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THE INVASION OF SICILY

The following Despatch was submitted to the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force on the 1st January, 1944, by Admiral of the Fleet Sir ANDREW B. CUNNINGHAM, G.C.B., D.S.O.

*Office of the Commander-in-Chief,
 Mediterranean.*

1st January, 1944.

I have the honour to forward the accompanying reports on the Invasion of Sicily. Many of these reports have been forwarded previously to the appropriate authorities in order that there should be no delay in the digestion and application of the "lessons learnt." The reports of the naval Task Force Commanders, and of the Vice-Admiral Commanding, Force "H"*, are very full and carefully compiled, giving a complete narrative of the operation in all its stages, and summarising a wealth of experience in the sound conclusions they have reached and suggestions they have offered.†

2. It is not my intention to add a further narrative to those already written nor to do more than comment on salient points of importance. Except in so far as stated in the succeeding paragraphs, I concur fully in the suggestions and recommendations of the Force Commanders.

Planning.

3. The following outstanding lesson emerged from the planning stage of this operation.

4. It is essential, if much time is not to be wasted and much confusion caused, that the responsible Commanders-in-Chief, together

with the Task Force Commanders who will be responsible for the tactical conduct of the battle; should meet at the outset for the discussion and evolution of a sound basic plan which should not thereafter be changed except for reasons of exceptional urgency, such as a complete change in the enemy's dispositions or a major strategic upheaval.

5. In the case of "Husky"* this was not done, since both General Alexander and General Montgomery were absorbed in the Tunisian battle. In consequence, although the operation was authorised on 23rd January and combined planning headquarters set up on 12th February, the final firm plan was not approved until the 12th May. Thus, although five months were available for perfecting plans for the operation, all detailed planning had in fact to be compressed into two months, resulting in some confusion and considerable unnecessary duplication in the issue of orders.

6. It cannot be too clearly recognised that a combined operation is but the opening, under particular circumstances, of a primarily army battle. It is the function of the navy and of the air to help the army to establish a base or bases on the hostile coast from which the military tactical battle to gain the object must be developed. It is upon the army tactical plan for the fulfilment of its object that the combined plan must depend. The navy and the air commanders must join with the army commander to ensure that the base or bases selected for seizure are capable of achievement without prohibitive loss in their respective elements, and that, when seized, they will fulfil the requirements of the force; but it is of no use to plan on the seizure of bases unrelated to the realities of the military situation when ashore.

Admiralty footnotes:

* Force "H"—a British naval force under the command of Vice-Admiral A. U. Willis, C.B., D.S.O., which was employed as a covering force for this operation.

† Only the report and narrative of operations of the Naval Commander, Eastern Task Force are reproduced here.

Admiralty footnote:

* "Husky" was the code name for this operation.

7. It was upon this point that the initial planning of "Husky" broke down. It may be that the earlier plans would have succeeded equally well; but the fact remains that these plans in the end proved unacceptable to the army leaders called upon to fight the tactical battle for the object, and that, had it been possible for those leaders fully to study the tactical aspect at the outset, the undesirable last minute changes would have been saved.

8. A further point is that in the initial planning great weight was lent to the value of airborne troops for the softening of beach defences. The conditions of light required for the employment of paratroops were inimical to the secure and undetected approach of naval forces. As the result of much discussion and in view of the importance attached to the airborne attack, the date selected for the assault was one which was not favourable from the naval point of view. In fact the airborne troops were never used in the manner projected, but that they were not to be so used did not emerge until it was too late to change the date. In consequence, the navies, for no advantage, had to accept a disadvantageous light for approach, and a subsequent period of moonlit nights off the beaches which could have been avoided.

9. The Naval Commander Western Task Force comments at length and stringently on this subject in his report.* While I do not in all respects agree with his estimate of the effectiveness of naval gunfire, I concur generally in his remarks, and, in particular, in questioning the wisdom of attaching a high degree of importance in the plan to the employment of airborne troops. A seaborne assault is unalterably committed to a date for some days in advance of D day. In tidal waters it is even more inflexibly bound by time and tide. It may well be that, on the selected date, airborne troops are weatherbound and cannot operate. It does, therefore, appear most necessary that airborne troops should be considered as a useful auxiliary rather than as a governing factor which may react to the disadvantage of other services involved.

10. Apart from the use of airborne troops, many other factors affect the selection of D day and H hour†: but a dominating factor must always be the high casualty rate inflicted by aimed machine-gun fire. Unless it can be guaranteed to the army that the enemy beach defences can be neutralised by naval gunfire or air attack or both—or by smoke—it is felt that darkness will always be chosen for the first waves to reach the beach. "Husky" gave but poor opportunity for judging the soundness of our choice since surprise was unexpectedly attained; but it is felt that, had the enemy been resolute and alert, it would have required more than the gun support actually available if the soldiers were to be landed in daylight without heavy casualties. Bomber forces were not available since they were occupied in neutralising the enemy air forces.

Admiralty footnotes:

* The Western Task Force was an American Task Force under the command of Vice-Admiral H. K. Hewitt, U.S.N. The publication of the report of the Naval Commander Western Task Force is a matter for the United States Navy Department, and this report is therefore not included here.

† H hour—the time at which it is planned that the first wave of landing craft should "touch down" on the beach for the assault.

Preparation, Training and Mounting.

11. The training and mounting of "Husky" proceeded under difficulties, particularly in the case of Force "B"* of the Eastern Task Force, and to a lesser extent of the Western Task Force. Both these forces had to establish their base facilities in captured ports which had been considerably demolished, namely Sfax and Sousse for Force "B", and Bizerta and Tunis for the Western Task Force. Great credit is due to all concerned that these difficulties were ably surmounted in the time available. Force "B", in addition to other difficulties, was faced at short notice with the task of capturing Pantellaria but the task was taken in its stride and successfully accomplished without prejudice to "Husky", of which operation indeed it was an essential preliminary.

12. The reception and absorption in the station of the great number of landing ships and craft, and the establishment of their bases, presented a heavy problem to both navies. The probable performance of these craft, manned as they were by new and inexperienced officers and men but recently enrolled in their respective services, gave cause for some anxiety, and in the early stages of training they caused some slight wavering of confidence among the troops they were to land. The manner in which they buckled to and met and overcame their inexperience can best be measured by what they achieved, and deserves the highest praise.

13. Another cause of anxiety at this stage was the large demand for movement of troops, airmen and vehicles to their staging points or bases for the attack. This involved heavy and continuous running by the landing craft at times when they should have been training, and fear was felt, not only that their training would be inadequate, but that their engines would not stand the strain. These fears were happily disproved, and in fact the sea training provided by these voyages must have stood them in good stead. That the craft themselves withstood the extra wear and tear is a tribute to those who designed and built them.

14. Additional difficulties in the way of training and mounting arose from late arrival of craft and material. This was particularly so in the case of Force "A"† of the Eastern Task Force which received its L.S.T.s‡ extremely late and had little or no opportunity of trying and practising with pontoons. This portion of the force was also separated by 900 miles from the L.C.T.s§ which were to form a part of its assault. A high standard of staff work was required to knit these scattered components into an operational whole.

15. The Western Task Force was more fortunate in that opportunities for training and mounting were undisturbed, and all ships were concentrated. Although this force also suffered to some extent from late arrivals and rushed planning, as compared with the Eastern Task Force the Western Task Force was much better placed since the U.S. warships came into the Mediterranean for the specific purpose of the operation, and only very slight calls were

Admiralty footnotes:

* Force "B"—a British Task Force under the command of Rear-Admiral R. R. McGrigor, C.B.

† Force "A"—a British Task Force under the command of Rear-Admiral T. H. Troubridge, D.S.O.

‡ L.S.T.—Landing Ship, Tank.
§ L.C.T.—Landing Craft, Tank.

made upon them for extraneous duties on the station. In the case of the Eastern Task Force, all ships, belonging as they did to the normal forces of the station, were heavily and continuously employed right up to the date of sailing for the operation, and in but few cases took part in any rehearsal or training. That their duties were performed so adequately when the time came reflects highly alike on the adaptability of their ships' companies and on the standard of maintenance achieved in spite of many months of arduous service at sea.

Collection of Beach Intelligence.

16. Much credit is due to the officers and men of the beach reconnaissance parties for their arduous and hazardous effort to obtain details of the beach gradients and sand bars. Credit is also due to the submarines of the 8th and 10th Flotillas which worked on beach reconnaissance in company with these parties.

Their casualties in this operation were unfortunately heavy; apart from natural dislike of such losses, the possibility of capture always gives rise to anxiety on grounds of security.

Location of Headquarters.

17. Much discussion was devoted to the best location for the combined headquarters from which the three Commanders-in-Chief should conduct the operation. Various alternatives were explored in an effort to find a common site satisfactory to all, but in the end communications problems, and, to a lesser extent, lack of suitable accommodation, caused an undesirable dispersion in that though the navy and army headquarters moved to Malta from Algiers, the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief found himself unable to move from his existing headquarters at Marsa, where he was in close touch with his main forces.*

I am sure Malta was a wise choice from both naval and army viewpoints, and apart from an unexpected assault of sandflies which devastated my staff, the arrangements were in all respects excellent.

18. The separation of the Commanders did not in the event have serious reaction, but was manifestly undesirable and might have proved extremely awkward had things begun to go awry. In particular the navy and the air are closely interdependent in a sea assault, and with the exception of the coastal air component, the air plans of the operation had all along appeared to the other services to be somewhat nebulous, and their day-to-day exposition was necessary to make the picture clear.

The Approach and Assault.

19. The co-ordination and timing necessary to ensure the punctual concentration of this vast force in the assault areas, presented a problem of some complexity. The problem was to some degree complicated by the great distances over which the forces were initially dispersed†, by the need for deceptive routeing

to avoid disclosure of intention, by the bottleneck presented by the Tunisian war channel, and, finally, by the requirement for topping up the fuel of escort vessels before their arrival in the assault area.

Very detailed orders were issued regarding the routes and timing of the approach, backed up by track charts and the inevitable "Mickey Mouse" diagrams which are in my view essential to the clear understanding of a problem of this nature. Even so, everything depended, as always, on the seamanship and good sense of individual commanding officers and on the smooth working of the berthing and fuelling organisations of the several ports concerned.

My confidence in their abilities was not misplaced. The operation ran like a well-oiled clock.

20. The only incidents which occurred to mar the precision of this remarkable concentration were the loss by submarine attack of four ships in convoy, the CITY OF VENICE and ST. ESSYLT in K.M.S. 18B on the 4th July, the DEVIS in K.M.S. 18B on 5th July, and the SHAHJEHAN in M.W.S. 36 on the 6th July. The passage of the convoys was covered most effectively by the operations of the North-West African Coastal Air Force, of No. 201 (Naval Co-operation) Group, of squadrons operating under Air Headquarters Air Defence, Eastern Mediterranean, and, on D-1 day, of the North-West African Tactical Air Force Squadrons based on Malta. Their problem was one of a complexity equal to our own. It was solved with conspicuous success, since no bomb was dropped on any convoy—the majority were not sighted by enemy aircraft—and all reports showed that the fighter cover was excellent.

21. An aspect of the approach which caused me concern was the slow speed of the L.C.T. convoys, and the necessity for their arrival at the assault beaches well before first light to provide the supporting arms the army needed. Throughout the planning stages, the estimates of speed of advance allowable for L.C.T. convoys had continually to be lowered as experience was gained. In the end it became clear that not more than 5½ knots could be counted upon in safety, even in calm weather. I was not sanguine of our ability to maintain surprise at any time after 1200 on D-1, since it appeared beyond doubt that the enemy must by then become aware of our concentration south of Malta: but it appeared to be beyond the wildest expectation that he should be unaware of the L.C.T. convoys which must be within 20 miles of his coast at sunset.

It is, I suggest, a matter of urgency that some means be devised of landing supporting arms at an early stage from craft whose speed is at least in the region of that of the average infantry assault ship, if tactical surprise is to be aimed at.

22. Little anxiety had been felt on the score of weather, which is so rarely bad in the Mediterranean at this time of year. Nevertheless, plans had been made whereby a postponement of 24 hours could, if necessary, be ordered as late as 1200 on D-1. Beyond this time it was felt impracticable to disturb the march of events, and it was also expected that in the event the weather would have sufficiently disclosed its intentions by this time.

Air Ministry footnote:

* Besides the accommodation and communications difficulties mentioned, time did not permit of the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief changing the elaborate arrangements for controlling the air operations from Marsa.

Admiralty footnote:

† Some of the British assault force was sailed from Egypt and the First Canadian Division from the Clyde. Part of the American assault force was mounted in the U.S.A., making only a short call at Algiers and Oran on passage to the assault beaches.

