

*The Times July 14 1943*

## **MORE TOWNS CAPTURED IN SICILY**

**Reported Fall of Augusta and Ragusa**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Allies Now 20 Miles from Coast**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Americans Repel German Counter-attack**

Unofficial reports from Algiers last night stated that the Sicilian towns of Ragusa and Floridia have been captured by the allies, who have now penetrated in some sectors to a depth of 20 miles from the coast of Sicily. Some reports also claim the capture of Augusta, which was bombarded by allied warships on Monday. While our fighter-bombers have continued their attacks on enemy troops and transport in Sicily, the toe of Italy has also been heavily raided. In attacks by torpedo-bombers on Axis shipping two merchant ships have been sunk, two destroyers left blazing, and two large troopships hit. AMERICAN LINE PIERCED TEMPORARY ENEMY SUCCESS ALLIED HEADQUARTERS, NORTH AFRICA, July 13.-British and Canadian troops are reported to have captured Ragusa Floridia, seven miles west of Syracuse, has also been taken. A junction of Canadian and American forces was made outside Ragusa, consolidating the unbroken allied line. American troops reached the verge of the city from the west slightly before the Canadians drove in from the east. Tonight it was stated that Axis tanks pierced the American lines in southern Sicily yesterday, reaching the beaches. The Americans regrouped and struck back vigorously and sealed the gap. A large number of enemy tanks are reported to have been knocked out. German troops have so far fought furiously in every engagement, in contrast to the

half-hearted Italians. Four Italian lieutenant-colonels have walked into the American lines and surrendered. It was officially stated here to-day that the attack on Sicily is being carried out by the 15th Army Group, including the Eighth Army, the Seventh United States Army, and Canadian forces. The Italian General Davet, commander of the 206th Italian Coastal Division, has been captured. In addition to the two Axis merchant ships sunk and two destroyers set on fire, as announced in the official report, two large enemy troopships have been hit by our torpedo-bombers.-Reurer. "

**GIGANTIC AIR SUPERIORITY " COMMENT BY SERTORIUS** Captain Sertorius, the German military commentator, declared in a broadcast last night:- During yesterday and last night the enemy, helped by gigantic air and sea superiority, landed considerable reinforcements, amounting to at least two to three divisions, on the south-east coast of Sicily. These reserves have been incorporated in the American Seventh Army, allowing General Patton not only to defend his bridgeheads at Licata and Gela against the Italian counter-attacks, but also to enlarge them. The advance has been considerable in the bridgehead of Licata, where Canadian troops under the command of an American general have pushed eight miles in a westerly and northerly direction. At the moment it is not known whether the right wing of General Patton's forces was able to advance from Gela towards the east or south-east, or whether his troops have been able to establish communication with the left wing of General Montgomery's forces which are fighting in the Plozzallo-Rosolini district. - The British Eighth Army has landed mainly in the Bay of Syracuse and in the small port of Augusta, south of Cape Croce. In these areas considerable bodies of troops landed on Monday and went north immediately. It appears that the British general is anxious to reach the plain of Catania as soon as possible. North-west of Augusta German reserves

bar the way to the British units. Very heavy fighting is now going on in this sector. While the centre of the British Eighth Army is at present lagging behind on the slopes of the hills west of Syracuse and Avola, the left wing of General Montgomery's army is very active, and has launched its main attack from Pachino in the direction of Ragusa through Rosolini, which is already occupied. **BRITISH TANKS** At the focal point of the fighting British tanks have gone into action. At the moment the activity of the British land artillery is limited, but the large guns of the British Fleet offshore and the allied air force, which entered the fight with its usual superiority, make up for it. So far the defence and counter-attacks of the Axis troops have been entrusted to local reserves in the south-eastern part of Sicily. The bulk of the Axis reserve has not yet entered the battle. Up to the time of writing, reports of new enemy landings at Trapani and on the West coast, as well as at Porto Empedocle, on the south coast, have not been confirmed. In considering the general situation, it must be remembered that Sicily is only a small sector of the enormous Mediterranean front which is open to allied landings because of their air and sea superiority. The 10 divisions that may have landed in Sicily are about half the numbers concentrated by the enemy lately in the Near East and in North Africa. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the allies have used only two-thirds of the tonnage at their disposal in the Mediterranean for the expedition of Sicily—perhaps less. This means that the enemy has the possibility of either sending his reserves gradually into Sicily or landing at some other points on the south of Europe with a mass of troops at least equal to and perhaps more powerful than those which were landed in Sicily. In any case, it is to be taken for granted that the enemy will use the whole material he has accumulated in the Mediterranean in the offensive.—Reider.

