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U. S. RANGERS

by

Col. W. C. Darby

DARBY, W.C.

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U. S. RANGERS

By

Col. W. O. Darby

Presented at the  
Army and Navy Staff College  
Washington, D.C.  
27 October 1944

(Amphibious Section)

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(COMMO. FOY: Gentlemen, this morning we are going to have a talk by one of the most interesting speakers we have had here in the course: Colonel Darby on the subject of the U. S. Rangers. He is going to be assisted by Colonel Dammer, who was his executive officer in the various operations of the Rangers in the Mediterranean.

The last time we asked Colonel Darby over here we asked him to speak about naval gunfire support from the receiving end, and what he talked about was the U.S. Rangers. So, this time we thought we would be perfectly honest and schedule the lecture under its proper name.)

General DeWitt, Commodore Foy: I thank you very kindly for your introduction. I would like to tell you gentlemen that I am very happy to be back over here for a third time to talk to the ANSCOL class. I don't see how Commodore Foy and General DeWitt stand it, but they do, and I will do my best to try to make this a little more interesting this time.

It becomes exceedingly more difficult every time I talk at ANSCOL because there are more people that I know and have served with who keep coming up here to school. It used to be the first time I made a speech, the only one up here to pin me down was Captain Mays Lewis. Since then, there is Johnny Leppert, whom I see in the back row here, and there is also my executive officer. So, this time I am pretty much confined to the truth.

So, I will start off on that basis and stick to what I know happened and not let my imagination wander. I am going to talk about the Rangers, and, incidentally, I am going to speak about some naval gunfire support.

The Rangers were organized over in North Ireland in June of 1942. They were organized, it is my belief at least,

because our Chief of Staff, General Marshall, had been over in Great Britain and had been in Scotland, and he was very much impressed with the Commandos and the type of work that the British Commandos had done. He was particularly impressed by the type of training that the British Commandos went through in their training center. He came over to North Ireland and he made the statement that he wanted a similar organization out of the troops there - out of volunteers of the 5th Corps. Hence, the Rangers were born.

My Rangers were formed up in a little town called Carrickfergus, North Ireland, and was formed completely with volunteers from the 5th Corps. About 50 per cent came out of the 34th Division and about 40 per cent came out of the 1st Armored Division and the final 10 per cent came out of the 5th Corps at large.

We were formed there, organized, and moved quickly to Northern Scotland to the Commando depot, which was commanded by SS Brigade, British, which is the headquarters for the Commandos. And there we had a month of very intensive training at this depot under very realistic conditions. The British Commandos were very keen on realism in their training, and it was very real indeed, and was exactly what we needed for a background.

From there we went through another center which was run by a combination of the British Army and Navy and set up under their combined OP-setup, a shore installation known as HMS Darlan. The headquarters is over on the western coast of Scotland. It is all surrounded by the western isle - the famous islands of Skye, Rum, Canna, Coll, Eigg, and Tiree - which most of you are familiar with. And those of you who have been there in particular know they offer about every type of beach that a

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person could think of to operate on. They have nice, sandy beaches, beaches with good gradients, beaches with gradients that jump right off. Then they have these shallow approaches, 100 to 200 yards out, where you waded in 100 to 200 yards in waist-deep water. And day in and day out we would practice on these beaches, and in one day's time we could practice on two or three different type beaches.

I speak of this because it was an ideal training center. We got a good picture there of the Army and Navy working together, some of the Navy's problems and some of the Army's problems. Particularly with the Army man, first of all he always has to learn which kind of a boat is a boat, and the difference between a boat and a ship, and how to some way control the heaving motion that goes on in your stomach when you are out at sea in a big storm; these are always the soldier's problems.

From there we went to Dundee and practiced for our first big show. In the interim we had Dieppe, in which some six officers and 44 men out of my outfit participated. Those men who went on Dieppe went with the two Commandos that made the flank attacks - No. 3 and No. 4 - and, also, I had a small party with the Canadian division in the center. Those that came back alive brought back an awful lot of information for us. And it was helpful to us in our training for our first big show that we were to do as a unit. I am going to roughly sketch here our operations from then on.

Our first show was the landing at Arzew with the mission of capturing Oran-Arzew here, and Oran, here (indicating on map). From there we were flown into Tunisia where we made "Custer's Last Stand," so to speak, down at Gafsa in the early days of 1943. We made some raids in that area, and

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we were the rear guard out of Gafsa back into what was later known as the Battle of Kasserine, where we pulled back into Dornier Pass.

From there we were the advance guard back into Gafsa, and the battle that materialized was known as the Battle of El Gatar.

We jumped off ahead of the 1st Division and took out the enemy's right flank division at a place which was known as Djeb-el-Ank. From there we went to the center and then to the right flank, and finally when the 8th Army broke through up the coast, we were withdrawn. (Indicating on map) This is El Gatar here; the 8th Army came through and went up the coast.

We were withdrawn and sent over to Nemours to make three battalions out of our own one battalion, and got ready to do the Sicilian show. Here (in Sicily) we landed in two places, at Gela and Licata, and later after we ended up in Messina, we were pulled out, sent to Palermo, and two weeks later we were landing on the left flank at Salerno. We took this peninsula out here (indicating on map), called Sorrento. From there we went up in the mountains and spent last winter at about 3,000 feet elevation, throwing rocks back and forth at the enemy, just short of Cassino, and came out for Christmas, about the 20th of December last year, got a nice rest, and off we went again to Anzio about three weeks later. And that is our overall history.

Today I intend to go in particular into this Arzew show, which was our first one, this Sicilian show, next, and then I will give you some high spots about the Sorrento and the Anzio shows.

While we were in Scotland, we were given the mission of

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preceding the 1st Divisional assault on Arzew. The plan was to land the 1st Division with the 18th and 16th Infantry to the east of Oran and the 26th Infantry way over on the west of Oran, to converge on Oran two pincer movements and squeeze it out, thereby giving us the excellent naval base of Mers-el-Kabir and the port of Arzew itself. I knew a month in advance before we ever sailed that our mission was to capture ahead of the 1st Division the two gun batteries that dominated this long beach. One gun battery was right here, and the other is here, Fort de la Pointe (indicating on map). The former gun battery was a much more pretentious thing and stuck up on the hill back here; it was a four-gun battery, which were supposed to be rather long range rifles which could keep our fleet five miles at bay. They had the facilities for shooting in almost any direction. It was very well sited and very well controlled.

There were no beaches except one little scramble beach between Arzew and Oran; it was a little tiny thing right in here (indicating on map). You could barely make it out; this is headland along here (indicating on map). This beach here was very appealing. It ran off in the direction of Mostaganem. To put in the 16th and 18th Infantry, you can see - they were to land here (indicating) - how vital it was that those batteries be taken out, because they would have swept these beaches and made this landing very difficult. Also, we had to quickly get our ships in and get our heavy equipment unloaded on the docks, particularly our armor. Hence, the importance of taking out these batteries.

We were at a place in Scotland known as Dundee. We studied the airplane photographs of this operation, and we made our plans. We worked over it a long time.

