

Division plans since 12 October had called for an attack on Mount Sole by the 24 Guards Brigade as soon as Mount Salvaro should fall. The slow struggle to clear the ridge line had repeatedly forced postponements; now the weather interfered. Like the Sillaro River, Setta Creek reached the flood stage on the 26th. Troops of the 5 Grenadier Guards who waded across to seize Hill 501 below Mount Sole on the evening of the 25th were virtually isolated. When the rains continued to the end of the month the attack on Mount Sole was abandoned, and measures were taken to consolidate the ground won.

On the left flank of the division CCB continued to push north along Highway 64 from Porretta. The village of Bombiana, 4 miles beyond Porretta, was captured on the 13th. Then the attack was virtually halted until the 26th when the 2d Battalion, 370th Infantry, relieved the 11th Armored Infantry Battalion of responsibility for a portion of its long flank. Three days later the 11th Armored Infantry Battalion with tank support extended its hold on the high ground northwest of Highway 64 by taking the hamlet of Palazzo, 3 miles beyond Bombiana. Elements of the 232d Grenadier Division, which had relieved the 94th Grenadier Division of responsibility for the area west of Highway 64, launched a counterattack in strength on the 30th and then continued to strike back until 2 November before they gave up the effort to retake the lost ground. Although the enemy still retained his hold on Mount Sole, at the end of October the 6 South African Armoured Division and CCB had done much to strengthen the left flank of II Corps.

F. 13 CORPS BRINGS UP THE RIGHT FLANK

16-31 OCTOBER

In the last 2 weeks of October, as in the previous period, 13 Corps made its main effort on the left to relieve as much pressure as possible from II Corps. Again 13 Corps was handicapped by the fact that its right flank remained fixed below Highway 67 while its left flank was constantly being extended northward to keep pace with the advances made by the 88th Division. Along the portion of the front stretching south of the Santerno Valley a series of attacks were launched which resulted in the occupation of additional hills and mountain villages, but the tactical value of the ground occupied was of less importance than the advantage to the main Army attack of keeping the 334th, 715th, and 305th Grenadier Divisions pinned down.

On 16 October the 78 Division had its 38 Brigade holding the Mount Cappello area and the 36 and 11 Brigades in the vicinity of the Gesso ridge where they were

engaged in relieving elements of the 351st Infantry and in taking the enemy-held height of Monte La Pieve. Corps plans called for the 38 Brigade to be relieved by the 61 Brigade (6 Armoured Division) which would permit the division to concentrate its full strength north of the Santerno Valley. Additional artillery was provided with the attachment of the 66 and 78 Medium Regiments and two batteries of the 61 Heavy Regiment. Until 19 October the division was occupied in completing the relief of the 351st Infantry, consolidating its hold on the Gesso ridge, and in moving up the 38 Brigade following its relief from Mount Cappello on the 18th. Division plans called for an attack the next morning with the 36 Brigade driving eastward to take Mount dell'Acqua Saluta and the 38 Brigade northward against Mount Spaduro.

The 36 Brigade, attacking with the 5 Buffs to the north and the 6 Royal West Kents on the south, made no progress toward Mount dell'Acqua Saluta on the 19th. Additional units were thrown into action until by the 24th the entire 36 Brigade and the attached 56 Reconnaissance Regiment had been committed. The latter unit was relieved the next day for employment against Mount Spaduro, but its place was filled by the 3 Welsh Guards. In spite of the strength of the attacking force and heavy losses, including approximately 200 prisoners, the 334th Grenadier Division clung to its positions on the mountain. Already the recipient of a commendation from Fourteenth Army for its action at Mount Battaglia, the 334th Grenadier Division won a second commendation from Tenth Army for the defense of Mount dell'Acqua Saluta. When the 5 Buffs withdrew from the arc of units besieging the feature on the 26th and attacked to the north in an effort to execute an outflanking move, it was held up at the hamlet of Piano Nuovo east of Mount Spaduro. The heavy rains which began on the 25th soon bogged down all operations, and at the end of the month the enemy remained in possession of the bitterly contested mountain.

