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Directorate of History
National Defence Headquarters
Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0K2

July 1986

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REPORT NO. 24
HISTORICAL SECTION (G.S.)
ARMY HEADQUARTERS

DECLASSIFIED
AUTHORITY: DHD 3-12
BY cae FOR DHIST NDHQ
DATE: NOV 10 1986

31 Mar 49

THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN (From the Fall of Rome
to the Evacuation of Florence (4 Jun-10 Aug 44))

Information from German Military Documents
regarding Allied Operations in General and
Canadian Operations in Particular

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R E P O R T N O . 24

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INTRODUCTORY

1. Information from German military documents for the period of the Italian campaign from 4 Jan-4 Jun 44 has been presented in Hist Sec (G.S.) Report No. 20. The substance of that report consisted of material relating to the role of 1 Cdn Corps in the breaching of the Gustav and Hitler Lines. The next major operation of 1 Cdn Corps culminated in the assault on the Gothic Line. Portentous events took place, however, between these high points of Canadian operations in Italy; the creation of the Normandy bridgehead changed the overall strategic picture, but for the miscarriage of plans to destroy the unsuccessful Fuehrer the tottering empire of Hitler would have collapsed, and Army Group "C" - ever in the dark regarding the future employment of the Allied reserves in the Mediterranean area - withdrew behind the Arno and was getting ready to offer strong resistance in a system of prepared defences in the Apennines.

2. The present report deals with the information which has become available from German military sources for the period from the fall of Rome to the evacuation of Florence (4 Jun - 10 Aug). During this time the Canadian participation in the fighting was limited to supporting actions by the Regiments of 1 Cdn Armd Bde. These actions were carried out partly in the area of Tenth Army and partly in that of Fourteenth Army. Although not much material has been found in this connection, a rough sketch of the tactical developments on the front of Army Group "C" is being provided here for the sake of continuity and in order to establish a background for the analysis of the succeeding phase of the campaign. For what the principal actors thought at the time and what motivated their decisions will lend perspective to the naked picture of the German dispositions as they were when the drive on the Gothic Line was launched. Beclouded as it was by the successful execution of a cover plan, the question of the prospective employment of 1 Cdn Corps at that time played so large a part in the deliberations of the German commanders in Italy that it can not be overlooked nor brushed aside as lacking in significance.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

3. The majority of the documents on which the present report is based were lent to Hist Sec (G.S.) by the German Military Documents Section in Washington, D.C. Some of the more important documents have been photostated; in all cases where a photostatic copy or a translation is being permanently retained, the first reference to the document is followed by the Hist Sec (G.S.) Master Index Number.

4. The substantial and accurate accounts in the War Diaries of Tenth Army were once more the most valuable source of information. Some information was gathered from the occasionally nebulous War Diary of Fourteenth Army. Material concerning the aftermath of the battle for Rome was found in the records for June 1944 of C.-in-C. Southwest. That month is apparently the only one for which fairly complete records of C.-in-C. Southwest are available; later periods are represented merely by some scattered and fragmentary files.

5. A source of a somewhat different character exists in the form of a narrative based on the accumulation of documents at OKW/WFST (Armed Forces High Command/Armed Forces Operations Staff). The War Diaries of this headquarters are known to have been destroyed, but fortunately we are in possession of a comprehensive study based on this material by Major Percy Schramm, previously professor of history at the University of Goettingen, and during the war in charge of the day to day compilation of the top level War Diary.*,*** One section of Schramm's work deals with the events in the Italian theatre of war from 1 Apr - 31 Dec 44. A photostatic copy of the translation of this section has been received through the courtesy of Hist Div, U.S. Dept of the Army (981A10.(D11A). In addition to the facts now generally known, a good deal

* Hist Sec Report No. 20, para 4

*** Schramm, Percy Ernst, born 1894, Dr. phil 1922, lecturer Heidelberg 1924, full professor Goettingen 1929, Shreve Fellowship Princeton 1932-33. (From German "Who's Who?" ("Wer ist's?") edit 1935, Crerar Library, Ottawa, Cat No. 083.D36)

of insight has lately been gained into the reasoning behind the enemy's operations from narratives prepared after the war by German senior commanders. The great historical value of these narratives cannot be diminished by a word of caution regarding the occasional assertions therein of an all-embracing prescience, assertions at variance with the records written at the time, which present a picture rather of laborious and often futile attempts to divine Allied intentions.

6. Well over 1,500 tons of German military documents are in American and British hands. Of this much is gold and much is dross. It is not expected that significant additions to this body of material will be forthcoming. According to Dr. Hugh Cole*, material not in our hands by now is either known to have been destroyed or to be in Russian hands. Speculation regarding the whereabouts of the German divisional and regimental records came to an end in December 1947 when the Soviet representative on the Allied Control Commission stated that the remnants of the Potsdam archives had reached Moscow.

ARMY GROUP "C" AFTER THE FALL OF ROME

(a) German Reflections on the Causes of the Defeat

7. Two weeks after the fall of Rome, on an intermediate defence line from coast to coast on the height of Lake Trasimene, Army Group "C" was able again to resume its old tactics of delaying warfare. In the meantime however the very existence of the Army Group had been in jeopardy, its Armies in danger of being separated, its western divisions in fear of encirclement and annihilation. In view of some recent additions to our knowledge of the period in question it may be well to go back in the story and to examine from new perspectives the causes of this critical situation. Less even than in the game of chess is it possible in the realm of warfare, with its added imponderables, to determine with accuracy the nature of the variations which might result from one or several changes in a given combination. And while it is not the purpose of this report to engage in speculation regarding that which might have been, some interest no doubt attaches to the reflections of the Army commanders and Chiefs of Staff of Army Group "C".

* Cole, Hugh M., "Writing contemporary Military History", Military Affairs, Washington, D.C., Fall 1948, pp 165, 166. (Colonel Cole was the Combat Historian of the U.S. Third Army, and later Chief of the European Section, Historical Division, U.S. Dept of the Army)

8. At the end of the first week of June the Fourteenth Army was a badly beaten force. It had been the main sufferer in the whole debacle, and little groups of men banded around some surviving officer were all that was left of many battalions and regiments. At 0600 hours, 6 Jun, Col-Gen Eberhard von Mackensen handed over command of the Fourteenth Army to Gen Joachim Lemelsen.* Mackensen's resignation had not come as a surprise. As variously shown in Hist Sec Report No. 20, the Army commander and his C. of S., Maj-Gen Wolf Hauser, had protested on many occasions against Kesselring's policy of drawing off to the front of Tenth Army the very reserves that would be needed to cope with the expected break-out of Allied forces from the beachhead of Anzio. Apparently ruling out the possibility that stronger resistance by Fourteenth Army would have brought forth a correspondingly greater effort of the opponent, the high officers of Fourteenth Army claim that Kesselring's mistakes had been the cause of their defeat. In his study** Maj-Gen Hauser says:

