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THE ROME - ARNO CAMPAIGN
22 JANUARY 1944 - 9 SEPTEMBER 1944

Type of operation described: THEATER OPERATIONS IN ITALY,
WITH EMPHASIS ON FIFTH (U.S.) ARMY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Index	1
Bibliography	2
Troop List, Fifth Army	4
Introduction	5
General Situation	7
Phase One: (22 January - 11 May 1944)	10
Phase Two: (11 May - 9 June 1944)	16
Phase Three: (9 June - 15 August 1944)	19
Phase Four: (15 August - 9 September 1944)	22
U.S. Casualties, Enemy Prisoners	25
Analysis and Criticism	26
Lessons	29
Map A -- Allied Operations	
Map B -- Fifth Army, November -- January	
Map C -- Fifth Army, May -- June	
Map D -- Anzio - Nettuno	
Map E -- Rome to the Arno	
Map F -- Arno River, Gothic Line	

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TROOP LIST, FIFTH ARMY
(MAJOR COMBAT UNITS, ONLY)

14 February 1944 (1)

FIFTH ARMY:

88th Division

II CORPS:

CCB, 1st Armored Division

34th Division

36th Division

VI CORPS:

1st Armored Division (-)

3rd Division

45th Division

504th R.C.T.

1st British Division

56th British Division

FRENCH EXPEDITIONARY CORPS:

Two Divisions

X CORPS:

51st British Division

46th British Division

NEW ZEALAND CORPS:

Two Divisions

22 May 1944 (2)

II CORPS:

85th Division

88th Division

VI CORPS:

1st Armored Division

3rd Division

34th Division

36th Division

45th Division

F.E.C. :

Four Divisions

IV CORPS

14 August 1944 (3)

FIFTH ARMY:

34th Division

92nd Division

II CORPS:

85th Division

88th Division

91st Division

442nd RCT (Nesei)

IV CORPS:

1st Armored Division

THE ROME - ARNO CAMPAIGN
22 JANUARY 1944 - 9 SEPTEMBER 1944

INTRODUCTION

(SEE MAP A)

This monograph concerns the Rome-Arno campaign in Italy, which began on 22 January 1944 and ended on 9 September 1944. Its phase of operation begins with action against the Gustav Line and the Allied landings at Anzio-Nettuno, and proceeds through the capture of Rome, Leghorn and Pisa. It is concluded with the Allied Forces having reached a line immediately in front of the Gothic Line, or a distance of approximately 300 miles from the starting point. Although the Allied Forces in Italy consisted of the Fifth (U.S.) Army and the Eighth (British) Army, most of the emphasis will be placed on the actions of the Fifth Army.

For the purpose of orientation, it will be necessary to summarize Allied strategy and operations prior to the Rome-Arno campaign.

Soon after the United States entered the war in December 1941, Allied plans began to form. Many of these plans were evolved at conferences held between President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and their staffs, during early 1942. (4) One of the major decisions arrived at was that Germany would be more decisively defeated by an offensive launched across the English Channel, and carried on into France and Germany. (5) This major operation, however, could not be executed in the near future, because of the time required to build up the great quantities of supplies, materiel, and personnel necessary. A tentative date of 1943 was set as a goal for the invasion. (6)

Russia at this time was fighting an uphill battle against Ger-

(4) A-16, p. 152,153; (5) A-24, p. 18; (6) A-16, p. 152,153.

many on the Western Front, and it was almost compulsory that the Allies take some measure at once to relieve the pressure on Russia. Otherwise, that country might fall prematurely and hinder Allied chances later of defeating Germany. (7) In view of this, it was decided in July, 1942, that a North African assault would be launched in the very near future. (8)

This operation was successfully conducted from November 1942 to May 1943, and with the capture by the Allied Forces of Bizerte and Tunis, the German Armies in North Africa were no more existent.(9)

Further planning conferences between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill were held in early 1943. At the Casablanca conference in January 1943, and at the Washington conference in May 1943, the original plan to launch the cross-channel invasion in 1943 was discarded because of inadequate supplies and stockpiles. But pressure had to be kept on the German Armies. The Mediterranean Theater was chosen at the area for the next offensive, with Sicily and Italy to be invaded, in turn. (10)

Sicily was invaded 10 July 1943, and fell approximately five weeks later, on 17 August 1943. (11)

The invasion of Italy began shortly thereafter, when the Eighth Army (British) of General Bernard Montgomery landed near the southern toe, at Reggio Calabria, on 3 September 1943. (12) The Fifth Army (U.S.) of General Mark Clark followed on 9 September 1943 near the Gulf of Salerno. (13) The first few days of this invasion were very critical, as the Germans tried determinedly to reduce the beachhead, but the Allied Forces fought magnificently, and the beachhead held. The worst part was over. (14) Contact was made on 16 September 1943

(7) A-16, p. 154; (8) A-25, p. 14; (9) A-16, p. 153; (10) A-16, p. 156-158; (11) A-17, p. 9-21; (12) A-15, p. 164; (13) A-23, p. 1; (14) A-23, p. 1.

