

CHAPTER II * * * * *

Plans for the Drive

A. ALLIED STRATEGY IN ITALY

See Map No. 2

THE over-all strategy of 15th Army Group, commanded by General Sir Harold R. L. Alexander, for the capture of Rome had been outlined well before the Winter Line battle began. Operations Instruction No. 31, issued by 15th Army Group on 8 November 1943, directed Eighth Army to drive up the Adriatic coast to Chieti and then to wheel west on Highway 5 toward Rome (1). Fifth Army was to drive up the Liri-Sacco Valley to Frosinone in Phase II. When this drive had come within supporting distance, Fifth Army would launch an amphibious operation south of Rome to initiate Phase III. Planning for this phase began almost at once.

On 2 January 1944 General Alexander ordered execution of the plans to land at Anzio. The purpose of this operation, directed by his Operations Instruction No. 32 (*See Annex No. 1A*), was to cut the enemy lines of communication and to threaten the rear of XIV Panzer Corps. The target date was to fall between 20 and 31 January, as near to the former as possible. On the southern front Fifth Army was to "make as strong a thrust as possible towards Cassino and Frosinone shortly prior to the assault landing to draw in enemy reserves which might be employed against the landing forces and then to create a breach in his front through which every opportunity will be taken to link up rapidly with the seaborne operation." Eighth Army was to make what amounted to a holding attack to prevent the Germans from transferring divisions from the northern sector of the front to that opposite Fifth Army. There was a remote hope that Eighth Army, in spite of its reduction in strength, might reach the Pescara line and develop a threat towards Rome through Popoli by 20 January.

(1) See Fifth Army History, Part III, Annex No. 1A.

On 12 January Fifth Army began a four-day drive which was to end with the capture of the last positions in the Winter Line. On the day that this drive began, General Alexander issued Operations Instruction No. 34 (*See Annex No. 1B*), entitled *The Battle for Rome*. The enemy, having lost heavily, was in the process of regrouping his forces, and it was estimated that there might be a lack of balance and some disorganization in his dispositions during the next few weeks. If true he was not likely to undertake offensive operations on a large scale but could be expected to defend his positions tenaciously. D Day for the seaborne operation in the Nettuno-Anzio area was set as 22 January, and there was to be no postponement except for bad weather. The specific tasks of Fifth Army were to force the enemy to withdraw north of Rome, and at the same time to inflict the maximum losses on German forces south of Rome. Lt. Gen. Sir Oliver H. Leese, commanding Eighth Army, was directed to maintain sufficient pressure on the enemy forces on his front to prevent the enemy from moving any troops from LXXXVI Panzer Corps to the Fifth Army front. The 2 New Zealand Division was to be withdrawn from Eighth Army and placed in Army Group reserve for employment as the course of operations might dictate. Primarily, however, it was intended to be used for exploitation for which its long range and mobility were peculiarly suited, and would be placed under command of Fifth Army when a suitable opportunity for its employment could be seen.

General Alexander emphasized the importance of not allowing the enemy "any respite in which to reorganize or take up new positions. The momentum of our advance must be maintained at all costs to the limit of our resources. The enemy will be compelled to react to the threat to his communications and rear, and advantage must be taken of this to break through his main defences, and to ensure that the two forces operating under Comd Fifth Army join hands at the earliest possible moment." After this junction Fifth Army was to advance north of Rome as quickly as possible to the general line Terni-Viterbo-Civitavecchia. More distant objectives for Eighth Army were stated as being the area Ravenna-Rimini-Faenza; those of Fifth Army were the area Pistoia-Florence-Pisa.

B. *PLANS FOR OPERATION SHINGLE (ANZIO)*

1. *Amphibious Operations in Fifth Army Strategy.* General Clark was fully aware of the strategic advantages of amphibious operations. Landings in force behind the enemy's lines to compel his withdrawal from prepared positions had been considered seriously since our arrival in Italy. After the battle

of Salerno Fifth Army had studied possible landings south of the Volturno River, south of the Garigliano River in the Mondragone area, on the Gulf of Gaeta, in the Sperlonga and Terracina areas, and at Anzio and Civitavecchia farther north. Early in October a special amphibious section, headed by Brig. Gen. John W. O'Daniel, was attached to the Army G-3 Section to plan for many of these operations; but for such reasons as the lack of troops and landing craft, poor beach conditions, or unfavorable tactical situations none of the plans was approved. Moreover, the requirements of the Italian campaign in craft and manpower had to be fitted into over-all Allied plans, and the necessary troops and craft for any large-scale landing were earmarked for other theaters. A possibility for a major amphibious operation appeared in November when Fifth Army had reached the Winter Line, but General Clark did not consider such a move feasible at that time with the limited number of troops under his command. To divide his forces would have meant being weak at both points and would have invited defeat in detail. In order for an amphibious end run to succeed, troops and landing craft must be available; above all the tactical situation must be favorable.

In a series of meetings at La Marsa, Tunisia, in late October and early November 1943 General Eisenhower and his senior commanders discussed plans for maintaining the impetus of the lagging offensive in Italy. General Alexander strongly urged launching an amphibious assault around the enemy's right flank as part of a general offensive to seize Rome. The availability of landing craft was the critical factor. As agreed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff at the Quebec conference in August 1943, 68 of the 90 LST's in the Mediterranean were scheduled to leave at once for other theaters to be used in future operations in 1944. General Eisenhower, however, secured permission from the Combined Chiefs of Staff to retain the 68 LST's until 15 December in order not to jeopardize the Italian campaign.

The disposition of these craft was discussed at a conference held by General Alexander at Bari on 8 November 1943. It was decided that their initial employment would be to accelerate the build-up of Allied troops in Italy and to increase the Strategic Air Force. 15th Army Group then proposed keeping the landing craft after 15 December for an amphibious operation in support of the main offensive toward Rome. A force landed on the enemy flank below Rome, once Fifth Army had already broken through the main German defenses in the south, might so threaten Kesselring's communications as to force him into rapid retreat. This appreciation was to result in the Anzio landing.

On the day of the Bari conference General Alexander issued Operations Instruction No. 31 outlining his plan for a co-ordinated effort to break through

to Rome. The third phase in this effort, as already noted, consisted of an amphibious operation south of Rome directed on Colli Laziali, a commanding hill mass astride the vital communications routes supplying XIV Panzer Corps south of Rome. An amphibious landing on the enemy flank, directed at Colli Laziali, would threaten to cut off the German troops. Combined with a frontal assault, this threat would drive the enemy north of the last barrier in the approach to Rome. It was considered essential that Fifth Army attack as soon as possible so that our troops on the south would be in position to support the amphibious operation prior to the withdrawal of the available craft.

2. *Early Planning and Postponement.* From this point on, planning for the newly named Operation Shingle became the joint responsibility of the Commanding General, Fifth Army; the Naval Commander Shingle; and the Commanding General, XII Air Support Command. The Naval Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean appointed Rear Admiral F. C. Lowry, U.S. Navy, as Naval Commander Shingle and directed him and his staff to begin planning at once with Fifth Army. In a radio message of 10 November to General Clark the Naval Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean urged that because of the short time the additional craft would be available and also because a successful advance on the Fifth Army front would rapidly crystallize the target date for Shingle, it was of utmost importance that combined planning begin as soon as possible. Therefore on 12 November Maj. Gen. Alfred M. Gruenther, Army Chief of Staff, informed Brig. Gen. Donald W. Brann, Army G-3, that he would have over-all charge of a Fifth Army planning staff to be set up immediately in the royal palace at Caserta. 15th Army Group suggested plans be made on the basis of a lift of one reinforced division (23,000 men) for an earliest target date of 20 December. Because a division had not yet been assigned, pending developments on the Fifth Army front, the Army staff was to draw up the division plan in order to take the fullest advantage of time.

The beaches selected for the operation were near Anzio, a small port and resort 31 miles below Rome. (*See Map No. 6.*) Here, along the low, level coastal plain, was open terrain suitable for maneuver; good roads led 20 miles inland to the key Colli Laziali hill mass. The greatest natural obstacle, however, was the poor quality of the beaches. Naval and engineer interpretation of air photos revealed only 3 suitable landing sites: a small beach right in the port of Anzio, a 5600-yard stretch 5 miles west of Anzio, and another 4 miles to the east. The offshore gradients were very shallow, averaging 1 : 80-1 : 85 on the east beach and only 1 : 110 on the beach west of Anzio. The navy advised that assault craft up to LCT(S)'s could land on the former but that only LCA's

and LCV(P)'s could come in over the west beach. These conclusions were fully substantiated in the actual landing.

Weather, too, could be a major obstacle. December, the peak month of the autumn rainy season, was the worst time of year for a combined operation. January was but little better. Rain, cold, and low clouds would hamper air support and severely restrict supply over the beaches. Owing to the prospect of unfavorable weather, which promised only 2 good days out of every 7, the operation would have to be completed within 48 hours. Yet even with these limitations the Italian winter was not too severe for amphibious operations.

