

their lines of communication where they crossed the sea. This had been their primary role since the 6th June, 1944, but with the supplementary operations undertaken during these months, and the preparation of the naval forces of occupation, the period becomes one of greater naval activity than any since the days of maintenance over the beaches.

4. More than the other Services, the United States and British Navies felt the demands of the Naval War in the Far East during this time, with the resultant considerable withdrawals from the naval strength at my disposal. With many unknown commitments ahead and many plans awaiting fruition, this reduction in our naval strength would have caused me more uneasiness had I not had ample evidence that fortitude and hard work would enable the Allied Navies to accomplish all that was required of them, despite reductions in their strength.

5. In these latter days, the French Navy was rapidly gaining in strength and it was a proud moment when French Naval Forces took part in the operation for the liberation of Bordeaux, the first major operation they had undertaken under my command.

6. But it is to the combined work of the United States and British Navies that the future historian will turn for an example of faultless team work and mutual understanding between nations, that may be equalled in the future but surely never surpassed. Tradition and custom, the parents of procedure, are very deeply rooted in all Navies and when one Navy is placed under the Commander-in-Chief of another nationality, the procedure of his own Service must be paramount in both. No exception occurred in this case, and the United States Navy readily adapted itself to the requirements of a closely knit British Naval organisation.

7. The foundations of this, the most fruitful and harmonious naval combination of all time, were laid by my predecessor, the late Admiral Sir Bertram H. Ramsay, K.C.B., K.B.E., M.V.O., and I am proud to be able to claim that the co-operation between our two Services has grown no less since his passing.

8. As the best expression of my feelings at the time of the termination of our great enterprise, I reproduce the messages made by me on the occasions of the termination of the Supreme Command and the last U.S. Naval Forces leaving the European Theatre of Operations, together with the replies made by yourself and Admiral H. R. Stark, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces in Europe.

(Signed) H. M. BURROUGH,
Admiral.

GENERAL DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, U.S. Army,
Supreme Commander,
Allied Expeditionary Force.

THE FINAL STAGES OF THE NAVAL WAR IN NORTH-WEST EUROPE.

The direct contribution of the Allied Navies to the crossing of the Rhine was the assistance they provided at the crossing, and to the Armies operating on the western flank in the east Scheldt area.

2. Early in March, 1945, a force of L.C.M.s and L.C.V.(P)s*, known as Force "U" and under the command of Captain P. H. G. James, R.N., was formed to assist the 21st Army Group in crossing the Rhine.

A corresponding force of United States landing craft had been formed the previous winter to assist the American Armies, and both British and U.S. craft were transported overland with their crews and all equipment in tank transporters.

In fact, only L.C.V.(P)s were used on account of their greater manoeuvrability and they proved extremely useful for such jobs as towing sections of pontoon bridges. They also did a certain amount of ferrying, notably in the American sector where they did valiant work under fire in the Remagen Bridge area.

3. At the request of the Allied Armies, small boom and asdic parties were supplied at the Rhine crossing with the object of preventing German midget submarines, explosive boats and saboteur swimmers from interfering with our communications. All were of great assistance as the Germans made some determined but fruitless efforts with these weapons.

4. On the lower Rhine and West Scheldt estuary, the naval Force "T", under Captain A. F. Pugsley, C.B., D.S.O., R.N., continued to be responsible for the protection of the seaward flank of our Armies and carried out a constant succession of Commando raids, mostly by L.C.A.,† on the enemy's positions in the area. These raids were almost uniformly successful.

5. Craft of both Force "T" and Force "U" took part in the final crossings of the Rhine when the Canadian Army was advancing westward into Holland.

Tasks facing the Allied Navies after the Rhine Crossing.

6. With the crossing of the Rhine accomplished, a survey of the wider scene found the Allied Navies charged with the following variety of tasks:—

(a) The provision of specialised seagoing ships and craft required for the maintenance of the Allied Armies in the field, together with the responsibility shared with the Commander-in-Chief, The Nore, for the protection of merchant shipping used for the same purpose.

(b) The working of the ports through which the main stream of military imports flowed. Some 10,000 tons of stores on British account and 20,000 tons on U.S. account were passing through Antwerp daily, while the main personnel traffic passed through Ostend and Calais in the British zone and Le Havre in the U.S. zone.

(c) Preparation of Naval Parties to participate in the occupation of Germany including the provision of an operational Port Party to open the port of Hamburg. Arrangements for naval representation on the S.H.A.E.F. Missions to Denmark and Norway.

* Admiralty footnote: L.C.M.—landing craft for mechanised transport.

L.C.V.(P)—landing craft for personnel.

† Admiralty footnote: L.C.A.—landing craft for assaulting troops.