Such was not the case however—at 1200 D—1 the wind was blowing force 4 from the north-west but there was no evidence of imminent increase and no question of postponement arose. By 1700 the wind was force 6 to 7* and a nasty sea had risen. It was manifestly too late for postponement but considerable anxiety was felt, particularly for the small craft convoys making up against the sea. The wind mercifully started to ease from 2330 onwards, by H hour it was slight, and by morning had ceased, leaving only a tiresome swell and surf on the western beaches.

Attainment of Surprise.

23. This little blow had various effects but the most noteworthy was its contribution to our unexpected success in gaining complete surprise. The very efficient cover plan and the deceptive routing of the convoys both played their parts. In addition the vigilance of the enemy was undoubtedly relaxed owing to the unfavourable phase of the moon to which we had been so unwillingly subjected. Finally came this wind which indeed came dangerously close at one time to making some, if not all, of the landings impracticable. These last two, to us, apparently unfavourable factors had actually the effect of making the weary Italians, who had been alert for many nights, turn thankfully in their beds saying "tonight at any rate they can't come!"

But they came.

The Landings.

24. In consequence of the wind not all assault waves reached the beach at H hour, but none was seriously late. Some of the L.C.T. convoys were very late, the most being that for BARK EAST† which was six hours late, having furthest to go against the wind. One L.C.T. was swamped and capsized. The performance of the small craft of both nations in this period was most creditable. They made valiant efforts to keep their rendezvous and in large measure were successful.

25. The assaults were landed in all sectors in the right place, nearly at the right time and with negligible opposition. In some areas some interference was encountered after daylight from coast defence and shore batteries, but in most cases they were readily silenced by ships' gunfire and the landings proceeded steadily with no appreciable interference other than the swell.

The Western Task Force, on their exposed western beaches, bore the brunt of opposition both by gunfire and surf, the latter particularly at CENT‡ beaches which were most nearly a lee shore. Losses of craft by broaching in this area were considerable. That the surf was in no wise allowed to interfere with the smooth progress of the landing reflects highly on the determination, resource and sound training of the Western Task Force.

Admiralty footnotes:

* Definitions in the Beaufort scale of windforce—

Force 4—moderate breeze (11–15 m.p.h. at sea level);

Force 6—strong breeze (21–26 m.p.h. at sea level);

Force 7—high wind (27–33 m.p.h. at sea level).

† BARK EAST—one of the British assault beaches (see Plan).

‡ CENT and DIME—American assault beaches, west of the Eastern Task Force assault area. DIME beaches were in the vicinity of Gela; CENT beaches were south-east of Gela, at places between DIME and Cape Scalambri.

26. After the landings the troops moved steadily inland on both fronts, apparently encountering but little opposition except inland of Gela in the DIME* area of the Western Task Force, where the floating reserve (Kool Force) was ordered to be landed in support. A determined counter attack by the Hermann Goering Panzer Division started to develop in this area from 0900 on D day and had some success, reaching almost to the beaches on the evening of D + 1. Naval gunfire played a prominent and praiseworthy part in stopping and turning this attack, being notably effective against tanks. By 2230 on D + 1 the situation had been restored and no further serious threat to the security of our bridge-heads developed.

Syracuse was entered by our troops at 2100 D day and the port swept and open by 0830 D + 1.

Air Action during the Assault.

27. The degree of air opposition encountered in the assault and later could by no means be described as serious; but caused some casualties among shipping and had some nuisance value.

In this respect the Western Task Force was less fortunate than the Eastern Task Force and was somewhat bothered, particularly by fighter bomber aircraft coming low over the hills from inland in such a manner as to evade detection by radar.

28. The provision of S.E.† fighter cover in the assault areas prior to the capture of adequate Sicilian airfields, presented a difficult problem to the Air Command, with only the limited airfield facilities of Malta, Gozo and Pantellaria lying within reasonable fighter range. The number of fighter sorties necessary to maintain even squadron strength in both assault areas was prodigious.

The Air Command had to strike a balance in the allotment of their resources between the value of defensive patrols and offensive action at the enemy airfields—both having the same object—the security of the assault from enemy air interference.

It was pointed out in my operation order that much of the air's effort would be unseen by the naval forces, and the strength of fighters to be expected was outlined.

29. By results I consider that the air appreciation was proved sound. To one who had fought through the Mediterranean campaign from the beginning it appeared almost magical that great fleets of ships could remain anchored on the enemy's coast, within 40 miles of his main aerodromes, with only such slight losses from air attack as were incurred.

The navies (and consequently the armies) owed a great debt to the air forces for the effectiveness of the protection afforded them throughout the operation. Nevertheless, there was palpably room for improvement in the close air cover of the assault areas, and, in particular, in the effectiveness of the liaison between the Naval Force Commanders and the fighter forces upon which they had to rely. This improvement was in fact effected in the next major amphibious operation which was undertaken in this theatre.

Admiralty footnote:

* (See foot note † of previous column.)

† S.E.—single engined.

Routeing of Troop-carrying Aircraft.

30. The routeing of aircraft carrying airborne troops to the attack was, from the beginning, recognised as presenting an awkward problem. Allowance was made in the naval approach plan, in conference with Air Plans, for a gap between assault convoys north of Malta through which the troop-carrying aircraft could approach and return without flying over convoys. These routes were promulgated in my operation orders.

In fact these attacks were delivered without interference between naval and air forces involved; but it was not until D - 3 that the airborne troops' plans became firm and that troop-carrier command were able finally to confirm the suitability of routes passing through the corridor laid down so long before.

These late decisions were in large measure due to the late crystallisation of the military tactical plan already referred to in paragraphs 5 to 7 above.

31. Later, airborne troop missions were flown on the night 10th/11th July to the Gela area and on the night 13th/14th July to the Catania area.

In the first instance, an ingress corridor over a deserted portion of coast between the two task forces was allotted and promulgated by signal. The aircraft were to fly inland by this corridor and withdraw passing to the north and west of Licata, well clear of the Western Task Force. In fact, owing to heavy ground A.A. fire and possibly due to bad navigation, large numbers of aircraft forsook the route and flew over the Western Task Force assault areas concurrently with an enemy air attack. Considerable losses resulted.

In the second instance, decision to carry out the operation was taken too late to enable routeing to be certainly promulgated to all ships. The airborne troops' representative at my H.Q. was apprised of this danger at the time. This late decision in combination with the unexpectedly late sailing of a convoy from Augusta led to a number of aircraft being shot down by merchant vessel gunfire. In this instance too, enemy aircraft were present to complicate the issue.

32. These incidents led to an enquiry being held by Allied Force Headquarters with a view to eliminating such incidents in future. I concur in the recommendations of committee which are forwarded separately.

Though not easy, the routeing of troop-carrier aircraft prior to the main assault, while ships are moving in pre-arranged tracks and in perfect timing, presents a clear cut problem readily susceptible to solution by careful planning as was shown on the night of D - 1/D day in "Husky".

The major problem arises in the routeing of aircraft to make drops to fulfil military tactical requirements arising after the main assaults, when the situation has become fluid, convoys are being cleared as they unload, and signal communications are inevitably congested. It was under these conditions that the incidents quoted above occurred.

Naval Forces other than Assault Forces.

33. The work of the main covering force, the hinge pin of the operation, was dull and unspectacular as must ever be the case against a

passive enemy. Force "H" was faced with the prospect of steady patrolling in waters within easy reach of the enemy's air bases, in conditions of moonlight and weather peculiarly suited to air attack and with a growing U-boat threat.

It was not until July 17th (D + 7) that the reduced congestion of Malta and my appreciation of enemy intentions combined to allow this force to be withdrawn into harbour at Malta. In the interval the INDOMITABLE had, not unexpectedly, been torpedoed and severely damaged. Force "H" achieved its object.

34. The effect of the diversionary operations, "Fracture"* by Force "Z" and "Arsenal"† by Force "Q" and coastal forces, cannot be accurately assessed. It is presumed that they contributed to the confusion of the enemy. Both were satisfactorily carried out in precisely the manner ordered.

35. The operations of Force "Q" patrolling nightly northward of the landings, were as necessary as they were unspectacular, and lacked incident. The torpedoing of CLEOPATRA by a U-boat, and the sinking of a U-boat by ILEX and ECHO were merely incidents of passage unconnected with the operational function of this force.

36. The operations of coastal forces, and, at a later stage, of the American P.T. boats‡ in the Straits of Messina were most gallant and determined. They nightly faced an unpleasant volume of gunfire and inflicted losses on the enemy.

37. The anti U-boat operations, both air and surface, which were instituted as soon as a U-boat concentration on the east coast of Sicily became apparent, did not succeed in making any kills. But the U-boat activity achieved little, and that this was the case was probably in no small measure due to the active measures which were taken to discourage their presence.

The U-boat kills which were made were fortuitous, notably the capture of BRONZO by the 13th Minesweeping Flotilla off Syracuse, and LAFOREY's rapid revenge for the torpedoing of NEWFOUNDLAND off Catania.

March of Events subsequent to the Assaults.

38. An outstanding feature of the operation was the rapidity of progress of the left wing U.S. 7th Army once they were firmly ashore. The whole of these operations both before and after the capture of Palermo was a model of amphibious tactics by the Western Task Force.

In particular, after the capture of Palermo on the 22nd July (D+12) U.S. generalship showed that it had nothing to learn of the value of sea power and Task Force 86 under Rear-Admiral Davidson, U.S.N. that it had nothing to learn of the rapid planning and execution of outflanking operations.

The three "end runs" executed in the north coast of Sicily saved days of costly fighting.

Admiralty footnotes:

* Operation "Fracture"—a bombardment of Favignana (an island off the western point of Sicily) and convoy feints towards the west of Sicily.

† Operation "Arsenal"—a bombardment of Catania (east coast of Sicily).

‡ P.T. boats—the counterpart of British Motor Torpedo Boats.

39. Progress on the east coast was less spectacular and more costly. Augusta was entered by the army on the evening of 12th July (D+2), after a rather exasperating day in which our destroyers alternately entered the harbour triumphantly and were evicted by enemy shell fire to which they could not reply owing to inability to distinguish our own troops; but the situation did not really become cleared up and the port rendered safe for democracy until the morning of the 13th when the Port Party was finally installed and a valuable protected anchorage made available for our use.

Two small commando operations from two L.S.I.(H)* contributed to the capture of this port. From this time onward, however, no use was made by the 8th Army of amphibious opportunities. The small L.S.I.s were kept standing by for the purpose at the call of Rear-Admiral McGrigor (Flag Officer Sicily) and landing craft were available on call: but the only occasion on which they were used was on 16th August, 1943, after the capture of Catania, when a commando landing was made, but fell short of the flank of the retreating enemy.

40. There were doubtless sound military reasons for making no use of this, what to me appeared, priceless asset of sea power and flexibility of manoeuvre: but it is worth consideration for future occasions whether much time and costly fighting could not be saved by even minor flank attacks which must necessarily be unsettling to the enemy. It must be always for the General to decide. The Navy can only provide the means and advice on the practicability from the naval angle of the projected operation. It may be that had I pressed my views more strongly more could have been done.

41. Much use was made of naval gunfire to support the seaward flank of the 8th Army. Reports showed that such support was satisfactory and effective. Only on one occasion was heavy ship gunfire employed, when WARSPITE carried out a brief bombardment of Catania on the evening of the 17th July.

The End of the Operation.

42. The operation concluded with the entry of Messina on the 17th August, the U.S. 7th Army, thanks to their amphibious tactics and some prodigious road engineering feats, beating the British 8th Army by a short head for the prize.

Conclusion.

43. These remarks contain criticism where, in my view, criticism is due. Where possible the criticism is constructive and designed to avoid a repetition of such mistakes as were made. It is a cause for congratulation of all concerned that the criticisms are so few and the triumph so great.

44. I count myself indeed fortunate that, in the planning and execution of this, the greatest seaborne operation so far known in history, I met with a co-operation so complete and cordial as was accorded me by my colleagues General Alexander and Air Chief Marshal Tedder, and their subordinates.

45. Of the Navies, I can only say that I never wish to command better, and I count it a great

honour that, through the person of Vice-Admiral Hewitt, I was privileged to command so large and efficient a force of the United States Navy. Both the Western Task Force, under Admiral Hewitt, and the Eastern Task Force, under Admiral Ramsay, performed their unaccustomed tasks in a manner befitting the highest tradition of any fighting service.

(Signed) A. B. CUNNINGHAM,

Admiral of the Fleet.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower,

Supreme Commander,

Allied Expeditionary Force.

Admiralty,

S.W.1.

1st October, 1943.