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The only way we could see we could take the thing was to split our force. If we kept our force together and all went into the harbor and took out Fort de la Pointe, then that would have aroused and alerted the big fort. We thought we would never get it then. Conversely, we felt if we went in the back door and came over the mountains and took out the other fort from the back side - the big one- Fort du Nord, then, vice versa, the harbor would become alerted and Fort de la Pointe would become alerted and the boom would be closed, and thus we would have a much more difficult time getting this place. So, we had to compromise and we had to split our force.

The plan hinged on this: We felt if we could sneak somebody into this harbor, make a smash landing right up against the dock here and quickly get this fort (Fort de la Pointe) and attract the attention of the big fort (Fort du Nord), we felt that a larger force landing up here, we hoped with surprise, and coming overland to sneak up on their back side that we would get them without too much trouble. That is exactly what we decided to do. Higher headquarters approved our plan. It all hinged on this one little plan. The Navy was very skeptical about this and with reason. The plan sounded fine. It looked like the only solution to knocking this out, but it depended on this force getting through here (through boom blocking harbor), and, too, it depended on the Navy's ability to find this beach. This beach runs for about 100 yards and then runs smack into sheer cliffs, about 30 to 40 feet deep; that is all the beach there is in the 20 to 30 miles over here to Oran. It meant that the Navy had to be mighty good to find that point. We argued for it, and my Navy man, the captain who was in charge of my show, felt it could be done, that the Navy could find that beach. So, that was the plan.

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The plan, then, to reiterate, was to send a small force in here (into the harbor), take Fort de la Pointe by surprise, and to dangle this little group under the nose of this big battery (Fort du Nord) to attract their attention, while a larger force found this beach, we hoped. We got surprise, and came up and stabbed them in the back. And that is exactly what we did.

I am going to have Colonel Dammer, who was my executive officer at the time, give you the part of his show, which was the taking of Fort de la Pointe. Colonel Dammer.

COL. W. H. DAMMER: General DeWitt, Commodore Foy, Gentlemen: Colonel Darby pointed out the importance of taking out these two batteries and securing the dock facilities for our landing the following day of our heavier equipment, that is, the equipment not of our particular battalion but the force as a whole. We considered in studying the landing in the harbor, a little beach here (indicating on map). We considered going into the corner here and we considered going into the mouth of the harbor. The objection to this little beach here is that it is extremely poor. It is the worst possible excuse for a beach, hardly deserving of the name. Furthermore, it is not brought out on the photograph here very well, but from out in here (just out of harbor) there is a considerable amount of sort of a rock and reef formation, and the Navy discouraged us from thinking any further about this as a possibility. They could not in any event, first of all, reasonably assure us that they could find it and then, again, that they could approach within wading distance of the beach.

This (indicating) is obviously objectionable. These jetties are built so the stone formations that reinforce them come to the outer sides. Ships are berthed here (indicating).

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The objection to this (going right into the harbor) was that there was a boom which showed up on our photographs but which is not brought out on this one. It was shown at different times in photographs as closed or open. That contributed to the decision on the part of the battalion commander to make the force that went into the harbor only a small one so that if this boom were closed, we had the alternative of either trying this or this. We had those two alternate plans made and we were prepared to do that if we found we couldn't get in here.

It was difficult to determine the size of this boom. We took the safeguard, which proved to be rather ridiculous after seeing the size of that boom later on, of having skids mounted under the landing craft while we were still back in Scotland. The skids were a sort of affair that ran on either side of the keel itself of the landing craft. We were using LCA's, British type, and the skids were designed to protect the propeller and the rudder, and that mechanism back there, from damage in case we had to ram this thing and try to mount over it.

Fortunately, as it turned out, that thing was open and we made the entry into the harbor.

As to the information we had on our area itself, it was quite complete. We had photographs and we had a model which were studied from the time we left Scotland on October 26 until the time we actually loaded up for landing. We got a good deal of good information from that. Our intelligence on this area was quite complete. We knew there were here at least three, possibly four, guns of 75-mm caliber, mounted in this fort here, Fort de la Pointe. Fort de la Pointe sticks up on a little promontory. On the seaside it is about

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30 feet up, a rather steep bank, and those banks were covered with wire. We knew all that from our study of photographs.

There is this seaplane station which you see over in this corner. We knew the main installations on shore were manned by French Navy, which, as most of you probably remember, were considered less friendly to our undertaking than was the army.

As to other weapons that were in the vicinity which might threaten our undertaking, there were thought to be machine gun positions along this south jetty and possibly more along this shore (east jetty), and we thought that where anybody put 75 mm guns, they expect also to protect them with automatic fire.

Our decision here, as I said before, was to enter the harbor, and we decided to land in this corner of the mole. In looking over the photographs, we found out something that caused concern because of the fact that we had a photograph which showed a man in a rowboat - this was in a British intelligence report - unloading his catch of fish onto the mole here (indicating). It showed the man standing in his rowboat and dumping his bag of fish right over. That caused us some concern, as you can see, in wondering whether or not, after we pulled up alongside the pier, whether or not we were going to get off the boats and onto the thing.

The LCA stands about three or three and a half feet off the water line, and from the deck to here, and how to accomplish that, was our problem. We were assured by seeing that photograph that it could be done. We decided to land in here in a column of boats. We formed our troops in the boats and planned the formation of our troops in the boats so that they would land in the order in which we wanted them to take off on land. As it turned out later, as I will bring out,

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this did not quite work out as well as it might have.

We were dropped in the transport area, which was generally to the east of Arzew - I don't know the exact location - but in moving in for the landing - and I believe Colonel Darby brought out that the battalion was mounted in three landing ships, I had a force of two battalions that was to do this thing here on the Royal Scotsman. We moved in here and sort of missed our cue.

We found and were heartened by the fact that some of the lights around the harbor were lit. The lights on the ends of these jetties, for instance, were lit. That worked very much to our advantage when we found that we were moving in here. It wasn't until, of course, later on the following day that I knew the reason why all these things happened. But, fortunately, I was with the flotilla officer, and on seeing these lights in the harbor in reverse, he knew he was entering from a wrong angle. We moved around again and came in properly with the green and red lights showing as they ought to show. But on coming in here, the distance from here to here is considerably farther than is apparent from the photograph, and we sort of missed the entrance into here.

There were various ships in the harbors spotted around at various points, some berthed alongside the mole and some in the bay. To cut this short we missed the mole and trolled over to here. We did not desire to run into troops we thought that were garrisoned in here, and rather than go in here, and since the garrison hadn't been alerted, the flotilla officer and I made the decision to turn about again and try it again from another angle, which we did.

Fortunately, as I say the Frenchmen were not alert.

When we got in here again something upset our plans. We thought it would be quite easy to come alongside here and hop

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over on the dock, but we didn't take into account the shifting of ships that are berthed here, and we didn't take into account the things we found alongside the mole. They had a flock of these small catamaran sort of things that are used in unloading. I believe they are used to fend off ships from the mole here. They sit very low in the water and they are just a raft sort of thing. That meant that we couldn't get our boats alongside the quay and up to the mole to hop off.

