

# CHAPTER VIII

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## *At the Gates of Rome*

AT dusk on 30 May the Fifth Army drive on Rome appeared to have stalled. The 1st Armored Division and the 45th Division had fought bitterly but unsuccessfully along the Albano road throughout the day. The 34th Division had been stopped below Lanuvio on the 29th; to its right the 36th Division, encircling Velletri on the south and east, found the town an enemy stronghold. On the extreme right flank of the beachhead, now held by II Corps, the 85th Division was just coming up to reinforce the 3d Division below Valmontone. In this zone our troops had remained on the defensive since 27 May.

Nonetheless, the over-all situation of Fifth Army was favorable. Our troops in the Lepini Mountains were moving north against slight rearguard actions. The 88th Division was being relieved for movement directly to the II Corps zone; the FEC might be expected to come up on the right flank in two or three days. In the Liri Valley the enemy forces retreating before Eighth Army were moving generally in the direction of Avezzano, away from the scene of battle at Colli Laziali. The Germans before Fifth Army were ever more weary, ever fewer; and we could count with some certainty on the fact that they could not be reinforced. When the FEC and the 88th Division arrived, we would have a sufficient superiority to crush the enemy completely. Actually, movements were in progress at dark on 30 May which made our capture of Rome a matter of the immediate future. These movements were being executed by the 36th Division: the unit which had secured the initial beachhead of Fifth Army at Salerno long months ago was now to cap its record by making the final breakthrough at Colli Laziali.

## A. THE BEGINNING OF THE FINAL DRIVE

30-31 MAY

1. *Breakthrough by the 36th Division.* (See Map No. 18.) The 36th Division had been committed on the night of 25-26 May to block Highway 7 north of Cisterna. On the following night the 143d Infantry moved forward to relieve the 1st Armored Division below Velletri and held positions about a mile south of the railroad through the next four days. The 141st Infantry had taken over the area east of Velletri on 27 May and gradually advanced until by the 30th it had a firm hold on the Artena—Velletri road below the great bulk of Mount Artemisio. The 142d Infantry had been alerted on the 27th to move by motor and exploit a breakthrough by the 1st Armored Division on the Albano road; since that breakthrough had not been secured, the regiment remained north of Cisterna in division reserve.

Extensive patrolling by the front-line elements of the 36th Division gradually disclosed the fact that the enemy forces, drawn by the fight at Lanuvio and by the threat to Valmontone, had left Mount Artemisio unguarded. Our exploitation of this superb opportunity was swift. General Clark, seizing the significance of the possibility, cancelled tentative plans for the division to attack through the 34th Division, and shortly after noon on 30 May the division commander, General Walker, issued his attack orders. In brief, the 142d Infantry and the 143d Infantry, with the former in the lead, were to move through the 141st Infantry on the night of 30-31 May and seize Mount Artemisio while the latter regiment blocked off the enemy at Velletri. The night attack up steep, wooded slopes would be a difficult operation, but the 36th Division had been trained for just such missions.

In the late afternoon and early night the 36th Engineers, which had reverted to Army reserve after joining up with the southern forces on the 25th, relieved the 143d Infantry south of Velletri and two battalions of the 141st Infantry east of the town. At 2100 the 143d Infantry began its movement to the right flank of the division. The 142d Infantry received its orders at 1600 from Colonel Lynch, entrucked immediately, and at 1830 proceeded via Cisterna, Cori, and Giulianello to the zone of the 141st Infantry. Although the regiment had road priority, congested traffic delayed completion of the 16-mile motor march until 2215. Battalion and company commanders reached the new area ahead of the troops, made their reconnaissance, and pointed out to the platoon leaders their objectives on the great black mass of Mount Artemisio as dusk turned to dark.

At 2255, 30 May, the 142d Infantry moved out in column of battalions, the 2d Battalion in the lead, followed by Regimental Headquarters, 1st Battalion, and 3d Battalion. Aided by the new moon, which cast just enough light to pick out the path, the advance guard reached the Velletri—Artena road at 0130, 31 May,

and marched through the vineyards on the lower slopes of Mount Artemisio. Amid the howling of occasional dogs and a burst of enemy air activity toward Velletri the regiment moved forward steadily. As the first gray light of dawn began to dim out the stars about 0415, the head of the column was starting up the steeper slopes of the hill across an open field. Men hurried a little faster, and by 0635 the 2d Battalion had seized Maschio d'Ariano and Hill 931. On the former they captured three German artillery observers, one of whom was taking a bath; thus far not a shot had been fired.

After the reorganization necessitated by the rapid advance over unfamiliar terrain, the 1st and 2d Battalions, the latter on the right, moved southwest down the ridge at 0840 and searched through the dense woods for the enemy. Throughout the morning they advanced with almost no opposition. After noon enemy resistance gradually increased as the Germans discovered the penetration, and by evening enemy tanks and 20-mm flak guns were firing on our troops from the vicinity of Nemi; but the two battalions were on their objective at 1930, directly overlooking the Velletri—Nemi road. Road blocks were established by the 1st Battalion during the night and early morning of 1 June.

To the rear Company E had remained on Maschio d'Ariano, and began to meet enemy counterattacks from the northeast at 0800. The 1st Battalion, 143d Infantry, relieved the company during the morning and beat off the disorganized, hasty jabs of the Hermann Goering Panzer Parachute Division, one of which left 70 dead Germans behind it. In the afternoon the 143d Infantry organized the central part of Mount Artemisio, southwest from Maschio d'Ariano.

Meanwhile the 141st Infantry moved on Velletri. The 1st Battalion drove slowly west in the afternoon through minefields commanded by enemy strongpoints. The 2d Battalion, advancing to the north of Velletri on the lower slopes of Mount Artemisio, met less heavy resistance. By 0230, 1 June, the battalion was on the Velletri—Nemi road east of the 142d Infantry. This escape route of the enemy garrison at Velletri was cut; the Velletri—Valmontone line was broken; and the enemy position at Colli Laziali was doomed.

2. *Fifth Army Operations Instruction No. 25. (See Annex No. 1L.)* As the 36th Division unleashed its bolt, the 85th Division to its northeast was taking over the left half of the 3d Division zone. Fifth Army was ready for the last, all-out attack. By Operations Instruction No. 25, 31 May, General Clark ordered new offensives to crush the German Fourteenth Army and to exploit by all possible means every opportunity to destroy the enemy.

To carry out this mission VI Corps was to attack 1 June to secure that part of Colli Laziali in its zone of action. It was then to drive forward with the utmost speed to cut the routes of withdrawal for enemy forces through Rome.

Strong forces would be turned southwest to annihilate the enemy against the Tiber River, while long-range artillery interdicted enemy crossing sites. In conjunction with the VI Corps push the British 5 Division was to press forward rapidly toward the Tiber to cut off and destroy the enemy forces which VI Corps turned south. On the north side of Colli Laziali II Corps would block all enemy traffic on Highway 6 by securing the high ground north of Valmontone. It was also to take the northern part of Colli Laziali and then be prepared on Army order to pursue and annihilate German forces withdrawing northwest across its front. As one step in this policy, II Corps was directed to send the 1st Special Service Force toward Ferentino to make contact with the FEC, which was to press vigorously toward Segni.

During the next three days the attack by Fifth Army proceeded generally on the basis of these instructions. VI Corps slugged its way slowly north toward Albano against stubborn enemy opposition, which weakened from east to west as the 36th Division pushed across the center of Colli Laziali behind the German main line of resistance. The troops of II Corps first forced back the Hermann Goering Panzer Parachute Division and then from 2 June exploited the rapid enemy withdrawal north of Colli Laziali. In addition to the 85th Division, the 88th Division was also employed in this zone and increased the pressure on the Germans at their weakest point. By the evening of 3 June it was clear that the enemy was everywhere withdrawing in defeat from his positions south of Rome.

