

### Chapter 3: Italy 1944

We landed at Naples and went forward to our designated area, where we would pick up our equipment, put it in shape, and move right to the front. However, when we arrived there by ship, as I have said before, transportation was at a minimum, as all of our transportation was in an area called the staging area of Pazzoulli, just north of Naples. The lack of transportation was, in our case, desperate, for me and for my staff. We had to get out to Pazzoulli; we had to get our units arranged so we could move forward and pick up all the mortar equipment, our tanks, self-propelled artillery, and so forth, and we had to have a jeep. On the way out of the ship I said to McGarry, "We had better see the military police and borrow a jeep."



*Hodge somehow managed to get an issue of M7 Priest self-propelled 105mm guns for his squadron's assault gun troop. All other cavalry squadrons were equipped with the much less powerful M8 75mm Gun Motor Carriage. This one is pictured in France.*

The first military policeman we asked—the first military policeman that we saw—we asked where the military police headquarters, American-type, was situated. He pointed it out to us,

and as he was a roving patrol, he took us up to military police headquarters. I walked in—it was an old police station—and I asked who was in command.

The response from the sergeant at the desk was, "It is Captain Lum."

I said, "Captain Lum? Is he a tall, strong-type of disciplinarian with a big voice?"

They said, "Yes, Sir."

I said, "What's his first name?"

They said, "Pres."

I smiled and said to the sergeant, "Well, where is he?" He said, "Sir, he's upstairs asleep. It's been rough days around here, and he's grabbing a few winks."

This was about 10:00 at night. I said, "We want to see him. He's an old friend of mine; in fact, we served in the same unit."

He said, "Nobody dares to wake him."

I said, "I'll wake him; just leave it to me."

So McGarry and I walked up to a bedroom on the second floor of the police station, and we opened the door and looked in. And here was Pres Lum, a very large and muscular man—not fat—sleeping in a pair of shorts. I thought we'd have a little fun with him.

I said, "Lum, get up!" You never saw a man stand so erect in bed in your life. And Pres got up, stood strictly at attention, almost still asleep, and then he looked over at me and he said, "Charlie. You wouldn't."

I said, "We would."

So it was a great meeting. I need not say, that beginning after ten minutes there we had sufficient transportation to get our units organized.

That laugh we had at the military police headquarters was the last one we had for a long, long while. We organized the unit with their proper equipment, drew more as we could draw it, packed ourselves with ammunition and were attached to the II Corps of the 5th Army, the army being the American Army in Italy, Two Corp being an important tactical unit in Italy. General Jeffrey Keys was the commanding general of Two Corps, and a fine leader. He welcomed us, and said, "Colonel Hodge, we have heard of your unit. We like them, we can use them, and there is hard fighting ahead. Your first mission is going to be to take a few towns on the way to Terrachina [as pronounced, actually Terracina]."

### The Move Toward Rome

Terrachina is on the west coast of Italy, northwest of Naples. It is the gateway to what was the great waste marshland, bounded by the beginning of the Apennines to the east end by the sea to the west, with the northwestern part indicated by the towns of Anzio, Latina and Nettuno. Part of our mission was to aid in the breakthrough of the formidable military obstacle, Terrachina. When that was accomplished, we were to pursue the Germans through the Pontine marshes, attempt to secure the railroad which ran from Terrachina through the

gorge, and then to move northward along the foothills of the Apennines to the east and the north.

Terrachina was broken through and secured, but in order to continue the operation through the Pontine Marshes, which had been flooded by the Germans, the Two Corps had provided us with amphibious jeeps and six-by-six trucks, which we used to great advantage. As a matter of fact, that amphibious jeep is one I would love to have around the seashore.

We moved out with our equipment, a lot of it amphibious, with part of us moving through the various reclaimed lands toward Anzio, and some moving toward Velletri. We made it with not too much difficulty through the marshes and contacted Anzio. The Allied forces at Anzio had broken out in a very successful but severe attack south of Rome to the area of Velletri. We joined them at that point and waited for the next move. Obviously, the move out of Anzio had, as its first objective, the taking of Rome to provide elbow room for all the forces moving up-north in that area—that is, the forces of the Allies.

One of the units serving in Anzio was a force called the Special Service Forces, which was a unit of brigade strength, made up of extremely well trained and specially selected soldiers. These soldiers had been trained as commandos, as airborne and paratroopers, and had received very intensive training in night fighting with raw blades. The composition of the Special Service forces was about one-third American, one-third Canadian and one-third Norwegian; this force was commanded by a very brave man by the name of General Fredricks.

Upon my arrival at Anzio, a message awaited me, saying that I was to report to General Fredricks immediately and that he, by the time I got there, would be at a little town called Artena. Naturally, I was off immediately for Artena after I arranged to have my unit reconsolidated and moved toward Velletri.

Artena was a mountain—not extremely large, but it must have been about seven hundred feet in altitude—and the town was on the summit. The main structure in the town was a very old castle, built of great stones, and which at some walls were four to five feet thick. The castle overlooked a valley through which one would have to pass in order to move to Rome from the south. To reach Artena, one had to take a road which gradually wound around the mountain and eventually got to the top. This was as quite a hot spot because there were battalions of German tanks in the valley immediately ahead of us, and they really were using their heavy fire power to interdict any passageway to the top. As a matter of fact, it was one of the unusual incidences of the way for military tactics, in that the German aircraft, instead of having to dive upon the roads leading to Artena, could come straight in at level, at about four or five

hundred feet, and then would have a direct horizontal field of fire.

It was a lot different than having an airplane diving on one. Since my trip to Ardena was at night, I can tell you that the flares were dropping all over the place, and I felt absolutely naked as the airplanes would come in at level, making it quite uncomfortable to travel that road. We made it to the top, but I'm sorry to say that many of the vehicles and equipment which were on the way to Ardena did not.

I arrived at the castle; it was a very large one and served as the headquarters of General Fredricks. I don't know how many men were there, but it was crowded, as any place with the protection of the stone would be crowded. The air in the castle was awful, but when I reported to General Fredricks, he was as sanguine and cool as if he just had come off a golf course.

