

N. 8723-F

**FIFTH ARMY  
HISTORY**



# FIFTH ARMY HISTORY

5 JUNE - 15 AUGUST 1944



*Our leading reconnaissance elements detour a German demolition on the way to Grosseto.*

# FIFTH ARMY HISTORY



## PART VI

### *Pursuit to the Arno*

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Order Seeig 9 the Army  
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**DECLASSIFIED**

*Lieutenant General* MARK W. CLARK.

\* \* \* *commanding*

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*Crossing the Tiber River*A. *ROME FALLS TO FIFTH ARMY*

IN the late afternoon of 4 June 1944 beaten elements of the German Tenth and Fourteenth Armies, disorganized and torn apart by the twin drives of Fifth Army through the battered Gustav Line and out of the Anzio beachhead, were in full flight north of Rome, first of the major axis capitals to be freed from the Nazi—Fascist regime. It was almost dark that night when armored and infantry elements of VI Corps celebrated the bursting of their beachhead bonds as they rolled into the Italian capital and seized the bridges over the Tiber River. The bridges within the city itself were undamaged; those to the north and south were destroyed. In mid-morning leading units of II Corps, driving in from the east, had reached the outskirts of the city, but rearguard actions by the foe prevented a penetration in force until about the time of the arrival of the VI Corps units.

Capture of the city brought to a climax a swift, hard-hitting campaign. In little over three weeks Fifth Army, aided by Eighth Army, smashed the vaunted Gustav Line defenses which had held throughout the winter months, continued through both prepared and hastily thrown up defenses of the secondary Hitler Line and broke out of the beachhead where VI Corps had been hemmed in for four months. This well planned, co-ordinated action, timed to strike the double blow from the south and from the beachhead originally hoped for in February, began along the Liri and Gargigliano rivers on 11 May to the accompaniment of intense artillery fire. Fifth Army, under the command of Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark, had as its objectives the breaking of the Gustav Line, advancing beyond Rome, and pursuing and destroying the German armies in Italy.

During this period Fifth Army had the greatest effective strength it was ever to have in the Italian campaign. The attack from the south saw all the power of II Corps and the French Expeditionary Corps (FEC), totaling almost seven divisions, grouped in a comparatively narrow zone extending from the Tyrrhenian Sea inland

to the line of the Liri and Sacco rivers. Troops of Eighth Army had been moved secretly in great strength from the Adriatic side of the Italian peninsula to take over the entire area north of the Liri River, including the Cassino sector, where Fifth Army had battled bloodily since the early days of 1944. II Corps occupied the left flank of Fifth Army, formerly held by the British 10 Corps, and sent the 85th and 88th Infantry Divisions into action north of Minturno. The FEC with its experienced and capable mountain fighters and armor was on the right flank. Four full divisions and three groups of tabors (goumiers) were under the FEC.

The enemy bitterly contested every foot of the territory he had defended so long. With good weather helping, our superiority in all arms made itself felt, and slowly but steadily the Germans gave ground. The infantry of II Corps advanced along the narrow coastal plain and through the mountains which lie close to the sea, relentlessly moving ahead through the pillbox- and bunker-studded terrain. French colonial troops and American armored units smashed up the south side of the Liri Valley and in the mountains. British units kept pace north of the river. On 24 May the 85th Division captured the seacoast city of Terracina while the 88th Division and the FEC were farther north and inland in the mountains. Patrols from beachhead units and from the forces driving up from the south met in the northern part of the Pontine Marshes the next day; the junction with the beachhead was complete since the Germans made no attempt to fight across this level, canal-studded area.

While the Allied forces in the south were cutting their way northwestward toward Rome, VI Corps at the beachhead had built up its strength to six infantry divisions and one armored division. General Clark gave the order for the second half of the punch, and on 23 May VI Corps launched its attack to cut the communications life line of the Germans, Highway 6. Tanks of the 1st Armored Division supported the thrust of the 3d and 34th Infantry Divisions and the 1st Special Service Force against Cisterna, Cori, and Valmontone. The British 1 and 5 Infantry Divisions executed holding missions in the center and northern edges of the beachhead perimeter. On 26 May the 34th and 45th Divisions attacked the strongpoints around Lanuvio. The 36th Infantry Division was then thrown against Velletri. Velletri fell to the 36th Division on 1 June. On 2 June the 3d Division occupied Valmontone and cut Highway 6. With this threat to their rear, German troops still fighting in the Liri Valley speeded their withdrawal to avoid being ground between the jaws of the Fifth Army pincers. The enemy's stubborn defense on the south slopes of Colli Laziali held just long enough to allow the bulk of the fleeing foe to pass north on the east of the hills.

