

K: What is the situation at present and what do you make of it?

W: I feel that we have been lucky with our withdrawal since it preserved us from being caught in the artillery barrage. I expect that he will follow with strong forces.

K: Regarding transfer of anti-tank weapons[from 51 Mtn Corps to 76 Pz Corps] ... something must be done all right.

W: Yes, but unfortunately we have no air reconnaissance with which to find out what is happening in the rear areas. In this respect we are once more totally blind.

...

K: Are you in contact with the Army Commander? You must certainly discuss this with him.

W: I spoke to him this morning about it.

K: Has Heidrich returned yet?

W: Yesterday he was not yet back.

1750 hrs Wentzell - Schnell (German synopsis)

... And then C. of S. has heard that the Canadians are there, though this has not yet been confirmed by a second source. According to the troops they are supposed to be Canadians. Schnell will have to be particularly hot after this information, for if they are really Canadians C. of S. will have to adopt quite other measures. For then it will be a true major operation (eine ganz grosse Angelegenheit).

1810 hrs Wentzell - Gericke\*

Down there in the zone of 76 Pz Corps there seems to be a lot going on. Apparently the enemy has committed himself there to a very large-scale affair. British formations are committed; possibly also Canadians. One must reckon with the possibility of a landing operation at Gericke's. G. should be on the alert; all the more as an intelligence report from Trieste says that something is brewing there ...

1820 hrs Wentzell - Runkel

(Runkel reporting) ... From the left a Polish sergeant has been brought in, who states that they have been relieved by Canadians ...

1910 hrs Wentzell - Runkel

... Monbarocchio has been lost ...  
Heidrich will be back in about three or four days ...

---

\* GERICKE, Col, G.S.C., C. of S. Venetian Coast Command (para 5 above)

2320 hrs Wentzell - Berlin

... At the moment we are in difficulties on the left wing. In the sectors of Heidrich and Raapke there is fierce air activity. In that area he has simply cleared all the minefields before the Green Line from the air. Now they must be re-laid hurriedly during the night and in the next few days.

2330 hrs Wentzell - Roettiger

...

R: What about the Army commander? Did you talk with him?

W: I was unable to reach him.

R: The Field Marshal thinks you ought to call him back [from leave].

W: I will call him on the telephone tomorrow morning

...

44. The Main War Diary of Tenth Army for 26 Aug carried the following entry:

Time and again during the last weeks the Army command has pointed out that the next major operation of the enemy was to be expected on the Adriatic coast (e.g. tel cons 19 Jul, 24 Jul, 29 Jul, and particularly C. of S. Tenth Army with Col Beelitz, Ops Offr O.B.SW on 9 Aug and 10 Aug). During the afternoon of 26 Aug the now clearly discernible enemy picture and the measures to be taken by 76 Pz Corps have been discussed with the Army Group without for the moment obtaining their full agreement with the Army's point of view.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth, W.D. 8, 26 Aug 44)

The above statement in itself is true enough, but it must be taken into account that the early alarm and "wisdom" of Tenth Army was in part a result of Allied deception. When the original intelligence picture of an Allied build-up on the Adriatic finally collapsed (see H.S. Report No. 24, paras 63, 79), Marshal Kesselring turned his full attention to the events on the west coast and in turn suffered complete surprise on the east coast due to the cumulative effects of Allied astuteness and the dismal failure of his own Intelligence service.

45. Fourteenth Army knew from bitter experience what might happen when it had to transfer some of its formations to another part of the front. True to form (as well as true to fact), the Main War Diary for 26 Aug carried items expressing concern regarding Allied intentions on the Army's front. And at 2345 hrs the Army telephoned to Army Group that agents were making the following statements:

(a) The enemy front is thinly held but 2.5 km further to the rear rather strongly.

(b) The insignia of the following divisions have been seen: New Zealand, South African, Canadian [sic] and 1 Greek.

- (c) Considerable concentrations of tanks in the rear area; on the roads heavy motor traffic.
- (d) Along the roads great stores of artillery ammunition.
- (e) Allied soldiers have stated on 25 Aug that within five days they would be attacking in the direction of Empoli, Signa and Florence.

(G.M.D.S. - 62241/1, Fourteenth Army, W.D.4, 26 Aug 44)

27 Aug

46. Tactically speaking the day was one of continued advances by the leading elements of Eighth Army in the direction of the Green Line. Once again the records of the telephone conversations are of particular interest because they reflect the views and opinions of the commanders and the reasons for the measures taken. In para 44 above it was shown that in the evening of 26 Aug Tenth Army and Army Group "C" did not see eye to eye in their appraisals of the situation. On the morning of 27 Aug, C. of S. Tenth Army received a further shock when after a few casual remarks Marshal Kesselring made the following statement:

0920 hrs      Wentzell - Kesselring

- K: A few moments ago I told my officers that this whole affair gives me the impression of a large-scale diversion arising from the enemy's fear of a German flanking attack in the West with three to four divisions in order to ruin the whole invasion of Southern France. All the attacks on the railways during the last few days, the attacks on the roads, the point at Ravenna, and now the attack on the left wing; all these things give me the impression that this attack will not be proceeded with in strength, but that the attacks have the express object of tying up our forces so that nothing can go wrong in Southern France.
- W: We shall have to see what today brings forth, so as to find out also from prisoners what is happening.
- K: Have they taken any prisoners?
- W: Yes, Canadians and from 46 Brit Div.
- K: Which Canadians are they?
- W: We do not know yet. Unfortunately one of the prisoners is already dead. They tried to take him back during daylight and he was caught in a bombing attack and killed. Now I have given orders that the other Canadians<sup>2</sup> are under no circumstances to be taken back during the day. They will not be brought back till the evening. We do not know where they are because Corps headquarters are moving ...

---

\* According to conversations which were held later in the day, the prisoner who died in the bombing attack was from 46 Brit Div (ibid).

K: I am anxious to hear what the prisoners have to say and whether my assumption that it is a diversion will be confirmed.

1130 hrs Wentzell - Runkel (German synopsis)

... Runkel unfortunately is unable to submit any information about the Canadians; they refuse to speak. Perhaps they belong to the armoured brigade. Efforts must be made to ascertain whether they belong to a large formation or to this brigade.

According to the telephone conversations the Germans employed very shrewd interrogators (Wentzell, 1010 hrs). The tenor of the latter conversation indicates that they did not find out much; for unspecified reasons, however, by 1810 hrs the Germans felt certain that the prisoners were from 1 Cdn Inf Div, and Wentzell told Roettiger that 5 Cdn Armd Div could not be far off, as it was unlikely that the Canadian Corps would be split up (G.M.D.S. - 61437/8, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 594, tel cons 27 Aug) (Photostat 981A10.(D205)).

47. The conversation at 1810 hrs between Wentzell and Roettiger, while too long and involved to quote, was the most important one of the day and, in fact, constituted a temporary assumption of the leadership by Wentzell. With the consent of Marshal Kesselring (who was near the telephone and praised Wentzell for his ideas) it was decided during this conversation:

To drop the plans for taking 334 Inf Div into Army reserve;

To drop the plans for exchanging 98 Inf Div for 29 Pz Gren Div;

But instead of this:

To move 334 Inf Div to Fourteenth Army;

To move 29 Pz Gren Div to the Adriatic coast;

To move 26 Pz Div complete to Tenth Army for commitment under 76 Pz Corps (at a time to be determined by O.B.SW);

To let weary 71 Inf Div change places with 98 Inf Div.

(Ibid, 27 Aug 44)

48. During the day the inner wings of the two Corps reached the Red Line; H.Q. 715 and 305 Inf Divs assumed command in their respective portions of the front previously controlled by H.Q. 334 Inf Div; H.Q. 278 Inf Div assumed command in the area previously controlled by H.Q. 5 Mtn Div (G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D.8, 27 Aug)<sup>2</sup>.