Lack of sufficient landing craft was the most crucial factor in all Shingle planning. The original allocation of craft by the Naval Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean was 42 LST's (10 of them 6-davit), 38 LCT's, 60 LCI's, and necessary support craft, sufficient to lift only one reinforced division. Fifth Army had desired to include a combat command from the 1st Armored Division as a mobile striking force, but this project was not feasible because of the shortage of craft. For the same reason there could be no immediate resupply or troop follow-up. Only ten days' supply could be taken along, seven on supply ships and three with the assault units.

From bids for personnel and vehicle space submitted by planning staffs of units earmarked for the operation and from G-4 needs, the Army staff estimated its craft requirements at 42 LST's (17 of them 6-davit), 35 operational and 15 supply LCT's, together with 250 Dukws for the artillery. This allotment would be sufficient to provide a lift of 24,594 men and 2,706 vehicles. The additional seven 6-davit LST's were necessary to provide more LCA's or LCV(P)'s for the assault wave inasmuch as the beaches were too shallow for larger craft. The navy succeeded in procuring the additional LST's, but the problem of conflicting Army space requirements and available landing craft was to continue throughout the planning phase.

On 25 November the first Outline Plan Shingle was approved by General Clark. It called for the amphibious operation to take place when Fifth Army had advanced to the general line Capistrello-Ferentino-Priverno and was prepared for an all-out drive on Colli Laziali. Then Shingle Force would descend on the Tyrrhenian coast near Anzio to assist main Fifth Army in the capture of Colli Laziali, commanding the line of communications in the rear of XIV Panzer Corps. The plan assumed that the main Fifth Army attack would join the amphibious force within seven days.

The assault plan called for one division, reinforced by one tank battalion, one tank destroyer battalion, and two light antiaircraft battalions, to land over the beach east of Anzio. In order to gain surprise there would be no

preliminary naval bombardment to smother the shore defenses. Instead, two Ranger battalions would land before H Hour on the shallow west beach and sweep down on Anzio to take out the coast defenses. It was later decided the Rangers should land in Anzio itself because the distance to Anzio from the west beach was too great. The 504th Parachute Regimental Combat Team would make an airborne drop along the main road inland from Anzio to prevent enemy reinforcements from reaching the beach. The German strength available in the Rome area to meet this thrust on D Day was estimated at 27,500 men, who could be reinforced by 1 division in reserve near Sezze and perhaps by 2 from north Italy. This force would be overwhelming against one reinforced division; the advance of main Fifth Army was expected to relieve the pressure before the Germans could concentrate to defeat our forces.

As Fifth Army paused and regrouped during the heavy rains of late November and then launched its major assault on the Winter Line, it became evident that Shingle would have to be postponed. Greatly increased enemy resistance in difficult mountain terrain and the worst weather in recent years had combined to slow the Army down to the point where it would not be within supporting distance as early as originally expected. It was now estimated that the earliest date at which Fifth Army could reach the Capistrello-Ferentino-Priverno line would be 10 January 1944.

Permission was requested to retain the 68 LST's in the theater long enough to permit the operation to be launched. At the Cairo conference in November the Combined Chiefs of Staff approved their retention until 15 January, which would still allow them enough time to return to the United Kingdom and refit. The navy considered that, including 5 days' allowance for bad weather, at least 15 days' preparation would be required for launching Shingle. Therefore, if the operation were to take place before the release of LST's from the theater, the decision as to whether it should be mounted must be made not later than 20 December. This situation led General Clark at a planning conference on 10 December to bring up a different approach to Shingle. He suggested that the phase line which Fifth Army had to reach might be cut down and Shingle launched without waiting until the overland attack was within supporting distance. Once in, the landing force would consolidate and make a stand until main Fifth Army came up. This conception would demand both a larger force and a resupply.

By 20 December the slow progress of Fifth Army through the Winter Line made it clear that Shingle could not possibly be launched by 10 January. The whole operation must be set aside because many of the craft now allotted would no longer be available after that date. Even after taking all the LST's

being used to complete the air build-up in Corsica, there would still be only 37 on hand instead of the 42 considered necessary by the Army staff. The planning staff was reduced to a skeleton force, and the 3d Division, which had been earmarked for the operation on 13 December, recalled its planning personnel to prepare plans for employment on the main front.

3. *The New Decision to Launch Shingle.* Although the conditions under which the original Shingle operation could take place had now passed, the tactical situation increasingly emphasized the desirability of an amphibious operation to break the stalemate on the Italian front. The first two phases of the 15th Army Group offensive had failed to achieve the expected results. Eighth Army had not reached the Pescara-Popoli road, and Fifth Army was making slow progress through the mountains of the Winter Line. Once the Winter Line was broken Fifth Army faced the yet more formidable Gustav Line positions barring the entrance to the Liri Valley. If the Allies in Italy were to avoid a further long and arduous mountain campaign and were to force an enemy withdrawal north of Rome during the winter, the best strategy seemed to be to threaten his communications by an amphibious end run.

At the Tunis conference on 25 December Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the ranking Mediterranean commanders decided that an amphibious landing of not less than two assault divisions behind the enemy's right flank was essential for a decision in Italy. The necessary additional craft would be provided by delaying until 5 February the sailing of 56 LST's to the United Kingdom and by temporarily withdrawing 16 LST's from the Corsica run. Eighty-eight LST's, 90 LCI's, 60 LCT's, and 8 LSI's would be made available. Several restrictions, however, were imposed on Shingle. It was to be allowed to interfere neither with the cross-Channel landing nor the air build-up in Corsica for the expected landing in southern France. Owing to the departure of craft immediately after the operation, there could be no continued maintenance over the beaches or subsequent build-up of the initial force. The Combined Chiefs of Staff approved the request that the 504th Parachute Regimental Combat Team, which was due to leave the theater in early January, remain long enough to make the parachute drop. The Tunis decision marks the emergence of the second Shingle plan. Instead of being launched to assist main Fifth Army when it had reached a line north of Frosinone, Shingle was now a much larger operation, to be carried out regardless of the position of Fifth Army on the south.

4. *Development of the Second Shingle Plan.* Even before General Alexander issued Operations Instruction No. 32, which crystallized strategy for the drive on Rome, Fifth Army resumed plans for Shingle. The major assault units

were to be the American 3d Division, veterans of landings at Fedhala and Licata, the British 1 Division from the Eighth Army, the 504th Parachute Infantry, the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion, and three Ranger battalions. As December drew to a close, planning staffs from these formations reported in and quickly began preparing detailed plans to meet the target date. To simplify planning the navy decided to lift the British division by a separate subordinate task force under Rear Admiral T. Troubridge, Royal Navy. He and his staff set up in the Caserta planning section on 31 December and in spite of the short time available did an admirable planning job. Since the beach east of Anzio could not accommodate two divisions, it was decided after consultation with the AFHQ Joint Beach Committee to land the British division over the west beach. Naval reconnaissance parties were sent ashore there and reported that light assault craft could land despite the shallowness of the beach.

Although sufficient craft were allocated to lift the greatly increased assault force, retention of these craft long enough to permit subsequent maintenance of the beachhead now became the crucial problem. Following the Tunis conference, further permission was obtained from the Combined Chiefs of Staff to delay the departure of the craft scheduled for the United Kingdom for another three weeks. An additional ten LST's could be taken temporarily off of the Corsica run, and eight LSI's were diverted from an operation formerly planned for the Indian Ocean in 1944. As a result the craft inventory at the end of December revealed 90 LSI's operating in the theater, more than enough to launch Shingle. There remained the question of supplying the landing force. AFHQ warned Fifth Army that, because of the early departure of the allotted craft, there could be no resupply or follow-up convoys. The Combined Chiefs of Staff program for the return of LST's to the United Kingdom would have to be carried out immediately after the assault. An additional 16 LST's would have to be returned to the Corsica run not later than 5 February to compensate for time lost in their withdrawal for Shingle. Certain others must be withdrawn immediately after the landing for overhaul and refit. Consequently only six serviceable LST's appeared available for Shingle maintenance after D plus 2. Even this number might be reduced by operational losses during the landing.

Although the Tunis conference had determined that there could be no resupply or follow-up convoys, General Alexander and General Clark considered these essential to the success of Shingle and made every effort to secure them. Admiral Lowry also advised that without sufficient craft in such bad weather it was dangerous to attempt supplying a two-division force. With the Germans developing their defenses along the Cassino position in front of Fifth Army,

it was impossible to forecast where the southern front would be on D Day, and no time limit could be set for the junction of main Fifth Army with the landing force. Therefore it was imperative that Shingle be able to support itself indefinitely against the expected enemy counterattack. General Clark cabled General Alexander on 2 January:

As I stated to you several days ago an enthusiastic re outlook for Shingle provided necessary means available. Conditions described in AFHQ Msg. 22218 requiring release of all but 6 LST's by 3 February would probably make operation extremely hazardous. I urgently request that you make every effort to hold adequate number of craft for Shingle until such time as success of operation is assured. With optimum number of LST's which will be available two infantry divisions will land with greatly reduced vehicle strengths.