When the 3d Division executed its northeastward thrust to Cori and Valmontone it came under control of II Corps, and by the time Valmontone fell the FEC

had been pinched out, leaving II Corps to advance along Highway 6 toward Rome with its initial forces plus those gained from VI Corps. VI Corps cracked the Lannuvio bastion, and on the evening of 3 June American doughboys moving north along the heights were almost within sight of the buildings of Rome. Armor and infantry of both II and VI Corps moved swiftly on 4 June against light and scattered resistance; by darkness Fifth Army troops had seized the line of the Tiber amidst the enthusiastic welcome of thousands of Roman citizens. With tanks guarding the approaches to the bridges, weary troops slept on the streets their first night in Rome while higher headquarters were awake laying plans to pursue the foe and carry out the last portion of the mission.

## B. *TERRAIN FROM ROME TO THE ARNO RIVER*

*See Map No. 1*

It was nearly 175 miles north from Rome to the next naturally strong German defense belt, the so-called Gothic Line in the high Apennine Mountains protecting the industrialized Po River valley. On the west this line was anchored in the mountains north of Pisa and stretched eastward to Rimini on the Adriatic coast. About 20 to 30 miles south of the mountain defenses the Arno River flows westward to the Tyrrhenian Sea through Florence and Pisa. Fifth Army's zone of operations to the Arno thus covered a section of Italy approximately 150 miles long by 45 miles wide. Even as Rome was taken plans were under way for the invasion of southern France, using many troops from Fifth Army. With this anticipated reduction in strength of Fifth Army, Eighth Army took over nearly three-quarters of the widening Italian front.

The major portion of the 6000 square miles in the area of Army operations is mountainous; however, there are no natural strong defense lines such as characterized the country between Naples and Rome. The land is rough and in many places hard to negotiate with vehicles, but in midsummer, without the handicap of bad weather, it could not be said to be tremendously difficult. In a north-south direction the terrain is naturally divided into two sections, the plain along the Tyrrhenian Sea and the more mountainous part east to the Army boundary. The coastal plain never exceeds 10 miles in width and is generally narrower. Occasionally for a short distance the mountains come down to the sea. The narrow corridor along the coast forms one continuous lane of advance, but other natural avenues of northward approach are not found until within 20 miles of the Arno where the valleys of the Elsa and Era rivers begin. North of Grosseto the mountainous country is split

lengthwise by a ridge running northwest-southeast at a height averaging from 1200 to 1500 feet.

Inland from the coast areas east-west natural phase lines are hard to find. When the valley of the Tiber is left behind, the country is one mass of undulating high ground to the Arno, the mountains varying only in height and slope. The country in the eastern part of the zone is slightly higher than on the west. The average altitude does not exceed 1500 feet, though numerous peaks stand out above that elevation. There is no east-west ridge line of consequence. The backbones of the mountains run more or less in a northeast-southwesterly direction; lesser ridges are jumbled together at all angles with narrow valleys between. Except for a hill mass near the coast around Civitavecchia the country for 50 miles north of Rome is featured by gentle, rolling hills. Then the valley of the Ombrone River forms a broad flat area around Grosseto extending well inland from the coastal plain. About 20 miles north of Grosseto the steepest mountains begin. There is rough country for another 20 miles culminating in a general summit on an east-west line through Volterra; from this line northward the hills are less steep and slope toward the valley of the Arno. Many of these hills are barren.

Only two sizeable rivers cut across the line of Army advance. These are the Ombrone, which runs into the sea just south of Grosseto, and the Cecina, which enters the Tyrrhenian Sea near the town of Cecina. Of the two the Ombrone is much the larger and presented the greater problem, but both rivers were at low water stage during the summer; the Cecina especially was easily fordable at many points. Neither stream was of great concern to forces operating in the eastern half of the Army zone since only the headwaters are encountered in that area. The Ombrone is wide and sluggish as it nears the sea, and its broad valley is cut up to a certain extent with canals and drainage ditches. The Cecina is comparatively narrow along its entire course. The Arno River is much larger than either of these two with a continuous wet gap of between 65 and 600 feet, the average width being from 200 to 250 feet. It is subject to great changes in water level, at flood stage often rising as much as 30 feet. Due to this characteristic an extensive levee system has been built up on both banks. The levees vary in height from 20 to 30 feet and are from 50 to 100 feet wide. The banks of the stream itself are about 10 feet high near its mouth, 40 feet in its central sector, falling off to about 20 feet in the Florence area. When the Arno enters the coastal plain it flows through a flat section which expands into a valley 10 to 15 miles wide as the river nears the sea.

Two main national highways ran the entire length of the Army zone. Along the coast is Highway 1 (Via Aurelia), almost always within sight of the sea. Between Cecina and Leghorn it twists through mountains which come down to the sea; the remainder of its route is along comparatively flat ground. Highway 1 was a

