

On the left wing the enemy is testing the front with strong assault detachments. Heavy enemy artillery fire with systematic surprise concentrations, sometimes directed by artillery ground observation aircraft, indicate that the enemy has finished moving up his artillery, preparatory to continuing the great offensive. Continuation of the heavy fighting for the heights of Germano must be expected.

As the stretch of railway line from Rimini - Bologna is being bombarded steadily and systematically by the enemy air force, entrainment of 356 Inf Div formations cannot take place on the section Imola - Forlimpopoli, and the Division is entirely dependent on marching.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D.8, 10 Sep 44)

103. On 10 Sep 76 Pz Corps was notified of the imminent arrival and placement under its command of 504 (G.H.Q.) Tank Bn and 590 (G.H.Q.) A.Tk Bn (recently equipped with new 8.8-cm A.Tk guns). Such increment was urgently required in view of the fact that during the recent fighting in the sector of 1 Para Div 1 Coy 525 (G.H.Q.) A.Tk Bn had been reduced to 2 Nashorns (Mark IV tanks with 8.8-cm A.Tk gun) and 2 assault guns (G.M.D.S. - 61437/11, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 8-10 Sep, Appx 946, 949, 953). In addition 3 Bn 56 Proj Regt was reported as being en route to 76 Pz Corps from Fourteenth Army (ibid, Appx 950). On 9 Sep, 2 Bn 242 Aslt Gun Bde, which had been operating in the sector of 1 Para Div, had reported itself as being in possession of only two serviceable assault guns, and on 10 Sep the unit was reported "withdrawn". (Ibid, Appx 953)

104. Telephone conversations between Army Group and Fourteenth Army revealed an increasing reluctance on the part of Fourteenth Army regarding the transfer of additional forces to Tenth Army. The first sign of renewed Allied interest in the dormant sector was noted on 10 Sep when strong Allied bomber formations carried out attacks in the Futa Pass area (G.M.D.S. - 62241/1, Fourteenth Army, W.D.4, 10 Sep 44).

11 Sep

105. German forces in the coastal sector had now settled down in the positions in which they would meet the next attack. The divisional boundary between 26 Pz Div and 29 Pz Gren Div still ran through the western outskirts of the town of Coriano. Coriano and the front immediately west thereof was held by 15 (mech) Gren Regt (29 Pz Gren Div); the adjoining sector was held by 71 (mech) Gren Regt (29 Pz Gren Div); thence 1 Para Div (with units under command) to the coast. West of Coriano was 67 Pz Gren Regt (26 Pz Div); to the right thereof 9 Pz Gren Regt (26 Pz Div). (G.M.D.S. - 61437/21, Tenth Army, W.D.8, sit maps 9-20 Sep, Sit map 11 and 12 Sep 44)

106. An approximate picture of the armoured and artillery strength of the two divisions nearest the coast is obtained from two documents prepared on 11 Sep:

Number of serviceable tanks and guns		29 Pz Gren Div	1 Para Div and units under comd
Tanks	Mark IV	32	-
	Tiger	-	11
	Command	1	1
	Nashorns (A.Tk)	-	2
Hy A.Tk Guns		12	7
Guns	Assault	-	4
	Light	16	29
	Heavy	5	2 plus 3-15 cm Proj

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/12, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 11 - 14 Sep, Appx 971, Weekly Report of Tenth Army, 11 Sep for 10 Sep 44) Photostat 981A10.(D262), and Appx 972, Report of Senior Tank Officer Tenth Army for 11 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D263))

107. Apart from harassing fire on the main battle line and artillery positions, the two divisions on the extreme left did not report any developments of consequence. 278 Inf Div and 71 Inf Div repulsed local attacks. Headquarters 76 Pz Corps were moved to a point 1 km west of Pte Matatardo (halfway between Cesena and Gambettola). Progress was made in the concentration of 356 Inf Div in the area between Forlimpopoli and Gambettola. (G.M.D.S. - 61437/12, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 11-14 Sep, Appx 963, sit rep 11 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D252)). A greek soldier was captured on the railway embankment at Riccione (*ibid*, Appx 961). 20 Fus Bn (20 G.A.F. Div) at Abissinia took over the blocking position previously occupied by 114 Recce Bn. Advance elements of 90 Pz Gren Div continued to arrive in the concentration area (*ibid*, Appx 962). In the day's telephone conversations Marshal Kesselring stressed the urgency of relieving 100 Mtn Jg Regt for transfer to the Western Alps; with the commitment of 356 Inf Div the now pointless protuberance to the South at the inner wings of the two Corps would be given up in favour of shorter lines. Preparations of jumping-off positions during the night on the left wing were read as signs of an early resumption of the attack (*ibid*, Appx 967, tel cons 11 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D251)).

12 Sep

108. Pressure now also developed on the right wing of 51 Mtn Corps. The centre and left wing of 76 Pz Corps were lying under a blanket of harassing fire from ground, sea and air. While this softening-up process was in progress, infantry activity near the coast remained confined to minor engagements (G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D.8, 12 Sep 44). In the telephone conversations reference was made to the Greek Brigade, which was said to operate between Canadian units. On the same day General Crisolly lost his life in an air attack and was replaced in the command of 20 G.A.F. Div by Maj-Gen Erich Frohnhoefer (G.M.D.S. - 61437/12, Tenth Army, W.D.8; Appx 11-14 Sep, Appx 990, tel cons 12 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D251)). Fourteenth Army reported greatly increased Allied reconnaissance activity and the moving up to the

front of enemy infantry, armour and artillery formations. Preparations were most intensive in the general area of the Futa Pass; less intensive near Pistoia (G.M.D.S. - 62241/1, Fourteenth Army, W.D.4, 12 Sep 44). At Army Group it was felt that the Fifth American Army was on the move to join the general offensive (tel cons, op cit).

13 Sep

109. Not altogether unexpectedly, but sooner than expected by the Germans, a new phase of the Battle of Rimini now opened with devastating bombardments, followed by violent assaults on the commanding features. S. Savino, Passano and Coriano were the focal points of the fighting, which led to dangerous penetrations, though not to a collapse of the front. Of the fighting in the sector of 29 Pz Gren Div, where Canadians fought for Coriano, the daily situation report of Tenth Army recorded the following:

29 Pz Gren Div: After hours of drumfire the enemy begins his attack at 0200 hrs. Four attacks on Coriano, each in at least battalion strength, and supported by from 5 - 10 tanks, are repulsed in heavy fighting for the time being. During the morning the enemy is continuously bringing up new forces and adds 130 tanks. In the early afternoon local penetrations north of Coriano are eliminated in a counter-attack in spite of violent artillery fire and continuous attack from the air. In a renewed attack supported by 30 tanks, the enemy again succeeds in breaking in. Enemy attacks from the penetration area at Coriano in a northerly direction. Fighting continues. 1.5 km east of 13439 (past Melo creek, NNW Coriano) an enemy infantry cum tank attack collapsed and three of five tanks, which had broken through are destroyed[†]. Since 1500 hrs renewed attacks at this point. In the evening a strong enemy attack, supported by tanks, on the left wing of the division. Heavy fighting still in progress. Considerable losses in men and materiel on our side; particularly heavy casualties on enemy side. Some prisoners were taken.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/12, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 11 - 14 Sep, Appx 1010, sit rep Tenth Army, 13 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D252))

110. In the day's telephone conversations an equal interest was shown in the developments at all pressure points. In view of the dearth of details from German sources on the fighting at Coriano, some pertinent remarks are being quoted below to show how the battle looked from the enemy's side:

1055 hrs Wentzell - Roettiger

R: So, it has started again.

