

NY 8723-E  
~~CONFIDENTIAL - MODIFIED HANDLING AUTHORIZED~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FIFTH ARMY  
HISTORY

~~CONFIDENTIAL - MODIFIED HANDLING AUTHORIZED~~

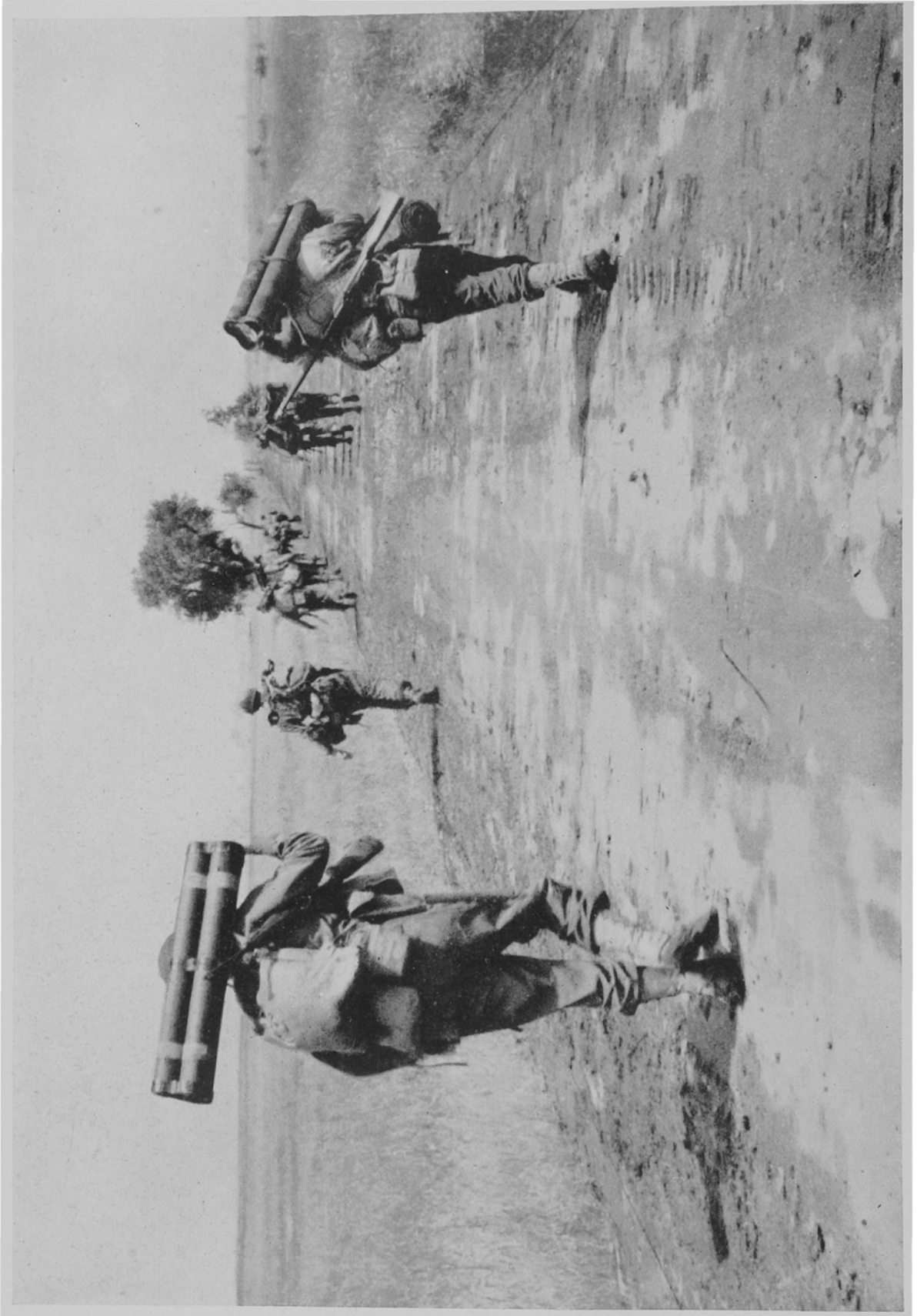
R-8723-E

**DECLASSIFIED**

# FIFTH ARMY HISTORY

1 APRIL - 4 JUNE 1944

**DECLASSIFIED**



*An infantry mortar platoon advances across the Anzio plain in the Fifth Army drive.*

DECLASSIFIED

# FIFTH ARMY HISTORY



PART V

Classification changed to  
**CONFIDENTIAL - MODIFIED HANDLING AUTHORIZED**

Authority

By DA Civ 310-20

*may 55*

## *The Drive to Rome*

\*\*\*\*\* CONFIDENTIAL \*\*\*\*\*

DECLASSIFIED

*Lieutenant General* MARK W. CLARK  
\* \* \* *commanding*

# CONTENTS

\* \* \* \* \*

	<i>page</i>
CHAPTER I. <i>PREPARATION FOR THE ATTACK</i> . . . . .	1
<i>A.</i> Fifth Army Regroups . . . . .	2
1. The Shift to a New Sector . . . . .	2
2. Rest and Training . . . . .	3
3. The Supply of Fifth Army on the Southern Front . . . . .	4
<i>B.</i> The Terrain of the May Drive . . . . .	6
1. General . . . . .	6
2. The Aurunci Mountains . . . . .	7
<i>C.</i> Enemy Dispositions . . . . .	8
1. Enemy Defensive Lines . . . . .	8
2. German Forces in Italy . . . . .	11
3. Enemy Supply and Our Air Force . . . . .	13
<i>D.</i> General Preparations by Fifth Army . . . . .	15
1. Reinforcements . . . . .	15
2. Replacements . . . . .	17
3. The Army Plan to Ensure Surprise . . . . .	18
CHAPTER II. <i>PLANS FOR THE ATTACK</i> . . . . .	21
<i>A.</i> Allied Strategy in Italy . . . . .	21
<i>B.</i> The Attack Order of Fifth Army . . . . .	23
1. Mission and Methods . . . . .	23
2. The Plan of Attack . . . . .	26
3. Support of the Attack . . . . .	27
<i>C.</i> The Approach of H Hour . . . . .	29
1. Final Movements . . . . .	29
2. Preparations of the Supporting Arms and Services . . . . .	30
3. Orders of the Day, 11 May . . . . .	31
CHAPTER III. <i>THE FEC BREAKTHROUGH</i> . . . . .	33
<i>A.</i> The Plans of the FEC . . . . .	34
1. The Attack Order . . . . .	34

	<i>page</i>
2. The Artillery Plan . . . . .	36
B. The Capture of Mount Majo, 11-13 May . . . . .	37
1. The 2d Moroccan Division Breaks the Gustav Line . . . . .	37
2. The Drive to Sant'Andrea . . . . .	40
3. Castelforte and Mount Ceschito . . . . .	41
C. The Drive through the Petrella Massif, 13-19 May . . . . .	44
1. Opening the Way . . . . .	44
2. The Goumiers Race West . . . . .	46
D. The Advance on the Right Flank, 13-19 May . . . . .	48
1. Exploitation North from Mount Majo . . . . .	48
2. Clearing the North End of the Ausonia Valley . . . . .	49
3. The Drive on Esperia and Mount d'Oro . . . . .	51
E. Summary of the FEC Attack . . . . .	52
CHAPTER IV. <i>II CORP TAKES ITRI</i> . . . . .	55
A. The Plans of II Corps . . . . .	55
1. The Attack Order . . . . .	55
2. The Plan of Supporting Fires . . . . .	56
B. The 88th Division at Santa Maria Infante, 11-14 May . . . . .	58
1. Success of the 350th Infantry . . . . .	58
2. The 351st Infantry Battles at Santa Maria . . . . .	59
C. The 85th Division: San Martino Hill and the S Ridge, 11-14 May . . . . .	62
1. The 338th Infantry on the S Ridge . . . . .	62
2. The Battle of San Martino Hill . . . . .	64
3. The Left Flank of II Corps . . . . .	66
D. Mopping up the Gustav Line, 14-15 May . . . . .	67
1. The Enemy Withdrawal . . . . .	67
2. The Capture of Spigno and Castellonorato . . . . .	67
E. Across the Mountains to Itri, 15-19 May . . . . .	69
1. Fifth Army Operations Instruction No. 18 . . . . .	69
2. Mopping up the Formia Corridor . . . . .	69
3. The Capture of Itri . . . . .	71
F. Eighth Army in the Liri Valley, 11-19 May . . . . .	72
G. The Enemy Reaction to Our Attack . . . . .	75
1. Tactical Surprise . . . . .	75
2. Strategic Surprise . . . . .	76
3. Enemy Activity, 11-19 May . . . . .	77