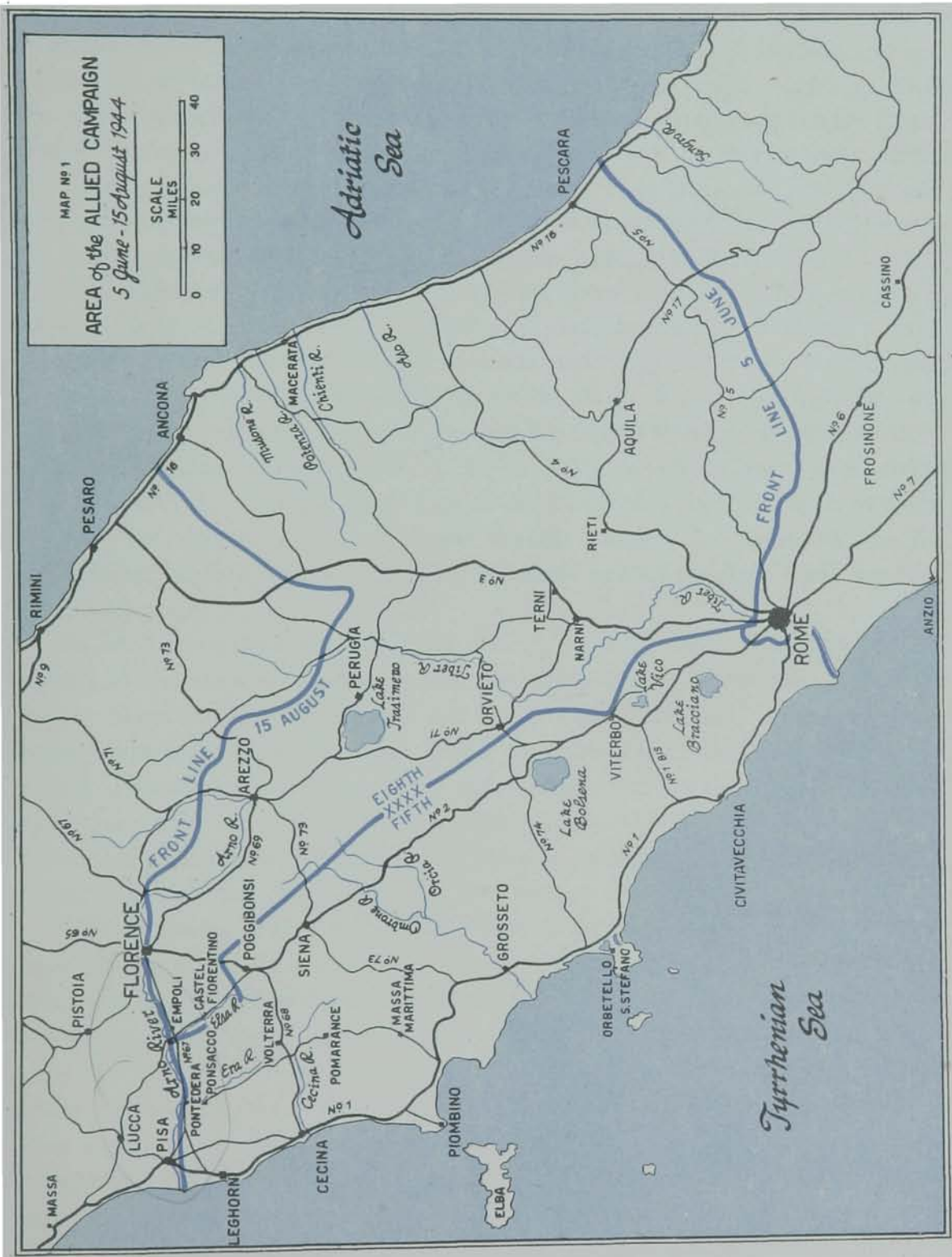
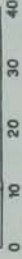
MAP No 1

# AREA of the ALLIED CAMPAIGN

5 June - 15 August 1944

SCALE

MILES



principal axis of advance leading to Civitavecchia, Grosseto, Piombino, Cecina, Leghorn, and into Pisa. Of these main cities Civitavecchia, Piombino, and Leghorn are excellent ports, especially the last, which had extensive harbor facilities and was the site of the Italian Naval Academy. Highway 2 (Via Cassia) roughly parallels the coastline about 35 miles inland through the hills and mountains and is more crooked than the coast road. Fewer large cities are connected by this highway which, after leaving Rome, travels through Viterbo, Siena, Poggibonsi, and into Florence. At Poggibonsi the road curved eastward out of the Army zone, but a good secondary route continues on through Castelflorentino to the Arno River west of Empoli.

Five improved highways form an excellent lateral road net. The first of these north of Rome is Highway 1 Bis. This road turns inland from Highway 1 about ten miles north of Civitavecchia and connects with Highway 2 at Vetralla, eight miles west of Viterbo. Highway 74 leaves the coast 18 miles south of Grosseto and cuts through the hills to meet Highway 2 near Lake Bolsena, 20 miles north of Viterbo. The next connecting link is Highway 73, which swings northeastward from Highway 1, skirts the north edge of the Ombrone Valley, and leads to Siena. Highway 68 runs eastward from Cecina through Volterra to Poggibonsi; the last main artery, Highway 67, is built along the south bank of the Arno extending from Pisa to Florence.