* Lemelsen had been temporary commander of Tenth Army in November and December 1943 (Hist Sec Report No. 18, numerous references). His confidential file at the Army Personnel Section of the German High Command reveals that on the basis of his performance at that time Marshal Kesselring regarded him as "fully qualified to command an Army". Lemelsen was one of the very few German officers who as a Corps commander had been damned with faint praise and later on was selected for, and successfully exercised, a higher command. He had commanded a Corps in Woehler's Eighth Army in the East. Praising him otherwise, General Woehler described him as "an average corps commander, not suitable for the next higher command". The Army Group commander had concurred. The explanation of the seeming contradiction may be found in the fact that Woehler and v. Mannstein had never been favourably inclined towards Lemelsen and had actively, though unsuccessfully, opposed his original appointment to the Eighth Army. (G.M.D.S. - Collection of OKW/OKH Personal Files of German Officers)

** Hist Div U.S. Dept of the Army, Manuscripts of German Officers, "The Italian Campaign", Part II, Chap 2, Sec A, p. 4 (981SOM (D80b))

The diversion of all reserves from the vicinity of the beachhead was a grievous mistake. Its disastrous consequences had to be borne mainly by Fourteenth Army. All protests of the Army against the removal of the reserves and all mention of the consequences thereof had been in vain. The Army had to meet its doom with its eyes open. At the beginning of June then it lost its highly esteemed commander whose further cooperation with Marshal Kesselring had become impossible owing to their complete difference in conception and temperament. This is a model example showing how military command should never be influenced by other than sober military considerations. Had the German command done this in the middle of May 1944, Tenth Army would have been withdrawn to the Caesar line in good time, one or two divisions would have remained as a reserve behind the beachhead-front of Fourteenth Army and a break-out of the enemy prevented until Tenth Army would have had completed its fighting withdrawal.

9. In his comments on Hauser's and Westphal's^x studies, General von Mackensen^{xxx} points out the following:

As indicated by General Westphal, there had been differences of a professional (never personal) nature between Marshal Kesselring and myself for some considerable time, and at the beginning of February I had asked the Marshal twice to request from higher authority that I be relieved. I was unable to prevail against him with my less

x "The Italian Campaign", *op cit*, Part II, Chap 4, Section A (981SOM (D80f)). Westphal's comments for this phase are brief. Between 1 May and the date of his replacement as C. of S. of Army Group "C" due to illness and accident, he had been on duty only from 18 - 24 May. From 1 - 17 May and from 25 May - 11 Jun, Colonel Beelitz, First Operations Officer of the Army Group had been his substitute (*ibid*); on 11 or 12 Jun Lt-Gen Roettiger assumed the functions of C. of S. Army Group "C". (G.M.D.S. - 55291/4, Tenth Army, W.D. No. 7, vol "C" of Appx, tel cons 12 Jun 44)

xxx "The Italian Campaign", *op cit*, Part I, Chap 12, Appx (981 SOM (D79/o))

optimistic views which I believed to be correct; I thought that I owed it to the troops under my command to vacate the appointment. Unfortunately Marshal Kesselring declined to act on my requests at that time. I relinquished command of the Fourteenth Army at 0600 hours 6 Jun 44[#]

... I agree with General Westphal that... political, propaganda or prestige reasons (differing in this from the Armed Forces High Command and Hitler) did not play a decisive role in Marshal Kesselring's decisions, but rather his glowing optimism which, according to my lights, did not count enough with the realities. This especially with regard to the known quantities of warfare which are difficult to overcome and differ from the conditions of aerial warfare with which the Marshal naturally was more conversant...

The transfer of the reserves from Fourteenth to Tenth Army had been the first and fundamental error, and the sudden, and for Fourteenth Army completely unexpected shift in the inter-army boundary made the situation intolerable.^{##} Hauser's map No. 1 shows clearly the decisive importance of this sector which was almost denuded of Tenth Army's troops. In this sector the enemy launched his decisive push with the French Expeditionary Corps at the focal point. The result could be foreseen. ...^{###}

10. The views of Maj-Gen Fritz Wentzell, then C. of S. Tenth Army, regarding the Allied offensive in May 1944 have been presented in detail in a manuscript prepared for Canadian Military Headquarters^{####}. General v. Vietinghoff and his able

[#] Schramm, op cit p. 37. Schramm merely states: "Effective 2 Jun Col Gen v. Mackensen was replaced in command of Fourteenth Army by General Lemelsen".

^{##} H.S. Report No. 20, para 123

^{###} Kesselring's comments regarding the employment of Para Pz Div H.G. and the change of the inter-army boundary will appear in his forthcoming: "Comments of Part II of 'The Italian Campaign'."

^{####} Wentzell, The Italian Campaign from Aug 43 - Feb 45, English text (981.013(D3)). The original German text appears as an Appendix to chapter 3 of "The Italian Campaign", op cit, Part II (981 SOM (D80/e)).

Chief of Staff thought very much alike and usually were of one mind on matters of importance. In his chapter dealing with the phase in question,* the Army commander states:

The author agrees in full with the opinions expressed by Wentzell with whom he was in daily exchange of thoughts during the operations and the subsequent internment.

General v. Vietinghoff's synopsis, compressing into a few sentences the gist of many documents, recorded telephone conversations (and in the last part possibly afterthoughts) may well serve to record here Tenth Army's point of view in the shortest available authentic form:

(1) On the German side, a timely withdrawal of Tenth Army would presumably have prevented the breakthrough to Rome and the smashing of a large part of Fourteenth Army as it was crossing the Tiber, or at least have delayed these events long enough to make possible an orderly withdrawal across the Tiber and through the difficult mountain terrain between Rome and Avezzano. Once the breakthrough had taken place, reestablishment of an unbroken front right across Italy during 14 days of hard pursuit represents a performance of which troops and commanders may justly be proud.

(2) On the Allied side, the operational and tactical planning of the great attack seems to the writer to have been exemplary. This applies most of all to the daring commitment of American Fifth Army, especially the French Expeditionary Corps, for the assault across the rugged mountain ranges.

On the other hand, from the German point of view, it does not appear to have been to the best advantage that the F.E.C., and later also the Canadian Corps, were held in reserve, and not put to better use. Another prompt attack by the former on Subiaco would probably have cut off and smashed the right wing of Tenth Army, to which most of the divisions belonged, including the best.

* "The Italian Campaign", op cit, Part II, Chap 3, pp 36-37.

A strengthening of the pursuit troops by the Canadian Corps in the at first almost open area between Tivoli and the Lake of Bracciano, with the object of striking quickly at Rieti and Terni and through Orvieto to Perugia and Arezzo, would have placed Tenth Army in an almost hopeless position, without in any way prejudicing the pursuit of Fourteenth Army. Tenth Army would probably not have been completely destroyed, but it would have been out of the question for it to again establish a well organized front as far forward as the Trasimene Lake. Even in the Apennines this could hardly have been done. The breakthrough into the Po valley might well have been the culminating point of the pursuit launched from Rome.

11. Marshal Kesselring, in his comments on "The Italian Campaign, Part I",* made some statements applying with equal relevancy to all phases of the campaign. Regarding orders reaching him from above he said:

When I accepted an order from above I also accepted the responsibility for it. My position was too high to allow me to hide behind the High Command or Hitler whenever this would have suited me or whenever events took an unpleasant turn. ...