between the Eighth and Fifth Armies, and the beachheads now became an area of operations. (15)

GENERAL SITUATION

(SEE MAP B)

For the three months following the initial invasion, the Italian campaign took on those aspects which made fighting a war difficult -- slow, costly advances through the mountains, against an enemy determined to make the most of his prepared defensive lines. (16) This type of fighting did not end until the collapse and surrender of German forces, in northern Italy on 2 May 1945. (17)

With the advance northwestward up Italy somewhat slowed down, orders were issued by 15th Army Group, under whose command the Fifth and Eighth Armies fell, to keep driving the enemy back with the mission of capturing Rome. (18) By 14 October, the U.S. VI Corps and the British X Corps, Fifth Army troops, had pushed across the Volturno River. (19) Allied Forces, in the next five weeks, advanced all along the front an average distance of thirty miles. At this time, on 15 November, a halt in the offensive was called along this line -- which later became known as the "Winter Line". (20) The enemy's stand along this line from November 1943 to January 1944, showed that he was definitely intending to adopt a strong defensive. (21)

Allied Forces again took up the offensive, after a short respite, late in November. Although characterized by heavy air and artillery support, the attacks moved very slowly. Average gains of only six miles were made along the front during the eight weeks fighting. (22) However, the gains did bring the Allies to the main German defense in Italy -- the Gustav Line, which guards the natural corridor into Rome ,

(15) A-17, p. 43; (16) A-11, p. 1; (17) A-19, p. 126; (18) A-23, p. 11; (19) A-17, p. 50, 51; (20) A-17, p. 51-53; (21) A-17, p. 62; (22) A-23, p. 17-59.

along Highway 6 and the Liri Valley. (23)

With the Gustav Line in front of Allied positions threatening to hold back future offensives, it was feared that a defensive stalemate might result. At a conference held in Tunis on Christmas Day, 1943, between Prime Minister Churchill and chief Mediterranean Theater Commanders, it was decided that, "It would be folly to allow the campaign in Italy to drag on and face the supreme operations against Europe in the spring with the task in Italy half finished. The case for the drive on Rome was not merely the capture of a city, - - - - -, but the annihilation of the enemy's army, - - - - -. Such strategy would speed up the Italian campaign and so facilitate the launching of an attack in early spring against Southern France." (24) In view of this concept, it was decided to resume the offensive in Italy, with an amphibious assault behind the enemy's right flank, simultaneous with a main assault along the Gustav Line between the Abruzzi Mountains and the mouth of the Garigliano River. (25)

A directive issued on 2 January, by General Alexander of 15th Army Group, gave Fifth Army the responsibility of assaulting by sea the beaches southwest of Rome, in order to destroy the enemy's lines of communication and to threaten his rear. It further called for a strong offensive along the Gustav Line in the direction of Cassino and Frosinone to attract the enemy's reserves prior to the beachhead landings, and also to eventually link up with those forces there. (26) These operations were to be timed so as to bring a maximum amount of effort against the enemy at one time, in order to obtain the greatest tactical effects. (27)

On 12 January, the Gustav Lines sector offensive began. Units of the French Expeditionary Corps, Fifth Army, advanced four miles and

(23) A-1, p. 2; (24) A-11, p. 5; (25) A-11, p. 6; (26) A-22, p. 9;
(27) A-17, p. 64, 65.

captured Atina. (28) On 15 January, the U. S. 34th Division of II Corps captured Mt. Trocchio. (29) On 17 January, the X Corps assaulted Castelforte, a very important town in the enemy's defense of this area. They failed to capture it, but did succeed in drawing in some of the enemy's reserves. (30) On 20 January, the 36th Division, II Corps, attacked near Cassino in order to gain a bridgehead for the 1st Armored Division to exploit. The Division did succeed in establishing the bridgehead, but could hold it for only 48 hours; heavy casualties forced it to withdraw. (31)

Thus, one phase of the offensive as called for by General Alexander was bogged down before it got any momentum. (32)

It is interesting to note that the German strategy and tactical use of troops during this time were influenced by three considerations:

1. A large number of German reserves had to be retained in Germany for the possible Allied cross-channel invasion, and hence reinforcements could not be sent to the Italian front.

2. Many of the divisions in Italy were understrength and lacked proper weapons and materiel.

3. The German Army was forced to maintain two main lines of defense in Italy -- one below Rome to prevent central Italy from falling into Allied hands, and one in northern Italy to guard against deep Allied flanking attacks, and to retain the rich economic region of the Po Valley.

These three influences caused a grave situation for the Germans ordered to hold the Italian theater. (33)

(28) A-11, p. 15; (29) A-23, p. 56; (30) A-11, p. 15, 16; (31) A-22, p. 44-47; (32) A-11, p. 17; (33) A-26, p. 2-9.

