

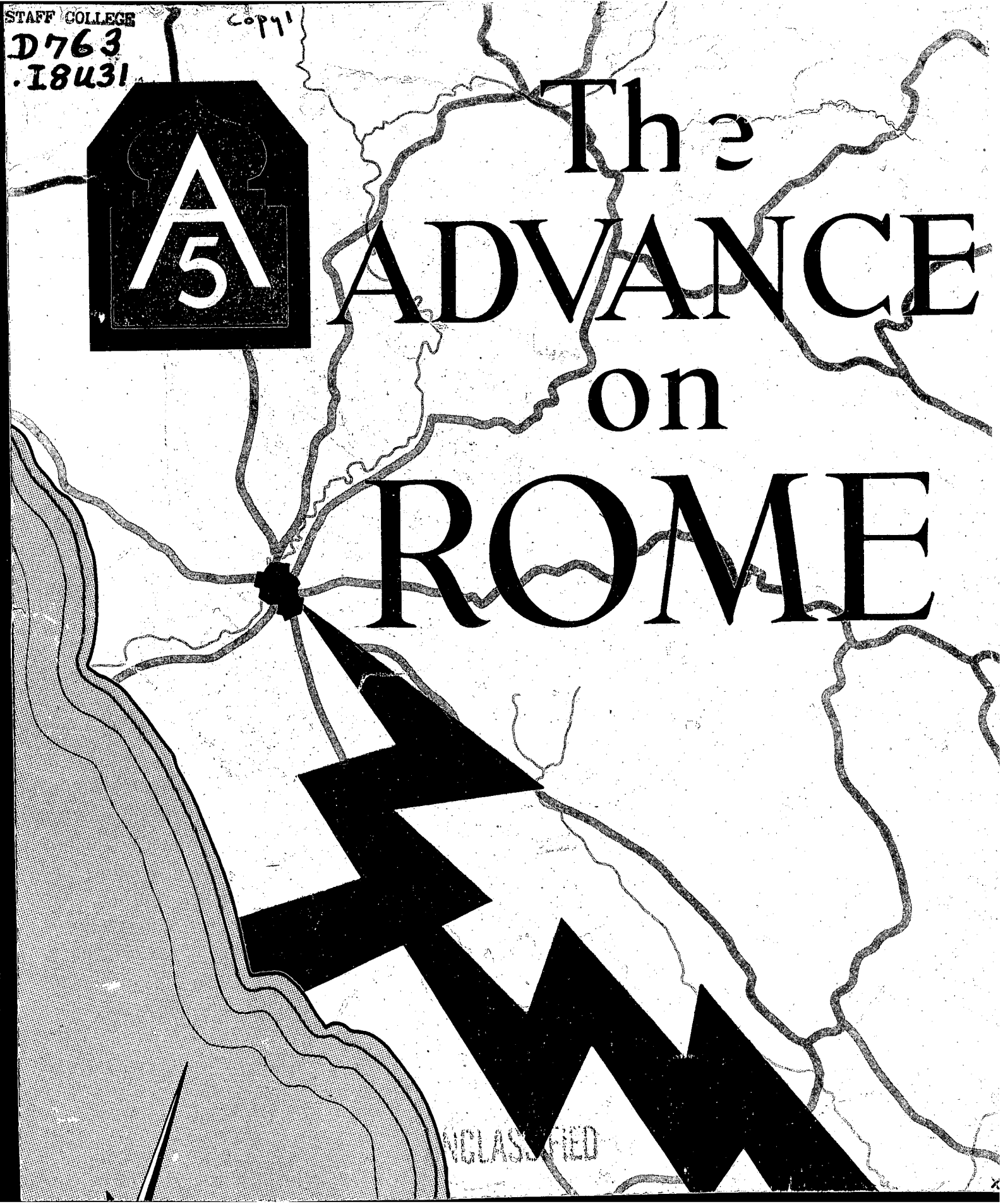
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The ADVANCE on ROME



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Report Documentation Page

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U.S. Army. Fifth Army.

The
Advance on Rome
of the
Fifth Army

Under command of
LIEUTENANT GENERAL MARK W. CLARK
U. S. A.

Prepared by the
G-3 Section, Headquarters Fifth Army

Reproduced by the
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FOREWORD

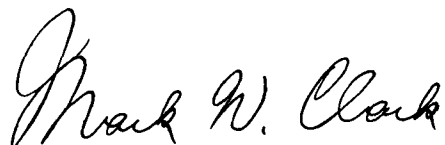
This is the chronicle of a historic battle.

Reading it one forgets the long and torturous winter in the hills near the *GARIGLIANO*, the tribulations connected with the assault on the *VERDUN*-like position of *CASSINO*, the agony of months in the island which was the *ANZIO* Beachhead.

One remembers only the glory which accrued to the Fifth Army for its tremendous tactical successes, its destruction of enemy personnel and materiel, its capture of the first enemy capitol city, *ROME*.

America honors the Fifth Army. To its personnel — British, French and American — I have only gratitude for their accomplishments. Theirs is the valor, theirs the endurance, theirs the success.

The Fifth Army marches on!



MARK W. CLARK
Lieutenant General, U.S.A.
Commanding

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THE ADVANCE ON ROME

I. THE BACKGROUND

a. During the months of preparation prior to the resumption of the offensive to consolidate forces with the beachhead and drive the enemy north of *ROME*, much careful study and planning was done by the staffs of Fifth and Eighth Armies and their subordinate headquarters. To insure success in the large scale attack that was to come, the highest degree of cooperation between personnel was essential. All concerned discharged their numerous and grave responsibilities with unity, vigor and unflinching purpose.

b. A tremendous amount of coordination between ground troops, air forces and naval units had to be achieved to insure smooth clock-like precision for the team play to follow. Troops were rested and given further training in rear areas while forward positions were maintained by a system of regular reliefs. Fresh reserves were concentrated in the *GARIGLIANO* Bridgehead. The necessary dumps of food, medical stores, engineer equipment, ammunition and other supplies were built up. Installations and supporting services were located close to the combat troops. Units and thousands of key individuals, as well as those who were to engage the enemy in actual combat, rehearsed the important parts they were to play. Through the untiring efforts of everyone concerned, many difficult problems were solved and standards of performance brought to the desired level.

c. Great care was taken to conceal movements and concentrations while the Fifth and Eighth Armies were moving into their new sectors. Troop movements, concentrations, amphibious and paratroop demonstrations, and radio activity were conducted to mislead and confuse the enemy. Enemy documents captured during the attack showed that the German possessed very poor and inaccurate information as to the composition and dispositions of Fifth Army troops. The amphibious demonstrations had led him to believe such an operation was to be mounted and did a great deal to make him place his reserves where their subsequent use was canalized in meeting our swift advance.

d. Six days before the scheduled operation a conference was called by Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark, the Fifth Army Commander, to discuss final arrangements, to outline the plan in broad form and to reach a mutual understanding between subordinate commanders.

THE ADVANCE ON ROME

2. THE PLAN

a. The Enemy Situation:

From an exhaustive intelligence study of the enemy situation the following conclusions were reached:

(1) On the southern or main front opposing Fifth Army the enemy had two and one-half divisions defending the *GUSTAV* Line. In the rear was the *ADOLF HITLER* Line, a formidable and well prepared position. Half of one division was in the *ITRI* area in reserve. (*Unfold Plate One*)

(2) Confronting the Eighth Army the enemy north of the *LIRI* River was in approximately the same strength as the force opposing Fifth Army.

(3) Five enemy divisions were containing the *ANZIO* Beachhead force with one other division in immediate reserve.

(4) Additional enemy divisions were located as follows: One division southeast of *ROME*, two divisions in the vicinity of *CIVITAVECCHIA*, and five more in Northern *ITALY*.

