

REPORT NO. 144
HISTORICAL SECTION
CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

CANADIAN OPERATIONS IN ITALY
SEPTEMBER 1943

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1. This Report is a direct successor to No. 136 which completed the narrative of Canadian Operations in Sicily. It begins a new series dealing in detail with Canadian Operations on the Italian mainland. Report No. 129 was a brief and preliminary treatment of these Operations from the time of the landing at REGGIO to the capture of ORTONA at the end of 1943. The present Report is concerned solely with Canadian Operations during the month of September 1943 and is a fuller treatment of the events which occurred between the planning of Operation "BAYTOWN" (the assault across the Straits of Messina) and the capture of POTENZA

and MELFI, which concluded the first phase of rapid movement in the extreme south of Italy. The narrative is based on all the available sources; the War Diaries of formations and units, both British and Canadian; the memoranda of interviews obtained by the Historical Officer, 1 Cdn Inf Div; information supplied by G Records, A.A.I. (15 Army Group); and a mass of relevant material contained in C.M.H.Q. files, Historical Section files and those of Combined Operations Headquarters. During September of 1943 a certain number of originals of Canadian War Diaries were lost as a result of enemy action, and in cases where reconstituted Diaries have been used, some of the Appendices have not been available. Much valuable information has been obtained from the R.A.F. Mediterranean Review published by Headquarters Mediterranean Allied Air Force and made available to the Historical Section, C.M.H.Q., by Headquarters R.C.A.F. Overseas.

THE BACKGROUND FOR "BAYTOWN"

2. Allied ground operations in Sicily against German and Italian troops ended on 17 Aug 43; the Sicilian campaign had been neatly rounded off in a matter of six weeks. For the next fortnight a period of reorganization, re-equipment and planning for the assault on the mainland of Italy intervened. In the meantime, the Mediterranean Air Forces, both Strategic and Tactical, were pounding the whole of southern Italy in a manner which conveyed to observers of the Pantelleria and Sicilian assaults that the southern portion of the peninsula would be the next target for a seaborne attack.

3. In fact, the assault on the mainland had been contemplated as a natural consequence of the capture of Sicily since the conference at WASHINGTON in May. Planning of a general nature and on a high level for the extension of Allied operations to the mainland was in progress concurrently with the detailed planning for Operation "HUSKY". But to quote the authorities entrusted with the task of drafting Field Marshal Alexander's despatches:

It had however by no means been decided that the invasion of Italy would necessarily take the form of a short leap across the Straits of Messina or whether amphibious assaults would be launched elsewhere in the southern part of Italy either as separate operations or in conjunction with an assault across the Straits. (Hist Sec File Italy: 1943/Eighth Army/C/F, Eighth Army Operation in Italy. - G. Records, A.A.I.)

4. Therefore, as early as 10 Jun 43, before the departure of 1 Cdn Inf Div from Scotland, Lieut.-General Sir Oliver Leese, Bt,

commanding 30 Corps, wrote to Major-General Simonds from his headquarters in North Africa saying:

The Army Commander held a conference yesterday morning at which he explained that the Allied task is now to knock Italy out of the war as quickly as possible. This slightly alters the role of the Eighth Army which as previously laid down went no further than the occupation of Sicily. The object now is to dominate the Messina Straits as soon as possible and to get a footing in the South of the mainland of Italy. 10 Corps H.Q. under Brian Horrocks has therefore been brought in to plan for the passage across the Straits of Messina and the subsequent operations to form a bridgehead on the mainland.

(Hist Sec File "HUSKY"/1 Cdn Inf Div: GOC/E)

5. Whatever considerations of politics or strategy may have prompted this decision, it is clear that Operation "BAYTOWN" (the assault across the Straits) was seriously contemplated as an immediate successor of Operation "HUSKY". The method and allocation of troops was by no means firm as the above quotation indicates. In the normal course alternatives were provided and three main plans were produced during the period of the Sicilian campaign. Operation "BAYTOWN" contemplated the use of 13 British Corps with 1st Canadian and 5th British Infantry Divisions to be used in an assault on REGGIO DI CALABRIA. Operation "BUTTRESS" called for the employment of 10 British Corps with the 46th and 56th British Infantry Divisions and the 7th British Armoured Division under its command to assault in the area of GIOIA TAURO on the west coast of the Calabrian Peninsula, seaborne from North Africa. Operation "AVALANCHE" was planned with the object of landing the U.S. Fifth Army with 6 U.S. Corps and 10 British Corps in the Gulf of Alerno after a direct sea passage also from North Africa. 10 Corps Planning Staff had to consider operating as a component of either "BUTTRESS" or "AVALANCHE", the former being planned in conjunction with Eighth Army Headquarters in Sicily, the latter with Fifth Army Headquarters in Algeria. The following conditions were to control the incidence of these attacks:

If the indications pointed to the enemy's intending to hold the "toe" of Italy 10 and 13 Corps were to make a combined assault on the "toe" under command of Eighth Army launching "BUTTRESS" and "BAYTOWN" simultaneously if possible. Should the enemy clearly be intending to make no serious attempt to hold the "toe", Fifth Army would launch "AVALANCHE" ruling out the 10 Corps operation in the "toe", but the 13 Corps operation "BAYTOWN" or a modification of it "BACKWATER", would still take place.

(Eighth Army Operations, loc. cit)

6. These uncertainties were resolved step by step by the progress of the Seventh and Eighth Armies in Sicily and the rapid deterioration in the Italian political situation during the month of August. The will as opposed to the capacity of the Italians to resist our troops was finally expressed by the wholesale surrenders of their coastal forces in Sicily and the collapse of Mussolini's regime on 25 Jul. Although our troops had been received with friendliness in Sicily, it was not yet clear to those who were engaged in fighting the Italians what would be the result of further active participation in the Axis alliance by Marshal Badoglio's new government. In TUNISIA, Italian resistance had at times been stubborn and well organized (Leese, op. cit.). Sicilian secessionist sentiment was no reliable guide to the reactions of mainland Italians and up to the moment of the opening of negotiations between Badoglio's government and General Eisenhower the potential strength of enemy defences in the "toe" remained in doubt.

7. The first two weeks of August produced a decision as to the direction of the attack on Italy itself and consequently the composition of the forces employed. Although 13 Corps had the advantage of knowing that its own task had been decided by the beginning of the month, the period remaining for planning before D-Day was short. Inevitably planning at divisional and brigade level had to be even shorter.

It was not until mid-August, when the final decision to launch the assault at Salerno ("Avalanche") was taken and that the assault across the Straits of Messina ("Baytown") should be undertaken on the scale on which it was finally mounted, that any firm allocation of landing craft could be made between these operations. The reorganization and reallocation of landing craft was made more difficult by the requirements of reinforcements and vehicles for the Armies in Sicily and by the steady deterioration in serviceability of the craft themselves resulting from the arduous service they had been called upon to perform. as a consequence, the time left for planning the 13 Corps operation across the Straits of Messina was extremely short. The final allocation of craft was made on 22 August, eleven days before the assault.

(Eighth Army Operations, loc. cit.)

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Mr. Winston Churchill, speaking in the House of Commons on 21 Sep, alluded to the landing craft difficulty as follows:

The time of our main attack upon Italy...depended upon the time necessary to disengage our landing craft from the beaches of Southern Sicily, across which up to the first week in August the major part of our armies actually engaged there had to be supplied from day to day. These landing craft had thus to be taken back to Africa. Those that had been damaged, and they were many, had to be repaired, and then they had to be reloaded with all their ammunition, etc. in the exact and complex order required before there could be any question of carrying out another amphibious operation...The condition and preparation of the landing craft were the sole but decisive limiting factors.
(The Times, 22 Sep 43. Report of Mr. Churchill's Speech of 21 Sep.)

It will be seen later that these administrative difficulties and uncertainties resulting in several last-minute changes were felt at a lower level by 1 Cdn Inf Div in the planning stage. Nevertheless, planning for "BAYTOWN" produced few of the difficulties which had beset the planners of "HUSKY". Great problems of establishment and supply had been settled once and for all as far as the Mediterranean theatre was concerned by the latter: obstacles which had once appeared formidable and shrunk in the light of experience and the Canadian participants in "BAYTOWN" were able to concentrate on the immediate operational problem.

8. In the closing stages of the campaign in Sicily, it became clear that, in spite of the efforts of the Allied sea and air forces, the Germans would succeed in evacuating substantial portions of the four divisions with which they had attempted to hold the north-eastern corner of Sicily. This was achieved by the massing of anti-tank and coastal artillery to cover the Straits of Messina, the use of infiltration methods at night by which dribblets of German units were brought over to the mainland under cover of darkness, and by recourse to the now familiar expedient of seizing the transport of their Italian allied and leaving the latter to shift for themselves. The Germans accordingly re-grouped their own forces which consisted - south of the line of the River PO - of eight divisions. 29 Motorized Division (renamed 29 Panzer Grenadier Division), 26 Panzer Division and 1 Parachute Division would be responsible for the defence of CALABRIA, LUCANIA and APULIA. In the extreme south, responsibility was given to 29 Pz Gr Div. 26 Pz Div and 1 Para Div were believed to have been assigned the task of holding the naturally difficult ground between the CATANZARO Isthmus and that of CASTROVILLARI. One regiment of the parachute division was detached and stationed in the ALTAMURA area of the province of APULIA with the object of forestalling any seaborne attack upon the "heel". All these formations were under the command of 76 Panzer Corps which, together with 14 Panzer Corps, formed the German Tenth Army (Kesselring)

(Eighth Army Operations loc. cit.).

9. The general situation of Italian forces, which will be examined in detail later, was similar to that which had prevailed in Sicily. Coastal forces untried in battle and, in the light of previous experience, presumed to be negligible in a military sense were sustained by a mobile reserve of field divisions. The attitude of these troops in the even of attack on the Italian mainland depended entirely upon the strength of the Badoglio government and its real, as opposed to its declared, intentions with regard to the further prosecution of the war. Certainty on this point was reached at Allied Force Headquarters when on 15 Aug an Italian General called upon the British Ambassador at MADRID, Sir Samuel Hoare, presented his credentials as an envoy of Marshal Badoglio and announced that the latter was prepared to join the Allies in the war against Germany at such time as the Allied armies made a landing on the mainland of Italy. The subsequent negotiations at Lisbon and at Allied Force Headquarter in Algiers led to the signing of the armistice at SYRACUSE on the night of 3 Sep while British and Canadian troops at the Eighth Army were consolidating their bridgehead on the mainland side of the Straits of Messina. (Churchill, loc. cit.)

10. Mr. Churchill has made it clear that the main Allied purpose of landing in strength upon the mainland of Italy at predetermined points was on the whole unaffected by these political developments. Nevertheless, the projected date of Operation "AVALANCHE" had to be advanced from 15 Sep to 9 Sep in order to shorten for the Italian government the difficult period between the signing of the armistice and the possibility of its detection by the German authorities in Italy. As early as 18 Aug Mr. Churchill sent the following telegram to General Alexander:

You are no doubt informed of the Italian approaches to us and the answers we have sent them. Our greatest danger is that the Germans should enter ROME and set up a quisling Fascist Government under, say, Farinacci. Scarcely less unpleasant would be the whole of Italy sliding into anarchy. I doubt if the Badoglio Government can hold their position until the day fixed for our main attack, so that anything you can do to shorten this period without danger to military success will help very much. (Churchill, loc. cit)

On the same day General Montgomery informed his Corps Commanders that both "AVALANCHE" and "BAYTOWN" would take place but that "BUTTRESS" would be abandoned (W.D., G.S. Main H.Q., 30 Corps, August 1943, Appx 00). It is clear from the foregoing that the main weight of the attack

was to be delivered against the beaches at SALERNO rather than against the "toe" of southern Italy. Despite the possibility of having to break a stubborn enemy defence in CALBRIA the political situation necessitated striking hard as far north as the limitations of land-based fighter aircraft would permit.

11. Although these negotiations were conducted in the utmost secrecy, that great clearing-house of rumour, the Portuguese capital, had already launched a story of the presence of Italian envoys, and the idea of a token resistance by the Italians for the dual purpose of soothing their consciences and deceiving their allies was openly canvassed (The Times, 3 Sep 43). It had been agreed at SYRACUSE that the armistice would not be effective until the moment of the main descent on the Italian mainland in the Gulf of Salerno (Churchill, loc. cit.). The landings in the "toe" of Italy in addition to encouraging the dissipation of German military effort might serve to conceal from the enemy his imminent desertion by the Italians. Eighth Army Intelligence Summary No. 540 of 8 Sep describes the landing in the "toe" of Italy as "a military walk-over and a political necessity". At all events the reverberations of the bombardment of REGGIO reached far beyond the neighbourhood of its terrified local audience.

12. Neither 1 Cdn Inf Div nor 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde were engaged in the final operations in Sicily which drove the enemy out of the north-eastern corner of the island. The Division was withdrawn into reserve on 7 Aug after advancing sufficiently close to ADRANO to assist its capture by the 78 Brit Div. The latter formation was comparatively fresh to the Sicilian campaign and the contraction of the Allied front along the ETNA line made it possible to relieve 1 Cdn Inf Div of 30 Corps and 5 (Brit) Div of 13 Corps and withdraw them into reserve for the planning and execution of Operation "BAYTOWN". The Army Tank Brigade, of which two regiments had been committed during the campaign, one under command 1 Cdn Inf Div and the other under command 5 (Brit) Div (Report 132) was now able to concentrate its detached units and devote itself in its turn to restoring its administrative integrity and the planning of future operations.

12. These two Canadian formations had been well assimilated by the Eighth Army in the course of the short but exhausting campaign. General Montgomery had at all times been concerned with expediting this process. His correspondence with General McNaughton on the original allocation of the Division and the Army Tank Brigade to the troops destined to invade Sicily may be found elsewhere (Report No. 127). On 26 Jul he wrote again to General McNaughton praising the conduct of 1 Cdn Inf Div and drawing attention to the fact that he had already

visited every one of its units. Amongst other things he said "I cannot imagine why it is not announced that the Canadians are with the Eighth Army" (C.M.H.Q. file 3/Sic/1/4). Shortly afterwards on 6 Aug he despatched the following message to the Commander-in-Chief:

For General Alexander from General Montgomery, ref MA 359:

It is definitely the will of every officer and man in Canadian formations here that they should be a part of the Eighth Army and be known as such. They definitely do not, repeat not, want to be nominally independent. They consider that the present method by which they are referred to as Canadian troops of the Eighth Army is quite satisfactory. This makes it clear that the Canadians are in the Eighth Army and that they are very proud of the fact and do not, repeat not, want any other arrangement.

(W.D., G.S. Main H.Q. Eighth Army, August 1943, Appx "Z")

14. During August the meeting between President Roosevelt, Mr. Winston Churchill and Mr. Mackenzie King and their Chiefs-of-Staff, at Quebec, was considering the whole scope of future operations in Europe. In the course of these deliberations the question of the future employment of Canadian forces in Sicily was decided and General McNaughton was able to send the following message to 15 Army Group:

Eighth Army from 15 Army Gp. MOST SECRET

Canadian Government has now approved further employment of 1 Cdn Div and 1 Cdn Tk Bde as in following extension of earlier directive which please pass to General Simonds, comd 1 Cdn Div and Brigadier Wyman, comd 1 Cdn Tk Bde; quote - my directive to you PPA 1-1-41-1, (sic) 19 Jun 43, extended to include the further operation in Central Mediterranean, contemplated by Allied Force HQ., North Africa with the immediate intention of crossing the Straits of MESSINA and operating against the enemy in the toe of Italy. For these operations you will carry out such orders as you receive from G.O.C. in C. 15 Army Group through the channel of comd which he establishes under the provision of para 4 of my directive above quoted. Acknowledge. Sgd - McNaughton, unquote.

This was received by H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Div apparently on 18 Aug although the message is logged by Eighth Army on 19 Aug (W.D., G.S. Main H.Q., Eighth Army, Appx "Z", August 1943; W.D., G.S., H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Div, 18 Aug 43). By this time the role of the Division and the Army Tank Brigade in forthcoming operations had already been communicated to their

respective commanders and planning was under way.

15. The area set apart for resting and equipping the "BAYTOWN" force comprised a large portion of the CATANIA plain and the rolling country on its western and southern edges. That part of it assigned to the two Canadian formations was the quadrilateral LENTINI - SCORDIA - MILITELLO - FRANCOFONTE, to which 1 Cdn Inf Div began to move on 11 Aug from its reserve area immediately south of ADRANO. The concentration which ensued was accompanied by kaleidoscopic changes of command which reflected the general urgency of operations both immediate and contemplated. On 8 Aug 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde received confirmation from 13 Corps that it had been under the command of that formation from 1200 hrs on 28 Jul (W.D., H.Q. 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde, 8 Aug 43), although for operational purposes it appears to have been under the command of 5 (Brit) Div on 1 Aug. (W.D., H.Q. 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde, August 1943, Appx 9.) On the same day orders were received from General Montgomery direct for the brigade to concentrate in the area of SCORDIA and Liaison Officers were sent both to 11 and 12 Cdn Army Tk Regts with orders to proceed to the concentration area on the following day. Confirmation to the placing of these two regiments once more under command of the Army Tank Brigade was eventually received through the normal channels, 12 Cdn Army Tk Regt reverting on 10 Aug and 11 Cdn Army Tk Regt on 11 Aug. The brigade was then informed on 11 Aug that it was to come under command 1 Cdn Inf Div as of 1200 hrs that day in order to ensure uniformity of policy on Canadian matters affecting both formations. Subsequently, as late as 24 Aug, the position of the brigade vis-a-vis the Division was clarified by placing the former under command 1 Cdn Inf Div for administration as before. On 30 Aug Staff Duties at 13 Corps interpreted the word "administration" as applying to "A" matters of a specific Canadian nature.

16. In the meantime 1 Cdn Inf Div was transferred from 30 Corps, with which it had operated throughout the Sicilian campaign, to 13 Corps with effect from 1200 hrs, 10 Aug (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 1 Cdn Inf Div, 10 Aug 43). At 0600 hrs on 13 Aug, 30 Corps relieved 13 Corps of its operational responsibility on the east coast of the island (W.D., G.S., Main H.Q., Eighth Army, August 1943). By this date the concentration of 1 Cdn Inf Div and 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde in the new area was complete. The troops thus assembled well behind the battle field were now able to indulge in their first experience of rest and recreation in a theatre of war. However, the staffs of all formations were permitted no rest and preparations for planning began at once.

17. The last two weeks of August present a curious pattern of preparation for the future and tidying-up of the past. In so far as the

events of these hot and placid days belong properly to the Sicilian operation they have not been dealt with in this Report. Suffice it to say that it was vital concern of the commanders of 1 Cdn Inf Div and 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde to see that their men enjoyed as much rest and recreation as was necessary to restore them to complete fighting fitness after their first sharp taste of warfare. Accordingly, immediate efforts were made by the administrative staffs to select beaches on the broad Catania Bay which had been previously swept of mines and to which daily bathing parades repaired embussed. The Auxiliary Services commenced to function with what slender stock of equipment has escaped the sinkings of the previous month. Instructional tours of neighbouring airfields were arranged in order to increase the familiarity of soldiers with the habits and problems of their comrades in the Desert Air Force. Unorganized recreation was hampered by the necessary precaution of putting out of bounds all towns and villages to all officers and other ranks whose duty did not require entry. Preparations began, at once, to institute brigade sports, culminating in a divisional meet, and were pressed forward with all the determination that invariably accompanies these peaceful activities in a theatre of war. But only the contests of the infantry brigades and 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde materialized on Sicilian soil. Not until 1 Cdn Inf Div had traversed 400 triumphant miles from REGGIO to POTENZA did it find time for the final celebration.

18. Steps were taken to ensure that the attitude of Canadian troops towards civilians should be one of correctness and consideration and General Simonds published a special order dealing with this question (W.d., A.A. & Q.M.G., 1 Cdn Inf Div, August 1943, Appx 4). Anti-malaria precautions were intensified and placed under the general supervision of an officer of field rank, when it became clear that the concentration area and indeed the whole Catania Plain were malarious in the extreme. (Hist Sec File Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/O/D, Account by Lt.-Col. W.P. Gilbrade, A.A. & Q.M.G., 1 Cdn Inf Div.) Finally the visit of the Army Commander, General Sir Bernard Montgomery, on 20 Aug and his address to all units of the Division and the Army Tank Brigade in which high and heartening praise was accorded all ranks, followed two days later by that of Lt.-Gen A.G.L. McNaughton on his second visit to the Mediterranean theatre, invited and compelled a high degree of smartness which effectively removed the dust and informality of conflict. All these matters have been dealt with in Report No. 136 -- Canadian Operations in Sicily - and do not fall within the ambit of this narrative.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

19. The general atmosphere which prevailed during this first period of

planning in the field is of some interest because this process during the months that followed was reduced to the form of a "drill". The amenities of Norfolk House were entirely lacking and all formations suffered from a shortage of tents, office equipment and telephones, all of which had been much reduced by the sinkings of July. Concentrated work was burdensome in the intense heat, under the torment of innumerable flies and with the uncomfortable concomitant of the complaint known as "Gypsy Tummy". The following description is given of the planning compound at Main H.Q. of the division:

The planning area is laid out in the form of a letter A with "Ops" and "I" at the apex. A couple of tents have been pitched just beyond the apex, one for the G.S.O. 1 and one for the A.A. & Q.M.G. On the north-east leg of the A is the A. & Q. staff tent and along the leg the heads of services. On the south-east leg is the S.N.O.L. (Senior Naval Officer Landing), P.M.I.O. (Principal Military Landing Officer), C.R.A., C.R.E., and O.C. Div Sigs. In the centre is a model of the area of operations. (W.D., H.Q. 1 Cdn Inf Div, G.S., 17 Aug 43.)

Rear H.Q. was moved to a situation adjacent to Main H.Q. in order to bring the planning members of the A. & Q. staffs within the orbit of the planning compound. These staffs were divided into a planning section and an administrative section, the latter being exclusively employed on the day to day needs of the Division. Working at night was an added trial because the necessity of "blacking out" the office tents raised the interior temperature to over 100 degrees. (W.D., H.Q. 1 Cdn Inf Div, A.A. & Q.M.G., 16 Aug 43.) H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, which was principally concerned in the assault, was more fortunate, having secured a location on an estate near FRANCOFONTE owned by an Englishwoman. Here there was an unfurnished house close to the mansion and sufficient lumber was available to convert it into a "Norfolk House in miniature". The existence of an electric light plant on the estate was an additional source of comfort and this was soon in operation to provide light for the brigade staff. (Hist Sec File Italy 1943/3 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Account by Lt.-Col. G.F.C. Pangman.) The brigade also had its model of the area of operations prepared by the intelligence staff and this was used from time to time for briefing company and platoon commanders of the assaulting battalions. Planning activity was also brisk at battalion level and the compilation of assault and light scales involved continuous effort and numerous estimates which altered daily as the target date was advanced.

20. It has been noted above that the political situation in Italy together with the problem of supplying sufficient craft for the combined

mounting of Operations "BAYTOWN" and "AVALANCHE" postponed, until the latest moment, the decision as to whether the "BAYTOWN" assault should be delivered in conjunction with "AVALANCHE" or with "BUTTRESS". An additional element of doubt was introduced by the enemy's intentions with regard to the defence of CALABRIA. As late as 15 Aug, a conference on fire support for the "BAYTOWN" - "BUTTRESS" combination was projected for 17 Aug. (W.D., G.S., Main H.Q. Eighth Army, Appx "B", August 1943). It was not until 19 Aug that the Army Commander was able to inform his corps commanders that the "BAYTOWN" - "AVALANCHE" combination was a firm commitment and that "BUTTRESS" would not take place. (W.D., H.Q. 30 Corps, G.S., Appx "00", 18 Aug 43). By this time 13 Corps and its component formations had commenced preliminary planning for the "BAYTOWN" operation and it was tentatively suggested that the task of the Corps was to establish a bridgehead across the Straits of Messina which would secure them for the use of the Royal Navy and its convoys. The target date at first given as 14 Sep was advanced and retarded from time to time during the planning period with disconcerting frequency. On 21 Aug, a message was received by 1 Cdn Inf Div to the effect that the assault would be delivered during the night 4/5 Sep. The final change was made on 24 Aug and D-day fixed for 3 Sep. (W.D., 1 Cdn Inf Div, G.S., 24 Aug 43 and Appx 26.)

21. This uncertainty had the effect of "hustling" the planing stage and placing considerable strain on the staffs of all formations accompanied as it was by concurrent changes in the allocation of landing craft. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 1 Cdn Inf Div, August 1943; Hist Sec File Italy 1943/3 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Account by Captain R.D. Prince and Pangman, op, cit.)

22. 13 Corps Preliminary Planning Instructions were issued on 14 Aug and the following day Major-General Simonds communicated the outline plan to the brigade commanders, their brigade majors and the heads of services. The assaulting divisions, 5 (Brit) Div and 1 Cdn Inf Div, were to land on the beaches between the towns of REGGIO DI CALABRIA and the village of GALLICO MARINA, 1 Cdn Inf Div assaulting on the right on a one-brigade front and 5 Div on the left on a two-brigade front. General Simonds indicated that 3 Cdn Inf Bde would undertake the assault closely supported by 1 Cdn Inf Bde, while 2 Cdn Inf Bde would be employed as divisional reserve. Although one officer present at the conference has suggested that the G.O.C. revealed the intention to make a landing in the Gulf of Salerno as well as one in CALABRIA (Pangman, op. cit.), it is clear from an examination of 1 Cdn Inf Div Outline Plan issued on 17 Aug that he referred to a landing by 10 Corps in the Gulf of S. Eufemia on the west coast of the Calabrian peninsula - Operation "BUTTRESS" (Hist Sec File "BAYTOWN"/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/I). On the

following day personnel of the Royal Navy pitched their tents at divisional headquarters and the headquarters of the assaulting brigade and remained with them to complete the details of combined planning. Brigadier M.H.S. Penhale, commanding 3 Cdn Inf Bde, was now able to put the officers of his own brigade into the picture and although the target date was still very much in doubt, planning commenced with 14 Sep as tentatively agreed upon. A much more elaborate briefing occurred on 24 Aug and was attended by Lt.-Gen. A.G.L. McNaughton. All officers of the division down to battalion, regimental and R.C.E. field company commanders were present and details of the operation were explained by the G.O.C., G.S.O.III (Int) and the I.O.(Photo) with the aid of an elaborate model of the beaches and their hinterland constructed by the Photographic Intelligence Section. Two days later 13 Corps Operation Order No. 1 was issued and the G.O.C., accompanied by Lieut-General M.C. Dempsey (commanding 13 Corps) attended a conference with Brigadier Penhale at H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Bde, subsequently visiting the other two brigade headquarters. 1 Cdn Inf Div's Operation Order No. 1 appeared on 28 Aug and two amendments followed it in due course. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 1 Cdn Inf Div, August 1943, Appx 32.) During this period the plan changed in detail on several occasions and in some respects almost from day to day. These dates have been given to indicate the landmarks of the planning period so that the plan itself as it finally emerged may be treated as a whole.

