

CRADLE OF TRIUMPH: THE INVASION OF SICILY AND THE
ANGLO-AMERICAN ALLIANCE IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

A Master's Thesis

by

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August 2017

*From Beirut to Gibraltar;
To the Mediterranean, where the Fate of the World will be decided.*

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WAR**

Graduate School of Economic and Social Sciences
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August 2017

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in History.



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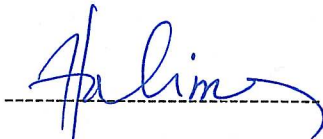
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ABSTRACT

CRADLE OF TRIUMPH: THE INVASION OF SICILY AND THE ANGLO-AMERICAN ALLIANCE IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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This study analyzes the vital importance of the Invasion of Sicily (July 9/10-August 17, 1943), codenamed Operation Husky for the Anglo-American Alliance in the Second World War. As the largest amphibious operation in the Second World War, Operation Husky stands as a significant military action which enhanced the strategic, operational and the tactical capacities of the American and British forces. Surpassing the previous victories, this experience enabled the Anglo-American Alliance to attain further victories later in Europe. However, its role has been underrated in the military historiography of the Second World War. Therefore, this thesis aims to assert its importance through a three-level, strategic, operational and tactical analysis.

Key Words: Anglo-American Alliance, Mediterranean Theatre of Operations in the Second World War, Operation Husky, Sicily, Three-Level Analysis of War

ÖZET

ZAFERİN BEŞİĞİ: İKİNCİ DÜNYA SAVAŞI'NDA SİCİLYA İSTİLASI VE ANGLO-AMERİKAN İTTİFAKI

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Bu çalışma İkinci Dünya Savaşı esnasında Sicilya İstilasası'nın, bir diğer ismiyle Husky Harekâtı'nın, Anglo-Amerikan İttifakı için önemini incelemektedir. İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın en geniş kapsamlı amfibik operasyonu olan Husky Harekâtı, Anglo-Amerikan İttifakı'nın stratejik, operasyonel ve taktik kabiliyetlerini pekiştiren kayda değer bir askeri eylemdir. Daha önceki zaferleri gölgede bırakan bu tecrübe, Anglo-Amerikan İttifakı'nın Avrupa'da kazanacağı diğer zaferlerin yolunu açmıştır. Ancak İkinci Dünya Savaşı askeri tarih yazımında bu harekâta hak ettiği önem atfedilmemiştir. Bu sebeple bu tez çalışması üç katmanlı, stratejik, operasyonel ve taktik çözümleme vasıtasıyla mevzubahis harekâtın önemini ortaya koymayı hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Anglo-Amerikan İttifakı, Husky Harekâtı, İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Akdeniz Harekât Alanı, Muharebenin Üç Katmanlı İncelemesi, Sicilya

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Both of them were the best teachers I have ever had and they occupy the same position in the lives of their thousands of other students. I hope they can feel my gratitude on the other side of this thin line. As for the living;

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Objectives and Sources

Was the Allied Invasion of Sicily (9 July-17 August 1943) –codenamed Operation Husky– a sideshow to the other more well-known battles of the Second World War? Was it solely designed by the British? And did the cunning Britons push the naïve American allies into this strategic suction point during the Second World War as eminent American historians of the Second World War, such as Trumbull Higgins and Carlo D’Este have stressed time and again?

The answer of this thesis to the above posed questions is “no” and it is going to refute the above mentioned notions first by asserting that Operation Husky was a joint strategic decision which led the Anglo-American alliance to victory in the European and Mediterranean theatres of the Second World War, as it initiated the first foothold on the European continent. Secondly, operationally it was planned in effective and flexible collaboration even while the planners were occupied with the unfinished war in North

Africa; because the Anglo-American alliance managed to set up a fine command structure, employed some of the best forces available and created a coherent operational plan, which was far superior to the plans made for previous operations in the theatre such as Operation Torch and the Tunisian campaign as it set clear cut operational objectives for a better organized and led Anglo-American invasion force. Thirdly, it was executed with great success in the field of tactics, on which the first large-scale amphibious operation of the Second World War was realized, because the Husky tacticians did not repeat the tactical mistakes of the Dieppe Raid or the Tunisian Campaign such as the discord between the allied commanders and forces on the battleground, misuse of available armor and infantry and poor execution of the combined warfare.¹ Thus, the research question of this thesis is as follows: How did Operation Husky strategically, operationally and tactically strengthen the Anglo-American alliance and lead it to victory against the German-Italian Axis in the European and Mediterranean theatres of the Second World War?

First of all, Husky was a momentous strategic decision. Invading Sicily in the given critical stage of the Second World War was not an easy decision to make. Even if it appears retrospectively as the logical course of action to the contemporary audience, Operation Husky was not without strategic alternatives before its inception. Hence, the strategic background of the Invasion of Sicily is rich. Debate over the issue of the second front to relieve the Soviets had already begun.² Even Operation Torch did not finalize the course of strategy in Europe and the Mediterranean and Husky had to fight

¹ Contrary to the popular consensus, Operation Husky was a larger amphibious operation than Operation Overlord. While 156.000 Anglo-American troops landed in Normandy D-Day 160.000 troops was present in the Husky landings.

² Trumbull Higgins, *Winston Churchill and the Second Front, 1940-1943* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974), 45.

its strategic alternatives in North West Europe and Mediterranean.³ However, once the Anglo-American leadership decided to invade Sicily, they settled their differences over their next military target and began to prepare for the Invasion of Sicily.

The planning of Operation Husky furthered this strategic decision; chiefly because the planning phase consolidated cooperation among the Anglo-American military leadership, while revealing their doctrinal differences.⁴ However, their doctrinal differences (such as American emphasis on mobility and British force concentration) for the conduct of the warfare amalgamated and perfected their military plans in the face of geographical restraints (such as the weather conditions on D-Day or the rugged terrain of central Sicily) and threatening challenges the Axis posed such as armor counter attacks, entrenchments and fortifications on the hills and urban areas. Before it was put into action on the Island of Sicily, the Anglo-American alliance enhanced the invasion plans with the appointment of skilled commanders including well known military geniuses; General George S. Patton and General Bernard Law Montgomery, and with the employment of the capable military formations they were to command, respectively the 7th U.S. Army and the 8th British Army. These developments in turn paved the way for a successful combined assault with a fusion of the above differences. The plans for Husky were also reinforced with preliminary assaults against the Axis-controlled isles on the south of Sicily, Pantelleria and the Pelagie Islands. Finally, the deceptive operations *Barclay* and *Mincemeat* prior to the invasion helped Anglo-American alliance to deceive

³ Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1999), 365-366.

⁴ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 164-165.

the Axis about the location of the invasion by leading them to believe that the actual invasion would take place either in Greece or Sardinia.

Once landings started and Anglo-American forces swiftly advanced from the southeastern tip of Sicily to Messina in about a month (10 July-17 August, 1943), Husky proved to be an immense military success. Airborne assaults, amphibious landings and mechanized movements executed by Anglo-American allies during Operation Husky were tactically exemplary in contemporary military history. Thus, the Anglo American military seized the opportunity to implement efficient and innovative military tactics (such as airborne assaults, successive amphibious operations or armored offensives) and Operation Husky gave them an opportunity to fight in unison which they had not perfected before and had paid dearly during their previous actions in the Mediterranean such as in the Battle of Kasserine Pass. Thus, Operation Husky was decisive in the consolidation of Anglo-American alliance strategically, operationally and tactically. Consequently, it was this consolidation that defeated the Axis in Europe.

