



Report by

THE SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER
MEDITERRANEAN
to the
COMBINED CHIEFS OF STAFF
on
THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN

8th JANUARY 1944 to 10th MAY 1944

H. M. Stationery Office

Price 1/- net.

Residencia
de Estudiantes

95/1205
REPORT BY THE
SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER
MEDITERRANEAN
TO THE COMBINED CHIEFS OF STAFF
ON
THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN
8 JANUARY 1944 TO 10 MAY 1944



LONDON

HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

1946

CONTENTS

	PAGE	
BACKGROUND TO THE PLAN OF OPERATIONS...	...	1
ORIGINAL OUTLINE PLAN	1
FRUSTRATION OF THE ORIGINAL PLAN...	...	5
CHRISTMAS DAY CONFERENCE	6
THE LANDING-CRAFT PROBLEM	7
DEVELOPMENT OF OPERATIONAL PLANS	10
PLANS	14
PREPARATIONS	18
THE ANZIO LANDINGS	20
CONSOLIDATION OF THE BEACHHEAD	24
SECOND BATTLE AT CASSINO AND ENEMY COUNTER-ATTACK AT ANZIO	29
REVIEW OF STRATEGY	33
WINTER CAMPAIGN—FINAL PHASE	39
CONCLUSION	41
GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS	43

BACKGROUND TO THE PLAN OF OPERATIONS

THE Italian Campaign was initiated by General Eisenhower and continued under his direction for three months, before I succeeded him in command of the Mediterranean Theatre on 8th January, 1944. During those three months it developed the features which have characterised it ever since : slow, painful advance through difficult terrain against a determined and resourceful enemy, skilled in the exploitation of natural obstacles by mines and demolitions.

As soon as this trend became apparent, it was clear that the only method of frustrating the enemy intention of compelling us to fight a slow and costly frontal battle up the "Leg" of Italy was to turn his flanks by amphibious landings on the coast behind his lines. Plans for such operations came under consideration very early and as the result of close liaison between General Eisenhower's Headquarters and my own Middle East Headquarters, a closer relationship existed between the two Headquarters by the creation of a unified Mediterranean Theatre on 10th December, 1943.

Eighth Army, after its landing at Reggio which opened the Italian Campaign, had reaped many benefits from this form of aggressiveness which had resulted in the enemy being forced to alter his line and tactics, and hastened our advance. After the juncture of Fifth and Eighth Armies below Salerno, several small amphibious operations to turn the enemy's flanks had been considered : one such operation executed on the Eighth Army front at Termoli had proved encouragingly successful. A plan by Fifth Army to land a small force by sea behind the enemy lines at Formia in the Gulf of Gaeta had only been cancelled the day before it was scheduled to be launched, the Navy considering it to be too hazardous an undertaking because of heavy minelaying by the enemy immediately prior to the intended date of the operation.

At the time of my assumption of command of the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations our way was barred up the Liri and Sacco Valleys on the west, and a halt had been called before the port of Pescara on the east, sealing off our advance on Rome ; it had become abundantly clear that a determined landing behind the enemy's main defence line was a pressing necessity. It was imperative, therefore, that we turn his flank to obtain passage on to the routes to Rome, and also to threaten his lines of communication which supplied his forces on the front, necessarily divided by the north-south line of the Appenine Range of mountains.

ORIGINAL OUTLINE PLAN

IN October, General Alexander urged strongly that an amphibious assault behind the enemy's right flank be given serious consideration. At conferences held at La Marsa during the latter part of October and early in November between General Eisenhower and his Commanders-in-Chief, plans were discussed and began to take form for the continuance

of the Italian offensive : the matter receiving first attention being the proposed amphibious operation which, it was decided, should be the size of one division with some armour.

General Alexander made it clear that it would not be possible to nominate one of the formations already in Italy for the operation. This left the two alternatives of 1 British Infantry Division which, with a French Moroccan Division, would shortly sail for Italy from North Africa to reinforce the Eighth and Fifth Armies respectively ; or, on the other hand, 9 U.S. Infantry Division which was staging in Sicily awaiting embarkation to the United Kingdom. The latter choice was considered the better, especially as it was proposed to employ one regimental combat team of 82 U.S. Airborne Division, thus confining the personnel to a single nationality, easing the supply difficulties and still making it possible for 9 U.S. Division to sail in the January convoy. General Clark, Commander-in-Chief, Fifth U.S. Army, however, suggested that 36 U.S. Infantry Division be employed for the task ; this division to be replaced in Italy by 9 U.S. Division.

As time was most pressing, it was necessary to begin the preparation of a plan based on simplicity at once.

The position of landing-craft within the Theatre was most difficult. Distribution and availability of craft had by now become a permanently limiting factor in planning all amphibious operations, not only in the Mediterranean but throughout all the Allied Theatres of War. To fulfil the schedule of returning landing-craft to the United Kingdom and to other Theatres as agreed at the QUADRANT Conference meant that of the 90 LST's operational in the AFHQ Command, 68 LST's were due to sail for the United Kingdom almost at once, and this would make impossible any proposed plans for an amphibious operation. It would also render impossible the completion of the programme for the build-up of ground forces and the transference of the Strategic Air Force into Italy from North Africa by the end of the year as originally planned.

With regard to LCT's the position was little brighter : of the 201 LCT's in the Theatre, 129 were scheduled to sail for the United Kingdom and India, leaving 72 craft, all of light type, which had been in constant service for a period of five months. Some of these were needed for the Messina Ferry and others to supply Eighth Army up the East Coast, as well as for working ports on both sides of the Italian Peninsula. It was estimated that with craft being overhauled there would be but 24 LCT's working by 1st November.

General Eisenhower, therefore, on 24th October cabled the Combined Chiefs of Staff asking that the 68 LST's scheduled to leave the Theatre might be retained in order not to jeopardise the Italian Campaign. His request was granted on 6th November, the date of departure for these LST's being set back to 15th December. Again, on a request for a further extension of time, in order to employ them for the amphibious operation, the date was postponed to 5th January, so that all current needs could now be met.

With the potential increase in resources, General Alexander called a conference of his Army Commanders at Bari on 8th November, and there issued a directive for the continuation of operations in Italy. This directive divided the overall operation into three phases : in the first phase Eighth Army would launch an offensive which would place it astride the road communications Pescara-Popoli-Collamele and, from there, threaten the enemy lines of communication before the Fifth Army front leading to Avezzano. The second phase would be launched by Fifth Army in a drive up the Liri and Sacco Valleys to capture Frosinone. The final phase, dependent on the progress of the first two, was to be an amphibious operation south of Rome directed on the Colli Laziali feature, together with a possible airborne landing by one regimental combat team. Planning for this third phase would be carried out by a Fifth Army Planning Staff assisted by a Naval Planning Staff, under Admiral F. C. Lowry, U.S.N., who was later put in charge of the Naval Task Force for the operation, and by an Air Staff from the Headquarters of XII Air Support Command.

It was realised that the earliest date for the launching of this operation would be the 20th December owing to the present position of landing-craft which were being used to transport troops from North Africa into Italy. In order to find a basis for immediate planning, General Alexander drew up an estimate of required landing craft to provide a lift of approximately 23,000 personnel, 2,250 vehicles and 1,200 tons of stores. This estimate included a lift of about 1,300 men in LCA's and LCV(P)'s for the assault wave.

Fifth Army set up a Planning Staff at the Royal Palace, Caserta, on 12th November under Brigadier-General Brann with the Naval and Air Planning Staffs attached. The earlier plan, suggested by General Clark, to use 36 U.S. Division, which would be replaced by 9 U.S. Division, was found to be impracticable as 9 U.S. Division would require re-equipping and there was the probability of its ultimate date of departure being affected by operations. This meant that the planning would have to go forward without a specified division being built into the scheme. In order to save time, under these circumstances, Fifth Army Planning Staff was also charged with preparing the divisional plan for the assault.

On 17th December, planning for the first two phases of the operation had been completed. Eighth Army would put in its attack as soon after 20th November as possible ; this being followed in from seven to ten days by the second phase, which would be launched by Fifth Army. If opportune, the amphibious attack would then be launched in conjunction with the Fifth Army attack from Frosinone. Planning for the third phase continued to progress satisfactorily. The beaches for the assault had been chosen and were in the vicinity of the Port of Anzio, some 30 miles south of Rome. This port has a small harbour, enclosed by a breakwater about 600 yards long sheltering it from the southwest. The harbour is available for vessels of less than ten feet draft and is subject to considerable swell with the wind between south and southeast ; in bad weather shipping cannot lay alongside. To the eastward is the small resort of Nettuno.

A main road leads out of Anzio which joins "Highway 7" at Albano, a town built on a commanding position of the Colli Laziali. A direct thrust up this road would secure our beachhead, threaten the enemy's communications feeding his forces on the western side of the peninsula and place us in an advantageous position to join up with our main forces advancing from the south.

To the north and east of Anzio the coast consists of sandy, gently shelving beaches with low dunes above high water mark. As these beaches are exposed, boatwork becomes dangerous even in a moderate wind. Inland, the country is flat and overlooked by the Lepini Range of mountains, some 20 miles from the coast, which would place our forces under long-range artillery fire; but this was a disadvantage that had to be accepted. To the south, the area is bounded by the Pontine Marshes.

There were three possible landing beaches: a small beach inside the harbour itself; a 5,000 yard stretch with gradients 1:80-1:85 five miles to the east; another 5,000 yard stretch with gradient 1:110 five miles to the west. These beaches, with their awkward gradients, were made worse by two sandbars which run across them: the outer one being 450-500 feet off-shore with one fathom of water, and the inner one 150 feet from shore with two feet of water.

The amphibious assault was to be launched when Fifth Army had reached the line Capistrano-Priverno-Ferentino. The force was to consist of: one infantry division; one tank battalion; one tank destroyer battalion; two light anti-aircraft battalions; two ranger battalions and one parachute infantry regimental combat team. Excluding paratroops, the force totalled 24,500 men and 2,700 vehicles.

3 U.S. Infantry Division was considered as the most likely formation to be used and was, at the end of November, being relieved by 36 U.S. Infantry Division.

For the actual launching of the operation the controlling factor would be the weather. Periods of good weather in December and January would be short; in bad weather, maintenance of our assault forces over the beaches would be very difficult. It was now found to be necessary to land our assault forces on the mainland within 25,000-30,000 yards from the advancing forces so that a junction might be effected within 24 hours.

It would be necessary to have a minimum of seven days for loading, rehearsal and approach.

The allocation of landing-craft provided: 42 LST's (17 six davit); 40 LCT's and 250 DUKW's. This assessment had caused difficulty in the early stages of the planning: Fifth Army Planning Staff had estimated an extra 7 six davit LST's over and above the Naval estimate. A greater wave was necessary than at first calculated, as it was unlikely that LCI's would be able to beach. The Navy was able to comply with our request.

The plan of operations required the Rangers to land at Anzio shortly before "H" hour to secure the port, while the Paratroops would be dropped on the Anzio-Albano road to prevent the arrival of enemy

reinforcements. The main force would land over the East beach. In order to secure surprise, there would be no Naval pre-assault bombardment. The target date was set for 20th December.

Intelligence sources estimated that the enemy had about 27,500 men in the Rome area who could oppose our assault forces on D-day. There was one division in Tenth Army Reserve at Sezze which could be lined up against us on D plus 1/D plus 3, and there was the further possibility that two more divisions could be brought down from the north of Italy.

At the SEXTANT Conference held at Cairo towards the end of November, the Prime Minister, in summing up the future programme of operations, said that in his view the campaign in Italy should be limited to an advance to the Pisa-Rimini Line ; but that our main objective was Rome for "whoever holds Rome holds the title deeds of Italy". With Rome in our hands the Italian Government would be able to hold up its head ; moreover, we should, once the city was in our hands, be in a position to seize the landing grounds to the northward.

At this same conference, the Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean was informed that he might retain in the Mediterranean the 68 LST's scheduled for the United Kingdom until 15th January. This would still allow these craft to be returned to the United Kingdom in time for them to be ready for the European offensive from the west.

FRUSTRATION OF THE ORIGINAL PLAN

WHILE the Fifth Army Planning Staff continued in its task of completing details for the amphibious operation, Eighth Army opened the first phase of the battle for Rome on 26th November by an attack across the Sangro River. This date signified a six day delay, caused by adverse weather conditions.

Fierce opposition was met from the start of the attack, and the enemy was able to bring reinforcements to this front from the north. Bad weather conditions continued, air movement was restricted, rivers were at flood, roads became impassable, and supply to troops became an ever-increasing problem. The men, by this time, were completely exhausted through exposure and the continual hardships experienced while fighting an offensive in country ideal for defence. Although the persistence of our forces in attack caused a breach in his defences, the momentum of the drive was checked, and exploitation had become impossible. We had been halted twenty-five miles from our objective—Pescara.

The Fifth Army attack which formed the second phase of the overall operation, and on the success of which rested the launching of the amphibious assault, was put in on 1st December, a day ahead of the calculated date. This attack was given heavy artillery and air support, but by 10th December, although the Monte Camino feature had been taken, progress into the Liri Valley was slow, and it still required a break-through of the Mignano Defile before the way to Cassino would be clear.

This slow advance left us very far from Frosinone. With strong enemy defences ahead, and with supply difficulties increasing through the flooding of the lower reaches of the Garigliano River and the heavy rains, this attack was stalled. The first two phases of the operation remained incomplete.

