

N-5723-8

FIFTH ARMY  
HISTORY

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7 OCTOBER - 15 NOVEMBER 1943

Classification changed to

**RESTRICTED** 25 APR 1945

by authority of AC of S, G-2, WDCS

by

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*The Volturno Valley near the Triflisco Gap..... painted by Sergeant Frank D. Duncan, Jr.*

# FIFTH ARMY HISTORY



PART II

*Across the Volturno  
to the Winter Line*

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*Registered Copy No. 318*

*Lieutenant General* MARK W. CLARK

\* \* \* *commanding*

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# CHAPTER I \* \* \* \* \*

## *Approach to the Volturno*

THE end of the first week in October 1943 found the American Fifth Army, commanded by Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark, generally along the southeast bank of the Volturno River and south of the Calore River. The British 10 Corps was deployed along the Volturno from its mouth at Castel Volturno northeast to Mount Tifata beyond Capua. The American VI Corps held a line curving northeast along the Volturno to its junction south of Amorosi with the Calore and then along that stream to Benevento. The British Eighth Army, under the command of General Sir Bernard L. Montgomery, had driven up on the right and had reached a line running from Termoli on the Adriatic Sea to a point slightly north of Benevento, where it was in contact with the American 45th Infantry Division.

These lines had been reached after a month of hard fighting against the forces of Field Marshal Albert Kesselring's German Tenth Army. The British 13 Corps, composed of the 1 Canadian Division and the 5 Division, had crossed from Sicily and made Eighth Army's assault on the Italian mainland on the morning of 3 September. The British 1 Airborne Division had landed at Taranto on 9 September, and the British 5 Corps, made up of the 8 Indian Division and the 78 Division, had come across the Straits of Messina from Sicily. Eighth Army then took up the pursuit of the retreating Germans. Fifth Army had landed on the beaches of Salerno on the morning of 9 September and started its drive north and northwest toward Naples, Benevento, and the banks of the Volturno River.

After days of hard fighting along the coast against the determined German forces, the tide of battle turned definitely in favor of Fifth Army, and it threw its full weight into the chase. The British 10 Corps fought its way up the coast and entered the rubble-filled streets of Naples on 1 October, the day

that Foggia and its airfields fell to the onrushing Eighth Army. The American 34th Infantry Division occupied Benevento on 3 October, and the 45th Division passed through the bomb-blasted town the following day to drive on across the Calore against the retreating 26th Panzer (Armored) Division. 10 Corps pushed on past Naples toward the Volturno River, the next natural line of defense for the Germans. Elements of the 23 Armoured Brigade reached this barrier on 5 October, and the 56 Division occupied Capua the next day. VI Corps found the opposition stronger in the mountains on the right, but by 6 October the 3d Infantry Division had driven above Caserta and had reached the Volturno. Enemy outposts still remained on the southeast side of the river, but for all practical purposes Fifth Army had reached the Volturno-Calore river line. The port of Naples and the surrounding airfields were secure and were being repaired for use in the forthcoming operations of Fifth Army on its way north toward Rome.

The month of hard fighting, which had thoroughly tested the mettle of the carefully trained Fifth Army, had been extremely successful. The combined American and British forces had accomplished one of the most difficult of military operations—a successful landing on hostile shores. They had beaten off everything the enemy could throw against them and had pushed forward relentlessly to their objectives. The next problem that faced them was also a difficult military operation—an assault on a defended river line.

#### A. *TERRAIN BEFORE FIFTH ARMY*

*See Map No. 10*

The section of the Italian peninsula which Fifth Army faced on 7 October is just about as difficult for offensive operations as could be found in Europe. The terrain, together with rainy weather, severely limited the opportunity for varied tactics. Armor, wide envelopments, and swiftly striking spearheads could not be used to speed up the advance. Frontal attack was the only method available to General Clark in pursuing the enemy across the Volturno and through the mountains toward Rome.

The area that lay before Fifth Army is a series of river valleys, coastal plains, and hill masses stretching toward Rome between the Tyrrhenian Sea on the left and the Apennine Mountains on the right. It may be divided more or less arbitrarily into three main sections as follows: the Volturno-Calore Valley, the Garigliano-Rapido Valley, and the divide between the two valleys. The bald, steep, and lofty Matese Mountains, a part of the Apennines,

on the northeast side of the route of advance may be disregarded except as being an almost impenetrable barrier between Fifth and Eighth Armies.