The attack of the 38 Brigade on Mount Spaduro started more favorably. Two companies of the 1 Royal Irish Fusiliers after passing through the 2 Lancashire Fusiliers fought their way up the western slope of the mountain on the 19th, but before reinforcements could arrive an enemy counterattack resulted in the virtual destruction of both companies. In response to the orders from General Clark on the 22d that 13 Corps was to aid the attack from Mount Grande by taking Mount Spaduro and the line of hills south of the Sillaro River, the 11 Brigade was committed on the 23d to add weight to the attack. In a night assault on 23–24 October the 2 Lancashire Fusiliers reached the summit of the mountain, and the 1 Surreys cleared the ridge to the northwest. Although combat patrols made contact with the 88th Division along Highway 937, attempts to continue the offensive down the south side of the Santerno Valley were no more successful than the attacks from Mount Grande.

Control of the Mount Cappello—Mount Battaglia area south of the Santerno

River passed to the 6 Armoured Division on the 18th when the 61 Brigade assumed responsibility for Mount Cappello. Extensive patrolling was carried out in the next few days toward Fontanelice on Highway 6528 and Mount Taverna to make contact. Enemy withdrawals permitted the brigade to advance nearly 2 miles on the 25th before opposition was met at Mount Taverna. Further action was postponed until the engineers could improve Highway 6528 and the remainder of the division could be made available. The 1 Guards Brigade was relieved on Mount Battaglia by the 1 Division on the 27th, and preparations were under way for the 2 Polish Corps to relieve the 26 Armoured Brigade along Highway 67 where Eighth Army was gradually bringing up its left flank.

To the southwest of Mount Battaglia the 1 Division held a narrow front astride the Senio Valley. Nearly the whole of its zone had already been allotted to the 8 Indian Division in anticipation of a new assignment to take over additional ground from the right flank of II Corps. Until this move should be ordered the division was to clear the north bank of the stream and assist the 8 Indian Division on its right. The later task was assigned to the 66 Brigade, which was located on Mount Ceco. Beginning on 16 October, a series of attacks were launched to the south and east of Mount Ceco against stiff resistance. Only slight gains were made, but the steady pressure on the flank of the enemy troops north of Mount Pianaccino was of assistance to the 21 Brigade. The 66 Brigade then turned north to take Mount delle Valle, where it was relieved by the 2 Brigade on the 29th. No advances were made north of Senio Creek until the 23d when the 3 Brigade entered the line. Mount Cornazzano, to the south of Mount Battaglia, was taken on the 26th, and patrols worked down the Senio Valley over 1 mile to the village of Casola Valsenio.

With only one brigade, the 26 Armoured of the 6 Armoured Division, left to defend the right flank of 13 Corps along Highway 67 and with the 1 Division confined to a narrow strip astride the Senio Valley, the 8 Indian Division was left on 16 October with a front approximately 10 miles wide. The 21 Brigade which had just relieved elements of the 1 Division in the Mount Toncone area held the left flank, the 17 Brigade was operating astride Highway 6521 beyond Marradi, and the 19 Brigade, less one battalion attached to the 26 Armoured Brigade, was in reserve. Since forward positions of the 1 Division were considerably in advance of the 21 Brigade and corps plans called for the former to be pinched out, the main effort of the 8 Indian Division was directed toward bringing up its left flank. Division plans called for the 21 Brigade to take Mount Pianoereno, to the east of Mount Pianaccino, and then the Monte Romano feature and Mount Giro north of Highway 6521; the 17 Brigade would take Mount Casalino and clear the area south of the highway.

The 3/5 Punjabs spearheaded the attack of the 21 Brigade from positions north of Mount Toncone on the 17th. Troops of the 715th Grenadier Division, dug in on

a series of knobs guarding the approaches to Mount Pianoereno, fought almost to the last man to hold their positions until the evening of the 19th when the 1 Mahrattas after passing through the 3/5 Punjabs reached the crest of the mountain. While the 1 Mahrattas and 3/5 Punjabs were consolidating positions on Mount Pianoereno, the 5 Royal West Kents pushed on toward Monte Romano. Forward elements reached the western slope on the 22d and dug in to wait for darkness. The enemy chose to abandon this feature and the next day gave up Mount Giro when the 3/5 Punjabs moved up.

