

RESTRICTED

85th Inf Div

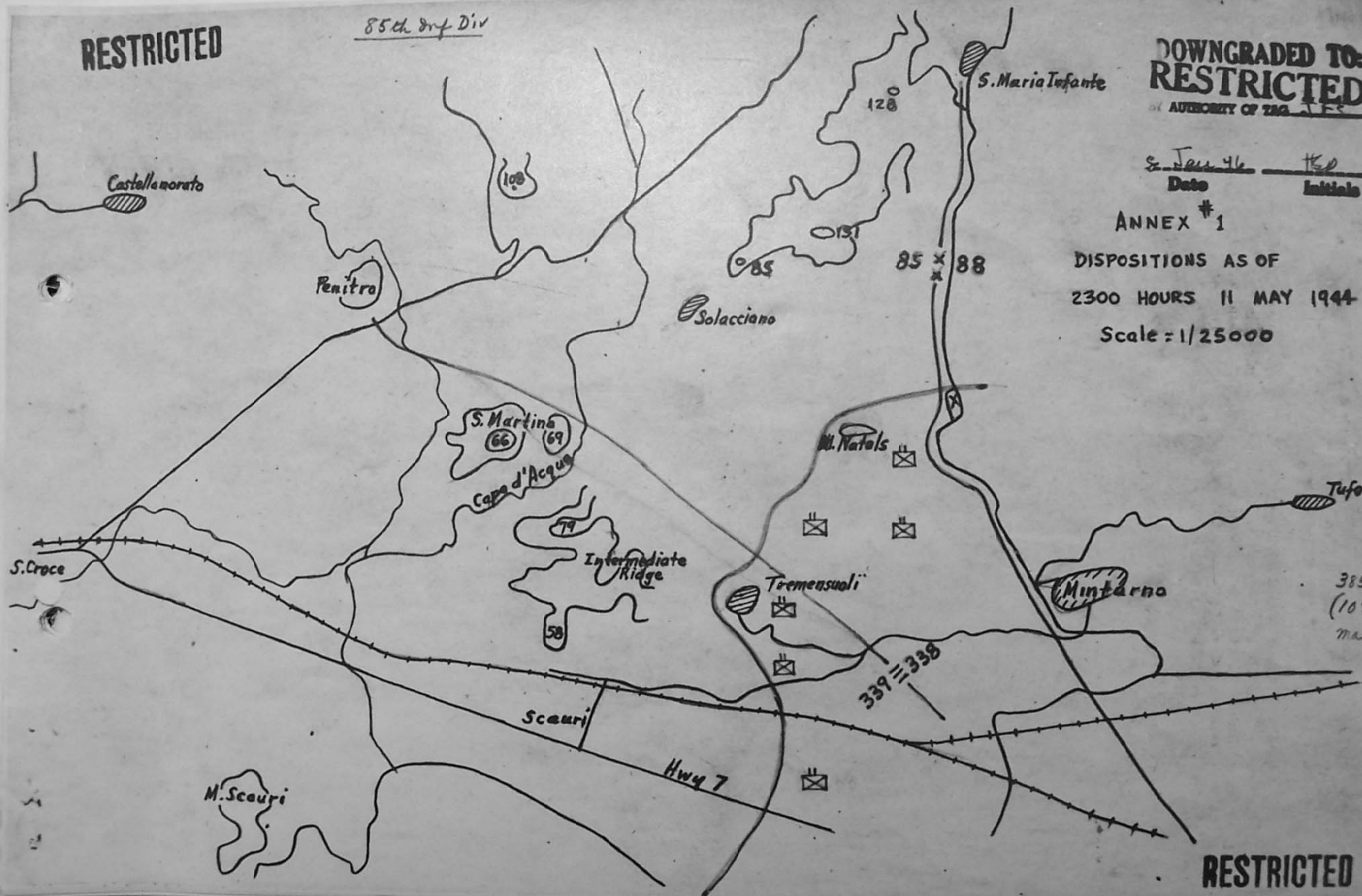
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BY AUTHORITY OF TAG JFC

S. J. 46 HSD
Date Initials

ANNEX #1

DISPOSITIONS AS OF
2300 HOURS 11 MAY 1944

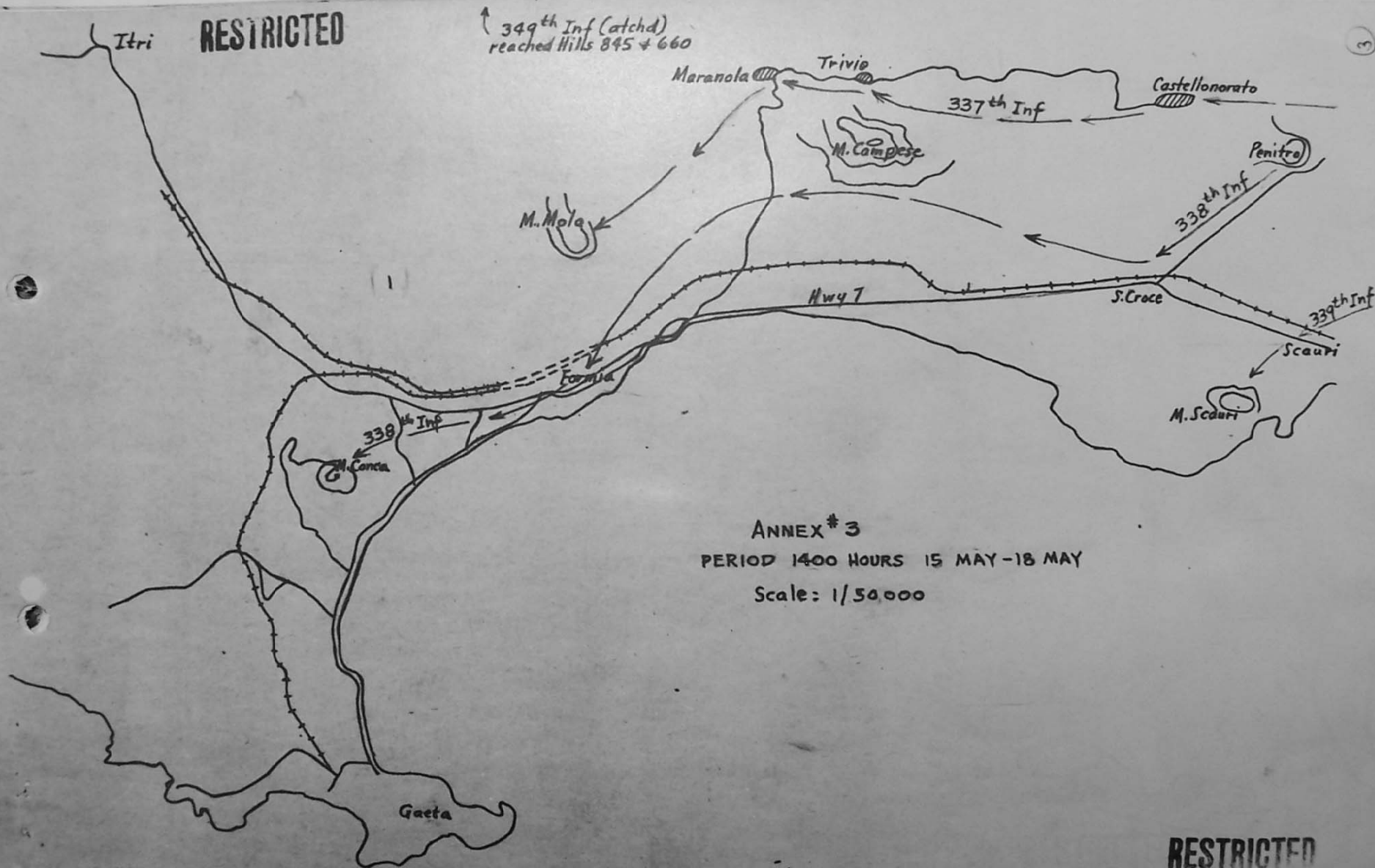
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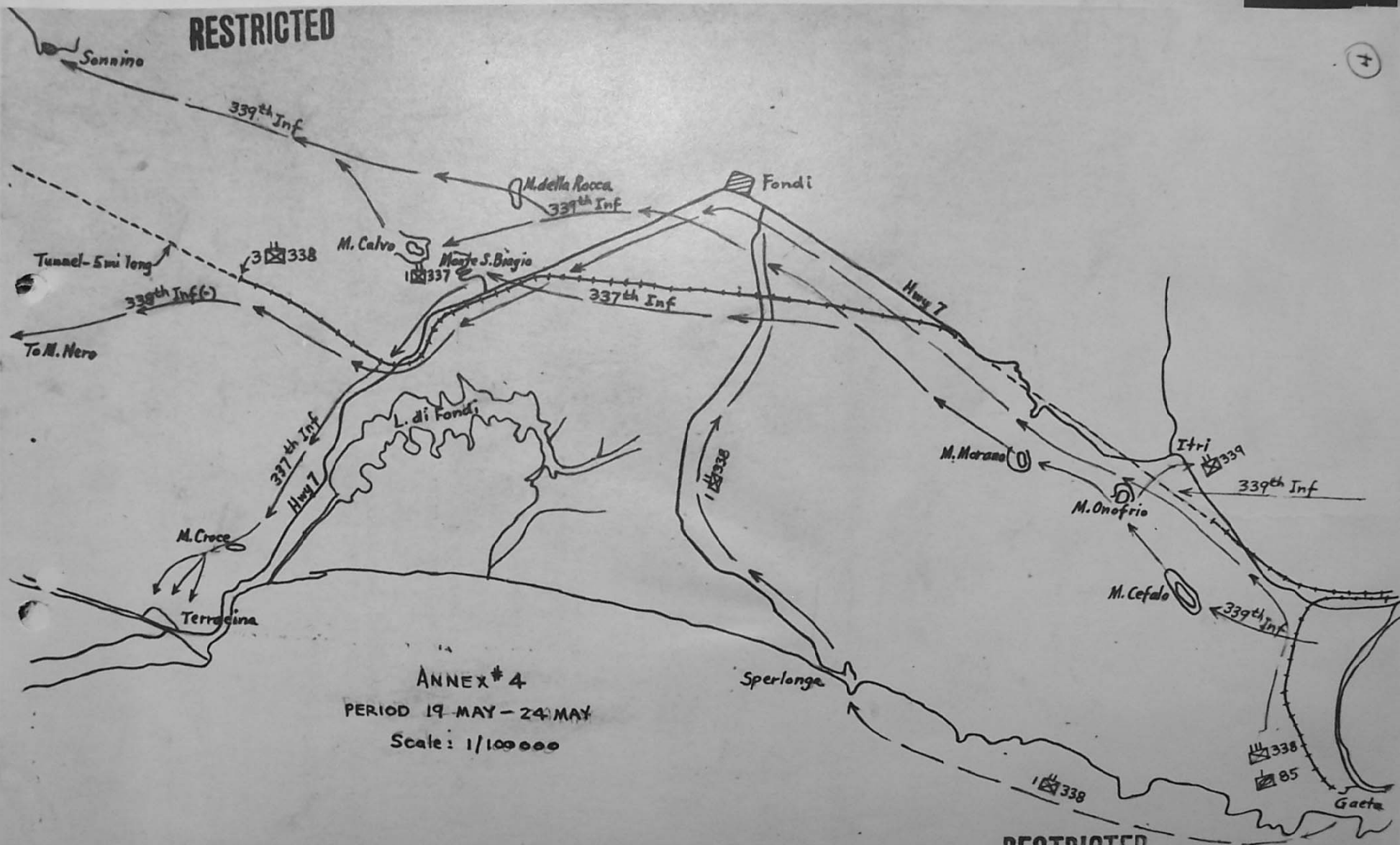
385-11.7
(10280)
May 44

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ANNEX # 4

PERIOD 19 MAY - 24 MAY

Scale: 1/100,000

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85TH INFANTRY DIVISION
REPORT OF OPERATIONS
SEPTEMBER 1944

ROUTES OF ADVANCE AND
TIME OF CAPTURE OF OBJECTIVES

LINE OF 30 SEP.

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7-15
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17. *Alnus*



215



INITIAL POSITIONS
13.0600

10' West of Rome

1° 01: *Luce*

ALBERT

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Of

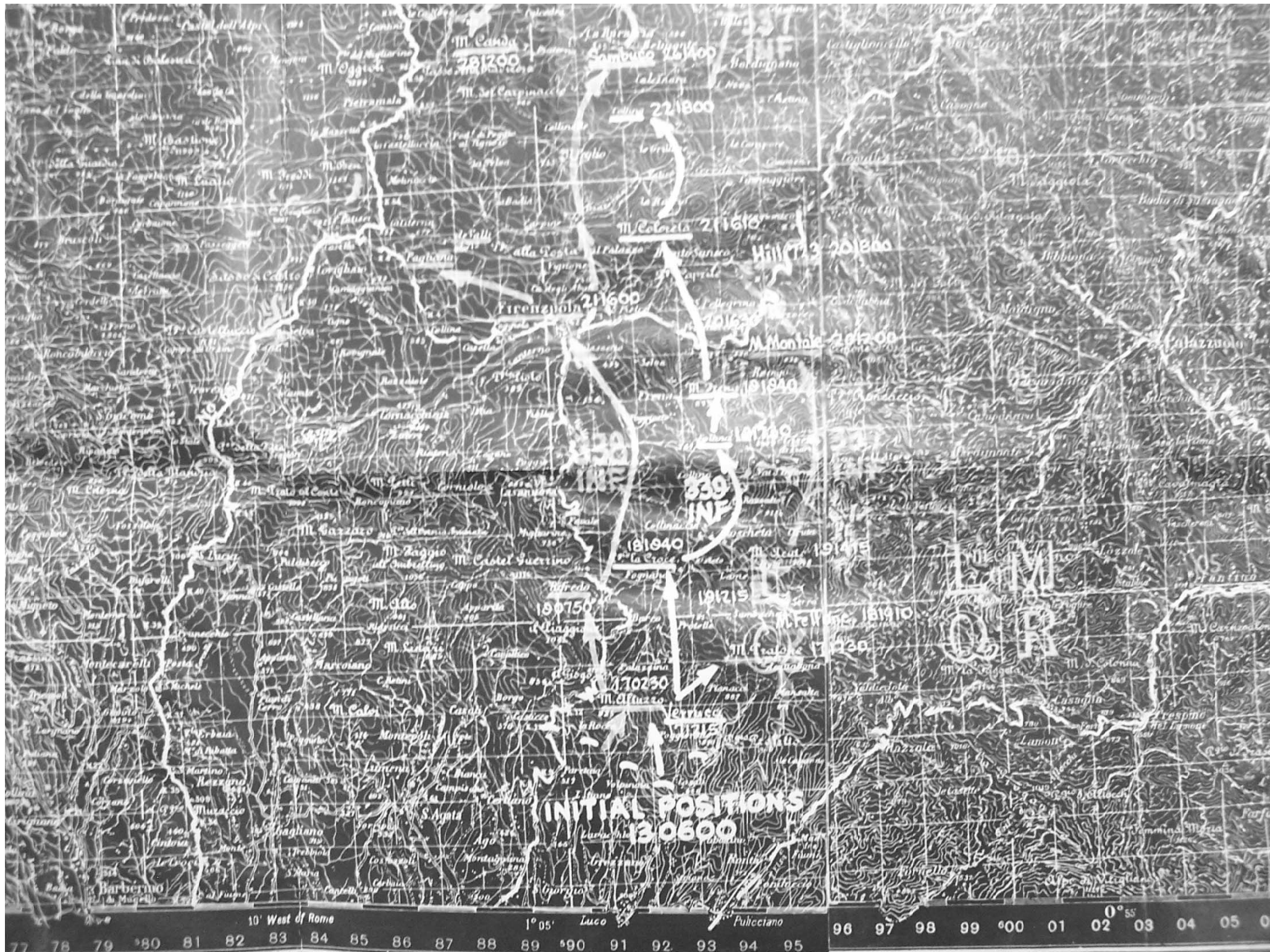
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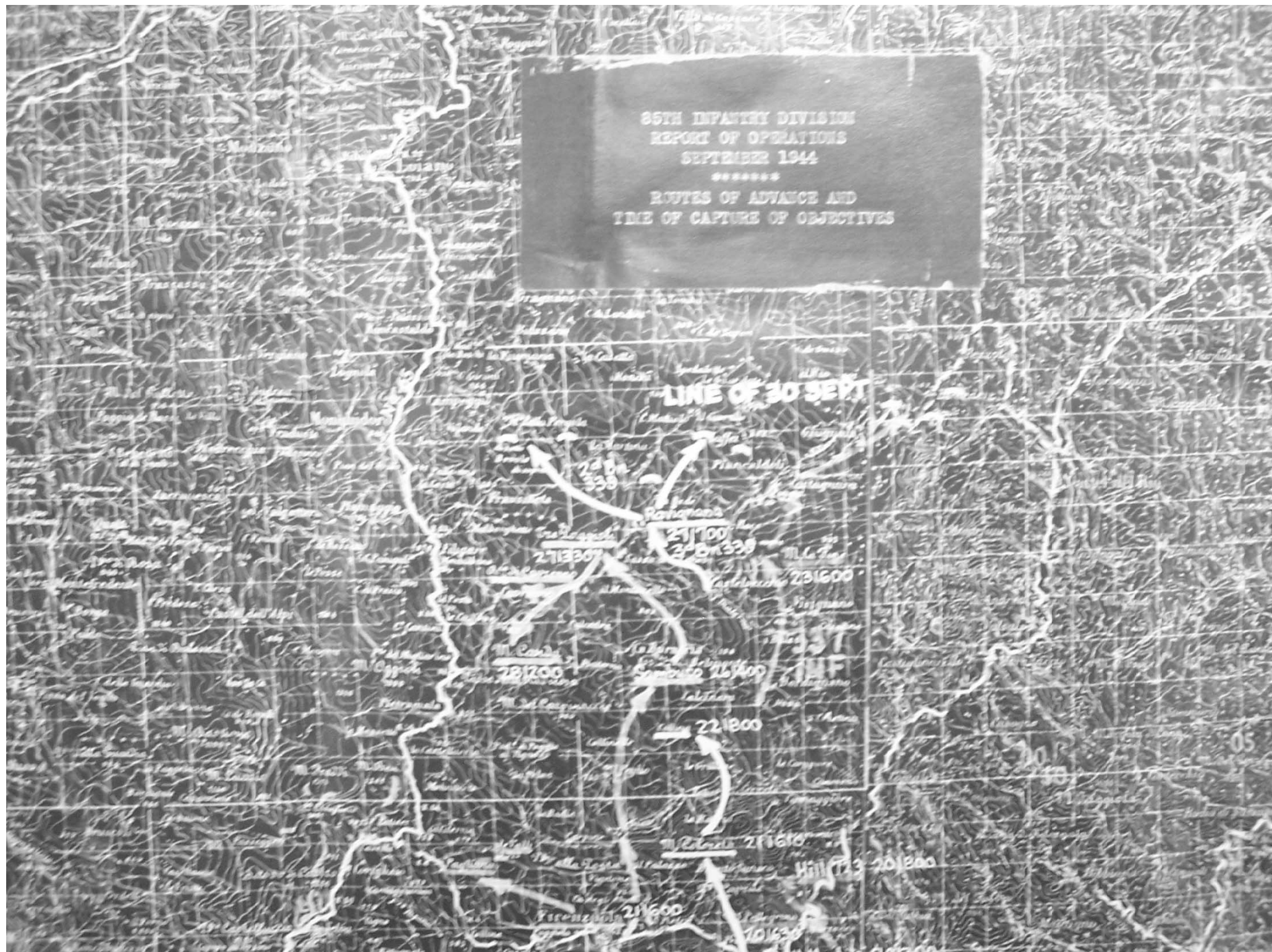
References

2000-2001

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REPORTS OF OPERATIONS-APRIL 44 TO JUNE 45
85TH INFANTRY DIVISION

Major General John B. Coulter, USA
Headquarters Fourth Army
Fort Sam Houston, Texas

385-0.1

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48025
master

Copy 44-June 45

against the GERMAN air raids which were periodically directed against the N. PLES area. All other units in Sub-Area #1 were also housed in concrete buildings.

85th Division Reports

DOCUMENT

HEADQUARTERS

DATED

1. Report of Operations - April 1944 Hq 85th Inf Div 12 June 44
2. Report of Operations - May 1944 Hq 85th Inf Div 12 June 44

9 Incls:

- Annex #1: 85th Inf Div: Disp as of 2300 hrs 11 May 44.
- Annex #2: 85th Inf Div: Period 2300 hrs 11 May to 1400 hrs 15 May.
- Annex #3: 85th Inf Div: Period 1400 hrs 15 May - 18 May.
- Annex #4: 85th Inf Div: Period 19 May-24 May.
- Incl (5) Message to CGs 85th & 88th Inf Divs fr Hq II Corps, 7 June 44.
- Incl (6) Message to unit comdrs, II Corps, fr Hq II Corps, 26 May 44.
- Incl (7) Message to II Corps from CG, Hq II Corps, 27 May 44.
- Incl (8) Message to M/G Coulter, CG 85th Inf Div, fr M/G Keyes, CG II Corps, 17 May 44.
- Incl (9) Congrat Message to Div & Sep Un Comdrs fr Hq II Corps, 18 May 44.

3. Report of Operations - June 1944 Hq 85th Inf Div 17 July 44

6 Incls:

- Annex #1: 85th Inf Div: Period 1-4 June 1944.
- Annex #2: 85th Inf Div: Period 4-10 June 1944.
- Incl (3) Message to O's & Men 5th Army fr CG, Hq 5th Army, 6 June 44.
- Incl (4) Message to II Corps fr CG, Hq II Corps, 6 June 44 (1st Ind, Hq 85th Inf Div)
- Incl (5) Commendation to Div, Sep Un Comdrs, II Corps fr CG II Corps, 9 June 44.
- Incl (6) Congrat. Mess. to Memb. 5th Army, Hq 5th Army, 20 June 44.

4. Report of Operations - July 1944 Hq 85th Inf Div 27 Sept 44
5. Report of Operations - August 1944 Hq 85th Inf Div 27th Sept 44
6. Report of Operations - September 1944 Hq 85th Inf Div 8 Nov 44

Incl: Map, Routes of Advance and Time of Capture of Objectives, Sept 1944.

7. Report of Operations - October 1944 Hq 85th Inf Div 18 Dec 44

Incl: Map, Routes of Advance and Time of Capture of Objectives, Oct. 1944.

8. Report of Operations - November 1944 Hq 85th Inf Div 20 Jan 45
9. Report of Operations - December 1944 Hq 85th Inf Div 12 Mar 45
- January 1945

Incl: Map, Division Sector 17-31 January 45, with estimated enemy dispositions.

10. Report of Operations - February 1945 Hq 85th Inf Div 8 April 45
11. Report of Operations - March 1945 Hq 85th Inf Div 2 May 45
12. Report of Operations - April 1945 Hq 85th Inf Div 2 June 45
13. Report of Operations - May 1945 Hq 85th Inf Div 17 June 45
14. Report of Operations - June 1945 Hq 85th Inf Div 8 July 45

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The Division was functioning in a large, bare, substantially constructed concrete building in Sub-Area #1 which had formerly served as a guardhouse. There were no furnishings of any description in this building, but it had one prime advantage in that it was strongly built and thus provided partial protection against the GERMAN air raids which were periodically directed against the N. PLES area. All other units in Sub-Area #1 were also housed in concrete buildings.

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(48358)

Operations Report - 85th Infantry Division

NO. 407
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Apr 44-June 45

85th Division Reports

85TH INFANTRY DIVISION

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RJB
1011

REPORT OF OPERATIONS - APRIL 1944

Period 1 April - 7 April

On 1 April 44 the Division was operating in several widely scattered localities inasmuch as the process of transporting the Division from North Africa to Italy was not yet completed.

Dispositions of the various units of the Division, with the commanders thereof, as of 1 April were as follows:

(a) Bagnoli Staging Area (Sub-Area #1), Bagnoli, Italy:

Headquarters 85th Infantry Division	- Major General John B. Coulter
Headquarters 85th Division Artillery	- Brigadier General Pierre Mallett
338th Infantry Regiment	- Colonel Fred A. Safay
329th Field Artillery Battalion	- Lt. Col. Leroy A. Davis
Headquarters Company, 85th Division	- Captain Thomas A. Roberts
Headquarters Battery, 85th Div Arty	- Captain Calvin L. Barton

(b) Bagnoli Staging Area (Sub-Area #3), Bagnoli, Italy:

337th Infantry Regiment	- Colonel Oliver W. Hughes
328th Field Artillery Battalion	- Lt. Col. Emmette Y. Burton, Jr.
910th Field Artillery Battalion	- Lt. Col. Harold S. Isaacson
403rd Field Artillery Battalion	- Lt. Col. Arnold J. Pio
310th Engineer Battalion	- Lt. Col. John D. Cole, Jr.
310th Medical Battalion	- Lt. Col. Ralph M. Patterson
785th Ordnance Company (LM)	- Captain Donald E. Broman
85th Reconnaissance Troop	- Captain Roy B. Thompson
85th Signal Company	- Captain Thomas C. Gordon
85th Quartermaster Company	- Captain Henry M. DuPont

(c) On Fifth Army main battle line north of Minturno, Italy:

339th Infantry Regiment	- Colonel James E. Matthews
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(d) Still enroute via Convoy from North Africa:

Division Rear Detachment, 1st Lt. Charles Dohm in charge, consisting of approximately 400 drivers and a like number of motor vehicles.

(e) Attached to 88th Infantry Division on main Fifth Army Front:

An observer party of 127 officers and 128 enlisted men under command of Brigadier General Lee W. Gerow.

The Division CP was functioning in a large, bare, substantially constructed concrete building in Sub-Area #1 which had formerly served as a guardhouse. There were no furnishings of any description in this building, but it had one prime advantage in that it was strongly built and thus provided partial protection against the GERMAN air raids which were periodically directed against the N. PLES area. All other units in Sub-Area #1 were also housed in concrete buildings.

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Sub-Area #3 was located approximately four miles south of Sub-Area #1 and was located at the bottom of an extinct volcano. Units bivouacked here will long remember this area for the long hike up the narrow road to the top of the crater and thence the equally long trek down along the inside of the crater.

Conditions at the Staging Area were temporary and rather make-shift. A great deal of the Division equipment either had not arrived in Italy or had not been brought out from the Port of Naples. The Division G-4 and supply officers of all echelons were particularly active during the time the Division remained at the Staging Area. Vehicles and equipment were unloaded in Naples and moved out to the various units. Supplies and equipment to bring the Division up to its T/E allotment were drawn and issued. In passing it might be stated, that, although equipment was not immediately available in the Staging Areas, the general status of equipment within the Division was excellent. With a few exceptions, notably 1/4 Ton Trucks, 1/4 Ton Trailers, some motor vehicle tools, and grenade launchers for the M-1 Rifle, the Division had its prescribed T/E allowance.

The arrival of the Division Rear Detachment in Naples on 3 April and the prompt unloading and dispatch of the drivers, vehicles, and equipment to the various units, did much toward alleviating the transportation shortage and permit the Division to proceed with its normal functions.

Before proceeding further, a word of explanation is necessary regarding the units mentioned in (c) and (e) above:

The 339th Infantry had left the Invasion Training Center in North Africa on 48 hours notice, had proceeded by water transport to Naples, had then been attached to the 88th Infantry Division and had then hurriedly relieved one of the Regiments of the 88th on the front line. As all of these events took place in March, the 339th gained the distinction of being the first element of the Division to be committed to action.

The observer party mentioned in (e) above represented a selection of key personnel from all units of the Division. Their mission was to observe conditions on the front line and to work alongside of their opposite numbers in the 88th Division. This was carried out, and the experience gained by these observers proved invaluable when the 85th later took over a portion of the line.

By 7 April the Division had cleared completely from the Staging Area and dispositions on the 7th were as follows:

The Forward Division CP had been established since 3 April in an olive grove at the base of the northern side of Mount Massico. Location was approximately four miles southeast of Cellole. Other units in this forward area were the CP 85th Division Artillery; Detachments of 85th Headquarters Company; Headquarters Battery, 85th Division Artillery; and the 85th Signal Company.

In rear areas on the south side of Mount Massico were the rear echelon Division Headquarters and 85th Quartermaster Company in Mondragone; the 310th Medical Battalion, 310th Engineer Battalion, the 85th Reconnaissance Troop, and the 785th Ordnance Company in the vicinity of Mondragone; and Combat Team 337 in a training area northeast of San Angelo.

Still further to the rear in the vicinity of Qualiano, Combat Team 338 was under going an intensive training program which included exercises in mountain warfare attack of villages, and stream crossings.

Meanwhile, the 910th and 403rd Field Artillery Battalions had been attached to the 88th Division, for operations only, and were in positions supporting the front line units of that Division.

During the period, the II Corps attached the following units to the Division:

756th Tank Battalion
Detachment 6881st Signal Company (Pigeon)
5th Mule Pack Group (Italian)

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In an important change of command, Lt. Col. Brookner W. Brady relieved Colonel Matthews as the Commanding Officer, 339th Infantry Regiment. Colonel Matthews was hospitalized and transferred from the Division.

Two schools were in operation during this period to which all combat units sent representatives. These were the special Scouting and Patrolling School conducted by the Fifth Army and the Mine Warfare School conducted by the 310th Engineer Battalion.

Period 8 April - 0800 hours 10 April

The Division had been informed that they were to take over a portion of the main Fifth Army Front Line, so all efforts were now directed toward the accomplishment of this end.

Final and detailed plans for the relief of a portion of the 88th Division by the 85th Division were worked out by Major Generals COULTER and SLOAN and their respective staffs.

Division Field Order #1 was issued.

Meanwhile the 337th and 338th Infantry Regiments continued training in the rear areas.

Company "L" plus one platoon Company "M", 338th Infantry Regiment, were attached to the 339th Infantry and moved into the front line areas held by the 339th.

The 329th Field Artillery Battalion had occupied positions in support of the front line and was prepared to fire at 2310 hours on 8 April.

Company "C", 310th Medical Battalion, and one platoon of the Clearing Company, 310th Medical Battalion, were in forward positions for the evacuation of casualties.

One platoon of the 85th Reconnaissance Troop had been assigned the mission of guarding the Minturne Bridge against attack by ground or water.

Weather throughout this period was warm and clear.

Period 0800 hours 10 April - 0200 hours 14 April - (See Annex #1 - Sketch)

At 0800 hours 10 April the Division for the first time in history was committed to action as a unit. At this hour, command of the left (coastal) sector of the II Corps zone passed to the Commanding General, 85th Division. The front line in this sector covered approximately 5,500 yards, extending from the Tyrrhenian Sea at a point east of Scauri to a point north of Minturne.

Disposition of units on the line at this hour was as follows:

The 339th Infantry (with Company "L" and one platoon Company "M", 338th Infantry attached) occupied the front line with three Battalions abreast.

The 85th Division Artillery (less 328th Field Artillery Battalion) in direct support.

The 85th Reconnaissance Troop (-) guarding coast line from mouth of Garigliano River to point approximately three miles north of Mondragone.

One platoon 85th Reconnaissance Troop guarding Minturne Bridge over the Garigliano River.

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Period 8 April - 0300 hours 10 April

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One platoon 85th Reconnaissance Troop guarding Minturne Bridge over the Garigliano River.

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Aggressive patrols were pushed out each night by our front line troops and as time went by a great mass of detail was built up to give an accurate and reasonably complete picture of the enemy dispositions. An attempt was made by use of patrols and aerial photos to pin point the locations of all gun and mortar positions along the front line. It was learned that the enemy had based most of his defenses on the reverse slopes, that his MLR and outpost line was rather thinly held, that he relied mainly on extensive use of land and personnel mines and well-coordinated, interlocking bands of machine gun fire supported by mortars and artillery to hold his positions. That his artillery was located generally around Spigno, Castellonero, Marcola, and Formia. That he used a number of self-propelled artillery pieces which changed positions frequently. That some Nebelwerfers were in the reverse slopes of Mount Sauri. That his 170mm guns and the Coastal Defense guns at Gaeta were capable of reaching any of our installations north of Mount Massico.

A considerable amount of enemy information during this period was obtained from civilian refugees who traveled in small boats from behind the enemy lines in the vicinity of Formia or Gaeta and landed along the coast line in our sector where they were apprehended by the 85th Reconnaissance Troop. The enemy also attempted to use similar methods to place enemy agents behind our lines and four such agents were picked up during the period.

Throughout the period, the enemy artillery maintained harassing and nuisance fire with occasional concentrations on any profitable targets. His normal targets were our front line positions, Minturno, Tufo, Tremensuoli, the Minturno Bridge, and the coastal area where the supporting Corps Artillery was located.

Most unpopular enemy weapons for our front line troops were the German machine pistol and the Nebelwerfer.

During the period, our Divisional artillery proved most effective. An early adoption of the policy of returning five shells for each one of the enemy kept the enemy completely under cover during daylight. No enemy troops or supplies were moved except at night and the interdiction fire and quick concentrations at critical points of the enemy supply lines unquestionably caused many enemy casualties. Effective counterbattery by the 403rd Field Artillery Battalion, and the use of the Artillery Liaison planes limited greatly the enemy artillery fire during daylight.

On 14 April, direct hits on the brickyard at Sauri caused the explosion of a large German ammunition dump.

During this phase of operations, the 310th Engineer Battalion was employed on the maintenance of roads within the Division sector and in the clearing of minefields.

Supply problems during this phase were handled in a most efficient manner. Front line troops were given at least one hot meal per day. K or C or 10 in 1 rations were used for front line positions. An augmented B ration for all other troops.

New clothing was secured by direct exchange at the Quartermaster shower unit at Mondragone.

Ammunition was plentiful for all calibres.

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Resupply of damaged equipment was prompt. On one occasion when a 155mm gun of the 403rd Field Artillery Battalion was destroyed by a direct hit, a new gun was delivered in three hours.

At 0001 hours on 24 April, the 338th Infantry relieved the 339th Infantry in the coastal sector, thus permitting the 339th to get a much needed rest in the rear areas.

At 1200 hours on 26 April, the 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached to the Division. By 0800 hours on 28 April, six Tank Destroyers of this unit were in position in direct support of the 338th Infantry sector.

At 2400 hours on 30 April, the assigned strength of the Division was 783 officers, 44 warrant officers, and 14,525 enlisted men or a total of 15,352.

John B. Coulter
JOHN B. COULTER,
Major General, U. S. Army,
Commanding.

2 Incls:

Incl 1 - Annex #1
Incl 2 - Annex #2 (with original copy only)

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HEADQUARTERS 85TH INFANTRY DIVISION

APO #85, U. S. Army.

12 June 1944.

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED

BY AUTHORITY OF *Co. 4 Army*

85TH INFANTRY DIVISION

REPORT OF OPERATIONS - MAY 1944

Period 1 May - 2300 hours 11 May (See Annex #1)

During this period the Division continued to actively defend its assigned sector within the II Corps zone.

At the beginning of the period, the Division front was approximately 9,500 yards in width and extended from the Tyrrhenian Sea at a point east of Scauri, thence to a point west of Trenusuoli, thence north of Minturno and Tufo to the Ausente River. The line was manned by the 338th Infantry on the left and the 337th Infantry on the right. Each Regiment defended with three Battalions abreast thus the Division sector was covered by six Battalions. The 85th Division Artillery was in direct support of the front line units. A Battalion of the 339th Infantry was motorized and was in a two hour alert status in the rest area northeast of Mondragone.

During this period front line positions were stabilized. Positions were well dug in, sandbagged and barricaded against artillery and mortar fire. Nightly patrols were sent out by each side for reconnaissance, security, ambush or combat missions. The artillery of each side was active. Harassing, interdiction, counterbattery, and quick concentrations on profitable targets were fired. Presence of the artillery restricted movement on both sides to the hours of darkness.

Upon receipt of orders for the attack Major General John B. Coulter, the Division Commander, made thorough and detailed plans and final preparations for the employment of the various organic and attached units of the Division. The 339th Infantry was moved from the Division rest area south of Mount Massico and took over approximately the left half of the 338th Infantry sector. The 338th continued to defend in what amounted to one half of their former zone. Each Regiment had two Battalions abreast on the front line. Net result of these changes was to put two Regiments each with two Battalions in line into the same zone where one Regiment had defended with three Battalions in line. The 337th meanwhile was relieved in its sector by the 88th Division and became the Division reserve with locations southwest of Trenusuoli. One Battalion of the 337th was attached to the 339th Infantry in the left front line sector.

Meanwhile on 9 May the Division CP had been moved to Minturno.

Period 2300 hours 11 May - 1400 hours 15 May (See Annex #2)

The attack jumped off promptly at 2300 hours 11 May. Twelve Field Artillery Battalions supported the Division either directly or indirectly. These varied from the 75mm howitzers of the 602nd Field Artillery Battalion (Pack) to the 240mm howitzers and the 155mm "Long Tons" of the II Corps Artillery. All of these began firing concentrations simultaneously. The noise was terrific - the entire rear areas of the Division were covered with the gun flashes of the rapidly firing guns. It was part of the greatest barrage in World War II and was truly an awe inspiring sight. Meanwhile, through the darkness and under cover of this tremendous barrage, the front line troops jumped off and proceeded toward the enemy lines. The Infantry supported their own attack with machine guns, mortars, and their own Cannon Company fire.

