

HISTORY OF TASK FORCE 45

(29 July 44 to 28 January 45)

FORWORD

Task Force 45 was a polygot task force of American and British antiaircraft gunners acting as infantry, with Italian Partisans, Brazilians and colored American troops fighting by their side. Its artillery were the antiaircraft guns pointed earthward, the guns of tanks and of tank destroyers and of captured German weapons. Its engineers were Italian civilians who were not afraid to work within the sound of guns and who built well. It did much with little. British Tommies who rode forward on American tanks, with American mortars behind and American engineers ahead, and the Yanks who stepped out of their foxholes with British artillery pounding protection behind, with Italians at their side and out ahead and with Brazilians on their flanks, learned that different peoples can fight well together.

## I. ORGANIZATION AND COMMITTING OF TF 45.

1. On 24 July 1944, the 45th AAA Brigade was providing the antiaircraft defense of IV Corps of Fifth Army with one operations detachment (for early warning), two AA Group headquarters, two AA automatic weapons battalions (self-propelled), five AA automatic weapons battalions (mobile), two AA gun battalions and one AA searchlight battery. This command consisted of some 7000 officers and enlisted men, grouped and armed as follows:

107th AAA Group	
105th AAA AV Bn (SP)	(32 M15's & 32 M16's)
434th AAA AV Bn (SP)	(32 M15's & 32 M16's)
536th AAA AW Bn (Mob)	(32 Bofors & 32 M51's)
898th AAA AV Bn (Mob)	(32 Bofors & 32 M51's)
403d AAA Gun Bn (Mob)	(16 Guns 90mm and 16 MG, .50 cal)
IC Btry, 351st AAA SL Bn	(15 lights and 15 MG, .50 cal)
209th AAA Group	
435th AAA AW Bn (Mob)	(32 Bofors & 32 M51's)
630th AAA AW Bn (Mob)	(32 Bofors & 32 MG, .50 cal)
900th AAA AW Bn (Mob)	(32 Bofors & 32 MG, .50 cal)
401st AAA Gun Bn (Mob)	(16 Guns 90mm & 16 MG, .50 cal)

### NOTE:

M15 is half-track mounting 1 gun 37mm & 2 MG, .50 cal.  
M16 is a half-track mounting 4 MG, .50 cal.  
M51 is a truck-drawn trailer mounting 4 MG, .50 cal.  
Bofors is a truck-drawn 40mm gun.

2. Major General Willis D. Crittenberger, IV Corps Commander, on 24 July 1944 advised Brigadier General Paul W. Rutledge, 45th AAA Brigade Commander, of the plans to employ the Brigade, minus some antiaircraft elements and plus elements of some of the other arms, as a Task Force to relieve the 34th and 91st Infantry Divisions. Elements of these divisions had then secured and were holding the line of the ARNO RIVER from the 21 Easting to the Tyrrhenian Sea, a front of approximately 15 miles.

3. General Rutledge at once began the conversion of his command to a provisional infantry unit:

a. IV Corps provided four Infantry field-grade officers and nineteen company-grade officers from veteran units so that the Brigade headquarters, each of the two Group headquarters, each of the four Battalion headquarters, and each of the sixteen provisional infantry companies had one experienced infantry adviser on hand. (These officers remained with the Task Force from four to six weeks.) Seventeen infantry officers were further procured from the Replacement Depot to fill vacancies in the AA units. The Brigade AA Gunnery Officer was designated Task Force Artillery Officer and the Commanding Officer of the AA Operations Detachment was named Provost Marshal. A Photo Interpretation Officer, a Surgeon, an AMG Officer, an Engineer Officer and a Prisoner-of-War Interrogation Officer were further loaned by IV Corps. Two infantry lieutenants, familiar with intelligence work, and one Field Artillery captain were also secured from the Replacement Depot to complete filling out the staff. Meanwhile, the regular Brigade S2, S3 and S4 and Communications Officer were dispatched to the headquarters of the 34 Infantry Division to learn infantry technique and procedure.

b. Reconversion to provisional infantry status was immediately instituted in the case of the 536 AAA Bn and the 898 AAA Bn, which were then in bivouac. All purely AAA equipment (Bofors guns, directors, power plants and .50 calibre AA machine guns) was stacked in a rear area and a small detachment left to guard it. Each AAA Battalion then, with a minimum change in personnel, adapted its structure of four firing batteries to the infantry design of three rifle companies and one heavy-weapons company, as follows:

<u>AAA (AW) Bn</u>		<u>Provisional Infantry Bn.</u>
Hq & Hq Btry	changed to	Hq & Hq Company
3 Firing Batteries	changed to	3 Rifle Companies
Hq Section		Hq Section
1 Platoon		1 Platoon
Hq Section		Hq Sec
1 Sec (15 men)		1 Sec (15 men)
2 Sec (15 men)		2 Sec (15 men)
3 Sec (15 men)		2 Platoon
4 Sec (15 men)		Hq Sec
2 Platoon		3 Sec (15 men)
Hq Section		4 Sec (15 men)
5 Sec (15 men)		3 Platoon
6 Sec (15 men)		Hq Sec
7 Sec (15 men)		5 Sec (15 men)
8 Sec (15 men)		6 Sec (15 men)
		4 Platoon
		Hq Sec
		7 Sec (15 men)
		8 Sec (15 men)

AAA(AW) Bn Cont'dProvisional Infantry Bn Cont'd

1 Firing Battery	changed to	1 Heavy Weapons Company
Hq Section		Hq Section
1 Platoon		Mortar Platoon
Hq Section		Hq Sec
1 Sec (15 men)		1 Sec (15 men)
2 Sec (15 men)		2 Sec (15 men)
3 Sec (15 men)		3 Sec (15 men)
4 Sec (15 men)		Machine-Gun Platoon
2 Platoon		Hq Section
Hq Section		4 Sec (15 men)
5 Sec (15 men)		5 Sec (15 men)
6 Sec (15 Men)		6 Sec (15 men)
7 Sec (15 men)		7 Sec (15 men)
8 Sec (15 men)		8 Sec (15 men)

Each rifle company was given 8 BARs (one for each section ) and each HW company was given six 81mm mortars (two for each mortar section) and ten .30 caliber machine guns and five .50 caliber machine guns (two .30 caliber machine gun and one .50 caliber machine gun for each machine gun section), plus the following infantry-type signal equipment:

Radio Equipment:

SCR 300	4 per Bn Hq (3 spares)
	1 per Co.
SCR 536	4 per Bn Hq (1 spare)
	6 per rifle Co.
	10 per HW Co.

Wire Equipment:

Reel equipment CE-11	8 per Group Hq.
	8 per Bn Hq.
	6 per Rifle Co.
	20 per HW Co.
Wire, W-130	7 miles per Group Hq.
	5 miles per Bn Hq.
	2 miles per Rifle Co.
	5 miles per HW Co.

c. On 25 July 1944, the 435th AAA Bn was relieved of its AA defense mission and the 439 AAA Bn was ordered from the Fifth Army AA Firing Point. Both units were moved to bivouac areas in the vicinity of Livorno to begin conversion to infantry. The 209 AAA Group,

105 AAA Bn, 401st Gun Bn, 630th AAA Bn and the 900th AAA Bn were at the same time relieved from assignment to the 45 AAA Brigade and assigned to the 71 AAA Brigade for continuance of their AA missions.

4. IV Corps, on 26 July 1944, issued Field Order No. 6 which designated the 45 AAA Brigade as Task Force 45 with the following troops:

Hq & Hq Btry, 45th AAA Brigade  
91st AAA Group  
435th AAA Bn  
439th AAA Bn  
673d Medical Collecting Co.  
107th AAA Group  
536th AAA Bn  
898th AAA Bn  
671st Medical Collecting Co.  
Hq & Hq Co, 2d Armored Group  
91st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (-)  
751st Tank Battalion (-)  
Reconnaissance Co., 894th Tank Destroyer Bn  
One Co., 805th Tank Destroyer Bn  
One Btry (plus), 434th AAA Bn  
34th Infantry Division Artillery

and with the following missions:

- a. Relieve elements of the 34th Infantry Division and the 91st Infantry Division in zone and assume command of sector on Corps order.
- b. Hold forward positions and conduct active patrolling in zone to prevent enemy infiltration.
- c. Send small reconnaissance patrols across to determine enemy strength and dispositions.
- d. Maintain contact with Task Force Ramey.
- e. Protect left flank of Corps.
- f. Prepare to follow up any enemy withdrawal.

On the same date, Task Force 45 issued Field Order No. 1 assigning troops as follows:

91 AAA Group

435 AAA Bn  
439 AAA Bn  
Rcn Co, 894 Tank Destroyer Bn  
673d Medical Collecting Co.

107 AAA Group

536 AAA Bn  
898 AAA Bn  
91 Cavalry Rcn Squad (-1 Troop)  
671 Medical Collecting Co.

2 Armored Group

39 LAA Regiment (Br) (-1 Btry)  
751 Tank Bn (- assault guns)  
434 AAA Bn (-Det)  
34 Infantry Division Artillery;

with the following missions:

a. 107 AAA Group.

- (1) Relieve 168 Infantry during night of 26-27 July and 133 Infantry during night of 27-28 July;
- (2) Protect right flank of Brigade, preventing any hostile penetration;
- (3) Maintain contact with 91 AAA Group on left and Task Force Ransy on right;
- (4) Send small reconnaissance patrols across RIVER to determine strength and dispositions;
- (5) Prepare to follow up any enemy withdrawal in sector.

b. 91 AAA Group.

