

CHAPTER III * * * * *

The First Volturno Crossing

A. *PLANS FOR THE CROSSING*

See Map No. 4

DURING the first week in October Fifth Army reached the Volturno-Calore river line, the next natural obstacle behind which the German Tenth Army could attempt a stand on the Mediterranean side of the Apennine Mountains. General Clark intended to send the British 10 Corps across the river in its zone along the coast as soon as it cleared the south side of the retreating enemy. When 10 Corps was delayed by rains, demolitions, and determined rearguard resistance, the decision was finally made to send both VI and 10 Corps across in a co-ordinated assault on the night of 12-13 October. Meanwhile the 45th Division had crossed the Calore at Benevento on 4 October and was pushing on northwest along the Apennines in contact with the British Eighth Army.

After 10 Corps was delayed in its preparations for the crossing of the Volturno, General Clark first decided to send VI Corps across the river 24 hours ahead of 10 Corps. General Lucas, commander of VI Corps, was accordingly instructed to force a crossing with one division in the vicinity of Triflisco on the night of 9-10 October. The occupation of the ridges running north and northwest of Triflisco would endanger the enemy's main gun area west of the junction of Highways 6 and 7 and would facilitate the advance of 10 Corps, which was ordered to cross during the night of 10-11 October.

General Lucas made a careful estimate of the situation, taking into consideration that he had a three-to-one superiority in men, tanks, and guns, and decided that one division could cross the Volturno successfully, but that two divisions would probably be needed to continue the advance to the northwest. He believed that he could get a second division into position to make the crossing on the night of 9-10 October. Having secured approval of his plan, he issued Field Order No. 7 on 8 October ordering the 34th Division to move from its assembly area at Montesarchio to relieve the 3d Division along

the river from the junction below Amorosi to a point south of Caiazzo. The 34th Division started moving up that night, but was greatly hampered by a lack of roads and by the extremely muddy condition of those that existed. When the division could not get in line and bring up sufficient supplies in time for the attack, some consideration was given to postponing the crossing 24 hours. General Clark then visited both corps areas on 9 October to see what progress was being made in preparations for the crossing. After taking into account the delays over which his forces had no control, he ordered a co-ordinated attack all along the river for the night of 12-13 October.

B. THE CROSSING OF VI CORPS

13-14 OCTOBER

1. *Plans and Terrain.* VI Corps had for all practical purposes reached the Volturno River by 7 October and had one division advancing northwest of Benevento beyond the Calore River. The 3d Division, with the 15th Infantry on the left and the 30th Infantry on the right, had pushed through the hills behind Caserta and held a line stretching some 15 miles along the river from its junction with the Calore south of Amorosi to the Triflisco Gap. Although some enemy posts remained south of the river, the division was securely in possession of the hills dominating the valley. After the enemy had evacuated Benevento, the 45th Division had moved through the town and had driven on along the slopes of the Matese Mountains toward the Volturno Valley.

The final plans for the attack of VI Corps called for two divisions to force a crossing of the Volturno at 0200 on the morning of 13 October. The 3d Division (reinforced) was to cross between Triflisco and a point south of Caiazzo, secure a bridgehead, and assist the advance of 10 Corps. The 34th Division (reinforced), which had relieved the 30th Infantry and part of the 15th Infantry along the upper eight miles of the VI Corps front, was to force crossings in its zone, secure a bridgehead, assist the advance of the 45th Division, and prepare to attack on Corps order toward Teano. The 45th Division (reinforced) was ordered to advance vigorously to the northwest, protect the right flank of Fifth Army, maintain contact with Eighth Army, and prepare on Corps order to attack in the direction of Teano. In order to have a secure bridgehead the three divisions were to advance to a line running generally from Raviscanina across Mount degli Angeli to Rocchetta e Croce.

The terrain that faced VI Corps was a river valley bounded on either side by steep and barren hills. The valley of the Volturno from the Triflisco Gap

northeast to the junction with the Calore varies in width from one to four miles. The hills on the south side of the river start with Mount Tifata (604 meters), extend east with Mount Castellone (405 meters), and gradually flatten out beyond Limatola. Both Mount Tifata and Mount Castellone come down to the bank of the river, but the hills swing away to the southeast to form a wider valley. Immediately across the river from Mount Tifata a high ridge rises abruptly and runs northwest to Mount Grande (367 meters). A pleasant farm valley extends from the Volturno on the northeast side of this ridge toward Pontelatone. The hills start on the east side of this valley with Mount Fallano (319 meters) and Mount Majulo (502 meters) and run east beyond Caiazzo.

The flat valley of the Volturno is broken south of Piana di Caiazzo by Hills 141 and 246, which rise steeply from the level farm land like solitary outposts. The river in this area varies in width from 150 to 200 feet, its depth ranges from 3 to 5 feet, and its banks rise from 5 to 15 feet above the water level. The intensively cultivated valley is cut by small tree-lined streams and sunken roads, and is covered with grain fields, vineyards, and orchards. The brush and the olive groves on the slopes of the hills on either side provide some concealment, but the valley itself offers little protection.

The road net available for the use of VI Corps was wholly inadequate for the speedy movement of large bodies of troops or supplies. The best road in the zone is Highway 87, which runs from Naples through Caserta, crosses the river at Triflisco and again at Amorosi, and then runs northeast to Pontelandolfo. Highway 7 runs from Benevento through Caserta to Capua in the British 10 Corps zone. Another road leaves Highway 7 at Maddaloni and goes northeast through Dugenta to Amorosi. The only other road of any consequence was the muddy one used by the 34th Division during its move to the Volturno. This route branches off Highway 7, runs northwest through Sant'Agata to Limatola, and continues on to Caiazzo. All bridges and culverts had been blown by the retreating Germans, and temporary by-passes constructed by the engineers were in many instances becoming almost impassable.

2. *The Crossing of the 3d Division.* The main effort of VI Corps was to be made by the 3d Division against the section of the river defended by the Mauke Battle Group of the Hermann Goering Panzer Division. General Truscott was well aware that the enemy would be prepared for an attack at the Triflisco Gap. He therefore planned to make a fake attack on the left flank, while he sent the 7th Infantry, commanded by Col. Harry B. Sherman, across the valley to make the main assault in the center. In order to effect this deception he ordered the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, and the heavy weapons companies of the 30th Infantry to concentrate all their available fire

power on the enemy defenses across the gap. The demonstration was to start at midnight, two hours before the jump-off time, and continue throughout the night. If the enemy showed any signs of withdrawing, the 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, was to cross the river. The ridges above Triflisco were to be blanketed with smoke until they were cleared of the enemy. On the right flank the 2d and 3d Battalions, 15th Infantry, were to attack north from Mount Castellone. Their first objectives were the German strongpoints on Hills 141 and 246. When these heights were occupied, they were to capture the high ground behind Piana di Caiazzo and then move west behind the 7th Infantry.

The 3d Division was in position and ready for the assault by the evening of 12 October. The various delays had given the regiments sufficient time for thorough reconnaissance and planning. The demonstration against the Triflisco Gap started promptly at midnight. An hour later the division artillery opened up with a terrific concentration on enemy positions across the river. This bombardment continued until 0155, when smoke shells were mixed with the high explosives to screen the crossing areas. The three battalions of the 7th Infantry had come down the valley between Mount Tifata and Mount Castellone, slogged quietly across the muddy fields, and started crossing at 0200. Some elements crossed in assault boats and on rafts, some used life preservers, and others forded the river with the use of guide ropes.

