

PATHE GAZETTE: 44/90.

THE WALCHEREN LANDINGS

At the recently captured town of Breskens, British Commandos prepare for their assault on Flushing across the narrow but all-important waters of the Scheldt. The landings at Salerno, Anzio and Normandy lie behind, the perfection of the technique of this type of operation - the landing craft head towards the Flushing beaches in the early morning light.

Dive-bombers swoop down on the German-held coastline and hammer at defences.

Up the bleak and muddy beaches pour men, guns and munitions - on, and through burning streets into the town.

Through the scarred streets of Flushing where stubborn snipers still lurk. Here the streets are dry, but parts of the town and most of the island is flooded and the fight goes on, often with men waist-deep in water. For the Germans on Walcheren it is inevitably a case of surrender or sink, yet even in the face of heavy artillery bombardment they put up stiff opposition, many survivors were willing to come rushing from Flushing.

Coincident with the attack on Flushing and the advance of the Canadians over the causeway from Beveland, Royal Marine Commandos successfully carry out an operation so tough that, by comparison, the Normandy landing was like a tea party. Rocket fire from the little ships answers the blizzard of fire hurled at them from the land.

Suffering terrible punishment from the fury of the enemy's guns, the landing craft went in. So intense was this hell of fire that losses of the close-support-bombardment-craft were as high as 20 out of every 25. It is difficult to see how men could endure such opposition and still succeed. Yet succeed they did. And in the worst weather of the war Westkapelle was taken and the Germans headed across the waterlogged island of Walcheren. The approaches to the port of Antwerp are now secured, and soon Allied armadas will steam in with supplies for the final all-out offensive into Germany.