- (1) Relieve 135 and 363 Infantry during night 28-29 July;
- (2) Protect Brigade left flank, preventing any hostile penetration;
- (3) Maintain contact with 107 AAA Group on right;
- (4) Send small reconnaissance patrols across RIVER to determine enemy strength and dispositions;
- (5) Prepare to follow up any enemy withdrawal in sector.

c. 2 Armored Group.

- (1) Brigade reserve.
- (2) Actively support Brigade by deployment of armor and by organizing AT defense with Co B, 805 Tank Destroyer Battalion and such other units as are available.

d. 34 Division Artillery (Infantry)

- (1) Direct artillery support of Brigade.

- e. (1) 536, 898, 439 and 435 AAA Battalions.
- (a) Assume provisional infantry T/O at once.
  - (b) Assemble equipment not needed for infantry role at battalion rear echelon where only sufficient personnel will be left to provide security and maintain equipment.
  - (c) Continue intensive training in Infantry tactics, stressing defense of river line, scouting, patrolling and use of Infantry weapons.
- (2) (a) No artillery fire will be placed on City of PISA except on Brigade order.

5. The 898 AAA Bn went into the line on the night 26-27 July 1944, to relieve the 168 Infantry on the right flank of the sector. On the following night, 27-28 July 1944, the 536 AAA Bn went into the line to relieve the 133 Infantry in the left half of the right sector. The 107 AAA Group then assumed responsibility for the entire right sector. The veteran 91 Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (-1 troop) was used to patrol south of the Arno River and to the flanks and was available as group reserve. (During the night 28-29 July 1944 the 91 Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron was deflected to the coast to counter a possible enemy amphibious attempt but was returned to its former positions the morning of 29 July 1944). The 84 Chemical Battalion, with its 4.2 mortars, was at the same time made available as 107 AAA Group support for a period of 4 days. This second night the AA troops received their first casualties from enemy artillery and mortar fire and took two prisoners of war from an enemy patrol.

6. On the night 28-29 July 1944, the 91 AAA Group, with 435 AAA Bn moving into the left sector and the 439 AAA Bn moving in to the right, below PISA, took over the left sector, relieving elements of the 135 and 363 Infantries. The Reconnaissance Co., 894 Tank Destroyer Bn, minus one platoon, was assigned the coast-patrol mission and was available as group reserve. Task Force 45 assumed command of the entire 34 Infantry Division sector as of 290600B July 1944.

7. The 34 Infantry Division Artillery was continued in the line to give close artillery support and the 403 AAA Gun Bn, together with elements of the British 62 and 66 AA Brigades, using 3.7 AA guns, supplemented this fire. The 434 AAA Bn (-Batteries A & B) provided 34 Division Artillery with AA protection.

8. The 2 Armored Group assumed command of the Task Force reserve, consisting of the 751 Tank Bn, Co B of the 805 Tank Destroyer Bn, Batteries A & B of the 434th AAA Bn and the British 39 LAA Regiment which had been attached to the Task Force on 29 July 1944. The 39 LAA regiment consisted of approximately 850 officers and enlisted men

and was comprised of 3 batteries each of 3 troops. Each troop consisted of 60 men who ordinarily manned six Bofors AA guns. These Bofors were stacked and the British AA troops began infantry training. The British had no heavy weapons other than three captured German 81mm mortars for which they had adequate ammunition. Subsequently, they also procured two 75mm pack howitzers which they employed with deadly effectiveness as close support weapons. Battery A and 1 Platoon of Battery B of the 434 AAA Bn, using their self-propelled 37mm guns and machine guns, took over the coastal patrol from the Reconnaissance Co., 894th Tank Destroyer Bn on 29 July 1944, leaving the Reconnaissance company free to bulwark the 91 AAA Group sector.

#### Dispositions 30 July 1944

<p style="text-align: center;">91 AAA Group</p> <p>435 AAA Bn      439 AAA Bn</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Rcn Co, 894 TD Bn (Res)</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">673 Med Coll Co.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">107 AAA Group</p> <p>536 AAA Bn      898 AAA Bn</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">91 Cav Rcn Sqdn (Res)</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">671 Med Coll Co.</p>
<p>2 Armored Group (TF Reserve)</p> <p>39 LAA Regiment</p> <p>751 Tank Bn</p> <p>B Co, 805 TD Bn</p> <p>A &amp; B Btries, 434 AAA Bn.</p>	

## II. THE ARNO RIVER PHASE.

1. During all of August, the Task Force held the line of the Arno River. Close contact was maintained with the enemy which at that time was the 16 SS Division. Patrols continuously made contact and in the resulting fire fights casualties were taken and inflicted. After walking into one enemy ambush our patrols quickly learned the trick and subsequently set three ambushes of their own which netted prisoners and enemy casualties. Minefields and trip flares were set and strongpoints were constructed at strategic points and reinforced. Harrassing of the enemy was taken up with a vengeance. Between 1000 and 2000 rounds of artillery were fired each day and the infantry, from excellent OP's, directed mortar and machine gun fire. The use of bazookas in exploding enemy strongpoint was also experimented with and proved successful. Air OP's were used,



for the first time in the Corps area, in successfully directing mortar fire. Demonstrations with tank and truck movements, smoking of a dummy bridge, operation of bull-dozers during the night and machine gun barrages were used to draw enemy mortar and artillery fire. The enemy firing positions were then plotted and counter-battered. During one smoke demonstration, the enemy fired 361 rounds of artillery and 242 rounds of mortar; the hum inflicted no damage but provided excellent counter-battery intelligence. Seven enemy air bombing and strafing attacks were experienced during the period.

2. On 31 July 1944, the 34 Infantry Division Artillery and the 403 AAA Gun Bn were withdrawn from the Task Force sector; however, the Tank Destroyer companies of the 894 Tank Destroyer Bn were attached 31 July 1944 and the guns of this unit, plus those of the 751 Tank Bn and Co B of the 805 Tank Destroyer Bn were sited to provide substitute artillery fire. The 3.7 AA guns of elements of the British 62 and 66 AA Brigades also continued available.

3. The departure of the 34 Infantry Division Artillery released for infantry training the 434 AAA Bn (-2 Batteries) which had been providing the artillery with AA protection. Battery A and 1 platoon of Battery B of 434 AAA Bn were now relieved of the coastal patrol by the Reconnaissance Co, 894 TD Bn and the entire battalion began infantry training, principally in the use of mortars, machine guns with infantry mounts, BARs and rifles. Two ranges were set up and intensive practice conducted. On 3 August 1944, Batteries A and B were attached to 91 AAA Group, Battery B being committed to the line to strengthen the Group right flank and Battery A being held in reserve.

4. The 111 Battery of the 39 LAA was attached to the 91 AAA Group on 1 August 1944 and was committed to relieve D Battery of the 435 AAA Bn on 4 August 1944. The 240 Battery of the 39 LAA was attached to the 107 AAA Group as group reserve also on 1 August 1944. The 110 Battery of the 39 LAA continued infantry training as part of the Task Force reserve. On 8 August 1944, Battery C, 351 AAA S/L Bn was attached to the 91 AAA Group and given the mission of providing coastal searchlight and radar defense.

5. On 11 August 1944, Headquarters 91 AAA Group, having been ordered from the theatre, was relieved by Headquarters 2 Armored Group which relinquished command of the Task Force reserve to Headquarters 751 Tank Bn. On 13 August 1944, the 898 AAA Bn, having also been ordered from the theatre, was relieved by the 434 AAA Bn (-2 Batteries). The 91 Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron which was in





### III. THE ADVANCE FROM THE ARNO.

1. Boche demolitions began to be observed on the 30th and 31st of August 1944 while smoke and tank demonstrations failed to evoke the Hun's usual, enthusiastic response. Our patrols became exceedingly active and began crossing the ARNO RIVER in force. While the enemy was still found to be present, it appeared that his defenses had thinned. This was confirmed by civilian and partisan reports.

2. At noon on 1 September 1944, the 100 Infantry Battalion, with six tanks in support, began crossing the ARNO RIVER at its northernmost bend east of PISA. Only sporadic opposition was met. On the morning of 2 September 1944, the 435 AAA Battalion with seven tanks in support, crossed the ARNO into NORTH PISA, using boats and the remains of a demolished bridge. The tanks crossed at a ford which the engineers quickly improved just east of PISA. Moderate artillery, with one particularly troublesome self-propelled gun and numerous mines and booby-traps were the only opposition. The self-propelled gun was silenced by our tank destroyers which moved up in front-line support. By 1600 on 2 September 1944, the 100 Infantry and the 435 AAA Bn had reached the 67 Northing, above PISA. The Reconnaissance Company, 894 TD Battalion, suffered two casualties from mines. The 434 AAA Bn then crossed to occupy and clean up NORTH PISA.

3. In the evening of 2 September 1944, the 39 LAA began crossing the Arno River at Route 1 and at Cascine Nuove, west of PISA. It was necessary for them to clean out one enemy strongpoint where seven of the Boche were captured. Progress of the 39 LAA was slow due to the dense thickets and extensive minefields in their sector North of the Arno. One rearguard enemy party captured 12 men of a mine-clearing group.

