

The Enemy Attacks (3-12 February)

At the beginning of February General Mackensen's *Fourteenth Army* was preparing to strike. Hitler had personally ordered that the "abscess" below Rome be removed, whatever the cost. Having stopped the Allied drive toward Cisterna and Campoleone, the Germans renewed their preparations for an all-out offensive against the Anzio beachhead. For the first two weeks of February, while these preparations were under way, the Germans believed that VI Corps might again attack toward Cisterna and Campoleone in an effort to break out of the beachhead. They also thought that the Allies might attempt another amphibious landing northwest of Anzio, and coordinate it with a drive from the beachhead area across the Moletta River to the northwest. The German attacks of early February were designed not only to pave the way for the enemy's main offensive but also by maintaining constant pressure on VI Corps: to prevent the Allies from reorganizing for a new drive out of the beachhead.

The situation and mission of *Fourteenth Army* was summarized on 3 February in its journal as follows:

Fourteenth Army intends to prevent the enlarging of the beachhead, and to prepare an attack to eliminate this area. A number of army units are remnants from various organizations and are not able to mount an attack at this time; during the last days, they had to be used in the front lines to prevent any enemy breakthrough. With these forces a strong assault group to conduct the attack on the beachhead cannot be organized. Therefore, *Fourteenth Army* has planned attacks with limited objectives, to suit various situations as they arise. When the enemy is weakened by these attacks, an all-out counteroffensive will be launched.

At the same time, *Fourteenth Army* headquarters again expressed doubt that the Anzio beachhead could be eliminated with the forces then available to it, and requested *Army Group C* to attach additional troops in order that the ultimate mission of eliminating the beachhead might be accomplished.

On the eve of their first large-scale offensive, the Germans reorganized their forces. *I Parachute Corps*, which had previously commanded the entire Anzio front under *Fourteenth Army*, was assigned the western sector from a point west of the Albano road to the sea behind the Moletta River. It had two divisions under its command, the *4th Parachute* on the west and the *65th Infantry* on the east. The staff of *LXXVI Panzer Corps* was transferred from *Tenth Army* in the south, where it had commanded the enemy forces opposing the British Eighth Army, to *Fourteenth Army*, and given control over the central and eastern sectors of the beachhead perimeter. It took over its new command at 1200, 4 February, five divisions were placed under it; in order, from the Albano road eastward, they were the *3d Panzer Grenadier*, the *715th Infantry* (motorized), the *71st Infantry*, and the *Hermann Goering Panzer Divisions*, together with the *26th Panzer Division*, most of which was held in Corps reserve. In practice, German attacks were usually launched by combat groups that were formed by varying combinations of units. The most

important of these, *Combat Group Graeser*, was to spearhead the enemy attacks against the center of the beachhead line.

The VI Corps offensive at the end of January had concentrated on two areas: the roads leading northeast from Anzio to Cisterna and the paved highway running north from Anzio toward Albano. These avenues, which traversed the only terrain suitable to the employment of tanks and heavy equipment, were likewise the most favorable routes for an enemy attack to drive VI Corps into the sea.

The German offensive against the Anzio beachhead launched in February had three principal phases: first, preparatory attacks to pinch off the deep British salient up the Albano road and capture the important Factory area (3-10 February); second, a major drive to break through to the sea along the axis of the Albano road (16-20 February); and third, an attack on the Cisterna front aimed at the main Allied beachhead defense line along the Mussolini Canal (28 February-2 March). The first of these attacks was to succeed; the second and third were to be repulsed by Allied forces that held grimly to the beachhead area and preserved it as a springboard for the subsequent offensive that led to the capture of Rome.

Battle of the Campoleone Salient

On the night of 3-4 February the Germans began their Anzio offensive by launching a two-pronged assault from the west and east against the center of the deep Allied salient extending up the Albano road from Carroceto to Campoleone. This attack was the first step in a preliminary offensive to capture the Factory-Carroceto area, which commanded the road network leading to Anzio and Nettuno; this area was to be the position for a jump-off in the major German drive that was to follow. ([Map No. 9.](#))

The drive launched on 30 January by the Allied 1st Armored and 1 Divisions up the Albano road had created a narrow salient approximately three miles deep and from one to one and one-half miles wide. If the Germans could pinch off the British units holding this salient, they would achieve the destruction of a sizable portion of the beachhead forces and at the same time open the way for further attacks down the Albano road. Quick to seize the opportunity, the enemy rushed troops into position for the attack.

After the Allied advance was stopped on 1 February, the 1st Armored Division was withdrawn into Corps reserve, leaving the British 1 Division occupying the ground which had been won. The apex of the salient just south of the railroad at Campoleone was held by the entire 3 Infantry Brigade consisting of the 1 DWR, the 2 Foresters, and the 1 KSLI. On the left flank of the salient and echeloned to the southwest was the 24 Guards Brigade consisting, in order of position, of the 1 Battalion, Irish Guards, the 1 Scots Guards, and the 5 Grenadier Guards, with the 2 North Staffordshire Regiment (2 North Staffs) attached. The 2 North Staffs were in contact with the 157th Infantry Regiment, 45th Division, defending the Moletta River line on the left flank of the beachhead. On the

right flank of the salient, and echeloned to the southeast, was the 2 Infantry Brigade (less the 2 North Staffs), consisting of the 6 Battalion, Gordon Highlanders (6 Gordons), and the 1 Battalion, Loyal Regiment (1 Loyals) reinforced in the center by elements of the 1 Reconnaissance Regiment (1 Recce Regiment). The 1 Loyals on the right were in contact with the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion, near the village of Carano. The 1 Division, holding a front of approximately ten miles, had had little time to prepare for the impending attack.

To add to the difficulties of this extremely long front and an exposed salient, the terrain generally favored the enemy. West of the Albano road the maze of deep, brush-covered ravines, which had proved such an obstacle to the tanks of the 1st Armored Division, offered the enemy concealed assembly areas from which they could infiltrate between the isolated strong points held by the British troops. East of the Albano road the country is more open, but the road leading southeast from Osteriaccia toward Carano offered enemy tanks

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an avenue of approach from concealed assembly points behind the railroad embankment east of Campoleone.

Late in the afternoon of 3 February the enemy laid an artillery concentration on the positions of the 1 DWR southwest of the railroad and followed it with a small infantry attack. This proved to be only a diversion involving not more than a company. Artillery fire broke up the attack and by dark the slight enemy penetration had been wiped out. Then, shortly before midnight, the enemy artillery opened up again. This time the fire was concentrated near the base of the salient with the heaviest fire falling in the sector east of the Albano road. At 2300 the 1 Irish Guards west of the highway reported enemy troops infiltrating between their positions and those of the 1 Scots Guards on their left. At 2330 the 6 Gordons on the east side of the salient also were under attack. Enemy units also struck at the 1 KSLI and 1 DWR at the nose of the salient. In the confusion of night fighting it was difficult to measure the strength of the attacks, but by dawn the enemy's intention was clear. By driving deep wedges into both sides of the salient near its base, he aimed to cut off the whole of the 3 Brigade.

