

not knock out the battery, was always sufficiently accurate to cause it to cease firing.

27. Y Beach was also visited by the French chasseur LA SURPRISE which, according to statements made later by prisoners, had orders to attack the ships there. She was engaged and finally sunk by BRILLIANT, the supporting destroyer off the beach.

28. At noon, information was received that the U.S. armoured force, for the most part landed from the Maracaibos, had taken Tafaraoui aerodrome and an immediate request was sent to Gibraltar for the U.S. Army Spitfires.

29. The naval aircraft, after the attack on the aerodromes, maintained standing fighter patrols over the area of operations and these aircraft directed by LARGS were used extensively for tactical reconnaissance. The latter was one of the features of the operation and was all the more important owing to the very scanty and uncertain nature of the army communications.

30. Twenty-four U.S. Spitfires arrived at Tafaraoui by 1600 and whilst airborne were in touch with LARGS by W/T.

*Monday, 9th November.*

31. During the night a considerable swell came in at all beaches and landing operations were delayed in consequence.

32. GARDENIA and FLUELLEN on patrol off X Beach were in collision, the former unfortunately sinking with the loss of three men.

33. During the forenoon JAMAICA and AURORA engaged two destroyers which came out of Oran, both destroyers being seriously damaged and beached under the batteries.

34. A French Zouave battalion from Mostaganem gave some trouble to the American battalion guarding the eastern flank of the beaches, and owing to the lack of good communications, which made the situation obscure in LARGS, together with a panicky message from the British F.O.O. in that area, caused for a short time some anxiety. The situation was, however, quickly restored when JAMAICA arrived off the beach to give supporting fire and some accurate high level bombing by FURIOUS's three remaining Albacores caused the enemy to withdraw.

35. More U.S. Spitfires from Gibraltar arrived in the course of the afternoon together with a half squadron of Swordfish for A/S patrols. I therefore ordered the carriers to return to Gibraltar on completion of their last fighter patrol of the day. Their co-operation had been invaluable and was carried out with all the dash and efficiency that characterises the operations of naval aircraft.

36. By the evening, the situation ashore, both from the positions gained by the advancing troops and the quantity of the ammunition and stores that had been got up to them, determined the Commanding General to carry out a general assault on Oran at 0800 on the following day.

RODNEY, AURORA and JAMAICA were detailed to assist by bombardment of the two big forts at Du Santon and Cape Canastel, and FARNDAL and CALPE, under the orders of Captain J. S. Bethell, R.N., my Chief

of Staff, were ordered to be ready to seize the earliest practicable opportunity of entering harbour to endeavour to stop any blocking operations, which all along I was convinced the French would undertake.

37. Early morning reconnaissance of the harbour from the air, however, revealed that this had already been carried out; consequently I decided to keep our ships clear. There was nothing they could have done and their presence at that stage would only have caused additional aggravation.

*Tuesday, 10th November.*

38. The assault went off as planned and by noon General Fredendall who had gone ashore early was taking the surrender of Oran.

39. News was received shortly afterwards that much of the French shipping in the port had been sunk, but that like most blocking operations hurriedly conceived and undertaken, the results were not so bad as they at first appeared.

40. The first follow-up convoys were due the following day and I ordered the five personnel ships of the fast portion into Mers el Kebir and the slow portion into Arzeu Bay.

*Wednesday, 11th November.*

41. RODNEY was sent to join Force "H" cruising between Algiers and Oran.

42. I embarked in AURORA during the forenoon and visited X and Y Beaches. As at Z Beach they had been much impeded by bad weather but with perseverance and resourcefulness were getting on very well. The big L.S.I.s, BATORY, MONARCH OF BERMUDA and LLANGIBBY CASTLE, had already been sailed empty for Gibraltar.

43. The NIEUW ZEELAND, which had been sailed independently from Arzeu, was unhappily sunk by a submarine when almost within sight of Gibraltar. I therefore arranged for all further returning ships to be escorted, and thereafter none were sunk in the Mediterranean.

*Thursday, 12th November.*

44. Unloading proceeded with great rapidity at all the beaches. At Z the unloading was confined to the harbour at Arzeu and it was found possible to get no less than seven ships inside, four of them alongside.

The congestion in the docks was bad and the stores, mostly petrol and ammunition, mountains high. It was as well that there were no air raids.

45. I visited the airfields of Tafaraoui and La Senia during the day, and to avoid disturbing the minds of those it was our policy to propitiate, covered my uniform with an American overcoat and tin hat. The local population appeared for the most part indifferent to the coming and going of the American troops.

The efficiency of the naval air attack on La Senia was impressive and I counted over forty wrecked aircraft on the aerodrome. The two hangars containing the fighters were completely wrecked, but the other hangars were virtually undamaged save for fragmentary perforation.