

OBJECTIVE... GOTHIC LINE



OP's kept the long vigil.

AFTER Rome fell, the 3rd, 36th and 45th divisions and the French were withdrawn to make the invasion of Southern France. For the Americans remaining in Italy there was plenty of unfinished business.

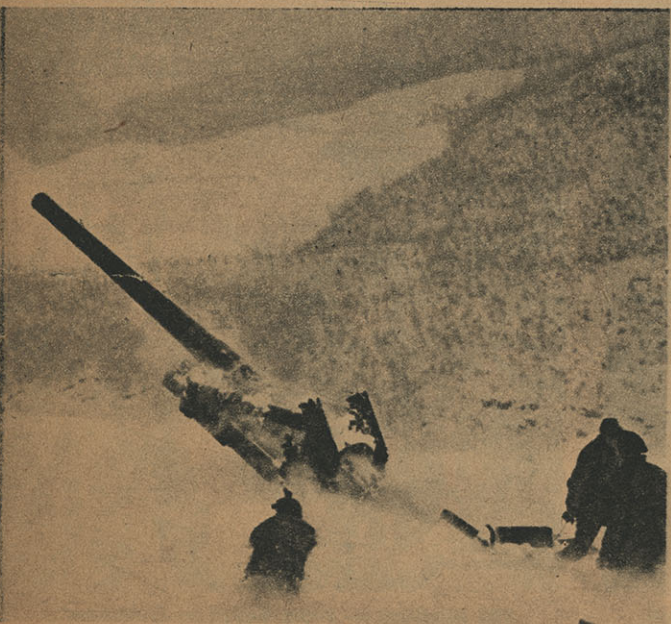
In one month the Fifth drove 150 miles north of Rome against spotty resistance. The 91st division reached the Arno river 18 July. By 10 September the full strength of the Fifth Army was drawn up before the center of the Gothic line.

Here the 34th, 85th, 88th and 91st divisions met the strongest prepared defenses of the entire campaign. The line was broken 17 September after four days of hard fighting.

As they had done at Salerno, Cassino and Anzio, the Krauts held on until they had been hit so hard and so often they had to give ground. For five long months the Fifth wintered in the high Apennines.



The long line of weary men.



Plenty of artillery blasted the way.



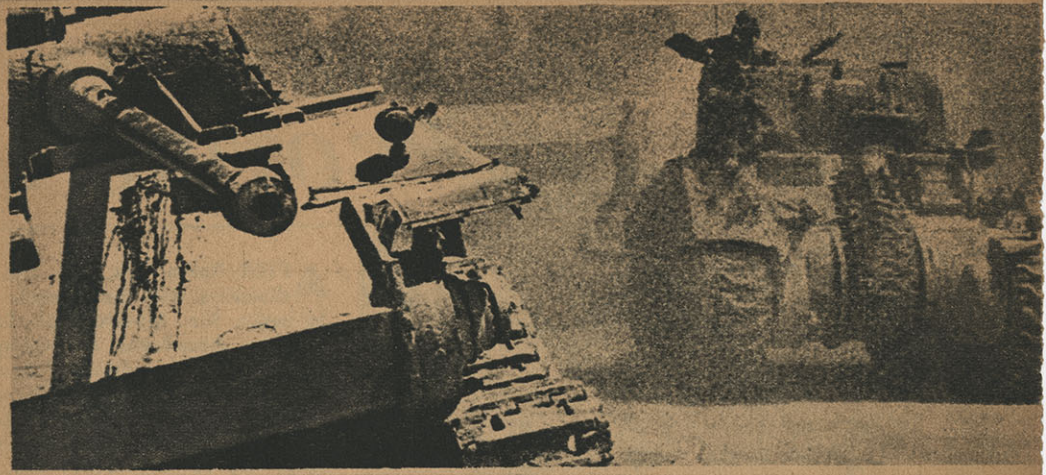
The Krauts knew what hit them.