Occasionally he seems to sneer at what he calls the "dyed-in-the-wool evacuation-tacticians" whose "slogans would ever prevent any boldness in command" and "who called over-optimism the very quality of faith without which success is unattainable." - Of his Army commanders the Marshal said:

Their good qualities by far outweighed individual weaknesses. In Vietinghoff I would have liked more hardness, in Mackensen more optimism, in Lemelsen more initiative.

Of particular interest from the Canadian point of view is his rating of the divisional commanders:

Despite his peculiarities I must rate Baade (90 Pz Gren Div) as a front commander of the most impressive type. Almost of equal merit was Heidrich (1 Para Div) who was matchless in the training of troops. Above average were:

* Kesselring's Comments on "The Italian Campaign, Part I", pp 10-12 (981 SOM (D 84))

General Fries, 29 Pz Gren Div
General v. Luettwitz, 26 Pz Div
General Rodt, 15 Pz Gren Div
General Boehlke, 334 Inf Div

The above group of six divisions corresponds closely to what Wentzell called "the German Army's best troops".* It also corresponds closely to the group from which came the divisions which furnished the main opposition to the advance of the Canadian forces.

(b) Condition of Army Group "C"

12. One week before the evacuation of Rome Marshal Kesselring had reported an estimated 25,000 casualties for the period from the beginning of the Allied May offensive up to 28 May.** In a new estimate on 1 Jun he spoke of 35,000 casualties (Photostat: 981A10.(D136)):

... The projected allotment of replacements fails to cover the present and imminently expected casualties. According to reports from the formations the number of casualties in the meantime has risen to 35,000 and keeps mounting. Although not (yet) supported by documentary proof, this estimate does not seem to be too high. As a comparative figure O.B.SW cites the 35,000 casualties of the Nettuno battle, where only a part of the divisions of the Army Group were committed, whereas at present all divisions hitherto with the Army Group are engaged in the fighting. In order to maintain the battleworthiness of the mobile formations, O.B.SW therefore again requests an increase in the allotment of replacement battalions.

(G.M.D.S. - 64832/6, W.D., O.B.SW, Appx 1-8 Jun, Appx 21, 1 Jun 44)

13. During the battle and the confusion of the first phase of the retreat it was nearly impossible to obtain exact administrative information. On 4 Jun Maj-Gen Freiherr von Buttlar of the Armed Forces Operations Staff had telephoned Kesselring for information regarding the condition of the Army Group; on 5 Jun, in an interesting document (apparently made out in one copy only) the Army Group commander reported the situation as far as known. (Photostat 981A10.(D137)):

... By 2 Jun the divisions had reported a total of 38,024 dead, wounded and missing. The figure keeps mounting.

... The present combat value of the divisions is estimated to be as follows:

Percentage of the actual strength at the beginning of the defence battle:

* Wentzell, op cit, p. 41, (981.013 (D3))

** H.S. Report No. 20, para 169

	Personnel	Guns	Hy A.-Tk Guns
	%	%	%
4 Para Div	50	50	50
65 Inf Div	30	50	40
3 Pz Gren Div	20	40	40
362 Inf Div	10	30	5
715 Inf Div	15	60	30
Para Pz Div H.Q.	45	?	? (a)
90 Pz Gren Div	15	30	5
29 Pz Gren Div	20	50	30
26 Pz Div	20	40	20
305 Inf Div	25	50	20
5 Mtn Div	30	40	10
114 Jg Div	20	40	40
278 Inf Div	(Complete less equipment not yet supplied)		
94 Inf Div	10	40	10
92 Inf Div	40	30	40
71 Inf Div	15	?	10
334 Inf Div	50	50	50
15 Pz Gren Div	30	40	20
44 Inf Div (H & D)	15	20	15 *
1 Para Div	15	15	15
356 Inf Div	(Complete; not yet committed)		

(a) Including elements not yet committed)

(G.M.D.S. - 64832/6; W.D., O.B.SW, Appx 1 - 8 Jun, Appx 208, 5 Jun 44). Further information was supplied on 8 Jun in a memorandum listing all the divisions of the Army Group and stating of each whether still capable of commitment or requiring a shorter or longer span of time for reorganization (Photostat 981A10.(D138)). (*ibid*, Appx 272, 8 Jun 44)

14. By 10 Jun the Tenth Army was in a position to supply at least some concrete information. From a series of abbreviated condition reports, submitted to O.B.SW on 7, 9 and 10 Jun, it is possible to establish the then existing fighting strength of some divisions (Photostats: 981A10 (D139; D140; D141)):

* 44 Inf Div carried the designation "Reichsgrenadierdivision Hoch and Deutschmeister"; in the present report it is being referred to by the shorter numerical designation.

Fighting Strength*

76 Pz Corps

Para Pz Div H.G.	811 all ranks
15 Pz Gren Div	2,488 all ranks
1 Para Div	902 all ranks
94 Inf Div	1,650 all ranks

14 Pz Corps

29 Pz Gren Div	2,299 all ranks
90 Pz Gren Div	2,185 all ranks
26 Pz Div	1,424 all ranks
Sperrgruppe Ortner ^{HH} (formerly 44 Inf Div)	1,762 all ranks
Sperrgruppe Schrank ^{HH} (formerly 5 Mtn Div)	5,223 all ranks
Sperrgruppe Boelsen ^{HH} HHH (formerly 114 Mtn Jg Div)	3,386 all ranks
305 Inf Div (8 Jun)	587 all ranks
334 Inf Div	unavailable

A similar picture of ruination emerges from the figures dealing with the number of remaining tanks and guns. (G.M.D.S. - 55291/3, Tenth Army, W.D. 7, vol "B" of Appx, Appx 266, 7 Jun; Appx 346, 9 Jun; Appx 364, 10 Jun 44)

15. The foregoing shows how difficult it is at times to establish even approximate figures of casualties. In the statistics prepared at the highest levels of the German military structure, the casualties experienced during phases of great combat activity appear only at much later dates. This must be borne in mind whenever the question arises of how

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- * Fighting strength (Gefechtsstaerke) means: Total actual strength less personnel on leave, sick and wounded, on command, and "trains" (soldiers in charge of transport, baggage, horses etc). (G.M.D.S. 75138/1, O.B.SW, 21 Jun 44)
- ^{HH} Origin of designation shown in Hist Sec Report No. 20, para 158
- ^{HHH} Due to an error in the original German document, Sperrgruppe Boelsen was shown as Sperrgruppe Ohlsen in Hist Sec Report No. 20, para 158.

much damage was inflicted during a given time. A good deal of information can be gathered from the periodical tabulations prepared by the Chief Medical Officer at the German Army High Command for distribution to a few top-level agencies. (Photostat: 981A10. (D 142) 71 pages). It is seen for instance that of the 7,620,000 casualties reported by the end of March 1945, 423,600 had occurred in the area of O.B.SW. But it will be noted also that the figures for Fourteenth Army remained unchanged from 31 May to 10 Jul 44, and that in consequence the greater part of the losses in the battle of Rome was shown for the first time in July. Considered with due caution, however, the figures for Army Group "C" (exclusive of Navy, Air Force proper and German-allied formations) are not without interest; selected totals will be found in Appendix "A" to this report. (981A10.(D143)). (G.M.D.S. - H 17/205, Casualty tabulations of the Chief Medical Officer of the Army High Command (General Staff Army/Q.M.G. Branch))

16. In a strength return dated 14 Jun (for 1 Jun), O.B.SW declared his inability to supply the figures for Tenth and Fourteenth Armies. (Photostat: 981A10.(D144)). The value of this document lies in the fact that it supplied a strength return for Armeegruppe v. Zangen. * ** *** In Hist Sec Report No. 20, para 61, reference was made to the lack of information regarding the numerical strength of this formation. To close this gap in part at least, some figures are being quoted here from the more detailed breakdown in the document:

1 Jun Armeegruppe v. Zangen

German Army Personnel	57,102
Turcomans	8,479
Italian Formations	15,523
	<u>81,104</u>

* A German "Armeegruppe" or "Armeegruppe" was not an Army Group in our sense of the word, but merely a temporary, provisional organization, intermediate in status and responsibility between Corps and Army. The German term for our Army Group is "Heeresgruppe".