The Calore River rises some 20 miles southeast of Benevento and flows north and west almost 40 miles to join the Volturno south of Amorosi. From its source the Calore winds through mountain gorges and narrow farm valleys until it reaches the Volturno. Steep hills and towering mountains rise on either side of its valley and in places are impassable to the vehicles of modern warfare. This is particularly true of the hill mass south of the river and west of Benevento. On the other side the rugged foothills rise to 736 meters at Mount Acero before they start falling off to the flat Volturno Valley.

The Volturno River rises high in the mountains northwest of Isernia and drains more than 1500 square miles of fertile farm valley and steep mountain slopes on its tortuous way 94 miles to the Tyrrhenian Sea. Its intensively cultivated farm valley, lined with scrub-covered hills and barren mountains, is from two to seven miles wide between Montaquila and the Triflisco Gap above Capua. The river runs generally south some 15 miles from its headwaters to a point northeast of Presenzano, turns southeast to its junction with the Calore below Amorosi, and then flows southwest to Castel Volturno on the coast. These two lower sections almost form a perfect V and enclose a hill mass about 15 miles long and 10 miles wide. After the river passes through the narrow Triflisco Gap about 18 miles from the sea, it meanders in large tight loops through the olive groves of the Campanian Plain and by the towns of Capua, Santa Maria la Fossa, Grazzanise, and Canello ed Arnone before reaching Castel Volturno at its mouth.

The Rapido River rises in the mountains near Atina and flows south some ten miles between terraced mountain slopes to Sant'Elia, where it emerges into a fertile valley which broadens into the Liri Valley below Cassino. At the southern edge of the Liri Valley it joins the Liri River to form the Garigliano River. This stream then cuts through the hill mass between Mount Camino and Mount Majo, flows into a triangular coastal plain below Sessa Aurunca (Sessa), and empties into the Tyrrhenian near Minturno. The slopes into the valley of these rivers are generally less precipitous than those that descend into the Volturno-Calore Valley.

The divide between the Volturno-Calore and the Garigliano-Rapido valleys is a mountain range generally 3000 feet high, running some 40 miles from the crest of the Apennines south to an abrupt ending at Mount Massico and its foothills, which tower above the narrow beach north of Mondragone. This mountain mass, which was a source of great annoyance to our troops, did not resemble anything with which the men were familiar. It does not consist of

a long mountain range with rolling foothills at the approaches, as is usually found in the native land of the Fifth Army soldier. Instead, it is a large area cut by deep gorges into numerous isolated peaks, often devoid of vegetation, which rise from the flat valleys almost as walls from the floor of a room. Few roads or trails enter these forbidding areas, and mule pack trains at times failed to negotiate the jagged ridges and overhanging cliffs of these hills.

Southwest of the section of the Volturno that runs from Presenzano to Amorosi the mountain masses fall away into the coastal plains, except for the ridge that extends on to the sea near Mondragone. A slight rise might normally be expected to divide the watersheds of two river valleys that flatten to the plains along the coast. Such is not the case, for a high spur, cut off from the main ridge by a low pass at Mignano and a narrow valley southeast of Mount Camino, separates the valleys of the lower Volturno and the Garigliano. The high points on this brush-covered and wooded divide are Mount Santa Croce and Mount Massico, rising 1005 and 812 meters above sea level.

A good road net exists in the open terrain, although many of the roads are not hard-surfaced. The main routes along the axis of the advance of Fifth Army were two first-class roads known as Highways 6 and 7. The latter of these runs from Benevento to Capua, continues across the plain and through a gap to Sessa, crosses the Garigliano below Minturno, and follows the coast northwest toward Rome. Highway 7B from Naples joins this route at Capua. Highway 6 branches off Highway 7 across the Volturno from Capua, goes northwest through the Mignano Gap to Cassino, and continues on to Rome. Highways 87 and 85 are two first-class lateral roads that were useful in moving troops and supplies. The first extends from Naples through Caserta, crosses the Volturno at Triflisco and again at Amorosi, and then passes through Pontelandolfo on its way over the Matese Mountains. Highway 85 leaves Highway 6 below Presenzano and runs up the Volturno Valley to Isernia.

