

CHAPTER VI * * * * *

The Drive to the North

AT the beginning of October Fifth Army was prepared to shift the emphasis of its attack back to the axis of Highway 65. The thrust of the 88th Division down the Santerno Valley, hampered by inadequate supply lines, an exposed salient, and increasing enemy resistance, had ground to a full stop. Any effort to continue the offensive in this direction was impractical. Conversely the transfer of enemy strength to opposite the 88th Division improved the possibility of a successful resumption of the attack to the north. Alarmed by the initial speed of the 88th Division advance and by the serious tactical defeat suffered with the loss of Mount Battaglia, Lemelsen continued to mass troops around the point of the salient and to launch costly counterattacks until well into the first week of October. To provide the necessary troops for these counterattacks units had to be shifted from the central sector as well as from the German Tenth Army. The first effect of this drain on other sectors of the front was felt at Radicosa Pass where the enemy had succeeded in stabilizing a line on 25 September and then, due as much to loss of troops as to our attacks, had been forced to pull back to regroup on 28 September. Thus the 88th Division thrust, although it failed to carry through to the Po Valley, served as a useful diversion for the attacks launched in October. The day after the fall of Radicosa Pass II Corps issued orders for a resumption of the Corps offensive to the north with D Day set for 1 October.

A. *PLAN OF ATTACK*

See Map No. 9

North of Radicosa Pass the drainage pattern of the streams on each side of Highway 65 is generally northward with ridge lines lying between and paralleling

the streams. Transverse ridges and tributary streams, characterized by dominating hill masses and deep gullies, cut across this pattern at intervals of 3 to 4 miles. At such intervals the hard-pressed enemy was afforded a series of delaying positions which he developed as fully as time permitted. After the loss of Radicosa Pass he fell back nearly 4 miles to a line of high ground which crosses Highway 65 at the village of Monghidoro. Here he faced our troops at the end of September. Four miles farther to the north Italian civilians were put to work improving a second and stronger natural line of defense stretching east and west through the village of Loiano; at roughly the same distances farther on were a third and fourth such line passing, respectively, through Livergnano and Pianoro. As soon as one of these "reserve" Gothic Lines had exhausted its usefulness the enemy could fall back to another, and II Corps would again be forced to regroup for another major attack.

For the October drive toward Bologna General Keyes planned to employ all four of his infantry divisions attacking simultaneously on a broad front. With the forward troops approximately 24 road-miles from Bologna, of which at least 15 were through extremely rugged mountainous terrain, and with the enemy showing no evidence of making a large-scale withdrawal, it appeared likely that days of hard fighting lay ahead. If the whole of his infantry strength were committed, General Keyes would lack a Corps reserve with which to exploit a local success or to assist a tired or weakened unit. The 1st Armored Division (less CCB), available to II Corps, was of little offensive value in the mountains, and it was hoped that the armor could be employed for an exploitation role once the open plain should be reached. To provide a reserve General Keyes ordered each division to hold out one regiment and to rotate the regiments in the line approximately every 5 days. Corps plans were so arranged that coordinated attacks were launched at intervals which coincided with the appearance of fresh units in the line. In practice this 5-day system of rotating units and of launching attacks corresponded closely with the rate at which each enemy defense line was developed.

Division zones in the corps plan of attack corresponded closely with those already established for the attack on Radicosa Pass. The 91st Division would continue to advance astride Highway 65 on a front approximately 4 miles wide. To the right of it the 85th Division, initially with a 6-mile front, would advance between Zena Creek and the Sillaro River. These two divisions were to form the spearhead of the attack with the emphasis to lie east of Highway 65. West of the 91st Division zone the 34th Division, in addition to attacking to the north, was to protect the Corps flank along the line of Setta Creek; to the east the 88th Division was to perform a similar function on the Corps right flank between the Sillaro and Santerno valleys.

In the last week of September, after II Corps had broken through the Gothic Line, rapid advances had carried the forward troops well ahead of the flanking ele-

ments of IV and 13 Corps. This condition promised to become more serious in proportion as the October offensive proved successful. The 88th Division in particular was faced with the task of protecting its right flank in the Santerno Valley while attacking to the north along the Sillaro River. To remedy the situation on the right General Clark ordered 13 Corps to relieve the elements of the 88th Division in the Mount Battaglia area. This shift would in turn require an extension of the 13 Corps front, and provision was then made for the 78 Infantry Division to be transferred from Eighth Army to 13 Corps. General Clark ordered that as soon as the 78 Division could complete the relief of the portion of the 88th Division in the Santerno Valley the intercorps boundary was to be shifted north to place this area under 13 Corps control. A change was also made on the left of II Corps on 5 October when the 6 South African Armoured Division, with CCB attached, passed from IV Corps to Army. Under direct Army control the action of the reinforced division could be coordinated more closely with the advance of II Corps. These measures served to strengthen the flanks of II Corps and permitted General Keyes to concentrate on achieving a break-through to Bologna.

In Operations Instruction No. 35 (*Annex 1F*), issued on 5 October, General Clark outlined the action to be followed by Fifth Army in the event that the attack then under way achieved success. It was anticipated that Fifth Army would debouch into the Po Valley on a broad front extending from just west of Bologna eastward to the vicinity of Faenza. In such an eventuality a bridgehead would be established immediately in the Bologna area of sufficient size to cover the build-up of supplies. IV Corps troops along the coast would push on to capture the great port of Genoa and the town of Parma on Highway 9 in order to provide a port and road to the Po Valley for subsequent operations in the western portion of the plain. After the establishment of a bridgehead at Bologna the action of the Army would depend on the enemy situation. In case enemy troops should still remain in the pocket formed by the Valli di Comacchio (a large lake below the mouth of the Po) and the Northern Apennines, Fifth Army would drive north toward Ferrara to prevent their escape; in case the enemy had withdrawn and Fifth and Eighth Armies were in contact, the main force of Fifth Army would assemble in the Bologna bridgehead until ordered to attack. Before these instructions could be carried out it was first necessary for II Corps to win control of the 24 miles of Highway 65 lying between the forward elements of the 91st Division and Bologna.

B. THE FIRST ATTACK

1-4 OCTOBER

At 0600, 1 October, following a prepared program of artillery fires which extended over a 16-mile front, the 88th, 85th, 91st, and 34th Divisions jumped off in a coordinated attack. Only on the extreme right flank of II Corps where the 350th and 351st Infantry were fighting off enemy counterattacks against Mount Cappello and Mount Battaglia did the line remain stable; along the remainder of the Corps front seven regiments and a portion of an eighth surged forward through the early morning mist. Their immediate objectives were enemy strongpoints hastily organized around clusters of stone farmhouses and dominating terrain features.

Once the morning mist cleared, 1 October proved to be a sunny day. Air and ground observers, aided by good visibility, provided excellent artillery support for the attacking troops; and Rover Joe, after several days of inactivity, was again able to direct a program of close air support. The good weather lasted for less than 24 hours. A cold, blustery wind and driving rain swept the mountains on 2 October, and with few interruptions low-hanging clouds, fog, and intermittent showers characterized the weather for the next week. Muddy trails and fields hampered the movement of tanks and tank destroyers and slowed the infantry. There was no decisive battle fought, no spectacular gain made during the first 2 days of the attack. In most cases the action was limited to engagements of small units as the scattered enemy strongpoints were neutralized and bypassed pockets of resistance were mopped up. Fighting a stubborn delaying action, the enemy fell back only when his positions were outflanked or overrun. Not until the third and fourth day, when he was forced back to the line of hills behind Loiano, did II Corps register substantial advances.

1. *The 91st Division Approaches Loiano.* The 91st Division jumped off from positions slightly over 1 mile to the south of Monghidoro. The 363d Infantry attacked with two battalions on the left side of Highway 65 with the objective of reaching the secondary road and high ground to the west of Monghidoro. The 362d Infantry attacked on the right with the 1st Battalion advancing up the highway, the 2d Battalion attacking farther to the east near the division boundary, and the 3d Battalion in the center. The 3d Battalion was to outflank Monghidoro from the east and cut Highway 65 to the north of the village. Once through the defenses at Monghidoro the two regiments were to press forward to develop the Loiano line.