W: Yes, and it is Coriano apparently which he wants at all costs.

...

[†] Tenth Army's situation map for 13 and 14 Sep 44 is being retained in photostatic form (G.M.D.S. - 61437/21, Tenth Army, W.D.8, sit maps 9-20 Sep, sit map 13 and 14 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D264)).

R: What is your appreciation of the situation at the front of 76 Pz Corps?

W: It remains to be seen; this is only the beginning. If he commits only one additional division we might master the situation. Including the Tigers we have now about 100 tanks in the area.

...

1255 hrs Wentzell - Roettiger

W: The battle for Coriano seems to be going rather well. The whole of 29 Pz Gren Div has been committed, and our counter-measures are slowly making progress.

1820 hrs Wentzell - Roettiger

W: According to the latest report from Corps to Army the situation of 76 Pz Corps is not very good. North of the Croce the enemy has advanced to the North; S. Savino has been taken, and the nests of resistance there destroyed. It was an impossible concentration of artillery fire. Then he committed 90 tanks and not much could be done about it because he covered the whole area with a smoke-screen. Fighting continues at Passano, but unfortunately there is a small penetration again north of Coriano. Coriano is more or less surrounded by tanks on the North, East and South. We have tried to carry out a tank attack, but owing to the air attacks it is impracticable. 29 Pz Gren Div alone lost 19 tanks, which were moving up to the front.

...

W: 1 Bn 15 Pz Gren Div is helping at Coriano. 1 Para Div has spread itself to the right as far as Ghetto.

...

... The artillery is being hindered by the enemy's air superiority, and when the artillery is silenced fighting becomes a murderous mess (Mürkserei).

...

W: I thought there would be a greater pause; that he would come so soon one could not know. ...

2005 hrs Wentzell - Roettiger

W: ... Coriano is under attack from North, East and South. In the North the number of tanks has increased considerably during the afternoon. 150 have been reported, and they have advanced up to the Melo. That is the situation. ... Casualties are considerable; 15 Gren Regt has lost seven company commanders.

2035 and 2045 hrs v. Vietinghoff - Kesselring

K: I have just returned and heard the terrible news. Will you please inform me of the situation.

v.V: The depth of the penetrations cannot be ascertained with accuracy as yet. ... According to Herr two difficulties made themselves felt today. Firstly, the smoke-screens which prevented aimed fire; secondly, the enemy's policy of destroying all daylight counter-attacks from the air, so that reserves suffered great casualties. If the reserves are kept near the front they are decimated by the preparatory fire; if held further back they are dispersed by attacks from the air.

...

K: Roettiger tells me that in consequence of severe casualties the front has become very weak.

v.V: The front has been greatly weakened.

...

K: We must realize that tomorrow will be a day of great crisis.

v.V: We are certain of this; all day we have been racking our brains about how to help, but we have nothing left. ...

2305 hrs Wentzell - Roettiger

W: General Herr reports that the attack north of Coriano has been spreading out to the boundary of 1 Para Div.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/12, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 11-14 Sep, Appx 1015, tel cons 13 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D251))

111. From the German point of view the situation was particularly serious in view of the absence of immediately available reserves at a moment when some divisions had to be withdrawn lest they be bled beyond recovery. The concentration of 356 Inf Div, 20 G.A.F. Div and 90 Pz Gren Div had not reached a stage permitting effective commitment, nor was there certainty as to the point of greatest future Allied pressure. And the situation had now been further complicated by the launching of Fifth Army's attack at the Futa Pass, where 1 Para Corps was engaged in heavy fighting. (tel cons, op cit)

112. On 13 Sep, at the request of Army Group, Tenth Army submitted an analysis of the tactical principles followed by the enemy in the recent fighting on the coast. This memorandum was based on a report received from Colonel Runkel, C. of S. 76 Pz Corps. Both documents are being retained in photostatic and translated form (G.M.D.S. - 61437/13, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 11-14 Sep, Appx 1022 and 1023, 13 Sep 44) (Photostats 981A10.(D265 and 266)). Though even in defeat the Germans were ever ready to criticize the tactics of the enemy, adverse comment was noticeably lacking in Runkel's remarks. Some of the more significant observations were:

... During the first days of the attack no hesitancy, but smart following-through after initial successes.

... Attacks launched at divisional boundaries.

... Enemy armoured formations, particularly Canadian tanks, no longer sensitive to artillery fire, but carry on even under heaviest fire concentrations.

(Ibid)

14 Sep

113. There was no let-up in the battle of attrition on this day, and the Germans lost further ground. During the day Marshal Kesselring insisted time and again on the disengagement of weakened formations; he said that the Army Group was responsible for a front of 1200 kms and could not invest its whole capital in a sector of 30 kms. Vietinghoff mentioned the importance of the 30 kilometres involved; the difficulties of withdrawing troops at the height of battle, and the danger of losing the battle for want of men and materiel. The two commanders appreciated one another's point of view, but the cupboard was bare. The logical conclusion to be drawn from this remained unexpressed. (G.M.D.S. - 61437/12, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 11-14 Sep, Appx 1041, tel cons 14 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D251))

114. The views and decisions of the Army were recorded on this day with unusual care:

Today, with ceaseless commitment of aircraft, and of artillery, with an expenditure of ammunition far greater than ours (the enemy fired in all about 60,000 shells), the enemy continues his great offensive. Under the influence of the completely one-sided material superiority, and most of all the feeling of defencelessness against the enemy air force, the morale of the troops is deteriorating rapidly. Losses in men and materiel are considerable. Under these circumstances the enemy is able to force penetrations, which can be sealed off only by the utmost straining of our available forces.

Army Group is again pressing energetically for the relief of those formations which have been hardest hit (98 Inf and 71 Inf Divs and 100 Mtn Jg Regt, the latter for commitment at the Alpine front).

Making this possible and creating reserves at all costs is still the main problem of the Army. Orders for the following measures have been issued:

1. Relief of 98 Inf Div by 356 Inf Div.
2. Accelerated moving up of 20 G.A.F. Div to Santarcangelo. (Once it has reached that locality it will be decided whether to commit the division at the left wing or the centre)
3. 114 Jg Div's sector will again be extended and only strongpoints are to remain occupied. (O.B.SW refuses to accede to the Army's request for a

thorough thinning out of the front and a change in the battle assignment of 51 Mtn Corps from defence to delaying action. Mobile reserves were to have been formed in the rear, which would have meant the freeing of one complete division)

4. Straightening of the front on the right wing of the Corps, and widening of the sector of 278 Inf Div to permit the disengagement of 71 Inf Div.
5. Moving up of battalions from 162(Turc) Inf Div to the left wing.

