

# CHAPTER VII \* \* \* \* \*

## *The First Counterattack at Anzio*

THE initiative in the fighting at the beachhead had passed to the enemy when VI Corps on 3 February issued verbal orders to its units to assume the defensive. The strenuous efforts of the 3d Division to take Cisterna and the attacks launched by the British 1 Division and the 1st Armored Division up the Albano road had exhausted the offensive strength of our troops. On the enemy side the Hermann Goering Panzer Division and the 29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, which had borne the brunt of the VI Corps attacks in January, also had suffered heavy losses, but the rapid build-up of the German Fourteenth Army during the first two weeks of February supplied General Mackensen with a constant flow of fresh troops. It was only a question of days before he would be in position to make an effort to wipe out the "abscess" below Rome.

The enemy attempt to carry out Hitler's order fell into three phases: first, an attack to pinch out the British salient up the Albano road and to capture the strategic Factory area; second, an all-out attempt to break through to the sea along the axis of the Albano road; and third, an attack from Cisterna with the minimum objective of reaching the Mussolini Canal. Of these three major attacks, which cover the period 3 February-4 March, the first on 3-12 February served to set the stage for what was to be the decisive battle. It was, nonetheless, a bitterly contested and bloody phase of the defense of the beachhead.

### A. *THE BATTLE OF THE CAMPOLEONE SALIENT*

3-5 FEBRUARY

1. *Enemy Intentions and Our Positions.* In the attacks at the end of January VI Corps had concentrated its attacks on two axes: the roads leading northeast from Anzio to Cisterna and the paved highway running north from

Anzio toward Albano. These avenues, which offered the only terrain suitable to the employment of tanks and heavy equipment, were likewise the most favorable routes for an enemy attack to drive VI Corps into the sea. On 2 February the VI Corps G-2 estimated that the enemy possibly would launch his all-out attack down both axes, preceded by a counterattack of a local nature.

On 3 February the build-up of enemy forces was not sufficient to permit a major effort, but conditions were extremely favorable for an attack with a limited objective. A period of dark cloudy days promised to keep our air support to a minimum, and the disposition of our forces was such as to invite an attack. The drive launched by the 1 Division and 1st Armored Division had carried them up the Albano road as far north as Campoleone Station, barely five miles from the dominating height of Colli Laziali. The result of this attack was to create a narrow salient approximately four miles deep and barely one and one-half miles wide at its apex. (See *Map No. 10.*) On the one hand the salient formed a threat to the security of the enemy's main line of resistance along the railroad embankment running east and west through Cisterna and Campoleone; on the other it offered the enemy an ideal opportunity to destroy the British forces holding the apex of the salient. Furthermore, if Mackensen could pinch off the Campoleone salient and then drive on to take the Factory area, he would have a good base from which to launch his major effort against the beachhead. All indications pointed to an imminent attack along the axis of the Albano road.

After the Allied drive on 1 February had stalled, the 1st Armored Division was withdrawn into Corps reserve, leaving the British 1 Division in occupation of the ground which had been won. The apex of the salient just south of the railroad was held by the entire 3 Brigade, consisting of the 1 DWR, the 2 Foresters, and the 1 KSLI. On the left flank of the salient and echeloned to the southwest was the 24 Guards Brigade, consisting in order of position of the 1 Irish Guards, the 1 Scots Guards, and the 5 Grenadier Guards, with the 2 North Staffs attached. The 2 North Staffs was in contact with the 157th Infantry defending the Moletta River line on the left flank of the beachhead. On the right flank of the salient and echeloned to the southeast was the 2 Brigade (less the 2 North Staffs), consisting of the 6 Gordons and the 1 Loyals, reinforced in the center by elements of the 1 Recce Regiment. The 1 Loyals on the right was in contact with the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion near the village of Carano. The 1 Division, holding a front of approximately ten miles, had had little time to prepare for an enemy attack.

To add to the difficulties of this extremely long front and an exposed salient, the terrain generally favored the enemy. West of the Albano road the slightly

rolling country is traversed by a maze of deep, brush-covered ravines offering concealed assembly areas and excellent opportunities to infiltrate between the isolated strongpoints held by the British troops. East of the Albano road the country is more open, but the road leading southeast toward Carano offered an avenue of approach to enemy tanks concealed in assembly areas behind the railroad embankment east of Campoleone.

2. *The Enemy Attacks.* Late in the afternoon of 3 February the enemy laid an artillery concentration on the positions of the 1 DWR southwest of the railroad at Campoleone and followed it with a small infantry attack. This proved to be only a diversion involving not more than an infantry company. Artillery fire broke up the attack, and by dark the slight enemy penetration had been wiped out. An uneasy calm spread over the battlefield as the cold, cloudy day drew to an end. Then, just before midnight, the enemy artillery opened up again. This time the fire was concentrated near the base of the salient with the heaviest fire falling on the right of the Albano road. At 2300 the 1 Irish Guards to the left of the highway reported enemy troops infiltrating between its positions and the 1 Scots Guards on its left. At 2330 the 6 Gordons on the right side of the salient also was under attack. Under cover of darkness the enemy appeared to be infiltrating on both sides of the salient and to the north in the positions of the 1 KSLI. In the confusion of the night fighting it was difficult to measure the strength of the attacks; by dawn the enemy's intention was clear. Driving deep wedges into both sides of the salient near its base, he aimed to cut off the whole of the 3 Brigade.