Although the division artillery fired 10,587 rounds to support the attack on 1 October, only slight gains were made during the first day against stiff resistance. When Company A, 362d Infantry, took Hill 852, 800 yards southeast of the village,

1,500 rounds of artillery were consumed in beating off a vigorous enemy counter-attack. Continuing the slow advance the next morning, the 3d Battalion, 362d Infantry, carried out its mission of cutting Highway 65 to the north of Monghidoro while the 2d Battalion won control of the heights overlooking the Idice Valley to the east. Meanwhile Company C, supported by nine tanks and two platoons of tank destroyers, fought its way into Monghidoro. A platoon of the 91st Reconnaissance Troop, entering from the north, knocked out a machine gun position and captured 29 Germans who had taken refuge in a house. The prisoners were identified as a platoon of the 3d GAF Battalion, a special unit made up of German air force personnel who had been sentenced by military courts and then given an opportunity to earn a reprieve through combat service. The 3d and 7th Battalions, each consisting of approximately 400 men, had been broken up and scattered through the regiments of the 4th Parachute Division. Many deserted or gave up without a fight. By late afternoon on 2 October, after a house-to-house struggle, the village of Monghidoro and 103 prisoners were in the hands of the 1st Battalion. To the left of the highway the 363d Infantry succeeded in cutting the road leading west from Monghidoro. In the early afternoon a break in the fog which shrouded the battlefield throughout the day revealed approximately 200 of the enemy forming up for a counterattack along the lateral road. Accurate artillery fire nearly annihilated this force and by the close of the day enemy resistance weakened. A night attack resulted in the taking of the high ground north of the lateral road, completing the breach of the enemy defenses in the Monghidoro area.

Resistance was light on 3 October as the enemy withdrew to his next line of defense. Both the 362d and 363d Infantry pushed forward to within 1 mile of Loiano before dark, an advance of nearly 3 miles. The next morning the two regiments attacked at 0600. Progress was again slow. Having reached favorable defensive positions, the 11th and 12th Parachute Regiments on the west and the 106th Grenadier Regiment on the east side of the highway fought hard to hold the approaches to Mount Bastia, the key height in the Loiano area. At 1500 the 3d Battalion, 362d Infantry, led by a platoon of tanks from the 755th Tank Battalion, attempted to force its way into the village. The first two tanks to reach the outskirts were knocked out by German antitank guns and the attack was halted. For the remainder of the day artillery fire was directed against enemy positions in and around Loiano, reliefs were carried out, and plans were completed for a resumption of the offensive on the morning of 5 October.

2. *The 85th Division Spearheads the Attack.* To the east of the 91st Division zone the 85th Division by 30 September had reached positions north of Highway 6529, the secondary road which links Highway 65 at Radicosa Pass with Highway 937 north of Castel del Rio. Almost directly athwart the division line of advance

lay a gradually descending ridge stretching northeast from Mount Canda and forming the divide between the Idice and Sillaro rivers. At Hill 751, 5 miles beyond Mount Canda, the ridge turns to the north, paralleling the division axis of advance. Control of Mount Canda and 2 miles of the ground to the northeast of it had been won during the fighting for Radicosa Pass, but the 362d Grenadier Division and what was left of the Infantry Lehr Brigade were well dug in along the remainder of the ridge.

The plan of attack adopted by General Coulter called for the 339th Infantry to attack from the occupied portion of the ridge to the Idice Valley. Its first major objective was Mount Bibebe, a steep-sloped mountain 4 miles to the north and just west of the Idice. The bulk of the supporting weapons available to the division was allotted to the 337th Infantry, which had the mission of clearing the ridge to Hill 751 and then continuing to the north along the divide between the two rivers. Armored support for the 337th Infantry was to be provided by a company each of tanks and tank destroyers; air support, by the 86th Fighter Bomber Group. For the first day of the attack Rover Joe was to be assigned to the regiment. Arrangements were made with the artillery for marking targets with smoke, and flights of eight P-47 Thunderbolts were to be available to Rover Joe every ½ hour during the period 0700-1100.

On the morning of 1 October the 2d Battalion, 339th Infantry, cleared the village of La Martina and then fought throughout 2 October to drive the enemy from a group of fortified hamlets blocking its advance to the Idice River, 1½ miles to the northwest. A mile to the east of La Martina the 3d Battalion, 339th Infantry, aided by six tanks and eight tank destroyers, attacked to the northeast along the ridge. A secondary trail which follows the crest of the ridge permitted the armor to afford close support, and before noon Hill 836, the first objective on the ridge, had been secured. The battalion then swung northwest on 2 October toward the Idice Valley, reaching positions nearly 2 miles to the northeast of the 2d Battalion. During the night the 1st Battalion, which had taken over Hill 836, moved up to pass through the 3d Battalion and continue the attack along the east side of the valley. Enemy resistance weakened on the morning of 3 October. By 0630 the 2d Battalion had occupied the enemy strongpoints which had held it up along the division left flank; by dark it had crossed the Idice and was approaching the village of Quinzano at the base of Mount Bibebe. The 1st Battalion matched this advance by taking the hamlet of I Boschi on the east side of the valley after an enemy counter-attack had been broken up by swift action on the part of the artillery and supporting aircraft.

After falling back to Mount Bibebe on 3 October the 1060th Grenadier Regiment again dug in. Company E was unable to force its way into Quinzano until

tanks had been brought up to pour direct fire into the stone houses. The village was taken, but the remainder of the battalion was held up by similar strongpoints farther to the west. Only the 1st Battalion, attacking along the western slope of the ridge across the river, succeeded in making appreciable gains. During the night of 4-5 October the 338th Infantry moved up to relieve the 1st and 3d Battalions while the 2d Battalion continued its attack on Mount Bibebe. Relief of the 2d Battalion was to be carried out after the mountain had been secured.

While the 339th Infantry was working its way down the Idice Valley, the 337th Infantry was fighting for control of the vital ridge between the Idice and Sillaro rivers. Action during the first 2 days centered around the efforts of the 2d and 3d Battalions to clear the portion of the ridge from Hill 836 to Hill 751. The 3d Battalion, advancing on the right toward Hill 751, was stopped shortly after the attack began on 1 October by mortar and machine gun fire from enemy positions covering a draw below the hamlet of Casa di Guzzo, over 1 mile short of its objective. The 2d Battalion on the left made better progress but was held up by fire from positions along the crest of the ridge beyond Hill 836. When the armor supporting the 3d Battalion proved unable to negotiate the muddy slopes on the right flank, Colonel Hughes ordered it to move to the left to aid the 2d Battalion. Spearheaded by a platoon of Company F mounted on tanks, the 2d Battalion broke through to the crest. By late afternoon Companies E and F held over 1 mile of the ridge extending as far as the village of Spedaletto. To exploit this success Colonel Hughes ordered the 3d Battalion to move its reserve Company L and any of the troops which could be disengaged from the right flank to Spedaletto. The 3d Battalion was to advance along the ridge during the night until halted by enemy resistance. It was then to attack at 0600, 2 October, to capture Hill 751.

Company L and one platoon of Company K reached Spedaletto by dark. Knocking out six machine gun positions and bypassing many others, the troops followed the ridge trail all the way to Hill 751. By 0440, after a brief skirmish, the reinforced company held possession of its objective. A second platoon of Company K arrived to reinforce the isolated troops on the hill, but efforts by Company I to break through the defenses at Casa di Guzzo failed. Although the spectacular advance to Hill 751 outflanked many of the enemy's positions, his immediate reaction was to hold firm while counterattacking to retake the lost ground. The bypassed positions came to life on the morning of 2 October when the 2d Battalion attempted to join the 3d Battalion, and by noon all three companies of the latter battalion were engaged in bitter fighting. Before Hill 751 could be used as a base for further advances it was necessary to dispose of these pockets of resistance. Company C was sent to assist Company I against the strongpoint at Casa di Guzzo, which was taken only after the enemy machine guns had been knocked out one by one. Late in the

afternoon what was left of the enemy force retreated to the northeast. At the same time the remainder of the 3d Battalion was fighting off two tank-supported counter-attacks against Hill 751. Just before midnight the enemy launched a third attack. Approximately 100 men armed with machine pistols struck the right flank of Company L. Defensive fires laid down within 50 yards of our troops aided them in breaking up the attack, and the remainder of the night passed quietly.

On the morning of 3 October the 2d Battalion, with armored support, attacked to the north along the main ridge while the 3d Battalion continued along a spur to the northeast of Hill 751 to secure the right flank of the division. When the 2d and 3d Battalions jumped off at 0600 they were confronted almost immediately by a wall of artillery, mortar, and small-arms fire. Suffering heavy casualties, the two battalions inched forward during the day. The armor supporting the 2d Battalion was held back by mines until 1700 when paths were cleared and a few tanks moved up. Aided by their fire the 2d Battalion captured Hill 628, 1 mile to the north of Hill 751. The 1st Battalion advancing along the western slopes of the ridge reached parallel positions, and the 3d Battalion after dark captured the tip of the northeast spur.