(5) The enemy capabilities and probabilities of action indicated that it was most likely he would employ delaying tactics if driven from the *GUSTAV* Line, contesting each important tactical locality until the *ADOLF HITLER* Line was reached, where he could be expected to defend and reinforce. When forced from that position it was possible he would fall back to a defense line he had been preparing south of *ROME*.

b. Information of Adjacent Units and Supporting Troops:

Assistance Fifth Army could expect from adjacent units and supporting troops was briefly as follows:

(1) On the main front 5 Corps, under Allied Armies in Italy control, was given the principal mission of holding and exerting pressure on the extreme right flank. The Eighth Army which was to make the main effort for Allied Armies in Italy was directed to break through the enemy's positions into the *LIRI* Valley

and advance on the general axis of Highway No. 6. Specifically, the initial attack was to be made with 10 Corps on the right, the Polish Corps in the center, and 13 Corps on the left. Covering a wide front, 10 Corps was to demonstrate force and lead the enemy to think it would attack towards *ATINA*. The Polish Corps, initially, would outflank the *MONASTERY* from *M. CASTELLONE*, cut Highway No. 6 and, after seizure of the *MONASTERY*, attack in the direction of *PIEDI-MONTE*. The advance would then be pressed to gain all the high ground toward *ROCCASECCA* as rapidly as possible. This maneuver was designed to assist 13 Corps which planned to force a crossing of the *RAPIDO* and move swiftly up the *LIRI* Valley. The 1st Canadian Corps, in Eighth Army reserve, was to be used either to assist or to pass through 13 Corps, depending on the situation.

(2) Artillery missions were initially to be counterbattery and concentrations on known positions, later shifting to maintain road blocks at critical points to isolate the battlefield and to disrupt enemy means of supply, communications and reinforcement.

(3) The Navy was assigned a similar mission in the *TERRACINA* area along the coastal flank of II Corps.

(4) Isolation of the battlefield was given highest air priority in addition to constant attention on communications west of *ROME*.

c. **Mission of Fifth Army.**

(1) TROOPS.

(a) Main front troops were under II Corps and French Expeditionary Corps. The II Corps consisted of the 85th and 88th Infantry Divisions (US) while the French Expeditionary Corps was made up of the 1st Motorized Infantry Division, 2d Moroccan Infantry Division, 3d Algerian Infantry Division, and 4th Moroccan Mountain Division. In addition the French Corps had three Groups of Tabors (Goumiers):

(b) The *ANZIO* Beachhead forces under VI Corps consisted of the 3d, 34th and 45th Infantry Divisions (US), the 1 and 5 Infantry Divisions (British), the 1st Armored Division and the 1st Special Service Force (US).

(c) The 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion (US) located in the *NAPLES* area was to be prepared to execute drop missions on Army order.

(d) The 36th Infantry Division (US) was considered for planning purposes to be initially in Army reserve. The Division had been attached to II Corps to plan both for employment in II Corps' zone of action and also to prepare plans for a rapid movement to the beachhead area. As the action opened, the 36th Infantry Division was in a rest area in the vicinity of *QUALIANO*.

(2) THE AAI DIRECTIVE.

The task of Fifth Army as laid down by Operations Order No. 1, Headquarters Allied Armies in Italy, directed the Fifth Army would:

(a) Capture the *AUSONIA* defile and advance on the axis generally parallel to that of Eighth Army but south of the *LIRI* and *SACCO* Rivers.

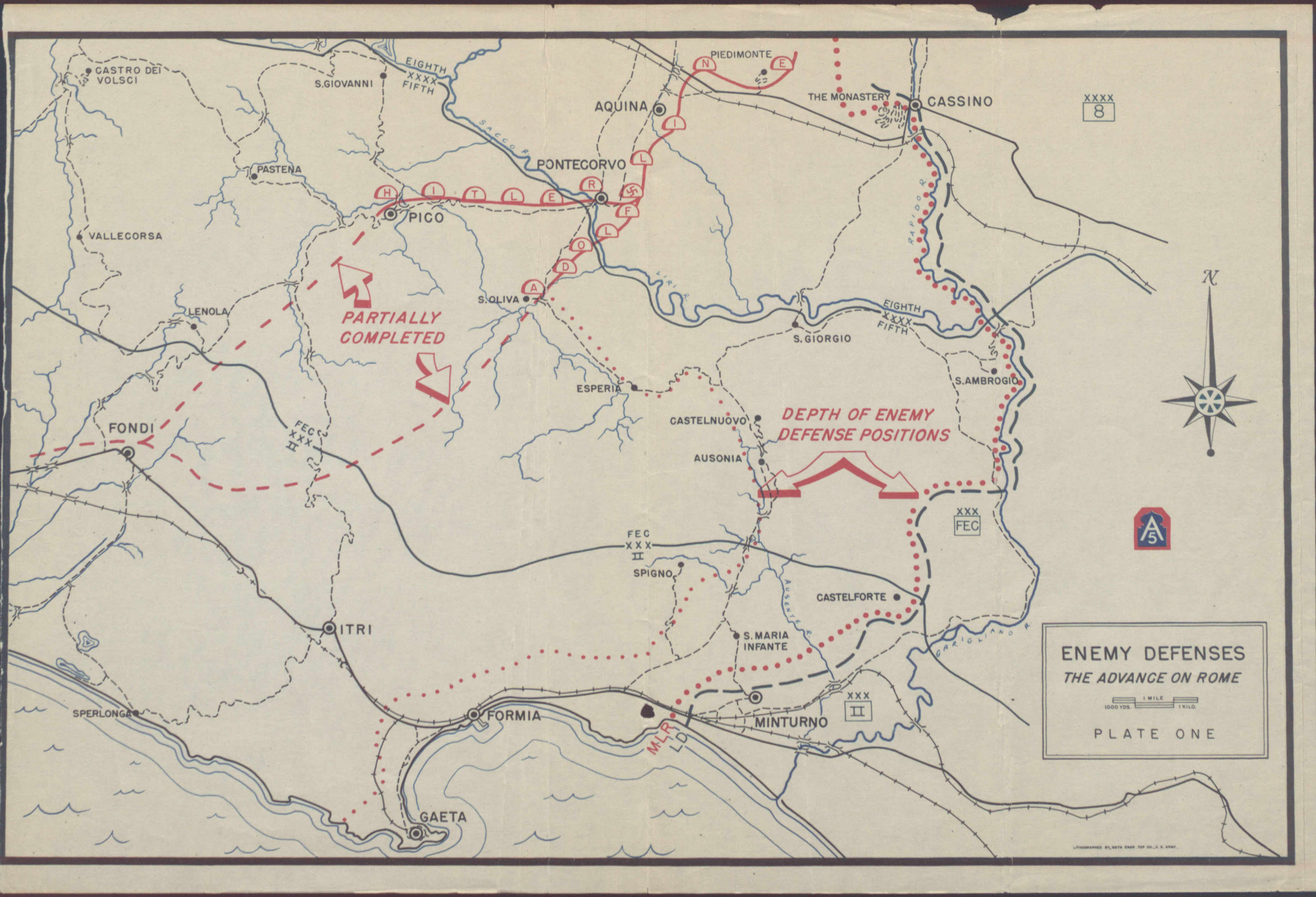
(b) Launch an attack from the *ANZIO* Bridgehead on the general axis *CORI-VALMONTONE* to cut Highway No. 6 in the *VALMONTONE* area and thereby prevent the supply and withdrawal of troops of the German Tenth Army opposing the advance of Eighth and Fifth Armies. The Fifth Army attack from the bridgehead would be ready to be launched on 24 hours notice anytime after D+4.

(c) Pursue the enemy north of *ROME* and capture the *VITERBO* Airfields and the Port of *CIVITAVECCHIA*.

(d) Thereafter advance on *LEGHORN*.

(3) THE ARMY COMMANDER'S FIRST DECISION.

To assist the Eighth Army's effort north of the *LIRI* and *SACCO* Rivers, the Fifth Army effort had to be made on the right. No mention had been made of an advance along Route No. 7. The roads south of the *LIRI* and *SACCO* along which the Fifth Army's main effort had to be made precluded the employment of more than one Corps. To facilitate his advance by use of maximum forces, the Army Commander made a bold decision. He decided to attack on his right for *M. MAJO* and *SAN AMBROGIO*, at the same time gaining the high ground west of the *MINTURNO* Bridgehead, seizing the *AUSENTE* Valley and then pushing through the *PETRELLA* Hill Mass to cut the *ITRI-PICO* Road and smash the *HITLER* Line.



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**PARTIALLY
COMPLETED**

**DEPTH OF ENEMY
DEFENSE POSITIONS**



**ENEMY DEFENSES
THE ADVANCE ON ROME**

1 MILE
1000 YDS. 1 KILO.

PLATE ONE

LITHOGRAPHED BY 66TH ENGR. TOP CO., U. S. ARMY.

THE ADVANCE ON ROME

3. THE ACTION

a. Phase I and II (*Unfold Plate Two*)

(1) DISCUSSION.