Another unfavorable factor--small number assault craft permit landing of only 5 inf. Bns. and 1 Ranger Bn assault loaded... In spite of these difficulties I have been willing to land Corps at reduced strength on the assumption that we would be able to retain a reasonable number of LST's for resupply purposes and to transport the necessary vehicles needed by the assault force... The minimum number of LST's which must be retained is twenty, 10 indefinitely for supply purposes, and 10 for two weeks to transport vehicles. If Navy will not remove loading limitation of 400 tons per LST a total of 24 will be required. It is my conception of Shingle that we must count on supplying by sea for a minimum period of 15 days and probably longer. The expected location of main Fifth Army when Shingle is launched is such that it is highly improbable that the two forces will be able to gain contact in less than that time.

I intend to attack in greatest possible strength in Liri Valley several days in advance of Shingle with the object of drawing maximum number of enemy reserves to that front and fixing them there. In that way and that way only can the Shingle force exercise a decisive influence in the operation to capture Rome. If my idea of the operation is sound it is essential that we make provision to resupply the force as indicated above. My estimate of 20 LST makes no allowance for craft to provide a buildup although it is quite conceivable that the enemy situation may make that action necessary.

Another meeting of the Commanders-in-Chief in Tunis on 3 January considered these new factors in Shingle. At present the assault force was to be

launched with only eight days' maintenance. Therefore, if Fifth Army could not join up with Shingle within eight days, the alternatives of either maintaining or withdrawing the landing force would have to be faced. They concluded that in spite of the obvious hazards involved in Shingle the prize to be gained was so important that the calculated risk might be well worth taking. Craft for maintenance and build-up were not then available for launching the operation, but it was directed that planning for the assault continue in order to take advantage of any favorable change in enemy dispositions.

General Alexander pressed hard to keep the craft as long as required by Fifth Army. He urged that since the present situation on the Fifth Army front made junction within eight days highly improbable maintenance of Shingle Force at Anzio was a necessity. General Alexander radioed Prime Minister Churchill that "Clark and I are confident of great chance of pulling off something big if given the means." Meanwhile he suggested that Shingle might be launched at some point nearer the southern front where extended resupply and follow-up would not be necessary. Gaeta was considered the most likely place. One division followed by a build-up of other troops could land, cut Highway 7, and possibly by-pass Frosinone. At a conference on 7 January it was decided to put D Day forward as much as possible so as to employ the extra time gained before the withdrawal of craft for two trips to Anzio or, should the weather prove favorable, for three. By this means supplies and reinforcements could be hastened to the beachhead. Finally on 8 January General Alexander met Prime Minister Churchill at Marrakech, Morocco, and secured approval for retention until the end of February of the 24 LST's considered essential for the maintenance of the Shingle force.

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5. *The Cover Plan.* 15th Army Group provided a cover plan to deceive the enemy as to the timing and direction of the Shingle assault. It was hardly possible to conceal the fact that an amphibious operation was being mounted from the port of Naples, but measures were taken to make the enemy believe it was directed elsewhere than at Anzio. In the cover plan radio deception and camouflage work played important parts.

A naval feint was originally planned for D Day at Ostia Lido at the mouth of the Tiber. The site was changed, first to Palo, 15 miles north of the river, then to Civitavecchia, on General Clark's insistence that since most of the German troops were garrisoned north of the Tiber a feint at Ostia Lido would merely bring them down into the battle area. Civitavecchia would be bombarded at H Hour and again at midnight the following night by a force of cruisers and destroyers. A Commando feint at Ostia Lido at midnight of D Day-D plus 1, followed by a march on Rome, was also considered but aban-

done. In early January a drop of the 504th Parachute Regimental Combat Team on the northern outskirts of Rome was likewise under consideration. It would land about midnight before D Day and cut enemy communications between Rome and the north. Various means were considered for its support. Two Commandos or a regimental combat team of the 45th Division could land at Ostia Lido and march on Rome, or an armored striking force could be dispatched north from the beachhead. These plans never reached full fruit, because they were considered too dangerous with such slender strength.

6. *The G-4 Plan.* Revision of supply schedules was an especially difficult problem. Although, owing to bad weather and poor beach conditions, the navy would place no reliance on continued maintenance over the beaches, this hazard had to be accepted and an extended resupply planned. Supply would be in four phases. First, the Peninsular Base Section (PBS) for the Americans and Flambo (Administrative Echelon, AFHQ) for the British would mount the operation and dispatch follow-up convoys from Naples and satellite ports. Then VI Corps itself would handle supply and evacuation at the beachhead. During the assault phase shore engineer dumps would issue supplies at the beaches until Corps dumps could be established and normal supply resumed. When contact was established with main Fifth Army, supply would be effected through regular Army channels.

By 12 January the many critical problems of planning had been surmounted and the final plans for Shingle completed and approved. When the operation was suddenly expanded in size and scope, the original plans were quickly and drastically revised. The possibility of not having clear weather for more than 2 days out of 7 demanded that the assault convoy be completely unloaded within 48 hours. Everything would be combat loaded, ready for quick removal. To permit rapid unloading of LST's the ingenious scheme of loading them with pre-stowed supply trucks would be employed for the first time in the Mediterranean theater. These trucks would load up to their 5-ton capacity at Naples dumps, drive onto the LST's, and then drive off again directly to Corps dumps at Anzio. The 6723d Truck Group of 1500 trucks was organized expressly to provide truck serials for this purpose.

Another obstacle to continuous supply was the inadequacy of the beaches. G-4 was prepared to maintain over the beaches as long as necessary. Since this procedure would be impossible in unfavorable weather, use of the small port of Anzio, which was capable of handling LST's, would greatly facilitate an adequate resupply. Port reconstruction engineers would land on D Day to rehabilitate the port, if possible. But no dependence was placed on using the port in case the enemy should demolish it. If the port were not available, LST's and LCT's would unload by ponton causeway over the shallow beach.

Tonnage restrictions were placed on craft in order to ensure the shallowest possible beaching draft. In addition to the pontoons, 30 LCT's and all available LCA's, LCV(P)'s, and Dukws would help unload the larger craft.

Since the length of time for which the expedition would have to be supported by sea was highly indefinite, at least 35 days' supply was planned. In view of the weather the outline convoy schedule called for a convoy every three days with the expectation that on one of these three the weather would permit getting through. Supplies would be carried by two methods, by bulk-loaded Liberty ships from North African ports, and by truck-loaded LST's from Naples. The assault convoy would carry 2 days' supply with the units and 700 trucks and 100 Dukws loaded with 3 days' further supply, while 4 Liberties carried an additional 10 days' supplies of all types. The first, second, and subsequent follow-ups each would consist of 4 Liberties, 14 LST's carrying 500 trucks, and other craft as needed.

7. *Air and Naval Plans.* When Shingle was expanded into the larger operation more distant from supporting bases, an elaborate air program was projected to protect the establishment of the beachhead. As outlined in 15th Army Group Operations Instruction No. 34 (*See Annex No. 1B*), this program would be in two phases. Prior to D Day the Tactical Air Force would bomb all enemy airfields to knock out the German air force and would seek to cut all communications between Rome and the north which enemy reinforcements might use. The Strategic Air Force would assist in these tasks. Then, from D Day on, every effort would be made to isolate the beachhead from enemy forces by maintaining air superiority over the beachhead, bombing bridges and road transport, and attacking all enemy columns or troop concentrations within striking distance.

Almost the entire strength of the Tactical Air Force would be available for this program, and the entire air effort of the Mediterranean theater would be on call. XII Air Support Command, reinforced by two groups from the Desert Air Force, would provide direct air support, while the Tactical Bomber Force flew heavier missions. The Coastal Air Force would give day and night fighter cover to the Naples mounting area and halfway up the convoy route. From here on the 64th Fighter Wing would cover the battle area. A total of 61½ squadrons (22 fighter, 6 fighter-bomber, 8 light bomber, 24 medium bomber, and 1½ reconnaissance) would directly support the ground effort. Enemy air was not considered a major threat. By early January almost the entire long-range bomber force of the Second German Air Force under General Baron von Richthofen had disappeared from Italian fields. What was left would probably be reduced 60% by Allied attacks on their bases. It was not considered

likely that the German air force would reinforce its units in Italy to meet Shingle, so the enemy air effort, never strong, should gradually diminish.

