

R E P O R T N O. 18

HISTORICAL SECTION (G.S.)

ARMY HEADQUARTERS

6 Dec 48

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1 Nov 47

THE CAMPAIGN IN SOUTHERN ITALY (September - December 1943)

Information from German Military Documents regarding Allied Operations in
General and Canadian Operations in Particular.

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HISTORICAL SECTION (G.S.)

ARMY HEADQUARTERS

THE CAMPAIGN IN SOUTHERN ITALY (September - December 1943)

Information from German Military Documents regarding Allied Operations in General and Canadian Operations in Particular.

INTRODUCTION

1. Canadian operations in Southern Italy from September to the end of December 1943, have been dealt with in detail in Reports Nos [129](#), [144](#), [161](#) and [165](#) of the Historical Section, Canadian Military Headquarters. These reports were mainly based upon information from Canadian sources; other Allied sources were drawn upon when this was necessary in order to show the Canadian effort in its proper relation to that of the 15th Army Group as a whole.

2. The present report purports to show the relevant information that has become available from German sources. The Germans had no reason to prepare a separate collection of the facts concerning the Canadian forces, and much of the information had therefore to be taken from German documents dealing with larger aspects of the campaign. To find the widely scattered references to Canadian operations it was necessary to peruse a great mass of documents; pertinent information of a general nature that has become available in this manner has been included in the report.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

3. The majority of the documents on which this report is based were lent to Hist Sec (G.S.) by the German Military Documents Section in Washington, D.C.

Some of the more significant documents have been photostatted. Where the expression "permanently retained" appears in connection with enemy documents. It denotes that the document in question is being permanently retained in photostatic form for purposes of substantiation and reference by Hist Sec (G.S.), Ottawa. In all such cases references to the document are followed by the letter R. Where the letters R.T. appear in this connection they indicate that a translation has been appended to the photostatic copy of the German text.

4. Quoted matter has been underlined in conformity with the original text. With regard to translation it has been necessary at times to resort to free translation in order to reflect the true meaning of the original text.

5. Attention is drawn to the fact that the German "Regiment" represents the brigade or brigade group of British military terminology.

6. The War Diaries of the German Tenth Army were found to be the most valuable and complete source of information. The records of the corps and divisions were used as far as they were available. Documents on regimental and lower levels were not on hand; it is not impossible that they may be found at a later date in some hide-out in Germany.

7. The War Diaries of 1 Para Div unfortunately have not been found and it is believed that they may have been destroyed. 1 Para Div was the German crack division that usually appeared in the toughest spots and that was beaten by the Canadians and forced out of Ortona in the bitter fighting of the closing days of 1943.

8. One of the strongest impressions to be gained from the analysis of German source material is the realization that the downfall of the German armies was hastened by their failure to recognize the true importance of good Intelligence. Their tendency to reward only achievements of a strictly

operational nature brought about a situation where young staff officers regarded Intelligence appointments merely as a passing phase and devoted their spare time to the study of tactical doctrine. An even more dangerous consequence of the failure to envisage wider fields than merely those of military problems in the abstract appeared in the appreciations of higher commanders, who at times seemed to show a lack of insight into the military-political aspects of a situation. In view of the unchanging nature of the German character and the possibility of sudden changes in the relative strength of nations capable of major technological achievements, it might be useful beyond the confines of historical narration to record the German reaction to given military situations.

SITUATION AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SICILIAN CAMPAIGN

9. Although nominally under the command of the Italian Comando Supremo and, after the defection of Italy very loosely subordinated to Army Group "B" (Rommel), the commander actually responsible for the conduct of the German operations in Southern Italy was Field Marshal Kesselring. He was the C.-in-C. South (Oberbefehlshaber Sued - O.B.S.), with headquarters at Frascati, near Rome.*¹

10. As shown in Hist Sec [Report No. 14](#), para 26, the German High Command had instructed Marshal Kesselring at the beginning of August to organize a subordinate Army Headquarters to relieve him of the increasing detail of tactical command and to tighten control over the German forces strung out in

¹ It is generally known that Rommel wanted to give up Southern and Central Italy as untenable and tending to dissipate the strength of the German armies. Kesselring believed strongly in the necessity for defending the area as long as possible. The differences in the views of the two commanders were well known in high places. The relationship between Army Group "B" and O.B.S. had been defined with unusual vagueness in Document "Achse":

Army Group "B" receives the right of issuing directives to O.B.S.

(Appendix "C", para 2, sec (e))

Southern Italy. This Army Headquarters was Armeekorpskommando 10 (A.O.K.-10 - H.Q. 10 Army). It was to be under the command of General of the Armoured Troops Heinrich v. Vietinghoff, with headquarters at Polla, ESE of Salerno.*²

11. Acting in his capacity as Commander Designate of the 10th Army, General v. Vietinghoff submitted his own appreciation of the situation to O.B.S. on 11 Aug. The document dealt with the following possibilities.

- a. Allied landings on both coasts of Southern Calabria for the purpose of cutting off the retreating 14th Corps;
- b. Allied landings in the Naples-Salerno sector.

In view of the battle that was to take place four weeks later at Salerno, the remarks concerning this sector are of special interest:

Allied landings in the Naples-Salerno sector represent the main danger to the whole of the German forces in Southern Italy. The German forces at present in the area are far from being sufficient strength.

Notwithstanding any considerations to the contrary, I regard it as imperative to transfer one motorized division from Central Italy to this area, at least until the arrival of 14 Corps.

While this report was being written, 14 Corps was preparing to withdraw from Sicily and 76 Corps was deployed in Calabria for the defence of the southern tip of the peninsula and for the reception and protection of 14 Corps. The future course of action for these formations was visualized as follows:

² To simplify references to the two commanders, their headquarters, or the orders emanating therefrom, the following abbreviations will be used where suitable:

O.B.S. for Kesselring
A.O.K. 10 for v. Vietinghoff.

During the return movement of 14 Corps, Southern Calabria must be evacuated up to the narrow part of the isthmus around Castrovillari. Even this will only be a temporary solution since the German forces for the defence of Calabria and Apulia are entirely insufficient and their lines of communication are insecure. It must remain the goal to concentrate the two corps further north in such a manner that their supply is assured and that they will have sufficient striking power to prevail against enemy landings or a sudden change in the political situation.

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/2, 11 Au; R 1)

12. Before assuming command of the newly formed Army, v. Vietinghoff flew to General Headquarters and on 17 Aug was received in turn by Field Marshal Keitel, by Colonel General Jodi and finally by Hitler in person. (G.M.D.S. - 42803/1, 17 Aug).

13. The instructions which Hitler gave on this occasion were recorded by the Army Commander in the somewhat sketchy form that appears below in translation:

Notes on Conversation with the Fuehrer on the evening of 17 Aug 48

For the conduct of the campaign in Southern Italy the Fuehrer gave me the following instructions:

1. The centre of gravity to be in the Naples-Salerno area, the sector to be held in any event on account of the lines of supply.

Three divisions to be transferred into the area, also the immobile parts of other formations.

2. An attack on Apulia appears less probable in view of the present dispositions of the enemy forces. For observation and security, 1 Para Div to be transferred there and preparations to be made for movement of two more divisions to the area in case of need.
3. The area of Southern Italy, especially Calabria, to be evacuated only under enemy pressure. Against superior enemy forces the area to be defended by delaying actions with fully mobile forces.
4. Preparations, including supply arrangements, to be made permitting the transfer of all troops to Central Italy in case of a special order to do so.
5. All German troops to be exclusively commanded by German Higher Headquarters.

(G.M.D.S. - 42893/2, 22 Aug; R2)

14. After conferring on the way back with O.B.S. , at Frascati, v. Vietinghoff returned to Polla on 22 Aug and assumed tactical command of 10 Army. Supply and administration were handled throughout the campaign by and from Headquarters O.B.S.

15. A new appreciation of the situation was made by the Army commander and placed on record in the War Diary of 10 Army on 22 Aug. The parts dealing with the situation on the ground read as follows:

The enemy has concluded his Sicilian under-taking and has reformed his units west of Messina. The greater part of his landing tonnage has been taken back to Africa. Renewed preparations reported from there indicate the early beginning of a large-scale landing operation. It is expected that first of all he will take Sardinia and Corsica in order to leap over

from there to Central or Northern Italy or perhaps even to Southern France. Above all, this will give him air bases for new undertakings against Germany.

An attack against Southern Italy is to be regarded only as a secondary possibility. In this case the area Salerno-Naples would be the one most likely to be chosen. The purpose of such an undertaking would be to cut off everything south of Naples by serving the main roads and traffic arteries leading through that city. Should this occur, the main action in the Naples sector might be supported by landings of paratroops in the Fidget sector.

Another secondary possibility would be a landing in Apulia. This would give the adversary the advantage of having good air bases against the Balkans and Roumania. The country there is also more suitable for operations of armoured and motorized forces.

It is improbable that the enemy will direct a main effort against Calabria. The difficulties of the ground there make a quick operative success improbable and he would have to fight his way to the North mountains and over few and easily interdictable roads.

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/2, 22 Aug)

16. While thus on 22 Aug a large Allied landing operation in southern Calabria was still looked upon as a rather remote possibility, the events of the following week left little doubt that such an understanding was being prepared. Intensive air reconnaissances over Calabria, heavy artillery bombardments from the sea and from Sicily, as well as exploratory landings by commandos, brought about a change in view that was that was expressed in a revised appreciation on 29 Aug:

... It must therefore be expected that the enemy will undertake larger landings either in the places where the commandos went ashore or at the most favourable locations in the narrow parts of the peninsula around Catanzaro and Castrovillari.

It is not impossible that the main intention of the enemy is to prevent the rapid transfer of the German formations now in Southern Italy, especially in Calabria, to the projected theatre of the main landing.

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/2, 29 Aug)

GERMAN FORCES AND DISPOSITIONS AT THE BEGINNING OF SEPTEMBER

17. Apart from the 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division and the 2nd Parachute Division, which were stationed near Rome but were not under the Command of A.O.K. 10, the bulk of the German ground forces south of the Gaeta-Pescara line at the beginning of September consisted of the 10th Army with the following formations:

Under direct command of A.O.K. 10

1st Parachute Division

2nd Battalion 6th Parachute Regiment

14 Corps with 15th Panzer Grenadier Division

16th Panzer Division

Panzer Division Hermann Doering

76 Corps with 29th Panzer Grenadier Division

26th Panzer Division

Not directly under the command of A.O.K. 10, but instructed to cooperate fully: 22nd Anti-Aircraft Brigade.^{3*}

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/1, 22 Aug)

18. The German officers exerting the greatest influence on the part of the campaign being dealt with in this report were the following:^{4**}

O. B. S.

General Field Marshal Albert KESSELRING

C. of S.: Lt-Gen Lt-Gen Siegfried WESTPHAL

Ops : Col Count v. KLINKOWSTROEM, (G.S.C.)^{5***}

10 Army

Col-Gen Heinrich v. VIETINGHOFF

(Col-Gen Joachim LEMELSEN, pro tem)

C. of S. : Col (later Maj-Gen) Fritz WENTZELL, (G.S.C.)

Ops : Lt-Col (later Lt-Gen) Hermann BERLIN, (G.S.C.)

³ When mentioned for the first time, German formations are given their full designation, later they are referred to by suitable abbreviations.

⁴ An alphabetical index of all German names mentioned appears as Appendix "A".

⁵ G.S.C. : General Staff Corps.

76 Corps

General Traugott HERR

C. of S. : Col Fritz RUNKEL, (G.S.C.)

Ops : Major JASTER, (G.S.C.)
later: Major v. CLAER, (G.S.C.)

29 Pz Gren Div : Lt-Gen FRIES

26 Pz Div : Lt-Gen Freiherr v. LUETIWITZ
Ops : Lt-Col Graf v. BERNSTORFF, (G.S.C.)

1 Para Div : Lt-Gen Richard HEIDRICH

19. Immediately after arriving on the mainland from Sicily, 14 Corps had started to move off towards the Naples-Salerno area. The plans for H.G. Pz Div had originally called for transfer to Apulia but the direction was changed on 19 Aug when the division was already on the move. The beginning of September found 14 Corps concentrated in the Naples-Salerno area; 15 Pz Gren Div was deployed in the Gaeta-Volturne Sector, H.G. Pz Div in the coastal strip northwest of Naples and 16 Pz Div in the coastal strip northwest of Naples and 16 Pz Div had arrived from Apulia and taken up positions between Salerno and Agropoli. (G.M.D.S. - 48702/1)^{6*}

20. 1 Para Div was gradually being withdrawn to Apulia during the first week of September for the defence of Taranto and for the protection of the deep flank of 76 Corps west and north of Taranto. Withdrawal from that area was to

⁶ The Divisional Order of 16 Pz Div on 15 Aug 43 began with the sentence:

be carried out only under enemy pressure and then in the manner of a delaying action. (G.M.D.S. - 42803/2, 29 Aug - 6 Sep)

21. The main forces of the enemy in Calabria on 1 Sep consisted of:

76 Corps (German) 29 Pz Gren Div, 26 Pz Div)

22 A.A. Bde (German)

XXXI Corps (Italian)^{7**}

⁷ The Italian forces in Southern Italy were under command of 7 Italian Army with Headquarters at Potenza. The disposition of the formations was:

Calabria. XXXI Corps with: 211th, 121th, 214th
227th Coastal Divisions
and Divisione Mantova.

Apulia. IX Corps with: 219th and 210th Coastal
Divisions, 31st
Independent Coastal
Brigade and Divisione
Piceno.

Naples-Salerno. XIX Corps with: 222nd Coastal Division,
32nd Independent Coastal
Brigade, Harbour Defence
Division Naples and
Divisione Pasubio.

(G.M.D.S. 42803/4, Appx 146b)

In the southernmost tip of Calabria was the 211th Coastal Division. It was reinforced by one battalion of Blackshirts and one battalion of paratroops. Some Italians were still willing to fight, but in most units the officers encouraged the prevailing attitude of passive resistance to the war. The German records contain many references to sabotage and to active assistance given to the Allies by Italian troops. On balance the Italians at that time were probably of help to none and a hindrance to all. The only serious resistance to the advance of 13 Brit Corps through Calabria was offered by 76 Corps.

A photostatic copy of the order of battle of the divisions of 76 Corps is being permanently retained. The document shows the designation and composition of the units of 26 Pz and 29 Pz Gren Divs on 10 Sep as well as the composition of the battle groups which had been formed from the various elements. (G.M.D.S. - 43005/2, 10 Sep; R3).

22. The composition of the divisions remained unchanged in essentials throughout the campaign but the battle groups were extremely fluid and subject to constant rearrangement.^{8*} German maps and documents frequently refer to events only by giving the name of the battle group concerned and remain obscure to one who does not know what units were parts of a certain battle group at a given time. The following is a list of the formations which usually served as a nucleus for the principal battle groups. It was customary to name the groups after the commanding officer.

<u>Division</u>	<u>Formation</u>	<u>Battle Group</u>
26 Pz Div	36 Pz Recce Bn	v. Rupprecht
	9 Pz Gren Regt	v. Mandelsloh
	67 Pz Gren Regt	v. Usedom

⁸ German units were indeed handled as interchangeable pieces of machinery and quite often found themselves under commanders of varying personality. The great flexibility of the battle groups offered tempting advantages of a tactical nature but the German records show that it made it also more difficult for higher commanders to keep fully posted, tended to loosen the bonds between the regular commanders and their troops and sometimes led to a situation where nothing seemed to be more important than a pause for the sorting out of the troops and the untangling of the administrative confusion. The German proclivity for regrouping the natural parts of the army structure did however complicate the task of Allied tactical intelligence. It remained simple to ascertain the division to which an identified unit belonged, but the fact that elements of a division had been recognized in a certain area by no means proved that the other parts of the division were to be found in the same area.

	93 Pz Arty Regt	Viebig
29 Pz Gren Div	15 Pz Gren Regt	Uhlig
	71 Pz Gren Regt	Krueger
	29 Pz Arty Regt	Pollack

GERMAN WITHDRAWAL FROM CALABRIA

23. The landing of 13 Corps in the Reggio sector on the morning of 3 Sep was unopposed. While 26 Pz Div and 22 A.A. Bde were already further to the North, 29 Pz Gren Div was bringing up the rear. 15 Regt was deployed as a covering force about 20 miles south and east of Bagnara. (O.B.S., 2 Sep). It was the task of 29 Pz Gren Div to carry out such delaying actions as were compatible with the order of 30 Aug to concentrate its forces east and southeast of Castrovillari. (G.M.D.S. - 43005/2, 1 Sep)

24. As soon as word of the landings at Reggio had been received, 76 Corps issued new instructions in an order entitled: "Corps Order No. 4 for the Conduct of Operations in Calabria." The intentions of the Corps Commander were defined in the opening sentence of para 2:

While covering Central and Northern Calabria, 76 Corps will transfer its centre of gravity to Northern Calabria in a delaying action.

A photostatic copy and a translation of this document, as well as of a General Order issued by O.B.S. and passed to 76 Corps by A.O.K. 10 on 4 Sep, are being permanently retained. (G.M.D.S. - 43005/2, 3 Sep; 42803/2, Appx 86, 4 Sep, R.T.4, R.T.5).

25. It does not fall within the scope of this report to describe in detail the complicated movements carried out by 76 Corps in the days between the landings at Reggio and at Salerno. The actions of 15 Pz Gren Regt in the

Bagnara position on 3 and 4 Sep were however the subject of a detailed German report submitted by 29 Pz Gren Div to A.O.K. 10 on 30 Oct 43. A photostatic copy and a translation of the most significant portions of this document are being permanently retained.

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/11, 30 Oct; R.T.6, R.T.7).

26. The document cited above shows that the defence of the southern part of the road from Le Gambarie to Delianuova should have been carried out by the battalion of Italian paratroops that was attached to the 211th Coastal Division, while the road from Melito was supposed to have been blocked by the battalion of Blackshirts that was deployed just south of Le Gambarie. The northern part of the road to Delianuova was the right wing of the German Bagnara position and the responsibility of 3 Bn 15 Pz Gren Regt. This battalion had moved from Reggio into the area on 2 Sep. The rearguards of its 10th Company⁹* were speeded on their way by 48 Highrs at S. Stefano on the morning of 4 Sep while the mass of the battalion on the same day moved to Palmi and during the night 4/5 Sep withdrew through the lines of 71 Pz Gren Regt. The Bagnara position had been weakened by the armoured attacks along the road from Scilla and collapsed with the landings at Bagnara and Palmi. When "B" Coy 48 Highrs entered Delianuova on the morning of 5 Sep, 15 Pz Gren Regt was well on the way to Cosenza and Castrovillari.

(G.M.D.S. - op cit; Hist Sec Report No. 144, para 65).

27. On 5 Sep the Malta Brigade landed at Gioia Tauro. It encountered the rear parties of Battle Group Krueger, which at that very moment was in process of formation and of taking up positions in the Nicotera - Laureana sector. The main elements of this force were 71 Pz Gren Regt (less 2 Bn, already at Cosenza) and Recce Bn 129. During the first days of September Recce Bn 129 had been operating along the main road No. 106 between Melito, Locri and Squillace, but on 5 Sep it had started to move inland over the lateral road

⁹ Companies of German regiments were numbered consecutively.

No. 110 and had left only observation detachments at Stilo and Badolato. Battle Group Krueger came officially into being on the evening of 5 Sep with the occupation of the Nicotera position; 26 Pz Div had assumed command over all German forces in Southern Calabria at 1600 hrs 5 Sep, but it did not exert its authority over Battle Group Krueger until 0800 hrs 6 Sep when the group had become ready to operate as an organized force. (G.M.D.S. - 42803/1, 5 Sep; 43005/1. 6 Sep; 43873/7, item 19, Daily Reports O.B.S., 6 Sep).

28. During the next few days 5 Brit Div advanced from Gioia Tauro into the Rosarno - Cinquefrondi area and increased its pressure on the German forces to the point where the commander of 26 Pz Div felt it necessary to withdraw his main lines into the Vibo Valentia - Soriano sector during the night 7/8 Sep.

Sitrep 26 Pz Div, 7 Sep

... In the early hours of the morning the enemy began his attacks on 9 Coy 71 Pz Gren Regt on the northern fringes of Gioia Tauro. At the same time the enemy advanced with tanks and apparently with motorized infantry via Riccione to the area southwest of Feroletto.

In contrast to the preceding days the enemy exerted strong pressure with tanks and infantry upon 9 Coy 71 Pz Gren Regt, which was withdrawing to Rosarno, and after fighting succeeded in taking Rosarno at about 1815 hrs.

In view of the numerical weakness of Battle Group Krueger and the strong enemy pressure since this evening, the divisional commander does not consider it possible to hold the Nicotera - Laureana position after dusk on 8 Sep.

It is interesting to note that the decision to withdraw was motivated by the pressure of 5 Brit Div and not by any for-knowledge of the impending landing at Salerno. (G.M.D.S. - 43005/3, 7 Sep; 43005/1, 7 Sep)^{10*}

29. On 8 Sep the left wing of 13 Brit Corps was fighting in the Vibo Valentia area, while 1 Cdn Inf Div on the right wing was traversing the Aspromonte. Extended reconnaissance by a composite Canadian force had shown that Route 106 was clear of the enemy at least as far as Squillace. 3 Cdn Inf Bde was leading the descent towards the town of Locri when all ranks could hear the noisy jubilations of the population celebrating the news of the Italian surrender. (The Canadian Army at War, From Pachino to Ortona, p. 94).

30. The situation as seen by A.O.K. 10 during the days immediately preceding the landings at Salerno is perhaps best illustrated by direct quotation from War Diary A.O.K. 10.

6 Sep ... Since the Straits of Messina are lost in any event, Commander 10 Army decides not to further commit any German forces south of Catanzaro.

7 Sep ... In Southern Calabria strong enemy pressure against the defence lines.

... Air recce in the area north of Palermo shows enemy convoys on a NE course. The possibility of further enemy landings in the immediate future must be reckoned with. The withdrawal of

¹⁰ A new German map code came into force on 7 Sep. A good deal of the source material cannot be read without the key to the code and a working knowledge of the German method of map references by reference points. As the subject is chiefly of interest to research personnel it has been dealt with separately in appendix "B".

battle group Krueger to its division is being ordered for the night 8/9 Sep. Recce Bn to remain in contact with the enemy.

8 Sep ... The big enemy convoys that have been observed southwest of Naples have been seen again. Since the position of the enemy conveys points to a possible landing in the Gulf of Salerno or at Naples, 76 Corps has been ordered to move rapidly and to accelerate the movement of 29 Pz Gren Div to the area Polla - Lagonegro, taking advantage however of any situations favouring counter attacks.

From 0830 hrs to 1000 hrs: Conference at Army Headquarters between the Army Commander, General Herr (76 Corps) and Maj-Gen Fries, (29 Pz Gren Div);

- 1) Withdrawal to the North as fast as possible without losing the Flak equipment. Salvage of supplies to be a secondary consideration.
- 2) Cooperation with the Italians:

... General Gionella, Commander 211th Coastal Division, fairly interested in cooperation; General Carbone, Commander of an independent Coastal Brigade, to be considered as a deliberate saboteur.

Radio London claims that Italy has capitulated. Commanding General 7th Italian Army states that he has no knowledge of such a step and has this statement formally confirmed by his chief of Staff.

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/1; 6, 7, 8 Sep)

31. The daily reports of O.B.S. for the days preceding the landing at Salerno reveal that a large scale landing was expected at any moment, but the anxious speculations about the destination of the convoys as well as the text and tenor of other pertinent documents indicate clearly that German Intelligence had failed to obtain the vital information that Salerno was definitely to be the target of the big Allied operation.

32. The situation as seen at Frascati was reflected in the daily reports of O.B.S. by the following items:

7 Sep, 2130 hrs

... Owing to the strong enemy pressure on the line Rosarno - Cinquefrondi our covering forces have been withdrawn to the North. The movement began in the afternoon of 6 Sep. All bridges between Gioia Tauro and Cittanova have ben demolished.

... In the afternoon, about 40 nautical miles north of Palermo, an enemy convoy of about 60 landing craft has been sighted. It is not clear whether it is the same convoy that was seen in the morning.

...The intensive convoy activity north of Sicily, the strong fighter protection along the eastern coast of this island and the extraordinary radio activity in the Palermo sector point towards a new and pincer-like operation against Calabria.

8 Sep, 0850 hrs

... On 7 Sep, at 2300 hrs, 3 vessels, probably aircraft carriers, were observed 35 nautical miles NW Trapani on a N course; a convoy of 25 merchant vessels was observed NE of the island of Cani on an E course; near the anchorage of Bizerta a further formation of

62 freighters of all sizes and of 30 smaller units, presumably landing craft, has been observed on an easterly course. Harbour, canal and lake of Bizerta at the same time are only occupied by 30 merchant ships so that apparently a large part of the ships have left and probably are with the convoy mentioned above. According to the latest reports the position of the convoy is such that it could proceed eastwards south of Sicily or northwards west of Sicily.

... On 8 Sep, 0525 hrs, air recce observed a large convoy 80 km SE Salerno. This is most likely one of the groups of landing ships which were observed north of Palermo on 7 Sep.

33. The morning report of 9 Sep, describing the situation on 8 Sep, was dispatched at 0910 hrs, 9 Sep, some five hours after the first landings at Salerno. Touched up perhaps by a bit of hindsight it contained the following statement:

During 8 Sep the picture of an operation in the Gulf Salerno - Naples, or possibly further north, solidified itself in ever increasing measure. From 0800 hrs large convoy groups and naval formations were observed as far as 80 miles SW of the Gulf of Salerno with N or NE courses and obviously tarrying in the area.

SALERNO (9 - 16 Sep)

34. Between sundown of 8 Sep and sunrise of 9 Sep the storm that had been gathering broke and jarred the Germans with two mighty blows. The surrender of Italy became a fact that none could doubt, and speculation about the destination of the convoys was dispelled by the landings at Salerno. In the early hours of the evening of 8 Sep, O.B.S. received the following message:

Adjutant of the Chief

General Headquarters

of the General Staff, Army

8 Sep 43

No. 38243

The accuracy of the Anglo-Saxon radio reports regarding the Italian capitulation has been confirmed by Marshal Badoglio. Code word "Achse" becomes effective immediately.

Jodl.

OKW/WFST No. 662236/43, Top Secret

(G.M.D.S. - H22/147, 8 Sep)

35. Code word "Achse" was the prearranged signal to announce the surrender of the Italians and the immediate beginning of a series of measures that had been laid down by General Field Marshal Keitel in a highly secret order entitled: "Document Achse". This document had been amended from time to time in accordance with developments and was binding for all concerned in the terms of its latest consolidation of 30 Aug. A translation of this version of the document appears as Appendix "C". A few hours after the landings at Salerno, Corps Order No. 5 of 76 Corps was issued. It contained the orders for the movements of the various units in the direction of Polla. A translation of this document appears as Appendix "D". (G.M.D.S. - OKH/OKW, W 4/4; 43005/3, 9 Sep).

36. According to the s of O.B.S. the code word "Achse" was sent out to the troops between 2030 hrs and 2100 hrs 8 Sep. Six hours later the beaches of Salerno became the scene of the historic landing of Fifth Army under the command of Lt-Gen Mark W. Clark, U.S. Army. From the extensive and interesting German documentation in the hands of G.M.D.S. it appears that the Germans had high hopes of throwing the Allied forces back into the sea. But one week later General v. Vietinghoff realized that he had failed, and the

battle was broken off. The lessons of Dieppe had been well learnt; an anxious world saw with relief that a major assault on the mainland of Europe had been a success; the German soldiers knew that those who had belittled the American soldier had indeed been the perpetrators of a cruel piece of propaganda.

37. By 15 Sep the enemy had spent his strength in furious onslaughts on the beachhead. There were no fresh reserves that could be thrown into the battle and the allied beachhead was strengthened steadily while Eighth Army was approaching from the South. An entry in the War Diary of A.O.K. 10 shows the situation as seen by the Army Commander in the late hours of the afternoon of 16 Sep.

The fact that the attacks (which especially by 14 Corps had been prepared fully and carried out with spirit) were unable to reach their objective owing to the fire from naval guns and low-flying aircraft, as well as the slow but steady approach of the Eighth Army, caused the Army Commander to withdraw from the battle in order to occupy good defence positions before the intervention of Eighth Army with fresh troops.

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/1, 16 Sep)

38. The primary objective of A.O.K. 10 had been to throw the Fifth Army into the sea. When this event failed to materialize the Germans found comfort in the fact that Fifth Army had been contained on the beaches and had been unable to cut off 76 Corps. On 17 Sep v. Vietinghoff was promoted to the rank of Colonel-General. (G.M.D.S. - 42803/1, 17 Sep).

39. While the mass of 76 Corps, 4 Para Regt and elements of 3 Para Regt, were a part of the German forces fighting at Salerno, and the rear elements of the Corps were harassing the advance of Eighth Army, 1 Para Div continued in its role of protecting the deep eastern flank of 10 Army. On 8 Sep the mass of 1 Para Div was deployed in the area Altamura - Matera - Montecaglioso -

Castellaneta - Locorotondo. On 9 Sep it was to have carried out the instructions of "Document Achse" with regard to the ports of Bari and Brindisi. But in the morning of 9 Sep, A.O.K. 10 ordered the division to proceed north and to concentrate its forces in the Foggia sector without wasting too much time over the ports of Bari and Brindisi.^{11*}

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/4, Appx 127b, air map 1 Para Div, 8 Sep; 42803/2, Appx 144, 9 Sep; 42803/1, 9 Sep).

40. With the landing of the Malta Brigade in the Gulf of S. Eufemia and the landing of elements of 1 Airborne Division at Taranto the British forces in the toe sector had become substantial but it was necessary to allow a few days for the preparation of the many-pronged advance to the North.

POTENZA (19 Sep)

41. Between 8 Sep and 16 Sep the 1st Canadian Infantry Division had not been in touch with the enemy. Hist Sec [Report No. 144](#) relates the story of these days of preparation and of the resumption of the trek towards the scenes of the hard fighting ahead. In the afternoon of 17 Sep a highly mobile composite force of Canadians set out for Potenza from the coastal road junction at Nova Siri station. This group, called "Boforce", consisted of West N.S.R., tanks, artillery and other elements. Potenza was an important road and communications centre and up to the time of the Italian surrender had been the headquarters of 7 Ital Army. Advancing along Highways Nos. 104 and 92, "Boforce" had passed Rotondella, S. Arcangelo and Corleto, and was approaching

¹¹ When Heidrich was informed of the Italian surrender on the night of 8/9 Sep, he was ordered to seize the Italian merchant fleet at Bari. He did succeed in sinking some 20,000 tons of shipping in Bari with the help of his engineer battalion. There then seems to have followed a period of confusion and bewilderment in which neither the Italian nor the German forces knew exactly what to do ... (Special Interrogation Report, General Heidrich, Hist Sec C.M.H.Q., 13 Nov 46)

Lauirenzana when the presence of enemy forces not far ahead was demonstrated by the demolition of the bridge at Laurenzana. (Hist Sec [Report No. 144](#), paras 98-100).

42. On 12 Sep, 1 Para Div had received orders to withdraw one group of its right wing through Potenza. On the day in question 1 Coy 2 Bn 1 Regt was quartered in Potenza and had dispatched the demolition party to Laurenzana. (G.M.D.S. - 43005/2, 12 Sep; 42803/5. Appx 369, 17 Sep).

43. The enemy was sensitive to the advance on Potenza and would most likely have put up a more determined resistance had not orders been received at the same time to take the whole front back. Sitreps A.O.K. 10 read as follows:

17 Sep ... intention to send 3 Para Regt,
to Potenza,

18 Sept ... 1 Coy 2 Bn 1 Regt at Potenza,
3 Regt on move to Potenza,

19 Sep ... 3 Regt in Potenza area.

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/3, sitreps 17, 18, 19 Sep)

44. A.O.K. 10 was of course fully aware of the significance of the loss of Potenza. War Diary A.O.K. 10 for 21 Sep states.

