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THE OPERATIONS OF COMPANIES "A" AND "B"
FIRST RANGER BATTALION, AT GELA, SICILY
10 - 11 JULY 1943
(SICILIAN CAMPAIGN)
(Personal Experience of a Company Commander)

Type of operation described: RANGER COMPANY
IN AN AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT LANDING

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INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operations of Companies "A" and "B", First Ranger Battalion, during the preparation for and the invasion of Gela, Sicily, 10-11 July 1943.

During the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, it was decided Sicily would be invaded during the month of July of that year. (1)

This decision was made because of the strategic location of the island. Sicily was employed by the Axis as a base for submarine and aircraft operations. These weapons of war had been attacking transports and supply ships enroute to Malta, Egypt, and The Middle East. (2)

The capture of Sicily would completely clear the lines of communications in the Mediterranean Sea, cause the Germans to withdraw troops from the Russian Front, and place intense pressure on Italy towards her surrender. With this island in Allied possession, Sicily would become a stepping stone towards the invasion of Italy and the European Continent. (3) The numerous seaports and airfields could be employed by the Allies to support future operations.

Sicily is an island about 10,000 miles square. The island is almost entirely mountainous, except for the plains of Catania and Gela. There are no large rivers, although during the rainy season the small streams become torrents. Military operations may be conducted the year around. (4)

(1) A-1, p.2,4; (2) A-1, p.3; (3) A-1, p.3; (4) A-1, p.3,4,5.

ENEMY SITUATION

In the initial phases of the invasion the known enemy strength was estimated to be 200,000 troops. The enemy units were: the Italian Sixth Army, consisting of five weak Italian coastal divisions; four Italian infantry divisions; and two German armored divisions (15th and Hermann Goering). The enemy's air strength was estimated to be about 1600 combat planes. This air power was based in Italy, Sardinia, Sicily, and southern France. Stationed in the southern part of Sicily were two divisions of Italian coastal troops, two divisions of Italian infantry, and a part of the Hermann Goering Division. (See Map A)(5) The exact strength of the enemy defending Gela, Sicily was unknown. Inspection of aerial photograph revealed a number of probable gun positions.

PLANS AND PREPARATIONS

The invasion was to be a joint American, British, Canadian and French operation, with General Eisenhower as the supreme commander. General Alexander commanded the Fifteenth Army Group. All naval operations were under the command of Admiral Cunningham (British). Air Marshal Tedder (British) commanded all air operations. The Fifteenth Army Group was composed of the British Eighth Army and American Seventh Army. These two armies were commanded by Generals Montgomery and Patton respectively. General Bradley commanded the Second Corps (Shark Force), which was composed of the Dime, Cent, and Wolf Forces. Dime Force was the 1st Infantry Division, 1st Battalion of the 39th Engineers, 83d Chemical Mortar Battalion, 1st and 4th Ranger Battalions. Cent Force was the 45th Infantry Division and 753d Tank Regiment. Wolf Force was the 505th Parachute Regiment and one battalion of the 504th

(5) A-1, See Map No.2.

Parachute Regiment. General Truscott commanded Joss Force, which was composed of the 3d Infantry Division, Combat Command "A" (a unit of the 2d Armored Division), and 3d Ranger Battalion attached. (See Map A)(6)

The floating reserve was the remainder of the 2d Armored Division and [^]combat team of the 1st Infantry Division. Reserves in Africa were the remainder of the 82d Airborne Division and 9th Infantry Division. The over-all plan called for Joss Force to land at Licata and to the east and west; Dime Force at Gela, and to the east; Cent Force at Scoglitti and to the east; Wolf Force to parachute and capture the airfield at Ponte Olivo.

