

The elaborate main defensive line of the enemy had thus been captured; the units on either side of the division were well up, and further progress should be much more rapid, now that the Germans were retreating. The 3-day battle had cost the division 513 battle casualties; 62 of the 95 exhaustion cases for the month occurred in the 4 days 16-19 April.

2. *The 34th Division Assaults the Sevizzano Ridge.* In coordination with the 91st Division the 34th Division, under Maj. Gen. Charles L. Bolte, attacked on the right of II Corps. Units attached were the 752d Tank Battalion (less Company A); the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion (less Company C); and Company C, 100th Chemical Mortar Battalion. Battery B, 105th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion, was attached for operations, and Battery C of the same battalion was in support. The 1st Battalion, 133d Infantry, was attached to the 363d Infantry; the 1st Battalion and the Cannon Company, 135th Infantry, were attached to the 6 South African Armoured Division.

During the period of regrouping prior to the attack the 34th Division had, on 5 April, assumed control of its attack zone east of Highway 65. The new front extended for 2 miles from the high ground right of Zena Creek on the east over the summit of Mount Belmonte to the gorge west of the Sevizzano ridge. The German defenses in the area, 800-900 yards north of the American front line, were based on two long parallel ridges running slightly east of north and separated by a steep-sided gully. On the Sevizzano ridge on the west the enemy positions roughly paralleled a little east-west road across the ridge. On the eastern ridge enemy defenses were centered around the ruins of Gorgognano church and cemetery and Dei Mori Hill. Enemy forces before the 34th Division were units of the 65th Grenadier Division, one regiment of which, the 145th, was to the left at Pianoro and Mount Arnigo. The Sevizzano ridge was manned by the 147th Grenadier Regiment; Dei Mori Hill on the eastern ridge was held by the 146th Grenadier Regiment, which also overlapped with one company into the zone of the Legnano Group.

General Bolte assigned the mission of attack to the 168th Infantry under Col. Henry C. Hine, Jr., with attachments of Company C, 100th Chemical Mortar Battalion; Battery B, 105th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion; and the 2d and 3d Battalions, Antitank Company, and Cannon Company, 133d Infantry. The 752d Tank Battalion (less Company A) and the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion (less Company C and the Reconnaissance Company) were to be in direct support. The main effort was to be made on the left up the Sevizzano ridge in order to furnish the maximum assistance to the 91st Division attack on Mount Arnigo.

Following an hour's preparatory fires in which the division artillery laid down 7,600 rounds and in which division and Corps weapons were supplemented by the mortars, cannon, and antitank weapons of the division reserve forces, the 168th

Infantry jumped off two battalions abreast at 0300, 16 April, through elements of the 133d Infantry. The 91st Division on the left attacked at the same hour, and on the right the Legnano Group assisted the attack with a vigorous demonstration. The 2d Battalion on the left, attacking the Sevizzano ridge, met heavy small-arms and mortar fire. Elements on the battalion right with tank support were thrown back once in the morning, twice in the afternoon, and again in a midnight effort; the latter failed when daybreak caught the leading troops without cover and forced them to fall back to Mount Belmonte. Tanks could not maneuver because trails were so narrow the heavy vehicles slid off them. Daylight of 17 April found left elements of the 2d Battalion dug in around a house up near the enemy lines west of the crest; the right elements were back on Mount Belmonte.

On the right ridge the 3d Battalion fared somewhat better although opposition there was equally stubborn. The fortified Gorgognano church on a round knob was the first objective. The enemy beat back several efforts against that key position, but it was finally taken by midnight of 16 April. Two tanks were brought up to the church at dawn. Several of the 3d Battalion's efforts to take Gorgognano church had been beaten back by enemy mortar fire zeroed in on his own positions. When, as happened on several occasions, the Americans threatened to overrun the positions the Germans retired under the ruins of the church and called for mortar fire, catching our troops out in the open and forcing them to retire. The strength of the enemy positions is attested further by the fact that the 34th Division Artillery alone fired 410 missions of 25,479 rounds in the first 24 hours of the attack.

The morning of 17 April found the 2d and 3d Battalions weary and in need of reorganization as a result of 1 day and 2 nights of stiff fighting; exigencies of the situation, however, could not permit much time for rest. The 2d Battalion had one company holding a precarious position on the Sevizzano ridge; in order to strengthen this wedge at Ca Sevizzano the attack continued throughout the day. After sharp fighting, during which tanks closely supported the infantry, the point fell at 1630. On the division right the 3d Battalion, starting from Gorgognano church, drove for the fortified cemetery at 1000. Two tanks were knocked out in the first effort. Another try and our troops reached the cemetery; the Germans counter-attacked furiously and finally succeeded in driving the 3d Battalion back to the church with their prepared mortar fires. At 1900 both battalions launched a coordinated effort with tank support which made some gains; the 2d Battalion reached a line across the left ridge nearly 400 yards beyond Ca Sevizzano — that is, in complete control of the Sevizzano ridge — and the 3d Battalion drove the Germans from the cemetery to reach the lower slopes of Dei Mori Hill.

During the night of 17-18 April the 1st Battalion passed through the 2d Battalion left flank along the division boundary and took up a flank defense mission,