The 1st Battalion crossed below the hairpin loop southwest of Piana di Caiazzo, while the other two battalions crossed above it. They then pushed on across the plowed fields, hampered by machine-gun and rifle fire from positions in the valley and by occasional mined areas, toward Mount Majulo. Forward elements of the 1st Battalion had almost reached the foot of the mountain by 0800, and the other two battalions were slowly working their way across the valley. Later the 1st Battalion was ordered to hold the flat ground on the left, south of Highway 87. Waterproofed tanks and tank destroyers forded the river during the middle of the day and added their weight to the attack. The 2d and 3d Battalions took Mount Majulo during the afternoon and prepared to seize Mount Fallano on the left. The day's fighting was difficult for the men of the 7th Infantry, but they did an excellent job in battling their way across the river and in gaining the dominating heights on the other side. Their mission was so successful that General Clark called Colonel Sherman the next morning and personally congratulated him on the achievements of his regiment.

The 15th Infantry, temporarily commanded by Brig. Gen. William W. Eagles, assistant division commander, sent two battalions across the river south of Piana di Caiazzo. The 2d Battalion crossed at the west end of Mount

Castellone and broke through fierce enemy resistance to take Hill 141. The 3d Battalion climbed down the steep sides of Mount Castellone, forded the river at the island below, and drove on to take Hill 246. The enemy slowly pulled back, subjecting the two hills in the valley to intense artillery fire. The two battalions then reorganized and fought their way to the slopes above Piana di Caiazzo during the afternoon.

After the 7th and 15th Infantry were across the river and on their objectives, the key ridge above Triflisco remained to be taken. The 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, made two unsuccessful efforts during the afternoon to cross and drive the enemy off the ridge. After dark the 1st Battalion crossed the jeep bridge that had been completed below the hairpin loop, advanced down the valley, and cleared the slopes above the gap. The 2d Battalion, followed by the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, came across the next morning. The 30th Infantry, under the command of Col. Arthur H. Rogers, then began to drive along the ridges toward Pontelatone and Formicola.

In a little more than 24 hours of fighting General Truscott's hard-driving infantrymen had won control of the Volturno Valley from the Triflisco Gap to Hill 246 south of Piana di Caiazzo. By the morning of 14 October every battalion of the 3d Division was across the river. There remained the problem of getting supplies and artillery over to support the advance. The engineers managed to get a light bridge in below the hairpin loop and an 8-ton bridge across at the foot of Mount Castellone during the first day of the assault. Company B, 16th Armored Engineer Battalion, then built a 30-ton bridge just above the destroyed bridges at Triflisco. The victory won by the infantry was matched by the superb work of the engineers in constructing three bridges under observed artillery fire.

3. *The Crossing of the 34th Division.* The plan for the crossing of the 34th Division divided a front of approximately eight miles between the 168th Infantry, which was to make the main effort toward Caiazzo, and the 135th Infantry, which was to attack on the right. Col. Frederick B. Butler, commander of the 168th Infantry, ordered his 1st and 2d Battalions to cross the river northwest of Limatola to capture the village of San Giovanni and then drive northwest through Caiazzo. Col. Robert W. Ward, commander of the 135th Infantry, directed his 1st Battalion and Company E to lead the assault below the Volturno-Calore junction. Company E was ordered to ford the river south of Squille and take Hill 131, while the 1st Battalion crossed the Volturno just below its junction with the Calore and advanced northwest over the rolling hills beyond Squille. The remainder of the 2d Battalion was then to cross over and drive on Hill 283 southeast of San Giovanni.

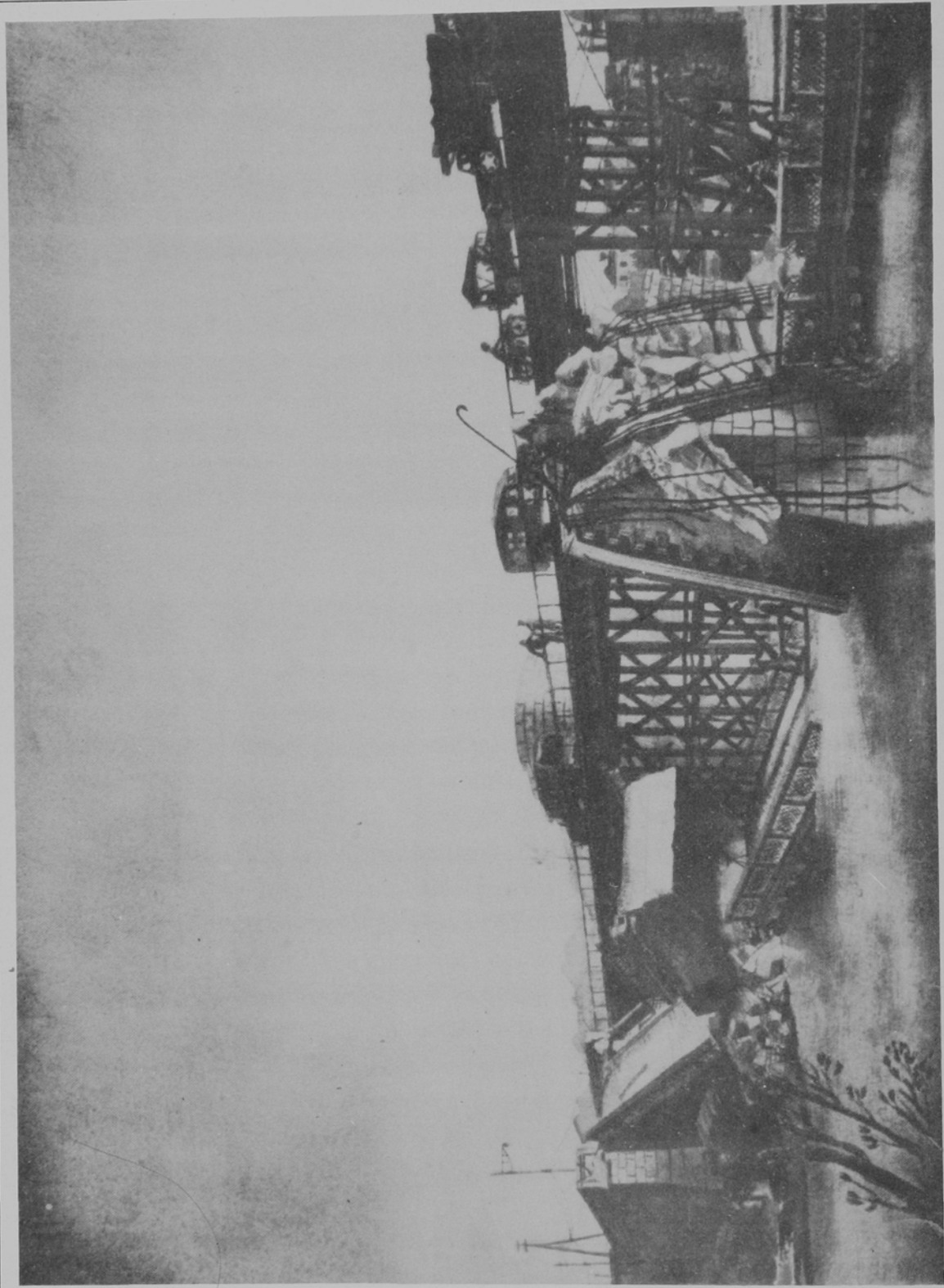
The various delays in starting the attack had given General Ryder's regiments sufficient time to make thorough reconnaissance, and points of attack had been chosen carefully.