In order to answer the research question posed at the beginning of the introduction and in order to better evaluate the underlying reasons for the significance of this question, this study is going to restrict itself to the perspectives of the British Empire and the United States. This will partially sacrifice a thorough analysis of the opposing forces, the Wehrmacht and the Royal Italian Army. Therefore, the Axis forces on the island of Sicily are going to play the role of *Clausewitzian* animate objects that react.⁵

⁵Clausewitz understood war not as a science or as an art but as a social phenomenon, because unlike in the natural sciences or art, a planner applies his designs on an object in motion. Therefore, this study is going to adhere to this precept and examine the Axis forces from the eyes of Anglo-American allies. For a good definition of Clausewitzian perspective of enemy; see: Edward N. Luttwak. *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003).

On the basis of the above stated rationale, the respective leading figures of the United States and the British Empire –such as political leaders, diplomats and high-ranking military officers– and their roles in deciding, planning and executing Operation Husky is going to constitute the main focus of this study. Furthermore, some of the typical questions that can be summarized into the question of “who was the senior partner?” in the Anglo-American alliance will not be a part of this study –though it has been a centerpiece of the relevant literature.⁶

As, at the given critical moment of the Second World War, the issue of seniority did not explicitly influence the high level leadership of both countries; it did not shape the combined strategy and tactics on a conflict of primacy and the related primary sources do not indicate an outright “controversy” over the matter.⁷ It cannot be denied that there had been an argument over the strategic issues, but defining them as controversy would be hyperbole. Besides, correspondences, accounts of senior figures and the official documents explicitly show that the American and British forces learned to work better together and consolidated their cooperative action on the ground during the Italian Campaign. Meanwhile, what mattered most to the Anglo-American leadership was to find a design to win the Second World War and Operation Husky was a vital chain in the grand design.

⁶ The issue of seniority is emphasized throughout the works of Historians of the Anglo-American Alliance such as Reynolds’ *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance 1937-41: A Study in Competitive Co-Operation* or Higgins’ *Winston Churchill and the Second Front: 1940-1943*. However, while depicting the events related to the Anglo-American alliance as a contest and thus creating controversy over the subject is useful for attracting readers or creating a debate for historians, in the opinion of this thesis it does not necessarily reflect the actual nature of the subject.

⁷ Warren F. Kimball, ed., *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence: Alliance Forged November 1942-February 1944*. vol 2. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 188-189.

As for the above-mentioned primary documents, they are in two categories: published diaries, memoirs and autobiographies; published official documents and correspondence. Given the fact that this study is going to analyze the decisions made by the higher echelons of the Anglo-American leadership, it would be appropriate to start with the published diaries, memoirs and autobiographies belonging to these figures. Briefly these primary sources are comprised of the and fifth volumes of Churchill's *The Second World War*; the memoirs of his diplomatic counterparts, such as Robert D. Murphy and Harold Macmillan; various memoirs and diaries of military commanders like the ardent proponent of the Mediterranean strategy Field Marshall Alan Brooke to its most acerbic critic General Albert C. Wedemeyer. There is also a considerable number of published collections of documents and correspondence such as; *Foreign Relations of the United States* documents, *Complete Correspondence* of Roosevelt and Churchill, *World War II: Inter-Allied Conferences* series, *History of Allied Force Headquarters*. Therefore, the number of documents which are readily available to construct this thesis is adequate.

The secondary literature is well-rounded. However, in addition to the American and British official histories of the Invasion of Sicily, there are several works directly dealing with Operation Husky, most of which are critical about the decision to launch Husky and its consequences.⁸ However, Operation Husky has also been the subject of at least a chapter in works dealing with the Italian Campaign and the Mediterranean

⁸ See: Carlo D'Este, *Bitter Victory: The Battle for Sicily July-August 1943* (London: Collins, 1988); Samuel W. Mitcham Jr. and Friedrich von Stauffenberg, *The Battle of Sicily: How the Allies Lost Their Chance for Total Victory* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole, 2007).

theatre.⁹ Furthermore, Operation Husky was the initial Anglo-American response to the question of the second front. There are primarily two attitudes regarding the Mediterranean theatre and its offset Operation Husky. Spearheaded by American historian Trumbull Higgins and advanced by Carlo D'Este, the first attitude condemned the decision to invade Sicily as a strategic decision that prolonged the Second World War in Europe; they denounced the operational plans for the lack of direction and criticized tactical movements for being ineffective.¹⁰ The opposing point of view, on the other hand, maintained that the decision to invade Sicily was correct; the Italian Campaign initiated by the Operation Husky fulfilled the expectations of the Anglo-American alliance and the real mistake was its abandonment in the last phase of the Second World War.¹¹ This study adheres to the latter view. Nonetheless, this view was not enforced with the works that particularly deals with the Invasion of Sicily. Therefore, this thesis will try to elaborate this view with particular regard to Operation Husky in order to fill the above mentioned gap. Furthermore, this study is going to interpret the Anglo-American alliance and its development during Operation Husky through the utilization of more contemporary sources and methods in military history and it will aim to contribute to present literature with its three-leveled strategic, operational and tactical analysis of the subject.

1.2 Structure and Scope

⁹ See: Winston Churchill, *Closing the Ring: The Second World War*. vol. 5. (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951), 23-65; Andrew Buchanan, *American Grand Strategy in the Mediterranean during World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 109-133.

¹⁰ Higgins, 212-214.

¹¹ See: Michael Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy in the Second World War* (New York: Preager, 1968); Chester Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe* (New York, NY: Harper Colophon Books, 1963), 12-13.

In contemporary military theory, war is compartmentalized into three levels: strategic, operational and tactical levels.¹² This study adheres to this framework and it will implement these three levels structurally, because a three layered analysis of war reveals a clearer vision of war –a phenomenon that is becoming more complex in time– by pointing out the interrelation among the causes, decisions and consequences. The three layers of this analytical methodology in military studies are as follows: strategic-level assessment deals with the evolution of national interests into a decision for a particular geographic domain; the operational level evaluates the assignment of forces, operational planning and preliminary action in support of the plans; the tactical level deals with the conduct of the engagements and it is marked by the use of concentrated force and offensive actions to gain strategic and operational objectives. Only through such compartmentalized analysis, the challenging task of demonstrating the arguments and putting forth an interpretation of this thesis can be achieved: the Anglo-American Alliance became more integrated and won a decisive victory which would be decisive in the future operations; the war in Sicily was not a mere sideshow.

Since wars are won or lost on the strategic level, this study is going to commence with an analysis of the strategic level of Operation Husky.¹³ Therefore, Chapter II is going to start with an analysis of strategic situation that was present in the Mediterranean Theatre prior to the decision to invade Sicily. It will continue with the analysis of the determinant politico-military meetings in Casablanca (SYMBOL) and

¹² Clayton R. Newell, “Modern Warfare: Balancing the Ends, Ways and Means,” *Army* (August 1986): 24–28.

¹³ Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray, “Lessons of War”, *The National Interest*, Winter (1988-1989): 83–95.