We had quite a scramble in here, but we did the best we could - fortunately, still not being fired on. Our plan was to extend from this corner of the mole over to here (indicating on map), which is not very ambitious. We intended to secure this initial beachhead because our primary job was the reduction of this fort (Fort de la Pointe). Our plan had a platoon going directly here and then crossing up through the wire and assaulting the fort up the bank. The other one was to come down to the main entrance of the fort, which was this way (indicating).

Actually, this fort (Fort de la Pointe) is a very ancient thing, and the building that constitutes the fort is this little building right here (indicating). In itself it is a very formidable thing. It is very ancient, as I said; there is a moat around it - and all that sort of thing. It would have been difficult to tackle, but the guns were out in this outer area here and our plan worked quite successfully.

After we once got unscrambled from this mess we got ourselves into here, we did form our perimeter as we expected and quickly got into the fort without any trouble. Actually in the initial stages of this there was only one man killed, and he was a Frenchman. We didn't sustain any casualties until the following morning when we had a good deal of difficulty in

cleaning out sniper activity that was up here between us and Colonel Darby.

On securing this area here (Fort de la Pointe), we gave the signal - that is, the visual signal, pyrotechnics - that was intended to give the division commander, the force commander, out on the ship the information that we had secured our objective.

From there on, we expanded to patrol this oil refinery area and make connection with Colonel Darby's force up here. This was a minor part of our mission, the securing of the port facilities. We sent a force up here to patrol through here and prevent any sabotage that might happen. We extended over here to clean out these buildings and make definitely certain that this mole was clear.

In the meantime, several hours after we landed here, a boat arrived in the harbor carrying the naval port party that was meant to take over the ships that were berthed alongside the mole. The party included a Marine officer, Colonel Plain, a Captain Ansell of the Navy and Commander Munsen, as I remember. We met them on the corner here and they went about their task of locating what was here, making an appraisal of whether or not things were damaged, and how best the port could be used for the following day's work.

That about cleans up my part of this show. Colonel Darby will take up the action from his landing up on this beach down to here (indicating). We made connection with him shortly after we got into this fort by radio contact, and then joined up with him the following morning.

GEN. DeWITT: What time did you land, Dammer?

COL. DAMMER: I think it was 0100.

CAPT. LEWIS: That's right; 0100 - I believe H-30.

COL. BENTLEY: May I ask a question. Did you run into

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contact with the naval forces that were at the naval stations over there?

COL. DAMMER: Yes. We received a certain amount of fire while we were here and while we were established across the base of the mole here to beyond this cemetery. We figured on using the cemetery as part of our security here because this is all dominated by this high ground. We did have some difficulty with these people in here (in naval stations). These people did give us some trouble. I believe Colonel Darby will bring out the shooting against the ships.

COL. DARBY: In Colonel Dammer's operation from the time he hit here (indicating) until he actually took out this fort (Fort de la Pointe) took 15 minutes from the time of landing until they got in here. The point we are trying to bring out now is the business of surprise. He did get absolute surprise because, if I may ad lib on his story, as one group was going through the barbed wire, one patrol was making a pass for the front gate. They met up with a French soldier carrying laundry over his head and they went in the front gate with him. Inside they captured the fort and they captured the commandant with his wife. That was surprise! It did get things alerted, and the plan now begins to unfold as we had planned it much to our surprise.

After he got inside, the air alarms and everything else went off and it did exactly what we wanted it to do. Everybody's attention became fixed down here (on Fort de la Pointe). At the same time he was going through here (indicating), we were making our landing out here; we were landing simultaneously.

I want to take time out a minute to go through some of these difficulties to get back to this problem that was gnawing

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on us, whether or not we were going to hit this beach. We were on three small British ships, the Ulster Monarch, the Royal Ulsterman, and the Royal Scotsman. Dammer was on the Royal Scotsman. I want to correct one thing he said. He said he had two battalions; he had two small Ranger companies - and went in in eight LCA's. I was here with the remainder of the battalion. I had four companies, and I was on the Royal Ulsterman and the Ulster Monarch. I had nine craft back here - LCA's. We banked everything on the fact that if the Navy could find this place accurately enough, we would go in on a bearing of 270 degrees, and we could come in sight of this big headland here and we could make it out in the darkness. We could then find this beach. And we had to find the beach because there is no other beach to land on - it is all cliffs. And everything was dependent on finding this one little beach.

So, we got in our transport area, lowered away, and, as the British said, "Off gripes." Really their system of lowering into the water consisted of having these overhanging davits and letting loose the brakes at the same time, and we fell eight feet in the water with a resounding splash. The only thing wrong with the system was that with one of the boats, they didn't "Off gripes" at the same time, and somebody's brake hung, and one of my boats spilled - the usual story of the chaplain and his organ - the one boat that had my radio equipment, flares, and what not, went down in the drink. It spilled because they only dropped the forward end.

That created a little bit of consternation because we were terribly crowded and we had to fish these people out of the water. This being our first landing, it was quite nerve-racking. We finally got everybody fished out - lost no one there - but in the meanwhile the boats in going around and

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around had no more idea than a goose where we were. I was in the leading boat with the flotilla officer. I asked him, "Have you the faintest idea where we are?" He said, "I haven't the foggiest." The captain of the ship, (Kingscote, I think) did a fine thing, and as a result of his action, he taught us a lesson that we have used many times since then. Seeing the confusion, he came along with his larger ship, his Landing Ship Infantry, Small - I think that was the term - and he coursed us. Because all our compasses were out, he coursed us until we were definitely on this course of 270 or whatever it was. He coursed us, and, finally, as he was sure we were all set, he said, "Keep as you are"---"Steady as you go," or something like that. And that is exactly what we did. Our compasses, no matter what they read, we were actually directed by his good ship's compass, and in we went.

As we approached, it was very hazy. At almost the last minute we could pick out the headland and the beach; we hit the beach right smack on the nose. And the boys have had confidence in the Navy's ability to find difficult beaches since.

We landed and were practically unopposed. We got on the beach and were making our way to the road, trying to be quiet, after having scaled these cliffs, when a sentinel who was French and very much on the ball challenged us - "Who goes there?" - and we took him with us. That was all the opposition we had there.

Meanwhile Dammer had landed here with his force (indicating on map). He had attracted their attention. We went down this coast road with an advance guard and flank guard, and another point in the use of the Navy was that as we took off by use of a colored light out to sea, we had the British LCS

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following us right opposite the head of our column all the way down - he was all black out - and as we approached down here, he kept right in pace with us.

We were particularly worried about this area in here (indicating). Because the road was so near the sea, if we got into any sort of a fight, we thought it would be very helpful if he were opposite the head of my column. We could see him all the time and he was all prepared to deliver fire. We were disappointed when we didn't have to use him - but we thought it was a good idea. It gave us a lot of confidence, going down the road knowing he was following along.