I have the honour to forward herewith the report of proceedings of the Eastern Naval Task Force during the initial phase of operations for the capture of the Island of Sicily, known as Operation "Husky". These operations were wholly successful, but considering the large force involved and the time allowed for preparation, any other result could only have been most unexpected and disappointing.

2. By reason of the weakness of the Italian opposition, the success of the assaults in "Husky" cannot be considered as a reliable guide to what may be attempted or achieved elsewhere. Nevertheless, valuable experience was gained which will be of inestimable assistance in future operations, notably in regard to maintenance through the beaches, handling and serviceability of landing ships and craft, opening of captured ports and in the use of naval armaments in support of the army in subsequent operations along the coast.

3. Casualties to shipping and amongst landing craft were considerably less than had been anticipated and allowed for. This was gratifying and is considered to be due to:—

(a) the very high degree of air superiority achieved;

(b) the efficiency of the A/S* organisation;

(c) the unexpected attainment of a considerable degree of tactical surprise. That tactical surprise was effected is considered to have resulted from a combination of circumstances, such for example as the adoption of a waxing moon period for the assaults, the lack of enemy air reconnaissance on D-1 day and a prolonged period of "alert" preceding D day, all of which, together with the unexpected high wind which got up p.m. on D-1, lulled the enemy coast defences into a false sense of security.

4. The performance of landing ships and craft was uniformly good and, in the majority of cases, creditable seamanship was displayed by those in charge of them, having regard to their necessarily restricted training and lack of previous experience. The advantage enjoyed by the personnel of the flotillas which were sent to the Middle East in advance of the operation was very marked and much credit is due to

Admiralty footnote:

* L.S.I.(H)—a type of Landing Ship, Infantry.

Admiralty footnote:

* A/S—anti-submarine.

Rear-Admiral T. H. Troubridge, D.S.O. (Rear-Admiral (G)) for the excellent training which he gave them.

5. *Period of Preparation and Planning.*—The conditions that would result from the large distances between the various headquarters had been foreseen, and, as expected, planning by telegram inevitably led to misunderstandings and a large number of amendments to the operation orders in the last few days. Due to the unavoidable delay in getting the operation orders to the various Task Group Commanders, considerable complications arose by the inclusion in some of their orders of matter which was properly the concern of higher authorities. This again increased the number of amendments necessary, and presented great difficulties to the smaller craft who received a mass of orders and amendments a few days before the operation.

6. *The Plan.*—There are two outstanding points about the plan which call for remark. The first has to do with the operational and the other with the administrative aspect. In my opinion the primary consideration is the operational aspect. The army must first examine the implications of the land campaign necessary to achieve the object in view. After this the administrative authorities must assess the administrative implications. In the early stages of planning for "Husky" too little importance and attention was paid to the operational aspect whilst too much was paid to the administrative, with the result that the outline plan given to the Commanders of the Eastern Task Force was operationally unacceptable. This situation was further complicated by the pre-occupation of the Army and Air Commanders with current operations and the wide dispersal of all planning authorities which resulted in a prolonged period of negotiation and delay.

In the end military necessity dictated the acceptance of administrative risks and the choice of a sound operational plan. It is to be hoped that plans for future operations will be based on operational requirements and not to suit the administrative appreciations, which incidentally always appear ultra-conservative in probabilities.

By the time the final orders were issued I felt entirely satisfied that the best plan available to us had been adopted, and my hopes that the weight of our attacks on a narrow front would overwhelm the enemy were, in the event, justified.

7. *Mounting of the Operation in the Middle East.*—From the moment of my arrival in Cairo on 2nd March, 1943, every possible assistance was afforded myself and my staff in the mounting and preparation for "Husky" by the Commander-in-Chief, Levant, Admiral Sir Henry Harwood, K.C.B., O.B.E., and his successors, Admirals Sir Ralph Leatham, K.C.B., and Sir John H. D. Cunningham, K.C.B., M.V.O., and the other naval authorities and departments in the Middle East. All the resources of the Levant Station, personnel, material and training, were made available and too great credit cannot be given to that Command for its share in the successful operations which followed.

Training in the Middle East was satisfactory. The rehearsals were carried out in the

Gulf of Aqaba from 10th to 17th June but were necessarily limited in scope, as only four M.T. ships and four L.C.T. were able to be present, no L.C.I.(L)* were available, and a limit had to be placed on the number of beachings that could be made by operational assault craft.

8. *Move to Malta.*—With my staff I took passage to Malta in H.M.S. ORION, arriving late on 2nd July. It had always been foreseen that there would be a large amount for my staff to do on arrival at Malta in the few days available previous to the operation, e.g., the allocation of landing craft by numbers to flotillas and task groups, and the briefing of the large number of landing craft and smaller warships based there. The forethought given to these matters by Vice-Admiral Malta enabled the work to be undertaken expeditiously and with his full understanding. I cannot speak too highly of the assistance given by Vice-Admiral A. J. Power, C.B., C.V.O., and his staff throughout the period that I was in Malta. His organisation enabled the heavy and intricate programme of loading, sailing and refuelling, etc., to proceed without a hitch, and all my requirements were readily and efficiently met.

9. *Narrative of the Operation.*—A composite narrative for the Task Force is attached. More detailed narratives for each sector are included in the Task Group Commanders' reports.

The Eastern Naval Task Force came under my operational control at 1200 on D-1, 9th July, and I was afloat on that and the following day with my flag flying in H.M.S. ANTWERP. Weather conditions were fair during the forenoon, and although the wind had risen slightly by noon, at which time I was in company with the four main ship convoys, south of Malta, I was not seriously concerned. The L.C.T. convoys from Tripoli and Tunisia had previously been spoken off Malta earlier in the day, and they and the ship convoys were all in their appointed positions. During the afternoon and evening the wind increased steadily from the north-west to a strength of at least 6 and by 1800 a nasty sea was running.

The effect of these conditions on the landing craft and at the beaches caused me some anxiety but postponement did not seriously enter into my mind. My reasoning was based on long acquaintance with Mediterranean weather conditions which led me to expect that the wind would go down suddenly before morning, together with the knowledge that all but one of my landings were to be made on a weather shore where conditions would not be too bad. It may be stated here that the wind and sea did start to drop soon after midnight and daylight saw the beginning of a perfect day with a clear blue sky and steadily decreasing swell. Except at BARK WEST,† where Force "V"‡ had to compete with a slight sea and swell, conditions at the beaches were perfect. It must be remembered, however, that the L.S.I. reached their release positions at 0030, before the wind and sea had abated to any extent, and the conditions in which the L.C.A.§

Admiralty footnotes:

* L.C.I.(L)—Landing Craft, Infantry (Large).

† BARK WEST—one of the British assault beaches (see Plan).

‡ Force "V"—a British Task Force under the command of Rear-Admiral Sir Philip L. Vian, K.B.E.

§ L.C.A.—Landing Craft, Assault.

were lowered with the first flight and when L.C.I.(L) came alongside to embark their troops were very unpleasant. The more credit is due to them for the fact that the initial landings were made as near to H hour as was the case.

I did not myself see any landing craft during the night, but all reports show that their performance together with that of the H.D.M.L.,* etc., was very satisfactory taking into account the prevailing weather.

10. The L.C.T. convoy for BARK EAST, having been held up by the weather and having eventually made BARK SOUTH,† arrived close on six hours late, that for ACID‡ two hours late, and that for BARK SOUTH about two hours late, but the L.C.T. for BARK WEST, which had been given a shorter route than originally intended, passing east of Gozo, arrived only thirty minutes late. This latter convoy had the worst of the blow, and their prompt arrival reflected high credit on Lieutenant-Commander K. A. Sellar, R.N., who led them.

11. In general the marking submarines were in their correct positions and navigational aids were working and were picked up by the convoys on approaching their release positions. The ships at the release positions were not apparently detected by the shore defences, and the only difficulties experienced in lowering and forming up landing craft were those imposed by the weather. It is clear that the allowance of two and a half hours from the arrival at the release position to H hour was in no way excessive as the majority of the assaults were a few minutes late.

12. The defences were taken generally by surprise when the assaulting formations landed and there was little organised resistance on the beaches. It is understood that a proportion of the coast defences were not, in fact, manned on that night; those that were manned were, in the majority of cases, not stoutly fought.

13. At first light there was a certain amount of shelling from shore batteries, but these were effectively dealt with by supporting monitors, destroyers and gun boats. The effectiveness of the supporting fire from our naval forces was a feature of the operation, and many tributes have been paid it, both by the army and by enemy prisoners.

14. Due to the late arrival of the L.C.T. convoys the only L.C.T. to beach before daylight were those at BARK SOUTH. Although these did so successfully, and on a shore that was generally rocky, insufficient experience was gained in the operation as a whole to show how far the beaching of L.C.T. in large numbers in darkness is a practical proposition. The problem of landing the supporting arms immediately behind the assault infantry cannot yet be considered to be solved, and it is recommended that comprehensive trials should be undertaken as early as possible to examine this matter. If difficulties are experienced, it is believed that a dark assault should be timed to be about one hour before first light, unless the army are prepared to rely on naval supporting fire for a longer period until first light.

Admiralty footnotes:

- * H.D.M.L.—Harbour Defence Motor Launch.
 † BARK SOUTH—One of the British assault beaches (see Plan).
 ‡ ACID—a sector in BARK EAST (see Plan).

15. It was unfortunate that the L.C.R.* were not able to soften the beach defences, but their subsequent performance suggests that they are well fitted for this role. L.C.G. (L)† engaged direct targets effectively at short range, and the moral effect of both the L.C.R. and the L.C.G. (L) firing from close inshore is reported to have been considerable.

16. The slow convoys arrived in accordance with the plan and in every case ships had moved to an inshore anchorage by 0800/10th July. No mines were found inshore.

17. Unloading of the M.T. ships was commenced without delay, and proceeded satisfactorily, despite bad exits and soft sand in the ACID sector and false beaches and soft sand at BARK WEST. It had always been known that BARK WEST beach was unlikely to be suitable as a maintenance beach, but it is clear that it was nevertheless correct to assault on it close on the flank of BARK SOUTH. It was generally considered by Task Group Commanders that the strength of the Docks Operating personnel in the M.T. ships was insufficient, and this was borne out in "Husky". It is probably correct to say that the bottleneck in maintenance through the beaches was the insufficiency of the Docks Operating Companies to work the ships continuously. Casualties to landing craft due to enemy action were very small, but as in "Torch",‡ a few L.C.T. and L.C.M.§ were put out of action due to bad seamanship displayed by their half trained crews.

18. Both the L.S.T. (2)|| and the L.C.I. (L) proved invaluable in their respective roles, and it is considered that the speed with which both vehicles and personnel were landed was one of the principal factors of the operation from the naval point of view. Although at times the rate at which stores were unloaded appeared to be disappointing, the totals unloaded for the beaches were, in fact, greater than the planned figures. On 21st July 4,400 tons of stores were discharged at BARK SOUTH. This was of course an exceptionally good beach, and by that time the organisation there had been perfected and three beach groups were assisting, but the previous estimates for beach maintenance would seem to need revision. It appears that neither BARK SOUTH nor BARK EAST were worked to capacity during "Husky". The salient feature of this period was the success of the L.S.T. (2), L.C.I. (L) and the D.U.K.W.¶ of which the latter were making their first appearance in European waters: they fulfilled our highest expectations.

19. In general, it is considered that the beach organisations worked satisfactorily, although Naval Commander Force "V" reported that his S.N.O.L.** organisations were slow in settling down. The shortage of transport ashore to clear the beach dumps was commented on by Task Group Commanders, and was aggravated by the very quick forward advance of the army. This is not likely, however, to obtain in future operations undertaken against a more determined enemy.

Admiralty footnotes:

- * L.C.R.—Landing Craft, Rocket.
 † L.C.G. (L)—Landing Craft, Gun (Large).
 ‡ "Torch"—the code name for the landings in North Africa.
 § L.C.M.—Landing Craft, Mechanised.
 || L.S.T. (2)—a type of Landing Ship, Tank.
 ¶ D.U.K.W.—an amphibious vehicle.
 ** S.N.O.L.—Senior Naval Officer Landing.

