

## *Securing the First Objectives*

ON all but the extreme right flank Fifth Army had reached the line of the Tiber River during the night of 4-5 June, and troops were poised to exploit the capture of the capital. II Corps, under the command of Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Keyes, held the northeastern part of Rome and country to the east. VI Corps, commanded by Maj. Gen. Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., was stretched along the river from the center of the city southwest toward the sea. On the left flank of VI Corps the British 5 and 1 Divisions were still short of the river line, but on the right elements of the 45th, 34th, and 36th Divisions had reached it. The 1st Armored Division held the river from the center of Rome to points west of the city. The 85th and 88th Divisions of II Corps were along the river with the 3d Division east of Rome some distance from the Tiber. The FEC, which had been pinched out in the convergence of the two American corps on the city, had been moving up along the right flank of Fifth Army until British troops of Eighth Army came up abreast of II Corps. The French were beginning to assemble their divisions between Highways 6 and 7 south of Rome. IV Corps Headquarters, under Maj. Gen. Willis D. Crittenger, was in Army reserve.

Rome, a major prize, was safely under control except for scattered mopping up. The next immediate objective was the seizure of the seaport of Rome, Civitavecchia, and the group of enemy airfields lying around Viterbo. Civitavecchia lay some 40 miles northwest of the city on Highway 1 while Viterbo was approximately the same distance from Rome and about 20 miles inland from the sea. An excellent road net led to Viterbo, Highway 2 being the major route, but other parallel hard-surfaced roads also ran to this city. Civitavecchia was in the VI Corps zone on the Army left and Viterbo in that of II Corps on the right flank of Fifth Army.

Few troops had gone far beyond the Tiber bridges on 4 June, and all units were ordered to push out the following day to obtain a secure bridgehead over the

river to a minimum depth of six miles. On 6 June the chase was continued by all units in their respective zones until the publication of Operations Instruction No. 28 by General Clark late that day which directed that faster, more mobile troops be employed in the pursuit. This order alerted the FEC to prepare for relief of II Corps and directed IV Corps to prepare plans immediately to take over direction of the attack in the VI Corps zone.

## A. VI CORPS BEGINS THE PURSUIT

5-11 JUNE

The territory to the northwest of the city on the left of the VI Corps zone consisted of a comparatively flat coastal plain, traversed by Highway 1 leading to Civitavecchia and on up the coast. (See Maps Nos. 2 and 3.) Low rolling hills made up the right half, offering little natural assistance for a delaying action and favoring the employment of armor. The 34th Division was given the coastal zone, and the 36th Division was allotted the inland zone. The main axis of advance inland was along a good secondary road, branching northwest off Highway 2 about seven miles beyond the city and running through Bracciano, Oriolo Romano, and then back into Highway 2 about four miles below Vetralla. Highway 2 at Vetralla turned almost due north into the II Corps zone, ran through Viterbo and continued on to the north.

The 1st Armored Division, under the command of Maj. Gen. Ernest N. Harmon, was given the mission of spearheading the pursuit of the enemy beyond Rome in the IV Corps zone. Combat Command A under Col. Maurice W. Daniel, made up primarily of the 1st Armored Regiment and supporting division troops, and the 135th Infantry, attached from the 34th Division, was given the zone of the 36th Division on the right flank of the Corps. Combat Command B under Brig. Gen. Frank A. Allen, Jr., consisting of the 13th Armored Regiment, the 6th Armored Infantry, and supporting units, was to work in the 34th Division zone on the left flank. The two infantry divisions were to follow the armor in their respective zones as rapidly as possible, with the 45th Division in Corps reserve behind the 34th Division. The two British divisions were also placed in reserve, preparatory to being detached from Fifth Army, and took little part in the action above Rome. On 5 June the 1 Reconnaissance Regiment of the 1 Division crossed the Tiber and advanced some six miles to the north, but the following day it was pulled back to the south bank. Both divisions then assembled between Rome and the sea.