Washington (TRIDENT). The first subsection of this chapter is going to start with the geographic and strategic analyses of the series of events that accumulated into the invasion of Sicily in the context of Second World War. Why did the Anglo-American alliance choose Mediterranean and Sicily as the first strategic object to stage a large amphibious offensive? The answer lies in the historical events that transformed the Anglo-American relationship to the Mediterranean. After the surrender of France, the British Empire was fighting for her survival in the vast waters of the Atlantic and Mediterranean, the skies of the mother country and the deserts of Egypt and Libya since September 1939. She barely resisted by herself until Operation Barbarossa and Pearl Harbor in 1941 and the primary theatre that kept the Empire intact was the Mediterranean and the Middle-East. The Americans were also well aware of the situation even before Pearl Harbor. However, Britain's situation in the Mediterranean was not stabilized until her relief with the victory in the Second Battle of El Alamein and the start of Operation Torch.¹⁴ In the context of these relevant events, the first part of Chapter II is going to evaluate the relevant diplomatic and military decisions such as Europe First and Operation Torch. Furthermore, in order to enforce the understanding of these decisions, this part is going to analyze the doctrinal and ideological differences that occurred between the Americans and the British since these decisions and differences had shaped the Anglo-American alliance and strategy and led them to the Mediterranean and in particular to Sicily.

¹⁴ The Second Battle of El Alamein (23 October-11 November, 1942) brought an end to the Axis threat in the Suez Channel which was the artery of the British Empire while Operation Torch (8-16 November, 1942) heralded the consolidation of the Anglo-American Allies in the southern coastline of the Mediterranean.

The second part of Chapter II is going to evaluate the Casablanca Conference (January 14-24, 1943) in which Sicily was decided as the next step in the Anglo-American combined warfare. Before the conclusion of the military actions in North Africa, however, Anglo-American leadership started considering the next strategic objective. They met in Casablanca to determine the next phase of the European War.¹⁵ Furthermore, the Sicily decision led them to rectify the strategy and complete the schedule for the war at the Third Washington Conference (12-25 May, 1943) just before the beginning of the invasion. In order to answer the question why Sicily was chosen over the alternative directions, the series of discussions between the British and American representatives must be evaluated within the context of grand strategy. Because, the decision to invade Sicily also meant that the Mediterranean strategy won over the Cross-Channel strategy in the given period of the Second World War, and it meant that Europe continued its primacy over the Pacific theatre on a global scale.¹⁶ First, the quest for a second front in order to relieve the Soviet Union in the Eastern Front was resolved in these meetings. Furthermore, they were instrumental in “closing the ring” around the Axis forces by securing the Mediterranean routes and ultimately eliminating the first Axis nation Italy. Besides, with the Trident conference, the Anglo-American strategy in the West took its final form.

Following the evaluation of the strategic level, this study is going to continue with the analysis of the operational level of the Invasion of Sicily in Chapter III. Operational level contains the organization of military power in order to fulfill the

¹⁵ Robert D. Murphy, *Diplomat among Warriors* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 162.

¹⁶ Buchanan, 109.

strategic objectives in a degree of synchronization.¹⁷ Therefore, this chapter is going to start with an analysis of the formation of the command structure and the invasion armada. Given the fact that the Invasion of Sicily was an amphibious offensive combined with airborne assaults, it was necessary to form a complex command structure. Furthermore, as the invasion was a bipartite endeavor, the formation of the command structure had to reflect the unity among the United States and the British Empire.¹⁸ Besides, the qualities of the combat formations were determinative on the field of battle and the Anglo-American leadership had to choose its ground, air and naval units with due discernment.

After analyzing the command structure and the order of the battle, this chapter is going to evaluate the military plans. This subsection is going to evaluate the evolution of the Husky plans and the nature and content of the deliberations between the Anglo-American planners first. By doing so, it aims to prove that the Anglo-American planners managed to overcome the difficulties surrounding the planning phase of the Operational level in the Invasion of Sicily. This chapter will continue with an analysis of the final plan which was a remarkable example of the operational art, as it was better crafted than the previous military actions such as the Dieppe Raid, Operation Torch and the Tunisian Campaign, while inspiring Overlord Plans. In addition to the final plan, the chapter will continue with the operational preliminaries (the invasion of Pantelleria Island and the Pelagie Archipelago and the deception operations, Operation Barclay and its sub

¹⁷ Edward N. Luttwak, "The Operational Level of War," *International Security*, (Winter, 1980–1981): 61–79.

¹⁸ General Eisenhower was appointed as the Supreme Commander of the Allied forces, while General Alexander was made his deputy on the ground, commanding the 15th Army Group consisting of veteran British 8th Army and U.S. 7th Army, which were commanded respectively by General Montgomery and Patton; See: Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 26-27.

operations Operation Animals and Operation Barclay) that enforced the plan. Thus, this chapter aims to prove that the operational phase of Husky was successful in terms of the employment of troops and commanders, planning and preliminaries that were vital for the Anglo-American war effort.

Chapter IV is going to deal with the tactical level of Operation Husky in which the above-mentioned decision to invade and the consecutive preparations were executed. While the strategic level started the operational preparations and planning, the tactical level analysis deals with the implementation of the decision and the plan. The first section of this chapter is going to solely evaluate the D-Day as the execution of the airborne and amphibious assaults. These were not only crucial for the fate of the invasion of Sicily, but that experience opened the way for the later airborne and seaborne assaults in Northwest France. On the night of July 9-10, American and British paratroops and glider-borne infantry formed the avant-garde of the 15th Army Group, assaulting advance Axis defense positions in order to guarantee the amphibious assaults to proceed without hindrance. The second subsection is going to analyze the seaborne landings. After the airborne assaults achieved their objective and created confusion among the defenders, the 15th Army Group began the landing on the southeastern corner of Sicily in the early hours of 10 July. While the 7th U.S. Army under General Patton was tasked with the invasion of the coastal strip roughly between the town of Licata and Gela, the British 8th Army under the command of General Montgomery landed between Syracuse and Pozzalo. Both armies fared well despite the heavy sea. Successfully executing the first full-scale and also the largest amphibious operation in the Second

World War, the Anglo-American forces established a foothold and successfully repulsed the counter attacks.

The second section of Chapter IV is going to evaluate the military engagements following the D-Day. In the first subsection, this study is going to analyze the 15th Army Group tactical movements on the island of Sicily. A week later, while the British 8th Army was occupied in a corrosive battle on the outskirts of Catania, General Patton led the 7th U.S. Army westwards to Palermo.¹⁹ While the 7th Army managed to execute its tactical duties rapidly, the British 8th Army managed to break the deadlock with the liberation of Centirupe in the first days of August, facing most of the resistance. Following the success of the first phase of reduction with the fall of all the strategic points on the island except for Messina, the Axis forces formed a defensive line on the foothills of Mount Etna. The 15th Army Group moved on in a similar fashion and breached the Etna Line with a three pronged push. They staged successive amphibious operations on the northern coast and enhanced it with the armored warfare, driving the Axis to the sea. In the center, mountain and urban areas warfare continued and eventually both armies fighting side by side rooted out the Axis defenders of the Etna Line in the center by the end of the first week of August. These offensive actions were tactically innovative thanks to the team of innovative officers such as General Truscott and General Matthew Ridgeway who utilized them successfully later on.²⁰ From then on, Operation Husky started to take the appearance of a mopping action. On August 11, Axis Commander, General Kesselring ordered full withdrawal and evacuation –partial

¹⁹ Albert N. Garland and Howard McGaw Smyth, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1993), 244.

²⁰ Successive amphibious operations and close airborne and armour cooperation were the tactical innovations which the Anglo-American allies repeatedly used later on in Italy and France.

evacuation had already started a week before.²¹ While the Axis withdrawal was orderly and successful, the Allies finally reached Messina on the night of August 16, and the Invasion of Sicily was concluded the next morning.²² Thus the tactical phase was completed, achieving all strategic and operational objectives.