PHASE ONE
PERIOD 22 JANUARY - 11 MAY 1944
(ANZIO-NETTUND LANDINGS: GUSTAV LINE ATTACKS)

(See Map C for Gustav Line Operation, Map D for Anzio Operation)

Enemy forces at this time - January, 1944 - were estimated to be in the strength of twenty four divisions. The Tenth Army of thirteen divisions was located along the Gustav Line. The Fourteenth Army occupied Northern Italy with the remaining eleven divisions - Field Marshal Kesselring was German commander-in-chief. (34)

Allied forces numbered twenty two divisions. (35) Fifth Army consisted of a total of eight divisions, divided among the II (U.S.), 10th (Br), and French Expeditionary Corps. The VI Corps, later to make the Anzio beachhead, is not numbered among Fifth Army units here. (36)

The Gustav Line was prepared as a main line of German defense. It was positioned throughout its length among key terrain features consisting of high mountains, river barriers, and highways. It protects the Liri River Valley and Highway 6 entrance into Rome, near the center. (37) It ran generally along the west side of the Garigliano River, to Cassino, and from there followed a line a little east of north. It extended from coast to coast. Both forward and reverse slope defenses were prepared, which gave the enemy nearly perfect fields of fire in all frontal and flanking areas. Mined approaches, flooded flat ground to retard armor, excellently and heavily constructed gun positions, and numerous observation posts were utilized to the best advantage to add to the effectiveness of the nearly-impregnable line. (38)

Against this type of enemy defense, Allied forces had to attack in order to accomplish its objective of advancing to the northwest.

(34) A-22, p. 2; (35) A-17, Map 11; (36) A-22, p. 8, Map; (37) A-17, p. 52-55; (38) A-22, p. 5-8.

Although, as previously stated, one phase of the offensive was bogged down, the other phase -- that of the amphibious operation against the enemy's right flank on the beaches below Rome in the vicinity of Anzio, was ordered to proceed. (39)

On 22 January 1944, at 0200 hours, the first assault troops were landed. (40) This force, the VI Corps under command of General Lucas, consisted of a total of 50,000 troops, (41) made up of the British 1st Division, the U.S. Third Division, with reinforcing tank, parachute, Ranger, Commando, and other supporting units. (42) Our initial landings were very successful and only lightly opposed. The first three days, VI Corps moved forward rapidly towards the immediate objectives of Cisterna and Campoleone. But on 28 January, the forward movement was stopped without having reached these immediate objectives. (43)

The rapid advances on the first few days can be attributed to the surprise attained in the landings. This is evidenced by the enemy having used his reserves to meet the offensive begun earlier along the Gustav Line; Kesselring was unable to mass sufficient forces immediately after the landings to stop the VI Corps inland advance. (44) "So little did the enemy fear a landing at Anzio that the 90th Panzer Grenadier Division and additional artillery had just then moved south from Rome to the vicinity of Gaeta." (45) However, by 28 January, sufficient reserves and elements had been recalled from the main front to stop the advance (46); this included three divisions on the beachhead, and four more on the way. (47)

"Operation Shingle", as the beachhead operation was called (48), had been launched in an area only thirty miles from Rome. The area was bordered on the southeast by the Pontine marshes, low barren land

(39) A-22, p. 62; (40) A-22, p. 62; (41) A-11, p. 17; (42) A-1, p. 5; (43) A-17, p. 69; (44) A-11, p. 18, 19; (45) A-22, p. 67; (46) A-11, p. 18, 19; (47) A-17, p. 70; (48) A-22, p. 59.

out by drainage ditches; on the northwest by rolling land interspersed with small trees and shrubs; and on the north by the Colli Laziali, the high ground overlooking the beachhead area. (49)

On 30 January, Anzio forces began another push to extend the beachhead area, with the hopes of reaching the highground of Colli Laziali. It was thought that the enemy's present front line defense was only a delaying position. At this time VI Corps had increased it's strength to the British 1st Division, the U.S. 1st Armored, 3rd and 45th Divisions, with reinforcing troops, or a total of "68,886 troops, 508 guns and 237 tanks." (50) Strong attacks were made in the direction of Cisterna and Campoleone, but were stopped short of their objective. (51) Here again the enemy had once more organized strong defensive positions, taking full advantage of terrain, weather and the already constructed houses and buildings. Allied armor support was greatly retarded because of wet ground, the ditches, and the excellent fields of fire the enemy had organized. The infantry advances could gain no more momentum, because of the strong defensive positions held. (52)

Due to the failure of this January offensive to move very far, coupled with the enemy's increase of his Anzio forces, General Lucas, VI Corps, was ordered on 2 February to assume the defensive. (53) It was estimated that enemy forces at this time consisted of five full divisions with large amounts of supporting artillery. (54)

On the main front, another attempt to take Cassino was made on 24 January, by a two division attack, but only limited success was attained. A bridgehead was established across the Rapido River, and the city of Cairo, north of Cassino was taken, but Cassino, itself, remained in the enemy's hands. (55) Again, on 1 February the U.S. 34th Division

(49) A-2, p. 15; (50) A-17, p. 70; (51) A-17, p. 70; (52) A-1, p. 40; (53) A-1, p. 40; (54) A-17, p. 67; (55) A-17, p. 67.