	<i>page</i>
CHAPTER V. <i>JUNCTION WITH THE BEACHHEAD</i> . . . . .	79
<i>A.</i> New Plans . . . . .	79
<i>B.</i> II Corps Fulfills Its Mission, 20-25 May . . . . .	81
1. Plans and Terrain . . . . .	81
2. The 88th Division on the Right Flank . . . . .	82
3. Approach to Terracina . . . . .	84
4. The Fall of Terracina . . . . .	85
5. Driving up the Pontine Marshes . . . . .	87
<i>C.</i> The FEC Drive through Pico, 20-25 May . . . . .	88
1. Plans for the Pico Operation . . . . .	88
2. Smashing the Outer Defenses of Pico . . . . .	90
3. The First Battle for Pico . . . . .	91
4. The Second Battle for Pico . . . . .	92
5. Exploitation to the West and North . . . . .	93
<i>D.</i> The Eighth Army Attack on the Hitler Line, 19-25 May . . . . .	96
<i>E.</i> Supply of the Fifth Army Attack . . . . .	97
CHAPTER VI. <i>VI CORPS BREAKS THROUGH AT CISTERNA</i> . . . . .	101
<i>A.</i> The Anzio Beachhead . . . . .	101
1. Our Situation . . . . .	101
2. The Enemy Situation . . . . .	102
3. The Terrain of the Beachhead Attack . . . . .	104
<i>B.</i> Plans for the Attack . . . . .	105
<i>C.</i> Breaking out of the Beachhead, 23-25 May . . . . .	107
1. The Last Preparations for the Attack . . . . .	107
2. The First Day of the Attack . . . . .	108
3. Encircling Cisterna . . . . .	112
4. The Fall of Cisterna and Cori . . . . .	114
CHAPTER VII. <i>EXPANSION OF THE BEACHHEAD ATTACK</i> . . . . .	117
<i>A.</i> Plans and Movements, 25 May . . . . .	117
<i>B.</i> Action on the Right Flank of VI Corps, 26-30 May . . . . .	120
1. The 3d Division Drive to Artena . . . . .	120
2. The 36th Division Holds below Velletri . . . . .	122
<i>C.</i> The First Two Days of the Drive toward Lanuvio, 26-27 May . . . . .	123
1. The Action of 26 May . . . . .	123
2. The Action of 27 May . . . . .	125
<i>D.</i> Enemy Resistance Stiffens, 28-30 May . . . . .	126
1. Attacks by the 34th Division . . . . .	127

	<i>page</i>
2. Attacks by the 45th Division and the 1st Armored Division . . . . .	130
E. Fifth Army Advance in the Lepini Mountains, 25-31 May . . . . .	134
F. Eighth Army, 25-31 May . . . . .	137
 CHAPTER VIII. <i>AT THE GATES OF ROME</i> . . . . .	 141
A. The Beginning of the Final Drive, 30-31 May . . . . .	142
1. Breakthrough by the 36th Division . . . . .	142
2. Fifth Army Operations Instruction No. 25 . . . . .	143
B. The Attack North of Colli Laziali, 31 May-3 June . . . . .	144
1. The Hermann Goering Division Retreats . . . . .	144
2. Pursuit toward Rome—3 June . . . . .	147
C. The Attack South of Colli Laziali, 31 May-3 June . . . . .	149
1. Hammering at the Lanuvio Line . . . . .	149
2. The Enemy Withdraws—3 June . . . . .	153
 CHAPTER IX. <i>FIFTH ARMY ENTERS ROME</i> . . . . .	 155
A. Preparations in the Night . . . . .	155
B. The Race to Rome: Highway 6 . . . . .	158
C. The Race to Rome: Highway 7 . . . . .	160
D. Consolidating the Victory . . . . .	162
 CHAPTER X. <i>THE DRIVE ON ROME</i> . . . . .	 165

## *Annexes* \* \* \* \* \*

	<i>page</i>
Number One. <i>Orders and Operations Instructions</i> . . . . .	169
A. AAI Operation Order No. 1, 5 May 1945 . . . . .	171
B. Field Order No. 6, 20 April 1944 . . . . .	175
C. Operations Instruction No. 17, 9 May 1944 . . . . .	178
D. Operations Instruction No. 18, 15 May 1944 . . . . .	179
E. Operations Instruction No. 19, 18 May 1944 . . . . .	180
F. Operations Instruction No. 20, 19 May 1944 . . . . .	182
G. Operations Instruction No. 21, 22 May 1944 . . . . .	184
H. Operations Instruction No. 22, 22 May 1944 . . . . .	185
I. VI Corps Field Order No. 26, 6 May 1944 . . . . .	187—
J. Operations Instruction No. 23, 24 May 1944 . . . . .	191
K. Operations Instruction No. 24, 26 May 1944 . . . . .	192

	<i>page</i>
L. Operations Instruction No. 25, 31 May 1944 . . . . .	193
M. Operations Instruction No. 26, 4 June 1944 . . . . .	194
N. Operations Instruction No. 27, 4 June 1944 . . . . .	196
Number Two. <i>Other Documents</i> . . . . .	197
A. Order of the Day, General Alexander, 11 May 1944 . . . . .	199
B. Order of the Day, General Clark, 11 May 1944 . . . . .	200
C. Order of the Day, General Clark, 6 June 1944 . . . . .	202
D. Evaluation of Our Attack by Marshal Kesselring, 19 May 1944 . .	203
Number Three. <i>Statistics</i> . . . . .	207
A. Casualties, U. S. Forces, 1 April-4 June 1944 . . . . .	209
B. Total Casualties and Strength . . . . .	211
C. Major Ordnance Losses, 30 March-8 June 1944 . . . . .	212
D. Prisoners of War . . . . .	215
E. Quartermaster Supply, April-May 1944 . . . . .	220
F. Almanac, 11 May-5 June 1944 . . . . .	222
Number Four. <i>Fifth Army Staff</i> . . . . .	223
Number Five. <i>Troop List of Fifth Army, 22 May 1944</i> . . . . .	227

## *Maps* \* \* \* \* \*

	<i>opposite page</i>
1. Supply Installations of Fifth Army, 30 April 1944 . . . . .	4
2. German Dispositions and Communications in Central Italy, April 1944 .	14
3. Fifth Army Plan of Attack, 11 May 1944 . . . . .	28
4. Initial Fire Plans Corps Artillery, FEC, 11 May 1944 . . . . .	36
5. The FEC Drive, 11-13 May 1944 . . . . .	44
6. The FEC Drive, 14-19 May 1944 . . . . .	52
7. Initial Fire Plans Corps Artillery, II Corps, 11 May 1944 . . . . .	58
8. S. Maria, the S. Ridge, and S. Martino Hill, 11-13 May 1944 . . . .	64
9. II Corps Attack, 11-15 May 1944 . . . . .	68
10. The Advance of II Corps, 15-19 May 1944 . . . . .	72
11. The Advance of Fifth Army, 19-25 May 1944 . . . . .	94
12. The Anzio Beachhead, 22 May 1944 (Plan Buffalo) . . . . .	106

	<i>page</i>
13. The Anzio Drive, 23-25 May 1944 . . . . .	116
14. Enemy Positions before the 168th Infantry, 28-30 May 1944 . . . . .	128
15. The Anzio Drive, 26-30 May 1944 . . . . .	134
16. Advance on the Southern Front, 25-31 May 1944 . . . . .	136
17. The Advance of II Corps, 31 May-3 June 1944 . . . . .	148
18. The Capture of Rome, 31 May-5 June 1944 . . . . .	160
19. The Terrain of the May Drive . . . . .	168

## *Illustrations* \* \* \* \* \*

An infantry mortar platoon advances across the Anzio plain in the Fifth Army drive . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
The military railroads are prepared for the drive on the southern front . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i> 20
One of the large ammunition dumps at Anzio was hit by enemy artillery . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i> 20
Santa Maria, the Ausonia Valley, and the escarpment of the Petrella massif . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i> 21
Looking north from Castelforte to Mount Majo and the zone of the FEC . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i> 21
The goumiers move forward in preparation for their drive to Mount Revole . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i> 54
The Fammera escarpment (on the left) towers over the town of Ausonia . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i> 54
A tank passes a ruined village on the north slopes of Mount Cianelli . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i> 55
Santa Maria was a mass of shattered rubble when our troops entered the town . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i> 55
Infantry of the 88th Division climb the slopes of Mount La Civita . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i> 78
As the Germans fell back, our vehicles filled the roads in pursuit . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i> 78
Enemy rearguard action delayed us briefly in the hills above Terracina . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i> 79
After the fall of Terracina II Corps drove on toward the beachhead . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i> 79

Opening the vital routes to Anzio across the flooded Pontine Marshes . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i>	100
General Clark greets an officer from the southern front, 25 May 1944 . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i>	100
Our armor gathers to spearhead the breakout from the Anzio beachhead . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i>	101
An M-4 tank of the 1st Armored Division slid off the road into a crater . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i>	101
The engineers have completed a bridge which will further the advance . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i>	140
A group of the German garrison in Cisterna surrenders after being surrounded . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i>	140
Men of the 100th Battalion move up to support the drive on Lanuvio . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i>	141
On 2 June 1944 the 3d Division entered Valmontone and cut Highway 6 . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i>	141
American tanks rumble through Velletri past the wreckage of the battle . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i>	154
Our tanks wait off Highway 6, ready for the signal to enter the city of Rome . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i>	154
A Mark VI tank burns at the edge of Rome as our men rush forward on Highway 6 . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i>	155
General Clark in Rome, after giving pursuit instructions to his commanders . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i>	155
War has its price: evacuating the wounded from the battlefield of Cisterna . . . . .	<i>opposite page</i>	166

*Preparation for the Attack*

ON 1 April Fifth Army under the command of Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark had essentially completed the shifts ordered one month previously, and lay concentrated either in the Anzio beachhead or in a narrow sector along the Garigliano River between the sea and the Camino hill mass. For the next month our men on the southern front, weary of rocky slopes and dark days, had that rest which they so badly needed.