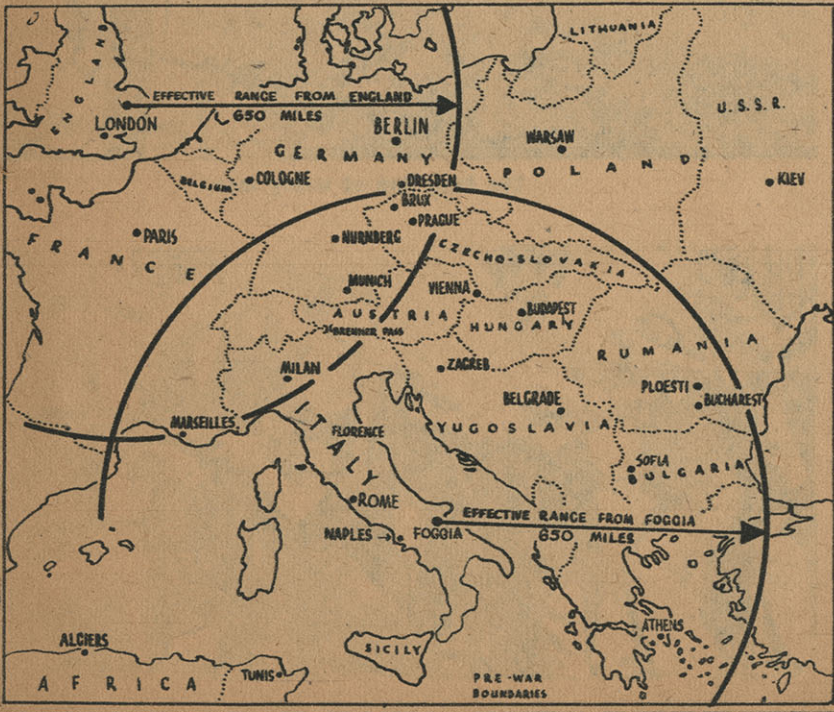
Italian Partisans helped free Florence.



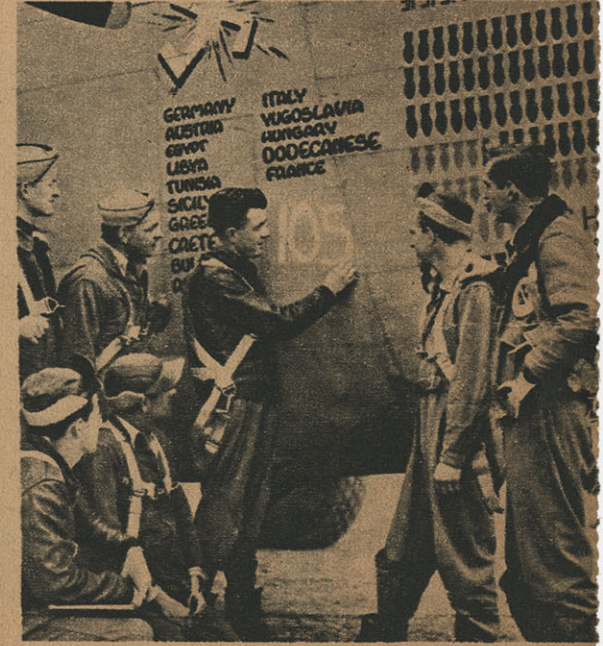
Knocked out German vehicles littered the roads north of Rome.



