

Examples, Conclusions, and Maxims
of
Modern Naval Tactics

1884

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Sometimes the shallowness of the water will not permit boats to land, or the only regular point of debarkation may be covered by the enemy's artillery, and the landing must be made elsewhere under circumstances which necessitate the use of a stage or float. Such a condition of affairs existed in the French operations before Sfax in Tunis, where the stage was made out of the topsail-yards of the line-of-battle ships, which were gotten into the water alongside, constructed into rafts, then towed separately near the shore, assembled together, and taken in under the direction of Captain Juge, whose report of this well-executed, delicate piece of work is as follows:

ON BOARD THE MARENGO

At anchor off Sfax, July 18, 1881

ADMIRAL: I have the honor, in obedience to your orders, to report you concerning the duty which was assigned me relative to the assembling of the floating bridge made in sections by the iron-clads of the squadron, and taking it ashore to assist in landing our men.

At 3.am Saturday, July 16, the steam-launch of the *Intrépide* shoved off from the *Marengo*, towing the whale-boats placed at my disposition, each boat having an officer in charge. We steered for the gun-boats to whose care the different rafts had been confided the evening before. As soon as we arrived, the steam-launch took in tow the raft of the *Marengo*, which was to be the head of the bridge, and the others conducted by the whale-boats followed on behind, end to end. Under the supervision of the officers the lashings were promptly made fast along each side, and the steam-launch steering by the alignment of the two towers took us in to about 400 meters from the mole. At that distance I stopped and dropped a grapnel from the rear end, so that the steam-launch had only to tauten the tow-line to keep us on a line perpendicular to the beach; we thus offered the smallest target to the enemy, and at the same time we were in the best position to work rapidly. It was then 4.20 a.m., and we remained in the position during the bombardment.

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When the launches and native boats were almost abreast of us, by order of Captain de Marquessac, I sent the whale-boats to tow the native boats, keeping one man of each boat's crew for the oars of the bridge. The grapnel was weighed, the steam-launch went ahead, and the men pulled at the oars, trying to maintain the alignment of the bridge. We were soon obliged to cast off the tow, and we hauled ourselves in by means of a grapnel carried out by the *Trident's* dinghy, and a small anchor which I had sent ashore by the whale-boat of the *Marengo*. The boats which landed first interfered with our movements somewhat. We finally, however, made our bridge fast after the *Trident's* expeditionary force had landed, and our bridge served for the rest of the expeditionary force.

I am, &c.,

JUGE

The naval brigade should be a fleet affair; every vessel should furnish a factor of the whole, but there should be no such organization as is now generally furnished by our ships of war, where all the elements are more or less those of a parade on shore, and are not such as the best offensive use of a body of men would call for.

Sometimes the shallowness of the water will not permit boats to land, or the only regular point of debarkation may be covered by the enemy's artillery, and the landing must be made elsewhere under circumstances which necessitate the use of a stage or float. Such a condition of affairs existed in the French operations before Sfax in Tunis, where the stage was made out of the topsail-yards of the line-of-battle ships, which were gotten into the water alongside, constructed into rafts, then towed separately near the shore, assembled together, and taken in under the direction of Captain Juge, whose report of this well-executed, delicate piece of work is as follows :

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