In addition to these roads some of which are metalled and all of which are wide enough for unimpeded two-way traffic, there is an extensive network of smaller roads. Many of these are narrow and few are hard-surfaced. North of Grosseto a north-south secondary road suitable for military use runs through Massa Marittima, Pomarance, and Ponsacco to enter Highway 67 at Pontedera. From Cecina a good road is available to Pisa parallel to Highway 1 but inland from Leghorn. Another alternate route branches from Highway 73 about ten miles south-west of Siena, by-passes that city to the west, and ends at Poggibonsi.

The population within the area of Fifth Army operations was fairly dense, especially along the coast and in the valleys. Even in the mountainous sections the country is well settled with many small towns and villages and numerous farms. The farmhouses, villages, and towns are almost without exception situated atop hills, some of which are very steep; most of the roads leading up are crooked with heavy grades and switchbacks. These towns and farmhouses are invariably constructed of stone and formed excellent cover for defenders. The majority of the thousands of bridges and culverts along the mountain roads are also made of stone. Cultivation is widespread, even on the steeper slopes, which are terraced and consist of vineyards and olive orchards. The valleys are well sprinkled with trees, mostly in scattered groves. Throughout the southern half of the zone most of the high ground



is covered with scrubby trees and brush, not very tall but high enough to afford good concealment. In the central section the trees are taller, but as the extreme northern portion is reached many of the summits are devoid of cover.

### C. *THE ENEMY SITUATION*

As the German Fourteenth Army fled north of Rome it could be considered an army in name only. From 11 May through 4 June the German armies in Italy had lost more than 1,500 vehicles, 110 pieces of field artillery, 125 self-propelled artillery and antitank guns, 122 tanks, and over 15,000 prisoners of war. Casualties in killed and wounded were much greater. The vast majority of this loss had come from Fourteenth Army, and of its field divisions only the Hermann Goering Panzer (Armored) Parachute Division still remained an effective fighting unit. This division had been pushed east of the Tiber River by our breakthrough at Valmontone, as had most of the German mobile and armored units. Much equipment was abandoned by Fourteenth Army in its disorderly flight; much more was destroyed by far ranging Allied planes, and Fifth Army troops pushed ahead along wreckage-strewn roads.

It was estimated that four German divisions could be written off as virtually destroyed with five others in serious condition from the poundings they had taken in the last month. Four grenadier (infantry) divisions came in the first category, the 71st, 305th, 362d, and 715th. The 362d Grenadier Division was hit hardest of all, G-2 reports declaring that no more than 2000 men from this unit escaped being killed, wounded, or captured. Those listed as partially destroyed were the 15th, 29th, and 90th Panzer Grenadier (Armored Infantry) Divisions and the 44th and 92d Grenadier Divisions. Remnants of these mauled grenadier units were merged with other divisions or with independent troops into a large number of Kampfgruppen (battle groups), varying in size, which were generally attached to operative divisions. The panzer grenadier divisions were hastily reorganized and received most of the available replacements. On 6 June the German High Command relieved General Eberhard von Mackensen of his command and placed Lt. Gen. (General of the Armored Forces) Joachim Lemelsen in charge of what remained of Fourteenth Army.

The Germans' strategy had been based on hoarding reserves but this plan had ultimately cost them dearly. First they tried to hold ground, then gave up ground to save reserves. Finally reserves and ground both went, and as the fall of Rome grew imminent there was no choice but to bring in additional troops badly needed in other theaters. To save Fourteenth Army from complete destruction four new divisions were rushed into Italy to plug the holes punched by Fifth Army's drive.

The 20th GAF (German Air Force) Field Division, made up of ground force personnel from the Luftwaffe turned into infantrymen, arrived from Denmark; the 19th GAF Field Division was sent from Holland; the 16th SS Panzer Grenadier Division Reichsfuehrer moved over from Hungary; and the 356th Grenadier Division was ordered south from Genoa.

With all the mobile units, including, in addition to the Hermann Goering Panzer Parachute Division, the 90th and 29th Panzer Grenadier Divisions and the 26th Panzer Division, cut off east of the Tiber, the enemy could not put up other than light and ineffective resistance along Highways 1 and 2 for the first few days after the fall of Rome. The 20th GAF Field Division arrived in time to be thrown into the line in the vicinity of Civitavecchia on 7 June, and the 162d Turcoman Grenadier Division, which had been guarding the coastline near Cecina against possible waterborne invasion, moved into contact three days later; but these two failed to prevent the port from falling into Fifth Army hands and the drive continuing up the coast.

Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, commanding the German Army Group Southwest relinquished ground to gain time for reformation of his units and put up little serious resistance during the first weeks of June. His delaying actions, however, both along the coast and in the mountain areas, began to show more evidence of advance planning. Demolitions and more demolitions were the principal weapons used until he was able to bring together more troops into his order of battle. By the middle of June increased German resistance, together with our lengthening lines of communication, began gradually to slow the impetus of our attack. By that time some of his better units had been able to reform, cross over from east of the Tiber River, and re-enter the battle after short periods of rest and reorganization. In his dire circumstances General Lemelsen flung units as small as battalions into the fight, not waiting for an entire division to be made ready. Parts or all of the 3d, 29th, and 90th Panzer Grenadier Divisions, 26th Panzer Division, and 4th Parachute Division began to appear in the lines facing Fifth Army. The 504th and 508th Heavy Panzer Battalions, mustering nearly 100 Mark VI Tiger tanks between them, bolstered the defense. The first of these battalions was rushed in from France. The 216th Armored Assault Battalion, with 18 self-propelled 150-mm guns, was spread out to provide additional artillery support. From west to east facing Fifth Army five divisions were identified: 162d Grenadier Division, 20th GAF Field Division, 90th and 29th Panzer Grenadier Divisions, and 26th Panzer Division.