All units moved out early on 5 June to secure the bridgehead line over the Tiber. Combat Command A and the 36th Division used intact bridges across the river, the Ponte Giuseppe Mazzini, Ponte di Ferro, Ponte Vittorio Emanuele, Ponte Sisto, and Ponte Sant'Angelo, all inside the Rome city limits. Most of their difficulty in advancing came from the dense throngs of citizens who crowded into the streets of the capital to celebrate their new freedom. It was necessary for the Combat Command B column to move partially into the Combat Command A zone to cross the river since the bridges in the lower reaches of the river either were damaged or would not take heavy traffic. The 34th Division, sending a light task force consisting of the 34th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop, the Reconnaissance Company, 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and a platoon of tank destroyers, also used this route.

The 180th Infantry (45th Division) had crossed to the north bank in some strength over a partially demolished bridge west of Rome at 0200, 5 June. Engineers erected a treadway bridge over the Tiber for use of the main body of the 34th Division. This bridge was in operation by mid-morning, and speedy repairs were made on damaged crossings in the 34th Division zone about four miles west of the city. The British 1 Reconnaissance Regiment crossed on footbridges and had some light armored vehicles across by the end of the day.

Only light enemy resistance, consisting of a few towed 88-mm and smaller antitank guns, an occasional self-propelled gun, a tank here and there, and scattered infantry and snipers, was encountered all along the VI Corps front during the day, but the bottleneck of traffic in Rome did not allow the full striking power of the divisions to be deployed widely until well into the afternoon. At darkness, which at this time fell between 2130 and 2200, the initial line based on strategic road junctions about six miles northwest of Rome had been secured across the front. The 157th Infantry (45th Division) moved up abreast the 1 Reconnaissance Regiment; tanks of the 13th Armored Regiment and 34th Division infantrymen held the central portion; and Combat Command A's tanks and infantry, closely followed by the 36th Division, covered the right flank. The 1st Armored Division reconnaissance unit, the 81st Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, operated over the minor road net between the two combat commands, sending mobile patrols over much of the countryside.

1. *Progress Along the Coast.* At 2100, 5 June, VI Corps was directed to capture Civitavecchia as rapidly as possible. Day attacks were to be led by the tanks; the infantry was to pass through the armor at night and press forward during the hours of darkness. Combat Command B's armored and motorized units the next day pushed rapidly up Highway 1. They made little contact with the enemy but were slowed considerably by blown bridges and other demolitions.

In the interest of speed and reduction of traffic each combat command of the 1st Armored Division was limited to one medium tank battalion, one infantry battalion, one reconnaissance company, one engineer company, one light tank company, and one armored field artillery battalion of self-propelled howitzers.

Progressing rapidly, the armored units were nearly 25 miles north of Rome at darkness on 6 June. The 2d and 3d Battalions, 168th Infantry, motorized in trucks, passed through the tank units at 2200 and moved on up the highway. Advancing all night, the battalions encountered nothing more serious than occasional small-arms fire and mines and by 1030 the following morning had secured Civitavecchia. Around this port the Germans put up only a short fire fight on the road northeast of the city. Combat Command B turned over the entire zone to the 34th Division, assembled, and began to move into the 36th Division zone behind Combat Command A.

Having set the policy of leapfrogging units to keep fresh troops always in the lead, Maj. Gen. Charles W. Ryder, 34th Division commander, moved the 133d Infantry under Col. William Schildroth in column of battalions through the 168th Infantry at 1700, 7 June, and pressed the attack northward toward Tarquinia. Without opposition the 133d Infantry had advanced within five miles of the town by midnight. Prisoners captured indicated two previously unidentified German divisions, the 162d Grenadier Division and the 20th GAF Field Division, were now in the fight, and on the morning of 8 June, while moving through a stretch of rough country toward Tarquinia, the 133d Infantry met the stiffest opposition yet encountered north of Rome. Infantry with machine guns, backed with artillery and mortars, had established positions in a ravine covering the highway, and the battle lasted most of the day. Using newly issued 57-mm antitank guns as direct-fire weapons, the regiment finally blasted the Germans from their positions and took nearly 150 prisoners. This same day the 45th Division was relieved of its reserve mission and moved east of Rome, later departing for Naples to join Seventh Army.

