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BE AND MAIL

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Calabria

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Continuous Stream Of Troops Flows Across the Strait

Algiers, Sept. 3 (CP).—Crack British and Canadian troops of the 8th Army, aided by a tremendous weight of Allied air and sea power, fought today to consolidate and extend positions on the toe of the Italian mainland after a pre-dawn landing launched from Sicily.

Daniel de Luce, Associated Press war correspondent, with the 8th Army, said Canadian troops which fought in Sicily were given "an important role" in the attack on Italy.

Scilla and Reggio Calabria, Italian ports 12 miles apart on the west coast, already had fallen, the Berlin radio indicated. A Rome broadcast, in phrases reminiscent of the Axis debacle in Sicily, also said: "The enemy's invasion now is in full swing. The enemy has set foot on the Italian mainland and is taking full advantage of his material superiority."

Thousands of British and Canadian soldiers streamed across the narrow Messina strait in an armada of small landing craft. The crossing was made under a heavy artillery barrage laid down from the Sicilian side of the strait and with the protection of a naval force of cruisers, monitors, destroyers and gunboats.

The landing took place at 4:30 a.m. (10:30 p.m. E.D.T. Thursday).

Yanks Not Yet in Action.

No official word on progress of the attack was forthcoming since the landing was announced in a special communique issued within three hours of the start of the newest phase of the Allied campaign to smash the Axis. No further official word was expected until Saturday.

The assault on Europe proper came less than three weeks after the conclusion of the Sicilian campaign, in which the Canadian 1st Division played a key part, helping to smash the strong Axis Mount Etna defense line. The Canadians were withdrawn from the fighting about 10 days before the conquest of the island springboard was completed.

This was the first of several expected invasions of the Hitler-held European Continent. The United States 7th Army of Lt.-Gen. George S. Patton, which fought alongside the 8th Army in Sicily, was not yet in action. Other powerful Allied forces were poised in North Africa.

The German radio said the invaders were met by Italian forces and there was no mention of German troops. It was expected, however, that the attacking forces will clash before long with some of the German soldiers which escaped from Sicily and now are believed to be

concentrated somewhere in Southern Italy.

Returning airmen who witnessed the early hours of the invasion indicated its continuing success. One R.A.F. Spitfire pilot, FO. George Craig, said he had maintained constant patrol over the landing area without encountering any Axis planes, and added: "In the Strait we saw hundreds of craft darting to and fro unmolested."

Co-ordination Excellent.

Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Allied Commander in Chief, directed the assault with assets never before available to him. His air strength was prodigious; the Royal Navy and American naval forces dominated the Messina Strait and other southern coastal areas of Italy; he had hundreds of thousands of seasoned soldiers under him.

With excellent co-ordination, American heavy bombers made their deepest penetration into Northern Italy from Africa to wreck vital bridges on the Brenner Pass railroad feeding German troops into Italy; medium bombers also tore up the rail network radiating from Cancelli north of Naples to seal off Southern Italy and make it ripe for land conquest.

The United Nations radio appealed to the people of Italy to receive "the Allied forces of liberation" in the same manner their ancestors had received those of Garibaldi, and the broadcast concluded: "Out with the Germans!" It made no mention of Marshal Pietro Badoglio's Government that took over after the Sicilian invasion saw Mussolini's exit from power.

"Allied forces are prepared to face the most bitter resistance since it can be foreseen that German resistance will increase in violence as Allied forces advance within the so-called fortress of Europe," this broadcast said.

A German broadcast recorded by The Associated Press told of fierce Axis resistance in the rugged mountains between Reggio Calabria and Scilla, but indicated the fall of

those two points when it said British tank forces had pushed eastward from Reggio Calabria and also had penetrated up the coast as far as Scilla.

It declared the Allied landing was "on a large scale" and that "considerable losses" had been inflicted on the invaders.

Hundreds of Barges.

Hundreds of small invasion barges crossed the moonless two-mile-wide Messina Strait to launch the assault.

Land guns mounted in Sicily arched a canopy of shells overhead, the Royal Navy stood offshore to obliterate Axis beach resistance, and hundreds of Allied planes bombed and machine-gunned Axis shore defenders to pave the way for the first shock troops.