≡ For the purpose of possible research at a later date, note should be taken of the following changes in map code:

(a) as of 0001 hrs 27 Aug the number 'eleven' was added to the number of each large square on the map 1:100,000, then in force. (G.M.D.S. - 61437/7, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 506, 24 Aug 44)

(b) As of 0901 hrs 27 Aug reports to Army Group were coded on the basis of the map 1:200,000, then in force. (G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D.8, 27 Aug 44)

49. A tabulation of the number and types of anti-tank weapons with the divisions of Tenth Army was prepared by the Army's Senior Armoured Officer on 27 Aug (G.M.D.S. - 61437/8, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 26-30 Aug, Appx 603, 27 Aug 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D234)). At that time, prior to the arrival of the formations dispatched to strengthen the left wing of the Army, 76 Pz Corps was in possession of the following:

76 Pz Corps (excl 5 Mtn Div; incl 278 Inf Div)	Total	Of these fit for use
Heavy anti-tank guns, self-propelled	43	27
Heavy anti-tank guns, tractor-drawn	7	6
Panther tanks (all with 1 Bn 4 Pz Regt)	33	20
Heavy anti-tank guns on "Rhinceros" (tank chassis Mark IV)	5	5
Anti-tank gun 39 (?)	9	2
Panther turrets	9	4
Assault guns (Italian)	17	15
Assault guns (German)	14	7
Grand Total	137	86

28 Aug

50. The vigorous pressure exerted by the Canadians on the inner wings of 71 Inf and 1 Para Divs caused the infantry elements of 71 Inf Div to falter. It was then realized on all levels that the danger of an immediate break-through would be very great, should the Canadians reach the Green Line simultaneously with the retreating Germans and before substantial reserves could reach and man the critical portion of the line. The surprise achieved by the Eighth Army had created a most awkward situation for the enemy, and a great part of the day's telephone conversations dealt with the problem of ascertaining which units, if any, could be moved up fast enough to serve as a stop gap.

51. According to Tenth Army's situation map for 28 and 29 Aug, the German forces, then a few miles south of the Foglia river, and gradually falling back to the Green Line sector Montecchio - Osteria Nuova - Borgo S. Maria, were, from left to right:

- 1 Bn 4 Para Regt (1 Para Div)
- 2 Bn 211 Gren Regt (71 Inf Div)
- 1 Bn 194 Gren Regt (71 Inf Div)

On, and just across the boundary with 46 Brit Div was 171 Fd Repl Bn (71 Inf Div). (G.M.D.S. - 61437/19, Tenth Army, W.D.8, sit maps 20-29 Aug, sit map 28 and 29 Aug 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D236)). In a telephone conversation between Wentzell and Roettiger, at 2220 hrs, it was then reported that by the evening

76 Pz Corps had found it necessary to dispatch the two reserve battalions of 1 Para Div to the area east of S. Angelo, in order to bolster the weakening units of 71 Inf Div (G.M.D.S. - 61437/8, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 617, tel cons 28 Aug 44) (Photostat 981A10. (D205)).

52. By midday 28 Aug Marshal Kesselring had evidently changed his opinion regarding the nature of the attack (para 46 above); at 1235 hrs he said to Wentzell:

... Die Sache am linken Fluegel erscheint mir doch gefaehrlich ...  
(Freely, but faithfully interpreted: "I now agree with you that the matter on the coast is dangerous".)

(Ibid)

53. Somehow during the day a copy of Lt-Gen Sir Oliver Leese's message to the troops (C.M.H.Q. Report No. 187, para 56) had been captured by the Germans, and by the end of the day the German commanders were convinced of its authenticity, were discussing its text and implications, from its distribution list had gathered the composition of 1 Cdn and 5 Brit Corps, and had concluded that it would now be safe and appropriate to shift the main weight of the Army to the Adriatic (ibid). In the meantime General v. Vietinghoff had returned from leave, and on the occasion of his first conversation with General Herr, at 2235 hrs was told:

On the basis of the captured document it is now certain that the enemy intends to carry out a big push to the plains of the Po.

(Ibid)

54. The "Final Appreciation of the Day" in the Main War Diary of Tenth Army read as follows:

No fighting of consequence at the front of 51 Mtn Corps. The withdrawal movement with the objective of releasing additional formations of 334 Inf Div is proceeding according to plan.

At the front of 76 Pz Corps the direction of the thrust and the enemy's intention are becoming clearly discernible. By committing fresh formations (Canadians and British in place of the Poles), and by superior weight of armoured and air formations, he is seeking to destroy our formations forward of the Green Line, with the objective of then quickly passing through the Green Line in the direction of Rimini. In the sector of 71 Inf Div the enemy succeeds in breaking through as far as the line 3 km east of Molinello del Bosco - just east of S. Angelo, and in the sector of 1 Para Div he breaks through to a point west of Arzilla. As a continuation of the attacks is expected, approval is given for 76 Pz Corps to withdraw to the Green Line. One battalion from 26 Pz Div and one regimental group of 98 Inf Div to be moved up hurriedly to form a Corps reserve. Furthermore, three additional Flak battalions to be moved up to the Corps for defence against the constant air attacks.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D.8, 28 Aug 44)

55. The most important orders of the day are being retained in photostatic form:

981A10.(D237) O.B.SW to Tenth Army 2045 hrs

Army authorized to withdraw 71 Inf Div and 1 Para Div to Green Line.

Accelerated concentration of 26 Pz Div near Cesena.

1 Bn 9 Pz Gren Regt, 1 Bn 67 Pz Gren Regt, 1 Bn 93 Arty Regt (all of 26 Pz Div) to be temporarily under command of 76 Pz Corps for commitment at front.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/8, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 26-31 Aug, Appx 618, 28 Aug 44)

981A10.(D238) Tenth Army to 76 Pz Corps 2110 hrs

Withdrawal Order. Green Line to be defended to last man.

(Ibid, Appx 621)

981A10.(D239) Tenth Army to 76 Pz Corps and Corps Witthoef 1350 hrs

Reinforced 290 Gren Regt (98 Inf Div) to reach positions in Green Line during night 29/30 Aug.

(Ibid, Appx 597)

981A10.(D240) Tenth Army to 76 Pz Corps 2030 hrs

Employment of elements 26 Pz Div temporarily under command.

(Ibid, Appx 620)

56. On 28 Aug the commander of Fourteenth Army advised Kesselring of the increasing enemy preparations for an attack on both sides of Florence. He pointed out that none of the divisions at the front were mechanized, and that a withdrawal movement in order to be successful would therefore have to be carried out before enemy pressure developed. In view of this, and of the situation on the Adriatic coast, Army Group now gave orders for Fourteenth Army to fall back to the Green Line in several planned movements. Fourteenth Army decided to fall back to the Hansi (intermediate) Line during the night 30/31 Aug (G.M.D.S. - 62241/1, Fourteenth Army, W.D.4, 28 Aug 44). Kesselring's formal order to both Armies for the gradual withdrawal to the Green Line was issued at 0030 hrs 29 Aug. A photostatic copy and a translation of the document appear as Appendix "G" to this report (G.M.D.S. - 62241/5, Fourteenth Army, W.D. 4, Appx 17-30 Aug, Folio 848b, 29 Aug 44)(Photostat 981A10.(D241)).