The 361st Regimental Combat Team under Col. Rudolph W. Broedlow, first element of the 91st Division to arrive in Italy, had been attached to the 34th Division and was committed to relieve the 133d Infantry at 0330, 9 June. Three hours later both the 361st Regimental Combat Team and command of the zone passed to the 36th Division, which by that time had moved north and then swung west to take over the entire VI Corps zone while the FEC relieved II Corps on the right flank of Fifth Army. The 34th Division assembled in reserve in positions around Civitavecchia.

2. *Battles on the Inland Route.* While rapid advances were being made along the coastal flank, Combat Command A and the 36th Division were matching this progress on the right of VI Corps. Armor and infantry of Combat Command A

jumped off from their bridgehead line at 0530, 6 June, and made a difficult march cross-country and over small trails. They finally reached the main Rome—Bracciano road and fought to the outskirts of Bracciano by darkness against a group of enemy tanks which gave battle the last three hours of daylight.

Infantry of the 36th Division under Maj. Gen. Fred L. Walker were to have advanced during the night, pass through the armor, and continue ahead, but failed to arrive in time. Combat Command A consequently jumped off at daylight on 7 June. in three task forces. These small task forces, made up identically of a reconnaissance platoon, an engineer platoon, a medium tank company, an infantry company, a light tank platoon and a platoon of tank destroyers each, were designated Task Forces A, B and C. At 0600 Task Force B passed through Bracciano, followed by Task Force C, and headed for Manziana, while Task Force A established a temporary road block on the road running north around Lake Bracciano. Elements of the 36th Division arrived, took over the road block and mopped up scattered enemy units by-passed by the armor.

Task Force B captured and consolidated Manziana in mid-morning after a short action outside the town, while Task Force C continued on to Oriolo Romano, which was occupied against slight opposition at 1610. Reconnaissance units pushed on to Vejano at dusk where progress was halted by a large-scale demolition in a ravine. The 142d Infantry under Col. George E. Lynch, following the armor, turned left on the Manziana—Tolfa—Civitavecchia road and advanced toward the coast until elements of the 34th Division were contacted. No resistance was met along the road. The 141st Infantry under Lt. Col. Austin F. Gilmartin, and the 143d Infantry under Col. Paul D. Adams followed, and the entire 36th Division assembled just west of Tolfa preparatory to taking over the coastal zone from the 34th Division.

Moving against Vetralla on the morning of 8 June, Combat Command A jumped into a fairly strong enemy rear guard near the junction of the road north from Vejano and Highway 2. Our tanks, infantry, and artillery finally subdued this force after a three-hour battle, but the delay had enabled the bulk of the enemy to retreat through Vetralla. Task force A had deployed during this action, and Task Force B immediately moved through in column and secured Vetralla by 1600. Though Viterbo had been included in the II Corps zone, Task Force C continued on ahead toward this important communications center. Its infantry continued to push until nearly midnight and then halted after coming up against more enemy infantry and tanks about a mile and one-half south of Viterbo. Following their usual tactics, the Germans withdrew during the latter part of the night, and Task Force C occupied Viterbo without resistance by 0650, 9 June.

During the night of 8-9 June Combat Command B had assembled behind Combat Command A; at 0700, 9 June, it was ordered to move northwest from Vetralla to seize Tuscania. Traffic was beginning to jam up along the road as French elements, which had relieved II Corps, caught up with the 1st Armored Division. Combat Command A was ordered off the roads until the French passed through, and late on 9 June it began to move back to an area near Lake Bracciano. Combat Command B engaged in a short, fierce fight on the southern edge of Tuscania but captured the place by noon, and by dark it had pushed reconnaissance to the northwest within a mile of Canino. The enemy withdrew from this town during the night, and by 0800, 10 June, Combat Command B finished mopping up the area. It was then relieved by the 36th Division. That night the command joined the remainder of the 1st Armored Division which had gone into Army reserve at Lake Bracciano.