In view of the extremely tense situation, at about midnight, O.B.SW orders the transfer of 90 Pz Gren Div to Forli as an Army reserve. The relief movements and the redistribution at the front mean fresh, though not numerically stronger forces at the front. The other measures can only take effect after some days. The situation on the morrow must therefore be regarded as definitely serious.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D., 8, 14 Sep 44)

Most alarming to the Germans was the situation east of Coriano, where Canadian spearheads had crossed the Marano River (tel cons, op cit). The daily situation report of Tenth Army mentioned bitter fighting in that area, but due to interrupted communications and continued fighting precise locations were not given. (G.M.D.S. - 61437/12, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 11-14 Sep, Appx 1037, sit rep Tenth Army, 14 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D252))

Fighting for S. Lorenzo in Correggiano and S. Martino (15 - 18 Sep)

15 Sep

115. Marshal Kesselring informed Tenth Army of the penetrations obtained by Fifth Army along the inter-army boundary in the sector of 4 Para Div. According to Lemelsen the situation was difficult. General v. Vietinghoff in turn described the inroads on morale from the stunning bombardments. Kesselring said: "We have to consider withdrawal to the prepared positions of 162 (Turc) Inf Div. We cannot permit the troops to reach the point where moral resistance collapses. The whole wing may have to be taken back. The situation has developed unfavourably". Wentzell told Roettiger that clearly discernible pressure in the direction of Rimini was causing concern. An improvement in the situation was hoped for from the impending arrival behind 1 Para Div of elements from 162(Turc) Inf Div and 356 Inf Div. Again tomorrow the area S. Lorenzo - S. Martino would be the focal point. (G.M.D.S. - 61437/13, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 15-18 Sep, Appx 1069, tel cons 15 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D267))

116. In the daily situation report of Tenth Army for 15 Sep the events in the sectors of 29 Pz Gren Div and 1 Para Div were reflected by the following entries:

29 Pz Gren Div: Heavy fighting on the left wing of the Division continued all day. Penetrations obtained by the enemy (supported by 30 tanks) on the previous day in the area of S. Lorenzo were eliminated. In renewed attacks at 1200 hrs the enemy advanced to the church. After prolonged, bitter and fluctuating fighting, in which 71 Pz Gren Regt and 129 Recce Bn offered heroic resistance, the enemy, with 25 tanks and mounted infantry, captured the locality from the East. Further attacks from there towards the West and Northwest were repulsed in counter-attacks, which were very costly to our own troops. From the area east of S. Lorenzo the enemy advanced further on S. Martino and was stopped immediately north of S. Martino. Our garrison in the locality is carrying out all-round defence from positions near the church.

1 Para Div: Despite the enemy breakthrough on the road from Southeast to S. Martino, it was possible to remain in possession of the localities on both sides of the road 1.5 km SW S. Martino. Further strong attacks with tanks and infantry on southern tip of airfield (3 km ESE S. Martino) were repulsed. Renewed attacks are under way. Own artillery and mortars repeatedly dispersed the enemy in assembly positions 1.5 km south of C. Cicchetti.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/13, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 15-18 Sep, Appx 1063, sit rep Tenth Army, 15 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D252))

117. Tenth Army's records for 15 Sep included a series of casualty tabulations. For the period 26 Aug - 15 Sep 44 the divisions of 76 Pz Corps had reported a total of 14,604 casualties; 7,000 of these were listed as missing (presumably captured). The greatest number of casualties had been experienced by 98 Inf Div (4,338); next came 1 Para Div with 3,294 casualties. Since the beginning of September 1943 Tenth Army had reported a grand total of nearly 150,000 casualties. This total did not include the figures of Navy, Air Force, G.H.Q. troops, nor those of wounded or sick who remained with their units. For what they are worth, the tabulations are being retained in photostatic form (G.M.D.S. - 61437/13, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 15-18 Sep, Appx 1075, 1076, 1079, 15 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D268)).

16 Sep

118. Fighting in the critical area of S. Lorenzo - S. Martino was intensive on 16 Sep, but inconclusive, and no substantial gains were made on this day and during the night 16/17 Sep by the Canadians there:

1 Para Div: In the afternoon the enemy continued his strong attacks in the direction of S. Martino, each time in battalion strength and supported by from 60 - 70 tanks. Attacks carried out in successive waves were repelled with heavy casualties to the enemy. Local penetrations were eliminated in counter-attacks. Enemy reconnaissance operations in company strength along the Via Adriatica were stopped by combat outposts.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/13, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 15-18 Sep, Appx 1093, sit rep Tenth Army, 16 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D252))

119. Positions of 76 Pz Corps on 16 Sep were shown on a situation map, which is being retained in photostatic form (G.M.D.S. - 61437/21, Tenth Army, W.D.8, sit maps 9-20 Sep, 16 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D270a)). This map is of particular interest in that it shows the exact course of the Rimini Line, the third line of resistance in the Gothic system near the Adriatic coast. The main part of this map appears in photostatic form as Appendix "L" to this report (ibid; 981A10.(D270b)). A photostatic copy is also being retained of the situation map for 16 Sep of 51 Mtn Corps (ibid; (Photostat 981A10.(D271))).

120. As arranged on the previous day, Marshal Kesselring and his Chief of Staff spent part of the day at the headquarters of Tenth Army. The views expressed and the decisions made on this occasion were recorded by the Army in a memorandum. In essence the Marshal said that he anticipated considerable pressure from the enemy forces in the Florence region, but that the threat was of a minor nature in comparison with that from the strong forces on the Adriatic wing, where the enemy had committed his best formations and all of his air force in Italy for the breakthrough to the Plains of Lombardy. With all known enemy divisions committed, a strategical landing on the coast was not now to be expected, but tactical landings at Ravenna remained a possibility. At the request of Tenth Army its battle assignment was changed from defence to mobile warfare. This would permit the elimination of a wide and increasingly dangerous salient and in consequence the early disengagement of 44 Inf Div for employment at future pressure points. A photostatic copy of this document is being retained. (G.M.D.S. - 61437/13, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 15-18 Sep, Appx 1097, 17 Sep for 16 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D269))

17 Sep

121. On the right wing and centre of the Army the day was characterized by relatively minor fighting; on the left wing however ceaseless attacks by 1 Cdn Corps and 5 Brit Corps failed to break the prevailing stalemate. The defence potential of 1 Para Div had been materially augmented by the commitment of 17 heavy anti-tank guns (8.8 cm) from 590 Hy G.H.Q. A.Tk Bn (ibid, Appx 1125, 17 Sep). On the other hand the defence had been hampered by the use of smoke pots, which had been dropped from Allied aircraft on that day for the first time in the Italian campaign (G.M.D.S. - 61439/2, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Intelligence Summary September, 17 Sep 44). From the sector of 29 Pz Gren Div the daily situation report of Tenth Army reported a series of defensive successes; events in the sector of 1 Para Div were summarized as follows:

A large concentration of enemy tanks in assembly positions southeast of the divisional boundary were dispersed by fire from artillery and mortars. Constant and heavy harassing fire fell on the left wing of 1 Para Div. In the afternoon too, the enemy persisted with great tenacity in his infantry cum tank attacks on S. Martino. Fighting lasted till 1900 hrs. The enemy was held off and nine of his tanks were destroyed. Casualties on both sides are high. Attacks farther east were also beaten off. At the moment a fresh attack is under way on the height about 1 km east of S. Martino. Lesser attacks in battalion strength astride the Via Adriatica and the

coastal road have also been repulsed. Defence has been made more difficult by dense smoke screens in the fighting area. (Ibid, Appx 1119, 17 Sep)
(Photostat 981A10.(D2527))