At daybreak on 4 February the attack on the west appeared to be the more threatening. An enemy battalion of the *65th Infantry Division*, supported by a few tanks and self-propelled guns, broke through the left flank of the 1 Irish Guards to reach the Campoleone-Nettuno railroad paralleling the Albano road. Later it became evident that the more serious threat was to the east flank of the salient. At 0725 at least six enemy tanks were spotted near a farmhouse to the east of the 6 Gordons. Swinging west along a dirt road, the tanks overran one company of the 6 Gordons and established themselves on a small ridge just east of the Albano road. Infantry poured in behind the tanks, antitank guns were brought up, and additional tanks moved in to complete the isolation of the 3 Brigade. This attack was launched by *Combat Group Graeser*, and spearheaded by the *104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment* reinforced by three additional infantry battalions, two

artillery battalions, two combat engineer companies, and armor, including Mark V (Panther) tanks.

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As the morning wore on the situation became increasingly difficult for the 1 Irish Guards and the 6 Gordons. Sherman tanks of the 46 Royal Tank Regiment, counterattacking to support the 1 Irish Guards, were outranged by the enemy's tanks and heavy antitank guns which had been emplaced to cover the Albano road. The 1 Irish Guards fell back to the southeast taking up a hedgehog position for all-around defense. Isolated by the enemy penetration, the 3 Brigade in the apex of the salient was under constant attack. Fighting under leaden skies and drizzling rain, it could not count on air support. By noon the situation seemed critical. General Penney, commander of the 1 Division, ordered the 168 Infantry Brigade (British 56 Division) to alert one battalion for a possible counterattack.

During the afternoon of 4 February the force of the enemy attacks gradually weakened against the stubborn defense put up by the 24 Guards Brigade and the 6 Gordons. By 1500 the 1 Irish Guards had fought its way out of the trap created by the penetration on the left flank; the 6 Gordons continued to hold the ground south of the ridge line; and in the beleaguered 3 Brigade area the 1 KSLI successfully intercepted a party of Germans escorting 100 British prisoners. Enemy tanks and infantry suffered from accurate artillery and tankdestroyer fire. Company C, 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion, knocked out four enemy tanks and an antitank gun which the German crew was manhandling into position; Company B picked off one Mark IV tank. At 1600, when the force of the enemy attacks showed signs of weakening, the 1 London Scottish (168 Brigade), supported by tanks of the 46 Royal Tanks, launched a counterattack. Suffering heavy losses, the enemy was forced to fall back, and by 1700 the gap between the 6 Gordons and the 3 Brigade had been wiped out.

Although the initial German attack had been checked, General Lucas considered that the forward units of the 1 Division were dangerously exposed, and he ordered them withdrawn to a new and more defensible line. The 1 KSLI and the 2 Foresters drew back quickly with only slight losses. The 1 DWR, which was under direct fire from enemy tanks, was unable to extricate itself until after dark; one company had been cut off, and the remainder of the battalion had to leave behind most of its antitank guns and heavy equipment.

During the night of 4-5 February the 1 Division continued the withdrawal of its forward units to a line approximately a mile north of Carroceto and the Factory. The fresh 168 Brigade was moved forward to take over the center of the line and the 3 Brigade moved into division reserve. Although the readjustment of the 1 Division positions represented a loss of two and one-half miles of hard-won ground, the new line was considerably shorter and more defensible. Of the 3 Brigade units at the apex of the salient only the 1 DWR suffered heavily, the chief losses being sustained by the 1 Irish Guards, 24 Brigade, and the 6 Gordons, 2 Brigade, who had borne the brunt of the enemy's attacks at the base of

the salient. Total British casualties in this action were more than 1,400 killed, wounded, and missing; the enemy claimed the capture of more than 900 prisoners.

The enemy's objective of wiping out the Campoleone salient had been achieved; his effort to isolate and destroy the 3 Brigade had largely failed. Bad weather had hampered the movement of tanks and other heavy equipment and stubborn Allied resistance had slowed down the enemy infantry attacks. The enemy had suffered heavy casualties-nearly five hundred killed-and during the operation the British took more than three hundred prisoners, most of them captured during the counterattack launched by the 1 London Scottish and the 46 Royal Tank Regiment. Prisoners reported that their units had been hit hard. One battalion was practically wiped out, and the *104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment*, which had led the attack against the 6 Cordons, was seriously depleted. Prisoners complained that the attack had been hurriedly organized without adequate reconnaissance of the ground and that some units had been moved up by forced night marches and thrown directly into the battle.

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The Beachhead Defense

On the morning of 4 February, when the fighting in the Campoleone salient was at its height, VI Corps issued written orders outlining the Corps plan of defense for the beachhead and confirming oral orders given the previous day. The initial beachhead line, which ran from the Moletta River on the left flank across the open fields of the central sector to the west branch of the Mussolini Canal and south along the main canal to the sea, was to be fortified as the final beachhead line of resistance. During the period of the expansion of the beachhead VI Corps had pushed out in the central sector an average of from two to four miles, with the Campoleone salient extending six miles north up the Albano road. It was the intention of VI Corps to hold the ground which had been won, falling back to the final beachhead line only as a last resort. ([Map No. 10.](#))

The flanks of the beachhead, the Moletta River on the left and the main Mussolini Canal on the right, were considered easily defensible. The 45th Division was assigned the task of preparing defenses along the Moletta River and of holding it with one regimental combat team; responsibility for the right flank went to the 1st Special Service Force.¹ The critical central sector north of the final beachhead line was to be prepared for defense and held by the 1 Division and the 3d Division. The 1 Division (reinforced) was to be responsible for the area extending from west of the Albano road to the village of Carano.² The 3d Division (reinforced) would hold the area from Carano to the junction of the west branch with the main Mussolini Canal.³ The 1st Armored Division⁴ (less Combat Command B) and the bulk of the 45th Division⁵ were to be held in Corps reserve prepared to counterattack on Corps order. The 1st Armored Division was located east of the Albano road in the extensive area of tangled undergrowth, scrub trees, and bogland known as Padiglione Woods; in addition to its counterattack role it was to organize defenses south of the final defense line behind the 1 Division. The bulk of the 45th Division, located northeast of Nettuno along the road to Cisterna, was to organize the

area south of the west branch of the Mussolini Canal behind the 3d Division. The 36th and 39th Engineer Combat Regiments, in addition to their engineer functions, were to assist in defending the coastline against airborne and seaborne raids and were to be prepared to assemble on four hours' notice as Corps reserve. At the port, the 540th Engineers, which passed to Army control on 6 February when Fifth Army took over control of supply at the beachhead, was to defend X-Ray and Nettuno beaches. During the critical days of February the task of improving the defenses absorbed the energies of every available man on the beachhead.

