

The Allies' Practice of Operational Art During the Italian Campaign

A Monograph

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Abstract

The Allies Practice of Operational Art During the Italian Campaign, by MAJ Colin C. Reutinger, US Army, 46 pages.

Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States and forced President Franklin Roosevelt to honor his Europe first pledge to British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. In doing so, the United States and British collaborated on the approach necessary to defeat the Axis Powers. After many disagreements and compromises, the Allies decided on an approach to invade southern Europe to set conditions for the decisive battle to occur on the eastern or western front in Germany. To accomplish this, the Allies decided to invade Italy in September 1943.

Known as the Italian Campaign, the invasion of southern Europe contributed greatly to eventual defeat of both the Italian and German armies. The Allies effectively used today's concept of operational art by arranging tactical actions to achieve desired strategic effects. Throughout the campaign, the Allies successfully demonstrated the importance of end state and conditions, lines of operation, and culmination and operational reach. In addition, the campaign provides an example of applying an operational framework to organize efforts across the environment.

Acronyms

ABC	American British Canadian Military Coordination
ADP	Army Doctrine Publication
ADRP	Army Doctrine Reference Publication
BEF	British Expeditionary Force
CCS	Combined Chiefs of Staff
JP	Joint Publication
LOO	Line of Operation

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Introduction

There is only one thing worse than fighting with allies, and that is fighting without them.

—Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Buckinghamshire, England

Prior to the United States' involvement in World War II, President of the United States Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill agreed America's primary focus would be the defeat of Germany rather than Japan. However, they did not agree upon the method to invade continental Europe and debated the importance of an Italian invasion throughout the opening years of the war. This monograph examines the Allies' decision to invade Italy and the Allied commanders' application of the current doctrinal concept of operational art during the campaign. By illustrating the Allies' successful use of operational art, this monograph also aids the operational artist's ability to understand specific elements of operational art and the importance of linking tactical actions to achieve strategic aims.¹

Although the concept of operational art in American doctrine is a modern construct, there are linkages which can be drawn from the Italian Campaign of 1943-1944. Specifically, the campaign illustrates the importance of clearly defined end states and conditions, lines of operation, culmination, and maintaining operational reach. This topic is relevant because of the need to understand operational art as a concept and how it is used in practice. The principal focus of this monograph is the Allies' decision making prior to and during the Italian Campaign while illustrating the effective use of operational art by the Allies. The goal of the research is to analyze a historical case study allowing readers to gain a better understanding of operational art and its application.

This monograph consists of four parts. Part one describes the strategic setting of the United States and Great Britain prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor through the beginning of the

¹ Mark Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and U.S. Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 29.

campaign in September 1943. In addition, this section introduces the key figures responsible for the national, military, and combined Allied strategies. Next, it describes the strategy chosen to defeat Nazi Germany by discussing the North Africa and Sicily Campaigns and decisions to conduct the Italian Campaign. This section allows the reader to understand the strategic setting prior to the start of the campaign and how tactical decisions were made to support the strategy. It also serves as the start point to understand how and why the strategy changed during the campaign.

Using the strategic goals discussed in part one, part two provides a historical review of the Italian Campaign by introducing the key leaders involved and describing the execution of the campaign itself. Describing the events and decision-making involved in the campaign allows the historical case study to serve as the apparatus through which the monograph analyzes the concept of operational art. In order to accomplish that goal, this section describes any changes in the Allied strategic goals during the campaign, as well as the tactical decisions made by the Allied commanders to support those strategic goals.

Part three focuses on the analysis of the Italian Campaign with emphasis on the effectiveness of the Allies' application of operational art. The monograph specifically analyzes the Allies' use of end state and conditions, lines of operation, culmination, and maintaining operational reach, as well as the operational framework used by commanders to organize and understand the environment. In order to analyze the Allies' use of operational art and an operational framework, this section uses the key decisions described in section two to understand how effectively the commanders used elements of operational art.

Part four concludes the monograph by illustrating how readers can gain a better understanding of how to apply operational art through the knowledge learned from the Italian Campaign. This case study illustrates the importance of the operational planner's ability to link tactical actions in time, space, and purpose to achieve the desired strategic end state. Finally, this

monograph allows operational planners to understand how previous planners and commanders organized the battlefield and used operational art while planning and executing operations.

This monograph is a qualitative-based historical analysis with a research focus on primary sources. Analysis of the political end state and strategic goals of the Allied forces will come from the primary sources of President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill. The firsthand accounts of Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery, General Dwight Eisenhower, General Harold Alexander, Lieutenant General Mark Clark, and other leaders in the campaign will provide the details for the tactical actions ordered to achieve the desired strategic effects. The operational framework and elements of operational art, specifically end state and conditions, lines of operation, culmination and operational reach, as defined by Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0, *Operations*, (ADRP 3-0) serves as the criteria to see if the commanders applied the current concept of operational art. However, the monograph will not discuss the development or inclusion of operational art in codified American Army doctrine.

In order to gain an understanding of the tactical and operational levels during the campaign, the monograph relied upon Martin Blumenson's *U.S. Army in World War II, Mediterranean Theater of Operations, Salerno to Cassino* and Rick Atkinson's *The Day of Battle: The War in Sicily and Italy, 1943-1944*. Also used were diaries and memoirs by Generals Alexander, Clark, and Lucian Truscott to provide greater depth into the decisions made throughout the campaign.

This monograph focuses on the planning and execution of the campaign from mainly the American and British perspectives with limited Soviet references. This narrowed scope is due to the amount of available time and space for detailed analysis as well as limited access to other nations' primary accounts. Though the Soviet Union did influence the decisions prior to and during the campaign, the monograph focus on the Mediterranean Theater of Operations and therefore precludes the in-depth inclusion of the Soviet Union. Soviet inclusion is limited to cases that help understand why American and British decisions were made. Another limitation to the

monograph is the extent to which the British Eighth Army actions are described. This is because the decisions of Generals Eisenhower, Alexander, and Clark were the primary focus of the research due to the number of choices they made and the greater impact they had on the campaign as a whole.

While answering the primary question of how effectively did the Allies apply today's concept of operational art, this monograph answers other questions as well, to include: What were alternative options to the invasion of mainland Italy? What was the command structure of the Allied forces? What role did the multinational combined force have on the execution of the campaign? What influence, and if so, how much, did the Allied political leaders effect operations? How many joint and combined operations happened prior to this campaign?

A review of current doctrine provides the reader with the knowledge necessary to understand the basis for the decisions and actions of the Italian Campaign. It also illustrates the importance of operational art and operational frameworks in the contemporary environment. Though the operational planners of World War Two did not use the term operational art, they did apply some of the elements of contemporary operational art. Likewise, the operational framework of decisive, shaping, and sustaining operations is a modern concept but is apparent in the campaign as well. To understand the monograph's analysis, certain elements of operational art are defined. More specifically, the elements examined in the monograph include end state and conditions, lines of operation, culmination, and operational reach. In addition, the review describes what current doctrine calls the decisive, shaping, and sustaining operational framework to use as a lens to understand how the Allies organized their actions. This framework and the elements of operational art serve as the basis for the analysis of operational art for military operations in the Italian Campaign during part three of the monograph. Today, operational art is

defined as “the pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose.”²

The first element of operational art used to analyze the Italian Campaign is end state and conditions. Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP 3-0) defines end state as “a set of desired future conditions the commander wants to exist when an operation ends.” It continues to say that a “clearly defined end state promotes unity of effort” that “may evolve as an operation progresses” and commanders assess the situation.³ This study analyzes the Allied political aim in regards to the Axis Powers as a whole and the impact it had on military operation in the Italian Campaign. This monograph also analyzes the military end state of the Mediterranean Theater commanders (Generals Eisenhower and Henry Maitland Wilson) given to subordinate commanders and how, if at all, it evolved over the duration of the campaign.

After understanding the end state of the campaign, the next element used to analyze the campaign is lines of operation (LOO). Lines of operation “link objectives to the end state physically and conceptually” where “operations designed using lines of operations generally consist of a series of actions executed according to a well-defined sequence.”⁴ This monograph analyzes Eisenhower and Wilson’s employment of the British Eighth Army and US Fifth Army during the Italian Campaign to demonstrate how lines of operations link objectives to the end state.

A challenge faced by the Allies during the campaign was the logistical support needed to sustain operations in forward areas where limited lines of communication were constantly challenged by enemy forces and terrain. Culmination is when “a force no longer has the

² US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 2-5.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 2-6.

capability to continue its form of operations” and is usually “caused by direct combat actions or higher echelon resourcing decisions.” Tied to culmination is operational reach which, defined by Joint Publication 3-0 (JP 3-0), is “the distance and duration across which a joint force can successfully employ its military capabilities.”⁵ This monograph studies the US Fifth Army and British Eighth Army’s movements north towards Rome after securing footholds on Italy. It further illustrates how culmination effects other elements of operational art and impacts mission success.

Lastly, this monograph uses the operational framework of decisive, shaping, and sustaining operations to analyze the campaign. Operational framework is “the Army’s common construct for unified land operations” which allows commanders “to organize efforts.”⁶ The decisive operation “is the operation that directly accomplishes the mission,” whereas the shaping operations “establish conditions for the decisive operation through effects on the enemy, other actors, and terrain.”⁷ This monograph focuses less on sustaining operations, which are those “that enable the decisive operation or shaping operation by generating and maintaining combat power.”⁸ The European Theater and Mediterranean Theater serve as an example of this framework at a higher level, whereas General Clark’s decision to conduct an amphibious landing at Anzio will serve as the example of the operational framework.