122. Although the attack of Fifth Army at the left wing of Fourteenth Army was obviously gaining momentum, Marshal Kesselring found it necessary to insist on the transfer to Tenth Army of the Infantry Training Brigade, which had barely reached 1 Para Corps from the front of 14 Pz Corps. The Brigade was to move without delay to the area of Cesena for absorption by depleted 98 Inf Div (G.M.D.S. - 62241/1, Fourteenth Army, W.D.4, 17 Sep 44).^{*} From the inter-army boundary 5 km south of Firenzuola to Sarzano (north-east of La Spezia) the following divisions were on the Army's front:

4 Para Div
334 Inf Div
362 Inf Div
65 Inf Div
42 Inf Div
16 S.S. Pz Gren Div

A situation trace of the Army's positions on 17 Sep appears in photostatic form as Appendix "M" to this report. (G.M.D.S. - 62241/6, Fourteenth Army, W.D.4, Appx 30 Aug - 30 Sep, Appx 939, 17 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D272))

18 Sep

123. Due to sharp attacks on the inter-army boundary, the extreme left wing of Fourteenth Army was forced back, while on the extreme right wing of Tenth Army the leading elements of 13 Brit Corps captured M. Altuccio and from there made further local gains. On the left wing of Tenth Army the battle was raging furiously and reached new proportions. In particular the advance on the right wing of 5 Brit Corps filled German commanders with forebodings of the imminent loss of Rimini, and the Canadian advance to the Ausa river north-west of the S. Lorenzo - S. Martino feature confirmed these views. At 1100 hrs C. of S. 76 Pz Corps believed that by evening the Corps would have been forced back to Rimini, and similar views were expressed in higher quarters, with Kesselring mentioning in self-consolation the proven prowess of 1 Para Div in house-to-house fighting. (G.M.D.S. - 61437/13, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 15-18 Sep, tel cons 18 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D267)). Greatly helped by the concentration of heavy weapons in the sector, the German troops however managed once more to stave off a decisive breakthrough, and the Main War Diary of Tenth Army recorded the day as a success for the defence:

The enemy continues his offensive on both wings of the Army, with increased commitment of materiel. Despite bitter defensive fighting, the enemy, by exploiting his successes in the M. Altuccio region, is able to make local gains. On the left wing of the Army he extends his large-scale attacks, but after the fiercest fighting and with heavy losses on both

* Due to changes in the situation this movement was not carried out (see para 131 below).

sides, a breakthrough is averted. Penetrations were either intercepted by local reserves or thrown back in counter-attacks. Again the enemy throws heavily massed infantry forces and an increased number of tanks into the battle, the attacks being supported by artillery with an extremely heavy expenditure of ammunition, by fire from naval guns, and by increased commitment of aircraft formations. According to reports which are still incomplete, 30 tanks have been destroyed and several prisoners brought in. Our artillery and projector brigade has made a decisive contribution to today's defence success.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D.8, 18 Sep 44)

Through the Rimini Position to the Marecchia River
(S. Fortunato Feature) (19-21 Sep)

19 Sep

124. On the front of 51 Mtn Corps the day was relatively uneventful. The same situation prevailed in the sector of 278 Inf Div, on the extreme right wing of 76 Pz Corps. At the centre and left wing of the Corps, however, the battle reached a new height of intensity. A well-rounded picture of the scope, effects and strategical implications of the all-out attack on 76 Pz Corps is conveyed by a series of entries for the day in the Main War Diary of Tenth Army:

"Final Appreciation of the Day":

On this day, in the sector of 76 Pz Corps, a battle of materiel of the greatest magnitude rages from earliest morning until well into the night. Today too, despite fierce fighting and heavy casualties on both sides, the strived-for breakthrough is denied to the enemy. By committing the reserves set aside for this purpose, penetrations are sealed off, or the enemy is thrown back by counter-attacks. Towards evening the enemy brings up strong forces, especially tanks, opposite the sectors of 90 Pz Gren Div, 26 Pz Div and 29 Pz Gren Div, so that another attempt to break through with massed forces in the direction of Santarcangelo must be expected for tomorrow.

At night, since 18 Sep, the enemy has been illuminating our part of the battle area with searchlights installed out of range of our artillery, whereby transfer and relief movements, as well as supply operations, which on the field of battle can hardly be carried out except at night, are seriously handicapped. The psychological effect produced on the troops by the battle of materiel itself is heightened by the feeling of helplessness against this new technical weapon.

On the Army's right wing too the fighting has increased in severity, and the enemy succeeds, in the roadless mountain terrain, in gaining ground,

without our scanty forces committed in that area being able to prevent it.

As in consequence of this situation the two wings of the Army are pressed back, while the Army centre is nearly 40 km further forward, the whole Army front thus forming a half-moon, since morning the Army command has been requesting anew that a definite decision be reached to withdraw the right wing and the centre of the Army front to the Green Line II, in order that additional forces, which are urgently needed on the wings, may be released. After the crisis has become still more acute owing to the development of the situation, in the afternoon Army Group agrees in principle to issue an order to this effect on the following day.

As 356 Inf Div has not succeeded, in spite of the best will to fight, in halting the strong armoured spearheads of the enemy, 90 Pz Gren Div takes over its sector, even though of its own divisional formations only one regimental group is available, and the mass of the Division is but just under way. Platoon by platoon they relieve the exhausted units of 356 Inf Div.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D.8, 19 Sep 44)

"Telephone Conversations of the Day"

In conversations at 1045 hrs, 2300 hrs and 2350 hrs the Army requests O.B.SW's consent to a withdrawal of the Army's centre to Green Line II. This in order to reach a sound line of departure for all further and more extensive withdrawals which might become necessary, possibly in the immediate future. During the last conversation, in which the Army Group explained its difficulties with the High Command, the issuing of an order in the desired sense is predicted for the following morning.* In addition to the facts which have become evident from the tactical developments, the critical aspect of the day is further illustrated by the statement at 2300 hrs that no reserves worth mentioning are available tonight. Reserves previously available have been committed and cannot now be disengaged owing to the heavy casualties. (Ibid)

"Tactical Situation"

...

29 Pz Gren Div: After strong artillery fire,

* For more detailed information on the subject of the relations existing at the time between Army Group and High Command see record of conversation between Wentzell and Roettiger at 0015 hrs 20 Sep (included in records for 19 Sep) (G.M.D.S. - 61437/14, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 19-22 Sep, tel cons 19 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D267))

in the morning the enemy attacks the right wing and centre of the Division. Except for a penetration 500 metres south of Covignano the enemy is being blocked. During the morning the attacks are expanding and are increasing in violence. A renewed attack in battalion strength and supported by tanks is repelled on the right wing. At S. Fortunato the enemy is thrown back in a counterattack. After the penetration on the left wing has been eliminated the main battle line is back in our hands again.