23. The term Calabrian Peninsula is applied technically to that portion of the province extending south from a line drawn between AMANTEA on the west coast and CROTONE on the east. Its narrowest portion is the Catanzaro Isthmus, a comparatively low-lying neck of land less than 20 miles from sea to sea connecting the large massif known as the SILA PICCOLA and the mountainous regions of the "toe". The whole area consists largely of three types of terrain: steep-sided crystalline mountains of granite and slate composition; a series of small plateaux constituted largely of sand and gravel which act as foothills; and a number of highly fertile alluvial plains facing the sea and hemmed in by the mountains. The mountains are divided into two groups, the SERRA in the north and the ASPROMONTE in the south, connected by a saddle of high ground which is crossed by two roads, LOCRI - GIOIA TAURO and VOVALINO-BAGNARA. They are of impressive height, MNTALTO in the ASPROMONTE rising to 1956 metres. The most considerable coastal plains are those facing the Gulfs of S. EUFEMIA, SQUILLACE and GIOIA and further south there is a continuous, although narrow, low-lying coastal strip extending from CAPE SPARTIVENTO to BADAOLATO. The tire region presents the familiar picture of erosion aided by the intensive cultivation of the foot-hills which are terraced with vineyards and orchards almost invariably to their summits, and by

the climate which is dry during the summer and subject to short periods of torrential rain in the winter. Only on the high levels of the mountains is there any considerable quantity of woodland and, in the ASPROMONTE in particular, the pine forests are extensive.

24. The coastal area facing the Straits of Messina, sometimes called too ingeniously the "toenail", has virtually no coastal plain at all, the ASPROMONTE spilling its foothills into the sea where only a narrow shelf permits the passage of road and railway between PELLARO and SCILLA. On this shelf lies REGGIO, a not insignificant successor to the ancient Ionian colony which dominated traffic through the straits in the fifth century B.C. The slopes of the ASPROMONTE are drained by numerous torrents known as "fiumare", the beds of which are dry during most of the year; their sand and gravel deposits can be clearly seen from the Sicilian shore as white seams in the flank of the mountain side. To avoid flooding during the rainy season, the Italians have protected their precarious holdings by confirming the lower reaches of these water courses within concrete retaining walls. Great scope was offered to enemy demolition parties by the numerous bridges and culverts which carried the coastal road and railway over their mouths. (Hist Sec File "BAYTOWN"/1 Cdn Inf Div/L/F, 1 Cdn Inf Div Intelligence Summary 31 Aug 43).

25. The beaches selected for landing by 13 Corps extended north from the Port of REGGIO to the village of GALLICO MARINA. The operative sectors from south to north were known as FOX, GEORGE and HOW in conformity with a general alphabetical classification of the whole area of the straits. According to the defence overprints issued on the MESSINA and REGGIO DI CALABRIA sheets of the 1:50,000 series maps of Italy, they were roughly delimited as follows: Sector HOW extended from CATONA south to the mouth of the R. PRITOLA, sector GEORGE thence south to the beach approximately 1,000 yards south of the TORRENTE TORBIDO, and sector FOX thence south to the mouth of the FIMMARA DELL' ANNUNZIATA. The narrow coastal plain, varying in depth from 1,000 to 2,000 yards running from CATONA south to the mouth of the R. STAPO in the middle of GEORGE sector, is practically non-existent between the STAPO and REGGIO behind which the hills fall steeply to the sea. Although the beaches in this area are generally, except in the case of FOX, composed of firm sand and suitable for landing, they were largely inadequate for beach maintenance and presented very few suitable exits walled in as they are by hedges, stone boundary walls, and the embankments of the coastal road and railway which run side by side. Sector FOX, indeed, which was subsequently chosen for the landing made by 3 Cdn Inf Bde contained no beach at all except an inconsiderable stretch near the pier at S. CATERINA immediately north of REGGIO.

Consequently, it would appear that in the final plan some modification of the boundaries of FOX were made in its favour northward to the walled mouth of the TORBIDO. (ibid.)

26. Coast defences on the FOX, GEORGE, and HOW Beaches were not considered formidable and were confined chiefly to pillboxes mounting machine guns with the occasional Italian 47 mm anti-tank gun. Little wire was apparent on HOW and GEORGE and none on FOX. Inland, the coast defence gun emplacements were reported to be either unoccupied or incapable of bringing fire to bear on the beaches themselves, being designed to fire seawards against hostile naval craft. The hub of the defence system in the immediate environs of REGGIO, which was of principal concern to 1 Cdn Inf Div, was the two forts in the foothills about one kilometre north-east of the town. Of these, the more southerly was known to be unoccupied (ibid.), while the north fort was subsequently found to be equipped with Italian 280 mm howitzers with a range of 8000 yards and conforming to the general scheme by not being sited to cover the beaches. (Ibid; Agenda to 1 Cdn Inf Div Intelligence Summary, 1 Sep 43.) To the south of REGGIO the airfield, which lay in the low-lying area on the coast between FIUMARA DI S. AGATA and the FIUMARA D'ARMO was protected by fixed dual purpose anti-aircraft and coast defence positions which were considered to be occupied. A certain number of roving guns were to be expected to supplement these rather meagre defences. The possibility of under-water mines, beach mines, wire concealed in hedgerows and make-shift machine gun emplacements could not be ruled out merely for lack of evidence. The exact positions of coast defences were obtained from air photographs taken daily up until the eve of the assault and were supplemented by civilian reports and observations from the numerous O.Ps., maintained by the artillery of 30 Corps which was in action by 28 Aug. From this time on, the activity of enemy coastal batteries which had engaged in sporadic shelling of the Sicilian coast road between SCALETTA and MESSINA since the termination of hostilities on the Island, was appreciably diminished. Although this counter-battery work, and the O.Ps. which served it, was under the control of C.C.R.A. 30 Corps, 3 Cdn Inf Bde had its own O.P., established by an attached British I.O., Lieutenant Pine-Coffin, in the vicinity of MILI MARINA, from which FOX sector was closely observed during the final days of preparation. (Pangman op. cit.; W.D., G.S., Main H.Q. 30 Corps, Appx A, 28 Aug 43.)

27. It was assumed by Intelligence staffs that if the Germans proposed to defend the beaches - and this in the planning stage seemed likely - they would not again repeat the mistake made in Sicily of allowing Italian coastal troops full responsibility for the coastal area and maintaining a German mobile reserve intact in the background. It was

felt indeed that German units would be sandwiched together with Italian coastal troops to stiffen the resistance of the latter and prevent the considerable desertions into the hills which were reported to be taking place. The general situation of German divisions in southern Italy has been given above but some elaboration is necessary in order to complete the picture as it appeared to our Intelligence at the end of August. It was appreciated that between eight and ten German divisions, together with five Italian field divisions, were committed to the defence of Italy south of ROME. The enemy appeared to be most sensitive in two areas, the "toe" of Italy and the coast between ROME and SALERNO. The region of the Pontine Marshes south of ROME was considered to be particularly vulnerable and in view of the subsequent revelation by Mr. Churchill of the discussions then in progress between A.F.H.Q. and the emissaries of Marshal Badoglio, enemy concentration here was eminently justifiable. One German division identified as 29 Pz Gr Div was charged with the defence of the Calabrian Peninsula south of the Catanzaro Isthmus. Of this, 15 Pz Gr Regt had as its immediate task a frustration of any landings between REGGIO and VILLA S. GIOVANNI with the additional responsibility of looking over its shoulders to north and south to ward off coastal landings in its rear. North of the isthmus, in the naturally strong and mountainous positions of the SILA PICCOLA, two German divisions, 26 Pz Div and two regiments of 1 Para Div were poised together with the Italian 104 (Mantova) Div to counter-attack and destroy any force which might deploy in the plain of the isthmus itself. The third regiment of 1 Para Div, as has been noted above, had the considerable task of covering the ports of TARANTO, BRINDISI and BARI with their respective low-lying hinterlands. (Hist Sec File "BAYTOWN"/ 1 Cdn Inf Div/L/F; 1 Cdn Inf Div Planning Intelligence Summary No. 2, 25 Aug 43 and W.D., G.S., Main H.Q. 13 Corps, 13 Corps Intelligence Summary, 4 Sep 43.)

28. The Italian defence system was known to conform to the general pattern which had prevailed in Sicily and which consisted of static coastal defences manned by garrison troops. In the light of Sicilian experience, the morale and fighting capacity of these troops were judged to be weak. Responsibility for defending the Calabrian Peninsula devolved upon the Italian XXXI Corps with headquarters at CATANZARO. Under its command were 211 Coastal Div, assigned to defend the area of ASPROMONTE and the adjacent coastal region; 212 Coastal Div, which was responsible for defending the CATANZARO region; and 104 (Mantova) Div, a field division located north of the line NICASTRO - CATANZARO which presumably had a counter-attack role and was better equipped for this purpose than the coastal troops. Headquarters of 211 Coastal Div was believed to be at CITTANOVA on the lateral road running from coast to coast between LOCRI and the Gulf of Gioia. The dispositions of this

division between VILLA S. GIOVANNI and CAPO PELLARO were now in some detail but were subject to certain limitations. The following is quoted as an example of the discrepancies which existed between the facade of Italian military organization and the facts as they were affected by the current period of dissolution and chaos.

Following is a list of Italian coastal units portions of which may be encountered in REGGIO area.

502 Coastal Bn coast north of REGGIO
118 Coastal Bn REGGIO
156 Coastal Bn REGGIO
123 Dismounted Cavalry Gp coast north of REGGIO
22 Dismounted Cavalry Gp REGGIO
604 M.G. Coy REGGIO

Detailed dispositions available are at least two months out of date and, in view of recent developments likely to bear little relation to fact.

(Hist Sec File "BAYTOWN"/1 Cdn Inf Div/L/F;
1 Cdn Inf Div Intelligence Summary, 31 Aug 43.)

The Dismounted Cavalry Groups referred to were second line troops forming groups of about 500 to 600 in number and in some cases equipped with bicycles. The presence of two battalions of Black Shirt Militia together with some artillery elements was suspected in the high ground near LE GAMBARIE. In addition to the German 15 Pz Gren Regt, elements of the Italian Nembo Para Div, one of the more reliable Italian formations, were stationed in the ASPROMONTE to stiffen the defence. In the case of FOX Beach, the estimate of Italian strength was no more than two platoons of infantry possibly supported by a machine gun section.

29. As D-day drew near, the reports of refugee civilians indicated more and more confusion in the ranks of the Italian forces and less and less likelihood of a determined stand on the beaches by either Italians or Germans. Although Intelligence communications cautiously discounted these reports, it appeared that the Italian coastal troops were melting away into the hills, and that the remainder were deprived of all direction and control except that imposed upon them by their German allies. The Italian-speaking experts of the British Intelligence Corps, whose representative at H.Q. 1 Cdn Inf Div was Captain V.C.J. Thrupp, held to the opinion that the Italian troops would resist a landing although they did not consider that the effectiveness of such resistance would be high. At H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Bde, this conclusion was not taken seriously. (Pangman and Prince, op. cit.) The possibility of an

effective German resistance was more difficult to judge. Tactical Reconnaissance reports showed that German military traffic was active in the neighbourhood of SAN STEFANO, LE GAMBARIE and DELIANUOVA, and that the latter two localities were strongly defended by heavy anti-aircraft guns. Although the lateral roads in the "toe" were frequented by German vehicles, the coastal road from LOCRI through REGGIO and around to GIOIA was practically deserted. Smaller parties of Germans had been seen from time to time on the coast road from REGGIO as far north as VILLA S. GIOVANNI and these were believed to be engineer demolition parties which might conceivably be employed as infantry to resist the assault. On the whole, the Germans were not expected to defend the beaches, but were counted on to offer considerable resistance behind them in the triangle REGGIO - SAN STEFANO - GALLICO with their advanced posts in the foothills and particularly in the neighbourhood of the Italian forts. A maximum of two infantry battalions might reasonably be allotted for this task. No more than a series of delaying actions described as "a succession of PIAZZA ARMERINAS" was anticipated from the Germans in the opening stages of the mainland campaign. (Hist Sec File "BAYTOWN"/1 Cdn Inf Div/L/F; 1 Cdn Inf Div Intelligence Summary 31 Aug 43 and Addenda 1 Sep 43.)

30. After the cancellation of Operation "BUTTRESS" the role of the Eighth Army was principally to assist Operation "AVALANCHE" by making the first lodgement of the Italian mainland. It was intended that as many enemy divisions as possible should be brought to bay in CALABRIA and LUCANIA, both of which regions were extremely vulnerable to the "seaborne hook". If this could be done, the vital blow delivered in the gulf of Salerno would tax to the utmost the entire German force in Italy, and at the same time menace the lines of communication of those divisions engaged in the south. Should the enemy refuse to be drawn, the task of the Eighth Army was to exploit its bridgehead northwards with all possible speed until it was in a position to turn the left flank of the considerable forces which he would be able to bring to bear against the assault by the Fifth Army. It is clear that the original Eighth Army plan contemplated a much more strenuous resistance than was actually encountered. The landing of 13 Corps was to be supported by 30 Corps, first by a very substantial force of artillery, the composition of which will be examined later, and secondly by a contribution of at least one brigade group which would initially take over the beachhead from 13 Corps and subsequently advance southwards through it and develop a thrust along the east coast of Italy. It will be seen that this feature of the Army plan - the employment of infantry of 30 Corps in addition to that of 13 Corps - was not finally abandoned until after the landing had taken place and the opposition to it had proved negligible. (W.D., G.S., Main H.Q. 30 Corps, Appx AB, 30 Corps

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31. Lieutenant-General Dempsey's plan involved a simultaneous landing by two divisions, carried in assault landing craft, on a narrow sector of the coast between REGGIO and CATONA. The total frontage involved was approximately six kilometres. 1 Cdn Inf Div (Major-General G.G. Simonds) would assault on the right on a one-brigade front on FOX sector. 5 (Brit) Div (Major-General G.C. Bucknall) would land with two brigades forward on the left on sectors GEORGE and HOW. The attack was to be in two phases:

Phase I: The capture of beachheads and Corps objectives.

Phase II: The advance east and north.

In Phase I both divisions were to capture and develop for future maintenance the assigned beaches and the high ground overlooking them. Corps objectives for 1 Cdn Inf Div were the capture of REGGIO and its airfield and for 5 Div the capture of VILLA S. GIOVANNI. In Phase II 1 Cdn Inf Div would send patrols as far east as the line of the DELIANUOVA - MELITO road and be prepared to advance along the axis REGGIO - SAN STEFANO - DELIANUOVA. 5 Div's patrol limit was to be a general line between SCILLA and the cross-roads at LE GAMBARIE, and its line of exploitation was to be on the axis VILLA S. GIOVANNI - SCILLA - RAGNARA. The selection of 3 Cdn Inf Bde (Brigadier M.H.S. Penhale) by Major-General Simonds has been noted previously. On its left, 13 Inf Bde of 5 Div was to land on GEORGE section while on the left flank of 5 Div, 17 Inf Bde would land on the HOW sector. These landings were to be preceded at H-5 by two ancillary commando operations. In the north the Special Raiding Squadron of the Special Air Service regt was to land between SCILLA and BAGNARA and demolish the coast road while 3 Commando would perform a similar function in the south near MELITO. 231 Inf Bde Gp, together with 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde and 40 Commando, were to remain in Corps reserve with the following qualifications: 231 Inf Bde Gp was to be prepared on or after D-day to make an assault landing on the north coast between SCILLA and BAGNARA while 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde was to contribute 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt to the support of 1 Cdn Inf Div and 11 Cdn Army Tk Regt to that of 5 Div. In the event, the Commando attacks did not take place as originally intended and on 30 Aug, the Special Raiding Squadron and 3 Commando were ordered to move by sea from CATANIA to MESSINA where they were to be held in readiness for such tasks on and after D-day as would be ordered by H.Q. 13 Corps. (Hist Sec File, "BAYTOWN"/C/I, 13 Corps Operation Order No. 1, 26 Aug 43.)

32. Major-General Simonds' plan provided that 3 Cdn Inf Bde would

assault FOX sector at H-hour with the following units under command and all at assault scale:

- 1 Cdn Fd Regt
- 391 Fd Bty (SP)
- 4 Cdn Fd Coy
- 9 Cdn Fd Amb
- 34 Beach Brick
- "A" Sqn 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt

Its first task was to destroy all defences between S. CATERINA in the south and the TORRENTE TORBIDO in the north, as far east as the power line running between the coast road the forts at point 305. Secondly, it was to solve the vital problem of finding and developing three vehicle crossings through the railway embankment which virtually shut the beaches off from the road and objectives further east. Thirdly, it was to capture point 305 which involved incidentally the reduction of its two forts; fourthly, to capture the high ground surrounding points 367 and 359 south of the FIUMARA DELL'ANNUNZIATA nearly two miles east of the town of REGGIO and fifthly, to exploit southwards of the town in order to gain contact with the enemy in the area of the REGGIO airfield. All this involved re-organization of the brigade on the high ground overlooking REGGIO and the maintenance of contact with 5 Div on the left. In Phase II, 1 Cdn Inf Bde (Brigadier H.D. Graham) with under its command

- 2 Cdn Fd Regt
- 1 Cdn Fd Coy
- 4 Cdn Fd Amb

and any other support arms which might be allotted by the G.O.C. after landing would land on FOX sector on the first turn of the Ferry Service, would assemble in the area behind FOX Beaches and to the north of the FIUMARA DELL' ANNUNZIATA and would then pass through 3 Cdn Inf Bde and continue the attack southward. Its first objective was to be the high ground on which stands the village of GALLINA rising steeply from the left bank of the FIUMARA DI S. AGATA and then to seize point 167 immediately to the south-west of the village in order to dominate the REGGIO airfield. It was then to capture the airfield and to re-organize on its objectives. The division reserve, the chief component of which was 2 Cdn Inf Bde, would land on the orders of the G.O.C. probably on D + 1, would assemble in the REGGIO town area and hold itself in readiness to move eastward into the ASPROMONTE on the axis MONTE CALLEA - MONTE REGGIO. (Hist Sec File "BAYTOWN"/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/I, 1 Cdn Inf Div Operation Order No. 1, 28 Aug 43.) 3 Fd Regt, R.C.A., usually

employed in support of 2 Cdn Inf Bde would be kept like the latter in divisional reserve. The necessity of placing it under the command of one of the brigade groups did not arise because H.Q., R.C.A. was to land before the reserve and resume command of the divisional artillery to support the operations of 1 Cdn Inf Bde Gp. A striking feature of the plan was the attachment of no less than seven War Correspondents together with B.B.C. sound equipment to the division, a scale of issue probably unequalled in a formation of this size.

33. The artillery plan for Operation "BAYTOWN" was impressive in its weight and thoroughness. It was preceded by a period of counter-battery fire across the Straits of Messina which was developed as quickly as the Army artillery could be concentrated. Between 17 and 27 Aug, enemy coast defence and mobile artillery installations had kept the coast road from TAORMINA to MESSINA under constant, if haphazard, shell fire. Enemy guns were, if anything, concentrated on the much battered port of the latter city which had been heavily bombed by the Allied Air Forces. Accordingly on 22 Aug, 6 A.G.R.A. commanding 75 Med Regt, 78 Fd Regt and 1 Det, C.B.O., were transferred from 13 Corps to 30 Corps, the latter having established itself in the north-eastern corner of the island. 27 Aug may be considered the last day upon which the enemy shelled the MESSINA area with any effect. By the next day, C.C.R.A. 30 Corps, whose headquarters was at ACI CASTELLO, was able to report the following in action or position:

70 Med Regt
80 Med Regt
7 Med Regt
64 Med Regt
5 A.G.R.A.
6 A.G.R.A.
57 Fd Regt
(W.D., G.S. Main H.Q., 30 Corps, Appx "A", 28 Aug 43)

From this time forward the Tactical Air Force, together with the combined artillery of the two corps, proceeded to hammer the opposite coast and its immediate hinterland with the result that enemy movement on the beaches sharply decreased and hostile shelling dwindled to negligible proportions. On 30 Aug, C.C.R.A. 30 Corps reported all medium regiments in action. (W.D., G.S. Main H.Q., 30 Corps, Appx "A", 29-30 Aug 43.)

34. The following calculations were produced by R.A., 13 Corps as a basis for estimating the number of guns required by the assaulting divisions to be sited on and behind the beaches and excluding the

artillery required to be carried in the assault wave or by subsequent ferry. The southward limit of range for field artillery was the point on GEORGE sector where the R. STRAPO entered the sea. Consequently by far the greater part of 5 Div's Sector was within range of 25-pdrs whereas 1 Cdn Inf Div's sector was entirely outside it. The extent of 5 Div's task being 5240 yards, it was estimated that 114 field guns and 32 medium guns were required in support of this division. 1 Cdn Inf Div's task being only 3200 yards required 64 medium guns to cover its front on a basis of 50 yards per gun. The artillery considered available for the operation was classified as follows:

Fd 12 Regts 288 guns
Med 4 Regts 80
155 mm (doubtful) 2 Bns 24
11 R.H.A. 105 mm S.Ps. 8
88 mm 8
12 in Hows 2 or more

The two battalions of 155-mm or Long Toms were to be contributed by the U.S. Seventh Army if available. The preliminary allotment of guns made on 21 Aug was as follows:

5 Div 4 Fd Regt 102 guns
1 Cdn Inf Div 4 Med Regt 54 guns

If the Long Toms were available they would be the disposal of 1 Cdn Inf Div for a time programme and the remaining seven field regiments would be held for supporting fire for 5 Div if required. In addition, all the available anti-tank guns not required by the assaulting divisions would be massed north of MESSINA for "concrete busting" across the narrowest portion of the straits and against the coastal railway area between S. GIOVANNI and CANITELLO. (W.D., G.S. Main H.Q., 13 Corps, Appx "F", 13 Corps Arty Instruction N. 2, 21 Aug 43.) Subsequently the total number of guns involved in the fire plan was increased to 530 - 410 field and 120 medium (Combined Operations Headquarters Fields, Report on Operations "BAYTOWN", "HOOKER" and "FERDY" by C.-in-C. Mediterranean 4462/Med/00361/R2, 20 Nov 43.). However, the support fire allotted to 1 Cdn Inf Div remained at four medium regiments which were sited to cover as far south as the 41 northing grid line or approximately 2000 yards south of the REGGIO airfield. (W.D., H.Q., R.C.A., 1 Cdn Inf Div Arty 00 No. 1, 29 Aug 43.).

35. More particularly, the artillery plan for 1 Cdn Inf Div provided for bombardment of the beach defence area from H-45 to H-36. A short period of counter-battery fire on all known hostile batteries was to

ensue between H-31 and H-16 and at H-11 the timed programme in support of the assault would come down on the inland objectives in the form of a barrage. This would last until H + 60 by which time it was considered that no further barrage would be practicable in the broken country behind the beaches. From then on observed fire and fire on pre-arranged targets in the form of concentration would be controlled by O.P. parties. The divisional artillery itself would not come into action against any specific targets until the time came for 1 Cdn Inf Bde to attack the GALLINA position. (ibid.)

36. The Naval Plan was co-ordinated at all points with that of the Army. Initial planning on a high level was undertaken by the heads of the three Services at ALGIERS. The Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean Station, refers to the problem of landing craft as being "rendered acute by the deterioration of the craft themselves and aggravated by the voracious demands of the Army in Sicily for reinforcements and vehicles". (Report by C.-in-C. Mediterranean; loc. cit.) The Flag Officer Sicily, Rear Admiral R.R. McGrigor, issued his Outline Plan on 25 Aug. the allocation of craft to 1 Cdn Inf Div was as follows:

L.S.T. 8
L.C.T. 9
L.C.M. 33
L.C.I. (L) 18
L.A.A. 18

Each assaulting company was allotted three L.C.A. and one L.C.M., the reserve companies being carried in one L.C.I.(L). The reserve battalions in each case were to be carried in three L.C.I.(L). One L.C.M. was allotted to each battalion headquarters and two L.C.M. to each brigade headquarters. In consequence each assaulting brigade was to be lifted in 18 L.C.A. for the assault companies; 11 L.C.M. for the balance of the assault companies and the accommodation of battalion and brigade headquarters; 5 L.C.I. (L)' two for the reserve companies of the forward battalions and three for the reserve battalion. In addition to these 9 L.C.T. were to accommodate the vehicles of each assault brigade. The Senior Naval Officer Landing, (S.N.O.L.), who lived at H.Q. 1 Cdn Inf Div during the planning period at LENTINI, was Captain I.R.H. Black, R.N. The Principal Beach Master, Commander H.R.N. Nicholl, R.N., the Assistant S.N.O.L., two Beach Masters and four Assistant Beach Masters were attached to the headquarters of the assaulting brigade, 3 Cdn Inf Bde, in a similar manner. (Hist Sec File "BAYTOWN"/RN/C/I, Operation "BAYTOWN" Naval Outline Plan, 25 Aug 43.)

37. During the 14 days previous to D-day, Commando patrols were landed

on the extreme southern coast of the Calabrian Peninsula and in particular at BOVO MARINA on the nights 26/27 and 28/29 Aug with the idea of distracting the enemy's attention from the actual landing places, and simulating patrols and beach reconnaissance. Ferry embarkation ports which would provide the necessary "hards" and which would be closest to the target were tentatively picked at SANTA TERESA DI RIVA about ten kilometres north of TAORMINA on the east coast road. These were, however, in enemy hands until 14 Aug and similar arrangements had to be made at CATANIA in case the TERESA beaches could not be prepared in time. The journey from TERESA to REGGIO, a matter of 25 kilometres, was considered too long for loaded L.C.A. and it was finally decided to use beaches even closer to MESSINA at MILI MARINA for embarking the assaulting troops. On 27 Aug, the assembly of the L.C.A. and L.C.M. was completed at AUGUSTA and each S.N.O.L. was able to carry out one day's practice with the assaulting troops of his sector. Accordingly the assaulting troops of 3 Cdn Inf Bde embussed on 29 Aug and moved to AUGUSTA to practise embarkation and loading with the crews of the landing craft which they were to use in the assault itself. No night rehearsals were considered practicable. The fact that the Canadian brigade had not previously made an assault landing was noted by the Flag Officer, Sicily in his report. (Report by C.-in-C. Mediterranean, Annexure 1, loc. cit.; W.D., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Bde, August 1943.)

38. This rehearsal, which took place two miles south of the Port of AUGUSTA, was attended by Major-General Simonds and members of his staff. The Brigade Major had made the following observations on the exercise which illustrate the importance of detail in assault landing:

It (the rehearsal) consisted of practising the assaulting coys and follow-up coys in L.C.A.s. and the reserve coys in L.C.Is. The R 22e R were practised in L.C.Is. because as a reserve Bn they were to proceed from CATANIA in L.C.Is. During these practices the troops were loaded into the craft in reverse order so that on landing they touched down in their proper order. This is important because had not these rehearsals taken place, there is no doubt that some of four troops during the actual assault would not have been landed at the proper time for we discovered during these rehearsals that the Naval Staff were considering "Right" and "Left" in the reverse order that we were considering the terms. The Inf Bns each had one L.C.M. so that they would take a jeep ashore during the assault. This was also taken into account during the rehearsal. We had great trouble securing transport for this rehearsal but the A.A. & Q.M.G. 1 Cdn Div, Lt.-Col. W.P. Gilbride, very obligingly helped us out of his difficulty.