The 2d and 3d Battalions, which had now been engaged in heavy fighting for 3 days, were ordered to consolidate their positions on 4 October while the 1st Battalion continued along the ridge. After a rapid advance, hindered only by scattered mines and small-arms fire, Company A reported at 0730 that it had taken Hill 587, over 1 mile beyond Hill 628. The remainder of the morning was devoted to clearing out snipers and preparing for an attack on Hill 566, the next prominent knob on the ridge. At 1300 the artillery preparation commenced, and at 1330 Companies B and C attacked. Heavy artillery fire from the exposed flanks forced a temporary halt shortly after the attack started, but by 1600 both companies were on Hill 566 and patrols were probing forward. The 1st Battalion had advanced nearly 3 miles during the day, placing it well ahead of the 339th Infantry on its left and the 88th Division on its right.

3. *The 88th Division Turns North.* On the right flank of II Corps the 88th Division was able to employ only the 349th Infantry and one battalion of the 351st Infantry during the first 4 days of offensive toward Bologna. At the beginning of October the 350th Infantry was still engaged in the bloody struggle for control of Mount Battaglia, and the 1st and 2d Battalions, 351st Infantry, were holding Mount Cappello. In the period 2-4 October the 350th Infantry was relieved by the 1 Guards Brigade (6 Armoured Division) and the 2d Battalion, 351st Infantry, was relieved by the 14th Armoured Infantry Battalion, but these units were badly in need of a period of rest before again going into action. Although hampered by the necessity of defending his own right flank, General Kendall concentrated all available

strength of the division toward clearing the high ground on the east side of the Sillaro River to provide protection for the right flank of the 85th Division.

For the first 2 days of October the 349th Infantry was engaged in a costly struggle for control of the converging ridge lines paralleling Highways 6529 and 937 to their point of junction south of the village of Sassoleone. On the left the 1st Battalion fought throughout 1 October to clear the village of Belvedere on Highway 6529 and the high ground to the northeast of it. Twenty-four prisoners from the 2d Battalion, 134th Grenadier Regiment, were taken in Belvedere, and small groups of prisoners were captured the next day as the 1st Battalion, passing one company through another as each strongpoint was developed, worked slowly forward. It was not until the morning of 3 October that the battalion reached the junction of the highways. The 3d Battalion, fighting hard for control of the ridge east of Highway 937, succeeded in reaching parallel positions to the east of the road junction only a few hours earlier.

The high ground seized by the 1st and 3d Battalions near the road junction provided an excellent line of departure for an attack to Sassoleone, but both units were in need of a short period to rest and regroup after the past 48 hours of strenuous action. Colonel Crawford assigned the mission of taking Sassoleone to the 2d Battalion, which had been in reserve. During the afternoon of 3 October it passed through the 1st and 3d Battalions and struck north along Highway 937. Meeting no opposition Company F, followed by the remainder of the battalion, entered the village shortly after dark. Although the 44th Grenadier Division made no effort to defend Sassoleone, enemy artillery heavily shelled the village, and German planes in one of their rare appearances bombed and strafed the entering troops. On 4 October the 1st Battalion passed through Sassoleone and turned northwest along the east side of the Sillaro River; the 2d Battalion continued to the north toward Hill 587, the regiment's next major objective. Both battalions encountered stiff opposition, and at the end of 4 October, with a night attack in progress, the enemy was still maintaining his hold on the approaches to the mountain. Meanwhile the 3d Battalion, 351st Infantry, advancing slowly through the hills to the east of Highway 937, reached positions $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles northeast of Sassoleone.

4. *The 34th Division Captures Mount Venere.* Along the left flank of II Corps the 34th Division attacked on a 4-mile front between Savena Creek and Setta Creek. The 133d Infantry on the right was to seize Mount del Galletto, a massive 3,100-foot mountain forming part of the divide between the Savena and Sambro Creek valleys, and then continue on to Mount Venere, the left anchor of the Loiano line of defenses. The 168th Infantry on the left was to advance down the Sambro Valley with the first objective of reaching Hill 747, 3 miles to the northwest of Mount del Galletto. Division artillery was strengthened by the direct support of three medium

regiments of the 10 AGRA and by the 27th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, attached from the 1st Armored Division.

The 133d Infantry attacked initially with one battalion, the 2d, from the vicinity of the village of Fornelli, 2 miles south of Mount del Galletto. Company G followed the trail which runs along the crest of the broad, open ridge, and Company F advanced along the east slope. During the early morning hours the two companies advanced more than 1 mile from the line of departure before Company G was held up by a field of antipersonnel mines across the trail and Company F encountered heavy fire from enemy positions in and around the village of Cedrecchia. In the early afternoon Company G, after bypassing the minefield, succeeded in reaching positions within 1,000 yards of the crest of Mount del Galletto; Company F, supported by a platoon of tank destroyers, attacked toward Cedrecchia at 1800 only to be stopped by mortar and machine gun fire in front of a wire entanglement guarding the approach to the village. Artillery, tank destroyers, and tanks of Company A, 757th Tank Battalion, poured shells into the village to soften up the enemy defenses. Then at 2300, after bangalore torpedoes had been used to blow gaps in the wire, Company F attacked again. The enemy beat off this attack and another before dawn. Rain beginning during the night of 1-2 October limited the movement of supporting armor and reduced visibility. It was not until the early afternoon of 2 October, at the end of nearly 24 hours of heavy fighting, that the village was cleared.

While Company F was attempting to break into Cedrecchia the remainder of the 2d Battalion, reinforced on the afternoon of 2 October by the 3d Battalion, was striking toward the crest of Mount del Galletto. To give added fire power the Cannon Company of the 135th Infantry was attached, and Colonel Braun ordered that every available mortar and machine gun be concentrated to support the attack. At 1500 Companies E, G, and L jumped off. Fire from enemy self-propelled guns and heavy mortars thinned the ranks of Companies E and G before the attack was under way, and little ground was gained. Prisoners taken from the 142d Fusilier Battalion, which was sharing the defense of the mountain with elements of the 10th Parachute Regiment, reported that a night counterattack was being prepared. Instead, the enemy took advantage of darkness to carry out a withdrawal. When the 1st and 3d Battalions renewed the attack at 0100, 3 October they met only sporadic mortar fire. An hour later the leading elements had reached the crest of Mount del Galletto.

Taking full advantage of the enemy retreat, the 133d Infantry pressed forward throughout the night of 3-4 October. At dawn the 1st Battalion and the tanks of Company A, 757th Tank Battalion, were on the lower slopes of Mount Venere. Seven of the tanks succeeded in working their way up the narrow, muddy trail lead-

ing to the summit, and by late afternoon the 1st Battalion held possession of the mountain. A mile to the east the 3d Battalion reached parallel positions along the division right flank. In the early afternoon Colonel Braun ordered the reserve 2d Battalion to mount one company on tanks and to continue the attack northward to cut the lateral road leading east to Loiano as soon as Mount Venere had been secured. Its objective was the village of Monzuno $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the north. At dusk when Company F reached its line of departure all but 3 of the 11 tanks on which the troops were riding had bogged down or thrown their tracks. The lead tank of the 3 remaining reached a point 1,000 yards short of Monzuno when it was struck and set afire by a German bazooka. The other two tanks bogged down while trying to maneuver around the burning vehicle, leaving Company F without armored support and eliminating any element of surprise in the attack. When heavy fire was received from the direction of Monzuno the company commander decided to dig in and await the arrival of the rest of the battalion.

For its attack down the Sambro Valley the 168th Infantry employed initially the 1st and 3d Battalions. Jumping off from positions near the village of Montefredente and following the high ground on the left side of the valley, Company A, leading the 1st Battalion, advanced 1,200 yards during the morning of 1 October before encountering enemy opposition at a church located on Hill 789. In the afternoon 20 men of the 2d Platoon worked around to the wooded northern slope of the hill, reached the church, and then held it for 4 hours until the arrival of additional enemy troops forced a retirement. During the night the enemy, identified as elements of the 36th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (16th SS Panzer Grenadier Division), which was shifting east into the II Corps zone, reinforced the troops on Hill 789. When repeated attacks the next day by the 1st Battalion failed to oust them from their positions, Colonel Hine decided to bypass the enemy strongpoint. The 3d Battalion, which had built up a line across the Sambro Valley, was ordered to push forward along the road paralleling the stream; the 2d Battalion was brought up from reserve to attack along the left flank of the regiment. It was afternoon before the 2d Battalion was in position to attack, and only limited gains were made before dark.