Since the landing at Salerno on 9 September 1943 the divisions of Fifth Army had been fighting almost continuously, first in the drive past Naples and up the Volturno River to the German Winter Line behind Venafro and Mignano; then, from 15 November, in the harsh winter campaign through the mountains to the bloody rubble of Cassino. The battle for this town had lasted two months, from the middle of January to the middle of March. It had made names such as the Rapido, Belvedere Hill, Castle Hill, and the Abbey famous; but the troops available to us had not been able to crack the impregnable German positions.

Elsewhere, too, our drive in the winter had produced half-successes. The British divisions in 10 Corps had stormed across the Garigliano River the night of 17-18 January. In the next two weeks they gained a bridgehead, reaching from Minturno to Mount Joga, but German counterattacks stemmed their advance up the Ausonia Valley and prevented the capture of Castelforte. On 22 January two divisions of Fifth Army under VI Corps went ashore at Anzio. Though taken by surprise, the German High Command had quickly rallied and assembled every available division from north Italy and even units from France to push us back into the sea. The fierce German attacks of February and early March had failed, but General Clark had been forced to commit three more divisions to hold the beachhead.

At Cassino and at Anzio our attack had been stopped. Our troops were exhausted; and many units were woefully understrength. Yet the enemy too had suffered

**DECLASSIFIED**

his heavy casualties in men and materiel—losses which it was far harder for him to repair. Further, our attack had brought strategic gains of great value. Allied troops now stood at the very entrance to the Liri Valley; Camino, Sammucro, Pantano, and Sant'Elia lay behind us. The establishment of a bridgehead across the Garigliano ensured that the next attack in this area would not have to start with a river crossing. The beachhead at Anzio, however difficult to maintain, was a foothold on the enemy's flank of inestimable value.

## A. FIFTH ARMY REGROUPS

1. *The Shift to a New Sector.* (See Maps Nos. 2 and 3.) After the winter campaign a major regrouping of the Allied forces in Italy was necessary to exploit our possibilities and to make the next attack a co-ordinated hammer blow which would crush the German armies before us. This regrouping was ordered on 5 March by General Sir Harold R. L. Alexander, commanding the Allied Armies in Italy (AAI), in his Operations Instruction No. 46.

The British 5 Corps under the direct command of AAI was to take over the east coast sector. Eighth Army would control the central sector, comprising the areas then held by the Polish Corps, the French Expeditionary Corps, and the New Zealand Corps. Henceforth the boundary between Fifth and Eighth Armies would run along Highway 6 from Capua to Mignano, thence along the railroad north of Mount Camino to its junction with the Sant'Ambrogio road, and generally down the latter to the Gari—Liri river junction. Fifth Army was thus relieved of the responsibility of the Atina, Cassino, and Rapido fronts. Its sector now consisted of a narrow strip 13 miles wide between the sea and the Liri River; in addition Fifth Army remained in command of the Anzio beachhead.

Plans for the future attack were not revealed in General Alexander's order of 5 March, but the general pattern could easily be discerned. Fifth Army, concentrated on a narrow front, presumably would be employed in a drive up the coast. At the same time strong forces from Eighth Army would smash up the Liri Valley. While a maximum effort was being launched in these zones, the remainder of the Allied line to the Adriatic would be held as thinly as possible.

Rain and the natural difficulties attendant on the movement of two large armies delayed completion of the reliefs and transfers until the end of March. The new interarmy boundary was placed in effect on 26 March; three days later the French Expeditionary Corps (FEC) and II Corps, the latter on the left, officially relieved the British 10 Corps in the Garigliano sector. 10 Corps was relieved

from Fifth Army on 31 March. This change had been contemplated since October 1943 to simplify our supply and administration but had never been tactically feasible. With the reduction in our sector and the arrival of fresh American troops the release of the British troops in Fifth Army became possible, except for the 1 and 5 Infantry Divisions at Anzio. The 56 and 46 Infantry Divisions, which had been with Fifth Army since Salerno, left the Mediterranean theater for a time; 10 Corps Headquarters remained with Eighth Army.

The front line of Fifth Army was held on 1 April by the 88th Infantry Division (339th Infantry of the 85th Infantry Division attached) from the sea to the vicinity of Castelforte and by the French 4th Mountain Division (4<sup>e</sup> Division de Montagne Marocaine) from that point to the Gari—Liri junction. More precisely, our line began at the sea just east of Scauri, curved north to Tremensuoli, and then east along the hills above the Garigliano plain to Minturno. Though we held this battered town, its streets were deserted by day, for the enemy had commanding observation here as elsewhere in our new sector. Further strongpoints marked the line through Tufo, along the lower slopes of Ceracoli Hill, and along the north side of Salvatito Hill. Below Castelforte the French took over and garrisoned the mass of bald, rugged hills on the east of Mount Majo—Mounts Turlito, Juga, and Ornito—around to the Garigliano. In the right half of the French sector our line followed the east bank of the river to the Army boundary.

2. *Rest and Training.* During April Fifth Army maintained the minimum of troops in the front lines along the Garigliano and at Anzio. At this time General Clark had seven American, three French, and two British divisions under his control. In II Corps, commanded by Maj. Gen. Geoffrey T. Keyes, the 36th Infantry Division moved from Maddaloni to an area northwest of Avellino on 8-11 April and began strenuous mountain training. The 85th Division, which had reached Italy in late March, was attached to II Corps on 1 April, proceeded to the Qualiano—Mondragone area during 3-4 April, and continued training there for the next week. Troops of the division then moved into the line, and on 10-14 April the 85th Division assumed command of the left half of the Minturno bridgehead as far as Minturno itself, with the 339th Infantry on the left and the 337th Infantry on the right. The remainder of the II Corps line was held by the 349th Infantry under the 88th Division. During the next month the two new divisions gained battle experience in the relative quiet of the April lull. The one other major American unit on the southern front, Combat Command B of the 1st Armored Division, remained in reserve near Pozzuoli until the end of April.

The 4th Mountain Division, which was the freshest division in the FEC, held the Mount Juga bridgehead throughout April. The other two divisions of the Corps, the 2d Moroccan Infantry Division (2<sup>e</sup> Division d'Infanterie Marocaine)



and the 3d Algerian Infantry Division (3<sup>e</sup> Division d'Infanterie Algérienne), moved back to the area about Salerno, where they rested and carried out mountain training. In the middle of the month the 2d Moroccan Division came up to the FEC sector, and on 23 April its regiments began to take over the north part of the French bridgehead in rotation to get acquainted with the terrain. Command of the entire area, however, remained with the 4th Mountain Division under the FEC commander, General Alphonse Juin.

VI Corps under Maj. Gen. Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., held the Anzio beachhead with five and one-half divisions: the British 1 and 5 Divisions; the 3d, 34th, and 45th Infantry Divisions; and Combat Command A of the 1st Armored Division. Other units included the 36th Engineer Combat Regiment and the 1st Special Service Force. Outside of occasional raids, conducted to improve our positions or to maintain the offensive spirit in our men, the beachhead forces remained on the defensive, four infantry divisions in the line and the armor with one infantry division in reserve.