⁵ US Army, ADRP 3-0 (2017) 2-6; US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing office, 2017), III-33.

⁶ US Army, ADRP 3-0 (2017), 4-1.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 4-7.

Part One: Strategic Background

This section outlines the key American and British strategy developed to defeat the Axis powers. It begins with an introduction and brief background of the political and military leaders responsible. Next, it will focus on the strategic goals prior to Pearl Harbor and how the strategy evolved over the twenty months prior to the Italian Campaign.

Winston Churchill became Prime Minister of Great Britain in May 1940 following the resignation of Neville Chamberlain. In large part, the resignation came from Chamberlain's policy of appeasement toward Nazi Germany. Prior to his appointment as Prime Minister, while serving in Parliament, Churchill often spoke harshly of the appeasement policy and wanted Great Britain to take a firmer stance towards Germany. Chamberlain did eventually commit the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) to support the defense of France but it was too little too late and BEF withdrew to the United Kingdom. Immediately after Churchill became Prime Minister, France capitulated to Germany, meaning Great Britain would fight alone against Germany until June 1941 when Germany invaded the Soviet Union. However, Churchill relied on America and President Franklin Roosevelt immediately upon entering office. The BEF's defeat on the mainland and the evacuation from Dunkirk helped shape Churchill's and British strategy toward Germany.⁹

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was first elected President in 1932 during the midst of the Great Depression and American desire to remain isolationists. With the fall of France, Great Britain required American assistance. Though most Americans hoped to remain neutral, Roosevelt believed "if Great Britain goes down," America "would be living at the point of a

⁹ John Keegan, *Winston Churchill* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2002), 56, 112, 129, 141, 150.

gun.”¹⁰ Understanding the German threat, Roosevelt began the Lend-Lease program designed to support British war efforts without sending Americans abroad.¹¹

The principle military advisors to the national leaders was another constant for both countries throughout the duration of World War II. General Sir Alan Brooke served as the Chief of the Imperial General Staff and was the leading military advisor to Churchill. His American counterpart was General George C. Marshall, US Army Chief of Staff. Together, these two officers and their associated staffs formed the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS). The CCS would meet periodically to decide on the strategy to conduct the war at different times throughout war years.¹²

Prior to America’s entry into World War II, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill discussed possible courses of action for defeating Nazi Germany. Commonly known as the Plan Dog Memorandum, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Harold Stark had recommended America conduct offensive operations with Great Britain to defeat Germany while employing a defensive strategy in the Pacific.¹³ Next, between January and March 1941, the American, British, and Canadian staff officers met in Washington, DC to finalize the Allied approach in what became known as the ABC-1 meeting. As historian Mark Stoler noted, the catalyst for the meeting was Germany’s aggression in Europe “which destroyed almost overnight the foundations of 135 years of American ‘free security’” and forced Americans to rethink their security plan. As

¹⁰ Edgar Robinson, *The Roosevelt Leadership 1933-1945* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1955), 25.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 269; The Lend Lease Act allowed the United States to “sell, transfer title to, exchange, lease, lend or otherwise dispose of. . . any defense article to any nation.” See Robinson, 269.

¹² Martin Blumenson, *U.S. Army in World War II, Mediterranean Theater of Operations, Salerno to Cassino* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1969), 1-4.

¹³ Memorandum from the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Op-12-CTB, November 12, 1940, accessed October 31, 2017, <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/psf/box4/a48b01.html>; Stoler, 29.

a result of the conference the Allies agreed the European and Atlantic theaters were the decisive theaters.¹⁴

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, coupled with German and Italian declarations of war on the United States in early December, 1941, the Allies confirmed that America's initial focus would be in the European Theater. What the Allies could not agree on though, was how to defeat the European Axis powers. While Great Britain preferred a Mediterranean approach to continental Europe, the American leaders believed it would prolong the war by a year. Both General Marshall and General Dwight Eisenhower, Commander in Chief, Allied Forces at the time, preferred a cross-Channel invasion into the occupied territory; however, the forces to launch such an invasion would not be available for another year.¹⁵

The difference in desired approaches were based on the differences between American and British societies, militaries, and experiences. First, America had an advantage in manpower and industrial capability, meaning Britain's forces would be dwarfed by Americans during the mainland invasion. Based on this limitation, the second reason for Britain's desire for an indirect approach was the need for Britain to remain relevant in the alliance, which would become more challenging if their role in combat diminished. A third reason was the Mediterranean Theater was a better fit for British military strengths and force structure given its naval history. It can be assumed another reason for the divergent strategies was based on Britain's defeat in the Battle of France in 1940. The defeat was fresh in their minds, whereas the Americans had not yet faced battle.¹⁶

Another national leader that affected strategy development was Soviet leader Marshal Josef Stalin. As early as April, 1942 Stalin urged the opening of a second front by the Anglo-

¹⁴ Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 37-41.

¹⁵ Carlo D'Este *Bitter Victory: The Battle for Sicily 1943* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1988), 33-52.

¹⁶ Douglas Porch, *The Path to Victory, The Mediterranean Theater in World War II* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2004), 454-456.

Americans to relieve pressure from the German attack.¹⁷ American leaders, to include Roosevelt, believed “Russia is the decisive factor in the war” and “must be given every assistance and every effort must be made to obtain her friendship.”¹⁸ Understanding the importance of Russia to the war effort, and faced with the alternative of inaction or a Mediterranean theater of operations, President Roosevelt conceded to the British strategy.

The major points of the compromise between the Allies included the opening of a second front in the Mediterranean theater with the promise that the cross-Channel invasion would occur as early as possible. President Roosevelt’s concession to the British plan to conduct offensive operations in the Mediterranean Theater resulted in the successful invasion of North Africa during Operation Torch. Lasting between November 1942 and May 1943, Operation Torch ended with the Allies successfully securing the coast of northern Africa and postured for future operations against Axis forces. The success in North Africa allowed the Allies to invade Sicily (Operation Husky) in July 1943 in order to ensure the safety of sea-lanes in the Mediterranean.¹⁹

During the execution of Operation Torch, the Allied leaders met in Casablanca, Morocco to discuss future strategy. Of note is the declaration that the Allies would only accept “unconditional surrender” from the Axis Powers to prevent “possible renewal of acts of aggression of the kinds which have caused these two terrible wars (meaning World War I and

¹⁷ Joseph Stalin, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Winston S. Churchill, and Clement Attlee, *Correspondence Between Stalin, Roosevelt, Truman, Churchill, and Attlee During WWII* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2001), 23, 44, 51, 74, 76, 86.

¹⁸ Robert Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins, An Intimate History* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), 748.

¹⁹ Warren F. Kimball, ed., *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, Volume I, Alliance Emerging October 1933-November 1942* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 292-293; Carlo D’Este, *World War II in the Mediterranean 1942-1945* (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1990), 1-4, 12, 38.

World War II).”²⁰ This is the political guidance the military leaders used to plan for future operations in the Mediterranean and European Theaters.

Following the successful operations in North Africa, but prior to the completion of Operation Husky, the Allies faced a decision point on how to proceed with the war against Italy and Germany. The Allies could either proceed with a cross-Channel invasion or exploit the Mediterranean successes by maintaining offensive operations in southern Europe. Similar to opinions expressed during the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, the American military preferred a cross-Channel invasion in hopes of quickly defeating the German army in order to provide more resources to the war against Japan. The British envisioned the cross-Channel invasion as the final piece to victory after weakening Germany through the Soviets’ Eastern Front, Allied strategic bombing, and operations in the Mediterranean Front.²¹

The Allies were also at odds on how to continue offensive operations in the Mediterranean if that was the course decided. The Americans preferred to invade southern France via Sardinia and Corsica to support the main effort of the impending cross-Channel invasion. The British preferred to send forces to the Balkans to ease pressure on the Eastern Front where the Soviet Red Army was close to defeat. The unifying idea among the Allies was the prospect of forcing Italy to capitulate and exit the war. This common goal allowed General Eisenhower to plan for two possible sequels to Operation Husky’s success. One sequel planning team would plan for the invasion of the Italian mainland while the other focused on Sardinia.²²

²⁰ Warren F. Kimball, ed. *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, Volume II, Alliance Forged November 1942-February 1944* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 119; Winston S. Churchill to Franklin Roosevelt, February 2, 1943, in Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, Volume II, Alliance Forged November 1942-February 1944*, 129.

²¹ Larry I. Bland, ed. *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall, Volume 4, Aggressive and Determined Leadership June 1, 1943-December 31, 1944* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 90; Blumenson, *United States Army in World War II*, 5-11.

²² Bland, *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall, Volume 4, Aggressive and Determined Leadership June 1, 1943-December 31, 1944*, 90; Blumenson, *United States Army in World War II*, 5-11.