The British Eighth Army, composed of the 13th and 30th Corps, was to land on the southeast coast of Sicily. (See Map A)(7) The 13th Corps, composed of the 13th Parachute Regiment, 5th, and 50th Infantry Divisions, was to land at Syracuse and south to Avola. The 50th Corps, composed of the 231st Infantry Brigade, 51st Infantry Division (British), and the 1st Canadian Infantry Division, was to invade C. Passero, and to the north and south. British Reserve was the 78th Infantry Division. (See Map A)(8)

The 1st Infantry Division (a unit of the 7th Army), commanded by General Allen, was to invade east of Gela. The 1st and 4th Ranger Battalions, with the 1st Battalion of the 39th Engineers and 83d Chemical Battalions attached (this force commanded by Lt Colonel Darby), was to capture Gela; the 1st Ranger Battalion capturing the left half of the town and destroying all gun positions to the west; the 4th Ranger Battalion capturing the right half of the town and destroying all gun positions to the east; the 83d Chemical Mortar Battalion supporting both battalions; and

(6,7,8) A-1, See Map No. 2.

the 1st Battalion of the 39th Engineers clearing the beach of all mines and obstacles, as well as preparing to support the Rangers if the need arose. The navy was to pound the shore defenses and buildings along the beach with high explosive shell fire. (9)

The boundary between Ranger Battalions was the pier (See Map B), 1st Battalion on the left and 4th Battalion on the right. There was ^{to be} radio silence until units were on the beach. This operation was controlled by phase lines. The first phase line was the buildings along the beach, second the main street, and third the north edge of the city. At each phase line all commanders would report by radio to Force Headquarters, and contact units on the right and left. (See Map B)

The battalion and attached units were to move from ship to shore in four waves in the following manner: Companies "C", "D", "E", and "F" in the first wave, "A" and "B" in the second, 1st Battalion of the 39th Engineers in the third, and 83d Chemical Mortar Battalion in the fourth. The assault craft would be led from ship to shore by a submarine with a large red light on its stern. The plan was for the first wave to clear the enemy positions along the beach and main street, which would allow the second wave to advance rapidly along the main street to the gun battery.

Companies "A" and "B", 1st Rangers, were formed into a joint command, commanded by the Company Commander of "A" Company. (10) This combined unit was supported by a platoon of 4.2 mortars. The initial mission of this unit was to destroy a coastal gun battery located at the west edge of Gela. Once ashore, this com-

(9) Personal experience.

(10) The author commanded Company "A", 1st Ranger Battalion. (The source of information for the remainder of this monograph is personal experience.)

bined unit would move rapidly across the beach to the main street, turn left, and advance as rapidly as possible to the coastal gun battery on the west edge of town. The capture of Gela, and destruction of the shore installations, was considered to be of utmost importance. With Gela in enemy hands, the enemy could attack the left flank of the 1st Division by employing the town as a base from which to operate. The destruction of the shore installations would allow the 1st Division to land with greater ease. (See Map B)

This initial planning was made from maps, recently flown aerial photos, and a scale model of Gela. Numerous probable gun positions were located from the aerial photos. By a close study of one strip photo, people could be seen standing on the beach in line with the drainage ditch through which the unit planned to advance. This pointed out that the beach was not totally mined with anti-personnel mines.

From a study of the scale model the following information was gained: the height of buildings, width of the beach, and distances to various parts of the town. This model was so realistic and complete in detail that one quickly became thoroughly familiar with the town plan, obstacles, and probable enemy positions.

Two rehearsals were conducted on the Algerian shore, in which every unit performed its part as it would in the actual landing in Sicily. As the units approached the beach, machine guns were fired between and over the tops of boats. As they moved across the beach, numerous charges were detonated, and the units were forced to go through barbed wire entanglements. Mock positions, similar to the Gela defenses, were set up, and each man rehearsed the exact part he was to play in the invasion. The assault craft,

navy personnel, and time schedules used during the rehearsals were those to be employed during the invasion.

ENROUTE

The 1st and 4th Ranger Battalions embarked aboard the USS DICKMAN at Algiers, French North Africa, on the 3d of July 1943. There were numerous loose ends that had to be tied together, and all the enlisted men had to be given the situation. During the rehearsals, unit commanders had briefed the men on the mission of each unit. At this time the previous briefing was tied in with the actual operation. Following the briefing, every individual was examined as a double check to assure that he fully understood his job. Numerous boat drills were held during daylight, and all hours of the night.