## B. *ENEMY USE OF TERRAIN*

The operation which lay before Fifth Army, that of continuing an advance along the mountain ranges running some 550 miles down the center of the narrow Italian peninsula, was as difficult as could be conceived. The terrain and the direction of advance in the face of such staunch fighters as the Germans meant that every river, gully, ravine, and spur jutting out from the Apennines would have to be stormed. Although the Germans were committed

to fighting a delaying action, they stubbornly defended the river lines, the mountains, and other obstacles as they slowly fell back before Fifth Army.

Demolitions and mining were used extensively by the Germans to delay the progress of the hard-driving forces of Fifth Army. Almost every bridge and culvert on main highways and secondary roads was destroyed by the thoroughly trained and experienced German demolition experts. Where roads ran through the narrow streets of the stone villages, buildings were blown down to block traffic. Trees were blown across highways wherever possible. Often these road blocks were mined and booby-trapped to present greater obstacles to the engineers. Some concrete obstacles were used to block strategic points on routes of advance. Intersections and shoulders of the roads were mined and had to be cleared before armor, artillery, and transport could be moved up to support the troops.

The use of mines and booby traps often caused the infantrymen more difficulties than enemy machine-gun and artillery fire. Not only did the Germans mine the roads, but they were also lavish in the use of mines and booby traps in vineyards and orchards, along the beds and banks of streams, in trails and likely avenues of approach, in possible bivouac areas and buildings that might be used by troops, and even in shell and bomb craters where the soldier might take refuge. Their S-mines and Tellermines could be detected by mine sweepers, but some areas were sown with mines made of concrete, wooden, and plastic materials. The content of the soil and numerous shell fragments often made the problem of minesweeping arduous and dangerous.

The Germans did not use their artillery extensively in a campaign that consisted mostly of delaying action. This was particularly true during October, but the situation changed when Fifth Army reached the mountain divide between the Garigliano-Rapido and the Volturno valleys. The Germans were in the mountains with their artillery well defiladed and enjoyed superior advantages of observation. In the first half of the campaign the enemy used self-propelled guns, mortars, rocket launchers, and tanks as roving artillery efficiently and with good effect. The rocket launchers, such as the six-barreled Nebelwerfer and the ten-barreled weapon mounted on a half-track, were first encountered in the Volturno Valley about the middle of October. Mortars and artillery were often zeroed on draws, road intersections, stream crossings, and probable strongpoints before they were used or occupied.

Early in the Italian campaign the Germans attempted to block highways and prevent movement by placing self-propelled guns and machine guns in well protected positions near sharp curves in the roads. During October they tended to change to delaying action from forward slopes and crests of hills,

with mortars and artillery on the reverse slopes or in the valleys behind them. The infantrymen fought from hastily scooped foxholes on the slopes, from behind boulders and stone walls, and from the brush and olive groves on the hills. Small groups were often left behind with machine guns after a village or position had been abandoned. After the third crossing of the Volturno the enemy was found to have the forward slopes of the hills lightly organized, while the reverse slopes were strongly held and fortified. Automatic weapons were sited to cut down anything that came over the crests.

When Fifth Army reached the mountains across the upper Volturno, the enemy defenses became more formidable. Caves in the mountains were enlarged and fortified, holes were dug and blasted in the rocks for foxholes and machine-gun positions, observation posts were underground and covered with as much as two feet of timber and rock, wire obstacles became more numerous, tank traps had been constructed, and minefields were greatly increased. One of the most annoying tactics of the resourceful enemy was his method of withdrawing from hills and strongpoints and then infiltrating back if they were not immediately occupied by our troops.

The numerous peaks in the mountain mass were usually so situated that each was dominated by one or more on either side. This meant that the attackers of one hill were often subjected to cross fire from rifles, machine guns, and mortars on the slopes of adjacent hills to the right and left. If forces were directed at the hills on either side, they were then taken under fire from other dominating slopes. The Germans were most efficient in siting their weapons from mutually supporting positions on the slopes, so that they could take advancing forces under fire day or night. These tactics employed by a stubborn and resourceful foe presented great obstacles to the advance of Fifth Army and resulted in much fierce and determined fighting.