From a tactical planning viewpoint the contemplated action should be divided into two main phases:

Phase I was to be the initial attack from a firm base in the *GARIGLIANO-MINTURNO* Bridgehead: The French Corps to secure a firm hold on the high ground around *M. MAJO* and to cut the *AUSONIA* road north of *AUSONIA*; II Corps to seize *M. DAMIANO*, move along the « S » Ridge toward *COLLE S. MARTINO* and sever the valley road in that vicinity.

Phase II required a continuation of the advance through the *PETRELLA* Hill Mass to secure the *ITRI-PICO* road and break through the *HITLER* Line. This daring and brilliantly conceived plan was to exceed expectations as the battle progressed. The maneuver was designed to close one end of the *AUSENTE* Valley with the French Expeditionary Corps, thereby fulfilling the orders of the Commander-in-Chief to assist the advance of Eighth Army in the *LIRI* Valley. Meanwhile II Corps was to advance along the coastal sector and capture critical features in the foothills of the *PETRELLA* Hill Mass.

(2) ACTION, PHASE I.

At 112300B May the offensive was opened with our artillery producing a nightmare of hell in the German's battery positions and along his forward wall. To retain until the latest possible moment the advantage gained by regrouping and careful reconnaissance, a lengthy artillery « preparation », as such, was not fired. Instead, the entire weight of Fifth Army's artillery was concentrated in turn on known enemy positions — gun emplacements, fortified localities, dumps and fixed defenses. In this way, the infantry was able to advance almost simultaneously with the opening of artillery fire. Surprise was not lost, and at the same time enemy guns were silenced by savage counter battery concentrations, while pill boxes and other advance-impeding installations were wiped out. The French Expeditionary Corps under General Alphonse Juin and II Corps under Major General Geoffrey Keyes attacked abreast at the same hour, with the French Expeditionary Corps on



An early objective, M. DAMIANO, (left) was the key to CASTELFORTE.



Resistance was mopped up at S. MARIA INFANTE.

the right, and secured the initiative with a considerable amount of surprise. The enemy, nevertheless, refused to yield his well-prepared positions until after prolonged and desperate resistance. Characteristic of the early fighting were many instances of strongpoints being won only when they had been completely isolated, outfought and overrun, and subsequent fierce counterattacks had been repulsed by our troops.

In the French Expeditionary Corps' sector the 2d Moroccan Infantry Division pushed northwest from the *GARIGLIANO* Bridgehead assisted by simultaneous drives on both sides. *M. FAITO* was taken on the first day by the 2d Moroccan Infantry Division which continued to attack to secure *M. MAJO* the following day. From this firm base the Division succeeded in gaining the high ground farther to the north as elements of the 3d Algerian Infantry Division with a US tank battalion, employed earlier in clearing *CASTELFORTE*, were enabled to reach a point 500 yards southeast of *AUSONIA* and secure control of the *AUSENTE* Valley road at that point. Meanwhile the 1st Motorized Infantry Division and US armor had captured *S. ANDREA* and *S. AMBROGIO* in a sweep north along the *GARIGLIANO*, joining other elements which had forced a crossing near the right Army boundary, and then continued west along the *LIRI* through *S. APOLLINARI* and into *S. GEORGIO* cutting off any further usefulness of the important *AUSENTE* Valley to enemy remnants there. The 4th Moroccan Mountain Division also dominated the valley from positions it reached generally along the river some distance below *AUSONIA* while protecting the left flank of French Expeditionary Corps and maintaining contact with II Corps. Thus the French Expeditionary Corps had fulfilled its most difficult task.

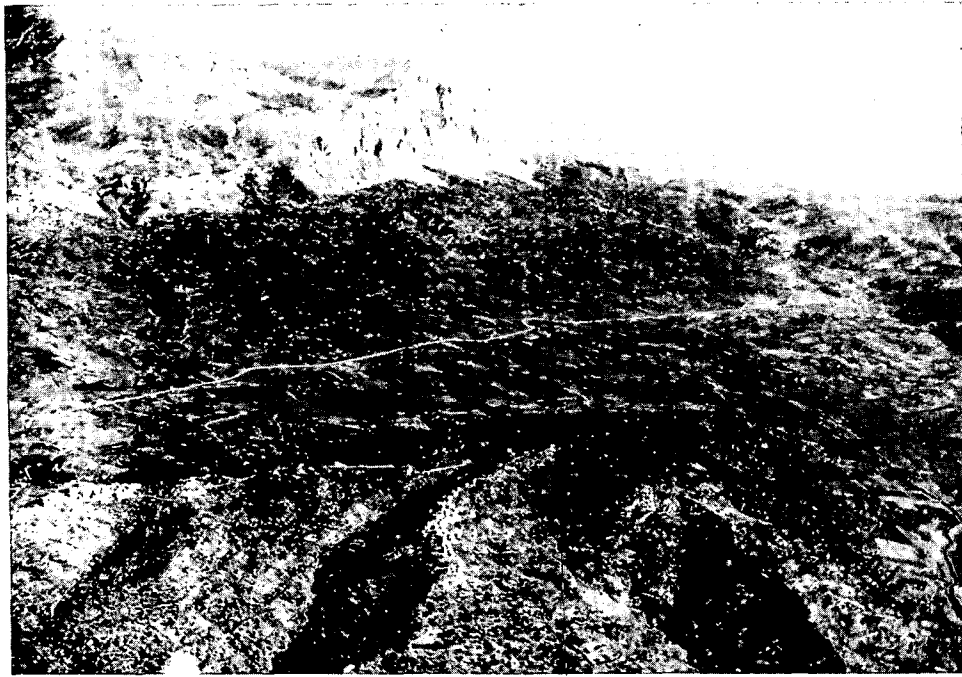
Fighting was equally bitter in the II Corps zone as the 88th Infantry Division on the right and the 85th Infantry Division on the left struck west against strongly-defended fortifications amid extremely rugged terrain. The 88th Infantry Division immediately seized *S. COSIMO* e *DAMIANO*, 1 kilometer southwest of *CASTELFORTE* which doomed the town later occupied by French Forces, while other elements pushed rapidly to *S. MARIA INFANTE* on 12 May. Very determined resistance was finally broken here on 14 May and the relentless drive bore on toward *SPIGNO*, approaching within 2 kilometers of the town. The 85th Infantry Division had quickly consolidated the « S » ridge southwest of *S. MARIA INFANTE* during the first day, facilitating the 88th Infantry Division's attack on the town and denying use of the *AUSONIA* Road to the enemy. On the left flank units of the 85th Infantry Division progressed along Route No. 7 and held against repeated counterattacks. Phase I was now more than complete.

(3) THE ARMY COMMANDER'S SECOND DECISION.

After the completing of Phase I, it became apparent that a break-through might be made on the left. Exploitation of this break-through of the *GUSTAV* Line would therefore cause a more rapid junction with the beachhead forces than could be accomplished by the forces operating in the *LIRI* Valley. The Eighth Army forces operating in the *LIRI* Valley were fighting on the floor of the valley east of the *HITLER* Line and in the hills around *PIEDIMONTE*. *S. ANGELO* and *CASSINO* had been secured, but the main fortifications remained to be pierced. On 16 May the Army Commander placed the 85th Infantry Division on a 72 hour alert



At the outskirts of AUSONIA the enemy road was cut.



Control of the important AUSENTE Valley was won.

for possible withdrawal and movement to the beachhead and further limited it in operations to a line north and south through *CAMPESE*. He also alerted the 36th Infantry Division at this time. Effective 161200B May, II Corps was to be prepared to turn over command of its sector to IV Corps and move to the beachhead on 24 hours notice. In the Army Commander's consideration of the future use of both the 36th and the 85th Infantry Divisions time was the vital element. Oral orders had been issued as the phase drew to a successful close. The Army Commander decided to continue the action with French Corps over the mountain masses and break through the *HITLER* Line; at the same time he continued the relentless attack by II Corps along the high ground north of Route No. 7. This combined action if pushed rapidly would have a two-fold result: assist the Eighth Army in their advance up the *LIRI* Valley; complete the first step toward joining of beachhead forces along Route No. 7, and further permit the use of the 85th Infantry Division in the *ANZIO* area at an earlier date than would have been possible had it been shipped by water. Despite the fact that II Corps' two divisions had fought a major action and no relief was available, he ordered a rapid and continuous attack. Fifth Army went forward to new successes.

(4) ACTION, PHASE II.