4. By evening of 3 September 1944, the 100 Infantry and the 435 AAA Bn had reached the line of the SERCHIO RIVER against slight enemy resistance. One Boche strongpoint had to be cleaned out by the 100 Infantry Bn and the Hun suffered 5 killed, 4 wounded and 6 captured. The 2 Armored Group was now given the sector west of Route 1 with all of the 39 LAA and 47 LAA; and the 107 AAA Group was given the sector east of Route 1 with the 100 Infantry and the 435 AAA Bn. The 434 AAA Bn was placed directly under the Task Force to police and patrol PISA. Enemy fire, small arms, machine gun, mortar and artillery at this time intensified and three enemy air bombing and strafing attacks were experienced.

5. During the night of 4-5 September 1944, the 39 LAA on the coastal flank came up abreast of the 100 Infantry Bn and the 435 AAA Bn. The 47 LAA at the same time completed the crossing of the ARNO and moved to occupy the right flank of the 2 Armored Group. Several mine casualties were received and moderate enemy small arms and machine gun and self-propelled artillery was encountered when elements of the two British regiments reached the SERCHIO. Two platoons of tanks were used to clean out the heavily wooded area between the SERCHIO and ARNO Rivers where rearguard enemy parties had been operating. On 5 September 1944, Battery C of the 450 AAA Bn, a colored unit, was attached and assigned the mission of guarding the principal ARNO bridge at CASCINE NUOVE, west of PISA.

6. Battery C of the 351 AAA S/L Bn was relieved of its searchlight and radar coastal defense mission on 6 September 1944 and replaced the 434 AAA Bn as the PISA garrison. The 434 AAA Bn then, on the night of 6-7 September 1944 relieved the 100 Infantry Bn on the right flank of the sector and the 100 Infantry Bn moved from the Task Force sector. The Boche continued to react sharply to any attempt to cross the SERCHIO RIVER although several American patrols succeeded in fording the stream and locating enemy positions. Tank fire and bazookas were used by the British to clean out two enemy machine gun nests on the north bank of the SERCHIO at Route 1. On 7 September 1944, the 336 Field Artillery Bn was detached from the Task Force and moved to Livorno. The British 71 HAA Regiment (24 AA guns of 3.7 caliber) which had been on call for special missions, was now given the primary mission of providing the Task Force close field artillery support.

Dispositions 7 September 1944

<u>2 Armored Group</u>		<u>107 AAA Group</u>	
39 LAA	47 LAA (-1 Btry)	435 AAA Bn	434 AAA Bn
Ren Co, 894 TD Bn (Res)		258/47LAA (Res)	
751 Tank Bn (Task Force Res)			
G Btry, 351 AAA S/L Bn (Pisa patrol)			
C Btry, 450 AAA Bn (Bridge guard)			
Tp A, 81 Cav Ren Sqdn (Coast patrol)			

7. The 435 AAA Bn crossed the SERCHIO RIVER in boats on the night of 8-9 September 1944, and occupied NODICA, VECCHIANO AND AVANE, east of Route 1. The next day the 434 AAA Bn forded the SERCHIO and took up positions on the high ground west of the northern course of the river and east of the 435 AAA Bn. By 10 September

1944 both battalions had advanced to the line of the Autostrada and were patrolling the high ground to the north. (0876 and 1076).

8. The 2 Armored Group began moving forward on the morning of 10 September 1944. A special task force of 2 platoons of medium tanks, 2 platoons of light tanks, 2 platoons of tank destroyers, the Reconnaissance Company, 894 TD Battalion and a mine-clearing detachment of engineers crossed the SERCHIO RIVER at the VEGGHIANO ford in the 435 AAA Bn sector and met the infantry support of the 39 LAA on the north side of the River at Route 1. The 39 LAA, followed by the 47 LAA, crossed the river in boats at that point (0569). Sporadic enemy small arms fire and many mines were encountered, but by 1800A the British had reached the Buffalina Canal on the 77 Northing and the 2 Armored Group was sending patrols into TORRE DEL LAGO (7802). At first light on 11 September 1944 the British, supported by armor, crossed the Buffalina Canal under slight enemy artillery fire and reached a line along 78 Northing.

9. At the same time, the American troops of the 107 AAA Group had advanced to the high ground north of the Autostrada along the 78 Northing and had sent patrols to LA GAVA (0681), QUIESA (0780), NOZZANA (1278) and BALBANO (1077). Troop A of the 81 Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron was relieved of attachment at 092400A September 1944 and the Task Force was relieved of the responsibility for the coastal patrol south of its sector.

10. Two tank patrols of the 2 Armored Group were sent to the southern edge of VIAREGGIO on the afternoon of 11 September 1944. There they were stopped by demolitions and the canal. One thousand Boche were reported to be in the town. On the same date the 434 AAA Bn relieved the 435 AAA Bn on the left of the 107 AAA Group sector and the 435 AAA Bn was withdrawn and attached to the 2 Armored Group, effective 131600A September 1944. The Reconnaissance Company of the 894 TD Battalion was assigned the mission of patrolling the coast and Battery C of the 450 AAA Bn was brought up to man coastal strongpoints and to patrol the wooded area south of the forward elements. The 194 Field Artillery Group was replaced by the 424 Field Artillery Group. The coastal sector of the 2 Armored Group now became primarily important since the 107 AAA Group sector on the right was largely masked by LAKE MASSACUICCOLI.

11. Armored patrols to VIAREGGIO on 12 and 13 September 1944 made enemy contact but on 14 September 1944 evidence of Boche withdrawal caused the construction of a canal crossing in SOUTH VIAREGGIO and advance patrols entering the town met only sporadic resistance.

The 435 AAA Bn moved into town on the 15th of September 1944. The enemy began shelling the town and casualties were incurred.

12. At 152400B September 1944, the 107 AAA Group, with the 434 AAA Bn was relieved of sector responsibility by a combat team of the Brazilian Expeditionary Force. The 107 AAA Group went into rest and the 434 moved into the coastal sector on the right of the 435 AAA Bn. The British 47 LAA was moved to hold the right and hilly sector of the Task Force front and the British 39 LAA went into reserve and rest in VIAREGGIO.

Dispositions 15 September 1944

435 AAA Bn	<u>2 Armored Group</u> 434 AAA Bn	47 LAA
	107 AAA Group (TF Reserve)	
	39 LAA (Reserve & rest)	
	751 Tank Bn (Support)	
	C Btry, 450 AAA Bn (Bridge guards & patrol)	
	G Btry, 351 AAA 3/L Bn (PISA patrol)	
	Ren Co, 894 TD Bn (Coast patrol)	

13. By 1600A on 18 September 1944, the line had been advanced to the 88 Northing, against only moderate enemy resistance. The Boche line now, however, began to stiffen. Enemy artillery, machine gun and small arms fire stepped up and allied casualties were suffered.

14. At 191900A September 1944 the 435 AAA Bn on the coast had moved up to the 91 Northing, taking the towns of FIUMETTO (9490) and MONTONE (9588) and the 434 AAA Bn in the central sector had entered PIETRASANTA (9891). On the right, the 47 LAA also had pushed forward to the 91 Northing and had occupied CAPUZZANO (9993). Battery G of the 450 AAA Bn was now called up to do combat engineer work on roads and bridges since the demolition work of the Hun had been thorough. The total strength of the Task Force at this time was now approximately 5000 officers and enlisted men.

15. By 21 September 1944, the entire line had been advanced to the 93 Northing against increasing enemy small arms and artillery fire and the coastal town of FORTE dei MARMI (9293) had been taken.

16. On 22 September 1944, the line was pushed forward to the 94 Northing after friendly counter-battery had silenced intense enemy artillery, mortars and machine gun fire which had inflicted numerous casualties. Tank demonstrations, while an air OP was a-  
left,, were now conducted to sound out enemy artillery locations. Five enemy artillery positions opened on the tanks and were immediately counter-battered with the air OP directing the fire. A captured German 150mm Howitzer was particularly useful on this mission. At this time the 110 Battery of the 39 LAA was also attached to the 47 LAA to permit rest for tired troops.

17. After active patrolling and numerous enemy contacts on 23-24 September 1944, the 434 AAA Bn on 25 September 1944 established a bridgehead North of the canal at 962938 and construction of a causeway was begun. On 26 September 1944 the 434 AAA Bn advanced its line to the 95 Northing against intense enemy artillery fire and had taken JUERCETA (9594). At the same time the 47 LAA advanced to take VALLECHIA (9795) but attempts to take RIPA (9695) and CONVAJA (9795) were repulsed by intense enemy small arms, mortar and artillery fire. Some thousand rounds of enemy mortar and artillery fire of all caliber, were reported during this 24 hour period.

18. The Task Force was now under the guns of the GOTHIC LINE and enemy artillery of all caliber increased. Both friendly and enemy patrols were active and sharp clashes occurred each day. On 28 September 1944, a company of the Italian, 23 Artier Battalion was attached to the Task Force for engineering work and were placed under the supervision of the Task Force Engineer. While limited by a shortage of bulldozers, they were frequently aided by the tank-dozers of the 751 Tank Bn and performed excellent work. At this time 12 truck-drawn 3 inch anti-tank guns were offered by IV Corps to the Task Force to supplement its artillery. These were quickly secured and Troops A and C of the 168 Battery of the British 56 LAA Regiment were enlisted, under the tutelage of an American Task Force artillery officer, to man them. They performed yeoman service and tremendously increased the Task Force fire power.