In the last Chapter, this study is going to be concluded with an overview of events triggered by Operation Husky. As envisioned by the Allied strategists, Mussolini's regime fell during the operation on 25 July 1943, thus practically knocking Italy out of war into a quasi-civil war.²³ The Mediterranean supply routes were secured and finally a gateway to the European continent for the Anglo-American allies was opened part way. Over and above, the ring around the Axis was tightened, slowly strangling the Third Reich because the second front –though not in the way USSR desired– was open. Then in relation to these consequences, this chapter is going to synthesize the strategic, operational and tactical analyses in the above outlined chapters and it will try to mold them into a coherent interpretation of the much ignored impact of Operation Husky in the evolution of the Anglo-American alliance and its victory in Europe.

To sum up, while both the invasion of Sicily and the Anglo-American Alliance has been examined –although not as much as the Allied liberation of France or even the conquest of North Africa–, the contribution of Operation Husky to the development of Anglo-American Alliance and its victory in Europe has not been a major subject of research. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the strategic, operational and tactical

²¹ Chartres Molony et al. *The Mediterranean and Middle East: The Campaign in Sicily, 1943 and the Campaign in Italy, 3rd September 1943 to 31st March 1944*. vol. 5. (London, UK: HMSO, 1973), 180.

²² Garland and Smyth, 416.

²³ John Whittam, *Fascist Italy* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2005), 128-134.

aspects of Operation Husky and define it as the cradle in which the Anglo-American alliance had grown and defeated the Axis and in this respect, it aims to contribute to the existing literature by proving the vital role of Operation Husky in the Anglo-American victory in Europe.

CHAPTER II:

ANGLO-AMERICAN STRATEGY AND THE HUSKY DECISION

2.1 Overview of the Mediterranean Theatre Prior to the Invasion

The Mediterranean basin has witnessed the struggles of countless powers over the centuries. The twentieth century was not different. But how did the Mediterranean become the focal point of military designs and how did these designs accumulate particularly into the decision to invade Sicily? This subsection is going to try to answer this question with an analysis of geographic elements, their influence upon the formation of the Anglo-American Mediterranean strategy and its immediate genesis before the start of Operation Husky.

2.1.1 Geographic Factors in the Development of Anglo-American Strategy

This subsection is going to evaluate the larger aspects of the Mediterranean and the Anglo-American alliance; such as the differences and similarities in their individual

and combined interests with respect to the Mediterranean geography. Thus, it is going to provide the background and the setting since the joint decision to invade the Island of Sicily was a synthesis of differing strategic perspectives of the United States and the British Empire. The strategies were at times contrasting, but in the end they were consonant and effective decisions –which are the outcomes of the *dialectic of will(s)*– in projecting power on a designated space in a tightly scheduled duration.²⁴ Therefore, the American and British strategies and their collective projection on space (geography) and time (the Second World War) constitutes the initial point of this study in order to better understand the Anglo-American Mediterranean strategy (APPENDIX A).

A year before the inception of Operation Husky, American geographer Nicholas J. Spykman said: “It [Mediterranean] provides maritime communication between the European and African continents and a route from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean” and continued to summarize its strategic position on the globe: “[the] struggle for these routes and points which controlled them has continued to this day not only between the new national states along the northern littoral but also between those states and the distant power of Great Britain.”²⁵ It was ultimately the British who had to maintain the control of these routes in order to maintain e her Empire. It was not easy to recognize the various American interests in the area at the first glance. On the contrary, the British interests were obvious. Britain had been acting as a major player in ceaseless regional

²⁴ Freedman’s definition of strategy with the phrase of *dialectic of will* and in this case reciprocal/plural *will(s)* particularly applies to this case. Napoleonic warfare, the emergence of mass armies and centralized nation states transformed the notion strategy into a comprehensive way to carry out political designs within a time table. See: Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013)

²⁵ Nicholas J. Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power* (New York, NY: Archon Books, 1970), 96.

struggles as Spykman stated because the Mediterranean was the maritime hub which connected the British Islands with her possessions in Africa, India and Asia-Pacific.

From Gibraltar to Suez, Britain needed to maintain a straight supply line that connected the British mainland with British East-Africa/Asia-Pacific and the Raj. To keep this artery open, the British Empire militarily acquired a defense line over a set of strategic positions, such as Gibraltar (1713), Malta (1813), Cyprus (1878) and Alexandria (1882). Apart from the static positions listed above, the Mediterranean Fleet of the British Royal Navy was a strong mobile presence in the Mediterranean basin since the early 18th century. The Royal Navy deterred the Mediterranean monarchies once, and in the 20th century it was able to deter navies of the rising nation states, including that of Italy (Italian Royal Navy). The Levantine ports of Alexandria, Nicosia and Jaffa guaranteed the British dominance in east Mediterranean. During the First World War, *Entente* forces led by Great Britain experimented unsuccessfully with amphibious warfare at Gallipoli to knock frail Turks out of the war and the east Mediterranean ports provided the operational base.²⁶

However, Spykman fell short of stating that the American trade and shipping benefitted through the British protection of the sea lanes and increasingly they were relying on domestic and British shipping lines.²⁷ Hence, the passage offered by the Mediterranean which connects oceans and continents had been in the scope of American commercial and military power. Even as a minor maritime power in the early 19th

²⁶A venture masterminded by none other than the First Lord of Admiralty (1911-1915) Winston Churchill himself. The Successful Turkish defense cost him his ministerial position, but never his ambition for Imperial enterprises (as in the case of the Invasion of Sicily). See: Roy Jenkins, *Churchill: A Biography* (New York, NY: Plume, 2001), 282–288.

²⁷ David Reynolds, Warren A. Kimball, and A.O Chubarain, eds., *Allies At War: The Soviet, American, and British Experience, 1939-1945* (London: Macmillan, 1994), 202.

century, the United States made her naval debut in the Mediterranean (The Barbary Wars 1801-1805, 1815); as an industrializing major maritime power, American White Fleet made a show of force in the Mediterranean during which it made a show of relief by providing help for the survivors of the Messina Earthquake (28 December 1908).²⁸ Compared to the British presence and experience in the area, these were rather minuscule actions. Yet, the idea of a complete and permanent Axis control over these routes haunted the American leadership before and during the Second World War.

What further drew the attention of the Allies to the Mediterranean and in particular to Sicily in the midst of the Second World War? What were the geographical factors in such a seemingly divergent decision? The Island of Sicily stands in the central Mediterranean, below the toe of the Italian peninsula. This triangular island had been a key strategic center in the region and had been a focal point for many powers who had been struggling through the ages.²⁹ A naval fleet harbored in Palermo can deter and conduct logistics operations between Italy and Tunisia. The same formula applies to Syracuse for its close proximity to Tripoli, while Messina is the gateway to Italy. The airfields in the island provide aeronautic coverage in central Mediterranean. Thus, the Island of Sicily was in a critical position, from which it controlled the Mediterranean maritime routes. Yet, the geographical assets of Sicily were kept under control by another island in the south, the British Crown Colony of Malta (APPENDIX B).

Churchill in the fourth book of his history of the Second World War defined the island of Malta as a “veritable hornet’s nest”, an “island fortress”, and it was a thorn to

²⁸ Buchanan, 4.