The assault convoy numbered 2 command ships, 4 Liberties, 8 LSI's, 84 LST's, 96 LCI's, 50 LCT's, escorted by cruisers, destroyers, and a host of lesser craft. It was divided into two task forces, Force X-Ray under Admiral Lowry to lift the 3d Division and Rangers, and Peter Force under Admiral Troubridge for British troops. Since only 16 6-davit LST's were available, the 8 LSI's had been assigned to provide additional assault craft. Even with this addition, LCI's would have to be used for follow-up waves over X-Ray Beach. Peter Beach was so shallow that only light assault craft could be used.

Task Force X-Ray was divided into several functional groups. There was a control group of two flagships, a sweeper group to clear a mine-free channel, and an escort group for anti-air and submarine protection. A beach identification group would precede the assault craft to locate accurately and mark the beaches with colored lights. Then three craft groups would land the assault waves. The 1st Naval Beach Battalion would follow the first wave to improve the marking of beach approaches and to control boat traffic. After daylight a salvage group would lay ponton causeways for unloading heavier craft. Back at Naples a loading control group would handle berthing and loading of craft.

8. *Final Assault Plan.* Fifth Army Field Order No. 5, issued on 12 January (*See Annex No. 2B*), ordered VI Corps under Maj. Gen. John P. Lucas to seize and secure a beachhead in the vicinity of Anzio, and then advance on Colli Laziali. To gain surprise there would be no preliminary bombardment, except a short intense rocket barrage at H minus 10 to H minus 5 by three LCT(R)'s. The beachhead would be seized by three co-ordinated assaults. On the right the 3d Division under Maj. Gen. Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., would land three regiments in assault over X-Ray Red and Green beaches, about four miles east of Anzio ⁽¹⁾. The Ranger Force of three battalions, the 83d Chemical Battalion, and the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion would come in over a small beach adjacent to Anzio harbor with the mission of seizing the port and clearing out any coastal defense batteries there. On Peter Beach, six miles northwest of Anzio, the 2 Brigade Group of the 1 Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. W. R. C. Penney, would make the assault; the 2 Special Service Brigade of 9 and 43 Commandos would land with it and strike east to establish a road block on the main road above Anzio. These forces would link up to consolidate a beachhead seven miles deep centering on the port of Anzio.

⁽¹⁾ *Attached* : 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion; 751st Tank Battalion; 441st AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion; Battery B, 36th Field Artillery Regiment [155-mm gun]; 69th Armored Field Artillery Battalion [105-mm howitzer SP]; and 84th Chemical Battalion.

The assault plan assumed initial heavy resistance on the beaches and heavy counterattacks once the enemy was fully aware of the extent of our landing. Consequently VI Corps held out a strong reserve and placed great emphasis on digging in early on initial objectives to repel armored counterattacks. The great bulk of the British 1 Division, with the 46 Royal Tanks, the 24 Field Regiment, and the 80 Medium Regiment attached, would remain on shipboard as a floating reserve. The 504th Parachute Infantry would land behind the 3d Division and also assemble in Corps reserve. Up to a few days before the landing it had been intended to drop the paratroopers behind the beaches, as originally planned. This drop, however, was called off because its objective was about the same as that of the 1 Division and dropping before H Hour might prematurely reveal the main assault. A drop at H Hour itself would incur the danger of being fired on by our own antiaircraft artillery if enemy planes should attack at the same time.

Now that craft were available long enough for a turn-around, it was tentatively decided to send a reinforcement of the 1st Armored Division (less Combat Command B) and one regimental combat team of the 45th Division with the first follow-up. As supporting troops VI Corps added three more battalions of Corps artillery. The dispatch of this force would depend on the rate that weather and enemy reaction permitted the assault convoy to make the turn-around. It was further tentatively planned to send up the remainder of the 45th Division and the 1st Armored Division. VI Corps contemplated three possible avenues of employment for this mobile striking force. If the enemy reacted in strength, it could assemble in Corps reserve ready to counterattack in any direction; or, if the situation permitted, it could thrust out toward Colli Laziali to cut the enemy communication routes. This attack could be either up the Albano road and then toward Rome or via Cisterna and Velletri to cut Highway 6 near Valmontone.

It was expected that a landing in strength in the rear of XIV Panzer Corps would be considered an emergency to be met by all the resources of the German High Command in Italy. Marshal Kesselring, a large part of his available reserves already committed to stem our thrust up the Liri Valley, would be compelled to withdraw troops from before main Fifth Army to meet the much graver threat to his rear. He would surely concentrate enough strength to attempt to destroy the beachhead or at least contain it. Once driven from their prepared mountain positions, and weakened by withdrawal of troops to meet the beachhead, the Germans should not be able to stay the advance of main Fifth Army, which would link up with the beachhead force on the threshold of Rome. From the latest intelligence available on enemy

troops in the Rome area the Army G-2 estimated that VI Corps could expect an initial D Day resistance from one division assigned to coast watching, 4 parachute battalions from Rome, a tank and an antitank battalion, and miscellaneous coast defense personnel, totalling 14,300 men. By D plus 1 another division, an SS infantry regiment from north of Rome, a regimental combat team from XIV Panzer Corps reserve, and perhaps the Hermann Goering Panzer Regiment could arrive. By D plus 2 or 3 the enemy might have appreciated that we had weakened the Eighth Army front and bring the 26th Panzer Division from that sector to produce a build-up of 31,000 men. If the Fifth Army attack in the south were sufficiently powerful and sustained, it should pin down all enemy reserves in that area. It was not believed that the Germans could bring down reinforcements quickly from north Italy, especially in face of our overwhelming air superiority. It was estimated that the build-up from north of Florence could not be more than two divisions by D plus 16.

The final summary by G-2, Fifth Army, on 16 January pointed out the increasing attrition of enemy troops:

Within the last few days there have been increasing indications that enemy strength on the Fifth Army front is ebbing, due to casualties, exhaustion, and possibly lowering of morale. One of the causes of this condition, no doubt, has been the recent, continuous Allied attacks. From this it can be deduced that he has no fresh reserves and very few tired ones. His entire strength will probably be needed to defend his organized defensive positions.

In view of the weakening of enemy strength on the front as indicated above it would appear doubtful if the enemy can hold the organized defensive line through Cassino against a co-ordinated army attack. Since this attack is to be launched before Shingle, it is considered likely that this additional threat will cause him to withdraw from his defensive position once he has appreciated the magnitude of that operation.

In two months Shingle had grown from a first tentative figure of 24,000 men to an expected eventual strength of 110,594. Originally conceived as a subsidiary operation on the left flank of a nearby Fifth Army it had developed, as the difficulty of quickly breaching the enemy mountain barriers became apparent, into a major operation far in the enemy rear. Just prior to the landing main Fifth Army would launch its powerful attack to break through the Gustav Line, draw in the enemy's reserves, and drive up the Liri Valley to link up with the beachhead force. Eighth Army would demonstrate to pin down the enemy troops on its front. The maximum air effort of the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces would be employed to knock out the Luftwaffe and block all routes by which the enemy could shift reserves. The Anzio landing would strike at the vital enemy lines of communication and threaten the rear

of XIV Panzer Corps. High hopes were held that the combined offensives would prevent a stalemate on the Italian front and drive the German Tenth Army north of Rome.

C. FIFTH ARMY PLANS TO BREAK THE GUSTAV LINE

Upon receiving 15th Army Group's Operations Instruction No. 31 General Clark issued his directive that was to define in broad terms Fifth Army's plan to break through the enemy's defenses. Operations Instruction No. 11 of 24 November 1943 ordered the offensive to be resumed by phases, the main thrust into the Liri Valley. The attack against the Gustav Line was governed by Operations Instruction No. 12, 16 December 1943, amended by Operations Instruction No. 13, 10 January 1944. The first of these directives ordered 10 Corps to force a crossing of the Garigliano River and occupy a bridgehead in the vicinity of Sant'Ambrogio, from which further operations could be conducted to cover the left flank of II Corps (1). In the center II Corps was to capture Mounts Porchia and Trocchio, be prepared to assist VI Corps to capture the high ground northwest of Cassino, secure a bridgehead over the Rapido River, and then employ the maximum amount of armor to pass through the bridgehead and drive northwest through the Liri Valley to the Melfa River. VI Corps on the right was to continue its attack to seize the high ground northwest of Cassino.