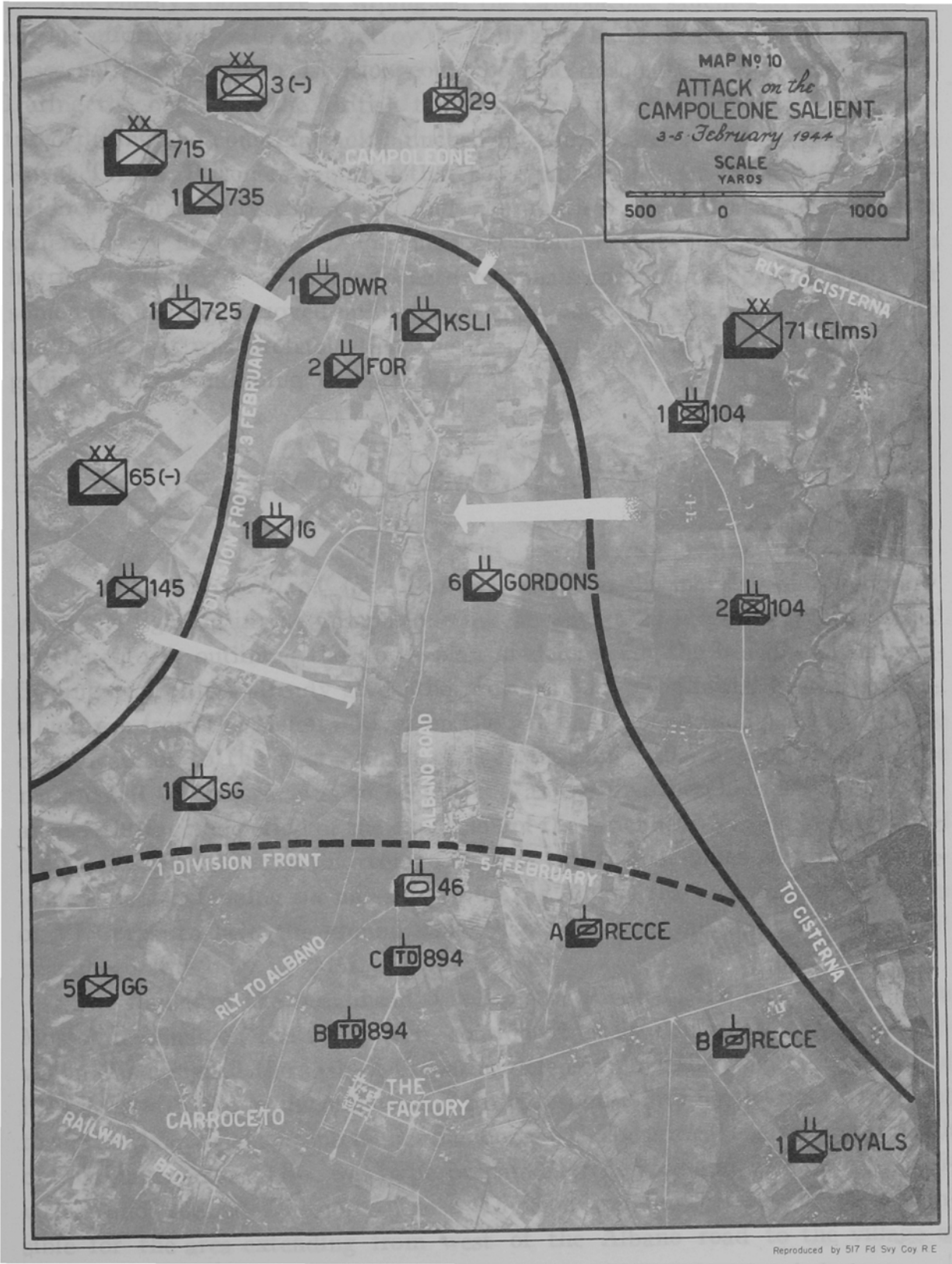
At first light on 4 February the attack on the left appeared to be the more threatening. An enemy battalion, probably the 1st Battalion, 145th Grenadier Regiment, supported by a few tanks and self-propelled guns broke through the left flank of the 1 Irish Guards to reach the railroad paralleling the Albano road. Later it became evident that the more serious threat was to the east flank of the salient. At 0725 at least six enemy tanks, including some Mark VI Tigers, were spotted near a farmhouse to the east of the 6 Gordons. Swinging west along a dirt road, the tanks overran one company of the 6 Gordons and established themselves on a small ridge just east of the Albano road. Infantry poured in behind the tanks, antitank guns were brought up, and additional tanks moved in to complete the isolation of the 3 Brigade. The enemy, consisting of the 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, reinforced by a battalion each from the 29th and 90th Panzer Grenadier Divisions and by elements of the 715th Grenadier and 3d Panzer Grenadier Divisions, represented a heterogeneous but strong force.

As the morning wore on, the situation became increasingly difficult for the 1 Irish Guards and the 6 Gordons. Sherman tanks of the 46 Royal Tanks,

counterattacking to support the 1 Irish Guards, were outraged by the enemy's Mark VI tanks and heavy antitank guns, which had been emplaced to cover the Albano road. The 1 Irish Guards fell back to the southeast, taking up a hedgehog position for all-around defense. Isolated by the enemy penetration, the 3 Brigade was under constant attack. Fighting under leaden skies and drizzling rain, our troops could count on no support from the air force. By noon the situation appeared critical. General Penney ordered the 168 Brigade (56 Division), which had landed at Anzio on 3 February, to alert one battalion for a possible counterattack.

During the afternoon of 4 February the force of the enemy attacks gradually weakened against the stubborn defense put up by the 24 Guards Brigade and the 6 Gordons. By 1500 the 1 Irish Guards had fought its way out of the trap created by the penetration on the left flank; the 6 Gordons continued to hold the ground south of the ridge line; and in the beleaguered 3 Brigade area the 1 KSLI successfully intercepted a party of Germans escorting 100 British prisoners. Enemy tanks and infantry suffered from accurate artillery and tank-destroyer fire. Company C, 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion, knocked out four Mark VI tanks and an antitank gun which the German crew was manhandling into position; Company B picked off one Mark IV. At 1600, when the force of the enemy attacks showed signs of weakening, the 1 London Scottish (168 Brigade), supported by tanks of the 46 Royal Tanks, launched a counterattack. Suffering heavy losses, the enemy was forced to fall back, and by 1700 the gap between the 6 Gordons and the 3 Brigade had been wiped out.

3. *The 1 Division Withdraws.* In accordance with orders issued by VI Corps the 3 Brigade began an immediate withdrawal. The 1 KSLI and the 2 Foresters drew back quickly with only slight losses; the 1 DWR, which was under direct fire from enemy tanks, was unable to extricate itself until after dark. One company had been cut off, and the remainder of the battalion was forced to leave behind most of its antitank guns and heavy equipment. During the night of 4-5 February the 1 Division continued the withdrawal of its forward units to a new line approximately a mile north of Carroceto and the Factory. The fresh 168 Brigade was moved forward to take over the center of the line, and the 3 Brigade was placed in division reserve. Although the readjustment of the 1 Division positions represented a loss of two and one-half miles of hardwon ground, the new line was considerably shorter and more defensible. Of the 3 Brigade units at the apex of the salient, only the 1 DWR suffered heavily, the chief losses being sustained by the 1 Irish Guards and the 6 Gordons, which had borne the brunt of the enemy's attacks at the base of the salient. Total British casualties were extremely heavy, totalling over 1400 killed, wounded, and missing in action.



MAP No 10  
 ATTACK on the  
 CAMPOLEONE SALIENT  
 3-5 February 1944  
 SCALE  
 YARDS  
 500 0 1000

The enemy's objective of wiping out the Campoleone salient had been achieved; his effort to isolate and destroy the 3 Brigade had failed. Against the heavy losses suffered by the 1 Division could be placed equally heavy enemy losses. During the operation the British took over 300 prisoners, most of them captured during the counterattack launched by the 1 London Scottish and the 46 Royal Tanks. Prisoners reported that their units had been hit hard. One battalion was practically wiped out, and the 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment suffered very heavy losses. Prisoners complained that the attack had been hurriedly organized without adequate reconnaissance of the ground and that some units had been moved up by forced night marches and thrown straight into the battle. It was probable that the enemy would need a short time to reorganize before continuing the attack.

## B. VI CORPS PLAN OF DEFENSE

1. *The Outline Plan.* (See Map No. 11.) On the morning of 4 February, when the fighting in the Campoleone salient was at its height, VI Corps issued written orders outlining the Corps plan of defense for the beachhead and confirming oral orders already given the previous day. The initial beachhead line, which ran from the Moletta River on the left flank across the open fields of the central sector to the west branch of the Mussolini Canal and south along the main canal to the sea, was to be fortified as the final beachhead line of resistance. During the period of the expansion of the beachhead VI Corps had pushed out in the central sector an average of from two to four miles with the Campoleone salient extending six miles north up the Albano road. It was the intention of VI Corps to hold the ground which had been won, falling back to the final beachhead line only as a last resort.