He said, "Hodge, we're glad to have you. We have a difficult mission to perform. Where is your unit?"

I responded to General Fredricks by saying, "Well, the unit is on its way moving to Ardena, but I think that it is impossible to get that much armor up these roads. I have instructed Col. Samsel to put all the units behind the mountain because the German Air Force is too active to concentrate them in any one place. The southwest sides of the hills provide much more protection."

He said, "That's fine. Come on, let me show you what we are going to do. And I think you haven't had any sleep for a couple of days."

"That's right. I haven't."

"Why don't you sleep here?"

"I'd be glad to."

But he said, "Here is what's happened. The British coming up from the south, just south of us, have been stalled at a town called Ferrentino. We have a schedule for the taking of Rome, which is going to be in two days, but before that, you have been assigned to us to take Ferrentino, which we are going to do tomorrow morning."

I said, "Yes, Sir."

Up to that point, I had thought we were going to have a glory ride into Rome, but now I found that we were going to go about fifteen or twenty miles and bail the British out so they could go into Rome with the Americans. This is how political incentives come into play. Politically, it would not have been sound to have had the American forces move into Rome without the British at their side, so I have no criticism of it. I merely recite the facts as I understood them.

We held a meeting at General Fredricks' headquarters and laid out the plans for a daylight move to Ferrentino. The Special Service Forces had not much equipment left, having come from Anzio, where they were not too mobile. General Fredricks, "How are we going to handle this?"

He said, "Here is what we're going to do. I am going to move the Special Service Forces along side of your armor, and I am just going to tell them to mount up on your tanks, half tracks, and armored cars. You're going to be in command of the taking of Ferrentino as long as we are mounted. We are going to move in fast--no hesitation. When we are moving into the town, for the street fighting and for the cleaning up of the town inside, then Col. Walker will take over."

These were simple plans, well thought out, and, in my opinion, the correct responsibility was handed out. At daylight, the Special Service Forces were on hand, and they all mounted like a bunch of gypsies on our equipment. We took off for Ferrentino with orders not to stop until we got to the town.

We did, and as we hit the outskirts of town, off of our vehicles went the Special Service Forces, and disappeared in all directions, certainly with planned objectives in town. In the meantime, we had ringed the town with very heavy fire, and, as a matter of fact, took relatively few casualties. However, much to my surprise, on our right, appeared small groups of soldiers who obviously were Moroccan. They were the same troops who had come over with us on the British transport from Oran: in other words, Les Goumiers, the Goums. They had come down from the western part of Ferrentino, and in effect had out-flanked the Germans and were moving up behind us. They were always nice to see, especially when they were friends, so they now joined us.

In the meantime, General Fredricks was right with us, and he said, "Come on, Charles, we're going to town."

And I said, "Yes, Sir."

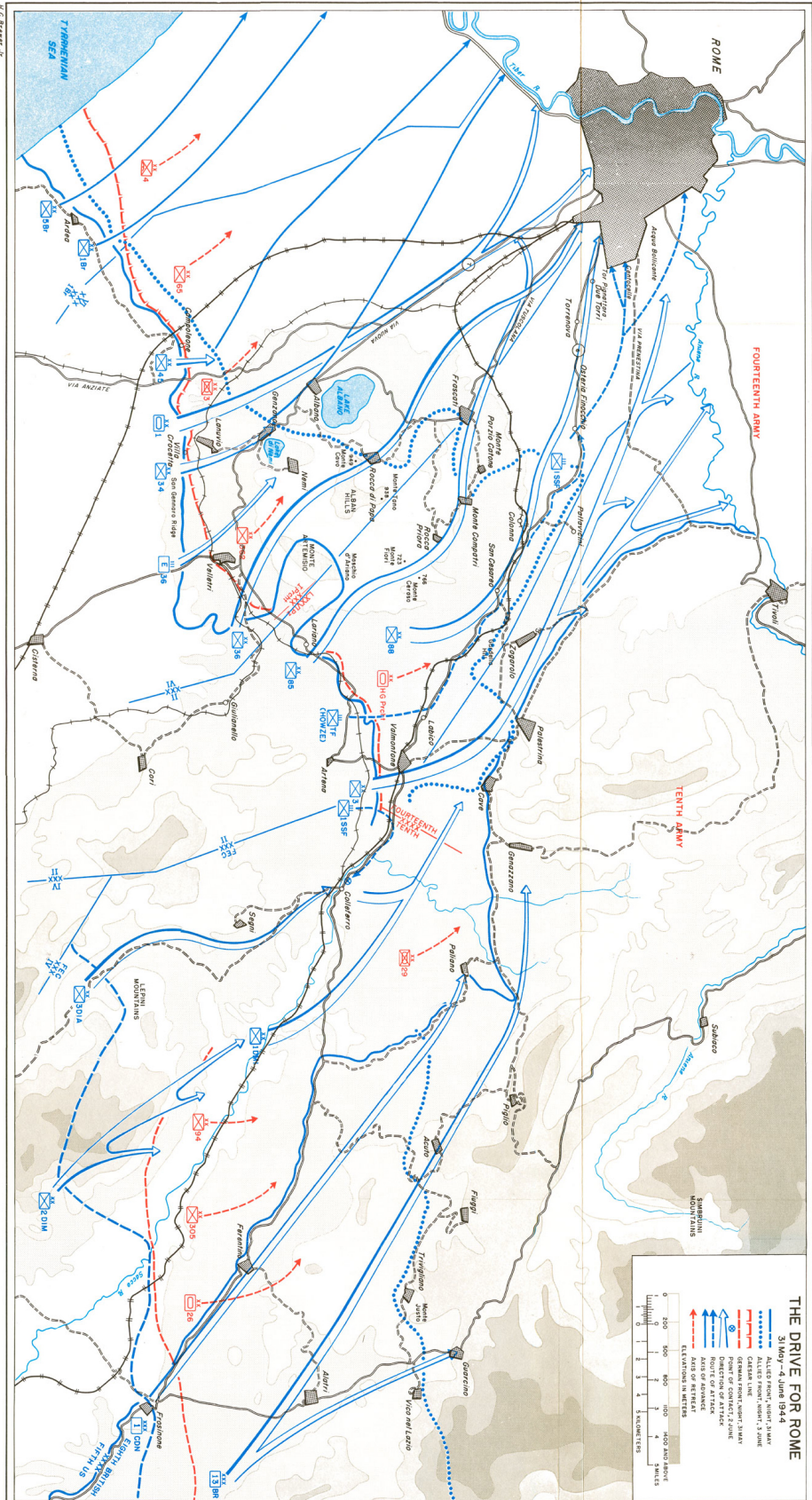
By golly, we. . . [text mostly illegible. Fredricks leads the way with no apparent concern to city hall on foot, despite Germans snipers firing from trees, buildings, and the church steeple. It was probably half a mile, but it seemed like 5,000 miles to Hodge, who is unwilling to say he is scared. The goums fought through on side of town, while the Special Service Force took the other, with the armored cars working between them.] Within an hour and a half, the town was taken. . . .

