



# 191<sup>ST</sup> TANK BATTALION IN FIFTH ARMY HISTORY



War correspondent Ernie Pyle (CENTER) with tankers of the 191st Tank Battalion at Anzio, 1944.

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regimental executives. The instruction was practical and applicatory. After each course a six-day trip was made to selected battlefields where officers from the troops that had fought over the ground explained the action and commented on the lessons to be learned. After two courses had been completed, the center was discontinued owing to shortage of qualified students who could be spared from other duties.

5. *Tank Destroyer Training Center.* The Fifth Army Tank Destroyer Training Center was activated 5 May. A location for the center, with headquarters at a point approximately seven miles south of Sebdou, Algeria, was selected. The site was a high plateau (3000 feet) bordering on the bunch grass country and offered a fine variety of terrain in sparsely occupied areas. Water in the area was limited, but a mobile water unit was installed at the source of the Tafna River, six miles north of Sebdou, with an auxiliary point located at El Gor.

The original staff consisted of Lt. Col. John W. Casey, Commanding; Capt. Charles F. Wilbur, Executive; Maj. John W. Dobson, S-3; Capt. Francis E. Kramer, S-2 and Co-ordinator of French Training. The headquarters detachment, commanded by Capt. Edward I. Kaufman, together with housekeeping facilities was moved from Mascara to provide the necessary enlisted personnel. Units trained at the center included the 636th, 701st, 776th, 804th, 805th, 894th, and 899th Tank Destroyer Battalions; and the 191st, 756th, and 760th Tank Battalions. The center also undertook the training of French tank destroyer battalions. French units attached for this purpose were the 8th, 9th, and 11th Tank Destroyer Battalions (Régiments des Chasseurs d'Afrique).

6. *Engineer Training Center.* The Fifth Army Engineer Training Center was activated 12 March. Lt. Col. Aaron W. Wyatt, Jr., was designated as commanding officer. Instruction in mine warfare and demolitions commenced 21 March. The original staff and faculty included Maj. Harold E. Wetzell, Executive Officer; Capt. Eric J. Schellenberger, Camp Executive. British instructors were Maj. Cecil L. Stephenson, R.E., Maj. Stanbury J. Hawkins, R.E., Capt. Eric H. Yeo, R.E., Capt. Robin R. Hoskyn, R.E. For French students two French officers were attached as instructors.

As originally established, courses were of seven days' duration. Many students were sent to the Tunisian front for a short period before the courses opened. Beginning with the seventh course, however, the period was increased to nine days. Student quotas were originally set at 20 officers and 40 non-commissioned officers. Subsequent quotas were increased to 40 officers and 60 non-commissioned officers; and finally 80 officers, 40 non-commissioned officers, and 20 French officers were allowed. In each course additional students were accepted

VI CORPS (*continued*). . . . .

- 120th Medical Battalion
- 700th Ordnance Light Maintenance Company
- 45th Quartermaster Company
- 45th Signal Company
- Military Police Platoon
- 157th Infantry Regiment
- 179th Infantry Regiment
- 180th Infantry Regiment

*Attached:*

- 2d Chemical Battalion (Motorized)
- 106th AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion (Self-Propelled)
- 27th Armored Field Artillery Battalion [105-mm Howitzer]
- 191st Tank Battalion (Medium)
- 756th Tank Battalion (Light)
- 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion

Medical:

- 52d Medical Battalion

Military Police:

- 206th Military Police Company

*Attached:*

- Company A, 504th Military Police Battalion

Quartermaster (*attached*):

- Company A, 204th Quartermaster Gas Supply Battalion
- Company B, 263d Quartermaster Service Battalion
- 2d and 3d Platoons, 47th Quartermaster Company (Graves Registration)
- 2d Platoon, 48th Quartermaster Company (Graves Registration)
- 2d and 3d Platoons, 90th Quartermaster Company (Railhead)
- Company D, 27th Quartermaster Truck Regiment

Signal:

- 57th Signal Battalion; *attached:*

- Detachment C, 71st Signal Company (Special)

*Attached:*

- Detachment, 128th Signal Company (Radio Intercept)
- Detachment, 180th Signal Repair Company

not be solved with Italian pack mules. The enemy continued to hold positions on the reverse slopes of hills and to infiltrate back through ravines and valleys. Fighting and patrolling went on steadily until the regiment was pinched out on 12 November by the 135th and 179th Infantry. The casualties of the 133d Infantry in the third crossing of the Volturno and the fighting around Santa Maria Oliveto were extremely heavy. Four officers and 81 enlisted men were killed, 24 officers and 216 men were wounded, and 6 men were missing. Exposure to rain and cold, however, struck down more men than did the enemy.

On 7 November General Ryder ordered the 135th Infantry; the 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion; the 191st Tank Battalion; Company A, 3d Chemical Battalion; and Company B, 109th Engineer Battalion, to assemble in the vicinity of the highway-railway crossing in the valley southeast of Roccaravindola. This group, under the command of General Caffey, was to be known as Task Force A and was to drive up the road to secure Montaquila. The 3d Battalion, 135th Infantry, led the attack the next morning and took the town and Hill 864 to the west. The 1st Battalion drove across the hills back of Santa Maria Oliveto and occupied Hill 1036. The 135th Infantry spent the next few days patrolling north across Chiaro Creek and west over the terraced hills toward Mount Pantano. Routes through mined areas were located by driving sheep and goats through them, and extensive minefields were discovered north of Chiaro Creek. Contact was made with the 504th Parachute Infantry, which had pushed along the right flank of VI Corps to Colli.

### C. SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

Fifth Army was everywhere held up by bad weather, mountainous terrain, and stubborn enemy resistance. The 56 Division, which had been making the main effort for 10 Corps, had given up its attempt to drive the enemy from Mount Camino. The 34th and 45th Divisions had been stopped in the mountains west of the Volturno River. The 3d Division had been successful in clearing the right side of the Mignano Gap, but Mount Lungo in the center and Mount la Difensa on the left were proving to be difficult to capture. The enemy had strengthened his right flank along the sea with the 94th Grenadier Division and his left flank in the mountains with the 305th Grenadier Division and the 26th Panzer Division. The rains had increased since October and the nights were bitterly cold. Problems of supply were becoming increasingly difficult as the Volturno rose, as the mud got deeper, and as the hills became steeper.