19. On the night of 28-29 September 1944, elements of the 47 LAA occupied SOLAJA (9894). At 2400A on 30 September 1944, the 39 LAA relieved the 47 LAA in the right sector and came under the command of the 107 AAA Group which had at the same time relieved the 2 Armored Group of command of the sector. The 47 LAA went into Task Force reserve and rest, being subsequently, 5 October 1944, attached to 2 Armored Group. At this time the 34 Quartermaster War Dog Platoon was attached to Task Force 45, but trial under artillery



fire indicated that the dogs were too nervous for forward area guard duty and could be used only in quiet areas. Battery G of 351 AAA S/L Bn, having been wholly relieved of the PISA patrolling mission on 30 September 1944, was now engaged in the military police duties of guarding bridges, road junctions and installations within the Task Force sector.

20. From 1 October to 3 October 1944, inclusive, Task Force 45 operated with the BEF as Task Force Dutra under the command of the Brazilian Minister of War, Major General Enrico Gaspar Dutra. Brigadier General Paul W. Rutledge, Task Force 45 Commander, was at this time decorated by the Brazilian Government with the order of "Comendador Da Ordem Do Merito Militar."

21. On the night of 3-4 October 1944, the 2 Battalion of the 370 Infantry Regiment (colored), having been attached to Task Force 45 on 2 October 1944, relieved the 107 AAA Group and the 39 LAA in the right sector. The latter units then moved to SAN MARCELLO (4301) on a new mission. On 3 October 1944, the 598 Field Artillery Bn and the 179 Smoke Generating Company were attached to Task Force 45. On 5 October 1944, the 370 Regimental Combat Team took over responsibility for the right sector from its own 2 Battalion.

22. At 1800 hours on 5 October 1944, all units of Task Force 45, except Task Force Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, having been relieved from Task Force 45 attachment and having been attached to Task Force 92, sector command passed to Task Force 92. The special staff of Task Force 45 was also then attached to Task Force 92 while the general staff continued to work with Task Force 92 until Task Force 45 was moved to the SAN MARCELLO area.

#### IV. HOLDING OF THE APPENNINE SEGMENT.

1. On 5 November 1944, 45 AAA Brigade was again alerted by the Corps Commander, Major General Willis D. Grittenberger, to the performance of a Task Force mission in holding and improving a position in a segment of the Appennines between BAGNI DI LUCCA (2597) and CAMPO TIZZORO (4999). This sector was being held by the 107 AAA Group with the British 39 LAA, 47 LAA and 74 LAA Regiments acting as infantry and with the British 80 HAA Regiment acting as artillery, but the mission involved was one requiring the staff and facilities of a full Task Force Headquarters.

2. IV Corps, Operations Instructions No. 65, dated 6 November 1944, assigned Task Force 45 the following missions:

a. Hold General Line CAMPO TIZZORO (493992) - CATTIGLIANO (405064) - BAGNI DI LUCCA (259969) and prevent any enemy movement south thereof.

b. Continue active patrolling and prepare plans to follow any enemy withdrawal.

c. Prepare plans to complete relief of 47 LAA and 74 LAA Regiments by 082400A November 1944. Move units to CASTELNUOVO area (3982180) on orders from IV Corps.

d. Maintain contact with BFF and 92 Infantry Division.

e. Protect left flank of IV Corps.

3. At 061600A November 1944, Task Force 45, had moved its Headquarters and Headquarters Battery to CAMPO TIZZORO (4899) and at that time assumed command of the 107 AAA Group sector.

4. This sector was arbitrarily bounded on the left by the 25 Easting and was roughly bounded on the right by Route 6629 which led from Ponte Petri (4899) to Ponte della Venturina (5909) where it joined Route 67. Task Force 92 was adjacent on the left and the BFF, supported by the CC "B" of the 1st Armored Division was adjacent on the right. The sector was very mountainous and of exceedingly rough terrain. The enemy had done thorough demolition work on the roads. Route 66, which led from PISTOIA to PONTE PETRI (5099) to a juncture with Route 12 at LA LIMA (4102) was the principal supply route. Route 12, which led from LUCCA to BAGNI DI LUCCA to LA LIMA to SESTA TAICONE (3906), where it ended in extensive demolitions defended as a road block by the enemy, was open only to jeep traffic from BAGNI DI LUCCA to LA LIMA. Route 6629 was also open only to jeep traffic. The road from MONTECATINI to LA LIMA was impassable due to demolitions. There were no other roads to the north of the BAGNI DI LUCCA - CAMPO TIZZORO line and only a few difficult mule trails. To the east and west of Route 12 from LA LIMA to SESTA TAICONE there were ranges of mountains which were practically impassable.

5. The Task Force Sector was logically divisible into 3 sub-sectors:

a. The Left or BAGNI DI LUCCA sector, bounded on the left

by the 25 Easting, which was the boundary of Task Force 45 and Task Force 92, and bounded on the right by the mountain ridge from M. GOMITO to M. CALIGI (3704) and to the high ground NW of LA LIMA (4102).

b. The Center or SESTIONE - CUTIGLIANO sector, bound on the left by the mountain ridge from M. GOMITO (3199) to M. CALIGI (3704) and the high ground NW of LA LIMA and bounded on the right by the mountain ridge from M. SPIGOLINO (4309) to M. GENNAIO (4706) to M. ORSIGNA (5005).

c. The Right or VIDICIATICO sector, bounded on the left by the SPIGOLINO - GENNAIO - ORSIGNA mountain ridge and bounded on the right by the BEF - Task Force 45 boundary.

6. IV Corps again provided Task Force Headquarters with an Engineer officer and a Photo Interpretation officer. The operations section this time did not procure additional officers or enlisted men but effected an economy of personnel by merging the S-2 and S-3 sections so that the members of either section were available for work in the other sections when conditions required.

7. The initial mission of effecting the relief of the British 47 LAA and 74 LAA Regiments was begun on 8 November 1944 when the 74 LAA on the right of the center sector was relieved by the 434 AAA Bn which had been detached from Task Force 92 and attached to Task Force 45 on 5 November 1944. The 434 AAA Bn garrisoned SPIGNANA (4303), MARESCA (4700), PRACCHI (5201) and PONTEPETRI (5099) and subsequently ORSIGNA (5003), VIZZANETTA (4105) and LA LIMA (4102). It also took over the patrol of the roads from VENTURINA (5909) to CAMPO TIZZORO (4999) and from LA LIMA (4102) to COCCIGLIA (3299). The anti-aircraft M16's, (four .50 caliber machine guns mounted on an armored half-track), were used very effectively on these patrols. The M16's were also posted at ORSIGNA, MARESCA and the LA LIMA bridge, where their formidable fire power provided good support for the infantry weapons. Battery C of the 434 AAA Bn was bivouacked in CAMPO TIZZORO where it was held as Task Force reserve.

8. On 9 November 1944, the 111 Battery of the 39 LAA moved to BAGNI DI LUCCA sector on the left where it relieved the 47 LAA. The 47 LAA and the 74 LAA were then moved from the sector to disbanding locations.

9. On 9 November 1944, the British 71 HAA Regiment was placed under the operational control of Task Force 45 to provide artillery support. This unit relieved the 80 HAA Regiment which was also being disbanded. The 71 HAA had 24 antiaircraft rifles of 3.7 caliber. Eight were sited in the BAGNI DI LUCCA area, 12 in the SAN MARCELLO area and four subsequently in the FORETTA TERME area. The British also made available U Troop of the 56 LAA to man the two 75mm howitzers which were sited in the SPIGNANA area (4303).

10. During this initial period, patrols made no enemy contacts but Task Force troops took 9 Boche deserters and apprehended several enemy agents. The agents were usually spotted by their good clothes and shoes, their possession of large sums of money and their non-local dialect. Carabinieri, furnished by IV Corps aided greatly in this work.

11. Reconstruction of Boche-blown roads and bridges was also given high priority. Some 300 to 400 local Italians were recruited by the Task Force Engineer who put them to work filling in and building back up the great blowouts which the meticulous Hun had created at critical points on the mountainside roads. The Corps Engineer loaned a bull-dozer which aided greatly in the work but much of the rebuilding required the most careful masonry work, involving fitting rock slab to rock slab for a height of 20 to 30 feet so that the level of the canyon road could be reestablished. Excellent timbered bridges with carefully laid stone buttresses were also built in surprisingly short times by the local workmen. On Route 6629 where a river crossing near PRACCHIA (5201) was urgently needed to permit movement of armor, the Task Force Engineer established a crossing by using the railroad route and the railroad bridge. This bypass required tearing up two miles of track and ran through two long tunnels but it provided an excellent, all weather road for the heaviest traffic. The Italians were skillful and conscientious workers. They received one meal a day and between 60 and 80 lire a day. They collected early each morning at designated points in towns in which they lived and were taken to their work by AA truck drivers. These drivers also hauled local rock and timbering needed for construction. Between 10 and 15 of them were kept continually busy on this assignment.

12. Closer contact with the Partisans on the right flank was also established at this time. General Rutledge, himself, travelled to LIZZANO BELVEDERE (5112) to interview General Armando, leader of some 400 to 500 Partisans who were active in this area. It was the

plan of General Crittenberger, the Corps Commander, to poise a threat to the Boche position in the M. BELVEDERE sector and these Partisans were to prove useful.

