

on instructions from the Naval Commander Force "A" she loaded her L.C.A. as originally planned. This necessitated the reorganisation of her troops and it was not until nearly 0230 that her craft were ready for lowering and it was 0315 before the first flight got away owing to the second flight from S.S. DERBYSHIRE persisting in an attempt to form up at the same time. The beach was found without difficulty with the aid of the Folbot* from the marking submarine.

The first flight from H.M.S. GLENGYLE beached about 0500; the second flight from S.S. DERBYSHIRE at 0520; and the remainder from S.S. MARNIX at 0545.

The first flight from H.M.S. GLENGYLE was met by a little machine-gun opposition, which was effectively dealt with by L.C.S.† from S.S. MARNIX. There were no casualties to craft personnel.

ROGER GREEN I and II beaches were used for the assault as in the light of conflicting information they appeared to be the best. In the event all the ROGER beaches were found to be shallow with constantly changing sandbanks, except ROGER RED which, though very small and rocky, was shown by a survey to be the most suitable for all types of landing craft. There was also an appreciable and abnormal tidal effect and many L.C.M. were stranded and could not be re-floated for some time. H.M.S. BOXER, THRUSTER and BRUISER were unable to beach within a reasonable distance from the shore and had to be unloaded by L.C.T.

Slow assault convoy arrives.—The slow assault convoy K.M.S. 18 arrived on time at the release position and brought up in the appointed anchorage.

Inner anchorage occupied.—Shortly before daylight, Naval Commander Force "V" in H.M.S. HILARY led into the intermediate anchorage after the approach channel had been swept. A searching sweep indicated that the inner anchorage was free of mines and at 0900 shipping was entered into the bay.

By midday both S.N.O.L.(R) and S.N.O.L.(S) had moved ashore. A reasonable rate of unloading was continuously maintained and at 1630 the L.S.I.(L) and L.S.P.‡ had completed disembarkation and sailed for Malta.

B. BARK SOUTH.

In spite of the weather which made station keeping by L.C.I.(L) very difficult, the assault convoy for BARK SOUTH was only fifteen minutes late when it anchored. L.C.A. were got promptly away from the L.S.I.(M), but the swell made it difficult for L.C.I.(L), both in coming alongside and in embarking their troops.

However, at 0115 the signal for the assault party to proceed was given, and the craft moved off with the exception of some L.C.I.(L) which had not completed loading; these followed later direct to the beaches.

The landings on RED beaches were made to time though two to three hundred yards to the westward of the correct position in the case

of RED III. The GREEN beaches were found correctly but owing to the weather more time than anticipated was required for the passage and the landings were forty minutes late.

Opposition was everywhere slight, surprise being complete or almost so. At the GREEN landings some casualties were suffered in L.C.I. from machine-gun fire and in the RED sector an L.C.A. received several direct hits from a mortar.

The L.C.T. convoy were late but proceeded direct to the waiting position arriving there at 0330. The majority had beached by first light.

All RED and GREEN beaches were found to be smaller than expected, and there was some congestion, particularly when the Reserve Brigade went in at first light. Notwithstanding this all L.C.I. and L.C.T. had beached and discharged by about 0745.

Between 0800 and 0900 reconnaissance of AMBER beach by land and water proved, as anticipated by the military, that this beach was only lightly defended. The only opposition was one burst of machine-gun fire, immediately silenced by a broadside from EGGESFORD.

By midday AMBER beach was in use, with L.C.I. beaching there in formation. A rocky promontory at the eastern end was found suitable for L.S.T. and needing only a little work to make it into an excellent hard. Elsewhere a false beach with three feet of water inshore caused some inconvenience and necessitated the use of D.U.K.W. and a pontoon.

The three L.S.I.(M) were sailed for Sousse at 1400 followed at 2100 by the first convoy of empty L.S.T. for Malta. Empty L.C.I.(L) had been proceeding to Malta in groups as, and when, ready since 0900. H.M.S. ROYAL ULSTERMAN was retained by S.N.O.L.(Q) as his headquarters.

C. BARK EAST.

When approaching Sicily it was found that the southerly set was stronger than had been anticipated but allowance was made for this and the convoy stopped in the correct position at 0030/10th July. All landing craft were lowered on arrival.

All flights touched down at the correct time, and the sea inshore being calm, all landings were made without difficulty. Surprise was lost fifty yards from the shore and light machine-gun fire and sniping were encountered by most on the beach. L.C.S. and L.C.F.* replied with effect and only slight military, but no naval, casualties were suffered. Only at RED beach was any serious opposition met and this was disposed of by troops landed on SCRAMBLE RED. Throughout the assault only one landing craft was lost—an L.C.P.† burnt out after being hit in the petrol tank by a shell splinter.

Although the beaches had been cleared, no progress could be made in the landing of supporting arms until nearly 0700 when the first L.C.T. arrived via BARK SOUTH, having been delayed and diverted by the weather.

At 0520 the coastal battery north of Pachino began a barrage on a line about 200 yards off

Admiralty footnotes:

* Folbot—a collapsible rubber boat.

† L.C.S.—Landing Craft, Support.

‡ L.S.P.—Landing Ship, Personnel.

Admiralty footnotes:

* L.C.F.—Landing Craft, Flak.

† L.C.P.—Landing Craft, Personnel.