

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.