After the fall of Monte Camino, the enemy had reinforced, and it had been confirmed from air reconnaissance that there was yet another defence system to be breached behind the Winter Line and south of Rome. This new defence line became known as the Gustav Line. These were the first indications of Hitler's decision to abandon delaying tactics and to fight to hold Rome, repercussions from which influenced the strategy of the Mediterranean Theatre during the whole of 1944.

The launching of the amphibious operation by 20th December was no longer practicable, because it was now estimated that the main body of the Fifth Army could not reach the line considered essential prior to the amphibious operation before 10th January. At that time the allotted number of landing-craft to carry out the amphibious assault would no longer be available. There would be but 37 LST's instead of the required 42 left in the Theatre, even should those which at present were being used for the build-up of the air forces into Corsica be employed.

At a planning conference on 10th December, General Clark reconsidered the factors which governed the amphibious operation and decided that it might be launched as an independent operation, with a disregard for the position of the main Fifth Army forces and the time factor for the joining of the two bodies of troops. This plan would necessitate the consideration of a more ambitious undertaking in forces and supplies than that which was now before him. By 20th December, the Planning Staff for the amphibious operation was largely disbanded and the Planning Group from 3 U.S. Division, which had finally been nominated to carry out the assault, was returned to its Headquarters. The amphibious operation was abandoned.

CHRISTMAS DAY CONFERENCE

ALTHOUGH the amphibious operation as originally envisaged had had to be abandoned, it became increasingly obvious that a plan involving the same principles would have to be developed to achieve a quick military decision leading to the capture of Rome. In order to discuss the future policy to be adopted in the Mediterranean in relation to other Allied Theatres of War, a conference was held on the 25th December at Tunis, at which were present Mr. Churchill and the principal Commanders-in-Chief in the Theatre. After General Eisenhower had described the general military situation, Mr. Churchill said that it would be folly to allow the campaign in Italy to drag on and to face the supreme operations against Europe in the spring with the task in Italy half finished. The case for the drive on Rome was not merely the capture of the city, important politically as that might be, but the annihilation of the enemy's army

and the securing of a line to give sufficient depth for the protection of the Naples-Foggia area to admit of the full development of its port and air-field facilities. Such strategy would speed up the Italian Campaign and so facilitate the launching of an attack in early Spring against Southern France by releasing personnel and equipment of all branches of the three Services, and would give us additional ports from which to launch the attack over shorter sea routes.

There was general agreement that in view of our air superiority, it was unlikely that the Germans would be able to reinforce from the north and that all military dispositions and preparations should go forward on the assumption that there would be a sufficiency of landing-craft within the Theatre to carry the assault to a successful conclusion. This operation must in no wise interfere with the plans for the proposed assault on Northern and Southern France, nor must it be allowed to affect the plans for the build-up of the Air Forces into Corsica.

It was decided that planning was to commence immediately for an amphibious assault behind the enemy's right flank to secure a beachhead in the vicinity of Anzio and to advance and secure the high ground of Colli Laziali. The plan called for a strength of two divisions with airborne troops and some armour. The planners were to aim at a provisional date of 20th January, in order to make our request for retention of landing-craft for as short a period as possible and to cause as little interference as possible with plans for following operations. This assault would be combined with an attack to be delivered by General Alexander's main forces between the Abruzzi mountains and the mouth of the Garigliano river.

As the proposed amphibious operation was to be the first one to be mounted after my assumption of Command of the Mediterranean Theatre, I took a personal interest in the materialisation of the plan as it was presented in broad outline. I was in agreement with the general conception of the project ; but felt it necessary to emphasise at this time the importance of putting in a force of sufficient strength at the outset.

THE LANDING-CRAFT PROBLEM

IN detailing the factors which would govern the launching of the amphibious operation, Mr. Churchill pointed out at the Tunis Conference that the crux of the problem lay in the availability of LST's. The present programme as laid down by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to return 56 LST's to the United Kingdom on 15th January in preparation for the invasion of France would not allow an amphibious project in the Mediterranean for the immediate future. Therefore the immediate task was to find sufficient LST's for the fulfilment of all commitments.

Landing-craft estimated as necessary for the two divisional assault in the Anzio area were : 88 LST's, 90 LCI's, 60 LCT's and 8 LSI's. Of the total of 90 LCT's on the station only 50 per cent. were serviceable ; but there was every indication that this situation would improve towards the Spring. There was an adequate number of LCI's to meet any emergency.

An accountancy of LST's in the Theatre disclosed that under the present programme, there would be a total of 47 in the Mediterranean after 15th January, excluding 26 LST's due to arrive from the U.S. in time for the operations at that time scheduled for the South of France. Of the 47 LST's, 10 were being used for the build-up of the Air Forces into Corsica and 10 would be under repair, leaving but 27 for operational purposes. As a result of postponement of an operation scheduled for 1944 in the Indian Ocean, 6 LSI's would arrive in the Mediterranean in time for an amphibious operation on 20th January and 15 LST's would arrive in time to be operational by 5th February. This meant that in fulfilling the present commitment for return of LST's to the United Kingdom and adding the 15 LST's from the abandoned Indian project, there would be a total of 50 of these craft in the Mediterranean after this date, of which 30 would be free for use in any operation—roughly, a third of the number required for proposed plans.

By releasing the 10 LST's from the Corsica run for a short period the figures for operations could be increased by this number ; but in order to safeguard the later project for the South of France, the rate of build-up into Corsica after the Anzio landings had been completed, would have to be doubled—this could be done solely on the proviso that the loading and reception ports could handle this extra traffic.

Therefore, in order to mount the amphibious operation it would be necessary to retain in the Theatre the 56 LST's due to sail for the United Kingdom on 15th January for a further three weeks. Dockyards in the United Kingdom were to give priority over other repair jobs to refit 25 LST's per month so that the retention of craft would not prevent their being ready for the European operations in May. As Mr. Churchill said in his cable on this matter to the Deputy Prime Minister*, " How foolish it would be after having kept [them] so long to take them away at the very moment and for the very three weeks in which they can render supreme service. Every effort of ingenuity must be made to fill the gap ". Should this plan be agreed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, the operation could be mounted ; but still would be limited to landing all forces on D-day complete with supplies and maintenance for a period of eight days : there could be no reinforcing of the beachhead and no maintenance over the beaches—planning was to go forward on this basis.

On 27th December, the Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean proposed a programme for the release of the 56 LST's after the assault had taken place ; this programme would take care of all requirements for the immediate amphibious operation in the Mediterranean and for future projects. Of the 56 LST's to be returned, 25 would be sailed from the Mediterranean to arrive in the United Kingdom about 21st February ; all of these craft would require docking and refitting ; 16 more could follow on the next convoy and would require refitting only. The remaining 15 LST's could be docked and refitted in the Mediterranean and sailed to arrive in the United Kingdom by the end of March. The object in retaining these LST's for refitting in the Mediterranean for an additional

* See page 42 for a fuller extract from this cable.

ten days was to enable the refitting to be done while, at the same time, retaining a small margin of these craft to deal with any emergency that might arise out of the operation. A further argument for the retention of these LST's was that the craft so retained could not in any case be taken in hand in the United Kingdom were they to arrive earlier. There would then be no need to retain in the Mediterranean the 15 LST's being sent from India ; these could proceed direct to Great Britain ; or, alternatively, the 26 LST's due to arrive from the United States of America could be diverted to the United Kingdom.

The retention of the 56 LST's until 5th February was agreed, and the Combined Chiefs of Staff replied that as a result of the granting of this request the following programme would have to be followed : of the total of 104 LST's (68 British, 36 U.S.) in the Mediterranean, eight British craft were to be sailed for the United Kingdom forthwith, and 12 U.S. craft as originally planned. The 15 LST's from India were to proceed direct to the United Kingdom to arrive not later than 13th February. The remaining 84 LST's were to be employed in the proposed operation, after which they were to be sailed for the United Kingdom in two convoys ; 20 British craft to arrive by 23rd February, and 13 by 4th March. 15 LST's used for the operation, in lieu of the 15 from India, were to be held in the Mediterranean and refitted in time for the South of France landings. 36 LST's (12 British, 24 U.S.) would remain, these being the approved Mediterranean allocation, and would have to be brought forward for the Southern France operation with station resources. It was stressed that nothing could be allowed to stand in the way of the scheduled arrival in the United Kingdom of the 33 British craft, as the date for the assault against Northern France depended on strict adherence to this programme. This arrangement and allotment of LST's was the best the Admiralty could do. As it was, there would have to be a deferment of refits of several important vessels and a dislocation of refitting programmes which would have repercussions for several months.

In reviewing this allocation of LST's by the Admiralty, the Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean said that instead of the 88 LST's requested, it meant in fact that there would be only 80 available and not 84 as the Admiralty supposed. Of the allocated 84 craft, one had been sunk and three were long-term repair jobs—all four craft were U.S. LST's. It was therefore suggested that the 8 LST's scheduled for immediate return to the United Kingdom should be held back in view of the fact that 7 of them could be refitted in the Mediterranean and this would mean that the programme could be met in full.

The final inventory of LST's at the end of December showed that there would be 2 of these craft operative in the Theatre over and above the required 88. The necessity that the programme for the return of LST's to the United Kingdom should be carried out was evident. It would also be necessary to release, not later than 5th February, 16 LST's for the Corsica run to compensate for the time lost in the withdrawal of craft from this run for the operation ; this date was firm regardless of the

date of D-day for the assault in order that the preparations for the South of France assault should not be hindered. Certain other LST's would have to be released immediately after the assault at Anzio for overhaul. Final considerations showed that after D plus 2, there would be but 6 LST's left in the Theatre to accommodate all supply requirements along both sides of the Italian Peninsula.

DEVELOPMENT OF OPERATIONAL PLANS

FIFTH Army Planning Staff was immediately reassembled to draw up plans for the new operation decided upon at Tunis. It was based on the principles of the abandoned Anzio project but it was to be an enlargement of these principles and it was to contain fewer limitations. In spite of the uncertainty of the landing-craft position, plans would go forward on the assumption that sufficient craft would be available. On 31st December, the Planning Staff was assembled at Fifth Army Headquarters assisted by a Naval Planning Staff under Rear-Admiral F. J. Lowry, U.S.N. ; air plans being entrusted to Major-General J. K. Cannon, commanding XII Air Support Command. This staff, consisting of representatives of the three Services, was augmented by members of the Joint Beach Intelligence Board AFHQ who were needed to advise on the state of the beaches in the landing area.

General Alexander's directive as outlined on 2nd January charged Fifth Army to prepare to launch an amphibious operation of two divisions plus on the beaches in the vicinity of Rome with the object of cutting the enemy's lines of communication and threatening the rear of German XIV Corps. The operation would take place between 20th January and 31st January ; but the target date should be as near 20th January as possible to allow the latitude of a few days if bad weather made postponement necessary.

The main ground forces for the operation would consist of : Headquarters VI U.S. Corps commanded by Major-General J. P. Lucas, who would conduct the operation, one U.S. infantry division, a U.S. Armored element, a battalion of Rangers, one Parachute regimental combat team, one British infantry division, a British Armoured element and two Commandos.

To provide these forces in the most economical way Eighth Army would release 1 British Infantry Division for the amphibious assault as soon as possible, to be followed by the release of 5 British Infantry Division to reinforce X Corps on the Fifth Army main front. It was of the utmost importance that these moves should be kept secret from the enemy. Eighth Army was to maintain sufficient pressure on its front to prevent the Germans from transferring divisions from the northern sector of the front to that opposing Fifth Army. If Eighth Army, in spite of its reduction in strength, could reach the Pescara line and develop a threat towards Rome through Popoli by 20th January, this would have a great bearing

on the success of the whole operation. Reserve formations such as Headquarters I Canadian Corps and 4 Indian Division would be moved forward to make a show of strength on Eighth Army front.

Fifth Army would make as strong a thrust as possible towards Cassino and Frosinone shortly prior to the assault landing in order to draw in enemy reserves which might be employed against the landing forces, then create a breach in his front through which every opportunity would be taken to link up rapidly with the seaborne operation.

General Eisenhower debated the wisdom of employing a mixed corps for the amphibious operation and felt that consideration of the administrative difficulties involved in assigning formations of two nations to the task had been neglected in the interest of policy. He was assured, however, that such was not the case ; that the administrative problems had been realised, and that they could be overcome. The reason for assigning a mixed corps for the operation was the lack of time to prepare a corps which would be either exclusively British or U.S. There were other factors prohibiting the employment of a national formation ; should a British corps be assigned, the necessary reshuffle would be so great that it would be difficult to conceal it from the enemy ; and employment of a U.S. formation would necessitate the withdrawal of a second U.S. division from the Fifth Army front, which would mean a relaxation of pressure where it could be least afforded. General Alexander felt that, considering the time factor and the desirability of securing a capable force commander, as well as the allotment of two first-class formations, 1 British Division and 3 U.S. Division, he had achieved the strongest combination possible.

