

RESTRICTED

OPERATIONS
IN
SICILY and ITALY



DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY ART AND ENGINEERING
UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY
WEST POINT, NEW YORK
1950



HyperWar Foundation
1400 Cypress Circle, Lafayette, CO 80026-1244

RESTRICTED

FOREWORD

This account of the operations in Sicily and Italy is based for the most part on material furnished by the Historical Division, War Department Special Staff. However, in acknowledging this indebtedness it is not desired to place on the Historical Division the responsibility for any factual errors or for the conclusions drawn.

It is regretted that space limitations have not permitted a more complete discussion of the important part played by our Allies in the campaigns.

This and other pamphlets on World War II are constantly being revised as additional information becomes available. It will be appreciated if military personnel who note any apparent errors or discrepancies, or who have comments or suggestions for the improvement of the subject matter, will communicate them to:

The Professor of Military Art and Engineering
U. S. Military Academy
West Point, N. Y.

August 1947

RESTRICTED

OPERATIONS IN SICILY AND ITALY

THE INVASION OF SICILY

INTRODUCTION (Map 1)

The campaign in Tunisia ended on 13 May 1943. In view of the need for fighter cover over the area of the next operation, the call was at once made for forward air bases. In response to this the island of Pantelleria was subjected to a series of heavy bombardments from the air and sea. Over 11,000 prisoners were taken when it fell on 11 June. The next day, after twenty-four hours of continuous bombing and shelling, Lampedusa Island fell, and on the 13th the island of Linosa was captured. The Allies then had taken from the enemy all the air bases within easy reach, and the route to Sicily had been cleared. From the location of these air bases, and those in Malta and Tunisia, the enemy could not be certain whether Sicily or Sardinia would be the next Allied objective. As a result the Axis was forced to disperse troops and air forces in order to prepare for either contingency.

These preliminaries to the invasion of Sicily followed, of course, the actual decision to direct further Allied efforts from Tunisia toward that island off the southern coast of Italy. From the large strategic standpoint the decision itself is of interest, since the island of Sardinia is about as close to Tunisia as Sicily and offered many advantages as the next objective.

It was clear to Allied commanders that an invasion of Sardinia could be undertaken many weeks earlier than an assault on Sicily, because it was less heavily defended and thus would require the training and mounting of fewer Allied troops. However, the capture of Sardinia alone would not influence the situation in the Med-

iterranean to any great extent unless it were accompanied by the capture of Corsica, and were promptly followed by an attack on Italy or southern France. And further, the capture of both Sardinia and Corsica without Sicily could not greatly affect the commanding position of the Axis over the shipping routes in the Mediterranean.

No doubt the question was finally resolved by the choice of the main strategic objective. If Italy was the main objective, then the operation against Sardinia and Corsica was to be favored not only because of the element of time but also because the new position would place the Allies on the flank of all western Italy. This would in effect permit by-passing the Sicily-Pantelleria defensive barrier and cause the evacuation of those two islands by the Axis as soon as a firm lodgement had been made on the Italian mainland.

On the other hand, if the main objective was to clear the Mediterranean for Allied use, then the prompt capture of Sicily was indicated. An invasion of Italy could then be launched on a subsequent date.

From authoritative reports it is clear that the decision to invade Sicily was made in January 1943, during the Casablanca conference. In view of the subsequent invasion of Italy it is equally clear that the operation against the mainland was decided upon not many weeks later. Looking back over the broad picture, it is perhaps justifiable to conclude that the Allied high command took a conservative course in deciding to invade Sicily. The bolder and more decisive course would have been an operation against Sardinia and Corsica, followed by an invasion of the Italian mainland. Napoleon is credited with a statement to the effect that the proper way to invade Italy is from the top of the boot and not from the toe. An Allied attack launched from Sardinia would have followed more closely the sound tenet enunciated. However, in January 1943 the general situation in North Africa was obscure, with Rommel about to effect a junction with von Arnim and the end of the Tunisian campaign not yet in sight. The Combined Chiefs of Staff must have felt that Allied offensive action should be continued in the Mediterranean, since it was still essential that some of the pressure on Russia be removed and since it was not yet possible to launch an effective invasion of the Continent via northern France. In view of the uncertain aspect of the Tunisian campaign six months before its conclusion, the conquest of Sicily was decided upon. The purposes of the campaign would be (1) to clear completely the Allied line of communication in the Mediterranean, (2) to divert as much German strength as possible from the Russian front, and (3) to intensify the pressure on Italy.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF SICILY

Sicily is of strategic importance chiefly because of its geographic location. Separated from Italy by the narrow Strait of Messina, it in effect projects the mainland to the southwest to within ninety miles of the Cape Bon Peninsula in Tunisia. Thus it almost divides the Mediterranean into two huge basins, one to the east of the island and the other to the west. In order to travel by sea from one part to the other it is necessary to pass through the connecting Sicilian Strait. Control of this strait was divided between the Allies and the Axis so long as Sicily remained in the latter's possession. Enemy land-based planes from airfields on the island*, as well as submarines and naval craft from nearby ports, could and did interfere seriously with the flow of sea-borne supplies that passed through the Strait of Gibraltar bound for Malta, Egypt, or the Middle East. The capture of Sicily would remove this major threat to the vital Allied Mediterranean line of communication.

However, a greater strategic role was planned for Sicily. From the date of their inception, Allied plans for the African venture envisaged the occupation of Morocco and Algeria as a direct approach to Tunisia, and it in turn as a jumping-off-place for the ultimate invasion of Italy. In this scheme of things Sicily was to become the final important steppingstone on the route to that objective. It offered the advantage of an excellent near-by base of operations for the invasion of the mainland.

Acquisition of air bases in Sicily would simplify materially the problems presented to the Allies by an attack directed against the Italian mainland. The Sicilian ports of Marsala, Palermo, Catania, and Syracuse would enable large forces to be based on the island, and, in view of Allied sea and air supremacy, the entire area could be easily defended. Then, too, Italy's fleet, an important factor in the Allied strategic calculation, might be neutralized. Should the invasion of Sicily hasten the collapse of the Fascist regime, there was reason to hope that the Italian fleet would be surrendered or destroyed, with the result that Allied naval strength in the Mediterranean could be released for employment in other theaters.

THEATER OF OPERATIONS

The island of Sicily contains about 10,000 square miles. It is slightly larger than the State of Vermont and about the same size as the Crimea. The coast line measures some 485 miles.

*Later reconnaissance revealed that there were no fewer than thirty main airfields.

The surface of the island is almost entirely mountainous, except for the large plain of Catania in the east and the rolling country in the extreme west. To the north of the Catanian plain Mount Etna rises from a base of 400 square miles to a height of 10,740 feet. Situated close to the east coast, this mountain limits the direct approach from Catania to Messina, and thence to the mainland of Italy, to a narrow coastal defile between the mountain and the sea.

From the chief mountain range, which extends along the northern coast, spurs radiate toward the south, flattening out as they approach the coast.

There are no large rivers and none that are major obstacles. During the rainy winter months the mountain streams become torrents, but during the summer most of them dry up.

An adequate standard railroad net exists. The roads are good, but often narrow and suitable for only one-way military traffic. Owing to the mountainous terrain, both roads and railroads can be quickly and easily blocked.

Except in the mountains, the climate is mild, and military operations can be conducted during any season.

PLANS AND OPPOSING FORCES (Map 2)

As early as the Casablanca conference, January 1943, the month of July was chosen for the invasion of Sicily, and the favorable moon phase of the month selected as the period of active operations.

It is of interest to note that the initial plans called for a British assault on southeastern Sicily, generally between Augusta and Gela, followed by two separate American assaults: one against the Sciacca-Mazara area of southwestern Sicily on D plus 2 and the other in the Castellammare area of northwestern Sicily on D plus 5. The revised plan that was actually put into operation provided for an initial assault against only southeastern Sicily, and both the British and American task forces were to be employed in a manner designed to achieve a more closely concentrated and coordinated action. It was concluded that under this plan the objective of severing Axis communications between Sicily and Italy could be achieved more quickly than would have been possible under the original plan. The disadvantages of the revised plan were that the available landing beaches were not so satisfactory and that in the American zone no large port could be secured during the initial phase. It is evident that the plan adopted was the more conservative, since landings at widely separated points would have subjected our forces to the danger of defeat in detail.

Under the final plan General Eisenhower was to remain in supreme command, with General Alexander, deputy commander, in charge of the combined Allied ground forces—to be called the Fifteenth Army Group. This army group was to be made up of the British Eighth Army, under General Montgomery, and the American Seventh Army, commanded by General Patton. For the first time in the war a complete American army was to fight in the field.

The general mission of the Allied invasion forces was to assault the southeastern portion of Sicily and subsequently to capture the entire island as a base for future operations.

A large naval force was to furnish artillery support for the landings and the initial ground operations. The combined British and American naval units would be commanded by Admiral of the Fleet Sir Andrew Cunningham.

From fighter bases on Malta and newly captured Pantelleria and from bomber bases in Tunisia, a huge air force was to establish a complete umbrella over the landing areas. The Allied air force was to be under the command of Air Chief Marshal Tedder.

As provided in the operational plan, the American Seventh Army would sail from Bizerte and ports to the west, while the British Eighth Army would start from Malta and ports in Africa as far east as Port Said and Alexandria.*

The specific mission of the Seventh Army was to effect landings in its assigned area and operate west of the line Vizzini-Ragusa-Pozzallo. In order to carry out its part in the landing phase, the Seventh Army plan provided for two major assault forces, called "Shark" and "Joss", together with an adequate reserve. The composition of these and other forces is shown on the map.

The Seventh Army's plan was to make simultaneous landings along the coast from Licata to Scoglitti; to extend the beachhead with all possible speed to "Line Yellow" (see map); and finally to occupy the high ground in the vicinity of Piazza Amerina in order to prevent hostile interference from the northwest. This final extension was termed "Line Blue" in the plan.

Shark Force, made up of Dime, Cent, and Wolf Forces, was to be under the immediate command of Lieutenant General Omar N. Bradley, who so successfully commanded the II Corps in Tunisia. This assault group had the following assigned missions: (1) under the cover of darkness to land in the Gela-Scoglitti area and capture the airfield at Ponte Olivo by daylight on D plus 1 and the airfield north of Comiso by the night of D plus 2; (2) to extend the beachhead to

*The 1st Canadian Infantry Division would sail from England.

Line Yellow and gain contact with the British on the right, in the vicinity of Ragusa, and with the 3d Infantry Division on the left.

Major General Lucian K. Truscott was to be in command of Joss Force. Its missions were: (1) to land in the Licata area; (2) to capture the port and airfield by dark of D-day; (3) to extend the beachhead to Line Yellow; (4) to protect the left flank of the landing forces against hostile interference from the northwest; and (5) to make contact with the II Corps on its right.

As mentioned previously, the Seventh Army plan made ample provision for reserves. Their mobility was preserved as much as possible in order to facilitate prompt committal either to bolster the landing operation or to exploit the successes achieved during that phase. These reserves consisted of three main forces:

1. Kool Force, commanded by Major General Hugh J. Gaffey; to sail with the assault forces and to be held as a floating reserve.
2. The 82d Airborne Division (less elements in Wolf Force), commanded by Major General Matthew B. Ridgway; to be prepared to support the assault from its bivouac in Africa.
3. One regimental combat team and the division artillery of the 9th Infantry Division was to be ready to move from Bizerte on call of General Patton after D-day; the remainder of the division was to be prepared to move by D plus 8.

In short, General Patton's initial landing force was to consist of three infantry divisions and part of an armored division. These were to be backed up by a floating reserve of about one division and by two divisions in North Africa, one of which—the 82d Airborne—could be quickly transported to the place needed.

Simultaneously with the landing of the American Seventh Army, the British Eighth Army (composition shown on the map), still under the command of General Montgomery, was to land on the southeastern coast of Sicily, generally from Pozzallo to the vicinity of Syracuse. Its missions were: (1) to capture the airfields in its zone; (2) to advance northward to capture the ports of Syracuse, Augusta, and the large port of Catania; and (3) to contact the American II Corps in the vicinity of Ragusa.

An airborne regiment of the British 1st Airborne Division was scheduled to drop in the area immediately south of Syracuse to seize a vital bridge and key points commanding the town.

D-day was to be 10 July 1943, with H-hour at 0245.

In order to deceive the enemy, the British naval forces in the Mediterranean planned two diversionary attacks. The eastern naval components were to rendezvous far to the southeast of Sicily and

subsequently were to concentrate directly north, in the Ionian Sea. The entire force would then be in position both to protect the Allied east flank against interference by Italian surface forces and, in addition, to mask our real intentions from the enemy by appearing to threaten the western coast of Greece. At the same time the western naval components were to cover the assault convoys coming from the western Mediterranean, block the approaches through the Tyrrhenian Sea to any elements of the Italian Navy, and then execute a diversionary attack against western Sicily with the object of containing enemy forces in that area.

There is doubt as to the effectiveness of the diversion directed against the western coast of Greece, but it is quite clear from later events that the one against western Sicily was successful beyond all expectations and helped materially to achieve a large degree of strategic and tactical surprise.

President Roosevelt was the first to reveal the size of the Allied forces that launched the attack on Sicily. In a radio address he said: "The initial assault force on Sicily involved 3000 ships which carried 160,000 men—Americans, British, Canadians, and French—together with 14,000 vehicles, 600 tanks, and 1800 guns. This initial force was followed every day and every night by thousands of reinforcements." Before the campaign ended, the American strength alone exceeded 200,000 men.

The enemy forces consisted of the Italian Sixth Army, made up of five weak Italian coastal divisions, four Italian infantry divisions, and two German armored divisions (15th and Hermann Goering). Later the German 29th Armored Grenadier Division, together with the equivalent of another division, was transported to Sicily for use during the final phase of the campaign. General Alfredo Guzzoni, a veteran officer who had led the Italian invasion of Albania in 1939, commanded initially, but after Italian resistance collapsed, he was succeeded by a German commander, General Hube. Total enemy combat strength was estimated at some 200,000 troops.

Enemy air strength for the central Mediterranean (to include Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, and southern France) was estimated at about 1600 serviceable combat planes, of which more than one half were German. To oppose this strength the Allies had about 3700 planes available.

OPERATIONS

The tempo of strategic bombing that had been carried on throughout the campaign in Tunisia was sharply increased during the latter

part of June and early July. Axis shipping in the western Mediterranean and airfields on Sardinia began to suffer from this organized attention. Strategic bases in Sicily were heavily bombed, and repeated attacks were made against airfields on the mainland of Italy. In the beginning Axis fighter resistance was particularly determined over Sicily, with more than a hundred enemy aircraft rising day after day to meet the Allied planes. But during the four weeks of the Allied air offensive the enemy air forces became widely dispersed by the broad compass of our bombing. German fighters were defeated in the air, and enemy opposition was largely neutralized by the damage to Sicilian airfields. Furthermore, during this softening-up period a constant pounding of shipping in the Strait of Messina seriously interrupted the flow of supplies to Sicily. Air reconnaissance showed that out of five train ferries at Reggio Calabria, the mainland terminal, four had been bombed out of service, with resultant congestion of rail traffic on both sides of the strait.

In the final week before the invasion the main Gerbini airfields, southwest of Catania, received 1300 tons of bombs in thirty-five attacks, with the result that on D-day the central airdrome and seven satellites were unserviceable. The southernmost airdrome, at Comiso, was likewise bombed out of commission, and other eastern fields were badly hit. These operations disorganized the enemy's air defenses in eastern Sicily, just as earlier raids had seriously weakened those in the west.

Finally, on the night of 9-10 July, there was another large-scale bombing of remaining airfields and of targets in the assault areas as a prelude to the dawn attacks.

In the meantime the assault forces were making the final preparations in North African ports in accordance with carefully detailed plans. The 3d Infantry Division and Combat Command A of the 2d Armored Division were assembled at Bizerte. The 45th Infantry Division, which had been transported from the United States in time to engage in the operation, was assembled at Oran, together with the remainder of the 2d Armored Division. The 1st Infantry Division assembled at Algiers, while the 82d Airborne Division made its preparations at Kairouan, in Tunisia. Tactical headquarters of the Seventh Army was established on the U. S. S. *Monrovia*. A transport was chosen instead of a warship, since experience in the North African landings had shown that command and communications were impaired when a warship went into action.

On the morning of 9 July 1943 the great armada converged toward Malta (Map 1). A heavy wind had whipped up a rough sea, but the expedition was ordered to proceed toward Sicily.

At Kairouan the fleet of C-47 transports received orders to warm up and take aboard their cargo of paratroopers (Wolf Force). Some hours later the air fleet roared over Malta en route to its drop zone, the high ground north and east of Ponte Olivo airport, six miles northeast of Gela (Map 3). The paratroops were scheduled to land there at 2330 hours on 9 July, but a forty-mile wind blew the planes from their course, and parachutists were strewn over a large part of southeastern Sicily—from Ponte Olivo to Niscemi, Vizzini, and Ragusa, and even as far east as Noto in the Eighth Army sector. None of them were assembled in time to participate in the initial fighting as organized units.

Various opinions have been given regarding the value of the airborne operation. The general consensus of opinion seems to be that despite the fact that the units were widely scattered and suffered heavy casualties, the airborne troops accomplished many things of value and materially contributed to the success of both British and American operations.

Meanwhile the passage of the vast Allied convoy to Sicilian coastal waters continued. Transports arrived off the coast on schedule, and shortly after midnight of the 9th assault troops began moving toward the beaches in their landing craft. It is reported that there was neither confusion nor excitement and that each man seemed to understand the part he was to play.

By 0600 hours all landings had been successfully accomplished. A naval bombardment, which had begun at 0345, silenced the few coastal batteries that protected the beaches. Large-scale enemy resistance at the water's edge never materialized during the initial landings—a definite indication that tactical surprise was achieved. At daybreak enemy air forces launched a series of bombing attacks that turned out to be their major air effort of the entire campaign.

The II Corps had been assigned fifty-seven miles of beach. On the right flank of the corps the 45th Infantry Division, Major General Troy H. Middleton commanding, had made its landings in good order, except for one regiment that became widely dispersed. Nonetheless the division occupied Scoglitti and Vittoria, its initial objectives.

In the meantime the 1st Infantry Division, Major General Terry de la M. Allen commanding, had landed just southeast of Gela against little opposition.* Likewise, Joss Force, on the left of the II Corps, had landed and occupied Licata by 1130 against slight enemy resistance.

*The town of Gela was captured by a Ranger battalion.

At 1800 hours Kool Force, the floating reserve, debarked east of Gela on the Dime Force beaches and assembled north of the coastal highway. Thus by the end of D-day all Seventh Army beachheads had been established to a depth of two to four miles and the situation was well in hand. These initial successes had been achieved at the relatively small cost of fifty-eight killed, 199 wounded, and 700 missing. Enemy prisoners of war totalled 4265.

British landing operations likewise were carried out in accordance with the Allied plan. During the night of 9-10 July a regiment of airborne troops landed with the mission of seizing Syracuse in the XIII Corps zone. Initial objectives were the canal and railroad bridges south and west of the city. Like the American airborne operation, this attempt was largely nullified by the failure to land near the objectives. Only eight officers and sixty-five men reached the canal bridge during the night, and they were so seriously pressed by the enemy that they were forced to withdraw at 1530 on the 10th. Later, patrols of the British 5th Infantry Division arrived and drove the enemy northward. For some unknown reason the bridge was left intact by the enemy, and the 5th Division pushed on toward Augusta. Meanwhile the British 50th Infantry Division, the remaining component of the XIII Corps, had landed and captured Avola and Noto.

In the XXX Corps zone the 51st Infantry Division landed near Cape Passero and advanced to Pachino against only minor opposition, while the 1st Canadian Infantry Division landed on the west side of Cape Passero and advanced to make contact.

After the successful landing on the 10th* the situation developed rapidly for the Seventh Army. Having taken a full day to evaluate the situation and group forces for a counterattack, the enemy now launched his major effort to throw the Allied invaders back into the sea. The attack commenced at 0800 on the 11th, with the greatest effort directed against the 1st Infantry Division in the Gela beachhead. This attack was spearheaded by twenty Mark VI tanks that moved south on the Ponte Olivo road, the axis of advance. The line held by a regiment of the 1st Division was pierced by the onslaught, and the enemy reached a point only 200 yards from Gela. In response to division orders all available artillery and naval fire

*An unfortunate incident occurred on the night of the 10th and the morning of the 11th when twenty-three C-47 transports were shot down by fire from Allied naval and ground forces. The formation of 170 aircraft was bringing 2500 troops of the 82d Airborne Division into the Gela area as reinforcements, and had the ill luck to arrive in the battle zone during an enemy bombing attack. Four hundred and ten men were lost.

was concentrated on the advancing tanks and by noon had succeeded in stopping them. Enemy infantry that had followed the armored vehicles was driven off by small-arms fire. Meanwhile another regiment of the 1st Division also felt the force of the enemy when forty Mark IV's spearheaded another assault. Nine enemy tanks managed to enter Gela and cause considerable confusion, but this attack likewise was broken up by American tanks, artillery, rocket guns, and antitank grenades, and the situation was restored by noon. At 1630 the enemy launched a third counterattack, with the Butera-Gela road as the axis of advance. This time the Rangers, supported by infantry and engineer shore groups that were called from their beach duties to aid in the defense, finally repelled the attack. The excellent artillery support given to the ground troops by the Navy warships in range was a major factor in the defeat of all of these armored counterattacks.

On the right flank of the II Corps the 45th Infantry Division seized the airfield north of Comiso about 1700 hours. This was accomplished in the face of stern enemy resistance, but was rewarded by the capture of 125 planes, of which twenty were in operating condition. By nightfall elements of the division had pushed on to occupy Ragusa, at which point contact was established the next day with advancing units of the 1st Canadian Division.

The 3d Infantry Division's sector was relatively quiet during the enemy assault against the Gela beachhead. Without much opposition it advanced to Line Yellow, thereby accomplishing its original mission.

American casualties for 11 July totalled 127 killed, 410 wounded, and 1794 missing. This was the largest number of casualties suffered by the Seventh Army during any twenty-four-hour period of the thirty-eight-day campaign in Sicily.

Costly repulses of the enemy counterattacks on the 11th did not preclude the resumption of their efforts to reduce Seventh Army beachheads. On the following morning an infantry attack supported by tanks was launched against the 1st Division just south of Niscemi, and two of its regiments became heavily engaged. With the assistance of elements of the 2d Armored Division this attack was turned back by 1400 hours, after the enemy had suffered the loss of four Mark VI's, twenty-nine Mark III's and IV's, ten Italian tanks, and 4206 prisoners. During this engagement the third regiment of the 1st Division seized the Ponte Olivo airfield.

By nightfall of the 12th elements of the 45th Division had taken Biscari, although the important airfield still remained in enemy

hands, and in the 3d Division zone the line had been pushed to Canicatti. The Seventh Army's foothold on Sicily was from eight to fifteen miles deep, and the important airfields that had been won by the assault groups were now beyond the range of artillery fire.

By this time a clearer idea of enemy dispositions had been gained. The Italian 54th Infantry Division had been dispersed by the British Eighth Army, and the 4th Infantry Division was in the Caltagirone-Riesi area. The 207th Coastal Division was between Canicatti and Agrigento. A part of the Hermann Goering Armored Division was five miles northeast of Niscemi, and the presence of the 15th Armored Division had been established. The enemy units that were originally in western Sicily were moving rapidly eastward.

The most important operations of the Seventh Army during the 13th and 14th centered around the capture of the Biscari airfield and the establishment of a continuous front. On the 14th units of the 45th Division took the airfield. Its loss was a serious blow to Axis air power in Sicily, for eighty planes were destroyed or captured. It was now estimated that the enemy air force had been whittled down to only 40 per cent of its pre-invasion strength. Following its success at Biscari, the 45th Division pushed on to positions five miles south of Caltagirone. Meanwhile the 1st Division took Niscemi and Mazzarino.

The dispositions of the Seventh Army units on 15 July are indicated on the map. Not shown are the 2d Armored Division, the 1st and 4th Ranger Battalions, and the 82d Airborne Division, which were in army reserve in the vicinity of Gela and Butera.

In the meantime, following their successful landings, the divisions of the Eighth Army pushed westward and northward. The 5th Division captured Augusta on 13 July after a severe fight with the German defenders. Moving around the 5th Division, the 50th advanced up the coast toward Catania, its next objective. The 51st Division moved rapidly from Avola through Palazzolo, while the 1st Canadian Division advanced via Pozzallo to make contact with the American 45th Division at Ragusa, and then onward to capture Vizzini by the 13th. In the fighting that took place during these advances two Italian divisions—the 206th Coastal and 54th—were dispersed, many prisoners being taken. German units fought resolutely, but were forced to retire northward. By 15 July the Eighth Army dispositions were as shown on the map.

It was now evident that the critical phase of the invasion had been passed and that the Seventh and Eighth Armies had more than a firm foothold on Sicily.

Apparently the frustration of enemy counterattacks on all parts of the front (Map 4) had led the Axis command to make a decision to withdraw to the northeast, fighting only delaying actions and making only local counterattacks. Air reconnaissance at the time revealed a general movement of the enemy toward the Catania plain south and southwest of Mount Etna. In view of this development, General Alexander, on 15 July, modified the plan for the conquest of Sicily. The general direction of advance of the Seventh Army was now to be toward the northwest, and the Eighth Army was to advance northward around both sides of Mount Etna, with Messina as the final objective. These combined operations would tend to split the Axis forces, isolate the western portion of the island, and threaten the only logical route of escape to the northeast—via Messina to the Italian mainland.

A new corps, known as the Provisional Corps and commanded by Major General Geoffrey Keyes, deputy commander of the Seventh Army, was now formed on the left of the II Corps. This new corps included the 3d Infantry Division, the 2d Armored Division (1st and 4th Ranger Battalions attached), and the 82d Airborne Division (with a combat team from the 9th Infantry Division attached).

The boundary between the Provisional Corps and the II Corps was extended to the eastern outskirts of Palermo, which city became the major objective of General Keyes' corps. At the same time a new boundary was established between the Seventh and Eighth Armies (as shown on the map) that made it necessary to side-step the 45th Division to the left.

In accordance with the new plan, operations commenced on the 15th. During the following fifteen days enemy resistance in front of the American Seventh Army decreased rapidly as Axis forces rushed eastward in a frantic effort to concentrate and to escape being isolated, but the Canadians and Americans who were operating in the central zone of advance had to fight their way northward through difficult hill country.

At this time the mission of the II Corps was to continue its movement to the north and northwest and cut the coastal road, while the Provisional Corps was carrying out its movement toward Palermo from the south and southwest.

From the 15th to the 23d of July the Seventh Army made rapid gains. On the left the Provisional Corps pushed on to capture Palermo on the evening of 22 July, against what were reported as "pathetic defense efforts by the Italians." The harbor was a shambles from our own bombardment, and at the time of entry forty-four

sunken vessels of all types were in the channels and at the docks, reducing port capacity to about 20 per cent. At this time the Provisional Corps was directed to administer western Sicily, and its activities as an aggressive combat organization came to an end.

While the Provisional Corps took Palermo, the 1st and 45th Infantry Divisions drove to the northwest. Thus the island had been cut in two by the Seventh Army, and the time had arrived for it to assist in pushing the enemy into the Messinian peninsula in order to destroy him there if possible. This necessitated a change of front, and accordingly the entire II Corps was turned eastward.

In the meantime, after the capture of Augusta by the British 5th Infantry Division on 13 July, the Eighth Army's next objective had been Catania, the occupation of which would secure an important port and airfields there and at Gerbini.

The Catania plain, south of the city, is flat and almost totally devoid of cover. Three rivers flow through it on their way to the sea. The one farthest north is the Simeto, which winds to the southeast until it meets the Dittaino, whence it turns eastward to empty into the Gulf of Catania. The Gornalunga River traverses the plain from west to east and runs into the Simeto just west of Ponte Di Primo-sole. The capture intact of the Primosole bridge was, therefore, of great importance to the Eighth Army.

On the night of 13-14 July a parachute group was dropped close to the bridge, and although difficulties of navigation reduced the size of the intended landing force, the paratroopers succeeded in capturing the undamaged bridge. The next night a superior German force retook the bridge, but on the morning of the 15th the 50th Infantry Division recaptured it, and for the next four days engaged in a fierce battle to establish a bridgehead. While these operations were in progress, the British 5th Division, which had been engaged in mopping up north of Augusta, moved up on the left of the 50th Division. It was given the mission of forcing bridgeheads over all three rivers.

Meanwhile the 51st Division had advanced along the axis Franco-fonte-Scordia and by 19 July had crossed the Gornalunga and had established a bridgehead over the Dittaino. The attack failed to carry Gerbini against strong enemy opposition, and by the 21st the division was pinned to its Dittaino bridgehead.

On the morning of 23 July the situation on the Eighth Army front was as follows: The 51st Division had failed to take Gerbini, while on its right the 5th and 50th Divisions had made little progress against fierce German resistance south of Catania. But on the left of the 51st the 1st Canadian and 78th Divisions had made good progress

in an enveloping movement around the northwestern side of the plain. Their advance had carried them to Leonforte, from where they were preparing to push on through difficult country toward Agira and Catenanuova. The positions reached on 23 July by the divisions of the Fifteenth Army Group are shown on the map.

After its advance to Petralia on the 23d (Map 5) the American 1st Division next day pushed toward Nicosia, while the 45th Division took Cefalu, on the coast road, and Castelbuono, some fifteen miles inland.

Several days were then spent in preparing the II Corps for the advance eastward. Seventh Army Headquarters regrouped some of its forces in order to provide the II Corps with maximum support, and five battalions of artillery from the Provisional Corps were placed at General Bradley's disposal, together with the 39th Regimental Combat Team of the 9th Infantry Division, which was attached to the 1st Division.

By the 27th all indications pointed to the organization of a strong line of defense by the enemy in the San Fratello-Troina area, and the movement of the II Corps continued eastward against increasing opposition. However, during the night of 30-31 July San Stefano was captured by the 45th Division with the aid of naval gunfire. The 45th was then replaced by the 3d Infantry Division. On the same night the 1st Division moved to within five miles of Troina, having taken Nicosia and Cerami on the way.

By 2 August the 3d Division had consolidated its position about six miles east of San Stefano and was prepared to move eastward along the coast against San Fratello, while the 1st Division had completed preparations for a coordinated attack against enemy positions in the difficult country near Troina. The dispositions of the Seventh Army at this time (2 August) are shown on the map.

On the Eighth Army front General Montgomery had ordered the 51st Division to side-step to the left on 22 July and make its next attack from the Sferro bridgehead, the 5th Division taking over the Gerbini bridgehead. These changes were completed by the 25th, and five days were allowed for extensive reconnaissance and other preparations. The attack started at 2350 hours, 31 July. Instead of launching the main attack from the Sferro bridgehead, the division commander made a demonstration at that point and crossed the river about two miles to the west in a surprise envelopment of the enemy position. This attack was entirely successful, and during the night of 1-2 August contact was established with the troops in the Sferro bridgehead. The Germans were forced to withdraw hurriedly to a new position on the left bank of the Simeto River.

On the left of the 51st the 78th Division had captured Centuripe on 2 August, and the 1st Canadian Division had occupied Agira. The Germans then began to abandon their Mount Etna positions, and enemy units started to thin out in the coastal area around Catania, withdrawing slowly northward under the protection of strong rear guards. Eighth Army dispositions on 2 August were as shown on the map.

Battles of Troina and San Fratello.—A glance at the map will show that at this stage of the operations there were only two available routes of advance toward the east in the zone of the II Corps, the coastal road and the Troina-Cesaro-Randazzo highway. The Adrano-Bronte-Randazzo road was in the British zone. It was along these three routes that Axis units (except those on the east coast) would have to retreat. If the British succeeded in pushing through Bronte to Randazzo, they would cut off Axis forces at Troina, and a breakthrough at Troina by the Americans would trap enemy units facing the British to the south.

Considering the II Corps zone alone, it was equally clear that Troina, Cesaro, and Randazzo, in the south, and San Fratello and Naso, along the coast, were the keys to the entire defensive system of the Axis on that side of Mount Etna. The increased vigor of enemy action at Troina and San Fratello indicated that he intended to make a determined stand.

The II Corps plan for the attack at Troina by the 1st Infantry Division, reinforced, called for envelopments of both enemy flanks and a strong frontal attack from the west. One regiment was to move around to the north and then southeast to cut the Troina-Cesaro road while a motorized battalion moved south via Agira and then northeast against the enemy left flank. The rest of the division would launch a strong attack astride the road to Troina. This attack commenced on schedule at 1530 on the 3d. Stubborn enemy resistance developed from the very beginning of the action. From the first day of fighting in Sicily the Axis forces had impeded the advance of Allied troops by using every delaying tactic known to modern warfare. Now that the possible routes of Allied advance were strictly limited, these tactics became even more effective. All bridges were blown up, roads were badly damaged, and the delay caused by expertly planted mine fields was greatly increased. As a result the 1st Division's attack succeeded only in capturing some high ground to the west and northwest of Troina.

On the next day, 4 August, several additional artillery battalions were brought up to support a renewal of the attack, and all guns commenced firing at 1645 hours. Two waves of thirty-six planes

each dropped 500-pound bombs on enemy targets. After this the infantry jumped off, at 1735. But the battered German defenders held doggedly to their machine-gun and mortar positions, and only limited and isolated successes were achieved by the attackers. Attacks were continued on the 5th, but the general situation remained unchanged. It was clear that the defenders were successfully covering the withdrawal of other Axis forces around the northwest side of Mount Etna.

It was on this date that the 9th Infantry Division began an advance which from all reports greatly influenced the final capture of Troina. After the occupation of Palermo the 9th (less one combat team) had embarked at Oran and had landed at Palermo on 1 August. It was then moved by trucks to an assembly area just west of Cerami, which it reached on 5 August. According to a II Corps directive the 9th was to relieve the 1st Division east of Troina after the capture of that town by the latter. The next natural defensive line available to the Germans would be San Fratello-Cesaro-Adrano, and the division plan of attack was based on breaking the portion of that defensive line in its zone of advance and capturing Cesaro. General Eddy, the division commander, planned to envelop the Cesaro ridge position from the north, using one infantry regiment to strike southward down the San Fratello-Cesaro road while the other made a secondary attack along the Troina-Cesaro road. The route of advance for the enveloping force was Capizzi-Mount Pelato-Mount Camolato. Only mule trails existed between Capizzi and Mount Camolato, and all possible effort was to be concentrated on building a road behind the attacking force, depending on mules for supply and evacuation until it could be completed.

It had been hoped that the 1st Infantry Division would have captured Troina by 5 August and that its relief by the 9th Division could be accomplished by the night of 5-6 August. With this in mind the enveloping attack of the 9th had been put in motion along its planned route of advance at daybreak on 5 August. When the capture of Troina was not accomplished by the 5th, the relief of the 1st Division was delayed, but General Bradley directed that the enveloping attack be continued. If the 1st Division proved incapable of capturing the strongly held positions at Troina within the next few days, he planned on moving the entire 9th Division along the route of the enveloping column in an effort to outflank the Troina defenses with an overwhelming force.

Without opposition the enveloping attack of the 9th Division reached Mount Pelato shortly before midnight on the 5th. It is considered quite likely that this movement caused the withdrawal of

German artillery that was located northeast of Troina in support of its defense, and may have led to the enemy decision to evacuate the town itself. In any event, during the night of 5-6 August patrols of the 1st Division pushed forward and at 0300 on the 6th reported that the Germans had abandoned Troina. Thus ended a battle during which the Germans had resisted strongly and had launched twenty-four separate counterattacks.