The convoy completed its formation off the Tunisian coast near Bizerte, and sailed north on 9 July. About 1300 hours a violent wind began to blow. The waves leaped up to the boat deck. Rumors were that the invasion might be postponed until this wind subsided.

At 2300 hours all officers were called to the bow of the ship. From this point numerous bursts of anti-aircraft fire could be seen. The enemy ashore was putting up strong resistance to the paratroop landing. After observing this display of fire for a short period, all officers returned to their troop compartments. It was time to "ready" the units to go ashore. Every leader checked each man's equipment and clothing. The company commanders then led their units in a short prayer. The Rangers had not had a Chaplain for several months. The Chaplain the Battalion had in Tunisia ^{had been} was on loan from the British Commandos, and he had returned to his parent unit.

About 2330 hours the commander of "A" and "B" Company joint force was told to report to the Ranger Force commander. The Force commander remarked, "You have observed the fireworks ashore, and you can see we are not going to have an easy time tonight. You were selected for the gun battery mission because you are one of the 'old timers' of the outfit, and I have confidence you will find some method of destroying that gun position. As you well know, we have a great number of officers who have not had any combat experience. I expect you, and the enlisted men who we can class as 'old timers', to guide the green officers and enlisted men along. It has been reported that the gun battery will be a hard nut to crack. If you recall, I have made this same remark a number of times during the planning of this invasion (See Map B).....During the landing and capture of the gun battery you will probably lose a great number of personnel. You must expect this. The Rangers, as you know, have never lost very many officers or men during any one operation. Tonight you must expect to lose from one to seventy-five percent of both companies. But don't forget that gun battery must be destroyed! If casualties are high, it will not be a reflection on your leadership abilities, and if you find need of assistance, contact me promptly and I will try to fulfill your request." The Force Commander ended his conference by remarking, "May God be with you, young feller!"

The Joint Commander* returned to his troop compartment where the units were preparing for the debarkation. Both companies were assembled for final instructions, and to hear the warning repeated that the landing and capture of the gun battery would be a tough mission. They were instructed that once ashore,

*The author will refer to the commander of the A and B joint command as the Joint Commander from here on.

and until the gun battery was destroyed each man was to shoot and shoot to kill everything that moved if he expected to be alive the following day.

About 0005 hours the red "ready" light began to burn; the compartment lights gradually faded, and shortly the compartment was dark. This was done so that everyone could get his night vision.

About 0030 hours the units moved from the compartment to assault boats. The type of assault boats used for this landing was the LCVP (Landing Craft Vehicle and Personnel). These boats were suspended over the side of the ship at boatdeck level. With the sea so rough the ship's skipper decided to lower boats off the leeward only. As each boat was loaded, it was lowered into the sea. The wind had lost some of its violence but the LCVP's still bobbed about.

As each boat became seaworthy^{harve}, the coxswain maneuvered off the ship's starboard to the rendezvous area. After all boats had been lowered off the starboard, the ship came about, and the boats were then lowered from the port side. This delayed the debarkation for a short period of time. By the time all boats were in the water and the units were ready to form, about half the sailors and soldiers were seasick.

The four waves* were formed, and the movement toward the beach began. As the small boats moved through the sea, the ones ahead would disappear in a trough and shortly come back into sight.

