



# Air War College

## Department of Leadership & Warfighting

### Operation Husky Staff Ride





# Day 1 Stand 1

Primosole Bridge

And

General Montgomery (CDR British 8<sup>th</sup> Army)

# PRIMOSOLE BRIDGE 13 – 16 July 1943

**Operation FUSTIAN** was carried out by the *1st Parachute Brigade (Red Devils)*, under BG Lathbury, 13–16 July, with the objective of capturing Primosole Bridge. The bridge was the only crossing point over the Simeto river, allowing *Eighth Army* access to the Catania plain, accelerating the capture of Catania, and Messina beyond. Its destruction by the Axis would seriously hamper the advance. Once the parachute brigade had captured the bridge, it would hold until relieved by elements of the *XIII Corps*. Although widely scattered or lost to enemy and friendly fire, enough elements of the Airborne force arrived near the bridge to surprise the mostly Italian defenders (*213<sup>a</sup> Divisione Costiera*) and seize the objective. However, due to its limited personnel and armament, German *1st Fallschirmjäger Division* forces in the area, and increasing pressure from German reinforcements, the *Red Devils* abandoned the bridge. Shortly thereafter, lead elements of the *50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division* arrived. With Airborne assistance, the bridge was retaken after very heavy fighting.

## What drove the decision to use paratroopers?

*Airborne troops were seen as a way to “vertically flank” the enemy by seizing key terrain behind the front line, especially lines of communication, such as bridges, before they could be destroyed. Allowing the seaborne forces to quickly move on to their next objective after having cleared the mountainous terrain inland from the landing beaches.*

## Evaluate Montgomery’s use of airborne/glider forces in this phase of the plan.

*Allied use of airborne forces was poorly coordinated and executed throughout the Sicilian campaign. Airborne forces suffered severe losses due friendly and enemy fire and aircrew in-experience. Of the 145 paratrooper-carrying aircraft and gliders used, less than one-third reached the area near Primosole Bridge with only 295 officers and men available to fight (of 1,856 committed). However, the operation was the first to successfully airlift artillery into battle (via gliders).*

## What insights should the Allies have discovered as a result?

*One of the insights was that night-time deployments were especially challenging, requiring highly trained pilots and paratroopers and close coordination with Naval forces. Additionally, airborne forces were relatively lightly armed and could not resist a reinforced enemy counter-attack which made timing of the link-up between allied units especially critical. These lessons learned were incorporated into follow-on airborne operations in Italy, Normandy, and Southern France.*



**LTG Traut**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Fall Div**

**LTG Gotti**  
**213 Coastal Div**

**BG Lathbury**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Para Bde**

**MG Erskine**  
**50<sup>th</sup> Inf Div**

## **13 JULY**

1930 Airborne forces take off from Tunisia

2230 Airborne units begin landing around Primosole Bridge

2230 1st Fall MG Bn and 2<sup>nd</sup> Para Bn battle on hills south of bridge (both viewed as “key terrain”)

2300 1st Para Bn overwhelms defenders and captures bridge

## **14 JULY**

0030 British Gliders begin landing IVO Primosole Bridge

0430 1st Para Bn consolidates bridgehead, employing glider-borne artillery and captured pillboxes. 2<sup>nd</sup> Para Bn holding hill Johnny III, 1st Fall MG Bn in possession of Johnny II

0900 Counter-attacks by 10th Arditi Regiment repulsed

1400-1700 German reinforcements counter-attack, pushing 1st Para Bn to south side of bridge

~1900 1<sup>st</sup> Para Bde relinquishes control of Primosole Bridge

1945-0001 4<sup>th</sup> Arm Bde and 151<sup>st</sup> Inf Bde (lead elements of 50<sup>th</sup> Inf Div of XII Corps) link up with 1<sup>st</sup> Para Bde

## **15 JULY**

0730 Elements of 151<sup>st</sup> Bde (primarily Durham Light Infantry - DLI) assault bridge, but are repulsed, heavy fighting throughout the day

## **16 JULY**

0100 DLI renew attack on bridge, fording river to west of bridge

~1900 Primosole Bridge finally captured



**1**  
**DEW**

[37.4084, 15.0649](#)  
Monumento "Primo Sole" (Italian Memorial)

**2**  
**DEW**

[37.4023, 15.0653](#)  
Durham Light Infantry Primosole Bridge Memorial

**3**  
**DEW**

[37.37809, 15.04327](#)  
Postazione Tobruk di Bivio Jazzotto (Johnny Hills)



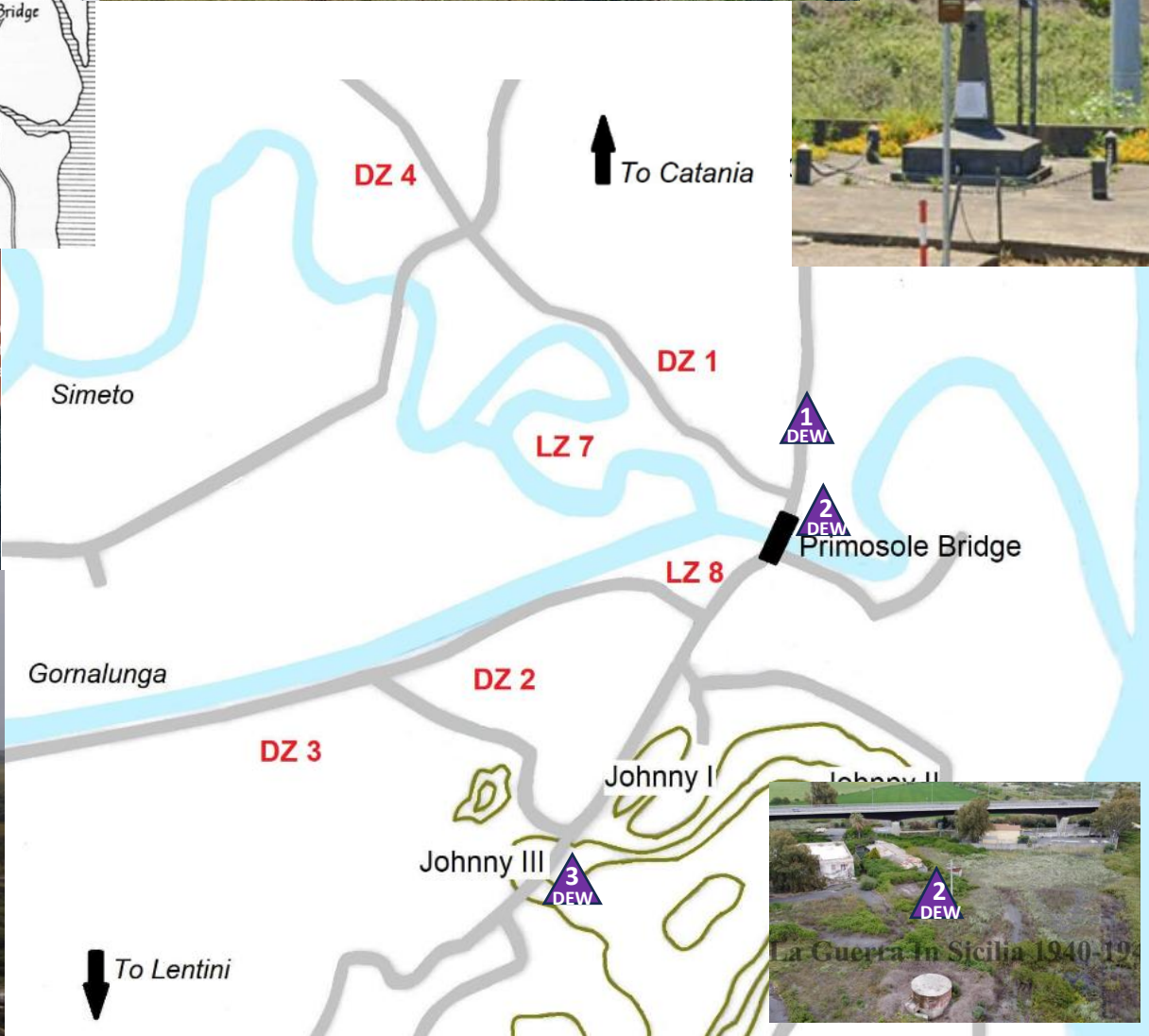
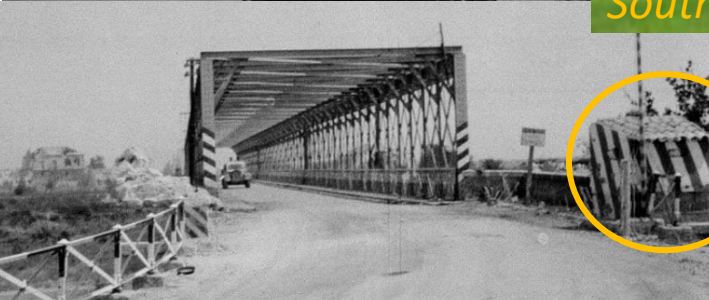
The Primosole Bridge of 1943 was built from steel girders. It had a span of 400 feet and rose 8 feet above the Simeto. The land to the north of the bridge was mainly olive and almond groves in tree-lined fields. Immediately to the south of the bridge was the Gornalunga canal, and beyond that three prominent hills. The road crossing the bridge was Highway 114, running from Lentini (10 miles south) to Catania (7 miles north). To assist the Italians defending the bridge, four pillbox bunkers had been constructed, two on the north bank and two on the south bank.



Bunker – North-West Side – Bridge



South Side – Bridge?





# FM Sir Bernard Montgomery: Commander TF 545, 8<sup>th</sup> Army/1<sup>st</sup> CID



- Nickname(s): "Monty", "The Spartan General"
- Born: 17 November 1887 Kennington, Surrey, England
- Died: 24 March 1976 (age 88)
- Buried: Holy Cross Churchyard, Binsted, Hampshire
- Spouse(s): Betty Carver, (m. 1927; died 1937)
- Allegiance: United Kingdom, Service: British Army
- Years of service: 1908–1958
- Rank: Field Marshal
- Unit: Royal Warwickshire Regiment
- **Commands held:**
- Deputy SAC-Europe (1951–1958)
- Chairman of the Western Union Commanders-in-Chief Committee (1948–1951)
- Chief of the Imperial General Staff (1946–1948)
- British Army of the Rhine (1945–1946)
- 21st Army Group (1944–1945)
- Allied Ground Forces (Normandy) (1944)
- **Eighth Army (1942–1943)**
- South-Eastern Command (1941–1942)
- XII Corps (1941)
- V Corps (1940–1941)
- II Corps (1940)
- 3rd Infantry Division (1939–1940)
- 8th Infantry Division (1938–1939)
- 9th Infantry Brigade (1937–1938)
- 1st Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment (1931–1934)
- 17th (Service) Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (1919)
- Battles/wars
- First World War, Anglo-Irish War, Arab revolt in Palestine, Second World War, Battle of France, Battle of Dunkirk, Dunkirk evacuation, North African Campaign, Battle of Alam el Halfa, Second Battle of El Alamein, Battle of El Agheila, Tunisian Campaign, Battle of Medenine, Battle of the Mareth Line, **Sicilian Campaign**, Italian Campaign, Western Front, Liberation of France, Operation Overlord, Battle for Caen, Operation Goodwood, Operation Cobra, Battle of the Falaise Pocket, Liberation of Paris, Siegfried Line Campaign
- Operation Market Garden, Clearing the Channel Coast
- Battle of the Bulge, Operation Veritable, Invasion of Germany, Operation Varsity, Operation Plunder, Battle of the Ruhr Pocket, Battle of Hamburg, Palestine Emergency

## Personality

- Cautious: Friction with Patton
- Great vision: Foresaw and calculated successful future actions
- Leader: Leadership based on truthfulness and character
- Style: Understood the importance of “engaged leadership”

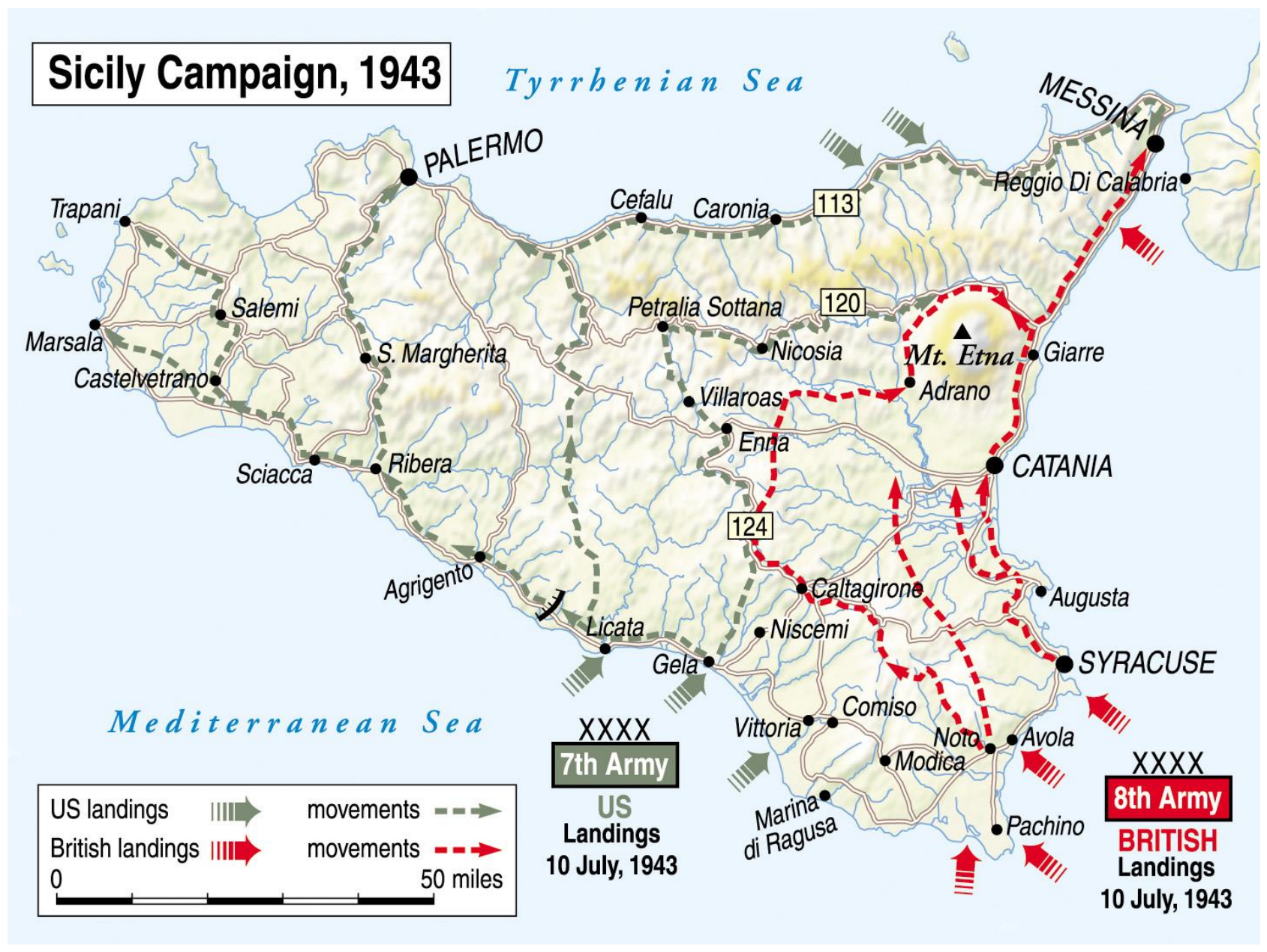
## Sicily Decisions / Assessment

- Mission: Assault via amphibious landing as main effort towards Messina. Patton’s 7<sup>th</sup> Army would provide left flanking defense/support.
- ETF: 115K, WTF: 66K...numerically=largest amphibious op of WWII.
- Biggest issues? = Terrain, small plain then mountainous. Patton’s desire to beat Montgomery to Messina (north then east).
- Airborne assaults preceding the landings resulted in heavy casualties.
- No coordinated attack plan with Patton’s 7<sup>th</sup> Army.
- Subsequent operations – Montgomery receives no direction from HHQ, Gen Alexander...takes matters into his own hands. Montgomery cedes race to Messina to Patton: 1. Terrain and casualties IVO Mt Etna, 2. Hope that the 8<sup>th</sup> Army would lead the initial campaign into Italy.
- Result: Successful but disastrous due to the Italians and Germans being able to withdraw in huge numbers from Messina to Italy. Patton would not allow units to enter Messina until he personally entered...EGO?





# Sicily Campaign, 1943







# Day 1   Stand 2

Melilli on Strada Pronvinciale 30



# Day 1 Stand 3

Ponte Grande / Syracuse

And

General Eisenhower (CDR MTO)



# SYRACUSE AND PONTE GRANDE BRIDGE

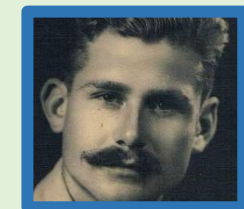
[37.054975, 15.265598](#)  
2.7 km South of Syracuse

- OPERATION LADBROKE was the opening 'coupe-de-main' of Operation Husky invasion of Sicily intended to secure key Lines of Communication, capture the Syracuse harbor and urban area, negate counter-invasion defensive positions, and disrupt Axis flow of forces to the beachheads.

- Loosely a success, in retrospect the forced-fit employment of still underdeveloped means of attack via glider and airborne infantry proved highly costly. While post-OPER Husky glider forces operational doctrine and training were greatly improved for both to be later employed in Overlord and Market Garden, the Axis also came to employ countermeasures. It wasn't until a hard look after WWII that glider infantry lost its theoretical aura of combat effectiveness and the hard realities were accepted. Only with the advent of sufficiently powered helicopters would planner obtain the effects they sought from gliders.



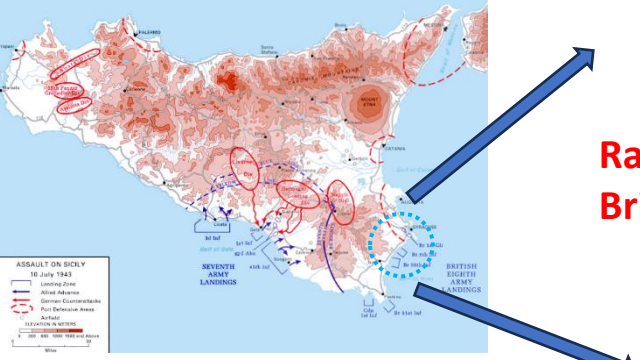
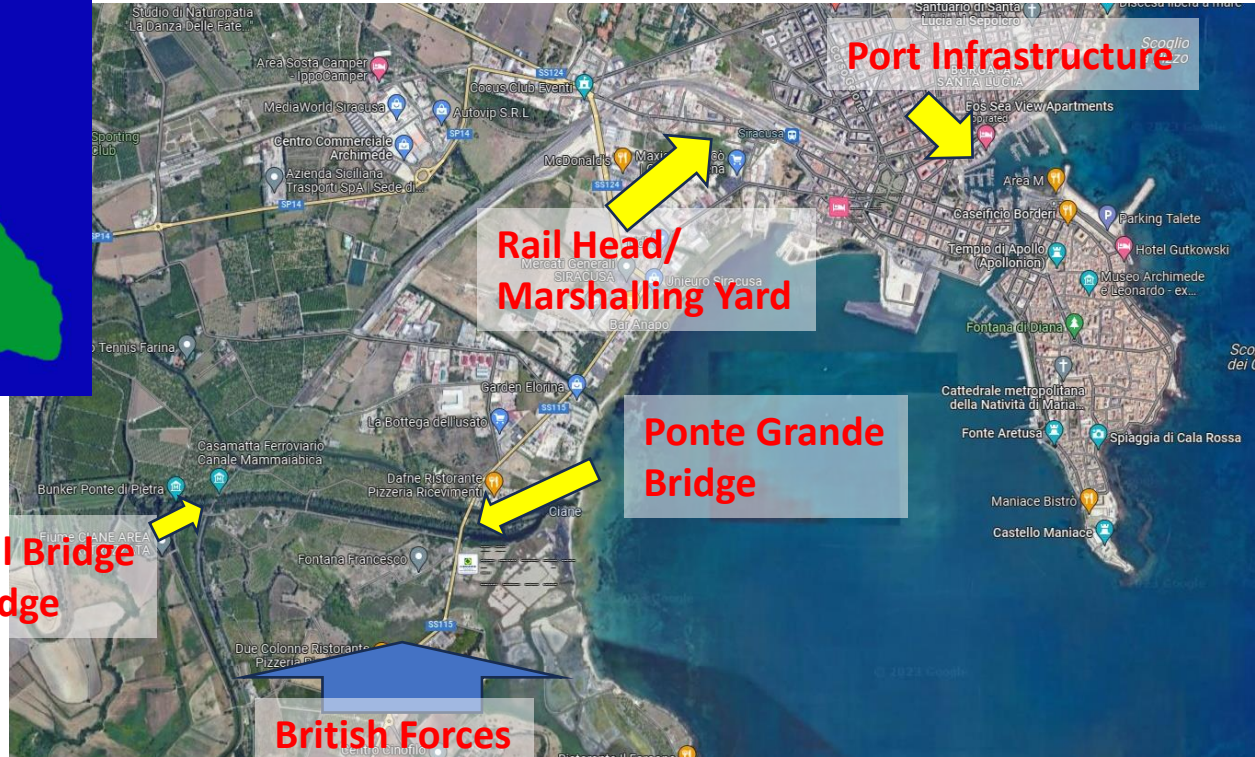
**Brigadier Pip Hicks**  
1<sup>st</sup> Airlanding Brigade



**Lt Leonard Withers, No 15 Pltn**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Btn, S. Staffordshire Reg



**ITL Adm Priamo Leonardo**



## FORCES

**240 of A & C Co of 2<sup>nd</sup> S. Staffordshires, 1<sup>st</sup> Airlanding Brigade in 8, Horsas gliders**

## TIMELINE

**09 AUG/1800:** 8, Horsas gliders take off  
/2100-30: RAF diversionary bombing, 280 puppet parachutists, and Combined start of radar-jamming.

- Gliders/tow planes encounter high winds, poor visibility, and AA fire
- /~2245: Gliders start to land
- Only 3 successfully landed, 1 by its target
- 5 lost to early release into sea, crash, AA
- "C" Company only by target, Lt Withers+30
- Lt W+5 crossed canal & river to execute a diversionary attack on pillbox on N-side while rest attacked from south. Italians surprised and surrendered.
- Attached Sappers cut phone cables and removed detonators on demo charges

**10 Aug/0630:** Forces consolidate 5-O, 80-M  
/0700 Italians start probing, later shelling. Flat terrain favored Italian Army

/1220 shelling ceased, but mortar and MG continued.