²⁹ D’Este, *Bitter Victory*, 1924-25.

the Italian ambitions in the central Mediterranean.³⁰ Surviving a long blockade enforced by the Italian Navy and German U-Boats, Malta also endured a ruthless Axis bombardment campaign (11 June 1940- 20 November 1942).³¹ Meanwhile, Royal Navy vessels commanded by Admiral Cunningham inflicted considerable damage upon the Axis supply lines.³² In the closing months of 1942 alone, nearly half of the Axis supply shipment was sunk by the British.³³ These factors had shown that Malta could also be used for offensive purposes. Therefore, it was the vertical, strategic bridge between North Africa and Southern Europe which defended the horizontal British life line from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Ultimately, the Island Fortress was also a spearhead directed at the Island of Sicily and the Italian mainland.

Were the American strategists aware of this vital strategic route? Yes, as Admiral Harold Stark, who set the basis of the American global strategy with Plan Dog memorandum in 1940, was concerned with the importance of these routes.³⁴ The seeds of a combined Anglo-American strategic framework predated *Pearl Harbor*. A year before the U.S. entry into the Second World War (December 7, 1941), Admiral Harold Stark appealed to the Secretary of Navy with a secret memorandum (November 12, 1940). This document was called *Plan-Dog* memorandum and it addressed the strategic dilemmas awaiting the U.S. in the case of a war with Axis forces. The hypothetical war was going to be fought on two fronts. If the U.S. was to fight Japan and Germany in

³⁰ Winston Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate* (Kingsport, TN: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1950), 296.

³¹ A. J. P. Taylor, *A History of World War Two* (London, UK: Octopus Books, 1974), 182.

³² Michael A. Simpson, *A Life of Admiral of the Fleet Andrew Cunningham: A Twentieth-Century Naval Leader* (London, UK: Routledge, 2012), 42.

³³ Tony Spooner, *Supreme Gallantry: Malta's Role in the Allied Victory, 1939–1945* (London, UK: John Murray Publishers, 1996), 327.

³⁴ Douglas Porch, *The Path to Victory: The Mediterranean Theatre in World War II* (New York, N.Y.: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2004), 326-327, 418.

alliance with the British Empire, her armies and fleets were to be present on the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and the continents of Africa, Eurasia and Australia. At the same time, the U.S. had to help sustain the British and Soviet struggle against Germany, Italy and the Axis puppets while keeping the Chinese alive against Japanese onslaught. Grand strategy –the answer to the above mentioned dilemmas– crafted by Admiral Stark was simple: *Europe First*. This answer received implicit support from the army and President Franklin D. Roosevelt.³⁵

After speculating several scenarios in which the British Empire disintegrates, Admiral Stark listed preventive objectives in his memorandum. First among these objectives was “obviously” to keep “the British Isles, the ‘Hearth of the Empire’” intact.³⁶ Secondly, in the case of a successful British resistance at home, he determined the next strategic objective as the “Egyptian Theatre”.³⁷ The third and the last strategic position he pointed out for the survival of the British Empire was Gibraltar.³⁸ Therefore, he identified two edges of the above drawn straight line that connects British possessions and reiterated the Mediterranean’s important strategic position on the global sea routes. Thus, Admiral Stark provided the eventual extent of the Mediterranean theatre and its significance within the American strategy, independent of direct British influence.³⁹ This means, at least, the document that determined the direction of the American strategy was

³⁵ Waldo H. Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War II* (New York, US: Oxford University Press, 1988), 38.

³⁶ Harold R. Stark, "Plan Dog Memo," FDR Library, accessed January 14, 2017, <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/psf/box4/a48b05.html>.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Harold R. Stark, "Plan Dog Memo," FDR Library, accessed January 15, 2017, <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/psf/box4/a48b06.html>.

³⁹ Plan Dog was not a rigid doctrinal document. It had been modified due to the necessities of war and repeatedly challenged by “Pacific Firsters”. Even though the document set the liberation of Europe as the first Allied war aim, it did not indicate any location. While ambiguous, Stark memorandum had been a determinative document for the Allied strategy.

quite concerned with the geographic importance of the Mediterranean theatre where the Island of Sicily was positioned at the center.

2.1.2 Chronology of the Anglo-American Strategy in the Mediterranean Area prior to Operation Husky

But did the map drawn by Spykman and Stark mean that the Americans were definitively supportive of a Mediterranean strategy? Retrospectively, it is easy to affirm this question. Yet, once the conventional understanding of the strategy as a static grand plan is set aside and instead the strategy is understood as an organic mode of thought which strives to confront contingences, it is not easy to respond immediately.⁴⁰ Therefore, it is necessary to understand how the above-mentioned geographic factors that shaped the Anglo-American Mediterranean strategy synchronized with the contingencies of the Second World War.

Following the American entry in war, the strategic scale was turning in favor of the Mediterranean theatre because the maturing Allied strategy was leading its combined war effort into the above presented geographic outline. The Allies had chosen French North Africa (Operation Torch, November 8, 1942) as the designate objective of the “First major Allied over-seas offensive” in Washington (Second Washington Conference, June 20-25, 1942), temporarily postponing Cross-Channel operation.⁴¹ The fighting on the Egyptian front was reaching its zenith in the 2nd El Alamein in the

⁴⁰ Henry Mintzberg, "Patterns in Strategy Formation," *Management Science* 24, no. 9 (May 1978): 935.

⁴¹ Kimball, 49.

meantime.⁴² Following the decisive victory at El Alamein, Winston Churchill declared: “Before Alamein we never had victory. After Alamein we never had defeat.”⁴³

He was right and more so with the simultaneity of the victory. Thereafter the overall momentum of the Second World War favored the Allies. In relation to the Mediterranean theatre, with the simultaneous success of Operation Torch and the 2nd Battle of El Alamein, the myth of Vichy autonomy faded away in Northwest Africa. Vichy free zone, *Zone Libre* disappeared in mainland France (Case Anton, November 10-27, 1942).⁴⁴ By the end of 1942, Anglo-American allies gained the strategic upper hand in the Mediterranean, but their grip was not yet complete. Thanks to the newly gained initiative, they were ready to make a pincer move from both edges of the southern Mediterranean coastline. Thus, the Allies cornered German and Italian forces on the tip of North Africa, Tunisia. The Axis forces prepared for their last stand against the British 8th Army pushing from the east, and Americans from the west.

Consequently, simultaneous victories on both edges of North Africa with Operation Torch/El Alamein seemingly finalized in Tunisia. As conceived by Anglo-American strategists, Axis presence on the North African coastline was obliterated utterly, sealing them off the continent. Henceforth the Anglo-American Alliance achieved the complete control of the south Mediterranean and by doing so they drained the Axis resources and they restricted the Axis influence to the European continent.

⁴² Stephen Wentworth Roskill and J. R. M. Butler. *The War at Sea, 1939-1945* (London, UK: H.M.S.O., 1961), 312.

⁴³ Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, 154.

⁴⁴ At secret Cherchell Conference (October 21-22, 1942) The American delegation persuaded Vichy Commanders not to resist. In consequence of the lack of determined French resistance in the face of Operation Torch, Germany and Italy occupied the Vichy holdings in France and Tunisia. On November 27, 1942, Vichy Mediterranean Fleet was scuttled by its officers in Toulon, denying the Axis a prospect of naval balance against the Allies in the theatre.

They managed to logically concentrate their available power onto the geographical space within a limited schedule. Consequently, they had realized the strategic aims regarding to the Mediterranean theatre by Admiral Stark on the geographical space drawn by Nicholas J. Spykman.