Potenza has been the focal point of interest today. With its fall the adversary has reached the direct road to Foggia and therewith the corner-post of the V position.^{12*} ... Immediately following the

¹² One of many intermediate positions.

confirmation of the occupation of Potenza 76 Corps has been instructed to report fully and to prevent a breakthrough at all costs.

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/7, 21 Sep)

45. The message dispatched by the temporary Army Commander read as follows:^{13*}

A.O.K. 10 to 76 Corps; 1 Para Div (21 Sep 1016 hr)

Enemy breakthrough at Potenza in direction Foggia or northwest to be prevented at all costs even if this entails weakening of the left wing of 1 Para Div.

Signed: Hube

Since A.O.K. 10 was not sure whether 76 Corps was in contact with 1 Para Div at the time, the message was sent to 1 Para Div directly and reached 76 Corps somewhat later. General Herr (76 Corps) was quick in sending a liaison officer to A.O.K. 10 with a message pointing out that 1 Para Div was now under the Command of 76 Corps, that he did not propose to have orders to his divisions sent over his head, that there were no signs of an enemy breakthrough and that, should such be the case, his troops would know how to deal with the situation. (G.M.D.S. - 43005/3, 21 Sep)

46. In view of the fact that the eastern flank of 76 Corps at the time was so weak that it would have collapsed under the slightest pressure from the South or from the Adriatic coast, the heady words of the Corps Commander are

¹³ General v. Vietinghoff was absent from his command from 20 Sep to 28 Sep, and General Hube (14 Corps) was temporarily in charge. (G.M.D.S. - 42803/1, 20 Sep; 42803/7, 28 Sep)

probably best explained by the state of his feelings which had been badly ruffled by the temporary preferment of the neighbouring Corps Commander. The requested report with a detailed analysis of the situation of 76 Corps was submitted to A.O.K. 10 on the following day in the form of a letter from Chief of Staff 76 Corps. The letter gives a clear picture of the precarious situation of the Corps and sets forth in detail the extent to which the effectives, vehicles and fuel supplies of the Corps had been depleted at Salerno. A translation of this letter appears as Appendix "E". (G.M.D.S. - 43005/3, 22 Sep)^{14**}

47. The fall of Potenza is described in the above letter in the following words:

Day before yesterday a battalion of 3 Para Regt in the strength of about 100 men was committed at Potenza. This force was attacked by a numerically superior enemy force. Considering the broader aspects of the picture this does not necessarily mean that the enemy is stronger here than elsewhere.

With reference to the situation in general and to 1 Para Div in particular the following statements are of interest:

... During the next few days the division will arrive in the area of Foggia. That area is particularly ill-suited for campaigning with the

¹⁴ Commitment of 76 Corps on 21 sep

26 Pz Div	fighting power	75% of normal,	width of front
29 Pz Gren Div	"	50% "	30 kms of front
			50 kms
1 Para Div	"	25% "	" of front
			70 kms

(G.M.D.S. - 43005/3, 21 Sep)

weak forces of this division. An attempt will be made to delay the advance on Foggia as long as possible ...

... The difficulties in the conduct of the campaign are a result of the vastness of the area, the insufficient number of troops and the lack of explosives.

... In view of the low fighting strength of the divisions the danger exists that with the increasing enemy pressure the withdrawals will have to be carried out at greater speed.

... The fighting strength of the whole 1 Para Div is only 1300 men.

(G.M.D.S. - op cit)

48. Resistance at Potenza had been light as a consequence of "Armeebefehl No. 3" (Army Order No. 3, A.O.K. 10), dated 18 Sep. This order contained directives for the next phase of the campaign. It is being permanently retained and appears in translated form as Appendix "F".

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/3, Appx 386, 18 Sep)

49. The second paragraph of the order dealt with operations:

10 Army commences a new operation.

... The left wing of the Army wheels back in a delaying action from the line Salerno - Potenza - Altamura to the line Salerno - Bovino - Manfredonia.

... 1 Para Div to be under command of 76 Corps as of 1200 hrs 19 Sep.

... The elements of 1 Para Div that have been with 76 Corps will return to their division.^{15*}

Paragraph 7 dealt with demolitions:

... During the course of the withdrawal all roads and traffic arteries will be destroyed most thoroughly and will be mined.

... All industrial installations capable of producing war materials and all supplies and equipment that cannot be taken along must be destroyed.

... The destruction of the aqueduct of Apulia must be carried out without fail.

... Corps commanders are responsible for the carrying out of the demolitions.

... All engineer personnel will be employed exclusively on tasks of demolition and will not be used in ordinary infantry fighting.

GENERAL SITUATION AT END OF SEPTEMBER

50. At the end of September the opposing armies were getting ready for further tests of strength. German records for the period contain several items of general interest. A.O.K. 10 asked for 6000 reinforcements to bring the Army back to its authorized strength. A.O.K. 10 had been moved to Caiazzo

¹⁵ The various battle groups had come to expect inclusion of some elements of 1 Para Div in their make-up, but Lt-Gen Heidrich was increasingly concerned over the effects on morale of such a scattering of his troops. The order to reunite the division was the result of a handwritten plea of Heidrich to the Army Commander. (G.M.D.S. - 42803/3, Appx 345, 16 Sep; Minute by Army Commander on same document)

on 19 Sep. (Caiazzo is a locality about 25 miles NNE of Naples; headquarters were established at a road junction a few miles north of the village).

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/2, 17 Sep; 42803/1, 19 Sep)

51. An order entitled: "Exploitation of Italy for the further Conduct of the War", appeared on 22 Sep over the signature of C. of S., 10 Army. The document was a sequel to "Document Achse" and the execution of the orders it contained could not fail to add greatly to the miseries of the Italian population. Readers of its economic clauses will not only be reminded of the plague of locusts that befell Egypt in an earlier age but may well wonder whether Teuton thoroughness had not improved the pattern by forcing the victims to lend a hand in their own despoliation. The document is being permanently retained and appears in translation as appendix "G".

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/8. 22 Sep)^{16*} (R 21).

52. In October the pace of the German retreat was to slow down and assume the form of a gradual withdrawal from one defended line to another. The importance of the Army troops increased with the measure of the specialized tasks they would be required to perform. An appendix to the War Diary of 10 Army shows the Army troops in the area, and the formations to which the various units were attached:

A.O.K. 10

Construction Battalion

432

¹⁶ A typical order was dispatched to the divisions by Q.M.G. 76 Corps on 27 Sep

The transportation of cattle to the North will be carried out with energy. Where it is not possible to do so, owing to evacuations the remaining cattle will be destroyed ruthlessly.

(G.M.D.S. - War Diary 76 Corps, Q. Branch, 27 Sep, 1500 hrs)

<u>76 Corps</u>	Construction Battalion	430
	Rock-Drilling Company	77
	Engineer Headquarters	16
	Fifth Company Local	
	Construction Battalion	9
	Army Flak Battalion	302

1 Para Div	Anti-Tank Company Sardinia	
29 Pz Gren div	Nil	
26 Pz Div	Nil	

14 Corps Engineer Battalion 60

15 Pz Gren Div	Projector Regiment	71
	Panzer Grenadier Regiment	382
H.G. Div	Panzer Grenadier Regiment	115
	Panzer Grenadier	
	Battalion Reggio	
16 Pz Div	Anti-Aircraft Battalion	501

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/8, Appx 118, 24 Sep)

53. In connection with the approach to stronger lines of defence, O.B.S. now ordered the timely destruction of the ports of Barletta, Manfredonia, Ortona and Pescara before they could possibly fall into the hands of the British troops. All anchorages along the coast were to be rendered unserviceable and all approaches to landing places to be mined. (G.M.D.S. - 42803/7. 25 Sep; 42803/8, Appx 141, 25 Sep).

54. During the last week of September, German plans for a gradual withdrawal to a definite winter line were taking shape. They appeared first in Army Order No. 4, dated 26 Sep. A translation of this order appears as Appendix "H".

Para 2 During the course of the coming weeks, 10 Army withdraws in a delaying action to the "Bernhard" line of resistance.^{17*}

For military, political and economic reasons it is important to gain as much time as possible without substantially lessening the fighting power of the Army.

Para 4 76 Corps withdraws to the "Bernhard" line through a series of interim positions. It is important that on the left wing a flanking advance by the Eighth Army be prevented by the early blocking of the mountain passes and by the most thorough destruction of the coastal roads.

Para 8 The exact location of the "Bernhard" line will be determined by O.B.S. "Bernhard" will be built up and developed as a line of resistance.

Para 14 Tac H.Q. A.O.K. 10 will be at Pozzilli, NNE Venafro.

(G.M.D.S. 0 42803/8, Appx 166a, 26 Sep)

55. A detailed breakdown of the actual strength of 10 Army at the end of September yields the following information:

¹⁷ The eastern sector of the Bernhard line (cracked later by the Eighth Army) ran roughly speaking parallel to the northern bank of the river Sangro from Castel di Sangro to Fossacesia on the Adriatic coast.

	<u>A.O.K 10</u>	<u>76 Corps</u>	<u>14 Corps</u>	
<u>Total</u>				
Officers	57	672	917	1,646
N.C.O.s.	256	4,342	6,220	10,818
O.Rs.	<u>1,580</u>	<u>19,763</u>	<u>26,636</u>	<u>47,979</u>
TOTAL	1,893	24,777	33,773	<u>60,443</u>

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/8, 1 Oct)

56. The 15th Allied Army Group had now consolidated its positions from coast to coast, and was ready to advance and to launch a coordinated attack upon the enemy wherever he made a stand. The mass of 1 Cdn Inf Div had moved from Potenza to the plain of Foggia and H.Q. Cdn Army Tank Bde with 12 Cdn Anti-Tank Regiment (Three Rivers Regiment) had arrived from the South.

57. In the meantime Field Marshal Kesselring had been at General Headquarters to Report to the Fuehrer and to receive orders for the further conduct of the campaign. Apart from demanding a decisive defence of the Bernhard line, once it had been reached, the Fuehrer demanded that an attack upon Foggia be made "to destroy the enemy there and to advance as far as Brindisi in case of success". The orders given by the Fuehrer on this occasion were reflected in many entries and notations in German documents. A.O.K. 10 summarized the directives in convenient form in a signal to 14 and 76 Corps on 1 Oct.

The Fuehrer considers it as most important to cede as little ground as possible. This applies especially to the left wing of the Army. A forceful conduct of the defensive operations will be attempted.^{18*}

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/9, Appx 293, 3 Oct for 30 Sep; 42803/8, Appx 255, 1 Oct)

58. Not mentioned in the orders to the fighting troops was an attack on Foggia. Hitler had of course promised fresh troops and increased air support, but the field commanders knew that heavy fighting would result and that the promised reinforcements were mythical or would have to be taken from other sectors of an already over-extended front. No action was taken regarding this but of wishful thinking. (G.M.D.S. - 42803/8, Appx 255, 1 Oct; 42803/7, 1 Oct).

¹⁸ 1 Para Div had withdrawn from Foggia on 27 Sep after carrying out the destruction of all important installations. (G.M.D.S. - 42803/8, 27 Sep). In spite of demands from higher sources that a breakthrough to Foggia should be prevented (see para 45). 1 Para Div felt that it could not cope with the situation, and withdrew in the face of pressure from armoured vehicles. The reasons for this course of action have been briefly referred to in para 47.

a)Vastness of the area.

b)Unsuitability of the area for the paratroop type of fighting, especially against enemy armour.

c)Insufficient number of troops (the actual number of fighting troops in the Division at the moment was only 1300);

d)Lack of explosives.

A few days before the evacuation of Foggia the plans for the German Winter Line had become known to the Commanders. It may be safely assumed that the Divisional Commander wanted to save his troops for a stand in more favourable positions.

59. Indicative of the true situation on the left wing, was the message from 76 Corps to 10 Army at 2200 hrs, 1 Oct.

Situation Heidrich further aggravated. Help required, including help from higher up.

The Army Commander was aware of the increasing pressure on his left wing and shortly after the arrival of the above message decided to rush 16 Pz Div to the east coast. This division had been withdrawn a few days earlier into Army reserve to recover from the effects of the battle of Salerno, but on 3 Oct it was speeding eastward. It arrived on the coast too late to prevent the initial landing, but in time to fight the British and Canadian forces at Termoli. (G.M.D.S. - 42803/8, Appx 256, 1 Oct; Appx 257, 2 Oct).

TERMOLI (2 - 6 Oct)

60. In a world that had become accustomed to witness undertakings of vast magnitude and importance, the capture of the minor port of termoli was gratefully acknowledged but soon forgotten. In the treasure house of valiant deeds however - in the historical files - one finds the true measure of this victorious British and Canadian action against a crack division of German armoured troops. There is ample evidence in German documents that Termoli was watched in high places with unusual interest and that Marshal Kesselring was most anxious that Termoli should not be lost.

61. Termoli was on the extreme left wing of 1 Para Div. On 30 Sep General Heidrich had become concerned over the threat of a landing at Termoli. He sent one platoon to the town but was not in a position to intervene with

substantial forces without prior changes in his orders from Corps H.Q. All depended on the timely arrival of 16 Pz Div.^{19*} ^{20**}

62. At 1100 hrs, 2 Oct, Col v. Bonin, C. of S. 14 Corps, telephoned 16 Pz Div as follows:

Enemy south of Termoli and at Termoli has broken through with strong armoured forces. Get everything ready; division to reach Campobasso today.

63. While the German division was on its way to the coast, the seaborne elements of 78 Brit Div landed at Termoli on the morning of 3 Oct between 0400 hrs and 1000 hrs. 78 Brit Div assumed command over 12 Cdn Army Tk Regt at 1000 Hrs of the same day. At 1150 hrs German 16 Pz Div received the order:

¹⁹ On 1 Oct the garrison of Termoli consisted of one railway company, one company of medical troops and a covering party of one platoon from 1 Para Div. In the vicinity there was also the N.C.O. reserve of 1 Para Div, on a platoon leaders' course. German records indicate that the railway troops, including the commander, were completely intoxicated and of no help; that the covering party was too weak to put up an effective resistance; and that the "Platoon leaders' course" fought desperately, was held at the front against the wishes of Heidrich, and was wiped out. (G.M.D.S. - 42803/9, Appx 381, 8 Oct).

²⁰ General Heidrich later claimed that 1 Para Div could have been moved to the coast, and would have arrived there early enough to obtain better results than 16 Pz Div, which had arrived too late to cope with the initial landings. (Special Interrogation Report, General Richard Heidrich, Hist Sec C.M.H.Q., 13 Nov 46). This claim may be well founded, but at the same time it can be appreciated that the Army Commander did not wish to create a gaping hole in the front of 76 Corps while he still had a good division in Reserve.

to destroy the enemy at Termoli, also enemy possibly advancing from Termoli to the West, and to concentrate the division in the area of Palata after completion of the task.

(W.D., 12 Cdn Army Tk Regt, 3 Oct; G.M.D.S. - 42243/7, 3 Oct)

64. 16 Pz Div was commanded by Maj-Gen Rudolph Sickenius. Its main components were:

Recce Bn 16

Panzer Regiment 2

Pz Gren Regt 64 (battle group Stempel)

Pz Gren Regt 79 (battle group Doering)

The division was 100% mobile but suffered delays on the trip to Termoli because the quartermaster had made arrangements for only half of the available petrol supply to be taken along in the hope of getting more from 76 Corps. This piece of hoarding, as well as the not too brilliant employment of the artillery by Sickenius and the absence of the usual verve of the troops, figured largely in the after-battle comments. But all these and other more or less valid explanations did not blind the German commanders to the fact that a British force of not necessarily overwhelming strength had prevailed against 16 Pz Div in the face of the plainly expressed desire to have the enemy thrown into the sea. (G.M.D.S. - H 16/24, 9 Oct; 42803/9, 7 Oct; 43803/9, Appx 381, 8 Oct.

65. British command at Termoli was elastic and resourceful; the troops fought well and supplied the extra bit of stamina and obstinacy that was required to withstand and overcome the attacks of 16 Pz Div. For three consecutive days the enemy tried to dislodge the British and Canadian forces but by the afternoon of 6 Oct the Germans were hardpressed themselves and gave up all hope of taking Termoli. At 1635 hrs the Division reported to Corps:

Enemy attack in brigade strength has crushed exhausted left wing of battle group Doering and has reached the area west of S. Giacomo. Numerically superior forces are attacking on the eastern flank. Orders have been given to withdraw to the area north of Guglionese.

(G.M.D.S. - 42243/11, 6 Oct)

66. That Termoli was regarded as more than a mere delaying action can be gathered from the telephone conversations of the German commanders in the area:

4 Oct, 2055 hrs. Ops Offr A.O.K. 10 to Ops Offr 76 Corps:

... The eyes of the whole Armed Forces High Command are on Termoli.

... The Fuehrer wishes to be informed about the situation at Termoli between 2200 and 2300 hrs.

5 Oct, v. Vietinghoff to Herr:

... The attack is of considerable importance and must succeed.

The acute interest of Hitler in the Italian front was even reflected in the language used in the War Diary of A.O.K. 10. In place of the usual bland comments one finds the statement:

The developments of the battle of Termoli are being watched at A.O.K. 10 in extreme suspense.

(G.M.D.S. - 42243/7, 4 Oct; 42803/9, 5 Oct; 42803/7, 6 Oct)

67. In the evening of 7 Oct, Marshal Kesselring appeared in person at the headquarters of 16 Pz Div, and a full discussion of the defeat at Termoli took place. One month later, on 7 Nov, Maj-Gen Sickenius left the Division to enter the "Reserve of Higher Commanders" of the Armed Forces High Command, and Colonel Back assumed command of the Division. (G.M.D.S. - 42243/7, 7 Oct; 42243, 7 Nov)

CAMPOBASSO AND VINCHIATURO

68. While the action at Termoli was being fought, 1 Cdn Div moved inland from the concentration area on the south-eastern rim of the Foggia plain towards the important road centre of Camposbasso and the cluster of German headquarters in the nearby villages. (76 Corps at Baranello, 16 Pz Div at Busso, 29 Pz Gren Div first at Jelsi and then on the eastern outskirts of Campobasso.)^{21*} The Germans were withdrawing slowly now and offered spirited resistance from selected positions while increasing the number and ingenuity of their countless traps and demolitions. A photostatic copy of the Order of Battle of 10 Army on 9 Oct is being permanently retained (R.14). A translation of this document appears as Appendix "X". (G.M.D.S. - 42803/12, sit maps; 42803/9, Appx 410, 9 Oct).

69. 1 Cdn Inf Bde advanced from Foggia and Lucera along Route 17 and on entering the hilly country around Motta was resisted by elements of 3 Regt 1 Para Div. 4 Regt at that time was still on the left flank of 3 Regt, and 2 Bn 67 Pz Gren Regt on its right, withdrawing along the boundary line with 29 Pz Gren Div. 2 Bn 67 Pz Gren Regt was on loan from 26 Pz Div in consideration of the width of the front on which 1 Para Div was withdrawing towards the Bernhard line and of the losses that 3 and 4 Regt had suffered at Salerno. The battalion operated in the area Motta-Volturara - north of

²¹ On 3 Oct a new German map code came into force. (See Appx "B", para 8)

Gambatesa - Celenza - Pietracatella. The village of Gambatesa was in the area of 29 Pz Gren Div and was last held by 3 Bn 15 Pz Gren Regt .. (G.M.D.S. - 42803/12, sit maps).

70. Limitations of time and space preclude the detailed description of all individual actions, but quotations from a number of German reports and notations will show how much the subsequent bloodless capture of Campobasso was indeed the fruit of the many engagements fought by the units of 1 and 3 Cdn Inf Bdes.

71. The reappearance of Canadian troops was immediately reported by O.B.S. In the report of 2 Oct (for 1 Oct), O.B.S. was not yet certain whether it was the First, or the "Eleventh Canadian Division, as has been gathered from prisoners taken at Motta." Volturara and Motta were occupied by 1 Cdn Inf Bde; during the next phase of the approach to Campobasso 3 Cdn Inf Bde was in the van of the action. On 11th Oct, West N.S.R. was charged with the capture of Jelsi and was temporarily delayed by "the first artillery concentration the unit had experienced in Italy." The report of O.B.S. for Oct mentioned the fighting at Jelsi:

Two attacks of 1 Cdn Inf Div in battalion strength near Jelsi were repulsed after hard fighting in which the enemy suffered heavy casualties. A third attack in the afternoon collapsed in the concentrated fire of all arms.

Later portions of the same report read:

... In the area of Jelsi the enemy is bringing up reinforcements.

... enemy concentrations in the Jelsi area are being fought with artillery.

These were the standard phrases which would make it unnecessary to mention later that Jelsi had been lost. The next report barely mentioned Canadian Activities but dwelled with relish on a morsel of possible propaganda value:

... The Bishop of Campobasso was killed by a British shell on 11 Oct in his church while conducting a service of intercession for the victims of a British bombing attack.

(W.D., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 11 Oct; O.B.S. 2, 11, 12 Oct)

72. O.B.S. on 14 Oct (for 13 Oct) reported:

1 Cdn Inf Div is bringing up further troops in the Campobasso area.

And on 15 Oct (for 14 Oct):

1 Cdn Inf Div, after intense artillery preparation, has attacked Campobasso in an enveloping movement.

Hard fighting is still in progress.^{22*}

73. 2 Cdn Inf Bde had orders to drive the enemy from the area south of Campobasso, to reach the important junction of routes 87 and 17 at Vinchiaturio and, if necessary, to assist in the capture of Campobasso on the left wing of

²² The expression "hard fighting" referred apparently to the German counter attacks on 48 Highrs and Hast & P.E.R. According to the German sit maps 2 Bn 71 Pz Gren Regt was in this area on 14 Oct. The occupation of the town proper by R.C.R. was uneventful. Campobasso was not further mentioned by O.B.S. except in one reference on 18 Oct (for 17 Oct) "In Campobasso area great reconnaissance activity on both sides and considerable enemy shelling and mortar fire". - Interest was not centred on the advance of 2 Cdn Inf Bde which culminated in the capture of Vinchiaturio and Baranello. (G.M.D.S. - 42803/13, Appx 530, sit map, 14 Oct).

attack by 1 Cdn Inf Div, after heavy artillery and mortar fire lasting three quarters of an hour, led to the temporary occupation by the enemy of some commanding heights 3 km S and SE Gambatesa. Our counter-attacks forced the enemy to withdraw with heavy casualties.

... Captured documents confirm the presence of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada (of Cdn Inf Bde, 1 Cdn Inf Div).

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/13, sit maps; O.B.S. 5, 7, 8 Oct)

75. The German version of the events which led to the loss of Vichiatiuro is found in the War Diary of 26 Pz Div:

13 Oct 1000 hrs Enemy in strength of one company advances from Gildone towards Vinchiatiuro.

1400 hrs Enemy transport column observed near Mirabella.

1600 hrs Enemy in strength of one company attacks Point 1000 (La Rocca) and takes the hill, thereby gaining possession of the height commanding the sector.^{23*} The number of our available troops was too small to occupy the feature and in the absence of flanking protection the enemy would have circumvented the height and the final result would have been the same.

²³ This action was carried out by P.P.C.L.I. (W.D., Cdn Inf Bde, 14 Oct)

1730 hrs 2 Bn 67 Pz Gren Regt returns to its division and has arrived at Cantalupo.

1830 hrs Increasing enemy air recce of the area Vinchiaturò - Isernia.

Enemy: No pressure on our centre or right wing, but enemy rapidly advancing on Vinchiaturò from the East and Southeast. Strong artillery positions of the enemy in the Mirabella - Cercepiccola sector point clearly towards an attack on Vinchiaturò for tomorrow.

14 Oct 0700 hrs 29 Pz Gren Div advises that its combat outposts are at the northeastern, eastern and southeastern exits of Campobasso, but that the division will most likely be forced to vacate Campobasso today. Opposite 29 Pz Gren Div the first Canadian Infantry Division has appeared again, which explains the rapid advance of the enemy and confirms the belief that the 45th American Division is opposite our right wing and the left wing of our adjoining 3 Pz Gren Div.

... The appearance of 1 Cdn Inf Div on the left wing of 26 Pz Div is expected.^{24*}

1630 hrs Recce advance of 8 enemy tanks is halted by our artillery south of the road Cercemaggiore - Vinchiaturò.

²⁴ The rear elements of the two German divisions had operated mainly by means of demolitions and harassing fire and evidently had failed to discover the identity of pursuing forces.

In the later hours of the afternoon considerable increase in the artillery activity of the enemy. Five enemy batteries have been located but cannot be fired upon owing to the insufficient maximum range of our howitzers and the lack of 10 cm ammunition.

1730 hrs The attack which was expected for today has not materialized. The enemy apparently had not completed his artillery preparations. The attack is expected for tomorrow.

2045 hrs The Divisional Commander orders the withdrawal of the rear elements to the line: 4 km NE Campochiaro - Baranello - Busso.

Reasons:

1. 8 Enemy tanks on rd Cercemaggiore - Vinchiaturo, and 15 enemy tanks at S. Giuliano create danger of rearguards being pinched off.
2. Enemy has completed his artillery preparations and has finished ranging.
3. Rearguards that have been surrounded cannot withdraw in daylight. Withdrawal now will prevent heavy losses tomorrow from superior enemy forces and artillery fire.

15 Oct 0615 hrs Enemy has occupied Vinchiaturo, entering from the East.

At 0930 hrs and 1130 hrs, Pz Arty Regt 93 directed concentrated fire on the locality. According to later statements of a line-crosser it was very effective.^{25*}

1830 hrs Enemy: Apart from recce and light arty activity the enemy has remained quiet during he day. The heavy artillery fire of yesterday (1600 rounds) has apparently induced the enemy to regroup before undertaking a further advance.

(G.M.D.S. - 43873/2)

76. Army Order No. 6 of German Tenth Army had been published on 4 Oct and contained the directives for the gradual withdrawal to the Bernhard line. The document appears in translated form as Appendix "J". The well known wish of Hitler to cede as little ground as possible, and the instructions of Army Order No. 6 had made the German commanders reluctant to withdraw unless unavoidable. But the long retreat had affected the fighting spirit of the troops. The problem was dealt with in para 3 of Army Order:

... From now on all ranks must devote their full energies to counteracting the inroads on morale which have been the inevitable result of the long delaying action.

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/9, Appx 311a, b, 4 Oct)

²⁵ The Italian line-crosser had of course to earn his keep, but Lt-Col Hoffmeister was much too wary and experienced a commander to mass his troops in Vinchiaturio; they were either posted on the heights commanding the area or busy patrolling in the direction of Boiano and Baranello.

77. In view of the desire to slow down the retreat, the rapid advance of 1 Cdn Inf Div was embarrassing to the German Commanders. It was discussed in many of the countless telephone conversations, which were all recorded with great care. The quotations appearing below are fragments of characteristic conversations between the Chief of Staff of 10 Army (Wentzell) and Chief of Staff 76 Corps (Runkel):

11 Oct 1315 hrs Casualties are considerable. I believe
Ru: that at Jelsi we will again be in difficulties.

We: O.B.S. has said that you could withdraw there for
that reason.

Ru: That is again only for one day. When he then breaks
through at Campobasso a great mess will result.

We: Local withdrawals are only natural but they affect
the whole.

Ru: I will give orders to withdraw to the line Sepino -
Cercepicola - Campodipietra - Monacilioni.
DREADFUL. I am worried stiff (in Not und Sorgen)
that 29 Pz Gren Div will suffer heavy casualties.

We: Well, then withdraw to that line.

1410 hrs The road via Campobasso is the only road back for
Ru: 29 Pz Gen Div. Today the enemy has already shelled
Campobasso, tomorrow he will intensify this fire.

We: Everything can flow over the road through Campobasso?

Ru: Yes, if we withdraw into the general line east of Vinchiaturo - northeast of Campolito. I must hold parts of 1 Para Div down there at the road junction in S. Croce. My hair is turning grey!

We: There are other situations!

Ru I know. When it is decisive one has to accept heavy casualties.

We It is worth it because we MUST hold the Bernhard line.

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/9, 11 Oct)

78. The dilemma of the enemy was that he could not afford to lose troops but was reluctant to withdraw. At 1820 hrs of the same day the Army Commander telephoned the Commander of 76 Corps:

... Every delay is appreciated.

... It is desired that the Bernhard line should not be reached before two or three weeks.

But the fate of Campobasso was sealed already and the town was occupied by Canadian troops on 14 Oct. (G.M.D.S. - 42803/9, 11 Oct).

79. 29 Pz Gren Div was a good division, always highly regarded by critical Marshal Kesselring, but it was sandwiched between 1 Para Div on the left and 26 Pz Div on the right. The paratroops were notoriously tough fighters, the roster of the officers of 26 Pz Div was to German eyes a glittering array of brilliant names from the highest circles of military and social life. It is

not surprising that 29 Pz Gren Div was impressed by such company and tried to appear in the best possible light. Perhaps this may account for their version of the loss of Campobasso, a report that is oddly at variance with the War Diary of R.C.R. According to the Canadians the Germans had left Campobasso two hours before the entry of R.C.R., 29 Pz Gren Div on the other hand reported street fighting and a hard battle.

Interim morning report 29 Pz Gren Div:

On the right wing of the Division, the entire 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade, supported by a heavy and a light artillery formation, has penetrated the eastern parts of Campobasso in street fighting, after attacking from both left and right. At the moment heavy fighting in and around Campobasso.

Evening report"

29 Pz Gren Div reports that Campobasso has been vacated in the early hours of the afternoon after a hard battle.

(W.D., R.C.R., 14 Oct; G.M.D.S. - 42803/10, Appx 512, 515, 14 Oct)

80. The losses of 10 Army were tabulated in a memorandum submitted to O.B.S. on 14 Oct. Between 1 Sep and 10 Oct the Army suffered 8427 casualties and 2725 cases of illness. Para 2 stated that the normal weekly wastage seemed to be about 1300 men. Para 3 dealt with "missing" soldiers:

The high number of "missing" soldiers is not fully explained by the actions at Salerno and Termoli. The main reasons are rather to be found in the lack of battle experience and the incomplete training of the young

reinforcements who, as soon as their leader has become a casualty, are completely helpless in the face of the much better trained enemy.

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/10, Appx 526, 14 Oct)

81. An interim report concerning the demolition of Adriatic ports was submitted to A.O.K. 10 BY 76 Corps on 14 Oct. Para 2 dealt with Ortona:

14 Oct. The following demolitions have been carried out in the harbour area of Ortona:

Little mole, all pipe-lines and pumping-stations for oil, 4 big ships, the big harbour mole with the exception of 800 metres. About 200 ships, all below 200 tons, have been sunk in the entrance to the port. The task will be completed within another six days.

At the same time O.B.S. appeared at Ortona. In view of the already heavy sea traffic at Termoli he was critical of the demolitions that had been carried out and sent a signal to A.O.K. 10 to increase the scope of the destruction at Ortona. (G.M.D.S. - 42803/10, Appx 567, 15 Oct; Appx 587, 16 Oct).

82. By the middle of October German resistance had become stiffer from coast to coast, especially so in the region of the lower Volturno where the Allied Fifth Army was engaged in large-scale fighting. The German Tenth Army had in the meantime been strengthened by the arrival of 65, 94 and 305 Inf Divs and numerous specialist units from General Headquarters' Pool.^{26*} A complete list

²⁶ Commanders:

II Air Corps	General BUELOVIUS
14 Corps (from 29 Oct)	General Fridolin v. SENGER und ETTERLIN
15 Pz Gren Div	Maj-Gen RODT
3 Pz Gren Div	Lt-Gen Fritz Hubert GRAESER

of all formations and units under the command of 10 Army on 22 Oct appears in photostatic form with attached translation as Appendix "K". (G.M.D.S. - 42803/10, Appx 701, 22 Oct).