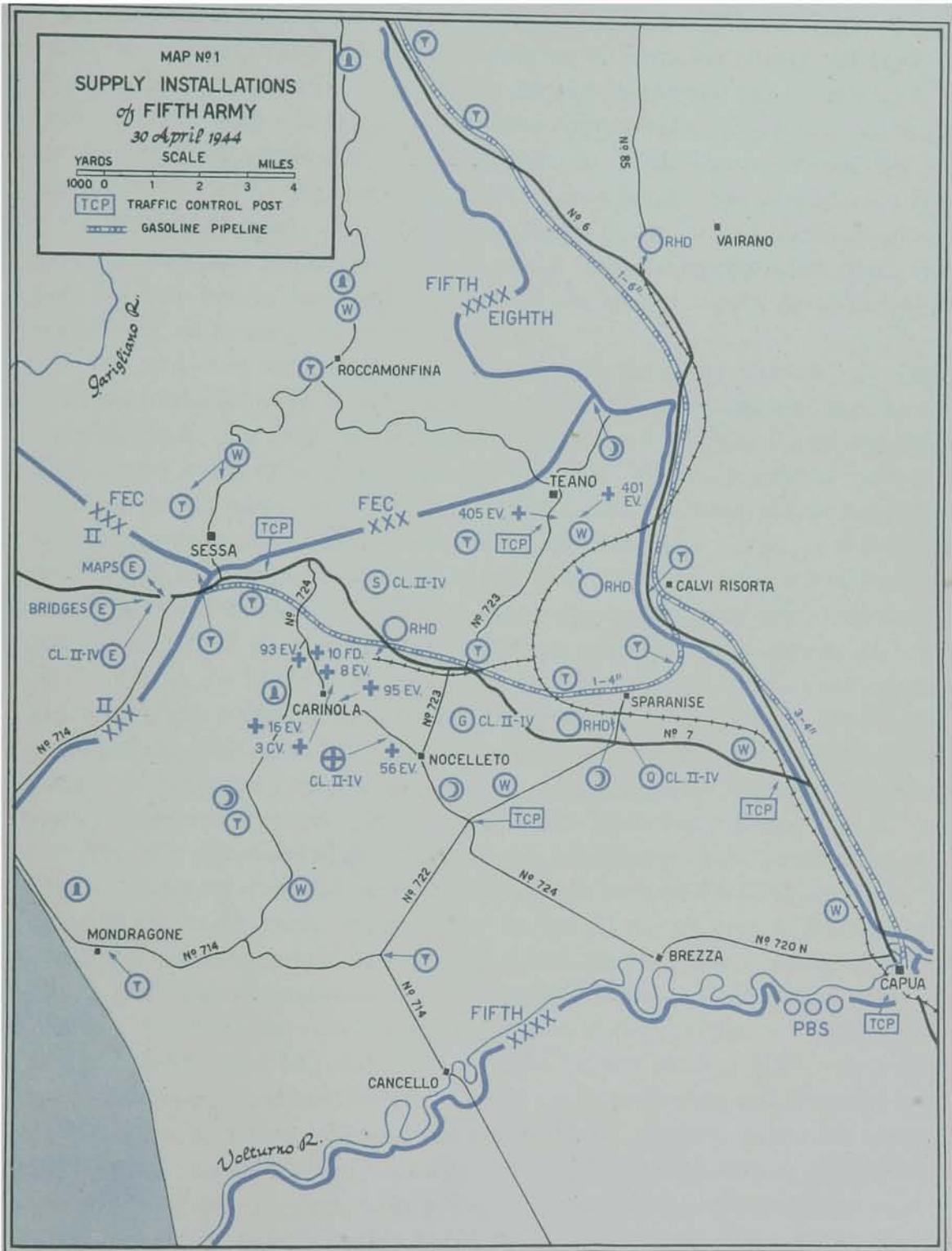
Men of all units at the beachhead and on the southern front received generous passes and allotments to rest centers in April. At the same time a carefully planned program of training was in progress to fit all members of Fifth Army both physically and mentally for the forthcoming attack. Units which had suffered heavily in the winter campaign were strengthened by the transfer of officers and the arrival of replacements, which brought every division up to strength. Equipment was overhauled, repaired, or replaced where necessary; for example, all field artillery pieces in the Army had been calibrated by the end of April. Tactical training revolved about exercises in mountain warfare and tank-infantry co-operation. Morale-building programs were carried out; above all the Italian sunny spring restored the morale of Fifth Army to the point it had reached at Salerno.

3. *The Supply of Fifth Army on the Southern Front.* (See Map No. 1.) The static situation in April favored the flow of supplies through the Army dumps and permitted the unimpeded transfer of our reserves from the axis of Highway 6 to that of Highway 7. By 14 April this transfer had proceeded to the point that the new set of supply installations could be announced in Army Administrative Order No. 48. Henceforth the rear boundary of Fifth Army ran along the Volturno River to Capua, and the forward boundary along the crest of the Mount Massico—Mount Santa Croce ridge. In comparison with the previous Army zone this area was much restricted, and our installations were necessarily crowded by the attempt to place them well west of Highway 6, now the main supply route of Eighth Army. In general Fifth Army dumps and depots lay behind Mount Massico, with some installations still in the Caserta—Capua area and a few dumps forward of the Massico ridge.

MAP No 1  
**SUPPLY INSTALLATIONS**  
 of FIFTH ARMY  
 30 April 1944

SCALE  
 YARDS 0 1 2 3 4  
 MILES

TCP TRAFFIC CONTROL POST  
 GASOLINE PIPELINE



Almost all supplies other than vehicles and Class III items were brought forward from Peninsular Base Section (PBS) in Naples by means of the Naples—Capua—Sparanise railroad. The principal railheads lay at Sparanise (Army and II Corps), Teano (FEC), and later at Carinola (II Corps); in addition the Caserta and Vairano railheads were still employed for some Army supply. Gasoline products came up through three 4-inch pipelines from Naples to Calvi Risorta. From this point one 6-inch line led to Mignano, and a 4-inch line to Sessa. The pipeline and railroad made the task of supply from the port of Naples to the forward Army installations much simpler than in the early months of the Italian campaign when motor transport had been heavily burdened. In view of the ease of supply Army dumps generally were maintained at low levels.

One first-class road, Highway 7, ran through the Army zone and was kept in excellent condition by the Army engineers. Since this route was used both by Fifth and Eighth Armies from the junction of Highways 6 and 7 to Capua, the bulk of Fifth Army traffic from Naples came to Canello. From this point it split, partly by Route 722 to Highway 7 below Sparanise, partly by Route 714 to Mondragone and then around the south end of Mount Massico to II Corps. Another road, 720N—724, ran from Capua to Brezza and on to Nocelleto, where it met Route 723, the main lateral line behind Mount Massico. In the spring, as rains decreased, all roads in the Fifth Army area were maintained more easily and bore up well under the burden of the heavy traffic of a large army in a limited area. Constant supervision by traffic control points and the Army military police kept this traffic moving at all times. Halting for any purpose on the main supply routes was forbidden; as a result of intelligent traffic supervision and preventive motor maintenance, extended jams of hundreds of vehicles did not occur in the Fifth Army sector.

The only difficulties in the supply of the Army came at the forward end of our lines of communication, for here all materiel and personnel had to cross the Garigliano River under enemy observation. In the II Corps area a floating bridge above the destroyed bridge on Highway 7 took the bulk of our traffic, with a foot-bridge and ferry downstream and two bridges (Damiano and Rossi) farther upstream. The FEC had four bridges at the bend of the Garigliano—Tiger (Pateley), Leopard, Jaguar, and Lion (Skipton). In the French sector it was estimated that 10 % of all enemy artillery fire was directed at Tiger Bridge, and the main bridges of both corps were damaged several times in April. Floating mines introduced by the Germans upstream also threatened the French bridges until a naval mine net was strung across the river. Beginning 5 April, chemical units laid a smoke screen every day and on moonlit nights at the two bridge areas to reduce enemy visibility, and further precaution was taken to build up stocks west of the Garigliano in the event of a temporary interruption in the supply routes.

## B. THE TERRAIN OF THE MAY DRIVE

I. *General.* (See Map No. 19.) The terrain before our forces on the southern front consisted principally of a chain of steep and rugged mountains, averaging about 15 miles in width and stretching approximately 60 miles northwest toward Rome. Bounded on one side by the sea and on the other by the Liri—Sacco Valley, this strip presented all the variations which the Italian landscape can afford. At Gaeta and Terracina the mountains come down to the sea; elsewhere the high ground recedes and yields either to the flat, waterlogged Fondi and Pontine plains or to the fruitful coastal strip between Formia and Minturno. Inland are such formidable peaks as Mount Petrella and abrupt cliffs towering hundreds of feet; yet here too scrub-covered rolling hills set amid farmlands offer an immediate contrast to the sheer rock walls.

The first part of the mountain chain, the Aurunci Mountains, extends about 20 miles from the Garigliano to the Fondi—Pico road. Rising to 940 meters at Mount Majo southwest of the junction of the Gari and Liri rivers, the mountains then fall away into the Ausonia Valley but rise to 1533 meters at Mount Petrella. The two valleys which run respectively north and south from Itri and Pico almost separate the western portion of the Aurunci Mountains from the main elevations of the Petrella massif. North and west of Fondi lie 12 miles of the Ausoni Mountains as far as the Amaseno River valley. Beyond Sezze and the Palombara Gap the Lepini Mountains continue the chain 20 miles to the broad valley between Velletri and Valmontone. The mountainous area then ends with the Colli Laziali mass overlooking the Tiber Valley.

The scarcity of roads in the zone facing Fifth Army presented considerable difficulties, both to the defenders and to the attackers. The only good road along the axis of advance was Highway 7 on the extreme left. This route crosses the Garigliano below Minturno, follows the coast to Formia, and turns northwest through the mountains to Itri and Fondi. Then, after skirting the coastal marshes to the bottleneck of Terracina, it runs 31 miles through the level Pontine Marshes to Cisterna. The entire supply of II Corps depended on this road.

Since no routes break through the mountain mass about Mount Petrella, the FEC was forced to depend on a number of minor roads well over to its right flank. A poor road cuts northwest from Castelforte to Ausonia, north of which it joins the second-class river route leading from Sant'Ambrogio around through Esperia to Pico and San Giovanni Incarico. From this point the FEC could make use of two routes forward, one through Pastena and Ceccano, the other through Lenola, Vallecorsa, and Amaseno.

