

Long-range view of shell burst on the approach to the Monterumici hill mass



Close-up view of caves and gullies which characterized the Monterumici area



British artillery plows through mud and water on the 13 Corps front



Construction of this Bailey bridge eased supply problems for 13 Corps

While CCA and the 135th Infantry continued their attacks on the Monterumici hill mass the 34th Division prepared to take over a new zone east of Highway 65. Control of CCA and the 135th Infantry passed to the 1st Armored Division at 1200, 14 October, thereby relieving the 34th Division of all responsibility for its former zone. On 13 October the 168th Infantry began moving to Mount delle Formiche to relieve the 338th Infantry, and the 133d Infantry moved the next day to the village of Barbarolo in the 91st Division zone. The division artillery also shifted to the east. By the end of 15 October preparations had been completed for the 34th Division (minus the 135th Infantry) to join in the new Corps attack scheduled for the morning of 16 October.

5. *Conclusion of the Third Phase.* The third phase of the October offensive was characterized by the heaviest fighting experienced by II Corps since the breach of the Gothic Line at Il Giogo Pass. In the 6-day period 10–15 October the 4 divisions spearheading the Army attack suffered a total of 2,491 battle casualties. Broken down by divisions this figure represented 872 battle casualties in the 88th Division, 769 in the 91st Division, 611 in the 85th Division, and 239 in the 34th Division. The effect of these losses was cumulative. Already in the first 9 days of October the 4 divisions had lost 3,208 men to make a total of 5,699 for the first 15 days of October and 12,210 since the beginning of the II Corps offensive on 10 September. Although the bulk of the losses was made up by men returning to duty and by replacements, a serious shortage of replacements was developing in the theater, particularly in the category of junior officers where the casualty rate was disproportionately high. Battlefield commissions granted to qualified enlisted men only partially alleviated the situation as the supply of experienced noncommissioned officers was almost equally low. In some instances the shortage of officers extended to the field grades. Of the nine infantry battalions in the 88th Division only four were commanded by lieutenant colonels on 15 October. It was evident that if the heavy casualties continued the fighting efficiency of the attacking divisions would soon be seriously impaired.

Measured in terms of ground gained the third phase recorded a progressive slowing down of the offensive. With the exception of a 3-mile advance by the 350th Infantry which brought the left flank of the 88th Division abreast with the 85th Division, the average for the Corps front was between 1 and 2 miles; and on the left flank, where the enemy still held the Monterumici hill mass, the front remained almost stationary. Even the achievement of having broken through the strongest of the enemy's delaying lines was tempered by the fact that the forward troops were still approximately 10 miles from Bologna.

Enemy losses in the period 10–15 October were unquestionably high. The clear weather which prevailed until the 15th permitted ground and air observers to direct the artillery fire with unusual accuracy, and there were no limitations placed on the

expenditure of ammunition. Many of the 1,689 prisoners taken by II Corps commented on the demoralizing effect of our artillery fire. The confused nature of the enemy's battle order at key points such as Mount delle Formiche showed he was experiencing great difficulty in repairing his losses, yet he exhibited an amazing resourcefulness in putting together odds and ends to maintain a front. Also Kesselring was shifting more and more strength to the II Corps front. In addition to the 65th and 98th Grenadier Divisions, which were fully committed before 10 October, one regiment of the 94th Grenadier Division was identified on the 85th Division front on the 13th, and one regiment of the 29th Panzer Grenadier Division appeared north of Livergnano at the end of the period. If this trend continued the enemy would soon have as many troops on the line as II Corps.

E. *ADVANCE OF THE 6 SOUTH AFRICAN ARMoured DIVISION*

1-15 OCTOBER

At the close of September the 6 South African Armoured Division under control of IV Corps had just completed a regrouping of its forces designed to reduce its long front and permit a greater concentration of strength along Highway 6620. General Clark anticipated that the drive of II Corps would carry it well ahead of the IV Corps units. To prevent a gap developing along the intercorps boundary and to provide maximum support for the left flank of II Corps, he made the 6 South African Armoured Division a self-contained unit and on 6 October placed it under direct control of Fifth Army. The division artillery was reinforced by the 178 Medium Regiment (from 10 AGRA); the 76 Heavy Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment (3.7-inch guns); Battery C, 697th Field Artillery Battalion (two 240-mm howitzers); one section of Battery A, 575th Field Artillery Battalion (8-inch gun); and four artillery observation planes supplied by IV Corps. Additional infantry and tank support was provided by the attachment of CCB. Thus reinforced, the division was given the mission of attacking down the Setta Valley to keep pace with the advance of II Corps and of maintaining contact with IV Corps on the left.