TO THE HEADWATERS OF THE BIFERNO

83. During the last two weeks of October the town of Campobasso was being developed as an administrative centre. Canadian Forces first drove the enemy out of artillery range and then advanced north and west into the area of the headwaters of the Biferno. The Canadian story of the many brushes and sharp engagements with the always dangerous elements of 26 Pz Div and of tired 29 Pz Gren Div have been related in Hist Offr's [Report No. 161](#). The German version of the events is being presented here by quotation from the War Diary of 26 Pz Div. It is only natural for the loser of combat to seek consolidation in the fact that he "put up a good show", and German reports stressed the more successful moments of their defence. They never denied the fact, however, that they were falling back due to the pressure of the Canadians. The merits of the Canadian advance in general, and of the capture of Baranello in particular, were strikingly confirmed by the records of the enemy.

65 Inf Div	Maj-Gen HEISTERMANN v. ZIEHLBERG
94 Inf Div	Maj-Gen Hellmuth PFEIFFER (later Lt-Gen STEINMETZ)
305 Inf Div	Lt-Gen Friedrich - Wilhelm HAUCK

Divisions arriving in November and December 1943:

44 Inf Div	Maj-Gen Dr Friedrich FRANEK
334 Inf Div	Lt-Gen SCHELLER
90 Pz Gren Div	Col (Maj-Gen) Ernst Guenther BAADE
5 Mountain Div	Lt-Gen Julius RINGEL (later Col (Maj-Gen) SCHRANK)

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/7; 42092/1)

84. War Diary 26 Pz Div:

16 Oct 0800 hrs The Divisional Commander asks the Chief of Staff (76 Corps) what the reasons might be for the discontinuation of the attacks of 1 Cdn Inf Div, contrary to expectations. Oberst Runkel replies that he believed the division to have suffered many casualties and that the Artillery fire of the previous days might have resulted in the adoption of a more cautious method of operation.

1600 hrs Combat outposts on height 743 have been attacked by superior enemy forces in company strength and had to be withdrawn to height 763.

Enemy: ... sudden artillery attacks on our own batteries indicate that the enemy has completed his artillery preparations. The careful manner of his recce would seem to indicate that he believes himself to be in the area of a strong defence line. Contrary to previously held beliefs, the Canadian Division seems to be no less systematic than our recent American opponents. The enemy apparently keeps his heavy artillery from firing in order to prevent premature disclosure of its positions.

17 Oct 1030 hrs 67 Pz Gren Regt reports that after 45 minutes of heavy artillery preparation the enemy is attacking its outposts in the Baranello area. In view of the enemy pressure and the hostile attitude of the civilian population, the outposts were forced to withdraw to Point 662.

Just before 1000 hrs the enemy attacked the outposts of Point 714 in a flanking movement and took the heights.

1050 7 7 Coy 9 Pz Gren Regt (in Div Reserve at Cantalupo) is placed under command of 67 Pz Gren Regt for the purpose of rectifying the situation at Baranello.

1100 hrs 67 Pz Gren Regt reports that height 743 which was lost yesterday evening has been retaken at dawn. Three officers and one O.R. were taken prisoner, but while in transport to the rear the officers managed to escape on a bend in the road which made it hard to see far.

1700 hrs The counter attack of 7 Coy 9 Pz Gren Regt on Baranello makes good progress. Baranello is taken at 2130 hrs.

1800 hrs Enemy has made Baranello the focal point of his attacks and apparently intends to break through from there in the direction of Boiano.

18 Oct 0830 hrs Height 743 has been lost again.

1030 hrs Enemy attacks Height 735. Our outposts were thrown back to Point 662.

1035 hrs Enemy attacks Baranello with one battalion. He is being repulsed.

1130 hrs Renewed enemy attack on Baranello has been repulsed.

1200 hrs Enemy artillery and fighter bombers are trying to silence our artillery.

1215 hrs Enemy advance in company strength and with tanks from height 735 in southwesterly direction to Point 604, and ran into our own advance on Point 735. Enemy attack was halted by our artillery fire.

1330 hrs Further enemy attacks on Baranello have been reported. They have been repulsed with the valuable help of 9 Coy 93 Pz Arty Regt.

1530 hrs Renewed enemy attacks on Baranello.

1545 hrs The situation at Baranello has been clarified. An enemy battalion succeeded in breaking through our line of outposts south of Baranello. The Divisional Commander orders 67 Pz Gren Regt to withdraw the outposts on the left wing as soon as darkness has set in. Orders to that effect have been given by telephone to Oberst v. Usedom at 1445 hrs.

1700 hrs Enemy occupies Guardiaregia and moves towards Campochiaro.

1730 hrs Enemy attack on height 650 (4 km W Vinchiaturro) has been repelled.

1800 hrs As expected, the enemy today has continued his attacks with strong forces and with massed artillery and has broken through our combat outposts south of Baranello. The simultaneous appearance of the enemy

at Campochiaro points to an advance from the South towards Boiano tomorrow. Attacks from Baranello to the Southwest must also be expected. The enemy uses recce elements to locate soft spots in the front and then attacks, usually in pincerlike movements, with one or two companies.

1830 hrs On the occasion of the enemy attack on Baranello at 1530 hrs the outposts of 7 Coy 9 Pz Gren Regt on the northern fringe of the locality were apparently surprised by superior enemy forces using smoke. This made it possible for the enemy to enter Baranello before 7 Coy became aware of the situation.^{27*}

19 Oct 1430 hrs 67 Pz Gren Regt reports that left neighbour (3 Bn 71 Pz Gren Regt) has withdrawn from hills 923 and 996 and is at Busso.

²⁷ In the telephone conversations of the following morning the loss of Baranello was reflected in the following:

Wentzell: How is your situation? Increasing pressure?

Runkel: Yes. A small mishap occurred unfortunately at Baranello where the enemy squeezed into the place from the rear.

Wentzell: One cannot deny that 26 Pz Div has been fighting well in these last few days.

- - - - -
Wentzell to Kesselring: And then the pressure at Baranello increased. The enemy penetrated from the rear and threw out our troops. Our company there fought bravely.

(G.M.D.S. - 42803/10, 19 Oct)

1720 hrs The enemy has taken height 996 (1 km E.S.E. Busso) which means that tomorrow Busso could only be held at the cost of severe casualties.

1740 hrs Chief of Staff 76 Corps informs the divisional commander that 29 Pz Gren Div will withdraw to Castropignano during the night and that the left wing of 26 Pz Div therefore would have to do likewise.

Enemy: After the occupation of Busso the enemy will most likely continue to attack in northerly and westerly directions with the main effort towards the West.

2100 hrs Busso had to be evacuated at 1900 hrs as a result of pressure from superior enemy forces.

20 Oct 1400 hrs An enemy battalion supported by heavy artillery and 22 tanks at Station Guardiaregio along the railroad line from Vinchiaturò - Boiano is attacking our combat outposts at the Quirino. At the same time one company supported by 8 tanks is attacking along the road Vinchiaturò - Boiano.

1620 hrs 67 Pz Gren Regt requests support from 6 Coy 26 Tank Regt.

1700 hrs Arty Regt 93 reports that today's ammunition for the heavy field howitzers contained 95% duds and that the effectiveness of the artillery fire was reduced in a corresponding measure.

1800 hrs Enemy tanks are firing from the Quirino creek...
Further enemy advances in the centre of the sector have been reported. The Regiment is forced to withdraw the combat outposts of the left wing behind the Biferno river.^{28*}

1830 hrs Enemy: Now that the enemy has captured the heights around Baranello, his left wing is obviously becoming the point of main effort and it must be expected that he will continue to attack along the road to Boiano with infantry, tanks and the artillery, which has all targets well registered.

Observations: Owing to the nature of the ground the enemy has up to now committed his tanks in small groups only, using them as mobile artillery. The cross-country mobility of these tanks is remarkable. But they are very sensitive to artillery fire and turn around or take cover as soon as fired upon by our own artillery.

As far as our own tanks are concerned it has repeatedly been noted that as soon as they had begun to communicate by wireless they were almost immediately fired upon by enemy artillery. They had apparently been located by radio direction finding

²⁸ On 16 Oct 67 Gren Regt had again been organized as "Battle Group v. Usedom". Apart from 67 Pz Gren Regt the group comprised 9 Pz Gren Regt (less H.Q. and 2 Bn) and two companies of Pz Regt 26. The divisional artillery and engineers were directed to cooperate closely with the battle group. (Ibidem).

methods. This increases the difficulties of controlling widely dispersed tanks.

21 Oct During the night an enemy battery situated east of Vinchiaturo was silenced with 150 rounds from 2 light field howitzers that had been taken forward for the purpose.

0945 hrs 7 enemy tanks tried to pass the Quirino at Point 527 in a NW direction. The attempt was halted by our artillery.

In the morning enemy artillery fire on Boiano, Colle d'Anchise and Spineto. According to information obtained from an Italian coming from Busso, the Canadians quartered there suffered heavy losses from a surprise concentration of artillery fire laid upon Busso by our artillery.^{29*}

22 Oct 1230 hrs Fire from 7 enemy batteries on the Boiano - Colle d'Anchise area. (2000 rounds within 30 minutes).

1335 hrs Enemy bombers attack H.Q. 26 Pz Regt at the moment of the arrival of fresh reinforcements. 11 dead, 23 injured.

²⁹ On the morning of 21 Oct, "B" Coy R.C.R. was in Busso. According to the Intelligence log of the unit, O.C. Bn and O.C. Coy were reconnoitring the ground behind the town for the purpose of taking the troops there in anticipation of German artillery fire, when the shelling began. "B" Coy (less 11 P1) moved to the high ground; 11 P1 remained in town. No casualties were reported. (W.D., .R.C.R., 21 Oct).

1400 hrs Height 751 (500m N Campochiaro) taken by the enemy.

Observations: Complaints about looting in the rear areas are increasing in number. It must be stated that the majority of these acts are being committed by soldiers of the Luftwaffe. Similar observations have already been made in Sicily and Calabria. The most severe measures are being taken, to guard against a bad influence on the troops of our own division.

23 Oct (synopsis) ... enemy attacks Colle d'Anchise with one battalion and penetrates into the centre of the town. A troop of 5 Coy 26 Pz Regt destroys three Sherman tanks south of Colle d'Anchise.^{30**} Without the support of the armoured company the situation would have become untenable.^{***31}

1530 hrs 1 Bn 67 Pz Gren Regt is in possession of three quarters of the town of Colle d'Anchise. A projected counter-attack to clear the locality has been cancelled in view of the Corps Order to withdraw to the "Luettwitz" position.

³⁰ Confirmed by Hist Sec [Report No 161](#), para 141.

³¹ During these days a few Canadian soldiers fell into the hands of the enemy. At Colle d'Anchise 5 men from L. Edmn R. were taken prisoner. German knowledge of the Canadian Army was enriched by the ingenious statement of an unidentified prisoner that the Loyal Edmontons had received the prefix "Loyal" in recognition of their services in Sicily. (G.M.D.S. - 43873/3, Appx to War Diary 26 Pz Div, Int rep for period 1 Jul - 28 Nov, 23 Oct).

24 Oct 50 casualties at Colle d'Anchise yesterday.
Engineers experienced casualties when enemy fire
caused premature explosion of demolition charges.

26 Oct 0830 hrs 29 Pz Gren Div reports heavy pressure and artillery
fire on line Torella - Molise.^{32*}

1000 hrs Commander 29 Pz Gren Div calls on Commander 26 Pz Div
and states that enemy pressure forces 29 Pz Gren Div
to withdraw in the evening from Torella and Molise to
Duronio and Pietracupa. Orders to withdraw are then
accordingly given to 67 Pz Gren Regt.

1400 hrs Enemy apparently has shifted point of main effort to
the right wing of 29 Pz Gren Div.^{33**}

27 Oct 0950 hrs 29 Pz Gren Div reports that enemy attacks have been
repelled and that some recce outposts are still in
Molise and Torella.

³² 48 Highrs at Torella, Hast & P.E.R. at Molise. ([Report No 161](#), paras 157-159)

³³ 26 Pz Div had requested the support of fighter-bombers on 20 Oct. Owing to the sogginess of the landing strips it could not be made available. The situation in the air was mentioned in a telephone conversation of 26 Oct:

Wentzell: The air superiority is terrible.

Westphal: In Russia it was different.

Wentzell: Yes. Here they puck out each individual vehicle.

(G.M.D.S. - 42873/2, 20 Oct; 42803/11, 26 Oct)

The Engineer battalion of the Division has carried out in Southern Italy up to now a total of 1948 demolitions with an expenditure of 670 tons of explosives.

(G.M.D.S. 47873/2)

86. 5 Brit Div relieved 2 Cdn Inf Bde during the night 27/28 Oct and the stage was set for the advance to Isernia. 1 Cdn Inf Div was temporarily withdrawn into reserve. In the middle of the month 3 Cdn Inf Bde embarked on a demonstration to the reaches of the upper Sangro, at the end of the month the main body of the Division moved to the Adriatic coast.

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87. Allied pressure on the German Tenth Army increased during these weeks which 1 Cdn Inf Div used to generate the strength that later enabled it to overcome the fierce resistance of the enemy in the Ortona salient. While the achievements of the various Allied formations have been fully recorded in many narratives, the quotations given below will serve to lend some small degree of continuity to the information from German sources.

88. An "Order for the Conduct of the Campaign" was issued by Marshal Kesselring on 1 Nov. A translation of this document appears as Appendix "L". Between the lines of this order the reader feels the stubborn resolution to carry out an unpromising operation in the belief that a better solution was unavailable in the light of the overall situation. Kesselring again insisted on decisive resistance in the Bernhard line and ordered the formations to exercise the rapid concentration of forces at points of attack while ruthlessly denuding sectors not being attacked at the moment. (G.M.D.S.-42092/18, Chefsachen, 1 Nov).

89. An event occurred now that revealed once more one of the deepest flaws in the armour of German efficiency. Where the good services of a visiting staff officer, or almost any attempt to practise the art of human relations would have been sufficient to rectify the situation, Marshal Kesselring sent the following signal to his Army Commander:

2 Nov

To the Commander of the Tenth Army:

The last two days have proven to me that command is not being carried out with the energy and far-sightedness required by the situation. My own personal intervention was necessary to point out to 14 Corps the shortcomings of the work on the Bernhard position. In spite of my repeated observations it has not been possible up to now to develop the most important artillery positions in the manner which would have been necessary and feasible. (e.g., by transfer of the heavy artillery and the Projector units of 76 Corps to 14 Corps).

Neither can I see the panacea of command in the manner in which the divisions that should be withdrawn for the purpose of creating a vital reserve are being committed time and again. I regard it as an impossible situation when reports about reverses reach me only when it is too late to correct the situation. ...

I add with equal clarity that the Bernhard line must and can be held if the commanders succeed in transmitting their will to the troops. I request that my views be made very clear to the subordinate commanders.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/18, Chefsachen, 2 Nov; R.8)

90. It is not surprising that General v. Vietinghoff should now feel the urgent need for medical attention. He requested sick leave and Marshal Kesselring, pending the arrival of a replacement in the person of General Joachim Lemelsen, took over the command of 10 Army on 4 Nov. Before his departure v. Vietinghoff submitted a clear-cut and logical explanation of his actions. The measure of their validity may be found in the fact that he returned at the end of the year and resumed his old command. The message of the Army Commander and the letter of Col-Gen v. Vietinghoff are being permanently retained. (G.M.D.S. - 42092/1, 29 Dec; 42092/18, 4 Nov; R.8, R.T. 9).

91. On 4 Nov the Fifth Army advanced with strong forces to the main battle line of 14 German Corps. The point of main effort was between Montecesima and Venafro. On 5 Nov O.B.S. ordered the destruction of the port of Pescara. On 6 Nov, 29 Pz Gren and 26 Pz Divs were withdrawn into Reserve. 1 Para Div took over the sector of 26 Pz Div. On the same day General Joachim Lemelsen assumed temporary command of 10 Army. (G.M.D.S. - 42092/2, Appx 111, 5 Nov; 42092/1, 4, 5, 6 Nov).

³⁴ Abraham Lincoln, having infinitely greater cause to censure Major-General Hooker, began his message with the words:

I have placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course, I have done this upon what appear to me to be sufficient reasons, and yet I think it best for you to know that there are some things in regard to which I am not quite satisfied with you. I believe you to be a brave and skilful soldier ...

(Battles and Leaders of the Civil War,
The Century Co, New York, 1912, Vol 3, p 216)

92. On 8 Nov General Lemelsen reported to O.B.S. that the Army with all attached units showed a deficiency of 28,600 men, 1 para Div alone requiring 10,700 reinforcements. (G.M.D.S. - 42092/3, Appx 175, 8 Nov).

93. A detailed appreciation of the situation was submitted on the following day by 14 Corps (v. Senger and Etterlin). The Corps Commander did not fail to point out that he disagreed with the policy of O.B.S., who was forming an Army Group Reserve with divisions taken from the front line:

According to the views of the Corps Commander it is wrong, in this country and with this enemy, to create strong reserves at the expense of the troops occupying the Bernhard position.

At the same time Lemelsen reported to O.B.S. that 10 Army had done about all that could be done under difficult circumstances and in view of clever enemy infiltrations that were being carried out without offering artillery targets and were causing considerable casualties. (G.M.D.S. - 42092/3, Appx 195a, 195b, 9 Nov).

94. The activities of the German engineers were the subject of several statements recorded at this time. A.O.K. 10 reported to O.B.S. that up to 7 Nov the engineers had laid 44,521 mines south of the Bernhard line and 30,606 mines in the area of the Bernhard line; altogether a total of 75,127 mines. On the same day O.B.S. released figures concerning the work of the railway engineers"

Up to 31 Oct the railway engineers south of the Bernhard line have carried out the following demolitions:

Bridges destroyed
12,210 metres

Culverts
1,830 metres
Tunnels
6,565 metres
Railroad tracks
667,000 metres
Railroad carriages
2,043 metres

A further 116,300 metres of railroad track have been pulled up by rail rooter.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/3, Appx 205, 9 Nov: O.B.S. 9 Nov)

95. The heavy pressure of Fifth Army on the western wing of the Bernhard line and the growing German concern for the safety of Rome had led to a regrouping of the forces of 10 Army. The changes that had taken place were shown in a new schematic order of battle issued by 10 Army on 10 Nov. A photostatic copy and a translation of the document appears as Appendix "M". (G.M.D.S. - 42092/4, Appx 253 a, b, c, 11 Nov)

96. 76 Corps now had only three divisions; 1 Para Div, 65 Inf Div and 16 Pz Div, the latter already earmarked for early transfer to the Russian front. Under command of 14 Corps were:

26 Pz Div
3 Pz Gren Div
15 Pz Gren Div
94 Inf Div
305 Inf Div

Pz Div Hermann Goering was in Army Reserve; 29 Pz Gren Div at the moment was being freshened up near Rome. General Bessel, the builder of the Bernhard line, had left. A "Higher Artillery Commander"^{35*} and his staff had arrived at the Headquarters of 10 Army on 8 Nov. ((G.M.D.S. - (42092/4, Appx 253 a, b, c, 11 Nov; 42092/1, 8 Nov).

97. The boundary line between the two German Corps ran on a straight line from Carovilli - two miles southeast of Castel di Sangro - Scanno. It intersected the main defence line on the heights commanding the Sangro valley between Scontrone and Castel di Sangro. ((G.M.D.S. - (42092/11)^{36**}

98. The tight control exerted by Hitler was shown on the occasion of an incident that began on 13 Nov and ended on 14 Nov. One of the most important and most carefully prepared sectors of the Bernhard line was the area between Mignano and S. Pietro on the road to Cassino. On 13 Nov, after initial successes in the Monte Rotondo sector, east of S. Pietro, the exhausted 8th Pz Gren Regt (3 Div) was reeling back under heavy pressure. At 0035 hrs, 14 Nov, General Lemelsen had given the order to withdraw east of S. Pietro. (G.M.D.S. - (42092/4, Appx 302, 14 Nov). The matter has been thoroughly discussed in the evening between Kesselring and Lemelsen by telephone:

13 Nov, 2055 hrs Kesselring ... 8th Regt must be taken back

³⁵ Lt-Gen v. Graffen, "Higher Artillery Commander" at A.O.K. 10.
(G.M.D.S. - (42092/1, 8 Nov)

³⁶ The Appendices to the War Diary of 10 Army contain two folders with various maps and tracings of the Bernhard line. These maps were in use at H.Q. 10 Army; they constitute perhaps the most authentic source of information regarding the exact location of the positions of the Bernhard line. A tracing and transcript of one of these maps, showing the Bernhard line from coast to coast, is being permanently retained in the Map Room, Hist Sec (G.S.). Scale 1:100,000. (R20) (G.M.D.S. - 42092/11; 42092/12, 26-31 Oct 43)

... But I do not know yet whether the Fuehrer will give his permission

... I will permit you to do anything that you convince me to be right.

2310 hrs ... The Fuehrer has given us a free hand concerning S. Pietro.

(G.M.D.S. - (42092/4, Appx 283, pp 11, 12, 14, 13 Nov)

But in the evening of 14 Nov General Westphal telephoned to A.O.K. 10 that Hitler now had reserved to himself any decision concerning further withdrawals at S. Pietro. He quoted the order received from Hitler:

"I authorize you to desist from further attack on the mountain pass. I order however to hold and develop the line at S. Pietro. Any withdrawal there I reserve for myself."

At the end of the conversation Westphal said:

The order giving us a free hand has been cancelled, apparently for political reasons.

(G.M.D.S. - (42092/4, Appx 305, pp 7. 8. 14 Nov)

99. No quick reserves were in sight, but obviously Hitler did not care how many died, so that he could cling a little longer to a line that had become untenable. To show reluctance towards the execution of orders from above was something fantastic for a German commander; to criticize Hitler had never been a good plan. But urbane and careful as it was, next day's recorded telephone conversation between Kesselring and Lemelsen revealed their feelings:

Kesselring: That the 8th Regiment, which should be withdrawn, now must remain, is the unpleasant.

Lemelsen: I do not like to do this either.

(G.M.D.S. - (42092/4, Appx 320, p. 5, 15 Nov)

100. By the middle of November, 3 Cdn Inf Bde had started on its demonstration towards Castel di Sangro. General Montgomery wished to create the impression that the whole Canadian division was pressing forward in the centre of the front. This would help to keep the Germans from sensing that he planned a large-scale attack on the Adriatic sector. The daily reports of O.B.S. for the period show that the desired effect was obtained in the part at least:

14 Nov On 12 Nov at Pietrabbondante, 8.5 km west of Agnone, Canadians of 1 Cdn Inf Div were seen. Renewed Commitment of this division is possible.

15 Nov Information from a reliable source confirms the commitment of 1 Cdn Inf Div between 5 Brit and 8 Ind Divs.

101 16 Nov was a relatively quiet day on the whole front. 29 Pz Gren Div relieved 3 Div at 1700 hrs and 16 Pz Div started to load equipment for the transfer to Army Group North. The main event of the day was an attack by 8 Ind Div on Monte Torella. Regarding this attack O.B.S. reported:

The Indian troop have turned out to be tough and resourceful opponents.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/1, 16 Nov; O.B.S. 16 Nov; 42092/5, Appx 400a, 19 Nov)

102. 1 Cdn Inf Div was mentioned again on 19 Nov. O.B.S. 19 Nov (for 18 Nov):

1 Cdn Inf Div has felt its way to Montagnola (11 km ESE Castel di Sangro)

Near Caprocotta, in the area of 1 Cdn Inf Div, an enemy battalion in winter dress and with mountain guns carried by mules has been observed.^{37*}

In the meantime, however, the Germans had recognized the signs that pointed towards an early attack in the Adriatic sector. In the same report O.B.S. stated:

Arrival of large quantities of supplies of all kinds in the coastal sector of Eighth Army would permit the assumption that an attack was impending.

The Army Commander was more positive; he stated flatly that he believed an attack to be imminent. At 1710 hrs, 18 Nov, he wirelessly:

A.O.K. 10 to O.B.S.; copy to Higher Artillery Commander.

The concentration of Eighth Army on the Adriatic front leads 10 Army to expect an early attack on our left wing. The Army requests the accelerated dispatch to 76 Corps of the promised "Caterpillar-Track or-Artillery Battalion East".

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/4, Appx 378, 18 Nov)

103. The report of O.B.S. for 20 Nov dealt mainly with the loss of Archi. Regarding the preparations of Eighth Army it stated:

³⁷ 7 P1 Carlt & York R. moved into Capracotta in the late afternoon of 18 Nov . (W.D., Carlt & York R., 18 Nov)

According to information from a reliable source Eighth Army has established a net of telephone communications right up to the battalions. This explains the small volume of wireless traffic of the last few days.

104. From the records of various telephone conversations it appears that Kesselring had made a short visit to Hitler's Headquarters. That he had been well received can be surmised from the many complimentary remarks which he made on his return about his divisional commanders, especially about v. Ziehlberg (65 In Div) who had apparently obtained good results from his green and partly unwilling recruits. Actually it was the weather and not the enemy that had held up the advance of Eighth Army; it had been raining constantly, the Sangro had swollen to a torrent, the ground was soft and unsuitable for large-scale operations. (G.M.D.S. - 42092/5, 20-25 Nov).

105. Upon his return Marshal Kesselring assumed the responsibility for the whole Italian theatre. He was now C.-in-C. Southwest; his new status was defined in the opening paragraph of the daily O.B.S. report for 21 Nov.

Headquarters Army Group "C" Report No. 1

General Field Marshal Kesselring has assumed command of Army Group "C" and the whole Italian area at 0000 hrs 21 Nov.^{38*}

106. An appreciation of the situation was submitted to O.B.SW by General Lemelsen on 25 Nov. It showed good knowledge of the opposing formations and dealt with the probable intentions of the Eighth Army:

³⁸ In subsequent paragraphs the abbreviation O.B.S.SW appears in place of the previously used abbreviation O.B.S.

By means of a thrust towards Pescara, Eighth Army will try to force 10 Army to commit its reserves and to take troops from the right wing, thereby facilitating the main thrust towards Rome.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/5, Appx 503, 25 Nov)

107. A new edition of the schematic order of battle of 10 Army appeared on 25 Nov. It showed 26 Pz Div as being in the process of relieving 16 Pz Div: 90 Pz Gren Div had not yet arrived. 14 Corps had been strengthened by the arrival of 44 Inf Div (Reichsgrenadier Division Hoch und Deutschmeister, commanded by Dr. Franek). A compilation of individual replacements that had reached the Army in November showed a total of 4,891 men. (G.M.D.S. - 42092/5, Appx 510 a, b, c, 25 Nov; 42092/5, 27 Nov)

108. The Eighth Army was now edging closer and closer to the German main defence lines, and A.O.K. 10 would have liked to retain 16 Pz Div. But the German position in the East was deteriorating and Berlin demanded the dispatch of the division with mounting insistence. On 25 Nov General Westphal telephoned to A.O.K. 10 so that no delay would be granted in the matter. At the same time the advance elements of 90 Pz Gren Div were approaching Pescara from the North. (G.M.D.S. - 42992/1, 25 Nov).

109, In the meantime West N.S.R. (3 Cdn Inf Bde) had taken Castel di Sangro. The main obstacle had been hill 1009. In the first attack on the feature, West N.S.R. encountered stiff resistance from paratroopers in well concealed positions and suffered about 20 casualties. The next attack was carried out after ample artillery preparation and succeeded. In the reports of O.B.SW this action was shown as follows:

24 Nov (for 23 Nov)

- 1 Para Div: An enemy attack in company strength on hill 1009 was repulsed and the enemy suffered considerable casualties, 21 prisoners were taken.
- 24 Nov 1 Para Div After the attack on height 1009 had been repelled with considerable casualties for the enemy, Castel di Sangro and hill 1009 came under heavy enemy artillery fire in the afternoon of 23 Nov (about 4000 rounds).
- 26 Nov (for 25 Nov) 1 Cdn Inf Div has occupied the heights from 1009 to 802 (SW Ateleta). Enemy artillery maintained lively harassing fire on our positions. Enemy columns with mules crossing the Sangro have been impeded by our own fire.
- 27 Nov (for 26 Nov) One company of 1 Cdn Inf Div was marched into Castel di Sangro this morning.^{39*}

(W.D., West N.S.R.; O.B.SW)

³⁹ The various references to 1 Cdn Inf Div in these reports of O.B.SW did not mean that the identity of the attacking units and unknown:

- 24 Nov Other prisoners have confirmed the commitment of 3 Cdn Inf Bde, with "B" Coy of West N.S.R. at hill 1009.
- 27 Nov Presence of 3 Cdn Inf Bde again confirmed in fighting at Castel di Sangro. (R. 22e R.)
- 30 Nov At height 831, 1 km S. Cantalupo, 3 Cdn Inf Bde confirmed.

(G.M.D.S. - (42092/6, 24, 27, 30 Nov)

110. It is not known whether the Bernhard line had been called so by mere coincidence or as a subtle challenge to the famous British General. At any rate, in the last days of November, Sir Bernard Law Montgomery proceeded to break the Adriatic hinge of the Bernhard line with his "colossal crack" across the Sangro.

111. Fossacesia and Mozzagrogna were situated in the main battle line of the Bernhard position. The sector was defended by 65 Inf Div. Its right neighbour was 9 Pz Gren Regt (26 Pz Div), relieving the rear elements of departing 16 Pz Div at 1200 hrs 29 Nov. The German story of the events of these critical days confirms the facts already known. British artillery and fighter-bombers pinned the Germans down and caused heavy casualties. Maj-Gen v. Ziehlberg (65 Inf Div) was severely wounded and replaced by the forceful and efficient Oberst Baade, who had been the Commander of the defences of the Straits of Messina. (G.M.D.S. - 42092/1, 28-30 Nov; 43005/1, 28-30 Nov; Hist Sec [Report No. 14](#), para 36).

112. The situation on the front of 65 Inf Div on 30 Nov was summarized in the War Diary of A.O.K. 10 by the following entry:

In the morning the enemy continued his attacks in order to widen the area of the break-through. Again he was assisted by heaviest commitments of artillery, waves of fighter-bombers and numerous tanks. The first attack was in the direction of Lanciano, the second one concentrically from the Southwest and Southeast of Fossacesia. In spite of the especially careful preparation of this sector, the main battle line was overrun by the enemy. As had been the case during the preceding days, our artillery was held down by the enemy Air Force. Counter attacks were impossible for the same reason...

In order to discuss counter-measures and the commitment of reserves right on the spot, the Army Commander spent the morning at H.Q. 76 Corps and

the afternoon with 65 Inf Div. O.B.SW now makes the whole 90th Panzer Grenadier Division available.

(G.M.D.S. - (G.M.D.S. - 42092/1, 30 Nov)

113. Once more General Montgomery had the enemy badly frightened. The telephone conversations of the enemy commanders portrayed the situation with a fidelity that could hardly be equalled by the polished phrases of official diarists. In the plain language of these harassed men appeared the truth as it was seen and felt at the very moment when events occurred.

28 Nov 1120 hrs:

Lemelsen to Westphal: ... Exactly like the Russians they try every time, whether they can get to a position at all or whether they are thrown out again. In this case it is a hard position. But when they are thrown out slowly or not at all it is a soft position. In this manner they are boring all the time.

Kesselring: (on same call) How was it that he could penetrate so fast?

Lemelsen: There was a heavy artillery barrage, about 6000-7000 rounds; they say it was colossal;

...

Kesselring: He always comes on the seams (boundaries).

Lemelsen: There are special detachments for the boundaries. The devil knows how he always finds out where the boundaries are.