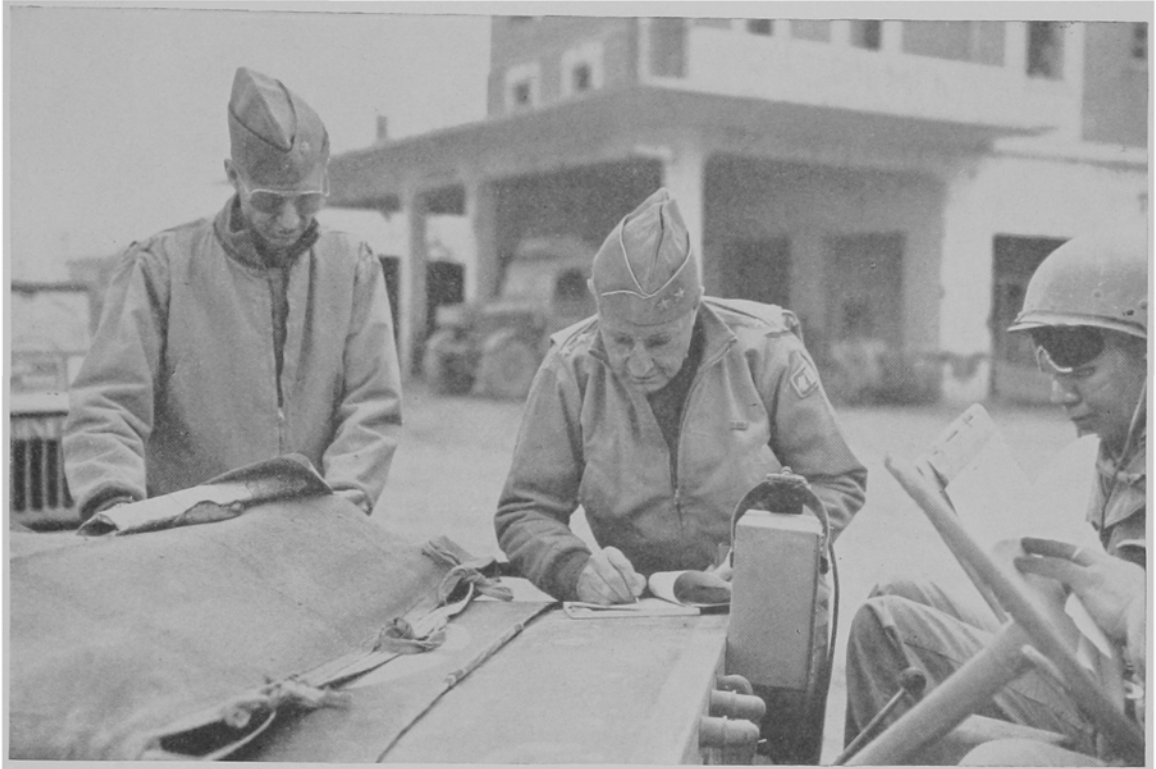
remaining in readiness to press the attack. The 2d Battalion cleaned up pockets of resistance, and the 3d Battalion moved against sporadic resistance to capture Dei Mori Hill on 18 April. By the end of the 18th the enemy main line of resistance before the 34th Division had collapsed as the enemy fell back. The advance of the 1st and 2d Battalions accordingly continued. By 0800, 19 April, the 2d Battalion had reached positions on the left ridge 2 miles from the original line of departure. The 1st Battalion, which went in on the extreme left, attacked at 2000, 18 April, and took the hamlet of Riosto 1 mile northeast of Mount Arnigo. The surrounding area was cleared after darkness.

The 34th Division attack had been assisted by the Legnano Group, under Maj. Gen. Umberto Utili, in the Idice Valley on the right. The group, which had the task of protecting the Army right flank and of following any enemy withdrawals, demonstrated at the time of the initial attack and supported with artillery fires the 34th Division attack on the 17th and 18th. On the 19th, as enemy defenses began to give way, the Legnano Group attacked to bring up the II Corps right. Substantial gains were made in the face of stiff opposition, particularly on the west side of the Idice, where the group ran into heavy fighting.

D. *REGROUPING AND THE ADVANCE ON BOLOGNA*

19-20 APRIL

1. *The Plans.* By dawn of 18 April the enemy in front of II Corps had begun an orderly retreat all along the line. Though our attack had not secured a clean break-through along Highway 65, it had wrested Mount Sole and Monterumici from the Germans and had placed the rest of the enemy front line in jeopardy; the persistent infantry, air, and artillery assaults had reduced the morale of the German garrison to such a point that by the end of the 18th the 8th Mountain Division alone had lost over 1,000 prisoners. Units south of Bologna further found themselves threatened with isolation in view of the IV Corps penetration and the continued advance of Eighth Army up Highway 9 on the east. On 18 April, while IV Corps resumed the attack three divisions abreast after committing the 85th Division on its right, II Corps advanced against greatly reduced resistance, overrunning the German defenses to seize and go beyond its Brown Phase objectives. The next day II Corps engaged in extensive shifts of its divisions to the left in accordance with the attack plan. As the 91st Division swung left toward the Reno and the 6 South African Armoured Division crossed that shallow stream at Praduro, the 88th Division, with the exception of the 350th Infantry still engaged at Mount Mario, was pinched out and moved across the Reno to be recommitted on the right of the 85th



At the edge of Bologna, General Keys plans to continue the attack



A brief break in Bologna before beginning the pursuit across the valley



A corner of the Bologna railroad yards, a frequent target of our air force



Soldiers of Fifth Army leave Bologna in swift pursuit of the enemy

Division. II Corps subsequently continued to the north astride the Reno River with two divisions on either side, the 88th Division and the South Africans on the west and the 91st and 34th Divisions on the east, with the Legnano Group still on the Corps right.

Orders were issued by General Keyes on 19–20 April for continuation of the attack. The scheme of maneuver was to press the attack from the Black Line with the main effort west of the Reno to cut Highway 9 and capture or isolate Bologna. At the same time Highway 64 was to be opened, and the area east of the Reno and south of Bologna was to be cleared by direct pressure from the south, aided if necessary by an encircling attack from the vicinity of Casalecchio. Thereafter II Corps was to debouch into the Po Valley with the minimum of one infantry and one armored division.