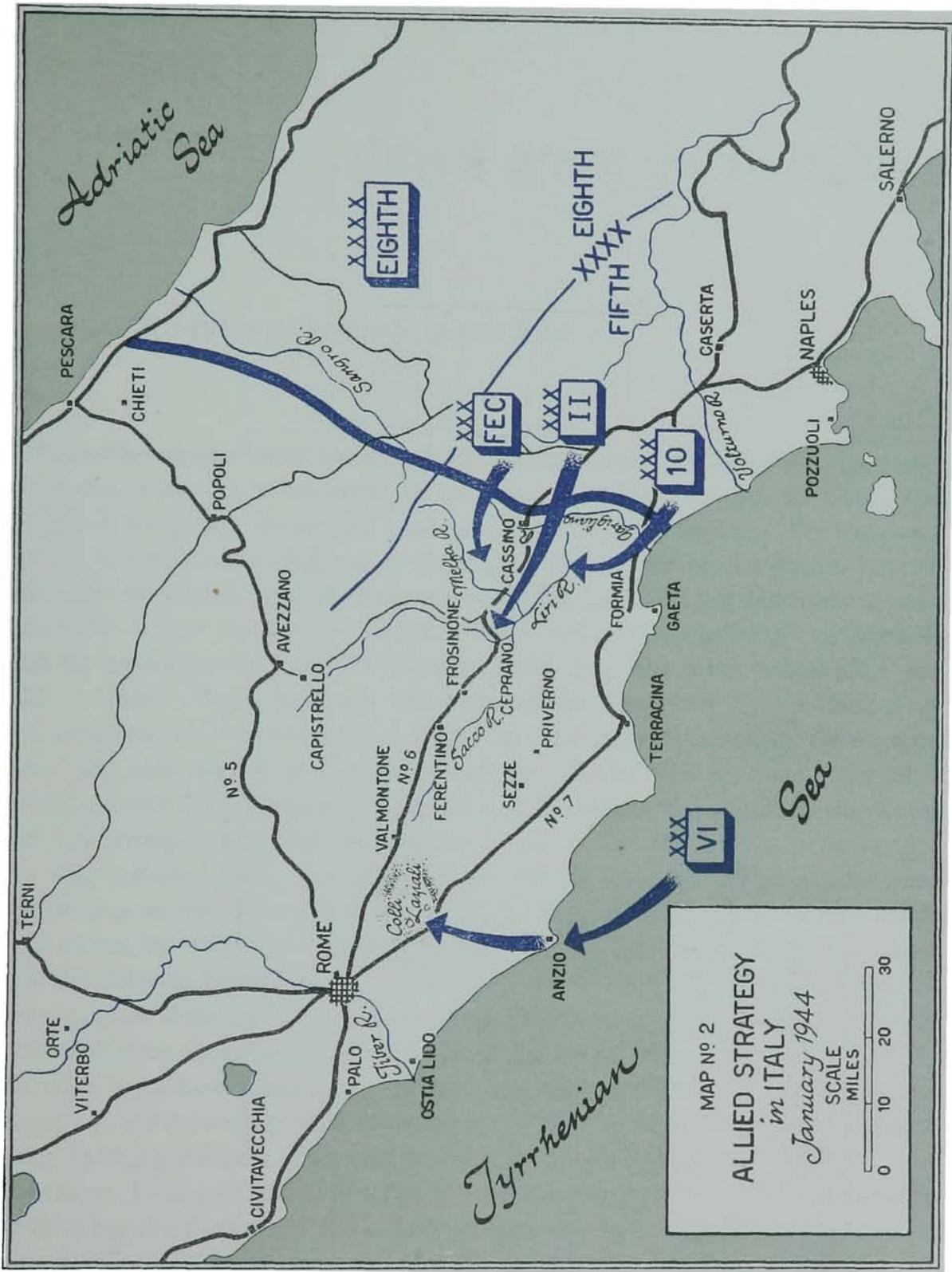
Favorable developments in the tactical situation, the preparations of the FEC to relieve VI Corps on the right, and General Alexander's directive of 2 January, resulted in Operations Instruction No. 13. (See *Annex No. 2A*.) The basic strategy outlined in the two previous instructions remained unchanged for the most part. The FEC was to take over the mission of VI Corps and open the attack on D Day, set later as 12 January. II Corps was to secure Mount Trocchio three days later. On a date given by Army order, estimated at D plus 8, II Corps was to force the Rapido River, establish a bridgehead in the vicinity of Sant'Angelo, and then employ the maximum amount of armor to exploit to the west and northwest. On the left 10 Corps was to attack on D plus 5 (17 January) to force the Garigliano River in the Minturno area and attack rapidly north toward San Giorgio. Simultaneously 10 Corps was to establish a second bridgehead at Sant'Ambrogio from which it could exploit

(1) The text of Operations Instructions Nos. 11 and 12 is given in Part III, Fifth Army History.

to the west. This latter crossing would occur before the drive across the Rapido and would accordingly cover the left flank of II Corps. In summary the operations of Fifth Army were to take place on the following schedule:

12 January	FEC drive on the enemy's left.
15 "	II Corps drive in the center to reach the Gustav Line.
17 "	10 Corps attack to envelop the enemy's right flank.
20 "	II Corps frontal assault over the Rapido.
22 "	VI Corps landing at Anzio to threaten the enemy's rear.

The attack against the Gustav Line was therefore closely integrated with the operations which drove the enemy from the Winter Line. The French forced the Germans to evacuate Sant'Elia on 15 January; II Corps captured Mount Trocchio on the same day. The time schedule could thus continue, with 10 Corps crossing the Garigliano River on 17 January.



CHAPTER III * * * * *

Attack across the Garigliano

A. PLANS FOR OPERATION PANTHER

THE valley of the lower Garigliano is a wide alluvial plain which practically disappears some ten miles north of the sea. (See Map No. 3.) 10 Corps was to launch its attack across this plain and into the hills beyond. On the lower part of the river near Highway 7 the plain extends west of the stream for two miles and then gives way at Minturno to rolling land and low hills, which command the lower reaches of Ausente Creek and the coastal road to Formia. Farther upstream, between the river and Hill 413, the plain is less than one mile in width. Even here the hills west of the river were not in themselves serious obstacles, but they did provide the enemy with excellent observation posts and also served as the outer defenses of the Gustav Line. The high ground around Castelforte is an extension of the Mount Majo mass to the north, and was strongly organized for defense.

One metalled road from Mondragone follows close to the coast and joins Highway 7 at the Minturno bridge. There are no other good military roads in the area, the remainder being gravelled or dirt tracks. The Minturno bridge and the railway bridge north of Highway 7 had been destroyed. Since the river was too deep for fording, the assault troops would have to cross in boats while engineers installed Bailey bridges at the most favorable sites. West of the river a good secondary road follows the edge of the hills from Sant'Apollinare to join Highway 7 west of Minturno. Another road runs from Minturno north through Ausonia and the San Giorgio defile to the Liri Valley.

On 11 January General McCreery, commanding 10 Corps, outlined his plan for crossing the Garigliano River and advancing on the axis Minturno-Ausonia. The main assault in Operation Panther, to be made by the 5 Division under Maj. Gen. P. G. S. Gregson-Ellis on the left and the 56 Division under Maj. Gen. G. W. R. Templer on the right, was divided into two phases. In the

first phase a bridgehead, four miles wide and two to three deep, would be captured west of the lower Garigliano; the advance northward by the 5 Division to capture the San Giorgio defile was to comprise the second phase.

Mount Scauri on the coast, Mount Natale, and San Vito were bridgehead objectives of the 5 Division northeast and northwest of Minturno, with exploitation to follow toward Castellonorato. In conjunction with the crossing, a small amphibious operation would strike at Mount d'Argento on the coast. The northward advance was to be astride the Minturno-Ausonia road, and was expected to reach Ausonia by the afternoon of D plus 1. Hill 413 was the principal bridgehead objective of the 56 Division in the Castelforte area, with exploitation toward Mount Rotondo (Hill 342) and Mount I Cerri. After these objectives had been taken, the 56 Division was to capture the hills north of the Castelforte-Coreno road. Mount Valle Martina was to be cleared as early as possible during the assault. Both divisions were to be prepared to exploit toward San Giorgio, Pontecorvo, and Pico. Strong fighting patrols were to be organized to cut the Castelforte-Coreno, Vallemaio-San Giorgio, Ausonia-San Giorgio, and Ausonia-Esperia roads. If the enemy held stubbornly along the Rapido, the 5 and 56 Divisions were to prepare to force a bridgehead across the Liri River near San Giorgio.

In addition to protecting the left flank of II Corps, the 46 Division under Maj. Gen. J. L. I. Hawkesworth was ordered to co-operate in the main assault by attacking across the upper Garigliano at two points to establish a limited bridgehead in the area of Sant'Ambrogio. One brigade was to cross the river with two battalions. During the night of D minus 1, D Day, and D plus 1 the division would feint a crossing. The actual assault would probably take place on D plus 2 (19 January), after the main effort on the south was in full swing. Surprise was not expected to be achieved in this crossing. If the main effort went well, one brigade of the 46 Division might be used as Corps reserve. The 23 Armoured Brigade was to deliver fire to contain the enemy on its front.