## B. *THE ATTACK NORTH OF COLLI LAZIALI*

31 MAY-3 JUNE

1. *The Hermann Goering Division Retreats.* (See Map No. 17.) During the night of 30-31 May the 85th Division relieved the 30th Infantry and the 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, and at 0500, 31 May, took command of the left half of the II Corps line. The 349th Infantry was attached to the division at 2130, 30 May, after closing southwest of Cori in the afternoon. In the right half of the Corps zone the 3d Division regrouped its regiments and prepared to resume the offensive which had carried it almost to Valmontone. Before us the Hermann Goering Panzer Parachute Division was still maintaining an active defense of the sector from Valmontone to Lariano.

The 85th Division attacked northwest at 1330, 31 May, to exploit the success of the 36th Division on Mount Artemisio and to secure a line of departure for the main Corps drive on the following day. The 337th Infantry on the left by-passed Lariano, which the reserve battalion later mopped up, and climbed the slopes of

Mount Artemisio with little opposition. During the morning of 1 June it relieved the 143d Infantry in the Maschio d'Ariano area. Northeast of Lariano the 338th Infantry met more stubborn resistance from the 1st Hermann Goering Panzer Grenadier Regiment, entrenched in commanding positions. The enemy reacted strongly to our advance and threw an unsuccessful counterattack of 3 tanks and about 50 infantry against the regiment after it had secured a line across the Velletri—Artena road. Farther to the right the 7th Infantry pushed combat patrols forward for limited objectives.

During the day the 88th Division moved to Anzio and then, after being attached to II Corps at 2130, to assembly areas near Rocca Massima. II Corps again had under its command the divisions with which it had broken the Gustav Line, and the 3d Division in addition. General Keyes issued his orders, and at 0500, 1 June, II Corps began its final drive on Rome. The first objectives set by Corps were Highway 6 and the Cave road. The 3d Division attacked the enemy positions astride the Artena—Valmontone road to cut Highway 6 at Valmontone and drive on to the Palestrina—Cave road near Cave, thereby blocking off the enemy forces to the east. To screen the extreme right flank of II Corps the 91st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron continued to operate beyond the 3d Division. On the left of II Corps the 85th Division pushed northwest toward Mount Ceraso, the dominating height at the northeast corner of Colli Laziali. The 88th Division, when committed in the center of the line, had the mission of taking the high ground at Gardella Hill across Highway 6 and just below Zagarolo.

Opposition by the Hermann Goering Panzer Parachute Division was intense on 1 June, but our superiority in force gradually pushed the enemy back. In the 3d Division the 15th Infantry advanced east of the Artena—Valmontone road, beat off several attacks by Mark VI tanks, and reached Highway 6 by 2100. The 1st Special Service Force took its objective, the high ground southeast of Valmontone, in the morning and consolidated its positions to guard the right flank of the division. On the left flank, the 30th Infantry (plus 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry) and Task Force Howze (plus 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry) passed through the 7th Infantry and advanced slowly against a determined enemy. During the first hour of the attack alone, Task Force Howze on the left knocked out eight antitank guns, but enemy snipers picked off several of our tank commanders from the rear. Our progress in this area was limited.

The 85th Division also met stiff resistance. Directly north of Lariano, on the left flank of Task Force Howze, the 338th Infantry found the enemy so well entrenched along the steep railroad embankment that it made little gain until late in the day. The slow wheeling turn of the regiment northwest toward Mount Ceraso produced a gap on its right flank which the 349th Infantry filled at 1100. By

dusk this unit had reached high ground just north of the railroad. The 337th Infantry, pushing north along the wooded draws of Mount Artemisio, met heavy opposition from infantry weapons on the north slopes of Maschio d'Ariano; the Germans also infiltrated through the dense foliage as far as one battalion command post. By dusk, however, this resistance was beaten back, and the 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry, aided by tanks made a substantial advance to the north. Throughout the afternoon enemy vehicles moved in column on the road toward Rocca Priora and gave fine targets to our artillery observers, who had dominating observation from Mount Artemisio.

After dark the divisional and regimental zones on the left flank of II Corps were considerably shuffled. The 88th Division had assumed command of the 349th Infantry late in the afternoon. During the night the 351st Infantry relieved the 338th Infantry, which went into reserve until the following morning. The 337th Infantry took over the mission of capturing Mount Ceraso, and the 339th Infantry moved up to Maschio d'Ariano to attack on the left of the 85th Division zone. Though units of the 36th and 85th Divisions had already held this point, small enemy groups were still found in the dense woods—an indication of the fluidity of the battle.

Realizing the hopelessness of his stand, the enemy began to withdraw on 2 June. The Hermann Goering Panzer Regiment moved from Valmontone toward Tivoli, and the infantry of the division fell back slowly, together with the remnants of other units under its command. Accordingly II Corps gained all its initial objectives during the day. The 30th Infantry found Valmontone unoccupied early in the morning and fanned out to the north and northeast to secure good positions in the vicinity of Cave. The 751st Tank Battalion lent support to this expansion, which effectively sealed the upper end of the Liri—Sacco Valley. The 15th Infantry advanced in column of battalions and took over the guard of the right flank from the 1st Special Service Force. On the left the 2d and 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, pushed as far as Labico with Task Force Howze and then proceeded alone during the night to the vicinity of Palestrina.

In the morning of 2 June the 1st Special Service Force reverted to direct Corps control and at 1100 attacked down Highway 6 to gain contact with the FEC. Backed by the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron and the 732d Tank Battalion, it made rapid progress which culminated in a meeting with the French east of Colle Ferro at 1530. By this time the 3d Algerian Division and the 2d Moroccan Division had swept up the last enemy stragglers in the Lepini Mountains and were pressing forward toward II Corps with all possible speed. After this second junction with the beachhead forces Fifth Army had a continuous line sweeping from the Moletta River around the slopes of Colli Laziali and on down to the Sacco River.

In the zone of the 88th Division the 351st Infantry and the 349th Infantry advanced on Gardella Hill. Enemy pockets, supported by artillery from Palestrina, caused the infantry some trouble, but the 349th Infantry held the division objective by the middle of the afternoon. The 3d and 2d Battalions, 351st Infantry, swung northwest, took San Cesareo, and cut Highway 6 by 1630. The road blocks established by these battalions proved very profitable; 1 manned by a platoon of Company G accounted for 14 enemy vehicles, including an 88-mm gun with prime mover. Elsewhere on the highway the enemy retreat was becoming so hurried that large amounts of materiel were left behind.

The 337th Infantry attacked in the hills to the south behind the fire of six artillery battalions. After initial resistance from enemy armored cars and infantry, our troops with tank and tank-destroyer support broke through and took Mount Ceraso by 1840. The 2d Battalion pushed on to a point less than two miles from Highway 6. To its left the 339th Infantry attacked in the afternoon and took Mount Fiore; on its right the 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry, reached Highway 6 at San Cesareo by 2200.

2. *Pursuit toward Rome—3 June.* At 2000, 2 June, II Corps issued orders to govern its advance on Rome. The last stages of the drive would necessarily consist of a great wheeling movement from north to west as the divisions of II Corps entered the narrow corridor between Colli Laziali and the hills at Tivoli. This corridor was divided into three divisional zones, the 85th Division to the south, the 88th Division astride Highway 6, and the 3d Division to the north. The long right flank of II Corps, which would be badly exposed during our left turn, was guarded by the 1st Special Service Force at Colle Ferro, the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron in the vicinity of Genazzano, and the 3d Division with one regimental combat team of the 88th Division on the line Cave—Palestrina; the 91st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron was to be ready to protect the extension of our right flank below Tivoli as our troops advanced.

The main attack toward Rome would accordingly be delivered by the 85th and 88th Divisions. Task Force Howze (3d Battalion, 13th Armored Regiment; and Company A, 81st Armored Reconnaissance Battalion) was strengthened by the addition of the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry; the 1st Battalion, 349th Infantry; the 756th Tank Battalion; and a battalion from the 6th Field Artillery Group, and received orders to act as a spearhead up Highway 6. At 0915, 3 June, it was attached to the 1st Special Service Force but continued to act independently until evening, when that unit came up from the right flank. The Corps order further laid down phase lines to co-ordinate the attack, but units were not to halt until they reached the last phase line short of Rome, the north-south road passing through Tor Sapienza.