In the first, or Yellow Phase of the attack the Legnano Group, protecting the Corps right, was to hold its positions ready to follow enemy withdrawal or on Corps order to capture Scanno Hill just beyond the Black Line. On completion of the Yellow Phase or on Corps order the group was to be ready to take over the 34th Division zone east of Highway 65. The 34th Division was to capture Albero Hill (309), 1½ miles northeast of Pianoro, swing left to assist the 91st Division, take the high ground at Poggio between Highway 65 and the Reno, and upon completion of the Yellow Phase shift to the west to take over the 91st Division zone east of the Reno. The 91st Division was to capture Poggio, cross the Reno through elements of the 6 South African Armoured Division to take the high ground 2½ miles north of Praduro, assist the advance of the 88th Division, and then swing back to the northeast. The 88th Division was to move out on the plain via the north-south ridge 3 miles west of the Reno. Meanwhile the 6 South African Armoured Division, which was to help the 88th Division get started in its new zone, was to push down Highway 64 in the 91st Division zone until passed through by that unit. Then the South Africans were to assemble south of Praduro in preparation for an attack on San Giovanni in the Po plain.

The second, or Red Phase, was to bring II Corps down through the last of the mountains. The Legnano Group was to follow any enemy withdrawal and cut Highway 9 east of Bologna. The 34th Division was to press on to Bologna, capture and garrison the city in conjunction with the Legnano Group and the 91st Division, and prepare to take over the entire city on Corps order. The 91st Division was to sweep east back across the Reno to seize Mount Sabbiuno and Hill 286 on the outskirts of Bologna and then move eastward to cut Highway 65 south of the city in an effort to trap any Germans attempting to make a stand before the 34th Division. The 363d Infantry, which had been put in Corps reserve, was released on the 20th to add weight to the attack. The 88th Division was to clear the Red Phase Line,

cut Highway 9 west of Bologna, and be prepared to advance either north or east. The 6 South African Armoured Division was to be prepared on 12 hours' notice to exploit into the Po Valley to San Giovanni. Later orders on the 20th directed the division to advance rapidly, hold crossings over the Reno northwest of Bologna until relieved by infantry, and take and hold San Giovanni; thereafter it would advance north in the Corps zone across the Po plain.

2. *The Action.* As II Corps units were shifted and plans laid for the subsequent attack through or around Bologna into the plain, the offensive continued without let-up, two divisions pushing across the Reno to move down its western bank as the rest of II Corps drove into Bologna. Late at night on the 18th the 88th Division prepared to shift west of the Reno to its new zone in the hills left of Highway 64 and to the right of the 85th Division. At 0500, 19 April, command of the old zone east of the Reno was relinquished to the 91st Division, and the new zone was taken over. The 351st Infantry, up to now in Corps reserve, was motorized and moved by road to Vergato. The command group of the 88th Division proceeded to the Vergato area also, followed later by the 349th Infantry after it was pinched out by the 350th Infantry. By dawn of the 19th the 349th Infantry had reached Vergato. Meanwhile the 350th Infantry, still engaged at Mount Mario, came under control of the 91st Division.

The 351st Infantry passed through the 338th Infantry on the 19th at Lama, 2 miles southwest of Praduro. It was a busy day west of the Reno — the 351st Infantry was relieving the 338th Infantry, and the 6 South African Armoured Division was crossing the stream. During the night of the 19th an attempt to take Lagune ridge, attacked the night before by the 337th Infantry, in a coordinated effort by the 351st Infantry and the 4/13 FFR from the 6 South African Armoured Division resulted in considerable confusion as the two forces got mixed up in the darkness and engaged in a fire fight. The position was taken shortly after midnight against scattered resistance. When the situation was ironed out the next morning the 351st Infantry, followed at 1,000 yards by the 349th Infantry, moved toward the next objective, Mount Capra, 4½ miles due north on the ridge extending from Lagune. Since the 3d Battalion, 337th Infantry, was operating north of the 351st Infantry on the same ridge, the 351st Infantry moved around to the right, reaching Mount Capra about 1200.

The house-studded hill, a little more than 1 mile south of the 337th Infantry objective of Gesso, consists of two humps, the larger of which is on the east. As the 2d Battalion approached to attack the hill the 337th Infantry on the left, shelling the area with artillery and tanks, lifted its fire. A knot of German defenders was dug in on the eastern hump, from which they covered the approaching roads, the slopes of the hill, and the route to Gesso with automatic weapons and at least six heavy mor-

tars. The first effort of the 2d Battalion was disorganized, and the battalion fell back before devastating mortar fire; about 1,200 120-mm mortar shells fell on the 88th Division. The battalion was reorganized; supporting fire from tanks, tank destroyers, and artillery knocked out the mortars; and two rifle companies assaulted the position. First a bald knob between the two features was taken, yielding over 100 prisoners and 27 enemy dead. Then the eastern hump was neutralized by artillery and armored vehicles, and the 3d Battalion, plus elements of the 2d Battalion, bypassed it. The 1st Battalion stayed behind and finished the job; the over 400 prisoners taken off Mount Capra by dark were chiefly from the 8th Mountain Division. The 2d and 3d Battalions pushed ahead to reach positions near Riale 1 mile west of Casalecchio along the road running northwest from that town which had earlier been outposted by the 85th Division in its move across the western front of II Corps. The 88th Division was ready to drive north into the plain in its zone.

To its right the three brigades of the 6 South African Armoured Division had been regrouped, effective at 0130, 19 April, so as to contain both armored and infantry elements for the purpose of carrying out the imminent pursuit of the enemy. The 11 South African Armoured Brigade was to make the main effort, assisted by the 12 South African Motorised Brigade. The 13 South African Motorised Brigade, which was to go into reserve, was first to secure the Reno bridgehead and then to continue north until relieved by the armor. The rapid pursuit did not materialize immediately. Advance up the Setta Valley road on the 19th was disappointingly slow because of mines, demolitions, and the terrific traffic congestion occasioned as the South Africans moved forward on the same road being used by 88th Division units shifting to their new zone west of the Reno. By darkness two companies of the Royal Natal Carbineers (RNC) had crossed at the Reno—Setta junction and were moving on Praduro; by 0750, 20 April, the 13 South African Motorised Brigade was entering Praduro. The RNC, joined later in the morning by Special Service Battalion tanks (SSB) which had been moving up the bed of the Reno, was 2 miles beyond Praduro by noon and by darkness had consolidated just outside Casalecchio, a gain of 4 miles during the afternoon. Progress in the morning had met no opposition but had been hindered by mines and demolitions; in the afternoon there was some opposition, but it was scattered and discouraged.