409th AAA Gun Battalion (Semi-Mobile)  
439th AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion  
102d Barrage Balloon Battery (Very Low Altitude)  
688th, 692d, and 693d AAA Machine Gun Batteries  
6672d and 6673d Gun Operations Room Platoons (Provisional)

*Attached:*

3d Platoon, Company A, 84th Engineer Camouflage Battalion  
574 Coast Regiment [British]

Armored Force:

191st and 756th Tank Battalions

Chemical:

6th Chemical Company (Depot)  
24th Chemical Company (Decontamination)  
83d Chemical Battalion (Motorized)

Engineers:

337th and 343d Engineer General Service Regiments  
175th Engineer General Service Regiment [-1st Battalion, and Companies  
E and F]  
344th Engineer General Service Regiment; *attached:*  
1st Pioneer Company [Italian]  
2d Battalion, 92d Engineer General Service Regiment  
540th Engineer Combat Regiment  
Company A, 84th Engineer Camouflage Battalion [-4 Platoons] ☐  
Company D, 84th Engineer Camouflage Battalion  
Detachment, Headquarters and Headquarters and Service Company, 85th  
Engineer Battalion ☐  
Company A, 85th Engineer Battalion (Heavy Pontoon) [-1 Platoon]  
405th Engineer Water Supply Battalion  
Survey Platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, 649th Engineer  
Topographical Battalion  
425th and 427th Engineer Dump Truck Companies  
469th Engineer Maintenance Company  
2699th Engineer Map Depot Detachment

Carano (1). The 3d Division (reinforced) would hold the area from Carano to the junction of the west branch with the main Mussolini Canal (2). The 1st Armored Division (3) (less Combat Command B) and the 45th Division (4) (less one regimental combat team) were to be in Corps reserve prepared to counterattack on Corps order. The 1st Armored Division was located east of the Albano road in the extensive area of tangled undergrowth, scrub trees, and bog land known as Padiglione Woods. In addition to its counterattack role it was to organize defenses south of the final defense line behind the 1 Division, while the 45th Division, located northeast of Nettuno along the road to Cisterna, was to organize the area south of the west branch of the Mussolini Canal behind the 3d Division. The 36th and 39th Engineer Combat Regiments, in addition to their engineer functions, were to assist in defending the coastline against airborne and sea-borne raids and were to be prepared to assemble on four hours' notice as Corps reserve. At the port the 540th Engineers, which passed to Army control on 6 February when Fifth Army took over control of supply at the beachhead, was to defend X-Ray and Nettuno beaches. During the critical days of February the task of improving the defenses absorbed the energies of every available man on the beachhead.

The attack on the Campoleone salient necessitated some changes in the plan of defense. The 168 Brigade, originally designated as Corps reserve, was committed to the support of the 1 Division, and the forward line to be consolidated was drawn back to form an arc covering the Factory area. On 5 February VI Corps designated an intermediate line approximately halfway between the initial and final beachhead lines. During the month of February, although powerful enemy attacks tore deep rents in the initial and intermediate lines of defense, necessitating frequent shifts in the positions of the defending troops, the general outline of the VI Corps plan of defense remained intact.

2. *Preparation of Defenses.* The work of preparing the defenses was performed under the most trying conditions. All operations had to be conducted at night and sometimes in the midst of battle. In the forward areas the extent

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(1) Attached : 2 Army Field Regiment, Royal Artillery; 3d Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry; 168 Brigade; 46 Royal Tanks; Companies B and C, 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

(2) Attached : 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion; 751st Tank Battalion; 191st Tank Battalion; 441st AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion; 84th Chemical Battalion; 69th Armored Field Artillery Battalion; 504th Parachute Infantry (-3d Battalion); 6615th Ranger Force (Provisional); 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion.

(3) Attached : 434th AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion.

(4) Attached : 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion; 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion (-Companies B and C).

The commitment of two regiments of the 45th Division in the 1 Division sector resulted in a depletion of VI Corps reserves. To offset this loss the 36th Engineers took over a portion of the Moletta River line, relieving all but one battalion of the 157th Infantry. Although the engineers had had no experience as infantry and were badly needed for construction of defenses and road maintenance, by holding a relatively quiet portion of the front they released infantry troops needed to bolster the critical central sector. In the succeeding weeks while the regiment continued to maintain the Moletta River line the engineers were to prove themselves able to handle machine guns and mortars as capably as their bulldozers and road graders.

The reliefs carried out by the 45th Division left the 1 Division holding less than half of its former front. It was then possible to move all of the 168 Brigade to a rear bivouac area for rest and reorganization. Responsibility for the newly defined division sector passed to the 3 Brigade, reinforced by the 3d Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment; the 1 Irish Guards; and the 1 Recce Regiment, less one squadron. The new front extended from the positions of the 2 Foresters and the 1 KSLI south of Buonriposo Ridge to a point just east of the Albano road where the 1 DWR relieved the 1 Scots Guards and the 5 Grenadier Guards, which had been covering the overpass below Carroceto. Back along the final beachhead line the 2 Brigade was engaged in fortification.