The flanks of the beachhead, the Moletta River on the left and the main Mussolini Canal on the right, were considered easily defensible. The 45th Division was assigned the task of preparing defenses along the Moletta River and of holding it with one regimental combat team; responsibility for the right flank went to the newly arrived 1st Special Service Force (1). The critical central sector north of the final beachhead line was to be prepared for defense and held by the 1 Division and the 3d Division. The 1 Division (reinforced) was to be responsible for the area extending from west of the Albano road to the village of

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(1) *Attached*: 456th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion (-Batteries C and D).

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

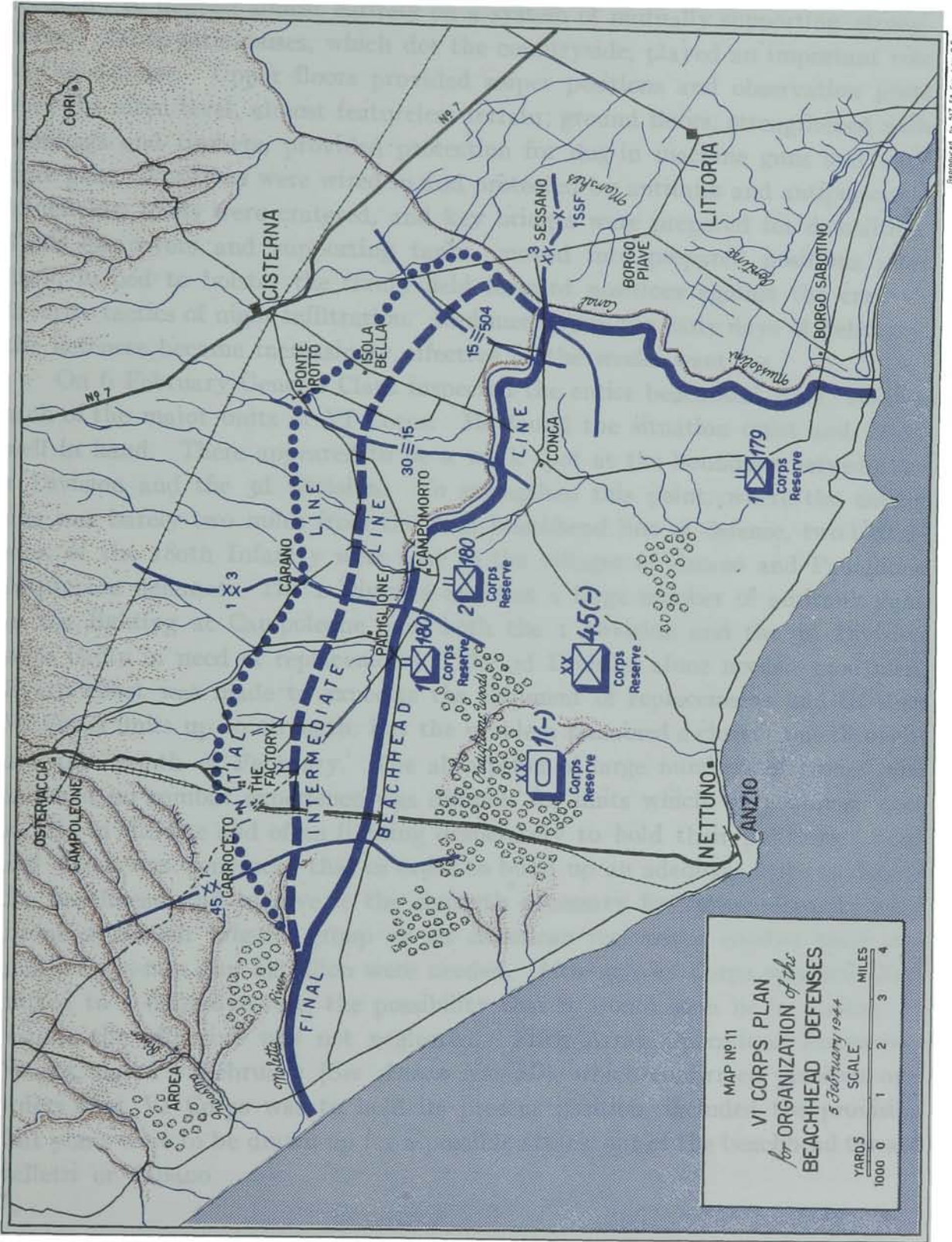
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(1) *Attached* : 2 Army Field Regiment, Royal Artillery; 3d Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry; 168 Brigade; 46 Royal Tanks; Companies B and C, 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

(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).





of the outpost line and the relatively small size of the defending force made it necessary to depend almost entirely on a system of mutually supporting strong-points. Stone farmhouses, which dot the countryside, played an important role in the defense. Upper floors provided sniper positions and observation posts over the often level, almost featureless terrain; ground floors, strengthened with sandbags and timbers, provided protection for dug-in machine guns and anti-tank guns. Positions were wired in and protected by antitank and antipersonnel minefields, roads were cratered, and key bridges were prepared for demolition. Tank destroyers and supporting tanks, moved into prepared positions after dark, helped to bolster the thinly held forward positions against the enemy's favorite tactics of night infiltration. Rudimentary in the early days of February, the defenses became increasingly effective as the weeks went by.

On 6 February General Clark inspected the entire beachhead front, visiting each of the major units of VI Corps. He found the situation quiet and fairly well in hand. There appeared to be a weak spot at the boundary between the 1 Division and the 3d Division. To strengthen this point, where the enemy line was barely two miles from the final beachhead line of defense, two battalions of the 180th Infantry were sent to the villages of Carano and Padiglione to prepare defenses. The 1 Division had lost a large number of antitank guns in the fighting at Campoleone, and both the 1 Division and the 3d Division were badly in need of replacements. The 3d Division alone needed 2400 men. Every effort was made to expedite the shipment of replacements and to keep VI Corps units up to strength, but the problem remained a chronic one throughout the month of February. The absorption of large numbers of troops who had had no combat experience was difficult for units which were almost constantly in the line and often fighting desperately to hold their positions. General Clark was convinced that in order to build up an adequate force to defend the beachhead and to give it the strength necessary for future offensive operations a British brigade group or an American regimental combat team and another 155-mm gun battalion were needed. Although VI Corps was now committed to a defensive role, the possibility that it would soon be in position to resume the offensive was not neglected. Fifth Army Operations Instruction No. 15, dated 7 February (*See Annex No. 2D*), which confirmed previous oral orders that VI Corps was to hold its present position, included the provision that plans were to be drawn up for a possible attack out of the beachhead toward Velletri or Albano.

## C. INTERLUDE BETWEEN ATTACKS

5-7 FEBRUARY

1. *The Enemy Tests the 3d Division Line.* After the 1 Division had successfully extricated itself from the Campoleone salient on the night of 4 February, the enemy made no large-scale attacks for three days. It was not, however, a period of inactivity. Every part of the beachhead was subject to shelling from enemy long-range guns as well as to air attack, and while reorganizing his forces to continue the offensive the enemy made repeated efforts to feel out the new beachhead defenses. The most important of these probing attacks was launched against the 3d Division on the night of 5 February.

While the British troops in the Campoleone salient were bearing the brunt of the first German attack, the 3d Division had been reorganizing its units and preparing its defenses in depth along the initial outpost line, intermediate line, and final beachhead line, based on the Mussolini Canal. The division sector was divided between the 30th Infantry on the left, the 15th Infantry in the center, and the 504th Parachute Infantry on the right, with the 7th Infantry in division reserve. The bulk of the division strength had been withdrawn to rush work on the intermediate and final defense lines, leaving only mixed holding forces along the initial outpost line.

