

were lowered with the first flight and when L.C.I.(L) came alongside to embark their troops were very unpleasant. The more credit is due to them for the fact that the initial landings were made as near to H hour as was the case.

I did not myself see any landing craft during the night, but all reports show that their performance together with that of the H.D.M.L.,* etc., was very satisfactory taking into account the prevailing weather.

10. The L.C.T. convoy for BARK EAST, having been held up by the weather and having eventually made BARK SOUTH,† arrived close on six hours late, that for ACID‡ two hours late, and that for BARK SOUTH about two hours late, but the L.C.T. for BARK WEST, which had been given a shorter route than originally intended, passing east of Gozo, arrived only thirty minutes late. This latter convoy had the worst of the blow, and their prompt arrival reflected high credit on Lieutenant-Commander K. A. Sellar, R.N., who led them.

11. In general the marking submarines were in their correct positions and navigational aids were working and were picked up by the convoys on approaching their release positions. The ships at the release positions were not apparently detected by the shore defences, and the only difficulties experienced in lowering and forming up landing craft were those imposed by the weather. It is clear that the allowance of two and a half hours from the arrival at the release position to H hour was in no way excessive as the majority of the assaults were a few minutes late.

12. The defences were taken generally by surprise when the assaulting formations landed and there was little organised resistance on the beaches. It is understood that a proportion of the coast defences were not, in fact, manned on that night; those that were manned were, in the majority of cases, not stoutly fought.

13. At first light there was a certain amount of shelling from shore batteries, but these were effectively dealt with by supporting monitors, destroyers and gun boats. The effectiveness of the supporting fire from our naval forces was a feature of the operation, and many tributes have been paid it, both by the army and by enemy prisoners.

14. Due to the late arrival of the L.C.T. convoys the only L.C.T. to beach before daylight were those at BARK SOUTH. Although these did so successfully, and on a shore that was generally rocky, insufficient experience was gained in the operation as a whole to show how far the beaching of L.C.T. in large numbers in darkness is a practical proposition. The problem of landing the supporting arms immediately behind the assault infantry cannot yet be considered to be solved, and it is recommended that comprehensive trials should be undertaken as early as possible to examine this matter. If difficulties are experienced, it is believed that a dark assault should be timed to be about one hour before first light, unless the army are prepared to rely on naval supporting fire for a longer period until first light.

Admiralty footnotes:

- * H.D.M.L.—Harbour Defence Motor Launch.
- † BARK SOUTH—One of the British assault beaches (see Plan).
- ‡ ACID—a sector in BARK EAST (see Plan).

15. It was unfortunate that the L.C.R.* were not able to soften the beach defences, but their subsequent performance suggests that they are well fitted for this role. L.C.G. (L)† engaged direct targets effectively at short range, and the moral effect of both the L.C.R. and the L.C.G. (L) firing from close inshore is reported to have been considerable.

16. The slow convoys arrived in accordance with the plan and in every case ships had moved to an inshore anchorage by 0800/10th July. No mines were found inshore.

17. Unloading of the M.T. ships was commenced without delay, and proceeded satisfactorily, despite bad exits and soft sand in the ACID sector and false beaches and soft sand at BARK WEST. It had always been known that BARK WEST beach was unlikely to be suitable as a maintenance beach, but it is clear that it was nevertheless correct to assault on it close on the flank of BARK SOUTH. It was generally considered by Task Group Commanders that the strength of the Docks Operating personnel in the M.T. ships was insufficient, and this was borne out in "Husky". It is probably correct to say that the bottleneck in maintenance through the beaches was the insufficiency of the Docks Operating Companies to work the ships continuously. Casualties to landing craft due to enemy action were very small, but as in "Torch",‡ a few L.C.T. and L.C.M.§ were put out of action due to bad seamanship displayed by their half trained crews.

18. Both the L.S.T. (2)|| and the L.C.I. (L) proved invaluable in their respective roles, and it is considered that the speed with which both vehicles and personnel were landed was one of the principal factors of the operation from the naval point of view. Although at times the rate at which stores were unloaded appeared to be disappointing, the totals unloaded for the beaches were, in fact, greater than the planned figures. On 21st July 4,400 tons of stores were discharged at BARK SOUTH. This was of course an exceptionally good beach, and by that time the organisation there had been perfected and three beach groups were assisting, but the previous estimates for beach maintenance would seem to need revision. It appears that neither BARK SOUTH nor BARK EAST were worked to capacity during "Husky". The salient feature of this period was the success of the L.S.T. (2), L.C.I. (L) and the D.U.K.W.|| of which the latter were making their first appearance in European waters: they fulfilled our highest expectations.

19. In general, it is considered that the beach organisations worked satisfactorily, although Naval Commander Force "V" reported that his S.N.O.L.** organisations were slow in settling down. The shortage of transport ashore to clear the beach dumps was commented on by Task Group Commanders, and was aggravated by the very quick forward advance of the army. This is not likely, however, to obtain in future operations undertaken against a more determined enemy.

Admiralty footnotes:

- * L.C.R.—Landing Craft, Rocket.
- † L.C.G. (L)—Landing Craft, Gun (Large).
- ‡ "Torch"—the code name for the landings in North Africa.
- § L.C.M.—Landing Craft, Mechanised.
- || L.S.T. (2)—a type of Landing Ship, Tank.
- ¶ D.U.K.W.—an amphibious vehicle.
- ** S.N.O.L.—Senior Naval Officer Landing.