

ITALY: BY DESJARDINS REPRESENTING THE COMBINED
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With the Canadians, Central Mediterranean,
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From a high point on the Sicilian hills I watched the Canadian invasion forces head for the southern tip of Italy under the protection of an artillery barrage.

The operation was celebrating the fourth anniversary of the declaration of war. It was almost unique in military geography.

It was the only place in the world where such an assault landing could be launched with field artillery support making operations equivalent to a river crossing.

The barrage started at three thirty a.m., one hour before the scheduled time of the landing. The guns lined up from Messina down the coast began booming. The din was doubled by the reverberation sound on mountains behind us.

I stood near the observation post in the front of a veteran medium artillery regiment of the Eighth Army. Night was transformed into day by the Eric flashes and by searchlight beams acting as beacons for the ships.

The enemy response was weak in our sector. Only one shell from an 88 mm gun exploded harmlessly four hundred yards in front of our guns. The morning thick white haze hides the coast. There was silence except for the faint rumblings of distant artillery. The barrage was all British except for some American heavies, while mediums plastered the beach.

Troops were in landing craft of all sizes. Hundreds of invasion craft and amphibious "ducks" carried stores of ammunition.

The first troops landed were ^amine detecting party of engineers. Conditions were perfect for an invasion. It was a starry but moonless night with a silksmooth sea and no wind.

The Canadians will have a hand in the invasion of Italy on land, sea and air. Many are members of the medium light bomber fighter squadrons held in readiness. Many Canadians are among navy personnel manning the invasion craft.