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Tactical surprise had been achieved. Although the Germans had been expecting an attack, it was not expected on this date. However, the enemy reaction was prompt. From his carefully prepared front line positions, a continuous defensive band of machine gun fire was laid down. Enemy mortar fire and artillery began to land on our forward positions. Advanced outposts in Tremensuoli were subjected to a particularly heavy enemy artillery concentration. Wire communication in many instances was knocked out.

On the left of the Division sector, the 339th Infantry advancing toward Hill #79 and San Martino, which was made up of two peaks (Hills #69 and #66), ran into determined resistance. German minefields in front of their positions caused many casualties. Troops of the 3rd Battalion, 339th Infantry in crossing the Cape d'Acqua towards their objective on San Martino, encountered minefields, wire, and enfilade machine gun fire. On the right of the Division sector, the 338th Infantry advancing toward Solacciano and "S" Ridge (Hills #85, #131, and #128) was also encountering minefields and prepared defensive machine gun and artillery fire.

By 0800 hours, the German MLR had been penetrated by the 339th Infantry on Hill #79 and Hill #69. Counterattacks launched against both of these features had been repelled. The 338th Infantry had not reached their objectives and the two assault Battalions were pinned down in what had formerly been "No Man's Land".

After some reorganization, another attack was ordered for 0800 hours. Still a third attack was ordered for 1300 hours. By 1500 hours 12 May, the German MLR was beginning to crumble. The 3rd Battalion, 338th Infantry had moved into Solacciano which was on the southwest end of "S" Ridge and permitted our troops to bring direct small arms fire on positions of the reverse slope of "S" Ridge. The 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry (attached to the 339th Infantry) had secured a firm hold on Hill #66 and had withstood two strong counterattacks. Hill #79 was still held by Company "G" of the 339th Infantry. Most of Company "F", 339th Infantry on "Intermediate" Ridge had been surrounded and taken prisoner or destroyed during a strong enemy counterattack. The remainder of the 339th was on the outskirts of Scauri and had made advances all along their front. At this stage of operations, gains were measured in yards and every yard of advance was bitterly contested by the Germans.

By nightfall 14 May, the 337th Infantry had been committed in between the 338th and 339th Infantry Regiments and had successfully assaulted and captured Hill #108 which was on the German's secondary line. The 338th had finally moved up and taken "S" Ridge, including Hills #131 and #85. On our right, the 88th Division had overcome particularly stubborn resistance to capture Santa Maria.

By noon 15 May, the 339th was holding Hill #66, Hill #79, and Hill #58; the 338th was on Hill #60 and in the Cave d'Arguilla area; the 337th had successfully repulsed two counterattacks to gain a secure hold on Hill #108, and the German line was broken. The first phase was ended, and the Division was now ready to continue the attack toward the west.

Indicative of the fierceness of this combat, is the fact that over 1,100 casualties were evacuated to our Division Clearing Station during the first 48 hours of the attack.

Period 1400 hours 15 May - 18 May - (See Annex #3)

At 1400 hours 15 May, a new attack was launched. In this, the 338th Infantry was to take Mount Penitro then drive southwest to the Croce RJ and thence proceed west along Highway #7. This, if successful, would bypass Scauri and Mount Scauri. The 337th in the Division right zone was to attack Castellonerate and then proceed west toward Maranola.

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The attack was successful. The 2nd Battalion, 337th Infantry stormed up the steep slopes toward Castellonerate following heavy artillery concentrations and a bombardment of the town by our air forces. By 1900, this Battalion had passed through the town and had moved some 2,000 yards to the west toward Marchiole.

The 338th in moving past Mount Penitro toward Croce RJ ran into strong enemy opposition, and an enemy counterattack forced them to withdraw for the night back toward Mount Penitro.

On 16 May, the 339th proceeded through the town of Scauri and Mount Scauri to mop up on remaining resistance. The 91st Reconnaissance Squadron, which had been directed to accomplish this mission, was halted by a blown bridge in Scauri for which no bypass could be found. Very little opposition, other than heavy minefields, was encountered by the 339th Infantry in Scauri or on Mount Scauri, inasmuch as German forces had withdrawn to avoid being cut off by the 338th Infantry which was moving in behind them at Croce RJ.

During the same day, the 337th, advancing toward Maranola, ran into strong opposition from Trivio and from Mount Campese. Likewise, the 338th Infantry proceeding on the left flank was stopped by fire from the southern slopes of Mount Campese.

A new attack was launched at daylight 17 May during which the 337th proceeded to push through Trivio and Maranola and then to Hills #906, #510, and Mount Mola where they halted. At the same time, the 338th, pushing forward on the left flank, overcame remaining resistance on the "Dora Line" of Mount Campese and pushed into Formia. The 349th Infantry, of the 88th Division, and which was attached at this time to the 85th, pushed forward abreast of the 337th through the mountains north of our zone to Hills #845 and #660.

By 2400 hours 18 May, the 338th had moved through Formia and advanced to Mount Conca. This opened the road toward Itri and put us on positions in rear of the German defenses on the Gaeta Peninsula.

Period 19 May - 24 May - (See Annex #4)

During this period the battered remnants of the German 94th Division withdrew to the north and northwest. Elements of the 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment of the 15th PG Division and the 620th OST Battalion, which had been hurriedly thrown into the line to hold our attack, were also in full retreat.

Our Division continued to advance against decreasing resistance over a wide and mountainous front. Two important terrain features, the Gaeta and Terracina Peninsulas, which were heavily fortified and which were at right angles to our direction of advance, made our advance rather complicated.

On 19 May the 338th Infantry and the 85th Reconnaissance Troop continued to clear out enemy pockets of resistance in the Gaeta Peninsula. The 339th continued north moving over Mount Cefalo and Mount S. Onofino. During this movement the Regiment received flanking fire from the town of Itri. A Battalion was dispatched into the town and after a short but spirited engagement the town was occupied.

On 20 May the 338th Infantry completed the mopping up of Gaeta and the Gaeta Peninsula. The 339th occupied Mount Marano and continued toward Mount Calvo di Fondi encountering only slight resistance.

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Large quantities of abandoned materiel, records, and documents found in Formia, Gaeta, and Itri indicated that the enemy had been in some haste in withdrawing from these places. Two of the 170mm guns which had been pounding our Division for sometime were found in Itri.

On 21 May the 339th continued to the northwest past Fondi and encountered enemy delaying forces on Mount Celvo and Mount Della Rocca. These were forced to withdraw. Meanwhile, the 337th proceeded west along Highway #7 and the railroad, passed around the rear of the 339th, and were then committed on the left flank of the 339th Infantry. The 337th advanced northwest against the town of San Biagio. Some resistance was encountered, 70 or 80 prisoners were taken, and the town was occupied. One Battalion of the 337th continued northwest to occupy the high ground above San Biagio, while the Regiment (-) proceeded southwest along Highway #7 toward Terracina. While all these events were taking place, orders were received from II Corps to move the 338th Infantry by water from Gaeta to Terracina. One Battalion of DUKWs was made available for the move. Late in the afternoon of the 21st, the 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry boarded the DUKWs and was transported to Sperlonga. The plan for further water movement was abandoned.

On 22 May the 339th Infantry pressed northwest into the mountains northwest of Fondi encountering slight resistance. The enemy withdrew. The terrain in the 339th sector was rough, rugged, and mountainous. It was passable only on foot or by pack mule. The object of this drive through the mountains was to drive through in a straight line to the Pontine Marshes where Highway #7 could be seized in rear of the German forces in Terracina. Meanwhile the 337th (-) proceeding southwest (at right angles to the direction taken by 339th) along Highway #7 encountered strong resistance from Mount Croce. Meanwhile the 338th Infantry was moving by marching and motor from Gaeta and Sperlonga to positions west of Fondi. Inasmuch as Highway #7 was the only road available between Fondi and Formia, and inasmuch as this road was being used by both the 85th and 88th Divisions plus all attached and II Corps troops, the movement of the 338th was a difficult one.

On 23 May enemy resistance stiffened considerably. Elements of a new German Division, the 29th PG Division, were encountered in force. The 339th Infantry driving through the mountains captured Sonnino after a fierce, hotly contested battle. The town was defended by the III Battalion, 15th PG Regiment. Among the prisoners of war taken in this battle, was Captain Hoebelein, the III Battalion Commanding Officer, who stated that his outfit had not expected our troops to cross over the mountains and that the first intimation he had of our presence was when he suddenly received a message that Americans were on either flank and that retreat was impossible. In this engagement, the 339th was entirely on foot and all supplies were sent up by mule trains.

Meanwhile the 338th had been committed and was now pushing forward through the mountains to the right of the 337th to outflank Terracina and occupy the northern slopes of the mountains overlooking the Pontine Marshes. Prior to moving into the mountains, however, a short encounter was had with enemy forces near the mouth of the railroad tunnel. Elements of the 71st PG Regiment, 29th Division were encountered. The 3rd Battalion, 338th Infantry reinforced by elements of the 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion remained on guard at the mouth of the tunnel when the 338th Infantry continued its advance.

(Note: This railroad tunnel was some five miles in length and had been used by the Germans to bring troops and supplies under the mountains and into our areas. The 15th and 71st Regiments, 29th Division had moved hurriedly from the vicinity of Rome during the night of 20/21 May with the mission of stopping our advance. Elements of both Regiments used the tunnel in order to reach our side of the mountains).

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Meanwhile the 337th Infantry was encountering strong resistance in the vicinity of Terracina. An attack on Mount Croce was successful. An enemy counterattack regained the hill for the Germans. A second attack by the 337th took and held the hill. Along Highway #7, along the base of the hill, tanks of the 760th Tank Battalion and mechanized elements of the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron were stopped by road demolitions and anti-tank and rocket fire. A further advance to the cemetery (583988) and Hill #133 was made by the 337th with heavy supporting fire from the 85th Division Artillery and the 2nd Chemical Weapons Battalion. Enemy forces in this area were identified by prisoners of war as the 103rd Reconnaissance Battalion and the II Battalion, 15th PG Regiment. These units received strong enemy artillery support.

On 24 May the 337th moved down from the hills with three Battalions abreast and captured Terracina. The loss of this "bottleneck" was a bad blow to the Germans as the road to the Anzio Beachhead was now opened, whereas, as long as he held Terracina and Highway #7 thereat, our forces west of the mountains were limited to foot troops supplied by mule train.

Meanwhile the 338th continued to advance northwest over the mountains and late in the afternoon reached Mount Nero overlooking the Pontine Marshes and Highway #7 northeast of Terracina.

Meanwhile the 339th continued its advance north from Sonnino against light opposition.

Period 25 May - 28 May

During this period the enemy continued a rapid withdrawal to the north.

The Division pressed north with all possible speed meeting only rear guard delaying positions at first and then slightly stronger organized resistance.

Enemy delaying elements from the 3rd PG, 26th Panzer, 29th PG, and 715th Divisions were encountered.

By 26 May our Division had advanced north of the Abbe di Fossanuova and Priverno.

By 27 May a fairly strong enemy delaying position was encountered along the line of hill running generally east from Sezze. A strong advance made in these positions by the 338th and 339th Infantry Regiments supported by the 85th Division Artillery and elements of the 760th Tank Battalion and 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The enemy withdrew.

The 338th Infantry sent elements into Sezze to complete the mopping up of the town after it had been entered from the east by elements of the 117th Reconnaissance Squadron.

On 28 May the Division was relieved from front line combat. There was no enemy opposition in front of the Division at this time. Friendly forces from the Anzio area which were pushing to the east across our front had caused the Division to be "pinched out". This date marked the 49th day of continuous operation against the enemy.

Period 29 May - 31 May

On 29 May the Division was moved to a rest area in the vicinity of Sabaudia and on the same date received orders to move back into the front lines.

On 30 May the 337th and 338th Infantry Regiments had relieved elements of the 3rd American Division in the Lariano-Giulianello area. The 85th Division Artillery was in position to support the front line units. During the night, patrols were sent out to determine the enemy strength and disposition. Information received from the 3rd American Division indicated that elements of the 3rd PG Division and the Hermann Goering Panzer Parachute Division occupied defensive positions to our front.

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On 31 May the Division advanced north within its zone and encountered a German MLR manned by the 1st PG Regiment, Hermann Goering Division; at least one Company (7th), 1028th PG Regiment; and elements of the 725th PG Regiment.

In the zone of the 337th the town of Lariano was "bypassed" by the two leading Battalions. The 2nd Battalion, in reserve, moved into the town during the afternoon to clear out the town and encountered unexpectedly strong pockets of resistance. Except for scattered snipers, however, the town was cleared by dark. A counterattack on the leading Battalions north of Lariano, made by a strong detachment of Infantry, supported by three tanks was repulsed.

In the zone of the 338th, where the enemy was located on highly favorable ground, wire, mines, and well-coordinated machine gun and mortar fire delayed our advance.

At the close of the day 58 prisoners, mostly from 1st PG Regiment, Hermann Goering Division, had been taken and the Division was advancing within its zone heading directly for Rome (which was entered by elements of the Division just four days later).

During the month, the Division advance 72 miles, captured 1,249 prisoners of war, virtually destroyed the German 94th Division, caused the retreat of other units, and had captured, destroyed, or caused the enemy to abandon great quantities of equipment.

Strength of the Division at the close of the period: 791 officers, 44 warrant officers, and 16,051 enlisted men.

The attached letters of commendation received by the Division during the month from the War Department, the Commanders of the Fifth Army, II Corps, and VI Corps are reproduced as indicative of the high praise accorded the Division for the accomplishments of the month.

John B. Coulter
JOHN B. COULTER,
Major General, U. S. Army,
Commanding.

9 Incls:

Annexes (1) to (4) (original copy only)

Letters of Commendation (5) to (9)

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R E S T R I C T E DHEADQUARTERS II CORPS
APO 19 U.S. ARMY

7 June 1944

SUBJECT : Message

TO : Commanding General, 85th Infantry Division.
Commanding General, 38th Infantry Division.

The following is an extract of message from the Army Commander. It is desired that this message be brought to the attention of all personnel of your command.

"In a message of congratulation received from General Marshall he asked that the following be sent to you:"

"My congratulations to you personally, and to the commanders and men of the eight five and eight eight divisions. Their splendid performance and fortitude have awakened great enthusiasm over here and will have a depressing effect on the German high command."

* * *

CLARK

By command of Major General KEYES:

/s/ F. W. Zies
/t/ F. W. ZIES,
Colonel, A.G.D.,
Adjutant General.

Incl (5)

R E S T R I C T E D

city if resistance were found there.

BY AUTHORITY OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
DOWNGRADING COMMITTEE
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Units of the German Army opposing the Division at this time consisted of elements of the 94th Infantry Division. German front line units running in a line generally northeast from Mount Scuri and Scuri were the I Battalion, 274th Infantry; II Battalion, 287th Infantry; I Battalion, 287th Infantry; and the 194th Fusilier Battalion, all being organic units of the 94th Division.

The German 94th Division had been formed in 1939 from reservists, had taken part in the French Campaign and had been engaged on the southern sector of the Russian front where it had been virtually destroyed at Stalingrad. It had been reformed in Italy where it was first identified in July 1943. It had been in action ever since October 1943. It was rated as a first-class combat Division.

Opposing front lines were stabilized. There had been little change in the lines during the previous two months. Both sides were well dug in and positions were reinforced with sandbags, steel rails, timbers, or any other material available. The enemy held the commanding terrain features in the area and had direct observation into both our forward and rear areas. Any movement during daylight on our front lines would bring down immediate small arms or artillery fire. Any movement during daylight in most of the rear areas, other than in single vehicles, would result in quick enemy artillery concentrations. The ruined town of Tremascoli, which was in our hands and in a slight salient of the front lines, was a favorite enemy target.

Morcel activity on both sides consisted of an active, alert, defense of front line positions. Nightly patrol activity. Intermittent, harassing, and interdiction fire by the artillery of both sides with quick concentrations whenever a target appeared.

The night of 10 April was noteworthy in that a patrol of the 338th Infantry captured three prisoners of war identified as being from the 10th Company, 274th German Infantry. These were the first prisoners for the Division and the first taken on the II Corps front in sometime. Much favorable comment was received by the Division for its aggressive action.

During the period, the 338th Field Artillery Battalion joined the other Battalions of the Division Artillery in direct support of the front line positions. The 337th Infantry began infiltrating units into the center sector of the II Corps front preparatory to taking over that sector. The 338th Infantry moved north from Qualiano into the area being vacated by the 337th.

One of the major problems of the Division at this time was the control of traffic over the Minturno Bridge. The bridge was the only one in the sector over the Carigliano River, was under direct German observation, and for that reason was kept constantly under smoke during daylight hours, and traffic was of necessity greatly restricted. A rigid bridge pass policy, controlled directly by G-3, was instituted to permit only essential traffic during daylight hours.

Period 0200 hours 14 April - 2400 hours 20 April - (See Annex #2 - Sketch).

At 0200 hours on 14 April, the 337th Infantry had completed the relief of the 331st Infantry of the 88th Division in the center sector of the II Corps zone and at that hour control of the sector formally passed to the Commanding General, 88th Division. This gave the Division a front approximately 9,500 yards wide extending from the Tyrrhenian Sea to the Ausente River.

There was no change in the left (339th) sector. The 337th occupied its sector with three Battalions abreast. Thus the Division front had six Battalions on line.

German dispositions opposing our new sector were known to include the 194th Fusilier Battalion and one Company of the 274th Infantry in the vicinity of Santa Maria and Puleherini; and the II Battalion, 311th Infantry, 71st German Division, on the high ground west of the Ausente River. The boundary between the German 94th and 71st Divisions was believed to be generally in the low ground just east of Puleherini.

During the period, the Division continued its active defense of its assigned sector.

R E S T R I C T E DHEADQUARTERS II CORPS
APO 19 U.S. ARMYIn the Field
26 May 1944

SUBJECT : Message

TO : Unit Commanders, II Corps

The following message from the Army Commander has been received. It is desired that this message be brought to the attention of all personnel of your command:

"I desire to commend in highest terms the magnificent operations of your command since the beginning of the present offensive on May eleventh by which it has effected the junction of Fifth Army main forces and the Fifth Army beach-head troops. You have executed this mission with superlative aggressiveness carrying the fight without pause to a dogged and determined enemy, repelling promptly his repeated counterattacks and refusing to be delayed or obstructed by his strong defensive positions, by the fatigue of your troops, by his mines and demolitions or by the difficult terrain over which your continuous advance has been conducted. In driving him back from position to position you have made him pay a heavy price in casualties and prisoners. The brilliant advance which has been executed continuously and persistently for fourteen days represents a great victory for the Fifth Army and can not fail to have a major effect not only upon the Allied campaign in Italy but upon the whole war against Germany. Please convey my congratulations to all the personnel of your command as well as the expression of my pride in having your splendid units in the Fifth Army."

CLARK

By command of Major General KEYES:

/s/ F. W. Zies
/t/ F. W. ZIES,
Colonel, A.G.D.,
Adjutant General.

Incl (6)

R E S T R I C T E D

and no shooting was necessary although the Division was prepared to attack the city if resistance were found there.
BY AUTHORITY OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
JAN 10 1946
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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

17 May 1944

TO: Maj Gen Coulter,
CG, 85 Division.

CLASSIFICATION (CANCELLED)
Restricted CHANGED TO
BY AUTHORITY OF *Co 4 Army*
Date *RJB*

WITH THE CAPTURE OF CASTELLONORATO AND SCURI THE 85 DIVISION HAS ACCOMPLISHED EXTREMELY IMPORTANT PARTS OF THE II CORPS MISSION AND THE OBJECTIVE SET BY ARMY IS WITHIN OUR GRASP IF WE ACT BOLDLY, VIGOROUSLY AND PROMPTLY. THIS I CALL UPON YOU TO DO. THE SENSING OF VICTORY WHICH IS IN THE AIR WILL FAR OUTWEIGH TEMPORARY PHYSICAL FATIGUE, AND LEADERSHIP OF OFFICERS AND NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS WILL INSPIRE THE MEN TO CONTINUE ON. PLEASE ACCEPT FOR YOURSELF AND STAFF AND FOR THE TROOPS UNDER YOUR COMMAND MY SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS AND ADMIRATION FOR A HARD TASK WELL DONE AND IN ANTICIPATION OF ANOTHER EARLY VICTORY.

KEX ES

Incl (8)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CLASSIFICATION (CANCELLED)
Restricted
 BY AUTHORITY OF *4 Army*
 Date *RJB*

HEADQUARTERS II CORPS
 APO 19 U.S. ARMY

In the Field
 18 May 1944.

Subject: Message of Congratulations.

To : Divisions and Separate Unit Commanders

The following paraphrase of a message from the Commanding General, VI Corps is published for the information of the entire command:

"The progress of II Corps is watched with interest and admiration by the entire benchhead. Best wishes and congratulations to your entire command for its splendid work".

By command of Major General KEYES:

/s/ F. W. Zies,
 /t/ F. W. ZIES,
 Colonel, A.G.D.,
 Adjutant General.

Incl (9)

DECLASSIFIED
 Authority: *MD 735017*
 By: *AF NARA East*
 Date: *3/11/05*

ORIGINAL

HEADQUARTERS 85TH INFANTRY DIVISION

APO 85, U. S. Army,
17 July 1944.85TH INFANTRY DIVISIONREPORT OF OPERATIONS - JUNE 1944Period 1 June - 1000-hours 10 June

After a relief from the line for two days the Division went into action 31 May in the region between VELLETRI and VALMONTONE in the LARIANO - GIULIANELLO sector. The high ground in the vicinity of MONTE COMPATRI was the initial Division objective.

In the neighborhood of LARIANO the enemy's positions were well prepared, and he occupied high ground overlooking our positions. Opposing us were elements of the 1st Panzer Grenadier Regiment of the Hermann Goering Division; the 1028th PGR and the 735th PGR. LARIANO was by-passed on the north and east by the 338th and two battalions of the 337th. Some enemy forces left in the city were cleared out by the 2nd Battalion after hard fighting in the streets and buildings. The 337th reached MASCHIO D' ARIANO and the near slopes of CASTLE HILL (CASTEL D' ARIANO). The 339th, relieving the two battalions of the 337th, seized the Hill. The 337th then advanced north beyond M. CERASO. The 338th met heavy artillery and mortar resistance in its advance north of LARIANO and found the enemy well dug in, with his main line of resistance along steep railroad banks. They nevertheless soon drove him out and then pushed on to COLLE DI FUORI (G-015555) and M. CERASO, and on 2 June the 2nd Battalion of that Regiment cut Highway 6 near SAN CESAREO. The same day the 339th took M. FIORE.

On 3 June the 337th took the town of ROCCA PRIORA. Only a few hills now remained between the attacking force and ROME. The 1st Battalion of the 339th taking CAMALDOLI, M. SALAMONE and M. SAN SEBASTIANO, saw before them a great valley and ROME itself, 15 miles or so away. The enemy meanwhile was withdrawing in haste, and even in rout, toward the country north and north - west of that city, offering comparatively little rear-guard action to cover the retreat. He had suffered heavy losses, and all along, since LARIANO, had had few prepared positions to retire to. The prisoners taken showed clearly that morale was weakening. The 85th Reconnaissance Troop, however, ran into a heavy fire fight that night just south of MONTE COMPATRI (952543). With the close support of Division Artillery they killed 40 of the enemy and took 65 prisoners. The next day elements of the Reconnaissance Troop sent patrols into FRASCATI, clearing out snipers, and the 339th occupied the town. The 337th, continuing its advance, marched through MONTE COMPATRI and FRASCATI, and between 0800 and 0830 hours 4 June elements of that regiment entered the outskirts of ROME.

At this time the 337th was ordered to turn to the south - west and take up defensive positions astride Highway 7 to prevent the further withdrawal of enemy troops by that route. The 339th was halted astride Highway 6 three miles south - east of ROME. The 2nd Battalion of the 338th, with mechanized attachments, was used to secure three important bridges across the TIBER in ROME.

The following message by the Commanding General, Fifth Army was received through Commanding General, II Corps *** "It is my urgent desire that Fifth Army troops protect both public and private property in the city of ROME. Every effort will be made to prevent our troops from firing into the city. However, the deciding factors are the enemy dispositions and actions. If the Germans oppose our advance by dispositions and fires that necessitate *** firing into the city of ROME, battalion commanders and all higher commanders are authorized to take appropriate action without delay to defeat the opposing elements by fire and movement. No resistance except some sniping fire was found in ROME and no shelling was necessary, though the Division was prepared to attack the city if resistance was found there.

BY AUTHORITY OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
DOWNGRADING COMMITTEE 75-260-76

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As the enemy continued his retreat beyond ROME on 5 June the Division was given a zone of action generally north - west of the city. The 339th, proceeding up Highway 6, passed through ROME on 5 June, followed by the 338th minus two battalions, and the 337th. The 339th continued its advance and on 6 June reached ISOLA FARNESE and took up positions astride Highway 2. The 910th Field Artillery supported their advance that day by knocking out several tanks and 88 mm guns.

From the beginning of the month the Division installations had moved frequently in order to keep up with the forward elements, and on 6 June all installations were ordered to move north of ROME and south of Highway 2 as quickly as possible. This they did, though in the next few days further moves were necessary as the advance continued.

The roads now were littered with wrecked enemy equipment - guns, tanks, trucks, buses, ambulances -, many destroyed by the enemy himself when he was unable to take them along in his retreat. The 339th, having pursued the enemy beyond OLGIATA, went into Division reserve 6 June. The 337th Combat Team on the right and the 338th Combat Team on the left, each with a tank company, a tank destroyer company, and a reconnaissance troop platoon attached, passed through the 339th to continue the pursuit. The 2nd Battalion of the 337th, motorized, and supported by tanks and tank destroyers was ordered on 7 June to push north on Highway 2 as far as possible to facilitate the advance of the Division and to clear out delaying positions. The enemy covered his retreat by using small delaying forces, usually consisting of one or two self-propelled guns supported with motorized infantry armed with automatic weapons. These rear-guards habitually remained near the roads and were forced to withdraw when our infantry outflanked them. At this time, for a brief period, the enemy rear-guard action stiffened, and in taking MONTEROSI, for example, it was necessary to clear many mines from the roads and nearby areas. Meanwhile, the 338th was advancing through the VALLE CORAZZA to the area between LAGO DI BRACCIANO and LAGO DI MARTIGNANO.

The Howze Task Force, consisting of a reinforced armored regiment, was attached on 7 June. The next morning this Task Force with the 1st Battalion of the 337th, now motorized, and attached tanks, tank destroyers, and engineers was ordered to advance north to maintain contact and defeat the enemy withdrawing in the Division zone of action. On 8 June, the Division was directed to clear the VITERBO road because of the British who were approaching from the south - east. From 8 to 10 June the Division occasionally lost contact with the enemy though prisoners were still being taken from miscellaneous units including the 20th Air Force Division and the 4th Parachute Division. Meanwhile, the 1st Armored Division, crossing the Division left boundary, entered VETRALLA, and on 9 June Corps Headquarters ordered this Division to clear Highway 2 in favor of the 1st Armored Division. By this time our leading elements were being relieved by elements of the 3rd Algerian Infantry Division. These French troops under 85th Division control during the relief had advanced to the vicinity of TUSCANIA when they reverted to the control of the French Expeditionary Corps at 1000 hours 10 June, at which time this Division was relieved from the line.

From June 1 - 10 the Division had advanced from the region around LARIANO to 46 road miles north of ROME. During that period 99 officers and men were killed in action; 59 were seriously wounded; 321 slightly wounded; and 132 were reported missing in action. On the last day of the month the assigned strength of the Division was 770 officers, 44 warrant officers, and 15,208 enlisted men. The effective strength was 754 officers, 44 warrant officers, and 14,992 enlisted men. During June, 24 officers and 840 enlisted men were received as replacements.

Prisoners taken during this phase totaled 1212.

Period 1000 hours 10 June - 30 June.

Between 10 and 14 June the Division moved to a rest area a few miles south - west of ROME in the estate of the King of Italy, the REALE TENUTA DI CASTEL PORZIANO. Here the troops were bivouaced for the remainder of the month, conducting training, and studying lessons taught by the campaign just ended. Emphasis was placed on methods of assaulting fortified positions, and on squad and platoon problems. Special attention was given the training of replacements. Showers and clothing exchange units were available throughout the period. Many

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opportunities for recreation were offered. All officers and men were given passes for ROME at some time during the period. Entertainments -- movies, USO shows, soldier shows, and performances by the Division Band - were given each night to one or more units.

On the afternoon of 30 June Lieutenant General MARK CLARK, Commanding General of the Fifth Army, awarded decorations to officers and men of the Division in the presence of the Division assembled in a field on the grounds of the CASTEL PORZIANO. General CLARK was introduced by Major General COULTER, and spoke briefly, praising the accomplishments of the Division and commending its leadership during the campaign just ended. At this time General CLARK awarded the first three Distinguished Service Crosses to be received by members of this Division during the present war. Air medals were also awarded to pilots and observers of the Division Artillery for services during the campaign.

The Distinguished Service Medal was presented to Major General JOHN B. COULTER by General GEORGE C. MARSHALL, Chief of Staff, United States Army, on 18 June for distinguished service as Commanding General of the 85th Division during the period 11 May - 10 June, when the Division successfully defeated the enemy on the GUSTAV LINE, and initiated a pursuit which covered 135 miles in 30 days.

John B. Coulter
JOHN B. COULTER,
Major General, U. S. A.,
Commanding.

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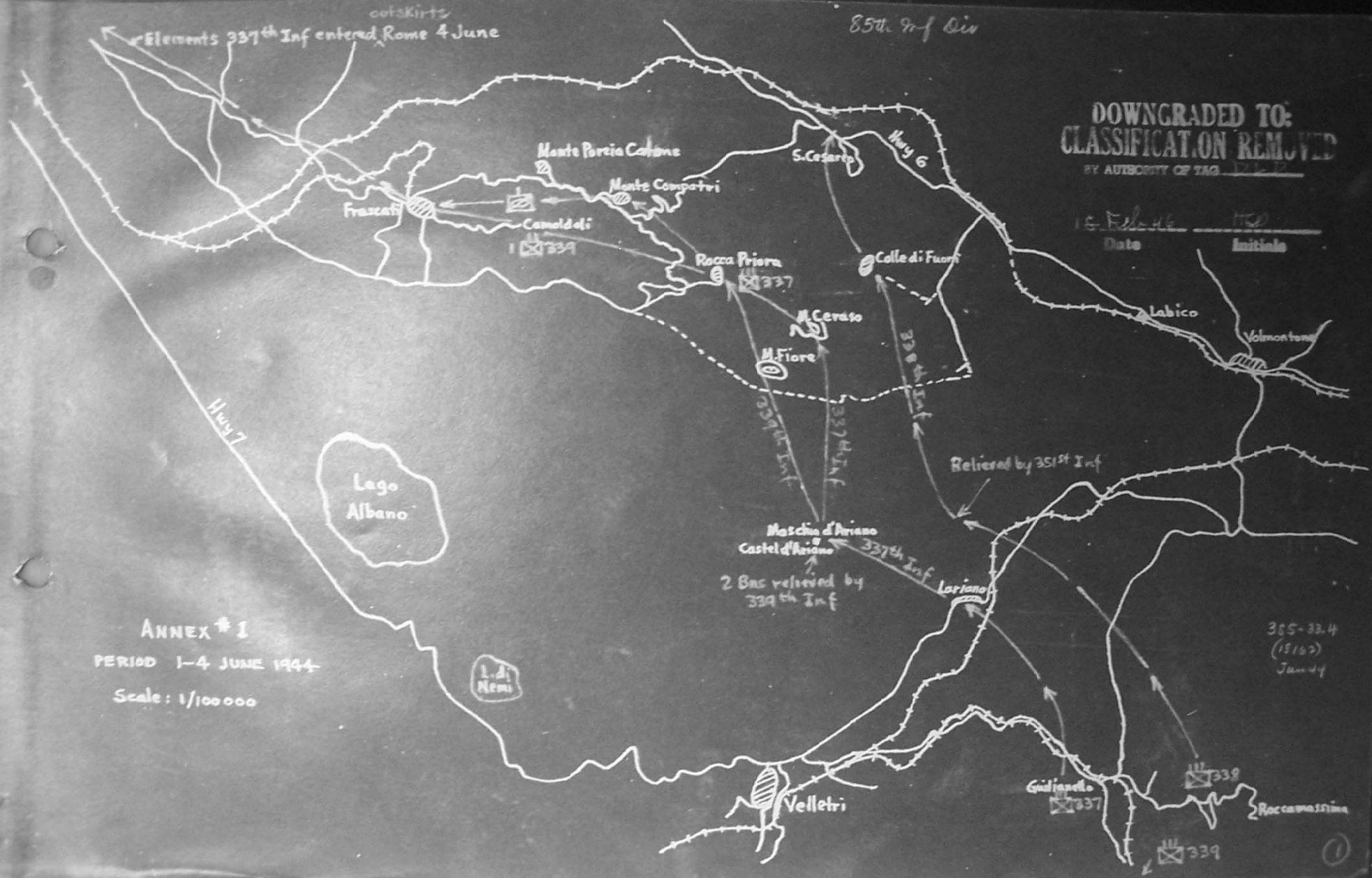
Annexes (1) to (2)

Letters of Commendation (3) to (6)

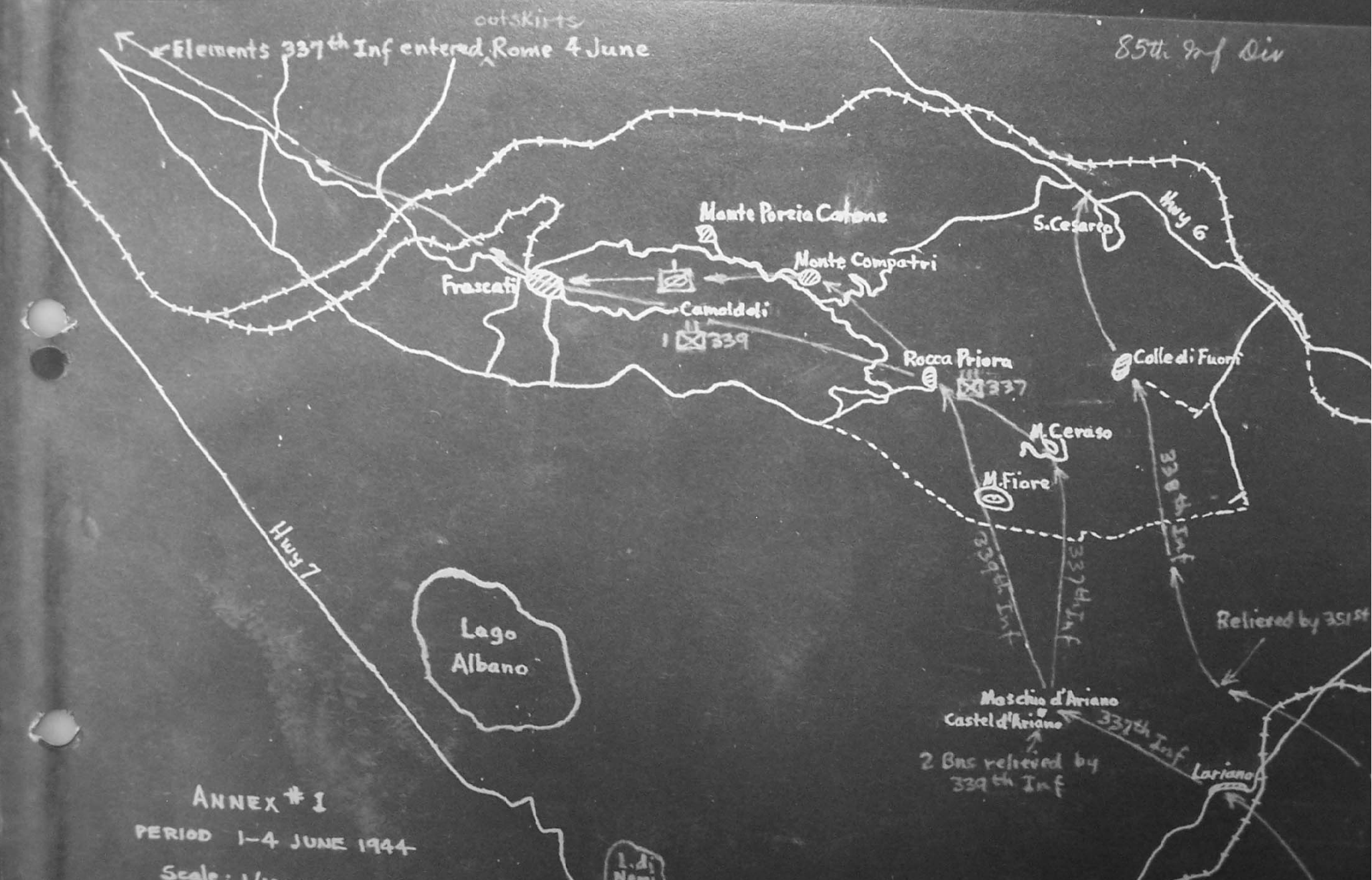
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 BY AUTHORITY OF TAG 121-12

15 Feb 46
 Date Initials

ANNEX #1
 PERIOD 1-4 JUNE 1944
 Scale: 1/100,000



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ANNEX # 2

PERIOD 4-10 JUNE 1944

SCALE : 1/250000

R E S T R I C T E DHEADQUARTERS II CORPS
APO 19 US ArmyIn the Field
6 June 1944

TO : II Corps.