On the night of 6-7 August the 9th Division relieved the 1st east of Troina and prepared to continue its advance on the 8th.

While the 1st Division was attempting to capture Troina, the 3d Division was fighting along the coastal road in an effort to break the enemy defense at San Fratello. On 3 August it advanced to the Furiano River but could not cross, despite the fire support of a cruiser and two destroyers. The enemy held a strong horseshoe-shaped position with both flanks anchored on commanding terrain. For two days all efforts of the 3d Division to advance across the river were repelled, and a force that crossed on the 6th was hurled back by a strong enemy counterattack. But because of the enemy retreat from Troina on the 6th the left flank of the San Fratello position was exposed, and its defenders were forced to withdraw. Our troops then crossed the Furiano. In order to disorganize the enemy and prevent his escape eastward, an amphibious assault was carried out against his rear on the 8th. A small task force, composed of one tank platoon, two batteries of field artillery, a detachment of engineers, and a battalion of infantry, was loaded at San Stefano and successfully landed two miles east of San Agata. This operation broke the enemy resistance at San Fratello, and the 3d Division moved through to gain contact with the amphibious force by 1600, after capturing some 1200 prisoners.

During these operations cruisers and destroyers of our Navy continually bombarded the coastal road and enemy positions. A Navy communique said: "The Army attributes the speed of advance along the coastal road to this naval cooperation."

Meanwhile in the Eighth Army zone the 50th Division delivered strong attacks against Catania, meeting stiff resistance from enemy rear guards. The British Navy supported these attacks, its fire controlled from shore observation posts. It was reported that the naval fire was most accurate and delivered promptly upon request. On the night of 5-6 August the Germans abandoned Catania, and the next morning the British marched into the city.

By 8 August the Eighth Army was advancing all along its front. On the right the 50th Division had passed through Catania and was making slow progress up the coastal road to Acireale, hindered by

extensive demolitions. The 5th Division was in Misterbianco. The 51st was advancing towards Biancavilla, which it reached that day. The 78th, which had crossed the Simeto, had pinched out the 1st Canadian Division and had moved on rapidly to take Adrano. It was now approaching Bronte.

This British advance threatened enemy forces on the front of the American 9th Division, and they withdrew toward Randazzo. Cesaro was occupied by the 9th Division early on the 8th, and General Eddy's men pushed on toward Randazzo.

After the severe fighting during the first eight days of August, the Axis forces abandoned all efforts to stem the Allied advance and began a final withdrawal to embarkation points. This retrograde movement was favored by the mountainous terrain that continued to lend itself to the use of effective road blocks and demolitions. The Axis held the northeast triangle of Sicily, with the Allies at the base and the evacuation proceeding from the tip. Enemy forces were concentrated in strength to protect only the three routes of withdrawal, since the intervening areas were so impracticable for vehicles that they needed to be held by only small patrols. The situation was ideal for delaying action.

Efforts of the enemy troops to reform and reorganize for a defense on the Cape Orlando-Naso line were broken by a strong 3d Division attack. This involved a second successful envelopment by sea, with a landing at Brolo on 11 August. Cape Orlando was captured the next day.

On the 15th a third amphibious attack was launched in order to cut off the enemy retreat. The assault force was to land in the vicinity of Falcone, but the troops advancing overland were moving ahead so rapidly that the landing point was changed to the beaches northwest of Barcellona. This landing was made without incident, but not in time to trap the retreating enemy.

The Allied forces entered Messina at daylight on 17 August, after the last German detachment had left the embarkation point.

The enemy evacuation across the narrow Strait of Messina was very successful. Since the Allies had complete and undisputed command of the sea and air, it would seem that the odds weighed heavily against the Axis removing many of their men and much of their equipment. Yet few prisoners and little mobile matériel were captured. It is significant that the Allies sank very few of the small craft used by the enemy as his means of escape. From reports it is clear that the successful evacuation was due largely to good organization and fire power. Under the protection of coast-defense guns

and some 400 antiaircraft weapons the equivalent of over three German divisions and many badly shaken Italian troops, with nearly all their heavy matériel, reached the mainland.

American casualties in the campaign numbered 1425 killed, 5200 wounded, and 791 missing. Total Eighth Army casualties are reported to have been 9353. In his efforts to prevent, or at least delay, the conquest of Sicily the enemy lost over 164,000 men—dead, wounded, and prisoners—of which 32,000 were Germans. The Allies captured seventy German tanks, 282 pieces of German artillery, and 3500 motor vehicles. More than 1000 aircraft were captured and over 500 more were destroyed on the ground.

COMMENTS

The landing of the Allies on the island of Sicily was a triumph of planning and organization. Although larger than the force used to invade North Africa, the expedition had a much shorter distance to travel to its objective and had the additional advantage of cover by land-based planes.

After the landing it was a question of which side would be able to build up its strength more rapidly. The Allies had been decidedly superior on the sea and in the air ever since the Tunisian campaign. So even though their supply routes were by water, they had more and better routes than the defenders, who were limited to the single and exposed line across the Strait of Messina. Here the situation was almost the reverse of that during the "Race for Tunisia", when the Allies were handicapped by inadequate supply routes and insufficient air cover.

Reports indicate that the 2½-ton amphibious truck, the DUKW ("Duck"), was one of the planned surprises of the operation.* Until ports were captured and prepared for use, this means of moving from ship to shore all types of fighting equipment helped to solve a very pressing problem. Another interesting and ingenious development for landing supplies was the use of Navy ponton piers. By a combination of such means the Allies were able to land, reinforce, and supply a striking force superior to any the Axis could throw against it.

*It was to play another important role in future landings on the coast of France.

In the beginning the main effort of the Allies was directed toward establishing as many beachheads as possible, which when linked up would include landing fields and large areas for maneuver of mechanized forces. By 14 July this purpose had been fully accomplished. A vigorous offensive against the invaders before they could consolidate their beachheads would have been the best course of action for the defenders. However, only limited attacks were made during the first three days. After that it was too late to stop the superior numbers and power of the Allied forces. It appears that this lack of energy was due chiefly to the general defection of Italian troops, who deserted and surrendered at the first opportunity. Within ten days the Italian Sixth Army ceased to have combat value. It is also apparent that there was an initial dispersion of Axis forces that materially decreased the chances of a successful defense.

After the Allies had consolidated their beachheads, there was no possibility of a successful enemy counteroffensive. So the Axis command chose the only alternative, which was to employ delaying action in order to postpone the inevitable invasion of Italy until the defenses there could be strengthened.

For the Allies, after the beachheads and airfields in the southeast had been gained, the major objective was Messina, on the Eighth Army's line of advance up the east coast. If Messina could be seized in time, there would be no escape for the enemy forces in Sicily. During the first phase of the advance the role of the Seventh Army was to protect the captured port of Licata and the airfields in its zone, and to guard the Eighth Army's left flank from attack by enemy reserves drawn from western Sicily. Reports indicate that while the Eighth Army was to advance due north with the mission of capturing Catania and the Gerbini airfields, the Seventh Army was to deepen its bridgehead only to the extent necessary to protect the flank of this advance. It is apparent that within ten days of the landings the roles of the two armies had been largely reversed, with the Eighth held up by the concentration, during the second week, of German strength in the Catania area, while the Seventh advanced rapidly toward Palermo, largely against Italians, to cut the island in two.

During the first week the Seventh Army had been faced by the bulk of the infantry of the two German divisions in Sicily and by nearly all the German tanks, totalling 160. After the failure of the enemy counterattacks the German units successively disengaged themselves and moved eastward into positions opposite the Eighth Army. Because of this, the Seventh Army's advance went much

more rapidly than was anticipated, and it was allowed to drive swiftly to the northwest. Messina was still the objective of the Eighth Army.

By 20 July General Montgomery's progress in the Catania plain had been slowed down materially. There the enemy's defense was aided by a network of canals, drainage ditches, and rivers that criss-crossed the plain and formed a deep antitank barrier. It was at this time that the strategy of the campaign was again modified and orders issued that resulted in bringing the Seventh Army into line with the Eighth in order to accomplish a breakthrough to Messina.

The natural route of enemy retreat was the great automobile highway through Nicosia and Randazzo, and so it was logical for the Allies to direct the greatest pressure toward those two points. A quick breakthrough along this axis would have seriously compromised the bulk of the German defenders south and west of Catania. So during the latter part of July and early August the operations of the right wing of the Eighth Army were limited to keeping the hostile forces fixed in position while the main Allied effort struck the center of the enemy position. When the attack in the center carried on beyond Troina Pass and Centuripe and to the line Cesaro-Bronte, the enemy position south of Mount Etna was untenable, and his troops there were withdrawn to the line Riposto-Linguaglossa-Barcellona. This line represented the last tactical position remaining to the enemy, and when he was forced to abandon it, all organized resistance came to an end. When Allied troops reached Messina, only small, scattered Axis forces were found in the area.

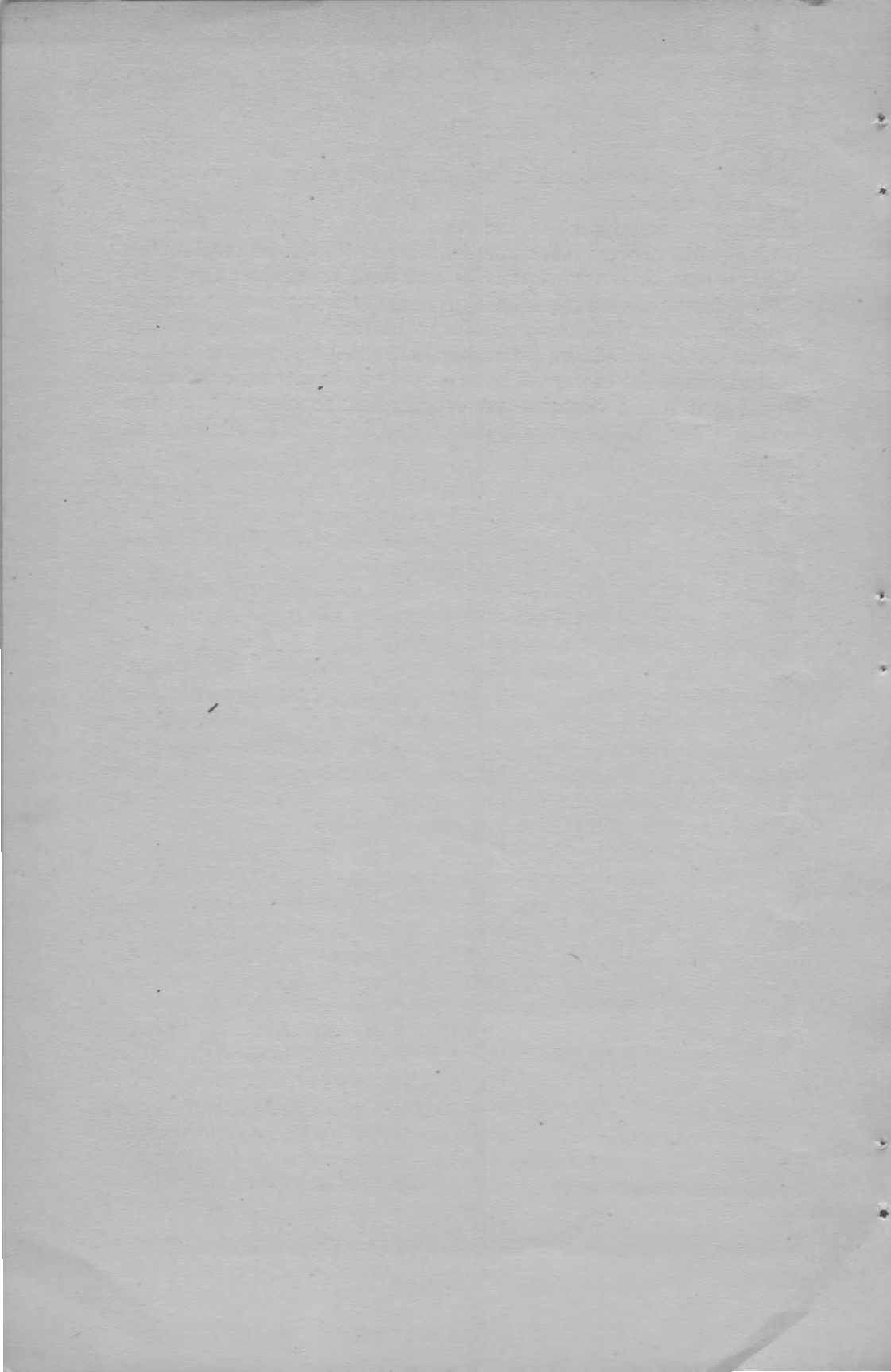
The campaign ended thirty-eight days after the Allied landings. Geographically speaking; perhaps, the mountainous, vineyard-covered island of Sicily was not an integral part of Hitler's "Fortress of Europe". But strategically, economically, and politically, it was.

The collapse of Sicily ended the Axis dream of dominating the Mediterranean, for the last outpost was now gone. And the disintegration of its armed forces in Sicily brought about a crisis which the Axis partnership itself could not long survive. Announcement of the end of Mussolini's rule was made on Sunday, 25 July, three days after the fall of Palermo. Thus the invasion of Sicily precipitated a political upheaval the implications of which clearly presaged the end of the Axis in Europe. The Continent itself, goal of Allied planning and preparation, was now within reach; the Axis had been rent asunder in Sicily, the threshold.

Nine months after the initial landings in North Africa the Allies had not only cleared its shores of enemy forces, but had wrested the

Sicilian bridge from the Axis to use as their own in an advance onto the Italian mainland.

From the standpoint of the Axis powers in Europe, July and August of 1943 were black months indeed. It will be recalled that Hitler committed large forces in an offensive against the Kursk salient during the early part of July, only to be repulsed and to lose the initiative to the Russians, who countered by reducing the Orel salient in August. Since November 1942 the Allied powers had successfully kept the enemy off balance and on the strategic defensive. The list of Allied victories was lengthening continuously, as Orel was added to Stalingrad and Rzhev, and Sicily to El Alamein and Tunisia.



THE INVASION OF ITALY



INTRODUCTION

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS (Map 6)

It became more and more apparent during the Sicilian campaign that the Italians were weary of the war and that they could be forced to desert their Axis partners. After the fall of Mussolini on 25 July 1943, the King of Italy appointed Marshal Pietro Badoglio as head of the government, and the latter commenced peace negotiations with the Allies.

Interesting as the details of these negotiations might be, they did not influence the strategical situation and for that reason are not recorded here. However, the results and timing of events are important. The Allied terms in the form of unconditional surrender were accepted by the Italian government on 2 September, and an armistice was signed on the 3d—the same date that British troops landed on the Calabrian Peninsula. This armistice was not announced until 8 September (one day preceding the Fifth Army's landing on the beaches of Salerno) in order to permit the Italian Army to stop fighting and still not allow the Germans time to occupy the coastal defenses.

The evidence shows that the sudden fall of Mussolini took his German partner completely by surprise. To meet the emergency, Hitler convened a combined military and political conference on 29 July that lasted until 5 August. As early as 3 August the Rome radio broadcast the Allied armistice terms. This tended to confirm Hitler's belief that Badoglio would not keep Italy in the war, and the German conference made some quick decisions in order to rectify the rapidly deteriorating situation. At this time three German divisions were fighting in Sicily, and several more were in central and northern Italy. Italian troops occupied southeastern France and constituted a large part of the Axis garrisons in the Balkans and in the Aegean Islands. It was decided as early as 1 August to withdraw the German divisions from Sicily to the vicinity

of Naples; to reinforce the German forces in central and northern Italy, so as to establish effective control there and prepare for an Allied invasion; and to send troops into southern France to effect the surrender of Italian units there and into the Balkans and the Aegean Islands for the same purpose. During this reshuffling of forces, which would require some time, the Germans planned to exercise extreme caution in order not to alarm their faltering ally. A further decision, also forced by the turn of events, was to assume the strategic defensive on the Russian front.

As a result of the armistice between the Italians and the Allies, a marked change occurred in the relative military and naval strengths in the Mediterranean. Of the sixty-two divisions that Italy had at the time, nine ultimately joined the Allies in southern Italy, Sardinia, or Corsica; ten divisions in the Balkans surrendered their arms and equipment to bands of guerrillas; and forty-three divisions in Italy, southern France, and the Balkans were disarmed by the Germans. As for the Italian Navy, six battleships, eight cruisers, twenty-seven destroyers, nineteen submarines, and forty-eight auxiliary craft eventually escaped to join the Allies. One battleship was sunk by the Germans, and one unfinished battleship, ten cruisers, ten destroyers, a number of submarines, and 450 small craft presumably fell into the hands of the enemy.

After the conquest of Sicily the next step was to exploit the advantage gained by a direct and immediate invasion of the Italian mainland. No doubt the decision to invade Italy will be attacked by many military writers in the years to come, and defended by many others, but it is now too soon to do other than point out the advantages that the Allied high command must have hoped to gain by the operation. They may be summarized as follows:

1. The strategic initiative, assumed by the invasion of North Africa, would be retained. Since we were not ready to invade France, Italy was the only place where we could continue to attack the Germans.

2. More complete control of the Mediterranean would be obtained.

3. A "second front" in Europe would be opened, if only in a small way, and German divisions which might otherwise be used against Russia would be kept engaged.

4. There would be secured air bases much closer to important targets in Austria, Rumania, and in some parts of Germany.*

*Some critics contend that after the capture of the Foggia airfields there was no need to go farther.

Prior to the invasion it was not entirely clear to what extent Germany would exert herself in defending the Italian mainland. However, if her defense of Tunisia were to be the criterion, then the Allies could expect some very heavy opposition in Italy.

THEATER OF INITIAL OPERATIONS

Southern Italy is a poor and unfruitful region presenting as wide a range of physical characteristics as any part of the Italian Peninsula. The prewar population was about 8,200,000.

Geographically and climatically, southern Italy is akin to Sicily, where our armies had already had extensive experience. The weather is quite similar—hot, dry summers and mild winters during which most of the rain falls. Geologically, southern Italy is an exaggeration of Sicily. In general it is high, rugged, and inhospitable. In the interior lies the Apennine system, the backbone of southern Italy as it is of the whole peninsula. With an average width of sixty miles, these mountains and their foothills cover more than 9,000 square miles of the region south of Naples.

Communications present difficulties that the Italians have never satisfactorily surmounted. Both the railway and highway systems of southern Italy depend to a great extent on a few major long-distance routes running along the coasts. Truck and automobile traffic is generally confined to these coastal roads and a limited number of others that wind through the mountains.

A standard-gauge electrified railroad runs up the west coast, connecting Reggio Calabria with Naples. A standard-gauge steam line rounds the southern tip of the peninsula, connecting Reggio Calabria with Taranto and Brindisi, from where it continues up the east coast. These main lines are linked across southern Italy by only one standard-gauge line, through Potenza. Narrow-gauge lines connect other cities in the southern area with the two main lines, but they are of little military importance. Naples and Reggio Calabria are the only important railway centers in southern Italy.

Sixteen major airfields and some thirty auxiliary landing strips made up the airdrome system of southern Italy. The largest and best air base in the area was the Capodichino airdrome at Naples, while the most important group of fields was in the Foggia area. Other major airfields were located at Capua and at Montecorvino, near Salerno, while the best military fields farther to the south were at Reggio Calabria and Crotone. There were nine military airfields on the east coast. The seaplane bases at Naples, Taranto, and Brindisi were also of some importance.

The most important city in southern Italy is Naples, with a pre-war population of 900,000. Prior to the war as many as 10,000 vessels were accommodated in a single year in its fine natural harbor, which is one of the best in the world.

ALLIED PLANS FOR THE INVASION

Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark, commander of the American Fifth Army, had been charged with the preparation of plans for further special operations in the western Mediterranean zone.

In January 1943 the Fifth Army was located generally in eastern Morocco and western Algeria—in the area bordering Spanish Morocco. At this time it was charged with the protection of the vital line of communication that ran from Casablanca to Oran and thence to Algiers and Tunisia.

From the middle of June 1943, a date prior to the invasion of Sicily, the Fifth Army planning staff was busy on several projects for the invasion of Axis territory. When the decision was made to invade Italy, all efforts were directed toward perfecting the plan for that operation.

The final plan for the invasion of Italy was as follows: (1) a main assault by the Fifth Army, with the mission of capturing Naples; (2) two secondary attacks by the Eighth Army, of which one would precede the Fifth Army's blow and the other would take place at the same time; and (3) a naval diversionary attack in the Gulf of Gaeta. The target date chosen was 9 September 1943.

With respect to the main attack by the Fifth Army, a major question arose regarding the site for the landing. The possibilities seriously considered were the Gulf of Salerno area, about twenty-five miles south of Naples, and the coast of the Gulf of Gaeta, which extends for a distance of some forty miles north of Naples.

A force landing on the shore of the Gulf of Gaeta would fight on the broad Campanian plain, terrain much more favorable than the smaller Salerno plain, which is dominated by a great mountain mass. Moreover, a successful landing north of Naples would place the Allies between the city and the strong enemy forces in northern Italy, some of which could otherwise be used to reinforce the troops defending the vital port.

However, after the most careful study Salerno was chosen as the landing site, the reasons being as follows:

1. It was within range—although extreme range—of fighter support from bases in Sicily, 200 miles to the south. This was by far the most important consideration, and no doubt the controlling one.

2. A juncture could be effected sooner with troops of the Eighth Army, who were to advance up the peninsula.

3. The Gulf of Salerno offered more favorable conditions for a landing, since the beaches and their approaches are excellent and in good weather there is little surf.

As a prelude to the American landing the British Eighth Army was to launch an amphibious assault from Messina directly across the strait to the Calabrian Peninsula. This secondary effort was to be assigned limited means—not to exceed three divisions—and would precede the Salerno operation by six days. The Eighth Army's initial mission was to capture Reggio Calabria and establish itself on the peninsula; it was to be prepared to advance northward through the toe of Italy. It was hoped that this assault would draw German forces to the south before the main attack was launched farther to the north or, failing that, would develop a threat to the enemy left (southern) flank should he heavily oppose General Clark's divisions.

It was decided later that simultaneously with the Salerno landing a British division of the Eighth Army would land on the heel of Italy with the object of seizing the port of Taranto by a coup de main. The division was then to advance overland and capture the port of Brindisi and the many good airfields in the vicinity of both places. After that it was to move northward along the Adriatic coast.

The execution of all three operations against the Italian mainland was to be under the command of the 15th Army Group, the group headquarters that had been set up under General Alexander for the invasion of Sicily. Thus the latter was to retain command of all the land forces, as deputy to General Eisenhower, commander in chief. General Clark, as we have seen, was to command the Fifth Army, composed of both American and British troops, and General Montgomery the British Eighth Army. Lieutenant General Carl A. Spaatz, U. S. Army, was to be in command of the Allied air forces, and Admiral Cunningham was to remain in command of all naval components, with Vice Admiral Hewitt, U. S. Navy, in immediate charge of naval operations. The main task of the combined ground, sea, and air forces was to assure the success of the main landing at Salerno.

ENEMY FORCES

It is evident that the success of the Allied plan of invasion depended on the ability of the British and American forces to establish a firm beachhead before the Germans could oppose them with units shifted from other defended areas. As for the enemy, he was faced

with the problem of determining just where the next blow would fall. In disposing their forces to repel landings in Italy, the Germans were handicapped by the peculiarities of the terrain. Narrow and long, the Italian Peninsula did not lend itself to the location of a large central reserve that could be moved quickly to a threatened spot. However, in defending against the advance of an invading army up the peninsula, the defenders would be greatly assisted by the fact that its breadth averages only a hundred miles. The Germans did the best they could under the circumstances and made their dispositions to defend against possible landings in the extreme south, the center, or the north.

To counter the invasion, the enemy had at first only eight divisions. The 16th Armored Division was in the Salerno area, sharing the defense of that part of the coast with Italian troops. The Hermann Goering Armored Division was in the vicinity of Naples, and the 15th Armored Grenadier Division (armored infantry) was probably in the general neighborhood of Gaeta. The latter two divisions had been reorganizing after heavy losses in Sicily. The 2d Parachute Division was near Rome, while the bulk of the 3d Armored Grenadier Division was north of the capital. Three other divisions were well to the south. The 1st Parachute Division held the Adriatic coastline, with some of its troops south of Bari; the 29th Armored Grenadier and 26th Armored Divisions were in Calabria.

THE SALERNO CAMPAIGN

September–October 1943

LANDING OPERATIONS, 9–15 September 1943

The invasion of Italy began at 0430 hours on 3 September 1943 when the Eighth Army launched the secondary attack, as planned, and crossed the Strait of Messina to land on the extreme western tip of the Calabrian Peninsula. The troops went ashore under cover of a barrage and concentrations fired by 434 guns that were sited along the northeastern tip of Sicily. The 1st Canadian Infantry Division landed on the right, near Reggio, while the British 5th Infantry Division landed a few miles to the north.

Only Italian troops were in the immediate area, and their opposition was almost negligible. This enabled the 1st Canadian Division to occupy quickly the port and airfield at Reggio, both of which were found to be intact and available for immediate use. After this the Canadians turned south along the coastal road and then advanced up the east coast of the peninsula. Meanwhile the 5th Division had

landed and had then turned north to advance up the west coast. Both columns were offered only slight resistance by small enemy rear-guard forces that resorted to extensive demolitions and effective delaying tactics, but which seldom caused the deployment of more than a battalion to brush them aside. The greatest handicap was lack of motor transport. As a result the troops were forced to push forward on foot, averaging ten miles per day for the first ten days. Later, when the announcement of Italy's capitulation was made, the movement was aided somewhat by vehicles turned over by Italian units. However, on 9 September, when the Allied main attack was launched on the beaches of Salerno, the Eighth Army was 130 miles to the southeast. It was evident from the first that the Germans did not plan on offering strong resistance to the invasion moving up the Calabrian Peninsula, and after the Fifth Army made its landing, the enemy withdrawal from the foot of the boot was accelerated. The 29th Armored Grenadier Division, in danger of being cut off, moved rapidly northward to reinforce the German XIV Corps on the Fifth Army front. The 26th Armored Division was left originally to block the advance of the Eighth Army, but later only one battle group remained for that purpose while the rest of the division hastened toward the threatened Salerno area.

Not until 25 September did the main forces of the Eighth Army reach a position abreast of the Fifth. In the meantime, from 9 to 25 September, the Allied main attack had experienced some hard going.

According to the plan, the mission of General Clark's Fifth Army was to seize the port of Naples, secure the airfields in the vicinity, and prepare a firm base for further offensive operations. The operational plan envisaged an assault by two corps and follow-up troops that would form an invading army of 125,000 against enemy forces estimated at 39,000 on D-day, with a probable increase to over 100,000 on D plus 3 (Map 7).

To carry out this mission, General Clark was assigned the British X Corps and the American VI Corps, and he planned to employ both in a coordinated assault.* The boundary between corps was to be the Sele River, with the X Corps on the left and the VI Corps on the right.

The troops assigned to the X Corps for its operations included the British 46th and 56th Infantry Divisions, 7th Armored Division, two Commando battalions, and three American Ranger battalions.

*The organization of the Fifth Army at this time is given in Appendix 1.

Commanded by Lieutenant General Sir Richard L. McCreery, the X Corps was to deliver the main attack of the Fifth Army. In its zone, which extended nearly twenty-five miles from Maiori along the coast to the Sele River, the immediate objectives were the port of Salerno, the Montecorvino airfield, the important rail and highway center of Battipaglia, and Ponte Sele, on Highway 19. The left flank of the zone was entrusted to the three battalions of Rangers and two battalions of Commandos, all under Lieutenant Colonel William O. Darby, U. S. Army. The Rangers were to land at Maiori and advance north to seize the broad Nocera-Pagani pass, between Salerno and Naples. The Commandos were to land at Vietri, turn east along the coastal road, and enter Salerno. Meanwhile the two British infantry divisions of the X Corps, the 46th and 56th, would land on three beaches south of Picentino Creek, with the 56th Division on the right. Between the latter division and the beaches of the VI Corps to the south lay a gap of more than ten miles. It was expected that this gap would be closed as the two corps moved inland, the junction of forces taking place at Ponte Sele.

The American VI Corps, Major General Ernest J. Dawley commanding, was to operate on the right of the X Corps. It had the mission of establishing a beachhead south of the Sele River. Regimental combat teams of the 36th Infantry Division (reinforced), under Major General Fred L. Walker, were to launch simultaneous assaults on the Paëstum beaches, advance inland to seize the high ground commanding the southern half of the Salerno plain, and prevent the movement of enemy reinforcements into the plain from the east and south.

Provision was made for an army floating reserve that was divided into two forces. Force 1, commanded by Major General Troy H. Middleton, consisted of one reinforced regimental combat team (later increased to two) of the American 45th Division. Its mission was to embark from Sicily prepared to land on D-day over any of the previously established beaches. Force 2, under Major General Matthew B. Ridgway, had one reinforced regimental combat team of the American 82d Airborne Division, which was to be prepared to land with light equipment on beaches that had not been previously secured.

Follow-up troops included the remainder of the 82d and 45th Divisions, the 34th Infantry Division, one American armored division, and supporting units.

The supply of both corps was to be over the beaches until the port of Naples became available.

Naval plans were carefully worked out by the planning staff and were designed to give the ground forces maximum support. Admiral Hewitt's Western Task Force, as it was called, was divided into two main groups: the Southern Attack Force, under Rear Admiral John L. Hall, Jr., U. S. Navy, and the Northern Attack Force, under Commodore G. N. Oliver, Royal Navy. The first-named force was to land American troops and their supplies and support the operations south of the Sele River; the latter was to serve the British in the same manner north of the Sele. These attack forces, with their great flotillas of transports and landing craft, were protected and supported by a large covering force of battleships, aircraft carriers, and destroyers, known as Force H, under the command of Vice Admiral Sir Algernon U. Willis, Royal Navy. This force, composed entirely of British naval vessels, included two large aircraft carriers and three battleships. Force H was also entrusted with the task of providing fighter cover for the Air Support Force of the Royal Navy. The latter was to consist of three British cruisers and five auxiliary or escort carriers, which were to provide the fighters and dive bombers that would cover the initial landings. The use of some carrier-based aircraft would be necessary, since, as already noted, Salerno was at extreme range for single-engine fighters operating from Sicilian land bases.

The guns of three United States cruisers—the *Philadelphia*, the *Savannah*, and the *Boise*—and of some eighteen destroyers, in addition to many smaller combatant craft and great numbers of mine sweepers, were to give close support to the landings.

A special naval force had the mission of making a diversionary attack against the beaches at the mouth of the Volturno River, northwest of Naples (**Map 6**), to draw enemy forces there and divert them from the main assaults.

The air forces originally had three major assignments: (1) Fighter planes were to throw a protective screen over naval vessels and the troops on the beaches; (2) medium bombers were to pound communication lines, hit airfields, and create road blocks to prevent reinforcements from reaching the beachhead; and (3) heavy bombers were to perform their normal function as part of the Strategic Air Force and attack military installations outside of the invasion area.

Air operations preparatory to the landings began several weeks before D-day. Effective bombing of important enemy airfields in southern and central Italy and of supply routes, railroads, and highways leading to the beachhead area and Naples took place late in

August. On the night of 3-4 September a series of especially intense and well-coordinated attacks was begun against fighter bases at Capodichino and Capua, near Naples, and at Foggia. From 15 August until D-day 248 enemy planes were destroyed on the ground and ninety-three damaged.

The ships bearing the invasion troops of the Fifth Army sailed from Oran, Bizerte, and Tripoli on 5 and 6 September. The British convoy from Bizerte was attacked twice by enemy aircraft on the 8th, but suffered the loss of only one LCT. All three convoys, protected by air and naval forces, rounded the western tip of Sicily and moved into the Tyrrhenian Sea.

At 1830 hours on 8 September General Eisenhower announced by radio that hostilities between the United Nations and Italy were terminated, effective at once. Twelve minutes after this announcement, the American convoy, then twenty miles offshore, headed for the transport area, some eight miles from the beaches. It was deemed inadvisable to go closer and come within range of German heavy artillery. Simultaneously the British convoys commenced a similar movement. The moon set at 0100, making concealment easier but increasing the difficulty that would be experienced in steering the landing craft toward the assigned beaches. The sea was smooth and the sky was almost clear. The armada of 500 vessels was ready for H-hour.

The Salerno beaches border the small plain that lies between them and a great wall of mountains (Map 7). The steep and rocky Sorrento Peninsula, with the town of Salerno at its base, is the north-west bastion of this mountain wall, which sweeps inland and southward in a great bow to meet the sea again at Agropoli. From Salerno to Agropoli the line of beaches runs almost straight for twenty-six miles. The plain is roughly crescent shaped, narrower at either end and some ten miles wide in the center.

Mount Eboli, just north of the Sele River, divides the plain into a northern half, where the British X Corps was to operate, and a southern half, assigned to the American VI Corps. East of the town of Paestum, Mount Soprano rises over 3,000 feet above sea level and dominates the view from the beaches near the town. Mount Eboli and Mount Soprano, viewed from a distance, seem to rise sheer from the plain and tower high above their foothills. On these foothills, west of the mountain wall, much of the heaviest fighting was to take place.

Through the center of the plain the two principal rivers, the Sele and Calore, run parallel for some seven miles and join four miles

from the coast. Each is fordable at several points above their junction. Two of the major north-south roads of lower Italy cross the plain. Highway 18, the coastal road, and Highway 19, which was to be the chief German route of approach from the south and east, meet at Battipaglia. Two railroads follow almost the same routes as the roads.

The only settlement on the Salerno plain proper is at Paestum. Battipaglia, Eboli, Albanella, Capaccio, and other villages are on higher ground.

On 7 September the German high command had ordered the 16th Armored Division to assume the defense of the Salerno sector. It was later found that artillery and mortars had been emplaced to cover the whole coastal area. A considerable number of heavy anti-aircraft guns were in position around the town of Salerno and in the Montecorvino-Battipaglia area. Included in the mobile defense was a railway battery of 132-mm. guns, usually kept on a track just north of Agropoli. Observation from such dominating terrain features as Mount Soprano would enable the enemy to direct fire on the gulf, the beaches, and the plain.

The defenses on the beaches and on the plain were not so well organized, the principal reliance being placed on small groups of tanks. Teller mines, however, were laid at random in a belt extending sixty to a hundred yards inland from the water's edge. Barbed-wire obstacles were placed to the front and rear of numerous machine guns, sited to cover the most likely landing spots.

In the VI Corps sector, the 36th Division planned on landing two of its regimental combat teams as assault forces. Landing abreast, they were to advance to the railroad, about 2500 yards inland, reorganize there, and then move on to their objective—the hills ten miles distant. Once this was accomplished, they would control the entire southern half of the Salerno plain. The third regimental combat team was to follow the first two and be prepared to protect either flank.

At midnight the loading of the landing craft began, and by H-hour (0330 hours, 9 September) all the assault troops and necessary vehicles had left the transports. From the north, where the British were firing a preparatory bombardment onto the X Corps beaches, came the dull boom of heavy naval guns, but the VI Corps was to make its assault on the beaches at Paestum without previous naval or air bombardment.

According to plan, the 36th Division's leading landing teams* arrived at their four assigned beaches exactly at H-hour. Enemy flares went up immediately, and his guns opened fire as our troops leaped into the shallow water and waded ashore. After H-hour the second and third assault waves reached the beaches at eight-minute intervals. Soon after 0400 the enemy fire became especially heavy. Some of the incoming boats suffered direct hits, some turned back, and others changed direction. For a while the situation was one of great confusion, and casualties mounted, but the determined assault troops continued to land on the beaches. Following the infantry, in the two crowded hours between 0530 and 0730, 123 DUKW's came ashore with 105-mm. howitzers, gun crews, and ammunition.