I thought that General Fredrick's [illegible] bravest that, personally, I saw during my experience in the war.

The town was secured. . . and the various units broke up as the British finally had [arrived?] from the south and were reorganizing in Ferrentino. . . . We started north toward Rome to our. . . rendezvous, and we stopped at our designated [destination?] to collect the units and get them together, refueling and [seeing to?] the injured. I will always remember, it was [illegible], and the German Air Force was out in strength [illegible]. . . . Rome was an open city, but the

armor [illegible] fought for, principally a delaying action [by the?] Germans. But they had to have time to reorganize, and they were fighting all around Rome, but not in it. And so we found this out as we approached Rome.





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We arrived at our designated assembly area around 2:00 a.m., on June 3. Believe it or not, and this is one of the strongest coincidences that can happen in a war, everybody was intensely fatigued from lack of sleep. While we had the necessary out-guards and protections, at night even though you send patrols out, they sometimes do not come up with all the facts. Well, the facts as they turned out to be evident the following morning at daybreak, when we found we were assembled within one thousand yards of a German force that was fighting a delaying action and whose obvious move was to go around Rome to the east, up until the confrontation came at daylight. There was quite a skirmish and battle in which we managed to take care of ourselves pretty well. However, it was a little bit of a delaying action that kept us from joining the parade into Rome, which we soon corrected.

#### To Rome and North

We were given the mission as more or less an advance guard moving on the main artery into Rome from the south<sub>a</sub> and there are several things I would like to relate.

From that point on, there was no fighting until we had moved through Rome and continued our pursuit of the Germans to the north. However, we had received the mission of pursuing the Germans, going through Rome—not hesitating, nor garrisoning it—but continuing the pursuit as rapidly as we could. We moved into Rome on June 4, 1944, and I shall never forget a rather sad scene, one I wish I could have had a picture of. As we moved into Rome proper, I saw a little Italian boy standing on the bodies of two German soldiers who had fallen, one first, then the second one on top of the first. The little boy was standing on top of the second soldier, waving an American and an Italian flag. This is not a propaganda story, but it was quite a moving story, and that was my first real feeling that we were going into Rome.

As we moved into Rome, into the more populated area, there must have been a million people just delirious with joy and welcome. You can be sure, however, that there were a good many German sympathizers, and perhaps German agents, left behind. The forward elements were the tanks of our force. They moved in with their turrets open. Bouquets were being thrown at the vehicles, and a tremendous welcome was being given by the population. I was riding in a half-track, and all-of-a-sudden, I saw the lead tank close down its turret top, and then I saw the second tank close down the turret top.

I said to the radio operator in my half-track, "What goes on?"



I got the message back: "We have closed the turret tops because we are getting too many bouquets, and we never know what is inside of one of them."



*Civilians greet troopers.*

A hand grenade or a little hand-thrown bomb landing inside a tank can make it very uncomfortable indeed. This was the reason the turrets were closed. I can tell you, when that message went over the air, every tank turret was closed, until we really had secured the town as far as our group went. We didn't open them again until we were quite sure there were no hand grenades being thrown at us.

I don't mean at this point to be too worldly, but I must say that all of the soldiers, having been fighting for weeks, suddenly to be thrust into the splendor of Rome and its beauty—but only that, to see the beautiful young Italian girls, riding around on bicycles with silk dresses on—did more to hesitate our force than did the Germans on the outskirts of Rome. For myself, it was quite a sight, and I thought maybe it was a good thing that we didn't get the job of pertly garrisoning Rome. The type of beauty and life in an open city had been foreign, not only to our unit, but also to all the units who were fighting beside them, especially those people out of Anzio, war; a sight for "sore eyes." Actually, the Third Division, which was a great

division, received the pleasant mission of being the garrison of Rome, under that wonderful man, Major-General (Iron Mike) O'Daniels.

We passed over the Tiber River, moving north out of Rome, where we stopped on the outskirts of the city to establish our headquarters and radio communications with higher headquarters, and to provide a proper radio network for the units moving forward. Referring to a story which I related earlier, that is where a young student priest accosted, me and asked me where "Col. Hodge" was.

If you remember, I responded by saying, "I am Col. Hodge." He said, "Monseignor Carrol says you're two days late, and he has coffee and donuts ready for you right down the street.

On the morning of June 6, when we were approximately fifteen miles north of Rome, having reinitiated our pursuit of the Germans, news of a fascinating sort came over the radio. Any soldier would think—and does think in times of war—that they are fighting the entire war, and that nobody's out to help them. As Ernie Pyle used to put it, "their own little war"—it was theirs. That was their life, not the big strategy, but just what they were doing in the confines of their smaller areas of combat. When the news broke out that the Invasion of Normandy had started, really nobody believed it. Your mind works to a point where you are convinced that all of you in the force—such as the Sixth Corps and Fifth Army and the smaller units—were to fight the whole war, and that you would have to go through the Alps; and that a Law of Averages would start to work pretty heavily. So we had just about given up that anybody was going to help us, such as the largest armada in world history. I tell you, I have seen strong men falter, but this morning they were weeping with thanks and with the radio knowledge that the invasion of Europe had commenced from England into Normandy.