Again you have proved your incomparable worth. With but few hours out of the line after your gallant victories from Minturno to Sezze and Maenza, you took your new battle positions in a minimum of time; that in itself was a remarkable feat in logistics.

Launching your attack the afternoon of 31 May, you drove relentlessly, day and night, capturing the critical positions of Valmontone, Colleferro, M. Ceraso, M. Fiore, Colonna, Rocca Priora, and Frascati. After only three days and nights you spearheaded the triumphant march of Fifth Army into Rome. Likewise, you were first to secure the important Tiber River bridges, thus assuring your continued advance.

This marks the culmination of a continuous drive of 24 days, during which time you have covered 80 miles, captured 4000 prisoners of war, and left the enemy with countless dead and wounded. You have dominated the enemy, defeating and driving him before you, causing him to retreat in disorder, leaving much valuable materiel on the battlefield.

For your courage, endurance, discipline, and combat efficiency, you have won the plaudits and commendations of distinguished officers of the Allied Armies throughout the world. My admiration for your accomplishments is exceeded only by my pride in having commanded you.

/s/ Geoffrey Keyes,
/t/ GEOFFREY KEYES,
Major General, USA,
Commanding.

DISTRIBUTION:
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R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E D

AG 201.22

1st Ind.

(6 Jun 44)

HEADQUARTERS 85TH INFANTRY DIVISION, APO 85, U. S. Army, 8 June 1944.

TO: Unit Commanders, including attached units.

It is again my happy privilege to transmit the Corps Commander's commendation of your magnificent drive.

The officers and men of the 85th Infantry Division, and attached units, can be as justly proud of this record as I in my pride of each of you.

Incl: (4)

/s/ John B. Coulter,
/t/ JOHN B. COULTER,
Major General, U. S. Army,
Commanding

R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E DHEADQUARTERS II CORPS
APO 19 U. S. ARMYIn the Field
9 June 1944

330.13 (DT)

Subject: Commendation.

To : Division and Separate Unit Commanders, II Corps.

The Corps Commander is please to transmit the following commendation from Lieutenant General Jacob L. Doyers, Commanding General, MATOUSA and Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theater:

"Congratulations to you and all the members of your command on the splendid job you are doing. It gives me the greatest pleasure to see the results. With commanders and troops such as those you have, there is no doubt as to the outcome of this campaign. Keep up the good work and may your successes continue and result in the final destruction of the German army in Italy".

By command of Major General KEYES:

/s/ F. W. Zies,
/t/ F. W. ZIES,
Colonel, A.G.D.,
Adjutant General

DISTRIBUTION:
"B-1"

Incl: (5)

9 June '44: 650

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R E S T R I C T E D

7

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY
A. P. O. #464, U. S. Army

8 June 1944

TO: Officers and Men of the Fifth Army.

It is with extreme pride and satisfaction that I address my congratulations to all the members of the Fifth Army for the magnificent offensive operations with which you have taken Rome and accomplished so much destruction and capture of enemy forces and material.

You have carried out these operations step by step according to plan, demonstrating the relentless drive and effective coordination of a courageous and fully cooperative Allied team. Pounding your way past every obstacle of enemy resistance and terrain, oblivious to counterattack or fatigue, you have pressed on to the goal.

The victory which you have won will have far reaching effects in the war against Germany. The Germans' last ditch defense from position to position as he retired before Rome shows conclusively that he realized how important it was for him at this time to prevent the capture of Rome, the destruction of his forces in Italy and the accomplishment of a major Allied victory here. His failure to accomplish these missions is at once a severe blow to his prestige in the war and a loss to his armed forces which he can not afford. Your victory augurs well for the success of other offensives which will be hurled against the Nazis in other parts of his so-called impregnable European fortress.

As your Army Commander, I wish to pay homage to your splendid accomplishments and to the brave and efficient manner in which now, as on former occasions, you have earned them. I congratulate you, every one. As soldiers of the Fifth Army you have again proved that you form a great Allied fighting team, ready to launch new assaults on new objectives that lie between us and complete victory.

I wish this message to be read in formation to all units of the Fifth Army.

/s/ Mark W. Clark,
/t/ MARK W. CLARK,
Lieutenant General, USA,
Commanding.

Incl: (3)

Distribution "G"

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY

A. P. O. # 464, U.S. Army

20 June 1944

Subject: Congratulatory Messages.

To : Members of the Fifth Army.

1. The following congratulatory messages have been received by Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark, Commanding Fifth Army. I know that they will be of interest to the officers and men whose ability and devotion to duty made the victory possible.

2.

FROM PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT:

"You have made the American people very happy. It is a grand job well done. Congratulations to you and the men of the Fifth Army."

FROM PRIME MINISTER CHURCHILL:

"We rejoice with you in the splendid exploits, comradeship and tireless energy of the United States, British and other Allied troops under your command and it gives me the greatest pleasure to congratulate you once again on your brilliant leading."

FROM PRIME MINISTER CHURCHILL (thru General Alexander):

"The War Cabinet officers have asked me to express their most cordial congratulations on the daring, patience and skill which have led to the liberation of Rome and to the crippling losses inflicted on the enemy. They have also asked me to express, extended to, General Clark and General Leese, their admiration for their leadership. We shall be glad if you will compliment on our behalf the leaders and troops of the U.S.A., of Britain, of Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, India, France, Poland, and Italy who have distinguished themselves throughout this great battle."

FROM SECRETARY OF WAR STIMSON:

"I send you, on behalf of the people of the United States, our deepest appreciation of the thought, labor and qualities of leadership which have contributed to this success and for the troops who have strained hard, and in spite of bitter sacrifices have entered Rome. They have our heartfelt gratitude."

FROM GENERAL MARSHALL, CHIEF OF STAFF, U. S. ARMY:

"You have my congratulations, thanks and admiration for your battle leadership. You have done a superb job. Please present my congratulations to General Juin and his division commanders of the French Army Corps on their great achievement. Tell him they have taken us back to the French Army I knew of the Marne and Verdun."

FROM FIELD MARSHAL SIR ALAN BROOKE, CHIEF OF THE IMPERIAL BRITISH STAFF:

"Heartly congratulations on wonderful achievement of Fifth Army and best of luck."

FROM THE SUPREME COMMANDER, ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCES IN EUROPE, GENERAL EISENHOWER:

"Your accomplishments have more than justified your high reputation and my great confidence in you and your ability. Please give to Generals Truscott, Gruenther, Koyes and all my other friends of your command my warmest congratulations and the hope that one day we will all meet in the heart of the enemy homeland."

FROM THE DEPUTY SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER, MEDITERRANEAN THEATER, LIEUTENANT GENERAL DEVERS:

"Congratulations on the work the Fifth Army is doing. Through your leadership and guidance it has made a name for itself never to be forgotten by the Allies or the enemy."

"Please express to your officers and men my personal admiration of their accomplishment. I am very proud of the way the Americans have fought and are fighting. With men who possess their courage, stamina and determination there can be no doubt in the German mind that they are being defeated by superior individuals fighting together in an excellent team."

"I sincerely hope we will be able to destroy the German army totally in the near future. May your successes continue."

FROM THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, ALLIED ARMIES IN ITALY, GENERAL SIR H. R. ALEXANDER:

"You have won a brilliant victory and opened the door to fresh ones. In sending you my thanks and gratitude for the great part you and your army have played I send you and your magnificent soldiers my sincere admiration and congratulations."

FROM THE COMMANDING GENERAL, FRENCH EXPEDITIONARY CORPS, GENERAL D'ARMEE JUIN:

"With all my heart I say: 'Bravo!' You have richly deserved your victory."

FROM GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING, EIGHTH ARMY, LIEUTENANT GENERAL LEESE:

"I send you from myself and from every officer and man of the Eighth Army our sincere congratulations to the Fifth Army. We have followed with admiration the magnificent fighting of your troops in the Alban Hills which ended so successfully in your great breakthrough into Rome."

FROM THE COMMANDING GENERAL, SECOND POLISH CORPS, LIEUTENANT GENERAL ANDERS:

"Please accept my heartiest congratulations and those of the Polish Corps on the magnificent achievements of the Fifth Army culminating in the capture of Rome by American troops. We followed with the greatest interest the heroic fighting and the rapid advance of your Army. The news of the capture of Rome by Americans created a tremendous enthusiasm among all soldiers of the Polish Corps. With kindest regards to yourself and best wishes for continued success."

FROM THE COMMANDING GENERAL, BRITISH FIFTH CORPS, LIEUTENANT GENERAL ALLFREY:

"Heartiest congratulations on your splendid achievement and on the magnificent way your troops have fought."

FROM THE COMMANDING GENERAL, 12TH AIR FORCE, MAJOR GENERAL CANNON:

"May I thank you on behalf of all ranks for your very generous tribute to the forces under my command. We are proud to have been able to share with you and your Army the great victory you have so brilliantly won."

FROM THE COMMANDING GENERAL, 15TH AIR FORCE, MAJOR GENERAL TWINING:

"It is with great pride that the officers and men of the Fifteenth Air Force view the splendid achievements of their comrades of the Fifth Army. Congratulations on the brilliant campaign now in progress and for continued success which can not be denied your determined fighting men."

FROM THE COMMANDER OF NAVAL FORCES IN NORTH AFRICAN WATERS, ADMIRAL HEWITT:

"Heartiest congratulations to the officers and men of your Army from the Naval Forces under my command. From the day of the attack at Salerno the Eighth Fleet has done its best to support your forward movement to Rome, and has followed with just pride the accomplishments of its comrades on shore. The first Axis capital has fallen. May the others soon follow suit."

FROM THE FLAG OFFICER, WESTERN ITALY, ADMIRAL MORSE:

"Heartiest congratulations. Not only non-stop but you do not even hesitate."

FROM DEPUTY THEATER COMMANDER, ETOUSA, LIEUTENANT GENERAL LEE:

"Heartiest congratulations from your old friends in the SOS ETO who are more than proud of you and your gallant Fifth Army. Don't think of answering this. Just know that we have put our bets on you all the way. You carry our abiding best wishes."

FROM COMMANDER, U. S. NAVAL FORCES IN EUROPE, ADMIRAL STARK:

"We are all rejoicing with you and proud of your great work. Our heartiest congratulations, and may continued success crown your splendid efforts. All good wishes."

FROM CHIEF OF STAFF, 21ST ARMY GROUP, LIEUTENANT GENERAL De GUINGAND:

"Heartiest congratulations on magnificent victory."

FROM LIEUTENANT GENERAL GEORGE S. PATTON, JR.:

"Heartiest congratulations."

FROM ALEXANDER KIRK, AMERICAN MEMBER ALLIED ADVISORY COUNCIL:

"I express to you my profound admiration for the splendid achievements which you and those who have fought with you have accomplished."

FROM THE BRAZILIAN DELEGATE TO FRENCH COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL LIBERATION:

"Please accept my warmest congratulations for the splendid victory of the gallant Fifth Army. The Brazilian people will share the pride of the people of the U.S.A. upon learning that Allied forces were led to Rome by an American general."

FROM THE RULER OF THE BHOPAL PRINCIPALITY, INDIA, NAUAB BHOPAL:

"Having heard of your glorious entry into the City of Rome, with great pleasure and profound thankfulness I offer you and the gallant troops under your command my warm congratulations on the splendid achievement, India having watched your progress and achievements with great admiration and satisfaction and may this victorious advance continue till final victory is won."

FROM MARSHAL MESSE, ITALIAN ARMY:

"The Italian armed forces express their high sense of gratitude and admiration for the victory which the immortal name of Rome has bestowed on the troops of your command."

Incl: (6)

/s/ A. H. Gruenther,
/t/ A. H. GRUENTHER,
Major General, G.S.C.,
Chief of Staff.

DISTRIBUTION: "G"

27 September 1944.

85TH INFANTRY DIVISIONREPORT OF OPERATIONS - JULY 1944

CLASSIFICATION (CANCELLED)

RESTRICTED CHANGED TO -

BY AUTHORITY OF *C. 4 Army*Date *RFB*Period 1 July - 31 July:

From 1 - 9 July the Division, under II Corps control, remained in the grounds of the CASTEL PERZIANO, south of ROME, and the units continued the training and recreation programs that were being conducted in the last weeks of June. The 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion and Company D of the 751st Tank Battalion remained with the Division during this period, and participated in the joint training program. Between 5 - 12 July special training was given in the technique of river crossing in battalion strength. The 810th Engineers provided instruction and demonstration for other troops. Stress was laid upon the loading of assault boats and support rafts, and the troops were familiarized with the capacities of the boats with respect to rifle, MG, and mortar squads and their equipment. This type of training was continued in the next areas to which the Division moved. The infantry as well as the engineers also continued to receive training in clearing mine-fields and neutralizing booby-traps, especially in darkness. Other units continued their individual programs of training, stressing the physical fitness of the troops and motor maintenance. All troops received training in the use of gas masks and decontamination equipment.

On 8 July the Division (with the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion and Company B of the 751st Tank Battalion attached) was ordered to move to an assembly area near ROCCASTRADA between 10 - 15 July (a distance of 163 miles). Beginning 12 July a program of training for mountain warfare was undertaken. Emphasis was placed on teamwork between the infantry and supporting arms, and the maintenance of supply and communications, including the use of sub planes to pick up messages. The remainder of the 751st Tank Battalion was attached to the Division 13 July, but the Battalion was released from division control the next day. Effective 2250 hours 16 July the Division, still under II Corps, was alerted for movement to the IV Corps area. The same day the 339th Combat Team and the 85th Reconnaissance Troop were ordered to the vicinity of FREGATE, north of VOLTERRA (431850 and 435344 respectively) and placed in Fifth Army reserve. Here they developed plans to meet any counter-attack along the boundary between the American Fifth and British Eighth Armies.

On 17 July the 326th, 329th and 910th Field Artillery Battalions were equipped with two additional 105mm howitzers per battery, and began training in the operation of the larger battery.

On 18 July the Division was attached to IV Corps and ordered to move to the vicinity of VOLTERRA, but a change of orders was received while part of the Division was en route. As a result of this change the Division moved into an assembly area near ROSIGNANO MARITTIMO, closing on 19 July. On 22 July the Division was placed in Corps reserve and the expectation was that it would be employed in the IV Corps zone of action. But plans were again changed, and at noon 25 July the Division reverted to II Corps control. The same day the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion was detached from the Division.

On 26 July at 2225 and 2230 hours elements of the Division bivouacked near ROSIGNANO MARITTIMO underwent the first enemy bombing attack since leaving the line in June. Four men from the 338th Regiment and three from the 810th Medical Battalion were injured.

On 27 July the 752nd Tank Battalion (- Company D) was attached to the Division.

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On 28 July an order was issued to move the Division (-) from ROSIGNANO to 12 miles north-east of VOLTERRA, the movement to take place between 29 July and 1 August. The 339th Combat Team and the 85th Reconnaissance Troop (both under Division control again since 26 July) remained in their previously assigned locations north of VOLTERRA. The 337th Combat Team moved to an assembly area north-east of ULIVIANO (525545) and the 338th north-east of CAMPORELIANO (550380). Other units were assembled in the neighboring countryside. The country here was moderately hilly, and scrub oak gave good cover.

The 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached to the Division on 29 July, moving immediately to the Division assembly area. The 1st Battalion of the 19th Engineer Regiment was attached to the Division on 30 July, and on 31 July was attached to the 310th Engineer Battalion. Also on 30 July the 403rd Field Artillery Battalion moved by II Corps order to the firing area of the 178th Field Artillery Group to which it was then attached. On arrival in the vicinity of CASTELFIORENTINO it was placed in support of the 88th Division.

On 31 July the effective strength of the Division consisted of 760 officers, 42 warrant officers, and 14,880 enlisted men. The number of replacements received during the month included 17 officers, 0 warrant officers, and 38 enlisted men.

John B. Coulter
JOHN B. COULTER,
Major General, U. S. Army,
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS 85TH INFANTRY DIVISION

APD 85, U. S. ARMY,
27 September 1944.

85TH INFANTRY DIVISION

REPORT OF OPERATIONS - AUGUST 1944

Period 1 August - 0610 hours 15 August.

The Division continued its training program during the first two weeks of August in the assembly area north-east of VILLERS. The troops took frequent long marches, and emphasis was placed upon scouting and patrolling. Instruction in the technique and mechanics of river crossing was continued. Training was given the attached tank and tank destroyer units in the use of their guns as supporting artillery. Stress was placed upon the development of a communications system in mountainous country and under conditions in which vehicles cannot operate. The Division Artillery sent out plumes to pick up and deliver messages between the units of the Division. Training was conducted in the use of pigeons in sending messages, and in the use of mules to lay wire. The purpose of the entire program was to prepare the Division for entrance into combat on short notice in the mountainous terrain north of the Ayrone.

On 1 August Companies A and B of the 64th Chemical Troop Battalion were attached to the Division, but remained temporarily under Battalion control north of VILLERS (463325) until they moved to a bivouac area south-east of CAMPREDON (540367). On 2 August the 403rd Field Artillery Battalion was detached from the 176th Field Artillery Group and attached to the 91st Division for operations south-west of CERNAY (490530). On 2 - 3 August Companies A, B and C of the 310th Engineer Battalion moved to the banks of the Elbe River south of CERNAY where they prepared bridge construction for 10 days. Here, across a fifty-foot river from three to four foot deep, they constructed and dismantled foot bridges and temporary bridges. "Flying Tortoises" were also made of M-2 assault boats. The Division and

The Division continued training in river crossing. The Division and unit commanders prepared plans for crossing the Ayrone west of SIGMA. The plans called for driving north-west to take the WHITE ALPINE hill mass and the high ground north-west of SIGMA. Studies were made of the terrain and of the disposition of enemy troops. As part of the preparation the Division from 5 - 12 August sent out selected officers and NCOs to accompany Indian and New Zealand troops in their night patrols in the sector along the Ayrone where the Division was expected to cross.

Patrols from the 17th and 21st Brigades of the 8th Indian Division and later from the 4th and 6th Brigades of the 2nd New Zealand Division were each accompanied by three or four officers and non-commissioned officers from the Infantry regiments, the engineer, tank destroyer and tank battalions.

Upon relieving the 2nd New Zealand Division between 14 and 16 August the Division planned to cross at four points - near LA FERRIE, MORGES, (590648), LE PUY (60660), CHAVINE (622604), and north of MORGES (633683). The patrols therefore were sent out to reconnoiter the areas about these points, especially the approaches to the river, and to study the condition of the banks and bed of the river at these points. They were also to learn where the enemy had employed mine fields and wire barriers, the condition of the roads and bridges, and the location of possible crossing sites. Each night, or in some cases in alternate nights, the American members of the patrols were rotated in order to give as many men as possible a first-hand knowledge of the terrain.

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The British units were under instructions to prevent the enemy from learning of the presence of American troops among them and to allow none of our men to fall into enemy hands.

On 4 August there fell the first rain to be seen in this region for nearly two months, and throughout the following week there were occasional showers, a few hours of steady rain, and some hail. The ARNO, which was very low, had only recently begun to show still more shoals and sand bars, and it was at first thought that the rain might affect the depth and breadth of the river. The width of the water at the tentative crossing sites varied from 50 to 150 feet, and the depth varied from one to ten feet. The rain proved to have no appreciable effect, though the roads were mired for a short time.

The patrols were discontinued 12 August when it became known that the original plans for the Division to cross the ARNO in this region were not to go into effect.

On 10 August the Division sent twelve Italian-speaking enlisted men into the sector of the 2nd New Zealand Division to work in conjunction with the Field Security Service in restricting the movement of civilians in this heavily populated area. The 2nd New Zealand Division had at this time approximately 100 men in the field engaged in this task, including members of its own Security Service, civilian police, partisans, and carabinieri. Later, when this Division formally took over the control of the sector, these Italian-speaking enlisted men together with the carabinieri were employed to restrict the movement of the population. Supervision was maintained by the Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment and the Provost Marshal.

In relieving the 2nd New Zealand Division the 35th Division at first was expected to have the mission of crossing the ARNO in this sector, driving the enemy to the north-west. When those plans were changed, the Division was directed to take over a much larger sector and given the mission of continuing the active defense of the ARNO. On the night of 12-13 August elements of the Division began to move forward from the neighborhood of VOLTERRA to an area east of CASTELFIDENE. The units now attached to the Division consisted of the 752nd Tank Battalion (- Company D), attached 27 July; the 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion (attached 29 July); Companies A and B of the 84th Chemical Weapons Battalion (attached 2 August); and the 9th Mule Pack Group, Italian (attached 5 August). The 1st Battalion of the 19th Engineer Regiment which had been attached to the Division since 30 July was detached on 13 August. The 403rd Field Artillery Battalion, ordinarily the Division's general support battalion, had been attached to the 91st Division for operations on 2 August, but reverted to 35th Division control on 16 August, remaining in place south-east of CASTELNUOVO at 496527.

The nights of 12-13 and 13-14 August the 339th Regimental Combat Team moved forward, and at 0425 hours 14 August closed in an assembly area north-east of MONTESPERTOLI near 642543.

Period 0610 hours 15 August - 0155 hours 28 August.

On 15 August at 0610 hours the 339th Regimental Combat Team completed the relief of the 4th New Zealand Armored Brigade and the 6th New Zealand Infantry Brigade of the 2nd New Zealand Division and assumed responsibility for their sectors. The 339th Combat Team remained under the control of the New Zealand Division until 0500 hours 16 August when the command of the New Zealand Division sector passed to the Commanding General of the 35th Division. This was the first unit of the Division to return to the line. The Regiment was reinforced by Company C of the 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion, Company C of the 752nd Tank Battalion, and Company A of the 84th Chemical Weapons Battalion. The 910th Field Artillery Battalion was in direct support north-west of CIGNIGLIO at 622623.

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The front line taken over extended from 563635, west of CASME, generally east along the south bank of the ARNO, passing south of MONTELUPO, north-east to 650004, near BELLOSGUARDO. The outpost line varied from 200 yards to 1500 yards south of the river. The night of 15 August the 339th sent out its first contact and reconnaissance patrols. The front was extensive, and there were often several hundred yards between platoon outposts. There was active enemy patrolling at this time, but only moderate artillery fire falling in the sector.

The night of 14 - 15 August the 338th Regimental Combat Team moved forward, closing in the area south of MARTIGNAN (5050 - 5750) at 0320 hours 15 August. The following night at 0315 hours it completed the relief of the 5th New Zealand Infantry Brigade. Attached to the 338th Infantry Regiment were Company B of the 752nd Tank Battalion, Company B of the 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and Company B of the 84th Chemical Weapons Battalion. The 329th Field Artillery Battalion was in direct support. The front line passed through 5684 (near CORTEUVA) to the vicinity of EMPOLI, then followed the bank of the ARNO to the junction of that river with the ELSA.

On 16 August at 0500 hours the Commanding General of the 85th Division assumed, from the Commanding General of the 2nd New Zealand Division, command of 338th and 339th Regimental sectors. The mission of the Division was to continue the active defense of the ARNO.

The same day the 403rd Field Artillery Battalion, situated at 496527, on the ORTO River south-west of CASTELNUOVO, reverted in place to Division Artillery. On 17 August the Assault Gun Platoon of the 752nd Tank Battalion was attached to Division Artillery.

The night of 15 - 16 August the 337th Regimental Combat Team had moved forward, closing in an assembly area near 480505, along the EVOLA River about five miles east of PALAI. The Regiment was reinforced by Company A of the 752nd Tank Battalion, Company A of the 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and the 85th Reconnaissance Troop. On 17 August at 0430 hours the 337th Combat Team relieved the 363rd Regiment of the 91st Division, and took over the front line running generally parallel to the ARNO from the ELSA river west to 371600, near CASARME.

The Commanding General, 85th Division formally assumed command of this sector from the 91st Division at 0430 hours 17 August, with the mission of continuing the active defense of the ARNO. The Division front now extended along the south bank of the ARNO from the vicinity of CASARME east to a point near BELLOSGUARDO, a distance by air of about 19 miles. The distance by river was about 24 miles.

On 17 August the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (less the 100th Infantry Battalion and the Anti-Tank Company) was attached to the Division. Plans were made for this Combat Team to become Division reserve on its arrival in the vicinity of 530529, south of CASTELNUOVO. At the same time the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion was attached to Division Artillery and the 232nd Engineer Company was attached to the 310th Engineer Battalion. On 18 August, however, the 442nd Combat Team was detached from the Division.

In order to form a Division reserve the 310th Engineer Battalion (- the platoons with the Combat Teams) was moved to the vicinity of MONTEGUFMI (6550).

On 17 August the 176th Field Artillery Battalion was attached to Division Artillery for operations.

From 17 to 21 August groups of white and negro officers and negro enlisted men from the 92nd Division were attached to the 85th Division in order to obtain combat experience. The units to receive these detachments were the 337th Infantry, the 328th Field Artillery Battalion, the 310th Engineer and 310th Medical Battalions, the 85th Quartermaster, the 85th Signal and the 785th Ordnance Companies.

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On taking up combat positions the Division began a period of aggressive patrolling by the infantry and counterbattery, harassing and observed fire by the artillery. Most of the front line was not the ARNO itself, but a series of outposts and strong points back from the river. Because of the great length of the front the outposts were often far apart. The area was infiltrated by enemy patrols, especially at night, and the sides and even the rear of company areas were constantly subject to raids. Consequently, maintenance of security at all times was stressed.

Because of the lack of recent identifications, knowledge of the enemy dispositions on the north side of the ARNO was limited. It was learned, however, that II Lm, 1059th PGR was in the vicinity of CASTELFRANCO and S. CROCE. Elements of the 26th Reconnaissance Bn, the 9th PGR and 67th PGR were in the area of FUCECCHIO and EMPOLI. PWs confirmed the presence of the 956th PGR in the area of EMPOLI and MONTELUPO. On 22 August the LEHR Regiment was identified in the vicinity of FUCECCHIO and it appeared that the 9th PGR was placed in reserve. The presence of the 362nd Reconnaissance Bn west of the T. OTERONE was confirmed and II Lm, 1060th PGR was identified in the vicinity of SIGMA. Prior to the Division's entrance into the line there had been a constant shift of enemy units to the east, and it developed that the 362nd Division (reconstituted from the 956th, 1059th and 1060th PGRs) with the LEHR Regiment attached was taking over the sectors previously held by the 26th Panzer Division and the 3rd PG Division.

Because the high ground on the north side of the river dominated the river itself, the enemy was able to send across numerous patrols, varying in strength from 2 to 50 men. The enemy also held a few strong points south of the ARNO - notably LA LISCIA (6499), FORMACI (6166), and TIRAJA (7665). The enemy made several raids upon our outposts and in one instance surprised and captured an entire squad. Enemy groups also crossed the river to lay mines and set trip-flares. On some nights a practically continuous flare activity was reported. Throughout the period the enemy maintained an alert defense and was quick to detect and fire upon our patrols. He also continued to improve his own positions on the north bank of the river. PWs stated that their instructions were to resist any crossing, but to withdraw in case of an all-out attack.

Enemy artillery and Nebelwerfer fire came sporadically into the Division sector. The positions of his artillery were occasionally shifted during this period, but aerial photographs failed to indicate any considerable increase of guns.

The Division, with the concurrence of higher headquarters, gradually intensified the frequency of its own patrolling west of MONTELUPO. Beginning 19 August strong patrols were sent out to cross the ARNO in order to determine the location and strength of enemy units on the north side of the river. Two patrols succeeded in crossing the ARNO in the vicinity of EMPOLI. Two strong raiding parties sent out on the night of 25 August crossed the ARNO but encountered no enemy. Our units also laid mines on this side of the river and set trip-flares to hinder enemy patrols.

Artillery fire was directed against observed concentrations, and many harassing missions were fired. Several TOTs were fired on enemy concentrations, the heaviest against TIRAJA (18 August) and LEITE (20 - 21 August).

On 19 August Company D of the 755th Tank Battalion was attached to the Division at 1200 hours, and together with the Headquarters of the 72nd Tank Battalion, moved to 586540, north of VALLECCHIO, and became the Division reserve. Also on 19 August the 9th Mule Pack Group was attached to the Division, and moved to the vicinity of CERTALDO.

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Effective 0001 hours 20 August the Division front was extended east to 68°00', north of S. OJLWEMBO. To effect the relief of elements of the 1st British Division occupying the sector the 85th Reconnaissance Troop was detached from the 337th Regiment, and on the night of 18 - 19 August took up positions on the right flank of the 339th Regiment to which it was then attached. The next night the 310th Engineer Battalion (-), taken out of Division reserve, moved to the extreme right boundary and was also attached to the 339th. The Engineers, acting as infantry, relieved elements of the King's Dragoon Guards at 2300 hours 19 August.

On 20 August at 0001 hours the Division passed to the operational control of IV Corps. At the same time the 105th AAA Battalion was attached to the 85th Division.

In order to give the Division rest prior to participation in the drive on the GETHIC LINE arrangements were made to relieve the Division by the 6th South African Armored Division and elements of the 1st (U.S.) Armored Division. The 85th Division, minus two battalions of the 337th Regiment and attached elements, was relieved on three successive nights.

On 23 August the 76th British Heavy Anti-Aircraft was attached to Division Artillery for operations.

On the night of 24 August at 0205 hours the 12th South African Motorized Brigade relieved the 1st Battalion of the 339th Regiment, the 85th Reconnaissance Troop, and the 310th Engineer Battalion (-). At 1200 hours Company B of the 84th Chemical Weapons Battalion was detached from the Division. The command of this zone passed to the Brigade Commander at 0500 hours 25 August.

On 25 August the 12th South African Motorized Brigade relieved the 2nd Battalion of the 336th Regiment at 0110 hours and the 3rd Battalion of the 339th at 0200 hours. The same day at 0035 hours the 24th Guards Brigade relieved the 3rd Battalion (- L Company) of the 336th Regiment, and at 0445 hours relieved the 1st Battalion of the 337th Regiment. The control of these sectors passed to the respective Brigade Commanders at 0500 hours that day.

On 26 August the 12th South African Motorized Brigade relieved the 2nd Battalion of the 339th Regiment at 0030 hours, and at 0045 hours elements of the 24th Guards Brigade relieved the 1st Battalion (plus Company L).

At 0500 hours 26 August the command of the Division sector passed to the 6th South African Armored Division except for the zones held by the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 337th Regiment. The command of these sectors at that time passed to the control of the 1st Armored Division, to which the regiment minus the 1st Bn was attached. Concurrently, Co A, 752nd Tank Battalion; Company A, 310th Medical Battalion; one platoon of Company A of the 310th Engineers; and 320th Field Artillery Battalion were also attached to the 1st Armored Division. The 752nd Tank Bn (-) and 310th Engineer Battalion (-) assembled as units in the bivouac areas.

At 0500 hours 26 August the Division (-), relieved from the line, reverted to II Corps. The assembly areas to which the units now moved were on the slopes of the ridge between the ELSA and FESA valleys, in the district between CANTALDO and MONTESPELLO.

Upon the relief of the Division all attached units except the 752nd Tank Battalion and the 9th Mule Pack Group were relieved from attachment.

At 0800 hours 26 August Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Division Artillery, and the 910th Field Artillery Battalion were detached from the Division and attached in place to II Corps Artillery. The 910th Field Artillery Battalion then moved to the vicinity of MARTIAN (65756456). The next day the 403rd and 329th Field Artillery Battalions were attached to II Corps Artillery and moved southwest of MONTELUPO and south of LESTRA A SIGNA, respectively.

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FRENA, moved first to capture POGGIO LA CROCE (924011). The 338th, on the left, set out for the high ground on the west overlooking the town of RIFREDO (911007) on the FIRENZUOLA road. The Division Artillery, with the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion (-) and the Assault Gun Platoon, 752nd Tank Battalion attached, supported the attack.

The 337th advanced steadily throughout the day. The 1st Battalion pushed north over three intervening hills before halting on the southeast slopes of FELLONE. The 2nd Battalion then moved forward against stiff resistance to capture the hill itself. The 3rd Battalion moved in a westerly direction, and at dark was halted by enemy fire one kilometer due west of FELLONE, at 942998.

The 339th moved down from VERRUCA and POGGIO ROTTO. After clearing the northern slopes the 1st and 2nd Battalions pushed north along the ridge east of the FIRENZUOLA road. They then captured and occupied Hill 681 (928011) and POGGIO LA CROCE.

Moving from the ALTUZZO hill mass the 3rd Battalion, 338th Infantry took Hill 939 (916985) on the PIAN DI GIOGO, and the high ground on either side of the road below IL GIOGO (910986). Elements of the 1st and 2nd Battalions now pushed forward along the road towards the town of BARCO (918998), two kilometers away. The hill mass dominating this section of the road on the west was now incorporated in the Division zone and elements of these two battalions cut directly north to seize Hills 1029 (904993) and 1041 (904995) in the night. Early in the morning of 19 September the 3rd Battalion, coming along the road, captured RIFREDO.

During the morning of the 19th the Division encountered little enemy resistance, and the difficulties of the terrain were rather less severe than those overcome on the preceding days. In this area the enemy had no organized system of defenses, and for some time to come he was to offer only short, though stubborn, delaying actions from hastily prepared positions. It appeared, however, that he would make use of the natural barriers that crossed the Division sector. The mountains on the left were less wooded than those previously encountered, and provided little concealment for our advancing troops. For a short while the weather was to continue clear though valley mist was often thick for an hour or two after sunrise.

On 19 September instructions were issued to exploit the advances now in progress, and preparations were made to assist the 88th Division to pass through our lines in order to take up positions on the right flank of the Division.

In the morning the 337th moved down from FELLONE, meeting only light resistance. The 3rd Battalion advanced to the crest of LAME (939010) by noon. That afternoon the regiment's supply lines across PRATONE were shelled by more than a hundred rounds of light and medium artillery. The 2nd Battalion moved north from FELLONE to MONTE ACUTO, by-passing enemy elements which the 1st Battalion mopped up shortly afterwards. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions, moving from high point to high point, advanced abreast along the ridge running north from ACUTO, with the 1st Battalion echeloned to the right rear. By dark, when they halted for the night, the forward elements had reached Hill 849 (958043), 2 kilometers south of MONTALE.

Throughout the day the 339th Infantry steadily advanced from its positions north of POGGIO LA CROCE towards MONTE FREMA, and by mid-afternoon the 1st and 2nd Battalions were within 2 kilometers of the objective. The 3rd Battalion, which had been in reserve, then pushed past the forward units, and, proceeding rapidly, by 1730 hours had reached COLLINA (935039), and by 1940 hours had occupied MONTE FREMA.

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On 20 September instructions were issued to govern the passage of elements of the 88th Division through the zone of the 337th Infantry. At the same time the 2nd Mule Pack Group, Company A, 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and Company C, 84th Chemical Weapons Battalion were detached from the 85th Division and attached to the 337th Infantry. One platoon of Company B, 84th Chemical Weapons Battalion was now attached to the 337th Infantry. Company C, 752nd Tank Battalion and Company C, 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion were attached to the 339th Infantry.

Meanwhile, on the morning of 20 September the 337th continued its advance. The 1st Battalion, pushing steadily ahead all day against enemy resistance, advanced into the CIONE DELLA BASTIA region and in the night captured Hills 1085 (975050) and 1090 (975053), east of MONTALE. The 3rd Battalion took up positions in reserve on that mountain at noon, while elements of the 2nd Battalion, passing west and north, crossed the SATTENO RIVER near SAN PELLEGRINO (949067) before dark, and halted for the night on Hills 725 (941073) and 587 (944072). Though nearly 100 meters wide in parts of its course the SATTENO RIVER offered no obstacles to our advance at this time. Intermittent showers and a few hours of steady rain on 20 September did not materially increase the narrow water gap, the river bottom was firm, and the banks were easily negotiated by both foot troops and vehicles. The rain of the next day, however, swelling the river and flooding the roads, caused the artillery considerable difficulty in their displacements.

The forward elements of the 337th had now, on 20 September, reached a line running just north of MONTALE, and in so doing facilitated the passage of elements of the 338th Division to their new positions. During the night and morning of 20 - 21 September contact was established with the 349th and 350th Infantry Regiments, and preparations were made for the 337th to pass into Division reserve.

Meanwhile the advance of both the 339th and 338th Regiments was delayed by intense concentrations of light and heavy mortar fire and fire from all types of small arms. The enemy had taken up a line running along the ridge from 921040 to 928039, west of MONTE FREMA. From these positions he fired into the left flank of the 339th and the right front of the 338th. The 338th was also harassed by self-propelled guns firing in the vicinity of VIOLLA (905045), and by machine gun, self-propelled gun, and artillery fire coming from northwest of CASANOVA (898032). Fire from positions in the zone of the 91st Division succeeded in pinning down the 1st Battalion at 901031 all day 20 September. The 3rd Battalion was similarly halted at 914035, east of PULENUCCIA. Pressure upon the 1st and 3rd Battalions, however, was relieved by the action of the 2nd Battalion, 339th, firing from the vicinity of Hill 646 (921041). During the night elements of the 3rd Battalion, 338th moved over to Hill 646 which they then occupied. The 2nd Battalion remained in reserve in BARCO.