For the counterattack to regain the Factory General Eagles committed the 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry, and two companies of the attached 191st Tank Battalion. One tank company was to attack through the overpass at Carroceto to strike the Factory from the west; the other company was to move up the north-south road just east of the Factory to strike it from the southeast. The infantry were to co-ordinate their advance with the tanks. At 0630, 11 February, following a 15-minute artillery concentration on the Factory, the tanks and infantry jumped off. Company A, 191st Tank Battalion, took the Albano road. The first tank to pass through the overpass was knocked out by a direct hit; a second tank blew up 200 yards farther along the road. At 0830, after shelling the southwest corner of the Factory, the tanks of Company A withdrew under a smoke screen. Company A, 179th Infantry, attacking behind the protective fire of the tanks, was held up by machine guns located in the Factory and along the road to the south of it. The tanks of Company B, supporting Company B, 179th Infantry, reached the road junction southeast of the Factory and poured shells into the buildings until forced to withdraw for ammunition. One tank was left forward to direct the fire of the 27th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, which was supporting the attack. Company A sent six tanks up to the underpass at 1030 to continue the shelling. They were again driven back by accurate antitank

fire. Nevertheless, at noon, when our troops withdrew to reorganize, tank and artillery fire had converted the enemy's fortress into a blazing mass of ruins.

At 1300 the tanks and infantry returned to the attack. The concentrated artillery and tank fire on the Factory was having an effect. Enemy tanks and self-propelled guns were forced to withdraw to the east along the lateral road, and at least two Mark III's were knocked out. Company A, 179th Infantry, fought its way into the buildings on the southwest corner of the Factory, where it engaged the enemy in bitter close-in fighting. Outnumbered, the company became disorganized and withdrew after losing 6 officers and 49 enlisted men reported missing in action. Company B, attacking from the southeast, also reached the Factory but was driven back at 1630 by an enemy counterattack supported by artillery fire and tanks which moved down the lateral road. The tanks of Company B, 191st Tank Battalion, had already been forced to return for more ammunition. Before dark both infantry and tanks were withdrawn for reorganization. The enemy still held the Factory.

During the fighting the 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry, captured 33 prisoners from the 10th and 12th Companies, 725th Grenadier Regiment, from whom it was learned that only an intercepted radio message had saved the Germans from being caught completely by surprise. The troops were alerted at 0430, and the 1st Company was moved up to strengthen them. To provide armored support six self-propelled guns and two Tiger tanks had been concealed in the Factory. After the attack started, the concentrated effect of our tanks firing from the flanks and the artillery shelling caused heavy casualties to the enemy units already depleted by the fighting with the 1 Division. One company was reduced to 17 men. The counterattack of the 191st Tank Battalion and the 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry, had come very near to succeeding.

At 0200 the next morning the 179th Infantry, this time employing Companies B and C, again assaulted the Factory. Company B attacked from the south, Company C from the southwest, and Company I paralleled the advance farther to the east. Company C, 191st Tank Battalion, moved up as far as the road junction southwest of the Factory. There it was stopped by a hasty minefield which the enemy had laid during the night. One tank was immobilized. The others found what cover they could behind farm buildings and supported the infantry by shelling the Factory and directing artillery fire. By 0430 both Companies B and C, 179th Infantry, had penetrated into the Factory area. Two hours later an enemy counterattack again forced the 1st Battalion to draw back. The enemy made no attempt to follow up the counterattack, and the 1st Battalion was able to organize a line approximately 500 yards south of the Factory. During the day Company C, 191st Tank Battalion, was withdrawn. In the two



those directed against the 3d and 56 Divisions. At approximately 0630 the 715th Light Division with tank support struck simultaneous blows at points all along the division front. The lightest of these blows was borne by the 180th Infantry, which was holding the division right flank along the Carano road. A force of approximately two companies, following the numerous stream beds and ditches which drain to the south, attempted to infiltrate between Companies E and F. The regiment called for prearranged artillery defensive fires, and the artillery together with the machine guns of the forward companies mowed down the attacking troops. At nightfall, when the remnants of the two enemy companies were pulled back, they appeared to be completely disorganized.

The tactical importance of holding the Factory and the overpass at Carroceto became immediately apparent in the attacks launched against the 2d and 3d Battalions, 179th Infantry, located respectively south and southeast of the Factory, and the 2d Battalion, 157th Infantry, astride the Albano road. With the observation provided by the Factory buildings the enemy could practically look down the throats of the 179th Infantry, and both the Factory and Carroceto provided concealed assembly areas for enemy infantry and tanks. Taking advantage of the network of roads in the area, groups of from four to eight tanks would issue forth from the Factory to pour fire at point-blank range into the foxholes of our troops. When out of ammunition they would withdraw to the Factory, replenish their supply, and return to the attack before our artillery could register on them. Enemy infantry, co-ordinating their movements with the tanks, worked down La Ficoccia Creek against the 3d Battalion, 179th Infantry, and down Carroceto Creek against the 2d Battalion.

During the morning all attacks on the 179th Infantry were beaten off with heavy losses to the enemy, but the pressure was kept up throughout the day. Companies F and G astride Carroceto Creek were forced to pull back slightly, and a platoon of Company L was sent forward to assist Company I in fighting its way out of an enemy encirclement. Company F, reorganizing under the protection of Carroceto Creek reported that it was down to 30 men and had lost all its machine guns. Late in the afternoon the pressure on the 179th Infantry eased, and the troops were given an opportunity to reorganize. Enemy tanks as well as infantry suffered heavy losses during these attacks. At noon the 160th Field Artillery Battalion massed the fire of 144 guns on a concentration of infantry near the Factory; at 1545, firing with observation by the 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion, it knocked out 3 tanks in the same area; and at 1725 it set fire to 4 tanks and damaged another near a water tower northeast of the Factory. The 191st Tank Battalion reported it had destroyed 15 tanks against a loss of 7 of its own. Several others were destroyed by antitank guns.

of fighter-bombers, light bombers, and medium bombers swept over the beach-head to attack assembly areas, troop concentrations, and tanks. The emphasis was placed on the 56 and 45th Division fronts, with dive bombers and medium bombers striking both the Factory and Carroceto while heavy bombers worked over the communication lines feeding into the Rome area.

At the end of the first day of the big push the enemy had made only slight gains in the sectors of the 56 and 45th Divisions at considerable cost in tanks and personnel. It was evident that most of the attacks were intended only as diversions to wear down the strength of the defending troops and to pin reserves. The enemy had not yet committed his main force.

