

Within a week of the initial Allied invasion of Italy, General Eisenhower extended his operations to points along the Western Seaboard. It was, perforce to be another amphibious operation, in which the invasion fleet was to have the protection and support of the guns of the Royal Navy and United States warships. The altered balance of naval power in the Mediterranean materially assisted in this direction. One place to assume critical importance was Salerno, lying off shore, the great armament of battleships and cruisers bombarded the enemy positions.

The expansion of invasion called forth another great effort on the part of the Allied Fleets. Here was the critical time during which our armada of ships was drawing close to the mainland. A massed invitation for the dive bombers, the coastal artillery and high flying raiders. The protection given to the seaborne army by sea and air, was to prove another classic instance of Allied thoroughness.

The landing of the Anglo-American 5th army, with its guns, vehicles, stores and equipment, was made before the enemy could bring full weight of opposition to bear. The 5th Army was, however, destined to come up against heavy fighting after setting foot.

For the first time on the screen we see the latest type landing craft, to be employed. Giant affairs with the bows opening outwards to form huge steel doors. The 5th Army, comprising considerable American units is, for the first time, reported in action since it was formed in North Africa last winter. Many British units are with them, fighting with that wall of Naval steel behind them in the toughest battles yet joined in Italy.

A bridgehead was established on Salerno Bay in the early hours of the morning. The glow of a burning landing craft and its black pall of smoke remaining long after the first men in had rooted themselves on shore. In due course it became a stern responsibility for the 5th Army to hold the Germans, until General Montgomery's wonderful 8th army could force its way up from the South to relieve the pressure. That holding action by the young 5th army was valiantly carried out. They suffered and inflicted heavy casualties, but their first major encounter had won them glory.

They had taken prisoners from Rommel's battle tried units which faced them. And as this story "goes to press", we learn how General Clark's fighting men are resuming the offensive alongside the 8th.

The urgent business of bringing up supplies and reinforcements goes on, as the British and Americans in the line swing the tide of battle and blaze the name of SALERNO on the standard of the 5th Army.