In the direct drive on Bologna the 91st Division shifted toward the northwest on the 19th. The 1st Battalion, 133d Infantry, relieved the 3d Battalion, 363d Infantry, on Mount Arnigo and took the hill just to the north by daylight. The 2d Battalion finished mopping up in Pianoro. Meanwhile the 362d Infantry, hitherto in reserve, was ordered forward to relieve the 350th Infantry; orders were later changed, and the 362d Infantry was committed between the 350th and 361st In-

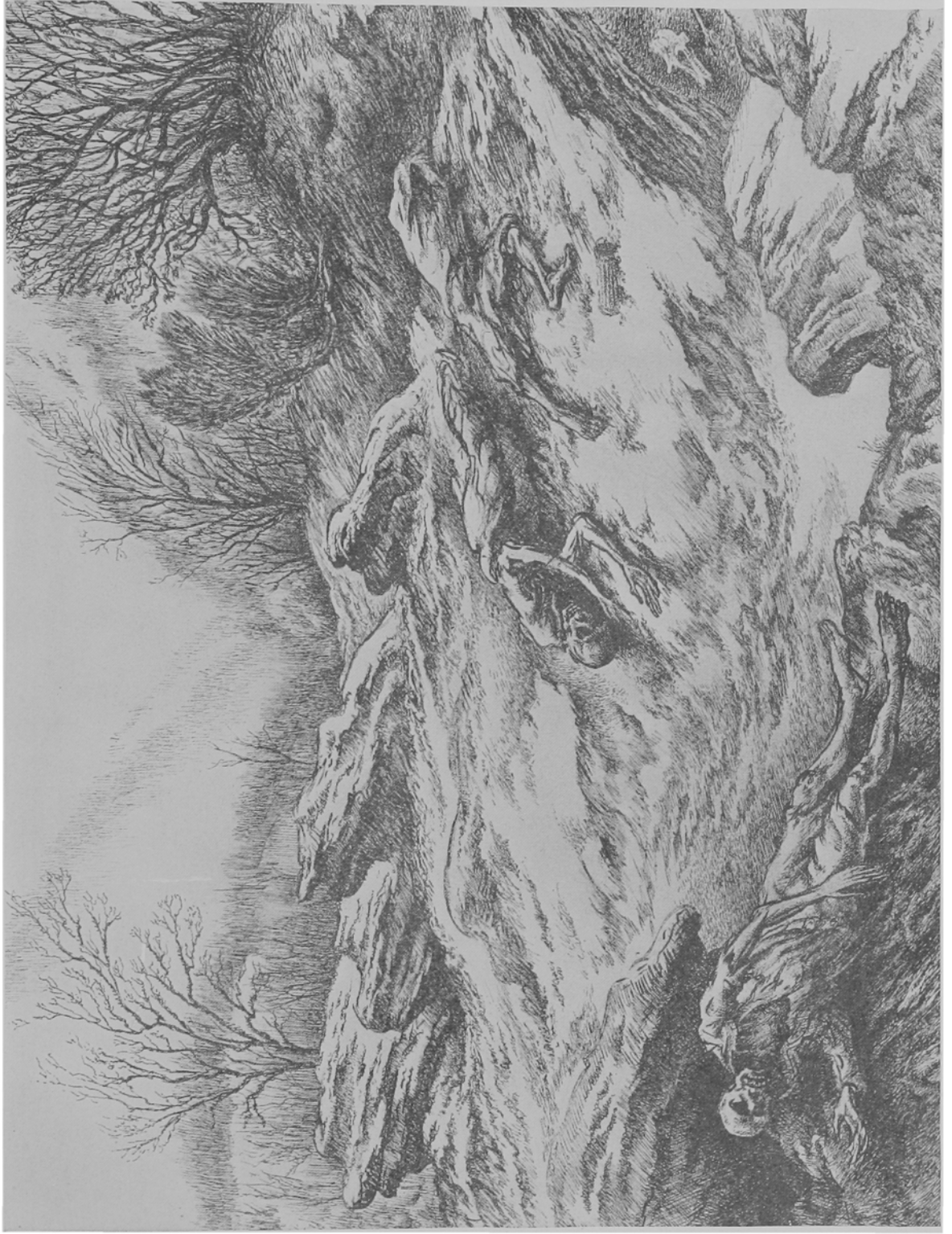
fantry. On the left the 350th Infantry, just short of its final objective at Mount Mario, was attached at 0500, 19 April, to the 91st Division.

Advances, in view of the gratifying successes on the 18th, were small. The 361st Infantry pushed ahead from Mount Posigliano, meeting increasingly frequent opposition from local counterattacks and isolated strongpoints as the day wore on; these forms of resistance, plus more artillery than previously experienced during the attack, indicated an enemy attempt to cover the evacuation of his main forces. At the end of the day the elements farthest advanced of the 3d Battalion on the left were about 1 mile short of Mount della Capanna. The 362d Infantry, freshly committed, found that the 350th Infantry was overlapping into its zone from the left. After the 350th Infantry took Mount Mario, the final 88th Division objective east of the Reno, at 1345 the situation was clarified, and the 362d Infantry advanced more rapidly north of Mount dei Frati. Scattered strongpoints were reduced, and by 0230, 20 April, the 362d Infantry held high ground 1 mile north of Mount Mario overlooking Praduro and the Reno Valley.

