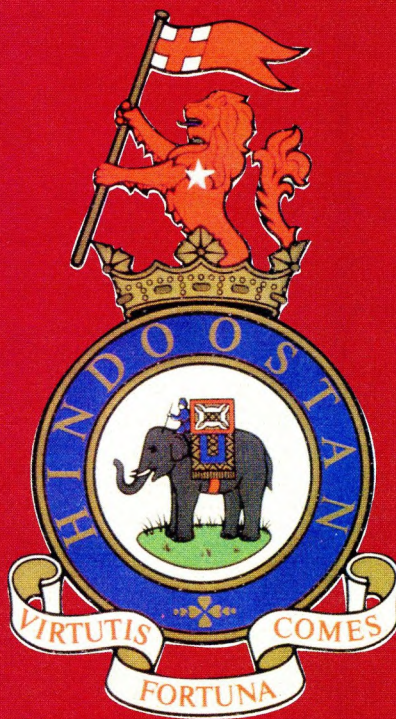


THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S REGIMENT



BATTLEFIELD TOUR

23-30 September 2003

CASSINO - ANZIO - MONTE CECE

CONTENTS

Serial	ITEM	Page
1	Programme	1-2
2	Nominal Roll	3
3	Cassino - Strategic background	4-9
4	Battles for Cassino	10 -17
5	Cassino War Cemetery	18
6	Anzio - 1st Battalion Orbat - January/February 1944	19
7	Group photograph of 1st Battalion Officers *	20
8	Anzio - outline of battle	21 -24
9	Citations for Anzio	25 -31
10	Anzio Beach Head Cemetery	32
11	Monte Cece - 1st Battalion Orbat -Sept/Oct 1944	33
12	Group photograph of 1st Battalion Officers - Mar/Apr 1945	34
13	Gothic Line	35 -38
14	Citation for Pte Burton VC	39
15	Obituary for Richard Burton	40
16	Other citations for Monte Cece	41 -43
17	Florence War Cemetery	44

*

Errata - Phot taken in Palestine 1945

MAPS IN MAP FOLDER

Anzio:

1. Anzio Beach-head.
2. Campoleone. 30 Jan 1944
3. Carraceto. Feb 1944
4. Flyover Defence.

Monte Cece:

5. Advance on Route Arrow.
6. Monte Cece Attack.

PROGRAMME FOR THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S REGIMENT

BATTLEFIELD TOUR

Date	Time	Event	Remarks
Tue 23 Sep	0800 0730	Coach pick-up	Leeds Rail Station
	1125	Latest reporting Stansted	
	1325	Depart Stansted	Ryanair flight FR3008
	1655 (local)	Arrive Rome Ciampino Airport	
		Coach transfer to Hotel (Villa dei Principi)	Terracina
	2000	Arrive hotel	
Wed 24 Sep	2030	Dinner	
	0800	Breakfast	
	0900	Depart hotel for Cassino	Coach
	1030 -1145	Approach to Monte Cassino and visit to Cassino War Cemetery	
	1200 -1330	Lunch Pre booked	
	1330 -1700	Monte Cassino, including the battle, visit to Monastery	
	1700	Depart Monte Cassino	
	1830	Arrive back at hotel	
Thu 25 Sep	2000	Dinner	
	0730	Breakfast	Note early start
	0830	Depart hotel for Anzio	
	1000	Arrive Anzio Port	
	1000 -1330	Anzio battle, including landing and visit to Beachhead Cemetery	Lay wreath
	1330 -1445	Lunch Pre booked	
	1445 -1700	Anzio battle and the Wadis	
	1700	Depart Anzio area	
Fri - 26 Sep	1830	Arrive back at hotel	
	2000	Dinner	
	0800	Breakfast	
	0900	Depart hotel for Rome	
	1100	Arrive drop-off point Rome	Coaches not allowed into Rome City
	1100 -1600	Sightseeing and lunch	Own arrangements
	1600	Meet coach for return to hotel	
	1800	Arrive back at hotel	
Sat 27 Sep	2000	Dinner	
	0800	Breakfast	
	0900	Depart hotel for Montecatini Terme.	Approx 30 miles west of Florence
	1430	Arrive Montecatini Terme (Grand Hotel Nizza et Suisse)	

Date	Time	Event	Remarks
Sun 28 Sep	0800	Breakfast	
	0900	Depart hotel for Apennines and Monte Cece	The Gothic Line
	1200	Stop for lunch at village of Palazzuolo	Pre booked
	1315	Mini-bus collects Monte Cece climbers	
	1400	Remainder depart for Monte Cece	
	1400 -1530	The battle for Monte Cece	
	1830	Arrive back at hotel	
	2000	Dinner	
Mon 29 Sep	0800	Breakfast	
	0900	Depart hotel for Florence War Cemetery	
	0915 -1030	War Cemetery	Lay wreath
	1100	Arrive Florence	
	1100 -1600	Sightseeing and lunch	Own arrangements
	1700	Arrive back at hotel	
	2000	Dinner	
Tue 30 Sep	0830	Breakfast	
	AM	Morning to be spent at leisure	
	1115	Depart hotel for Pisa airport	
	1230	Arrive airport and check-in	Ryannair flight FR587
	1430	Flight departs	
	1555 (local)	Arrive Stansted	
	2000	Coach party arrives Leeds Rail station	

BATTLEFIELD TOUR, ITALY, 23 - 30 SEPTEMBER 2003

NOMINAL ROLL

Major General Sir Evelyn Webb-Carter KCVO OBE - Tour leader and speaker.

Major Bob Heron - Administration

Joining the Tour at Stansted Airport

Major General Sir Evelyn and Lady Celia Webb-Carter

Brigadier and Mrs J B K Greenway (John/Judith)

Mr and Mrs R F Diacon (Richard/Elizabeth)

Mr and Mrs L A Balding (Tony/Margaret)

Mr and Mrs J S Bailes (Joe/Thelma)

Mr and Mrs K Jagger (Keith/Eveline)

Mr R Owers (Rodney)

Mr J A Young (John)

Total - 14

Joining Coach at Leeds

Major and Mrs R Heron (Bob/Linda)

Lieutenant Colonel W Robins (Robbie)

Major P B L Hoppe (Peter)

Dom Alberic Stacpoole (Captain) (John)

Captain and Mrs R C Wilson (Bob/Jean)

Mr B Eastwood (Brian)

Mr G Hill (Geoff)

Mr W Norman (Bill)

Mr J E Sargeant (John)

Mr C Boothman (Cliff)

Mr and Mrs C Ford (Cyril/Jean)

Mr and Mrs H Greenwood (Harold/Nancy)

Ms J E M Gul (Janet)

Mrs K M Shone (Kath)

Mr and Mrs G Popple (Geoffrey/Patricia)

Mr M Tiernan (Michael)

Total - 21

Joining Tour in Italy

Major General D E Isles (Donald)

Mr and Mrs D Peckover (David/Jeanne)

Mr and Mrs R Hanson (Bob/Margaret)

Total - 5

Tour Total - 40

THE STRATEGIC BACKGROUND TO THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN 1943 - 1945

1. The invasion of Italy on 3 September 1943 marked the start of a new phase in Allied strategy which was designed to culminate in the invasion of Germany. When the last Germans fled across the straits of Messina from Sicily the first aim of Allied strategy had been achieved: to clear the Germans from Africa and open the Mediterranean to Allied shipping.
2. The Casablanca Conference in January 1943 treated the invasion of Sicily as a continuation of the clearance of North Africa and looked no further ahead. The Trident Conference in Washington in May 1943 took a wider view. After it, on 26 May, the Combined Chiefs of Staff informed the Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean of their decision that a major attack on Europe would be made from the United Kingdom probably in the early summer of 1944. He was therefore instructed to plan such operations in exploitation of the conquest of Sicily as could best be calculated "to eliminate Italy from the war and contain the maximum number of German divisions". Subsequently the Mediterranean theatre would no longer receive the first priority for resources and its operations would become preparatory and subsidiary to the D Day invasion of Normandy.
3. The Supreme Allied Commander's Instructions gave no geographical objectives, but pointed out two desirable aims: one political and the other to contain the maximum number of German divisions. It is essential that this directive be constantly borne in mind, for it continued to govern all Allied strategy in Italy up to the final surrender of German forces. In essence the campaign in Italy became a grand strategic fixing attack. The diversion of German strength to a theatre as far removed as possible from the vital point, the Channel coast, and the elimination of Italy would mean a loss to the Axis Powers of 59 divisions, amounting to some two million men. In the summer of 1943, Italy had seven divisions in southern France, and no less than 32 in the Balkans, together with anti-aircraft and coast defence units in both theatres. To replace these and at the same time to provide troops which would have to be sent to hold the line in Italy would represent a formidable commitment for Germany at a time when she was faced once more with war on two fronts.
4. To carry out the terms of the directive from the Combined Chiefs of Staff one course of action had obvious advantages. Italian troops could be found and fought at any point of the deeply indented northern coastline of the Mediterranean from Greece to the Pyrenees, or in the many off-lying islands, but to eliminate Italy from the war an attack on the mother country clearly offered the best solution. One alternative was to invade the Balkans. To do this, however, it would first have been necessary, for the sake of air cover, to break into the outer ring of islands from Crete to Rhodes, a difficult operation in autumn. Balkan terrain was even worse suited for offensive operations than the Italian and, it must be remembered, that the Allied amphibious resources were destined to dwindle to the advantage of the western theatre. Two further arguments against this course were first that the United States Government was most reluctant to become involved in a Balkan campaign and, second, that the Soviets were anxious to keep the Balkans for themselves post-war: so they were agitating effectively to keep the western Allies out.
5. Another possible operation considered was one against Sardinia and Corsica. German air bases there could be eliminated and the islands might act as stepping stones for an attack on the south of France. But the Allies were anxious not to attract any more German forces into France but rather away from it. There was also no guarantee that such a campaign would contain many German forces, nor was there any guarantee that such an operation would eliminate Italy from the war. The latter argument also applied to operations in the Balkans.

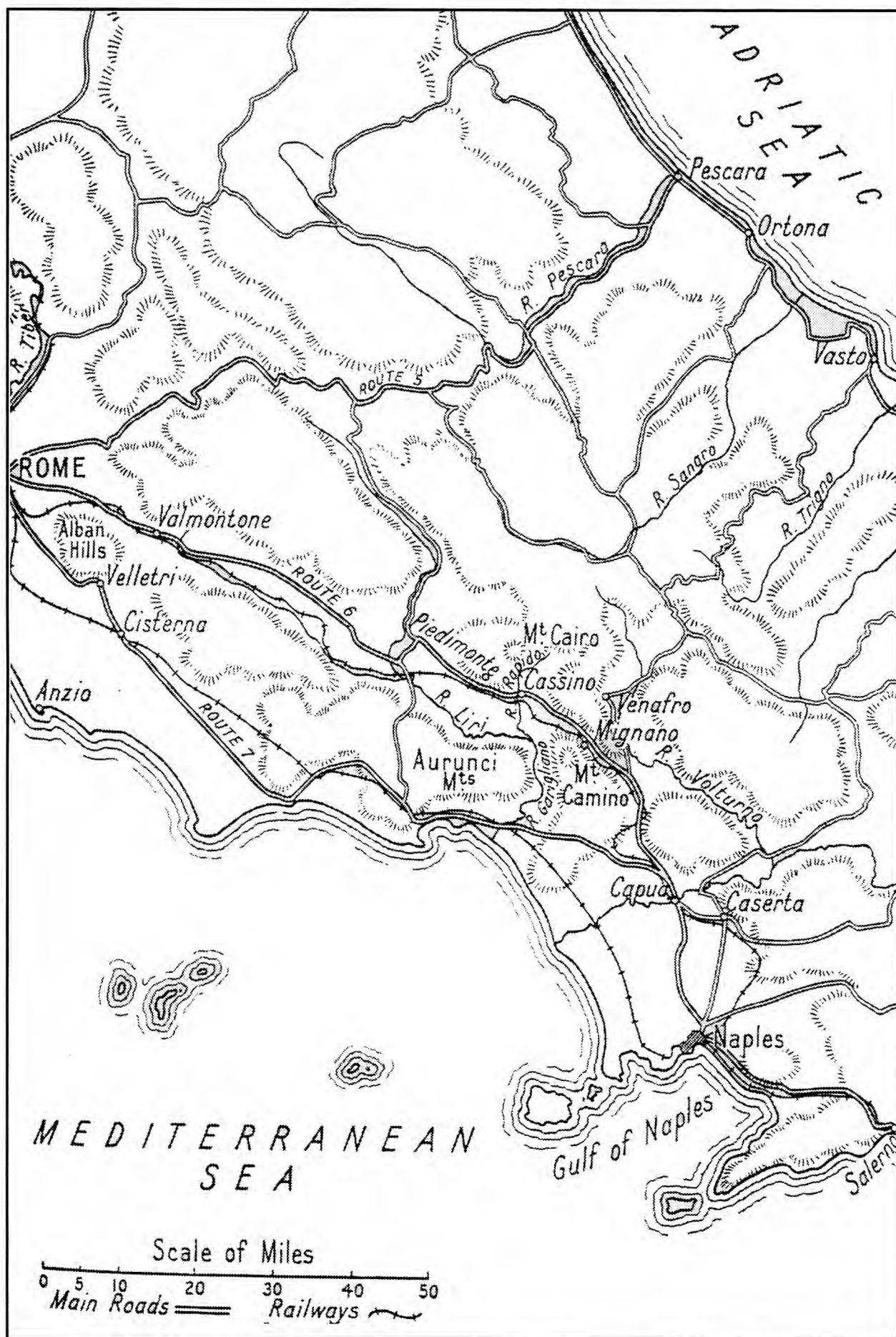
6. It was, therefore, the opinion of the Allied Command that an invasion of Italy was by far the best means of carrying out the first part of the Chiefs of Staff's directive, namely the elimination of Italy from the war, and that it also offered the best chances of achieving the second strategic objective; the containment of as many German forces as possible. The Germans would have to commit a strong force of good quality troops or risk losing Italy, resulting in Anglo-American armies appearing on the southern frontier of Germany and allowing the Allies use of the airfields in Italy from which their strategic Air Forces could develop attacks against the Fatherland.

7. It was also clear, gazing at the relief map of southern Italy, that it would be necessary to progress up the 'leg' of Italy quickly and, preferably, to commence the invasion as far north as possible. But the limits were constrained by the availability of air cover which was limited to the area running from the island of Capri, just south of Salerno, across the peninsula to about 15 miles short of Taranto. In this area there were no major strategic targets but there were two great prizes just outside the range of fighter cover - the naval base at Taranto to the east and the port of Naples to the north. A direct assault on either of these heavily defended, however, would be sufficiently hazardous even with maximum air support and quite impossible without it.

8. Following the announcement on Radio Roma on the 25th July of the fall of Mussolini there was a conference at Carthage, on 26th July, attended by General Eisenhower, Admiral Cunningham, Air Marshal Tedder and General Alexander. Salerno was selected as the site for the invasion.

9. The Salerno beaches were undoubtedly the best for an assault on the whole west coast of Italy; sea approaches are good and offshore gradients vary between one in eight and one in four, allowing landing craft to come close inshore. The coastal defences in the area were not impressive and conditions for an assault were ideal, but the trouble lay in expanding the bridgehead beyond the beaches. The coastal plain is overlooked by mountains and the rocky spur of the Picentini Mountains, which run down into the Sorrento peninsula, makes a formidable obstacle blocking the way to Naples. Towering sheer above Salerno, this wall of bare mountain is pierced by only two passes running through narrow gorges, offering admirable defensive positions. For all these advantages, however, there was one decisive factor in the choice of Salerno: it was the furthest north and nearest to Naples that the Allies could strike without losing fighter cover.