29 Aug

57. On this day the retreating divisions of 76 Pz Corps crossed the Foglia River. In connection with the developments in this area, the "Final Appreciation of the Day" in the Main War Diary of Tenth Army contained the following remark:

The withdrawal of 76 Pz Corps to the Green Line has been carried out. Despite sharp engagements with the hotly pursuing enemy it was possible to save all heavy weapons. The coming day will be an exceptionally grave one for the reason that in spite of all acceleration the approaching reserves cannot become effective before 30 Aug. During the last few days our minefields forward of the Green Line - no doubt betrayed by agents - have been systematically and effectively destroyed by successive waves of enemy bombers.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D.8, 29 Aug 44)

58. Tenth Army's final situation report for the day was issued at about midnight 29/30 Aug. At that time the approaching reserves were reported in the following areas:

26 Pz Div

1 Bn 9 Pz Gren Regt east of S.M. del Monte  
1 Bn 67 Pz Gren Regt  
1 Bn 93 Pz Arty Regt 3 km north-west of S.M. del Monte  
2 Bn 67 Pz Gren Regt on march to S.M. del Monte  
Elements of Tk Bn  
3 Coy Engr Bn south-east of Cesena  
Div H.Q. Roncofreddo

Balance of Division to reach the area of Cesena during night 29/30 Aug

98 Inf Div

Battle Group 290 Gren Regt between Poggio Berni and Vericchio (on march to Saludeccio)

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/8, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 26-31 Aug, Appx 641, Tagesmeldung 29 Aug 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D209))

59. Time and space of course were elements which could not be overcome by mere orders and commands, and during the whole day General Wentzell had misgivings and feared that too little would come too late. Time and again in long telephone conversations he sought to entice Army Group to move more forces to the critical sector and to take a chance further up the coast where probably nothing was going to happen. But the experience at the Garigliano front with the subsequent embarrassment at Anzio had not been forgotten (Hist Sec Report No. 20, para 21); the Army Group was unwilling to gamble, and no further measures were taken on that day. The stage was set; soon the opposing forces would meet head-on, and the outcome of the battle might well decide the further course of the campaign in Italy.

The Gothic Line (Green Line I)

60. The general location and the military significance of the Gothic Line have been amply described in Allied narratives and need not be reviewed in this report. In Allied literature the term Gothic Line has frequently been used in a dual sense,



firstly to describe one specific line of the whole system of German defences on the height of the Apennines and, secondly, for the whole complex of these defences. The specific line was the Gothic Line proper, the German Main Defence Line extending from Pesaro along the heights of the north bank of the Foglia River and thence across the peninsula to the Tyrrhenian Sea at a point 4 km south-east of Marina di Carrara. The German name for this particular line at the time of the breaching was: Green Line I. (For Green Line II and Rimini position see paras 90 and 119 below.)

61. To the Germans the Gothic defences were known by a succession of names. Prior to 25 Apr 44 they were known as the "Apennine Position", from 25 Apr to 15 Jun as the "Gothic Position", after 16 Jun as the "Green Line" (see Hist Sec Report No. 20, para 62f). As work on the defence positions progressed, the original abstraction of a line as a last barrier against penetration of the Lombard Plain from the South was replaced by the reality of a system of defences in depth, and the individual major positions were then given the names referred to in para 60 above.

62. The first order to authorities below the highest planning levels in connection with the creation of a defence line in the Apennine regions was apparently dispatched by the German High Command to Army Group "B" on 27 Jul 43 in a list of tasks which included the item:

... Reconnoitring and preparations for the development and occupation of the Apennine position.

(981SOM.(D79F), "The Italian Campaign", op cit, Chap 4, p. 14)

According to the same source this work at that time was being carried out by H.Q. 51 Mtn Corps (ibid).

63. When Army Group "B" (Rommel's Headquarters) was moved to France late in November 1943, Marshal Kesselring, on 21 Nov 43, assumed control of the whole German sphere in the Italian theatre of war (H.S. Report No. 18, para 105) and thereby became responsible for the further development of the Apennine defences. Not a great deal was done in this respect until after the landing at Anzio, when Fourteenth Army was moved to the front, and Armeegruppe v. Zangen was created for the purpose of guarding the Italian coast north of the line Cecina - Porto Recanati. On 24 Jan 44 Kesselring directed Armeegruppe v. Zangen:

To carry on with the utmost energy the construction work on the Apennine position and on the coastal fronts.

(H.S. Report No. 20, para 25)

64. Retarded by difficulties of procurement and handicapped by other factors, construction work proceeded in somewhat leisurely fashion until 2 Jun 44, when the breaching of the Caesar Line and the imminent fall of Rome impelled the German High Command to issue a comprehensive order for the accelerated development of the Gothic Line (H.S. Report No. 24, paras 27 - 30). In German records this order was frequently referred to as "The Gothic Order". A photostatic copy and a translation of this document have appeared as Appendix "E" to H.S. Report No. 24.

65. Kesselring's order for the reconnoitring and preparation of a second line (Green Line II) about 15 - 20 km behind Green Line I, was issued on 3 Jul 44 (G.M.D.S. - 61438/6, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx vol 28e, Green Line, Misc Docs)(Photostat 981A10.(D242)). The last general order of O.B.SW in connection with work on the Gothic defences was issued on 11 Aug 44:

Work on the Green Line - including the depth of the position - must be furthered in such a manner as to make the position fully ready for occupancy as of 1 Sep 44. Whether the line will be occupied before or after 1 Sep depends on the situation. O.B.SW.

(Ibid, Ops 5593/94, 11 Aug 44)(Photostat 981A10.(D243))

66. The scope of the work done by 28 Aug 44 in Tenth Army's portion of the Gothic defences was shown in a report to O.B.SW on 3 Sep 44 (G.M.D.S. - 61438/6, Tenth Army, W.D.8, vol 28f of Appx, Green Line, Misc Docs, item dated 3 Sep 44)(Photostat 981A10.(D248)). According to this document the situation in this respect was as follows:

Type of Installation	Completed	Under Constr	Projected
Nests of Resistance	10	2	-
Machine Gun Positions	2,375	272	89
Circular Emplacements for M.G.	73	3	-
Armoured Machine Gun Nests	16	-	-
Tank Gun Turrets (1 & 2 cm guns)	18	15	13
Panther Turrets	4	18	7
Italian Tanks in Fixed Positions	8	-	-
Atk Gun, Mortar & Aslt Gun Positions	479	131	45
Shelters	2,267	706	167
Shelters, Minod	90	26	2
Caves	27	21	-
"O.T." Steel Shelters	-	22	-
Infantry Observation Posts	153	40	8
Small Dugouts and Shelters	1,201	115	31
Connecting Trenches (metres)	1,253	-	-
Artillery Observation Posts with Shelter	166	12	4
Artillery Positions	119	5	-
Shelters for Crews or Ammunition in above	119	20	-
Atk Ditches (metres)	8,944	-	-
Atk Wall (metres)	160	-	-
Number of "T" Mines laid	72,517	-	-
Miscellaneous Obstacles	2	-	-
Prepared Positions for Bazookas	2	-	-
Number of "S" Mines laid	23,172	-	-
Wire Obstacles (metres)	114,170	13,570	27,200
Trip Wire Enganglements (metres)	3,200	-	-
Riflemen's Positions (Trees & Branches)	16,006	-	-
Defensive Flame-throwers	-	9	-
Roads Constructed (metres)	53,209	2,500	-

(Ibid)

67. In connection with the Green Line, photostatic copies of the following German documents are being retained:

981AZ.(D37) (Introduced in H.S. Report No. 24, para 27)

Armeegruppe v. Zangen 7 May 44  
Construction Sectors of Gothic Line from  
Adriatic to Tyrrhenian Sea

(G.M.D.S. - 64839/8, W.D. Armeegruppe v.  
Zangen)

981A10.(D244) Tenth Army August 1944

Final Course of Green Lines I and II in area  
of Tenth Army (traced on British map  
1:100,000 by Cartographic Sub-Section DHS)

(G.M.D.S. - 61438/5, Tenth Army, W.D.8, vol  
28e of Appx, Green Line, Misc Docs)

981A10.(D245) Fourteenth Army August 1944

Successive Defence Lines from Heinrich (Arnc)  
Line to Green Line in area of Fourteenth  
Army

(G.M.D.S. - 62241/3, Fourteenth Army, W.D. 4,  
sit maps, trace from German master map)

981A10.(D246) Tenth Army 2 Jul 44

Green Line I - Adriatic Sector (Trace  
1:250,000) Anti-tank Installations, Tank Gun  
Turrets and Armoured Machine Gun Nests (com-  
pleted, under construction and projected) as  
at 2 Jul 44

(G.M.D.S. - 61438/5, Tenth Army, W.D.8, vol  
28e of Appx, Green Line, Misc Docs, item 17)

981A10.(D247) Headquarters Gen of Engr Bessel 4 Aug 44

Location of Panther Turrets, Tank Gun (2 cm)  
Turrets and Circular Machine Gun Emplacements  
in area of Tenth Army (Trace 1:100,000)

(G.M.D.S. - 61438/6, Tenth Army, W.D.8, vol  
28 of Appx, Green Line, Misc Docs, 4 Aug 44)

68. At the time of the actual fighting there, the Green Line on the north shore of the Foglia river proved to be less formidable than had been anticipated. Apart from and in addition to the fruits derived from the bravery and superior morale of the men of Eighth Army, this situation was a product of the tactical surprise achieved and of the devastating bombardments of the mine-fields and prepared defences from the air. To the fighting troops the relatively easy breaching of the German Main Defence Line however meant merely that what had been expected to be an attack on a bitterly defended line, would now turn into an equally bitter creeping battle over an area twenty kilometres in depth, in a series of operations which in the aggregate might well be called the "Battle of Rimini".