2. *The Second Day.* (See Map No. 14.) Before midnight on 16 February the enemy resumed the attack down the Albano road. One company of the 725th Grenadier Regiment worked around both flanks of Company E, 157th Infantry, astride the road, while a second company infiltrated directly into the positions of the company. During the night the enemy slowly wiped out the forward positions from the front and rear, forcing the remnants of Company E into a small area around the command post. Here three tanks of the 191st Tank Battalion assisted them in holding out. At 0500, behind a protective screen of smoke and high explosive shells laid down by the artillery and with the aid of the Shermans, which fought off 4 enemy tanks closing in from the flanks, what was left of Company E — a total of 14 men — and 4 men of Company H withdrew to the west of the main road. The 2d Battalion, 179th Infantry, also under pressure during the night, sent a platoon west to contact the 2d Battalion, 157th Infantry, without success. A dangerous gap was opening up between the two regiments.

The enemy lost no time in exploiting the tactical advantage he had won by his successful night attack. Striking swiftly and in force, he worked to deepen and widen the salient he had created along the Albano road. At 0740 an estimated 35 Focke-Wulf 190's and Messerschmitt 109's bombed and strafed the 45th Division front line. A few minutes later both the 2d and 3d Battalions, 179th Infantry, were under attack by a powerful force composed of the whole of the 725th Grenadier Regiment, two battalions of the 145th Grenadier Regiment, and part of the 741st Grenadier Regiment. During the day approximately 60 tanks, employed in small groups, supported the enemy infantry.

One force of tanks and infantry moved southeast from the Factory to attack the 3d Battalion along the north-south road 2000 yards to the east of the Albano road, while a second force, after driving south from Carroceto along the highway, swung east through the former positions of Company E, 157th Infantry, to strike the 2d Battalion in the flank. Company G, which had been

of both the 56 and 1 Divisions when General Penney was wounded by a shell fragment. General Truscott left the 3d Division to become Deputy Commander of VI Corps, his former position being filled by Brig. Gen. John W. O'Daniel.

In an effort to lessen the depth of the enemy penetration and to obtain a more defensible line, General Eagles ordered the 2d and 3d Battalions, 179th Infantry, and the 3d Battalion, 157th Infantry, to launch a counterattack on the night of 17-18 February. The 179th Infantry was to reach the west branch of Carroceto Creek, an advance of 1000 yards, while the 3d Battalion, 157th Infantry, was to reach a parallel position on the Albano road where it would be in position to tie in with the beleaguered 2d Battalion west of the highway. The 191st Tank Battalion was to support the attack. At that time the 3d Battalion, 179th Infantry, had been reduced to 274 men, and the 2d Battalion, even with Company A attached, was in hardly better condition. The two depleted battalions jumped off on schedule at 2300; the 3d Battalion, 157th Infantry, was delayed. Hampered by lack of communication between units and pressure from the enemy, the attack by the 3d Battalion did not get under way until 0030. The enemy had already succeeded in bringing up machine guns and consolidating his gains along the Albano road. The battalion encountered such heavy fire that it got no farther up the highway than the junction with the dead-end road, almost 1000 yards short of its objective. The 2d Battalion, 179th Infantry, found its left flank exposed to attack from the west. Momentarily on the defensive, the enemy returned to the attack. Company E was partly cut off by enemy tanks and was forced to begin a withdrawal. To the right Companies K and L reached their objectives, only to find that Company K was in a trap. The situation became confused. Enemy artillery fire knocked out all communication between the 179th Infantry and its battalions, forcing the regiment to rely almost entirely on runners to keep abreast of the situation. The counterattack had failed. It lacked sufficient strength to throw the enemy off balance, and it left the troops of the 179th Infantry in an exposed position.

4. *The Day of Crisis.* (See Map No. 15.) All through the night the enemy moved up units in preparation for a resumption of the offensive while employing his customary tactics of infiltrating small groups under cover of darkness. Special attention was paid to the shoulders of the salient. On the left enemy units, infiltrating up the ravines which drain into the Moletta River, got between the 167 Brigade and the 2d Battalion, 157th Infantry, and cut the battalion's supply route. On the right Companies G and F, holding the left flank of the 180th Infantry, were harassed by enemy tanks operating along the north-south road and by enemy infantry infiltrating into their posi-

servers became casualties or had their radios and telephones shot out, but the enemy's efforts to keep down the cub observation planes failed. At 1110 a cub plane observing for the 45th Division Artillery reported 2500 Germans moving south from Carroceto along the Albano road. Within 12 minutes the Corps fire control center had massed on the target all available Corps artillery, representing 20 155-mm guns, 20 155-mm howitzers, 8 4.5-inch guns, and 8 5.5-inch howitzers, together with the 120 25-pounder gun-howitzers of the 5 field regiments supporting the 1 and 56 Divisions, and 4 battalions of the 45th Division Artillery, to make a total of 224 guns. In the next 50 minutes the massed fire of these guns was shifted to 4 other locations by the cub pilot. Many enemy units were decimated and disorganized before they were even in position to attack, yet there appeared to be no end to the waves of enemy infantry thrown against the 45th Division.

At 1400, when Colonel Darby took command of the 179th Infantry, the situation appeared desperate. The shattered 3d Battalion had been withdrawn for reorganization; the 2d Battalion was at less than half strength and nearly exhausted. Only the 1st Battalion was capable of organized resistance. All communication lines between the regiment and its battalions were out, further complicating the task of creating a co-ordinated defense. The 180th Infantry on the right flank was still largely intact, but its units were holding a long front exposed to enemy tank attacks, and Company G was completely cut off. The enemy's Mark VI tanks could operate almost at will down the Albano road and the diagonal road to Padiglione. A large percentage of the division's anti-tank guns had been knocked out or overrun during the fighting of the past three days; the tanks of the 191st Tank Battalion and the tank destroyers of the 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion had suffered heavy losses while beating off the never-ending succession of enemy attacks. The 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion alone lost 14 M-10's on 17 February. In order to obtain hull defilade it was necessary to dig the M-10's into the marshy ground. Once in place they were difficult to move, and in some cases they had to be abandoned when the infantry withdrew. In the late afternoon of 18 February, as the enemy prepared to make his heaviest attack of the day, it was questionable whether the final beachhead line could hold.