The only airborne regimental combat team suitable for the operation was 504 Parachute Regiment of 82 U.S. Airborne Division. This unit was scheduled to sail for the United Kingdom early in January to refit and train for the forthcoming invasion against Northern France, and because of this, General Eisenhower was loathe to ask the Combined Chiefs of Staff for the retention of the unit beyond this period in the Mediterranean Theatre. However, as General Alexander pointed out, this was the only unit competent to carry out the task ; the British Airborne Brigade, now in the line, would be difficult to replace and had had, up to this time, no experience in air landings. The inclusion of 504 Regimental Combat Team in the order of battle for the amphibious operation would have decisive effects on our assault. Retention was desired only for the completion of the operation, after which the unit would be released and could arrive in the United Kingdom by 16th March. Should this be too late for its inclusion in the invasion in the North of France, an airborne regimental combat team from the U.S.A. might be substituted. The request was put forward to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, who agreed to the retention of this unit until the seaborne operation should be completed.

The conception of the amphibious operation as a major project and not a mere supplement to Fifth Army's main attack increased the problem of supplying the forces employed. There was no guarantee that the operation would be completed within eight days, the period originally agreed as

the maximum for which maintenance would be provided, and the Navy was requested to reconsider the availability of supply craft in order to land supplies after the assault ; there might even be the need to land a small third division under certain circumstances.

D-day could not be a firm fixture, weather conditions being unreliable ; it was necessary, therefore, to plan on landing the maximum force in the assault and first follow-up. The final state of LST's in the Theatre was still giving cause for concern as after 3rd February there would be but 6 of these craft left in the Theatre to supply our beachhead forces by sea, and the whole operation under these conditions would be extremely hazardous. General Clark in a cable to General Alexander stressed that an adequate number of LST's should be left on the Station until the assault could be considered a success. With the optimum number of LST's available, the two infantry divisions would have to be landed with a reduced vehicle strength ; 1 British Division would have 1,200 vehicles less than the recognised assault scale and 3 U.S. Division would be similarly restricted. VI Corps would also have to be landed on a much reduced strength ; but this would be acceptable on the assumption that a reasonable number of LST's could be retained for re-supply and for the transportation of the necessary vehicles. Another unfavourable factor was the small allotment of assault craft which would only allow of the landing of five infantry battalions and one Ranger battalion, assault loaded. The reserve battalions would not be able to land in assault craft, and a request for 12 additional six-davit LST's was necessary, because the sole alternative was to use LCI(L)'s for the reserve, which beach conditions made an unsatisfactory solution.

In order to meet supply requirements after the assault landings had gone in, 10 LST's would be required for an indefinite period for re-supply and 10 for an additional fortnight for the transport of vehicles. If the Navy should adhere to the ruling of 40 vehicles per LST, this limitation being set because of the draught on beaching, the request for craft would have to be increased to 24. The Planners then conceived that it would be necessary to re-supply by sea for a minimum of 15 days as it was highly improbable that contact could be made between the Fifth Army main forces and the beachhead troops in a shorter period for the establishment of supply through normal channels.

In order to consider new factors which had been revealed since the Tunis Conference on Christmas Day, a further conference was called on 3rd January. Opposite the Fifth Army front the enemy was developing his defences, but should our attacks on the main front, scheduled to precede the amphibious operation, fail to draw in enemy reserves he would be able to muster against our troops in the beachhead three divisions and an additional two battle groups. The beachhead force was to be landed with eight days' maintenance, but at the expiration of this period, should the two forces not have joined, it would have to be either further maintained or withdrawn. Partial maintenance could be carried out by LCT's should the weather remain favourable. Should maintenance not

be possible, the force would have to be withdrawn with total loss of equipment, some loss of personnel and serious risk to landing-craft needed for the later assault against the South of France.

However, the prize to be gained was high enough to warrant the risk, and planning was to continue in order to take every advantage of any favourable change in enemy dispositions.

As a result of this conference, General Alexander feared the consequences of the inability to re-supply the beachhead forces and asked Mr. Churchill, who happened to be in the Theatre during the interim period between the departure of General Eisenhower and my assumption of command, if a reconsideration could be given to the LST situation. He pointed out to the Prime Minister, who at that time was recuperating from an illness at Marrakech in Morocco, that with only 6 LST's left for supply after D plus 2 it would take 21 days to land the fighting vehicles for two divisions in order to meet the Germans on equal terms. Success depended, in an operation of this nature, on readiness to meet counter-attack, particularly as overwhelming support was available from the Tactical Air Forces which would help to restore the balance of the numerically inferior ground forces. Even this number of 6 LST's was but a hypothetical figure as it was governed by the number of craft lost through enemy action. Since a junction of the beachhead forces with the main Fifth Army forces could not be scheduled in advance—maintenance became a necessity. Finally, General Alexander pointed out that in the event of the assault forces being sealed off, so long as LST's remained in the Mediterranean they would have to be used to maintain the forces which could not be left to perish.

The operation appeared justified, even at considerable cost. 14 LST's were needed for maintenance until the two forces should be joined and a further 10 LST's for 15 days after landings to build up supplies. Even should this allotment interfere somewhat with the current plans for the subsequent invasion of the South of France, General Alexander considered the prize to be gained worth the cost.

At a conference on 7th January it was decided that D-day must be put forward as much as possible so that every use should be made of the landing-craft available, it being planned to employ in the interim between the launching of the operation and the withdrawal of the LST's the total of these craft for two trips and, should weather be favourable, for three. An early date, decided as 22nd January, would also give the enemy the minimum of time to reinforce the area of the objective. At this time it was a certainty that 82 LST's would be available for the assault and would continue to be available, less operational losses, until 3rd February, when the number would be reduced to 25 until 23rd February and from then to 12 until the end of the month. The possibility of landing a small third division, should weather permit, after D plus 5 was a further consideration for the employment of these craft.

With regard to maintenance, 2,000 extra load carrying vehicles would be made available from resources in Italy for use as a ferry, partly by

sea in LST from Naples to Anzio, between base depots and beach dumps, resources of the vehicles of the landing force being insufficient for necessary requirements. After the assault had gone in, LCT's would be employed for lighterage, obviating the necessity of returning these vehicles to Naples to reload.

On 8th January, General Alexander met Mr. Churchill at Marrakech and means were found to provide the required extra 24 LST's for the maintenance of the beachhead forces, until the end of February, without affecting future operations.

PLANS

IN appointing Rear Admiral Lowry (commander of U.S. amphibious forces under Vice Admiral H. K. Hewitt, U.S.N.) as Naval Commander of the Task Force to carry out the operation, the Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean charged him with the responsibility of mounting, embarking and landing the ground forces, and with the subsequent support of this force until it was firmly established ashore. Admiral Lowry, in addition to this appointment, was also given command of one of the U.S. groups of the Task Force ; the commander of the British group would be Rear Admiral T. H. Troubridge, R.N.

The boundaries of the Task Force area were fixed, and provision of Naval cover beyond these boundaries was to remain the responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean. The assignment of Naval craft was as follows :

<i>Task Force "P" (British)</i>	<i>Task Force "X" (U.S.A.)</i>
1 H.Q. SHIP	1 H.Q. SHIP
4 CRUISERS	1 CRUISER
8 FLEET DESTROYERS	8 DESTROYERS
6 HUNT DESTROYERS	2 DESTROYER ESCORTS
2 A.A. SHIPS	6 AM
2 DUTCH GUN BOATS	12 PC
11 FLEET MINESWEEPERS	20 SC
6 M.L.	18 YMS
4 LCG	6 ARB
4 LCF	
4 LCT(R)	

Assault and landing-craft numbered 8 LSI's, 88 LST's, 90 LCI's, 60 LCT's, and 4 Liberty ships were also to be included in the assault convoy. Since only 16 six-davit LST's would be available, the 8 LSI's had to be used as additional assault craft. Even with this addition, the LCI's would have to be used for follow-up waves over the Eastern beach, where the U.S. troops were to be landed ; while on the West beach, where British troops were to go ashore, conditions were so poor that only light assault craft could be used.

The Air Forces allotted a major proportion of the strength of the Tactical Air Force to support the amphibious operation. XII Air Support

Command, reinforced by two wings (U.S. Groups) from the Desert Air Force was to provide direct air support while Tactical Bomber Force would be put on heavier missions. Coastal Air Force would give continuous cover to the Naples area and half way along the route to the landing beaches. The enemy air menace was not considered to be great ; the long range bomber force of Luftflotte II had been withdrawn from Italy and plans to blast enemy airfields prior to D-day should reduce his available force considerably. To economise in shipping space, it was planned to put only one Spitfire squadron ashore on the beachhead. The greater part of the air support was to be provided by aircraft based in the Naples area.

During the early stages of the planning it had been proposed to have 52nd Troop Carrier Wing drop 504 Regimental Combat Team behind the beaches to cut the Anzio-Albano road shortly before H-hour in order to prevent enemy reinforcements from reaching the assault beaches. This plan, however, was abandoned as likely to give early warning of our intentions to the enemy. Moreover, the place chosen for the drop was so close to the planned objectives of 1 British Division, that the hazardous mission appeared to offer too few advantages to offset the risks, amongst which was that of danger from our own anti-aircraft fire, should this drop and the main assault be launched together and be attacked by enemy aircraft.

During the pre-assault period Tactical Air Force, assisted by Strategical Air Force, was to cut enemy lines of communication from the north to prevent reinforcement of the beachhead and to neutralise enemy air force units still remaining in Italy. For the actual operation, the mission of Tactical Air Force was to provide cover for the assault convoy during the approach and the actual assault and to neutralise opposition to future movements. Full support was to be given to ground troops and provision made for artillery spotting. At a critical moment we had to deal with the danger that the personnel of one group of B-25 Medium Bombers and of two groups P-40 Fighter Bombers might be withdrawn to India. If this move should take place before the main and amphibious attacks were launched it would mean a reduction in our Fighter Bomber effort of 28 per cent along the fronts and would affect seriously the main Fifth Army attack. I sought, and obtained, permission from the Combined Chiefs of Staff to retain the personnel in question until 15th February to assure us full utilisation of our total air resources.

For the discharge of its responsibilities under the air plan, XII Air Support Command, which included 64th Fighter Wing, had at its disposal for the operation a total of 699 Fighters and Fighter Bombers, divided into $61\frac{1}{2}$ squadrons—22 Fighter squadrons, 6 Fighter Bomber squadrons, 8 Light Bomber squadrons, 24 Medium Bomber squadrons and $1\frac{1}{2}$ Reconnaissance squadrons. During the assault stage, and until operational facilities should be established ashore, the air forces in the assault area were to be directed from HMS *Palomares* off-shore.

The assault and follow-up convoys were to be mounted at Naples and

its satellite ports. The responsibilities for this task were allotted to AFHQ Advanced Administrative Echelon for the supply of British Forces, and to Peninsular Base Section for the supply of the U.S.A. Forces. Supply and evacuation at the beachhead was the responsibility of Headquarters VI U.S. Corps. During the assault phase, shore engineer dumps would issue supplies at the beaches until Corps dumps had been organised, but once junction had been made with the main Fifth Army Forces, supply would be resumed through normal channels.

We could not assume favourable weather conditions for more than a 48 hour period, and we therefore planned to unload the assault convoy within that time. Everything must be combat loaded and, to facilitate rapid unloading of LST's, these craft were to be loaded with pre-stowed vehicles so that on docking at Anzio, the vehicles could proceed direct from the craft to the dumps.

As the beaches were poor and only serviceable for unloading during good weather, quick rehabilitation of the port of Anzio was essential ; but the adequacy of the small port facilities depended on our ability to prevent its destruction by the enemy. Should the port not be available, a pontoon causeway was to be constructed over the beach. The Navy had also restricted the loading of craft to decrease draught. 30 LCT's, all available LCA's, LCV(P)'s and DUKW's would assist in unloading the larger craft.

Heavy stores and equipment were being loaded in Algiers on 8 Liberty ships, because loading in North Africa would avoid unnecessary congestion in the port of Naples. Four of these Liberty ships would be fitted to sail with the assault convoy, the remaining 4 to follow later.

Because of the impossibility of assessing the time required for junction of the assault forces with main Fifth Army forces, supplies for a period of 35 days were allocated for shipment by sea. Because of adverse weather conditions, the Outline Convoy Schedule allotted a convoy every third day to supply the beaches on the assumption that this would allow each convoy to reach the assault beaches between the periodic spells of bad weather. Supplies were to be carried by two methods : by the bulk-loaded Liberty ships from North Africa and by vehicle loaded LST's from Naples. The assault convoy would carry two days' supplies with the forces and 700 trucks and 100 DUKW's loaded with three days' supplies of all types. The follow-up convoys would consist of 4 Liberty ships, 14 LST's carrying 500 vehicles and some smaller craft.

A feint was originally planned for D-day by the Navy at the mouth of the Tiber River ; but as enemy reinforcements were concentrated north of this River, it was considered that this ruse would only tend to draw these reserves closer to the scene of the landings and would therefore endanger the assault needlessly. The plan was therefore cancelled and instead a bombardment of the port of Civitavecchia was planned for H-hour of D-day, to be repeated on the night of D/D plus 1 by a force of cruisers and destroyers.

Appreciation of the enemy situation indicated that in spite of heavy losses, causing his formations to be reduced greatly in strength, and the battle-weariness of his troops, he had no intention of withdrawing from his present position unless forced to do so. In consequence, it was assumed that he would be compelled to carry out considerable regrouping during January and that during the next few weeks there was a likelihood of catching him at a disadvantage while this was in progress.