The Breakthrough (30 Aug - 1 Sep)

30 Aug

69. The location of the approaching German reserves at midnight 29/30 Aug was shown in para 58 above. By the morning of 30 Aug the battalions which had been earmarked for immediate commitment had reached the front. In succession from the right, 1 Bn 9 Pz Gren Regt was at Belvedere, next was 2 Bn 67 Pz Gren Regt<sup>\*</sup>, then 1 Bn 67 Pz Gren Regt astride Montecchio and to the divisional boundary a few hundred yards east of that locality. From the divisional boundary to Osteria Nuovo and at Borgo S. Maria the Canadian units faced 1 and 2 Bns 4 Para Regt. (G.M.D.S. - 61437/20, Tenth Army, W.D.8, sit maps 30 Aug - 8 Sep, sit map 30 and 31 Aug 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D249)). The section of this map showing the dispositions of 76 Pz Corps appears in photostatic form as Appendix "H" to this report.

70. On the occasion of the morning report Wentzell told Roettiger that 26 Pz Div was now in command of the sector adjoining 1 Para Div (G.M.D.S. - 61437/8, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 26-31 Aug, Appx 663, tel cons 30 Aug 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D205)). During the morning nothing alarming had occurred at the front, and the Chiefs of Staff expressed satisfaction over this gain of time. It was hoped that a breakthrough might be prevented just as had been done in the initial defence operations at Cassino. Wentzell nevertheless felt increasingly certain that a general offensive in the direction of Rimini was impending, and he continued his telephonic campaign for more reserves at the cost of accepting a risk further up the coast. He argued that the current developments in the Adriatic sector would, during the next two weeks, have a decisive influence on the whole course of the Italian campaign, and that forces here, there and everywhere constituted a dispersion at a time when concentration of forces was indicated. He was not very successful in this quest however, and Roettiger stated repeatedly that the Army Group was unable to accept the risk suggested (ibid).

71. During the latter part of the day it was learned that 2 Pol Corps, 1 Cdn Corps and 5 Brit Corps were nibbling at the Main Defence Line and were obviously in a mood to push ahead. At 2305 hrs Wentzell told Roettiger that it did not yet look like a set-piece attack; but just as the Germans would do under similar circumstances, the orders given were apparently to follow up or get set for an attack according to the resistance encountered. Roettiger in reply could only say that he hoped 29 Pz Gren Div would be available in the rear area of 76 Pz Corps by 4 Sep (ibid).

72. In connection with the developments on the Adriatic wing of the Army Group, Fourteenth Army on 30 Aug received orders to speed up the disengagement of 29 Pz Gren Div irrespective of the belated arrival of 334 Inf Div, and to transfer 20 G.A.F. Div to the Adriatic coastal zone as an Army Group reserve, the advance elements to depart in the evening of 31 Aug irrespective of the time of arrival of the relieving formations of 42 Jg Div from the area of the Ligurian Army.

(G.M.D.S. - 62241/1, Fourteenth Army, W.D.4, 30 Aug 44)

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\* This battalion participated in the defence of Montecchio on 31 Aug (see para 74 below).

73. On 30 Aug the big planning conference (para 38 above) in connection with a possible withdrawal behind the River Po was held at the headquarters of Tenth Army. All bridges across the Po had been destroyed by Allied air attacks, and the crossing of the river with large forces under worsening circumstances would require careful planning. The basic plan for a timed programme for this operation, aptly called "Autumn Fog" (Herbstnebel), was preserved by Tenth Army and is being retained in photostatic form (981A10.(D310)).(G.M.D.S. - 61437/8, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 26-31 Aug, Appx 662, 30 Aug 44).

31 Aug

74. The successful penetration of the Gothic Line (Green Line I) on this day by the divisions of the Eighth Army created a highly critical situation; caused alarm and consternation amongst the ranking German officers, and forced Army Group to a belated revision of its reserved attitude regarding the bringing up of all possible reserves within its grasp. The description of the day's tactical developments is being quoted below from the Main War Diary of Tenth Army:

31 Aug 44 Tactical Situation:

51 Mtn Corps:

Following the planned withdrawals only artillery and petrol activity. Own artillery harasses enemy tank and vehicle traffic.

76 Pz Corps:

After carrying out an extremely strong concentration of his forces at the front of 71 Inf Div, 26 Pz Div and 1 Para Div, the enemy undertakes a new large-scale attack. Despite the massed commitment by the enemy of tank, fighter-bomber and bomber formations, our own division succeed in preventing the breakthrough to Riccione.

In detail: In the sector of 278 Inf Div an attempted enemy breakthrough is halted 1 km south of Pieve di Cagna by the fire of our own artillery and heavy infantry weapons.

71 Inf Div, which has been engaged in heavy fighting for the last ten days, succeeds in halting the attack of an enemy division. After repulsing several, for the enemy very costly attacks on Monte Calvo, with air, artillery and tank support, the locality is given up and the enemy, who is advancing to the East, is stopped in the depth of the main battle line. Apart from the penetration area of the previous day at Belvedere, the enemy also advances northwards at the joint between 26 Pz Div and 1 Para Div. One battalion was encircled at Belvedere after fighting off several attacks. After having expended all their ammunition, elements of this battalion succeeded in making their way back to our own lines. The enemy, who temporarily penetrated Mondaino, was forced back by an immediate counter-attack.

26 Pz Div: This division too, which was rushed to the area only a few days ago, stands today at the focal point of the fighting, and succeeds in hard fighting in stemming the enemy advance on both its wings. After several night attacks the enemy succeeds in advancing to height 231 (2.5 km E Mondaino). The height is retaken in a counter-attack but lost again in the morning hours after fierce fighting. On the other hand it was possible to seal off the penetration on the left neighbour's front and thus prevent the necessity of a withdrawal there to the Northeast. An additional enemy attack shortly before 1600 hours at il Cereto (3 km ESE Mondaino) is halted by artillery fire. Also at Montecchio the enemy attacks in the afternoon with strong armoured formations. 2 Bn 67 Pz Gren Regt at first makes good progress in a counter-attack, but later is **forced** back to the North by superior force.

1 Para Div: The enemy, who has made a break-in at Montecchio with about 100 tanks, is lunging into the deep flank of 4 Para Regt. After some single tanks, which have advanced farther north, have been disabled by our fire, the enemy veers off in a south-easterly direction. At the same time the enemy is attacking with about 40 tanks at Borgo S. Maria. He obtains a penetration of 1 km depth. The fighting in the eastern part of Pesaro continues during the whole day. The main battle line is under fire from 10 enemy naval units on the height of Pesaro.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D.8, 31 Aug 44)

75. The true significance of the dry words in the tactical report was of course that the Canadian Corps had penetrated deeply into the German main defence line. The synopsis of the day's telephone conversations in Tenth Army's Main War Diary opened with the statement:

Discussion of the situation on the left wing of the Army (the enemy is in the Green Line). Time and again the situation is being described as very grave, as immediate commitment of reserves which have just arrived makes it barely possible to seal off the enemy penetrations. All reserves (elements of 98 Inf and 26 Pz Div) are brought forward, and the artillery is sharply concentrated. In the afternoon the Army requests from Army Group the retention and concentration in the area of Cesena of 100 Mtn Jg Regt (the regiment of 5 Mtn Div still in the Army area). The Army Group consents.\*...

