

**THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN
INVASION OF THE SOUTH OF FRANCE
1943 - 1945**

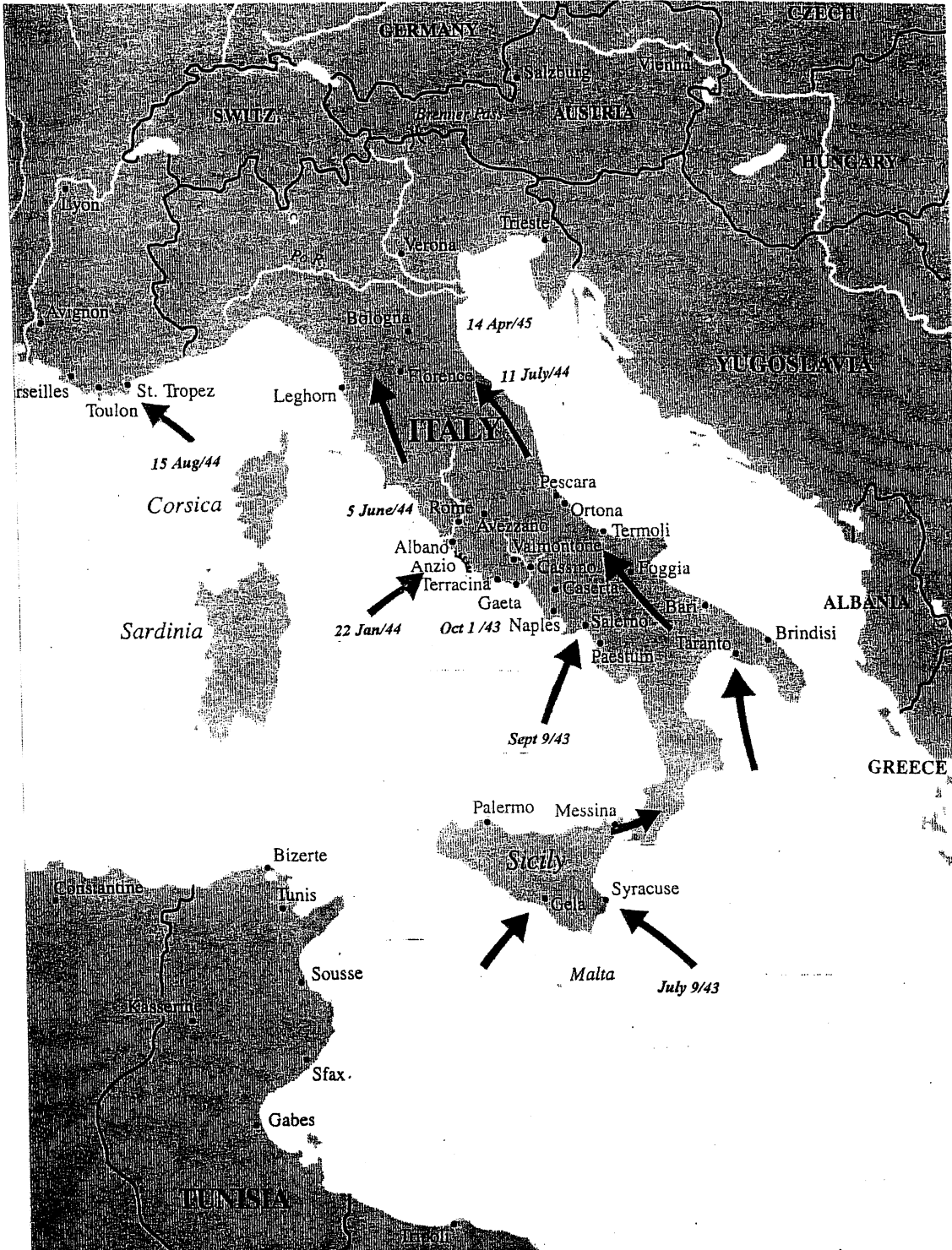
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Casablanca

At the Casablanca Conference of January, 1943, the combined Chiefs of Staff in session with Mr Winston Churchill and President Roosevelt made the decision that landings should be effected on the shores of Sicily. It was agreed that offensive action should be undertaken in the Mediterranean in 1943 for the conquest of Sicily, with the objective of:

- (a) Making the Allied lines of communication in the Mediterranean more secure.
- (b) Diverting as much German strength from the Russian front as possible.
- (c) Intensifying the pressure on Italy and hoping that successful results might create a situation in which Turkey could be enlisted as an active Ally.

The hostilities in Africa ceased on the 18th May, 1943, and this set the stage for the invasion of Sicily and the Italian campaign. Churchill referred to it as: "the soft underbelly of Europe", where, in reality, it turned out to be the tough, scaled hide of an alligator. The whole of the Italian campaign was ideal for defensive operations. The Germans settled down behind the successive rivers that flow to the Mediterranean sea on the west coast, and to the Adriatic sea on the east coast, from the mountains, the Apennine Range that form the spine of Italy. As they held one river line they would prepare the next behind it. When their fixed position was finally breached, they fell back, destroying everything as they went, to the next river, and the whole deadly scenario was played over again.

There was the Winter Line, the Bernhard Line, the Barber Line, the Gustav Line, the Hitler Line and finally the Gothic Line along the Po valley.

The Italian campaign can be divided into four phases. The invasion of Sicily, the invasion of the toe and heel of Italy, with the landings at Salerno, and up to the Gustav Line, both in 1943. The drive up to the Gothic Line in 1944, with the landings at Anzio, and, finally the landings in the south of France. The diversion of the Canadian Corps to north-west Europe along with the three American and three Free French divisions for the landings in the south of France reduced General Alexander's command ability to mount an offensive against the Gothic Line. The German resistance at the Gothic Line folded in the spring of 1945 when the heartland of Germany was invaded by the Allies. (1)

The Invasion of Sicily Operation "HUSKY"

Under the command of General Eisenhower on July 9, 1943, the U.S. 7th Army of two and a half divisions under General Patton, and the British 8th Army with four and a half divisions under General Montgomery, laid assault against the shores of Sicily. By the 22nd of July the Americans, under Patton, had entered Palermo in a campaign that had lasted 39 days. On the 16th of August, the Americans entered Messina, and the occupation of Sicily was complete.

1.) Young, Peter "World War 1939 - 1945 p. 283 - 287

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The initial assault for HUSKY was to consist of eight simultaneous pre-dawn sea-borne landings on D-Day, with the object of capturing airfields and secondary ports in south-eastern Sicily, from which to develop an attack on Catania, and subsequent advances on Messina and Palermo. As a prelude to Operation HUSKY the islands of Lampedusa and Pantellaria were captured, and RAF Mobile radar units were installed. AMES 8000 was in the assault convoy on Pantellaria and AMES 233 and AMES 897 followed. AMES 896, AMES 603, and AMES 6006 were despatched to Lampedusa which surrendered after aerial bombardment. (1) The radar screen from Malta, Pantellaria and Lampedusa covering the Sicilian Narrows, through which the HUSKY convoys had to pass, was now complete.

On D-Day the plan for Operation HUSKY was to put one GCI radar, and two light warning sets on each beach. This would be followed, on D-Day+3, by one COL radar and two light warning radars and on D-Day +14 the remainder would be ashore. A total of 41 mobile radar stations would cover the island and its assault. By July 14 a great profusion of radar equipment was in Sicily, enough to protect an island ten times its size. For the first time in the history of RDF, the familiar cry of "shortage of equipment" was not heard. (2)

"I was with AMES 8023, and we were held in a camp near Tunis until the invasion of Sicily started on July 10, 1943. On July 11th we were loaded onto several tank landing craft for the trip across the Mediterranean. We landed in Sicily at Gela the next morning. The landings we had practised near Prestwick the previous January proved to have been unnecessary. The Royal Navy boys put us right on the beach so that we didn't even get the wheels of the vehicles wet. There were many bodies of General Patton's glider troops in the water. Some of the gliders had been released too soon, and we were told that some were shot down by U.S. navy guns."