10. While the Allies had been planning the assault on Europe during the spring and summer of 1943, the Germans had been planning its defence. Their first reaction to the catastrophe in Tunisia was to reinforce the Balkans, where their forces increased from seven to 19 divisions by the end of August. One and a half divisions were sent to Sardinia and Corsica and, by the 3rd of September, there were 16 divisions in Italy. Two were near Rome and two more were in Calabria. Two had moved to the Naples area to refit and 16th Panzer Division was covering the Gulf of Salerno. These eight divisions were under Headquarters, German 10th Army (Colonel-General von Vietinghoff). Rommel, in northern Italy, had four divisions in the general area Genoa - Spezia. All these forces were clearly disposed to meet an Allied invasion at the points considered most threatened: Calabria, Gaeta - Naples - Salerno, the Rome area and Genoa - Spezia. These points were considered by the Germans as possible Allied objectives with the degree of probability increasing towards the north.



CENTRAL ITALIAN BATTLEFIELD

September 1943-June 1944

11. In the early hours of 3rd September 2 Brigades of 5th British Division and a Brigade of the 1st Canadian Division, the vanguard of 13th Corps, crossed the straights of Messina supported by the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force. On the same day the first convoys for Salerno sailed from North Africa. On the evening of the 8th they joined up off the Gulf of Salerno. As they headed towards the land, the troops learned that Italy had surrendered. On 9th September, having already landed, 13th British Corps were advancing through Calabria and were about half way up the toe, 1st British Airborne Division had occupied Taranto and 46th and 56th British Divisions, along with 36th US Division, landed on the beaches of Salerno. The Italian armed forces had received no warning of their government's intentions and the Germans moved so fast that by 10th September they had disarmed all the Italian divisions and turned without fear of interference to face the Allies at Salerno.

CHRONOLOGY

10 Jul 43	The assault of Sicily began. Syracuse captured.
25 Jul 43	Mussolini resigned.
3 Sep 43	8th Army crossed the straits of Messina.
8 Sep 43	Italy surrendered.
9 Sep 43	5th Army land at Salerno. 1st Br Airborne Division captured Taranto.
10 Sep 43	Italian fleet surrendered at Malta.
27 Sep 43	Foggia captured.
1 Oct 43	Naples fell.
15 Oct 43	Volturno crossing secured.
2 Nov 43	46th Infantry Division reached the Garigliano.
6 Nov 43	First assault of Monte Lungo failed.
8 Nov 43	River Sangro reached by 8th Army.
15 Nov 43	5th Army halted for regrouping in the Mignano Gap.
30 Nov 43	5th Army assault on Winter Line began.
6 Dec 43	Monte Camino captured.
8 Dec 43	Italian forces attacked German positions on Monte Lungo.
16 Dec 43	Monte Lungo captured by 142nd Regiment, US 36th Division.
28 Dec 43	Ortona cleared by 8th Army. 8th Army offensive brought to a halt.

FIRST BATTLE OF CASSINO

17 Jan 44	10th Corps attacked across the lower Garagliano.
22 Jan 44	Allied forces landed at Anzio (Operation Shingle).
25 Jan 44	US 34th Division attacked across the Rapido, north of Cassino.
12 Feb 44	4th Indian Division began take over from US 34th Division in the hills north of Cassino.

SECOND BATTLE OF CASSINO

15 Feb 44	Monte Cassino Monastery bombed.
15-16 Feb 44	1st Royal Sussex attacked Monte Cassino from Snakeshead Ridge.
17-18 Feb 44	4th Indian Division attacked the Monastery.
17 Feb 44	New Zealanders attacked station via railway track.

THIRD BATTLE OF CASSINO

15 Mar 44	Cassino town bombed. New Zealanders attack the town.
16 Mar 44	1/9th Gurkhas reached Hangman's Hill.
17 Mar 44	New Zealand troops reached the station via the town.
19 Mar 44	Armoured assault up Cavendish Road.
25 Mar 44	Troops withdrawn from Hangman's Hill.

FOURTH BATTLE OF CASSINO

- 11 May 44 Attacks on Gustav Line by US 2nd, French Expeditionary, 13th British and 2nd Polish Corps.
- 12 May 44 First Polish attacks on Points 593, 575 and Albaneta Farm began.
- 13 May 44 Monte Maio captured.
- 17 May 44 2nd Polish Corps attacked Points 593, 575 and Albaneta farm.
- 18 May 44 Monte Cassino Monastery occupied by 12th Podolski Lancers.

Aftermath

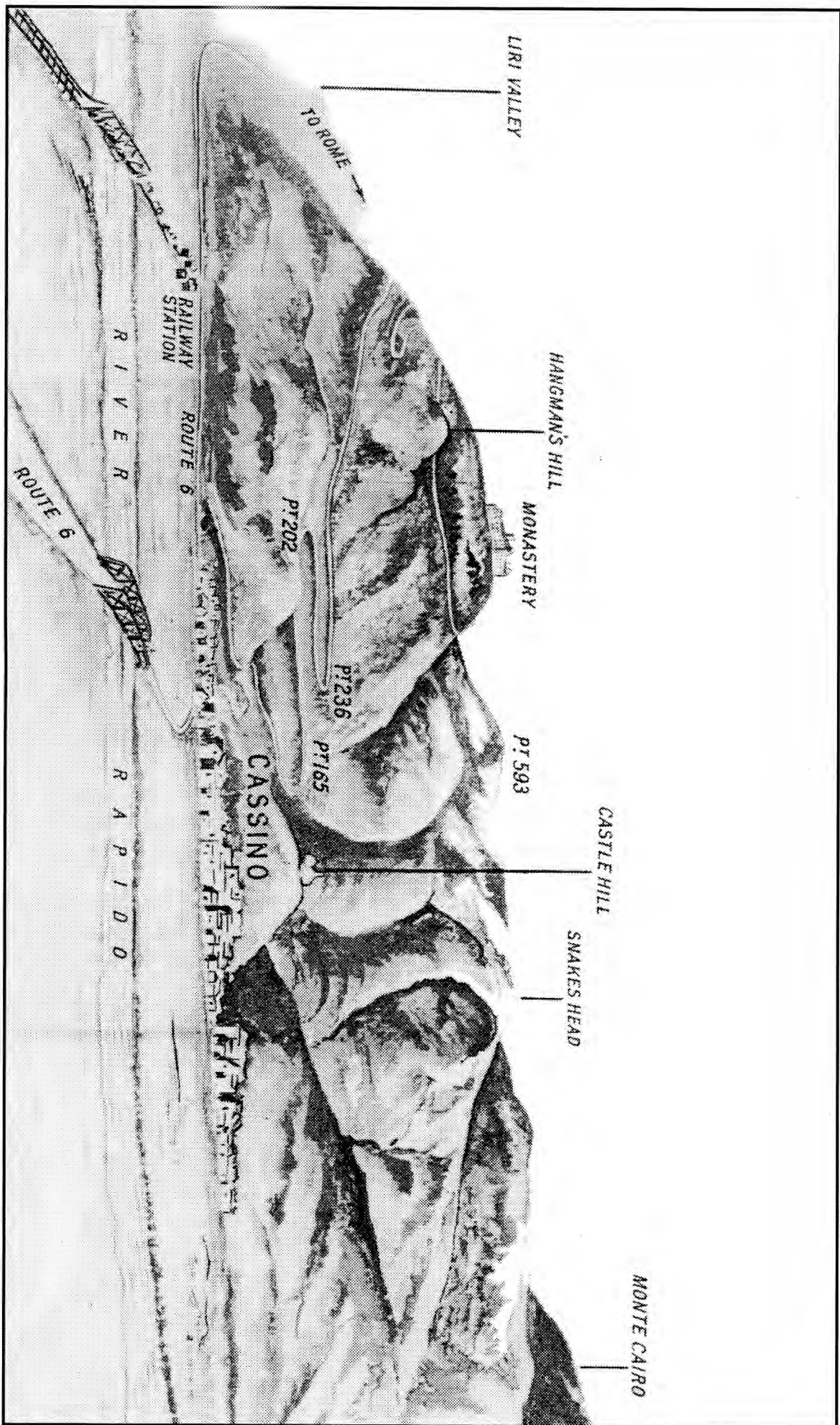
- 23 May 44 Anzio breakout began. Canadian Corps breached Hitler Line at Pontecorvo.
- 25 May 44 Link up between US 2nd Corps and 6th Corps took place.
- 4 Jun 44 Rome entered by 5th Army.
- 6 Jun 44 D Day landings in Normandy.

ANZIO LANDINGS

- 22 Jan 44 Allied landings at Anzio.
- 24 Jan 44 Beachhead expanded to a depth of 7 miles.
- 25 Jan 44 Allies capture Aprilla, "The Factory".
- 1 Feb 44 Anzio port fully operational.
- 3 Feb 44 German counter attacks against Campoleone salient.
- 9 Feb 44 Allies pushed out of Aprilla.
- 11 Feb 44 Allies counter attack Aprilla.
- 16 Feb 44 German assault on 4 mile front along the Campoleone salient.
- 5 May 44 6th Corps breakout of Cisterna at Cori - Op Buffalo.
- 25 May 44 Link up with 6th Corps.

AFTERMATH

- 4 Jun 44 Rome entered by 5th Army.
- 6 Jun 44 D Day in Normandy.



THE BATTLES FOR CASSINO

THE FIRST BATTLE - JAN 44

Attempts to outflank Cassino were unsuccessful. 10th Corps on the left and 2nd Corps on the right, plus the French Expeditionary Corps on the right, while 6th Corps was withdrawn from the line to prepare for the amphibious landing around Anzio and Nettuno, a mere 30 miles (38 km) from Rome.

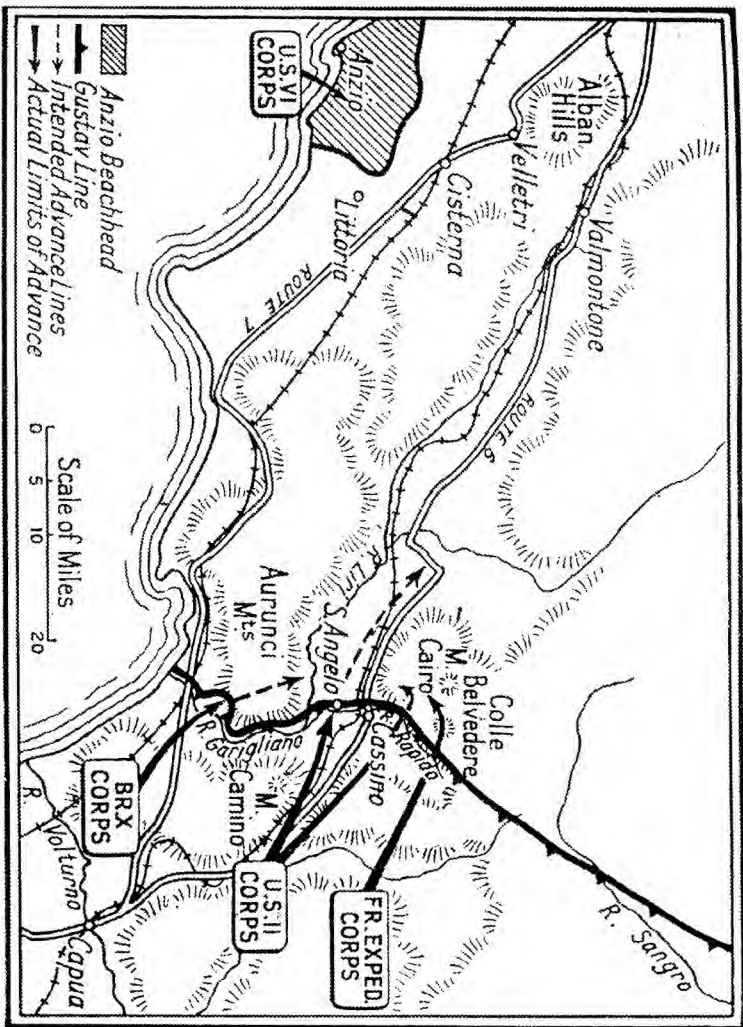
The mountain trained Moroccan and Algerian troops made good headway across the River Rapido and Secco and were fighting in the mountains north of Cassino by the time of the Anzio landings on the 22nd January, while on the coast the British 5th Division had crossed the Garigliano and captured Minturno. To their right the British 56th Division also got across the river and started heading towards Ausonia, but then Kesselring took the 1st Parachute Division out of reserve and threw its weight behind a counter attack by the 29th Panzergrenadier Division. This stabilised the German right flank but, although McCreery's 10th Corps was now firmly across the Garigliano, on a line stretching from Monte Juga to Monte Natale, in the centre Keyes's 2nd Corps had suffered a disaster. The 36th (Texan) Division tried to force a crossing of the Rapido opposite Sant' Angelo during the night of the 20th but was pinned down by murderous crossfire, many of its boats being holed and others not getting half way across the river. A pathetically small force established a toe-hold on the far bank but that was all and, by the 22nd January, the last 40 or so of the survivors had been forced to swim back to safety. The proud 36th Division had practically ceased to exist.

Meanwhile at Anzio

Lucas' 6th Corps had stormed ashore on beaches either side of Anzio and Nettuno. Remembering Salerno, Lucas was not enthusiastic but astonished to encounter no German resistance. By the end of the day 36,000 British and US soldiers had successfully landed, with only 13 casualties from accidents. Fearing a trap, Lucas proceeded to consolidate and only slowly expand his beach-head. This inaction gave Kesselring ample time to bring up reserves to cordon off 6th Corps. The bold plan to cut Kesselring's line of communication between Rome and Cassino and break the stalemate on the Gustav line had failed.

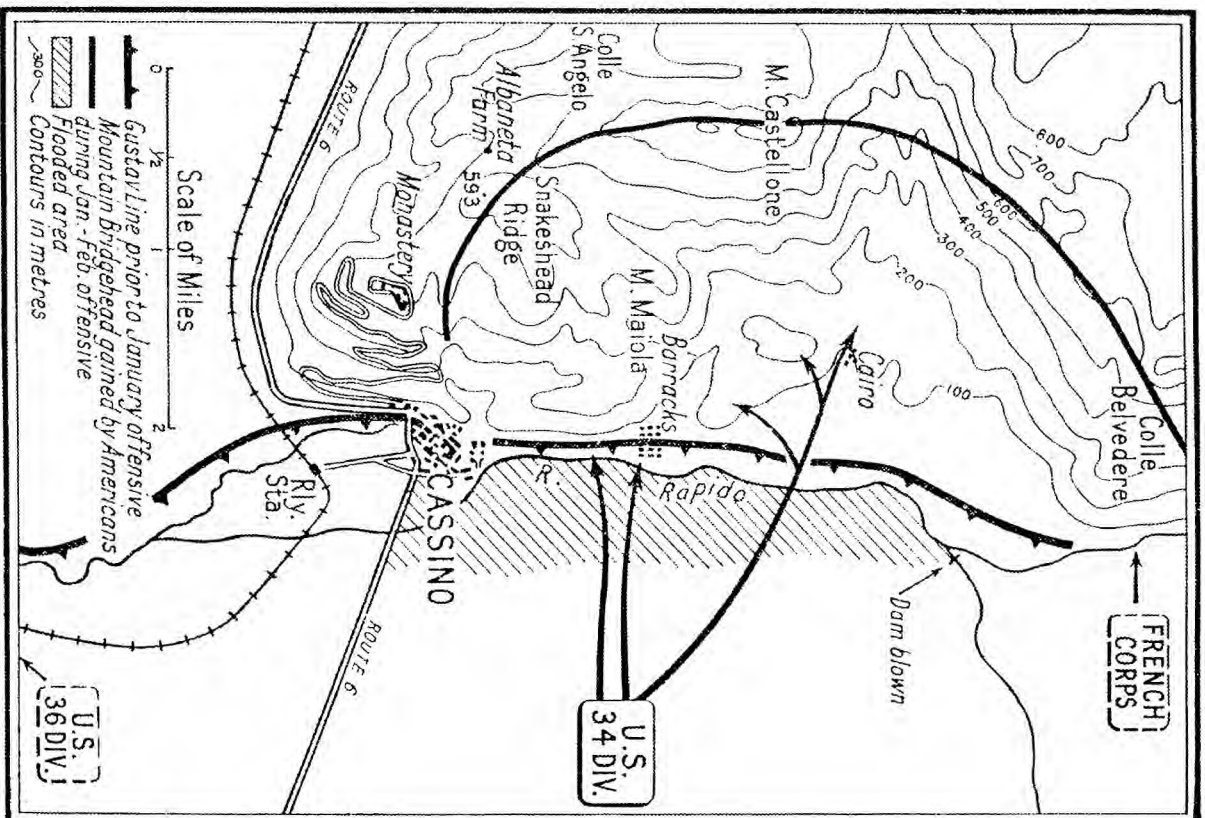
On 30th January Lucas began moving, sending the Rangers ahead of the 3rd Division towards Cisterna. This turned out to be a disaster, with only six out of 767 men escaping death or capture when they were caught in crossfire from the guns and tanks of the crack 'Hermann Göring' Panzer Division.