# CHAPTER II \* \* \* \* \*

## *Plans for the Campaign*

### A. ENEMY FORCES AND THEIR POSITIONS

*See Map No. 1*

WHEN Fifth Army invaded Italy, Field Marshal Albert Kesselring had eight divisions, four of which had been evacuated from Sicily, available to oppose it and Eighth Army. Two of these were in or north of Rome, two were in the vicinity of Naples, and four were south of Naples. The 16th Panzer Division was in the Eboli-Battipaglia area. The Hermann Goering Panzer Division was apparently dispersed in the plain of Naples from Caserta south. The 15th Panzer Grenadier (Armored Infantry) Division was probably northwest of this force, generally in the Gaeta area. Some elements of the 3d Panzer Grenadier Division were at Frascati, but most of it apparently was north of Rome. The 2d Parachute Division garrisoned Rome and the vicinity from the Alban hills to Viterbo. The 1st Parachute Division was on the Adriatic coast, with part of its strength south of Bari. The 26th Panzer Division and the 29th Panzer Grenadier Division were generally in Calabria.

When Fifth Army reached the Volturno and Calore rivers early in October, Kesselring's forces were generally recognized as the German Tenth Army. The German Fourteenth Army, commanded by Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, was in control of northern Italy, with its southern boundary some distance north of Rome. Tenth Army was composed of XIV Panzer Corps, which was opposing the advance of Fifth Army, and LXXVI Panzer Corps, which stretched generally from the Apennines to the Adriatic Sea. Rommel was believed to have at least 12 divisions in northern Italy and Yugoslavia, not more than 4 of which were thought to be south of Bologna. There was some probability that he had been reinforced with four additional divisions. With the 8 divisions in Tenth Army, there was a possibility that the German forces in Italy might reach a total of 24 divisions.

On the British Eighth Army front the Germans had the 1st Parachute Division, the 16th Panzer Division, the 29th Panzer Grenadier Division, and elements of the 26th Panzer Division on a line extending south from the Adriatic Sea. The 26th Panzer Division was falling back before the American 45th Division and was gradually withdrawing over the mountains from the Fifth Army front. The 3d Panzer Grenadier Division, the Hermann Goering Panzer Division, and the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division, which composed XIV Panzer Corps, held a defensive line along the Volturno from the Volturno-Calore junction to Castel Volturno on the coast.

The 15th Panzer Grenadier Division held a line in front of the British 10 Corps from the mouth of the Volturno up to Grazzanise. The 129th Panzer Grenadier Regiment was deployed along the river, while the 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment was echeloned back along the coast. The 382d Panzer Grenadier Regiment had not been identified by 10 Corps, but was thought to be in reserve north of Cancelloried Arnone. The 15th Panzer Grenadier Division was believed to have had its origin in the 33d Grenadier (Infantry) Division, which fought in France in 1939 and was reorganized the following year as the 15th Panzer Division. After fighting in Libya it entered Tunisia and was virtually destroyed in 1943. The Division Sicily, which was formed in May and June 1943, first was called the 15th Panzer Division and then became the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division. The new division assimilated the part of the 999th Grenadier Division that did not get to Tunisia, and fought in Sicily with two panzer grenadier regiments. Some of its elements were in the Naples area in September, but the 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, which had been a part of the 15th Panzer Division in Africa, was with the Hermann Goering Panzer Division. The 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment had been in the 21st Panzer Division in Africa, the 129th Panzer Grenadier Regiment was originally the Regiment Fullrieder, and the 382d Panzer Grenadier Regiment, which was probably used to replace casualties in the other two regiments, had been in the 164th Division in Africa.

The Hermann Goering Panzer Division, which was divided into two battle groups, was responsible for the line from Grazzanise to Piana di Caiazzo. The Corwin Battle Group was deployed from Grazzanise to Capua, while the Mauke Battle Group was defending the valley from Triflisco to Piana di Caiazzo. The division was formed in 1942 by the expansion of the Hermann Goering Brigade. Elements of the division fought in Tunisia and suffered considerable losses in 1943. It was then reformed in the Naples area and appeared in Sicily in July. After suffering further losses it returned to Naples, where its rehabilitation was interrupted by the landing of Fifth Army on the beaches of Salerno.