We had practiced this thing so many times up in Scotland - the plan was to put our mortars, our 81-mortars in position back here - that we had a pre-arranged range for them.

This gun battery (Fort du Nord) stuck right up on a hill like a sore thumb; they were open positions. They were sunken emplacements, but they were open on top. So, we got our mortars very carefully in position and we started the attack, three companies abreast, on this hill on these gun positions. The mortars were all set and everybody was listening in on the radio - we were using a little 536-A set. Everyone had good communication.

We started creeping up the back side of the hill, and, much to our surprise, nothing happened. Meanwhile I had been in communication with Dammer who had convinced me that he had his part of the show under control. And it looked like we were about to get away with the whole business when just as we were halfway through this 14-foot band of wire, he caught us and he started shooting. So, it was pretty rough for a few minutes. It was so rough I had to withdraw slightly to give my mortars a chance to fire. We had given them a pre-

arranged range which would be effective provided he found the proper position in the dark and was all right. The range was fixed so it would land slightly over the target, if I called for it, and that is exactly what happened. It was based on the fact that if it was over, he could bring his shots back by creeping, and I could give him lift fire and go in. That is exactly what we did. We put 50 to 60 rounds of 81-mm heavy on top of him and we were partially through the wire to begin with. The mortar fire was extremely accurate - it was just firing in the dark but it was pre-planned - and when I gave the command to go in, the resistance was all over and the battle was practically over with for the time being.

That was the battle. That gave us the gun battery on top of the hill (Fort du Nord), the battery here (Fort de la Pointe), and then we felt free to signal the Navy to come on in.

Here comes an interesting point. We had made a plan with the Navy to notify them in a number of ways because the Navy would not come in closer than five miles until these two gun batteries were surely out. And the reason why they wouldn't was a good reason. So, to make sure there would be no mistakes, not only was I to call them by radio, but I was to shoot a series of flares. I felt very apprehensive about this flare system because of these various colors. I was to shoot up double greens, four sets of greens in pairs. Then I was to follow that up by an authenticating signal, four sets of double white star clusters. Of course, as luck would have it, they had a tremendous shortage of white star clusters and I only had enough to do the thing once - and they had to be in the boat and on the man who was in the boat that was dropped in the drink. So, naturally, we didn't have those flares. Also, I had lost my radio, the only radio I had with me.

[REDACTED]

Here we were with our mission all done, about 3 or 3:30 in the morning, everything had gone fine, and I was trying to let the people out at sea know it. I started shooting green flares frantically. I was told later that General Fredendall and the naval commander interested remarked, "That is half the signal, but I wonder if we can be sure." Of course, they couldn't be sure. I kept shooting up more and more green flares but I couldn't authenticate them.

Finally, a naval FOO party came up and we used the naval officer's set two hours later - two hours that we could have used in getting those ships in if we had had an iron-clad communication system.

I bring that up because that is communications between shore and ship. Once a landing is to be made, it is all important and you can't spend too much time in your staff planning. It can't be left haphazardly to work out on the ground by initiative, or some other thing, because there is no such initiative in flares and radio signals. Either your plan is foolproof and works or it is full of holes, in which case it will never work. It could have been more costly than it was. Actually, it worked out all right.

These were about all the salient features, I think, of the battle of Arzew.

We moved inland. We then had the mission of clearing the town. The battle went on to Oran and Oran was taken. From there we moved into Tunisia. I have covered this phase of it, and I am going to now go into the part where we pull out of Tunisia. I had the mission of forming three Ranger battalions out of one to do the show in Sicily. We were pulled out just before the fall of Tunisia. We were sent back to a little place near the Moroccan border known as Nemours,

[REDACTED]

a God-forsaken place way out in the sticks away from everything, away from all equipment, and we were sent there to do our training. (indicating on map) Nemours is right here and Oran is here.

I had about 1500 green men. I still had my own Ranger battalion which was pretty much intact after Tunisia to use as a nucleus and we started in training. The point was that the time was limited and we had practically two green men for every old man. I had taken my men fresh out of the replacement depots at Oran and I was very much concerned as to whether or not we would be able to get these men in any sort of shape to do the difficult job we had ahead of us.

Colonel Dammer was then a battalion commander. He had the 3rd Ranger Battalion and was to make the landing at Licata. I had a force which consisted of two Ranger battalions and two engineer battalions, and I had the mission of taking Gela and holding it while the 1st Infantry Division landed on my right and went in here (indicating).

I knew it was going to be a tough job. We knew the chances of getting into Gela undiscovered would be slight. We had to face a landing where they would be on the beaches waiting for us and we knew it when we were training.

I was getting a bit desperate because I wanted to make my training more realistic. Fortunately, I ran into Captain Leppert. Captain Leppert had a beautiful setup, quite different from that miserable setup I had at Nemours. He had me in for lunch one day, and over a can of his beer, we found out that even the Navy had a problem. He had the problem of having all kinds of boats - or ships, excuse me, Captain - and his problem was green crews. He had a green crews problem and I had a green troops problem. Thanks to Captain Leppert, we got

[REDACTED]

together on our own. He would bring his boats down, his LCIs, with his green crews and we would mount my green troops on them. We would take them out at sea and bring them in and give them the most realistic landings we could think of. As a matter of fact, we put a couple of bullet holes through Captain Leppert's ship. But I think it was for the mutual benefit of us all, I hope, because when we went in to make the landing at Gela, you remember, they had their searchlights and their guns firing for hours before we ever got in there. It did pay dividends. I can't speak for a captain in the Navy, but I am sure it must have paid dividends with his green crews, because it certainly paid dividends for my green men. They went in like veterans. Most of them had had about a month's training before they went in on this landing.

The plan at Gela was to land two battalions abreast, the 4th Ranger Battalion on the right and the 1st Ranger Battalion on the left, to follow that by the 1st Battalion, 39th Engineers. Following that was my 4.2 Chemical Mortar Battalion, followed up by the final 531st Engineer Battalion. That was the general plan. We were to land, as I said, on the left of the 1st Division.

This was a big long sandy stretch of beach over here and quite flat. Gela was the only place along there that had any altitude, and that was about 150 feet high. The little town stuck right up on the top of the hill and was right flush with the beach and had a tremendously long jetty sticking out into the water. The beach was quite shallow. The gradient, I believe, was about one in a hundred. It wasn't as shallow as some we got on later, but it was bad enough, particularly with the fact that it had some bars off the beach and we knew those things.

[REDACTED]

The problem became one of how to so group our forces that we could get in there and knock out the gun batteries which existed on each side of the town. We had assigned to us for gunfire support a very fine cruiser, the Savannah. The Savannah, as you probably know, was equipped with 15 6-inch guns - three turrets forward and two, aft - one way or the other - and it is capable of putting out an awful lot of fire power. She was assigned to support this landing.

The sore point of this landing was the gun battery on the west side of the town. Under no circumstances was it to fire. Our taking out the town was incidental to taking out the batteries. We, again, had the mission of taking out the gun batteries so the ships could close the beach. And the Savannah's mission was that under no circumstances were the batteries to blaze away. If they did blaze away, whether or not we were there, the Savannah was to take them out and silence them if she could. That was the set-up.

