

which lay across the main axis of advance of 42 Commando, an air strike was called down at 0700 hours GMT. Immediately after this the advance was resumed with the Commandos travelling in their unarmoured open LVT's escorted by tanks. They moved rapidly down the RUE MAHOMET ALI coming under fire from side streets with grenades being thrown down from balconies overhead.

The Commandos replied with their personal weapons while the tanks knocked out anti-tank guns halfway down the street and overran a further three guns as they emerged into the open South of the heavily built up area.

The Commandos suffered some casualties at this stage in their vehicles and while subsequently clearing the houses on either side of the street.

Meanwhile 40 Commando was carrying out a deliberate clearance of the houses along the QUAI SULTAN HUSSEIN bordering the harbour. A considerable number of Egyptian infantry were seen and engaged to the West of this axis and strong opposition developed amongst the warehouses behind NAVY HOUSE.

At 0540 hours GMT the Commanding Officer of 45 Commando took off from HMS OCEAN in a helicopter to reconnoitre the landing zone for his unit. In the smoke and haze the pilot lost his way and landed temporarily in an Egyptian held football stadium where the party came under fire. Quickly realising his mistake he re-embarked his passengers and made good his escape in spite of a considerable number of bullet holes in his machine.

45 Commando were landed using 22 helicopters from HMS OCEAN and THESEUS and 90 minutes later 400 men and 23 tons of stores were ashore near the CASINO PIER without further incident. This was the first occasion on which such an operation had been carried out.

The remainder of 6 Royal Tank Regiment disembarked at the FISHING HARBOUR later in the morning. One squadron was placed in support of 45 Commando who had the task of clearing the town between the axes of the two leading Commandos: the other squadron by-passed the opposition with which 40 Commando was dealing and finally joined up with the French parachutists well South of the town near the bridges over the INTERIOR BASIN.

By 0730 hours GMT 42 Commando and its supporting tanks had taken up positions in the area of the GAS WORKS and GOLF COURSE CAMP South of the town from which they engaged Egyptian infantry near the PRISON. These appeared to be forming up for a counter-attack and an air strike was called down on them at 0900 hours whereupon they rapidly dispersed.

From then onwards until 1200 hours GMT 42 Commando engaged Egyptian infantry trying to cross their axis from East to West evidently seeking sanctuary in the rabbit warren of ARAB TOWN. This Westward move was also due to pressure from 45 Commando who were slowly clearing the middle of PORT SAID.

Like all street fighting the clearing of PORT SAID was a slow process made more difficult by the fact that most of the regular Egyptian troops had by then discarded their uniforms

for "gallabiyahs", and were indistinguishable from civilians, many of whom were armed.

Streets had to be cleared house by house and sometimes room by room. This took time and required a considerable expenditure of small arms ammunition and grenades. Failure to observe the normal street fighting drill and the wish of all ranks to get through PORT SAID as quickly as possible led in some cases to avoidable casualties to our own troops. It is a tribute to their patience and forbearance that so little damage was done to PORT SAID.

At 0900 hours GMT Lieutenant-General STOCKWELL reported that, with the other Task Force Commanders and General BEAUFRE, he was going ashore to try to secure the unconditional surrender of PORT SAID. Negotiations were in progress through the Italian Consul and a rendezvous had been arranged at the Consulate. Lieutenant-General STOCKWELL and his party sailed into the harbour in a motor launch as far as the Canal Company building where they were fired on from the direction of NAVY HOUSE. Going about they landed near the CASINO PALACE HOTEL and proceeded to the Consulate. The Egyptian Commander however failed to come to the rendezvous and as a result fighting continued throughout the day.

By 1015 hours GMT a tough battle was taking place in PORT SAID but the situation was gradually being brought under control. British and French forces had linked up at the Water Works and the advance Southward was being organised.

I was particularly anxious to secure as much of the Causeway running South from PORT SAID as quickly as possible, mainly in order to prevent our break-out from the Causeway from being blocked by the Egyptians but also to enable PORT SAID to be used for unloading men and material without interference or the requirement of a lot of troops to secure it.

In PORT SAID the last area of resistance centred round NAVY HOUSE where tanks supporting 40 Commando used their guns to blow in the doors of warehouses from which Egyptian fire was still coming.

Finally, just before dusk an air attack was called down on NAVY HOUSE itself which still held out. This building was engaged and our troops occupied the area. All organised resistance now ceased, 3 Parachute Battalion had also closed up to the edge of ARAB TOWN and the Commandos had linked up with the French South of the town. Sporadic sniping however continued throughout the night.

At 1700 hours GMT orders were received from LONDON that a United Nations Force would take over from us and that a Cease Fire was to take effect 2359 hours GMT, and that no further move of forces would take place after that hour. Orders were therefore issued to the leading troops to halt at midnight by which time the leading Allied Forces had reached EL CAP, some 23 miles South of PORT SAID.

EIGHT

The Occupation of Port Said

Early the next morning I flew into GAMIL airfield and joined General STOCKWELL there. We then toured the town together in a Land