While the 3d Division was forcing its crossings on the left, the 34th Division was making its assault on the right. The 96 guns and howitzers representing the division and supporting artillery opened up at 0145. Fifteen minutes later the men of the 135th and 168th Infantry slipped down the muddy banks of the Volturno and waded through the icy water to press their attack. Reconnaissance had revealed that the strongest resistance might be expected in the flat valley below Caiazzo, but the men of the 34th Division knew that the enemy was waiting for them all along the river and that the battle ahead was not going to be an easy one.

The 168th Infantry sent one company of the 1st Battalion across north of Limatola, while the remainder of the battalion crossed 800 yards down the river. The 2d Battalion crossed in columns of companies east of Limatola. Company L went over on the extreme left to protect the flank of the 1st Battalion. The leading elements of the 1st Battalion got across without difficulty, but the swift current of the river began to carry their assault boats downstream and the enemy discovered their position. Enemy machine guns in the flat fields and in the olive groves on the slopes and artillery behind Caiazzo opened up on them. The battalion was pinned down during the morning between the river and the road to Caiazzo and made little progress, but managed with the aid of the artillery to drive on up the slopes during the afternoon. The 2d Battalion crossed without resistance and then fought its way into the hills southeast of San Giovanni. The 3d Battalion came across that night and aided the 1st Battalion in taking Caiazzo the next morning.

The 135th Infantry sent Company E across the river below Squille at 0200, and it had little difficulty in occupying Hill 131 southwest of the village. The 1st Battalion forded the river just below the junction with the Calore and made good progress during the early morning. The enemy appeared to be withdrawing without attempting to make a determined stand. Later in the morning the advance of the battalion was slowed down by tank fire from Amorosi. The remainder of the 2d Battalion came across during the day and had to fight its way through a pocket of Germans by-passed during the morning advance. The 1st Battalion occupied Hill 283 the next morning and drove on toward the hamlet of Ruviano.

The drive of the 34th Division was considerably slowed by its inability to get supplies and artillery over the river. The 135th Infantry put a small ferry into operation early on the morning of 13 October, but the engineers experienced



The Volturno River Bridge at Capua..... painted by Sergeant Frank D. Duncan, Jr.

great difficulty in building their bridges. The enemy was in direct observation of all bridge sites and placed accurate artillery concentrations on the engineers whenever they approached the river. They finally managed to get a small bridge in near Squille on the morning of 14 October, but were unable to construct the 30-ton bridge below Caiazzo until 15 October.

4. *The Advance of the 45th Division.* While the 3d and 34th Divisions were forcing a crossing of the Volturno, the 45th Division was launching an attack on the right flank up the rugged slopes of Mount Acero. General Middleton had been assigned the task of breaking through the enemy defenses extending from the Matese Mountains above Faicchio to the Calore River south of Telese. This line was the enemy's last natural defensive position blocking the approach to the Volturno Valley. A good start had been made on 12 October when the 180th Infantry, commanded by Col. Forrest E. Cookson, took the high ground northeast of Telese and advanced on to San Salvatore. This success opened the way for an attack around the west side of Mount Acero and forced the enemy to give up the whole western flank of his line. General Clark was considerably concerned about the right flank of his Army during 13 October and kept in close touch with the progress of the 45th Division. By the end of the day there were indications that the enemy would only fight a delaying action while withdrawing across Titerno Creek. The 45th Division drove on toward Faicchio and the Volturno Valley.

C. THE CROSSING OF 10 CORPS

12-14 OCTOBER

1. *Plans and Terrain.* 10 Corps reached the Volturno on 6 October, but delays from swampy terrain, demolitions, and enemy rearguard resistance prevented it from making an immediate assault on the river line. General McCreery planned at first to exert his main effort on the right in order to make maximum use of the approaches and exits through Capua and to gain a position suitable for helping the 3d Division during the early stage of its attack. Reconnaissance soon indicated that the Capua area would be the most difficult in which to force a crossing, while reports from the 46 Division along the coast were more optimistic. The decision was then made to attack on as wide a front as possible, with the main weight on the left. A rapid assault appeared not to be feasible, and plans and preparations were made accordingly, as information about the river and surrounding terrain was built up over a period of several days.

The final plan of 10 Corps for the assault across the Volturno called for the 56 Division to cross one battalion immediately west of Capua, while the 201 Guards Brigade made a demonstration from the hills east of Capua. The 7 Armoured Division was to make a holding attack in the Cancellò ed Arnone and Grazzanise areas and to harass by artillery fire movements of enemy reinforcements along the roads north of the river. The 46 Division was to cross on a two-brigade front between Cancellò ed Arnone and the coast. The 40 Royal Tanks was to be moved by sea in LCT's to land north of the mouth of the Volturno. The attacks of the 46 and 56 Divisions were to be preceded by intense artillery concentrations.

The terrain along the lower Volturno was most difficult for an assault against a determined enemy. The distance from Mount Tifata above Capua to Castel Volturno on the coast is approximately 17 miles. The land is flat on both sides of the river, and toward the sea it has been reclaimed from marshes. Numerous canals provide drainage for the areas on both sides of the river. The most important of these is the Regia Agnena Nuova Canal, which parallels the north side of the river from Capua to the sea. There are few trees on the south side to provide concealment, but a thick belt of olive groves, vineyards, and scattered timber runs along the north bank of the river. The enemy had good observation from Mount Massico and the ridges running north and south, while 10 Corps was denied observation except from the slopes of the hills above Capua. The two-storey modern farmhouses dotting the plain provided some view of the enemy lines, but their use was limited.

The Volturno meanders between high banks from Capua to Castel Volturno. The width of the river varies from 150 to 300 feet, while the banks rise from 12 to 20 feet above the water. Levees 10 to 15 feet high, which had been built on both sides to prevent the flooding of the plain during the rainy season, provided defilade positions for the enemy. This factor gave the enemy a considerable advantage, for it made the use of the fire of supporting weapons difficult. Tanks and antitank guns could not get a good field of fire from the south bank. The depth of the water averaged about six feet, and no fords were found that could be used by equipped infantrymen or tanks.

Poor roads and ground soft from recent rains made approaches to the river difficult except on main roads. The 56 Division was limited to one road, the Naples-Rome highway (Highway 7B and 7), which crosses the river at Capua. The 46 Division had the use of two roads leading into Castel Volturno and Cancellò ed Arnone. The 7 Armoured Division had only the road which crosses the Volturno at Grazzanise. A hard-surfaced road parallels the river on the south side from Castel Volturno to Capua, but it could not be used until the

enemy was driven away from the north banks. All bridges and culverts had been destroyed with care and thoroughness, and the enemy had his guns in position to harass any movements along the highways.

10 Corps faced the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division and the Corwin Battle Group of the Hermann Goering Panzer Division across the Volturno. The 15th Panzer Division was responsible for the line from the sea to Grazzanise and had all three battalions of the 129th Panzer Grenadier Regiment deployed along the river. The Corwin Battle Group defended the area between Grazzanise and Capua. The 115th Panzer Battalion had between 30 and 40 tanks and self-propelled guns around Mondragone and Carinola. The main gun area of the enemy was centered behind the junction of Highways 6 and 7 beyond Capua. The strength of the enemy was disposed to cover the three chief axes of advance through Capua, Grazzanise, and Cancellone ed Arnone. In addition to his artillery he had numerous machine-gun nests situated to cover the approaching roads. The belt of trees, the canals and dykes, and occasional concrete pillboxes on the north side of the river aided the enemy's defenses.