This wheel by II Corps to the west put it squarely in front of the FEC and the main bulk of Eighth Army, both of which were still well behind in the Liri—Sacco Valley. As a result a jam of troops was threatened in the area below Palestrina. Some room was available to the French on our far right flank west of Tivoli, and the FEC began on the 3d to move the 3d Algerian Division forward on Highway 6 to relieve the 1st Special Service Force and then the 3d Division so as to take its place in this area. Meanwhile the 2d Moroccan Division moved across Highway 6 and halted facing Paliano and Genazzano to protect the right rear of the FEC.

Eighth Army was still farther down the valley and was turning its attention more toward the Subiaco road. To permit II Corps to maneuver more freely AAI on the afternoon of 2 June temporarily shifted the boundary between the two armies north from Highway 6 to the road Paliano—Cave—Palestrina—Tivoli, with the proviso that when Eighth Army had drawn abreast the old boundary would be restored. As it turned out, the forward elements of Eighth Army did not reach the area in question until after II Corps had entered Rome. The 6 South African Armoured Division, which was scheduled to continue the advance on the left flank of Eighth Army, did not finish concentrating in Colle Ferro until 5 June. The final days of the drive on Highway 6 thus remained to II Corps. The reshuffling of troops in the night of 2-3 June caused by the shift in direction of attack held up operations slightly, but during the following day units proceeded steadily. By evening the advance elements of II Corps were in position to reach the Eternal City in one more bound.

The 3d Division continued its guard of the right flank throughout most of 3 June. The advance guard of the FEC first relieved the 15th Infantry on the far right, and that regiment moved up Highway 6 in the afternoon to positions northeast of Osteria Finocchio. The 30th Infantry remained west of Cave; the 7th Infantry turned west north of Highway 6 and beat off an enemy counterattack south of Palestrina in the evening. The 349th Infantry, which lay south of Zagarolo guarding Highway 6, came under the control of the 3d Division on the morning of the 3d, and beat off a small enemy tank-infantry counterattack at 1900. The enemy forces in this attack, which consisted of the 2d Battalion, 11th Parachute Regiment, had been shifted from the vicinity of Ardea across our front and had lost a company to our tanks on Highway 6 in the process.

On the highway itself Company A, 81st Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, led the way, followed by tanks of Task Force Howze at a pace of five to seven miles per hour. The accompanying infantry were hard pressed to keep up, and the tanks were stopped beyond Colonna by snipers and antitank guns. When the infantry came up, they moved through the tanks, located in partial defilade on either side of the road, and by combined action with the tank fires forced the enemy to withdraw.



The advance then continued until dark under stiffer opposition, especially from the north where the Germans were guarding their escape route below Tivoli. During the afternoon three tank battles took place on Highway 6 west of Colonna, but by dark Task Force Howze held the crossroads at Osteria Finocchio. The 1st Special Service Force, which had been relieved by the 3d Algerian Division at 0130, 3 June, then took up the drive at 2000. Enemy resistance had now collapsed and the 3d and 2d Regiments pushed on to the final phase line near Tor Sapienza by 0400, 4 June.

Shortly after daybreak on the 3d the 351st Infantry had shifted south of Highway 6 to a line of departure in front of the 337th Infantry and advanced through Colonna, with the 350th Infantry to its left rear. Enemy opposition here also was that of a mobile rear guard with 88-mm self-propelled guns, tanks, and 37-mm guns. After dark the 351st Infantry swung northwest on the left flank of the 1st Special Service Force, likewise gaining the final phase line south of Tor Sapienza at 0400, 4 June.

In the 85th Division zone advance elements of the 337th Infantry climbed back up the north slopes of Colli Laziali, and the regiment changed the direction of its attack from north to northwest. By-passing Rocca Priora, it took Monte Compatri, then Monte Porzio Catone and by dark was moving down the slopes northeast of Frascati. The 339th Infantry continued on its left into the hills west of Rocca Priora, with the 338th Infantry behind. Enemy resistance in the division zone was composed of such troops as the 38 prisoners taken at Monte Compatri from the German Cooks and Bakers School of Rome.

Throughout 3 June our aerial reconnaissance reported heavy movements into the city of Rome from the area north of Colli Laziali around as far as Tivoli. The enemy plan evidently was to delay our forces north of and astride Highway 6 to permit completion of this evacuation, for the 85th Division in the northern hills of Colli Laziali was sufficiently hampered by the terrain to prevent its constituting a serious threat. This plan was not carried out with full success, for our troops north of Highway 6 reached the last phase line short of Rome during the night of 3-4 June. The entry of II Corps into the city could now be only a matter of hours.

### C. THE ATTACK SOUTH OF COLLI LAZIALI

31 MAY-3 JUNE

I. *Hammering at the Lanuvio Line.* (See Map No. 18.) While the German left wing fell back before II Corps, the right wing had clung tenaciously to its lines opposite VI Corps. Our troops in this area were initially closest to Rome and

must be held until the enemy to the north had cleared across the Tiber. Nevertheless, the Germans could not stop the 36th Division drive across the center of Colli Laziali, which cut west on the slopes above the Lanuvio line. The advance of this division rolled back the German garrison below it, first from Velletri, then from Lanuvio, and finally from Albano.

The penetration by the 36th Division on 31 May had put it in command of the Velletri—Nemi road. In the expectation that the enemy would thus be forced to evacuate Velletri, the 36th Engineers attacked toward the town at 1730 with its 2d Battalion on the south and the 1st Battalion on the east. After reaching within 200 yards of the railroad, the engineers came under heavy machine-gun, mortar, and artillery fire, and withdrew slightly to reorganize.

To their left, dogged assaults by the rest of VI Corps met the same stubborn resistance as on 30 May. At 0530 the 135th Infantry attacked toward the railroad in its zone. Our air force, which devoted its main efforts on the 31st to enemy troops and installations along Highway 7, bombed Lanuvio twice before 1000, and our mortars laid a heavy smoke screen on the town; for artillery support the regiment had one 8-inch howitzer battalion, one 155-mm gun battalion, two medium battalions, and five batteries of light artillery. Nevertheless, the infantry had made scant gains by the middle of the day. After noon the 3d Battalion, 133d Infantry, attacked on the right, preceded by the 34th Reconnaissance Troop; this time we pushed forward 500 yards. The enemy promptly counterattacked with infantry and tanks in the center of the 135th Infantry line and also on the left between the 179th Infantry and 135th Infantry, but the fire from 13 battalions of artillery halted the thrust.

The renewed push by the 1st Armored Division and 45th Division on 31 May was little more successful than on the previous day. On the Albano road the 2d Battalion, 179th Infantry, launched its attack at the same time as the 135th Infantry. It met similar opposition, based on enemy strongpoints stubbornly defended by infantry weapons and supported by tanks, self-propelled guns, and flak guns. The 191st Tank Battalion found enemy antitank fire so intense that it could not attack frontally. At this time the battalion had 37 tanks, 18 of them without crews.

Combat Command B, northwest of Campoleone Station, was reinforced for the day's push by the 157th Infantry. The tanks moved out at 0530, followed 15 minutes later by the 1st Battalion, 157th Infantry, astride the Campoleone railroad. Remaining 300 to 500 yards behind the tanks, the infantry made a slight advance during the day against heavy artillery fire and small-arms opposition. Farther to the left the 81st Armored Reconnaissance Battalion continued to maintain contact with the British 1 Division, which was attached to VI Corps at midnight on 30 May.