13. The development of the Right sector became a possibility on 11 November 1944, when the 2 Armored Group and the 435 AAA Bn were released from Task Force 92 to Task Force 45. This veteran armored group was assigned the mission of developing the Right sector with the 435 AAA Bn and a contingent of Partisans which varied between 200 and 400. VIDICIATICO (5013), LIZZANO (5112), CASTELLUCCIO (5411) and PIANACCIO (5010) were garrisoned. Many strongpoints were established, some manned by Americans, some by Americans and Partisans, some by Partisans alone. The fires of all were coordinated. The Task Force Engineer, this time with the help of the local IV Corps AMG officer, again recruited Italians to repair the roads and bridges. Roads passable only to jeeps became passable to tanks, and trails passable to only mules, became passable to jeeps.

14. Meantime, the Center sector became active. This sector was strongpointed at ONTONI (3806), SESTAIONE (3906), CUTIGLIANO (4006), VIZZANETTA (4105) and SPIGNANA (4303), with reserves at LA LIMA (4102). On 13 November 1944, the British troops at ONTONI, engaged 20 to 30 of the Hun operating in the vicinity of FRANZIA (3707), while troops at CUTIGLIANO (4006) clashed with a Boche patrol of 15 men wearing white caps. This seemed to confirm earlier reports that elements of the German 232 Infantry Division, which had been holding the sector, had been replaced by higher quality mountain troops of 4 Battalion, Meer Alpine Regiment. Sporadic enemy light artillery fire also began being received in the vicinity of CUTIGLIANO. On 16 November 1944, the mortar platoon of the 434 AAA Bn moved up to support the British at CUTIGLIANO AND SESTAIONE.

15. The Boche mountain troops struck ONTONI in the early morning of 17 November 1944. About 40 to 60 of the enemy opened up on the town with machine guns and rifle grenades at about 0400A. At the same time the British outpost at FRANZIA (3707) was heavily engaged and cut off from the main body at ONTONI. The men at this outpost continued resistance until all ammunition was gone when the Boche closed in, taking eight prisoners and leaving three British wounded and one dead. The Hun withdrew about 0600A with reported casualties of their own of 3 killed and 8 wounded. The same day the British apprehended ten suspected enemy agents in this vicinity. November 18 the troop at ONTONI was reinforced with British G Troop, 240 Battery, 39 LAA.

16. The Task Force line on the Left was improved 17 November 1944 when the British H Troop of the 240 Battery strongpointed OSTA (3299) and placed outposts on the high ground forward and to either flank of the town.

17. During this period, the Right sector had remained quiet with our troops organizing their positions and actively patrolling, particularly in the M. BELVEDERE region (5217). Moderate enemy artillery fire of medium caliber had been intermittently received.

#### V. THE ATTACK ON M. BELVEDERE.

1. On 18 November 1944, IV Corps issued Operations Instructions No. 68 which attached the following additional troops to Task Force 45:

2 Bn, 370 Infantry (colored)  
3 Bn, 6 Infantry (BEF)  
Rcn Troop, 1 Infantry Division (BEF)  
Hq & Hq Co, 751 Tank Bn (-assault guns)  
    B Co, 751 Tank Bn  
    D Co, 751 Tank Bn (-2 Platoons)  
4 Wire Crews, 62 Signal Bn

and placed in direct support of Task Force 45:

2 Cos, 1108 Engineer (C) Group  
68 Armored Field Artillery Bn.

The boundary between Task Force 45 and the BEF was also changed to a line from

"a point on existing boundary at 560040 to 594086; then along W side of Highway 64 to 626188; then NW to 600210 to 580229 to 550244;"

and Task Force 45 was assigned the following mission:-

(a) Deny M. BELVEDERE (523176) Ridge to the enemy, capture and hold M. CASTELLO (567192) - M. DELLA TORRACIA (559203) - M. TERMINALE area.

(b) Be prepared to release to parent unit all Brazilian troops on 48-hour notice on capture of objectives.

2. The newly attached units were further attached to 2 Armored Group, together with the following units which IV Corps attached on 19 and 21 of November 1944:

Ren Co (-1 Platoon), 894 Tank Destroyer Bn  
1 Platoon, D Co, 13 Tank Bn  
Co A (-1 Platoon), 894 Tank Destroyer Bn.

The 2 Armored Group was to make the principal effort directed by Corps.

3. Patrolling was now intensified and frequent contacts and fire fights resulted. One 20-man American and Partisan patrol of the 435 AAA Bn clashed with a strong party of the Hun at QUERCIOLA (5116) on 21 November 1944. When our patrol withdrew nine enemy dead and a large number of wounded had been observed. Our patrol suffered two killed and one wounded. Hun shelling increased. Engineer work on the SILLA-LIZZANO (5814-5113) road was pushed so that supporting armor could be brought up.

4. Necessary regrouping and preparation in the 2 Armored Group sector was completed on 23 November 1944.

(a) 435 AAA Bn was on the left, based at VIDICIATICO and LIZZANO and supported by

200 Partisans

1 Platoon of medium tanks

1 Platoon of light tanks

1 Platoon of Tank Destroyers

Ren Co (-1 Platoon), 894 Tank Destroyer Bn.

Its mission was to take QUERCIOLA (5116), CORONA (5117) and M. BELVEDERE (5217).

(b) 2 Bn, 370 Infantry was in the center, with OP at GAGGIO MONTANA (5516), and supported by

1 Platoon of medium tanks

1 Platoon of light tanks

Detachment of Mules.

Its mission was to take the high ground in the vicinity of M. DELLA TORRACIA (5520) and M. TERMINALE (5621).

(c) 3 Bn, 6 Infantry Division (BEF) was on the right, with a base at BOMBIANA (5818) and supported by

1 Platoon of medium tanks

1 Platoon of tank destroyers

Engineer mine-clearing detachment

Its mission was to take the high ground in the vicinity of M. CASTELLO (5619).

(d) Reg Co, 1 Infantry Division (BEF) was in group reserve vicinity of FORETTA TERME (5811).

(e) 1 Bn, 1 Infantry Division (BEF) was in Corps reserve in the vicinity of 575083.

5. At 0600A on 24 November 1944, the three battalions jumped off for their objectives. The weather was cloudy and misty which prevented anticipated air support and limited artillery observation. By evening, the left flank had been pushed forward considerably, progress had been made in the center and stiff resistance was being met on the right:

(a) 435 AAA Bn took QUERCIOLA (5116) by early afternoon and CORONA (5117) by dark. Stiff resistance had been met and casualties had been incurred from Hun machine guns, mortars and small arms. The Partisans had fought splendidly. Fourteen prisoners were taken. Progress on the M. BELVEDERE slopes had also been made. The battalion line ran roughly from 499159 to 509167 to 517178 to 527171 to 534166.

(b) 2 Bn, 370 Infantry reached a line from 542178 to 550170 to 570185 and began to dig in. Mortar and small arms fire was beginning to be received, particularly in the vicinity of 573183.

(c) 3 Bn, 6 Infantry Division (BEF) received heavy machine gun and mortar fire. The command tank of its supporting armor was disabled by mines. By noon, the Brazilians had been forced to drop back to their line of departure for reorganization.

(d) Over 2000 rounds of friendly artillery was fired during this first 24-hour period of the attack.

6. At midnight the Boche launched a counter-attack against CORONA (5117). The attack was in company strength and the Hun screamed as he charged. Later reports indicated that these Boche, members of the 1 Bn, 1043 Infantry of the 232 Infantry Division were incited to their enthusiasm by the well-known Captain Straube whose ambitions for promotion stimulated him to urge on his men from behind with a pistol and a hand grenade. The attack was broken up by concentrated fire from small arms and tanks. Fourteen Supermen were taken prisoners, six were killed and ten wounded.



7. Next day, 25 November 1944,

(a) 435 AAA Bn reached the crest of M. BELVIDERE against enemy small arms, machine gun and artillery fire. They dug in and began organizing their positions.

(b) 2 Bn, 370 Infantry advanced against light oppositions to a line from 544182 to 540182 to 542185. Toward evening, however, the Hun began intensifying his small-arms and mortar fire.

(c) 3 Bn, 6 Infantry Division (MEF) again met intense enemy small-arms, machine gun and mortar fire. By afternoon they had advanced to a line about LA CA (577183) which ran roughly from 572178 to 574188 to 585185, with the 3 Platoon of A Co, 894 TD Bn on the right at 593193. By evening increased Boche mortar fire and added casualties required a further short withdrawal to the ridge line south of GUANELLA (5718).

(d) During this 24-hour period, friendly artillery had again fired in excess of 2000 rounds despite the limited observation occasioned by the bad weather.

8. There was no change on the 2 Armored Group right and left flank on 26 November 1944, but the Boche on this day subjected the center of the line to intense mortar and artillery fire. The 2 Bn, 370 Infantry was forced to fall back to a line which ran roughly from 538176 to 542176 to 546178. To bulwark this sector, the Recon Troop, 1 Infantry Division (MEF) was replaced as Group reserve by 1 Bn, 1 Infantry Division (MEF) which moved to CAGGIO MONTANI (5516).

