



THE MOVEMENT OF 1 CDN INF DIV (25 FEB - 23 MAR 45)

29. The last elements of 1 Cdn Inf Div, which was commanded by Maj-Gen E.W. Foster, D.S.O., were relieved in the Serio line by 8 Ind Inf Div on 23 Feb. Main Divisional

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Headquarters was located at this time at Borghetto, west of Ravenna. On 25 Feb movement commenced from this sector to temporary concentration areas at Fermo and Macerata, about 150 miles down the Adriatic coast. Fermo was a decided and welcome change from long service in the field for most of the Division, and Headquarters personnel were loud in their praise of the accommodation provided for them.

Villa Vinci is a splendid mess and after our first night here we praise its comfort and love its good looks! Here, for the first time in months, we know once more what running water is, we hear with strange glee the flushing of a toilet! Our sleeping quarters are furnished, our dining room is big and not bare and both C and E mess are housed therein. A mess has separate quarters in an adjacent wing; Senior officers however, continue to sleep in their very comfortable caravans.

The Villa is owned by Countess Julia Vinci, nee Valdeschi. The Count was a Capt in the Italian Artillery but now a prisoner of war - he was caught by the British in Sidi Barani during Gen Wavell's campaign - was at one time Italian Minister to Ethiopia then to Hungary and was to go to Buenos Aires as Italian Ambassador when war was declared.

Fermo which we take in on a sort of sight-seeing tour is a pleasant little place, which has not been touched by war. It is clean, tidy, well kept. There are many descents and ascents and seldom if ever does one find oneself on even ground. The town is very old, one of the oldest in Italy; it was founded in 738 B.C., now has a population of 15,000 and is the proud possessor of no less than 22 churches, a rather large proportion, but this is Italy, the country of churches.

(W.D., G.S., H.Q. 1 Cdn
Inf Div, 25 Feb 45)

30. From Fermo the Division moved to Leghorn on a road route through Foligno and Pontassieve with a night's staging in each place. Carriers, half-tracks and 17-pr guns were shipped from Rimini. With an estimated strength of 19,500 personnel, the rate of movement was set at approximately 300 wheeled vehicles per day, carrying 1200 troops but A.F.H.Q. gave authority to increase the size of each vehicle's load. The first flight of wheels consisting of 251 vehicles carrying 1652 personnel, left Fermo on 28 Feb; other flights of like size left on succeeding days with few interruptions, until 12 Mar when the thirteenth and final flight was despatched for Leghorn. (Preliminary Report on Exercise "GOLDFLAKES", para 5 (e))

31. While the concentration of 1 Cdn Inf Div at Harrod's Camp was proceeding, embarkation for Marseilles commenced on 7 Mar, and within two weeks the complete Division had left Italy. On arrival in France, the wheeled convoys were soon rolling northward to Belgium, where Divisional Headquarters were established for a short period in Itegem. On 4 Apr the Division moved into Germany, under command of 2 Cdn Corps for its first operation - "CANNONSHOT" - in North-West Europe. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 1 Cdn Inf Div, 4 Apr 45)