1 Para Div: Apart from reconnaissance activity no infantry action. Enemy tank concentrations at the centre of the divisional front are being fired on by our artillery. (Ibid)

According to the situation map of Tenth Army for 19 and 20 Sep the Fortunato feature (from east to west) was defended by the following units:

1 Bn 1 Para Regt (north of Covignano)
1 and 2 Bns 71 Gren Regt (29 Pz Gren Div)
1 and 2 Bns 314 Gren Regt (162 (Turc) Inf Div)
1 and 2 Bns 15 Gren Regt (29 Pz Gren Div)
20 Fus Bn (20 G.A.F. Div)

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/23, Tenth Army, W.D.8, sit maps 9-20 Sep, sit map 19 and 20 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D273))

20 Sep

125. Four weeks of hard and costly fighting reached a successful conclusion on 20 Sep when 2 and 3 Cdn Inf Bdes (flanked by the no less fiercely fighting British units) drove the Germans from the area of S. Fortunato and thus forced 76 Pz Corps to fall back behind the river Marecchia. The attack had been launched in the evening of 19 Sep and was making good progress. Possibly due to tardy reporting, the gravity of the situation was not recognized at German higher headquarters until late in the morning. At 0915 hrs the Army commander told Kesselring that no important advances had been reported; but by 1100 hrs the picture had changed. The reactions of the enemy commanders are shown here by means of excerpts from the record of telephone conversations:

1105 hrs 20 Sep v. Vietinghoff - Kesselring

v.V: ... Further north something unpleasant has happened. In the sector of 26 Pz Div the situation is satisfactory, but in the sector of 29 Pz Gren Div the enemy succeeded in breaking through the Turcoman battalion, and tanks have already reached the area of S. Lorenzo in Monte. The Turcoman battalion is said to have been battered to pieces. Polack is sealing off the locality with his last remaining forces. In addition small groups from 1 Para Div - their last reserves - are being sent there, so that it is hoped that no major crisis will

develop there.

But on the other hand Herr now appreciates the situation in the sense that he will definitely have to take his artillery behind the Marecchia, as in their present positions they are at least partially under direct fire from enemy machine guns. But consequently his artillery will no longer be fully effective forward of the battle lines and, therefore, he wants to withdraw behind the river. That is of course a very grave decision.

K: It is very serious; I can say that.

...

K: I cannot give my final decision at the moment; I want to discuss the matter with my staff. That is not so easy. It was wrong of 29 Pz Gren Div to commit a Turcoman battalion at the front.

v.V: They had something further back; but their strength has been reduced to the point where they can no longer cope with the situation.

1115 hrs Wentzell - Roettiger

W: I have become somewhat suspicious. If he gets the quite correct idea of moving to Imola instead of Bologna, we will be trapped in this pocket here.

...

1320 hrs Wentzell - Roettiger

W: The situation at the front of 76 Pz Corps is very strained. 29 Pz Gren Div has practically nothing left; 71 Gren Regt now has 200 men; 15 Gren Regt 100 men. The Turcomans have practically disintegrated and so have the Air Force people who also were committed there (20 Fus Bn). The enemy has reached the Spadarolo area, and is bringing up tanks. The paratroopers are having a hard struggle on their right flank. ... I think it will be necessary to withdraw behind the river.

R: Yes, there is really nothing else to do.

...

One moment, please; I will go and ask the Field Marshal. ...
The Marshal AGREES.

1930 hrs v. Vietinghoff - Kesselring

K: But I presume that Rimini will be held for the moment, so that the paratroopers may do their house-to-house fighting.

v.V: They will be leaving rearguards there.

...

K: I do not like this wholesale folding back.

v.V: Of course not. I have discussed the matter thoroughly with Herr, as I too fear that the whole thing may begin to slide. He replies - and this is the only argument which counts - "If the front is pierced at one point, the enemy cannot be stopped, because we have no more reserves."

...

K: I have the terrible feeling that the thing is beginning to slide.

v.V: I spoke with Herr about this, and told him to remain on the hills, but he repeats that then there will be nothing in the rear.

K: He forgets that he is reaching open country.

v.V: He feels - which remains to be seen - that the plain is no less favourable, as our positions there cannot be seen so well as now, where they are spread out before the eyes of the enemy on the hills.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/14, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 19-22 Sep, Appx 1187, tel cons 20 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D267))

126. The "Final Analysis of the Day" in the Main War Diary of Tenth Army concluded with the following remarks:

In accordance with the request of the Corps, Tenth Army obtains the consent of O.B.SW for withdrawal of the left wing during the coming night to the "Adelheid Position" (i.e. north of Verucchio on the far side of the River Marecchia), thereby breaking off the Battle of Rimini before their own formations south of the Marecchia have become exhausted and incapable of preventing a breakthrough to the plains.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D.8, 20 Sep 44)

A description of the events in the sector of 29 Pz Gren Div appeared in the daily situation report of the Army:

... 29 Pz Gren Div: Beginning with the noon hours the Division carried out a fighting withdrawal while warding off all enemy attacks. Sometimes under particularly difficult conditions and in face of sharp enemy pressure, the individual battle groups, in some cases led by non-commissioned officers, fought their way back. Time and again they had to fight off attacks by the pursuing enemy; then fall back another few hundred yards. During the day, the small garrison of S. Lorenzo

held its positions against four enemy attacks in battalion strength and with tank support. Compressed into a small area, they stood fast until evening. In the late afternoon they repelled a fifth attack from the Southeast. A further attack in battalion strength by infantry carried on vehicles and with tank support was also repulsed, thanks to the support of our own artillery. By committing trains, alarm units and hastily formed battle groups composed of stragglers from all units, it was possible by 1700 hrs to create a thin blocking line around S. Lorenzo, and thus to eliminate the danger which existed in the morning of a breakthrough to the North. According to present reports, four enemy tanks have been destroyed in today's fighting. 1 Para Div: Due to interrupted communications, no reports received*

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/14, Tenth Army, W.D.8, Appx 19-22 Sep, Appx 1185, Daily Sit Rep Tenth Army, 20 Sep 44) (Photostat 981/10.(D252))

127. The formal order for the general withdrawal of 51 Mtn Corps to Green Line II was issued by Tenth Army at 1510 hrs 20 Sep. It began with the statement:

The continued enemy pressure on the wings of the Army necessitates the withdrawal of the projecting centre section of the Army front in order to free additional forces for the wings.

A photostatic copy of the full text is being retained. (Ibid, Appx 1188, 20 Sep 44) (Photostat 981/10.(D274))

21 Sep

128. Large-scale fighting in the coastal sector had now ceased for the moment. The period of continued good weather had come to an end, and intermittent showers were softening the ground. Immediately west of Rimini, on 21 Sep, 1 Cdn Inf Div established several bridgeheads on the far bank of the Marecchia in face of harassing fire from the machine guns of German rear-guards. 114 Jg Div, which was at full strength and which had not suffered in the recent fighting, received orders for a lateral move to the right wing of 76 Pz Corps. This would permit the relief of hard-hit 26 Pz Div and 356 Inf Div. 29 Pz Gren Div would be the next formation to be rested and brought back to strength. A definite aggravation of the situation had occurred on the right wing of 51 Mtn Corps, where the retreating forces of 715 Inf Div had come under sharp pressure. The Corps commander was insistently asking for reinforcements. The Army commander was thinking of moving 44 Inf Div from Cesena to the danger point,

* (Note: Communications may of course have been interrupted, but if the much harder pressed 29 Pz Gren Div found ways and means of communicating with Corps headquarters, 1 Para Div might have found it possible to do the same. In view of the mendacity notoriously rampant at the headquarters of this division, the cause of history may have suffered little by this lack of detailed reports. (See also Report No. 20, para 39))

but reserved his decision pending further clarification of the situation. (G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D.8, 21 Sep 44)