attacked north of Cassino towards Highway 6, and even though making some advance, was still stopped one and one-half miles from the objective after three days of fighting. (56) Once more, on 15 February, the New Zealand Corps of two divisions attacked Cassino. Preliminary to this attack, the Air Force dropped 576 tons of bombs on the objective. Despite the destruction reaped, the Corps did not wrest Cassino from the enemy. (57)

The success of the enemy's defense around Cassino greatly affected any possible breakthrough by the Allied Forces on this southern front. Although the above three attacks were unsuccessful, on 15 March a fourth attempt was made. On this date, over 1000 tons of bombs -- twice as many as on 15 February -- were dropped on Cassino. (58) Also included were almost 200,000 rounds of artillery shells, ranging from 3 inch gun to 240 mm howitzer. (59) The 2d New Zealand Division and the 4th Indian Division moved toward the objective after the bombardment, and although some advance was made, the attack was called off after a week of fighting. The persistent Germans still held Cassino. (60)

Meanwhile, the Anzio beachhead was the scene of some very heavy fighting. While the VI Corps there had assumed a defensive role, as ordered on 2 February, the Germans had plans to counterattack and eliminate the beachhead. (61) This German offensive, which began the night of 3 - 4 February, was centered on the Campoleone salient, which the British 1st Division and the U.S. First Armored had established on 30 January. A double envelopment of this salient by the enemy, had reduced this salient on 5 February. (62) The salient, which had stuck out of the front lines for a distance of approximately

(56) A-22, p. 89,90; (57) A-17, p. 72; (58) A-17, p. 75; (59) A-22, p. 179; (60) A-17, p. 75; (61) A-17, p. 74; (62) A-1, p. 44-46.

six miles in the direction of Campoleone, was thus eliminated. (63)

The next eleven days following the German's successful effort to reduce the Campoleone salient were used by the enemy to prepare for his all-out effort to wipe out the beachhead. For this phase of the counteroffensive, The German Fourteenth Army used six divisions in the assault, two in reserve, all being strongly supported by armor. The armor was given the mission of exploiting the penetration to the sea. (64)

On the 16th of February, this counteroffensive began. (65) The main German effort was directed on the 45th Division (U.S.) sector, in the approximate center of the beachhead, where the attacks of 3 - 5 February had been made. (66) The attack was made in broad daylight, under cover of smoke, in several different directions. (67) The fighting raged heavily for three days, characterized by the enemy making use of all available resources at his command. (68) But by late on 18 February, this major offensive was stopped, and Allied Forces prevented what the Germans had tried to do -- eliminate the VI Corps from the beachhead. (69)

Thereafter, his efforts were futile. One last attack from 29 February to 4 March failed without having made much headway, and indicated a distinct lack of aggressiveness and timing on the part of the enemy. (70)

The beachhead, from 4 March to 22 May, remained virtually a stalemate, with neither side launching any major offensive. (71)

Operations along the Gustav Line also took on a relatively passive role for the period beginning 23 March to 11 May, due to the Fifth Army's failure to break through the Gustav Line in January and February. (72) This period was spent in the assignment of new sectors

(63) A-1, Map 9; (64) A-1, p. 67; (65) A-22, p. 129; (66) A-1, p. 70; (67) A-22, p. 129; (68) A-22, p. 130-140; (69) A-1, p. 82; (70) A-22, p. 151-155; (71) A-17, p. 74; (72) A-17, p. 77.

to the Armies -- the Fifth Army's front was now narrowed to a thirteen mile width; in regrouping divisions and corps, as much as possible by nationalities; and in the rest and further training of troops. (73) Two newly arrived U. S. Divisions, the 85th and 88th, were assigned to the Fifth Army at this time. (74) Allied Air Forces concentrated on bombing the enemy's line of communication in order to prevent his reinforcing the Gustav Line and Anzio beachhead forces prior to the forthcoming May offensive. (75)

To show the costly fighting just concluded with this phase, the following passage is quoted, "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. (76)

(This phase, briefly stated, has covered the Anzio beachhead landings, the unsuccessful German counterattacks there, and the assumption of a defensive role by VI Corps; it showed the unsuccessful attempts by the Fifth Army in January and February to break through the Gustav Line, and the ensuing regrouping and rest phase, prior to a May offensive, which was yet to be launched).

(73) A-21, p. 2-3; (74) A-21, p. 3; (75) A-17, p. 77; (76) A-17, p. 76.

PHASE TWO
PERIOD 11 MAY - 9 JUNE 1944
(BREAKTHROUGH AT ANZIO AND GUSTAV LINES; CAPTURE
OF ROME, CIVITAVECCHIA, VITERBO)

(See Map C for Gustav Line Operations; Map D for Anzio Operation)

Plans were made and issued in April by General Alexander for Allied Forces in Italy to resume the offensive shortly. They called for an all-out coordinated effort to "destroy the right wing of the German Tenth Army; to drive what remains of it 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." (77) The plan further outlined that the main effort would be made by the Eighth Army along Highway 6 into the Liri Valley; that the Fifth Army would also move forward, south of the Eighth; and that the Anzio forces would cut Highway 6 near Valmontone, and then proceed to Viterbo and Civitavecchia. (78)