About 1500 yards off shore two searchlights began to sweep the sea. This illumination showed that contact with the first

*See p.6 of this monograph.

wave had been lost. It was thought at first that the second wave was arriving at the wrong beach. The enemy mortars, coastal gun battery, and 20 mm. guns commenced firing. During this period the Cruiser SAVANNAH was firing at the shore installations and buildings along the beach. Mortar and 20 mm. fire was still sweeping the sea. About 700 yards off shore a naval support craft fired rockets at the searchlights, which put out the lights for a period of time. About 500 yards off shore the machine guns on the beach opened fire. Troops on the landing craft, employing their 2.36" rockets, succeeded in silencing most of these guns. Shortly afterwards a large red guide light could be seen ahead. This was pointed out to the coxswain and the boats were maneuvered slightly to the left. Seventy-five yards off shore the boats came to a sudden stop on the false beach. The ramps were lowered and the troops began to wade ashore. The depth of the sea at this point varied from knee-deep to neck-high. The units, having been thoroughly drilled in this type of operation, went ashore as fast as possible, firing as they moved in. The searchlight on the left of the town came on again. It was as if someone had removed a cover from the sun in the middle of the night. The searchlight was destroyed shortly by naval gunfire.

MOVEMENT TO AND CAPTURE OF THE GUN BATTERY

Upon reaching the beach there was no evidence that the first wave had landed and the enemy beach positions were still intact. The Rangers had been trained to rush across a beach and were over it before enemy mortars could shift their fire. Two machine gunners attempted to fire, but as they opened up they found Rangers in the positions with them and were promptly destroyed. "A" and "B" Companies moved up a drainage ditch which led to the main street. (See Map B) Several attempts were made to contact units

of the first wave, but this failed. (It was reported later in the day that the first wave had lost two boats from results of the mortar fire and these units had stopped to pick up the survivors.)

Arriving at the main street the companies moved out to the west. Figures could be seen moving in the dark, but when the password was given there was no answer. With no loss of time the units opened fire. Their formation consisted of a single file on each side of the street, using the buildings for cover when possible, with the file on the right covering the men on the left and vice versa. (See Map B) There was firing all along the column, although very little was received from the direction of advance. The enemy was met and disposed of coming out of houses and alleys all along the route to the gun battery. There were bodies scattered all along the street, and it was evident many of the enemy units had been alerted too late.

As the column approached the Butera and Licata Road Junction, the First Sergeant of Company "A" noticed a roadblock extended across the Butera Road. (See Map B) As he approached this position he saw four men move through the door of the roadblock. He reached the door as the last man was closing it. The First Sergeant kicked the door open, and after a few bursts from a tommy gun and the explosion of a hand grenade he reported this position had been neutralized. His prompt, instinctive action, which resulted from sound training in addition to previous combat experience, eliminated what might otherwise have been a troublesome obstacle. This roadblock was armed with two heavy machine guns and one 47 mm. anti-tank gun.

From the west edge of town the gun battery could be seen in the distance, and the 4.2 mortar liaison officer was promptly

ordered to place fire on this position. Meanwhile the 60 mm. mortars of "A" and "B" Companies began to fire. The company commanders were ordered by the Joint Commander to be prepared to assault on order. Bangalore torpedoes were placed in the wire fence surrounding the gun position; these were to be fired just prior to the assault. The Joint Commander asked the mortar liaison officer what time he would be ready to fire, and he was informed by the liaison officer that he was unable to contact the gun position by radio. It was then decided to assault without 4.2 mortar support. Upon observing the open terrain between the wire and gun battery it was decided that an assault across such ground would probably result in a great number of casualties. A ditch was found running along the road towards the rear of the gun position. The two companies were ordered to remain in position and continue fire on the gun battery while a section of men moved along the ditch in an attempt to gain entrance into the gun position from the rear. This envelopment would be controlled by two flare signals: first signal was to lift all fires, and at the second the wire would be blown and units would assault positions around the gun emplacement.

As the section began to move along the ditch a large shell exploded about 200 feet over head. The first thought was that the enemy gun crew was cutting some very short fuses. Shortly a shell could be heard coming from the sea; the Cruiser SAVANNAH was firing at the gun battery. This was 6-inch high-explosive time fire. The Joint Commander contacted Ranger Force headquarters by radio, requesting this fire be lifted, and the cruiser was ordered to cease firing. As the section moved from the ditch towards the gun position a machine gun burst killed one man of

the section. Two grenades thrown into the position silenced this gun. Enroute to the rear of the gun battery an enemy mortar platoon was spotted firing from a small defile. This ^{platoon} was destroyed by hand grenades. A search along the wire revealed a gate. The section moved rapidly through this opening and up to the sandbags piled around the gun battery. The first signal was fired and each man of the section threw two grenades into the gun position. The section jumped into the gun position and cleared it of all enemy personnel. The second signal was fired and the wire was blown. Troops rushed through the gaps, mopping up as they moved toward the gun position. This gun position housed two 3-inch coastal guns. (See Map B)

A report was made to Ranger Force Headquarters at 0630 hours that the gun position had been captured.