By throwing in his second-class troops to cover reorganization of his better divisions, the enemy sacrificed most of the former units. The 162d Grenadier Division was made up primarily of Russian ex-prisoners of war from the Asiatic Caucasian Soviet Socialistic Republics who « volunteered » to fight, amply chaperoned by German officers and non-commissioned officers. This division was typical of several of

its type formed by the Germans. Most of the personnel were taken prisoner around Kharkov in May and June 1942. Almost none could speak German and few could speak good Russian. Various tribal dialects were their only language. They were given a choice of serving with the Germans or starving in prison camps. Most chose to serve but remained only as long as necessary and took advantage of every opportunity to desert. In not over 2 weeks' time after its committal during the first week of June, the 162d Grenadier Division had lost over 2000 prisoners in addition to very high casualties. It was estimated that 75% of the prisoners either allowed themselves to be captured without a struggle or were outright deserters. These losses ruined the division's fighting ability and it was relieved by the 19th GAF Field Division, also made up of second-rate troops. By 20 June the 20th GAF Field Division had also been badly cut up and withdrew through the 90th Panzer Grenadier Division. At this time the sectors allotted to German units became more definite, but many « orphan » elements were also present. Prisoners of war taken on 24 June by the American 1st Armored Division were identified as belonging to nine regiments from seven different divisions. A captured order of the 19th GAF Field Division clearly indicated the German intentions. Part of it read: « This war will not be decided in this theater. To relieve our forces in the west the mission of our armies in Italy is to keep strong forces of the enemy occupied, to weaken his armies, and to inflict heavy losses in men and equipment. »

*The Pursuit is Organized*

A. *ALLIED STRATEGY IN ITALY*

FIFTH Army troops did not tarry in Rome after the Germans left the city but continued to advance as rapidly as possible. Pursuit of the remnants of Fourteenth Army and smashing as much of it as possible was the order of the day, following the broad provisions of Operations Order No. 1 (1) issued by Allied Armies in Italy (AAI) on 5 May. This order, which had governed the big offensive resulting in the capture of the capital, continued to direct the activities of Fifth Army almost to the Arno River.

General Sir Harold R. L. G. Alexander, commander of AAI, had predicted at the time of the issuance of the attack order that, once Rome had fallen, the Germans probably would withdraw fighting to the Pisa—Rimini or Gothic Line, imposing the maximum delay on our advances by strong mobile rear guards and demolitions. This prediction proved to be correct. Long-range AAI intentions as listed in Operations Order No. 1 called for pursuit of the enemy to the Gothic Line with the infliction of the maximum losses on him in the process. In addition to this broad order the instructions directed Fifth Army to capture the Viterbo airfields and the port of Civitavecchia, thereafter to advance on Leghorn. As an indication of the importance attached to obtaining a good port as soon as possible, Fifth Army also was instructed to prepare an amphibious operation to be launched if required to assist in the earliest possible capture of Civitavecchia. Plans prepared by Allied Force Headquarters for the capture of the Island of Elba, which lies off the Italian coast west of the port of Piombino, would be co-ordinated by AAI with the advance of Fifth Army. Fifth Army was also informed through this order that the British 1 and 5 Divisions, comprising part of VI Corps, would be withdrawn into AAI reserve as soon as the bulk of the Army advanced beyond Rome. Above Rome Eighth

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(1) For text, see Fifth Army History, Part V.

Army was to pursue the enemy on the general axis of Terni—Perugia and then advance on Ancona and Florence, with the main objective beyond that stage to be decided later.

On 14 July Operations Order No. 2 was issued to Fifth and Eighth Armies. (*See Annex No. 1A.*) This involved long-range planning for future operations. The order took cognizance of the fact that the enemy at that time was resisting stubbornly all along the front and that his main anxiety was to preserve an intact force while gaining as much time as he could in falling back to the Gothic Line. It was evident, therefore, that the enemy would make a determined stand on the general line of the Arno and the high ground south of Florence, holding as long as possible the successive river lines between Ancona and Pesaro on the Adriatic coast. In carrying out the expressed intention of destroying the enemy's armed forces in Italy, future operations were divided into three phases: 1) driving the enemy back to the Gothic Line, inflicting the maximum losses on him in the process; 2) penetration of the Gothic Line between Dicomano and Pistoia; and 3) exploitation over the Apennines to the Po River line and establishment of bridgeheads over that river.