Other news of the Sicilian operations on page 3 "THE TIME

HAS NOW COME" STIRRING MESSAGE FROM GEN. MONTGOMERY General Montgomery has sent the following message to his invasion troops in Sicily:- The time has now come to carry the war into Italy and into the Continent of Europe. The Italian oversea empire has been exterminated. We will now deal with the home country. To the Eighth Army has been given the great honour of representing the British Empire in the allied force which is now to carry out the task. On our left will be our American allies. Together we will set about the Italians in their own country in no uncertain way. They came into this war to suit themselves, and they must take the consequences. They asked for it, and now they will get it. On behalf of us all, I want to give a hearty welcome to the Canadian troops that are now joining the Eighth Army. I know well the fighting men of Canada. They are magnificent soldiers and the long and careful training they have received in England will now be put to very good use-to the great benefit of the Eighth Army. The task in front of us is not easy.- But it is not so difficult as many we have had in the past and I believe we will overcome successfully. In all our operations we have always had the close and intimate support of the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force, and because of that support we have always succeeded. In this operation the combined effort of the three fighting services, is being applied in tremendous strength and nothing will be able to stand against it. I want all of you, my soldiers, to know that I have complete confidence in the successful outcome of this operation. Therefore, with faith in God and with enthusiasm for our cause and for the day of battle, let us enter into this contest with stout hearts and with determination to conquer. The eyes of our families and, in fact, the whole Empire will be on us once the battle starts. We will see that they get good news, and plenty of it. To each one of you, whatever may be your rank or employment, I would say, " Good luck

and good hinting in the home country of Italy." MORE TOWNS CAPTURED IN SICILY REPORTED FALL OF AUGUSTA AND RAGUSA ALLIES NOW 20 MILES FROM COAST AMERICANS REPEL GERMAN COUNTER-ATTACK

**NOTE ABOUT PLAIN TEXT QUALITY:**

This text has been scanned from the printed page using an automated process called Optical Character Recognition (OCR). The text will in many cases not be 100 per cent accurate. Older articles tend to have very inaccurate readings, because of archaic typefaces and spellings and damaged source material.

## **GOOD PROGRESS MAINTAINED**

**\*\*\*\*\***

## **The Importance of Palazzolo**

**\*\*\*\*\***

## **PORT OF SYRACUSE UNDAMAGED**

**From our Special Correspondent Algiers July 13**

The general picture which emerges from the official announcement and other news of the Sicilian invasion is of good progress in the south-east and along the north of the east coast, and of increased and to some extent effective resistance by the enemy to the forces which landed in the west and the centre of the Bay of Gela. Preliminary examination after the capture of Syracuse at 9 p.m. on Saturday showed that the port and harbour facilities were undamaged. The announcement in the official report that Augusta had been bombarded by naval units and that the approaches had been swept clear of mines by the allied

forces, dated as it is 24 hours ago, invites the inference that allied ships were likely to enter the port, if indeed they have not already done so. With two harbours, both on the borders of the Catanian plain, the prospects of an advance by mechanized forces well into the heart of the island seem fairer than they have hitherto. **ASTRIDE THE ONLY ROAD** Next in importance, - but a close second, is the capture of Palazzolo, in the heart of the Monte Lauro massif, and almost overlooking the Catanian plain. The town is astride the only road and only railway - a light railway - to the west from Syracuse, and thus closes one of the avenues by which the enemy can send forces against the port. Ragusa is the point of convergence of several important lines of communication: the standard gauge railway from Syracuse to the south coast, the light railway from Syracuse round the north of Monte Lauro, and 2 number of roads. Between Syracuse and Vittoria is Comiso, three miles distant from either. Ragusa was also fixed in the plans as a meeting point for the Canadians landed to the south-east and Americans who landed on the south-west of Ragusa. In fact, Canadian units who took possession of Pozzallo after its surrender to a destroyer, and who also captured Ispica and Rosolini, reached the outskirts of Ragusa just after the Americans who had advanced inland from the neighbourhood of Scoglitti. These allied successes are due largely to the outstanding achievement of the allied armed and merchant navies in handling supplies, which in its turn owes a great deal to the protection from the allied air forces. The figure of 3,000 ships is believed here to constitute the largest armada on record **FIGHTING NEAR GELA** The most bitter fighting so far has been east of Gela, and the advance in that area has been at the best slower than on the right. Some enemy tanks were destroyed all being of French construction. Some German opposition has been met both north of Gela and north-west of Syracuse.