The attack of the 31st had been better co-ordinated than previously, but the troops were exhausted and the effective tank strength was low. At 2000 the 2d Battalion, 135th Infantry, and the 2d Battalion, 6th Armored Infantry, which held the line west of the 179th Infantry, were attached to the 45th Division. The remainder of the 1st Armored Division then passed to Army reserve for maintenance purposes. Thus far in the Anzio attack 161 medium tanks and 48 light tanks of the division had been knocked out by enemy action. Of these, 117 and 25 respectively were recovered; 100 mediums and 12 lights had been returned to duty. From reserve stocks 48 medium tanks and 19 light tanks had been issued, so that on 31 May the 1st Armored Division was short only 13 M4's and 17 M5's. The division was actually more weakened by loss of men than by loss of tanks. Twenty medium tank crews had been hastily brought up from the 752d Tank Battalion in IV Corps on 30 May, but filled only part of this shortage.

During the night of 31 May-1 June the enemy pulled out part of his forces between Lanuvio and Velletri, with the result that opposition in this area began to diminish on 1 June. In the 36th Division the 142d Infantry consolidated its positions at the south end of Mount Artemisio, and the 143d Infantry, relieved at Maschio d'Ariano by the 337th Infantry, moved southwest along the ridge. Further action was delayed while the pack train brought up supplies and the 111th Engineer Battalion built a road by which tanks could enter the valley lying to the west of Mount Artemisio.

During the day the 141st Infantry attacked through the vineyards and orchards toward the strong enemy positions on the high hill of Velletri. The bitter fighting grew more intense as the enemy tanks and infantry attempted in the afternoon to break out to the northwest; many of our men used up all their ammunition and resorted to hand-to-hand combat to beat back the enemy sortie. At 1630 leading elements of the 2d Battalion entered the town and together with the 1st Battalion spent the night mopping up scattered enemy groups in the debris. A large number of Germans had been trapped and fell prisoner.

With victory in sight the 34th Division put increased pressure on the enemy to its front. At 0500, 1 June, the 133d Infantry renewed the attack below Lanuvio and made some progress. On its right the 109th Engineer Battalion, which relieved the 1st Battalion, 168th Infantry, in the previous night, joined with the 3d Battalion of that regiment in an attack on Villa Crocetta and Genaro Hill. The 3d Battalion struggled up to within 50 yards of the enemy main line of resistance, then fell back in order to direct careful artillery fire on the enemy, and finally took Hills 225 and 202 just below Gennaro Hill. One platoon of the 109th Engineers reached the vicinity of the Villa itself but retreated under enemy pressure. Apart

from one counterattack of tanks and infantry west of Lanuvio, which netted us 40 prisoners, the enemy was content to hold his main strongpoints.

The center of German resistance was by this time passing farther west to the front of the 45th Division, for if this unit could drive up to Albano it would cut off the retreat of the enemy to the east. At 0530 the 3d Battalion, 179th Infantry, passed through the 1st Battalion and attacked with the 2d Battalion on its left. Gains were scant. The 1st Battalion, 180th Infantry, relieved elements of the 179th Infantry just west of the Albano road and drove north. Opposition was first light, then heavy, and the battalion failed to make progress. On its left the 2d Battalion, 6th Armored Infantry, and the 2d Battalion, 135th Infantry, were forced to remain in the front lines another day until the 45th Division could pass beyond them. The British units on the far left met stiffer opposition than previously, and enemy counterattacks forced our advanced patrols out of some points.

The second of June marked the eighth straight day of heavy fighting for the 34th and 45th Divisions—the most intensive and continuous battle in which any units of Fifth Army had been engaged since Cassino. The end, however, was near, and the enemy finally yielded part of the Lanuvio line. Our advance in this area was materially aided by the push on the right flank of VI Corps. In this area the 142d Infantry and the 143d Infantry attacked abreast at 0930 across the grain fields between Mount Artemisio and the hill mass of Mount Cavo. The 142d Infantry moved in column of battalions along the only covered approach in its zone and gained the hills just east of Mount Cavo. Among the 50 prisoners taken from the light opposing forces were a number of German military police from Rome. The 143d Infantry met similarly ineffectual resistance and occupied the hills east of Tano Hill. To the south the 1st and 2d Battalions, 141st Infantry, had reached Highway 7 during the night and proceeded west along the road with part of the 36th Engineers to their left. In the afternoon, both of these units were relieved by the 157th Infantry. The 36th Engineers passed to Corps control, and the 141st Infantry swung north toward the hills east of Lake Nemi. Strafing and enemy artillery fire delayed completion of this attack until the early morning of 3 June.

The 157th Infantry drove west on Highway 7 during the afternoon of 2 June to an enemy strongpoint two and one-half miles west of Velletri. This regiment had been relieved on the left flank of the 45th Division during the night and moved by truck to the neighborhood of Velletri, where it came under the command of the 36th Division and strengthened our push at its most important point. Such a transfer of an entire regiment from one flank to another demonstrated anew the mobility of Fifth Army, based on air superiority, availability of transportation, and unceasing work by Corps and division engineers in keeping up the road net.

Threatened from the rear, the enemy garrison on the east of the Lanuvio line pulled out. At 0430, 2 June, a special raiding party from the 168th Infantry had occupied Villa Crocetta, and after dawn the entire regiment moved in column of battalions across Gennaro Hill to the railroad. On its left combat patrols of the 2d Battalion, 133d Infantry, likewise pushed up to the railroad. Farther west, however, the enemy was not yet sufficiently in danger to yield his positions. The 1st Battalion, 133d Infantry, jumped off at 0830 without an artillery preparation but found the enemy still on its front. The main attack of the 34th Division during the day, launched by the 100th Battalion at 0930, met considerable machine-gun and self-propelled fire from the Lanuvio ridge together with small counterattacks in the afternoon.

In the 45th Division zone the 179th Infantry attacked at 0930 and made small gains against stern opposition. New efforts in the afternoon by the 179th Infantry and the 180th Infantry brought only slight advances. An enemy counterattack stopped the advance of the 179th Infantry, and enemy tanks drove back the 2d Battalion, 135th Infantry, to its left. Five of our M4's, which came up to stem the enemy thrust, were knocked out by enemy antitank and self-propelled guns.

2. *The Enemy Withdraws—3 June.* For the first two days in June the German forces in front of VI Corps had clung to their Lanuvio line, yielding a little on their left flank but still safeguarding the evacuation of rear echelons. Time, however, was now growing short, for II Corps had swept around the north side of Colli Laziali and the 36th Division had reached the central heights within the volcanic bowl. During the night of 2-3 June the bulk of the enemy accordingly pulled out along the entire VI Corps front.

Early in the morning of 3 June the 1st Battalion, 141st Infantry, seized Nemi. The 2d Battalion continued northwest to the road junction east of Lake Albano by noon. Here an enemy rear guard of some force halted the battalion in a stiff action; the battalion commander was killed, and his men were ordered to hold their ground until the 3d Battalion could pass through after dark. Company G, 142d Infantry, took the large hotel on top of Mount Cavo in a dashing attack which resulted in 50 enemy dead and prisoners without a single casualty in our attacking force. The 143d Infantry reduced an enemy strongpoint at Tano Hill with equal success and netted 110 prisoners from the 3d Battalion, 1059th Grenadier Regiment. A new unit, the 361st Regimental Combat Team of the 91st Division, had closed at Velletri on the evening of 2 June and was attached to the 36th Division to operate with the 141st Infantry. These orders were later cancelled as a result of the enemy retreat, and the 361st Infantry saw no action before the fall of Rome.

On the south slopes of Colli Laziali the 157th Infantry had prepared a co-ordinated attack to be launched on the morning of the 3d, but on news of the enemy

withdrawal all three battalions of the regiment pushed toward Mount du Torri below Genzano as rapidly as possible, impeded only by long-range artillery and by mines. The 157th Infantry thus entered the zone of the 34th Division and at 1100, 3 June, was attached to that division.