A search of the gun position area disclosed three 77 mm. field pieces and many rounds of ammunition. The sights and elevating mechanisms had been removed from the guns prior to their capture.

by whom? | The roof of a two story building on the west edge of town was used as an observation post. (See Map C)

Casualties for "A" and "B" Companies were extremely light for this operation, since they amounted to only one killed and eight walking wounded.

The two units promptly began to prepare hasty defensive positions in preparation for the expected counterattack.

During the assault on the gun battery the 4.2 liaison officer returned to the center of town and found his unit waiting for a fire mission. It was reported that the radio set at the mortar position was dropped in the sea during the move to the

not definite
beach. No one had checked the radio. This mortar platoon was moved forward to the west edge of town. (See Map C)

THE COUNTERATTACK

About 0900 hours nine enemy light tanks were observed approaching the town from the north. This was reported to Force Headquarters. When the tanks were about 5,000 yards from the town, four stopped in a small group of trees and the remainder continued to move towards the town. (See Map C) The 4.2 mortar platoon was ordered to place fire on this target, but none of the lead tanks received a direct hit. These tanks disappeared among the buildings on the north edge of town. (It was reported that they were knocked out by rocket fire after entering the town.) The Mortar Platoon Leader stated that the four tanks in the trees were beyond his weapons' range. He was ordered to fire. The round was short. The Mortar Platoon Leader stated that 13 rings were all that the tube could stand, and if any more rings were used on a round the pressure would probably split the tube. After much discussion between the Mortar Platoon Leader and the Joint Commander, it was decided that 14 rings would be used. This round was over. The range was corrected, and mortar rounds began to fall on the tanks. One tank began to smoke and the other three withdrew.

Since the Rangers' largest weapon was the 60 mm. mortar, it was decided to put the captured 77 mm. field pieces to use.

Within the ranks of the Rangers there were officers and enlisted men from all branches of the service. Also, part of the basic training of all Rangers consisted of the utilization of captured enemy materiel. A quick check of "A" and "B" Companies

revealed an officer and four enlisted men who had had past experience in the Artillery. More men were detailed to assist this officer, and three gun crews were formed. After two hours of gun drill, the Ranger Artillery reported that it was ready to fire. (See Map C)

The same three tanks recently fired upon reappeared among the trees. Since the 4.2 mortar platoon reported that its ammunition was low, the 77 mm. battery position was called and the location of the target was designated in relation to the OP. The battery reported it could see the OP, which was on the gun-target line, and it was therefore ordered to aim one gun at the OP, elevate the tube to about a fifteen-degree-angle, and fire one round. This round hit the OP. After collecting his wits, the observer directed the tube to be elevated to a greater angle. After firing five rounds, the correct range and deflection were found. The shells began to burst in and around the tanks, and the other two guns were laid on the target by the use of the compass mil scale. All guns were alined by sighting along the tubes and elevating them until all were the same elevation as the gun already on the target. Half of this 77 mm. ammunition were duds.

After the tanks had withdrawn, enemy activity was observed around a large farmhouse about 2500 yards north of the observation post. (See Map C) This target was given to the Ranger Artillery. Five rounds were fired before the correct range and deflection were found. About two hundred enemy soldiers boiled out of this building, scattering in all directions, running into ditches and defiles, and disappearing out of sight. More 77 mm. ammunition was found in an underground storage pit at the coastal gun position.

About 1400 hours aircraft ^{were} sighted coming in from the west.

