

form of an amphibious assault in close support of your ground advance or, alternatively, in areas outside your responsibility. For one operation in the latter category now being planned it is anticipated that three United States infantry divisions and all the French divisions at present in Allied Armies in Italy will be required. To make this possible it may be desirable for you to relieve formations to be concentrated under control of Allied Force Headquarters as early as follows: one United States division by 17th June; one French division by 24th June; one United States division by 27th June; thereafter the remaining formations at longer intervals. The dates given are the earliest you may have to meet, and then only if you have captured Rome. You should take this requirement into account in planning both immediate and subsequent operations.

In addition to the above an experienced United States Corps Headquarters should be relieved by 1st June, if you can do so without interfering with your present mission.

You will be notified from time to time regarding the assault lift and shipping which can be made available to you but it is unlikely that there will be sufficient resources (shore to shore) available this year to enable you to undertake an amphibious operation on a scale in excess of one division plus."

It will be noted that no decision had been taken, at the time this directive was issued, whether ANVIL should be mounted or not; on the other hand the forces to be provided for it from Italy had now risen to seven divisions. This uncertainty was a very great handicap to our planning, and its psychological effect on the troops expecting to be withdrawn, especially on the French, was undoubtedly serious. It is hard to expect troops to give of their best when they are continuously "looking over their shoulder" to a new objective, particularly when it is so attractive an objective as the liberation of their own country. This situation lasted throughout June. On the 14th I was instructed that VI Corps Headquarters was to be withdrawn at once, 3 Division on 17th June and the 36th on 27th June. On the 24th a French division was to be withdrawn to the Naples area, followed by a second in the first week of July. On the same day the Combined Chiefs of Staff signalled "the destruction of the German armed forces in Italy, south of the Pisa-Rimini line, must be completed. There should be no withdrawal from the battle of any Allied forces that are necessary for this purpose". Nevertheless I was informed on the 16th that, in order to preserve the possibility of mounting ANVIL, it was necessary to proceed with the programme of withdrawal of forces already laid down. We could still hope that we might get these troops back again later but this became more unlikely after it was known that General Eisenhower had strongly recommended the operation in a signal of 23rd June. The final decision in its favour was communicated to me on 5th July. ANVIL* was eventually launched on 15th August.

Whatever value the invasion of Southern France may have had as a contribution to

operations in North-western Europe its effect on the Italian campaign was disastrous. The Allied Armies in full pursuit of a beaten enemy were called off from the chase, Kesselring was given a breathing space to reorganise his scattered forces and I was left with insufficient strength to break through the barrier of the Apennines. My Armies, which had just been built up into a strong, flexible and co-ordinated instrument, inspired by victory and conscious of their own superiority, were reduced once more to the shifts and improvisations which had marked the previous winter and faced again with the problems of overcoming not only the difficulties of the Italian terrain and the stubbornness of the enemy's resistance, but also the lack of manpower on their own side.* I express no opinion on the correctness of the decision, but I was, to say the least, disappointed that our victory was not to be exploited as it deserved.

The Pursuit North of Rome.

The German flight north from Rome was, in the first few days, rapid and rather disorganised. The roads along which their flight had gone presented an amazing sight; mile after mile they were littered with the wrecks of armoured and other vehicles, destroyed either by our air forces or by our armoured pursuit or abandoned and wrecked by their drivers when fuel ran out. It was still Kesselring's intention, however, to delay us as far south as possible and retain as much territory as he could. He was, in fact, now back again in the same position as in September 1943, or rather in the position he then expected to find himself in, that is he was withdrawing up the leg of Italy pursued by a superior force. Now also, as then, his task was to fight a delaying action in front of a prepared position but this time his "winter position" was further back. The "Gothic" line, as it was called,† ran along the summit of the Northern Apennines; it was intended to be held to the last to preserve the rich lands of Northern Italy. When Rome fell it was far from completion and though for the immediate future the Germans would have to fall back quickly to avoid a complete rout, especially in the relatively open west coast sector, it would soon be necessary to bring this withdrawal to a halt and gain time for more work to be done. It was necessary, therefore, for Kesselring to weigh carefully the dangers involved in making a stand too soon, and thereby risking another defeat before he had had time to reorganise his forces, and, on the other hand, in delaying that stand too long and allowing the Allies to make contact too soon with the "Gothic" line. It was certainly essential to carry out as soon as possible some measure of

* The loss of the French was particularly severely felt as they were expected to repeat in the Apennines their feats in the Aurunci mountains. 4 Moroccan Mountain Division was, as I have explained, my only mountain division.

† We took this name from a map captured in Kesselring's Headquarters at Monte Soratte and it was the name we always used for the line. This name "Gotenstellung" appears to have been given to the whole Apennine position in the planning stage but on 16 June it was changed to the "Green" Line (Grüne Linie), which was what the Germans called the actual line on the ground. There is no special connection between the Northern Apennines and the Goths but the Germans often showed themselves conscious, not only by their behaviour, that in Italy they were treading in the footsteps of their barbarous forefathers; for instance two minor defensive positions in Campania were called after Totila and Alboin.

* Shortly before the operation the codename was changed to DRAGOON.