During the night patrols of the 168th Infantry had entered Lanuvio, which was firmly in our hands shortly after daybreak on 3 June. The 168th Infantry then assembled just north of Lanuvio while the other two regiments of the division continued the attack. The 133d Infantry moved out at 0300 and turned north along the railroad toward the high ground east of Mount du Torri. Initially the 100th Battalion led the attack of the 135th Infantry on the left, jumping off at 0530, but at 1030 the 135th Infantry was attached to the 1st Armored Division and the independent battalion continued on alone toward Mount du Torri. With two units of the 34th Division heading for this area from the south and the 157th Infantry driving in from the east, some intermingling of troops and accidental cross-fire from supporting weapons took place during the afternoon. These difficulties were straightened out by orders for the 157th Infantry under Corps control to attack southwest below Mount du Torri for the road junction on the Albano road just above the railroad. Problems of passing the 133d Infantry through the 157th Infantry, and this in turn through the 100th Battalion to its west, unavoidably delayed action in the area below Genzano for several hours.

Thus, the 157th Infantry was forced to wait until the 100th Battalion had closely invested Mount du Torri. Though this commanding point was gained by our troops three times, enemy artillery shelled us off again each time, for the hill dominated the enemy escape route through Genzano. At 2200 the 157th Infantry passed west behind the 100th Battalion and reached its objective on the Albano road at 0345, 4 June. The 100th Battalion continued to assail the enemy rear guard before it and finally succeeded in reducing opposition on Mount du Torri by 0100, 4 June. The 133d Infantry attacked for Genzano from positions east of Mount du Torri at 1930 on the 3d and occupied the town about 0320 on the following morning. Patrols to Ariccia reported Highway 7 clear to that point.

While the 34th Division advanced toward Albano from the southeast, the 45th Division continued its push north on the same point and directed an attack by both the 179th Infantry and 180th Infantry in the middle of the morning on 3 June. At first our infantry met the same small-arms and mortar fire as before, then opposition slackened, and in the afternoon enemy fire died down. By evening contact was lost. As the infantry began to advance, the 1st Armored Division (135th Infantry attached) moved up, preparatory to passing through the 45th Division when it reached the railroad. Late in the evening the armor crossed the railroad and went into temporary bivouac areas while plans were being made for the dash on Rome.



*American tanks rumble through Velletri past the wreckage of the battle.*



*Our tanks wait off Highway 6, ready for the signal to enter the city of Rome.*



*A Mark VI tank burns at the edge of Rome as our men rush forward on Highway 6.*



*General Clark in Rome, after giving pursuit instructions to his commanders.*

# CHAPTER IX \* \* \* \* \*

## *Fifth Army Enters Rome*

ON the late afternoon of 3 June all the troops of Fifth Army were moving. On the slopes south of Albano, in the hills and plains of Colli Laziali, along the narrow valley below Palestrina—everywhere masses of infantry, tanks, and all the other fighting arms were driving at their great objective, the city of Rome. As the night came, some of these troops halted briefly for a little rest; others kept going and probed their way through the dark. To their front a beaten German army was retiring hastily through the city. The day's fighting had died down, but enemy planes once again swept over the highways behind our lines to bomb and strafe our troops through the night.

### A. *PREPARATIONS IN THE NIGHT*

Final instructions for the drive on Rome were issued by General Clark in Fifth Army Operations Instruction No. 26, early on 4 June. (*See Annex No. 1M.*) This directive laid down zones of action for the units of Fifth Army, prescribed a phase line north of Rome, and emphasized the vital necessity of securing the Tiber bridges. The fall of Rome was certain; the important point now was to secure bridging sites over the Tiber in order that Fifth Army might continue the pursuit. All units were ordered to be ready to push armored reconnaissance columns forward rapidly to seize and secure the crossings in their respective zones. An annex to the operations instruction dealt more specifically with the engineer equipment to be carried by each of these columns, including 2 infantry support rafts, 14 assault boats, 10 6-man pneumatic boats, and 2 22-horsepower outboard motors. Both II and VI Corps were advised to hold well forward one footbridge, one 130-foot DS set Bailey bridge, and enough floating steel treadway bridge for two crossings.

Desirable sites for the construction of hasty bridges were listed, for the planning of Fifth Army for the Tiber crossing had been thorough both in reconnaissance and in assembly of bridging units and materiel.

In the evening of 3 June General Clark had also dealt with the potential problem of German defense within the city of Rome in a message to all troops:

Fifth Army forces are approaching rapidly the city of Rome. The intentions of the enemy are not known; he may decide to fight within the city or he may withdraw to the north. It is my most urgent desire that Fifth Army troops protect both public and private property in the city of Rome. Every effort will be made to prevent our troops from firing into the city; however, the deciding factor is the enemy's dispositions and actions. If the German opposes our advance by dispositions and fires that necessitate Fifth Army troops firing into the city of Rome, battalion commanders and all higher commanders are authorized to take appropriate action without delay to defeat the opposing enemy elements by fire and movement. Such action to be reported immediately to this headquarters.

As events of the next day proved, the enemy had no intention of fighting a major action within the city. By this time the uncaptured survivors of the two armies under Kesselring's command had escaped. The divisions in the Liri—Sacco Valley had mostly withdrawn through Avezzano and Subiaco; the broken units in the Lepini Mountains had slipped around behind the Hermann Goering Panzer Parachute Division when it still held Valmontone; and that division had retired on 2 June below Tivoli. While the garrison of Colli Laziali beat its hasty retreat through Rome on the night of the 3d and the morning of the 4th, the 4th Parachute Division moved from the Ardea sector to serve as rear guard along the entire front. The bulk of this division cleared the city in the afternoon of 4 June.

During the day our troops met only mobile rear guards, whose sole mission was to check us temporarily. Snipers showed up now and again to the rear of our advance elements; self-propelled guns and tanks fired a few rounds from good positions and then withdrew in the maze of roads of the Roman suburbs. Only along Highway 6 did a real action develop. Here a strong group of enemy infantry and self-propelled guns held its positions west of Centocelle from early morning until the middle of the afternoon, and thus delayed the 1st Special Service Force and the 351st Infantry for approximately nine hours. Toward evening the enemy delaying action died away everywhere east of Rome. Within the city itself our men met only an occasional sniper or self-propelled gun, retreating toward the Tiber bridges.

As our command had foreseen, the situation on 4 June called for the employment of speedy forces heavy in fire power, with the minimum number of troops: the latter both to avoid congestion on the narrow streets of the city and to retain the maximum flexibility. A number of our divisions accordingly formed flying columns of tanks, tank destroyers, engineers, and infantry, usually based on a battalion or less of infantry and a company of tanks. The infantry were sometimes motORIZED by taking vehicles from the regimental service company or from the division quartermaster company; in other cases they rode on the decks of the tanks until opposition was met. Behind these spearheads, columns of infantry advanced by foot and motor to the suburbs, but did not press into the city proper until the Tiber bridges had been secured.

The first troops into Rome were accordingly small forces, mostly of battalion strength or less. In VI Corps the main thrust was entrusted to the 1st Armored Division, only one combat command of which entered the city itself. The two British divisions remained west of Ardea; the bulk of the 45th and 34th Divisions assembled below Albano; and the 36th Division halted on Via Tuscolana short of Rome. To the north II Corps sent the 1st Special Service Force and a battalion each from the 351st Infantry and 350th Infantry, both with tank elements attached, along Via Prenestina and a battalion of the 338th Infantry along Via Tuscolana to secure the Tiber bridges in its zone. The 3d Division shuttled its troops by motor along the north side of Highway 6 as fast as they were relieved by the FEC, and the bulk of the 88th Division also moved north of the highway to the vicinity of the city. The 85th Division with the 760th Tank Battalion attached curved south to cut Highway 7 and so trap the last enemy rear guards in front of VI Corps.

All through the 4th the scene east of Rome was one of hectic excitement as our small columns drove at the Eternal City along the walled roads and through the close-packed suburbs. Veering from one road to another as the opportunity presented itself, the spearheads occasionally crossed each other's path; but in general each proceeded independently of the others, and many soldiers had the proud feeling of being the « first in Rome ». Here and there our men flushed out the snipers in brief, violent fire fights. At times the tanks barked briefly at an enemy self-propelled gun. And everywhere were the throngs of cheering civilians throwing flowers and dispensing wine with open hand.