On August 12, 1943, five days before the official ending of Operation Husky in Sicily, General Eisenhower, with CCS approval, made the decision to invade the Italian mainland as soon as possible. His decision to invade the mainland supported the Allies' desire to force Italian capitulation and withdrawal from the war. By having five divisions in France and twenty-nine in the Balkans, Italy's removal from the war would make Germany reallocate combat power.²³ Adolf Hitler recognized the deteriorating Italian situation and ordered sixteen divisions from France, Soviet Union, and Germany under the command of *Generalfeldmarschall* Erwin Rommel to reinforce Italy.²⁴

Eisenhower's decision had two other major strategic implications. First, by invading Italy, the Allies would force the Germans to transfer soldiers assigned to defend the cross-Channel invasion to Italy. Second, the invasion would alleviate pressure off the Soviets by continuing a second front. In addition, Italy's King Victor Emmanuel removed Il Duce Benito Mussolini from power following the invasion of Sicily and replaced him with Pietro Badoglio. Badoglio's government secretly corresponded their wishes for peace with the Allies.²⁵ With the Italians close to capitulation, the Allies' desire to invade the mainland was reinforced and set the stage for Operation Avalanche. The Allies began the Italian Campaign with the political aim of unconditional surrender of both Italy and Germany. The military end states to achieve this aim included the capitulation of Italy to weaken Germany's eastern and western fronts, opening a

²³ Geoffrey Perret, *There's a War to be Won* (New York: Random House, Inc. 1991), 197.

²⁴ Blumenson, *United States Army in World War II*, 60.

²⁵ Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, August 12, 1943, in *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: II*, ed. Alfred D. Chandler (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 1331; Alfred D. Chandler, ed. *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: III* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 1401-1414; Winston S. Churchill to Franklin D. Roosevelt, in Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, Volume II, Alliance Forged November 1942-February 1944*, 423-424; Franklin D. Roosevelt to Winston S. Churchill in Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, Volume II, Alliance Forged November 1942-February 1944*, 456.

second front to allow the Allied eastern or western front to destroy the German army, and seizing Rome and Italian airfields as far north as possible.

Part Two: Case Study

Following the exploration of the strategic framework, the monograph focuses on the Italian Campaign itself. This section of the monograph begins by introducing the key military leaders who played a critical role during the campaign. Next, it describes the events of the Italian Campaign from September 3, 1943 through the beginning of the Allied breakthrough of the Gustav Line in May 1944. The focus of the descriptions of events is on the decisions made by the key leaders, to understand how the tactical decisions enabled achievement of strategic objectives. Strategic aims will be discussed in this section when there are changes or decisions made which affected the campaign itself.

For the initial invasion, General Eisenhower was the Commander in Chief, Allied Expeditionary Force. He served in this capacity until December 1943 when he moved to the United Kingdom to lead the Allied invasion of Normandy. Prior to this position, he had served as the deputy chief of the War Plans Division for General Marshall, where the two developed a strong relationship, and oversaw the initial landing on Italian mainland through the winter stalemate and initial planning for the Anzio amphibious landing.²⁶

In order to gain American command of the cross-Channel invasion, President Roosevelt compromised with Churchill and allowed a British officer to command the Mediterranean forces. Replacing Eisenhower was British General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson who became the Allied Commander in Chief, Mediterranean Theater, on January 8, 1944. Prior to this assignment, Wilson commanded British Middle East forces.²⁷

²⁶ Porch, *The Path to Victory*, 337-339.

²⁷ Winston S. Churchill to Franklin Roosevelt, November 25, 1943, in Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, Volume II, Alliance Forged November 1942-February 1944*, 614; Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, Volume II, Alliance Forged November 1942-February 1944*, 621.

Throughout the campaign's drive to Rome, General Sir Harold Alexander served as the immediate subordinate to Eisenhower and Wilson. Initially, he commanded the 15th Army Group but that position was renamed to Allied Armies in Italy, simultaneous with Wilson's replacement of Eisenhower. While some contemporaries questioned Alexander's ability to handle complex problems and his mental capacity, Alexander developed a reputation as an unquestioned leader who had inspired confidence during World War I.²⁸

A subordinate to Alexander throughout the duration of the campaign was US Army Lieutenant General Mark Clark who commanded the Fifth US Army. He was the youngest three-star general in the US Army's history and skipped the rank of colonel all together. Following World War I, Clark had an ordinary career and suffered from multiple illnesses.²⁹ Clark was selected for command, as Eisenhower believed Clark to be "the best organizer, planner, and trainer of troops" that he met. Eisenhower thought Clark "will shortly have a chance to prove his worth" and "that if success is possible in the next operation he will achieve it."³⁰ Clark's peer commanding the British Eighth Army, General Bernard Montgomery, also began the campaign with high expectations and praise.

As the commander of the British Eighth Army, Montgomery had the ability to irritate superiors, subordinates, and peers alike but was a proven leader of men in combat. After leading the British Eighth Army during Operations Torch and Husky in North Africa and Sicily, Montgomery was the obvious choice for the invasion of the Italian mainland.³¹ However, even

²⁸ Rick Atkinson, *The Day of Battle: The War in Sicily and Italy, 1943-1944* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2007), 131.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 183.

³⁰ Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, August 24, 1943, in Chandler, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: II*, 1354.

³¹ Atkinson, *The Day of Battle*, 123-125.

prior to the Italian Campaign, Montgomery showed tendencies of being “a superb leader but mediocre manager of armies in battle.”³²

After the race to Messina, Sicily during Operation Husky, Montgomery was staged for an invasion in the Italian mainland as he awaited General Alexander’s decision to initiate. On September 3, 1943, Montgomery’s British Eighth Army led the Allied invasion of continental Europe when they crossed the Messina Strait to the town of Reggio di Calabria on the Italian mainland. The amphibious landing in Reggio di Calabria, known as Operation Baytown, was a shaping operation in support of the US Fifth Army’s amphibious landing planned to be initiated the following week. The German forces located in southern Italy offered no resistance to Montgomery’s invasion. As Alexander explained, the Germans’ “inability to destroy our bridgehead, our hold on the mainland of Italy could be considered firm.”³³ Following the success of Operation Baytown, Montgomery began moving his forces along the routes north to support Fifth Army’s planned operation, but his movement was severely restricted due to the poor quality of limited roads and logistical issues.³⁴

³² Perret, *There’s a War to be Won*, 185.

³³ Harold Alexander, *The Alexander Memoirs 1940-1945* ed. by John North (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1962), 116.

³⁴ Bernard L. Montgomery, *El Alamein to the River Sangro* (Germany: Printing and Stationary Services, British Army of the Rhine, 1946), 119-129.

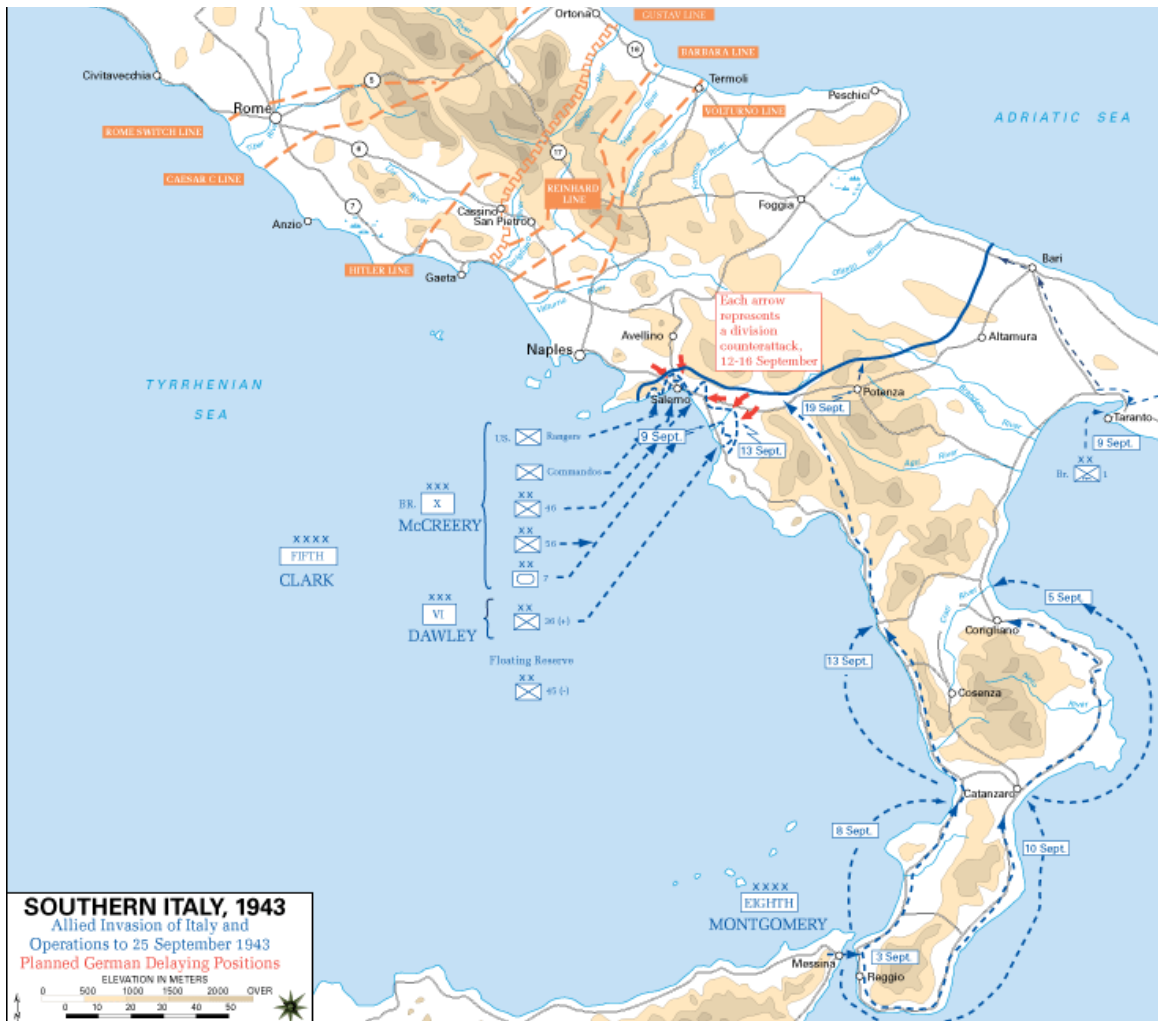


Figure 1. Southern Italy, 1943. Map courtesy of the Department of Military History United States Military Academy, “Allied Invasion of Italy and Operations to 25 September 1943” *United States Military Academy Atlases*, accessed 23 January 2018, <https://www.westpoint.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/World%20War%20II%20Europe/WWIIEurope47.gif>.