On 1 October the 24 Guards Brigade was engaged in a struggle for control of Mount Catarelto, a long ridge on the west side of the Setta Valley and slightly to the north of the village of Montefredente, from which the 168th Infantry launched its attack; the 11 South African Armoured Brigade was in the vicinity of Castiglione 5 miles to the southwest of Mount Catarelto; and the left flank of the division, held by the 12 South African Motorised Brigade, stretched away to the southwest to Highway 64. The 1 Scots Guards after reaching positions within 200 yards of the crest of Mount Catarelto on 30 September was counterattacked at 0100, 1 October,

by elements of the 35th SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment. The attacks were repeated at 0645 and at 0800. By 1030 Company A, on the west side of the mountain, had been reduced to 45 men. Efforts to get tanks up failed when the trail they were following collapsed. Company A had to be pulled back, and Companies B and C on the east side of the ridge were withdrawn during the night to permit the 5 Grenadier Guards to pass through on the morning of 2 October to continue the attack. After 2 days of bitter fighting which cost the 24 Guards Brigade 132 casualties the SS troops, apparently influenced by the loss of Mount del Galletto, withdrew from the mountain in the early morning hours of 3 October.

During the ensuing weeks the division devoted its main effort toward gaining control of the chain of mountains lying between the Setta and Reno valleys. Beginning with Mount Vigese, 4 miles west of Mount Catarelto, these mountains are high points on a ridge which stretched in a slight arc northeast to Mount Sole, 3 miles west of the Monterumici hill mass. Starting from Castiglione, the 11 South African Armoured Brigade turned northwest along Highway 6422 to reach the lower slopes of Mount Vigese on 3 October. Elements of the 36th SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment, counterattacking repeatedly, succeeded in throwing back each assault until the morning of 6 October when a company of the RNC, concealed by a heavy mist, took the summit of the mountain by surprise. Following up an enemy withdrawal the ILH/Kim R reached the village of Collina 2 miles south of Mount Stanco, the next major objective on the ridge.

General Poole assigned the task of taking Mount Stanco to the 4/13 FFR. From the village of Camugnano on Highway 6422 where the battalion detrucked there remained a 4-mile march over muddy trails to reach the line of departure. Company D passed through Collina at 1600, 7 October, and reached the crest of Mount Stanco at 1900, Company C arriving $\frac{1}{2}$ hour later. Companies B and A were 1 mile behind at the village of Prada. There was no communication with the forward companies, but by dawn it was apparent that they were in a trap. A contact patrol sent forward from Prada was wiped out by mortar fire. Companies C and D had no mortars, they were unable to call for artillery support, and the mules sent back for ammunition were killed by the curtain of fire the enemy laid down on the trail to their rear. Caught in an untenable position the two companies fought their way back to Prada.

During 9 October the division regrouped to place CCB and all three of its brigades in the line. CCB, then approaching Porretta, was made responsible for the left flank along Highway 64; the 12 South African Motorised Brigade was to move to the Mount Vigese area; the 11 South African Armoured Brigade would resume the attack along the ridge; and the 24 Guards Brigade would continue down the Setta Valley with the objective of taking Mount Sole as soon as the attack along

the ridge cleared the area to its left. Following an artillery preparation at 0500, 10 October, the RNC passed through the 4/13 FFR and attacked Mount Stanco. Company B on the left nearly reached the crest before it was stopped; Company D moved up on the right to reach parallel positions by 0700. Three hours later Company D reported that its right platoon had been overrun by an enemy force attacking from the village of Grizzana. Company C was ordered forward to assist, but by midafternoon the enemy was attacking in such strength that the RNC was forced to withdraw from the mountain. A patrol from the FC/CTH sent west toward the Reno picked up six prisoners from the 194th Fusilier Battalion, an indication that the 16th SS Panzer Grenadier Division was being reinforced. In 4 days no progress had been made toward reducing Mount Stanco.