The enemy attack on the Campoleone salient required some changes in the plan of defense. The 168 Brigade, originally designated as Corps reserve, was committed to the support of the 1 Division, and the forward line to be consolidated was drawn back to form an arc covering the Factory area. On 5 February VI Corps designated an intermediate line approximately halfway between the initial outpost and final beachhead lines. During the month of February, although powerful enemy attacks tore deep rents in the forward lines of defense, necessitating frequent shifts in the positions of the defending troops, the general outline of the VI Corps plan of defense remained intact.

The work of preparing the defenses was performed under the most trying conditions. All operations had to be conducted at night and sometimes in the midst of battle. In the forward areas the extent of the outpost line and the relatively small

1. Attached: 456th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion (less Batteries C and D).

2. Attached: 2 Field Regiment, Royal Artillery; 3d Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry; 169 Brigade; 46 Royal Tanks; Companies B and C, 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

3. Attached: 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion; 751st Tank Battalion; 191st Tank Battalion; 441st AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion; 84th Chemical Battalion; 69th Armored Field Artillery Battalion; 504th Parachute Infantry (minus 3d Bn); 6615th Ranger Force (Provisional); 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion.

4. Attached: 434th AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion.

5. Attached: 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion; 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion (less Companies B and C).

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size of the defending force made it necessary to depend almost entirely on a system of mutually supporting strong points. The stone farmhouses that dotted the countryside played an important role in the defense. Upper floors provided sniper positions and observation posts over the relatively level and almost featureless terrain; ground floors, strengthened with sandbags and timbers, provided protection for dug-in machine guns and antitank guns. Positions were wired in and protected by antitank and antipersonnel mine fields, roads were cratered, and key bridges were prepared for demolition. Engineers of the 10th Engineer Battalion strung barbed wire in the bed of the west branch of the Mussolini Canal and then, to increase its effectiveness as a tank obstacle, built earth dams to raise the water level. Tank destroyers and supporting tanks, moving into prepared positions after dark, helped to bolster the thinly held forward positions against

the enemy's favorite tactic of night infiltration. Rudimentary in the early days of February, the defenses became increasingly effective as the weeks went by.

General Clark inspected the entire beachhead front on 6 February, visiting each of the major units of VI Corps. He found the situation quiet and fairly well in hand. There appeared to be a weak spot at the boundary between the 1 Division and the 3d Division. To strengthen this point, where the enemy line was barely two miles from the final beachhead line of defense, two battalions of the 180th Infantry (45th Division) were sent to the villages of Carano and Padiglione to prepare defenses. The 1 Division had lost a large number of antitank guns in the fighting at Campoleone, and both the 1 Division and the 3d Division were

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badly in need of replacements, The 3d Division alone needed 2,400 men. Every effort was made to expedite the shipment of replacements and to keep VI Corps units up to strength, but the problem remained a chronic one throughout the month of February. The absorption of large numbers of troops who had had no combat experience was difficult for units which were almost constantly in the line and often fighting desperately to hold their positions. General Clark was convinced that in order to build up an adequate force to defend the beachhead and to give it the strength necessary for future offensive operations an additional British brigade group or American regimental combat team and another 155-mm. gun battalion were needed. Although VI Corps was now committed to a defensive role, the possibility that it would soon be in position to resume the offensive was not neglected. Fifth Army Operations Instruction No. 15, dated 7 February, which confirmed previous oral orders that VI Corps was to hold its present position, included the provision that plans were to be drawn up for a possible attack out of the beachhead toward Velletri or Albano.

After the 1 Division had successfully extricated itself from the Campoleone salient on the night of 4 February, the enemy made no large-scale attacks for three days. It was not, however, a period of inactivity. Every part of the beachhead was subject to shelling from enemy long-range guns as well

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as to air attack, and while reorganizing his forces to continue the offensive the enemy made repeated efforts to feel out the Dew beachhead defenses. The most important of these probing attacks was launched against the 3d Division on the night of 5 February.

While the British troops in the Campoleone salient were bearing the brunt of the first German attack, the 3d Division had been reorganizing its units and preparing its defenses in depth along the initial outpost line, intermediate line, and final beachhead line based on the Mussolini Canal. The division sector was divided between the 30th Infantry on the left, the 15th Infantry in the center, and the 504th Parachute Infantry on the right, with the 7th Infantry in division reserve, The bulk of the division strength had been withdrawn to

rush work on the intermediate and final defense lines, leaving only mixed holding forces along the initial outpost line.

In the sector held by the 30th Infantry the outpost line extended in an arc from the village of Carano across the open fields and deep ditches of the rolling farmland west of Cisterna to the stream crossing at Ponte Rotto. It was lightly manned by platoon-sized units of the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion on the left; a platoon each of Companies G and F, 30th Infantry, in the center; and platoons of the 2d and 3d Battalions, 7th Infantry, and the 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, on the right. The defenses of these positions were not yet completed. Company F, 30th Infantry, had planned to wire in its position the previous night but had been pinned down by enemy machine-gun fire. Wire communication between units was still being laid, and the troops were being reorganized.

Just at dark on the evening of 5 February the enemy put down a short, intense concentration of artillery, mortar, and tank fire on a front of two and one-half miles extending from Formal del Bove Creek to Ponte Rotto. Tanks moved up on the flanks and poured direct fire into the positions of the 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, to the north of Ponte Rotto. Then, making liberal use of flares and machine-pistol fire, the enemy attacked. At 2125 the 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, reported it could not hold out much longer. The platoons of Companies F and G drew back; the platoon of Company E became disorganized; and the 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, also withdrew from its position near Ponte Rotto. The platoons of Companies F and G, 30th Infantry, finding their right flank exposed, fell back 1,500 yards to the intermediate line. The result of this wholesale withdrawal was to produce a gap extending over nearly the whole length of the 30th Infantry sector of the outpost line. To restore the situation Company K, 30th Infantry, was ordered forward to counterattack. Supported by tanks and tank destroyers, Company K moved up the road toward Ponte Rotto. It met only light artillery and mortar fire and, with other units, regained the former forward positions of the 30th Infantry by 0230. The 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, also counterattacked and regained its former position by 0435. The 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, moved to the rear to reorganize; its positions were taken over by the 3d Battalion, 30th Infantry. By morning, with the exception of Ponte Rotto, the original outpost line had been restored.

The exact size of the enemy force making the attack is not known. It is probable that it represented not more than a reinforced infantry battalion supported by tanks. By clever psychological use of concentrated machine-pistol fire and flares the enemy had created the illusion of an attack in greater force. Two hours after the attack had been launched, the enemy had withdrawn. Except for heavy losses sustained by the 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, little damage had been done.