Known as Operation Avalanche, Fifth Army’s purpose was to seize Naples and establish bases from which they “could maintain strong forces on the mainland.”³⁵ The Fifth Army began their amphibious operation to Salerno after Montgomery landed in Calabria. Given the lack of resistance faced by the British Eighth Army to the east and Italy’s surrender, Clark believed enemy resistance would be weak with scattered unsupported positions. These assumptions informed Clark’s decision not to use preparatory naval fires on Salerno.³⁶ However, in the early

³⁵ Alexander, *The Alexander Memoirs*, 113.

³⁶ Mark Clark, *Calculated Risk* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1950), 184-188.

hours of September 9, 1943 the American Fifth Army faced the strong resistance of the German's 16th Panzer Division. German reconnaissance of Allied naval assets and the assumption that the Calabria invasion was a decoy, allowed Field Marshall Albert Kesselring, the senior German commander in Italy, to predict correctly that another Allied invasion would occur in Salerno. Kesselring ordered the occupation of Italian coastal defense positions with the intent to defend vigorously until 16 September.³⁷

The initial landing in Salerno occurred at 3:30am on September 9, 1943. Fierce German fire contested the landings, which were more opposed than the landings of either North Africa or Sicily. The fog and friction of war led to confusion for the amphibious landing parties and not all landing teams occupied their assigned landing zones. The combination of German resistance and Allied confusion on the beaches prevented the Allies from securing the Salerno beachhead prior to sunrise on September 9. Ultimately, it took until the end of the day for the Allies to secure the beaches following a day of fierce fighting.³⁸

As the Fifth Army secured the beachheads, the German army moved from Calabria north to Salerno for an eventual counterattack. The German rearguard actions continued to disrupt General Montgomery's movement to Salerno, which forced General Eisenhower into a decision point. After informing the CCS "we are in for some very tough fighting," Eisenhower offered General Clark the use of the 82nd Airborne Division to provide reinforcements.³⁹

Simultaneous to the Fifth Army's movement to Salerno, Gen Eisenhower ordered the British 1st Airborne Division amphibious landing in Taranto known as Operation Slapstick which occurred on September 9. For this operation, the 1st Airborne Division was detached from the British Eighth Army and remained so until Montgomery consolidated forces prior to Foggia

³⁷ Albert Kesselring, *Kesselring: A Soldier's Record* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1954), 221-225.

³⁸ Clark, *Calculated Risk*, 188-192.

³⁹ Dwight D. Eisenhower to Combined Chiefs of Staff and British Chiefs of Staff, September 9, 1943, in Chandler, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: III*, 1405-1406.

operations in October. At the suggestion of the Italians, Operation Slapstick was designed to seize the port of Taranto on the east coast of Italy. Seizing the southeastern Italian port provided Eisenhower with a new base of operations where he could supply the British Eighth and US Fifth Armies from the east and west respectively. However, Operation Slapstick offered little to the Fifth Army in Salerno on September 9 as they prepared for a German attack.⁴⁰

As the Fifth Army continued to arrive on the Salerno beaches and the Eighth Army marched northward, the Germans prepared for a counterattack in Salerno. As stated above, Kesselring planned for his coastal defense to hold until September 16 in order to provide time to strengthen the defensive belts further north. To accomplish this, he initiated a counterattack against the Allied beachhead. As the Germans continued to mass combat power for the upcoming attack, they initiated harassing attacks with airpower, utilizing the *Luftwaffe* against the Fifth Army's defensive positions and naval vessels off the coast. The German counterattack began midday on September 13 and had initial success; however, after a brief loss of terrain, the Allies' resistance grew and the German attack was halted. Following the American defeat of the counterattack, Kesselring determined the deteriorating situation was unfavorable for a protracted defense and began to move forces north.⁴¹

The successful lodgment of the Allied beachhead brought the conclusion of phase one of the Italian Campaign and found the US Fifth Army prepared to march northwest to secure the ports in Naples. Similarly, Montgomery consolidated the British Eighth Army in order to secure the all-weather Foggia airfields, from which additional air attacks could be launched against Germany. However, during the German withdrawal from Salerno, Kesselring ordered the destruction of railroads, power plants, bridges, harbors, food supplies, and anything else of military value to the Allies. The destruction of these facilities disrupted the Allied movement

⁴⁰ Blumenson, *United States Army in World War II*, 54, 94-95.

⁴¹ Kesselring, *Kesselring: A Soldier's Record*, 224-225; Clark, *Calculated Risk*, 197-207.

north by forcing Allied engineers to conduct the time consuming tasks of constructing bridges, bypasses, and roads. This delay allowed Kesselring the necessary time to reinforce defensive positions near the Volturno line with the intention to hold until October 15.⁴²



Figure 2. Southern Italy, 1944. Courtesy of the Department of Military History, United States Military Academy, “Allied Advance to Volturno River, Reorganization, and Attack on Gustav Line,” *United States Military Academy Atlases*, accessed 23 January 2018, [https://www.westpoint.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/World%20War%20II%20Europe/WWII Europe48.gif](https://www.westpoint.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/World%20War%20II%20Europe/WWII%20Europe48.gif).

The capture of Naples was the main objective for phase two of Operation Avalanche. The Allies understood that the successful capture of the ports would allow basing options to extend operations into southern Germany. A shaping operation designed to support US Fifth Army, was Montgomery’s Eighth Army’s seizure of the Foggia airfields. General Alexander reassessed the enemy situation and altered the plan for the march north. With the updated analysis which

⁴² Lucian K. Truscott, *Command Missions* (New York, NY: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1954), 258-260; Kesselring, *Kesselring: A Soldier’s Record*, 226-227; Blumenson, *United States Army in World War II*, 157.

showed German resistance was less than originally expected, Alexander ordered Clark and Montgomery to begin movement to their objectives immediately. Alexander's plan included an operational pause to resupply the forces after they seized Naples and Foggia, respectively. However, Montgomery was unable to seize his objectives on Foggia, causing him to become overextended and his forces culminated. The Eighth Army logistical bases at the ports of Reggio and Crotona in Calabria were too far away to support Montgomery sufficiently and had to be relocated. The delay allowed the German's surrounding Foggia to dig in behind the Biferno River and disrupt Montgomery's movement. Due to logistical issues and increased resistance, the Eighth Army did not seize the Foggia airfields until 11 October.⁴³

The delaying actions of the Germans and restrictive terrain made Fifth Army's movement toward Naples slow and difficult. Clark's subordinate commanders could not use the roads or repair the bridges fast enough to pursue the fleeing Germans. Additionally, the logistics needed to sustain Fifth Army's movement north became harder when the Allies realized that traditional vehicles could not traverse the terrain and forced them to use thousands of pack mules. Another constraint that impaired movement north was Alexander's order for Fifth Army to maintain contact with Eighth Army's western flank. Alexander rescinded the order on September 24 after realizing it restricted Clark's advance.⁴⁴

On September 26, Clark changed the mission to his lead element, VI Corps, commanded by Major General John Lucas. Initially ordered to outflank the Germans on Naples from the east, Lucas was now ordered to seize the city of Avellino, the most "important objective," located between Naples and Foggia.⁴⁵ The seizure of this city would give the Allies the control of the major east west running line of communication connecting the two objectives. It would also place

⁴³ Montgomery, *El Alamein to the River Sangro*, 131-136.

⁴⁴ Blumenson, *United States Army in World War II*, 158-160; Clark, 209.

⁴⁵ Truscott, *Command Missions*, 260.

Lucas's corps in a position to outflank the Germans. To support his movement north, Lucas decided to reposition his logistical support areas further towards the front of his formation than normal. After facing little German resistance, VI Corps seized Avellino on September 30.⁴⁶ Lucas' shaping operation allowed Clark to conduct the decisive operation in Naples.