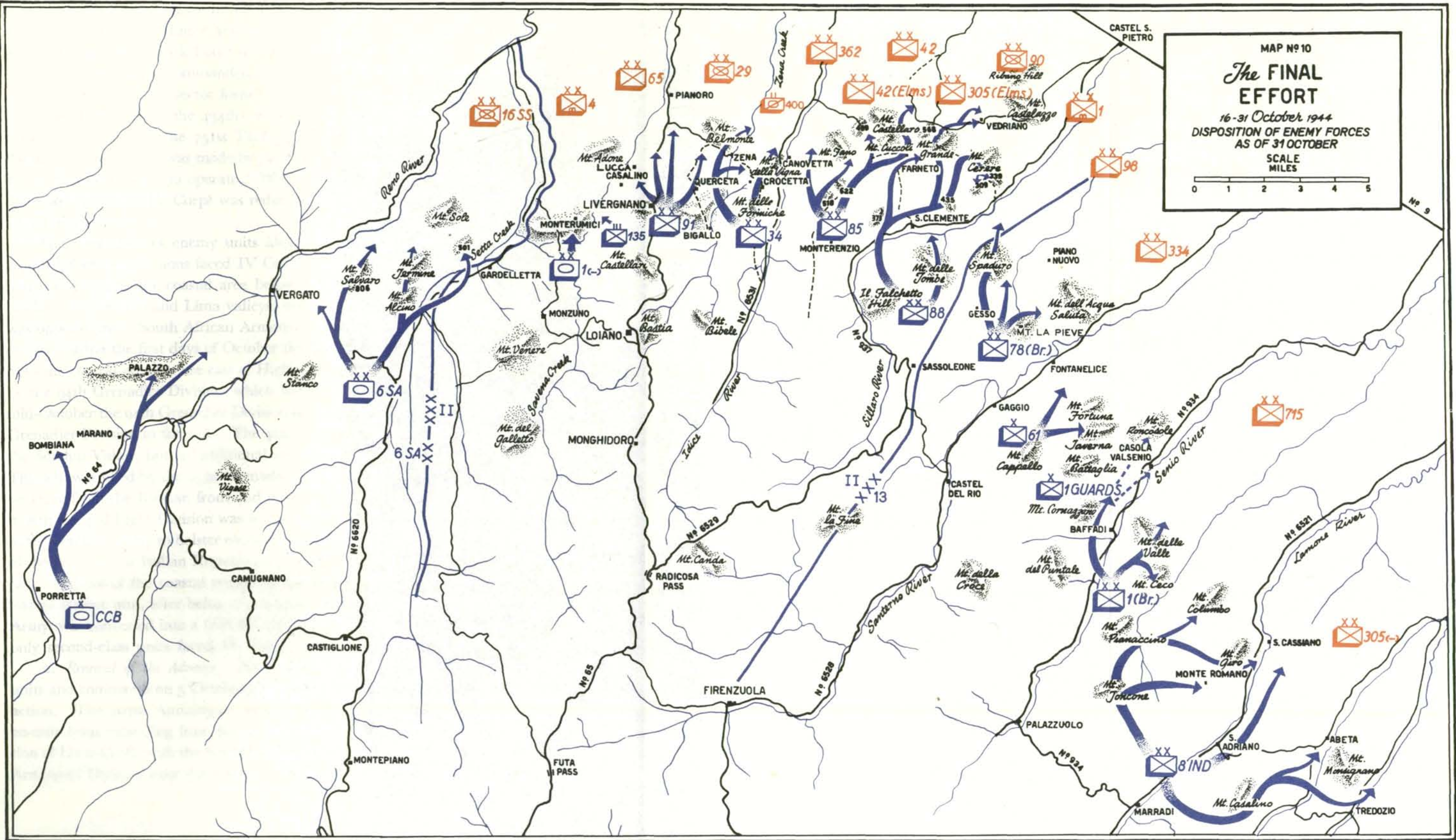
South of Highway 6521 the 17 Brigade occupied Mount Casalino on 17 October, then lost it again as a result of an enemy counterattack on the 20th. Two days later the enemy began a general withdrawal. The 1/5 Gurkha Rifles reoccupied Mount Casalino, turned southeast 2 miles toward the village of Tredozio, and then gained an additional 2 miles toward Mount Monsignano. The 19 Brigade moved up to take over the area astride Highway 6521 south of Mount Giro, and the 21 Brigade reached Mount Colombo, 1½ miles north of Mount Giro. These advances, which were matched by the 26 Armoured Brigade along Highway 67, were a result of the enemy's decision to shift the 305th Grenadier Division to the north and to shorten his lines in face of the arrival of the 2 Polish Corps from the south.