The enemy attack started with a thrust by 12 tanks down the diagonal road. Only a blown bridge where the road crosses Carroceto Creek kept the tanks from breaking through. Strung out along the road, the tanks were able to fire point-blank into the foxholes of Company A, 180th Infantry. Under the cover of this fire the German infantry attacked. By 1750 the fighting was general along the whole front of the salient as far west as the overpass. Both

stopped. Immediately thereafter our tanks loomed up in the smoke all along the front, and behind them came swarms of infantry.

Complete surprise had been achieved. Men of the 180th Infantry had to pry their opponents, often partially clothed, out of the dugouts; below Cisterna the enemy at first thought we were launching another small daytime sortie. Our artillery preparation, the most intensive thus far at the beachhead, had searched out the command posts, assembly areas, and dumps which we had carefully located in the previous weeks, with the result that enemy communications and supply lines were severely damaged. Enemy artillery fire was slow to start and was hampered by a day-long haze limiting German observation from the dominating hill masses. Though the enemy recovered quickly and put up a strong fight, he never could make up for the initial disorganization, and counterattacks remained local in character.

The 45th Division under Maj. Gen. William W. Eagles attacked on the left for limited objectives, to hold the shoulder of the main penetration. While the 179th Infantry under Lt. Col. Preston J. Murphy made a demonstration on the extreme left, the 180th Infantry under Col. Robert L. Dulaney proceeded to neutralize 2 houses 1500 yards northwest of Carano and to organize the ground in the vicinity. The 2d Battalion moved up through the artillery preparation and secured its initial objectives quickly. One company was then held up by small-arms and machine-gun fire from an enemy strongpoint situated in four houses along the Carano road. Tanks of Company C, 191st Tank Battalion, came up and fired point-blank at the houses, knocking out the resistance so the infantry could proceed. The value of the intensive tank-infantry training of the previous weeks showed itself in this small action, for the infantry often ran up to the tanks and pointed out a target or indicated it by tracers. By the middle of the afternoon the battalion held its final objectives and dug in. It had taken prisoners or killed a large part of the 3d Battalion, 29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, and had captured the battalion command post with radios and documents.

To the right of the 180th Infantry the 157th Infantry under Col. John H. Church attacked with two battalions abreast for deeper objectives. The 1st Battalion on the left jumped off at 0625 and held a line north of the Carano road by dark. The 3d Battalion, moving up the west bank of Carano Creek, occupied Hill 94 just short of the railroad about noon, with its three rifle companies strung out along the creek. At 1420 the forward artillery observer reported six to eight tanks moving in on the center of the line. Fifteen minutes later the number had grown to 24 Mark VI's, and in the next few minutes the tanks, unsupported by infantry, had driven our northernmost company back into the creek bed. The tanks pushed through almost to the creek, cutting the battalion in two and firing on the rear of the 1st Battalion. Tank destroyers hurried to the scene of action; the 3d Battalion,

Cisterna—Cori district became ever more apparent, and the 45th Division reported withdrawals on its front. The Hermann Goering Panzer Parachute Division, the last dependable reserve of the German High Command, was coming up, but preliminary indications suggested that it would be utilized in the Valmontone area. The enemy forces southwest of Velletri could expect no substantial reinforcements.

In the evening General Clark decided to attack toward Lanuvio on 26 May. At 2300 the division commanders met at VI Corps Headquarters to receive the Corps order. Twelve hours later the attack was under way. During that brief period the major elements of 2 divisions were shifted by foot and motor on crossing paths over a distance varying from 4 to 15 miles; Corps artillery displaced to support the new drive; orders and reconnaissance were initiated and completed by all echelons from Corps to battalions. Fifth Army again caught the enemy flatfooted by its swift exploitation of his weaknesses.

The Corps attack order directed the 3d Division to continue on its previous mission of driving north to Valmontone and Highway 6. The 1st Special Service Force and elements of the 1st Armored Division were attached to this unit to protect its right flank in the hills above Cori and its left flank in the open ground north of Giulianello. In the main offensive the 34th and 45th Divisions would push west below Velletri, the 45th Division on the left toward Campoleone Station and the 34th Division toward Lanuvio. Both combat commands of the 1st Armored Division would concentrate on Velletri from south and southeast. The provision of Operation Buffalo which called for the 36th Division to pass through the 3d Division had already been scrapped, and the 36th Division was ordered instead to come up southeast of Velletri to plug the gap between the Lanuvio and Valmontone drives.

This order required extensive shifts in troop dispositions. Some of these movements were already in progress under the plan to attack on 27 May; others were speeded by the new order. Units of the 45th Division, which had held their gains east of the Factory, were essentially in position except for the 179th Infantry, still in line on the south flank. This regiment was relieved at 0510, 26 May, by the 18 Brigade of the 1 Division and moved to divisional reserve. The 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion (less Companies A and B) reverted from the 1st Special Service Force to the 45th Division; tank support consisted of Companies B and C, 191st Tank Battalion.

The 34th Division, which was to attack with two regiments abreast through the lines of the 135th Infantry, was widely scattered at dusk on 25 May. The 135th Infantry, west of Highway 7, was supporting Combat Command A; on the east of the highway the 168th Infantry held positions to block the gap between Combat Command A and Combat Command B. The third regiment of the division, the

progress was rapid. In the left half of the 34th Division zone the 133d Infantry advanced with the 3d and 2d Battalions abreast, the left flank of the 3d Battalion guiding about 1200 yards north of the railroad. At 1550 the regiment was halted after a gain of a mile and one-half until the 168th Infantry could clean up opposition on the right flank.