During this period, Anglo-American officer corps started to produce able planners and field commanders, many of whom were going to play their parts in the invasion of Sicily, such as General Bernard Law Montgomery, General Harold Alexander, General George S. Patton and General Dwight D: Eisenhower. With the appointments of these capable commanders, the Anglo-American combined warfare was being thoroughly institutionalized and organized. Eisenhower was chosen as the supreme commander of Anglo-American landings in Torch, and proved his capabilities as an operational commander with success.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, in Northeast Africa, General Bernard Montgomery and General Harold Alexander repeated the same success in the Battle of El Alamein and subsequent thrust into Libya.⁴⁶ Then, in August 1942 Eisenhower established the Allied Force Headquarters (AFHQ) to keep the combined offensive coherent in the both ends of North Africa.⁴⁷

The field of action itself was an overall testing ground not only for the commanders, but also for the whole armies and military traditions. The first serious American engagement with the Axis at the Kasserine Pass (February 19-24, 1943) proved disastrous for the American prestige. General Fredendall's inability resulted with

⁴⁵ General Patton also served under him at the head of central task force, distinguishing himself as a skilled field commander. See: Eisenhower, 71.

⁴⁶ Richard Mead, *Churchill's Lions: A Biographical Guide to the Key British Generals of World War II* (Gloucestershire: Spellmount, 2007), 47.

⁴⁷ Allied Force Headquarters was founded by Anglo-American allies to better coordinate Allied operations in the Mediterranean. During the planning and execution of Husky, AFHQ played a vital role.

the first major American defeat in the face of Germany and Italy. Besides, his nationally-minded British counterpart, General Kenneth Arthur Noel Anderson was unwillingness to cooperate with the American forces contributed to this defeat. After the disaster at Kasserine passed, however, the Allies learned their lesson and tried to avoid appointment of such incapable, nationally-minded officers and they rectified their errors with choosing commanders who were more willing to cooperate, as both Lloyd Fredendall and General Kenneth Arthur Noel Anderson were relieved in the aftermath of the campaign. Alexander's training effort enhanced the military capabilities of the American forces in Tunisia under the 18th Army Group. Patton's appointment as the American field commander (he had to be taken away from the planning of Operation Husky) strengthened their tactical abilities in mechanized warfare. With Eisenhower's revitalizing role as the supreme commander, combined warfare continued effectively. In this way, they managed to defeat the Axis on May 13, 1943, inflicting nearly a quarter million casualties.⁴⁸ According to Reich's propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, the Axis defeat was a powerful blow in the scale of Stalingrad to the Axis strategic designs and morale.⁴⁹

2.1.3 Underlying Divergences and Convergences in British and American Strategic Doctrines

⁴⁸ Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, 697.

⁴⁹ Rick Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa, 1942-1943* (London, U.K.: Abacus 2004), 537.

Nonetheless, the above outlined set of decisions, which resulted with victory in Tunisia in the Second World War, was not agreed upon easily. The related negotiations possibly witnessed the most stressful Combined Chiefs of Staff meetings. However, these discussions outlined the strategic differences and emphasized the inevitable necessity of sticking to the Mediterranean in 1943. Combined planning and the execution of these strategic decisions were also tenuous processes, considering what was at stake. It is therefore tempting for a scholar to depict the whole Allied endeavor as a contest. Both sides –especially the officer corps– shared mutual skepticism towards one another’s war aims and combat capabilities.⁵⁰ American planners were ready to defend the British home islands. Nonetheless they were not exactly enthusiastic to do so for the British colonial interests in the Mediterranean or elsewhere.⁵¹ On the other hand, the British regarded the American strategy as an unfeasible doctrine which ignored the necessities of the war and the state of the Anglo-American military strength during the mid-war period.⁵²

Michael Howard explains the underlying dynamics of these doctrinal differences by explaining the strategic perspectives of both nations in a nutshell. According to Howard: “The British began with mobilization and deployment of forces, assuming that circumstances would determine where the decisive engagement would occur –if indeed any such clear ‘decision’ easily identifiable in time.”⁵³ However, he defines American approach as a more direct one: “The Americans, on the other hand, started by deciding where the decisive engagement should occur, worked back from there to their plans for

⁵⁰ See: Richard Mead, *Churchill’s Lions: A Biographical Guide to the Key British Generals of World War II* (Gloucestershire: Spellmount, 2007)

⁵¹ Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, 21.

⁵² British planners privately accused American planners of drawing “castles in the air.”

⁵³ Michael Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy in the Second World War*, 22.

development, and from there to mobilization of resources.”⁵⁴ Based on Howard’s depiction it is possible to qualify the British strategic doctrine as *opportunist* and *indirect* and the American doctrine as *decisive* and *direct*.

This fundamental difference is the gist of the strategic conflict among Anglo-American planners. Yet, the difference should be analyzed with caution and moderation. The military men are competitive. In every battle, there are officers who would try to prove their superior capabilities over the friends and enemies alike, and the relationships between the U.S. Army officers and British commanders was not an exception.⁵⁵ So are the diplomats, who usually compete and conspire against both their foreign colleagues and departmental rivals. There is no need to mention the ambitions of political leaders. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the immediate content of these reciprocal notions and their reflections on the events in question. Specifically, there are entrenched notions and prejudices inherent in each nation against one another and the Anglo-American relation was not an exception. While not pathological, Anglophobia was widespread among the Americans.⁵⁶ The British were also skeptical about the American integrity and competence.⁵⁷ In the beginning of the above-mentioned set of events triggered by the Torch decision on April Fools’ Day, 1942, a junior member of the Joint Staff Planners, General Albert C. Wedemeyer received orders to accompany United States Army Chief of Staff, George C. Marshall and Roosevelt’s personal envoy Harry

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Andrew Roberts, *A History of English Speaking Peoples since 1900* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2007), 326.

⁵⁶ John E. Moser, *Twisting the Lion’s Tail: Anglophobia in the United States, 1921-1948* (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 7.

⁵⁷ David Reynolds, “1940: Fulcrum of the Twentieth Century?”, *International Affairs* 66, no. 2 (April 1990): 331.

Hopkins to a secret Joint Chiefs of Staffs meeting in Bermuda Islands.⁵⁸ He was assuming that the duty was related to the Anglo-American build-up on the British Isles (BOLERO), and the planned invasion of Northern France (ROUNDUP).⁵⁹ He was also assuming that the “*Britishers*” and their allies in the United States civilian corps, “*drugstore strategists*” and “*baneful Jews*” would try to divert combined strategy from these plans by advancing peripheral decisions and actions in the Mediterranean.

These two plans were the hypothetical operational route of the above-mentioned *direct* and *decisive* American strategic doctrine.⁶⁰ On the other hand, the British strategic doctrine was the opposite and identical with Howard’s description in Wedemeyer’s view. According to Wedemeyer, it was “a concept of scatterization or periphery-pecking, with a view to wearing down the enemy”; and unfortunately for the American planners, Britons were “masters” of “negotiation”, “intrigue”, “cajolery” and “tacit compulsions,”⁶¹ and their superior negotiation skills were instrumental in pushing Americans into the strategic periphery. The intention of the British stance was to advance and defend their colonial interests, not to win the war. They would do so by depending increasingly on American resources and lives in his view. Describing the inter-allied negotiations as a joust, Wedemeyer claimed that the “Machiavellian” British negotiators were the better “jousters”.⁶²

Upon the British pressure for Operation Torch, concerned with shipping and supply deficiencies, General Marshall eventually proposed an alternative course: an

⁵⁸ Albert C. Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!* (New York, NY: The Devin-Adair Company, 1958), 97.