In the sector held by the 30th Infantry the outpost line extended in an arc from the village of Carano across the open fields and deep ditches of the rolling farmland west of Cisterna to the stream crossing at Ponte Rotto. It was thinly manned by platoon-sized units of the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion on the left; a platoon each of Companies G and F, 30th Infantry, in the center; and platoons of the 2d and 3d Battalions, 7th Infantry, and the 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, on the right. The defenses of these positions were not yet completed. Company F, 30th Infantry, had planned to wire in its positions the previous night but had been pinned down by enemy machine-gun fire; wire communication between units was still being laid; and the troops were in the process of reorganization.

Just at dark on the evening of 5 February the enemy put down a short, intense concentration of artillery, mortar, and tank fire on a front of two and one-half miles extending from Formal del Bove Creek to Ponte Rotto. Tanks moved up on the flanks and poured direct fire into the positions of the 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, to the north of Ponte Rotto. Then, making liberal use of flares and machine-pistol fire, the enemy attacked. At 2125 the 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, reported it could not hold out much longer. The platoons of Com-

panies F and G drew back; the platoon of Company E became disorganized; and the 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, withdrew from its positions near Ponte Rotto. The platoons of Companies F and G, 30th Infantry, finding their right flank exposed, also fell back 1500 yards to the intermediate line. The result of this wholesale withdrawal was to produce a gap extending over nearly the whole length of the 30th Infantry sector of the outpost line. To restore the situation Company K, 30th Infantry, was ordered forward to counterattack. Supported by tanks and tank destroyers, Company K moved up the road toward Ponte Rotto. It met only light artillery and mortar fire and by 0230 had reoccupied the positions of the 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry. The latter moved to the rear to reorganize. By morning, with the exception of Ponte Rotto, the original outpost line had been restored.

The exact size of the enemy force making the attack is not known. It is probable that it represented not more than a reinforced company of the 114th Reconnaissance Battalion. By clever psychological use of concentrated machine-pistol fire and flares the enemy had created the illusion of an attack in force. There were also reports that he had employed Mark III tanks equipped with flamethrowers. Two hours after the attack had been launched, the enemy had withdrawn. With the exception of the 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, which had suffered heavy losses, little damage had been done.

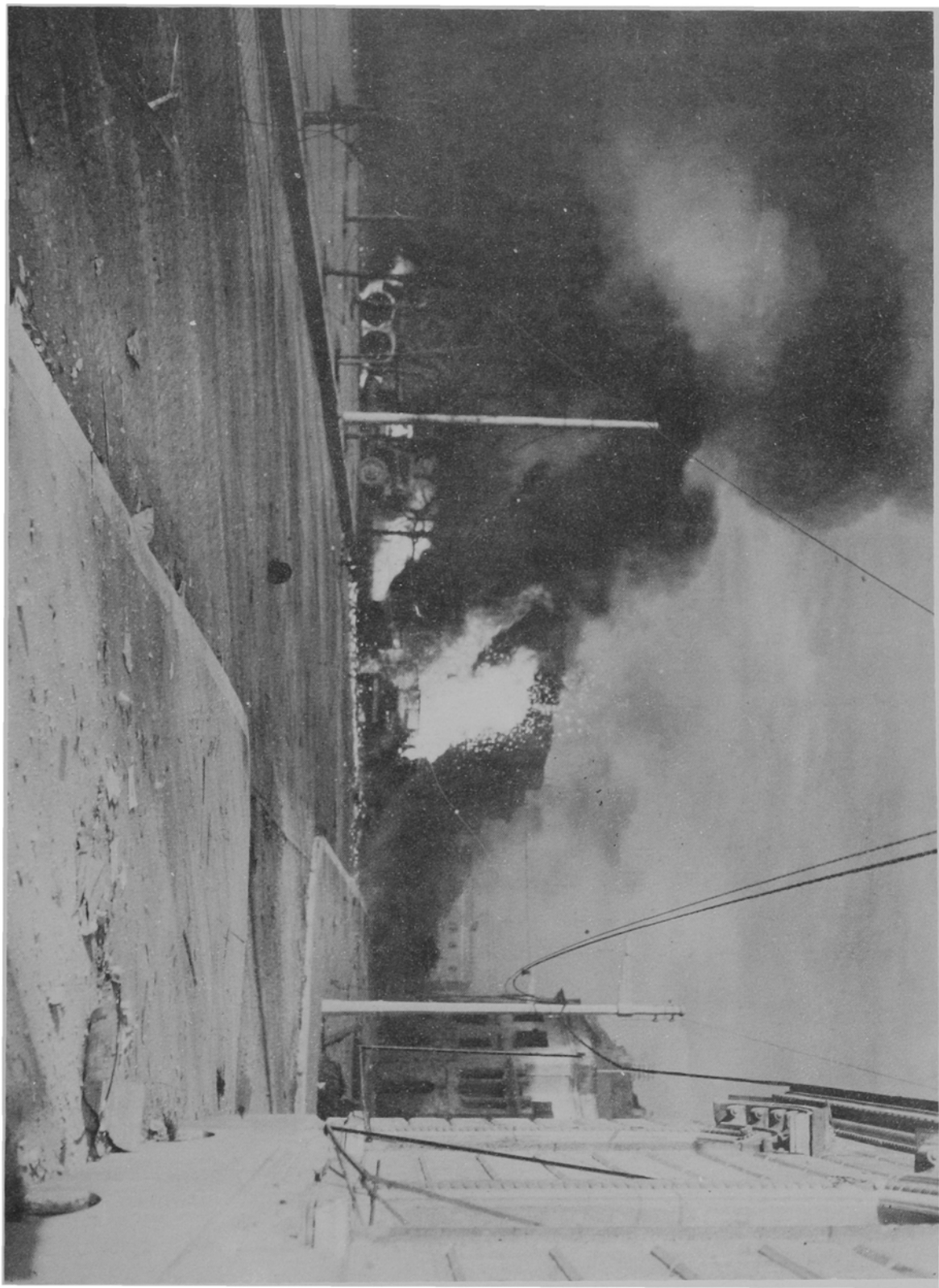
Although our troops had lost Ponte Rotto, they profited by the lesson. The transition from offensive to defensive fighting was not easy to troops accustomed to doing the attacking; and in the early days of February officers and men had to learn many lessons the hard way. To strengthen the thinly held forward lines, General Truscott ordered the tank destroyers and tanks to be placed well forward where they could provide direct support. The positions of the units on the outpost line were further improved when, on the night of 7-8 February, the division relieved the units along the Mussolini Canal and returned them to regimental control. This permitted the 15th and 30th Infantry and 504th Parachute Infantry to defend their respective forward areas with two battalions, keeping one in reserve. The 7th Infantry, in division reserve, continued the work of improving the defenses along the canal with the assistance of the 10th Engineer Battalion and the 39th Engineers.