(Pangman, op. cit.)

In his comments at the conclusion of the rehearsal, General Simonds pointed out that sappers and pioneers must be prepared to probe for mines in beaches before the assault troops crossed them, even in an opposed landing. (W.D., West N.S.R., 29 Aug 43.)

39. The narrowness of the beaches and the desire of the Army to land its troops upon them with minute exactness created naval problems of peculiar difficulty. In spite of the short sea passage and the possibility of overwhelming superiority in air cover and fire power, the Navy's problem of landing during darkness was complicated by strong tidal currents running south through the Straits of Messina and by the high dark background mass of the ASPROMONTE which obliterated foreground features upon which coastal navigators are wont to rely. Consequently, fixed transit lights and searchlights were installed on the Sicilian shore and provision was made for the Army to fire tracer and 25-pdr smoke to indicate the assault beaches. At TERESA and MILI MARINA the embarkation beaches were marked by illuminated signs to indicate the destination of the waiting troops. The assault beach was divided into two sub-sectors, FOX AMBER on the left for the West Nova Scotia Regiment, and FOX GREEN on the right for the Carleton and York Regiment. One rocket craft or L.C.T. (R) was assigned to support each assault sector. Army was to supply 300 D.U.K. Was., 40 of which were to be allotted to each division, 70 to the Beach Bricks and 130 to be held by Corps. These were to move by road to the embarkation points, already loaded, on D-1 but were not to be employed during the hours of darkness on that day. After unloading in the assault phase they were to play a prominent part in the Ferry Service.

40. Additional Naval gun support was provided by:

- 3 Monitors
- 3 6" Cruisers
- 6 Fleet Destroyers
- 2 Gun-boats
- 3 L.C. (G)
- 6 L.C. (F)
- 3 L.C.T. (R)

This force amounted to a total of 125 naval guns bearing calibres from 4" to 15" and a total of 2376 5" rockets. These were to support the assault in conjunction with the land-based artillery from south of the 43 northing grid line which bisects the REGGIO Airfield. The bombarding squadron allotted specifically to 1 Cdn Inf Div consisted of one monitor

(H.M.S. "ROBERTS") and one cruiser (H.M.S. "ORION"), two L.C.(F), two L.C. (S) and two L.C. (G), and as noted above, one L.C.T.(R). The L.C.(S) would be employed on either flank of the first assault wave and in addition all L.C.A. were to mount 2" mortars and Bren guns. Five fleet destroyers were to accompany them to engage observed targets and to be on call from Naval F.O.O. parties. In preparation for D-day, Allied Naval Forces heavily bombarded the south coast of CALABRIA. On the night 17/18 Aug, Royal Navy cruisers shelled SCILLA and U.S. cruisers simultaneously attacked GIOIA TAURO and PALMI. U.S. destroyers resumed the bombardment of GIOIA TAURO on the night 19/20 Aug, and Fighting French destroyers shelled SCILLA once again. On 28 Aug a cruiser and destroyer of the Royal Navy shelled the coastal batteries in the area around REGGIO in daylight and these defences received the formidable attention, on 31 Aug, of the battleships "NELSON" and "RODNEY" while other naval units engaged the batteries at CAPO PELLARO. Finally on D-1 (2 Sep) H.M.S. "VALIANT" and H.M.S. "WARSPITE", the latter being the most active and one of the oldest of the Royal Navy's capital ships, shelled coast defences further south at CAPO DELL' ARMI. (Hist Sec File "BAYTOWN"/RN/C/I, Naval Outline Plan, 25 Aug 43; Report by C.-in-C. Mediterranean, Annexure I, loc. cit.; R.A.F. Mediterranean Review No. 5.)

41. On the Allied Air Forces, however, fell the chief burden of active preparation for the military landings involved in "BAYTOWN" and "AVALANCHE". The magnitude of the task can be appreciated by examining the commitments which had to be borne in mind by the air staff during this period. With reference to the assaults themselves, it was required to provide for:

- (1) The neutralization of the enemy forces by air bombardment.
- (2) Attacks on enemy communications and movement in order to prevent reinforcements and supplies reaching the assault areas.
- (3) The provision of air protection over the assault convoys, the assaults themselves and subsequent operations.
- (4) The assistance of operations by air attack.

Furthermore, Operation "AVALANCHE" called for the transportation of airborne troops and these required protection of the closest and most careful character. Apart from the above requirements, the following tasks had also to be discharged:

(1) The defence of North Africa, the Middle East, Malta and Sicily against air attacks.

(2) The protection of allied shipping in the Mediterranean including the protection of the follow-up convoys to reinforce the SALERNO assault.

(3) Anti-submarine reconnaissance and strikes for shipping reconnaissance and strikes including the protection of air forces capable of striking at enemy naval forces should they put out to sea.

(4) Strategic and tactical photographic reconnaissance.

41. In the fulfilment of these numerous tasks, the North West African Strategic Air Force assisted by the 9th U.S. Air Force, at this time based on CYRENAICA and shortly to leave for the North-West Europe theatre, together with two R.A.F. heavy bomber squadrons, also in CYRENAICA, was responsible for the attacks on strategic airfields and lines of communication. The North-West African Tactical Air Force, which was made up of medium and light bombers and fighter bombers, was in charge of air operations in the battle area and, except in so far as they were included therein, the North-West African Coastal Air Force undertook the protection of convoys and harbours and the ancillary task of attacking enemy shipping in the Central Mediterranean. For the purpose of immediate land operations in CALABRIA, the Tactical Air Forces were controlled by the A.O.C., Desert Air Force, the justly celebrated air component of the Eighth Army.

42. During the preparatory period from 18 Aug to 2 Sep heavy bombers delivered a total of 645 effective sorties from North African bases and 327 from CYRENAICA and these were concentrated on enemy airfields and railway marshalling yards. The latter at ROME and NAPLES had already been dealt particularly destructive blows during the assault on Sicily, and for the moment needed no further attention. On 19 Aug, FOGGIA, the principal railway centre for south-eastern Italy, was attacked by 162 U.S. Fortresses from North Africa and 71 Liberators from CYRENAICA and its railway communications with NAPLES, BARI, and MANFREDONIA were cut. On 31 Aug, 152 Fortresses attacked PISA which was similarly a vital rail centre for western Italy and vital damage was also done to the west coast system of railroads. Attacks on a smaller scale were delivered during this time against marshalling yards at SULMONA, TERNI and BOLOGNA. On 2 Sep by an unexpected stroke of luck, the main line into Italy over the Brenner Pass was temporarily cut by attacks on BOLZANO. The 9th U.S. Air Force, concentrating mainly on the eastern

side of the peninsula, struck at marshalling yards at CANCELLO, PESCARA, at FOGGIA again on 25 Aug and at TARANTO on 28 Aug. In addition to all this, effective medium bomber sorties delivered by both the Strategic and Tactical Air Forces numbered during the same period, 2147. These were directed against similar targets in the NAPLES' SALERNO, FOGGIA and TARANTO areas and successfully hampered most attempts to repair the damage inflicted by the heavies. Against the Calabrian Peninsula itself, light bombers made a series of attacks on CASTROVILLARI, CATANZARO and neighbouring towns as well as marshalling yards at PELLARO. Night attacks by Liberators and Halifaxes from the Middle East were delivered at the same time against the marshalling yards at CROTONE.

43. The most important single attack on enemy airfields was directed against the FOGGIA group on the morning of 25 Aug by the Strategical Air Force. 140 Lightnings and 136 Fortresses did critical damage to these at a time when their attention and use was essential to the enemy defence of southern Italy. As an incidental triumph, 47 enemy aircraft, mostly German, were destroyed on the ground. With more special interest to the assaulting troops, a series of attacks against the enemy positions in the "toe" of Italy was undertaken by the Tactical Air Force. On 26 and 27 Aug, gun positions in and around REGGIO were bombed by 36 U.S. Bostons and by 27 R.A.F. Bostons on the following three nights. The fortifications of SAN GIOVANNI were attacked by 12 R.A.F. Baltimores on 26 Aug. On 1 Sep, 24 S.A.A.F. Bostons and Baltimores, 24 R.A.F. Baltimores and 24 U.S. Mitchells hammered enemy troops concentrated south of the Catanzaro Isthmus. Attacks on D-1 reached a crescendo of fury. 45 U.S. Mitchells, 24 S.A.A.F. Bostons and 33 R.A.F. Baltimores concentrated on specified enemy headquarters. 45 U.S. Bostons, 36 R.A.F. and S.A.A.F. Baltimores and Bostons bombed enemy gun positions east of REGGIO. 24 U.S. and S.A.A.F. Bostons attacked troops at BOVA. To all this flexible and damaging activity, the enemy made remarkable little reply. Southern Italy is as dependent on northern Italy for its supplies as the whole country was depending on Germany for the essential munitions of war. By 3 Sep, southern Italy was virtually isolated from the north, its airfields pitted by innumerable craters and its tenuous net-work of railways shattered beyond immediate repair. A more energetic and phlegmatic people than the Italians might well have quailed before such an attack delivered before the onset of the Allied armies. In Italy as it was then, dispirited, disorganized and disillusioned, the game was up. (R.A.F. Mediterranean Review No. 5.)

44. While these massive preparations were in train, 1 Cdn Inf Div, and to a lesser extent, 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde, had administrative problems of their own. On 19 Aug at Rear Headquarters of the division, an "A" & "Q"

conference was held under the presidency of Lt.-Col. W.P. Gilbride, A.A. & Q.M.G. At this conference the staff captains of the infantry brigades, of the Army Tank Brigade, and of H.Q., R.C.A. together with the heads of Services, the Commander of 34 Beach Brick, the P.M.L.O. and the 2 i/c, 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt, assembled to discuss the Corps Administrative Plan and to apply it to the requirements of the Canadian Force. The maintenance project provided for 48 hour mess tin rations and an emergency ration to be carried on each man. Two days' Compo ration would be carried in first line transport. Water which was a vital consideration in CALABRIA, especially at this time of year, was disposed of in full water-bottles for each man, full unit water trucks and one gallon per man in tins carried on first line transport. All vehicle petrol tanks were to be full supplemented by sufficient in "Jerricans" to provide for a journey of 200 miles per vehicle. Full first line ammunition was to be carried in unit transport. The A.A. & Q.M.G. stated that maintenance would be over the beaches but that it was expected that the Port of REGGIO would be partially open on D + 1. C.R.A.S.C., 1 Cdn Inf Div and 34 Beach Brick would be responsible for the control and clearing of the beaches and the Divisional Maintenance Area was to be established in close conjunction with that of 5 Div in the area of the coast road at the extreme left of FOX sector where the two most favourable beach exits exists. Some necessary modifications were made in the system of handling kit bags which had suffered considerably from pilfering on the PACHINO beaches during the invasion of Sicily. On this occasion they were to be left in Sicily with Unit rear parties and brought forward when possible. The water-proofing of vehicles to be carried over on D-day and D + 1 was to be handled as a Corps undertaking by Fortbase instead of being done under unit arrangements as was the case for Operation "HUSKY". Plans were made to convert as many jeeps as possible into ambulance carriers and this use of the vehicle was highly commended by brigade staff captains. Provision was also made for 1,000 reinforcements to be landed between D-day and D+6. (W.D., H.Q. 1 Cdn Inf Div, A.A. & Q.M.G., August 1943, Appx 5.)

45. A source of considerable anxiety during this period was the impending arrival of the D+42 convoy for Operation "HUSKY". According to the movement plans for "HUSKY", this convoy carrying unit rear parties and low priority vehicles was due to arrive in Sicily on 21 Aug. In fact, it was several days behind schedule at a time when the maintenance of schedule was a point of grim necessity. Disembarkation of personnel at AUGUSTA and vehicles at SYRACUSE commenced finally on 26 Aug. Lt.-Col. Gilbride's comments on this situation and the incidental problems to which it gave rise may be quoted in full:

The re-equipping of the Division for operation BAYTOWN...

proceeded smoothly except for the allocation of vehs. Eighth Army had decided to bring our allotment of vehs up to light scales only and were relying upon the 'D' plus 42 (i.e. - 'D' equals 10 Jul) convoy for the necessary vehs. Actually the 'D' equals 10 Jul) convoy for the necessary vehs. Actually the 'D' plus 42 vehs did not arrival until about four days before the assault and we had to withdraw vehs from 2 Cdn Inf Bde and low priority units to give them to 3 Cdn Inf Bde in order that they could be waterproofed in time for the assault. An officer was sent to SIRACUSA with the W/T set to await the 'D' plus 42 convoy. As soon as he learned that this convoy was about to arrive he signalled for the necessary drivers to take over the vehs and after off-loading to the units concerned any G1098 stores or kit that may have been on them, the vehs were distributed immediately to meet deficiencies. Some of the ships of this convoy did not arrive until very much later: (1) the "Ocean Faith" reached BRINDISI on about 9 oct, (2) the "Fort Carillon" arrived at TARANTO on about 28 Sep. In both instances offrs were despatched well ahead to the appropriate port to make sure that we would receive all of our vehs.

Forty-eight hrs before the Division was to leave for its embarkation areas it was found that due to the non-arrival of some of the ships the Division would not be up to light scales and we, therefore, asked Eighth Army to make up deficiencies and this they did by drawing from 30 Corps. The majority of these vehs were 4 x 2s which had seen lengthy service and it was made quite clear to the GSO I (SD) and the DA & QMG Eighth Army that while we appreciated their assistance we wanted to receive our Cdn vehs upon their arrival and would return the borrowed vehs to the Eighth Army.

(Hist Sec File Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/O/D,
Account by Lt.-Col. W.P. Gilbride, AA & QMG.)

The question of securing Canadian vehicles for Canadian troops was recurrent throughout the Italian operations from this time forward and was only finally settled by drastic pooling regulations imposed by 15 Army Group for the whole theatre.

46. Waterproofing of all the necessary vehicles of 13 Corps was carried out in the CATANIA Plain with all the advantages of mass production and assembly line technique. Fortbase selected an area on the dead straight stretch of main road from the PARIMOSOLE Bridge which crosses the confluence of the GORNALUNGA, SIMETO and DITTAINO Rivers running northward to the city of CATANIA. Immediately north of the bridge on both sides of the road was the pre-waterproofing area where

vehicles assembled. To the north again, and adjacent were the waterproofing area on the west side of the road and the post-waterproofing and assembly areas on the east side and opposite. From these later points vehicles were to proceed to their ports of loading. South of the bridge and at the junction of the SCORDIA and LENTINI roads, 1 Cdn Inf Div had established an inspection park through which all divisional vehicles had to pass before being called forward to the pre-waterproofing area. The vehicles of 3 Cdn Inf Bde Gp which included Corps and Army troops under its command were waterproofed under these arrangements during 25-27 Aug. Elaborate catering provision was made for the crews of these vehicles at the inspection park. No more convincing testimony could be given to the superiority of Allied air power than the huge concentration of vehicles which this programme entailed, massed on the CATANIA Plain without cover, without camouflage and in close proximity to a group of airfields well known to the enemy. (Hist Sec File "BAYTOWN", 1 Cdn Inf Div/B/F, 1 Cdn Div Adm Planning Instruction No. 3, 25 Aug 43; Gilbride op. cit.)

47. Lt.-Col. Gilbride says further about the multifarious activities of the services during this stage:

The administrative unit during this re-equipping stage were, if anything, busier than during actual operations. A terrific tonnage of stores flowed through the ADOS dump, a dump which had been very organized by ADOS 1 Cdn Div, Lt.-Col. D.J.G. Farquharson. REME workshops were busy overhauling vehs and carrying out modifications such as strengthening the base plates of 3" mortars, etc. Every individual veh in the Division received REME inspections and in general their condition was found to be very good. The RCASC assisted Corps in moving amn to dumps preparatory to the arty bombardment of the Italian mainland from across the STRAITS OF MESSINA in support of the landing operations and in addition to this, feeding the scattered Division at the same time and overhauling its own equipment. The Medicals were operating a large malaria centre holding patients within the Division. REME also provided inspection teams for the pre-waterproofing area which was organized by the Division, thus every veh that was being waterproofed was thoroughly inspected and only two of the total number were rejected because of minor defects which were quickly corrected. REME fitters also assisted Fortbase in their extensive waterproofing of vehs. This mass waterproofing was more satisfactory from the unit point of view than carrying out waterproofing under unit arrangements. The Division operated a transit camp to feed the crews of these vehs during the waterproofing and also assisted in operating a transit camp in the

embarkation area. The Divisional Catering Adviser, Capt F. Thrasher, did an excellent job in organizing these facilities. When the Division left for the embarkation areas fmns and units reported that there was not a single outside administrative problem of any importance. (Gilbride, op. cit.)

48. On 31 Aug, just seventeen days after the commencement of planning by 1 Cdn Inf Div and in spite of numerous changes in detail, Operation "BAYTOWN" was ready for execution. The previous day had been devoted to rehearsing platoons in assault drill and final inspections of kit and equipment in the assaulting battalions. In the afternoon of 1 Sep the West N.S.R. and Carlt & York R. moved in T.C.Vs. to CATANIA where they embarked on L.C.I.(L) and put to sea at last light arriving at the MILI MARINA beaches at 0100 hours on the morning of 2 Sep. R. 22e R., the reserve battalion of 3 Cdn Inf Bde, moved in turn to CATANIA on 2 Sep and there embarked in order to join the assault convoy on D-day. Units of 1 Cdn Inf Bde, the follow-up brigade, moved by road under the overhanging mass of Mt ETNA to their assembly areas between TAORMINA and the embarkation beaches at S. TERESA. Close by was Divisional Headquarters which was to cross the straits with this brigade group on 3 Sep. On 2 Sep, 2 Cdn Inf Bde Gp left the MILITELLO area following the same route as far as RIPOSTO where it staged during the night 2/3 Sep preparatory to moving further north to take its turn at embarkation on the TERESA beaches. Great care had been taken not only in the making of preliminary reconnaissances by the brigade commanders and their staffs but also in organizing the most rigid traffic control along the exposed east coast road where all movement was under observation from Italy. In this connection a letter, dated 28 Aug 43, was received by 1 Cdn Inf Div and 5 Div from the Commander, 13 Corps emphasizing the necessity of concealing the assembly of the two assault divisions from prying eyes across the straits. Strict adherence to Movement Tables was necessary to avoid tell-tale traffic congestion. (Hist Sec File "BAYTOWN"/Q/I.)

49. All day long in the heat of 2 Sep the troops at MILI MARINA and S. TERESA waited for darkness and the first attack on the mainland of Europe. The characteristic gullies which carried the seasonal streams down the bare hillsides to the sea provided shelter for most of their necessary movements although little respite from the sun. Here the men were told off in their serial groups and they and their equipment were carefully aligned so that embarkation on the assault craft would be swift and accurate. Commanders and staffs, dealing with the many minor problems which arose during the day, cast anxious eyes towards the high Italian shore. In CATANIA where the R. 22e R., together with the greater portion of the miniature armada spent the day, the enemy served

notice of his vigilance and also of his weakness by making an ineffective hit-and-run air attack with F.W. 190 aircraft. The Army Commander issued the following characteristic personal message to all troops:

1. Having captured SICILY as our first slice of the Italian home country, the time has now come to carry the battle on to the mainland of ITALY.

2. To the Eighth Army has been given the great honour of being the first troops of the Allied Armies to land on the mainland of the continent of Europe.

We will prove ourselves worthy of this honour.

3. I want to tell all of you, soldiers of the Eighth Army, that I have complete confidence in the successful outcome of the operations we are now going to carry out.

We have a good plan, and air support on a greater scale than we have ever had before.

There can only be one end to this next battle, and that is:
ANOTHER SUCCESS.

4. Forward to Victory!

Let us knock ITALY out of the water!

5. Good luck. And God Bless you all.

B.L. MONTGOMERY

General

Eighth Army

(W.D., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Bde, Appx 2, September 1943)

This was accompanied by a more particular injunction to the Canadians by Major-General Simonds in a special Order of the Day:

1 Canadian Division is in the van of the invasion of Continental Europe. It is a grand honour for the Division, earned by virtue of its achievements in the conquest of Sicily and it is an honour to our country that Canadian troops share in this decisive act.

We have crossed the moat and entered the outer defences of the "European Fortress" of the Axis - a feat which Nazi and Fascist propagandists have constantly proclaimed impossible. There may be

prolonged, hard fighting ahead, and heavy blows struck from several directions before the Nazi collapse comes, but a vigorous thrust into Italy at this time will have tremendous moral effect.

We will have to fight our way through very difficult and steep country but we have learned in Sicily how such difficulties may be overcome. We have added battle experience to a sound training and we know that the German cannot withstand our concentrated and shattering bombardments and determined assaults.

I wish to congratulate all troops on the standard of conduct and smartness which has been maintained during our period of rest. We have shown that we are not here to make war on women and children. But we will now again demonstrate that we can fight and defeat the Nazi soldiery.

We will press on into Italy with the cry:

"DRIVE THE GERMANS OUT OF ITALY"

G.G. SIMONDS

Major-General

GOC 1 Cdn Div

(W.Ds., 1, 2 and 3 Cdn Inf Bdes, Hist Sec File ITALY/
1 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Account by Major G.E.B. Renison.)

THE ASSAULT ACROSS THE STRAITS

50. The embarkation of the assaulting battalions began on the MILI MARINA beaches at about 2330 hrs. Weather in the straits was perfect. The sea was dead calm and by the faint moonlight it was possible to see general outlines. All accounts testify to the smooth and expeditious process of loading the assault craft and the report of the S.N.O.L. of FOX sector -- Captain Ian Black, R.N. -- mentions with appreciation the good work of the military guides, two to each craft, who accompanied the L.C.A. into shore. These men were part of the serials which they were to embark and called out their numbers as each was required to file forward and enter the boats. No single hitch was reported at this stage by any of the authorities concerned. During this operation the craft were spread out along the beaches in one long continuous line with the L.C.I.(L) of the S.N.O.L. in the centre. Diagrams of their disposition had been supplied by the Royal Navy to the officers concerned superintending the loading of their own troops and the knowledge of these greatly assisted them in the darkness. (Hist Sec files Italy 1943/3 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Pangman and Prince, op. cit; BAYTOWN/RN/C/I, Naval Outline Plan; W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 2-3 Sep; Report on

C.-in-C. Mediterranean Station, loc. cit.)

51. At 0230 hrs on D-day, 3 Sep, the long line of small craft bearing the assault battalions of 3 Cdn Inf Bde on the right, 13 (Brit) Inf Bde in the centre and 17 (Brit) Inf Bde on the left, slide away from the beaches "X", "E" and "W" and began to form up behind the naval motor launches for the seven mile journey to the Italian mainland. The flotilla bound for FOX beach now moved in four parallel columns headed by its guiding launch. In the meantime, at midnight, the L.C.I.(L) bearing the reserve battalion, the R. 22e R., slipped out of the harbour at CATANIA and headed north along the Sicilian coast to keep their rendezvous with the rest of the brigade off FOX beach. (W.D., R. 22e R., 2 Sep 43.) At 0330 hrs while bde brigade was still seaborne the great barrage was flung eastwards over their heads. The whole coastline of Sicily as far north as MESSINA was brightly lit by the flashes of the guns. Vertical searchlight beams sprang up from the Sicilian side to assist the navigation of the landing craft and tracer shells were fired continuously to mark the limits of the beaches. When the L.C.A. reached positions about 1,000 yards from the mainland the rocket craft in support of each sector commenced firing on the beaches with devastating and terrifying effect. To the thunderous challenge of the guns of the Eighth Army there was no reply from the looming shores of Italy. As the time for deployment approached everything was proceeding entirely according to plan. But at the very moment when the calculations of the planners were being fulfilled line by line, the ill-chance, seemingly inseparable from most assault landings, started to upset them. (Pangman and Prince, loc. cit.)

52. The natural difficulties which beset the path of the historian when describing in many paragraphs the breathless onrush of events are complicated at moments like these by the inarticulate and confused character of the official documents. One voice, that of the S.N.O.L. for HOW sector, has indeed spoken clearly in terms which apply generally to the whole assault area: "In spite of the favourable features of the landing, i.e., short sea passage, dead calm and lack of opposition, we did not succeed in landing at the prearranged places". (Report of C.-in-C. Mediterranean Station, loc. cit.) All accounts speak of the dense smoke obscuring the beaches soon after the bombardment began. In this connection, Rear Admiral McGrigor made the following observations in his report:

All assault convoys found their way successfully to positions within a few hundred yards off the beaches and then encountered dense smoke. Over 500 smoke shells had been included in the barrage without either myself or any member of my staff being

consulted. I would not have agreed to this because of the uncertainty of off-shore breezes at H-hour.

(ibid.)

53. At this stage the guiding lights on the sterns of the leading motor launches, which had served their purpose well during the run across the straits, were mistaken for fixed lights ashore and increased the difficulties of the assault craft navigators (Pangman, op. cit.). Before deployment, twenty minutes delay was imposed on the FOX group of landing craft by those of GEORGE group which were late in forming up ahead (Report, of C.-in-C. Mediterranean Station, loc. cit.). At 0450 hrs, twenty minutes after H-hour, Commander Nicholl, the Principal Beach Master, deployed the 16 L.C.A. of the assault wave and gave them the order "GO" at an estimated distance of seven chains from the beaches (ibid.).

54. In the event, the two assault companies of the West N.S.R., which were to land simultaneously on the beach known as FOX AMBER, failed to do so. There is substantial disagreement among the authorities as to what actually happened. The War Diary of H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde suggests that both companies landed on HOW sector and had to move south for a distance of approximately 1½ miles to rejoin their reserve companies on FOX AMBER (W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 3 Sep 43). The regimental War Diary indicates that "B" Company only was affected, landing partly in REGGIO and partly some two miles north of FOX sector (W.D., West N.S.R., 3 Sep 43). Commander Nicholl in his report states that two of the regiment's eight L.C.A. went astray and beached on HOW sector (Report of C.-in-C. Mediterranean Station, loc. cit.). This last explanation would account for half of the assault personnel of "B" Company. The Carlt & York War Diary, without going into detail, alludes generally to landings made on the wrong beaches although here again that of H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde disagrees to the extent of describing the Carlt & York R. as the only lucky ones (W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde; W.D., Carlt & York R., 3 Sep 43; Pangman, op. cit.). Whatever the actual facts may have been, the action taken by the battalion commanders in making fast their L.C.M. ;to the leading craft of their reserve companies and guiding them in to the right beaches averted any further confusion (Pangman, op. cit.).