After the attack of 10 October failed, General Poole ordered the 12 South African Motorised Brigade to take Mount Stanco and then continue on to Mount Salvaro, the next prominent peak on the ridge. The 24 Guards Brigade would assist the attack on the right until Mount Salvaro had been taken; it would then attack Mount Sole. The lack of roads in the area made it difficult to move the troops into their forward positions, and it was 13 October before all preparations were completed. At 0230 the 1 Scots Guards launched a diversionary attack to the east of Grizzana supported by tank, 4.2-inch mortar, and artillery fire; at 0445 the division and supporting artillery laid down a 15-minute artillery preparation in what was the largest set piece attack the division had undertaken since El Alamein. Then the infantry attacked. On the left the WR/DLR made rapid progress. By 0600 a platoon had reached the summit of the mountain, although enemy units continued to hold out on the lower slopes. The FC/CTH on the right had to fight for each yard gained, but by early afternoon the 12 South African Motorised Brigade could report that the objective had been secured. A total of 128 prisoners were taken from the 94th Grenadier and the 16th SS Panzer Grenadier Divisions, and it was estimated that the day's fighting cost the enemy 500 casualties.

No attempt was made to continue the advance to Mount Salvaro until the supply situation could be improved. A patrol from the FC/CTH found Grizzana unoccupied on 14 October, and the next day the 1 Scots Guards took the high ground to the northeast of the village. This advance opened up the eastern portion of Highway 6424, another of the lateral roads connecting Highways 6620 and 64, and ended the necessity for the long haul north from Camugnano. Although the protracted fighting for Mount Stanco had prevented the division from matching the advances of II Corps, by 15 October the 24 Guards Brigade was securely tied in with the 1st Armored Division on its right, and there was no danger of II Corps being hampered by an unprotected flank; that danger was more serious on the long front held by the 6 South African Armoured Division. From Porretta, where CCB was held

up by road demolitions, to the Setta Valley north of Grizzana the division had its troops spread over a front of 15 miles.

F. 13 CORPS ON THE RIGHT

1-15 OCTOBER

With the change in direction of the Fifth Army offensive on 1 October from northeastward down the Santerno Valley to northward along the Florence—Bologna axis the importance of the 13 Corps drive on Faenza was overshadowed by the need for assisting the thrust to the north. With each mile that the II Corps salient extended into the mountains more troops were needed to protect the flanks. On the right, where the 88th Division needed its full strength for its attack on Mount Grande, General Clark ordered 13 Corps to take over as much as possible of the 88th Division zone. Since the right flank of 13 Corps remained fixed below Highway 67, even with the addition of the 78 Division the Corps was forced to devote most of its energy to carrying out its new assignment. The fall rains, which bogged down the four-wheeled British trucks more quickly than American transport, provided an additional limitation on offensive operations.

1. *Assisting the 88th Division.* At the beginning of October the 350th Infantry on Mount Battaglia was still engaged in fighting off the German attempts to pinch off the dangerous salient resulting from the 88th Division attack. The task of relieving these troops, assigned to the 1 Guards Brigade, was complicated by the fact that the only approach to the mountain was under direct observation of the enemy, forcing all movements to be made at night. It was planned that one battalion would relieve a battalion of the 350th Infantry each night beginning on 2-3 October. The first relief was effected at the scheduled time by the 3 Welsh Guards relieving the 1st Battalion, 350th Infantry, in position; the 2 Coldstream Guards took over from the 2d Battalion the following night; and the final relief was completed during the night of 4-5 October when the 3 Grenadier Guards replaced the 3d Battalion. During this time the enemy launched a series of counterattacks accompanied by heavy mortar and artillery fire. The counterattacks were repulsed, but the harassing fire continued, and the problem of supplies, which had forced a halt to the attack of the 88th Division, continued to be chronic.

The arrival in the 13 Corps zone of the 78 Division, temporarily commanded by Maj. Gen. R. K. Arbuthnott, permitted a more extensive program of reliefs. The 38 Brigade assembled in the Firenzuola area on 5 October, and then moved down the Santerno Valley to take over Mount Cappello from the 351st Infantry. Again the relieving troops were forced to make the approach march at night. Mules alone could negotiate the mountain trails beyond Castel del Rio, and since Fifth Army was

hard pressed to secure pack animals for other sections of the front the 8 Indian and 1 Divisions were called upon to supply the required draft animals from their own slender resources. During the night of 5-6 October the 2 London Irish Rifles made a 6-hour march to Mount Cappello to relieve the 14th Armored Infantry Battalion and the 1st Battalion, 351st Infantry; the next night the 2 Innisks and the 1 Royal Irish Fusiliers relieved the balance of the regiment. The 11 Brigade reached Firenzuola on the 6th. Mud, rain, and overcrowded roads delayed its movement forward. Only the 2 Lancashire Fusiliers, attached to the 38 Brigade, reached Mount Cappello on the 8th. The rest of the 11 Brigade, together with the newly arrived 36 Brigade, assembled in division reserve.