It was a terrific barrage that first hit the beaches and crawled up into the mountains, wiping out enemy pillboxes, dugouts, barbed wire entanglements and large gun mounts studding the uplands.

The dim outline of the peninsula mountains could be seen from the Sicilian shore as the troops, hunched under the weight of their armaments, shoved off for the short channel crossing.

Daniel de Luce, Associated Press war correspondent attached to the famous 8th Army that has been the spearhead of so many victories, said Gen. Sir Bernard Montgomery in a personal message to his departing stalwarts declared:

"We have a good plan and air support on a greater scale than we ever had before.

"There can only be one end to this next battle; another success.

"Forward to victory.

"Let us knock Italy out of the war."

Bridgehead Established.

The first waves of British and Canadian troops struck the beaches, fanned out and established a bridgehead for other oncoming barges that spilled their loads of men and equipment on the shores below the foothills of Aspromonte—Bitter Mountain—a range that is the spinal column of the toe of Italy.

By that time the Allied land and sea barrage had lifted to gnaw at Axis defenses in the crags above,

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and dawn round the protecting mantle of Allied planes overhead.

"Allied forces under the command of General Eisenhower have continued their advance," said the brief bulletin issued two hours after the landing.

Spokesmen here emphasized that the new assault was not to be regarded as a "second front," but merely a sequel to the North African and Sicilian campaigns. That was the meaning of the communique phrase saying Allied troops had "continued their advance."

It was emphasized that the early collapse of Italy cannot be expected despite the political situation in that troubled land, where there have been demonstrations for peace ever since the downfall of Mussolini.

Progress may be rapid until the Italian defenders are joined by the battle-wise Germans, who learned in Sicily to fight without the aid of the battered Luftwaffe. It remains to be seen whether the Italian soldiers will defend the mainland more whole-heartedly than they did Sicily, where they spent more time throwing down their arms than fighting.

Advantage With Defense.

The advantages are all with the defenders in Southern Italy. The terrain where the landing was made is not unlike that of Northeast Sicily. It is mountainous, thickly wooded country, with deep ravines. The timber and scrub which abounds in that part of the Calabrian Peninsula provides good cover for defenders.

Today's assault climaxed a series of commando raids designed to probe the defenses and explore the region where the invasion was planned. Scotching Axis reports that the preliminary attacks were repulsed, it was stated officially at Allied headquarters that the raids, in the nature of tip-and-run affairs, were successful.

From Reggio Calabria it is more than 300 land miles to Rome and another 350 airline miles to the Brenner Pass.

The Germans and Italians have had months to prepare fortifications on the intervening mountains overhanging the coastal roads which are the most feasible routes of invasion. Most of the German forces, however, are believed entrenched in Northern Italy.

But political repercussions from the invasion may play an even more important part than the military factors involved. The strike into Sicily routed Mussolini and his Fascists and installed the Badoglio regimen, which thus far has held a war-weary people largely in check. Obviously Allied leaders hope the new invasion will knock out Italy, and open the first glaring crack in the Axis camp.

Weeks of intensive land, sea and air bombardment preceded the stab into Southern Italy. Railroad yards, coastal roads, arsenals and supply dumps were devastated by Allied airmen.

The Germans knew the invasion was imminent, judging by their declarations and their military operations of the last few days. This only underscored their inability to prevent the landing.

Two hundred or more Axis planes had attempted to fend off American bombers yesterday, and the Germans also made a small-scale air raid on Allied shipping in the port of Augusta.

This effort cost them 34 planes and the question which no one here yet has been able to answer is how long the Nazi High Command can afford to pay such a price in the futile effort to beat back the steady encroachments of Allied air might.

The Allies chose the fourth anniversary of the British and French entry into the war against Germany for the invasion. It came 17 days after the 38-day conquest of Sicily, and was the first landing by the Western Allies on the European mainland since the reconnaissance in force at Dieppe Aug. 19, 1942, when a force largely consisting of Canadians was ashore for nine hours.