** A collection of photostats of the most important available documents regarding the organization and task of Armeegruppe v. Zangen is being permanently retained by Hist Sec (G.S.). (981A.Z.)

*** Armeegruppe (later Armeegruppe) v. Zangen: Hist Sec Report No. 20 paras 26, 61 and others.

In addition to this, the document reported the strength of the organization directly under the command of the "Plenipotentiary Representative of the German Armed Forces in Italy":*

German Army Personnel	5,847
German Air Force Personnel	16
Non-German Eastern Volunteers	<u>2,291</u>
	<u>8,154</u>

(G.M.D.S. - 62834/5, W.D., O.B.SW, Appx 9-15 Jun, 14 Jun 44)

(c) Immediate Measures

(i) Retreat to the Trasimene Line (5-19 Jun)

17. A full analysis of the situation of Army Group "C" after the fall of Rome appears in: Schramm (op cit). The original documents on which Schramm based his study of the deliberations and decisions at the highest level have been destroyed (para 4, above). Some of the documents introduced in the following however will serve to authenticate Schramm's statements by virtue of the fact that they are identical copies of the ones destroyed at the headquarters of the originator; others are operation orders reflecting Kesselring's views and intentions. On 8 Jun General Warlimont, ** who had been sent to Kesselring's headquarters for information and consultation, reported to Col-Gen Jodl: ***

In my opinion the most important fact established so far from my conversations with the Marshal is that, if the worst should happen and despite the greatest efforts the enemy can not be brought to a halt previously, it will be necessary to fall back to the Gothic position in about three weeks. O.B.SW believes that, unless the enemy carries out an encircling landing, he will be able to lengthen this time considerably by fighting a delaying action with all means available. Consequently I concur with O.B.SW in holding necessary the extension and the utmost acceleration of all measures for improving the defence potential of the Gothic position. ...

(Photostat: 981A10. (D 145))

(G.M.D.S. - 64832, W.D., O.B.SW, Appx 1-8 Jun, Appx 262, 8 Jun)

* Plenipotentiary Representative of the German Armed Forces in Italy, General of the Infantry Rudolf Toussaint. (Bevollmaechtigter General der deutschen Wehrmacht in Italien). S.A.: 981CS. (D2). German Chain of Command in the Italian Theatre of War. (G.M.D.S. - 43005/3, W.D., 76 Pz Corps, Vol II of Appx)

** ** General of the Artillery, Walter Warlimont, Deputy Chief of the Armed Forces Operations Staff; Col-Gen Alfred Jodl, Chief of the Armed Forces Operations Staff.

18. On the day following this conference with the representative of the Armed Forces Operations Staff, Marshal Kesselring issued a comprehensive Operations Order for a gradual fighting withdrawal to the Gothic Line. * ** A photostatic copy and a translation of this document appear as Appendix "B" to this report (981AZ(D50) (G.M.D.S. - 64839/2, W.D., Armeedivision v. Zangen). A large map which was appended to the operations order showed the name and course of the various main and intermediate defence lines from the Dora Line to the Gothic Line. (Photostat 981AZ. (D51). The introductory paragraph and some salient points of the order are being quoted here:

For the general conduct of operations in the Mediterranean area it is of decisive importance, particularly in view of Italy as a potential springboard for an enemy operation against the Balkans, to retain as much of Italy as possible. It is therefore the task of the Army Group, by stubborn fighting to prevent the enemy from pushing on further towards the North.

Thus it will begin by defending the DORA Line, *** and will only withdraw towards the North if forced to do so by the enemy. However, in the

* Prior to 25 Apr 44 known as the "Apennine Position", from 25 Apr to 16 Jun known as "Gothic Position", after 16 Jun 44 known as "Green Line". (For details see Hist Sec Report No. 20, para 62f.

** Schramm, op cit, p. 62:

After the Fuehrer had requested on 15 Jun that the name of the Goten position be changed immediately because, in case of its capture, it would give the enemy a pretext for cries of victory and suscite false conceptions on our side, it received the name of "Green Line".

*** Once again a Dora Line is encountered. As the earlier Dora Line preceded the present one by a mere month, the courses of both lines are being restated below;

Dora position in May 1944 (Part of Gustav System):

Formia - 2 km east of Esperia - 2 km west of Belmonte - M. Bianco - 750 m east of Picinisso - La Meta (connected with Senger-Riegel-between Terracina and S. Oliva).

Dora position in June 1944 (after the fall of Rome):

South slope of the mountains east of Orbitello - south shore of Lake Bolsena - Narni - Rieti - Aquila - south slope of Gran Sasso - Torre, thence Foro position.

event of any further strengthening of the enemy forces, or if there is a basic change in the situation, a gradual withdrawal to the GOTHIC position may become necessary.

This withdrawal movement is to take place only after stubborn fighting and over several lines of resistance, each of which is to be held as long as possible. Between these resistance lines, the Armies are to form intermediate lines in such a manner that the withdrawal movement will not exceed 15 kms at any one time. ...

... In future, each withdrawal must be approved by O.B.SW. Plans for the following day are therefore to be communicated to O.B.SW not later than 1200 hours of the preceding day.

... Insofar as the situation allows without a decisive further weakening of the fighting power, the DORA position is to be defended, in order to intercept the enemy's advance and to make it possible for our formations to reorganize.

... In the event of developments in the situation making a further withdrawal absolutely necessary, orders for the withdrawal will be issued by the Army Group. The code word for this operation is ALARICH.

... Once the FRIEDA Line[⊘] has been reached, it is intended to divide the whole of northern Italy south of the Po into two Army areas, which will be taken over by Tenth Army (left) and Fourteenth Army (right).

... All preparations for the withdrawal movement ALARICH are to be made in such a manner that, after the appropriate order has been received from the Army Group, the movement can begin forthwith. The planning staff for this movement is to be limited to the absolutely necessary. Telephone conversations referring to the withdrawal are forbidden.