/1245 Brits shifted E of PG to hold out 20M  
/1515: Only 20 fighting men left  
/1530 Brits surrender – Lt Welch +7 escape  
/~1645: 8<sup>th</sup> Army forces retake bridge

- Royal Scots push towards Syracuse

**/2100** 1st Airlanding Brigade arrive in greater #s to take over bridge defense

## Contextual Map: OPER LADBROKE as Opening Coup-de-Main of OPER HUSKY

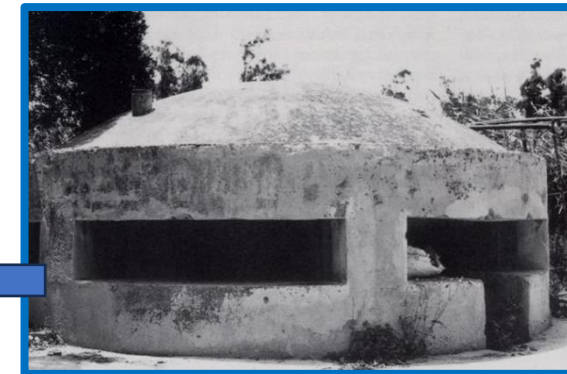
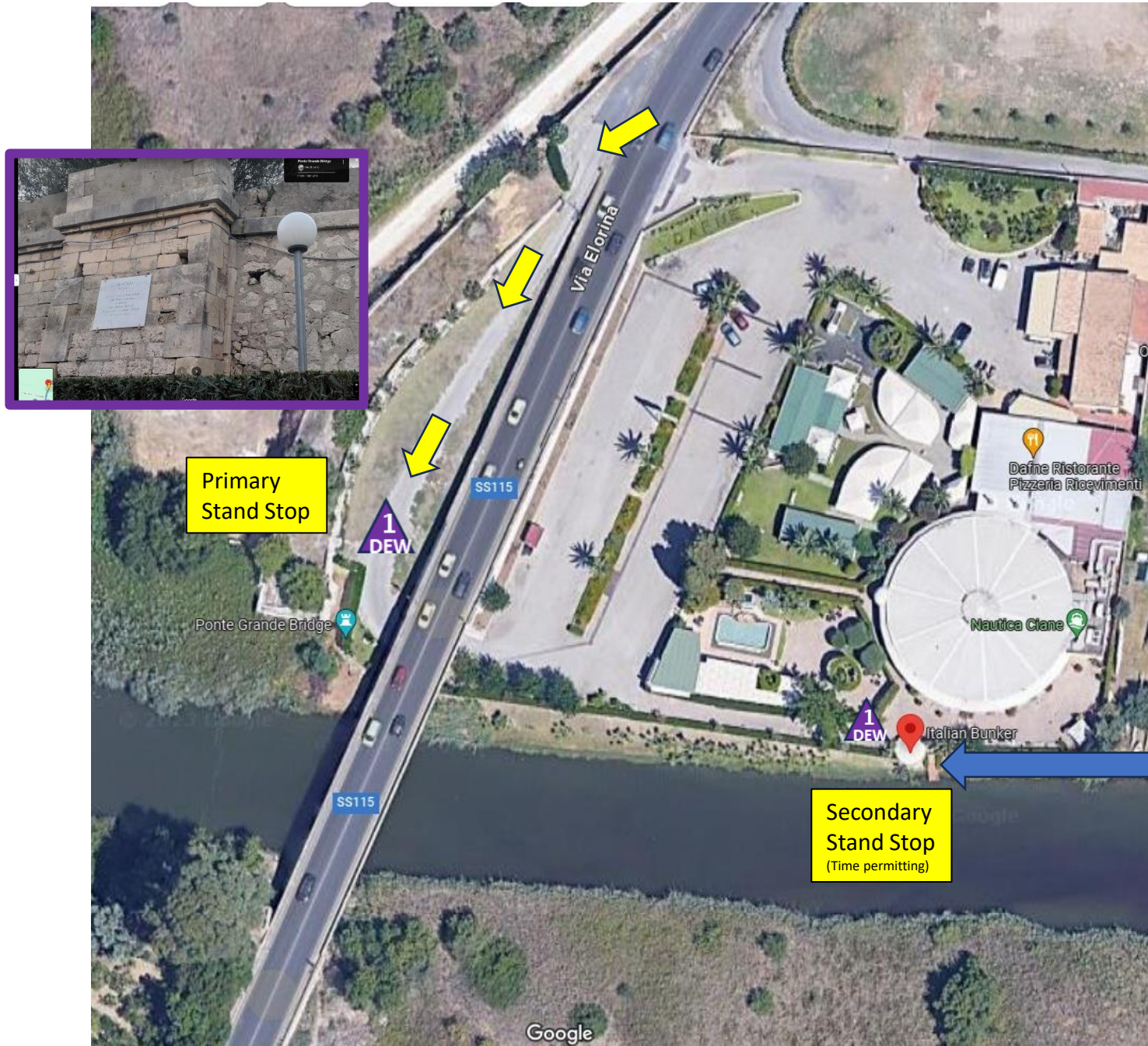




# Ponte Grande Bridge



**Operation Ladbroke Objective: Ponte Grande Bridge** over the Anapo River and Mammaiabica Canal about 800ft west of the river opening into the Mediterranean Sea. Rationale: Secure main bridge south into Syracuse with its port facilities for the British landing forces to occupy in force.



Italian Bunker

# GLIDER INFANTRY EFFECTIVENESS

- Originally OPERATION LADBROKE, the night-before coupe-de-main was originally tasked to airborne troops. However, Field Marshall Montgomery thought that airborne troops would be too lightly armed w/minimal ammo to hold objectives.
- Glider infantry had been viewed as an effective Avant guard warfare capability to deliver medium-light combatants behind enemy lines. Gliders could deliver light vehicles, artillery, mortars, and other equipment.
- Prior success was anecdotally based on Nazi Germany's employment of glider troops in taking Crete. Unfortunately, the same shortcomings apparent then as they were to play out on 9 July 1943 were never fully assessed.



**AS.51 Horsa**  
~30 men, including 2 pilots



**Waco CG-4A Hadrian**  
(Americans referred to it as 'Waco')  
~12 men, including 2 pilots

## Lessons Learned

- Dedicated Tow/Drop Aircrews must be trained
- Deploy pathfinders to land with beacons prior to main force
- Gliders are NOT to be released over water
- Concentrate vs. disperse landing forces
- Prominently paint glider & train friendly AA crews on recognition
  - OPER OVERLORD utilized 3 white lines on the wing and rear fuselage

## Questions

- Why were Allied flag leaders so enamored with glider/airborne?
- Was Intel and Training sufficient?
- Could the objectives been taken by other means?
- Unintended consequences; positive/negative?

## FORCES

**LADBROKE - 240 of A & C Co of 2<sup>nd</sup> S. Staffordshires, 1<sup>st</sup> Airlanding Brigade in 8, Horsas gliders**  
**CATASTROPHE in the MAKING**

- 144 Gliders & 2,075 Troops**
- 8 Horsa & 136 Waco gliders
    - 65 gliders crashed into the sea after released too early by American towing aircraft; 252 drowned
    - 59 gliders landed up to 25 miles (40 km) from their intended targets
    - 12 Landed near their objectives
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Airlanding Brigade incurred most severe losses**
    - 313 killed and 174 missing/wounded (24.5% casualties)
    - 66% pilot casualty rate; 14 killed, 87 missing/wounded

## Logistics

- Horsa Gliders were flown in from England. Weather, Axis Fighters, and unknown causes accounted for losses.
- Waco Gliders were shipped in crates. Mismanaged handling resulted in mismatched delivery and no tools/instructions. Also, no dedicated mechanics. Weather further deteriorated the wood / fabric construction.

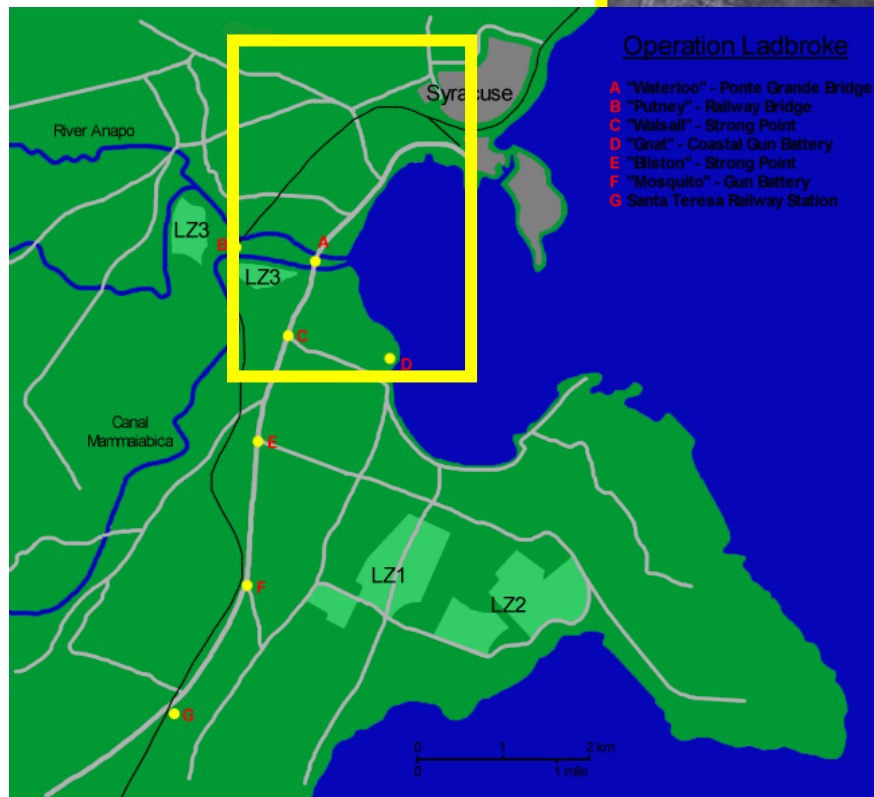
## Training / Planning

- **Field Marshall Montgomery had substituted glider airlanding troops for airborne parachute troops** under the concept that airborne troops were too lightly armed. Gliders could bring in jeeps, mortars, and field artillery.
- Before OPER HUSKY glider training started, pilots had ~8 hours of glider flight experience
- Brit glider pilots had not trained in Waco gliders.
- By LADBROKE, (Brit) 1<sup>st</sup> Airlanding Brigade glider pilots had 4.5 hours across 2 exercises; only 1.2 night hours.
- **No British glider doctrine for night landings because they had deemed such operations as impossible.**
- Towing Planning. Planners last minute switched tow plane units based on earlier unit support experience rather than actual glider experience. The 51<sup>st</sup> Troop Carrier Wing supporting the 1<sup>st</sup> Airlanding Division had no previous glider towing experience. Eventually, 4 different (RAF Albermarles, Stirlings, Halifaxes; USAAF Dakotas) tow planes (bombers/ transports) were utilized.

## Execution

- Significant headwinds,
- Reference points obscured by dust/smoke from prior bombing and naval gunfire
- Landing zones were smaller than thought, had obstructions, and in view of searchlights and AA machineguns
- Lack of experience (tow and glider pilots)





An aerial photograph taken on the 1st May 1943, with the top of the photograph facing north, showing part of Syracuse (top right) and the Ponte Grande bridge (towards the bottom, just left of centre). Running from left to right, the River Anapo (above) and Canal Mammaiabica (below) can clearly be seen under the bridge. At the extreme left of the picture the railway bridge can also be seen; the long straight line proceeding north-north-east from the Canal is the railway line. **Only the eastern sector of LZ-3 can be seen in this photograph**, running from west to east between the railway and the Ponte Grande bridge, and about half the distance between these to the south of the Canal. Photographs such as this one made it appear as if the zone was an open space, empty of obstacles and therefore ideal for glider landings. A closer look, however, would have revealed an imposing network of low stone walls.

## Eastern Landing Zone 3

Aerial Photo ~2.2 months before  
OPER LADBROKE on 9 July 1943

# General, Army of the United States Dwight D. Eisenhower (11 Feb 1943 temporary)



Best Description of Eisenhower's personality came from the great bridge player and popularizer Ely Culbertson.

Ely described [Ike's] game as classic and sound with "flashes of brilliance" and said that "you can always judge a man's character by the way he plays cards. ***Eisenhower is a calm and collected player and never whines at his losses. He is brilliant in victory but never commits the bridge player's worst crime of gloating when he wins.***"

- Nickname(s): "Ike"
- Born: 14 Oct 1890 in Denison, Texas
- Died: 28 March 1969 (age 78) Washington D.C.
- Buried: Place of Meditation Chapel, Eisenhower Presidential Center, Abilene, Kansas
- Spouse(s): Mamie Doud, (m. 1916; died 1979)
- Allegiance: United States, Service: U.S. Army
- Years of service: 1911–1948
- Rank: General of the Army (5-stars) (General, temporary July-Aug '43)

## Commands held:

- Army Chief of Staff (Nov 1945-1948)
- Governor, American-occupied zone of Germany (May 1945-Nov 1945)
- Supreme Allied Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEP) Dec 1943 – May 1945)
- Supreme Commander Allied (Expeditionary) Force, North African Theater of Operations (Nov 1942–Dec 1943)
  - Operations Torch (N. Africa), Husky (Sicily), Avalanche (Italy)
- Commanding General, European Theater of Operations (1942)

## Foundational Assignments:

- Assigned to General Staff, Washington D.C. (Dec 1941-June 1942)
  - Deputy Chief, Pacific Defenses, War Plans Division
  - Chief, War Plans Division
- Chief of Staff, 3<sup>rd</sup> Army. Successful Louisiana Maneuvers, promoted to Brig Gen 3 Oct 1941)
- (Colonel) Chief of Staff, IX Corps
- Commanding Officer, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Reg (Feb-Nov 40)
- (Lt Col) Philippine Tenure (1935-1939)
  - Served under Gen MacArthur
  - Earned his pilot's license in WA; soloed over Philippines,
- (Major for 16 years)
  - Army Industrial College student/faculty
  - Posted to France
  - Army War College
  - American Battle Monuments Commission
  - Command and General Staff College
  - Exec Officer in Panama Canal Zone
  - Tank Battalion Commander. Threatened w/courts martial for publication of proposed speed-oriented offensive tank warfare
  - Transcontinental Army convoy
- **WWI** – Logistics, Engineers, Commanded a tank training unit
  - Displayed excellent organizational skills
  - Learned how to camp, equip, and train troops for combat

## Personality

- **Summary:** Competent. 'Nose' for talent. Apolitical yet extremely politic
- **Less visionary:** More adept at orchestrating war planning and selecting / managing the egos of the best combat flag officer talent
- **Leader:** Diverse logistics, training, new capabilities (tank/plane); penchant for ID'ing officers' strengths & optimal prsnl placement
- **Style:** Calm, Collected, Team Player. Maintained the coalition. Interacted adeptly with Churchill, Montgomery, de Gaulle, & Zhukov
- **Notables:** No Combat Experience. Respected by all nations' combat commanders, Ike never commanded a combat unit.

## Sicily Decisions / Assessment

- **Mission:** Transition from North African to Italian Campaign to present Hitler with a 2<sup>nd</sup> front in keeping with Roosevelt's promise to Molotov to take pressure off Soviet's front. 1943 too early for direct land on FRA
- Supreme Commander, 3 Brit direct subordinates : Land – Sir Gen Harold Alexander, Air – Mar Lord Arthur Tedder, Sea – Adm Sir Andrew Cunningham
- **Challenges:** 1) High-level planning lacked direction. Top 3 land cdrs still occupied in Tunisia; Alexander, Montgomery, Patton. 2) Original multi-point assault opposed by Monty who wanted SE concentration of forces
- **Allied Enablers:** DUKW, w/in fighter range from N. Africa & Malta
- **Axis Enablers:** Axis able to restrict Allied effects on retrograde actions. Land – Narrowing peninsula consolidated Axis Forces. Air & Sea – effective employment of AA & anti-ship artillery denied Allied pinch-off.




















## A life of perseverance

### Dwight D. Eisenhower's Military Career

#### Promotions

No insignia	Cadet, <a href="#">United States Military Academy</a> : June 14, 1911
No pin insignia in 1915	<a href="#">Second Lieutenant</a> , <a href="#">Regular Army</a> : June 12, 1915
	<a href="#">First Lieutenant</a> , <a href="#">Regular Army</a> : July 1, 1916
	<a href="#">Captain</a> , <a href="#">Regular Army</a> : May 15, 1917
	<a href="#">Major</a> , <a href="#">National Army</a> : June 17, 1918
	<a href="#">Lieutenant Colonel</a> , <a href="#">National Army</a> : October 20, 1918
	<a href="#">Captain</a> , <a href="#">Regular Army</a> : June 30, 1920 (Reverted to permanent rank.)
	<a href="#">Major</a> , <a href="#">Regular Army</a> : July 2, 1920
	<a href="#">Captain</a> , <a href="#">Regular Army</a> : November 4, 1922 (Discharged as major and appointed as captain due to reduction of Army.)
	<a href="#">Major</a> , <a href="#">Regular Army</a> : August 26, 1924
	<a href="#">Lieutenant Colonel</a> , <a href="#">Regular Army</a> : July 1, 1936
	<a href="#">Colonel</a> , <a href="#">Army of the United States</a> : March 6, 1941
	<a href="#">Brigadier General</a> , <a href="#">Army of the United States</a> : September 29, 1941 (temporary)
	<a href="#">Major General</a> , <a href="#">Army of the United States</a> : March 27, 1942 (temporary)
	<a href="#">Lieutenant General</a> , <a href="#">Army of the United States</a> : July 7, 1942 (temporary)
	<a href="#">General</a> , <a href="#">Army of the United States</a> : February 11, 1943 (temporary)
	<a href="#">Brigadier General</a> , <a href="#">Regular Army</a> : August 30, 1943
	<a href="#">Major General</a> , <a href="#">Regular Army</a> : August 30, 1943
	<a href="#">General of the Army</a> , <a href="#">Army of the United States</a> : December 20, 1944
	<a href="#">General of the Army</a> , <a href="#">Regular Army</a> : April 11, 1946





# Day 1

Commonwealth War Graves Commission  
Cemetery Syracuse



# Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery Syracuse

Gp Capt John Shields, RAF



**BLUF:** CWGC is currently responsible for the commemoration of 1.7 million deceased Commonwealth military service members in 153 countries. Since its inception, the commission has constructed approximately 2,500 war cemeteries and numerous memorials

## CWGC Background

Formed May 1917, Prince of Wales as President

Two Guiding Principles:

- Bodies should not be Repatriated

- Uniformity to Avoid Class Distinctions

- Cemeteries plus Memorials to the Missing

- Menin Gate in Ypres

- Theipval in the Somme

## A Typical CWGC Cemetery

- > 40 Graves = Blomfield's Cross of Sacrifice

- > 1K Graves = Stone of Remembrance

- Portland Stone

- Grave Markings

- National Emblem or Regimental Badge\*,

- Rank, Name, Unit, Date of Death and Age

- Religious symbol and Family Dedication



## CWGC in Sicily

3 CWGC Cemeteries with c.3600 graves

Syracuse, Catania & Agira\*

Syracuse – 1059 graves, 134 Unidentified

Early Stages of Invasion

- Landings inc Glider Regiments

- Assault on Syracuse & Drive to Lentini

Multinational Graves:

- Australian, Canadian & New Zealanders

- Greek, Dutch, South African & Indian

Other Oddities:

- WW1 grave

- Stone of Remembrance?

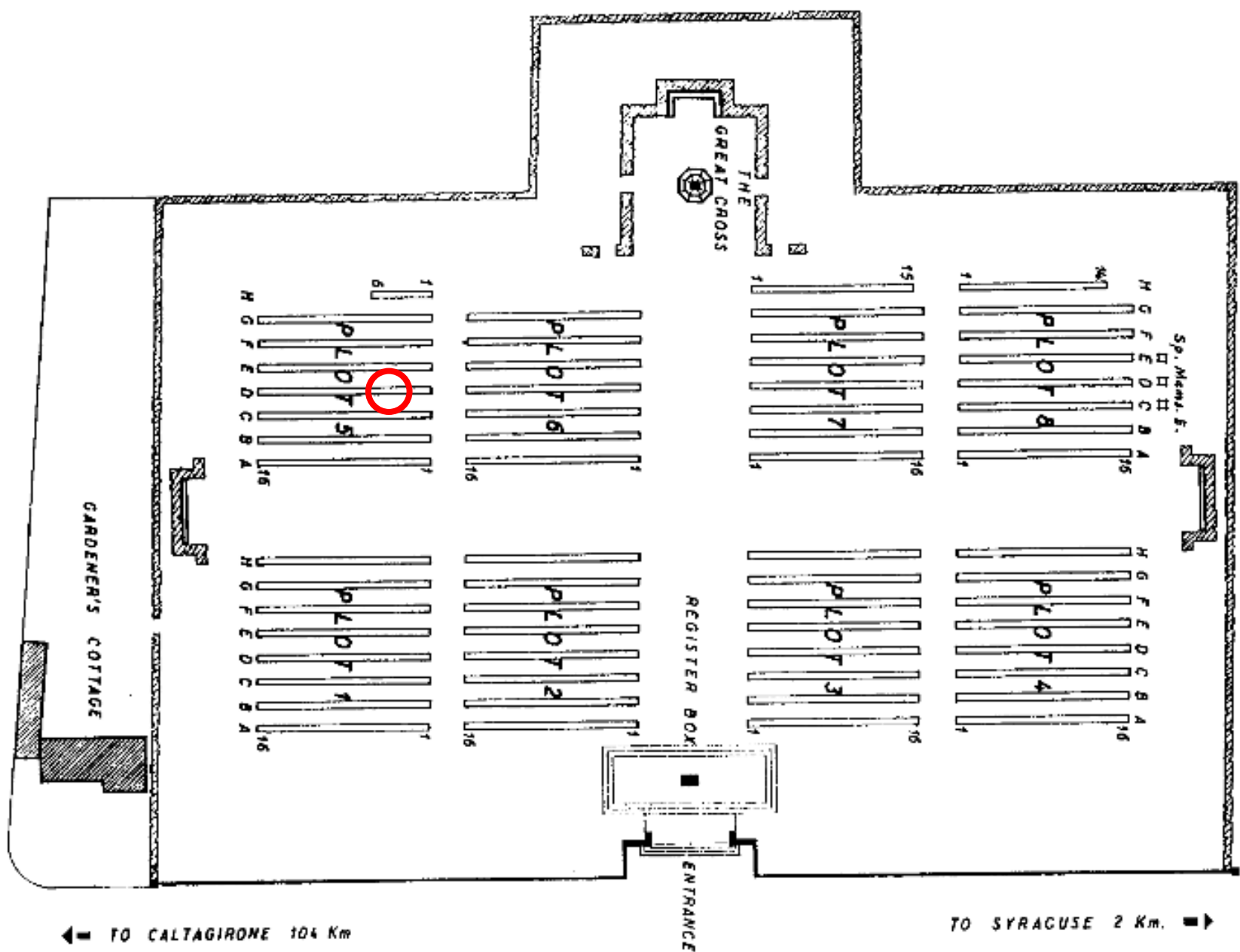
- Pre-Op Husky

The Missing?

- Air Forces Memorial, Runnymede

- Portsmouth Naval Memorial







# Group Captain Walter Myers Churchill DSO DFC

Gp Capt John Shields, RAF

**BLUF:** Decorated Fighter Ace, Battle of France & Battle of Britain Veteran, First commander of 71 (Eagle) Squadron, base commander on Malta but KIA over Sicily on 27 August 1942



## Background:

Born in 1907 in Amsterdam, Holland to William & Hannah

Father is a diplomat and art historian

Privately-educated with engineering degree from Cambridge University

Joins Hawker Siddeley as Aircraft Engineer; Marries Joyce in 1934

In 1937, forms Churchill Components – an aviation engineering firm

Builds Compressor Blades for Frank Whittle's gas turbine engines

## Pre-War RAF Experience:

Jan 1932 - Commissioned into 605 (County of Warwick) RAuxAF

Based at Castle Bromwich, near Birmingham

Flew biplane bombers before unit converted to fighters

Westland Wapiti, Hawker Hind & Hart, Gloster Gladiator & Hurricane

## Second World War, Pre-Operation Husky:

At outbreak of war, becomes full-time fighter pilot on 605 Squadron

Nov 1939 – Flight Commander on 3 Squadron at Croydon on Hurricanes

10 May 1940 – Deploys to France, made acting CO after death of CO

Returns to UK after 10 days as ace & awarded DSO & DFC

Jun 1940 – Returns to 605 Sqn as CO, initially based at Drem in Scotland

Leads them into Battle of Britain from Tangmere in 11 Group

No more kills but attacked & injured on 11 Sep – lands safely

29 Sep 1940 – Forms 71 (Eagle) Squadron as OC at RAF Church Fenton

Brewster Buffalo then Hurricanes from Nov 1940

Jan 1941 – Medically grounded with sinus issue

July 1942 - Appointed CO at RAF Takali, Malta & Deploys to Med...

Younger Brothers, Peter & Oliver, both served in SOE and awarded DSOs

## Distinguished Service Order Citation



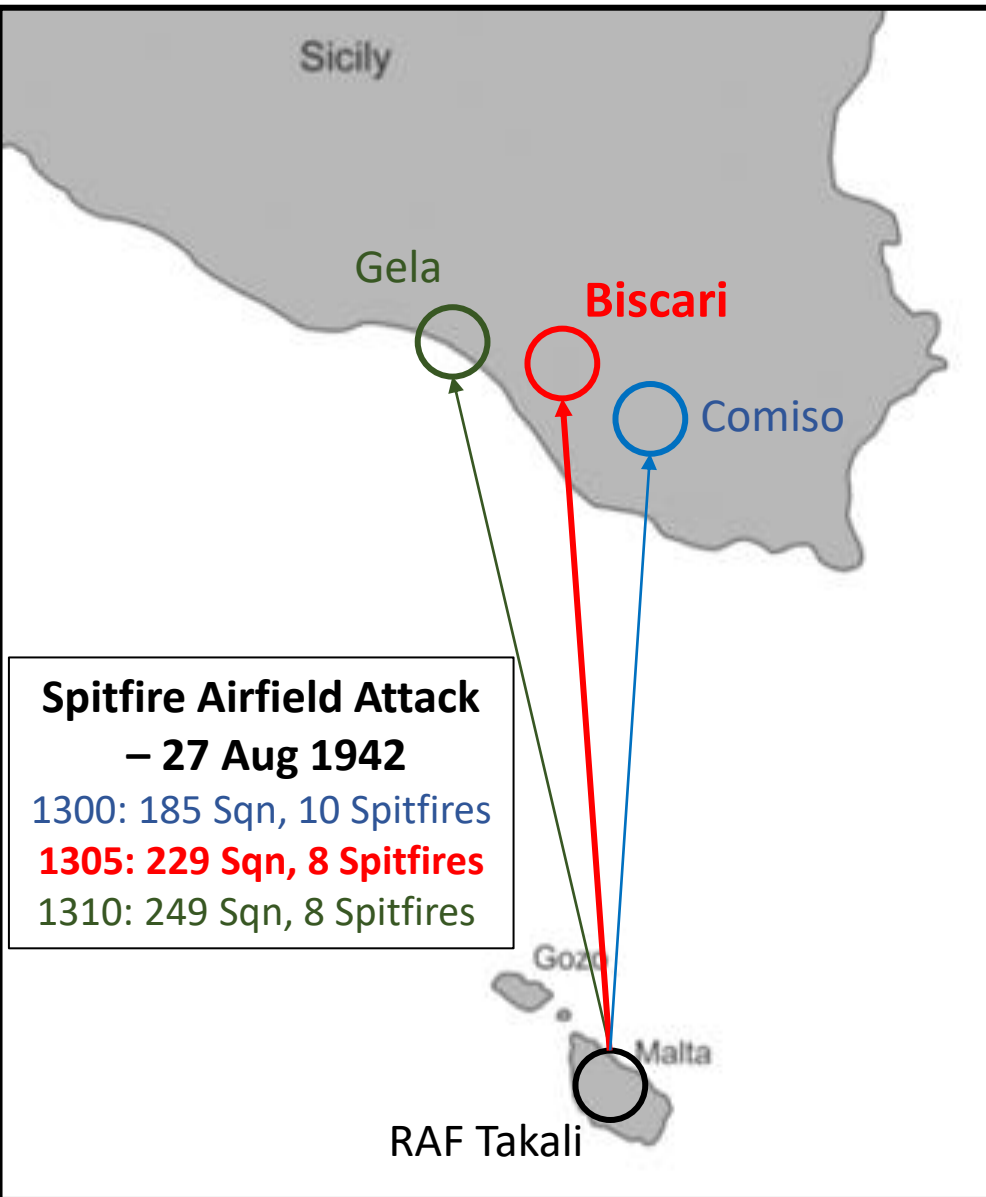
“This officer assumed command of a squadron shortly after its arrival in France and led it with marked success, inspiring his pilots and maintenance crews magnificently. He undertook the tactical instruction of new pilots, led many patrols successfully and organised his ground defences and crews in an exemplary manner. While under his command the squadron destroyed 62 enemy aircraft and he was throughout the main-spring of the offensive spirit, their excellent tactics and their adequate maintenance results. Only four pilots of the squadron were lost. Flight Lieutenant Churchill has recently destroyed four enemy aircraft, bringing his total to seven.”