The 3d Panzer Grenadier Division was brought down from the Rome area early in October and thrown in line between the Hermann Goering Panzer Division and the 26th Panzer Division. Originally it appeared to take over a sector from Piana di Caiazzo to the junction of the Volturno and Calore rivers, but its left boundary was gradually extended across the Volturno toward the mountains as the 26th Panzer Division withdrew to the Eighth Army front. The 1st Battalion, 29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, was in the vicinity of Caiazzo, while the 3d Battalion was deployed east to the river. The 8th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, reported to be fighting in Russia, was encountered by the 45th Division as it advanced up the northeast side of the river. The 3d Panzer Grenadier Division fought in the Polish and French campaigns, was motorized in 1940, and participated in the Russian campaign from the beginning. After being destroyed at Stalingrad it was reformed in France, incorporating elements of the 386th Grenadier Division. It saw duty on the Spanish border, moved into Italy north of Rome, and had elements in the Naples area in September.

Tenth Army continued its delaying action against the Allied Fifth and Eighth Armies throughout October without reinforcement. The German order of battle in northern Italy remained obscure in some respects, but by the end of the month Rommel appeared to have more than 14 divisions under his command. Ten of the 20 divisions destroyed at Stalingrad had been reformed and were now in Italy. As the British 10 Corps approached the Garigliano River and the American VI Corps prepared for its third crossing of the Volturno River early in November, the Germans sent down the 94th Grenadier Division to take over their right flank on the coast and the 305th Grenadier Division to hold their left flank in the mountains. The German policy seemed to be to put in these two fresh infantry divisions, which had been reformed in France after their destruction at Stalingrad, to hold the coastal hills and inland mountains, while the three panzer and panzer grenadier divisions defended the main axis along Highway 6. The terrain in this sector was the most passable, the most important to defend, and better for the movement of semi-armored mobile formations. The 3d Battalion, 6th Parachute Regiment (2d Parachute Division), appeared in the 3d Panzer Grenadier Division sector. On 9 November elements of the 9th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (26th Panzer Division) also entered the 3d Panzer Grenadier Division area as a vanguard of the division, which was being withdrawn from the Eighth Army front to help halt the advance of VI Corps.

## B. ALLIED FORCES AND THEIR POSITIONS

1. *British Forces.* When the British 10 Corps reached the Volturno River early in October, its commander, Lt. Gen. Sir Richard L. McCreery, had three battle-tested divisions to throw across the river against the Germans. The 46 Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. J. L. I. Hawkesworth, was deployed along the river from Castel Volturno on the coast to Canello ed Arnone. The 7 Armoured Division, under the command of Maj. Gen. M. G. G. Erskine, was responsible for the zone from Canello ed Arnone to a point about midway between Santa Maria la Fossa and Capua. The 56 (London) Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. D. A. H. Graham, occupied the Capua area from the 7 Armoured Division boundary to Mount Tifata. These three divisions had been fighting since their landings at Salerno and were destined to continue the 10 Corps drive to the Garigliano River without reinforcements.

2. *American Forces.* Fifth Army had five well trained and battle-experienced American divisions available for future operations as it prepared for the first Volturno crossing. VI Corps, commanded by Maj. Gen. John P. Lucas, had three divisions in line along the Volturno and across the Calore. The 45th Division, under the command of Maj. Gen. Troy H. Middleton, was advancing northwest of Benevento and was responsible for the zone between the Matese Mountains and the Volturno River. The 34th Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. Charles W. Ryder, had moved up to the river from its assembly area near Montesarchio and held a line from the Volturno-Calore junction to a point south of Caiazzo. The 3d Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., was deployed through the hills from the 34th Division boundary to that of the 56 Division slightly west of Mount Tifata. The 36th Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. Fred L. Walker, was in Army reserve, and the 82d Airborne Infantry Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway, was policing the city of Naples.

## C. PLANS FOR CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

*See Map No. 2*

1. *15th Army Group Strategy.* Fifth and Eighth Armies were making excellent progress in their drives up the Italian peninsula during the last week in September. Just before midnight on 29 September, General Sir Harold R. L. Alexander, commanding 15th Army Group, instructed General Clark that future operations of his Fifth Army and the British Eighth Army were to be con-

ducted in two phases. (*For text of message see Annex No. 2A.*) The first phase was designed to secure the Foggia airfields and the port of Naples, together with the airfields north of that city, and included the capture of a line running southwest from Termoli on the Adriatic Sea along the Biferno River to Castropignano and then through Isernia, Venafro, and Sessa to the Tyrrhenian Sea. Airfields, ports, and centers of road communications were to be secured in this area before the second phase was started.