(Ibid)

76. The retention of 100 Mtn Jg Regt in the Cesena area made it possible to cancel the exchange of 71 Inf Div for 98 Inf Div. 71 Inf Div (less 211 Gren Regt, which had already been relieved) remained at the front. During the day 98 Inf Div was placed under the command of 76 Pz Corps, and in its place Corps

\* A good deal of interesting detail regarding the day's events and decisions appear in the record of telephone conversations (28 pages). (G.M.D.S. - 61437/8, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 26-31 Aug, Appx 686, tel cons 31 Aug 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D205)). On this day, for instance, Heidrich, who had been vainly sought by Army Group, was reached on the telephone in Dresden by Wentzell and apparently condescended to promise his immediate return to his troops.

Witthoeft was assigned 100 Mtn Jg Regt and 211 Gren Regt (ibid). According to the daily situation report of the Army, 290 Gren Regt was placed under command of 71 Inf Div on arrival at the front; 9 Pz Gren Regt (less 1 Bn already committed), 26 Pz Recce Bn, 2 and 3 Bn 93 Pz Arty Regt, and the mass of 93 Engr Bn reached their Division during the day. (At 1550 hrs Wentzell told Kesselring that 26 Pz Div was complete: op cit, tel cons). Also during this day 1 Bn 4 Pz Regt (previously in Corps reserve) was placed under command of 1 Para Div (G.M.D.S. - 61437/8, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 26-31 Aug, Appx 683, sit rep 31 Aug 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D209)).

77. Fourteenth Army, which during the night 30/31 Aug had withdrawn to the Hansi Line, received orders to continue its withdrawal during the following night. The Main War Diary of the Army bears the following entry:

During night 31 Aug/1 Sep the Army withdraws to the Green Line forefield - Emma Line. This movement to be carried out even in the absence of enemy pressure in order to disengage 29 Pz Gren Div.

At 1200 hrs 31 Aug Roettiger had telephoned Fourteenth Army to accelerate the disengagement of 29 Pz Gren Div in view of the threatening situation arising at the front of the neighbouring Army (G.M.D.S. - 62241/1, Fourteenth Army, W.D.4, 31 Aug 44).

78. General v. Vietinghoff spent most of the day at the headquarters of 76 Pz Corps, 71 Inf Div, 26 Pz Div and 1 Para Div. According to his notes the Corps Commander had stated the reasons for the quick enemy penetrations in the following order:

- (a) 26 Pz Div not yet acquainted with its positions.
- (b) Numerical weakness of 71 Inf Div.
- (c) Great enemy superiority in artillery and aircraft.
- (d) Strength of enemy armoured forces.
- (e) Partial destruction of minefields by enemy bombers.
- (f) Alleged failure of mines to detonate.

A note regarding the Panther turrets in the sector of 1 Para Div indicates that some received their first supply of ammunition during night 30/31 Aug, and that others had not been completed at that time. The Army Commander's notes on this visit are being retained in photostatic form (ibid, Appx 685) (Photostat 981A10.(D250)).

1 Sep

79. During the night 31 Aug/1 Sep, and all day on 1 Sep, the Canadian units worked and fought their way forward and finally emerged at the far side of the Gothic Line (Green Line I). In contrast to the bland and polished terminology of the Main War Diary, the day's telephone conversations were studded with expressions of dismay and bitter disappointment over the quick loss of the prepared line; the next best thing now would be to withdraw quickly and to organize the divisions and new reserves for a more effective stand in a shorter line further north (G.M.D.S. - 61437/9, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 1-3 Sep, Appx 706, tel cons 1 Sep 44). Marshal Kesselring spent part of the day at the headquarters of Tenth Army. Apparently he admitted having reacted too

slowly to the developing threat (see para 81 below) and was most anxious to take every possible step to halt the Eighth Army at the next line suitable for defence.

80. The tactical developments at the focal points of the fighting were reflected in the Main War Diary of Tenth Army by the following entries:

26 Pz Div: At 1300 hrs the enemy begins his attack, with the focal points on both sides of the road fork 3 km east of M. Gridolfo and on M. Marrone. With very strong artillery support, and committing ground-attack aircraft, at about 1400 hrs he succeeds in penetrating the main line of resistance at the road junction referred to, with about 50 tanks. But the advance is brought to a halt, with eight enemy tanks put out of action. At the same time, however, the enemy succeeds in surrounding M. Marrone by an enveloping attack from the Northeast, and in wiping out the defenders after several hours of fighting.

At approximately 1500 hrs the enemy advances afresh from the penetration area east of M. Gridolfo. By strong defensive action, effectively supported by our artillery, the attack is again brought to a halt, and by a local withdrawal, the enemy's plans for envelopment are defeated. Further pressure against the left divisional flank is successfully countered by our artillery.

1 Para Div: During the early morning the enemy continues his attacks from the penetration area, supported by tanks and air formations combined with artillery fire, the focal point being at Tavullio\*, and Pieve (3 km northeast thereof). Heavy fighting develops for Tavullio in particular. After fierce fighting and almost complete annihilation of the garrison, the height 1.5 km to the East had to be abandoned. The fierceness of the fighting is shown by the fact that in the sector of 4 Para Regt alone, 30 tanks were destroyed and five more put out of action by gunfire.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D.8, 11 Sep 44)

81. The "Final Appreciation of the Day" began with the words:

The Army continues to be concerned about the development on the Adriatic (The Field Marshal admits that he recognized the "centre of gravity" developing here too late). The enemy has not achieved any major breakthrough, but a moderate withdrawal movement on the Army's left wing cannot be avoided. Losses in men and anti-tank weapons are making themselves felt. ...

(Ibid)

From a telephone conversation between Wentzoll and Roettiger at

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\* Tavullio and Tomba di Pesaro are one and the same locality. Allied maps show Tomba di Pesaro, German maps Tavullio, a name which is locally used at the present time (903.003(D2), Italy, Topo Notes, p.21). German records show misspellings in the form of Tavullo and Tavollo.



1325 hrs it appears that in the morning, when he was at the headquarters of Tenth Army, Marshal Kesselring had changed his mind regarding the employment of 100 Mtn Jg Regt (5 Mtn Div), and instead of leaving it with Corps Witthoeft had decided to commit the three battalions as quickly as possible. At the same time it was also decided to move 85 Recce Bn (5 Mtn Div) and 1 Bn 95 Arty Regt (5 Mtn Div) from the Cesena area to the South for commitment under the command of 76 Pz Corps. Wentzell remarked that all the Army's transport was engaged in bringing forward to Green Line II the two last regiments of 98 Inf Div, and that the elements from 5 Mtn Div would come too late for intervention in the current fighting (op cit, tel cons). During the day Fourteenth Army received orders to rush one battalion (15 cm smoke-shell mortars) of 56 Proj Regt to Tenth Army; and Forli was now designated as the concentration area for 29 Pz Gren Div. (G.M.D.S. - 62241/1, Fourteenth Army, W.D. 4, 1 Sep 44)

Exploitation to the Conca River (2 Sep)