In keeping with the general withdrawal carried out along most of the II Corps front the enemy troops on Hill 789 abandoned their positions during the night of 2-3 October. Moving forward rapidly on 3 October, the 2d Battalion reached the village of Campiano less than 1 mile from Hill 747, the first objective assigned to the regiment in the division plan of attack. Late in the afternoon the battalion dug in on the lower slope of the mountain. Across the Sambro Valley the 3d Battalion reached positions to the north of the village of San Benedetto where it paused to rest for a day; the 1st Battalion passed into reserve. Under heavy shell fire the 2d Battalion made no effort to seize Hill 747 on 4 October. The only advances for the

day were made by the 91st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, which passed between the 2d and 3d Battalions with the objective of reaching the Setta Valley. A blown bridge blocked the road down the Sambro Valley, and at the end of the day the squadron was only 1,000 yards north of Campiano.

5. *The Ground Gained.* The first phase of the October drive toward Bologna closed on 4 October with each of the attacking divisions carrying out reliefs in preparation for a new attack on the morning of the 5th. In this period of 4 days the Corps front was pushed northward approximately 4 miles and at two points for over 5 miles, an average of slightly more than 1 mile per day. A total of 858 prisoners were taken by II Corps, and enemy casualties in killed and wounded were estimated to be high. Our losses also were heavy but had not yet reached a point where the combat efficiency of the divisions was seriously impaired. The 88th Division had 726 battle casualties, the 85th Division 443, the 91st Division 331, and the 34th Division 234. To these figures it is necessary to add an almost equal number of nonbattle casualties. A large percentage of the 88th Division losses resulted from the enemy efforts to retake Mount Battaglia and had no direct connection with the drive to the north. On the basis of these statistics and the character of the fighting for the past 4 days it could be anticipated that II Corps would reach the Po Valley before the October rains turned to snow; it was equally unlikely that a swift breakthrough would be achieved.

On the favorable side it could be pointed out that the enemy's second line of defense had already been pierced at two points. The swift advance of the 337th Infantry along the ridge line between the Idice and Sillaro Rivers and the capture of Mount Venere by the 133d Infantry placed these units well beyond the line of departure anticipated for the second phase of the offensive. Also the enemy so far had been unable to withdraw the 4th Parachute, the 362d Grenadier, or 44th Grenadier Divisions from the line, and these units were all in a critical condition. On the unfavorable side it could be noted that the enemy was gradually succeeding in increasing the number of units in the central area below Bologna. The shift of the 16th SS Panzer Grenadier Division to the east placed a strong unit opposite the left flank of the 34th Division; by 4 October there were indications that the whole of the 65th Grenadier Division was moving over from the IV Corps front to take over a sector astride Highway 65; and opposite the 88th Division, where the enemy had concentrated every available unit to block our thrust toward Imola, all of the 98th Grenadier Division was now available to oppose the new drive to the north. The increasingly bad weather also aided the Germans by reducing the effectiveness of all our offensive weapons.



Tank crew and infantry halt for a rest after the capture of Monghidoro



Bulldozers have cleared a narrow path through the rubble of Loiano



Tank destroyers emplaced near Loiano support the 91st Division drive



Artillery shells bursting on the rocky slopes of Mount delle Formiche

C. THE SECOND PHASE

5-9 OCTOBER

In the Corps plan of attack for the next phase of the drive toward Bologna, issued on 3 October, there was no change made in division boundaries. The main emphasis would continue to fall east of Highway 65 in the zone of the 85th Division and in particular along the ridge lying between the Idice and Sillaro rivers. The bulk of the Corps artillery and air support would be allotted to the 85th Division, but all four of the attacking divisions were to press forward as rapidly as possible. So far as possible fresh units, together with those committed to remain in the line, attacked in accordance with the Corps plan at 0600, 5 October, although in some instances initial objectives had already been taken and in others the attacks of the preceding day were still in progress.

1. *Action of the 85th Division.* The 337th Infantry had pushed the right flank of the 85th Division so far forward on 4 October that the division concentrated its energies for the next few days toward consolidating the gains made on the right and bringing up the left flank. The 2d Battalion, 339th Infantry, fought throughout 5 October to complete its mission of seizing Mount Bibebe, possession of which was essential to any further progress down the west side of the Idice Valley. Company E reached the summit at 1445, but it was nearly midnight before Company F had taken a knob on the eastern spur of the mountain. The next day the battalion joined the rest of the 339th Infantry in reserve, and the 3d Battalion, 338th Infantry, continued the attack along the high ground on the west side of the Idice Valley. A mile to the north of Mount Bibebe an enemy strongpoint was encountered at Castelnuovo di Bisano where the enemy had fortified a church located on the crest of a hill. Capture of the church on the morning of 7 October brought the left flank of the 85th Division parallel to the positions held by the 337th Infantry.

Just across the valley on the western slope of the ridge the 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry, relieved the 1st Battalion, 339th Infantry, in the early morning hours of 5 October north of the cluster of houses at I Boschi. Its objective was an enemy strongpoint organized around the hamlet of La Villa almost 3 miles to the north. Ahead lay a series of deep ravines formed by streams draining west to the Idice and open ridges which offered virtually no cover. After 2 days of working forward from ridge to ridge the 1st Battalion reached positions within 1,000 yards of La Villa, placing it abreast of the 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry, on the crest of the main ridge. Down in the valley the 2d Battalion, 338th Infantry, patrolled the road which runs along the banks of the Idice River and which provided the chief supply route for the division.

On the crest of the ridge the 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry, had all it could do to hold its positions on Hill 566 during 5 October. Patrols reported that a strong outpost line of defense extended across the ridge 500 yards to the north, and just before dark the battalion was engaged in beating off an enemy counterattack. The 117th Grenadier Regiment (98th Grenadier Division) was identified on the ridge, and elements of both the 362d and 65th Grenadier Divisions were holding positions astride the Idice Valley. With these forces available the enemy appeared determined to defend all approaches to Hill 578, the summit of the Monterenzio hill mass lying directly ahead of the 337th Infantry. To give a broader base for the attack Colonel Hughes ordered the 3d Battalion to clear the east side of the ridge. Company L reached the knob on the spur extending east of Hill 566 on the afternoon of 7 October but was driven off that night; Company K retook the knob the next day. Preparations were then made for a three-battalion attack on the morning of 9 October. The 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry, would continue its efforts to seize La Villa, and the 1st and 3d Battalions, 337th Infantry, were to attack along the crest and east side of the ridge. At the end of 9 October after a day of hard fighting La Villa was still held by the enemy, and the forward elements of the 337th Infantry were barely 1,000 yards north of Hill 566.

West of the Idice River the 338th Infantry proved more successful. After the 3d Battalion had taken Castelnuovo di Bisano on the 7th and a series of knobs to the northwest of it the next day, the enemy fell back to Mount delle Formiche, one of the key bastions in his third line of defense. During 9 October the 2d Battalion relieved the 3d Battalion, and plans were prepared for a coordinated attack the next morning in conjunction with the 91st Division on the left. By the end of 9 October the situation on the 85th Division front had been reversed from that of 4 October. It was now the left flank which had outstripped the right.

2. *The 91st Division Approaches the Livergnano Escarpment.* Astride Highway 65 the 91st Division had advanced as far north as the approaches to Loiano on 4 October. Here the 4th Parachute Division was dug in on Mount Bastia and along the high ground stretching eastward toward Mount Bibebe and westward toward Mount Venere. To the north of Mount Bastia the ground slopes generally downward to the valleys of Zena Creek on the east side of the highway and Savena Creek on the west as far as Livergnano, where a steep escarpment cut across the 91st Division zone. Until the defenses at Loiano could be broken General Livesay planned to keep the 363d and 362d Infantry in the line as well as introducing the 361st Infantry on the right. Beyond Loiano the 362d Infantry would swing west to pinch out the 363d Infantry and together with the 361st Infantry it would continue on toward Livergnano. The 363d Infantry would then pass to division reserve.

Beginning at 0548, 5 October, the 91st Division Artillery laid down a concen-

tration of 1,000 rounds in 12 minutes on the enemy defenses. At 0600 the three regiments attacked. Twenty-five minutes later behind a rolling barrage laid down by the 346th Field Artillery Battalion the 3d Battalion, 362d Infantry, reached Loiano. Company L fought its way through the town, beat off an enemy counterattack early in the afternoon, and then joined Company K in driving the enemy from Mount Bastia. By 2100 both companies were dug in on the mountain. To the west the 2d and 3d Battalions, 363d Infantry, were less successful. Meeting strong opposition throughout the day, they made only limited gains in their effort to clear the high ground along the Loiano—Monzuno road. A second attack was required the next morning before the regiment had carried out its portion of the division plan of attack and could begin assembling for a badly needed rest. On the right the 1st Battalion, 361st Infantry, met little resistance in occupying its portion of the high ground lying to the east of Mount Bastia. At the end of the day the 3d Battalion had moved up, and the regiment was prepared to continue the offensive. In slightly more than 24 hours the Loiano line of defenses had fallen.