2. *The Build-up of Enemy Artillery.* Enemy shelling of the beachhead area increased at a rising tempo throughout the first two weeks of February. Taking advantage of the observation afforded by the dominating heights of Colli Laziali, the Lepini Range, and the water tower at Littoria, the enemy's long-range 150-mm guns and 170-mm guns could drop shells into any part of the limited beachhead area. Air photos taken on 6 February, the first clear

day in a week of bad weather, revealed a considerable increase in enemy artillery strength. The main concentration was in the center below Colli Laziali where the guns could support an attack either down the Albano road or from Cisterna. A large build-up was also noted on the left flank. On the afternoon of 5 February the air strip at Nettuno was heavily shelled. Five Spitfires were destroyed, and the field had to be abandoned as a permanent base. Thereafter planes used the field only during the day, returning each night to bases near Naples. On 7 February a heavy-caliber railroad gun was reported near Campoleone on the railroad which passes through Cisterna and Campoleone on the way to Rome. Reconnaissance planes discovered additional heavy guns and railroad guns on the slopes of Colli Laziali: 170-mm guns were located on the edge of a cliff near Lake Nemi, and a railroad gun was spotted near the mouth of a tunnel at Albano. Although the shelling from these long-range weapons was seldom accurate, the rear areas of the beachhead were so congested that material damage and casualties were inevitable. The most serious effect was in delaying the work of unloading supplies in the port.

As many of the enemy's heavy guns were out of range of the 155-mm guns in the Corps artillery, the navy and air force were called upon to assist in knocking them out. On 5 February the cruiser U.S.S. *Brooklyn* and three destroyers were employed against guns and enemy positions on the left flank of the beachhead. Two P-51 Mustangs of the 111th Reconnaissance Squadron directed the fire of naval guns with good results. The program was repeated on the left and right flanks of the beachhead whenever the weather was favorable. In order to hamper enemy observation of the right side of the beachhead XII Air Support Command sent P-40's and A-36's to attack the water tower at Littoria on 7 February. The next day railroad guns west of Albano were bombed. Hits on the track and a burst of yellow flame and smoke from the target area indicated that the guns had at least been damaged.

3. *Enemy Air Attacks.* Damage from enemy bombing was much more serious than the long-range artillery fire. Day or night the beachhead was never safe from enemy planes, which came in to bomb and strafe shipping in the harbor, the dock areas, ammunition dumps, and troop assembly areas. The enemy used an increasingly larger percentage of antipersonnel "butterfly" bombs in his night attacks, which caused casualties throughout the beachhead. Along the front 7 February was a quiet day; in the rear bombing raids covered the port area with high explosives and antipersonnel bombs. At 0810 20 Focke-Wulf 190's and Messerschmitt 109's dove out of the sun to attack Anzio and Nettuno. Bombs landing near VI Corps Headquarters at Nettuno blew up three ammunition trucks, destroyed a number of buildings, and caused heavy casual-



*Enemy bombs score a hit on an ammunition convoy on the main street of Nettano, 7 February 1944.*



*After an enemy air raid: two landing craft burn in the sea off Anzio, 30 January 1944.*

ties. At 1135 15 Focke-Wulf 190's and Messerschmitt 109's bombed and strafed the harbor area. An LCI and an LCT were damaged, 30 men were killed, and 40 were wounded. At 1525 the enemy fighter-bombers were over again. One plane, under attack by a British Spitfire, jettisoned its load of antipersonnel bombs in an effort to gain altitude. The bombs fell in the area of the 95th Evacuation Hospital, riddling the administration and operating tents. X-ray and surgical equipment was damaged, 28 of the hospital personnel and patients were killed, and 64 were wounded, including the commanding officer. The hospital had to be closed, and on 9 February the 15th Evacuation Hospital was moved to the beachhead to replace it. Hospital units continued to suffer casualties from bombing and shelling throughout the period of the beachhead. It is doubtful, aside from the sinking of the hospital ship H.M.S. *David* on 24 January, that the enemy deliberately bombed or shelled medical installations. It was impossible to locate the hospitals in areas completely apart from military installations, and they were never more than six to eight miles from the front lines. During the rainy winter season, also, the ground was too wet to permit digging the tents in. There were no safe areas at Anzio. Nurses and quartermaster depot men were subject to shelling and bombing as well as the men in the front lines. Nonetheless, the enemy paid dearly for the air attacks. On 7 February antiaircraft guns accounted for 7 planes destroyed, 6 probables, and 9 damaged; defending fighters destroyed 17 with 12 probables.

#### D. THE BATTLE FOR THE FACTORY

7-12 FEBRUARY

The swift and thorough measures of VI Corps to prepare a strongly organized and co-ordinated system of defenses were based on the almost certain knowledge that the enemy would resume the offensive as soon as he had grouped his forces. On the night of 6 February orders were sent out to the units to be alert for a possible attack the next morning. Intelligence sources in Rome had reported that the enemy was planning a major attack to be launched at 0400, 7 February. At that time it was anticipated that the attack would be directed against the 3d Division, and General Clark ordered strong air support to be ready on call, with strategic bombers prepared to attack Cisterna and Velletri. The expected offensive failed to develop at the reported time. Just before midnight on 6 February the enemy laid down a concentration of 800 rounds of medium artillery fire on the positions of the 2d Battalion, 157th Infantry, along

the Moletta River line. At 2400 an enemy force of approximately one company launched an attack. By 0110 the enemy had been thrown back with heavy losses, and there was no further action during the night. Indications of the impending offensive, however, continued to accumulate during the day of the 7th. There was an increase in artillery fire on the 1 Division front, the Factory area was bombed and strafed, and prisoners were picked up who had deserted to avoid participation in the attack. The evidence on the 7th pointed to a resumption of the enemy's drive in the British sector with the Factory area as the first objective.

1. *Tactical Importance of the Factory Area.* Capture of the Factory was a logical next move if the enemy planned to make his all-out effort along the axis of the Albano road. The Factory itself, before it was leveled by weeks of bombing and shelling, was a compact, geometrically laid out cluster of three and four-storey brick buildings designed to be the epitome of Fascist farm settlements. Located on a slight rise of ground, it stood like a fortress dominating the surrounding countryside. The hamlet of Carroceto, located 500 yards to the southwest of the Factory and just north of the overpass which crosses the Albano road and the parallel railway, was an equally important objective. Possession of the Factory and Carroceto would offer the enemy strong defensive positions as well as assembly areas from which to launch further attacks. In addition they were the focal points of a network of roads leading south and southeast. As the wet boggy ground of the beachhead made employment of tanks off the roads virtually impossible, control of the road network was of great tactical value to the attacker. Once the enemy had won the Factory and Carroceto, he would be in position to strike at several different points along the final beachhead line of defense.

To protect the Factory area the 1 Division had three brigades on the line. To the left of the Albano road the 24 Guards Brigade held Buonriposo Ridge with the 2 North Staffs, the 5 Grenadier Guards, and the 1 Scots Guards. The center was held by the 168 Brigade with the 3d Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry, astride the Albano road and the 1 London Irish and the 10 Royal Berks along the lateral road leading east from the Factory. The 2 Brigade held the right flank with a squadron of the 1 Recce Regiment and the 1 Loyals. Division reserve consisted of the whole of the 3 Brigade. After the losses sustained in the fighting at Campoleone the 1 Division was considerably below strength, and the troops, fighting in rain, mud and near-freezing weather, had had little rest since D Day.