The organic artillery of each division in 10 Corps was reinforced with one field regiment and one medium regiment. In addition the American 59th Armored Field Artillery Battalion supported the 46 Division. Corps Artillery in support of the 5 and 56 Divisions included one field regiment, three medium regiments, and one heavy regiment. An ample supply of ammunition was to be dumped at gun positions before the attack. The 25-pounders were to have 400 rounds per gun, medium pieces (4.5-inch and 5.5-inch) 250, and heavy pieces 150. The preliminary concentrations were to be confined to the 56 Division front, while the 5 Division, with a long approach march to the river, was to make a silent crossing.

In addition to artillery fires, ample naval and air support was available. To the air force fell the task of isolating the bridgehead area to prevent the arrival of enemy reinforcements immediately before and during the assault. The San Giorgio and Pontecorvo bridges were to be destroyed; the roads in the areas of Pontecorvo, San Giorgio, and Sant'Oliva, and routes from Formia to Itri and Itri to Pico were to be bombed. This bombing was designed to interfere with enemy movements on the road net. Close support would be available on a large scale until 22 January, when the Anzio landing was to be made. Naval support was planned both to deceive the enemy and to bombard positions on the coast in front of the 5 Division. Two cruisers (*Orion* and *Spartan*) and five destroyers (*LaForey*, *Faulknor*, *Jervis*, *Janus*, and *Urchin*) were available. On 18 January this force was to bombard Mount Scauri, Castellonorato, and the Gaeta area and also place observed fire on enemy movements on the road to Formia. On the night of 18-19 January a demonstration might be staged off Terracina.

B. PREPARATION FOR THE ATTACK

The British made every effort to prevent the enemy from learning that the 5 Division had moved over to the coast. Behind the screening activities of the Hicks Force elements of this division moved up Highway 7 on 15-16 January to occupy forward positions along the Garigliano. Two battalions of the 17 Brigade were between the Via Appia and the coast, with the third in the rear; the 13 Brigade disposed its three battalions along Highway 7 east of the railroad. The 201 Guards Brigade was transferred from the 56 to the 5 Division to provide reserves for exploitation. On 12 January, before the attack began, the 168 Brigade (56 Division) cleared enemy outposts in the Maiano salient. The attack in the 56 Division zone on 17 January was to be made by the 167 Brigade on the left and by the 169 Brigade on the right. Units of these two brigades moved into position on 17 January, and the 168 Brigade passed into a reserve role. It was, however, to demonstrate in the center between the two assaulting brigades when the attack jumped off.

XII Air Support Command carried out an extensive program of bombing and strafing on 16-17 January. During these days numerous missions were flown against gun positions, road junctions, and bridges. On the morning of 16 January 12 P-40's reported 12 hits on gun positions northwest of Vallemiaio on the road to San Giorgio; and in the afternoon 12 P-40's obtained good results

in bombing gun positions south of Sant'Apollinare with white phosphorus and high explosive. The Pontecorvo bridge, attacked by 16 P-40's on the same day, escaped damage except to the approaches. The San Giorgio bridge emerged unscathed from an attack by 8 P-40's, but 24 A-20's dropped bombs in the town. On 17 January 80 P-40 and 60 A-20 sorties were flown to attack gun positions on Mount I Cerri and Mount Scauri, southwest of Coreno, east of Spigno, and along the road from Pontecorvo to Ausonia. Sixteen A-36's bombed Coreno, while an equal number bombed and strafed Highway 7 to Formia and road junctions around Minturno.

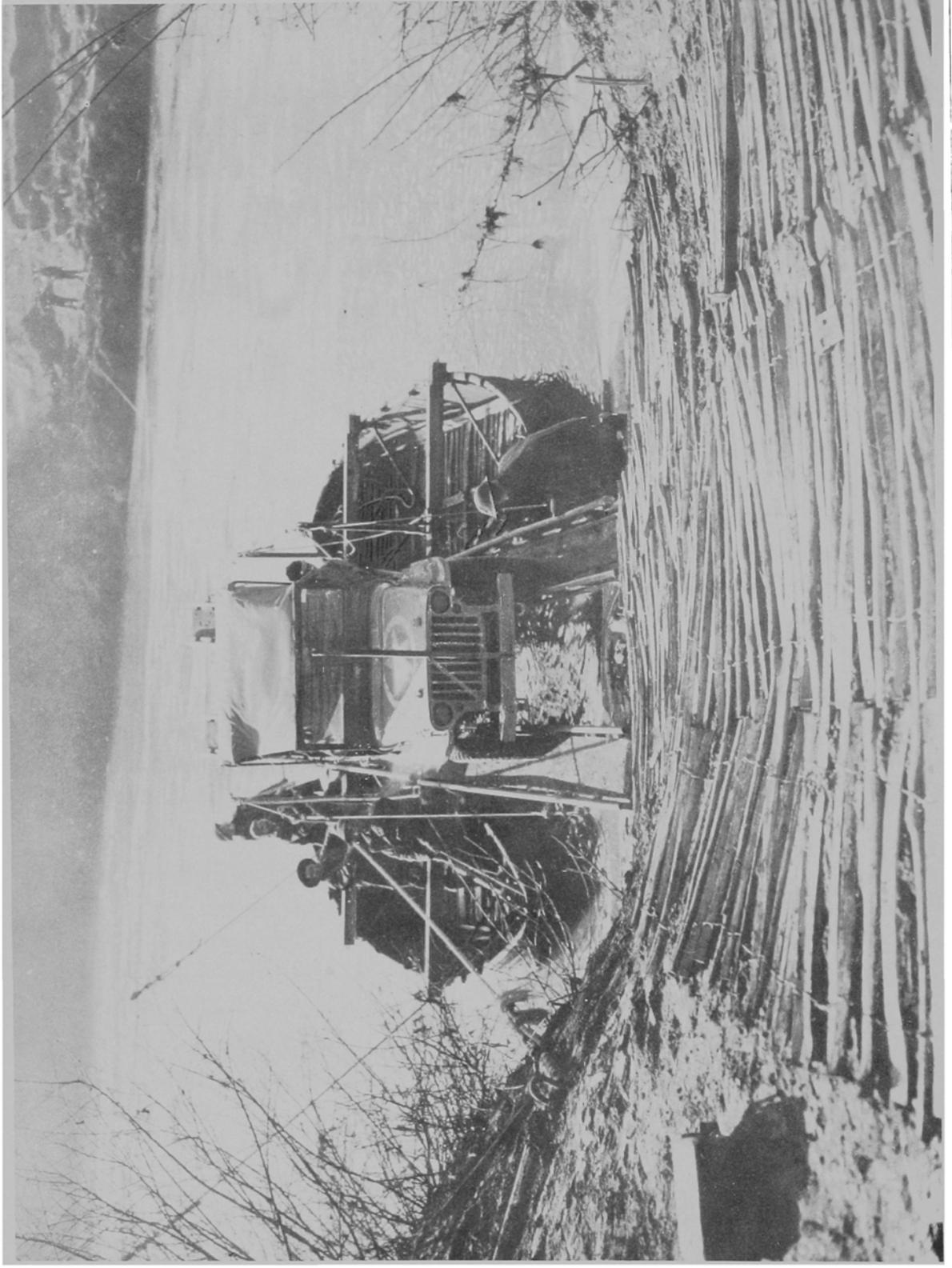
C. ESTABLISHING THE BRIDGEHEAD

17-20 JANUARY

1. *Attack of the 5 Division.* (See Map No. 3.) The 5 Division began to cross the river with three battalions at H Hour (2100, 17 January). In the coastal zone the 17 Brigade sent the 6 Seaforths over at Puntafiume, while the 2 Royal Scots Fusiliers landed from Dukws and LCT's about 2000 yards west of the river near the low swell known as Mount d'Argento. The 13 Brigade north of Highway 7 had two crossing sites: the 2 Wiltshires 1400 yards upstream from the lower railroad bridge, and the 2 Innisks about the same distance below the upper railroad bridge.

All of these crossings, except that of the 2 Innisks, achieved considerable initial success. By 0200, 18 January, the 6 Seaforths had crossed and was reorganizing after having suffered casualties in a minefield. Within five hours the battalion had advanced past the ruins of Minturnae and reached Highway 7. An enemy counterattack supported by tanks then forced the advance elements to fall back slightly. By mid-afternoon the 2 Northhamptons had crossed at Puntafiume and was organizing west of the river. Both battalions then consolidated their positions before renewing the attack, which reached the railroad less than one mile south of Minturno by nightfall on 19 January. The second group of Dukws and LCT's bearing the 2 Royal Scots Fusiliers landed successfully near Mount d'Argento at about 0200, 18 January, but the first group of Dukws, carrying self-propelled artillery, engineers, and some infantry, came ashore east of the river behind our own lines. The forward group overcame the enemy opposition sufficiently to push forward to Mount d'Argento. An enemy counterattack at 1100 drove the British troops back, but by 0630, 19 January, the feature was recaptured and consolidated.