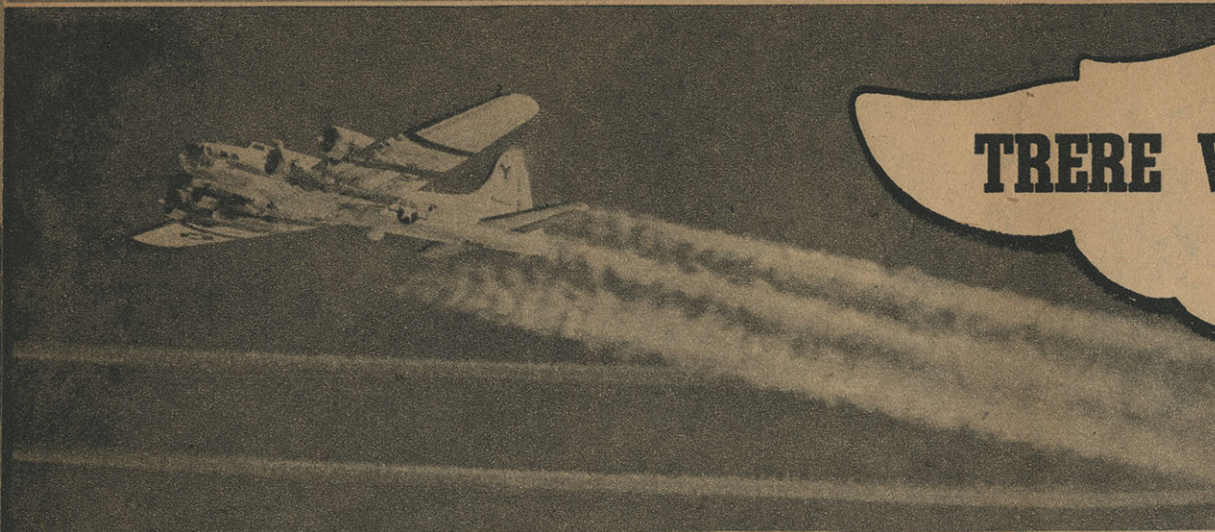
Smashed Panther tanks made everyone feel good.



This troop train caught Hell south of Florence.



105 Missions — From Egypt to Germany.



**THERE WAS MORE THAN ONE
FLAK ALLEY...**

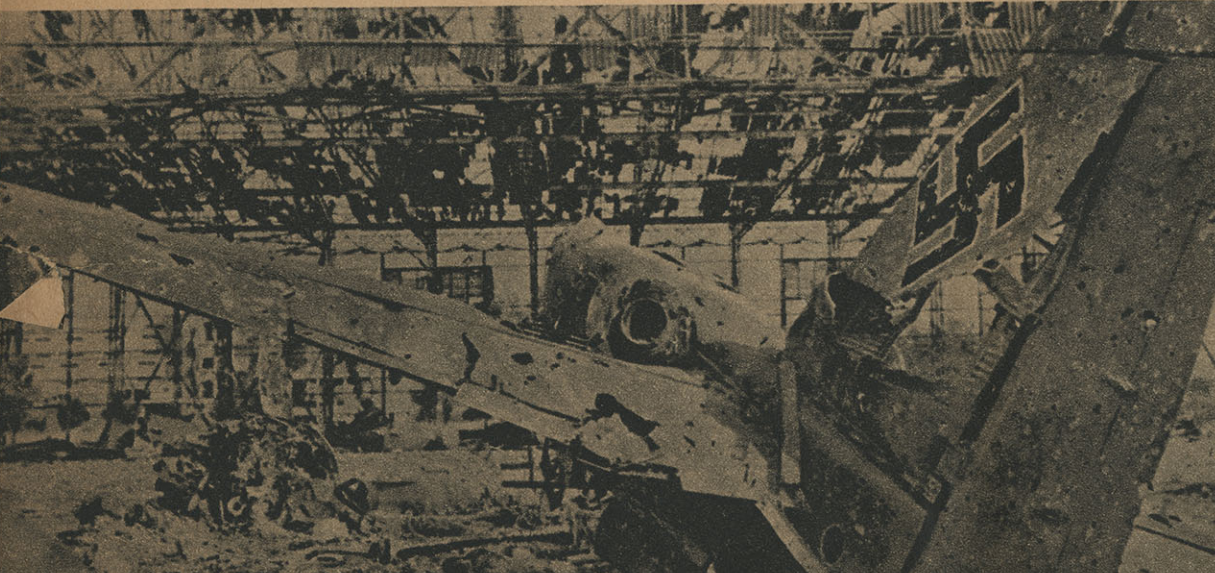
Flying Forts blazed their trails from Ploesti to Berlin.

GROWING from a few squadrons into two mighty airforces, American air power played its full share in the Mediterranean victories. Targets lay in Africa, Sicily, Italy, France, Austria, Yugoslavia, Greece, Roumania, Czechoslovakia, and Germany and the 12th and 15th air forces took them as they came.