One lateral road branches off Highway 7 west of Minturno and runs north through Ausonia and San Giorgio a Liri to Cassino. Another useful lateral route, Highway 82, proceeds north from Itri through Pico and San Giovanni, and a third follows the valley Sezze—Prossedi—Frosinone. After the initial fighting the enemy was forced to withdraw at such a pace that he could not spare time for heavy demolitions and mining; damage to the road net accordingly did not delay Fifth Army as much as it did Eighth Army, struggling across the streams in the Liri Valley.

2. *The Aurunci Mountains.* (See Map No. 3.) The area immediately in front of Fifth Army, bounded on the north by the Liri River, on the west by Highway 82, and on the south by the sea, falls from the military point of view into several subsections: the hills centering about Mount Majo, the Ausonia Valley, the huge massif dominated by Mount Petrella, and the coastal plain in the region of Formia and Gaeta.

The northeast sector, isolated by the Ausonia Valley and the Ausonia Defile and partly encircled by the Liri and Garigliano rivers, is a hilly triangle approximately 6 miles wide at its northern end and 12 miles long. From the rivers the ground rises first slowly, then more rapidly in numerous hills past Sant'Ambrogio and San Giorgio to the main Majo mass. To the north this mass consists of two ridges, one running south from Cantalupo Hill and the other southeast from Castellone Hill. Between the ridges is the steep Vallemaio Valley; at their junction lies the peak of Mount Majo. The wild area running on southeast from Mount Majo, a series of limestone ridges and rounded hills separated by narrow and steep-sided valleys, is penetrated from the east only by the poor road from Castelforte to Coreno, and by a few trails which switch back and forth along the natural terraces of the mountain mass. Below Castelforte the land descends to Hill 413 (Mount Ciannelli) and Ceracoli Hill (110 meters), and then falls away south into the valley of Ausente Creek.

Between the Majo mass and the Petrella escarpment is a triangular area of gentle swells given over to open fields. This valley gradually rises to a height of 175 meters north of Ausonia and narrows to a defile, through which runs the Ausonia—San Giorgio road. Toward the south the valley is split by a wedge of low hills and small farm valleys extending from the Minturno ridge north to Mount dei Bracchi. In a narrow valley to the east of Mount dei Bracchi (205 meters) flows Ausente Creek, which drains most of the plains below Ausonia; a smaller stream, Capo d'Acqua Creek, rises below Spigno to follow the western fork of the valley.

The western side of the Ausonia Valley is sharply delimited by the high fault escarpment of Mount La Civita and Mount Fammera, which marks the beginning of the Petrella massif—a region of wild mountains and upland basins stretching on six miles to the Itri—Pico road. Though Mount Petrella is the highest peak,

the center of the region lies at Mount Revole (1285 meters). The mountains on the east side are more or less devoid of trees, but the scrub growth becomes thicker toward the west.

No roads traverse this mass in any direction, and only a few trails, made by charcoal burners and shepherds, run along its steep slopes and narrow valleys. On the south and east access to the mountain block is well-nigh impossible. The coastal plain to the south slopes up past the isolated hill of Mount Campese to the foot of the mountains, which rise almost sheer. To the east a steep cliff overlooks the Ausonia Valley along its entire length, except at Spigno. Here one trail ascends the escarpment to the northwest with a 51 % grade for the worst 500 yards and curves north and west of Mount Petrella to the mountain basin called the Fraile. Another possible route hugs the southern side of Mount Petrella and continues on to Mount Ruazzo.

The northern and western sides present easier slopes. A good mule trail leads southwest from Esperia to the Fraile; from the Itri—Pico road a trail which was being improved by the Germans before our drive runs as far as Piano del Campo, a level upland plain west of Mount Revole. While individuals and mules can penetrate to this peak from several directions, the movement of motorized equipment through the Petrella massif is completely out of the question.

On the south of the central mountains the terrain sinks into low hills and the plain through which Highway 7 runs to Formia and Itri, where it meets Highway 82. To the north of the massif the Esperia—Pontecorvo road follows relatively easy slopes through a region of hills and broad valleys. Directly northwest of Esperia the road runs below the conical peak of Mount d'Oro (846 meters); then it enters the low valley of Forma Quesa Creek and curves about Mount del Mandrone to Highway 82 east of Pico.

### C. ENEMY DISPOSITIONS

1. *Enemy Defensive Lines.* (See Map No. 3.) The mountainous terrain to our front, which could be approached by road only on the flanks, strongly favored the defense. The Germans had further improved their situation by the fortification of two main lines. The first of these was the famous Gustav Line, which ran along the hills above Minturno and Castelforte, in front of Mount Majo to the Gari—Rapido rivers, and up the Rapido past Cassino. The second, the Adolf Hitler Line, extended from Terracina along the Fondi—Pico road to Pontecorvo and across the Liri Valley through Aquino to Piedimonte.

Between these two lines in the Fifth Army zone were two switch lines, the Dora and the Orange. The former began at the sea near Gaeta and curved east and then north about the base of the Petrella massif to Esperia and Sant'Oliva, where it connected with a spur of the Hitler Line. Just west of Ausonia the Dora Line met the Orange Line, which ran from Castelforte west through Ausonia. The main works of this latter line were astride the road north of Ausonia and evidently were designed to bar the Ausonia Valley in the event we broke through at Minturno; the Germans apparently believed that we could not crack the Gustav Line frontally at Mount Majo itself.

During March and April our command gained a clear picture of the Gustav Line to our front, for the enemy was so lulled by the static situation as to change his installations infrequently. Through photo reconnaissance, patrols, interrogation of prisoners and escaped civilians, and all the other means available to G-2, we obtained a mass of detailed information extending our knowledge of the enemy far into his rear areas. Some of this collated intelligence was acted upon immediately, as in the artillery program for methodical destruction of bridges and nightly harassing missions on enemy routes of supply; but most of it was stored away to give the enemy a surprise on D Day.

The Gustav Line below the Liri had not been deliberately laid out in advance but was the result of the earlier action in the area. In January and February the British 10 Corps had captured Minturno, Mount Juga, and other points in the previous German line of defense; after halting our attack the enemy stabilized his line on the basis of the positions which he still held. In general the Gustav Line in our zone was characterized by such fortifications as trenches, firing pits, pillboxes, and dugouts.

The dugouts were usually excavations in the sides of hills, 9 feet long, 12 feet wide, and 12 feet deep. The walls were strengthened with timbers; three to four layers of logs were crisscrossed over the top; and earth was piled up over the roofing to a depth of five feet, making the outside appear to be an oval-shaped mound. Large stones and rubble were added for reinforcement and camouflage, while the entrance had winding steps for protection against shell fragments. The dugout was used by the enemy infantry primarily as living quarters and as cover during our artillery concentrations.

In the sector before II Corps the ordinary pillbox was based on an excavation five feet wide and three feet long. Pillars were placed in each corner, wooden beams were laid across these, and on top of the beams as many as three layers of railroad rails were placed. Further reinforcement was obtained by an additional covering of railroad ties, stone, and earth. Another type of pillbox was constructed by digging holes about five feet deep in the floor of a house and then reinforcing

them in the same manner as in the first type, with the exception that only wooden beams and earth were used as covering. If the houses were then demolished by artillery fire, the rubble merely added strength and concealment to the position. The pillbox accommodated both riflemen and machine guns; in addition uncovered machine-gun positions and fire trenches were used.

Defenses of this sort were placed in depth along the front, especially in the hills about Minturno and on the Castelforte—Ausonia axis. In the Mount Majo area the enemy's positions included crude stone bunkers, dugouts, and unsheltered automatic-weapon emplacements, but the Germans depended heavily in this district upon the natural difficulties of the mountainous terrain. Farther north the Gustav Line curved down to the close vicinity of the Garigliano behind barbed wire and an antitank ditch. Along the river the enemy forward positions lay on the lower foothills about 200 yards from the river bank; reserve positions were built on the gentle reverse slopes of the hills north and south of Sant'Ambrogio and at Sant'Andrea. Throughout the entire line the Germans made good use of commanding heights and reverse slopes, and placed their automatic weapons skillfully to command all avenues of approach.

Mines also were extensively used to protect the German positions against infantry and armor. Trails, draws, and every natural avenue of approach were mined and often wired as well. Patterned minefields were not common, but the Tellermines were normally spaced four yards apart and the wooden mines two yards. In some areas, however, the mines were so close that one detonation would set off a series. The use of antipersonnel mines and box mines was widespread in front of II Corps and was being increased when our attack started.

Our knowledge of the Hitler Line was less complete. In the Liri Valley it apparently was—and in fact proved to be—another belt such as the Gustav Line at Cassino, with « armored crabs » (portable steel pillboxes) and other carefully prepared positions. These steel and concrete defenses extended south of the Liri River to Sant'Oliva and curved east to anchor on Mount d'Oro. From Pontecorvo the Hitler Line also reached southwest to Fondi and Terracina; late in April prisoners reported that the Todt Organization was completing a line of steel bunkers on the line west of Lenola. From photo reconnaissance, however, the interesting fact developed that the Germans did not appear to be fortifying the Petrella massif or indeed stretching a continuous belt of defenses from the Liri to the sea at any point in rear of the Gustav Line.