There were a lot of prayers of thanks there that morning. Without exaggeration, it was hard to believe and harder still to gain the full realization of this tremendous undertaking over the English Channel into France. Still of this age and thinking over the past years, it is impossible to realize the feeling of those soldiers fighting in Italy, most of whom had fought in North Africa and Sicily, to feel that the big push really had started, and maybe, just maybe, they would get home, instead of being buried in Europe.

#### Notes on Combat North of Rome

In reminiscing on the move and fighting from Naples through Terrachina; helping to ease the breakout at Anzio;

going through Velletri, Artenha, Ferrentino and into and through Rome; I am going to take a few moments to relate a few incidences which are worthy of note.

I have not mentioned a man who attached himself to me in Ft. Jackson, prior to our moving to the embarkation port in England. His name was James Ungaro—I call him Jimmy because we all loved him—and he was a very fine young Italian boy. Jimmy got my rapid attention when, in the early morning fogs of England in October and parts of November, 1942, he suddenly appeared at my quarters and said, "Colonel, I am your driver now. We don't need any other driver."

I responded to Jimmy by saying, "Can you drive a jeep?" Jimmy said, "I am learning right now."

From that time on, he was my driver by his own assignment, and he was a great help. There is no question in my opinion that he saved my life just south of Rome as we were assembling at our point of rendezvous. I mentioned before that the German Air Force was very active, and I heard an airplane cut its motors. What this really meant was a silent glide to drop anti-personnel bombs.

I looked at Jimmy and said, "Did you hear that airplane cut out? It sounded close."

And he started to say something, and all-of-a-sudden he pushed me and himself, and we landed in a depression in the ground which was not a shell hole, but served as such. When an antipersonnel bomb was dropped, it is timed to explode about four or five feet off the ground and throws thousands of little pieces of shrapnel along the ground at level. It exploded very close to us, but the fragments passed over us because of the indentations of the ground. Thanks, James.

Regarding the surprise confrontation on the early morning of June 4, I am reminded of the surprise which attended our finding a German force there, but I honestly believe that the Germans were far more surprised than we were. Thank heavens for that! It allowed us to put the mortars into action prior to their commencement. Of course, they soon got around to it, but anyway, we had the first lick.

I don't want to indicate that we were the only troops fighting there, as our mission, as you can see from the map, was one of protecting the left flank; carrying on armed reconnaissance missions to the north in towns; and "developing the situation", as it is called militarily. And there were a series of small skirmishes, small battles, and when a major force was encountered, of course the heavier units such as the divisions came in and were most effective. I see no point in repeating town after town which was taken, because they fell into a pattern: however, there were some incidences which are not recorded in history—which really is the basis of these memoirs.

As for an example, we encountered the One Hundredth Infantry battalion for the first time, which was an independent

battalion all of whose personnel were Neisei. The Neisei were those Americans of Japanese descent, and quite naturally most of them were from the West Coast of the United States. They were truly an outstanding unit. As an example, I believe my memory is correct when I say there was never one AWOL in that battalion. We did not know too much of—or I should say, we had not heard too much-of—the One Hundredth battalion, but we received an order one night, saying that the One Hundredth battalion would be attached to us for operations around Regiglione. I can remember the incident just as if it was yesterday. We were in a draw—kind of a depression, but not a gully—but it certainly gave you substantial protection from artillery fire. (Not, however, from mortars,) It was my custom, and I believe it was the custom of most commanding officers, to be sure that one was with one's troops in the line at daybreak every morning. We were all sleeping just on the ground, and I awakened about 4:00 a.m. Of course, blackout discipline was exacting because the German forces were immediately ahead. As I started to stumble down this long draw, I started to stumble over bodies, and I really wondered what had happened. They hadn't been there when I went to sleep. Using the flashlight, which was covered by a blue filmy-type paper to prevent throwing a light which could be seen, I reached down and put the flashlight close to the face of one of these bodies. I got quite a shock, when not only the one I looked at but all of them all around there sound asleep were Japanese in American uniforms. For a moment I thought that I really had lost ray mind, and as I continued down this long draw, there were hundreds of them all sleeping with that cherubic smile they could get on their faces. I went on further down and found the major who was commending the battalion, and of course, he reported to me.

He said, "I didn't want to awaken you, but we're here; the One Hundredth battalion is now here in place."

I said to him, "Have you ever been in combat before?"

He said, "No, Sir, this is the first time."

I said, "How are your troops?"

"We're the best troops in the world. I'm sure you will find that they will hold up under combat."

At this point, it was about 7:00 a.m. The Germans had invented a whistling mechanism which they attached to their mortar shells. This attachment on a mortar shell was the most eerie, frightening thing, because when you heard it you knew there was a mortar coming over, and it got your attention immediately. It was only psychological, but it was a good one. We had captured some German mortar positions, and evidently some of the Neisei soldiers had found a box of "Nebelwerfers" which they were experimenting with. I remember I was talking with the major commanding the battalion and with some of my own officers around the jeep. All of a sudden, a series of Nebelwerfer screams came to our ears and obviously in close proximity to us. It was the first time in my life I ever saw five people get under a jeep at once, but no explosion came. Everybody looked around and gradually got up. What it turned out to be was a group of the Neisei soldiers had found this carton of Nebelwerfers and were

having fun with them by throwing them up in the air and admiring the noise. This may have been humorous to them, but for the personnel who had been in combat, it was no joke. It certainly was not meant by the Neisei to frighten us—just like children playing with a new toy. I must say, however, that that was the only time they ever did it, as they were cautioned rather directly by their own battalion commander. It is just an incident, but it shows you what can be described as prankish in combat.

I believe it was the same day, when we had patrols all around us of course, for protection and reconnaissance information. I looked back from our point of vantage up in the hills, and I saw through my field glasses, a long, long line of trucks moving toward us some miles back.

It was a very long line, and I got my S-2 and asked, "What troops are supposed to be moving up here? That is a very large unit."

And he said, "I don't know; they're not on schedule."

I said, "Get a patrol down there right away and find out who it is and what it is. They're highly exposed through that flat few miles, and while they're interspersed properly as far as distance between vehicles, it looks like they're on a routine march."