Under the existing circumstances it was certain that the enemy would react strongly to any suggestion of a landing in the rear of his XIV Corps. In view of the overall progression of our offensive, he would be compelled to throw in his reserves to check the thrust of the Fifth Army up the Liri Valley and would then have to withdraw some of these forces to counter our threat to his lines of communication after our landings at Anzio. He would undoubtedly endeavour to throw our assault forces off the beaches, or at least attempt to contain them within the smallest perimeter. Once weakened on the main front, with his forces split, he would have little chance of containing our thrust up the Liri Valley.

Intelligence showed that the assault forces could expect to meet an opposition of the maximum strength of one division, four Parachute battalions from the Rome area and other miscellaneous elements, totalling in all 14,300 men on D-day. By the following day the enemy could bring against us another division, an SS Infantry regiment, a battle group and possibly the Hermann Goering Panzer Regiment. By D plus 3, his appreciation of our situation might permit him to release 26 Panzer Division from the Adriatic to his forces about Anzio. By virtue of our air strategy, his chances of reinforcing from the north were slight. It was estimated that two divisions could be brought in from locations north of Florence, but these troops could not arrive in the beachhead before D plus 16.

On 16th January, indications of the enemy strength pointed to a weakening condition on the Fifth Army main front, thought to be the result of battle strain. This implied that he would be compelled to pull in all his reserves to this front. It was doubtful whether he would be able to hold this line even with his available reinforcements once the Fifth Army offensive, scheduled to precede the amphibious operation, should be launched, and the result would be a withdrawal to the north.

Our final plan for the assault was to have VI U.S. Corps, under command of Major-General Lucas, seize and secure a bridgehead in the vicinity of Anzio and then to advance on Colli Laziali. This assault would take place at 0200 hours on 22nd January. In order to gain surprise there would be no preliminary Naval bombardment; but 3 LCT(R)'s were to put down a rocket barrage on to the beaches from H minus 10 to H minus 5.

Rear-Admiral Lowry, commanding Assault Task Group "X", would land three regiments of 3 U.S. Division and supplementary units on the beach east of Anzio; Rear-Admiral Troubridge, commanding Assault Task Group "P", would be responsible for landing a brigade group of

1 British Division, together with 9 and 43 Commandos, on the beach west of the port. This force would strike east and establish a road block on the Anzio-Albano road. The U.S. Ranger Force commanded by Colonel Darby would be landed at the port of Anzio from HMS *Royal Ulsterman*, HMS *Princess Beatrix* and MV *Winchester Castle* with the task of seizing the port and neutralising the coast defences. These three forces would link up and consolidate a bridgehead seven miles in depth centering on the port of Anzio. After establishment of the beachhead the objective of the force was to cut the two main roads about 12 miles southeast of Rome.

Examination of the enemy's coastal defences suggested that stiff resistance would be met on the beaches if these defences were found to be manned. From our knowledge of the enemy's forces in the Rome area it was thought that he could on D-day mount a counter-attack of divisional scale. To take care of this situation, the bulk of 1 British Division with a regiment of tanks and two regiments of artillery were held in reserve. 504 Regimental Combat Team would land behind 3 U.S. Division and also pass to VI U.S. Corps reserve. Now that the required number of landing-craft had been placed at our disposal, the final plan included a scheme to reinforce the beachhead forces by 1 U.S. Armored Division, less Combat Command "B" which was fighting on the main Fifth Army front, and one regimental combat team of 45 U.S. Infantry Division. The despatch of this force depended on the weather and the time required for the assault convoy to make a turnabout. Later, the remaining elements of these two divisions would follow. It was intended to employ these extra forces either to strengthen the assault forces against German counter-attack, or to thrust forward to cut the enemy lines of communication.

PREPARATIONS

PREPARATIONS progressed with the planning. Early in January reorganisation of Fifth and Eighth Armies was commenced. As soon as VI U.S. Corps had been chosen for the operation it handed over its commitments to the French Expeditionary Corps on Fifth Army's right flank on 3rd January and moved to Maddaloni. 3 U.S. Division was withdrawn from the Fifth Army front to Pozzuoli and 1 British Division moved from under command Eighth Army to come under command Fifth Army, moving from Foggia to Salerno. Both these divisions were placed under command VI U.S. Corps as the two assault formations. In order to maintain pressure on Fifth Army front, 5 British Division was also transferred from Eighth Army to Fifth Army front and placed under command X Corps behind 56 British Division. 2 New Zealand Division was moved from Orsogna to Venafro where it remained in ACMF Reserve.

With this depletion of forces, Eighth Army had to make a show of force along its front in order to keep the enemy formations on its side of the Appenine Mountains occupied, making it impossible to withdraw forces

for reinforcement of the Fifth Army front. In order to carry out this show of force, Headquarters I Canadian Corps and 4 Indian Division had to be brought forward from reserve.

The units allotted VI U.S. Corps for the operation were under continuous training which culminated in a practice amphibious landing on the beaches below Salerno on 17th-19th January. The brilliant accomplishment of the clearing and the opening of the port of Naples over a three-months' period, and the complete air superiority enjoyed in Italy, made it possible to mount the operation from a port which was less than 100 miles from the assault beaches. Landing-craft were gradually assembled and loaded at Naples and Salerno by AFHQ Advance Administrative Echelon and Peninsular Base Section ; loading of supplies commencing on 19th January and troops on the following day.

The Air Forces undertook the task of cutting enemy lines of communication from the north and destroying the Luftwaffe in Italy to the greatest extent before the landings should take place. Both Strategical and Tactical Air Forces attacked marshalling yards at Florence, Pisa, Arezzo and Terni ; bridges on the central and West coast routes and transport in the enemy's rear. The four airfields in the Rome area were attacked with H.E. and incendiary bombs ; the three airfields at Perugia, on which the German reconnaissance units were based, were severely damaged in our air attacks, this assessment being made from the fact that no reconnaissance flights were made until D plus 3. Airfields in the Po Valley also came in for their share of punishment from our bombers. The final pre-assault raid staged by the Air Forces was made on 21st January on the airfields servicing the torpedo and glider bomber units in the South of France.

The successful breaking up of enemy blockade running in the Atlantic released cruisers of 15th Cruiser Squadron to return to the Central Mediterranean. The return from the Levant of HMS *Phoebe* resulted in our having the entire British Mediterranean cruiser strength available for use in time for the amphibious operation.

On 20th January, HMS *Orion*, *Spartan*, *Jervis*, *Janus*, *Laforey* and *Faulknor* bombarded enemy coastal batteries in the area of Terracina ; the 12th Minesweeping Flotilla being employed to ensure safe passage for the bombardment forces through the unswept Gulf of Gaeta. On the following night HMS *Dido*, FS *le Fantasque* and HMS *Inglefield* carried out a diversionary bombardment near Civitavecchia. At daybreak, the Naval Force was withdrawn south and given the task of bombarding the coast in the area of Formia and Terracina in order to check any reinforcements to the enemy's troops at Anzio from his southern front.

On 12th January the general offensive opened on the Fifth Army front when 2 Moroccan Division and 3 Algerian Division, under command French Expeditionary Corps, opened an attack on the Army's right flank, to capture Atina and threaten Cassino from the north. This attack caught the enemy unawares and resulted in an advance of nearly four miles.

On 15th January II U.S. Corps resumed its advance and captured Monte Trocchio, the last barrier before the entrance to the Liri Valley.

Two days later, X Corps launched its attack across the Garigliano River in an attempt to turn the Southern flank of the Gustav Line and advanced to Castelforte, key to the enemy defensive system in this sector, having suffered heavy losses. Although Castelforte continued to hold out, the attack gained a formidable bridgehead for us across the river. Against these attacks the enemy threw in his reserves : 3 Panzer Grenadier Division was brought from the west coast to counter the thrust of the French Corps ; while the bulk of the Hermann Goering Division and 29 Panzer Grenadier Division from reserve and 90 Panzer Grenadier Division which was moving from the Adriatic to the Rome Area were thrown into the line opposite X British Corps.

The plan in broad outline at this time required that the French Expeditionary Corps should continue to attack on Fifth Army's east flank with continued pressure to the right. X British Corps with 5 Division, 46 Division, and 56 Division under command, after completing its bridgehead across the Garigliano River, would turn north to capture the high ground southwest of Cassino in the San Giorgio area. II U.S. Corps with 34 Division, 36 Division and elements of 1 U.S. Armored Division under command, would attack on the night 20th/21st January and capture a bridgehead across the Rapido River, south of Cassino, then exploit northwest along Highway 6 to Piedmont-Aquino. The amphibious assault by VI U.S. Corps on Anzio would follow an entire day later at 0200 hours, 22nd January.

At 1600 hours on 20th January I decided that the amphibious operation should be launched as scheduled and all machinery was immediately set in motion to put this into effect.

II U.S. Corps attacked across the Rapido River on 20th January. Footholds were gained across the river but were lost in the face of stubborn opposition. A renewal of the attack the following day also was repulsed. As a result of the tenacity on the part of the enemy to hold on to his defence line, the opening through into the Liri Valley had not been accomplished by the time the amphibious operation was launched as had been planned. However, some success in our general plan had been achieved : enemy reserves had been drawn into this front leaving little with which to counter our landings at Anzio.

THE ANZIO LANDINGS

UNDER perfect weather conditions and with a forecast that these favourable conditions would hold, the Assault Task Force, under the command of Admiral Lowry, U.S.N., set sail from Naples at 0500 hours on 21st January. The convoy was made up of 243 warships, transports, landing craft and various other vessels of the U.S. and British Navies, supplemented by Dutch, Greek, Polish and French craft. The assault forces, under the command of Major General Lucas, consisted of some 50,000 U.S. and British troops and more than 5,000 vehicles.

On leaving port part of the convoy turned south, sailed around the southern coast of the Island of Capri and well out into the Mediterranean

before turning north on a direct course towards Anzio. This routeing was adopted in order to mislead the enemy and to avoid minefields. MACAF gave air protection to the ships during the first half of the voyage after which this responsibility was assumed by XII Air Support Command.

The voyage was uneventful and no interception or reconnaissance was made by the enemy. The convoy arrived off Anzio at 0005 hours on 22nd January under cover of darkness. HM Submarines *Ulator* and *Uproar* acted as beach markers for the beaches on either side of the port and Naval Scout parties were sent ashore to locate and mark the points of landing, while minesweepers of the 12th and 13th Minesweeping Flotillas swept waters off the beaches of Task Force "P" and U.S. minesweepers cleared the waters of Task Force "X". It was planned to have our landing programme well advanced before moon-rise at 0255 hours.

Ashore all was quiet and the assault craft were assembled and dispatched towards the beaches. At 0150 hours, two LCT(R)'s laid down a rocket barrage lasting for five minutes on the two divisional beaches ; the third rocket ship did not fire. At 0200 hours the first assault troops touched down.

Off the east beach, where 3 U.S. Division landed, USS *Brooklyn*, HMS *Penelope* and five U.S. destroyers hove to to give covering fire support, while similar Naval assistance was given by HMS *Orion* and *Spartan* off the western beach, where 1 British Division went ashore. The two gun boats *Flores* and *Soemba* of the Royal Netherlands Navy stood by to lend additional fire support as it might be needed.

3 U.S. Division overran a few patrols and was able quickly to clear the beaches which contained no anti-invasion obstacles and advanced towards their first objective. The Rangers landed at the port of Anzio and captured the dock area, which the enemy had not had time to destroy, and proceeded to mop up the weak enemy defences in the town and its neighbouring seaside resort of Nettuno. On the western beach the assault elements of 1 British Division immediately ran into minor difficulties ; the beach was lightly mined and DUKW's were delayed in the initial stages of landing ; beach conditions were worse than estimated and even LCT's required pontoons for unloading because of the off-shore bar so that troops had to wade 300 feet to shore ; and enemy mobile guns trained on this landing point caused some slight interference with the unloading. Despite these difficulties, however, the assault elements of the division secured a beachhead with few casualties.

By 0445 hours, LSI(L)'s had completed unloading and were under way on the return trip to Naples. With the bulk of the infantry ashore, progress towards the consolidation of the beachhead had been made satisfactorily, anti-aircraft units were ashore and in position to give protection to beach dumps and unloading areas. Anzio and Nettuno were completely in our hands in the early afternoon and before last light the channel had been cleared of mines and the port opened to landing-craft.

Throughout the day, opposition had been negligible, both divisions advanced to their initial objectives four miles inland and consolidated their gains. On the east beach the bulk of 3 U.S. Division was ashore,

while on the west beach 1 British Division had one brigade group ashore complete with guns and tanks and a portion of a second brigade group. At Anzio, 504 Parachute Infantry Regiment was landing to be followed by a regimental combat team of 45 U.S. Division and an armoured group of 1 U.S. Armored Division. As beach conditions were so bad on the western beach it was decided not to land the third brigade group of 1 British Division at this point : but to divert it to the port of Anzio.

The unloading of supplies followed immediately on the landing of the assault force. On the eastern beach LST's unloaded on to LCT's and also on to a tandem of three pontoons reaching from the anchorage to the beach, whence supplies were transported to dumps situated beyond the dunes. Rehabilitation of the port was carried out so expeditiously that Anzio was ready to receive 4 LST's and 3 LCT's almost as soon as the town had been taken. On the west beach, because of the off-shore bar, the poor gradient and bad surface, unloading was entirely unsatisfactory. The beach was closed, therefore, on completion of the unloading of the assault troops and their equipment.

