

# Montgomery Commands Canadians

By DOUGLAS AMARON

London, July 12 (CP).—Word that British and Canadian troops in Sicily are fighting under the leadership of the most celebrated Allied field officer of all, Gen. Sir Bernard Montgomery, was welcomed throughout Britain today.

The announcement that Montgomery is in command of British forces came simultaneously with the disclosure that the 8th Army leader came here after his victories in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia and conferred with Canadian Army heads, including Lt.-Gen. A. G. L. McNaughton, Commander of the Canadian Overseas Army.

Now Montgomery has under his wing a Canadian force whose strength has not been announced. Details of Canadian participation in the Sicily invasion were worked out at conferences between the two generals and their staffs many weeks ago.

Many Britons and Canadians knew of Montgomery's visit to England which, officially, was a secret until today. He was cheered when he attended a London theatre and was seen in St. Paul's Cathedral. But the press and radio were not permitted to mention his brief homecoming.

## Knows Canadians Well.

Montgomery is well acquainted with the value of Canada's soldiery, having had the Canadian Army under his general direction during the time early in the war when he was general officer commanding the Southern Command in England.

Today Montgomery's Canadian and British combination swept up the east coast from their firmly established anchorage on Pachino Peninsula and captured the important harbor city of Syracuse.

The announcement that Montgomery's men had taken the city was made by Allied headquarters; Reuters News Agency had the first report that the Canadians were part of the onrushing force. Reuters said they "stormed through the flame and smoke filled streets" to capture Syracuse.

Earlier reports from Allied headquarters in North Africa told of the Canadians pushing inland from their landing point.

At least some Canadian troops had the privilege today of seeing their Commander-in-Chief, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower. A British correspondent in the Mediterranean area, Edward Gilling, reported that the American general had arrived in Sicily at Pachino Peninsula, where the Canadian beachhead was established Saturday, after crossing from North Africa in a British destroyer.

Details of what the Canadians are doing in the Mediterranean theatre

came from Canadian Press correspondents. Ross Munro, who revealed for the first time in a despatch Sunday that the Canadians were fighting with the 8th Army, covered in a second despatch from Sicily the first 24 hours of action on the beachhead on Pachino Peninsula. From Allied Headquarters in North Africa, Louis Hunter told of the settling down after their arrival of thousands of Canadian reinforcements for the fighting men on Sicily.

Highlights of Munro's despatch were:

The invasion attack was a tactical surprise and the Canadians smashed through beach defenses as soon as they were set ashore after their non-stop voyage from England.

## 700 Prisoners Taken.

About 700 prisoners, mostly Italians, were taken in the first day.

Finding the initial resistance light, the Canadians expected to fight determined resistance further inland. First-day casualties were light.

The Berlin radio, perhaps fishing for information, described the Canadian strength as the "1st Infantry Division and the 2nd Tank Brigade."

Identity of the general officer in immediate command of the Canadians in Sicily has not been announced, nor has the size and composition of the force which streamed off landing craft Saturday morning, smashed the Italian beach defenses and sped inland to make a junction with a crack British formation. Together these Anglo-Canadian troops quickly overran Pachino Peninsula at the southeast corner of Sicily within 24 hours.

## Dominion-Wide Force.

Munro in his eye-witness stories was, however, permitted to say that men from Canadian battalions from the Atlantic to the Pacific coasts were in the assaulting force, together with tank troops.

He gave territorial affiliations by saying that regiments from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Winnipeg, Alberta and Vancouver were part of the force, together with a Western light infantry support group and a Quebec tank regiment.

Munro reported that a sudden storm of gale proportions which blew up in the Mediterranean threatened for a time to delay the landing operation. But before zero hour arrived the storm died away and the huge convoy of merchant ships and protecting warships, the whole under close guard by the R.A.F., stood in to shore.

Just before reaching Sicily the convoy broke up, the Americans moving off to the left to attack their pre-chosen targets around Gela, while the British and Canadians headed directly for the beaches of Pachino Peninsula.

Ahead of them flew Allied bombers to give the defenses a devastating pounding. Over their heads screamed shells of the Royal Navy, also feeling out potential defense spots.

## Complete Surprise.

Streaming into landing craft, the Canadians headed to shore, guided by naval officers in launches. The landing boats came upon a sandbar, as had been expected. The troops plunged into the water and battled

ashore through water to

They scored a complete tactical surprise, Munro reported. Machine-gun nests and coastal batteries were quickly cleaned up with bayonet and hand grenade. The divisional medical officer said Saturday night only 40 casualties had been reported to him.

Royal Canadian Engineers and British sappers sped ahead to cut the Italian wire and uncover land mines. Through gaps in the wire Canada's crack assault troops roared away inland, while behind them waves of troops, with full equipment and supplies, were poured on the beaches.

The advance troops quickly seized Maucini, an old monastery one and a half miles from the beach, which the Italians had used as a barracks and ammunition dump. Two hundred Italian prisoners were surprised and captured there. The next objective to fall to the Canadians was a coastal battery a mile further north. This battery, which was reduced with hand grenades, had fired at the landing craft a little while earlier.

Pachino, bombed by the R.A.F. and by the Royal Navy, was "burned to a crisp" before it fell to the Allies. It was captured Sunday morning.

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