The action continued with no let-up, giving the enemy little opportunity to regroup his forces or throw in fresh reserves. While his elaborate system of strong fortifications in depth known as the *GUSTAV* Line was by no means breached, it had been seriously weakened by our swift thrusts. The 2d Moroccan Infantry Division was pinched out by the 3d Algerian Infantry Division early in this phase and several « Groupements » composed of native troops (*GOUMIERS*) and parts of the 4th Moroccan Mountain Division were formed to push through the mountainous country and cut the *ITRI-PICO* Road. The 1st Motorized Infantry Division remained on the right while the 3d Algerian Infantry Division was in the center with the several Groupements operating mainly on the left.

The 1st Motorized Infantry Division completed mopping up *S. GEORGIO* and continued westward to a position along the *RIO FORMA QUESA* from which forward elements pressed on toward *PONTECORVO*. Elements of the 3d Algerian Infantry Division cleaned up *AUSONIA* and *CASTELNUOVO* on 15 May and proceeded in the direction of *ESPERIA* relieving the 2d Moroccan Infantry Division and after securing *ESPERIA*, drove on *PICO*. In rapid succession it overcame stubborn enemy resistance to capture the heights of *M. d'ORO* continuing on to secure *S. OLIVA* and the high ground commanding *PICO* from the southeast from which it severed the *PICO-PONTECORVO* Road and resisted all enemy attempts to dislodge it from the *PICO* area. One Groupement had scaled the steep slopes of *M. FAMMERA*, assisting the movement of the 3d Algerian Infantry Division to the northwest, and later drove scattered enemy forces west to reach the hills overlooking the *ITRI-PICO* Road as the main spearhead further south stabbed through the rough *PETRELLA* Hill Mass. This Groupement occupied *M. REVOLE* on 17 May and placed the *ITRI-PICO* Road under fire from mountain pack artillery, effectively halting enemy movement along this important lateral communication route. *M. FAGGETO* was also occupied and the road directly west of *M. REVOLE* fell into *GOUM* hands 20 May. The enemy frantically committed



In the LIRI Valley hushed CASSINO became a ghost.



Twin thrusts swiftly overran the formidable PETRELLA Hill Mass.

piece meal reserves rushed pell-mell from the *ROME* area in an effort to keep the *HITLER* Line intact, but its fate was sealed, the hinge was cracked.

The II Corps likewise had given the German no rest as it continued to drive his disorganized forces further west. The 88th Infantry Division seized *SPIGNO* at the beginning of Phase II and swept through the *PETRELLA* Foothills keeping abreast of the French Groups to their north. On 19 May it secured a firm hold on the *ITRI-PICO* road and stormed *ITRI* into submission. From this key point a reconnaissance spearhead along the axis Highway No. 7 succeeded in reaching *FONDI* on 20 May and foot troops occupied the town that same evening. Another fast-moving reconnaissance team thrust sharply southwest to a point just beyond *SPERLONGA* on the coast. In the 85th Infantry Division zone *M. SCAURI*, south of Route No. 7, was taken on 16 May as the main advance moved through the hills north of the highway. During the next three days the line pushed forward against moderate resistance to the *GAETA* Road Junction, west of *FORMIA*, where stiff fighting occurred. *FORMIA* had been found heavily-mined and had to be cleared of snipers. *GAETA* was occupied during the night 19/20 May and was found to be densely mined along the coast. On the following day, elements consolidated their positions to the southwest of Highway No. 7 and extended gains to include the high ground approximately three miles northwest of *ITRI*. At this highly successful conclusion of Phase II the *HITLER* Line had been outflanked and rendered untenable. Enemy forces now remaining in Fifth Army's area were badly demoralized and could offer no real obstacle or serious delay to a relentless pursuit, swiftly executed.



THE ADVANCE ON ROME

b. **Phase III** (*Unfold Plate Three*)

(1) DISCUSSION.

It was believed that pursuit of the enemy to the northwest could be undertaken by both Corps when the *HITLER* Line was penetrated. This was also considered the opportune time to attempt to break out of the *ANZIO* Beachhead and join forces. During the preceding phases beachhead forces had the mission of holding firm and screening future actions.

During the latter part of Phase II it was decided to attack out of the beachhead on 23 May. On 18 May the 36th Infantry Division had begun loading out of *NAPLES* for *ANZIO*. Although Headquarters Allied Armies in Italy had directed the main axis of attack to be toward *VALMONTONE*, alternate plans were prepared to fit any contingency. In fact a total of three plans were prepared for the break-out from the beachhead. One attack was toward *CARROCETO* and west of *COLLI LAZIALI*, the second was in the direction of *CORI* thence north to cut Highway No. 6, the third was to reach the high ground at *SEZZE*, in conjunction with a drive by French Corps down the natural corridor from the *SISERNO* Hill Mass, and pinch out II Corps thereby gaining more flexibility in the beachhead attack.

The 85th Infantry Division was placed on the alert to move by water and thereby insure its presence in the beachhead if needed. To support the attack, the division would have to be there, either by land or water. It was felt that as the attacks were progressing so favorably, there was a possibility of a break through the *AUSONIA* Hill Mass, the effecting of a junction with beachhead forces via Highway No. 7, (thereby bringing the 85th and 88th Infantry Divisions by land to the beachhead) and finally a drive with all forces on the *ALBANO* Hill Mass and *ROME*.

(2) THE ARMY COMMANDER'S THIRD DECISION.

The Army Commander basing his decision on these factors ordered the advance of the II Corps through the *AUSONIA* Hill Mass.

(3) ACTION, PHASE III.

The *ADOLF HITLER* Line soon ceased to exist in name even before it was completely erased in fact. German propaganda broadcasts hastily withdrew that reference as their own troops were being forced to retreat from its tottering bastions. The methodical reduction of these fortifications in the *PICO-PONTECORVO* area continued for several days. Fighting remained bitter in the French



FORMIA was pulverized by Allied air and naval might.



Debris and human wreckage littered ITRI. The drive sped on.

sector as the enemy resorted to strong counterattacks and delaying tactics while his efforts were not so determined in the II Corps' zone.

The 1st Motorized Infantry Division secured the French Expeditionary Corps' right flank along the *SACCO* west of *PONTECORVO* until pinched out by the 3d Algerian Infantry Division on the 25th. The 3d Algerian Infantry Division was severely counterattacked, losing *M. PALINFERNO*, 2 kilometers northwest of *PICO*, on 23 May but regained this ground the next day and elements pushed on to *S. GIOVANNI*, 6 kilometers north of *PICO*. Part of the 2d Moroccan Infantry Division moved forward on 23 May to assist the 3d Algerian Infantry Division on the left. It attacked in the direction of *PASTENA* advancing to about 1000 yards east of the town. Other elements secured the high ground some 3 kilometers west of *PASTENA*. In the 4th Moroccan Mountain Division sector the combination of exceedingly difficult terrain and vicious enemy resistance failed to halt the momentum of the division's penetration. One drive punched west to *VALLECORSA* and then swung north to take *M. ROTONDO*. *GOUMS* fanned out swiftly to seize the precipitous slopes of *M. CIVITELLA* west of *VALLECORSA*, *M. QUATTORDICI* to the northwest, and also occupied *AMASENO*.

II Corps troops outdid themselves racing toward the now virtually assured meeting with beachhead forces. The 350th Infantry Regiment of the 88th Infantry Division spearheaded one thrust which reached *ROCCASECCA* de *VOLSCI* in the *AMASENO* River bend near *PRIVERNO* during the night of 23 May. Other division elements proceeded on the task of clearing the mountain masses of remaining enemy in its area and protecting the Corps' right flank. On the 350th Infantry Regiment's left, the 339th Infantry Regiment of the 85th Infantry Division kept generally abreast advancing on *SONNINO*, capturing it the same evening. By the close of Phase III this thrust crossed the *AMASENO* River and cut the valley road. Along the ancient Appian Way another major drive forked west to *M. LEANO*, reached by the 338th Infantry Regiment on 23 May, as elements of the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, attached to the II Corps, moved to occupy a position a short distance to their north. The 337th Infantry Regiment attacked *TERRACINA* on 23 May and captured it early the next morning.

Upon gaining the general line of hills above the *AMASENO* River and flooded *PONTINE* Marshes, the II Corps ordered its tiring regiments to regroup. Excellent team play had produced perfect interference to clear the field. It now remained but to reach the goal to score an impressive victory. Displaying the same spirit of close cooperation the ball was passed to a lighter, fresher and faster member of the team, the 91st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, also attached to II Corps, which made contact with another reconnaissance party from *ANZIO* near *BORGO GRAPPA* at 1010B on the 25th of May.