2220 hrs, Ops Offrs A.O.K. 10 to Ops Offr O.B.SW:

Enemy Air Force has attacked in unheard of proportions.
Our losses in blood and morale are exceedingly high.
Without a counterbalance troops cannot stand up to
this

29 Nov 1415 hrs:

Lemelsen: Commitment of enemy Air Force is enormous. Baade says
that not even in Africa has he seen anything like this.

Kesselring: With Montgomery you could count on that.

2250 hrs:

Wentzell: The enemy has retaken both places and the hill at Colli.
It is simply impossible to do anything. Superiority in
the air and of his artillery directed from the air are so
great that nothing can move. It is simply impossible to
do anything, he has everything concentrated right
there ... One cannot make a counter=attack, the troops
would be wiped out.

Wentzell: Our losses are enormous.

Westphal: How bad?

Wentzell: 2 Bn 145 Regt has to be written off.

...

They could not get out of the tunnels owing to the
artillery fire, were overrun and liquidated from the rear.

...

Wentzell: It is a bad mess; without the Air Force nothing can be done here.

Westphal: It is no good. If they think at the top that it can be done without the Air Force, there would have been no need to create one.

30 Nov 1930 hrs:

Westphal: The Infantry is weak?

Lemelsen: 9 Regt has 200 men left.

Westphal: What? So weak?

...

Westphal: We cannot afford a counter-attack

Lemelsen: Unfortunately this is true. Yesterday four battalions were destroyed, three of 145 Regt and one of Battle Group Einstmann.^{40*}

Westphal: Four battalions?

⁴⁰ Battle Group Einstmann was the advance element of 90 Pz Gren Div that was approaching Pescara from Ancona, where it had been under command of 14 German Army. At the moment Battle Group Einstmann was under command of 65 Inf Div, and operated in the salient nearest to the Adriatic coast. Its main components were 361 Inf Regt (Einstmann) and 165 Field Repl Bn. (G.M.D.S. - 43005/4, Appx 56a 30 Nov)

Lemelsen: Since the prepared positions have been lost our men lie unprotected in the open air at the mercy of the enemy Air Force.

2345 hrs:

Westphal: Jodi called me on the phone with the customary spiel (Senf). You know what I mean. The Fuehrer desires that we hold at all costs and bring the reserves close up.

Lemelsen: This is really something in the face of the bomb-carpets.

...

Westphal: I just told the Army commander that Tommy can go on at this rate for another six days.

Lemelsen: How do you know this so exactly?

Westphal: I asked the Air Force. They claim that there must be a let-up after a certain time because the machines cannot take it any longer.

Wentzell: Six days!

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/5 and 6, 28, 29, 30 Nov)

ACROSS THE MORO AND TO ORTONA

114. After the crossing of the Sangro river it was important to keep the enemy moving. 78 Brit Div had prevailed against 65 German Div but needed a breathing spell. It was relieved by 1 Cdn Inf Div. The fighting on the whole

front in December was characterized by steady Allied pressure. On the Tyrrahenian flank the fighting developed into the violent battles for the Camino and the Monte Lungo, on the Adriatic salient it reached its climax in the conquest of Ortona.

115. In this last month of the year there were no fundamental changes in the tactics and structure of the German Tenth Army. Due to the approach of the winter and to the mountainous nature of the country, the Army had already become an infantry army. Of the twelve divisions under its command in the middle of December, only two were armoured. (26 Pz Div and H.G. Div; 16 Pz Div was being exchanged for 5 Mountain Div.).

116. As fighting gained in intensity, the area in which it took place became gradually smaller until in the end it narrowed down to blocks of buildings and individual houses in the town of Ortona. A closer examination of the records of this type of warfare must necessarily be carried out on a day to day basis. The enemy picture of Canadian operations in December is being presented here in this fashion. Significant items of a general nature appear with the material that deals with the events of the day in question.

117. During the course of the advance 1 Cdn Inf Div came to grips chiefly with elements of 90 Pz Gren and 1 Para Divs. It is unfortunate that the war diaries of precisely these divisions are unavailable, while for instance the well kept records of adjoining 26 Pz div contain many eye-witness accounts of junior leaders and men in the tanks. The picture of the Canadian operations, as seen by the enemy, appears most clearly from the records of 10 Army. Some information has been taken from the files of 76 Corps; the almost daily references to 1 Cdn Inf Div in the reports of O.B.SW have been extracted and appear in translated form as Appendix "N".

118. On 1 Dec 5 Brit Corps was maintaining pressure with 78 Brit, 8 Ind and 1 N.Z. Divs. 1 and 2 Cdn Inf Bdes were moving behind 78 Div and preparing to

relieve that division. On the enemy side 76 Corps was taking steps to replace 65 Inf Div with 90 Pz Gren Div. Intentions of 76 Corps were:

To hold main battle line as far as Melone. To develop a new line from Melone to Ortona. To stop enemy attacks in the area of the outposts by obstinate delaying actions. To continue preparations for the taking over of the left flank of 65 Inf Div by 90 Pz Gren Div.

The intentions of 5 Brit Corps were estimated as follows:

Continuation of the attacks in the area of Castelfrentano. Resumption of the attacks on the left wing of 65 Inf Div. The latter because Brit artillery has crossed the Sangro and wireless intelligence has overheard that the work of bringing up considerable quantities of artillery ammunition has been concluded.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/6, Appx 616, 1 Dec)

119. For some time A.O.K. 10 and O.B.SW had felt the need of an additional Corps Headquarters for the centre of the front, and a request for one had been submitted to higher authority. The German High Command recognized the proposal as being justified, but turned it down on 1 Dec with the explanation that a spare Corps Headquarters was unavailable at the moment and the creation of a new one impracticable. (G.M.D.S. - 42092/1, Dec; 42092/6, Appx 621, 1 Dec).

120. The order of O.B.SW to withdraw 65 Inf Div completely and to dispatch it to the North into the area of 14 Army, reached A.O.K. 10 at 0220 hrs, 2 Dec. 76 Corps was looking forward to the arrival of 5 Mountain Div but it had been delayed by the effects of Allied air attacks.

Westphal: Unfortunately they have bombed the railroad line again and 5 Mountain Div had to be detrained. This has happened because we have taken away our flak up there.

Lemelsen: I agree. At least the important rail centres ought to be protected.

Westphal: It happens every time. Without the Air Force it cannot be done.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/6, Appx 645, 620, 2 Dec)

121. The main event of 3 Dec was the beginning of the battle for the Monte Camino massif in the area of Fifth American Army but the actions of 5 Brit Corps were also recorded in the War Dairy A.O.K. 10:

In the sector of 90 Pz Gren Div the enemy, supported by 15 tanks, forced our forward elements in the area of Frisa to withdraw to the north bank of the Moro. Advancing along the coast and from the South, and supported by 30 tanks, against light combat outposts, the enemy succeeded temporarily in breaking into the town of S. Vito. In this area the enemy is bringing up further forces from the South.

The German forces in the S. Vito area on 3 Dec were shown on the situation maps as being 1 and 2 Bns 361 Gren Regt 1 Coy 26 Pz Recce Bn. 90 Pz Gren Div had assumed command of the whole coastal sector at 1430 hrs. (G.M.D.S. - 42092/, 3 Dec; 42092/16, 3 Dec).

122. Further west, 2 N.Z. Div was exerting pressure and hoped to break through the new German line along the lateral Ortona - Orsogna - Guardiagrele.

3 Dec 1010 hrs

Lemelsen: Strong enemy pressure on Orsogna and Melone.

Kesselring: We must hold there at all costs. The ground there is so favourable that it can be held with relatively small forces.

The danger of envelopment for the troops east of Orsogna was a matter of concern for the Germans, and the troops in the area had received orders to hold at all costs. Elements of 2 N.Z. Div had entered the eastern parts of Orsogna early in the day, but the locality was firmly held by 26 Pz Recce Bn and some attached units. The advance elements of General Freyberg's forces were forced to withdraw in a violent counter-attack by 6 Coy 26 Pz Recce Bn. It became apparent that a strong and carefully prepared attack would be necessary to dislodge the Germans. The enemy in the meantime had decided to bring 4 Regt 1 Para Div into the salient to relieve 26 Pz Recce Bn. (G.M.D.S. - 42092/6, Appx 667, 3 Dec; 43872/13, 3 Dec; 43873/19, 4 Dec).

123. On 4 Dec, 90 Pz Gren Div was forced out of S. Apollinare and decided to withdraw across the Moro in the afternoon. In anticipation of the expected attempts of 5 Brit Corps to break through the new main battle line in the Adriatic sector, 76 Corps ordered a regrouping of its forces on 4 Dec. This Corps order is being permanently retained and appears also in translated form (R.T.10). Regarding the manner in which the prospective fighting was to be conducted the order stated: "Watchword for one and all: 'Into the Ground'". Owing to the recent experience with British air and artillery bombardments the German troops were willing and anxious to dig, and what the Canadians saw from the high ridge overlooking the Moro valley was indeed a deceptively empty and innocent looking landscape. (G.M.D.S. - 43005/4, 4 Dec, R.T.10; The Canadian Army at War, From Pachino to Ortona, p. 126).

124. In the area of 5 Brit Corps the day was mainly one of preparations and reconnaissance. In the evening, however, 1 Cdn Inf Div launched three

different attacks in the salient of 90 Pz Gren Div. These attacks, the first ones in a series of bitter struggles, were reflected in the German reports for 6 Dec. In the meantime the battle for the Monte Camino massif continued in the area of the Fifth Army. A telephone conversation between two German commanders paid a compliment to the security-mindedness of British troops.

4 Dec 1035

Westphal: The enemy radio claims that whole companies of our troops are deserting.

Wentzell: He took 48 men of one company of 104 Bn, so that is about all. It is the battalion that made the counter-attack. But men from another battalion have unfortunately given full information. The British wirelessly the Interrogation reports to the rear and we intercepted them.

Westphal: Our men do that all the time.

Wentzell: Yes, it is very annoying. You can get nothing out of the British but our own men tell everything.

Westphal: They have given information about the camino sector?

Wentzell: Yes; where our reserves are, etc.

At 1305 hrs the Chief of Staff of 76 Corps telephoned to A.O.K. 10 and reported that 1 Cdn Inf Div and the Armoured Brigade had been observed in the coastal sector.^{41*} (G.M.D.S. - 42092/6, Appx 701, 5 Dec).

⁴¹ The designation of this formation had in the meantime been changed from 1st Canadian Army Tank Brigade to 1st Canadian

125. The events of 6 Dec in the sector of 90 Pz Gren Div were described in the War Diary of A.O.K. in the following words:

In the area of 90 Pz Div enemy forces up to battalion strength, and supported by tanks, attacked during the whole day along the coast. Under most difficult conditions and in dense fog it was possible to correct the situation or to seal off the points where penetrations had occurred. Villa Roatti is in the hands of the enemy. Fighting continues at the extreme left wing of the Division.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/1, 6 Dec)

126. Villa Roatti had barely been occupied when German counter-attacks began. The defence of the locality by the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry on 6 Dec has been described in Hist Sec [Report No 165](#), paras 79-87. Paras 83-86 of this report deal with the second German counter-attack of the day. The enemy intended to dislodge the Canadian troops with a combined force of armoured and infantry elements. The armoured component was 7 Coy 26 Pz Regt, the infantry came from 200 Gren Regt at Crecchio. A combat report by the commanding officer of the German armoured company appears in the appendices to the War Dairy of 26 Pz Div. In the words of the enemy it contains a graphic description of the damage the Patricias inflicted on this company of enemy elite troops. A translation of the document appears as Appendix "O". Further information about this particular attack is found in the War Diary of Headquarters 26 Pz Div, in a special "Observation":

The failure was not only caused by the excellent fire discipline of the enemy, who let our tanks approach to within 50 meters and then destroyed them, but also by the lack of cooperation of our own arms; the attack went in without artillery support.

Armoured Brigade.

127. On the same day, while Marshal Kesselring was waiting for Hitler's permission to withdraw from the untenable Monte Camino massif, General Lemelsen discussed the situation on the Adriatic front with the Commander of 76 Corps. According to the sketchy synopsis of this conversation, Lemelsen spoke of the apparent concentration of armoured forces on the coast and said that it was important that nothing should go amiss in the coastal sector. General Herr pointed out that only one company of the Tank Battalion of 90 Pz Gren Div had arrived and that, like the rest of the division, it had never been in action before. Lemelsen thought it would be good to have at least "something" to oppose an enemy who was attacking with three brigades and concentrating further forces in the area.

The discussion regarding possible reserves remained inconclusive however, and the lack of fresh reserves was further illustrated by the reappearance of decimated 65 Inf Div in the quiet sector on the right of 26 Pz Div. The records do not show whether it was a routine precaution or whether the Army Commander took a graver view of the situation; in any event during the evening of the day he sent the following order to 76 Corps:

6 Dec 1125 hrs Independently of the fighting in the present line, 76 Corps will reconnoitre and prepare rear positions in the general line:

Pretoro - mouth of Foro river, or

Pretoro - Chieti - west bank of Pescara river, or

Pretoro - M 04 (between Manopello and Casalincontrado - M 31 (NW Pallazone on Via Tiburtina) - west bank of Pescara river.

128. An entry in the War Diary of 76 Corps on 6 Dec dealt with the line-up of its formations.

Arrangements effective at 1700 hrs, 7 Dec:

1 Para Div (with 3 High Mountain Bn under command)

65 Inf Div with 4 High Mountain Bn, 4 Para Regt, 2 Bn 1 Para Regt

26 Pz Div with 2 Bn 146 Regt

90 Pz Gren Div (with Div Rifle Bn 65 and 26 Pz Recce Bn under Command)

Other documents of the same day indicate that elements of 5 Mountain Div had arrived at Tiburtina and that 14 Army was organizing and dispatching twelve battalions of fully equipped Italian construction pioneers for work on the defence positions of 10 Army. (G.M.D.S. - 42092/7, Appx 725, 726, 6 Dec; 43005/1, 6 Dec).

129. German records for 7 Dec dealt chiefly with the artillery barrage on Orsogna and the penetration between Orsogna and Poggiofiorita. The events in this area were fully described in the War Diary of 26 Pz Div; the telephone conversations of the German commanders, however, show that their main concern was for the area on the coast.

1000 hrs Runkel to Westphal (German synopsis)

The attacks of yesterday were all carried out by the Canadians.
Montgomery's goal is certainly Pescara. We hope to stop him.

1920 hrs Lemelsen to Herr (German synopsis)

The main push will be on the coast. Orsogna looks like an attempt to pin us down during the push on the coast. Commander 76 Corps should not feel tempted to move forces from coast to Orsogna sector.

2055 hrs Lemelsen to Kesselring (verbatim)

It is my opinion that the attacks in the area Orsogna - Poggiofiorita are unimportant. He wants Orsogna for reasons of prestige but the centre of gravity remains on the coast.

2145 hrs Runkel - Westphal (verbatim)

Runkel: The New Zealanders have already attacked again at Orsogna.

Westphal: Lemelsen says that everything up there is all right and that he is not worried.

Runkel: Well, we threw him out and now he is in again. We are counter-attacking and the fight goes back and forth. The New Zealanders are pretty tough.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/7, Appx 740, 7 Dec)

130. 26 Pz Div had never felt the pressure on Orsogna to be an undertaking of secondary importance, and the commander of 76 Corps now shared this opinion. By the evening the new conception had been passed along and Lemelsen reported to O.B.SW:

2215 hrs Quite a bit of action at 76 Corps. Apparently the centre of gravity is not merely on the coast but extends as far down as Orsogna and Melone.^{42*}

131. Regarding the advance of the Canadians along the coast, 76 Corps reported that an advance of two enemy groups along the coastal road had led to a penetration of the German main defence line. About the fighting at Roatti it was reported that it had been impossible to correct the situation, but that the penetration had been sealed off. (G.M.D.S. - 43005/1, 8 Dec).

132. On the western part of the front the battle for Mignano continued on 9 Dec with undiminished fury. In the Adriatic sector 1 Cdn Inf Bde waged a bitter and successful fight for the bridgehead of S. Leonardo. In the War Diary of 76 Corps the engagements in the coastal sector were shown as follows:

On the left wing of 90 Pz Gren Div the enemy broke through on the coastal road and at S. Leonardo after heavy shelling. Leonardo was retaken in the afternoon by heaviest commitment (8 of our tanks were put out of action) but the place was lost again at 1630 hrs. Hill 84 which had been retaken in the morning had to be ceded again under heavy pressure.

The telephone conversations of the day reveal the first signs of concern for Ortona:

1110 hrs Wentzell: ... Up there he attacks on the whole front from the coast to S. Leonardo. Everything is being taken up there. 2 Bn 3 Para Regt goes to Ortona.

⁴² For key to map code from 9 - 18 Dec see Appendix "B", para 10.

Kesselring: To Ortona?

Wentzell: Yes, so that he will be prevented from getting there at all costs.

(G.M.D.S. - 43005/1, 9 Dec; 42092/7, Appx 776, 9 Dec)

133. A new schematic order of battle of 10 Army was issued on 9 Dec. This document appears in photostatic form as Appendix "P". On the same day a report was prepared showing the strength of the Army on 1 Dec. The principal figures of the report indicate that 15 Army Group in December was opposed by ground forces of more than 140,000 men.

	<u>Officers</u>	<u>N.C.Os</u>	<u>O.Rs</u>	
<u>Total</u>				
Army	4,024	18,520	89,485	112,029
Air Force Ground				
Combat Troops	754	4,902	21,250	26,806
S.S. Combat Troops	23	130	810	963
Auxiliary Volunteers			1,836	1,836
<hr/>				
TOTAL	4,801	23,452	113,381	141,634
<hr/>				

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/7, Appx 779 a, b, c, 9 Dec;
Appx 778, 9 Dec dated 10 Dec)

134. The attempts of the Canadian brigades on 10 Dec to advance from the bridgeheads met with determined resistance. As the war diaries of 90 Pz Gren Div have not been found, the information from enemy sources remains limited; the condensed presentation in the diary of 76 Corps seems to contain most of the information available:

10 Dec Advancing from point 84, the enemy attacked S. Donato in the late hours of last evening and occupied the locality. Our own counter-attack in the early morning hours, on both sides of point 115, 1 km west of S. Leonardo, was rendered ineffective by heavy enemy shelling. Shortly before noon, supported by tanks and using smoke, the enemy attacked from Leonardo in a northwesterly direction and on Torre. He was stopped west of Torre. Torre was occupied by the enemy with two companies and about ten tanks. In the afternoon the enemy continued his attacks from Leonardo to the Northwest and from Torre to the West. These attacks were halted by concentrated fire from all weapons. Five enemy tanks were hit. At 1500 hrs an enemy attack with tanks, on both sides of hill 84, was repelled in a counter-attack. During the course of a renewed attack on hill 84, six enemy tanks succeeded in breaking through but four of them were destroyed.

Enemy: A continuation of the attacks must be expected.

Intentions: To hold present positions and to carry out an attack with the limited objective of disturbing the enemy preparations at S. Leonardo.

(G.M.D.S. - 43005/1, 10 Dec)

135. The telephone conversations of the day provide some additional information:

10 Dec 1135 hrs Wentzell: Just a moment ago I talked to Claer.^{43*}
Altenstadt is at the front; we have no clear picture of 361 Gren Reg. On the coast the pressure seems to be increasing. At S. Leonardo there are terrific shelling and no success was obtained.

Westphal: Oh yes! The counter-attack failed?

Wentzell: I think they gave up as there was no hope of succeeding.

Westphal: The Field Marshal has given orders to draw as many reserves as possible into this area.

Wentzell: The Engineer battalion of 90 Pz Gren Div has now been taken to Ortona.

136. During the course of the next ten days the Canadian forces were held up in their advance to Ortona by the desperate resistance of German troops operating in terrain overwhelmingly favourable to the defender. On 11 Dec the sector nearest to the coast was held by 1 Bn 200 Gren Regt. 1 Coy of the battalion was in the Berardi area. During the day it had become clear that an advance to Tollo could not be accomplished without hard fighting. The Germans considered the day as a defensive success.

⁴³ Major v. Claer was Ops Offr 76 Corps. C. of S. 76 Corps was ill; his substitute was Colonel Hans George Schmidt v. Altenstadt, previously C. of S. 51 Mountain Corps. (G.M.D.S. - 42092/7, Appx 755, 8 Dec)

By 1400 hrs an enemy penetration 2 km north of Leonardo was cleared up after three attacks by 1 Coy 200 Gren Regt in hard fighting. A counter-attack at 1600 hrs reached point 115 and gained some ground to the South of it. The main defence line was again firmly in our hands.

At Headquarters 76 Corps, however, it was felt that more could have been achieved, that the reserves of 90 Pz Gren Div had been committed too late in the day, and that they had been half-hearted. Many previous telephone conversations had already shown doubts regarding the abilities of the senior officers of reconstituted 90 Pz Gren Div, especially Einstmann, 361 Gren Regt. Later in the evening of the same day the commander of 3 Para Regt was placed in charge of all operations in the immediate coastal sector; a few days later Lt-Gen Lungershausen was replaced as commander of 90 Pz Gren Div by Colonel Baade. (G.M.D.S. - 42092//8, appx 804, 11 Dec, Appx 832, 12 Dec).

137. Somewhat in the style of the gaudy situation maps of the Italians, the Intelligence section of 76 Corps on 11 Dec produced a beautifully coloured situation map of the Allied forces on its front. Casting much credit on the security-mindedness of the Canadians who had been taken prisoner, but less on the operational Intelligence of the Germans, 3 Cdn Inf Bde was still shown as being in the area of Castel di Sangro. (In the evening of the same day West N.S.R. of that brigade attacked in the Berardi area; the other two battalions were in the immediate neighbourhood.) (G.M.D.S. - 42092/4, 11 Dec).

138. 12 Dec was a comparatively quiet day. 1 Cdn Inf Div was making preparations for the resumption of the advance: German 76 Corps was moving units of 3 Para Regt into the front line. 3 Bn 3 Para left on 13 Dec was shown to be in the Berardi area, 2 Bn on its left; 1 Bn 200 Gren Regt (less 1 Coy) still in the immediate coastal salient. (G.M.D.S. - 42092/16, sit maps, 12, 13 Dec).

139. On the following day the area of 90 Pz Gren Div was the only active sector on the Italian front. Although its fighting strength had been badly depleted by casualties, in the evening of the day West N.S.R. made another attempt to force the gully in the Berardi area. Constant heavy machine gun fire from the enemy positions presented the unit from attaining its objective. An advance of Hast & P.E.I. Regt along the coast was also stopped. The German troops engaged in these operations appear on the German situation maps with the significant designations: "Remnants 1 Bn 200 Gren Regt"; "Remnants 361 Gren Regt"; "2 Bn 3 Para Regt". (G.M.D.S. - 42092/16, sit maps, 13, 14 Dec).

140. Departing from its usual procedure, the daily report of A.O.K.

10 mentioned several units below regimental level:

13 Dec The enemy continued his attacks during the whole day. On the left flank they were repulsed by 2 Bn 3 Para Regt with heavy losses to the enemy. To restore the old line and to close the gap between 1 Bn 200 Gren Regt and 190 Eng Bn (90 Pz Gren Div), reinforced 2 Bn 3 Para Regt was committed from the North. The attack encountered strong enemy forces, which were thrown back. At the moment, the battalion is again in possession of point 115. ...

141. A postscript to the daily report of A.O.K. 10 indicated that 1 Bn 3 Para Regt was now also moving to the coast. War Dairy 76 Corps dealt with the condition of 90 Pz Gren Div:

A great fighting value can no longer be ascribed to 90 Pz Gren Div. The units have become badly mixed and the troops are exhausted. The fighting value of at least two battalions have been used up. The present positions can only be held by bringing in new battalions, which makes it necessary to bring new units into the old sector of 1 Para Div.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/8, Appx 857b, 13 Dec; 43005/1, 13 Dec)

142. On 13 Dec C. of S. 76 Corps still believed that with the arrival of 1 Para Div it would be possible to undertake an advance in a southerly direction via Casa Berardi. 1 Para Div had been in a quiet sector and had been freshened up. During a telephone conversation on this day General Lemelsen stated:

1130 hrs (Lemelsen - Herr)

The fighting strength of the paratroops is not as bad as it is always made out to be; it has been increased by the arrival of young reinforcements and can be considered as normal.^{44*}

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/8, Appx 860, 13 Dec)

143. Casa Berardi was finally taken by the Royal 22e Regiment on 14 Dec. Detailed accounts of the bravery and the sacrifices of the battalion have been laid down in many official accounts. To the Germans the Canadian breakthrough in the Berardi area was a severe blow. The day's fighting was reflected in the enemy diaries by unusually long and detailed remarks.

War Diary A.O.K. 10, 14 Dec:

This day was characterized as a day of major action by the embittered fighting in the Ortona area. By sacrificing the last resources it was possible to deny the enemy a further exploitation of his initial success.

⁴⁴ On 9 Dec 1 Para Div reported a total strength of 11,864 all ranks, (including 19.7% on leave). (G.M.D.S. - 42092/8, Appx 836, 12 Dec)

It must be said however, that bad weather deprived the enemy of his customary air support.

...

In the area of 90 Pz Gren Div, supported by tanks and heavily increased artillery fire the enemy continued his attacks. It was possible to stem the attacks on the left and right wings of the division, but after an artillery barrage of over six hours' duration the enemy succeeded in breaking through at point 155. The tanks which had broken through were stooped south of S. Elna.

A concentric attack on the enemy who had broken through was carried out by the following units:

From the South: Group Behr with 2 Bn 200 Regt and another detachment that had been raked up;

Adjoining Behr Group Brand with parts of 93 Eng Bn (26 Pz Div),
in the North: 9 Heavy Tank Company with other elements picked up in the area and 35 tanks from the North, Group Heilmann with 2 Bn 1 Para Regt, 2 companies 3 Eng Bn (3 Pz Gren Div) 15 Tanks and some assault guns;

To seal off the Group Ziegler with remnants of 361 Gren Regt, mass of
area west of the Anti-Aircraft artillery and some tanks.
penetration:

Moving towards the area of the penetration are 1 Bn 3 Para Regt and the Regiment Liebach (Army Group Reserve).

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/8, 14 Dec)

144. The implications of the Canadian breakthrough were fully realized by the enemy.

War Diary 76 Corps (14 Dec):

Enemy will bring up further forces and tanks and, in the exploitation of today's success, presumably will take Ortona.

The prolonged telephone conversations of the day showed that the Germans were scraping bottom with regard to quick reserves and that 90 Pz Gren Div was roundly blamed for the reverse.

1125 hrs Wentzell - v. Altenstadt

The situation is very tense. Either today or tomorrow it will lead to serious developments. Either the Corps receives something tangible (in the form of reserves) or it will have to adopt another method of fighting.

1210 hrs Wentzell - v. Altenstadt

Wentzell: I will endeavour to get the Army Group Reserve to the coast (Regt Liebach).

1230 hrs Wentzell - v. Altenstadt

The news has just been received that down here the last brigade of the Canadians has been taken away and the worn out 78th Division is moving in.^{45*} This

⁴⁵ While this conversation was being held, 3 Cdn Inf Bde was indeed not in the area of Castel di Sangro but was busy

seems to prove that there are no other forces behind the Canadians up there. Intention of the Canadians will be to take Ortona. They could not get through on the coast and now are trying further along the main road to Orsogna. When they have crossed it they will wheel around and press on towards Ortona. The Corps is trying to prevent this with the last available forces. New decisions cannot be made in this situation, one must try to throw in everything to prevent the Canadians from succeeding.

1625 hrs, Lemelsen - Herr

Herr: Heilmann (Commander 3 Para Regt) thinks that even now one ought to change tactics and withdraw to the mountains. If reserves arrive tomorrow it will be possible to hold, otherwise only a delaying action is possible.

Lemelsen: The Field Marshal will be asked for a decision; he has nothing left to throw in either.

1920 hrs, Lemelsen - Herr

It was a serious decision to make Liebach (Army Group Reserve) available.

2230 hrs, Wentzell - v. Altenstadt (from German Synopsis)

throwing the Germans out of Casa Berardi.

C. of S. 10 Army tells C. of S. 76 Corps after conversations with O.B.SW that everything has to be thrown in and that the Corps is held responsible for the sealing-off of the enemy penetration. C. of S. 76 Corps states that the best and most efficient commanders have been sent to the front and that all that can be done is being done.

1240 hrs, Kesselring - Lemelsen

Kesselring: For two months now I have not been able to exercise proper command because everything evaporates between my fingers and runs down like water from the mountains.

...

Lemelsen: This whole thing must be blamed on the complete failure of 90 Pz Gren Div.

Kesselring: It is that outfit's own fault.

Lemelsen: Wherever Heidrich is, everything goes all right. ... The enemy advancing along the coast was flatly thrown back by Heidrich; others let themselves simply be overrun.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/8, Appx 878, Tel Cons 14 Dec, 26 pages)

145. Fighting in the coastal sector continued on 15 Dec, but the troops on both sides were thoroughly exhausted and no major action developed. With

Colonel Baade, the ace trouble-shooter of 10 Army, in command of 90 Pz Div, 76 Corps had hopes again that further Canadian advances could be stemmed, particularly as the lack of immediate exploitation of the breakthrough seemed to prove that no other formations were behind the Canadians. The following signal was sent to 90 Pz Gren Div:

Everything now depends on the incipient defensive success being realized by combined operations of all available infantry, artillery and armour. For this purpose all units in the area are herewith placed under command of 90 Pz Gren Div:

On the same day O.B.SW ordered the immediate dispatch of Pz Recce Bn Hermann Goering to Chieti as Army Reserve. (G.M.D.S. - 43005/1, 15 Dec; 42092/8, Appx 908, 15 Dec).

146. During the night 15/16 Dec, the 6th American Corps had taken Monte Lungo, thus forcing a German withdrawal from the main Bernhard positions and casting ahead the shadow of future attacks on Monte Cassino. In the early afternoon the Commander of German 14 Corps requested and obtained permission for withdrawals in the area of the breakthrough. Only an hour later, the commander of 76 Corps reported the necessity of withdrawals in the coastal sector. At 1915 hrs he received the consent of A.O.K. 10:

- 1) Authority is herewith granted to 76 Corps to fight a delaying action to the reconnoitred position Pretoro - Villamagna.
- 2) It will be the task of the Corps to conduct the fighting in such a manner that the enemy will be able to gain new ground only at the cost of hard fighting. The intention to withdraw must be concealed in order to prevent him from following quickly over ground cheaply gained. This movement could only be called successful if the casualties inflicted on the enemy were so great that he would be

unable to attack the new defence line for some time and that not without bringing up fresh forces. ...

While the Canadian brigades were organizing the attack on the crucial cross-roads northeast of Casa Berardi, the left wing of 5 Brit Corps increased pressure along the Ortona - Orsogna lateral and obtained possession of point 198. According to German reports the artillery barrage on their positions was a shoot of 12,000 rounds. The advance battalion of Army Group Reserve Liebach was caught in the fire and lost 50% of its effective on its first day in action.^{46*} (G.M.D.S. - 42092/1, 16 Dec; 420/8, Appx 924, 16 Dec).

147. On 17 Dec the centre of 5 Brit Corps continued its gradual advance and forced the Germans to abandon the Consalvi fraction of the Bernhard line. 1 Cdn Inf Div carried out some exploratory attacks and reported a noticeable thinning out of the German lines. A lengthy appreciation of the situation by 76 Corps was received at A.O.K. 10 on the same day. 76 Corps found a certain amount of satisfaction in the fact that the British advance had been slowed down after the crossing of the Sangro. High praise was given to the efforts of 1 Para Div; of 65 Inf and 90 Pz Gren Divs it said that due to lack of battle experience they were unable to cope with the extremely difficult situations. After the usual remarks about the superiority in material of the Allied forces the report went on to state:

The troops from the Dominions - used to life in the open - showed particular aptitude for attacks during the night and in fog.