As well as tactically supporting the ground troops, American airmen flying from Mediterranean bases participated in the great campaigns which crushed the Luftwaffe, strangled the German oil industry, and crippled the German transportation system.

For the men who flew the planes those missions meant sweating out flak and enemy fighters. For the men who kept the planes in the air there were long hours of work and long hours of waiting.

The lines of blasted German tanks and trucks, the demolished bridges, flattened railroad yards, and battered factories testified to the kind of job they did.



Wholesale destruction of the Luftwaffe was carried out in support of the May offensive.



Railroad yards were vital targets.

ATTACK! BREAKTHROUGH! ROME!

THE blow came from the south at 2300 11 May. After three bitter days the 85th and 88th divisions and the French Corps blasted the Gustav line from the Liri valley to the sea. The Beachhead divisions hacked their way out 12 days later and on 25 May leading elements of the forces coming up from the south made contact with men from Anzio.

The Krauts were badly beaten and the Fifth moved rapidly toward Rome. At dusk 4 June, special task forces moved into the city. The next morning the main body passed through — the first army in history to capture Rome from the south.

There were cheering crowds, flowers, vino and the prettiest girls seen in Italy up to that time. The men who had walked and fought all the way from Minturno and Cisterna took the reception in stride. In the afternoon they moved out of the city and back into the war.



Snipers caused plenty of trouble in Liri.



Romans thronged St. Peter's square to offer thanksgiving.



Italian civilians, who lived near the Gustav line, came out of the hills after seven months.



The final fight for Rome took place in the outskirts.



Crowds swarmed around every jeep.



Service troops were targets too.

Naples handled more tonnage than New York.

SUPPLIES KEPT COMING

WHEREVER the armies fought, supplies got there. For every man in the line were a number of others backing him up — unloading boats, driving trucks, repairing guns, directing traffic, building bridges, repairing railroads, and stringing communications.

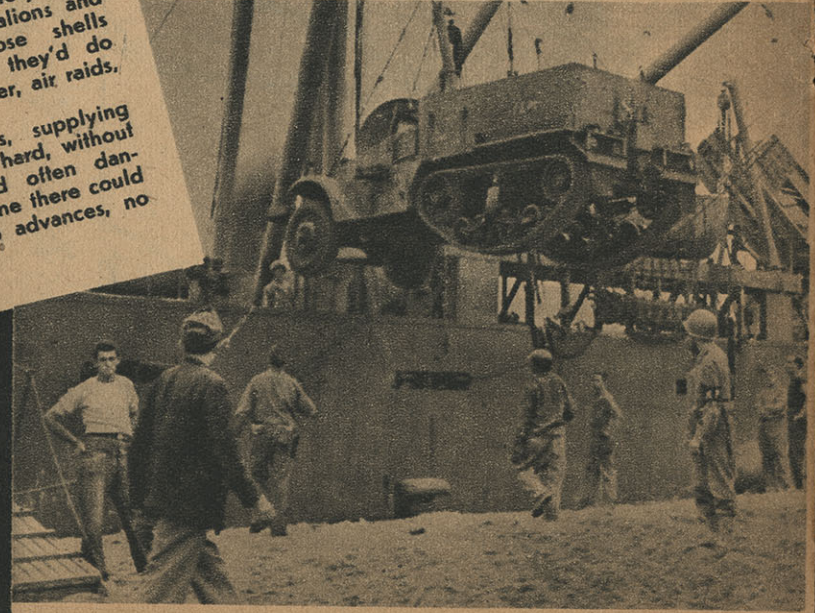
During one day at Salerno, three battalions of the 45th division artillery fired almost 7,000 rounds. Port battalions and shore engineers bucked those shells across the beaches to where they'd do some good despite bad weather, air raids, and artillery fire.

Throughout the campaigns, supplying the armies was monotonous, hard, without glamour or recognition and often dangerous. Had it not been done there could have been no landings, no advances, no victories.



MP's kept vital traffic moving.

