend the consequences of real hits.

MONEY

Replica banknotes will be used for trade in local shops and small businesses. They are not meant to simulate a real economy, nor to enact trading patterns between the inhabitants of the village: they are just another dramatic tool to play cool scenes revolving around money and commerce. Consider this: before the war, the average monthly salary of a farm labourer was 300 Lire ("lee-ray", the old Italian Pounds), while a clerk's would be little more than 1.000 Lire, and the price of a kg of bread was 2 Lire; now, with the inflation caused by the war, prices have surged ridiculously and the same amount of bread can be purchased in Montelupo for no less than 100 Lire! You will also find jewellery in-game, represented by trinkets of modest value (some worn by the players themselves): for all game purposes, consider them precious.

RATION BOOKS, IDS, PARTY MEMBERSHIP CARDS

At check-in, you will receive in-game IDs for your character, appropriate to your faction (a party card, a partisan provisional ID, etc.):



bring a couple of small ID-style pictures of yourself in black & white (you can also just print them with your home PC printer), so you can customize your ID with your very own face. Villagers will also get ration books they can use in game to redeem what little food allowance they're entitled to. Do use all this stuff to enhance your play.

RADIO COMMS AND MUSIC

All military factions will have access to a two-way radio station to talk to their commands (played by NPCs on the other end of the waves). You will also see around a handful of devices capable of playing music, like fake old radio sets and phonographs. It's all very sensitive equipment that can easily jam, so specific players will be briefed on their care and operation, we ask everybody else to please refrain from tampering with them; don't even try operating them, because if any one gets messed up it's going to be complicated fixing it in-game. You can justify this with awe or helplessness in front of technology you have not been trained to use, which is not at all far from reality in 1944 (and even today, actually).

VEHICLES

Some factions will have historical vehicles at their disposal. They have no special function other than carrying someone to someplace in a spectacular way, take them as big (and very cool) props. Here too, operation is restricted to those players who will be briefed on how to use them, anybody else simply "doesn't know how" so if you're not briefed please don't try to drive them, even if you know how to in real life. Please note vehicles can't be used to "escape" from Montelupo in-game (just pretend the roads are patrolled): characters are meant to stay and see the end of it (or meet their own end).

TOBACCO AND CIGARETTES

The setting doesn't get in the way in this chapter, tobacco, cigars, pipes and cigarettes are all appropriate for the time so smokers will be allowed to smoke whatever they like. However, it is not realistic they have an unlimited supply, as tobacco goods were very scarce as well in 1944 Italy: they were highly sought after and can be object of trade in game. Therefore, a single pack of cigarettes per character is allowed in game. You will be given labels to disguise it as a historical one; if your character is poor we may ask you to hide part of the cigarettes and fish them out a bit at a time so as not to sport around a full pack. Cigars, pipe and hand-rolled cigarettes follow similar guidelines, except that there is no need to disguise them.

If you feel a pack in two days is too little for

your smoking habits and you may incur in discomfort, feel free to carry some extra "out of game" cigarettes. Those won't be disguised and won't exist in the game. We just ask you to smoke those extra cigarettes out of other players' sight.

WHAT TO BRING

Not much, the international player ticket includes almost everything you need. The organization will provide you with:

- » a pre-written character
- » props and a full costume
- » a lift to the venue from Turin or Milan
- » food and lodging at the venue from the afternoon of Friday to Sunday noon
- » lodging/couching at a local player's for an extra night before and/or after if you need
- » optionally, a bed at the venue for Thursday and/or Sunday night as well
- » a courtesy blanket and/or sleeping bag, if it doesn't fit in your luggage

What you will have to take care of:

- » travel to Milan or Turin
- » two B/W passport-style pictures of yourself (a PC print is sufficient) for in-game IDs
- » underwear to use in game, that can blend with the setting
- » a bag or rucksack to use in game, that can blend with the setting and can be easily carried (partisan life will likely include some hiking and relocating)
- » appropriate shoes (leather/plain, low or boots)
- » a sweater or warm underwear for the night (it's low mountains, temperatures drop after sundown)
- » the usual off game stuff (normal clothes, toiletries etc.)
- » sunscreen and mosquito repellent are a good idea, too

Optional:

- » your own sleeping bag (or bedsheets)
- » your own blanket, looking appropriate for the time
- » extra character props and trinkets
- » extra in game clothes/pieces of costume

We suggest not to use in game anything valuable or especially dear to you. Experience tells things just can get lost at larps, even with the best of care by everyone, and we can't take responsibility for missing property. For the off-game valuables you may not feel like leaving in the car (wallet, keys, phone...) we will provide an A4 yellow padded office envelope. Put your things in, seal it and leave it at the bottom of your bag. Anyone coming across such an envelope (e.g. during an in-game search) is requested to acknowledge it as off-game and leave it alone.



ETIQUETTE: THE DON'TS

We hold immersion and safety as very important and we ask you to abide to a few attitudes, to ensure an enjoyable experience for yourself and everyone else.



- » **never break immersion**, except for safety reasons; stay in character all the time, including when eating or resting; if someone tries talks to you out of character for no important reason, politely steer them in character ("What are you talking about, captain? Not grasping what you mean...").
- » **don't bother pointing out** another player's lack of fair play, you're playing to lose; if you think the person is really impairing the game flow, approach the bridge-character discreetly about it
- » **forget you mobile phone** for this couple of days; if you have personal issues requiring you to use it, please at least silence it and withdraw to a lonely spot to make your calls
- » **avoid recurring to the staff** as much as possible; if there really is a problem, we are totally there for you, just talk to a Bridge-character in private, otherwise we ask you to try and sort your doubts out in game: there's game styles where people are encouraged to consult with the staff about their steering, we like to empower the players to heed by their own judgement instead.
- » **refrain from meta-humour**, those ambiguous puns that are told with an in game wording but are really directed to the players and not to their characters; we find this an even worse blow to immersion that simply breaking out of character
- » **last and most important: never, ever disregard safety** and common sense; respect the other players, even in a heated scene, and immediately restrain your action if a safeword is called out; whatever, even if nobody is invoking a safeword, never allow yourself to do something objectively foolish or dangerous.