⁴⁶ Appendices to the War Diary of 26 Pz Div contain many combat reports submitted by company commanders of 26 Pz Regt regarding the fighting with elements of 8 Ind and 2 N.Z. Divs. Apparently as early as 1943, the Germans experienced a shortage of competent field officers. The reports at times are quite critical of the disastrous orders that were given to experienced armoured troops by senior officers of 90 Pz Gren Div who had o comprehension of the tactics of tank warfare. (G.M.D.S. - 43873/19, Appx 14-24).

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/8, appx 943a, 17 Dec)

148. A conference between Marshal Kesselring, General Lemelsen and the Corps Commander was held on 17 Dec at Headquarters 76 Corps. General Lemelsen advocated an attack on the left flank of the Eighth Army, east of the Maiella massif. The temporary attachment of 29 Pz Gren Div for this purpose was suggested. Marshal Kesselring however, pointed out that the division was needed in the rome area.^{47**} (G.M.D.S. - 42092/8, Appx 943b, 17 Dec).

149. Lemelsen seems to have been convinced that it would be possible to destroy the elements of the Eighth Army that were north of the Sangro. On 21 Dec he confirmed his verbal statements in a letter to O.B.SW.

In accordance with the repeatedly expressed desire of 10 Army to change over to offensive warfare as soon as possible, I believe that the time has come for the thorough annihilation of Brit Eighth Army. ...

A translation of this letter appears as Appendix "Q". In the same sealed folder of "Top Secret Command Matters" (Chefsachen) that contained Lemelsen's letter, there appeared also a holograph by Commander 76 Corps, dated 20 Dec. In this letter General Herr pointed out that he held the moment opportune for an encirclement of the highly concentrated forces of the Eighth Army. A translation of a typed copy of this letter appears as Appendix "R". (G.M.D.S. - 42092/18, Chefsachen, 21 Dec (Lemelsen's letter); (G.M.D.S. - 42092/18, Chefsachen, 20 Dec (Herr's letter); (G.M.D.S. - 43005/1, Appx 72, 26 Dec (typed copy of Herr's letter); G.M.D.S. - 43005/1, 26 Dec, 42092/1, 29 Dec)

150. No documents have hitherto been found that would shed light on Kesselring's conception of the contemplated offensive. That he gave it

⁴⁷ A map with changed reference points was taken into use on 19 Dec. (See Appendix "B", para 11)

serious consideration must be concluded from an entry in the War Diary of the Armed Forces Operations Staff (Wehrmachtsfuehrungsstab) on 27 Dec for 23 Dec:

O.B.SW advised by teletype that he intended to carry out an offensive with concentrated forces and limited objective against Eighth Army. He asked for an examination of the Air Force and supply problems of such an undertaking. ... O.B.SW is now being informed that the Fuehrer has given the order to desist from the planned offensive in view of the inability of the Air Force to meet requirements and of the fact that certain formations in this theatre are slated for transfer to O.B. West and therefore to be relieved.

(G.M.D.S. - War Diary of Armd Forces Ops Staff
(W.F.St), Vol 1 Sep - 31 Dec 43 (Uncatalogued at time
of writing))

151. Most units of 1 Para Div had now been moved into the Ortona sector; the few units that remained on the right wing of 76 Corps were formed into Battle Group Schulenburg. Divisional Headquarters had been established at Miglianico, (three and a half miles from the coast between the rivers Foro and Dentelo). Command of the coastal sector was taken over by H.Q. 1 Para Div on 19 Dec. The area of the division was bounded on the left by the Adriatic sea and on the right by a line from Point 155 to Villamagna and from there to Tollo.

152. On 18 Dec a very heavy artillery shoot preceded and accompanied the attempt of 48 Highrs and R.C.R. to capture the cross-roads northeast of Casa Berardi, but the fruits of the very costly Canadian attack were only garnered on the next day when the paratroopers withdrew in the face of renewed pressure. The defensive success of 18 Dec was amply mentioned in German reports and telephone conversations, but the withdrawal from the important

cross-roads was not specifically mentioned in the German reports of 19 Dec. The daily report of 1 para Div for 19 Dec read:

During the morning several enemy raids on the lines of the division were repulsed. After heaviest artillery preparation the enemy in strength of two companies attacked three times during the afternoon in the direction of Ortona from S. Donato and in the direction of Point 115 from S. Leonardo. The enemy was stopped in front of our lines. Enemy assembly positions near point 137 were broken up by concentrated fire from our artillery. Heavy enemy artillery fire, especially on Villa Grande, Villa S. Tommaso and west of the crossroads at Casa Berardi.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/1; 42092/8; 42092/8, Appx 979;
43005/1, 18, 19 Dec)

ORTONA (21 - 28 DEC)

153. If, as the records show, the Germans in their arrogance and conceit believed that the allied troops were superior in materiel but inferior in boldness and audacity, Ortona must have been a rude awakening and an evil omen for the enemy. In the hope that the port might be rendered serviceable within a short span of time, the Eighth Army had desisted from a reduction by bombardment. In one week of merciless fighting, reinforced 2 Cdn Inf Bde matched its strength and courage, its morale and training with that of the enemy and emerged the victor.

154. On 21 Dec, L. Edmn R. advanced from the outskirts of the town into the town proper as far as Piazza Vittorio. During this day 1 Para Div failed to keep 76 Corps fully informed; the daily report stated merely that an enemy attack southwest of Ortona had been repulsed. At the German High Command the silence was taken as a sign of bad news and it was believed that Ortona had been lost. 21 Dec 1205 hrs:

Westphal: The High command called me on the phone. Everybody was very sad about Ortona.

Wentzell: Why, Ortona is still in our hands.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/1, 21 Dec; 42092/8, Appx 1026, 21 Dec)

155. The events of 22 Dec in the Ortona salient appeared in the daily report of A.O.K. 10 as follows:

Enemy attacks in the morning on Villa Grande and the ground east and west of it were repulsed. Two attacks in the morning from the South towards Ortona were followed in the afternoon by three fresh attacks, which continued into the evening. In the end the enemy had two regiments committed.^{48*} In hard house to house fighting all enemy attacks collapsed in the fire of our own weapons... . Enemy attacks were supported by heavy fighter-bomber and artillery fire on the main defence line of the Division... . 3 Bn 1 Para Regt will reach the area near the mouth of the Foro river by noon 23 Dec.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/8, Appx 1045, 22 Dec)

156. Although the Edmontons were fighting in the streets of Ortona on 22 Dec and the report of 1 Para Div spoke of hard house to house fighting, the War Diary of A.O.K. 10 shows the surprising entry:

⁴⁸ The designation of both Canadian units in Ortona contained the word "Regiment". In the sense of Army organization however, they were battalions. The German report, speaking of two regiments, was either based on misinformation or calculated to create the impression that the paratroops had been attacked by two brigades.

Contrary to the reports of the opponents the enemy is still outside Ortona (vor Ortona).

Headquarters 10 German Army were evidently under the impression that the situation at Ortona had been stabilized; the Army Commander sent a special message of commendation to 1 Para Div; an entry in the War Dairy A.O.K. 10 read:

The telephone conversations of the day reflect the confidence which is felt at Army Headquarters regarding the developments on the left wing.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/1, 22 Dec' 42092/8, Appx 1048, 22 Dec)

157. The situation map of A.O.K. 10 for 23 Dec shows the following locations for the units of 1 Para Div in the sector:

2 Bn 3 Regt at Ortona

2 Bn 3 Regt S.E. of S. Nicola

1 Bn 3 Regt at Villa Grande

2 Bn 1 Regt at S. Tommaso

1 Bn 4 Regt at S.E. Tollo

2 Bn 4 Regt at Torre Mucchia

3 Bn 1 Regt at mouth of Foro river

H.Q. 1 Para Div at Miglianico

H.Q. 3 Para Regt between S. Tommaso and Torre Mucchia

On 24 Dec, 2 Bn 4 Regt and 3 Bn 1 Regt were shown as moving to Ortona; on the next day all battalions in the salient were shown as being at the front. The divisional reserve consisted of a mere company of 1 Bn 4 Regt, at Tollo. With the exception of vehicles on the coast road there were no other German troops

between Ortona and Pescara. The situation map of 27 Dec shows the threatening encirclement of Ortona as a result of the drive of 1 Cdn Inf Bde on S. Nicola and S. Tommaso. The enemy units that had been forced back by these attacks were: 3 Bn 3 Regt, 2 Bn 1 Regt and 3 Bn 4 Regt. At Ortona on 27 Dec were 2 Bn 4 Regt and 2 Bn 3 Regt. The latter unit had borne the brunt of the fighting for the town. (G.M.D.S. - 42092/17, 23-27 Dec)

158. German optimism regarding the situation at Ortona began to vanish with the belated admission on 23 Dec that the town had been penetrated. War Diary A.O.K. 10:

On the left wing of 1 Para Div the enemy has been attacking Ortona since morning with two battalions, supported by flame throwers and 17 tanks which are being used as artillery. Owing to the number of our own casualties, the more remote and southernmost positions had to be abandoned after exceedingly hard fighting.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/1, 23 Dec)

159. While the fighting was raging at Ortona, there was a lull in the operations on the other sectors of the front. A decision of wider interest was taken however on 23 Dec, when Hitler terminated protracted discussions concerning the fate of the monastery of Cassino by ordering its inclusion in the main defence line.

A.O.K. 10 to 14 Corps, 23 Dec, 1220 hrs:

On orders received from the Fuehrer, Monte Cassino is to be included in the defence line and to be fortified like other parts of the "Fuehrer-Riegel" position.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/1, 23 Dec; 42092/9, Appx 1066, 23 Dec)

160. The engagements of 24 Dec were reported as follows:

1 Para Div: In the middle of the divisional front the enemy, supported by 6 tanks, attacked the left wing of 3 Bn 3 Regt at about 0800 hrs and achieved a penetration after inflicting numerous casualties on our own troops. During the day the enemy infiltrated our main defence line over a width of about 500 metres and to a depth of about 200 metres. Counter-attack of 3 Bn 3 Regt remained ineffective. Enemy occupied the heights on both sides of S. Nicola. In hard house to house fighting enemy advanced to the centre of Ortona. Heavy fighting continues. Two enemy attacks on Villa Grande have been repulsed.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/9, Appx 1079, 24 Dec)

161. Early on the morning of 25 Dec Lemelsen and Kesselring discussed the situation at Ortona over the telephone:

Lemelsen: ... 12 heavy mortars have now become available up there, and the artillery is being regrouped.

Kesselring: The mistake was that 2 Bn 4 Regt was kept too far back. It is clear that we do not want to defence Ortona decisively but the English have made it appear as important as Rome.

Lemelsen: It costs so much blood that it cannot be justified.

Kesselring: No, but then you can do nothing when things develop in this manner; it is only too bad that Montgomery was right for once and the world press makes so much of. ...

162. Of the fighting in Ortona on Christmas day the Germans reported:

In Ortona the enemy attacked all day long with about one brigade supported by 10 tanks. In very hard house to house fighting and at the cost of heavy casualties to his own troops, the enemy advanced to the market square in the southwestern part of the town. The battle there is especially violent. Our troops are using flame-throwers, hand grenades and the new bazookas (Ofenrohre).

With regard to the somewhat confused fighting in the western part of the salient the Germans mentioned that a counter-attack of 3 Bn 1 Regt had regained the height 1 km east of S. Nicola. (G.M.D.S. - 42092/9, Appx 1097, 1098, 25 Dec)

163. Although the German High Command had refused to sanction the organization of a third Corps Headquarters on the Italian front, A.O.K. 10 had found it necessary to create something of a similar nature. At 1800 hrs, 25 Dec, "Corps Group Hauck" assumed command of the central sector of the long Italian front. On the same day Army Headquarters advised 76 Corps of the pending arrival of an "East" battalion of 162 Inf Div (Ture) for construction work in the Foro defence line.^{49*} The degree of urgency and importance ascribed to this work may be gauged by the fact that the rail movement of this battalion was given priority over the frontward movements of 334 Inf Div. (G.M.D.S. - 42092/9, Appx 1103, 1104, 25 Dec)

164. On 26 Dec, fighting in the whole salient raged back and forth. According to the daily report of 76 Corps:

⁴⁹ Turcomans from Turkestan and the Caucasus, with German cadres.

all reserves available on the left wing of the Corps had been committed.

In the afternoon 48 Highrs succeeded in widening the bulge from S. Tommaso in a northeasterly direction. Of the support received from the Canadian armoured forces the War Diary of 48 Highrs said: "This was the most effective use of tanks this unit has made". The report of 1 Para Div acknowledged the advance in the following words:

In the centre of the divisional front the enemy attacked at about 1530 hrs with one reinforced battalion supported by 16 tanks in the direction of Point 100 (1 km N.E. Villa S. Tommaso) and succeeded in advancing to this point.

(W.D., 48 Highrs, 26 Dec; G.M.D.S. - 42092/9,
Appx 1117, 26 Dec)

165. The last day of large-scale fighting in the Ortona salient was 27 Dec. With Canadian pressure continuing undiminished, 76 Corps realized that further fighting in the face of the complete lack of quick reserves would bring about the destruction of 1 Para Div in a situation already beyond remedy. Lt-Gen Heidrich, commander 1 Para Div, had left for Germany on 26 Dec to take some leave. On the occasion of later interrogation by allied Intelligence officers, Heidrich said that at the time he believed the situation to have been more or less stabilized. In the absence of any records of 1 Para Div it cannot be ascertained whether or not the division reported its situation as hopeless. Their orders had been "to hold Ortona". The general tone of the telephone conversations between 76 Corps and 10 Army seems to indicate however that an earlier withdrawal would have been understood. In any event, on the morning after the departure of Heidrich, General Herr requested authority to withdraw from Ortona.

27 Dec, 1100 hrs, (German synopsis):

Ops Offr 76 Corps: As the units are gradually wasting away and fighting strength is being reduced, General Herr feels that he must make the decision to take the line back to Torre Mucchia - west of Villa S. Tommaso - west of Villa Grande - Casa Vezzani, (as discussed last night) (sic).

Wentzell: (After consultation with Lemelsen)

Army Commander gives consent to immediate beginning of preparations for withdrawal. The movement may be carried out during the night.

(Special Interrogation Report, General Heidrich, Hist Sec C.M.H.Q., 13 Nov 46 G.M.D.S. - 42092/9, 27 Dec 43).

166. On 27 Dec the commanding heights of the Maiella massif were taken from 5 Mtn Div by Moroccan troops. This ended all German speculation regarding the possibility of a flank attack on the Eighth Army. In the evening 76 Corps received orders to disengage all units of the Army Group Reserve Liebach and to arrange for their transfer to XI Corps near Rome. Furthermore, Pz Recce Bn Hermann Goering was to be withdrawn from its position on the right wing of

1 Para Div and to be reunited with the mass of the Division.^{50*} (G.M.D.S. - 42092/9, Appx 1139, 27 Dec; O.B.S.W, 28 Dec)

167. Early on 28 Dec Canadian patrols established the fact that the enemy had withdrawn during the night. The events of the day, as seen by the enemy, were most clearly described in the War Diary of 76 Corps:

The withdrawal movements of 1 Para Div during the course of last night were not disturbed by the enemy. In the early hours of the morning extremely heavy artillery fire on road Villa Grande - Tollo. Immediately thereafter enemy felt his way forward and reached the destroyed bridge over the Arielli at 0900 hrs. Enemy infantry in strength of about two companies is digging in at that place. An enemy attack in strength of about two companies at 1500 hrs on the outposts of 3 Bn 3 Regt at S. Nicola was stopped. Our own artillery and mortars delivered three sudden concentrations of fire on Ortona. On the left wing of the divisional front the enemy advanced to point 60 and is digging in at that point.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/1, 28 Dec)

168. 3 Cdn Inf Bde was now taken into the front line again. On 29 Dec it was charged with the exploitation of the gains that had been made by 1 and 2 Bdes in the preceding days. The Carleton and Yorks were pressing forward along the

⁵⁰ Telephone conversation Kesselring - Lemelsen, 23 Dec:

Kesselring: I received a terrific blast from the Reichmarschall today. He said that I had no understanding for his division and demands that it be committed as a compact force and not piecemeal with the Recce people at one coast and the infantry at the other.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/9, Appx 1065, 23 Dec)

coast road towards Point 59 (Torre Mucchia). The area of Point 60 (Punta di Ferracio) was taken, but the attack came to halt when it reached the enemy main line near Point 59. The German battalion there was 1 Bn 1 Regt, the unit had been transferred from the right wing of 76 Corps to the coast during the night 27/28 Dec.^{51*} The vigour of the attempted exploitation was strongly emphasized in the daily report of 1 Para Div.

After two embittered enemy attacks along the coast road on our combat outposts at Point 60, our own forces withdrew to the main defence line after embittered fighting.

(G.M.D.S. - 43005/1, 29 Dec; 42092/9, Appx 1172,
29 Dec)

169. After several days of severe winter weather that made operations virtually impossible, Point 59 (Torre Mucchia) was finally taken by Carlt & York R. on 4 Jan 44. It was the last engagement of consequence in this phase of the campaign and was reflected in the War Diary of A.O.K. 10 by the following entry:

After heavy artillery preparation, which lasted for 30 minutes, the enemy attacked in a surprise raid along the coastal road in battalion strength at 1530 hrs and under cover of smoke succeeded in capturing the coastal tower and the slope of the hill to the northeast of Torre Mucchia. The enemy penetration was sealed off by 1 Bn 1 Para Regt. The number of casualties was high. A counter-attack by 2 Bn 1 Para Regt with the purpose of recapturing the old main battle line had no success.

⁵¹ Battle Group Schulenburg was relieved by 577 Regt. - 1 Bn 1 Para Regt has reached its divisional sector. (O.B.SW, 28 Dec)

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/19, 4 Jan 44; 42092/20, Appx 78a,
4 Jan 44)

170. On 29 Dec 43 General v. Vietinghoff had resumed command of 10 Army. On the same day a definite statement regarding the losses suffered by 1 Para Div during the fighting in the Ortona salient was made in a telephone conversation:

0835 hrs (Wentzell - Klinkowstroem)^{52*}

All the battalions of Heidrich have now a strength of merely one company
27 Dec)
28 Dec (20-150 men). The necessary steps to obtain reinforcements will be

taken.

The daily casualty reports of 76 Corps to A.O.K. 10 show the casualties that were reported by 1 Para Div during the period of the fighting for Ortona:

Date	Dead			Wounded			Missing			Sick		
	a	b	c	a	b	c	a	b	c	a	b	c
20 Dec	-	-	4	-	-	16	-	-	-	-	-	-
21 Dec	-	2	3	-	6	8	-	7	14	-	-	2
22 Dec	-	-	4	-	-	2	1	2	9	-	-	-
23 Dec	-	-	14	-	7	21	1	7	25	-	1	3
24 Dec	-	1	8	-	2	13	-	3	21	-	1	4
25 Dec	-	-	7	-	-	3	-	6	25	-	-	1
26 Dec)	-											
		2	13	2	7	70	1	4	58	-	1	8
	-											
		-	10	1	-	1	1	2	18	-	1	2

⁵² Colonel Count v. Klinkowstroem (G.S.C.) had relieved Colonel Schmidt v. Altenstadt as C of S. 76 Corps on 21 Dec. (G.M.D.S. - 42092/8, 20, 21 Dec 43)

9 days'												
Total	-	5	63	3	22	134	4	31	170	-	3	20
All												
Ranks	68		159			205			23			
TOTAL 455												

The available documents contain no evidence that would make it possible to reconcile these figures with the authoritative statement made by Wentzell. Since the Canadians in Ortona found the unburied bodies of about 100 paratroopers, it is certain however that many of those listed as "missing" were actually killed. (G.M.D.S. - 42092/1, 29 Dec' 42092/9, Appx 1175, 29 Dec, 42092/9, 20-28 Dec).

171. During the last days of the year, fighting ebbed away in the few sectors of the front that were still active. Increasingly severe winter conditions, the exhaustion of the fighting troops and the lack of fresh reserve formations on both sides resulted in a stalemate that was only broken when the Allies landed at Anzio.

172. This report has been prepared by Capt A.G. Steiger, Historical Section (G.S.).

(C.P. Stacey) Colonel,
 Director
 Historical Section (G.S.)

LIST OF APPENDICES

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"C"	Document "Achse"	35	13
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NOTE: Photostat of the original texts of the following appendices are being permanently retained:

"D", "F", "G", "H", "I", "J", "L", "O", "Q", "R"

LIST OF DOCUMENTS RETAINED

R. Photostat of German text

R.T. Photostat and translation of German text

	<u>Document</u>	<u>Para</u>
R. 1	Appreciation of Situation by Gen v. Vietinghoff, 11 Aug 43	11
R. 2	Notes on Conversation Hitler - v. Vietinghoff, 17 Aug 43	13
R. 3	76 Corps; Order of Battle, 10 Sep 43	21
R.T. 4	76 Corps; Corps Order No 4, 3 Sep 43	24
R.T. 5	Message, 10 Army to 76 Corps, 4 Sep 43	24
R.T. 6	Report on Withdrawals of 29 Pz Gren Div in Southern Calabria, 25 Oct 43	25
R.T. 7	29 Pz Gren Div; Div Order No. 25, 3 Sep 43	25
R. 8	Telegram Kesselring to v. Vietinghoff, 2 Nov 43	90
R.T. 9	Letter v. Vietinghoff, to Kesselring, 4 Nov 43	90

R.T. 10	76 Corps; Corps Order of 4 Dec 43	123
R. 11	German Text of Appendix "D"	35
R. 12	German Text of Appendix "F"	48
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R. 18	German Text of Appendix "Q"	149
R. 19	German Text of Appendix "R"	149
R. 20	H.Q. 10 Army; Map of Bernhard line from coast to coast (1:100,100)	97
R. 21	German Text of Appendix "G"	51

CONCISE LIST OF SOURCES

H 22/147	Documents of Armed Forces High Command
H 22/108	

By Formations:

10 Army	42092; 42803
76 Corps	43005
14 Corps	48702
16 Pz Div	42243
26 Pz Div	43873

By Numerical Sequence:

42092	10 Army
42243	16 Pz Div
42803	10 Army
43005	76 Corps
43873	26 Pz Div
48702	14 Corps

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF GERMAN NAMES

(The letter "f" following the number of a paragraph denotes that the reference appears in the footnote.)

v. ALTENSTADT, (Schmidt v. v. Altenstadt); Col; 135f, 142, 144, 169f

BAADE, Ernst Guenther; Col, (Maj-Gen); 82f, 111, 113, 136, 145

BACK; Col, (Maj-Gen); 67

BERLIN, Hermann; Lt-Col(Lt-Gen); 18, 66

Graf v. BERNSTORFF; Lt-Col; 18

BESSEL, Hans; Maj-Gen (Pion); 96

v. BONIN, Bogislav; Col; 62

BUELOVIUS; General; 82f

v. CLEAR; Maj; 18, 134f

EINSTMANN; Lt-Col; 113f, 136, 165

Dr. FRANEK Friedrich; Maj-Gen; 82f, 107

FRIES; :Lt-Gen; 18, 30

GRAESER, Fritz Hubert; Lt-Gen; 82f

v. GRAFFEN, Karl; Lt-Gen; 96f

HAUCK, Friedrich-Wilhelm; Lt-Gen; 82f, 163

HEIDRICH, Richard; Lt-Gen (Gen); 18, 39f, 49f, 59, 61, 61f, 61ff, 144, 165

HEILMANN; Col, 136, 143, 144

HEISTERMANN v. ZIEHLBERG, Gusrav (see: v. Ziehlberg)

HERR, Traugott; General; 18, 24, 30, 45, 127, 144, 146, 148, 150, 165

HITLER, Adolf; 12, 13, 57, 58, 66, 76, 98, 127, 159

HUBE, General; 45f

JASTER; Maj; 18

JODL, Alfred; Col-Gen; 12, 34, 113

KESSELRING, Albert; General Field Marshal; (numerous references)

KEITEL, Wilhelm; General Field Marshal; 12, 35

Graf v. KLINKEWSTROEM; Col; 18, 169, 169f

KRUEGER; Lt-Col; 22, 27

LEMELSEN, Joachim; col-Gen; 18, 90, 91, 92, 93, 98, 99, 102, 106, 113, 120, 122, 127, 129, 130, 142, 148, 149, 161, 165

Freiherr v. LUETTWITZ; Lt-Gen; 18, 84

LUNGERSHAUSEN, Carl Hans; Lt-Gen; 18, 84

v. MANDELSLOH; Lt-Col; 22

PFEIFFER, Hellmuth; Maj-Gen; 82f

POLLACK; Lt-Col; 22

RINGEL, Julius; Lt-Gen; 82f

ROMMEL, General field Marshal; 9

RODT, Maj-Gen; 82f

RUNKEL, Fritz; Col; 18, 46, 66, 77, 84, 84f, 124, 129, 135f

v. Rupprecht: Lt-Col; 22

SCHELLER: Lt-Gen; 82f

SCHMIDT v. ALTENSTADT; Col; (see; v. Altenstadt)

SCHRANK; Maj-Gen; 82f

SCHULENBURG; Lt-Col; 151, 168f

v. SENGER und ETTERLIN, Fridolin; General; 82f, 93, 146

SICKENIUS, Rudolf; Maj-Gen; 64, 67

STEINMETZ; Lt-Gen; 92f

v. USEDOM; Lt-Col; 22, 85f

UHLIG; Lt-Col; 22

VIEBIG; Col; 22

v. VIWRINFHODD, Heinrich; Lt-Gen; (numerous references)

WENTZELL, Fritz; col, (Maj-Gen); 18, 77, 84f, 85f, 113, 124, 132, 135, 144,
154, 165, 169

WESTPHAL, Siegfried; Lt-Gen, 18, 51, 85f, 98, 108, 113, 120, 124, 129, 135,
154

v. ZIEHLBERG, Gustav, (Heistermann v. Ziehlberg); Maj-Gen; 82f, 104, 111

NOTES ON THE GERMAN METHOD OF MAP REFERENCE
BY REFERENCE POINTS AND ON CODES USED IN
CONNECTION THEREWITH

1) Map reference were based on ordinary gridded maps with an overpoint of squares and reference points. The reference points were little circles with numbers alongside. The squares were used to indicate the general area in which a feature was to be found; the reference points were used to show exactly where in the square the feature was located. This was done by stating the direction and distance of the feature from a nearby reference point.

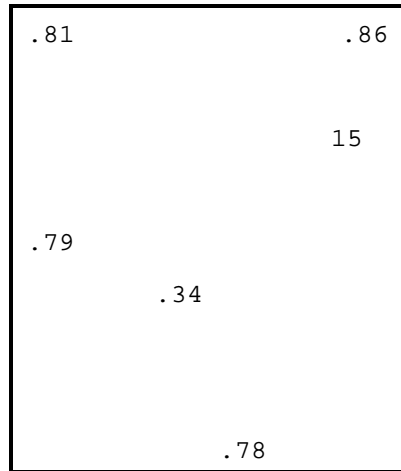
2) For security reasons the squares and reference points were numbered or lettered in an arbitrary pattern. Diagram A shows the simplest type of pattern:

Diagram A

18	27	39	17
.81 .86 15 .31 .79 .78	41	19	23

3) Diagram B shows an example of a map reference. A road junction is the only topographical feature shown on square 15. It is assumed that it is situated 1 km south of reference point 79.

Diagram B



The map reference would read: rd jct 1 km south 1579

4) Map reference were coded by changing the numbers of the square and reference points according to the code in force at the moment. To code the map reference in para 3, the coding instructions might have read: For square 15 use letter Y, to the number of the reference point add 4. The coded reference then would have read Y 83 in place of the original 1579.

5) The method is simple but lends itself to an enormous number of possible mutations. Historical research is facilitated by the fact that the code was not changed very frequently.

6) The code in force before 7 Sep has not been found. It could however be broken by deduction from the source material, if necessary with the help of a code expert.

7) The code in force from 7 Sep to 2 Oct appears below. It was found in the second volume of Appendices to the War Diary of 76 Corps. (G.M.D.S. - 43005/3)

Code from 7 Sep to 9 Oct 1943

a) Add 10 to the number of all reference points

b) Replace the numbers of the squares by the following letters:

10	B	43	A
54	W	59	S
24	H	31	Z
16	P	02	E
20	D	06	N
35	L	26	T
47	R	14	G
41	F	25	K
38	M	50	C

8) According to G.M.D.S. - 43005/1, a new code came into force on 3 Oct. The key to this code was found in a message from O.B.S. to A.O.K. 10 in G.M.D.S. - 42803/8. App 261 b, 1 Oct.

As of 1 Oct the following changes in the reading of the map of Italy, 1:200 000, come into force:

(i) The rectangles with the violet borders, instead of being described by two-figure combinations, are now designated by letters as follows:

56	J	16	G	41	W
32	Q	33	O	59	K
44	V	50	M	31	A
34	Y	20	T	02	H
57	X	35	R	06	S

48	V	47	D	26	F
54	C	38	B	14	P
10	Z	58	F	25	E
24	L	43	N		

(i) Add 5 to the number of all reference points.

(Note: Sometimes a new code was not taken into use at the same time by all formations. Special care must be taken regarding the decoding of map references that were given during such periods of transition).

9) From 0001 hrs 9 Nov until 2359 hrs 8 Dec, map references of higher headquarters were based on map Italy 1 : 100,000. No code was used during this period. Suitable maps are to be found in the volumes of situation maps of War Diary A.O.K. 10. (G.M.D.S. - 42092/13/14/15)

10. A new code was introduced on 9 Nov. A key to it appears in Appendix 764, War dairy A.O.K.10, 8 Nov: (G.M.D.S. - 42092/7, 8 Nov)

At 0001 hrs, 9 Nov, the following changes regarding the reference point map Italy 1:100,000 will become effective:

1)	A	becomes	X	O	becomes	B
	B		F	P		O
	C		U	Q		W
	D		P	R		J
	E		Y	S		D
	F		Z	T		R
	G		H	U		K
	H		T	V		L
	J		A	W		N

K	V	X	E
L	S	Y	C
M	Q	Z	M
N	G		

2) Add three to the number of each reference point

3) A new issue of the map is in preparation

11) On 17 Dec a second edition of the map Italy 1: 1000,000 was issued down to divisions. It had new reference points. No code was used during the initial period. Map reference were based on this map after 1200 hrs, 19 Dec.

(G.M.D.S. - 42092/8, Appt 949, 17 Dec)

Top Secret

30 Aug 43

BY HAND OF OFFICERS ONLY

"AXIS"

In adaption to the developments of the situation in the Mediterranean and in Italy, the following general instructions are now given:

A. In General

Most important task is the disarmament of the Italian Armd Forces as fast as possible. Exceptions will only be made in the case of those units which offer reliable guarantees of their will to continue fighting on the side and under the command of German troops.

The dissolution will be facilitated by the use of the watchword that the war is ended for the Italians and what every man, after handing over his arms, may either return to his civilian occupation or join the German Armd forces as a helper.

The disarmament will be carried out first and as fast as possible in the case of the Italian formations that can be reached quickly, thereafter it will be gradually extended to all formations.

It must be made certain that all arms, vehicles, horses, mules, fuel and other materials will be seized.

It is especially important that the valuable material of the division "Centauro" be seized or, at least be rendered useless.

German troops from formations in training may be used for this purpose.

The prosecution of these measures, formations of Militia and of workmen will be formed, and our own troops will be made fully mobile and all other supplies will be replenished.

B Tasks of the individual Headquarters

1) C.-in-C. South

- (a) Transfer of all German troops in Sardinia to Corsica. To this end all fortified islands around Maddelena will first be occupied and all the fascists that have arrived there already will be freed.

Corsica will be defended by, and the island of Elba placed under the command of G.O.C. 90 Pz Gren Div.

- (b) Return of 10 Army into the Rome sector.

Defence of that sector with all German troops now there at least until arrival of all parts of 10 Army in the area.