Almost from the moment of landing, enemy tanks in scattered groups made it difficult for the combat teams, but throughout the day the latter fought their way inland. The initial objective on the left flank was Hill 140, which had been captured by 0730. In the center the objective was Hill 386, from which every movement on the plain and the beaches could be seen by the enemy. Artillery on this hill fired steadily on the invading forces until naval gunfire silenced the batteries during the afternoon. After this an attack was launched by our infantry, and by nightfall they controlled the southwest slope and a vital stretch of the road leading to the plain.

From early morning until 1200 the enemy had thrown his armor against our troops on the southern beaches, but by the latter hour his attacks had been brought to a standstill. Naval gunfire and shore-emplaced artillery had given excellent support, but to a large extent the battle had been fought by infantrymen using infantry weapons.

On the whole, the VI Corps met with considerable success on D-day. The 36th Division, untried in battle, landed under fire, overcame prepared beach defenses, and for the most part reached its initial objectives. At the end of the day our troops controlled the plain south of the Sele River and occupied some high ground. The beachhead averaged five miles in depth.

Only on the right flank had the progress been disappointing. Here the troops had not fully reorganized after landing on the beaches, but they had been successful in beating off some vicious enemy attacks without relinquishing their positions. Men, vehicles, artillery, and supplies continued to pour onto the beaches. Supply points were functioning, exit roads were operating, antiaircraft batteries were emplaced, and communications were finally working.

*Two battalions from each of the two regimental combat teams landed abreast.

In the meantime, on the left flank of the X Corps, the American Rangers reached the coast at Maiori at 0310 hours (on D-day). No opposition was met, and by 0345 a toehold had been secured. Following this the Rangers advanced west to Amalfi, and by 0900 they were four to five miles inland and on hill positions commanding the Nocera-Pagani pass.

The British Commandos encountered some resistance at Vietri but succeeded in establishing a beachhead before moving east into the town of Salerno.

In the sector of the X Corps south of Salerno the enemy opened fire even before the first waves of the 46th and 56th Divisions reached the beaches. Nonetheless, the assault was launched promptly at H-hour, Allied warships blasting the area behind the beaches with well-directed fire. In the face of extremely bitter resistance, the British troops slowly fought their way inland. By nightfall they had reached positions some 3000 yards from the beaches and were attacking the Montecorvino airfield, one of their major initial objectives.

Throughout the day practically no communication existed between the X and the VI Corps, and a dangerous ten-mile gap lay between them. However, at the end of D-day the Fifth Army as a whole had secured four separate footholds between Amalfi and Agropoli.

The next objective was to secure the dominating mountain heights inland from the beaches. With these heights in its possession, the Fifth Army could protect and expand the beachhead as a base for the drive toward the port and airfields of Naples.

On the 10th (D plus 1) the VI Corps reorganized its beachhead forces and prepared to launch an attack the next day. Enemy interference was slight, owing to the withdrawal of most of his units to oppose the X Corps in the more important area to the north. Against only light opposition, the 36th Division pushed its right flank into the hills near Ogliastro and Trentinara. About the same time the 45th Division began to land on the VI Corps beaches.

General Dawley's plan was to launch a coordinated attack by both the 36th and 45th Divisions; to strike toward the northeast to cut the enemy's main route of approach from the east, along Highway 19; and to threaten Highway 91, one of his main routes of escape.

In accordance with this plan, a regimental combat team of the 45th Division advanced up the corridor between the Sele and Calore Rivers during the night of 10-11 September. Shortly after daybreak on the 11th further progress was suddenly stopped when the Germans launched an attack southward from the vicinity of Eboli. This at-

tack, which was supported by tanks, struck the exposed left flank and rear of the combat team, which was forced to halt and withdraw into a defensive position south of Persano, where the continuing German attacks made its situation precarious.

Meanwhile the 36th Division carried out its part of the attack with deceptive ease. Altavilla and Hill 424 were occupied and patrols were on the Albanella ridge.

On the left flank of the VI Corps the situation called for prompt action. Although the Germans were not aware of the fact, their attacks there had struck the weakest part of the Fifth Army line. The British 56th Division, hard pressed on a wide front, had not been able to extend its right to fill the gap between the X and VI Corps. When the danger in the Sele-Calore corridor became apparent, the regimental combat team of the 45th Division that was then in army reserve was ordered to advance on the north side of the Sele to secure the fords north of Persano and thus relieve the troops who were hard-pressed on the south side of the river. An enemy order captured later indicated that elements of the German 16th Armored Division had moved down from Battipaglia on the 11th to hold the line Torre Palladino-Tobacco Factory-Persano. Against these forces little progress was made, and at the end of the day the issue along the front from Bivio Cioffi east through the Sele-Calore corridor was still in doubt.

To the north the X Corps was meeting even more stubborn resistance and heavy German counterattacks. Though these thrusts did not penetrate the British lines, they slowed the advance and stopped it at several points. On the extreme left of the X Corps, the Rangers above Maiori, who had been reinforced, held the important positions commanding the Nocera-Pagani valley. In the center of the X Corps zone the British 46th Division had entered Salerno, but could make little progress in its attempt to drive north into the mountains. The British 56th Infantry Division, on the right of the 46th, was fighting in the streets of Battipaglia and was heavily engaged at the Montecorvino airfield, which was taken by nightfall.

Generally speaking, the Fifth Army beachhead had been expanded on the 10th and 11th along the forty-mile coastline to an average depth of six to seven miles. Only in the center, in the Sele-Calore corridor, was the beachhead insecure; here the successful enemy attack on the 45th Division threatened to separate the X and VI Corps.

Between the 9th and 11th of September German reinforcements had concentrated in the mountains to the east and north. The enemy divisions initially in the south had escaped the trap which the

Fifth and Eighth Armies were trying to set. They had, in fact, arrived so quickly in the Salerno area that they might hope, with the help of other divisions arriving from the north, to turn on the Fifth Army and drive it into the sea before the Eighth could arrive. By the evening of 11 September an enemy force composed of units from six divisions*, completely motorized and with a large number of tanks, was poised to strike against our beachhead.

During the night of 11-12 September enemy units worked their way around positions held by the 36th Division on Hill 424 (Map 8). At daybreak a bitter fight developed that resulted in the recapture of Hill 424 by the enemy during the afternoon, and by nightfall our line here had been forced back about one mile.

While the Germans were attacking Hill 424, our situation in the Sele-Calore corridor improved considerably. Threatened by the presence of a part of the 45th Division on the north side of the Sele, the enemy had withdrawn from Persano during the night of 11-12 September. During the 12th an all-day fight developed for the possession of the tobacco factory. This key position changed hands twice before the troops of the 45th Division finally secured it and temporarily restored the situation along the Sele.

But, except for reconnaissance units, almost a five-mile gap still remained between the X and VI Corps. On the night of the 12th units of a German armored grenadier division, led by forty tanks, launched a powerful attack that drove the 56th Division out of Battipaglia. Efforts to retake the town proved futile.

Even before this attack had revealed the German strength in this area, General Dawley had decided to reinforce the left flank of the VI Corps in order to close the gap. He ordered the 45th Division to withdraw its combat team from the Sele-Calore corridor after nightfall on the 12th and move it to a new position north of the Sele, on the left flank of the division. The 36th Division was ordered to take over the area vacated by 45th's combat team, but it was able to move only one battalion north of the Calore. To strengthen further the left flank of the VI Corps, troops from the right flank of the 36th Division, near Ogliastro, were moved to the extreme left flank of the corps, near Bivio Cioffi.

Taking advantage of the confused situation in the Sele-Calore area, the Germans made a strong attack at 1530 on 13 September

* The 16th Armored Division, which had been in the area at the time of the landing; the 26th Armored and 29th Armored Grenadier Divisions from the south; and the Herman Goering, the 15th Armored, and the 3d Armored Grenadier Divisions from the north.

along the north bank of the Sele River. This attack drove the right flank of the 45th Division back from Persano, uncovering the crossing there. The enemy then crossed the Sele with strong forces and struck the isolated battalion of the 36th Division in the Sele-Calore corridor, annihilating all but one company. After this success the German infantry and tanks drove on down the corridor to attack our rear areas. The situation of the corps was now extremely serious, for the enemy had penetrated our infantry positions, and the only troops between him and the beaches were two battalions of field artillery, located south of a burned bridge near the junction of the Sele and the Calore.

The artillery battalions gathered all available men, stripping their gun crews to a minimum, and posted them on the slope south of the burned bridge to dig in and hold the enemy with rifles and machine guns, supported by six 37-mm. guns. Members of the division artillery staff commandeered every soldier they could find. They put Headquarters Battery and even bandsmen into the line and scraped together a reserve of fifteen mechanics and truck drivers to reinforce the most threatened sectors. The sweating gun crews poured artillery fire on the ford by the bridge and on the road leading to it, firing eight rounds per minute per gun at the height of the enemy attack. Altogether the two battalions fired 3,650 rounds. This devastating fire pulverized the roads and fields in the tip of the corridor and, combined with the dogged resistance of the troops at the ford, hurled back every attack. Finally, as darkness fell, the enemy conceded his failure and pulled back his tanks. The artillery had stopped the most serious breakthrough attempted during the entire Salerno beach-head fight.

The situation appeared critical as the American commanders assembled at VI Corps headquarters at 1930 hours, 13 September. Practically all units of both the 36th and 45th Divisions had suffered heavy casualties. Our line had been pierced, though not entirely broken. Yet, worst of all, there were almost no reserves immediately available to strengthen the seriously endangered sectors.

The corps commander adopted the only possible course under the circumstances, and orders were issued to withdraw to the best defensive positions available, dig in, and hold on. All through the night weary officers and men worked to reassemble their units and organize the ground.

The 45th Division was ordered to pull back its right flank. The 36th took up a position west and south of La Cosa Creek. The latter division had been so extended and had suffered so heavily during the

13th that reconstitution of its regiments was impossible. Units were hopelessly intermixed, but the necessity to hold was understood by all. During the night two battalions of parachute infantry (82d Airborne Division) were dropped. They promptly went into positions west and south of Albanella.

As expected, early on the 14th the enemy attacked our position both west and east of the Sele River. Repeated quick jabs probed the entire VI Corps front in search of weak spots. Fighting became intense when the Germans attempted to exploit any local tactical success. At several points enemy tanks managed to penetrate the defenses, but in each case they were caught and destroyed. Naval gunfire helped materially to break up several attacks. At dusk the Germans ceased their assaults, for the effort was proving too costly. The VI Corps had withstood everything the enemy could throw against it.

While the VI Corps was fighting desperately, the X Corps was also meeting heavy opposition. However, all enemy attacks were repulsed, and by the evening of the 14th the situation of the Fifth Army on the Salerno plain was much improved. By this time the gap between the two corps had been closed, and reinforcements were arriving. The remaining regimental combat team of the 45th Division landed early on the 14th; another parachute regiment was dropped that night; and a glider regiment was brought in by water on the 15th. In addition, the British 7th Armored Division began to arrive.

After the arrival of reinforcements there was no question but that the crisis was over and that the beachhead was secure.

When during the critical period it was seen that every effort would be required to resist the enemy's attempt to push the Fifth Army back into the sea, the Strategic Air Force of the Northwest African Air Command was diverted from its normal tasks and joined with the Tactical Air Force to blast the enemy. Both forces dropped as many bombs as possible and lent much-needed support to the ground forces.

In the meantime, according to plan, the British Eighth Army carried out the operation against Taranto (Map 9). This secondary attack was assigned to the British 1st Airborne Division, which at the time was concentrated at Sousse, in Tunisia. It was ordered on 6 September to make the assault early on D-day, 9 September, a rather short notice for such an operation. Nonetheless, the division moved immediately to Bizerte, boarded such small vessels as were available, and landed the first wave at Taranto during the afternoon

of 9 September. Except for the loss of one ship, which struck a mine when entering the harbor, the coup de main from the sea was accomplished without incident. There were no Germans in Taranto; those who had been there had withdrawn on the day previous to a point about fifteen miles to the north. The Italians remaining in the city proved to be friendly and cooperative and willingly helped to unload the ships, run the harbor and transport facilities, and defend the area against the Germans.

On 11 September Brindisi was occupied, and by the 14th patrols were operating unopposed up the east coast road as far as Bari. The main object of the expedition had been achieved.

The progress of the Eighth Army up to 14 September is shown by the phase lines on the map.

CAPTURE OF NAPLES, 15 September–8 October

Although the beachhead at Salerno was safe, the Fifth Army had not yet captured the port of Naples and the airfields in the vicinity—its main objectives. These objectives lay thirty miles away.

General Montgomery's Eighth Army was headed toward the left flank and rear of the German forces at Salerno. Units of the British 1st Airborne Division entered Bari on 14 September and moved a short distance north, toward Foggia. Leading elements of the British 5th Infantry Division made contact with the Fifth Army at Vallo on the 16th. If the enemy was to avoid being outflanked, he had to withdraw. The German high command, seeing this, directed the XIV Armored Corps, then facing the Fifth Army, to fall back toward the northwest, pivoting on the Sorrento Peninsula. The enemy troops on this flank were to hold the mountain passes as long as possible to permit a thorough wrecking of Naples harbor. Then they, too, would fall back to the Volturno River and link up with the troops retreating before the Eighth Army to form a solid line across the entire peninsula. In short, the enemy plans called for stubborn resistance against the X Corps and rear-guard action against the VI Corps.

The Fifth Army plan for the advance on Naples provided for coordinated action by both corps (**Map 8**). The X Corps was to take the most direct route, breaking through the mountains that barred the way. The VI Corps received the mission of operating on the right flank. It was to maintain contact with the Eighth Army and to take the mountains east of Naples. Speed here was essential, both to put pressure on the main German forces in front of the X Corps and to allow the enemy little time for demolitions.

On 18 September the American 3d Division, Major General Lucian K. Truscott commanding, replaced the 36th Division; the latter was detached from the VI Corps and placed in army reserve to refit and rest. On the same date the Germans opposite the VI Corps commenced to withdraw.

The 3d Division moved up along the route through Battipaglia; the 45th advanced on the right, along Highway 91. Both divisions had to fight numerous engagements with enemy rear guards. From 19 to 27 September the 3d Division advanced twenty-eight miles along the road from Battipaglia; the 45th, swinging east, moved thirty-four miles.

On 20 September Major General John P. Lucas replaced General Dawley as commander of the VI Corps.

While the VI Corps had been struggling in the rain-swept mountains, the X Corps had forced its way through the passes south of Nocera. By 28 September the entire Fifth Army was ready for a rapid movement forward. Meanwhile the VI Corps had been strengthened by the arrival of the 34th Division, commanded by Major General Charles W. Ryder.

On the night of 29-30 September the VI Corps launched a general attack toward the northwest, threatening to envelop the enemy forces to the east of Naples. At the same time the X Corps, led by the 7th Armored Division, swooped down on the city. At nightfall on the 30th units of this corps were on either side of Mount Vesuvius, and at 0930 hours, 1 October, one of its units entered Naples without opposition. The British found a city more terrified than destroyed, although the damage was grave enough. Previous Allied air raids had smashed most of the harbor installations; and the Germans had completed the wreckage before they left, scuttling ships at the piers and sinking obstacles in the harbor. The waterfront itself was a mass of crumbled masonry and fire-twisted steel. The main aqueduct was cut; all public utilities had suspended operation; hidden time bombs made every quarter dangerous. Yet the Fifth Army now had a harbor that by almost superhuman effort was to be restored to service in an astonishingly short time.* After the capture of Naples our troops drove on without delay and by 6 October were in possession of the south bank of the Volturno (Map 9). Naples was now secure; and the main objective of the Salerno landings had been achieved, twenty-seven days after D-day.

*By the exercise of much ingenuity, such as building platforms on sunken hulls and using them for ship berths, Major General Thomas B Larkin's S.O.S. organization actually increased the capacity of the port over what it had been in prewar days.

Before withdrawing across the Volturno, the enemy destroyed the remainder of the bridges, the most important of which had already been knocked out by our airmen so as to block the supply lines. With all bridges gone, and swollen by the almost daily rains of the first week in October, the river presented a formidable obstacle. A pause in the operations was necessary to bring up bridge equipment and prepare for a coordinated attack.

CONCURRENT OPERATIONS

While the Fifth Army fought at Salerno and then on up to the Volturno River, the Eighth Army continued to carry out its part of the invasion plans. By 25 September the British 5th Infantry Division was concentrated in the area of Auletta. Meanwhile the 78th Infantry Division arrived at Taranto and commenced to concentrate at Bari, where it replaced the British 1st Airborne Division. It then pushed on to capture Foggia, the German Air Force's principal maintenance base in Italy. By the 28th it had reached the vicinity of Termoli, where a stiff fight developed for the city. With the assistance of an amphibious movement that landed Commandos one mile to the west, Termoli was captured on 3 October. Heavy fighting continued until about 6 October, when the enemy main body was withdrawn to the left bank of the Trigno River, leaving only covering forces to the south.

In the center the 1st Canadian Division had pushed on to the important rail junction of Potenza by 25 September and by the 28th was north of Atella. The map shows the line held by the 15th Army Group on 8 October.

COMMENTS

The invasion of Italy commenced about six weeks after her request for an armistice and seventeen days after the conquest of Sicily. It is evident that speed was of great importance in order to prevent the alert Germans from establishing a strong defense; and the lapse of time between late July and 9 September occasioned some criticism of the Allied high command on the part of contemporary analysts, who asserted that there appeared to have been much needless delay in launching the actual landing operations. These writers enumerated the strategic advantages that would have accrued from an earlier invasion, but offered no constructive solution of the logistical problem that confronted the actual planners.

In the light of such information as is now available, it is difficult to see just how an earlier invasion of Italy could have been accomplished. Virtually the entire British Eighth Army was committed in Sicily until 17 August, as well as units that later constituted the follow-up divisions of the American VI Corps. The losses in matériel during the Sicilian campaign had been heavy and would necessarily have to be made up prior to further offensive action. Especially was this true with respect to certain types of landing craft, the replacement of which would require much time.

Shipping, too, was a vital factor; and so long as the Sicilian operation continued, most of the available tonnage was required for it.

The mission of the Fifth Army was to capture Naples and prepare a firm base for further offensive operations. Some writers have referred to the boldness of the plan. However, if all the major factors influencing the success or failure of the invasion are considered carefully, and in the light of information at the disposal of the Allied commanders at the time, a more accurate conclusion would be that the plan was sound and conservative. A bold plan would have called for a landing in the Gaeta area. As has been noted, this was rejected primarily because it could not be properly supported by land-based fighter aircraft.

When the British Eighth Army landed at Reggio Calabria on 3 September, the Germans adopted a policy of avoiding all major actions and of disengaging under pressure, covered by extensive demolitions. This course was dictated by the rough nature of the country and its lack of communication facilities, the undisputed Allied air supremacy, and the obvious risk of other landings farther north. In accordance with the same policy, no enemy troops were sent to oppose the British occupation of Taranto and the advance from there. Only a few mobile elements were employed.

The Allied landing at Salerno on 9 September, however, provoked an immediate and energetic reaction. To the Germans it was obvious that the Allies were endeavoring to seize Naples and the Foggia airfields and advance up the peninsula to Rome and beyond. Moreover, a swift Allied success would have prevented the extrication of the German forces falling back in Calabria. The loss of Italian troops could be suffered, but the Germans could ill afford to part with two or three divisions of their own. So they fought bitterly at Salerno, first, to prevent our penetration inland and, second, to force us back into the sea. With characteristic vigor and courage the enemy seized the initiative. Infantry and tanks were concentrated against the narrow beachhead and were soon joined by the divisions disengaged from Calabria and by reinforcements from Naples.

During the short space of one week practically every important type of tactical maneuver was employed in the Salerno operation. During the period from the 9th to the 16th of September a landing on a hostile shore, an attack, a defense, a counterattack, and a withdrawal followed in rapid sequence.

In contrast with the amphibious operations against Sicily, the Allied landings at Salerno were made in the face of determined enemy resistance. This has occasioned the remark that, compared to Salerno, Sicily was a "dress rehearsal."

American and British assault forces reached the beaches at precisely the same time. For fifteen minutes prior to H-hour the naval guns had shelled the coastal defenses opposed to the British, while in the American sector there had been no such preparation. This difference in tactics is explained by the relative importance attached to surprise. As in any operation, surprise takes shape in a number of forms, two of which are time and place. The British decided that either all surprise elements were lost or that the value of supporting naval fire outweighed the possible advantages of partial surprise.

On the other hand, the American decision rested on the hope that enough of the surprise element remained to warrant the withholding of the naval support. As it turned out, it would have been advantageous to have had this support, since the Germans were well prepared for the invasion. And so we may say that possibly one lesson to be learned from this operation is that naval guns should be employed to soften the enemy's defenses unless absolute surprise is a certainty.

There are many other lessons to be learned from the landing at Salerno, but space permits reference to only a few. One report stressed the advantages of landing tanks in one of the first three waves to give additional artillery support, as well as to provide a very stimulating effect on the attacking infantry. A British observer pointed out the need for adequate guiding lights to beaches. His reference to this was no doubt based on the experience of the British 46th Division. Each of the three assault divisions of the Fifth Army attacked with two regiments abreast. Each regiment was assigned two beaches and attacked with two battalions abreast, with one in reserve. In the British 46th Division's attack, the battalion on the right missed its assigned beach and landed in the area of the British 56th Division. The reserve battalion followed it to the wrong beach. Consequently, at midday both battalions were not only completely disorganized, but they had no supporting weapons.

Still another observer praised the sending ashore early of a large number of antitank weapons, but criticized the inadequate preparations for dealing with mines on the beaches and exits.

On the whole, most reports agreed that the plan was excellent and that under the conditions of darkness and hostile fire the troops of the Fifth Army stood up admirably to the test imposed. Singled out for special praise was the American 36th Division, which had never experienced the realities of war.

From a purely tactical standpoint, it can be seen that the gap which existed between the X and VI Corps was the key to the difficult situation that developed on the 13th. This gap, which according to plan was to have been closed at Ponte Sele by the initial advance from the beaches, necessitated a reshuffling of forces at a time when the VI Corps was already on an overextended front. Had the gap not existed, the corps might have averted the withdrawal that delayed the accomplishment of its mission and caused so much anxiety.

It was the withdrawal of the VI Corps to the La Cosa line that prompted a Berlin radio commentator to speak exultantly of "another Dunkirk". So confident were they of success that on the night of 14 September, when the crisis of the battle had passed, the Germans released a long account of the "Salerno victory", with descriptions of how most of our troops had been killed or taken prisoner and with graphic stories of survivors being evacuated in landing barges. Actually, the barges were bringing in reinforcements.

On 14 September the naval armada offshore opened up with everything it had; carrier-based planes were active; and the Northwest African Air Force flew more than 1800 sorties over the battle area. That day and the next saw the Nazi tide stemmed.

It was not until 16 September that the Allies were able to strike back in strength, but by the 18th the Fifth Army had regained the initiative. The availability of reserves, superiority on the sea and in the air, and the dogged determination of the troops again won a splendid victory. And since at the same time the Eighth Army was headed toward his left flank and rear, the enemy decided to withdraw.

General Clark maintained at the time that the Salerno beachhead was not in grave danger, and subsequent events proved that he was right. He knew of the scheduled arrival of the additional divisions that were to land during the critical period—something that was not known to the American press, which seemed so fearful of disaster.

In view of his failure to throw the Allied invaders back into the sea at Salerno, and faced with the threat of being completely turned by the British Eighth Army, Kesselring began the first step in his efforts to stop the Allied advance up the peninsula. At this time, early

in October, he was obviously still short of troops. He had, however, successfully completed the withdrawal of his right flank to the Volturno River. He had also dispatched his hard-trying 16th Armored Division eastward to Termoli in an effort to establish a defensive line from the Tyrrhenian Sea to the Adriatic.

Prime Minister Churchill revealed some of the broad strategic concepts that guided the British and American plans when, on 21 September, he said: "I have never regarded the African operation as a substitute for a direct attack across the Channel upon the Germans in France or the Low Countries. On the contrary, the opening of this new front in the Mediterranean was always intended by myself and others to be an essential preliminary to the main attack on Germany and her ring of subjugated and satellite states. . . . I call this front which we have opened first in Africa, next in Sicily, and now in Italy, the third front."

From this it is clear that the attack on Italy was only one link in the ring that was gradually closing around Germany and her associates.

The success of the Salerno campaign was purchased at a high price in casualties. From 9 September to 6 October 788 American soldiers were killed in action, 2841 wounded, and 1318 reported missing—a total of 4947. Most of the casualties were incurred by the 36th and 45th Divisions. The British X Corps, which engaged in such hard fighting on the left, suffered even more heavily, with a total of 7272 killed, wounded, and missing. During the same period German casualties were about 8,000.

One other important, though small, operation should be mentioned to complete the account of the initial invasion of Italy. As a result of the landing at Salerno, both Sardinia and Corsica were threatened with attack and isolation. Under pressure of attacks by Italian forces, German troops completed the evacuation of Sardinia on 19 September. The enemy crossed to Corsica, where he was engaged by Italian troops, French Commandos, patriots, and small American units. By 5 October the Germans there had been captured or evacuated, and Corsica, too, was in Allied hands.

FROM THE VOLTURNO TO THE WINTER LINE

October–November 1943 (Map 10)

Late in September 1943, 15th Army Group headquarters had issued orders to the Fifth Army to drive the Germans across the Volturno River and back into the mountains. The accomplishment of this task would put the Fifth Army nearer Rome, its next major

objective. Between the Volturno and Rome lay 120 miles of rugged, mountainous country in which the Germans could take advantage of numerous natural lines of defense.

The composition of the VI and X Corps at this time is shown on the map. Together with their supporting troops, these two corps represented a force of over 125,000 men. To oppose the Fifth Army, Field Marshal Kesselring had part of the German Tenth Army. Kesselring's force was smaller than the Fifth Army, but it was fighting a delaying action through terrain that gave every advantage to the defender.

The key to the enemy's retention of the Volturno River line lay in the massif northeast of Capua. This was his main artillery area; and so long as it was held, no crossing in strength by the British between Capua and the sea was possible. In the event, however, of crossings made by American troops at points east of Capua, the central massif would be threatened. Its capture would force an enemy withdrawal from the center, open up the coastal plain, and enable the X Corps to advance.

Accordingly, on 7 October the VI Corps, then occupying a front of thirty-five miles, was ordered to force a crossing of the Volturno during the night of 9-10 October and drive along the ridge line running northwest toward Mignano. The X Corps was to attack generally along its entire twenty-mile front, force a number of crossings of the Garigliano, and contain as many enemy troops as possible.

Owing to delay in regrouping the divisions of the VI Corps, General Clark postponed the attack until the night of 12-13 October. On this date both corps would strike simultaneously along the whole extent of the forty-mile Volturno-Calore line. Each corps would attack on a three-division front, giving the Fifth Army a powerful though extended striking force.

In the VI Corps the main crossing was successfully made by the 3d Division on both sides of a hairpin bend in the river almost due north of Caserta. Without waiting to mop up all the pockets of resistance along the river, leading elements of the division pushed on across the valley toward Mount Majulo, in the face of heavy artillery fire and enemy counterattacks. Soon the important heights of Mount Majulo and Mount Caruso were completely under the 3d Division's control. By the morning of 14 October the entire division was across the Volturno and in position to continue the attack. In hardly more than twenty-four hours of continuous fighting, General Truscott's men had won control of the Volturno Valley from the western slopes of Mount Majulo to the eastern slopes of Mount Caruso.

While the 3d Division was fighting its way across the Volturno and into the hills, the 34th Division was advancing on the right. Against only sporadic and generally light opposition, the 34th crossed the river on a regimental front. By late afternoon of the 14th it controlled the high ground east of Mount Caruso, and its patrols had crossed the upper Volturno and established contact with the 45th Division.

In the early morning hours of 13 October, while the 3d and 34th Divisions were forcing a crossing of the Volturno, the 45th Division, on their right, was launching an attack against Mount Acero. By the 14th the 45th had cleared the slopes of the mountain and was moving northwest along the Volturno. The enemy had no alternative but to withdraw to new positions to the north. The next day all German troops were cleared out of the Calore Valley, and contact was established with the 34th Division.

In the meantime, after severe fighting along the lower part of the Volturno, the X Corps had secured two bridgeheads.

Although the enemy was still holding small portions of the river line and was shelling the engineers as they rushed work on the vital supply bridges, the backbone of his resistance was broken by nightfall of 14 October. The Fifth Army was across the Volturno and was now ready to get on with the task of driving the enemy back to his next line of defense.

It was soon evident that the Germans were withdrawing before the VI Corps, and General Clark ordered all his divisions to push on without delay.

The terrain through which the VI Corps divisions were ordered to move is a series of high, rocky, brush-covered hills and ridges, interspersed with deep ravines, narrow valleys, and small broken tablelands.

Poor roads, demolished bridges, and the difficulties of bringing in supplies slowed our advance as much as the determined resistance of the enemy. Every hill along the route of advance had to be taken, demolished bridges had to be by-passed and then rebuilt, roads had to be repaired, and mines, booby traps, and road blocks had to be removed.

In the X Corps zone of advance the terrain was less rugged but almost as suitable for delaying tactics.

During the next month the Fifth Army slowly fought its way up the peninsula, the VI Corps advancing some forty miles on its right and twenty miles on its left, while the X Corps kept pace along the coast.

During this advance the 34th Division crossed the Volturno for the second time, and on the night of 3-4 November both the 34th and 45th faced a third crossing. Only minor opposition was encountered in getting across the river, but once beyond the valley and into the lower slopes of the mountain mass opposite Mignano, Venafrò, and Colli, progress became much slower as the Germans brought up reinforcements and stubbornly contested every foot of ground.

By 15 November, after twelve days of constant climbing and incessant fighting in the mountains, the entire VI Corps had been brought to a standstill. To the south the X Corps had been stopped at the Garigliano and by the strong position at Mount Camino. It was evident that the exhausted divisions needed rest and replacements, and General Clark ordered the advance stopped on 15 November.

CONCURRENT OPERATIONS ALONG THE TRIGNO RIVER

As previously mentioned, at the close of the battle at Termoli, on the Eighth Army front, the enemy withdrew his main forces behind the Trigno River, leaving light covering forces on the right bank.

From the 7th to the 18th of October it was generally quiet in the Eighth Army zone. The enemy was too weak to launch offensive operations; and the Eighth Army was hampered in following up his withdrawal from Termoli, owing to the extension of its forces during the rapid advance to the Biferno. Reserves and supplies were brought up; and by 22 October General Montgomery was ready for his next operation, the crossing of the Trigno River.

In a series of bitterly contested actions the Eighth Army crossed the Trigno and captured San Salvo, although continually hampered by extremely bad weather. By mid-November General Montgomery had reached the right bank of the Sangro River and was planning the next move.

COMMENTS

During the period extending from late September to the middle of November the fiercest fighting on the Fifth Army front took place along the Volturno River. When General Clark's divisions successfully crossed it on the night of 12-13 October, the enemy resumed his retreat, his forces being pressed closely by the Eighth Army on the right and the Fifth on the left.

Our advance up the peninsula, however, grew more and more difficult as the fall rains flooded streams and washed out temporary bridges installed on the vital supply routes. Throughout its entire length, the supply chain from forward units back to the damaged port of Naples was strained by the burden imposed by the weather and enemy demolitions.

Equally as serious as supply was the lack of reserves, for without fresh divisions to exploit a breakthrough, our tactics were necessarily cautious. By 15 November its divisions were so exhausted that it was necessary for the Fifth Army to pause for a rest before renewing the attack.

The victories of General Clark's men from 6 October to 15 November required an additional expenditure of lives. The total battle casualties were 9690, of which 6843 were American. The heaviest losses in the VI Corps occurred on 13 October and 4 November, the days during which the first and third Volturno crossings were made. Non-battle casualties during the entire period were about equal to the number of battle losses. German casualties totaled about 9,000.

THE WINTER LINE CAMPAIGN

November 1943–January 1944*

PLANS AND PREPARATIONS (Map 12)

Less than eight miles in front of the center of the Fifth Army lay the beginning of the Liri Valley, the "gateway to Rome", which was to be the objective of our next attack. The gateway, however, is well protected by all the obstacles that nature can devise. Between it and the Fifth Army lay high mountains, along the eastern edge of which flowed the narrow but deep Garigliano River. Attack in this sector—to force an entrance into the southern portion of the Liri Valley—would be exceedingly difficult.

The terrain along Highway 6, in the center of our line, was little better. As the highway approaches the town of Mignano, it enters a narrow valley that lies between the formidable group of jagged ridges forming Mount Camino and a belt of less rugged hills rising to the northeast. This valley is known as Mignano Gap. Highway 6 and a railroad run side by side through a portion of the gap, then diverge near Mignano to pass on either side of Mount Lungo, which with Mount Rotondo forms a natural "stopper" in the bottleneck approach to the Rapido River, which in turn bars the northern entrance to the Liri Valley.

*The organization of the Fifth Army during this period is given in Appendix 2.

On the Fifth Army's right flank a tangled belt of mountains, nine miles deep, stretched north from Mount Sammucro and effectively protected the approach to Mount Cairo, on the north side of the Liri Valley. This belt is a wild mixture of bare knobs and brush-covered knolls, scantily inhabited and poorly provided with natural avenues of approach. Only two roads, one through Filignano and Sant' Elia and the other from Colli to Atina, penetrate this desolate country. Both roads are narrow and tortuous, and both are dominated everywhere by the hills.

In late October information was received regarding a strong defensive position that was being prepared by reserves and forced civilian labor to the rear of the immediate front. The German high command apparently had decided by the middle of October, on the basis of the successful delaying action then in progress, that our forces could be held south of Rome for the winter. It had therefore set about the construction of a defensive line from the Tyrrhenian Sea straight across to the Adriatic. Conflicting reports, however, made it difficult to determine the exact location of this line, and the subsequent fighting showed that not one but two belts of enemy fortifications awaited our troops. The main belt, called the Gustav Line, had as its eastern boundary the general line of the Garigliano and Rapido Rivers. On this position the Germans planned to make their main defense of the Liri Valley; but in front of it, to protect the work of fortification and to gain time, they constructed a temporary belt that was to become known as the Winter Line. Though this second line was planned only to delay us, the success of the enemy in stopping our advance units there at the beginning of November led to a decision to hold it as long as possible before falling back to the main belt.

However temporary it may have been considered in the original plan, the Winter Line was a formidable barrier to the advance of the Allies (**Map 11**). On the Eighth Army front the Germans held along the Sangro River from the coast inland to its headwaters. No army can operate on the high peaks of the Apennines, which form the backbone of the peninsula and marked the boundary between the forces of General Montgomery and General Clark. On the Fifth Army front the line ran along the hills west of Venafrò and Mignano and down the west bank of the Garigliano to the sea. The entire line was a belt of defenses in depth without any single key point, and there was no opportunity for a brilliant stroke that could break it. Each mountain had to be taken, each valley cleared, and then there were still more mountains ahead.

German engineers made very skillful use of terrain and fortifications to hold the Allies at bay. They laid mines on the roads and trails, at the heads of gullies, and across every natural route of advance. All bridges and culverts were destroyed, and more mines were buried in the possible by-passes. Machine-gun and mortar emplacements, many of them dug into solid rock, covered the approaches to the position. Not even intense artillery concentrations could smash such emplacements. On the slopes of mountains, behind stream beds, and across narrow valleys, dozens of mutually supporting machine guns were sited to weave a pattern of death. Because of the rugged terrain and its careful organization, relatively few men were needed for the defense of the position.

