



# Cava SAIV

**ACCADEMIA DELLO SPORT**

**A.S.D. Pol. CAVA – SAIV Calcio Matricola FIGC 913786**

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Campi di gioco: “G.Monti” via Sillaro 57-“D.Zanfini” via Ossi 2/a

## The present society perhaps forgets too easily what happened only 70 years ago

### DO NOT FORGET:

This is the story that Guido Masini, our fellow citizen , has lived in the War of Russia 1940-45 .

Born in September of 1919, in November 1940 he was enrolled in the Army as motorcyclist of the rifle Regiment, precisely in the 6th Bersaglieri Regiment. He was deployed in Ferrara ( district of Bologna) for about 2 months and on February 21, 1941 is was transferred to Sicily , under the direct dependence of the XII Army Corps , which represents, from February 23 , along with other units engaged in Africa, the Swift Group of Sicily.

On April 10 , the regiment leaves for the Yugoslavian Front. On April 13, it crosses the border with the target to reach Sussak, where it arrives the same day. In the following days

all the appointed purposes were reached with its units. From 2 to May 8 , it establishes a mixed- motorized column and assumes the military powers in Karlovac . After a brief return to Italy, the Regiment leaves again with the destination of southern Bosnia , with the aim to control the sector area of Garac. Then the war in Yugoslavia and following return back to Desenzano del Garda. January 28, 1942 he was transferred to Russia by train. At Uman, near the Bug River , in Romania, it was not possible to continue the trip anymore with the European gauge train (being the Russian tracks 20 cm wider ). Therefore, they were forced to continue with the motorcycle (a 500 Alce Guzzi) by forced march for about 700 km until the Don River about 30 km from Stalingrad , by passing the Urals , traveling day and night with low lights for not being seen by the enemy.



Guido remains in Russia, among the various battlefields, until December, at the counterattack of the Russians and following rupture of the front and the tragic retreat with weather conditions (heavy snow, blizzards, ice and temperatures near minus 30° C degrees) reaching the limits of the survival threshold. The water vapor of the breath solidified on the balaclava , by forming long beards of ice.

Walking on the snow it happened to step on obstacles, which later ended to be dead Italian soldiers.

According to the most recent data , taken from existing documents in the Russian archives , finally open to Italian

researchers , 25,000 died either by fighting or by starving during the retreat and 70,000 were taken prisoner .



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These prisoners were forced to march for hundreds of kilometres and travel on to cattle trucks for weeks, in amazing conditions , without food , without being able to rest at night , with Siberian temperatures .

Those who managed to reach the improvised and unorganized sorting camps , with medieval hygienic conditions , were so malnourished and debilitated that epidemics of typhus and dysentery mowed them down shortly.

The Bersaglieri equipment and clothing , compared to the other bodies of infantry, were the most fortunate and privileged because they had been provided with padded fur coats and real leather boots, in comparison to others who had only fabric clothes and " cardboard shoes ". However, the survivors must also thank the generous Russian people met during the retreat which in some cases helped them by providing a minimum support of comfort and shelter to rest.

Fortunately, Guido Masini managed to avoid the capture and returned to Italy by lucky means, either by jumping on freight or cattle trains , or on foot or by other means, through Romania, Hungary , Poland, the city of Warsaw, Vienna always with the a high risk of running into some dangerous misadventure .

Finally he arrived in Italy. In Carpena Forlì he was hold on by the Germans, but as they saw that he was a veteran of the war in Russia they let him go .

Guido Masini arrived home at the beginning of 1943 , one of the five survivors of Forlì ( Bagnacavallo , Predappio ) , exhausted and in a dramatic physical status. His body was marked by terrible veins and scars after having been tormented for two years by lice and other parasites, due to the desperate hygienic conditions experienced during the war.

After seventy years, this is part of what the great Bersagliere and biker Guido Masini from Forlì recalls ; not a fiction but a true lived story , which must make one think , especially today's youth, about the meaning of war and peace , not to mention the bravery of our soldiers who took part of it .

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