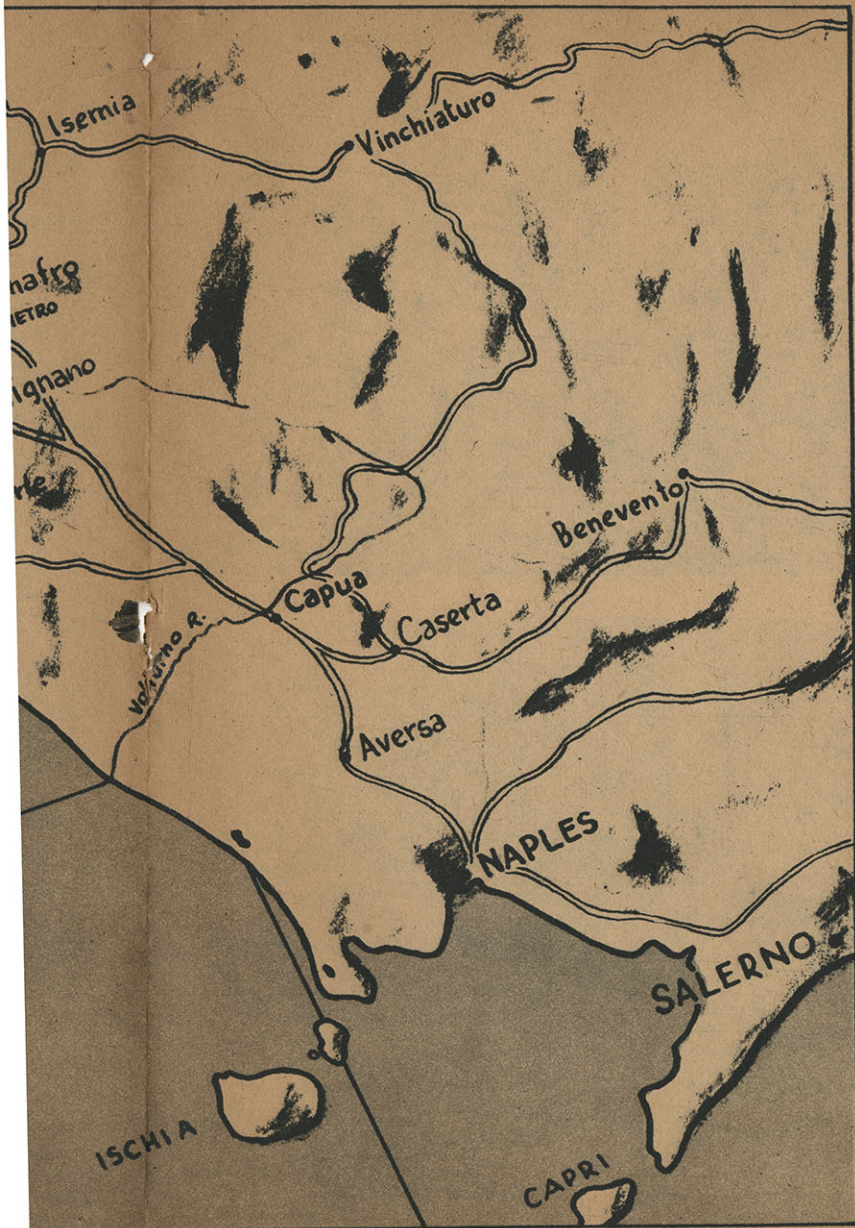
Engineers rebuilt the railroads.



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“PATROLS WERE ACTIVE”



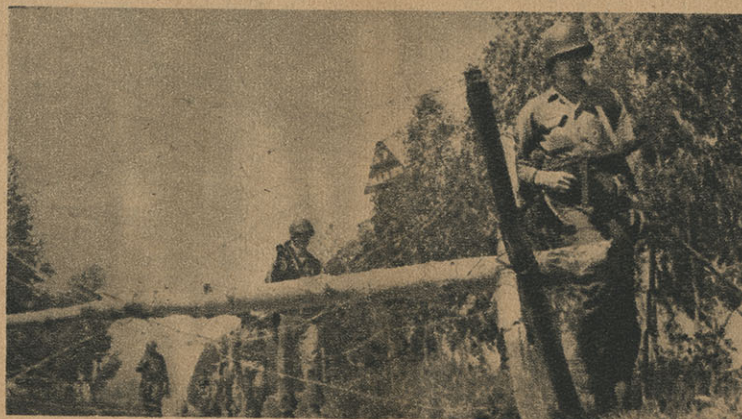
DURING the “static” periods, Fifth Army communiques laconically reported: “Patrols were active.” For the men who made those patrols there was enough activity to last a long while. It meant moving stealthily along a rocky path; sweating out ambushes; mines; and all the noises of night in no-man’s land. There were flares, fire-fights, mortars, artillery and Screaming Meemies, and men got hurt.