Howitzers and long-range guns, many self-propelled and all of them well defiladed behind protecting crests, could reach nearly every point held by us. The trails and roads we had to use and our bivouac sites were all subjected to harrassing fire. Peaks, such as Camino and Sammucro, provided posts from which enemy forward observers could see every movement of our forces made in daylight. On the other hand, the Germans, protected by the mountain barrier, could supply their troops with safety and could maneuver almost at will to reinforce the small detachments that manned the defenses.

From the Allied point of view, it was imperative that we wage a winter campaign in the mountains to break through the German lines. Political reasons, for one thing, dictated the capture of Rome as quickly as possible. As a token of the complete destruction of the Rome-Berlin axis and as an indication of Allied military power to the subject countries of Europe, its conquest was important. Further, it was desirable to keep the Germans as busy as possible in Italy, both to draw men and supplies from the Russian front and to lessen the number of divisions that they could send to France to oppose us in the spring of 1944. Accordingly, the main question before the 15th Army Group was not whether to continue the attack, but how best to carry it out.

The over-all strategy of the 15th Army Group now emerged—the strategy that was to influence all the action in Italy for the next six months. As early as 8 November a directive issued by General Alexander outlined the broad scope of the plans for further offensive action. This directive divided the operations into three phases. In the first phase the Eighth Army would drive up the Adriatic coast to Chieti and Pescara and then wheel west toward Rome, thereby threatening the enemy line of communication through Avezzano. In the second phase the Fifth Army would advance up the Liri and

Sacco Valleys and capture Frosinone. In the third and final phase, when the drives by the Eighth and Fifth Armies had come within supporting distance, the Fifth Army would launch an amphibious operation south of Rome directed on the Colli Laziali feature. It was estimated that the amphibious operation would take place by 20 December, when the Fifth Army would have reached the line Priverno-Ferentino-Capistrallo. It is thus seen that the plan called for an initial penetration by the Eighth Army along the Adriatic and then an envelopment from the east; and next a penetration by the Fifth Army into the Liri Valley, followed by an amphibious turning movement south of Rome as soon as the main penetrations had converged to a point so that both armies on the main front were within supporting distance.

During the period up to mid-November the Fifth Army had delivered the main attack and as a result had drawn to its front the bulk of the enemy forces. If the weight of our operations were suddenly shifted to the Eighth Army front, the enemy might be surprised. The Fifth Army was ordered to stand fast and reorganize in preparation for an attack about 30 November; the Eighth Army was meanwhile to begin the attack up the east coast toward Pescara. General Montgomery, in accordance with this plan, proceeded to regroup his forces for an attack on the Winter Line in the lower Sangro River sector.

OPERATIONS OF THE EIGHTH ARMY

Battle of the Sangro River.—In preparation for forcing the Sangro, the weight of the Eighth Army was shifted to the right. Following this the troops jumped off during the night of 19-20 November. By the 23d, despite rain, mud, and flooded rivers, as well as a determined enemy, General Montgomery's divisions had established bridgeheads across the Sangro at three points. The enemy reaction to these initial successes was very strong, but the British troops kept pressing forward; and three weeks later, after much hard fighting, they were on the outskirts of both Ortona and Orsogna. At both places German resistance stiffened, and it was not until 27 December that Ortona was cleared of the enemy. The British continued to attack, but by 15 January there had been little further change in the situation on the front of the Eighth Army.

It was now clear that the strategic plan of the Allies was, for the time being, doomed to failure. Since the Eighth Army could not

break through the eastern end of the Winter Line, it became impossible for it to cut across the Italian Peninsula and behind the German forces opposing the Fifth Army's advance. In the meantime General Clark was attacking according to plan.

OPERATIONS OF THE FIFTH ARMY (Map 12)

The Fifth Army's plan was to break through the difficult terrain to its front, reach the Rapido River, and subsequently force a crossing into the Liri Valley.

In view of the mountainous terrain, the operation was to be divided into three phases. The first phase was to be a thrust on the left of the Mignano Gap; the second a drive on the right of the gap, supported by a simultaneous attack along the army's north flank; and the third phase was to be a drive through the center up the Liri Valley. The principal burden of these attacks would fall on four American divisions, three of which had been in the line almost continuously since they landed at Salerno in September. The two British divisions in the X Corps would assist on the left, and arrangements had been made to bring in French troops. The 2d Moroccan Division would arrive at Naples by 1 December and the 3d Algerian Division at the end of the month. Both divisions had been trained in mountain fighting, and both were eager for the fray. With these two divisions and the American 1st Armored Division, which had reached Italy in November, the Fifth Army would have eleven divisions at its disposal for the grueling work ahead.

On 16 November the 36th Division, moving up from a rear area, began to relieve the 3d Division in the vicinity of Mignano Gap. About this time the II Corps, Major General Geoffrey T. Keyes commanding, was formed, and to it were assigned the 36th and 3d. General Keyes began preparations for the attack by his corps, which was to be delivered against the formidable group of peaks known collectively as the Camino hill mass. Mount Camino itself rises 3200 feet above sea level. At the upper end of the hill mass, which is six miles long and four miles wide, are the numerous peaks of Mount Maggiore.

General Clark planned simultaneous attacks by the X and II Corps. The X Corps, on the left, was assigned the mission of capturing Mount Camino proper. It was to be prepared to move north to relieve the II Corps and was to carry out deceptive measures along the lower Garigliano River to indicate a crossing there. The II Corps was to capture the eastern and northern slopes of Mount Camino prior to being relieved by the X Corps. On the right flank

of the Fifth Army, the VI Corps was to harass the enemy along the entire corps front. Together these operations were to constitute the first phase of the Fifth Army's attack against the Winter Line.

In order to cover the movement of troops to assembly positions and to draw enemy forces from Mount Camino, the 46th Division was ordered to capture the western ridges of the Mount Camino hill mass during the night of 1-2 December. Then the 56th Division would attack Mount Camino itself on the following night. If the X Corps could succeed in this assault before daylight of 3 December, the enemy would be deprived of the high ground from which he could look down on the American troops attacking the eastern and northern ridges.

First Phase, the Thrust on the Left, 1-10 December.—On 1 December the units of the II and X Corps were ready to launch their attacks. Prior to this the 46th Division had, according to plan, made a feint on the lower Garigliano; and on the right flank the VI Corps had begun its diversionary attacks, which were to be continued in unsuccessful attempts to capture Mount Pantano.

On the 1st and 2d of December the XII Air Support Command reached the high point in its bombing of enemy targets in preparation for the assault on the Camino hill mass. Rain cancelled part of the extensive bombing program, but 274 sorties were flown on 1 December and 612 the following day. However, the Germans suffered little from these attacks, so well were they protected in caves, dug-outs, and by the extremely rough terrain.

The artillery preparation for the attack was the most formidable seen thus far in the war in Italy. Starting at 1630 on 2 December, 925 pieces poured ton after ton of high explosive and white phosphorous shells into enemy positions. On Mount Camino alone 820 pieces, ranging from 3-inch guns to 8-inch howitzers, fired "some of the most powerful and intense concentrations ever produced in battle on a small area." During a one-hour period on 2 December, 346 pieces, including twenty-four 8-inch howitzers, fired 22,508 rounds—an average of 65 rounds per gun—in the II Corps zone. Hour after hour the preparation continued until by 1800 hours on 4 December the three corps in the Fifth Army had fired 203,900 rounds weighing 3865 tons. However, the effect of this massed artillery fire on the enemy was disappointing. There were few men in the target area at the time of the preparation, and they were in protected positions.

After dark on 2 December the 1st Special Service Force,* on the left of the II Corps, fought its way up the eastern slopes of the Mount Camino hill mass and by dawn of the 3d had forced the enemy back. Despite desperate counterattacks, the position was held; and by 8 December the northeastern portion of the hill mass had been cleared of German troops.

Meanwhile the 56th Division occupied the crest of Mount Camino to climax some very bitter fighting and by 9 December had driven the fiercely resisting Germans from the western slopes of the hill mass. Between the 1st Special Service Force and the 56th Division, over two thirds of the Fifth Army's initial objective had been seized during the first eight days. The remainder of the objective was taken by troops of the 36th Division, who cleared Mount Maggiore and held it despite vicious enemy counterattacks. So we see that during this highly successful first phase practically all of the Camino hill mass had been captured from the strongly entrenched enemy.

Second Phase, the Thrust on the Right, 7-21 December (Map 13).—On 10 December the 34th Division was replaced by the 2d Moroccan Division, which had landed at Naples late in November; and a fresh division, trained in mountain fighting, was ready for the next attack.

Liberated Italy also entered the fight against the Germans during this phase of the Winter Line campaign. The 1st Italian Motorized Group, with over 5000 men, had occupied the extreme southeastern nose of Mount Lungo on 7 December.

The capture of the Camino hills had given us observation over the Liri Valley, but the heights of Mount Lungo and Mount Sammucro still remained in the enemy's hands. The narrow valley between these two mountains, less than a mile wide, was strongly organized for defense, with San Pietro as the center of resistance. Before this strong point could be reduced, both Mount Lungo and the crest of Mount Sammucro had to be captured.

The plan for attack during the second phase called for a main effort by the II Corps north of Highway 6—to begin on 8 December. On the left the X Corps was to take over the defense of the Camino hills and thus relieve some of the troops of the II Corps. On the right the VI Corps was to attack by 15 December and drive west on the Colli-Atina and Filignano-Sant' Elia roads, with the hills above Cassino as the objective. By attacking over a wide front, General

*This force consisted of six battalions of specially trained Canadian and American troops.

Clark hoped to compel the enemy to extend his forces.

The II Corps plan for the capture of San Pietro provided for a double envelopment. The 1st Italian Motorized Group was to envelop the town from the south by capturing Mount Lungo while elements of the 36th Division enveloped it from the north by taking the heights of Mount Sammucro. No movement was planned through "Death Valley", between San Pietro and Mount Lungo, but a secondary attack toward the former was included as part of the 36th Division's scheme of maneuver.

Following a forty-minute artillery preparation, the Italians commenced their attack at 0630 on 8 December. By noon it was apparent that they could not go far.

No greater success attended the efforts of the 36th Division's secondary attack in its attempt to take San Pietro. The attack had commenced simultaneously with the Italian thrust, but the German defenses were too strong.

Meanwhile the main enveloping attack by the 36th Division had commenced at 1700 hours, 7 December, against Mount Sammucro. So skillfully was the approach to the position conducted that the Germans were blasted out of their emplacements with grenades as our troops swarmed over the hill just before dawn of the 8th. Time and again the enemy counterattacked; but his efforts failed, many broken up by our artillery.

With the heights of Mount Sammucro in its possession, the II Corps continued its operations against San Pietro. An attempted advance from Mount Sammucro failed; but a part of the 36th Division, advancing from the south, captured Mount Lungo by dawn of the 16th, which forced the enemy to give up San Pietro. By the 19th the Germans had retired to a defensive position in front of Cedro Hill, Mount Porchia, San Vittore, and Cardito.

The drives by the II Corps against San Pietro were accompanied by a full-scale offensive on the part of the VI Corps, to the north. That corps gained some ground, but was unable to make much progress prior to the German withdrawal that was brought about by the success of the II Corps.

On the whole, some substantial gains had been made by our troops during this second phase of the Winter Line campaign. The II Corps had gained its objectives by capturing Mount Lungo, San Pietro, and Mount Sammucro. These victories, won at heavy cost, had broken the strong German position along Highway 6.

The attack of the Fifth Army was by this time assuming greater importance in the Italian campaign as a whole, for, as we have seen,

the advance by the Eighth Army along the east coast had been almost completely stopped.

Although the II Corps had gained complete control of Mignano Gap, it soon discovered that the next German position was only a short distance beyond San Pietro. Before new attacks could be made, it was necessary to regroup and bring up fresh troops. The tired 36th Division, which had acquitted itself so well, was replaced by the 34th; and the 45th Division, after spending 115 days in combat, was relieved by the 3d Algerian Division (Map 14). What had been the VI Corps zone now became that of the French Expeditionary Corps, commanded by General Alphonse Juin. The 6th Armored Infantry Regiment of the 1st Armored Division, which now came into line, constituted the greater part of Task Force A. The 1st Special Service Force took position on the right of the 34th Division.

Third Phase, the Thrust to the Rapido, 5-15 January 1944.—The Fifth Army forces were to drive the enemy from the maze of mountain defenses east of the Rapido River, capture the high ground north of Cassino, and push up the Liri Valley. The axis of advance would thus remain unchanged, and the II Corps was again to make the main attack. The 5th of January was chosen for D-day.

On the right flank the French Expeditionary Corps was to drive west through Sant' Elia, and on the left the X Corps had the mission of clearing up enemy resistance between the Peccia and Rapido Rivers south of the railroad.

Before the II Corps could take Mount Trocchio, its main objective, Mount Porchia, south of the highway, and Mount La Chiaia, to the north, had to be captured.

The 1st Special Service Force was to take the key peak of Mount Majo and then swing southwest toward Highway 6. Its supplies would have to be carried by pack trains, and 700 mules were to be provided.

On the left flank of the II Corps, Task Force A was to take Mount Porchia and advance generally parallel to the railroad.

The 34th Division, in the center, was to make the main effort. After taking Mount La Chiaia, San Vittore, and Mount Cervaro, it was to capture Mount Trocchio, the main objective.

Artillery, air, and armored support was to be available to the II Corps on a large scale.

According to plan, the 1st Special Service Force moved forward and by early morning of the 7th had captured Mount Majo and the high ground to the west. The Germans reacted strongly and during the next three days counterattacked repeatedly in vain attempts

to retake the lost position. Meanwhile, to the south, the 34th Division launched the main attack and, after enveloping both flanks, drove the enemy from his Mount La Chiaia position. This success enabled Task Force A to take Mount Porchia.

The hard fighting continued until 15 January, by which date Mount Trocchio* was in our hands. During the fortnight's operations General Clark's men had won more than a score of hills and mountains on a front six miles long and more than five miles deep.

While the II Corps was breaking through the last defenses of the Winter Line, the French Expeditionary Corps was keeping pace against stiff German resistance. Generally speaking, as their strong points in the II Corps zone were enveloped and subsequently captured, the Germans were forced to withdraw their left. By 13 January the French were moving rapidly toward Sant'Elia and on the 15th forced the enemy to evacuate that town. The Fifth Army line of contact was as shown on Map 14. The general line held by the Allied army group at the end of the Winter Line campaign is indicated on Map 11.

COMMENTS

German intentions in Italy were not clearly revealed until the start of the Winter Line campaign, for the enemy fought only rear-guard actions after the fall of Naples and gave little indication as to when or where he would stand and fight a real battle. By 15 November there was no longer any doubt, and events of the succeeding two months showed that the Germans intended to hold us below Rome at all costs.

The front of the Fifth Army was about thirty-five miles long. The troops on the lower third of the line made no advance during the period 15 November to 15 January. Along Highway 6 the II Corps, aided by the X Corps, pushed the Germans back eight miles, while to the north the VI Corps gained an equal distance toward Sant' Elia. Considering distance alone, these results do not appear impressive for a campaign of two months; but in view of the difficulties that faced them, General Clark's divisions deserve high praise. The enemy had fought bravely and tenaciously on each hill and mountain, retaining his position until the fight was hopeless or even, on occasions, until his garrison was exterminated. The weather had been consistently unfavorable to the offensive and, together with the terrain, had made each of our attacks an utterly exhausting action that required extensive periods of rest for the troops. Supplies were

*Mount Trocchio was of value more as a site for observation posts than as a defensive position.

more easily expended than replaced, particularly in the forward lines on steep mountainsides.

With respect to the over-all picture, it is interesting to note that German sources state that Allied tactics along the front were partly responsible for the success of the relatively weak Tenth Army. Since the attacks by the American Fifth Army usually alternated with those by the British Eighth, the German command was able to move divisions from quiet to active sectors and thus avoid a breakthrough. The enemy yielded territory to the British Eighth Army so as to concentrate on the Fifth Army front. An American breakthrough would mean the loss of Rome and a German withdrawal from central Italy. During November and December serious emergencies developed whenever an offensive was started by one of the Allies prior to the completion of the preceding attack by the other. The motorized and armored divisions of the Tenth Army underwent severe strain, since they were continually engaged in active sectors and had little time for rest and repair. During November and December strong matériel and personnel reinforcements had to be injected to prevent disintegration of the Tenth Army, whose battle casualties during this period reached 20,000.

The Winter Line campaign had not only been slow; it had also been extremely costly. During the period of two months only half the time had been spent in large-scale fighting, but the Fifth Army had suffered heavily, as shown by the following tabulation of losses:

	AMERICAN	BRITISH	FRENCH	ITALIAN	TOTAL
Killed	1,615	347	449	113	2,524
Wounded	6,955	2,405	2,728	191	12,279
Missing	271	380	128	282	1,061
	<u>8,841</u>	<u>3,132</u>	<u>3,305</u>	<u>586</u>	<u>15,864</u>

At the end of 1943 important changes took place in the Allied high command. General Eisenhower was transferred to the European Theater of Operations, and General Sir Henry M. Wilson was made commander of all Allied forces in the Mediterranean area. Lieutenant General Jacob L. Devers, U. S. Army, became his deputy. This change placed the eastern and western Mediterranean theaters under one command. Lieutenant General Ira C. Eaker, U. S. Army Air Forces, succeeded Air Chief Marshal Tedder in command of the Allied Mediterranean Air Forces. The American components included in the new command were Major General Nathan F. Twining's Fifteenth Air Force and Major General John K. Cannon's Twelfth Air Force. As commander of the Eighth Army, Lieutenant General Sir Oliver W. H. Leese replaced General Montgomery, who was transferred to the European Theater of Operations.

THE CASSINO-ANZIO CAMPAIGN

January-March 1944

ALLIED PLANS (Map 15)

By mid-December it was obvious to Allied commanders in Italy that neither phase one nor phase two of their strategic plan had been completed. The Eighth Army was still about twenty-five miles from Pescara and the Fifth Army some thirty miles from the line considered essential for it to reach prior to launching the amphibious operation—the line Capistrallo-Ferentino-Priverno.

It was equally clear that additional frontal attacks against the Germans in their strongly fortified positions of the Gustav Line would only continue to win ground slowly and at too great a cost. In the light of these two considerations a new amphibious plan was adopted, and Allied strategy was modified to accommodate it.

Whereas in the first plan the amphibious attack was designed to assist the main part of the Fifth Army when it had reached the line north of Frosinone, the new plan provided for a much larger operation to be carried out, regardless of the position of the Fifth Army. In two months the force scheduled for the Anzio operation had grown from a tentative figure of 24,000 to a planned eventual strength of over 110,000. (As always in an operation of this type, one of the main factors that affected the strength of the task force was the number of landing craft available.)

The new plan of operations provided as follows:

1. On the southern front the Fifth Army was to "make as strong a thrust as possible towards Cassino and Frosinone shortly prior to the assault landing to draw in enemy reserves which might be employed against the landing forces and then to create a breach in his front through which every opportunity will be taken to link up rapidly with the sea-borne operation".
2. The Eighth Army would make what would amount to a holding attack to prevent the Germans from transferring divisions opposed to it to new positions opposite the Fifth Army.
3. The Fifth Army would launch an amphibious operation with two divisions, plus certain attached units, on beaches south of Rome. The attack would be directed on the Colli Laziali, a commanding hill mass astride the vital communication routes supplying the German right wing on the front opposite the main part of the Fifth Army. The date for this operation was to fall between 20 and 31 January, and to be as near the 20th as possible.

General Alexander stated the expected results of the new plan of operations as follows: "The enemy will be compelled to react to the threat to his communications and rear, and advantage must be taken of this to break through his main defenses and to insure that the two forces operating under the Commander, Fifth Army, join hands at the earliest possible moment." It was fully anticipated that the amphibious landing at Anzio combined with the attack by the Fifth Army on the southern part of the main front would result in driving the enemy north of the last barrier to the advance on Rome. After the junction of its forces the Fifth was to advance north of Rome as quickly as possible—to the general line Civitavecchia-Viterbo (Map 9). More distant objectives were the Florence-Pisa area for the Fifth Army and the Ravenna-Rimini area for the Eighth.

Vice Admiral Lowry's Naval Task Force 81, which included Greek, Dutch, and French ships as well as British and American, was to provide the naval support for the amphibious operation. In addition he was to execute a diversion against the beaches in the vicinity of Civitavecchia, about forty miles northwest of Rome.

Briefly stated, the Allied plan of operations included a naval diversion against the beaches in the vicinity of Civitavecchia; a holding attack by the Eighth Army on the enemy's extreme left; a landing by the VI Corps of the Fifth Army on the beaches in the vicinity of Anzio, behind the German main line of defense, followed by an advance to cut the enemy's line of communication leading to his right wing; and an attack by the remainder of the Fifth Army along the main front for the purpose of penetrating into the Liri Valley and linking up with the VI Corps at Anzio.

The date finally chosen for the amphibious landing was 22 January, with H-hour at 0200.

The 15th Army Group prepared a cover plan to deceive the enemy as to the timing and direction of the amphibious assault. It was hardly possible to conceal the fact that an amphibious operation was being mounted from the port of Naples, but measures were taken to make the enemy believe it was directed elsewhere than at Anzio. In the cover plan radio deception and camouflage work played important parts. The enemy was to be led into the belief that Leghorn was the objective of the amphibious force, that the Fifth Army was to go on the defensive, and that the Eighth Army was to make the main assault along the Adriatic.

Prior to D-day the Tactical Air Force would bomb all enemy airfields to knock out the German air force and would seek to cut all communications between Rome and northern Italy. The Strategic

Air Force would assist in these tasks. Then, from D-day on, every effort would be made to isolate the beachhead from enemy forces by bombing bridges and road transport and attacking all enemy columns or troop concentrations within striking distance.

Almost the entire strength of the Tactical Air Force would be available for this program, and all air units of the Mediterranean theater would be on call. A total of 61½ squadrons would directly support the ground effort.

Reorganization of both Allied armies commenced early in January. The American 3d Infantry Division and the British 1st Infantry Division were withdrawn from the front and placed under the VI Corps; the British 5th Infantry Division was transferred from the Eighth Army to the X Corps of the Fifth Army. Later the 2d New Zealand Division was to be moved from Orsogna to Venafro, where it would remain in army group reserve (Map 15).

The Eighth Army was thus depleted by two divisions, but to carry out its show of force the headquarters of the I Canadian Corps and 4th Indian Division were brought forward from army reserve.

It is important to understand that the operations of the Fifth Army in the Anzio campaign overlapped the operations that drove the enemy from the Winter Line. During the Winter Line campaign the French Corps had attacked on 12 January and by the 15th, as mentioned previously, had forced the evacuation of Sant' Elia (Map 14). By the same date the II Corps had taken Mount Trocchio. The Fifth Army's offensive operations would be continued with the attack by the X Corps on 17 January, which would initiate the Anzio campaign.

OPERATIONS (Map 15)

The attack by the X Corps opened on the 17th, as planned, and by the 20th a bridgehead had been established across the Garigliano. However, the 46th Division, on the right, failed to get across the river. This was of critical importance because the left flank of the II Corps would be exposed during its attack across the Rapido.

In the II Corps zone, as shown on Map 14,* the area around Cassino was the key to that portion of the Gustav Line lying north of the Liri River. In this region the mountains rise abruptly from the somewhat marshy floor of the valley. Immediately above the town,

* The operations around Cassino are not shown on any map of this series. However, Map 14 shows the terrain and can serve to make the narrative sufficiently clear.

Monastery Hill rises to a height of 1700 feet, and within two or three miles to the north and west lie numerous other peaks with elevations of from 2000 to 2500 feet. Mount Cairo, some five miles to the north-west, has an elevation of about 5500 feet. The great number of mutually supporting positions afforded by the jumble of hills overlooking Cassino made the area one of exceptional strength. The town itself, composed almost entirely of stone buildings, is on the west side of the Rapido River. Situated on the main highway and railway between Rome and Naples, it was of considerable strategic value.

The II Corps planned to avoid the strong defenses in the immediate vicinity of Cassino and make an envelopment of that place from the south; the 34th Division, on the right, would hold enemy forces opposite the town; the 36th Division would establish a bridgehead across the Rapido below Cassino and penetrate the Gustav Line; and Combat Command B of the 1st Armored Division would exploit through the bridgehead to Piedmonte and Aquino. On the right of the II Corps, the French Corps would support the attack by advancing westward into the mountains.

Despite the fact that the X Corps' bridgehead across the Garigliano had not cleared the area south of the Liri River, the II Corps attacked on 20 January, according to schedule.

Units of the 36th Division crossed the Rapido and established a bridgehead about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Cassino, but were forced to give it up two days later after suffering 25 per cent casualties. This was the division's first serious setback. The enemy's defenses west of the Rapido were simply too strong, supply of the beachhead was frustrated by enemy fire and bad weather, and without pressure from the south by the 46th Division the bridgehead could not be held.

So far in the Fifth Army operations only local gains had been secured, but the threat of additional successes was so grave that the Germans were forced to move their reserves. Four additional enemy divisions were committed on the army front or directed toward it. On 20 January General Wilson directed that the amphibious operation be launched as scheduled, since, in spite of the fact that its gains had been small, the Fifth Army had attracted enemy reserves—divisions that otherwise would be available for use against the VI Corps.*

* At this time the west coast had been so denuded of troops that from the mouth of the Tiber to Terracina, a stretch of seventy-five miles, the Germans had only one armored grenadier battalion, one armored reconnaissance battalion, and a few coastal batteries.

The II Corps continued its efforts to capture Cassino from the south. However, it had so little success that about 22 January, the day of the landing at Anzio, General Clark directed that the corps attempt to envelop Cassino from the north. In conjunction with this maneuver the French Corps was to change the direction of its advance and turn southwest toward Piedimonte. On the left of the French the 34th Division would cross the Rapido and advance south, sending one column down the road into Cassino while other forces went through the mountains to take the high ground dominating the town and strike the enemy's rear near Piedimonte.

According to plan, the 34th Division launched its attack on 24 January. Two days later it had gained a firm though shallow bridgehead on the west bank of the Rapido. On its right the 3d Algerian Division of the French Corps expanded the bridgehead into the foothills north of Cairo. Heavy fighting raged for the next week as the enemy strove desperately to hold the commanding heights northwest of Cassino that barred the advance into the Liri Valley. By the end of January the village of Cairo had fallen to the 34th Division, but otherwise progress was slow, costly, and extremely difficult.

Meanwhile the VI Corps landed at Anzio and Nettuno (Map 15). These two villages are seashore resorts some thirty miles south of Rome. An excellent road leads to the capital via Campoleone. Another leads to Cisterna, seventeen miles northeast of Nettuno. The main railroad on the western side of the peninsula runs from Rome to Naples, and an excellent highway parallels it. A successful Allied advance from Anzio and Nettuno could quickly cut both of these major supply lines, although it would still be necessary to penetrate inland some twenty-five miles to sever the alternative line of communication—both rail and highway—that runs from Rome to Cassino down the Sacco Valley. Even this success would not entirely cut all of the supply routes to the Cassino-Minturno sector, since the motor road and rail route from Rome eastward to Avezzano and thence southward would still be open. However, the capture of Rome would immediately cut all lines of communication to the German right wing and center.

The VI Corps, commanded by Major General John P. Lucas, was ordered to secure a beachhead in the vicinity of Anzio and then advance on Colli Laziali. The beachhead would be seized by three coordinated assaults: On the right, about four miles east of Anzio, the 3d Infantry Division would land its three regiments; three Ranger battalions would land on a small beach adjacent to Anzio harbor with the mission of seizing the port and clearing out any

coastal defense batteries there; and, six miles northwest of Anzio, the British 1st Infantry Division would assault the beaches with one brigade group* and two Commando battalions. The mission of the Commandos would be to strike east and establish a road block on the main road north of Anzio.

The assault plan assumed heavy resistance on the beaches and strong counterattacks once the enemy was fully aware of the extent of our landings. Consequently the VI Corps made ample provision for follow-up troops and reserves. The 1st Armored and 45th Infantry Divisions would support the assault units, a portion of each division coming in soon after the initial landings. A regiment of the 82d Airborne Division was to land later and be in corps reserve, and the bulk of the British 1st Division was to be a floating reserve.

Initially all of the assault forces in the operation would link up to consolidate a seven-mile-deep beachhead centering on the port of Anzio.

The VI Corps was about to embark on its second amphibious landing, a water movement of 120 miles by an assault force of almost 50,000 men and 5,200 vehicles. Its strength of twenty-seven infantry battalions was comparable in size to the force that landed at Salerno. The latest air reconnaissance revealed that the enemy apparently knew nothing of our plans. The weather forecast predicted negligible swell and a thick morning haze to cover the landing. At 0500 hours, 21 January, the ships put out to sea.

On leaving the port of Naples the convoy turned south and sailed around the island of Capri and well out into the Mediterranean before turning north on a direct course to Anzio. The Mediterranean Allied Coastal Air Force gave air protection to the ships during the first half of the voyage, after which the XII Air Support Command took over.

The voyage was uneventful, complete surprise having been achieved. The convoy arrived off Anzio at 0005 hours on 22 January, under cover of darkness. Mine sweepers cleared the approaches to the beaches, and at 0200 hours the first assault troops landed.

By 0445 hours the landing craft had unloaded most of the assault forces. Good progress had been made by the troops ashore against only minor opposition. By early afternoon Anzio and Nettuno were in our hands, and by dark the assault units had advanced to their initial objectives four miles inland. By midnight 36,034 troops and 3,067 vehicles had been put ashore.

* The equivalent of our regimental combat team.

During D-day the Tactical Air Force had flown 841 sorties in support of the landings; enemy air attacks had been slight.

On 23 January the operations of the VI Corps continued to progress slowly but favorably, and by the 24th the initial beachhead line, seven miles inland, had been reached against very moderate opposition. During the 23d and 24th the major effort had been devoted to landing supplies and reinforcements. No rapid advance in strength was believed possible until heavy weapons, tanks, and additional supplies could be landed.

Owing to the situation on the main front, there was no immediate prospect of quickly linking up the two forces and making a joint attack. It was considered more likely that the Germans would be able to bring up reserves in an attempt to throw the VI Corps back into the sea. Indications of heavy troop movements from north of Rome and from the inactive Eighth Army front, where the expected holding attack had failed to materialize, tended to confirm this view. If the VI Corps advanced too far inland toward Colli Laziali with its present limited strength, it might be so extended as to risk being cut off by a sudden German counterthrust. Consequently General Lucas consolidated his position and awaited reinforcements. During the interim our troops probed along the two best axes of advance. On the right the 3d Division advanced up the roads leading to Cisterna, while on the left the 1st Division pushed up the Albano road on Campoleone.

All during this period the Germans, initially caught off balance, were reacting quickly and were rushing reinforcements to the threatened area. By the 24th they had elements of three divisions opposite the VI Corps, with units on the way from the quiet Eighth Army front and from France, Germany, and even the Balkan area. The German command was aided considerably by the capture of our landing plan early in the operation. From the information received from this plan and from interrogation of prisoners, the Germans decided that the VI Corps did not have sufficient force to break out of the bridgehead after 24 January. At this time, therefore, they began to think of attack instead of defense, and plans were started to mount a counteroffensive as soon as sufficient forces had arrived. The 28th of January was considered the earliest possible date for this attack, but it was to be postponed until early February because Allied air attacks had slowed the movement forward of reinforcements.

Enemy resistance continued to be light on the 25th as the VI Corps moved inland to deepen its beachhead; but as advance units of the 3d Division approached Cisterna and the 1st Division neared Cam-

poleone, stronger opposition developed. The two divisions were first slowed down and then, on the 28th, stopped entirely before they reached the two intermediate objectives.

As early as the 26th VI Corps Headquarters had estimated that the Germans had moved in three full divisions,* with more possibly en route. It was realized that though our constant air attacks on bridges and motor transport would delay the movement of reinforcements, they could not stop them entirely. During the next four days advance elements of four more divisions arrived to bring the enemy strength up to thirty-six infantry battalions and one armored battalion.

Meanwhile the VI Corps had been strengthened by the remainder of the 1st Armored and 45th Divisions, and the equivalent of four divisions now held the Anzio beachhead. With 68,886 troops, 508 guns, and 237 tanks ashore, and backed by a large reserve of supplies, General Lucas ordered the VI Corps to attack on 30 January and advance in the direction of Colli Laziali. If the attack progressed satisfactorily, the corps was to be prepared to push toward Rome.

On the right flank the 3d Division was to get astride Highway 7 at Cisterna and advance northwest to seize the high ground about Velletri. In the center the British 1st Division was to drive up the Albano road to seize the heights above that town—on the south slope of Colli Laziali. The 1st Armored Division was to swing around the left of the 1st Division and seize the high ground above Marino. A preliminary artillery preparation was not considered necessary, but extensive supporting fires and a smoke screen laid by aircraft at daylight were planned. The air force prepared an elaborate air support program that included special air cover for the advance of our armor. If the VI Corps could attain the commanding height of Colli Laziali, it would be astride the vital enemy communication route and so cut off the German forces in the south.

Between 28 and 30 January the 45th Division, in corps reserve, relieved the 1st and 3d Divisions along the beachhead flanks so that they could employ their full strength in the assault. The attack then commenced. In three days of bitter fighting the 3d Division gained up to three miles along the road leading to Cisterna but was unable to break through the last mile of enemy defenses. Since 22 January the division had suffered 3131 casualties. On the left the British 1st Division was stopped short of Campoleone, and without a breach in the enemy position an armored assault was not practicable.

* They actually had eighteen infantry battalions and one armored battalion, well-supported by artillery. At this time there were only six battalions in a German division.

The VI Corps attack out of the beachhead had spent itself on the unexpectedly strong German defenses. We had believed the defenses before Cisterna and Campoleone to be merely delaying positions, with the main line of resistance back on the high ground of Colli Laziali. Instead, the German commander, appreciating the limited strength of the forces opposing him and the value of the two key road junctions, determined to make his stand in front of them. Anticipating a renewal of our drive up the two main axes of advance inland, the Germans had moved in reinforcements in wholly unexpected strength. By feverish work they had also succeeded in building up a strong system of defenses. Every house and village was converted into a strong point, and these were connected by well-camouflaged machine-gun nests and rifle pits. Tanks and roving self-propelled guns supported these positions. In addition, our troops encountered massed artillery and mortar fire. Reducing each stone farmhouse was a separate siege operation in which tanks and tank destroyers had to pulverize the building before the infantry could move in. Sniping and infiltration by small enemy groups continued long after we had seized key points; and the infantry continually had to mop up by-passed pockets of Germans, who fired on them from the rear.

Every advantage of terrain, too, lay with the enemy. On the left flank our armor proved incapable of surmounting the natural obstacles presented by deep stream gullies and ground made soggy by repeated rains. On the right flank the route of our advance lay over open fields that offered scant cover to the attacker, while providing excellent fields of fire for defending troops. January rains made ground movements difficult, and low clouds during the crucial period severely restricted air support.

The main result of our attack was to postpone further the planned date of the opening of the German counteroffensive.

After a conference with General Clark on 1 February General Alexander ordered the VI Corps to continue the attack, to extend the beachhead to the Campoleone-Cisterna line and then organize for defense. The initial beachhead had been the largest that could be held with the limited number of troops originally landed. But it was so small that any part could be reached by enemy artillery, and there was little room for defense in depth. A breakthrough at any point would bring the Germans almost to the sea. Consequently General Alexander desired to extend the beachhead farther inland and anchor it on the strongpoints of Cisterna and Campoleone. By the afternoon of 1 February, however, it was evident that these

objectives could not be immediately attained. The enemy build-up to the equivalent of forty-two infantry battalions and one armored battalion, supported by forty-two batteries of artillery, had become so threatening that on 2 February General Clark ordered General Lucas to consolidate the bridgehead and prepare for defense.