The main effort for Fifth Army's seizure of Naples was the British X Corps. While Lucas' VI Corps seized Avellino, X Corps attacked to seize Naples beginning September 23. Led by Lieutenant General Richard McCreery, X Corps encountered stronger resistance than initially anticipated, and the hopes of a quick breakthrough quickly diminished. After several days of failed attacks, Clark moved the 82nd Airborne Division to the Sorrento Peninsula to reinforce X Corps. On September 27, with Lucas advancing west in Avellino and Allies to the east and south of Naples, General Heinrich von Vietinghoff began pulling the German Tenth Army back to establish a new defensive position. A subordinate to Kesselring, Von Vietinghoff's retrograde allowed the Allies to continue movement towards Naples and ended with the city's seizure on October 1.⁴⁷ Clark's Corps continued to advance north towards the Volturno River on the way to Rome, which Eisenhower believed would fall within the next six weeks.⁴⁸ The seizure of Naples marked the completion of Operation Avalanche and began a new phase in the Italian Campaign.

The purpose of seizing Naples was for the establishment of a logistical base to project and sustain combat power during the Italian Campaign. However, the port itself and majority of the infrastructure were destroyed during German occupation. Clark dedicated the Fifth Army base section to repair the port and city in order to support logistic operations. It was not until the end of October, however, that the Allies could transport supplies from the port to the soldiers on the

⁴⁶ Blumenson, *United States Army in World War II*, 160-162.

⁴⁷ Clark, *Calculated Risk*, 212-214; Blumenson, *United States Army in World War II*, 162-166.

⁴⁸ Dwight D. Eisenhower to Combined Chiefs of Staff, September 26, 1943, in Chandler, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: III*, 1461-1462, 1476.

front lines.⁴⁹ The Foggia airfields, on the other hand, were mission capable and supported heavy bombers almost immediately after the seizure.⁵⁰

After successfully debarking on and securing southern Italy, the Allies once again were confronted with challenges and questions at the strategic level, on how to proceed in Italy with regards to the war effort as a whole. President Roosevelt's immediate aims for Italy included the Allies securing positions north of Rome, Sardinia, and Corsica. Prime Minister Churchill agreed, as he stated "nothing less than Rome could satisfy the requirements of this year's campaign."⁵¹ In addition, General Marshall understood it was necessary to prepare for an invasion in southern France to support Operation Overlord. While the strategic and military ends were clear and unified, the means available did not align. The cross-Channel invasion was the main effort for the Allies' planning process and almost all available resources and personnel went to the United Kingdom. Given the quick defeat during Operation Avalanche, Allied planners assumed the Germans would continue to retrograde. Even with the supply shortages, Eisenhower was confident they could secure Rome within six weeks.⁵² In General Alexander's course of action, Fifth Army and British Eighth Army would attack abreast to objectives north of Rome.⁵³

For Fifth Army, the immediate concern was crossing the heavily defended Volturno River. Following their successes at Naples, McCreery and Lucas continued to move north with the intent to cross the river. Alexander ordered Clark to secure the high ground between Sessa

⁴⁹ Clark, *Calculated Risk*, 212-217.

⁵⁰ Montgomery, *El Alamein to the River Sangro*, 136.

⁵¹ Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: Volume 5 Closing the Ring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951), 36; Bland, *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall, Volume 4, Aggressive and Determined Leadership June 1, 1943-December 31, 1944*, 85.

⁵² Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, August 12, 1943, in Chandler, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: II*, 1331; Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, October 4, 1943, in Chandler, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: III*, 1485; Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, October 5, 1943, in Chandler, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: III*, 1487-1488.

⁵³ Alexander, *The Alexander Memoirs*, 116.

Aurunca and Venafro once Fifth Army crossed the river. The heavy rains of the typical Italian fall delayed both McCreery and Lucas's corps as the mud made the roads impassable. Clark, however, ordered both corps to attack across the breadth of the Volturno on October 12. Different from Salerno, Clark accepted risk in the flanks during this operation and the disciplined initiative of subordinate commanders allowed the Allies to seize high ground across the river by October 14. Clark also made the decision to shift the corps boundary on October 14, which facilitated both corps projecting combat power north of the river.⁵⁴

Following the river crossing, Fifth Army moved north towards the Winter Line. The Winter Line, constructed as part of Kesselring's plan, was the German defensive position composed of three different linear defenses. The southernmost defensive position, known as the Barbara Line, and the Bernhard Line to the north, would be shaping operations in the overall German concept of the operation.⁵⁵ Germans would resist heavily at the Barbara and Bernhard Lines but were prepared to withdraw to the third and strongest line, the Gustav Line, where they planned to defeat the Allied attack. The Germans continued to fortify the Gustav Line during the delaying actions fought near the Barbara and Bernhard Lines.⁵⁶ Knowing this was a race against time, General Clark wanted Fifth Army to reach the Gustav Line as fast as possible to minimize German fortification.⁵⁷

To accomplish the objective of securing positions along the Gustav Line, General McCreery ordered his three divisions to travel along the three north south running roads. The three objectives for X Corps included the lower Garigliano, Monte Massico, and Teano. On October 14, the divisions began movement along tough terrain and a series of well-defended

⁵⁴ Clark, *Calculated Risk*, 222-226; Blumenson, *United States Army in World War II*, 188-206.

⁵⁵ Blumenson, *United States Army in World War II*, 207.

⁵⁶ Alexander, *The Alexander Memoirs*, 117.

⁵⁷ Truscott, *Command Missions*, 265.

German positions. The German resistance slowed progress for X Corps and they travelled only seven miles in the first four days of the operation. While preparing for a renewed offensive on October 31, McCreery learned the Germans were withdrawing from the Barbara Line. McCreery started his offense a day early in order to maintain contact with the withdrawing German forces and met light resistance while securing his objectives.⁵⁸

Synchronized with X Corps' movement north, was VI Corps movement on their eastern flank. The two objectives for Lucas's VI Corps included the high ground around the Mignano gap and the city of Venafro. Similar to X Corps' movement, VI Corps proceeded slowly against heavy German resistance until October 31 when the Germans withdrew from their positions. In the twenty days of fighting, Fifth Army moved only fifteen miles, while the Germans gained time to prepare the Gustav Line positions with little cost in terms of men or materiel.⁵⁹

On November 3, VI Corps surprised the Germans by crossing the north-south running portion of the Volturno River sooner than anticipated. Lucas' corps was now postured to begin the attack on the Bernhard Line. The overall objective of Fifth Army's offense at this time was to secure the Liri Valley, which served as the gateway to Rome. In order to secure the Liri Valley, Fifth Army would first have to clear the Mignano gap, seize Cassino, and cross the Garigliano and Rapido Rivers. However, the severely restricted terrain allowed the defenders to use time gained from the Barbara Line to create an even stronger defense along the Bernhard Line. Fifth Army was not able to make any progress during offensive operations between November 5 and November 15 because of the strong German defense. On November 15, Clark convinced Alexander that a frontal attack Vietinghoff would exhaust his forces and requested an operational

⁵⁸ Clark, *Calculated Risk*, 224-231; Truscott, *Command Missions*, 268-285; Blumenson, *United States Army in World War II*, 208-217.

⁵⁹ Truscott, *Command Mission*, 268-285; Blumenson, *United States Army in World War II*, 217-220.

pause. Alexander granted Clark a two-week period where Fifth Army would refit and plan for their continued attack to penetrate the Liri Valley.⁶⁰

During Fifth Army's slow progression north, Montgomery and the British Eighth Army encountered little to no resistance and made great progress on the eastern flank. The Germans did not resist the British as heavily as they assessed the eastern side of Italy lacked decisive or strategic objectives. This allowed Montgomery to move north faster than Clark and he reached the Gustav Line on his eastern flank in mid-November. To prepare for the next phase of his operation, Montgomery also ordered an operational pause to resupply his forces and prepare for the next attack.⁶¹

In an attempt to maintain the initiative and surprise the Germans, Eisenhower directed Alexander to plan an amphibious landing in conjunction with land operations. Also understanding the European Theater and strategic objectives, Eisenhower's end state for the Italian Campaign remained the capture of Rome and to fix as many German troops in Italy as possible. Fixing the Germans allowed more freedom of maneuver to the Russians on the Eastern Front as well as for the planned Operation Overlord in Normandy. Understanding that the majority of the German defenders opposed Fifth Army, Alexander planned for Montgomery's Eighth Army to seize the city of Avezzano located fifty miles east of Rome, which would allow Fifth Army to continue its frontal attack north towards Rome. Once Clark's elements reached Frosinone, fifty miles south of Rome, Fifth Army would conduct an amphibious landing south of Rome vicinity Anzio. The landing's objective was Alban Hills, which was twenty miles south of Rome.⁶² This became the concept for the capture of Rome but first, Fifth Army had to move fifty miles over ground they had not been able to do so previously.

⁶⁰ Clark, *Calculated Risk*, 233-237.

⁶¹ Montgomery, *El Alamein to the River Sangro*, 133-139; Blumenson, *United States Army in World War II*, 232-233.

⁶² Dwight D. Eisenhower to Combined Chiefs of Staff and British Chiefs of Staff, October 25, 1943, in Chandler, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: III*, 1529.