"We moved out immediately to the site that had been selected for us. By the end of the day we were operational and reporting into a control room that General Patton's troops had set up near Gela. Throughout the day and for the next several days we were approached by small groups of fully armed Italian soldiers who were wandering around behind the lines trying to surrender."

"In each case we would give each man a box of C-rations and suggest that they try to surrender in Gela. We didn't even disarm them".

"After a few days the front had moved up to the Catania region. We were ordered to break camp and move to a site overlooking the harbour at Augusta. The Augusta port, among others, was being used to supply the armies and was under frequent air attack. We became permanent residents. The unit was still there when I was informed in October, 1944, that my number had come up for rotation leave back to Canada."

M. F. Bradford
Ottawa, ON

1.) Air Publication #1063 "The Second World War, 1939 - 1945, Royal Air Force Signals " Vol IV p 307
2.) *ibid* p. 330

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Beach Landing - Sicily

West of Cape Passero, near Vittoria

"On Thursday, July 8, 1943 AMES 8035 departed from North Africa (Tunis) as part of the largest invasion fleet assembled to this point in history (3000+ships). We were on an L.C.T. with seven of our technical gear trucks chained to the deck. We encountered a severe storm and, for many of us, our first bout of sea sickness. We looked forward to landing on terra firma, hostile or not. I was driving an Austin flatbed or float with the I.F.F. aerial folded piggy back, and on the morning of July 11th, 1943, we were ready at the ramp. When my turn came, I got the front wheels of the Austin truck in the water but the rear wheels spun off the ramp, and after two or three feet we were stuck. A bulldozer came to the rescue and we were hauled up on the chain mesh on the beach. We headed for cover in the trees at the edge of the beach but not before being strafed by enemy aircraft. We had no real damage and, under cover, removed the waterproofing from our truck."

"German fighter-bombers were very much in evidence, strafing the beach and going after the landing craft, particularly the L.S.T.'s. The ack-ack was terrific. We watched as one of our spotter aircraft was shot down by two Jerry fighters. So this was war.... "

"Towards evening, our radar site had been cleared for us to set up our gear. We were operating in a vineyard, and we would not want for grapes. Our RT/WT van was a few hundred yards away from the radar site but our lines of communication were being cut by someone who was unfriendly to the cause. Volunteers were sent out to find and repair the breaks. Suddenly, the shore batteries opened up with anti-aircraft fire and soon the sky was filled with transport aircraft. One was hit above us and came flaming to the earth. The next thing we knew, paratroopers were dropping everywhere. We grabbed our sten guns and helmets and crawled among the grape vines. We were surrounded and, if the order was given, we would blow up our gear. During that time of terror, Ray Dodds and Frank Parker were out repairing our communication lines. They were captured and led at gunpoint to our site, and were shouting: "Don't shoot! They are Americans!" What a fiasco. It was a miracle that lives were not lost. Our first night ashore in Sicily will never be forgotten. Working with Beaufighters, we assisted with the shooting down of three German aircraft. We were operating with only our technical crew, and we had little time for sleep. Food was limited to "C" ration and fruit obtained from friendly Sicilians. The rest of our crew, supplies and trucks landed on another beach and did not reach us until Sunday, July 18, 1943."

1943. Tuesday, July 20th

"We were on the move again. We passed through Vittoria, and along the road we saw evidence of war in the form of burned-out tanks and other vehicles. We had stopped in Gela for the night, and we were sleeping on the ground beside our trucks."

Wednesday, July 21, 1943.

"We were on our way at 10.00 a.m. and our destination was Agrigento. Passed through Licata and signs of battle were everywhere. Whenever we went through a little village the children ran

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alongside our convoy and begged for cigarettes and caramelos. The streets were filthy and smelly. We stopped near Agrigento and slept again under the stars."

Thursday, July 22, 1943.

"We moved to our new site and were operational immediately. We were in a fairly flat field and located not far from Agrigento."

Tuesday, July 27th, 1943.

"We were on our way again, and headed cross-country through the mountains towards Palermo. Our trip today took us into a rather attractive part of Sicily with a scenic background."

Wednesday, July 28, 1943.

"Up and away again at 8 AM and our convoy made slow headway around the mountain tops, caused by the truck radiators boiling over. Towards evening we bypassed Palermo and along the coast we stopped for the night."

Thursday, July 29th 1943.

"We arrived at the location allocated to us for our radar operation. Our technical gear was operational by noon. A short distance away across a field of stubby undergrowth, we set up our camp-site. There were six of us to a tent and our space crawled with ants and other bugs which called for drastic action. Our remedy, which we had used before, was to burn the ground before putting up the tent. Once the tent was up, bed spaces were selected. Our individual ground sheets were put down and mosquito nets were attached to hoops at each end of the space. Our issue of two blankets per airman were thrown inside and we hoped and prayed that we would be "bug" free for the night. We were often visited by lizards and they usually kept the tent free of insects. The odd lizard did get into bed with us and then there was some excitement but generally they were friendly little creatures."

"We were about 300 yards from the sea and we were able to get the odd swim in after the beach was cleared of mines. Our site was somewhere between Termini and Cefalu. We were now about forty miles behind a rapidly advancing front line. That night we had some enemy action overhead which was met with anti-aircraft fire."

"We received word that the Fascist government had been overthrown, but Italy was still in the fight. The Eighth Army had made good progress up the eastern coast and it was flanked by the First Canadian Division and Tank Brigade. For the Canadians who were in our unit, F/L Bickerdike, Ray Dodds and myself, it was great to hear about the successful operations of the Canadian Army."

**F.D. Hurlburt,
Winnipeg, MB,**

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Let us now flash back to the war in the Desert following the Allied victory at El Alamein.

AMES 871 Operations Record Book

9 to 22 May 1943:

Fitting and forming out of unit for operations at AMES Reserve Pool.

23 to 25 May:

By road to railway siding at Amiryra, completed loading of vehicles by 1130 hours.

27 to 28 May:

Arrived at 845 AMES Tobruk, with complete change-over of personnel in accordance with instructions.

30 May to 7 June:

By road from Tobruk through Benghazi to Tripoli.

8 to 15 June:

Maintenance, erection of equipment and dismantling carried on repeatedly.

16 June:

To 38 PTC Tripoli for port of embarkation, embarked on landing craft infantry (LCI) and sailed at 1300 hours. Arrived Malta 17 June at 0600 hours.

18 June: Transport was obtained and the unit moved to 314 A.M.E.S where all were made most welcome by their C.O. F/L Harbottle. A stone billet was provided for the men, and tents for officers and NCO's.

19-25 June: Square Bashing and route marches were arranged, and the time was passed in generally keeping fit. Everyone enjoyed all the privileges of the camp which were so generously opened to the unit.

25 June: The technical equipment arrived. Time spent in practice set-ups and dismantling, and additional equipment was installed.

8 July: Moved to port of entry and embarked on an LCT to another bay where we hove to and spent the night.

9 July: Sailed early in the morning and joined the convoy.

10 July: Found a beach and were told to lay off by the Control Ship, as the Navy were shelling a mile back from the beach (Pachine area), but by 1100 hours the enemy had withdrawn sufficiently to allow us to land.

"I arrived in the Middle East in the spring of 1942 and that summer I was posted to command 512 AMES. This radar was at the south end of the 8th Army Line at Alamein near the Qattara Depression. We gave radar cover to the 7th Armoured Division, the famed "Desert Rats". After the battle of Alamein and the breakthrough, we followed the 7th Armoured Division until we got to Tobruk where we set up to cover the port of Tobruk. In the spring of 1943 I was posted to take command of 871 AMES which had been issued with the latest equipment, and a new crew at Helwin, near Cairo."