With the completion of the relief of the 88th Division troops on Mounts Cappello and Battaglia the intercorps boundary was shifted to the north side of the Santerno Valley. The new boundary, while leaving part of the Gesso ridge and Mount Spaduro in the II Corps zone, reduced the front of the 88th Division by nearly 6 miles. The next step in the Corps plans called for the 78 Division to drive north to Mount Spaduro so as to release the 88th Division troops attacking the Gesso ridge. Since the attached 1 Guards Brigade was fully engaged in holding Mount Battaglia and the 38 Brigade was needed to defend Mount Cappello, the date of the attack would depend on the time required to move additional troops forward. Division traffic was hampered by the destruction of the Sant'Andrea bridge, a lofty stone structure which crossed the Santerno above Castel del Rio before German engineers blew out the central spans. A temporary Bailey bridge had been put in downstream, but it was incapable of handling the required flow of traffic when the approaches to the bypass became slippery from the rains. Work was progressing on a 500-foot Bailey which was being constructed on the damaged piers of the original stone bridge. It was expected that the new Bailey would be open on the 13th; until it could be completed the 78 Division would be unable to support a major offensive.

In view of the supply problem and the continuing enemy counteroffensive against Mount Battaglia, General Arbuthnott decided to carry out a limited objective attack. He ordered the 11 Brigade to move its remaining troops forward on the 13th and attack that night against Monte La Pieve, a hamlet atop a hill south-east of Gesso. This effort was intended to assist the attack of the 351st Infantry toward Mount Spaduro as well as to protect the flank of the 88th Division. If casualties were not too heavy the brigade would assume responsibility for the Gesso ridge and then clear the high ground to the east. Meanwhile the 38 Brigade would push northeast from Mount Cappello to take Mount Taverna provided that the 1 Division came abreast of the troops on Mount Battaglia. If successful, the attack would give the division a more secure base in the Santerno Valley for further operations to assist the right flank of II Corps.

During 12 October the enemy launched four separate attacks against Mount Battaglia. Eighty-six prisoners were taken in the course of these assaults; thereafter the enemy gave up the effort to retake the mountain. The next day the 2 Lancashire Fusiliers and the 5 Northhamptons moved north of Castel del Rio to positions south of Monte La Pieve; that night, in accordance with the division plan, they jumped off. The 2 Lancashire Fusiliers was counterattacked short of the objective and forced back to its original position; the 5 Northhamptons nearly reached Monte La Pieve when it was stopped by German troops armed with flamethrowers. Close to 100 casualties were sustained by the attacking troops. The following day the 5 Northhamptons relieved the 1st Battalion, 351st Infantry, just west of Gesso, and the 8 Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders moved up to relieve the 3d Battalion, 351st Infantry. While these reliefs were in progress the 1 Surreys succeeded in establishing an outpost line just below Monte La Pieve. Although the failure of the 1 Division to take the high ground south of Mount Battaglia forced the 38 Brigade to remain on Mount Cappello and although Monte La Pieve was still in enemy hands, at the end of the period the 78 Division was ready to take over another portion of the II Corps right flank.

2. *Protecting the Army Right Flank.* Action on the remainder of the 13 Corps front was devoted to aiding the 78 Division, improving positions, and keeping as many enemy troops as possible pinned down on the Corps front. The major burden of this fighting fell to the 1 Division, which was advancing down the Senio Valley. At the beginning of October the 3 Brigade was astride Highway 934 below Mount del Pozzo and Mount Pianaccino, two heights guarding the Senio Valley below Palazzuolo; the 2 Brigade on the right had been relieved by the 8 Indian Division and was concentrating with the 66 Brigade in division reserve. On 1 October the 2 Sherwood Foresters reached the lower slopes of Mount Pianaccino where it was stopped temporarily by small-arms fire. By working around to the east of the mountain the battalion forced the Germans to pull back to Mount Ceco. The latter height was taken on the 3d, but before the 2 Sherwood Foresters could consolidate positions it was forced back by an enemy counterattack. A second assault the next day met a similar fate. In the meantime the 1 KSLI on the other side of the valley took Mount del Pozzo, Mount del Puntale, and the village of Buffadi, 2 miles below Mount Battaglia. This advance placed the 1 KSLI to the north of Mount Ceco, permitting the 3 Brigade to attack the height from three directions. Two platoons from the 1 Duke of Wellington's Regiment (1 DWR) and the 2 Sherwood Foresters reached the summit of the mountain on the 5th. For a third time the enemy laid down a mortar barrage on Mount Ceco and followed it up with a determined infantry attack; for a third time his efforts met with success.