On the right flank of the 5 Division zone two battalions of the 13 Brigade



A ferry on the lower Garigliano, 20 January 1944. Bridges were knocked out as soon as built.

carried the attack toward Tufo and Minturno. The 2 Wiltshires, although somewhat slow in following the artillery preparation, crossed and advanced to capture Point 102 and Tufo. An enemy counterattack compelled a withdrawal to Point 102 by 2000, 18 January. The 2 Innisks was heavily mortared when it attempted to cross. The battalion then moved west to the crossing site of the 2 Wiltshires and advanced north and west to the high ground in the bend of Ausente Creek north of the Castelforte-Minturno road. On 19 January the 15 Brigade was put in the line on the left of the 2 Wiltshires. Tufo was recaptured by the 1 King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (1 KOYLI), and the 1 Green Howards advanced west toward Minturno. By nightfall the town was practically cleared of enemy troops. On 20 January the 1 York and Lancaster (1 Y and L) captured Point 172 north of Minturno and Mount Natale to the northwest. The 1 KOYLI moved up to garrison Point 172. After capturing Minturno, the 1 Green Howards drove west through Tremensuoli and to the high ground overlooking Capo d'Acqua Creek. The 201 Guards Brigade, one of the last major reserves of 10 Corps, concentrated south of Minturno on 20 January for an attack on Mount Scauri.

The capture of Minturno, Tufo, and Tremensuoli by the 13 and 15 Brigades, together with the limited success of the 17 Brigade on the left, gave the 5 Division a substantial bridgehead across the Garigliano. Although the left pincer in the double envelopment of Minturno had failed to progress as expected, remaining enemy positions in the area were practically untenable unless counterattacks could drive the British from the high ground north and northwest of Minturno. Reinforced by the 201 Guards Brigade, the division was prepared to continue the drive to capture Mount Scauri and San Vito, which would complete its bridgehead objectives. The establishment of permanent crossings over the river, however, was a problem which delayed action here as well as in the 56 Division zone. Throughout the 18th ferries and raft only were used; a class 9 bridge was opened early on the 19th two miles above Highway 7, but was hit by 1030 and temporarily closed. A class 30 bridge on Highway 7, completed on 20 January, could be used only at night.

2. *Attack of the 56 Division.* There were two general drives by the 56 Division during 17-19 January. On the left the 167 Brigade struck for the Hill 413-Castelforte area; on the right the 169 Brigade attacked the high ground of Mount Valle Martina. Each brigade had two crossing sites.

On the extreme left flank of the 56 Division the 9 Royal Fusiliers (167 Brigade) crossed near the upper railroad bridge. Attempting to advance on the east side of the railroad, this battalion met strong opposition from the 2d Battalion, 276th Grenadier Regiment, and was forced to fall back to the

river. The 8 Royal Fusiliers had better success. Although late in following the artillery barrage because of heavy enemy fire which sank many assault boats, the troops crossed successfully near Maiano, had reached the road by 0320, 18 January, and pushed on toward Salvatito Hill. At the end of the day the battalion had captured this feature and part of Hill 413 one-half mile to the north. Three troops of the 40 Royal Marine Commandos took up the advance from Hill 413 and captured Mount Rotondo (Hill 342) northwest of Ventosa on 19 January, but could not hold their gains. The 9 Royal Fusiliers was nevertheless able to move up to Salvatito Hill. The 7 Oxford Bucks followed the 8 Royal Fusiliers, protected its right flank, and on 19 January went on to Ventosa, west of Castelforte. The 1 London Irish Rifles (168 Brigade), committed on 19 January, advanced up the east road to Castelforte, and reached the outskirts of the town by 1100, but could make no further progress. Thus by noon on 19 January the 167 Brigade had reached but was held up on the line Hill 413-Ventosa-Castelforte.

The 169 Brigade on the right likewise made significant gains during the first two days of the offensive. Completing its crossing by 2400, 17 January, the 2/6 Queens had reached the road below Sujo by 0700 and two hours later captured the high ground east of the village. The 2/7 Queens on its left captured Sujo at the same time, and went on to the high ground east of Castelforte. One troop of Polish Commandos then attacked north toward Mount Rotondo (Hill 392) and captured Hill 320. The 2/6 Queens advanced northeast and captured Hill 321 on Mount Valle Martina by noon on 19 January. Two troops of the 40 Royal Marine Commandos then gained about one-half mile to the north of Hill 321. The 2/5 Queens on the extreme right of the 56 Division was delayed considerably in its crossing by enemy fire from a small knob directly across the river, but by 0330, 18 January, was ready to attack Point 217. Five hours later this feature was taken, and by noon on 19 January the 2/5 Queens had driven north to capture the eastern half of the Mount Valle Martina ridge. In two days the 169 Brigade had captured a bridgehead one to two miles deep in the hills immediately overlooking the Garigliano. During a reorganization on the night of 20-21 January, the 138 Brigade (46 Division) relieved the bulk of the 169 Brigade, and the 168 Brigade took over the Hill 413 area.

3. *Attempt of the 46 Division to Cross the Garigliano.* While the 5 and 56 Divisions were preparing for their attack across the Garigliano, the 46 Division on the right of 10 Corps attempted to improve its positions. The enemy was especially sensitive to activity in the area east of the Liri-Gari junction, an indication of the importance he attached to this flank of the Liri Valley. On 15 January considerable enemy vehicular movement was observed in the

vicinity of Sant'Ambrogio, and large German working parties came in to improve defenses in that area. North of the river junction the 139 Brigade was in line, with the 138 Brigade relieving the 128 Brigade south of the junction at 2300, 16 January. The 115th Reconnaissance Battalion (15th Panzer Grenadier Division) acted as a screening force for the enemy in the Vandra-Campo Fiore area northeast of the river, apparently to guard the approach to the Sant'Ambrogio bridge site. On 16 January a company of the 2/5 Leicesters (139 Brigade) attempted to clear this area, but was held up by heavy fire short of Vandra. Early in the morning of 18 January the 2/5 Leicesters and 5 Foresters captured Campo Fiore and Vandra; but the enemy counterattacked and recovered Vandra during the night 19-20 January. The 5 Foresters, attacking again at 2000, 20 January, had full possession of the town by morning and was able to protect the right flank of the 46 Division.

During the attack by 10 Corps the 128 Brigade made three unsuccessful efforts to cross the Garigliano east of Sant'Ambrogio. The 1/4 Hampshires failed in the first attempt southeast of Sant'Ambrogio at 2100, 19 January. Assault boats reached midstream only to be swept away by the strong current. A second attempt a short distance upstream failed when a cable broke after five men were across. The 2 Hampshires succeeded in getting about 30 men over at the mouth of Peccia Creek; but, since the swift current prevented the boats from returning, the party became isolated and was eliminated by the enemy before noon. A dense fog seriously hampered the effort, and by 0430, 20 January, the assault battalions were moving back to their former positions. The swiftness of the current and the rise in the water level were apparently caused by the enemy's having opened the gates of the dam at the upper end of the Liri River when the 46 Division began its demonstrations on 17 January to cover the crossings downstream. The failure of the effort was of critical importance, for the left flank of II Corps, crossing the Rapido to the north, would now be open.

4. *Air Support for 10 Corps.* XII Air Support Command flew more than 200 sorties on 18 January to support 10 Corps. Mount I Cerri and the Mount Scauri area were hit by 60 A-20's and 32 P-40's; 36 sorties by P-40's covered gun positions and roads between Pontecorvo and Ausonia; 16 A-36's and 12 P-40's bombed Coreno and gun positions to the southwest. Gun positions east of Spigno were bombed by 12 P-40's; 16 A-36's bombed and strafed roads in the Minturno and Formia areas; 24 P-40 sorties caused heavy damage to the road junction at the northwest corner of Minturno. On 19 January only 68 sorties were flown for 10 Corps. Thirty-six P-40's dropped phosphorus bombs south of Mount Scauri, on the reverse slopes of Mount I Cerri, and at Tremen-

suoli. Twelve A-36's bombed the road junction at Santa Maria Infante but caused little damage. Strongpoints on Mount Natale were hit by 8 P-40's, and 12 A-36's bombed and strafed gun positions at Castellonorato.