20. The immunity from air attack was as surprising as it was satisfactory and considerably greater than I had been led to expect. Our ships were not attacked until 1015/10th July, when a raid was made on the ships at ACID. On subsequent days there were intermittent air attacks, principally on the east coast, and an increasing number at night. It was fortunate that more damage was not done by these attacks; only three M.T. ships and one hospital ship were sunk by them. The hospital ship TALAMBA was deliberately attacked and sunk and the ABA and DORSETSHIRE were also attacked whilst lying over five miles to seaward fully illuminated. It is regretted that the orders regarding the conduct of hospital ships were not sufficiently clear; it had always been my intention that if hospital ships had to remain off the beaches at night they should remain darkened and in the fleet anchorage, and that normally full illumination would only be switched on when five miles clear of the beaches and on passage to or from the assault area. It is clear that the illumination of hospital ships stopped offshore provides the enemy with a temptation to attack that is too great to resist and, in consequence, after the TALAMBA incident hospital ships were kept in the anchorages all night without lights. This procedure is recommended for future occasions.

21. Syracuse was occupied at 2100/10th July, the port party entered during the forenoon of 11th July and the D+3 personnel convoy arrived there according to plan on 13th July: unloading all twelve ships and sailing them again at 1800 the same day was a notable achievement. Attempts were made to enter Augusta which was reported as having been evacuated at 0500 on 12th July but on her way to do so ESKIMO with Naval Commander Force "A" onboard was damaged in an air attack. Later in the day other ships of Force "A" again entered Augusta, and I myself went in in the evening in BROCKLESBY with Naval Commander Force "A". At this time the enemy on the outskirts of the town commenced to shell our ships intermittently with field guns and we had to clear out. I strongly support the recommendation of Naval Commander Force "A" that the foremost elements of the army should have some means of notifying their positions to supporting warships, as on this occasion we saw a large amount of M.T. which we thought belonged to the Eighth Army but which in fact belonged to the enemy. In consequence we missed an excellent and easy target.

22. In accordance with my instructions Naval Commander Force "V" took over the BARK sectors on 13th July in order that Naval Commander Force "B" could proceed to Syracuse to take over the duties of Flag Officer Sicily. On visiting that port on 15th July I found a certain amount of confusion existing in the naval organisation which was absorbing the attention of Rear-Admiral McGrigor, to the detriment of the performance of his functions as Flag Officer Sicily. As I was anxious that he should proceed to and carry out these functions in Augusta without further delay, and as I deemed it advisable that a naval officer of standing should be temporarily present in Syracuse to supervise the Naval Officer-in-Charge and put matters right, I

directed Naval Commander Force "A" to proceed there forthwith and Flag Officer Sicily to carry on to Augusta.

23. A larger number of L.S.T. and major landing craft was found to be serviceable on D-1 than had been anticipated, and as a result it was possible to commence loading the first flight of the ferry service before ships and craft which had been engaged in the assaults had returned. The Eighth Army plan was to clear the high priority vehicles and stores from Malta before working craft in any numbers from Sousse and Tripoli, and in the first seven days 56 L.S.T., 36 L.C.T. and 33 L.C.I.(L) cleared loaded from Malta. Some initial difficulty was experienced over the control of the Ferry Service, as the Military Movements organisation set up in Malta did not appear adequate to meet the demands made upon it, but after a shaky start things went much better, and the planned programme was finally completed earlier than anticipated.

24. It was decided, both to reduce signalling and to avoid delays to sailings, that the short passage between Malta and Sicily should be made by L.S.T. and major landing craft engaged in the ferry service without making any sailing signals. The organisation of a convoy was often only completed immediately before it sailed, and I am satisfied that this apparently casual method was fully justified in order to continue the build-up of the army as fast as possible. As far as I know there was only one mishap; WALLACE engaged an L.C.I.(L) on the night of 12th/13th July, but happily only one rating was wounded. It would not have been possible to continue to sail these landing craft convoys in this manner, unescorted or only lightly escorted as they were, had the weather not remained calm after D day, and had there not been an increasing period of moonlight. Although the first quarter of the moon at first sight appeared unfavourable for landing operations from the naval aspect, in the event it proved greatly to our advantage against a weak enemy and with our possession of great air superiority.

25. Major landing craft seemed to keep running very well during the first few days of the operation, but my flag was struck at about the time when I imagine that defects were beginning to accumulate. It must always remain a difficult decision in future operations as to when to withdraw a proportion of landing craft for essential maintenance as the need for this must be balanced against the vital requirement of following up the initial blow as expeditiously as possible.

26. It is greatly regretted that a number of our troop-carrying aircraft were shot down by our ships off the east coast on 13th July. The question of the rules for the engagement of aircraft off the beaches was always a vexed one during planning, and the orders were twice altered by agreement with the R.A.F. As finally framed, ships were free to open fire at night at aircraft whose approach indicated hostile intent, and it was stated that if friendly aircraft had to fly over our convoys they would do so above 6,000 feet. All troop-carrying aircraft were routed in lanes to avoid our convoys on the night of D-1/D, but for the second airborne attack on D+3, they flew low over the Gulf of Noto. It is understood that Mediterranean Air Command had

obtained the agreement of Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean to this some hours earlier, and warning signals were at once sent by the latter to all ships and forces concerned. It is not certain that they did in fact reach all the merchantmen, and by unfortunate chance a small number of enemy aircraft was in the vicinity at the time our aircraft were approaching. As might be expected, firing which started spasmodically soon became general, and it is hard to blame ships for engaging low-flying aircraft which appeared to be menacing them during an air raid. It is considered that in only very exceptional circumstances should ships be deprived of their right to open fire at low-flying aircraft approaching them. The solution must be always to route transport aircraft clear of our shipping.

27. I cannot close this letter without paying tribute to the magnificent work throughout all stages of "Husky" of my Task Group Commanders, Rear-Admirals R. R. McGrigor, C.B., Sir Philip L. Vian, K.B.E., D.S.O., and T. H. Troubridge, D.S.O.—as well as that of Captain Lord Ashbourne. I could not have been more efficiently and loyally supported by them nor by my staff under Commodore C. E. Douglas-Pennant, D.S.C.

28. Although the enemy did not make a determined attempt to prevent our assaults, conditions were not always easy, and it is considered that in general a very high standard of seamanship and devotion to duty was shown by officers and men of the Eastern Naval Task Force.

(Signed) B. H. RAMSAY,
Vice-Admiral,
Naval Commander,
Eastern Task Force.

Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean.

NARRATIVE OF THE OPERATION.

D - 1 DAY.

Friday, 9th July, 1943.

Naval Commander Eastern Task Force assumed operational control of all his ships and craft at noon. Leaving Malta in his Headquarters ship, H.M.S. ANTWERP, at 0630, he proceeded to the southward to sight first the L.C.T. groups approaching from Sousse and Tripoli, carrying the supporting arms for the assault, and later the fast and slow assault convoys from the Middle East and United Kingdom, all of which were in their assigned positions and proceeding according to plan. The forces and landing craft starting from, or staging through, Malta sailed as arranged throughout the day to join their respective group or convoy. H.M.S. ANTWERP returned to Calafra in the evening to land the Chief of Combined Operations, and sailed again after dark for the scene of the landings south of Syracuse.

Weather.—The weather which in the early morning was good deteriorated throughout the day until in the evening the wind was force 6 from the north-westward. A short steep sea resulted which, while it did not interfere with the timing of the ship convoys, had the effect of slowing down the craft convoys and driving them off their course to the eastward. The state

of the weather caused a certain amount of anxiety regarding the suitability of conditions off the beaches for carrying out the assault, but the question of suggesting a postponement did not come to be seriously considered.

Enemy reports.—No reports of enemy aircraft were received during the day.

D DAY.

Saturday, 10th July.

Weather.—After midnight the wind commenced to decrease in strength and the dawn ushered in a perfect blue Mediterranean day.

The Assaults.

The detailed accounts of the various assaults are given in the reports of the respective Task Group Commanders, etc., and only a general outline will be found in this narrative.

A. BARK WEST.

The fast assault convoy (K.M.F. 18) under Naval Commander Force "V" anchored about half-an-hour late, in a position subsequently found to be two miles to the eastward of the planned release position.

(i) SUGAR Sector.

Considerable swell was still running in this sector, but the first assault flight were quickly and successfully lowered, and moved off not more than ten minutes behind schedule. The second flight were at once lowered and were got away only fifteen minutes late (*i.e.*, 0155). The two flights beached on their correct beaches five and eighteen minutes late respectively. A runnel with nine feet of water inside a bank off the beaches, of which warning had been received while on passage from U.K., was encountered but all craft were carried over it by the surf.

The loading of serials* was put under way immediately the other craft had departed, but was slow on account of the swell.

Shortly after 0330 success signals were observed and about 0415 a signal was received that the shore was ready to take serials.

The Royal Marine Commandos also successfully landed and reported about 0330. The batteries which formed their objective proved to be dummies, and they suffered only a few casualties.

These landings were made without surprise being lost and there was little opposition at the beaches; in fact it was not until the first flight was leaving the shore that machine-gun fire was opened.

The first L.C.A. reported back to their parent ship about 0430. Naval casualties amounted to two wounded.

(ii) ROGER Sector.

Having regard to the runnel mentioned above an alternative plan was devised and ordered whereby the troops would embark in L.C.T. instead of L.C.A. at the release position and then be launched in D.U.K.W. on reaching the runnel.

The L.C.T. duly arrived and loaded from S.S. MARNIX VAN SAINT ALDEGONDE, but none reached H.M.S. GLENGYLE and

Admiralty footnote:

* Serials—convoys of ships or groups of landing craft when employed on regular ferry service between ports or from ship to shore, were organised as a "series" and each passage or trip was given a "serial" number.

on instructions from the Naval Commander Force "A" she loaded her L.C.A. as originally planned. This necessitated the reorganisation of her troops and it was not until nearly 0230 that her craft were ready for lowering and it was 0315 before the first flight got away owing to the second flight from S.S. DERBYSHIRE persisting in an attempt to form up at the same time. The beach was found without difficulty with the aid of the Folbot* from the marking submarine.

The first flight from H.M.S. GLENGYLE beached about 0500; the second flight from S.S. DERBYSHIRE at 0520; and the remainder from S.S. MARNIX at 0545.

The first flight from H.M.S. GLENGYLE was met by a little machine-gun opposition, which was effectively dealt with by L.C.S.† from S.S. MARNIX. There were no casualties to craft personnel.

ROGER GREEN I and II beaches were used for the assault as in the light of conflicting information they appeared to be the best. In the event all the ROGER beaches were found to be shallow with constantly changing sandbanks, except ROGER RED which, though very small and rocky, was shown by a survey to be the most suitable for all types of landing craft. There was also an appreciable and abnormal tidal effect and many L.C.M. were stranded and could not be re-floated for some time. H.M.S. BOXER, THRUSTER and BRUISER were unable to beach within a reasonable distance from the shore and had to be unloaded by L.C.T.

Slow assault convoy arrives.—The slow assault convoy K.M.S. 18 arrived on time at the release position and brought up in the appointed anchorage.

Inner anchorage occupied.—Shortly before daylight, Naval Commander Force "V" in H.M.S. HILARY led into the intermediate anchorage after the approach channel had been swept. A searching sweep indicated that the inner anchorage was free of mines and at 0900 shipping was entered into the bay.

By midday both S.N.O.L.(R) and S.N.O.L.(S) had moved ashore. A reasonable rate of unloading was continuously maintained and at 1630 the L.S.I.(L) and L.S.P.‡ had completed disembarkation and sailed for Malta.

B. BARK SOUTH.

In spite of the weather which made station keeping by L.C.I.(L) very difficult, the assault convoy for BARK SOUTH was only fifteen minutes late when it anchored. L.C.A. were got promptly away from the L.S.I.(M), but the swell made it difficult for L.C.I.(L), both in coming alongside and in embarking their troops.

However, at 0115 the signal for the assault party to proceed was given, and the craft moved off with the exception of some L.C.I.(L) which had not completed loading; these followed later direct to the beaches.

The landings on RED beaches were made to time though two to three hundred yards to the westward of the correct position in the case

of RED III. The GREEN beaches were found correctly but owing to the weather more time than anticipated was required for the passage and the landings were forty minutes late.

Opposition was everywhere slight, surprise being complete or almost so. At the GREEN landings some casualties were suffered in L.C.I. from machine-gun fire and in the RED sector an L.C.A. received several direct hits from a mortar.

The L.C.T. convoy were late but proceeded direct to the waiting position arriving there at 0330. The majority had beached by first light.

All RED and GREEN beaches were found to be smaller than expected, and there was some congestion, particularly when the Reserve Brigade went in at first light. Notwithstanding this all L.C.I. and L.C.T. had beached and discharged by about 0745.

Between 0800 and 0900 reconnaissance of AMBER beach by land and water proved, as anticipated by the military, that this beach was only lightly defended. The only opposition was one burst of machine-gun fire, immediately silenced by a broadside from EGGESFORD.