19. This operations order was received by Hitler with misgivings and distrust. Despite the known tenaciousness of his Army Group Commander, Hitler now suspected him of wanting to fall back to the Gothic Line without offering serious resistance. In his narrative, General Roettiger, Kesselring's Chief of Staff, said:

⊘ Grosseto - Orlia sector - Lake Trasimene - Nocera - Camerino - Tolentino - Porto Civitanova (see also para 33 below)

The Army Group Order for the withdrawal to the Apennines was misconstrued by the High Command as meaning that O.B.SW now intended to withdraw to the North "unconditionally" and even when not forced to do so by the enemy. As a consequence of this misinterpretation not a day went by without Army Group receiving verbal or written orders "to resume the definitive defence of the Italian area as far south as possible at all". The resulting tension between the High Command and O.B.SW led even to the situation where Kesselring's repeated request for a personal interview (either for himself or his C. of S.) with Hitler was not acceded to until the beginning of July 1944. ("The Italian Campaign", op cit, Part II, Chap 4, Sec B, p. 7) (981 SOM (D80f))

Even from the limited original documentation available the fact emerges clearly that Kesselring, previously the one to hold his Army commanders on a tight leash, now was himself being firmly taken in hand by the High Command and spurred on severely in his efforts to reach the Gothic Line as late in the year as possible. At that time, shortly after the invasion of Normandy, the German commanders knew well enough that only a miraculous turn of events could ward off an ultimate collapse.^z But the machinery of war was still functioning, and by a combination of superb staff work on all levels, the strong will of Kesselring and the pressure from a High Command extremely sensitive to dangers threatening its pattern of strategy, it became possible to slow down the retreat and in effect to prevent the Allies from reaching the Plains of Lombardy before the spring of 1945. A vastly different course of events would have to be recorded, of course, had not the Allied landings in southern France required the withdrawal of seven good divisions from the Italian theatre of war.

20. Kesselring's operations order was issued on 9 Jun. How quickly the High Command reacted can be surmised from an entry in the War Diary of the Army Group on 10 Jun:

In a teletype message to the High Command Marshal Kesselring reaffirms his intention of defending Italy as far south of the Apennines as possible. This intention has already been clearly stated to General Warlimont.

^z e.g.: In a telephone conversation at 2215 hours on 11 Jun, C. of S. Tenth Army said to Ops Offr Army Group:

"There can be no doubt that the time for illusions is past; whoever still holds illusions is (expression not recorded) (G.M.D.S. - 55291/3, Tenth Army, W.D. 7, vol "B" of Appx, 11 Jun, Appx 381a, p. 5)

... Nevertheless it is possible that O.B.SW will be forced to continue the withdrawal.

... O.B.SW regards it as his second imperative duty to prevent the destruction of his Armies before they reach the Gothic Line and to let them reach the new line in battle-worthy condition.

(G.M.D.S. - 64832/1, O.B.SW, W.D. 1-15 Jun, 10 Jun 44)

On the next day we find the following entry:

11 Jun Order from the Fuehrer:

Delaying (type of) resistance must not be continued till the Apennines are reached. After reorganization of the formations the Army Group will resume defence operations as far south of the Apennines as possible. (ibid, 11 Jun)

Hitler's order to make a stand instead of withdrawing was questioned by Kesselring in a telephone conversation with Jodl on 12 Jun. The representations made by the Marshal on this occasion were recorded in an Appendix to the War Diary (Photostat and Translation: 981A10. (D146). Briefly stated, he pointed out the following:

- (a) under present conditions the defence of unprepared positions is hopeless;
- (b) the danger of an encirclement of Tenth Army is still great;
- (c) if reached with too weak forces, the Gothic Line can not be defended successfully;
- (d) defence far south of the Apennines entails a serious threat to the flanks; the forces available for coastal defence are insufficient;
- (e) if due to a slow withdrawal movement the Allies reach the Gothic Line simultaneously with the German troops, there will be danger of an immediate breakthrough.

"For this reason: Renewed suggestion to carry out the operation ALARICH." (see para 18, above).*

(G.M.D.S. - 64832/5, W.D., O.B.SW, Appx 1-15 Jun, Appx 156, 12 Jun 44)

* Kesselring's unusually pessimistic attitude on that day may be explained in part by the fact that he had been advised by the High Command of a possible Allied landing operation intended to cut off Army Group "C". (G.M.D.S. 64832/1, O.B.SW, W.D., 1-15 Jun, 11 Jun; Schramm, op cit, p. 47)

21. After 12 Jun the relations with the High Command were not referred to in the War Diary of the Army Group for a considerable time. However, there is ample though indirect evidence that the suggestions of the Marshal had been turned down flatly.* On 14 Jun he issued a sharply worded "Army Group Order for the Transition to the Defence" (Photostat and Translation: 981A10 (D147)). In essence the order read:

The Gothic Line must be built up to the point where it will be strong enough to resist any large-scale attempt of the enemy to break through to the plain of the River Po. In order to win the required time the Army Group will stand and defend the Albert-Frieda Line.** Every officer and man must know that upon reaching this line the delaying tactics will come to an end and the enemy advance and breakthrough must be stopped. ...

(G.M.D.S. - 64832/5, W.D., O.B.SW, Appx 9-15 Jun, Appx 9 for 14 Jun)

His renewed will to stand and fight, as well as his mood, were shown by Kesselring in a conversation with the commander of Tenth Army on 15 Jun:

1115 hours v. Vietinghoff - Kesselring

K: I have just been speaking again with Lemelsen regarding the kind of fighting to be done; that it is impossible - as just has happened - to fall back for 20 kms as the crow flies in one day; that it must not happen again.

v. V: We try anything in order to slow down the tempo.

K: I told him that we have to stiffen the resistance with all forces lest the whole thing begin to slip. In the Albert Line it will have to come to a halt in any case.

* In the telephone conversation referred to in para 19f above, at 2215 hours 11 Jun (after Hitler's order to stand and fight had been received), Ops Offr Army Group "C" said to C. of S. Tenth Army:

"There is no doubt that the Marshal had other intentions, but when the Fuehrer says "Thus it shall be done", that is the way it will have to be done. ...

(G.M.D.S. - 55291/3, Tenth Army, W.D. 7, vol "B" of Appx, Appx 381a, p. 5, 11 Jun 44)

** What is called the Trasimene Line in Allied records, was called the "Albert" or "Albert-Frieda" Line by the Germans.

v. V: I do not believe that it will come to a standstill for long.

K: The Fuehrer has given me explicit orders to defend (the Albert Line). I have given the appropriate orders. ... Lemelsen was made very unhappy by my words, but after all it must be possible to use strong language at times; we can not afford to go back 20 - 30 kms in one day. ...
(G.M.D.S. - 55291/4, Tenth Army, W.D. 7, Appx 12-16 Jun, Appx 502, 15 Jun 44)

22. A schematic Order of Battle of Army Group "C" was issued on 15 Jun 44. Due to several changes in organization a new edition was prepared on 23 Jun. Photostatic copies and translations of both documents appear as Appendix "C" to this report. (981A10.(D156)) (G.M.D.S. - 64832/5, W.D., O.B.SW, Appx 9-15 Jun, 15 Jun 44, fol 285; 64832/4a, W.D., O.B.SW, Appx 17-23 Jun, 23 Jun 44, fol 416)* All G.H.Q. formations in the area of O.B.SW and their various attachments were shown in a tabulation

* The above German Orders of Battle of Army Group "C" have been compared with the "Order of Battle of German Forces in Italy on 20 Jun 44", as shown in Appendix "E" of "Operations of British, Indian and Dominion Forces in Italy", Part II, Section F, page 26. Disregarding minor discrepancies, in the light of more recent information the following items should be read in conjunction with Appendix "E":