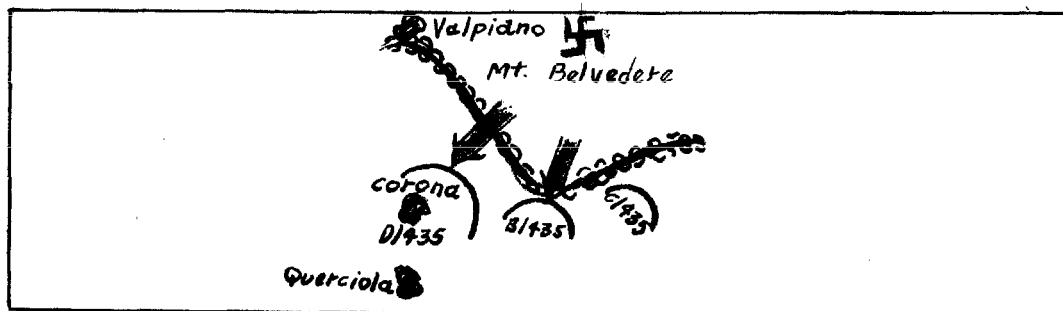
9. In the evening of 26 November 1944, IV Corps, by Operations Instructions No. 70, changed the MEF-45 Task Force boundary to a line

"from a point on present boundary at  
632180 along stream to 602192 to Hill  
756 (593200) to Hill 788 (579208) to  
Hill 997 (570213),"

and relieved 3 Bn, 6 Infantry (MEF) and 1 Bn, 1 Infantry (MEF), plus platoon of medium tanks and the platoon of tank destroyers in support of these units, from attachment to Task Force 45. The sector of 2 Armored Group now covered only the subsection of 435 AAA Bn and 2 Bn, 370 Infantry.

10. The enemy now, on the afternoon of 26 November 1944, concentrated 500 rounds of mortar on the town of CORONA (5117) in the 435 AAA Bn sector. Partisans also reported some enemy massing in ROCCA CORNETA (4917) on 27 November and a friendly artillery TOT was placed on the town which terminated the activity. IV Corps on this date provided Task Force 45 with an additional platoon of medium tanks and a platoon of light tanks. C Battery of the 434 AAA Bn was also directed to proceed as reserve to the 435 AAA Bn sector on 29 November 1944.

11. On the night of 28 November 1944, the enemy launched a battalion-strength counter-attack in the 435 AAA Bn sector. At the time the troops of the 435 AAA Bn were roughly disposed as follows:-



The enemy lightly shelled CORONA and M. BELVEDERE during the day. Then at 1640A a TOT of 200 rounds was placed on CORONA. This collapsed a forward strongpoint and wiped out some 30 of our men. The enemy then attacked in two-company strength over the VALPIANO ridge into the town of CORONA. At the same time two companies launched an attack on the M. BELVEDERE positions of B Battery. B Battery fought until lack of ammunition forced a withdrawal to QUERCIOLO at 1700A. C Battery continued to engage the enemy until 290130A when danger of an enemy outflanking infiltration required a withdrawal to QUERCIOLO. D Battery continued to engage the enemy until 2300A when heavy casualties (70 killed and missing) and the destruction of three of their supporting tanks required their withdrawal. D Battery withdrew to VIDICIATICO and C Battery, 434 AAA Bn was moved to the QUERCIOLO frontline. The enemy employed three Mark IV Tanks and one self-propelled gun in the CORONA attack and showed remarkable skill in infiltrating infantrymen with faust-patrones (bazookas) within close range of our tanks where damage could be inflicted. During this action there was no change in the positions of 2 Bn of the 370 Infantry.

12. It should be noted that during the entire BELVEDERE operations, the Partisans fought side by side with our troops and exhibited equal courage and determination in carrying out their mission. The operation ended with a strong, mutual respect and admiration existing between these Italian volunteers and our own American troops.

13. During the BELVEDERE operations, the central and left sectors of Task Force 45 had not been without activity. On 20 November 1944, enemy activity was noted on the CAPPEL d' ORLANDO feature (3807) NW of SESTAIONE and an enemy party was there engaged and driven off. On 21 November 1944, the enemy returned to ORLANDO to snipe at our SESTAIONE positions. Our mortars silenced them. On 24 November 1944, a 12-man enemy patrol operating in the area of ONTONI (3906) was engaged with small arms and mortar fire and forced to withdraw. Again on 28, 29 and 30 our troops clashed with enemy patrols at FIAN DI NOVELLO (3508) and 365077 and 375076. The enemy were forced to withdraw on all three occasions. On 30 November 1944, the enemy sent a small patrol to CUTIGLIANO (4006) in the early morning but it was discovered and withdrew with one casualty. British patrols to MONTEFEGATESI (2702) north of BAGNI DI LUCCA, continued to receive reports of enemy patrols in the area and on 29 November 1944, they engaged an enemy patrol within the town and inflicted several casualties.

14. The British AA supporting artillery continued to fire an average of 500 rounds in the left and center sectors and the enemy replied sporadically. Seventy rounds of enemy light artillery were received in the vicinity of CUTIGLIANO during the noon hour on 23 November 1944 but no damage was inflicted. On 30 November 1944, B Troop of the 209 Battery of the 73 HAA with its four 3.7 AA rifles, was moved to the right sector to supplement the fire of the 68 Armored Field Artillery Battalion. While the British 3.7 gun did not fire as large a projectile as the 105mm howitzer of the 68 Armored Field Artillery Bn, it had greater range and airbursts could be employed.

#### VI. CONTINUED OPERATIONS IN THE APENNINE SEGMENT.

1. On 1 December 1944, Colonel Gerald G. Gibbs, who had been Task force executive, succeeded to the command of the Task Force, Brigadier General Paul W. Rutledge having proceeded on that date to the United States to assume a new command.

2. The right sector now continued quiet for several days. Patrols were active and made enemy contacts on 3, 4, 5 and 7 December 1944 but no friendly casualties were received; one enemy sentry was killed. Enemy artillery was sporadic and our own artillery was on a reduced scale.

3. Relative quiet also prevailed in the BAGNI DI LUCCA and CUTIGLIANO - SESTIONE sectors. Our patrols increased in the depth of their penetrations into Boche area but few contacts were made. Ten enemy deserters were picked up on 7 December 1944 and others were taken from time to time. It appeared that the mountain troops of 4 Bn of the Meer Alpine Regiment had now been replaced by the lower quality troops of the 232 Fusilier Bn of the 232 Infantry Division. Enemy agents were also apprehended from time to time.

4. The 900 AAA (AW) Bn (Mob) was attached to the Task Force on 6 December 1944. It had had several weeks infantry training in the II Corps sector and was a fresh and rested unit. It relieved the 435 AAA Bn in the VIDICIATICO - LIZZANO area during the night 8-9 December 1944. The 435 AAA Bn then reverted to Fifth Army control and left for a rest area.

5. The 900 AAA Bn readily adapted itself to the infantry role. QUERCIOIA, VIDICIATICO, LIZZANO and PIANACCIO continued to be held in strength. New outposts were established to provide maximum crossfire and an elaborate system of communications, permitting instant call for supporting mortar and artillery fire was established. Maximum use was made of Partisans and confident reconnaissance patrols slipped through enemy minefields and wire entanglements to locate Hun outposts. CASACCIA (5216) was also strongpointed.

6. Active patrolling by 2 Bn, 370 Infantry was also continued during this period. Two patrols on 11 December 1944 engaged the Boche in the vicinity of 543186 and 532175 and killed two of them. The Hun maintained moderate artillery shelling and intense to moderate mortar fire, particularly in the vicinity of GAGGIO MONTANO (5516).

7. German attempts to infiltrate positions about CUTIGLIANO (4006) on 11 December 1944, were discovered by one of the Partisan outposts at 0410A. In the ensuing fire fight the Hun employed grenades and machine pistols and at 0620A fired two flares which were followed by an enemy TOT of 70 rounds on CUTIGLIANO. The Germans then withdrew.

8. The Brazilians on 12 December 1944 made a further attempt to capture M. CASTELLO (5619). The 2 Armored Group was instructed at this time to stage strong diversionary attacks to support this effort and to confuse the Hun. On the left of the 900 AAA Bn sector armor was moved up and tank destroyers at first light began heavily shelling BOCHE-held ROCCA CORNETA (4917) and the road leading to it from the North. At the same time a patrol of 1 officer

and 30 enlisted men and 15 Partisans, supported by a reserve force of one officer and 15 enlisted men, moved forward and deployed about the southern end of the town. Our troops opened fire on the Hun positions with small arms, machine guns and rifle grenades at 0925A. The enemy replied with small arms and machine guns and by 1030A had brought up mortars and began effective registration. Our troops then withdrew under cover of their own mortar and tank destroyer fire. On the right of the 900 AAA Bn front, a patrol of similar strength was sent at the same time to CORONA (5117). This attack was preceded by little artillery preparation and the Hun was caught napping. By 1000A our patrol had penetrated to the northern edge of town, had taken 3 of the enemy prisoner, killed nine and wounded 2. Two German 81mm mortars were also destroyed with grenades. At 1130A the Hun had recovered from his surprise and began a flanking movement supported by artillery, mortars and machine guns. Our troops withdrew under cover of friendly artillery and smoke. In this engagement two Americans and three Partisans were killed and two Americans and one Partisan were wounded.

9. As part of the same diversion, the 2 Bn, 370 Infantry, sent a platoon-strength patrol against Boche positions in the vicinity of 532169. The colored troops engaged the enemy with small arms and machine guns from 0905A until 1915A at which time they withdrew with one killed.

10. The Hun maintained interest in the SESTIONE - CUNIGLIANO sector with moderate artillery, patrolling and sniping from CAPPEL D' ORLANDO (3807). On 16 December 1944, a 70-man Partisan patrol under an American officer and enlisted man proceeded to the vicinity of MELO (3909) where it directed friendly artillery fire by radio on enemy observed in PIANINATICO (3808) and RIVONETTA (3708). On its return on 17 December 1944, this patrol engaged a German party and killed one, wounded two and captured two.