The S-2 immediately sent a patrol out, and in about a half-hour he came back shaking his head. He said, "You won't believe this, but it's an evacuation hospital moving up. It has all the medical attendants, a lot of nurses and they're happy as lambs."

I said, "Whet the hell are they doing there?"

He said, "Colonel, you won't believe it. They're lost. They took the wrong road."

And all I can say to my readers is that they were headed right for captivity, because immediately in front of us were the Germans. We convinced them rather rapidly, and they accepted it with thanks, to turn around. But it may have been the almighty hand of the Lord that kept them from being blown to bits by the German Air Force.

I cite this just to show you that cardinal errors can happen when people do not know what they're doing and do not send forward or have a guide to show them where they are going. The result of this was nothing serious, but it certainly was fortunate they hadn't gone another fifteen miles.

During the move from Rome to the area at Regiglione and Grosseto, somewhere along the line my providing orderly Jim Ungaro had commandeered a German ambulance that had been put out of business for a while. He had gotten the motor maintenance section to fix it up, and he had made it into a mobile headquarters for me, which was very helpful. The commanding general of the Fifth Army, General Clark, very properly had put out orders that the Italians had been hurt badly, meaning the civilians, and that there would be no careless stealing or

appropriating of equipment. In particular, an order was given that we were approaching the great furniture manufacturing area of Grosseto, and that we were not to "borrow" or to appropriate any of the great mahogany wood, as the Italians had been hurt enough.

At a staff meeting when we pushed this order out, my loveable Jimmy Ungaro came up to me with a sheepish grin and said, "Colonel, have you seen your new mobile headquarters?"

I said, "I've only seen it. I saw it back there in the back-ground, but I haven't been in it yet."

Then he said, "I have done something very bad."

I said, "What?"

He said, "Do you remember that mahogany factory we took?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "The inside of your new headquarters is now solid mahogany paneling, and I did it, and now I've heard about this order, and am I in trouble?"

I said, "Well, Jim, if you are in trouble, so am I. So let's just keep it, and maybe nature will take care of itself," which we did.

Our route of march which you can see from the strip map attached, and when I say route of march, I mean route of attack, included the capture of various towns which will be mentioned as part of the mission. Regiglione was one; Viterbo was an important point which we participated in, but there were larger forces to help; and Terkenia on the coast was another. This particular town I don't believe had one whole brick left in it as a result of the Allied bombardments of the coastline, the German Air Force bombardments, and our navy shelling the coastline towns from offshore. It was devastated. Orbetello was about the same position, while we had to take the town, there was far less hard fighting there in those towns than we expected. There was some, of course, but not enough to hold us to a static role, end incidentally, a "static role" is where you take casualties. When you are moving reasonably fast, your casualties are greatly reduced.

I am going to insert here an example of what battle intelligence can do and how dangerous it is if information falls into the hands of the enemy, especially if the information is of a tactical nature.

In our incident just south of Rome before we went into Rome, when we overran the headquarters of the German force, we had a man in the S-2 operation (that was the intelligence operation) whose mission was to seek out intelligence of the enemy. This man was named Rabinowitz. Rabinowitz was a linguist, a Jewish sergeant, and one who spoke German



fluently, Russian fluently, French and Italian fluently and, of course, English. In his search for battle information just south of Rome, he pulled out of a burning waste-paper basket, a good many papers which obviously had been marked for destruction. However, he saved some of the papers, and on one of the papers were orders from Marshall Kesselring, who was the Field Marshall in command of all German forces in Italy. This order directed all the regimental division commanders to meet with Kesselring, I believe, Regiglione.

Rabinowitz immediately reported to me that he had these papers and this information, and thought they were important enough to get right to higher headquarters. We did that; we sent him back to Two Corps headquarters. They thought it was highly important information, and they arranged to have it transported immediately to Fifth Army headquarters and from there to the Air Force. As it turned out, the Air Force pinpointed the area—or I should say pinpointed the group of building—in which this meeting was to be held and really plastered this particular area.

When we took the town, the civilian personnel there said the Field Marshall and his commanders had just left about an hour or two hours prior to the pinpointed attack of the Air Force on these buildings, and thereby got away safely. It must be obvious to the reader, that had this information been processed a little faster and then gone through the channels necessary a little faster, that the whole general staff in Italy could have been destroyed. This would have had a substantial effect on the remainder of the fighting in Italy. However, that's the way the cookie crumbles.

There are times in the middle of a combat movement that are difficult to understand, that is, it is difficult for the soldier who is attacking and has the mission of taking towns to understand some of the orders which come down from higher headquarters. An example of this, and I'm quite sure I have the right town, was Orbetello, which was an historical town. It supposedly had a great deal of splendid and renowned architecture in it. When one has to take a town, a commander normally uses whatever weapons and support he can gather, preferably by laying down very heavy artillery and bombardment in preparation for the attack; and also, a barrage into the town as the ground troops are moving in. This is the classic way, of taking a town.

However, where there are architectural splendors or art splendors such as in Orbetello, you normally would be asked to take care and damage as little of this property as possible, the reason of course being to preserve this for posterity. Once in awhile you will get an order not to use

artillery and bombardment, the reason for the order, again, being to preserve architectural art treasures for posterity. However, when one is face-to-face with saving treasure, and one is ordered to take it by ground attack, forgoing the very helpful artillery and air attacks, one met with a very serious quandary in his own mind. And it is very simple: are the ancient architectural designs and are the ancient pieces of art of such value that it may cost you two to four hundred lives to take a town? I am sure that most commanders would feel—that is, on a regimental or division level—that they are going to take the town with the least number of casualties of the men in their command, who have become part of their family. Is it, then, wrong not to adhere to the order of no artillery, or would you use the artillery to ease the taking of any point?

My own philosophy on this is that if the town has such architecture and such art treasures, then it should be negotiated, so that it would be declared an open town, such as Rome was. It should not be left to the commander on the ground, who has the mission of securing the town, to forgo the aid and, in this case, life-saving aids, of other capabilities. I, for one, am in that school, and feel that if a town has classic architecture or art from history, that it should be negotiated, thus obviating any requirement for destruction. I am sure that the higher command thinks through this, on the other hand, not only should they think it, but also if it is important enough to prohibit the use of artillery or air strikes on the town, then it certainly is important enough to negotiate through intermediates with your enemy to have an open town or else.