2. *The Assault of the 56 Division.* The 56 Division planned for the 167 Brigade to make a crossing just south of the demolished railway bridge at Capua, while the 201 Guards Brigade made a demonstration on the right to lead the enemy to believe that a main effort was being directed at the Triflisco area. The site chosen for the crossing was the most obvious one and was well covered by enemy small-arms posts, pillboxes, mortars, and artillery. Reconnaissance, however, had indicated that no other suitable place for assault boats existed within the division boundaries. The depth of the river and the strength of the enemy positions made it impracticable to attempt to put an adequate force across at any other point by swimming or wading, with the mission of attacking the main crossing site from the rear.

The 56 Division began its assault west of Capua before midnight on 12-13 October. The 201 Guards Brigade started its deception near Triflisco, and the 167 Brigade sent the 7 Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry across below the railway bridge. Surprise was not achieved, and the leading elements immediately met heavy opposition. Ten assault boats loaded with men were sunk before they reached the far bank, and the attack was then discontinued. The intense artillery preparation preceding the attempt to cross had failed to knock out the enemy along the river, although the forward troops had previously been withdrawn 400 yards in order to give the artillery a free hand. The demonstration by the 201 Guards Brigade resulted in one company securing a footing across the river, but the enemy strongpoints on the ridges above Triflisco made its position untenable. The company was withdrawn before daylight.

The 56 Division decided on the morning of 14 October that no crossing was feasible in its zone. All attacks in the VI Corps zone had been successful, and the 3d Division had completed three bridges over the Volturno. One of these was a 30-ton bridge just above the demolished highway and railway bridges at Triflisco. General Clark therefore decided to alter the corps boundary so as to include in the 10 Corps area the line of hills running north and northwest from Triflisco. This boundary change deprived the 3d Division of its proposed means of communication around the ridges above Triflisco, but it gave the 56 Division approaches to the 30-ton bridge in the Triflisco Gap. After General Clark issued verbal orders at 1530, 14 October, changing the boundaries, the 56 Division arranged for the use of the bridge.

3. *The Crossing of the 7 Armoured Division.* The 7 Armoured Division in the center was ordered to make a feint attack at Grazzanise to hold enemy troops and reserves in that area. In conjunction with the feint attack it was to infiltrate on one or both sides of Grazzanise with the mission of capturing the village of Brezza across the river and protecting the right flank of the 46 Division. The large loop between Brezza and Grazzanise was chosen for one crossing, because its shape made possible the placing of tanks, mortars, and other weapons on both sides of the enemy positions across the river. The approaches on both banks of the river were good, for the Italians had operated a ferry at one point and the Germans had built and later demolished a wooden bridge at the ferry site. The wet and soft ground made it impracticable to attempt a crossing at any place that could not be approached by existing roads. The Queen's Brigade (131 Brigade) was given the task of carrying out the plan of deception and of throwing the infiltrating elements across the river on the flanks of Grazzanise.

The 131 Brigade sent small parties of the 1/5 and 1/7 Queens across the loops at Grazzanise and below Santa Maria la Fossa before midnight on 12-13 October. The elements of the 1/5 Queens, which crossed near Santa Maria la Fossa, were withdrawn, but the small bridgehead in the loop north of Grazzanise was enlarged during 14 October. 10 Corps then decided to construct a Class 9 bridge at Grazzanise, and work on it was begun that night. This bridging operation was interrupted frequently by enemy shelling, but was completed successfully. Meanwhile the 7 Armoured Division gradually extended its bridgehead up the loop toward Brezza.

4. *The Crossing of the 46 Division.* The 46 Division was given the task of making the main effort of 10 Corps on the left flank along the sea. Its objective was a bridgehead 3000 yards deep from a point east of Canello ed Arnone to the coast. Reconnaissance indicated that the steep and wooded

banks of the river would provide good concealment for the infantry, but would restrict the fields of fire of machine guns, tanks, and antitank guns. No suitable ford could be discovered nor could satisfactory exits for vehicles be found on the north bank opposite any possible approaches from the south. The assistance of the navy made it desirable to force one crossing near the sea to take full advantage of the naval gunfire. The use of LCT's and Dukws to ferry tanks, guns, and supplies around the mouth of the river also made an initial bridgehead near the sea necessary. Since the enemy was covering the main roads and was accustomed to the British habit of advancing under heavy concentrations of artillery, the division commander decided to attempt to achieve surprise by playing on these points. The decision was made to cross on the flanks of Castel Volturno and Canello ed Arnone, while placing an intense artillery preparation on the latter town.

The crossings of the 46 Division were, with one exception, all successful. On the 139 Brigade front the 16 Durham Light Infantry and the 2/5 Leicesters got across northeast of Castel Volturno and repulsed an immediate counterattack. The two battalions then dug in along a secondary canal. On the extreme right the 5 Foresters reached a precarious and exposed position northeast of Canello ed Arnone. Two counterattacks were beaten off during the day, but the enemy attacked again at last light and overran the battalion's positions. Most of the men were later able to get back across the river. The 128 Brigade was most successful and had the 1/4, 2, and 5 Hampshires over by daylight. They dug in along the road running northwest of Castel Volturno or west of it toward the sea and slowly pushed their positions forward a few hundred yards during the day. On their left one squadron (17 tanks) of the 40 Royal Tanks was ferried around the mouth of the Volturno and landed successfully. The ground, however, was too boggy in most places along the sea for the movement of tanks. The higher dry ground had been mined and had to be cleared before the tanks could proceed. Several were lost and the remainder immobilized until the slow process of removing the mines was completed. This task took longer than usual, for the mines were non-metallic.

During 14 October the leading troops of the 128 Brigade and left elements of the 139 Brigade were able to gain on an average of about 600 yards. No other advances were made during the day on the 10 Corps front, but by nightfall the 46 Division had six battalions across the river. All three battalions of the 128 Brigade, the 16 Durham Light Infantry and the 2/5 Leicesters of the 139 Brigade, and the 6 York and Lancasters of the 138 Brigade were on the north bank and ready to push forward over the coastal plain. Thirty-six 6-pounders and a troop of 17-pounders had been brought over, while other 17-pounders were doing a