German counter attacks continued and the situation was very grave.



FIRST BATTLE

General offensive on main front combined with seaborne landing at Anzio



UPPER RAPIDO BRIDGEHEAD

Mountain salient gained by U.S. 34th Div. and subsequently the spring-board for successive Allied attacks

THE SECOND BATTLE - FEB 44

At Cassino on the night of 5th/6th February a regiment of the 34th Division captured Mount Calvary, overlooking the monastery. But Kesselring was pouring reinforcements onto the battlefield, including the veteran 1st Parachute Division, which recaptured the peak on the 10th February. This marked the whole style of the battle for Cassino.

Now the 5th Army itself began receiving reinforcements to relieve the exhausted men of 2nd and 10th Corps. Three fresh divisions - 2nd New Zealand, 4th Indian and 78th British - arrived, under the command of Lieutenant General Bernard Freyberg. It was Freyberg who insisted that the monastery should be bombed because the Germans were using it as an artillery observation post. In fact, they were not, having said all along they would preserve the ancient abbey's sanctity, but Freyberg persisted and on the 15th February the air strike went in - 229 Allied bombers dropped 600 tons of high explosive. The decision to bomb had not been taken lightly, and there had been urgent discussions in London and Washington before the bombers were despatched. As it turned out, results of the bombing were exactly the opposite to what Freyberg had anticipated, because the Germans did now move into the abbey, the rubble covering cavernous cellars which made it a veritable fortress.

Over the 16th and 17th the British, Indian, New Zealanders made several attempts to seize the monastery but they were uncoordinated and all failed. On the 18th General Alexander called a halt to the operations. There was also a lull at Anzio, where a determined German attempt to drive the invaders back into the sea had been finally checked by naval and aerial bombardment on the 19th.

It was time for both sides to pause and rethink.

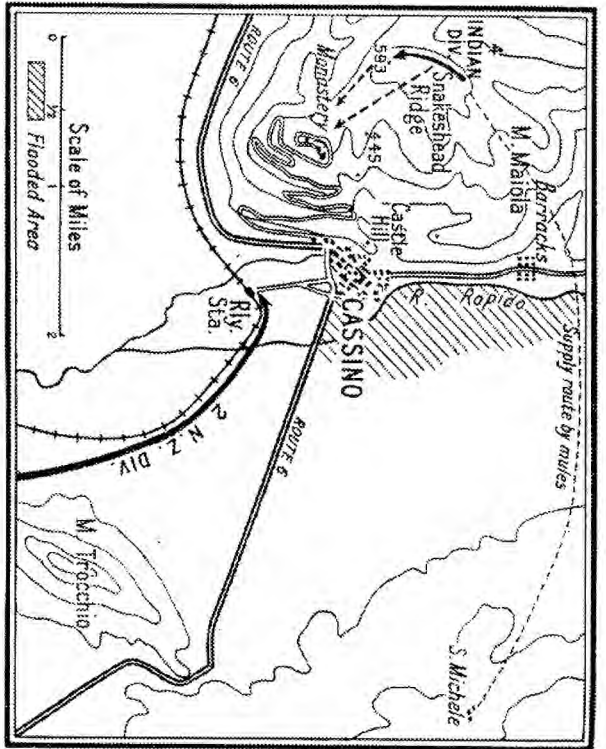
THE THIRD BATTLE - MAR 44

At 8 o'clock on the morning of 15th March, 1944, the skies over Cassino reverberated once more to the roar of hundreds of aircraft engines. A mighty fleet of bombers and fighters thundered overhead to drop 1,250 tons of bombs on the already battered town. A war correspondent, watching from safety three miles (5 km) away, described the towering pillars of smoke and dust as like "some dark forest of evil fantasy". Inside the town the men of the German 3rd Parachute Regiment cowered in their cellars, clinging together 'as if they were one lump of flesh'. Over half the men of their 2nd Battalion were killed, wounded or buried alive. Then, as the last aircraft departed shortly after midday, the artillery opened up, 748 guns pouring shell after shell in a creeping barrage into the town and the monastery. The third battle for Cassino was underway.

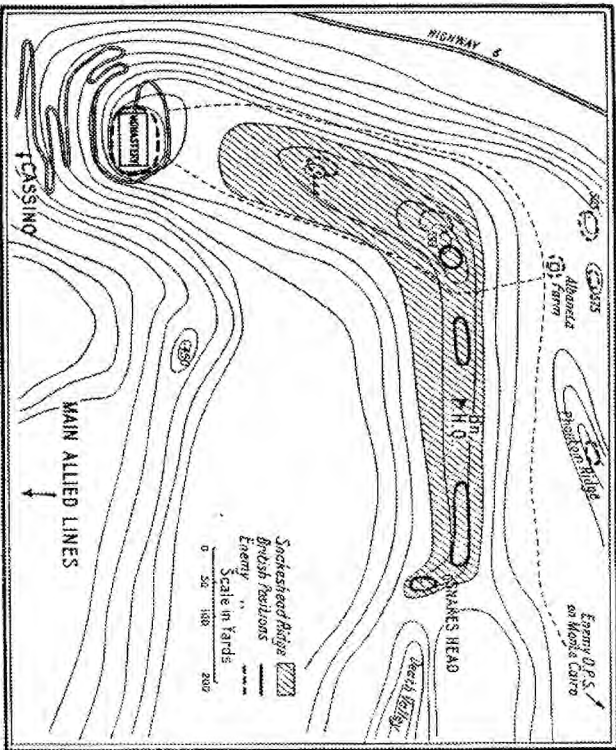
General Freyberg had been frustrated by delays in making his assault, Operation Dickens, because a prerequisite was three days of fine weather to dry out the ground, but for three weeks the weather had refused to cooperate.

Now, at last, he could move. The basic plan was a two pronged attack from the north, with the 2nd New Zealand Division taking the town of Cassino and Point 193 - Castle Hill - while the 4th Indian Division moved in on their right to take Point 435 - Hangman's Hill - and assault Monastery Hill itself.

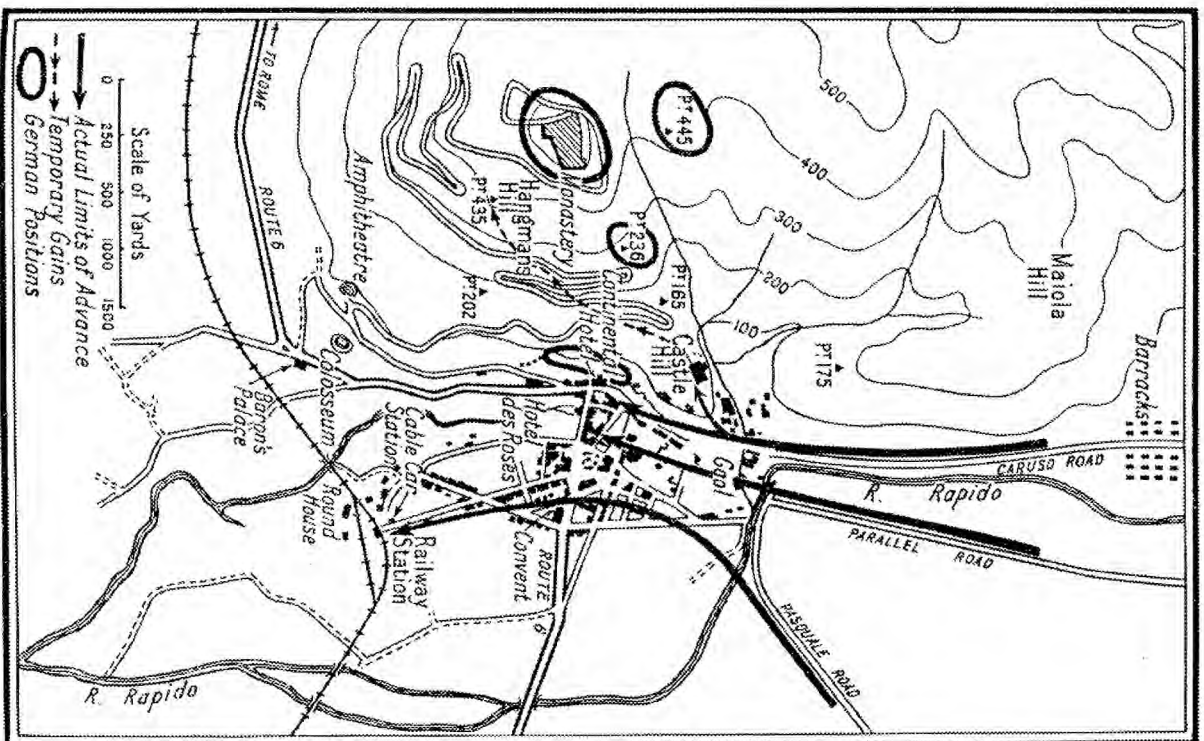
As the bombardment ceased, the New Zealanders moved cautiously forward, tanks and infantry side by side. The landscape was cratered like the surface of the moon and dust lay thick in the air, clogging the men's noses and throats. Mines and booby traps were a constant hazard because far from all of them had been set off by the barrage. Moreover, to their surprise, the tough German paratroopers still had plenty of fight in them and emerged from their cellars to contest stubbornly every pile of rubble which had once been a house.



SECOND BATTLE
Pincer attack from north and south by 4th Indian and 2nd NZ Divisions



MOUNTAIN BATTLEFIELD



THIRD BATTLE

4th Indian and 2nd NZ Divs attack from north. Castle Hill and Station were captured but Hangman's Hill, daringly held for eight days, had eventually to be relinquished

Nevertheless, to begin with, the attack seemed to go well, but this was cruelly deceptive because the German commander, Major General Richard Heidrich, had no intention of surrendering his positions. Being on the spot, he was able to direct accurate mortar and artillery fire against the New Zealanders, whose supporting tanks were unable to push through the ruins and deep holes in the ground. Nevertheless, by nightfall most of the town was in their hands and Castle Hill had been taken after a fierce firefight.

During the night Gurkhas of 5th Indian Brigade scaled the rocky heights of Hangman's Hill but were unable to advance any further towards the monastery itself. Victory hung in the balance but the battle-hardened German paratroopers would not give up, having made a veritable fortress of the remains of the Exelsior Hotel which commanded the centre of the town. The 16th March was totally indecisive and, although the New Zealanders managed to capture the railway station on the 17th, a vigorous German counter attack during the night of 18th/19th almost succeeded in recapturing Castle Hill, leaving the Gurkhas cut off from the rest of 5th Brigade.

On the 19th March General Freyberg sent a squadron of light tanks by a circuitous route along a road which sappers had laboriously hacked out of the mountainside to attack the monastery from the rear. This created a certain amount of panic among the Germans, who had not expected an armoured assault over such unsuitable terrain but they rallied quickly and all 14 tanks were destroyed by fire from the notorious 88mm guns and by mines.

This fiasco marked the real end of the third battle for Cassino but it was not until the 23rd March that Alexander called a halt to further offensive operations.

Anzio

There was stalemate, too, at Anzio where German reinforcements, including the crack 16th SS Panzergrenadier Division Reichsfuhrer SS had tightened their stranglehold on the beach-head. Even though Lucas had been replaced by the far more aggressive Major General Lucian Truscott at the end of February, the Allied troops were unable to make any further headway. Both sides dug in and waited at Anzio and Cassino. Kesselring knew that all he had to do was hold on. He fully expected another amphibious landing, north of Rome this time, but of course unknown to him this was impossible because more of the Allied landing craft had been sent back to England in preparation for Operation Overlord - the landings in Normandy planned for the summer.

The next couple of months saw relative inactivity except in the air where Allied bombers and fighters attacked road and rail targets in northern Italy to disrupt German communications and supplies. The Germans, in their turn, plastered the Anzio position with 280mm K5 (E) railway gun 'Leopold' which they concealed inside a tunnel in the Alban Hills. (The Allies nicknamed it 'Anzio Annie' and it now resides in an American museum). The Germans also made great use of propaganda leaflets showing wives at home with other men and describing the beach-head as a 'death's head'. This crude form of wartime propaganda is usually ineffectual, but many Allied soldiers at Anzio felt they had been more or less abandoned to their fate and morale suffered accordingly.

During April both sides poured reinforcements into positions for what each knew would be the decisive struggle for the Gustav Line. The bulk of the 8th Army - now commanded by Lieutenant General Sir Oliver Leese, since Montgomery was back in England for Overlord - was transferred to the Cassino front, just leaving a couple of Divisions behind to hold the line on the Adriatic coast. These forces included Major General E M Burns' 1st Canadian Corps, Lieutenant General Wladislaw Anders' 2nd Polish Corps and Lieutenant General Sidney Kirkham's 13th British Corps, with Lieutenant General Sir Richard McCreery's 10th Corps held in reserve to tie the Germans down. These were welcome reinforcements for Major General Keyes' 2nd US Corps and General Alphonse Juin's French Expeditionary Corps. And it was to be to the 8th Army that what was supposed to be the final battle for Cassino was entrusted.

THE FOURTH BATTLE, MAY 44

On the German side, General Heinrich von Vietinghoff-Scheel's 10th Army now comprised Lieutenant General Fridolin von Senger und Etterlin's 14th Panzer Korps and General Valentin Feuerstein's 51st Mountain Corps, with Heidrich's 1st Parachute Division still entrusted with the lynchpin of Cassino itself. At Anzio, General Eberhard von Mackensen's 14th Army surrounded Truscott's 6th Corps.