The Dora Line, for example, had some fortifications in the vicinity of Mount Campese and others north of Esperia, but between these points the German High Command apparently relied on the rock cliffs of Mount La Civita and Mount Famera to break any attack. Prisoners taken after the beginning of our drive gave



a full description of the Dora Line at its northern extremity, with its concrete-roofed dugouts and emplacements for weapons, but reported it as far from complete. Wire had not been laid, no mines had been planted, and trees still limited the fields of fire; worst of all the dugouts had been constructed facing us so that direct fire from our artillery and tanks could cover the entrances. As our attack developed, it became increasingly clear that the Germans had not taken full advantage of their month of leisure to carry out a policy of ever improving their defenses in the rear; on the contrary their confidence in the Gustav Line, which had broken our earlier assaults, seems to have mounted to such a point that they relied in an almost fatalistic manner on the fortifications already built.

2. *German Forces in Italy.* (See Map No. 2.) During April and early May the enemy units before us remained generally in the same areas and under the same command as in March. The overall command was called Army Group Southwest, under Field Marshal Albert Kesselring. North Italy, with the Riviera and part of Yugoslavia, was called Area Witthoeft; the rest of German-occupied Italy fell under the German Tenth and Fourteenth Armies. The latter of these, commanded by General Eberhard von Mackensen, was responsible for containing our troops in the Anzio beachhead and for guarding the coast north of the Tiber, while Tenth Army under General Heinrich von Vietinghoff genannt Scheel held the southern front.

On 3 April Area Witthoeft was garrisoned by LXXXVII Panzer (Armored) Corps and seven divisions. In Italy proper were the 356th Grenadier (Infantry) Division near Genoa, the Hermann Goering Panzer Parachute Division near Leghorn, the 162d Turcoman Division near Cecina, and the 278th Grenadier Division, forming on the east coast.

Fourteenth Army had two corps and eight divisions. In reserve were the 92d Grenadier Division, forming in the vicinity of Civitavecchia, the 29th Panzer Grenadier (Armored Infantry) Division near Lake Bracciano, and the 26th Panzer Division about Sezze. I Parachute Corps, on the north flank of the Anzio beachhead, had in line the 4th Parachute Division, the 65th Grenadier Division, the 1027th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, the Infantry Lehr Regiment, and the 3d Panzer Grenadier Division. In LXXVI Infantry Corps, on the south flank of the beachhead, were the 362d Grenadier Division and the 715th Light Division with attached German and Italian units.

Under Tenth Army, on the southern front, LI Mountain Corps was responsible for the Adriatic coast with the 334th Grenadier Division, the 305th Grenadier Division, and perhaps the 114th Light Division under its command. Most of the main front was garrisoned by XIV Panzer Corps: from west to east, the 94th Grenadier Division, the 71st Grenadier Division, part of the 44th Grenadier Division

—all these in the Fifth Army zone—then the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division in the Liri Valley, the 1st Parachute Division about Cassino, the rest of the 44th Grenadier Division above Cassino, and the 5th Mountain Division in the central mountains. Tenth Army reserve consisted of the 90th Panzer Grenadier Division north of Frosinone.

In all Marshal Kesselring had on 3 April 22 divisions, the same number as AAI. The equality in number of units, however, did not indicate equality in force, for the bulk of Kesselring's divisions was greatly understrength in men and materiel, as they had been throughout most of the Italian campaign. Favored units, such as the Hermann Goering Panzer Parachute Division, were brought back up to full strength after each debacle, but the rest were reorganized after the January—March battles on an average strength of 300-500 men per infantry battalion.

The Germans were particularly weak in reserves. Of the units in Area Witthoef only the Hermann Goering Panzer Parachute Division from the Leghorn area took part in the May campaign. Available reserves farther south consisted of three mobile units: the 90th and 29th Panzer Grenadier Divisions, and the 26th Panzer Division. When these had been committed, as they were early in the May drive, further reinforcements could be gained only by pulling units out of the Adriatic line. The German High Command had evidently decided that the requirements of other theaters precluded any increase in its Italian investment, and that the German forces in Italy would be adequate at least for an orderly, deliberate withdrawal in the event of a heavy attack. This proved to be costly economy.

Along the Garigliano front the enemy remained quiet throughout April and early May. (*See Map No. 3.*) The most sensitive sectors lay east of Mount Majo and at Ceracoli Hill, commanding the valley of Ausente Creek. Here the enemy apparently grew nervous on two occasions in the middle and end of April, for minor attacks were carried out to gain prisoners and information. In general, however, the German lines were lightly held during the daylight hours; night activity consisted of minor patrolling and alert outposting.

From time to time regular reliefs were carried out in the front lines, but the sectors of the two divisions before us remained much the same throughout the month and one-half before our attack. When our offensive began, the 94th Grenadier Division still held the coastal sector from Scauri to Ausente Creek, with the 267th and 274th Grenadier Regiments in the line and the 276th Grenadier Regiment coast watching in reserve. (1) The 71st Grenadier Division, reinforced by elements of three other divisions, garrisoned the long sector from the Ausente to the Liri. The 211th Grenadier Regiment was deployed from the Ausente to Hill 413; then came

---

(1) For the major components of the German divisions facing Fifth Army, see Annex No. 2E.

the 194th Grenadier Regiment in Castelforte and the 191st Grenadier Regiment in the hills just north of this town. A mixed group comprising the 131st Grenadier Regiment and the 44th Reconnaissance Battalion (44th Grenadier Division); the 171st Fusilier Battalion; and the 2d Battalion, 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (15th Panzer Grenadier Division), defended the vital sector extending from Mount Faito to the Garigliano and along the latter to its junction with the Liri. The enemy had long appreciated the importance of the Majo ridge, of which Mount Faito was a part, and kept it as well manned as possible; but his strength was so scanty that in some points he was forced to depend largely on the natural obstacles of the mountains. Outside of the division reserves and the 620th Ost Battalion (largely Russian) at Gaeta, the German command before us could count on no support in the first days of our attack.

The division artillery was mostly emplaced in the Ausonia Valley. Interesting shifts took place in the month of April as the enemy began to realize, though incompletely, the strength concentrated against him. At this time the artillery of the 94th Grenadier Division shifted farther west in the Formia—Mount Campese area, and the artillery of the 71st Grenadier Division withdrew to the west side of Ausente Creek; in both cases batteries tended to split up and so to reduce the effectiveness of our counterbattery fire. To compensate for the retreat of the light artillery an estimated battalion of nebelwerfers, apparently 120-mm with a range of 6500 yards, and a company or two of self-propelled guns were moved up to positions northwest of Mount dei Bracchi. Heavier artillery consisted of seven 170-mm guns near Itri and one near Gaeta, some 105-mm guns in the vicinity of Ausonia, San Giorgio, and Formia, and a battalion of 150-mm guns near Ausonia.

Throughout the lull before our attack enemy artillery remained silent in the morning when the sun favored our observation, and increased in the late afternoon. The main targets of enemy fire, limited severely by ammunition restrictions, consisted of our forward troop areas, the towns of Minturno and Tufo, our bridges over the Garigliano, and the American artillery along the coast; but the enemy was also quick to bring fire on excessive vehicular movements, tanks, and self-propelled guns. Though the enemy enjoyed good ground observation, he had little photo reconnaissance. Camouflage and flash defilade accordingly protected our artillery, even when well forward.

3. *Enemy Supply and Our Air Force.* (See Map No. 2.) While supplies for Fifth Army moved up in regular schedule from Naples, the materials of war for the enemy were forced to run a long gauntlet all the way down the Italian peninsula. Three means of transportation were available to the enemy—rail, motor, and ship—and all were hammered by our XII Tactical Air Command. Our air force had had abundant practice during the winter in learning how to block the enemy