The construction of the beach exits was quickly accomplished ; but the clay soil between the beaches and the main road soon became so badly rutted that matting, corduroy and rock had to be laid down in order to make this area passable. Stores were transported away from the beaches for unloading at the dumps as quickly as possible, to avoid congestion on the beaches themselves ; Corps dumps were opened at 1550 hours on 23rd January. So successful were the unloading arrangements that by midnight on 22nd January 90 per cent. of the personnel and equipment of the assault convoy, amounting to 36,034 men, 3,069 vehicles and large quantities of stores had been put ashore. By 1600 hours on 23rd January the entire 1 British Division and 3 U.S. Division at assault scales had been landed. Landing facilities had been so improved that 6 LST's could be unloaded per day so long as the weather remained favourable.

During D-day, Tactical Air Force flew 841 sorties in support of the landings, while Strategic Air Force attacked enemy airfields in the South of France to interdict activity by the Luftwaffe. Enemy movements along the coastal road in the Formia area were restricted by shelling from HMS *Dido* and a destroyer.

On D-day enemy air attacks were slight, although one LCI(L) was bombed and lost. On 23rd January, raids increased in intensity and, during an air raid at dusk, glider bombs sank HMS *Janus* and so damaged HMS *Jervis* that she had to retire to Naples. On the 24th, three hospital ships, *St. David*, *Leinster* and *St. Andrew*, lying fully illuminated in the roads off Anzio, were wantonly attacked ; *St. David* sank and *Leinster* was damaged. USS *Plunkett* was severely damaged in the raids of this evening and had to leave. Damages from mines during the period 22nd-24th January were sustained by HMS *Palomares* and USS *Mayo* ; USS *Portent* struck a mine on D-day and sank.

On 23rd January the operation continued to progress favourably ; although no rapid advance in strength was possible until heavy weapons

and tanks with necessary supplies had been landed. By early afternoon both assault divisions had completed their first flights with patrols pushing further forward, and the two Commandos were firmly established astride the Anzio-Albano Road.

Because of careful preparation by an experienced planning staff, complete co-operation between all Services, and faith in a successful conclusion to the task, the landings had proved a model of amphibious operations. The pre-assault air plan had been successful in cutting enemy lines of communication in three places between the Pisa-Rimini Line and Rome, had rendered the Rome airfields unserviceable, and had made impotent the enemy reconnaissance units in the Perugia area, so that our final preparations and initial landings went unnoticed by enemy reconnaissance. Our feint against Civitavecchia by Naval bombardment on the night of 21st-22nd January occupied the enemy's attention until well after dawn.

That the enemy had been caught unawares was evidenced by the fact that he had commenced regrouping his forces before the launching of the attack on the main Fifth Army front. He had then been forced to commit his Tenth Army reserves to meet the series of attacks along the whole Fifth Army front and to check the advance made by the French Expeditionary Corps and X British Corps. On the day of the Anzio landings there was evidence that the bulk of his reserves had been committed to action in the south, since he launched severe counterattacks on the main Fifth Army line that day and since the beachhead force encountered only light opposition. On the following day the weakness of enemy forces in the Rome area was indicated by his feeble reaction to our Anzio penetration, while his counterattacks in the Liri Valley and against the main Fifth Army front increased in intensity. These attacks prevented X Corps from exploiting to the northwest through the mountainous region into the Liri Valley but could not dislodge that Corps from its bridgehead over the Garigliano. Just before the landings 36 U.S. Division had attempted for two days to force a crossing of the strongly-held Rapido River but had been repulsed by the reinforced German defenders. On the right of II U.S. Corps, 34 U.S. Division had crossed the upper Rapido on 24th-25th January and had made a slight breach in the Gustav Line, north of Cassino. Thus our operations on the southern front had drawn in a substantial part of the enemy reserves, his decision to commit them proving that he had failed to appreciate the imminence of our amphibious end-run.

The first enemy reaction to our landings was a hasty concentration of elements of the Herman Goering Panzer Division, then in XIV Panzer Corps reserve and spread from Frosinone to Littoria. We had noted an increase of road traffic westward on Highway 6 from Frosinone to the Colli Laziali area and on 23rd January heavy road movement was reported on both main roads leading northwest from the southern front as well as west from the Eighth Army front through Popoli and Avezzano. Intelligence estimated that by last light on 23rd January, the Germans

could have massed against our beachhead forces the equivalent of two divisions plus, made up of an assortment of troops withdrawn from the main battle-front and from the Rome area, possibly including three Tank battalions. Two Panzer Grenadier Regiments, the 29th from Pescara and the 104th disengaged from the Liri Valley, appeared on the beachhead line and behind this screen of mobile forces the enemy was concentrating near Velletri. Our forces pushing inland met strong patrols and armour on 24th January and we regrouped for thrusts up the Albano road and toward Cisterna. To hamper the enemy build-up at Anzio our air and sea forces maintained heavy bombardment of the main roads. On 23rd January HMS *Dido*, *Kempenfelt*, *Inglefield* and FS *Fantasque* kept the Formia-Terracina road under constant shell fire and early the next morning HMS *Kempenfelt* bombarded the road again when it was reported that transport was passing north through Formia. Later in the day HMS *Inglefield* and FS *Le Malin* covered the area and after *Le Malin* was replaced by HMS *Mauritius*, the ships kept the road under fire throughout the following night. As a consequence of this blocking of enemy reinforcements 1 British Division had not made contact and 3 U.S. Division had made but slight contact on the north-eastern rim of the beachhead perimeter. Now that the beachhead was established we planned to co-ordinate our operations there and on Fifth Army main front very closely.

On the main front the French Expeditionary Corps had captured several small features at the foot of Monte Croce only to be driven off again. Fifth Army now planned to have the French Corps renew its drive on Atina; II U.S. Corps regain a footing across the Rapido River while X Corps would continue to regroup in order to resume its attack in the Castelforte area. In the beachhead 3 U.S. Division was to attack north towards Cisterna.

German intentions were greatly clarified on 24th January when the contents of a Special Order from Hitler were captured. This order, read to all German troops, stated: "The Gustav Line must be held at all costs for the sake of the political consequences which would follow a completely successful defence. The Fuehrer expects the bitterest struggle for every yard".

CONSOLIDATION OF THE BEACHHEAD

IN order to exploit our landing by launching an attack in strength from the beachhead, it was necessary to consolidate our initial gains and effect a quick and strong build-up of men and materials. 504 Parachute Regiment was transferred from Corps Reserve to secure the right flank of the beachhead, while 3 U.S. Division and 1 British Division continued to improve the beachhead perimeter without stretching our lines beyond a practical point, and at the same time attempted to probe the enemy's defences with the intention of seizing the two intermediate objectives of Cisterna and Campoleone before making a final thrust towards Colli Laziali. The

remainder of the 45 U.S. Division and Combat Command "A" of the 1 U.S. Armored Division were landed in the beachhead giving VI U.S. Corps the equivalent of four divisions for their forthcoming drive.

The supply and maintenance problem resolved itself more easily than had at first been estimated. Unloading continued ahead of schedule, in spite of a gale on 24th January, making discharge over the beaches impossible, and followed by a second gale on 26th January which again closed the beaches and washed ashore the pontoon causeways, one LST, one LCI and twelve LCT's. By 24th January, however, facilities in the Port of Anzio were so improved that it was possible to discharge 8 LST's and an unlimited number of LCT's in the port a day. There were more than 40 LST's available for the ferry from Naples to the beachhead and 1,700 three-ton trucks to travel on them. This ferry proved most successful; 300 trucks were loaded each day at Naples, 50 in each LST, and each truck was overloaded to five tons with 60 per cent. ammunition, 20 per cent. P.O.L. and 20 per cent. rations, making a total of 1,500 tons of stores put into the beachhead from LST's per day. The craft docked at the port where each LST could be unloaded in an hour by driving the loaded trucks direct from the craft to the dumps. By the 28th January the efficiency of this ferry service was further facilitated by the establishment of a new inshore channel route from Naples to Anzio.

Liberty ships arrived and departed on a ten-day schedule from North Africa. At Anzio they lay off shore where they were serviced in the early stages by 30 L.C.T's which were reduced to 18 at the end of February as the result of losses through enemy action and normal wear; 450 DUKW's were also available and these proved eminently suitable for the task of unloading. The DUKW's also proved an invaluable asset in unloading Liberty ships moored at a distance off shore, and bore out over a long period the experience initially proved in the Mediterranean on the beaches of Sicily and Salerno. The initial plan for loading, routeing and returning LCT's was not successful. LCT's had been allotted to ships carrying British and U.S. stores to British and U.S. points of unloading respectively. There was at no time a sufficient number of these craft to take care of the required task and this allotment of certain craft to certain ships and dumps caused great delay as the unloading of stores could not be co-ordinated with the national allotment of LCT's.

Despite the delay caused by bad weather, the adjustment required for supply arrangements to meet the need of the peculiarities of this particular operation and the increased harassment by enemy artillery and air attack, 7 Liberty ships and 201 LST's were cleared at the beachhead and 27,250 tons of stores landed during this period. With 68,886 men, 508 guns and 237 tanks ashore and backed by the large credit in stores on the beachhead, VI U.S. Corps was now prepared on 29th January to launch its attack.

The enemy's first reaction to our landings was to provide a defence force of sufficient strength to prevent our exploiting beyond the Anzio

area. It soon became clear that he had decided to give battle and meet our forces on the field we ourselves had chosen. While implementing Hitler's order to stand firm on the main front, Field Marshal Kesselring, realising that his lines of communication were not under immediate threat, was content to observe our movements in the beachhead, contain the flanks and spearheads, and to build up a strong counter-attack force to drive us back into the sea, and eliminate the threat to Rome which now represented the entire German military purpose in Southern Italy.

Appreciating that the Eighth Army would not be able to launch an offensive on the Adriatic Coast, he withdrew 26 Panzer Division from that front, and 3 Panzer Grenadier Division and the Hermann Goering Panzer Division he brought from the south to form a mobile striking force for counter-attack. The move of these two divisions from the main front reduced enemy forces there from his intended build-up, as envisaged before the landings at Anzio, from nine to seven divisions ; but, in spite of this depletion of forces against the main Fifth Army drive, it was evident that he would endeavour to seal off any threat to turn the Gustav Line at either its northern or southern extremity, and to make our attempts to assault the position frontally in the centre too costly to be attempted.

The enemy realised his plans by combining his two forward Corps to provide a mixed force in the beachhead to act as a protective screen. A combining of front line units produced three divisions which were given the task of containing our flanks and preventing exploitation of the beachhead. The enemy's intentions not being entirely defensive ; in addition to these units drawn from Tenth Army, he brought from Northwestern Italy and France the equivalent of two weak divisions and a further division of miscellaneous units from Rome, Central and Northwestern Italy. The assembling of this force enabled the enemy to invest the beachhead. The flank north of the Tiber River was covered by the transfer of another division from the Adriatic. That a counter-attack was imminent was obvious and the delay in its development could only mean that his damaged lines of communication were not adequate to meet his present needs. A lightning campaign to throw our forces back into the sea followed by a swift reinforcement and rectification of the Gustav Line was his only hope of success. It was evident that he was prepared to take risks on the Adriatic Coast, hoping to stand fast against the main Fifth Army front and to counter-attack south of Rome.

During this period of regrouping the enemy also endeavoured to hamper our inflow of supplies ; 88 mm. and 170 mm. batteries continued to shell the beachhead area with ever-increasing intensity and accuracy ; floating mines were reported laid in the sea lanes off the beachhead by enemy aircraft at night and aggressiveness from the air increased. Two bomber groups were transferred from Greece to the Po Valley and determined attacks were put in against our beachhead forces together with torpedo and glider bomb attacks from aircraft based on his airfields in Southern France. The largest raid during this period of

the build-up occurred on 29th January at dusk when the enemy succeeded in sinking HMS *Spartan* and a Liberty ship. To counter these measures there was an immediate increase in our air force strength and in anti-aircraft defences.

To prepare for our own main attack 3 U.S. Division attempted to press on towards Cisterna while 1 British Division moved towards Campoleone because with these two vantage points in our hands, we should have a firm springboard from which to launch the planned attack. While 3 U.S. Division put in an attack towards Cisterna which proved abortive, 504 Parachute Regiment launched a diversionary attack across the Mussolini Canal supported on its flank by Naval fire from USS *Brooklyn* and three destroyers. This diversionary attack was successful and the force, apart from several strong combat patrols, was withdrawn across the Canal at night. On the left the 1 British Division had had initial successes in the neighbourhood of Carroceto, but were halted short of Campoleone. Both divisions continued to probe the enemy defences without much success as his rate of build-up and clever deployment of forces prevented our making penetration.

Because of the rate at which enemy forces were being brought into the Anzio area, in spite of our repeated air attacks against his lines of communication and traffic by both Strategical and Tactical Air Forces, the necessity of making an early breakthrough of his defences was apparent ; VI U.S. Corps therefore prepared to launch a co-ordinated attack on 30th January to seize the high ground in the vicinity of Colli Laziali, block the highways heading southwest out of Rome and prepare to advance on Rome. This operation could be carried out by 3 U.S. (spearheaded by Ranger Battalions), 1 British and 1 U.S. Airborne Divisions, deployed astride the roads Cisterna-Velletri and Anzio-Albano.