2. *The Enemy Plan of Attack.* Captured enemy documents and information obtained from prisoners make it possible to reconstruct the enemy plan of at-



tack with unusual accuracy. A field order issued by I Parachute Corps reveals that its mission was to capture Carroceto and Aprilia (the Factory) and cooperate with Battle Group Graeser of LXXVI Panzer Corps. I Parachute Corps delegated the task of taking Carroceto and the Factory to the 65th Grenadier Division with the 4th Parachute Division making a diversionary attack on D minus 1. The latter attack was the one directed against the 2d Battalion, 157th Infantry, on the night of the 6th. On D Day the 65th Grenadier Division was to attack across Buonriposo Ridge against the positions of the 24 Guards Brigade with the reinforced 145th Grenadier Regiment on the right, the reinforced 147th Grenadier Regiment in the center, and Battle Group Gericke on the left. Battle Group Gericke was to be composed of a battalion of the 11th Parachute Regiment; the 2d Battalion, 71st Panzer Grenadier Regiment; and a company of the 60th Engineer Battalion. The 145th and 147th Grenadier Regiments each was to be supported by a company of the 165th Engineer Battalion, and the 147th Grenadier Regiment was to be reinforced by a company of the 165th Antitank Battalion. The engineers were to clear and mark gaps through the British minefields and lay mines to assist in repelling a tank counterattack. Once the 65th Grenadier Division had succeeded in enveloping Carroceto and the Factory it was to prepare them for all-around defense. Battle Group Graeser, led by Maj. Gen. Fritz Hubert Graeser, commander of the 3d Panzer Grenadier Division, appears to have included all of the 715th Light Division, the 29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, and the 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment. The mission of LXXVI Panzer Corps is not known. It may have been to exploit a successful attack of the 65th Grenadier Division to effect a breakthrough to the sea; probably it was the more limited objective of gaining control of the strategic lateral road east of the Factory and assisting the 65th Grenadier Division in the capture of the Factory itself. In any case the enemy's commitment was large, including six full regiments and elements of six divisions.

3. *First Phase of the Attack.* (See Map No. 12.) The attack started at 2100, 7 February, with heavy artillery concentrations on both flanks of the 1 Division front. At 2115 the 3d Battalion, 157th Infantry, which was in contact with the 24 Guards Brigade along Buonriposo Ridge, reported its right flank under attack. The brunt of the blow, however, was borne by the adjoining 2 North Staffs. Infiltrating rapidly and in small groups, the 145th Grenadier Regiment crossed the Moletta River and fought its way east toward the Albano road. Before midnight the attack had spread along the whole front of the 24 Guards Brigade. Taking advantage of a dark night and the numerous deep gullies which cut up the rough country west of the Albano road, the 65th Grenadier Division pushed deep into the positions of the British troops. The fighting along Buonriposo Ridge

resolved itself into a series of confused and bloody hand-to-hand encounters as the strongpoints of the 2 North Staffs were isolated and overrun. In the early morning hours the 3d Battalion, 157th Infantry, discovered enemy tanks and infantry operating to its rear, and at 0400 70 men, all that was left of the company of the 2 North Staffs to its right, requested permission to attach themselves to it. They had used up all their ammunition and had lost their automatic weapons. In order to protect its right flank the 3d Battalion was ordered to withdraw to the stream line south of the ridge, and a company of the 179th Infantry was sent up to support it. By 0130 the reserve company of the 5 Grenadier Guards to the southwest of Carroceto was under pressure from German units attacking along the Buonriposo Ridge line from the former positions of the 2 North Staffs, and the forward companies of the 5 Grenadier Guards and the 1 Scots Guards were under constant pressure from the north and west. Small enemy units penetrated all the way to the main road before being wiped out. Fighting continued all morning as the 65th Grenadier Division, having achieved its first objective of seizing Buonriposo Ridge, sought to carry out its mission of breaking through to Carroceto.

The attack of Battle Group Graeser on the British right flank started more slowly. Shortly after 2200, 7 February, two companies attacked C Squadron, 1 Recce Regiment, and the right flank company of the 10 Royal Berks near the crossroads where the lateral road from the Factory meets the road to Carano. This force appeared to be covering a minelifting party. An hour later it had withdrawn under cover of a mortar barrage. By midnight both forward companies of the 1 London Irish were under pressure, and one platoon was overrun. The attack, launched by the 29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, followed the same tactics of rapid infiltration which had proved so successful on the left flank. Small groups armed with machine pistols and light machine guns would infiltrate behind the forward British units, cut communications, and organize small pockets of resistance deep within the lines. After our troops had exhausted their ammunition firing on an enemy who appeared to be striking from all directions, the main enemy force would overrun the position. The 29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment had only limited success with these tactics. A captured document indicates that it had advanced too slowly, and accordingly all three battalions of the 725th Grenadier Regiment were committed. This attack also failed to make more than slight gains. One small group of the enemy got as far as the rear of the Factory before it was mopped up; other groups were held at the lateral road. A company of the 1 London Scottish was sent up to plug the gap between the 1 London Irish and the 10 Royal Berks, and a local counter-attack supported by three tanks drove back the enemy unit which had captured

a bridge on the lateral road just to the east of the Factory. The only important success won by Battle Group Graeser was on the right flank near the crossroads. Attacking at dawn on 8 February, a battalion of the 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment overran C Squadron, 1 Recce Regiment, and a platoon of the 1 Gordons which was supporting it. The Germans then dug in with two companies on each side of the road between the positions of the 10 Royal Berks and the 1 Loyals. Employing small groups of tanks in support of the infantry, the enemy kept up the pressure on the 168 Brigade all day without succeeding in gaining control of the important lateral road.

General Penney decided to deal first with the critical situation on the left flank. Orders were issued to the 3d Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry, to move south of Carroceto where it could be employed as a counterattack force to support the 24 Guards Brigade. Its former positions north of the overpass were filled by the 1 Scots Guards. At 1400 General Penney committed his divisional reserve, the 3 Brigade, to regain the positions of the 2 North Staffs along Buonriposo Ridge. The 3 Brigade employed two battalions, the 2 Foresters and the 1 KSLI, attacking abreast with armored support by a squadron of the 46 Royal Tanks and a platoon of Company C, 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The 2 Foresters made good progress in clearing the left side of the ridge; the 1 KSLI was held up on the right by machine-gun fire. The Germans had dug in well, and both battalions suffered heavy casualties during the attack. Late that night a company of the paratroopers was committed to support the 5 Grenadier Guards. Although the counterattacks succeeded in retaking only a portion of the lost ground, they served to bolster the hard-pressed 24 Guards Brigade.

The enemy devoted the remainder of the afternoon to digging in and consolidating his positions along Buonriposo Ridge, while the 1 Division reorganized its forces. After the counterattack launched by the 3 Brigade, the 1 KSLI and the 2 Foresters were left in position to strengthen the left flank. On the right the 6 Gordons was moved up from 2 Brigade reserve to help fill the gap between the 10 Royal Berks and the 1 Loyals. To strengthen the 6 Gordons, which had been reduced to two companies during the battle for the Campoleone salient, the 238 Field Company, Royal Engineers, and a company made up from 3 Beach Group personnel were added. The commitment of the 6 Gordons was balanced by moving the 1st Battalion, 180th Infantry, to previously prepared positions near Padiglione where it could be employed either as a reserve or counterattack force. Of the 2 North Staffs only 17 officers and 364 men were left at the end of the day. These were reorganized by their commanding officer into a rifle company. The 1 Division had been seriously weakened, but it had succeeded in

completely upsetting the enemy's timetable. What had been planned as a night attack promised to require several days of hard fighting.