Between Loiano and the Livernano escarpment the enemy had developed a secondary delaying line based on Mount Castellari, a long ridge-shaped mountain 2 miles north of Loiano, and a series of villages lying to the south and east of the mountain. Beginning on 5 October the 65th Grenadier Division began moving into the area astride and to the east of Highway 65. With these fresh troops to help garrison the Mount Castellari line the enemy could take full advantage of each stone farmhouse and favorable terrain feature. It required 3 days for the 362d Infantry to take Mount Castellari. At the end of a night attack on 6–7 October the 1st Battalion took Hill 705, a knob just to the south of the mountain, and the 3d Battalion reached the village of Anconella to the southwest. Then at 0800, 7 October, the two battalions, attacking without artillery support in an effort to gain surprise, attempted to storm the mountain. Virtually no ground was gained in the face of intense small-arms, mortar, and artillery fire. The next day Colonel Cotton introduced his 2d Battalion on the left flank to broaden the attack. The troops jumped off at 0430 on what promised to be another dark, rainy day. Some progress was made on the left, but Company C lost all but one of its officers in a mortar barrage and Company B was stopped by fire from concrete machine gun emplacements. Heavy fog made it difficult to coordinate the action of the troops, and at noon a halt was called for regrouping. Three hours later the attack was resumed. Companies A and B beat off a counterattack part way up the mountain; then Company B, working forward under the cover of the fog, cleared the mountain. Patrols employing rope ladders scaled the rocky crest to complete the mission at 0215, 9 October.

To the east of the highway the 361st Infantry was hampered during the first

2 days by a series of deep, muddy ravines feeding east into Zena Creek and by enemy strongpoints organized around the mountain villages, but on 8 October it moved rapidly. In the morning the 3d Battalion seized Barbarolo and a group of other hamlets east of Mount Castellari. Hidden by the fog Companies K and I then continued due north for over 1 mile to the southern edge of the escarpment, swung west, and cut Highway 65 at the village of La Fortuna. Having penetrated deep behind the enemy lines the two companies were engaged throughout the night with groups of enemy troops drifting back from the Mount Castellari area. On the morning of 9 October they were counterattacked by infantry and tanks from Livergnano and were hard pressed to hold their positions. In the meantime Companies B and C had reached positions a mile to the east.

The escarpment facing the 91st Division at Livergnano offered the most formidable natural line of defense north of the Gothic Line. Although not as high as the mountains to the south it presented to the attacking troops a sheer rock wall 3 miles long and in places nearly 1,500 feet high. From the rim the enemy commanded every approach from the south; above the rim automatic weapons sited on a lateral series of hills could place fire on any troops who should reach the high plateau. To the east across a narrow gorge formed by Zena Creek lay Mount delle Formiche in the 85th Division zone, and to the west the enemy defenses were tied in with the Monterumici hill mass in the 34th Division zone. Only two breaks occur in the escarpment: at Livergnano where Highway 65 cuts through, and 1½ miles to the east above the village of Bigallo.

During 9 October bypassed pockets of resistance were cleaned up, and the troops moved into position for a coordinated attack the next morning. General Livesay ordered the 362d Infantry to shift the direction of its attack to the northwest toward the Savena Valley, where it was to be pinched out by the 361st Infantry. After a day of hard fighting the regiment had advanced to within 1,000 yards of its objective. On the right the 363d Infantry moved to a forward assembly area prepared to enter the line on the division right flank where it was to assist the attack of the 85th Division on Mount delle Formiche. The main attack would be launched by the 361st Infantry. It was to take the form of a pincers movement with the 1st Battalion (Companies B, C, and K) attacking the gap in the escarpment at Livergnano and the 2d Battalion striking north of Bigallo and then swinging west across the top of the plateau. After moving up to the escarpment and locating the gap north of Bigallo, during the night of 9-10 October, Companies E and G scaled the cliff to within a few hundred yards of the top. Here they found themselves in a natural bowl virtually surrounded by enemy positions. On the left Company K sent its 3d Platoon to reconnoiter Livergnano. Reaching the outskirts of the village at 1500, the troops were trapped by machine gun fire and forced to seek cover in a

house. After dark the rest of Company K moved up. Caught in a mortar barrage and hemmed in by machine gun fire, nearly the whole of the company was driven into the building with the 3d Platoon. By the end of 9 October, with one company trapped in Livergnano and two others pinned down above Bigallo, it appeared that the battle for the Livergnano escarpment would be as difficult as any yet encountered by the 91st Division.

3. *The 34th Division on the Left.* After the capture of Mount Venere the 34th Division was faced with the dual problem of continuing its drive northward to keep pace with the advance of the 91st Division and of protecting an increasingly extended left flank. An added difficulty arose from the fact that a gap was opening between the 168th Infantry, which had not yet taken Hill 747, and the 133d Infantry, which at the end of 4 October was already pushing on to the north and east of Mount Venere. As a temporary measure General Bolte ordered the 2d Battalion, 135th Infantry, to occupy Mount Venere, but the flank would not be secure until the enemy had been driven from the area lying between Mount Venere and the Setta Valley. This task was assigned to the 168th Infantry and the 91st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron. When completed it was planned that the 168th Infantry would pass into reserve.

The attack of the 168th Infantry on 5 October started slowly. On the left the 2d Battalion proved unable to take Hill 747; on the right the attack of the 1st Battalion was disrupted for several hours by an enemy shell which landed on the battalion command post and killed a number of key personnel. Company A lost three officers, the first sergeant, and a sergeant platoon leader. The battalion was already critically short of officers, and with these casualties it was necessary to reorganize the companies. Colonel Hine ordered the 3d Battalion to move up on the right, and by late afternoon the two battalions were advancing along the west side of the Mount del Galletto—Mount Venere ridge. When it was found that there was only one usable trail the 3d Battalion passed through the 1st Battalion. Meeting little opposition, the troops by midnight had marched over 4 miles to reach Hill 661, 1 mile to the northwest of Mount Venere. The next day, aided by fog which concealed their movements from the enemy holding the high ground across the Setta Valley, the 1st and 3d Battalions took up defensive positions overlooking Highway 6620. During the night of 5–6 October the Germans gave up Hill 747, leaving the 2d Battalion in control of the area south of Sambro Creek and permitting the 168th Infantry to complete its task of clearing the division left flank. Although the regiment was not completely relieved until the night of 9–10 October, the 91st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron provided a screening force along the valley, and the sector remained quiet.

North of Mount Venere the 2d Battalion, 133d Infantry, seized Monzuno

before dawn on 5 October. Two and one-half miles beyond lay the Monterumici hill mass, the next major objective of the 34th Division. Guarded on the east and south by a deep gorge and escarpment formed by Savena Creek and tributary streams feeding into the Savena and Setta valleys, the Monterumici hill mass looms up like a massive fortress. The best route of approach from the south is along a ridge forming the divide between the two valleys. Atop the ridge a secondary road leads north from Monzuno. While the 3d Battalion completed the work of clearing the area east of Mount Venere the 2d Battalion pushed north along the ridge with the 1st Battalion paralleling its advance to the left. By the end of 5 October the need for security on Mount Venere was over, and the next day the 135th Infantry assembled in the Monzuno area preparatory to taking over the division right flank.

The steady rain coupled with the lack of any good roads behind the 133d Infantry presented a difficult problem of supply and evacuation. Mules provided the only means of bringing up rations and ammunition and laying wire. On 5 October part of the Service Company, cooks, and all personnel of the Antitank Company except the Mine Platoon were pressed into service as emergency litter bearers. To keep open the trail along the Mount del Galletto—Mount Venere ridge the division formed a provisional engineer detachment made up of the personnel of Batteries B and C, 105th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion, clerks, assistant drivers, mechanics, and garrison prisoners. By 8 October the detachment numbered 744 men. Improved weather on 7 October came to the assistance of the engineers, and the artillery was able to move forward to advance positions.

In the meantime the advance toward the Monterumici hill mass continued. On 7 October the 1st Battalion, 133d Infantry, shifted northwest to the Setta Valley and established a road block on Highway 6620 at the village of Gardeletta; 2 miles to the east along the ridge the 2d Battalion took Hill 520; and in the center the 3d Battalion was engaged in a slow struggle to cross the series of ridges and gullies leading west to Setta Creek. During the night of 7–8 October the 2d Battalion, 135th Infantry, relieved the 133d Infantry of responsibility for the ridge line. For the next 2 days the two regiments inched forward, the 133d Infantry attempting to outflank the Monterumici hill mass from the west while the 135th Infantry attacked from the south. By the end of 9 October the enemy had been forced back to a strong outpost line of defense stretching between the Savena and Setta valleys 1,000 yards south of the 34th Division's objective. Elements of the 10th Parachute Regiment and 35th SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment holding this line fought off every attempt to outflank or break through their positions.