This was a formation of German bombers with fighter escort. Numerous bombs were dropped on and around the ships in Gela Bay. The ships opened fire with all anti-aircraft guns and hundreds of bursting shells filled the air, shooting down several aircraft. After the bombers had passed, the fighter escort returned, strafing the ships and town and dropping a number of small bombs. When the smoke cleared, the results of the bombing could be observed. Two large transports had received direct hits. It was later reported that the two ships and cargo were almost a total loss.

During this period the eastern sector of Gela was receiving a counterattack. The enemy was making every attempt to push the Allies into the sea.

Sniping by enemy civilians as well as soldiers continued to harass the units throughout the day and night. During the night of 10 July all units patrolled actively and continuously.

On the morning of 11 July a number of German tanks from the Elite Hermann Goering Division struck the eastern sector and drove almost to the beach.

About 0900 hours an enemy force was observed moving toward Gela from the northwest. This force was estimated to be a regiment. (The strength of the two Ranger units defending the western sector of town was 120.)(See Map D) When this report was made to Ranger Force Headquarters, the reply was, "You will have to fight with the troops and supporting weapons you have at this time. The units in the eastern sector are all engaged in stopping a tank attack." The 39th Engineer and Quartermaster units working on the beach were alerted and moved into the town to form an inner perimeter.

As the enemy attacking from the northwest came into artillery and 4.2 mortar range, these weapons commenced firing. Our fire was answered by enemy artillery and mortar fire. The enemy force was deployed with about a battalion in a skirmish line, with the remainder of the unit following in a closed column formation.

The 4.2 mortar and artillery were slowing up the advance of the enemy, but by no means stopping them. While observing the effect of the supporting fires and making corrections for the artillery and mortars from the observation post, the Joint Commander had a visitor. It had been the practice in the past to loosen the chin strap of the helmet when under enemy artillery or mortar fire. The Joint Commander heard this visitor state, "Captain, your chin strap is unbuckled." Without turning around to see who had made this remark, the answer was "Hell yes, we always unbuckle the chin strap when receiving incoming artillery or mortar fire." A loud clearing of the throat was heard and the Joint Commander turned his head and there stood the Commander of the Seventh Army, General Patton! With a quick "Yes Sir", the chin strap was secured. The General questioned the Joint Commander about the situation and was informed that it was not too good. Before departing, General Patton remarked, "Kill every one of the God Damn Bastards!"

The 4.2 mortar platoon leader reported his ammunition was running low and there was no more on the beach.

At this point, when things looked very grave, an observer from the Cruiser SAVANNAH appeared at the OP. His first remark was, "Having trouble soldier?" After a quick look at the situation on the ground, the naval observer began to radio his fire

mission to the SAVANNAH. The skirmish line was the first target. The barrage, consisting of 6-inch high-explosive time fire which burst just above the ground, hit directly on the enemy line. After moving his fire along the line, the fire was shifted down along the column behind the skirmish line. The whole area was black with smoke and dust. When this curtain lifted enemy troops could be seen staggering around as if thoroughly dazed. (See Map D) The Joint Commander ordered "A" and "B" Companies to assault the disorganized enemy units. Without firing another shot, four hundred Italians were taken prisoner and "A" and "B" Companies returned to their defensive positions. A report was received that in the area where the enemy had been stopped by the navy there were human bodies hanging from trees and some blown to bits.

Sometime during the afternoon the Joint Commander was ordered to report to Ranger Force Headquarters. At this point the Ranger Force Commander stated that the 1st Battalion of the 41st Armored Infantry Regiment would fill the gap that existed in the Ranger perimeter. Up to this time a 400-yard gap existed in the line. The 1st Battalion of the 41st Armored Infantry Regiment would fill this gap. (See Map D)

General Patton was at the Force Command Post at this time, and as the Joint Commander and Battalion Commander (1st Battalion, 41st Armored Infantry Regiment) were departing, General Patton remarked to this Commander, "Colonel, your outfit will make an attack in the very near future. After the attack I want to see Blood and Guts hanging from every man's bayonet! Do you understand?" When the Joint Commander and the Battalion Commander were enroute to the defensive position, the latter remarked, "Do you think the General expects my outfit to carry out his

instructions?" The answer was, "General Patton expects every order he issues to be carried out to the last word."

