

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.