4. *The 88th Division on the Right.* For the second II Corps attack on 5 October the 88th Division still had available only the 349th Infantry and the 3d Battalion, 351st Infantry. The situation on the division right flank, however, steadily improved

as 13 Corps took over the zone along the Santerno Valley. By 5 October the whole of the 350th Infantry had been relieved on Mount Battaglia, and the 2d Battalion, 351st Infantry, had been withdrawn from Mount Cappello. The next day the 1st Battalion, 351st Infantry, also was relieved. After a short period of rest the latter two battalions were available to support the 351st Infantry attack. When the new boundary between II and 13 Corps north of the Santerno River went into effect at 0800, 9 October, the 88th Division was able to devote its full attention to supporting the drive to the north.

At the end of 4 October the 349th Infantry, leading the division advance, was maneuvering for an attack on Hill 567, 1 mile to the north of Sassoleone. North of Hill 567 the high ground divides. One ridge, dominated by Il Falchetto Hill, curves to the northwest paralleling the arc formed by the Sillaro River, which turns northwest at Sassoleone and then swings east to cut directly across the 88th Division zone. A second ridge, dominated by Mount delle Tombe, stretches due north. Following the capture of Hill 587 the division plan of attack called for the seizure of both Il Falchetto Hill and Mount delle Tombe. To relieve the battered remnants of the 44th Grenadier Division which had been opposing the 349th Infantry, the 98th Grenadier Division placed the 289th Grenadier Regiment in the area of Hill 587. These troops were fresh and put up a determined defense both of Hill 587 and the ridge to Il Falchetto Hill.

After trying unsuccessfully for 2 days to storm Hill 587 from the south the 2d Battalion, 349th Infantry, dug in on the slope of the mountain on 6 October. The 1st Battalion, attacking from the west, reached positions within 500 yards of the crest on the 5th; the next day Company A continued to within 100 yards of the objective. Mud fouled the men's weapons, and they had all they could do to hold the ground which had been won. To broaden the attack Colonel Crawford sent the 3d Battalion around to the left to cut the ridge short of Il Falchetto Hill. In a night attack on 6-7 October Companies I and L reached the crest of the ridge. The fog and rain, while limiting the effectiveness of artillery fire and frequently preventing any use of supporting armor, aided the infantry in gaining surprise. When not under attack the Germans sought refuge from the weather in farmhouses, which, if not properly outposted, were death traps. Company I captured 60 prisoners from such a farmhouse on the ridge below Il Falchetto Hill without firing a shot; Company L to the right of it achieved a sufficient element of surprise to reach the crest of the ridge but was forced to fight all night to maintain its positions.

Continuing the attack on Hill 587, Companies F and C moved up near Company A on the night of 7-8 October. Company C met stiff opposition to its attempts to reach the crest of the ridge; Company F after passing through Company A found the summit of the mountain, for which the regiment had fought for 4 days, unoccu-

ped. A mile to the northwest the 3d Battalion took Il Falchetto Hill and 73 prisoners in a daylight attack on 8 October. There remained the ridge leading to Mount delle Tombe. After dark Company C started north from Hill 587 with the mission of reaching the first knob on the ridge. Machine gun fire stopped the advance short of the objective, and the company had to beat off two counterattacks during the night. At dusk on 9 October Company E passed through Company C and continued on to take the knob. A mile of the ridge remained to be cleared before the regiment would be in possession of Mount delle Tombe.

To the southeast of Sassoleone the 3d Battalion, 351st Infantry, made virtually no progress for the first 2 days of the Corps offensive. Then on 7 October both the 1st and 3d Battalions became available, and Colonel Champeny was able to launch a coordinated attack. Within 24 hours the enemy defenses holding up the 3d Battalion were broken, and all 3 battalions were moving north toward the next enemy line of defense based on a lateral ridge extending east and west through the village of Gesso 2 miles east of Hill 587. Late in the afternoon of 9 October the 1st Battalion reached the outskirts of Gesso and attempted to enter the village. The 754th Grenadier Regiment, which had lost nearly 200 prisoners in its withdrawal to the ridge, had now stabilized its lines. Armed with flamethrowers, the German troops in Gesso repulsed the attack of the 1st Battalion. At the end of 9 October the 2d Battalion was ahead of the 349th Infantry on the left, but the 351st Infantry was again up against a strong defensive line.

5. *Situation of II Corps on 9 October.* In the first phase of its October offensive II Corps had advanced its front approximately 4 miles in as many days; it had broken through the enemy's first delaying positions based on Monghidoro, developed his second line of defense at Loiano, and at two points had broken through the latter line. In the second phase of 5 days the rate of advance was somewhat slower. In the central area the 91st Division and the 338th Infantry advanced slightly over 3 miles; on the flanks the gains ranged from 1 to 2 miles. Along the ridge between the Idice and Sillaro rivers where the 337th Infantry had made the deepest penetration in the first period and where the Corps plan called for the greatest effort to be made, the line moved forward less than 1 mile. To achieve these gains the 4 infantry divisions suffered 1,474 battle casualties as contrasted to 1,734 battle casualties in the preceding period. The 88th Division again headed the list with 681 battle casualties, the 91st Division had 382, the 34th Division 187, and the 85th Division 224. A total of 1,119 prisoners were taken, making a daily average slightly higher than for the first period.

A contributing factor to the slower pace of the offensive in the second phase of the offensive was the weather. The rainy and foggy days which characterized the period worked almost entirely to the benefit of the enemy. Artillery observation

planes were grounded, and few of the planned air missions were flown. Tanks and tank destroyers lost much of their effectiveness as close support weapons. If the fog and mist in isolated instances aided our troops in achieving surprise, they greatly increased the problems of coordination between attacking units and prevented the exploitation of local successes. Finally, with each mile that the troops moved ahead over the rain-soaked trails and dirt roads the problem of keeping supplies moving forward increased in geometric proportion. The possibility of a swift thrust to the Po Valley now appeared remote.

D. *THE THIRD PHASE*

10-15 OCTOBER

Facing II Corps on 10 October, D Day for the third phase of the offensive, lay an enemy delaying line which was stronger in natural defenses than either of the two which had just been broken. From west to east it included the Monterumici hill mass in the 34th Division zone, the Livergnano escarpment opposite the 91st Division, Mount delle Formiche and the Monterenzio hill mass opposite the 85th Division, and Mount delle Tombe and the Gesso ridge facing the 88th Division.

The Corps plan of attack, issued on 8 October, followed closely the pattern of the earlier orders. The main effort was again to be made on the right in the zone of the 85th Division with the 91st Division assisting in the capture of Mount delle Formiche and the 88th Division clearing the east side of the Santerno Valley to provide flank protection. Artillery and air support in this instance was to be concentrated behind the 88th as well as the 85th Division. In an effort to build up reserves for a new phase scheduled to start about 15 October CCA, consisting of the 6th and 14th Armored Infantry Battalions, was detached from the 88th Division and attached to the 34th Division. It was to be used by the 34th Division to relieve troops in the line so that the division could concentrate two regiments east of Highway 65 before the start of the next phase. The 1st Armored Division (less CCB) would take command of the 34th Division zone on Corps order. Emphasis was again placed on the need for each division to withdraw one regiment for rest and rehabilitation before the next phase should begin. General Clark had no additional divisions available with which to relieve those already committed, and there was the danger, if the troops were not given some rest, that fatigue and casualties would bring the offensive to a halt.

1. *Capture of Mount delle Formiche.* The highest of the terrain features in the chain of enemy defenses stretching east and west through Livergnano was Mount delle Formiche, a bald-crested, 2,092-foot height topped by a tower which provides

observation as far west as Highway 65 and east across the Idice Valley. An almost perpendicular escarpment blocks the south and southeast approaches to the summit with the exception of a single ridge trail which offers a more gradual, but narrow route of ascent on the south side. The enemy had this weak point well covered with machine gun fire. Characteristic of the confused nature of the German forces at any one point in his line of defenses was the fact that the mountain was held by elements of the 267th Grenadier Regiment (94th Grenadier Division), the 956th Grenadier Regiment (362d Grenadier Division), the 147th Grenadier Regiment (65th Grenadier Division), and the 362d Fusilier and 362d Antitank Battalions. Elements of the 1060th Grenadier Regiment were being held in reserve as a counter-attack force. Against this force General Coulter planned to employ two battalions of the 338th Infantry, assisted on the left by the 2d Battalion, 363d Infantry.