When the first phase line was reached by Fifth and Eighth Armies, they were to consolidate their gains and prepare to advance to the second line. The instructions specifically stated: "Firm base will be established on the areas gained but light mobile forces will operate ahead and keep up active patrolling against enemy rearguards." The second phase, conducted to secure the airdromes and airfields in the area, was to include the capture of a line running west from San Benedetto del Tronto on the Adriatic Sea to Visso and then southwest through Terni to Civitavecchia on the Tyrrhenian Sea above Rome. This line would place Fifth Army in secure possession of Rome and would give both armies numerous airfields much closer to Germany.

The boundary between Fifth and Eighth Armies was to be extended to include Benevento in the Fifth Army zone. Eighth Army was to have the road from Pontelandolfo to Isernia. The boundary was then to run from Isernia to the road junction southwest of Celano, up the Salto River to Rieti, and thence along the road through Terni, San Gemini, and Todi. 15th Army Group probably contemplated changing the boundary when the first phase line was reached, for it stated that it intended to transfer the British 10 Corps to Eighth Army at a suitable date, possibly when both armies had completed the first phase of their advance.

2. *Fifth Army Operations Instruction No. 5, 2 October.* On 2 October General Clark issued Fifth Army Operations Instruction No. 5 from his headquarters near Pontecagnano Faiano. (*See Annex No. 2B.*) Fifth Army was ordered to continue its advance to the Isernia-Venafro-Sessa line. The drive toward this objective was to be made with VI Corps on the right and 10 Corps on the left along the sea. The boundary between the two corps extended from Formo northwest along the eastern edge of the Campanian Plain to the Volturno east of Capua and thence northwest across the plain to Sessa. This boundary confined the efforts of 10 Corps to the coastal plain and to the high ridge separating the lower valleys of the Volturno and Garigliano rivers. VI Corps would have the valley of the upper Volturno, the steep foothills of the Apennines on the right, and the hill mass northwest of the section of the river between the Volturno-Calore junction and Triflisco. Its main effort would