To prepare for this attack 45 U.S. Division was made responsible for the security of the flanks of the beachhead, aided by elements of the Corps troops ; 504 Parachute Regiment took new positions along the Mussolini Canal. On 29th January, HMS *Spartan*, *Loyal* and *Laforey* carried out bombardments on VI Corps flank, during which HMS *Spartan* was bombed and sunk and replaced by HMS *Phoebe*. Naval forces continued this support throughout the next two days.

By 1st February, our beachhead forces were confronted by the equivalent of five enemy divisions supported by 42 batteries of artillery, our thrusts had been blunted and the attack had lost impetus. By noon, it was clear that after three days' fighting Cisterna was too strongly held and 3 U.S. Division was switched to a defensive role. In the attack towards Albano the plan for 1 U.S. Armored Division had to be altered as the ground over which the division should pass was found to be unsuitable for the task to which it had been assigned. The Division was now ordered to wait until 1 British Division had taken the cross-roads to the north of Campoleone, pass through the British Division and exploit towards Albano ; 1 British Division ran into heavy opposition which repeated attacks were unable to break ; 1 U.S. Armored Division

was prevented from launching its assault and was withdrawn into Corps reserve.

The enemy had made full use of the respite allowing him to develop his defences ; instead of encountering delaying positions before Cisterna and Campoleone, we had met major defence positions. The enemy had taken every advantage of terrain and the weather had made progress difficult over ground which was ill-suited to offence. It was decided therefore that VI Corps should go over to the defensive and prepare to halt the counter-attack which was now inevitable. Our casualties amounted to 6,487 ; but we had taken heavy toll of the enemy and had captured 1,485 prisoners. The anticipated build-up of Air Forces in the Anzio area was never carried out, as after the final investment by the enemy all parts of the beachhead were under shell fire. After the shelling had destroyed 24 aircraft on the ground, the one Spitfire Squadron was withdrawn and the landing strip was kept as an emergency landing ground for the use of the fighter patrols operating from behind Fifth Army front.

The assault on the main Fifth Army front continued during the beachhead build-up and attack. On 25th January, the French Corps gained the crest of Monte Belvedere. On 24th January, 34 U.S. Division launched a new attack, shifting direction to the north across the Rapido River towards Casteleone and Albaneta on the flank of the French Corps ; but was held up north of Cassino by mines. By 26th January, however, a firm hold had been gained on the farther bank of the river. On this day, Monte Belvedere fell to the French Corps. At the end of the month, II U.S. Corps had regrouped its forces and had taken the town of Cairo, north-east of Cassino. Fighting for the town of Cassino itself had started and house-to-house fighting was fierce in the outskirts. Elements of 34 U.S. Division finally reached to within 300 yards of the Monastery where they were halted by heavy artillery and mortar fire ; X Corps had maintained its gains across the Garigliano River and managed to turn the enemy out of the Castelforte area, but against determined German defenders had been prevented from exploiting its new positions. The bridgehead secured north of the river was destined to prove of the greatest value in subsequent operations.

At this stage we had been halted along the entire front. The enemy divisions, skilfully employed, prevented our advance, particularly by the key defences of Cassino and northwards from Minturno through the valley leading to the plain about Pontecorvo. Fierce fighting had resulted in heavy casualties to both sides.

Our failure to achieve decisive results required a complete reconsideration of our plans and our resources. Now that an early junction of the beachhead and main Fifth Army forces seemed remote, it was essential to keep at least 24 LST's available for the supply of the beachhead troops in addition to all available DUKW's. The current situation in the beachhead made it impossible to withdraw 504 Parachute Regiment to the United Kingdom. It was considered that it might be necessary to draw 78 British Division from the Eighth Army front to the Fifth

Army in order to give added pressure to our next attack. But the effects of all these decisions on future major operations would have to be considered.

The enemy had reinforced to a total of 17 divisions south of Rome and the situation had altered materially since planning for the general offensive had been undertaken. With a static battle on the Eighth Army front, insufficient strength to force a break-through on the main Fifth Army front and with our forces in the beachhead now on the defensive, the first phase of the winter campaign had come to a close.

On 2nd February control of the Naval Forces in the beachhead area passed from Rear Admiral F. J. Lowry, U.S.N., to the Flag Officer, Western Italy, Rear Admiral J. Q. V. Morse, R.N. He established standing anti-submarine patrols to cover the new inshore route from Naples to Anzio so that our shipping might traverse this route unescorted, thus releasing escorts for other commitments. German U-boats, which had been absent at the time of the Anzio landings, were now becoming active in the area and steps were taken to hunt them down. Our anti-submarine tactics, in which the air forces played a large part, proved efficient and threw the enemy on the defensive.

SECOND BATTLE AT CASSINO AND ENEMY COUNTER-ATTACK AT ANZIO

THE expected enemy counter-attacks against the beachhead forces commenced on the night 3rd February when German Infantry units attacked along the Albano-Anzio road on 1 British Divisional sector. The attack continued until just before dawn when it was held and the situation established until mid-morning when another attack consisting of infantry and armour was checked after some slight penetration of our lines. The enemy continued his efforts to eliminate the beachhead but was frustrated by the hard fighting and resolution of the defenders. Had further penetrations been effected the situation would have become serious. Once the attack was driven off, it was realised that the perimeter was sealed off and that our forces therein were not capable of advancing.

General Alexander had been constantly preoccupied with the endeavour to assemble forces for a main attack at a decisive point on the main Fifth Army front. It had not been possible to accomplish this earlier because of our shortage of the required number of divisions to cover the front effectively while executing the amphibious operation. To swell his forces, General Alexander was now receiving on this front reinforcements of one British Guards brigade, one British Infantry brigade, elements of 4 Moroccan Mountain Division and, when its relief had been completed on the Eighth Army front by the 3 Carpathian Division, 78 British Division. The enemy, although he had absolutely no air support, had the equivalent of 17 divisions massed against our forces, and another division was on its way to reinforce his formations in the front line. He was considerably stretched both as to men and supplies as a result of our

continued pressure on the main front combined with our air attacks against his lines of communication. Our pressure was making itself felt particularly in the Cassino area where, as a result of continued attacks by II U.S. Corps, a foothold on the north-eastern slopes of the Cassino Massif had been secured. Once we controlled these two features we should have broken the hinge of the enemy's defence line as well as his switch line extending northwards from Terracina through Pontecorvo.

Therefore, an attack by II U.S. Corps was planned in the Cassino area to capture the town ; after which the newly formed New Zealand Corps, consisting of 2 New Zealand Division, 4 Indian Division transferred from the Eighth Army front and Task Force "B", 1 U.S. Armored Division, would attack up the Liri Valley. This attack was launched on 4th February and, although gaining initial success, it spent itself so that regrouping became necessary. Four days later the need to despatch 56 British Division to reinforce at Anzio deprived X British Corps on the West coast sector of forces needed to carry on the offensive, and the positions already gained were therefore consolidated.

I was confident that continued attacks on the main Fifth Army front, combined with maintained pressure in the beachhead and assisted by air attacks against enemy lines of communication, would secure a favourable outcome of the battle, although progress would be slow because of the difficult terrain over which we were being compelled to fight—terrain which gave the enemy ample scope to employ his ingenious tactics of mining and demolitions. The Navies had rendered great assistance in supporting our flanks and by bombardment of the coastal roads in the Anzio and Formia areas, in addition to fulfilling their maintenance tasks which would continue to be their responsibility until the beachhead and main Fifth Army forces had been joined.

II U.S. Corps was charged to attack again in the Cassino area. Should this attack fail, then the formation, which had undergone many losses and hardships, would be withdrawn from the line and replaced by a Corps built up round the Headquarters of the New Zealand Division. The attack was launched on 10th February, but was not successful and New Zealand Corps took over this sector, relieving II U.S. Corps except for 133 Infantry Regiment which continued to hold positions on the outskirts of the town.

Planning began immediately for the New Zealand Corps attack on Cassino. The first objective was to be the capture of Monte Cassino, a formidable task when it is realised that this feature had been considered almost impregnable by the Italian Military College which had long used the feature as an assault problem. Before Monte Cassino could be taken, however, two hills before it, which act as a screen, would have to be attacked and won.

The Army plan, to follow an air attack on the Benedictine Monastery atop Monte Cassino, called for 4 Indian Division holding the salient on the foothills north east of the Monastery to attack in a westerly direction to secure two features overlooking Highway 6, thereafter turning

southwards to clean up the Monastery feature and the town at the foot of it ; 2 New Zealand Division was to force the passage of the Rapido River south of Cassino and join forces with 4 Indian Division. The two Divisions would then advance westwards to the Liri River mopping up the defences of the Rapido River in the process. A special detachment, including armour, was detailed to be ready to exploit up the Liri Valley to Pignataro. This attack was scheduled for the night 12th-13th February ; but because of difficulty in carrying out relief of II U.S. Corps, and the impossibility of forming a bridgehead at the railway bridge across the river in order that the embankment might be used to bring forward tanks and so avoid the flooded ground, a postponement was enforced until conditions permitted the attack to be launched on 15th February.

The Cassino Monastery, the buildings of which the enemy had occupied and fortified, dominated all approaches to the town and to Highway 6, and formed the pivot on which the German defensive system was based. The steep slopes of the feature, in places impassable for infantry, so narrowed the approaches as to make it impregnable to ground attack. After the Monks had been warned of our intention to destroy the Monastery, supporting artillery and the Air Forces proceeded to carry out their missions. One hundred and forty-two Fortress bombers dropped 287 tons of 500-lb. general-purpose bombs and 66½ tons of 100-lb. incendiaries, followed by 47 B-25's and 40 B-26's which dropped another 100 tons H.E. bombs. The Monastery buildings were wrecked and breaches were made in the outer walls ; but, because of the great thickness of these walls, the bombs did not breach them from top to bottom.

That night, 4 Indian Division was strongly counter-attacked, suffering heavy losses which caused a further postponement of the ground attack to the following night. The attack when put in was halted early when our forces found themselves at the edge of a cleft which had been neither mapped nor discovered during reconnaissance, and the attack had to be called off. On the following day, and again on 18th February, the Monastery was bombed by fighter bombers and on 17th February, following the air attack, a fresh ground attack was launched. But this too, failed when our forces sustained heavy casualties ; 2 New Zealand Division procured a bridgehead across the Rapido River and reached the railway station at Cassino : but, as bridging could not be completed to allow the Division to receive tank and anti-tank support, they were forced to withdraw on being counter-attacked. Direct artillery support was impossible during the attack because of the close proximity of the forward defence line to the enemy. However, 34 U.S. Division and 36 U.S. Division employed their artillery units together with two Medium Regiments against enemy forming-up areas. French Expeditionary Corps artillery and the remaining Medium Regiment were given counter-battery tasks. The elements of 4 Indian Division on the ground before Monte Cassino were holding out in positions which were continually

under enemy mortar and small arms fire. In order to supply these troops, six-wheeled trucks were borrowed from II U.S. Corps and the actual ascent to the positions was made by five companies of porters and 800 mules. Casualties were so high that it was decided to withdraw from these positions.

On the Anzio front the long awaited massed attack by the Germans was launched on 16th February with four divisions on a five-mile front at the time that 1 British Division was being relieved in the line by 56 British Division and 45 Division, and some penetration was made. The enemy continued these attacks on the general axis of the Campoleone-Anzio road until 19th February when he realised that further aggressiveness was unlikely to succeed, as he had by this time committed the bulk of his armoured reserves including 26 Panzer Division and 29 Panzer Grenadier Division.

That the enemy had been forced to withhold this attack for sixteen days was undoubtedly the direct result of air attacks on enemy held railways and lines of communication. The chief air effort was now to maintain this pressure on enemy communications in order to increase the enemy's difficulties in maintaining the large number of troops south of Rome and seriously limit his general freedom of movement. To help stem the German attack on 17th February, VI U.S. Corps Commander asked for the maximum air support. Our aircraft gave close and continuous support, disrupted enemy efforts to launch large-scale attacks without interruption by destroying supply installations, communications and vehicle concentrations in the area where enemy reserves were located. The bombing of enemy forward elements was not entirely satisfactory ; but the morale effect on both sides created by our huge air armada was great. In addition to this support from the air, Naval fire support from HMS *Dido*, *Penelope* and USS *Philadelphia* was added to the fire from Field and Anti-Aircraft Artillery.

The enemy attack was halted because of lack of support and demoralisation resulting from combined artillery and air action. He made slight penetration on 3 U.S. Divisional sector, which was eventually restored, and the attack on our left flank was stopped south of Carroceto by 45 U.S. Division. The thrusts were finally halted at their bases by blows from the Air Forces which gave support to our defending troops in the areas around Carroceto and Campoleone. Eight hundred and thirteen bombers of all types dropped 972 tons of bombs during this action, while Strategic Air Force flew missions against Grottaferrata, Albano, Genzano and Velletri. There had been no penetration within our main line of resistance ; enemy losses had been heavy and included 400/500 prisoners. His air attacks against our shipping had brought him negligible results and, when he saw that his attacks were being held and switched his air effort from shipping in the Anzio anchorage to the support of his troops, it was already too late for this air support to influence the battle in his favour.

REVIEW OF STRATEGY

I impressed on my Commanders-in-Chief that the first task was to see the battle through, to join the main forces with the beachhead and to go on to Rome, but it was essential to review the situation in all its aspects, before making further plans. While the present state of affairs lasted, it was impossible to contemplate withdrawing Commandos, Rangers and Paratroops as originally planned. Further retention of 504 Parachute Regiment had been granted by the Combined Chiefs of Staff until the April convoy, but we still could not guarantee their release on this date, until the situation had been reviewed. The enemy now had the initiative in that he could withdraw at his pleasure—we understood well his policy and his methods. There was the possibility of a voluntary withdrawal to the Pisa-Rimini Line in order to conserve divisions ; alternatively, he might stand on a line farther south running through Lake Trasimeno.