⁵⁹ Andrew Roberts, *Masters and Commanders: Commanders: How Four Titans Won the War in the West, 1941-1945* (London, UK: Harper Perennial, 2010), 344.

⁶⁰ Carlo D’Este, *Decision in Normandy* (London, U.K.: Penguin Books, 2004), 24-35.

⁶¹ Wedemeyer, 105.

⁶² *Ibid.*

American offensive in the Pacific, diverging from the *Europe First* strategy outlined by Stark⁶³. But it was ruled out by the President because it would not be contributing to the Soviet survival. Instead he opted for Operation Torch, directly defying his Army Chief. From this point on, U.S. military strategists would not seriously bring the Pacific first strategy on the table.⁶⁴ Only a couple of months later, the British view prevailed over the American strategy. Resources and troops which were reserved for the early invasion of Northern France were allocated to Operation Torch to Wedemeyer's dismay. This dismay which exemplified the American skepticism about the character of British strategic aims is manifest all through his memoirs. Wedemeyer concluded: "It is true that I thought that sun never sets on the British Empire. But neither does the dove of peace."⁶⁵

Were Wedemeyer's grim reflections over the Anglo-American combined strategy correct? Was it in fact a joust between the divergent interests of the two nations and their national characters? Is it not possible to find the convergences between both strategies? To answer these questions and to determine the convergences between the strategic approaches it is necessary to analyze the structural genesis of Anglo-American command and the necessities that shaped it. Mindful of these necessities, the British leadership wanted to deploy the inexperienced American troops in a immediately available theatre of war, while continuing the military build-up.⁶⁶ Let aside material

⁶³ Mark A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance and U.S. Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 78.

⁶⁴ Christos Frentzos and Antonio S. Thompson, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of American Military and Diplomatic History: 1865 to Present* (New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2013), 135.

⁶⁵ Wedemeyer, 106.

⁶⁶ Only a month later in the 2nd Claridge Conference (July, 1942), the Allies decided to carry out Operation Torch and invade French North Africa See: Simon P. Mackenzie, *The Second World War in Europe* (London, U.K.: Routledge, 2013), 55.

and numerical capabilities, the American Army was not yet organizationally capable of assaulting the *Fortress Europe*.⁶⁷

In the beginning of the war, the American Army was practically a non-entity.⁶⁸ However, it was emerging from the boot camps and arms factories all around the U.S. day by day thanks to the American administrative and industrial power. From 1940 to 1943, American military expenditures had risen by 4587 percent.⁶⁹ It was more than enough to gradually start using this power against the Axis, but it fell short of directly countering the German forces in the open fields of Northwest Europe. Nonetheless, the Allied military strength was growing steadily as the necessary organizational developments were gaining momentum.

Fortunately for the maturing American war effort, the Anglo-American Alliance was able to produce harmonious high level organizational structures. This harmony was evident in the order of their foundational processes. Americans created their military decision-making body Joint Chiefs of Staff in the same lines with the British Chiefs of Staff Committee.⁷⁰ The Anglo-American supreme command, the Combined Chiefs of Staff were organized months before the American Joint Chiefs of Staff in Arcadia Conference. In a way, the American decision-making body came into the existence as a combined Anglo-American structure which in turn developed into an independent

⁶⁷ U.S. Army Center of Military History, "A Brief History of the U.S. Army in World War II," accessed February 10, 2017, <http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/brief/overview.htm>.

⁶⁸ Reynolds, Warren A. Kimball and A. O. Chubarain, 55.

⁶⁹ U.S. Army Center of Military History, "A Brief History of the U.S. Army in World War II," accessed February 10, 2017, <http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/brief/overview.htm>.

⁷⁰ Robert W. Coakley and Richard M. Leighton, *United States Army in World War II – The War Department – Global Logistics and Strategy 1940–1943* (Washington, D. C.: Center of Military History, 1995), 144.

American entity in the form of Joint Chiefs of Staff.⁷¹ The British influence on the formation of the American military decision-making body and the moderately stable accord it brought was a remarkable feature of the Anglo-American Alliance. This remarkable feature comprised the organizational backbone of Anglo-American strategic convergence that overcame the conflicting differences over the conduct of the war.

In conclusion, growing and maturing both in character and structure, the Anglo-American Alliance captured the southern coastline of the Mediterranean basin because of the strategic opportunities –such as containing the Axis to the European continent and draining their resources while doing so– it offered in the mid-war period. These strategic opportunities and their gradual adaptation helped the American and British leadership to formulate a maturing strategy out of their individual doctrines. So where did the Island of Sicily stand within the above-drawn strategic framework?

2.2 Decision for the Invasion, Casablanca and Trident Conferences

The Island of Sicily stood exactly in the center; the conflicting notions, designs and actions dealt within the previous subsection were resolved in the Casablanca and the Trident conferences. The order of events in question –Casablanca in January, Trident in May– comprises the chronological extent of the Anglo-American strategic decision for Sicily. During these events, the Husky decision was made and refined. Therefore, this part of the chapter is going to analyze how the strategic resolution emerged from these conferences in relation to the Operation Husky and the Anglo-American Alliance.

⁷¹ Wedemeyer, 88-89.

2.2.1 Husky Confirmed, Casablanca Conference

Meeting at Hotel Anfa in Casablanca, top level Anglo-American leadership discussed the conduct of global war and strategy (January 14-24, 1943).⁷² In this respect, the decision to invade Sicily was the primary and the most immediate result of the Casablanca Conference, because it represented a turning point in the war effort which John Keegan defined as the agreement over the further Allied commitment to the Mediterranean strategy.⁷³ Retrospectively, it seems that the decision to invade Italy after the success of Operation Torch was the most plausible option. But the conference took place mid-way through the war, and principal military and political leaders of the Anglo-American alliance were not completely resolute on Operation Husky.⁷⁴ American military planners largely favored opening the way into Germany through Normandy or Brittany.⁷⁵ Yet, the President, as usual, was open to seizing “every opportunity” and his attitude was complementing to the British strategic thinking.⁷⁶ Encroached within the hardships, the British leadership strove to continue the operations in the Mediterranean until the Fortress Europe started to crumble. But, Husky was not without strategic alternatives such as Operation Brimstone (planned attack on Sardinia) and Operation

⁷² The chief attendees were: Franklin D. Roosevelt: President of the United States Winston Churchill: Prime Minister of Great Britain. Their Chiefs of Staffs: Generals George C. Marshal and Alan F. Brooke as well as their personal representatives in Mediterranean Robert D. Murphy and Maurice Harold Macmillan.

⁷³ John Keegan, *The Second World War*. (London, UK: Penguin, 1989), 354-5.

⁷⁴ Mark A. Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front: American Military Planning and Diplomacy in Coalition Warfare, 1941–1943* (Westport, Conn., and London: Greenwood Press, 1977), 71.

⁷⁵ Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944*. (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1994), 122-123.

⁷⁶ United States Department of State Foreign relations of the United States. *The Conferences at Washington, 1941-1942, and Casablanca, 1943: Operations in the Mediterranean* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1941-1943), 714 (hereinafter referred to as FRUS).