The initiative in the fighting had passed to the enemy. The strenuous efforts of the 3d Division to take Cisterna and the attacks launched by the British 1st Division up the Albano road had exhausted the offensive strength of our troops. On the enemy side the rapid build-up of the German Fourteenth Army during the first two weeks of February supplied General Mackensen with a large force of fresh troops. It was only a matter of days before he would be in position to make an effort to wipe out the Allied beachhead.

By the end of January the situation that confronted the 15th Army Group in Italy was as follows: The Eighth Army front remained static; the Fifth Army apparently lacked sufficient strength—at least temporarily—to break through into the Liri Valley and effect a junction with the VI Corps at Anzio; and the VI Corps, as we have seen, had been forced to assume an entirely defensive attitude. It was obvious that the offensive plans of the Allies had been countered temporarily by an astute and resolute enemy.

Nonetheless it was essential that the Fifth Army continue its offensive operations on the main front, for otherwise the enemy would withdraw additional divisions and send them to Anzio. Accordingly the II Corps was ordered to continue its operations against the strongly held enemy sector around Cassino (**Map 14**). Plans for the attack early in February remained generally the same. The 34th Division was to continue its thrust from north of Cassino toward Highway 6, with the French Corps attacking on its right and Combat Command B (1st Armored Division) prepared to exploit into the Liri Valley when the Cassino bastion fell.

In this attack the 34th Division fought desperately to carry out its mission, and during the first three days of February advanced a few miles into the mountains north of Cassino. Several commanding peaks were captured and the outskirts of Cassino reached, but at this point the attack again bogged down. Only 2700 yards beyond was Highway 6, lifeline of the defenders in the Cassino area. However, the attack worried the Germans enough to make them contemplate shifting forces from the Anzio sector. It definitely did pin down the units already in the area.

Early in February the New Zealand Corps, consisting of the 4th Indian and 2d New Zealand Divisions, was assigned to the Fifth Army and within a short time took over from the II Corps the part

of the front around Cassino. The fresh corps now attempted the capture of the town. The new plan of attack provided for a heavy air attack on the Benedictine monastery atop Mount Cassino, it having been established that the enemy was using its buildings. On 15 February, after our front-line troops had moved a thousand yards to the rear, 576 tons of bombs were dropped. Additional air attacks were made on 17 and 18 February. The monastery was wrecked, but the New Zealand Corps was unable to make appreciable gains. The closely packed fortifications of Cassino and Monastery Hill, manned by determined defenders, withstood every attack.

Meanwhile at Anzio the VI Corps worked feverishly to establish strong defenses against the expected enemy counterattacks (Map 15). Hitler had called the beachhead below Rome an "abscess" and had ordered Kesselring to eliminate it. Mackensen's efforts to carry out this order fell into three phases: first, an attack to pinch out the British Campoleone salient that had been driven up the Albano road from 3 to 12 February; second, an all-out attempt to break through to the sea along the axis of the Albano-Anzio road, 16-19 February; and, third, an attack from Cisterna with a similar objective, 29 February-4 March.

During the first phase, which began on the date scheduled, the Germans were successful in reducing the Campoleone salient. Two desperate counterattacks by the 45th Division, initially in corps reserve, failed to retake the lost ground. A few days later, on 16 February, Mackensen, who had elements of ten divisions under him (with a strength of 95,000 men), opened the second phase of his attack. It appears that he fully expected that this assault would eliminate the beachhead. A secondary attack, which had little success, was launched south of Cisterna against the 3d Division while the main assault was being delivered along the Campoleone-Anzio road. In the main effort three German infantry divisions, assisted by elements of two additional divisions and supported by sixty tanks, attacked on a 4000-yard front. By the 19th the Germans had succeeded in pushing our line back about three miles, but there they were stopped. The next day Allied counterattacks regained about one mile of the lost ground. Enemy casualties were heavy, and he was forced to regroup his forces before attempting another large-scale assault.

At the height of the German attack, on the 17th, 533 Allied bombers dropped about 1100 tons of bombs in close support of the VI Corps. Our superiority in artillery and air power and the inability of the enemy to employ his tanks to advantage on the unfavorable terrain were the main causes of his defeat.

After the unsuccessful assault German artillery increased the weight of shells poured onto the beachhead. An average of 1500 rounds per day were delivered from 384 pieces. In comparison, the VI Corps, exclusive of the infantry cannon companies, had 432 artillery pieces that fired an average of 25,000 rounds per day at the enemy. In addition, Allied fire was thickened by cruisers and destroyers offshore.

By 18 February the British 56th Division from the X Corps of the Fifth Army had arrived at the beachhead. This was no doubt a relief to the Allied commanders, since most of their reserves had been committed to hold the defensive perimeter.

In the third-phase attack (29 February-4 March) elements of four enemy divisions pushed along the axis Cisterna-Anzio while parts of four other divisions drove down the Albano-Anzio road. Again the Germans were stopped without important gains. Over 800 Allied bombers of all types dropped 972 tons of bombs in successful efforts to assist the ground forces.

On 4 March the German Fourteenth Army ordered its units to organize a strong defensive position. The high command was giving official recognition to a fact already apparent to the troops: the attempt to reduce the beachhead had failed. The gradual disintegration of the enemy's last drive to push the VI Corps into the sea served as a fitting epilogue to a month of fighting as bitter and costly in lives as any experienced in the Italian campaign. The enemy had started his offensive in a spirit of confidence and with the determination to make any sacrifice necessary to victory. He had drawn upon his dwindling reserves in northern Italy, France, Yugoslavia, and Germany to build up an effective striking force. Then he attacked. His first drive, designed to pave the way for the breakthrough, was launched with skill and aggressiveness and he won his objective, although the time required and the expenditure of troops were greater than he anticipated. Still confident, he massed his forces for the blow which he expected would carry his armor and infantry through to the sea. For four days, 16-19 February, he threw wave after wave of infantry into the battle in a desperate effort to achieve success. The beachhead line of defense bent, but it failed to break. His attacks during the last drive, 29 February-4 March, showed both timidity and lack of coordination. Kesselring's efforts to win a victory that would bolster flagging morale at home and restore the reputation of the German Army abroad broke down before the stubborn resistance of the Allied troops.

From 4 March to 22 May 1944 the beachhead line remained virtually unchanged, no large-scale action being initiated by either side. Casualties during the period from 22 January to 22 May were heavy. The 3d Division received 14,165 replacements and the 45th Division, 11,202. In all, 23,860 American and 9,203 British casualties were evacuated during the five-month period that the beachhead was held.

During the second week of March the beachhead forces were further strengthened by the arrival of the British 5th Division, which replaced the 56th Division, and a week later by the arrival of the 34th Division. The VI Corps combat units then totaled five infantry divisions and one armored division (less one combat command).

Early in March the Combined Chiefs of Staff were concerned again over the adverse influence which a prolongation of the static situation in Italy might have on the broad strategic position of the Allies. It was decided to continue pressure against the enemy on the main front, opposite Cassino, but with the limited objective of securing a good jump-off position for a subsequent offensive. The plan was to combine an intensive bombing of a limited area at Cassino with a vigorous attack on the ground. The date set was 15 March.

From 0830 hours on that date until noon 338 heavy and 176 medium bombers dropped 1100 tons of explosives on the town, and 300 fighter-bombers attacked targets in the immediate vicinity. When the air attack ceased, 610 pieces of artillery threw 1200 tons of shells into the target area.

Cassino having been reduced to a mass of rubble, a regiment of the 2d New Zealand Division advanced behind a rolling barrage; but in spite of the heavy bombardment that had taken place, stiff opposition was met from German strong points in the town and on the hillsides, the enemy having come out of his shelters to man machine guns and other weapons. Assisted by a regiment of the 4th Indian Division, the New Zealand troops captured a considerable part of the town; but though the fighting continued for several days, the Allied troops were not able to seize full control nor to capture the dominating terrain feature, Monastery Hill.

On 23 March it was decided to abandon the attack. The 2d New Zealand Division had suffered 1316 casualties and the 4th Indian Division over 3000.

In a dispatch to the New Zealand Minister of Defense, General Freyberg, commander of the New Zealand Corps, said: "The blitz bombing at Cassino on 15 March proved a double-edge weapon that produced obstacles which made speedy deployment of our armor impossible. . . . At first there was little opposition. Prisoners were stunned and reported heavy casualties from our bombing. Soon

after, however, a torrential rain began, and progress in Cassino was slow and there was delay and loss of cohesion. During the rainy night the Germans reorganized a number of strong points, and many of the advantages of surprise were lost."

During the 129 days from D-day at Salerno, 9 September 1943, to the end of the Winter Line campaign, 15 January 1944, the Fifth Army suffered 37,773 battle casualties. The Anzio-Cassino campaign, 16 January-31 March, produced 52,130 casualties in seventy-six days. These figures indicate the severity of the fighting. Enemy casualties are known to have been high, but it is unlikely that they were as severe as our own.

COMMENTS

No doubt the Anzio operation will be discussed by military critics for years to come. While many points of view will be expressed, certainly none will contend that General Alexander's army group should not have taken advantage of Allied control of the sea and have attempted an amphibious operation. The only other alternative was to continue the slow and costly process of storming one mountain position after the other.

The less informed will criticize the VI Corps for not dashing inland to cut the enemy communications and make havoc of his rear installations. Those critics will not realize that before any large-scale advance from the beachhead could take place, it was necessary to establish a firm base so that large quantities of supplies could be landed and protected. It is doubted that a charge that the Allies were not bold enough can be sustained.

For the operation to be entirely effective, the VI Corps had to seize and hold positions astride the enemy's lines of communication. In this it failed for lack of combat power. We know now that the Allies made a limited investment of troops in Italy in order to have the maximum number available for the landings that were to take place in France. No one can properly criticize that decision. In order to be stronger at the decisive point, economy of force had to be exercised in the less important theaters. The only question that then remains is whether a larger part of the total Allied strength in Italy should not have been sent to Anzio. Those who favor the affirmative will contend that several additional divisions could have been spared. This line of reasoning is supported by the fact that, regardless of the strength opposing them, the German divisions on the southern front would have had to withdraw if their lines of communication

were cut. However, we have here another example of the controlling influence of logistics on a plan of operations. Owing to the demands of the coming invasion of France, additional landing craft could not be made available to the forces in Italy.

THE ROME CAMPAIGN

May-August 1944

ALLIED PLANS AND PREPARATIONS (Map 16)

Since March the 15th Army Group had been engaged in another extensive regrouping of its divisions. Troops were rested and given further training in rear areas. The necessary stocks of food, equipment, and ammunition were built up. Reinforcements for both the main front and the Anzio beachhead were provided, and the new divisions were moved into the combat zone. British and Dominion units formerly with the Fifth Army were assigned to the Eighth Army, and the latter took over the Cassino front as far south as the Liri River. The part of the Fifth Army on the main front was now composed of American and French troops, who were responsible for the sector extending south from the Liri River to the coast. In his II Corps General Clark had two fresh divisions, the 85th and 88th, that were to add fame to American arms. Under General Juin's leadership, the French colonial divisions were to show that they were more than a match for the Germans.

Great care was exercised to conceal these changes, and later information showed that the efforts were largely successful.

As early as 28 April the Allied air force commenced intensive day-and-night attacks against enemy lines of communication. Its mission was to make it impossible for the enemy to reinforce his troops below Rome or to change materially the location of his divisions along the front. Attacks of a similar nature, and with the identical mission, had been made in January in an effort to prevent the enemy from bringing in troops to oppose the Anzio landing. Then the attempt had failed. Profiting by that experience, a more comprehensive plan was now employed. Railroads were bombed more extensively, and highway bridges were given special attention. Since it was found that the enemy was using water transportation from Genoa and other more distant points in supplying his troops below Rome, those ports were bombed regularly. To accomplish the mission, which they did most effectively, Allied planes made 21,800 sorties. Only sixty-three planes were lost in combat.

The Italian winter with its cold rains and high winds was over; the weather was warm and dry and the ground suitable for military operations.

At this time Field Marshal Kesselring had some twenty-two divisions in Italy. Nine were engaged in holding the southern front of 100 miles, five were containing the Anzio beachhead forces, two were in reserve southeast of Rome, two were northwest of Rome, and the remainder were in northern Italy.

Early in April General Alexander outlined the purposes of the May offensive as follows: to destroy the right wing of the German Tenth Army; to drive its remnants and the German Fourteenth Army north of Rome; and to pursue the enemy to the Rimini-Pisa line, inflicting the maximum losses on him in the process.

The Eighth Army was to make the main attack. Briefly stated, its mission was to break through the enemy defenses along the Rapido River and advance into the Liri Valley, with Highway 6 as its general axis of advance. The mission of the Fifth Army divisions on the southern front was to break out of the bridgehead across the Garigliano and advance on an axis generally parallel to that of the Eighth Army and south of the Liri and Sacco Rivers. The VI Corps was to break out of its Anzio beachhead and cut Highway 6 in the Valmontone area, thereby preventing the supply and withdrawal of the German divisions on the southern front. The attack from the beachhead was to be launched on twenty-four hours' notice at any time after D plus 4. A further mission of the VI Corps was to pursue the enemy to the north of Rome and capture the Viterbo airfields (**Map 17**) and the port of Civitavecchia.

Along the main front the Allies had built up a strength of some twenty-two divisions (**Map 16**). In view of their superiority in artillery and their overwhelming strength in the air, the offensive had every chance of success, despite a stubborn enemy who held strong defensive positions. The 11th of May was to be D-day, with H-hour at 2300.

OPERATIONS

The Allied attack opened in force on the night of 11 May, as planned. In order to obtain surprise, a lengthy artillery preparation was not fired. Instead, the entire weight of the Allied artillery was brought to bear on the enemy's forward positions about the time the infantry began its advance.

For the first two weeks of the offensive the major action took place along some thirty miles of the southern front of the Fifth and Eighth

Armies. This section included the zones of the Polish, British XIII, French Expeditionary, and American II Corps. To the north the X and V Corps carried out their operations without causing any material change in the line of battle.

From the very beginning of the offensive the principal Allied gains were scored along the Fifth Army front south of the Liri River by the French Corps and the American II Corps. General Juin threw all of his hardy divisions into the attack. They drove forward over rugged Mount Majo, rapidly shattering the German defenses, and on the 14th captured San Giorgio. The next day, as their attack gathered momentum, French units took Ausonia, on the Cassino-Formia road. This was on the enemy's main lateral line of communication. On the same day French armor cleared the Ausonia defile. The German positions facing the British XIII Corps in the lower Liri Valley were now seriously threatened with envelopment. Of almost equal importance, the French Corps was in a position to drive west and south behind enemy forces facing the II Corps, which had broken out from the Garigliano bridgehead on the afternoon of the 13th and morning of the 14th. By the 16th, after heavy fighting, the II Corps had reached positions about two and a half miles northeast of Formia.

In the action to date the successful breach of the Gustav Line defenses south of the Liri appeared to have disorganized completely a number of German units and to have forced a withdrawal from the Gustav Line at all points between the Liri and the coast. The enemy fell back to the Hitler Line, which ran from Terracina through Fondi to Pontecorvo and across the Liri Valley to Aquino and Piedmonte.

In carrying out its mission of enveloping Cassino from the north and protecting the right flank of the XIII Corps, the Polish Corps attacked westward in its zone. Only slight progress was made against the extremely bitter opposition, but the Poles aggressively continued the attack. Simultaneously the XIII Corps began an envelopment of Cassino from the south. Bridgeheads were established across the Rapido, and San Angelo, three and a half miles south of Cassino, was captured.

Progress then became difficult and slow. However, threatened by an envelopment when the French reached the Liri at San Giorgio on the 14th, the Germans opposing the XIII Corps began to thin out, and by the 17th the British had reached the Cassino-Rome road (Highway 6) at a point about two miles west of Cassino. Enemy resistance in Cassino was then crushed and at least 1,500 of the defenders captured.

After the fall of Cassino the British pushed up the Liri Valley toward the Pontecorvo-Aquino road, and the Poles moved toward Piedimonte. In this area the strongly prepared defenses of the Hitler Line and stubborn German resistance prevented much further advance until 23 May.

After the breach of the Gustav Line by the French Corps on the 14th and 15th, the advance of the Fifth Army was quite rapid. Esperia was captured by the French on the 17th, while on the same day other French units progressed to within artillery range of the Itri-Pico road. This highway was first cut by advance patrols on the 19th. By 22 May General Juin's men had captured Pico and had entered Pontecorvo. This action again threatened enemy forces opposing the XIII Corps north of the Liri and materially assisted its advance toward Aquino.

The American troops in the coastal sector kept pace with the French advance and moved forward rapidly against comparatively slight opposition. Formia, Itri, and Fondi fell in rapid succession, and by 22 May some of our units were in the mountains north of Terracina, a gain of thirty miles since the start of the offensive.

It was clear that the Hitler Line had been turned from the south by the II Corps and rendered untenable. The enemy forces remaining in front of the Fifth Army soon became badly demoralized and could cause no serious delay to a relentless pursuit swiftly executed.

This was considered the opportune time for the VI Corps to break out of the Anzio beachhead. One hour before dawn on the 23d the beachhead forces struck, the main attack being directed toward Cisterna and Cori. The corps objective was Valmontone, on Highway 6, the prompt seizure of which would cut off the German forces in the Liri and Sacco valleys.

Cisterna, lying on both the Appian Way and the Rome-Naples railway, was captured on the 25th after heavy fighting. Cori fell the same night, and units of the VI Corps pushed on to Artena.

Enemy reinforcements were rushed to the Valmontone sector, and for six days the progress of the VI Corps toward its objective was arrested. It was evident that the enemy intended to hold here at all costs so that his forces to the southeast could withdraw toward Rome and the northwest.

In the meantime on the southern front, Terracina fell to units of the II Corps on 24 May, and our troops poured into the Pontine Marshes. Early on the 25th advance elements of the II Corps met patrols from the VI Corps near Borgo Grappa and established land communication with the Anzio beachhead forces. The II Corps had

completed an advance of more than fifty-eight miles in fourteen days. The map shows the line held by the 15th Army Group on 28 May.

The II Corps moved to the Anzio area as quickly as possible. It took over the part of the front east of Velletri and south of Valmontone, with the VI Corps on its left. Heavy fighting developed as both corps strove to take the Colli Laziali and to cut off the enemy retreating across the Sacco Valley.

It was not until the night of the 31st that substantial progress was made. Units of the II Corps infiltrated between enemy strong points and successfully enveloped Velletri; both that town and Valmontone were captured on the morning of 2 June. The final advance on Rome was then commenced. Enemy resistance in the suburbs of the capital was overcome late in the afternoon of the 4th, and American troops entered shortly afterwards. The approximate line of contact on 5 June is shown on the map.

During the period 1 April to 4 June the Fifth Army suffered 35,014 casualties, of which 5,938 were killed, 26,450 wounded, and 2,626 missing in action. From 12 May to 4 June American casualties were 3,145 killed, 13,704 wounded, and 1,082 missing; a total of 17,931.

It will be recalled that Rome was only one of the three original objectives of the Fifth Army, the other two being the airfields at Viterbo and the port of Civitavecchia (Map 17). So without delay General Clark's divisions continued their advance. Only the II and VI Corps were available to pursue the defeated enemy, since the French Expeditionary Corps had been pinched out during the final advance to Rome, and its divisions could not move up until some later date. The British 1st and 5th Divisions had been ordered released without delay, and the VI Corps was directed to pinch out the American 45th Division during its advance. Aggressive armored reconnaissance elements were largely employed to maintain the pursuit, followed by small armored task forces with tanks and jeeps loaded with infantry. In the VI Corps zone, on the left, the 36th Division captured the port of Civitavecchia on 7 June. Its harbor facilities were all but useless because of extensive enemy demolitions, but they were restored to use in record time. Troops from the 1st Armored, 85th, and 88th Divisions secured Viterbo and its demolished air base on 9 June. All Fifth Army objectives had now been won.

After the fall of Rome the Allied advance west of the Tiber had met relatively little opposition, but east of the river the German Tenth Army had been able to organize more effective resistance, and

for a time Allied progress had been slower. However, after a few days the Germans had begun to withdraw rapidly, and the Eighth Army's advance had been accelerated. The map shows the lines of contact on 9 and 17 June.

French troops commanded by General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny landed on the island of Elba on 17 June, and by noon of the 19th had completed its occupation in the face of determined resistance by the German garrison. About 1800 prisoners were taken.

After 20 June the pursuit by the Fifth Army was continued by Major General Willis D. Crittenger's IV Corps, which replaced the VI Corps, and the French Expeditionary Corps, which took over from the II Corps. The IV Corps initially comprised the 34th and 36th Infantry Divisions and the 1st Armored Division. Later it employed the 88th and 91st Infantry Divisions to relieve other divisions in the operation.

The first really severe resistance by the enemy to the Allied pursuit developed about 20 June as the 15th Army Group approached his defenses south of the line Cecina-Arezzo-Ancona, a position behind which there were good lateral communications. The German commander desired to delay the Allied advance so as to gain time for additional strengthening of the Gothic Line, farther north, and to deny us the port of Leghorn, on the west coast, and Ancona, on the Adriatic Sea. By 18 July both were in Allied hands, and General Alexander would soon be able to use them as advance bases for his operations against the enemy's Gothic Line. This defensive system extended generally from southeast of Spezia through the rugged Appennines to Rimini, with forward defenses as far south as the Arno River.

When the Arno was reached by the Fifth and Eighth Armies—by early August—the Allied pursuit had come to an end, 150 miles northwest of Rome.

During the pursuit the Eighth Army captured 7,656 prisoners and the Fifth Army, 16,226. Enemy losses in matériel were extremely heavy. Fifth Army casualties totalled 17,939 and those of the Eighth Army, 15,966. The losses of the American units were 1,933 killed, 8,777 wounded, and 549 missing.

On 1 June the assigned strength of the Fifth Army was 248,989; by 1 July it had dropped to 205,992; and on 1 August the figure stood at 153,323. During the two months' period nine full divisions and the equivalent of a tenth were assigned elsewhere.

COMMENTS (Map 16)

There is perhaps no finer example of concentration of combat power throughout the invasion of Italy than that demonstrated by the Allies in the Rome campaign. It is true that in May General Alexander had more divisions available, but in addition he observed the principle of mass more closely. As mentioned previously, this was accomplished by completely regrouping the Eighth and Fifth Armies preparatory to the May offensive. The Fifth Army front was cut in half, and seven divisions were available for the drive along the coast to the Anzio beachhead. Although the Eighth Army took over a much larger sector than it had held previously, strict economy of force on the right flank permitted a heavy concentration against the Cassino sector. On the front in the vicinity of Cassino, which in January was held by four divisions, the Allied commanders concentrated ten divisions, including the two in reserve. Only two divisions held the extreme right flank, along the Adriatic. From Cassino south to the sea fifteen divisions were employed in May as compared to seven during the Anzio campaign in January and February. In addition, the beachhead force had been strengthened to give it offensive capabilities. The combination was too much for the German defenders.

It should be pointed out that the French Expeditionary Corps played a major role in the campaign. From reports of the operation it is clear that the French success in penetrating through the mountains—on the left flank of the Allied main attack against the Cassino sector and on the right flank of the secondary attack along the coast—achieved decisive results.

During the Rome campaign proper—11 May to 4 June—the Fifth Army took over 11,000 prisoners and caused additional enemy casualties estimated at 8,000 killed and 24,000 wounded. This total loss of 43,000 strongly supports the claim that the German Fourteenth Army was badly crippled. The further losses suffered during the pursuit completed its annihilation. Even as early as 12 June Allied headquarters had announced: "It is now clear that the original Fourteenth Army has been dispersed to the four winds. All that remains is a few scattered remnants who mainly are engaged in stealing one another's transport to get away as far as possible."

In an address given two days after the fall of Rome, Prime Minister Churchill stated: "General Alexander's prime object has never been the liberation of Rome, great as are the moral, political, and psychological advantages of this episode. Allied forces, with the

Americans in the van, are driving ahead northwards in relentless pursuit of the enemy. The destruction of the enemy's armies has been, throughout, the aim. The Anzio landing had in the end borne fruit by forcing Hitler to send south of Rome eight or nine divisions which he might well have needed elsewhere." On 6 June, the day of these remarks, Allied forces landed on the coast of France to launch a full-scale assault upon Hitler's "Fortress Europe" from the west.

THE ATTACK ON THE GOTHIC LINE

August–October 1944

Within a short time the Allies were ready for an advance against the Gothic Line. In preliminary operations the south bank of the Arno River was cleared and the historic city of Florence, which lies on both banks, was captured (Map 18).

The 15th Army Group's plan of attack on the Gothic Line called for a main blow by the Eighth Army along the Adriatic coast while the Fifth Army made a secondary attack toward Bologna.

General Leese planned to employ the bulk of the Eighth Army on a narrow front along the coast. In this zone the V Corps and the Canadian I Corps would attack initially, with the Polish II Corps in support on the left. As progress was made, the Eighth Army front, originally some ninety miles wide, would be constricted to about thirty-five miles, and an increasingly powerful attack would be directed against Kesselring's Tenth Army. Rimini was the initial army objective. The map shows the strategic importance of this city, the eastern terminus of the main lateral road and railway to Bologna, sixty miles distant, and to the Po Valley. After following the coastline, the highway turns northwest and runs behind the strong defensive positions of the Gothic Line.

The Eighth Army proposed to capture Rimini by penetrating the German left, along the Adriatic coast, and enveloping the enemy position from the east.

If the Fifth Army could seriously threaten to break through the mountains on the face of the salient held by the German left wing, it would draw enemy reserves to its front and would materially increase the chances of success by the Eighth Army along the coast.

Operations commenced on 26 August when the Eighth Army struck near the coast and the Fifth Army attacked into the mountains facing its long front. By 4 September the British and Poles had fought their way forward over difficult terrain to within five miles of Rimini.

On the left the IV Corps of the Fifth Army had secured Pisa and had reached the outskirts of Lucca, while the XIII Corps, on the right, had successfully moved into the southern outposts of the Gothic Line north of Florence.

It is apparent that the Germans feared a breakthrough into the Po Valley by the right wing of the Eighth Army and reacted quickly to the threat. Reinforcements, including armor, were brought up, and from the 4th to the 13th of September Allied advances along the Adriatic were measured in yards.

Meanwhile, on the 10th, the II Corps of the Fifth Army launched an attack through the XIII Corps' left and fought its way with extreme difficulty up both sides of Highway 65, toward Bologna. Progress on the right of the II Corps was more rapid than on the left, and corps reserves were committed on the 13th to exploit this success. Attacking toward Firenzuola, the II Corps captured this important point on the 21st and advanced toward Imola. The fall of Firenzuola flanked the strongly held Futa Pass, through which Highway 65 runs to Bologna, and on the 22d the enemy was forced to withdraw.

The Fifth Army's threat to Highway 9, the vital German line of communication and supply that served forces blocking the Eighth Army, had mounted so greatly that again the enemy was forced to act swiftly. By mid-September German reserves were being moved against the right-wing attack of General Clark's Fifth Army. The Eighth Army, taking advantage of this shift of forces, struck out again, and on 21 September Rimini was captured by the Eighth. The situation on 25 September was as shown by the phase line on the map.

Allied strategy had obviously forged a double-edged weapon that could wreak catastrophe on the Germans should either their center, south of Bologna, or their left wing, northwest of Rimini, give way.

By late September the greatest threat to the German armies was the right-wing attack of the Fifth Army, and as a result more reserves were sent to oppose this danger south of Bologna. Materially slowed by enemy counterattacks, the Fifth Army's forward movement was definitely stopped by 20 October, and near the end of the month General Clark ordered a halt to further offensive action. On clear days II Corps troops could see the buildings in Bologna, only fifteen miles north of the Fifth Army. The coveted objective was close, but more than ten miles of rocky, barren mountains still barred the way. With tired troops, few remaining reserves, and mounting problems of supply, the Fifth Army could go no farther for the time being.

Meanwhile, from 25 September to the end of October, as the Germans withdrew forces from their left to stop the Fifth Army's attack, the Eighth Army continued its advance along Highway 9. The situation on 30 October was as shown by the phase line on the map. At this time thirteen of Kesselring's twenty-one divisions along the front opposed the Fifth Army; nine of the thirteen had been employed against the four divisions of the II Corps.

By successfully withdrawing his left wing in good order before the Eighth Army, Kesselring demonstrated again the high degree of defensive skill that had marked his operations in Italy. He could afford to give ground slowly on his left provided his center held against the strong, purposeful attacks by the Fifth Army's right.

During the attack on the Gothic Line in September and October important gains were won by both armies of the Allied 15th Army Group, but at no time was a breakthrough accomplished against the excellent defensive tactics of the enemy. At the end of this period the Eighth Army was fighting across successive river lines that were used expertly by the Germans to slow the advance. In the center of the line the fighting was now on the north slopes of the Apennines, but the terrain was still so rugged that demolitions could be used to advantage and mountain strong points made difficult to reduce. On the west flank the mountains provided a barrier that duplicated the most difficult terrain over which the Allied armies in Italy had ever fought, and any slight advance was made only after extreme and costly effort. The enemy was resolved on holding our troops south of the Po Valley as long as possible, and he put up the most stubborn resistance.

Cutting diagonally across the Italian peninsula from Milan, the Po Valley is a vital axis of road and railroad lines (Map 19). It is also the center of Italian population and industry. Nearly half of Italy's 40,000,000 people live in the manufacturing cities of the valley and on the prosperous farms throughout the area. This is the part of Italy that has tempted conquerors through the ages, and the part that the Germans desired to hold above all other.

Weather conditions now became progressively worse. Rain, snow, sleet, fog, and mud returned to harass our troops, and the Italian winter once more aided the defenders. Especially was this the case in the mountainous area opposite the Fifth Army (Map 18).

Along the coast the Eighth Army continued to press the enemy back slowly. The Ronco River was forced, and Forli was captured by 9 November. The Lamone River was finally crossed, and both Faenza and Ravenna had fallen by 18 December.

It was considered essential that the 15th Army Group as a whole resume offensive operations as soon as possible and continue to press the enemy in Italy, the main purpose being to prevent the transfer of troops either to the eastern or western fronts in Europe. So a coordinated attack by both the Fifth and Eighth Armies was planned for Christmas Eve, with Bologna as the objective. The plan was frustrated by a German thrust down the Serchio Valley against the IV Corps. In this drive some ground was gained by the enemy, but by the end of the year the original Allied position had been restored. However, Allied offensive plans were cancelled, and both armies settled down to several months of needed rest and reorganization. On 15 January the Eighth Army was drawn up along the Senio River and the south shore of Lake Comacchio. Elsewhere along the front of the 15th Army Group little change had occurred in the line of contact since late October.

COMMENTS

When the Germans reached the Gothic Line, after their rapid retreat from Rome, there was no way to drive them out except by direct assault. The position could not be easily turned by an amphibious expedition. The western coast is rocky, with only a few small beaches, and the one beach on the east coast, just north of Rimini, could be easily defended.

Against the Gothic Line, General Alexander repeated in reverse the plan that was so successful in April. Then he switched the Eighth Army from the Adriatic toward the Tyrrhennian side of the Apennines. In August he moved it back again. In both cases he achieved a large measure of tactical surprise.

At 0800 hours, 15 August, Allied troops began to land in force on the beaches of southern France between Toulon and Cannes. The contribution made to this effort by the 15th Army Group was great, for many of the divisions used by General Patch for this new invasion had received their combat training in Italy.

This transfer of troops to General Eisenhower materially weakened the Allied forces in Italy, for the newly organized and equipped Italian units and the Brazilian Expeditionary Force, which arrived late in the year, compensated only in part for the loss of veteran divisions such as the 3d, 36th, and 45th, and General Juin's rugged French Corps.

Following the Rome campaign it became evident that the Italian theater would lapse more than ever into its role as a secondary theater, important as that role continued to be. The many divisions

needed on the main battle front in Belgium, France, and Germany simply did not warrant a large build-up in Italy, nor was the Allied high command to be guilty of dividing the strength at its disposal in order to crack the Gothic Line more quickly. It would appear then that the attacks there were made principally for the purpose of tying down, in Italy, as many enemy divisions as possible and preventing their use on either of the two main European fronts.

Late in November General Wilson was transferred from the Mediterranean theater to become the head of the British military mission in Washington, General Alexander stepping up to take his place. Both officers were made field marshals. General Clark succeeded Alexander and General Truscott, now a lieutenant general, became the Fifth Army commander. The latter had commanded a corps during the invasion of southern France.

At the turn of the year Germany was defending desperately on all European fronts. On the western front Rundstedt retained only a small fraction of the gains won in the costly Ardennes counter-offensive. In the east the Russians had held firmly to captured Budapest, and on 12 January launched a massive offensive from the Vistula that was destined to carry them to the Oder River, only thirty-seven miles from Berlin, in the short period of one month. Pressed from three sides, Germany was near the end of her rope. On all fronts in Europe the final chapter was about to be written.

ALLIED SPRING OFFENSIVE

April-May 1945

PLANS AND OPPOSING FORCES (Map 19)

From late October 1944, when the Fifth Army assumed the defensive, until April 1945 the Italian front lapsed into its longest period of stalemate. Neither side engaged in any large-scale offensive operations. Only a few miles of rugged terrain remained to be traversed before the Fifth Army could break out into the flatlands, where armor and flexibility of maneuver could be employed as never before possible in Italy.

The five months of general inaction in Italy had provided the Germans time in which to carry out their usual methodical organization of the ground. By early April 1945 the defenses guarding Bologna had been heavily built up south, southeast, and east of the city but had been strengthened to a lesser extent to the southwest. In addi-

tion, new belts of fortifications had been constructed along the Po and the Adige Rivers. Despite the Russian successes on the eastern front, that during the first three months of 1945 had carried their masses to within thirty-seven miles of Berlin, and notwithstanding the rapid advance of the Americans and British toward the Elbe on the western front, the enemy appeared as reluctant as ever to give up any portion of northern Italy.

Early in April 1945 General Truscott's Fifth Army comprised nine complete divisions and the equivalent of a tenth. Its effective strength was 266,883 officers and men; 177,218 Americans, 44,351 British, 31,157 Italians, and 14,157 Brazilians. Owing to the withdrawal of troops for service in Greece and Holland during the winter, the strength of the Eighth Army had been reduced to seven infantry divisions, one armored division, three Italian combat groups, and a Jewish brigade. Its effective strength was about equal to that of the Fifth. Hence General Clark's 15th Army Group comprised over 530,000 combat troops. A complete order of battle is given in Appendix 3.

Vietinghoff, commanding the Army Group Southwest, had twenty-three German and six Italian Fascist divisions in Italy. To defend western Italy and to block the passes leading from France, he had the Ligurian Army, Marshal Graziani commanding. This army contained seven divisions, two of which were German and the remainder Italian. Opposed to the 15th Army Group on the main Italian front were nineteen German divisions and one Italian. Since the enemy divisions were far below their full strength and the Allied divisions were overstrength, Vietinghoff probably did not have half as much infantry as the Allies. In armored forces and in the air the enemy was much inferior in strength. However, his troops were entrenched in strong positions.

Briefly stated, Allied strategy for the final offensive in Italy envisaged an initial double penetration (a penetration by each of the two Allied armies) followed by a double envelopment of enemy forces south of the Po, and the subsequent bisecting of northern Italy as far as the German frontier.

The Eighth Army was to make the initial attack with strong air support. The Fifth Army would be prepared to launch the main attack within twenty-four hours after D plus 2, at which time maximum air support would be switched from the Eighth to the Fifth Army front.

