

active reconnaissance and in his painstaking training and preparation before the operation, is worthy of special note. Credit is also due to the Captain (S), Eighth Submarine Flotilla and the Commanding Officers of His Majesty's Submarines P.45, P.48, P.221, P.54 and URSULA for their efficient co-operation.

7. The arrival of the assault forces at their initial positions off their beaches proceeded without a hitch. Contacts were made with beacon submarines as planned. In fact the operation up to this point proceeded with a flawless accuracy which reflects high credit on Task Force Commanders,\* Commanding Officers of His Majesty's Ships and Masters of Merchant Vessels alike.

8. Assaults at Oran beaches passed off without a hitch; but at Algiers B and C Beaches things went awry and delay and confusion resulted, which might well have endangered success had the opposition been determined or alert. These points are well brought out in the report of the Naval Commander Eastern Task Force (Vice-Admiral Sir Harold M. Burrough, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O.) and that of Lieutenant-Commander H. M. C. Willmott, D.S.O., Royal Navy.† I would only wish to state my entire concurrence with the remarks of the former and re-emphasise that these difficulties are not "lessons learnt", but recognised and foreseen disadvantages which had reluctantly to be accepted owing to the speed with which the operation was staged and the consequent short time available for training, coupled with the difficulty of co-ordination of units scattered initially from Scapa to Sierra Leone.

9. The actual landings when the troops reached their beaches appear to have gone according to plan and the work of the beach parties was excellent, but unnecessarily large numbers of landing craft were crippled as the disembarkations proceeded. These losses were mostly avoidable and due to lack of training and bad seamanship. In this connection it is recommended that the use of new entries, not properly disciplined, in this type of operation be avoided.

Various suggestions have arisen, chiefly from United States Army reports, that landing craft should be manned and operated by the Army on the score of improved co-ordination and training. In fact, it is felt that it matters little what uniform the crews wear provided that they are disciplined, trained and practised seamen and provided that they are organised and operated by officers competent in their jobs and in close touch with the requirements of the troops they are required to land and maintain. As, however, the ships taking part in an assault are tied to a great degree to their landing craft during the period of unloading, it remains essential that the control of the latter should rest in the hands of those responsible for the safety of the ships.

10. The direct assaults planned against the harbour of Algiers and Oran (Operations "Terminal" and "Reservist") were in no sense planned as imitations of Zeebrugge but

*Admiralty footnotes:—*

\* The British Naval Task Force Commanders were:— Eastern Task Force, Vice-Admiral Sir Harold M. Burrough, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O.; Centre Task Force, Commodore T. H. Troubridge, D.S.O., R.N.

† Lieutenant-Commander Willmott's report is not being reproduced here.

were intended to be launched just before the surrender or capture of the ports with the purpose of preventing sabotage of ships and port installations. The choice of the correct moment for entry was a difficult one, depending on the existing situation and the large degree of resistance encountered.

In the event, neither operation was successful in its object but both were remarkable for the determination and gallantry with which all concerned tackled their task, and both were successful in forcing an entry through the booms.

#### *Operation "Terminal"*

11. His Majesty's Ship BROKE (Lieutenant-Commander A. F. C. Layard, Royal Navy) succeeded in getting alongside in Algiers and disembarked her troops, but they were pinned by machine-gun fire and did no good. It is considered that the Commanding Officer's decision to retire from a position rapidly becoming untenable was a correct one. It is much to be regretted that an underestimate of damage sustained should have led to the subsequent foundering of this ship when she might by then have been safely berthed in Algiers harbour.

#### *Operation "Reservist"*

12. The choice of the ships for this operation had rested on their American appearance, and their chance of a friendly reception lay largely in this appearance and the use of the American Ensign. In the face of serious opposition it could not be expected that they would succeed in their task. In the event, the moment chosen could hardly have been less fortunate, since the French alarm to arms was in its first flush, whilst darkness prevented any American complexion to the operation being apparent.

The expedition was a failure, redeemed by the gallantry displayed by officers and men of both nations as they strove to achieve their object in the face of hopeless odds. It is much to be regretted that Captain F. T. Peters, V.C., D.S.O., D.S.C., Royal Navy, the leader, having survived this ordeal, lost his life in an aircraft accident on his way to the United Kingdom.

#### *Support Fire.*

13. The experience of units detailed to provide supporting fire for soldiers ashore served only to re-emphasise the well known fact that ship gunfire cannot be expected to knock out forts by obtaining direct hits on gun positions. Ships' gunfire is capable of very considerable moral effect when using heavy calibre guns, and of smothering effect from the rapid volume of medium calibre fire of any calibre gun at close range, but that is the most that should be expected. Cases reported of delays in responding to calls for fire are attributable to two main causes, namely, inability of military authority to appreciate that a ship cannot remain waiting indefinitely in her bombarding position in submarine infested waters, and failure to make proper use of the support wave for rapid communication.

#### *Air Support.*

##### *Fighters.*

14. Taken as a whole the provision of fighter support over the shipping and beaches left little to be desired. It suffered from all the known limitations of carrier-operated aircraft,