3. *Relief of VI Corps.* After relieving the 133d Infantry the 361st Infantry, under 36th Division command, launched an attack on Tarquinia at 0530, 9 June, only to find that the enemy had again retired under cover of darkness. In half an hour after the jump-off the town was in our hands, and the troops moved on up the coast along Highway 1. Little resistance was encountered during the day as the 361st Infantry pushed ahead. The 143d Infantry turned inland from Tarquinia on the lateral road leading to Tuscania. By the time the infantry arrived the town had been taken by Combat Command B, and the 143d Infantry followed on behind the tanks to Canino, where it took over from the armored units.

The 361st Infantry continued its advance up the coast beyond Tarquinia. After a two-hour delay caused by a blown bridge it entered the next town of Montalto, about eight miles northwest of Tarquinia. Another blown bridge over a deep chasm north of Montalto prevented pushing the pursuit during the night, but engineers constructed a bridge before dawn, and the line moved up six miles farther on 10 June. During the night of 10-11 June the 141st Infantry relieved the 361st Infantry and encountered increasingly stiff resistance. The Germans now had in the line most of the two divisions they had rushed in to cover their retreat, and at midday they threw a two-company counterattack against the 141st Infantry. The attack was broken up by infantrymen and supporting artillery without loss of ground, but it indicated that the days of 10 to 15-mile gains were almost finished.

At 1200, 11 June, IV Corps Headquarters took over command of the VI Corps zone, and VI Corps Headquarters shortly thereafter began moving to Naples and was assigned to Seventh Army. The 34th and 36th Divisions were attached to IV Corps. When VI Corps left the front, the Army line on the coastal side had been pushed nearly 65 miles north of Rome. The Corps had secured the two vital objectives north of the city, the port of Civitavecchia and the airfields of Viterbo.



*Allied bombing shattered the enemy columns fleeing north of Rome.*



*In the Tarquinia area our troops advance past a wrecked German field gun.*



*The devastated port of Civitavecchia, as our troops first saw it.*



*Fifth Army engineers at Civitavecchia prepare a wharf to unload ships.*



Within four days after its capture, supplies began to come ashore at Civitavecchia. The Viterbo airfield facilities had been bombed and blown flat by Allied aircraft and German demolition squads, but the ground was still there and in a comparatively short time our bombers and fighters were both operating off the runways.

VI Corps units north of Rome had added their bit to the huge number of German vehicles lying twisted and burned along the highways—mostly the work of the Allied air force—and had knocked out or captured more than 50 artillery pieces of various types. Slightly more than 1000 prisoners had been taken, and heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy in a number of places. Standing forlornly amid twisted rails and smashed cars in the marshalling yards of Civitavecchia were two big German railroad guns. These tremendous guns were 280-mm in size and had tubes 65 feet in length. It was believed they were the long-range weapons whose shrieking shells made them famous as the Anzio Express. Unable to take them along in the retreat, the foe had spiked them and left the remains behind for study by Allied ordnance experts.

## B. *II CORPS NORTH OF ROME*

5-10 JUNE

In its final drive on Rome II Corps attacked with three divisions abreast, the 85th, 88th, and 3d Divisions from left to right. Task Force Howze and the 1st Special Service Force swept into the northeastern part of the city late on 4 June to capture the upper or northern bridges over the Tiber River. This mission was accomplished by midnight, and the 88th Division entered the city to take bridges in its zone by the same time. The bridges were obtained intact. Elements of the 85th Division moved into the city the night of 4-5 June while the main body of the 3d Division assembled northeast of Rome east of the river. The 91st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron fanned out in the direction of the Aniene River protecting the Corps right boundary.

Rapid consolidation of positions inside the city itself took place the following day when mopping up forces cleaned all the enemy out of Rome in the Corps zone. The 3d Division, which was squeezed into the right of the narrowing II Corps zone, was detached from the Corps at 1420, 5 June, and reverted to Army control as garrison troops for the city. The 1st Special Service Force continued to guard the II Corps bridges, with the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron attached. Armored units of Task Force Howze, which had spearheaded the drive up Highway 6, assembled east of the city to reorganize.