(a) On the German charts 356 Inf Div was shown as a component of 1 Para Corps; in Appendix "E" this division was not listed. The War Diary of Fourteenth Army shows the following entries:

356 Inf Div:

6 Jun Approaching.
7 Jun Elements reached area between Lake Bolsena and Tiber.
9 Jun As troops still green, provided with battle-experienced N.C.Os.
11 Jun Relieved elements of 4 Para Div in Corps sector.
13 Jun The withdrawal of the left wing of 1 Para Corps (356 Inf Div) was carried out successfully, thereby preventing a decisive breakthrough on the inter-army boundary.
14 Jun Committed on the boundary with Tenth Army. Engaged in heavy fighting.
(G.M.D.S. - 59091/1, Fourteenth Army, W.D. 3)

356 Inf Div was subsequently shown as operating alongside 4 Para Div (G.M.D.S. - 64832/5, W.D., O.B.SW, Appx 9-15 Jun, folios 269 and 274, 15 Jun 44; 64832/4a, W.D., O.B.SW, Appx 17-23 Jun 44, (Footnote continued on page 20)

dated 21 Jun. A translation of this list appear as Appendix "D" to this report (Photostat 981A10.(D160)) (G.M.D.S. - 64832/4a, W.D., O.B.SW, Appx 17-23 Jun, 21 Jun 44, fol 279)

23. A full description of the tactical detail of the German withdrawal to the Trasimène Line would transcend the scope of this report. A good picture of the difficulties encountered and the evolutions carried out by the German formations during this phase will be found in the pertinent chapters of "The Italian Campaign", op cit. Although Canadian units for the moment were involved in the pursuit to a small degree only, for the sake of continuity and in pursuance of the policy adopted in preceding reports, the most significant documents of Tenth Army and the most important entries in its War Diary are being introduced below.*

* (Cont'd from page 19) fol 169, 20 Jun 44).

On the sit maps of adjoining Tenth Army the Division was first shown on 18 Jun in positions south of Montepulciano (G.M.D.S. - 55291/15, Tenth Army, sit maps, 18 Jun 44 and later)

(b) On the German charts 188 Res (Mtn Div) and 3 Regt Brandenburg were shown for the Adriatic Coast Command; Appendix "E" shows 187 Res Mtn Div (Note: This latter division had been absorbed by 42 Jg Div as Battle Group 187. Successive orders of battle of 356 Inf and 188 Res (Mtn) Div appear in: G.M.D.S. - H1/533, Orders of Battle of Divisions in Army Group "C". (Photostat: 981A10 (D135)).

(c) On the German charts H.Q. 75 Inf Corps was shown as under command of Fourteenth Army. In this connection the War Diary of Fourteenth Army showed the following entry:

18 Jun To ensure uniformity of command in the coastal area on both sides of Livorno, Headquarters 75 Inf Corps with formations under command (less Brigade Group with 14 Fz Corps to be under command of Fourteenth Army (G.M.D.S. - Fourteenth Army, W.D. 3, 18 Jun)

* With the exception of those specifically identified, all quotations in paragraph 23 are being cited from the main volume of Tenth Army's War Diary (G.M.D.S. - 55291/1, Tenth Army, W.D. 7)

6 Jun No clear picture of the situation of Fourteenth Army has been received as yet. No orientations or orders are being received from O.B.S.W. In accordance with its own appreciation of the situation, and on its own initiative, Tenth Army has decided to entrust the operations for the protection of the deep right flank to 14 Pz Corps, at first with 26 Pz Div and 90 Pz Gren Div. Only 76 Pz Corps and 51 Mtn Corps will remain at the front. ...

7 Jun In view of the rapid advance of the enemy west of the Tiber, Tenth Army decides to move 29 Pz Gren Div and 334 Inf Div to 14 Pz Corps. ...

8 Jun The withdrawal movement proceeds as planned. Despite the existing traffic difficulties the new concentration of 14 Pz Corps progresses well. The dispositions of the enemy west of the Tiber point to Orvieto as the next target. Appropriate orders for the conduct of operations after 9 Jun are being given in Army Order No. 14.

A photostatic copy and a translation of Army Order No. 14 are being permanently retained (981A10: (D148)(G.M.D.S. - 55291/3, Tenth Army, W.D. 7, Appx 6-11 Jun, Appx 30, 8 Jun 44) A good picture of the dispositions of 14 Pz Corps at 2000 hours 8 Jun appears on photostat 981A10. (D149)(G.M.D.S. 55291/14, Tenth Army, W.D. 7, sit maps 1-10 Jun 44) The successive positions of Tenth Army from the Adriatic to the Tiber from 7-9 Jun appear on photostat 981A10 (D150) (*ibid*). Due to the many changes in map code at that time it is necessary to read Army Order No. 14 in conjunction with the last named situation map. The general aspects of the situation were set forth in clear language; all positions however were given by map references requiring the coded map in force at the moment. * **

* MAP CODE IN USE AT GERMAN DIVISIONAL AND HIGHER HEADQUARTERS

Map references were based on ordinary gridded maps with an overprint of squares and reference points. The squares were used to indicate the general area in which a feature was located; the reference points (little circles with numbers alongside) were used to show exactly where in a given square the feature was to be found. This was done by stating the direction and distance of the feature from a nearby reference point.

In order to understand certain German military documents it was and is therefore necessary to have a map with the then current overprint of numbers or letters for squares and reference points. For reasons of security the Germans issued periodically new maps with squares and reference points differently arranged and differently numb-
(Footnotes continued on page 22)

The main points of Army Order No. 14 were:

Movements of strong enemy forces on the western bank of the Tiber indicate that the enemy's next objective is a breakthrough in the direction of Orvieto with the object of throwing Tenth Army back into the mountains towards the East, and of cutting it off from the Apennines. Tenth Army prevents such a breakthrough by further drastic echelonment of the forces on the right wing, at the same time withdrawing its front, sector by sector, towards the Northwest. ...

The task of 14 Pz Corps is to prevent (at first from the Tiber to a point southeast of Orvieto) an enemy breakthrough on the Army's right flank, and to regain contact with the left wing of Fourteenth Army. ...

24. 9 Jun (W.D., Tenth Army)*

The danger to the flank of 51 Mtn Corps arising from the advance of enemy armour via Arsoli-Carsoli is being countered by an order for the accelerated withdrawal of the Army's left wing. ** ...

Due to the concentration of 14 Pz Corps (including the still fairly effective mechanized divisions) the situation of Tenth Army has been considerably improved. The situation of Fourteenth Army remains critical. Contrary to the intention of O.B.SW of committing 14 Pz Corps on the front of Fourteenth Army, Tenth Army suggests that the whole Corps be left under its command. Tenth Army offers to take over a sector west of the Tiber. The suggestion was declined.

* (Cont'd from page 21)

ered or lettered. In addition, whenever there was reason to believe that the current code had been compromised, the Germans issued a list of interim changes to be in force pending the issue of a new edition of the overprinted map. (For greater detail see Hist Sec Rep No. 18, Appx "B")

** Due to the fact that reference points on German maps were often placed on featureless ground, a description of the location in each case would require a lengthy explanation; it is therefore more expedient to read the documents in conjunction with the appropriate maps.