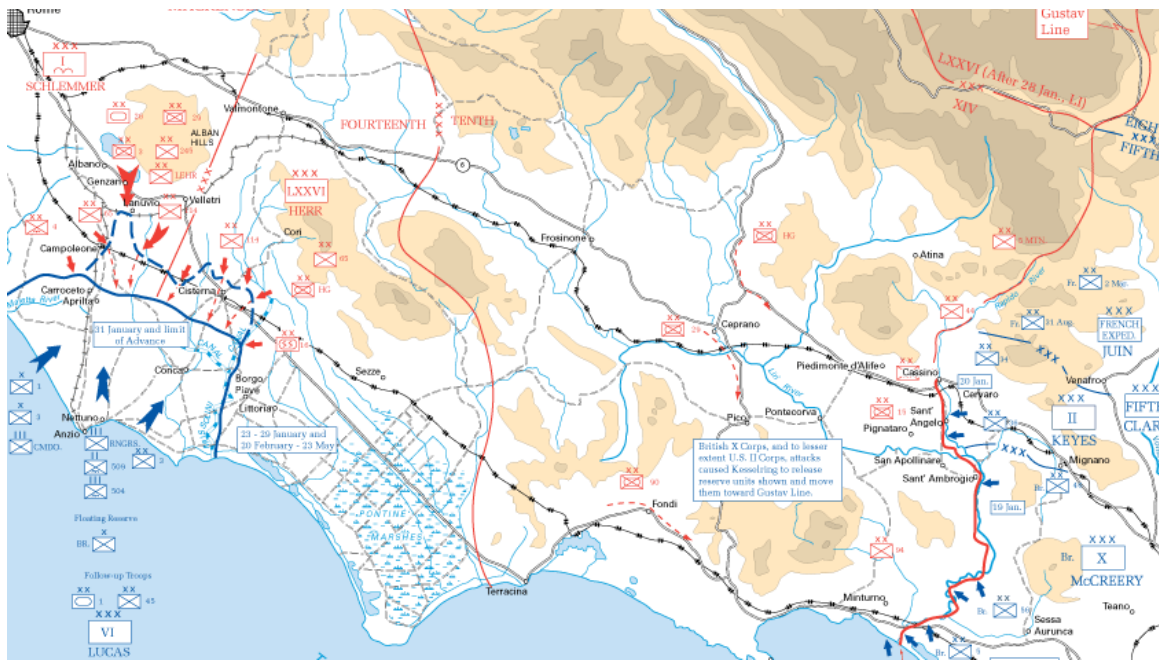


Figure 3. Anzio-Cassino Area, 1943. Courtesy of the Department of Military History, United States Military Academy, “Attempts to Cross Rapido and Garigliano Rivers 17-20 Jan. and Anzio Landing 22 Jan. 1944 and German Counterattack at Anzio, 16-19 Feb.,” *United States Military Academy Atlases*, accessed 23 January 2018, <https://www.westpoint.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/World%20War%20II%20Europe/WWIIEurope49.gif>.

On November 27, after poor weather delayed initiation, Montgomery and the British Eighth Army began phase one of Alexander’s operation. While the British Eighth Army defeated the German forces they encountered, they were unable to secure the town of Pescara, which was necessary because it would eventually lead to Avezzano. This failure meant the envelopment to Rome by land stalled; however, it did pressure the German’s to reallocate forces away from Fifth Army’s advance. Even with Eighth Army’s culmination, Clark convinced Alexander to allow him to begin his movement north, which was phase two of Alexander’s plan. Clark began movement on December 1 with X Corps in the lead and the newly arrived II Corps, commanded by Major General Geoffrey Keyes. The first phases of Clark’s plan were for II Corps and X Corps to secure

the high ground of Mignano gap, allowing VI Corps to seize the high ground behind Cassino followed by a breakthrough of the Liri Valley.⁶³

By the end of December 8, Fifth Army successfully completed phase one of their plan by clearing a series of key obstacles on the road to Rome. Known as the Camino-Difensa-Maggiore complex, the German defensive positions were strong and well defended. The Allies' use of artillery and fresh troops arriving from Africa gave the Allies the momentum necessary to seize the German complex. To secure the Mignano gap completely, the next objectives for the Allies included Monte Lungo and San Pietro.⁶⁴ Hitler directed the steadfast defense of San Pietro and refused to allow the German army commanders to withdraw. It was not until the end of December 17 that the Allies finally secured the village after continuous hard fighting for ten days. The Germans eventually retrograded to the village of San Vittore two miles north, where they would continue to provide bitter resistance.⁶⁵ As historian Martin Blumenson noted, Allied commanders began to see Italy as a series of "taking one mountain mass after another gains no tactical advantage. There is always another mountain mass beyond it with Germans on it."⁶⁶

The seizure of San Pietro concluded phase two of Fifth Army's plan. Fifth Army seized the high ground overlooking the Mignano gap, but at such a high cost and with no reserves that they were unable to consolidate gains and continue the attack. Though Alexander originally planned for Fifth Army to reach Frosinone before conducting the amphibious landings, two major factors made the Allies reconsider the plan. First, General Eisenhower moved to the United Kingdom to become the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force. He was replaced by British General Sir Henry Wilson as commander of the Mediterranean Theater. Eisenhower's

⁶³ Truscott, *Command Missions*, 286-288.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 290-291.

⁶⁵ Clark, *Calculated Risk*, 239-261.

⁶⁶ Blumenson, *United States Army in World War II*, 286.

departure meant Prime Minister Churchill would have a more direct role in the conduct of the Italian Campaign.⁶⁷ Fearing stagnation, the second factor in modifying the plan, Churchill pressured President Roosevelt to allocate more resources to Italy because “we must have the big Rome amphibious operation.”⁶⁸ Codenamed Operation Shingle, the amphibious landing of Anzio was scheduled for 22 January 1944.⁶⁹

According to Alexander, the purpose of Operation Shingle was to “cut the enemy communications and threaten the German rear” units defending southern Italy.⁷⁰ The landing would allow the remainder of Fifth Army to continue moving along the Liri Valley and eventually seize Rome. However, in order to conduct the landing, Clark realized he needed to conduct shaping operations to facilitate the operation. The most important of an array of shaping operations, was for Fifth Army to get as far north in the Liri Valley as possible. To do this, Clark developed a plan to cross the Garigliano and Rapido Rivers, seize Monte Cassino, and move as far north towards Frosinone as possible. The purpose of the shaping operations was threefold; fix German forces to facilitate the Anzio landings, reallocate German combat power from Anzio, and penetrate the defensive positions to gain a foothold in the Liri Valley.⁷¹

In order to achieve this purpose, Clark developed a four phase operation involving three different corps. Phase one began on January 12 and tasked the French Expeditionary Corps to seize the high ground to north of Cassino. Phase two began January 15 when II Corps would seize Monte Trocchio, the last remaining high ground south of the Rapido River. The successful seizure of terrain in phases one and two would trigger the start of phase three, where X Corps

⁶⁷ Blumenson, *United States Army in World War II*, 294-305.

⁶⁸ Churchill, *The Second World War: Volume 5 Closing the Ring*, 431.

⁶⁹ Truscott, *Command Missions*, 305.

⁷⁰ Alexander, *The Alexander Memoirs*, 124.

⁷¹ Alexander, *The Alexander Memoirs*, 125-127; Churchill, *The Second World War: Volume 5 Closing the Ring*, 427-429; Truscott, *Command Missions*, 290-296.

would breach the German defenses. After seizing bridgeheads near Sant' Ambrogio and Minturno, X Corps would attack north and northwest to seize high ground in the Liri Valley. This would allow II Corps to seize the bridgehead near Sant' Angelo across the Rapido River, in phase four. By the end of the operation, planned for January 22, VI Corps would land in Anzio. However, plans rarely survive first contact with the enemy and this proved to be the case in Italy during January 1944.⁷²

While the operation was initially successful, the failures by X Corps to secure the objective in Sant' Ambrogio had great effects. Clark commented that British 46th Division's failure to secure Sant' Ambrogio "had aroused serious concern."⁷³ However, Clark, "fully expecting heavy losses," knew it was important to fix the Germans on the southern front to facilitate the Anzio operation.⁷⁴ Therefore, even though the conditions were not met for phase four, Clark ordered II Corps to continue with the plan to cross the Rapido River to secure Sant' Angelo. Between 20-22 January, 36th Division suffered over 1,600 casualties and failed to secure Sant' Angelo. Even though the attack did not result in the capture of Sant' Angelo, it was successful in achieving the purpose of fixing German troops and diverting their attention from Anzio.⁷⁵

While the three-corps operation was underway near Cassino, Lucas prepared VI Corps for the Anzio landing. Clark's orders to Lucas for Operation Shingle were ambiguous in regards to if he should conduct offensive or defensive operations following the landing. Clark later said he intentionally did this to allow Lucas the ability to make the decision on the ground once he assessed the situation. VI Corps landed in the early morning hours of January 22 and quickly

⁷² Truscott, *Command Missions*, 304-305.

