

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Denian Palla, and I am currently in the first year of high school at the “Faik Konica” school. I am passionate about history, and I am honored to share the story of my great-grandfather, Llambi Palla, whose courage during World War II made him an unsung hero of the Albanian resistance. This story, which I present as part of the World War II history contest, showcases not only my great-grandfather’s bravery but also the collective struggle of the Albanian people in their fight for freedom.

The Heroism of My Great-Grandfather and the Battle of Qafa e Sqepurit

In the heart of Albania, among the rolling hills of Berat, lies **Qafa e Sqepurit**, a place where history was written in blood and fire. Today, a large monument stands as a testament to the battle that took place during **World War II**, when the Albanian partisans fought bravely against the fascist and Nazi occupiers.

My great-grandfather, **Llambi Palla**, was not a soldier, but he played a crucial role in the resistance. Though he did not carry a weapon, his courage and determination made him a hero. His home became a refuge for the partisans—a safe place where they could rest, recover, and plan their next attacks. However, this act of bravery came at a great cost, one that nearly destroyed his entire family.

During **World War II**, Albania was first invaded by **Fascist Italy** in 1939 and later by **Nazi Germany** in 1943. The occupiers wanted to control the country completely, but the Albanian people refused to give in. They formed partisan groups—brave men and women who fought in the mountains and forests, launching surprise attacks and sabotaging enemy supply lines.

One of the most intense battles occurred in **Qafa e Sqepurit**, where the **Italian fascists** attempted to crush the partisans. The fighting was fierce, with both sides suffering heavy losses. Despite having fewer weapons, the partisans were able to use their knowledge of the terrain and clever strategies to outsmart the enemy. They set traps, ambushed enemy patrols, and disappeared into the mountains before they could be caught. Though the battle did not have a clear winner, the partisans showed their strength and resilience, weakening the Italian forces and proving that they would not surrender. Humiliated and angry, the fascists looked for revenge.

My great-grandfather, **Llambi Palla**, lived in the village of **Sqepur**, near the battlefield. He was a simple farmer, seeking a peaceful life for his family. However, upon witnessing the suffering of his people, he knew he could not remain silent. Despite the risks, he decided to help the partisans.

His home became a secret refuge for the resistance. At night, the partisans would come—tired, hungry, and in need of shelter. My great-grandfather offered them

food, water, and a safe place to rest. In exchange, they shared stories of their battles, the friends they had lost, and their dreams for a free Albania. His home became a place of hope, but also one of danger.

The fascists were determined to find those who helped the resistance. Spies were everywhere, and betrayal could come at any moment. **Llambi Palla** knew that if the enemy discovered what he was doing, they would not only punish him but also endanger his wife and nine children. Despite the threat, he never hesitated. He believed the fight for freedom was worth any sacrifice.

One day, the worst happened. The Italian soldiers discovered that my great-grandfather had been helping the partisans. They arrived at his house in the middle of the day, searching for the resistance fighters. However, the partisans had already left, disappearing into the mountains.

Frustrated and furious, the soldiers decided to punish my great-grandfather. As his family watched in terror, the soldiers set fire to his home, destroying everything he owned. The flames rose high, turning years of hard work into ashes. The house, which had been a place of warmth and safety, was now nothing but ruins. My great-grandfather stood there, holding his wife and children close, knowing that they had lost everything. But even worse, he knew that the fascists now considered him an enemy. His life—and the lives of his family—were in grave danger.

In 1943, **Italy** surrendered, and **Nazi Germany** took control of Albania. Unlike the Italians, the Nazis were more organized and ruthless. They relied heavily on informants and spies to find the partisans and their supporters.

Soon, the Nazis also discovered my great-grandfather's connection to the resistance. They came with a new wave of destruction. Although the partisans had already escaped, the Nazis set fire to his home again, this time with even more cruelty. The danger was now greater than ever. The Nazis were notorious for executing those who helped the resistance, and my great-grandfather knew that if he stayed, he would not survive.

With no home and no safety, **Llambi Palla** had to act quickly. He gathered his wife and children, and with the help of the partisans, they fled into the forests. They moved quietly, hiding during the day and walking at night. The partisans protected them, guiding them to a safer location.

They had lost everything—home, land, and possessions—but they were alive, and that was all that mattered.

The war continued, but Albania's partisan resistance never gave up. In 1944, Albania was finally liberated, and the occupiers were driven out. My great-grandfather's sacrifices were not in vain.

Today, a monument stands in **Qafa e Sqepurit**, honoring those who fought and suffered for freedom. When I visit, I think of my great-grandfather, **Llambi Palla**, and his incredible courage. He was not a soldier, but he was a true hero. He risked his life not for glory, but because he believed in doing what was right.

His story is not just a family memory—it is part of Albania's history. It reminds us that even in the darkest times, ordinary people can become heroes.

Sincerely,
Denian Palla