They sought information; looked for crossings along rivers; went for Kraut outposts; hunted Germans; and laid in ambush. It took a couple of hours to reach an objective and 20 minutes to come back. They went out whether it was raining or freezing cold. The weather made no difference.

They went out and patrols were active.



They went out in all kinds of weather.



Their objective was a German-held farmhouse at Anzio.



They always sweated out mines.



The Krauts always left mines.

MUD, MULES, MOUNTAINS, MINES, MEN

AMERICANS learned in Italy there was no easy way to win the war. It was brought home again and again that tanks, planes, and guns are just members of a team whose purpose is to make it possible for a dogface to crawl from one hole to another.

Italy was an infantryman's war. There was slimy, stinking mud that got in your shoes, your hair, and your chow. Ammunition, water and rations had to be hauled up by mules. There were mountains — Soprano, Maggiore, Cairo, Majo, Altuzzo, and Grande. There were mines wherever the Krauts could lay them — "S" mines, Schu mines, concrete mines, box mines, and Teller mines.

And there were men — Americans who sweated, feared and fought like Hell to knock the Krauts out of Italy.



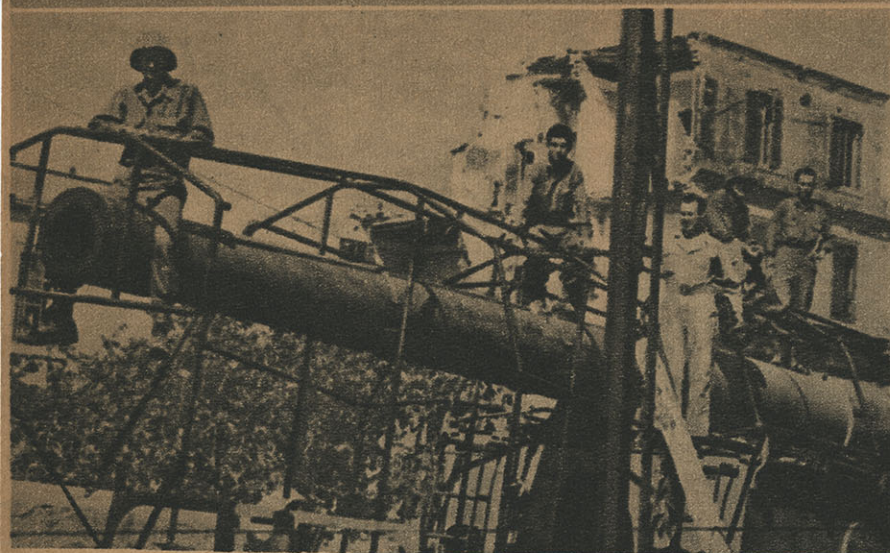
There were men—like the "One Many Army", Pvt. Alton Knappenberger (left), who won the Medal of Honor with the 3rd Division at Anzio.