55. Similar discrepancies occur in the various accounts with regard to the actual time of touching down. The brigade diary gives the time of the first report of touching down from the Carlt & York R. as 0440 hr at which time, if Commander Nicholl is to be believed, the craft had not yet deployed for the run in to the beaches. The regimental diary is

silent on the point (W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde; W.D., Carlt & York R., 3 Sep 43). Nevertheless, it is apparent that the Carlt & York R. reported all its companies ashore on FOX GREEN before word had been received from the West N.S.R. at 0527 hrs of one company having landed (W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 3 Sep 43). This was "A" Company which reported a successful landing at 0500 hrs (W.D., West N.S.R., 3 Sep 43). None of these minor difficulties were, in fact, a source of anything more serious than inconvenience because no opposition was encountered, no hostile shelling impeded the landings and the two battalions were able to proceed to their tasks in good order. The Carlt & York R. moved quickly into REGGIO and the West N.S.R. having collected its scattered sub-units, was able shortly after 0545 hrs to begin the steep climb to the forts at point 305. Initial success was general and unopposed throughout the 13 Corps area of assault and at 0545 hrs, 13 Corps reported to Eighth Army "that landing is taking place." On this information 15 Army Gp was to send signals direct to the Prime Minister of Great Britain. (W.D., Tac H.Q., Eighth Army, Appx "B", 3 Sep 43.) This was followed at 0600 hrs by the Navy reporting success at FOX GREEN and FOX AMBER (ibid.), originally signalled at 0526 hrs (W.D., G.S., H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Div, 3 Sep 43).

56. Brigadier Penhale now decided to land the R. 22e R. and the rest of the brigade reserve at once. The former was ordered into the beach at FOX GREEN (Hist Sec file, Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, Ops Message Log, 3 Sep 43, serial 9) and apparently landed in the West N.S.R. area on FOX AMBER at 0700 hrs (W.D., R. 22e R., 3 Sep 43). Fifteen minutes later the West N.S.R. broke into the Italian forts at point 305 and found them to be deserted except for two Italian sergeants who had remained behind in the north fort. The massive walls, in places twelve feet thick, had easily withstood the weight of our bombardment and large supplies of ammunition for the coastal guns were piled within. Four 280-mm mortars, four 75-mm guns and two 20-mm A.A. guns were captured (W.D., West N.S.R., 3 Sep 43). The Carlt & York R. moved south through the suburb of S. CATERINA with "A" Company on the right keeping to the built-up area and "C" Company on the left skirting the high ground east of the power line behind the town. "A" Company found the bridge over the FIUMARA ANNUNZIATA intact and the way open through the main part of the town. "D" Company passed through "A" Company and "B" Company, which had been left to form a firm base at FOX GREEN, was prepared to take over from "C" Company when the need should arise. At 0730 hrs, 3 Cdn Inf Bde received a message from General Simonds saying, "Well done. Maintain firm base but be bold in use of fighting patrols." While the R. 22e R. was climbing the slopes across the FIUMARA ANNUNZIATA towards points 367 and 359 and the REGGIO - S. STEFANO road, it became apparent that no immediate resistance would be forthcoming. Friendly civilians

volunteered the information that there were no Germans south of GALLICO or west of LE GAMBARIE and that the Panzer Grenadier Battalion of 29 Pz Gr Div which had been in the REGGIO area had withdrawn eastwards two days before. (W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 3 Sep 43.) Brigadier Penhale's position was now so favourable that General Simonds ordered him to extend his operations to include the pre-arranged objectives of 1 Cdn Inf Bde as quickly as possible. By 0810 hrs, "A" Company of the Carlt & York R. had crossed the bridges over two more "fiumare" and had seized the most important objective of all, the REGGIO airport. The ascent to the village of GALLINA was more laborious but at 1145 hrs this objective was secured by "B" Company. (Pangman, op. cit; W.D., Carlt & York R., 3 Sep 43.)

57. Nowhere on any of the beaches assaulted by 13 Corps had there been any enemy resistance and the attitude of the Italian civilians was one of hysterical enthusiasm. Throughout the day, columns of Italian soldiers descended from the hills behind the coast to surrender to the invading army. More satisfactory than this, was the recovery of 14 British prisoners of war in a military hospital in REGGIO taken by the Carlt & York R. At about 0830 hrs an enemy gun, apparently one of a troop of 88-mm, began firing on the beaches from positions near TERRETI, after which the troops withdrew to STRAORINI and blew the bridge there in the afternoon. (W.D., G.S., H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Div, Appx 5, Intelligence Summary No. 11, 4 Sep 43; W.D., West N.S.R., 3 Sep 43.) The gun was engaged at once by all the 64 medium guns supporting 1 Cdn Inf Div. Half an hour later four medium enemy bombers made a half-hearted attack on REGGIO Harbour but no serious damaged was done to any of the installations. (W.D., West N.S.R., 3 Sep 43.) To the northward - in 5 Div's sector - the beach at GEORGE was reported to be under fire from 17-cm guns shortly after 13 Inf Bde had made good its landings (W.D., Tac H.Q., Eighth Army, Appx "B", 3 Sep 43).

58. In the meanwhile, Brigadier H.D. Graham, commanding 1 Cdn Inf Bde, had despatched a reconnaissance party under his Brigade Major (Major G.E.B. Renison) to the mainland to establish assembly areas for his Brigade Group. While he himself moved to the O.P. near MESSINA, the brigade embarked in the first lift of the TERESA ferry service. The 48 Highrs disembarked at FOX beaches at about 1130 hrs; they were followed by the Hast & P.E.R. and R.C.R. in that order, and the whole group including its transport, supporting arms and the Main H.Q. of 1 Cdn Inf Div were complete in the REGGIO assembly area by evening (1900 hrs). At noon, Brigade H.Q., while still in Sicily, received the order to take over the task of 2 Cdn Inf Bde, and Brigadier Graham prepared to embark at once while instructing the Brigade Major by wireless to report to the G.O.C. in REGGIO and get details. These involved pushing forward

along the divisional axis of advance -- the road running east from REGGIO, through TERRETI and PODARGONI to meet the GALLICO-MELITO road at S. STEFANO. The 48 Highrs set out at once in the wake of the R. 22e R., passed through the latter at TERRETI and continued forward to the neighbourhood of STRAORINI which was reached in the early hours of 4 Sep. (W.D., H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Bde, Appx 3, 3 Sep 43; Rension, op. cit.)

59. Momentarily the main task of 3 Cdn Inf Bde had come to an end although it was to provide important patrols in advance of the main body during the next phase of operations. One of these patrols which developed during the following days into a combination of flank guard and reconnaissance force for the whole subsequent movement of the Division was pushed southward soon after the consolidation of the REGGIO airfield position. It consisted of two platoons of "A" Company of the Carlt & York R., two anti-tank guns and two 3-in mortars, one platoon of Vickers machine-guns from the Brigade Support Group (Sask L.T.) and four of the Battalion despatch riders, all under command of the Battalion Adjutant (Capt. J.D. Augherton). The patrol reached MELITO DI PORTO SALVO on the coast road, the southern terminus of the lateral road running north of LE GAMBARIE at 1800 hrs without making any contact with the enemy. In the course of its journey through the CAPO PELLARO region it did however, accept the surrender of a thousand Italian prisoners of war who were directed back towards REGGIO. While probing northward towards BAGALADI the same evening, enemy mortar fire was encountered and the resultant skirmish yielded another 150 prisoners. So far no German resistance had been identified. (W.D. Carlt & York R., 3 Sep 43.)

60. By the end of the first day of the invasion of the mainland, 13 Corps had established itself solidly along the coastal strip facing the eastern shores of the Straits of MESSINA from CAPO PELLARO to a point immediately west of SCILLA. This bridgehead, although nowhere more than four miles deep, was strongly anchored to the high ground overlooking the coastal plain and the deep valleys of the various "fiumare" running westwards from the high ASPROMONTE. Although much superficial damage had been done to the town of REGGIO by our own bombardment and much more serious havoc had already been caused by enemy demolition and Italian looting, the port facilities remained substantially unimpaired and it was clear that the period of beach maintenance would not be prolonged for more than 48 hours. During the day of 3 Sep, Ferry Control at TEREIA had shipped 1500 vehicles across the Straits including many D plus 2 priorities, the assembly of which caused great congestion in the beach maintenance areas. 5 (Brit) Div had met with the same uniform success as attended the operations of the Canadians on their right, the patrols of 13 Brigade pushing towards S. STEFANO along the road from GALLICO by last light, while Seaforth

carriers from 17 Inf Bde chased enemy rearguards into the outskirts of SCILLA on the north coast road. Headquarters of all formations within 13 Corps together with Corps H.Q. were established ashore during the day. In the Canadian sector, 3 Cdn Inf Bde was re-grouped to provide a firm base around REGGIO, the R. 22e R. covering the main axis and the West N.W.R. being moved southwards to positions on the high ground overlooking the airfield. The Carlt & York R. concentrated in the GALLINA area, and the role of the brigade as a whole was to form a defensive flank facing southeast to cover the eastward exploitation by 1 Cdn Inf Bde. The airfield itself was considered to be ready for fighter aircraft by nightfall. No mines, blown bridges, or other tactical demolitions had been encountered throughout the day's operations in and around REGGIO. Only the railway marshalling yards which form the link between the west coast electrified line to NAPLES and the east coast steam railways to TARANTO, had been extensively wrecked. West of a line BOVA MARINA - S. STEFANO - SCILLA, the enemy had provided only the most scattered and perfunctory resistance. Rough figures for captured enemy personnel showed 3,000 Italian and three German prisoners of war taken over the whole Corps front. 13 coast defence guns, 15 field guns and eight anti-aircraft guns, together with great quantities of ammunition had fallen into our hands. (W.D., Tac H.Q., Eighth Army, Appx "A" -- Situation Trace -- and Appx "B", 3 Sep 43.)

THE ADVANCE INLAND

61. It is interesting to observe that the plan now followed by substantially the same as that laid down on 1 Sep by General Simonds in an Outline Plan of Operations communicated to the Brigade Commanders before embarkation. It was appreciated that any enemy resistance south of the ASPROMONTE watershed would involve only small rearguards and demolition parties and that the main defensive effort would be concentrated in the northern portion of the peninsula facing the Gulf of GIOIA. The Outline Plan points out that the spine of the ridge MONTALTO - M. CROCCO turned all the river lines flowing northwest and southeast and covered the right flank of 13 Corps while restricting any attempt of the enemy to manoeuvre between the southeastern slopes of the ASPROMONTE and the sea. (W.D., G.S., H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Div, Sep 43, Appx 1.) The abandonment of Operations "BUTTRESS" and "BACKWATER" and with them the possibility of employing the "sea-borne hook" on a large scale made necessary the methodical clearing of the ground eastward from the beachhead Operations "FERDY" and "HOOKER", the only sea-borne assistance now available to 13 Corps were to be aimed at the coastal road in the Gulfs of GIOIA and S. EUFEMIA. The axis of 1 Cdn Inf Div consequently remained the same as laid down on 1 Sep 43, viz: the line REGGIO -

DELIANUOVA - CINQUEFRONDI. Exploitation along this line involved first and foremost the securing of the lateral roads LE GAMBARIE - MELITO and DELIANUOVA - BOVALINO MARINO, while 5 Div continued to work its way north-eastwards along the north coast road. The triangle COSOLETO - OPPIDO - DELIANUOVA covering the northern slopes of the ASPROMONTE was to be consolidated for a further advance to the GIOIA TAURO - LOCRI lateral in its central portion between RADICENA and CITTANOVA could take place. (ibid.) The only departure from this plan occurred in the early stages of the operation when 1 Cdn Inf Bde took over the task assigned to 2 Cdn Inf Bde in the afternoon of D-day. Close behind the toiling columns of the 58 Highrs came the Hast & P.E.R. moving likewise up the steep and precariously balanced mountain road with the deep cleft of the FIUMARA CALOPINACE on their right hand and the barren cliffs of M. GONI on their left. South of the first bridge demolition near STRAORINI the Hast & P.E.R. turned off the road and established two companies on the slopes of M. CALLEA overlooking the CAMPI DI REGGIO -- a typical plateau of this region -- thus gaining the first "landing" on the long climb up the terraced slopes of the ASPROMONTE. (W.D., Hast & P.E.R., 3 Sep.) The R.C.R. spent the night in an assembly area on the lower slopes just outside REGGIO. The town itself was now silent and largely abandoned by the civil population (W.D., R.C.R., 3 Sep 43).

62. Nevertheless, it became increasingly clear that the ASPROMONTE was a natural feature which required little or no man-made improvement in order to secure it against direct passage by a modern army. 1 Cdn Inf Bde did, indeed make good the line of the road LE GAMBARIE - MELITO on 4 Sep after a brief engagement by the 48 Highrs with Italians and German rearguards near S. STEFANO which withdrew after shelling by Canadian artillery and the combined pressure of this battalion and the Northhamptons moving up from S. ALESSIO. (W.Ds., 48 Highrs and R. 22e R., 4 Sep 43.) LE GAMBARIE was thoroughly bombed by 24 Baltimores and 1 Cdn Inf Bde was able to consolidate on the slopes of M. BASILECO and M. DI REGGIO under the frowning mass of MONTALTO. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, Ops Message Log, 5 Sep 43, Serial 206.) The Canadians were now in a pleasant, if chilly, environment deep in the chestnut and beechwood forests which made LE GAMBARIE a local resort for skiers in the winter and children in the summer. The troops in passing, enjoyed the amenities of some of the larger houses and chalets. The Brigade Major says of LE GAMBARIE and the operations around it:

This was a very commanding position because German communications were under observation for a very considerable distance. It was now raining heavily and as we were very high in the mountains, we suffered severely from the cold ... Some fighting took place with the Italians but this opposition was easily pushed aside.

Persistent demolitions blocked our way, going off practically in our faces and during this time we were fighting ground to a greater extent than the enemy. It was impossible country and the administration problem very great. Supplies and equipment had to be "man-packed" by units whose men had already their normal equipment to carry.
(Renison, op. cit.)

63. The operations of 1 Cdn Inf Bde were effectively assisted by those of the Carlt & York R's. flying patrol which was briskly engaged during the day by Italian paratroops of 84 (Nembo) Division. These troops contested for some hours the tangle of ravines and barren peaks around the villages of S. LORENZO and BAGALADI. No weapons larger than mortars were used by either side, and the enemy after yielding both villages and prisoners to the number of 150 men, withdrew along the mountain road eastwards towards ROCCAFORTE DEL GRECO. (W.D., Carlt & York R., 4 Sep 43; Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, Ops Message Log, 4 Sep 43, Serials 139, 187.) The Carlt & York R. patrol, although reinforced to the strength of two companies with supporting arms, was well out of artillery range and began to call insistently for artillery support. Although naval F.O.Os. were on the ground, efforts by H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde to obtain the support of a destroyer had eventually to be abandoned. (ibid., Prince, op. cit; W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 4 Sep 43.) The patrol found in the BAGALADI hospital two naval ratings who had taken part in the commando landings at BOVA MARINA before D-day -- one a Canadian -- as well as a gunner from 1st Air Landing Anti-Tank Regiment, R.A., who had been dropped at MELITO as early as 10 Jul -- D-day for Operation "HUSKY". (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, Ops Message Log, 4 Sep 43, Serial 167.)

64. In the meantime, beginning at 0730 hrs, the third fighting group of the Division, 2 Cdn Inf Bde, crossed the Straits from S. TERESA and landed complete by 1100 hrs in the REGGIO assembly area. At the same time, 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt was also in transit but the greater complexity and number of its vehicles lengthened the period of unloading and the regiment was not fully concentrated until 2300 hrs. (W.D., 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt, 4 Sep 43.) 2 Cdn Inf Bde began the arduous march eastwards through TERRETI as soon as possible but owing to the bridging operation just south of STRAORINI and the filling of a crater where the CAMPI DI REGGIO track leaves the road, the three battalions did not reach the plateau, 1250 metres above sea level, until 2230 hrs. Here they stayed until first light on 5 Sep when the P.P.C.L.I., preceded by "A" Squadron, 4 Cdn Recce Regt, set out to pass through 1 Cdn Inf Bde on the way to DELIANUOVA and the hoped for contact with the Germans. (W.D., H.Q., 2 Cdn Inf Bde, 4-5 Sep.) At the same time, "B" Company, 48 Highrs

had been ordered forward to seize DELIANUOVA mounted on folding bicycles found at LE GAMBARIE in a Quartermaster's store formerly belonging to the Italian Blackshirt Legion (W.D., 48 Highrs, 4 Sep). All transport of 2 Cdn Inf Bde which had crossed the CAMPI DI REGGIO track was forced to return and reach LE GAMBARIE through CERASI and S. STEFANO because of a large "blow" at M. BASILICO at the lateral road.

65. The road from LE GAMBARIE to DELIANUOVA skirts the northwestern slopes of the precipitous central mass of the ASPROMONTE along the edge of the plateau known as the CAMPI D'ASPROMONTE over 1000 metres above the coast at BAGNARA. It joined the main lateral road BAGNARA - BOVALINO after crossing a spur of MONTALTO about a mile north of DELIANUOVA. The enemy had demolished it at two points and most emphatically by creating a 70 foot break in the viaduct which crosses the deep valley of the TORRENTE VASI (W.D., H.Q., 2 Cdn Inf Bde, 5 Sep 43). In the beechwoods of this high and exposed mountain side, the troops felt keenly the contrast between the heat of the coast and the rain and fog which they now had to endure with the inadequate protection of khaki drill (Renison, op. cit.). "B" Company, 48 Highrs, duly arrived in DELIANUOVA on their bicycles without making contact with anything more formidable than the usual nonchalant parade of surrendering Italians and a rapturous welcome from the inhabitants. In the afternoon they were relieved by the marching troops of the P.P.C.L.I. of 2 Cdn Inf Bde and returned to the VASI Valley for the night. (W.D., 48 Highrs, 5 Sep 43.)

66. As communications lengthened and supply difficulties increased, the demands made upon the infantry became increasingly heavy in the effort to make contact. Only jeeps and motorcycles could negotiate the blown bridges and cratered roads at this stage and "man-packs" were the order of the day. Established on the nexus of roads surrounding DELIANUOVA, the P.P.C.L.I. patrolled rapidly and audaciously towards OPPIDO, S. CRISANA and COSOLETO. The Seaforth of C. and Edmn R. moved forward along the road from LE GAMBARIE with flanking patrols far out to the north and west. Bridges and exposed stretches of road continued to go up "in the faces" of the forward troops in a manner which impressed them as forcibly as the men of 1 Cdn Inf Bde on the preceding days. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/2 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Account by Lt.-Col. C.B. Ware, O.C., P.P.C.L.I.) While 2 Cdn Inf Bde was in motion, orders came thick and fast from Divisional Headquarters, now in position at the LE GAMBARIE road junction. At 1300 hrs, the G.S.O.1, Lt.-Col. Kitching, sent word to Brigadier Vokes' forward command group, that his next immediate objective was to be the MASTROGIOVANNI Plateau overlooking the BAGNARA - BOVALINO road due east of S. CRISANA. This order had been anticipated and the Edmn R. was already on the march. At

2100 hrs a further order was received from General Simonds to occupy CITTANOVA, a long leap ahead of the Brigade's present position and situated in the middle of the peninsula almost exactly half way between GIOIA TAURO and LOCRI. (W.D., H.Q., 2 Cdn Inf Bde 6 Sep 43.) There were two available routes for the advance to the next lateral road, one by an almost inevitably demolished minor road through OPPIDO to RADICENA and the other a track leading along the precipitous ridge which connects the mountain masses of the ASPROMONTE and the SERRA. It was decided that the OPPIDO road traversing the western slopes of the ridge would be explored by the P.P.C.L.I. while the Edmn R., having gained its commanding position on the MASTROGIOVANNI Plateau, would take the upper track (ibid.).

67. Although the original idea of the role of 1 Cdn Inf Div entertained from Army Headquarters down, was denial to the enemy of the eastern coastal communications by dominating the high ground of the interior at least as far north as M. CROCCO in the SERRA, a variety of factors operated in favour of a change of plan. In the first place, the speed of the German withdrawal greatly exceeded expectation and it was of vital importance for the Eighth Army to maintain contact with the German force in view of the impending blows at SALERNO and TARANTO and the pre-arranged surrender of Italy. A striking comment on German nervousness about the latter point was given to the D.A.A.G. of the Division (Major F.E.D. Wallace) by the mayor of BOVA MARINA who stated that a party of Germans had evacuated his town on 2 Sep saying that if they stayed longer they would be trapped by the Italian capitulation. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, Ops Message Log, 4 Sep 43, Serial 172.) Secondly, all attempts to find routes from the interior alternative to the much-demolished and traffic-congested road to DELIANUOVA had been unsuccessful. On 4 Sep, the West N.S.R. patrol from REGGIO had reported no motor transport movement possible east of CARDETO. On 5 Sep, Lt.-Col. C.H. Neroutsos, on being asked by General Simonds to give his opinion of the possibility of tanks using the road through S. STEFANO, stated that considerable engineering work would have to be done before such a course could be contemplated. (W.D., 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt, 5 Sep 43.) On the same day the Engineers advised the G.O.C. that the CAMPI DI REGGIO track -- the only practicable alternative to the road through S. STEFANO -- could not be developed as a Divisional axis (W.D., H.Q., R.C.A., 1 Cdn Inf Div, 5 Sep 43), and the efforts of "A" Squadron, 4 Cdn Recce Regt to pursue German stragglers up mountain tracks leading eastwards from the road LE GAMBARIE - BAGALADI were frustrated by the appalling difficulties of the ground (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, Ops Message Log, 5 Sep 43, Serials 294, 303, 304). The coast road, however, from REGGIO by Cape Spartivento, at first considered too vulnerable, looked more inviting.

A patrol from 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt consisting of three carriers, a scout car and a jeep had travelled along it beyond BRANCALEONE reporting no enemy south of BRUZZANO during the same day. Finally, enemy resistance to 5 (Brit) Div in the BAGNARA area, on which the withdrawal had been pivoted, was beginning to crumble. (W.D., G.S., Main H.Q., Eighth Army, Appx "B", 5 Sep 43.) We had complete command of the sea and air and the ASPROMONTE fortress area was obviously lost to the enemy.

68. Consequently, 6 Sep was a day of new decisions. Although 154 (Highland) Inf Bde had been ordered across the Straits to relieve 3 Cdn Inf Bde and release it for concentration at LE GAMBARIE, General Montgomery ordered the return of the former to Sicily together with Tactical Headquarters, 51 (Highland) Div as soon as craft allowed. 30 Corps Artillery was told to stand down. The exploitation role of 30 Corps had gone the way of Operation "BUTTRESS" and the campaign in CALABRIA was to be a pursuit rather than a battle. At the same time, 1 Cdn Inf Div was ordered to swing right from the mountains down to LOCRI and thence forward to make the coast road its axis. (ibid., 6 Sep 43.)

69. Many precautions, however, had to be taken before the new axis could be adopted and the high ground abandoned. The decision to clear the interior as far as the GIOIA TAURO - LOCRI lateral road was adhered to. A much stronger force than the patrol of 5 Sep was now placed under the command of the O.C., 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt consisting of "B" Squadron, 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt (less two troops), two companies of the Carlt & York R. to be carried in motor transport, "A" Squadron of 4 Cdn Recce Regt, a 4.2-in mortar section and a machine-gun section from the Sask L.I. and a troop of anti-tank guns. Lt.-Col. Neroutsos' command was known as "X" Force and its role was to proceed along the southeast coast road and capture LOCRI. (W.D., 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt, 65 Sep 43.) "X" Force, less "A" Squadron, 4 Cdn Recce Regt, left REGGIO at 1700 hrs on 6 Sep and harboured at 2100 hrs near MELITO. At 1345 hrs, Army Air Support Control was informed of the expected movements of "X" Force and asked to make sure that it received more considerate treatment from the U.S. Kittyhawks which had strafed the first patrol three times on the previous day. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, Ops Message Log, 6 Sep 43, Serial 354.)

70. On the morning of 7 Sep, "A" Squadron, 4 Cdn Recce Regt, joined "X" Force at MELITO after a difficult movement from LE GAMBARIE over the BAGALADI road and Lt.-Col. Neroutsos pushed on to CAPO BRUZZANO. The bridge over the FIUMARE LA VERDE had been demolished and the approaches heavily mined. From the high ground to the south, "X" Force was able to see signs of the enemy's rearguards withdrawing and blowing bridges

as they went. Although at one time an R.C.E. officer came under enemy machine-gun fire as he approached a road bridge to the north of BRUZZANO, no active resistance was encountered and the force entered BOVALINO MARINA at 1630 hrs. Two troops of tanks reached the battered town of LOCRI at last light. (W.D., 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt, 7 Sep 43; W.D., Tac H.Q., Eighth Army, 7 Sep, Appx "B".)

71. In the meantime, 2 Cdn Inf Bde had begun its arduous march towards CITTANOVA. During the afternoon of 6 Sep, the Edmn R. continued to move around the northern edge of the ASPROMONTE after being delayed by a substantial demolition east of DELIANUOVA. The infantry was now out of reach of sapper assistance and these demolitions had to be overcome by the ingenuity of the unit's Pioneers with assistance from the marching troops. Immediately east of the junction of the main road and the track leading to OPPIDO a chasm 200 feet deep was negotiated by the latter and by noon the following day the Pioneers and one of the companies had constructed around the broken arches of the previously existing bridge a diversion which was capable of carrying jeeps and motorcycles and thus preserving the ration supply. (W.D., Edmn R., 7 Sep 43.) After a midnight halt at S. CRISANA, three companies of the Edmontons reached the flat surface of the MASTROGIOVANNI Plateau by 1000 hrs on the following morning. Here the battalion halted until a report was received by Lt.-Col. Jefferson from scouts sent forward towards the CITTANOVA - LOCRI lateral and at 1600 hrs resumed its advance along the great ridge connecting the ASPROMONTE and the SERRA massifs. Only the most rudimentary sheep track and previously traversed this knife-like projection between the two main lateral roads. But the Edmontons saw signs of the preparation of a military road and of fortified positions. During the march the coast on both sides of the peninsula was clearly visible from the Gulf of GIOIA in the west to the Ionian Sea in the east. (ibid., 7-8 Sep 43.)

72. While the Edmontons, closely followed by the Seaforth, were marching out of sight and out of wireless contact northeastwards, the P.P.C.L.I. set forth at 1500 hrs on 7 Sep across country to VARAPODIO, by-passing OPPIDO and passing through the village of TERRANOVA and RADICENA (on the main lateral road). By 0300 hrs on 8 Sep they had reached the open country northwest of CITTANOVA. (W.D., P.P.C.L.I., 7 Sep.) Throughout this march the usual difficulties were encountered and overcome. Numerous demolitions made the going impossible for all but jeeps and motorcycles which, where the construction of a diversion was impossible, had to be raised and lowered by ropes. The inhabitants of the villages in this area gave the Canadian troops a rousing welcome and as soon as the scout and sniper platoon had reported a village clear, the infantry would move through to the accompaniment of loud

cheers and official oratory. More important, contact, although fitful, was maintained with the patrols of 5 (Brit) Div as the latter pushed forward along the wet coast road. Contact with the Germans there was none. (Ware, op. cit.)