Polish Victory

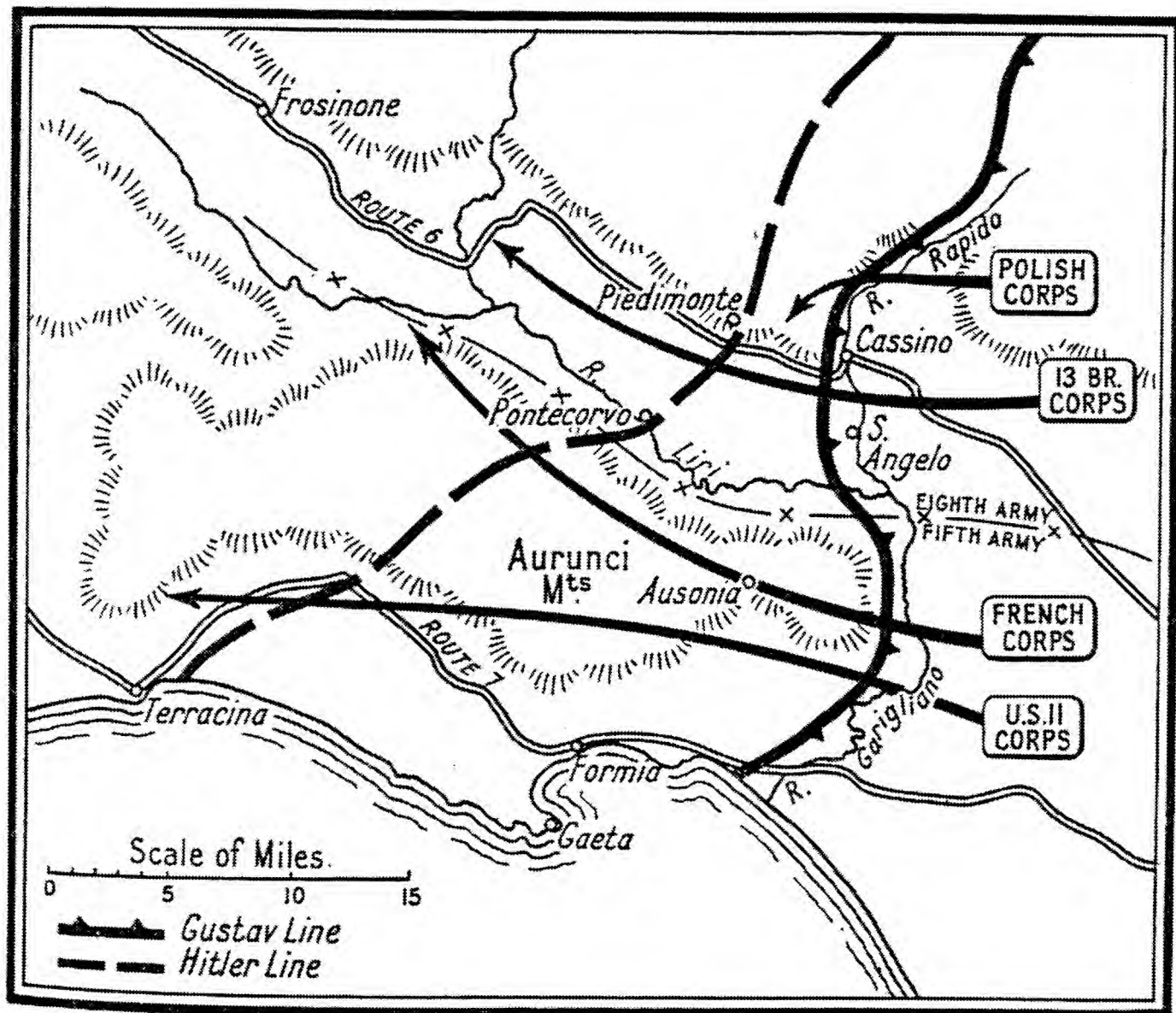
A patrol succeeded in taking out several of Heidrich's paratroopers' advance posts around Hill 593, overlooking the road along which that tanks had earlier been decimated. Anders swiftly fed a whole battalion onto the position. The German paras counter attacked with fury but were unable to dislodge the Poles who, like the French, had a particularly personal reason for wanting to win.

The battle was fought at close range throughout the 17th with bayonet, grenade and sub-machine gun. As night fell, flares illuminated the ghastly scene. Anders later wrote that 'the critical moment had indeed arrived' and ordered a general assault for the morning of the 18th but by that time the last of the paras had received the order to retire and the astonished Poles walked into the dusty rubble. At 10.30 in the morning of 18th May the red and white Polish flag at last flew above the dusty ruins.

With the full weight of his 5th and 8th Armies now pouring up the Liri Valley and the coastal plain, Alexander told Truscott that this was the moment to make a determined effort to break out of the Anzio beach-head and head for the Alban Hills, blocking the retreat of Vietinghoff's 10th Army.

The attack was launched during the night of 23rd but the Germans stubbornly held on to Cisterna until the 26th. By this time, though, the Canadian 1st Corps had breached the Dora Line (Adolf Hitler Line) and Kesselring had to order a further retreat. Mackensen's 14th Army at Anzio held up Truscott's advance just long enough to allow Vietinhoff's 10th Army to escape.

On the 25th May, advance patrols from 2nd Corps heading north from the Gustav Line bumped into men from 6th Corps heading in the opposite direction from Anzio, reuniting Clark's 5th Army at long last. Then, on 30th May, the 36th (Texan) Division, which had suffered such a mauling earlier in the year, broke through to the east of the German positions in the Alban Hills, threatening to cut them off. Kesselring's lines were crumbling rapidly and, on 2nd June, he asked Hitler's permission to abandon Rome. Hitler agreed with surprising grace and Kesselring ordered his forces to evacuate the Eternal City and fall back towards the Gothic Line. Since they had been the first to tackle the Cassino position, it was appropriate that it was soldiers of Mark Clark's 5th Army who first entered Rome on 4th June.



FOURTH BATTLE

Fifth and Eighth Armies break through and begin successful advance on Rome

CASSINO WAR CEMETERY
Italy

Location Information.

Cassino War Cemetery lies in the Commune of Cassino, Province of Frosinone, 139 kilometres south-east of Rome. Take the autostrada A1 from Rome to Naples and leave it at the Cassino exit. At the junction of this exit and the road into Cassino, is the first of 6 clearly visible signposts to the cemetery and Memorial.

Visiting Information.

Wheelchair access to the cemetery is possible, but may be by alternative entrance. For further information regarding wheelchair access, please contact our Enquiries Section on telephone number 01628 507200.

Historical Information.

On 3 September 1943 the Allies invaded the Italian mainland, the invasion coinciding with an armistice made with the Italians who then re-entered the war on the Allied side.

Progress through southern Italy was rapid despite stiff resistance, but by the end of October, the Allies were facing the German winter defensive position known as the Gustav Line, which stretched from the river Garigliano in the west to the Sangro in the east. Initial attempts to breach the western end of the line were unsuccessful. Operations in January 1944 landed troops behind the German lines at Anzio, but defences were well organised, and a breakthrough was not actually achieved until 18 May, when Cassino was finally taken.

The site for CASSINO WAR CEMETERY was originally selected in January 1944, but the development of the battle during the first five months of that year made it impossible to use it until after the Germans had withdrawn from Cassino. During these early months of 1944, Cassino saw some of the fiercest fighting of the Italian campaign, the town itself and the dominating Monastery Hill proving the most stubborn obstacles encountered in the advance towards Rome. The majority of those buried in the war cemetery died in the battles during these months.

There are now 4,266 Commonwealth servicemen of the Second World War buried or commemorated at Cassino War Cemetery. 284 of the burials are unidentified.

Within the cemetery stands the CASSINO MEMORIAL which commemorates over 4,000 Commonwealth servicemen who took part in the Italian campaign whose graves are not known.

1st BATTALION DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S REGIMENT 'JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1944

Bn HQ	CO	Lt Col	B W	Webb-Carter DSO		
	2i/c	Maj	M M	Davie		
	Adj't	Capt	B	Hindley		Wounded
	IO	Capt	J L	Streatfeild	MC	
	RMO	Capt	A	Paterson	RAMC	
	Padre	Rev	T W	Richardson		Wounded
HQ Coy	Comd	Maj	H T	Sills	MC	
	Sigs	Lt	S R	Turnbull		POW
	Admin	Capt	A D	Siddall		
	QM	Lt	H L	Lyons		
Support Coy	Comd	Capt	J O	Urmson		POW
	Mors	Lt	W R C	Miller		Wounded
		Lt	R B	Fowler		
	Carriers	Lt	H L	Cartmell		POW
		Lt/Capt	T E	Ludlow		
	Anti Tanks	Lt	N E	Tuckwell		POW
		Lt/Capt	E H	Buckland		
	Pioneers	Sgt	J	Dodds		
A Coy	Comd	Maj	T F	Huskisson	MC	Wounded
		Lt/Capt	E	Oliver		
	2IC	Capt	A G	Peel		
		Lt/Capt	N	Wimpenny	MC	
	PI Comds	Lt	A S	Peebles		
		Lt	H N W	Fielding		
		2Lt		Stafford		†
		2Lt	A	Burns	GH	Wounded
B Coy	Comd	Capt	J A	Randall		Wounded
		Maj	C G R	Taylor		Wounded
	2IC	Capt	E D	Macintosh		POW
	PI Comds	Lt	D S D	Jones-Stamp		POW
		2Lt	F N	Potts		Wounded
		Lt	C C	Gomm	E Surreys	MC
		2Lt	J	Stilt	E Surreys	
C Coy	Comd	Maj	P P	Benson	MC	†
	2IC	Capt	A H	Jacobsen	MC	POW
		Capt	F A	Barbury		POW
	PI Comds	2Lt/Capt	G H	Hall	MC	
		Lt	H	Cooper	LF	POW
		Lt	R H	Hoyle	RWK	
		Lt	R J	Diacon		
D Coy	Comd	Maj	P R	Faulks	MC	Wounded
		Capt	D G	Redfern		†
	2IC	Capt	E W	Sutcliffe		POW
	PI Comds	2Lt	R J	Corke		POW
		Lt		Ancliffe		Wounded
		Lt	J W	Taylor		†
		Lt	H	Thompson		Wounded



Some Officers of the 1st Battalion - March / April 1944

Standing: Lts RB Fowler, RH Hoyle, ? , N Wimpenny, Capt A Peterson (RAMC), Lt RJ Diacon, ? , ? , Capts JL Streatfield, PR Druce, AO Siddall

On Chairs: Maj MM Davie, Lt Col BW Webb-Carter, Maj HT Sills

Sitting: ? , Lts AL Lyons, RA Smith, ? , ?

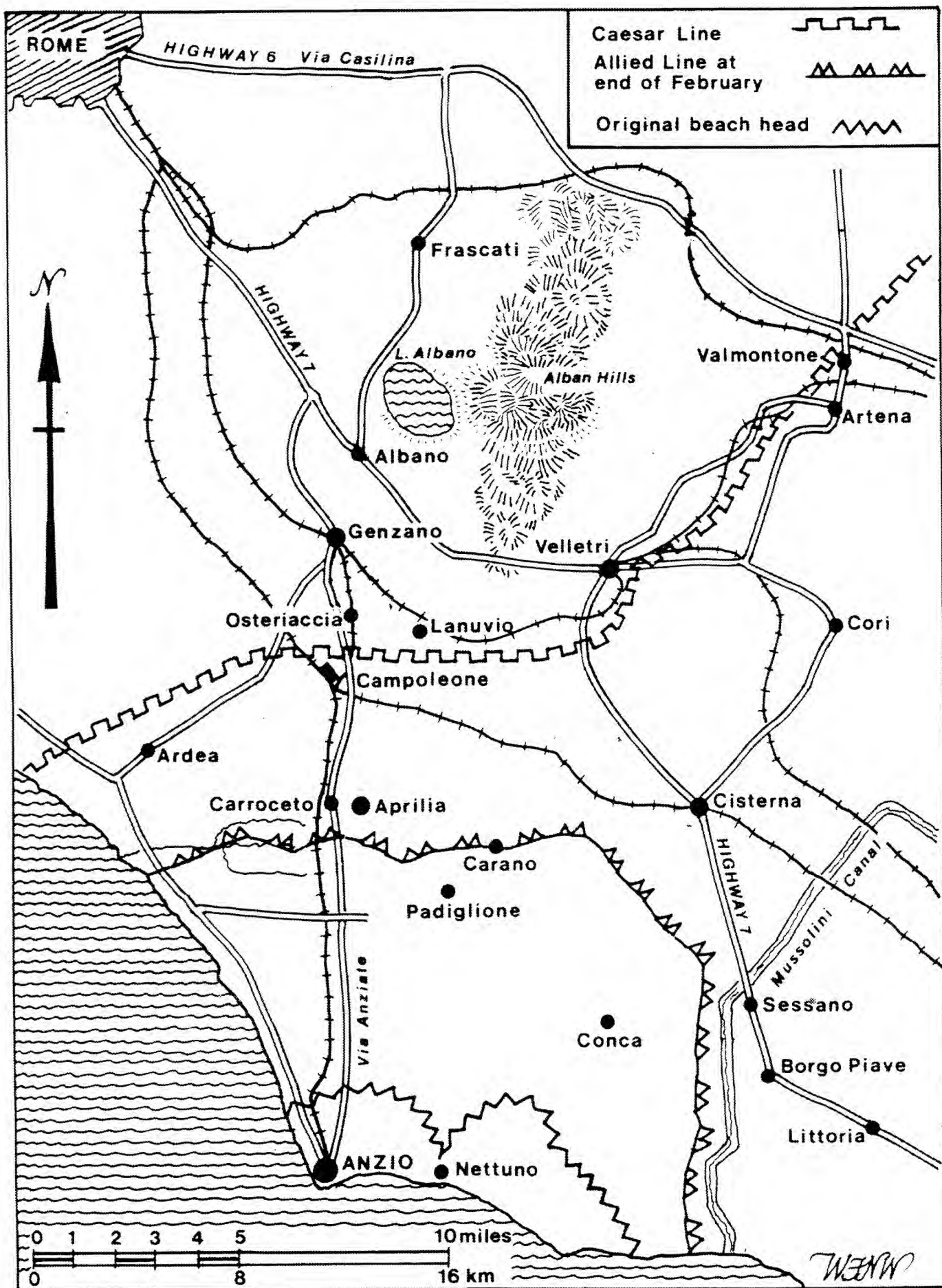
Ops 4 B/20

ANZIO

The landings at Anzio in the small hours of 22nd January 1944 achieved complete surprise. They demonstrated, however, not for the first time, that although a great logistic and organisational effort is necessary to place a force ashore in an amphibious operation, it is equally necessary that the High Command have unequivocal views on what that force is to achieve once landed and ensure that it has sufficient strength for the task. At Anzio this was not so. The operation produced certain limited strategic benefits, but at high costs and not to the extent envisaged.

VI (US) Corps landed astride the little port of Anzio - 3rd (US) Division on the right and 1st (British) Division on the left - and advanced inland with no opposition to a prescribed line, giving a Beach-head of some seven miles in depth, and a corps front of about twenty-six miles. The operation was intended as part of a successful offensive breaking through at Cassino, whereas that offensive was already failing. In these circumstances the troops in or operating from Anzio Beach-head were bound to be isolated until a reversal of fortune sixty miles further south. It was clear, too, that German concentration against the beach head would only be disturbed if there were rapid and successful operations on the main Fifth Army front, whereas these were now likely to be slow and painful. On the other side of the coin the High Command hoped to assist Fifth Army's operations by threatening the rear of the Germans in the Gustav Line. This, by definition, required aggressive action from Anzio. Alexander told Clark on 12th January that the object was "to cut enemy communications and threaten the rear of XIV Corps". Clark, on the other hand - with more ambiguity, but more realism - told Lucas to secure a Beach-head, and then advance "on" the Alban Hills - the high ground twenty-five miles from Anzio and immediately south-east of Rome over which ran the Appian and Casilian Ways, lifelines of the German front.

Matters were, therefore, left very much to Lucas as to how far to go, whether and when. He has been much criticised for failing to seize his initial opportunities to advance - when opposition did not exist - and thereby allowing his force to be sealed in a bridgehead and counter-attacked at leisure with great ferocity. It may be that VI Corps should have advanced some way deeper initially, and secured more defensible ground whose possession might have posed more of a threat to the enemy - the judgement is tactical. But on the main point, of whether a great operational opportunity was missed, there can be little just criticism. To occupy a blocking position astride the German north-south communications, and simultaneously to protect corps rearward communications to Anzio would have needed a far larger force than Lucas commanded or than could be supplied. Alexander wrote to Brooke after the event that it would have needed six divisions: "What we were aiming at was to get astride the enemy's L of C." Kesselring reckoned that an Allied force of four divisions might have been landed - and that such was quite inadequate to do more than hold a Beach-head. Admiral Sir John Cunningham (Naval Commander-in-Chief) pessimistically assessed that it was impossible to supply a force of four divisions, let alone more. In all these circumstances it appears that Lucas had been placed by his superiors, whatever their afterthoughts, in what would now be described as a "no-win situation". It is difficult to believe that, had he undertaken a major advance, he would not have suffered a major disaster. But shore of a major advance - Alexander's concept - it is equally difficult to justify SHINGLE at all. Alexander and Clark both visited the Beach-head from time to time, and periodically complained of Lucas's lack of enterprise. He may not have been an inspiring or lucid commander, but it is far from clear what he could have done, or indeed what Alexander and Clark wanted him to do, given the forces they allotted him; equally it is unclear why, if they were dissatisfied, they did not give unequivocal orders.