I am going to make no statement on this but I'll leave it to the readers' imaginations which course I chose.

During the operations in Italy from the dates of the memoirs, the well-seasoned divisions fighting in Italy were the Thirty-sixth Division; the Third Division; First Armored Division; Ourselves; the Neisei Battalion; British Forty-Sixth Division; other British divisions; and then there were the other divisions—and I am speaking of Americans now—called the Draft Divisions. I might say at this time, that there is absolutely no substitute for experience in combat—or, as is commonly called, a blooded unit—to harden its personnel in battle. At the same time, a young man of eighteen to twenty-one years may be a boy entering combat, but after two or three days of it, he has become a hardened soldier. Such were the divisions such as the Eighty-fifth Division and the Eighty-eighth Division; and Draft Divisions, trained in the States, maneuvered in areas such as North Africa but with no combat, and who, in my opinion,

did an excellent, outstanding job after they had been blooded.

Experience not only with the individuals but also with the staff is important. As an example, back around Sezze or Terrachina, when the Eighty-fifth Division was on our right, we had sent word that we were advancing rapidly and would be on their left, and maybe even move forward on their left. But, as many times happens, the information did not get down to the forward elements of the Eighty-fifth Division, and they opened fire on us.

As a matter of fact, our leading elements were four or five miles ahead of them. This is what hurts, certainly there is no malintention at all, but it's a matter of nervousness and an inability to get the information down to all elements of that particular division or any other division until they've had substantial combat experience.

It's important here to explain how the word "liaison" works among attacking troops, and how it works with your support arms, such as corps artillery, army artillery or the air arm. With missions such as ours, while we had some self-propelled artillery, it was often necessary to call on heavier units, which normally would be division or corps artillery, or sometimes army artillery. To satisfy our requirements and to get artillery fire fast, we established an operating procedure in our unit; as we were moving fast and far-ranging at times, we wanted our friends to know where we were. We also wanted to be friends with the artillery support in particular, and the Air Force, so we would have support when we needed it.

Our method of accomplishing this was that we had six liaison teams. Each liaison team had the following equipment: one jeep, excellent radio communications to our headquarters, and to our forward headquarters. They also were properly loaded with scotch and bourbon, so that if the particular artillery commander or battalion commander questioned the mission, they broke out a bottle and got into a really friendly chat, as to how badly the artillery was needed, and surprisingly enough, the generally worked very well indeed. I might say at this time I have never been dissatisfied in the artillery [illegible].

### The Particulars of War

While I am on the subject of liaisons and the teaming up of and the direction of the supporting arms—such as artillery and air—you must realize that when troops are making rapid progress, it is true that many occasions require the use of what is called "phaselines". Phaseline

one, phaseline two, phaseline three are examples. It happens many times in a war of movement that troops overrun their phaselines, or at least do not want to halt at the phaselines, to give an enemy who is off-balance a chance to re-group or to get himself set again. It is for this reason that troops must maintain close liaison with the supporting arms, so that when troops do advance past a phaseline ahead of their appointed departure from that phaseline, they are not shelled by their own forces and bombed and strafed by their air force. I believe that the policy of close support by the air to ground forces was perfected as nearly as possible by the Marines in the Far East, when they had close support-fighter planes and strafing planes-for their attacking ground forces. We think we did a pretty good job of this in commencing in Italy, but you never can have too close a liaison with the supporting arms.

One little bit of humor, however. Because of the several incidences of our air hitting some of the forward elements of the of the attacking forces, someone got the bright idea that we put a bright cerise colored panel of material on our tanks, armored cars and half-tracks. We fell for that one all right, but someone, as well as us, forgot that the German air could see these just as plainly as our own friendly forces. Believe me, the Germans made brilliant use of these targets. I would say this exercise lasted for about one day and off came the cerise panels. As a result of this potential mix-up in air and bombing, the Air Force finally put forward observers, who were themselves pilots, to ride in our forward elements with direct communication to the fighter planes. The Air Force was just as much concerned as we were about any error in the bombing lines. The selection of pilots to ride in the forward elements of an attacking group, in my opinion, was a masterpiece, because the pilot was very familiar with the problems that the pilot in the air had, and knew what he could ask them to do and what he could not ask them to do. I think this was a great forward move in the close support of air for the ground troops. It was so important, as I will tell you later, that when I got back as the chief of tactics of the Fort Riley School of Armored Cavalry, I put problem after problem-exercises-wherein a reinforced platoon was supported by tactical aircraft, and the tactical aircraft was brought into the area by a pilot riding in a forward tank. This was real progress.

In the northern movement of our units to Pisa, I am going to take the opportunity of saying to my readers that I suppose that Anzio was a hot spot (and, of course, it turned out to be a tactical and strategic error, as one might call

it), but Casino was the back-breaker. One of the reasons I am mentioning Casino is that a request went out for my adjutant, Captain Baker—the same Baker who had organized the baseball in North Africa—to be transferred from our unit and to head up the mule team pecking unit that was supplying the forces up on Mt. Casino with ammunition, rations and medical supplies. In return, the mules were used to bring down the dead and the wounded. I haven't heard from Baker in a long while, but I understand that he did a good job in handling the mule pack to Casino, up and down.



*This certainly looks like the troopers are playing in  
North Africa!*

As we moved north of Grossetto, the Germans, of course,

had retreated up the boot of Italy and were gaining more defensive ability as they became more consolidated in their rather rapid retreat. As a matter of fact, it became obvious that the rest of the way was going to be more difficult, and especially in the Po Valley. And I can assure you that no one looked forward to fighting a static war in that area. This condensing of their defense line and the reorganization of the troops began to make itself felt as we moved toward Leghorn (Livorno) and Pisa. They were much more difficult to get off balance. It was just about this time—I would say toward the end of July—that I was told that we were going to be relieved and that we would return to Naples and Pazzouli to stage for another operation.