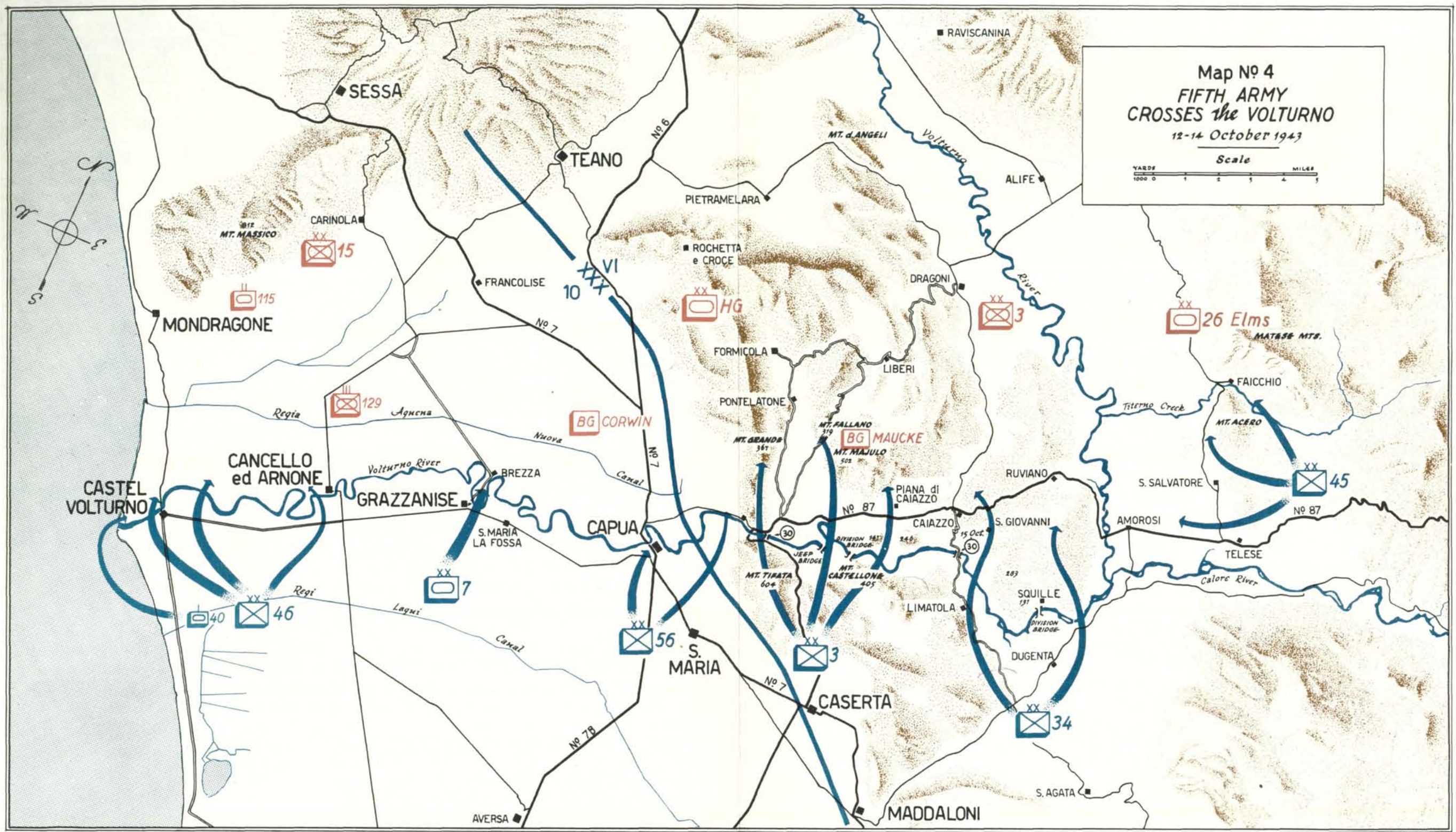
good job in helping repel counterattacks, especially those directed at the 139 Brigade. Another squadron of tanks in LCT's was ready to land when needed. Two ferries were operating in the 46 Division zone without being molested by enemy artillery, and the division commander decided that there was no immediate necessity for building a bridge across the Volturno in his zone. The enemy began to show signs of withdrawing before the 46 Division, and by the evening of 15 October forward elements of the 128 Brigade reached the banks of the Regia Agnena Nuova Canal.

D. *SUMMARY OF THE FIRST VOLTURNO CROSSING*

Fifth Army was extremely successful in its first crossing of the Volturno on 12-13 October. The 34th Division had two regiments across, and the 3d Division had every battalion north of the river by the morning of 14 October. The 45th Division was pushing its drive on the right flank toward the Volturno Valley. The main assault of the 46 Division had succeeded on the 10 Corps front, and it had six battalions dug in between the river and the Regia Agnena Nuova Canal. The 7 Armoured Division was slowly extending its bridgehead toward Brezza, while the 56 Division was preparing to cross on the 3d Division bridge above Triflisco. The efforts of both corps had been somewhat costly. VI Corps lost 544 men during 13 October. The 3d Division suffered 314 of these casualties, while the 34th Division had 130 men killed, wounded, and missing. General Clark's forces had within 37 days completed two of the most difficult of military operations— a landing on defended hostile shores and an assault against a defended river line— and were ready to continue their drive toward Rome.

Map No 4
**FIFTH ARMY
 CROSSES the VOLTURNO**
 12-14 October 1943

Scale
 YARDS 1000 0 1 2 3 4 5
 MILES



CHAPTER IV * * * * *

Consolidating the Bridgehead

VI CORPS had successfully fought its way across the Volturno, and the enemy had started his withdrawal by the evening of 13 October. The following morning found the 168th Infantry in the olive groves on the hills north and east of Caiazzo. The engineers, hampered by observed artillery fire, had been unable to construct either of the bridges in the 34th Division zone. Water, rations, and ammunition had to be carried across the river by hand or in assault boats and then transported by carrying parties over approximately six miles of rugged terrain. The wounded were being evacuated with extreme difficulty. General Ryder ordered the regiment to advance no farther until the supply situation was improved and strength was built up on the right flank. The 135th Infantry pushed up during the day to the high ground south of Ruviano. On the 3d Division front the 15th Infantry had reached the heights northeast of Piana di Caiazzo, the 7th Infantry had fought its way into the hills east of Pontelatone, and the 30th Infantry was driving along the ridges from Triflisco toward Formicola. On the right flank the 45th Division was pushing forward northwest of Benevento against stiff enemy resistance. The 180th Infantry was cleaning out the town of San Salvatore, the 157th Infantry was moving around the south side of Mount Acero, and the 179th Infantry was driving over and north of the mountain toward Faicchio.

The crossings on the 10 Corps front had been partially successful, and efforts were being made to enlarge the bridgehead. The 56 Division had no troops over the river in its zone across from Capua. The 7 Armoured Division enlarged its small bridgehead at Grazzanise, but had withdrawn the elements which had crossed near Santa Maria la Fossa. The only gain during the day was an advance of about 600 yards made by the 128 Brigade, but by nightfall the 46 Division had six battalions north of the river.

A. THE ADVANCE OF VI CORPS

14-25 OCTOBER

1. *Plans and Terrain.* (See Map No. 5.) The change in the boundary lines between VI and 10 Corps would have pinched out the 3d Division, for its objectives were now assigned to the 56 Division. VI Corps accordingly issued Field Order No. 8 at 2100, 14 October, changing the routes of advance of its forces. Originally the 45th Division was to push northwest between the Volturno and the Matese Mountains on the right to capture Alife, Sant'Angelo d'Alife, and Raviscanina. The 34th Division was to advance northwest through the valley on the southwest side of the river and over the high ridges to the left to seize the mountains and valleys around Baja e Latina, Roccaromana, and Pietramelara. The 3d Division was to drive northwest toward Teano over the Triflisco ridges and occupy Pignataro, Rocchetta e Croce, Mount Maggiore, and the Calvi Risorta feature northwest of Capua. The new order directed the 34th Division to advance up the valley beyond Alvignano and then turn northeast across the river into the 45th Division zone. The 3d Division was to turn northeast to Dragoni and then prepare to advance northwest in the area previously assigned to the 34th Division. The 45th Division was to revert to Corps reserve when it reached the high ground west of Piedimonte d'Alife.