The 168th Infantry advanced in column of battalions, maintaining depth and antitank protection on its exposed right flank. The 1st Battalion in the lead ran into some opposition at Hill 158 west of the east fork of Carano Creek. Enemy machine guns in the houses to the west also caused some trouble, but by late afternoon the regiment had removed the opposition and continued the advance to the main course of Carano Creek where it halted for the night. The 133d Infantry, while waiting for the 168th Infantry and for tanks from the 191st Tank Battalion, fed and rested its men, and jumped off again at 2100 for its second objective, the stream junction on Prefetti Creek. Advance elements reached this point after midnight, but the bulk of the regiment halted for a brief rest on the ridge line just to the east.

To the left of the 133d Infantry the 157th Infantry had made even greater progress, with the result that both of its flanks remained open throughout the day and night of the 26th. This regiment, on the right of the 45th Division, attacked south of the railroad with the 2d Battalion in the lead, followed by the other two battalions in column. Enemy opposition consisted chiefly of harassing artillery fire. Scattered machine-gun and mortar fire on the right flank of the regiment was partially eliminated by the night attack of the 133d Infantry.

The 180th Infantry on the left flank of the 45th Division met the most stubborn resistance encountered by our infantry on 26 May. Attacking over the rolling wheat fields east of the Factory, the 2d and 3d Battalions found the enemy entrenched in the prepared defenses of the Factory area. Machine-gun crossfire harassed our advance, and heavy artillery concentrations were combined with direct tank fire on the infantry. The 1st Battalion, 180th Infantry, on the left followed our artillery preparation closely and jumped into Spaccasassi Creek, its limited objective, before the enemy could get organized. Here the 2d Company, Infantry Lehr Regiment, was captured intact. The 2d and 3d Battalions on the north, however, were pinned down on the flat ground for two hours until tanks of Company C, 191st Tank Battalion, could be pushed forward. Then the enemy resistance finally broke, and our troops captured 171 prisoners from the 2d Battalion, 29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, including the battalion commander and 3 of his staff. Except for the 8th Company this battalion was wiped out, and the 180th Infantry advanced across Prefetti Creek before dark.

easily throughout the morning. At noon direct tank and machine-gun fire from a knoll north of the railroad pinned the right flank of the 157th Infantry. The 2d Battalion swung north to clear out this opposition in co-operation with tank destroyers from the 34th Division and occupied the knoll in the afternoon. The 3d Battalion moved up from reserve and took its place in the advance, crossing Pre-sciano Creek before dark.

The 2d and 3d Battalions, 180th Infantry, were likewise pinned at noon by fire from enemy tanks, located in the woods northeast of the Factory. Our own tanks and tank destroyers had been held up by blown bridges during the night, but at noon on the 27th a bridge was thrown across Spaccasassi Creek on the Carano road. Company C, 191st Tank Battalion, then moved up west of the creek and made a thrust into the woods which had sheltered the enemy tanks. Since the German armor had discreetly vanished, our infantry were able to work their way forward through the antipersonnel minefields to Spaccasassi Creek by dark.

Thus far the 34th and 45th Divisions had met chiefly long-range fire covering the enemy withdrawal. We were now less than two miles from our objectives at Lanuvio and Campoleone Station. Though the enemy could not afford to yield more ground on his left flank at Lanuvio, his ability to hold his main line of resistance appeared dubious; for the forces available to the German command consisted only of the 65th Grenadier Division with elements of the 3d Panzer Grenadier Division and 4th Parachute Division and scattered remnants of the 362d Grenadier Division. The 1st Armored Division accordingly was alerted to be ready to attack through the 45th Division on 28 May. The 2d Battalion, 135th Infantry, was attached to the armor, and the 142d Infantry in 36th Division reserve was also ordered to be ready to move by truck behind the tanks, in the event that the 1st Armored Division secured a breakthrough.

#### D. *ENEMY RESISTANCE STIFFENS*

28-30 MAY

During the next three days that breakthrough was not achieved. Though the Germans had no solid, organized block of troops on which to base their resistance, they combined the broken units available into battle groups, patched the gaps with Alarm Companies hastily formed from rear echelon personnel, and stiffened weak spots with a dash of paratroopers from their less threatened right flank in front of the British. The ingenuity and craft of the Germans in defense were rarely better demonstrated than in the battle of Lanuvio. Since our right flank was already pressed up against the main German defensive line, our progress on 28-30 May con-



also counterattacked the 3d Battalion. The whole regiment formed a new defensive line running northeast-southwest 1500 yards below Lanuvio.

At 1900, 29 May, our men attacked again after a 15-minute artillery preparation to secure the railroad as a line of departure for the 135th Infantry on the following day. Once more the 2d Battalion made the greatest gain, but the regiment could not reach its goal. After the 2d Battalion had pulled back 400 yards, the regiment dug in. Casualties and missing in the 34th Division during 29 May were 270, almost twice the total for the previous day; Company A, 191st Tank Battalion, supporting the 133d Infantry, had only 5 tanks left in operation. During the night of 29-30 May the bitter defense by the remnants of the 362d Grenadier Division in the Villa Crocetta—Gennaro area and by the paratroopers from the 12th Parachute Regiment at Lanuvio received some air support when nine scattered enemy aircraft strafed the roads in rear of the 34th and 45th Divisions.

General Ryder, division commander, committed the 135th Infantry (less the 2d Battalion) on the 30th to attack on a narrow front west of the 133d Infantry. The 1st and 3d Battalions, moving out abreast at 0630, pushed slowly over open terrain covered by well sited machine guns, mortars, and self-propelled guns. Heavy smoke screens were laid on the Lanuvio ridge to aid the attack, and the 133d Infantry supported the advance by fire. By noon the 3d Battalion on the left had captured a small enemy strongpoint. Farther progress was impossible, and the regiment dug in southwest of the town.

2. *Attacks by the 45th Division and the 1st Armored Division.* (See Map No. 15.) While the 34th Division had been battering at the railroad line, the troops on its left had followed up the enemy withdrawal to his main line of resistance. On 28 May the 1st Battalion, 11th Parachute Regiment, covered the German retreat from a well organized position at Campoleone Station. The 3d Battalion, 157th Infantry, on the north advanced at 0705 from its positions on the west bank of Presciano Creek. By the middle of the morning the battalion was pinned on the west bank of Spaccasassi Creek, the next stream to the west, by heavy machine-gun, mortar, and artillery fire from the vicinity of Campoleone Station and from an enemy strongpoint north of the railroad. The six tanks remaining in Company B, 191st Tank Battalion, were unable to cross the creek under direct antitank fire.