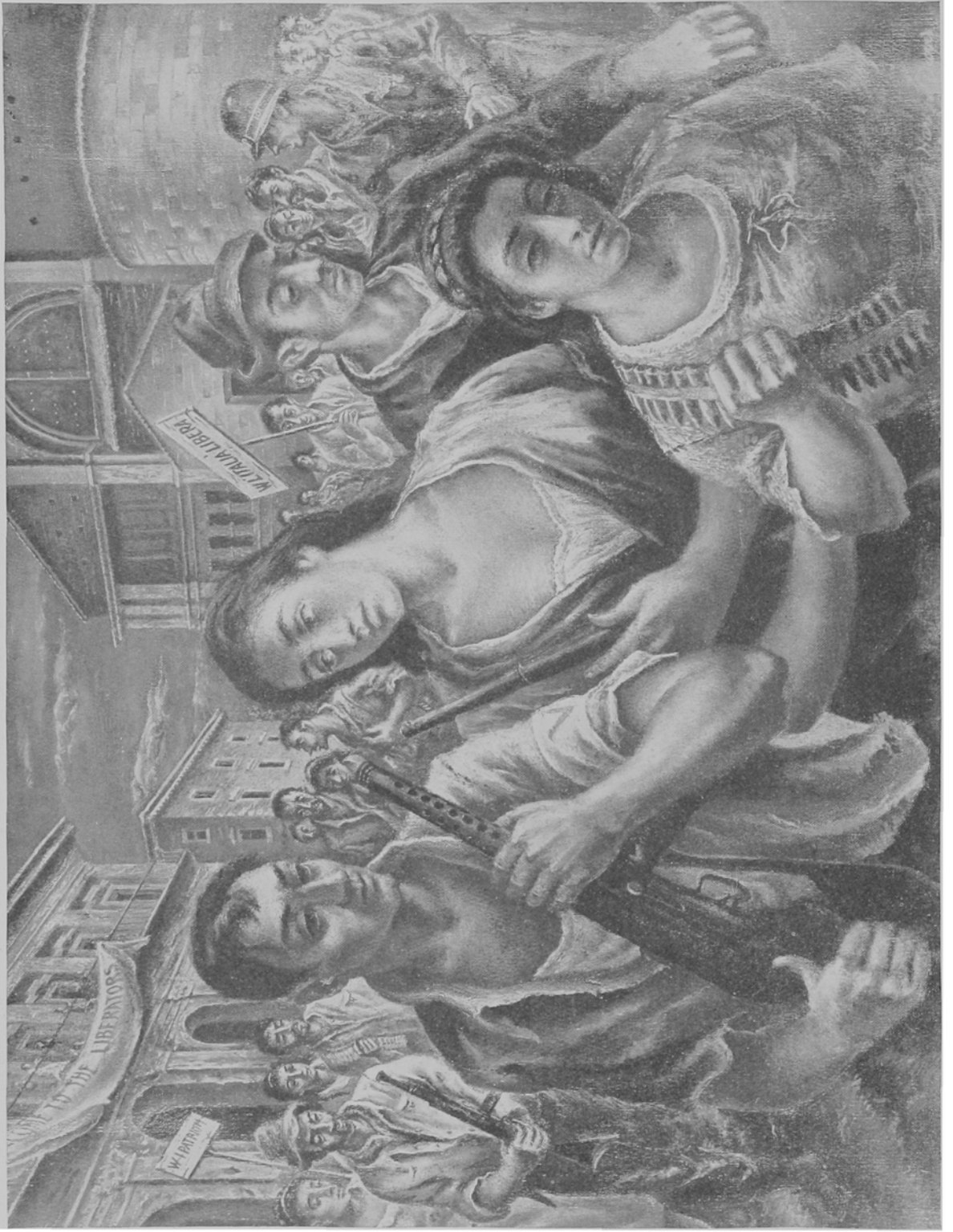
At 2400, 19 April, the 2d Battalion, 361st Infantry, which had been pulled out for some badly needed rest, jumped off for Mount della Capanna from positions west of Mount Posigliano. The 2-mile approach march was made with no opposition, and Mount della Capanna was occupied by 0515 on the 20th. Meanwhile, in accordance with Corps orders for 20 April, the attack was shifted to the west. The 2d Battalion held on Mount della Capanna as the 1st and 3d Battalions moved forward west of that point. Resistance stiffened again after the easy conquest of Mount della Capanna, but by 1450 the 1st Battalion had advanced to Poggio, where it was halted by enemy opposition. The 3d Battalion on the left met little resistance and by 1515 had crossed the Reno 2 miles north of Praduro. There the battalion was ordered to hold and was later pulled back. The 1st Battalion on the right resumed its advance at midnight and took Mount Sabbiuno against light opposition by 0200, 21 April. The 361st Infantry, meeting no further resistance, moved to a point 1 mile southwest of Bologna where it went into division reserve.

The 362d Infantry, instead of crossing the Reno at Praduro as earlier planned, drove north on the east bank of the river on the 20th. By 1145, 21 April, elements of the 2d Battalion were in Bologna. Meanwhile the 363d Infantry after a day in reserve began a wide move westward around the rear of the division to Highway 64 on 20 April. By the morning of the 21st the regiment was in the Caselecchio suburb of Bologna and later in the day moved forward to be committed on the left of the 362d Infantry.

Crumbling of enemy resistance before the 34th Division marked by the capture of Dei Mori Hill on 19 April had been followed by the relief of the 168th Infantry and commitment of the 133d Infantry under Col. Walden S. Lewis as the 34th



The attack passed by last winter's dead . . . painted by Sergeant Harry A. Davis



The partisans cluster in the streets of Bologna . . . painted by Sergeant Harry A. Davis

Division attack was shifted to the west. At the same time the Legnano Group, also swinging to the left, began pushing forward to crowd the enemy withdrawal. On the 19th the 34th Division took over the 91st Division zone west of Highway 65 and captured hills 1,000 yards north of Mount Arnigo against stiff resistance. The Legnano Group, although the right flank still sagged at the end of the day, also made good progress against considerable opposition. On the 20th the last elements of the 168th Infantry were pinched out by units of the Legnano Group and the 133d Infantry, and the advance on Bologna speeded as the enemy situation deteriorated. The 133d Infantry, pacing the attack, gained 2½ miles to reach positions along Highway 65 3 miles beyond Pianoro. The Legnano Group, still meeting resistance on its right, also continued to gain ground.