Ground action on the remainder of the VI Corps front was confined to small-scale company actions and patrolling. On the night of 7-8 February Company E, 15th Infantry, attacked north up the road paralleling Femminamorta Creek with the objective of capturing the farm east of Ponte Rotto; Company F, 30th Infantry, attacked from the west to secure the road junction just beyond Ponte Rotto bridge. Both attacks achieved limited results. At 2100 enemy tanks and infantry pushed down the road from Cisterna toward Isola Bella. Tank fire collapsed some buildings in which Company G, 15th Infantry, had organized positions. After losing some ground Company G fought its way back before daylight. A second company-strength attack, supported by tanks, struck Company G, 30th Infantry. It was beaten back. On the 8th, while the heavy fighting was in progress on the 1 Division front, only one attack, a raid aimed at the village of Carano, struck the 3d Division. In beating off the attack the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion captured 19 prisoners and killed 25 of the enemy, most of whom were from the 114th Light Division.

During 8 February the VI Corps artillery, in addition to supporting the fire of the 1 Division guns, executed a co-ordinated program of counterbattery fire on all known enemy gun positions on the west flank of the beachhead. In response to an emergency request, two British cruisers, the *Orion* and *Phoebe*, and one American cruiser, the *Brooklyn*, moved up from Naples to add the fires of their 5-inch and 6-inch guns. Good weather permitted accurate airspotting by the 111th Reconnaissance Squadron. Fighter-bombers of XII Air Support Command and guns of the 68th Coast Artillery Regiment, the 45th and 1st Armored Division Artillery, and the 976th Field Artillery Battalions all joined in blasting enemy gun positions and assembly areas. Dive-bombers also gave close support to the ground troops. They dropped smoke bombs and high explosives and strafed enemy troops, while 48 B-25 mediums bombed Cisterna.

4. *The Enemy Takes the Factory.* Following the same pattern of attack he had employed the previous day, the enemy launched a new effort to take the Factory area during the early morning hours of 9 February. Shortly after midnight, following a heavy concentration of mortar and artillery fire, enemy units began infiltrating at various points all along the 1 Division front. On the left flank, where the 5 Grenadier Guards and the 1 Scots Guards were protecting Carroceto, elements of the 65th Grenadier Division forced the 5 Grenadier Guards back to the railroad station and overpass. There it held. At the same time the enemy units dug in along Buonriposo Ridge drove south against the 1 KSLI and the 2 Foresters, pushing them back from their newly won positions to

the stream line south of the ridge. This time the main attack was launched by Battle Group Graeser against the 168 Brigade, covering the Factory and the lateral road to the east.

For the attack General Graeser threw in his remaining reserve, the 735th Grenadier Regiment, to reinforce the 725th Grenadier Regiment and the 29th and 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiments, which had been committed the previous day. During the night small units penetrated at several points along the lateral road and in the Factory area. At daylight the major force, supported by a few tanks, drove through to capitalize on the gains made by the infiltrating groups. The fighting spread along the whole front of the 168 Brigade. To the east of the Factory, between the 1 London Irish and the 10 Royal Berks, elements of the 29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment pushed south as much as 2000 yards. Farther to the east the 104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment overran the right flank company of the 10 Royal Berks, clearing the way for enemy tanks and self-propelled guns to use the lateral road. Exploiting these gains, the 735th Grenadier Regiment fought its way into the Factory. By early afternoon the enemy controlled both the lateral road and the Factory. He lost no time in bringing up antitank guns and consolidating his gains. On the left the hard-pressed 5 Grenadier Guards and the 1 Scots Guards, aided by a counterattack launched at 0630 by the 3d Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry, held stubbornly to their positions covering Carroceto.

To give the 1 Division support against the enemy penetrations the 1st Armored Division employed two companies of medium and two companies of light tanks in counterattacks. At 0900, 9 February, the 1st Battalion, 1st Armored Regiment, was alerted to attack Buonriposo Ridge with its light tanks. Company A moved up the Albano road to the first overpass, turned west on the lateral road which formed part of the final beachhead line of defense, and then swung north along a dirt road. Under artillery and antitank fire it made slow progress once it had left the highway, and at the end of the morning it was only 2000 yards north of the overpass. The light tanks knocked out one Mark IV and assisted in breaking up the attack of an estimated battalion of infantry. Company B was ordered forward at noon to attack the left side of the ridge. Following a dirt trail, it moved up to the stream line in the positions of the 1 KSLI and the 2 Foresters. Here it encountered a hasty minefield and two tanks were lost. The company attempted to get around the field and push on. As soon as the tanks left the road they sank into deep mud, and five tanks became mired. Accurate antitank fire forced the company to withdraw with a total loss of seven tanks.

At noon the 3d Battalion, 1st Armored Regiment, was ordered to send one company of medium tanks up the Albano road to the Factory and a second

company to the right of the Factory. Company H followed the main road to a point beyond the Factory where it was stopped by a minefield which the German engineers had laid across the road. The Factory itself was bristling with antitank guns. In the area of the 5 Grenadier Guards Company H knocked out one tank and two antitank guns, and helped drive back two battalions of infantry; north of the Factory it got two Mark IV tanks before withdrawing late in the afternoon. On the right Company I followed the diagonal road leading northwest from Padiglione and then turned north behind the 1 London Scottish. Roadbound and under antitank gun fire, it was able to give the 1 London Scottish only limited help in mopping up the enemy penetration east of the Factory.

Continuing the program of the previous day, VI Corps artillery on 9 February carried out another co-ordinated air, artillery, and naval gunfire counterbattery shoot on the left flank of the beachhead. The British destroyer *Loyal* while laying a smoke screen for the cruisers was hit and slightly damaged by a shell from a German ground battery. It had to be sent back to Naples for repairs. Trouble was also experienced in obtaining air observation. The P-51 observation planes were held on the ground by a wind of near-gale proportions which prevented all unloading from Liberty ships in the harbor. A cub plane from the 976th Field Artillery Battalion managed to get off the ground during the afternoon and so enabled the cruisers to do some observed firing. In the morning Fifth Army had requested that as much air support as possible be given to VI Corps. One hundred and four fighter-bombers, 36 light bombers, and 84 medium bombers were sent up. Medium bombers, briefed to bomb supply dumps between Valmontone and Palestrina, switched to assembly areas around Campoleone with excellent results. A more extensive program was prepared for the next day.

Late in the afternoon on 9 February the fighting slackened off. The enemy as well as the British units had suffered heavy losses; both sides were near the point of exhaustion. The enemy seized the opportunity to consolidate his positions while the 1 Division reorganized. To relieve some of the pressure on the seriously depleted British force, the 180th Infantry took over the positions of the 2 Brigade, which then passed into division reserve along the final beachhead line. This left the 1 Division three brigades with which to cover its reduced front. The 168 Brigade held the right flank east and south of the Factory, which was now firmly in enemy hands; the 24 Guards Brigade covered Carroceto, with the 1 Scots Guards still holding a thin salient north of the village astride the railroad; and the 3 Brigade held the left sector along the ravine south of Buonriposo Ridge. The battered, tired troops worked feverishly through the night to wire in their positions and prepare for new attacks. General Brann, Army G-3, reported that the 1 Division was at not over 50% effective strength, and he concurred with

General Lucas that another division was needed to hold the bridgehead until main Fifth Army could break through the Gustav Line on the southern front.