Although American troops had lost Ponte Rotto, they profited by the lesson. The transition from offensive to defensive fighting was not easy for troops accustomed to doing the attacking; in the early days of February, officers and men had to learn many lessons the hard way. To strengthen the thinly held forward lines, General Truscott ordered tank destroyers and tanks to be placed well forward where they could provide

direct support. The positions of the units on the outpost line were further improved when, on the night of 7-8 Feb-

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ruary, the division relieved the units constructing defenses along the Mussolini Canal and returned them to regimental control. This permitted the 15th and 30th Infantry and 504th Parachute Infantry to defend their respective forward areas with two battalions, keeping one in reserve. The 7th Infantry, in division reserve, continued the work of improving the defenses along the canal with the assistance of the 10th Engineer Battalion and the 39th Engineers.

In addition to probing attacks the Germans built up their artillery and increased the tempo of their shelling throughout the first two weeks of February. On 5 February, the enemy had 372 artillery pieces, with 152 of calibers exceeding 105-mm., concentrated around the Anzio beachhead. Directed by observers on the dominating heights of Colli Laziali, the Lepini Mountains, and a water tower at Littoria, the enemy's long-range artillery weapons and 210-mm. and 240-mm. railroad guns could drop shells into any part of the limited beachhead area.

Air photos taken on 6 February, the first clear day in a week of bad weather, revealed the increase in enemy artillery strength. The main concentration was in the center, below Colli Laziali, where the guns could support an attack either down the Albano road or from Cisterna. A large build-up was also noted on the left flank. On the afternoon of 5 February the air strip at Nettuno was heavily shelled. Five Spitfires were destroyed, and the field had to be abandoned as a permanent base. Thereafter planes used the field only during the day, returning each night to bases near Naples. On 7 February a heavy-caliber railroad gun was reported emplaced near Campoleone. Reconnaissance planes discovered additional heavy guns on the slopes of Colli Laziali: 170-mm. guns were located on the

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edge of a cliff near Lake Nemi, and a railroad gun was spotted near the mouth of a tunnel at Albano. Although the shelling from these long-range weapons was seldom accurate, the rear areas of the beachhead were so congested that material damage and casualties were inevitable. The shelling seriously delayed the work of unloading supplies in the port during this period.

As many of the enemy's heavy guns were out of range of the 155-mm. guns in Corps artillery, the Navy and Air Force were called upon to assist in knocking them out. On 5 February the cruiser U.S.S. *Brooklyn* and three destroyers were employed against guns and enemy positions on the left flank of the beachhead. Two P-51 Mustangs of the 111th Reconnaissance Squadron directed the fire of naval guns with good results. The program was repeated on the left and right flanks of the beachhead whenever the weather was favorable. In order to hamper enemy observation of the right side of the beachhead, XII Air Support Command sent P-40's and A-36's to attack the water tower at Littoria on 7

February. The next day railroad guns west of Albano were bombed. Hits on the track and a burst of yellow flame and smoke from the target area indicated that some damage had been done.

Damage from enemy bombing was much more serious than the long-range artillery fire. Day or night, the beachhead was never safe from enemy planes, which came in to bomb and strafe shipping in the harbor, the dock areas, ammunition dumps, and troop assembly areas. The enemy used an increasingly larger percentage of antipersonnel "butterfly" bombs in his night attacks, which caused casualties throughout the beachhead.

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Along the front, 7 February was a quiet day; in the rear, bombing raids covered the port area with high explosives and antipersonnel bombs. At 0810 twenty Focke-Wulf 190's and Messerschmitt log's dove out of the sun to attack Anzio and Nettuno. Bombs landing near VI Corps headquarters at Nettuno blew up three ammunition trucks, destroyed a number of buildings, and caused heavy casualties. At 1135 fifteen Focke-Wulf 190's and Messerschmitt log's bombed and strafed the harbor area. An LCI and an LCT were damaged, thirty men were killed, and forty were wounded. At 1525 the enemy fighter-bombers were over again. One plane, under attack by a British Spitfire, jettisoned its load of antipersonnel bombs in an effort to gain altitude. The bombs fell in the area of the 95th Evacuation Hospital, riddling the administration and operating tents. Chief Nurse 1st Lt. Blanche F. Sigman and two other nurses were standing by the bedside of a patient to whom they had just given blood plasma. All three were killed. A litter bearer carrying a patient into an operating tent sacrificed his life when he shielded the wounded soldier with his own body. In all, twenty-eight hospital personnel and patients were killed and sixty-four wounded, including the commanding officer. X-ray and surgical equipment was damaged. Medical installations continued to be bombed and shelled throughout the period of the beachhead; the hospital area came to be known to front-line troops as "Hell's Half Acre." It is doubtful, aside from the sinking of the hospital ship H.M.S. *David* on 24 January, that the enemy deliberately bombed or shelled medical installations. It was impossible to locate the hospitals in areas completely apart from military installations, and they were never more than six to eight miles from the front lines. During the rainy winter season, also, the ground was too wet to permit the tents to be dug in deeply. There were no safe areas at Anzio. Nurses and quartermaster depot men, as well as the men in the front lines, were subject to shelling and bombing. Nevertheless, the enemy paid dearly for the air attacks. On 7 February antiaircraft guns accounted for 7 planes destroyed, 6 probables, and 9 damaged; defending fighters destroyed 17 with 12 probables.

The Factory and Carroceto

The swift and thorough measures of VI Corps to prepare a strongly organized and coordinated system of defenses were based on the certain knowledge that the enemy would resume the offensive as soon as he had grouped his forces. On the night of 6 February orders were sent out to all front-line units to be alert for a possible attack the

next morning. Intelligence sources in Rome had reported that the enemy was planning a major

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attack to be launched at 0400, 7 February. It was anticipated that the attack would be directed against the 3d Division, and General Clark arranged for strong air support to be ready on call, with strategic bombers prepared to attack Cisterna and Velletri. The expected offensive failed to develop at the reported time. just before midnight on 6 February the enemy laid down a concentration of 800 rounds of medium artillery fire on the positions of the 2d Battalion, 157th Infantry, along the Moletta River line. At 2400 an enemy force of approximately one company launched an attack. By 0110 the enemy had been thrown back with heavy losses, and there was no further action during the night. Indications of the impending offensive, however, continued to accumulate during 7 February. There was an increase in artillery fire on the 1 Division front, the Factory (Aprilia) area was bombed and strafed, and prisoners were picked up who had deserted to avoid participation in the attack. The evidence pointed to a resumption of the enemy's drive in the British sector with the Factory area as the first objective. ([Map No. 11.](#))

Capture of the Factory was the next logical move if the enemy planned to make his all-out effort along the axis of the Albano road. The Factory itself, before it was leveled by weeks of bombing and shelling, was a compact, geometrically laid out cluster of three- and four-story brick buildings designed in 1936 to be a model for Fascist

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farm settlements. Located on a slight rise of ground, it stood like a fortress dominating the surrounding countryside. The hamlet of Carroceto, located 500 yards to the southwest of the Factory and just north of the overpass which crosses the Albano road and the parallel railway, was an equally important objective. Possession of the Factory and Carroceto would offer the enemy strong defensive positions as well as assembly areas from which to launch further attacks, for they were the focal points of a network of roads leading south and southeast. As the wet boggy ground of the beachhead made employment of tanks off the roads virtually impossible, control of the road network was of great tactical value to the attacker. Once the enemy had won the Factory and Carroceto, he would be in position to strike at several different points along the final beachhead line of defense.