129. Shortly after the fall of Rome Marshal Kesselring and General Warlimont had been of the opinion that a quick withdrawal to the Apennine positions was unavoidable (H.S. Report No. 24, para 17). But soon thereafter, thanks to exceptionally brilliant staff work and to feats performed by the remnants of elite divisions, the Army Group had managed to achieve temporary stabilization on the height of Lake Trasimene. The German High Command then sensed the possibility of delaying the Allied advance to the point where the advent of unfavourable weather would find the German troops ensconced in a line from which they could effectively block all roads to the northern plains. This had been the real reason for the stream of exhortations to stand fast, which had been reaching Kesselring daily and almost hourly from highest levels during the early weeks of June. At first merely because he had no other choice, and then beginning to believe himself that it could be done, despite miscalculations and misreadings, the commander of the Army Group had virtually reached this goal. During the last days of the battle of Rimini the Germans had been vainly hoping for a decisive break in the weather; but only intermittent rains had fallen on the field of battle. On 18 Sep Kesselring had said to Vietinghoff:

... and there is no promise of a change in weather. The rainy season this year is late by two weeks; this is two weeks above the European mean.

(Tel cons 2105 hrs, 18 Sep, op cit)

But if the rains had not come in time to help the Germans in their last stand in the Gothic system on the coast, nevertheless come they did a few days later, thus robbing the Allied push of its momentum.

FROM THE MARECCHIA TO THE RONCO
(22 SEP - 26 OCT)

From Rimini to Cesena (22 Sep - 20 Oct)

22 Sep

130. With the situation on the Adriatic for the moment well in hand, Tenth Army was able to pay some attention to the developments at the inter-army boundary, where the acceptance of a calculated risk had now led to a situation demanding immediate remedial action. During the morning the Army commander called at the headquarters of 715 Inf Div and found the formation weakened by many casualties. The wastage of manpower had not been solely due to enemy action. As the personnel of the Division had not been trained for operations in high mountain country, the number of men falling down some precipice at night had been so great as to constitute a palpable factor. The Division reported the following strengths:

725 Gren Regt	720
735 Gren Regt	120
1028 Gren Regt	970
Fd Repl Bn	150
<hr/>	
132 Gren Regt	576 (under command; from 44 Inf Div)
Total	2,536 *

131. In the afternoon the two Army commanders conferred with Marshal Kesselring at the Tactical Headquarters of the Army Group. The views expressed on this occasion by the Army commanders, as well as Kesselring's decisions, were recorded in a memorandum appearing in photostatic and translated form as Appendix "N" to this report (G.M.D.S. - 61437/14, Tenth Army, W.D. 8, Appx 19-22 Sep, Appx 1226, 22 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D275)). It was decided that the Infantry Training Brigade was now after all to remain with Fourteenth Army (see para 122); Tenth Army would move another regimental group from 44 Inf Div to the Army's right wing (balance to follow), and 94 Inf Div would be brought up to the left wing to carry out the relieving tasks originally planned for 44 Inf Div. Fourteenth Army was given a free hand regarding complete withdrawal to Green Line II, and the prevention of a breakthrough at the inner wings of the two Armies was classed as being of equal importance with the carrying out of the identical task at the Adriatic front. (Ibid)

23 Sep

132. By 0700 hrs 23 Sep the leading elements of 134 Gren Regt (44 Inf Div), moving up the Santerno valley on the road from Imola to Firenzuola, had reached the area between Fontanelice and Castel del Rio. They were to take up positions on the extreme right wing of 51 Mtn Corps. Just across the inter-army boundary was the Infantry Training Brigade (G.M.D.S. - 61437/22, Tenth Army, W.D. 8, sit maps 21-30 Sep, sit map 51 Mtn Corps, 23 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D276)). At 2030 hrs 44 Inf Div assumed command in the area 1 km south-west of M. Taggiola - M. Macchia di Cano (G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D. 8,

* (G.M.D.S. - 61437/14, Tenth Army, W.D. 8, Appx 19-22 Sep, Appx 1275, 22 Sep 44)

23 Sep 44). To ensure unified command in the threatened area, 44 Inf Div was placed under command of Fourteenth Army, effective 0700 hrs 24 Sep (G.M.D.S. - 61437/15, Tenth Army, W.D. 8, Appx 23-26 Sep, Appx 1249, 23 Sep 44). Simultaneously the inter-army boundary was moved eastwards. Previously the boundary had passed through M. Altuzzoli - M. Coloreta - Piancaldo - Monterenzio - Ozzano; as of 0700 hrs 24 Sep it would pass through M. Carolano - 10 km south-east of Firenzuola - immediately north-west of Faggiola - M. Bataglia - eastern rim of Imola (G.M.D.S. - 62241/1, Fourteenth Army, W.D. 4, 23 Sep 44). In order to free further forces for the critical area at the inter-army boundary, Fourteenth Army would accelerate limited withdrawals. In addition, a reinforced regimental group from 232 Inf Div (1043 Gren Regt) was being rushed from the zone of the Ligurian Army to that of Fourteenth Army. (Ibid)

133. On the Adriatic side the elements of 20 G.A.F. Div at Santarcangelo had failed to hold their positions. This formation was a division on paper only, and it was felt that dispersal was well justified. Presuming however that the High Command would fail to countenance the dissolution, Marshal Kesselring allowed Tenth Army to disperse its forces by sending the individual companies "on command" to various units of 76 Pz Corps, particularly 26 Pz Div (G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D. 8, 23 Sep 44; 61437/15, Tenth Army, W.D. 8, Appx 23-26 Sep, Appx 1248, tel cons 23 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D267)). On the same day 29 Pz Gren Div and 1 Para Div succeeded in repulsing several reconnaissance thrusts in battalion strength (G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D. 8, 23 Sep 44). A well-prepared situation map of 76 Pz Corps on 23 Sep is being retained in photostatic form (G.M.D.S. - 61437/22, Tenth Army, W.D. 8, sit maps 21-30 Sep, 23 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D277)).

134. The forces of 44 Inf Div had arrived too late to prevent the occupation of M. la Fine and M. Sasso. But soon the front would be mended and resistance stiffened. The hard-headed Bavarian Army Group Commander, whose mind worked best under pressure and when exhilarated by dramatic danger, was now fully aroused. In addition he had received orders ruling out a strategic withdrawal to positions north of the River Po. No doubt at the time he would have preferred to carry out operation "Herbstnebel" (Autumn Fog) (see para 73); but was prevented from doing so by direct orders from Hitler. In the absence of evidence from original documents, a pertinent passage is being quoted here from the narrative prepared by Major Ritter Percy v. Schramm, War Diarist of the German High Command, on the basis of day to day top level documents:

On 23 Sep General Roettiger arrived at the Fuehrer's Headquarters and submitted the intentions of O.B.SW to the Fuehrer. Thereupon on the same day O.B.SW received the message that the basic intentions to defend the Apennines and the Western Alps were to be adhered to. O.B.SW however retained local freedom of action. Strategic withdrawal movements remained subject to Hitler's approval, but O.B.SW could begin preparations for disengagement at once, thus making possible a withdrawal at short notice. . . . Hereby, and against the recommendation of O.B.SW the movement Autumn Fog was postponed. Instead he was promised men and materiel to enable him to carry out his mission. The fulfilment of this promise however proved difficult. Nevertheless, O.B.SW, who had

requested 23,800 men, was advised on 26 Sep that he would receive 20,000 men by 1 Oct.