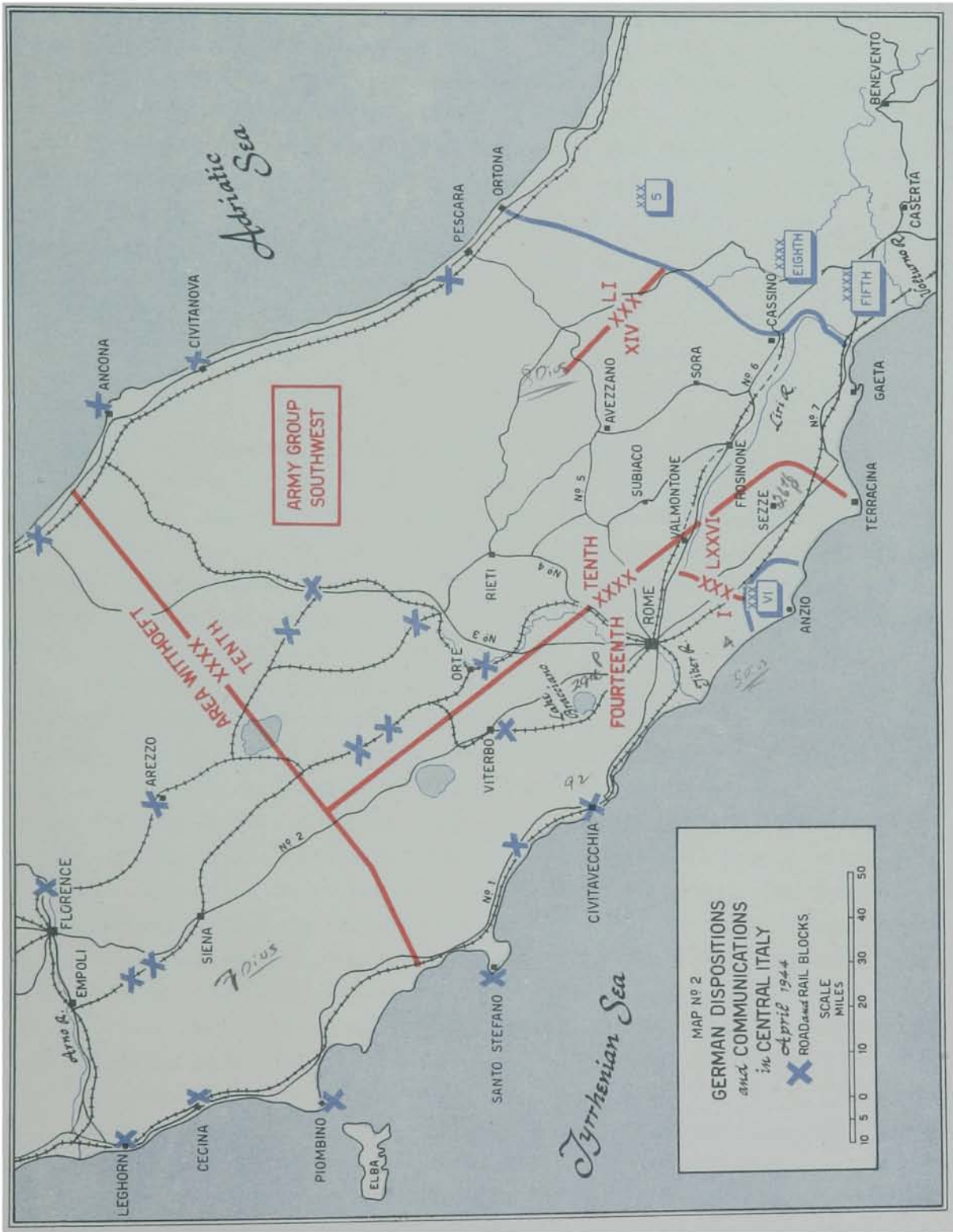
communications; as the flying weather improved in April it put its lessons into good effect, and devoted the bulk of its energy to jamming enemy supply lines.

At no time in April were the rail lines south from Florence and Leghorn clear. Our medium bombers created numerous blocks, some of them simultaneously. The Cecina bridge on the coastal line was out for the entire month. The Florence—Arezzo line was interrupted; the important bypass line Empoli—Siena was neutralized. Farther south the fighter-bombers took over, kept the main Orte line cut, and also hamstrung the lines through Viterbo. Photo reconnaissance reports agreed with the results from interrogation of prisoners: the Germans were unable to place any weight on the rail system south of Florence.

Accordingly the bulk of German supplies was transshipped in the Florence area from rail to truck and came down Highways 1 and 2 through Rome. This maneuver was not overlooked by our air force, which sent numerous armed reconnaissance flights over the road net behind the enemy lines, both by day and by night. Some increase in shipping along the west coast also took place, but the ports of Piombino and Santo Stefano were so damaged by our raids that a large part of the seaborne supplies was unloaded over open beaches. As a final blow to the Germans, our air force carried out a systematic program against their dumps, motor parks, and motor repair installations.

The results of this activity were disturbing to the German supply lines. When the weather permitted, between 100 and 200 sorties were flown daily against enemy communications and dumps. The report of one fighter group (the 57th) for the period 1-20 April gives a clear idea of the probable effect. In attacks against railroads the group claimed 111 track cuts and 8 bridges out, 24 engines destroyed and 30 damaged, 140 railroad cars destroyed and 348 damaged. Motor transport hit by the group included 133 flamers, 54 destroyed, and 114 damaged, while 1 road bridge was destroyed and 2 damaged. Eight gasoline dumps were set on fire, one oil dump destroyed, three ammunition dumps destroyed and one damaged. Other groups did as well.

Prisoners of war agreed that running the gauntlet of our air force from Florence south was unpleasant. On 13 April one German soldier went from Florence to Arezzo; when captured later, he reported the road « one tremendous M/T cemetery » with piles of destroyed vehicles on both sides and some recent casualties still blocking the highway. During his trip the road was bombed four times. Other prisoners indicated that enemy trucks, consisting mostly of Fiats, Spas, and Lancias, were overloaded by one-third and broke down frequently through lack of spare parts, which were rare since our bombing of the Italian truck factories at Milan and Turin. Such reports were scarcely exaggerated, as our troops discovered when they marched up the wreck-laden roads north of Rome in June.



Nevertheless the German forces on the front lines opposite us were never critically short of rations or ammunition, and any interruptions in the flow of supplies close to the front were due more to immediate artillery action on our part than to the activities of the air force farther to the rear. Enemy artillery ammunition had to be conserved, and enemy reserves in all branches of supply were not high; but enough materiel got through our aerial blockade to keep the enemy in fighting condition. Undoubtedly the burdens imposed on the German system of supply did help speed the enemy collapse in our May drive, but precise evidence on the importance of this factor is not yet available.

#### D. *GENERAL PREPARATIONS BY FIFTH ARMY*

1. *Reinforcements.* During the previous months of the Italian campaign Fifth Army had been built from the small force that landed at Salerno to a powerful organization well supplied with all the types of units necessary in a modern army. The fighting thus far, however, had revealed the need for further reinforcement in some categories, and efforts were made in April to obtain the necessary units. These efforts were partially successful, but the demands of other theaters prevented complete fulfillment of Fifth Army's needs.

As far as infantry divisions were concerned, Fifth Army entered the May battle with four essentially fresh divisions—two French and two American. The French 1st Motorized Division (1<sup>re</sup> Division de Marche d'Infanterie) began to unload at Naples on 20 April and closed at Benevento eight days later. This division, composed of the 1st Marine Regiment and the 1st, 2d, and 4th Infantry Brigades, included many of the early members of the Free French Forces, and used the Cross of Lorraine of that unit as its insignia. Since Allied Force Headquarters initially planned to train the division at the Invasion Training Center (Salerno), only one regimental combat team was requested by AAI for Fifth Army on 25 April. Five days later the entire division was attached to the FEC to give it combat experience. On 6 May AAI informed Fifth Army that plans for the amphibious training of the 1st Motorized Division were cancelled and that the unit was completely at our disposal for the May drive.

In addition to this French division the 4th Mountain Division was also completely assembled in Italy by the shipments on 4 and 27 April of its remaining elements from Corsica. Another group of tabors also arrived, and the First Goum Headquarters was attached to the FEC on 13 April to control the 1st, 2d, and 4th Groups of Tabors, which totalled about 12,000 by D Day.

By the beginning of the May attack the FEC under General Juin had been considerably strengthened in Corps troops. Large-scale attachment of American engineers was no longer necessary, and only in armor, field artillery, and antiaircraft artillery were American units employed in large numbers by the FEC. With 4 divisions and 3 groups of tabors, the French had an effective strength of 99,000 on 11 May. To cope with this increase in strength and to give combat training to command elements a second French corps headquarters under Lt. Gen. Edgard R. M. de Larminat was brought over, the commanding general arriving 11 May and his reduced headquarters early in June. Though the French troops were never officially split, this new command was employed by General Juin to direct part of his operations in May and June.

An American corps headquarters, IV Corps under Maj. Gen. Willis D. Crittenger, also came to Fifth Army. Arriving in Italy on 28 March, IV Corps remained at Pozzuoli and vicinity for the next seven weeks in charge of coastal defense. On 28 May the Corps was put in the line for a brief period, and it again took command of part of the Fifth Army zone in June.

Fifth Army had two fresh American divisions for D Day. The 88th Division under Maj. Gen. John E. Sloan had been employed in part to hold the lines above Cassino during March, and took over command of the II Corps sector on the lower Garigliano at the end of the month; but its first experience in attack came during the May drive. The 85th Division under Maj. Gen. John B. Coulter closed in Italy late in March and likewise received combat experience along the Garigliano during the quiet weeks of the April lull. These two units formed the spearhead of the attack.