At this time, the German Fourteenth and Tenth Armies consisted of twenty two divisions: nine were containing the Gustav Line, five were at the Anzio beachhead, and the other eight were dispersed throughout Italy. (79) Allied Forces were comprised of the same total -- twenty two, including the seven on the Anzio beachhead in VI Corps. Fifth Army, exclusive of VI Corps, had six divisions. (80)

The attack began on 11 May. The first two weeks of the offensive saw no distant objectives captured, but certainly during this period some very important tactical points were taken. (81) The French Expeditionary Corps, in the right of Fifth Army's zone, made rapid local advances, capturing Ausonia and San Giorgio. (82) The U. S. II Corps on the left flank, moved close to Formia. (83) These two operations forced the enemy to withdraw his right flank from the Gustav Line and

(77) A-21, p. 21; (78) A-17, p. 78; (79) A-21, p. 11-13; (80) A-17, p. 77,78, Map 16; (81) A-17, p. 78,79; (82) A-21, p. 52, Map 6; (83) A-17, p. 79.

move it to the Hitler Line, a few miles further back. (84)

On 18 May, the defenders of Cassino finally gave up. This surrender was not caused by a frontal attack, but rather by an envelopment. When the French captured Ausonia and San Giorgio, the Eighth Army also made a flanking attack north of Cassino. Thus, the Germans in Cassino were more or less cut off from the rest of their forces. (85) "When Cassino fell, so did the effectiveness of the Gustav Line. (86)

By 22 May, the forward advance had reached the general line Terracina-Fondi-Pico-Pontecorvo. With this advance by Allied Forces, the enemy now had no prepared defense line to rely on, until a point could be reached many miles further northwest. (87)

So, because of the speed and initiative Fifth Army had gained along the main front, General Alexander ordered the VI Corps at Anzio to begin its offensive for Valmontone. (88)

The VI Corps in two days captured Cori and Cisterna, on the road to Valmontone, but was then slowed down. (89) The enemy was making a determined stand to hold Valmontone, since losing it would prevent a successful withdrawal of troops along Highway 6 from the southern front. Valmontone controlled this main escape route. (90)

However, on the same day that the VI Corps attack was stopped, 25 May, patrols from the VI Corps made personal contact with leading elements from II Corps from the Southern Front. This meant that the two fronts were now united. (91)

Efforts between these two forces now being combined, the drive to Valmontone was again launched. The town finally fell on 2 June. This opened the way to Rome. (92)

On 4 June, leading elements of Fifth Army entered the Holy City --

(84) A-17, p.79; (85) A-21, p.73,74; (86) A-22, p.129; (87) A-17, p.80; (88) A-17, p.80; (89) A-1, p.119; (90) A-17, p.80; (91) A-1, p.117; (92) A-17, p.81.

Rome. (93) The 3d Division was named by General Clark to be the U.S. garrison for Rome. (94)

Although Rome was the climax to the May offensive, it was not the end. The pursuit of the enemy northwest was continuing without a break. (95) (See Map E) Since Viterbo, important airfield base, and Civitavecchia, large seaport, were also objectives of Fifth Army, advances from Rome were begun immediately in their direction. These cities are approximately 60 miles north of Rome. (96) By 7 June, Civitavecchia was taken, and on 9 June, Viterbo fell. (97)

This 21 day spring offensive had cost Fifth Army 17,000 casualties. (98) German losses were estimated at 75,000. (99) However, the Allies had gained over 3,000 square miles of territory, all the way from Cassino to Rome. (100)

This phase is ended with the Fifth Army still on the move to the northwest.

After weeks of continued effort to break through the Gustav Line, success was finally achieved in May. Until this penetration was effected, the war in Italy was at a standstill. The success of the sudden breakthrough of the Gustav Line can possibly be attributed to three conditions: first, German intelligence estimates of the number of Allied troops were very poor, showing a marked underestimation; second, our troops and gun positions were shifted about under cover of smoke and darkness for several days prior to the attack, and the enemy had no accurate tactical information of this; and, third, our tactics consisted of bypassing the enemy's strongest points, over near impassable terrain, instead of frontally assaulting them. (101)

(This phase has covered the opening of the May offensive against

(93) A-1, p.122; (94) A-21, p.163; (95) A-21, p.163; (96) A-17, p.81; A-17, Map 17; (97) A-18, p.21,22; (98) A-21, p.166; (99) A-3, p.41; (100) A-17, Map 16; (101) A-21, p.75-77.

the Gustav Line, its successes; the break through by the Anzio forces; the joining up of these two forces; and the coordinated drive to Rome, Civitavecchia, and Viterbo.)