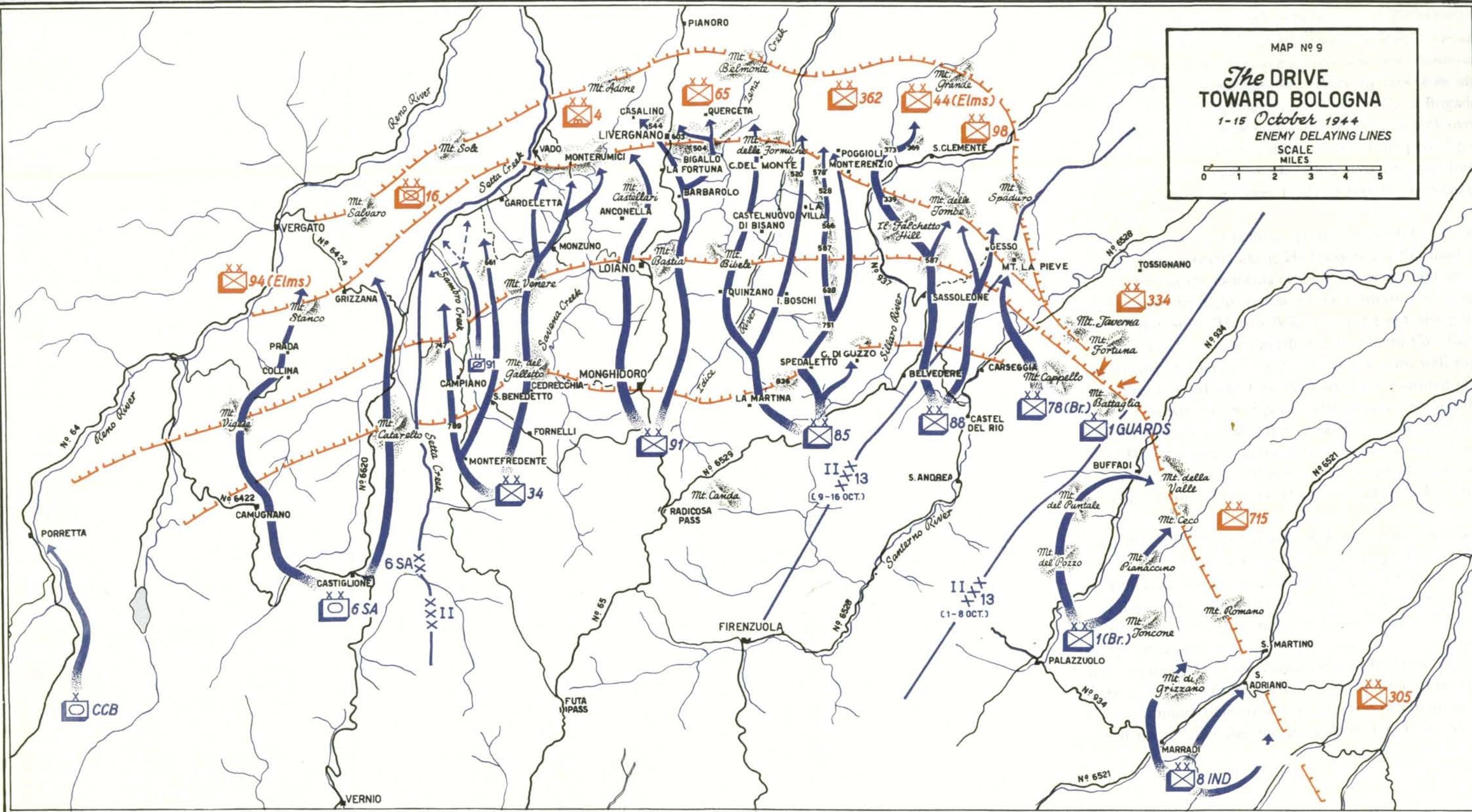
Having failed on three successive days to take Mount Ceco, the 3 Brigade de-