It was now again apparent that the enemy was receiving reinforcements. The night of 19 September elements of the 1059th Grenadier Regiment arrived in FIRENZUOLA, and marched immediately to the south to meet our advancing troops. Miscellaneous units of the 715th Infantry Division were also identified.

Meanwhile, on 20 September elements of the 339th Infantry continued their advance. The 1st Battalion started out from 928030, near CAPANNINA, meeting mortar fire from the left as it passed west of FREMA, and by nightfall had crossed the SATTENO near BRUSCALA (937063). The 2nd Battalion cleaned up pockets of resistance on the ridge running from MONTE FREMA towards FIRENZUOLA, while the 3rd Battalion remained in reserve on that mountain.

On the morning of 21 September the relief of the 337th Infantry by elements of the 338th Division was begun. Control of the sector held by this Regiment passed to the Commanding General of the 338th Division at 0500 hours, but the difficulties imposed by the terrain delayed the passage of the troops and the relief was not completed till afternoon. At this time the 338th Field Artillery Battalion was relieved of the mission of furnishing supporting fires for the 85th Division Artillery.

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Upon their relief the Battalions of the 337th marched to an assembly area near PULNUCC (909035) where the Regiment remained in Division reserve till 23 September. The Division right boundary now ran from west of FOGNANO (925007) north, crossing the SANTERNO RIVER east of BORGO (914068), continuing past the eastern slopes of MONTE COLORETA (9208). Company C, 752nd Tank Battalion and Company C, 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion were now detached from the 339th Infantry. Company A, 310th Engineers and the platoon of Company B, 84th Chemical Weapons Battalion were detached from the 337th Infantry. The 85th Reconnaissance Troop was now attached to the 338th Infantry.

At 0500 hours 21 September the 339th Infantry renewed its advance. Moving from the vicinity of BUSCALIA the 1st Battalion took COLLE CAPRILE (935076) in the forenoon, and elements then advanced to the southern slopes of COLORETA. The 2nd Battalion advanced somewhat more slowly, but succeeded in clearing the enemy from the ridge running from near the town of FREMA towards the SANTERNO VALLEY (Point 569 (927051) to Point 584 (923060)). In the afternoon both battalions advanced slowly. Nevertheless, by 1700 hours one company of the 1st Battalion was on the peak of COLORETA, and the other companies held positions on other parts of the mass. The 2nd Battalion swung over into the sector of the 338th Infantry in order to take advantage of the more favorable terrain, and by dark elements had crossed the SANTERNO RIVER east of BORGO. The 3rd Battalion remained in reserve on MONTE FREMA, where it received supplies before continuing north to cross the SANTERNO.

On 21 September the 338th Infantry occupied FIRENZUOLA. The 3rd Battalion met little resistance as it moved towards the town, the enemy preferring to avoid contact. There was, however, some harassing fire from self-propelled guns to the north though little artillery. Before reaching the town, the 3rd Battalion turned to the east, crossed the SANTERNO RIVER, and seized the high ground to the north. The 1st Battalion entered FIRENZUOLA at 1600 hours and found it abandoned and in ruins though the town and the stone bridge across the river were still being shelled. The 2nd Battalion meanwhile followed the advance of the 3rd, halting for the night on Hills 620 (916076) and 577 (913075). The 3rd Battalion remained at POGGIO ALLA POSTA (9098) during the night.

Efforts by the 310th Engineers to construct Bailey Bridges across the SANTERNO at FIRENZUOLA on 21 and 22 September were forestalled by accurate enemy artillery concentrations directed against the crossing sites and the town itself. Smoke screens were now laid to obscure the targets and to protect Division traffic.

On 22 September both the 338th and 339th Regiments met stiff resistance from the enemy though they encountered no organized defense lines. Moreover, at this time the Division encountered few mine fields in its advance to the north, though some improvised box mines were found in the shoulders of the roads near FIRENZUOLA.

The 1st Battalion, 339th Infantry held positions on the crest of COLORETA, and one company of the 2nd Battalion from its positions at 924084 attacked along the southwest slopes in order to take over the positions held by the 1st Battalion, and to allow that unit to continue its advance to the north. The enemy put up unexpectedly stiff resistance, and two more rifle companies were committed. By nightfall the 2nd Battalion occupied most of the COLORETA MASS, and the 1st Battalion had pushed on to take MONTE COLLINA (9211) against moderate resistance. The 3rd Battalion also encountered little difficulty in taking Hill 690 (945117), near LA TORTA.

The 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 338th moved slowly north in the area immediately west of COLORETA, meeting determined resistance and some long range artillery fire coming from CANDA. By night they had advanced a kilometer or more north of FIRENZUOLA and held lines from 91400628 to 92060820 and from 896085 to 909085. The 1st Battalion remained in regimental reserve, while the 85th Reconnaissance Troop, attached to the Regiment, protected the exposed left flank of the regiment.

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On 22 September instructions were issued to govern the further advance of the Division, setting new boundaries and objectives, and directing the Division to assist the 88th Division in the capture of MONTE LA FINE. The boundary between the two divisions ran due north from the east slopes of COLORETA to 940155, just beyond LA FINE, where it turned sharply northeast to 998180. North of the SANTERNO RIVER the new Division sector covered a progressively wider front, though at first only two regiments were to be on the line. The 337th Infantry (minus the 3rd Battalion) was to advance east of the positions held by the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 339th in the vicinity of COLORETA, and on making contact with the 3rd Battalion, 339th would take over the zone and mission of the 339th Infantry. The 1st and 2nd Battalions, 339th, after mopping up the remaining resistance in this locality and assisting the advance of the 337th Infantry in the former 339th zone, were instructed to assemble in Division reserve along the FIRENZUOLA road. The 3rd Battalion, 339th, then coordinating its advance with the 349th Infantry on the right, would be attached to the 337th Infantry (-) 23 September. These units would then advance on LA FINE. The 338th Infantry would strike to the north west to take CANDA, the great mountain east of the PASSO DELLA RADICOSA. The 3rd Battalion, 337th Infantry, would remain temporarily in Division reserve at 908034, near CASANOVA.

0600A hours 23 September - 30 September

SAMBUCO - LA RAVIGNANA - MONTE LA FINE - TRE POGGIOLI - MONTE CANDA

On 23 September the Division west boundary was temporarily changed. The new boundary ran from 902063, just south of FIRENZUOLA, in a northwesterly direction to the road junction at 860109. At the same time the 91st Division was assigned the mission of protecting the road center of FIRENZUOLA, and of preventing enemy infiltration to the southeast. A company of the 752nd Tank Battalion and one platoon of the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion were temporarily placed under the operational control of the 363rd Infantry at 1400 hours 23 September (reverting to 85th Division control at 1400 hours 25 September).

The 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 338th moved forward and by nightfall elements of the 2nd were at 916099, northwest of COLORETA, and elements of the 1st at 905079. The 85th Reconnaissance Troop was now protecting the Division left flank and patrolling the roads northwest of FIRENZUOLA leading towards PAGLIANA (867086) and LE VALLI (881088).

At 1145 hours 23 September command of the 339th zone passed to the Commanding Officer of the 337th Infantry, and the 3rd Battalion, 339th was attached to the 337th. The 339th Infantry (-) was now in reserve, where it remained till 26 September. Elements of the 337th Infantry, having passed to the right of the positions of the 339th on COLLINA and COLORETA, advanced rapidly to 935151, on the western slopes of LA FINE blocking the PASSO DELLA RADICOSA - CASTEL SAN PIETRO road. The 3rd Battalion remained in Division reserve.

The resistance of 23-24 September was light in the eastern sector and the troops still encountered no organized enemy defense line. The 338th, however, met fairly stiff resistance as it moved forward during the day and night, and the showers of 24 September turned the fields and roads to heavy mud. The 1st Battalion nevertheless advanced steadily, and by nightfall had moved to hills northwest of COLORETA (901105 and 909102). The 2nd Battalion meeting somewhat stiffer resistance moved slowly forward to capture localities at 901125, 911130, 918130, in the CARPINACCIO (905123) - SAMBUCO (912133) area. The 3rd Battalion was occupying CASA BURACCIA (918132).

The 2nd Battalion, 337th Infantry consolidated its positions during the day and the 1st Battalion prepared to move to forward positions from the area of VISIGNANO (948140) southwest of LA FINE. At 0800 hours 24 September the 3rd Battalion, 337th reverted from Division reserve to the Regiment. At 1000 hours the 85th Reconnaissance Troop was detached from the 338th Infantry, and placed in Division reserve.

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The progress of the Division and of the Corps was such that further instructions were now needed to direct the attack to the northeast. The new attack was to begin 25 September. To the 337th Infantry were now attached Company B, 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion, the 84th Chemical Weapons Battalion, and the 85th Reconnaissance Troop. Company C, 752nd Tank Battalion was attached to the 339th Infantry.

The enemy held fortified positions in SAIBUCCO and MONTARELLO (922146) and several strong points blocking the way to TRE POGGIOLI (9015). More enemy reserves were being brought up, and it was soon apparent that for a while at least the resistance would be stiff.

At 1400 hours, 25 September the Division boundary was changed to include LA FINE and IL SASSO (9615), and it now became the mission of the 337th Infantry to relieve the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 349th Infantry holding those features. By 2345 hours the relief had been completed. The 2nd Battalion was now southwest of MONZANO (9315); the 1st Battalion east of that locality; and the 3rd Battalion between LA FINE and IL SASSO.

The 339th Infantry was in Division reserve at the beginning of 25 September, but its elements began to move forward as demanded by the circumstances. The 3rd Battalion, attached to the 337th Infantry, at 0800 hours was attached to the 338th Infantry and directed to move west from the vicinity of LA FINE to assist the 3rd Battalion, 338th in its attack on TRE POGGIOLI. Moving from near LA FINE the Battalion progressed slowly, and at 1130 hours was halted at 930145, west of CASTELVECCHIO, by accurate mortar and small arms fire coming from near MONTARELLO, where elements of the 2nd Battalion, Lehr Brigade were now situated. From his commanding positions the enemy was able to fire so effectively against the Battalion that it was compelled to move back to a defiladed area southeast of CASTELVECCHIO.

The morning of 25 September the 3rd Battalion, 338th Infantry, ran into serious difficulties in its advance on TRE POGGIOLI, the important hill mass northeast of CANDA. The decision had been made to take this objective in order to come round on CANDA from the north, and avoid the special problems offered by the steep sides on the south of that mass. At 0800 hours one company had reached the southern slopes of TRE POGGIOLI, and the rest of the Battalion was moving up. Enemy resistance then made itself felt, and while the company was able to retain its positions the other units of the Battalion were prevented from coming up to join it. The forward company successfully resisted a series of counterattacks during the morning, but in the afternoon a combat patrol attacking with two tanks in support compelled the right platoon to withdraw. At 1300 hours a still heavier attack was repulsed, this one in company strength supported by several tanks. Defensive artillery fires were built up to repel the counterattacks, but after dark the enemy began to infiltrate our positions. This and a shortage of ammunition finally caused the company to withdraw from the mountain. Under cover of darkness the entire Battalion then withdrew to COLLINE (914110).

The 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry had been in a blocking position on hills northwest of PEGLIO (901115, 896112, 895103) and on Hill 724 to the east (909102), protecting the left flank of the Regiment. This Battalion was, however, to be employed in the attack on TRE POGGIOLI the next day, and the 85th Reconnaissance Troop, attached to the 338th at 2207 hours 25 September, took over positions vacated by C Company of that Regiment, and with B Company protected the Regiment's west flank.

At 1715 hours the 1st Battalion, 339th was attached to the 338th Infantry and the 3rd Battalion, 339th Infantry released from attachment. It now became the mission of the 1st Battalion to join with the 1st Battalion, 338th in the advance on the TRE POGGIOLI MASS the next day. In the night the 1st Battalion, 339th moved from its positions near BORDIGNANO (939125) to the vicinity of CASA BURACCIA to meet the 1st Battalion, 338th. During this period the 2nd Battalion, 339th remained at 934099, near CANIPOLASSO.

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HEADQUARTERS II CORPS
Office of the Commanding General
APO 19 U.S. ARMY

27 May 1944

TO II CORPS:

In an operation that will long be cited as an outstanding example of speed, skill, courage and stamina you have as a team accomplished in a little over two weeks the juncture with the ANZIO BEACHHEAD, the conquest of 472 square miles of enemy held territory, the capture of over 2,000 prisoners of war together with much armament and equipment.

You have operated and fought through terrain unbelievably difficult, and broken the enemy's strongly fortified positions. You have advanced nearly 50 miles.

You have accomplished successfully the missions assigned by the Army Commander. The feats accomplished and the high standards set in your victorious battles will incite envy and admiration in your comrades and will instill fear in and exact respect from the enemy.

You are American soldiers and you should be proud of that fact and of the record you have just made. But remember your reputation will endure only if jealously guarded and nourished by you.

I am proud of you and of the privilege of having commanded you in this operation.

/s/ Geoffrey Keyes
/t/ GEOFFREY KEYES,
Major General, U. S. A.,
Commanding.

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Before dawn, 23 September the two Battalions took off, the 1st Battalion, 339th in the lead. The advance was slow in the face of intense mortar and artillery barrages. The coordinated attack of the two battalions was supported by tanks, although these were to some extent hampered by fields of anti-tank mines. By the end of the day the advanced units had reached positions between 907152 and 908154, close to the crest.

The 2nd Battalion, 338th battled all day 23 September against SAVINCO. Attacking from the south and east our troops made little headway against an enemy well employed in many fortified houses. By dark the enemy still held the town, and operations were halted for the night. On this day, however, the 3rd Battalion, 339th, succeeded in capturing two strong points, LA CARLELLA and LA CARLEMA, which had held it up the day before, and took many prisoners. The Battalion then continued on in the night towards LA RAVIGNANA (919159). The 2nd Battalion at this time moved near CASA BRACCOLA to be in readiness for use as the situation might require.

The 337th Infantry was meanwhile consolidating defensive positions between LA FINE and LA 01350 and in the neighborhood of MONTARELLO.

The morning of 27 September the 1st Battalion, 339th Infantry with the 1st Battalion, 338th (minus Company 3) continued the attack on TRE POGGIOLI. They were supported by tanks firing machine guns and high explosive shells at close range. The enemy resisted bitterly from the mountain itself and from high ground to the west and south. His small arms and mortar fire were particularly heavy, but he was also using 75mm and 105mm self-propelled guns. In mid-morning, however, our tanks, after climbing over difficult terrain, cut across the route of the advancing infantry and across the highway leading south-west to CAMEL. As a consequence by 1100 hours some enemy, fearing to be cut off, were seen withdrawing to the north. Under cover of artillery barrage the infantry moved with the tanks up the mountain, but as they approached the crest they came under heavy long range machine gun and artillery fire from the northern slopes of CAMEL. Nevertheless, by noon our first troops had reached the crest of TRE POGGIOLI, and the remainder of the enemy on that mountain were driven off soon afterwards. During the afternoon and night the positions on this axis were consolidated and improved, and contact established with the 3rd Battalion, 339th Infantry near RAVIGNANA.

After dark the 3rd Battalion, 338th began to move by way of CASA BRACCOLA to the high ground south and west of TRE POGGIOLI in order to be in a position to attack CAMEL from the northeast. The march was made difficult by darkness, mire, and rugged country. Supplies for tanks were brought up by jeep and hand pack, and preparations were made for the attack next morning. The 1st Battalion, 339th Infantry remained on TRE POGGIOLI to consolidate positions there. The enemy made use of the dark and rain to cover the withdrawal of some of his units, and during the night of 27/28 September much of the self-propelled gun and mortar fire from CAMEL ceased.

On 27 September SAN RUFO had been captured by the 2nd Battalion, 338th Infantry. The enemy continued to resist fiercely, house by house. Supporting tanks were brought up to fire point blank on the enemy positions, and the town was levelled. J Company, 338th Infantry with close tank support made the final assault, and the town was completely ours by 1400 hours.

Advancing on RAVIGNANA troops of the 3rd Battalion, 339th Infantry, faced sniper fire in the drags, and machine gun and mortar fire coming from the RAVIGNANA heights, but the advance continued. After careful reconnaissance and heavy artillery and mortar preparations the heights were captured in the late afternoon. Positions were consolidated during the night, and contact on both flanks was established.

On 28 September at 1230 hours the 3rd Battalion of the 337th Infantry was relieved by the 1st Battalion, 349th. The 3rd Battalion then advanced to the north, and occupied GIUGLI (964176) and Hills 681 (968172), 730 (969187), 665 (974157), 493 (979173), 410 (969177), and Point 975176. The 1st and 2nd Battalions continued to strengthen their positions from MONTARELLO west to MONTARELLO.

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During the period the Division routed elements of the 4th Parachute Division, the 362nd Infantry Division, the Lehr Brigade, and the many miscellaneous units the enemy threw in to halt or delay our advance. From 13 to 30 September 1961 prisoners of war passed through the Division cage.

The effective strength of the Division at the end of the month was: 793 officers, 44 warrant officers, and 13,725 enlisted men. From 13 - 30 September the casualties suffered by the Division were: 11 officers and 247 enlisted men killed in action; 37 officers and 1162 enlisted men wounded; and 3 officers and 223 enlisted men missing in action. Non-battle casualties for the month were 40 officers and 1099 enlisted men. The Division received 12 officers and 929 enlisted men as replacements during the month.

John B. Coulter
JOHN B. COULTER,
Major General, U. S. Army,
Commanding.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority MMD
By at NARA Date

(Not to be taken into the front lines)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~APO 85, U. S. Army,
18 December 1944.85TH INFANTRY DIVISIONREPORT OF OPERATIONS - OCTOBER 1944CLASSIFICATION (CANCELLED)
Restricted
BY AUTHORITY OF *CG 4 Army*Period 1 October - 26 OctoberDate *18 Dec 44*

On 1 October the Division continued the attack to the north, prepared to debouch into the PO VALLE. The front lines at this time extended from L-979186, just west of BELVEDERE, in a westerly direction to 975180, 965182 (near MONTALE), 953182 (near LA GAVIA), 935173 (near LE LAIE), 929178 (near SCAMITELLA), 913168, 897177 (south of OSTERIA), to 887177 (southwest of CASA DI SELVA). The Division sector as originally defined extended approximately 27 kilometers north-northeast to the Via EMILIA (Highway 9) along a front generally about 9 kilometers wide.

Attached to the Division were the 752nd Tank Battalion (minus Company D), the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion (minus Company A), and the 84th Chemical Weapons Battalion (minus Companies A, C and D). The 86th Fighter Bomber Group supported the attack. On 1 October the 77th Field Artillery Group relieved the 178th Field Artillery Group and assumed the mission of direct support of the Division.

The terrain though not so severely rugged as the Apennines in the ALTUZZO region nevertheless offered serious difficulties. A succession of steep hills extended from MONTE CAIDA (3813) to the Via EMILIA. Many of these hills, varying from two to six hundred meters in elevation, rose from small bases in steep dome-like shapes with rock or clay cliffs falling from the peaks. The domed hills were so closely crowded together that from the summit and sides of one hardly more than the next immediate hills could be seen. On the eastern part of the Division sector, however, for the first few miles there were long humped ridges, only thinly covered with growth, furrowed by deep ravines and gorges, with steep banks descending to the edge of the IDICE TORRENT and the SILLARD TORRENT. Not until MONTE BIBBLE (902234), MONTELENZIO (947231), and MONTE DELLE FORMICHE (916238) were reached did the Division come to mountains dominating a considerable area.

A second-class road (6531) passed north through the Division sector, in the winding valley of the TORRENTE IDICE. There were other rough cart roads for short distances, and some general roads and trails, but most of these were normally poor and in the almost daily rains of October quickly became mired.

Except during the period 10-17 October there were but few brief spells of clear weather. Because of the mud it was at no time possible to move supplies direct to front line units by motor vehicles.

The rains swelled the mountain streams, and flash floods were common. These frequently washed out roads, marooned trucks and ambulances, and flooded supply points in the bottom land. Installations on one side of the IDICE were at times isolated from units on the other side, and the TORRENT itself frequently ran so full and swift that it could not be forded. In the latter part of the month it was necessary for the 310th Engineer Battalion to construct an overhead tramway in order to move supplies and equipment to the 310th Medical Battalion situated on the east bank. On some occasions supplies were carried across the swollen stream by assault boats.

Supplies were maintained throughout the period despite the difficulties of terrain and climate. The supporting Mule Pack Groups (1st, 5th, and 9th) performed admirably. The movement of artillery and tanks, however, was several times seriously impeded by the muddy ground and the swollen streams.

The enemy, driven from TRE POGGIOLI and CAIDA, had no prepared positions to fall back to. But he continued to fight stubbornly from hastily fortified

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positions on ridges, in isolated houses and in the villages. On 1 October he was defending along the road in the vicinity of Hill 866 (925183), in the vicinity of LA MARTINA (906175), and at 968189 (near MOLLASCO).

Confronting the Division at this time were the 1st and 2nd Battalions, combined, of the 131st Grenadier Regiment, 44th Infantry Division on the extreme right, northeast of IL RIO near 965190. Extending west were elements of the 362nd Infantry Division and of the Lehr Brigade: the 2nd Battalion, 956th Grenadier Regiment north of LA GAVINA (954180); the 1st Battalion, 1059th Grenadier Regiment near the SASSO DELLA MATELCA (923182), and the 1st Battalion, Lehr Brigade northwest of that hill; the 2nd Battalion, 1059th Grenadier Regiment near RONCHI (914195); the 2nd Battalion, Lehr Brigade near LA MARTINA (906175); and on the extreme left were elements of the 1st Battalion, 1060th Grenadier Regiment, northeast of CAMPEGGIO (906188). It seems probable that elements of the 362nd Fusilier Battalion were also near LA MARTINA. Many of these units of course were not in full strength and some were in process of being relieved.

Throughout the month the enemy brought up large numbers of replacements to make good the losses in killed and captured personnel. Several units were relieved in the course of the month's operations, others were reorganized, and new units were brought into the Division sector. The character of the resistance remained the same, however - stubborn delaying action from fortified ridges and houses, mortar and artillery fire covering the draws, and strong counterattacks after artillery preparations against any important objective just occupied by our forces. The resistance grew more stubborn with the arrival of reinforcements, and it was soon evident that the enemy had recovered from the confusion that had followed the breakthrough of the GOTHIC LINE.

On the right the Division objectives in the first phase were Hill 751, the CASONI DI ROMAGNA (951212), and the trail junctions nearby, about four kilometers north of positions held by our advance elements on 1 October. Two kilometers beyond lay the next objective, VILLA DI CASOQUERO (962234). The line of attack for the 337th Infantry, to which these objectives had been assigned, lay across the hills and draws and a network of streams falling towards the TORRENTE SILLARO on the east. In this region there were few roads or trails of any kind.

MONTE BIELE was the first Division objective assigned the 339th Infantry on the left. The Regimental sector was divided near the middle by a fairly good road to the north (Highway 6531), following the valley of the TORRENTE IDICE. Although this road ran almost directly north into the PO Valley where it joined Highway 9, it came to a dead end at FRASSINETTA. It was necessary to construct lateral roads connecting with Highway 65 on the west, and Highway 6528 on the east. Apart from the valley road, there were only the usual narrow roads and trails crossing the sparsely covered hills.

The 337th and 339th Infantry Regiments, each with two Battalions abreast, attacked at 0600 hours 1 October. The 336th Infantry was initially in Division Reserve. Company B, 84th Chemical Weapons Battalion (minus one platoon) was attached to the 337th Infantry, and one platoon of that company was attached to the 339th. The 85th Reconnaissance Troop was attached to the 337th Infantry. The 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion (minus Company A) was attached to the 752nd Tank Battalion (minus Company D).

The 3rd Battalion, 337th Infantry on the right was supported by Company A, 752nd Tank Battalion and Company B, 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion. After advancing a short distance from 953182, near LA GAVINA, the Battalion was pinned down the rest of the day by fire coming from the draws and strong points along the SPEDALETTO Ridge (9319). But moving forward again at night the Battalion reached a point (950208) less than a kilometer from the objective, Hill 751. Passing along the COLLE DI GUZZO Ridge (958194), and by-passing several delaying positions, by 0440 hours 2 October it had seized the objective.

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The 2nd Battalion on 1 October advanced from north of CASETTA (929167), but the forward elements were held up in their advance towards SPEDALETTO (934191) by fire from IL CAPRULLO Ridge (928184). Reconnaissance had shown the terrain in the 3rd Battalion zone unsuitable for the operation of the armored elements, and these were moved into the zone of the 2nd Battalion. A platoon of tanks, mounted by infantry, now advanced to clear IL CAPRULLO Ridge, and the enemy was driven from his positions there. In the afternoon SPEDALETTO was captured.

During the heavy rain of 2 October the 3rd Battalion mopped up the pockets of resistance that had been by-passed the night before. The enemy fought bitterly from numerous machine gun positions, and the entire day was required to clear him from them. After overcoming scattered resistance along the SPEDALETTO Ridge, the 2nd Battalion occupied positions on Hill 751. During the night positions on this hill were attacked by about 100 enemy, remnants of the 132nd Grenadier Regiment. They were driven back by elements of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions and with the aid of defensive artillery concentrations.

On 3 October the 2nd Battalion advanced northwest to capture high ground at Point 605 (944231) by early evening, while the 3rd Battalion captured Point 625 (962222). The 1st Battalion had now come up through SPEDALETTO to a point near CASONCELLO (935195), and swinging west of the 2nd Battalion took the high ground near CASA DI ROTARO (937222).

The 85th Reconnaissance Troop, attached to the 337th Infantry, throughout this period and until 14 October protected the Division right flank and maintained contact with the 88th Division on the right.

Because of the persistent and determined enemy resistance the 1st and 2nd Battalions organized their positions for defense during the night before continuing the attack the next morning. At this time the enemy artillery fire was especially intense, falling in both the rear and forward areas.

As a result of these advances, by 4 October the 337th Infantry had forced a salient well ahead of the forward elements of all other units of the Corps, and was receiving fire from self-propelled guns from the east and the west as well as from the north. The attack was continued, nevertheless. On the left the 1st Battalion advanced more than two kilometers to the northeast to capture Hill 587 (948245), then pushed farther north along the ridge to take positions from 945260 to 950260, south of the village of PALMONA (948263). The 3rd Battalion had moved a few hundred yards north to occupy positions on Hill 588 (963228), the COLLE del MONTE, still south of the VILLA di SASSONERO, while the 2nd Battalion occupied high ground near 945230, immediately east of Hill 605 (944231). At this time a special counterbattery program was undertaken in order to neutralize the intense enemy artillery concentrations falling in the Regimental sector.

On 5 October the Regiment strengthened its holding positions and moved elements near the CASA di BELLAI (953245) and SASSONERO to be in positions to protect the Regiment's right flank and prevent enemy infiltration. In the late afternoon, following a fifteen minute artillery and mortar preparation, a counter-attack in company strength was directed against the right flank of the 1st Battalion southeast of PALMONA at 948273. This attack was repulsed with the aid of defensive artillery fires and long range machine guns, and during the night the Regiment made preparations to continue the attack next day.

In the advance on MONTE BIBBE the 339th Infantry had likewise met persistent enemy resistance. Attacking on 1 October the 3rd Battalion, on the right, pushed on from near SCHITELLA to capture Hill 886, just north of the SASSO DELLA MANTESCA, and north of the road leading to SPEDALETTO. The 2nd Battalion met especially heavy resistance. In attacking from positions south of OSTERIA and west of LA MARTINA, it was soon apparent that several nearby villages must be cleared of the enemy before progress could be made. It was first necessary to clear LA MARTINA and CASA di SELVA. The thick-walled stone houses of LA MARTINA were used as strong points by the enemy, and artillery concentrations were directed against these. After LA MARTINA was captured there was further bitter fighting during the night at OSTERIA and MOLINO della PERGOLA (887183). On 2 October, OSTERIA fell to the 2nd Battalion, and the 3rd Battalion pushed on to capture the COLLE di TATTINI (908201), rising from the east bank of the IDICE TORRENT.

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On 3 October the enemy resistance was again stiff. The 3rd Battalion took up holding positions at 914202 and 908202 on TATTINI, while the 1st Battalion, moving from reserve, passed to the right. A counterattack in reduced company strength from near 933228 was broken up by the action of supporting air and artillery, and after this the Battalion consolidated positions near BOSCHI (922223). The 2nd Battalion (minus F Company) pushed along the hills west of the IDICE and cleared several villages on the way to BIBELE (LA FIUMANA - 893195; LA POZZA - 901206; L'IMPUGNOLA - 895205; and GRAGNANO - 899209). Early in the afternoon elements had reached SAN BENEDETTO di QUERCETO, a somewhat larger community, close to the junction of a small network of roads and trails, and other elements pushed forward to a point near QUINZANO (899225), a village on the heights to the northwest. The Regiment had now reached positions from which it could advance on BIBELE.

MONTE BIBELE dominated the IDICE VALLEY in this area. This sprawling rocky mass (elevation 617 meters), cut by ravines and gorges and most of the approaches blocked by cliffs, was defended by the enemy with small arms, machine guns and mortars. Attacking at 0700 hours 4 October the 1st Battalion moved along the right, east of the mountain, while the 2nd headed directly for the mass. Hill 504 (925231) fell to the 1st Battalion early in the morning and VERNOLO (934237) was taken later in the day. The 2nd Battalion, however, met stiff resistance from QUINZANO, south of the base of the mountain, and SAN MARTINO (894227), southwest of the base. Tanks were brought up to reduce the resistance in these villages, and QUINZANO fell in the afternoon though SAN MARTINO still held out. At dark the assault on SAN MARTINO and on BIBELE itself was renewed, but throughout the night's fighting little progress was made.

During the night of 4/5 October the 1st and 3rd Battalions, 339th Infantry were relieved by elements of the 338th, but the 2nd Battalion, 339th Infantry was ordered to continue the attack on BIBELE until that feature should be taken. Command of the 339th zone passed to the Commanding Officer, 338th Infantry at 0450 hours 5 October. The relief of the 1st and 3rd Battalions was completed at 0615 hours 5 October and these Battalions then moved to rear assembly areas. Elements of the 3rd Battalion were at BOSCHI and LA POZZA ready to assist the 2nd Battalion if they were needed in the assault on BIBELE. The Regiment remained in reserve till 13 October.

On the morning of 5 October the enemy still held SAN MARTINO and Hills 542 (903228) and 561 (904230), on the ridge leading from the south to the peak of BIBELE (Hill 617). Though in the later afternoon one company had reached the top of the mountain and SAN MARTINO had fallen, the enemy still held Hill 577, the crest northeast of Hill 617. Shortly after dark, however, this last high point was captured, and the remainder of the mass cleared and occupied. The Battalion remained on BIBELE till afternoon next day when it moved to rejoin its regiment in Division reserve. The Battalion assembled in areas near SAN MARTINO and SAN BENEDETTO di QUERCETO.

On relieving the 339th Infantry the 338th had been ordered to capture CASTELNUOVO di BISANO (909255) and the Division objectives formerly assigned the 339th, the next being MONTE DELLE FORMICHE (elevation 638 meters). One tank company with supporting tank destroyer elements was placed in direct support of the Regiment. At 1800 hours 5 October the 84th Chemical Weapons Battalion (minus Companies A, B, C and D) was relieved from attachment to the Division. Company B, minus the 2nd platoon, remained attached to the 337th Infantry, and the 2nd platoon, relieved from attachment to the 339th Infantry, was attached to the 338th.

At 0600 hours 5 October the 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry, moving forward from near BOSCHI, had passed through the extreme left part of the 337th zone in order to take advantage of high ground, and pushing forward against scattered resistance occupied Point 539 at 937244, south of LA CIVETTA. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions remained in reserve during the day, but at night the 3rd passed through the 2nd Battalion, 339th Infantry in order to attack CASTELNUOVO di BISANO (911255), beyond BIBELE and on a prominent ridge west of the TORRENTE IDICE. Enemy positions here commanded wide fields of fire, and effectively covered the approaches to the heights. By dawn 6 October the Battalion had made contact with the forward elements of the 2nd Battalion, 339th Infantry and was on BIBELE preparing to move forward.

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Attacking north on both sides of the IDICE the Regiment at first met only light enemy resistance. On the right the 1st Battalion moved forward in the rain and mud to capture MANDRIZZA (933242), LA CIVETTA (937247), and Points 455 (940255) and 369 (935255) on 7 October, but the advance to LA VILLA (937264) was proving difficult and costly. The Battalion encountered extremely heavy artillery and mortar concentrations. Moreover, the terrain offered little cover, and the enemy was strongly situated in numerous houses. The 2nd Battalion, generally following the river bed, occupied BISANO, and BORGO di BISANO (918239) on a hill east of the stream. The 3rd Battalion pushed north from BIBELE to seize and occupy localities south of CASTELNUOVO di BISANO from 916252 west to 895252, near CASONE.

On 7 October the 338th met stiff resistance, and found its advance further impeded by mines on the side roads. Nevertheless, the 1st Battalion, on the right, seized hills west and northwest of LA CIVETTA, and the 3rd Battalion captured SUNLINO (895255) and several hills in its advance on CASTELNUOVO di BISANO from the west. The next day the 3rd Battalion seized still other hills west of the IDICE, and the 1st Battalion took high ground northwest of LA CIVETTA. In this area it was necessary to clear the enemy from each of the scattered farm houses, and tank and tank destroyer elements were brought up to aid in this work and to establish and consolidate positions.

The steady pressure exerted by the Regiment was forcing the enemy back from a line he was attempting to hold in this sector on ridges west of CASTELNUOVO di BISANO. On 9 October he lost VILLA di CASSANO (933266) and VILLA (937264), east of the TORRENT, and he was now forced to withdraw to the next line of commanding terrain features - FORTICHE on the left, and the ridge running from FIUMETTO (931284) to LA TORRE (939288) and CASONE (944290) on the right.

On 6, 7, and 8 October the 337th Infantry cleared the enemy from the area to its front while preparing for the attack on the MONTERENZIO MASS. The Regiment was receiving maximum support from the 762nd Tank Battalion (minus Company D), with the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion (minus Company A) attached. Elements of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions remained in positions protecting the Regiment's right flank, while other elements of the 3rd Battalion were capturing VILLA di SASSONERO and the locality at 972240 on 6 October. From the northwest heavy machine gun and small arms fire was received from Hill 408 (937257) by the CASA dei BARTOLETTI. Elements of the 1st Battalion held a line south of PALIGNA, from 950260 to 945260. On 7 October the 3rd Battalion cleared the ridge from point 407 (955256) northeast to IL POGGERE (953257), and a counterattack against these elements was broken up by cannon company fire though some ground was lost. Elements of the 2nd Battalion occupied CASA MILITA (959251).

On 8 October the 85th Reconnaissance Troop, attached to the 337th Infantry, moved to positions to protect the Division's right flank and maintain contact with the 88th Division. A strongpoint was immediately established at the road junction at 972237, where the road leading northeast from VILLA di SASSONERO joins the road running beside the TORRENTE SILLARO. The Regiment sent patrols towards PALIGNA and Hill 424 (952257). Hill 407 (955256), which had been recaptured by the enemy the night before, was again seized by our troops and many prisoners were taken.

During this period the Regiment had felt out the enemy's defenses, but the attack on the MONTERENZIO MASS had been postponed on Division order until the exposed flanks of the Regiment were covered by the advance of the adjacent units. It was known that Hill 578 was well defended and garrisoned by a large force. Moreover, this hill dominating the mass, was the center of a system of defenses extending along the ridge from SCARUGLIO (948273), through PALAZZO (945283), to POGGIOLI (953286). The enemy also occupied positions on Hill 528 (945288) and Hill 572 (945276).

At 1615 hours 8 October the 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry was attached to the 337th Infantry to aid in the attack. At 0600 hours 9 October the Regiment jumped off, with elements of the 3rd Battalion on the right, the 1st Battalion in the center, and the 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry on the left. The 2nd Battalion, 337th Infantry remained in reserve. The attacking troops were immediately met by machine gun fire and heavy mortar barrages from Hill 470

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(942257), and the enemy stubbornly resisted all advances towards PALMONA and LA VILLA. The fighting continued on through the night, and before dawn the 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry had captured Hill 452 (932266) and LA VILLA. It appeared that the enemy was weakest on our left, and during the night the 2nd Battalion was moved up for an attack in that area.

By now the wet weather, the terrain, the bad roads, and the persistent delaying tactics of the enemy had appreciably slowed the advance of the 85th and of the adjacent divisions. In order to penetrate the enemy positions and to continue the attack to the north II Corps launched a coordinated attack at 0800 hours 10 October making the main effort on the right in the sector of the 88th Division. The Division on its part was to assist the advance of the 85th by seizing ridges at 970265 (COLLE I MATROLI DI SOPRA) and at 985288, south of SAN CLEME DI RIGNANO. The 91st Division was also to assist the 85th by capturing the ridge near 906288, west of MONTE DELLE FORMICHE, and after the capture of FORMICHE by the 85th Division the 91st would be prepared to outflank LIVERGIANO (874296), on Highway 65, from the east. The maximum air effort was to be made, with emphasis on targets in the 85th and 88th Division zones.

On the right, the 337th Infantry (with the 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry attached) was to attack north to capture the Division objective, Hill 578 (947281) on MONTERENZIO and Hill 622 (956308) and Hill 602 (956007) in the vicinity of SANTA ANNA (955307), four kilometers to the northeast. On the left, the 338th Infantry (-) would initially make its main effort to capture MONTE DELLE FORMICHE.