G. ACTION ON THE IV CORPS FRONT

1-31 OCTOBER

At the end of September, IV Corps had penetrated only the southern fringe of the great mountain mass lying north of the Arno plain. Ahead lay miles of jagged peaks and narrow twisting valleys more rugged than anything met in the II Corps zone. With the exception of the narrow coastal plain beyond Viareggio, the only means of access to the north was along the valleys formed by the Serchio River, Lima Creek, and the Reno River. By controlling these lines of communication the enemy could hold his long right flank with a minimum of forces. Similarly, Fifth Army maintained only sufficient troops on the IV Corps front to protect its vital supply lines from Leghorn and to prevent, so far as possible, the transfer of enemy troops to the II Corps front.

1. *Shifts of Allied and Enemy Units.* (See Map No. 11.) Extensive readjustments in command and in the disposition of units were made on both sides of the line during the first few days of October. During the period 1-3 October, Task Force 45 and the 6th Combat Team, BEF, were joined under the operational command of Maj. Gen. Enrico Gaspar Dutra, the Brazilian Minister of War, after which these forces reverted to IV Corps control. The major change in command occurred on 5 October



when CCB and the 6 South African Armoured Division reverted to Army control. At the same time command of the central zone east of the Serchio Valley was transferred from Task Force 92 to the 107th Antiaircraft Artillery Group to be composed of the British 39 and 47 Light Antiaircraft Regiments and the British 74 Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment. Task Force 92, now consisting of the 370th Infantry and the 2d Armored Group and commanded by Maj. Gen. Edward M. Almond, would be responsible for the coastal sector formerly held by Task Force 45. The 2d Armored Group would consist of the 434th and 435th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalions, supported by elements of the 751st Tank Battalion and of the 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion. No change was made in the Serchio Valley zone where the 6th Combat Team, BEF, continued to operate. With the loss of CCB and the 6 South African Armoured Division, IV Corps was reduced to the strength of no more than a reinforced division.

The disposition of enemy units also was changed. At the beginning of the month 3 German divisions faced IV Corps on a 50-mile front: the 42d Light Division was guarding the coastal area below Massa; the 65th Grenadier Division was blocking the Serchio and Lima valleys; and the 16th SS Panzer Grenadier Division was opposite the 6 South African Armoured Division. As the threat to Bologna increased during the first days of October the 65th Grenadier Division was withdrawn from the central area for use east of Highway 65. Its place was filled on 3 October by the 94th Grenadier Division, which had been reforming in the Udine area. By mid-October the 94th Grenadier Division had followed the shift of the 16th SS Panzer Grenadier Division to the east. The 42d Light Division extended its lines to include the Serchio Valley, but an additional unit was required to defend the central area. This gap was filled by the 232d Grenadier Division, a new unit made up of personnel on leave from the Russian front and men from 35 to 45 years of age. Late in the month the 42d Light Division was withdrawn with the exception of a few troops left in the Serchio Valley to bolster elements of the Monte Rosa Alpine Division, the first of the reorganized Italian Republican (Fascist) Divisions to be used against the Allies. Control of the coastal region passed to the 148th Grenadier Division. This former reserve unit, after being driven across the French-Italian frontier by Seventh Army, was converted into a field division in the Genoa area. By the end of October only second-class units faced IV Corps.

2. *Renewal of the Advance.* Accompanying the instructions for the shifting of units and commands on 5 October, General Crittenberger outlined the Corps plan of action. The 107th Antiaircraft Artillery Group was scheduled to hold firm on a 20-mile front extending from Bagni di Lucca, on Highway 12 just east of the junction of Lima Creek with the Serchio River, to the boundary with the 6 South African Armoured Division near the village of Ponte Petri. The 6th Combat Team, BEF,

was directed to continue its advance in the Serchio Valley toward Castelnuovo to give the Brazilian troops battle experience. Task Force 92 would open a coastal drive aimed initially at the capture of Mount Cauala, the first of a series of heights guarding the approach to Massa. Capture of Massa would in turn open the way for an assault on the port of La Spezia.