We made the practice for this landing at Algiers - a little place over here called Zeralda. That landing was very revealing. Admiral Hall was in command of the show and I remember his caustic, yet humorous remarks afterwards about how that thing went. It was horrible. We had made this landing, tried to make it realistic, and like all these last-minute shows, they are generally pretty bad, but this was the worst I ever saw. It just scared us to death. We got together and when we got through listening to Admiral Hall, we were convinced that the Navy was going to put us on the right beach and that they were going to iron out the difficulties they had in their system. We were all still new at this game, and I felt very confident in the fact that we would be able to hit the beach right on the nose. The only thing, the one thing, I was leery about - and I



[REDACTED]

bring it up here because it was later corrected - was the fact that we were basing everything in our particular part of the show in finding our beach at Gela on the fact that some scout boats, which had never been with us in practice and which we had never seen, were going to show up and lead the way into Gela. I was suspicious of that because I am always suspicious of anything like that in anything where you haven't actually been together with the people, worked out your plans, and worked out all the details and rehearsed them, if possible, before you go in.

We were always assured in our practice that these scout boats or these guide boats would be there to guide us in. And when the night came for doing the show on Gela, the boats were not there. Some of the funniest and wierdest things happened that night I ever saw.

In going in, we were to take off in our small craft, some 14 LCAs and 14 LCVPs, half-British and half-American ships. They were to be followed up by a wave of engineers and then by a wave of three LCIs. Captain Leppert decided he wanted to be in on this show, so, he took the center boat, No. 17. Everything depended on our finding these guide boats and being set off in our proper order.

As I said before, there was a lot of milling around and no guide boats showed up. Finally, we decided to strike off. The flotilla officer I was with was off the Dickman. We had a pretty good idea where Gela was because there were a number of searchlights on at the time which pretty much identified it. But we weren't sure which searchlight was ours. We started going in the general direction of searchlights. We had delayed terribly trying to look for our guide boats. All of a sudden out of the gloom I saw what I thought was a guide boat, so we

went over in the dark. But it was Captain Leppert, who was bringing up his LCIs of the 3rd wave. He was very much on course, and he was going on in on schedule. If we hadn't met up with him, I think he would have preceded the whole formation. He almost did. Thank heaven for finding him out in the middle of the ocean. Because of his being confident that he was on course, I got my waves assembled. With this Coast Guard commander, we got the three waves assembled ahead of him, took off, and actually made it just as we had planned. But it was no thanks to the system or to the plan we had for getting in there, because it was just by luck that we ever ran into anybody in the middle of the ocean at night who knew where he was going. That was actually the truth. We ran into Captain Leppert and he put us on course; in we went, and we hit Gela.

I might say that one of the wildest scenes I ever saw was that landing at Gela. We got in all right. The place was alive with searchlights. They had machine gun fire up and down the beach. Another thing I learned there has always made me feel sure that the best place to be in the landing is the first wave. If you have any luck at all, the first wave gets across the beach all right. Then with the second wave, the enemy begins aiming at them. Then the aim calms down and by the time the third wave gets in, they are getting good. It was about the third wave when Captain Leppert and his boat came in. He not only hit the bars good and hard, but I think he jumped one and put the nose of his LCI right up on the beach and there he hung at the exact intersection of machine gunfire from both flanks. I never saw such a concentration as he got on that boat. He did a beautiful job. Here in front of him, I wish to have this opportunity to say what a grand job was done there. In the face of all this fire, his boat being shot to pieces, he

kept his three little LCIs in there and they unloaded these very essential and vital 4.2 mortars right there on the beach. And, believe it or not, much to my surprise, he got the boats off again, having gone over a bar.

That was our landing at Gela. By dawn we had the town pretty well out and we were going after the gun battery. Meanwhile, every time the battery sounded off, the Savannah would hush it up. We had an arrangement with the Savannah ahead of time, laid down indirectly with us, that when we gave "Lift fire" through our communications - I had a naval FOO party, a forward observation party, which had an Army man who was supposed to have worked on the Savannah and knew how to get in touch with them - they were to lift fire and we were to go into the fort and take it.

I want to bring this up, not in criticism, but to tell you that half-way measures don't work out very well. The Savannah had the mission of firing at gun flashes. She had also the mission to cease firing on my orders. But that didn't stop the other mission to continue to fire any time any flashes were seen. I gave "Lift fire"; in we went at the battery. They got the thing in pretty short order; there wasn't much fighting really. After we got inside the thing, those that were left inside which hadn't been destroyed by the Savannah's fire, quickly surrendered. Things at that time were in such a fluid state, we didn't want to walk away from those guns undestroyed because we didn't know how long we were going to hold Gela. So, we set about destroying the guns. That made a big boom and a lot of flashes, and the Savannah figured she was being fired on again. And we had the delightful sensation of being on the receiving end of a salvo of the Savannah's guns, which, I assure you, are tremendous. That was

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before we could get the Savannah turned off; we assured her everything was all right and we were just in there blowing up guns. We don't hold that against the Savannah. If she hadn't taken those batteries out, I don't know how we would have gotten in there.

I want to bring up the point of your communications between your ground people on the shore and your people on the ship. They can't be left to chance because they will always end up with some unfortunate incidents that will work to your detriment.

Later, I think, we got things worked out a little bit better.

I want to bring out a point here in passing about how naval gunfire can be of extreme help to the man on the ground. After we took Gela, I had the mission of going north and capturing a place known as San de Cola, about seven miles north of Gela, right up this road (indicating on map), and then later, the town of Butera, which stuck right up on the hill.

I had no artillery other than the artillery we had captured in these forts and my boys, I found, weren't too good artillerymen when we got to shooting. We got to San de Cola, some seven miles from Gela. I made a night attack and got one battalion on its objective during dark. But my left flank battalion got caught in a plain, and down we went. We almost got wiped out for keeps. We were in a very desperate situation, with one half of my force committed on the high ground and the other half down in the plain. We just couldn't move. They had a tremendous amount of small arms fire and they had a very well dug-in and well built position - concrete emplacements, pill-boxes and all.

I had this little lieutenant of artillery with me, who had all the naval gunfire of the Savannah at his control, and

I decided to put him to use. I had one of my men who was in position on top of the hill up here and who could see the gun batteries that were firing on us, some five 149 and 150 howitzer batteries that were blazing away. So with my forward observer, so to speak, giving me directions, we started working on the Savannah who was cruising at that time back and forth south of Gela of course. She was between two fixed points, and it was a very calm, quiet day for her so far as the sea was concerned. I never realized naval gunfire could be so accurate. We started firing with the Savannah and before we finished we had knocked out - or, rather, the Savannah knocked out, with my boy who was a simple infantryman company commander sitting up on top of the hill spotting these shots - and forced five batteries to stop shooting. We examined those battery positions and in every battery position we found at least one gun with a direct hit and at least one stack of ammunition blown in each place - practically forced them out of their position with the ammunition going off and blowing up around them.