After our capture of Rome, the question naturally arose as to what unit had entered the city first. Under the pressure of combat conditions of the moment and the necessity of pressing forward with all possible speed, careful records to establish the point in question were not made. The only item in official records which bears on the problem is a report that elements of the 88th Reconnaissance Troop (88th

Division) entered Rome at 0800, 4 June. Interrogation of individuals who were in this patrol indicated that the report of entrance was based on the patrol having passed at that hour a « Roma » sign located on Route 6 with co-ordinates approximately 799647'. It was accordingly considered that elements of the 88th Reconnaissance Troop were officially the first to enter the city of Rome.

## B. *THE RACE TO ROME: HIGHWAY 6*

*See Map No. 18*

In the II Corps zone the line of advance lay along Via Prenestina just north of Highway 6, with a side drive by the 85th Division southwest to cut Highway 7 and west on Via Tuscolana. The main attack was carried out by the 1st Special Service Force and by elements of the 88th Division, both of which had reached the road running south from Tor Sapienza at 0400. On Highway 6 two companies of the 1st Regiment, 1st Special Service Force, moved out at 0440, riding on the tanks of two companies of the 13th Armored Regiment (Task Force Howze) and in eight armored cars of Company A, 81st Armored Reconnaissance Battalion. Progress was rapid, and the force reached the road junction west of the settlement of Centocelle by 0615. Here antitank fire put out the two leading tanks, and the infantry deployed under heavy small-arms fire. The advance on this route had been stopped.

On Via Prenestina the advance guard of the 88th Division was likewise driving west. As already noted, elements of the 88th Reconnaissance Troop had made a sortie into the edge of the city shortly after daybreak, but further penetration awaited the advance of the infantry. A special pursuit force was formed from the 1st Battalion, 350th Infantry; a battery of the 338th Field Artillery Battalion; a company of the 313th Engineer Battalion; a battery of six 105-mm self-propelled guns; and a company of the 752d Tank Battalion. This force moved up Highway 6 to Torre Nova, turned north to Via Prenestina, and moved west on that road. Ahead of it the 1st Platoon, 88th Reconnaissance Troop, and the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon, 351st Infantry, were leading a special force from the 351st Infantry composed of Company C and the Antitank Company, while the other companies of the 1st Battalion marched on foot. This force had cut south to Via Prenestina from its position below Tor Sapienza, reached the road at 0930, and moved toward Centocelle.

About 0900 the reconnaissance elements were stopped by strong enemy fire from the ridge north of the suburb, and it developed that paratroopers with 150-mm self-propelled guns had organized strongpoints on a line curving about the west

side of Centocelle. Company C, 351st Infantry, was forced to detruck and take up firing positions, while the other companies of the battalion, aided by tanks from the 752d Tank Battalion, worked toward the north of the enemy positions. The Germans, however, knocked out three tanks and put up determined resistance which pinned the 1st Regiment on Highway 6 and the 351st Infantry on Via Prenestina until after noon.

The two companies of the 1st Special Service Force on the south attacked northwest at 1100 and drove slowly through the enemy opposition; at 1530 the 1st Battalion, 351st Infantry, launched a final attack to the west. Between them the two drives broke the last enemy resistance, and the 1st Regiment drove on northwest to a road junction on Via Prenestina at the edge of the city proper by 1700. Here it met the 2d and 3d Regiments with the infantry elements of Task Force Howze, which had secured crossings over the Aniene River north of Tor Sapienza in the morning and then in the afternoon moved west along the railroad.

To avoid jamming against these troops the 1st Battalion, 351st Infantry, veered northwest across the railroad tracks by 1820, encountering mines and a mined bridge. The 1st Battalion, 350th Infantry, drove west on Via Prenestina, entering the city proper at 1930. The 2d Regiment, 1st Special Service Force, meanwhile passed through the 1st Regiment, reached Porta Maggiore at 1915, and arrived at the Central Station by 2000. One company turned off and was at Piazza Venezia by 1915, where it had a short fire fight with enemy mechanized troops. The 3d Regiment struck northwest on the right flank of the 2d Regiment and entered Piazza del Popolo at 2100.

The companies of the 1st Special Service Force then fanned out to seven bridges over the Tiber north of Ponte Margherita. At this point and also at Ponte di Littorio they met enemy guards with well emplaced machine guns, but by 2300 our men held the bridges in the II Corps zone. Behind them the two battalions of the 88th Division advanced through the city toward the northernmost of these bridges. On the way the 351st Infantry and a group of the 1st Special Service Force, each mistaking the other for a German force, had a brief fire fight, but shortly after midnight the 351st Infantry had reached Ponte Milvio and the 350th Infantry Ponte Duca d'Aosta.

On the right flank of II Corps the 3d Division completed turning over its old positions to the French during the day. The 7th Infantry had moved up behind the 15th Infantry to San Cesareo in the night of 3-4 June; the 30th Infantry, relieved at 0530, 4 June, assembled at Valmontone and proceeded by motor along Highway 6 to positions just northeast of Centocelle. During the following night the 30th Infantry established contact with the 350th Infantry, sent patrols into

the northeast quarters of Rome, and seized the main railroad bridge over the Tiber north of the city.

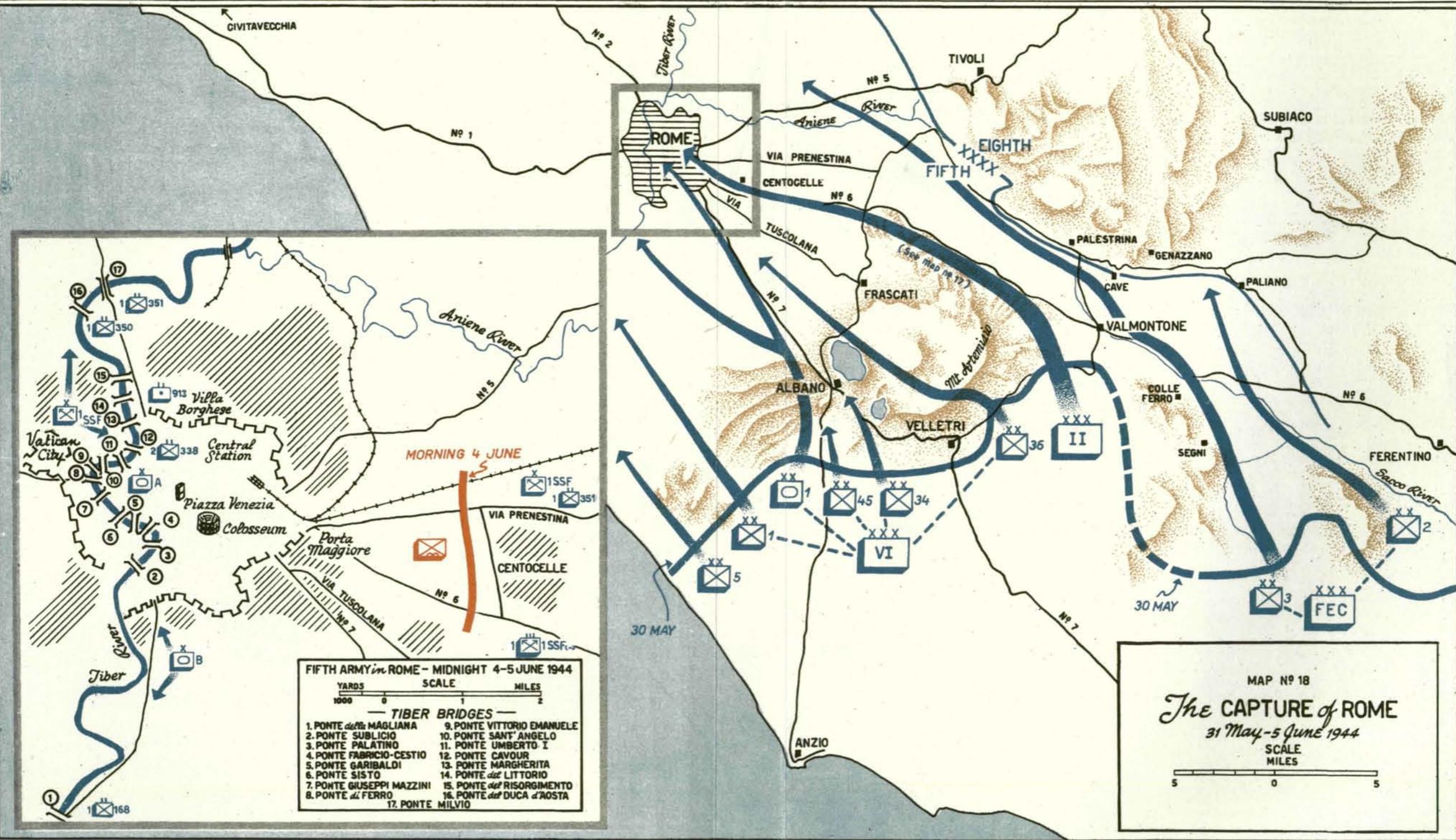
In the 85th Division on the left flank of II Corps the 339th Infantry took Frascati early on 4 June and moved down the west slopes of Colli Laziali on Via Tuscolana. Behind it came a mobile column which the division had formed from the 2d Battalion, 338th Infantry, on trucks; a platoon each of tanks, tank destroyers, and engineers; and the regimental Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon. To the north the 337th Infantry sent ahead at 0600 a task force of one motorized rifle company supported by engineers, tanks, tank destroyers, and artillery. The Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon of this regiment reached the suburbs of the city at 0830, but reported that it had run into elements of the 1st Special Service Force, held up on Highway 6.