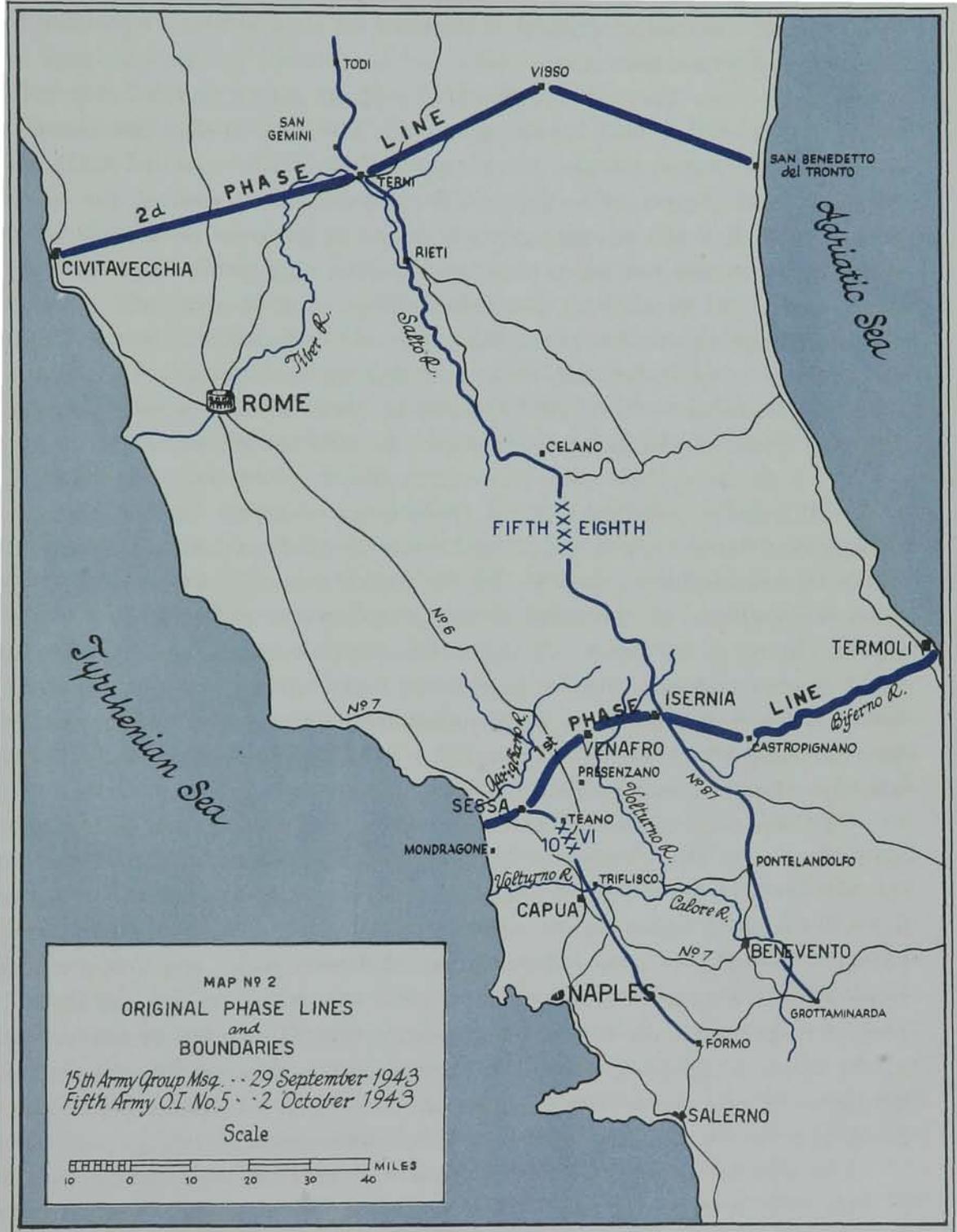
have to be directed across the Volturno between the junction and Triflisco. Across the flat river valley the rugged hills rose abruptly and extended from 10 to 15 miles northwest until they dropped off into another flat valley before the towns of Presenzano and Teano.

General Clark directed 10 Corps to "push its attack to the Volturno, force the crossings of that river and continue the advance on the first phase line." He further instructed General McCreery: "Due to the present location of the VI Corps, the advance of 10 Corps will not await the arrival of the VI Corps abreast of it, but will advance as rapidly as the situation permits." VI Corps was ordered to use not more than one division to capture Benevento on the right, secure the crossing of the Calore River in that area, and advance by road northwest to the first phase line. The remainder of VI Corps was directed to continue to move forward with all speed by road between Benevento and the Corps boundary. The 36th Division, in Army reserve, was to be available after 6 October to VI Corps in exchange for another division.

3. *Fifth Army Operations Instruction No. 6, 7 October.* VI and 10 Corps had both reached the Volturno in their zones of action by the morning of 7 October. General Clark then issued from his headquarters near Naples Fifth Army Operations Instruction No. 6 (*See Annex No. 2C*) directing VI Corps to cross the Volturno on the night of 9-10 October and 10 Corps to force a crossing on the following night. VI Corps was to concentrate one division along the Volturno and one division in the Montesarchio area without delay. The 36th Division was ordered to move immediately into an area northwest of Nola. This movement was to be co-ordinated by VI Corps in order not to interfere with the flow of supplies from Avellino.

VI Corps was ordered to force a crossing of the Volturno on the night of 9-10 October in the vicinity of Triflisco and then attack toward Teano along the high ground northwest of Triflisco. 10 Corps was directed to force a crossing in its zone of action on the night of 10-11 October and to drive northwest to seize the ridges north and northeast of Mondragone. 10 Corps was made responsible for arranging for naval gunfire in support of its advance. The corps commanders were instructed to secure mutual support of the operations in the Capua-Triflisco area. Fifth Army would obtain an intensive air bombardment of all appropriate targets on the fronts of both corps, and the corps were to submit requests for specific missions.