By midday AMBER beach was in use, with L.C.I. beaching there in formation. A rocky promontory at the eastern end was found suitable for L.S.T. and needing only a little work to make it into an excellent hard. Elsewhere a false beach with three feet of water inshore caused some inconvenience and necessitated the use of D.U.K.W. and a pontoon.

The three L.S.I.(M) were sailed for Sousse at 1400 followed at 2100 by the first convoy of empty L.S.T. for Malta. Empty L.C.I.(L) had been proceeding to Malta in groups as, and when, ready since 0900. H.M.S. ROYAL ULSTERMAN was retained by S.N.O.L.(Q) as his headquarters.

C. BARK EAST.

When approaching Sicily it was found that the southerly set was stronger than had been anticipated but allowance was made for this and the convoy stopped in the correct position at 0030/10th July. All landing craft were lowered on arrival.

All flights touched down at the correct time, and the sea inshore being calm, all landings were made without difficulty. Surprise was lost fifty yards from the shore and light machine-gun fire and sniping were encountered by most on the beach. L.C.S. and L.C.F.* replied with effect and only slight military, but no naval, casualties were suffered. Only at RED beach was any serious opposition met and this was disposed of by troops landed on SCRAMBLE RED. Throughout the assault only one landing craft was lost—an L.C.P.† burnt out after being hit in the petrol tank by a shell splinter.

Although the beaches had been cleared, no progress could be made in the landing of supporting arms until nearly 0700 when the first L.C.T. arrived via BARK SOUTH, having been delayed and diverted by the weather.

At 0520 the coastal battery north of Pachino began a barrage on a line about 200 yards off

Admiralty footnotes:

- * Folbot—a collapsible rubber boat.
- † L.C.S.—Landing Craft, Support.
- ‡ L.S.P.—Landing Ship, Personnel.

Admiralty footnotes:

- * L.C.F.—Landing Craft, Flak.
- † L.C.P.—Landing Craft, Personnel.

the beaches without doing serious damage and in less than an hour-and-a-half was virtually neutralised by the Dutch gunboats SOEMBA and FLORES.

At 0615 the slow assault convoy arrived at the release position and a searching sweep by M.M.S. (L.L.)* and fleet sweepers having revealed no mines, at 0640 all ships were ordered to the anchorage. It was reached by the leading ships about 0740. The ferry service then started and all personnel were ashore by noon with army baggage and light stores soon after.

By 1400 S.N.O.L. (N) had transferred to H.M.S. ALYNBANK, and H.M.S. KEREN and the personnel ships sailed for Malta.

D. ACID SOUTH and ACID NORTH.

The marking submarine was in the correct position and no difficulty was experienced in picking up her transmissions and the screened signal lamp. Swell caused some difficulty in embarking troops in L.C.I. (L), and wind and sea made some formations late in getting under way.

The assault waves touched down up to thirty minutes late, but with one exception the correct beaches were all found.

Although the wind had considerably decreased the big ships were quickly set down to leeward: *i.e.*, the south-eastward: and the follow-up flights had considerably more than the planned distance to cover.

There was little organised resistance to the landings and after a short period of heavy machine-gun fire the defenders withdrew. A few casualties were caused by mines on one beach before it was cleared. Success signals were received from all beaches by 0500 and ships were then ordered to close the shore without waiting for the anchorage to be swept for mines.

From first light onwards there was considerable shelling from batteries inshore, but these were silenced by supporting destroyers and gunboats by 0800.

The arrival of L.C.T. with supporting arms was rather disorganised, and none beached before daylight. Two of the beaches at ACID NORTH intended for use by L.C.T. were found to be composed of large boulders instead of the shingle indicated by the air photographs, a fact which did not make easier the task of beaching the craft and discharging them. The slow assault convoy arrived an hour-and-a-half late, but all had taken up their anchor berths by 0700.

The first large personnel ship completed discharging by 0900 and all, with one exception, had disembarked personnel and baggage and hoisted their craft by 1415. With four exceptions they were on passage to Malta at 1500.

The rate of discharge of L.C.T. was slow, but the unloading of the slow convoy proceeded satisfactorily in spite of being unable to discharge L.S.T. and L.C.T. at most of the beaches without pontoon bridging and difficulties with wheeled vehicles due to heavy shingle and soft sand.

Gun Support.

The following details of gun support are available:—

A. BARK WEST.

Since the assaults met little opposition, fire from the destroyers in support was confined to a few rounds only and L.C.S. were able to furnish all the support needed on the beaches.

Between 0415 and 0542, when the battery was silenced, H.M.S. BLANKNEY at a range of 6,000 yards fired 80 rounds at P.4 battery in ROGER sector. At 0740 another 37 rounds were fired at the same battery, fire ceasing when our troops were seen in the vicinity.

H.M.S. ROBERTS carried out three shoots in the course of the day:

(i) at 0510. Impromptu from anchor at a range of 15,000 yards against the Casa Guiliano battery of five 149 mm. guns which had fired about a dozen rounds haphazard at landing craft without scoring a hit. After ten rounds from H.M.S. ROBERTS the battery was silenced.

(ii) 0540, another four rounds from 15,000 yards for the second time silenced the same battery which had again opened ineffective fire at craft on and close to the beach.

(iii) 1556, at the request of the army, fourteen rounds were fired at the southern outskirts of Spaccaforno and the area was observed to be well covered by the fall of shot.

H.M.S. BRISSENDEN also carried out several shoots:

(i) at 0645, at a range of 3,800 yards, six smoke shell to thicken the screen laid by L.C.S. on SUGAR RED beach. Result was good.

(ii) 1550 to 1600 at anchor, range 11,000 yards, with H.M.S. ROBERTS, at southern outskirts of Spaccaforno, 90 rounds in salvos seen to be spread with effect over the area.

(iii) 1825, on call from Forward Observation Officer 84 rounds fired at infantry at Casa Basile. Result very effective.

H.M.S. PUCKERIDGE.

(i) 0515, fire opened impromptu at flashes from four guns of 149 mm. of the Casa Chiusa battery which were firing irregularly and without success at landing craft. From anchor, range 9,200-8,800 yards, eight rounds. Result—battery ceased fire and was captured by troops soon after.

(ii) 0532, at gun flashes from Casa Guiliano battery when it opened fire again after H.M.S. ROBERTS' first shoot. Range 8,000 yards, eight rounds. Result—shot seen to fall in target area, and battery ceased fire.

(iii) 0600, the last mentioned battery again opened fire and H.M.S. PUCKERIDGE was ordered in to eliminate it. At ranges 6,000-4,200 yards, twenty rounds were fired under way and the battery which had constituted almost the only opposition to the landing was finally silenced.

Three of the four L.C.G. (L) in Force "V" engaged direct targets during the assault, and fired ten rounds H.E. full charge each. An ammunition dump was blown up by L.C.G. (L) 9 with her seventh round at 500 yards range.

Admiralty footnote:

* M.M.S. (L.L.)—motor minesweepers.

B. BARK SOUTH.

(i) Between 0308 and 0420, three L.C.T. (R)* carried out pre-arranged shoots on flank targets at the beaches.

(ii) After daylight H.M.S. WHADDON and EGGESFORD gave close support and three L.C.G. also fired a few rounds. H.M.S. LAFOREY also joined in the silencing of machine-guns at Portopalo Bay.

(iii) Later in the day ships of the Bombarding Squadron (H.M.S. NEWFOUNDLAND, ORION, LAFOREY, LOYAL, LOOKOUT) fired direct shoots at areas five miles inland including Rosolini and Spaccaforo.

C. BARK EAST.

L.C.S. and L.C.F. replied with effect to the machine-gun fire and sniping encountered by the assault craft on beaching.

H.N.M.S. SOEMBA and FLORES engaged a battery 2,000 yards north of Pachino at 0533, which with five guns of 100 mm. had been firing at the rate of one round per gun per minute a defensive barrage on a line about 200 yards off the beaches. The two ships under way and keeping station on dan buoys, at ranges of 7,000 and 7,800 yards respectively, fired in periods until 0645 when the battery was virtually neutralised.

D. ACID SOUTH and NORTH.

Bombardments were carried out as follows:—

(i) By H.M.S. MAURITIUS.

(a) at 0600, fire was opened on a coast defence battery which had been worrying How and JIG beaches. After thirty-six rounds had been fired no further shelling occurred from this direction although great difficulty was experienced in locating the target.

(b) at 0840, in response to a call, a defended area was bombarded for five minutes, the shells appearing, from visual observation, to hit the required area.

(ii) By H.M.S. ESKIMO.

(a) at 0545 at a range of 10,000 yards, five salvos were fired at a battery concealed among trees north-east of Avola which had been dropping shells on How sector. The battery ceased fire.

(b) at 0610, at another battery shelling How beaches. The battery quickly ceased fire but opened up again soon after. The bombardment was resumed at 0715 and after the sixth salvo there was an explosion and fire at the position of the battery from which nothing further was heard.

(iii) By H.M.S. TETCOTT.

(a) at 0510, opened fire at a battery which had been shelling JIG beaches, and drew its fire which was very inaccurate.

(b) at 0559, changed target to another battery giving trouble at the beaches, but as H.M.S. MAURITIUS opened fire at about the same time, reverted to first target so as not to confuse her, the first battery having again come into action. The battery ceased fire as a result.

(c) at 0641, opened fire at a third battery of three guns, which ceased fire.

(iv) By H.M.S. TARTAR.

(a) at 0410, fire was opened at two searchlights in the vicinity of Avola, which were extinguished.

(v) By H.M.S. EREBUS.

(a) at 1415, fire was opened on an infantry defended post with six pill boxes. Target reported destroyed after twelve rounds at 12,600 yards had all been spotted and corrected upon the target, including two direct hits and seven within one hundred yards of the centre of the target.

(b) at 1945 at a range of 18,700 yards, six rounds fired at another infantry defended post. Five direct hits and target reported by Forward Observation Officer as destroyed.

Enemy Air Activity.

Prior to the landings enemy air activity against the expedition was non-existent and it was only slight throughout D day. Some details were as follows:—

A. BARK WEST.

Shortly after 2200, an attack was made on the anchorage in the course of which a stick of bombs fell close between H.M.S. HAMBLEDON and H.M.S. WALLACE. Flares dropped by the aircraft were effective but the anchorage was heavily protected by smoke and no damage was sustained.

B. BARK SOUTH.

There were indications of air activity, but no bombs were dropped. One low-flying aircraft was shot down after dark.

C. BARK EAST.

(i) At 0550 two Me. 109 made a cannon-fire attack on RED beach; one stoker of an L.C.S. was wounded.

(ii) From 2010 to midnight there were intermittent attacks on the ships and H.M.S. ALYNBANK was near missed by a dive attack, two ratings being killed.

D. ACID NORTH and SOUTH.

While waiting to cover the later flights two L.C.S. (M) were machine-gunned by an aircraft and some minor casualties were suffered; the aircraft was seriously damaged. Then between 0630 and 0700 fighter bombers appeared overhead but no bombs were dropped. Next, at 1015 about ten Ju. 88 and some F.W. 190 dropped bombs in the vicinity of shipping. During the afternoon two L.C.T. were damaged by near misses and in further intermittent attacks, including an attack by forty aircraft at 1630, near misses on S.S. BERGENSFIORD and L.S.T. 407 were the only incidents of note.

Night attacks began soon after 2100 and a considerable number of bombs scored no direct hits until 2200, when the hospital ship TALAMBA, lying illuminated five miles to seaward of GEORGE sector, was sunk in a deliberate attack. Another hospital ship, ABA, was attacked at the same time, but escaped damage.

D + 1 DAY.**Sunday, 11th July.**

Weather.—Weather and sea conditions continued to improve at all sectors, though

Admiralty footnote:

* L.C.T. (R)—Landing Craft, Tank (Rocket).

some wind and surf persisted at BARK WEST and ACID.

Situation at beaches.

A. BARK WEST.

The beaches assaulted were unsatisfactory for maintenance owing to flat gradients, the sandbars already mentioned, and poor exits. SUGAR RED beach I was opened and proved satisfactory for L.C.M. and vehicles and guns were unloaded here throughout the day, while L.S.T. and L.C.T. discharged on to ROGER RED. Unloading as a whole was slow, some of the delays being attributable to the inexperience of the men handling the Vehicle Landing Ramp, its liability to "snake" and the length of time required for adjustment when an L.S.T. came up to it.

H.M.S. BOXER, THRUSTER and BRUISER having completed, sailed with three M.T. ships for Malta, leaving twelve ships of the slow assault convoy to complete discharging.