⁷³ Clark, *Calculated Risk*, 269.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 270.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 261-285.

established a beachhead where a majority of the 50,000 men moved ashore by midmorning.⁷⁶

Once the landings at Anzio were successful, Clark met with his three corps commanders to ensure they knew “the necessity for keeping up the attacks” to breach the Gustav Line in the Liri Valley.⁷⁷

Knowing the frontal attack from II Corps failed to cross the Rapido River and break through the Gustav Line, Clark looked for options on the flanks. Simultaneously, the French Expeditionary Corps in the north, needed a day to reposition forces. Additionally, McCreery’s X Corps culminated following German counterattacks on the Garigliano River crossing sites. The combination of these events left II Corps to become the main effort in the attempted breakthrough. On January 24, Keyes initiated a two-division attack to cross the river and seize the town of Cassino. II Corps successfully crossed the river on January 27, by which time the French Expeditionary Corps secured Monte Belvedere. The advance north of Cassino bent the Gustav Line but had not yet broken it. McCreery, in the south, made minimal progress in extending the bridgehead over Garigliano. By the beginning of February, with all three corps culminated, Alexander shifted the 5th British Division from the Adriatic to help. A renewed offensive on February 8 by the French Expeditionary Corps and II Corps ended on February 14 with II Corps within a mile of the Liri Valley, and breakthrough likely. However, it would now be up to the New Zealand Corps after II Corps culminated.⁷⁸

In an attempt to break through the Gustav Line quickly, Lieutenant General Sir Bernard Freyberg, the New Zealand Corps commander, ordered the controversial bombing of the abbey of Monte Cassino on February 15. To do so, he ordered his corps to withdraw from their current locations too close to the abbey. The withdrawal allowed the Germans to reoccupy the battle space without a direct fire engagement. To make matters worse, the bombing did not create the

⁷⁶ Blumenson, *United States Army in World War II*, 354.

⁷⁷ Clark, *Calculated Risk*, 288-289.

⁷⁸ Clark, *Calculated Risk*, 281-305; Atkinson, *The Day of Battle*, 398-412.

breakthrough of the Gustav Line and after multiple failed breakthrough attempts, Freyberg's New Zealand Corps culminated and had to wait for better weather to try future offensive operations. The better weather did not come to Cassino until March 15 when Freyberg initiated a new offensive aimed at seizing the town of Cassino and ultimately the Liri Valley. Supported by over 100 heavy and medium bombers, Freyberg's corps was still unable to breach the Gustav Line, his forces culminated by March 25, and the operation halted.⁷⁹

Lucas's lack of offensive operations following the landing allowed the Germans to bring reinforcements from southern and northern Italy, Germany, France, and Yugoslavia, as Germans planned to initiate a large-scale counterattack on February 2. Prior to starting offensive operations, Lucas focused on establishing the beachhead, while ensuring the logistical infrastructure was in place to support his corps. On January 29, eight days after landing and believing his logistic support adequate, Lucas prepared for offensive operations. Concerned that he lacked sufficient forces for an offensive operation at Alban Hills, Lucas determined that seizing the towns of Campoleone and Cisterna would facilitate defensive operations to deny a German counterattack. The offensive action from VI Corps had initial success, but was eventually defeated by the reinforced Germans.⁸⁰ However, it did disrupt the timing of the German counterattack, which allowed Lucas to establish defensive positions on February 2. Initial German attacks began on February 4 with great success in isolating and destroying units from VI Corps, which forced Lucas to establish a final beachhead line.⁸¹

During the failed breach of the Gustav Line following the Monte Cassino bombardment, the major German offense planned against Lucas was set to begin February 16. This began a five-day German offensive with the intent to breach, exploit, and destroy VI Corps. Continuing to withdraw to the final beachhead line, VI Corps eventually repelled all German attacks and

⁷⁹ Atkinson, *The Day of Battle*, 432-441, 453-473.

⁸⁰ Blumenson, *United States Army in World War II*, 385-396.

⁸¹ Kesselring, *Kesselring: A Soldier's Record*, 233.

refused to break under German pressure. Disappointed in Lucas's lack of aggressiveness following the landing, on February 23, Clark and Alexander decided to replace him as corps commander with Major General Lucian Truscott. Under Truscott's leadership, VI Corps continued to defeat all major German attacks through March as they prepared for future operations.⁸²

With both the Anzio and Cassino fronts essentially at a stalemate for the immediate future, strategic goals again came into question for the Allies. Understanding the Italian Campaign served as a shaping operation for the larger European Theater and war against Germany, planners once again had to assess future operations. Due to the large logistical effort necessary to sustain Anzio, the Allied invasion of southern France would be delayed. Additionally, Eisenhower and the Americans were adamant to conduct the cross-Channel invasion they envisioned since 1942. This forced Fifth Army to become less important in the planning priorities, which resulted in uncoordinated, small-unit actions for the foreseeable future.⁸³

With Operation Overlord scheduled for June, 1944, General Alexander prepared for an offense in Italy to help support the cross-Channel invasion. With the same strategic purposes of seizing Rome and "to contain the largest possible portion of the German ground forces," Operation Diadem was planned.⁸⁴ Initiated on May 11, the long awaited breakthrough of the Gustav Line and breakout at Anzio was underway.⁸⁵

⁸² Kesselring, *Kesselring: A Soldier's Record*, 233-238; Blumenson, *United States Army in World War II*, 419-432; Truscott, *Command Missions*, 328.

⁸³ Churchill, *The Second World War: Volume 5 Closing the Ring*, 505-515; Blumenson, *United States Army in World War II*, 449-456.

⁸⁴ Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, April 17, 1944, in Chandler, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: III*, 1825.

⁸⁵ Churchill, *The Second World War: Volume 5 Closing the Ring*, 514-515; Ernest F. Fisher, *United States Army in World War II, The Mediterranean Theater of Operations, Cassino to the Alps* (Washington, DC: Office of Military History, 1977), 3-119.

Part Three: Analysis

The purpose of this section is to analyze the Allies' use of operational art by comparing the strategic goals outlined in part one, and the tactical actions detailed in part two. More specifically, this section uses the modern definitions of end state and conditions, lines of operation, culmination and operational reach as provided in part one. This section will also analyze the framework used by commanders to organize and understand the environment during the operation.

During the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, the Allies developed the overall political aim for the war. During this conference, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill announced the desired aim of unconditional surrender. In a February 1943 Presidential address to the United States, Roosevelt explained unconditional surrender as “no harm to the common people of the Axis nations. But we do mean to impose punishment and retribution upon their guilty, barbaric leaders.”⁸⁶ Understanding the initial desired political aim for Italy and subsequent aims for Germany, helped shape the military end state for the Allies prior to and during the Italian Campaign.

Derived from the political aim, the military end state of the Allies toward Italy included Italy's capitulation, forcing Germany to degrade the eastern and western fronts, the open a second Allied front to allow the Allied eastern or western front to destroy the German army, and the seizure of Rome and airfields as far north as possible. In order to achieve the military end states, Eisenhower decided to invade the Italian mainland.

Prior to and during the initial parts of Operation Avalanche, Eisenhower worked with the newly formed Pietro Badoglio Italian government to negotiate Italy's surrender. Eisenhower

⁸⁶ Franklin Roosevelt, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt. 1943 Volume 12, The Tide Turns*, ed. Samuel Rosenman (New York: Random House, 1943), accessed December 2, 2017, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/p/ppotpus/4926600.1943.001/114?page=root;rgn=full+text;size=100;view=image>.

accomplished the first aim of the campaign when he “accepted the unconditional surrender of Italy, terms of which were approved by the United States, Soviet Republics and the United Kingdom.”⁸⁷ Italy’s capitulation also helped weaken the German eastern and western flanks by causing Hitler to reallocate combat power to the Italian theater. As stated, Hitler was concerned about the growing Allied threat from Italy prior to the invasion, and continued to move divisions away from the eastern and western flanks. The Allies had a clear vision of the desired end state in regard to Italy’s involvement in the war. Eisenhower understood an invasion would directly lead to their withdrawal from the war while simultaneously forcing Hitler to react.

The weakened German flanks helped the Allies accomplish the second strategic end state of allowing the Allies to destroy the German armies on the eastern or western flanks. By re-allocating sixteen divisions to Italy, Hitler’s flanks were not as strongly defended for the upcoming Operation Overlord in the west or Operation Bagration in the east. The immediate reallocation of German combat power also facilitated Soviet successes in counter-offensives from Ukraine to Leningrad in early 1944.⁸⁸ Again, because the end state was clearly defined, the Allies as a whole achieved unity of effort in the larger European Theater of Operations. The decision to invade Italy forced Hitler to react by weakening his eastern and western flanks, which in turn allowed the Allied operations on both flanks to be successful.

The final end state of seizing Rome and airfields as far north as possible was achieved toward the end of the Italian Campaign after Operation Diadem. The manner this was done will be analyzed during the lines of operation section. However, with the seizure of Rome and the airfields, the Allies successfully achieved the “set of desired future conditions the commander wants to exist when an operation ends.” Throughout the Italian Campaign the Allies also

⁸⁷ Stalin, Roosevelt, Truman, Churchill, and Attlee, *Correspondence*, 91.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 122.

demonstrated that a “clearly defined end state promotes unity of effort.”⁸⁹ By understanding the political aims, Eisenhower nested the desired military end state with the aims. This in turn allowed the Allies to arrange “tactical actions in time, space, and purpose” to achieve strategic objectives.⁹⁰

The seizure of Rome and airfields as far north as possible is an example of the Allied commanders’ use of lines of operations by linking objectives to achieve the desired end state. While the method and objectives of the line of operation changed during the course of the campaign, US Fifth Army and British Eighth Army were both operating to seize Rome and airfields further north. The initial success of Operations Avalanche and Baytown secured a foothold on the mainland and was the first objective in the Allied line of operation. The success of these operations allowed Alexander to order Clark and Montgomery to seize the next objectives while never losing site of the desired end state. For the next objective, both armies moved north and seized Foggia and Naples, which enabled the Allies to mass combat power on the mainland. Believing they were within six weeks of seizing Rome, Alexander identified the next objective as Rome itself. However, German resistance forced the Allies to develop a new course of action. In the new course of action, Alexander ordered Montgomery to seize Avezzano and Clark to conduct Operation Shingle at Anzio. These two locations were chosen as Alexander believed their seizure would eventually allow the Allies to achieve their end state. Eventually, the successful operations at Avezzano and Anzio ultimately led to the seizure of the Liri Valley, which allowed the Allies to finally breakthrough the Gustav Line and seize Rome during Operation Diadem. Throughout the campaign, the Allies demonstrated the ability to “link objectives to the end state” both “physically and conceptually” because they understood the end state and the approach to achieve the end state. While the Germans did force the Allies to make