The Italians have shown remarkably little cohesion in their defensive tactics, and every one is somewhat surprised at the lack of determination in the enemy's resistance. Neither the Leghorn nor the Naples division is proving much more distinguished in fighting than the coastal defence divisions, of which one commander, General Davet, has been captured. It seems likely that the enemy is still nervous about what may happen in the west of the island. It is plain that if he rushes all his reserves to the east he is inviting a landing in the Trapani-Marsala area. On the other hand, if he delays too long in meeting the threat from the east he might find himself cut off in another Cape Bon or Zaghouan. Evacuations across any but the narrowest stretches of the sea do not show him at his best. The civil population continues to show a sort of animal friendliness which, with so mercurial a people, should not be taken as too serious an indication of what they really think.

240 LORRIES DESTROYED

Much of the weakness in the enemy's opposition may be due to the splendid tactical work of the allied air forces. Fighters and fighter-bombers continued throughout daylight their attacks on trains and lorries, destroying or damaging at least 10 locomotives and 240 lorries. In this work Lightnings and the new A36 dive-bombers distinguished themselves. The former left 35 vehicles in flames out of four convoys of some 115 vehicles; the A36s knocked out nearly 100. The vital railway bridges leading to the south from Messina were the target of Flying Fortresses, which also attacked industrial areas. Direct hits were recorded on the bridges. On these all the traffic from Italy to the Catanian plain is bound to pass, unless prepared to make a laborious detour along the north coast and across the winding mountainous railways, which would triple or quadruple the journey. It must also again be recalled that all the railways in Sicily are single lined.

# GOOD PROGRESS MAINTAINED THE IMPORTANCE OF PALAZZOLO PORT OF SYRACUSE UNDAMAGED

## NOTE ABOUT PLAIN TEXT QUALITY:

This text has been scanned from the printed page using an automated process called Optical Character Recognition (OCR). The text will in many cases not be 100 per cent accurate. Older articles tend to have very inaccurate readings, because of archaic typefaces and spellings and damaged source material.

*The Times Jul 15 1943*

## FALL OF AUGUSTA AND NARO

\*\*\*\*\*

### US Warships Fire on Tanks

The following announcement was issued from Allied Force Headquarters yesterday:- During operations on Tuesday contact was made between American and Canadian forces. A further general advance has been made in all sectors, including the capture of Augusta early this morning, with its port facilities undamaged, and the capture of important towns, including Ragusa and Naro. Some thousands of prisoners have now been taken. General Davet, commanding the 206th [Italian] Division, has been captured with his entire headquarters, and this division has now been almost entirely eliminated. The Navy's main task of supporting the Army by commanding the sea and disembarking troops and their supplies continues. Throughout the operations American warships have rendered valuable support to troops on shore by engaging surrounding formations, tank columns behind Gela, and, among other targets, the airfields at Ponte Olivo and Porto Empedocle. A British destroyer and a Greek destroyer entered the port of Augusta at 4 p.m. on Monday. These ships, with the cruisers and monitors outside, assisted materially in the capture of the port. The naval bombardment was described by the Army as both accurate and timely. Catania airfield was bombarded from the sea in the early hours of Tuesday. It is reported that the swell on some of the more-exposed beaches has subsided. There were some bombing attacks on certain of the beaches against vessels lying off shore, but they did not interfere with the work in progress. Disembarkations are proceeding smoothly. The work of administrative units is of particular importance in operations of this nature, and a ceaseless flow of vehicles and stores is being maintained through the ports and over the beaches. There are signs of increased U-boat activity throughout this area, but counter-measures have been highly successful and disheartening to the enemy. Activity on the part of minesweepers and light coastal forces continues, and the efforts of all have been crowned with success. On Monday night one of our flotilla of M.T.B.s operating in the Strait of Messina



engaged two E-boats, which were set ablaze and driven ashore. A third E-boat was damaged during a later engagement, but managed to escape. FALL OF AUGUSTA AND ' , NARO U.S. WARSHIPS FIRE ON TANKS