2 Sep

82. Authority to withdraw the left wing of Tenth Army - if unavoidable - to the line: Foglia River 3 km west-south-west of Auditore - Calfabbro (700 m north-north-east of Tavoleto) - west of Monte Maggiore - east of Morciano - 2km west of Cattolica, had been given by O.B.SW in an operation order dispatched at 0350 hrs 2 Sep (G.M.D.S. - 61437/9, Tenth Army, W.D. 8, Appx 1-3 Sep, Appx 723, 2 Sep 44) (Photostat and Translation 981A10.(D253)). The advance during the day of the Canadian spearheads to Gradara, Fanano and San Giovanni forced 1 Para Div to withdraw quickly from the coastal area between the Foglia and Conca rivers. According to the Main War Diary of Tenth Army the left wing of 26 Pz Div at 1700 hrs obtained a defensive success against one battalion and 30 tanks at about 1.5 km south-west of S. Maria Pietrafitta. But the entry continues:

1 Para Div: Since early morning the enemy continues his armoured attacks with great impetus on the general axis of Cattolica. As a result of the self-sacrificing defence of the strongpoints S.M. Pietrafitta, S. Giovanni, Tavollo<sup>3</sup> and Gradara, the enemy breakthrough is at first prevented. Defensive operations are continued until 3 and 1 Para Regts (less H.Q. 1 Bn 1 Para Regt and elements of one company from this regiment) have made good their withdrawal to the North. The mass of the artillery and of the mortar battalion succeeds in reaching the new sector, but due to their immobility, a number of anti-tank guns and heavy anti-aircraft guns were lost.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D. 8, 2 Sep 44)

The "Final appreciation of the Day" in the same source reads:

On the third day of the great offensive, British Eighth Army tries to force a quick breakthrough to Cattolica with a strong spearhead, and to cut off 76 Pz Corps' left wing. Despite heavy commitment of manpower and materiel the enemy is foiled in this respect by the stubborn resistance of the

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\* See footnote to para 80 above.

strongpoint garrisons, above all in the sector of 1 Para Div and by the excellent cooperation of all arms. The enemy suffers heavy losses, and today, according to reports received up to now, has lost 55 tanks, of which many were destroyed by artillery. After 1 Para Div has succeeded in extricating itself from the threatened envelopment, and in forming a new defence front at Riccione, O.B.SW orders expressly that there is to be no further withdrawal, but defence at all costs, above all in order to gain time for the reinforcements to arrive. On the strength of an intercepted radio conversation, which permits the assumption of an overtaking landing, and of reports of vessels seen off the coast, during the night O.B.SW orders Alarm Stage II for the coastal sector.

(Ibid)

83. The new line ran from immediately north of Tavoloto - Saleduccio - west of Cattolica. According to the record of telephone conversations the exact situation in the sector of 1 Para Div was not known at higher headquarters during the day, but: "In the evening the report was received of their arrival to form a new defence line at Riccione" (ibid, German synopsis of tel cons). 4 Para Regt was not mentioned for the reason that it had virtually ceased to exist. Of various references in this respect, the following is cited:

Casualties of 1 Para Div not yet ascertained; in case of 4 Para Regt over 70%.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/9, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 1-3 Sep, Appx 720, Daily sit rep Tenth Army, 2 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D252))<sup>\*, \*\*</sup>

<sup>†</sup> Much additional information on the day's operations appears in the records of telephone conversations (G.M.D.S. - 61437/9, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 722, tel cons 2 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D251)). A study of these conversations requires the use of Tenth Army's situation map for 1 and 2 Sep 44 (G.M.D.S. - 61437/20, Tenth Army, W.D.8, sit maps 30 Aug - 8 Sep, sit map 1 and 2 Sep) (Photostat Adriatic sector: 981A10.(D254)). Particular attention must be paid to the fact that the discussions with Army Group were based on the code then in force for map 1:200,000 (squares and reference points entered by hand in blue on this map), whereas for the discussions with Corps the original printed numbers for squares and reference points on this map were used. In addition to this the numbers of the large squares had been changed recently, and old or new numbers were being used indiscriminately by the various speakers.

<sup>\*\*</sup> As the different formations were usually identified by stating the name of the commanding officer, the perusal of the records of telephone conversations requires knowledge of the following additional personal names:

CRASEMANN, Eduard Peter, Maj-Gen, Comd 26 Pz Div  
(Experienced divisional commander; commanded 15 Pz Div in Africa for some months)

CRISOLLY, Comd 20 G.A.F. Div

v. HEYGENDORFF, Ralph Karl, Maj-Gen, Comd 162 (Turc) Inf Div  
(Russian speaker, linguist, previously with German Embassy at Moscow; irreplaceable as commander of this particular division; fair soldier)

DOSTLER, Anton, General, Comd Venetian Coast  
(Not a top flight officer)

84. According to the same situation report, at the end of the day headquarters 26 Pz Div were located at Ospedaletto (3 km north-west of Coriano), and headquarters 1 Para Div in the area between S. Lorenzo and S. Fortunato. Regarding the build-up of the defending forces the following locations were reported (as at midnight 2/3 Sep):

76 Pz Corps

100 Mtn Jg Regt (less 3 Bn) near Torre la Tomba (between S. Martino dei Molini and Corpolo, on road to Rinini)

3 Bn 100 Mtn Jg Regt SW Montaletto (near Cesenatico)

85 Recce Bn committed on right wing 71 Inf Div

98 Inf Div:

289 Gren Regt in area 4 km NW Saludeccio

98(Div) Fus Bn committed on left wing 71 Inf Div

117 Gren Regt:

1 Bn in area 4 km NW Glenente

2 Bn near Bordonechio (on coastal road)

Corps Witthoeft

Blocking Group 162(Turc) Inf Div in Riccione - Misano area.

29 Pz Gren Div:

Reinforced 71 (mech) Gren Regt near Imola

Elements 129 Tk Bn near Bologna

2 Bn 15 (mech) Gren Regt - 10 km south of Bologna

313 GHQ Anti-Aircraft Bn with two batteries between Bologna and Imola

One engineer company - 10 km south of Bologna

(Ibid)

From the Conca to the Marano (Coriano Ridge)  
(3-14 Sep)

3 Sep

85. With the weather still favourable, and the German lines not yet fully reinforced and stabilized, 1 Cdn Corps made important gains in bitter fighting, without however achieving the hoped-for breakthrough to Rinini. In German eyes the day was a critical one. It was felt that the storm had to be weathered for this day and that the situation would then be eased during the

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HH (Footnote continued from page 40)

POLACK, Dr. Fritz, Maj-Gen, Comd 29 Pz Gren Div

(High decoration for work in Sicily as commander of a battle group from 29 Pz Gren Div)

REINHARDT, Alfred, Lt-Gen, Comd 98 Inf Div

(A brigade commander at Russian front earlier in the war)

Note: "Fries" or "old Fries" refers to 29 Pz Gren Div, previously commanded by Lt-Gen Walter Fries; "Luettwitz" or "old Luettwitz" refers to 26 Pz Div, previously commanded by Lt-Gen Freiherr Smilo v. Luettwitz)

night by the arrival of 71 Pz Gren Regt at the important Coriano feature behind the joint of 26 Pz Div and 1 Para Div. The German senior commanders were then of the opinion that the advance of the Eighth Army could be brought to a halt and that a stalemate might ensue. In keeping with the importance which the day's developments had assumed in their minds, and no doubt with an eye to their own stature in the eyes of history, the highest ranking commanders couched their talks in meticulously chosen words, which were recorded with unusual care (G.M.D.S. - 61437/9, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 1-3 Sep, Appx 745, tel cons 3 Sep 44; 39 pages). Of particular interest is the conversation at 2335 hrs between Wentzell and Roettiger, in which Wentzell reported in great detail on the situation he had encountered on the occasion of his several inspection and morale-building trips during the day to the headquarters of 76 Pz Corps, 1 Para Div, 26 Pz Div and 98 Inf Div. The uninspired performance of 1 Para Div, where the regiments had lost contact with one another and had committed various tactical blunders, was blamed on the absence of Heidrich; Colonel Schulz (the commander of 1 Para Regt, and at that time the division's deputy commander) was described as a brave man, incapable however of equalling Heidrich's performance. Crasenann was described as lacking in the firm will to stand to the last, and his division was admonished to live up to its past traditions; 98 Inf Div on the other hand seemed to be surprisingly effective and well led. The main hope of salvation at the moment rested on 29 Pz Gren Div and its able commander, who "under no circumstances was to be subordinated even temporarily to either one of its neighbouring divisions"<sup>\*\*</sup>. 29 Pz Gren Div upon arrival was to be completely and unconditionally at the disposal of Tenth Army. Asked where he was going to commit reinforced 71 (mech) Gren Regt, Wentzell said: "Exactly in the sector 50 - 51 [Coriano Ridge]". The regiment was to be commanded directly and in person by the divisional commander and his own headquarters staff.<sup>\*\*</sup> Reinforced 100 Mtn Jg Regt was ordered to occupy positions astride Gornano in the sector adjoining the right flank of 26 Pz Div (ibid).