In the first phase the Eighth Army was to cross the Senio and Santerno Rivers and then make two thrusts northeast of Bologna:

one toward the town of Budrio for the purpose of aiding in the capture of Bologna and the other toward Bastia, on the route leading to Ferrara through the Argenta Gap, a narrow strip of land lying between the Reno River and Lake Comacchio and affording an avenue of advance to the Po. Provided the gap could be secured, the main effort of the Eighth Army would be directed through it, and this enveloping arm would strike towards Bondeno, south of the Po and west of Ferrara, in completing the second phase.

The Fifth Army's main mission, in the first phase, was to advance between the Panaro and Reno Rivers and debouch into the Po Valley. Its secondary mission was to capture or isolate Bologna. In the second phase it was to form a junction with the Eighth Army in the vicinity of Bondeno. Simultaneously the Fifth was to seize the crossings over the Panaro River, to the west, and then move north in the corridor between the Panaro and Secchia, striking the Po at Ostiglia.

During the third phase Verona would be captured and the enemy's escape route to Germany blocked.

A diversionary attack by the 92d Division, reinforced, along the Ligurian coast was ordered to precede the main offensive by four days. Naval diversionary attacks and deceptive measures were also planned to lead the enemy into believing that amphibious assaults were about to be made behind both his right and left flanks.

Strong support by our air forces was planned. Prior to D-day Allied planes were to continue their normal activities, interdicting the Po River crossings, destroying enemy motor transport, and harassing supply lines. On the dates set for the attacks of the Eighth and Fifth Armies large formations of heavy bombers, in addition to other aircraft, were to strike the enemy forward areas—the first time these large airplanes had been assigned such missions since the days of Anzio and Cassino.

OPERATIONS, 2-20 APRIL 1945 (Map 20)

Along the Adriatic coast the Eighth Army executed a diversionary Commando attack against enemy positions on the Comacchi spit* on 2 April. This operation was entirely successful, and the spit was cleared of hostile forces in two days.

Three days later, on 5 April, the 92d Infantry Division, on the extreme left of the Fifth Army, began its diversionary attack for the purpose of taking Massa, behind the Gothic Line defenses. Massa fell on 10 April and Carrara a day later.

* The narrow isthmus between Lake Comacchio and the Adriatic Sea.

The attack by the Eighth Army began on 9 April. Along a fifty-five-mile front General McCreery had aligned his XIII, X, II Polish, and V Corps, with eight divisions concentrated on the right in the latter two corps. The remainder of the Eighth Army front was held by only four divisions.

Early on 9 April 825 heavy and 282 medium bombers and 1017 fighter planes took to the air. More than 143,000 twenty-pound fragmentation bombs were dropped on enemy positions in the vicinity of Lugo. This "carpet attack" covered an area about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles deep and $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles wide. After this the Eighth Army attacked.

Two days later the V Corps had crossed the Senio both north and south of Lugo and had succeeded in crossing the Santerno about three miles north of that town. The II Polish Corps forced the Senio and then secured bridgeheads over the Santerno on both sides of Imola. Gains by the other corps of the Eighth Army were also scored.

To hasten the fall of Bastia, the V Corps launched one brigade of the 56th Division in an amphibious operation along the shore of Lake Comacchio, and on the 13th troops landed four miles northeast of the town. At nightfall on 13 April the situation in the Eighth Army was as follows: The enemy was successfully defending east of Bastia against the 56th Division, and the remainder of the V Corps had been slowed down about twenty miles east of Bologna; the Polish II Corps was by-passing Imola on both sides; and on the left the X Corps was beginning to debouch from the mountains into the Po plain.

The success of the Eighth Army attacks had disrupted the German defenses southeast of Bologna. The time was ripe for the main attack by the Fifth Army.

Fifth Army plans provided an attack by corps abreast, the IV Corps on the left and the II Corps on the right. During the first two weeks in April the regrouping of the Fifth Army divisions had been carried out with as much deception and secrecy as possible. Of its ten divisions nine were concentrated along a twenty-five mile front. The mountainous sector between the 92d Division on the Ligurian coast and the left flank of the Brazilian division was held defensively by two detached regiments from the 92d. It is clear that the mass of the Fifth Army was concentrated to secure maximum results.

The IV Corps launched its attack at 0945 hours on 14 April. Prior to H-hour the "carpet technique" of bombing was again used, and 2381 tons of fragmentation bombs were dropped on enemy positions in the short period of forty minutes. After this all available artillery in both the IV and II Corps shelled the enemy position for thirty-five minutes. When the artillery abruptly ceased firing, the infantry jumped off.

In four days and nights of mountain fighting the 10th Mountain Division successfully penetrated the enemy's defenses in front of the IV Corps. Casualties were high, but by nightfall on 17 April the 10th had reached the last foothills before the Po plain. On the left the 1st Brazilian Division had taken Montese and then had moved to relieve left-flank units of the 10th Division as it continued its advance. On the right the 1st Armored Division had captured Vergato and against moderate opposition had advanced some eight miles.

By nightfall of the 17th the enemy situation on the Fifth Army front had become critical. During that day reserves had been committed against the 10th Mountain Division; but they had arrived too late, since the division had already secured an egress from the mountains. Stretching ahead was gently rolling country suitable for the employment of armored forces, and the 1st Armored Division was ordered to move from the IV Corps' right to its left. The 85th Infantry Division, initially in army reserve, replaced the 1st Armored.

Enemy resistance in front of the 10th Mountain Division crumbled on the 19th, and his attempted orderly withdrawal before the IV Corps was turned into a rout. With the 1st Armored Division protecting its left and the 85th its right, the 10th descended from the last line of hills and swept out onto the floor of the Po Valley on the 20th. Enemy infantry opposition was almost entirely lacking, and only occasional artillery fire delayed the advance. At 1500 hours the 10th Mountain Division crossed Highway 9 and by midnight held Ponte Samoggia.

Meanwhile, thirty-seven hours after the IV Corps had opened the Fifth Army's spring offensive, the II Corps struck its blow east of the Reno River. Despite the fact that the enemy initially gave ground very slowly, no possibility existed after the 17th for a long stand barring Highway 65. Owing to the breakthrough by the IV Corps on the left, the II Corps advanced against greatly reduced resistance. By nightfall of the 20th this corps was ready to burst from the hills onto the Po plain and stood only three to six miles from Bologna.

Meanwhile, from 14 to 20 April, the Eighth Army carried out its part of the 15th Army Group's plan. A quick regrouping, completed on the 14th, placed the XIII Corps in between the II Polish and V Corps, thus effecting heavier concentration in the right wing.

In order to bolster their left flank against the threatened breakthrough by the V Corps, the Germans had committed their last available general reserve—between Highway 16 and Lake Camacchio. However, by the 16th the 56th Division, temporarily held up east of

Bastia, had fought its way into the town. Swinging northwest, it joined with other units of the V Corps in enveloping Argenta and seizing the Argenta Gap. By nightfall the XIII Corps was in possession of Medicina, only fifteen miles east of Bologna. Frantic enemy resistance slowed the Eighth Army during the next four days, but by the night of the 20th the XIII Corps had established a bridgehead over the Idice a mile north of Budrio. The V Corps was preparing to resume the attack toward Ferrara with the British 6th Armored Division, from army reserve, and the II Polish Corps was rapidly approaching Bologna.

Air support for the 15th Army Group had reached a high point of efficiency during the period 9-20 April. After the initial softening up of enemy positions by aircraft of all types, close support was given by the tactical air units. During the week preceding the fall of Bologna, Allied planes flew 11,903 sorties, the greatest effort in one week during the entire Italian campaign.

The map shows the line of contact on 20 April. With all the defenses of Bologna ruptured, the enemy armies were in the process of withdrawing as rapidly as possible to the Po River defense line. The Germans were short of vehicles and fuel; they were attempting to retreat across an open valley with a superb network of roads available to our mechanized forces; and in their rear was the unfordable Po River. The situation was ripe for exploitation. Both General Truscott and General McCreery placed emphasis on speed of movement in order to exploit fully the enemy's confusion and apparent disorganization.

During the early morning hours of 21 April the 34th Division (II Corps) entered Bologna (Map 21). At 0600 on 21 April the II Polish Corps entered the city and then swung northwest to cut Highway 64.

The fall of Bologna came with unexpected ease. Hub of the 15th Army Group's lines of communication, it would have been of great value to the Germans in slowing an advance to the Po. Vietinghoff must have concluded that if the strong mountain defenses could not stem the Allied tide, the immediate defenses of the city likewise could not stand for long.

Phase 1, the breaching of the Santerno River line by the Eighth Army and the debouchment of the Fifth Army into the Po Valley, had been completed by 21 April. The next step was to encircle the German forces south of the Po. According to the plans for exploiting the breakthrough, the Eighth Army was to operate east of a line running roughly from Bologna to Vicenza, both exclusive. In its

zone the coastal routes, Highway 16 to Padua and Highway 14 to the east, would constitute the main avenues of advance. The Fifth Army would strike generally north and northwest from Bologna. Across its routes of advance lay the Panaro, Po, Mincio, and Adige Rivers.

On the IV Corps front the 10th Mountain Division, still the spearhead and now operating over paved roads, struck northwest toward Mantua, covered on the right by the 85th Division. After crossing the Panaro River at Bomporto on the night of the 21st, it reached the Po near San Benedetto the next night. Preparations for crossing the river were rushed, and by noon of the 23d the first elements had started crossing, in the face of heavy artillery, machine-gun, and rifle fire.

On the left the 1st Armored Division by-passed Modena and reached the Po near Guastalla early on 23 April. Combat Command B advanced south of Highway 9 to cut the southern approaches to Modena, and the city soon fell to a special task force that was assisted by partisan groups. Farther to the left the Brazilian division reconnoitered aggressively and pressed hard on the heels of the withdrawing enemy.

The II Corps met with more resistance. The right wing of the German Tenth Army opposed the corps with stubborn delaying action in order to cover the withdrawal of its units across the Panaro and the Po. While the 88th Division, on the left, advanced almost abreast of the IV Corps' 85th Division, the 6th South African Armored and the 91st Divisions met with vicious resistance near Finale. By the time the advance had been resumed and the 6th South African had turned east to make contact with units of the Eighth Army, four German divisions had escaped.

Meanwhile, on the 21st—the day the Polish II Corps entered Bologna—the V Corps of the Eighth Army, spearheaded by the 6th Armored Division, struck through the Argenta Gap toward Ferrara and Codigora. Elements of the 6th Armored turned westward to close the trap on the escaping Germans; but, as we have seen, this came too late to achieve any great measure of success. Strong enemy resistance around Ferrara slowed the advance in that direction; but the XIII Corps, in the center, reached Bondeno. The general line of the two armies on the night of 23 April is shown on the map.

The pursuit was now on in earnest and the destruction of the enemy well under way (Map 22). On the Fifth Army front the IV Corps swept north to take the important airfield at Villafranca and move on Verona, the capital of Fascist Italy, and northwest toward Milan

and Lake Como to block off all escape routes from the upper Po Valley. The II Corps quickly seized the line of the Adige River from Verona to Legnano, Verona falling to the 88th Division early on the 26th. Crossing the river on a three-division front, the corps turned east to take Vicenza and to assist the Eighth Army in the capture of Padua.

By the end of the month the German armies in Italy were being rapidly cut to pieces. Enemy troops by-passed during the swift advance of the Allied units were being mopped up by special task forces, and the prison cages were receiving whole divisions at a time. On the extreme left the 92d Division had taken Genoa and was moving on to meet the French troops advancing from the border and to make contact with the IV Corps near Pavia. The 1st Armored Division, now supported by the 34th, was at Milan and Lake Como; and the 10th Mountain Division was on both shores of Lake Garda. The 88th moved north through Bassano toward Trent and the Brenner Pass, and the 85th had reached the valley of the Piave.

On the Eighth Army front the advance was no less rapid. Padua fell to the XIII Corps on the 29th, and on the same day Venice was entered by the V Corps. Armored forces raced eastward toward Udine and Trieste. Contact was made with units of the Yugoslavian Army, and on 2 May Trieste was entered.

The map shows the extent to which our fast-moving troops had occupied northern Italy by 30 April.

Peace negotiations had begun on 29 April with representatives of General Vietinghoff. Articles of unconditional surrender were signed on 2 May, and hostilities in Italy were at an end.

The formal surrender in Italy was the beginning of mass surrenders throughout the European theater and signalled the end of the Third Reich.

On 3 May the 85th and 88th Divisions sent task forces north to seal the Austrian frontier and to gain contact with the American Seventh Army, then driving southward from Germany. Elements of the 85th reached Austrian soil east of Dobbiaco on 4 May while the 88th met troops from the VI Corps of the Seventh Army at Vipiteno, nine miles south of Brennero.

To the west the 10th Mountain Division reached Nauders, beyond Resia Pass, on the 5th and contacted German forces pushed south by General Patch's Seventh Army troops. A status quo was maintained until the enemy surrendered to the Seventh Army.

COMMENTS

After twenty dreary months the grinding Italian campaign had been climaxed by a final brilliant offensive that in twenty-four days had reduced two formidable enemy armies, firmly entrenched in mountain positions and behind river lines, to a fleeing rabble with neither defense, organization, nor equipment.

Any general summary of the reasons for the success of the spring offensive of 1945 in Italy would include the following: careful planning and preparations; Allied superiority in combat power both on the ground and in the air; close coordination of the two Allied armies; and the desire on everyone's part to end the war in Italy as quickly as possible.

More specifically, the offensive was another excellent example of the proper employment of mass. As in the Rome campaign, both Allied armies were concentrated along narrow fronts and at decisive points. And the results achieved in both offensive operations could, as a consequence, be predicted with an astounding degree of accuracy. During the war in Italy, as in Russia, Poland, and France—and for that matter during any major war throughout history—it was demonstrated again that a penetration can be made through the enemy's lines, even in mountainous terrain, provided a superior enough concentration of combat power can be brought to bear. By means of rigid economy of force on its left the Fifth Army was able to throw six strong divisions and two weaker ones—a total of eight—against the enemy along a front that measured only twenty-three miles. The Eighth Army exercised similar economy on its left and massed eight divisions for its main blow along the coast. The Germans found it impossible to stop either penetration, but especially that of the Fifth Army's IV Corps, which proved decisive in bringing disaster to Vietinghoff's armies.

Military history records many successful breakthroughs but few well-executed pursuits. The causes normally given for these failures are many and varied. However, when they are sifted down, three remain predominant: lack of means, lack of plans, and lack of determination on the part of the leaders and troops.

In the spring offensive of 1945, not only were breakthroughs effected by both Allied armies, but in addition each army had planned well in advance for the exploitation phase and had provided the means for its speedy execution. Moreover, the commanders and troops retained the will to destroy the enemy despite the long and difficult months of fighting that had preceded the offensive.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN

Following quickly after the Tunisian and Sicilian campaigns, the invasion of Italy enabled the Allies to retain the initiative in the Mediterranean theater. The occupation of Italian ports permitted the consolidation of Allied Mediterranean sea power and extended the area controlled by it far up into the Adriatic. Acquisition of air bases in Italy greatly facilitated our bombing operations against Germany. The capture of Rome had large political and psychological repercussions, mostly favorable to the Allies. And, most important of all, a second front was opened to which were drawn German divisions that might otherwise have been used against Russia.

The soldiers of the 15th Army Group had spent two cold winters in the line, fighting about Cassino and Anzio in the first and manning the positions of the Apennine front in the second.

Opposed to our armies in Italy was a crafty, experienced enemy who fell back reluctantly from one fortified line to another. Rarely did we outnumber him sufficiently to exploit temporary tactical advantages. Yet almost always were we on the offensive. When beaten the enemy would rally and face us anew in previously prepared defensive positions to which the terrain lent great natural strength.

The Italian campaign was indeed a bitter one. Lasting 601 days, from 9 September 1943 to 2 May 1945, it cost the twenty-seven divisions that at one time or another were in the Fifth Army a total of 188,546 casualties. The enemy losses in dead and wounded are not known, but from D-day at Salerno to 2 May 1945 the Fifth Army took 212,112 prisoners. American losses were 19,475 killed, 80,530 wounded, and 9,637 missing; a total of 109,642.*

There has been criticism of the slowness of the operations in Italy by some who, either through lack of information or military knowledge, have failed to appreciate the difficulties of advancing up a mountainous peninsula against a determined foe when the attacker has but limited combat power. It has been said with reason that for the Allied ground forces in Italy to fulfill their mission it was required only that the effort be persistent, even if slow, and that it be strong enough to force the use by the enemy of important forces that otherwise would be available for use on the Russian front or, later, in western Europe. Hence, assuming the mission as stated, the Allied forces in Italy were at all times successful.

Others perhaps will criticize the Combined Chiefs of Staff for sending so few divisions to Italy. However, unless they were to dis-

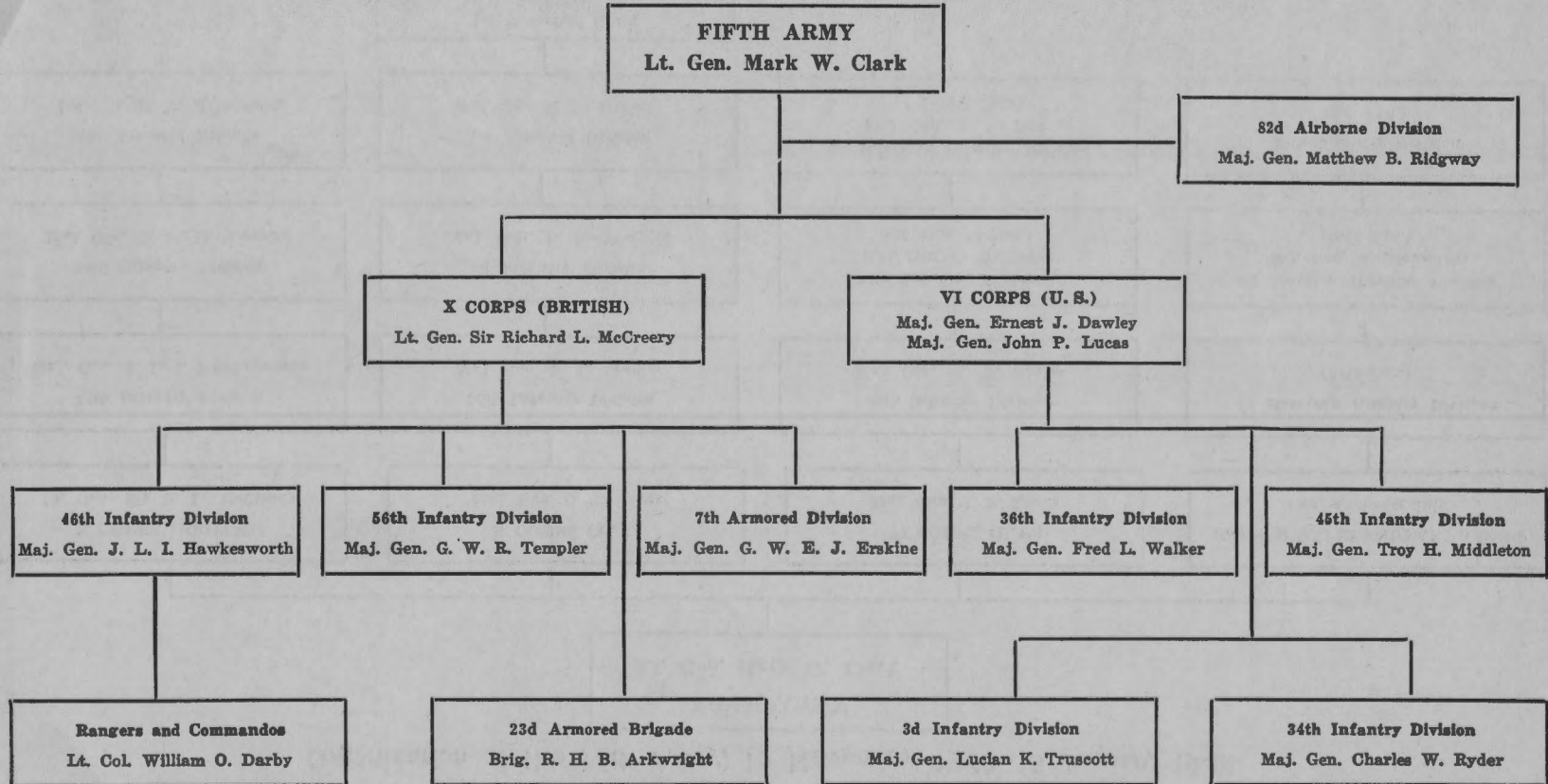
* A chart showing casualties suffered by the Fifth Army and other data of interest is given in Appendix 4.

regard the needs of what was to become the main theater in Europe, they could not allot additional divisions to this secondary theater. The war against Hitler could be won farther north in Europe, but not in Italy.

Whether the Allies should have gone into Italy at all is another and a broader question, and one that will be much discussed in the years to come. But be that as it may, nothing can detract from the glory due the leaders and the troops for the intelligent direction and hard fighting that were characteristic of the successful campaign.

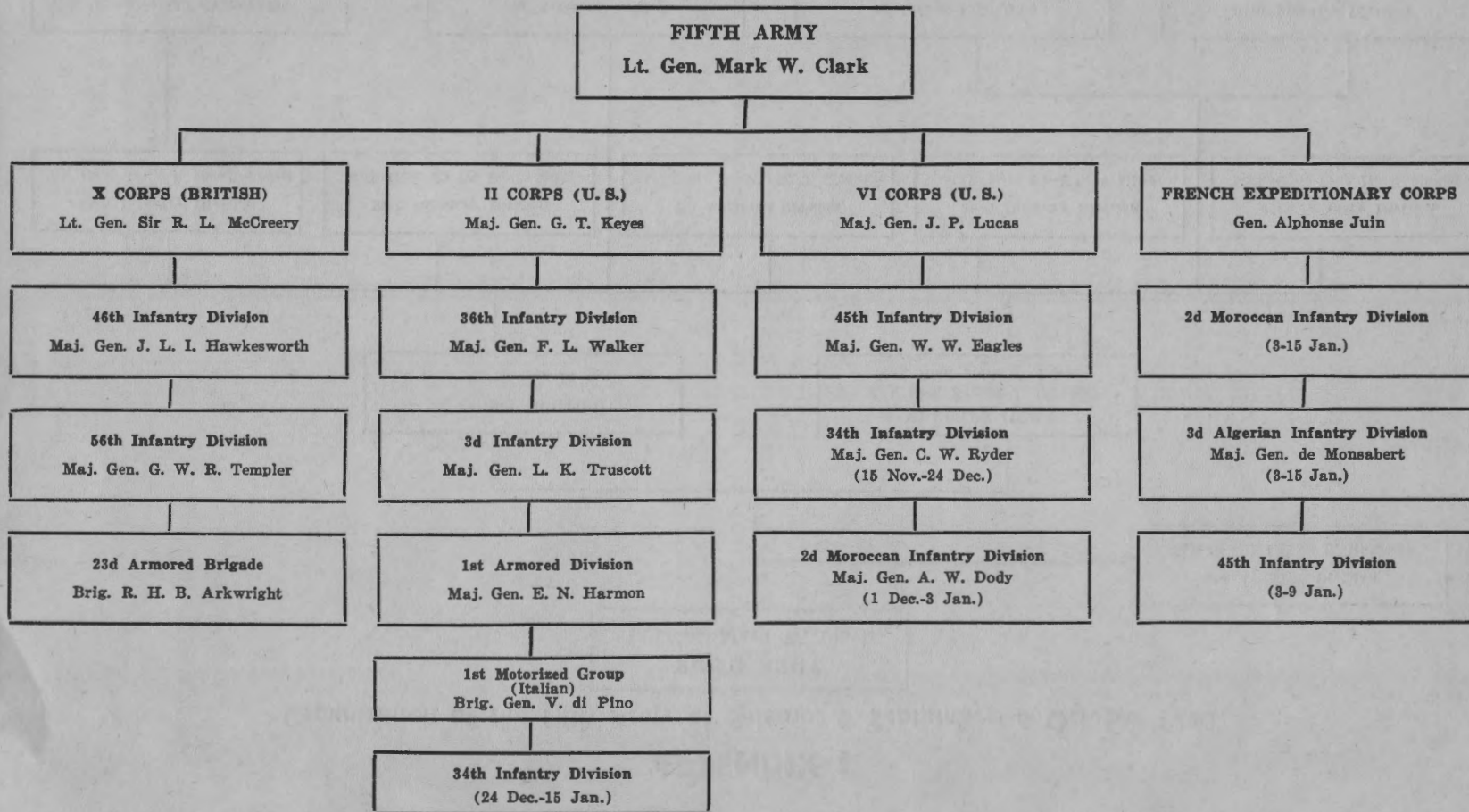
APPENDIX 1

Organization of the Fifth Army at Salerno, 9 September-6 October 1943



APPENDIX 2

Organization of the Fifth Army, 15 November 1943–15 January 1944



APPENDIX 3**15TH ARMY GROUP, 1 APRIL 1945****LT. GEN. M.W. CLARK****FIFTH ARMY, LT. GEN. L. K. TRUSCOTT, JR.**

- II CORPS.....Maj. Gen. G. Keyes
 1st Armored Division (U.S.).....Maj. Gen. V.E. Prichard
 34th Infantry Division (U.S.).....Maj. Gen. C.L. Bolte
 88th Infantry Division (U.S.).....Maj. Gen. P.W. Kendall
 91st Infantry Division (U.S.).....Maj. Gen. W.G. Livesay
 Legnano Group (Italian).....Maj. Gen. Utili
- IV CORPS.....Maj. Gen. W.D. Crittenger
 10th Mountain Division (U.S.).....Maj. Gen. G.P. Hays
 1st Brazilian Division.....Maj. Gen. Mascarenhas
- IN ARMY RESERVE
 6th South African Armored Division...Maj. Gen. W.H.E. Poole
 85th Infantry Division (U.S.).....Maj. Gen. J.B. Coulter
- UNDER ARMY CONTROL (but not in reserve)
 92d Infantry Division (U.S.).....Maj. Gen. E.M. Almond

EIGHTH ARMY, LT. GEN. SIR R. L. McCREERY

- V CORPS.....Lt. Gen. C.F. Keightley
 56th Infantry Division (British).....Maj. Gen. J.Y. Whitfield
 78th Infantry Division (British).....Maj. Gen. R.K. Arbuthnolt
 2d New Zealand Division.....Lt. Gen. Sir B.C. Freyberg
 8th Indian Division.....Maj. Gen. D. Russell
 Cremona Group (Italian).....Maj. Gen. Primieri
- II POLISH CORPS.....Maj. Gen. Bohusz-Szyszeko
 3d Carpathian Division (Polish).....Maj. Gen. Duch
 5th Kresowa Division (Polish).....Maj. Gen. Sulik
- X CORPS.....Lt. Gen. J.L.T. Hawkesworth
 Jewish Brigade.....Brigadier E.F. Benjamin
 Friuli Group (Italian).....Gen. Scatlini
- XIII CORPS.....Lt. Gen. Sir J. Harding
 10th Indian Division.....Maj. Gen. D.W. Reid
 Folgore Group (Italian).....Maj. Gen. Morigi
- IN ARMY RESERVE
 6th Armored Division (British).....Maj. Gen. H. Murray

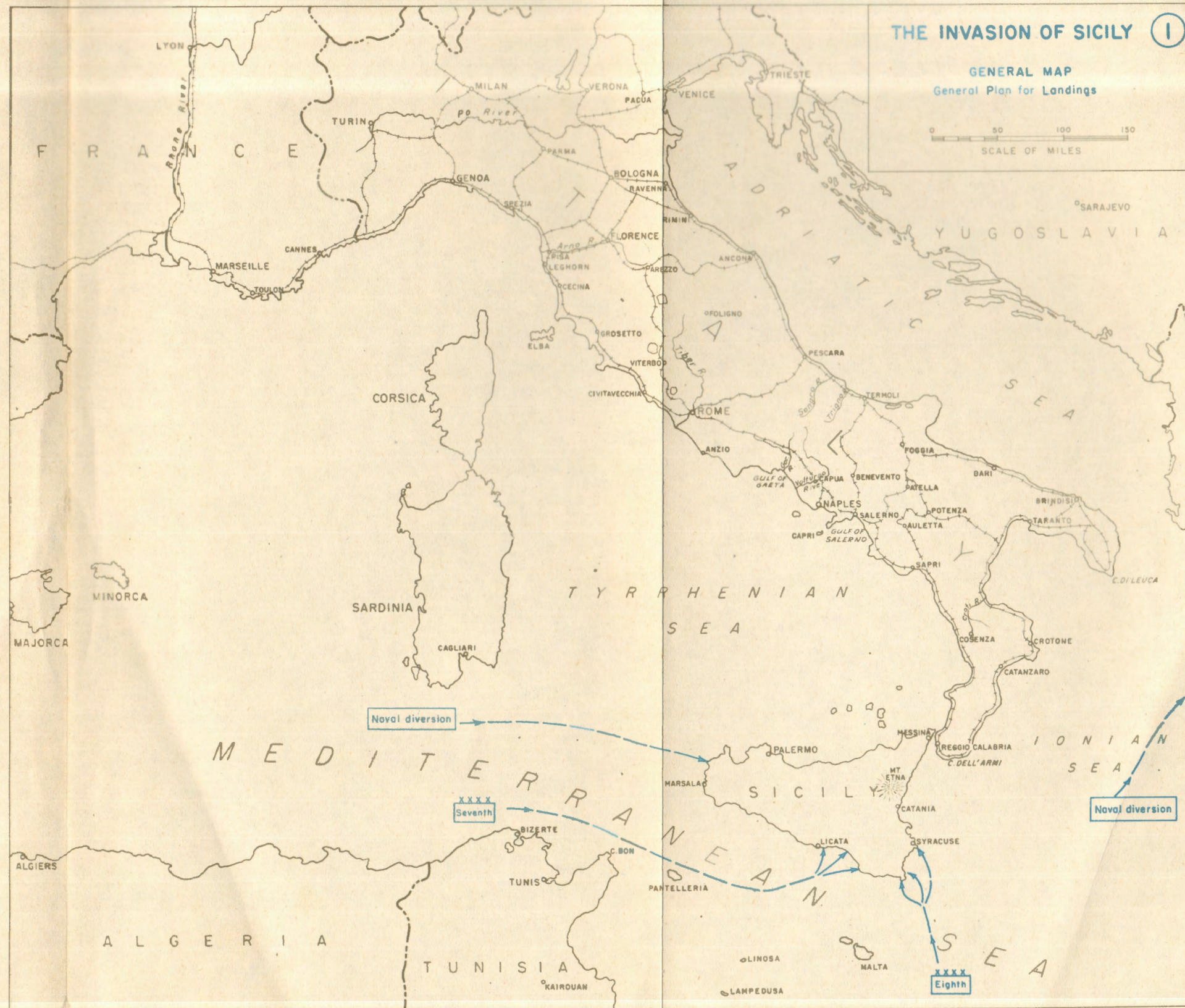
APPENDIX 4

	FIFTH ARMY BATTLE CASUALTIES 9 Sept. 1943—2 May 1945				STRENGTHS AND REPLACEMENTS	
	Killed in Action	Wounded in Action	Missing in Action	Total	Effective Strength 2 May 1945	Replacements 9 Sept. 1943 to 2 May 1945
American	19,475	80,530	9,637	109,642	179,312	144,879
British	6,605	29,977	10,870	47,452	48,818	67,451
Brazilian	275	1,901	235	2,211	14,841	3,989
Italian	290	770	510	1,570	31,134	1,909
French	5,241	20,847	1,583	27,671		
	31,886	133,825	22,835	188,546	274,105	218,228