The hill mass through which the 3d and 34th Divisions were ordered to advance stretches from 10 to 15 miles northwest of the section of the Volturno Valley running from the Volturno-Calore river junction to Triflisco and is about 10 miles wide. The area is bounded on the southeast and northeast by the winding V-shaped river, on the southwest by the plain along the Volturno to the sea, and on the west by an extension of the plain up into the wide valley below Teano and Presenzano. It is a series of high, rocky, brush-covered hills and ridges rising at Mount Sant'Angelo to 870 meters and at Mount Maggiore to 1057 meters above sea level. The mass is interspersed with deep ravines, narrow farm valleys, and small broken tablelands. The high ridges fall off sharply on the northwest side to Pietramelara and Roccaromana in the valley east of Teano. On the northeast side the hills drop steeply to the fertile valley of the Volturno, which is from two to three miles wide on the southwest side and somewhat wider on the northeast side of the river. Everywhere across the valley, on the right flank of VI Corps, the precipitous Matese Mountains tower over Piedimonte d'Alife, Alife, Sant'Angelo d'Alife, and Raviscanina.

The struggle through this rugged hill mass was not to be just against the determined resistance of the retreating Germans. Poor roads, demolished bridges,

and the problem of bringing in supplies slowed the advance of VI Corps. The only road through the hill area branches off from Highway 87 northeast of Triflisco and winds through defiles and around mountains, passing through the villages of Cisterna, Prea, Villa, Liberi, and Majorano di Monti, until it descends into Dragoni in the Volturno Valley. Another road runs northwest from Caiazzo along the foot of the northeast side of the ridges through Alvignano, Dragoni, and Baja e Latina. Along these roads the enemy was fighting a stubborn delaying action from the slopes and valleys. Ridge after ridge had to be taken; demolished bridges had to be by-passed; roads had to be built and repaired; and mines, booby traps, and road blocks had to be cleared. The enemy had to be driven from his well selected machine-gun positions and from his hastily scooped fox-holes in the brush, from behind stone walls, and back over the crests of ridges.

2. *The Advance of the 3d Division.* The 3d Division was pushing its drive to the northwest when the news arrived during the afternoon of 14 October that the boundaries between VI and 10 Corps had been altered. The 7th Infantry was in the hills east of Pontelatone when it received verbal orders to change the direction of its advance and drive up the road through Liberi to Dragoni. The 3d Battalion, supported by tanks and tank destroyers, led the attack at 1645 in an effort to take Liberi before dark. The battalion encountered stiff resistance at Cisterna, a village in a saddle on the forward slopes of Mount Fallano, and the fighting continued there all night. The 2d Battalion was committed at midnight to drive up the valley on the left and pass along the slopes of Mount Friento above the village of Prea. Opposition from tanks used as roving artillery in the broken tableland north of Cisterna caused some delay, but the 2d Battalion was on the slopes above Prea by daylight and was making rapid progress above the road toward Liberi.

The drive continued on 15 October over the rough terrain and against determined pockets of enemy resistance. The 1st Battalion moved up to the right through Strangolagalli, a village in the ravine east of Mount Fallano, to drive straight north over the tableland and ridges toward Liberi. The enemy had withdrawn from Cisterna and offered the battalion no opposition until it hit the scrub-covered ridges northwest of the small village of Sasso. The battalion gained a footing during the afternoon on Hill 561, a high point on the ridge running northwest from Sasso through Villa, but the enemy was not completely driven off until after daylight the next morning. The 2d Battalion on the left made steady progress during the day around the slopes of Mount Friento. Shortly after midnight it was stopped by strong resistance southwest of Villa, a small village in a pass across the ridge between Hill 561 and Hill 524, and suffered heavy casualties in the dark.

All three battalions of the 7th Infantry were engaged in sharp fighting around Liberi on the morning of 16 October. Elements of the 29th and 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiments were putting up a determined defense of Hill 524, a low knob less than 50 meters above the little tableland between Villa and Liberi, and twice repulsed the efforts of the 3d Battalion to storm it. The 1st Battalion beat off counterattacks on Hill 561 throughout the day and continually drove the enemy back down the slopes toward Liberi. The attack on Liberi was continued on the morning of 17 October, but most of the enemy forces had withdrawn. In the meantime the 3d Battalion, 15th Infantry, had been attached to the 7th Infantry and had come up the road from Pontelatone to assist on the left flank. This battalion and the 1st and 2d Battalions, 7th Infantry, drove on through Villa and Liberi and reached Hill 667 and Hill 618. The 1st Battalion pushed on into the narrow farm valley on the other side, but was pinned down by rifle, machine-gun, tank, and artillery fire before noon and was held south of Majorano di Monti until dark.

On the morning of 17 October the 15th Infantry was ordered to drive through the mountains west of Liberi and seize the high ridges east of Pietramelara. This move over rocky slopes, across deep valleys, and through narrow ravines was to protect the left flank of the division. At midnight the 1st Battalion reached castle-crowned Hill 446 above Roccaromana. The 2d Battalion occupied Hill 330 to the southeast and sent patrols to block the road running east to Dragoni. The 1st Battalion moved over Hill 446 the next morning and attacked Roccaromana, situated along a deep stream at the base of the hill. Pockets of enemy resistance on the slopes and out in the valley caused considerable difficulty, but the battalion temporarily cleaned out the village. The 2d Battalion moved to the slopes on Hill 446 vacated by the 1st Battalion and drove on that night to seize Mount della Costa to the north.

The enemy began to withdraw in front of the 7th Infantry late in the afternoon of 17 October. The 3d Battalion was then ordered to move up the road through Liberi toward Dragoni and was informed that General Truscott expected it to be in Dragoni by daylight. The battalion advanced rapidly up the winding road, reached Hill 371 south of Dragoni after midnight, and sent patrols down the slopes to the left toward the town. After daylight the battalion moved across the road to Hill 507. Meanwhile the 2d Battalion had occupied Mount Longo west of Dragoni and sent patrols down the slopes to cut the road toward Baja e Latina. General Truscott then ordered the 7th Infantry to stop its advance and rest its men.

VI Corps did not consider the Volturno bridgehead secure until the enemy had been forced out of the hill mass northwest of the river and into the valley

beyond it. General Truscott rested his men and gradually moved them up toward Baja e Latina. The 7th Infantry was then directed against Mount degli Angeli and Mount Monaco, two mountain masses northwest of Baja e Latina. The regiment occupied Mount degli Angeli on 22 October and spent the next three days driving the enemy from the slopes of Mount Monaco. When these areas were cleared, the 3d Division was in position to push across the valley and its obstructions toward the Mignano Gap.

3. *The Advance of the 34th Division.* The next immediate task of the 34th Division after it took Caiazzo was to drive the enemy up the southwest side of the valley beyond Dragoni. The main bridge in the 34th Division zone was not completed during 14 October. The 168th Infantry needed food, supplies, and artillery, and the 135th Infantry could not advance much farther without bringing up its supporting artillery. Late that night General Ryder secured permission from General Lucas to confine most of his activity on 15 October to patrolling. A few minutes later General Clark called General Lucas, explained that there were indications that the Germans were pulling out, and directed that the 34th and 45th Divisions push their advance. General Lucas immediately telephoned General Ryder and General Middleton and informed them that their units "must not lose contact and must push on as hard and vigorously as possible."

The 135th Infantry moved up to the low ridge south of Ruviano during the night of 14-15 October and prepared to attack the village the next morning. Shortly after midnight General Ryder postponed plans for the advance, but later sent Brig. Gen. B. F. Caffey, assistant division commander, up to direct an attack on the village. The regiment drove on through Ruviano on the morning of 15 October and swept across the rolling grain fields, vineyards, and olive groves of the valley. Enemy delaying action was at times stubborn, but a line from Hill 204 east of Alvignano to the Volturmo was occupied by the evening of 17 October. There the tired infantrymen could look from their foxholes and see on their left the round towers of the old castle above Alvignano. Everywhere on the right, when the clouds lifted, the Matese Mountains rose gaunt and gray.

