

MS # D-095

29th Panzer Grenadier Division (30 Jul 1943)
[German Counterattack at Motta, Sicily]

(Generalmajor Max Ulich)

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Translated by Howard G. Smyth

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Deutscher Gegenangriff bei Motta (suedwestlich S. Stefano) am 30.7.1943.

(German Counterattack at Motta July 30, 1943.)

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MS # D-095. Generalmajor Max Ulich, Deutscher Gegenangriff bei Motta (suedwestlich St. Stefano) am 30.7.1943. (German counterattack at Motta July 30, 1943.)

Garmisch, May 19, 1947. Written from memory.-

In the American account "The 45th," the stubborn, strong German resistance for several days at "Bloody Ridge" at Motta near S. Stefano is emphasized.

The following brief exposition shows that this combat will also be remembered by the German troops as particularly hard.

I.- The Situation.

1.- By the evening twilight of 29 July the 45th American Division with its distinct superiority in artillery and heavy weapons had succeeded in gaining ground along the coastal road and in penetrating into the German defensive position southwestward of S. Stefano.

2.- Thru an Italian-speaking German soldier, who was in Pettineo in civilian clothes disguised as a goatherd, it was verified that the strong enemy in and near this place was making ready for an attack on 29 July.

We therefore had to reckon with continuation of the American attack in the direction of S. Stefano and Motta on 30 July -- as a result of previous experiences probably toward noon.

3.- Within the framework of the whole defense a withdrawal of the 29th Panzer Grenadier Division over the road S. Stefano - Mistretta toward the east could not be begun before the night 30 - 31 July. Therefore it devolved on us to stiffen the defense on the dominating high ground near Motta and to keep this terrain firmly in hand until the evening of 30 July.

The unfavorable course of the then advanced (forward) line and above all the danger of a hostile penetration along the coast road moved (induced) the C.G. of the 29th Panzer Grenadier Division to the decision to employ a counterattack in order to clear the enemy out of the high ground northwest of Motta.

For the execution of their attack the 2nd Battalion, 71st Panzer Grenadier Regiment, and 2nd and 3d Battalions of 29th Artillery Regiment were attached to the 15th Panzer Grenadier Regiment. Time for beginning the attack was set at early morning of 30 July.

II.- The Counterattack.

1.- Then stood available for the counterattack:

- a) Parts of 3d Bn, 15th Panzer Grenadier Regiment
- b) Engineer Platoon of 15th Panzer Grenadier Regiment
- c) 1 s.I.G. Zug (Heavy Infantry ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ^{Gun} platoon) of 15th Panzer Grenadier Regiment
- d) 2nd Bn, 71st Panzer Grenadier Regiment
- e) 2nd and 3d Bns, 29th Artillery Regiment.

2.- The order to attack was given at 1-00 on 30 July.

3.- The position of readiness of 2nd Bn, 71st Panzer Grenadier Regiment was made soon afterwards hard to the north of Motta; it was completed at 3:30.

4.- The attack jumped off at 4:30 without preparatory fire -- to the enemy it was committed with surprise -- and at first the attack had good success.

5.- For the organization (Gliederung) of the attack and its direction see Overlay # 1.

III.- Results.

1.- After initial considerable success then developed strong defensive fire of all weapons of the enemy, and also from the area of Pettineo.

The German attack went no further forward, for in this terrain a support by artillery and heavy weapons was very difficult. The losses were relatively high. The continuation of the attack was called off.

For the line which was reached see Overlay # 3.

2.- This limited success had the result that during the course of 30 July the enemy undertook no attack.