In the event, the advances of the first day were unopposed, and the British troops saw in the distance commanding ground which appeared theirs for the taking. The German response was swift. Kesselring and his superiors assessed that this was the invasion of Western Europe, rather than a subsidiary operation of Fifth Army. Reinforcements, according to an existing contingency plan, were hurried towards Italy from France and Germany. Within Italy Kesselring placed the Commander of Fourteenth Army, General von Mackensen, in command of the whole area north and south of Rome, and moved towards the battle every unit or group within range. By excellent Staff work these were assembled sorted into coherent commands and concentrating against the Allied Beach-head in a remarkably short time. The Allies were quickly contained. The framework of two German divisions was in the area by the evening of the first day, and by 28th January some four divisions, each of a different size and shape, were confronting Lucas's Corps, with more to come: a total of thirty-three battalions, a tank regiment and over two hundred and forty pieces of artillery. This was a formidable array, and to command it tactically Kesselring moved from the east the experienced LXXVI Panzer Corps Headquarters (General Herr) which on 4th February became responsible for the sector, with five divisions, including 2nd Panzer Division.

Meanwhile Lucas spent the early days digging a defensive position and authorised a number of limited attacks which, although skilful and successful, could never seriously threaten the enemy now concentrating against him. In response to pressure by Alexander and Clark to make a limited advance to Cisterna and Campoleone - ostensibly to strengthen his defensive position, although also to extend it - Lucas ordered an attack on 30th January. On the left 1st Division advanced to the railway at Campoleone, passing one brigade through another, with 1st (US) Armoured Division moving forwards on the left flank. The movement created a salient. It also had the merit of upsetting German preparations for the major counter-attack which was thought inevitable.

With Mackensen now reinforced and ordered to push the Allies into the sea, there began a series of battles as bitter as any in the Italian campaign. The Allied Beach-head, too, was reinforced. Two American divisions - 45th Infantry and 1st Armoured - had already arrived and been in action, and, on 12th February, 56th (British) Division was withdrawn from X Corps on the Garigliano and shipped to Anzio where it took over responsibility for part of the line, while 1st Division was brought into corps reserve. Already, however, Mackensen had begun his move.

On 3rd February the forward positions of 1st Division in the salient were attacked, and although the assault was beaten off the forward brigade was withdrawn. On the evening of 7th February, Aprilia, held by the right-hand battalion of 1st Division's left-hand brigade, was attacked by ten battalions, while another German infantry division thrust towards Carroceto from the west. The attack on Aprilia was again repelled, but next day was resumed by twelve battalions. Two days later, on the night of 10th February, yet another heavy attack was launched from the west towards Carroceto Station. In all these battles German infantry greatly outnumbered the defenders, pressed their attacks as hard as ever, and were driven back. 1st Division lost many men but little ground.

The main attack was delivered by LXXVI Panzer Corps on 16th February, driving south down the Via Anziate with five divisions, including two Panzer Grenadier and one Panzer, and with a battalion each of the formidable Tiger and the new Panther tanks. The main thrust hit 45th (US) Division, but was entirely and brilliantly defeated after several days of fierce fighting. West of the Via Anziate the German attack struck 56th (British) Division with equal lack of success. On 19th February the German Panzer troops penetrated the front to a depth of a mile - but were then stopped by the determination of the defence and the accuracy of the artillery fire. Mackensen's attack had failed. A final German attempt on 29th February met with no success. The German Fourteenth Army was exhausted. The Anzio Beach-head was no longer threatened. Some reliefs of formations took place, and the Anzio Front remained static, dangerous and disagreeable, as positional warfare took over until May. The attempt to destroy the Allies had cost the Germans dear, and in terms of attrition the Allied operation had played its part.

DECORATIONS

The following is a list of immediate awards made to officers and other ranks of a Battalion of the Regiment in Italy, together with citations:-

CITATIONS for IMMEDIATE AWARDS to 1st Bn in ITALY

BAR TO THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER.

T/LT.-COLONEL BRIAN WOLSELEY WEBB-CARTER, D.S.O.

This officer has commanded his Battalion with great gallantry and outstanding devotion to duty from the initial landing in the Anzio Beach-head on the 22nd January, 1944, to the present date.

On the 30th January the - Infantry Brigade attacked the high ground immediately south of Campoleone station with the D.W.R., commanded by this officer, on the left. After crossing the start line strong enemy resistance was encountered but was ultimately overcome and the final objective later captured. The successful completion of this operation was brought about by the skilful handling of the Battalion by this officer. Throughout the operation this officer's cool determination was an example and inspiration to all ranks in his Battalion.

After this attack the Brigade held the position for five days and nights, well in advance of the remainder of the Division. This officer never spared himself in his sound planning of the defence of the Battalion locality, with the result that the many attempts by the enemy at penetration were successfully thrown back.

On the 4th February his Battalion was ordered to withdraw in broad daylight and whilst in close contact with the enemy on all sides. This was accomplished despite the repeated efforts of the enemy. Its success was largely due to the forethought and planning on the part of the commanding officer. On the 10th February and under the most difficult conditions this officer's Battalion was ordered to carry out the relief of a hard-pressed and numerically weak battalion of the Division in the Carroceto area. The Battalion occupied this position against great odds and held it successfully against all enemy attacks. When a partial success was gained by the enemy the prompt action by this officer in the launching of a deliberate counter-attack with the minimum delay completely restored the position. From the 25th February to the 6th March, 1944, the Battalion was holding positions in the difficult wadi country at the left of the Divisional sector of the Beach-head. Despite the most appalling conditions at the time, this officer's cheerfulness and determination maintained the spirits of his troops at a high level. There is no doubt that this Battalion held its position against heavy enemy pressure as a direct result of the encouragement and fine example set by this officer.

Throughout all the period since the landing in the Anzio Beach-head on the 22nd January, this officer has served with outstanding distinction and devotion to duty.

MILITARY CROSS.

MAJOR P. P. BENSON (killed in action February, 1944).

Major Benson is a rifle company commander in this Battalion. During the bitter fighting in the Anzio Beach-head from 30th January to 4th February he set a high example of personal courage and real leadership. He led his company to its objective on the attack of 31st January and in the face of particularly fierce opposition he gained it. This position had subsequently to be abandoned to allow our medium artillery to engage enemy strong points in its vicinity. After the barrage had subsided, Major Benson observed enemy movement on the feature opposite him and, accompanied by his batman, went forward to investigate it. He found an enemy armoured car on the feature to which two German officers were retiring with their kit. Major Benson at once engaged these officers and shot them both dead with his revolver, despite the proximity of the armoured car, which immediately opened heavy M.G. fire on him. Major Benson then retired to his own company positions, where morale was much raised by this incident. This officer, who was wounded in the course of the Tunisian campaign, has always shown high qualities of leadership and gallantry.

CAPTAIN CHARLES CHRISTOPHER GOMM.

For great gallantry and outstanding leadership in the Anzio Beach-head from 9th February to date. This officer joined the Battalion as a reinforcement on 9th February. Within a few days he was in action with a company consisting almost entirely of reinforcements who had never heard a shot fired. Capt. Gomm showed consistently a very high standard of leadership in its best sense. On 20th February he personally lead a platoon on a strong enemy M.G. nest which was a source of considerable embarrassment to the communications of the Battalion. Recklessly exposing himself, he led an assault which was entirely successful and ended in the elimination of the enemy post and capture of a prisoner. His skilful dispositions and minor tactics enabled the operation to be carried out at the loss to us of one man wounded. On 26th February his company commander became a casualty, as did the C.S.M. of the company, and Capt. Gomm assumed command. The losses the company had suffered had shaken the inexperienced troops and Capt. Gomm at once set out to work to restore confidence. By his energy and resource he soon improved matters to a remarkable degree. On 27th February he selected an O.P. and, taking a sniper's rifle, he there shot three Germans who had been sniping at his company. He so inspired his men with fighting spirit that there was keen competition as to who should next man the exposed position of the O.P. and take his turn at sniping. By 6th March, when his company was relieved in the line, Capt. Gomm's command were in full control of their sector. Enemy activity by day had ceased owing to skilful sniping and his patrolling at night was much curtailed and carried out with obvious caution.

LIEUTENANT G. H. HALL (now CAPTAIN).

In the Anzio Beach-head from 30th January to 5th February Lt. Hall was continuously in action. During the whole of that period this officer was most conspicuous for his reckless bravery and powers of leadership. In the initial attack of 30th January Lt. Hall inspired his platoon and, indeed, the whole company to which he belonged by his cool disregard of danger. He led his platoon in the face of very heavy enemy shell and M.G. fire to its objective and by constant exposure of himself under fire inculcated a feeling of confidence in his men under very trying conditions during the subsequent defensive period. Finally he had to take over command of his company as all other officers became casualties and numbers were seriously reduced. During this exacting time Lt. Hall again proved to be a tower of strength. On several occasions he joined a section shaken by a near miss and by manning the Bren gun himself and causing casualties to the enemy instantly restored confidence. On one occasion when a German L.M.G. engaged his company from a flank at a distance of about 400 yards, Lt. Hall manned a 2in. mortar himself and put it out of action with his first shot. These actions had a tonic effect on his men who emerged from a telling ordeal in fine heart.

MAJOR T. F. HUSKISSON.

This officer is a rifle company commander. During the fighting in the Anzio Beach-head from 30th January to 4th February his conduct was beyond praise. He led the right forward company in the assault on features overlooking the Rome railway on 31st January and by his inspiring leadership and skilful handling of his company achieved his objective in the face of shattering shellfire and intense M.G. fire. The Battalion held these positions for six days of increasing enemy pressure and encirclement and under almost incessant shell and mortar fire. Major Huskisson's conduct during this difficult period was exemplary. He was moving from platoon locality to platoon locality - often under fire - almost ceaselessly and was a powerful factor in keeping up the morale of his company in particularly trying circumstances. On 4th February the Battalion was in close contact with enemy infantry and armour when it was ordered to withdraw. The success of getting a reasonable part of the Battalion away can be ascribed to a degree to the part played by Major Huskisson's company. Under his skilful direction his company afforded covering fire for the preliminary withdrawal of two other companies. The appearance of enemy armour failed to dislodge his company until his task was fulfilled. Major Huskisson's conduct throughout was of the highest order, and his direction of artillery D.F. tasks and 3in. mortar shoots was a large factor in the successful defence of the Battalion sector.

LIEUTENANT JOHN LEWIS STREATFEILD

For gallantry and untiring devotion to duty in the Anzio Beach-head from 23rd January to 25th March. This officer is intelligence officer of the Battalion. On 30th January, when the Battalion was leading Battalion of the Brigade attack on Campoleone, the adjutant became a casualty, as did the understudy. Lt. Streatfeild was detailed to carry out the duties of adjutant in addition to his own, and this he did with the utmost efficiency and devotion. Under consistently heavy fire, this officer manned the 22 set and ensured the maintenance of communications. On 4th February the Battalion was ordered to retire. It was at the time almost completely surrounded and menaced by a number of enemy tanks. Lt. Streatfeild, with Battalion H.Q., saw all companies leave their positions and then accompanied the C.O.'s carrier when it moved off. The carrier - having to leave the usual route owing to heavy enemy fire - became bogged. Manning a Bren gun, Lt. Streatfeild took up a position and engaged the enemy while the driver endeavoured to extricate the carrier. For over three-quarters of an hour this officer was under heavy fire but continued to keep the enemy at bay - determined to do all that was possible to get the carrier with its load of the 22 set and various documents, etc., away to safety. Finally, realising the hopelessness of the task, Lt. Streatfeild sent the driver on and remained behind to destroy all codes, etc., with the enemy in some strength within 80 yards of him. He accomplished this task and still bearing his Bren gun regained our own lines.

This officer was severely wounded in Tunisia in April, 1943, and only rejoined the Battalion last November. He has always shown a striking standard of gallantry and devotion which is an inspiration to his brother officers.

LIEUTENANT N. WIMPENNY (now CAPTAIN).

This officer is second-in-command of a rifle company. Throughout the attack and subsequent defensive action by this Battalion in the Anzio Beach-head, Lt. Wimpenny showed high qualities of courage and leadership. In the attack of 30th January he was always to the fore and was of great assistance to his company commander in reaching the objective. The period from 31st January to 4th February was one of particular trial as the Battalion was in close touch with the enemy and sustained several attacks. Lt. Wimpenny - throughout this time - moved almost without ceasing from platoon to platoon in his company. Everywhere he was a source of increased morale. Frequently he manned L.M.G.s in platoon areas and despite heavy enemy artillery fire engaged the enemy to good purpose. Finally, when circumstances forced the withdrawal of the Brigade, Lt. Wimpenny organised the movements of the covering platoon of his company and by his inspiring leadership ensured the safety of the bulk of his company. Throughout the whole action this officer's conduct was above praise.

DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL

No. 4611239 C.S.M. McNEA, E. (died from wounds 1st March, 1944).

On 4th February, 1944, "B" Company was holding a position on the left flank of the Battalion in the left sector of the Anzio Beach-head. From 0300 hours until 1630 hours the enemy put in continued attacks on this company's position. These attacks were successfully repulsed until finally No. 4 Platoon was overrun with the loss of the platoon commander. This enemy success opened to them the company's position, and if not dealt with promptly would have allowed them to dominate another rifle company and Battalion H.Q., with possibly very serious effect.

At this time the O.C. "B" Company was engaged with the enemy away from his H.Q. and no other officer remained with the company. C.S.M. McNea appreciated the gravity of the threat and immediately organised a counter-attack, drawing the personnel from his own company H.Q., a much depleted platoon of his own company, and men from other units in the vicinity. He personally led the attack, which he conducted with skill and great determination, finally driving the enemy from their recently won position, inflicting severe losses upon them.

Later, the Battalion was ordered to withdraw, and had it not been for this action by C.S.M. McNea, the ability of two rifle companies and Battalion H.Q. to do so may have been rendered impossible by the presence of the enemy behind them.

By his initiative, coolness and high personal courage, C.S.M. McNea inspired his men and undoubtedly prevented an enemy success which might have had serious and far-reaching results.

MILITARY MEDAL

No. 4618307 PTE J. BAKER.

This soldier was a stretcher bearer attached to "C" Company during the advance of 30th January, 1944. He showed the utmost coolness in leading the company stretcher bearers to wounded men lying in the open although the ground was still being heavily shelled and machine gunned. He was always in the lead and walked to the R.A.P. unceasingly with stretcher cases and then back for more. Likewise, when the company was being attacked on 4th February again he was in the lead to render first aid to wounded men, although all the company positions were under L.M.G. and mortar fire and he worked tirelessly throughout the day and night to give all aid possible; it was a magnificent display

of coolness and nerve which materially assisted the company as a whole to maintain its fighting qualities to the end.

No. 6101363 Pte. E. PAULL (missing February, 1944).

Pte. Paull was a platoon runner on the 4th February, 1944, and was wounded in three places in the leg during a critical phase of the battle. In spite of his wounds he continued to carry out his duties as runner and to relay urgent messages from his company headquarters to his platoon. He made four or five journeys by crawling on his stomach before finally he allowed himself to be evacuated. Throughout this time he was in great pain. But for his high sense of duty in delivering these messages it is possible that the enemy might have succeeded in penetrating the company position.