Prior to launching the beachhead attack, time was employed to fullest advantage. Positions were held firm, units were relieved according to plan and final preparations were carried to completion. Normal patrolling and artillery activity was also maintained to screen the forthcoming operation. The 36th Infantry Division moved to the *ANZIO* area by increments commencing 18 May and closing on 22 May.

At 230630B May, VI Corps, under command of Major General Lucian K. Truscott Jr., jumped off assisted by a diversionary action of the 1 and 5 British In-

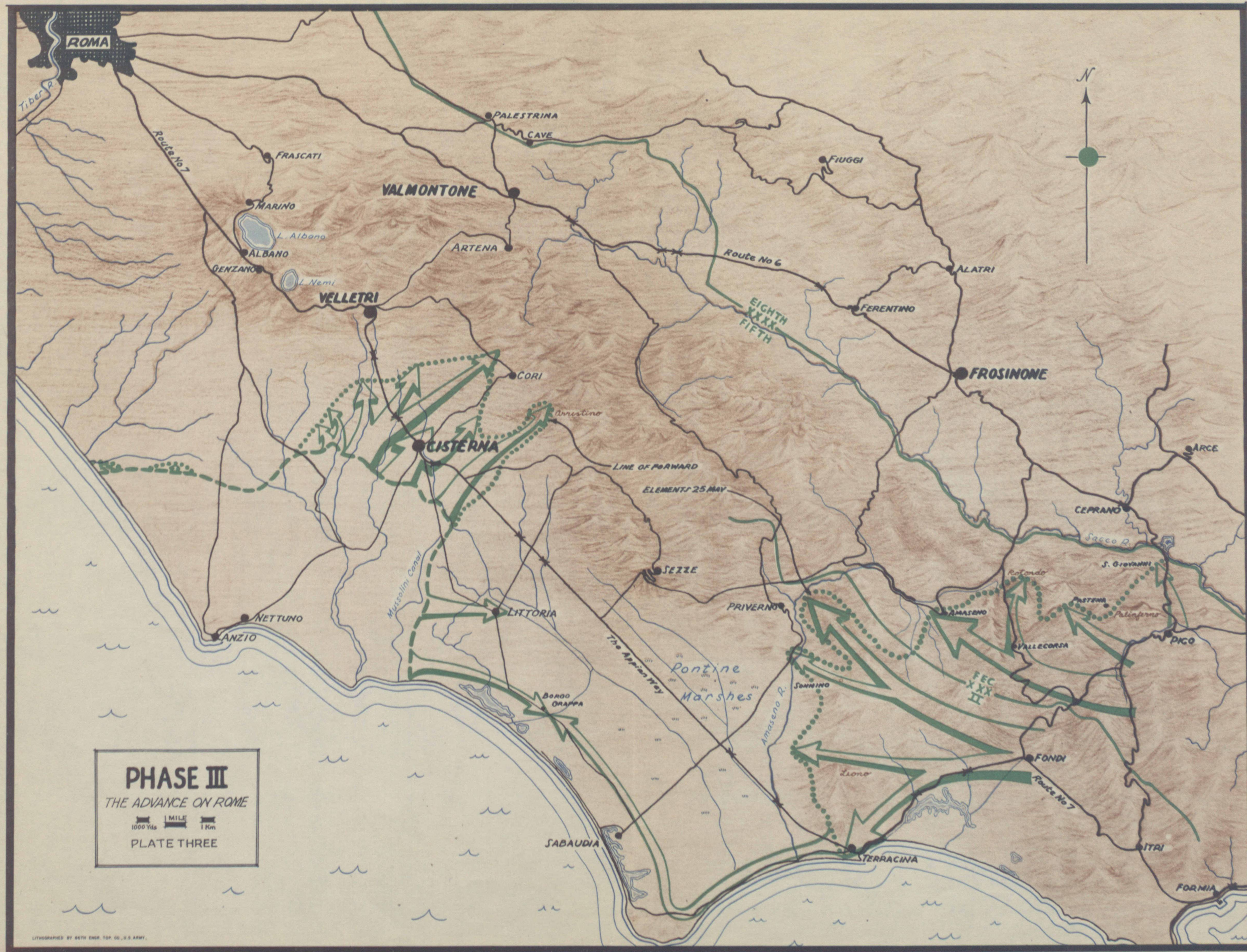


Stubborn fighting for CISTERNA lasted two days.



Army Commander encouraged his troops on the road to ROME.

fantry Divisions, under Army control, on the left. The 1st Special Service Force, reinforced, struck from the right shoulder toward *M. ARRESTINO* meeting heavy initial resistance the first day, but succeeded in cutting Highway No. 7 on 24 May and securing its objective on 25 May. The 3d Infantry Division, attacking *CISTERNA*, completely enveloped the town in a stubborn two-day battle. Upon its capture in the late afternoon 25 May, elements pushed on toward *CORI*. Elements of the 1st Armored Division drove north and northeast encountering a heavy minefield at one point that caused some delay until infantry cleared a path and its advance could be resumed. On 25 May forward elements had cut the road 2 kilometers northwest of *CORI* placing the town between jaws that later (the following day) closed around it. The 45th Infantry Division fought off a heavy counterattack while improving its line some 4 to 5 kilometers north of its original position on the left shoulder. Elements of the 34th Infantry Division occupied positions held by the armor and the 1st Special Service Force as they continued to move forward. British troops exerted strong pressure to achieve local gains on the extreme left. On 25 May a composite group, chiefly reconnaissance and engineer troops, joined hands with II Corps east of the beachhead, while patrols from the 36th Combat Engineer Regiment reported *LITTORIA* clear. These successes left nothing more to be desired at the conclusion of Phase III.



PHASE III
THE ADVANCE ON ROME
1000 Yds 1 MILE 1 Km
PLATE THREE

THE ADVANCE ON ROME

c. **Phase IV** (*Unfold Plate Four*)

(1) DISCUSSION.

The Army Commander's decision to pursue the enemy west through the *AUSONIA* Hill Mass. screening with the French Corps, while withdrawing II Corps and moving it to the beachhead to unify command of the right sector, proved most sound. Headquarters IV Corps commanded by Major General Willis D. Crittenger took over the II Corps sector. The advance continued and French successes, although confined to extremely difficult maneuvering in rugged terrain, advanced beyond expectations. The French advance made German positions on the south floor of the *LIRI* Valley untenable thereby continuing fulfillment of our directive to assist Eighth Army's advance along Route No. 6. The beachhead force attacked on 23 May as ordered. The 36th Infantry Division was used as necessity dictated — to maintain contact between the 3d and 34th Infantry Divisions. As the action progressed and contact between the beachhead and main front forces became a matter of hours, the Army Commander had to decide as to the best use of his combined forces.

The situation at the beachhead was this: On the left the two British Divisions were in a very active defense line and not in condition for extended offensive action; the 45th Infantry Division was on a wide front; the 34th Infantry Division was well engaged before *LANUVIO*; the 36th Infantry Division had one combat team engaged around *VELLETRI*; the 3d Infantry Division and 1st Special Service Force were up in the hills south of *VALMONTONE* where they were able to place Route No. 6 under artillery fire. Fifth Army's mass was in position to attack down Highway No. 7; however, the enemy's capabilities for counter attack were strongest near the *VALMONTONE* position where our salient at *ARTENA* was exposed on the left where it projected beyond the line of the 36th Division and on the right where the French forces had not come up. The right flank presented the most vulnerable target as enemy troops withdrawing before the French were still numerous and to protect their withdrawal they might well be expected to launch a counter attack on the 3d Division — 1st Special Service Force.

(2) THE ARMY COMMANDER'S FOURTH DECISION.

The Army Commander took a calculated risk. He evaluated the enemy's counterattack capabilities as very slight. Screening the right flank of the 3d Division with a reconnaissance squadron he ordered the attack to complete what was to be the final Fifth Army operation east of *ROME*. In his order of 31 May 1944, General Clark sent the II Corps on the right to swing down Highway No. 6;



Our jubilant forces met near BORGIO GRAPPA.



A jaw of armor irresistably closed on CORI.