The offensive along the coast got under way at 0600, 6 October, with the 1st and 2d Battalions, 370th Infantry, attacking abreast against Mount Cauala and the 434th and 435th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalions bringing up the left flank between Highway 1 and the sea. An advance of slightly over 1 mile was made on the right and slight gains were made near the coast but heavy rains and insufficient reconnaissance hampered the troops. Tanks and tank destroyers attached to the 2d Armored Group were ordered to support the attack along Highway 1 on the morning of the 7th. They were blocked by lack of suitable stream crossings over the swollen creeks, and no progress was made. The next day the 2d Battalion, 370th Infantry, was driven back by mortar and artillery fire when it reached the upper slopes of Mount Cauala. The battalion regrouped after dark. At 0300, 9 October, the troops moved forward again, scaled the steep rocks below the summit, and reached the crest without opposition. In the afternoon mortar and artillery fire forced a second withdrawal. On the left the 435th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion, aided by two platoons of Sherman tanks, seized the cemetery just north of Querceta.

For the next 2 days Task Force 92 made preparations to renew the attack on Mount Cauala. Ladders were constructed for the assault against the cliffs, and crossings were sought over Seravezza Creek, which was badly swollen by the steady rains. On the evening of 11 October the 2d and 3d Battalions, 370th Infantry, crossed the creek and started up the mountain. There companies reached the summit at 0730 the next morning; by late afternoon artillery and mortar fire again made their positions untenable. No further effort was made to take the mountain until the night of 17-18 October when a patrol fought its way to the crest. On 19 October the patrol was relieved by a platoon, and the positions were further reinforced the next day. After efforts to expand the hold on Mount Cauala by taking the next height to the northeast failed on the 23d, the offensive along the coast was halted.

Bothered more by rain and demolitions than by enemy resistance, the 6th Combat Team, BEF, made steady progress along the high ground on each side of the Serchio River. On 9 October when the 3d Battalion was approaching the village of Barga, General Crittenberger ordered General Zenobio to hold the positions he had reached and limit himself to local attacks. There was a danger that if the Serchio Valley thrust gained too much momentum the enemy would counterattack, and there were no reserves available to IV Corps. Barga was occupied on the 11th; Gallicano, on the other side of the river, was outflanked on the 28th; and at the end