THE INVASION OF SICILY ①

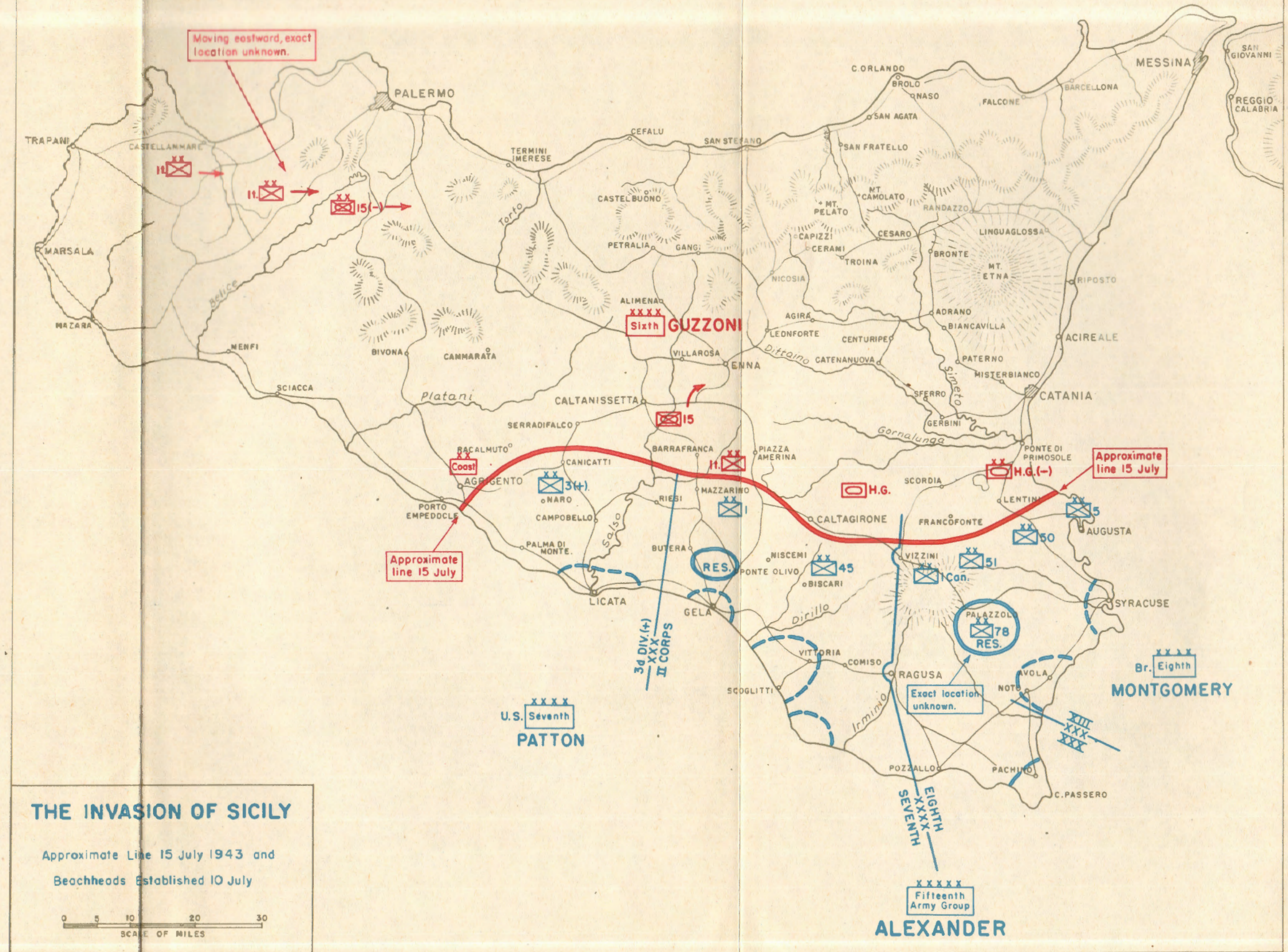
GENERAL MAP
General Plan for Landings

0 50 100 150
SCALE OF MILES



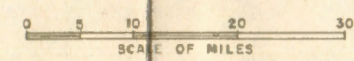
Plan for Landings 10 July 1943

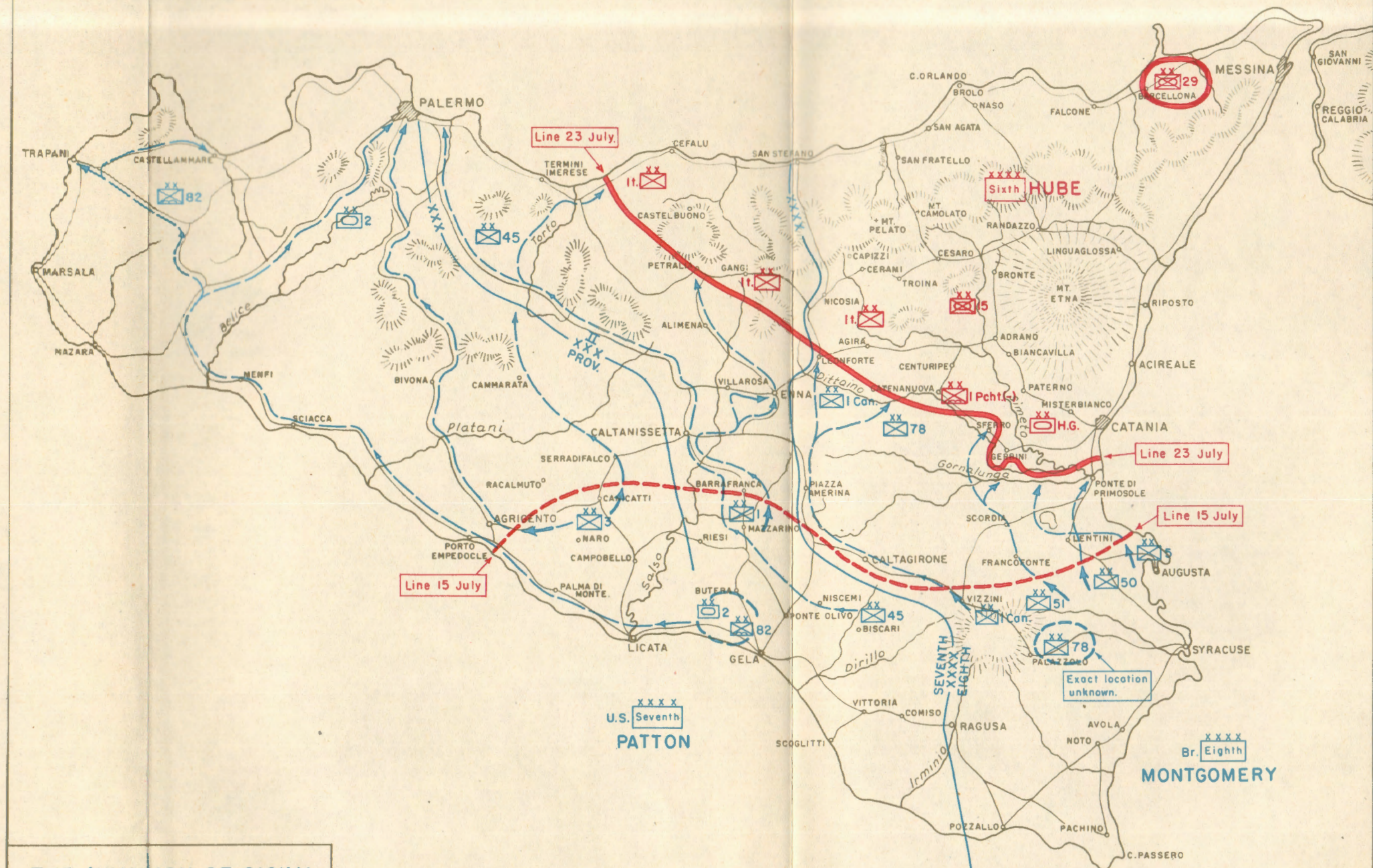
0 5 10 20 30
SCALE OF MILES



THE INVASION OF SICILY

Approximate Line 15 July 1943 and
Beachheads Established 10 July





THE INVASION OF SICILY

Situation 23 July 1943 and
Allied Advance Since 15 July

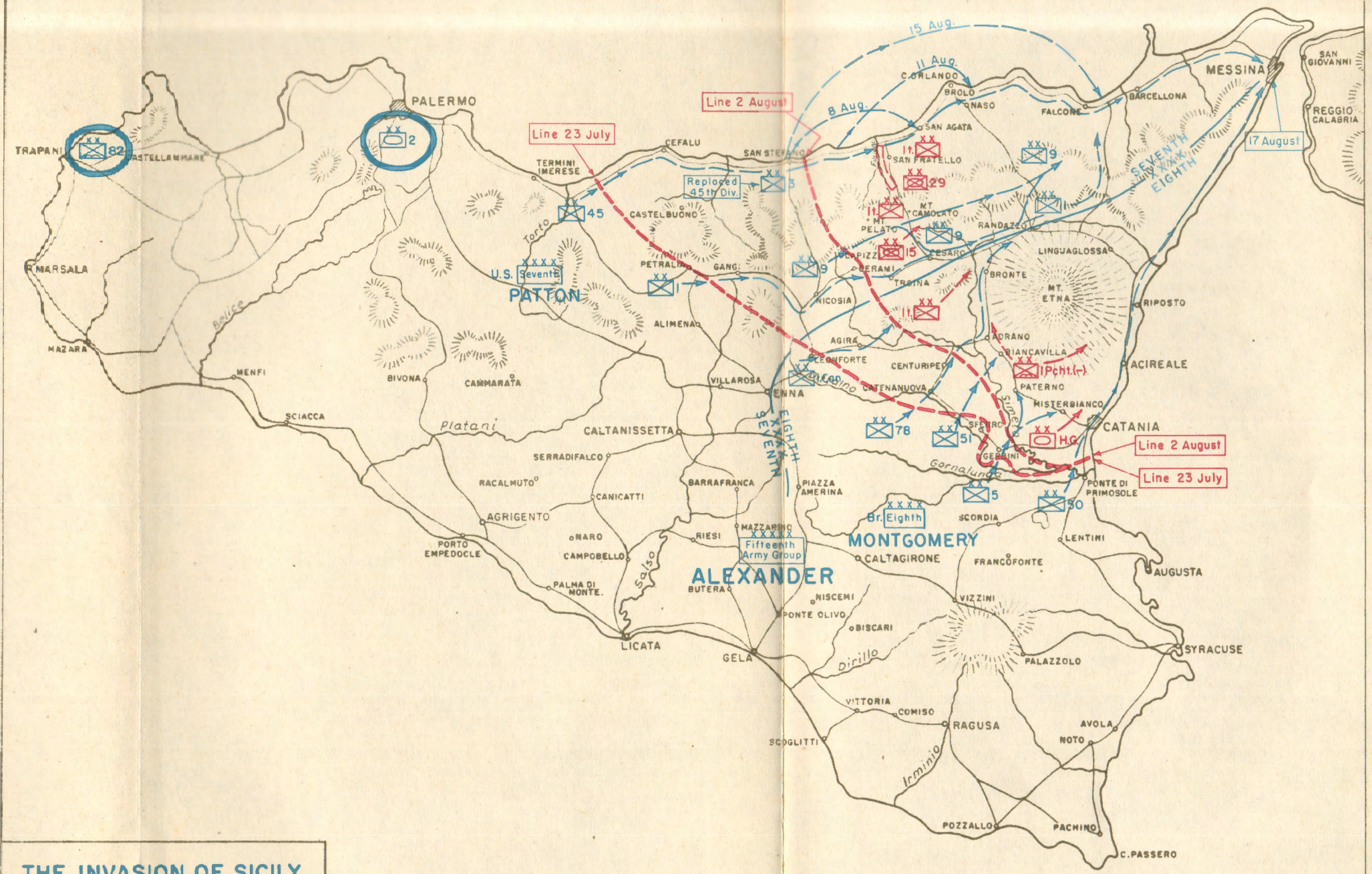
0 5 10 20 30
SCALE OF MILES

XXXXX
Fifteenth
Army Group
ALEXANDER

XXXXX
Br. Eighth
MONTGOMERY

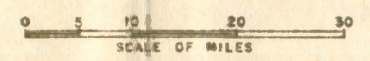
XXXXX
U.S. Seventh
PATTON

Sixth
HUBE



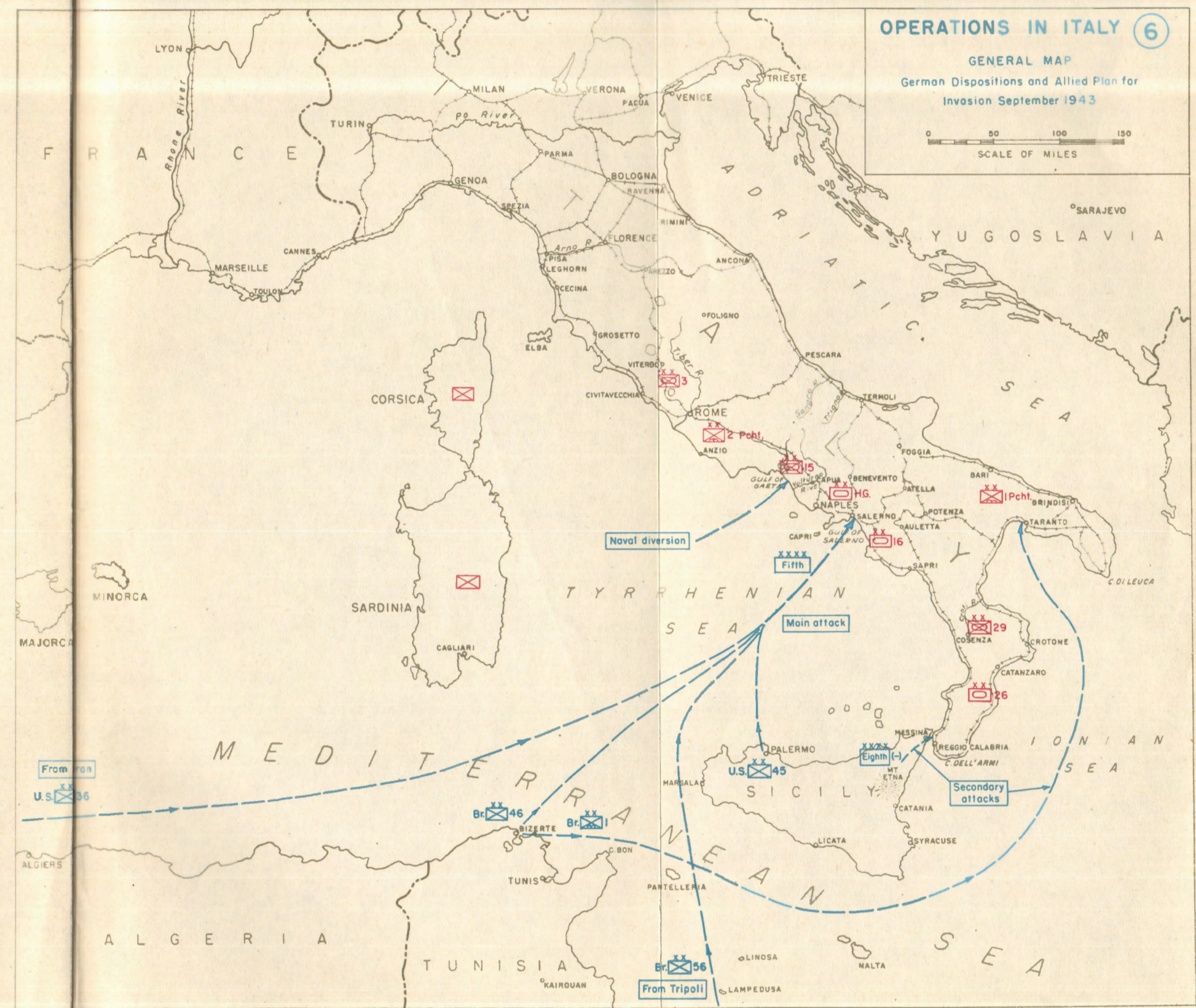
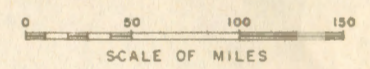
THE INVASION OF SICILY

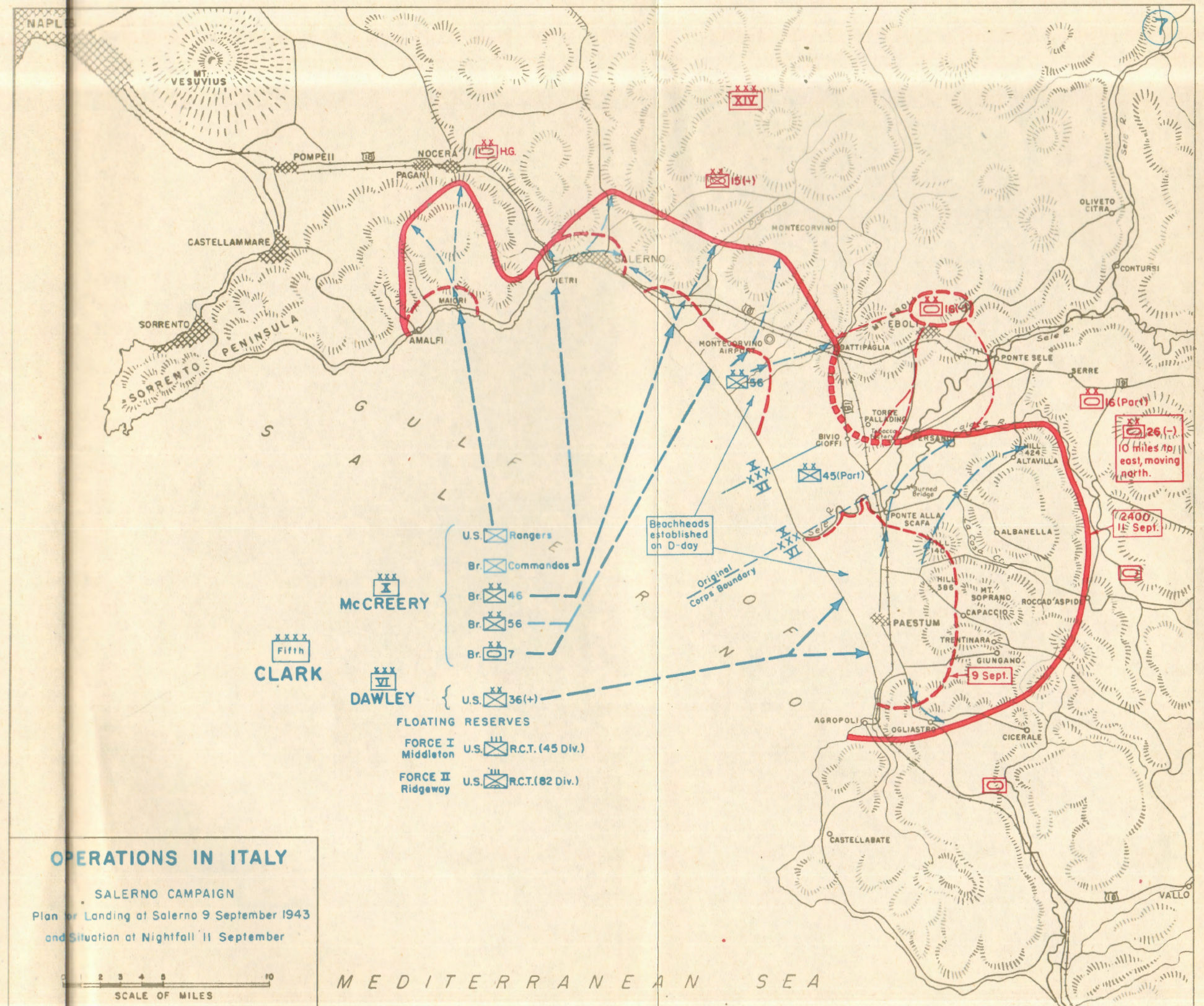
Allied Advance to Messina
23 July - 17 August 1943

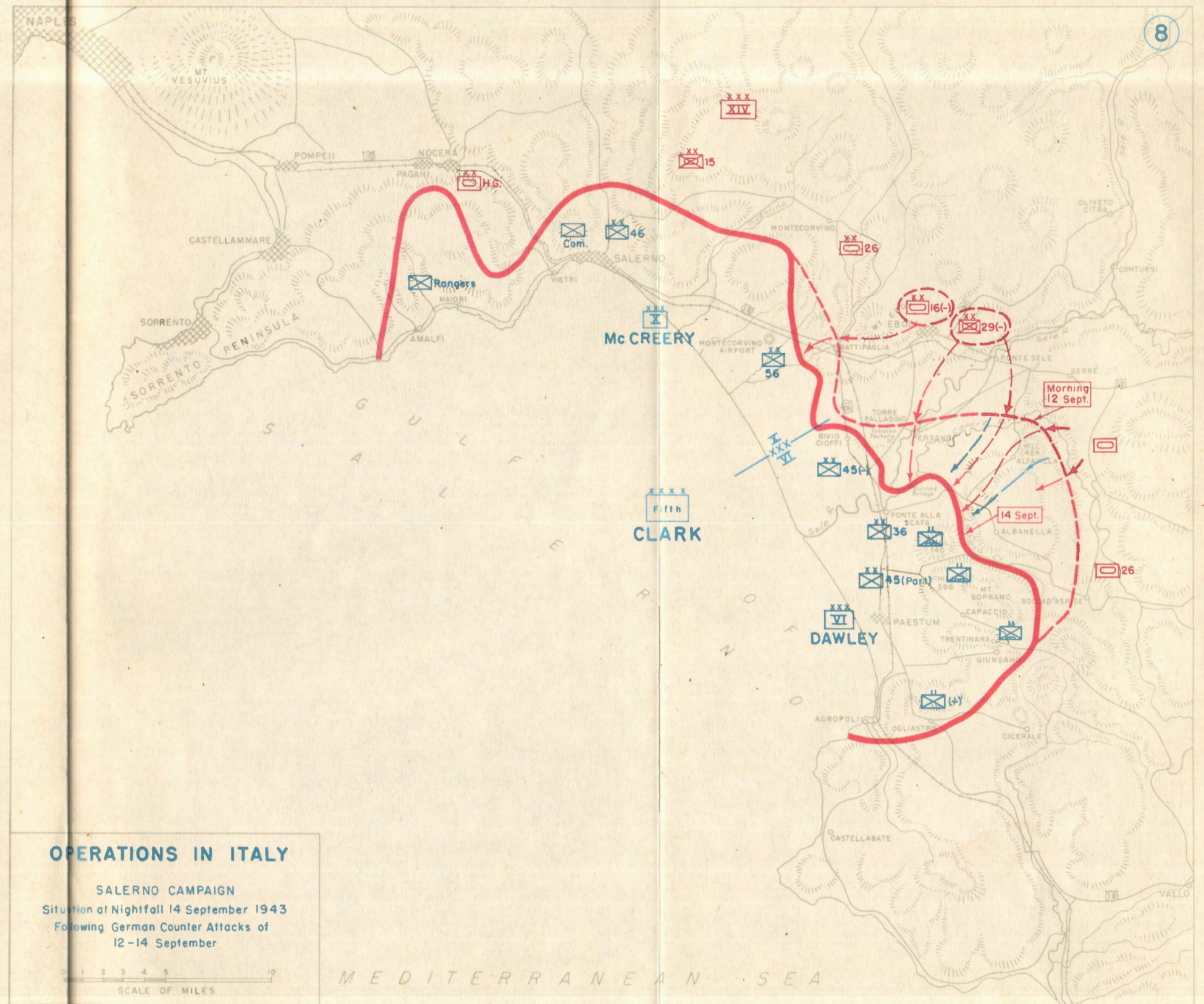


OPERATIONS IN ITALY ⑥

GENERAL MAP
German Dispositions and Allied Plan for
Invasion September 1943

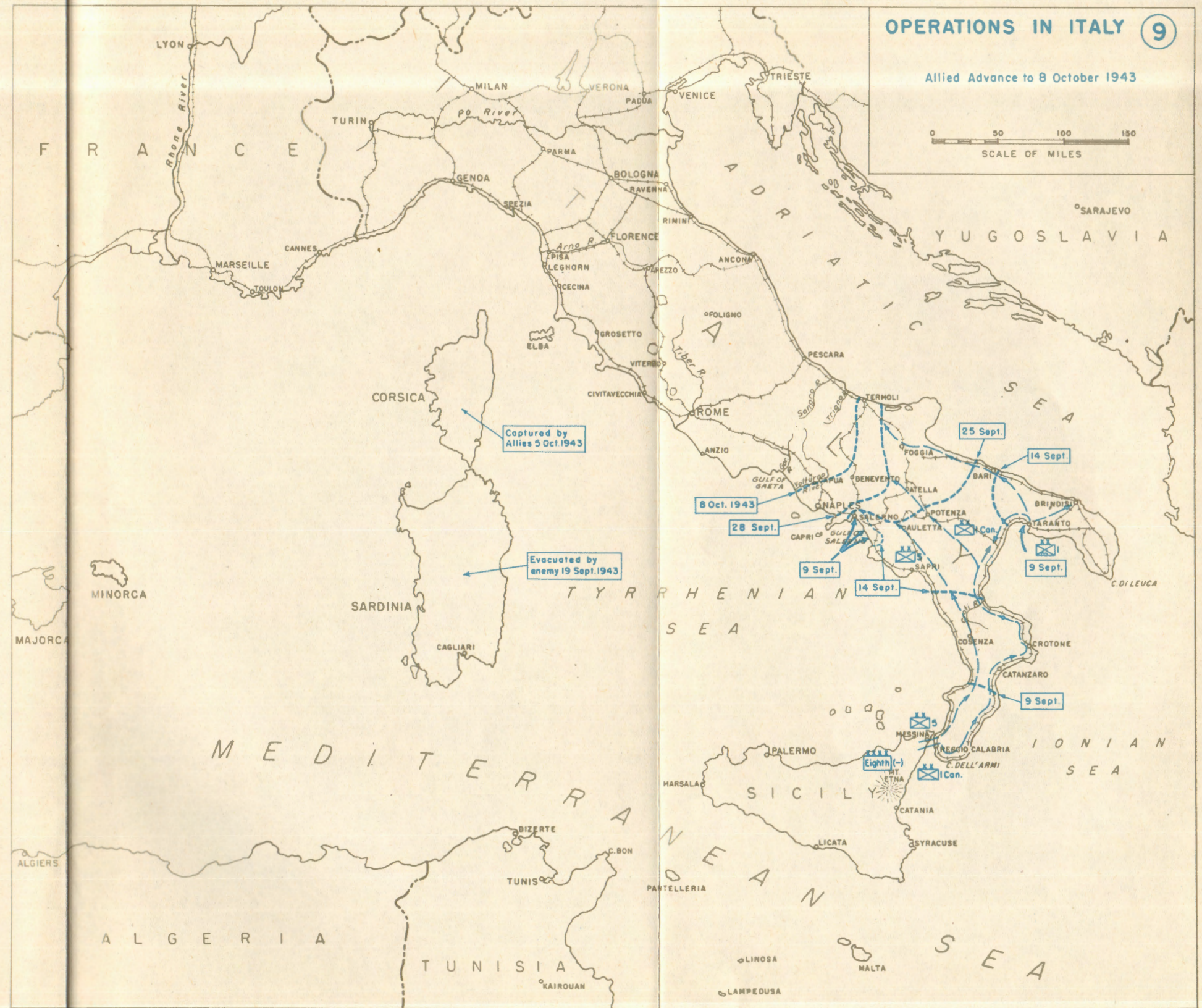
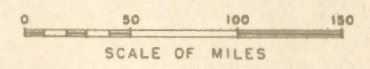






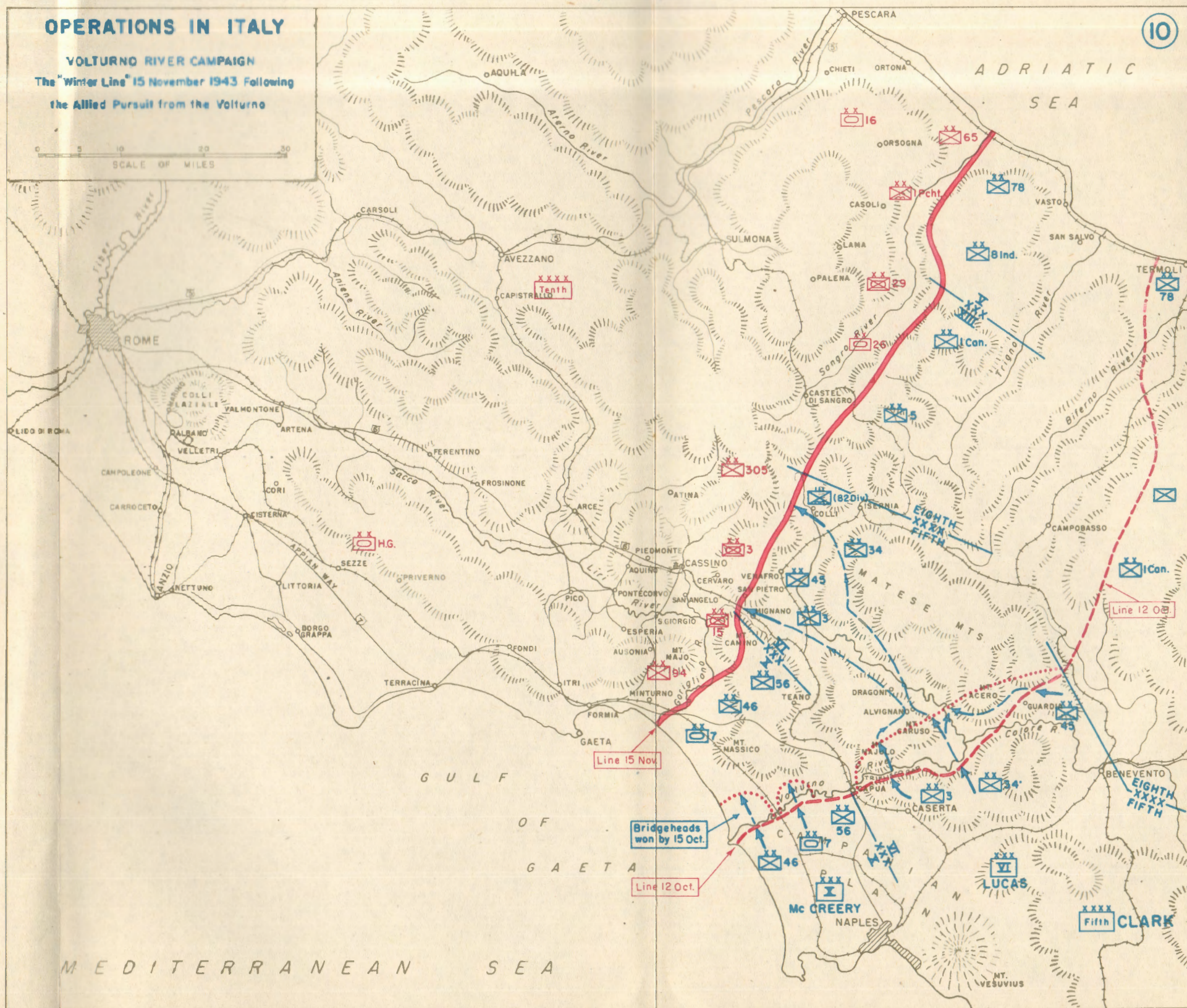
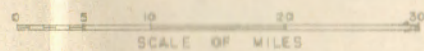
OPERATIONS IN ITALY 9

Allied Advance to 8 October 1943



10

The "Winter Line" 15 November 1943 Following
the Allied Pursuit from the Volturno