Elements of the German 98th Infantry Division had been appearing recently on the Division front, as well as elements of the 65th Infantry Division. The newly arrived units and reinforcements were now concentrated to defend FORMICHE and MONTERENZIO. The latter mass was defended by elements of the 1st Battalion, 117th Grenadier Regiment, 98th Infantry Division; elements of the 1st Battalion, 147th Grenadier Regiment, 65th Infantry Division; the Loos Kampfgruppe (remnants of the 132nd Grenadier Regiment, 44th Infantry Division); and elements of the 362nd Engineer Battalion. FORMICHE was defended by elements of the 2nd Battalion, 267th Grenadier Regiment, 94th Infantry Division; elements of the 2nd Battalion, 147th Grenadier Regiment; the 14th Company, 956th Grenadier Regiment; and elements of the 362nd Fusilier Battalion and of the 362nd Anti-Tank Battalion.

The enemy tactics remained the same, stubborn and determined delaying actions from nearly over available position. He continued to use artillery to harass our supply lines and against our newly captured positions. He was also using tanks and self-propelled guns to fire upon our advancing elements from concealed positions. Our units were nevertheless successful in advancing, and in taking large groups of prisoners. There was a considerable number of desertions among the enemy, particularly of troops of non-German origin.

The attack by the 337th Infantry, reinforced, on MONTERENZIO developed into movement around the right of the mountain to cut off reinforcements to the garrison on the crest, while other elements attacked frontally and to the left. At 0800 hours 10 October the Regiment attacked with four Battalions abreast - (from right to left) the 3rd Battalion, the 1st Battalion, the 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry, and the 2nd Battalion. The mud prevented bringing tanks up to aid in the attack. After reaching a point, 953264, near ZELLO, the 3rd Battalion established a road block on the west bank of the SILLARO at 962259. The 1st Battalion pushed ahead towards PALMONA and two hills to the north just south of the MONTERENZIO slopes - Hill 528 (946268), and Hill 409 (940272). PALMONA held out during the day, but Hill 528 fell to a surprise attack without a shot and the entire garrison was captured. On the left, the advance of the 2nd Battalion, 337th Infantry was coordinated with that of the 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry. Advancing towards objectives west of MONTERENZIO these elements captured three localities on the southwest verges - Hill 349 (930275), MOLENTTO (927279), on the east bank

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of the IDICE, and Hill 362 (933279) to the east. Very heavy artillery concentrations now fell on the newly occupied positions.

At 0700 hours 11 October the attack was resumed with the four Battalions still abreast. After a day of hard fighting the 3rd Battalion captured ZELLO (955265), a strong point from which machine gun fire had held up our advance for nearly two days. Hill 572 (945276), the southern crest of the pass dominated by Hill 578, was also taken by the 1st Battalion, and most of the peak LIANO (937279) and Hill 520 (939281) were cleared of the enemy. The 2nd Battalion fought bitterly in taking LIANO, and at the end of the day's fighting the 2nd Battalion, relieved by the 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry, passed to Regimental reserve.

On 12 October the enemy resistance continued fierce, mortar and artillery fire meeting all elements advancing over the hills and draws. Tanks were now brought up to fire against Hill 578, but the entrenched enemy (1st Company, 117th Grenadier Regiment; 1st Company, 147th Grenadier Regiment; and 3rd Company, 147th Grenadier Regiment) held their positions and elements of the 1st Battalion could make no headway against them. Advance elements reached the church below the crest, but were trapped by machine gun and mortar fire, and this fire also prevented bringing assistance to these troops. The 3rd Battalion moved from north of ZELLO over rough terrain to capture Hill 418 (968271); then, passing to the right of Hill 578 at Dark, captured and occupied the village of POGGIOLI (962287), cutting the only road leading north from the MONTERENZIO crest. Here they dug in, and thus were in a position to prevent the enemy from bringing up replacements and supplies to the troops on the mountain.

At 1900 hours 12 October the 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry was relieved from attachment to the 337th Infantry and reverted to the parent unit.

The 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry occupied positions on Hill 572 (945276). There they resisted strong enemy pressure, receiving heavy machine gun fire on both flanks. At night, elements of the Battalion, attacking north and northwest, captured Hill 471 (942282) and Hill 468 (943283), along the road coming into MONTERENZIO from the west.

By 13 October two companies of the 3rd Battalion were firmly dug in at POGGIOLI, and companies from the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were moved to positions to protect the Regiment's right flank. The 1st Battalion, with tank support, now attacked Hill 578 from the northeast, the south, and the west. Two companies swung wide to the right to attack from the northeast and gained a measure of surprise. Late in the morning elements of the 1st Battalion with the supporting tanks overran the hill and drove off the enemy who left many dead on the mountain. Small groups of prisoners were taken. In the afternoon the Battalion consolidated positions. Later on three small counterattacks were beaten off by elements of the 3rd Battalion at POGGIOLI, and nearby positions were topped up.

The 338th Infantry (-) with K Company, 339th Infantry attached, met heavy resistance when it pushed off through the mists on 10 October towards FORMICHE and MONTE DELLA VIGIA. FORMICHE, rising steeply to sheer cliffs which blocked all but one approach from the south, dominated the nearby hills and the IDICE valley. The tower of SANTA MARIA DI EMMA was at the summit. The 3rd Battalion captured two hills (Hill 265 - 923274 and Hill 251 - 924276), on the left of the IDICE dorsa from SAVAZZA (926274), and two villages on the road to the west of these hills, UCELLARE (916270) and CAMPAGNE (916276). Farther north on the same road the 2nd Battalion captured MICKERATOIO (916286), at the base of FORMICHE.

Attacking next day, with elements of the 3rd Battalion on the right and elements of the 2nd on the left, the advance was continued, and Point 366 (922285) and CASA DEL MONTE (912287) were captured. Once the fortified houses in this area were cleared the way was open for the advance on FORMICHE. One company of the 2nd Battalion worked its way to the crest on the afternoon of

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11 October, overcoming heavy enemy resistance. Other elements of the 2nd Battalion moved up to help defend the newly won positions after the enemy had launched two counterattacks which inflicted heavy losses on our troops, but the positions were retained and the enemy was driven off. When these counterattacks failed, the enemy withdrew north towards the hills near CROCETTA (917304).

At 1500 hours 11 October the 3rd Battalion, 339th Infantry was attached to the 338th, and moved to a forward assembly area near CASTELNUOVO DI BISANO. At that time F Company, 339th Infantry relieved K Company of that Regiment.

On 12 October the 3rd Battalion, 338th Infantry advanced to TRE POCCHI (922290), at a cart road junction below the eastern slopes of FORMICHE where the enemy was strongly engaged in the cellars of houses. Here, however, the advancing troops were exposed to intense artillery and mortar fire, much of it coming from near BACCANELLO (931296), and the Battalion withdrew to cover. Later in the day elements of the Battalion advanced along the northern ridge of FORMICHE to seize Hills 468 (916290) and 475 (917299). They were supported by six tanks which had moved over difficult terrain along the cliffs to Hill 525 (917293). The 2nd Battalion meanwhile consolidated its positions on FORMICHE.

During the night of 13/14 October the 339th Infantry moved forward from reserve to relieve the 337th Infantry (minus I Company). That company remained in position on Hill 418 (956271) to protect the Division right flank (till at 2100 hours 14 October it reverted to the control of its parent Regiment). At 2300 hours 13 October the command of the right regimental zone passed to the Commanding Officer of the 339th Infantry. At 0001 hours 14 October the 85th Reconnaissance Troop was detached from the 337th Infantry and passed to Division Reserve near FRA SINETA (882168). At the same time Company B (-), 84th Chemical Weapons Battalion, relieved from attachment to the 337th Infantry, was attached to the 339th, also supported by Company A, 752nd Tank Battalion and 1 platoon, Company B, 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

The 339th Infantry attacked towards the next Division objectives, Hill 602 (959307) and Hill 622 (956308) in the vicinity of SANTA ANNA. The 1st Battalion, having relieved elements of the 337th Infantry at POGGIOLI, pushed forward and advanced almost to Hill 537 (958290) by daylight 14 October. The 2nd Battalion relieving elements of the 337th Infantry on MONTEDIZIO, ran up against stubborn resistance and made very little progress in its attack to the north.

It was now apparent that Hill 518 (950295) would prove a center of enemy resistance. On 14 October the 1st Battalion moved forward against stubborn opposition on the high ridge dominating this sector, capturing localities on the east - Hill 466 (960287), MIGLIARINA (959292), and COLLE DI PIAZZA (964296). The 2nd Battalion advanced towards Hill 518 and to the immediate right, capturing LUGO (955294) and POLCA (952294). The 3rd Battalion, released from attachment to the 338th Infantry, remained in Regimental reserve, protecting the right flank.

The 1st Battalion on 15 October mopped up scattered resistance in the COLLE DI PIAZZA area and on Hill 515 (959291), and by afternoon the 2nd Battalion had captured CASA NOVA (945293), just below Hill 536 (945295). At dark the 1st Battalion pushed off to attack Hill 622 (956308) and Hill 602 (959307), the dominant heights in the Regimental zone. The 2nd Battalion to the west was to continue its assaults against Hill 536 (945295) and Hill 528 (947296) to clear the way for the attack on Hill 518. The 3rd Battalion, now committed to the assault, was to move along the high ground to Hill 503 (962295) north of MIGLIARINA; then cross-country to Hill 571 (963312). As they pushed off these elements met stubborn resistance, and fighting continued through the night.

Meanwhile, the 338th Infantry had also met determined resistance since capturing FORMICHE. Attacking on 13 October the 3rd Battalion, taking over the 2nd Battalion sector, carried the main effort during the day, advancing towards MONTE DELLA VIGNA (917312), north of FORMICHE and west of the IDICE, while the

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1st Battalion pushed towards LA TORRE (938288), due east from FORMICHE on the right of the stream. The 2nd Battalion occupied defensive positions in the vicinity of FORMICHE.

Advancing from Hill 525 (916293) in the early morning, part of the 3rd Battalion, supported by tanks, pushed past the VAL PIOLA (915294) to reach Hill 475 (917299). Heavy small arms fire converging on them from three sides caused them to pull back, however, to Hill 488 (916295). In the afternoon these troops advanced to the northeast, clearing Hill 451, BAPAZZA (921298), which, because of the lack of cover, they had attacked under the protection of a smoke screen. They then reoccupied Hill 475. In its advance towards LA TORRE the 1st Battalion captured two hills, Hill 378 (938286) and Hill 392 (935285), and elements occupied houses on the east side of the road in FIUMETTO (938284). The enemy held houses on the west side, and fighting continued during the night.

At this period the 34th Infantry Division was moving forward to take up positions in the line between the 85th and 91st Divisions. At 2400 hours 13 October the 1st Battalion, 168th Infantry Regiment, 34th Infantry Division was attached to the 338th Infantry and prepared to move into defensive positions held by the 2nd Battalion, 338th Infantry on FORMICHE.

During 14 October FIUMETTO was cleared of enemy elements by the 1st Battalion, and in the afternoon one company of the 3rd Battalion, after dislodging the enemy from his positions in the collars of TRE POGGI (923290), prepared to advance towards CROCEZIA (917303).

The 2nd Battalion, relieved at 0400 hours 15 October by the 1st Battalion, 168th Infantry, moved through the 3rd Battalion, 338th Infantry and continued the attack north at dawn. The 1st Battalion captured LA TORRE, Hill 461 (938288), and Hill 392 (935285) and advanced to Hill 516 (943297). The company at TRE POGGI advanced beyond UGNANO (924294). The 3rd Battalion was now relieved by elements of the 168th Infantry Regiment, 34th Infantry Division, and command of the Regimental sector to the west of Highway 6531 passed to the Commanding General, 34th Infantry Division at 2400 hours 15 October. The relieved elements moved to assembly areas near FIUMETTO and SAVAZZA, and prepared to continue the attack north. The 1st Battalion continued to consolidate positions to the east of Highway 6531.

The enemy during the past week had resisted stubbornly and effectively, and gave no sign of a voluntary withdrawal. Field Order 23, this Headquarters, issued on 14 October, further stated: "It is believed that [the enemy's] stubborn delaying tactics will be continued as he withdraws slowly to the north and that he may attempt a determined defense of DOLOGNA." The plan was now formulated for II Corps to attack on the morning of 16 October, making its main effort in the zone of the 85th Division. The Division's primary objectives were Hill 622 (956308) and Hill 602 (959307) near SANTA ANNA (958306) and MONTE FANO (955322) and the VIGNALE Ridge (9632).

After fighting through the night the 339th Infantry found the enemy still resisting stubbornly on the morning of 16 October. The 1st Battalion by-passed RONCO BRITTI (956305) before dawn and then pushed on to capture Hill 622 (956308) (SANTA ANNA) where they immediately organized positions on the heights. The 2nd Battalion was still fighting for Hill 536 (945295) and Hill 528 (947296), south of CASA NOVA. The resistance was determined and it was necessary to wipe out isolated points of resistance one at a time. Most of these positions were cleared out by dark, but Hill 516 (950295) remained in the enemy's control. The 3rd Battalion meanwhile advanced from Hill 622 (956308), now occupied by the 1st, in order to strike northeast to seize Hill 602 (959307).

During the night the attack on Hill 516 continued, and by 0230 hours 17 October elements of the 2nd Battalion had captured the hill. The 2nd Battalion now passed to reserve, while the 1st Battalion took over the left zone. The 3rd Battalion advanced on the right. Company I, 338th Infantry was attached to the 339th, and occupied defensive positions on the left flank.

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West of SANTA ANNA, Hill 590 (953307) now threatened to hold up the further advance of the Regiment. In the late afternoon of 17 October the 3rd Battalion succeeded in taking Hill 571 (953312), after attacking along the ridge leading northeast from Hill 602 (953307) blocking out several machine gun emplacements. After positions here had been consolidated the reserve company of the Battalion passed through the forward elements and continued the attack along the ridge towards COLLE CASTELVECCHIO (953316).

Elements of the 1st Battalion, reinforced by one company of the 2nd, attacked Hill 590 (953307) during the afternoon and night, but without success. Other elements of the 1st Battalion meanwhile moved forward through SANTA ANNA to attack Hill 571 (953312), passing north of Hill 590 (953307).

On 18 October early in the morning elements of the 2nd Battalion had cleared COLLE BRANCINATICO (954305) and elements of the 3rd Battalion secured Hill 571 (953312) and dug in in order to repel counterattacks. Elements of the 3rd Battalion now pushed ahead and took up positions on that hill.

By 18 October Hill 590 had fallen after repeated assaults by elements of the 1st and 2nd Battalions and in conjunction with elements of the 2nd Battalion, 338th Infantry. By dark the 1st Battalion had captured and secured Hill 571 (953312). The 2nd Battalion was now in the vicinity of Hill 574, at RONCO BRITTI.

Meanwhile, the 338th Infantry was advancing against steady resistance towards its objective, MONTE EMIL. On 18 October elements of the 2nd Battalion pushed forward along the IDICE, east of MONNICHIE, capturing two hills east of BACCANELLO, Hill 536 (943295) and Hill 516 (943297). Troops of the 1st Battalion captured BACCANELLO (943295) and in the night other elements of that Battalion captured Hill 482 (938296). Shortly afterwards, the 1st Battalion was relieved by elements of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, and passed to Regimental reserve near FIMETTO.

On 17 October the 2nd and 3rd Battalions continued to advance, capturing several hills and villages, and consolidating positions. The terrain in this sector was barren and rugged. The objectives were usually hills or groups of houses located on commanding ground, and the approaches offered little concealment. Attacking from one hill to another it was necessary to cross deep ravines where the footing was treacherous, and these ravines were generally covered by mortar and artillery fire. Companies attacked most commonly in a column of platoons, one covering the other's advance after patrols had first felt out the ground ahead.

In the morning the 2nd Battalion captured Hill 528 (946296), north of CASA NOVA, and three hills east of OSTERIA (Hill 477 - 942298; Hill 404 - 939303; Hill 402 - 938305). In the afternoon, supported by tanks and tank destroyers, elements of the Battalion occupied COLLE VAGTIE (950307), between SANTA ANNA on the east, and COLLE ACQUABONA (945307), the next hill to the left. During the night positions on the ridge connecting these hills were consolidated. The 3rd Battalion, however, advancing with tanks and meeting only light resistance, occupied OSTERIA and COLLE ROCCA (933307), along the road on the east bank of the river.

On 18 October enemy resistance in this sector was intensified. After elements of the 2nd Battalion, in coordination with the 338th Infantry, had completed the capture of Hill 590 (953307), the Battalion pushed ahead to take two other high points, COLLE CUNEI (952311), and the nose at 950312. The 3rd Battalion maintained holding positions in BACCANELLO and on Hill 402 (938305).

On 18 October orders had been given the 338th Infantry to aid the 88th Division on the right in its advance on MONTE GELINDE (996324), about three kilometers north-east of CASTELVECCHIO, and about the same distance to the northeast of the present position of the advance elements of the Regiment. A blocking force would be employed near COLLE CASTELVECCHIO (966316) to insure the retention of that hill. The Regiment would then advance to capture two

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high points west of GRANDE, Point 425 (976324) and Point 386 (982325) and it was given the additional mission of protecting the left and rear of the 88th Division as far east as MONTE CUCCOLI (933320).

To accomplish these orders the 339th Infantry on 19 October changed the direction of its attack sharply to the east. The 3rd Battalion was most immediately concerned. By evening that Battalion had captured Hill 480 (972316) and Hill 454 (974316). In doing this it had cleared the enemy from positions on the ridge extending east of CASTELVECCHIO where they had previously held up the advance of the 3rd Battalion, 350th Infantry towards the road junction at 974316. Contact was now made with elements of the 350th Infantry at 978319, near COLLE MARZOLINO, and moving north after dark the 3rd Battalion captured Hill 454 (977319). Preparations were now made for these troops to advance in conjunction with the 3rd Battalion, 350th Infantry in order to protect the left and rear of that Regiment.

During this period the 2nd Battalion, 338th had come up through Hill 571 (963312) and CASTELVECCHIO, moving towards COLLE del VENTO (966319). This hill was well defended by machine guns firing from stone houses, and several of the approaches were also covered by machine guns similarly placed in houses on neighboring hills. Attacks on these positions during the day failed to drive out the enemy, and an attack after dark also failed.

The next day the enemy still held out at COLLE del VENTO, and the 2nd Battalion forced its way past the enemy on that hill to occupy the locality at 969323. The 3rd Battalion meanwhile, on 20 October, made no attack but sent patrols forward to probe the enemy positions.

On 20 October, the 337th Infantry ordered the 2nd Battalion to move forward to secure MONTE CUCCOLI, relieving the 3rd Battalion, 350th Infantry, 88th Infantry Division at 2030 hours. Elements were sent ahead to occupy Hill 386 (983325), but withdrew before daylight when they found their advanced positions exposed.

On 19 October the 338th Infantry had made important progress in its advance on MONTE FANO. In the late morning the 2nd Battalion (minus F Company) moved from the vicinity of Hill 590 (953300), passed to the east of Hill 571 (956314), and prepared to attack FANO from the southeast. F Company had occupied Hill 471 (949317), meeting no resistance, and was in position to attack from the southwest. In the late afternoon the coordinated attack was begun. Resistance was stiff and determined. Leading elements, however, reached the south slopes of the mountain which they succeeded in holding against heavy enemy fire. During the night the enemy launched a counterattack from the northeast and northwest with heavy small arms and mortar fire and fire from self-propelled guns, but the attack was repulsed. Remaining elements of the Battalion then advanced to secure the summit and by 0600 hours 20 October FANO was securely occupied.

The 3rd Battalion had meanwhile occupied Hill 376 (940313), and COLLE SPETTRA (933312). Snipers were also cleared from COLLE dei SANADINI (928310), and troops then occupied that locality in order to protect the Regiment's left flank. The next day the Regiment improved its positions by local advances, and sent patrols forward.

Except for patrolling there was little activity in the sector of the 339th Infantry during 21 October, but at 2300 hours the 2nd Battalion resumed the attack on Hill 552 (963323), east of CASSETTA di VIGNALE (964324). Several houses in both these localities were fortified, and were stubbornly defended. Heavy fog hampered the advance and units were unable to determine their exact positions though white phosphorous shells were used to mark reference points. Newly arrived reinforcements, the 190th Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, attached to the Lehr Brigade, offered severe resistance to our patrols approaching COLLE RIO DI AIANO (964321). Heavy fighting took place here and at CASSETTA di VIGNALE.

A Company, 337th Infantry, attached to the 2nd Battalion, had now moved forward and relieved elements of the 350th Infantry at FANETO (986319). The relief was completed, and the command of the zone previously held by the 3rd Battalion, 350th Infantry passed to the Commanding Officer, 337th Infantry at 0210 hours 22 October. The other elements of the Regiment (except the 2nd Battalion, still holding positions on CUCCOLI) remained in Division Reserve.

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On 21 October further orders were issued to guide the Division in coordinating its attack with that of the 38th Division on the right. An attack was to be made on the night of 22/23 October to capture Hill 459 (960332), north of PARROCCHIA di VIGNALE (964327). When that should be taken, other attacking forces would swing northeast to take MONTE MEZZANO (967344) in coordination with the capture of Hill 560 (960332) by the 38th Division.

The advance towards Hill 459 (960332) was difficult. The 3rd Battalion, 25th Jaeger Regiment, 42nd Light Infantry Division had just been committed in this area, and was fighting stubbornly to hold its positions. By nightfall the 339th Infantry had secured COLLE RIO DI ALME, after the town had changed hands twice. In the late afternoon elements of the 1st Battalion, after passing through the 2nd, had retaken the village, and other elements of that Battalion moved from there along the ridge toward Hill 459 (960332). This advance was made with less difficulty than expected, but at dawn 23 October a fierce counterattack killed or captured most of the advance elements on the hill. The enemy broke through from the north and west and overran our position before reinforcements could be brought up. It was now obvious that the enemy held the reverse slopes of the hill in force.

Meanwhile, on 22 October the 2nd Battalion, 337th Infantry continued to hold its positions on CUCCOLI, and elements pushed forward to occupy and organize MONTE CASTELLINO (960334), a kilometer southeast of MEZZANO. The next day the 1st Battalion moved forward to positions south of Hill 560 (960332), and after dark attacked along the high ground towards MEZZANO. But the seizure of that objective waited upon the capture of COLLE RIVIE (964334) and the mopping up of elements still holding out on CASTELLINO. At IL POGGIO (000338) approximately 50 enemy attacked the right flank of the leading company, but were driven off. Artillery and mortar concentrations followed the attack, and the Battalion withdrew from their exposed positions to a locality near COLLE RIVIE, and made preparations to resume the attack. COLLE RIVIE itself had been cleared of enemy by the 2nd Battalion, and elements of this Battalion took over the defense of CUCCOLI after clearing out the resistance on CASTELLINO.

The day of 24 October was spent by the 337th Infantry chiefly in patrolling and preparing for an attack at night. At that time the enemy was cleared from IL POGGIO by the 1st Battalion, which then went on to capture MEZZANO by 0600 hours 25 October. The 2nd Battalion captured BOSSANO (960340), and attacked enemy units at the base of Hill 444 (960343). Positions in this area were consolidated throughout 25 October. Enemy gathering for counterattacks on our positions on the south slopes of Hill 444 were twice driven off. At this time instructions from the Army Commander ordered the defense of the positions now held, and the Regiment undertook to straighten its lines.

On the left the 338th Infantry had been meeting the same kind of stubborn resistance encountered by the other Regiments. On 22 October the 2nd Battalion held its positions on MONTE FANO, and moved elements forward to attack ORE (948325). The 1st Battalion relieved the 3rd in positions in the neighborhood of CASA LAMA (941315), Hill 376 (940313), COLLE SPETTINI (933312), and the COLLE dei SANADINI (920310). The 3rd Battalion then assembled in Regimental Reserve. Throughout 23 and 24 October the Regiment continued to improve its positions and sent out patrols to maintain contact with the enemy. Elements of the 2nd Battalion moving up to attack OREGA encountered stiff enemy resistance, and were further held up by minefields in the draw near 9532. They finally withdrew to positions at 951324 and 957315 on the slopes of FANO. The next day positions were further strengthened.

At this time the enemy was firing especially intense artillery concentrations against our forward positions. Accordingly, counterbattery missions were being more frequently fired by Division Artillery. There was, however, a critical shortage in artillery, mortar, and cannon company ammunition and it became necessary to allocate the available stores for small scale harassing and defensive fires. To compensate partially for the rationing, maximum use was made of the 752nd Tank Battalion for harassing fires.

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Period 26 October - 31 October

On 26 October the Division assumed the active defense of the positions it then held. The enemy resistance of the last week or more had been effective in slowing or halting our advance, and Corps and Division at this time did not have sufficient supplies of ammunition and enough infantry replacements to permit a continuance of the attack with the maximum effort. Moreover, the troops were fatigued from the long, hard fighting over the rugged terrain in miserable weather. Accordingly, a period of defense now began, preparatory to continuing the attack. Barbed wire entanglements were constructed, mines laid, and trip flares were set up. Patrolling was continued and outposts established as the situation allowed.

At this time the condition of the roads was critical. Many roads and trails were impassable to motor vehicles, and even mules on occasion were unable to pass through. Some of these broke their legs in trying to extricate themselves from the mud in which they became mired, and it was necessary to shoot them. In order to maintain the roads the 310th Engineer Battalion was assisted by the 85th Reconnaissance Troop.

During this period special emphasis was placed upon anti-tank defense, since it was known that enemy reinforcements in this sector were equipped with tanks and self-propelled guns. The Division Artillery Commander was responsible for coordinating plans involving the use of demolitions and mines, the coordination of the artillery with the tank and tank destroyer elements, and the establishment of a warning system.

On 27 October orders were given to establish a general line of defenses running west from CASTELLARO to CASETTA di VIGILANTE, PIZZANO (951325), and Hill 437 (945322). Strong patrol action was to be maintained as far forward as a line running westward from PIZZANO to Hill 424 (988343), Hill 459 (963332), and to Hill 365 (949326).

The enemy had meanwhile continually brought up replacements and reinforcements, and the 42nd Light Infantry Division, elements of which had first appeared on the Division front on 22 October, took over an increasingly large part of the enemy sector. But elements of the 362nd Infantry Division and the Lehr Brigade were still opposing the Division at the end of the month.

The 337th Infantry, which had repulsed a heavy counterattack on PIZZANO on 26 October, the next day was ordered to withdraw from the vicinity of that mountain and IL POGGIO to defend a line between COLLE ROVINE, CASTELLARO, Hill 305 (981333), and Hill 425 (973324). These orders were given in order to withdraw the Regiment's positions to a line more closely tied in with those of the flanking units.

After dark on 27 October the 337th Infantry began the execution of plans for reorganization of its defensive positions. The 1st Battalion withdrew from positions in PIZZANO to an assembly area near MIGLIARIMA (959291). Elements of the 2nd Battalion near the church at 989341 withdrew to CASTELLARO, and elements of the 3rd Battalion near IL POGGIO withdrew to positions defending the CUSCO LI ridge. The other regiments continued to improve their positions, and minor adjustments were made in Regimental boundaries. Elements of the supporting tank companies continued to support the infantry from indirect firing positions. The line now held by the Division was approximately 14 1/2 kilometers north of the positions held at the beginning of the month.

On 29 October it appeared that the enemy was withdrawing slowly in front of the Eighth Army though fiercely defending his positions in front of the Fifth Army. The Division continued its mission of maintaining an active defense generally, along the present front lines.

Units of the Division were ordered to patrol aggressively in order to contain the enemy and to seek out soft spots in his defenses. Raids were to be conducted to maintain identifications of units opposing us. Continuous vigilant counterreconnaissance was also to be undertaken in order to prevent infiltration by the enemy. Once the defensive positions had been stabilized, reserves were to be withdrawn for rest and rehabilitation, in preparation for an early resumption of the offensive.

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At 2022 hours 29 October the boundary between the 330th and 339th Infantry was adjusted to include the west slopes of COLLE CASTELVECCHIO in the 330th zone.

On 30 October orders were issued to govern the conduct of a program of reorganization and rehabilitation. Equipment was to be repaired or replaced, and the men were to be provided as much rest and recreation as the situation would allow. From 31 October to 19 November the Regiments, by a system of rotation and relief, were to grant a six-day rest period to each Battalion. Training was also to be conducted for the elements relieved from defensive positions. Lessons learned in combat were to be reviewed, and training conducted in the laying and removal of minefields and in tactics of small units. A special intensive program was to be conducted for replacements.

At 1200 hours 31 October the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion (minus Company A) was relieved from attachment to the 752nd Tank Battalion, and attached to Division Artillery.

The rains of October had presented serious problems. Roads and bridges were frequently washed out, and landslides many times blocked traffic. Moreover, it was necessary to drain the roads of the water and the surplus mud thrown up by the traffic, and carried down by the rain from the hills. Because of the scanty network of roads it was necessary to establish a strict schedule of one-way traffic in many areas, alternating the direction of traffic at regular intervals. Convoys were normally limited to no more than nine vehicles.

Supplies were nevertheless brought up on schedule. Towards the end of the month, however, dumps were placed in the forward areas where the troops had access to five-days' emergency supplies of food and ammunition. These were established to meet the special emergencies caused by flash floods. Assault boats were also provided for use in crossing the swollen streams in order to bring supplies to the troops cut off from the road net.

Many bridges had of course been demolished by the enemy, and some of the temporary bridges washed out. The 310th Engineer Battalion and supporting engineers constructed a large number of by-passes and bridges. In an extreme example, in one stretch of Highway 3531, between POGGIO and FIUMETTO, a distance of ten kilometers, it was necessary to construct nine Bailey Bridges.

Mules, called on for all other purposes, could not be used satisfactorily to evacuate the wounded, and hand litter carriers for half a mile or more were often necessary. Twelve litter bearers were sometimes required to complete a carry.

Despite the rain and overcast skies air units flew 72 missions in support of the Division during October, though during the last week of the month no mission could be flown. Targets were called for through "Rover Joe", air force personnel stationed in the forward areas. Bombing missions were directed against the Division objectives as well as against enemy rear installations and targets of opportunity. Propaganda leaflets were dropped from planes, and shells containing propaganda leaflets were fired by Division Artillery.

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During the month 1 officer and 376 enlisted men were killed in action, 59 officers and 1494 enlisted men wounded, and 1 officer and 298 enlisted men were reported missing in action. During this period 12 officers and 1322 enlisted men were received as replacements.

At the end of the month the effective strength of the Division amounted to 702 officers, 43 warrant officers, and 12,540 enlisted men.

During October 1437 prisoners of war passed through the Division Cago.

John E. Coulter
JOHN E. COULTER,
Major General, U. S. Army,
Commanding.

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85th Division Reports

(Not to be taken into the field)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~APO 85, U. S. Army,
20 January 1945.85TH INFANTRY DIVISIONREPORT OF OPERATIONS - NOVEMBER 1944

CLASSIFICATION (CANCELED)

Restudied CHANGED TO 4 Army

Date RLB

Period 1 November - 22 November

In November the Division continued to defend the line established in the last week of October. The Main Line of Resistance extended from COLLE ROVINE (L995335), west to MONTE CASTELLARO (985334), across the CUCCOLI RIDGE (985320), west through CASETTA DI VIGNALE (965325), MONTE FANO (955322), south of PIZZANO at 952323, near the COLLE ZANARELLO at 945321, to a locality near CANOVETTA at 935319. All three Regiments remained on the line, continuing the active defense of their sectors.

At 0100A 1 November Company D, 61th Chemical Weapons Battalion was relieved from attachment to the Division. At 0945A 2 November Company C, 100th Chemical Weapons Battalion was attached to the Division. The second platoon of C Company was attached to the 336th Infantry at 2315A 2 November, and the remainder of the company was attached to the 339th Infantry at 0430A 3 November. The 752nd Tank Battalion (minus Company D) and the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion (minus Company A) remained attached to the Division. The Tank Destroyer Battalion (-) and the Assault Gun Platoon, 752nd Tank Battalion were attached to Division Artillery.

During the last days of October comparatively few prisoners had been taken, and the Division did not possess full knowledge of the enemy's dispositions. It nevertheless appeared that the 1st Battalion, 200th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, 90th Panzer Grenadier Division was on MONTE BELLANO (996344), with the Alarm Company, 44th Infantry Division (made up of personnel drawn from the 131st, 132nd and 134th Grenadier Regiments) in the same area; the 1st Battalion, 577th Grenadier Regiment, 306th Infantry Division, north of COLLE ROVINE (995334) and on Hill 566 (998332). The 2nd Battalion, 200th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, held positions on MONTE CASTELLARO (985334); the 1st Battalion, Lehr Brigade was west of Hill 444 (988344); the 3rd Battalion, 25th Jaeger Regiment, 42nd Light Infantry Division north of Hill 459 (968331); the Battle Group Schlageter attached to the 362nd Fusilier Battalion, and the Battalion itself in positions east and west of Highway 6531 between the 93rd and 95th Bastings.

During this period contact with the enemy was maintained chiefly by night patrols, which were sent out regularly. The opposing forces undertook no major offensive actions, and were each generally content to maintain their positions. Patrols and raids were the chief offensive activities of the infantry.

The weather in this region varied from one day to the next. There were occasional clear spells, but fog, rain and snow were the rule. During this period it was estimated there was twice the amount of rainfall normally encountered in November. Nevertheless, because of the frequent clear spells, in limited areas supporting aviation was able to fly missions on approximately half the days of the period.

Had continued to hamper the maintenance of supplies, and mule trains were still indispensable. Landslides were also to be reckoned with, disrupting traffic and endangering installations. It was necessary to repair the roads continually, and the 316th Engineer Battalion was assisted in this work by the 85th Reconnaissance Troop until 11 November, when the Troop passed to Division reserve.

In accordance with orders given on 30 October the units of the Division undertook to provide periods of rest and rehabilitation for individual battalions while continuing the defense of the sector. Each battalion, through a system of rotation, received at least six days' relief in the regimental reserve areas. During the period of relief training was conducted and lessons learned in combat were reviewed. Replacements received special instruction.

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The regiments conducted aggressive patrolling to maintain contact with the enemy and to prevent infiltration of our lines. Following the policy established during the last of October each regiment sent out raiding parties with missions to capture prisoners at least twice a week for the purpose of obtaining unit identifications. In approaching enemy positions our patrols encountered minefields along the roads and trails and in the fields and many of the approaches were blocked by wire barriers. Several houses, which the enemy occupied at certain times, but which were unoccupied at other times, were also surrounded by mines.

Ambush patrols and raiding parties frequently encountered enemy patrols, and fire fights were common. A few prisoners were taken, and these provided most of the information our units were able to obtain concerning the enemy's dispositions. Some civilians were also brought back by patrols, and many others coming through the lines supplied the units with useful information.

Patrols were frequently sent out to reconnoiter enemy outposts, houses and villages occupied or recently evacuated by the enemy. Combat patrols on occasion used sound power telephones, with which they maintained contact with their supporting forces, and next higher Headquarters. Radio was also used at appropriate times.

Patrols usually operated without artillery support. However, on occasion artillery was used for this purpose. For example, a party of nine men was given the mission of raiding German outposts at PIZZANO (951325) on the early evening of 6 November. Shortly before dusk an artillery barrage was laid upon the village to prevent the enemy from moving men into the houses before our troops had reached positions near the village.

Upon one occasion a 14 man patrol occupied a house at 95553352, northeast of PIZZANO, inside German-held territory for three days (12-14 November). Buildings a short distance away were occupied by enemy who did not know of the Americans' presence. On 14 November several civilians came to the house, informing the patrol of the strength of the Germans in three houses occupied by the enemy. That night the civilians were evacuated, and the patrol relieved. Riflemen and BAR men were then placed in firing positions throughout the house, and a blocking force was sent to the nearby road junction to prevent enemy from moving towards the building along the road.

At 2000 hours a machine gun on COLLE COLOMBARA (958326) and another from one of the three houses to the front began firing upon our patrol's position. The patrol returned the fire, and at the same time called for supporting fire over the sound power phone. At 2010 hours the Cannon Company, mortars, chemical mortars, and heavy machine guns laid down prearranged fires on the three enemy-occupied buildings and on COLLE COLOMBARA, and also laid harassing fire on PIZZANO. The enemy fired six rifle grenades at our outpost, and then ceased firing. After a brief interval when there was no fire from either side, a group of enemy was seen approaching, but it was routed by fire from the BAR's.

There were many actions of a similar kind in the probing of enemy positions and in raids.

Because of the increasingly severe restrictions on the use of ammunition the artillery units mainly confined their firing to observed missions of destruction, counterbattery and defensive fires. Enemy artillery was only moderately active, but from the vicinity of SETTEFONTI (979373) and positions north of Highway 9 daily interdiction and counterbattery missions were fired. Poor visibility hampered our observers, and good photo coverage was not always available, but a number of the enemy positions were taken under fire with the result that the enemy was compelled to move many of his gun positions.

For the first time in the present operation the enemy used mass fires of as many as 200 rounds against Division Artillery positions. When it was evident that the enemy had accurate knowledge of the location of our artillery positions, dummy guns made of old shell cases and camouflage nets were set up. These were left in position when the artillery units were relieved from the line.