For the pursuit II Corps picked the 85th and 88th Divisions to continue northward, with the general road line Orte—Soriano—Viterbo as the objective and

Highway 2 as the principal axis of advance. (*See Maps Nos. 2 and 3.*) The Corps right boundary ran almost due north from a point about four miles east of the Rome city limits, through Civita Castellana, and to a point just west of Orte. The original left boundary between II Corps and VI Corps ran northwest some four to six miles west of Highway 2, skirted the northeastern shores of Lake Bracciano, and then cut more sharply northwest to include Vetralla and Tuscania. On 7 June the boundary was shifted to place these two towns in the VI Corps zone when VI Corps units swung northward and cut across the advance of II Corps troops. The two divisions poured across the Tiber on 5 June and were hard pressed to keep up with the rapidly retreating foe. Highway 2 became the divisional boundary with the 85th Division west of the road and the 88th Division on the east.

1. *The 85th Division Advances.* Moving rapidly northwest on the left flank of the Corps, the 85th Division under Maj. Gen. John B. Coulter led off the chase of the enemy by moving the 339th Infantry under Lt. Col. Brookner W. Brady west of the Tiber on 5 June. It crossed mainly over the Ponte Cavour and Ponte Margherita bridges which had been secured by the 1st Special Service Force. Encountering great difficulty with festive crowds, unfamiliar streets, and a welter of other military traffic, the regiment virtually fought its way through the tumultuous city until it reached the outskirts and began advancing on the extreme left boundary of II Corps. By nightfall of 5 June forward elements were five miles to the northwest of the city. Elements of the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, attached to the division, were feeling out the enemy ahead and on the flanks of the infantrymen but met little opposition. A considerable number of stragglers was rounded up.

The following day the division continued to advance in column of regiments, the 338th and 337th Infantry following behind the 339th Infantry, which sent its battalions forward in three columns generally astride the axis of Highway 2. The 117th Reconnaissance Squadron screened the Corps and division left flank by advancing along the minor roads running to the northwest. Reinforced with tanks of the 760th Tank Battalion and tank destroyers of the 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion, the 339th Infantry jumped off from its first bridgehead positions west of the Tiber at 0515 and advanced unopposed for about three hours until it met enemy rear guards who had halted along a ridge line in the vicinity of Isola Farnese. This line was just north of a main road junction where Highway 2 continues to the north and another paved road branches off northwest toward Bracciano. The enemy resistance was designed to cover the road junction and consisted of self-propelled guns with a protecting screen of riflemen and machine guns. This strongpoint was overcome by midday, and the regiment resumed the advance, moving generally inside the V formed by the two roads. The 338th Infantry had been following up and bivouacked a short distance behind the 339th Infantry in the general area of the road



junction. The 337th Infantry remained in its assembly area on the northwestern outskirts of Rome in division reserve.

On 7 June the 337th Infantry under Col. Oliver W. Hughes passed through both the other regiments and took up the main pursuit along Highway 2. Initially the 1st and 3d Battalions advanced on foot astride the highway, and the 2d Battalion was motorized in trucks as a reserve to exploit the situation should the resistance prove negligible. The 338th Infantry under Lt. Col. William H. Mikkelsen swung on behind the 337th Infantry and moved to its left with the 339th Infantry holding in the same position it occupied at darkness on 6 June.

The foot elements advanced six miles without meeting any opposition. It became evident that the Germans were rapidly moving out of contact and widening the gap between their main body and our pursuing troops. Task Force Howze by this time had completed its reorganization and was attached to the 85th Division at 1130 as II Corps sought to increase its mobile striking power. The armor was moved as rapidly as possible to an assembly area near the head of the column. The task force consisted of medium tanks of the 3d Battalion, 13th Armored Regiment; Company A, 81st Armored Reconnaissance Battalion; a detachment from the 16th Armored Engineer Battalion; and a detachment of medical troops from the 47th Armored Medical Battalion, all under command of Col. Hamilton H. Howze, commanding officer of the 13th Armored Regiment. These 1st Armored Division troops had been attached to II Corps previously to assist the 3d Division in cutting Highway 6 at Valmontone.

