

ITALIAN BRIDGEHEAD:

(By Vaughan Thomas representing the Combined British Press)

With the Fifth Army in Italy

Allied Beachhead Forces

April 16th

The raid carried out on the morning of April 15 with our forces on the small hamlet of Cerreto and also three miles south of Littoria was a most effective small scale action. Our men with the support of tanks moved off at first light. Their objectives were strong points built by the enemy in farmhouses. Surprise was complete. Tanks and infantry worked together and advanced so swiftly that the enemy put up little opposition.

Over sixty prisoners were taken, among them a company commander with sergeant major and clerks who tried to hide in a cabbage field. In one house fifteen Germans still suffering from a hangover after a party the night before. They are now sobering up in our prisoners' cages.

Lieutenant T.C. Gordon said "We went by them so fast that I passed some of them still lying doggo under their sleeping blankets. One bird was so surprised that as soon as he saw us he just pulled his hand grenades out of his pocket and quietly handed them over."

Not one of the prisoners resented his capture. On the whole they were of poor quality. We suffered no casualties.

The raid lasted six hours and the fact that it took place in daylight may have caught the enemy on the wrong foot. The whole affair was a most satisfactory proof of the hitting power of the Fifth Army at the beachhead.

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