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Early in November the three Regiments and Division Artillery reestablished counter-mortar sections to maintain accurate records and charts of enemy mortar positions. Troops were instructed to turn in immediately reports of enemy mortar firing, with all the pertinent information available, and this provided the means of locating and neutralizing the enemy fire.

At the beginning of the period a few civilians remained in their houses in the forward areas occupied by the Division. As the situation became stabilized more of the civilians returned to their homes from the hills and caves. However, only a few entered friendly territory from the north. Movement of civilians between unit sectors was prohibited, and civilians attempting to cross these boundaries were apprehended and screened by the Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment. In some areas, where necessary, civilians were evacuated to the rear.

Early in November plans were completed for the gradual relief of the Division. As the individual organizations were relieved, they moved to areas near GAGLIANO (9330055) or near MONTECATINI TIRRE (94002) and MISI (95207). Elements relieving parts of the Division were generally attached to the Division until at 0001A 22 November command of the Division sector passed to the 88th Infantry Division. Fighter bombers were in the air day and night to cover the relief.

At 1100A 8 November the 329th Field Artillery Battalion was relieved by the 338th Field Artillery Battalion, 38th Division Artillery, which was then attached to the Division and to the Division Artillery. At 0505A 11 November the 351st Infantry Regiment, 88th Division, was attached to the Division, and the command of its Regimental sector passed to the Commanding General, 85th Division. The Division sector now extended west of CASA DI RAZZANE (932325) to POGGIO (924326), CASERTA (915330) and the vicinity of GARGOGNANO (908334). At the same time Company C, 513th Engineer Battalion, Company C, 513th Medical Battalion, Company A, 757th Tank Battalion, and one platoon of Company C, 804th Tank Destroyer Battalion were attached with the Regiment to the Division. At this time also the 913th Field Artillery Battalion was attached to the Division and to the Division Artillery. In the 351st sector an active defense was also maintained. The chief enemy forces in this zone were elements of the 29th Panzer Grenadier Division.

At 1553A 12 November elements of the Royal Artillery, 1st British Division completed the relief of the 329th Field Artillery Battalion. At 1515A 14 November the 337th Field Artillery Battalion, 88th Division Artillery, completed the relief of the 910th Field Artillery Battalion, and at 1835A 15 November the 339th Field Artillery Battalion, 88th Division Artillery, relieved the 403rd Field Artillery Battalion. Both the 337th and 339th Field Artillery Battalions were then attached to the 85th Division and to Division Artillery.

The relief of the Regiments was also accomplished gradually. At 0540A 11 November the 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry, plus Company E, was relieved by the 1st Duke of Wellington Regiment, the command of the sector passing to the General Officer Commanding, 1st British Division at 0545A 11 November. At this time the 2nd Battalion, 337th Infantry (minus Company E) was attached to the 2nd Infantry Brigade, 1st British Division. At 1545A 11 November the command of the Battalion sector passed to the General Officer Commanding, 1st British Division, and the relief of the 337th Infantry elements was completed by elements of the 2nd North Staffordshire Battalion at 2150A 11 November.

On 19 November the 3rd Battalion and the Anti-Tank Company, 350th Infantry Regiment, 88th Division, relieved the 3rd Battalion and Anti-Tank Company, 338th Infantry. On the completion of the relief at 0535A the 88th Division elements were attached to the 338th Infantry. The 2nd Battalion, 350th Infantry meanwhile relieved the 2nd Battalion, 338th Infantry, completing the relief at 2245A. The 3rd Battalion, 350th Infantry was relieved from operational control of the 338th Infantry, reverting to the parent unit, and at 2400A 19 November command of the sector of the 338th Infantry passed to the Commanding Officer, 350th Infantry.

At 0600A 20 November Company A, 510th Engineer Battalion was detached from its parent unit and the Division, and attached to II Corps Engineers.

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At 2110A 20 November the Anti-Tank Company, 339th Infantry was relieved by the Anti-Tank Company, 349th Infantry. At 2130A 20 November the 1st Battalion, 339th Infantry was relieved in place by the 3rd Battalion, 349th Infantry, and command of the Battalion sector passed to the Commanding Officer of the 349th Infantry. At 2200A 20 November the 2nd Battalion, 339th Infantry was attached to the 349th Infantry, and the Commanding Officer, 349th Infantry assumed command of the former sector of the 339th Infantry. Also at 2200A Company C (minus one platoon) was detached from the 339th Infantry and attached to the 349th Infantry. The 349th Infantry (minus the 1st Battalion) was attached to the 85th Division at 2200A 20 November. At 2015A 21 November the 2nd Battalion, 349th Infantry and the Cannon Company relieved the corresponding elements of the 339th Infantry, which then reverted to the control of the parent unit.

At 0001A 22 November command of the Division sector passed to the Commanding General, 85th Infantry Division. At this time units of the 85th Division attached to the 35th Division reverted to the parent organization, and other attached units were relieved from attachment to the 35th and attached to the 85th Division.

Period 22 November - 30 November

On the relief of elements of the Division from the line plans were adopted to provide rest, recreation and training for the troops, and to repair and rehabilitate equipment. GAGLIANO became the Division center, and most of the units were assembled here when they were not in the MONTECATINI Rest Area.

After relief from the line each organization generally provided the first four days as a rest period, except for necessary property checks, etc. Thereafter, six hours a day were spent in training and education. Special intensive training was provided the replacements. Training areas were made available and ranges were set up for firing individual arms and crew served weapons.

Most organizations of the Division during this period moved to areas near MONTECATINI and VISTOLA for periods of approximately eight days. Members of other elements of the Division were granted four-day passes to MONTECATINI.

MONTECATINI had been established as a rest area under Fifth Army control, available to the various divisions on their relief from the line. Formerly a large resort well known for its sulphur baths, the city's hotels, casinos, theatres, restaurants, and baths were now made available to the troops.

On completion of the stay in the Rest Area organizations returned to training areas near GAGLIANO.

At 0600A 22 November Headquarters, 310th Engineer Battalion and the Headquarters and Service Company were detached from the 85th Division and attached to II Corps Engineers. B and C Companies of the Battalion were attached to 85th Division Special Troops for administrative control. On the same day the 85th Reconnaissance Troop was attached to II Corps to conduct a survey of available bivouac sites in the II Corps area.

At 0600A 23 November Company D, 310th Engineer Battalion was detached from the 85th Division, and reverted to the 310th Engineer Battalion, still under the control of II Corps.

At the end of the month the major part of the Division was in the GAGLIANO area, conducting training, and otherwise preparing for future operations.

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On 30 November the assigned strength of the Division amounted to 724 officers, 43 warrant officers, and 13,641 enlisted men. In the period from 1 to 22 November 64 enlisted men were killed in action, 10 officers and 200 enlisted men were wounded in action, and 15 enlisted men were reported missing in action. During the month the Division received 15 officers and 916 enlisted men as replacements.

From 1 to 22 November 17 prisoners of war passed through the Division Cago.

John B. Coulter
JOHN B. COULTER,
Major General, U. S. Army,
Commanding.

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to be taken into the front line

APO 85, U. S. Army,
12 March 1945.85TH DIVISION AFFIDAVIT
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REPORT ON OPERATIONS - OCTOBER 1944 - JANUARY 1945

Period 1 - 11 December 1944

By 4 December all the elements of the Division had returned from the Montecchi-Piccolo area, and were continuing training in the vicinity of Capione (1038). The troops conducted training in the tactical problems of mountain warfare. Machine ranges were set up in the nearby hills, and special emphasis was given to retreating. Much attention was placed on the establishment and operation of counter-attack organizations. A comprehensive program was carried out in establishing methods of reporting and charting enemy mortar action, and in the methods of contacting and neutralizing this fire. Emphasis was placed on the coordination of the artillery and infantry in these operations.

At this time, preparations were made for the expected return of the Division to the line in the Montecchi (L-1010) sector west of Highway 35. These plans did not materialize, though elements of the Division were moved to that general area on various missions. The 1st Battalion and the Cannon Company, 13th Infantry were detached from the Division and attached to the 1st Armored Division at 0100 3 December, and at 0100 4 December, respectively. These elements took up defensive positions in the left flank of the 1st Armored Division between L-1117 and L-1117. The 320th Field Artillery Battalion was also attached to the 1st Armored Division at 0100 3 December, and was moved to the vicinity of Basso (L-1011). The 2nd Battalion, 320th Infantry remained attached to the 1st Armored Division until 10 December, when it was relieved by the 3rd Battalion of that Regiment. The remainder of the Battalion was also preparing to move to this area. At 1700 7 December the 320th Field Artillery Battalion was attached to II Corps, taking up firing positions at L-101070 in the vicinity of Basso.

At this time, however, there were increased signs of activity on the IV Corps front, and at 0000 12 December the Division was placed on an alert status in anticipation of its use to repel a threatened attack in that sector. The 137th Regimental Combat Team was alerted to move first. This unit (minus one battalion of the 1st Tank Company, on temporary duty with II Corps) moved to the vicinity of Basso (L-1010) on 12 December. Operating at L-101011 in the vicinity of Basso's location, it was detached from the 320th Division and attached to the 13th Infantry Division at 1000 12 December.

In the early morning of 14 December the 137th Infantry also began to move west, and at the arrival at an assembly area west of Porto (L-1011) at 1000 14 December it was attached to IV Corps.

At 1000 15 December the Division (minus the 137th and 320th Regimental Combat Teams, the 1st Battalion and Cannon Company, 13th Infantry, the 320th Engineer Battalion (minus Company A), still attached to II Corps, the 137th and 106th Field Artillery Battalions) began to move to the vicinity of Basso. On arrival in this area at 0000 16 December the Division (-) was detached from II Corps and attached to IV Corps. At the same time the 137th and 106th Regimental Combat Teams reverted to Division control. The 320th Engineer Battalion (minus Companies A and B) was detached from II Corps at 1000 15 December, reverting to Division control, and completed its move to the Basso area on 16 December.

The Division was set in IV Corps control, prepared for assignment as a counterattacking force in either the sector of the 1st Infantry Division or of the 320th Infantry Division. From the east west of Basso, the Division extended a chain of machine guns, some more than five thousand feet high. The chain along the coast and the interior of the mountain range of Basso, were the most likely routes for attacking forces. In addition, the Division was given plans for the counterattacking force in either of these areas. In conformity with these plans, the Division arranged its a careful

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reconnaissance of both sectors. The 537th Infantry made continued reconnaissance of the general line of defense east of the 10 existing in the sectors of the 6th Indian and 32nd Infantry Divisions, making plans for the use of the Combat Team in coordination with the 6th Indian Division. The 537th Infantry carried on a similar reconnaissance program in cross west of the 10 existing, prepared for commitment in coordination with the 32nd Infantry Division. The 537th Reconnaissance Troop was prepared to protect the flanks of the defensive positions might be occupied, and conducted reconnaissance in coordination with the two Regiments. Guards were placed over several bridges, and elements of the Troop patrolled important roads in the Division area.

As preparations for the use of the Division were completed several of the units attached to other organizations were moved to the vicinity of Lucen and returned to Division control. The 529th Field Artillery Battalion, at 0116A 27 December, and the 403rd Field Artillery Battalion, at 1300A the same day, were detached from II Corps and returned to Division control. Still others were assigned to combat units on the IV Corps front. Moving to the vicinity of San Marcello (L-4801) on 28 December, the 530th Regimental Combat Team was detached from the Division and attached to IV Corps and Task Force 45 at 0600A 27 December upon closing in that area. Upon attachment, it formed the chief infantry element of that Force. While here the regiment engaged in active patrolling and the Cannon Company and 110th Field Artillery Battalion went into firing positions. Various defensive positions were occupied in the snow covered hills to be occupied in case of attack.

At 2100A 27 December the 529th Field Artillery Battalion was detached from the Division and placed under the operational control of the 6th Indian Division, moving to the vicinity of 235841, near Corrate. At the same time the 530th Field Artillery Battalion and the 403rd Field Artillery Battalion were detached from the Division and attached to the 32nd Infantry Division, moving, respectively, to positions near Montone, at U960395, and Morio, at Q-013072.

The units in the Montorsai area were gradually being returned to the Division. The 3rd Battalion, 536th Infantry was detached from the 1st Aired Division and II Corps at 1515A 26 December, and moved to the vicinity of Q-160032, near Rutigliano. The Cannon Company of that Regiment had been detached from the 1st Aired Division and attached to the 32nd Infantry Division at 0700A 26 December. But the next day at 0600A it reverted to the control of the Regiment, moving to the vicinity of Q-164022, near Ponte del Giglio.

The 526th Field Artillery Battalion was detached from the 32nd Division at 0600A 26 December, and on reverting to the control of the parent unit moved to the vicinity of Q-046000, near Casaliere on 30 December. At 0600A that morning it was detached from the Division, and attached to IV Corps Artillery.

At 0700A 30 December the combat elements of the Division (minus the 530th Regimental Combat Team) were placed on a two-hour alert to repel counterattacks in the sectors of either the 32nd Infantry or the 6th Indian Division. The enemy, however, did not attack.

On 31 December the effective strength of the Division was 752 officers, 41 warrant officers, and 15476 enlisted men. During December, 1 enlisted man was killed in action and 1 officer and 11 enlisted men were wounded in action. During the period 32 officers and 390 enlisted men were received as replacements.

Period 1 - 17 January 1943

During the first week of January the Division continued preparations for commitment to the line in the IV Corps sector, but on 6 January orders were received to move immediately to the vicinity of Gagliano preparatory to relieving the 1st British Division in the Ponte Grande (L-9032) sector, north and west of the Torrente Sillaro. The movement to Gagliano began on 7 January, and by 0330A 11 January all the units of the Division had closed in that area and had reverted to Division control. On closing, the Division was detached from IV Corps and attached to II Corps.

On 8 January orders had been received to begin the relief of the 1st British Division on 9 January. Moving forward on the afternoon of 8 January elements of the 537th Infantry Regiment that night began the relief of elements of the 1st British Division on Montecaldararo (L-9035). Other elements on

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succeeding days took on defensive positions in the 1st sector (the 1st British Division, in the vicinity of Farneto (L-998310), Monte Guccoli (L-998319) and Mersolina (L-977510). The Commanding Officer, 337th Infantry assumed command of the sector of the 56th Brigade, 1st British Division, at 1200A 11 January, and the regiment at that time was attached to the British Division. The relief of the British elements in this sector was completed at 2030A 11 January.

On 13 January elements of the 338th Infantry began the relief of the elements holding the right of the 1st British Division sector. In the days and nights immediately following, elements of the Regiment took up defensive positions at Prassinato (L-010315) and on Monte Carore (L-0031) and Monte Grande (L-9982). The relief was completed at 2135A 16 January, and the relieving units were attached to the 1st British Division at the time of relief. At 0700A 17 January the Commanding Officer, 338th Infantry assumed command of the 3rd Brigade sector.

At 1500A 12 January the 1st Battalion, 339th Infantry was attached to the 337th Infantry as regimental reserve. The 339th Regimental Combat Team (minus the 1st Battalion and the 910th Field Artillery Battalion) completed the relief of the 551st Regimental Combat Team (-), 34th Infantry Division, and was attached to the 54th Division at 2040A 13 January in the vicinity of San Benedetto di Querezo (L-903210). In this sector they carried on the construction of the Intermediate Defense Line and prepared to move forward for use as a counter-attacking force if they were needed.

Between 10 January and 17 January the Headquarters, Division Artillery, the 326th, 329th, and 403rd Field Artillery Battalions moved to positions in the Monte Grande sector, and were attached to the 1st British Division at the time of closing. The 35th Reconnaissance Troop continued training in the Cagliano area throughout the period.

Company A, 130th Chemical Mortar Battalion was attached to the Division at 1400A 11 January. On 15 January one platoon of this Company was attached to the 338th Infantry, and another platoon was attached to the 337th on 18 January. Company A was attached to Division Artillery at 0455A 18 January, and the detached platoons then reverted to the control of the parent unit while continuing to support the regiments to which they had formerly been attached.

At 0800A 11 January one company of the 605th Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached to the Division, but this attachment was rescinded on 19 January. Three Canadian Tank Destroyers, however, were loaned by crews of this Battalion at this time, and remained under the operational control of the Division, supporting the 337th Infantry.

At 2200A 12 January the 755th Tank Battalion (minus Companies A and B and the Headquarters Detachment) was attached to the Division. The remaining elements of the Battalion were attached to the Division at 1045A 15 January. The Assault Gun Platoon of the Battalion was attached to Division Artillery at 1200A 15 January.

The 1st Platoon, Battery A, 1056th AAA Battalion (SP) was attached to the Division and to Division Artillery on 15 January.

Period 17 - 31 January 1945

At 0700A 17 January the Commanding General of the 85th Division resumed command of the 1st British Division sector. At that time all the units of the Division attached to the 1st British Division reverted to Division control. At 1410A 17 January the 2nd Battalion, 338th Infantry was relieved from attachment to the 54th Division and was attached to the 338th Infantry as regimental reserve. The 910th Field Artillery Battalion also moved into supporting positions on 17 January. At 1500A 19 January the remainder of the 339th Infantry was relieved from attachment to the 54th Division, and reverted to Division control as Division reserve.

The central feature in the line held by the Division was Monte Grande (L-9982) (elevation 608 meters) and the ridge to the north connecting with Montecellaro (L-9965), which formed in fact the northern extension of Grande. This long rim, extending into enemy territory, was exposed on both flanks. To

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the southeast the front line extended from Grande along the Carrero Ridge (L-90051) a short distance beyond the village of Prasineta (L-010315). The west half of the Division front extended from Grande along the slopes of the Cuccoli Ridge (L-90051) a short distance west of Marsellina (L-977516), elevation 434 meters. From southeast to west the Division line was about three and one-half kilometers long, but the perimeter of defenses including Montecalderaro measured approximately five kilometers.

On the right, the Division sector cut sharply northeast and the forward positions of the adjacent division were due south of Prasineta (L-010315). Consequently, the Division front also faced enemy positions to the east and south-east as well as north and northeast. It was therefore particularly necessary to keep close watch on enemy activity on the right flank of the Division sector.

The German 1st Parachute Division held defensive positions opposite the Division front. The 1st Parachute Regiment held the right half of the sector facing the Division, south and southeast of Casotta (L-014535) as well as positions opposite the neighboring Division on the right. To the north and west of Casotta extended the positions of the 4th Parachute Regiment. The enemy's defense line consisted chiefly of trenches and foxholes, dug-in machine gun positions, and outposts in scattered houses and villages. These positions were being constantly improved.

In January the Division sector was mostly covered with snow, less than a foot deep in open country, but in the ravines and other places where it had drifted it was frequently waist-deep. During the remainder of the month it continued to snow from time to time and there was some hail and rain. The temperature rose quickly and thaws set in for brief periods. Ice often covered the roads and hampered the traffic of both vehicles and mules. Fog was also frequent.

Our units held reinforced dug-in positions, which they improved throughout the period. The few buildings in the forward areas were also occupied, some as observation posts.

From the high ground held by the Division, bare slopes and deep ravines led to the somewhat less high hills held by the enemy. It was the same rocky and eroded country the Division had become familiar with in the operations of October and November. Fringes of woods and brush followed the stream beds through the draws, but the open slopes were barren and without cover. There were only a few scattered farm houses and isolated villages.

The rear areas were also largely wasteland, and it was necessary to bring most of the supplies to the forward troops in the hills by mule pack and head carry. During this period the Division was supported by the 12th, 17th and 28th Indian Mule Pack Companies.

Highway 537, following the Sillero River, was the single road serving the Division. This road turned east at Polina Collo Sillero (L-579265) and two narrow, unimproved roads branched north, one at that point and one at San Clemente (L-905267). Where these roads ended mule and foot trails were extended to our forward areas. The road from San Clemente north, known as the Boston Highway, and the other road, known as the Western Valley road, were constantly improved by the 310th Engineer Battalion. The snow and rain and frequent thawing spells necessitated the spreading of great quantities of gravel to provide a firm base for the traffic. Mule trails were built and laid with netting. Where these ended foot trails continued to the extreme forward positions.

While the forward positions occupied by the Division conducted the enemy positions, from certain high features he held he commanded observation over large parts of the Division sector, across the Carrero Ridge (L-90051) and down the Sillero Valley as well as the salients of Grande and Montecalderaro. In consequence much of the movement in our forward areas was restricted to the hours of darkness. As a further measure of concealing their movement in the snow, the mules wore white covers.

The Division was constantly alert to the possibility of enemy attack. The roads leading from Volturno (L-013387) and Il Poggio (L-001336) to Montecalderaro (L-90033) offered suitable routes of approach for night attacks on Montecalderaro -

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(L-9835) offered suitable routes for night approach for night at Montecalderaro, and several of the wooded draws offered opportunities for infiltration by day or night. The possession of the Montecalderaro Grande - Corro feature would have greatly strengthened the enemy's defense line, and he might be expected at any time to make an effort to regain it. He had already made one such effort when this feature was held by the division formerly occupying this sector. On 12 December 1944 the II Battalion, 1st Parachute Regiment had attacked Monte Corro (L-0031) in strength, and had been repulsed. On the alert for the repetition of such an attack, all avenues of approach to our positions were now blocked by ambush patrols. All positions were manned in strength after dark and in fog and periods of poor visibility, and the outpost line was manned during the daylight hours.

There was also the possibility that the enemy might withdraw along the entire Italian front. The 1st Parachute Division, reputedly one of if not the best of the German divisions in Italy, would be important in any such plans. To secure instant knowledge of any movements that would indicate withdrawal, patrols were organized frequently to establish the location and strength of enemy positions, and to maintain the identification of the units holding them. Each battalion in the line sent patrols out nightly to probe the enemy defenses to determine when and in what strength certain positions were occupied, and to obtain prisoners.

Reconnaissance patrols were sent out to investigate certain localities, draws, gorges, and houses frequented by the enemy at various times. Ambush patrols took up positions where they lay in wait for enemy patrols or other enemy troops in the neighborhood of localities known to occupy.

Both our own and the enemy patrols were white clothing to conceal their movements across the snow. It was more difficult to prevent the noise made in breaking through the crust in pushing through drifts. Such noises resulted in the detection of many of the patrols as they moved towards their objectives, and accounted for the failure of a considerable number to accomplish their missions. Whenever a patrol was discovered, machine gun and sniper fire was directed at its location and the enemy frequently used flares to expose the movements of our patrols. He also laid mines and set booby-traps in areas patrols might be expected to enter. Trip wires were found connected to charges fastened to trees.

During the period our troops became familiar with certain points as the centers of enemy activity: Casotta (L-015523); Cello (L-010323); Il Poggio (L-001339); Monte Mezzano (L-993344); Monte Castellaro (987335); and at various points opposite Monte Cuccoli (981351); Casa Nuova (L-013325), Ponzio (L-013519), Cello Roggi (L-004325). Some of the enemy positions were no more than two hundred yards from our front.

The road crossing Grande, at the north of the mountain, branched into several roads: one passing east and northeast across Vedriano (L-010337); one crossing Mezzano (L-993344) to the north; another going northwest through Bursano (L-990040). These roads were used by the enemy to service his forward positions, and vehicular activity was observed on them at various times. This activity was of course usually restricted to the dark, but were the object of frequent artillery fire day and night.

A number of tanks and tank destroyers were in position to fire harassing missions against the enemy's positions and the artillery carried out extensive programs of harassing and counter-battery fire. The enemy's artillery, however, was relatively inactive. On two days no shells were received in the Division sector, and on an average day about twenty-five or thirty rounds were received. The greatest volume amounted to seventy-five rounds on one day.

On 21 January the 33rd Quartermaster Troop Platoon was attached to the Division. Preliminary arrangements were made for the scout dogs to work with the 333th Infantry and the messenger dogs to work with the 337th.

In anticipation of attack the Division prepared to establish three defense lines to the rear of the Main Line of Resistance. The 333rd Infantry (minus the two battalions on the line), after closing near Casa Subano (L-9821) on 19 January began to reconnoiter for the proposed lines. Defenses were constructed by reserve infantry units. Entrenchments were dug and wire barriers constructed. The 310th Engineers laid mines and prepared demolitions, and the Division Artillery prepared positions for its guns.

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During the period, infantry organizations on the line were relieved periodically. On the nights of 19/20 and 20/21 January the 1st Battalion, 339th Infantry relieved the 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry. The night of 25/26 January G Company, 339th Infantry relieved E Company, 337th Infantry and was in turn relieved by E Company, 338th Infantry the night of 28/30 January. Within the units arrangements were put into effect for the frequent rotation of the troops on the line.

On 29 and 30 January the 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry relieved the 1st Battalion, 339th Infantry. On 31 January the 3rd Battalion, 339th Infantry relieved the 1st Battalion, 339th Infantry, and was attached at 1600H to the 337th Infantry as regimental reserve. The 1st Battalion reverted to the control of the parent regiment and moved to an assembly area near Casa Babano (L-3021).

The period passed quietly, and at the end of the month the positions of the opposing forces remained essentially as they had been when the Division entered the line. Minor adjustments had been made in both the right and left boundaries.

On 31 January the effective strength of the Division amounted to 793 officers, 40 warrant officers, and 14116 enlisted men. During the period 10 enlisted men were killed in action, 1 officer and 62 enlisted men were wounded in action, and 2 enlisted men were reported missing in action. During January, 42 officers and 328 enlisted men were received as replacements, the latter receiving special training before seeing service in the line.

During the period 17 - 31 January 1 prisoner passed through the Division Camp.

John B. Coulter
JOHN B. COULTER,
Major General, U. S. Army,
Commanding.

With original copy only:

Map - Division sector 17-31 January 1945,
with estimated enemy dispositions.

Annexes: G-1 Report of Operations
G-2 Report of Enemy Operations
G-3 Report of Operations
G-4 Report of Operations

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HEADQUARTERS 85TH INFANTRY DIVISION

A.P.O. 85, U. S. Army,
8 April 1945.85TH INFANTRY DIVISION

CLASSIFICATION (CANCELLED)

BY AUTHORITY OF

REPORT OF OPERATIONS - FEBRUARY 1945

Throughout February the Division continued to hold defensive positions in the Monte Grande sector. The 338th Infantry on the right (with the 2nd Battalion, 339th Infantry attached) held positions near Frassineto (M-010315), west along the Cerere Ridge, and on the eastern slopes of Monte Grande (L-9932). The 337th Infantry (with the 3rd Battalion, 339th Infantry attached) held the left sector, with positions on the western slopes of Monte Grande and on Montecalderaro (L-9933), and west along the Cuccoli Ridge (M-9832) beyond Marzolina (L-977318). The 339th Infantry (minus two battalions, and the Cannon Company, which was attached to the Division Artillery) remained in Division Reserve near Casa Bubano (L-986212), and was engaged in repairing weather damage to the Switch and other Defense Lines. The 85th Reconnaissance Troop continued training near Gagliano (Q-8395) throughout the month.

The following organizations remained under control of the Division: Company A, 100th Chemical Mortar Battalion, attached to the Division Artillery, with single platoons supporting both the 337th and 338th Infantry Regiments; the 755th Tank Battalion, attached to the Division, with the Assault Gun Platoon attached to the Division Artillery; the 1st Platoon, Battery A, 105th AAA AW Battalion (SP) attached to the Division; the 38th Quartermaster War Dog Platoon attached to the Division. On 18 February at 2100A Company D, 752nd Tank Battalion was attached to the Division and the Tank Destroyer Platoon of the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached to the Division at 1115A and in turn to the Division Artillery. At 1200A, 19 February the 755th Tank Battalion was relieved from attachment to the Division.

The German 1st Parachute Division continued to hold defensive positions opposite the Division sector. The 1st Parachute Regiment held the east half of the sector, with the 4th Parachute Regiment on the west. During the first part of the month prisoners reported that the I Battalion, Neukumm Regiment had taken up positions in the sector of the 4th Parachute Regiment on Hill 477 (L-998340) and northeast of Bursano (L-970340). With its commitment four battalions faced the Division. No other major changes in the disposition of the enemy forces facing the Division occurred during the remainder of the month.

Throughout the period the units on the line regularly sent out patrols and raiding parties to establish the location and disposition of the enemy forces and to maintain identifications. The Division was constantly alert to the possibilities of an enemy attack or withdrawal. Ambush patrols, accompanied by war dogs when the conditions permitted, took up positions each night to block the likely means of approach to our lines. The enemy was sensitive to our patrols and raids, and constantly brought to bear harassing machine gun and mortar fire on our forward positions. He also made an extensive use of flares in efforts to detect our patrols. Patrols and raiding parties generally encountered resistance from the enemy's outposts, but it was discovered that positions manned in strength at one time, at other times were unoccupied. One of these, the house at Di Sopra (L-982330), which was the objective of several patrol missions and at least one raid, was found to be unoccupied on several occasions, but on another occasion it was stoutly defended by the enemy. Because of the importance of patrol activity at this time orders were issued on 16 February for the establishment of Regimental Patrol Groups for special missions, formed from volunteers for the assignment.

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Each organization consisted of a small headquarters detachment and three sections, one from each battalion. Each section was composed of one lieutenant, one sergeant, and five other enlisted men. These groups received special training and were billeted separately. They were released to the Battalions only on the approval of the Regimental Commander.

As a further development of defensive operations, a provisional .50 calibre Machine Gun Detachment of nine guns was set up in each Heavy Weapons Company. This program, established on 10 February, was created to assist the defense by direct and indirect fire, to prevent enemy movement, and in general to harass the enemy anywhere within range. These detachments were also designed to support raids and limited objective attacks.

On 17 February the 1st Battalion, 339th Infantry was placed on a two-hour alert, prepared, when directed by the Division, to carry out a II Corps or 337th Regimental counterattack mission in the sector of the 362nd Infantry Regiment on the left. On 20 February the 1st Battalion, 339th Infantry relieved the 3rd Battalion of that Regiment, and was attached to the 337th Infantry. The alert was rescinded on 28 February.

The enemy's patrol activity was rather less than our own and only one raiding party was encountered. But it was evident that the enemy expected an attack in this sector, and in order to gain information of any such preparations he sent several long-range patrols behind our lines to lie over and gather information. Three of these patrols were captured. As a counter measure to these patrols, beginning 21 February the 339th Infantry was ordered to send patrols daily to cover the Falchetto Ridge (L-9825) area, east of and parallel to the Sillaro Torrent between the 23rd and 27th northings, on the watch for any long-range reconnaissance patrols lying out in this vicinity. On 24 February all other commanders were ordered to send out similar patrols each day to cover other areas. In further expectation of an attack, the enemy continued to improve his defenses intensively, digging trenches and constructing dug-outs and bunkers.

The Division Artillery fired a preparation demonstration on the afternoon of 5 February in support of the limited objective attack of the 34th Division on the left. The enemy reacted to this by sharply increased artillery fire against our sector immediately afterwards and on the next few days, and during the remainder of the month the volume of enemy fire was consistently greater than prior to 5 February. The positions on Montecaldorero (L-9933) received frequent heavy shellings from artillery and mortars. On 20 February the advanced Command Post of the 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry received several direct hits by 120mm mortar shells which killed the Battalion Commander and four others and wounded twelve. Because of the generally increased shelling many of the installations in houses in the extreme forward areas were removed to dug-outs on the reverse slopes of hills. To protect the salient held by the Division the Division Artillery particularly emphasized counterbattery missions. In addition to the normal harassing fire, a special fire program was put into effect to harass the enemy traffic on his five main supply routes.

Shortly after the first of the month clear, moderately warm weather set in and the snow soon disappeared from most of the region. The ground gradually dried out, and the maintenance of supplies became easier. The 12th, 17th and 26th Indian Mule Pack Companies continued to support the Division. The 310th Engineer Battalion widened the Western Valley Road and the Boston Byway to two-way all-weather routes. Trails were improved and reinforced. Floods had been expected in the Sillaro Valley, but in the abnormally dry weather these did not materialize.

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The 750 Infantry replacements received by the Division in January continued to receive intensive training in the Regiments to which they were assigned. These replacements were rotated with troops on the line for brief periods in order to receive battle experience. Other inter-company and Battalion reliefs were effected periodically.

During the month 2 officers and 19 enlisted men were killed in action; 3 officers and 87 enlisted men were wounded in action; and 2 enlisted men were reported missing in action. At the end of the month the effective strength of the Division amounted to 809 officers, 35 warrant officers, and 14283 enlisted men.

During February 12 prisoners of war passed through the Division Cage.

John B. Coulter
JOHN B. COULTER,
Major General, U. S. A.,
Commanding

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HEADQUARTERS 85TH INFANTRY DIVISION

APO 85, U. S. Army,

CLASSIFIED May 1945.

85TH INFANTRY DIVISION

RESTRICTED AUTHORITY OF U. S. Army

REPORT OF OPERATIONS - MARCH 1945

Period 1 March - 0600A 13 March

During this period the Division continued to hold defensive positions in the Monte Grande (L9932) sector. The 338th Infantry on the right (with the 2nd Battalion, 339th Infantry attached) held positions on Frassineto (M010315), west along the Cerere Ridge (M0031), and on the eastern slopes of Monte Grande (L9932). The 337th Infantry (with the 1st Battalion, 339th Infantry attached) held the left sector, with positions on the western slopes of Monte Grande and on Montecalderaro (L9933), and west along the Cuccoli Ridge (L9832) beyond Marzolina (L977318). The 339th Infantry (minus two battalions, and the Cannon Company, which was attached to the Division Artillery) remained in Division Reserve near Casa Bubano (L986212). The 85th Reconnaissance Troop continued training near Gagliano (Q8395).

The night of 28 February - 1 March elements of the 1st Battalion, 339th Infantry began the relief of the 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry on Monte Grande (L9832), completing the relief at 2230A 2 March. On 2 March elements of the 3rd Battalion, 339th Infantry began the relief of the 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry. On the completion of the relief at 1500A 3 March the 3rd Battalion, 339th Infantry was attached to the 338th, and the 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry was attached to the 339th in Division reserve. All three battalions of the 339th Infantry were now in line together - the 3rd Battalion holding the extreme left of the 338th sector on the Cerere Ridge (M0031) with elements of the 2nd Battalion on its right, and the 1st Battalion to the left of the 3rd. Within the regiments companies were rotated periodically between forward and reserve positions.

The units on the line maintained an alert defense, stationing ambush patrols to block any likely means of enemy approach, and regularly sending patrols and raiding parties into enemy territory to establish the disposition of the enemy forces and to maintain identifications. Ranger combat patrols, established in February, were used for the first time in this period. Patrols were also maintained throughout the Division area in the daylight, on the watch for enemy long-range patrols lying over behind our front lines. Elements in reserve positions carried on training and fired upon ranges that were set up in these areas. Training was conducted in sniper, small arms and rifle-grenade firing. Anti-tank companies conducted test firing of 37mm guns on the new T-32 model mount.

It appeared that the disposition of the enemy forces facing the Division front remained essentially the same as in February. The 1st Parachute Regiment of the 1st Parachute Division continued to hold the eastern half of the sector, east and southeast of Casotta (M005329), with the 4th Parachute Regiment controlling the zone to the west. The enemy's patrol activity was lighter, if anything, than in February, but the enemy remained alert to our patrolling, meeting our patrols with machine gun and mortar fire and covering approaches to his outposts with automatic weapons. His artillery fire, mostly light and medium caliber, was relatively heavy in volume at the beginning of the month (200 rounds was the average volume of fire received in the first three days), but this rate of fire decreased until by the end of the period the average volume was 40 rounds. Most of the artillery and mortar fire was against our forward positions, but on the first days of the month heavy concentrations were directed at rear installations.

The enemy was chiefly active in the improvement of his defense lines in the increasing expectation of an attack. His present positions were improved, new positions were constructed, and connecting trenches were cut between positions.

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The weather during the period was sunny and Spring-like. The snow had largely disappeared, the ground had dried, and the Torrente Sillaro had dwindled to a small current. The maintenance of supplies was consequently made easier, and though mules were still required to carry supplies over the steep trails to the forward positions roads elsewhere were kept in good condition and were adequate to the traffic. The 12th, 17th and 26th Indian Mule Pack Companies continued to support the Division.

On 8 and 9 March orders were issued governing the relief of the Division in the next few days by the 10th Indian Division, at that time holding positions on the right of the Division sector.

Between 10-12 March elements of the 25th Indian Brigade of the 10th Indian Division, and the attached Lovat Scouts, relieved the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 337th Infantry and the attached 1st Battalion of the 339th, which was detached from the 337th Infantry at 2145L 11 March and then reverted to the parent unit. The command of the 337th sector passed to the Commanding Officer of the 25th Indian Brigade at 0200L 12 March, at which time the 25th Indian Brigade came under the operational control of the Division. The 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry was now attached to the 25th Indian Brigade, remaining under the control of this unit until 1300L 14 March.

On 12 March other elements of the 25th Indian Brigade relieved the 2nd Battalion, 338th Infantry and the 3rd Battalion, 339th, and at 0200L 13 March command of the former 338th sector passed to the Commanding Officer of the 25th Indian Brigade. At this time the 3rd Battalion, 338th Infantry and the 2nd Battalion, 339th came under the operational control of the Indian unit. The 2nd Battalion, 339th Infantry was returned to regimental control at 1510L 13 March, and the 3rd Battalion, 338th Infantry reverted to the control of the parent regiment on the completion of its relief at 0015L 14 March.