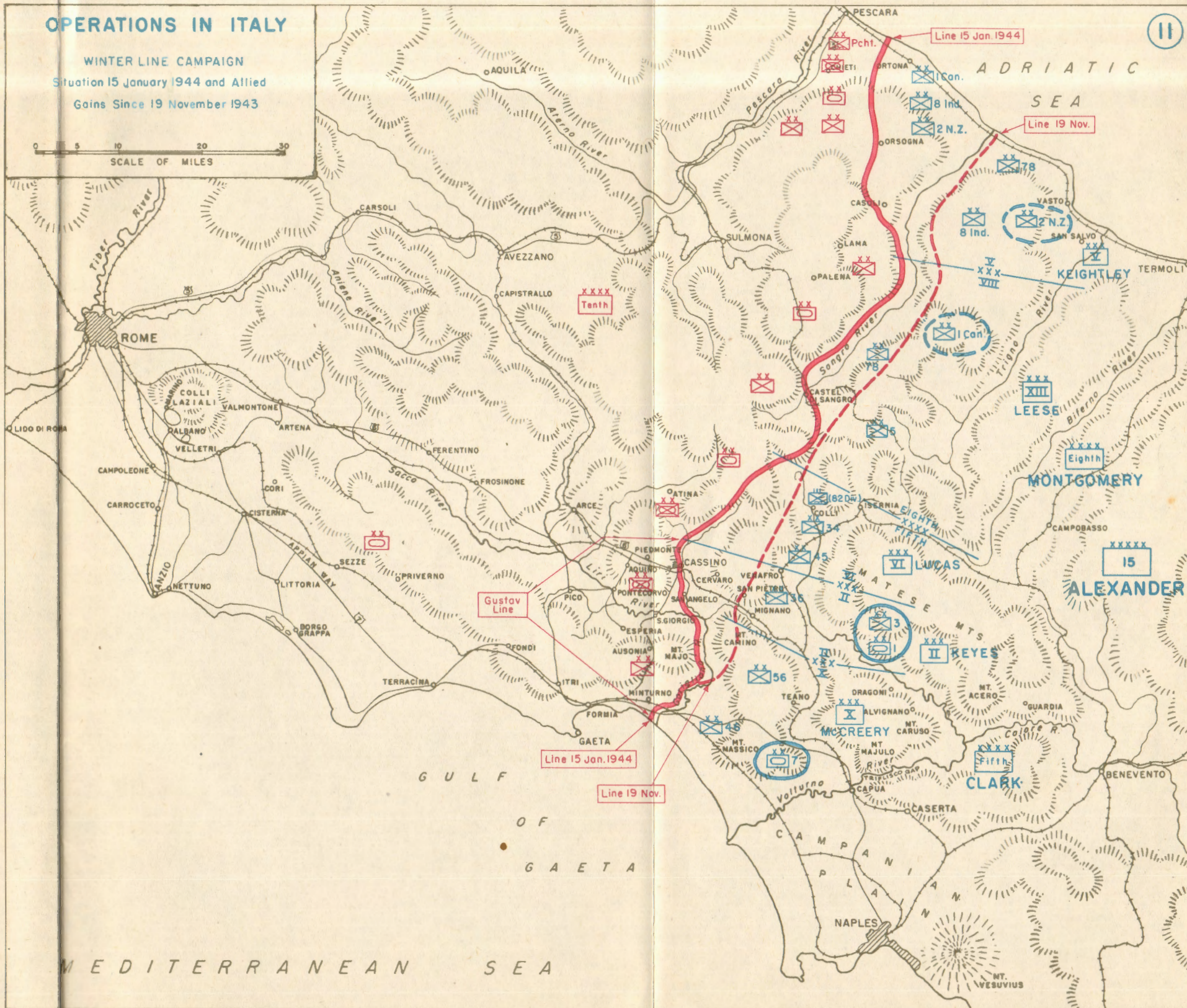
OPERATIONS IN ITALY

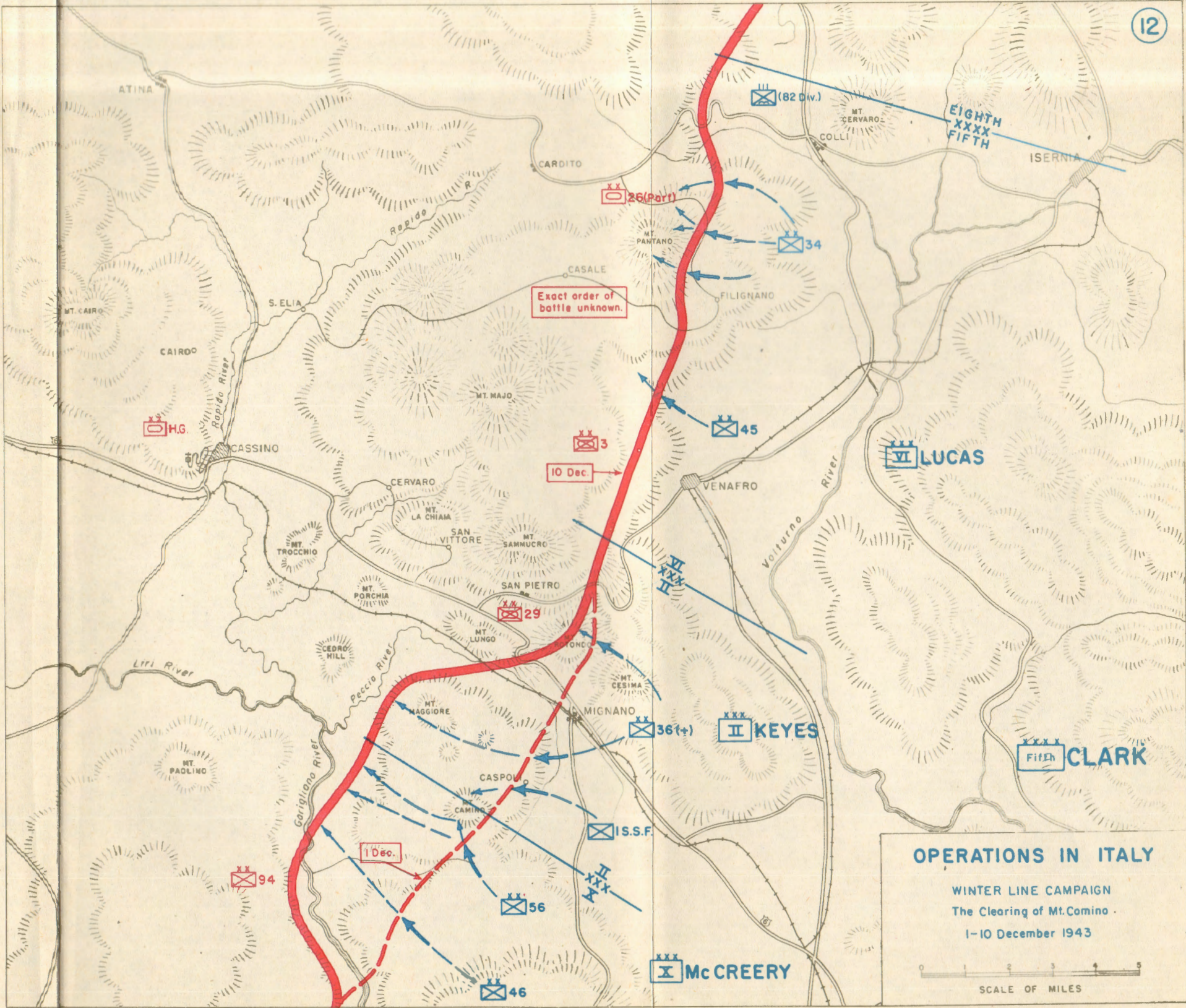
WINTER LINE CAMPAIGN

Situation 15 January 1944 and Allied

Gains Since 19 November 1943

0 5 10 20 30
SCALE OF MILES



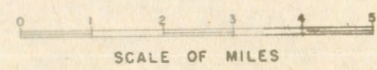


OPERATIONS IN ITALY

WINTER LINE CAMPAIGN

The Clearing of Mt. Comino

1-10 December 1943



Mc CREERY

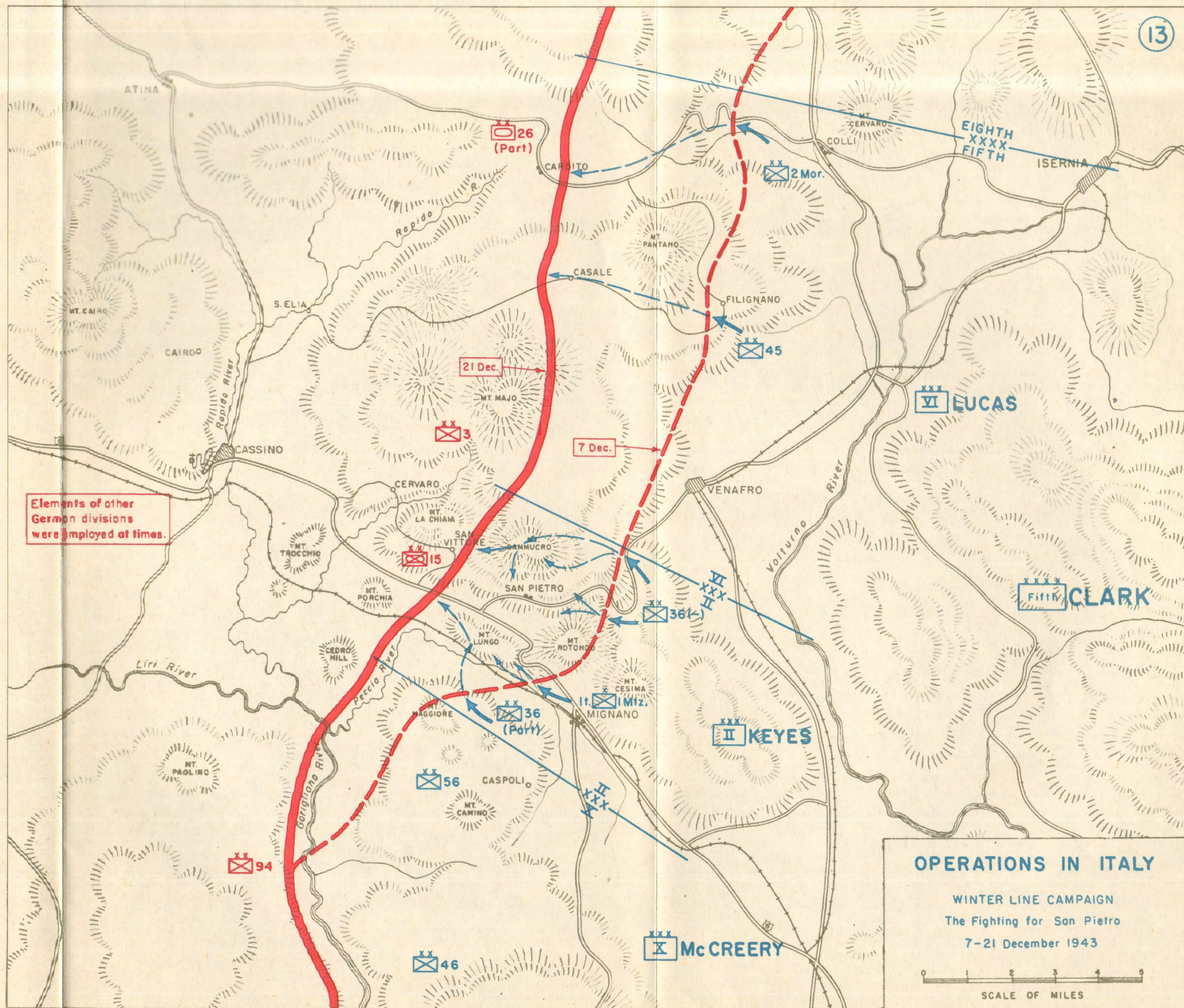
LUCAS

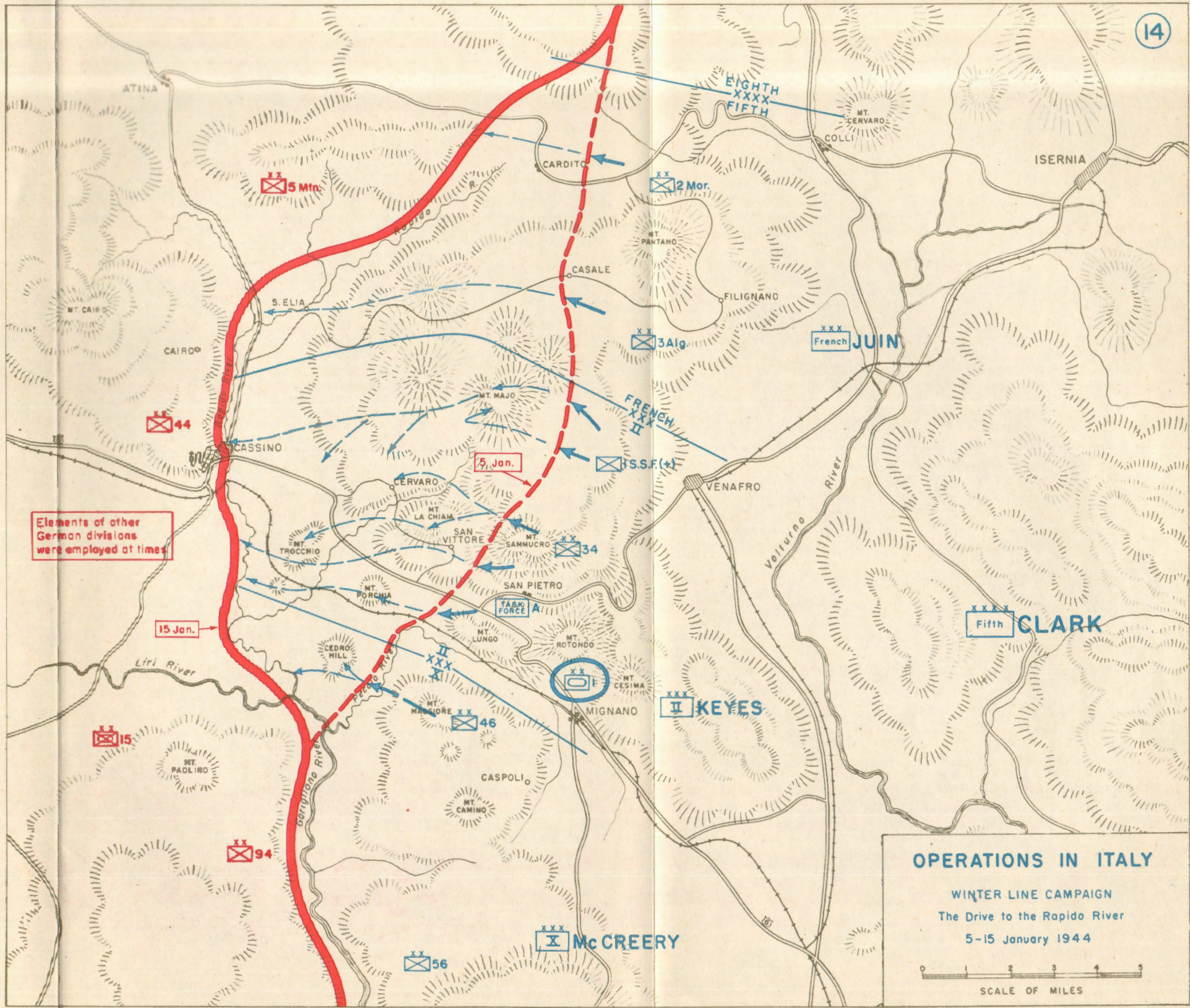
KEYES

CLARK

Exact order of battle unknown.

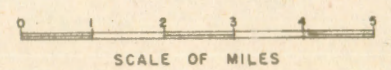
EIGHTH
XXXX
FIFTH





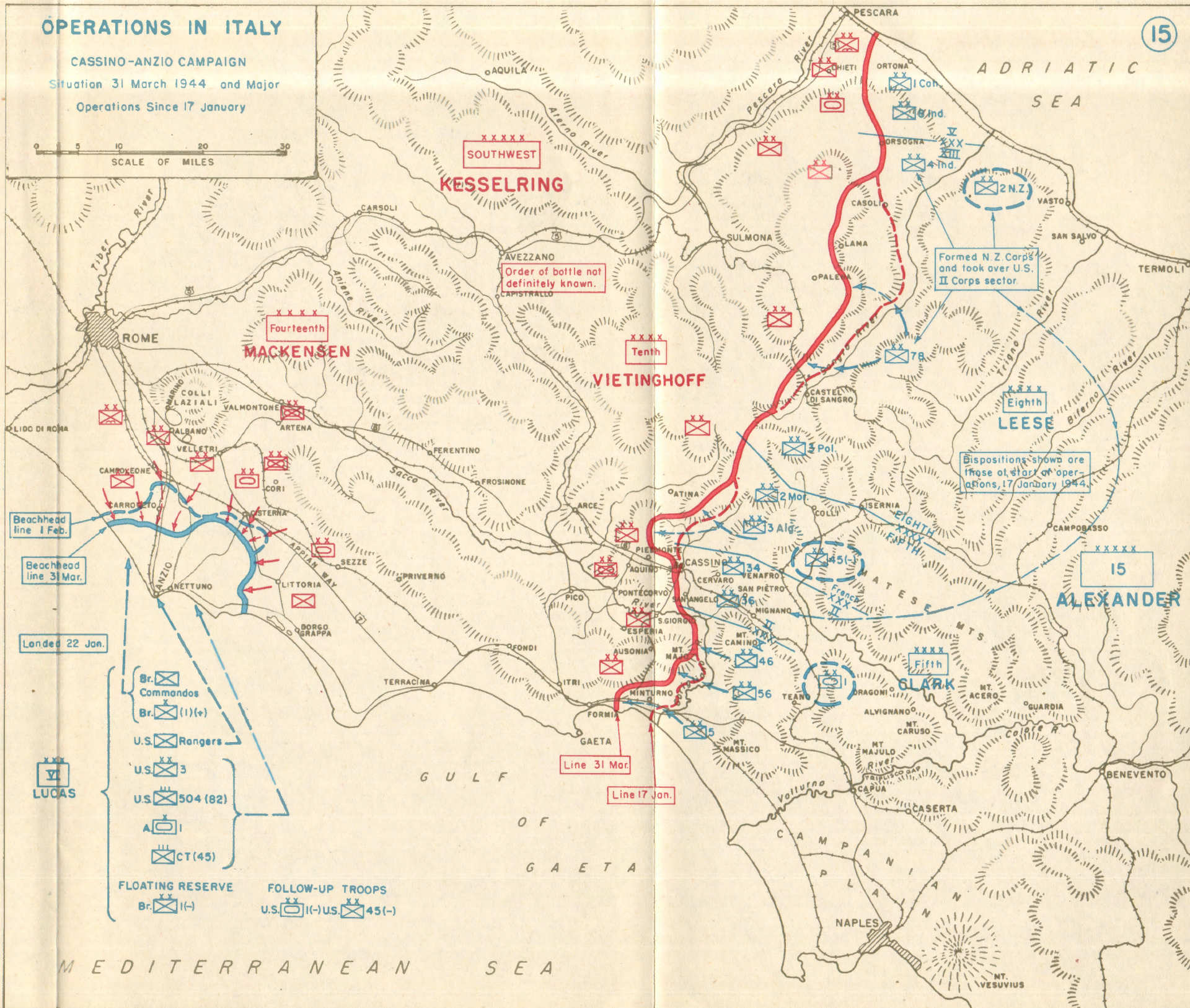
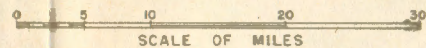
OPERATIONS IN ITALY

WINTER LINE CAMPAIGN
The Drive to the Rapido River
5-15 January 1944



CASSINO-ANZIO CAMPAIGN
Situation 31 March 1944 and Major
Operations Since 17 January

Operations Since 17 January



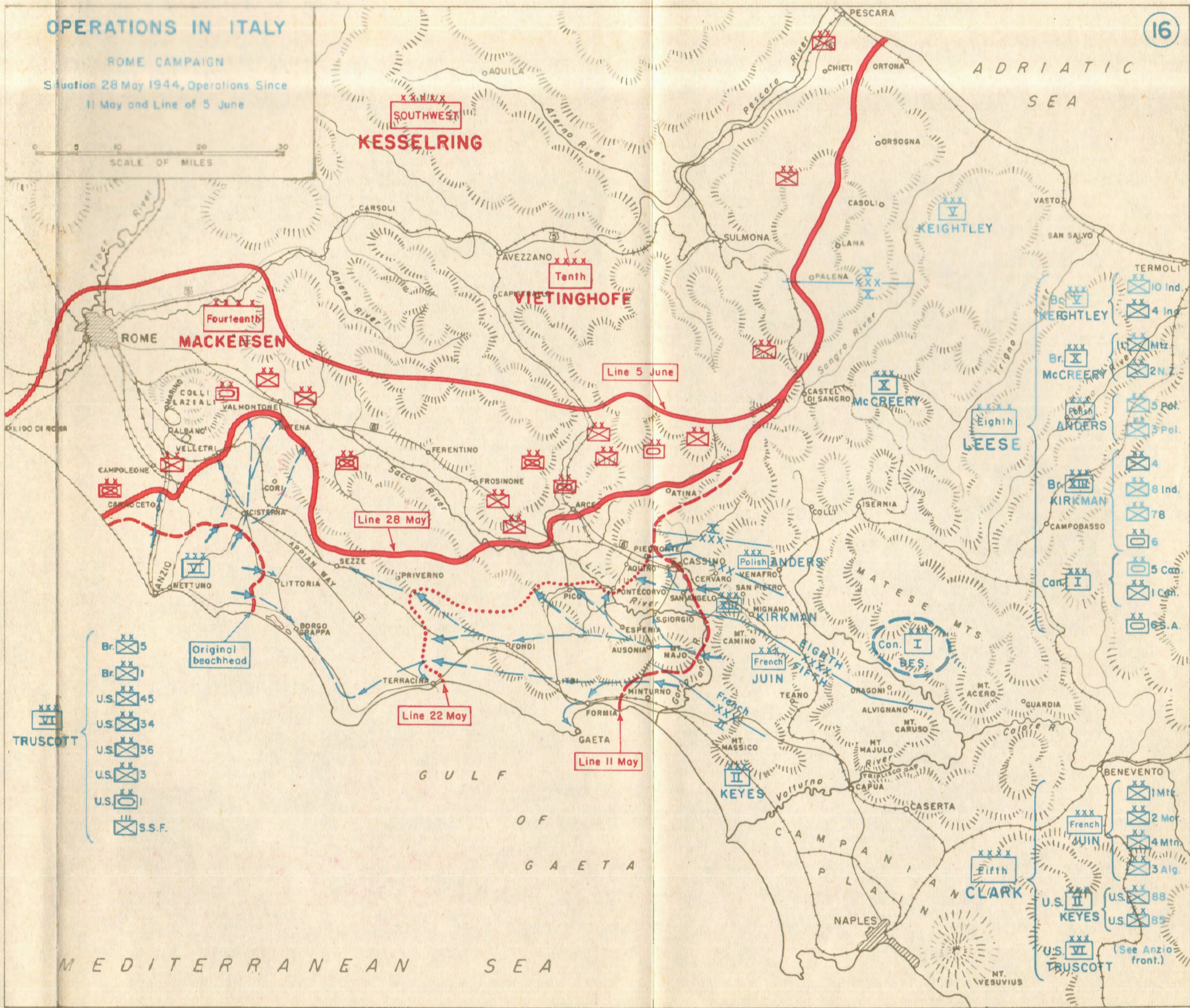
OPERATIONS IN ITALY

ROME CAMPAIGN

Situation 28 May 1944, Operations Since
11 May and Line of 5 June

0 5 10 20 30
SCALE OF MILES

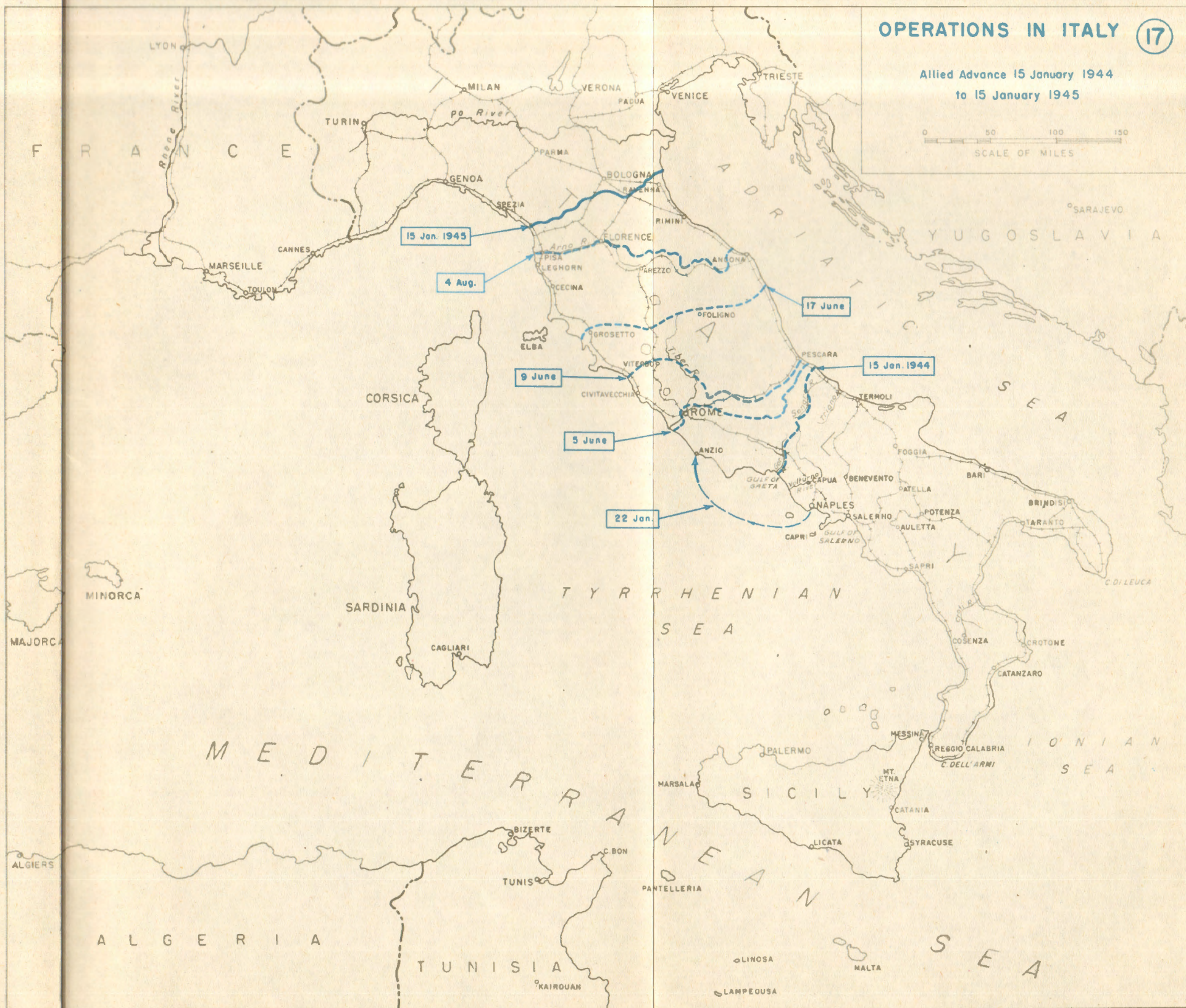
16



OPERATIONS IN ITALY 17

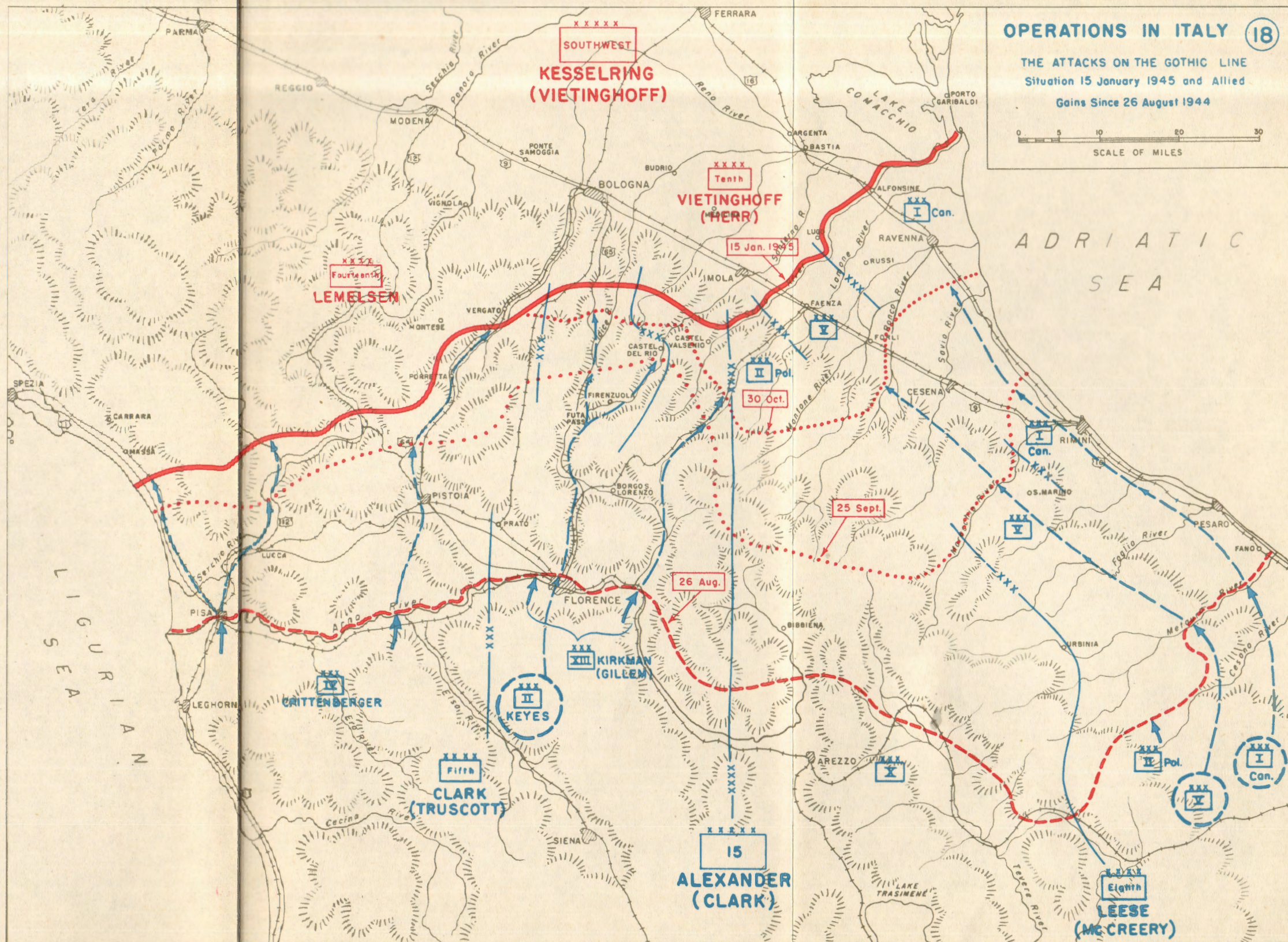
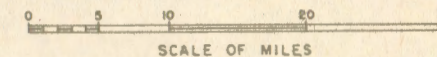
Allied Advance 15 January 1944
to 15 January 1945

0 50 100 150
SCALE OF MILES



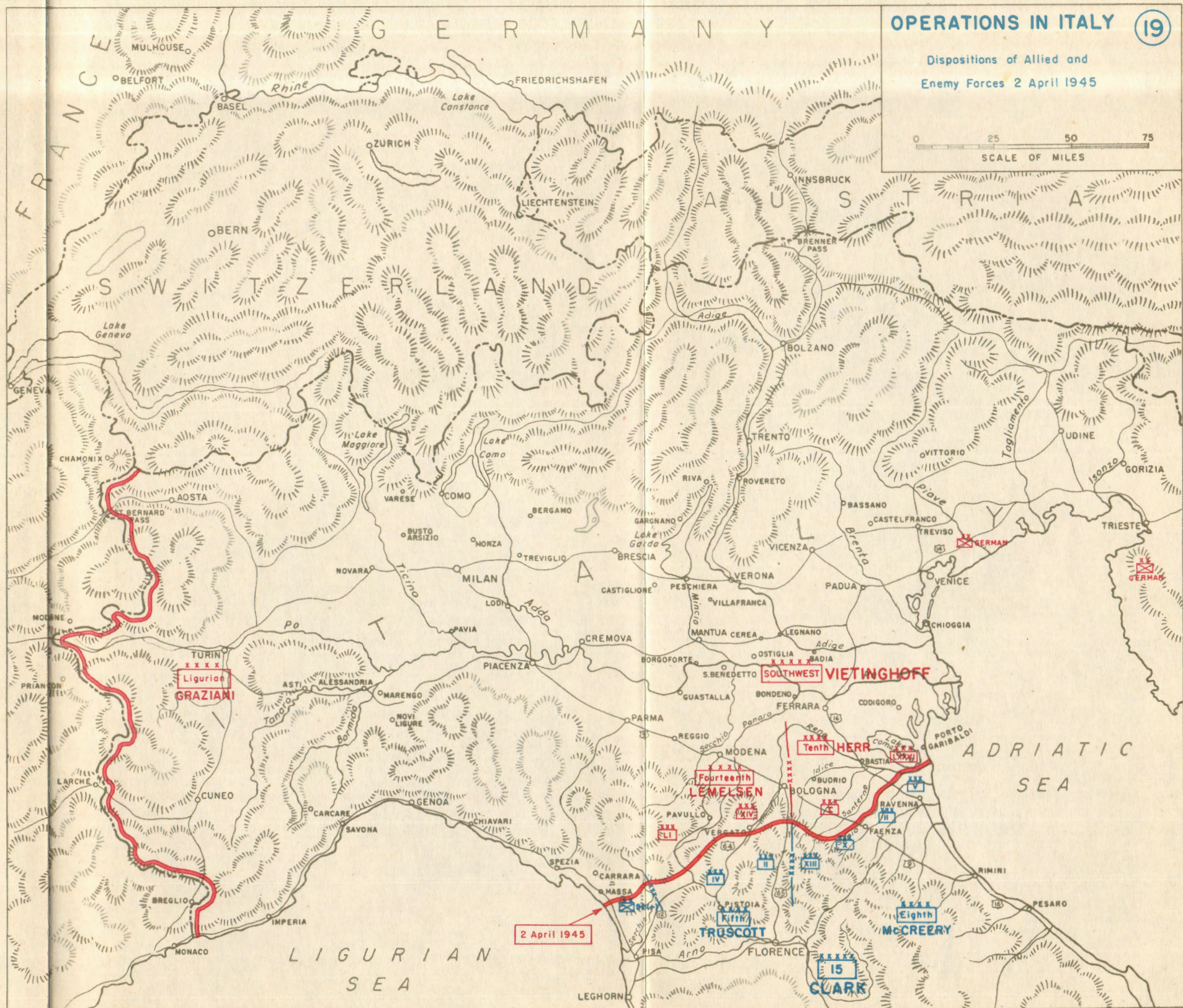
OPERATIONS IN ITALY 18

THE ATTACKS ON THE GOTHIC LINE
Situation 15 January 1945 and Allied
Gains Since 26 August 1944



Dispositions of Allied and
Enemy Forces 2 April 1945

0 25 50 75
SCALE OF MILES



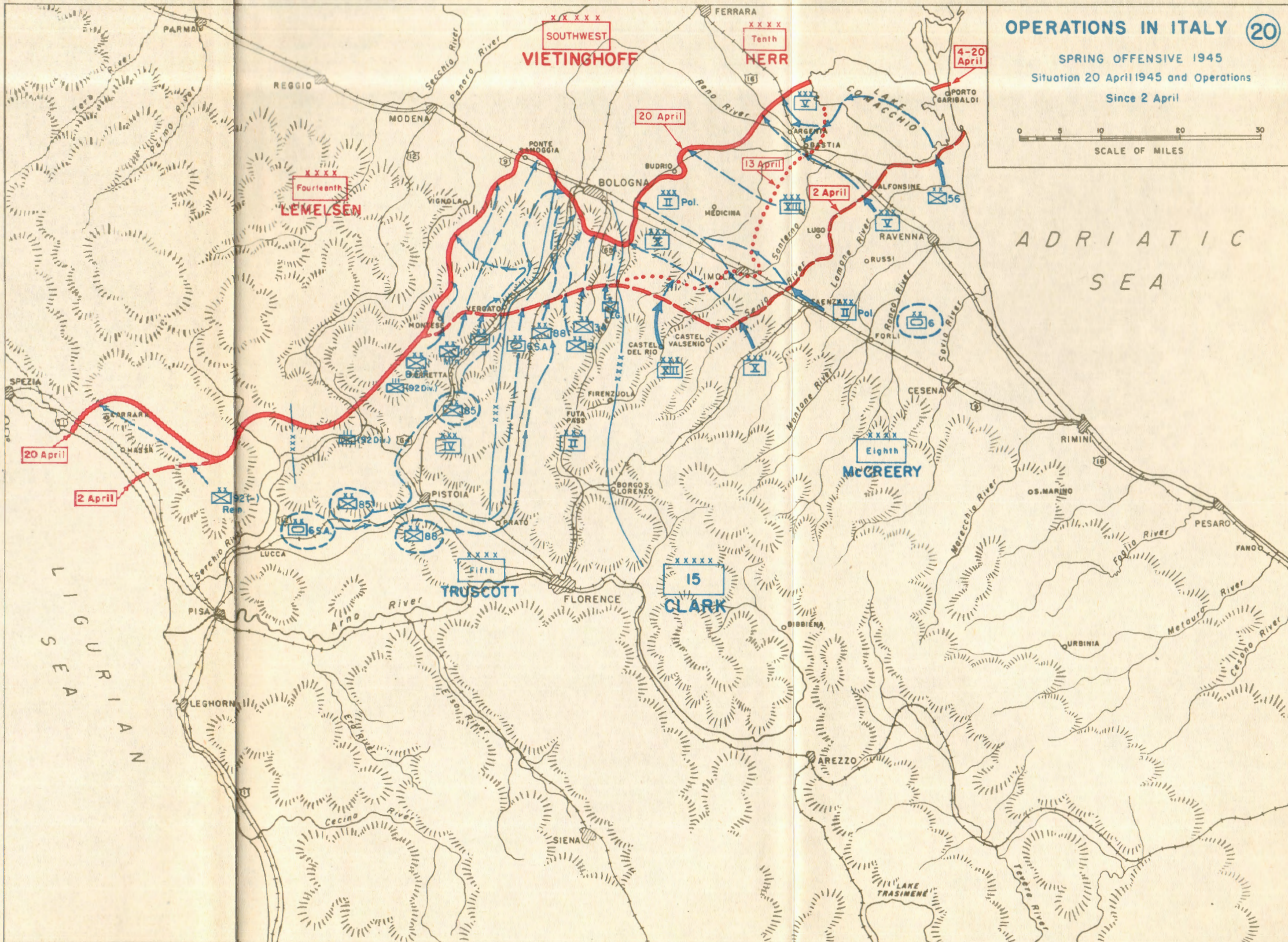
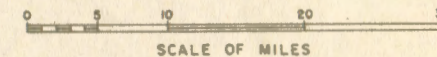
2 April 1945

OPERATIONS IN ITALY 20

SPRING OFFENSIVE 1945

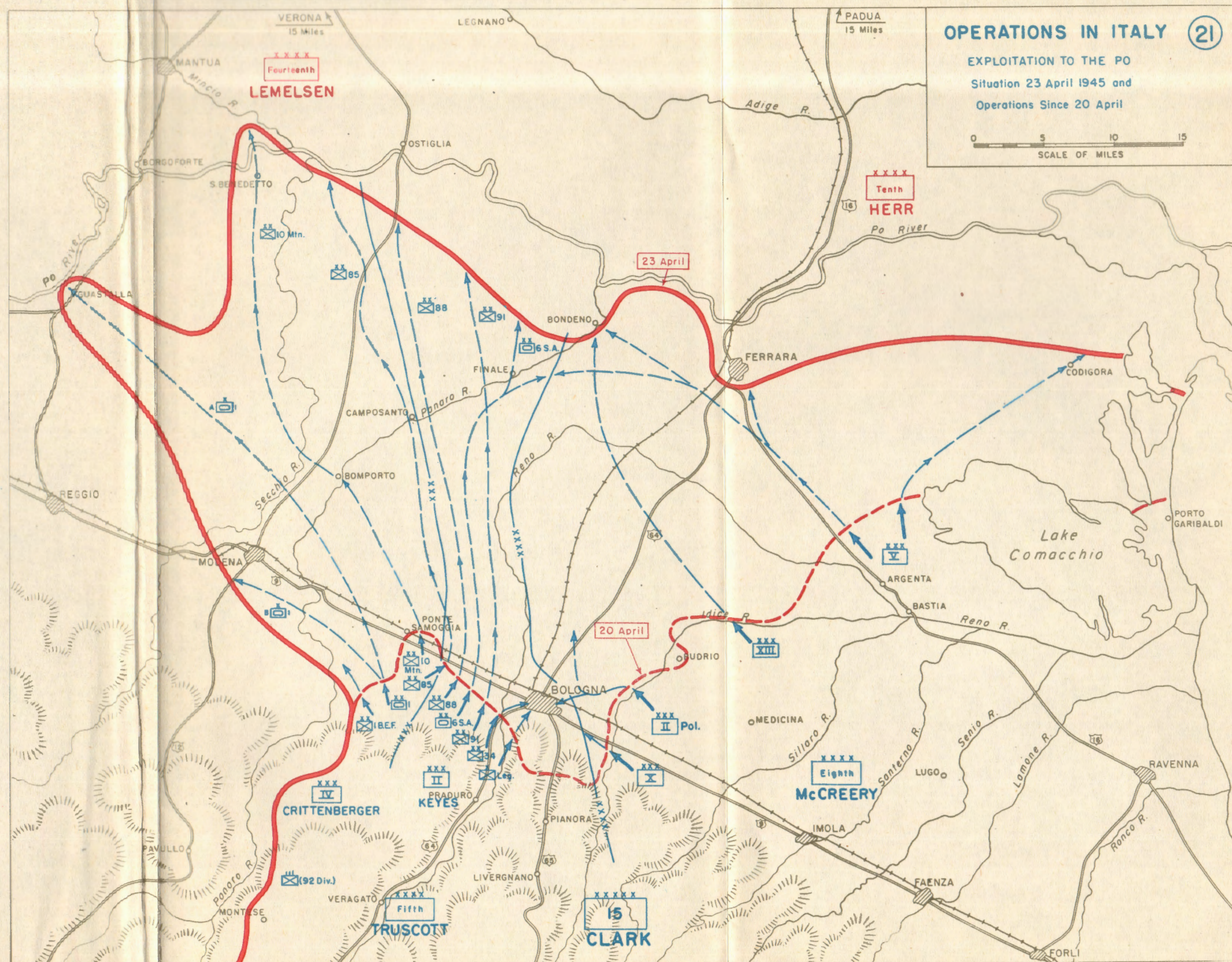
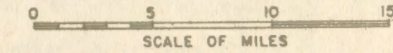
Situation 20 April 1945 and Operations

Since 2 April



OPERATIONS IN ITALY (21)

EXPLOITATION TO THE PO
Situation 23 April 1945 and
Operations Since 20 April



THE PURSUIT

Situation 30 April 1945 and

Operations Since 20 April