# Group Captain Walter Myers Churchill DSO DFC

Gp Capt John Shields, RAF



## Mediterranean Operations

Malta – A Strategic Mediterranean Location

Vital for Success in North Africa; Axis and Allies both knew it

Defending the Island – 1435 Flight + 670 fighters over 2 years

Op Pedestal & Op Bellows – Successfully Run the Gauntlet

Churchill Deploys on HMS Furious as part of Op Bellows

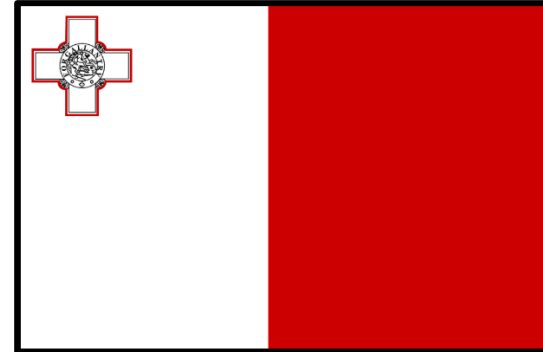
Launches in Spitfire from Aircraft Carrier on 11 Aug 1942

Commands RAF Takali on Malta; Spitfire Wing

DCA & OCA; leads first OCA mission on 23 Aug 1942

27 Aug 1942, second OCA raid on Sicilian Airfields

Leads 8 Spitfires from 229 Sqn against Biscari in Spitfire Vb, serial number EP339



Pilot Officer C H Parkinson, recounts:

"As we passed a large town, Vittoria, my leader fired at a tall building. The rest of the section fired also. In the distance, I could see a thick, black column of smoke coming from one of the 'dromes already attacked. I could hear the boys natter as they went in. At last, our objective came into view. Biscari aerodrome. I could see a line of about six bombers on the deck, quite close together. Quarter of a mile from the drome my leader, Group Captain Churchill, was hit by flak, started to smoke, and then burst into flames, rolled on his back and crashed into the ground. Rather shook me!"

'The Best Form of Defence is Attack' – Is the old adage true in 1942 while Malta desperately struggled to survive with the second order effect of preparing the battlespace for Op Husky 12 months later? Did Churchill die in vain?



# Group Captain Walter Myers Churchill DSO DFC

Gp Capt John Shields, RAF

Dear Mrs Churchill,

I am writing because I feel that it may be some comfort to you in your great loss to know that your husband met his end leading a fighter formation in a most successful attack on the enemy. Although Walter Churchill has passed on, his fine example and inspired leadership will live on in Malta to the end of the war. He arrived in Malta leading a formation of reinforcing Spitfires to protect the last vitally important convoy. During his all too short stay in Malta Walter Churchill was an inspiration to the fighter squadron in the air and on the ground. If it was ordained that Walter Churchill was to give his life for his country, I feel sure he would have chosen to end it as he did, leading a fighter formation on a daring and most successful fighter sweep over enemy territory.

Air Vice-Marshal (2\*) Kieth Park  
Air Officer Commanding Malta

**While Fighting a War, Would you as a Senior Leader, take the time to write a personal letter to a widow of one of your subordinates, one you had only commanded for two weeks?**







# Day 1 Stand 4

Allied Air Operations  
And

Air Chief Marshal Tedder (CDR, Allied Med AF)

# Allied Air Operations During Operation Husky



**General Dwight Eisenhower**  
Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Force  
North African Theater of Operations



**Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder**  
Mediterranean Air Command



**Lt Gen Carl Spaatz**  
Northwest African Air Force



**Air Chief Marshal Douglas**  
Royal Air Force Middle East



**Air Chief Marshal Park**  
AOC Malta



**Brig Gen Jimmy Doolittle**  
Strategic Air Forces



**ACM Hugh Lloyd**  
Coastal Air Forces



**ACM Arthur Conningham**  
Tactical Air Forces

**Objective:** Achieve air superiority for invasion force while striking enemy positions and interdicting supply lines

## **Strategic Air Forces four stages:**

- 1) Neutralize enemy air forces and airfields
- 2) Destroy enemy communications
- 3) Isolate the expected battlefield
- 4) Conduct close air support

## **Three Phases:**

- 1) Fall of Tunisia to D-7 (13 May – 3 July) – conduct bomber raids from Sicily to Northern Italy to weakened Axis Air Forces, reduce Italian industrial output, lower Italian morale
- 2) D-7 to D-Day (3-10 July) – Neutralize Axis air forces and interdict LOCs to Sicily
- 3) D-Day to capture of Sicily – Close air support, protect shipping, conducting EW operations against radars

**Operation Corkscrew** – 11 Jun invasion of Pantelleria -Enabled fighter coverage over all of Sicily during assault “...laboratory to determine the effect of concentrated heavy bombing on a defended coastline.” Eisenhower “...the first defended place to be reduced to surrender... as a result of air and naval bombardment alone” Tedder



# Allied Air Operations During Operation Husky

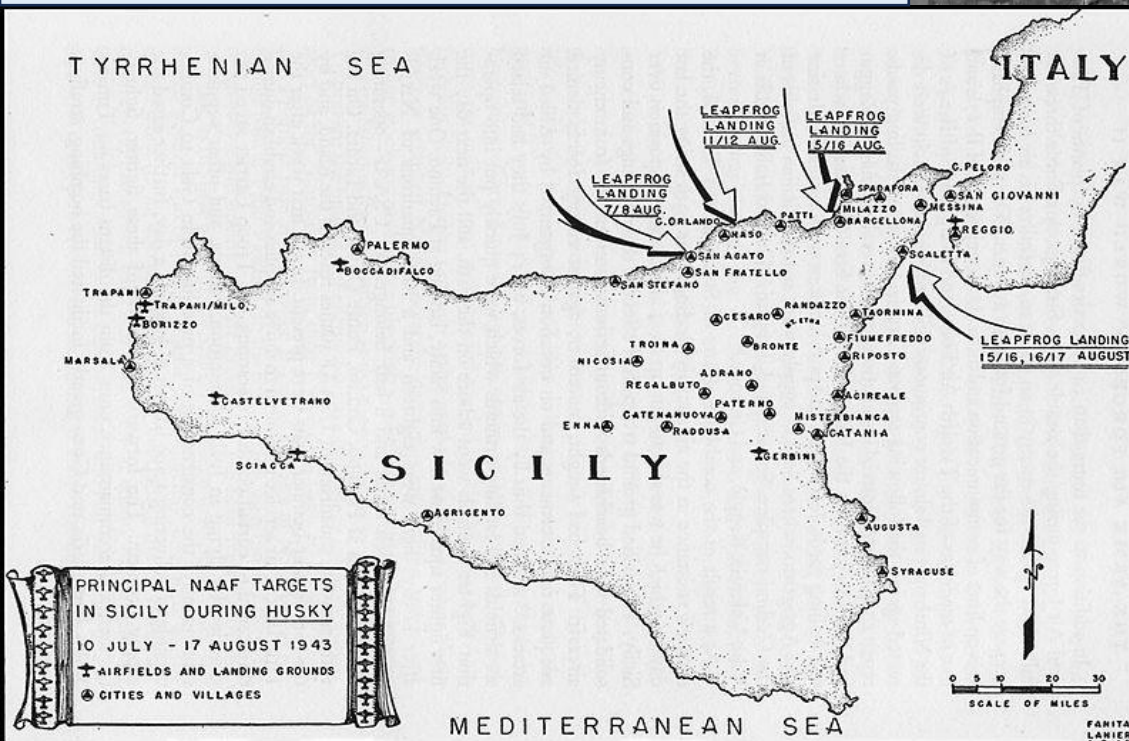
## Successes:

- **Effective air coverage during assault**- quickly gained air superiority supremacy; only 12 of 1,400 naval vessels sank by Axis air units
- **Successful interdiction campaign** – Axis powers unable to effectively mount a response due to bombing campaign; air force response ineffective
- **Demonstrated bombing effectiveness** – Pantelleria captured without single Allied casualty  
Air/Naval bombardment shattered defenses
- **Photo reconnaissance** – enhanced assault effort



## Challenges:

- **Glider operations ineffective** – arrived late to need, no night navigation experience, poor landing zone options
- **Airborne assault** – weak formation discipline and navigation errors scattered troops across drop zones
- **Poor coordination** – VHF radio failures interfered with ground/sea comms, Patton constantly complained about AAF support, 22 C-47s shot down by Allied gunners during airborne assault
- **Failure to impede German evacuation** – failure to plan, poor coordination, few bombers allocated - allowed effective retreat
- **Log planning** – completely disconnected from planning effort  
*“the most masterful piece of uninformative prevarication, totally unrelated to the Naval and Military Joint Plan, which would have possibly been published”* – Anonymous British report



## Results:

- 322 Axis bombers, 268 fighters destroyed on the ground
- 207 Axis bombers, 700 fighters destroyed in the air
- Coverage over amphibious assault
- Western Med SLOCs secured





# Air Chief Marshal (4\*) Arthur Tedder

## *Air Officer Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean Air Command*

**BLUF:** A senior RAF Officer who could put coalition & joint needs above those of his Service/Nation, much to the chagrin of Churchill. Led Mediterranean Air Command during Op Husky, Eisenhower's deputy during Op Overlord & future RAF chief



### Background & Experience:

Born in Scotland in 1890 to wealthy family  
Privately Educated then read history at Cambridge University  
Colonial Service in Fiji, but Reserve Commission

### WW1

Returns to UK in late 1914  
Knee Injury forces transfer to Royal Flying Corps in early 1916  
Serves on Western Front as Pilot then Sqn Cdr for c.18 months  
Egypt until end of War – promoted to Lt Col in mid 1918

### Inter-War Period

Various commands, including training positions  
Graduate of Royal Navy Staff and Imperial Defence Colleges  
Assistant Cmdt of RAF Staff College & AOC Far Eastern Forces  
2\* by Outbreak of War

### WW2 Experience Before Op Husky

Ministry of Aircraft Production v Churchill & Beaverbrook  
Son Killed in France  
Nov 1940 – RAF Middle East Cmd as 3\*, Dep then AOC in mid-1941  
Crete in May 1941, Op Crusader in late 1941  
Jul 1942 – Promoted to 4\*  
Jan 1943 – Wife Killed in Plane Crash in Egypt  
Feb 1943 – Commands Mediterranean Air Command (Ike's JFACC)



"the most unstuffy of great commanders, who could be found sitting cross-legged, jacketless, pipe smoldering, answering questions on a desert airstrip." *The Times*





# Air Chief Marshal (4\*) Arthur Tedder

## *Air Officer Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean Air Command*

**Tedder & Spaatz Identify 4 major stages of airpower during Husky: 1. Neutralise the enemy's air forces pre-invasion. 2. Destroy enemy communications. 3. Isolate the expected battlefield to deny enemy ability to attack bridgehead. 4. Provide CAS**



### **Operation Husky:**

1942 Western Desert LIs with Air Marshal (3\*) 'Mary' Coningham  
Based in Tunis, co-located with Spaatz – joint planning & alignment  
Eisenhower (JFCC) Cunningham (JFMCC) & Alexander (JFLCC) in Malta  
Parallel Ops = Rarely met, strained relationships with Monty  
ALI – Army v On-Call CAS vs Theatre's broader airpower needs  
Coningham v Patton; Coalition first, then airpower

### **Post-Operation Husky:**

Oct 1943 – Remarries, 9 months after first wife dies  
Jan 1944 – Dep Supreme Cdr Allied Expeditionary Force under Ike  
Continued Troubled Relationship with Montgomery?  
May 1945 – Took Surrender on behalf of Eisenhower  
Sep 1945 – Promoted 5\*  
Jan 1946 – RAF Chief for 4 years, Last Tour in US & Retires in 1951  
Jun 1967 – Dies aged 76, Ashes buried in St Clements Dane in London

### **Character & Strategic Leadership Traits**

Shunned the limelight to the point of invisibility – Good or Bad?

Calm, good humour, sensible, consistent discipline, readiness to share info with all ranks, sought realistic training

Forceful but even-handed

Organisational talent and exceptional understanding of both air and ground operations at Eisenhower's side

Directly opposed Churchill concerning pre-invasion strategic bombing.





# Day 2   Stand 5

Gela Beach  
And

Admiral Cunningham (CDR Allied Naval Forces)



# GELA BEACH / PIER 10 – 12 July 1943

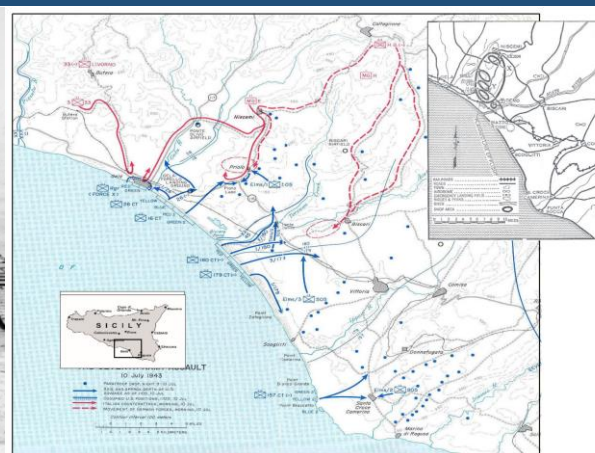
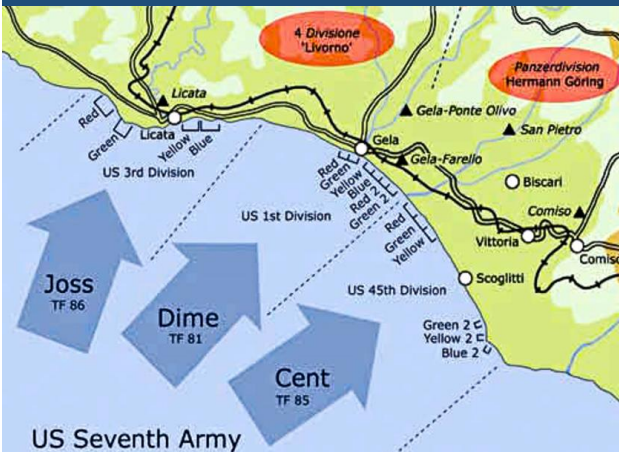
Gela Beach / Pier was part of the U.S. portion of the invasion of Sicily in OPERATION Husky, led by LTG Patton's 7<sup>th</sup> Army, composed of three task forces. In the West, MG Truscott's 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division landed against light resistance at Licata; in the center, MG Allen's 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division along with Force X (two ranger battalions and an engineer battalion) landed against moderate resistance at Gela; and in the East, MG Middleton's 45<sup>th</sup> Division, landed near Scoglitti, encountering little opposition. The assault beaches spanned nearly the same distance as the total stretch of the entire Allied Normandy invasion (~50 miles). Additionally, elements of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division were dropped behind the landing beaches to act as a blocking force to any enemy counter-attacks/reinforcements. Due to weather and crew inexperience, few Paratroopers landed near their objectives, but still were relatively effective. An airborne reinforcement of the invasion area was made by the 504<sup>th</sup> PIR on 11/12 July, which took heavy losses (23 aircraft shot down) from friendly fire. German and Italian counterattacks were made throughout the day on 10 July, but the greatest threat came on D+1 when the Hermann Goering Division and Italian Livorno Division made a determined attack. All initial objectives were considered achieved by the evening of 12 July when LTG Patton established his permanent headquarters ashore.

## U.S. Landing/Amphibious Assault challenges.

*The US amphibious assault faced an immense logistical challenge as it moved hundreds of thousands of troops and tons of equipment across the Mediterranean Sea. On the eve of the invasion, the weather caused havoc for both sea- and air-borne forces with high seas and heavy winds. Enemy resistance, along with sporadic and un-coordinated US air support, and intermittent communications ashore also presented challenges.*

## Lessons Learned.

- The importance of air superiority and land-sea-air command/control and coordination over the landing beaches.
- The value of naval gunfire support. Many enemy tank and infantry attacks were broken up by off-shore fires.
- The significance of logistics sustainment after the initial assault. This was the ETO premiere of the LST (Landing Ship Tank), which along with an innovative pontoon bridge system and the DUKWs ensured supply of the beach-head.



## 10 JULY

- ~2330 505<sup>th</sup> PIR begins landing IVO of assault beaches
- 0030 Gen Guzzoni alerts forces to invasion; orders pier destroyed
- 0100 200 (of 3,400) Paratroopers IVO Piano Lupo (rest scattered)
- 0240 Gela Pier destroyed
- 0245 First assault waves arrive
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Inf Div (TF C) near Licata
  - 45<sup>th</sup> Inf Division (TF K) near Scoglitti
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Inf Div elements (TF H) and Ranger Force X near Gela
- 0335 All initial waves landed
- 0458 USS Maddox sunk by Axis aircraft (Italian Stuka)
- 0800 Rangers capture Gela
- 0900 Most initial objectives captured, landing forces move inland
- 0800-1200 LST reinforcement sporadic due to intermittent artillery fire and mine-clearing operations

## 11 JULY

- 0100 504<sup>th</sup> PIR reinforcement suffers heavy friendly fire casualties
- 0600 Axis Counter-attacks (see separate "stand" brief)
- 1730 Liberty ship Robert Rowan disintegrates after being bombed

## 12 JULY

- 0400 90% of invasion convoy successfully off-loaded
- 0845 1<sup>st</sup> Inf Div captures Ponte Olivo airfield
- 1700 Gen Patton departs USS Monrovia, establishing HQ ashore

OPERATION HUSKY

1943 - 2023

1 DEW

2 DEW

3 DEW

[37.0686, 14.3652](#)

Fortified area of the Gela-Niscemi crossroads

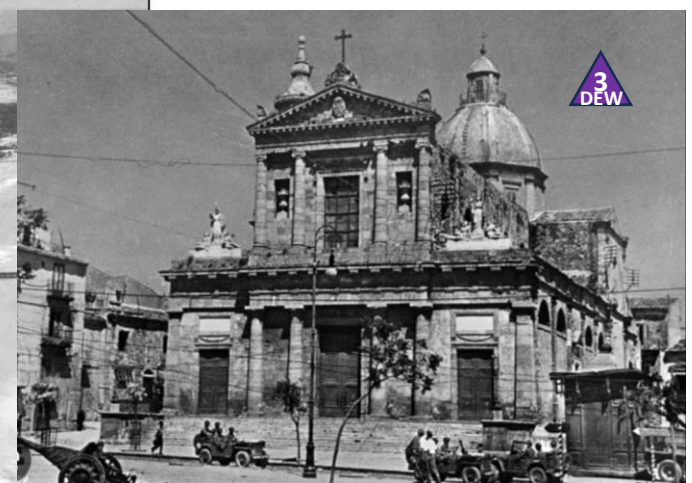
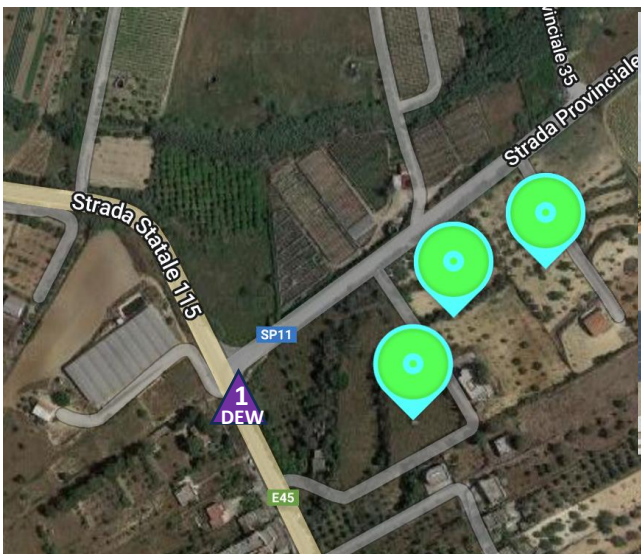
[37.0643, 14.2473](#)

Gela Pier

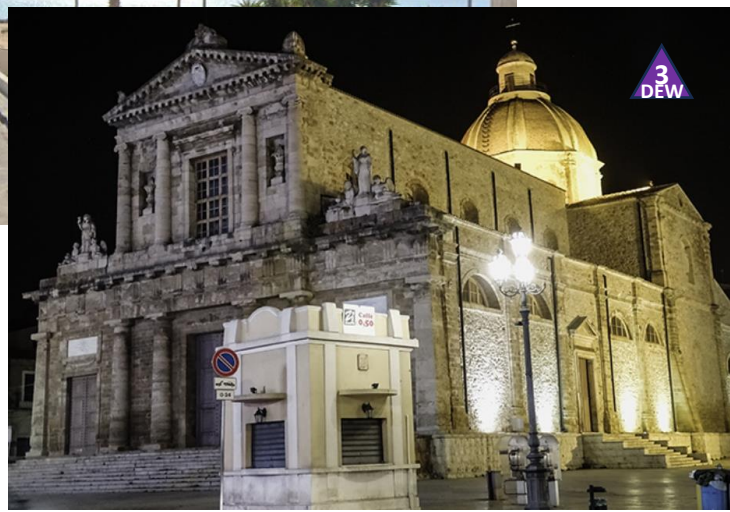
[37.0664, 14.2501](#)

Lunch – Vicinity of Gela Cathedral / Piazza Umberto I





Gela beach as it looked in 1943. Note the jetty in the center of the photo. Darby's Rangers landed on either side and pushed rapidly inland. (View from the direction of Monte Lungo)<sup>77</sup>





### DEW 1 - Fortified area of the Gela-Niscemi crossroads

Before reaching the intersection, there will be a small building labeled “SUD-OCCID,” still standing 80 years later and same area in black/white inset picture (not a stop, but point of interest). Once arriving at the intersection, park in the dirt driveway to the left (South-West side of S-115). Hopefully, you can see Piano Lupo (Plain of the Wolf) to the North-East and some of the remaining pillboxes on the hills that protected this “Y” intersection. Unfortunately, the hilly area to the North-East is private and gated, so cannot get close to the bunkers. Next stop is the Gela Pier (continue South down Route S-115).

### DEW 2 – Gela Pier

Drive into downtown Gela and park in the area next to the Pier. The pier was an objective of Force X (Rangers) to capture and prevent destruction to allow quick logistics flow from Navy shipping. Unfortunately, the pier was blown up before the Allies landed. Recommend walking out on the pier to get a sense of the invasion beaches, which extend both East and West and the topography of Gela as seen from sea level. To the West, near Licata, is where Audie Murphy came ashore as part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Inf Div, about 3 hours after the initial waves.

### DEW 3 – Gela Cathedral

Gela Cathedral and the adjacent plaza was the scene of intense fighting. LTC Darby and his Rangers fought off the Italian tank counter-attack here, with Darby manning an anti-tank gun. Note the Cathedral has been restored as it looked during Operation Husky (compared to the 1943 black/white photograph).