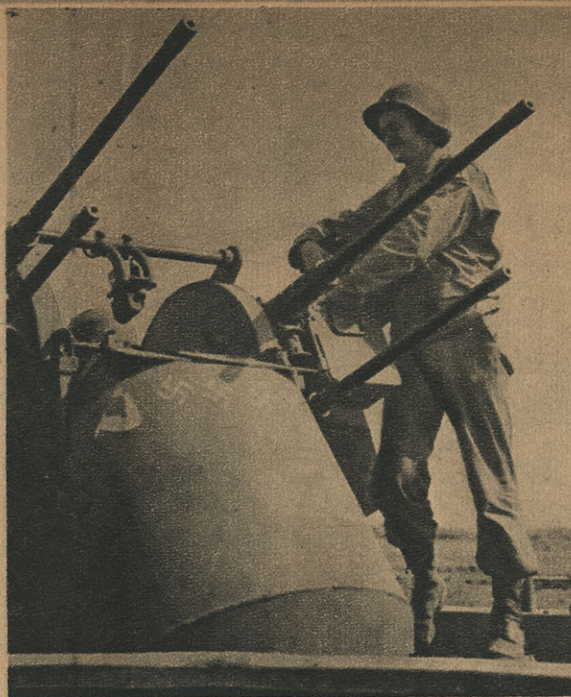
Mules carried everything from radios to rations.



10th Mountain Div. men had to use "vertical evacuation" to get their wounded down the cliffs.



The Germans threw everything they had at the Beachhead. One of their favorite weapons was a 280 mm railway gun. It was known as "the Anzio Express" and sounded like a freight train coming to a stop sideways. The air corps nailed "the Express" at Civitavecchia.



The Luftwaffe was unusually active. The ack-ack boys had plenty to do.



No one was safe at Anzio.

IT TOOK GUTS TO STAY AT ANZIO



The landings were lightly opposed.

ACROSS a flat, green, ditch-crossed beachhead, approximately 10 miles deep and 10 miles wide, American and British soldiers fought one of the bravest actions of the entire war.

The Fifth Army struck at Anzio, 31 miles south of Rome. The landings were made against light opposition 22 January. Eight days later when the 3rd Division and the Rangers attacked Cisterna, the Germans had ringed the Beachhead with six divisions. Our attacks were stopped cold.

German reinforcements rushed toward the Beachhead and during February and early March, the Krauts launched three great attacks to drive the Fifth Army back into the sea. Men of the 3rd, 45th and 1st Armored divisions, the 1st Special Service Force, and the British dug in and held.

Through April and May the Beachhead was in effect a dagger stabbing into the German right flank. During the drive on Rome, it was the key to victory.

**THEY
STOPPED US
AT CASSINO**

It took four full-scale attacks and four months to capture Cassino, strongest point in the enemy's Gustav line. The 36th division made the first bid by crossing the narrow Rapido river, south of the town. This action became known as "The Battle of Guts." When it was over, the 36th had lost heavily and was forced back to where it started from.

Four days later the 34th division crossed the river north of Cassino and stormed the hills overlooking the town. Through minefields and against deeply entrenched paratroopers, one regiment forced its way into the town. Another assaulted and captured

Hill 593 overlooking the famous Benedictine Abbey above the town.

Then the New Zealand Corps took over and on 15 February the Abbey was shattered by a heavy bombing attack. On 15 March Cassino was leveled under a great concentration of bombs. Still the Germans could not be driven out.

The Eighth Army moved into the Cassino sector 26 March. The long fight continued until 18 May when British forces took the town and Polish troops captured the Abbey. When this happened, the Gustav line ceased to exist.



Not a building remained intact.



British finally took the town.



The Germans used the Abbey as a fortress. Bombers demolished it.

PROGRESS BY YARDS

THE German retreat was bitter and deliberate. They used every trick in the book to delay our advance as they pulled back.

The 3rd, 34th, and 45th divisions forced the first crossing of the Volturno river on the night of 12/13 October. The weather was cold and rainy, the water chest deep and the current swift.

Mountain by mountain in rain and mud, grim battles were fought at Mignano, Venafro, Mt. Camino, Mt. Sammucro, San Pietro, San Vittore, Mt. Porchia, and Cervaro. Progress was made, but it was measured in yards. Casualties were heavy on both sides.

Finally, on 15 January 1944, men of the 34th division took Mt. Trocchio. Below, across the flat Rapido valley, lay the gray, undamaged buildings of a town called Cassino.



Volturno was crossed, bridged three times.



There was always "one more hill."



CP — wherever the CO sat down.



Where there was mud there were engineers.



Taking San Pietro was a three-day job.