PHASE THREE
PERIOD 9 JUNE - 15 AUGUST 1944
(FROM ROME TO THE ARNO)

(See Map E)

Although Fifth Army had now taken Rome, Viterbo, and Civitavecchia, only part of its mission had been accomplished. General Alexander's order had called for pursuit to the "Rimini-Pisa Line". (102) This line extends generally east to west along the Arno River, approximately 150 miles north of Rome. (103)

The German Fourteenth Army, which had opposed Allied Forces in the spring offensive, was very badly mauled and cut up. It could now be thought of as an Ineffective Army. General Kesselring's plan of "economy of force at the expense of giving away ground to save time", was not tactically sound. During the latter part of this phase, Kesselring did receive four replacement divisions, but these were committed piecemeal to stem the tide of Allied advance, but not effectively. (104)

It is also an interesting fact that during the pursuit to the Arno, Fifth Army troops strength fell off about 40 percent, or from 250,000 to 150,000. Losses were nine infantry divisions, with gains of two infantry divisions -- the 91st and 92d. (105)

Most of the terrain from Rome to the Arno was mountainous. However, instead of containing separate ridge lines or corridors, there was one continuous mass of hills. This type of terrain prevented any

(102) A-21, p.21; (103) A-17, Map 17; (104) A-18, p.6-8; (105) A-18, p.12-14.

natural defensive lines and also contained no strategic avenues of approach. Highways were excellent, running both laterally and frontally; they contained many bridges and ran through many defiles. Highway 1, the chief road, ran from Rome to Pisa along the western coast. The Arno River itself had an average width of 200 feet. (106)

The zone of the Fifth Army advance covered an average width of fifty miles, flanked by the coast on the West, to just east of Highway 2 on the East. (107)

The first two weeks of the pursuit to the Arno allowed rapid gains to Fifth Army units. Many times artillery units went into position and back out again without firing a shot, the situation changed so rapidly. Teams of infantry-tank destroyer-tank elements were formed to act against the enemy's small delaying forces, and to move along all highways and roads; in order to keep the pursuit moving at a fast pace. The Air Force was used chiefly for rear area isolation of the battlefield and very little in close tactical support. (108)

On 20 June, Fifth Army units were slowed down by strong delaying positions along the Cecina-Arezzo line. The enemy's desire for time to strengthen his Gothic Line defenses further North, plus wishing to keep the port of Leghorn from use by the Allied Forces, was the cause of this strong delaying position. (109) Along this line were Highways 68 and 73 which formed an excellent tactical roadnet. (110)

On 2 July, the 34th Division captured Cecina, despite these strong German attempts to hold it. Siena, on the Fifth Army's right flank, fell on 3 July. The taking of this lateral road net now paved the way for the final push to the Arno River. With the 34th Division operating on the

(106) A-18, p. 3-6; (107) A-18, Map No. 1, p. 4; (108) A-18, p. 14-15; (109) A-17, p. 82; (110) A-18, Map 1, p. 4.

left flank along the coast, 91st Division in the center, and 88th Division on the right, IV Corps of Fifth Army moved rapidly forward. (111)

On 18 July the port of Leghorn was taken. (112)

Despite German demolition of all bridges between Leghorn and Pisa, the 34th Division advanced up Highway 1, and entered south Pisa, on the south banks of the Arno, on 23 July. (113)

On 18 July, the 91st Division in the center reached the Arno at Pontedera, despite heavy German rearguard action, which in one case left its artillery alone to delay the U.S. advance, while the enemy infantry withdrew. (114)

Also on 18 July, the 88th Division on the right flank took over the high ground overlooking the Arno just north of Palaisa. The Fifth Army, thus, had succeeded by 23 July in reaching the Arno all along its entire front. (115)

Engineer support of this phase of the operations deserves special mention. During the month of July, alone, the 1108th Engineer Combat Groupⁿ put in 8 Bailey bridges, erected 9 bridges of other types, constructed 51 culverts, filled 55 craters, improved 34 bypasses, and graded 306 miles of roadⁿ. In addition, over 1,000,000 maps were issued. (116)

U. S. casualties during this period were 11,259. Enemy prisoners of war, alone, captured by Fifth Army troops, totaled 14,889. (117)

(This phase has seen Fifth Army effect most of its original missions of advance to the Pisa sector, and the destruction of enemy forces. It included the pursuit north of Rome and the attainment of a front along the Arno River. The next phase includes part of the action to reach the enemy's main line of defense along the Gothic Line.)

(111) A-18, p. 105; (112) A-17, p. 82; (113) A-18, p. 84; (114) A-18, p. 87; (115) A-18, p. 90; (116) A-18, p. 117-118; (117) A-18, p. 137-138.

PHASE FOUR
PERIOD 15 AUGUST - 9 SEPT 1944
(ARNO RIVER CROSSINGS: ADVANCE TOWARDS GOTHIC LINE)

(SEE MAP F)

The Arno River presented another temporary static phase for the Fifth Army. Behind the Arno, approximately twenty miles away, lay the Gothic Line, another strongly prepared defensive position. (118)

The enemy held the Arno River line with a minimum of troops, his organization consisting chiefly of defensive strongpoint organization, roving self propelled artillery, and obstacles. The Fifth Army Line was also stretched thin, as the past two month's pursuit had wearied the combat troops. Action, thus, on the part of both sides, was passive, consisting of patrols, artillery duels, and night movement. (119)