"Our unit 871 AMES was formed to fill part of the radar commitment of the Middle East for the

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invasion of Sicily. Our mission was to be on the beachhead as soon as possible in keeping with the security of the radar equipment. If we couldn't be on the beachhead we were to operate off-shore from the LST. Personnel were chosen from the experienced desert units, the chief controller being F/L Edwards, formerly of 845 AMES, whose operators were transferred en masse to the new unit. Equipment comprised the latest to arrive in the Middle East, including the only power-turning gear of the Desert Air Force. The Middle East personnel were chosen carefully, and given experience in waterproofing at a special training camp."

"Towards the end of the month our unit was loaded on flat cars, to travel by rail from Alexandria to Tobruk, where the exchange of operators with 845 AMES took place. Our journey to Tripoli was made by road. Unit personnel took advantage of stopovers to practise erecting the antennas and we brought the whole unit on stream and made general motor transport checkups."

June, 1943.

"When we arrived at Tripoli our unit pitched camp beside the sea in preference to the transit camp, where there was insufficient space for practice-erection. The controllers left for Malta to work with the night fighter crews which were based there; while we settled down to the business of becoming truly mobile. Domestic arrangements were necessarily reduced to a minimum as the transport was to be made in two parties, "A" and "B". "A" party consisted of technical equipment and sufficient domestic vehicles to carry the reduced kit of the technical personnel. "B" party was scheduled to land roughly 20 days after "A" party but, as there was no guarantee that this plan would function perfectly, all arrangements were completed for a considerable period of separation. Also, our unit actually broke up into two distinct camps to enable the two parties to anticipate our individual requirements, such as the distribution of tools and utensils."

"Around the middle of the month all the personnel of "A" party, with the exception of the MT, were shipped via LCI to Malta. We were billeted at an AMES there, our unit engaged in physical-fitness exercises, awaiting the arrival of the MT which pulled in by LCT a few days later. Further practices were performed and several technical installations were completed by unit mechanics."

July, 1943.

"Early in the month our unit was moved to the assembly point, where all the waterproofing was finished. The radar convoy then moved down to the harbour where we embarked with other RAF units, among them the MPRU, and took position in the LCT."

**W. M. Lower,
Islington, ON.**

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D-Day SICILY

"With the LCT becoming lost from the convoy during the night, Pachino beach was not reached till after eight in the morning. Operations which had commenced at four that day appeared to be progressing favourably, the warships already shelling a good half-mile inland. Permission was not granted for our unit to land immediately, as the control ship did not wish to expose secret equipment to unnecessary danger. About eleven o'clock, permission was granted to land and the LCT pulled into the beach. When the door opened the first vehicle, driven by me, struck deep water and stalled. A bulldozer quickly righted the situation, permitting the craft to re-beach and land the remainder of its cargo."

"The beachhead was still the scene of some confusion as odd pockets of Italian infantry were being found and herded together. A quiet field some distance from the landing place was found, where our unit began de-waterproofing while enquiries were made about the local situation."

"Despite the fine co-operation of the RAF Beach-master, no satisfactory information could be obtained as to the position of Pachino airfield, the proposed site of the unit. Personal reconnaissance added little confidence to the situation which clarified by evening in time for our unit to set up. Some engineering difficulties were experienced in traversing irrigation pipes, but a little explosive soon cleared the way. A most satisfactory arrangement was made whereby the Mobile Plotting Room Unit, the Advanced Landing Group and the GCI were all located in the same area and connected by land-line. The first night our unit operated with some difficulty on a poor site, with an anti-aircraft gun within twenty yards of the antenna. Several raids took place, and aircraft under our unit control downed two JU88's. It might be noted that this was the first occasion the controller, F/L Edwards, had controlled an aircraft on our unit, and his quickness in adapting himself to new equipment under most strained conditions was highly commendable. A large basket of incendiaries fell dangerously close to the VHF, but fortunately it failed to open, burning in a mass which was extinguished with some difficulty."

"While our unit was dismantling the following morning, the new site was found to be clear and the equipment was operational by noon. Army Field Signals quickly laid a line to MPRU and full communications were again established, although the Fighter Director ship retained control of the night-fighter allocations. After several successful days of operation, instructions to proceed and set up were deemed operationally necessary. Following a night's operation, the equipment was dismantled and our unit moved off taking the north road. Recurring road strafing forced our unit to take cover in an orchard north of Priola, but a site was subsequently found off Augusta beach, and the unit again erected."

"Our unit enjoyed the most successful night in its career at this site, scoring six kills from dusk to dawn. From this site also all the Augusta raids were covered and considerable action seen. Sniping was also experienced. After the fall of Carlentani, a location north of Augusta was taken up and operated for several days until the 8th Army rolled into Catania, whereupon a site was chosen on

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the plain, near the coast. This site proved most unsatisfactory technically. As the army advanced no further, shell-fire became of some danger. Also, the area was highly malarial, requiring the move to a field on the heights above the plain near the village of Villasmundo."

AUGUST, 1943.

"Operations were continued on this latter site until our unit was relieved for technical overhaul and rest. After a week's rest and refit at a small village named Brucoli by the sea, and having joined "B" party, the main body received orders to report to Millazo on the north coast. Proceeding along the road to the west of Etna, it completed the journey without incident other than both cooks being abandoned in the rear, victims of malaria. Following further waiting at assembly areas and additional waterproofing, the unit boarded an LCT, intact this time as it had been found too great a strain for the "A" party to be obliged to work alone."

W. M. Lower

Operation "AVALANCHE"

The Italians surrendered on the 3rd September, 1943, and the British 8th Army landed at Reggio di Calabria and seized Taranto on the 9th of September. That same day General Mark Clark's 5th Army landed in the Gulf of Salerno south of Naples. The range of fighter cover made it practically impossible to risk a landing any further north. The Germans quickly concentrated five divisions against the Salerno beachhead. On 11th of September, the pattern of the previous day was repeated at Salerno. Earlier on, both the British and American corps advanced with some success but both were later pushed back. The German reinforcements were beginning to come up, and in the bridgehead the beachhead morale was poor because of the lack of progress. (1)

On the 14th September, the Germans maintained pressure on the Salerno Beachhead but Allied air support, and even more importantly, naval gun fire prevented any significant success. The 8th Army was still driving forward in the south, having reached Bari in the east. On 16th of September, the 8th Army linked up with General Mark Clark at the Salerno beachhead and Field Marshall Kesselring was authorized to withdraw to the Volturno Line.(2)

The initial radar cover in the assault phase was from warships fitted with radar and two sea-borne GCI stations mounted on LST's. Two COL GCI stations were landed on D-Day with four light warning sets. Of the two sea-borne GCI stations, one was damaged by enemy shell fire, and the second one, AMES 15076 sailed well out from the shore every night reducing to a considerable degree the obstructing permanent echoes. The two that landed on D-Day on the 9th September were AMES 871 and AMES 887. (3)

1.) Young, Peter (Ed) "The World Almanac of World War II" p. 226.

2.) *ibid*

3.) Air Publication #1063

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Beach Landing at Salerno, Italy

"On Wednesday, Sept 1, 1943, we were on the move again and we reached our destination, Cape Milazzo, in the evening. For the first time we met up with the Eighth Army troops who moved up through the eastern portion of Sicily. On September 3rd, the Eighth Army and the Canadian 1st Division crossed the Strait of Messina to the toe of Italy. We were on the move again towards Messina and ended up in an olive orchard where we waterproofed our trucks. On Wednesday the 8th of September, we heard the news of the surrender of Italy. The following day the American Fifth Army made a landing at Salerno. We knew then that the Gulf of Salerno would be our destination."