Another division, the 91st Infantry Division, arrived in the Mediterranean theater in April, but its employment was indefinite for some time. On 5 April Natoussa informed Fifth Army that the division would be assigned to us; six days later the destination of the division was changed to Oran and its assignment to Allied Force Headquarters. The 91st Division arrived in North Africa 21 April-4 May and began combat training at Arzew. General Clark, however, was still anxious to obtain further American troops and requested one regimental combat team of the division through AAI on 26 April, to be effective in Italy by 1 June. Allied Force Headquarters replied favorably and scheduled the 361st Regimental Combat Team to arrive on 27 May. The regiment finally reached Anzio by direct movement from North Africa on 1 June; the remainder of the division, after temporary assignment to Seventh Army, was released to Fifth Army late in May and came to Italy after the fall of Rome.

The rest of the Fifth Army reinforcement consisted of smaller units. Two pack artillery battalions, the 601st and 602d, were secured for the mountain warfare which lay ahead; and our long-range artillery received a notable reinforcement in

the form of 4 8-inch guns, with a range of 35,000 yards. Most of the other additions were dictated by the likelihood of a mobile situation developing in our attack, which would put greater demands on our reconnaissance elements and on transportation both from the railheads and in the mountains. The 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron arrived in the middle of May; truck units were secured from PBS and on loan from Seventh Army; and the number of Italian pack companies was increased from four to six. Other mules and mulehandlers were added to the two pack artillery battalions.

2. *Replacements.* Shortly after the cessation of active fighting in March all units of Fifth Army were brought back up to full strength and maintained at that level. The experience of the previous months, however, demonstrated that as soon as our combat troops again took up the offensive their strength would diminish rapidly through injuries and wounds. At Cassino and at Anzio rifle companies had been reduced to 60 and 80 men in only a few weeks of fighting, with a consequent reduction in morale and battle efficiency.

The system of replacements in the past had not proven satisfactory. In general infantry companies had received new men in bulk while they were in reserve, and frequently moved back into the line before the strangers could be absorbed into the close-knit organization of the unit. When a company had been so greatly reduced that the majority of its men consisted of replacements, its combat efficiency remained low for some time. Even worse, the new men, generally fresh from the United States, suffered disproportionate casualties until they became battle-wise. The results of the system had been undue losses, the slow weakening of good outfits in the line, and the bulk reception of new men who needed extensive training in too brief a time.

In April the flow of replacements from the United States permitted the establishment for the first time in the campaign of a replacement reserve. Natoussa and the War Department approved the suggestion made by G-1, Fifth Army, on 15 April that each infantry division be allotted an overstrength of 750 replacements. These men, all infantry, were integrated into the division on the basis of 250 per regiment. During the quiet period in April the replacements were rotated with the regular personnel of the infantry rifle companies and thus secured combat experience in the outfits to which they would eventually be assigned.

When the May drive began, all replacements were back in their divisional pools. As casualties began to reduce the strength of the front-line companies, requests for replacements went back much as ration requests and were filled as automatically. The strength of the infantry divisions in Fifth Army accordingly remained well up throughout the campaign, and its rifle companies continued to maintain a high peak of efficiency. All commanders were well satisfied with the new policy, which



DECLASSIFIED

also had a definite influence in keeping up the morale of old men and replacements alike. The gaps caused by battle were filled so quickly that soldiers were less conscious of the casualties, and the new men came into their outfits with greater confidence as a result of their previous combat experience.

3. *The Army Plan to Ensure Surprise.* On 15 April Fifth Army issued a camouflage plan for the future operation. This plan, based on an AAI scheme, went beyond the purely technical aspects of camouflage to lay out an entire program to gain the great advantage of surprise in our drive. The general aim was to present a picture of normal defensive activity in the Fifth Army zone until the very last minute before D Day, H Hour. As many units as possible were to remain in their locations as of 15 April until the eve of the attack. Those which shifted forward proceeded by night into locations which had already been camouflaged; rear parties or other units maintained a semblance of activity in the old areas.

After 25 April units west of the Volturno which moved other than in normal reliefs did not post location signs, and to keep the presence of the 1st Motorized Division hidden its troops removed all unit insignia from clothes and vehicles before arriving in Italy. II Corps and the FEC were ordered not to use radio communication with the 1st Motorized Division and the 36th Division under any conditions, and all radio activity was carefully regulated to present a picture of the normal nets with a normal number of stations. Among other safeguards relieving units took over the call signs and frequencies of the relieved organizations.

Activity in the area forward of Mount Massico and Mount Santa Croce was especially restricted. Only troops in the initial assault moved west of this line; dumps were not established in the area unless essential and then gradually, well off the main roads. Traffic to these forward dumps moved as far as possible after dark without lights. Preparations for the construction of new bridges across the Garigliano after the beginning of our attack were carried out only on direct approval of Fifth Army.

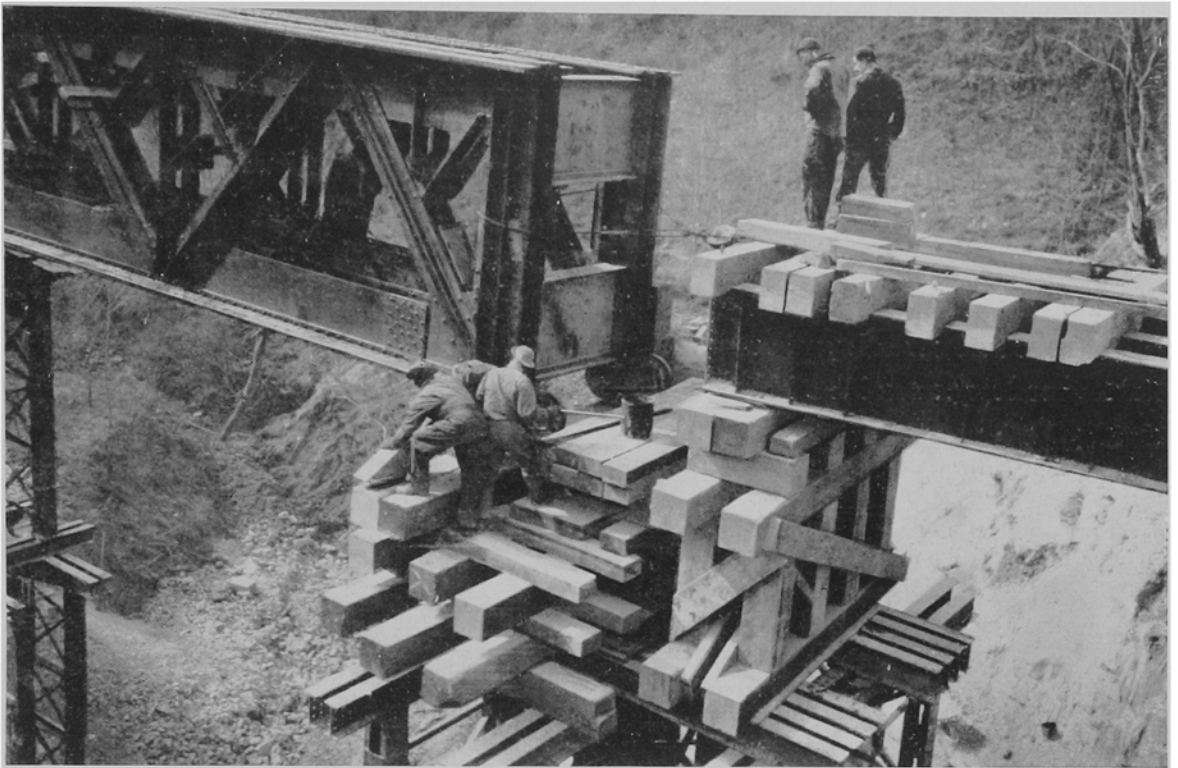
By 15 April the minimum of corps artillery necessary to support our defensive fires was in position, much of it still in its old locations east of Cassino. The rest lay in reserve, including all the heavy howitzers except for two 240-mm howitzers. These pieces were engaged in a program of methodical destruction of enemy bridges. During the entire month of April II Corps artillery fired 68,858 rounds, one-fifth of its May expenditure. As far as possible the May drive was supported initially from already established positions. The remainder of the corps artillery moved directly to battle positions from rest areas in the last few days before D Day, and an increase in the volume of artillery fire was carefully avoided.

All aspects of Fifth Army activity were thus regulated to present a picture of static defense. The regular reliefs continued in the front line, and new units of

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED  
R. Kelly  
Ltr Mem To R-8773-18

the 85th Division were committed, as if in a quiet sector to gain experience. Existing camouflage was maintained, but units already in position were not further concealed. Camouflage patrols inspected installations from the ground while our photo reconnaissance took pictures at regular intervals of the entire Fifth Army area from the Volturno forward. These photographs were studied, and instances of change from the situation on 15 April were immediately checked. In such a plan a slip by one unit might make the enemy suspicious, but that slip did not occur. As the attack demonstrated, our plan to ensure surprise worked admirably; the enemy did not reinforce his line before D Day, and he did not expect our attack with the strength and at the time it was launched.



*The military railroads are prepared for the drive on the southern front.*



*One of the large ammunition dumps at Anzio was hit by enemy artillery.*



*Santa Maria, the Ausonia Valley, and the escarpment of the Petrella massif.*



*Looking north from Castelforte to Mount Majo and the zone of the FEC.*