To clearly show the reason for this phase of the Rome-Arno campaign, a description of the Gothic Line is considered necessary. It ran generally from west to east along the line Massa - Pescia - Pistoia - Vermio - S. Lucia - to Pesaro, with a bend to the southeast between the latter two towns. Between the present line along the Arno, and the Gothic Line, was a broad valley in most all of the sections. The Gothic Line consisted in general of the same type of defense found in the Gustav Line and the Winter Line: strong emplacements, utilization to the best advantage of high ground for observation, maximum tactical use of obstacles, and mutual support of all weapons. (120)

The enemy's strength in August consisted of twenty one divisions, divided between the Tenth and Fourteenth Armies. Many of these units were tired and depleted in strength, since they had been in action from the Gustav Line rearward through their withdrawal and had seen heavy fighting. His air strength was so depleted that only a very small per-

(118) A-19, p. 7-10; (119) A-18, p. 102-104; (120) A-19, p. 7-10, and Map p. 17.

centage of Fifth Army troops knew that he had any airplanes left. (121)

Fifth Army strength was mainly five Infantry divisions, one armored division, and the 442nd (Nisei) regimental combat team, divided among the II and IV Corps. (122)

Allied plans to push across the Arno called for a main effort by II Corps on the right flank to push through the British XIII Corps at Florence, to take the high ground north, and push on into the Sieve Valley towards the Futa Pass. On the left flank, IV Corps would constitute a holding attack and make strong diversionary attacks to conceal the true location of the main effort. (123)

By 25 August, a bridgehead and tank ford were secured, and most of Florence was taken. The enemy pulled back to the high commanding ground north of Florence. (124)

During this time, Eighth Army on the right flank had attacked and moved its lines forward about 30 miles, and had reached the Gothic Line in the vicinity of Tamba and Montegridulfo, northwest of Pesaro, by 6 September. The enemy began pulling back in view of these gains, and had placed his reserves on his left flank to counteract this movement. (125)

This seemed a wise time for Fifth Army to relaunch its main effort. It began on 1 September with the 1st Armored Division crossing the Arno east of Pontedera and surrounding the key hill of Mt. Pisano by 2 September. A little farther right, the 6th South African Division took Mt. Albano. (126)

A temporary halt was now called for the purpose of regroupment and reassignment of tasks for the advance through the Gothic Line.

9 September finds Fifth Army just short of this line and plans being made to break through the Gothic Line and to trap the enemy south of the Po Valley. (127)

(121) A-19, p. 20-21; (122) A-18, p. 153-170; (123) A-19, p. 20-21; (124) A-19, p. 23-24; (125) A-19, p. 24-32; (126) A-19, p. 31; (127) A-19, p. 46-51.

(This concluding phase has covered the period of relatively in-activity along the Arno River in front of the Gothic Line. It included attacks made for the purpose of gaining this line, and plans being made to penetrate it, and to destroy the German armies afterwards.)

U. S. CASUALTIES, ENEMY PRISONERS

CASUALTIES, U. S. FORCES

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>(FOOTNOTE)</u>
16 January - 31 March	22,210	(128)
1 April - 4 June	21,024	(129)
5 June - 15 August	<u>11,259</u>	(130)
Total	54,493	

ENEMY PRISONERS CAPTURED BY FIFTH ARMY

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>(FOOTNOTE)</u>
16 January - 31 March	8,557	(131)
1 April - 4 June	15,606	(132)
5 June - 15 August	<u>16,969</u>	(133)
Total	41,132	

(128) A-22, p. 218; (129) A-21, p. 210; (130) A-18, p. 136; (131)
A- 22, p. 225; (132) A-21, p. 215; (133) A-18, p. 138.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

The feat of the German Armies in Italy in containing the Allied Forces before the Gustav Line for a 5 months period, in spite of several strong attacks, is worthy of special emphasis. His actual organization of this defensive line could have been improved but very little. All known factors of defense were certainly used both throughout the Line and the period of the attacks. His uses of obstacles, mutual support, cover and concealment, utilization of key terrain, and coordinated fires were excellent. No doubt the earlier set backs in Africa and Sicily had prepared the enemy psychologically for such a defensive war.

However, it is my judgment that General Kesserling did not adequately use his reserves to give proper depth to this particular defensive line. Rather than centralizing the eleven divisions not in battle, he kept them scattered throughout Italy, where they could do no good. If he had used only part of these as a possible counterattacking force, I believe he could have contained and possibly driven back Allied forces penetrations. Certainly he could have destroyed the Anzio beachhead, had he but used four more of these divisions in his counterattack in February.

In general, the entire plan of action for the enemy in Italy appeared to be one of passive defenses altogether. If the use of an aggressive defense had been instituted, the Allied Forces would have been detained much longer.

The original policy in the Allied groupments of corps and divisions called for a mixture of nationalities in these armies. This is evidenced by the fact that as late as February, 1944, Fifth Army (principally U.S.) contained 4 British divisions, 2 New Zealand Divisions, and 6 U.S. Divisions. No doubt this grouping was because of the desire of all concerned

to promote confidence and goodwill among Allied nations. However, problems of supply, training, and tactics arose and greatly influenced this type of assignment. Therefore, in May of 1944, a regrouping of troops was made in order to assign U. S. Divisions to U. S. commands and British troops to British commands. No doubt this greatly facilitated the breakthrough which occurred only two weeks later. Had this plan been placed into effect originally, certainly the tactics and administration would have been greatly simplified. To carry the results of this experience a little further, the invasion and subsequent battles in France and Germany found Allied Forces, almost without exception, grouping Armies by nationality. Many lessons of command learned in Italy no doubt proved of great value for the main campaign in France and Germany.