B. BARK SOUTH.

Unloading of L.S.T. continued satisfactorily throughout the day and by nightfall nearly all of the first flight was unloaded and twenty had sailed for Malta with H.M.S. ROYAL ULSTERMAN, S.N.O.L. (Q) having landed and established himself and party ashore at AMBER beach. The General Officer Commanding 30 Corps had also disembarked during the afternoon and set up his headquarters ashore. At 1900 H.M.S. LARGS sailed for BARK EAST and the A/S patrol off BARK SOUTH was discontinued, the destroyers thus released reinforcing the patrol at BARK EAST.

C. BARK EAST.

Unloading at this sector was delayed as a result of the time required for discharging L.C.T. with 51 Division stores which had been transferred from BARK SOUTH owing to the poor beaches in the latter area. In addition, L.S.T. 9, also from BARK SOUTH, grounded on Isola Grande.

D. ACID SOUTH and NORTH.

The only outstanding incident was the successful launching of D.U.K.W. from L.S.T. over the ramp while the L.S.T. were under way. It was found that this method of discharge presented no difficulty in fine weather.

Good progress was made with unloading M.T. and stores, the flow to the beaches increasing steadily and much of the arrears due to delays in discharging L.C.T. the previous day was made up.

Large L.S.I. sail from Malta.—Convoy M.K.F. 18 consisting of eleven large L.S.I. sailed from Malta westbound and soon after midday twelve similar ships left eastbound in M.E.F. 36.

Malta shuttle service begins.—The first empty landing ships and craft arrived back at Malta from Sicily and the shuttle service commenced. The first empty M.T. ships were also sailed from the beaches.

Gun Support.

Supporting fire was provided by ships at various points as required from time to time. In particular:

- (i) between 0030 and 0250, at the request of 1st Canadian Division, H.M.S. ROBERTS

fired from anchor four rounds in each of three prearranged shoots from 12,400 yards at high ground in the Pozzallo area. H.M.S. BLANKNEY and BLENCATHRA had earlier in the night carried out harassing fire on the same area. The object of these shoots, which was achieved, was to force the enemy to retire before the Division advanced at 0300.

(ii) between 1130 and 1205, simultaneously with a shoot by H.M.S. DELHI on Spaccaforno and by H.M.S. BRISSENDEN on Pozzallo, H.M.S. ROBERTS on request from 1st Canadian Division carried out a prearranged shoot on an area N.E. and S.W. of Rosolini in which the enemy were concentrating. At a range of 18,000 yards, 30 rounds were fired from anchor, the area being swept three times. All enemy troops who came under this fire were demoralised and surrendered promptly.

(iii) H.M.S. BRISSENDEN, under way, fired 40 rounds at a gun emplacement and 120 rounds at a building and area in the vicinity of Pozzallo. At the conclusion of the shoot a white flag was hoisted on the gun emplacement.

(iv) H.M.S. ORION carried out a bombardment of Medica at the rear of BARK WEST.

(v) H.M.S. UGANDA engaged a hostile battery at the southern end of Augusta Bay.

(vi) H.M.S. UGANDA and MAURITIUS bombarded the enemy's line of retreat in the vicinity of Augusta.

Enemy Air Activity.

There was rather more activity by enemy aircraft and it was more widespread than on D day. Some particulars follow:—

A. BARK WEST.

Sporadic attacks during the night D day/D+1 day caused no damage to ships but were responsible for a few casualties.

B. BARK SOUTH.

No loss or damage was suffered, though there were several "Red" warnings.

C. ACID SOUTH and NORTH.

Several sharp raids took place and at 1235, S.S. BAARN at anchor off JIG sector was near missed by a Ju.88 and cased petrol in No. 1 hold set on fire. The fire became uncontrollable and in view of the risk of a serious ammunition explosion she was later sunk. Another M.T. ship JOSEPH C. CANNON off How received a direct hit at about 1900, but although the ship's bottom was penetrated no fire resulted as the hold was nearly empty and she was eventually able to proceed to Malta. Raids after dark were ineffective.

Syracuse occupied.—The army entered Syracuse at 2100 on 10th July, and at 0600/11th July, fleet sweepers and B.Y.M.S.*, escorted by H.M.S. NUBIAN and H.M.S. TARTAR, proceeded to sweep the approach channel into the port. No mines were swept; there was no opposition, and at 0830 H.M.S. WHITEHAVEN passed through the gate. Naval Commander Force "A" entered in H.M.S. CROMARTY shortly after, and the majority

Admiralty footnote:

* B.Y.M.S.—British Yacht Minesweeper.

of the port party landed at the same time. The boom and gate were intact, though in poor condition in spite of the existence of spare gear on the spot. The town was almost deserted. There was no damage to port installations apart from that caused by our own aircraft on the night of the beach assaults. About 2130, Naval Commander Force "A" advised that all personnel ships of the convoys due on D+3 day should proceed to Syracuse to discharge.

Pozzallo occupied.—Following the bombardment by H.M.S. BRISSENDEN mentioned above, the white flag was hoisted and H.M.S. BRISSENDEN closed the town of Pozzallo. The Bombardment Liaison Officer and an armed party landed and accepted the surrender at 1315, returning on board with 98 prisoners. The port was found to be useless for unloading either vessels or craft.

A.A. cruisers transferred.—To strengthen the defence of the ACID anchorages which had so far borne the greater part of the enemy's air attacks, H.M.S. DELHI, hitherto at BARK WEST, was transferred to the orders of Naval Commander Force "A" from noon.

H.M.S. COLOMBO from Force "V" was transferred to the Western Task Force to reinforce the protection of Gela anchorage where enemy aircraft were also troublesome.

D+2 DAY.

Monday, 12th July.

Weather.—Weather continued fine, and on the whole less inconvenience was experienced from swell at the anchorages and beaches, though it still retarded the rate of discharge at the western end of the area.

Situation at beaches.

A. BARK WEST.

"G" Naval Commando moved from SUGAR sector to BARK SOUTH and "N" Commando took over SUGAR sector in addition to ROGER.

M.T. continued to come in on SUGAR RED I beach and a number of L.C.T. beached at SUGAR RED II. The exits from these beaches were only moderate, and the roads behind bad, while approximately one vehicle in three was "drowned" getting ashore. Accordingly it was decided that S.N.O.L. (S) should transfer to BARK SOUTH (QUEEN sector) and receive the follow-up convoy, while S.N.O.L. (R) remained to complete the discharge of the assault convoy over ROGER sector. Stores began to come in at about midday, and an urgent call for petrol in the evening was met by unloading from L.C.T. throughout the night.

B. BARK SOUTH and EAST.

At 0600 the first follow-up convoy of L.S.T. arrived at BARK SOUTH and commenced to beach and unload during the forenoon. All the original L.S.T. and L.C.T. completed unloading by the afternoon. The rocky ledge at the eastern end of AMBER beach had been levelled and improved by this time to an extent which enabled five L.S.T. to be discharged at a time.

Two M.T. ships from BARK WEST arrived at BARK SOUTH and commenced to discharge by means of D.U.K.W.

Naval Commander Force "B" decided that as soon as the M.T. ships of the assault convoy

were cleared BARK EAST beaches should be kept open mainly for 51 Division stores in L.C.T. which were becoming congested at BARK SOUTH and that S.S. DIOMED, the only follow-up ship destined for BARK EAST, should be diverted to BARK SOUTH.

Late in the evening the two Category "A" ships of the assault convoy completed unloading (the third had been sunk en route).

C. (i) ACID SOUTH.

Discharge was completed of the four Class "A" M.T. ships of the assault convoy and the stevedores thus released were transferred to the Class "B" ships.

(ii) ACID NORTH.

At 1900 an additional beach, called BLUE, was opened at the northern end of the sector and proved satisfactory for both L.C.T. and L.C.M. though inadequate approaches and shortage of labour precluded its use for landing stores.

Gun Support.

Supporting fire was provided by ships as and when required and opportunity offered.

H.M.S. MAURITIUS had a busy day and carried out shoots as follows:—

(a) from 0830 to 0900, in response to an urgent call for support, Mellili was effectively engaged.

(b) at 0930, a coast battery was engaged and gave no further trouble.

(c) at 1115, in response to an immediate call, a battery north of Priolo which was holding up the army's advance was effectively engaged. After a short bombardment the Forward Observation Officer reported the target destroyed.

(d) at 1205, fire, reported effective from direct observation, was again opened on Mellili.

(e) at 1251, a strong point near Augusta was bombarded at the request of the army.

(f) at 1340, Mellili was again bombarded, direct observation indicating that the fire was effective.

(g) at 1403, the target was another defended post and the Forward Observation Officer reported the shoot as particularly satisfactory.

(h) at 1500, an accurate and successful shoot on a defended area near Augusta.

(i) from 1532 to 1541, direct fire in the Augusta area.

(j) from 1834 to 1843, a successful shoot at a coast defence battery.

(k) at 2006, an effective shoot on Augusta defences in support of a commando landing from H.M.S. ULSTER MONARCH.

H.M.S. TETCOTT, in support of the commando landing from H.M.S. ULSTER MONARCH,

(a) at 1930, engaged and silenced a light high velocity gun on the ridge overlooking Augusta.

(b) at about the same time, effectively bombarded at a range of three cables with 4-inch pom-pom and Oerlikon a cement works near the shore from which machine-gun fire was observed.

H.M.S. EREBUS was also well occupied during the day carrying out the following shoots:—

(a) from 0542 to 0602, coast defence batteries, range 1,800 yards, rounds 27. Target area covered.

(b) from 0628 to 0634, anti-aircraft battery, range 2,650 yards, rounds 10. Target area covered.

(c) from 0653 to 0658, coast defence battery, range 3,000 yards, rounds 6. Target area covered, probable ammunition dump blown up.

(d) from 0744 to 0747, coast defence battery, range 14,800 yards, rounds 6. Target area covered, and barracks observed hit.

(e) from 0749 to 0756, coast defence battery, range 3,000 yards, rounds 8. Target area covered and explosion observed.

(f) from 1018 to 1029, coast defence batteries, range 11,000 yards, rounds 13. Target area covered and explosion observed.

(g) from 1031 to 1033, same coast defence batteries, range 10,000 yards, rounds 7. Target area covered and on closing to two miles, guns in first target observed apparently intact but building immediately behind damaged. Guns of second target badly damaged.

(h) from 1050 to 1058, H.A. battery, range 12,600 yards, rounds 10. Indirect shoot, no spotting.

(i) from 1132 to 1142, town of Mellili, range 18,300 yards, rounds 12, of which 8 observed to fall in target area.

(j) from 1338 to 1400, town of Mellili, range 18,000 yards, rounds 32. Whole area of town covered.

H.M.S. ORION and UGANDA also carried out bombardments in the vicinity of Mellili and Augusta in the course of the day.

Enemy Air Activity.

Once again the northern end of the area experienced the heaviest attacks during a day when activity was on much the same scale as the previous day. Details:—

A. BARK WEST.

There was slight activity at dawn, and one aircraft was shot down by a night fighter controlled by the radar set in L.C.T. 305.

B. BARK SOUTH.

A raid warning in the early hours left BARK SOUTH untouched. On this occasion M.L.s* put up a very effective smoke screen. After nightfall, further warnings, with aircraft passing overhead, still produced no bombs.

C. BARK EAST.

The hospital ship DORSETSHIRE had arrived the previous afternoon and before nightfall had been sent to sea by S.N.O.L.(N) so as to be well clear of the assault area and illuminated during the night. Nevertheless, at 0500/12th July, she was attacked and sustained some structural damage and casualties from near misses. Though the attacks on the anchorage were of some weight no other damage was caused.

Following the experience of TALAMBA and DORSETSHIRE the latter and AMRA were for the night of 12th/13th July darkened and anchored close to the convoy so as to have the benefit of the anti-aircraft and smoke protection of the anchorage.

D. ACID SOUTH and NORTH.

At 0500, H.M.S. ESKIMO, when about three miles to the southward of Cape Murro di Porco on her way with Naval Commander Force "A" to investigate the situation at Augusta, was attacked by several aircraft and hit in Nos. 5 and 6 oil fuel tanks. The ship stopped and was ordered to Malta in tow of H.M.S. TARTAR; they arrived at 1700 without further incident.

At dawn an attack developed off JIG sector and a near miss at the fore end of S.S. OCEAN PEACE caused a fire in the cased petrol in No. 1 hold. The fire could not be controlled and the ship had to be sunk to prevent further disaster. The usual raids after dark on anchorage and beaches were again ineffective, causing only a few casualties ashore. A good smoke screen was put up before the raids began.

Augusta entered.—Late the previous night there had been a report that Augusta was being evacuated by the enemy and in execution of orders from Naval Commander Eastern Task Force, sweepers proceeded to sweep the channel at first light. They were not molested by coast defence batteries, which were under occasional fire from H.M.S. EREBUS to keep them quiet, but a field gun opened fire on the B.Y.M.S. (L.L.) when on their last leg out.