... At noon on 27 Sep O.B.SW again requested authority to initiate the movement. He based his plea on the fact that the two big attacks on his southern front were continuing and that the enemy air force was reinforcing its attacks against the front and the rear area. Indications of a push over the Alps against Turin were becoming more numerous and the possibility of landings on the Riviera and in the rear of Tenth Army had to be reckoned with. The vacancies resulting from casualties could no longer be filled by replacements. The danger of a breakthrough in the direction of Imola - Bologna, putting Tenth Army in a most difficult situation and threatening to make the extensive movement of the Army of Liguria in the Alps impossible was growing constantly. Therefore, if the enemy advance could not be checked within the next few days, the initiation of the movement was necessary ...

On 5 Oct O.B.SW was informed that the Fuehrer, for political, military and administrative reasons, had decided to defend the Apennine front and to hold upper Italy not only until late fall, but indefinitely. With this in view, O.B.SW was enjoined ... to bring the front of 1 Para Corps to a final state of stabilization.

(v. Schramm, op cit, Photostat 981A10.(D11A)), paras 136 - 138)

24 Sep

135. While Fourteenth Army was already engaged in extensive preparations for pumping fresh blood to the danger spot, due to mounting pressure on its right wing Tenth Army now decided on further measures in support of its western sector. 305 Inf Div would have to spread itself to the right, and 98 Inf Div (to some extent rested and reinforced by now) would have to move up for early commitment. In the main War Diary of Tenth Army the following was recorded:

In the sector of 715 Inf Div, which since Fourteenth Army has taken over 44 Inf Div is now on the extreme right wing of Tenth Army, the enemy, nourished by steady streams of reinforcements, attacks during the whole day, and is able to make penetrations in the middle sector, where he is opposed by our badly exhausted troops. In view of the still tense situation, the Army decides to commit 98 Inf Div on the right wing after its reorganization has been complete. The departure of the first regimental group is ordered for the following evening. On the Army's left wing too, the enemy carries out numerous attacks with tank support, the point of main effort being on the coast in the sectors of 29 Pz Gren Div and 1 Para Div. These attacks cannot yet be regarded as the beginning of the third phase of the great offensive, but are reconnaissances in force. In the evening large tank concentrations are observed in this area.

As the moving into position of the enemy's artillery too can now be regarded as ended, it is expected that in the course of the next few days he will renew his attempts at breaking through.

Included in the measures for strengthening the front, Army Group is moving up 94 Inf Div and compensating the Adriatic Coast Command with one grenadier regiment from 162 (Turc) Inf Div.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D. 8, 24 Sep 44)

136. In the Adriatic sector 4 Brit Div had established a bridgehead across the river Uso; 90 Pz Gren Div had been forced to fall back in consequence of flanking attacks from Santarcangelo, and by the end of the day 1 Para Div had reported no less than 27 attacks in battalion strength on its positions during the last 36 hours. (Ibid) Though relatively small, the new withdrawals in the sector had a disconcerting effect on Marshal Kesselring: 15th Army Group was punching with both fists; the Army Group had been forbidden to move behind the Po, and the strategical implications were frightening to contemplate. In prolonged telephone conversations with his Army commanders Kesselring stressed the incalculable consequence of a breakthrough to Imola, and demanded increased hardness on the part of all commanders. (G.M.D.S. - 61437/15, Tenth Army, W.D. 8, Appx 23-26 Sep, Appx 1272, tel cons 24 Sep 44, (Photostat 981A10.(D267)), and 62241/1, Fourteenth Army, W.D. 4, 24 Sep 44)

25 Sep

137. While on this day Fifth Army was not making any significant gains, Eighth Army showed unmistakable signs of being ready for a new advance. In the Main War Diary of Tenth Army the following was recorded:

On the right wing the enemy continues his attacks throughout the day, extending them to the South-east, and is everywhere repulsed by our stubborn defence.

In the area of 76 Pz Corps the enemy's point of main effort lies between the Via Emilia and the coast, where in bitter fighting, and at the cost of heavy casualties, the enemy gains ground on the left wing. The arrival of enemy formations in the front line, either brought up from the rear areas or reinforced in the vicinity of the front, the very actively conducted reconnaissance activities of the last few days, combined with methodical artillery ranging and the systematic demolition of communications in the rear areas from the air, indicate that a new major offensive by Eighth Army's right wing is directly imminent. In connection herewith, the enemy will continue his attacks in the mountains with the object of breaking through along the Via Emilia in the direction Bologna - Faenza.

In the area of 76 Pz Corps 72 enemy tanks were put out of action between 22 and 25 Sep.

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/1, Tenth Army, W.D. 8, 25 Sep 44)

138. Telephonic reports by the Army commander regarding the reappearance of rested and replenished 5 Cdn Armd Div, as well as the general picture of three enemy armoured divisions and four armoured brigades spoiling for a breakthrough, induced the Army Group commander to countenance in advance a "rolling with the punch" and to demand extensive deployment in depth. Such tactical elasticity would keep the troops from being decimated by artillery fire, and would at least save the front from being pierced. (G.M.D.S. - 61437/15, Tenth Army, W.D. 8, Appx 23-26 Sep, Appx 1288, 25 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D267))

26 Sep

139. On the left wing of Fourteenth Army 44 Inf Div had failed to come up to expectations and had lost M. Pratolungo and M. Acuto. Immediately east of these mountains the Division was forced back to a thinly held blocking line from Castel del Rio to Budrio. Contact with Tenth Army was not established. (G.M.D.S. - 62241/1, Fourteenth Army, W.D. 4, 26 Sep 44). The situation on Tenth Army's front was summarized as follows:

As on the previous day, the fighting on the Army's extreme right wing is dependent on the development of the situation in the sector of its neighbour on the right. Severe fighting develops east of M. Croce. The enemy now extends his attacks as far as the road Marradi - Faenza. Enemy armoured reconnaissance is already on the mountain pass road at Bagno di Romagna too. With the arrival of 290 Gren Regt (98 Inf Div) in the battle area on the Army's right wing the front is now more densely occupied. But in spite of many attempts on the part of 51 Mtn Corps, contact with its western neighbour across the Army boundary cannot be established. Thus the danger of a further enemy penetration remains.

On the Adriatic the fighting between Via Emilia and the coast increases in severity, but up to now the enemy has gained but little ground. In expectation of a renewed major attack preceded by drumfire and massed bombs, the front is echeloned far to the rear, with the object of minimizing the otherwise unavoidable casualties.

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

140. In the day's telephone conversations the potential danger in the situation on the right wing was not being minimized, but nevertheless the centre of gravity was definitely recognized as continuing to be located on the Adriatic side. The Eighth Army seemed to be changing its method though, and the commander of 76 Pz Corps reported that the opponent seemed to deviate from the recent pattern of large-scale attacks and would maintain constant pressure with somewhat smaller forces. (Ibid). During the day the first transports from 94 Inf Div left Istria for Ferrara, where the Division was to be concentrated with all possible speed as an Army Group reserve. The first formation to be dispatched was 276 Gren Regt. (G.M.D.S. - 61437/15, Tenth Army, W.D. 8, Appx 23-26 Sep, Appx 1311, 1312 and 1313).