"On Sunday, September 12th, we moved our trucks to the docks where they were boarded on an L.S.T. My vehicle was shackled to the upper deck and I made my bunk on the top canvas cover. As we approached Salerno, the sound of heavy guns was heard and, as we prepared to land, Allied battleships were firing shells into the hills. We moved off the L.S.T. and on to the beach at 2:30 p.m. the 13th. We met at a transit camp and scattered our trucks in a corn field"

"We were about five miles from the hills where the Germans were well-entrenched, and their big guns were firing on our positions. The din of battle was horrendous and the ground shook. At dusk we endured dive-bomber attacks and a nearby gasoline dump was hit. We were next to a field of anti-aircraft artillery which was drawing the attention of the enemy. We slept in slit trenches that night."

"At the time of our beach landing we lost the services of Frank Parker, a radar mechanic. Frank was working or checking the waterproofing at the front of his truck when the L.S.T. beached. He became pinned between his truck and a tank and suffered nerve damage to his legs. A few days later, Ray Dodds and I visited Frank at the field hospital and found him limping but dragging one foot. He was waiting to be evacuated."

"We had news that one of the other RAF radar crews was operational on an L.S.T. with their aerial on the bow of the landing craft. Apparently, German guns scored a direct hit on the aerial and another shell was taken amidships. We could not verify this mishap."

"During the next 13 days, life was not a bowl of cherries for us. We were unable to occupy the site chosen for our radar gear. Also, there was continued fighting for an airstrip as our Allied aircraft, fighters and bombers, had to fly from bases in Sicily and Africa. News reports stated that our aircraft were providing an air umbrella over our positions at Salerno. However, this was not true at dawn and at dusk. German FW's and Me 110's came at us out of the sunrise and sunset. At night Ju 88's and whatever dropped flares and bombs while Bofors anti-aircraft artillery nearby blazed away at them. Sleeping was difficult with the noise of battle and the first few days and nights we were warned to be ready for counter attacks by German ground forces. After our first night at

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Salerno we chose to sleep by our trucks so that we could roll underneath during the night attacks as protection against flak. There our training came in handy; we rested on our elbows with thumbs clenched in the mouth, to absorb shocks should a bomb land too close to us."

"On the third night at Salerno, Ray Dodds complained bitterly that he could not sleep. He was fed a sleeping potion and fell asleep on a ground sheet underneath a mosquito net with the sky as a ceiling. Sure enough, we had the nightly air raid, and we remembered Ray was asleep in the open. We ran out and put him on a stretcher and under a truck. After the raid was over we returned him to his original bed. On awakening the next morning he told us that he had a blissful night of sleep."

F. D. Hurlburt

871 AMES Operations Record Book

1 Sept 1943:

Instructions received to proceed to an embarkation point in the Millazo area.

3 Sept:

Arrived that night at Millazo.

5 Sept:

Waterproofing being finished we moved into L.S.T. sections.

8 Sept:

Embarked on L.C.T. MK 111 and sailed that night.

9 Sept:

Landed in Italy that night with very little activity.

10 Sept:

As there was no indication of our designated site being captured, the unit moved into a camp adjacent to 887 AMES operational site.

11 Sept:

We were warned by the C.O. of a Reconnaissance Unit that the enemy had broken through the Royal Fusiliers and if he continued to advance, a line was to be held on the beach side of our encampment. Further news indicated that all was not well, so the technical vehicles were taken down to the beach, and the Beach-master called in an L.C.T. Later found the line was now holding, and the immediate threat was past, therefore the unit encamped at the RAF Assembly Area with a double guard.

12 Sept:

Heavy 88mm. shelling experienced with damage to the transmitter and the aerial trailer.

13 Sept:

Heavy shelling of the nearby beach, in the early evening, immediately followed by a direct raid on the locality by 10 plus aircraft. Anti-personnel bombs were dropped in a line between the technical and domestic sites.

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14 Sept:

Continued operations, heavy shelling of the beach

15 Sept:

Continued operations, heavy shelling in evening for short period.

16 Sept:

Warned to move as the area was required for aircraft dispersal.

29 Sept:

News of the fall of Castellamare, which opened up the district where our site is situated.

30 Sept:

C.O. went to investigate the possibility of taking over the site, but found the bridges blown up and all road communications cut. Spares situation becoming critical.

7-9 Oct:

The Commanding Officer together with officers of 64th Fighter Wing U.S.A.A.F went to investigate the possibility of taking over the site where the unit was supposed to go on landing.

10-12 Oct:

The unit was assembled ready to move as soon as the road was open.

13 Oct:

Received word that road was clear and moved early in the morning. On reaching Sorrento Point it was found necessary to requisition the villa where the technical site was situated.

14 Oct:

Became operational. Fixed billets for all personnel.

15-31 Oct:

Continued operations, the time passing quietly.

D-DAY, SALERNO

"The LCT arrived off the beach after nightfall, during a heavy enemy air attack. Our unit remained inactive for three days awaiting opening of the beachhead. Shell splinters damaged the transmitter, and, following repairs, it was decided that it would be healthier for morale to set up a temporary site and operate there. Several days later this site became part of an airfield. Heavy air attacks continued, with several bombs falling close to the technical equipment, but there were no casualties. As the technical site lay on the proposed dispersal of the new airstrip, another location was adopted to the west of Montecorvino airfield. Operations continued with one man being injured by splinters from heavy mortar fire. When the enemy fell back our unit moved to Sorrento, where it set up for controlled COL operations in the garden of a large villa which was requisitioned for billets. A semi-permanent site was arranged and the unit remained there until after the New Year. Domestic arrangements were ideal, with billiards, table tennis, volley ball and bi-monthly dances to help the men enjoy their first break in more than a year."

W. M. Lower

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Wednesday, September 29th

"I had infectious hepatitis and was evacuated from Salerno by a D.C 3 and flown to Catania, Sicily. I was put in 25 Mobile Field Hospital (MFH). I was very ill, and could not eat or sleep. I had turned yellow."

"On Tuesday, 28th September, I had been to see the M.O. where he said that I had hepatitis, and would have to be evacuated. I left Salerno with little but shirt, shorts, socks and boots and without my pay-book."

"On Friday, October 8th, we were told that the 25 MFH was being moved to Italy. The M.O said that I was not well enough to return to Italy. On Saturday, the 9th, I left on the 8:00 a.m. flight to Tunis. By 2.00 p.m. I was transported to No.1 General Hospital at Carthage where I was assigned a nice bed, with clean sheets. The convalescent tents were situated beside the ancient ruins of Carthage."

"On Friday, October 15th I was declared cured and I was moved to No. 2 Base Personnel Depot (BPD), Tunis. I checked in and received two blankets, one ground sheet, a mosquito net and bed space in tent E5. Since I had little in the way of clothing, I was issued with battle dress, but no recognition of rank as I did not have my paybook. I was told I would get only hardship allowance. There were two daily parades for transit personnel at that big BPD, one at 8.00 a.m. the other at 1.15 p.m. I was assigned to a ditch-digging party. The Station Warrant Officer refused to believe that I was a corporal serving with the RAF, and I began to wonder if I would ever get back to my unit."

"I had discovered that there was an RCAF office in Tunis, a detachment of the RCAF Liaison Office in Cairo. Actually, it was while I was digging ditches that I noticed two RCAF officers to whom I told my tale of woe. The next day I was ushered into the Station W.O.'s office where I was told that I was a "Shadow" Sgt. in the RCAF. Days later I was informed that I had \$1,500 in back pay in an account in Cairo. Shortly after I was told that I could return to my unit as soon as sea passage was available."

Wednesday, November 17th and Thursday, November 18th

"After a good crossing we sailed past the Isle of Capri into the Bay of Naples, and docked at 3.00 p.m. We were transported by lorry to Portici, a suburb about 11 miles from downtown Naples. We were at No.3 B.P.D., a new depot with very few personnel on the staff."

Friday, November 19th to Sunday 21st

"The staff at No.3 B.P.D. had no idea where my unit, AMES 8035, was located. It was suggested

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that I should check with the A.P.O., and the ration depot in Naples."