11. The boundary between Task Force 45 and the BEF was changed at 0600A on 17 December 1944 by a IV Corps Message of 15 December 1944 to a line

"From a point on the present boundary at 558126, along road to 528134, to RS (525140); then along trail to 521154 to 513177."

At this time elements of the 900 AAA Bn lying on the BEF side of the new boundary were relieved by the Brazilians and 2 Bn, 370 Infantry was relieved by the BEF. The colored troops now returned to

their parent unit the 92 Infantry Division on the coast. Battery C of the 434 AAA Bn was also relieved of attachment to the 900 AAA Bn and returned to CAMPO TIZZORO as Task Force reserve.

12. During the period the Right sector remained active with patrol clashes and continuing evidence of enemy activity. Sharp-shooting, with tank destroyers firing from a hill mask north of VIDICIATICO, was developed at this time. With a 20-power scope constantly trained on known points of enemy activity, the Hun was forced to keep under cover during daylight hours for a depth of five miles behind his lines.

13. All armor was relieved of direct attachment to Task Force 45 on 20 December 1944 but the 751 Tank Bn (-C Co & 3 Plt, D Co) with 2 Platoon, A Co, 894 Tank Destroyer Bn, attached, was left in direct support of the Task Force and maintained all armor in the right sector. Two armored cars of Ren Co, 894 Tank Destroyer Bn were also attached to 107 AAA Group at this time to maintain the double road patrol from CAMPO TIZZORO (4909) to VENTURINA (5908).

14. The 2 Armored Group was relieved from Task Force 45 at 211500A and moved from the sector to supervise infantry training of the Brazilians. Responsibility for the Right sector was thereupon taken over by the 900 AAA Bn and a La Salle Switch was established at CASTELLUCCIO (5411) to insure communications.

15. Rumors of a Boche Christmas offensive in the SESTAIONE - CUTIGLIANO sector began coming in as the holidays approached and on 22 December 1944, IV Corps reinforced the Task Force with a Provisional Headquarters and Companies A and B of the 755 Tank Bn. These tanks deployed throughout the Center sector and demonstrated by movement and by firing at known enemy positions. Smoke was also used to suggest offensive bridge-building intentions. Patrolling was intensified and deepened along the whole Task Force front. Critical points on Routes 12 and 66 and the key LA LIMA bridge were prepared for demolition and mines, trip flares and wire entanglements were also laid. One 15-man Boche raiding party in the 900 AAA Bn area tripped a flare and was immediately swept with our own machine gun and mortar fire. In the exchange of fire two of our men were wounded but the Hun promptly withdrew.

16. Snow now began to present a problem to patrols but enemy contact was maintained. In the SESTAIONE-CUTIGLIANO area, two particularly-sought enemy agents were apprehended and an American

flyer who had fallen far behind the Boche lines was smuggled through by Partisans.

17. On Christmas morning PARTISANS led by an American officer, moved in the early hours of the morning to positions around Boche-held PIANSINATICO (3908). After directing artillery fire on observed enemy positions, they entered the town and engaged the Hun. In the 30-minute fire fight that followed, they killed two of the enemy, wounded an undetermined number of others and captured three. They then withdrew with two of their own men dead and three wounded.

18. Brigadier General Lee S. Gerow (Assistant Division Commander of the 85 Infantry Division) assumed command of Task Force 45 at 0600A on 27 December 1944. At the same time the 339 RCT of the 85 Infantry Division was attached, having closed on the SAN MARCELLO area (4201) at 270023A.

19. The Hun at this time was attacking down the SERGHIO VALLEY in the 92 Infantry Division sector on the right. At the same time the threat of the rumored Boche holiday offensive in the SESTAIONE-CUTIGLIANO sector had not abated. Nor was the situation on the right flank in the VIDICIATICO-LIZZANO area any less delicate. It was accordingly determined not to commit the 339 RCT but to hold them in reserve so their full weight might be employed on either the left, center or right sector, as the changing situation required.

20. These veteran infantrymen were, accordingly, not put into the line but were put to work developing the excellent defensive positions on the high ground south of GNTONI and SESTAIONE on a line from PIANONE (3705) to FRASSINETTI (3805) to Hill 847 (3906) to CUTIGLIANO (4006) to LA CUCCOLA (4106). Secondary defense lines were also surveyed on the high ground running from north of LA LIMA (4002) to SPIGNANA (4303). On the right sector, positions were likewise prepared on the CASTELLUCIO ridge (5411) which provided an excellent holding line. At the same time, defensive positions at the SILLA BRIDGE (5814) and on high ground east of PORRETTA TERME were thoroughly reconnoitered so that the Task Force might be prepared in the event a strong enemy blow threatened its flank on the right.

21. In the BAGNI DI LUCCA sector defensive positions were surveyed on the high ground east of the town and a secondary position was reconnoitered at the river narrows in the vicinity of COCCIGLIA (3300). Detailed plans for speedily reinforcing any of the three subsectors of Task Force 45, in the event of an imminent enemy attack,

were drawn. Plans were also made, and routes reconnoitered for a counter-attack in the event of a surprise attack by the Hun in any of the three subsectors.

22. The 339 RCT also dispatched an average of ten patrols a day. This not only conditioned the troops and acquainted them with the terrain, but added to the security.

23. Meantime, patrols of the AA units remained active in all sectors. While snow impeded the troops in some sections, skis and snowshoes began to be used with some skill. Minor engagements with the enemy continued. At 0230A on 29 December 1944, a party of the Hun, aided by unidentified inhabitants of ONTONI (3706), surprised a British outpost at 379068 and withdrew with six prisoners. ONTONI was next day evacuated of civilians. On 5 and 6 January 1945, patrols of the 900 AAA Bn engaged enemy positions at 502167 and 507166 and, at the latter position, forced a Boche withdrawal.

24. The 86 Mountain Regiment moved into the Task Force sector on the night of 8-9 January 1945. The 1st Battalion relieved the 900 AAA Bn on the right. The 2d Battalion relieved elements of the 39 LAA and 434 AAA Bn at ONTONI, SESTAIONE, CUTIGLIANO and VIZZANETTA. The 3d Battalion relieved other elements of the 39 LAA and 434 AAA Bn at BAGNI DI LUCCA, LA LIMA, SAN MARCELLO, MARESCA and ORSIGNA. All reliefs occurred without incident. The 39 LAA then moved to PISTOIA for disbandment while the 434 AAA Bn and the 900 AAA Bn moved to MONTECATINI for conversion to infantry, along with the 2 Armored Group, 435 AAA Bn and 532 AAA Bn. The 339 RCT also moved from the sector to rejoin its parent division on 9 January 1945.

25. Brigadier General Robinson E. Duff (Assistant Division Commander of the 10th Mountain Division) took over command of Task Force 45 on 9 January 1945. The G-2 and G-3 of the 10 Mountain Division also took over their respective duties in the Task Force Headquarters. The 5 Mule Pack Company (Italian) was attached 10 January 1945 and entered the sector on 14 January 1945.

26. The mountain troops, although just arrived from the United States, readily accommodated themselves to battle conditions. Patrols were aggressively pushed deep into enemy territory. One midnight patrol to PALAZZO (5017) on 18 January 1945, failed to find the enemy and pushed on to C. FLORIO (5017) where a Boche outpost was discovered. The Americans killed a sentry when he refused to surrender and took under fire some 25 to 30 Germans who ran from nearby dugouts at the sound of the firing. Four casualties were inflicted on the Boche.



When the enemy mortar fire became effective, the mountain troops drew back and called for and directed friendly mortar fire, and then withdrew with two casualties.

27. Patrols to ROCCA CORNETA (4917), PRADA (5116), M. SPIGGLINO (4205), PIANSINATICO (3808) and OSPEDALETTO (2808), sought fire fights and got them. While casualties were incurred, experience was rapidly gained. Two-day reconnaissance patrols on skis and snowshoes were also sent deep into Hun territory and much information was procured.

28. The 85 Mountain Regiment entered the sector and was attached to Task Force 45 on 21 January 1945. The 1st Battalion relieved Co I of the 86 Mountain Regiment in the BAGNI DI LUCCA sector. The 2 Battalion moved into the vicinity of PRUNETTA (4396) to engage in further training and conditioning and the 3d Battalion moved to the vicinity of San Marcello as Task Force reserve.

29. The Boche on the right had been repeatedly stung by the patrol jabbing of the 1 Bn of the 86 Mountain Regiment and on the night 24-25 January 1945 he conducted a raid himself on American positions at JUSCICOLA (5116). The raid was preceded by enemy artillery after which one Hun party of five men and a second party of 12 men attempted to infiltrate the American positions. While these patrols were being engaged a third group of Boche moved in on the right flank of the JUSCICOLA positions and inflicted casualties of one dead, four wounded and one missing. The Hun then withdrew under cover of his own artillery. Blood indicated one enemy casualty.

30. The town of MONTEFOATESI (2702) on the left flank above BAGNI DI LUCCA was strongpointed with a reinforced company on 24 January 1945. This advanced the left flank appreciably and gave our patrols greater range. One patrol from this sector engaged a party of Boche in the vicinity of 291069 on 26 January 1945. After a sharp fire fight, four of the enemy were taken prisoner. Another patrol on the same day shot up German positions west of PIANSINATICO (379085). The Hun replied with machine pistols, mortars and 88mm artillery but no friendly casualties were received. The Hun suffered one known dead.