I am now going to relate a situation I think is somewhat humorous, and no criticism is intended, because the commanding general in this particular case was a great guy and is a friend of mine. If he reads this, I'm sure he'll get a kick out of it also.

The units fighting in Italy initially and during most of the very difficult fighting—I should say the two major American, tactical instructor at West Point when we were playing a lot of polo and was on the officer's team and was a very good polo player. Larry LaDuc was his name. He came up to see me, and he had heard the stories around that we certainly had taken those towns in a hurry.

He said, "You rascal. You're going to get yourself into trouble. Why didn't you tell General Crittenberger that you had the towns secured when he was talking to you?"

I said, "Larry, I tried to, but you know Crit. Any further conversations amounted to a long—as he thought—alibi, and I figured what's the point? We were in there; we got them, we've satisfied him. . . . say nothing more."

Larry got a big laugh out of this, and I'm sure he told General Crittenberger about it, although I never heard another word about it.

Getting back to the main Italian operation, as I said before, we were moving more slowly up near Piombino and San Vincenzo, on the way to Leghorn and Pisa. Just south of Pisa, almost on the outskirts, we were then given our orders—at least I was—to move my unit back to Naples and Pazzouli. At this time, all the officers had been on the customary two-day leave and the only place to go was Rome. I had been in Rome in 1936; I decided I'd stop on the way south and have the smaller unit commanders take their own units back to Pazzouli. I went



to Rome for a two or three day rest and recuperation leave. I was billeted at the Excelsior Hotel, which was a fine hotel—one of the best—and still is, and it was reserved only for combat officers. It was both a pleasure and a sad thing to be there. The great majority of officers who were billeted there for the rest and recuperation of two or three days had time to think and knew that they would have to report back to their fighting units, and the question crossed every mind, "Will I make it?" So, it was sad in that sense.

I remember that I bathed and tried to get some clean clothes as I was going out to an Italian restaurant in Rome. As I went out the front door, I ran into a first-lieutenant by the name of Robert Lang. Robert Lang was an artillery observer for one of the artillery units in a division. Being a forward observer, I can assure you, is risky business, because the enemy searches out diligently for where the observers are. When they think they're there or know they're there, they turn loose a great deal of fire on the forward observers, since they are the eyes of the artillery and greatly improve what they call "spotter airplanes." Nevertheless, a forward observer is a poor risk for life insurance.

Bob Lang was a very high-grade, serious young man, but as I met him going out the door, he said, "Charlie, where are you going?"

I said, "I am going right down the street to get some Italian food."

He said, "Can I join you?"

I said, "I'd be delighted."

So Bob and I went down to a little restaurant whose name escapes me and had some pasta. The more we talked, the lower his morale became, as he was leaving for the front the following morning.

He said, just as many officers would have said, "I have a premonition. I will get it this time," and aided by a few drinks, he became very despondent. Bob asked me where I was going, and I told him I was going back to Naples.

He said, "Why?"

Of course, I did not tell him, but I felt so sorry for that officer. He was from the town of Maplewood, New Jersey, and his family had been friends of my wife's family ever since they were children. It was a personal feeling of sympathy and friendship I felt because I knew exactly how he felt, and while I don't think I would reach the depth of despondency that he had reached, I

nevertheless understood.

After two and a half days in Rome, I went by jeep with Jimmy Ungaro down to Naples and reported in to the Sixth Corp headquarters, still commanded by General Truscott. The headquarters of Sixth Corp, which also was the planning office for the Invasion of Southern France, was in a large, castle-type stone building— very old— which was called the "blockhouse." I always wanted to call the building the "roundhouse", because it was a typical railroad roundhouse, except it was much higher and a great deal larger, with a large circular center court and two or three stories of offices all the way around it. It could have been a prison at one time, but at this time it was a planning headquarters for Anvil.

Upon my arrival there I was told that I would turn my unit over for the staging and reequipping, and that I would be assigned to a planning phase of the invasion of Southern France. I also was assigned a billet in a small hotel, and I cannot remember the name of it, but I call it the "Flat Iron Hotel", because it was built exactly like a flat iron. All we were assigned was a bed in a room, since there were officers coming and going, working and changing, all hours of the day and all hours of the night. The hotel was a combination operation of the Navy, the Army and the Air Force.

During my first meeting on my first day there, some of the Sixth Corp officers, as would be their normal procedure, were joking and were happy to get on with this operation. It was destined and planned to be a wrap-up of all of Southern France, with the eventual mission of joining the Invasion Forces, which had come through Normandy. They started to kid me about the mission, which we were going to receive and suggested jokingly that it would be a great way to become a hero. I responded by saying that I didn't want any hero staff, but that I would like to get the damn war over with and get back home.

When it came down to planning this invasion carefully in detail, and when we officially received our mission, it was to be the base unit of a task force called Task Force Butler. This task force was to be commanded by General Fred Butler, who was the executive officer, second-in-command, of the Sixth Corp, and who was an engineer by training.

We were to be the base unit and the forward probing elements. Our mission was to land abreast of the three divisions making the invasion. These divisions were the Thirty-Sixth Division, commanded by General Dalquist;

the Forty-Fifth Division, commanded by General Eagles; and the Third Division, commanded by General Daniels. The other forces involved were special forces and a brigade of paratroopers to make a-landing, commanded by General Fredricks. The planning was careful and excellent, and we all knew that there were no units going into this invasion of Southern France which had not had great experience in combat. We also knew that with the training and experience which all these units had had, that there would be no stopping on the beaches. Under the great leadership of General Truscott, there was no thought of going anywhere but forward.

Our particular mission was to land abreast of the three assaulting divisions and to break through the German lines after assembling Task Force Butler at a little mountain town called Le Muy. The invasion beaches or areas for the assault were St. Tropez, St. Rafael, and St. Maxim, all on the Riviera and all of which are very popular now.

After the assembly at Le Muy, the mission of Task Force Butler, including ourselves, was to break through the German lines and to move about 250 to 300 miles up the Rhone River, cutting the Rhone Valley at Montelimar. The operation of that mission will be separate subject matter and will be discussed in some detail, including some maps and extraordinary operations. However, a few incidents will wrap up Italy.