"I went down to D.I.D. (ration depot) on Sunday, 21st, and at 10.00 a.m. one of our lorries arrived. At 1:30 p.m. we arrived at our AMES 8035 site, and it was great to see the gang again."

F. Hurlburt

As the Germans fell back to the Volturno river there were two main operational controls functioning in the tactical areas:

(a) The U.S. 64th Fighter Wing Operation Centre and associated Radar units in its network. These had landed at Salerno, and the units were deployed covering the western flank of the front.

(b) The No.1 Mobile Operations Room Unit and its radar network. These units had crossed from Sicily to the southern "foot" of Italy, and followed up the rapid advance of the Eighth Army. Initially, they moved up the west coast until the more advanced Salerno sector radar units gave forward raid reporting cover. Then No.1 Mobile Operations Reporting Unit (MORU) and its radar network moved north-eastwards finding itself at one time ahead of the British Eighth Army. As the Allied line across Italy was established, No.1 MORU, operating under the Desert Air Force, took over the eastern flank of the Allied front on the Adriatic sector.

When it became apparent that the Allied landings at Salerno would be maintained and that their push towards north could not be prevented, the Germans realised the danger of their forces remaining on the islands of Corsica and Sardinia. The latter was inadequately garrisoned to resist any landing in force and the enemy therefore began an evacuation of his troops through Corsica on 11th September, 1943.

With both islands ready for occupation by the Allies, radar sites were available to extend radar reporting cover over practically the whole of the north-western Mediterranean. In addition, the airfields on the islands could be used by Allied aircraft as bases for bomber and coastal reconnaissance aircraft.(1)

The campaigns in North Africa had shown the need for close radar tactical support of the army, highly mobile radar units and the need for radar base defence of the ports and air fields. As the armies moved forward to Sicily and Italy more and more radar units were formed and despatched to meet these needs. The allocation and distribution of these radar units south of the Volturno line in 1943 is described at the end of this essay. This description also includes those RCAF radar personnel serving on those units.

1.) *Air Publication #1063 p.340*

The Italian Campaign

JANUARY, 1944

"Early in the month I was warned of pending operation 'Shingle', and steps were taken to make our unit once again mobile. For this operation a different task was assigned. Our unit was to be mounted temporarily on an LST to cover the initial assault, and was to remain operational at sea until land-borne forces and units became well established. It was then to dismantle and disembark, assuming once more the role of a mobile GCI. Overcoming a few difficulties, our unit was finally installed aboard the British LST 430. The ship's cargo, in addition to the Radar, comprised a squadron of dwks to be unloaded at H-Hour+2."

W. M. Lower

ANZIO-NETTUNA

Operation "SHINGLE"

After the fall of Naples, and even with this magnificent port, the Allied advance was held up at the Gustav Line along the river, with the lynch-pin being Monte Cassino. It was decided to attack the enemy in his flanks and threaten his lines of communications. Operation Shingle: the landings at Anzio, the landings at the Nettuna area sixty miles behind the German lines. D-Day was scheduled 21st January, 1944. Anzio is along the river Garigliano.

The initial landing was a complete success; 36,000 men landed the end of the first day with only 13 casualties. The port of Anzio was taken virtually intact. By the 23rd the Allies had 50,000 men ashore. Hitler then committed his reserve forces to be assembled from north Italy, France and the Balkans in the hope of forestalling the British and American amphibious operation elsewhere in Europe. Within a week eight divisions were in place. (1)

A stalemate had been reached and by the 2nd February the Allied attacks around Anzio were brought to a halt, and, because of heavy losses, on the 7th of February the five forces on the Anzio Beachhead were reinforced by the British 56th Division and the U.S. 45th Division. For a period the Anzio sector had a comparative lull. The British 1st Division was taken out of the line after heavy losses. On the 17th of February the German attacks on the Anzio Beachhead continued and almost achieved a breakthrough in front of the U.S. 45th Division. There were heavy casualties on both sides. On the 5th of February, the Germans began a second offence of Anzio. The main weight of the attack fell on the U.S. 3rd Division. Four attacking divisions failed to break through. On the 3rd of March there was another flurry of activity in the Anzio sector where the American 3rd Division met and held an attack near Ponte Rocco. After this failure the German 14th army went over to the defensive. By the 11th of May, 1944, the Allies had 12 divisions in the attack as well as ample reserves. The Germans had the serious disadvantage of having only six divisions, including reserves. On the 17th of May, 1944, although Kesselring was given three more divisions, they had been unable to halt the

1.) *The World Almanac of World War II p.247*

The Italian Campaign

continued Allied progress in the Liri valley and to the south. On the 23rd of May, at long last the Anzio Beachhead burst into new activity, with fierce bombardment followed by an attack at Cisterna. On the 25th of May, patrols of the 2nd U.S. Corps linked up with the units of the 6th Corps at Anzio.(1)

"I was the senior NCO of #305 Mobile Signals Servicing Unit working in the Naples area. I was assigned to take supplies up to a radar station on the south section of the Anzio Beachhead. I left Naples on an LCT with a driver and a lorry at sundown; a twelve-hour trip by sea around the German-held line. Aboard the LCT were two trucks, a pile of potatoes in one corner and a large pile of bread in the other. LCT's were not very large or high out of the water, and their wheel-house was about the size of an overgrown outhouse. Occasionally, a wave slopped over the side and mingled with the bread and potatoes, and gave them a special tang. That night I slept on the pile of potatoes because there was no room on the little truck, and the driver occupied the seat."

"At dawn we ran up on the beach, and when the ramp was lowered we drove up the beach to a road and looked for a radar station which was supposed to be up on the left hand side. Visibility was not good because the Germans held the high ground, and the Allies kept smudge pots going during the day which created an artificial fog, with the hope of obscuring their activities. The whole area under their control was approximately a seven mile radius in a half-moon arc from the sea and included Nettuno."

"We travelled up the road for a short time, and then we were stopped by a British soldier who wanted to know our business. I explained about the radar station up on the left, and his reply was: "Not here. The Jerries are just hundred yards around that bend in the road in front of you." We retreated hastily, and after some enquiries we found it near a tented hospital. It was a CHL station, and after we had delivered the supplies we were informed that it would be about a week before we could get a passage back to Naples. There was no room for us, so we slept in the back of the truck. Sometimes a shell landed in the soft ground near us during the day, but most activities on the side of the Allies took place at night. I remember scrounging an over-size pair of khaki shorts from the station, took them apart and cut a V section out of the crotch and seat, and then sewed it all together again after shortening the legs. They were the best I ever had, and I was always sorry that I handed them in with my desert equipment at Bournemouth."

"We left by LST and arrived back in Naples without incident. A few weeks later I went back up to relieve a bomb-happy sergeant, on a 10 centimetre radar station, in the northern section of the beachhead."

1.) *The World Almanac of World War II.*

The Italian Campaign

"My second trip to Anzio was on another American LST, and we anchored out in the Bay and I went ashore in an amphibious dkw. This station was located on firmer ground than the first one I visited, and so was the ground nearby with the result that everyone seemed to want it, so that things were quite close together."

"A Lancashire sergeant and I made a dandy dugout in a ditch by filling 200 sandbags which we used for ends and the roof after covering it with boards from a shattered building. We even had a parapet wall and were as snug as a bug in a rug. It was fortunate that it was not the rainy season or we would have been flooded out."

"The station aerial had a gaping hole in it caused by some anti-personnel bombs which were often dropped by the Germans. Each day, Mitchell bombers swept in from the sea and made low level attacks on the enemy, and often the Navy stood off shore and lobbed shells into the German positions. The Germans fired shells and when they came over they often had a delayed charge which gave them a little more distance, as they tried to reach the ships off shore. There was one small pier that accommodated only one ship at a time. The LST's came to the beach, unloaded and left quickly. It was so crowded in the area that the German artillery could fire anywhere, despite the artificial fog, and hit something. They waited until the food dump or ammunition dump was built up, then fired a shell or two to mess things up, and the replacement work began again."