Four tank destroyers, followed by the tanks, were then sent around through the 180th Infantry zone to the Carano road and moved up the road west of Spaccasassi Creek. Assisted by their fire and also by a company of the 1st Battalion thrown in on its left flank, the 3d Battalion renewed its push and reached the railroad west of the Albano road in the late afternoon. Here it received fire from 170-mm guns and self-propelled guns, then at 2000 a heavy artillery preparation preceding an enemy attack from the north down Spaccasassi Creek. The tanks

supporting the 3d Battalion were short of ammunition, and the infantry were threatened by small enemy groups infiltrating to their rear, so our men fell back to the creek and dug in for the night. The battalion had suffered heavy casualties.

The constant threats to the right flank of the 45th Division on 27-28 May had shown that the gap along the railroad between the 34th and 45th Divisions must be plugged. The 2d Battalion, 179th Infantry, reverted from 157th Infantry reserve to its parent unit on the afternoon of the 28th and moved up on the right of the division to fill the gap by attacking toward the Albano road north of Campoleone Station. By dusk it had reached its line of departure on Spaccasassi Creek against stiff opposition. The other two battalions of the 179th Infantry followed the 2d Battalion.

Southwest of the 157th Infantry the attack of the 1st and 3d Battalions, 180th Infantry, jumped off at 0615, 28 May, and advance elements reached the railroad west of the Albano road by 1000. Opposition in this area fortunately was limited to long-range direct fire from 20-mm flak wagons, for Company C, 191st Tank Battalion, was in no condition to support the attack. Six of its tanks were without crews at nightfall on 27 May, and the replacements borrowed from the 1st Armored Division and tank destroyer units consisted largely of rear echelon personnel ill acquainted with the operation of an M4 tank; tanker replacements were so scarce that nothing else was available. At 1830 the 180th Infantry moved out again for its next objective but this time met heavy resistance both from machine guns and mortars. For the night the regiment consolidated its gains along the railroad track.

The British divisions on the far left flank were moving forward by this time under orders to conform to the advance on their right. Patrols of the 1 Division reported on the 27th that the 146th Grenadier Regiment had withdrawn two miles to the northwest the previous night, and the division began to advance on a narrow front through the heavy mine-fields south of the Factory. On the 28th it occupied the Factory without opposition. The 5 Division on the 27th relieved the left brigade of the 1 Division astride the Albano road and on the 28th swung ahead west of the road. By the evening of 28 May the old perimeter of the Anzio beachhead had everywhere been left behind except at the mouth of the Moletta.

All evidence indicated that the Germans below Lanuvio were badly disorganized, and our air force and artillery increased that disorder daily. Save at Lanuvio itself the enemy troops were poorly co-ordinated; in their retreat from position to position there was no time to organize each new line, and our attacks had driven them out of one after another. Still the enemy did not break, even though we had taken 5156 prisoners by the evening of the 28th. Greater pressure was necessary if we were to achieve a breakthrough below Lanuvio.

pulled back two miles to the line of the infantry, a mile north of Campoleone Station. On its right, east of the Albano road, was the 179th Infantry in column of battalions; on the left Combat Command B held positions northwest of the Station. Though the attack had been only partially successful, Campoleone Station was now firmly in our hands.

During the night the 1st Battalion, 6th Armored Infantry, was attached to Combat Command B. The 2d Battalion, 135th Infantry, and the 2d Battalion, 1st Armored Regiment, reinforced Combat Command A and moved out with the 2d Battalion, 6th Armored Infantry, on the morning of 30 May. The infantry had to fight their way to the line of departure, while the tanks could move forward only about 1000 yards. A second attack in the Combat Command A zone in the afternoon merely produced further losses, for the enemy laid heavy fire from antitank guns, tanks, and self-propelled guns on any of our tanks that moved. In addition he launched several counterattacks of tanks and infantry; elements of the latter acting on the defensive knocked out several of our tanks with bazookas and other close-support weapons.

Gains on either side of Combat Command A were equally scant. East of the Albano road the 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry, passed through the left flank of the 2d Battalion and pushed on slowly under intense mortar and small-arms fire coupled with heavy artillery concentrations. Though supported by Companies B and C, 191st Tank Battalion, the infantry made slight progress in the morning and none in the afternoon, when the 3d Battalion was committed on the left. As so often before, the enemy had excellent observation, and accurate shelling met every effort of the infantry to advance. Here again we were running up against the main enemy defense line south of the railroad.

On the left of Combat Command A the armor of Combat Command B once more thrust its spearhead northwest along the Campoleone railroad. This time the tanks kept in closer touch with the infantry, and the two reached Campoleone Creek. At dark Combat Command B stabilized its lines in this area, with the 180th Infantry to its rear by Campoleone Station. The 157th Infantry was attached to the 1st Armored Division and further attached to Combat Command B at 1630 to relieve the 3d Battalion, 6th Armored Infantry, which passed to Combat Command A. During the night the troops rested and prepared to attack again on the morning of 31 May.

During 29-30 May the British divisions had continued to follow up the enemy. The 1 Division pushed well beyond the Albano road on the 29th, and the 5 Division crossed the Moletta. Though enemy troops in this area had withdrawn the previous night, our advance elements got behind a body of Germans just north of the coast road; to extricate this group the enemy launched a strong counterattack

must be held until the enemy to the north had cleared across the Tiber. Nevertheless, the Germans could not stop the 36th Division drive across the center of Colli Laziali, which cut west on the slopes above the Lanuvio line. The advance of this division rolled back the German garrison below it, first from Velletri, then from Lanuvio, and finally from Albano.

