

Monthly Showcase - July 2010

Italian flag captured by Lieutenant J D Scholes RM at the naval base, Augusta, Sicily, whilst serving with Mobile Naval Base Defence Organisation II, July, 1943.



The capture of Sicily, codenamed Operation HUSKY, was the allied response to demands from Stalin to open a second front and thus reduce pressure on the Red Army. It was also a means of reducing the Italians' will to fight and to undermine Mussolini.

MNBDO II operated in Augusta for six months under the command of the Eighth Army. In addition to providing coast defence, signals, medical and security forces, the Organisation supplied rations for 35,000 men. Half the ships' unloading parties in the port of Augusta were Royal Marines and for some weeks, MNBDO II handled all the petrol brought in for the Eighth Army.

In this operation, as always, the flexibility of the Corps was in evidence. The staff of the Organisation's bakery (some 40 Royal Marines and seamen) generated over 4,500 kg of bread a day. They also manned Oerlikons for air defence.