On 20 January XII Air Support Command was compelled to divide its efforts between 10 Corps and II Corps; still the former received strong support. San Giorgio and Esperia were bombed by 24 P-40's; Ausonia and Castellonorato by 24 P-40's; Mount Scauri by 36 A-20's and 12 A-36's; and Mount I Cerri by 24 P-40's. An enemy counterattack forming south of Santa Maria Infante was hit by 12 P-40's; tanks and infantry were strafed and bombed by 8 A-36's east of Mount Natale. At the request of Fifth Army 48 B-26's bombed the Pontecorvo bridge. This bridge was visited by 24 B-25's on 21 January and by 36 B-17's on 22 January; it was finally reported destroyed when 39 B-17's dropped 90 tons on the following day. After 20 January air support for 10 Corps diminished because of the requirements of other areas. On 21 January 48 P-40 and 12 A-36 sorties attacked Mount Scauri, Mount I Cerri, Santa Maria Infante, and concentrations of troops and tanks west of Tremensuoli. Bad weather hampered air support on all fronts during the last week of the month and during the first week of February.

D. CONSOLIDATING THE BRIDGEHEAD

21 JANUARY-19 FEBRUARY

1. *Enemy Reinforcements and Counterattacks.* The initial phases of Operation Panther took the Germans by surprise. Within 24 hours 10 Corps had 10 battalions across the river. But the enemy reacted swiftly to reinforce the 94th Grenadier Division and then launched numerous counterattacks on 21-23 January to stem the advance. These counterattacks failed to make significant gains, but they did effectively stop the 10 Corps threat to the right flank of the German line. Having correctly analyzed the Fifth Army strategy in the Liri Valley, the enemy threw strong reinforcements into the Castelforte area and increased his strength somewhat along the coast to protect Mount Scauri.

Northeast of Castelforte the 3d Battalion, 71st Panzer Grenadier Regiment, took up positions on Mount Rotondo (Hill 392); the 1st Battalion, 2d Hermann Goering Panzer Grenadier Regiment, went in between Castelforte and Mount Rotondo. The strongest reinforcements bolstered the line west of Castelforte. Elements of the 361st Panzer Grenadier Regiment were identified on Hill 413. The 44th Reconnaissance Battalion, rushed from behind Cassino, held Mount I Cerri, two and one-half miles west of Castelforte, and Mount Rotondo (Hill

342) a mile northwest of the town. The 15th Panzer Grenadier Regiment occupied Mount dei Bracchi and then counterattacked toward Salvatito Hill. The 2d Battalion, 1st Hermann Goering Panzer Grenadier Regiment, and elements of the Hermann Goering Artillery Regiment appeared some two miles south of Ausonia to protect the Ausente Creek Valley. Elements of the 200th Panzer Grenadier Regiment were identified in the same area. Along the coast west of Minturno the principal reinforcements consisted of elements of the 267th Grenadier Regiment and a company of tanks from the Hermann Goering Panzer Regiment. Northeast of Minturno the 194th Replacement Battalion occupied San Vito, while the 3d Battalion, 274th Grenadier Regiment, had fallen back on Santa Maria Infante, with the 1st Battalion in position a mile south of Spigno.

The Germans launched several counterattacks before all of these reinforcements had arrived. Strong efforts to repulse the British were begun on 18 January and increased in tempo during the next five days. Mount d'Argento, threatened by the 2 Royal Scots Fusiliers on 18 January, was held by an enemy counterattack on the same day, then captured by us on the 19th. Likewise Tufo, taken by the 2 Wiltshires on 18 January, was recovered by the enemy, then captured again by the 1 KOYLI on the 19th. Such counterattacks were, however, standard German tactics, and the main effort to recover lost ground apparently began on 21 January.

The 56 Division threw back counterattacks on its arc from the Garigliano to Hill 413 and Salvatito Hill. The Germans made a strong effort to drive a wedge between the 138 and 168 Brigades by attacking south from Castelforte, but the British reinforced the 8 Royal Fusiliers with three troops of the 40 Royal Marine Commandos and the line held. Farther west Mount Natale, held by the 15 Brigade, was seriously threatened by late evening of the 21st and was lost on the 22d, but the 1 Green Howards halted this threat to Minturno. Point 201 north of Tufo changed hands four times on 22 and 23 January, with the 2 Cameronians finally holding it. By nightfall on 23 January the enemy had lost heavily in these counterattacks and had recovered very little ground, mostly in the Minturno area. After a renewal of his counter effort on 24 January against Hill 413, he went on the defensive, content for the time being to hold Mount Rotondo (Hill 342), the north slopes of Hill 413, and Castelforte.

2. *Resumption of the Offensive by 10 Corps.* General McCreery regrouped his forces and improved his positions in preparation for renewing the offensive. Good progress had been made at Anzio, but the II Corps attack toward Sant' Angelo on 20-21 January had failed. While II Corps attacked across the Rapido north of Cassino, it was essential that 10 Corps make strong efforts to break through south of the Liri River. The 56 Division, however, held a wide front,

the left half of which, in the vicinity of Hill 413 and Castelforte, had met the strongest enemy counterattacks. General McCreery therefore decided to shorten the front of the 56 Division by committing two brigades of the 56 Division east of Castelforte to attack north toward Mount Juga and Mount Purgatorio. The 40 Royal Tanks was to hold the left flank of the 46 Division southwest of Sujo.

Reorganization was in progress during 23-27 January. The 128 Brigade (46 Division) passed into Corps reserve, then went into line on Hill 413 and cleared enemy troops from part of the north slopes on 24 January. At the same time the 169 Brigade (56 Division) moved over from the right flank and advanced on the left of the 128 Brigade. In its place the 139 and 138 Brigades took command of the 56 Division right flank on Mount Valle Martina. The 23 Armoured Brigade with the 2/5 Leicesters (139 Brigade) remained as a screening force in the former 46 Division sector east of the Garigliano.

10 Corps renewed its offensive on 27 January, aiming at Mount Juga and Mount Natale. Apart from the recapture of the latter point by the 17 Brigade on 30 January, the only significant gains were made by the 138 Brigade on the right. The 6 Lincolns attacked northwest from Hill 321 and captured Mount Rotondo (Hill 392) on 28 January; the 2/4 KOYLI drove to Mount Purgatorio by 31 January. On the 29th the 6 Y and L passed through the 6 Lincolns and continued north to Mount Juga. The 16 Durham Light Infantry (139 Brigade) came in on its left and attempted to cut behind the enemy defenses at Castelforte. This effort failed to break through; an attack on Hill 413 by the 56 Division likewise failed on 29 January.

The greatest promise of success in the 10 Corps drive lay on the right in the high ground west of the Garigliano. The 138 Brigade had made very satisfactory gains at the end of January. Elsewhere along the front 10 Corps troops held their ground and beat off counterattacks. The 168 Brigade had been withdrawn to reinforce the Anzio beachhead, and the 169 Brigade took over the 56 Division sector. General McCreery planned to attack toward Mount Faito on 2 February with two troops of Commandos and two infantry battalions; on 6 February he hoped to have the 138 Brigade and the King's Dragoon Guards available to continue the effort north from Faito. Several reliefs were carried out on 31 January and 1 February. The 2 Special Service Brigade, composed of the 9, 10, and 43 Commandos withdrawn from Anzio on 24 January, came under the 138 Brigade and led the 46 Division attack against Mount Faito at 1900, 2 February. The Commando drive bogged down on its east slopes, and our troops withdrew to Mount Ornito. On 4 February the 5 Hampshires (128 Brigade) relieved the 2 Special Service Brigade and consolidated positions on Mount Ornito; limited attacks in the next few days on Mount Faito proved unsuccessful.

E. SUMMARY OF 10 CORPS ACTION

By 8 February the 10 Corps bridgehead across the Garigliano had reached its limit. Throughout February and March the line remained static with only minor changes. The enemy attacked Mount Ornito with elements of six battalions on 19 February, but retired after heavy losses. Thereafter each of the opposing forces settled down to several weeks of artillery exchanges, patrol actions, and small attacks to improve local positions.

The attack by 10 Corps across the lower Garigliano achieved impressive success during the first three days. Before the enemy could counterattack in strength, British troops were firmly established on the high ground west and north of the river. The outer defenses of the Gustav Line had been breached. In the sector southwest of Castelforte no important gains were made after 21 January. After failing to cross the upper Garigliano the 46 Division made a drive that captured about six square miles northeast of Castelforte. This area was the only one in which 10 Corps took all of its original bridgehead objectives and went on to exploit to the north. When the 56 Division was called on to reinforce the Anzio beachhead, the plan to drive north up the Ausonia Valley was abandoned. In the principal action of 17-31 January 10 Corps had captured 1035 prisoners but had suffered 4152 casualties.

Although threatened along the Rapido and at Cassino, where the 34th Division was closing in, the enemy still had sufficient strength to hold. Rapid shifting of reserves, combined with well prepared positions in very rugged terrain, enabled the Germans to prevent a breakthrough to the Liri Valley. In keeping with General Alexander's orders 10 Corps had made strenuous efforts to facilitate the advance of Fifth Army up the Liri Valley. These efforts failed; but the bridgehead won across the Garigliano proved to be invaluable when Fifth Army began the triumphant campaign on 11 May that was to result in the capture of Rome.