On Eighth Army front we were superior to the enemy by four-and-a-half divisions to three, with one division of the Polish Corps fresh, but lacking in battle experience. The terrain is extremely difficult and decisive results were not likely from such limited successes as might be achieved.

At the beachhead we were slightly inferior to the enemy in infantry but superior by over two to one in tanks and we had approximately one hundred more guns of 7.5 cm. calibre and above, of all types. Since 16th February, the beachhead forces had been continuously attacked, our casualties had been heavy and our troops were tired. I regarded it as essential that the present defensive battle should be won, after which the beachhead would have to be consolidated and re-organised so as to be able to hold out for a considerable period.

On Fifth Army main front our superiority on paper was ten divisions to six or seven. Against this, II U.S. Corps and the French Expeditionary Corps had been exhausted by their attacks on Cassino, and it was important not to commit prematurely the New Zealand Corps in order to maintain our pressure. Here again, the nature of the terrain made a co-ordinated attack most difficult and if we were to produce results, simplicity of plan would have to be combined with greater weight and sustained effort. For this purpose reserves would have to be built up—at the moment a difficult task. The situation at the beachhead could not be allowed to cause plans to be rushed, or attacks launched, until everything was ready. We could not afford a failure.

Earlier appreciation had indicated that twenty-eight divisions could be maintained in Italy in addition to the air build-up. At this time I saw every possibility of being able to build up to twenty-five divisions. Of the divisions in Italy, fourteen Infantry and two Armoured had been committed. This left but four other Infantry divisions, including the newly arrived 88 U.S. Division and 5 Kresowa Division now concentrating on the east coast. The principal current need was further Infantry divisions to relieve our tired troops. For this purpose the Infantry brigades from 1 Armoured and 6 Armoured Divisions had had to be brought to Italy

from North Africa and two Infantry regiments from 4 French D.M.M. which would shortly be joined by the remainder of that division.

General Alexander's plan giving a revised priority in which formations were required for Italy included 10 Indian Division and 6 South African Armoured Division, the balance of 5 Kresowa, 4 British, 6 British Armoured and 4 Moroccan Divisions. After completing these formations his most urgent need was for British-equipped formations to hold the line on the east coast and in the centre in order to release for offensive operations formations of Eighth Army now in those sectors. Additional French divisions were available, but there was a limit to the number of French troops which could be employed effectively. Difference in language and equipment made them a relatively inflexible element, unsuitable for use on Eighth Army front. General Alexander agreed to accept, therefore, not more than a single French Corps composed of three or at the most four divisions. At the moment, amongst his formations there were three corps with but two divisions each : the Polish Corps which could be useless after one engagement because of lack of replacements ; the New Zealand Corps which suffered the same limitations ; thirdly, II U.S. Corps which would not be battleworthy for another three months because of losses and fatigue. Heavy losses and the lack of reinforcements had reduced 56 British Division in the beachhead to such an extent that its Infantry battalions were no longer effective fighting units. It was necessary to relieve personnel of this division by 5 British Division and only reinforcements to make up the bulk of the losses sustained by 56 British Division could make it suitable even for a defensive role.

The position of reinforcements was grave ; should the infantry reinforcements of 300 officers and 5,000 men not be available quickly, divisions like 1 and 56 British Divisions would become ineffective fighting units for many months. There were no reinforcements in depots and no prospects of replacing casualties before the end of March. Casualties in April and May would be heavy because of the launching of new operations.

We estimated casualties for the proposed operations during the next four weeks at 80 officers and 1,480 men. After these preliminary operations, and the regrouping of Armies, Eighth Army would launch an attack from the Cassino area and operations would be resumed in the beachhead. Therefore, we estimated that casualties in April and May would not be less than 10,000 per month. It was now essential that in addition to receiving replacements of previous casualties we should also build up an adequate reserve. I had received instructions from the Combined Chiefs of Staff to give the Italian campaign overriding priority over all existing and future operations in the Mediterranean with first call on all resources, sea, land and air in the Theatre, and my first action, therefore, was to endeavour to reinforce General Alexander's armies.

The Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, informed me that there would be no LST's available for the rapid movement of new divisions. As a result of the shortage of LST's all vehicle movements would have

to be made in M.T. ships and the effect of maintenance through Italian ports would have to be considered carefully. This situation demanded of us a continuation of the maximum rate of build-up which Italian ports could accept until the end of April at least. This build-up included formations and units which had not been envisaged as necessary when the overall plan for the Italian Campaign was considered at the Sextant Conference, with a corresponding increase in total numbers of personnel and vehicles to be shipped. The increased size of the force and the high casualty rate would require increased shipment of replacement personnel and vehicles. Further, to make good previous shortage, replacement personnel would be shipped from the United States of America to North Africa for onward movement to Italy at an increased rate during the next few months. I hoped that, with the postponement of a proposed invasion of Southern France, the shipping allotted by the Sextant Conference for this operation would now be available for the Italian Campaign. Should this be possible, my build-up in Italy would be assured. In any case, I should still need sufficient shipping from late April onwards to carry out actual operations.

In order to obtain an early conclusion to this phase of Mediterranean operations it was necessary, therefore, to ask the Combined Chiefs of Staff for extra shipping. Allowing for the movement of ancillary units and replacement vehicles to support these formations, and also for certain movements to and from Corsica, it was provisionally estimated that some 276,000 personnel and 34,000 vehicles would have to be moved to Italy and Corsica. It was considered that, of this total, 225,000 personnel could be shipped in personnel shipping which would be available during March and April, aided by existing Naval opportunities. A further 21,000 personnel could be lifted in cargo shipping if our allocation of this particular shipping were to be increased by 40 sailings in March and 100 sailings in April : these additional sailings over and above the sailings allotted at the Sextant Conference would give a total lift of 21,000 vehicles. I emphasised that the success of operations in Italy depended very largely on the speed with which the forces in Italy could be built up. This could be assured if additional shipping could be provided in April and May. Measures to provide this additional shipping would undoubtedly require time for consideration, but I requested that approval for this shipping be given immediately in order that I might make my plans.

Until the junction of the main Fifth Army Front and the beachhead forces had been achieved, I could not risk withdrawing forces for other operations from my Italian front. It would be impracticable to consider any other major operations in the Mediterranean which would split my air forces. I represented, therefore, that the launching of the proposed operation against Southern France could not be implemented under these circumstances, and suggested that I be given a fresh directive to conduct operations with the object of containing the maximum number of German troops in Southern Europe with the forces now placed at

my disposal, including an assault lift of one division plus. I felt that, should I continue strong pressure in Italy combined with feint operations, we should obtain the biggest dividends in this Theatre and give the maximum assistance to the proposed invasion of Northern France.

Naval considerations precluded any amphibious operations except on the smallest scale until the beachhead and main front had been joined for a month, by which time the use of landing-craft for Army supplies could be discontinued. Even so, seaborne supply to support operations from the beachhead would be limited to 2,500 tons per day.

On 21st February, the objective being limited to securing the Monastery feature and a jumping-off line north of the Rapido River for the subsequent offensive, instructions were issued that the attack would go in at Cassino on 24th February. Dry weather was necessary for our plan in order to permit our tanks to exploit up the Liri Valley and also to allow our bombers to take off from landing fields which at this time were huge mud flats. Bad weather continued and the attack was postponed from day to day, although attacking formations were to be ready at 24 hours' notice. The elements of 4 Indian Division astride the ridge north of Monte Cassino could not be relieved and had to hold out. The remaining elements of II U.S. Corps in the northern outskirts of the town and astride Highway 6 to the east were relieved at long last by elements of 2 New Zealand Division.

The Italian operations were likely to be conditioned mainly by the air factor. My general plan was to use the air so as to deprive the enemy of the ability either to maintain his present position, or to withdraw his divisions out of Italy in time for the invasion from the west. I assured General Alexander that in addition to the fullest co-operation of the Tactical Air Force he would also be supported, when essential, by heavy bombers in the operations planned for the immediate future in the Anzio and Cassino sectors. But, subject always to the general programme for the bombing of Europe by the Combined Allied European Air Forces, the primary task of the Air Forces in Italy must be to make it impossible for the enemy to maintain a powerful army on the Rome Line. It was not unreasonable, granted good weather conditions, to expect that the MAAF Bombing Plan just initiated for this purpose would make itself felt by the end of April. The effect should be to compel the enemy to withdraw to the Pisa-Rimini Line.

The land forces were to continue offensive operations against the enemy to the maximum possible extent, and with no pause appreciable to the enemy. This would afford the best chance of keeping the enemy tied down and would quicken the effect of the interference with his communications. When he began to withdraw, we should follow him up as actively as our resources and his demolitions would permit.

I instructed General Alexander, therefore, in the light of these considerations, to base his plans on regrouping with limited offensives designed first to enlarge the beachhead, and so free the port of Anzio from shellfire, and secondly, to kill Germans and force them to expend

ammunition on the main front, making the most of our superiority in weight of metal. I assured him that, with the exception of 46 British Division, no further troops would be withdrawn from the Italian front until the joining of the two forces, and that I should send him 85 U.S. Division to arrive on the main Fifth Army front by mid-April. I stressed that his present task was to link up the Beachhead and to take Rome. I directed that he, in conjunction with General Cannon, Commanding General Tactical Air Force, make plans in the light of these considerations.

On 8th March, in light of the new priority accorded the use of forces in Italy, the Combined Chiefs of Staff were concerned over the influence which prolongation of the present situation in Italy might have on the overall strategic position. They felt that the concentration of nearly 3,000 bombers and fighters on vital restricted areas would have a determining effect on the enemy provided it were related to vigorous offensive action on land. This action might be developed at either the Beachhead or at Cassino, choice of which would be left to me, and I was asked to reconsider my plans on these considerations. I informed the Combined Chiefs of Staff that prolongation of the situation in Italy was quite distasteful to me and that I realised the effect which stabilisation in the present situation would have on the overall strategic position, but I had no intention of allowing stagnation to set in.

The New Zealand Corps, now composed of 2 New Zealand Division, 4 Indian Division, 78 British Division, and Combat Command "B," 1 U.S. Armored Division was assembled on the Cassino front ready to launch an attack as soon as weather permitted. This operation was planned to involve the maximum combined effort of our Air Forces and all available ground forces. The attack, when completed, should secure a good jumping-off place for a subsequent offensive to be undertaken when the enemy had been further weakened by our air effort. Meanwhile, on the rest of the main front, regrouping was continuing so as to bring more fresh divisions to the decisive point. The Beachhead was being strengthened by bringing in 5 British Division to replace 56 British Division and by subsequent landing of 34 U.S. Division. This would allow a widening of the Beachhead and preparation for a breakout as soon as the main forces were within supporting distance. Our plan was to deliver a series of successive blows against the enemy which would inflict losses upon him, force him to use up ammunition, and lead to the earliest linking up with the Beachhead and the capture of Rome.

Plans for the enlargement of the Beachhead had to be based on the fighting strength of the troops we could maintain there and on the reserve supplies, especially ammunition, that could be built up. The strictest economy of ammunition during quiet periods had been ordered. The Navy had been asked to maintain a daily maximum of 2,500 tons, but General Alexander informed me that the present daily requirements at the beaches were 2,700 tons per day. In fact, the average to date had been slightly above 3,000 tons per day, but this figure had been achieved by taking every advantage of weather and it was essential that a higher figure

than 2,500 tons per day now be guaranteed. Reserves at this time were causing some anxiety even in respect to defence security. Reserves of ammunition in particular, were low in relation to the abnormal expenditure ; they were definitely inadequate for offensive action. The move of two more divisions into the Beachhead would require the average daily discharge to be increased to 3,200 tons per day, plus 800 tons per day to build up reserves, plus additional craft lifts for troop movements. To move 34 U.S. Division into the Beachhead would require 39 LST lifts during the last two weeks of March. Discharge at the rate of 4,000 tons per day would have to start ten days before the extra division was to be moved, in order to effect the necessary improvement in the present weak reserve position.

To meet this programme I asked the Combined Chiefs of Staff for permission to retain in the Theatre, until 20th March, the 13 LST's due to sail for the United Kingdom on 29th February. Should this be approved, there would be 14 serviceable British and an estimated 10 U.S. LST's for the Beachhead during the last ten days in March and, although this number would not meet all requirements, it was hoped that the additional LST's available in the first twenty days in March would enable an accumulation of a sufficient number of reserves to tide us over this period. These remaining 14 British LST's were scheduled to leave the Theatre on 1st April, leaving only 10 U.S. LST's to carry out all maintenance of the Beachhead until the 26 U.S. LST's, which had been allotted, should arrive from the United States of America. I, therefore, asked that these craft too should be held in the Mediterranean beyond their present allotted period until such time as they could be replaced by an equivalent number of new arrivals. These 14 craft could then be refitted in the Mediterranean and sailed for the United Kingdom about 10th April. Should these proposals be approved, and granted good weather and low casualties, we should be able to secure the Beachhead and build up resources for our contemplated offensive. I suggested to General Alexander that further economy in the use of LST's might be effected by shipping only essential weapons and fighting vehicles with the new additional division.