The penetration by the 36th Division on 31 May had put it in command of the Velletri—Nemi road. In the expectation that the enemy would thus be forced to evacuate Velletri, the 36th Engineers attacked toward the town at 1730 with its 2d Battalion on the south and the 1st Battalion on the east. After reaching within 200 yards of the railroad, the engineers came under heavy machine-gun, mortar, and artillery fire, and withdrew slightly to reorganize.

To their left, dogged assaults by the rest of VI Corps met the same stubborn resistance as on 30 May. At 0530 the 135th Infantry attacked toward the railroad in its zone. Our air force, which devoted its main efforts on the 31st to enemy troops and installations along Highway 7, bombed Lanuvio twice before 1000, and our mortars laid a heavy smoke screen on the town; for artillery support the regiment had one 8-inch howitzer battalion, one 155-mm gun battalion, two medium battalions, and five batteries of light artillery. Nevertheless, the infantry had made scant gains by the middle of the day. After noon the 3d Battalion, 133d Infantry, attacked on the right, preceded by the 34th Reconnaissance Troop; this time we pushed forward 500 yards. The enemy promptly counterattacked with infantry and tanks in the center of the 135th Infantry line and also on the left between the 179th Infantry and 135th Infantry, but the fire from 13 battalions of artillery halted the thrust.

The renewed push by the 1st Armored Division and 45th Division on 31 May was little more successful than on the previous day. On the Albano road the 2d Battalion, 179th Infantry, launched its attack at the same time as the 135th Infantry. It met similar opposition, based on enemy strongpoints stubbornly defended by infantry weapons and supported by tanks, self-propelled guns, and flak guns. The 191st Tank Battalion found enemy antitank fire so intense that it could not attack frontally. At this time the battalion had 37 tanks, 18 of them without crews.

Combat Command B, northwest of Campoleone Station, was reinforced for the day's push by the 157th Infantry. The tanks moved out at 0530, followed 15 minutes later by the 1st Battalion, 157th Infantry, astride the Campoleone railroad. Remaining 300 to 500 yards behind the tanks, the infantry made a slight advance during the day against heavy artillery fire and small-arms opposition. Farther to the left the 81st Armored Reconnaissance Battalion continued to maintain contact with the British 1 Division, which was attached to VI Corps at midnight on 30 May.

eastern suburbs of the city after a brief brush with the enemy. On its right motorized battalions of the 142d Infantry and 143d Infantry moved down to the same area.

The bulk of the 34th and 45th Division took no part in the last day of the drive on Rome, but task forces were sent by the two divisions to the two crossing sites south of Rome. The 34th Division formed Task Force A from a company each of the 168th Infantry and the 191st Tank Battalion, reinforced by a battery of the 175th Field Artillery, a platoon of the 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and a detachment of the 109th Engineer Battalion with bridging equipment. This force left Albano at 1230 but was held up by 1st Armored Division traffic until after dark. It then moved through Rome and down the north bank of the Tiber to Ponte della Magliana. Farther south the 45th Reconnaissance Troop and the 1st Battalion, 180th Infantry, reached the lower bridge by 1900. Both of these bridges had been blown, and the engineers of the two infantry divisions, together with the armored engineers, set to work at once to throw temporary structures across the Tiber.

#### D. *CONSOLIDATING THE VICTORY*

By midnight of 4 June troops of Fifth Army stood at the Tiber from its mouth to the junction with the Aniene River. Every bridge along that stretch had been taken and was under firm guard. North and south of the city the Germans had blown the bridges, but in the city proper all crossings of the river were intact.

The reception of Fifth Army by the citizens of Rome had been hysterical. While the hated Germans were scurrying north and west out of the city through deserted streets, the roads leading into Rome from the south and east were filled by its cheering citizens. As one tank commander put it, what the Germans had never been able to do the solid masses of the Roman throngs had accomplished; and our progress everywhere was slowed by the thickly packed streets. Nevertheless, the enemy still lay ahead, and the Fifth Army advance proceeded without a break.

On the north the van of the 3d Algerian Division had reached the blown bridges on the Aniene River at Lunghezza in the afternoon of 4 June. To its right, below Tivoli, the 1st Motorized Division was again committed for the first time since the 11 May attack on Sant'Ambrogio. Both divisions crossed the Aniene on the 5th, and the Algerians pushed to the Tiber. At this point all troops in the FEC except the 3d Algerian Division were halted and ordered to clear the roads for the passage of the 6 South African Armored Division through their area to operate in the original Eighth Army zone. Highway 6 reverted to Eighth Army at this time, with II Corps traffic being routed over Highway 7 and VI Corps movement on the roads to the south thereof.

VI CORPS (*continued*) . . . . .

6th Armored Infantry Regiment  
1st Armored Regiment  
13th Armored Regiment  
141st Armored Signal Company  
Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, Combat Command A  
Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, Combat Command B

*Attached to 1st Armored Division:*

434th AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion (Self-Propelled)  
191st Tank Battalion  
6779th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment (Provisional) [from NA-TOUSA]  
751st Tank Battalion  
46 Battalion, Royal Tank Regiment [British]

Chemical:

83d and 84th Chemical Battalions (Motorized)  
24th Chemical Company (Decontamination)  
179th Chemical Company (Smoke Generating)

Engineers:

36th and 39th Engineer Combat Regiments  
Company B, 405th Engineer Water Supply Battalion  
661st Engineer Topographic Company [-Survey Platoon]  
1st Platoon, 423d Engineer Dump Truck Company  
Detachment, 6617th Engineer Mine Clearing Company (Provisional)  
1811 Ponton Bridge Platoon  
6th Minatori Company, 910th Engineer Battalion [Italian]  
21st and 101st Pontieri Companies [Italian]  
210th and 909th Engineer Companies [Italian]

Field Artillery:

18th Field Artillery Brigade, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery  
35th Field Artillery Group, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery  
15th Field Artillery Observation Battalion  
36th, 976th, and 977th Field Artillery Battalions [155-mm Gun]  
69th Armored Field Artillery Battalion [105-mm Howitzer]  
141st, 634th, and 938th Field Artillery Battalions [155-mm Howitzer]