*The intersection of Rte. 115 (main east-west highway in southern Sicily) and a highway that ran north to the towns of Casa Prioli and Niscemi was called Piano Lupo. It was guarded by a 16-pillbox complex along the northeast corner of this vital crossroads. It was dubbed the “Y” by the paratroopers who had to secure it to block German forces. Piano Lupo became the focus of one of the two key battles during the first two days of the invasion. CPT Sayre, leading A Company of the 505th, with about 100 men, captured this intersection on 10 July. His unit was one of the few that actually landed on the correct DZ about three kilometers north of the “Y” at Casa Priolo. Naval gunfire had previously engaged the Italians defending this sector and when Sayre threatened to use this weapon against them they promptly surrendered. Sayre’s force moved south from Casa Priolo and captured the pillbox complex that included twenty machine guns and 500,000 rounds of ammunition, which came in very handy when the Germans launched their counterattack. CPT Sayre joined up with elements of an infantry regiment of the 1st Division to establish a strongpoint at the pillbox complex.*

“...the timing got snarled in the predawn confusion; and we came in late, chugging ashore like a bunch of clucks in a ferryboat.” Murphy wrote in his 1949 memoir [To Hell and Back](#).

“The assault troops had already taken the beach. The battle had moved inland. So for several hours we have tramped over fields and hills without direct contact with the enemy.”

Touring the embattled town in the jeep with a machine gun mounted at the rear, Darby and Captain Charles “Chuck” Shunstrom rolled into Cathedral Square at nine thirty and learned that a column of light Italian tanks that appeared on the Niscemi-Gela road was nearing the cathedral. As Altieri put it, “They just kept rolling blithely along as if they were going to a Sunday church meeting.” Noting that there was nothing the lightly armed Rangers could do but watch in amazement, his account continued, “It was incredible! A whole army supported by a mighty navy had thundered ashore and here before our eyes were sixteen black Renault tanks coming to pay their respects.”

# Admiral Andrew Browne Cunningham “ABC”

## Background

Admiral “ABC” Cunningham (1883-1963), was a British naval officer who served with distinction in both World Wars. He was known for his aggressive and decisive command style. He entered the Royal Navy in 1897 and rose steadily through the ranks. He commanded a destroyer during the First World War, and was awarded the Distinguished Service Order and two bars for his gallantry.

When World War II broke out, Cunningham was in command of the Mediterranean Fleet and achieved a number of notable victories, including the Battle of Taranto in November 1940, in which he crippled the Italian battlefleet.

In 1942, Cunningham was appointed to the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee in Washington, D.C. However, he returned to combat command in 1943 as Naval Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in the Mediterranean.

In 1943, Cunningham was appointed First Sea Lord, the professional head of the Royal Navy. He served in this role until the end of the war, and oversaw the Navy's transition to peacetime operations.

Cunningham was a highly decorated officer, and received numerous awards and honors during his career. He was created a Viscount in 1945, and died in 1963 at the age of 80.

Cunningham is widely regarded as one of the greatest British admirals of all time. He was a skilled and innovative commander, and his victories in the Mediterranean Fleet were instrumental in the Allied victory in World War II.



## Personality

- Cunningham was not in the Nelson mode. He inspired respect bordering on awe, and sometimes fear rather than adulation. He was not a people person. For all his faults, he was among the greatest of the Royal Navy's 20<sup>th</sup> Century sailors.

## Sicily Decisions / Assessment

- Proposed invasion should take place on the southeastern coast of Sicily, conducted in the face of the prevailing winds and currents, and carried out in three sectors, which would split up the Axis forces and make it more difficult for them to coordinate their defense.
- Ordered that naval gunfire support be used extensively during the landings. This proved to be very effective in suppressing Axis fire and helping the Allied troops to establish a beachhead.
- Developed a number of deception measures prior to the landings, including fake landing craft and aircraft, as well as transmissions to mislead the Axis about the location and timing of the invasion.
- Supported use of amphibious trucks (DUKWs) to ferry supplies and reinforcements to the beachhead, new types of landing craft, such as the Landing Craft Assault (LCA), which was smaller and more maneuverable than previous craft, and the Landing Ship Tank (LST).
- Coordinated naval support as the Allied forces advanced inland.





# Day 2 Stand 6

Axis Counter-Attack  
And

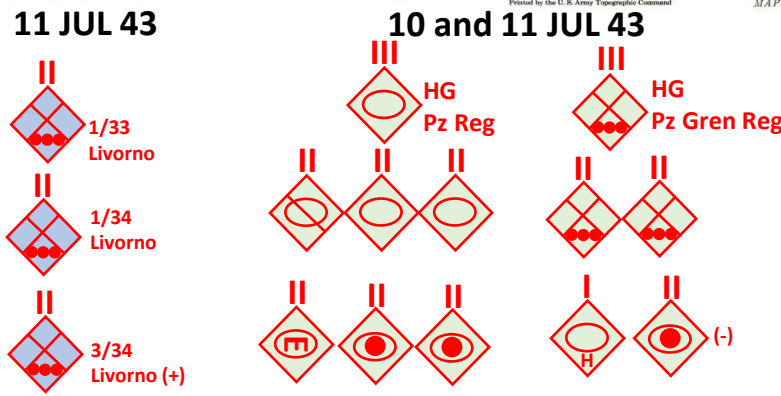
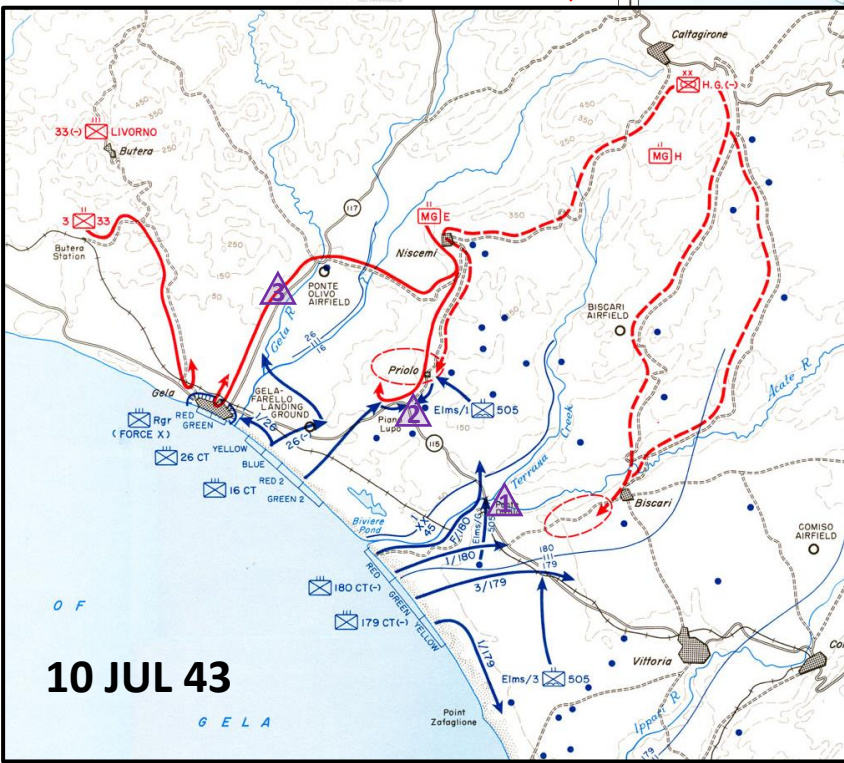
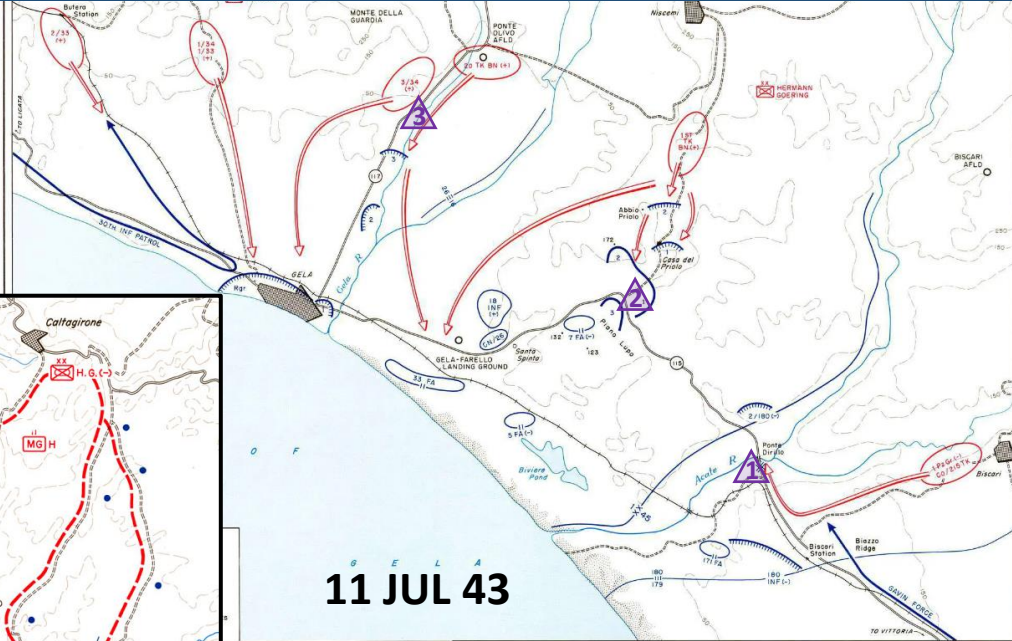
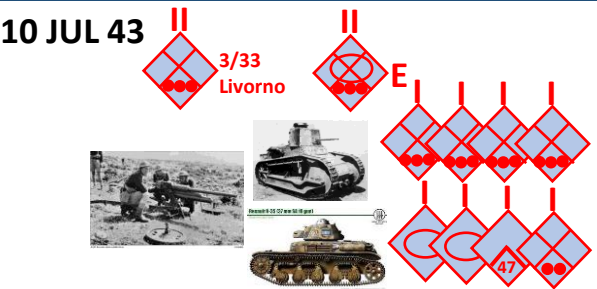
General d'Armata Guzzoni (CDR, 6<sup>th</sup> IT Army)

# AXIS COUNTER-ATTACK 10-11 JUL 1943



The Axis Counterattacks on 10-11 JUL 1943 were multi-divisional efforts across a 45 km frontage (narrowed to 30 km) to defeat the Allied landings IVO Gela/Scoglitti by forcing them to withdraw/re-embark. The Allies used Fires (Army and Naval), a defense in depth, and fortunate “maneuver” to defeat the Axis attack.

- Questions:
- What should GEN Guzzoni have done on 10-11 JUL 43 given the information he had? Should he have changed the plan?
  - Were the CATKs the best way to counter the Allied landings? How else could the Axis have responded?
  - How did events on 10-11 JUL 43 influence LTG Patton’s decision to reinforce the Gela beachhead with Airborne forces?



**TIMELINE**

**10 JUL:**

- ~0000 Airborne Landings
- 3335-0800 Amphibious Assault
- 0400 HG Div begins movement from Caltagirone
- 0900-1130 Infantry push inland across 7<sup>th</sup> Army frontage and meet three Axis attack columns (Mobile Group E and Livorno) moving from the North
- 1400 HG Div moves out of Assembly Areas (IVO Niscemi) to begin attack
- 1500 Conrath orders attack renewed
- 1700-1845 HG Div withdraws
- 2000 Guzzoni orders XVI Corps to attack with Livorno & HG Divs at 0600
- 2400 1ID attack to seize Ponte Olivo Airfield (26IR) and Niscemi (16IR)

**11 JUL:**

- 0030 US attack halted
- Early AM Guzzoni orders change in plan (HG wheel to East)
- 0615 HG Div and easternmost column of Livorno Div attack begins along four axes supported by German and Italian planes (beach and Naval)
- 0900 Battle IVO Ponte Dirillo/Acate River begins – Gavin defends flank. Both HG Panzer Battalions unite on Gela plain
- 1000-1500 Gavin CATK to seize Ponte Dirillo and open route to 1ID
- 1100 1ID forces back to 2400 start line IVO Piano Lupo
- 2000 Gavin offensive with augmented force defeats HG Pz Grenadiers
- Afternoon Guzzoni orders XVI Corps to suspend all offensive action and to begin withdrawal (HG DIV to Caltagirone to arrive at Vizzini on 12 AUG to be committed against British forces/Livorno to consolidate from Mazzarino to Caltagirone))

**1 DEW** [37.031781, 14.404505](#)  
**2 DEW** Strada 115 82d Airborne Division Monument  
[37.067810, 14.362410](#)  
**3 DEW** Strada 115 and SP 11: Piano Lupo  
[37.123640, 14.284515](#)  
Castelluccio di Gela



# 11 JUL 43

## Questions:

- In a multi-day, two-plus Axis Division attack which was defended by elements of four U.S. Army divisions, why didn't the U.S. have air superiority over the lodgment?
- Why wasn't there any ground attack/CAS for the U.S. (at least six requests throughout the day) on 11 JUL 43? 511 Axis vs ~ 2000 Allied fighter sorties on 10 JUL 43
- The HG Cdr (Conrath) was criticized for the failure of his attack. One of the primary reasons cited was poor task organization. What task org would you recommend?
- How did the Germans effectively implement ACE?

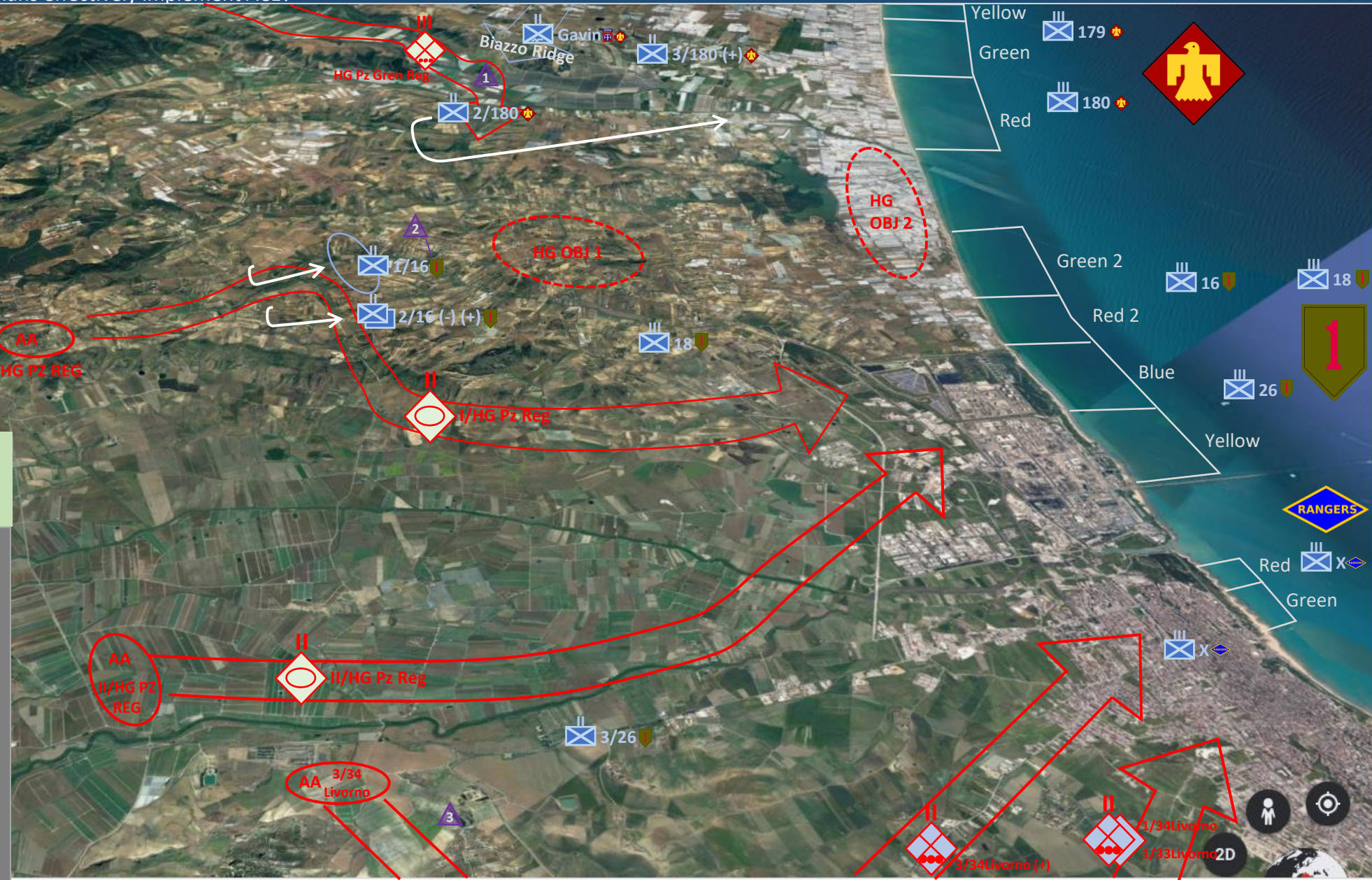


"You can get your Navy planes to do anything you want, but we can't get the Air Force to do a Goddamn thing!"

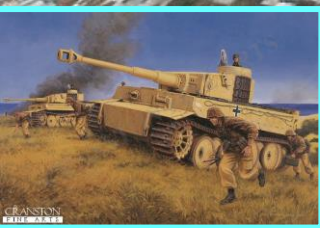
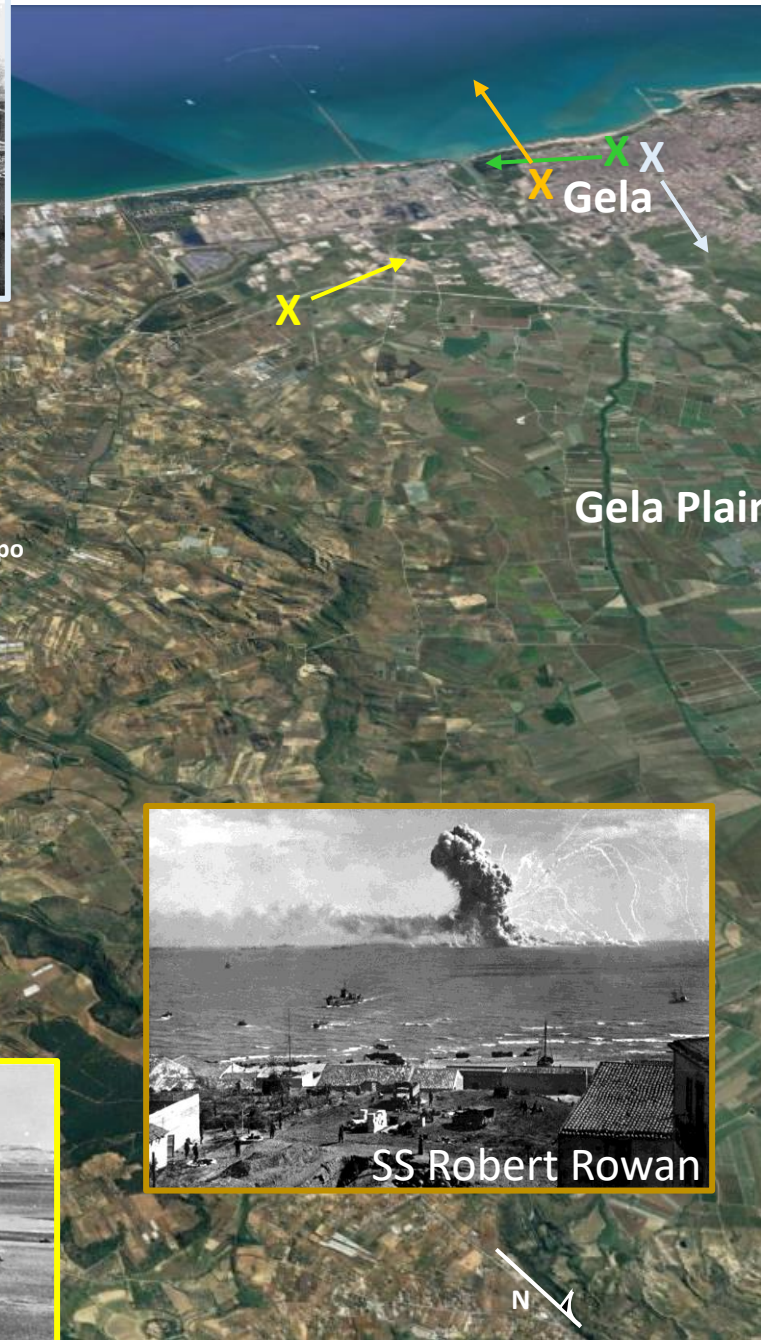
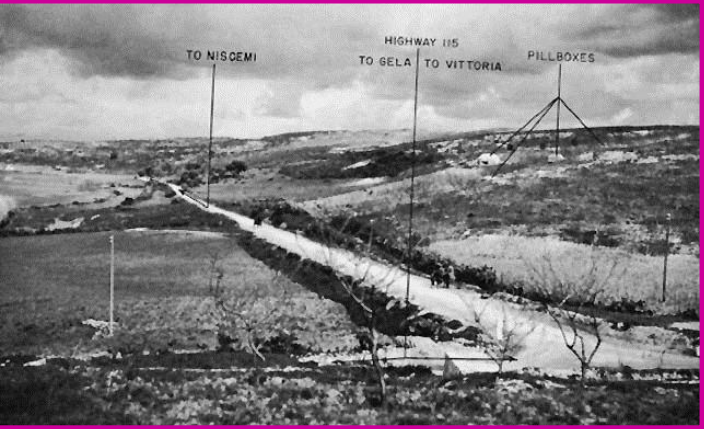
Because Allied air-surface coordination was almost nonexistent, the German pilots enjoyed a kind of field day, in spite of their inferiority in numbers. The U.S. Navy official history states that the convoys had almost no air protection until July 12, 1943.

Throughout the day, the Navy sent up several SOCs (Seagull Scout Observation Float Planes) to direct naval gunfire for the ground forces, but because they had no fighter protection, most of them were shot down or run off by Messerschmitt's.

Mitcham and Von Stauffenberg, *The Battle of Sicily*









# General d'Armata Alfredo Guzzoni, Commander of the 6<sup>th</sup> Italian Army



## Background and Education

- Born (12 April 1877) and raised in Northern Italy (Mantua, Lombardy)
- Graduated from Modena Military Academy (Italy's best). Commissioned 2LT in 1895.
- Fought in Italo-Turkish War in 1911 as Captain
- Fought in WWI – key staff positions
- Served in East Africa from FEB 1934 to April 1937, including as the Governor of Eritrea from May 1936 to April 1937.
- Commanded Italian invasion forces in Albania in 1939.
- Commanded Italian 4<sup>th</sup> Army (Italian Main Effort) during invasion of France.
- Under-Secretary of War and Deputy Chief of the Supreme General Staff
- Retired from service NOV 1941 (64 years old)
- Recalled to active service 11 months later – OCT 1942.
- Late MAY – General Roatta (Commanding 6<sup>th</sup> Italian Army) issued proclamation which was interpreted as a slight on Sicilian patriotism (Sicilians vs Italians). Commando Supremo “promoted” him to Chief of Staff of the Army and on . . .
- 30 MAY 1943 Assigned at the General Officer Commanding the 6<sup>th</sup> Italian Army in Sicily. (66 years old and had never been to Sicily before nor expressed the slightest interest in it)

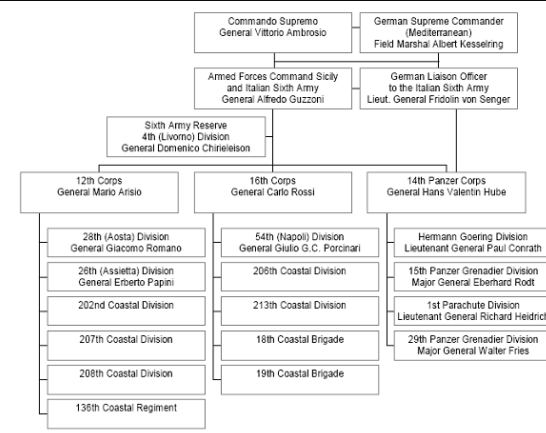


## Personality

- One of Italy's most competent field commanders / solid tactical judgment
- Reputation for knowing what he was doing.
- One of few Italian officers who maintained good relations with the Germans
- Old, small of stature, heavy set, and known as a political “operator” (like most Italian generals)
- Not a “strong” personality – conciliatory and prepared to moderate differences

## Sicily Decisions / Assessment

- Plan of defense and initial disposition of force pre-invasion
  - Deferred to Kesselring on positioning of 15<sup>th</sup> Pz Gr Div
  - Selection and positioning of 6<sup>th</sup> Army Reserve (Livorno)
  - Plan – delay, then CATK with Germans and Italian Mobile Units
  - Too many alerts?
- CATK: Commit KG Schmalz toward Syracuse and launch Gela Counter-attack on 10-11 JUL. 15 Pz Gr Div movement (Kesselring)
- Change plan for Gela Counter-attack early morning of 11 JUL.
- 12 JUL - Shift forces to the Northeast in order to prevent being cut off
- 14-15 JUL – accepted de facto transfer of C2 to XIV (GE) PZ Corps
- 22 JUL – refused to formally relinquish C2 to XIV (GE) PZ Corps
- 25 JUL – Communique to 6<sup>th</sup> Army stressing loyalty to the Axis (Mussolini)
- 9/10 AUG – Received orders to extend AO/withdrew 6<sup>th</sup> Army HQs to Calabria





# Day 2 Stand 7

Enna

And

General Alexander (CDR, 15<sup>th</sup> Army Group)

And

Field Marshal Kesselring, (OB South)



# ENNA and LEONFORTE 19 – 22 July 1943

Located in the center of Sicily, Enna is a crossroads town that provided a key communications center for Allied and Axis forces. Prior to the invasion, Guzzoni used it as 6<sup>th</sup> Army HQ. After landing at Gela and Licata on 10 July, American forces moved north to establish a beachhead along the Yellow Line. Within days of landing, 7th Army had pushed up so strongly from Gela and Licata that Truscott's 3rd Division was poised to strike at Enna. This represented an operationally significant move as it would have prevented Axis forces deployed in the west from moving east and trapped enemy units in the southeast. However, the Allies failed to take the area quickly as a result of a modification to the plan that tasked 8th Army to take Enna instead. To accomplish this new mission, 8<sup>th</sup> Army required Route 124—the Vizzini-Caltagirone highway—which forced the Americans to shift west and stalled their advance. This change also shifted the inter-Army boundary (just west of Enna) and subordinated 7<sup>th</sup> Army's role to protecting Montgomery's left flank. To take Enna, Montgomery tasked General Oliver Leese, commander of the 1st Canadian Division to drive on Caltagirone, Enna, and Leonforte. However, the Canadians, who were tired from heavy fighting in the southeast, sidestepped Enna after encountering heavy German defenses in the hills around Enna. In German hands, Enna represented a serious threat to Bradley's right flank, so he ordered 1st Division to take the city on 19 July.