French Expeditionary Corps to pull up and screen the right flank; VI Corps to secure *COLLI LAZIALI* within its zone of action, drive forward with the utmost speed and cut the routes of withdrawal of enemy forces through *ROME*, then push strong forces southwest to annihilate the enemy against the *TIBER* River; 5 Infantry Division (British) to press forward rapidly to the *TIBER* to cut off and destroy enemy forces turned south by VI Corps. As soon as this decision was reached, plans were begun for an orderly passage of units through *ROME*, proper police of the city and pursuit of the enemy to the west.

(3) ACTION, PHASE IV.

By 26 May resistance had weakened throughout most of the French Expeditionary Corps sector except in front of the 2d Moroccan Infantry Division. The 3d Algerian Infantry Division completed occupation of *S. GIOVANNI* and resumed their advance northward to secure the French flank being pinched out by the 2d Moroccan Infantry Division which broke the enemy grip on *PASTENA* at the beginning of the phase and moved rapidly northwest to capture *CASTRO dei VOLSCI* on the second day and were about 1000 yards from *CECCANO* on 28 May. The enemy doggedly held there until 30 May. When the defense of *CECCANO* collapsed so did all his hopes of further organized resistance in the area. The 2d Moroccan Infantry Division then took up the pursuit moving rapidly northwest through the hill slopes rising from the *SACCO* Valley to positions along the river near Highway No. 6, halting there to cover Fifth Army's right shortly before the period closed. Meanwhile the indefatigable *GOUMS* and 4th Moroccan Mountain Division elements thrust forward at an amazing pace. At the opening of Phase IV they quickly consolidated the general line of the road *AMASENO-CASTRO dei VOLSCI*, then seized *M. SISERNO* on 27 May as a springboard to *GUILLIANO*, captured the following day with *PROSSEDI*, 3 kilometers southeast. The drive continued to secure *M. della DIFESA* on 29 May, and *Mts. SENTINELLA, SALERIA* and *PILOCCO* on 30 May with *GOUMS* arriving before *CARPINETO*. Relief of the 88th Infantry Division in the *NORMA-BASSIANO-SEZZE* area was accomplished on the last day of May as *CARPINETO* was mopped up. *MONTELANICO* was solidly held by 2 June as the 3d Algerian Infantry Division passed through the 4th Moroccan Mountain Division, contacting the II Corps at *COLLEFERRO* and taking *SEGNI*. During the period 3-5 June, the 3d Algerian Infantry Division, followed by the 1st Motorized Infantry Division, moved up to protect the right flank in Fifth Army's sweep on *ROME*.

II Corps resumed its attack northwest as Phase IV opened. The 88th Infantry Division completed clearing the hill masses east of the *AMASENO* River and advanced on the towns of *ROCCAGORGA* and *MAENZA*, approximately 3 miles north of *PRIVERNO*. The 85th Infantry Division occupied *SEZZE*, cleared by reconnaissance troops earlier, and secured *PRIVERNO* on 27 May. The next day IV Corps assumed command and responsibility in II Corps' zone and the 88th Infantry Division relieved the 85th Infantry Division in its sector. II Corps and the 85th Infantry Division moved to the *ANZIO* front. IV Corps continued progress to the northwest against dissipating resistance and turned over its area to the French on 1 June. The 88th Infantry Division also moved to *ANZIO* to rejoin II Corps, then on the right of VI Corps.



General CLARK checked with his field commanders.



Determined doughboys captured VALMONTONE.

The drive of the 1st Special Service Force, the 3d Infantry Division and elements of the 1st Armored Division toward *VALMONTONE* to cut Highway No. 6 continued in VI Corps' zone with the 34th and 45th Infantry Divisions, also supported by tanks, attacking *VELLETRI* on the left. On 26 May armor had speared swiftly north to enter *ARTENA* followed by the 3d Infantry Division with the 1st Special Service Force in the vicinity of *CORI*. Progress was considerably slower north from *ARTENA* with the enemy fiercely contesting our every effort to advance in the direction of *VALMONTONE*. Kesselring indulged in numerous bloody counterattacks here throwing in fresh well-trained reserves. Day by day however, our determined doughboys and tank forces jockeyed in for the kill. On 29 May II Corps had been given command of operations toward *VALMONTONE* (for boundaries see Plate Four), with the 3d and 85th Infantry Divisions (and the 88th Infantry Division after 31 May), 1st Special Service Force, elements of the 1st Armored Division and reconnaissance troops attached, and preparations were completed to launch an all-out attack on 1 June.

Meanwhile the 36th Infantry Division had been committed to a flanking movement on *VELLETRI*, with the 34th Infantry Division in the center advancing generally toward *LANUVIO* and the 43th Infantry Division pivoting on its left. German counterblows were equally violent in this sector but the relentless encirclement of those towns continued with mounting fury and heavy enemy losses. By 30 May the 36th Infantry Division, skillfully taking advantage of German dispositions, gained the heights of *M. ARTEMISIO* overlooking *VELLETRI* from the northwest thereby weakening the defense of the *ALBANO* Hills. The 34th Infantry Division reached a line less than 1 kilometer south of *LANUVIO* and forward elements of the 45th Infantry Division held a line about 4 kilometers due south of *ALBANO* extending southwest another 4 kilometers. British forces improved their positions favorably, conforming to the main advance on their right.

On the first day of June, Highway No. 6, the vital enemy supply and communication link to his forces in front of Eighth Army's left flank, was cut just east of *VALMONTONE* by the 15th Infantry Regiment of the 3d Infantry Division. *VALMONTONE* was taken on 2 June by the 30th Infantry Regiment as the 7th Infantry Regiment reached *LABICO*, 3 kilometers to the west. The 1st Special Service Force reinforced, was given the mission of driving down Highway No. 6, contacting the advancing French Corps and Eighth Army forces and trapping enemy forces caught between them. At *COLLEFERRO* the 1st Special Service Force met the leading French elements. The enemy's forces however, had fled to the northeast over escape routes still open to him and few were caught. However, all worry over the previously exposed right flank of II Corps now vanished. All reserves were committed, Fifth Army was « shooting the works » for *ROME*.

The 88th and 85th Infantry Divisions now assisted II Corps' attack on the left, hitting hard and advancing rapidly northwest. With the German's last key defense smashed, the drive now swung sharply to the left, on *ROME* itself. Part of the 3d Infantry Division was pinched out and began assembling in the area *PALESTRINA-CAVE*, while the remainder with the 88th and 85th Infantry Divisions and the 1st Special Service Force pushed forward aggressively and fought their way to the city limits. On the morning of 4 June, elements of the 3d and 88th Infantry Divisions and the 1st Special Service Force, reached the eastern outskirts where