Later on, I stretched her to her limit. Before I took Butera she was giving fire support to me - and accurate fire support - at a range of 22,000 yards, which I think is something for people to remember. Naval gunfire support with ground observation and good communications is just like anybody else's artillery: it is good. As a matter of fact, it is awfully fine artillery because when you say "fire for effect," you have 45 rounds in the air of 6-inch shells in one minute. They have 15 guns and fire about three rounds a minute. I was very much impressed by the ability of the Navy to support the Army in a ground action.

Gentlemen, we will try to cover the remainder of our adventures and try to hit the high spots within the next half

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hour. I am going to ask Colonel Dammer to give you the story of his landing over here at Licata that was made simultaneously with our landing at Gela.

COL. DAMMER: My battalion, the 3rd, moved from Nemours to Bizerte to stage with the 3rd Division. I was attached to them, whereas Colonel Darby was attached to the 1st Division again and staged at Algiers. We came across in LCIs. We went over to Bizerte and worked it out there. While there, we had an opportunity to run a dry problem with Army troops, the people we were going to work with, and we ran a wet problem with our Navy people. We were quite prepared in the way of photographs and other information on the job we were to do.

The main landing that was done by the 3rd Division was done on the beaches to the east of Licata. My battalion and the 2nd Battalion of the 15th were to land just to the west of Licata, close on the town, and secure the port as the main objective. Licata is shown on the photograph here (indicating). The only beaches west of the port itself are a small beach that is here (indicating) and these two beaches, numbered 71 and 72 here, split by this promontory here (indicating) which is quite high.

The plan was for my battalion to precede the 2nd Battalion of the 15th and secure high ground that was here and here (indicating), behind beaches 71 and 72, as protection against troops entering down through this corridor here and permit the 2nd Battalion of the 15th to go across this ridge line and close in on the town.

We were fortunate here - as Colonel Darby wasn't at Gela - in getting a decent landing. Our landings were made on both beaches. The dimensions on these are about 250 yards, each

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one of these, and we wanted the high ground here on this side of the valley and this high ground here (indicating) so we could dominate this, as I said.

We landed in quite good order - very good order, as a matter of fact. It was a beautiful job done by the Navy in finding this place in the first place. The beaches are small and there was nothing much to guide on. This high ground stood out well in silhouette, but this thing was much smaller than the dominating ground in back of it. The ground falls off into a plain above here, through which this road now passes. We landed here and got on our objectives quite easily except that the weapons that were sited on this high rocky point here opened fire just after we landed. They didn't do a great deal of damage to us, but, unfortunately, they immobilized two of the landing craft, drilled a hole through them with a 47-mm gun. These people (indicating location on map) were overcome, and we didn't find any troops up on our objectives with the exception of a few scattered people here (indicating) that were in some trench areas and living in dugouts and small farmhouses here. We felt we were going to have a lot more trouble here than we did.

I will pass briefly over this because of the time. This operation went quite well. The 2nd Battalion of the 15th did a very splendid job here in getting to the town. The main defense of the town was sited on the high ground here in the vicinity of this castle (indicating on photograph). They consisted of two batteries of dual-purpose anti-aircraft guns which could fire both in defense of the port and as anti-aircraft. There were more troops scattered back in here but we didn't meet up with them. Fortunately, we were opposed by Italian troops and in the other we were opposed by the French.

[REDACTED]

We had not yet gotten to the people who were going to give us trouble.

After finishing up at Licata, we went cross-country. But before I close the other phase, we did have an incident in connection with naval support. It was either the Philadelphia or the Brooklyn which was in support of this landing. There was no observation officer with my battalion since I was to hang back in this vicinity. He was with the battalion of the 15th Infantry. On coming up here, the Navy was firing on this high point. They were asked to lift fire so that the troops could close on their objectives here. That was accomplished quite satisfactorily, except that we had a mixed force out here doing the shooting. One gunboat was very difficult to silence and gave us some trouble. It injured some of the troops that were up here. It was the fault of communications entirely. Part of the communications that were with this battalion of the 15th that was doing this were lost on the landing here. That was quite a stretch, about three miles - about three miles from this point to the port itself.

I will pass over this and go again to where we met with our Navy people. On the move to secure the port, this movement of the entire force into the west toward Trepani, my battalion was still attached to the 3rd Division and attached to the 7th Infantry, and moved from Fevara through Girgenti and circled around to the port of Port Empedocle, a place where supplies could be unloaded. And we approached Port Empedocle from the north. We had a certain amount of difficulty at Girgenti and in closing on the port there. By the time we got up there we were hopelessly out of touch with the remainder of the troops. They had a little problem attacking Girgenti directly and while I skirted around the rear, I met only with



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a road block there with which we had a little scrap, and, again, bypassed them, because my mission was to get to Port Empedocle.

We met up with various elements, all Italian, between this little town up here called Mount Aperta and Port Empedocle. And by the time we arrived at Port Empedocle, we had a sizable group of prisoners which later gave us trouble. At Port Empedocle most of the defenses were headed for the sea and weren't sited to protect the port from our attack from the north. However, there was a German battery there and that is where we first met our German people in Sicily. The battery was at this point here (indicating). They had a dual purpose - for one, as an anti-aircraft battery to the west of Port Empedocle. However, everything was in our favor in approaching the obstacle as we did and we got 91 Germans out of that. That added to the flock of Italians we had when we arrived at the port; we were out of touch with our own troops and we had other problems concerning rations, ammunition, etc. This had taken several days to do and we were very close to being out of ammunition. We were out of 60-mm. I considered our situation here rather unfavorable. We consolidated at the port, put out our defenses and sat down to wait for the rest of the troops to come up along the coast road.

My immediate problem was to get word back as to where I was and what I was doing and how I was doing. There was a cruiser off here, which turned out later to be the Philadelphia which was firing to the east of the port. There were several Navy scout planes circling the town and looking down on it. At one point they passed over and dropped leaflets down which asked for the surrender of the garrison. All this occurred while we were already in the town.

We made two very frantic efforts to communicate with the

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plane. We did accomplish what we wanted to by finding a lot of oil barrels down at the wharf and we spelled out various things as "Yank," and "U. S. Troops," and various things to inveigle them to come down. That took several hours. We were always afraid that the people were going to act on their ultimatum which was dropped by leaflet and plaster the town with us in it.

Finally, we were able to entice the seaplane to land. He came in, picked me up and took me out to the cruiser. I was very nicely received there and told them my story, what was wrong with me, as far as being cut off from our other people, being out of food, etc. And I got more than just sympathy out of the commander of the Philadelphia there. He helped us a great deal. He sent in boats with rations. He couldn't help us out with ammunition, but he did help us with cigarettes and other things like that. Meantime, the greatest service he rendered to us was communicating with higher headquarters who in turn notified the division as to what our situation was there.

Again there was a failing of communications. Our battalion never did have equipment which lent itself to operating in any great distance from a larger force and keeping the proper contact with it. And, here again, the thing broke down and could have ended to our disadvantage had the cruiser opened up on the town as they were threatening to do in their leaflets.