141. In a special message to all Corps and Divisional Commanders, General v. Vietinghoff on this day set forth the economic and military reasons which made it imperative to hold upper Italy as long as possible and to exact a heavy price for every foot of ground. He added that this task could not be carried out by mere routine procedure; but required sustained top performance in the art of command. A photostatic copy and a translation of the document appear as Appendix "O" to this report (G.M.D.S. - 61437/15, Tenth Army, W.D. 8, Appx 23-26 Sep, Appx 1310, 26 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D278)).

142. The infantry strength of Tenth Army at that time was roughly indicated in the Army's condition report for the week ending 25 Sep. Exclusive of 44 Inf Div, (now with Fourteenth Army) the Army comprised 92 battalions of varying strength:

Classification	Number of Battalions
Strong (over 400)	10
Fairly strong (below 400)	16
Average (below 300)	26
Weak (below 200)	21
Exhausted (below 100)	16
Dissolved	1
Unreported	2
<hr/>	
Total	92

Using statistical averages this would indicate a strength of approximately 21,500 men. It would be a reasonably safe estimate to say that the infantry strength of the Army at that time was definitely less than 25,000 men, and probably nearer to 20,000. A photostatic copy of this weekly report is being retained. Additional interest attaches to the document for the reason that it contains the names of the divisional commanders and their First Operations Officers at the time. (Ibid, Appx 1319, 25 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D279))

143. Contrary to expectations the inner wings of the two German Armies had hitherto been unable to heal the festering sore at the front. Any further deterioration would lead to the early interdiction of the vital Via Emilia. The War Diary of Fourteenth Army leaves no doubt that the situation on this day assumed the character of a grave crisis. 1 Para Corps was virtually exhausted. The designations of some of the reserves now being drummed up for dispatch to the front clearly betrayed their prospective ineffectiveness. M. Battaglia, Castel del Rio and M. Carnevale had been lost; only the advent of very bad weather or a change in plans by the enemy could mitigate the situation. Both of these eventualities did occur.

144. In the Adriatic sector steady pressure by 1 Cdn Corps forced 29 Pz Gren Div and 1 Para Div to begin wheeling back towards the Fiumicino (G.M.D.S. - 61437/16, W.D. 8, Appx 27-30 Sep; Appx 1337, tel cons 27 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D267)). 26 Pz Div reported heavy fighting and penetrations at S. Mauro. Very determined pressure was being exerted by 5 Brit Corps northwest of Poggio Berni. (Ibid,

Appx 1333, sit rep Tenth Army, 27 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10. (D252))

28 Sep

145. A prognosis of the role to be played by the weather in the months to come was seen in the copious rains which were drenching the front on this day. At the height of the difficult situation in the Santerno valley Kesselring had asked his Army commanders to attend a conference at his tactical headquarters. When the meeting began, at 1300 hrs on 28 Sep, pessimism had somewhat receded. The substance of the various declarations made on this occasion was recorded by Tenth Army in a memorandum. The document appears in photostatic and translated form as Appendix "P" to this report (G.M.D.S. - 61437/16, Tenth Army, W.D. 8, Appx 27-30 Sep, Appx 1349, 28 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D280)). On the whole the document represents a summation by an authoritative source of subject matter set forth in greater detail in preceding paragraphs. It corroborates v. Schramm's statements regarding the directives received by Kesselring at that time (see para 134).

146. On the eastern wing of Fourteenth Army further reverses were suffered to the right and left of Castel del Rio; in addition now the rear units of the formations there were engaged in heavy fighting with organized guerillas, but on the whole Fifth Army's attacks seemed to be lessening in intensity. (G.M.D.S. - 62241/1, Fourteenth Army, W.D. 4, 28 Sep 44). In the area of Tenth Army the day was characterized by the beginning of a series of futile and costly attempts to regain possession of the summit of M. Battaglia. Near the coast the fighting was fiercest in the sector of 90 Pz Gren Div in and at Savignano. Despite heavy rains 1 Cdn Corps maintained strong pressure. From Savignano to the coast the Germans were now deployed along the Fiumicino. 76 Pz Corps considered the day as a successful one for the defenders:

... In obstinate and sullen fighting ... our troops obtained a full defensive success. By the personal efforts of commanders the troops were carried forward time and again; enemy penetrations rolled back in counter-thrusts and counter-attacks, and the main line of resistance kept intact at the cost of high casualties on both sides. In several penetration areas fighting is still in progress.

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

Tenth Army's situation map for 28 and 29 Sep is being retained in photostatic form (G.M.D.S. - 61437/22, Tenth Army, sit maps 21-30 Sep, sit map 28 and 29 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D281)).

29 Sep

147. Fourteenth Army reported no engagements of consequence. Tenth Army moved its tactical headquarters from Pizzocalvo to Sabbioncello san Vittore (8 km south of Copparo). In the Main War Diary of the Army the day's events were summarized as follows:

Today the focal point of the fighting on the right wing is M. Battaglia, the possession of which is of decisive importance for the development of the defensive front in the present line. The defender, whose freedom of action is hampered from three sides, still occupies the castle ruins on the summit, which with the assistance of guerillas has been developed into a fortified stronghold.

Contact with the neighbouring Army has been established.

On the Adriatic front the ground is still very muddy and can be traversed by vehicles only with great difficulty. In spite of occasional fine intervals, the enemy air force remains inactive, presumably on account of soft runways. While additional enemy concentrations have been observed, the only fighting of any importance is taking place in the sector of 90 Pz Gren Div, where Savignano has been lost.

In view of the difficult terrain, even if the weather should clear up, the resumption of heavy fighting is not expected before 1 Oct.

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

30 Sep

148. Renewed attempts to retake the summit of M. Battaglia failed. Bad weather in the Adriatic sector prevented major operations. The German withdrawal across the lower Fiumicino had been carried out in the nick of time. At 1040 hrs Runkel said to Wentzell:

The crossing of the Rubicon[⊗] yesterday is said to have been something indescribable. Men drowned and some guns were literally washed away. ...

(G.M.D.S. - 61437/16, Tenth Army, W.D. 8, Appx 1387, tel cons 30 Sep 44) (Photostat 981A10.(D267))

Well-prepared situation maps of 51 Mtn Corps and 76 Pz Corps on 30 Sep are being retained in photostatic form (G.M.D.S. - 61437/22, Tenth Army, sit maps 21-30 Sep, sit maps 30 Sep, 51 Mtn Corps (Photostat 981A10.(D282)) and 76 Pz Corps (Photostat 981A10.(D283))).

149. A picture of the psychological-warfare methods employed by Tenth Army at the time is found in the detailed report for the month of September by the Propaganda Liaison Officer at the Headquarters of Tenth Army (G.M.D.S. - 62439/2,

⊗ On the available maps the name Uso is followed by the word "Rubicone". Runkel however was in possession of a map on which the Fiumicino was given as Rubicon, and following his telephonic suggestion references to the Rubicon were references to the Fiumicino (ibid, tel cons 29 Sep 44)