4626167 SERGEANT A. J. SELWAY.

On 28th February, 1944, while his company were occupying a sector of the line in the Anzio Beach-head, Sgt. Selway was in command of a rifle platoon. During one of the numerous periods when the company's positions were being heavily shelled, the C.S.M. was very severely wounded in both legs. No stretcher bearers were left in the company, so Selway, hearing the cries of the wounded man, came to attend to him although heavy shelling continued. After working for some 25 minutes in the open, Selway organised a stretcher party and himself helped to carry the C.S.M. over 600 yards of open and exposed ground in full daylight, to the R.A.P. After attention here, he assisted in carrying the C.S.M. back to an A.D.S. again in full daylight, over an exposed road. On returning to his company area, Selway then organised and personally conducted the evacuation of his company commander who had previously been wounded. Thereafter, during the night 28th-29th February, Selway acted as guide to various parties over difficult and dangerous ground without thought for himself.

Selway's coolness and devotion to duty were an inspiration to all ranks, and by his courage and leadership undoubtedly ensured that his company received supplies and reinforcements, and guided another company safely to a new area in very difficult circumstances.

Mentioned in Despatches

Lt. (temp. Captain) THE Duke of Wellington (56864) (killed in action).

"At Dragone Hill on 13th September, 1943, a critical situation developed and the enemy was pressing forward and threatening to encircle the right of our position. Under heavy mortar and machine guns fire Captain The Duke of Wellington led his troop forward to the counter-attack and after close hand-to-hand fighting succeeded in repelling the enemy. This counter-attack was the turning point in the action, and Captain The Duke of Wellington's personal leadership and disregard of danger contributed materially to its success."

"At Piccolette on the evening of 15th September, 1943, he commanded the left half of the Commando in a night advance, the two in charge having been killed. Again his leadership, determination and energy were conspicuous, infusing the greatest confidence in his men, and ensuring the success of the advance in which a large number of prisoners were taken."

"Captain The Duke of Wellington had always shown the highest devotion to duty in action, placing himself in the most exposed positions in order to inspire confidence in his men, and 'proved himself to be a gallant leader and a fearless officer'." (Missing, believed killed, 16th September, 1943).

BAR TO THE MILITARY CROSS.

MAJOR T. F. HUSKISSON, MC.

For conspicuous gallantry and outstanding qualities of leadership in the Anzio Beach-head. On the 22nd May the - Battalion was ordered to attack the Pantoni feature which was a German prepared position of considerable strength. Major Huskisson, who had recently returned to the Battalion from being wounded in February, was in command of the left forward company. The considerable artillery support failed to silence the German machine guns and Major Huskisson's company came early under a heavy volume of fire. Taking the lead, this officer gained the first objective with his company. This was the ruins of Pantoni itself, which was by-passed by the left platoon of the company and although covered by our troops still contained a dug-in machine gun post surrounded by "S" mines. Keeping this machine gun post engaged with his right platoon, Major Huskisson pushed his left platoon on to the second objective of the company. This was gained at the point of the bayonet and the platoon then withdrew according to plan.

Major Huskisson then proceeded to organise rapidly his company and consolidate the ground won. Walking about under fire, this officer established a co-ordinating defensive position, got his men dug in and the position wired. By vigorous offensive fire the German occupation of the Pantoni ruins was rendered impossible and dawn saw the company in complete domination of the feature.

Major Huskisson's conduct throughout was of the highest order and an inspiration to his men.

MILITARY CROSS

LT. F. P. FROUDE.

For gallantry and cool leadership in the Anzio Beach-head. Lt. Froude commanded a forward platoon of his company during the attack on the Pantoni feature on 22nd May. He led his men with such dash in the early stages of the assault that he had to halt his command for several minutes to allow our artillery to lift. He then led his platoon forward under heavy M.G. fire and by-passing the first objective according to order, passed on to the final objective of his company. Though prevented by a minefield from actually entering the enemy positions at this point, Lt. Froude so directed the fire of his platoon that the enemy had to evacuate their trenches. He personally engaged one post of three Germans with hand grenades, killing all the occupants, while the fire of his automatics engaged the remainder. For 45 minutes until darkness fell, this officer held his ground, recklessly exposing himself to encourage his men. He then crawled back under heavy fire to company H.Q. for instructions, returned, and led his platoon to its final objective, where it consolidated. Later he was instrumental in getting a number of our wounded from in front of his position and next morning went forward to our wire to secure four prisoners. The courage and utter disregard for his own safety shown by this young officer and the leadership he showed in this, his first action, were an inspiration to his platoon.

MILITARY MEDAL

No. 6098248 PTE. S. BOURNER.

For gallantry in the Anzio Beach-head. Pte. Bourner is a company stretcher bearer. During the attack of 22nd May he evacuated five wounded men of his company under heavy M.G. fire. He was himself hit in the thigh early in the operation but despite this he continued to tend the wounded, exposing himself without any regard to his own safety. Finally, weak through loss of blood, he was ordered to proceed to the A.D.S., but having received treatment, this soldier avoided evacuation and, reporting back to his company for duty, insisted on carrying on with his duty. Pte. Bourner was instrumental in saving the life of several of his comrades and his gallantry in this, as in all other actions in the Beach-head, was an inspiration to his comrades.

No. 46222882 PTE. R. C. LONG.

For conspicuous gallantry and outstanding devotion to duty in the Anzio Beach-head . Pte. Long is the driver of the Jeep which is used for the evacuation of the wounded in the forward area. He has carried out evacuation under heavy fire and sometimes in circumstances of extreme danger to himself since early February. This devotion reached a climax on the night 22nd-23rd May when after the attack on the Pantoni feature, Pte. Long repeatedly drove his vehicle up a machine gun swept track to evacuate wounded. His complete coolness and his care of patients has been an inspiration to the wounded, and the certainty that evacuation will be carried out regardless of the risk involved to himself has been a considerable source of confidence to the fighting troops. The officers of the field ambulance find themselves unable to speak highly enough of the valuable and devoted service of Pte. Long.

No. 14646135 PTE. H. E. MARSHALL.

For gallantry in the Anzio Beach-head. Pte. Marshall is a rifleman in his section. During the attack on the Pantoni area on the 22nd May this private soldier showed great courage and determination. When his section was held up by an enemy anti-personnel mine field just short of the objective, he stood up against the enemy wire and engaged the enemy garrison of the M.G. post behind it. Under heavy fire, he threw grenades, killing several enemy and forcing the remainder to abandon their M.G. and leave the post. Later, during consolidation, Pte. Marshall repeatedly went forward of our positions to find our wounded, reassured them that stretcher bearers were on their way, and on their arrival assisted in their evacuation under fire. A gallant young soldier whose conduct was a pattern to his comrades.

No. 5049885 L/SGT. T. SPODE.

For courage and outstanding leadership in the Anzio Beach-head. On the 22nd May, during the attack on the Pantoni feature, Cpl. Spode was a section commander. Early in the assault both his platoon commander and platoon sergeant became casualties. Cpl. Spode immediately took command and, running forward, led his platoon in a desperate assault on Green Bush Hill, which was heavily defended. Forcing his way through the wire, Cpl. Spode fired his T.M.C. into the enemy and succeeded in entering the German trench. Most of his platoon becoming casualties, the Corporal was compelled to withdraw, but he rapidly re-organised the survivors and consolidated a position about 20 yards from the enemy. Here he held his ground until ordered to withdraw. Cpl. Spode's initiative and gallantry were an inspiration to his men.

ANZIO BEACH HEAD WAR CEMETERY

Italy

Location: Anzio is a coastal town 70 kilometres south of Rome. To reach Anzio take the No.148 Superstrada Motorway which runs between Rome and Latina. Turn off the Superstrada at the No.207. Follow the signs towards Anzio. The Cemetery lies 5 kilometre north of Anzio town on the No.207 and Commission signs are visible 150 metres from the Cemetery. There is a small parking area at the main entrance.

Visiting Information: The cemetery is permanently open and may be visited anytime.

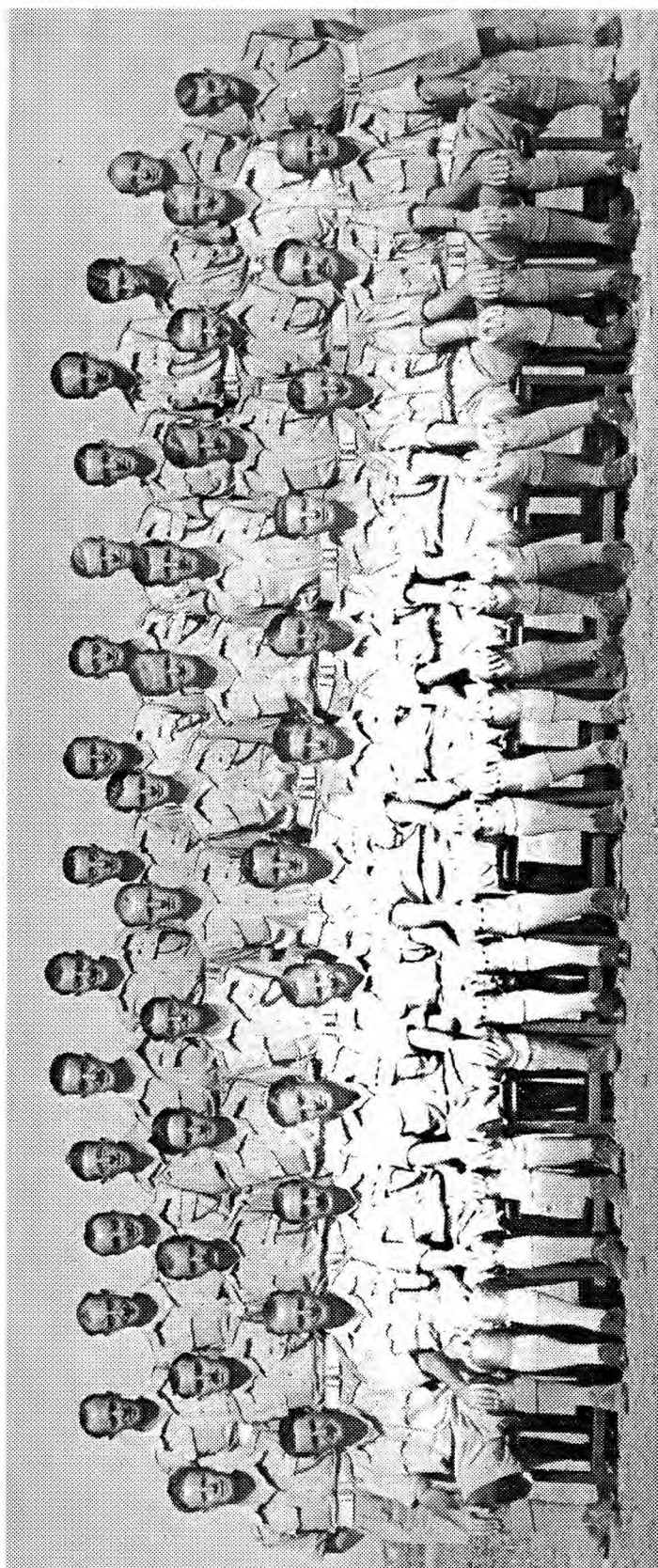
Historical Information: On 3 September 1943 the Allies invaded the Italian mainland, the invasion coinciding with an armistice made with the Italians who then re-entered the war on the Allied side. Progress through southern Italy was rapid despite stiff resistance, but by the end of October, the Allies were facing the German winter defensive position known as the Gustav Line, which stretched from the river Garigliano in the west to the Sangro in the east. Initial attempts to breach the western end of the line were unsuccessful. Operations in January 1944 landed troops behind the German lines at Anzio, but defences were well organised, and a breakthrough was not actually achieved until May. The site of the cemetery originally lay close to a casualty clearing station. Burials were made direct from the battlefield after the landings at Anzio and later, after the Army had moved forward, many graves were brought in from the surrounding country. Beach Head War Cemetery contains 2,312 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War, 291 of them unidentified. There is also one First World War burial which was brought to the cemetery from Chiete Communal Cemetery near Rome.

Roll of Honour:

Pte Albert Allen	Cpl Albert Cross	Pte John Hall	Pte Edward Rose
Pte Kenneth Andrews	Pte Frederick Cummings	Pte Robert Hanson	Pte George Scaife
Pte Thomas Ashford	Pte Edward Davies	Pte John Henn	LCpl James Smorthit
Pte James Beavon	Pte Frederick Deller	Pte Dennis Howe	Cpl Haydn Stradling
Maj Philip Benson	Sgt Alfred Emmerson	Pte William Howkins	Pte Charles Taylor
Pte David Bentley	Pte Keith Emmerson	Pte Leslie Hughes	Pte Frank Taylor
Pte Alfred Bilborough	Pte Charles Field	Cpl Walter Ives	Cpl Sydney Thomas
Pte John Blackburn	Pte John Fishwick	Pte Fred Jackson	Pte Frank Townson
Pte James Blampey	Pte Charles Foulds	Pte Charles Laws	Pte Harold Walsh
LSgt Eric Broadbent	Pte Stanley Fullard	Pte Arthur Mann	Pte James Walters
Pte Walter Burman	LCpl Hubert Gardner	Pte James McNally	Pte William Watts
Pte Ernest Burton	Pte Harold Gelder	CSM Ernest McNea DCM	Pte Cecil Weatherlake
Pte Thomas Buttress	Pte Herbert Gerrard	Pte George Newby	Pte Clifford Whittaker
Pte James Cole	Pte John Gilfoyle	Pte James Pankhurst	Pte Albert Wood
Pte Edward Coleman	Pte Benjamine Gudgeon	Pte Ronald Priestley	Pte Joseph Wood
LCpl Ronald Crisp	Pte Harry Hall	Pte Clarence Raybould	Cpl Thomas Woods
			Cpl Jonathan Wright

1st BATTALION DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S REGIMENT 'SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1944

Bn HQ	CO	Lt Col	F P St M	Sheil	DSO	† SWB
	2IC	Maj	V C	Magill-Cuerden		
	Adj	Capt	B	Hindley		
	IO	Capt	J L	Streatfeild	MC	
		Lt	MT	Hastings		
	RMO	Capt	A	Paterson	RAMC	
HQ Coy	Comd	Maj	H T	Sills	MC	
	Sigs	Lt	W L	Johnson		
	Admin	Capt	A D	Siddall		
	QM	Lt (QM)	H L	Lyons		
Support Coy	Comd	Capt	W R C	Miller		
	Carriers	Lt	VB	McFarlane	S African	
	Anti Tanks	Lt	E H	Buckland		
	Mors	Lt	R B	Fowler		
	Pioneers	Capt	R J A	Smith		
A Coy	Comd	Maj	T F	Huskisson	MC & Bar	
	2IC	Capt	A	Burns	DSO	
	1 PI	Lt	DE	Isles		
		Lt	LJ	O'Sullivan		
	2 PI	Lt	D W D	Farquhar		
	3 PI	Lt	FP	Froude	MC	
B Coy	Comd	Capt	J A	Randall		
	2IC	Capt	E	Oliver	MC	
	4 PI	Lt	R H	Hoyle	MC	
	5 PI	Lt	HJ	Johnson		POW
	6 PI	2Lt	W	Perritt		
C Coy	Comd	Capt	P C H	Hathorne	S African	
	2IC	Capt	C B	Saxton		
	7 PI	Lt	P A	Druce		
	8 PI	Lt	J K	Sproule	S African	
	9 PI	Lt	J	Wilson		
		Lt	A C	Mitchell		†
D Coy	Cadre Comd	Capt	B L	Ellam		
	Att 3 Bde HQ	Lt	R J	Diacon		



1st Batt 1 DWR Officers & WO's - July 3 October 1945

Palestine

CSM E. Green, CSM Callaby, CSM Selway, CSM J. Dodds, RQMS E. Dinsdale, Lt S.E. Walker, Cpt A. Burns DSO, Lt R.J.A. Smith, Cpt R.C. Miller, Lt W. Perritt, Lt R.H. Hoyle MC, Lt J. Wilson, CSM G. Hall MM, Lt D.E. Tozer (UDF), Lt B. Halmshaw, Cpt F.N. Potts, Cpt J.E. Johnson (UDF), Cpt R.B. Fowler, Cpt M.T.C. Hastings, Lt J. Mathews, Lt R.F. Diacon, Lt C. Commer, Lt B. Spilling.