To protect the Factory area the 1 Division had three brigades in the forward line. West of the Albano road the 24 Guards Brigade held Buonriposo Ridge with the 2 North Staffs, the 5 Grenadier Guards, and the 1 Scots Guards. The center was held by the 168 Brigade with the 3d Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry, astride the Albano road and the 1 London Irish Rifles and the 10 Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment, along the lateral road leading east from the Factory. The 2 Brigade held the right flank with a squadron of the 1 Reece Regiment and the 1 Loyals. Division reserve consisted of the whole of the 3 Brigade. After the losses sustained in the fighting at Campoleone the 1 Division was

considerably below strength, and the troops, fighting in rain, mud, and near-freezing weather, had had little rest since D Day.



The enemy plan of attack called for a simultaneous assault on the night of 7-8 February by the *65th Infantry Division* from the west, and by *Combat Group Graeser* from the east, converging on Carroceto and the Factory. The attack started at 2100, 7 February, with heavy artillery concentrations on both flanks of the 1 Division front. At 2115 the 3d Battalion, 157th Infantry, which was in contact with the 24 Guards Brigade along Buonriposo Ridge, reported its tight flank under attack. The brunt of the blow, however, was borne by the adjoining 2 North Staffs. Infiltrating rapidly and in small groups, the *145th Infantry Regiment (65th Infantry Division)* crossed the Moletta River and fought its way east toward the Albano road. Before midnight the attack had spread along the whole front of the 24 Guards Brigade. With the advantage of a dark night and the numerous deep gullies which cut up the rough country west of the Albano road, the *65th Infantry Division* pushed deep into the positions of the British troops. The fighting along Buonriposo Ridge resolved itself into a series of confused hand-to-hand encounters as the strong points of the 2 North Staffs were isolated and overrun. In the early morning hours the 3d Battalion, 157th Infantry, discovered enemy tanks and infantry operating to its rear. At 0400 seventy men, all that was left of the company of the 2 North Staffs to its right, requested permission to attach themselves to the 3d Battalion; the British troops had used up all their ammunition and had to abandon their 'automatic weapons. In order to protect its right flank the 3d Battalion was ordered to withdraw to the stream line south of the ridge, and a company of the 179th Infantry was sent up to support it. By 0130 the reserve company of the 5 Grenadier Guards to the southwest of Carroceto was under pressure from German units attacking northeast along the Buonriposo Ridge line from the former positions of the 2 North Staffs, and the forward companies of the 5 Grenadier Guards and the 1 Scots Guards were under constant pressure from the north and west.



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Small enemy units penetrated all the way to the main road before being wiped out. Fighting continued all morning as the *65th Infantry Division*, having achieved its first objective of seizing Buonriposo Ridge, sought to continue its advance toward Carroceto and the Factory.

The attack of *Combat Group Graeser* on the British right flank started more slowly. Shortly after 2200, 7 February, two companies attacked C Squadron, 1 Recce Regiment, and the right flank company of the 10 Royal Berks near the crossroads where the lateral road from the Factory meets the road to Carano. This force appeared to be covering a mine-lifting party. An hour later it had withdrawn under cover of a mortar barrage. By midnight both forward companies of the 1 London Irish were under pressure, and one platoon was overrun. The attack, launched by the *29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (3d Panzer Grenadier Division)* followed the same tactics of rapid infiltration which were proving so successful on the west flank. Small groups armed with machine pistols and light machine guns would infiltrate behind the forward British units, cut communications, and organize

small pockets of resistance deep within the lines. After the defending troops had exhausted their ammunition firing on an enemy who appeared to be striking from all directions, the main enemy force would overrun the position. The *29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment* had only limited success with these tactics. This regiment had advanced too slowly, and accordingly all three battalions of the *725th Infantry Regiment (715th Infantry Division)* had to be committed. This attack also failed to make more than slight gains. One small group of the enemy got as far as the rear of the Factory, where the 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion had three tank destroyers. 1st Lt. Bernard T. Schaefer, moving his destroyer into position to fire on a house occupied by the enemy, killed forty with his .50-caliber machine gun while he blasted the building with his 3-inch gun. The remainder of the enemy force—thirty in all—surrendered. Other groups were held at the lateral road. A company of the 1 London Scottish was sent up to plug a gap between the 1 London Irish and the 10 Royal Berks, and a local counterattack supported by three tanks drove back the enemy unit which had captured a bridge on the lateral road just to the east of the Factory. The only important success won by *Combat Group Graeser* was on the right flank near the crossroads. Attacking at dawn on 8 February, a battalion of the *104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment* overran C Squadron, 1 Recce Regiment, and a platoon of the 6 Gordons which was supporting it. The Germans then dug in with two companies on each side of the road between the positions of the 10 Royal Berks and the 1 Loyals. Employing small groups of tanks in support of the infantry, the enemy kept up the pressure on the 168 Brigade all day without succeeding in gaining control of the important lateral road.

General Penney decided to deal first with the critical situation on the left flank. Orders were issued to the 3d Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry, to move south of Carroceto where it could be employed as a counterattack force to support the 24 Guards Brigade. Its former positions north of the overpass were filled by the 1 Scots Guards. At 1400 General Penney committed his divisional reserve, the 3 Brigade, to regain the positions of the 2 North Staffs along Buonriposo Ridge. The 3 Brigade employed two battalions, the 2 Foresters and the 1 KSLI attacking abreast with armored support by a squadron of the 46 Royal Tanks and a platoon of Company C, 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The 2 Foresters made good progress in clearing the lower end of the ridge; the 1 KSLI was held up on the upper end by machine-gun fire. The Germans had dug in well, and both battalions suffered heavy casualties during the attack. In the meantime Lt. Col. Leslie G. Freeman, commander of the 3d Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry, was moving his battalion to positions south of Carroceto. The paratroopers of Company H were committed that night to assist the 5 Grenadier Guards west of the overpass. Although the counterattacks succeeded in retaking only a portion of the lost ground, they served to bolster the hard-pressed 24 Guards Brigade.