86. In view of the substantial changes which had taken place in the composition of Tenth Army since the launching of Eighth Army's offensive, a new "Schematic Order of Battle" was issued by the Army on 3 Sep. A photostatic copy and a translation of the document appear as Appendix "J" to this report (G.M.D.S. - 61437/9, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 1-3 Sep, Appx 752a, 3 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D255)). As set forth in preceding paragraphs, and as shown on the above-mentioned document, on 3 Sep 76 Pz Corps was composed of the following formations:

- 1 Para Div
- 26 Pz Div
- 29 Pz Gren Div (en route to the front)
- 71 Inf Div
- 98 Inf Div
- 278 Inf Div
- Reinforced 100 Mtn Jg Regt

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\*- It will be noted that Pretzell in "The Battle of Rimini" (op cit) erroneously gives 3 Sep as the date of 29 Pz Gren Div's intervention. According to all available evidence this event occurred on 4 Sep 44.

\*\* The regimental commander was a new man; Polack on the other hand was an experienced artilleryman, had commanded 29 Pz Arty Regt in the early phases of the Italian campaign, and could be relied on in any situation requiring the expert use of the artillery.

In connection with the situation on 3 Sep, the following additional documents are being retained in photostatic form:

981A10.(D256) 22 Flak Bde Sit map 3 Sep 44 (ibid)

981A10.(D257) Tenth Army. Notes of C. of S. on visits to Corps and divisional headquarters on 3 Sep 44 (ibid)

4 Sep

87. From Riccione Marina at the coast to the western slope of M. Gallero, on 4 Sep 1 Cdn Corps faced the following forces:

4 Para Regt (remnants)  
Blocking Group from 162(Turc) Inf Div  
3 Para Regt  
117 Gren Regt (98 Inf Div)  
1 Para Regt

This aggregation was under the command of General Heidrich, who had rejoined his division during the day. Behind 4 Para Regt, astride Route No. 16, was one company of Tiger tanks; astride Coriano was 71 Gren Regt 29 Pz Gren Div. The location of the various formations was recorded on Tenth Army's situation map for 3 and 4 Sep 44. The Adriatic section of this map appears in photostatic form as Appendix "K" to this report. (G.M.D.S. - 61437/20, Tenth Army, W.D.8, sit maps 30 Aug - 8 Sep, sit map 3 and 4 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D258))

88. Apparently believing in the imminent stabilization of the situation, Marshal Kesselring spent the day at the newly opened tactical headquarters of Fourteenth Army at Vignola (25 km west-north-west of Bologna). On the front of Fourteenth Army the day was completely uneventful (G.M.D.S. - 62241/1, Fourteenth Army, W.D.4, 4 Sep 44). In the evening however, when he returned to his own headquarters, Kesselring learned that the armoured spearheads of 1 Cdn and 5 Brit Corps were threatening to envelop the Coriano Ridge. In the Main War Diary of Tenth Army the day's fighting was summarized as follows:

26 Pz Div: ... Following heavy artillery preparation renewed enemy attacks in the afternoon in northwesterly direction resulted in an enemy penetration 1 km south-east of Passano. From there the enemy attempts to advance to Coriano; heavy fighting is still in progress.

1 Para Div: Following a concentric attack, M. Gallera has been lost. The enemy advances to 1.5 km east of Coriano. Immediate counter-attacks collapse in the fire of artillery and ground-attack aircraft. Indeed, the enemy succeeds in driving our badly depleted formations farther back to the road-fork 1.5 km ENE Coriano and 1 km WSW C. Serra. The enemy also penetrates S.M. di Scacciano where house-to-house fighting takes place. Bitter fighting goes on all day for the road-fork 1 km north of S.M. di Scacciano.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D.8, 4 Sep 44)

89. The reports submitted to the Marshal on his return were confused and contradictory; nobody seemed to be able to give any definite information, and in addition General Herr now appeared to entertain thoughts of further withdrawal. The Marshal seemed to sense that all that had been done would be of no avail;

his mounting exasperation culminated in a towering rage in which he threatened to replace corps and divisional commanders unable to envisage operations other than those of withdrawal. To make matters worse, during the day General Warlimont<sup>W</sup> had appeared at the headquarters of the Army Group and asked Roettiger whether the enemy could be driven back in a counter-attack. Roettiger replied that the Army Group would be happy indeed if it succeeded in stemming the enemy's advance. How much this episode contributed to the Marshal's vexation cannot be ascertained; tactical developments had certainly not come up to expectations; in part at least the scene however is sure to have been a bit of showmanship for the purpose of squeezing a maximum performance from all concerned. Prolonged "plain-talking" was carried on over the wires till far past midnight, when the even-tempered but ever subtle Army commander managed to calm down his disappointed chief by referring to the casualties borne by the troops; by stating that he knew of no man who could better Herr's performance, and by deftly introducing the name of Lemelsen into the conversation.<sup>LM</sup> This was bound to remind the Marshal of the time when after a similar scene he had found himself confronted with the necessity of calling General Lemelsen to act as a temporary substitute for v. Vietinghoff.<sup>VM</sup> (G.M.D.S. - 61437/10, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 4-7 Sep, Appx 768, tel cons 4 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D251))

90. In the Adriatic sector the assault formations of the Eighth Army were now operating in or had overrun the area, which on German maps was designated as Green Line II<sup>GM</sup>. Unless the situation was stabilized without delay the loss of Rimini within the next few days was almost certain. On 5 Sep the full weight and density of the German reserves became effective and the Allied advance was blunted and its momentum lost.

5 Sep

91. According to the German records 98 Inf Div, 26 Pz Div, 29 Pz Gren Div, and 1 Para Div with the attached formations, all decisively assisted by the now very considerable artillery concentrations under the command of Colonel Bornscheuer (Arty Comd 76 Pz Corps) and Colonel Andrae (Comd 5 Proj Bde), obtained a hard-fought success by blocking the advance of Eighth Army at all critical points. During the day 44 Recce Bn (44 Inf Div) began moving to the Cesena area as the nucleus of a new Army reserve; 114 Recce Bn, which had been borrowed from 114 Jg Div, was moving to a blocking position extending inland from Abissinia (2 km southwest of Rimini); the rear elements of 29 Pz Gren Div, which had just reached the Cesena area, were ordered to the front; the efforts of 4 Para Regt astride the coastal road were overshadowed by the presence there of 1 Bn G.H.Q. Tk Regt and one company of Tiger Tanks (of 508 G.H.Q. Hy Tank Bn). For the time being the situation

<sup>W</sup> WARLIMONT, Walter, Gen of Arty, Deputy Chief Armed Forces Operations Staff

<sup>LM</sup> LEMELSEN, Joachim, Col-Gen, Comd Fourteenth Army, (see Hist Sec Report No. 24, para 8, et al)

<sup>VM</sup> Hist Sec Report No. 18, paras 89 and 90

<sup>GM</sup> Course of Green Line II in area of Tenth Army:

Abissinia - S. Clemente - Germano - Sasso Feltrio -  
Monte Copiolo - 2 km N Mercatino - 2 km NE Sorbano -  
2 km N S. Sofia - SW Portico - Marradi - M. Coloreta  
(5 km NE Firenzuola). (See para 67 above)

had now been stabilized (G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D.8, 5 Sep 44; 61437/10, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 4-7 Sep, Appx 789, sit rep 5 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D252)).