Before the bulk of the 337th Infantry could become involved in the battle about Centocelle, it was turned southwest by the division to carry out the Army order (0900) to cut Highway 7 and proceed southwest. The 3d Battalion, 337th Infantry, accordingly moved across the front of the 339th Infantry on Via Tuscolana, and was approaching Highway 7 at 1500, when it ran into a small enemy force. After clearing out the snipers involved, the regiment reached Highway 7 at 1700. Enemy opposition below Albano had so diminished by this time that the regiment found elements of the 1st Armored Division passing across its front. On further Army order the 85th Division stopped its southwesterly drive, and ordered the 337th Infantry to hold its advance positions. The mobile force from the 338th Infantry then continued its advance on Via Tuscolana and approached the city about 1800. After clearing some opposition at the outskirts, the battalion pushed on to Ponte Cavour during the night.

### C. *THE RACE TO ROME: HIGHWAY 7*

*See Map No. 18*

The advance of VI Corps was led by the combat commands of the 1st Armored Division, which received road priority on Highway 7. Combat Command A on the right was initially composed of the 1st Armored Regiment (less the 3d Battalion) and the 1st Battalion, 6th Armored Infantry; but in the night of 3-4 June the 135th Infantry (less the 2d Battalion) took the place of the armored infantry. Combat Command B on the left was then composed of the 1st Battalion, 13th Armored Regiment, and the 3d Battalion, 1st Armored Regiment, with the 6th Armored Infantry moving in column of battalions closely behind the tanks. The 3d



Battalion of the infantry was to proceed on foot and the 2d Battalion in half-track personnel carriers.

During the night of 3-4 June the troops of the 1st Armored Division waited along the Albano road near the Canuvio railroad line while their commanders received orders and counterorders. Finally, just after midnight, the combat commands were directed to attack at 0345, 4 June. In Combat Command A a flying column composed of one company each of tanks, armored infantry, and engineers and a platoon of tank destroyers moved out at 0130 and advanced through the mines to Albano. No opposition was met as far as the town, for the 157th Infantry had cleared the stretch of the Albano road immediately above the railroad and the 100th Battalion had pushed patrols into Albano itself in the early morning.

The advance guard of Combat Command A, followed by a second force composed of the 2d Battalion, 1st Armored Regiment, and the 1st Battalion, 135th Infantry, turned northwest from Albano on Highway 7. Below Castel Gandolfo the advance guard was held up just before noon by three Mark VI tanks with snipers, who forced it to halt temporarily three more times before reaching the outskirts of Rome. Here the 337th Infantry had already eliminated the major opposition, and after one brief fire fight at the very entrance to the city Combat Command A rolled about 1800 through Porta San Giovanni into the city. Making their way through the crowded, twisting streets, the tanks before midnight were guarding the approaches to Ponte Sant'Angelo, Ponte Umberto I, and Ponte Cavour.

Combat Command B, moving out at 0345, at first met only mines on the road curving along the slopes southwest of Albano, but as it turned west toward the Tiber it began to meet small-arms opposition. At an enemy strongpoint five miles west of Albano the main forces of the spearhead were forced to deploy, and fought a running battle until after noon. At 1330 Company A, 13th Armored Regiment, and a platoon of tank destroyers were sent on to the south outskirts of Rome, followed later by the 2d Battalion, 6th Armored Infantry, in half-tracks. While these forces gained control of Ponte Palatino and the other bridges in the southern part of the city, the rest of Combat Command B moved out at 1500 in three columns to secure the two major Tiber crossings south of Rome. Minor enemy resistance caused occasional delay, but the armor held its objectives by 1800.

To the right of the 1st Armored Division the 36th Division had on the morning of the 4th swept the enemy out of Marino in short, heavy skirmishes. The 2d Battalion, 141st Infantry, with one company riding on tank destroyers in the van, reached Highway 7 in the afternoon, but 1st Armored Division military police, already forward, detoured the column to the north. On orders of General Walker, who accompanied this advance guard, the battalion stopped for the night in the

eastern suburbs of the city after a brief brush with the enemy. On its right motorized battalions of the 142d Infantry and 143d Infantry moved down to the same area.

The bulk of the 34th and 45th Division took no part in the last day of the drive on Rome, but task forces were sent by the two divisions to the two crossing sites south of Rome. The 34th Division formed Task Force A from a company each of the 168th Infantry and the 191st Tank Battalion, reinforced by a battery of the 175th Field Artillery, a platoon of the 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and a detachment of the 109th Engineer Battalion with bridging equipment. This force left Albano at 1230 but was held up by 1st Armored Division traffic until after dark. It then moved through Rome and down the north bank of the Tiber to Ponte della Magliana. Farther south the 45th Reconnaissance Troop and the 1st Battalion, 180th Infantry, reached the lower bridge by 1900. Both of these bridges had been blown, and the engineers of the two infantry divisions, together with the armored engineers, set to work at once to throw temporary structures across the Tiber.

#### D. *CONSOLIDATING THE VICTORY*

By midnight of 4 June troops of Fifth Army stood at the Tiber from its mouth to the junction with the Aniene River. Every bridge along that stretch had been taken and was under firm guard. North and south of the city the Germans had blown the bridges, but in the city proper all crossings of the river were intact.

The reception of Fifth Army by the citizens of Rome had been hysterical. While the hated Germans were scurrying north and west out of the city through deserted streets, the roads leading into Rome from the south and east were filled by its cheering citizens. As one tank commander put it, what the Germans had never been able to do the solid masses of the Roman throngs had accomplished; and our progress everywhere was slowed by the thickly packed streets. Nevertheless, the enemy still lay ahead, and the Fifth Army advance proceeded without a break.

On the north the van of the 3d Algerian Division had reached the blown bridges on the Aniene River at Lunghezza in the afternoon of 4 June. To its right, below Tivoli, the 1st Motorized Division was again committed for the first time since the 11 May attack on Sant'Ambrogio. Both divisions crossed the Aniene on the 5th, and the Algerians pushed to the Tiber. At this point all troops in the FEC except the 3d Algerian Division were halted and ordered to clear the roads for the passage of the 6 South African Armored Division through their area to operate in the original Eighth Army zone. Highway 6 reverted to Eighth Army at this time, with II Corps traffic being routed over Highway 7 and VI Corps movement on the roads to the south thereof.