In analyzing the strategical reason for a war in Italy, the idea of maintaining a continued pressure on the German armies influenced greatly decisions made during that campaign. It appears that this idea of continued pressure at times cost a lot of unnecessary lives and supplies, which could have been saved had a little more time been taken between major offensives. For example, the launching of the Anzio landings even though the battle along the Gustav Line was at the same time stopped; the continued unsuccessful attacks against Cassino; and the hammerings against the Gustav Line immediately prior to the Anzio landing: all appeared to have been initiated without rest for troops, without proper regard for timing, and with the desire to speed up the action. One exception to this is the period given over to rest, resupply, and regroupment just prior to the May offensive -- which was successful.

History shows that the Anzio beachhead was a success. It was launched by a very small force -- three divisions plus -- and held despite German efforts to destroy it. By containing reserve German forces which could have been used against the Allied Forces at the Gustav Line, and by threatening the enemy's rear and lines of communication, it accomplished its mission. When it finally joined up in May with the troops from the other front, it added considerably to the rapid downfall of the enemy. However, if more forces could have been added to the beachhead in February, and if this would have given the VI Corps there the major role, it is this author's opinion that the war in Italy would have been shortened.

This opinion is arrived at after considering the following facts:

1. Frontal attacks against the Gustav Line had proven costly and not very effective.
2. The enemy had shown that he was content to fight primarily a defensive war.
3. Exploitation of the Anzio success, even at the expense of thinning out the forces at the main front, would have cut off most of the enemy's routes of escape to the rear from the southern front.
4. This latter factor would most likely have caused his early withdrawal from the Gustav Line, thus preventing a necessary frontal attack against that position.

By adding together the last two facts, cut off of the escape route and an early withdrawal by the enemy, it can be readily seen that two advantages would have occurred: The saving of lives and materiel from a costly frontal attack against the Gustav Line, and the trapping of the major part of the enemy army in Italy.

The pursuit north from Rome moved very fast. The enemy withdrew rapidly, and except in a few instances, gave little resistance. The adoption of small, fast moving "Task Forces" of infantry-armor, utilizing all roads, by Fifth Army units, proved to be of great worth. Not only did this type of pursuit keep the U. S. troops on the enemy's rear at all times, but also it allowed much needed gun power at the front, in the presence of tanks and tank destroyers. Since the slower artillery could not keep up the pace, the armor gave these "Task Forces" the "bridge between this gap", by using long range fire. In addition, close continuous support by engineers aided the pursuing Allied armies in the maintaining of continued pressure on the enemy.

When the main offensive in May, against the Gustav Line, was launched, its success is largely due to the type of tactics used by the Allies. Rather than frontally assaulting the enemy's strong points, or by flanking them through likely avenues of approach, the Allied troops used the tactics of surrounding the position from nearly impassable approaches. Since the Germans had mined all roads and ravines (likely avenues) and had paid scant attention to hill tops and steep mountains, Fifth Army commanders planned their maneuvers using the latter. The surprise thus attained was instrumental in breaking the Gustav Line. A good example of this is Cassino. Had this type of tactics been adopted in winter, or early spring, earlier success may have been obtained.

LESSONS

Of the Italian campaign, Lieutenant General Jacob L. Devers has stated, " ----- the principal lessons from Italy ----, that our basic doctrine and teachings have proven correct -----". The main

lesson above all has been the necessity for appropriate application of these principles ----. The campaign has emphatically demonstrated that the 'book' must not be learned and applied merely by rote." (134)

Lessons learned from this campaign, as analyzed by the author, are as follows:

1. A defense, even though based on aggressiveness, cannot be successful unless adequate mobile reserves are used to counterattack to off set gains made by the attacker. Without this added aggressiveness gained by use of reserves, the defense will become merely a delaying position.

2. The sacrifice of unity of command for goodwill and international relations can be very detrimental to an otherwise sound tactical plan.

3. A flanking attack cannot be considered ultimately successful unless full exploitation of its original success is utilized, as exemplified by the successful Anzio operation which was not further exploited immediately.

4. Periods of rest and reorganization are necessary to any command, regardless of the type of combat operations engaged in, and regardless of whether the action is active or passive.

5. Pursuing forces should be comprised of infantry, armor, and engineers in order to maintain the pressure on the enemy at all times. This special troop organization must be planned for prior to the beginning of the pursuit phase so that no time will be lost once the pursuit is possible.

6. Against strongly fortified positions which have been deliberately prepared, attacking forces should consider staying away from the likely avenues of approach and should make reconnaissance

(134) A-8, p. 4.

and plans to attack over the near impassable terrain or unlikely avenues, in order to flank the position.