I reported, among other places, to a quartermaster headquarters to make sure we got the latest models of light tanks and the latest models of self-propelled artillery so that we would be fully equipped. I had Col. McGarry with me, since he was, in effect, running the unit while I was at the blockhouse. I came down from the meeting at the quartermaster's office, and I found my driver, Jimmy Ungaro, parked exactly where I'd left him, but in a rather heated argument with a military police sergeant. The MP was telling Ungaro in no uncertain terms that the jeep was parked in the wrong spot and that he, the military sergeant, was going to see that it was moved,

Ungaro, having been in a lot of combat and believing the MP had not, said to him, "Sergeant, my old man told me to wait hero and when he said wait here, he meant exactly that. This jeep is going to stay here, and I am going to stay in it, regardless of the military police back in Naples."

About that time I came upon the scene. The military police sergeant was acting under his orders to restrict parking, and instead of being a wise guy and being nasty, he

started to laugh. He said to me, "You know, that driver you have is something. He said he was going to do anything you tell him to do, and I knew he meant it and that I wasn't going to move him, but I got quite a kick out of it." He said the fellowship between soldiers in combat was fantastic, wasn't it?

I said, "Yes, it is."

The detailed planning for Southern France was just about completed by August 10th. The landing was scheduled for 8 a.m., August 15th, after naval bombardment and air strikes as a prelude to the actual assault by ground forces.

Again, a pleasant interlude to the subject matter. When we had a few hours off in the evening, Bob McGarry would drive he and I in a jeep up to the north side of the Bay of Naples, where most of the consulates [?] were situated. We would get out and gaze over the beauty from the north side of the Bay of Naples across the Bay, looking down toward Vesuvius. We had stopped one day before a beautiful home, dismounted from the jeep, and leaned on an iron railing looking down into a magnificent garden of the villa. As we were standing there, an elderly lady came out of the villa and approached us, speaking English, and asked us if we would come in for some tea. I assure you we did not hesitate for a second, but went into the fantastically beautiful, old Italian villa. The name of the family villa was Currenchio, and there were three sisters living there, as well as a daughter-in-law whose husband had been "killed." I think that probably I never have met finer people. The youngest of the sisters at that time was about sixty and the oldest was about eighty. They were ladies of the old school. They really took us in and could not do enough for us. The villa had a chapel—their own private chapel—and a staff of retainers which had been in their family for years and years and years. They assigned a room to me when I could make it, and, as I say, Mamma Mia, beautiful linen sheets, wonderful meals and beautiful gentle company. It really made the war seem a long, long way away.

The only reminder was the German bombing of the Bay of Naples, but that didn't seem to bother anybody very much. A good number of the bombs fell into the bay and at that point the natives would go out in boats. Finally I asked the Currenchio family what the natives were doing, and they said, "Well, then the Germans bomb the Bay of Naples, they kill a lot of fish, and especially kill a lot of octopus. Octopus is a delicacy here, and the natives go out and just pick them up and either serve them to themselves or sell them. War does have its funny twists.

The elderly sister asked me if I had a picture of my family, which by then was my wife and two children, a

little girl and a little boy.

This lady said to me, "Colonel, we have an old artisan who owns a little shop under Vesuvius. His trade is the carving of cameos, and I would like very much to take the picture which you have shown me, and I will have him carve a cameo of the little girl," whose name was Mary Lou also.

I, of course, jumped at the chance and asked Ungaro to drive her over to Vesuvius to contact this artist. I must say it made a rather breathtaking sight, with Jimmy Ungaro, steel helmet, a carbine and all, driving this very dignified old lady over to Vesuvius, in a combat-type jeep.

The time element was becoming very short before our scheduled departure, which, of necessity, was top secret. My worry was whether or not I would get the work of this artist before we left for the invasion of Southern France. It was a long wait, and as time became more pressing, I was convinced that I would not get the cameo in time, and what is more, that other carvings would not be made of the other two people in the photograph.

At any rate, two days before the departure I think the Currenchio family had a premonition that we were leaving since there was so much activity around Naples. They got word to us that they wanted McGarry and myself to come to dinner again. We again accepted with alacrity, but on this particular point, something new had happened. I was back at Pazzouli with my unit, when my loveable driver Jimmy Ungaro came up and said, "I hear that you are going out to dinner tonight at the Currenchio's."

I said, "Yes, Jimmy, Col, McGarry and I are going out to dinner tonight, but it's not necessary for you to drive us. We will drive ourselves." I should have smelled a rat, because I noticed he was all shined up, his boots were polished, his metals were cleaned up, and he looked like he had just stepped out of a band box.

He said, "I would like to drive you."

And I said, "If you want to you may, but there's no necessity for it."

He said, " I would like to."

So I said, "Fine,"

So into the jeep we get. When we arrived at the Currenchio's, we went on in, and I noticed that Ungaro did not ask what time he should pick us up, but just with a sickly smile on his face, got out and strolled around. I looked at McGarry and he looked at me, and I said, "What goes on?" Well, what went on was this: that some of the retainers, who obviously lived in this villa, had a beautiful daughter about twenty-one or twenty-two. We

didn't even know it until the middle sister said, "We have asked your driver to have dinner also in the kitchen,"

As they were serving an aperitif, in came the prettiest little Italian girl you have ever seen. So the problem, or I should say, the puzzle, was solved. We now knew why Ungaro went beyond the line of duty to drive us,

I said, "Well, let's go in and see him." So we went in to see him, and he looked like a little boy who had been caught stealing candy. He blushed, and he was sitting down to the biggest plate, of all things, of roast turkey. And you never saw a happier Italian in your life. We were happy that those people had been so kind as to invite him.

To add to the wonderful scene of Jimmy Ungaro sitting like a little king at that bountiful table, guess who was waiting on him? The beautiful little Italian girl. I wish I had had a picture of it.

During the dinner, the elder sister, the matron, of the Currenchio family presented me with the cameo carving of Little Mary Lou, as we call her, who was a beautiful little girl. The cameo carving could not be mistaken for anyone but our daughter. There was no way that they would let me pay for it, but rather wanted me to leave the picture if I had to go away soon. They would have the other two personalities in the picture carved for me and sent to me.