The command of the 85th Division sector, which the Division had defended for 56 days, passed to the General Officer Commanding, 10th Indian Division at 0600L 13 March. At this time the 329th Field Artillery Battalion was relieved from its fire missions, briefly remaining under the control of the 10th Indian Division till 0820L 13 March. The remaining units of the Division Artillery also came under the operational control of the 10th Indian Division. The 85th Division Artillery and the 910th and 403rd Field Artillery Battalions were relieved from the operational control of the 10th Indian Division on 14 March, but the 328th remained in position under the control of the Indian Division till 20 March.

During this period the supporting units (except for the platoon of Battery A, 105th AAA AW (CP) Battalion) were relieved from attachment to the Division: the 38th Quartermaster War Dog Platoon was relieved at 2000L 9 March; Company A, 100th Chemical Mortar Battalion at 1100L 10 March; the Tank Destroyer Platoon of Company B, 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion at 0800L 13 March; and Company D, 752nd Tank Battalion at 2155L 13 March. The Cannon Company, 339th Infantry was relieved from attachment to the Division Artillery at 0800L 10 March and reverted to regimental control.

Period 13 - 31 March

As the units of the Division were relieved from the line they moved to the Gagliano (Q8395) area where they resumed training, or to the Montecatini Rest Area. Provisions were made for all troops to spend four days in Montecatini, for a period of rest and rehabilitation. On returning from Montecatini the troops resumed training, with emphasis on the renewal of offensive combat. Recent replacements were further instructed in the history and achievements of the Division.

At 0001L 13 March the Division (minus Division Artillery) was relieved from attachment to II Corps and became Fifth Army reserve.

While in the Gagliano area the Division Artillery received orders to prepare to relieve the 91st Division Artillery, then supporting the 34th Infantry Division, between 20-26 March. At 2225L 20 March the 329th Field Artillery Battalion relieved the 346th Field Artillery Battalion near Roncoberto, at L831225, west of Highway 65 and west of the Torrente Savona. It was then attached to the 91st Division Artillery, and to the 34th Infantry Division. The 910th Field Artillery Battalion moved to a point southwest of Barbarola at L879267, and

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was also attached to the 91st Division Artillery on completing the relief of the 347th Field Artillery Battalion at 2230A 21 March. At 2330A 22 March the 403rd Field Artillery Battalion completed the relief of the 348th Field Artillery Battalion east of Highway 65 near Poggiolo (L385265) and was attached to the 91st Division Artillery. At 1200A 23 March the 85th Division Artillery assumed control of the artillery support of the 34th Infantry Division, and at this time the 329th, 910th and 403rd Field Artillery Battalions returned to 85th Division Artillery control, while the 328th Field Artillery Battalion remained under Division control.

On 21 March, in anticipation of the Spring offensive by the Allied Forces in Italy, orders were issued to move units of the Division west to the vicinity of Cascine Nuove (Q0563), on the banks of the Arno west of Pisa, to undertake special training in the assault crossing of rivers. The 337th Regimental Combat Team moved first, closing in the new area on 22 March. Intensive exercises were conducted for four days, and problems were executed in both battalion and combat team river crossings. The 404th Engineer Combat Team and the 52nd Quartermaster DUKW Company supported the Division units in this training. At the end of this period the 337th Regimental Combat Team (minus the 328th Field Artillery Battalion and Company A, 310th Engineer Battalion) moved to a bivouac area south of Lucca, near Colle Paladini (Q265711) to resume their regular training program, and the 338th Regimental Combat Team, the 329th Field Artillery Battalion having been relieved from the line, (with Company C, 310th Engineer Battalion also attached) undertook a similar river-crossing training program in the Cascine Nuove area beginning 27 March. While in Gagliano, elements of the 310th Engineer Battalion had undertaken river crossing exercises along the Arno a few miles west of Florence. The 339th Infantry did not participate as a unit in this training, but groups of officers and non-commissioned officers from that regiment attended the training of the other Combat Teams, and by the end of the month almost all the regimental officers and platoon and section sergeants had witnessed the training. Meanwhile, the 339th Infantry was preparing to move from Gagliano to an area south of Lucca in the first week of April. The 85th Reconnaissance Troop had moved west from Gagliano on 27 March to the vicinity of Asciano (Q159685), northeast of Pisa, where normal training was resumed. Company D, 752nd Tank Battalion was attached to the Division from 20 March to 0600A 31 March that the infantry troops might become accustomed to the new light tank.

As the units moved from Gagliano to their new areas special security measures went into effect in accordance with orders from higher headquarters. All identifying markings were removed from vehicles and equipment, the Division insignia was removed from the troops' clothing and headgear, and new road markings were used to guide the convoys. All troops were further instructed not to divulge the identity of their units to unauthorized persons. These measures were taken in order to conceal from the enemy the disposition and probable use of the Division in the coming offensive.

The 328th Field Artillery Battalion, which had been relieved from the operational control of the 10th Indian Division at 1300A 20 March, and had supported the 337th Infantry in the river crossing training, relieved the 916th Field Artillery Battalion at 2215A 27 March near Roncobortolo (at L841225), east of the Torrente Savona.

As part of the plans of higher headquarters for the forthcoming offensive, the Division on 29 March sent bivouac parties to the vicinity of Forlì (M4317), in the sector of the British Eighth Army, to reconnoiter areas for the disposition of the units of the Division in the event of its use in that sector. All identification markings were also removed from the vehicles and uniforms of the personnel engaged in this mission.

The month ended with the Division continuing preparations and plans for offensive operations in the near future, and conducting intensive training.

On 31 March the effective strength of the Division amounted to 858 officers, 37 warrant officers, and 14,582 enlisted men. During the period in which elements of the Division were in the line 6 enlisted men were killed in action and 38 were wounded.

From 1-13 March 4 prisoners passed through the Division cage.

John B. Coulter
JOHN B. COULTER,
Major General, U. S. Army,
Commanding.

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HEADQUARTERS 85TH INFANTRY DIVISION

APO 85, U. S. Army,
2 June 1945.

85TH INFANTRY DIVISION

REPORT OF OPERATIONS - APRIL 1945

Period 1 - 17 April

At the beginning of April the Division, in Fifth Army Reserve, was completing the assembly of its elements in areas south of Lucca and west of Pisa where training was continued in preparation for the coming offensive. The 337th Regimental Combat Team was in training south of Lucca and the 338th Regimental Combat Team was completing a four-day period of special training in river crossing along the Arno in the vicinity of Cascine Nuove (Q0563). The 339th Infantry started moving west from Gagliano (Q8395) on 2 April, and had closed in areas south of Lucca (near Badia, Q270663) by 4 April. All units of the Division were now observing strict security regulations and taking all precautions to conceal their identity. All identifying insignia and special markings were removed from clothing and equipment, and all individuals were instructed not to reveal their units to unauthorized persons. Billeting parties sent to Forli under a similar security black-out as part of the Fifth Army Cover Plan remained there until ordered by II Corps on 10 April to return to their units.

The Division Artillery (minus the 329th Field Artillery Battalion), with the Assault Gun Platoon, 757th Tank Battalion attached) was continuing to support the 34th Infantry Division in positions east and west of Highway 65 generally along the 26th Northing. The 329th Field Artillery Battalion, which had closed in the Lucca area on 2 April, was released from Division control, detached from II Corps, and attached to the 92nd Division at 030101B April.

After arriving south of Lucca the 339th Infantry conducted training in river crossing by battalions along the Arno near Calcinaia (Q278605) between the 276th and 272nd Eastings, and also conducted training in small unit problems. Between 10-12 April, further river crossing training was conducted along the Arno west of Pisa, and use was made of special equipment which included the Infantry Support Raft and the Foot-Bridge, M-1.

On the passing of the command of the 34th Division sector to the Commanding General, 88th Infantry Division at 052400B April, the 85th Division Artillery (-) was relieved from attachment to the 34th Division Artillery and attached to the 88th, and continued to provide supporting defensive fires for that division for a brief period. Almost immediately plans were put into effect for the relief of the 85th Division Artillery (-) by elements of the 91st Division Artillery and the 88th Division Artillery.

The 328th Field Artillery Battalion was relieved by the 916th Field Artillery Battalion on 6 April, and on closing near Lucca at Q255733 at 060945B April the 328th Field Artillery Battalion reverted to Division Artillery control. The 910th Field Artillery Battalion, relieved by the 347th Field Artillery Battalion, 88th Division Artillery, returned to Division Artillery control at 061000B April on closing near Q200750; also in the Lucca area. The Assault Gun Platoon, 757th Tank Battalion, however, relieved from attachment to the 910th Field Artillery Battalion, was attached to the 347th Field Artillery Battalion in place. Headquarters Battery reverted to Division Artillery control on closing near Lucca (at Q159772) at 061515B April. On 7 April the 403rd Field Artillery Battalion was relieved by the 348th Field Artillery Battalion, 88th Division Artillery, and reverted to Division Artillery control on closing near Q218753 in the vicinity of Lucca at 071140B April.

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On 9 April orders were received from IV Corps, in compliance with orders from Fifth Army, detaching the Division Artillery (minus the 329th Field Artillery Battalion) from II Corps and attaching it to IV Corps and IV Corps Artillery as of 100001Z April. Reconnoitering parties from Division Artillery immediately set out to prepare for the movement of the Division Artillery (-) to the vicinity of Campidello (L627251). The Division Artillery (-) was assigned the mission of providing general support as Corps Artillery, and of reinforcing the fires of the 10th Mountain Division Artillery in the offensive which was about to begin. The attack, originally scheduled to commence at 120700Z April, was postponed till 140945Z April. The 85th Division Artillery (-) fired in support of the 10th Mountain Division which was making the main effort of IV Corps. A 36-minute artillery barrage immediately preceded the attack, and the Division Artillery continued to fire supporting missions when the infantry met stiff resistance. One battalion (the 910th) fired 3441 rounds as a reinforcing battalion in 24 hours.

Meanwhile, the 329th Field Artillery Battalion, which had been attached to the 92nd Division Artillery on 5 April, had been assigned the mission of reinforcing the fires of the 599th Field Artillery Battalion, which was providing direct support for the 442nd Infantry Regiment. At this time the 329th fired preparations for the attack of the 442nd Infantry on Monte Carchio (Q961976) and Monte Cerreto (Q962977).

On 13 April, orders were issued warning the Division (minus Division Artillery) to be prepared for movement on short notice, and the next day the Division (minus Division Artillery and the 338th Regimental Combat Team), with one platoon of Battery A, 105th AAA AW Battalion (SP) attached, was placed on a six-hour alert. The 338th Regimental Combat Team was at this time instructed to be prepared to move promptly on short notice. On 16 April, orders were received from Fifth Army to move the 338th Regimental Combat Team (minus artillery) to the vicinity of Africa (L692256), and by 170345Z April it had closed in the designated area.

On 17 April further orders were received from Fifth Army to remove the remainder of the Division to areas indicated by the Commanding General of IV Corps between Africa (L692256) and Sassonolara (L584243). The Division (-) was attached to IV Corps at 170100Z April, and by 171630Z April had completed closing in the new area.

On 17 April the Division was ordered to relieve the 1st Armored Division and elements of the 10th Mountain Division within its zone without delay, and on the morning of the 18th to continue the attack north on the right flank of IV Corps in order to clear Highway 64 within its zone, to secure an exit into the Po Valley, and to assist the advance of II Corps. The 337th Infantry was ordered to relieve elements of the 10th Mountain Division, and the 338th Infantry, with the 85th Reconnaissance Troop attached, was to relieve the elements of the 1st Armored Division within its zone. The Division Artillery was to support both the assault Regiments. The 339th Infantry was initially in Corps reserve near L6322, to be used only upon the approval of the Army Commander.

The 329th Field Artillery Battalion remained under 92nd Division control until 170600Z April, and under IV Corps control until it arrived in the Division area at 181630Z April when it reverted to Division Artillery. The component units of the Division Artillery were assembled west of Highway 64 and generally south of the road leading west from Africa (L692256) to Roffeno Musiole (L635267), and were now returned to Division control.

Period 18 - 30 April

The Division entered the attack west of the Reno River in the hills and ridges north of Vergate (L697257). The first and highest hills were about 1800 feet high. The ridges were sharp and cut with deeply eroded ravines. These descending directly into the Reno Valley resembled the barren slopes of the Idico Valley, but farther to the west the hills were more deeply wooded and there were long fields of open pasture. Highway 64, following the Reno, was the single first-class road to the north, but it was dominated by positions on the bordering

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hills which the enemy still hold, and many of the bridges and culverts were blown. For some distance, also, it was heavily mined. To the west of Highway 64 most of the other roads were merely wagon trails, twisting around and over the steep slopes in many sharp turns. Mines had also been laid on some of these roads and bridges here also had been demolished. It was necessary to widen the best ones in order to make them serviceable for our supply vehicles. Tanks could not operate advantageously for the first few miles.

The direction of the attack originally swung from the north to the northeast, towards the dominating hills, Monte Luminasio (L747341) and Monte Torronera (L762358). Past these, the drive was to continue on a front about six kilometers wide across hills that were progressively less and less high and along the Reno Valley into the Valley of the Po some fourteen kilometers away. In this relatively prosperous country there were many farmhouses, but comparatively few villages of more than ten buildings. In this region the enemy had not prepared many positions, and very few of the houses or villages were fortified though some were to be defended as strongpoints.

At the time of the Division's commitment the enemy forces in this sector were already falling back in some disorder under the weight of the IV Corps attack in the area between the Reno and Samoggia Rivers. The forces initially opposing the Division included elements of the 94th Infantry Division on the right, and elements of the 8th (formerly the 157th) Mountain Division on the left. Prior to our commitment elements of the 90th Panzer Grenadier Division had been sent from the northeast to reinforce the enemy troops to the west of the Division sector, but in the first two days' fighting none of the units of that division was identified by our troops.

On 17 April the 338th Infantry moved up to take over the right sector of the Division zone, and the 337th came up to take the left. Marching up during the night of 17/18 April the 3rd Battalion, 338th Infantry, on the right of the Regimental sector, relieved elements of the 81st Reconnaissance Squadron and of the 1st Armored Division on a front extending west from Piano di Venola (L759309) to L740286, in the vicinity of Pieppo di Salvaro. Command of the former 81st Reconnaissance Squadron sector passed to the Commanding Officer, 338th Infantry at 180100B April, and the relief of the 81st Reconnaissance elements was completed at 180610B April.

The 2nd Battalion, 338th Infantry, on the left of the 3rd, marching forward from Querceto (L655203), pushed across the hills and over dusty trails on the morning of 18 April, and by 1415B had completed the relief of the 6th Infantry Battalion, 1st Armored Division in the vicinity of La Croce (L736323). The 1st Battalion was meanwhile moving up along Highway 64 in close support as Regimental reserve. The 85th Reconnaissance Troop, attached to the 338th Infantry, screened the right flank of the Regiment during the relief and set up a road block on Highway 64 across the Reno River at L732281. It thereafter followed along the Highway abreast of the infantry. The command of the sector now held by the 338th Infantry passed to the Commanding General, 85th Infantry Division at 181430B April.

The 2nd Battalion, 337th Infantry was moving up on the right of the Regimental sector the night of 17/18 April, south of Monte Luminasio (L747341), its first objective. The 1st Battalion, on the left, relieved the 1st Battalion, 86th Mountain Regiment, 10th Mountain Division in the vicinity of Monte Vignola (L719336), which that organization had just captured, and command of the sector passed to the Commanding Officer, 337th Infantry at 180900B April. The 3rd Battalion was in reserve. The Commanding General, 85th Infantry Division assumed command of this zone at 182100B April.

The 339th Regimental Combat Team, in assembly near Riola (L646197), was initially in IV Corps reserve, to be used by Corps only upon the approval of the Army Commander.

Company B, 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached to the Division at 180545B April, and Company B, 751st Tank Battalion was also attached to the Division on 18 April. Company B, 751st Tank Battalion, with one platoon of Company B, 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion attached, was placed in direct support of the 337th Infantry at 180820B April and Company B (-), 894th Tank Destroyer

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Battalion was placed in direct support of the 338th Infantry as was the 1st Platoon of Battery A, 105th AAA AW Battalion (SP).

The coordinated Division attack began at 180930B April, both Regiments attacking abreast after a fifteen-minute artillery barrage. The weather was clear and warm.

As the 2nd Battalion, 338th Infantry moved ahead on 18 April it met no opposition, but picked up a number of stragglers, chiefly from the 276th Grenadier Regiment, 9th Infantry Division. Many of these had been cut off from their units by our artillery fire and strafing. Before nightfall the Battalion had seized the town of Luminasio (L762338). The first prisoners already indicated that the enemy was disorganized.

The 3rd Battalion, 338th Infantry was also advancing rapidly on 18 April, taking several communities and highpoints without encountering any opposition - Sporticano (L766304), the hill at L766317, Marsabotto (L773317), Miana (L773321) and Colle Belvedere (L766324). In advancing towards Lama (L783344), however, K Company ran into densely-laid mine fields, but the town itself was seized before midnight by troops of I Company who had pushed on from Sibano (L752298).

After halting for the night, the 338th Infantry prepared to continue the attack to the north the next morning, but these plans were cancelled when changes were effected in the Division boundaries. What had been the 338th left boundary was now approximately following the 75th Easting. The 6th South African Armored Division was now pushing over into the 338th's former zone, and that Regiment was accordingly ordered to assemble in Division reserve in the vicinity of Casamento (L753361), prepared to swing behind the 337th Infantry or to shift over to its left. The units of the 338th Infantry were halted at 190130B April, but they were not formally relieved by the 6th South Africans (the latter met elements of the 68th Infantry Division in front of our lines, and from there continued the advance to the north).

The 337th Regimental Combat Team had meanwhile moved out on the left of the 338th to capture Monte San Andre (L785375) and to assist the advance of the 338th along the Highway. The 2nd Battalion, on the right, was to capture Monte Luminasio (L747341) and Monte San Andre, and the 1st Battalion, on the left advanced to capture Monte Bonsara (L737367). The 3rd Battalion was initially in reserve.

Progress was fast at first and there was little resistance. The 2nd Battalion occupied Monte Luminasio (L747341) without a shot being fired, and the 1st Battalion by noon had advanced 800 yards north of Monte Bonsara (L737367). But late in the afternoon of 18 April the enemy's resistance stiffened. The 2nd Battalion had captured Monte Torrenera (L762358) and in advancing to the north began to meet fire from Lagune (L773377), and fire from the Lagune-Monte Grolla (L778403) ridge threatened the success of the advance. The 2nd Battalion accordingly cut over to the east, and elements of both the 2nd and 3rd Battalions prepared to attack the ridge. At 0200B the attack commenced, and was immediately met by intense machine gun and rifle fire. It was apparent that the enemy meant to make the best use of his positions here. The attack continued, but at 0340B the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were ordered to break contact with the enemy immediately, since a change in boundary effected by higher headquarters placed the ridge outside the Regiment's and Division's sector.

These Battalions now shifted to the west, and the 1st Battalion, already in position in the new zone, took up the advance at 180600B April. The 1st Battalion at first moved forward in a column of companies down the ridge road towards Rasiglio (L757396) until they ran into heavy fire from houses and positions occupied by the enemy at La Collina (L762386), 400 yards to their right. To destroy this resistance one company, together with tanks and a platoon of 57mm anti-tank guns moved against the strong point, and the other elements of the Battalion continued on to Rasiglio (L757396). After several determined rushes and fighting that lasted into the late afternoon the enemy in La Collina was routed. But meanwhile the troops advancing on Rasiglio were receiving fire

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from several points on the Laguno Ridge. They nevertheless pushed ahead, and by dark two companies had advanced beyond Resiglio. The right flank of the 1st Battalion was now exposed for a distance of 5000 yards, but in view of the nature of the resistance it was decided to continue the attack without waiting for this gap to be covered.

On the night of 19 April orders were issued to continue the attack into the Po Valley. The 1st and 3rd Battalions, 337th Infantry, supported by a company of tanks and a company of tank destroyers, were to attack abreast, and to seize Gosso (L794470), Monte Rocca (L783453), and the western slopes of Monte Malgotto (L795460). The 3rd Battalion advanced towards Tignano (L779432) and Monte Capra (L794447). The Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon was ordered to proceed along the Lavino River Road with all possible speed to take Gosso (L794470).

The Battalions immediately ran into stiff resistance. The enemy defended Tignano (L779432) bitterly, and there was also heavy fighting at Casotta (L777438) and Monte Rocca (L783453), but the I and R Platoon continued on while the Battalions were engaged in the neighboring hills. Gosso (L794470) undefended, was captured at 200825B April.

The resistance in the hills was not wiped out until the middle of the afternoon, and meanwhile at noon, the 337th Infantry received further orders, to seize the high ground overlooking Casalecchio (L828471) in order to assist II Corps to debouch into the Po Valley, outposting a line from Casalecchio to the Comunale Bridge (L793484) across the Lavino River. The I and R Platoon had continued to advance along the road to Riale (L810475), and meanwhile the 2nd Battalion, reinforced, moved forward along the river road. Corototo (L823472) was cleared only after heavy fighting, and north of here our troops were halted by a large volume of light artillery and mortar fire and the fire from self-propelled guns. As the advance approached Casalecchio, a barrage from five artillery battalions was called down upon the town which the enemy was still trying to hold.

In the late afternoon the Comunale Bridge (L793484) had been seized, and at dark elements of the 6th South African Armored Division, advancing on the right, entered Casalecchio. The enemy was compelled to withdraw, and by midnight the 2nd Battalion had manned the assigned outpost line. During the night three separate attacks against these positions were repulsed.

With this mission completed certain changes in the disposition of the troops were effected. The 351st Infantry Regiment, 88th Infantry Division moved through the forward positions of the 2nd Battalion, 337th Infantry and assumed control of the Battalion sector at 210215B April. The 338th meanwhile moved up to continue the attack into the Po Valley and the 337th Infantry passed to reserve.

Entering the Po Valley the land stretched north in fields of wheat and rice separated into strips by rows of fruit trees. There were few long vistas because of the denseness of the cultivation, but everywhere innumerable straight roads led north to the Po and beyond. Without exception the roads were firm based and in the dry season were fully adequate to the movement of the heaviest vehicles. Some were comparatively narrow, but it was necessary to maintain one-way traffic in only a few towns.

The irrigation ditches and canals offered very little hindrance to the advance. Many of the ditches were dry, no attempt had been made to flood the fields and roads, and very few culverts had been blown. A few of the canals, and the Panaro River, for example, were confined by steep banks as much as twenty feet high. At one or two places across the Sanoggia it was necessary to construct by-passes, but two bridges across the Panaro were captured intact. The enemy failed to make effective use of the levees for defense purposes.

As they entered the Po Valley our troops overran hundreds of prepared positions, most of which had never been manned. Machine gun positions and fire trenches lined the roads, and many other positions had been placed to cover the road with cross fire. Above Highway 9 the troops overran abandoned rear installa-

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tions, rear command posts, ammunition dumps, and warehouses. Along the roads there were many enemy vehicles, some of them destroyed by the Germans, others by us, and perhaps as many undamaged.

It was apparent that the enemy was retreating in extreme haste to prevent being trapped south of the Po. As evidence of the haste of the retreat, our troops found field kitchens where food was still cooking and bakeries where the freshly made bread was still warm.

Beginning on 20 April the enemy had taken to the roads in open daylight in defiance of our Air Force. He continued to crowd the roads at night, but his situation was now so desperate - particularly in view of the lack of bridges across the Po - that many of his units abandoned their usual precautions. Within the Division sector this did not turn out to be a fatal decision. As our troops advanced they found comparatively little evidence that the enemy had been harassed or disorganized by attack from the air.

Driven from his defenses in the Apennines the enemy's organization fell into confusion. The enemy was routed and no such thing as a coherent order of battle existed. Here and there a unit attempted to organize and hold positions briefly. Members of the 194th Engineer Battalion were hastily thrown in as infantry to organize a delaying action. Attacked before they could fully occupy their positions, they were immediately put to flight. Supply and anti-aircraft units were drawn on to form an Alarm Company to support remnants of the 94th Division, but they were able to offer hardly more than negligible resistance. Other troops, pulled out of the retreat to establish delaying positions, were captured before they could dig in. From the beginning of the advance through the Valley, prisoners were taken by the hundreds each day.

The attack became a race. Tanks and reconnaissance elements were screening the advance, and the pockets of the enemy that were overrun by the advance elements were ordinarily cleaned out by infantry, sometimes with armored support. Partisan groups cleaned out others. Artillery support became less and less important. But in order to keep up with the infantry the artillery was kept on the move night and day. Fortunately, the displacement of guns in the level country was a relatively easy matter. But in view of the speed of the advance it was often necessary to leap-frog batteries in order to insure the infantry of artillery support.

As the advance progressed through the valley the maintenance of supplies became increasingly difficult. Every possible use was made of the available transportation but at times this was not enough. Supply dumps were set up as far forward as possible, but often they were no sooner established than the infantry had left them many miles behind. The more cumbersome Army dumps, from which we drew our supplies, were often very far behind, and this added to the strain upon the transportation facilities. In order to maintain a continuous supply, large reserves of gasoline and rations were kept well forward by the Division Quartermaster.

The capture of large numbers of prisoners created special problems. Advance elements on several occasions captured groups of more than a hundred prisoners. It was necessary to evacuate these immediately, sometimes by marching, but eventually trucks were required. When thousands were collected, it was necessary to call on any vehicle that might be found on the road to move them back to the Prisoner of War Cages. In some instances Partisans collected the prisoners in buildings or yards and guarded them until the Division found means to evacuate them. Some use was made of captured enemy vehicles.

It was also often difficult to maintain communications as the advance increased in rapidity. Radio communication became increasingly important, and with the aid of relay stations this made up for the occasional gaps in wire communications.

On the afternoon of 20 April orders were issued recommitting the 338th Infantry in the left of the Division zone, with the assigned mission of cutting Highway 9 and seizing the line of the Sanoggia River from San Giacomo del Martignone (L784613) to Ponte Sanoggia (L733566). Two battalions took up the assault

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initially, the 3rd on the right and the 1st on the left. The 2nd Battalion, in reserve, followed the 3rd. The 85th Reconnaissance Troop preceded the advance. The 3rd Battalion moved forward through Masiglio (L761402) and made a temporary stop before midnight 20 April at Lavina di Sopra (L792484). Then the companies began to move towards their individual objectives. The advance went rapidly and almost unopposed. Across the last hills into the Po Valley and over the last winding roads the troops reached Highway 9 and crossed it without interference. The 85th Reconnaissance Troop, however, ran into a fight at L788544, below C. Masotti where enemy SP guns and mortars were still firing. The engagement lasted three hours, and the enemy resistance was wiped out only after infantry elements had out-flanked the enemy positions. Before noon 21 April, K Company had advanced nearly three kilometers north of Highway 9 (to L788567), and I Company, though receiving sporadic SP and mortar fire, had secured a bridgehead across the Sanoggia canal at L786594. Some prisoners were taken in this area, but these were merely remnants fleeing from the breakthrough above Bologna and generally incapable of organized fighting. L Company, however, was met by a small counterattack as it advanced through these plains, but this was quickly repelled and the advance continued.

Meanwhile the 1st Battalion, moving forward through Casa Vizzano (L757404), set out for the Po Valley towards dark on 20 April, and by 0500B next morning it had cut Highway 9 and established a bridgehead at Anzola dell' Emilia (L772546).

At 210600B April the 1st Platoon, Company B, 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion was detached from Company B, 751st Tank Battalion, reverting to parent unit control, and the tank and tank destroyer companies were attached to the 338th Infantry.

The 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry pushed ahead in a column of companies, the troops of B, the leading Company, riding on tanks. Moving forward in the afternoon of 21 April to the vicinity of Santa Agata Bolognese (L728677), they found the town abandoned, the last enemy having retreated the night before. Marching from here throughout the night the Battalion reached the south banks of the Panaro River north of Bonporto (L658753) before dawn 22 April, and found that the north bank was already occupied by friendly troops.

The 2nd Battalion had also been committed on the early morning of 21 April, attacking on the right of the 3rd. Marching in a column of companies through Gesso (L794470), it assembled briefly at L786490, near San Pancrazio, to pick up weapons. At 210200B April it took up the attack, advancing in a column of companies with machine gun and mortar attachments. Advancing north of Tenbo (L796523) after dawn 21 April it continued on to F800565 where its leading elements were pinned down by small arms fire from a number of houses to the front. The enemy was firing from houses which he had fortified and from dug-in emplacements. This resistance was overcome with the help of 57mm anti-tank guns and Tank Destroyers. North of Highway 9, at L798552, east of C. Massotti, elements of the Battalion also received about 100 rounds of light artillery fire within an hour, but the advance was continued without encountering any further serious opposition until 211230B April, when the Battalion was ordered to halt to permit the passage of elements of the 88th Infantry Division through the Battalion zone.

At 202400B April the 339th Infantry had been attached to the 1st Armored Division, at that time advancing down the Sanoggia River Valley on the left of the 10th Mountain Division. Closing in the vicinity of Casaccia (L693406) and Palazza (L677389) at 210530B April the Regiment was placed in reserve for the 1st Armored Division. The 1st Battalion, however, was alerted for immediate use in protecting the 1st Armored Division's left flank, and moving to the high ground west of the Torronzo Ghiaiotta (L6541) it took over a road block on the road east of Cieno (L636402). At 211200B April the 339th Infantry was relieved from attachment to the 1st Armored Division, reverted to Division control, and was placed in Division reserve.

At 212100B April Company B, 751st Tank Battalion was detached from the 338th Infantry and attached to the 337th. At the same time the 1st Platoon, Battery A, 106th AAA Battalion (SP) was attached to the 337th Infantry and Company A, 751st Tank Battalion was attached to the Division and sub-attached to the 337th Infantry.

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On 22 April the 55th Infantry had passed to reserve, and the 557th Infantry, motorized, passed through to continue the attack. At 220600Z April the 55th Reconnaissance Troop was detached from the 55th Infantry and attached to the 557th, at 0700Z Company B, 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion was detached from the 55th and attached to the 557th Infantry.

As the advance continued the confusion of the enemy's organization became increasingly evident. After the breakthrough in the Apennines many of the enemy units scattered in small groups trying to reach the Po. The units became intermingled as they headed for one or another crossing points. Prisoners were now taken from the 45th, the 114th, the 232nd, and 306th Infantry Divisions and the 90th Panzer Grenadier Division as well as from innumerable service units. We were now advancing through the midst of an army in flight.

Thousands of the troops were trapped. Cut off, harassed by Partisans, often with orders merely to get to Verona, individually confused, many of them quickly gave themselves up. Others briefly put up token resistance. In only a very few places was the enemy to make any determined effort to resist or delay us.

The 557th Regimental Combat Team assembled near Budrio (L766593) the night of 21 April prepared to move ahead through the 55th at that time some twenty miles distant by road. The Anti-Tank and Cannon Companies were grounded, and their prime movers and the organic trucks were used to motorize the 2nd and 3rd Battalions. These Battalions were organized as task forces, reinforced by tanks, tank destroyers, engineers and the 55th Reconnaissance Troop.

The 3rd Battalion, 557th Infantry passed through the 3rd Battalion, 55th Infantry at 220900Z April, and headed for the Camposanto Bridge (L7551), which it was ordered to capture intact (if possible). The 2nd Battalion, on the left, moved out to cross the Panaro to the west of Camposanto. The 1st Battalion (minus C Company), starting out on foot, was prepared to exploit the first crossing effected. Company C was motorized and noted as mobile Regimental reserve.

The Panaro River defenses were extensive, and the river itself, flowing through steep banks, was a formidable obstacle. The stone bridge at Camposanto was still intact, and its capture was important.

As elements of the Reconnaissance Troops and a platoon of K Company approached the bridge at 221000Z April they were met by heavy fire from north of the river, and immediately the enemy sent men forward to set off the demolition charges which had been placed on the bridge. Our troops drove these back, and a non-commissioned officer of the 510th Engineer Battalion then swam the river and cut the wires to the charges.

The fight for the bridge became intense. The remainder of K Company had now come up, and a group of approximately platoon strength swam the river and obtained an insecure foothold on the north bank. From buildings in the village the enemy was now firing 40mm anti-aircraft guns and light artillery at our infantry, and two Tiger Tanks and several self-propelled guns were firing against our tanks. I Company moved over to attack the defenders east of the bridge but made little headway against intense machine gun and rifle fire.

The fight continued into the afternoon, and the enemy was still holding out. It was later learned that the 1097th Security Battalion had been sent down from the vicinity of Bologna to reinforce the troops defending this bridge.

The decision was now made to outflank the enemy from the west. The 2nd Battalion, which had reached the Panaro at 1100Z after mopping up several pockets of resistance, crossed the river on the Bonetto Bridge (L701797) one of the tanks was knocked out by bazooka fire in a brief fight, but the advance continued. Meanwhile, about one hundred of the enemy defending the Camposanto bridge launched a strong counterattack against the left flank of the 3rd Battalion. When this was repulsed, with the help of mortar and artillery fire the Camposanto bridge was captured intact.

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The Regiment was now ordered to advance to the Po with all possible speed, by-passing all towns and occupied places. The 3rd Battalion on the right, the 2nd on the left, both motorized, moved forward at night, driving into the midst of routed enemy. Overrunning many abandoned installations and vehicles they by-passed many of the enemy, but even before light some insisted on giving themselves up. After dawn there were larger and larger hauls.

At 231045B April the leading elements of the 3rd Battalion Task Force had reached the bank of the Po above Quintole (F6709). Elements of the 2nd Battalion reached the Po at 1230E, and a defense line was set up between Chivica (F736078), north to Rovere (F7410) and west to Brodo (F615129). Some resistance was encountered in clearing Rovere and Pieve di Coriano (F724080), but large numbers of the enemy surrendered without resisting. In the 24-hour period from noon to noon 23-24 April 2543 prisoners passed through the Division Cage. The next day 1791 passed through the cage.

Meanwhile the 339th Regimental Combat Team on 21 and 22 April had moved into the Po Valley, following the advance of the 337th Infantry, and prepared to assist that Regiment in mopping up by-passed pockets of the enemy. When the 3rd Battalion, 337th Infantry became involved in a heavy fight at the Camposanto Bridge (L7481), the 3rd Battalion 339th Infantry was attached to the 337th Infantry at 221730S April, with orders to seize the north end of the bridge after cleaning up a pocket of the enemy at Solara (L700798). But when Solara was reached the enemy had already been put to flight and it was learned that troops of the 337th Infantry had occupied the entire village of Camposanto. The 3rd Battalion, 339th Infantry reverted to Regimental control at 230600S April.

During the day of 23 April the remainder of the 339th Infantry crossed the Panaro at Bonporto, and, rejoined by the 3rd Battalion, it moved north towards Mirandola (L6892), continuing to mop-up scattered groups of the enemy. The 3rd Battalion, on the right, entered Modolia (L686884) at 230945B April, and found the village free of the enemy. Then, moving towards Mirandola (L6892) to seize that town, troops of the Battalion met up with a unit of the 91st Reconnaissance Troop, composed of five tanks and three scout cars, whose commander expressed the desire to attach his unit to the 3rd Battalion. This was arranged, and a platoon of L Company mounted the tanks, and other troops were loaded on the Battalion jeeps and trucks. Mirandola had already been occupied by friendly troops, and the Battalion, now completely motorized, was ordered to capture Poggio Rasco (F7302). Three kilometers south of the village the advance elements halted when a group of enemy was seen to be running toward prepared positions along the road. But as our troops prepared to attack, and before a shot was fired, one of the enemy approached and offered to surrender his entire group of forty. The advance platoon then proceeded on foot into Poggio Rasco, and after a brief skirmish captured 150 prisoners and three vehicles. Other elements of the Battalion deployed and captured 68 Germans from a nearby supply unit. This area cleaned up, the Battalion advanced into Rovere (F7411), and occupied a line along the Po to the north and west, and prepared to cross the Po.

The 2nd Battalion, 339th Infantry had meanwhile cleaned out other villages by-passed by the leading troops - Cavosco (L6586), San Possidenio (L626936), and Concordia (L6186). In the early evening of 23 April motorized patrols of the Battalion had reached Quistello (F6206), which had already been occupied by elements of the 337th Infantry. The 1st Battalion, initially in reserve, had moved up on the left of the 3rd Battalion during the afternoon, and advanced to the banks of the Po behind a screening force. By 232000S April the 1st Battalion had taken over defensive positions along the south of the Po from elements of the 337th Infantry.

The 339th Infantry was ordered not to cross the river at this time, and accordingly through the night and the day of 24 April it was chiefly occupied in handling large groups of prisoners who came flocking in. In 24 hours six officers and 764 enlisted men gave themselves up to the Regiment.

On the night of 23/24 April the 86th Infantry Division, on the right, on Corps order had taken over the sector of the 3rd Battalion, 339th Infantry from Rovere (F7411) west to the 71st Basting. Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion, 339th

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Infantry relieved the elements of the 337th Infantry on the south banks of the Po between the 71 and 68 Eastings, and was in turn relieved by elements of the 88th Division at 240600B April. The boundary between II and IV Corps now followed the 68 Easting as far as the 20th Northing. At that point it turned in a north-westerly direction to Vilimpenta (F6621), then north through Sarga (F6329) and Erbe (F6232).