Troops of Task Force 45 found the resort town of Viareggio badly damaged



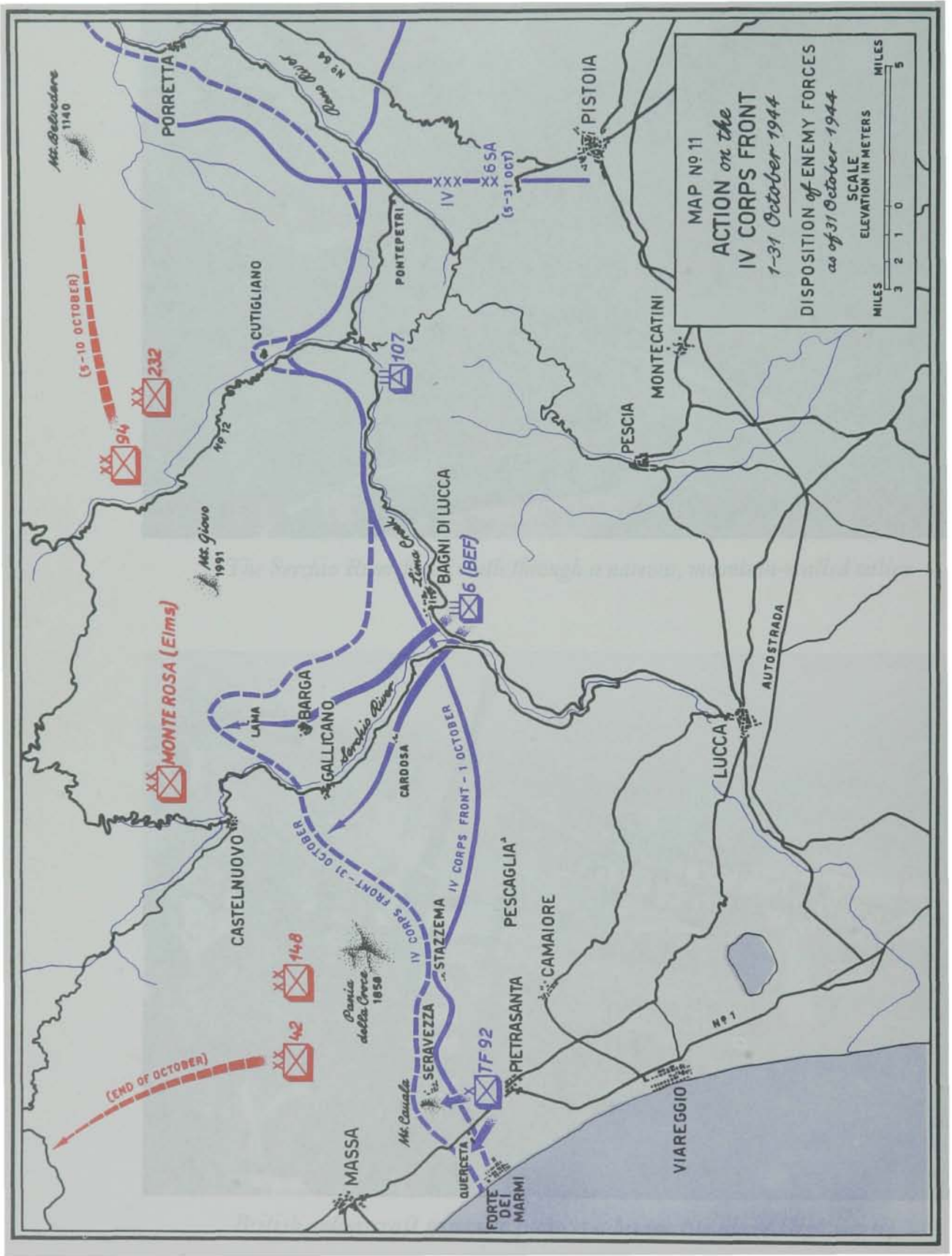
These huge railroad and coastal defense guns were abandoned by the enemy



The Serchio River flows south through a narrow, mountain-walled valley



British antiaircraft gun crew protects a bridge site along Highway 64



MAP No 11
**ACTION on the
 IV CORPS FRONT**
 1-31 October 1944
 DISPOSITION of ENEMY FORCES
 as of 31 October 1944

SCALE
 ELEVATION IN METERS
 MILES 0 1 2 3 4 5
 MILES 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000

of the month the Lama hill mass, to the north of Barga, was occupied. The 3-mile gain achieved was assisted by the high rate of desertion and the unwillingness-to-fight attitude of the Italians of the Fascist Monte Rosa Division opposing us.

Although IV Corps launched no major attacks during October, the fall rains and the rough nature of the terrain over which the troops were operating made it difficult to supply even a small force. In spite of the efforts of the engineers and provisional engineers drawn from infantry units bridges and road fills washed out almost as fast as they were repaired. A further handicap was the shortage of transportation. All Army transportation was needed for the long haul from Leghorn to the II Corps units south of Bologna. A provisional truck company under IV Corps control was organized on 15 October to utilize the organic vehicles of the front-line units in the most efficient manner. Although this system succeeded in keeping the supply dumps up to a minimum operating level, most of the supplies had to be hand-packed from the dumps to the forward troops. Extra mules could not be obtained for use in the mountains because of the concentration of the Army effort behind II Corps. In numerous instances patrols from the 107th Antiaircraft Artillery Group found enemy positions in the mountains north of Lima Creek undefended, but the almost impossible task of supplying these points precluded their occupation.

In addition to protecting the left flank of Fifth Army, IV Corps assumed responsibility for the organization and training of two major units. The 1st Infantry Division, BEF, arrived in Italy during October, and a supervised training program was begun to prepare it for combat. A similar program was worked out for troops of the 92d Division as they arrived. Both the 6th Combat Team, BEF, and the 370th Infantry had already undergone extended periods in the line. Before the start of a new Army offensive, IV Corps would have two fully equipped and trained divisions.