voted the period 6–7 October to working over the enemy positions with artillery fire and regrouping. On the night of 7–8 October the 1 DWR made an unsuccessful attempt to infiltrate into the enemy defenses under cover of darkness. The battalion spent the next day working around to the north flank of the height and then launched another night assault. Two platoons reached the summit, and this time reinforcements were available to repulse the enemy counterattacks. After 10 days of steady action the 3 Brigade was in need of a rest. Beginning on 10 October the 2 Brigade relieved the troops astride the Senio Valley; the next day the 66 Brigade took over the right portion of the division zone. For the remaining 4 days of the period patrols probed forward to locate the 715th Grenadier Division's next delaying line, supplies were brought forward, and preparations were made to take the remaining high ground south of Mount Battaglia.

The 8 Indian Division, faced by elements of both the 715th and 305th Grenadier Divisions, concentrated the bulk of its strength along Highway 6521, the road to Faenza. The 17 Brigade, after relieving the elements of the 1 Division in the area, confined its activities to probing along the highway toward Sant'Adriano, a village 3 miles beyond the crossroads at Marradi. The 19 Brigade, strung out along the trail leading from Marradi to Highway 67, worked north to take Mount Cavallara, a 2,440-foot height on the south side of Highway 6521. Enemy troops, well supported by artillery and mortar fire, held Mount Cavallara until the morning of 7 October when a company of the 1 Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders reached the summit. Later in the day the 21 Brigade relieved the 17 Brigade, taking over responsibility for the area north of Highway 6521; on the 14th it extended its left flank to include all the ground south of Senio Creek. Although an aggressive attitude was maintained along the whole of the division front, no effort was made to launch a major effort.

The 6 Armoured Division, astride Highway 67, also made only minor advances during the first half of October. With the 1 Guards Brigade employed to hold Mount Battaglia and the 26 Armoured Brigade guarding the exposed flank with 10 Corps the offensive strength of the division was seriously reduced. A further reduction was made at the end of the period when the division was ordered to assemble the 61 Brigade for use in taking over a portion of the 78 Division zone. The task of keeping pace with the advances made by II Corps forced General Kirkman to draw heavily on the units holding the less vital right flank, and there was little value to be gained from expending lives to win minor objectives. The success or failure of the Fifth Army offensive depended on maintaining the impetus of the II Corps offensive.

MAP No 9
The DRIVE TOWARD BOLOGNA
 1-15 October 1944
 ENEMY DELAYING LINES
 SCALE MILES
 0 1 2 3 4 5



G. AIR SUPPORT

Air support activity was restricted during the early part of October by heavy rains — 4.2 inches fell in the Florence area in the period 1–9 October — which reduced visibility and rendered air strips unserviceable. By 9 October only 12 missions of 42 sorties were able to get off the ground. Fighter-bombers, which flew 462 missions of 2,149 sorties in the first 10 days of October, continued to bomb and strafe enemy lines of communication in an effort to hamper the movement of enemy units concentrating against the II Corps salient. Enemy transport equipment and supply dumps were struck with considerable success; 41 gun positions were destroyed and 19 damaged. Extensive use of 110-gallon fuel tank incendiary bombs containing a jellylike mixture of gasoline and “Napalm” was made for the first time on the Italian front. These bombs proved particularly effective against enemy bivouacs and troop installations in wooded areas where the burning fuel, scattered over a wide area, could start numerous fires.

Plans for a massive air assault designed to destroy the enemy’s supply dumps in the Bologna area and to disrupt his lines of communication were prepared by XXII TAC for 12 October. Requested by Fifth Army and carried out by planes of the Tactical and Strategic Air Forces, the assault was intended to reduce the enemy’s war potential built up in the area between Mount Sole and Mount Grande. A total of 1,661 tons of bombs were dropped on 74 targets by 750 heavy bombers, 300 medium bombers, and 277 fighter-bombers. The close support part of the operation, carried out by fighter-bombers, required an additional 89 missions of 345 sorties. Reports of the disruption of administrative and supply installations came from German prisoners for days after the assault. Aside from the material damage inflicted on the enemy, this display of Allied air superiority had a beneficial effect on the morale of our troops.