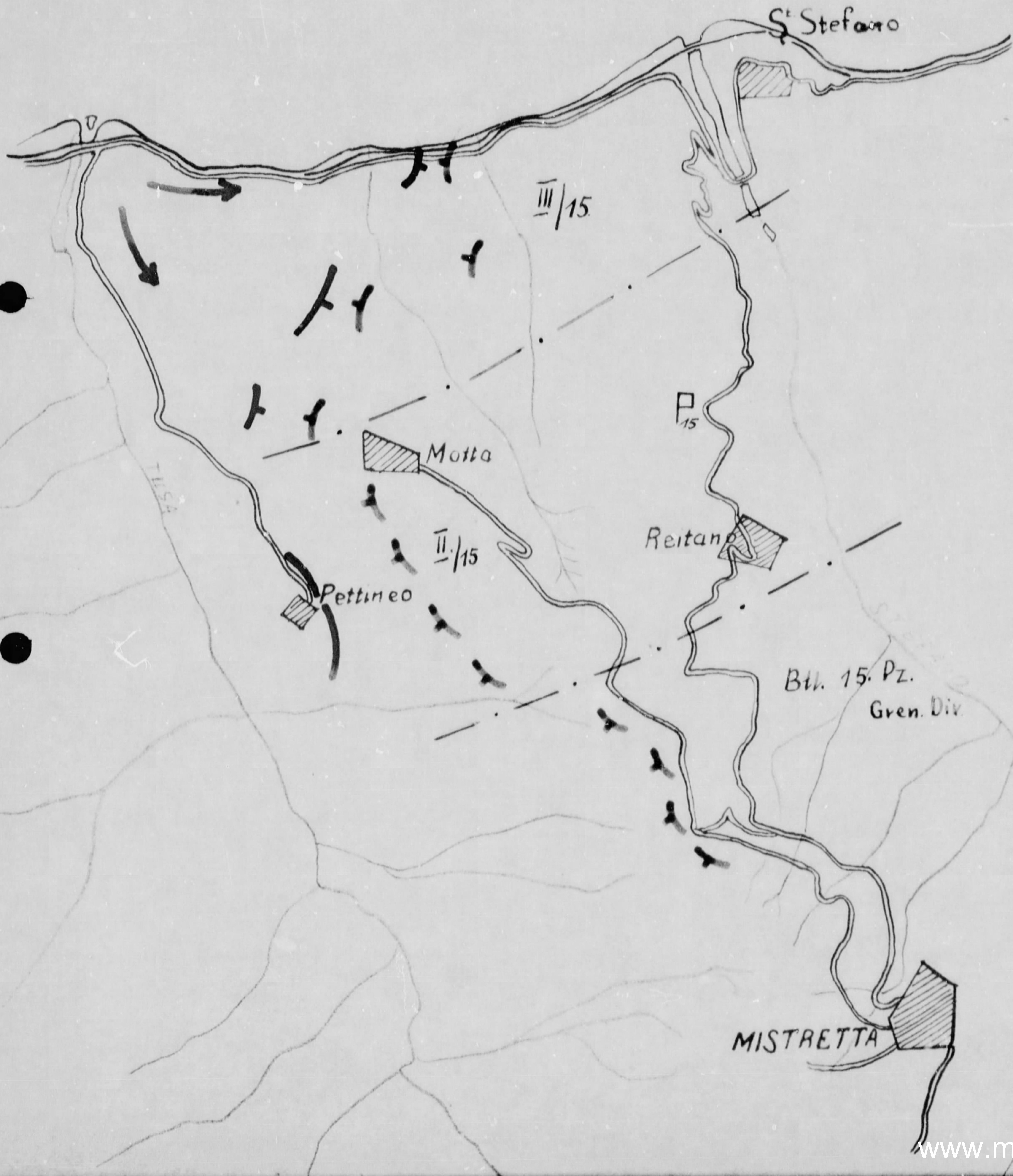
The withdrawal of all parts of 29th Panzer Grenadier Division along the San Stefano - Mistretta road toward the east was executed during the night 30 - 31 July without friction.

IV.- Judgment.