73. "Everywhere we went", said Lt.-Col. Ware of the P.P.C.L.I., "we found the enemy had left just about the day before." (ibid.). All reports corroborate this statement. Occasionally the enemy left stragglers in our path. The first German prisoner to be taken by 1 Cdn Inf Div in Italy was brought in by a "first light" patrol of the P.P.C.L.I. on 6 Sep. He was a sapper belonging to 29 Pz Gr Div and had been found on the road east of S. CRISANA waiting for demolition fuses which never came. The German defence platoon covering demolition operations in the area had withdrawn northwards through OPPIDO. (W.D., P.P.C.L.I., 6 Sep 43; W.D., G.S., H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Div, Appx 6, Intelligence Summary No. 12, 7 Sep 43.) Stragglers of a more determined nature were discovered on the MASTROGIOVANNI Plateau on the early morning of 8 Sep by the leading elements of the West N.S.R., at this point moving through 2 Cdn Inf Bde towards LOCRI. At about 0530 hrs the West Novas who were resting by the roadside heard small arms fire close at hand and were soon engaged in a skirmish in the half light with Italian paratroops approximately 100 strong. In short order they had taken 57 prisoners and killed six while a platoon of the Edmontons, presumably left behind to work on the nearby diversion, chased away the remainder. (W.D., West N.S.R., 8 Sep 43.) A company sergeant-major and a sergeant of the West N.S.R. were killed, two officers and several other ranks being wounded. The Italians had fought fiercely as long as the fighting lasted and this was the more remarkable in view of the supine attitude adopted by all other Italian troops encountered hitherto. They had bivouacked less than 100 yards from the Canadians and their presence was unnoticed in the dark. The hazard of ambush in these mountains might well have been a powerful deterrent had Italian resistance been more determined during the last few days of Italy's belligerence. It was subsequently discovered that this party belonged to 8 Bn, 185 Para Regt of the 84 (Nembo) Division. Their Battalion Commander had been unwilling to surrender with the Italian coastal troops and had withdrawn his men from their original position on the south coast at MELITO northwards to LE GAMBARIE where they joined a German battalion deployed to defend the crossroads. They had then withdrawn through DELIANUOVA and had lost touch with the swift retreat of 29 Pz Gr Div. (W.D., G.S., H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Div, Appx 6, Intelligence Summary No. 12, 7 Sep 43; Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/L/D, Account by Capt. V.C.J. Thrupp.)

74. The slow the tortuous advance of the two divisions lost much of

its significance when 231 Bde was landed by the Royal Navy in the Gulf of S. EUFEMIA at MARINA DI VIBO VALENTIA in the early morning of 8 Sep. Here again the success of the operation was put in jeopardy by failure to find the right beaches. A hard and fluctuating fight ensued during this enemy artillery accurately shelled L.C.T. A good indication of the rapidity of the German withdrawal at this stage of the campaign to provided by two features of the landing. Firstly, it had been planned for two nights previously to take place in the area of GIOIA TAURO. Secondly, it had been timed to land the force behind the enemy's main body and so to cut off his line of withdrawal. In fact, the landing took place exactly at the point where the main German force was retreating along the western coast road and the enemy was thus able to bring unexpectedly heavy fire to bear. Nonetheless, the course of this operation served to reinforce the decision taken on 6 Sep to pursue rather than to seek battle with caution. (Report of C.-in-C., Mediterranean Station, annexure 1, loc. cit. and W.D., G.S., H.Q., 13 Corps, September 1943, Appx J1.) Enemy resistance in the area of PIZZO continued until the infantry of 5 (Brit) Div joined hands with 231 Bde but by 10 Sep contact with the Germans had been lost on the whole front. (W.D., Tac H.Q., Eighth Army, Appx "B", 10 Sep 43.)

THE EAST COAST AXIS

75. In the evening of 8 Sep at 1830 hrs, the B.B.C. announced the capitulation of Italy. The effect on the natives of CALABRIA was electric. All night the ridge pyrotechnics of the surrounding villages illuminated the darkness and caused much speculation among isolated patrols who were not aware of the news. So violent were the rejoicings in LOCRI that the Brigade Major of 1 Cdn Inf Bde who had approached the town from the south by the coast road, and a liaison officer of 3 Cdn Inf Bde reconnoitring the route from CITTANOVA through GERACE both came to the conclusion that something had gone wrong with the smooth progress of the advance. The former entered LOCRI and heard of the capitulation from an hysterical citizen, while the latter learned the news at GERACE, commandeered Italian transport and sent back for two companies of the Carlt & York R. to proceed to the coast and preserve order. (Renison and Prince, op. cit.) Early on the following morning, Operation "AVALANCHE" went in against the beaches of SALERNO. On the same day 1 Airborne Div, having previously embarked at BIZERTE, operating under the direct command of 15 Army Group was put ashore at TARANTO by cruisers and destroyers of the Royal Navy.

76. While 2 Cdn Inf Bde was pushing forward along the backbone of the mountains to fulfil the plan of 1 Sep, 3 Cdn Inf Bde was brought forward from its firm base position around REGGIO. The first stage took place

on 5 Sep and by the afternoon of the following day the brigade was concentrated in the now familiar area of LE GAMBARIE. That evening Brigadier Penhale announced at an "O" Group that a 24-hour period for rest and cleaning up would ensue for the whole brigade. (W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 6 Sep 43.) On the morning of 7 Sep, however, fresh orders were received in conformity with the change of plan noted above and the brigade was ordered forward to DELIANUOVA in T.C.Vs., there to debus and proceed by march route to LOCRI. All available jeeps were to be concentrated in the form of a light supply column. (ibid., 7 Sep 43.) Consequently, in the evening of 7 Sep, the battalions of the brigade -- West N.S.R., R. 22e R. and Carlt & York R. (less two companies, detached with "X" Force), began the laborious march towards the MASTROGIOVANNI Plateau in the wake of 2 Cdn Inf Bde. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, Ops Message Log, 7 Sep 43, serials 499, 500.)

77. In the course of this move the West N.S.R., as we have seen, became involved in a skirmish with Italian paratroops early in the morning of 8 Sep. Nevertheless, the troops made good time along the ridge to the CITTANOVA - KLOCRI road and by the end of the day the brigade had coiled up in the mountainous country between the junction of the ridge track and the lateral road -- on the saddle known as LA NEA DI GERACE -- and a blown bridge about half a mile above the town of GERACE itself. From this point the two companies of the Carlt & York R., were rushed downhill into LOCRI to check the activities of the drunken populace, and especially looting by Italian troops which was then proceeding apace. (ibid., 8 Sep 43, serial 689; W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 8 Sep 43.)

78. At first light on the following morning an attempt by the Engineers to put a Bailey bridge in position resulted in a temporary disaster in which the span fell nearly 100 feet into the bottom of the ravine carrying with it an Engineer officer, Lieut. Love, who miraculously escaped death although not severe injuries. (W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 9 Sep 43; Prince, op. cit.) A diversion, passable for jeeps, was quickly undertaken and the battalions moved down to the outskirts of LOCRI by jeep ferry. Brigade Headquarters moved a short distance up the coast to SIDERNO MARINA where it was besieged by the local population clamorously demanding food. Strong patrols were necessary to convince the citizens of SIDERNO to go about their business. (ibid.) From here, Brigadier Penhale decided to send forward the balance of Carlt & York R. by sea to "X" Force now far along the coast at MARINA DI MOASTERACE. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, Ops Message Log, 9 Sep 43, serial 690.) Here also the Commanding Officer of 8 Bn, 185 Regt, 84 (Nenmbo) Div, came to surrender

the remnants of his unit (W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 9 Sep 43.)

79. At last light on 8 Sep the battalions of 2 Cdn Inf Bde were grouped around the town of CITTANOVA. The P.P.C.L.I. were north of it with patrols in POLISTENA and CINQUEFRONDI, Brigade Headquarters just east of it, the Edmn R. immediately east of Headquarters and the Seaforth of C. further east again in the neighbourhood of LA NEA DI GERACE. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/2 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Account by Capt. F.M. Pope.) It is clear that the possibility of making further progress northwards through the mountains was still entertained because on the following day a strong reconnaissance patrol from the Edmn R. was despatched under Major A.S. Donald with its main object the establishment of a route to CATANZARO following the mountain roads through CINQUEFRONDI, LAUREANA DI BORRELLO, SORLIANO CALABRO and SERRA SAN BRUNO. The patrol consisted of a platoon of infantry together with ten regimental Pioneers and an unspecified number of regimental 6-pr anti-tank guns. It had not gone far before the extent of German demolitions convinced Major Donald that the route would be of little use to a rapidly moving division. Nevertheless, he persevered and attempted to come up with the demolition parties moving like a cloud in the mountains before him. The inhabitants of the eastern and northern slopes of the SERRA were friendly and helpful. In order to get their anti-tank guns around the numerous demolished bridges, the Pioneers used explosive extracted from German Tellermines and heated to the required point of volatility. After a journey of more than 100 miles this patrol rejoined the Edmontons on 13 Sep after moving through CHIARAVALLE and SQUILLACE. Only one German prisoner was taken and he was an officer in civilian clothes captured while attempting to make his way back to his fast-moving compatriots. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/2 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D. Account by Major E.W. Day; W.D., Edmn R., 9 and 12 Sep 43; Pope, op. cit.) In fact, however, 2 Cdn Inf Bde had now to wait for three days while the rest of the division passed through to LOCRI and up to the next area of concentration at CATANZARO.

80. On the afternoon of 9 Sep, General Simonds held an "O" Group at LOCRI. Here he discussed the latest developments in Italy and issued his orders in conformity with the decision of 13 Corps to establish 1 Cdn Inf Div in the area TAVERNA - CATANZARO and 5 (Brit) Div in that of NICASTRO - NOCERA. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/GOC, serial 3.) Starting forthwith, "A" Sqn, 4 Cdn Recce Regt, under the command of Lt.-Col. F.D. Adams, was to move ahead of the rest of "X" Force direct on CATANZARO. Order had already been sent to 1 Cdn Inf Bde to come forward along the east coast road in T.C.Vs. through REGGIO and the brigade arrived in the LOCRI area that evening. 2 Cdn Inf Bde was to stand fast and reorganize on light scales around CITTANOVA. 3 Cdn

Inf Bde would reorganize at LOCRI, its assault scale transport moving through CITTANOVA and light scale vehicles behind 1 Cdn Inf Bde along the coast road. The balance of 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt would move up by the same route and eventually rejoin the elements with "X" Force. (W.D., H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Bde, 9 Sep 43; W.D., 2 Cdn Inf Bde, September 1943, Appx 15.) On the following day, 10 Sep, Lt.-Col. Adams was to despatch patrols to CROTONE and SAN SEVERINA and reconnoitre all routes in this area and that of CATANZARO. 1 Cdn Inf Bde would be ferried by landing craft supplied by 13 Corps (Hist Sec File Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, Ops Message Log, 7 Sep 43, serial 454), which even then were beaching at LOCRI (W.D., Carlt & York R., 9 Sep 43), to land at CATANZARO MARINA and be prepared to advance inland to COSENZA through the heart of the SILA Mountains nearly 60 miles by road northwest of CATANZARO. On 10 Sep both 2 Cdn Inf Bde and 3 Cdn Inf Bde would remain in their concentration areas at CITTANOVA and LOCRI respectively. On 11 Sep, 3 Cdn Inf Bde would be ferried by landing craft to CATANZARO, its transport moving by road, while 2 Cdn Inf Bde would march to LOCRI and be ferried, in its turn, by sea to CATANZARO. A significant feature of these arrangements illustrating well the widely extended situation of the Division, was the position of the Divisional Artillery which on 9 Sep was to concentrate as far back as the CAMPI D'ASPROMONTE west of DELIANUOVA whence it would move by road through CITTANOVA and eventually to the new area. The arrangements for 11 Sep were largely tentative but in the event only minor changes in detail were necessary owing to the unexpected provision of Italian T.C.Vs. for the movement of 2 Cdn Inf Bde down to the sea. (W.D., H.Q., 2 Cdn Inf Bde, September 1943, Appx 15.)

81. It would be tedious to follow these moves in detail but it may be noted that they involved an advance of some 60 miles along the coast road supplemented by the welcome assistance of three naval landing craft. These craft were an even greater boon than the T.C.Vs. because they provided relief from the all pervading white dust which rose in clouds behind the long convoys, not to mention a pleasant rest and the refreshment of sea breezes for troops who had been engaged in the most arduous route marching of their lives. (Report of C.-in-C. Mediterranean Station, annexure 1, loc. cit.)

82. Meanwhile, Lt.-Col. Neroutsos had been discharging his final task as commander of "X" Force. His main body reached LOCRI on the morning of 8 Sep. One of the Carlt & York companies was left between LOCRI and SIDERNO MARINA supported by machine and anti-tank guns to provide a firm base for the subsequent moves of the main body of the Division. The remainder pushed on and by 1600 hrs had turned the corner at Cape STILO and reached MONASTERACE on the coast. A troop of tanks was despatched inland to STILO meeting no enemy and finding no demolitions. In fact,

none of the mines and demolitions so common around LOCRI were discovered on the long stretch of road between it and MONASTERACE and it was evident that the usually meticulous German engineers were now in a great hurry. Nevertheless, the force was again attacked by Allied Kittyhawks in spite of the warnings issued by the Divisional Headquarters and Army Air Support Control. The first sign of opposition came next morning from an Italian battery of 75-mm guns which was either unaware of the Armistice or unwilling to recognize it. "D" Company, Carlt & York R., accordingly deployed and overran the intransigent battery while the attention of the tanks was distracted by a submarine which surfaced about a mile offshore and move in to investigate the firing. All tanks were loaded with armour-piercing shot and trained on the intruder but in the absence of any recognition signals from the submarine and any positive knowledge of the difference between the silhouettes of Allied and enemy submarines, it was judged safer not to open fire. After further scrutiny the submarine proceeded out to sea and submerged. When "A" Squadron, 4 Cdn Recce Regt, was detached to go forward of CATANZARO, the remainder of "X" Force harboured at MONTAURO south of SQUILLACE and eventually rejoined the rest of 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt at MARINA DI CATANZARO on 12 Sep. (W.D., 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt, 8-12 Sep 43.)

83. During 10 Sep, movement along the coastal road towards CATANZARO was continuous and unimpeded, except by the intense congestion of traffic inseparable from the use of a single restricted axis of advance (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, Ops Message Log, 7 Sep 43, serial 790). A serious demolition was encountered where the coast road, built on galleries of masonry, clings to the steep face of the PUNTA DI STALETTI (W.D., Tax H.Q., Eighth Army, Appx "B", 10 Sep 43). An inland by-pass through MONTUORO was used to circumvent this obstacle and 4 Cdn Recce Regt reported its entry into CATANZARO by 1700 hrs (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, Ops Message Log, 10 Sep 43, serial 776), followed closely by a patrol of the R.C.R. (Renison, op. cit.). Through the journey, the Division had an opportunity of assessing the work of the M.A.A.F. which had bombed the coastal railway installations during the previous three days with remarkable accuracy. The railway had ceased to function and sidings and freight yards of even minor importance had been methodically destroyed. At MARINA DI CATANZARO, the coastal projection of the provincial capital of CATANZARO, the marshalling yards -- the most considerable of the east coast -- were in a state of utter ruin. Large coal piles were still burning and the reconnaissance party of 1 Cdn Inf Bde was able to cook meals on what was to all intents and purposes a vast outdoor stove. (Renison, op. cit.). CATANZARO is a city containing some 27,000 inhabitants on the extreme southern slopes of the SERRA PICCOLA, bounded on the east and west by

the steep valleys of the "fiumare" known as LA FIUMARELLA and MOSOPALO. A branch railway line running to COSENZA connects it with MARINA DI CATANZARIO six miles to the south. North of the city the landscape is extremely rugged and mountainous and covered with dense woods of coniferous and deciduous trees. The distance from sea to sea in this area is barely 20 miles and it is indeed the narrowest part of the Calabrian Peninsula. The mountains of the SERRA break off south of CATANZARIO but the terrain of the isthmus between the Gulf of SQUILLACE and the Gulf of SAN EUFEMIA is broken by the steep and tangled ridges of windblown sand formations (I.S.I.S. Report on Sicily: Supplement on the Calabrian Peninsula). On the line CATANZARO - NICASTRO, General Montgomery proposed to halt for a few days to "pull up the tail of the Army" (W.D., Tax H.Q., Eighth Army, Appx "B", 9 Sep 43). A message to this effect announcing that the Division would remain in the CATANZARO area until 14 Sep was passed by Headquarters to the brigades during the day (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, Ops Message Log, 10 Sep 43, serial 767).

84. The Division concentrated with Divisional Headquarters, 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt and Divisional R.C.A. and R.C..E. on the open ground between CATANZARO and MARINA DI CATANZARO. To the north of the mountainous country around PENTONE was 1 Cdn Inf Bde, in a position to probe towards COSENZA if such action were required. At BORGIA, southwest of CATANZARO and beside the pleasant banks of a perennial stream, lay 2 Cdn Inf Bde. 4 Cdn Recce Regt patrolled the roads between TAVERNA and SAN SEVERINA, having ascertained that the port facilities of CROTONE were in good working order. The town of CROTONE was perched on a headland overlooking its harbour and the long stretch of sandy beach running northwards to the FIUMARA NETO. On its northern outskirts was an important electro-chemical plant which had been severely damaged by Allied bombing. CROTONE proved to be a most useful port and for a short time the needs of the Eighth Army were supplied through it to the tune of 2,000 tons a day. (Report of C.-in-C. Mediterranean Station, annexure 1, loc. cit.) General Simonds, himself, arrived hard on the heels of the Reconnaissance Regiment in CROTONE on 11 Sep and made his own report on its condition to the Corps Commander (W.D., G.S., H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Div, 11 Sep 43). Subsequently, a platoon of the Hast & P.E.R. was quartered in the town for garrison duties (W.D., Hast & P.E.R., 11 Sep 43).

85. The halt at CATANZARO enabled the Division's painfully elongated lines of communication to be shortened and the rear echelons of units to make contact with their marching troops. On 15 Sep a large letter and parcel mail was delivered to the troops -- the first since landing in Italy. (W.D., H.Q., 2 Cdn Inf Bde, 15 Sep 43.) Best of all, the broad

sandy beaches which flank the northern edge of the Gulf of SQUILLACE and the pleasant streams and woodland in the neighbourhood of CATANZARO allowed all ranks to wash themselves and their clothes and to enjoy shelter from the sun and dust of the coastal roadways. Regular bathing parades were organized at once. During two days, 12 and 14 Sep, General Simonds inspected the three brigades and Divisional troops and spoke to all ranks about the general situation. After calling the men around him, he said that the Army and Corps Commanders were more than pleased at the speed with which the Division had moved through the mountains to its present position. He emphasized the importance of fire power and mobility in the Sicilian campaign and during the present advance. In Sicily the Division had shown its superiority in fire power and since landing at REGGIO, in mobility as well. "Foot mobility" had been a special feature of the long advance through difficult country where mechanical mobility was at a disadvantage. Finally, he clarified the complicated political situation which prevailed in Italy after the capitulation and explained the new status of Italian troops and civilians who were now no longer enemies and must not be treated as such. (W.D., H.Q., 2 Cdn Inf Bde, 14 Sep 43, and Pope, op. cit.)

86. Apart from their own administrative problems, the various staffs had to wrestle with a new and formidable embarrassment. Unlike the disorganized streams of Italian soldiers which were brushed aside during the swift advance northwards, 104 (Mantova) Div and 212 Coastal Div were discovered almost intact around CATANZARO and in full possession of weapons and transport. The Canadian troops had not yet been positively informed about the status of Italian soldiers since the announcement of the Armistice. They accordingly continued to take what they required of Italian equipment. When General Bologna, commanding 104 Div, was brought to General Simonds' Headquarters on 11 Sep (W.D., G.S., H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Div, 11 Sep 43), his observations about the acquisitive habits of our troops were heated and prolonged (Thrupp, op. cit.) The situation, which had its lighter side, threatened to become serious owing to the disorganization produced among the Italian formations by desertion, the shrinkage of food supplies as a result of German looting, aerial bombing and the need of essential communications for our own L. of C. A letter from General Dempsey dated 11 Sep, emphasized the necessity of concentrating complete Italian units and formations in situ, under their own officers, until arrangements could be made to deal with them in bulk. Small parties would necessarily be treated as prisoners of war. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/GOC, serial 2.) On the following day, instructions were issued to concentrate 104 Div and 212 Coastal Div in the area CARLOPOLI - TAVERNA - PETILIA on the high ground north of CATANZARO and well back from the coastal roads on both sides of the peninsula. It was emphasized that

Canadian formations must render all assistance in their power to facilitate this movement, and that no transport was to be requisitioned from the Italian divisions without authorization from Divisional Headquarters. (W.D., H.Q., 2 Cdn Inf Bde, September 1943, Appx 17.) The terms of the Armistice had provided for the active employment of Italian troops in the interests of the Allies. For this reason it was necessary to issue additional orders that Italian soldiers were not to be disarmed or considered as prisoners of war. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/L/D, Account by Capt. C.T. Isolani, British Intelligence Corps.) H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Bde, in whose area the greater part of 104 Div began to concentrate, made survey of the strength and equipment of the Italian units (W.D., H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Bde, September 1943, Appx 6), but because of the limited time available, little more could be done by the Canadians. It had been intended to employ Italian troops in force on the lines of communication in the work of repair and supply, but the swiftness of the advance northwards, and the disinclination of the fighting troops to cope with masses of Italian soldiers, accelerated a process of disintegration in the Italian Army which rendered it temporarily useless and was not reversed for several months. (Thrupp and Isolani, op. cit.)

87., General Montgomery visited Divisional Headquarters during the morning of 13 Sep and presented to officers and men of 1 Cdn Inf Div decorations won during the Sicilian campaign. In the afternoon the G.O.C. held a conference of brigade commanders and heads of services to explain what was available of the 13 Corps plan for the immediate future, and to coordinate the largest move forward yet undertaken. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/GOC, serial 14.) The next stage of the advance required a fresh concentration of the Division in the low-lying and malarious plain east of CASTROVILLARI. By road it was a journey of roughly 150 miles. The air cover which had been so generous in the earlier stages of the advance would henceforth be absent owing to the removal of the entire M.A.A.F. to the SALERNO beachhead which was then in mortal danger. (W.D., G.S., H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Div, 13 Sep; and Daily Telegraph, 3 Nov 44, Press Conference of General Alexander in Rome.)

THE ADVANCE TO POTENZA

88. The fate of Operation "AVALANCHE" was now to absorb the energies of the whole of 15 Army Group. In the opinion of 10 Corps, the Armistice had been announced one day too early, enabling the Germans to relieve Italian units in the SALERNO area before the landings took place and to take over coast defence batteries and other installations. (W.D., G.S., Main H.Q., 30 Corps, September 43, Appx "A", 12 Sep.) The

initial landings had sufficient impetus to secure the port of SALERNO and establish a substantial bridgehead in the flat Plain of Paestum, famous for the glories of its Hellenistic ruins. In spite of numerous counter-attacks by small battle groups, by 10 Sep U.S. troops had established themselves from TOCHIARA in the hills to the south of the plain as far north as the River SELE, subsequently extending their foothold to include the villages of ALBANELLA and ALTAVILLA. Meanwhile British troops moving along the main road east of SALERNO had captured BATTIPAGLIA and the important airfield at MONTECORVINO. But, except in the extreme south, all these positions from PAESTUM to SALERNO itself were overlooked by the enemy from the ring of steep hills which surround the plain. In a determined effort to cut the bridgehead in half the enemy launched a heavy counter-attack on 12 Sep along the general line of the River SELE compelling a withdrawal from ALBANELLA, ALTAVILLA and BATTIPAGLIA and, by 14 Sep, driving in the Allied position to a bare thousand yards from the beaches. To resist this disastrous shrinkage of the Fifth Army's perimeter the whole available strength of the M.A.A.F. and of the Allied Naval forces in the Mediterranean were employed to break the counter-attack by continuous bombardment from the air and from the sea. Stabilization was achieved on 15 Sep but from this time on the first pre-occupation of 15 Army Group was to thrust northward with the Eighth Army against the enemy's left flank and relieve the heavy pressure which he was exerting against the main Allied effort. (War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee, Weekly Resume No. 211: War Office Weekly Intelligence Review No. 6: General Alexander, loc. cit.)

89. All but one of the enemy's five divisions in Southern Italy were moved to the SALERNO area to seal off the Fifth Army (General Alexander, loc. cit.). 29 Pz Gr Div and 26 Pz Div accordingly disappeared from the front of the Eighth Army (W.D., G.S., Main H.Q., 13 Corps, September 1943; 13 Corps Intelligence Summary No. 253, 15 Sep 43). The bulk of 1 Para Div, experts in defensive fighting, were left to impose what delay they could upon the Eighth Army and 1 Airborne Div which in the words of the Commander-in-Chief was "to crack about in the enemy's rear with a fairly weak but highly mobile force". (General Alexander, loc. cit.). The completeness of this withdrawal was not, however, immediately apparent to 1 Cdn Inf Div. Patrols sent forward by 4 Cdn Recce Regt to ROSSANO secured civilian reports that the enemy, at brigade strength, was near FRASSA on the southern edge of the CASTROVILLARI Plain. Subsequent reports from Italian officers at FRASSA indicated a large concentration of Germans around CASTROVILLARI with forward defensive positions at SPEZZANO. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, Ops Message Log, 14 Sep 43, serials 976 and 989.)

90. The 13 Corps warning order for the move northwards to the CASTROVILLARI area provided that 5 (Brit) Div would move first on 14 Sep by sea and by the west coast road to the area CASTROVILLARI - BELVEDERE. 1 Cdn Inf Div would not move to the area VILLAPIANA - SPEZZANO until 16 Sep. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/GOC, serial 12.) Presumably the reasons for moving 5 (Brit) Div two days ahead of 1 Cdn Inf Div contemplated the outflanking of any enemy position in the CASTROVILLARI Plain and the possibility of joining hands with the Fifth Army as quickly as possible by the shortest route. Patrol tasks given to 5 (Brit) Div while its main body was in motion were along the lines CASTROVILLARI - LAGONEGRO and BELVEDERE - VALLO DI LUCANIA. Similarly 1 Cdn Inf Div was to reconnoitre boldly along the line VILLAPIANA - ROTONDELLA. (ibid.)