By the time this order was issued Fifth Army had been greatly reduced in size by withdrawal of troops for operations in France with Seventh Army. It was soon to lose the FEC. For this reason AAI could not be sure of the resources available for operations beyond the mountains and did not then issue orders covering other than the first phase of the planned action. Fifth Army was directed to capture the port of Leghorn and drive the enemy north of the Arno, exploiting beyond the river if available resources permitted. If Fifth Army found itself unable to exploit across the Arno, the plan for securing Mount Pisano, a high mass north of the river and east of Pisa, would have to depend on the situation when the Arno was reached and the capabilities of Fifth Army at that time.

## B. *FIFTH ARMY ORDERS*

With great latitude in planning and a broad mission laid out for him by AAI, General Clark in turn gave generally long-range missions to his corps commanders. When Rome fell he issued verbal instructions to his units to secure a bridgehead line to a minimum depth of six miles beyond the Tiber River. On 6 June he published Operations Instructions No. 28, which was the only formal order issued to the entire Army until the line of the Arno had actually been reached. (*See Annex No. 1B.*) In the six weeks between formal instructions, operations of the various corps were governed by the existing situation and conferences among the higher

commanders, together with telegraphic directives from the Army Commander to specific units.

On 6 June the strength and disposition of the enemy forces facing Fifth Army were such that their most probable mission was to continue delaying with demolitions and light forces. If sufficient reinforcements were made available it was possible enemy resistance might strengthen sufficiently to require a co-ordinated effort to break through. The general mission outlined was a continuance of the advance to the northwest, using armored elements supported by light mobile forces to compel the rapid withdrawal of the enemy and in event of increased resistance to develop rapidly the enemy positions. Operations Order No. 28 prescribed the initial corps boundaries and laid out a succession of objectives to be reached at certain times. The Army maintained its fast pace in the first few days beyond Rome, and the timetable appeared almost too slow. Consequently on 10 July General Clark ordered that these phase lines were not to be considered « stop lines » and all units should continue making every effort to maintain contact with and destroy the enemy in their assigned zones.

In the 6 June order II Corps was instructed to continue to push forward with all available troops in expectation of early relief by the FEC. Similar movement orders, went to VI Corps, which also was ordered to release without delay the British 1 and 5 Divisions in accordance with AAI instructions and to pinch out one American division as soon as operations permitted. The 45th Division was desired if possible. IV Corps was given a warning order to prepare to relieve VI Corps. While directing in separate instructions that VI Corps earmark infantry and artillery units for the possible seaborne attack on Civitavecchia, General Clark in his formal order alerted the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion to be prepared on 48 hours' notice to drop in the Della Tolfa hill mass south of Civitavecchia to aid in the capture of the port. As the battle developed, neither operation was found necessary.

These orders carried Fifth Army until 21 July when Operations Instruction No. 29 was issued (*See Annex No. 1C*) for a possible crossing of the Arno River line and initiated planning for operations against the Gothic Line. II Corps was to assume responsibility for the entire Army zone from the sea to the Army boundary approximately 30 miles inland. II Corps was also directed to prepare plans for crossing the Arno in the vicinity of Montelupo, capturing Mount Albano, and securing Pistoia and Lucca as Fifth Army's part in the first phase of the AAI plan of operations. Three days later Operations Instruction No. 30 (*See Annex No. 1D*) amended parts of the previous instructions by dividing the Army zone between II and IV Corps and ordering that the line be held with the minimum of troops. II

Corps was to proceed with its attack plans and IV Corps was to prepare a demonstration in the area Pontedera—Angelica in connection with the attack of II Corps. IV Corps, which was to hold the western half of the Army sector with a motley group of units, was to follow any withdrawal of enemy forces.

### C. *REGROUPING OF FIFTH ARMY UNITS*

Approximately six weeks were required for Fifth Army to chase the Germans from Rome to the North banks of the Arno River. During this period greater losses were inflicted on the enemy than those suffered by Fifth Army, despite the fact the Allies were always on the offensive. By 1 August, however, so many troops had been withdrawn to serve in the invasion of southern France that the strength of Fifth Army stood at little more than 50% of the figure on 4 June. The losses were progressive during the northward advance. On 1 June the assigned strength of the Army was 248,989, by 1 July it had dropped to 205,992, and on 1 August it was 153,323.

During the two months' period nine full infantry divisions and the equivalent of a tenth were assigned elsewhere. First to leave was the 3d Division, which was detached from II Corps on 6 June to perform garrison duty in Rome. It was assigned to Seventh Army on 24 June. On 15 June the British 1 Division was transferred to the British 5 Corps, and the British 5 Division subsequently left for the Middle East. On 22 June the 45th Division passed to Seventh Army; five days later the 36th Division also departed. With it went the 1st Special Service Force and the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion. First of the French units to go was the 1st Motorized Division (1<sup>e</sup> Division de Marche d'Infanterie) on 24 June followed shortly by the 3d Algerian Division (3<sup>e</sup> Division d'Infanterie Algérienne). When the FEC was relieved, the 4th Moroccan Mountain Division (4<sup>e</sup> Division de Montagne Marocaine), the 2d Moroccan Infantry Division (2<sup>e</sup> Division d'Infanterie Marocaine), and three groups of tabors (gouniers) were also lost to Fifth Army along with all the French Corps troops.