As a result of our urgency to hasten the build-up in the beachhead, the Navy, in an all-out effort to meet our requirements, boosted the supply until on 11th March a record of 7,347 tons of stores were landed. Throughout the first 11 days of the month the daily average amounted to 7,000 tons per day. This accomplishment allowed us to realise part of our plan by landing 34 U.S. Division in the beachhead on 20th March in order to provide for successive rest and refit of 3 and 45 U.S. Divisions.

While we were planning for the continuation of the offensive, both at Cassino and at Anzio, the enemy launched an attack of three battalion strength on 29th February on a 1,000-yard front at Anzio opposite the positions held by 3 U.S. Division. He also put in an attack on the 45 U.S. Divisional front. After slight penetration into its lines 3 U.S. Division regained its original positions by counter-attack.

There was no question as to the security of the Beachhead, although the enemy was able to reach any part of it with his artillery. Our Air, including heavy bombers, was able to give direct support to our defending troops and our flanks were protected by Naval gun fire. Although we were unable to take the initiative at this time, the enemy counter-attack was smashed and it was now unlikely that he would be in a position to renew it in view of his heavy losses in this latest bid to throw us into the sea, especially because of the chaos which our Air Forces had created in his communication system.

WINTER CAMPAIGN—FINAL PHASE

AT 0830 hours on 15th March the Air Forces began the bombardment of Cassino which lasted until mid-day ; 338 heavy bombers and 176 medium bombers dropped 1,100 tons of bombs on the town. While the attack on Cassino was in progress more than 300 fighter bombers attacked targets in the immediate vicinity with 280 fighters giving cover protection. As the morning progressed the town of Cassino became more and more a heap of rubble, as our bombers went in to the attack meeting no opposition from either enemy aircraft or flak.

At mid-day when the air attack ceased, the artillery programme opened : 610 pieces of artillery from X British Corps, II U.S. Corps and New Zealand Corps were employed. 88 guns laid down a creeping barrage under cover of which 2 New Zealand Division was able to advance into the town, while 78 British Division held the line west to X British Corps boundary. The remaining artillery was given the task of neutralising enemy defence positions in addition to counter-battery work. The artillery programme lasted until 1600 hours during which time 1,200 tons of shells were fired into the town.

Facing 2 New Zealand Division was 1 Parachute Division which had relieved 15 Panzer Grenadier Division after the New Zealand attack in February. The enemy had approximately 180 guns, the majority of them small calibre, numerous mortars sited on the slopes about the town, and about 20 Nebelwerfers. Although our infantry was able to advance, no tanks could get through to give them support because of the bomb craters which measured some 40-50 feet in diameter and quickly filled with water. Tanks were unable to follow the infantry into the town until 36 hours later, when a path had been cleared by bulldozers.

By nightfall, most of the town and Castle Hill had been taken and we were within 150 yards of Highway 6, but after the aerial bombardment, the enemy had returned from cover and strongly held position in the area of what had been the Continental Hotel and another position 400 yards to the east astride Highway 6. At dusk, the weather closed down and our advance was slowed. On the following day 4 Indian Division launched an attack towards the Monastery, but attempts to advance were halted because of our own artillery shells falling close to our own troops.

Progress was slow and troops had become isolated on one of the hills before Monte Cassino ; the enemy still held out in the debris of the Continental Hotel and astride Highway 6. We continued to attack towards the west of the town, in an endeavour to clear it, and towards the Monastery, but it was difficult to obtain support and to continue supply against a strongly entrenched enemy, now being reinforced. We realised we should not be able to complete the operation successfully.

On 23rd March, it was decided to abandon the attack ; 2 New Zealand Division had suffered 1,316 casualties and 4 Indian Division over 3,000 casualties. New Zealand Corps was ordered to consolidate and make a chain of forts on a line running across the south-eastern section of the town from Castle Hill to the railway station, containing a group of buildings between these two points. The detachments situated on the hills of the approaches to Monte Cassino were successfully withdrawn under air and artillery cover. On 26th March, owing to casualties and lack of reinforcements, the Corps Headquarters, improvised round that of the New Zealand Division, was broken up, its formations and units passing to the command of the British XIII Corps with the exception of Combat Command "B", 1 U.S. Armored Division, which had, two days earlier, reverted to Fifth Army. The French Expeditionary Corps was also moved from its sector and the front held by this Corps and New Zealand Corps were taken over by Eighth Army.

There were several reasons for our failure. Infantry and tanks did not follow up the air bombardment with the estimated speed, fell behind schedule early in the attack, and finally failed in their purpose. The obstacles created by our bombing and shelling proved too difficult to overcome in the required time. The weather hampered our advance after the initial infantry assault, and the determined opposition of the enemy, coupled with the defensive nature of the terrain with natural shelter, caves and large rocks behind which they were able to take cover. We had failed to realise the delaying effect of our bombing and had partly failed to estimate the enemy's intention to maintain a continued and stubborn defensive. However, in spite of disappointments General Alexander had succeeded in securing the greater portion of the town of Cassino and a small bridgehead across the Rapido River.

It was now necessary to go on the defensive-offensive on all fronts, while regrouping and planning for future operations. Eighth Army had broken halfway through the enemy's main defences on the Adriatic coast early in January, and had held these positions throughout the winter while the battles at Cassino and the landings and subsequent battles at Anzio had been in progress. The bridgehead secured by the X Corps over the River Garigliano in January, together with the area round Cassino, gave us valuable ground, once the country had dried out, to launch an offensive to effect a junction with the Anzio beachhead.

Our Beachhead perimeter at Anzio was firm and, although under constant enemy artillery fire and subject to determined air attack, we had consolidated our positions and were building up our supplies so

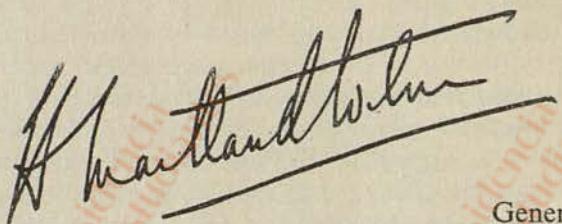
that we should not only be able to maintain the Beachhead but also be ready, when the time came, to launch an offensive. Build-up in the Beachhead was now being restricted by the reduction in the use of Liberty ships and LST's. The reserve situation at Anzio had become satisfactory, however, after the all-out effort put forward by the Navies on our plea for additional supplies. After 11th March, bad weather, increased enemy shelling and the necessity to withdraw LST's for maintenance caused the average unloading of 4,225 tons per day during the early part of the month to drop to 3,000/3,500 tons per day. However, with the ground forces now static and on the defensive, the amount of material possible to unload in the small area began to reach its limit and the daily convoys of LST's were reduced first to 12 and then to 10 per day. Some damage had been sustained by landing-craft from air attacks and the enemy had been able at various times to mine the approaches to the landing stages. In spite of the increased enemy artillery fire, little damage was caused by this form of nuisance.

With all our ground forces on the defensive, while preparing for a coming offensive, I was able to turn my air forces against enemy communications and I informed my Army Commanders that they would not be able to expect air support during this period of preparation. Air action in the battle zone was to be restricted to a minimum and Tactical Air Force was to concentrate all possible power in efforts against enemy rail, road and sea communications south of the Pisa-Rimini Line for the purpose of isolating the German forces in Central Italy. The operation, known as STRANGLE, was carried out from 19th March through 11th May ; it achieved notable tactical results and contributed heavily to the success of the Allied drive to and beyond Rome.

CONCLUSION

As the situation now stood we had secured an adequate start line to launch an offensive while the Anzio bridgehead was a constant threat against the enemy's line of communication. The enemy defence lines were still intact, however, with the result that the regrouping and preparation necessary to produce sufficient weight to force them would take considerable time. It was absolutely essential that we concentrate our efforts on the battle in Italy until the Beachhead and the main front should be joined ; it would, in fact, be militarily impracticable to pursue any other course. In my view, on broad strategical and moral grounds the capture of Rome was an essential part of the Campaign in Italy. The Germans would fight hard to keep it and we could best serve the general strategic interest by forcing them to adopt this strategy. Capture of Rome would give us fresh airfields for basing Tactical Air Forces supporting the land forces in Italy, thus releasing the Corsican airfields for air forces operating against Northern Italy and Southern France. It would give us control of communications which were necessary for further advance.

The winter campaign, apart from the amphibious landings below Rome, had not been spectacular, but it had proved a valuable asset to the furtherance of the war against the common enemy and had been of great assistance to our Russian Allies in the east and to preparations for the coming summer offensive against France. We had forced Hitler into fighting the battle we intended he should be compelled to fight. We were, at this time, engaging 18/19 enemy divisions, thus fulfilling our primary task of containing as many enemy formations in Italy as possible, and we had inflicted heavy casualties and destroyed a great amount of his supplies. We had, in view of this destruction of enemy forces and stores, compelled him to draw into Italy supplies and reinforcements which he needed on the Russian and Balkan fronts. Throughout this period the Strategic Air Force operating from the Foggia area had attacked with continually increasing strength the strategic targets in Southern France, Central Europe and the Balkans, in accordance with the over-all plans for air attack against enemy and enemy-held territory in Europe. These results I considered to be at least as important to the over-all strategy of the war as the gain or holding of Italian territory.



General,
Supreme Allied Commander,
Mediterranean Theatre.

EXTRACTS FROM THE CABLE REFERRED TO ON PAGE 8

- (1) We cannot leave the Rome situation to stagnate and fester for the three months without crippling amalgamation of "Anvil" and thus hampering "Overlord". We cannot go to other tasks and leave this unfinished job behind us.
- (2) Today we decided in conference with Generals Eisenhower and Smith that orders should be prepared for two divisions for "Shingle" with target 20 January.
-
- (4) Everything therefore turns on delaying return to the United Kingdom of remaining 56 L.S.Ts. for three weeks. How foolish it would be after having kept 75 so long to take them away at the very moment and for the very three weeks in which they can render supreme service. Every effort of ingenuity must be made to fill the gap. Admiral John Cunningham says that if 56 start leaving Bizerta by 5 February convoy there will be time enough to bring them in for May "Overlord" and Captain Power has furnished me with proposals, endorsed by the Naval Commander-in-Chief, to achieve that end, and the only point unprovided which I can see is reconstructing these craft on reaching the United Kingdom which must be at a minimum rate of 25 a month. This should have priority over all Admiralty construction, whether merchant ships or anti-submarine craft. I am confident dockyards can achieve this and I ask directions to be given to that effect.

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.C.M.F. ....	... Allied Central Mediterranean Force.
A.F.H.Q. ....	... Allied Force Headquarters.
A.M. ....	... Auxiliary Minesweeper.
A.R.B. ....	... Air Rescue Boat.
D.M.M. ....	... Division Marocaine de Montagne.
D.U.K.W. ....	... Amphibious Load Carrier.
H.E. ....	... High Explosive.
L.C.A. ....	... Landing Craft Assault.
L.C.F. ....	... Landing Craft Flak.
L.C.G. ....	... Landing Craft Gun.
L.C.I. ....	... Landing Craft Infantry.
L.C.I.(L) ....	... Landing Craft Infantry (Large).
L.C.T. ....	... Landing Craft Tanks.
L.C.T.(R) ....	... Landing Craft Tanks (fitted with Rocket Projectors).
L.C.V.(P) ....	... Landing Craft, Vehicle or Personnel.
L.S.I. ....	... Landing Ship Infantry.
L.S.T. ....	... Landing Ship Tanks.
M.A.A.F. ....	... Mediterranean Allied Air Forces.
M.A.C.A.F. ....	... Mediterranean Allied Coastal Air Forces.
M.L. ....	... Mine-layer.
P.C. ....	... Patrol Craft.
P.O.L. ....	... Petrol, Oil and Lubricants.
S.C. ....	... Submarine Chaser.
Y.M.S. ....	... Yacht Minesweeper.

COMPLEMENTARY TO THIS REPORT

Report of the Supreme Allied Commander on the Operations in Europe of the Allied Expeditionary Force

(GENERAL EISENHOWER'S REPORT)

The official account of the operations in N.W. Europe. Describes the planning and preparation which preceded the largest amphibious operations the world has ever seen and the progress of the campaign from the initial assault to the final surrender.

Price 2s. 6d. (by post 2s. 9d.)

Report by the Supreme Allied Commander Mediterranean to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the Operations in Southern France (August, 1944)

(GENERAL MAITLAND WILSON'S REPORT)

This despatch covers the co-ordination and planning necessary before the assault landing in Southern France on 15th August, 1944 and the progress of the campaign to the eventual transfer of operational and administrative control to General Eisenhower.

Price 1s. (by post 1s. 2d.)

H. M. STATIONERY OFFICE

York House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2

(Post Orders : P.O. Box No. 569, London, S.E.1)

13A Castle Street, Edinburgh 2 ; 39-41 King St., Manchester 2
1 St. Andrew's Crescent, Cardiff ; 80 Chichester St., Belfast
or through any bookseller

Residencia
de I. studiantes



C O P Y R I G H T R E S E R V E D

LONDON

PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

To be purchased directly from H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE at the following addresses :
4 York House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2; 13a Castle Street, Edinburgh 2;
39-41 King Street, Manchester 2; 1 St. Andrew's Crescent, Cardiff;
80 Chichester Street, Belfast;
or through any bookseller

1946