* With the exception of those specifically identified, all quotations in para 24 are cited from the main volume of Tenth Army's War Diary (G.M.D.S. - 55291/1, Tenth Army, W.D. 7).

** For amendment to Army Order No. 14 see photostat 981A10: (D151) (G.M.D.S. - 55291/3, Tenth Army, W.D. 7, Appx 6-11 Jun, Appx 343, 9 Jun 44)

10 Jun Due to the situation at Lake Bolsena 90 Pz Gren Div was committed this morning in the threatened sector by Marshal Kesselring without the knowledge of Tenth Army. ...

In connection with a directive received from O.B.SW, Army Order No. 15 was issued today. (Photostat and translation 981A10. (D152) (G.M.D.S. - 55291/3, Tenth Army, W.D. 7, Appx 6-11 Jun, Appx 343, 10 Jun 44)

This order regulated the movements of Tenth Army for the next few days. Its main subject was the strengthening of the Orvieto sector; in addition it contained a list of all G.H.Q. formations attached to 14 Pz Corps, 76 Pz Corps and 51 Mtn Corps.*

11 Jun At 0730 hours Marshal Kesselring arrived for a discussion of the situation. He decides to place 14 Pz Corps under the command of Fourteenth Army. ...

For Tenth Army the removal of 14 Pz Corps is a matter of serious consequence. In view of the communication difficulties the conduct of the Army's operations with only two Corps Headquarters is very difficult.

12 Jun As Fourteenth Army is already withdrawing to the "Frieda-West" Line there is now a gap again between the two Armies. The closing of this gap is being hampered by a nearly complete lack of gasoline. Movements for the protection of the focal point of Arezzo can not be carried out at the moment for the same reason. It is imperative that big supplies of fuel be made available without delay; - in contrast to this ammunition supplies are ample. ...

The withdrawal movements of 51 Mtn Corps are being harassed increasingly by guerillas apparently assisted by British paratroopers.**

With 14 Pz Corps now under command of the neighbouring Army, Tenth Army was a vastly depleted force. A list of the formations and units under its command was issued on 12 Jun. (Photostat 981A10. (D154) (G.M.D.S. - 55291/4, Tenth Army, W.D. 7, Appx 12-16 Jun, Appx 412, 12 Jun 44)

13 Jun The main worry is the gap between the two Armies. Due to the quick withdrawal of Fourteenth Army there is now no contact with it. The battle

* Map references in this order may also be located on photostat 981A10. (D150) (para 23 above)

** A map showing the successive defence lines over which the extreme left wing of the Army Group was falling back is being retained in photostatic form (981A10. (D153) (G.M.D.S. - 55779/5, W.D. 51 Mtn Corps, vol "B" of Appx, sit maps). The map shows how the Battle Groups Hoppe, Boelsen and Schrank withdrew from the Erika, Dennoch, Oskar I and Oskar II positions to the Edith Line (from north of Perugia to Ancona) via the following intermediate defence lines: Katja, Olli, Erna, Ilse, Gertrud, Wilma, Frieda, Elfriede and Mechthild.

for Orvieto has started. The planned strengthening of the right flank with 15 Pz Gren Div is being retarded by lack of fuel.

Advanced positions of the Army: 7 km S.S.W. Ficulle - 4 kms E Guardea - road bend 2 km N.W. Montenuco - M. Castabio - Poggio Cancelli - Montorio - Roseto degli Abruzzi.

14 Jun Tac H.Q. Tenth Army moves to Nestore, northwest of Umbertide. ... The right flank of the Army is still in danger due to the immobilization of 15 Pz Gren Div by lack of fuel. The constant interruptions in telephone communications by enemy fighter bombers aggravate the difficulties of command. ...

15 Jun From Orvieto the enemy advances not only to Ficulle but also on Todi, and in the evening his advance elements reach Foligno. An order with the enemy order of battle has been captured from 78 Brit Div. ...

25. During the first part of June the Germans were mainly interested in getting away from the enemy. Now, with orders to make a stand on the Trasimene Line, and with telephone communications momentarily restored, 15 Jun was a day of prolonged conversations (Photostat: 981A10. (D155)) Tenth Army; Record of telephone conversations for 15 Jun (G.M.D.S. - 55291/4, Tenth Army, W.D. 7, Appx 12-16 Jun, 15 Jun, Appx 502, 34 pp). Considerable interest was shown in the Allied "Order of Battle" that had been taken from a captured dispatch rider:

Tel cons 2100 hours 15 Jun C. of S. Tenth Army -
C. of S. Army Group "C".

Wentzell: ... But we remain in the dark regarding 1 Cdn Corps. The captured order of battle covers the front from coast to coast but this Corps is not mentioned. Either it is in the rear area or possibly in the process of being moved to the front. A signal has been intercepted: "We have contact with our neighbours".

Roettiger: This might account for the increase in signal traffic.

Wentzell: The Canadian Corps may be committed in the direction of Spoleto, it can not yet be at the front in its entirety or it would have been mentioned (in the captured document). (Ibid)

One hour earlier O.B.SW and the commander of Tenth Army had discussed the situation on the telephone:

Kesselring: ...

Secondly, 1 Cdn Inf Div will advance via Todi.

On your left wing the situation is not harmless. The Canadians (5 Cdn Armd Div) are farthest to the left, with advance elements already past Todi, then

...

An officer of 76 Pz Corps is on his way here. The Corps thinks that the Canadians are at Foligno. It is only a matter of scout cars. ...
(Ibid)

Since 1 Cdn Corps at the time was training in the rear area, and 1 Cdn Armd Bde was complete in the area Mentana - Capena (Hist Offr Report No. 160, para 8; Italy 1: 100,000, Sheet 144, map refs 8782, 7994), Kesselring's concern regarding the presence of the Canadians was based on wrong intelligence reports. The daily intelligence report of Headquarters O.B.SW for 14 Jun had contained the following entry:

1 Cdn Corps advancing via Narni to Terni.

(G.M.D.S. - 64832/5, W.D., O.B.SW, Appx 9-15 Jun, 14 Jun 44, folio 235)

And on 15 Jun:

... 1 Cdn Army Corps in area north of Narni - Terni with an American artillery formation under command (sic). Advance of the Corps is being carried out in two groups, southern group from Narni via Amelia to Alviano, northern group from Terni towards Todi on Route 79. (ibid 15 Jun 44, folio 287)

Subsequent telephone conversations and intelligence reports avoided the subject until 20 Jun, when the following was reported:

Observed: In the rear area of Eighth Army, 11 Cdn Inf Bde and 5 Cdn Armd Bde (sic).
(G.M.D.S. - 64832/4a, W.D., O.B.SW, Appx 20 Jun 44, folio 196)

26. In an appreciation of the situation transmitted to O.B.SW in the evening of 16 Jun, General v. Vietinghoff expressed the following opinion:

... The events of the last few days point to ... the continuation of the main advance of the enemy in the direction of Arezzo. Being aware of the negligible development of the eastern sector of the Gothic line, the enemy may make it his strategic objective to reach the plain of the Po by means of a straightforward breakthrough in the eastern sector rather than by

a far-flung envelopment along the Mediterranean.
(Photostat: 981A10. (D157)(G.M.D.S. - 55291/4,
Tenth Army, W.D. 7, Appx 12-16 Jun, Appx 534,
16 Jun 44)