"Night time was the busy time. The infantry was probing and every gun was fired. I was told that there were 700 Allied guns in that small area which caused a lot of noise. It was a spectacular sight to witness the flashes, as every fifth shot seemed to be a tracer. You became used to it, and the Bofor gun beside us never really bothered our sleep."

"Each month British sergeants got a ration of a 1/2 bottle of whiskey, and other ranks a bottle of beer. Americans did not receive a spirit ration. One day an American soldier came over to our dugout and said he would give us 10 lbs of sugar for one drink of whiskey. My sergeant said that he did not have to give us sugar because he would gladly give him a drink. The American was from one of the Southern states, and told us that he had made himself a still and, in his southern drawl said: "Ah sure wish we could get rid of that diesel smell." I said, "Why don't you run it through charcoal?". "Where all would we get charcoal?". I told him that there was a little shanty nearby that was full of it. In no time he was back with a Peep, (just slightly larger than a Jeep) and loaded up with the charcoal. I never tried his later effort, but one drink of his older mixture was enough for me...it was just like drinking gasoline."

"My stay at Anzio finished when the Allies came up the Liri valley and made contact with the beach-head. I went back to Naples on one of the last LST's before everything packed up and went north."

**Frank Sills,
Seaforth, ON**

The Italian Campaign

AMES 871 Operations Record Book, 1944.

15 Jan:

Departed Sorrento for embarkation on L.S.T. 430 at Naples.

20 Jan:

Sailed for Salerno to convoy assembly.

21 Jan:

Convoy sailed on invasion.

22 Jan:

Hove to 3 miles off Anzio. H-Hour at 02:00 hours. Cargo of dwk's unloaded at 04:00 hours. Unit became operational at 04:30, and L.S.T. put out to sea for operational patrols.

22-23 Jan:

Night of 22/23 rd witnessed deliberate air attack on 3 fully-lighted hospital ships, several miles from any military target. The SAINT DAVID was sunk within ten minutes of being hit.

24 Jan:

For the three days operational at sea considerable enemy air activity was seen.

26 Jan: Ordered to land, but L.S.T. was driven well off course by heavy seas, and Anzio was not reached until evening.

27 Jan: Landed at 08:00 hours, and were operational at 5 miles east of Nettuno by 17:30 hours. Nettuno was 2-5 miles from Anzio.

21-7 Feb:

Constant enemy air activity, and spasmodic enemy shelling. Operational continually.

13 Feb:

Unit controlled a section of fighters, who shot down 2 FW.190's.

15 Feb:

A flare "T" was laid within 200 yards of site, and was attacked by enemy aircraft; many bombs dropped close, but fortunately no casualties or damage was sustained.

21 Feb:

Heavy enemy air raid at night.

28 Feb:

Very heavy shelling near unit.

1-11 Mar:

Operations continued, with day and night enemy air activity and frequent shelling.

13 Mar:

About 09:00 hours, the unit appeared to be the target of 170 mm shelling which blew down our VHF mast and damaged Dodge 15 cwt and sprayed technical vehicles with shrapnel. No personnel casualties sustained. A new site was located which provided camouflage and cover.

29 Mar:

From time of landing to date, heavy rain was experienced for a large part of the time, thus making the digging of slit trenches and shelters an impossibility. Also it was impossible to obtain sand-bags for protection of vehicles or bodies.

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18 Apr:

Personnel of 8028 A.M.E.S. arrived to enable personnel of this unit to have some leave.

24 May:

Personnel of 8028 A.M.E.S. returned to Naples.

26 May:

The beachhead was relieved by the Fifth Army.

28 May:

In day operations during the Anzio campaign, aircraft under this unit control accounted for a total of 14 enemy aircraft destroyed, 2 probably destroyed, and 3 damaged.

D-DAY, ANZIO

"The LST arrived off-shore at its appointed station at H-1. At H-Hour diesels were started and communications checked, but the radar could not get into full operation till the cargo was off-loaded at H+2. After unloading, the ship sailed out of the anchorage to patrol on a fixed course within the destroyer screen. As no bearing composition device was obtainable, the ship's heading was of prime importance, and in furnishing this the Navy was more than co-operative. Operations were decidedly inferior to shore work, as bearings and pinpoints lacked complete accuracy. Too, the weather became rough and the operators suffered seasickness. It was while engaged in this work that our unit observed the deliberate bombing of the St. David, a hospital ship, with full lights burning, and situated at least ten miles away from the anchorage. The ship sank within ten minutes."

"On the fourth day the sea became so violent that operation was impossible. The ship was driven many miles from anchorage, and her deck began to crack. The fifth day was spent limping back to Anzio, where the following morning our unit debarked and set up a site off the Littorio road. This had been an old Italian gunnery field, an ideal technical location for the area. Domestically, however, it was very poor, water lying up to ground level, prohibiting the digging of slit trenches, and with no natural camouflage near the site. No heating stoves could be obtained for the tents, requiring men to live in heatless tents all winter. Heavy bombing raids were experienced near the station, but aside from a few near misses, no damage was done. Shelling of a nearby field was of considerable annoyance, as men on foraging expeditions were pinned down by fire."

"This fire was not considered a deliberate attack on our unit, until a heavier gun commenced firing around the domestic site. This fire increased daily until one morning several hits were scored, crippling one vehicle and felling a 75-foot VHF mast, as well as spraying shrapnel over the camp. As the camp was now obviously the target of direct enemy attack, the site was changed to one nearer the beach, and out of line of direct enemy observation. The domestic site was located between two mine fields, thereby gaining some semblance of privacy on the crowded beachhead. This was short-lived, however, with the partial cleanup of the fields and assignment of the beach area to the billeting of troops out of the line. Here our unit remained until the relief of the beachhead. Operations during this time had been most difficult, the enemy resorting to all methods to jam our unit. Little success was gained, about five kills, but day control was more in demand and sixteen

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interceptions were obtained, in addition to hundreds made through the whole beach radar chain. For their work on the beachhead all members of our unit were personally commended by General Hawkins of the 64th Fighter Wing."

"With the relief of the beachhead, the unit was commissioned by General Savill of the 12th Air Force to follow the advancing 5th Army as closely as possible, supplying advance radar warning to front line troops. Our unit followed the Army for a month, from Anzio to Cecina, a distance of about 200 miles, occupying eight sites during the period and missing not a single night's operation. Owing to a lack of heavy enemy air attack, the forward C.P.'s were not sufficiently interested to even run a line to our unit. Nevertheless, the experiment served to evolve the idea of guiding fighter bombers to their targets from spotter cubs, ultimate success of which is unknown to me, as our unit was called to Naples to prepare for the invasion of France.

W. M. Lower

COMMENDATION

Headquarters 64th Fighter Wing
Office of the Commanding General
APO # 650
1 March 1944.

SUBJECT: Commendation.
TO: F/Lt. W.M. Lower, C8042

I take pleasure in commending you for your exemplary behaviour, display of courage and devotion to duty during the period of 22 January to 29 February. The manner in which you have performed your duties, at the Anzio and Nettuno beach-head, while all the installations, roads and bivouac areas were subjected to intense artillery fire and bombing attacks is worthy of highest praise. The courage you have shown has contributed much to the success of this operation.

J. R. Hawkins,
Brigadier General, USA,
Commanding.

INVASION OF THE SOUTH OF FRANCE **Operation "Anvil/Dragoon"**

In the planning of the invasion of the south of France it was thought that the code name "Anvil" had been compromised and the code name was changed to "Dragoon".