91. The next move northward was begun on 15 Sep by 4 Cdn Recce Regt which, strengthened by a troops of 17-pr anti-tank guns, "D" Company of the Carlt & York R. and a section of 3-in mortars from the same battalion, set out to seize VILLAPIANA and SPEZZANO in preparation for the general advance (W.D., Carlt & York R., 14 Sep 43; Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/GOC, serial 14). They were followed by the tracked and wheeled vehicles of 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt on the same day. The G.O.C., for the second time in Italy, constituted a Tactical Headquarters which spent the night, 15/16 Sep, in harbour with the latter near CARIATI. (W.D., 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt, 15 Sep 43.) The reports of 4 Cdn Recce Regt on the coast road between STRONGOLI and CARIATI which, at the beginning of the war had been under construction, suggested that it might deteriorate under the impact of heavy traffic. In consequence, the brigade convoys were directed to turn inland from STRONGOLI until they joined the main road from SAN GIOVANNI in FIORE at SAVELLI. 3 Cdn Inf Bde left CATANZARO MARINA at first light on 16 Sep, lifting as many troops as possible on the three L.C.I.(L), the remainder travelling by road. (W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 16 Sep.) They were followed by 1 Cdn Inf Bde on the same day. This convoy was involved in considerable traffic congestion as a result of the overlapping movement into CROTONE of the Desert Air Force (W.D., H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Bde, 16 Sep 43 and Renison, op. cit.). Since Tac H.Q. and 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt had arrived at the dispersal point (the road junction at CERCHIARA Station) without incident by noon, the brigade convoys were able to make the journey in one day, the landing craft discharging their burden at GIARDINO near TREBISACCE in the last afternoon. Divisional Headquarters was established near FRANCAVILLA, 3 Cdn Inf Bde around VILLAPIANA and 1 Cdn Inf Bde between SPEZZANO and TERRANOVA. 2 Cdn Inf Bde did not move until 17 Sep and then concentrated near CASSANO, sending patrols westwards to CASTROVILLARI. 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt and the Divisional Artillery and Engineers were again near the coast in the area of the

dispersal point. (ibid: W.D. H.Q., 2 Cdn Inf Bde, 16 Sep 43, Appx 18, 17 Sep 43; W.D., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 16 Sep 43; Prince, op. cit.)

92. The Eighth Army at this point was almost at the end of its administrative tether. Its immediate task was to push forward as rapidly as possible towards the SALERNO battlefield while maintaining contact with 1 Airborne Div in APULIA. The problem of administration in the new phase was formidable and has been described as follows:

13 Corps was strung out along 250 miles of very mountainous country from Reggio to Scalea, with only the very small ports of the Calabrian peninsula and the beaches along the coast for maintenance. The original objective of the Army had been the Castrovillari isthmus, for which the facilities for maintenance in the "Toe" had been considered sufficient. But the Army was nearing that objective without the expected battle for the "Toe" having been joined, and the Army now had to be maintained in a further advance into the mainland of Italy. It was decided to build up the "Heel" as a firm administrative base for the support of the Army's future operations and to use the line of communications through the "Toe" only to the extent necessary to support 13 Corps with its two divisions in its drive north to link up with Fifth Army. As soon as the Salerno bridgehead was secure and Fifth Army started to advance, Eighth Army's axis would be shifted to the Adriatic coast.

(Eighth Army Operations, loc. cit.)

Scarcely had the first units arrived in the new area when patrols of 4 Cdn Recce Regt began to push forward towards ROTONDELLA making contact with 1 Airborne Div who sent a Liaison Officer to Tax H.Q. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, Tax H.Q., Ops Message Log, 16 Sep 43, serial 16.) News of the capture of BARI was brought from H.Q., 1 Airborne Div but the roads south in the direction of TARANTO were reported to be still in enemy hands. Enemy estimated to be at divisional strength were believed to be in the area ALTAMURA - GRAVINA (ibid., serial 22). By the time that the last units of 2 Cdn Inf Bde had reached CASSANO, plans for the next bound forward were already laid.

93. Fortunately, there is ample documentary evidence of the decisions taken by the commanders of 13 Corps and 1 Cdn Inf Div, evidence of a kind which all too often escapes the files. Although the outline of the larger plan must have been firmly drawn in discussion several days previously, the following directive by General Alexander was issued on 17 Sep addressed to Fifth and Eighth Armies from Tac H.Q., 15 Army Group:

MOST SECRET - PERSONAL - I am sending you the following directive for your guidance and action when you are ready to resume the offensive. Closest touch and co-operation must be mutually arranged between both armies.

1. FIVE ARMY will secure the high ground north of MAIORI N 5329 on which they will pivot to gain the general line TEORA 0 0551 MONTEMORANO N 8458 AVELLINO N 6757 NOCERA N 5438 CASTELLAMMARE N 4133.

2. EIGHTH ARMY. EIGHTH ARMY will secure the POTENZA - 5228 Area. Point of junction between Armies will be at road junction 0 0949.

3. Boundary between Armies. Inclusive EIGHTH ARMY AULETTA 0 2018 thence all inclusive FIVE ARMY BUCCINO 0 1526 road junction 0 0949 Route 91 to road function 0 1166 road VALLATA 0 0571 GROTTAMINARDA N 8975 thence BENEVENT 0 N 6581. It may be necessary for Armies to share road POLLA 0 2613 AULETTA road junction 0 199210.

4. A pause will be necessary when the general line above has been reached in order to concentrate, bring up supplies and build up sufficient strength in the TARANTO area before securing the next objective which will be FOGGIA - NAPLES. (ibid., Appx "C".)

At 0700 hrs on 17 Sep, Major-General Simonds despatched a letter to Lieut-General Dempsey in which his knowledge of the larger plan and his intentions for 1 Cdn Inf Div are clearly set forth.

The following is the plan I intend to carry out unless I hear from you to the contrary. It is intended to develop a threat along the axis ROTONDELLA - CORLETO - POTENZA as early as possible. Doucet was not quite clear as to whether this was still your intention but I am assuming no change (i.e. I am not quite clear as to whether it is now desirable to make "military noises" in that direction as quickly as I can, or whether we should like doggo until the whole division is ready to advance. I am assuming the former and have arranged to quickly back up the leading troops). My Recce Sqn is in very bad shape mechanically and until another sqn arrives cannot do more than flank patrols - leading brigades along main axis must find their own mobile patrols in front. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/GOC, serial 13.)

It may be said, parenthetically, that 4 Cdn Recce Regt which up till now had been represented by "A" Squadron was to be completed in the Mediterranean theatre by the arrival of the D plus 42 convoy in Sicily. On 15 Sep, Army had been asked by 13 Corps to hasten the process of bringing the balance of the regiment forward. (W.D., Tac H.Q., Eighth Army, Sep 43, Appx "B", 15 Sep, serial 13.)

94. General Simonds went on to outline the main features of his plan for the Division and the remainder of the letter is quoted in extenso:

17 Sep

(a) Recce based on ROTONDELLA to patrol routes east and north to following line:-

Bridge 3905 (to make contact with standing patrol of Airborne Div reported at this posn) ry junc 1605 - CRACO 0700 - S. ARCANGELO 9385. To start at first light and route ROTONDELLA - S. ARCANGELO to be first priority.

(b) Starting not before 1200 hrs 17 Sep one bn 3 Cdn Inf Bde with under comd:-

One fd bty
One A Tk bty (less two 6-pr tps)
One LAA tp
One pl engrs
One sqn 14 CTR

will advance by route VILLAPIANA 1071 - ROTONDELLA - S. ARCANGELO and position itself in area S. ARCANGELO during night 17/18 Sep with patrols along axis S. ARCANGELO - CORLETO.

At first light 18 Sep this bn will advance on axis S. ARCANGELO - CORLETO and secure in succession:-

1. High ground about GALLICCHIO 8290 - (Code Word QUEBEC).

2. TEMPA CADORE 7694 - MARRONI 7291 - (Code Word HALIFAX).

3. CORLETO - (Code Word WINDSOR).

4. High ground 7006 north of CORLETO - (Code Word DIGBY).

The bn will reorganize in CORLETO area covering all approach roads and patrolling northwards towards POTENZA.

(This bn is in fact the adv gd to 3 Cdn Inf Bde. If it is NOT propitious to advance main bodies by 18 or 19 Sep it may be halted at any stage or withdrawn if necessary. In the meantime it will develop the desired threat towards POTENZA.)

Night 17/18 Sep

3 Cdn Inf Bde in M.T. and with under comd:

One fd regt)
One A Tk bty)
One LAA bty) less details with adv gd
One sqn 14 CRT)
One FD Amb

will advance to area M. COLUGNA 0278 and will form a firm base covering the junc of rds about the place.

18 Sep

(a) Recce based on X-rds 2598 will patrol along axis:-

1. BERNALDA 2804 - GINOSA 3323 to contact standing patrol of Airborne Div reported at GINOSA.

2. BERNALDA - MATERA 2032.

3. PISTICCI 702 - GRASSANO 9328.

(b) 1 Cdn Inf Bde in M.T. and with under comd:

One fd regt
One A Tk bty
One LAA bty
One Fd Amb

will advance by route SPEZZANO 9822 rd junc 1021 - VILLAPIANA 1040 - SCANZANO to form a firm base in area

MONTALBANO 1891 - SCANZANO.

(Whilst I appreciate the importance of covering the coast road and refusing my right flank, I consider a firm base at SCANZANO untenable unless the high ground at MONTALBANO - which completely overlooks the coastal plain - is in our possession. I, therefore, propose to place this bde in depth astride the road and high ground MONTALBANO - SCANZANO. Troops at MONTALBANO will become adv gd to the bde should it later advance on axis SCANZANO - STIGLIANO 8803 - CORLETO.)

(c) 14 Tks less one sqn to SCANZANO in rear of 1 Cdn Inf Bde.

(d) Div Arty less details under comd inf bdes to east of ROTONDELLA.

(e) Main Div HQ to ROTONDELLA ahead of 1 Cdn Inf Bde.

2 Cdn Inf Bde will not arrive in CASSANO area until late on 17 Sep. I intend to leave it there until any way 19 Sep when I will:

(a) Move it to ROTONDELLA.

(b) Pass it through 3 Cdn Inf Bde towards POTENZA.

(c) Leave it at CASSANO, depending upon how the situation develops.

I am forming a D.M.A. (beach head) near rd junc 2473 starting 18 Sep.

The above represents the earliest moves I can make whilst keeping the div properly balanced. I expect to make contact with the Germans between S. ARCANGELO and CORLETO. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/GOC, serial 13.)

95. On the same day, General Dempsey wrote to General Simonds and it is obvious that the latter must have been despatched before receipt of the one quoted above. It was received by General Simonds at 2200 hrs. The operative portion reads:

Enemy. It is believed that there are six Divs opposing AVALANCHE (3, 15, HG, 16, 26 and 29). It is also believed that 1 Para Div,

less certain elements opposing AVALANCHE, are in the area of MATERA. 5 Corps is said to have a recce force permanently at GIOJA. I know that you are taking good care to protect your right flank by bold recce thrown well out to the North, and that your patrols are in touch along the coast road with patrols of 5 Corps. I also believe it is part of your plan to retain one Bde Gp in the area road junc SCANZANO - MONTALBANO. It is clearly important to do so for the present - and please do not move it from there without previous reference to me. With this firm base at SCANZANO - MONTALBANO, and recce thrown boldly out on your right flank, it will be quite safe and most desirable to get your Div in succession and as quickly as possible to the objectives:-

(a) Areas S. ARCANGELO.

(b) CORLETO.

and finally POTENZA. I will be very interested to know whether this main axis of yours has been badly blown.

You will have heard the latest AVALANCHE news on the wireless. It seems to have been going a bit better during the last 24 hours.

5 Div. One Bde firmly established at SAPRI, one Bde at LAGONEGRO, endeavouring to get through to the MONTESANO road junc today - but this road is badly blown and it may take time. Their objective after MONTESANO is the road junc 4 miles North West of SALACONSILINA. Meanwhile, they have a strong recce force in VALLO. Patrols from there joined hands with the FIFTH ARMY last night, and are now moving Northwards from VALLO through difficult country to gain contact with the German Southern flank.

Our air is getting into COTRONE (sic) rapidly (I am afraid they caused you a good deal of interference on the roads) and we hope to have some Kittys at SCALEA very soon.

Drive on for POTENZA - but remember that you are now in an area where you may run into German opposition.
(ibid., serial 9.)

96. No time was lost in constituting the advanced guard. Late in the evening of 16 Sep, Lt.-Col. M.P. Bogert, commanding West N.S.R., had been warned by Brigadier Penhale that he would command this force, to be known as "BOFORCE", and that its role was to move rapidly on POTENZA and if possible to take it out of hand. On the following morning, Lt.-Col.

Bogert attended an "O" Group at Brigade Headquarters where orders were issued to the commanders of the supporting arms which would, together with West N.S.R., compose the force. At 1100 hrs the G.O.C. gave final instructions to Lt.-Col. Bogert and shortly after noon on 17 Sep, on receipt of the code word "RACE", "BOFORCE" was on its way. (W.D., West N.S.R., 16 and 17 Sep 43.)

97. "BOFORCE" was composed of:

West N.S.R.

"A" Sqn 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt

"C" Bty, 1 Fd regt R.C.H.A.

57 A Tk Bty, R.C.A. (less two troops)

"C" Tp of 2 L.A.A. Bty, R.C.A.

One platoon 1 Fd Coy, R.C.E.

One platoon M.M.G. Coy, 3 Cdn Inf Bde Sp Gp (Sask L.I.)

One coy 9 Fd Amb, R.C.A.M.C.

(W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, September 1943, Appx 3: W.D.,

2 L.A.A. Regt R.C.A., Appx 7, 18 Sep 43.)

It was to move along the coast road to NOVA SIRI Station, on the edge of the flat and sandy fringe of the Gulf of TARANTO, and then turn left on route 104 through ROTONDELLA and back into the mountains to SAN ARCANGELO, CORLETO, LAURENZANA and POTENZA. The road from ROTONDELLA ran through tangled mountainous country over many streams and at least two considerable rivers for a distance of approximately 70 miles.

Contact with the enemy was expected either at POTENZA itself or in front of it. POTENZA was an important centre of road communication on the main lateral road about midway between SALERNO and BARI. Moreover, it lay on the extreme left flank of the enemy's defensive dispositions around the SALERNO bridgehead and astride his lateral communications with the defending forces in the ALTAMURA - MATERA area of APULIA. The mere threat to POTENZA would be sufficient to cause him acute anxiety and to distract attention and troops from the Fifth Army sector. Its capture might well cause a general withdrawal to the line NAPLES - FOGGIA. So rapid had been the recent stages of advance northward that no large-scale maps were available for the area north of FRANCAVILLA and for the time being "BOFORCE" and 3 Cdn Inf Bde generally had to fight from maps of the 1:250,000 scale. (W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 18 Sep 43.)

98. At a Divisional "O" Group held at 1500 hrs, 1 Cdn Inf Bde were warned to move to the area MONTALBANO - SCANZANO at first light on 18 Sep (W.D., H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Bde, 17 Sep 43). In the meantime, the balance of 3 Cdn Inf Bde prepared to make a night move behind "BOFORCE".

Tactical Reconnaissance reports showed no movement on the roads between CARLETO and POTENZA (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, Ops Message Logt, 17 Sep 43, serial 1079). "BOFORCE" made rapid progress during the remaining daylight reaching ROTONDELLA at 1800 hrs (ibid., serial 1090), and the crossing over the River SINNI at M. COLUGNA by nightfall. Next morning S. ARCANGELO was passed without incident and the first blown bridge was encountered about a mile and a half south of CARLETO (W.D., West N.S.R., 18 Sep 43). A diversion was put in hand by the Engineers and "D" Company, West N.S.R., found it necessary to clear the rubble from the main street of CORLETO, which had been heavily bombed, before further progress by motor transport could be made. During this operation, "B" Company passed through on foot preceded by an engineer reconnaissance party. The R.C.E. officer in charge, Lieut. Rollefson, who had been forward to reconnoitre the road at LAURENZANA on motorcycle, returned without it to report to Lt.-Col. Bogert that he had actually passed a carload of Germans proceeding southwards from LAURENZANA. In order to avoid capture he had abandoned the motorcycle and disappeared into the undergrowth. In the meantime, a loud explosion had been heard from the direction of LAURENZANA and West N.S.R. patrols reported that the bridge there was blown and that the enemy demolition party had been seen leaving "BOFORCE" halted for the night in front of LAURENZANA. (W.D., West N.S.R., 18 Sep 43.) The other two battalions of 3 Cdn Inf Bde were well forward by the end of the day and stopped for the night off the road near ARMENTO. The G.O.C. gave order that no movement forward should be made by the main body until "BOFORCE" had secured CORIETO, and 1 Cdn Inf Bde had organized its firm base position around SCANZANO (W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 18 Sep 43; Pangman, op. cit.)

99. Earlier in the day, 1 Cdn Inf Bde had moved along the coast road to the low-lying, scrub-covered coastal plain at SCANZANO surrounding the winding debouchment of the River AGRI. At 1200 hrs, Brigadier Graham had received verbal instructions from the G.O.C. later confirmed in writing. General Simonds announced his intention of closing 3 Cdn Inf Bde up to CORIETO that night and pushing "BOFORCE" towards POTENZA. although the available evidence indicated a German withdrawal, he felt that at least two German divisions had moved from the Fifth Army front with the result that a counter attack in strength might be expected against the Canadian right flank or towards TARANTO. It was Brigadier Graham's task to frustrate any such attempt by establishing his Brigade Group in a defensive position on the high ground astride the road SCANZANO - MONTALBANO protecting the right flank of the advance to POTENZA and maintaining contact with the troops of 5 Corps by deep patrolling to the north and east. The protection of the administrative area of the Division at NOVA SIRI Station was a primary responsibility.

Subject to the fulfilment of this defensive task, the Brigade Group was to undertake offensive patrolling against enemy patrols within its range. For these purposes, 4 Cdn Recce Regt and 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt were placed under its command. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/GOC, serial 10.) It may be noted that CORLETO was the point of intersection of two main roads, one running northwestwards from ROTONDELLA to POTENZA -- the divisional axis of advance -- and the other running roughly westwards from SCANZANO through MONTALBANO and STIGLIANO to the main road between LAGONEGRO and SALERNO. In consequence, the firm base position at SCANZANO controlled all lateral communications on the Division's right flank as far north as and excluding the road POTENZA - MATERA which was still in enemy hands.

100. At 0500 hrs in the early morning of 19 Sep, "A" Company, West N.S.R., moved forward to the blown bridge just west of LAURENZANA to cover the operations of the Engineers who were constructing a diversion. When these were in hand, "A" Company moved forward on foot followed by Lt.-Col. Bogert's Command Party and "D" Company. The force was now moving along a steep defile at the confluence of the FIUMARA d'ANZI and the FIUMARA CAMASTRA, both with dry but substantial river bottoms. Scarcely a mile ahead of the column, German sappers blew a crater in the road and another diversionary operation was necessary. Shortly afterwards as "A" Company rounded the bend overlooking the river beds, the bridge carrying the road across their junction was blown and the enemy demolition squad opened fire on the leading troops. Fire from 3-in mortars was immediately brought down, an enemy lorry was hit and the Germans hastily withdrew. Lt-Col. Bogert placed tanks of "A" Squadron, 14 Cdn Army Tk Regt, at the head of the column as soon as they could be brought forward in order to frustrate for the future any similar activity on the part of enemy demolition parties. Just before reaching ANZI another blown bridge was discovered and "D" Company went forward on foot while the remainder of the battalion closed up in T.C.Vs. ANZI was entered at approximately noon and three German vehicles which were visible on the road beyond were engaged by the leading tanks and withdrew hurriedly. In addition to the increasing number of craters and blown bridges and culverts, the road from ANZI onward was "studded with Tellermines". (W.D., West N.S.R., 19 Sep 43.)

101. At about 1930 hrs the leading troops of "BOFORCE" reached high ground from which they were able to look northwards directly at POTENZA. From here the road spiralled in a westerly direction down to the BASENTO River where the bridge had already been blown. POTENZA is a fine modern town built on an ancient site overlooking the BASENTO River from the north. Three-quarters of a mile southwest of it is the junction of the BASERTO - at this point running northwest - and three tributary

torrents. The BASENTO then turns towards the east running below POTENZA in the early stages of its long journey to the Gulf of TARANTO near METAPONTO. At this time of the year its course, like that of all the other mountain rivers and torrents of the district, is largely dry with only here and there a pool of still water in its gravel bed. Consequently, it presented no obstacle in the military sense beyond offering an excellent field of fire for anybody holding POTENZA or the heights around it. More serious was the branch railway line which joins POTENZA with SALERNO on the one hand and TARANTO on the other. The railway embankment keeps close to the left bank of the BASENTO in front of the town and provided the principal obstacle to infantry attack. Nothing was known with certainty about the strength of the enemy in the neighbourhood of POTENZA. On the previous day civilians had reported a strong force in and around the town supported by tanks. Shortly afterwards, an Italian colonel had reported the enemy's withdrawal from POTENZA itself. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, Ops Message Log, 18 Sep 43, serials 1151, 1153.) Such a withdrawal might well be in accordance with a German plan to harass from the surrounding hills any troops entering POTENZA. Accordingly, Lt.-Col. Bogert halted "BOFORCE" behind the commanding ground to the south and issued orders for an advance into the town after the moon rose at 0300 hrs. (W.D., West N.S.R., 19 Sep 43.)

102. During the afternoon, Brigadier Penhale had placed the whole of 1 Cdn Fd Regt in support of "BOFORCE" which hitherto had disposed of "C" Battery only. The regimental War Diary indicates that the regiment was "in action" by 2000 hrs but it would seem that no general bombardment of the town occurred, artillery activity being confined to registration only. The Engineers reconnoitring the first bridge over the BASENTO discovered a quantity of hastily laid and booby-trapped Tellermines and these threatened to obstruct any immediate crossing over the river in that portion which was sheltered from the town by the high ground on which Lt.-Col. Bogert's Command Post was situated. "D" Company, West N.S.R., was ordered to cover the mine lifting operation of the Engineers and then to advance with "C" Company into POTENZA. "A" Company would then provide protection for the Engineers and "B" Company would move when ordered. No general move was to be attempted before midnight. The advance towards the bridge was undertaken by "D" Company on foot with "B", "C" and part of "A" Companies following it in T.C.Vs. One of these vehicles moved off the road near the bridge and exploded a Tellermine wounding an officer and six other ranks of "A" Company. This occurred at about 0200 hrs on the morning of 20 Sep. Almost simultaneously small arms fire was heard from the direction of a second bridge over the junction point of the various tributaries of the BASENTO River and in full view of POTENZA. Here a patrol with Lieut. Carroll of "A" Company

intercepted and drove away a party of enemy engineers attempting to blow this second bridge. The second bridge was variously reported blown and intact in signals back to Brigade and Division during the morning but it seems fairly clear that the action of the patrol preserved the bridge from destruction. "C" and "D" Companies crossed the river bed below the second bridge, crossed the railway and by first light were engaged with German paratroops in a small arms skirmish in the outskirts of the town and on the slopes beneath it. Reports from the companies indicated that the enemy was using tanks and an unusually large number of automatic weapons. Two 6-pr and a 17-pr from 57 A Tk Bty sited near the blown bridge were able to engage enemy machine-gun positions among the houses.

103. For a time it appeared that the commitment of these two companies to fighting in the town would raise a problem for the supporting arms. Although a substantial concentration of artillery tanks and medium machine-guns were available, they could do little more than engage targets of opportunity for fear of hitting our own troops. In consequence, Brigadier Penhale, who had brought the R. 22e R. and Carlt & York R. forward during the night, determined to deploy the former in a wide enveloping movement to cross the river east of POTENZA and seize the high ground to the north and northeast of the town. The advance of the R. 22e R. was to be supported by concentrations from 1 Cdn Fd Regt and registration was duly carried out with this in view. The Carlt & York R. were to enter POTENZA in the wake of West N.S.R. and clear the town. The G.O.C. arrived at West N.S.R. Battalion Headquarters at 1000 hrs and observed that the view of the battle obtainable from there was equal to that of a sand-table model.

104. While the R. 22e R. were sweeping around the right flank, the first troop of tanks succeeded in getting into POTENZA shortly after noon and resistance collapsed. "D" Company, West N.S.R., pushed right through to the northern limit of houses followed by "B" Company riding on the remaining tanks. They received an ovation from those of the inhabitants who were bold enough to venture out. No further organized opposition was met although a few obstinate snipers continued to require attention during the afternoon. Carlt & York R. passed through to secure the function of the main roads running to AVELLINO on the one hand and MELFI on the other while R. 22e R. proceeded to its objectives and consolidated them without hindrance. The latter captured six German paratroopers when they crossed the river east of the town. (W.D., West N.S.R., 20 Sep; W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 20 Sep 43; Pangman and Prince, op. cit.)

105. Patrols were at once pushed out by West N.S.R. and Carlt & York R. to the westward to make contact if possible with the reconnaissance

troops of 5 (Brit) Div. This was accomplished late in the evening by a West N.S.R. patrol under Lieut. Bullock at SATRIANO on the road between POTENZA and BRIENZA. 5 (Brit) Div had captured BRIENZA during the day after a long advance, impeded by demolitions, from LAGONEGRO down the flat-bottomed DIANO Valley of the TANAGRO River. (Eighth Army Operations, loc. cit.) On his way back, Bullock received a great welcome from the people of the village of TITO who presented him with an address couched in elaborate and almost unrecognizable English. (W.D., West N.S.R., September 1943, Appx 4.)

106. Interrogation of the German prisoners established the fact that they belonged to 1 Bn, 3 Para Regt of 1 Para Div. This battalion had been moved from the eastern edge of the SALERNO perimeter at BATTAPAGLIA and had only arrived at POTENZA on the afternoon of 19 Sep just a few hours before "BOFORCE" appeared on the other side of the BASENTO. It had instructions to dig in on the slopes below and around the town to protect the withdrawal of the Engineer demolition parties which had been so active during our advance from CORLETO. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/L/F: Intelligence Summary No. 13, 21 Sep 43.) The strength of this battalion apparently consisted of no more than one company and ten independent sniper groups of four men each. It withdrew towards MELFI at 1330 hrs leaving, among other casualties, a total of 16 prisoners in the hands of 3 Cdn Inf Bde. (W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 20 Sep 43.) The prisoners described POTENZA as "STUTZPUNKT SUD". POTENZA was apparently regarded as a convenient bottleneck for retarding our advance but did not form part of any firm defensive zone. It appeared likely, because of the hasty mine laying, and absence of artillery and tanks, that the advance of "BOFORCE" had been more rapid than the enemy had expected. (Hist Sec file Italy/1 Cdn Inf Div/L/F: Intelligence Summary No. 13, 21 Sep 43.)

107. POTENZA, as has been said before, was more modern in appearance than most towns in Southern Italy. It had been roughly handled by our medium and light bombers on the night 8/9 Sep and the civilian hospital had been virtually demolished. Considerable loss of life had been inflicted on the inmates and their rotting corpses were still unburied when Canadian troops arrived (W.D., A.D.M.S. 1 Cdn Inf Div, 21 Sep and Prince, op. cit.) But its environment of wooded hills was to provide an ideal rest area after the strenuous days of the enervating atmosphere of the coastal plain. The operations of 3 Cdn Inf Bde and its advanced guard, "BOFORCE" were the most extensive that had yet taken place in the experience of 1 Cdn Inf Div on the Italian mainland, but once again the enemy had escaped envelopment by a timely withdrawal. Canadian casualties were light, the West N.S.R. losing only four men killed. (W.D., West N.S.R., 20 Sep 43.)