The 82d Airborne Infantry Division was ordered to continue its mission of patrolling Naples, but was also directed to make plans for dropping one parachute battalion in the Sessa area. This battalion was to have the mission of interrupting communications and blocking the withdrawal of the enemy to



the northwest. This plan was later canceled because of the strength of the enemy forces in the area around Sessa. It was feared that the Germans had sufficient reserve troops in the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division and the Hermann Goering Panzer Division to defeat a parachute battalion before the forces crossing the Volturno could reach its position.

Operations Instruction No. 6 further explained that Fifth Army was preparing plans for an amphibious landing on the beaches north of Mondragone with one regimental combat team from the 36th Division. This force would have the mission of assisting 10 Corps in the capture of the high ground north and northeast of Mondragone and of blocking the retreat of the enemy to the northwest. The indications were that the enemy had strong forces in the area of the proposed landing, and the operation would not be ordered unless the main attacks of VI and 10 Corps drew a major portion of the enemy in that district to other localities. The crossings of the Volturno failed to cause the enemy to move his forces from the Mondragone area, and the plan for the amphibious operation was canceled.

4. *Fifth Army Operations Instruction No. 7, 14 October. (See Map No. 3.)* A number of factors, including the weather, difficulties in moving troops and supplies, and strong enemy rearguard action, caused changes in the plans outlined in Operations Instruction No. 6. The crossings of the Volturno were not attempted until the night of 12-13 October, and the failure of the 56 Division to force its way across at Capua resulted in another modification of plans. After the 56 Division was not successful in its initial efforts, it made a feint attack on 14 October. The strong resistance to this effort made it apparent that the division could not cross in its zone without heavy losses. The lack of success on the part of the 56 Division resulted in the 3d Division's left flank becoming dangerously exposed, as it continued to exploit its successful crossing. General Clark then decided to alter the boundary between the two corps so as to include in the 10 Corps area the ridges running north and northwest from Triflisco. This boundary change would give the 56 Division access to the 30-ton bridge constructed in the 3d Division zone at Triflisco. He issued verbal orders to that effect at 1530, 14 October, and confirmed them the same day with Fifth Army Operations Instruction No. 7. (*See Annex No. 2D.*) The zones of action of the 56 Division and the 3d Division were now separated by a line running from the demolished bridge at Triflisco along the east side of the ridge line above Triflisco to the road junction south of Pontelatone, then across the ridge just east of Formicola, and northwest over the plain along Highway 6. The 56 Division was directed to make arrangements with the 3d Division for the use of the bridge at Triflisco.

5. *Fifth Army Operations Instruction No. 8, 20 October.* (See *Map No. 3.*) VI and 10 Corps were making good progress after the middle of October in consolidating their Volturno bridgehead when Fifth Army reached the decision that an immediate advance to the second phase line previously delimited was beyond the capacities of the limited forces at its disposal. General Clark then issued from his headquarters in Naples Fifth Army Operations Instruction No. 8, dated 20 October. (See *Annex No. 2E.*) The first phase line was moved forward from the Isernia-Venafro-Sessa objective to the line Isernia-Mount Passero-Garigliano River to the sea. When the mission of seizing this line was completed, Fifth Army was to continue its advance without delay to the general line Opi (exclusive)-Alvito-Arce-Fondi.

The area between this new phase line and the general line occupied by Fifth Army on 6 October is bounded on the southeast by the Calore and Volturno rivers, on the southwest by the Tyrrhenian Sea, on the northeast by the barren ranges of the Apennines, and on the northwest by a line running from Isernia across Mount Passero to the Garigliano River west of Mignano and then down the river to the sea. The distance straight across the hills and plains from Castel Volturno to Benevento is approximately 50 miles, some 45 miles of rugged mountains separate Benevento and Isernia, the mouth of the Garigliano is approximately 35 miles from Isernia, and the distance straight from the Garigliano along the sea to the Volturno is about 17 miles.

VI and 10 Corps were ordered to continue their advances in their respective zones. 10 Corps was to make its main effort against the mountains on its right, while VI Corps pushed on across the upper Volturno and made its main effort on the left. VI Corps was to continue to maintain contact with Eighth Army on the right, and 10 Corps was charged with maintaining contact with VI Corps on its right. Both corps were directed to push forward rapidly within their zones of action in order to facilitate the advance of one another. Operations to be conducted by either corps in the zone of action of the other were to be co-ordinated between corps commanders prior to execution, and Fifth Army Headquarters was to be notified of any such arrangements.