- (c) During the course of these two operations, demolitions as in enemy country.

- (d) Further conduct of operations as ordered by Army Group "B".

2. Army Group "B"

- (a) Strengthening of the protection of all mountain passes. Use of the local rifle clubs in the Tyrol and in Carinthia as well as of the male German population of the southern Tyrol. (to be armed with weapons from Italian booty).
- (b) Occupation of the ports of Genoa, La Spezia and Livorno, as well as of Trieste, Fiume and Pola.
- (c) Safeguarding of the most important mountain passes of the Apennine mountains between Genoa and Florence, and subsequent advance of the guarding elements to the line Elba - Perugia - Porto - Civitanova, for ultimate fusion with the forces of O.B.S.
- (d) Pacification of Northern Italy with the help of the fascist organizations.
- (e) Army Group "B" receives the right of issuing directives to O.B.S.; it is intended to place 10 Army later under the command of Army Group "B"

3. C.-in-C. West

Occupation of the part of the Italian coast situated west of the Franco-Italian border.

4. C.-in-C. Southeast

Assumption of command over the whole Southeastern theatre, including the Aegean Sea, towards this end occupation of the most important bases, including the coastal areas, islands

and parts of islands (Crete, Rhodes,) hitherto occupied by Italian troops.

C. Tasks of the Navy

Taking possession of the Italian naval and commercial ships within reach. In any event prevention of their going over to the enemy.

The carrying through of the transports required for the evacuation of Sardinia.

Maintenance of vital traffic on the sea.

Taking over of the naval tasks in the coastal sector hitherto occupied by the Italians.

Assisting the Army in the occupation of the Islands around Maddalena, the island of Elba and possibly of further islands in the area of C.-in-C. Southeast.

D. Tasks of the Air Force

They are enlarged by the taking over of the tasks of the Italian Air Force. Towards this and taking over of the Italian ground organization, the additional installations required and the equipment of the Air Defences, especially the anti-aircraft equipment provided by Germany.

Prevention of the going over to the enemy of Italian naval forces and of the misuse of Italian air - and anti-aircraft equipment.

E. Transport

Army Group "B", in conjunction with the General for Transportation in Italy, will take all measures necessary to prevent any interruption of the rail services.

In Northern Italy the commander of the Army Transportation Services will make arrangements for German personnel to take over and operate the rail service; further south and as far as ROME he will endeavour to improvise a service with Italian railway personnel.

In the areas to be evacuated, Army Group "B" and O.B.S. will thoroughly demolish all railway installations. Italian freight and supply trains will be confiscated if within easy reach of German troops.

C.-in-C. Southeast will take over the guarding of the railway lines through Albania from Kraljewe to Skoplje.

- F. Commander Signal Communications takes the measures necessary to take over Italian signal installations in the area of German troops.
- G. Chief of Counter-Intelligence in Foreign Countries assists the Higher Commanders and the units of the Armed Forces in the execution of their tasks, especially with regard to border controls and the security of vulnerable points, (power-stations, railway installations etc.), the prevention of the going over to the enemy of the Italian Navy and the liaison with fascist organizations.
- H. A special proclamation will be directed to the Italian people and the Italian Army.

- I. German Commanders, down to divisional commanders or officers of equivalent authority, will again be informed orally as far as necessary.

The order for the execution of these tasks will be given by the High Command of the Armed Forces (by dispatch of) the code word "Achse".

Local developments may make it necessary for Officers of the rank of divisional commander, and upwards, to take these measures on their own initiative.

- K. Orders previously issued by the High command of the Armed Forces are herewith cancelled and are to be destroyed.

The orders for "Special undertakings" (limited distribution) remain unchanged.

The authorities named in the distribution list are responsible for it that no written order concerning "Achse" will be issued at lower levels than Army and that copies of this document in the Italian area can under no circumstances fall into the hand of Italians.

signed: Keitel

OKW/WFST/662108/43 Top Secret Command matter.

Headquarters 76 Pz Corps, Ops

9 Sep 1943

Corps Order No 5

For movement of forces in the direction of Polla

- 1) Enemy has landed on the Gulf of Salerno and Naples at 0030 hrs. A further advance of the enemy forces landed in Southern Calabria is to be expected.
- 2) 76 Corps moves 29 Pz Gren Div into the area Lagonegro - Polla; 26 Pz Div into the area Castrovillari - Spezzano.

Orders as follows:

- a) 29 Pz Gren div (less reinforced Regt 71 and Recce Bn 129) with Pz Recce Bn 26 under its command and with Para Regt 3, beginning early on 9 Sep, moves Battle Group Uhlig into the area Polla - Sala Consilina; reinforced Recce Bn 26 into the area Lauria - Lagonegro. Flak Regt 313 will be under its command.

Orders: Protection of western flank.

- b) 26 Pz Div (less Pz Recce Bn 26) with reinforced Regt 71 under its command and Recce Bn 129 moves into the area Spezzano - Castrovillari; reinforced Regt 71 moving into the area north of Spezzano station; the divisional units into the area to the south of the station. Flak Regt 135 will be under its command.

Orders:

Rearguards, which even without enemy pressure will fall back in the direction of Castrovillari in accordance with the movements of the division, will be posted on the line of the enemy advance. As soon as the mass of the division has reached the area assigned to it, the intention is to move reinforced Regt 71 back to 29 Pz Gren Div in the area north of Polla. Patrols of fighting strength are to be posted on the coast in the area of Castrovillari, between E 42 and E 38 (Schiavonea - rd jct rds No 106 and 92).

In the event of an enemy landing in this area, effective enemy action on the Cosenza - Castrovillari road is to be delayed until the mass of the division has passed through Castrovillari, heading north.

- 3) (Cancelled)
- 4) Corps Sig Bn 476 to maintain telephone and wireless connection as before.
- 5) Corps H.Q. will be 8 km south-east of Castrovillari until early on 10 Sep; Q Branch 12 km south-east of Castrovillari.

H.Q. 76 Corps

22 Sep 1943

Dear Colonel Wentzell,

The liaison officers is handing you the map, on which our position is marked.

At 1400 hrs the key-points of the defence are:

1. Acerno.

Here the enemy, under the protection of his infantry, succeeded during the early morning hours in installing artillery observation posts on the heights flanking our positions. These lay under heavy and closely observed artillery fire during the morning, and losses were heavy in consequence.

A report has just come in from the Division stating that the enemy has broken through on both sides of Acerno, and that the Division will be forced to withdraw from the position before nightfall. Originally the intention was to withdraw from the Acerno position during the night of 22/23 Sep and to fall back to a new position with very favourable terrain 4 km northwest of Acerno.

It is not yet known whether the enemy inflicted heavy casualties during his last attack. He appears to be pressing very heavily at this point, and 26 Pz Div was forced to move a company of Recce Bn 26 and a heavy battery from the right wing to reinforce this sector.

On the right wing of 26 Pz Div the day passed quietly. The question of boundaries and boundary line defence have at last been straightened out with Hermann Goring Div.

2. Oliveto:

Here the enemy is moving up reinforcements from the directions of Eboli and apparently also of Auletta.

At present the strength of the enemy there is estimated as at least two battalions, with tanks and several batteries. An attack was repulsed here in the early morning.

At 1000 hrs the enemy penetrated our position on Hill 1142 (5 km west of Oliveto) with one battalion; a counter-attack is in progress. Here too enemy pressure is expected to increase.

This position must be held as long as possible, as north of Oliveto the terrain becomes more and more unfavourable on account of the many opportunities for by passing our demolitions. Should enemy attacks threaten us with severe losses, here too the front will at first be withdrawn to Calabritto.

3. Potenza:

The day before yesterday a battalion consisting of 100 men from Para Regt 3 was in action here. The unit was attacked by superior forces, though, considering the enemy advance as a whole, this does not necessarily indicate that he is stronger here than at other points.

According to the morning reports, the enemy has not advanced any further north from Potenza in the direction of Atella. What demolitions 1 Para

Div has carried out on the Potenza - Atella road is still uncertain. Information is being obtained.

It appears that one enemy battalion at most has advanced north-west from Potenza, and that there has been no enemy attack against Regt 71 in this area.

Effective demolitions have been carried out on the Potenza - Muro road. Here too resistance must take the form of a delaying action as far forward as possible without incurring heavy casualties.

Forward line of 1 Para Div:

M 25 (boundary with 29 Pz Gren Div) - M.52 - M.70 - M.73 - M.92 (Atella - Forenza - rd jct ESE Spinazzola - Minervino - Margherita di Savoia.)

Further data on our own situation and on that of the enemy are lacking for the sector of this division. The General Commanding has proceeded there to obtain a picture of the situation. As soon as the position is clarified I will report by telephone.

During the next few days the Division will reach the Foggia area, which is especially unfavourable for Para Div 1 with its weak forces. In the event of enemy pressure here becoming more severe, the Division will have to be withdrawn to the 0 1 - line. Every effort will be made however to delay an advance in the direction of Foggia as long as possible.

The problems of the whole conduct of battle in the Corps Command are the difficulty of covering an area of this size with insufficient forces and the lack of explosives. Up to the present time no explosives have

arrived. Unfortunately during the past days many demolition projects have had to be deferred owing to this lack.

Vital units of the Corps are tied down with 26 Pz Div at the point of main effort on the right wing. For this reason the operations of 29 Pz Gren Div and 1 Para Div can only be carried on from hand to mouth.

Several defence lines have been planned, which altogether can be held for two days at the outside, as we cannot prevent the enemy, led by Italians, from using the mountain roads to by-pass our positions.

The subsequent defence line, which we hope to hold until 24 Sep, is:
4 km NW F 83 - F 107 - F 156 - M 15 - M 24 - C 92. (4 km NW Acerno - rd jct E Calabritto - rd jct N Pescopagano - Reference point 3805 (situated where an imaginary line from Pescopagano to Melfi would cross the river Ofanto) - Melfi - Margherita di Savoia.)

Efforts will be made to continue resistance in the outpost area long enough to delay the occupation of line 0 at least until 27 or 28 Sep.

On the left wing of 26 Pz Div this will not be easy, as the enemy has already worked forward 10 - 15 km towards line 0. In spite of this, we hope that operations will proceed according to plan.

Luftwaffe support:

It is difficult, with the slow wireless service, to give the Luftwaffe definite targets. It is therefore generally necessary to use fighter bombers seeking their own targets.

Special relief would be afforded to the divisions if the moving up of reinforcements to the focal points could be delayed. I have

particularly in mind the roads which lead from F 74 to F 83; from F 75 to F 120; and from F162 to F 112. (Battipaglia - Acerno - ry line from Eboli halfway to Contursi - Auletta - Contursi.).

As the fighting advances, our available air strength would have to be used on the northern stretches of these roads.

It would also be necessary for our air reconnaissance to report large-scale enemy movements in good time, thus enabling the Luftwaffe to take action. All air support of this nature will be a help.

Supplies.

Besides the lack of explosives the shortage of fuel is becoming unpleasantly obvious.

At the present time 26 Pz Div has .9 units (VS). 100 cbm are in transport. Thus the Division would have 1.9 units; 29 Div has 1.8 units.

Sooner or later the divisions must have more fuel, in order that troop movements may not be handicapped, as has already happened in some cases.

The main cause of the trouble is the shortage of transport. The transport situation at the present time is as follows:

Corps troops	63 Tons
29 Pz Gren Div	150 tons
26 Pz Div	150 - 200 tons
1 Para Div	40 tons

With this small amount of transport the supply service can only be carried on with the greatest difficulty. In addition casualties in the transport columns are continually occurring as a result of air attacks. Unfortunately in Southern Italy only Italian infantry divisions with little transport were employed. Thus there has been no perceptible improvement in the motor vehicle situation through seizure of Italian transport, losses meanwhile having far exceeded seizures.

The divisions employed in the Naples area and north are much more favourably placed in every way. Since it has not been necessary for these divisions to carry out any major movements, they have had time to strengthen themselves fundamentally by seizure of Italian fuel and transport.

In my opinion, if the divisions of 76 Corps are not to go to pieces completely during the course of further movements, the Army must help them by sending replacements. 29 Pz Gren Div was always badly off as regards transport. Thus the condition of the vehicles has led to a high percentage of breakdowns. The Division was only able to stand these because of its steadily decreasing fighting strength.

The danger exists that in this division the last of the old experienced combat veterans who are so indispensable for the rejuvenation of a formation will be lost. Herein lies General Fries' greatest anxiety, which is fully justified.

1900 hrs.

Unfortunately the situation at Oliveto has so developed that the positions held today can no longer be held tomorrow without incurring heavy casualties. Since midday the enemy has been receiving

reinforcements from the South-East, and has forced the battle group to use its reserves.

In the middle sector the battle group was able to repulse an attack.

Intense artillery and mortar fire on the front and behind the lines indicate that the enemy's heavy weapons are in position. We shall therefore withdraw to the general line F 109 - F 124. (Senerchia - 4 km NE Contursi) With this movement the battle group will reach the unfavourable terrain.

During the afternoon the enemy still did not feel his way forward before the left battle group of 29 Pz Gren Div. According to the report of 1 Para Div he appears to have swung north-east from Potenza, the road leading north having been thoroughly destroyed. On 23 Sep 43 the line of 1 Para Div will run: M25 - M24 - C 92 (Atella - Melfi - Margherita di Savoia), the result being that only weak forces will be engaged on the left wing. Para Regt 4 is for the present being held as corps reserve behind the right wing.

The fighting strength of 1 Para Div is altogether about 1300 men. According to an estimate of enemy strength this afternoon, it appears very doubtful whether line O can be held until 30 Sep. (Salerno - Bovino - Manfredonia).

In view of the reduced fighting strength of the divisions, the danger exists, that with the increased enemy pressure, especially on the inner wings of 26 Pz Div and 29 Pz Div, it may be necessary to accelerate the withdrawal.

Naturally everything possible will be done by the Corps to delay the enemy advance.

Summary: Our chief sources of anxiety are the Acerno area and the area north of Contursi.

(Signed: RUNKEL)

A.O.K. 10, Ops

23 Sep 43

No 331/43.

8 Copies

(Copy No 2)

Supplement to Army Order No. 3

Ref: Cooperation with Flak Bde 22.

The following orders concerning cooperation with Flak Bde 22 supplement Army Order No 3:

1) Flak Bde 22 is instructed to act in closest cooperation with A.O.K. 10.

2) The following units will work together under command of the Brigade:

Flak Regt 57 (13 heavy, 1 medium, 4 light batteries) with 14 Corps.

Flak Regt 135 (10 heavy, 2 medium, 2 light batteries) with 76 Corps.

Flak Group Pachaly (4 heavy, 3 light batteries) with 1 Para Div.

Corps Commands and 1 Para Div will inform flak units directly of any special wishes they may have regarding employment of flak. Flak commanders are instructed to accede to the wishes of the Army or to refer the question to 22 Flak Bde for decision.

Operations of Army flak units are to be coordinated with the commitments of Luftwaffe Flak. The greatest possible effectiveness must be achieved by all anti-aircraft units through well-planned operations.

Signed HUBE

Distribution:

As for Army Order No. 3

Checked for accuracy:

BERLIN

Lt Col G.S.

No 331/43

A.O.K. 10

18 Sep 43

8 Copies

Copy No. 2

This document has been prepared in accordance with security regulations.

Army Order No. 3

- 1) Enemy forces landed in the Gulf of Salerno did not achieve their objective, which was to cut off and to destroy the German forces in southern Italy. On the contrary he was thrown back by our troops to a narrow strip of coast and suffered heavy casualties.

In Apulia the enemy limited his operations to securing a firm hold on Taranto and feeling his way in a north-westerly direction with small detachments.

Fresh convoys reaching the Salerno area indicate a considerable strengthening of the enemy forces in that locality within the next few days. Increasing pressure by 8 Brit Army, whose advance elements have reached Sala Consiline, is to be expected.

- 2) 10 Army is commencing a new operation. For this purpose is withdrawing from the battle in the Salerno area. With 14 Corps remaining on the whole in its former position, the left wing of the Army (76 Corps) is wheeling back in a delaying action through the line Salerno - Potenza -

Altamura (V) to a first line of defence, Salerno - Bovino - Manfredonia (O).

The line O is to be held until about 30 Sep:

3) Boundary line (!:100,000) from 1800 hrs 21 Sep:

14 Corps and 76 Corps: M. Stella - Capreccaro - Arienzo - S. Felice (these localities to be occupied by 14 Corps) - Tenafro (76 Corps). Tactical liaison to be established jointly by the two corps at Baronissi.

4) Battle Orders:

14 Corps, with no changes in its order of battle, will guard against possible enemy landings in the Gulf of Naples; endeavour to establish a continuous defence line from Castellamare to Salerno; and prevent an enemy advance from Salerno north or north-west by determined defensive action.

The objects of this plan are to enable 76 Corps to carry out its withdrawal movements according to plan and to prevent any effective enemy action from the direction of either Salerno or the Gulf of Naples, especially against the area south of Avellino.

Upon arrival 26 Pz Div will again be under command of 14 Corps. It will be quartered in the Maddaloni area in such a manner that it can be committed in the direction of either the Gulf of Naples or Salerno. Actual commitment will require previous approval by A.O.K. 10, but practical possibilities are to be explored.

76 Corps, with 1 Para Div under its command as of 1200 hrs 19 Sep, is withdrawing in a delaying action over the line (V) Salerno - Eboli - Potenza - Altamura to the defence line (O) Salerno - Bovine - Manfredonia. The centre of gravity of the operation lies on the right wing of the Corps. Adequate reserves will be held here in readiness, and reconnaissance of the positions to be occupied will begin immediately.

16 Pz Div will be taken out of the front line in such a way as to ensure its arrival in the Maddaloni area in the early morning of 21 Sep.

5) Re-grouping of formations:

- a) During the course of the withdrawal the elements of 1 Para Div now with 76 Corps will rejoin their division.
- b) Reinforced 2 Bn Regt 67 will remain with 14 Corps for the time being; arrangements are being made for the Battalion to rejoin 26 Pz Div on reaching the defence line () Salorno - Manfredonia.
- c) 3 Bn Para Regt 1 to remain with 14 Corps for the present.

6) Intended timetable:

Night 17/18 Sep: 14 Corps: No change.

76 Corps: Withdrawal to the general line
Montecorvino - Altavilla.

1 Para Div: Withdrawal to Altamura.

Night 18/19 Sep: 14 Corps: No change.

76 Corps: Withdrawal to line V.

Night 21/22 Sep: 14 and 76 Corps: Gradual withdrawal to line O/

The tactical junction point of Baronissi must be occupied not later than the early morning of 21 Sep. The boundary between the two Corps will be protected by a battle group consisting of one reinforced battalion furnished by 14 Corps until 2 Bn Regt 67 has rejoined 76 Corps; by 76 Corps thereafter.

Liaison officers will be exchanged by the divisions forming the adjoining wings.

7) Demolitions:

During the withdrawal all roads and traffic lines are to be lastingly destroyed and mined in great depth. Road junctions in the Salerno, S. Angelo, La Toppa area and the coastal road and railway line on the Adriatic constitute focal points.

All factories of military importance (a special order on the subject of "importance" will follow); signal installations including wireless stations; and all non-removal equipment and supplies of military importance are to be destroyed. Destruction of the Apulia Aqueducts is to be assured and will be carried out immediately in areas already evacuated.

Corps commanders will be responsible for the carrying out of demolitions.

All engineers are now to be used for demolition work and not for infantry fighting.

Signal officers are to be employed for demolition of signal installations.

8) Engineers:

Under command of:

Army Eng Comdr: Constr Bn 432 for road repairs.

76 Corps: Fortress Eng Staff 16
Constr Bn 430
5 P1 Local Constr Coy 9
Drilling Coy 77

9) Reconnaissance and construction work on line B will be carried out by Eng Comdr Southern Command (Col Wagner), with Coastal Defence Staff South (Col Messerschmidt) under his command.

10) Mules will be commandeered extensively for future operations and will be taken back to the defence zones concerned immediately.

11) Parking Zones:

a) New parking zones are assigned as follows:

14 Corps: 15 Pz Gren Div, 16 Pz Div, Herman Coring Pz Div and 29 Pz Gren Div in area Guarchino - Areoli - Guidoni - Palestrina - Anagni.

76 Corps: 26 Pz Div and 1 Para Div in area l'Aquila - Borbona - Rieti - Sassa.

- b) Shifting of parking zones to begin at once.
- 12) On 21 Sep the following reports will be made:
- a) Intended disposition of forces in lines 1 and 2.
 - b) Intended Tac H.Q.'s of the Corps.
- 13) Airforce 2 is requested:
- I) With its fighting elements, to carry out the following battle and reconnaissance tasks:
 - a) Support of 14 Corps in defence of Salerno.
 - b) Delaying the approach of 8 Brit Army.
 - c) Support of 76 Corps in its withdrawal operations.
 - II) With its anti-aircraft elements (in closest cooperation with the various army headquarters) to protect:
 - a) Troop movements.
 - b) Main traffic centres.
- Re-organization for this purpose is proceeding; pertinent information will be forwarded to the Corps Commanders.
- 14) Tac H.Q. A.O.K. 10 from midday of 20 Sep at km 88, 17 km north of Caserta.

15) For special orders for Signal units see Appendix 2.

(Note: No available)

2 Appendices

v. Vietingoff

Distribution:

Corps Commands and formations
directly under A.O.K. 10.

A.O.K. 10 Sec Ops

22 Sep 43

No 329/43 Secret

18 Copies

(Copy 14)

EXPLOITATION OF ITALY FOR THE FURTHER CONDUCT OF THE WAR

Italy's betrayal enables us from now on to make the fullest and most drastic use of this country too for the further prosecution of the German cause. Thus it is important that the following orders be carried out with the utmost speed, before we are forced to relinquish more Italian territory on operational grounds.

A. Personnel Section

1. Extensive use is to be made of the Italian male population for further military and economic purposes.
2. With this object in view the following orders will come into effect:
 - a) Use of Italian officers and men who are prepared to continue fighting voluntarily on the German side.

Internment of all complete Italian formations that have been fighting against us (App 1).

- b) Impressment of Italian civilians by Italian authorities for construction battalions. (App 2).

- c) Impressment of Italian specialized workers and complete units of industrial personnel. (App 3).
3. The following officers are responsible for procurement operations:
- a) The German Commandant of Rome in the area between the line Gaeta - Termoli and the line Piombino - Perugia - Porto Civitanova.
 - b) The corps commanders in the areas of their own commands
4. The prosecution of recruiting and conscription:
- a) Special units are to be formed by the Corps commands for the purposes of recruiting and conscription
 - b) For the present, conscription, other than for personnel covered by order 2.c), will be replaced by recruiting on a voluntary basis.
 - c) In recruiting, full propaganda use is to be made of the following: Transportation by the enemy of Italian workers from Sicily to Africa; the impossibility of quickly recreating opportunities for work in plants located in the destroyed battle zones; devaluation of the lira in enemy-occupied territory.
5. With the command of A.O.K. 10 the following orders are to be put into effect
- a) Personnel of Nembo Div are to be absorbed by 1 Para Div.

- b) Extensive use is to be made of Italian drivers, mechanics, fitters, etc., in order that German soldiers may be freed for fighting.
- c) Corps commanders and Army engineer commanders are to bring the construction detachments up to full strength, plus 20% for replacement of casualties, by recruiting Italian soldiers and civilians.

In the engineer battalions each Italian construction company is to consist of about 200 men and is to be provided with a German cadre. The construction companies are to be under Italian foremen, but always under German supervision.

The method of employment will be the same as for German units.

Tools and excavation material to be bought or confiscated locally.

- 6. All Italian officers, other ranks and civilians who have been recruited, but are not required in A.O.K. 10 as laid down in 5., are to be sent to C.B.S. or to Army Group B.

7. Transit camps and evacuation:

- a) Transit camps near the entraining stations, and on longer marches at the road sides, are to be set up for the assembling of Italian personnel intended for evacuation and for labour forces conscripted as laid down in 2.c). Italians taken prisoner as laid down in 2.a) Para 2 are to be taken to PW camps. They are to be kept strictly segregated from Anglo-American PW's.

- b) A police battalion will be sent to H.Q. 14 Corps for guarding Italian prisoners and impressed labour while in camp and during transport.

Until the arrival of this unit, Local Defence Bn 676, Naples, is to be moved up.

- c) Transport is to be arranged by the corps commanders; for Naples area with the outpost section of the Chief German Transport Officer (G.S. Major Fintelmann, Cassino), for Foggia area with Detraining Commissioner 46 (Major Kuehlwind, Foggia). Transport arrangements to be reported in good time.
- d) Escort personnel for transport are to be furnished by the corps commands. After fulfilling their mission, they are to return immediately. Apart from this, 14 Corps will move up Replacement Training Bn for Special Duty 222; 76 Corps will move up the Personnel Replacement Transfer Battalion which is arriving at Cassino on 22 Sep.

8. Supplies:

- a) Italian army personnel continuing to fight on the German side as laid down in 2.a) are to be supplied in every respect according to the scales in force for German personnel.
- b) Italian army personnel who have been taken prisoner will be treated as laid down in orders for PWs.
- c) On recruitment, the category referred to in 1.b) may receive as recruiting bonus a maximum sum of 350 lire.

On reporting for service with the field forces, the men in this category will receive scale III rations, and the lowest rate of pay (8 lire per day). Foremen (capi), may receive a daily payment up to 20 lire according to their usefulness.

Impressed labour as laid down in 2.c) will also receive scale III rations during their stay in the assembly camps. When employed they will be paid according to their performance.

All those to be moved by rail rare to be issued with 3 days' scale III rations for the journey.

d) In assembling rations as laid down in c), Italian supplies are to be seized freely.

9. Exclusive of the units referred to in No 5. no Italian formation may be created.

10. Reports:

On each Sunday, reports covering impressed personnel as laid down in No. 2., subdivided into a), b) and c) as of Saturday noon, are to be handed in.

11. A special order is being issued on the general impressment of those fit for active service in the command of A.O.K. 10.

b. Economic Section

Confiscation of Goods in short Supply.

1. Confiscation commands and one technical battalion (W.E.K. 3 and 4, T.B. 13) will be set up in the army zone. Their purpose will be confiscation of Italian goods of all sorts in the army zone; their transportation to the zone of the interior, as well as the guarding of the most important technical installations of Italian industry.

Until these arrive, the corps commands are to set up temporary economic confiscation staffs.

Tasks:

- a. Seizure and guarding of all raw materials and other goods of economic importance to Germany (see App 4).
 - b. Removal of goods seized in priority order shown in appendix 4, with due regard to the labour and transport available.
2. The economic seizures staffs of the corps commands will be advised in the carrying out of their tasks by the Railway Officer at A.O.K. 10, Captain Buettner.
 3. For the removal of goods to Germany, Italian forced labour is to be made free use of in cooperation with the local Italian civilian authorities.

Application for transport space is to be made to the corps commands, and if these have none, to A.O.K. 10 Executive Staff Q.M.G., who will have space available which is not required for supplies and transport of military material.

Application for rail transport is to be made to Chief German Transport Officer for the Outlying Posts in Italy (G.S. Major Fintelmann, Cassino), or to Detraining Commissioner 46 (Major Kuehlwind, Foggia).

At the same time the special representatives of the German Ministry of Armaments and Munitions are to assist as much as possible by placing transport space at the disposal of corps commanders and the Executive Staff Q.M.G.

4. All goods which cannot be removed owing to shortage of transport, but which can be used by the troops without burdening them unnecessarily, are to be issued (e.g., tires, spare parts, ammunition, food, luxuries, clothing, etc.); otherwise (and this includes food dumps) they are to be thoroughly destroyed before evacuation of the area.

For A.O.K. 10

Chief of the General Staff

WENTZELL

4 Appendices

Distribution:

Commanders of Corps and Divisions.

22 Sep 43

Possibilities of employment of Italian officers and men who are prepared to continue fighting voluntarily on the German Side

1) The following possibilities of employment exist for Italian officers and men who are prepared to continue fighting voluntarily on the German side:

a) Employment in militia formations on further instructions of Reichs Leader of SS troops; in Italy as police forces; outside Italy for fighting guerillas. The latter use may be specially considered when the Italian units concerned have honestly fought with us against the guerillas, as for example in Istria.

b) Employment as construction battalions with the three arms of the Wehrmacht.

c) Employment as auxiliaries with our own troops, if they are specially needed, as for example drivers, fitters, mechanics etc. But this is only to apply where sufficient German forces are available to exclude all danger from such employment.

Employment according to the principles laid down in No 1 is in no case permissible in areas where the population is of German origin, or in Croatia or Albania.

2) Troops that have fought against us, and now, influenced by the liberation of the Duce, declare themselves ready to fight for Germany,

have no claim to further employment. They are all to be taken prisoner and used as labour in the Reich.

The Italian railway engineers who have been taken prisoner will be assembled in the camps. Special orders regarding their employment are being issued.

Formation of Italian labour groups

- 1) O.B.S. orders the Italian civilian authorities to call up immediately those in the age-groups 1910 - 25, and to assemble them in units of one hundred.

Altogether 120 labour groups, each consisting of 500 men will be formed. This order is to be put into effect by 30 Sep. In A.O.K. 10 impressments will take place only in the Naples area for the present; they will be effectuated by the prefect of that city; transport to the prepared camp will be arranged by H.Q. 14 Corps through the town Commandant of Naples in cooperation with the Prefect.

- 2) Orders regarding assignment of the labour groups will be issued when the report of the Italian authorities has been received, giving the place of assembly and stating that organization has been completed. Employment of labour groups after assignment must take place in such a way that they can be moved back from the battle zone in good time in case of enemy action.

- 3) Boundary line for withdrawal movement to "Bernhardt" position.

(1 : 200,000) Effective from 1800 hrs 27 Sep: F 37 - F 35 (76 Corps) - F 15 (14 Corps) - R 155 (14) - R 120 (14) - L 65 (14) - W 124 (14).

(S. Mango Piemonte - rd and rly jct 3 m north of Baronissi - Monteforte - rd and rly jct 2 m south of Airola - rd bridge over Volturno 5 m east of Caiazzo - rd and rly jct 5 m west of Langano.)

4) Battle orders:

14 Corps will withdraw by sectors to "Bernhardt", fighting a delaying action and warding off attempted enemy landings in the former coastal sector. On reaching "Bernhardt" 16 Pz Div will deploy in Aquino - Frosinone area prepared for quick action against possible enemy landings in the area west of Gaeta or in the Rome area.

76 Corps will withdraw to "Bernhardt" via the intermediate positions, fighting a delaying action. In so doing it is important that, by blocking the defiles leading from the mountains in good time and thoroughly destroying the coastal roads, an enveloping advance of 8 Brit Army be prevented. On occupying "Viktor" line during withdrawal to "Bernhardt", 29 Pz Gren Div (less Eng Bn) will be released from the front and deployed in the area south-east of Rome, where it will be at the disposal of O.B.S. A liaison officer is to be sent to O.B.S. in good time.

Eng Bn 29 Pz Div will be withdrawn from the front line only after reaching "Bernhardt".

5) Carrying out of withdrawal movement:

For defence lines see tracing. Tracing attached to Army Order No 3 is to be destroyed.

Time guide for withdrawal movements:

"Anton" position taken up early on 28 Sep. Occupation of tactical contact point 27 Sep 1900 hrs. "Anton" will be held until about 3 Oct. Withdrawal from "Anton" to "Viktor" in such a way that "Viktor" can be held until if possible 15 Oct.

To ensure uniformity in the withdrawal of the two corps, the Army is to be informed of intended withdrawal operations in good time, so that it can determine the withdrawal time after co-ordinating the movements of the two corps.

Contact and joint conduct of battle along the corps dividing line must be definitely assured.

Orders giving times for occupying main contact points will be issued at the appropriate time by A.O.K.

Dead lines for intermediate points are to be determined by directly adjacent units.