5. *The Loss of Carroceto.* By noon of 9 February Battle Group Graeser had achieved the enemy's main objective, the capture of the Factory. There still remained Carroceto and the overpass. Taking advantage of the observation provided by the Factory buildings, the enemy directed fire all afternoon on the 1 Scots Guards and the 5 Grenadier Guards. Shortly after midnight approximately 15 enemy tanks emerged from the Factory and together with a battalion of infantry struck the 1 Scots Guards. Tank destroyers of Company B, 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and artillery fire broke up the armored attack, and the infantry were driven off. At 0430 the 5 Grenadier Guards was under attack from three sides. With the help of a squadron of the 46 Royal Tanks it held out. North of Carroceto the situation of the 1 Scots Guards gradually deteriorated. All contact was lost with the two forward companies, and the remainder of the battalion, in danger of being cut off, withdrew within the perimeter defense of the 5 Grenadier Guards protecting the overpass. The tank destroyers covered the withdrawal with their caliber .50 machine guns. At 0530 General Penney reported that his troops had been fighting all night, often within their positions, and that the division could not continue to hold out without the support of a counterattack by fresh troops prepared to take over the major part of the 1 Division front.

Corps artillery and the air force gave all the aid they could muster to support the hard-pressed division. At 0900 two enemy attacks forming up at the Carroceto railway station were dispersed by a concentration of 200 guns representing both division and Corps artillery. At the same time wave after wave of heavy, medium, and light bombers attacked assembly areas along the Albano road from Campoleone to Albano. All the resources of the Strategic and Tactical Air Forces were allotted to VI Corps. Unfortunately, a heavy overcast began developing at 0945, and an hour later further bombing was out of the question. One hundred and seventy-four medium bombers and two groups of heavy bombers were forced to turn back without unloading their bombs.

By the end of the morning of the 10th the enemy held the Carroceto railroad station as well as the Factory. The objectives of I Parachute Corps and LXXXVI Panzer Corps had finally been achieved. It is impossible to estimate accurately the price they paid, but it was very high. The enemy had planned to take Carroceto and the Factory in one night. Instead it had required three full days of bitter fighting. Each day he was forced to throw in more and more of his reserves until he had committed the equivalent of over six full regiments. His tactics of night infiltration had proved often very successful; during the daylight hours, when our artillery could fire on observed targets, he suffered

disproportionately heavy losses. Air bombardment and naval gunfire also aided in disorganizing the enemy attacks, and the continuous fighting had undoubtedly tired the enemy troops as well as the British defenders. The VI Corps G-2 estimated that the enemy would need some time to reorganize before renewing the attack.

6. *The 1st Special Service Force Raids Sessano, 9-10 February.* When the 1st Special Service Force under Brig. Gen. Robert T. Frederick took over the right flank of the beachhead on the night of 2-3 February, the enemy outpost line was along the Mussolini Canal. After a week of aggressive patrolling, the enemy had been forced back 1500 yards, leaving a broad no-man's land between the opposing forces. During the day this area appeared to be a peaceful expanse of level farmland; at night the 1st Special Service Force kept it alive with hard-hitting patrols which gave the enemy no rest. Although the right flank of the beachhead with its soft ground and numerous drainage ditches was not favorable terrain for a major attack, the 1st Special Service Force never permitted it to remain a quiet sector of the front.

During the night of 8-9 February the 2d Company, 2d Regiment, staged a successful raid on the village of Sessano. The 4th Company, 7th GAF Battalion, which was holding the town, was almost annihilated. After taking 7 prisoners, killing at least 40 of the enemy, and holding the town for 3 hours, the Special Service troops withdrew. Accurate artillery fire adjusted on a reserve company organizing for a counterattack cost the enemy an additional 20 dead, and the rear guard of the assault company accounted for 20 more. The 2d Company itself suffered only 15 casualties.

7. *The 45th Division Attempts to Retake the Factory.* The hard and protracted struggle to hold the Factory area had in a very literal sense drained the fighting strength of the 1 Division. It was in no condition to launch a counterattack or even to hold the positions to which it had been forced back. On the afternoon of 19 February the 168 Brigade was estimated to be at less than one-third normal strength, and many other units were at no better than half-strength. In addition, the weather for the past three days had been almost consistently cold, windy, and rainy. Foxholes dug in the wet, boggy ground quickly filled with water, and after a few days in the line troops suffered from trench foot and exposure. It was important for VI Corps not only to regain the Factory area but also to effect the relief of at least a major part of the 1 Division. The first step had been taken on the night of 9-10 February when the 180th Infantry under Col. Robert L. Dulaney took over the positions of the 2 Brigade. The next night the 179th Infantry under Col. Malcolm R. Kammerer relieved the 168 Brigade with one battalion and prepared to launch a counterattack on the morning of the 11th to retake the Factory.



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

days of fighting the battalion had lost eight tanks totally destroyed and several damaged. Company A, 179th Infantry, had been reduced to 3 officers and approximately 40 enlisted men. It appeared that a major effort would be required to retake the Factory.

Bad weather, which nullified the planned air support for 11 February, drastically curtailed the program for the 12th. The air force had accepted the heaviest program of air support up to that date ever allotted to a corps. Six groups of heavy and six groups of medium bombers were briefed to strike close support targets at the beachhead. Of the planned sorties, 34 B-17 Fortresses dropped 100 tons and 19 B-24 Liberators dropped 45 tons of bombs on Campoleone Station and farther up the Albano road on the railroad crossing at Cecchina. A group of medium bombers also struck Campoleone and Cecchina, but most of the heavy and medium bombers were forced to return without completing their missions. Dive bombers and P-40's attempted to locate the long-range railroad guns and gave close support to the ground troops. Although the program had not been fully carried out, VI Corps reported excellent results. In the afternoon three Germans of the 145th Grenadier Regiment surrendered to the 1 DWR. They reported that they couldn't stand the bombing. That night the 1 DWR and the 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry, were pulled back a few hundred yards to permit the bombing of Carroceto. At 1525 and 1530 on the afternoon of the 13th two waves of dive bombers struck the village. Clear weather permitted accurate bombing, and ground observers reported good results. The infantry then moved back to their former positions.

8. *Results of the Enemy's First Drive.* The failure of the second attempt by the 45th Division to retake the Factory on 12 February marked the end of the first phase of the battle to hold the beachhead. The enemy had achieved his initial objectives of wiping out the Campoleone salient and securing the Factory and Carroceto. Yet, although he had won the first round, VI Corps was far from beaten. The attempt to trap the 3 Brigade in the Campoleone salient had failed, and the night attack to capture the Factory and Carroceto had resulted in a costly and exhausting struggle lasting for five days. While the enemy consolidated his gains and rushed fresh troops to the beachhead to replace his heavy casualties, he was losing valuable time. On the evening of 12 February the 6 Gordons relieved the weak 1 Irish Guards, thereby strengthening the 3 Brigade line below Buonriposo Ridge, and the 1 DWR was pulled back slightly to tie in with the 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry. With the fresh troops of the 45th Division in line, VI Corps was able to stabilize its beachhead defenses and prepare for the next blow. If the enemy had won the first round, he had not yet won the battle.