Discuss the importance of the terrain in the Caltanissetta/San Caterina/Enna area and how it impacted/influenced operations for both the Axis and the Allied sides.? Enna is a key communications center that includes Highway 121, a major east-west highway. Throughout the operation, Alexander worried about securing the Enna loop—a network of major highways that fanned out throughout the island that the Axis could use to attack Montgomery's left flank. The capture of this road network from Enna to Caltanissetta would have split the island in half and blocked Axis forces from redeploying units to the east. Moreover, the terrain around Caltanissetta, San Caterina, and Enna represents the transition to higher terrains on the island and the steep roads and ridges provide excellent high ground for defenders. As the Allies approached Enna, Group Ens used the Monte della Forma—a 2,700-foot-high mountain—to hold off the Canadian 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade.

Evaluate the change in the plan (which led to the boundary shift on 14 JULY), the expansion of the beachhead, and Patton's decision to attack West and seize Palermo. On 12 July Montgomery urged Alexander to allow 8<sup>th</sup> Army to shift west to take Enna-Leonforte and then move north to the coast. In concert with operations north through Catania, Montgomery intended to encircle enemy forces in the east. On 13 July Alexander approved the plan and ordered Patton's forces to shift west and assigned them to protecting 8th Army's left flank. This change to the plan infuriated 7th Army leaders, who felt they had been subordinated to rearguard duty. On 17 July Patton confronted Alexander, arguing the best way to protect 8th Army forces was to allow a drive up to Palermo, which he claimed would "split the enemy forces irreparably." Alexander eventually relented and allowed American forces to drive on Palermo. These changes prevented a quick move north, which could have trapped Axis forces redeploying to the east but did allow 7<sup>th</sup> Army to drive to Messina later in the operation.



Colonel Ens  
Group Ens



Gen Fullriede  
Group Fullriede



MG Allen  
1<sup>st</sup> Div



LTG Leese  
30 Corps

## 19 JULY

18<sup>th</sup> Infantry ordered to take Enna from the west.

16<sup>th</sup> Infantry ordered to take Enna from the south.

1<sup>st</sup> Division takes Enna within five hours after Group Ens and Group Fullriede withdraw east.

## 20 JULY

0500 - 1<sup>st</sup> Division pursues German forces and 2d Battalion meets Italian Group Schreiber on way to Alimena. American light tanks counter attacked the Italians, who then scattered into the hills.

Late Afternoon - Alimena cleared late afternoon.

American light tanks run into enemy artillery fire at blown bridge south of Bompietro.

## 21 JULY

1600 - CP of Seaforth Highlanders of Canadian 2<sup>nd</sup> BDE attacked by artillery barrage from Ens regiment. Attack on Leonforte delayed.

1930 - Loyal Edmontons attack under cover of darkness and clear much of the town in vicious street-fighting.

Group Ens counter attacks with tanks and assault guns forcing Edmontons to fall back.

## 22 JULY

0900 - Infantry, Shermans, and 6-pounder anti-tank guns from Canadian 2<sup>nd</sup> BDE cross River Dittaino on Bailey Bridge.

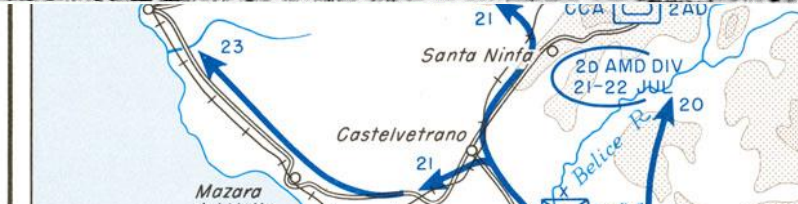
1200 – 1<sup>st</sup> Division engineers repair the bridge. 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry attacks across small stream. Group Fullriede puts up stiff resistance with artillery fire. German resistance and difficult terrain slow the Americans' advance.

1520 - Canadians capture summit at Leonforte and force Group Ens to withdraw to Agira, 8 miles to the east.

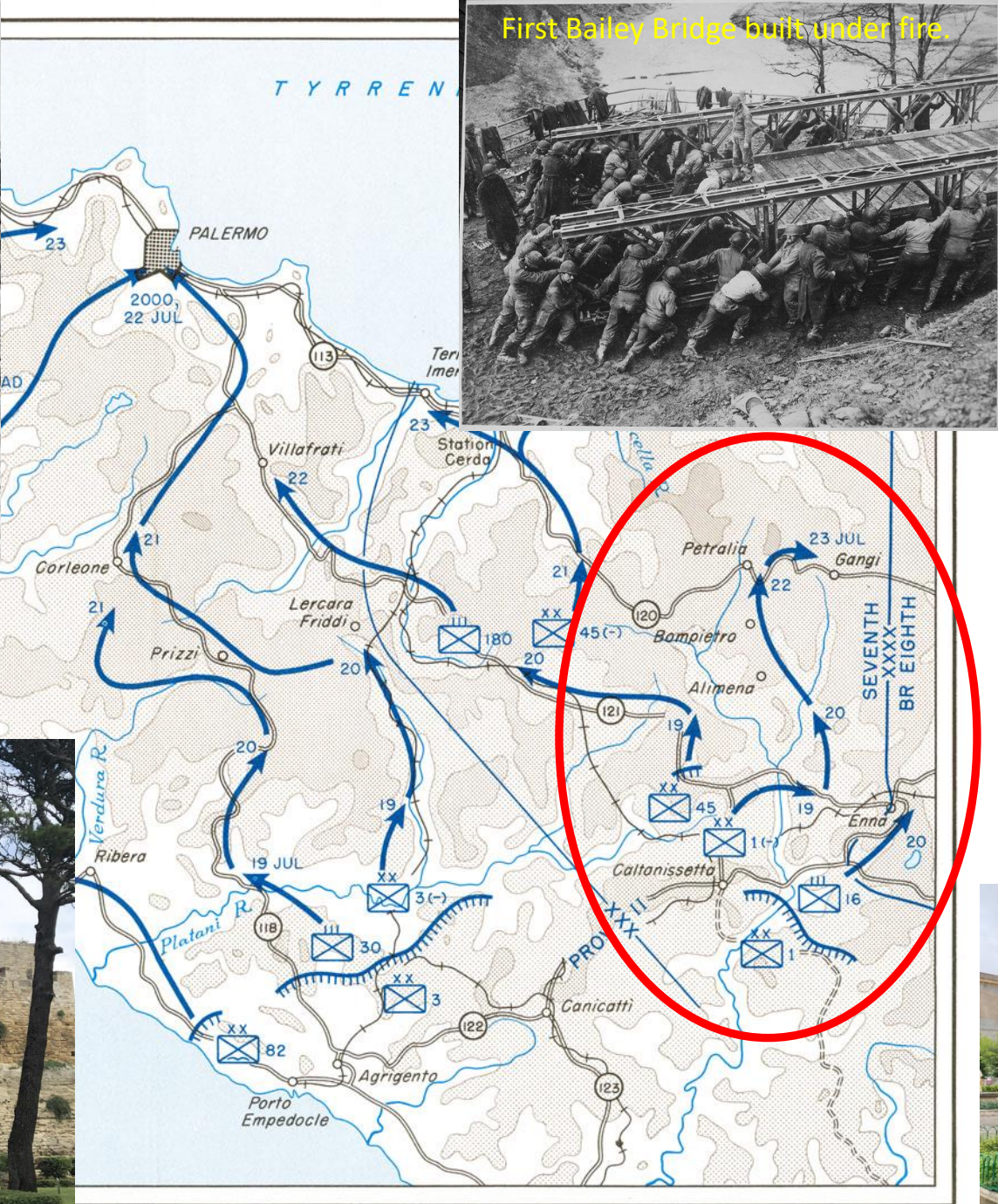
1900 - 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry takes Bompietro and Enna is secured. 1<sup>st</sup> Division continues push to the north coast.



Southern Approach to Enna

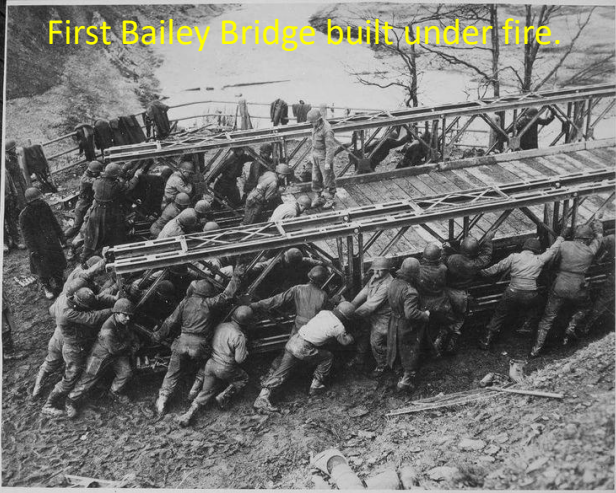


War monument Enna, 37.639641, 14.393517

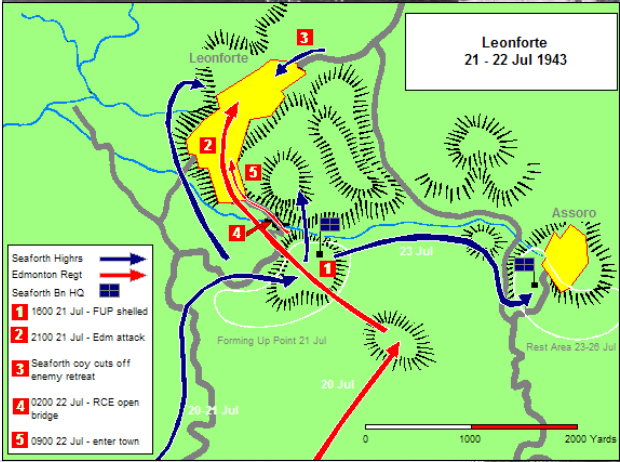


Printed by the U. S. Army Topographic Command MAP VIII

First Bailey Bridge built under fire.



Leonforte



War monument Leonforte, 37.639641, 14.393517



# General Sir Harold Alexander: Commander-in-Chief, 15th Army Group



## Background and Education

- Born in London, England – 10 Dec 1891
- Graduated from Sandhurst in 1911 and then commissioned in the Irish Guards
- Commanded on the Western Front during WWI, where he rose from platoon leader to battalion commander in less than a year
- Seriously wounded at First Battle of Ypres, received Military Cross for bravery at Loos, and Distinguished Service Order and French Legion d'honneur during Battle of the Somme
- Between the wars, he commanded in Latvia, Constantinople, and at Gibraltar
- Attended Staff College at Camberley from 1926 to 1927 and Imperial Defense College in 1930
- After school, he served in India until 1938
- Commanded the 1st Division of the BEF in 1940
  - Led I Corps during the evacuation at Dunkirk
- In 1942, Sent to India after the Japanese invasion of Burma
  - Became full general, commanded British Forces in Burma and led fighting retreat into India
- Took charge of Middle East Command in July 1942 and oversaw Montgomery's operations in North Africa
- In February 1943, he took command of 18th Army Group that reported to Eisenhower
- Named commander of 15th Army Group for Operation Husky
- Remained in Mediterranean after Husky to command Allied Invasion of Italy
  - Led the Allied Armies in Italy
- Turned down by CIGS Alan Brooke to lead British force in France, deemed unfit for higher command as war continued
- Took over as Supreme Commander of Allied Forces Headquarters in 1944 and received German surrender in Italy on 29 April 1945

## Personality

- Modest and unassuming – content to remain in the shadows rather than bask in the limelight of publicity
  - Held the distinction of being Churchill's favorite general
  - Commanded admiration and respect from the Americans
- Smooth and Polished – known for having easy charm and always looking immaculate
- Unoriginal – often acquiesced to what subordinate commanders—Slim, Montgomery, Patton, and Clark—wanted to do, had reputation for lacking creativity and often failed to provide guidance to subordinates
- Biased – Held a low opinion of U.S. fighting ability after North African campaign, carried this bias to Sicily, which contributed to 7th Army's supporting role during Operation Husky

## Sicily Decisions / Assessment

- Led planning for Operation Husky from its inception
  - Acquiesced to Montgomery's demands for another division in southeast and then movement of 7th Army to Gela and Licata
- Reluctantly approved Patton's drive to Palermo
- Most serious leadership flaw was failure to take responsibilities of higher command and inability to give firm and clear decisions
- On 12 Jul, he approved the boundary line change that gave Route 124—the Vizzini-Caltagirone highway—to 8th Army
  - This change shifted 7th Army to the west and prevented a rapid drive to the northeast, enabled Axis redeployment to the Etna Line, which eliminated possibility of cutting off Messina
- On 13 Jul, made 7th Army the flank guard for 8th Army, deemed "the most damaging misjudgment of the Sicily campaign"



# Field Marshal Albert Kesselring: Commander in Chief (Oberbefehlshaber) - South

## Personality



## Background and Education

- Born in Marktsteft, Bavaria – 30 NOV 1885
- Joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bavarian Foot Artillery Regiment, commissioned in 1905
- Completed balloon observer (dirigible) training in 1912
- Served on both West and East Fronts in WWI
- Served in the Reichswehr from 1922 to 1933 as a Lt Col.
- Learned to fly in 1933 (age of 48)
- Against his wishes, he was discharged from the Reichswehr and appointed as the head of Administration at the Reich Commissariat for Aviation in 1934 as a Col.
- Promoted to Major General in Oct, 1934 and Lt Gen in 1936.
- Appointed Luftwaffe Chief of Staff on 3 June 1936 – oversaw the expansion of the Luftwaffe, including incorporation of Paratroops.
- After dispute with Erhard Milch, requested transfer to field command. Given command of Air District III (Dresden) and promoted to General der Flieger in 1937.
- Commanded Luftflotte 1 from 1938 to 1940. Supported Army Group North in the Polish Campaign (Warsaw bombing) – awarded the Knights Cross by Hitler.
- Appointed to command Luftflotte 2 on 15 JAN 1940 – supported Army Group B in Low Countries (Rotterdam bombings). Given task of destroying Allied forces in/around Dunkirk. Promoted to Field Marshal in 1940. Largest of the three Luftflotten during the Battle of Britain – responsible for southeast England and London area (daylight).
- June 1941 – Luftflotte 2 supported Army Group Center during Operation Barbarossa (1/2 of Luftwaffe support)
- November 1941 – appointed Cdr in Chief South (Luftflotte 2 staff until January 1943)

- Extremely optimistic – probably why Hitler liked him
- Brave – aides killed, at 1<sup>st</sup> Para Div DZ
- Leader – lead by example (flying)
- Selfless – subordinated himself to Rommel - Battle of Gazala

## Sicily Decisions / Assessment

- Defend Tunisia/North Africa – cost the Axis 250,000 men (1/2 German). Kesselring's 2<sup>nd</sup> Luftflotte responsible for (a) protection of shipping and (b) air transport = failure. Left it difficult to defend Sicily/Italy.
- Correctly deduced Sicily (or Sardinia) as the target (vs southern France, northern Italy, the Balkans). Gave Axis as much of an advantage as possible given small forces available.
- Biggest mistake? = Positioning of 15 Pz Gr Div to defend Caltanissetta-Enna and Salemi area (Center and NW) and HG Div to defend Caltagirone (SE) with part of 15 Pz Gr Div detached (Schmalz) to defend Catania Plain (East). This scattered the best division all over the island – against the Italian Commander's (Guzzoni) wishes and against the advice of Rodt (15 Pz Gr Div) and Von Senger (LNO). This "nervous dispersion made it impossible for them to launch an early concentrated assault against any part of the invading forces."
- Directed German units early on – confusion with Chain of Command
- Defend (indefinitely) and Delay - Reinforcements (14<sup>th</sup> Pzr Corps, 1<sup>st</sup> Para Div and 29<sup>th</sup> Pz Gr Div) against Guzzoni and Von Senger advice. Overly optimistic – denied withdrawal request of 15 Pz Gr Div.
- Subsequent operations – Rommel = withdraw and defend northern Italy. Kesselring = economy of force to tie down Allies along the length of Italian peninsula. Thought Italy would stay in war (5 AUG letter)
- Ordered withdrawal from Sicily on 8 AUG 43. Didn't have units to defend against amphib landings on flank.





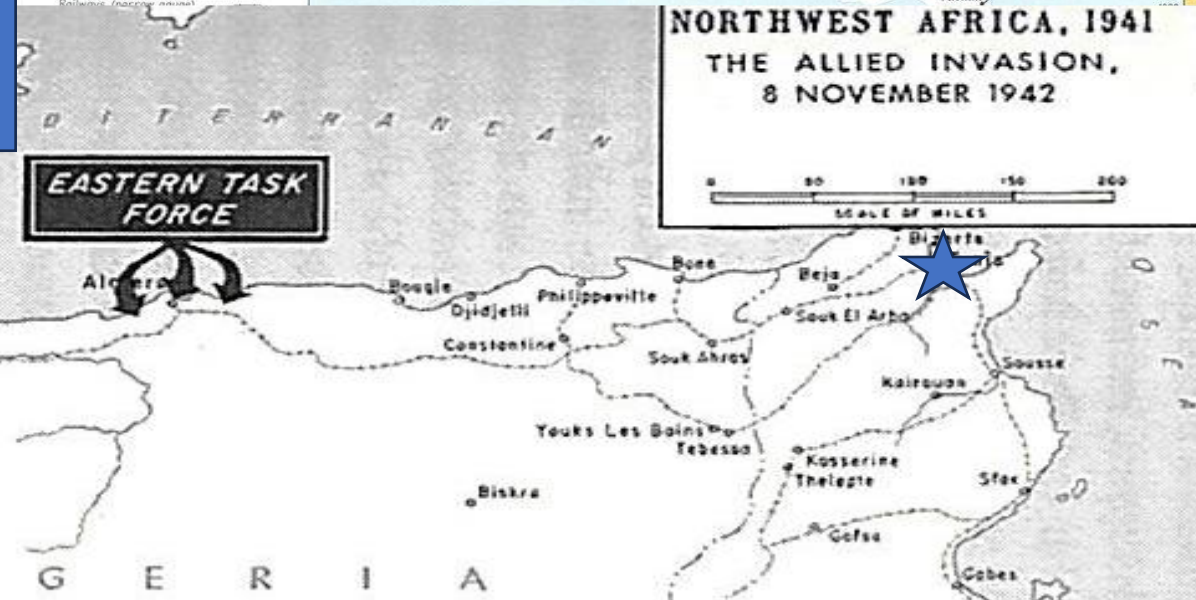
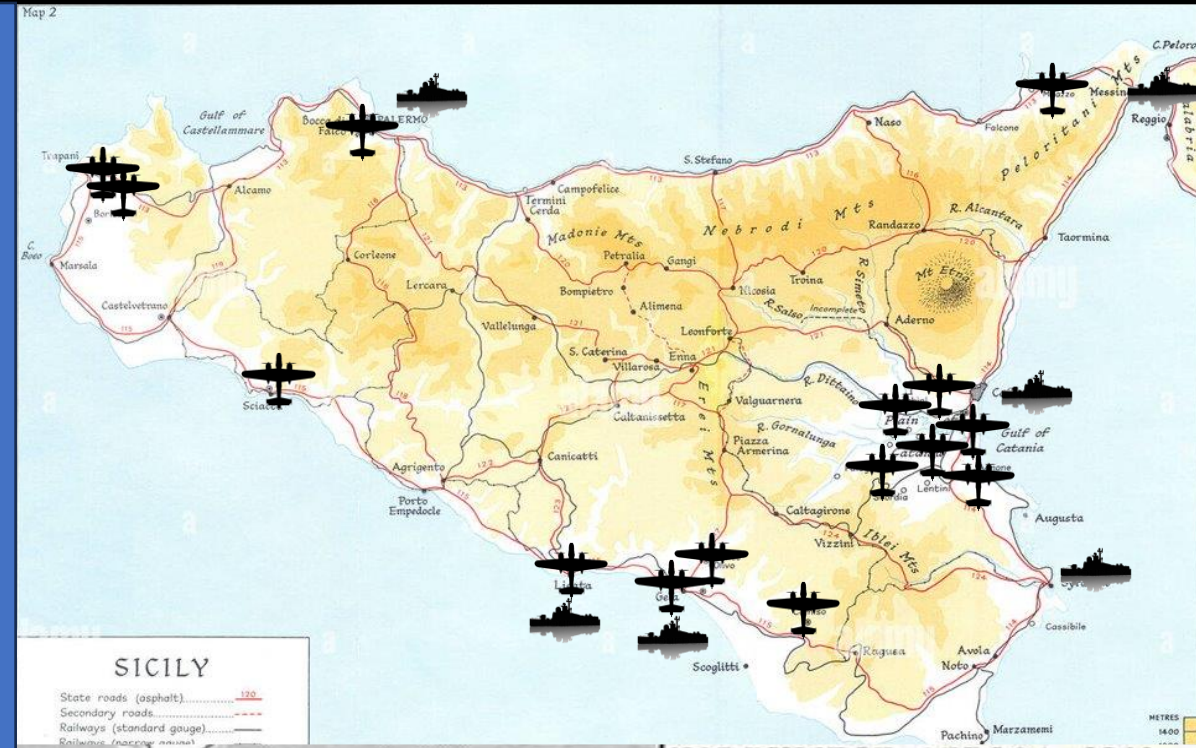


# Day 2 Stand 8

Allied Logistics

# Allied Logistics Operations During Operation HUSKY

- Naval progression by March 1943 forced Germans to withdraw majority of German U-boats from Atlantic due to heavy losses
- Invasion opened Western Mediterranean to Allied shipping
- Invasion of Italy provided forward basing for Allied long-range bombing
- Draft plans logistically oriented with Allies seizing shipping ports
- Four main ports: Messina, Catania, Syracuse, and Palermo
- Bombing: Palermo(69); Messina(58); Augusta(43); Catania(87)
- Smaller port capabilities - Gela and Licata, 200 and 600 tons/day
- Decision to scrap Palermo had logistics consequences
- Sustainment operations over the shore more difficult
- Assault forces had to carry more supplies (7 day vs 4 days)
- Beach planning factors unknown – generic factors used
- Needed 60 days after final planning: 9/load plans, 30/waterproofing