The day's telephone conversations dealt mainly with the choice of tactically favourable locations for the Albert Line (*ibid*, Appx 532, 16 Jun 44). On 17 Jun and 18 Jun the withdrawal to the Albert Line continued. In the evening of 18 Jun Tenth Army reported the course of the Albert Line and the sectors of the different formations (Photostat 981A10. (D158)). (G.M.D.S. - 55291/5, Tenth Army, W.D. 7, Appx 17-21 Jun, Appx 596, 18 Jun 44). Owing to insistent demands from the highest quarters some definite line had to be shown despite the fact that fierce attacks in the Perugia area and the certain loss of Elba were **constantly** causing adjustments of the line.* Tenth Army's situation map for 18 Jun not being very suitable for photostatic reproduction, the somewhat better map for 20 Jun is being retained in this connection (Photostat 981A10. (D159)). (G.M.D.S. - 55291/15, Tenth Army, W.D. 7, sit maps 11-25 Jun, 20 Jun 44). The course of the Albert Line, as reported on 18 Jun, may be found on this map by locating the reference points given in Tenth Army's report.** Junction point with Fourteenth Army was 1 km S.S.W. Villa Astori on the secondary road from Chiusi to Montepulciano (ITALY 1:100,000, Sheet 121, map ref 278841). The course of the line in the area of 76 Pz Corps was reported as follows: 1 km S.W. Villa Astori - along the creek to the western tip to Lake Chiusi - southern tip of Lake Chiusi - Carraia di Torre - height 2 km south of Magione - 500 m south of M. Panciano - Ponte Felcino - Valfabbrica. Points east of Valfabbrica are not relevant due to the fact that 51 Mtn Corps in the event remained further south in the Frieda Line (from Valfabbrica to Porto Civitanova, see para 33 below). The Germans hoped that with the re-establishment of a continuous line of resistance the crisis resulting from the loss of the Caesar line had now reached its end; but particularly in the area of Fourteenth Army the situation soon began to deteriorate and become critical again.

* Actually it would be very difficult to name a line and say: "This was the Albert Line". Everything was in flux, reports were vague and contradictory. Hitler realized that he was being kept in the dark and let Kesselring know that he was displeased. (e.g.: Schramm, *op cit*, page 63 of translation)

** In this connection it must be taken into consideration that due to a succession of quick changes in map code at the time, squares 68, 46, 62, 36 on sit map 20 Jun were squares 48, 27, 14, 16 in the report of 18 Jun. (These latter square numbers were merely the original square numbers (as shown crossed out on the map of 20 Jun, plus five).

(ii) Accelerated Development of the Gothic Line

27. On 24 Jan 44, two days after the Allied landings at Anzio, Marshal Kesselring had redefined the tasks of his Armies in an Army Group Order (Hist Sec Report No. 20, para 25). Armeegruppe v. Zangen was then directed "to carry on with utmost energy the construction work on the Apennine position and on the coastal fronts". On 8 Feb the Armeegruppe, in its Armeegruppen Order No. 3, laid down the guiding principles for this work (Photostat and Translation: 981AZ(D6). (G.M.D.S. - 64839/4, W.D. Armeegruppe v. Zangen). The course of the main line from Pesaro to Marina di Carrara (south of La Spezia), and the individual construction sectors were shown on a map issued by the Armeegruppe on 7 May 44 (Photostat 981AZ.(D37)). (G.M.D.S. - 64839/8, W.D. Armeegruppe v. Zangen). Whether it was due to lack of personnel, equipment and material, or due to the comfortable distance from the fighting front, or, as seems probable, to a combination of all these factors, the work accomplished by the end of May in all but the Western sectors was negligible. Any complacency or planned limitation of effort came to an end however on 2 Jun, when after several days of deliberations, due to the loss of the Caesar line and the certain fall of Rome, the German High Command issued an order for the accelerated development of the new defence position. This document was signed by Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel and began with the words: "The Fuehrer has ordered". In later documents and conversations it was usually called "The Gotenbefehl" (The Gothic Order). A photostatic copy and translation of the order appear as Appendix "E" to this report (981A10.(D161). (G.M.D.S. - 75138/13, W.D., O.B.SW, Position Construction, Dec 43 - Dec 44).

28. As the complete text of the "Gothic Order" is available for verification it may be permissible to quote Schramm's synopsis of the order: The order mentioned in particular: Installation of panzer protection in the sectors threatened by tanks, the acceleration of fortified construction on the main breakthrough points (driving of galleries, fire embrasures etc.), extensive mining at sufficient depth, evacuation of the civil population from the outpost zone and the main battle zone, installation of an obstacle zone of about 10 km depth in front of the main line of resistance, and within it, thorough destruction of all traffic roads, installations, shelters etc., or preparations to that effect. The General of Engineers and Fortresses was given the mission of reinforcing the Fortress-Engineer Organization (for that work he was to have at his disposal a staff from the Southeast and a rock-drilling company from Norway); the Chief of Armament and Replacements, as far as possible, was to use the construction battalions as cadre personnel for the supervision of Italian civil

labour forces; O.B.SW had to bring back to the Apennine position the Italian forces which could no longer be put in line in the "C" position because of enemy action; the German General Plenipotentiary in Italy had to organize from the Italian male population domiciled in the area or waiting to be evacuated, a civil labor force etc. (Schramm, op cit, Translation, page 35)

29. Regarding the sudden and somewhat belated interest of the High Command in the development of the Gothic Line, General Roettiger, then C. of S. Army Group "C", in his post-war narrative made the following remarks:

Between Rome and the Apennines there was only one natural barrier, the River Arno. But there were no prepared positions south of the northern Apennines. The failure to develop prepared positions in Central Italy must be ascribed primarily to Hitler's usually negative attitude towards the construction of positions in the rear areas. It was his contention that the troops were inclined "to keep one eye towards the rear" whenever they were aware of the existence of a prepared rear-position. And he disregarded all mention of the fact that experience had shown the troops as holding positions with the greatest confidence and tenacity, even in the most difficult situations, when they knew that a covering position was ready in the rear.

For Army Group "C" it was therefore a remarkable and pleasant surprise when Hitler from the beginning of June not only showed keen interest in the development of the line but even issued a special order. As borne out by events, this happened unfortunately rather too late. ...

("The Italian Campaign", op cit, Part II, Chap 4, Sec B, Roettiger, (981SOM(D80F))

30. Count (Karl Heinrich) Klinckowstroem, C. of S. 51 Mtn Corps, was one of the many German officers who knew from bitter experience the disastrous consequences of belated orders in connection with withdrawals and preparation of rear positions (Hist Sec Report No. 20, paras 131-132). Well aware of the contents of the "Gothic Order", but nevertheless foreseeing a repetition of the old difficulties, he made his views known to Tenth Army in the evening of 18 Jun. Apart from revealing once more the added burdens which Hitler's constant distrust imposed on German front commanders, and despite the fact that Klinckowstroem was more or less speaking out of turn and treated accordingly, the record of this conversation may not be devoid of interest to officers who at some time or other may have to contemplate the various aspects of a planned withdrawal: