

SEAMAN DUNCAN TENNANT SERVES ON ASSAULT CRAFT

Veteran of Sicilian Campaign Among First to Reach French Shore as Invasion begins

A Hamilton man, Able Seaman Duncan Tennant, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Tennant, of 80 Ottawa street north, is serving aboard one of the Royal Canadian Navy assault craft which are carrying Allied troops to the shell-smashed coasts of Normandy, it was learned in a dispatch from the front to-day. Able Seaman Tennant's craft, commanded by Lieut. George Nuttall, of Calgary, raced to the beach under heavy machine gun and mortar fire, which opened several holes in the little craft after four mortar bombs exploded nearby. It returned from the beach on one engine, had the damage repaired while the soaked crew donned dry attire, ate and then retraced a path to the beachhead for a special job.

Veteran of Sicily

Able Seaman Tennant, who enlisted in the R.C.N. three years ago, is a veteran of the Sicilian landings. He was posted for overseas duty a year and a half ago. His twin brother, Leading Coder Alex Tennant, is also serving in

ON ASSAULT CRAFT—Able Seaman Duncan Tennant, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Tennant, of 80 Ottawa street north, this city, is serving aboard one of the Royal Canadian Navy's assault craft which are carrying Allied troops to the shores of Normandy, it was learned in a dispatch from the beachhead to-day.

the navy, and was home on leave a short time ago after suffering wounds in action. Another brother, Cpl. Thomas Tennant, R.C.A.F., is serving in England.

Able Seaman Tennant was employed at the Steel Company of Canada before he enlisted, and attended Lloyd George School.

The dispatch, distributed by British United Press, which mentions the name of the Hamilton seaman, was written aboard a warship off the French coast.

It reads:

Canadian troops, including hundreds transported ashore in Can-

adian-manned assault craft from this parent ship, swept across the beaches in broad daylight this morning.

Casualties appeared light in the face of considerable opposition. Well-directed mortar fire was the Germans' main weapon on the beachhead and it was surprisingly strong, despite a fierce bombardment of the area from sea and air. The Luftwaffe stayed grounded.

The crews of a landing craft returned to report the beach had been won by the Canadians, who waded ashore just 45 minutes after H-hour.

Many soldiers became sea-sick in the bouncing small craft, but morale wasn't damaged.

Enemy mortar fire from concealed positions beyond the beach and hidden by a cliff caused many casualties and knocked out several tanks some time before they landed.

Heavy seas also swamped some tank landing craft miles from the shore.

Flotilla Fails to Return

One flotilla of eight landing craft from the Prince Henry failed to return. It was knocked out by the enemy on the beach after its troops got safely ashore. A few flotilla members suffered minor injuries from shrapnel.

When this ship's landing craft, like hundreds of others, were lowered into the sea with a cargo of crack soldiers, the flotilla leader, Lieut. Jack Davis, of Duncan, B.C., said that as his craft approached the beach in broad daylight it looked as if it would be an almost unopposed landing.

"It wasn't until we almost touched down that they opened fire from mortars well back of the beach," he said. "The beach seemed clear of enemy guns, but close to shore were many mines and anti-tank pickets which holed my craft as the troops touched down."

"They ran across the beach, ascended a small cliff about 100 yards up and disappeared over the other side. I saw some men lying on the beach, apparently dead, and I saw several dead being buried at sea from returning craft of other ships."

The flotilla sailed through many beach obstacles to reach shore, Davie said. Besides rusty-looking mines and cement pickets there were trip wires stretched neatly along the water's edge. Crew members believed a mine caused the hole in Davie's craft. It was taken in tow by two of the flotilla craft and brought back.

With the crew bailing because they didn't think they could make it, they transferred a wounded Canadian corporal to another vessel. Davie, who saw action in the North Africa and Sicilian landings, was about to give the order to shove off from the beach when he noticed the wounded corporal in a beached craft 25 yards away.

Braving enemy fire, Davie waded through waist-deep water and half carried the soldier to his own boat.

"He was wounded in the stomach, leg and arm," Davie said. "He told me he was wounded inland, but managed to make his way back to the beach. He was in a bad way."



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