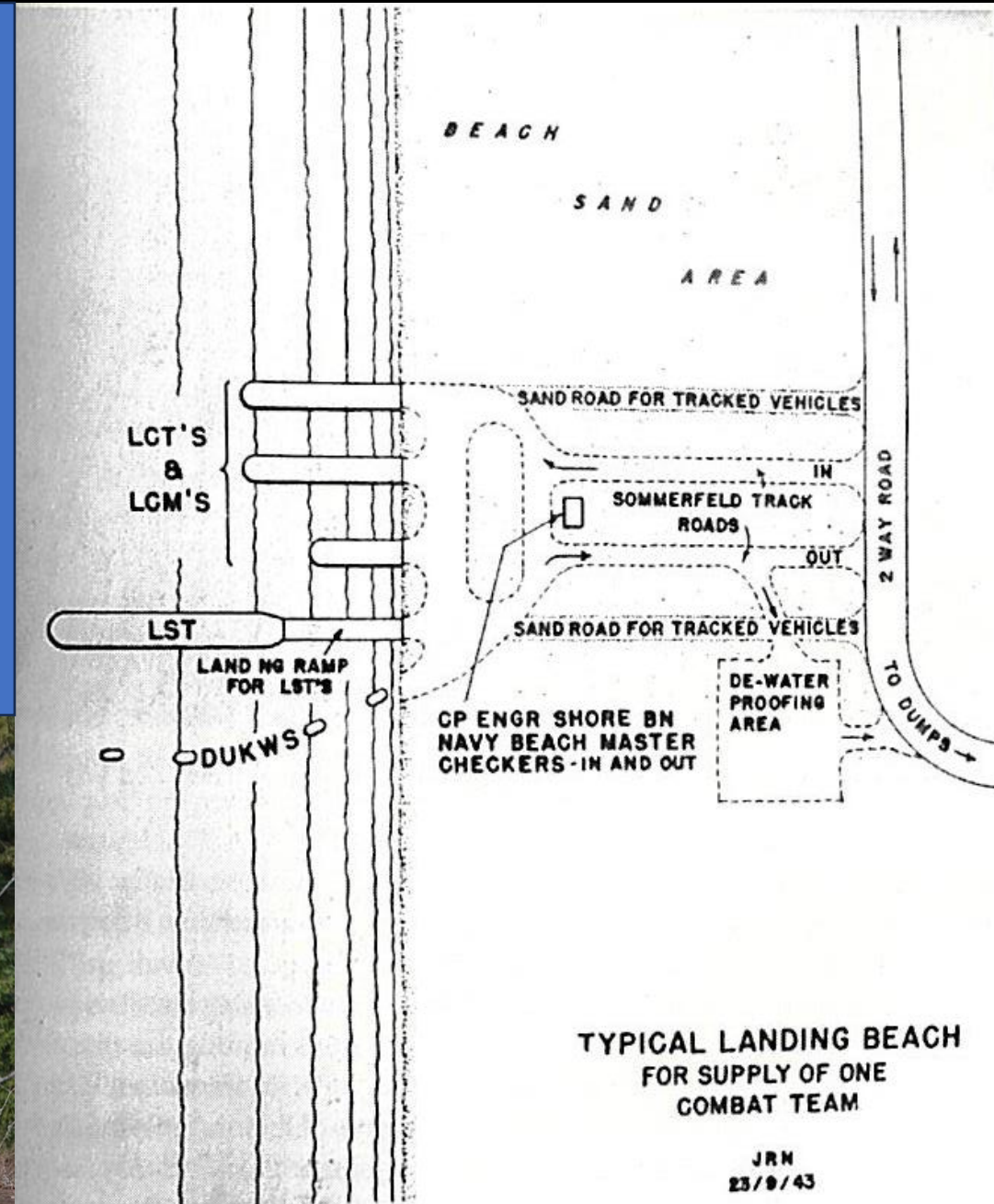
# Preparing for the Invasion

- Needed flexible support plan that could support any tactical plan
- Absence of tactical plans from 7th Army – jt planning impossible
- Allied Air Force plan completely disconnected from log effort
- Late planning changes: 48hrs-load planning; 48hrs-supply rqmts
- Assault force needed 14 days of supply
- Resupply convoys from CONUS at 15-day intervals
- Embarkation could simultaneously stage/load 52 LCI, 30 LST, 32 LCT (vehicle), and 12 personnel LCT
- Vehicle loading started 18 June-mounting complete 5 July
- Luftwaffe attack Tunisian ports with 75 aircraft – minor damage
- Forces spread across Eastern BS – established HQ at Mateur, TUN
- Tunis main; 1ID load transport (Algiers), 3ID load craft (Bizerte)



# Invasion and Sustainment

- Engineer Shore Group organized beach groups -unload ships, marking navigation aids/obstacles, constructing beach exits, providing security, unloading boats, and setting up beach dumps
  - D+3: 66,235 men, 17,766 tons, 7,416 vehicles
  - Rail system and pack animals proved essential
  - Water supply and medical logistics challenging
- TAKEAWAYS:
- Organized beaches can support sustained logistics for Corps-sized effort
  - DUKW essential to overcome planning gaps
  - Lessons seasoned leadership preparation for Normandy invasion
  - Service force proportions essential: axis-none; allies-1/3 of troops
  - Axis lack of centralized leadership led to competing requirements, insufficient support for outposts, and lack of air/sea supremacy







# Day 3    Stand 9

Centuripe

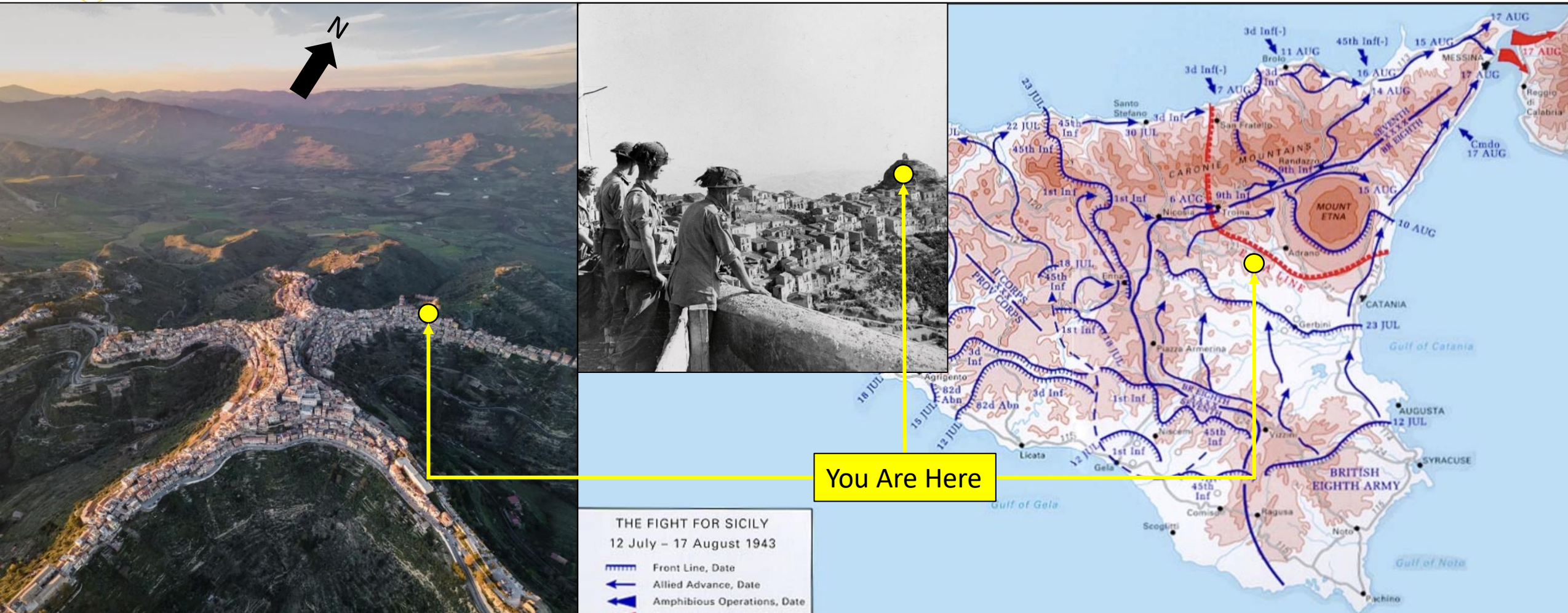
And

LTG Hube (CDR XIV PZ Corps)



# The Battle for Centuripe: 'The Ghost Town of the Heavens'

Gp Capt John Shields, RAF



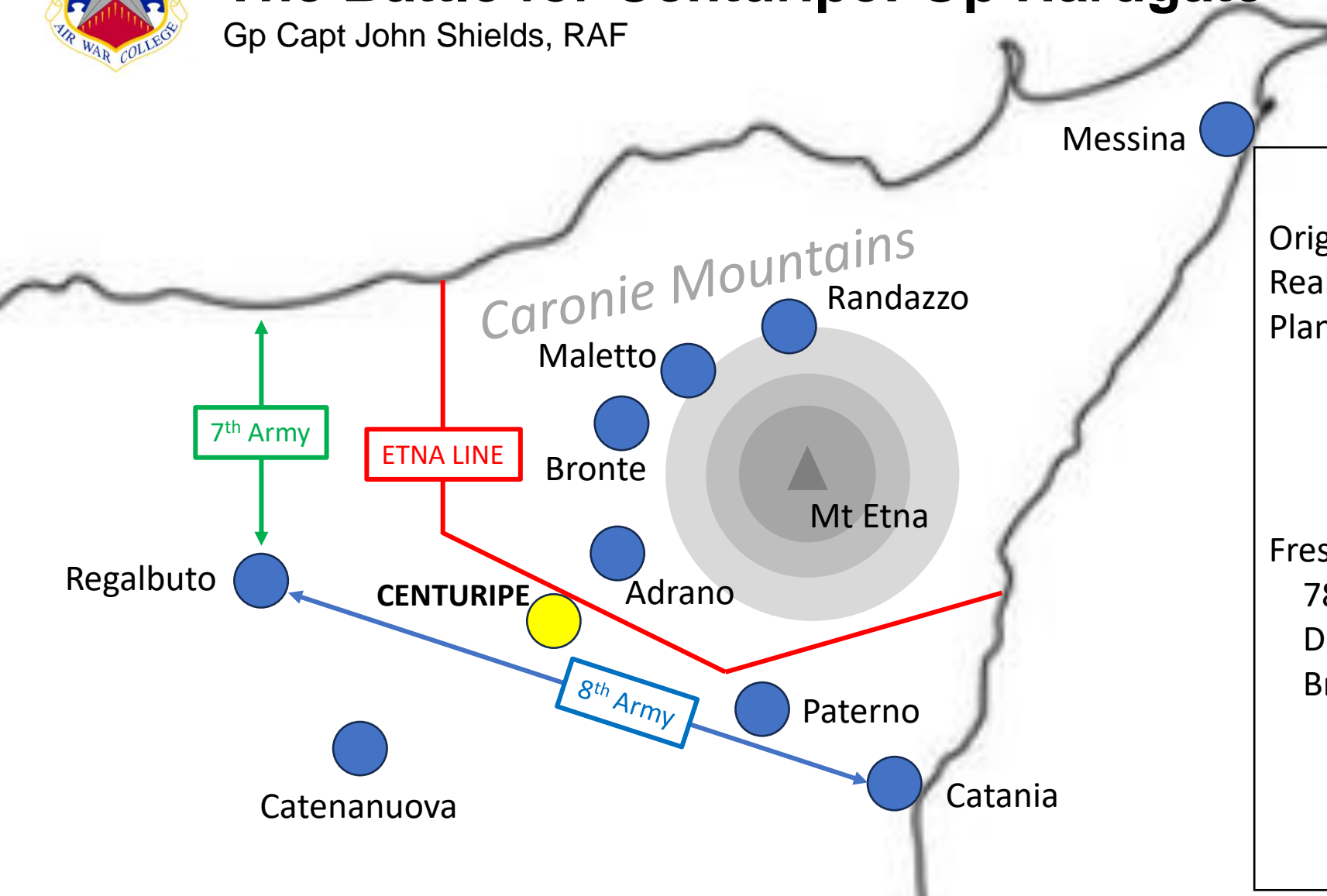
1 August 1943 – Discuss the overall Allied Plan at this point, especially the British efforts at Centuripe. What was main effort/primary objective? Evaluate the plan in terms of successive operations. Were there other options?





# The Battle for Centuripe: Op Hardgate

Gp Capt John Shields, RAF



## 1 August 1943 = D-Day+20

Original Plan – UK Supported/US Supporting

Reality – 8<sup>th</sup> Stalled on Catania Plain

Plan B - 3 Avenues of Approach to Messina

- US takes Northern Coastal Route
- UK takes Catania & Central Route
- US perspective versus reality

Fresh & Troops Enter the Fray in Late July

78<sup>th</sup> Battleaxe Division – 17K personnel

Dunkirk & North Africa Experience

British Left Flank & Adjacent to US Forces

11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade (Catenanuova)

36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade (Centuripe)

38<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Infantry Brigade (Adrano+)

+ Arty/Eng/Signals

Brigadier Nelson Russell (CO 38<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Infantry Brigade) - A Campaign in Three Phases:

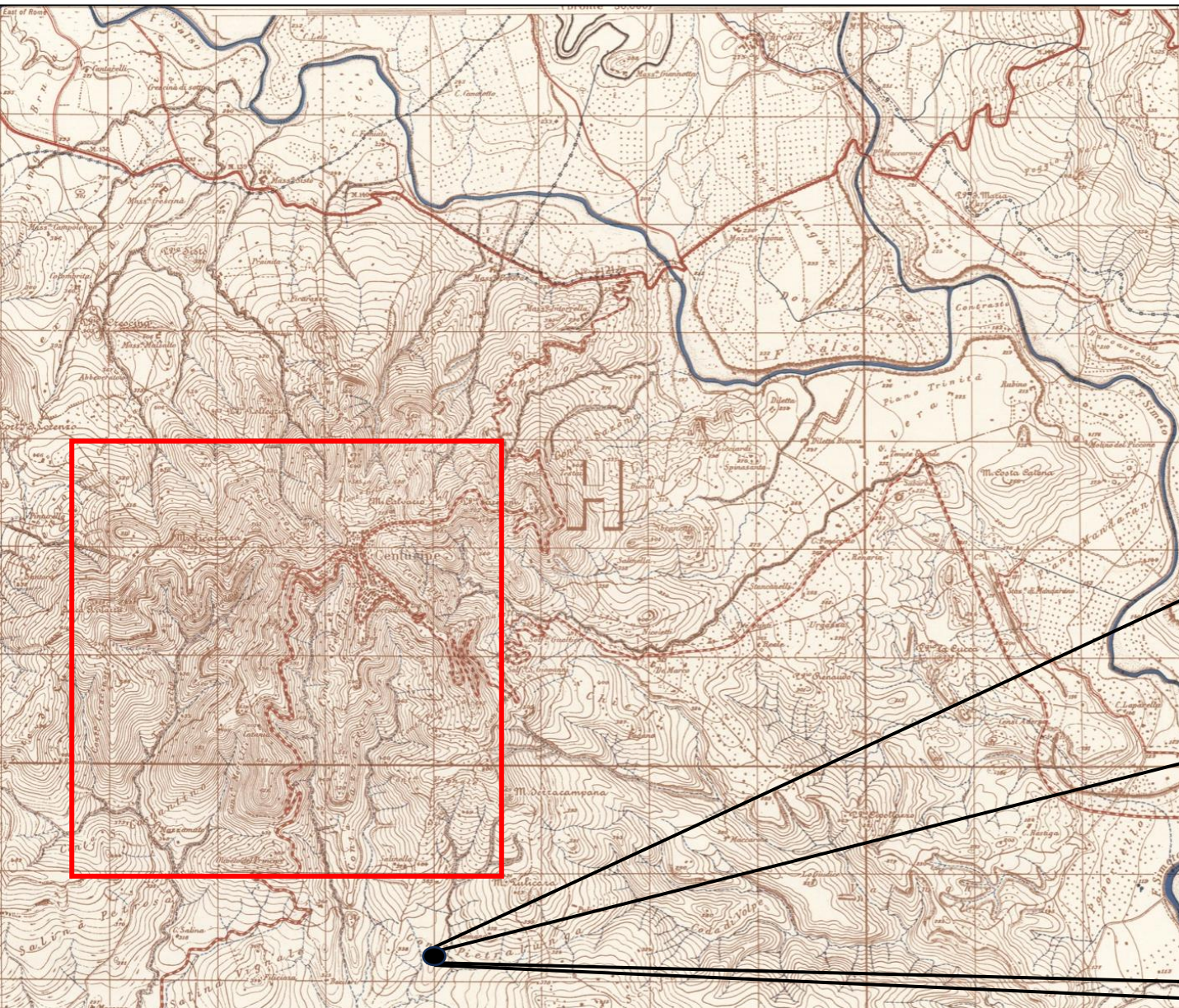
The Good Beginning (10-20 July), The Sticky Period (20-31 July) and The Final Push (1-16 August)



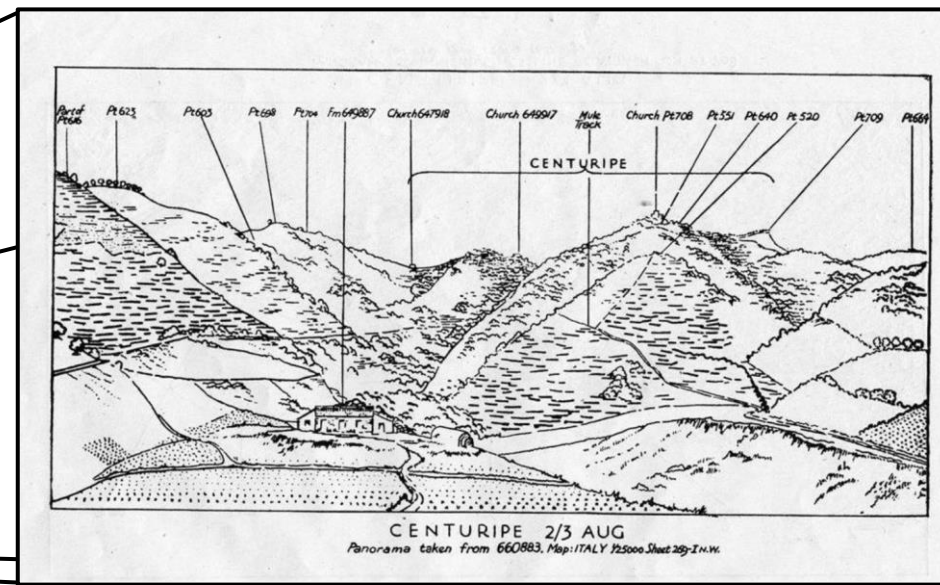


# The Battle for Centuripe: The Opposition = Terrain + Enemy

Gp Capt John Shields, RAF



'King' Ludwig Heilmann's 3. Fallschirmjäger (c.2 Bns)  
New Arrivals & New Commander  
+ Panzer, Arty & Anti-Tank troop  
Twice the MGs (1 per 5 men)  
= Best German troops on Sicily at height with firepower  
UK Situational Awareness on Enemy?  
Mountain into Urban fight

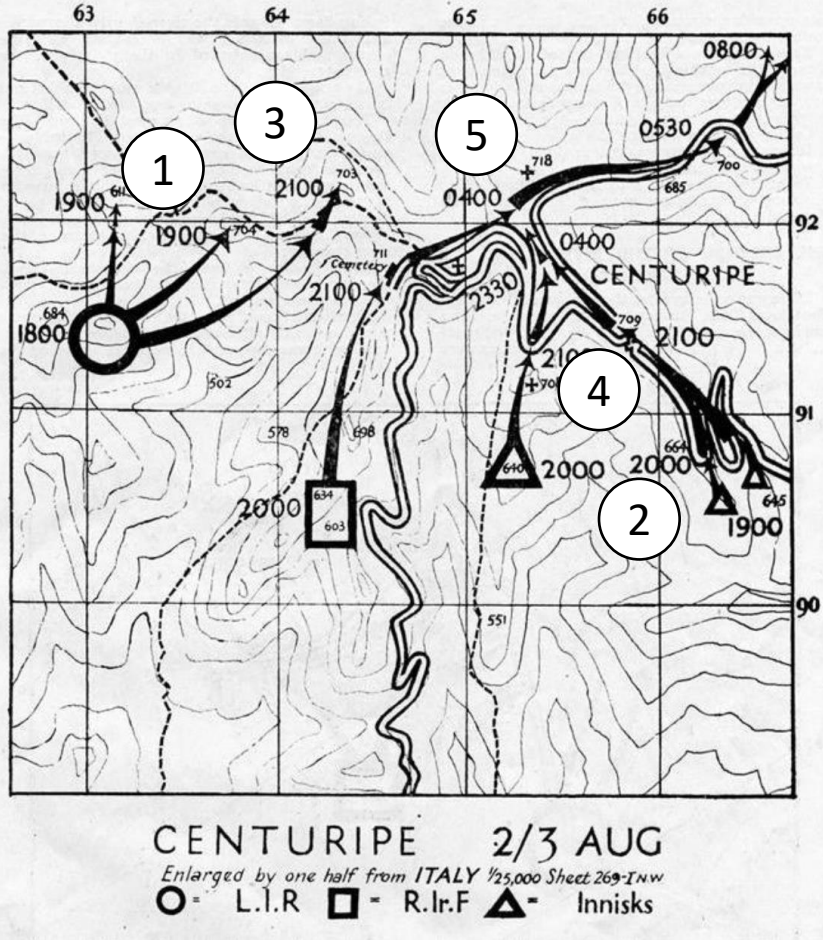






# The Battle for Centuripe: The What

Gp Capt John Shields, RAF



**Lessons:** Op Resilience v Reserve/Sequencing of Unit Actions/Risk Appetite/Decision Points/Mission Command/Tempo – Exploit?  
**Op & Joint Lessons or Routine Army Lessons??**

## The Prelude: 1 August

36<sup>th</sup> Brigade plus 2 Bns from 11th Brigade attack Centuripe

Supported by Arty Bty

38<sup>th</sup> Brigade Marched up from Catenanuovo

Held in reserve in the wadis of the foothills to South

By 1200 British Attack Stalled in the hills to south of Centuripe

1700 – Situational Awareness Low vs 38<sup>th</sup> Bde Planning

## The Fight: 2 August

0330 - 38<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Infantry Brigade brought up from reserve

0400 - 38<sup>th</sup> Bde move forward (3 miles & 2k' ft climbing). No Transport

1500 - Brief

1615 - Barrage starts, extra Arty brought in; c.150 guns.

1630 - 38<sup>th</sup> Bde Push, LIR first, then RIF & Innisks together 1 hour later

① 1800 - Plan = LIR secure western hills. Reality = 2 Hills by 1930. DP = Go!

2000 - Innisks = Main Effort v 'Suicide Gully', foothold in town ②

③ 2100 - LIR secure 3<sup>rd</sup> Objective

2200 - RIF & Innisks Link up in town, German Counterattacks ④

## ENDEX: 3 August

⑤ By Dawn – Centuripe in Irish hands.

Next Move – Cross the Salso & Simeto Rivers and on to Adrano



# The Battle for Centuripe: So What/Now What

Gp Capt John Shields, RAF



"I doubt that any other Division in the army could have carried out the operation successfully"  
- Winston Churchill



"The Storming of Centuripe was a particularly fine feat..."  
- Field Marshal Harold Alexander



"Impossible!"  
  
"The best mountain warfare division in the British 8<sup>th</sup> Army"  
- Lt Gen Bernard Montgomery

## So What?

Outputs: Losses – 4 of 37 at Roll Call  
Gallantry v Main Effort

Outcome: Centuripe causes the German defences to collapse 5-10 miles

The Campaign Fulcrum?  
The Landings or Centuripe/Troina?

Centuripe = Success ...  
but could it have been executed better?

From a Coalition perspective?  
From a Joint perspective?

Lessons Identified for Op Overlord?

## Now What?

Output v Outcome: Do we have the correct mindset at the operational level to understand and embrace the required strategic risk appetite to achieve the desired effect?

Can we identify the campaign fulcrum ahead of time?

To what extent have we overcome the coalition and joint challenges to deliver a more effective and efficient tactical/operational/strategic solution?



# Generalleutnant Hans-Valentin Hube: Commander of XIV Panzer Korps



## Background and Education

- Born in Naumberg, German Empire– 29 Oct 1890
- Joined Prussian Army in 1909
- Saw action in WWI, including German Race to the Sea and Battle of Verdun
  - Received Iron Cross and Knight's Cross for heroic action
  - Lost left arm due to serious injury in Verdun
- Briefly served in Freikorps (German paramilitary force)
- Despite disability, rose through ranks during interwar period as Germany's only "one-arm" general
- Deep-thinking modernist who embraced motorized warfare
- First Commander of Infantry School
- CC'd Olympic Village during '36 Berlin Games
  - Provided direct/personal interaction w/Hitler
- Regiment commander during Poland/France invasions
  - Distributed racist pamphlet condemning use of black/foreign troops against Germans
- CC'd 16<sup>th</sup> Division in France in 1940
- Earned favored reputation during fight on Eastern Front/Operation Barbarossa
  - CC'd XIV Panzer Korps in Stalingrad
  - Rcv'd Swords to the Knight's Cross w/Oak leaves from Adolf Hitler 21 Dec 42
- Master of mechanized warfare and fiercely loyal to men
  - Known by troops as "der Mann"
- Following Sicily, CC'd 1<sup>st</sup> Panzer Army on Eastern Front in Oct '43
  - Led German breakout of Korsun-Cherkassy pocket
- Awarded Diamonds to the Knight's Cross by Hitler at Hitler's 55<sup>th</sup> b-day celebration & promoted to Generaloberst
- The day after receiving the award/promotion, Hube died in plane crash returning to Eastern front

## Personality

- Loyal– Loyalty earned him status as one of Hitler's "favorites"
  - Loyalty to troops earned him deep admiration, "der Mann"
- Brave – Fought/survived "Race to the Sea", Verdun, Eastern Front
  - Refused Hitler's order to personally evacuate Stalingrad to stay w/men until personally "escorted" out by SS troops
- Lucky-- survived multiple serious injuries, lost arm at Battle of Verdun
- Skilled– "Class act" competence, matching deep intellect w/broad experience

## Sicily Decisions / Assessment

- Arrived in Sicily on 16 Jul to command XIV Panzer Korps (lead f/all troops in Sicily)
  - Impossible task- Charged to defend Sicily f/as long as possible w/out risking total loss of 3 German divisions
- Despite stiff defensive positions/efforts, began plan to orderly withdrawal German forces in early August following fall of Mussolini
- Oversaw defensive fortification of Troina, saw city as key to holding line to allow withdraw
- 28 Jul- Orders dev of Sicily withdrawal plan (Op LEHRGANG)
  - 5-night orderly withdrawal to maximize troop/equip evac
  - Allowed retreat behind shrinking defensive lines to Messina
- 3 Aug- Refused Rodt's request to evacuate troops from Troina early/maintained defensive line to finalize evac preps
- 10 Aug- orders execution of Op LEHRGANG, completed overnight 16-17 Aug
- Op LEHRGANG allowed more than 25K German troops to evacuate Sicily
  - 9.6K vehicles, 94 guns, 47 tanks also evac'd





Day 3 Stand 10

Troina



# Battle for Troina

31 July -6 Aug 1943



[37.78376, 14.59802](#)  
43 miles NW of Catania

The Battle of Troina was an Allied effort to break the German's Etna defense line and continue pursuit of retreating German troops. Predicted to be a fairly easy, straightforward operation, Troina, Sicily's highest elevation town, featured some of the campaign's fiercest fighting and served as a critical defensive effort to protect German evacuation planning/execution.