At 08:00 hours, 15 August, 1944, three divisions of General Patch's U.S. 7th landed in Provence between Toulon and Cannes, followed the next day by three divisions of the Free French. The landing was supported by four battleships, twenty cruisers and thirty-one destroyers. A further four

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cruisers and sixty destroyers performed escort duties. There was almost no resistance to the landings, and only 183 casualties. Two days later, in northern France, Falaise was captured by the Canadian 2nd Division, and the Falaise Gap was closed on the 18th of August. Before the end of August all the French coast from the mouth of the Rhône to Nice was firmly in the hands of the Allies. The majority of the 19th German army was withdrawing rapidly northward up the Rhône Valley, and within days the whole of France had been liberated.

At 15:30 hours on D-Day, Operation Dragoon, August 15, the radar silence was broken. An air warning cover for the landings was provided by two GCI LST's and FDT No.13 which had been so successful in Operation Torch, the landings in Normandy. (1)

Wednesday, July 26th to Monday July 31st, 1944

"We had our first long leave since we left England. Most of us decided to stay at the Malcolm Club in Naples. We were three to a room, and the beds were not very comfortable. Daily, we followed a routine. In the morning we swam at a seaside beach called "Villamare". In the afternoon went to a cinema or a show. I visited the opera house and found that I enjoyed Italian opera performances, even though I could not understand a word being sung. In the evening we went to the NAAFI palace for a meal and refreshments."

Tuesday, August 1, to Sunday August 13th, 1944

"We were recalled from leave and packed and drove our trucks to the staging area. At 4.00 p.m. on Thursday, I left the staging area for the docks. It was not until Friday, at 7.00 a.m. that my turn came to board the ship, and my truck was put in a lower hold of a Liberty ship, "The Edward Richardson". On Saturday afternoon moved out into the Bay of Naples and sat at anchor. The Bay was full of ships, a good many were Liberty ships all made of metal. On Friday, August 11th, we were still waiting in the Bay of Naples, and there was a desire to get moving. In the morning, a York aircraft, protected by a Beaufighter, flew over our ship. We were told later that Churchill had been in that aircraft, and he was, reportedly, in Italy."

Sunday, August 13th, 1944 to Saturday, August 19th

"On Sunday we left the harbour and the ship was positioned between the mainland and the Isle of Capri. We were definitely on our way on Monday, and our destination was Southern France. Our convoy had about 60 ships of the Liberty type. By evening, we were going through the straits between Sardinia and Corsica. On Tuesday we received francs in exchange for lira, military currency. That was D-Day. In the afternoon we heard gunfire, also the guns of some of our heavy cruisers as they knocked out objectives inland. We were a few miles off shore. That evening we endured what we were told was a short air raid. At the sound of the air raid warning we scurried below decks. The sound of battle was deafening in those Liberty ships because of their metal content."

1.) Air Publication #1063 p 356

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"On Wednesday, the 16th, we were in the Gulf of St Tropez and we saw the coastline clearly, and the beautiful homes built in the hills beyond the shore. We saw the town of St Tropez, and to the right, we were told, was St Maxime. All was quiet on board until 8:30 p.m. when we were caught napping as seven Ju 88's appeared above our convoy. We had no air raid warning. The ack-ack was terrific, and something dropped just off the ship. There was no damage and we watched as two Ju 88's were shot down. All was quiet on Thursday and we were still aboard ship. This was the most peaceful invasion that I had been on. Finally, on Friday the 18th, we approached Dramont Beach and prepared for landing and unloading. Most of the trucks were unloaded but Ray Dodd's diesel generator and my IFF float were unloaded the next day. On Friday night there was another air raid, and our destroyers set up a smoke screen."

"On Saturday, August 19th, Ray and I were ready to land our trucks on French soil. It was decided that the radar aerial trailer be hitched to my truck. When my turn came I dropped my truck on the beach and proceeded easily up to the meeting point. I heard shouts behind me and looked back and saw the aerial trailer still on the ramp. To my chagrin, the trailer had become unhitched from my truck when I dropped onto the beach. Again, a bulldozer came to the rescue. My first landing on French soil occurred at 7:30 p.m."

Sunday, August 20th to Saturday, September 9th, 1944

"We left Dramont and drove to nearby Ste Maxime and to Fréjus and set up our operation as a CHL station. Our domestic site was a former French Army Camp, and we occupied the rest of the barracks. They had installed some showers which we were welcome to use."

Sunday, September 10th, 1944

"We moved to our new location which was about five miles along the coast from St Raphaël, and about fifteen miles from Cannes. We erected our radar gear atop a 975-foot hill which overlooked the rocky coast of a small bay, and we were operational as a CHL station. We were on the site of a former Nazi Radar Station, which the American forces had captured and removed the technical gear. The whole hill was covered with a network of defensive positions, gunpits, etc., many of which looked unfinished. We did not wander too far away on the hill, for the mines had not been removed. Alongside the road up the hill were warning signs "Achtung Minen", and, if one looked closely at the undergrowth, the odd trip line could be seen."

F. D. Hurlburt

AMES 871 Operations Record Book, 1944.

7 July:

Left site at Venturina, arrived 2 miles south west at Cecina, on the west coast opposite the north part of the Island of Elba.

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18 July:

Departed Cecina under special orders to proceed by convoy to Naples.

21-26 July:

Technical vehicles boarded L.S.T. 394 for installation. Domestic site complete. No accommodation other than cots on the tank deck.

29 July:

Commanding Officer remarks that the new controller has been attached without recent G.C.I. experience, and his attachment to the unit before an operation, for operational duty, was useless.

31 July

LST moved to position off Ischia for calibration.

7 Aug:

Engaged in manoeuvres off Salerno.

12 Aug:

Convoy sailed at 14:00 hours.

15 Aug:

Ship in operational position H-hour-2, and equipment operational by H-Hour.

22 Aug:

Disembarked St Tropez.

23 Aug:

Left St Tropez for Aix-en-Provence.

30 Aug:

ILLINOIS American radar arrived to replace unit.

31 Aug:

Left site at Aix-en-Provence, with orders to set up at Valence airfield if it had been taken, and if not, to take an alternative site at Montélimar. Valence was not taken, so unit set up at Montélimar, unit was operational that night. No communications established, as nearest operations were 100 miles south.

Sept-Nov:

Unit continued operational until 15th September, when instructed to close down. Unit was told to await siting officer, who was to re-site us in the south of France, on transfer from the Mediterranean Tactical Air Forces to Mediterranean Coastal Air Force.

16 Dec:

F/O Lunenfield R.C.A.F assumed command vice F/Lt W. M. Lower on Lower's posting home (tour expired).

"Preparations for the operations in the south of France were similar to those at Anzio, with our unit ship-borne for the initial period. One improvement lay in the fact that bearing compensation devices were available, materially altering the technical set-up. Three channels of VHF were employed, as it had been decided to plot by this method. The domestic party was detached and shipped via Liberty craft, to be landed on D-Day and await the disembarkation of the technical equipment. Landing the ship's cargo about 10 o'clock on the morning of D-Day, the patrol position was assumed, the unit remaining operational there for several days. Technical siting difficulties

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again hindered, to some extent, the efficiency of operations, but enemy activity was limited to small hit-and-run raids, troublesome to deal with, in any case."

"Upon disembarking the domestic party was joined and our unit proceeded to a site at Aix-en-Provence. This movement anticipated the fall of Marseille, affording the area only one outlet to the sea. The situation improved rapidly, and the 7th Army made excellent headway up the Lyons road. Along with another radar group, the unit was commissioned to adopt the fighter control set-up previously employed in Italy. This time additional equipment was more modern in character and, although there was little or no time for organization, the method seemed fairly successful. The first phase was a race between the two units for one of two sites, Montélimar and Valence. If Valence had fallen the winning unit was to set up there, if not, it was to set up at Montélimar while the losing unit waited until the town fell and set up at Valence. Valence had not been taken, so the unit set up at Montélimar. This region was the scene of one of the greatest triumphs of our forces against enemy transport. For at least twenty kilometres, both sides of the road were packed with destroyed or ditched enemy transport, a splendid victory for combined air strafing and ground artillery."