Late in the afternoon a warning order was received to prepare to move out. A search was made for animals to make the Ranger Artillery mobile and a number of mules and horses were found. These animals were used to pull the 77 mm. field pieces. Late in the evening, 11 July, the First Ranger Battalion and the new Ranger Artillery moved out in the attack. Thus the landing and assault phase of the Ranger Force at Gela, Sicily was concluded.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

I believe that the success of this operation should be credited to the following factors: Plans and preparations prior to the invasion; the aggressive spirit; and the will to carry the fight to the enemy displayed by every individual within the units.

Surprise was gained by the Rangers landing at Gela which was well defended. The enemy was kept off balance throughout the fight by the employment of speed, shock action, and fire power, combined with maneuver.

OK
The enemy commanders were at fault for billeting troops throughout the town. Had the enemy troops been housed in one area, it is felt commanders would have had better control, and the enemy's will to resist would have been greater.

It is essential that artillery and anti-tank support promptly follow invading forces ashore. Had the enemy struck the initial landing forces with an infantry-armored team, it is felt that the operation would have been delayed; the loss of life and materiel greater.

The navy employed as a support fire unit for ground troops ashore was found to be very effective. Had this supporting fire

not been available, the counterattack from the northwest on 11 July would have overrun the position of "A" and "B" Companies.

During rehearsals in North Africa the 4.2 mortar platoon employed radio communications between observer-gun with excellent results. No consideration was given to the possible loss of or damage to either radio. When this happened, Companies "A" and "B" were without mortar support during the attack on the coastal gun battery. Had adequate attention been paid to this possibility, plans would have been initiated to supplement the radios with telephone.

One principle of amphibious operations is: Never stop to pick up survivors once the move from ship to shore begins. This principle was violated by the unit commanders of the first wave. Had the Joint Commander paused long enough to contact the first wave, the capture of the gun battery would have been delayed for some period of time.

It was not normal practice to counterattack beyond the main line of resistance, although it was felt that immediately after the naval bombardment the enemy was disorganized to such an extent that a quick thrust would wipe out this attacking force completely.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. Alternate means of communications should be employed between forward observer and gun positions.
2. Planned rehearsals are essential during the preparation stages prior to invading enemy shores.
3. Assault waves should never stop at sea to pick up survivors when enroute from ship to shore.
4. Close coordination must be maintained between the Navy and units being supported ashore.

Journal

5. When a unit has achieved almost complete surprise, and the enemy is disorganized, the necessary security measures can be reduced in order to maintain speed and the initiative.

2nd point could be better stated

6. It was learned that captured enemy weapons could be used with little training and practically no experience.

8th point (A. Co. Sec. 10)

7. The use of deception and envelopment in combat will save numerous lives.

ANNEX NO. I

A Ranger Battalion was organized into six (6) line and one (1) headquarters company. Total strength of each battalion was twenty-seven (27) officers and four hundred seventy-three (473) enlisted men.

Headquarters Company was organized into eight (8) sections: command, supply, mess, administration, medical, operations, transportation, and signal. All the above listed responsibilities stopped at battalion level except command. The strength of a headquarters company was nine (9) officers and ninety-five (95) enlisted men.

A line company was organized into two (2) platoons and a company headquarters, two (2) sections to a platoon. Total strength of a line company was sixty-three (63) enlisted men and three (3) officers.

The companies were armed with rifles, automatic rifles, Thompson submachine guns, pistols, and 60 mm. mortars. Since there was no heavy weapons company, there were no 81 mm. mortars nor light or heavy machine guns in the battalion. When the need for heavy weapons arose, they were drawn from the weapons pool of the unit to which the battalion was attached and manned by one of the line companies.