From here (Port Empedocle), we walked, it seemed to me, over most of Sicily. I am going to skip all that until the point where we get up toward Messina. Here, again, my battalion was sent on a wide end run and I found myself on the afternoon of the 16th of August sitting up on a hill back in here from which I could see Messina - again out of radio communication. The march to here had been particularly bad. We couldn't possibly have toted a radio set which would communicate back to

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where the other fighting was at the time. That, again, had taken a certain length of time and I was quite in a dither again up here as to what I was going to do. We could observe all the activity in Messina from here. We could see the far shore. We were very interested - although we couldn't do anything about it - in seeing the ferrying of troops. The Germans were still clearing out of Messina at the time, ferrying troops over to the Italian side. They were blowing ammunition, etc., up here, but we couldn't do anything about the situation. It would have been a beautiful thing there had we had communication with the naval fire which could have been sitting out here, and we could have plastered these people. However, it didn't come off.

I suppose we all know how we missed the boat at Messina. We didn't catch any Germans there and they made good their get-away.

I have gone over that roughly, gentlemen, touching on the high spots that my battalion did in Sicily.

COL DARBY: One interesting point happened here (Messina). This escape of the Germans was practically unopposed, as Colonel Dammer said. One thing did stop it somewhat. That night some three motor torpedo boats cut loose through the Strait and ran the gauntlet of fire between both shores. The Germans were still holding along here, and, of course, they held all along the toe of the boot, but they didn't get off exactly scot-free. Those three motor torpedo boats did stop them from going across there and broke up their formation.

Incidentally, this is rather humorous, I think: We were supposed to be fairly well trained in amphibious operations, so by the time we got ready to do this job, we found ourselves with some 200 mules going over the mountains - heaven knows how high - while the 3rd Division did the amphibious end runs

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in LST's. Everything worked out fine but it was quite a treat from water to mule.

The afternoon of the morning we got in there, I left Colonel Dammer asleep in a graveyard, and we received orders that we were going to have the honor of going on another amphibious operation and that we were to pull out immediately and get going. So, I got in a plane with Colonel Dammer and the battalion commander of the 4th Ranger Battalion, Colonel Murray, and the outfit slowly and painfully proceeded back to Corleone, leaving all three battalions. The 1st and 4th were about 40 per cent under strength, and the 3rd was 50 per cent under strength, after the march over the mountains, in killed, wounded, and non-battle casualties. And they went back to Corleone to train frantically for the next job. We went back to Algiers to plan. My supply officer, Captain Anderson, who is here today, was wondering what his mission was. We got back in a hurry and got ready to go off to do the job, which was to land on the left flank of Salerno, right here (indicating on map). The 5th Army was to land on the Salerno plain and we were to land on the left. We loaded up quickly at Palermo, with little training, practically none at all, with our green troops, packed them on board and off we went to make a landing operation.

We had one thing. We had the experience of having made several landing operations in the past, and in this particular instance we got together with the Navy and decided that we had to have closer cooperation and closer communications than we had ever had before, because we had another situation of finding a bad beach in darkness.

The main landing was made here (indicating on map), on either side of the Sele River south of Salerno. Our mission

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was to land at Maiori in here and seize this high ground which overlooked the Naples plain. All this is very mountainous in here (indicating). This is the famous Amalfi Drive in here, Sorrento, and the little island of Capri here. We were the left flank and we were to land at Maiori. It was to be one of these scramble beach landings and we were to hold this while the main force came up through Salerno into Naples. That was the original plan. It was all supposed to happen in two days. We were supposed to go over the mountains, take Kunzie Pass and cut off the German retreat while the force came up that way. It sounded fine in the plan. They were to come through on the second day and be off to Naples. Everything was fine except it took them 22 days to make this trip through here, and that left us up on top of the mountains waiting.

To find the beach, to go back to the beach-finding methods, in this case we were on British ships, LCA's, and my gunfire support, which in this case was a British destroyer, and a very good one, was to make sure there would be no tie-up, and they were further complicated because of British equipment and British operators and our own which are supposed to be similar but sometimes don't work so well, and, I think it was due to the language difficulty. I agreed with the captain of the ship who was a grand person. I had dinner with him and we talked this thing all over, which is the way an Army man ought to talk with a Navy man. If he is going to fire the guns over the head of the Army man, he ought to know the man before he goes in. We had dinner together and he was convinced it was a good idea. I said, "Captain, please understand me. It is not that I distrust your radio equipment, but I would feel easier if I had my own radio operator on the bridge with his radio set." He thought that was a good idea and in this case it worked like

a charm. I put my radio man with the commander of my Navy part of the show and we had excellent communications all the time from the time I hit the beach until the last boat was unloaded and had left. We were able to take advantage of the surprise we got on the landing, and I want to bring out that point. You have got to beat this communication problem. I don't care what system you use, but it has to be simple and it has to work--and it has to be simple for me to understand it. And with my radio operator on the bridge of the ship, it worked fine.

In this case again we had the problem of how to locate a beach, in the dark, in a small craft. If any of you have ever been down in the water in a small craft, you know you don't see very much when you are going along. Your compasses, no matter how many times you swing them, in a small craft are practically worthless after 35 soldiers with helmets and rifles and everything else that contains metal get into the boat. All your swinging of compasses is for naught.

Well, we harkened back to the day when we made the landing at Arzew. We remembered how the boat had paced us in. So, after we were formed up in the water we came alongside the British destroyer, and it was actually done in this simple manner. When we were set to go, we moved forward in column of two in the water. I was in the leading boat with the flotilla officer, and when we came opposite the bridge of the destroyer, we hollered up. He said, "Are you there?" We said, "We are here. Let's go." That was just that simple, it being agreed that because he was in the bigger ship with a firm base and with the good compass, having made his own corrections, that he would course us. I don't know what he sighted on, but he obviously sighted on Capri and many points along here, and he was bound to be pretty right. There was one little beach in here we had to hit, that was the problem, and we just had to be

right if our landing was going to be successful. So, with him pacing us until he got about a mile offshore, it was fine, and then he said, "Continue on your course," and we had agreed beforehand that no matter which way our compass was pointing, that whatever he said, we would do, that we would not change, trusting blindly for that last mile. We went in and hit the beach on the nose.

So, I have always liked that method very much of finding beaches, because it has worked to such good advantage.

At that time we landed in column of battalions. I had my Ranger force, so-called, back together. Then it consisted of the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Ranger Battalions, 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion and some engineers also, two British Commandos, which landed slightly off to our right at Vietri. We got in and had a surprise landing. And I believe we were the only people who had that distinction at Salerno because those other people had a rough time getting ashore - a surprise landing, such a surprise, as a matter of fact, that we found two German colonels in a hotel in Amalfi sound asleep. They were very much embarrassed about being captured - apparently down there for a weekend.