Before daylight on 16 October the 168th Infantry moved up the valley dotted with stone farmhouses and along the brush-covered slopes to the left to seize Alvignano. The 3d Battalion met some resistance on the slopes above the road, but drove the enemy off after a spirited engagement. The regiment reached the dominating hillsides south of Alvignano shortly after dark, and the 2d Battalion occupied the village the next morning. Orders were then received to outpost the area until passed through by the 133d Infantry on 19 October on its way to seize Dragoni.

The 135th Infantry continued to clear the valley during 18 October and prepared to use one battalion that night to force a bridgehead across the Volturno. Plans were changed during the morning, and General Ryder ordered the 168th Infantry to drive on toward Dragoni, while he sent the 133d Infantry, commanded by Col. Ray C. Fountain, across the valley to seize the highway-railway bridge over the Volturno north of the town. The 168th Infantry met strong resistance during the afternoon in the vicinity of Hill 371, where elements of the 29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, supported by self-propelled guns, attempted a counterattack. The fire of the 175th Field Artillery Battalion drove off the supporting artillery, and the enemy infantry withdrew.

The threatened counterattack, which proved to be an effort to cover the evacuation of Dragoni, caused General Ryder to postpone plans for the river crossing during the night by the 135th Infantry. All three battalions of the 133d Infantry were struggling across the valley to block the road from Dragoni to Piedimonte d'Alife and to force a bridgehead just north of the bridge over the Volturno. The 7th Infantry was on the high ridges above Dragoni threatening the escape of the enemy up the road toward Baja e Latina. General Ryder knew that the enemy was trying to retreat up the road toward Piedimonte d'Alife and was particularly insistent that the 133d Infantry drive on the bridge with all speed.

The three battalions of the 133d Infantry were not on their objectives until nearly daylight on the foggy morning of 19 October. The 1st Battalion crossed the river during the afternoon of 18 October, made a wide sweep around to the right, and reached the bridge before midnight. The 3d Battalion arrived after midnight, and the 100th Battalion came up at dawn. The German demolition experts had thoroughly destroyed the bridge, and only its low gray stone abutments and one arch could be seen through the willows. All battalions immediately dug in under the grapevines and fruit trees and prepared to complete the crossing.

The 34th Division pushed on up and across the valley during 19-20 October. The 135th Infantry started its delayed crossing of the Volturno after midnight on 19 October; the 168th Infantry advanced early in the morning and occupied Dragoni without opposition. The 100th and 3d Battalions, 133d Infantry, forded the river after dark and closed into areas in the flat country south of Alife, with the enemy in the olive groves on the slopes overlooking them. The 135th Infantry completed its crossing just before 0200 on the misty morning of 20 October and drove toward Alife, which had already been visited by our air force. The infantrymen were delayed during the dark and foggy morning by swampy ground cut by swift canals fed by rippling mountain streams and

were hampered by sporadic artillery fire and occasional minefields; nevertheless they entered the rubble-filled streets of Alife before daylight.

The 34th Division then continued its advance up the valley on the right of the river. The 133d Infantry started a drive at 1800, 20 October, against Sant'Angelo d'Alife, a village nestling among the olive groves in a draw between Hills 630 and 529 northwest of Alife. The regiment met stiff enemy resistance from positions along the terraced slopes and encountered intense artillery fire from guns behind Hill 529. Stubborn fighting went on for three days, and two tank attacks on the left flank had to be repulsed. During the night of 23-24 October the enemy withdrew from Sant'Angelo d'Alife and Raviscanina, and the 133d Infantry moved up and occupied both towns the next day. This success completed the occupation of all objectives designated by VI Corps in its orders for crossing the Volturno and securing a bridgehead.

4. *The Advance of the 45th Division.* While the 3d and 34th Divisions were driving up the valley and through the hills on the southwest side of the Volturno, the 45th Division was securing the right flank and was maintaining contact with Eighth Army across the mountains. During 14 October the 180th Infantry had patrols operating through the valley west of the Volturno and north of Titerno Creek. The 179th Infantry, commanded by Col. Robert B. Hutchins, drove on Faicchio on the northeast side of Mount Acero and the 157th Infantry, commanded by Col. John H. Church, came up around the west side of the mountain. The advantages of terrain lay with the enemy, for the 179th Infantry had to fight its way down the narrow gorge of Titerno Creek between Mount Acero and the Matese Mountains, while the 157th Infantry had to advance up a road flanked on the left by the Titerno and on the right by Mount Acero. Despite a bombing and strafing attack by 20 enemy planes the 179th Infantry on 14 October reached the slopes northeast of Faicchio. When the regiment attacked the town the next day, it was beaten back by tank fire. Elements of the 157th Infantry forded the Titerno below Faicchio on 15 October and tried to drive up the west side of the river, but were stopped by fierce enemy resistance and a bombing and strafing attack. When the 157th Infantry continued the attack the next morning, it found that the town had been evacuated during the night. The 26th Panzer Division was gradually withdrawing to the Eighth Army zone, and the 3d Panzer Grenadier Division was extending its front across the Volturno to the Matese Mountains.

The 180th Infantry continued on up the valley across Titerno Creek and maintained contact with the 34th Division on the west side of the Volturno. The 157th Infantry drove through Gioia on 17 October. The regiment pushed on the next day along the slopes in the face of determined rearguard resistance.

The enemy apparently completed his withdrawal during the night, and the 157th Infantry entered Piedimonte d'Alife at 1700, 19 October. The right flank of VI Corps was secure, and the 34th Division was advancing on up the Volturno Valley toward Sant'Angelo d'Alife.

B. THE ADVANCE OF 10 CORPS

14-25 OCTOBER

1. *Plans and Terrain.* The assaults of the 7 Armoured Division and the 46 Division in the center and on the left of the 10 Corps front had been successful during the night of 12-13 October, but the 56 Division on the right had failed in its efforts to force a crossing of the Volturno in the Capua area. After it became apparent on 14 October that the 56 Division could not cross in its zone without heavy losses, General Clark changed the boundaries between his corps. 10 Corps issued Operations Instruction No. 9 on 15 October, which gave in detail the new corps boundary. The ridges north and northwest of Triflisco were placed in the 10 Corps zone so that the 56 Division might use the 3d Division bridge at Triflisco and also have high ground for observation over the coastal plain. The zones of action of the 56 Division and the 3d Division were now separated by a line running from the demolished bridge at Triflisco along Highway 87 to its junction with the road to Pontelatone and thence generally northwest to Formicola.

The area that faced 10 Corps was the flat coastal plain from the Volturno toward the Garigliano River, which is broken by a high ridge of mountains running southwest from Mount Santa Croce above Roccamonfina through Mount Massico to Mondragone on the sea. This broad stretch of land is approximately 7 miles long on the coast from Castel Volturno to Mondragone and is some 13 miles long along the foot of the ridges running northwest from Triflisco. The depth of the plain along the Volturno is about 17 miles, while the distance across the west side from Mondragone to the Calvi Risorta feature is approximately 14 miles. The coastal plain from the mouth of the Volturno to Mondragone is rimmed with sand dunes and marshes. The terrain soon rises inland to fertile grain fields, vineyards, orchards, and olive groves. Several drainage canals run immediately northwest of the river, and the plain is cut by numerous tree-lined streams, deep ravines, and sunken roads. The only high ground of any consequence that breaks the wide expanse is the series of low hills southwest of the Calvi Risorta feature. The most prominent elevations in this mass are Mount Maro, which is 212 meters high; Hill 226, a flat-topped knob above



Antiaircraft battery in the Mignano Gap..... painted by Technical Sergeant Savo Radulovic

Sparanise; and Hill 143, across a little farm valley, on which the hamlet of Francolise is situated.