Heading the list of headquarters and service troops withdrawn were VI Corps Headquarters, assigned to Seventh Army on 15 June, and the French Expeditionary Corps Headquarters, which was relieved on 22 July. Major losses among service units included 2 field and 3 evacuation hospitals, 4 ordnance battalions, 6 signal companies, 23 quartermaster truck companies, 6 medical collecting companies and 2 medical clearing companies, and 2 engineer general service regiments.

While the withdrawal of infantry was felt most keenly because the nature of the terrain in Italy made these troops most valuable, a great number of combat units

in other branches also was transferred. Losses in this category included:

117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron  
191st, 753d, and 756th Tank Battalions  
601st, 636th, and 645th Tank Destroyer Battalions  
59th, 69th, and 93d Armored Field Artillery Battalions (self-propelled 105-mm howitzers)  
36th, 141st, 634th, 937th, and 938th Field Artillery Battalions (155-mm guns)  
601st and 602d Field Artillery Battalions (75-mm pack howitzers)  
463d Parachute Field Artillery Battalion, minus two batteries  
36th and 540th Engineer Combat Regiments  
48th Engineer Combat Battalion  
2d, 3d, and 83d Chemical Battalions (Motorized)  
68th, 72d, 108th, 216th, and 403d Antiaircraft Artillery Battalions  
433d, 451st, 534th, 894th, and 895th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalions  
106th, 441st, and 443d Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalions, Self-propelled  
102d Balloon Battery  
337th Searchlight Battalion  
688th, 689th, 692d, and 693d Airborne Antiaircraft Battalions (.50 caliber machine guns).

While all these units were relieved from Fifth Army one new division was assigned on 21 June, the 91st Infantry Division. The 361st Regimental Combat Team, which had arrived ahead of the main body, went into action 11 June with the 36th Division; the 363d Regimental Combat Team was committed on 5 July; and the division as a whole was attached to IV Corps on 10 July. The 92d Infantry Division was earmarked for Fifth Army, but only the 370th Regimental Combat Team arrived in Italy in time to take part in the action along the Arno River, being given a sector there late in August. One other unit, the 517th Parachute Infantry Regimental Combat Team, was temporarily assigned to the Army on 26 May to obtain three weeks' combat experience and was relieved of assignment on 2 July after taking part in operations with IV Corps. The 442d Regimental Combat Team was committed to action during this period for the first time. The first South American nation to send troops into the war, Brazil, shipped its Brazilian Expeditionary Force to Italy, but by 15 August only one combat team had arrived for Fifth Army and it had not been sent into the line.

When the front became temporarily stabilized along the Arno River during the latter part of July and the month of August, Fifth Army compensated for its lack



of infantry by creating two provisional infantry regiments from antiaircraft troops. The 91st Antiaircraft Artillery Group formed its battalions into a provisional regiment, stored the antiaircraft guns, and issued machine guns and mortars. The 107th Antiaircraft Artillery Group did the same. The 91st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron and the 2d Armored Group were incorporated into this organization, called Task Force 45 after the 45th Antiaircraft Artillery Brigade, parent organization of the two groups. With tanks and tank destroyers functioning as artillery Task Force 45 amounted to a provisional division.

#### D. *CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PURSUIT ACTION*

1. *Tactics of the Army.* The pursuit action of Fifth Army fell into three periods, corresponding roughly with the terrain covered. From the fall of Rome until about 15 June the advance was very rapid through the gentle hill country north of the Tiber and in the Ombrone Valley around Grosseto. For the next month the chase led through more difficult country where the German defense functioned better and the gains were correspondingly slower. After Leghorn fell on 18 July and the mountains became hills near the Arno River the rate of advance increased.

Gains of 15 miles a day were not uncommon in the first few days of the pursuit. This imposed a strain on the supply line since few Army dumps were north of Anzio. Until the harbor of Civitavecchia was restored to use, supply trucks at times were forced to travel nearly 100 miles for needed stores. The war outran the medical units. One day the 11th Evacuation Hospital went into position 15 miles behind the front, its usual distance. By the next night the advance combat elements were 30 miles ahead, a distance considered too great. On 17 June the 8th Evacuation Hospital was six miles behind the troops, closer than any hospital of this type had been except at Anzio. The early rapid progress saw field artillerymen constantly going in and out of position, often without firing a shot. One armored field artillery battalion with self-propelled guns went three days without firing a round. When a target appeared it would be gone by the time the gunners could get ready. Tanks and tank destroyers did most of the heavy gun work in the early stages of the pursuit and kept close to the lead of the columns to engage targets.