At 1045, H.M.S. EXMOOR, flying the flag of Naval Commander Force "A"—he had transferred from H.M.S. ESKIMO after she had been bombed—proceeded into the harbour. The gate was open and the boom vessel abandoned, and there was no sign of life until a field gun, or possibly a tank, concealed behind trees, began shelling the ship at short range. The fire was accurate, and as no target could be distinguished EXMOOR was ordered out. No counter shoot could be conducted owing to the proximity of our own troops.

N.C.E.T.F. enters Augusta.—H.M.S. EXMOOR with the Greek Hunt class destroyer KANARIS in company re-entered the port at 1600 followed later by H.M.S. BROCKLESBY flying the flag of Naval Commander Eastern Task Force. Again the ships had to withdraw because of fire from high velocity guns of 3 to 4-inch calibre to which no adequate reply could be made owing to uncertainty in regard to the exact whereabouts of our own troops. Much transport was seen in motion ashore, but could not be engaged as it was not known whether they were friend or foe—they were in fact enemy.

Late in the evening one of the brigades of 5 Division penetrated into the town, and the naval port party arrived from Malta. The army's hold was, however, precarious, and later the S.B. Squadron, S.A.S. Regiment* was successfully landed by H.M.S. ULSTER MONARCH as a reinforcement. In consequence of this uncertainty and a statement by the Brigadier that he might have to retire from

Admiralty footnote:

* M.L.s Motor Launches.

Admiralty footnote:

* S.B. Squadron, S.A.S. Regiment—Special Boat Squadron, Special Air Service Regiment.

the town, the Naval Officer-in-Charge temporarily withdrew his party except for some key ratings.

H.M.S. ROBERTS to Acid North.—H.M.S. ROBERTS from Force "V" was ordered to move to ACID NORTH ready to be called forward either to join Force "K" or to supplement the anti-aircraft defences of captured ports as and when required. In the meantime she was placed under the orders of Naval Commander Force "A".

U-boats.—Although it was estimated that some eighteen Italian U-boats were at sea in the area of operations of the Eastern and Western Task Forces there had so far been no contact with any. This day, however, several were encountered.

H.M.S. OAKLEY claimed a "probably sunk" in the vicinity of Sousse, and the Greek Hunt class destroyer PINDOS was unsuccessfully attacked two miles east of Cape Passero at 0445. The latter U-boat was counter-attacked, and one pattern of depth charges dropped, but though A/S vessels hunted until noon no further contact was obtained.

BRONZO captured.—While the 14th Mine-sweeping Flotilla were engaged in screening the cruisers bombarding Augusta, H.M.S. SEAHAM sighted a periscope shortly before 1300 and closed at full speed with the intention of ramming. The U-boat surfaced and fire was opened on it with all possible weapons and hits were observed on the conning tower with the 3-inch. The U-boat replied, but surrendered after a sharp engagement, which had lasted about half-an-hour. The U-boat was the Italian BRONZO, and she was towed by H.M.S. SEAHAM to Syracuse. Twenty prisoners were taken out of a crew of forty, the remainder including the Commanding Officer having been killed by gunfire or drowned when abandoning ship.

H.M.S. BLANKNEY and BRISSENDEN in collision.—While on A/S patrol off BARK WEST, H.M.S. BLANKNEY and H.M.S. BRISSENDEN came into collision. Both sustained damage and were detached to Malta for repairs, BRISSENDEN proceeding there p.m. 12th July and BLANKNEY p.m. 13th July.

D+3 DAY.

Tuesday, 13th July.

Weather.—The weather remained fine, and the calm sea permitted the passage to Sicily from Malta of lighters and harbour craft for use in the captured ports.

N.C.F.V. takes over from N.C.F.B.—In pursuance of orders given by Naval Commander Eastern Task Force when in Sicily the previous day, Naval Commander Force "V" at 0400 took over the BARK areas from Naval Commander Force "B" who proceeded to Syracuse to assume duty as Flag Officer Sicily.

Situation at beaches.

A. BARK SOUTH.

S.N.O.L.(Q) left for Sousse during the forenoon and S.N.O.L.(S) from BARK WEST took over the sector.

The follow-up convoys, K.M.F. and K.M.S. 19, consisting of three personnel, fourteen M.T. ships and two petrol carriers arrived at BARK SOUTH at 0700. Unloading of M.T. by L.C.T. and of stores by a fleet of about

fifty D.U.K.W. began at once. By 1630 the personnel ships, using L.C.I.(L) and L.C.M., had discharged and by 1930 sailed for Malta, in addition to four M.T. ships of the slow assault convoy for Tripoli. This left eight ships of the slow assault convoy and the newcomers remaining at the beaches.

B. BARK EAST and WEST.

Naval Commander Force "V" decided in the forenoon to continue his predecessor's policy of using BARK EAST only for L.C.T. when the assault convoy M.T. ships had been cleared. This entailed all ships, as opposed to craft, leaving BARK EAST p.m. and resulted in the S.N.O.L. ship H.M.S. ALYNBANK being withdrawn. The latter was in any case particularly needed to increase the anti-aircraft protection at BARK SOUTH.

In the afternoon, however, there was a partial reversal of this plan when, with a view to avoiding the increased concentration at BARK SOUTH which would result from the decision to close BARK WEST, the Naval Commander Force "V" ordered three nearly empty M.T. ships from BARK WEST to BARK EAST the following day. The one ship of the follow-up convoy for BARK EAST which had been diverted, was also sent back there.

The decision to close BARK WEST was reached because BARK SOUTH was in every way superior. L.S.T. and L.C.T. could beach at the eastern end without using a ramp, and L.C.M. could land stores almost dry shod at the western end which was backed by a good maintenance area.

In consequence of these changes S.N.O.L.(S) transferred to BARK SOUTH while S.N.O.L.(R) remained at BARK WEST and S.N.O.L.(N) moved ashore and set up his headquarters in a house on Isola Piccolo.

The two Category "A" ships of the slow assault convoy at BARK EAST sailed a.m. under escort to join the ACID portion of a convoy for Tripoli, and the three Category "B" ships cleared by the evening.

C. ACID SOUTH and NORTH.

The follow-up convoys M.W.F. and M.W.S. 37 arrived. The fast section entered Syracuse at 0945 and at once began to discharge. Such good progress was made that by 1800 all twelve ships were empty and away from the port. The slow section of thirty ships anchored off the beaches at 0900. Thirteen ships of the slow assault convoy having previously been cleared from the anchorage sailed immediately with the escort of M.W.S. 37. Of the new arrivals ten were ordered to enter Syracuse at first light the following day.

Gun Support.

Gun support units continued their activities as required.

The following are some particulars:—

H.M.S. MAURITIUS.

(a) from 0900 to 0930, an apparently effective shoot, using direct observation, at Carlentini.

(b) a few minutes later, at a battery at Campolato which had opened fire on the ship. One hit observed and battery ceased firing.

(c) at 1032 and from 1144 to 1240, spasmodic engagement of gun opposition ashore.

Results probably not satisfactory, observation by Forward Observation Officer difficult and possibly an incorrect map reference received.

(d) at 1720, against a defended post near Catania. Result reported satisfactory by Forward Observation Officer.

(e) from 1753 to 1800, target Lentini.

H.M.S. TETCOTT.

(a) at about 2300, opened fire on a defended area south of Catania in support of commando landing from H.M.S. PRINS ALBERT at Murazzo Point. Enemy guns not completely silenced. Target engaged again after midnight with the result that the enemy guns ceased fire.

H.M.S. EREBUS.

(a) at 0938. Shore batteries near Carlentini, range 2,500 yards, rounds 10.

(b) at 1105. Catania Airfield, range 30,000 yards, rounds 10. Indirect fire.

(c) at 2140. Catania Airfield, rounds 20. Results unobserved but a fire seen when bombardment complete.

Enemy Air Activity.

The only air attacks this day were in the ACID area. There were continuous though ineffective raids during the night 12th/13th July, as well as the usual dawn attack. The most serious incident occurred a little before noon when two fighter bombers scored hits on S.S. THOMAS PICKERING in the after hold. The ship, which had only arrived earlier in the morning, became a total loss.

Shortly before midnight intermittent attacks with bombs and torpedoes on the empty personnel ships from Syracuse caused some confusion but no damage or casualties.

Augusta.—The naval port party returned during the forenoon. The town was found deserted with considerable damage at the northern end but none at the southern end. There was no power and a shortage of water.

The conditions in the harbour varied in one part and another. Only the northern entrance was open, but there was a four hundred foot quay with twenty-two feet of water alongside and ample berthing for all types of landing ship. The Carlo del Molo harbour and jetties were, however, found to be completely obstructed. The floating dock was undamaged and, in addition to one large oil carrier and three small petrol carriers, lighters were available though without means of towage.

Commando landing.—After dark H.M.S. PRINS ALBERT successfully landed No. 3 Commando with little loss near Murazzo Point, north of Augusta. H.M.S. TETCOTT, escorting, effectively engaged a battery which opposed the landing and also sank one of three E-boats* which attacked.

Local Defence Forces.—In view of the progress made and in anticipation of the capture of Catania, Naval Commander Eastern Task Force re-allocated local defence forces as follows:—

1. Syracuse.
 - 13th Trawler Group (A/S).
 - 153rd B.Y.M.S. Flotilla,
 - 6 H.D.M.L. from Force "A".

2. Augusta.

- 8th Trawler Group (A/S, M/S†),
- 105th M.M.S. Flotilla,
- 4 H.D.M.L. from Force "B".

3. Catania.

- 4th Trawler Group (A/S, M/S),
- 4 H.D.M.L. from Force "A",
- 2 H.D.M.L. from Force "B".

4. Group "P".

Hunt class destroyers, CROMARTY, POOLE, BOSTON, SEAHAM and 22nd M.L. Flotilla to be based on Augusta when Catania occupied.

5. 20th M.G.B. Flotilla and 32nd M.T.B. Flotilla to be based on Augusta as ordered by Commander-in-Chief.

Inshore Squadron for army support.—In accord with instructions from the Commander-in-Chief, Naval Commander Eastern Task Force also placed under the orders of Flag Officer Sicily for service in the inshore squadron in support of the army the following: H.M.S. EREBUS, ROBERTS, D.S. FLORES, SOEMBA, H.M.S. CROMARTY, POOLE, ROMNEY, SEAHAM, the 22nd M.L. Flotilla and temporarily two Hunts to be detailed by Naval Commander Force "A". It was stated that three L.C.R., three L.C.G. and four L.C.F. would also be available from Malta if required. The latter were requested forthwith by Flag Officer Sicily.

S.N.O.L. prepare to leave.—At the end of the day proposals were submitted by S.N.O.L.(N) and (Q), with which Naval Commander Force "V" concurred, that they should withdraw from the Island on the 15th July with their staffs, leaving the Beach Commando and Deputy S.N.O.L. at BARK EAST and a nucleus beach party at BARK SOUTH. Naval Commander Eastern Task Force also concurred with this.

U-boats.—Further successes were recorded against U-boats at no great distance from the operational area of the Eastern Task Force.

M.T.B. operating under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief encountered two U-boats southbound in position 38°10'N.15°27'E. and sank one with a torpedo. The U-boat was not identified.

H.M.S. ECHO and H.M.S. ILEX, two of Force "H" destroyer screen, sank the Italian NEREIDE in position 37° 36' N. 16° 17' E., taking twenty-five prisoners. This boat was only twenty-four hours out from its base.

D+4 DAY.

Wednesday, 14th July.

Weather.—Weather was unchanged at very fine.

Situation at beaches.

A. BARK WEST.

All unloading was stopped over these beaches. The M.T. ships were divided between BARK SOUTH and EAST with their superior facilities and there was an improvement in the rate of unloading. All ships were clear of BARK WEST by 2030 and H.M.S. HILARY, headquarters ship Force "V", anchored at BARK SOUTH.

Admiralty footnote:

* E-boats—motor torpedo boats.

Admiralty footnote:

* M/S—minesweeping.

Six more ships of the slow assault convoy were sailed at midday.

B. BARK SOUTH.

S.N.O.L.(S) set up his headquarters in a house above Punta Portopalo with Deputy S.N.O.L. and a V/S* station in the centre of the stores beach.

L.S.T. were employed in addition to L.C.T. in transferring vehicles from the M.T. ships, as more transport was urgently needed at the front.

C. BARK EAST.

The three Category "B" ships of the assault convoy sailed at 1400 to BARK SOUTH to join convoy. This left only one M.T. ship in the anchorage.