108. In the meantime, the already crowded main axis was burdened with the advance of 2 Cdn Inf Bde which began to move from CASSANO before daylight on 19 Sep. Its first staging area was at the crossroads at NOVA SIRI Station. The personnel of Edmn R. and Seaforth of C. embarked from VILLAPIANA in L.C.I.(L) while the remainder of the Brigade Group travelled by road to the neighbourhood of the crossroads. The movement was complete by 0810 hrs and fresh orders were received from the G.O.C. to move from the coastal area as fast as possible to MISSANELLO with the result that the convoys were again on the road by 1030 hrs. By last light the entire group was established between MISSANELLO and GALLICCHIO. While this last stage of the advance was in progress the Corps Commander sent a personal message to General Simonds ordering him not to move 2 Cdn Inf Bde forward of ROTONDELLA on 20 Sep owing to the shortage of petrol. This was followed some ten hours later by another personal message permitting the G.O.C. to move the brigade as he wished but forbidding any movement of main bodies beyond the area of POTENZA. In the same message were included instructions to reconnoitre east to ALTAMURA, north to MELFI and west towards AULETTA. The inter-divisional boundary was described as the road junction five miles west of POTENZA and inclusive to 5 (Brit) Div. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/#1 Cdn Inf Div/GOC, serials 4 and 6.) In fact, these message had no effect on the movements of 2 Cdn Inf Bde although they may have been reflected in a series of contradictory orders received on 20 Sep by the brigade as to its future movements. What is significant is the reference to the supply situation which was beginning to reflect difficulties inherent in the extended lines of communication. (W.D., H.Q., 2 Cdn Inf Bde, 18 and 19 Sep 43.)

109. At 1055 hrs, 21 Sep, the head of the 2 Cdn Inf Bde column passed through POTENZA and the brigade took up positions covering the roads POTENZA - AVELLINO and POTENZA - AULETTA west and northwest of the town. 3 Cdn Inf Bde at this point went into divisional reserve maintaining with minor alterations the positions in and around POTENZA taken up on the previous day. Extensive patrol tasks eastwards to IRSINA and northwards to MELFI were allotted to its units. Mopping up of isolated snipers continued during the day. Coincidental with the move of 2 Cdn Inf Bde, 15 Inf Bde of 5 (Brit) Div was to move from BRIENZA northward along the inter-divisional boundary to PICERNO while 13 Inf Bde closed on AULETTA. The movement of the former was hampered by demolitions north of BRIENZA but the latter reached AULETTA on time and there made contact with patrols of 6 (U.S.) Corps. Fifth and Eighth Armies had now firmly joined hands. (W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 21 Sep; Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/G, Situation Trace, 21 Sep 43.)

110. Immediately before taking POTENZA, General Simonds wrote to the Corps Commander making an estimate of the position and capabilities of the Division following consolidation around POTENZA. He suggested that if the railway from POTENZA to TORREMARE on the shores of the gulf was open for traffic it would be possible to operate the three brigades in a motorized role and said that the Division had secured the locomotives and rolling stock necessary to release motor transport. On the other hand, if the railway was not available and if 1 Cdn Inf Bde was to be kept at SCANZANO it was possible to employ one brigade on a motorized basis within a range of 100 miles from POTENZA. In the event of being able to concentrate all three brigades on POTENZA without the assistance of the railway all operations would have to be conducted "flat-footed" with the possible exception of moving one bridge in motor transport within a range of 50 miles. Available ammunition supply would permit him to fight one 400-pound per gun battle at 24 hours notice and another on the same scale after the lapse of a further 36 hours. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/GOC, serial 11.)

111. General Dempsey, in his turn, wrote to General Simonds on 20 Sep as follows:

I hope you realize what a great achievement the capture of POTENZA in sixteen days has been, and what a very big effect it has had on AVALANCHE. I offer you and your Div my very sincere congratulations.

We will now halt on the line ALTAMURA - POTENZA - AULETTA until 1 Oct and get ourselves organized and administratively set for the next advance. The objective of the Corps will be the capture of FOGGIA.

I want you to get:

(a) Your Div (less 1 Inf Bde Gp) to the POTENZA area.

(b) 1 Cdn Inf Bde Gp to the area ALTAMURA - GRAVINA.

You will then be set, ready to move by 1 Oct, on the axes POTENZA - MELFI - FOGGIA and GRAVINA - SPINAZZOLA - CANOSA - FOGGIA, in such formation as we later decide.

I am sending Bob Wyman and the 3rd Tank Regt (12 Cdn Army Tk Regt) to the TARANTO area. It will probably be better for him to pick up your Tank Regt and take them also to the TARANTO area, but if you require the Regt, or a portion of it, to help 1 Cdn Inf Bde

get to ALTAMURA, you may take it - though the roads do not look very suitable on the map for a tank move.

While you are waiting on the line ALTAMURA - POTENZA you will, of course, recce boldly:

(a) To join hands with elements 78 Div at BARI.

(b) To CORATO, 08.

(c) To ANDRIA, 99.

(d) To CANOSA, 79.

(e) To MELFI.

I am "swinging the tail" of the Corps from the West coast to the East, and for our future operations we will be based on TARANTO. I hope to start this move by establishing my Tac HQ at CORLETO on 21 Sep, and will then be in close touch with you.

Your recces and leading troops seem to be acting with great vigour, and it looks to me as though there is quite a chance of their cutting off some Huns in the MATERA area. That would be excellent. 5 Div are establishing themselves in the triangle rd junc 5 miles West of POTENZA - SALA CONSILINA - AULETTA, and AVALANCHE now seems to be getting on quite well.
(ibid., serial 15.)

It is clear that the reconnaissance tasks laid down in this letter contemplated cutting off the elements of the German 1 Para regt still resisting in the Apulian uplands around ALTAMURA and MATERA.

112. The commendation and congratulations of the Corps Commander were passed by the G.O.C. to the troops and in particular to those of 3 Cdn Inf Bde and gave justifiable satisfaction to Brigadier Penhale and his men. (Pangman, op. cit.) General Simonds, however, disagreed with the suggestion that the Division should conduct its next advance on two axes. In acknowledging the above letter on 22 Sep he wrote:

I see serious objections to locating 1 Cdn Inf Bde Gp in the ALTAMURA - GRAVINA area and the proposal subsequently to move on two axes POTENZA - MELFI - FOGGIA and GRAVINA - SPINAZZOLA - CANOSA - FOGGIA. Measured on the map the distance from POTENZA to GRAVINA is 30 miles. Judging by our experienced on these roads it

will run to 60 or 70 miles as the jeep goes (on the 1/250,000 map the distance ROTONDELLA - POTENZA measures some 50 miles - it is 110 miles by road).

If I try to advance on a two brigade front on axes separated by 70 miles:-

(a) My wireless communications will not work over such a range and I will have no communication with the right flanking brigade other than by L.O. by road with about a 24-hr turn around. This is quite hopeless in fluid operations where action must be quickly co-ordinated and support readjusted. It is in no sense comparable to the present situation of 1 Cdn Inf Bde which has a static role and is close to our main forward axis.

(b) I will have to divide my support on two axes or leave the flanking brigade without any.

(c) I will have to divide my engineer effort on two axes and in addition have to open long and difficult laterals towards both flanks instead of only one.

(d) I will have to make an administrative detachment resulting in loss of administrative flexibility.

I consider advancing a single division on such widely separated axes objectionable from both a tactical and administrative point of view. The alternative is to split the division and place the right flanking brigade under command of another formation. This I believe to be contrary to the Army Commander's fixed policy and I certainly consider it unsound because the problem of dissipating the supporting arms and administrative effort still remains.

I believe there are great advantages to operating the division on a two brigade front providing that the frontage does not result in loss of control and the loss of the power to concentrate all resources in support of a thrust along one axis. Our experience in Sicily and here is that if a speedy advance is to be maintained along the divisional axis against enemy rearguards, the artillery effort must be concentrated and if speed is to be maintained in face of demolitions only, then the engineer effort must be concentrated.

I can see the advantages of placing a brigade wide on my right

during a period when we will be tapping out the enemy to the North and East by active patrolling but I consider it should be within wireless range. The recce I would place wider still and make responsible for the deep patrolling.

If it is desirable to position a brigade in the GRAVINA - ALTAMURA area, would it not be better to place there an Independent Brigade which has its own allotment of supporting arms without cutting into those of a division which in my opinion should always be positioned so that it is possible to concentrate them quickly on a single thrust line. The lateral BRIENZA - POTENZA - GRAVINA will be through in a day or so. 5 Div with 231 Bde seem to be in rather a cramped area. Would it not be possible to pass 231 Bde across to the GRAVINA area?

I realize that the plans are still in a very formative stage but I feel I should now represent:

(a) That my communications, administrative, artillery and engineer resources will NOT allow me to control a divisional battle on two axes separated by some 70 miles.

(b) The alternative of splitting the division and its supporting engineers and artillery to form a detached group, if we are working forward to an offensive battle, I regard as unsound. If the enemy is very "soft" it does not matter, but under such conditions recce's can do the wide flanking task better than a detached brigade. Surely a strong thrust along the coast axis BARI - FOGGIA and another strong divisional thrust on the axis POTENZA - FOGGIA linked up by an Independent Brigade, Armour or even Recce, in between will see the enemy out of FOGGIA at short order. In the country through which we will be moving I would have no worries about my left flank. With the 5th Army pushing forward as I presume it would and with the 5 Div echeloned back to the left as I believe is your intention, full insurance will be provided against any enemy threat on our western side.

The country about here is suitable for the employment of tanks and I would like to have some remain with me - especially when we debouch from the MELFI area into the FOGGIA plain.

I may have misunderstood your letter which referred to axes "POTENZA - MELFI - FOGGIA and GRAVINA - SPINAZZOLA - CANOSA

- FOGGIA". If the axes are alternative, the difficulties I mentioned do not arise. If we advance on the axis GRAVINA - SPINAZZOLA - CANOSA - FOGGIA, I consider we would need an Armoured Brigade to cover the advance insofar as the country can be judged from small scale maps.

I would respectfully urge an early decision as to our axis because with the present lack of good large or medium scale maps, photographic strips covering a wide lane either side of the axis are really a necessity to planning ahead. (ibid., serial 16.)

Further discussion along those lines occurred during the Corps Commander's visit to H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Div on 23 Sep and it would appear from subsequent events that General Simonds' recommendations were accepted. (ibid., serial 16, Note by Major-General Simonds.)

113. The fortunes of 1 Cdn Inf Bde Gp were largely removed from those of the Division and the feeling of isolation was deepened by the fact that no wireless contact with Divisional Headquarters was possible because a distance of 125 miles, broken by mountains, intervened. Brigadier Graham had been warned of the danger of risking the capture of any of his men by the enemy because of the intelligence which would be conveyed of this wide and thinly-held front from POTENZA to the Gulf of TARANTO. (Renison and Pangman, op. cit.) The positions adopted by the Brigade on 19 Sep remained basically the same during the period 18-27 Sep. On the right flank the 48 Highrs held the crossroads at SCANZANO with a standing patrol northeast of TORREMARE where the road from GINOSA meets the coast road. The Hast & P.E.R. prepared a defensive position on the high ground some two miles east of MONTALBANO immediately south of the road to SCANZANO and overlooking the valley of the AGRI River. The R.C.R. were based on the same road where it winds around the eminence upon which MONTALBANO is built and to it fell the largest part of the infantry patrolling, particularly westward through STIGLIANO to CORLETO and northwards to PISTICCI and POMARICO. These patrols found quantities of mines along the tracks running through the undulating country between the latter and BERNALDA. (W.D., R.C.R., 19-24 Sep; Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, 20 Sep 43, serial 1363.) 4 Cdn Recce Regt which was to play a most active part during the next ten days had its headquarters in the valley of the CAVONE River south of PISTICCI.

114. The immediate hinterland of the sandy coastal strip was low-lying and rising gradually to the central tableland of APULIA. It was rolling country but broken by large patches of plantation woodland and

intersected by the gullies of innumerable streams running southeast. Although 1 Airborne Div had a firm grip on the line BARI - GIOIA del COLLE - TARANTO and all the country east of it, the enemy was known to be in control of the high ground between that line and the road between ALTAMURA and MATERA. Civilians, on 18 Sep, reported that a battalion of German paratroops were based on MATERA with outposts at MONTESCAGLIOSO. (W.D., Tac H.Q., Eighth Army, Appx "B", 18 Sep 43.) During 19 Sep the patrols of 4 Cdn Recce Regt which had pushed north along the road from BERNALDA to MONTESCAGLIOSO found the latter unoccupied but similar patrols moving along parallel lines up the road and railway between PISTICCI and MIGLIONICO came under fire from the high ground at FERRANDINA. After crossing the BASENTO River where the narrow gauge railway line to MATERA disappears into a tunnel over two miles long, they were confronted by a blown bridge cutting the road which winds uphill from the valley towards MIGLIONICO. The heights above them concealed enemy positions. Without engineer assistance it was impossible for the armoured vehicles to by-pass this demolition and it was accordingly decided to group the three Assault Troops of the regiment together and advance on foot towards the town. Lieut. White who commanded this force decided to use the railway tunnel and go under the enemy's positions rather than over them. The subterranean movement was accomplished without incident and when the northern exit of the tunnel was reached, Lieut. White launched an attack of two troops against the forward slopes of the hill of MIGLIONICO and across the road to MATERA. The enemy who were bivouacked in this area in confident reliance upon the screen of outposts under which Lieut. White had burrowed, were taken completely by surprise; but numbering between two and three hundred men compelled the retirement of the Assault Troops after a sharp fight in which the latter inflicted over 50 casualties and took six prisoners. Eight of White's men were killed, three missing and four wounded, but he made good his withdrawal through the railway tunnel. On the following morning (20 Sep), reinforced by "C" Company, R.C.R., 4 Cdn Recce Regt occupied MIGLIONICO without further resistance from the enemy. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, Ops Message Log, 19 Sep 43, serial 1258, and Hist Sec file Italy 1943/4 Cdn Recce Regt C/D. During 20 Sep the patrols of 4 Cdn Recce Regt converged on MATERA from both MIGLIONICO and MONTESCAGLIOSO, joining hands on the right with troops of 1 (Brit) Para Bde who were pressing inwards on the same point from GINOSA and LATERZA. The enemy (1 Para Regt) was now compelled to contract his perimeter and gave signs of withdrawing from MATERA on ALTAMURA. Further north and due east of ALTAMURA at SANTERAMO the Special Raiding Detachments of the Special Air Service Regiment were in contact with 2 Bn, 1 Para Regt. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/C/H, 20 Sep 43, serial 1363.)

115. The occupation of MONTESCAGLIOSO was consolidated by "A" Company, 48 Highrs, which had come under command 4 Cdn Recce Regt on 18 Sep. From this time until the end of the month, "A" Company followed the fortunes of the reconnaissance regiment in its extensive patrolling. It saw no serious action and its main task became the lifting of the numerous mines which beset the latter's armoured vehicles. (W.D., 48 Highrs, 18-20 Sep 43.) "C" Company, R.C.R., however, returned from IGLIONICO to the battalion area, while R.C.R. patrols turned their attention to explore the next lateral road north running from MIGLIONICO through TRICARICO to the POTENZA - IRSINA road (W.D., H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Bde, Appx 3, Message Log, 22 Sep). The German 1 Para Regt quickened the pace of its withdrawal evacuating GINOSA and ACQUAVIVA on 20 Sep, SANTERAMO on 21 Sep and the important triangle MATERA - ALTAMURA - GRAVINA on 22 Sep. Its line of withdrawal passed through SPINAZZOLA and thence northward towards CANOSA and westward towards MELFI, where it converged with that of 3 Para Regt withdrawing northwards from POTENZA. A deadly blow was struck at the welfare of the civilian population of APULIA by the destruction of the great aqueduct at ATELLA which supplied water for the whole of this arid region from FOGGIA to LECCE. (Eighth Army Operations, loc. cit.) 1 Cdn Inf Bde transferred its patrolling base at once to ALTAMURA and in close co-operation with H.Q., 5 Corps which had assumed command of the operations of 1 Airborne Div on 18 Sep, thrust westward with 4 Cdn Recce Regt at an ever swifter pace in the effort to maintain contact. (Renison, op. cit.)

116. At this point the enemy was performing the familiar operation of swinging his line backwards, pivoting on the strong hinge of resistance between SALERNO and NAPLES. His future intentions were not clear to the Intelligence Branch but it was confidently expected that he would make a temporary stand on the line FOGGIA - NAPLES. The plain of FOGGIA, open, treeless and undulating, provided an excellent killing ground for a great armoured battle. From the evidence available at this time, it appeared that the distribution of German divisions throughout Italy gave Rommel in the PO Valley between five and eight infantry divisions, three Panzer divisions and some unspecified mountain units, and Kesselring in the south a force of three Panzer divisions, three Panzer Grenadier divisions and one or two Parachute divisions. Observation of the movement of traffic and the majority of civilian reports tended to confirm the view that the main stand would be made along the line of the River PO and that Kesselring would fight a wide and flexible delaying action in the tangled mountains of Central Italy. A continuous withdrawal from all positions south of ROME was regarded as inevitable. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/L/F, Intelligence Summaries Nos. 14 and 15.) One unusual example of prescience was nevertheless provided by a Brigadier-General Morica of the Italian Seventh Army, who claimed

that a plan existed, agreed to by both the German and Italian High Commands, for the establishment of an intermediate line of defence in the narrowest portion of the peninsula running between MINTURNO on the Mediterranean and VASTO on the Adriatic coast. (W.D., G.S., H.Q., 13 Corps, September 1943; 13 Corps Intelligence Summary No. 257, 21 Sep 43.) At all events until the Eighth Army could build up its east coast communications, General Montgomery could only pursue and maintain contact with light forces. (Eighth Army Operations, loc. cit.)

117. While 1 Cdn Inf Bde held to its role of probing on the right flank, its infantry battalions and its artillery component (2 Fd regt, R.C.A.) were able to carry on training activities such as study groups, N.C.Os. schools and demonstrations of weapons (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Account by Lt.-Col. I.S. Johnston).

PATROLLING TOWARDS THE RIVER OFANTO

118. At 1400 hrs, 22 Sep, General Simonds held an "O" Group. He referred to the rapid build-up taking place under 5 Corps on the Adriatic coast and generally to the courses of action open to 13 Corps. (An outline of the operations on the right flank of the Division during this period will be given below.) With reference to 1 Cdn Inf Div, he said that no general movement forward of the POTENZA area would take place before 1 Oct. This was in accordance with the policy of 13 Corps which had designated the intervening period for adjustment of administrative difficulties and for the construction of "all weather" routes on the lines of communication. No substantial alteration was to be made in the positions of 2 and 3 Cdn Inf Bdes except that the former would assume responsibility for patrolling along the axis POTENZA - MELFI. 1 Cdn Inf Bde would be brought forward either to POTENZA or to a location between POTENZA and GRAVINA not before 23 Sep. The enemy appeared to be developing a defensive position in front of FOGGIA along the line of the River OFANTO which rises in the mountains overlook SALERNO and runs across the greater part of the peninsula into the sea immediately west of BARLETTA. An outpost line, ANDRIA - MINERVINO, might be expected. The next Corps objective would be FOGGIA.

119. For the immediate future brigades were instructed to carry out active patrolling in front of their present areas while their "A" and "B" Echelons closed up and the comfort of the troops were attended to. The men were to be kept occupied and out of trouble. (The town of POTENZA was placed out of bounds.) The date for the Divisional Sports Meet was set at 29 Sep. All vehicles were to be thoroughly overhauled and deficiencies in all lines of equipment to be made good as opportunities and supplies permitted. Officers were instructed to make

a point of explaining the general situation to their men. Finally, the G.O.C. directed that all ranks be impressed with the fact that the rapid movements of the Division from REGGIO to POTENZA had exercised a decided influence on the outcome of the battle for the SALERNO bridgehead.

120. In the meantime, P.P.C.L.I., which was the reserve battalion of 2 Cdn Inf Bde and was occupying the high ground south of POTENZA from which the action of 19/20 Sep by "BOFORCE" had been directed, was ordered to despatch a patrol to ATELLA on the main road between POTENZA and MELFI. This was entrusted to the scout and sniper platoon equipped with a No. 18 wireless set and accompanied by two despatch riders and two Pioneers for the purpose of detecting and lifting mines. (W.D., P.P.C.L.I., 21 Sep.) This patrol left at first light on 22 Sep. At 0910 hrs a message was received from Division by H.Q., 2 Cdn Inf Bde, ordering a patrol to MELFI forthwith. Its orders were to reach MELFI no matter what was in the way and submit a report as soon as possible. Further and complementary instructions were sent to P.P.C.L.I. to despatch immediately a composite force consisting of an infantry platoon, two or more despatch riders and a patrol mounted on bicycles. Its task was to reach MELFI to ascertain the condition of the road and whether or not there were enemy troops in MELFI and to submit a report on its progress every two hours. (W.D., H.Q., 2 Cdn Inf Bde, Appx 7, Message Log, 22 Sep 43.) Accordingly, a second patrol upon which this accumulation of orders devolved, was ordered out personally by the G.O.C. The Commanding Officer of the P.P.C.L.I., Lt.-Col. C.B. War and Brigadier Vokes had both gone forward with the scout and sniper platoon bound for ATELLA. (W.D., P.P.C.L.I., 22 Sep 43.)

121. A preliminary reconnaissance, conducted by patrols of Carlt & York R. and 4 Fd Coy, R.C.E., on 21 Sep before the MELFI road had become the responsibility of 2 Cdn Inf Bde, had revealed the existence of a blown bridge about two miles north of the intersection of the roads POTENZA - MELFI and AVIGLIANO - ACERENZA. (W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 21 Sep 43.) The scout and sniper platoon of P.P.C.L.I. found two more, one at CASTEL Station where an elaborate belt of Tellermines caused considerable delay, and another immediately north of CASTEL itself. The two 30 cwt. trucks with which the patrol was equipped could not proceed before these were lifted, and here the bicycles, presumably still the trophies of LE GAMBASRIE, were put to good use. Although no enemy had been encountered so far it was clear that the urgency demanded by Division would be materially qualified by demolitions and mines. In the course of its advance the patrol reported an unusually heavy explosion from the direction of ATELLA (W.D., H.Q., 2 Cdn Inf Bde, Appx 7, 22 Sep 43). In all probability this was caused by the disastrous breaching of the Apulian aqueduct referred to above. Here it emerges

from its subterranean conduit to cross the bed of the FIUMARA d'ATELLA. (W.D., P.P.C.L.I., 22 Sep 43).

122. At 1500 hrs, the second patrol reached CASTELLO DI LAGOPESOLE (more familiarly known as CASTEL) which derives its name from the great castel built here in the thirteenth century by the Emperor Frederick II. From its battlements Brigadier Vokes and Lt.-Col. Ware had a clear view of ATELLA across the intervening plain and of the impressive and isolated peak of M. VULTURE which rose behind it. On the eastern slopes of the mountain and to the north of ATELLA were the towns of RIONERO and BARILE. Beyond and invisible was MELFI. Lt.-Col. Ware ordered Lieut. Munro, commanding the second patrol, to overtake the scouts and snipers, leave them at ATELLA and proceed to MELFI. This plan in the event was frustrated by the enemy who opened fire on the scout and sniper platoon from ATELLA with machine-guns and compelled a withdrawal of both patrols to CASTEL. According to Lieut. Jones, in command of the scout and sniper platoon, who was wounded, together with four of his men, he had narrowly avoided being cut off by seven German armoured cars. During this action an enemy pilot was captured by Lieut. Munro's patrol after being hit by anti-aircraft fire over POTENZA. Three ME 109 aircraft had attempted to attack the town and all available Oerlikon and Bofors guns had opened fire, in some cases for the first time in Italy. (W.D., P.P.C.L.I., 22 Sep 43; W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 22 Sep 43; Hist Sec file Italy 1943/2 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Accounts by Lt.-Col. C.B. Ware and Lieut. D.A. Gower.) Brigadier Vokes returned from CASTEL in the afternoon, he ordered the P.P.C.L.I. to constitute a "force" to be known as Force "X" at CASTEL and to establish there a patrol base. Force "X", which was commanded by Major D. Brian, consisted of "C" Company, 18 Pl and the scout and sniper platoon, P.P.C.L.I., 19 Fd Bty, R.C.A., and the greater portion of the Brigade Support Group (Sask L.I.) consisting of a platoon of 4.2-in mortars, a platoon of medium machine-guns and one-half of a platoon of 20-mm Oerlikons. In addition, the battalion was ordered to move north of POTENZA to the crossroads east of AVIGLIANO and abreast of the Seaforth of C. and Edmn R. which were situated on the road POTENZA - MUNRO on the high ground overlooking RUOTI. During the night 22/23 Sep, a small reconnaissance patrol gained access to ATELLA and there made contact with four of Lieut. Jones' scouts who had been left behind to observe the enemy's movements. After a stealthy advance to the main street they were caught by fire from all directions but were able to pick out the various positions and withdraw by morning. One sergeant was wounded in the stomach and ordered his companions to leave him where he was. On the following morning this party was able to report that the enemy had withdrawn his defences to the building in ATELLA itself and estimated a hostile fire power of two to three machine-guns, 20 to 30 rifles and numerous grenades. At 1400 hrs, the

25-prs were in position behind CASTEL and began ranging across the valley on ATELLA. The enemy immediately laid down smoke and withdrew on RIONERO. (W.D., P.P.C.L.I., 23 Sep 43; Ware and Gower, op. cit.)

123. This withdrawal was not confirmed by Force "X" until 24 Sep (W.D., P.P.C.L.I., 24 Sep). A platoon was stationed in ATELLA and the process of patrolling the enemy out of RIONERO was undertaken along similar lines. The Divisional Intelligence Summary of 24 Sep gives a lucid explanation of German tactics during this unhurried withdrawal.

For whatever larger reason, the Germans have decided to delay us at the nodal point of MELFI. The immediate reason is clear: with paratroops still in TERLIZZI and ANDRIA they cannot allow the road MELFI - CANOSA to be in our hands. When the coastal withdrawal of paratroops was achieved the line MELFI - CANOSA, MELFI will be voluntarily surrendered.

Specifically contact with the enemy has been brief. On the right of our div front, a patrol on 22 Sep encountered fire from one or two M.Gs. at 0.7354 and later a few thousand yards further along the road. A small number of shells drooped in the area from the direction of SPINAZZOLA. No hard def core was discovered. On the left, before ATELLA, the Germans had been more stubborn. With up to 50 inf, and a few armed cars they have held they ground in the face of our patrols. In the southwest the German paratroops have withdrawn from GRAVINA and probably TERLIZZI. Information of German strength in the MELFI area has been ludicrously contradictory. One source said the town was empty save for six plus donkey carts, another that 3,000 Germans are in the town. south of MELFI the towns BARILE and RIONERO are claimed by equally conflicting sources, to be occupied by Germans. In sum, there may be a bn gp in the area. Hardly less in view of the numerous eye witness reports; hardly more in view of the task being performed and the apparent absence of arty. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/L/F, Intelligence Summary No. 14, 24 Sep 43.)