The enemy devoted the remainder of the afternoon to digging in and consolidating his positions along Buonriposo Ridge, while the 1 Division reorganized its forces. After the counterattack launched by the 3 Brigade, the 1 KSLI and the 2 Foresters were left in position to strengthen the left flank. On the right the 6 Gordons was moved up from 2

Brigade reserve to help fill the gap between the 10 Royal Berks and the 1 Loyals. To strengthen the 6 Gordons, which had been reduced to two companies during the battle for the Campoleone salient, the 238 Field Company, Royal Engineers, and a company made up from 3 Beach Group personnel were added. The commitment of the 6 Gordons was balanced by moving the 1st Battalion, 180th Infantry, to previously prepared positions near Padiglione where it could be employed either as a reserve or counterattack force. Of the 2 North Staffs only 17 officers and 364 men were left at the end of the day. These were reorganized by their commanding officer into a rifle company. The 1 Division had been seriously weakened, but it had succeeded in checking the enemy's initial assault.

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Ground action on the remainder of the VI Corps front was confined to small-scale company actions and patrolling. On the night of 7-8 February Company E, 15th Infantry, attacked north up the road paralleling Femminamorta Creek with the objective of capturing the farm east of Ponta Rotto; Company F, 30th Infantry, attacked from the west to secure the road junction just beyond Ponta Rotto bridge. Both attacks achieved limited results. At 2100 enemy tanks and infantry pushed down the road from Cisterna toward Isola Bella. Tank fire collapsed some buildings in which Company G, 15th Infantry, had organized positions. After losing some ground Company G fought its way back before daylight. A second company-strength attack, supported by tanks, struck Company G, 30th Infantry. It was beaten back.

On 8 February, while heavy fighting was in progress on the 1 Division front, only one attack, a raid aimed at the village of Carano, struck the 3d Division. In beating off the attack the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion captured ten prisoners and killed twenty-five of the enemy, most of whom were from the *114th Light Division*.

Activity on the right flank of the beachhead was carried on by the 1st Special Service Force under Brig. Gen. Robert T. Frederick. On the night of 2-3 February, when the unit took over the right

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flank of the beachhead, the enemy outpost line was along the Mussolini Canal. After a week of aggressive patrolling, the enemy had been forced back 1,500 yards, leaving a broad no man's land between the opposing forces. During the day this area appeared to be a peaceful expanse of level farmland; at night the 1st Special Service Force kept it alive with hard-hitting patrols which gave the enemy no rest. Although the right flank of the beachhead with its soft ground and numerous drainage ditches was not favorable terrain for a major attack, the 1st Special Service Force never permitted it to remain a quiet sector of the front. During the night of 8-9 February the 2d Company, 2d Regiment, staged a successful raid on the village of Sessano. The German company which was holding Sessano was almost annihilated. After taking 7 prisoners, killing at least 40 of the enemy, and holding the village for 3 hours, the Special Service troops withdrew. Accurate artillery fire adjusted on a reserve company organizing for a counterattack cost

the enemy an additional 20 dead, and the rear guard of the assault company accounted for 20 more, The 2d Company itself suffered only 15 casualties.

During 8 February VI Corps artillery, in addition to supporting the fire of the 1 Division guns, executed a coordinated program of counterbattery

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fire on all known enemy gun positions on the west flank of the beachhead. In response to an emergency request, two British cruisers, the *Orion* and *Phoebe*, and one American cruiser, the *Brooklyn*, moved up from Naples to add the fires of their 5-inch and 6-inch guns. Good weather permitted accurate air spotting by the 111th Reconnaissance Squadron. Fighter-bombers of the XII Air Support Command and guns of the 68th Coast Artillery Regiment (Antiaircraft), the 1st Armored and 45th Divisions, and the 976th Field Artillery Battalion, all joined in blasting the enemy gun positions and assembly areas. Dive-bombers also gave close support to the ground troops. They dropped smoke bombs and high explosives and strafed enemy troops, while forty-eight B-25 mediums bombed Cisterna.

Following the same pattern of attack he had employed the previous day, the enemy renewed his efforts to take the Factory area during the early morning hours of 9 February. (Map No. 12.) Shortly after midnight, following a heavy concentration of mortar and artillery fire, enemy units began infiltrating at various points all along the 1 Division front. On the western flank, where the 5 Grenadier Guards and the 1 Scots Guards were protecting Carroceto, elements of the *65th Infantry Division* forced the 5 Grenadier Guards back to the railroad station and overpass. There they held. At the same time the enemy units dug in along Buonriposo Ridge drove south against the 1 KSLI and the 2 Foresters, pushing them back from their newly won positions to the stream line south of the ridge.

The main attack was launched by *Combat Group Graeser* against the 16S Brigade, covering the Factory and the lateral road to the east. For the attack Mai, Gen. Fritz H. Graeser threw in his remaining reserve, the *735th Infantry Regiment*, to reinforce the *725th Infantry Regiment* and the *29th* and *104th Panzer Grenadier Regiments*, which had been committed the previous day. During the night, small units penetrated at several points along the lateral road and in the Factory area. At daylight the major force, supported by a few tanks, drove through to capitalize on the gains made by the infiltrating groups. The fighting spread along the whole front of the 168 Brigade. To the east of the Factory, between the 1 London Irish and the 10 Royal Berks, elements of the *29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment* pushed south as much as 2,000 yards. Farther to the east the *104th Panzer Grenadier Regiment* overran the right flank company of the 10 Royal Berks, clearing the way for enemy tanks and self-propelled guns to use the lateral road, Exploiting these gains, the *735th Infantry Regiment* fought its way into the Factory. By early afternoon the enemy controlled both the lateral road and the Factory. He lost no time in bringing up antitank guns and consolidating his gains. On the left the bard-pressed 5 Grenadier Guards and the 1 Scots Guards, aided by a counterattack launched at

0630 by the 3d Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry, held stubbornly to their positions covering Carroceto.

To give the 1 Division support against the enemy Penetrations the 1st Armored Division employed two companies of medium and two companies of light tanks in counterattacks. At 0900, 9 February, General Harmon ordered Major Tuck to alert his 1st Battalion, 1st Armored Regiment, to attack Buonriposo Ridge with light tanks. Company A moved tip the Albano road to the first overpass, turned west on the lateral road which formed part of the final beachhead line of defense, and then swung north along a dirt road. Under artillery and antitank fire it made slow progress once it left the highway, and at the end of the morning it was only a mile north of the overpass. The tanks knocked out one Mark IV and assisted in breaking up the attack of an estimated battalion of infantry. At noon, Company B was ordered forward to attack the south side of the ridge. Following a dirt trail, it moved up to the stream line in the positions of the 1 KSLI and 2 Foresters. Here it encountered a hasty mine field, which caused the loss of two tanks; the company commander, 1st Lt. William W. Beckett, was wounded. The company attempted to get around the field and push on. As soon as the tanks left the road

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they sank into deep mud and five tanks became mired. Accurate antitank fire and intense smallarms fire forced the company to withdraw with a loss of seven tanks.