- a) Before beginning a withdrawal movement the next tactical contact point in rear is to be occupied and secured by both Corps H.Q.'s.
- b) Co-ordination of the withdrawal movement must be definitely assured by the liaison officers between Hermann Goering Pz Div and 26 Pz Div.

During the next days the enemy must not be allowed, after capturing the Avellino road, to push forward to the Marigliano area with stronger forces, as this would make it possible for him to turn the "Anton" position and to harass our withdrawal to the "Anni" position.

6) Traffic instructions:

The road section R 94 - L 62 (mill of S. Angelo - Longano) is at the disposal of 76 Corps for its troop movements, independent of tactical boundary lines. 76 Corps has the right of way over this section.

7) Grouping of formations:

The following units are to be returned to their divisions or commands:

a) By 14 Corps:

On reaching "Anni": All units of 3 Pz Gren Div Recce Bn 103 and 2 Coy Eng 3).

On reaching "Viktor": All elements of the Navy from the Naples area.

All personnel of the signal detachment not belonging to 14 Corps.

3 Bn Para Regt 1.

2 Coy Eng 3 is to be sent to Maj Gen Bessel, Cassino (if orders to this effort have not already been issued by O.B.S.)

Recce Bn 103.

b) By 76 Corps:

On reaching "Viktor":

All elements of 16 Pz Div

Eng Coy Eng 33 will be at the disposal of Army Eng Commander.

8) "Bernhardt" will be determined by O.B.S. and developed as a line of defence. Divisional reconnaissance staffs are to be left there and

gradually increased, and will support the construction staff (from 27 Sep, Maj Gen Bessel).

9) Demolitions:

Directions previously given for demolitions remain in force. Salerno - Avellino road and roads leading west to the Naples are to be destroyed with special thoroughness by concentrated employment of engineers.

10) Road discipline:

Special attention is drawn to A.O.K. 10/Ops No 1278/43, secret, dated 25 Sep 43.

11) Road maintenance

The various corps headquarters are responsible for maintenance of roads and bridges south of the line Arce - Cervaso - Cajazzo - Riggia - Termoli (villages excluded). North of this line Army Eng Commander is responsible.

12) The following are to e reported:

a) On 29 Sep, by the various corps headquarters, intended withdrawal operations and disposition of forces in the individual lines.

b) The dispatch of units in accordance with 7.

13) Co-operation with the Air Force as before.

14) The next A.O.K. 10 Headquarters will be Pozzilli, N.N.E. of Venafro. Corps Headquarters will be informed of time of removal.

for

Signed HUBE

1 Appendix

Checked by:

BERLIN

Lt Col G.S.

Distribution:

Corps Commanders

22 Sep 43

Impressment of specialized Italian workers in complete units of personnel

- 1) The Fuehrer has ordered the total removal of all armament, technical and specialized workers.

On the area of 10 Army this measure is for the present to be carried out only in the Naples area.

- 2) To this end O.B.S. has issued the following orders to the Italian Minister of the Interior:

- a) "In view of the situation existing at the present time, full operation of the factories in the Naples area can no longer be guaranteed.

- b) Managers of plants having a pay-roll of more than 50 persons are to be ordered by public proclamation to apply to the prefect for transportation of their workers as a unit. It possible the personnel will be employed as a unit.

Transport will be arranged in accordance with the instructions which the town commandant of Naples will give through the prefect."

- 3) In case of Italian refusal or hesitation, impressment of workers is to be enforced by the most drastic methods.

- 4) 76 Corps will investigate and make preparations for removal of the specialized workers from the Foggia area and will make a report on probable transport requirements.

Installations and factories in front of Defence Line B which must be evacuated.

(Evacuation list)

A. Traffic equipment.

- 1) Rolling stock; locomotives urgent.
- 2) Lorries, omnibuses, passenger cars.

B. Signal installations

German and Italian two-strand field cables are to be dismantled without exception, and converted to our own use.

C. Armament works and factories of military importance.

- 1) Alfa-Romeo, Naples Pomigliano
- 2) Silurificia Italiano, Baia (near Naples)
- 3) O.S.A.R. Naples
- 4) Sinterna, Posilippe (Parodi Delfino)
- 5) Ansaldo, Pozzuoli
- 6) Army arsenal, Naples
- 7) Navalmeccania and Benzini, Castellamare di Stabia
- 8) Cantiere metallurgica Italiana, Castellamare di Stabia
- 9) Naval dockyards, Naples

- 10) Senib, Naples
- 11) Riccardi Bros, Torre Annunziata, Vesuvius
- 12) Ettore Flour, Naples
- 13) Salvatore Bread, Naples
- 14) Society Meridionale Azoto, Bagnoli
- 15) Chemical Industries Dr Saronia, Melignano, (near Foggia)
- 16) Montecatini Sulphuric acid Works, Naples
- 17) Montecatini Synthetic Ammonia Works, Bagnoli
- 18) Capua Pyrotechnic Works. This works to be dismantled complete with all machinery and installations.

Evacuation priority is to be given to:

- a) Modern machine tools with individual drive.
Horizontal drills, gauge drilling apparatus, grinding machines other than simple grinding trestles, large lathes and revolver lathes, single and multiple automatic spindles, large milling machines (size of table 350 x 1000 mm and over)
- b) Measuring tools and measuring machines (Zeiss, Leitz, Mahr, etc.)
but not: Slide rules, parallel rules, Touchier-plates, toot rules, set and try squares.
- c) Cable in rolls only, generators, but not: Switches, bulbs, fuses, etc.
- d) Ball bearings.
- e) Tools: Turning gouges, milling machine, twist-drills, worm-drills, saw-blades. Especially important: tools made of hard metals or rapid-process steel.

- f) Leather belting and V-type belting.

- g) High-grade steel alloys, as far as can be ascertained.
Rapid-process steel, V₂A-steel and sheeting, high temperature resistant chrome-vanadium steel.

- h) Non-ferrous metals:
Copper, tin, lead, brass, bronze.

- i) Signal equipment if it can be safely packed:
Teletype and telephone apparatus.

- k) Office equipment:
Typewriters, adding machines, accounting machines.

- l) Special apparatus:
Rectifiers, transformers, catalyzers in sulphuric acid and nitric acid plants, but not: Motors, generators, switch components.

- m) Furnaces:
Electrically-heated and gas-heated furnaces, if transportable; that is, hardening furnaces, salt bath crucible furnaces, muffle furnaces.

A.O.K. 10 Sec Ops

26 Sep 1943

No 374/43

7 Copies

(Copy 2)

This document has been prepared and distributed in accordance with security regulations.

ARMY ORDER NO 4

- 1) 5 Amer Army has failed to break through our lines and to disturb our withdrawal operations.

8 Brit Army has been held up to a great extent by extensive road demolitions, and apparently intends to advance along the Adriatic coast with the mass of its forces.

It must be expected that the enemy will attack again with 5 Amer Army (which has meanwhile been reinforced and deployed for action) and 8 Brit Army, in an effort to envelop 10 Army by breaking through from both coasts. At the same time land operations against both flanks may be expected.

After capturing the Salerno - Avellino road, the enemy forces opposite our right wing will at first try to envelop the intermediate positions of 14 Corps by moving powerful forces through Monteforte or Arienzo, while those opposite our left wing will try to reach the defiles leading out of the mountains west of Foggia ahead of our own formations by throwing forward mobile detachments.

2) Plans of the Army and conduct of operations:

During the course of the next weeks 10 Army will withdraw to the defence line "Bernhardt" in a delaying action. For military and economic reasons it is important that the withdrawal operations be completed as slowly as possible, without thereby seriously impairing the fighting strength of the Army.

Within the limits of the delaying action, every opportunity is to be taken of destroying enemy forces that have pushed ahead incautiously, and of inflicting heavy losses through action of combined arms. Withdrawal to the individual defence lines and the delaying action between them are dependent on the enemy advance.

Withdrawal movements must only take place as a result of overwhelming enemy pressure or of heavy losses caused by intense artillery fire. The practice is to be followed of intensifying our own artillery fire shortly before withdrawal, and of posting rearguards well supplied with ammunition to screen the withdrawal movement.

In addition the Army is forming new reserves by withdrawing 16 Pz Div and 29 Pz Gren Div from the front.

Position on 9 Oct 43

ORDER OF BATTLE OF THE LARGE FORMATIONS OF 10TH ARMY

(INCLUDING TROOPS ATTACHED FROM GENERAL HEADQUARTERS POOL)

App 410, War Diary A.O.K. 10
No 328/43, Secret

18 Copies (Copy No 18)

A.O.K. 10

2 Bn Army Sig Regt 512
1 Bn S.S. Police Regt 20 (less 3 Coy)
PW Transport Escort Bn Münster
Railway Constr Bn 12
Bridging Column 29
Constr Bn 432 (new)

GENERAL OF ENGINEERS AT O.B.S. (GENERAL BESSEL AND STAFF)

Fortress Eng Staff 16
Sector Group I/Fort Eng 16
Rock-drilling Coy 88
Constr Bn 433 (less 2 Coy)
1 Coy Local Constr Bn 9

H.Q. Eng Regt 543
Sector Group II/Fort Eng 16

Rock drilling coy 77
2 Coy Constr Bn 433
5 Coy Local Constr Bn 9

Course for Engineer Junior Leaders (Thorn)
Demolition Group Feldernhalle (Rademacher)

76 Corps

Corps Sig Bn 76
Army Flak Bn 302 (new, less 1 Coy)
Constr Bn 430
Arty Regt Staff for Special Employment 553
Heavy Arty Bn 764 (17 cm cannon)
Heavy Arty Bn 450 (heavy field howitzers)
Projector Regt 56 (less 1 Bn)
Staff Arty Comdr 476

65 Inf Div

Gren Regt 145
Gren Regt 146
Arty Regt 165
Recce Bn 165
Anti-Tank Bn 165
Eng Bn 165
Sig Bn 165

1 Para Div

Para Regt 1
Para Regt 3

Para Regt 4
Para M.G. Bn 1
1 and 2 Bns Para Arty Regt 1
Para Anti-Tank Bn 1
Para Eng Bn 1
Para Sig Bn 1
1 Coy Anti-tank Bn 90

29 Pz Gren Div

Pz Bn 129
Pz Gren Regt 115
Pz Gren Regt 71
Arty Regt 29
Pz Recce Bn 129
Eng Bn 29
Sig Bn 29
Army Flak Bn 313
Replacement Training Bn 29

26 Pz Div

Pz Regt 26
Pz Gren Regt 9
Pz Gren Regt 67
Pz Arty Regt 93
Pz Recce Bn 26
Pz Eng Bn 93
Pz Sig Bn 93
Army Flak Bn 304
Replacement Training Bn 93

16 Pz Div

Pz Regt 2
Pz Gren Regt 64
Pz Gren Regt 79
Pz Arty Regt 16
Pz Recce Bn 16
Pz Eng Bn 16
Pz Sig Bn 16
Army Flak Bn 274
Replacement Training Bn 16

14 Corps

Corps Sig Bn 60
Eng Bn 60
Flak Bn 501
1 Bn Projector Regt 56
Staff Arty Comdr 414

305 Inf Div

Gren Regt 576
Gren Regt 577
Gren Regt 578
Arty Regt 305
Recce Bn 305
Anti-Tank Bn 305
Sig Bn 305

15 Pz Gren Div

Pz Bn 215
Pz Gren Regt 104
Pz Gren Regt 129
Arty Regt 33
Pz Recce Bn 33
Eng Bn 33
Sig Bn 33
Army Flak Bn 312
Projector Regt 71 (less 2 Bn)

3 Pz Gren Div

Assault Gun Bn 103
Pz Gren Regt 29
Arty Regt 3 (less 1 Bty)
Pz Recce Bn 103
Eng Bn 3
Sign Bn 3
Army Flak Bn 312

Hermann Goring Pz Div

Special Service Bde H.G.
Pz Regt H.R.
Pz Gren Regt 1 H.G.
- 2 H.G.
Pz Arty Regt H.G.
Pz Recce Bn H.G.
Pz Eng Bn H.G.
Pz Sig Bn H.G.
Flak Regt H.G.
1 Bn Flak Regt 49

Pz Gren Regt 115
Pz Gren Bn Reggio
2 Bn Projector Regt 71

A.O.K. 10, Sec Ops

4 Oct 1943

No 409/43

9 Copies

This document has been prepared in
accordance with security regulations

ARMY ORDER NO 6Preparations for taking up the "Bernhardt" positionA. Conduct of battle before and in the "Bernhardt" position

1. The object of the battle in the "Victor" line is to gain time for construction of the "Bernhardt" position, the moving up of fresh troops, and the salvaging of important supplies.

Therefore the battle in "Viktor" is to be carried on more tenaciously than ever. The line is to be held for the time being.

A withdrawal will only take place if a large-scale enemy attack is clearly recognized as imminent. I definitely reserve to myself the right to issue the order for withdrawal.

2. For the conduct of battle in a future withdrawal over "Barbara" to "Bernhardt", the principles already laid down hold good. According to these, in sectors having favourable terrain, the enemy must be forced again and again to move up his artillery into position and prepare it for action.

In the "Barbara" line a protracted resistance should be offered once more.

The corps commands are responsible for obstacles and demolitions as far as and including "Barbara"; after "Barbara" Maj Gen Bessel is responsible.

On reaching "Barbara", the corps commands must be prepared to assume command of "Bernhardt".

Orders will be given in good time for the subordination under the respective Corps Commands of the construction and engineer forces employed there at the time.

3. A DECISIVE STAND IS TO BE MADE ON THE "BERNHARDT LINE."

The principles of the battle procedure must be clearly recognized, and the will to fight stubbornly, down to the last soldier in my army, must dominate.

Beginning immediately, all ranks must use their entire energy to make good the inroads in the fighting spirit of the troops which are the inevitable result of a long delaying action.

The objects of the "Bernhardt" position are:

- a) To guard the central Italian region, with its great significance from the military and political standpoints.
- b) If occasion arises to serve as a basis of operations for a fresh offensive.

The point of main effort of the defence plan lies in the mountains valleys. An outflanking of the valley positions by the enemy is to be prevented by taking up positions and stationing reserves on the adjoining heights on either side.

In the terrain lying between, the fighting efficiency of the covering parties and reserves is to be maintained in such degrees that every attempted enemy penetration can be cut to pieces.

A flexible use of artillery, with strong concentration at key points, play a decisive role.

A knowledge of the enemy's fighting methods is essential for the determination of our own tactics.

B. Zones of command and sector boundaries in the "Bernhardt" position

- I. 1. From 5 Oct A.O.K. 10 assumes command of the "Bernhardt" position.

A.O.K. 10 will be augmented by Maj Gen Bessel with the staffs, engineer and construction units already employed there.

Maj Gen Bessel will still be responsible to me for the centralized direction of reconnaissance and construction work of the position.

The Corps Commanders must go ahead with the details of reconnaissance and construction in closest cooperation with Maj Gen Bessel, supporting him to the fullest extent.

Individual groups from regiments, battalions and companies are to be sent back in good time to set up the position.

2. The following dispositions have been decided on for the occupation of "Bernhardt".

Right: 14 Corps:

15 Pz Gren Div	right
3 Pz Gren Div	centre
305 Inf Div	left

Left: 76 Corps:

1 Para Div	right
An infantry division	
(identity no yet	
decided on)	left
(until it arrives, 16 Pz Div)	

As A.O.K. reserve:

16 Pz Div behind the Adriatic Wing.

(until arrival of the infantry division,
also Pz Div

26 Pz Div will then pass under the command of O.B.S.

3. Sector boundaries:

Boundary with O.B.S. (Hermann Goring Div): Terracina-M.
della Fate - Ceccano.

Boundary between 14 and 76 Corps: About 3560-2852.

Maj Gen Bessel will determine the exact line.

II. Reconnaissance and construction.

1. Reconnaissance work on the "Bernhardt" line is to be completed as quickly as possible by Staff Bessel, assisted by the divisional reconnaissance staffs, so that construction work can be commenced everywhere in the position.

2. Directions for reconnaissance and construction:

THE MAIN REQUIREMENTS FOR "BERNHARDT" ARE SECURITY AGAINST MECHANIZED ATTACK AND PROTECTION FROM CONCENTRATED DRUM-FIRE BY ENEMY ARTILLERY.

Means to this end:

Generally:

- a) Everything underground.
- b) Location of the main battle line on the rear slope, so that to a great extent it will be out of effective range of the enemy's artillery. Only advanced outposts to be on the crest or the front slope of the heights. In the individual sectors, well camouflaged

observation and flank security is to be ensured by artillery and heavy weapons.

- c) On the coast, observed fire from the enemy's naval guns (balloon observation from the ships) must be eliminated. In the coastal stretches there must be only dense mine-fields commanded by gun-fire.
- d) Artillery positions must be placed so that concentrated fire can be directed on the enemy before the defence of the defiles. At the same time positions must be chosen from which a swift change of position can be guaranteed with the object of concentrating the artillery fire in front of the point of main effort of an enemy attack. In the territory lying between, mortars must be used.

Alternative emplacements with observation posts must be prepared as a matter of routine for artillery and heavy arms.

There must also be dummy installations.

- e) There must be defence zones in the defiles; several positions protected by anti-tank ditches and minefields. Anti-tank ditches must be commanded by flanking anti-tank guns.
- f) Strong points must be protected by wire.

- g) See also: "Directions for position construction", C-in-C of the Army/Army Gen Staff/Constr Bn (II) No 3500/43, dated 8 Sep 43.

In detail:

- h) The points of main effort of the construction work lie in the defiles at Cassino leading to Avenzzano, and on the Adriatic Coast.
- i) In the territory lying between, all roads and mule-paths are to be thoroughly destroyed and mined, natives familiar with the country being employed for the purpose.
- k) In front of the position, the field of fire is to be ruthlessly cleared.

3. The labour forces at present available for construction fall far short of requirements.

Any available troops (trains etc) are to be employed by the corps commands.

Staff Bessel is to harness up the Italian civilian population, using armed force where necessary. For the present 2 Coy 20 Police Bn will be attached for the seizing of Italian labour.

4. The following units will be moved up to assist in the reconnaissance of "Bernhardt":

- a) Staff Bessel: From 5 Oct, Eng Regt Staff 543.
If possible this unit is to be employed in the future sector of 76 Corps.
- b) 14 Corps: Reconnaissance staff of 3 Div.

5. Material.

- a) O.B.S. remains responsible for supplying "Bernhardt" with engineering and construction equipment.
Maj Gen Bessel is to keep in close touch with Chief Eng Officer at O.B.S.
- b) In addition seized Italian material is to be used freely. A.O.K. 10 is to report to Mar Gen Bessel from time to time on the material on hand.

- III. 1. Corps commands will see to it that newly arrived units not used to battle conditions receive detailed instruction in their future work from qualified officers.
- 2. For mountain fighting, mule and carrier columns are to be formed; also for the newly arrived units.

IV. Luftwaffe

- 1. In future, Air Corps II will support the defensive fighting of the army. Our own airforce will shortly be increased.
- 2. In future, Flak Bde 22 will continue to operate in closest cooperation with the corps commands. Three new flak

battalions will be moved up for employment in the "Bernhardt" position in the sector of 76 Corps.

V. Reports

The following reports are to handed in by Staff Bessel:

1. On 7 Oct, the plan of the "Bernhardt" line on the 1 : 100,000 map.
2. On each Sunday, beginning 10 Oct:
 - a) On a pendulum position map the number of completed and planned installations.
 - b) The number of workers employed in the individual sectors.
 - c) Especially urgent material requirements.

Distribution:

Corps Commanders.

10 Army

ORDER OF BATTLE

22 Oct 43

(Original Text and Translation)

C-in-C. South

No. 468/43

1 NOV 43

5 Copies

(Copy 1)

Order for the conduct of the campaign

- 1) The enemy is attacking our intermediate positions with powerful forces. It is expected that he will attack along the entire front, in order first of all to gain possession of the Rome area. The centre of gravity of enemy operations will probably lie, as before, in the sectors favourable for commitment of armoured units. But at the same time the possibility of enemy landings in strength towards the rear of the Bernhardt position, with the object of outflanking it, as well as in the Rine area and to the north must be considered. Isolated operations in the interior (guerilla warfare) and the landing of airborne troops are to be expected.

For details see 1 Nov issue of: "Information concerning the enemy".

- 2) O.B.S. will hold the central Italian area and prevent enemy landings in deep flank from the sea south of the line Piombino - Civitanova, and will hold the Island of Elba and guard the Island of Pianosa.
- 3) 10 Army (for composition see App 1) will decisively defend the Bernhardt position and prevent enemy landings south of the line Terracina (exclusive) - Civitanova harbour (inclusive).

Construction in the Bernhard position does not yet meet requirements. It must therefore be continued by night and by day at high pressure by the defence troops employed thereon, and be improved ceaselessly.

The object is to create an impregnable system of positions in depth, and so to save German blood. Leaders of all ranks must never forget this high moral responsibility.

In order to gain time for further construction, the enemy must be dealt such a heavy blow when he first attacks the Bernhard position that a long time must elapse before his troops are again fit for attack. For this reason I authorise 3 Pz Gren Div and the artillery of Hermann Goring Pz Div to remain at the front for the time being, until 94 and 305 Inf Divs are completely organised for defence. A further order for the withdrawal of 26 and 16 pz Divs will follow.

The coastal defence on both sea-flanks must be the object of special attention. In this connection it is important that strong points be established which are well covered against fire from naval guns and air attack, while at the same time controlling the landing beaches with their heavy arms. The concentrations of reserves provided for defence against enemy landings must likewise be out of reach of shelling and enemy bombs. Furthermore the lines of approach best protected against naval gun-fire are to be reconnoitred and determined. The reconnaissance still necessary for field construction of the coastal defence is to be put under way forthwith. Results are to be reported. Construction work is to be carried out by the labour forces gradually becoming available at the front.

With reference to my order of 31 Oct, I again point out the necessity of making full effective use of all light infantry weapons.

The strong points of the Bernhard position which lie in the mountains are to be provided with a 14 days' supply of ammunition, food and fuel in view of the snowfall which is to be expected shortly. Overhead cable railways for supplies are to be installed in the most difficult sectors of the front.

- 4) 11 Air Corps will prevent enemy landings from the sea and from the air on the Tyrrhenian coast between Piombino and Terracina (both places inclusive). For this purpose a division is to be moved into a position of readiness in each of the Grosseto and Civitavecchia areas and in the area south of Rome. A time-table is to be prepared, so that on receipt of the code work for defence against possible enemy landings, a speedy concentration of forces can take place immediately, and two divisions employed in the Grosseto or Civitavecchia area and all three divisions in the Rome area. Road reconnaissances are to be set on foot forthwith to provide for the quick movement of the forces of 11 Air Corps in the battle zone of 10 Army, above all in the sector of 14 Pz Corps. A special order is being issued for coastal defence between Piombino and Terracina by 11 Air Corps.

The rejuvenation of the 16 and 29 Pz Gren Divs is, like the training of all troops, to be treated as a matter of the greatest urgency.

- 5) Army Group reserves.

- a) Pz Div Hermann Goring will reconnoitre the area Pico - Ceprano - Frosinone - Sezze, and prepare a time-table for defence against a possible enemy break-through from the direction of Cassino and enemy landings in the direction of Gaeta, Fondi and Nettuno. The preparations are to be made in closest co-operation with A.O.K. 10 and H.Q. 11 Air Corps. Results are to be reported to me on 15 Nov.

The divisional flak regiment will be employed for air defence in the Frosinone area in accordance with the wishes of A.O.K. 10.

The rejuvenation and training of the Division are to be pushed forward with the greatest dispatch.

- b) SS Aslt Bde "Reichsführer SS" (Sturmbrigade "Reichsführer SS", will remain for the present in the area around Tivoli, in the event of enemy landings at Rome passing under the command of 11 Air Corps. The requisite preparations for the employment of the Brigade are to be accelerated, and H.Q. 11 Air Corps will report their conclusion to me by not later than 5 Nov.

Arrangements have been made for withdrawal of the Brigade to the Teramo area after the arrival of the mass of 16 Pz Div. Once there, in the event of enemy landings, it will pass under the command of A.O.K. 10. Suitable orders will be issued at the right moment.

- 6) The Commandant of Elba will defend the Island of Elba and prevent the setting up of enemy air bases on the Island of Pianosa.
- 7) The German Naval Command for Italy will support the army formations by:
- a) Continuing the attack against the fighting ships and transports of the enemy with surface vessels and U-boats.
- b) Laying of mines for protection of especially endangered sections of both coasts. In addition, fighting forces and blockade material still available are to be put to offensive use against the ports and sea-lines of the enemy.

- c) Taking over part of the supply transport to the rear areas and protecting it while at sea. For this purpose the coastwise traffic on the west coast is to be developed to capacity; on the east coast as far as Pescara within the limits of the means available. Emergency ports or unloading points on the open coast are to be prepared.
- 8) Airforce 2 will support the defensive battle of 10 Army with their close-range forces, and in the future they will attack enemy shipping with their heavy battle formations.

Of the flak formations employed in O.B.S.

22 Flak Bde is directed to operate in closest
co-operation with 10 Army
Flak Regt 149 with 11 Air Corps.

- 9) Special orders for supplies follow.
- 10) Tac H.Q. O.B.S. and arrangements for signal communications to remain unchanged.

KESSELRING

General Field Marshal

C.-in-C. South
No 468/43 Top Secret
dated 1 Nov 43

A.O.K. 10 with Army Troops

H.Q. 14 Pz Corps with Corps Troops

H.Q. 76 Pz Corps with Corps Troops

65 Inf Div

94 Inf Div

305 Inf Div

15 Pz Gren Div

1 Para Div

26 Pz Div

Also under command of 10 Army:

3 Bn Pz Gren Regt 382

2 Bn 3 "Brandenburg" (less one platoon)

Reinforced High Mountain Bns 3 and 4 (Arrival after 20 Nov)

Army Flak Arty Bn 302 (new)

Flak Bn 501

High Arty Comd 114 (arrival after 20 Nov)

Arty Comd 414

Arty Comd 476

H.Q. Special Arty Regt 553

Hy Arty Bn 450

Hy Arty Bn 557

Hy Arty Bn 764

Projector Regt 56

Projector Regt 71

Pz Observation Bty 16)

) will be relieved by 1 Observation Bn

Pz Observation Bty 26)

Coastal Arty Regt Graf

3 Coy A-tk Bn 590

H.Q. Coastal Defence South

Portress Engr H.Q. 16 with Sector Groups I, II and III

H.Q. Engr Regt 543

Engr Bn 60

Constr Bns 430, 432 and 433

Coysl and 5 Local Constr Bn 9

Rock-drilling Coys 5, 6, 7 and 8

1 Bn SS Police Regt 20 (less 3 Coy)

Landeschützen Bn 686 (less one platoon) x)

Landeschützen Bn 746

PW Escort Bn Münster

x) Landeschützen = Troops for service in rear areas composed of
older men.

10 Army

ORDER OF BATTLE

10 Oct 43

(Original Text and Translation)

- 1 -

EXCERPTS FROM DAILY REPORTS C.-IN-C. SOUTHWEST

(3 Dec - 31 Dec 1943)

(G.M.D.S. - H 22/108; H 22/109)

Date of
Report For

3 Dec 2 Dec In the sector of 5 Brit Corps, an enemy attack by considerable infantry and armoured forces between Colle San Biagio and Castelfrentano about 1 km south of Orsogna was brought to a halt. Another enemy attack supported by tanks between Madonna del Carmine and Lanciano led to the capture of M. del Carmine. At Treglio, which had to be evacuated because of strong enemy pressure, the attack was sealed off. Strong thrusts against Lanciano and S. Vito were repelled. At about 1330 hr the road M. Sailvano to Guilinova was fired on by naval guns.

4 3 During the afternoon, after an enemy attack supported by 15 tanks, Frisa (4 km NW Lanciano) was lost. Our advanced outposts have withdrawn to the north bank of the Moro. Late in the morning the enemy attacked S. Vito from the south and along the coast, and was able to penetrate. Our outposts are still in the northern part of the town.

After the temporary withdrawal of H.Q. 65 Inf Div, H.Q. 26 Pz Div and H.Q. 90 Pz Gren Div assumed command. The boundary between the divisions is Vacri (7 km SE Chieti) - Madonna del Carmine (3 km NW Lanciano).

A-tk Bn 590 is being moved to 10 Army as active reserve behind the left wing.

1 1 65 Inf Div: During the night the enemy did not continue his attacks. Employing Battle Group Usedom (reinforced Pz Gren Regt 67) and Fd Replacement Bn 165, an interception line was formed along a general line: 1 km north of Elici - along the

road villa Andreoli to 1 km south of Treglio - from there to the coast at P. di Cavaluccio.

4 4 On the left wing of the Army, S Vito was given up entirely by our troops. Night reports are not yet available.

5 4 In the sector of 5 Brit and 1 Cdn Divs, apart from harassing fire the day passed quietly. A patrol of 8 Ind Div at Melone was repulsed. The attack which was expected south of Orsogna because of troop concentrations in that area did not materialize. North-east of Orsogna there was lively patrol activity on both sides. Intense artillery fire was directed on the main battle line and on Guardiaagrele, Melone, Orsogna and to the north-east. The enemy, who for a time was in possession of Frisa, has again withdrawn from that locality. An attack by two companies of 78 Brit Inf Div forced our advanced patrols out of S. Apollinare. An enemy assault of equal strength at S. Vito was repulsed.

5 5 90 Pz Gren Div: During the late afternoon of 4 Dec there were renewed enemy tank assaults from S. Vito, in which 6 tanks were destroyed or disabled by gun-fire. In this area our patrols were withdrawn to the north bank of the Moro.

6 5 90 Pz Gren Div: Fighting reconnaissances against the main battle line were repulsed. Our patrols withdrew north after defensive fighting with several enemy assault detachments.

On 6 Dec large forces are expected to attack on the left wing of the Army. Suitable reserves are in readiness.

Line-crosser information:

At Lanciano and proceeding from Lanciano in the direction of S. Vito are about 70 Canadian tanks (probably elements of 1 Cdn Armd Bde).

7 6 In the area of 5 Brit Corps, the enemy, taking advantage of the thick fog, attacked during the whole north of Ruatti, at S. Leonardo and on the coast, with forces up to battalion strength and supported by tanks, apparently with the object of establishing bridgeheads on the other side of the Moro. While it was possible to clean up the situation at S. Leonardo by counter-attack, the points of penetration at Ruatti were sealed off. Caldari is still in the hands of the enemy. At the coast fighting was still in progress at dusk.

PW information:

1 Cdn Inf Bde (1 Cdn Inf Div) west of S. Vito. 21 Ind Inf Bde (8 Ind Div) in the Lanciano area. According to PW statements 1 Cdn Inf Div has relieved 78 Brit Inf Div.

90 Pz Gren Div: On the extreme left wing of the Division the enemy break-through to the north side of the Moro was sealed off. The enemy still holds a small bridgehead. During the fighting 11 prisoners were taken, 3 tanks put out of action and one wireless set captured. In the entire divisional sector there was harassing artillery fire.

On the left wing of the Army, powerful assaults with the object of establishing bridgeheads on the other side of the Moro in the sector of 90 Pz Gren Div; withdrawal of armoured forces from the area before 26 Pz Div; and the lessening of

artillery and patrol activity in the sector of this division, indicate a coming attack against 90 Pz Gren Div.

In the right corps-sector enemy fighting reconnaissances sent our against the main battle line were repelled. After defensive action against several enemy assault detachments towards Frisa our patrols withdrew north. In the coastal sector, enemy artillery fire was intensified.

Elements of 2 N.Z. Inf Div have probably been pushed forward towards the North-East in the direction of the mouth of the Moro.

8 7 According to wireless reconnaissance, 1 Cdn Div has relieved 78 Brit Inf Div on the right wing of 8 Brit Army.

