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LANDING WAS AN ALL-OUT EFFORT

BY BUCKLEY REPRESENTING COMBINED BRITISH PRESS
Sicily, September 3,

British troops after effecting a successful landing, cleared the beaches and reached the road 200 yards inland by 5.42 this morning.

It was an all-out effort now. We had literally scores and scores of fresh field guns which had been moved up for the occasion and had not yet fired, but which had their targets plotted for the most extreme accuracy. We had the support of a number of American field guns, and in addition our heavy machine guns now firing across the Straits. Enemy guns, whatever there were of them, still seemed almost wholly inert.

There was some rather random firing of tracers on their part, and presently a single battery of six guns were discovered to be replying spasmodically. They had indeed little opportunity to counter our fire. Our observation had marked down numerous enemy guns or gun concentrations, and every one of these targets was now receiving intense and repeated pasting.

Standing on the crest of a ridge overlooking the Straits I listened to the running commentary of the British artillery Brigadier, while below and behind us our guns flashed and spat fire under a tranquil starlit sky. A little cluster of officers, all of them gunnery experts, stood grouped round the Brigadier. I listened to their comments on the progress of the bombardment. They had just that detached personal quality which is so typical of their nation.

Every fresh evidence of explosion across the Straits, every clear-cut glowing rectangle of flame that broke the stygian darkness ahead of us was received with the terse remark: "Good work. Another brewup." For the homely term "brewup" which to a private soldier traditionally means cup of tea, means direct hit on the target in the language of a gunnery officer.

And still there was no effective enemy counter fire. The hands of my watch had crept round towards 4.30 when the first British landing-craft touched the beaches opposite.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION