

## **Ulisse Gilioli (Italy)**

### **Clip 1**

#### **Introduction and family**

My name is Ulisse Gilioli, I was born on May 26th, 1921 in Montecavolo near Quattro Castella (in the province of Reggio Emilia). My family had been a miller family for over 400 years. In 1929 there was a terrible crisis and my father lost a great deal of money, mostly because he was a great friend of the parson. He had 12 or 14 sharecroppers working for him, so he was really rich, and they could not pay him any longer with the stuff they used to bring to the mill. So they kept taking credits, but the day came when my father lost a lot of money. That was when we split up. Me and my brother Portos were both students, so we went to Montecchio where we owned a nice little house. I was friends with the family of Jones Bertolini who was a really passionate partisan, that was when I became a communist. His mother was an anti-fascist, the father had to emigrate to France, they were really poor. I'd seen him only once when he came back to Montecchio to meet his parents. I remember I saw him killing a chicken with a sling and then taking it home to eat it. A really terrible poverty. That was when I ...

I didn't fancy that lady, she was good and kind but she swore so much against that stubborn (Mussolini) who sent people to die ... I wished she was a little bit more gentle but she was right in many ways.

### **Clip 2**

#### **Beginning of the partisan activity**

When I was at home I didn't feel safe because the fascists were spies, great spies. After the end of the war I read what they'd written about me and my brother Portos, a commander of a unit, and my brother Tonino, you wouldn't imagine what they wrote. An idiot that I knew, but I've never reproached him, for the sake of our country. It was easy to become anti-fascist because the fascists were really stupid guys. When I think back now I think that it's unbelievable how many people believed them. I got so angry with those fascists! If I see the Duce today I feel like vomiting, I can't feel sorry for them!

And I went to the mountains and crossed the fields of a man called Fontana, a fascist but an honest one. He understood that I wanted to enlist. We went to the river Enza where he had an appointment with many other guys. My task was to bring a bag of 5 kilos of salt from Montecchio to Canossa. I fixed it well and got on my way, but as I arrived in Canossa they stopped us. "STOP! PASSWORD!" The password was "Torino. Avanti Toro!" So we went to a something of a barn to sleep and eat because we still had not had breakfast. They gave us a nice big cup of milk with bread. I was with my brother in the Stalin unit. I wasn't called Bonifacio VIII in memory of Matile of Canossa, I called myself Horace. In those days I only had Horatii and Curiatii on my mind. And in fact in my mortal fight with the Germans (being mortal for them, not for me), I called myself "Horace" because the Germans, these gasoline-coloured men, they had eyes of that colour, they seemed to be big warriors.

### **Clip 3**

#### **The newspaper**

In the meantime I had composed a poem about the partisan courier. Shall I recite it for you? It's called "Garibaldina".

O hero walking with courage,  
along the steep roads and horrible paths  
you have something in your proud looks,  
that recalls the mother, the bride, the sister.  
Simple are your hair and your skirt,  
your thoughts are on struggle and uneasiness  
you don't rest on candid pillows,  
your pain is eased by laying on hay.  
Don't ever get tired, Anita,  
if you live this exasperating life,  
for the triumph of the ideal of freedom  
that indicates the sacred battle to everyone  
the way to a just and shiny future  
the way to universal peace.

I brought it to the journal some time before Christmas and there I met the solicitor Lando Landini who was studying medicine and he told me: "Look, this verse here has no flow ..." and I replied: "No, either you publish it like this or not at all." And I went away. After 20-30 minutes he called me back and said: "Go away, I'll take care of it, we'll publish it. Now, could you come over here to work for the journal?" They were issuing two newspapers, the Garibaldino and the Partigiano, the former for the Garibaldi-brigades, the latter for the Green Flames. I accepted and was sent to the units to describe the partisan life. I liked it, I noticed I got better every day, I told myself how good I was ...

To make it short we went to Reggio Emilia and opened another journal, the "Volunteer of Freedom", and I became the chief editor. The director was Eros, Didimo Ferrari. We were issuing the newspaper because a guy called Cipro, the future commander of the Battalion of the Single Command, was somehow able to manage it, I don't know how. Anyway, whenever he'd find them (paper) he'd bring them to the command post, to the journal. Then we went to provide the paper, the ink and the printer. We printed almost 1000 by hand. I slept in the night doing this, turning the handle. We had a lot of readers because there were some really nice stories told in it. Yesterday I met a partisan, a vice-commander, and he told me: "You wrote some really nice stuff". Well, we tried to keep the morale up, for example.