At noon the 3d Battalion, 1st Armored Regiment, was ordered to send one company of medium tanks up the Albano road to the Factory and a second company to the right of the Factory. Company H followed the main road to a point beyond the Factory where it was stopped by a mine field which the German engineers had laid across the road. The Factory itself was bristling with antitank guns. In the area of the 5 Grenadier Guards, Company H knocked out one tank and two antitank guns, and helped drive back two battalions of infantry; north of the Factory it destroyed two Mark IV tanks before withdrawing late in the afternoon. On the right, Company I followed the "bowling alley," a road leading northwest from Padiglione to the overpass below the Factory, and then turned north behind the 1 London Irish. Roadbound and under antitank-gun fire it was able to give the 1 London Irish only limited help in mopping up the enemy penetration east of the Factory.

Continuing the program of the previous day, VI Corps artillery on 9 February carried out another coordinated air, artillery, and naval counterbattery shoot on the left flank of the beachhead. The British destroyer *Loyal* while laying a smoke screen for the cruisers was hit and slightly damaged by a shell from a German shore battery. It had to be sent back to Naples for repairs. Trouble was also experienced in obtaining air observation. A wind of near-gale proportions held the P-51 observation planes on the ground and prevented all unloading from Liberty ships in the harbor. A cub plane from the 976th Field Artillery Battalion managed to get off the ground during the afternoon and so enabled the cruisers to do some observed firing. In the morning Fifth Army had requested that as much air support as possible be given to VI Corps. One hundred and four fighter-bombers, thirty-

six light bombers, and eighty-four medium bombers were sent up. Medium bombers, briefed to bomb supply dumps between Valmontone and Palestrina, switched to assembly areas around Campoleone with excellent results. A more extensive program was prepared for the next day.

Late in the afternoon on 9 February the fighting slackened. Both enemy and Allied units had suffered heavy losses; both sides were near the point of exhaustion. The enemy seized the opportunity to consolidate his positions while the 1 Division reorganized. To relieve some of the pressure on the seriously depleted British force, the 180th Infantry took over the positions of the 2 Brigade, which then passed into division reserve along the final beachhead line. This left the 1 Division three brigades with which to cover its reduced front. The 168 Brigade held the right flank east and south of the Factory, which was now firmly in enemy hands; the 24 Guards Brigade covered Carroceto, with the 1 Scots Guards still holding a narrow salient north of the village astride the railroad; and the 3 Brigade held the left sector along the ravine south of Buonriposo Ridge. The battered, tired troops worked feverishly through the night to wire in their positions and prepare for new attacks. General Brann, Army G-3, reported that the 1 Division was at not over 50 percent effective strength, and he concurred with General Lucas that another division was needed to hold the beachhead until main Fifth Army could break through the Gustav Line on the southern front.

By early afternoon on 9 February, after twelve hours of heavy fighting, *Combat Group Graeser* had achieved the German's main objective, the capture of the Factory. ([Map No. 13.](#)) The 1 Division still held Carroceto and the overpass. Taking advantage of the observation provided by the Factory buildings, the enemy directed fire all afternoon on the 1 Scots Guards, the 5 Grenadier Guards, and the 3d Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry. Shortly after midnight approximately fifteen enemy tanks emerged from the Factory and together with a battalion of infantry struck the 1 Scots Guards, Tank destroyers of Company B, 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and artillery fire broke up the armored attack and the infantry was driven off. At 0430, 10 February, the 5 Grenadier Guards and


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the paratroopers were under attack from three sides. With the help of a squadron of the 46 Royal Tank Regiment they held out. North of Carroceto the situation of the 1 Scots Guards gradually deteriorated during the bitter-cold, moonlit night. All contact was lost with the two forward companies, and the remainder of the battalion, in danger of being cut off, withdrew within the perimeter defense of the 5 Grenadier Guards protecting the overpass. Company B's tank destroyers, acting as a rearguard, covered the withdrawal with their .50-caliber machine guns. The "fighting tank busters," as the British troops called them, appeared to be all over the battlefield. In addition to their normal role, they operated as tanks, as mobile pillboxes, as assault artillery, and even as infantry. The British troops, fighting against odds, needed their support. At 0530 General Penney reported that his troops had been fighting all night, and that the division could not

continue to hold out without the support of a counterattack by fresh troops prepared to take over the major part of the 1 Division front.

Corps artillery and the Air Force gave all the aid they could Muster to support the hard-pressed division. At 0900 two enemy attacks forming near the Carroceto railway station were broken up by a concentration of 200 guns representing both division and Corps artillery, At the same time, wave after wave of heavy, medium, and light bombers dropped their bombs on assembly areas along the Albano road from Campoleone to Albano. All the available resources of the Strategic, Tactical, and Desert Air Forces and XII Air Support Command were allotted to VI Corps. Unfortunately a heavy overcast began developing at 0945 and an hour later further bombing was out of the question, Many of the medium and heavy bombers were forced to turn back without unloading their bombs.

The *65th Infantry Division*, attacking from the west, occupied Carroceto station during the morning of 10 February. An Allied counterattack during the day, supported by tanks, recaptured the station. But it was retaken in the evening by *Combat Group Graeser*, striking from the east.



With the capture of the Factory and Carroceto, the German *Fourteenth Army* had won its initial objectives after three days of bitter fighting. Each day the Germans were forced to throw in more and more of their reserves until they had committed the equivalent of over six full regiments. Their tactics of night infiltration had proved very successful; but during the daylight hours, when Allied artillery could fire on observed targets, their troops suffered disproportionately heavy losses. Air bombardment and naval gunfire also aided in disorganizing the enemy attacks. The Germans had to pause to consolidate their gains and bring up additional fresh troops before renewing their offensive.

Allied Counterattacks

The hard and protracted struggle to hold the Factory area had drained the fighting strength of the 1 Division. It was in no condition to launch a counterattack or even to hold the positions to which it had been forced back. On the afternoon of 10 February the 168 Brigade was estimated to be at less than one-third normal strength, and many other units were at no better than half-strength. In addition, the weather for the past three days had been cold, windy, and rainy. Fox holes dug in the wet, boggy ground quickly filled with water, and after a few days in the line troops suffered from trench foot and exposure. It was important for VI Corps not only to regain the Factory area but also to effect the relief of at least a major part of the 1 Division. The first step had been taken on the night of 9-10 February when the 180th Infantry under Col. Robert L. Dulaney took over the positions of the 2 Brigade on the right flank of the division. The next night the 179th Infantry under Col. Malcolm R. Kammerer relieved the 168 Brigade with the 3d Battalion and prepared to launch a counterattack on the morning of 11 February to retake the Factory with the 1st Battalion.

The commitment of two regiments of the 45th Division in the 1 Division sector resulted in a depletion of VI Corps reserves. To offset this loss the 36th Engineer Combat Regiment took over a por-

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tion of the Moletta River line, relieving all but one battalion of the 157th Infantry. Although the engineers had had no experience as infantry and were badly needed for construction of defenses and road maintenance, by holding a relatively quiet portion of the front they released infantry troops needed to bolster the critical central sector. In the succeeding weeks while the regiment continued to maintain the Moletta River line the engineers were to prove themselves able to handle machine guns and mortars as capably as they handled bulldozers and road graders.