"After operating for several days at the new site, our unit was relieved by more modern American radar, and sent back to Salon de Provence on coastal work. With the assignment of coastal work the mobility of our unit was lost. In approximately a year and a half they had moved from Cairo to the south of France. Although the number of successes was not large, it was satisfactory. Twenty-eight night bombers and sixteen daylights were confirmed, plus probable and damaged. The pride of the personnel in their ability to move at a moment's notice and yet not lose a night's operation was the whole reason for the mobility obtained, which was honoured by a commendation from the Commander-in-Chief, Royal Air Force, Mediterranean and Middle East."

William M. Lower, F/L

COMMENDATION

"While it is not the usual practise to commend individual Units, the Commander-in-Chief wishes to make an exception in the case of No. 871 A.M.E.S. This unit landed on enemy-occupied soil on D-Day, or shortly afterwards, during the landings in Sicily, at Salerno, at Anzio and in Southern France. No. 871 A.M.E.S. is commended by the Commander-in-Chief, Royal Air Force, Mediterranean and Middle East, on the station's outstanding record of uninterrupted operations under M.A.T.A.F. since July 1943. This Unit's success during four operations between July 1943 and September 1944 is due in large measure to the whole-hearted co-operation, skill and enterprise of each individual member. The conduct of the entire crew has been exemplary and in the best tradition of the Royal Air Force."

Extract from HQ, MAAF Command Routine Orders
Serial No.5 dated, 3 Feb, 1945.

The Italian Campaign

RCAF RADAR PERSONNEL IN ROYAL AIR FORCE RADAR UNITS

Italian Mainland, Corsica and Sardinia,

September/November 1943

Tactical Units under Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Force

Salerno-Naples Area

Plotting to 64th Fighter Wing United States Army Air Force

AMES 887	GCI	Cpl. V. D. Wood
AMES 871	GCI	F/L W. W. Lower; Cpl. R.C. Lapp; Cpl. G. W. Rosebrugh
AMES 6037	LWS	Cpl. D. H. Scratch
AMES 6043	LWS	(nil)
AMES 329	MRU	Sgt. C. M. Lyster
AMES 8035	GCI	F/L G. C. Bickerdike; Cpl. R. G. Dodds; LAC A. M. Grasdle; Cpl. F. D. Hurlburt
AMES 6041	LWS	(nil)
AMES 6038	LWS	Cpl. C.G. Reilly; LAC R. W. Weaver
AMES 8043	COL	F/O R. R. Dodd; Sgt. A. P. Nofield
AMES 8015	GCI	F/L K. Banton; Cpl. J. O. Turnbull
AMES 8020	COL	Cpl. L. B. Barton; LAC H. R.C. Wallbaum
AMES 332	MRU	F/O J. A. Johnston
AMES 886	COL	(nil)

Base Defence Units under MATAF and MACAF

Messina-Calabria-East Coast of Italy

Plotting to No.1 F.F.C.U (Desert Air Force)

AMES 873	COL/GCI	F/L A. D. Revill; Cpl. L. T. Syrette
AMES 890	COL/GCI	Sgt. S. O. Harding; Cpl. F. J. Richards
AMES 8028	COL/GCI	F/Sgt L. S. Moore; LAC R. L. Stevens
AMES 8033	COL/GCI	F/L H. G. Montgomery
AMES 8036	COL/GCI	(nil)
AMES 628	LWS	(nil)
AMES 629	LWS	LAC A. L. MacKasey
AMES 6003	LWS	Cpl. R. J. McConkey
AMES 6004	LWS	LAC K. V. Allen; LAC H. R. Barbour
AMES 6039	LWS	Cpl. D. R. Armstrong; Cpl. A.R. Taylor

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AMES 6040	LWS	Cpl. R. Southall; LAC L.E. Topley
AMES 6042	LWS	(nil)
AMES 6044	LWS	Sgt. J. F. Gribben
AMES 6045	LWS	(nil)
AMES 6060	LWS	(nil)
AMES 6061	LWS	LAC W. W. Shoquist

Radar Units in the North Africa Coastal Air Force Base Defence Sectors 1 November, 1943

Taranto Sector

Plotting to 242 Group, Desert Air Force

AMES 274	MRU	(nil)
AMES 8010	GCI	F/L J. R. Adams; LAC E. F. W. Harlow; Sgt. P. McGregor; LAC G. McKeown
AMES 8032	GCI	Sgt. M. A. Carrico
AMES 8041	COL	F/L H. K. King; Cpl. W. P. McArthur; Cpl. D. F. MacLeod
AMES 624	LWS	(nil)
AMES 14027	TYPE 14	F/L W. J. Croll; LAC M. P. Harrold
AMES 14028	TYPE 14	LAC W. Halpern

Naples Sector

Plotting to 62nd Fighter Wing, USAAF

AMES 330	MRU	F/L A. E. Shipton; Cpl. R. S. Turtell
AMES 256	MRU	(nil)
AMES 1505	GCI	F/O S. J. Gladys
AMES 8009	COL	LAC M. S. Landen; Cpl. E. J. Uttley
AMES 8044	COL	F/O W. H. Munroe
AMES 8029	COL	(nil)
AMES 623	LWS	(nil)

Foggia Sector

Plotting to 242 Group, Desert Air Force

AMES 214	MRU	F/L J. E. Clark; LAC A. Harboway
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The Italian Campaign

AMES 899	GCI	F/L J. F. Anderson; Cpl. E.N. Atkinson
AMES 8016	COL	F/L S.F. Duvall; Sgt C. Harrison
AMES 890	COL	Sgt S. O. Harding; Cpl. F. J. Richards

Borgo Sector, Corsica

Plotting to 63rd Fighter Wing, USAAF

AMES 372	MRU	F/L S. J. Chapman
AMES 392	MRU	Cpl. A. J. Nicholls
AMES 295	MRU	F/L H.A.S. Thompson; Sgt J. A. Putman; LAC I.H. Thompson
AMES 8003	GCI	(nil)

Ajaccio Sector, Corsica

Plotting to 63rd Fighter Wing, USAAF

AMES 892	GCI	(nil)
AMES 8001	COL	(nil)
AMES 889	COL	F/L H.B. Stewart; Cpl. E. W. Douglas
AMES 6005	LWS	(nil)

Alghero Sector, Sardinia

Plotting to 63rd Fighter Wing, USAAF

AMES 275	MRU	F/L W. M. Marshall; Cpl. J. Critchley
AMES 294	MRU	F/L B. Mayer
AMES 898	GCI	(nil)
AMES 8005	GCI	(nil)

Cagliari Sector

Plotting to 63rd Fighter Wing, USAAF

AMES 880	COL	F/L M. S. Deller
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The Italian Campaign

AMES 881	COL	(nil)
AMES 6010	LWS	A/W/O A .W. Eisner
AMES 622	LWS	(nil)
AMES 6007	LWS	(nil)
AMES 631	LWS	(nil)

Abbreviations:

GCI Ground Control Interceptor Radar Unit;
LWS Light Warning Radar Unit;
MRU Mobile Radar Unit
COL Chain Overseas Low
USAAF Unites States Army Air Force.

Editor's note:

The RCAF radar personnel listed above in the distribution of the ground radars in the Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Force (MATAF) are indicative of their broad dispersal throughout the Royal and Commonwealth Air Forces. MATAF, Mediterranean Allied Coastal Air Force (MACAF) and Mediterranean Allied Strategical Air Force (MASAF) were the Air Commands within the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces (MAAF) during the North African and Italian campaigns. Some 550 RCAF radar officers and airmen served in the four Air Command headquarters, five Group headquarters, twelve Wing headquarters, thirty-four fighter, coastal, bomber and transport squadrons, seventy-one ground radar units, and 30 support units such as schools, maintenance units and radar servicing sections.