After passing through the 3d Battalion, the 2d Battalion, 338th Infantry, attacked along the ridge at 0800, 10 October, H Hour for the Corps attack. In contrast to the past week the sky was clear, permitting the maximum use of air and artillery support. By afternoon Company E, leading the attack, entered the hamlet of Casa del Monte on the west of the escarpment. An enemy counterattack resulted in the loss of two squads which were cut off, and the remainder of Company E was forced back from the town. At 0200 the next morning, while Company E was continuing its efforts to take Casa del Monte, Company G passed through it and worked its way up to the crest of the mountain by midafternoon. Fifty-three prisoners were taken in the assault on the enemy positions around the church on the top of the mountain. Company F joined Company G in beating off two counterattacks after our artillery had disorganized the enemy's efforts to bring up his reserve force. The enemy artillery also was effective, and all three companies of the 2d Battalion had suffered heavy losses before the end of the day.

The 2d Battalion, 363d Infantry, advancing over open slopes on the western side of Mount delle Formiche, provided flank protection but proved unable to offer direct support to the 338th Infantry. When the crest of the mountain had been captured the battalion swung west to join in the 91st Division attack on the Livergnano escarpment. The 3d Battalion, 338th Infantry, cleared the eastern slope of Mount delle Formiche and then took over the task of continuing the attack from the positions of the 2d Battalion on the crest. The enemy fought back stubbornly from each knob on the gradually descending ridge leading northward from the mountain, and in 3 days of heavy fighting the 3d Battalion advanced less than 1 mile. In the early days of the October offensive the enemy had staged a withdrawal after losing control of a prepared defensive position; now he contested every foot of ground.

On the other side of the Idice Valley the 337th Infantry, with the 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry, attached, continued its efforts to reach Hill 578, the high point of



View of the terrain lying ahead of the 34th Division beyond Monzuno



German prisoners bring in wounded soldier below the Livergnano escarpment



Troops of the 91st Division watch shelling from the edge of Livergnano



Battered remnants of houses which once made up the village of Livergnano

the Monterenzio hill mass. As in the Mount delle Formiche area the defending enemy troops represented a variety of units, in this instance elements of the 98th, 65th, 44th, and 362d Grenadier Divisions. On the morning of 10 October Company A caught the enemy troops holding Hill 528 by surprise and eliminated this enemy strongpoint on the ridge before the German troops had an opportunity to fire. During the preceding night the 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry, had outflanked the hamlet of La Villa where the battalion had been held up for 2 days; it then went on to reach positions on the spur extending northwestward from Hill 528. The 2d Battalion, 337th Infantry, made a long night march to take the remainder of the spur just above the Idice River at 0940; to the east of the main ridge the 3d Battalion made limited advances. All units reported that the enemy artillery was the heaviest they had yet encountered during the fall offensive, and casualties were high.

In another night attack on 10–11 October the two battalions on the left flank crossed a deep ravine and won control of the spur leading down from Hill 578. From its positions on Hill 520 the 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry, at dawn was less than 1,000 yards west of the crest of Hill 578. The rest of the day was devoted to consolidating positions on the spur and to the relief of the 2d Battalion, 337th Infantry, which passed to reserve. Along the ridge the 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry, closed up from the south to a knob 300 yards below Hill 578; the next morning Company B crept up to within a few yards of the church on the crest of Hill 578 only to be driven back. Supporting tanks, which had been bogged down in the mud during the first 2 days of the attack, reached positions from which they could place direct fire on the hill, and in the afternoon Company B repeated the assault on the bald knob forming the summit of Hill 578. Twenty men got into the church, but they were trapped there by machine gun fire and the rest of the company was unable to reach them.

During the night of 12–13 October the 1st Battalion succeeded in working around both flanks of the hill, Company C reaching the rear without being detected. At 1030 the next morning Companies A and C, with tank support, launched a coordinated attack which finally achieved the objective for which the regiment had struggled for nearly a week. By noon Hill 578 and 23 prisoners were in our hands. Meanwhile the 3d Battalion had worked its way along the east side of the ridge to the hamlet of Poggioli 1,000 yards to the northeast of Hill 578, and the 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry, advanced down the Idice Valley to provide a flanking force on the left. On the night of 13–14 October the 337th Infantry, having completed its mission of taking the Monterenzio hill mass, was relieved by the 339th Infantry. Two days later, after the 339th Infantry had pushed forward 1 mile beyond Hill 578, the 85th Division held an integrated line across the Idice Valley.

2. *Battle for the Livergnano Escarpment.* On the morning of 10 October when

the new Corps attack was launched the assault of the 91st Division on the Livergnano escarpment was already under way. The plan of General Livesay called for the 361st Infantry to continue its efforts to outflank Livergnano and then shift gradually to the west to pinch out the 362d Infantry; the 363d Infantry would enter the line on the right to assist in the attack on Mount delle Formiche and to assume responsibility for the eastern portion of the 361st Infantry zone. The stiff resistance met by the 2d Battalion, 361st Infantry, during the night of 9–10 October indicated that all of the strength of the 363d Infantry would be needed. The enemy was fighting from excellent defensive terrain, and his order of battle was better integrated than in the 85th Division zone. The 3d Battalion, 10th Parachute Regiment, and the 2d Battalion, 145th Grenadier Regiment, held the area west of Livergnano; the 1st Battalion, 146th Grenadier Regiment, was astride Highway 65; and the 2d Battalion, 146th Grenadier Regiment, together with the 142d Fusilier Battalion, held the eastern portion of the escarpment. In contrast to most of the units facing II Corps the 65th Grenadier Division had suffered comparatively few casualties.

Company K, 361st Infantry, trapped in the house it had occupied on the edge of Livergnano, fought off an enemy attack in the early hours of 10 October. Later in the morning the Germans concentrated mortar fire on the house and then brought up a tank to demolish the building. With the exception of the 10 men hidden in a neighboring house the whole of the company was captured. Unaware of the fate of Company K, the 91st Division attempted to relieve it. Artillery fire was laid down on the northern edge of the town, and three fighter-bomber missions were flown; Company B was ordered to push forward along Highway 65, and the 2d Battalion on the escarpment above Bigallo was ordered to attack from the east. None of the attacks succeeded. Enemy troops, securely ensconced in caves on each side of Livergnano, held off Company B; the 2d Battalion was barely able to maintain its foothold on the escarpment. Company F was fully employed in protecting the trail through the gap, hand packing supplies forward, and carrying out the wounded. It required 12 hours to bring a wounded man down off the escarpment.

On 11 October the 363d Infantry moved up to the base of the escarpment to provide additional weight on the right. The artillery, tanks, and tank destroyers concentrated fire on the caves, and at the request of General Livesay 9 air missions were flown, some within 350 yards of the forward troops. After dark the 363d Infantry, under orders from General Clark to assist the 2d Battalion, 361st Infantry, launched a night attack. Companies A and C reached the top of the escarpment to the east of the 2d Battalion, 361st Infantry, and part of Company K reached Hill 504 farther to the west before dawn. These troops consolidated during 12 October while Companies L and B came up to join them. West of Livergnano the 1st Battalion, 361st Infantry, also launched a night attack to outflank the village. Fol-

lowing up gains made during the night, Company C succeeded in placing one platoon on the escarpment northwest of Livergnano at noon on 12 October. Four hours later it had been driven back by tank and heavy-caliber mortar fire. On the outskirts of Livergnano Company B, aided by tank destroyer fire, rushed the caves below Hill 603. Fourteen prisoners were taken from the caves, but efforts to climb the hill above them failed.

Although the 65th Grenadier Division was in full possession of Livergnano and held most of the plateau above the escarpment at the end of 12 October, eight rifle companies from the 361st and 363d Infantry had climbed the escarpment, and Livergnano was nearly outflanked from the west. In the next 2 days the cumulative effort of artillery fire, bombing, and infantry attacks began to produce results. The 91st Division Artillery alone fired 24,000 rounds during the 3-day period 12-14 October. Fair weather, which continued almost uninterruptedly for 4 days after 10 October, made possible the first extended period of observed artillery fire since the fighting in the Gothic Line and again permitted Rover Joe to operate efficiently.

Beginning on 13 October enemy resistance decreased. Company B, 361st Infantry, attacking at 0600, reached the crest of Hill 603 directly above Livergnano. Company A again failed to take Hill 544, the twin height across the highway, but the 3d Battalion, 361st Infantry, carrying out a wider enveloping move, reached the village of Casalino 1,200 yards to the northwest of Livergnano. On the escarpment above Bigallo the 2d Battalion, 361st Infantry, after being virtually immobilized for 3 days, took 73 prisoners from the enemy strongpoints blocking its advance. Colonel Broedlow ordered the battalion to reorganize and then drive west across the plateau. At the end of 14 October it had reached positions where it could dominate Highway 65 to the north of Livergnano. A patrol from the 1st Battalion had already reported at 1645 that the Germans, in danger of being cut off, had evacuated the village.