The reliefs carried out by the 45th Division left the 1 Division holding less than half of its former front. It was then possible to move all of the 168 Brigade to a rear bivouac area for rest and reorganization. Responsibility for the newly defined division sector passed to the 3 Brigade, reinforced by the 3d Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, the 1 Irish Guards, and the 1 Recce Regiment, less one squadron. The new front extended from the positions of the 2 Foresters and the 1 KSLI south of Buonriposo Ridge to a point just east of the Albano road where the 1 DWR relieved

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the 1 Scots Guards and the 5 Grenadier Guards, which had been covering the overpass below Carroceto. Back along the final beachhead line the 2 Brigade was engaged in fortification. ([Map No. 14.](#))

For the counterattack to regain the Factory, Maj. Gen. William W. Eagles, commanding the 45th Division, committed the 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry, and two companies of the attached 191st Tank Battalion. One tank company was to attack through the overpass at Carroceto to strike the Factory from the west; the other company was to move up the north-south road just east of the Factory to strike it from the southeast. The infantry were to coordinate their advance with the tanks. On it February at 0630, following a 15-minute artillery concentration on the Factory, the tanks and infantry jumped off. Company A, 191st Tank Battalion, drove up the Albano road, The first tank to pass through the overpass was knocked out by a direct hit; a second tank blew up 200 yards farther along the road. At 0830, after shelling the southwest corner of the Factory, the tanks of Company A withdrew under a smoke screen. Company A, 179th Infantry, attacking behind the protective fire of the

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tanks, was held up by machine guns located in the Factory and along the road to the south of it. The tanks of Company B, supporting Company B, 179th Infantry, reached the road junction southeast of the Factory and poured shells into the buildings until forced to

withdraw for ammunition. One tank was left forward to direct the fire of the 27th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, which was supporting the attack. Company A sent six tanks up to the overpass at 1030 to continue the shelling. They were again driven back by accurate antitank fire. Nevertheless when American troops withdrew to reorganize at noon, tank and artillery fire had converted the enemy fortress into a mass of ruins.

At 1300 the tanks and infantry returned to the attack. The concentrated fire on the Factory was having an effect. Enemy tanks and self-propelled guns were forced to withdraw to the east along the lateral road and at least two Mark III's were knocked out. When the crews attempted to bait out, they were picked off by troops of the 3d Battalion, 179th Infantry, dug in south of the lateral road. Under cover of the smoke from the tanks and artillery fire, Company A, 179th Infantry, fought its way into the buildings on the southeast corner. The enemy reacted swiftly. Swarming up from the deep basement below the Factory where they found protection from artillery shells and tank fire, the enemy troops engaged Company A in bitter closein fighting. Outnumbered and scattered among the buildings, Company A became disorganized and was forced to withdraw. Company B, attacking from the southeast, also reached the Factory only to be driven back at 1630 by an enemy counterattack supported by artillery fire and tanks which moved down the lateral road. The tanks of Company B, 191st Tank Battalion, had already been forced to return for more ammunition. Before dark both infantry and tanks had been withdrawn for reorganization. The enemy still held the Factory.

During the fighting the 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry, captured thirty-three prisoners from the *10th* and *12th Companies, 725th Infantry Regiment*, from whom it was learned that only an intercepted radio message had saved the Germans from being caught completely by surprise. The enemy troops were alerted at 0430 and the *1st Company* was moved up immediately to strengthen them. After the attack started, the concentrated effect of tanks firing from the flanks and the artillery shelling caused heavy casualties to enemy units already depleted by the fighting with the 1 Division. One company was reduced to seventeen men. The counterattack of the 191st Tank Battalion and the 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry, had come close to retaking the Factory.

At 0200 on 12 February, Lt. Col. Wayne L. Johnson, commanding the 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry, again sent his men forward in an effort to storm the Factory. Company B attacked from the south, Company C from the southwest, and Company I paralleled the advance farther to the east. Company C, 191st Tank Battalion, moved up as far as the road junction southwest of the Factory. There it was stopped by a hasty mine field which the enemy had laid during the night. One tank was immobilized. The others found what cover they could behind farm buildings and supported the infantry by shelling the Factory and directing artillery fire. By 0430 both Companies B and C had fought their way into the Factory. Two hours later an enemy counterattack again forced the 1st Battalion to draw back. The enemy made no attempt to follow up the counterattack and the 1st Battalion was-able to organize a line approximately 500 yards south of the Factory. During the day Company C, 191st Tank Battalion, was withdrawn. In the two days of fighting the battalion had lost eight tanks totally destroyed and several damaged.

Company A, 179th Infantry, had been reduced to three officers and forty enlisted men. It appeared that a major effort would be required to retake the Factory.

To back up the ground operations of 11-12 February, the Allied Air Force had agreed to furnish the heaviest program of air support ever allotted to a corps up to that date. Six groups of heavy and six groups of medium bombers were briefed to strike close support targets at the beachhead. Bad weather nullified or curtailed some of the program. Of the planned sorties, 34 B-17 Fortresses dropped

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100 tons and 19 B-24 Liberators dropped 45 tons of bombs on Campoleone Station and farther up the Albano road on the railroad crossing at Cecchina. A group of medium bombers also struck Campoleone and Cecchina, but most of the heavy and medium bombers were forced to return without completing their missions. Dive bombers and P-40's attempted to locate the long-range railroad guns and gave close support to the ground troops. Although the program had not been fully carried out, VI Corps reported excellent results. In the afternoon of 12 February three Germans of the *145th Infantry Regiment* surrendered to the 1 DWR. They reported that they could not stand the bombing. That night the 1 DWR and the 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry, were pulled back a few hundred yards to permit the bombing of Carroceto. At 1525 and 1530 on the afternoon of 13 February two waves of dive bombers struck the village. Clear weather permitted accurate bombing, and ground observers reported good results. The infantry then moved back to their former positions.

The failure of the second attempt by the 45th Division to retake the Factory on 12 February marked the end of the first phase of the battle to hold the beachhead. The enemy had achieved his initial objectives of wiping out the Campoleone salient and securing the Factory and Carroceto. Although the Germans had won the first round, VI Corps was far from beaten. The attempt to trap the 3 Brigade in the Campoleone salient had failed, and the battle for the Factory and Carroceto had developed into a costly and exhausting struggle lasting five days. While the enemy consolidated his gains and rushed fresh troops to the beachhead to replace his heavy casualties, he was losing valuable time. On the evening of 12 February the 6 Gordons relieved the exhausted 1 Irish Guards, thereby strengthening the 3 Brigade line below Buonriposo Ridge, and the 1 DWR was tied in with the 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry. With the fresh troops of the 45th Division in line, VI Corps was able to stabilize its beachhead defenses and prepare for the next blow. If the enemy had won the first round, he had not yet won the battle.

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