

Tenth east. General von Mackensen, the former commander of Fourteenth Army, had been relieved from his command after the fall of Rome and replaced on 6th June by General Lemelsen. To his assistance Kesselring directed all the newly arrived reinforcements, 356 Infantry Division from Genoa, 20 Luftwaffe Field Division from Holland, and the 162nd from Leghorn. The last named heralded its arrival with a charge of Cossack cavalry; this was the first we had seen of an arm of which we had heard such interesting reports but it proved ineffective against Fifth Army and the experiment was not repeated in Italy. In Tenth Army XIV Corps, retreating up the Rieti axis, had in the area of Carsoli and Orvinio a mixed group of 305 and 94 Infantry Divisions and, lined up north of the Aniene river from east of Tivoli to the Tiber, 1 Parachute, 15 Panzer Grenadier and Hermann Goering Divisions.

13 Corps was the pursuit Corps for Eighth Army and the plan was to employ two armoured divisions in the lead, 6 South African up Route 3, the Via Flaminia, west of the Tiber, and 6 British up Route 4, the Via Salaria, east of the Tiber; 4 British Infantry Division with 25 Tank Brigade followed up the latter on the minor road leading due north from Tivoli through Palombara.* The French were already across the Aniene, east of Rome, which gave an initial advantage to the pursuit on the right but on the left the South Africans were hampered by having to pass through II Corps to use the Rome bridges across the Tiber. They were clear through, however, by the morning of the 6th and by that evening a dashing advance of thirty-three miles brought them to Civita Castellana. East of the Tiber our advance was more strongly opposed, in particular by the Hermann Goering Division which gave 6 British Armoured Division a stiff fight for Monterotondo; 4 Division also met resistance on the Palombara road from 15 Panzer Grenadier Division and 1 Parachute Division.

The situation was developing so favourably west of the Tiber that on the morning of 7th June I sent fresh orders to both Armies and to 5 Corps:

"1. The enemy has been greatly weakened by the fighting since 11th May and is now thoroughly disorganised. He is certainly in no position at present to launch a serious counter-attack. He will continue to suffer seriously during his retreat from attacks by our Air Forces and advancing columns.

2. To take full advantage of this situation Eighth Army will advance with all possible speed direct on the general area Florence-Bibbiena-Arezzo and Fifth Army on the general area Pisa-Lucca-Pistoia. Armies will maintain general contact on their inner flanks but will not wait on each other's advance. Enemy resistance will be by-passed wherever possible in order to reach the above vital areas quickly. Eighth Army will be responsible for any protection that may be necessary on its right flank.

3. To save transportation resources and bridging material 5 Corps will not follow up

* I intended to employ only the minimum force necessary in the pursuit; among other reasons maintenance ruled out a large force, as railhead was still back in the Cassino area. The remaining divisions were grounded in areas where they could be easily maintained.

the enemy on their front. If the advance of Eighth Army fails to force the enemy to abandon Ancona, Polish Corps will be moved forward later on Eighth Army's eastern axis to take Ancona from the west.

4. The Commander-in-Chief authorizes Army Commanders to take extreme risks to secure the vital areas mentioned in paragraph 2 above before the enemy can re-organise or be reinforced."

On these orders the pursuit was pressed rapidly. The main difference was that 13 Corps was no longer directed on the Terni-Rieti area but farther afield; this meant that the South Africans were no longer to turn eastwards to cross the Tiber to seize Narni as originally planned, but to press on to Orvieto. Here again a difficult question of routeing was involved since both they and II Corps were in danger of arriving simultaneously at Viterbo. I decided to give precedence to the armour and II Corps was halted in place until the South Africans were through. Meanwhile VI Corps made rapid progress up the coast in spite of the arrival of two fresh German divisions. On the 9th it captured Tarquinia and a task force from 1 Armoured Division, operating on the inland flank, cut into II Corps' territory to capture the Viterbo airfield. On the 11th, however, VI Corps was relieved by IV Corps and moved to Naples, coming under command of Seventh Army for operation ANVIL. II Corps had pushed forward with 85 and 88 Divisions up the axis of Route 2 and consolidated the position between VI and 13 Corps. It was relieved by the French on 10th June. On the 9th Eighth Army had also carried out a regrouping; the Tiber was now to be the boundary between 13 and 10 Corps, with the latter commanding all the troops formerly in 13 Corps east of the river. The final result was to give 13 Corps 78 and 6 South African Divisions, with 4 Division in reserve, and 10 Corps 6 British Armoured and 8 Indian Infantry Divisions, with 10 Indian as reserve. The Canadians were grounded south of Rome. The Polish Corps, which had passed to Army Group reserve on 26th May after the capture of Piedimonte, assumed command of the Adriatic sector from 5 Corps on 17th June, remaining under direct command of my headquarters until 29th June when it passed to Eighth Army. The enemy had begun to fall back in the Adriatic sector on 8th June and on the 10th we occupied Pescara and Chieti.

For ten days after the regrouping the pursuit continued, though the enemy was now offering stronger resistance. Kesselring had at last managed to shift sufficient strength westwards to feel secure against a serious outflanking by Fifth Army up the west coast and he was beginning to feel the benefit of the fresh reinforcements he had received from elsewhere. He could now put twenty to twenty-one of his twenty-six divisions into the line. The revival of his strength was shown by the stiff action at Bagnoregio which delayed the fall of Orvieto to 78 Division until 14th June. IV Corps on the extreme left also had to fight hard for Orbetello and Grosseto; the latter fell on the 15th but little advance had been made beyond it by the 20th, for the Ombrone river was a difficult obstacle. During the same period of 10th-20th June the French, under a provisional "Pursuit Corps" Headquarters commanded