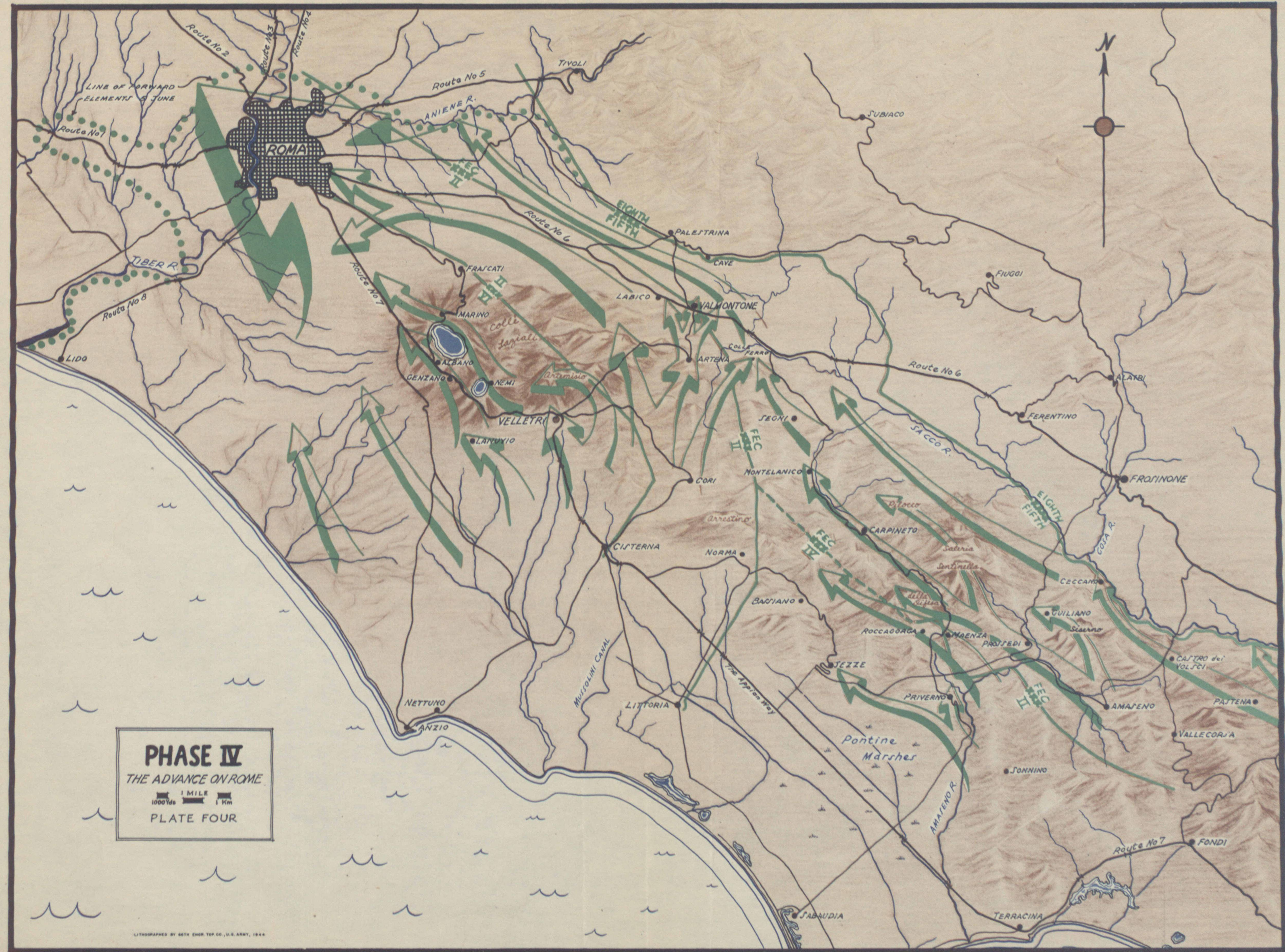
Heavy artillery crushed LANUVIO'S backbone.



Prisoners trapped at VELLETRI foreshadowed Nazi defeat.

hot skirmishing took place. In a change of direction the 85th Infantry Division moved south and cut Highway No. 7, the escape route of many retreating Germans in VI Corps' sector, at a point only a few kilometers southeast of the city. During the night the 1st Special Service Force met little opposition in seizing the bridges within the city. On 5 June, the 88th and 85th Infantry Divisions moved on through *ROME* and continued pursuing the demoralized enemy northwest. The world renowned capitol of historic antiquity, artistic masterpieces, religious doctrine and, more infamously, the 22-year old seat of the Fascist regime was thus liberated by the indomitable fighting men of General Clark's Fifth Army.

In VI Corps' zone the backbone of German resistance was also crushed as *VELLETRI* fell to the 36th Infantry Division on the 1st of June, and *LANUVIO* was occupied by the 34th Infantry Division, early 3 June. Both the 34th and the 45th Infantry Divisions had hurled back severe counterattacks inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy and taking many prisoners during the period. Continuing on the high ground, *COLLI LAZIALI*, northeast of Lakes *NEMI* and *ALBANO*, the 36th Infantry Division cleared the towns of *NEMI* and *MARINO* during the next two days while the 34th Infantry Division advanced beyond *GENZANO* on the other side of the lakes. Paced by armored elements, well across the *TIBER* River on 5 June, the infantry divisions moved rapidly across to form a strong bridgehead and continue the pursuit. These highly successful accomplishments marked the end of the confidently-planned and brilliantly-executed action in Phase IV:



THE ADVANCE ON ROME

d. Phase V (*Unfold Plate Five*)

(1) DISCUSSION.

ROME was captured and a small bridgehead secured by 5 June. Preparatory orders had provided for aggressive armored reconnaissance columns to maintain the pursuit. The enemy forces facing Fifth Army were such that their most probable mission could only be to delay with demolitions and light forces. Some reinforcing units were known to be moving south from Northern *ITALY*. Fifth Army must therefore continue the advance northwest using armored elements supported by light mobile forces to compel the enemy to continue his withdrawal. II Corps therefore would have to continue pursuit until such time as French Expeditionary Corps units (which were pinched out) became available for relief. VI Corps was to continue pursuit prepared to pinch out one division, preferably the 45th Infantry Division. The 1 and 5 Infantry Divisions (British) were to be released without delay as ordered in Operations Order No. 1, Headquarters Allied Armies in Italy.

(2) THE ARMY COMMANDER'S FIFTH DECISION.

At this point the Army Commander confirmed an earlier decision for the quick completion of Phase V, giving us the *VITERBO* Airfields and the Port of *CIVITAVECCHIA*. His prior planning had laid the framework for the pursuit, his Corps Commanders knew their assigned tasks, and the Army was continuing to advance. On 6 June the Army Commander issued orders directing the Fifth Army to maintain its relentless pursuit northwest of *ROME*.

(3) ACTION, PHASE V.

The 3d Infantry Division was now attached to the City Administration Section for the purpose of garrisoning *ROME*. French Expeditionary Corps units were generally along the *ANIENE* River east of *ROME*, starting movement forward near the end of the period to relieve II Corps on the right of Fifth Army. VI Corps continued on the left in the coastal area. Initially the foot troops were hard-pressed to remain in contact and reengage their routed foe. The Army Commander achieved greater speed and mobility, exploiting the situation to maximum advantage, by pressing his armored forces and reconnaissance troops ahead to lead the pursuit during a large share of the final phase.

Elements of the 88th Infantry Division reached a line about 20 miles north and slightly west of *ROME* by 8 June while leading troops of the 85th Infantry Division advanced about 25 miles northwest approaching within 1000 yards of *SUTRI*. A task force of the 1st Armored Division, continuing, then advanced



The drive surged into the city (Note troops riding tank).