Meanwhile the motorized 2d Battalion, 337th Infantry with tanks and tank destroyers and a mechanized platoon from the 85th Reconnaissance Troop, had moved up on Highway 2, going ahead of the two marching battalions of the regiment. The plodding infantry met practically no resistance. Shortly after noon the 337th Infantry reached the east shore of Lake Bracciano and pinched out the 338th Infantry against the south shore of the lake. Enemy contact was finally regained by the motorized 2d Battalion about two miles south of Monterosi, another highway junction town five miles north of Lake Bracciano. Five German tanks formed the backbone of this rearguard detachment, which forced the 2d Battalion to detruck. Our troops began to develop the enemy position while the trucks were used to shuttle forward the other two battalions of the regiment. The 3d Battalion arrived by 1600 and with the 2d Battalion launched an attack which saw the 3d Battalion enter the town by 1700. The enemy was forced to withdraw. The 337th Infantry occupied positions just beyond the town for the night. The other two regiments of the division remained where they had been holding, the 338th Infantry on the edge of Lake Bracciano and the 339th Infantry back in the vicinity of Isola Farnese.

Task Force Howze moved into an assembly position just behind the 337th Infantry during the night and received additional strength when the 117th Reconnaissance Squadron was attached to it. To provide infantry the 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry, was also attached and motorized. This force moved out at daybreak on 8 June and advanced against limited resistance. It ran into more mines and demolitions than on the previous two days, which slowed the pursuit considerably. No serious resistance was met until 1730, when the German rear guard turned and fought again in the hills two miles north of Ronciglione along the east edge of Lake Vico. This resistance was speedily overcome, and the force advanced about two miles north of the lake. When night fell it was within six miles of Viterbo.

On 9 June the FEC began the relief of II Corps. Task Force Howze advanced some five miles farther to reach a point four miles due east of Viterbo, which was occupied the same day by VI Corps troops coming north from Vetralla into the II Corps zone. A shift of the Army boundary reduced the size of the II Corps zone which the French took over and resulted in the British 13 Corps swinging west into the area where the Howze force had been operating. The Eighth Army boundary was extended westward to allow use of routes through Viterbo. As British and French units moved swiftly into their new zone, Task Force Howze was returned to Army and eventually to 1st Armored Division control, while the 117th Reconnaissance Squadron assembled with other II Corps units. Final relief of the 85th Division was accomplished by the French at 1000, 10 June, and the entire division assembled in the vicinity of Lake Bracciano. On 14-15 June it moved to the Lido di Roma area for rest, reconditioning, and training.

2. *Action of the 88th Division.* The 88th Division under Maj. Gen. John E. Sloan at nightfall on 4 June had the 350th and 351st Infantry in Rome, having entered the city with regiments abreast along Highway 6. The 349th Infantry under Lt. Col. Joseph B. Crawford had been attached to the 3d Division but reverted to control of its parent unit that night and began moving into the 88th Division zone. Artillery of the division was set up in the gardens of the famous Villa Borghese to support the continuance of the push to the northwest, and on the following day the troops moved out on the right of the II Corps zone. All three infantry regiments crossed the Tiber River on 5 June, using primarily the Ponte Milvio and Ponte Duca d'Aosta bridges. They then advanced astride Highway 2, the 351st Infantry under Col. Arthur S. Champeny on the left and the 350th Infantry under Lt. Col. Walter E. Bare, Jr., on the right of the road. Positions about three miles beyond the river had been reached at the end of the day. The 351st Infantry met some slight and brief opposition along a low ridge two miles northwest of the stream; the advance of the 350th Infantry was unopposed. Highway 2 from this point formed the boundary between the 88th and 85th Divisions, inclusive to the 85th Division, and all elements

of the 88th Division were moved to the right of this artery as they prepared to resume the pursuit on 6 June. The 91st Reconnaissance Squadron was operating on the division right, protecting both its flank and that of the Corps.

Moving out again at daybreak on 6 June, the 350th Infantry swung to the left of the division zone, with the 351st Infantry cutting across the rear of the 350th Infantry and operating on the right. The 349th Infantry, which had now completely assembled with the division, followed the 351st Infantry and then moved to its right, thereby placing the three regiments abreast: the 350th Infantry on the left, the 351st Infantry in the center, and the 349th Infantry on the right. The division advanced almost due north, operating in columns of battalions and using all available roads to the east of Highway 2. Little opposition was met after the feeble resistance just beyond the Tiber was rolled up on 5 June. The division advanced an average of eight miles north of Rome on 6 June. The 349th Infantry, the most forward element, was approximately ten miles beyond the city, with the division front echeloned to the left rear from this point.