During the night of 20 April troops of the 3d Battalion, 133d Infantry, were loaded on the tanks of the 752d Tank Battalion and rolled into Bologna with little opposition in the early morning hours, reporting their entry at 0851, 21 April. The rest of the 133d Infantry and the 135th Infantry entered the city later in the day. A few enemy snipers were soon eliminated, and road blocks were set up on routes leading out of the city on the north, east, and west. The 34th Division then reverted to direct Army control to garrison Bologna. The Legnano Group also came up later in the day, cleared the eastern outskirts of the city, and then reverted to Corps reserve.

E. *THE ATTACK OF EIGHTH ARMY*

9-21 APRIL

As advance elements of the 34th Division entered Bologna, troops of 2 Polish Corps came in from the southeast along Highway 9, racing forward on the left flank of Eighth Army. Here enemy resistance had initially been stubborn from the prepared positions along the Senio River, but by 21 April the Germans were pulling back before Eighth Army in complete defeat. The attack in this zone had begun on 9 April, 5 days before the main Fifth Army drive. On D Day General Sir Richard L. McCreery, commanding Eighth Army, had his 13 Corps, 10 Corps, 2 Polish Corps, and 5 Corps aligned from left to right in that order on a 60-mile front from the Idice River to the Adriatic Sea. The task awaiting the 9 divisions of British, New Zealand, Polish, Jewish, and Italian troops under his command was to force the Senio and Santerno rivers, outflank Bologna by seizing Budrio and Bastia, 10 and 25 miles respectively, to the northeast of that city, and then make contact with Fifth Army forces north of Bologna. The initial thrust would be made primarily by 5 Corps on a 30-mile front extending from a point 3 miles southwest of Lugo along the Senio

River to the Reno, and on to a point on Lake Comacchio, where the 2 Commando Brigade had carried out a feint on 2-5 April. The 5 Corps front was held by the 2 New Zealand Infantry Division on the left, southeast of Lugo, with the 8 Indian Infantry Division ready to strike northeast of that town. The Cremona Group (Italian) was prepared to punch northwest along the west side of Highway 16, the coastal route, while the 56 Infantry Division attacked along the southwest shore of Lake Comacchio. In reserve the Corps had the 78 Infantry Division; the 6 British Armoured Division in army reserve might also be committed.

The offensive of Eighth Army was given close air support from 825 heavy bombers, 282 medium bombers, and 1,017 fighters and fighter-bombers, most of which concentrated on the relatively small Lugo—Imola area. At 1920, 9 April, the 8 Indian Division attacked and quickly pushed across the Senio north of Lugo while the 2 New Zealand and 3 Carpathian Divisions forced crossings south of Lugo. The Cremona Group attacked on the 10th up Highway 16, and far to the west 10 Corps joined the offensive as the Jewish Brigade and the Friuli Group secured bridgeheads over the Senio. The enemy resisted stubbornly all along the line.

On the 11th the 56 Division scored good gains up the west shore of Lake Comacchio, and the 8 Indian Division reached the Santerno alongside and to the right of the 2 New Zealand Division, some elements making a crossing of that river 3 miles northwest of Lugo. Meanwhile the 3 Carpathian Division had crossed the Senio on both sides of Highway 9 to reach the Santerno, which it crossed the following day as the 8 Indian and the 2 New Zealand Divisions fought off desperate counter-attacks on their bridgeheads near Massa Lombarda. On the left flank of Eighth Army 13 Corps entered the offensive as the Folgore Group began fighting out of the mountains and advanced 3 miles up the Santerno Valley.

With strong elements across the Santerno the immediate objective of Eighth Army was the swift seizure of Bastia and Budrio. The attack on the former called for an amphibious operation along the shore of Lake Comacchio by the 56 Division, which landed 4 miles northeast of Bastia. The enemy offered stiff resistance around Bastia and at nightfall on the 13th was holding off the 56 Division on the east, the Cremona Group 4 miles to the south, and the newly committed 78 Division 3 miles to the south. The drive of the 2 New Zealand Division in the direction of Budrio also had been slowed west of Massa Lombarda, 20 miles east of Bologna. The Poles, slashing toward the northwest along Highway 9, continued to bypass Imola on both sides; on the left the 10 Indian Infantry Division in 13 Corps began debouching out of the mountains to the Po plain.

On 14 April 10 Corps took over the zone of 13 Corps to its left, and the latter went in between the Polish and 5 Corps with the 2 New Zealand and 10 Indian Divisions under its command, leaving the Poles astride the highway, driving toward

Bologna. On the right the enemy had thrown in his reserve 29th Panzer Grenadier Division to halt the break-through between Highway 16 and Lake Comacchio along the Argenta Gap. Farther west, however, he was unable to prevent the 2 New Zealand Division and the Polish Corps from crossing the Sillaro north of Massa Lombarda on the 14th and 15th; the Friuli Group brought the left flank across that barrier on the 16th near Highway 9. By this time the 56 Division had fought its way into Bastia from the east and turned north to join the 78 Division in an envelopment of Argenta and the complete seizure of the Argenta Gap. Before nightfall the New Zealanders took Medicina, 15 miles east of Bologna.

Heavy fighting continued on the left flank throughout the 18th and 19th as the enemy resisted strongly along the creek lines less than 10 miles east of Bologna. On the 20th the 10 Indian Division outflanked Budrio from the east, and the New Zealanders threw a bridgehead over the Idice 1 mile north of the town. Southwest of Budrio the Poles continued to advance on the Idice after heavy fighting and crossed the Quaderno halfway between Medicina and Bologna. By the early hours of 21 April the Polish Corps had thrown a cordon around Bologna from the east as it pinched out 10 Corps and took over the left flank of Eighth Army. While the 3 Carpathian and 5 Kresowa Divisions swung northwest to cut Highway 64 northeast of the city, the 3 Carpathian Brigade fought its way over Savena Creek near Highway 9 3 miles outside of Bologna, repelled a counterattack, and then entered the city by 0600. Meanwhile, on the right flank of Eighth Army 5 Corps had committed the 6 British Armoured Division on Highway 16 and was rolling across the Po plain only 10 miles south of Ferrara.