2. *The Advance of the 56 Division.* The 56 Division started the 201 Guards Brigade across the 3d Division bridge at Triflisco on 15 October and moved northwest along the ridges toward Mount Grande. Most of the brigade and a squadron of the Greys (a tank battalion) were over by the evening of 16 October. The bridge was still under artillery fire, and a number of casualties were sustained during the crossing. The Guards pressed their attack along the ridges toward Mount Grande. After extremely hard fighting this height was taken by the 6 Coldstream Guards on 17 October. The brigade then swung to the west and continued its pursuit of the slowly retreating Germans. The spur northwest of Villa Volturno was stubbornly defended and caused considerable difficulty until cleared by the 2 Scots Guards.

Although the 56 Division originally had no interest in occupying the hills north of Mount Grande, the 30th Infantry had to be relieved southwest of Formicola. The enemy was dug in between the British and American forces southwest of the town and could shell the 3d Division zone whenever the 30th Infantry tried to withdraw to the east. The 6 Grenadier Guards accordingly turned north toward Formicola to effect the relief. Considerable difficulty was encountered on the ridge southeast of Camigliano, where the crest was so narrow that only one platoon could be deployed against the well situated enemy. The terrain through the area is extremely rugged, and the 3 Coldstream Guards had to be used as porters to maintain the 6 Grenadiers. A man could carry only two rounds of 3-inch mortar ammunition and required four and one-half hours for the round trip. The Grenadiers finally reached Formicola on the afternoon of 18 October and relieved the 30th Infantry. The rest of the 201 Guards Brigade had pushed on in the meantime against stubborn delaying action to a line running through Formicola to Camigliano.

The 169 Brigade began crossing the bridge at Triflisco during the early hours of 17 October. One battalion and a squadron of Greys were directed westward on the north side of the river to cut off the enemy forces still resisting stubbornly in front of Capua. Meanwhile small parties of the 167 Brigade crossed in the Capua area to assist the 169 Brigade. The remainder of the 169 Brigade pushed up Highway 6 northwest of Capua. A determined effort was made to rush the bridge over the Regia Agnena Nuova Canal below the junction of Highway 6 and Highway 7, but this effort was stopped by minefields. By the evening of 18 October the 169 Brigade had occupied Villa Volturno and Pignataro on the right and was in line with the advancing 201 Guards Brigade. Part of the troops of the 167 Brigade had come across the

river at Capua and had reached the area west of the airport; the remaining elements were crossing at Triflisco. The 169 Brigade drove on up Highway 6 to the vicinity of Calvi Vecchia and up Highway 7 across Lanzi Creek southeast of the town of Sparanise.

The 56 Division was strengthened on 19 October, when the 168 Brigade, newly arrived from Sicily, closed into the Caserta area and came under its command. Fresh troops were most welcome at this time, for the division had been fighting continually since its landing at Salerno. The supply situation was greatly improved on the same day by the completion of a Bailey ponton bridge across the 240-foot gap over the Volturmo in front of Capua. Despite bad approaches and 20-foot banks the engineers built the bridge and had supplies flowing up Highway 6 within 48 hours after the enemy was driven back sufficiently for them to start to work. The 168 Brigade then moved up on 22 October to help the 201 Guards Brigade improve its positions in the mountains overlooking the Calvi Risorta hills and ridges, the 168 Brigade reached the high ground north of the Guards, and the Greys worked up Highway 6 to its junction with the road to Teano.

3. *The Advance of the 7 Armoured Division.* The 7 Armoured Division in the center of the 10 Corps zone continued to push the 131 Brigade across the river at Grazzanise and captured the village of Brezza on the morning of 16 October. Its Class 9 bridge at Grazzanise was completed later in the day, and it began to get supplies and artillery across to support its drive over the flat plain. Progress was slowed by low wet terrain, good concealment for the enemy, extensive demolitions, and stubborn rearguard resistance. The high banks and the wide water span of the Regia Agnena Nuova Canal caused considerable difficulties, but a bridgehead was finally forced across it. The brigade pushed on over the grain fields and through the olive groves of the coastal plain. Its leading elements, supported by the City of London Yeomanry (a tank battalion), were just short of Sparanise and Francolise by 22 October, but were unable to occupy Sparanise until 25 October.

4. *The Advance of the 46 Division.* The crossing of the 46 Division had been most successful, but it encountered stiff enemy resistance as it attempted to drive on across the Regia Agnena Nuova Canal. The enemy withdrew from the area between the canal and the river during the night of 14-15 October, and elements of the 128 Brigade pushed on to the south banks of the wide and deep canal. This withdrawal cleared the district around Canello ed Arnone, and bridging operations were started across the Volturmo there at 1400, 15 October. The 138 and 139 Brigades, which had been slowly extending their bridgehead north and west, regrouped in front of the town to protect the

engineers who were building the bridge. Late in the evening of 18 October the 2/4 King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry finally forced a bridgehead across the Regia Agnena Nuova Canal on the road running north from Cannello ed Arnone. By 20 October the division had three ferries in operation across the canal and was ready to continue its drive along the coast. Its advance, however, was stopped while 10 Corps paused briefly to regroup and prepare for an attack on Mount Santa Croce and Mount Massico, the high points on the ridge between the lower valleys of the Volturno and Garigliano.

C. SUMMARY OF THE ADVANCE

The troops of Fifth Army continued to push back the forces of Marshal Kesselring. The enemy retreated slowly, depending upon demolitions, road blocks, mined and booby-trapped areas, self-propelled guns, and small rearguard units to slow our advance. Villages and ridges in the hills were often defended stubbornly for a few hours or for days and then evacuated at night. On the VI Corps front the 45th Division had reached Piedimonte d'Alife and had gone into reserve. The 34th Division had forded the Volturno a second time and had fought up to Raviscanina. The 3d Division had driven up beyond Baja e Latina and had cleared Mount degli Angeli and Mount Monaco. The 56 Division, leading the advance of 10 Corps after it got across the Volturno, was in possession of the ridges northeast of the coastal plain and had crossed the hill mass that runs southwest to Sparanise and Francolise. The 3d, 34th, and 56 Divisions had thus gained the line originally designated by VI Corps as necessary to secure the Volturno bridgehead. The 7 Armoured Division in the center of the 10 Corps zone had crossed the Regia Agnena Nuova Canal and had reached Sparanise. The 46 Division along the sea still had most of its elements behind the canal, which continued to obstruct its advance. VI Corps was now in a position to drive on up the Volturno Valley and toward the Mignano Gap, while 10 Corps pushed across the valleys and ridges toward the Garigliano. The rains were becoming more frequent, the weather was getting cooler, and the men of both corps were becoming tired and worn after weeks of steady fighting against the elusive enemy.

Map No 5
FIFTH ARMY
CONSOLIDATES its BRIDGEHEAD
ACROSS the VOLTURNO
 14-25 October 1943
 Scale

