

SECRET

Narrative by:
Comdr. John F. Curtin, USNR
C.O. Beach Battalion in
"Neptune" Operation

Film No. 252
Recorded: 7-25-44
Rough: Beckman 9-23-44

This is 25 July 1944. John F. Curtin, Comdr., USNR, Commanding Officer of the Second Beach Battalion, returned from the United Kingdom 24 July 1944.

The Second Beach Battalion was organized and commissioned at Camp Bradford, Virginia, during the latter half of March 1943. It moved from Camp Allen to New York on 31 March of that year and sailed for North Africa the following day.

The trip was made on the Army transport H. F. ALEXANDER, and the Battalion arrived in Oran, Algeria, 13 April 1943 - in a convoy which included the S.S. Acadia, upon which the Fourth Beach Battalion was embarked.

Both Battalions reported to the Commander, Eighth Amphibious Force, and at once began a period of intensive training in the field with the 1st Engineer Amphibian Brigade, U. S. Army. (The training continued up to the Sicilian Landing.)

The Second Beach Battalion worked with the 36th and 540th Regiments, Combat Engineers, U. S. Army. The Fourth Beach Battalion was attached to the 531st Engineer Shore Regiment.

The Second Battalion, with the 36th Regiment, moved to Tunisia during the last half of June. It embarked, for the Sicilian Invasion, on various landing-craft of the Joss Attack Force - which was assembled in and near Bizerte.

The Fourth Battalion proceeded from Algeria by water - on various Transport Divisions and on LCI - and, in the Sicilian Invasion - landed with the Dime Attack Force at GELA.

The Joss Attack Force, to which the Second Beach Battalion was attached, landed on the Beaches adjacent to Licata, Sicily, and later moved into that port. I was C.O. of the Second Battalion and, of course, landed with it.

The Sicilian Operation was not an especially difficult one from an amphibious standpoint. The assault beaches had gradients ranging from 1 in 30 to 1 in 70 and, while landing