F. *SUMMARY OF THE ATTACK*

14-20 APRIL

The fall of Bologna on the morning of 21 April came with unexpected ease. Appreciation of enemy intentions before our attack was launched had included the possibility that the enemy would leave a suicide garrison in the city even after we had surrounded it, on the model of recent German resistance in western Europe; for the city was a vital road junction, standing as it did at the point where our main lines of supply, Highways 64 and 65, both came out onto the Po plain. The German High Command, however, was in no mood to waste troops on the protracted defense of Bologna. Indeed, the inability of the enemy to hold the excellent defenses astride Highway 65 made it appear unlikely that the closer defenses of the city could have been successfully manned, particularly in view of the partisan threat within the city itself.

At Bologna the troops of Fifth Army first made the acquaintance of the efficient partisan organizations of the Po Valley. Throughout the Italian campaign the sympathies of the local inhabitants had universally been on our side, and we had secured their aid from time to time as guides and purveyors of information on the enemy. Active, armed partisans had only begun to appear north of Rome, and then slowly. During the liberation of Florence in August 1944 the partisans had carried out a great deal of the work in clearing the northern part of the city; to the west small bands of partisans had helped our push into the mountains north of Pistoia and Lucca. These units nevertheless had been poorly organized on a local basis and had not constituted any severe threat to the Germans.

North of the Apennines the situation changed. The population was politically more active, especially in the cities with their large groups of workers of liberal tendencies, and partisan activities had been carried on from bases in the Alps throughout the period after September 1943. During the winter of 1944-45 appropriate agencies of Allied Force Headquarters assisted the partisans of the Po Valley in forming regional and provincial organizations, advised by American and British officers who infiltrated by planes; extensive, detailed plans worthy of an Army staff were drawn up for concerted action; and a fair quantity of arms and ammunition was dropped by plane to add to the equipment the partisans could obtain from Italian arsenals or incautious Germans. At Bologna itself the partisan uprising came only as we entered the city, for the Germans were too numerous; but the groups of patriotic Italians operated quickly to seize the agencies of government and the public utilities. Throughout the 21st they assisted troops of the 34th Division in seizing German stragglers and armed Fascists in the streets of Bologna. During the next 2 weeks our advance into other cities of the Po Valley was to receive ever greater aid from the partisans as the German collapse became more evident.

The drive to Bologna, objective of Fifth Army since the fall of 1944, had taken place with astounding speed, and its fall had, by the 21st, become almost incidental to a greater success. In 7 days we had broken the German line from the Panaro to the Idice; yet more, we had split the enemy forces in two and had a clean gap ahead of us for exploitation. The Fifth Army attack had begun with the drive up the Ligurian coast launched by the 92d Division on 5 April. Though a diversionary thrust, this drive was pushed forward stubbornly over difficult terrain. Massa, the first objective, fell on 10 April; Carrara was occupied the next day. Then the coastal drive was slowed down, after it had drawn a battalion of the 90th Panzer Grenadier Division from Bologna; but our troops kept moving forward on La Spezia and eventually Genoa.

The main drive began on the 14th, when the 10th Mountain Division attacked at 0945 in the IV Corps zone. Their left flank protected by the BEF and their

right by the 1st Armored Division, the mountain troops pushed northeast rapidly in the hills on the west side of the Reno. By the 16th the enemy had cracked, and our advance became more rapid. The commitment of the 90th Panzer Grenadier Division to the west of the gap was counterbalanced by the shift of the 1st Armored Division to the area northwest of Tole; the 85th Division came in on the right of IV Corps on the 18th; and the push carried on swiftly to the Po plain. At midnight on the 20th the 85th Division was just west of Casalecchio, the 10th Mountain Division had cut the main German lateral artery south of the Po by crossing Highway 9 below Ponte Samoggia, and the 1st Armored Division had reached the plain on the east bank of the Samoggia. The long left flank of IV Corps was well protected by active patrolling on the part of the BEF and the 365th and 371st Infantry; on the 20th the 2d Battalion, 365th Infantry, advanced up Highway 12 without opposition to Abetone as the enemy pulled back. Partisan units under General Armando were operating well ahead of our troops in this area.

The advance of II Corps, which began on a four-division front on the night of 15-16 April, was less spectacular, for the enemy defenses were stronger and slowed our advance. The first 2 days of the attack in this zone consisted of one slugging attack after another. Mount Sole fell to the 6 South African Armoured Division on the 16th; Monterumici to the 88th Division on the 17th; then the enemy began to pull back all along the line. Late on the 18th, II Corps made a quick shift to the left to push out on the plain on the west side of Bologna. The 88th Division and the South Africans crossed the Reno River to continue the advance along the right of IV Corps; the 91st and 34th Divisions and the Legnano Group pushed on into Bologna.