An attack along the coastal road by 1 Cdn Inf Div with from one to two companies from the bridgeheads taken the previous day was shelled by our artillery. In the sector between Poggiofiorito and the coast there was harassing artillery fire and patrol activity on both sides.

PW Information:

1 Cdn Inf Bde between the coast and S. Leonardo.

2 Cdn Inf Bde between S. Leonardo and Ruatti.

Elements of 8 Ind Inf Div in the area south of Ruatti.

9 8 The counter-attack launched in the morning to clean up the enemy bridgehead at Caldari (SW S. Vito) has not so far been able to throw the enemy back across the Moro. Battles are still in progress on both sides of the coastal road. Enemy

troops up to company strength are assaulting from the bridgehead.

Our morning counter-attacks with tanks and machine guns for the cleaning up of the enemy bridgehead at Caldari were repelled by 8 Ind Div. 31 prisoners were taken (30 Indians and 1 Canadian). An attack by 1 Cdn Inf Div from Ruatti with infantry and 25 tanks were held up at the eastern edge of the village by concentrated fire. On both sides of the coastal road battles with enemy shock troops up to company strength are still in process. Intense traffic activity as well as concentrations of vehicles behind 2 N.S. 8 Ind and 1 Cdn Inf Divs.

9 9 90 Pz Gren Div: On the extreme left wing of the Army, the enemy assault along the coastal road from the bridgehead resulted in a local penetration. Reports on the result of our immediate counter-attack, which was supported by tanks, are not yet to hand.

10 9 Efforts by 1 Cdn Inf Div to extend the points of penetration south-west and north of S. Leonardo were prevented, and the breaches were cleaned up in a counter-attack. Along the coastal road the battles are still in progress. In the areas Guardiagrele Arielli and Ruatti-S. Leonardo there is very lively artillery activity on both sides. Motor vehicle traffic and concentrations, and an assembly of about 40 tanks at S. Apollinare were effectively fired on by our artillery and mortars. Enemy landings with small craft on the coast at Porto di Acquabella directly in front of our line are apparently only for the purpose of moving up supplies and heavy arms.

10 10 On the afternoon of 9 Dec, after further reinforcement, the enemy resumed the attack against the right wing of 90 Pz Gren Div. All attempts by the enemy to pierce our main battle line failed in face of the combined efforts of our arms. The fluctuating battles, in which 2 enemy tanks were put out of action continued through the night.

11 10 In the area of 1 Cdn Inf Div, after an enemy penetration 2 km north of Ruatti had been repelled during the night, Canadian forces attacked here again at about midday without result. At the same time the enemy launched assaults from S. Leonardo west and north-west, under cover of a smoke-screen and strongly supported by artillery and tanks, with the object of enlarging his bridgehead. While the thrust towards the north-west was repulsed, the enemy gained ground in his push westwards. The attack was halted west of Torre. Also in the coastal sector there was again intense enemy fire, artillery and aircraft equipped with cannon being employed.

PW Information:

1 Cdn Armd Bde in the northern coastal sector at S. Donato.

11 11 On the left wing of 90 Pz Gren Div, the enemy continued his attempts during the afternoon to push further ahead from Torre, and to the north-west from S. Leonardo. The attacks were again held up by the concentrated fire of all heavy arms, 5 enemy tanks being put out of action. At about 1500 hrs an enemy attack supported by tanks, on both sides of Hill 84 (2 km east of road junction Route 16 and road to Villa Grande) was thrown back in a counter-attack. In a renewed assault on Hill 84, 6 enemy tanks broke through, 4 being put out of

action. Sporadic artillery fire and occasional smoke bombs on our main line, our rear area and, for the first time, on Ortona.

H.Q. and 3 Bn Para Regt 3 are in the area behind 90 Pz Gren Div.

12 11 90 Pz Gren Div: In several assaults from the area of Ruatti and S. Leonardo to the north-west and north, the enemy sought to enlarge his bridgeheads. The assaults were repelled everywhere, partly by counter-attack. One enemy tank was destroyed.

2 Bn Para Regt 3 was moved to Ortona to guard the coast and to serve as a quick reserve.

13 12 In the area of 90 Pz Gren Div the enemy attacked again 2.5 km south of Ortona and south-west of S. Leonardo. Temporary breaches in our main battle line were sealed off for the time being. During the evening all points of penetration were retaken in counter-attacks.

The remnants of Gren Regt 145 have been moved to the area around Filetto (W Orsogna) as divisional reserve. Fus Bn 65 Inf Div was withdrawn from the front to be held as a divisional reserve 3 km SSW Ortona.

13 13 2 Bn Para Regt 1 has been relieved by Battle Group Droste (Remnants of Gren Regt 145).

90 Pz Gren Div: Towards midnight the enemy achieved a local break-through south-west of Caldari. The point of penetration

has been sealed off. A counter-attack will be carried out during the morning of 13 Dec. In the left divisional sector there was no fighting.

14 Dec 13

In the area of 26 Pz Div, some enemy harassing fire. In an effective concentration of fire our divisional artillery shelled the enemy forces, which were advancing north over the Moro bridges towards Frisa.

90 Pz Gren Div: In a series of assaults the enemy continued his attacks along the entire front. On the left wing, 2 Bn Para Regt 3 repelled the enemy with heavy casualties. In the middle sector, there was a penetration east of Licini, which was intercepted on the Orsogna-Ortona road. Elements of the intruding enemy tried without success to out-flank our troops with single tanks. 2 Bn Para Regt 3 was moved down from the north to clean up the situation, and by about 2100 hrs they had re-taken point 115 (4 km south of Ortona) in spite of stubborn enemy resistance. By that time 5 enemy tanks had been put out of action. Since midnight, after intense artillery preparation and under cover of smoke screens, the enemy has been attacking in the entire sector of Regt 200. Further reports are not yet to hand.

15 14

90 Pz Gren Div: The attacks commenced by the enemy during the night continued on a wide front and with greatly increased artillery fire. On the right wing of the Division the enemy attack was sealed off. In the evening an enemy attack in battalion strength and supported by tanks, which was carried out along the coast, was repelled with heavy enemy losses, 3 tanks being disabled. On the other hand, the enemy was able to break through our lines in the middle sector with two

assault detachments, that on the west taking point 198 (4 km NNW Frisa) on the Orsogna-Ortona road. The detachment on the right forced its way through past Licini to point 155 (2.5 km NNW point 198), and veering north tried to gain more ground. In the evening of 14 Dec, in a concentric attack against the point of penetration, from the south-west by one panzer grenadier battalion and one armoured company, and from the north by one parachute battalion, the enemy was forced back on point 155.

Intention: Complete adjustment of the break-through. To accomplish this, the following units are being brought up: 1 Bn Para Regt 3 from Chieti; and Group Liebach (Para Regt 6, less 1 and 2 Bns, Airborne Trg Bn and 6 Bty Arty Regt 3), previously Army Group Reserve, from the Cassino area.

14 14 90 Pz Gren Div: Shortly after midnight, after a 6-hour artillery preparation of drum-fire type, the enemy attacked the main defence line of Pz Gren Regt 200 on a wide front. For the most part we were able to repel the attack. Only at height 153 has the enemy been able to achieve a small local penetration. In the left divisional sector there was not fighting of importance.

15 14 PW Information:

3 Cdn Inf Bde of 1 Cdn Inf div in the Villa Caldari area. Thus the whole 1 Cdn Inf Div in the Villa Caldari area. Thus the whole 1 Cdn Inf Div with 1, 2 and 3 Inf Bdes and 1 Cdn Tk Bde are engaged in the coastal sector.

15 15 90 Pz Gren Div: Our counter-attack re-captured point 155 at about 0330 hrs, and was resumed at about 1500 hrs. It has not yet been possible to establish communication between the two assault detachments engaged. Details are lacking. The number of enemy tanks put out of action 14 Dec has increased to 9.

16 15 Renewed enemy attacks up to battalion strength in the sector of 90 Pz Gren Div were unsuccessful. On the extreme left wing, enemy attacks on the positions of 2 and 3 Bns Para Regt 3 were likewise beaten off with heavy losses. At the point of penetration of the previous day, there are still weak enemy forces occupying the road at either side of point 155 (5.5 km SW Ortona). The height itself is held by us.

16 16 Since 0500 hrs, the left wing of the divisional sector and the extreme right wing of 90 Pz Gren Div have been under artillery fire of drum-fire type. Since 0400 hrs, the enemy has been feeling his way forward with tanks against Pz Recce Bn 26. An attack against the left sector of 26 Pz Div and the right sector of 90 Pz Gren Div is to be expected in the near future.

17 16 At the dividing line between 26 Pz Div and 90 Pz Gren Div, Pz Recce Bn 26 was forced back to about 300 m north-west of the railway line. An attempt by the enemy to force his way through to Crecchio (60 km NW Frisa) failed. During the afternoon, apart from numerous surprise bursts of artillery fire, there was no further infantry action.

90 Pz Gren Div: Since early morning, after intense artillery preparation and with strong and continuous air support, the enemy attacked on a wide front with the centre of gravity on the right wing of the division. While in the left sector all

assaults were repelled with heavy loss to the enemy and the disabling of one tank, he succeeded in penetrating the main defence line between Marcone and point 198 (4 km NW Frisa). During the midday hours, the enemy continued his attacks in force, with the object of widening the breach. By means of repeated counter-attacks and after bitter fighting, we succeeded in halting the attack on the line Villa Bacilli - point 127 (5 km NW and 7.5 km N Frisa respectively), and so prevented a break-through.

18 17 On the left wing of 2 Bn Gren Regt 361, the enemy made a local penetration during the midday hours which in the course of the afternoon was cleaned up in a counter-assault. In a spirited counter-attack, 2 Bn Para Regt 3 re-took point 137 and 115 (4 km S Ortona), fighting off enemy counter-thrusts. On the extreme left wing of the Army, the enemy carried out several unsuccessful reconnaissances in the area of Regt 3. One enemy tank was put out of action by anti-tank guns, and a second struck a mine and was destroyed at close range.

19 18 26 Pz Div: Towards midday, our advance posts fought off a minor enemy thrust, which was supported by tanks. A renewed assault in platoon strength against the left wing was likewise repulsed with heavy enemy losses. Harassing fire by enemy artillery as well as surprise shelling in the area NE Arielli to Tollo and Canosa continued during the whole day.

During the morning, after several hours of concentrated artillery fire (about 22,000 rounds), the enemy supported by about 17 tanks, attacked in the S. Elena area (3 km SW Ortona) and was able to effect a small local penetration, which was sealed off. In the afternoon, another attack in battalion

strength, supported by 15 tanks, collapsed in the concentrated fire of all arms. At the same time an enemy thrust in the area SE Casa Vezzani (6 km SW Ortona), also supported by tanks, was likewise repelled, the flak artillery accounting for three enemy tanks. In the sector of 2 and 3 Bns Para Regt 3, enemy assaults along the coast were repelled with heavy enemy losses. Enemy tanks and infantry in position in the area around point 155 (12 km N Orisa) were shelled by concentrated fire from our batteries and flak artillery.

20 19 During the morning, operations by assault detachments of 1 Cdn Div were unsuccessful. At about 1400 hrs, after intense artillery preparation, two forces, each consisting of 2 companies, attacked three times without success from the direction of S. Leonardo against point 115, and from S. Donato in the direction of Ortona. Enemy forces with tanks and infantry in assembly positions at point 137 were broken up by concentrated artillery fire. In the entire right sector of the Corps there was harassing fire by enemy artillery, with focal points on the road junction 2.5 km SSE Ortona. Between 1200 and 1700 hrs there was intense artillery fire of medium and heavy calibre, reaching at times 120 rounds per minute.

19 19 In the zone of 90 Pz Gren Div enemy forces at the point of penetration west of point 155 and at point 127 have been increased.

19 19 H.Q. 1 Para Div have taken over command of the new divisional sector. Tac H.Q. at Y 14 (Miglianico). Right boundary (to 90 Pz Gren Div) Q 16 - Y 16 - point 155 (Villamagna - Tollo - Point 155). In the previous sector of 1 Para Div, the commander of Para Regt 1 is temporarily in command.

20 19 90 Pz Gren Div: Along the entire divisional sector, the enemy pushed forward, at first with rather weak forces, towards the main defence line. an enemy assault supported by tanks led to a local penetration at point 151 (6 km SW Ortona). After midday there was harassing fire by enemy artillery in the whole divisional sector.

21 20 1 Para Div: In the morning, an enemy assault in company strength supported by 4 tanks on the right wing of the division was repulsed with heavy casualties. On the other hand, after two and a half hours of artillery preparation, an enemy attack in at least regimental strength, with strong tank support, succeeded in penetrating our positions. After bitter, very heavy fighting, the enemy was brought to a halt at the southern fringes of Ortona. The town is being held for the present. In this engagement the enemy suffered very heavy casualties. Ortona and also Torre Mucchia were under continuous and heavy artillery fire.

20 20 In the area of Battle Group Schulenburg (Para Regt 1), 65 Inf Div, and 26 Pz Div there was parol and artillery activity on both sides. Occasional bursts of firing in the entire sector of 1 Para Div, the heaviest fire being west of Ortona.

22 21 During the afternoon 1 Cdn Inf Div attacked in company strength south-west of Ortona. The attack was repulsed. An enemy patrol of one section was destroyed. Before the entire divisional sector harassing artillery fire besides several bursts of surprise fire on Ortona.

90 Pz Gren Div: An enemy assault in about company strength in the neighbourhood of point 181 was beaten off. The enemy

artillery was raging on points behind the lines in the divisional sector.

1 Para Div: All battalions of Para Regt 3 are now engaged in the foremost line in the sector of 1 Para Div. 1 and 2 Bns Para Regt 4 are south-east of Tollo and at Torre Mucchia respectively as divisional reserves.

In order to avoid the heavy enemy artillery fire, in the areas of 26 Pz Div and 90 Pz Gren Div our defence line is being moved back during the night of 21/22 Dec to the line Arielli - south-east slope of Cracchia - 1 km north-west of point 181 - 800 north-east of point 181 - southern border of Ortona.

22 21 The preparations of the enemy for attacking the left wing of 76 Pz Corps appear to be almost complete.

23 22 In the right sector of 5 Brit Corps lively artillery harassing fire with the heaviest fire at Melone, Orsogna, Arielli, Villa Grande and Ortona, increasing at times to drum-fire in the coastal sector. Our artillery shelled the continuously heavy motor vehicle traffic on the roads Perano - Castelfrentano and Castellfrentano - Salarola. 10 prisoners from 8 Ind Div were captured at St di Caldari by one of our patrols. A tank-supported enemy attack was stopped on either side of Villa Grande by concentrated fire from all arms. Of 7 tanks forcing their way through, 2 were put out of action. After two tank-supported attacks from the south of Ortona at about 0900 and 1100 hrs by 1 Cdn Inf Div had been beaten off in bitter fighting, in the afternoon the enemy attacked again three times with a force of two regiments, strongly supported by aircraft, tanks and artillery. All attacks were beaten

off, with a loss to the enemy of three more tanks besides very heavy casualties. Ortona is in our hands. At point 127, two waiting enemy battalions were effectively shelled by our artillery.

24 23 A patrol from 8 Ind Inf Div which had penetrated into Villa Grande was captured. At about 1150 and 1400 hrs, two more attacks were beaten off after reaching the eastern border of Villa Grande, in spite of strong artillery support. Enemy concentrations south of the village were successfully shelled by our artillery. Enemy attacks in company strength north-east of height 127 collapsed in front of our position. 1 Cdn Inf Div attacked our lines south of Ortona repeatedly with forces up to two battalions strong, supported by tanks employed as artillery and using shock-troops with flame throwers. All attacks were repulsed, the enemy sustaining especially heavy casualties. Ortona remains as before in our hands.

25 24 1 Cdn Inf Div attacked on the whole divisional front with superior forces. Two attacks, each in battalion strength, on Villa Grande were repulsed. In the middle sector, after strong artillery preparation and supported by six tanks, the enemy attacked with vastly superior strength, and by dark had captured the heights on either side of S. Nicola. At the same time Canadian troops pushed forward against Ortona from south and south-west. After the enemy had been beaten back several times, he succeeded, in strength not yet known, in penetrating the place during the evening, reaching the centre of the town at about 2200 hrs. The house-to-house fighting, in which both sides are suffering heavy casualties, is still going on.

Intention: 76 Pz Corps is withdrawing to the new line of defence Villa Grande - Torre Mucchia (3 km NW Ortona), while fighting obstinately in the intermediate area.

26 25 In the area of 1 Cdn Inf Div, after fluctuating fighting, during the course of which a detachment was temporarily cut off by the enemy, in the evening Villa Grande was still in our hands. As a result of our counter-attack the enemy had to give up the height 1 km east of S. Nicola. In Ortona the bitter hour-to-hour fighting lasted throughout the day, the enemy being unable to gain any ground. Enemy casualties at Ortona are estimated at one battalion.

Information from captured sources: The boundary between 8 Ind and 1 Cdn Inf Divs runs from the eastern border of Villa Grande in a south-easterly direction.

25 25 In the sector of 1 Para Div the situation at Villa Grande has not yet been clarified. Each of the heights at either side of S. Nicola is occupied by one enemy battalion. The village itself is still in our hands. The intended withdrawal movement from Ortona has not yet been carried out. In the centre of the town, fierce street-fighting still continues, in which both sides are suffering heavy casualties. 3 Bn Para Regt 1 is stationed as reserve 1 km NE Z 21 (Villa Tomaso).

27 26 90 Pz Gren Div: The enemy is digging himself in the Vezzani area. In the left sector, an enemy attack in company strength on our advanced out-posts at Casa Vezzani was repulsed. Our artillery supported the defensive fighting of 1 Para Div in the area of Villa Grande and S. Elena. The rear areas of the

divisional sector were under harassing fire from enemy artillery.

Fluctuating fighting continued throughout the day on the entire front of 1 Para Div. At Villa Grande two enemy attacks, at times in company strength and supported by tanks, were repelled, in some places in hand-to-hand fighting; in the course of these engagements nine enemy tanks were put out of action with hand-grenades (Faustpatronen). In the middle sector we took point 108 (south of S. Nicola) in a counter-attack, and succeeded in pushing through to the south. But the height lying 1 km to the east of S. Nicola had to be given up again in face of strong enemy pressure. The bitter fighting at Ortona continues unabated. The situation at that place is still unchanged. Four enemy tanks were destroyed in hand-to-hand fighting. 29 prisoners were brought in, and 120 enemy dead were counted.

27 27 In the area of 90 Pz Gren and 1 Para Divs harassing artillery fire on both sides. The penetration made yesterday afternoon east of S. Nicola was sealed off. Situation otherwise unchanged.

28 27 1 Para Div: During the morning an enemy attack by about two companies in the area of Villa Grande was repelled, and an enemy force assembled in the rear area was broken up by concentrated artillery fire. Another tank-supported attack in company strength south-east of villa Grande was likewise unsuccessful. In the centre of the Division there were no major actions. At Ortona the fierce fighting is still going on, and the enemy is suffering unusually heavy casualties. The situation there is unchanged. Enemy tanks, apparently on

account of the losses on the previous day, were held back more and used as artillery.

28 28 During the night, 90 Pz Gren and 1 Para Divs withdrew to the line west of Z 22 - 1 km east of Z 34 - Z 36 (W Villa Grande - 1 km E Tollo - Torre Mucchia), without the enemy following up.

28 27 Troop concentrations of 1 Cdn Inf Div south of Villa Grande were shelled by our artillery. In the same area an enemy attack two companies strong was repulsed during the morning. Another attack in company strength supported by tanks southwest of villa Grande was likewise unsuccessful. Two enemy-occupied houses on the eastern border of Villa Grande were blown up with their occupants. East of S. Nicola the enemy pushed forward closer to the main defence line. At Ortona the fierce fighting is still going on, and enemy casualties are unusually heavy. The situation there is unchanged. The enemy is holding back his tanks more and using them as artillery, apparently because of his losses on the previous day.

29 28 1 Cdn Inf Div: While the enemy was still directing heavy artillery fire on the evacuated positions during he midday hours, in the afternoon he felt his way forward carefully with patrols against our advanced outposts. Enemy tanks assembled south of S. Nicola were shelled by our artillery. In the fighting yesterday afternoon at Ortona the attacking Canadian infantry brigade suffered exceedingly heavy casualties and may be presumed to have been severely weakened.

1 Para Div: After directing heavy artillery fire on the evacuated positions until midday, in the afternoon the enemy

only felt his way forward carefully with patrols against our advanced outposts on the line just west of Villa Grande - south-east border of Villa Tomaso - 1.5 km E Villa Tomaso - 1.3 km NW Ortona. Disposition of the Division: 1 and 2 Bns Para Regt 4, 1 and 3 Bns Para Regt 3, 2 Bn Para Regt 1, 1 Bn Para Regt 1, 2 Bn Para Regt 3, 2 Bn Para Regt 1 in their respective sectors. Because of the snowy and icy roads the remaining units of the former Group Schulenburg have not yet reached their divisional sector.

30 29

1 Para Div: Tanks waiting in position north of Villa Grande were successfully shelled by the concentrated fire of the entire artillery regiment. Before the left wing of the Division, the enemy is digging himself in at point 83 (2 km W Ortona). Two enemy attacks along the coastal road, each in company strength and supported by tanks, were repelled by the combined fire of all arms, in some places after bitter fighting. One enemy tanks was disabled. During the afternoon only moderate artillery activity.

Information from reliable sources: There are signs pointing to 1 Cdn Inf Div being relieved.

Information from captured sources: The order of battle of 1 Cdn Inf Div corresponds to data given by the section "Foreign Armies West".

30 30

On 29 Dec at 1600 hrs in enemy patrol advancing along the Ortona - Pescara road before 1 Para Div, 100 m from our main defence line, was completely wiped out.

31 30

1 Cdn Inf Div: An enemy attack two companies in strength and accompanied by six tanks along the coastal road collapsed in the concentrated fire of our infantry, the enemy suffering very heavy casualties. Two enemy tanks were put out of action in our mine-field; the remainder veered off. Heavy motor-vehicle traffic on the road Villa Grande - S. Nicola.

Information from reliable sources: There are further indications of the relief or disengagement of 1 Cdn Inf Div. Units of 1 Cdn Armd Bde, are probably still in the Ortona area.

1 Jan 44 Dec 31 1 Para Div: In the middle sector of the Division the enemy attacked after strong artillery preparation. Our advanced outposts were forced to evacuate Villa Tomaso (3 km W Ortona) armd are now just north-west of that place. Along the coastal road the enemy tried in several attacks to force a break-through, with forces up to two battalions. All attacks were repelled, partly by the concentrated fire of all arms, partly in hand-to-hand fighting, the enemy sustaining heavy casualties.

Information from reliable sources: Units of 1 Cdn Inf Div, including 1 Cdn Armd Bde, are still engaged in the coastal area. Relief of units of the Division by a formation approximately equalling one division in strength is presumably under way.

C O P Y

7 Coy Pz Regt 26

Company Headquarters

7 Dec 1943

Le Piane

To: 2 Bn

Combat report of the attack on Ruatti on 6 Dec 1943

On 6 Dec 43 at about 0920 hrs, the company received orders to dislodge the enemy from Ruatti, which he had penetrated with tanks. Our fighting strength was 9 tanks; 7 long and 2 short. The company left its point of departure at about 0940 hrs, arriving first in the area north of point 155, 2 km SW Ruatti. There the situation was discussed with the commander of Gren Regt 200, which was engaged in that sector. I was not however able to obtain any clear information as to the strength of the enemy at Ruatti. A considerable time then elapsed before the grenadiers who were to accompany our attack arrived, and we were not able to advance until about 1400 hrs.

The company proceeded along the highway as far as the road leading to Ruatti in a north-easterly direction. From that point, the company deployed to the left of the road, advancing on Ruatti with infantry on both sides and to the rear of each tank. In spite of the level terrain, it was only possible to proceed over the rough ground in low gear. Because of the heavy growth (olive trees and fairly high vineyards) the visibility of the individual commanders was nil. In addition the fog was often rather dense, so that for much of the

time one could not see even 100 metres. The grenadiers kept up well and conducted themselves splendidly.

The company was within about 200 metres of Ruatti, when we were suddenly struck by a terrific bombardment. Tank 724 was hit, presumably in the fuel tank and immediately caught fire. The company thereupon responded with counter-fire from all vehicles. Naturally we could fire only in the direction of the muzzle flashes, as we could see nothing because of the dense growth. The massed defence fire of the enemy continued, and in addition we soon came under intense and well-directed shell-fire. Tank 725 was put out of action, the right track being shot off, and just afterwards the turret was hit. At almost the same moment 733 was knocked out by a hit in the gears. The company's remaining 6 vehicles advanced on the village in a series of rushes, at the same time firing rapidly in the direction of the muzzle flashes, it being still impossible to see anything. In the village a house was on fire. 712, which had broken out to the right across the road, located a party of about 30 enemy riflemen, firing on them and almost certainly wounding the majority. After turning back onto the road, the commander saw an enemy tank at the edge of the village, which he destroyed with three shots. The remainder of the company had worked its way forward in a series of rushes, and was in some places only about 50 metres from the village. The houses occupied by enemy riflemen were fired on. 721's turret was hit by several shots, which came from guns in the forward area. We then saw yet another enemy tank just in front of the village standing broadside on, the turret directed towards us; but it was no longer firing. Presumably we had disabled it. 734, on the left wing, had silenced two enemy weapons in different places, having located them by the muzzle flashes. But it was not possible to ascertain whether the guns had been destroyed. At about 30 metres from Ruatti 734's engine was hit, and further hits followed in rapid succession.

The enemy defensive and artillery fire continued undiminished. The grenadiers, who had reached the first houses along the road, were forced to

withdraw. Under the circumstances, and in order to avoid the loss of further vehicles, I considered it better to attend to the wounded and to the detanked and drifting crews. Assisted by my gunners, I got the badly wounded wireless operator of 721 into my tank; likewise Lt Meyer, who had been wounded by shell splinters outside the tank. After taking on board the remainder of the crew from 721, who were slightly wounded, and another commander, I took these men back to the point of departure and arranged for their transfer to the field dressing station. Meanwhile, 712 went to the assistance of a vehicle which had stuck. An attempt to tow back 725 and 733 failed. I therefore gave orders that they should be blown up after removal of everything that could be used.

I then mounted guard with two tanks on the highway in the area north of point 155-0330.

Casualties:

Personnel:

3 dead, whom we have not yet been able to recover.
6 wounded, of whom two are still with the unit.
5 missing. Reports on casualties will be sent in tomorrow.

Tanks:

4 tanks, long.
1 tank, short.

A detailed report will be sent in as soon as possible.

(Signed) Ruckdeschel

Lt and Company Commander

10 Army

ORDER OF BATTLE

9 Dec 43

(German Text)

10 Army

Army Headquarters

The Commander

21 Dec 43

Br B No 37/43

2 Copies

(Copy No 2)

To: General Field Marshal Kesselring
C.-in-C. Southwest (Army Group "C")

Acting in accordance with the wishes of the Army, already expressed on several occasions, to take the offensive at the earliest possible moment, I consider that the time has come for the thorough annihilation of 8 Brit Army.

The situation in the coastal sector is as follows:

The enemy is moving up 5 Brit Div with the object of achieving at least something in the coastal sector of Ortona, in conjunction with the three divisions already engaged, which have been hard-hit in the recent fighting.

To this end he has formed a strong concentration of forces, including artillery, in the east. At Eusonio, the left flank is covered by rather weak forces (1 Airborne Div) with one artillery group; opposite the high mountains and the left wing of Battle Group Schulenburg it is almost entirely exposed. Judging by the movement of troops along the base it may be concluded that considerable reserves are no longer available behind the front. No movement of fresh forces from the rear areas is observed at present. If the major attack which is to be expected during the next few days is once again beaten off successfully, the resultant period of comparative weakness in the enemy's

fighting power should be made use of to annihilate those elements of 8 Army which are north of the Sangro before the restoration of their full striking power.

The first objective:

Breaking up of the western enemy defence wing by envelopment from the south and attack from the west.

The second objective:

Destruction of the enemy attack group by a thrust to the Adriatic and an attack from the Ortona area towards S. Vito.

Distribution of forces:

Attack Group A.

(29 Pz Gren Div reinforced by Bn Brandenburg) From the Torricella area via Altino to P 29 and P 25 (Piazzano and Elici). Bn Brandenburg along the Sangro for bridge demolitions.

Attack Group B.

(Every available unit of 3 Pz Gren Div, 65 Inf Div, 334 Inf Div and 26 Pz Div). From the area Guardiagrele - Orsongna - Cassacanditella to Lanciano and the adjoining area Fossacesia - S. Vito.

Attack Group C.

(Elements of 1 Para Div). Thrust from Ortona to S. Vito.

Time: Thick weather (to eliminate the enemy airforce.) The interval between Christmas and New Year is most suitable, as at this time of year the enemy least expects us to attack.

From a successful blow of this nature the Army anticipates a decisive result affecting not only 5 Amer Army but eliminating all the problems originating in the risks that have constantly to be accepted in the Rome - Northern Italy area.

It is requested that this proposal be examined and that the forces be made available.

L.

App to A.O.K. 10 - Ops No 37/43

(Command Matters)

20 Dec 43

C O P Y

Commander

76 Corps

To: Commander 10 Army

Sir:

The enemy situation in the northern sector is now such that the three reinforced British divisions that constitute the centre of gravity of the attack are located between the coast and Orsogna. They are now concentrated in the northern sector to an even greater degree than was previously the case. Our defensive action of the last few days had inflicted very considerable casualties on the enemy. The reconnaissance of the enemy artillery made on 18 Dec shows 12 batteries in the S. Vito area, and 5 each round Lanciano and south-east of San Eusanio. Therefore here too there is a definite concentration. Yesterday's decrease in enemy artillery fire would seem to show that they are re-grouping further ahead because they have reached the last effective limits of the former positions. The new enemy bombing line points to an intended breakthrough in the area Crecchio-Ortona.

I am of the opinion that at the present moment the Corps has a unique opportunity of anticipating the enemy's intentions by launching an attack, and dealing the 8th Army an annihilating blow.

- 1) Objective of attack: The first thrust to Lanciano along the line Melone-Orsogna (at the same time silencing the artillery group S. Eusanio). The second thrust from Lanciano to Fossacesia (or, if only smaller forces are available, to S. Vito), and at the same time a thrust from Ortona to S. Vito.
- 2) Object: Elimination of the enemy artillery, and encirclement of the mass of the three enemy divisions.
- 3) Covering of the south-east flank by utilizing the old main defence line on the Melone-Lanciano road.
- 4) Time: Thick weather must be made full use of, in order to eliminate enemy superiority in the air. The Christmas feast days are best suited to our purpose, as the enemy will think that the Germans will then be in soft mood.
- 5) Forces: 3 Pz Gren Div which was earmarked for relief of 90 Pz Gren Div and 26 Pz Div, together with 334 and 65 Inf Divs, as also 26 Pz Div, to be used as assault group "South" from Guardiagrele - Orsogna - Filetto - Casacanditella - Rapino.

Two reinforced regiments of 1 Para Div from Ortona to S. Vito.

- 6) The present line to be held by 1 Regt 3 Para Div and Para Regt 6, the reconnaissance battalions of H.G. Pz Div and 90 Pz Gren Div. An enemy break-through in the centre would help the scheme of envelopment.

Pre-requisites for the above proposal would be the immediate decision:

- a) To retain 65 Inf Div here.
- b) To move up 3 Pz Gren Div immediately.

The uncovering of northern Italy is a risk that would have to be taken; the enemy will certainly not force a decision there.

Up to now the defence has permitted the enemy again and again to mass his forces where he wished. An attack by us would provide the new 334 Div with a better initiation to battle than defensive warfare against superior material, and would give 65 Div the desired opportunity for rehabilitation.

(signed) HERR