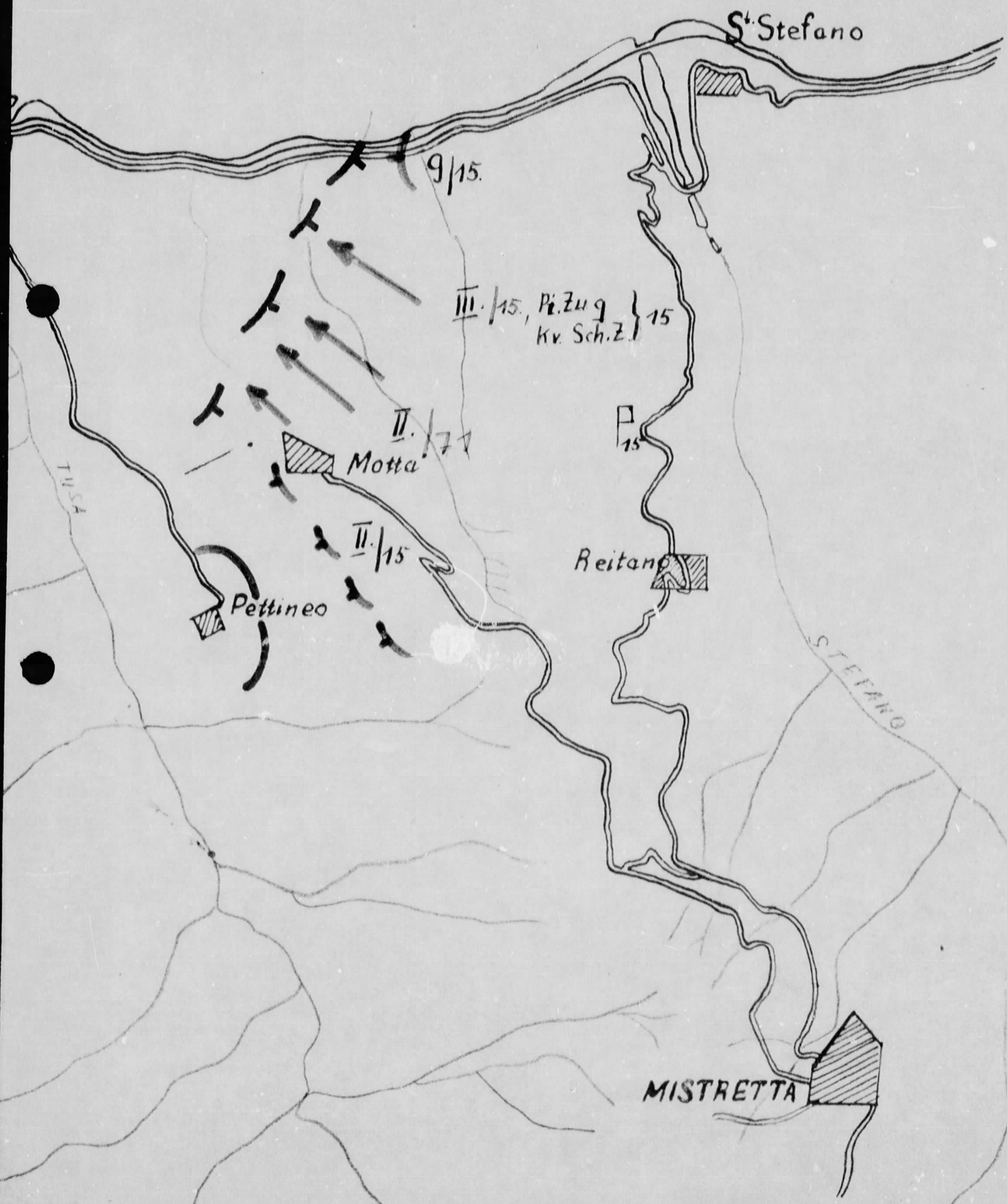
The battle which was fought hard on both sides but fair shows that the expression "Bloody Ridge" is accurate.

Ulich.-

Skizze Nr. 1.



Skizze Nr. 2



Skizze Nr. 3.