Cpt A. Pearson (RAMC), Cpt B.L. Ellam, Maj B. Hindley, Maj P.R. Faulks MC, Cpt F.P. Froud MC (Adj), Maj T.F. Huskisson MC & Bar (CO), RSM F. Birch, Maj J.A. Randall, Maj M.J. Reynolds, Cpt J.W.D. Forsythe, Cpt N. Wimpenny MC, Cpt H.L. Lyons (QM)

THE GOTHIC LINE

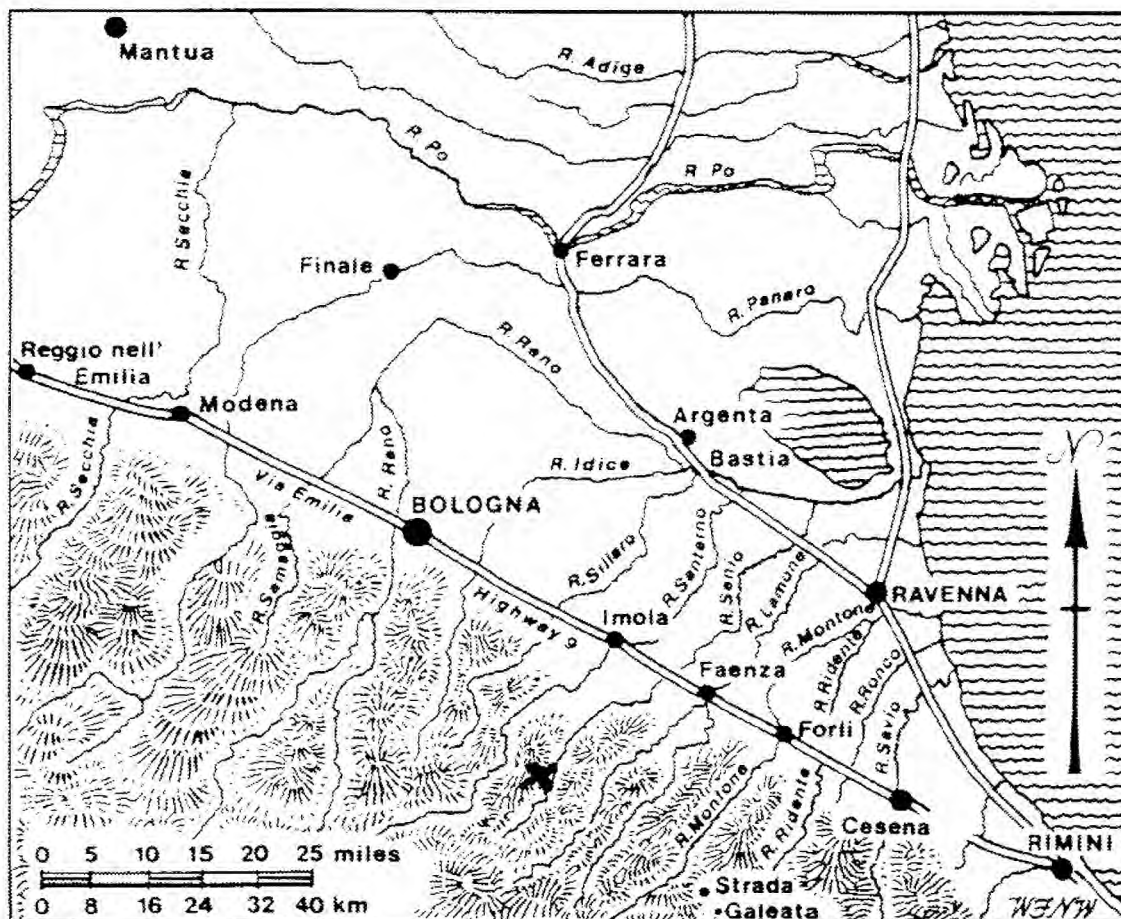
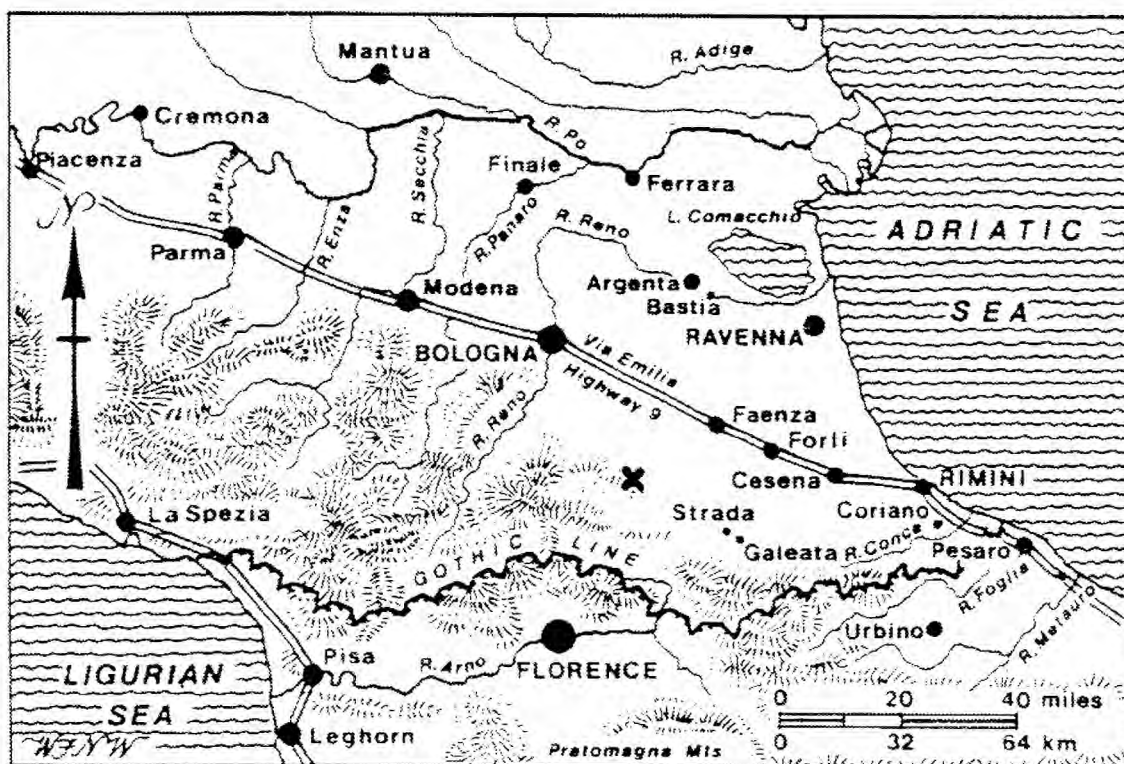
The Gothic Line, two hundred miles long, ran from Pisa to Rimini. For all but the easternmost fifty miles it lay in the Northern Apennines, natural defensive country with roads through the passes easily blocked, defiles fortified, bunkers excavated, gun positions protected, demolitions prepared. In the east, on the Adriatic flank, the terrain was no more inviting to an army seeking to advance.. Here the Apennine Spur ran north-eastwards to the sea in a sequence of defensible parallels, between which ran broad rivers - a total of thirteen had ultimately to be crossed - with high embankments and surrounding low-lying country which rain turned easily into marsh.

In the west the Gothic Line was held by the German 14th Army (General Lemelsen) with six divisions (the veteran 14th Panzer Corps and 1st Parachute Corps) and two divisions in army reserve. In the east the line was occupied by 10th Army (General von Vietinghoff) with ten divisions deployed under 51st Mountain Corps on the inland and 66th Panzer Corps on the coastal flank, and a further two divisions in army reserve. German divisions were of uneven quality and strength. Some were new to the theatre, some had suffered severely and, in addition, the actions of Italian partisans caused a formidable casualty bill - about 26,000 between June and August 1944. Nevertheless, the Gothic Line was strong, and strongly held. Behind it, clear of the mountain barrier, ran the main Bologna-Rimini road, Highway 9, the Emilian Way, giving the Germans a lateral communication of great value.

Faced with the familiar combination of difficult terrain and an enemy with both flanks resting on the sea, Alexander could only hope to achieve decisive results by concentrating force at a chosen point, while being prepared to shift his weight to another point if the battle demanded, and to do so with greater agility than his opponent. No great manoeuvres were possible - indeed they seldom were in Italy. He determined to make his main effort in the Adriatic sector by moving back 8th Army from West and Central Italy to the east coast. The move was accompanied by a sophisticated deception plan to mask the selected area of attack. In the week between 15th and 22nd August 60,000 tanks, vehicles and guns were moved from one flank to the other over the exiguous roads. Alexander planned that 5th Army should also attack, in the centre, through the mountains - a move that should follow the attraction by 8th Army of German strength towards the Adriatic.

The operation started on 25th August. 8th Army now consisted of four Corps - a total of 11 divisions. 2nd Polish Corps (General Anders), of two divisions, attacked to gain high ground north-west of Pesaro at the extreme east of the Gothic Line. Thereafter, 8th Army moved forwards with three corps in line: on the right, directed on Rimini, 1st Canadian Corps with two divisions; next inland British 5th Corps (Lieutenant General Keightley), by far the strongest in 8th Army, consisting of 1st Armoured, 4th, 46th, 56th and 4th Indian Divisions. 5th Corps was ordered to attack west of Rimini, to break through to Highway 9, the Rimini -Bologna road, and thereafter advance towards Bologna: this movement would menace the entire rear of Army Group C and must, it was reckoned, attract every available division upon 5th Corps. On the left of 8th Army the British 10th Corps, consisting of only the 10th Indian Division, was directed to hold the rest of the army front across to the boundary with 5th Army on the Pratomagna mountain range east of Florence. 2nd New Zealand Division was in army reserve.

By 2nd September, the early movements had gone well, with the Germans dislodged from their positions in the Gothic Line and driven back to the Conca River. Kesselring had only just appreciated the weight and direction of the Allied attack when the forward troops of his 10th Army, in inadequate strength, met the main 8th Army thrust.



GOTHIC LINE AND BEYOND

Note: X marks where M Ceco is.

The prepared positions of the Gothic Line once breached, the Allies hoped for a decisive breakthrough on the right wing. They were, however, frustrated by the terrain and the speed of the German response, for the enemy was now alert to the acute danger to the whole of Army Group C. The way forwards for 8th Army lay across a series of ridges and rivers. At Coriano, ten miles south-east of Rimini, the last ridge before open country, 5th Corps was halted and failed to "take it on the bounce". Instead German reinforcements, tanks and anti-tank guns were hurried to the sector and, by 5th September, Vieteinhoff had six divisions, including one Panzer and one Panzer Grenadier, facing 8th Army and defending the Coriano Ridge. To break through now would demand more strength, more preparation, a mass of artillery and time. Every day that passed brought nearer a possibility of a break in the summer weather and the sort of rains which had so often before - notably on the Sangro - reduced fighting on the Adriatic front to near-Flanders conditions.

8th Army now prepared a deliberate attack. They were through the Gothic Line, but they were still blocked and frustrated. The attack began on the 12th September. Artillery bombardment was coordinated with bombing by the air forces and with fire from naval vessels in the Adriatic. Eventually 5th Corps drove the enemy from the Coriano Ridge, but casualties were high. Tank losses were so formidable that after the battle 1st Armoured Division could no longer be employed as such. Rimini was finally taken on 20th September and, inland, 5th Corps pressed slowly forwards from river to river, infantry and engineers once again in the lead and in universal demand.

Meanwhile Alexander, realising that there would be no early breakthrough by 8th Army, and appreciating that the Germans had responded swiftly to its threat, ordered an attack through the mountains by 5th Army under General Clark. 5th Army, which had suffered the loss of the DRAGOON divisions, now consisted of two American Corps, 2nd and 4th and of 13th British Corps (Lieutenant General Kirkman), the latter containing 1st (the Division in which the Dukes were), 6th Armoured and 8th Indian Divisions. Clark was already moving forwards, for opposite him the Germans were withdrawing to maintain a coherent front with their forces under pressure in the eastern sector. On the 13th September he attacked the main Gothic Line position. The Allied Armies in Italy were now fully committed right across the front. Having surrendered divisions to DRAGOON, Alexander had no fresh troops with which to maintain ultimate pressure, to keep up momentum when both sides were exhausted.

5th Army battered its way painfully forwards through the mountains towards the promised land of the Po Valley and the supreme target of the Bologna-Rimini road, which, once reached, would cut German lateral communications between 10th and 14th Armies and force a general retreat upon the enemy. Advancing on the most easterly of parallel routes winding through the mountains, the British 13th Corps was directed towards Faenza and Forli. A combined attack by 1st Division and an American division on 17th September finally forced the Gothic Line. Many defensible positions, however, still survived along the Apennine roads and, although Clark switched main effort from one thrust line to another and the Allied air forces pounded the Germans remorselessly when the weather allowed, the advance was slow and expensive, Monte Cece was part of this relentless slog. Clark concentrated strength for a renewed offensive on 2nd October, a renewed attempt to get through the mountain barrier. Such a task was comparable to the appalling march forwards south of Cassino, but with larger, steeper mountains and worse numerical odds. Men struggled painfully up and along precipitous ridges, spending their days and nights in flooded slit trenches or slithering through mud under incessant shell and mortar fire. Not a rocky hilltop, not a bend in a mountain road but was disputed and then counter-attacked by an undefeated enemy. By now the weather had broken. 5th Army attack was directed on Imola and Bologna. In the east, the enemy had been driven back to towards the Savio River. 8th Army was ordered to attack north-east towards Cesena. ¹

Throughout September rain fell incessantly and the ground became ever more impassable, a sea of mud. Movement, confined to roads, was laborious. On 19th October, 8th Army took Casena, inching their way north-west up Highway 9 towards Bologna, reaching Galeata and Strada. Torrential rain swept away the Savio bridges behind them. From the south, but still held in the mountains, 5th Army took Monte Belmonte, nine miles from the centre of Bologna, on 23rd. Casualties were high, conditions appalling, progress minimal. By the end of October, the Germans held the line of the Ronco River facing south-east and still retained a line of formidable mountain strongholds in the Apennines, facing south. As so often in Italy, weather and exhaustion imposed a halt on even the most courageous operations. The British infantry alone lost 7,000 men in the battles of the Gothic Line. Losses were proportionately higher than in any other phase of the Italian campaign.

It is not easy to demand sacrifices, including men's lives, when the object of a campaign has become demonstrably subordinate to the claims of other theatres, and where attrition rather than victory appears the only aim. Hitherto, Alexander had been able to hold before his troops the vision of a great adventure into and across the North Italian Plain. He himself had visions of an even more ambitious advance - a march by Ljubljana to Vienna - a concept which for sound political reasons Churchill had considerable sympathy, although Brooke regarded the notion as entirely impracticable, short of a general German collapse, and one which the Americans were most unlikely to entertain. Without some such stimulus, however, the Allied Armies in Italy had a hard and depressing winter ahead of them, it being clear that no further major offensive could be contemplated for several months; and even then it appeared to the soldiers doubtful whether the authorities cared if the armies in Italy advanced or not. Were not the huge army groups now advancing towards the Rhine, or the Soviet masses forcing their way through Poland, clearly going to finish the Third Reich before the Allied forces south of the Alps could play further part? The imminence of victory, the coming hard-to-imagine outbreak of peace, with the apparent subsidiary nature of the Italian theatre combined to depress. Desertions increased sharply. Survival looked more attractive than suffering, and the latter's value was questioned.