*"Troina's going to be tougher than we thought. The Kraut's touchy as hell here," MG Terry Allen, 1 INF/CC*

## Questions:

Was the attack on Troina necessary?

Were there other options, why or why not?



LTG Bradley  
II Corps



MG Allen  
1st ID



Gen Hube  
15 Panzer Korps



Gen Rodt  
15 Panzer Div

## TIMELINE

24 July- Mussolini is arrested; Italian government is in disarray

- Allies predict less resistance from Italian/German forces

28 July- German Gen Hans Hube, IV Panzer Corps, orders plans dev f/Op LEHRGANG (orderly evacuation of German troops from Sicily)

- Plans f/5-night orderly withdrawal behind shrinking defensive lines

31 July- 1 INF captures Cerami w/little resistance (12 km west of Troina)

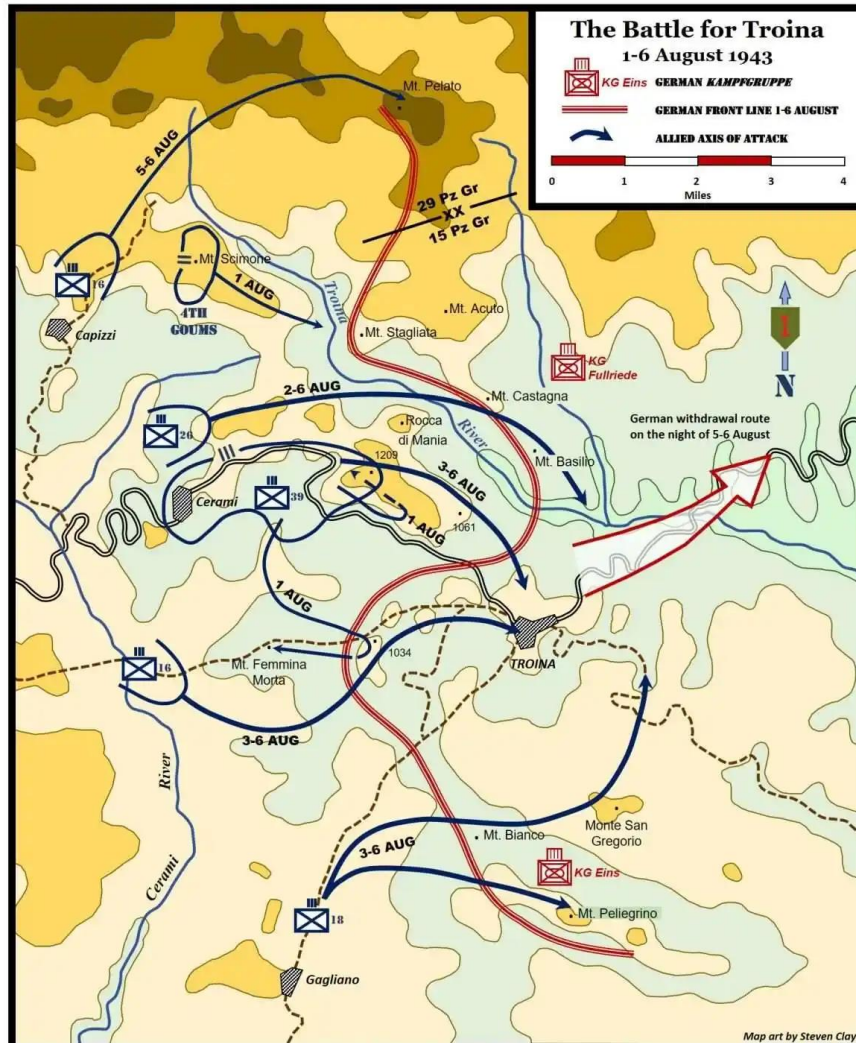
- MG Allen, 1INF/CC, anticipates Troina will similarly meet little resistance
- In reality, Gen Hube prep'd Troina as the key defensive post in Etna defense line to protect evacuation planning/prep.
- Hube personally oversaw defensive prep in Troina, creating a "mountain fortress." Hube refuses Gen Rodt, 15 Panzer Greandier Div/CC, request to abandon Troina; orders him to hold as long as possible

## 31 July:

- 39 INF Reg conducts hasty attack on Troina after Cerami capture, German resistance/counterattack halts advance
- MG Allen positions 18/16 INF Reg position to north and south of advancing 39th to attempt double envelopment
- Troina geography/conditions significantly limit effectiveness of dedicated artillery/air support

## 1-2 Aug:

- Allen orders addition of 26 INF Reg to assist in capturing high ground north of Troina
- U.S. forces struggle to position f/further attacks due to difficult terrain. Elevation/ terrain makes vehicle transportation ineffective (*use of mule trains to move equipment*)



View of Troina at time of battle



Current view of Troina highlighting difficult elevated terrain

# Troina

[37.78376, 14.59802](#)  
43 miles NW of Catania

## Analysis/Assessment

- Despite Allied success in capturing Troina, opening the path to continue the eastward push, Hube's decision to hold the Etna Line at Troina provided invaluable time/space for planning/preparing the German withdrawal
- Hube's decision to use terrain/elevation to enhance defensive posture and create "mountain fortress" at Troina created difficult condition for U.S. advance
- Faulty intel/assumptions regarding German resistance led to initial brash decision-making
- Terrain/conditions hampered American combined fire coordination/efforts
- More/better resources ensured eventual Allied success in Troina
- From German perspective, Troina/Etna Line was the key defensive effort to protect preparations f/orderly withdrawal
  - Defensive effort spt'd safe evacuation of 62K Italian troops, 39.5K German troops, 9.6K vehicles, 94 guns and 47 tanks
- From Allied perspective, Patton's competition to reach Messina first made capturing Troina and a second route to the coast a priority. A better coordinated two-pronged attack from the northwest (U.S.) and southeast (British) may have prevented the need to fight through the central highlands. A



Following 6 days of a "terrible, bloody, slugging match," Allied troops enter Troina on 6 Aug to little resistance following German overnight withdrawal.



Harsh travel conditions into Troina



Mule trains used to move cargo through harsh terrain

## 3-5 Aug:

- 39/18/16/26 Regs initiate major assault across 10-mile front around Troina
- Under Rodt's leadership, 15 Panzer Greandier Div holds Etna line defense despite gradual U.S. advance
- Despite German defensive hold, limited resources/no reserve forces limit long-term effectiveness
- Rodt makes request to Hube to pull back from Troina; Hube again refuses request as evacuation order had not been issued...Troina is key to protecting force withdrawal
- 60 INF Reg (from 9<sup>th</sup> Division) added to assault force to assist 26 INF
- By late evening on 5 Aug, 26 INF gains high ground north of Troina
- 16/39 INF continue to hammer away at center of Etna Line near Troina
  - INF "lavishly" supported with artillery/air spt w/mixed results
  - Coordination challenges resulted in many bombs landing dangerously close to Allied positions, including Allen's CP
- 18 INF advances to high-ground positions to the South of Troina (Mt Pellegrino)
- 26 INF advances despite heavy casualties to capture high-ground position North of Troina (Mt Basilio)
  - Pvt James Reese, 26 INF, awarded MoH f/heroism in fight f/Mt Basilio
- By end of 5 Aug, Allied forces postured on high ground surrounding Troina, Hube orders Rodt to pull back 15 Panzer and Goering Division forces to next defensive line (Tortorici Line).

## 6-7 Aug:

- Allied forces enter destroyed Troina to little resistance as Rodt withdrew forces behind next line.
- Bradley relieves Allen of command of 1ID due to growing concerns regarding his ability to lead

***"Every act of astonishing heroism from the Americans had been matched by the Germans, whose units were all horrendously depleted." – James Holland, Sicily '43***





# Day 3 Stand 11

Brolo

And

LTG Patton (CDR, U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Army)

And

LTG Spaatz (CDR NAAF)

# BROLO AND THE NASO RIDGE

10-12 AUG 1943

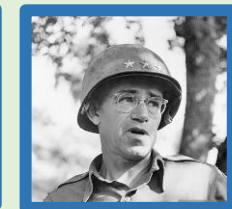
DEW 38.101017, 14.786027  
SR 116 ~ 500 meters north of Sant'Antonio

The Battle of Brolo was a U.S. effort to envelop and encircle the 29<sup>th</sup> (GE) Panzer Grenadier Division defending the Tortorici Line by executing an amphibious assault. This amphibious operation was directed by LTG Patton and executed by a reinforced infantry battalion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division and supported by TF 88 of the USN.

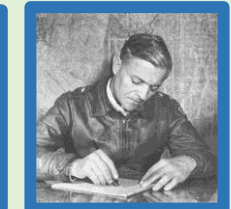
**Questions:**  
Why did this attempt fail? What could have been done differently to make it a success?  
What was the tactical problem? The operational problem? The strategic problem?  
Was this an attempt at operational maneuver or tactical maneuver? Were there other options using an amphibious assault?



LTG Patton  
LTC Bernard



LTG Bradley



MG Truscott



MG Fries

## TIMELINE

**05 AUG:** Germans withdraw from Troina, 78 (BR) Div near Adrano, 50 (BR) Div enter Catania

**06 AUG:** 29 PzGren Div begins withdrawal from San Fratello Line

**Night of 07-08 AUG:** 29 PzGren Div rearguard withdraws from San Fratello Line

**08 AUG:**  
0315-0415 Amphibious Assault to envelop San Fratello Line 1230 Link Up with main body of 3ID.  
PM – 7<sup>th</sup> INF continues advance along HWY 113.

**09 AUG:** Luftwaffe attack sinks LST

**10 AUG:**  
All Day: German forces begin withdrawing from Sicily (Messina)  
AM: Patton calls Bradley to his CP – orders Amphibious Assault on morning of 11 AUG  
AM: 7<sup>th</sup> INF gains foothold across Zappulla River  
AM: 3ID CDR orders 15<sup>th</sup> INF inland to outflank German Defenses  
PM: 15<sup>th</sup> INF occupy Mirto (PM – 2100)  
PM: Multiple phone calls/request to Patton to postpone Amphibious Assault for 24 hours  
1800: 2/30 In Bn completes loading 1 LST, 2 LCIs, & 6 LCTs near Carnoia (22 miles west of Brolo)

**11 AUG:**  
0100: Amphibious TF arrives off Brolo, troops load into LCVPs and DUKWs  
0600: 2/30 IN Reg Objectives Seized  
0600~1200: 2/30 IN Reg defeats several uncoordinated German C-Atks  
1420: 7 and 30 In Reg being attack to the East  
1500: Successful German C-ATK from Brolo to the West  
~1600: LTC Bernard orders BN to withdraw to Mount Cipolla  
1900: Germans control HWY 113 and withdraw

**12 AUG:**  
0730: 1/30 In Reg makes contact with 2/30 In Reg along Naso River



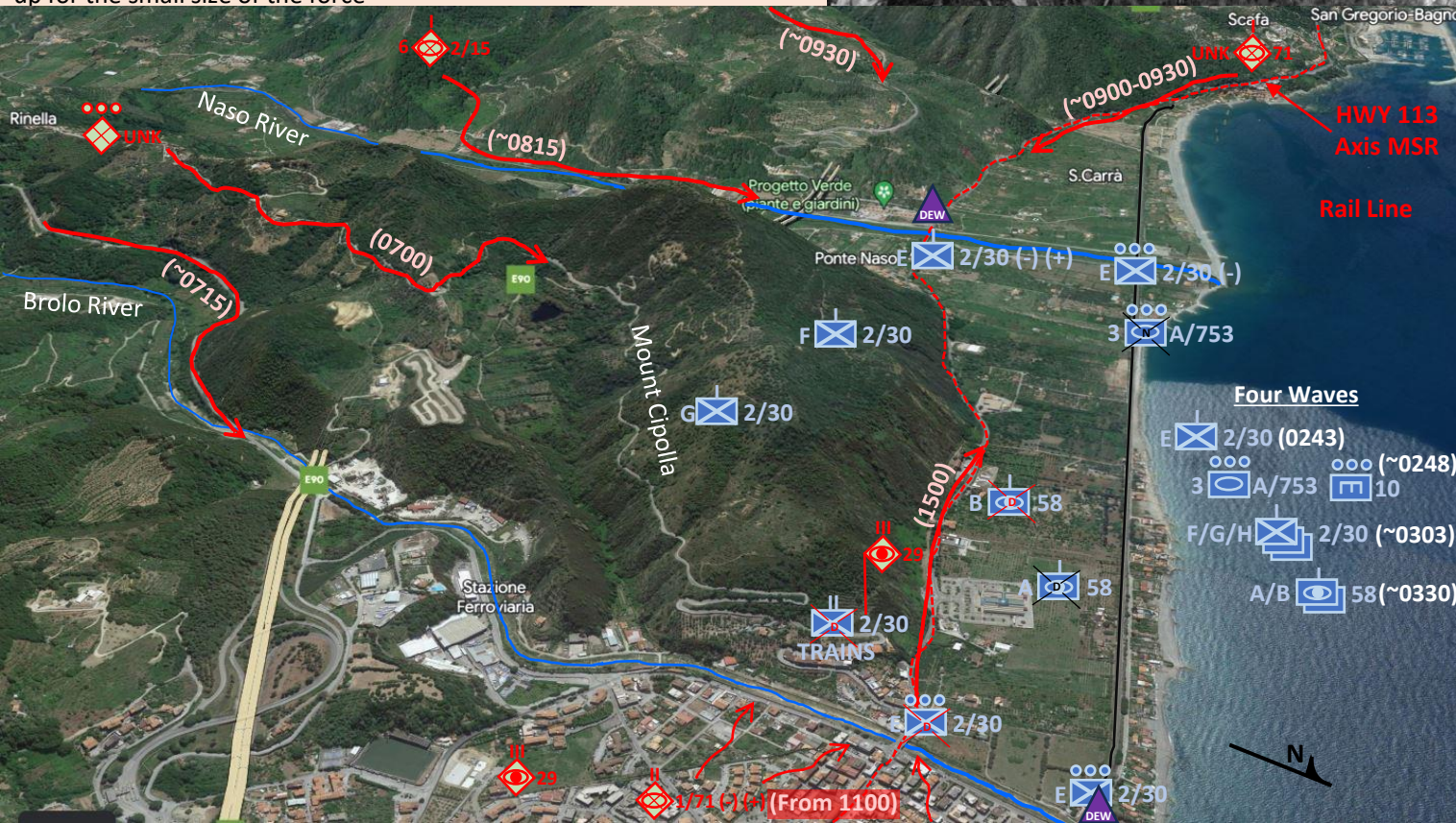
# BROLO AND MOUNT CIPOLLA

## Analysis/Assessment

- The operation forced the 29<sup>th</sup> Pzr Gren Div to withdraw 24 hours earlier than planned, while occupying very favorable terrain.
- The operation came very close to trapping a large part of the 29<sup>th</sup> Panzer Grenadier Division, which would have allowed the U.S. to envelop the entire northern section of the German Defensive line, including the 15<sup>th</sup> Panzer Grenadier Division to the south (IVO Randazzo). With the 29<sup>th</sup> Panzer Grenadier Division eliminated, the U.S. would have been unopposed and may have been able to quickly move to Messina and trap all/most German forces.
- The amphibious assault force was too small to block attacks from East and West and to block the withdrawal of the 15<sup>th</sup> Panzer Grenadier Regiment to the south – an entire RCT was needed. Continuous air (with comms) and naval support (for an entire day or more) may have made up for the small size of the force

DEW 38.148586, 14.801531: SS113 Naso River

DEW 38.160692, 14.827001: Brolo Beach



11 AUG:

0210-0400: Amphibious Assault conducted

0530: Companies F and G on Mount Cipolla, Navy Pre-planned fires

~0600: Companies F and G dug in, Artillery Batteries in position

0600-0700: German forces in Brolo bring direct fire against Eastern slope of Mount Cipolla, killing/wounding 2/30 IN BN's "field trains" (men & mules carrying ammo)

~1000: TF88 withdraws to Palermo

1100: Col Polack assembles forces IVO Brolo and begins to probe toward Brolo River

1140: LTC Bernard begins to ask for urgent Air/Naval support against force to the East

1200: 29<sup>th</sup> Pzr Gr Div withdraws from Naso Ridge to the East (15<sup>th</sup> Pzr Gr Reg to the East of the Naso River, LTC Bernard asks for 155-mm Artillery fires on forces IVO Brolo

1400: 1 x Cruiser and 2 x destroyers begin firing on targets IVO Brolo ICW 155-mm Arty and 12 x A-36 followed 30 minutes later by 12 more

1420: 30<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> (US) Inf Regs begin attack east

1505: Cruiser and Destroyers withdraw to Palermo, Germans attack from Brolo along HWY 113, defeat Plt/E/2/30 and destroy Battery B, but forced to withdraw

1600: F/2/30 IN moves to Brolo River Line to replace E/2/30 – at the same time 7 A-36s attack, destroy Battery A and kill several personnel from HQ/2/30 In Bn. LTC Bernard orders all forces to withdraw to Mount Cipolla

1615: Confusion and chaos cause all DUKWs to withdraw to cruiser/destroyers, including ammunition resupply

1645-1700: Naval fire on Cape Orlando, Brolo, and Highway.

1700-1730: 8 German A/C bomb USN warships – 7 shot down (5 from the Cruiser).

1730: USN withdraws to Palermo

1900: 71<sup>st</sup> Pzr Gren Reg in control of HWY 113.

2200: Full German withdrawal begins - with vehicles, 7<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> In Regs seize crest of Naso Ridge

12 AUG:

0730: 1/30 In Reg makes contact with 2/30 In Reg along Naso River

All Day: The 29<sup>th</sup> Pzr Gr Div withdraws to PL 1

E/2/30 IN: T/P1 – clear enemy from beach to HWY 113 IOT allow FOF movement. T/P2 Block German forces to the East and West IOT prevent their linkup and withdrawal.

F/2/30 IN: T/P: Control Mount Cipolla IOT support E/2/30 and prevent German withdrawal

G/2/30 IN: T/P: Control Mount Cipolla IOT support E/2/30 and prevent German withdrawal

H/2/30 IN: Provide 1 x MG Section to E/F/G Companies and 1 x section of 81mm mortars to F/G Companies

3/A/753 AR: Support E/2/30 IN in defense along HWY 113

A/B Batteries/58 FA: Block any German attempt to withdraw from Naso Ridge (B Btry) and any German relief attempts from Brolo (A Btry)

ENG Platoon: Assist/support landing and movement of Tank Platoon and Arty Batteries



**Messages Received at 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division HQs from LTC Bernard: 11 AUG 1943**

**0600** BLUE ALL IN. LIGHT RESISTANCE. ATTACK PROGRESSING. JEEP BROKEN DOWN.

**0830** BLUE AS PLANNED. ENEMY REINFORCEMENTS STOPPED BY ARTILLERY. MANY ENEMY TRUCKS HIT. CASUALTIES LIGHT. ENEMY PLANES BOMBED OUR POSITION.

**0905** ONE COMPANY ITALIANS ATTACKING FROM THE WEST. WE ARE ON THE BEAM.

**0930** APPROXIMATELY FIVE ENEMY TANKS APPROACHING FROM WEST. SHERMANS OUT AFTER THEM.

**0945** WHERE IS DOC AND HARRY?

**1010** TO SIX (Division Commander) INITIAL COUNTERATTACK REPULSED. RECONNAISSANCE EVIDENT BOTH FLANKS. JEEP NOW OK.

**1140** ENEMY COUNTERATTACK MASSING EAST BROLO 1000 YARDS. REQUEST AIR MISSION ON THAT POSITION AND 753513 AND 719511. URGENT. ALSO NAVY.

**1200** REQUEST ALL POSSIBLE ARTILLERY SUPPORT ON BROLO EAST 1000 YARDS.

**1230** MOTOR-VEHICLES AND M-6 TANKS 3000 YARDS EAST AND IN BROLO. MUST HAVE EVERYTHING.

**1305** NAVY SAYS THEY CANT FIRE UNTIL 1630. MUST HAVE IT NOW. AIR NOT HERE. SITUATION CRITICAL.

**1340** ENEMY COUNTERATTACKING FIERCELY. DO SOMETHING.

**1425** REPEAT AIR AND NAVY IMMEDIATELY. ALSO ON CAPE. HOW ABOUT OTHER DOGFACES. CAN TOMS REACH CAPE. ALSO NAVY AND AIR. SITUATION STILL CRITICAL. MUST BE CONSTANT.

**1610** WHERE IS REINFORCING INFANTRY. NEED DOUGHBOYS BADLY. ANOTHER COUNTERATTACK ON. AMMO VERY SHORT, HAVE LITTLE YELLOW SMOKE LEFT.

**1725** BEING COUNTERATTACKED BY BATTALION FROM WEST. MUST HAVE NAVY AND AIR ON 702504 IMMEDIATELY OR WE ARE LOST.

**1745** WHITE SIX (Bernard) MUST HAVE PREVIOUS MESSAGE OF APPROXIMATELY 1700 IN CLEAR.

**1850** GIVE NAVY PRIORITY AND LET THEM —————END OF TRANSMISSION / RADIO SILENT



11 AUG 1943 Late Afternoon  
LTG Patton visits 93 Evacuation Hospital



# General George Patton: Commander 7<sup>th</sup> Army



## Background

- Nickname(s): "Old Blood and Guts," "Georgie," "Old Man"
- Life: Born, 11 November 1885 (San Gabriel, CA); Died, 21 December 1945 (Buried at Luxembourg American Cemetery)
- Family: Spouse Beatrice Ayer (married, 1910), 3 children
- Service: US Army, 1909–1945
- Early Childhood: Grew up in a military family and aspired to be General from early age. Was regarded as "slow" and struggled in school likely due to Dyslexia (not known at the time)
- Education: VMI (1 yr); West Point (failed 1st year)
- Represented US at the 1912 Olympics (Pentathlon). Close to medaling, but one of his shots was not counted
- Early career highlights: As a Major, he designed a new US Army Sabre and commanded first tank school.
- WW I: He commanded 1st tank brigade, lauded as "Hero of the Tanks" & promoted to Colonel
- From WW I experience, he developed his doctrine of fighting which he applied in WW II: Move swiftly, strike vigorously; War means fighting...Fighting means killing, not digging trenches; When the enemy wavers, throw caution to the winds; Ride the enemy till death and a violent pursuit will finish the show-; He favored being in battle and abhorred staff work.
- After WW I he was a neighbor and friends with Lt Col Dwight Eisenhower
- Was chief proponent of an independent armored force separate from infantry and cavalry prior to WW II
- WW II Commands: 7th Army (Sicily); 3d Army (Normandy)
- History of a temper which resulted in two significant incidents during race to Messina where he assaulted two soldiers for cowardice during field hospital visits. These incidents along with friendly fire and POW killings led to punishment from Eisenhower and hurt his career and relationship with Eisenhower.
- In attack on Biscari airfield, two infantry Sergeants killed nearly 100 Germany/Italian POWs in which Patton initially tried to cover up, but Bradley refused. They used Patton's orders as their defense which failed.