General tactics of the pursuit consisted of decentralization of command with formation of numerous small mobile forces utilizing all available roads. Lower echelon officers were given much freedom in directing their units as they saw fit. Armor was used to the maximum to speed the drive and infantry were carried in trucks whenever possible. Truck transportation, however, was short, and the available trucks were needed primarily to move supplies. Tanks and tank destroyers

were attached to all infantry units to give them mobile fire power. These two branches complemented each other with considerable success, the tanks cleaning out machine-gun nests and other resistance points which hindered the infantry and the infantry in turn working around antitank guns which held up the armor. While the infantry divisions did not greatly vary their standard formations, occasionally a reinforced battalion would be sent out as a special task force. Armored units were broken down into small groups, a policy which proved its worth and allowed all available roads to be used. The FEC formed a provisional « pursuit corps » headquarters which was given two divisions and conducted the chase for approximately one month while Corps main headquarters and the other FEC divisions followed behind. Throughout June and to a lesser extent in July the pursuit was necessarily carried out with a minimum number of troops, for our lengthy lines of communication and supply were heavily taxed. As a result it was possible to alternate divisions and smaller units to give most men some rest.

Opposition was generally of the rearguard type, with some instances of bitter resistance in strength. Hit and run tactics by small groups of German infantry and tanks were most often encountered. The terrain was as much a foe as the Nazi. Ideal for delaying action, the mountains were hard on our men physically and on our vehicles mechanically. Bridges and culverts were plentiful along the coast and in the mountains averaged more than one per mile. These were methodically blown by the enemy, and Fifth Army engineers of all echelons were constantly called upon to make repairs and improvisations. In addition to damage caused by enemy demolitions the engineers had to repair many bridges and roads smashed by the Allied air force in weeks of bombing behind the enemy lines. All service troops were called upon for extreme efforts to keep up with the advancing combat elements. Ordnance units especially were overburdened, since Seventh Army and other theaters had priority in equipment and parts as well as in personnel. Salvage became an increasingly important item.

For the most part air support in the pursuit was carried out in the enemy rear areas, but fighter-bombers were on call and in many instances gave close-in support when the momentum of the drive had begun to slacken and it was possible to determine friendly and enemy positions with some degree of accuracy. Enemy air attacks were negligible. In daylight the Luftwaffe was almost never seen. At night the foe used a curious assortment of German and Italian planes, many of them obsolete, in small-scale attacks against rear area establishments, ports, and bivouacs. Roads were strafed and antipersonnel bombs were directed against front-line troops. The small load of high explosive bombs which these craft dropped in the rear placed them mostly in the nuisance category.

2. *The Italian Partisans.* North of Rome Fifth Army troops encountered anti-German guerrilla bands in large numbers for the first time. These partisans were met in ever-increasing numbers as the lines moved toward the north, and on many occasions they performed valuable service. The partisans identified themselves with red, white, and green armbands and carried a great assortment of weapons. In a group of a dozen of these patriots it was not uncommon to find almost as many different types of weapons. Many had British-made Sten guns, dropped by parachute from Allied planes and intended specifically for these resistance units. Next in popularity came captured German machine pistols followed by almost every other type of pistol, rifle, and grenade.

Many of these partisan bands were led by escaped Allied prisoners of war, some of whom had been living in the hills with friendly Italians for a year or more. A few women had attached themselves to these roving parties. Occasionally the partisans joined Army units and fought alongside our soldiers. Some instances of pitched battles between Germans and the partisans were found. Before the occupation of Piombino the partisans fought a fierce battle there in which 150 Germans were killed along with an unknown number of the guerrillas. The hindrance they caused the enemy was indicated in a captured German order for road protection in areas north of Rome known to be centers of partisan activity. This order prohibited individual vehicles from traveling these roads and directed that no convoy of less than five machines use the routes. For foot columns advance, rear, and flank protection was made mandatory, and troops were instructed to pass through larger communities in extended order. These measures were necessitated by heavy losses inflicted on one column of troops marching in close order through a village of some size.

Generally, however, the partisans proved themselves of most value as internal police in areas occupied by our troops before the Allied Military Government (AMG) could be set up and Carabinieri brought in to enforce the laws. It became Army policy to allow the partisans to carry on these necessary functions until local government was restored; then the partisans were disarmed. The partisans also took charge of initial distribution of supplies to the civilian population and rounded up notorious Fascists who were turned over to AMG authorities. They ferreted out numbers of German soldiers who had donned civilian clothes and frequently brought in other stragglers who had been by-passed by our forces.

Though the partisans south of the Arno were not as highly organized as resistance groups in some other European countries, they usually knew leaders of similar groups in areas still behind the German lines. Often they were sent through the lines to give instructions to friendly civilians ahead as to what should be done to facilitate our advance. In this manner they also functioned as information

gatherers. As our troops advanced, almost all civilians had information of «greatest value» to offer; however, they often did give valuable leads to worthwhile information. The Army also made use of the partisans as guides in country which was not well mapped and where shortcuts could be used to advantage. These local guides were most useful in night operations. At no time did the civilian population prove a serious problem to Fifth Army as the vast majority of the people were friendly and co-operative.