¹ Command of 8th Army was assumed by Lieutenant General McCreery on 1st October. Leese went to South-East Asia to command all Allied forces in that Command.

Details of Individual Medal Awards
Held by Regimental Headquarters The Duke of Wellington's Regiment

Burton **Richard Henry** Town of origin: **Melton Mowbray**
(If known)

5891907

Medal type: **VC**

Rank held: **Pte** Battalion/unit: **1st** Campaign: **WW2 - Monte Ceco**
London Gazette: Date **04-Jan-45** Page: **207** Medal location: **Auctioned 1998**
Date bar awarded: (If known)

Remarks: **Buried Kirriemuir, Scotland**

Citation:

In Italy on 8th October, 1944, two companies of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment moved forward to take a strongly-held feature 760 metres high. The capture of this feature was vital at this stage of the operation as it dominated all the ground on the main axis of advance. The assaulting troops made good progress to within 20 yards of the crest, when they came under withering fire from Spandaus on the crest. The leading platoon was held up and the Platoon Commander was wounded. The Company Commander took another platoon, of which Pte Burton was a runner, through to assault the crest from which four Spandaus, at least, were firing. Pte Burton rushed forward and, engaging the first Spandau position with his Tommy gun, killed the crew of three. When the assault was again held up by murderous fire from two more machine guns Pte Burton, again showing complete disregard for his own safety, dashed forward towards the first machine gun using his Tommy gun until his ammunition was exhausted. He then picked up a Bren gun and, firing from the hip, succeeded in killing or wounding the crews of the two machine guns. Thanks to his outstanding courage the Company was then able to consolidate on the forward slope of the feature.

The enemy immediately counter-attacked fiercely but Pte Burton, in spite of most of his comrades being either dead or wounded, once again dashed forward on his own initiative and directed such accurate fire with his Bren gun on the enemy that they retired leaving the feature firmly in our hands. The enemy later counter-attacked again on the adjoining platoon position and Pte Burton, who had placed himself on the flank, brought such accurate fire to bear that this counter-attack also failed to dislodge the Company from its position. Pte Burton's magnificent gallantry and total disregard of his own safety during many hours of fierce fighting in mud and continuous rain were an inspiration to all his comrades.

Richard Burton VC

Independent, 17 July 93

RICHARD BURTON was just 21 in February 1944 as the Cassino Battle unfolded on the Gustav Line in Italy. Eight months later he had won a remarkable Victoria Cross, without a scratch upon him. He was a private serving with 1st Battalion, the Duke of Wellington's Regiment. His CO was killed in the action and his Officer Commanding (A Company) was wounded. It occurred during a violent assault north of Florence, at Monte Ceco, for which the regiment received its 72nd battle honour.

The regular battalions of "The Dukes" both distinguished themselves: 1 DWR in Africa and Italy and 2 DWR as part of the Chindits in Burma. The 1st Battalion represented 1 Division in the ceremonial march into Rome on 8 June, Dick Burton among them, their colonel wearing his second DSO.

There are supposedly three qualities of VC: for self-survival, as at Rorke's Drift; for crushing the enemy, as at Monte Ceco; for giving one's life to save others, as with Dr Noel Chavasse, VC and bar, MC, RAMC. Burton's was very high in the second category.

He came from a gentle family in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, where he was schooled till 14. He followed his forebears into the building trade, till he was 19; and then, after the Second World War, till he retired in 1986. Trained in soldiering by the Northants in 1942 as a teenager, he joined the Duke of Wellington's to go to French North Africa, where he experienced soldiering in the Tunisian campaign. His OC A Company was Captain Freddie Huskisson, who — characteristic of the Dukes — already had eight rugby caps for England.

With his regiment, Private Burton went into the capture of the Isle of Pantellaria in 1943, the Anzio beach landing in January 1944, and the long slog up Italy. Anzio cost the Dukes 11

officers and 250 other ranks wiped out. Burton's OC was wounded.

The northward slog was most costly. Weather reduced the battalion to mule transport, laden mules becoming "bellied" under the weight of ammunition or stores. Thus the Dukes confronted the Gothic Line in October 1944, and notably a crucial 2,000ft feature — Monte Ceco — which held up the Allied advance. A six-day battle ensued in rain. The initial attack from the south failed, mud



Burton: 'hands-on' courage

in place, knee-deep being a cause. A silent second attack from the west was launched in a downpour under heavy German mortar fire on the evening of 8 October.

In the final stage Capt A. Burns took Burton, the runner, with his platoon through to assault the crest, held by five Spandau machine-gun teams. Despite withering German fire, Burton managed to kill the first team with his tommy-gun; and similarly the next, till his ammunition ran out. He then picked up a Bren light machine gun and, firing from the hip, neutralised two further German

machine-gun teams, allowing his company to consolidate on the forward slope of Monte Ceco.

The Germans counter-attacked fiercely. Burton, with his companions lying dead or wounded around him, beat off that attack with accurate Bren fire. A second German counter-attack was mounted on Burton's flank and, firing in enfilade, he again broke up the impetus of this attack, saving his company's position. Burton's VC citation reads: "Private Burton's magnificent gallantry and total disregard for his own safety in many hours of fierce fighting in mud and continuous rain were an inspiration to all his comrades." He was awarded the 44th Army VC of that war.

Dick Burton was barely a man at the time, a quiet boy who knew his duty. His medal embarrassed him, not only then but in the years that followed. To the end he remained modest, disliking fuss. He was a man tall and well set up, with nothing abrasive in him. There are essentially two sorts of VC courage: the calculating and cold, calling on intellect (such as the pilots showed); and the fiercely physical, which is "hands-on" and calling on reserves of will. Dick Burton had that will, that conviction, from boyhood.

He married the girl he had met before going to war, a Scot called Dorothy Robertson, in 1945. They went to live in Kirriemuir, Angus, there bringing up three boys and a girl. The Leicestershire lad became a convert Scot, even to the accent. He never lost touch with the regiment he had so honoured, which returned that honour.

Alberic Stacpoole OSB

Richard Henry Burton, farmer and soldier: born 29 January 1923; VC 1944; married 1945 Dorothy Robertson (two sons, one daughter, and one son deceased; died 11 July 1993).

CITATIONS

The following is a list of citations of immediate awards made to officers and other ranks of the 1st Battalion in Italy and at Monte Cece in particular:-

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER. CAPTAIN A. BURNS.

For outstanding leadership and personal bravery in the face of strong enemy opposition during the attack and capture of Monte Cece on 8th and 9th October, 1944. The capture of the Monte Cece feature was vital to the advance as the feature was strongly held by the enemy and dominated forward company positions and the main axis of advance. This feature was 759 metres high with sheer slopes near the crest. It rained throughout the 8th and night 8th-9th October - conditions were well nigh impossible over ground which at the best of times was precipitous and difficult.

The Battalion was ordered to attack this feature on the afternoon of 8th October. "C" Company was leading and was being followed closely by "A" Company, under the command of Capt. A. Burns, to assist in consolidation and against counter-attack. The attack commenced at approximately 1530 hrs. 8th October. The leading company came under heavy M.G. and mortar fire from the crest and was held up. The Commanding Officer then ordered Capt. Burns with "A" Company to attack through the leading company. Meanwhile the C.O. went forward to "C" Company, where he was mortally wounded, and "C" Company commander was wounded. Capt. Burns, appreciating the seriousness of the situation, took command of both "A" and "C" Companies, and under intense enemy spandau fire from short range re-organised the company positions and arranged for two platoons of "A" Company to attack the crest. Capt. Burns personally led the attack with the two platoons, which successfully gained the ridge and wiped out the enemy M.G. opposition. The position was consolidated under the orders of Capt. Burns but was counter-attacked during the night 8th-9th October and at first light 9th October. Both these counter-attacks were driven off and heavy casualties inflicted on the enemy. During 9th October all known enemy positions were actively engaged, preventing any further counter-attacks, the position was held and the Battalion relieved during the night 9th-10th October.

Throughout the operation Capt. Burns led his men with courage and cheerfulness. He took every opportunity to wipe out known enemy resistance. He inspired his men with his personal courage in the face of the enemy. It was this officer's leadership and his initiative in taking over control when his commanding officer was killed, together with his total disregard for personal safety which undoubtedly inspired the men during the attack and capture of the objective, which was essential for the successful continuance of the battle.

MILITARY CROSS. LT. R. H. HOYLE.

For conspicuous bravery and outstanding leadership during the attacks on Monte Cece from 6th-9th October 1944.

Lt. Hoyle was commanding the leading platoon of "B" Company which was ordered to attack Monte Cece during the night 6th-7th October. Before reaching the objective the company was pinned down by intense spandau fire from the crest. One platoon of "A" Company which was on the left was also held up and the platoon commander seriously wounded. Lt. Hoyle left his cover and, in spite of the

heavy enemy fire, he went to the wounded officer, brought him back under cover and arranged his evacuation. During the re-organisation of the company on the 7th October, Lt. Hoyle and his platoon were allotted the task of protection and cover to the remainder of the company. Although dominated by enemy positions, Lt. Hoyle moved about, exposing himself in order to organise sniping and harassing fire on enemy movement and known posts. When darkness came this officer with his platoon and under heavy spandau fire were able to rejoin the company and take part in the second and successful assault on the feature on the afternoon of 8th October. During the final action Lt. Hoyle commanded his platoon with great skill. This officer's cheerfulness, personal courage and offensive spirit throughout this long period, without a doubt, ensured the firm footing established on this high feature was not lost and led to the final capture of Monte Cece.

DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL

6019290 Sgt. D. EMERY

For outstanding bravery and devotion to duty during the attack on Monte Cece on the afternoon of 8th October, 1944, and during the night 8th-9th October, 1944.

For the attack on the strongly held Monte Cece feature "A" Company, to which Sgt. Emery belonged, was allotted the task of capturing and holding the right end of the summit. The going was hard, due to mud and pouring rain, and the climb from the start line to the crest extremely steep. When 20 yards from the crest the leading platoon was halted by concentrated fire from four spandaus firing from the summit. Sgt. Emery, who was acting platoon commander, as his platoon commander had been wounded, was ordered to take his platoon through the leading platoon and assault the crest. He complied with this order immediately and with himself in the van, he led the platoon on to and over the crest, accounting for at least one spandau crew either killed or wounded who fell to his own Tommy gun. The assault was entirely successful and was in a very large part due to this N.C.O.'s outstanding dash and courage in the face of withering enemy M.G. fire. Sgt. Emery immediately re-organised and consolidated his platoon, which had suffered heavy casualties. Almost before this was completed the enemy counter-attacked with some 15-20 men. Once again Sgt. Emery immediately took up a position in front of his platoon, and although exposed to heavy enemy small arms fire engaged the attackers with his Tommy gun and directed the fire of his platoon to such effect that the counter-attack was quickly and completely broken and the enemy withdrew leaving a number of dead and wounded. Throughout the whole action, which lasted until the early morning of 9th October, Sgt. Emery displayed not only the highest qualities of leadership and devotion to duty, but also showed an utter disregard for his own safety during a time of extreme danger. When not engaged actively in attacking and directing fire on to the enemy Sgt. Emery was a constant source of encouragement and cheerfulness to his men, moving amongst them and directing the evacuation of the wounded. There is no doubt that it was in a very large part due to Sgt. Emery's conspicuous bravery that the assault on Monte Cece was a success.

MILITARY MEDAL

5255951 PTE. (NOW L/CPL.) L. BURSTON.

For outstanding personal courage and initiative in the face of the enemy during the attack on Monte Cece on 8th and 9th October, 1944.

During the attack on Monte Cece on the afternoon of 8th October Pte. Burstons of "C" Company's leading platoon showed great courage and initiative in spite of heavy enemy fire. The advance was temporarily held up by an enemy M.G. post when Pte. Burstons, although exposed to fire, engaged the enemy post with his 2in. mortar and silenced it. Having silenced it, he handed over his 2in. mortar and ammunition to his platoon sergeant and went forward armed with a rifle with his section to

consolidate on the crest. Whilst consolidating, the enemy counter-attacked and the section was over-run. Pte. Burston extricated himself, however, and observing an enemy mortar position, advanced towards it to engage it. He was then fired on by several enemy M.G.'s. he was not hit but fell to the ground feigning death, until he was able to roll down a bank out of view and into a trench, where he found a German, whom he captured. Pte. Burston held the prisoner in the trench until dark and then returned with him to his company positions. Throughout this operation Pte. Burston showed outstanding personal bravery which was an inspiration to all about him and his action assisted in the final capture of the objective.

5255043 PTE. B. SALT.

For outstanding courage and devotion to duty. On the night of 8th October, Pte. Salt was one of the party carrying ammunition to the forward companies on Monte Cece. The track this party had to use was precipitous and stretches of it were under constant mortar and machine gun fire. Between 1600 hrs. and 2100 hrs. Pte. Salt made the journey six times; he was always the first man to arrive at the top and his load was never less than a box of 1,000 rounds .303. On the way down Salt assisted in evacuating three wounded men by carrying them bodily from the top to safer places farther down the mountain. This soldier was indeed a tower of strength, both by dint of his magnificent physique and by his personal courage and devotion to duty.

549545 SGT. J GREEN

For conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty during the attack on Monte Cece on 8th-9th October, 1944. When the Battalion attacked Monte Cece on 8th October, Sgt. Green was in charge of the ammunition carrying party. The route was precipitous and most of it open and under constant enemy M.G. and mortar fire. This route had to be crossed six times to carry up the necessary ammunition. Sgt. Green, with his cheerfulness and personal courage, led his men on to complete the task although casualties were being suffered, until on the last journey he was himself severely wounded. This ammunition was vital to the companies which were enabled to hold their positions against three counter-attacks during the night 8th-9th October

FLORENCE WAR CEMETERY

Italy

Location: Take the A1 Rome to Milan road and exit at Firenze Sud. Follow the road SS 67 towards Pontassieve and Arezzo. Florence War Cemetery stands on the north bank of the River Arno about 5 kilometres east of Florence.

Visiting Information: The cemetery is permanently open and may be visited anytime.

Historical Information: On 3 September 1943 the Allies invaded the Italian mainland, the invasion coinciding with an armistice made with the Italians who then re-entered the war on the Allied side. Following the fall of Rome to the Allies in June 1944, the German retreat became ordered and successive stands were made on a series of positions known as the Trasimene, Arezzo, Arno and Gothic Lines. Florence, which was taken by the Allied forces on 13 August 1944, was the centre of the Arno Line and the point from which the attack on the German Gothic Line defences in the Appenines was launched. The site for the war cemetery was selected in November 1944 for burials from the hospitals in and around Florence but the greater part of those buried here lost their lives in the fighting in this area from July to September 1944. After the war, 83 graves were moved to the cemetery from nearby Arrow Route Cemetery, when it proved impossible to acquire the site in perpetuity. Most of these burials were from the fighting in the Appenines during the winter of 1944-1945. Florence War Cemetery now contains 1,632 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War.

Roll of Honour:

Lt Col F P St M Sheil from SWB Regt - CO 1 DWR during assault on Monte Ceco

LCpl Gerald Baines	Pte Frederick Carpenter	Pte William Harrison	Pte John Poole
Pte Reginal Barnard	Pte Alfred Coates	Pte William Hewitt	Pte Clifford Ryder
Pte James Beck	LCpl Peter Cooper	Pte Arthur Ingold	Pte William Ruff
Pte Lawrence Biss	Cpl Thomas Dent	Pte Dennis Jagger	Cpl Frank Sharples
Pte James Boothroyd	Pte William Francis	Pte Lawrence Johnson	Pte Leonard Souther
Pte John Brett	Pte Harry Freeman	Pte Leslie Kiely	Pte Jack Steele
Pte James Brook	Pte Francis Gordon	LCpl William Longman	Pte George Fripp
Pte Sydney Bryan	Cpl Bertram Hackett	Pte William Maddocks	Pte Herbert Symmons
			Pte Robert Wyer