The relief of the elements of the 337th Infantry in this sector permitted them to move to the Quingentole (F6709) area to join the remainder of the Regiment then preparing to cross the Po. About the same time the 339th Infantry began to move up to Quingentole, assembling in preparation to cross the Po after the 338th.

The 337th Infantry now prepared to cross the Po as quickly as possible in order to exploit the confusion of the enemy organization. It was known that the enemy had prepared elaborate defenses north of the Po, and it was supposed that he would make some use of them. But the attack was to be made quickly that they might not be fully manned.

There were no bridges across the Po in the Division sector. The river, about three hundred feet wide, ran in a swift current between wide sandy beaches north of Quingentole and on the north bank low bluffs rose from the beach. Bridge equipment originally assigned to the Division was at the last moment transferred to the division on the left. It was accordingly necessary to cross all the combat elements of the Division except the medium artillery on four Infantry Support Rafts, three rafts improvised by the 310th Engineer Battalion, DUKW's and assault boats. The medium artillery, the supporting armor, and later many of the supplies, were brought over across the bridge at San Benedetto Po (F5810), in the sector of the division on the left.

Early on the morning of 24 April the companies of the 337th Infantry moved into positions on the beaches. The attack began at 0830B, after mortars had laid down a smoke barrage on the north bank and after a 15 minute artillery preparation by ninety-six guns. Seventy loaded assault boats pushed into the river, and at 0844B the first wave hit the north beach. No retaliatory fire was received. The first troops quickly pushed ahead, and meanwhile the second wave had crossed, landing at 0900B. The bridgehead was secured without firing a shot. The Po River defenses in the Division sector were completely unmanned.

As other units crossed later a few enemy planes attempted to interfere with the crossing, but without particular success.

After the 337th Infantry had passed through the 338th early in the morning of 22 April, the 338th assembled briefly in areas south of the Panaro River and near Camposanto (L7381) where elements of the 3rd Battalion set up a guard. The next day the Regiment moved to assembly areas west of Mirandola (L6892), about 19 kilometers south of the Po. The morning of 24 April the units of the Regiment moved by motor and on foot to assembly areas east of Quistello (F6206) and crossed the Po later in the day from the beaches already used by the 337th Infantry. No bridges had yet been constructed in the Division sector, and the troops were carried across by assault boats, small motor launches and DUKW's.

The vehicles of the Regiment were carried over by the few rafts available, during the day and night of 24/25 April.

The 339th Regimental Combat Team, now with Company A, 751st Tank Battalion and Company B, 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion attached, was meanwhile getting ready to cross the Po early on 25 April. The 339th was prepared to operate in the left sector of the Division zone after passing through elements of the 337th Infantry holding a line about two miles north of the river. The Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon and the Anti-Tank and Cannon Companies moved first, crossing on rafts at 250300B April. These elements pushed ahead to reconnoiter the road not in advance of the Battalions and to report the location of any groups of enemy resistance. At 0500B the Battalions began to cross the river in DUKW's, the 2nd, 1st and 3rd Battalions moving across in that order. By noon the passage of the lines of the 337th Infantry had been completed, and the 339th was ready to take up the advance, the 2nd Battalion on the right, the 1st on the left, and the 3rd, in reserve, following the 1st.

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It soon became apparent that there was to be very little resistance to their advance. The assault Battalions were accordingly motorized to the fullest extent possible, and forward reconnaissance was made by jeeps mounting machine guns. The 2nd Battalion was unopposed until it reached a point about a kilometer west of Fagnano (F6034) where the advance elements were fired on by automatic weapons in positions in that village. Anti-tank guns were brought up to counter this, and the enemy withdrew quickly. On the left the 1st Battalion had seized Gazzo (F563256) on Highway 10, leading northeast from Mantua, and moving through Castelbelforte (F562296) it advanced two miles farther north before setting up defensive positions preparatory to halting for the night.

Passing through elements of the 337th Infantry, whom they now relieved, two Battalions of the 338th continued their advance on Verona to the right of the 339th. The 2nd Battalion, on the right, moving past Sustinente (F6513) made contact with the 337th Infantry after a five-hour march at 242000B April east of Nosodole (F634186). Pushing on through these troops, the 2nd Battalion met no resistance and quickly cleared Vilimpenta (F6721). The route of the Regiment's advance was reconnoitered by the 85th Reconnaissance Troop, now under Division control. Near Vilimpenta the men halted to rest for the remainder of the night.

On the left the 1st Battalion advanced from Molinello (F626196) at 1300B, and set up defensive positions west of Vilimpenta. The 3rd Battalion was in Regimental reserve, and followed the advance of the leading battalions in stages.

On 25 April the 338th Infantry attacked with the following units attached: the 1st Platoon, Battery A, 105th AAA, AW Battalion (SP), Company B, 751st Tank Battalion, and one platoon, Company B, 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion. Company A, 751st Tank Battalion and Company B (minus one platoon), 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion were now attached to the 339th Infantry.

The advance of the 338th Infantry continued to meet only the slightest resistance. The 1st Battalion, starting out in the early afternoon, sent motorized patrols ahead, and the remaining troops were shuttled forward by the Battalion's vehicles. Castel D'Ario (F6226), Erbo (F6232), and Trevonzuolo (F5935) were quickly seized. From Trevonzuolo, entered as the Partisans were cleaning out the last Germans, the 1st Battalion marched to an area south of Vigasio (F6040) where defensive positions were set up and the Battalion stayed the night. The 2nd Battalion had meanwhile moved ahead in a similarly uneventful advance, and also passing through Erbo (F6232) occupied Vigasio (F6040). The 3rd Battalion had now assembled near Sabbioni (F601303).

The continued failure of the enemy to offer resistance north of the Po seemed almost incredible. The advancing units were still taking prisoners, though not in such large numbers as in the southern part of the Valley, but still the scattered remnants of innumerable organizations. Reports obtained from these indicated that the enemy had no intention of defending either Verona or the Adige River Line, and that the elaborate defenses north of Verona would possibly not be manned at all. While many of these prisoners were fleeing towards Verona, according to their orders, several reported the belief that the German forces would offer no further organized resistance until the Alps themselves were reached.

Verona now was only thirteen kilometers distant from our forward positions. Any number of good secondary roads led to Verona, and, as it was to turn out, there was no considerable number of demolitions or road blocks to hinder the advance on the city. The single important hindrance would be the lack of bridges across the Adige both within Verona and on either side.

North of the Po, many of the towns and villages had contained groups of the enemy only a few hours before we reached them. Most of the troops fled as we came nearer, and others, tardy in their retreat, were frequently engaged by Partisans who killed or captured them or put them to flight. Consequently, many places where there was reason to expect resistance by the enemy were entered and found abandoned. At some points, however, German troops, apparently unwilling to risk further retreat through country infested by Partisans, waited until our arrival in order to give themselves up.

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On 26 April the sky was overcast for the first time since the advance had begun, and there were light sprinkles of rain. For the rest of the month the weather was fitfully gray or bright, and there was more rain, but not enough to effect the operations on the ground.

At 260600B April the 338th Infantry, on the right, moved forward with the assurance of reaching the objective with little difficulty. The 1st Battalion, with a motorized patrol forward, reached the southern part of Verona at 1000B. The city itself had already been occupied by other friendly forces with only slight opposition. The 1st, followed by the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 338th Infantry crossed the Adige into the center of the city by the remains of the railroad bridge at F650530. This was passable only by foot troops, and supporting vehicles were brought across the river on rafts. The 310th Engineer Battalion set up two assault-boat ferries and also cleared the railroad bridge of freight cars and damaged rails and built up earthen ramps at either end to facilitate the traffic. The 1st and 2nd Battalions passed through the city and into the hills to the north, cutting the Adige Line which, as had been reported, was unmanned. The 1st Battalion, meeting scattered small arms fire, advanced some five miles to the vicinity of Nescato (F685585), and established road blocks at Compagnola (F685574) and Vendri (F685598). The 2nd Battalion, advancing north of Verona, assembled in the vicinity of Villa Loovo (F657579). Patrols were sent forward during the night in a vain effort to establish contact with enemy forces. The 3rd Battalion assembled just northeast of Verona at F679553.

At 260600B April the 339th Regimental Combat Team, on the left of the 338th, also jumped off for Verona, moving forward in a column of Battalions. The 1st Battalion, leading the advance, was supported by all the armored elements attached to the Regiment. No resistance was encountered. By 0815B forward elements had advanced into the southern part of the city in the vicinity of the railroad marshalling yards, and had cut Highways 62 and 11 leading into Verona from the southwest and west.

At this time the elements of the 10th Mountain Division and the 88th Infantry Division already occupying the city were ordered to move west and east, respectively, from Verona, and the 339th Regimental Combat Team prepared to cross the Adige River running through the center of the city, and to move north to determine if the enemy was occupying the Adige Line. Although all the bridges across the river had been destroyed, either by our own aerial bombardment or the demolitions of the Germans, the 1st Battalion was able to improvise a foot crossing over the piers and rubble remains of one bridge with the help of ladders, doors and ropes. By 1625B the entire Battalion had crossed over and had begun the advance into the hills north of the city. Meanwhile, the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon had discovered a small ferry about six miles west of Verona, at Settimo (F582583), and this was used to carry Anti-Tank guns and small vehicles across the river where they had easy access to Highway 12, leading into Verona from the northwest. The 3rd Battalion set up road blocks to protect this crossing.

The 1st Battalion was now ordered to move into the Adige Line positions if they were unoccupied, and to send patrols to the north to maintain contact with the enemy. The elaborate abandoned positions were quickly occupied during the night of 26/27 April, and by 270315B April the 1st Battalion had secured Monte Mozzano (F6561), 412 meters high, and the 2nd Battalion was moving up behind the 1st. The 3rd Battalion had meanwhile closed in the northwestern section of Verona.

While there was no fighting, prisoners were still being captured in great numbers. On 26-27 April the Division captured prisoners from the 65th, 94th, 148th, 155th, 278th, 305th, 334th, 362, and the Brandenburg Infantry Divisions; the 26th Panzer Division; the 8th Mountain Division; and the 1st and 4th Parachute Divisions. Forces from everywhere in Italy were converging in flight towards the Brenner Pass.

Other prisoners were taken from a great variety of units - assault battalions, alarm companies, truck companies, anti-aircraft battalions, tank battalions, bridge companies, sabotage units, and labor battalions. Troops of many subject nationalities were represented - Czechs, Yugo-Slavs, Turks, Poles, Russians, Albanians, Austrians and Italians. Officers of Czech Labor Battalions surrendered themselves and their units, and offered to fight against the Germans. Partisans, better organized in the mountains north of Verona than in the Po Valley, continued to turn over to the Division the prisoners they had captured.

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The 339th Regimental Combat Team remained in defensive positions for the remainder of the month, and during this time patrols were sent farther and farther north to clean out any positions that might yet be held by the enemy. On 28 April a motorized task force, consisting of A Company, one platoon of A Company, 751st Tank Battalion, and one platoon of the 85th Reconnaissance Troop advanced beyond Erbozzo (F665765) only to find that the last enemy in that area had already retreated still farther to the north. On 29 April troops of the 3rd Battalion were sent to guard a radio station on Monte Castelbore (F680852), which had been turned over to the Division by the Partisans. This mountain, 1751 meters high, marked the point of the farthest advance north in this sector by elements of the Division.

During the remainder of the month the 338th Infantry maintained an arc of defensive positions blocking approaches to Verona. A road block was set up on Highway 11, to the east, at San Michele (F690534), and due north of San Michele and other road blocks were established to the north and northwest - at Castel Montorio (F688560), Nesento (F685585), and Vondri (F685598). These positions were held by troops of the 3rd Battalion. The 1st and 2nd Battalions occupied defensive positions from Grezzano (F673634) to Ghetto (F615586) (on Highway 12). Long-range foot and motor patrols were sent to the north as far as the 70th Northing and guards were placed over several captured enemy supply dumps and installations, but no contact was made with the enemy. Stragglers and deserters continued to come in, and Partisans frequently reported the presence or movement of enemy troops, but otherwise the period passed quietly.

On 27-28 April the 2nd Battalion, 337th Infantry patrolled the streets of Verona, as a protective garrison and to secure the south bank of the Adige River. During the remainder of the month the Regiment remained in the southern outskirts of the city.

On 27 April, Company A 84th Chemical Weapons Battalion was placed in support of the division.

At 271800B April the 1st Platoon, Battery A, 105th AAA AW Battalion (SP) was detached from the Division and reverted to the control of the parent unit.

At 280800B April the Division was detached from IV Corps and reverted to Fifth Army control.

At 290800B April Companies A and B, 751st Tank Battalion were relieved from attachment to the Division and were attached to the Lognane Group.

At 301200B April the Division was released to II Corps control, and prepared to move north of Vicenza for a resumption of the offensive in the Piave River Valley. At 301800B April the 337th Regimental Combat Team began moving into areas west of Vicenza. The 339th Regimental Combat Team was also alerted for movement to this area, and in preparation for this move the 338th Infantry began the relief of elements of the 339th. The 1st Battalion, 338th Infantry completed the relief of the 1st Battalion, 339th at 302115B April, and at this time the command of the 339th sector passed to the Commanding Officer, 338th Infantry, and the 339th Regimental Combat Team assembled in preparation for the move east. The 338th continued to defend its own and the former 339th sectors.

During the period 1 officer and 30 enlisted men were killed in action; 7 officers and 127 enlisted were wounded in action; and 4 enlisted men were reported missing in action.

On 30 April the effective strength of the Division amounted to 874 officers, 40 warrant officers, and 14,439 enlisted men.

By noon 1 May 8563 prisoners captured by the Division passed through the Division Cage. 94 prisoners captured by the 1st Armored Division also passed through this cage. In addition, 300 prisoners taken by the Division were evacuated through the cage of the 10th Mountain Division, and 926 were evacuated directly to the Fifth Army Cage. 163 prisoners were captured in the German hospital at Quistello (F624065). In all the Division was responsible for the capture of 9952 prisoners during the period.

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Since 18 April the Division had advanced approximately ninety-eight miles measured by the map.

Lee S. Gerow
LEE S. GEROW,

Brigadier General, U. S. Army.
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS 85TH INFANTRY DIVISION

A.P.O. 85, U. S. Army,
17 June 1945.85TH INFANTRY DIVISIONREPORT OF OPERATIONS - MAY 1945

At the beginning of May the enemy was retreating north into the Alps, leaving behind scattered pockets of resistance and delaying detachments. In the Rovereto (A7104) area the 26th Panzer and the 1st and 4th Parachute Divisions were withdrawing to the north and northwest. In the Feltre (B3816) area the 305th, 65th, 278th and 155th Infantry Divisions were retreating north along the main roads into the Dolomites. II Corps was to advance north in the pursuit of the retreating enemy forces, to seize Highway 49, the chief east-west Highway cutting across the Corps zone, prepared to advance beyond the Brenner Pass to seize Innsbruck, Austria. The Division (minus the 338th Regimental Combat Team) was ordered to concentrate in the general area Aleno di Piave (B3704) - Montebelluno (G4789), then to advance to seize the Corps objective, to protect the Corps right flank, maintaining contact with the 6th British Armored Division on the right and the 88th Infantry Division on the left.

The 338th Regimental Combat Team initially remained in the Verona area, manning an arc of defenses to the north of the city and patrolling areas to the southwest in search of any remaining by-passed pockets of the enemy. At 011800B May the 338th Regimental Combat Team was detached from the Division and placed under II Corps control.

At 010030B May the 757th Tank Battalion; the 804th Tank Destroyer Battalion (minus the Reconnaissance Company), and Company B, 100th Chemical Mortar Battalion were attached to the Division. The 337th Regimental Combat Team (reinforced by one platoon of Company B, 100th Chemical Mortar Battalion, Company C and one platoon of Company D, 757th Tank Battalion, Company A, 804th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and one platoon of the 85th Reconnaissance Troop) moved east from the Verona area, closing near Vicenza (G0864) at 010230B May. It was detached from the Division at 010900B and attached to the 88th Infantry Division. It was then ordered to move west of the Piave River between Feltre (B3816) and Cornuda (G4495), prepared to pass through the right flank elements of the 549th Infantry, 88th Infantry Division. On passing through these elements it was to advance along Highway 50 through Feltre (B3816) to Sedico (B5326), then north along the road following the Torrente Cordevele to Jerde (B4845). From this point it would continue on to Highway 49, cutting the Highway and advancing to the Austrian border. The 339th Regimental Combat Team was meanwhile assembling in the Verona area, and preparing to move east.

Moving along the valley roads north of Foner (B406035) on 1 May the 337th Regimental Combat Team advanced rapidly without meeting enemy resistance. The attached platoon of the 85th Reconnaissance Troop, however, moved to the northwest to clean out a few pockets of the enemy southwest of Bassano (G2588). Several groups of prisoners were taken, and the Partisans reported large numbers of Germans in the vicinity.

The country into which the troops were advancing was rapidly becoming more and more mountainous as they drove towards the central ranges of the Alps, but the roads in the river valleys were uniformly good. Comparatively few of the bridges had been blown by the enemy, although as the advance progressed it was occasionally necessary to halt while the attached engineers constructed by-passes. Intermittent rain failed to hamper the advance.

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At 012315B May the 2nd Battalion, 337th Infantry, motorized and reinforced by one chemical mortar platoon, a company of tanks (minus one platoon), a company of tank destroyers (minus one platoon), a battery of field artillery, and a platoon of engineers) was ordered to advance north and northeast of Feltro (B3816) to reach Highway 49 as quickly as possible. The 3rd Battalion was ordered to follow the 2nd, mopping up any stragglers of the enemy and to evacuate prisoners. The 3rd Battalion was now reinforced by a platoon of tanks, a platoon of tank destroyers, and a platoon of the 85th Reconnaissance Troop. The 1st Battalion was in Regimental reserve.

At 020600B May the 2nd Battalion Task Force began the advance, the troops of G Company, the forward company, riding the tanks and tank destroyers. The advance went rapidly, and by 020800B the 337th Regimental Combat Team had passed through the 349th Infantry north of Foner (B406035). The Commanding Officer, 337th Infantry now assumed command of the former 349th Infantry zone, and at the same time the 337th Regimental Combat Team returned to Division control.

The 2nd Battalion Task Force, when it was reported that the bridge at Bribana (B5124) had been destroyed, advancing along the west of the Torrente Cordevole made such rapid progress that the 3rd Battalion was now also motorized in order to keep up with the advance of the 2nd, prepared to assist the 2nd Battalion if enemy opposition should materialize. Passing through Sospirolo (B5129) and capturing the bridge at Mas (B5530) intact, the 2nd Battalion Task Force encountered the first enemy opposition near Mas at 021000B May. The five leading tanks and one platoon of G Company attacked the enemy in the village, and after a sharp fight cleared the village, destroying three enemy artillery pieces and capturing 377 prisoners. The advance towards Agordo (B4845) was immediately resumed. Here the road ran beside a winding river through a deep-cut gorge, and from positions in the flanking mountains snipers fired at the advancing column. No other resistance was met, however, till south of Foner (B5432). Here the advance elements met up with a German supply train which they destroyed. Some troops, still resisting, attempted to set up a road block of burning vehicles, but after a brief engagement these troops were driven back, many prisoners were taken, and the advance continued.

At 021200B a parlementaire from the enemy approached our forces, asking permission to pass beyond our lines to inform other German troops in the vicinity that hostilities in Italy were to cease at 021400B May. Since no word to this effect had been received from higher headquarters by the 337th Infantry or the Division, the parlementaire was detained and the 2nd Battalion Task Force was ordered to continue the advance.

Sniper fire continued to harass the advancing troops, but shortly afterwards the advance was halted when the forward troops reached a place in the winding road where progress was blocked by a crowded mass of thousands of enemy troops, vehicles and horses. As our troops halted, the Commanding General, 278th Volksgrenadier Division presented himself to the Task Force Commander, and stated that the German 10th Army Headquarters had informed him that an armistice had become effective at 021400B May. Since the Commanding Officer, 337th Infantry had received no notification of such an armistice, he demanded the unconditional surrender of the troops facing him. The Commanding General, 278th Infantry Division then surrendered the troops under his command. A temporary Prisoner of War Stockade was then set up to receive the surrendered forces.

After the road had been cleared troops of the 2nd Battalion Task Force continued to advance on foot towards Agordo. At 021740B May the leading troops encountered elements of the 29th Panzer Grenadier Division at La Stanga (B5537) along the road. The Commanding General, 29th Panzer Grenadier Division requested a conference with the Commanding Officer, 337th Infantry, and the opposing forces were ordered to stand fast to await instructions from higher headquarters.

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Meanwhile the 3rd Battalion, 337th Infantry had reconnoitered the Fies Valley to discover a route to Highway 49, but found that in that area several bridges had been destroyed. The 1st Battalion in the meantime had arrived at Giustina (26223).

The 337th Infantry now prepared to halt for the night, the 2nd Battalion Task Force bivouacking near Fies (26231). At 022000Z May news of the unconditional surrender of the German forces in Italy and Austria was confirmed. At 022455Z the 337th Regimental Combat Team was ordered to halt in place, and its mission to cut Highway 49 was cancelled. Arrangements were made for guarding the several thousand prisoners now held by the Regiment, and the 1st Battalion was ordered to move to an area between Fies (26231), Sedico (26236) and Belluno (26129) by 030600Z May to establish a concentration area for enemy troops.

Meanwhile, on the morning of 2 May, the 339th Regimental Combat Team had been ordered to proceed north through the Piave River Valley, following the advance of the 337th Regimental Combat Team as far as the road junction at 263006Z. The direction of attack of the 337th Infantry continued north from this point, and the 339th Regimental Combat Team was ordered to move to the east towards Belluno (26129), before turning north towards Highway 49. The 339th Regimental Combat Team, now on the right flank of the Division, of II Corps, and of Fifth Army, was further ordered to maintain contact with the 6th British Armored Division, and to establish road blocks on the lateral roads crossing the Corps right boundary. The 339th Regimental Combat Team was now reinforced by the balance of Company C, 310th Engineer Battalion, one platoon of Company B, 757th Tank Battalion, Company C, 804th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and Company B (minus one platoon), 100th Chemical Mortar Battalion. The 2nd Battalion, 339th Infantry, motorized, moved out ahead, reinforced by all the tank and chemical mortar elements attached to the Regiment, Company C (minus one platoon), 804th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and Battery B, 910th Field Artillery Battalion. The 3rd Battalion, with one platoon of the 66th Reconnaissance Troop and one platoon of Company C, 804th Tank Destroyer Battalion attached, prepared to follow the 2nd Battalion Task Force and to mop up any by-passed enemy pockets. The 1st Battalion was initially in Regimental reserve.

The 339th Regimental Combat Team began its advance at 021155Z May. Progress was rapid and no resistance was encountered. Many enemy groups were met, however, who approached in order to give themselves up. In a few places blown bridges were encountered, but in all cases these were easily by-passed. Late in the afternoon the 2nd Battalion reached Belluno (26129), and went on to the junction of Highways 50 and 51 at Ponte dell'Alpi (26753) and Portogruaro (26639). Here the advance was halted for the night while Company C, 310th Engineer Battalion constructed a by-pass around the destroyed bridge at this point.

Just before dark a German officer approached the forward troops to arrange for the surrender of certain troops of the German 10th Army. The 339th Regimental Combat Team was not informed officially, however, of the cessation of hostilities until 042250Z May. After some initial uncertainty, the original mission of the 339th Regimental Combat Team was confirmed - to cut Highway 49 within its zone and to advance to the Austrian border. These units were now attached to the Regiment: Companies A, B and C, 310th Engineer Battalion, Company C, 804th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and the 757th Tank Battalion (minus one company). Three task forces were organized within the Regimental Combat Team, each composed of one battalion of infantry, motorized, a battery of 105mm howitzers, a tank company, a company of engineers, and the necessary signal, supply, and evacuation detachments. The separate forces moved forward at 051255Z May, delayed at only one point by a blown bridge. When this had been by-passed, the 339th Regimental Combat Team continued north in a column of battalions, advancing along Highway 51 past Pieve di Cadore (27561) to the junction of Highways 51 and 52 at Pinio (26271). From that point the 2nd Battalion Task Force, followed by the 1st, proceeded north on Highway 52 towards San Candido (26694). The 3rd Battalion Task Force moved northwest along Highway 52 towards Dobbiaco (26495) and Brunico (26202).

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While advancing during the afternoon further orders were issued to the 339th Regimental Combat Team, ordering it to block all exits north of Highway 49 into Austria, to push reconnaissance elements along these routes as far as the border, to send a Battalion Task Force to the Brenner Pass, and to close the border and prevent the escape of enemy troops along these routes. The advance continued into the mountains that were now in some places more than 10,000 feet above sea level. Towards dark the troops were slowed in their advance by increasingly deep snow, at some places three feet deep. Bull-dozers cleared the roads, but at the Monto Croce di Comelico Pass (B7986) the troops were halted for three hours before the road could be cleared. By 040415B May troops of the 2nd Battalion had nevertheless cut Highway 49, occupied San Candido (B6894), and had reached the Austrian border at D7697 where they were halted by a German road block. The 3rd Battalion had by this time reached a point west of Monguelfo (B5598), at B505998.

Moving forward from just south of Highway 49 before daybreak 4 May the 1st Battalion Task Force began to advance towards the Brenner Pass. Advancing west on Highway 49, the 1st Battalion reached Vipiteno (W0415) on Highway 12 at 041615B May, and blocked the Brenner Pass (W1028). A force consisting of a rifle company, a tank platoon, and two tank destroyers moved forward and made contact with troops of 103rd Infantry Division, 7th United States Army at the Brenner Pass. This 339th Infantry Task Force was the first combat unit of the 15th Army Group to reach the Austrian border and to link up with the Seventh Army.

The 338th Infantry (minus the 2nd Battalion, Reinforced), which had been in defensive positions in the Verona area, closed near Feltre (B3816) at 040430B May, where it reverted to Division control as Division reserve. The 2nd Battalion, Reinforced, remained under II Corps control, and was made self-sufficient while continuing to protect the Verona area. On 4 May the Reconnaissance Company, 804th Tank Destroyer Battalion returned to parent unit control.

Several noteworthy incidents occurred on 4 May. On the basis of information supplied by the Division, a small task force formed from Company G and the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon, 339th Infantry liberated an important group of political hostages held by the enemy at Lago di Braos (B531915). Among these were Leon Blum, Martin Niemöller, Hjalmar Schacht, and Kurt von Schuschnigg. At Fortozza (W1000) troops of the 1st Battalion, 339th Infantry discovered vaults containing the gold reserve of the Bank of Italy totalling nearly eighty million dollars. Troops of the 3rd Battalion, 339th Infantry discovered an important collection of works of art hidden by the Germans at Campo Turoso (W4316). Guards were placed over these as well as various enemy installations.

On 6 May the Division (with the 804th Tank Destroyer Battalion, minus one platoon, and the 767th Tank Battalion, minus one platoon, attached) was ordered to direct its main effort to assembling and disarming surrendered enemy units within its zone and to continue sealing the Italian border, assuming military control of the area. At 061800B May Company B, 100th Chemical Mortar Battalion was relieved from attachment to the Division.

During this period the Division undertook the long and tedious process of concentrating, disarming and evacuating the large number of enemy troops within the Division zone. These consisted chiefly of troops of the 73rd Corps, the 76th Panzer Corps, and Army troops of the 10th German Army and the Army Tyrol. According to the orders of higher headquarters enemy troops taken in the mass surrender were assembled as far as conveniently possible in their proper units, and after processing were evacuated as units to concentration areas where they were disarmed and from which they were ultimately distributed to concentration areas in the rear. These troops were originally massed chiefly in the areas controlled by the 337th and 339th Infantry Regiments. The 338th Infantry was mainly engaged in guarding installations in the Belluno area, establishing road blocks, and maintaining roving patrols within the Regimental area. Other units of the Division were engaged in similar activities. Meanwhile, casual and unruly prisoners, SS troops and troops of certain subject nationalities were evacuated in the usual manner through the Division Cage.

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On 9 May the 2nd Battalion, 338th Infantry reverted to parent unit control and moved to the vicinity of Feltre (B3816).

On 11 May the Division was ordered to assume control of the surrender of all enemy personnel in the then Eighth Army zone north of Highway 13 and west of the Tagliamento River.

At 131130B May the Division sector was extended to the west, and the Division now assumed control of part of the former 88th Division sector, and assumed responsibility for all enemy troops within the additional sector except those of the German 14th Army. The Division left boundary now extended from B-4080 to Rio di Pasteria (B2204), and then north to the Austrian border. This area was incorporated in the sector of the 339th Infantry. The Division sector now extended north from the vicinity of Vicenza approximately 140 kilometers, varying in width from 30 to 50 kilometers.

On 21 May the Division was placed under the operational control of the 88th Infantry Division for evacuating surrendered personnel of the German 10th Army.

Companies A, B, and C, 757th Tank Battalion were relieved from attachment to the 339th, 338th and 337th Infantry Regiments, respectively, and were returned to parent unit control at 182400B May. The 757th Tank Battalion (minus D Company) was relieved from attachment to the Division at the same time, reverting to II Corps control. On 19 May one platoon of the 85th Reconnaissance Troop and one platoon of Company D, 757th Tank Battalion were detached from the Division and attached for operational control to the II Corps Area Command. These elements reverted to the control of the parent units on 29 May, and Company D, 757th Tank Battalion was relieved from attachment to the Division and reverted to parent unit control. The 804th Tank Destroyer Battalion was relieved from attachment to the Division at 280001B May.

The relief of the Division in the sector north of the B-00 Northing by the Folgore Group (Italian) was begun on 26 May, and on completion of the relief at 282400B May command of the sector passed to the Commanding General, Folgore Group. The Friuli Group (Italian) completed relief of the elements of the Division south of the B-00 Northing at 282200B May, and command of this sector passed to the Commanding General, Friuli Group at this time.

On completion of the relief the elements of the Division assembled in areas between Agordo (B4845), Belluno (B6129), and Feltre (B3816), prepared for movement on Division order to the II Corps sector in the vicinity of Trieste. The 338th Regimental Combat Team, the 85th Reconnaissance Troop (-) and Company D (-), 757th Tank Battalion were placed on a six-hour alert; the 337th Regimental Combat Team was placed on a twelve-hour alert, and the remainder of the Division was placed on a twenty-four hour alert. During the remainder of the month training activities were carried on.

From 1 May to 28 May the Division evacuated 36,100 enemy troops taken in the mass surrender. In addition, 12,565 prisoners, chiefly captured in the first days of the month, were evacuated in the usual manner through the Division Cago. In all, the Division evacuated 48,665 prisoners during the period.

During the period six enlisted men were killed in action and 2 officers and 10 enlisted men were wounded in action.

On 31 May the effective strength of the Division amounted to 837 officers, 42 warrant officers, and 14,127 enlisted men.

Lee S. Gerow
LEE S. GEROW,
Brigadier General, U. S. Army,
Commanding.

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HEADQUARTERS 85TH INFANTRY DIVISION

A.P.O. 85, U. S. Army,
8 July 1945.

85TH INFANTRY DIVISION

REPORT OF OPERATIONS - JUNE 1945

CLASSIFICATION (CANCELLED)
BY AUTHORITY OF *John B. Coulter*Date *1 July 1945*

At the beginning of June the Division, under Fifth Army control, was assembled in areas near Feltre (B3816) and Belluno (B6229). Training was continued and the Division was prepared for movement to the II Corps sector in the vicinity of Trieste. At this time negotiations were under way to establish the limits of the zones occupied by the Yugo-Slav Liberation Army and to place the Trieste area under the control of the Allied Military Government. On 13 June the Division was released from the alert status when it became evident that the Division would not be required for use in the disputed area.

On 9 June the Division was notified by Fifth Army that it had been classified as a Category IV Unit, in the terms of the Redeployment Program, and that as such it would prepare for shipment to the United States in the near future. It was further stated that the Division would be demobilized shortly after return to the United States.

In fulfillment of instructions which accompanied this notice, large scale transfers of officers and men were now undertaken. According to the set policy, only those members of the Division who were classified as essential or who possessed an Adjusted Service Rating Score of 85 points or more were to remain with the Division for return to the United States. Non-essential members having less than 85 points were to be transferred to other units in the Mediterranean Theater. Concurrently, personnel from other units in the Theater who were eligible for discharge from the Army (having 85 points or more) were transferred into the Division. For the purposes of redeployment and demobilization the Division was authorized a total strength fifty per-cent greater than that established by the Table of Organization. In this manner the Division was to be prepared for demobilization while still in the Mediterranean Theater. By the end of June the greater part of the necessary transfers had been completed. During the month approximately 300 officers and 6,000 enlisted men were transferred out of the Division and approximately 250 officers and 2,500 enlisted men were received.

While these transfers were being effected training was continued to the degree that conditions allowed. Vocational and educational training was also expanded through the facilities offered by the Army Education Program. Unit schools were established throughout the Division. Instructors were chosen from the qualified personnel of each unit, and courses were offered in subjects for which the demand had been established through questionnaires which had been filled out by each man in the Division.

On 24 May 1945, Major General John B. Coulter, the Division Commander, departed for a short visit to the United States to attend a celebration in Chicago, Illinois, with General Mark W. Clark, returning to his command on 18 June 1945. During his absence, the Division was commanded by Brigadier General Lee S. Gerow, the Assistant Division Commander.

On 23 June the Division was ordered to prepare to move to the Volturno Redeployment Training Area, northwest of Caserta, in the early part of July. The Advance Division Detachment closed in the Volturno Area at 291445B June. The relief of the Station Complement, Volturno Redeployment Training Area, was completed at 301800B June, and at this time the Division assumed command of the Area.

On 30 June the assigned strength of the Division amounted to 675 officers, 39 warrant officers, and 9819 enlisted men.

UNCLASSIFIED

John B. Coulter
JOHN B. COULTER
Major General, U. S. Army,
Commanding.

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The mule trains at this time were suffering considerable losses from enemy shelling. The heavy rain of 28 September also added to the difficulties ordinarily offered by the terrain, flooding the roads and jeep trails. It was especially difficult to bring up tanks. Beset by these difficulties the 3rd Battalion, 338th Infantry advanced to take CANDA, meeting light enemy resistance on the northeast slopes but none at the top, which it reached at noon. Other elements of the Battalion pushed on to occupy CAVRENNO (882148). The 1st and 2nd Battalions spent the day consolidating and strengthening their positions.

At 1435 hours 28 September the 85th Reconnaissance Troop was relieved from attachment to the 338th Infantry and assembled in Division reserve near FIRENZUOLA.

The continuing rain caused a 24 hour delay in the advance. All three regiments continued to consolidate their positions and prepare for the advance. Whenever possible the troops were given dry clothing and blankets, hot food and drink. Aggressive patrolling to the front and flanks was conducted, however, as far as a line running from BELVEDERE (980187) through CASSETTA (929167) and MONTE GURLINO (899167). It was expected that the next hills to be used by the enemy for his delaying positions would be those from 8 to 10 kilometers north of CANDA.

On 29 September patrols were instructed to proceed even farther north, as long as they were unopposed, but the 337th and 339th Regiments were to move their battalions no farther forward than MOLINACCIO (968186) and GURLINO.

On 30 September instructions were issued for the new advance. The 337th Infantry on the right, the 339th on the left, were to attack north on either side of the valley of the TORRENTE IDICE taking the dominating hills, to seize and hold a line just south of the VLA EMILIA and to be prepared to debouch into the PO VALLEY. The 86th Fighter Bomber Group, AAF, was to support the attack. The 338th Infantry was in Division reserve. Attached to the 337th Infantry were the 85th Reconnaissance Troop and Company B, 84th Chemical Weapons Battalion. One Platoon of Company B, 84th Chemical Weapons Battalion was attached to the 339th.

During the day the elements of the Division completed their preparations for the attack, sent patrols well forward into the new zone, and took up forward positions. Elements of the 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry occupied PIANCALDOLI (950170), and the other two battalions were nearby. Elements of the 3rd Battalion, 339th, occupied SCIMITELLA (929178) and a point southwest of there, 913168. Elements of the 2nd Battalion were in positions south of CAPEGGIO (887188). Elements of the 1st Battalion were in BELLONTE (931131). The attack was to begin at 0600 hours next morning.

In the operations of September the Division had broken through the GOTHIC LINE, the last prepared line of German defenses south of the PO VALLEY. It had advanced approximately 15 miles, measured by the map, over the last two ridges of the northern APENNINES, crossing the first when it broke the GOTHIC LINE guarding IL GIOCO PASS, and the other in taking TRE POGGIOLI and CANDA, the great mountains protecting the PASSO DELLA RADICOSA. The terrain was mostly steep and rocky, though on the highest mountains there were long tundra-like slopes bare of cover. The few roads in the Division sector were generally poor, and most of them needed improvement before the normal needs of supply could be met. The Division and Corps engineers repaired and maintained those under difficult conditions and constructed several new roads. The longest single road built by the 310th Engineer Battalion extended from near FIRENZUOLA to SASSO DI SAN ZANOBI, a distance of approximately 8 miles.

The weather remained generally fair and the temperature moderate until the last days of the month when cold, driving rain added immeasurably to the difficulties of the advance. The rain turned the roads and fields into deep Italian mud in which jeeps, trucks, tanks and ambulances were continually stuck. Nevertheless, supplies and communications were successfully maintained throughout the period. The mule trains proved extremely useful from the beginning, carrying food and supplies on occasion as far as advanced platoon outposts.

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