92. Reference has been made in Canadian accounts to the gallant fight put up by the Canadians at the coast on 5 Sep (Hist Sec Report No. 187, paras 167 and 168). Enemy opinions corroborate this evaluation. At 0920 hrs 6 Sep Generals Herr and v. Vietinghoff discussed the previous day's fighting near the coast:

v.V: 1 Para Div has Tigers and Panthers and reinforcements from 162 (Turc) Inf Div. No further withdrawal must take place.

H: The attack at the coast was stronger than it seemed (at first). Another division would not have survived the last heavy attack. ...

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/10, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 4-7 Sep, Appx 816, tel cons 6 Sep 44)

6 Sep

93. Renewed Allied attacks in the Adriatic sector continued to meet with stiff resistance and the situation assumed the character of a stalemate. 29 Pz Gren Div and 1 Para Div made full use of their artillery components by harassing the leading elements of 1 Cdn Corps with fire concentrations from all weapons. According to 1 Para Div these tactics were particularly effective in the Riccione and Riccione Marina area, where fire was directed against armoured units in assembly positions. (G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D.8, 6 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D251)).

94. Abatement of the pressure now made it possible for the German commanders to examine measures for coping with the problems bound to arise from the certain resumption of the Allied offensive. During the past emergency, commanders at all levels had been unable to maintain a reasonable balance between fighting troops and reserves, and nothing, therefore, at the moment was more urgent than the formation of local reserves in order to ensure a return to sound operational practice. Marshal Kesselring was most insistent in this respect. His wishes were passed down the chain of command, and soon units and formations everywhere were occupied with the task of thinning out the front. Action was all the quicker for the reason that the great density of troops demanded deployment in greater depth in order to lessen the number of casualties from Allied bombardment. The numerous minor changes in dispositions which now ensued cannot be described in detail here. (Ibid)

95. Regarding the formation of an Army Group reserve the situation was far from satisfactory. This was due to the constant delays in the dispatch of 20 G.A.F. Div in consequence of the tardy arrival in small parties of the relieving 42nd Jaeger Division from Army Liguria. The first transport from 20 G.A.F. Div reached the concentration area of Forlimpopoli on 6 Sep; subsequent transports however left the area of Fourteenth Army at irregular intervals, and the last substantial elements of the Division were sent on their way to O.B.SW as late as 16 Sep (G.M.D.S. - 62241/1, Fourteenth Army, W.D.4, 6-16 Sep 44). An improvement in this respect within the reasonably near future was foreseen when it became known that 90 Pz Gren Div would be transferred to the area Ostiglia - Ponteno - Lentinara; one rein-

forced regimental group to be quartered south of the river Po, the balance north of it. (G.M.D.S. 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D.8, 6 Sep 44)

96. After several consultations with the Army commander (tel cons, op cit), Marshal Kesselring decided to abandon earlier plans for moving 44 Inf Div from 51 Mtn Corps to 76 Pz Corps, but instead at 1900 hrs told Fourteenth Army on the telephone that 356 Inf Div would have to move to the Adriatic sector<sup>2</sup>. He added that 16 S.S. Pz Gren Div might have to follow in due course. General Lemelsen did not fail to point to the dangers resulting from such a drain on his forces, and Kesselring in turn promised immediate help in the case of Fourteenth Army meeting with unexpected difficulties. (Plans for the transfer of 16 S.S. Pz Gren Div were dropped following the attack of Fifth Army at the centre of the Army Group) (G.M.D.S. - 62241/1, Fourteenth Army, W.D.4, 6 Sep 44)).

7 Sep

97. Activity in the sectors of the two German divisions nearest the coast was confined in the main to artillery duels. Keen fighting took place at the front of 71 Inf Div and 98 Inf Div; the latter reported the average strength of its battalions as having fallen below 100. 44 Recce Bn, which was moved in for the purpose of forming an Army reserve, now received orders to speed to the assistance of hard-pressed 98 Inf Div. During the day the Army commander called at the headquarters of the fighting divisions. All reported very heavy casualties; 1 Para Div, after throwing all its fresh and only partially trained reserves into the fray reported the following strengths:

1 Para Regt	862
3 Para Regt	370
4 Para Regt	153
Recce Coy	28

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/10, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 3-7 Sep, Appx 852; Notes on inspection tour by Army commander on 7 Sep 44) (981/10. (D259))

98. How to separate reserves from already badly depleted forces was the main subject of the day's discussions. In a telephone conversation with Kesselring at 2210 hrs, the Army commander described the situation in great detail. Several references to Canadian formations were made on this occasion:

v.V: ... The two old assault divisions are still up there [the Canadians at the coast]. According to uniform reports from 1 Para Div they must have suffered heavy casualties. But I am told that 5 Cdn Armd Div was excellent. They are both still up there, massed at the front of 1 Para Div and the left wing of 29 Pz Gren Div. ...

...

K: But 56 Brit Div and the Canadians are not fresh either.

v.V: That is true, but fundamentally, though not strong in numbers, the Canadians are right good soldiers. ...

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/10, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 4-7 Sep, Appx 853, tel cons 7 Sep, pages 8 and 11) (Photostat 981/10. (D251))

<sup>2</sup> = Comd 356 Inf Div: FAULENBACH, Karl, Lt-Gen. (rated: "Average")



99. Situation maps showing the positions of 76 Pz Corps and 51 Mtn Corps on 9 Sep are being retained in photostatic form (G.M.D.S. - 61437/21, Tenth Army, sit maps 9-20 Sep 44) (Photostats 981/10.(D260) and (D261))

8 Sep

100. By the evening all six divisions of 76 Pz Corps had reported one battalion in reserve:

278 Inf Div	278 Fus Bn
71 Inf Div	85 Recce Bn
98 Inf Div	44 Recce Bn
26 Pz Div	26 Recce Bn
29 Pz Gren Div	1 Bn 15 (mech) Gren Regt
1 Para Div	3 Para Regt

The area immediately adjacent to the coast between the paratroopers and Rimini had still the additional protection of Blocking Group 162 (Turc) Inf Div (at Miranare) and 114 Recce Bn (at Abissinia, 2 km south-west of Rimini). Severe but inconclusive fighting took place at the front of 71 Inf Div and 98 Inf Div. Depleted 98 Inf Div had been strengthened in the meantime by the arrival of 117 Gren Regt, which had been withdrawn from 1 Para Div to rejoin its own division. In the absence of pressure Fourteenth Army (Main War Diary, *op cit*) and 51 Mtn Corps continued their gradual withdrawal. (G.M.D.S. 61437/11, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 8-10 Sep, Appx 877, sitrep Tenth Army for 8 Sep 44) (Photostat 981/10.(D252)).

9 Sep

101. On the right wing of 76 Pz Corps intensive fighting continued all day. 100 Mtn Jg Regt was placed under the command of 71 Inf Div; 114 Recce Bn was ordered from its blocking position at the coast to the support of 98 Inf Div; the unit reached the area of M. Calombo on 10 Sep. In the Main War Diary of Tenth Army the situation was summarized as follows:

The first phase of the defensive battle is over. By shifting the point of main effort to the right the enemy is obviously trying to discover a weak spot and to force a breakthrough there. In spite of dwindling reserves the Army hopes to hold until the arrival of 356 Inf Div. Casualties on both sides are considerable. The situation must still be regarded as serious.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D.8, 9 Sep 44)

10 Sep

102. Apart from the steady pressure exerted by 5 Brit Corps on the centre of 76 Pz Corps the day was comparatively uneventful. Various signs now pointed to an early resumption of the full-scale attack. In the Main War Diary of Tenth Army the situation was described in the following words:

On 10 Sep too the enemy continues his attacks in the middle sector of the Corps, which is obstinately defended, heavy losses being inflicted on the enemy and local penetrations being cleaned up by prompt counter-attacks.