## Personality

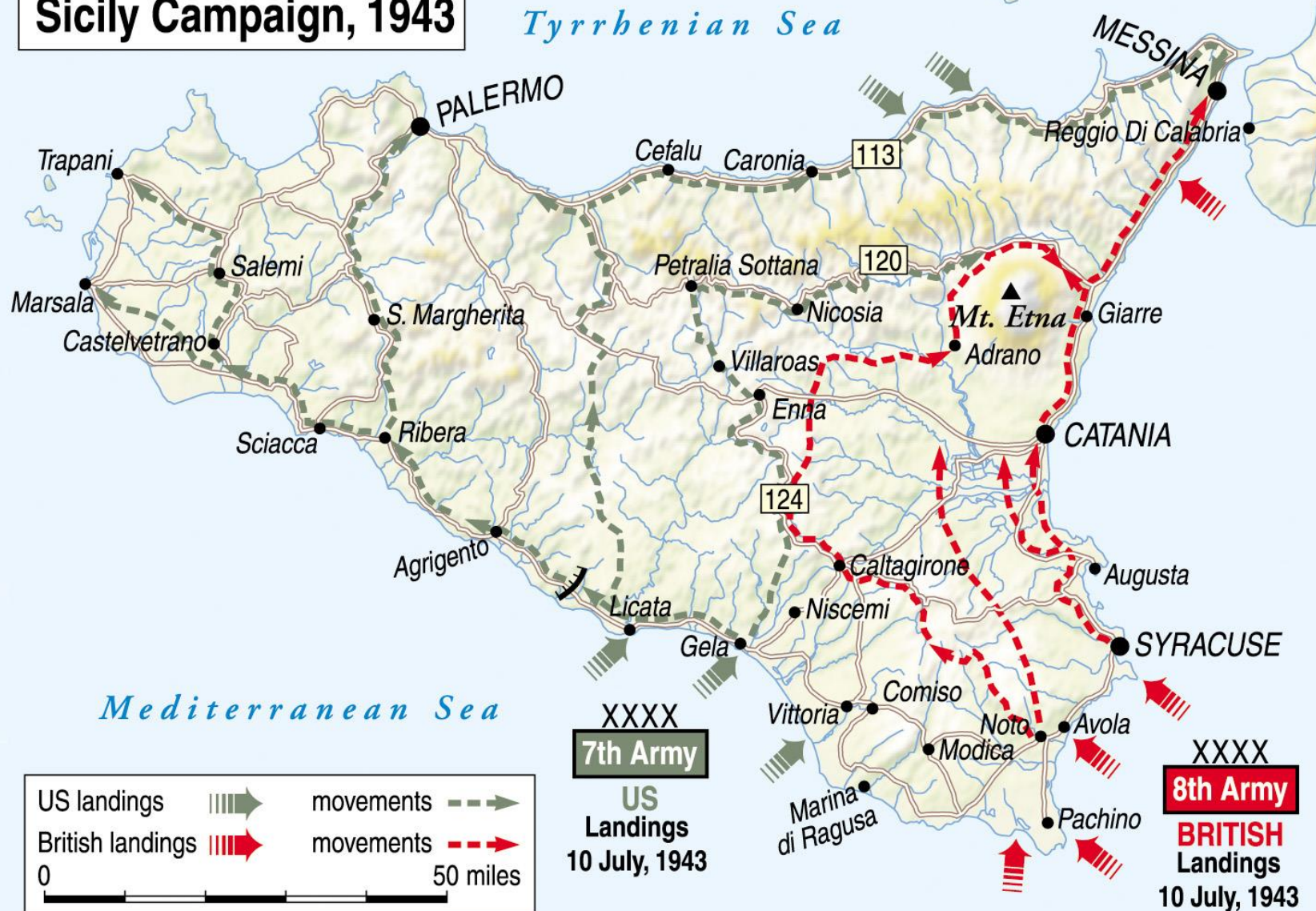
- "Firebrand"; Risk taker and aggressive; "caution leads to death"
- Believed in hard training and preparation
- Jekyll and Hyde personality--crude/tough in front of the troops and intellectual/cultured with peers
- Charismatic leader, inspirational public speaker, sought the spotlight
- Master of mobile tank warfare, less concerned about "logistics"

## Sicily Decisions / Assessment

- Initially, Patton and 7th Army was relegated to a support role in campaign due to British unease of American fighting capability and spirit
- Mission: Amphibious assault in Gulf of Gela & left flank support to 8th Army
- Key objectives: Gela and airfields: Ponte Oliva, Biscari, & Comiso. Later, Palermo and Messina.
- 7th Army landings were largely unimpeded, but Axis counterattack on 10/11 July and C2/congestion/logistical issues at beachheads slowed progress
- Naval gunfire and gallant troop efforts enabled allies to repel counterattack but lack of CAS eroded effectiveness
- Patton's decision to replace 36th Div with 1st Div, CC'd by Terry Allen proved critical to triumphant stand at Gela
- Patton's decision to call up airborne reserves on 11 July led to tragedy from naval friendly fire which destroyed 60 aircraft and killed over 140.
- Patton's individual efforts during Gela counterattack resulted in a DSC
- 7th Army/8th Army boundary line change on 13 Oct slowed overall progress and further eroded Patton/Montgomery relationship. Patton likely didn't push back on this change to superiors because he was lambasted for previous mistakes (\*Most controversial operational decision of campaign\*)
- Patton advocated for greater role for 7th Army which led to approval of "reconnaissance in force" of Palermo which became full-on capture of the city
- Patton's 4-day sweep around the west was valuable to US morale and credibility in the eyes of Alexander/Montgomery. Combined with 8th stalemate, Alexander/Monty agreed to approve Patton to advance along N. Sicily to take Messina
- Race to Messina led Patton to push Bradley's II Corps, confronting him and subordinate CCs for not going fast enough.
- Terrain and coastal roads east of Palermo, along with Axis delay tactics painfully slowed progress of 7th Army
- As such, Patton ordered three amphibious flanking operations which Bradley and subordinates deemed the second/third unnecessary which in fact they were, and the amphibious troops arrived after the ground were already there
- Patton won the race and ordered that he be the first to enter the city
- Overall: Lack of collaboration between Patton and Montgomery due to their bitter rivalry led to poor unity of effort and hindered campaign effectiveness.



# Sicily Campaign, 1943





# Lt General Carl “Tooeey” Spaatz: Commander, Northwest African Air Force

## Background and Education

- Born in Boyerton, PA– 28 Jun 1891
- Ran Father’s newspaper – 1908-1909
- Attended West Point 1910-1914, attempted to resign
- Classmates and acquaintances with Omar Bradley and Dwight Eisenhower
- Inspired to become aviator by Glenn Curtis’ prize winning Hudson river flight from Albany to New York
- Performed obligatory 1-year in infantry at Schofield Barracks before flying school at North Island, San Diego
- First flying assignment supporting Pershing's ground forces against Pancho Villa in Mexico
- Combat duties in France as Commander of 31st Aero Sq impressed Pershing, Foulis, and Mitchell by revamping training and standardization of flying operations
- 7th Bomb Gp/CC formative on view of airpower
- Served as Chief of Air Staff during development of AWPD-1 overseeing Hansell and George
- Commanded 8 AF in 1942 and brought USAAF to England – placed in charge of all USAAF in Europe
- Eisenhower’s Air Deputy at Casablanca Conference
- Named Commander of Allied Northwest African Air Force in May 1943 including 12th and 15th Air Force
- Appointed first Chief of Staff of United States Air Force in Sep 1947



## Sicily Decisions / Assessment

- Ensured centralized control of all Air Forces during battle
- Objective was to achieve air superiority by providing single-engine fighter coverage for the amphibious operation while using bombers to pound enemy positions and interdict supply lines
- Fighter aircraft lacked range to provide coverage from Tunisia
- Proposed taking Pantelleria airfield to serve as base for fighters
- 99th Fighter Squadron of Tuskegee Airmen pounded the island under command of Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.
- Pounded Sicily with bomber aircraft weeks before landing
- Medium bombers targeted Sicilian ports/airfields; heavy bombers conducted interdiction of airfields and ports north to Rome
- Effective air coverage during amphibious assault – only 12 of 1400 Navy vessels sank by Axis air units
- Airborne assault operation went poorly – weak formation discipline and navigation errors scattered troops far away from drop zones;
- Short planning window and poor coordination resulted in 22 C-47 aircraft shot down by Allied gunners
- Glider operations went poorly - late delivery and little time to train
- Ultimately, excellent weather, low attrition, and high ops tempo resulted in quickly achieving air superiority (possibly supremacy)
- Kesselring’s counterassault at Palermo necessitated diverting bombers from mainland assault and conducting more paratrooper drops – improved/effective airdrop operations by September



## Personality

- Nonchalant – difficult to anger and never took himself too seriously
- Gregarious - loved outdoors, fishing, and birdwatching
- Expert – understood tactical operations for bomber and pursuit aircraft
- Adventurous – pioneer of military aviation- during dangerous epoch
- Wise airpower thinker – non-academic that relied on wit, perception, and experience as basis for how to properly employ airpower in conflict





Day 3    Stand 12

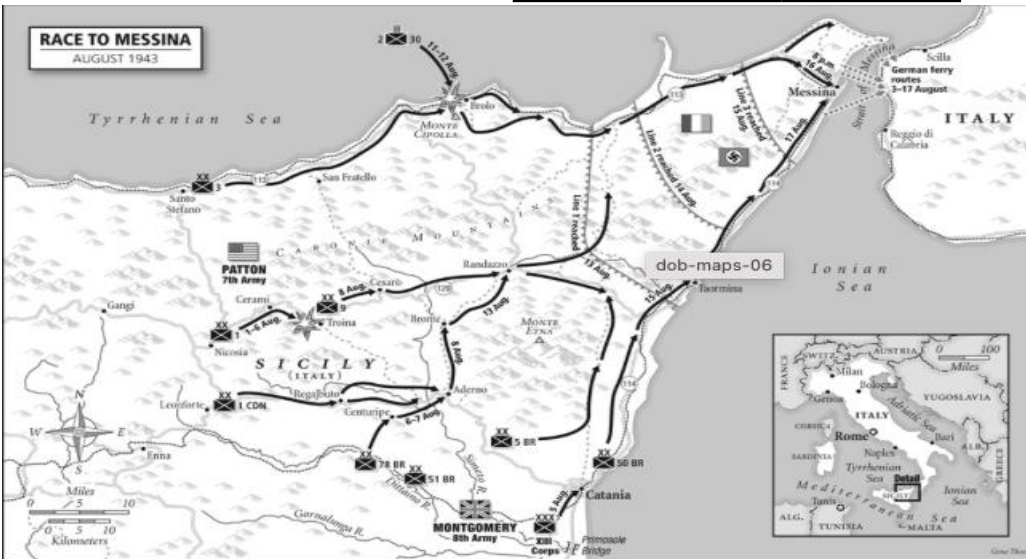
Messina



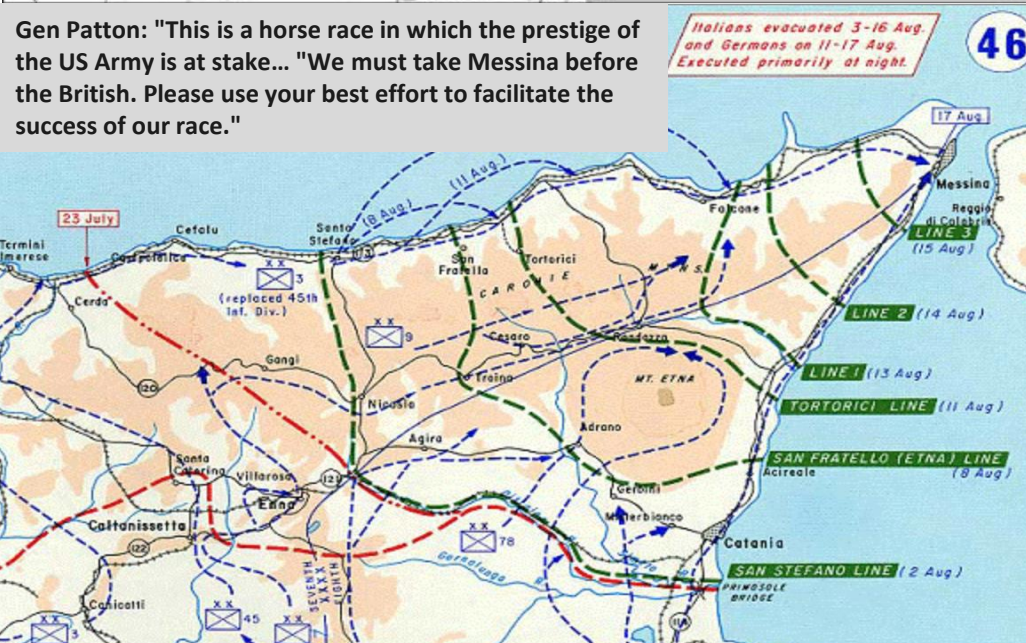
# Race to Messina

38.192121, 15.554581

Piazza del Duomo City Square



Gen Patton: "This is a horse race in which the prestige of the US Army is at stake..." "We must take Messina before the British. Please use your best effort to facilitate the success of our race."



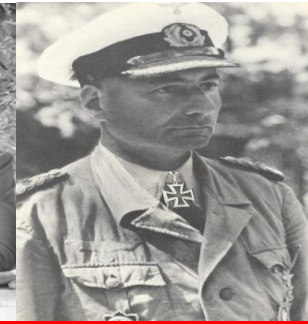
German evacuation plan, "Lehrgang," called for a phased withdrawal from 5 converging defensive lines. As each line was reached, 5-10K troops were released to designated embarkation sites.



General Hans  
Valentin Hube  
German  
Command of  
Sicily (XIV Corps)



Oberst Ernst-Günther  
Baade  
German unified cmdr  
of straits  
(defense/evacuation)



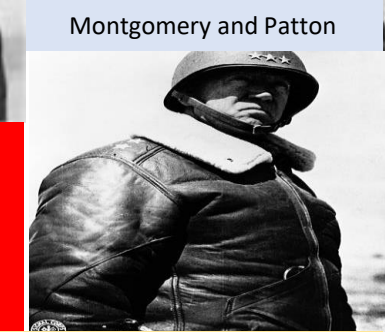
Baron von  
Liebenstein  
German Sea  
Transport Leader  
(straits transport)



Admiral Pietro  
Barone  
Italian Sicily  
Naval  
Commander



Montgomery and Patton



## Timeline

Mid Jul---Kesselring asks Hube to prepare a contingency evacuation plan to avoid repeating disaster of Tunisia

22 July---Palermo falls to Patton's 7th Army

26 Jul---OKW orders preparation of evacuation plan. Plan codenamed 'Lehrgang' is already close to being finalized, but is kept secret from Italians

27 Jul---Hube orders von Liebenstein and Baade to prepare for evacuation

31 Jul---Fierce battle of Troina begins with US 1st Div against 15th Panzer Grenadier Div (31 Jul – 6 Aug)

1 Aug---Warning orders are issued to German units

2 Aug---Kesselring approves evacuation plan but ask that he be notified before executing plan

3 Aug---General Alexander request Admiral Cunningham and Air Chief Marshall Tedder coordinate Naval/Air efforts to prevent enemy evacuation

4 Aug---Hube issues evacuation of all German units that could be spared without consent from OKW

7 Aug---After fall of Troina and Adrano, Hube initiate's final German withdrawal in preparation of Lehrgang

8 Aug---Kesselring orders Hube to begin evacuation (Does not inform Hitler or ask for approval). On this day, San Fratello and Bronte were both lost.

8 Aug---Montgomery cancels amphibious maneuver

9 Aug---Italians learn of order and issue their order to evacuate

10 Aug---Kesselring issues formal order to begin Operation Lehrgang from 11-16 August. German divisions reach Tortorici line

10 Aug---Patton orders Brolo operation to commence on 11 August

11 Aug---Night evacuation of Lehrgang begins. Von Liebenstein pleads Hube to expand daylight operations which is granted because of night challenges

12 Aug---Patton proposes airborne/amphibious landing at Barcelona to trap 15th/29th Panzer Grenadier Divs, but concerns over troop losses and time lost reviewing makes plan pointless as Germany retreated beyond target

13 Aug---US & British forces converge on Randazzo and take the town, but German troops escape (15th/29th Panzer Grenadier Divs)

12-16 Aug---Evacuation operations improve due to better moonlight, increased efficiency, and expanded day operations

16 Aug---Montgomery orders amphibious assault on Messina

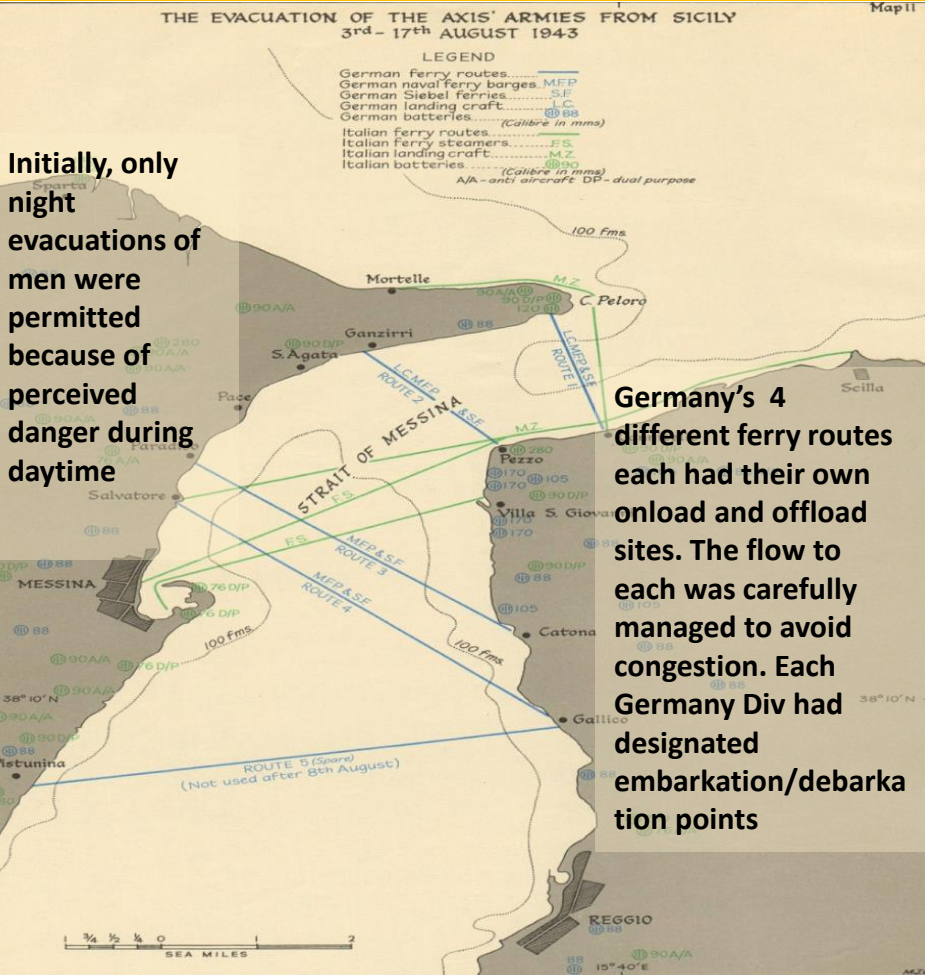
17 Aug---Germany completes evacuation in morning

\*Hitler did not order evacuation until 16 August after all troops had safely evacuated\*



# Messina Evacuation (11-17 Aug)

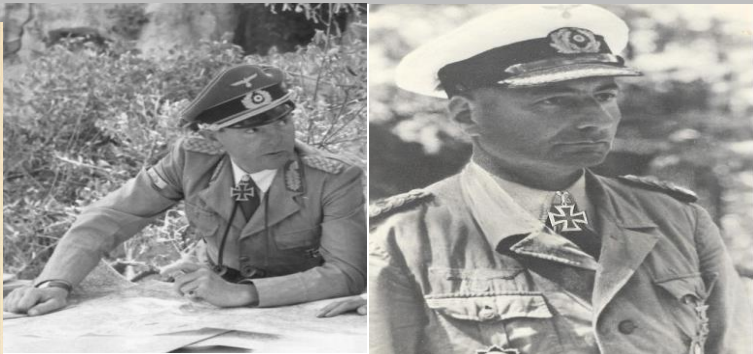
**Overall Assessment: Germany designed and orchestrated one of the most masterful defensive battles and evacuations in history**



Longest ferry routes were 3-5 miles. Narrowest strait - approx. 1 mile

## 38.211543, 15.561560 Ferry Terminal

Germany optimized every aspect of Messina strait operations. They unified operations with a clear chain of command for both defense and ferry services.



**Oberst Ernst-Günther Baade**  
German unified commander of straits (defense/evacuation). Overall commander who reorganized defenses including augmenting AA defenses and creating 6 flak sectors, 3 on each side of straits.

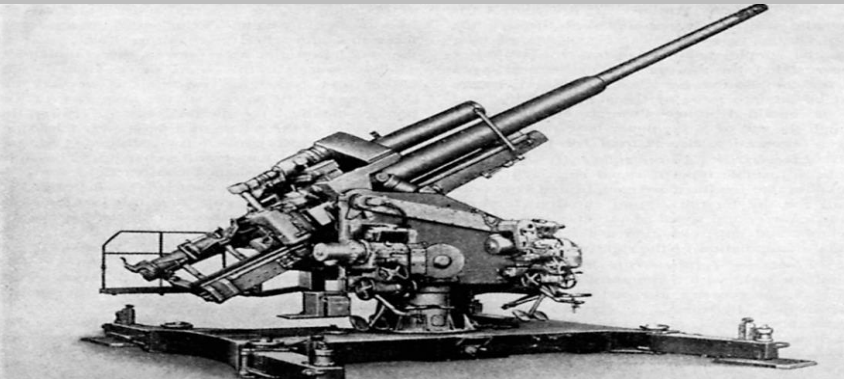
**Baron von Liebenstein**  
German Sea Transport Leader  
He streamlined and unified Messina Strait operations, correcting former deficiencies. Developed a roll-on/roll-off capability which reduced ferry load/unload times to 20 minutes.

Germany and Italy executed completely independent evacuations similar in nature. Both had four ferry routes but the Italians vessels were incapable of loading heavy equipment.

Siebel Ferry used during evacuation



Germany utilized 140 total vessels: 76 motorboats, 33 barges, 7 MPFs (landing beach crafts), 13 smaller landing craft, & 12 Siebel Ferris. Italy used only 2 small steamers and one ferry.



“A2AD network” around Messina straits was extremely effective against allied efforts to disrupt evacuation. The network made attacks on the evacuation flotilla extremely hazardous. Combination of anti-aircraft artillery, naval presence including mini-submarines and patrol boats, naval shore gun emplacements, combined with the narrow straits denied allied efforts. AA defense included over 330 anti-aircraft pieces on both sides of the straits. Intensity of flak made bombing precarious, forcing bombing at high-altitude. A barge at 20,000 feet was a small target nearly impossible to hit.

**Outcome:** Germany managed to evacuate over 54,000 soldiers, nearly 10,000 vehicles, over fifty tanks, over 160 guns, over 1,800 tons of ammunition and fuel, and nearly 17,000 tons of equipment. Three divisions and part of a fourth escaped Sicily to fight again. Italy evacuated over 62,000 personnel, 227 vehicles, and 41 artillery pieces. Only one German soldier was killed by allied air attacks during evacuation.



# Messina Evacuation

Ferry 38.211543, 15.561560

Ferry Terminal

**Why did the Axis Escape?:** The lack of unity of effort between naval, air, and ground forces along with US/Britain discord was a major reason. First, the strategic bombing fleet was ineffectively applied. Only 5.5% of bombers sorties were used in the 17 days of August. Only 25% of all sorties (tactical and strategic) went to interfering with the Axis withdrawal with minimal results. In the first 10 days of August, 528 bomber sorties flew against targets in the Messina straits, dropping 1,217,000 tons of bombs. Fighter-bombers flew 759 sorties. During the evacuation, minimal air effort (only 293 tons) led to sinking zero axis vessels. Overall, Germany reported destruction of 1 Seibel ferry and four other smaller crafts. The Navy was also not utilized effectively to prevent the escape. Cunningham was overly concerned of another Dardanelles massacre of the fleet and didn't want to risk the fleet. The biggest operational mistake came when Montgomery changed the 7th/8th boundary line and altered his main effort from coastal plains to highlands. At the same time, Montgomery failed to effectively use Naval/Amphibious operations to flank/end run German troops. Another factor that contributed to the German withdrawal at Messina, was the failure to deliver enough transport vehicles to the 8th Army at the beginning of the campaign (poor logistical planning), resulting in troop exhaustion. Lastly, the terrain and lack of modern infrastructure was a significant issue throughout the campaign, which made it difficult to fight a modern, mechanized way of war. The mountainous terrain and lack of roads capable of supporting large scale attack gave a considerable advantage to the defense. There often was not enough "space" mount a large attack with multiple divisions. The roads could simply not handle the throughput of infantry, armor, and artillery to pass down it. The narrowing of the Northeast Triangle near Messina made this even more challenging. On top of this, the climate - hot, sunny, and humid - quickly led to troop exhaustion.



**Sicily offered a significant advantage to the defense:** Germany effectively used prepared defensive positions and rear-guard delaying tactics to impede Allied progress. They laid mines and booby traps and blew bridges to slow progress. Additionally, mountainous terrain and lack of roads eroded progress and speed. The northeast part of the island was the most mountainous with limited roads. This restricted movement and lines of advance. While the allies enjoyed air superiority through most of the campaign and significant material advantage, Germany had the advantage of defending a line that continued to get smaller as they pushed NE from the early stages of the campaign (e.g. 922 miles to 60 miles at the Etna line). This enabled less troops to defend the line. For comparison, US 3d Div traveled 40 miles in one day during march to Palermo, but it took 18 days to travel the N. Coastal roads to Messina



# Day 3 Stand 13

Catania

Discussion of Operation