We went on up and took Kunzie Pass. Came the dawn and we were all set to go down and accomplish our mission at Pagani, but our troops weren't showing up. We had an unusual site from where we could see all of the German Army sitting in the Naples plain down below us. And if ever there was an artilleryman's dream, here it was. They were sitting there waiting and this time we were prepared. I had two naval FOO parties with me. One particularly I remember; he was a British paratroop officer named Captain Thompson, and he had a party. He had lived aboard one of these ships out in the bay and he started calling fire down on the targets out in this plain.

To make a long story short, he ended up firing the battleship

Howe. There was quite a force supporting it. Firing on these targets down here were the battleship Howe, Monitor, and three cruisers, and we fired them for the better part of 19 days. It was the most beautiful target I believe I have ever seen. It shows what you can do if you have the communications and are prepared. We had made enough blunders in the past, and I believe we made up for it in this instance.

The Howe, as you know, is a battleship - and I know you know more about battleships than I do, particularly the Navy element present - but I was surprised to learn that they don't elevate so well. The ships were bearing down on that corridor that went up to Pagani. The Howe couldn't seem to clear the mountains as well as the cruisers could, but she backed off and pointed her big guns over that corridor and that is when the Germans changed their route over to Avileno and then went down. It stopped them from using this road through Camarillo Pass. It forced them to stop using this road and they had to move their supplies back because we had this naval gunfire support and we had a man on top the hill with field glasses and the communications so that he could handle it.

From there on, the thing grew in proportion. He could handle ships over here and could spot for them. It is just that old thing of being able to communicate and shoot.

We had a very interesting time there. Our force grew and grew. The Germans got very irritated at our holding such a lovely observation post, so they started counter-attacking. During the 20 days we were there, we received some 15 counter-attacks of increasing violence. And to help me hold the place, they kept attaching units until finally we ended up with 8500 troops including the 28th Armored Brigade British that was thrown in for good measure to help us hold this. It became



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increasingly important because our troops got hung down here and couldn't follow through on their plan, and this was the only observation for the Army which was fighting down here against the German's rear. That is why they were counter-attacking, because we were on their rear.

There is an interesting point here in that we were entirely cut off from that force and we almost ran out of ammunition. At a crucial point the Germans were counter-attacking viciously to get us off - and this is why we Army people have got to get along with you Navy people - we were in desperate straits, out of ammunition, and we had to pull out and flag down a motor torpedo boat. In she came, and she dashed over here to find my supply officer. He told them of our critical needs. Then again by cooperation here with our friends in the Navy, we got them to give us craft to ship 4.2. ammunition into us, and we were able to hold this hill. That kind of cooperation has to exist in any battle. We talk about it a lot. I would like to bring it out, that it has worked and worked well all through our experience in the Mediterranean and particularly in this instance.

From there on we fought later ashore at Cassino, and I am going to end up with the last amphibious operation we made, and just touch on it very slightly, and not go into too much detail, except to say it was the most successful all-around amphibious operation we ever made. By that time we had gotten to know people. We had gotten to know Navy people and Navy people had gotten to know us. They got to know what we were talking about and we got to know the characteristics of ships and what to expect and the best methods to find beaches. I think when we got to this job at Anzio that it was the most perfect landing we ever made. I worked in close cooperation with Captain Lewis. Captain Lewis was in charge of the planning staff at Cassino

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last December when we planned this Anzio show.

Our Ranger force consisted of three Ranger battalions, a 509 separate parachute battalion and the 83rd chemical mortar battalion. We had the mission of taking out the town of Anzio and Nettuno and establishing this beachhead. And the 3rd Division was to land on our right. And the 1st British Division was to land on our left. Finally, this beachhead was to be established. I won't go through the details of the battle of Anzio. That is another subject in itself. But I will go into the landing slightly to say that we picked a piece of ground north of Naples, Pozzuoli Bay, which was as near like the actual job we were going to do at Anzio as we could find. We picked the thing and talked it over with Captain Lewis. He agreed he could put his ships in there for the practice - and this is important: It is very important for the Army man and the Navy man to get together prior to doing one of these shows and pick out a piece of ground or a piece of beach that is suitable for working together. It is very important that you have this practice; I am convinced of it. In this case, the difficulty here was again a very, very shallow beach, and there was the question of getting in with as much surprise as possible because we expected this to be very bitterly opposed.

I had a very bitter time with Captain Lewis in planning this. I couldn't help but remember that landing at Gela when the guide boats didn't show up. So, the minute Captain Lewis started mentioning that there would be three guide boats to guide me in to the Ranger beach, I got awfully obnoxious, I'm sure, and I have since apologized. I said, "Captain, let's not go into that. Let's have somebody lead them in." He said, "This time you are going to have guide boats there," and, he said, "I will have a man sitting off the end of that dock waving

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you in." He convinced me; but until I got there, I was wondering if they were going to be there. This time we practiced with them and took them into Pozzuoli with us. They ate in my mess and we got to know each other by the first name and had dinner together and a drink or so. And then we felt we would see those people there, and we did.

When we came to the transport area, we unfortunately had to make a dog-leg. The main transport area was to point at this main beach and we had to come in and make a dog-leg in here in the middle of the ocean somewhere and hit our beach. And this beach had to be hit right. There were no two ways about it. We couldn't hit it wrong because of the rocks. It had to be hit in the one place if we were ever to take out the town.

An amusing thing there was that there was a big white casino right on the beach, and I kept telling Captain Lewis that when I ran out of that landing craft, I didn't want to look to the right or left; I said, "I'll be going so fast that I want to make sure that when I hit the beach and start running, that I will run right through the front door to that casino." And we only missed it by 10 or 20 yards. We had to slant slightly to get into the casino. But that is how good it was. It was excellent because we had practiced with these guide boats. When we came out of the transport area and made our turn, there was our guide boat flashing its proper signal. As we made our turn and looked down, it was the most beautiful sight I ever saw. There were three lights, as Captain Lewis said there would be. They were waiting for us. And he wasn't kidding about the man off the end of this pier sticking out. There was a little fellow there floating around in a boat to wave us in, and we hit that beach on the nose.

I was very pleased with that landing. I think it is the

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finest one we ever did. I think this was excellent and a fine example of what happens when the Army and Navy get together and figure out their problems.

I realize, gentlemen, that this has been a very hit-and-miss speech. I didn't want to take up too much of your time. I think we could almost talk for hours and go into great detail on any one of these operations. I have tried to cover a little bit of all of them.

(DISCUSSION)

CAPT. LEWIS: Are there any questions or comments?

COMMO. FOY: The whole story has been told. There is nothing to ask about or speak about; there is no point in gilding the lily. You people see why I asked this fellow over here. I am interested in the operations of the Rangers and I am interested in naval gunfire support, and I like to have people come here and talk about it. But what I am principally interested in is having somebody come here who has done the thing, and to tell you people the importance of coordinating your work with whatever service happens to be involved in the same task.

Colonel Darby, without knowing it, here this morning has given a most excellent lecture on the reason for the existence of this institution, which is, as you know, to bring about that feeling amongst the services that will produce the necessary coordination in situations such as this.