⁸⁹ US Army, ADRP 3-0 (2017), 2-5.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

changes, the Italian Campaign demonstrated an operation that “generally consist(ed) of a series of actions executed according to a well-defined sequence.”⁹¹ By understanding the desired military end state, the Allies developed a series of objectives that would lead to the eventual achievement of the end state. The ability to define intermediate objectives serves as another example of the Allies’ ability to arrange “tactical actions in time, space, and purpose” to achieve strategic objectives.⁹²

A constant among the line of operations discussed above was the need to prevent culmination in order to maintain operational reach. Following Operation Baytown, Montgomery immediately justified his doubters’ beliefs that he was not able to successfully manage armies in battle in his delay to seize Foggia. Before seizing Foggia, the major factor that impeded Montgomery’s ability were the “administrative” requirements needed to support his operation.⁹³ His inability to continue offensive operations was the result of culmination. Montgomery had to relocate basing operations to continue his attack and extend his operational reach. Basing was not the only element of operational art effected by the culmination. Montgomery’s culmination also effected the tempo of the theater wide operation as US Fifth Army’s movement north would create a seam in between the two units. Until Alexander rescinded the order for the two armies to maintain contact, Montgomery’s culmination effected the tempo of both the British Eighth Army and the US Fifth Army. Because of the restrictive terrain and limited number of supply vehicles facilitating the US Fifth Army, there were multiple occasions where Clark’s forces culminated during the campaign. One of these examples illustrates how culmination effects a commander’s acceptance of risk in operations. When McCreery’s X Corps culminated on the Rapido and Garigliano Rivers, Clark still ordered Lucas to conduct the landing at Anzio. Though, the pre-

⁹¹ US Army, ADRP 3-0 (2017), 2-6.

⁹² Ibid., 2-5.

⁹³ Montgomery, *El Alamein to the River Sangro*, 132.

established conditions were not set, Clark accepted risk and executed Operation Shingle anyway. In accepting risk, Clark demonstrated today's concept of operational art by applying the elements of operational as "intellectual tools to help understand an operational environment...and describe their approach for conducting an operation."⁹⁴

Another way to analyze the Italian Campaign with modern doctrine is using the framework of decisive, shaping, and sustaining operations. This framework can be applied to the European and Mediterranean Theaters as a whole and in Clark's plan for Operation Shingle. In the greater European Theater context, the Italian Campaign served as a shaping operation by establishing conditions for the future decisive operation which Allied leaders envisioned as Operation Overlord. British and American leaders viewed Operation Overlord as the decisive operation believing it "directly accomplishes the mission" of destroying the German army while forcing Germany to accept the terms of unconditional surrender. The Italian Campaign, which was the shaping operation, "establish(ed) the conditions for the decisive operation through effects on the enemy."⁹⁵ One effect of the campaign was it forced Hitler to reposition sixteen division from the east and west flanks. At the operational level, Clark's four phase operation for Operation Shingle also illustrates the framework. The shaping operations of the French Expeditionary Corps, II Corps, and X Corps served as shaping operations to facilitate the decisive operation, VI Corps, landing in Anzio. The shaping operations fixed the enemy vicinity the Liri Valley which allowed Lucas to land his corps at Anzio. The landing was "the focal point around which commanders design an entire operation" and was "designed to determine the outcome" of the campaign by achieving aforementioned end states.⁹⁶ While Operation Shingle did not have the

⁹⁴ US Army, ADRP 3-0 (2017), 2-4.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 4-7.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

immediate effect the Allies wanted, it still serves as an example of how frameworks allow commanders to “organize efforts.”⁹⁷

To help educate the reader and future operational planners on operational art and its application to contemporary operations, there are instances in the Italian Campaign where the leaders did not apply today’s concept of operational art. One could argue Clark’s decision to execute Operation Shingle is an example of his failure to apply today’s operational art element of phasing and transitions. ADRP 3-0 defines a phase as “a planning and execution tool used to divide an operation in duration or activity” and more specifically “is critical to arranging all tasks of an operation that cannot be conducted simultaneously.” Similarly, transitions “mark a change of focus between phases.”⁹⁸ Though the necessary conditions for the transition between phases were not established, Clark executed the operation. However, in Clark’s defense, as the commander, Clark could accept risk in order to “create opportunities to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative and achieve decisive results.”⁹⁹ Clark believed the political pressure to seize Rome in time for cross-Channel invasion had made Anzio a vital part of the strategy and it must be executed, regardless of the circumstances.¹⁰⁰

A second example of the Allies’ failure to apply an element of operational art is when they lost the advantage of tempo to German forces. Tempo “is the relative speed and rhythm of military operations over time with respect to the enemy.”¹⁰¹ After initial success, the Allies believed they would seize Rome within six weeks. However, as the attack north continued, Eisenhower quickly realized his “principle operational concern at the moment is to prevent the bogging down of our ground forces in Italy.” He continued, “the weather is abominable and the

⁹⁷ US Army, ADRP 3-0, (2017), 4-1.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2-7.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2-10.

¹⁰⁰ Clark, *Calculated Risk*, 270.

¹⁰¹ US Army, ADRP 3-0 (2017), 2-7.

systematic destruction of communications by the Germans makes maintenance and supply extraordinarily difficult.”¹⁰² The weather and German delaying operations allowed the Germans to seize the initiative and operate at a higher tempo than the Allies. Eisenhower’s words were prophetic, and the Allies loss of tempo meant seizing Rome took seven months instead of six weeks.

While much debate remains about Clark’s decisions, the Italian Campaign serves as a relevant case study to better understand the application of operational art. The Allies were able to achieve “strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose” which is the current Army definition of operational art. They demonstrated contemporary operational art by their application of contemporary elements of operational art and their ability to use an operational framework similar to the contemporary decisive, shaping, and sustaining framework.

Part Four: Conclusion

The use of operational art elements supported the Allies success in the Italian Campaign from Salerno to Cassino occurring between September 1943 and May 1944. Given this analysis, understanding the overarching political aims allows commanders to arrange tactical actions to ensure success at the strategic level. In the previous pages, this monograph tried to answer how end states and conditions, lines of operation, and culmination and operational reach help commanders organize the tactical actions in time, space, and purpose. The paper also illustrates how successfully applying the decisive, shaping, sustaining operational framework allowed the Allies to organize efforts across the environment.

The Allies successfully used operational art, specifically the elements listed above, during the Italian Campaign. The evidence from sections one and two affirms that the Allies

¹⁰² Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, October 13, 1943, in Chandler, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: III*, 1503.

applied the selected elements of operational art through description of strategic goals and tactical actions. The analysis from section three illustrates the Allies' successful use of end states, lines of operation, and culmination and operational reach. Section three also illustrates the successful implementation of the operational framework.

The primary focus of this work was to analyze the American and British forces use of operational art in the Italian Campaign. The inclusion of the Soviet perspective was limited to cases where it was absolutely necessary to better understand the American and British decisions. This monograph also limited the discussion on the British Eighth Army and focused instead on the US Fifth Army because of the greater impact the latter had on the campaign. If possible, further research into the British Eighth Army experience may offer different insight of the campaign.

General Eisenhower understood the political aims that President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill desired and was able to develop clearly defined military end states to help achieve the aims. In doing so, Eisenhower made decisions prior to, and during the campaign while balancing current requirements with anticipated future operations. He was able to successfully work within a combined joint force where he had to balance the various perspectives and personalities of both subordinates and superiors.

In order to achieve the desired military end state and conditions, Eisenhower and Wilson were able to develop lines of operation. Within the lines of operation, there were multiple intermediate objectives that eventually led to the end state. Both leaders successfully reacted to the enemy decisions and never lost sight of the end state they wanted to achieve. They allowed the subordinate leaders to execute the plan with what appeared to be minimal interference from the theater level.

While conducting operations in support of the end state, a constant challenge the Allies faced during the campaign was the importance of limiting culmination and extending their operational reach. The challenges arose from a multitude of factors to include the terrain and

limited number of transportation assets. The case studies shows how all operational art elements, and specifically culmination, are tied to other elements, effect decision making at all levels, and effect operations.

The last portion of the analysis section demonstrates the Allies use of the decisive, shaping, and sustaining framework to organize efforts. When viewing the European and Mediterranean Theaters together, the Italian Campaign can be seen as a shaping operation designed to enable the decisive operation in the European Theater. Operation Shingle offers another example of the framework used by Allied commanders to organize efforts to achieve desired results.

The purpose of this study was to explore the Allies' decisions prior to and during the Italian Campaign while using the current doctrinal definitions of operational art and operational framework. This study is important to operational planners as this campaign illustrates the successful arrangement of tactical actions with operational objectives to achieve strategic results. The campaign also illustrates the successful organization of efforts across the environment using a modern operational framework concept.

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