On the right flank of the division the 1st and 3d Battalions, 363d Infantry, also began to move forward on 13 October. The eastern portion of the plateau was cleared; following a night attack on 13-14 October, the 1st Battalion captured the village of Querceta more than 1 mile beyond the escarpment. On the left flank the 362d Infantry, rotating battalions in the line, continued the work of driving the enemy back from the area lying between Highway 65 and the Savena Valley until the forward units were relieved by the 34th Division at 2400, 12 October. The regiment then passed to reserve. The portion of the 91st Division zone west of Highway 65 was taken over by the 361st Infantry in the course of its drive to outflank Livergnano from the west; the 363d Infantry assumed responsibility for the eastern portion. Both regiments devoted 15 October to consolidating their gains along an east-west line approximately 1 mile north of Livergnano. Enemy resistance was

again determined, and his artillery fire, particularly from self-propelled guns, was unusually heavy. Although the Germans had lost their strongest delaying positions north of Futa Pass there still remained several miles of terrain favorable to the defense.

3. *The 88th Division Brings up the Right Flank.* In the II Corps plan of attack for the third phase of the offensive the 88th Division was instructed to make its main effort on its left along the Sillaro Valley. In the first two phases of the offensive the 85th Division had outstripped the 88th Division with the result that the right flank of the 85th Division was open to attacks from the east. If the 88th Division could bring up its left flank, it would serve the dual purpose of aiding the assault on the Monterenzio hill mass and of opening the way for a possible drive to the northeast toward Castel San Pietro. To carry out the mission assigned to the division General Kendall committed the 350th Infantry, which had been in a bivouac area in the Santerno Valley since its relief from Mount Battaglia. The miserable weather of the past week gave the troops of the 350th Infantry little opportunity to dry out their clothes or to rest, but by 10 October the regiment was able to re-enter the line in the zone of the 349th Infantry. On the right the 351st Infantry continued its attack on the Gesso ridge.

The 350th Infantry passed through the 349th Infantry in the early morning hours of 10 October and attacked at 0600. At the end of the day the 1st Battalion, advancing along the ridge leading from Hill 587, was just short of Mount delle Tombe; the 3d Battalion, jumping off from Il Falchetto hill, captured Hill 339, a knob on the northwest ridge which overlooks the Sillaro Valley. The next day the 3d Battalion consolidated positions while the 1st Battalion fought for control of Mount delle Tombe. Elements succeeded in digging in on the northern approaches and at one time reached the crest, but every attempt to gain complete possession of Mount delle Tombe failed.

The lack of success on the right was more than compensated by a brilliant out-flanking move carried out by the 2d Battalion on the night of 13-14 October. Crossing the Sillaro to the west of Hill 339 the 2d Battalion found a gap between the 289th and 117th Grenadier Regiments and cut in behind the enemy troops in the valley. At 0820, 14 October, it had taken Hill 373 1½ miles north of Hill 339. Sixty prisoners were captured from the 117th Grenadier Regiment and 44 from the 289th and 290th Grenadier Regiments. Continuing its sweep across the high ground north of the Sillaro on the 15th, the 2d Battalion took Hill 369, 1,200 yards to the east of Hill 373, beat off a counterattack launched by the 198th Assault Company, and then turned left to reach positions over ½ mile to the north of the Sillaro Valley. The 1st Battalion, after being relieved at 0200, 15 October, by the 351st Infantry, moved up to strengthen the hold of the 2d Battalion on the high ground across the

valley. At the end of 15 October the 350th infantry had brought the left flank of the 88th Division abreast with the most advanced elements of the 85th and 91st Divisions.

The stiff resistance offered by the enemy troops on Mount delle Tombe extended east to the Gesso ridge where the 351st Infantry was attacking. When the 1st Battalion proved unable to capture the village of Gesso on the night of 9–10 October, Colonel Champeny ordered a new attack the following night. The 3d Battalion was to strike from the west, the 1st Battalion from the south, and the 2d Battalion, which was well to the left of the other two, would continue north along the narrow ridge to the east of Mount delle Tombe. None of these attacks made appreciable gains, but the artillery, supplemented by tanks and tank destroyers, did much to soften up the enemy defenses. One tank and one tank destroyer reached positions along the trail entering Gesso from the southwest where they were able to place direct fire on the buildings in the town. At 0100, 12 October, the 3d Battalion repeated its attack from the west; 4 hours later it was entering the village. Seventy Germans from the 334th Fusilier Battalion and the 754th Grenadier Regiment, some of them armed with flamethrowers, were found cowering in the basement of the village church where they had sought refuge from the artillery fire. Late in the afternoon, following a 15-minute artillery preparation, the 3d Battalion took an almost equal number of prisoners from the 756th Grenadier Regiment along the ridge to the east of Gesso.

Having secured the east-west ridge through Gesso the 3d Battalion sent Company L to the north toward Mount Spaduro, the next important height on the east flank of the 88th Division. By dawn on 13 October Company L was 1 mile to the north of Gesso. Patrols were sent on to reconnoiter the objective, but the plan to take the height was disrupted by an enemy counterattack which forced Company L to fall back half the distance it had gained. Any further attacks were halted on the morning of 14 October by orders from General Kendall that the 3d Battalion was to consolidate its positions on the Gesso ridge. The period 14–15 October was used by the 351st Infantry largely to carry out a series of reliefs aimed toward drawing as much as possible of the regiment out of the line while aiding the concentration of the division for a continuation of the attack north of the Sillaro River.

4. *Relief of the 34th Division.* At the start of the third phase of the II Corps offensive the 34th Division had both the 133d and 135th Infantry fully engaged in the attack on the Monterumici hill mass. Capture of this objective was an important part of the Corps plan; of more importance to the next phase of the offensive was the assembling of two regiments of the division for use east of Highway 65. As one regiment, the 168th Infantry, was already in reserve General Bolte planned to keep the 135th Infantry in the line and replace the 133d Infantry with CCA, which

had been attached to the 34th Division for that purpose on 8 October. Since effecting the relief of a major unit in the midst of an important operation promised to slow up the attack, the division, hoping to take its objective before the relief was carried through, kept the 133d Infantry in action through the first day of the attack.

The plan of the 133d Infantry, formulated on 9 October, called for the 1st Battalion, with tank support, to make a night attack down Highway 6620 toward the village of Vado in the Setta Valley while Company K circled around through the 135th Infantry to avoid the deep ravine and escarpment blocking the 3d Battalion's advance. Before dawn on 10 October this plan had broken down. Craters in the road held back the tanks which were to assist the 1st Battalion, and Company K was blocked on the right by fire from enemy positions below the Monterumici hill mass. Late in the morning Company I was ordered to cross the ravine and attack from the south. As darkness approached leading elements of Company I, less than 100 yards from the top of the escarpment, were stopped by minefields and machine gun fire. Attempts to bypass the minefields failed, and the attack had to be abandoned. Repeated attacks by the 2d Battalion, 135th Infantry, along the ridge to the west of the Savena Valley also resulted in no appreciable gains. In view of the possibility that the enemy defenses would continue to hold for several more days General Bolte ordered the relief of the 133d Infantry to be carried out. During the early morning hours of 11 October the 6th and 14th Armored Infantry Battalions moved into position south of the ravine, and the 133d Infantry passed to reserve.

The attempt to outflank the Monterumici hill mass from the west having failed, the 34th Division shifted the strength of the 135th Infantry more to the right. While the 3d Battalion passed through the 2d Battalion and continued to press the attack along the ridge west of the Savena Valley the 1st Battalion crossed the creek to attack from the east. The latter succeeded in clearing an area on the flank of the hill mass up to the gorge formed by the creek, but here by the end of 12 October the enemy again succeeded in stabilizing his positions. Since 2 days of heavy fighting by the 3d Battalion, even with the aid of 240-mm howitzer fire on enemy strong-points, also had failed to break the deadlock on the south, plans were made to extend the front of the 135th Infantry farther to the east. CCA, serving as a holding force, would relieve the 3d Battalion along the ridge, and a temporary boundary was arranged with the 91st Division to give the 135th Infantry a zone 2 miles wide east of Savena Creek. In the process of being relieved the 3d Battalion gave up some of the high ground it had won. To regain the lost ground General Bolte attached the 3d Battalion to CCA. East of Savena Creek the 2d Battalion moved up on the right of the 1st Battalion. Only slight advances were made. Although partially outflanked from the east, at the end of 15 October the enemy retained a firm hold on the Monterumici defenses.