D. ACID SOUTH and NORTH.

The remaining ships of the slow assault convoy were sailed for Tripoli at 0630.

JIG sector closed down and all M.T. ships and landing craft proceeded to Syracuse. GEORGE and HOW sectors were progressing well though the stevedores were very tired owing to the frequent night air raids. To alleviate this they had been sent to sleep ashore.

N.C.F.A. turns over to F.O.S.Y.—Naval Commander Force "A" turned over all operations from Syracuse northwards to Flag Officer Sicily who was by now at Syracuse in H.M.S. LARGS. In the evening, having finished at ACID, he proposed turning over to S.N.O.L.(H) with a view to proceeding to Malta the following day in H.M.S. BULOLO.

K.M. 19Y ordered forward.—By noon the situation was such that the Commander-in-Chief ordered forward convoys K.M.F. and K.M.S. 19Y, i.e., those parts of the follow-up convoys from the United Kingdom which had been held at Algiers until required.

H.M.S. CARLISLE to Augusta.—About midday Naval Commander Eastern Task Force ordered H.M.S. CARLISLE to be sent to Augusta as soon as Flag Officer Sicily thought fit, to provide long range air warning. Flag Officer Sicily had, in fact, released her the previous day as he had expected Syracuse to be empty that night except for H.M.S. LARGS and L.S.T. He was of the opinion, however, that she should return to Syracuse on 14th when M.T. ships were due, as the A.A. defences were still below minimum and somewhat extempore.

Gun support.—Ships continued to give supporting fire to the army as required but, apart from a bombardment of Lentini by H.M.S. MAURITIUS lasting from 0702 to 0730, there were no shoots of particular note.

Enemy Air Activity.

The night 13th/14th July was almost free of air raids and the customary dawn attack at ACID was less intense than on previous days. While on patrol at BARK SOUTH after dark H.M.S. MENDIP and H.M.S. WALLACE were bombed. The full moon and many flares dropped by the enemy made evasion difficult for the destroyers, which apparently

were taken as substitute targets, since the merchantmen in the anchorage were quite invisible in the smoke screen put up. Several sticks of bombs fell within one to two cables of the destroyers but no damage or casualties were caused. There was much activity and many flares were dropped at about 2100 but no incidents occurred.

At BARK EAST in the evening smoke cover was also used most effectively, the ships being well backed up from the shore. After the smoke had become effective three M.T. ships and two hospital carriers made the anchorage safely. One circling torpedo was reported, but failed to find a target and neither at BARK EAST or at ACID were any ships damaged by bombs.

At Syracuse there were no daylight raids, and three night raids by single aircraft were ineffective.

Great confidence was inspired among the ships by the successes of nightfighters, and A/S screening vessels also took toll of low-flying aircraft.

Own aircraft engaged by ships.—As a result of our own aircraft being engaged by our ships, in particular low-flying transport aircraft on the night 13th/14th July, the Commander-in-Chief issued orders that fire was to be withheld unless aircraft were clearly identified as hostile, and that the strictest fire discipline was essential.

A/S measures.—Implementing the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean's policy of employing every possible A/S vessel in active offensive measures against the known concentration of U-boats in the operational area, Group "W" of four Hunts was detached from Force "B" to devote all its time to systematic hunting.

D + 5 DAY.

Thursday, 15th July.

Weather.—There was no change in the weather which remained fine and calm.

Situation at beaches.

A. BARK SOUTH.

L.C.M. arrived from BARK WEST where there was nothing more for them to do, and the number of D.U.K.W. available was increased to about 160. By this time a number of L.C.M. were suffering from defects (though many continued to run satisfactorily on one engine), as the beach repair party were still at BARK WEST salvaging damaged craft.

By the end of a good day little M.T. remained to be discharged and two ships were sailed.

B. BARK EAST.

After a considerable quantity of stores had been discharged from the ships which had come round from BARK WEST they were sailed at 1800 to join a Tripoli convoy from ACID. Two further M.T. ships arrived during the evening from BARK SOUTH having discharged their vehicles there.

C. ACID SOUTH and NORTH.

Seven ships of the D + 3 day convoy completed discharge and sailed in convoy at about 1600.

H.M.S. BULOLO with Naval Commander Force "A" left at 1800 and S.N.O.L. (H) took charge of the area.

Admiralty footnote:

* V/S—visual signalling.

Ports.—The situation at Syracuse was not satisfactory, and it was decided by Naval Commander Eastern Task Force that Naval Commander Force "A" should take over there to permit Flag Officer Sicily to proceed to Augusta where he was urgently required. Accordingly the staff of Force "A" were placed at the disposal of N.O.I.C. Syracuse to help straighten matters out.

At Augusta the harbour and approach channel were both swept for mines during the day with negative result. A start was made with the establishment of coastal forces and landing craft bases.

N.C.E.T.F. visits ports.—Naval Commander Eastern Task Force visited Syracuse and Augusta in H.M.S. LAFOREY during the day.

Gun support.—The normal supporting fire was carried out when, and where, required by the army. The only incident of note was damage inflicted by H.M.S. ROBERTS upon herself while engaged in a bombardment. This included one 4-inch mounting put out of action and an Oerlikon wrecked.

Air activity.—Air activity was restricted to night raids in the north which resulted in nothing worse than some near misses. Heavy barrage from shore defences and extensive use of smoke probably prevented any attempt at precision bombing.

D.S. SOEMBA and FLORES to Augusta.—By order of Flag Officer Sicily the Dutch gunboats SOEMBA and FLORES sailed from BARK EAST for Augusta.

D + 6 DAY.

Friday, 16th July.

Weather.—Fine weather still prevailed over the whole area of operations.

Beaches.

A. BARK SOUTH.

Discharge of stores continued satisfactorily all day. The pontoon with three mobile cranes on it was used for discharging stores from L.C.T. and Scammels to off-load crates from beached L.C.M. Part of the beach repair parties having come round from BARK WEST, a repair park for craft was established on one section of the beach.

B. BARK EAST.

Good progress was made with the unloading of the three M.T. ships in the anchorage and L.C.T. with stores for 51 Division continued to arrive from BARK SOUTH for unloading.

Four ships of the 14th Minesweeping Flotilla carried out a searching sweep in the approach to the anchorage.

C. ACID SOUTH and NORTH.

The last Class "A" ship of the D+3 day convoy sailed to join a convoy from Syracuse.

F.O.S.Y. to Augusta.—Flag Officer Sicily in H.M.S. LARGS transferred from Syracuse to Augusta.

K.M.S. 19B and C forward.—It was decided that K.M.S. convoys 19B and C, which had been held at Malta, should be sailed for Sicily the following morning. This was to relieve congestion at Malta and permit economic use to be made of escorts.

Gun support.—Supporting fire was given to the army as required, but there was again no shoot worthy of particular note.

Enemy air activity.—Only at the northern end of the area of operations was there any particular incident. Raids on a reduced scale were experienced during the night 15th/16th July at Syracuse and near misses resulted in some damage to H.M.S. BOSTON and a few minor casualties in that ship and H.M.S. POOLE. Aircraft mining was also reported south of Syracuse by H.M.S. ROOKWOOD.

D + 7 DAY.

Saturday, 17th July.

Weather.—There was no change in the weather which remained consistently favourable.

Beaches.

A. BARK SOUTH.

Unloading continued satisfactorily and four M.T. ships and two cased petrol carriers were cleared and sailed, leaving eight ships in the anchorage.

B. BARK EAST.

It was decided by Naval Commander Force "V" that after the completion of discharge of the three ships then present, BARK EAST beaches were to be closed. S.N.O.L. (N) was relieved in the evening by Commander R. W. D. Thompson, R.N. and Captain (D), 21st Flotilla assumed responsibility for the safety of the ships in the anchorage.

When S.N.O.L. (N) left, all landing craft in the sector with the exception of two L.C.M. and one L.C.T. were still in good running order.

Augusta.—The presence of two E-boats in the searched channel during the night 16th/17th July caused minelaying to be suspected. Convoy movements were held up until 0930 when the port was re-opened after a 100 per cent. sweep of the channel over a width of two cables on either side of the centre line had been completed without disclosing a mine of any type.

The E-boats were also reported by a patrol trawler to have fired torpedoes and H.M.S. MAURITIUS at anchor in the harbour observed two flashes resembling torpedo explosions outside. No damage was done.

Syracuse.—H.M.S. BULOLO sailed from Syracuse for Malta at 2000 with Naval Commander Force "A" on board, the situation being, by then, satisfactory with a new N.O.I.C., Captain A. N. Grey, R.N. temporarily in charge. It had previously been agreed between Naval Commander Force "A" and Flag Officer Sicily that a prolongation of the stay of H.M.S. BULOLO would eventually lead to confusion owing to divided control, and that the shore organisation would settle down more quickly when there was no doubt as to who was in charge.

Gun Support.

The Inshore Squadron once more gave its support to the army in their operations along the coast, but no call was made upon the bombardment cruisers.

In the evening between 1842 and 1902, H.M.S. WARSPITE bombarded Catania, firing 57 rounds of 15-inch at ranges opening at

15,000 yards and finishing at 11,200 yards. At the same time the accompanying destroyers engaged shore batteries of about 4-inch calibre to the northward of Guardia. The batteries engaged the destroyers intermittently and with little accuracy.

Enemy Air Activity.

Enemy aircraft were little in evidence and there was only one incident of moment. In the early hours of the morning, H.M.S. QUEEN EMMA with Royal Marine Commandos on board was near missed at Augusta, and a number of casualties were suffered among both the ship's company and the Commandos. In all about 18 were killed and about 70 wounded. In addition to superficial damage the ship sustained many holes in her sides and superstructure as well as fractures in fire-main and piping systems.

H.M.S. WARSPITE saw enemy fighters once, and some unidentified aircraft on another occasion, but no attack developed.

U-boats.—H.M.S. WARSPITE recorded that there were two doubtful reports of the presence of U-boats in her vicinity, but no contact was obtained, and no attack apparently made.

D + 8 DAY.

Sunday, 18th July.

Weather.—Favourable weather conditions still prevailed.

Beaches and Ports.

Unloading was steadily becoming a matter of routine, and at 0700 S.N.O.L. (N) with his staff sailed for Malta in H.M.S. BRECON.

At BARK SOUTH as a result of some re-organisation and re-allocation of craft the daily total was again increased.

At Syracuse, operations were hindered by a serious petrol fire at the Molo San Antonio, the fuelling point connected with the bulk installation inland, and all efforts failed to extinguish the fire which continually broke out afresh. As a result, two alongside berths in the harbour were rendered untenable and the bulk storage immobilised.

At ACID NORTH, a period of twelve hours this day, Royal Engineers constructed at BLUE

beach a causeway sixty feet wide with a depth of 3 feet 6 inches at the seaward end.

Three ships of the KM. 19 Y convoy arrived.

In the course of the normal patrols off the ports there were no incidents.

Gun support.—Support was given to the right flank of the army by L.C.G., gunboats and destroyers, and during the forenoon H.M.S. MAURITIUS and NEWFOUNDLAND bombarded Catania.

Enemy air activity.—This was on a small scale and the night 17th/18th July saw only one raid on Augusta. Two small fires were started ashore but no damage was suffered by port or ships.

U-boats.—A combined sweep east of Augusta was carried out during the night 17th/18th July by destroyers and A.S.V. aircraft.* Two U-boats were located by aircraft in positions 37° 26' N., 16° 22' E. and 37° 09' N., 15° 42' E. respectively. The first was attacked with depth charges, and the aircraft claimed to have inflicted severe damage. The enemy was last seen on a course 047° still on the surface, but the supporting destroyers failed to find it. The second U-boat also escaped.

D + 9 DAY.

Monday, 19th July.

Weather.—Continued fine weather was experienced at all sectors.

Beaches and ports.—At BARK SOUTH further re-arrangement resulted in the daily total of personnel, stores and vehicles which landed being still further increased.

N.C.E.T.F. hauls down his flag.—Naval Commander Eastern Task Force proceeded from Malta to Sicily for a final inspection during the day. At noon his appointment lapsed, his task being regarded as completed, and his flag was struck. The duties hitherto performed by him were assumed between them by the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, Vice-Admiral Malta and Flag Officer Sicily.

Admiralty footnote:

* A.S.V. aircraft—aircraft fitted with radar equipment.

ERRATUM.

Supplement to The London Gazette of Friday, 8th October, 1948.

Naval Operations in the Aegean between the 7th September, 1943, and 28th November, 1943.

In paragraph 21, after "BEAUFORT" delete "(Lieutenant-Commander Sir Standish O'G. Roche, Bt., D.S.O.)" and substitute "(Lieutenant J. R. L. Moore, R.N.)".

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