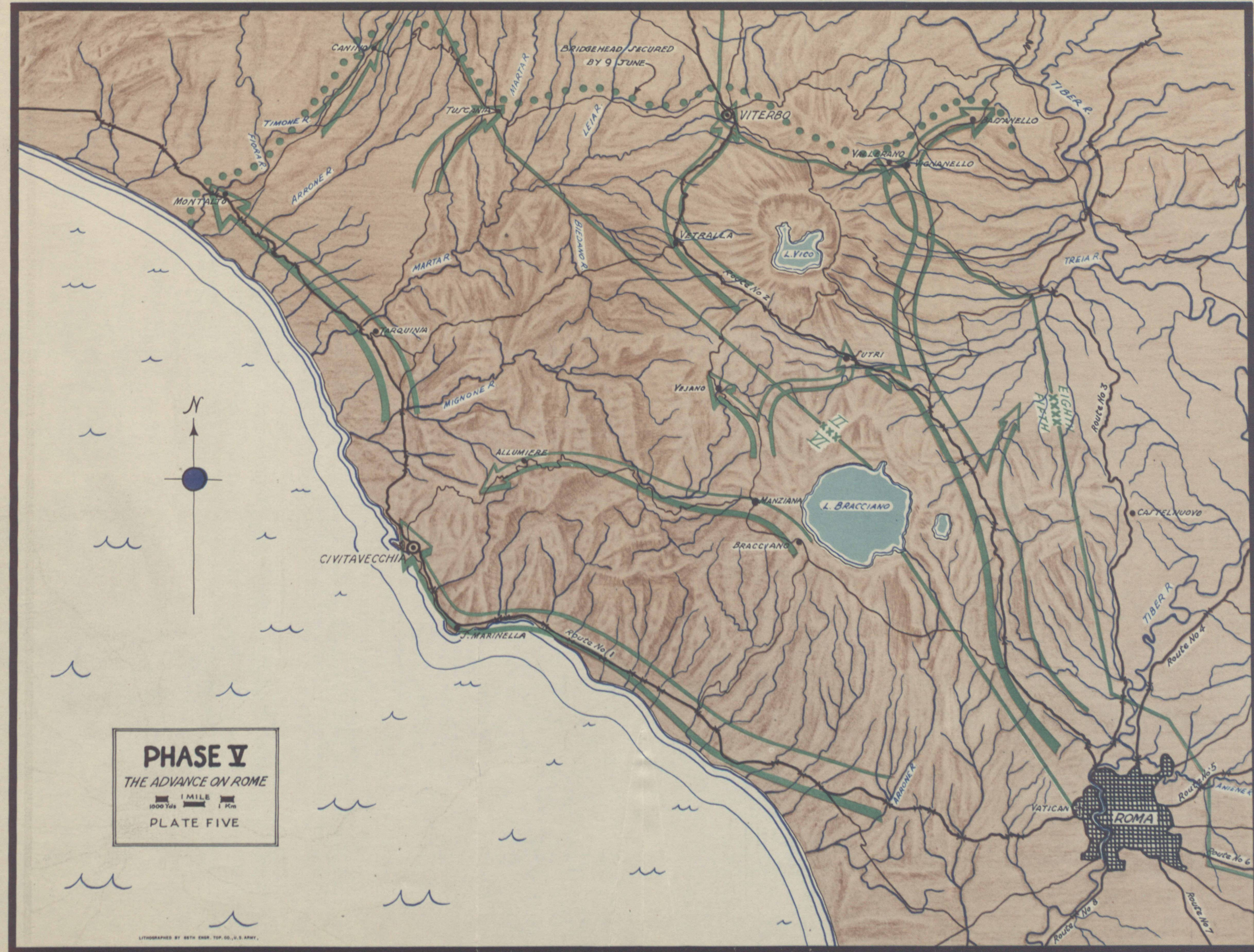


Inside ROME troops used cover of flaming Mark VI tank.

rapidly on the right of Lake *VICO* to the area *BASSANELLO-VIGNANELLO-VALLERANO* where it was halted on 9 June to permit the maneuver northwest of the 6th South African Armored Division (Eighth Army). The 91st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron screened Fifth Army's flank on the right of the II Corps, and the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron operated on its left between Corps.

In the VI Corps area, the 34th Infantry Division captured the Port of *CIVITAVECCHIA* on 7 June. Its harbor facilities were all but useless due to extensive enemy demolition work, but sweating engineers had it restored to operational condition in their habitual record time. Another tank column raced north during the night to *VEJANO* and *SUTRI*, pushing on the next day to clear *VETRALLA*. The 36th Infantry Division proceeded west along the axis *MANZIANO-ALLUMIERE* Road and pinched out the 45th Infantry Division according to prior plan. 1 and 5 Infantry Divisions (British) had also been relieved on orders from Headquarters, Allied Armies in Italy, and the three units began assembling in their former zones of action, southeast of *ROME*, in preparation for movement elsewhere. The 34th Infantry Division was engaged in heavy fighting in the vicinity of *TARQUINIA*, 8 June, but resumed its advance on Highway No. 1 along the coast to occupy *MONTALTO* the following day. The 1st Armored Division secured *VITERBO* and its demolished enemy air base at first light, 9 June, and elements mopped up *TUSCANIA* and *CANINO* later the same day. Thus a solid bridgehead extending between 40 and 50 miles across the *TIBER* River northwest of *ROME*, was won in the incredible space of four days, giving the badly-mauled enemy no opportunity to lick his wounds.

In less than one month's time, during the entire course of action and major developments covered by this report, Fifth Army forces captured nearly twenty-five thousand Axis prisoners of war and inflicted probably twice that number of casualties. This was but a bitter foretaste of other humiliating defeats the enemy was yet to suffer, for with 150-odd miles of Nazi « gangrene » already scraped from Italy's shin the operation continued to make favorable progress toward the knee.



THE ADVANCE ON ROME

4. SUMMARY

a. Ground Forces

One cannot summarize the achievements of Fifth Army at any one time for, at the end of the period covered by this paper, Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark's forces were still smashing ahead to new conquests. An attempt has been made to run the hours through the glass slowly so that the action so vividly impressed on our memory may be chronicled in fitting form for those who so bravely fought in the Fighting Fifth.

To the ground forces the action herein described needs no further tribute. The German Fourteenth Army was destroyed and part of the Tenth badly mangled. A few conclusive figures tell a story of their own. With some 24,000 enemy captured, an estimated 15,000 killed and a probable 35,000 wounded, a conservative total is reached of approximately 75,000 of the enemy's strength rendered non-effective. Our armored elements accounted for a minimum of one hundred enemy tanks destroyed while the total of enemy field guns of different calibers captured runs to well over three hundred pieces.

It is fitting that we consider those staff sections and services which supplied this mighty machine of destruction.

Because of plans developed and executed by G-1 prior to the battle, the ever present problem of securing replacements during battle and maintaining the even flow of these men to the units was handled in a highly satisfactory manner. All divisions entered combat with an overstrength of men and officers already trained to operate in that particular unit, thus facilitating the replacement of losses with men ready for the job and not unfamiliar with their surroundings.

To keep the fighting ground forces supplied, equipped and fed required an administrative supply plan prepared long before D-Day. Sufficient to say, the Army administrative plan was successful. Whether our troops were fighting in the mountains or on the coastal plain — whether it was by mule trains, motor trains, or pack — the ammunition, the food, the thousand and one things that keeps an Army on the march were there.

Too, we must not forget the engineers toiling under fire, sweeping mines, building bridges and roads, keeping the fighting lanes open to combat troops and rear roads open to supply.



The German Airbase at VITERBO was completely demolished.



In record time CIVITAVECCHIA was restored to operation.

Think of an associate arm or service — any one of them — they all contributed their part. Success means team play; team play defeats the enemy. Under the leadership of Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark we secured our objectives and defeated the enemy in our zone of action.

b. Air and Naval Forces

As it was considered better not to burden the reader with details of air and naval assistance as we followed the ground action we will now in summary give a brief picture of their part in the advance.

The Air Corps forces available to Fifth Army played an important role in support of ground forces. The XII Tactical Air Command under Brigadier General Gordon P. Saville, functioned in direct and close support. It had under command two wings of Royal Air Force Spitfires, five groups of American Fighter-Bombers and one group of Light Bombers. The Tactical Air Force, composed mainly of Heavy Bombers under Allied Force Headquarters, could also be allotted for Army targets.

Preceding the attack, the Air Force was used to attempt disruption of enemy communications and to keep the enemy from building up his supplies. Medium and Heavy Bombers were used on marshalling yards, harbors, and communications. Fighter-Bombers were used to cut rail lines and to keep them cut. This plan was successful. All rail movement in the *ROME* area and south of *ROME* was stopped. Road junctions, bridges and defiles were also bombed to hinder road motor movement. Supplies of the enemy were reduced and he was forced to use his forward reserve dumps.

On D-Day the enemy communications were disrupted, his Headquarters bombed and, with the help of artillery, the southern *GARIGLIANO* front isolated. The Fourteenth German Army Headquarters was destroyed and the German Army Group Headquarters seriously damaged. On the *GARIGLIANO* southern sector the enemy had only four roads and the attacks on this road net were successful.

As the advance moved forward and the beachhead forces broke out, Fighter-Bombers began attacking targets which appeared in the more forward Army areas. Utilizing a forward air controller set up in Corps areas, targets including enemy positions, motor movements, troops concentrations and armor were placed under effective bombing in a minimum of time.

When the break-through in the *ALBANO* Hills turned into a pursuit of the enemy forces to *ROME* and north, air was requested to put a maximum effort on enemy transport. Very successful results were obtained. Some 2300 vehicles were claimed destroyed and 1800 damaged.

The Air Corps, who travel the sky routes above the ground forces, greatly assisted the drive on *ROME* by clearing those skies and inflicting an uncountable toll on the enemy. Their constant presence was an inspiration to our troops and their well done job a contributing factor to Fifth Army's success.

Moving alongside our Army in its advance was the Navy, protecting the sea flank and rendering valuable assistance as we moved forward.

Cruisers operating off shore covered fixed defenses, roads, and targets that could not be reached by our artillery. We must not forget the sea lanes cleared

by the mine sweepers that supplies might be brought into ports and that the Navy bull-dogs might lend their fire power to assist our ground forces.

Whether it was bringing supplies into coastal ports, opening ports such as *GAETA* and *CIVITAVECCHIA*, or lending the use of heavy guns to reach distant targets, the Navy constantly did their difficult part in conjunction with the air and ground forces — a team play that history will never forget.

c. Conclusion

We turn a page in the brilliant history of Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark's Fighting Fifth Army. That page and the pages to come do not need the illumination of the craftsmen monks of other years. The deeds of those living and dead are our illumination. In tribute to those who made its success a vital reality, our goal remains the continued destruction of the enemy.