Considerable assistance was rendered by the local Carabinieri who disguised themselves in civilian clothes and rode on horseback to the outlying villages for information (Ware, op. cit.). A patrol from Force "SX", attempting to by-pass RIONERO to the east, was mortared near RIPACANDIDA on 25 Sep. Next day contact was made with a patrol of 3 Cdn Inf Bde in the same area and two more of Force "X's" detachments entered RIONERO and BARILE unopposed. (W.D., P.P.C.L.I., 25-26 Sep 43.) A grim trail of rape and murder had been left by the Germans in RIONERO

on withdrawing the night before, and the results of a mass execution of the available male inhabitants provided Canadian War Correspondents and press photographers with an unnerving experience. (Ware, op. cit.) From RIPACANDIDA reports were received of the activity of Canadian armoured cars. In fact, these referred to the reconnaissance unit of 1 Airborne Div which had made a foray far west of its centre line. (W.D., H.Q., 2 Cdn Inf Bde, Appx 7, 26 Sep 43, serials 1 and 14.) But 4 Cdn Recce Regt was close at hand.

124. During the period of the direct advance of MELFI, 3 Cdn Inf Bde was patrolling far and wide to the northeast. On 22 Sep after the responsibility for reaching MELFI had devolved on 2 Cdn Inf Bde, 3 Cdn Inf Bde was ordered to send a long-range patrol towards SPINAZZOLA. Accordingly the R. 22e R. despatched a patrol consisting of two sections of the carrier platoon and a No. 22 wireless set in three jeeps, and two 15-cwt. trucks carrying the remainder of the carrier platoon in the rear. The patrol, under the command of Lieut. M. Pariseault, reached ACERENZA without incident and at GENZANO heard that two motorcycle combinations carrying machine-guns were five minutes ahead of its travelling towards SPINAZZOLA. Lieut. Pariseault sped in hot pursuit down the hill at GENZANO and across the flat plain towards SPINAZZOLA. At last light he drew from the direction of SPINAZZOLA fire which was certainly machine-gun fire and possibly that of 88-mm artillery. (W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 23-23 Sep 43; W.D., R. 22e R., 22 Sep 43.) As in the case of the operations of the P.P.C.L.I. it became apparent that a more substantial force was required for these long-range encounters and at a conference at Brigade Headquarters it was decided to establish a forward patrol base between ACERENZA and GENZANO. In addition, the Brigade was charged with the task of reconnoitring a supply route from the new base at TARANTO direct to POTENZA. Keeping contact with 5 (Brit) Div on the left was also mentioned as a 3 Cdn Inf Bde responsibility but after the initial touch had been established by West N.S.R., it appears to have been maintained by patrols of Seaforth of C. and Edmn R. operating from BELLA as far west as MURO. (W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 23-25 Sep 43.)

125. The R. 22e R. sent out a still stronger patrol on 23 Sep under Capt. R. L'Esperance consisting of the carrier platoon, a rifle platoon, two 3-in mortars and two 6-pr anti-tank guns from the battalion; a troop of 25-prs from 1 Fd Regt, R.C.A., and a platoon of medium machine-guns with two 20-mm Oerlikons from 3 Cdn Inf Bde Sp Gp (Sask L.I.). This force adopted a defensive position about one mile north of ACERENZA on the road to GENZANO. The latter was occupied and on 24 Sep the carrier platoon reached FORENZA on the lateral road to RIONERO. En route it met a jeep patrol from 1 Airborne Div which informed it of the occupation of

CANOSA by British armour. On the following day, the carriers extended their operations to RIPACANDIDA, captured one German soldier in the area and made contact with the P.P.C.L.I. In the meantime, another R. 22e R. patrol reported SPINAZZOLA clear of the enemy on 24 Sep and over the whole area patrolling was uninterrupted along the roads joining SPINAZZOLA, PALAZZO S. GERVASIO, RIPACANDIDA, FORENZA and ACERENZA. The enemy had even lifted his own mines from the road between PALAZZO and SPINAZZOLA. On 25 Sep the R. 22e R. was relieved of its task by the Carlt & York R. In every village its patrols had received a rapturous welcome and information about the Germans bordering on the fabulous. (W.D., R. 22e R., September 1943, Appx 4; W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 22-25 Sep 43.)

128. Carlt & York R. patrols made contact with elements of 4 Cdn Recce Regt near VENOSA on 26 Sep and reported that the latter were on the move north of that town in the general direction of MELFI. On 27 Sep the Carlt & York R. reached MINERVINO between SPINAZZOLA and CANOSA. With its patrols now well into the rolling country of the OFANTO Valley. H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde requested permission to establish a patrol base still further forward but Division said that in future a daily trip FORENZA - SPINAZZOLA - PALAZZO - VENOSA would suffice. On the same day Italian officers in civilian clothes despatched by 3 Cdn Inf Bde reported MELFI clear. This report was rendered fully a day ahead of the entry into MELFI by 4 Cdn Recce Regt and the P.P.C.L.I. (W.D., Carlt & York R., September 1943, Appx 8; W.D., H.Q., 3 Cdn Inf Bde, 27 Sep 43.)

127. For some time past, Divisional Intelligence had been experimenting with new methods of acquiring information in a moving battle. For instance, in CROTONE, an Intelligence Officer had been able to telephone ahead of our furthest patrols using the ordinary lines which the enemy had neglected to destroy. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/L/D, Account by Capt. K.A. Cottam.) During the pause at POTENZA, similar opportunities occurred and VENOSA was actually reported clear by its own municipal officials as early as 24 Sep. (W.D., H.Q., 2 Cdn Inf Bde, Appx 7, 24 Sep 43, serial 32.) Capt. C.T. Isolani, an officer of the British Intelligence Corps who was attached to Divisional Headquarters throughout this period had the following to say about the employment of existing telephone lines and of the use of Italian agents.

While in the POTENZA area Divisional Intelligence was able to establish contact by telephone with Italians who were in territory still occupied by the enemy. This was done by connecting the existing telephone line systems to various power plants serving the area POTENZA, TOLVE, SPINAZZOLA, VENOSA, MELFI, LAVELLO and ROCHETTA. The operators at either ends of these lines with whom I

had personally conversed over the telephone, proved to be most co-operative and it was soon arranged that they would be at their post at certain hours and would be contacted by me whereupon they would transmit items of particular interest. To do this it was necessary for me to travel each day to TOVLE some 28 miles from Div HQ. Often during these telephone conversations enemy fmns would be passing by at the other end of the line and the operator could give a very full and accurate verbal account of this movement visible during the conversations, which proved to be of great value to our Intelligence. Italian agents friendly to our cause were organized and sent across to enemy lines disguised as ordinary bedraggled Italian soldiers. They were sent over to pre-selected areas after first having been briefed and eventually returned with first hand information concerning the enemy.

The three main sources for getting information were as follows:

(1) Public officials. Since these by virtue of their appointments have all been Fascists, they are all to be considered unreliable. (2) The local Carabinieri Reali. These are sometimes reliable and sometimes not, depending upon the locality in which they were concerned. (3) Anti-Fascists or ordinary citizens. These proved to be very good sources for information particularly the latter who during the Fascist regime were up against it. Peasants, if intelligent, were very good for on the whole they were most sympathetic to the Allied cause. The chief reasons for the general co-operation received from the common people are: (1) The obvious anti-fascist tendencies of the ordinary citizen; (2) the Italians' inherent dislike of war in spite of what the Fascists claimed; (3) the fact that great numbers of the population naively believed in our propaganda (such as the broadcasts from the BBC by Col. Stevens), in preference to that issued by the Fascists.

(Isolani, op. cit.)

128. Between the capture of POTENZA on 20 Sep and the entry into MELFI on 28 Sep, an extraordinary change had occurred in the situation along the Adriatic coast. The abandonment of ALTAMURA and the cutting of the Apulian aqueduct by the enemy indicated clearly that he was not prepared to make a firm stand on any line south of FOGGIA. It was, therefore, the task of 5 Corps to pursue him. For this purpose a special mobile force known as Force "A" was placed under command 78 (Brit) Div and landed at BARI on the night 22/23 Sep. It consisted of elements of 78 Div and 4 (Brit) Armd Bde commanding two battalions of infantry, a reconnaissance regiment, an armoured regiment and 2 S.A.S. Regt, previously under command of 1 Airborne Div. Force "A" mopped up enemy

rearguards at ANDRIA and BARLETTA and reached the OFANTO River on 24 Sep. Here the brigades carrying the railway and coast road were demolished and because of their wide spans caused a temporary delay. Nevertheless, on 27 Sep the armour of Force "A" led by the celebrated band of irregulars known as Popski's Private Army entered FOGGIA and encountered only desultory resistance in the streets. By 28 Sep the forward mobile patrols were operating around LUCERA and SAN SEVERO and the invaluable group of airfields in the FOGGIA Plain had fallen to the Eighth Army almost without a blow. (Eighth Army Operations, loc. cit; Pope, op. cit.)

129. Meanwhile, the build-up based on TARANTO and BARI had proceeded apace. By 27 Sep, 13 Corps took command of all operations in the FOGGIA Plain and of 78 Div and 1 Cdn Army Td Bde the headquarters of which together with 12 Cdn Army Tk Regt had concentrated near TARAMTO by 25 Sep. (W.D., 12 Cdn Army Tk Regt, 25 Sep 43.) 5 Corps was directed to form a firm base in the "heel" of Italy with 1 Airborne Div, 8 Indian Div and the Special Service Brigade under command. Its Headquarters was at TARANTO where Fortbase was now installed after leaving CATANIA in Sicily. 86 Area commenced operations in BARI and about five miles along the coast at S. SPIRITO was an advanced group of H.Q. 15 Army Gp. The stage was set for a new thrust by the Eighth Army while Fifth Army mopped up in NAPLES and prepared the port for its own future operations. (ibid., and W.D., G.S., Main H.Q., Eighth Army, Appx "A", Situation Trace, 28 Sep 43.) These extended operations by 5 Corps had been protected on the left flank by 13 Corps. 5 (Brit) Div had maintained contact with Fifth Army but the hilly nature of the country north of AULETTA had confined its patrolling activities. As we have seen, 1 Cdn Inf Div had played a most active part in patrolling over a front 125 miles wide. This had been shortened on 27 Sep by the movement of 1 Cdn Inf Bde from its base at SCANZANO to an area immediately northwest of GRAVINA. (W.D., H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Bde, 27 Sep 43.) By 28 Sep, 4 Cdn Recce Regt with "A" Company, 48 Highrs in attendance, had patrols at ASCOLI SATTIRIANO about 15 miles due south of FOGGIA... and on the east on the banks of the OFANTO River near CANOSA. Regimental Headquarters were some three miles northwest of MELFI. (ibid.)

ADMINISTRATION DURING THE ADVANCE

130. Only the most general comments can be made on the complex and voluminous administrative work performed during the advance from REGGIO to POTENZA. It has been said that administrative history is of little interest until something goes wrong. Nevertheless, the problem of supplying, transporting and maintaining 1 Cdn Inf Div during operations which greatly exceeded in speed and in scope the estimates of the

original plan is of absorbing interest from the military point of view. Here again the A.A. & Q.M.G. of the Division, Lt.-Col. W.P. Gilbridge had illuminate the obscurity of the daily tasks on the lines of communications by his own narrative. From this it appears that considerable improvisation was necessary from the beginning of the invasion.

Prior to the operation on the Italian mainland arrangements had been made for maintaining contact with the remaining units left behind the vehs of low priority. After the actual landing Rear Div HQ moved in right behind Main Div HQ. An administrative post was established at CATANIA near Fortbase which was made up of a D.A.A. & Q.M.G., a GSO. II and a Staff Capt. A HQ in charge of rear parties and low priority units was formed under Major Embury, (second-in-command Sask LI) in the former Divisional Maintenance Area and this offr in addition to his other duties kept an eye on the unloading of the ships. This rear party was equipped with W/T communication. The Staff Capt was provided with a 299 Set which could reach the other two centres from the HQ of the Ferry Service across the STRAITS OF MESSINA. The DMA was left in REGGIO di CALABRIA until the Division had completed its tour through the ASPROMONTE and across to the eastern coast of CALABRIA along the coast rd to LOCRI. When the DMA was moved from REGGIO an administrative post was set up there to direct Canadian units along the divisional axis. By this chain of administrative and W/T posts we had at all times a complete picture of the units left behind in SICILY and of those who were crossing the straits and were able by this means to raise the priority of any particular unit on the Ferry Service. We were in contact with the HQs of rear parties until we reached CATANZARO by which time the rear parties themselves came forward and gradually closed up the posts as they were no longer needed.

Units were told to leave their excess baggage in charge of a baggage party consisting of one officer, one NCO and six ORs who would be responsible for their unit baggage and were for this purpose attached to 4 Bn C.B.R.D. They were to have adequate transport and were to move forward at a latter date so that the baggage could be brought up to units during a rest period. The baggage did, in fact, arrive during the rest period in POTENZA. (Gilbride, op. cit.)

131. The advance into the ASPROMONTE over one inferior road compelled a high degree of traffic control. Traffic control points equipped with wireless sets were set up to ensure the minimum of confusion and when

necessary to impose a ban on "down" traffic, thus preserving a one-way flow of vehicles forward during periods of emergency. While this was in force, units were authorized to consume their two days reserve of rations to compensate for the inability of their transport to get back to the supply points. Of all the services only the essential medical units were allowed to go forward into the ASPROMONTE. Consequently, while the War Diary of the A.D.M.S. complains vigorously of the intolerable traffic congestion and isolation from the necessary knowledge of operations, supply and transport units were able to move quickly around to LOCRI along the coast road from REGGIO as soon as the divisional axis was changed. (ibid. and W.D., A.D.M.S., 1 Cdn Inf Div, 7 Sep 43.)

132. The swift advance northwards would have been impossible without a flexible plan for lifting marching troops in motor vehicles. As early as 4 Sep the necessity for troop carrying, as soon as the R.C.E. could overcome the difficulties of blown bridges and cratered roads, was forcibly borne in upon Divisional Headquarters. At this time the A.A. & Q.M.G. and C.R.A.S.C. (Lt.-Col. H.L. Pease) were prepared to lift two infantry brigades with divisional transport alone. These resources were supplemented by the addition of 35 Italian T.C.Vs. which enabled the Division to concentrate rapidly at CATANZARO and later at VILLAPIANA even more easily. These were retained until after the capture of POTENZA. (ibid.)

133. The three L.C.I(L) referred to above were joined at CATANZARO by three more which, in spite of requests to the contrary, arrived at the rendezvous without supplies. This incident was the beginning of a protracted difference of opinion between Divisional Headquarters and 86 Area. 86 Area, which controlled the port of entry at REGGIO and later at CROTONE, apparently inclined to the belief that 1 Cdn Inf Div was building up dumps of petrol, ammunition and rations in excess of its requirements. The matter was brought to a head when the Division reached VILLAPIANA and was preparing for the long move on POTENZA. On the first return of the landing craft to CROTONE after discharging at VILLAPIANA, 86 Area refused to despatch any more rations or petrol and the craft sailed northward empty. This refusal necessitated the despatch of a R.C.A.S.C. platoon by road to CROTONE to collect the supplies required and generally caused a repetition of the results of the unfortunate oversight by which landing craft had arrived empty at CATANZARO three days previously. The slender resources of the divisional transport were unequal to such a dissipation of effort and a brisk exchange of messages occurred between Division and Corps after which apologies were made and the obstinacy of 86 Area corrected. (ibid. and Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/O/H. A & Q Message Log 18 Sep 43, serial 443.)

Finally, steps were taken by H.Q., 13 Corps, to release all the L.C.T. operating on the west coast and hitherto engaged in supplying 5 (Brit) Div and to load them with ammunition for 1 Cdn Inf Div. (Hist Sec file Italy 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/O/H, A & Q Message Log, 21 Sep 43, serial 523.) This was coupled with an admonition to the Division to keep Corps punctually and accurately informed of its administrative situation and reminding it that craft would only be loaded after receipt of indent and in accordance with the instructions of Eighth Army. (ibid., 21 Sep 43, serial 526.)

134. No less enterprising were the railway operations of the administrative services. The unusual good fortune of finding a railway in operation occurred at CATANZARO where the branch line to COSENZA had been kept in running order largely by the enthusiasm of its maintenance crew. (Renison, and Gilbride, op. cit.) This was used variously by an Intelligence Officer from 1 Cdn Inf Bde, a reconnaissance patrol from 5 (Brit) Div and by the Staff Captain (Ammunition) who was ordered by Lt.-Col. Gilbride to investigate its possibilities as a possible axis of advance. In the event the CRATI Valley, the traditional highway from CALABRIA to the north, was not used as a supply route by either division. Near VILLAPIANA however, an undamaged train was discovered at TREBISACCE Station and was used to move supplies from there to ROTONDELLA. It then proceeded to TARANTO to take on coal under the supervision of Capt. M.C. Carter, R.C.A.S.C., who had been directed by C.R.A.S.C. (Lt.-Col. H.L. Pease) to proceed from there via TARREMARE to POTENZA. In view of the enemy's propensity to mine and demolish the railway track this was a hazardous undertaking. Capt. Carter was instructed to couple two box-cars loaded with wood or other ballast in front of the engine and to draw four box-cars with petrol and full second line ammunition behind. (W.D., H.Q., R.C.A.S.C., 1 Cdn Inf Div, 18 Sep 43.) Two days later the train was making its way towards POTENZA when it was derailed by the explosion of a mine some ten miles northwest of FERRANDINA. The cars in front had failed to explode the mine which blew up under the locomotive. Capt. Carter's leg was broken but the engineer -- a sergeant of the Carlt & York R. -- and other passengers were unharmed and the supplies were safely returned to ROTONDELLA (ibid., 20 Sep 43 and Gilbride, op. cit.) The first train from ROTONDELLA reached POTENZA on 26 Sep with a load of petrol and rations from 106 F.M.C. But with the opening of the next phase of operations at the end of the month the rare opportunity of exploiting existing railway communications at divisional level came to an end (W.D., H.Q., R.C.A.S.C., 1 Cdn Inf Div, 26 Sep 43).

135. The War Diary of the A.D.M.S. (Col. C.H. Playfair) for the month of September is a valuable repository of information on the

administrative problems faced by the R.C.A.M.C. As with the other services, distance was the main problem. When the Division reached POTENZA, 9 Cdn Fd Amb was at GALLICCHIO, 4 Cdn Fd Amb at CASA DI GIOIA near SCANZANO, 5 Cdn Fd Amb at CROTONE and 1 Cdn F.D.S. at CATANZARO. Various staging posts were necessary between these points to assist the evacuation of casualties (W.D., A.D.M.S., 1 Cdn Inf Div, September 43, Appx 56). Although battle casualties were light, the increasing occurrence of malaria, especially virulent in its malignant form in the country bordering the Gulf of TARANTO, and infectious hepatitis (commonly known as jaundice) kept the evacuation machinery in a state of constant activity. Although the plight of 1 Cdn F.D.S. situated some 300 miles by road from divisional administration was unhappy enough, the case of one medical officer and two orderlies who had to remain at DELIANUOVA with a seriously wounded soldier of the West N.S.R. throughout the period of the advance on POTENZA, is an illustration of the shifts to which the medical services were put. Nonetheless, they were able to report proudly on 27 Sep 43 that the percentage of sick in the Division had remained at .28 compared with a "conceded normal" of 3 per cent per day (ibid.).

THE EVE OF THE ADVANCE OF CAMPOBASSO

136. Of all the temporary losses from jaundice the most serious was that of Major-General Simonds. On 22 Sep he was confined to his quarters and remained there with brief intervals of activity until 29 Sep when he was taken to hospital. Before he finally succumbed, however, he was able to hold a full "O" Group on 29 Sep on 0900 hrs giving general orders for the concentration of the Division in the area of CANOSA and the subsequent advance through FOGGIA and LUCERA towards CAMPOBASSO. An hour later the Divisional Sports competition for the "Sicily Cup" began at the well-equipped stadium in POTENZA. The weather was cool and bright after a heavy shower during the previous night -- the first heavy rainfall since leaving the high levels of the ASPROMONTE far to the southward. After a stirring opening ceremony by the pipe bands of the 48 Highrs and Seaforth of C. the cup was won handily by the team from 2 Cdn Inf Bde. In the middle of the proceedings Brigadier Vokes was summoned to the G.O.C.'s caravan and ordered to take over command of the Division. He was succeeded in the command of 2 Cdn Inf Bde by Lt.-Col. B.M. Hoffmeister of the Seaforth of C. Both appointments were temporary and conferred no promotion. On the last day of September, 1 Cdn Inf Div moved out of POTENZA towards the FOGGIA Plain. (W.D., G.S., H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Div, 22-30 Sep.)

137. By and large the principal justification for the long and arduous pursuit by 13 Corps for roughly 400 miles along the roads and through

the mountains of CALABRIA and the BASILICATA had been the furtherance of the main battle of 15 Army Group which had been fought by the Fifth Army on the plain of PAESTUM and on the steep ring of mountains which hems in SALERNO from the north and west. Although the thrust of "AVALANCHE" failed to cut off the German formations withdrawing before the Eighth Army, the Fifth Army made good its once precarious foothold and inflicted a damaging tactical defeat upon the main body of an enemy fighting with every advantage of ground and communications. Battle casualties had been particularly light in 1 Cdn Inf Div and 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde; but as we have seen the effect of the far-flung operations of 1 Cdn Inf Div and 5 (Brit) Div had exerted a profound and stimulating effect on the fortunes of the Fifth Army. By the end of the month the Allied battle line had ceased to be a matter of interdependent pockets and had become an integrated deployment of infantry and armour stretching from sea to sea across southern Italy. General Alexander's directive of 17 Sep (cf supra, para 93) had been fulfilled by the Eighth Army's capture of FOGGIA on 27 Sep and by the Fifth Army's capture of NOCERA on 28 Sep. The latter achievement (by British troops of 10 Corps) secured the vital pass giving access from the Gulf of ALERNO across the base of the SORRENTO peninsula to the Gulf of NAPLES. While American troops of 6 U.S. Corps closed in on AVELLINO and reached northwards to envelop BENEVENTO a flood of armour was released on the flat and fertile Neapolitan Campagna and flowed rapidly around the base of Mt. VESUVIUS.

138. All this had been achieved barely two weeks after the bloody repulse of 16 Pz Div's fierce counter-attack down the banks of the R. SELE during 12-14 Sep. By 1 Oct the Fifth Army would be in NAPLES pursuing the Hermann Goering Pz Div towards the VOLTURNO while the Eighth Army with a combination of frontal assault and "seaborne hook" clawed its way northwestwards into the Central Apennines. The campaign thus far might well have recommended itself to Lord Nelson who, a century and a half before, had vainly recommended to his sceptical superiors the value of amphibious operations against the long coastline of southern Italy as a means of outflanking the powerful land armies of the French Republic. It had been a triumph of manoeuvre in a countryside of steep hills and narrow valleys where, without the perfect coordination of sea, air and land forces, effective deployment would have been impossible. The broader strategy of the war in the Mediterranean was well served during the same period by the evacuation of the German garrison in SARDINIA, completed on 20 Sep, and the commencement of operations in CORSICA, which had a similar result on that island. In the Dodecanese the occupation of the islands of KOS and LEROS in mid-month was to have an unfortunate sequel and result in a temporary setback. But for the future our armies in Italy, sustained by

Allied mastery of the sea and air, were to press forward through the many hazards of the campaign to its remorseless and inevitable conclusion.

(War Cabinet Chiefs-of-Staff Committee Weekly Resumes Nos. 212-3.)

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139. The maps appended to this Report are illustrations only. While every effort has been made to include in them all relevant information, further reference should be made to the publications of the Geographical Section, General Staff, the War Office, as follows:

GSGS. 4230, Italy 1:250,000 in particular, Sheets 36-8, 41-4, 47-8, 52 & 53.

GSGS. 4164, Italy 1:100,000 in particular, Sheets 185-91, 192-202, 209-12, 220-2, 228-31, 236-8, 241-3, 245-7, 254-7, 254-5 and 263-4.

140. This Report was prepared by Lt.-Col. S.H.S. Hughes, C Int C, formerly Historical Officer, 1 Cdn Inf Div, 14 Oct 43 - 16 Jul 44.

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D.D. Hist Sec
CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS
APPENDIX "A"

NOTE ON THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY'S SHARE IN OPERATION "BAYTOWN"

Of the Canadian components of Force "W" (Rear Admiral T.T. Troubridge, R.N.) only the 80th L.C.M. Flotilla (Lieut. J.E. Koyl, R.C.N.V.R.) was used for the assault across the Straits of Messina. None of the Canadian L.C.A. flotillas which had taken part in Operation "HUSKY" were employed, nor was the 81st L.C.M. Flotilla which had also participated in the previous operation. The reason for the exclusion of the 81st Flotilla appears to have been the fact that it was equipped only with L.C.M.(i), whereas the 80th was equipped with L.C.M.(iii), which were craft of American manufacture equipped with diesel engines with an endurance of about 800 miles as opposed to the less powerful and less robust internal combustion engines of the L.C.M.(i). In consequence of 80th were able to proceed from MALTA to MESSINA direct without the assistance of other craft.

Four of Lieut. Koyl's L.C.M. were included in the assault wave while the remaining six landed at first light in the second wave. Lieut. Koyl's own craft carried, appropriately enough, H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Bde, supplying an all too rare example of operational partnership between the two Canadian Services. For 32 days thereafter the 80th Flotilla participated in the arduous work of the Ferry Service.

During Operation "AVALANCHE" various Canadian naval officers were included in the companies of L.S.T. and landing craft flotillas but no Canadian naval formation, as such, was involved. Several Canadian officers, on loan to the Royal Navy, served with distinction in M.T.Bs. and M.G.Bs. during the Mediterranean operations of this period, but not until January 1944 was a Canadian flotilla formed (56 M.T.B. Flotilla) consisting of 3 M.T.Bs. and 3 M.G.Bs., of which the commanders were all Royal Canadian Navy personnel.

(Royal Canadian Navy Monthly Review No. 26, February 1944; Report by Lieut. J.E. Koyl, R.C.N.V.R.; and other documents in the possession of the Historical Records Officer, Canadian Naval Mission Overseas.)
APPENDIX "B"

NOTE ON THE ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE'S PARTICIPATION IN THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN, SEPTEMBER 1943

During September Wellington X aircraft of Nos. 420, 424, and 425 Squadrons, operating under No. 331 (R.C.A.F. Wing) of No. 205 R.A.F. Group, carried out 571 bombing sorties and 18 leaflet-dropping sorties against Italian ports, marshalling yards, airfields, military installations and lines of communication on the mainland of Italy. These attacks took place not only in the battle area but over northern Italy, ROME and the islands of SARDINIA and CORSICA. The most strenuous of these operations occurred during the course of Operation "AVALANCHE" when close cooperation was given to the Fifth Army in the SALERNO Beachhead. 990 tons of bombs were dropped and 3,762,000 leaflets. A total of 3,681 operational hours were flown by the three squadrons.

In addition, Canadian fighter aircraft of No. 417 (City of Windsor) Squadron, R.C.A.F. began their long association with the Italian Campaign. Operating under No. 244 (R.A.F. Wing) this squadron, all in Spitfire Mark VIII aircraft, carried out escorts to bombers, fighter sweeps, convoy and bridgehead patrols, standing patrols over battle areas, interceptions and Air/Sea Rescue patrols.

(C.M.H.Q. file 24/Sources/1/7, folio 129: information supplied by the Historical Records Section, R.C.A.F. Headquarters Overseas.)