As on other parts of the Fifth Army front the enemy was running faster than our dismounted infantry could keep up. The bulk of the foe's forces apparently had been retreating day and night despite land and air attacks, and the rear guards which delayed us were usually motorized infantry and self-propelled guns which, when they disengaged, rapidly outdistanced our foot troops. Lack of vehicles prevented a more extensive motorization of our forces. On 7 June all reconnaissance elements fanned out beyond the 88th Division front, and the infantry followed as rapidly as possible. Elements of the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron were on the outskirts of Civita Castellana, nearly 25 miles north of Rome, by the end of the day, while the three infantry regiments of the 88th Division had advanced generally 16 to 18 miles above the capital.

Here the 88th Division was practically eliminated from the picture, for the newly designated Army boundary ran diagonally across its front and the 6 South African Armoured Division of the British 13 Corps was moving along the new boundary in a northwesterly direction. Hence orders were sent to the division to halt on the ground reached on 7 June. Task Force Ellis, under command of Lt. Col. Charles A. Ellis, commanding officer of the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron, was to maintain contact with the enemy.

In addition to the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron, which had been attached to the division the previous day, Task Force Ellis included the 756th Tank Battalion, the 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion, less one company, and the 3d Battalion, 351st Infantry, which was mounted in trucks to provide infantry support. This force swept into Civita Castellana early on the morning of 8 June and continued on to the north. Mobile elements were sent on all available routes toward the Viterbo—Orte

road, about ten miles to the north. Slight rearguard opposition by the enemy was brushed aside during the day; the rapidly increasing number of mines and demolitions noted across the entire Army front was also encountered here. By nightfall, 8 June, the main body of the task force had reached the village of Vignanello, five miles southwest of Orte, while advance elements penetrated to the road designated as their objective about four miles west of that town, turned east, and cleared Orte of scattered snipers.

This was the high-water mark of the II Corps advance during this phase of the Italian campaign. Task Force Ellis units were ordered to halt in place to allow 13 Corps to maneuver to the northwest. The lighter elements of the force continued to screen the road between Orte and Soriano during 9 June, guarding the British left flank until all positions were consolidated. By the close of that day the relieving units had taken over the entire zone and the Ellis force was dissolved. The 88th Division and attachments assembled south of Civita Castellana and on 12 June began movement to their training and rest area in the vicinity of Lake Albano.

In the four days the Corps was in action north of Rome its units had pushed Fifth Army's line more than 30 miles beyond the city, at comparatively small cost to themselves, and had rounded up close to 1500 prisoners in addition to casualties inflicted on the enemy. Most of the prisoners were stragglers who had been separated from their units, and the majority surrendered without opposition to armored reconnaissance troops. As an indication of the demoralization widespread through the German Fourteenth Army at that time, many prisoners were taken who had on their persons passes authorizing them to retreat as individuals, living off the land, until they reached the main battle line in the vicinity of Florence. Prisoners were identified from nearly all the units comprising Fourteenth Army.

Resistance was encountered mainly from small groups of infantry, ranging from 10 to 50 men, who were supported by armored artillery and who sought to create temporary delays, principally at defiles on the main roads. The German air force was active during the moonlight nights, but only a few planes engaged in harassing the routes of our pursuit. Some casualties were suffered among personnel of the 88th Division when service trains were strafed at night in the outskirts of Rome.

Anticipating its relief by the French and experiencing difficulty in keeping its heavy artillery close to the troops when the pace of the pursuit increased, II Corps ordered all its Corps artillery except two battalions of 155-mm guns and one battalion of 4.5-inch guns into assembly areas on 6 June. One mission was fired by Corps artillery that day and four on 7 June, which ended its actions during this phase. By 10 June, when II Corps was entirely withdrawn, Fifth Army had reached the general line Viterbo—Tuscania—Tarquinia, and both the port of Civitavecchia and the airfields around Viterbo had been secured.