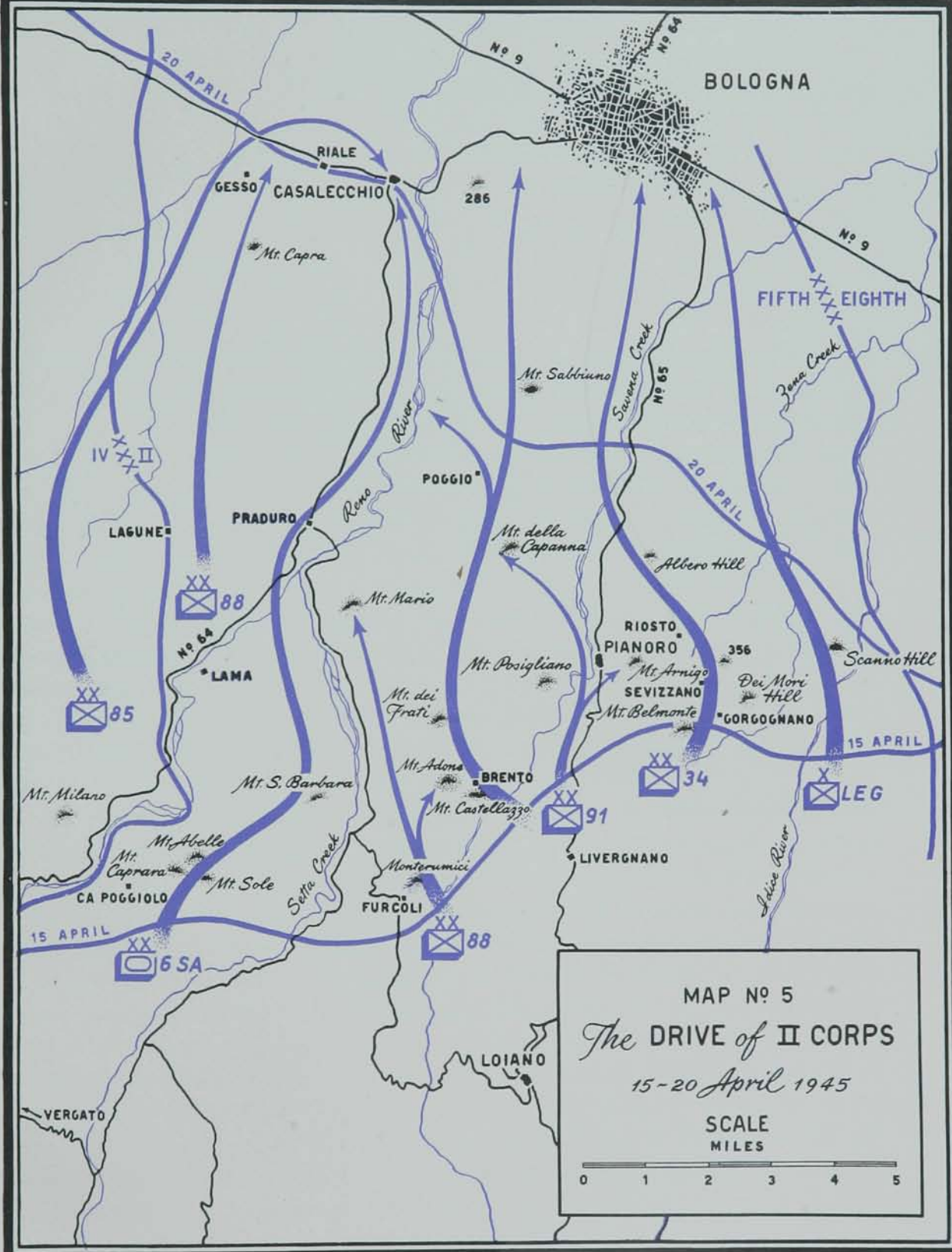
Air support before Fifth Army had reached a high point of efficiency. The major attack was begun with the accompaniment of extensive softening-up of enemy positions by heavy bombers, and close support was afforded by the tactical air forces thereafter. On 14 April, XXII TAC flew 459 sorties on the Fifth Army front, mostly in missions of four planes each against gun positions, strongpoints, troop areas, and other defense features. On the following day 830 heavy bombers of Fifteenth Air Force and 258 medium bombers from MATAF made tactical attacks south of Bologna; on the same day XXII TAC flew 495 sorties on close support, dump, and tactical reconnaissance missions in the immediate vicinity of the Fifth Army front.

During succeeding days the air force kept up this scale of attacks, directed in large part by the highly efficient system of ground control known as Rover Joe, which had been developed during the previous fall and winter. As the enemy began to withdraw, briefing the pilots before the take-off became less and less possible; and numerous instances occurred when our fliers could find their targets only by

means of directions from forward Rovers. During the period 8–21 April, XXII TAC fighter-bombers and light bombers flew 2,603 sorties; medium bombers of the 57th Bomb Wing flew 462 sorties, and the heavy bombers of MASAF flew 2,218 sorties. In the week ending with the fall of Bologna, MATAF flew 11,903 sorties of all types on the Allied front in Italy, the greatest single week's effort during the entire Italian campaign.

The attack up to 20 April had been outstandingly successful at a relatively moderate cost. Casualties during the period 14–20 April were 4,198 Americans, 406 South Africans, and 26 Italians, a total of 4,630. The heaviest losses had been borne by the 10th Mountain Division with 1,625 casualties; the 88th and 91st Division had each suffered about 650 casualties in their attacks. The system of allotting a five percent overstrength of replacements to each infantry division had worked very well, feeding replacements into the frontline rifle companies almost as automatically as rations. The backlog of replacements had proved more than ample thus far.

No difficulties had arisen up to the 20th in the kindred problem of supply. A railhead had been opened at Pistoia on the 14th, and the camouflaged dumps along the Reno in the vicinity of Porretta had been quickly stocked with all necessary items. The well-established network of dumps on Highway 65 had borne the burden of the attack in that area without difficulty; the weather on the north side of the Apennine ridge had been good, and had permitted the opening up of supply routes by the engineers without undue troubles. Congestion had arisen on the routes on either side of the Reno in the forward areas when our troops shifted their zones, but bottlenecks had been only temporary. With the Army reaching the Po plain much more rapidly than could have been expected, the problem of supply might grow greater, but the services could be counted on to do their utmost to support a swift drive across the valley to seize Verona and so split the enemy entirely in two. In that drive the mobility of Fifth Army, which had already shown itself in the speedy shifts on the 17th and 18th, would be extended to the utmost.



BOLOGNA

RIALE
 GESSO
 CASALECCHIO

FIFTH EIGHTH

IV II

LAGUNE

PRADURO

POGGIO

20 APRIL

XX 88
 NO 64

XX 85

LAMA

RIOSTO
 PIANORO

356

Scanno Hill

XX 34

DEI MORI HILL
 GORGOGNANO

15 APRIL

XX LEG

BRENTO

XX 91

LIVERGNANO

XX 88

XX 6 SA

LOIANO

VERGATO