The 3d Division on the 5th attacked toward the Tiber north of the Aniene River. The 15th Infantry in the lead met enemy small-arms fire at 0500 shortly after crossing the Aniene, but worked its way to its assigned bridge, which had been blown. Instead of crossing the Tiber and cutting Highway 3, as originally planned, the 3d Division received fresh orders to move to Rome as garrison for the city. These instructions were the result of Fifth Army Operations Instruction No. 27, 4 June (*See Annex No. 1N*), which directed that the 3d Division, the 1 Battalion The Duke of Wellington's Regiment, and one composite battalion of the FEC would garrison the city of Rome under the command of the Commanding General, City Administrative Section, Fifth Army.

Beyond the Tiber the 88th Division drove up Highway 2, with the bulk of its artillery firing from positions in Villa Borghese throughout most of the day. On its left one regiment of the 85th Division moved by truck through Rome and proceeded northwest of Vatican City. Right flank protection for these units of II Corps was furnished by the 91st and 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadrons.

The advance of VI Corps was covered by the 1st Armored Division, operating on a wide front. Due west of St. Peter's Combat Command B moved up Highway 1 ahead of the 36th Division, which crossed the city after midnight. To the south Combat Command A fanned out across the Tiber, backed by elements of the 34th Division on the north and the 45th Division on the south. Working through the night, the engineers had completed the 45th Division bridge by inserting 30 feet of treadway in the blown gap, while the 36th Engineers built a floating treadway slightly upstream. To the north the 34th Division had a class 30 bridge in operation and a floating treadway under construction. Reconnaissance elements of both British divisions had reached their respective bridging sites on the lower Tiber on 4 June, but the British bridges were not yet built.

By dusk of 5 June the sound of battle had rolled far past Rome. The bulk of the combat troops were across the Tiber, with the remainder soon to follow. Pursuit of the broken enemy was continuing at top speed. For the first time since our arrival in Italy, Rome now lay behind Fifth Army.

# CHAPTER X

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## *The Drive on Rome*

THE drive on Rome forms one of the most spectacular parts of the Fifth Army campaign in Italy. In extent and importance of terrain gained, in the magnitude of forces involved, this operation far outshadows all the previous action since Salerno. The enemy had vowed to hold us south of Rome; he had failed, and in that failure had suffered disaster. Fifth Army had shown that we could meet and decisively conquer the Germans on their own ground.

The attack began in the south in the hills above the Garigliano. After six weeks of preparation two corps of Fifth Army jumped off at 2300, 11 May. The FEC on the right smashed through to Mount Majo, the key of the Gustav Line, by 13 May and then exploited its penetration by swift drives to the Itri—Pico road. The second German belt of defenses, the Adolf Hitler Line, was outflanked on the south by the dash to Mount Revole on 16 May, the capture of Esperia and Mount d'Oro on 17-18 May, and finally the fall of Pico on 22 May. After these defeats the Germans could no longer hold the British Eighth Army in the Liri Valley to our north.

II Corps on the left attacked along the sea with two new American divisions, the 85th and the 88th, abreast. In the three days 11-14 May the outwardly insignificant points of Santa Maria Infante, the S Ridge, and San Martino Hill acquired fame as American soldiers fought and died to secure their possession. By 14 May the Germans in this area were in full retreat, and II Corps pressed forward along Highway 7 in hot pursuit.

Formia fell on the 17th, Itri on the 19th, and Fondi on the 20th. Then our troops prepared to assault the hills above Terracina, the last barrier to junction with the beachhead. The enemy reinforcements came too late to stop the men of the 85th Division, who held the Terracina defile on 24 May. The following morning our reconnaissance troops, racing north up the Pontine Marshes, gained contact with

our engineers from the north, and the saga of the isolated garrison at Anzio was ended. To the right the French continued to drive back the slowly retreating enemy. The battle in the south was essentially finished.

The focus of action then swung to Anzio, where VI Corps had on 23 May begun its drive toward Cisterna and Cori. The immediate objective of this attack was the capture of Valmontone to block Highway 6 behind the enemy, but the initial success of the drive led to its expansion on 26 May. While the 3d Division continued to drive on Valmontone, the 34th and the 45th Divisions swung west below Velletri to break the last German defensive line south of Rome. As our threat to this line developed, enemy resistance stiffened, and every man available to the German High Command was thrown into the front lines. For a few days during the last of May the battle swirled in indecision about the slopes of Colli Laziali.

On 28 May II Corps turned over its previous zone of action to IV Corps and moved to Anzio. Together with its divisions it was placed in line to the right near Valmontone on 31 May. The following day the last, all-out attack to smash the Germans began. II Corps drove up the valley north of Colli Laziali, VI Corps hammered at the southern slopes of the hills, and the FEC hastened north through the last of the Lepini Mountains. Crushed by the weight of our attack, the enemy first retreated slowly, then ran, and by evening of 4 June our troops were within the ancient walls of the Eternal City.

Every victory must be bought by the expenditure of materiel, energy, and lives. During the period 1 April-4 June Fifth Army had 35,014 casualties, of which 5,938 were killed, 26,450 wounded, and 2,626 missing in action. Broken down by nationalities the totals were:

	<i>Killed</i>	<i>Wounded</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>Total</i>
U. S. . . . .	3,667	16,153	1,204	21,024
British . . . . .	520	2,385	450	3,355
French . . . . .	1,751	7,912	972	10,635
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	5,938	26,450	2,626	35,014

By far the greatest bulk of these was incurred during the period 12 May-4 June. American casualties during the drive amounted to 3,145 killed, 13,704 wounded, and 1,082 missing—a grand total of 17,931. The three most costly days of the American attack were 12 May with 1572 casualties, 23 May with 1928, and 1 June with 1539. Fifth Army had never experienced such losses during its previous action in Italy; in the 24 days of the May drive the Army suffered one-third of its total losses in Italy during the 269 days from D Day at Salerno to 4 June 1944.



*War has its price: evacuating the wounded from the battlefield of Cisterna.*

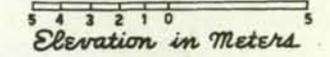
In offset it must be noted that Fifth Army had never been as strong as during the May drive. On 4 June the effective strength of the Army was 369,356, represented by 231,306 Americans, 42,908 British, and 95,142 French.

As in previous parts of the Italian campaign, it is again impossible to assess accurately the losses of the enemy. His surrender of Rome and all the territory south thereof as far as Cassino and the Garigliano represented a heavy blow to his prestige in the world at large and within the confines of the German fortress of Europe. Physically the German losses in materiel were tremendous during the battles and the subsequent retreat. The enemy casualties may be measured only by the prisoner-of-war total. The American divisions took 10,420 prisoners, the British 107, and the French 5,079, a total of 15,606. On the basis of these figures alone it is apparent that the German Fourteenth Army and that part of Tenth Army facing us suffered more heavily, with a fewer number of troops originally available, than did Fifth Army. The continuation of the German retreat throughout June and July attests to the smashing victory we had won in the drive to Rome.

MAP No 19

# The TERRAIN of the MAY DRIVE

SCALE  
MILES



ROME

PALESTRINA

FRASCATI

VALMONTONE

ALATRI

FERENTINO

Colli

Lake Albano

Laziali

VELLETRI

ARTENA

COLLE FERRO

FROSINONE

Sacco River

CAMPOLEONE

CORI

Lepini Mountains

CARPINETO ROMANO

CECCANO

CEPRANO

ARCE

M. Cairo

PIEDIMONTE

CASSINO

VENAFRO

Incastro R.

Moletta R.

CISTERNA

M. Arretino

ROCCAGORGA

Palombara Gap

PROSEDI

CASTRO D. VOLSCI

Melfa River

Liri River

S. ANGELO

MIGNANO

NETTUNO  
ANZIO

LITTORIA

PRIVERNO

ROCCASECCA

AMASENO

M. Cabrilli

PASTENA

PICO

S. OLIVA

M. d'Oro

S. GIORGIO A LIRI

S. AMBROGIO

BORGO GRAPPA

Aurunci Mountains

M. Pizzano

VALLECORSO

LENOLA

ESPERIA

CAUSONIA

M. Majo

M. Iuga

TERRACINA

SPERLONGA

FORMIA

GAETA

SESSA AURUNCA



Tyrrhenian

Sea