

brought success to our undertaking. The embodiment of that spirit was exemplified in our Commander-in-Chief, General Dwight D. Eisenhower; we counted it a privilege to follow in his train.

(Signed) A. B. CUNNINGHAM,
Admiral of the Fleet.

The Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces.

ENCLOSURE I.

*The Office of Flag Officer, Inshore Squadron,
H.M.S. BULOLO.*

8th December, 1942.

The following report on Operation "Torch" is forwarded.

Prior to leaving U.K..

2. In compliance with Admiralty instructions I hoisted my Flag as Flag Officer, Force "E", in H.M.S. BULOLO at Greenock at 0800 on 14th October, 1942.

3. Most ships who were to form the fast and slow convoys, K.M.F.1 and K.M.S.1 respectively, had assembled in the Clyde area by 17th October. I took the opportunity on this and succeeding days of visiting all L.S.I.s*, with General Ryder, U.S. Army (in command of the assault on Algiers) and Major-General V. Eveleigh, O.B.E. (in command of the British 78th Division), and spoke briefly to the ships' companies, landing craft crews, beach parties, and military and R.A.F. personnel embarked.

4. Whilst in the Clyde every endeavour was made to exercise both naval and military personnel and to prepare them for the parts they would be required to play in the operation. In this connection great difficulty was experienced by the Senior Naval Officers of Landing in making contact with the M.T. ships of the slow convoy; this was due partly to delay in preparing ships and concentrating them and partly to the fact that berths were many miles apart. In the event, it proved impossible for the M.T. ships and their landing craft to be exercised at all.

5. H.M.S. BERMUDA and all Hunt class destroyers taking part in the operation carried out practice bombardments on the Arran range. All destroyers who were available were also given bombardment communication exercises with their own military F.O.O.s† ashore.

6. On 17th October, the Fleet minesweepers ACUTE (Commander M/S), CADMUS, ROTHER, SPEY, ALARM, ALBACORE, ALGERINE, HUSSAR and SPEEDWELL were exercised in special night sweeping operations which included the laying of lit dans‡. These exercises were designed as far as possible to reproduce the actual requirements of the operation and proved most valuable.

7. On the night of 20th/21st October, Exercise "Flaxman", which had been prepared by the staff of Rear-Admiral Combined

Operations, was carried out in the Loch Fyne area. Owing to many ships not being available, "Flaxman", which was designed to exercise fully all ships, military and R.A.F. personnel and units in combined operations, was on a very reduced scale. Moreover, as it was urgently necessary to conserve landing craft, which could not be replaced if damaged, only a minimum of troops, vehicles and equipment could be landed. In consequence, communication with the beaches was bad and little information of what was going on was received in the H.Q. Ship. Discussions on return to Greenock proved that while the exercise had been of value to the S.N.O.L.s,* military, landing craft crews and beach parties, etc., it was quite inadequate owing to the restrictions which had to be imposed.

8. On 22nd October, Convoy Conference for K.M.S.1 was held on board H.M.S. AVENGER; and on 25th October, the Convoy Conference for K.M.F. 1 was held on board the REINA DEL PACIFICO. At both these conferences the orders for the operation were gone through in detail with the Commanding Officers of naval forces and the Masters and S.N.O. (T)s† of Red Ensign ships.

From U.K. to passage of Straits.

9. Convoy K.M.S.1 sailed from the Clyde on 22nd October, 1942. At 2100 B.S.T. on 26th October, I sailed in H.M.S. BULOLO with Convoy K.M.F.1 from the Clyde in single line ahead at 9 knots.

10. In view of the danger of moored mines, the Fleet minesweepers and twin-screw corvettes escorting K.M.S.1 and K.M.F.1 carried out Oropesa search ahead of both convoys from longitude 06° W. to the 100 fathom line. The search was made with double Oropesa in "H" formation and covered a 3 mile front 5 miles ahead of leading ships of the convoys.

11. At 0900 on 27th October, H.M.S. SHEFFIELD, wearing the Flag of Rear-Admiral C. H. J. Harcourt, C.B.E., Rear-Admiral Commanding, 10th Cruiser Squadron, joined K.M.F.1 with the escort from Belfast, where she had embarked some 600 U.S. troops under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Swenson, U.S. Army, and 50 naval ratings commanded by Captain H. St. J. Fancourt, R.N., who were to take part in the direct assault on Algiers (Operation "Terminal").

12. The passage of the convoy from the United Kingdom to the rendezvous with the additional escort off Cape St. Vincent, and the division of the convoy into K.M.F.A.1 and K.M.F.O.1 on 4th November, was wholly successful, and there is reason to believe that the convoy was never sighted or reported by U-Boats.

13. From 30th October to 3rd November, A/S‡ patrols were flown from H.M.S. BITER, and at 1700 on 30th October a Swordfish sighted a U-Boat on the surface 25 miles, 270° from the convoy. The U-Boat dived before the aircraft could attack, but the aircraft kept him down for sufficient time to enable the convoy to pass unreported. BITER's last Swordfish became unserviceable landing on in a swell after the dusk patrol on 3rd November. No A/S air patrol was provided on 4th November

Admiralty footnotes:—

* L.S.I.—Landing Ship, Infantry.

† F.O.O.—Forward Observation Officer.

‡ Dan—a marking buoy.

Admiralty footnotes:—

* S.N.O.L.—Senior Naval Officer Landing.

† S.N.O.(T)—Senior Naval Officer (Transport).

‡ A/S—anti-submarine.