31. The 3 Bn, 85 Mountain Regiment relieved 2 Bn, 86 Mountain Regiment in the SESTIONE - CUTIGLIANO area on 27 January 1945. The 2 Bn of the 86 then moved to PRUNETTA (4395) for rest and training.

32. Major General George F. Hays (Division Commander, 10 Mountain Division) assumed command of Task Force 45 at 0600A on 28 January 1945. At the same time Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10 Mountain Division, took over the duties of Headquarters Task Force 45 and Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 45 AAA Brigade moved to LIMESTRE (4400) to prepare for disbandment.

33. Major General Willis D. Crittenberger, IV Corps Commander, on 12 February 1945, decorated Colonel Gerald G. Gibbs, 45 AAA Brigade Commander with the Legion of Merit and, after commending the unit, announced the disbandment directed by General Orders No. 15, Headquarters Fifth Army, dated 11 February 1945.

34. Lieutenant General Lucian K. Trussett, Fifth Army Commander, on the same date, issued the following commendation:

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY  
A. P. O. #464, U. S. Army

12 February 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding Officer, 45th Antiaircraft Brigade,  
A. P. O. #464, U. S. Army.

1. Although the headquarters of the 45th Antiaircraft Brigade and some of its remaining unit served under my command for but a brief time before disbandment and diversion to other tasks, I have learned, through records and reports, of the splendid record of accomplishment of that command. I desire here to note its accomplishments and to express my admiration for the outstanding manner in which it handled each of the many difficult and diversified tasks assigned to it during its existence with the Fifth Army.

2. I have heard nothing but praise for the performance of the men and organizations of the 45th Antiaircraft Brigade both in their antiaircraft role and in ground action as a front line element of the Fifth Army. They functioned at all times throughout all of the operations of the Italian campaign in which they participated in a highly commendatory manner making a notable contribution to the traditions of the Coast Artillery Corps as well as to those of the Army as a whole.

3. I regret that conditions have necessitated the inactivation of such a fine command, but I am pleased to have so much of its personnel remain within Fifth Army in other units where I knew they will carry on in the same outstanding manner that has characterized their performances in the past.

4. I compliment you and every member of the 45th Antiaircraft Brigade on your enviable record of achievement. You have earned the respect of all who have known you and may now be rightfully proud of a job well done.

/s/ L. K. TRUSCOTT, JR  
/t/ L. K. TRUSCOTT, JR.  
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army,

AA 1st Ind STE/AB/glb  
HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY, Office of the Antiaircraft Commander,  
(Rear), A.P.O. #464, U. S. Army, 13 February 1945.

TO: Commanding Officer,  
45th AAA Brigade, A.P.O. #464, U. S. Army.

1. Upon the disbandment of the 45th Antiaircraft Artillery Brigade and the 45th Antiaircraft Artillery Operations Detachment, I wish to add my appreciation to the Army Commander's commendation for the admirable and gratifying performance of the difficult and varied assignments which were so successfully carried out by your command. The work of the Brigade in the role of directing anti-aircraft units in infantry missions and acting as a divisional headquarters has been outstanding and is well deserving of great praise.

2. It is with great deal of pleasure that I pass this commendation on. I am well aware of the contributions made to the traditions of the Coast Artillery Corps by the officers and enlisted men of your organization. I wish to take this opportunity to extend my sincere best wishes to every individual of your unit for continued success in his new assignment.

/s/ AARON BRADSHAW, JR  
/t/ AARON BRADSHAW, JR.,  
Brigadier General, U. S. A.,

35. All officers and enlisted men of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery of 45 AAA Brigade with its complementing 45 AAA Operations Detachment were assigned to other units on 13 February 1945 and organizational property was turned in. The name of Task Force 45 continued to be used by 10 Mountain Division for security purposes.

36. During its operation, Task Force 45 had at varying times, 3000 to 8000 men attached from the following units:

American Units

AA Units

45 AAA Brigade, Hq & Hq Btry  
45 AAOD  
91 AAA Group  
107 AAA Group  
Battery C, 351 AAA S/L Bn  
403d AAA (G) Bn  
434 AAA AW Bn  
435 AAA AW Bn  
439 AAA AW Bn  
Battery C, 450 AAA AW Bn  
536 AAA AW Bn  
898 AAA AW Bn  
900 AAA AW Bn

FA Units

194 Field Artillery Group  
424 Field Artillery Group  
Battery C, Field Artillery Bn  
338 Field Artillery Bn  
598 Field Artillery Bn  
Battery C, 697 Field Artillery Bn  
910 Field Artillery Bn

Infantry Units

100 Infantry Bn  
339 Infantry RCT  
370 Infantry RCT  
85 Mountain Infantry Regiment  
86 Mountain Infantry Regiment

American Units cont'd

Tank & AT Units

2 Armored Group, Hq & Hq Co  
1 & 2 Platoon, Co D, 13 Tank Bn  
2 Platoon, Co B, 13 Tank Bn  
751 Tank Bn  
755 Tank Bn  
805 Tank Destroyer Bn  
894 Tank Destroyer Bn  
91 Cav Ren Squadron  
Troop A, 81 Cav Ren Squadron

Miscellaneous Units

84 Chemical Bn  
179 Chemical Co  
34 War Dog Platoon  
62 Signal Bn (4 crews)  
1 Plat, Co C 310 Engineer Bn  
Co C, 310 Medical Bn  
671 Medical Collecting Co  
672 Medical Collecting Co  
673 Medical Collecting Co  
615 Medical Clearing Station

British Units

AA Units

39 LAA Regiment  
47 LAA Regiment  
U Troop, 167/56 LAA Regiment  
71 HAA Regiment  
73 HAA Regiment  
74 HAA Regiment

Brazilian Units

2 Bn, 6 Regiment  
3 Bn, 6 Regiment  
1 Bn, 1 Infantry Division  
Hon Troop, 1 Infantry Division

Italian Units

23 Artier Regiment (Magr)  
5 Mule Pack Co

It covered fronts of from 12 to 25 miles, both mountainous and on the coastal plain and it advanced its initial front twenty miles from the line of the Arno River and Pisa to the Gothic Line of the Hun at the CINQUALE CANAL north of Forte Dei Marmi (9293).

It suffered these casualties:-

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Missing</u>
JULY	12	22	1
AUGUST	23	124	2
SEPTEMBER	23	107	17
OCTOBER	3	16	4
NOVEMBER	17	137	69
DECEMBER	4	23	18
JANUARY	5	23	

The scope of the Task Force's operations were epitomized in the Corps Commander's official commendation of 10 February 1945:-

HEADQUARTERS IV CORPS  
THE COMMANDING GENERAL

10 February 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding Officer, 45th AAA Brigade, APO 464, U. S. Army.

1. Upon the occasion of the inactivation of the 45th AAA Brigade, I consider it a duty as well as a privilege to enter upon the records my official commendations for the distinguished contribution it has made to the Allied war effort in Italy. During the eight months period in which the 45th AAA Brigade has been a part of the IV Corps, it has successfully executed a wide variety of missions over varied terrain and under all conditions of weather.

2. Although not organized, trained and equipped to do so, it has nevertheless functioned in a role similar to that of combat division in battle. The changes and improvising necessary to facilitate the use of an Antiaircraft Artillery Brigade Headquarters in the capacity of a division headquarters were accomplished with efficiency and dispatch while in constant contact with the enemy.

3. During the time the 45th AAA Brigade Headquarters fought as a part of the IV Corps, it operated not only as an Antiaircraft Artillery Brigade Headquarters in a fast moving situation, but also assumed the duties of a Task Force Headquarters which through meritorious performance has established an enviable reputation among the allied troops in Italy.

4. The wide scope of its effectiveness is best indicated by the success of its distinguished commander, Brigadier General Paul W. Rutledge, and able executive Colonel Gibbs, in directing operations involving technical employment as antiaircraft; and command of ground troops engaged in the pursuit of the German Army north along the Tyrrhenian coast, the occupation of a defensive line along the Arno River, the subsequent crossing of that river, the capture of Pisa, Viareggio and other Italian cities, and the more recent winter operations in the Apennine Mountains.

5. The flexibility and commendable performance of this headquarters is also indicated by the fact that the troops available to it constantly changed, and included both British and American antiaircraft units operating initially in their characteristic role and later as infantry; tanks, tank destroyers, infantry, engineers and all types of artillery.

6. The conversion of American and British antiaircraft units from their antiaircraft duties to the role of infantry and artillery in support of ground troops, which conversion was accomplished while in contact with the enemy along the front lines and without any preliminary preparations, can be recorded as a noteworthy example of American ingenuity and improvisation.

7. In every way this organization has lived up to the high traditions and standards of the United States Army. It is therefore with considerable gratification that I look back on this successful and very satisfactory association of the IV Corps with 45 AAA Brigade Headquarters in the campaign of Allied armies in Italy in 1944 - 1945.

8. As they go forward to other duties, all personnel, enlisted and commissioned, who have been on duty with the 49th AAA Brigade Headquarters during its participation in the IV Corps pursuit of the enemy from North of Rome into the Apennines, can have a justifiable pride in the part they have played in the success of the Allied Arms in Italy.

**WILLIS D. CRITTEMBERGER,**  
Major General, U. S. Army,  
Commanding.