Roundup (the plan for an early amphibious invasion of Northwestern France). So, why was Husky chosen as the next step of the Allied war effort as a more viable course than the rest of the strategic alternatives? (APPENDIX C)

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to take a glance back to the positions of each party on the strategy. American historian and longtime economic advisor in the U.S. Department of State during Hoover and Roosevelt administrations, Herbert Feis outlined interests of the big three in the global strategy: “[...]the Soviet Union on the continent of Europe, engrossingly; Great Britain in the Mediterranean, preservatively, and the United States in the Pacific Ocean, waveringly.”⁷⁷ However, this study argues against Feis’ definition of the American strategy. At that point, American leadership had already espoused Europe First strategy as it was elaborated above with the analysis of Plan Dog Memo which set the basis of American strategy. From then on, the idea of strategic shift to the Pacific degenerated into leverage which was to be used by American Chiefs of Staff to promote Cross-Channel operations. Even though he constantly protested, Stalin tolerated Mediterranean operations throughout 1942, but now the Soviets were marching to a decisive victory in the Battle of Stalingrad (August 23, 1942 –February 2, 1943) –which they would reach only a week after the conclusion of the Casablanca Conference. Increasing Russian ability to absorb and deflect German offensives augmented Stalin’s confidence. So, on the eve of the triumph in Stalingrad, Stalin refused to attend the Conference.⁷⁸ But, unlike Feis’ definition, in 1943 American planners had already converted to abovementioned Russian position on the global

⁷⁷ Herbert Feis, *Churchill-Roosevelt-Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957), 37.

⁷⁸ United States Department of State Foreign Relations of the United States. *The Conferences at Washington, 1941-1942, and Casablanca, 1943* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1941-1943), 500.

strategy, if they had not shared the same position all along.⁷⁹ Therefore, Anglo-American leadership knew that the decision for Operation Husky was more profitable strategically in this episode of the war and a Pacific Shift did not pose a serious alternative to Operation Husky.

Five days before the start of the Conference, President Roosevelt assembled the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the White House.⁸⁰ The chief purpose of this pourparler was to ascertain an American strategy after driving the Axis out of North Africa. President Roosevelt started the discussion by reiterating overall American position and asked Joint Chiefs of Staff if all agreed on the Cross-Channel operation.⁸¹ General Marshall stated that while the Joint Chiefs of Staff was leaning towards a Cross-Channel operation, there was no such consensus among military planners. The events that followed the Torch alternated the strategic options for the Anglo-American Alliance as it is analyzed in the previous sections. Therefore, American planners were also considering the options in the Mediterranean. Marshall conveyed his opposition to President regarding the future Mediterranean operations, but added that the Americans “may learn something from the British in conference, of which [we] are not aware.”⁸²

The British planners had already crafted and codenamed operations in the Mediterranean; Husky for Sicily, Brimstone for Sardinia.⁸³ British planners also presented Crete and Dodecanese as alternatives but they were not discussed thoroughly, therefore Brimstone was the only considerable rival plan to Husky during the

⁷⁹ Garland and Smyth, 21.

⁸⁰ FRUS, *Joint Chiefs of Staff Minutes of a Meeting at the White House 7 January 1943*, 505.

⁸¹ Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944*, 131-132.

⁸² FRUS, *Joint Chiefs of Staff Minutes of a Meeting at the White House 7 January 1943*, 509-510.

⁸³ Churchill, *Hinge of Fate*, 658.

processions.⁸⁴ Operation Brimstone envisaged an invasion of Sardinia, and it was the primary operational alternative to Husky in the Mediterranean theatre. In the case of its success, it would provide a base of operations which could easily threaten both Northern Italy and Southern France. It looked considerably easy to commit allied war effort to Sardinia, and compared to the island of Sicily it seemed easier to do so at first glance.⁸⁵ During the negotiations, it garnered support from General Eisenhower and Admiral Mountbatten. Their main argument was that the island of Sardinia might prove to be a better stepping stone for the invasion of the mainland, because it was closer to the more significant population centers and strategic objectives, not only in Italy but also in Southern France, thus taking two birds down with a single stone. But even if it seemed as a more convenient option, as it attracted Mountbatten and Eisenhower, why was it eliminated in favor of Husky?

The presence of strong logistical disadvantages had the potential to ruin the Sardinian venture because of the distance between the Allied bases in North Africa and the Sardinian ports. In the case of a successful landing, defending the supply lines was a significant problem. The coastal distance between the closest allied logistic center and the Island of Sardinia was greater in length compared to the Sicilian ports. The Italian Navy was also operational and it was still capable of posing a substantial threat to the Allied shipping and amphibious operations in the Ligurian Sea. The existence of coastal batteries in the North Italian coastline was another obstacle for the Allied success, because it would prevent the necessary artillery support which had to be provided by

⁸⁴ Arthur Bryant, *The Turn of the Tide* (New York, NY: Doubleday and Company: 1957), 445-448.

⁸⁵ Gordon A. Harrison, *Cross Channel Attack* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1993), 35.

naval batteries.⁸⁶ Due to the distance between Allied bases of operations in North Africa and Malta, it was relatively harder to provide necessary air coverage for the operation. Furthermore, smaller and less populated and less adjacent to Italy than Sicily, the Invasion of Sardinia would not affect the Fascist regime's grip on power as it was relatively farther to the Italian mainland compared to the Island of Sicily which is adjacent to the Italian boot.⁸⁷ Aware of the above listed strategic disadvantages, American leadership eliminated Operation Brimstone in favor of Operation Husky as the British representatives were already on Husky's board (except for Mountbatten who toyed with Sardinia even after the decision, to General Brooke's chagrin.)⁸⁸

On the other hand, the British side was apprehensive of American insistence on the early Cross-Channel operation, and they were fearful of crossing the channel at that stage of the war. The underlying reason for their anxiety was not due to their complete refusal to admit their forces for a Cross-Channel invasion; on the contrary they were convinced of the necessity of invading North Western France and a thrust against the German heartland from there.⁸⁹ British General Chiefs of Staff memorandum to the Combined Chiefs of Staff in January 2, 1943 summarizes the British strategic position:

On most issues we are in agreement with the U.S. Chiefs of Staff. The main point of difference between us is that we advocate a policy of following up 'Torch' [the invasion of Northwest Africa] vigorously [in the Mediterranean], accompanied by as large a 'Bolero' buildup [in the United Kingdom] as possible, while the American Chiefs of Staff favor putting our main European effort into 'Round-up' [the Cross-Channel assault] and holding in North Africa.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Vincent P. O'Hara, *Struggle for the Middle Sea: The Great Navies at War in the Mediterranean Theater, 1940–1945* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2009), 6-8

⁸⁷ FRUS, *Meeting of Roosevelt with the CCS 16 January 1943*, 596.

⁸⁸ Bryant, *The Turn of the Tide*, 440-441.

⁸⁹ Winston Churchill, *The Grand Alliance: The Second World War* vol. 3. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1950), 554.

⁹⁰ Alan F. Wilt, "The Significance of the Casablanca Decisions, January 1943" *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (Oct., 1991), 521.

Looking at the British positions in retrospect, there is a strong rationale. A set of immediate fiascos, Dunkirk, Dieppe Raid and the Battle of Kasserine Pass alarmed the British military planners and strategists.⁹¹ Especially the failure of the Amphibious Dieppe Raid (August 19, 1942) led the Anglo-American Alliance to the Mediterranean theatre and this decision resulted with repeated postponement of Cross-Channel invasion, as American and British soldiers and their commanding officers were proven incapable of executing an amphibious operation.⁹² At the same time there were not enough military formations and resources to embark on such venture.

One of the leading critics of the Italian venture, Carlo D'Este agreed that the invasion of Europe through northwest France in 1943 was not possible. Furthermore, while the British were committed to the troop build-up in Britain, they were reluctant to use it until "a serious crack in the German morale appeared."⁹³ Unlike the United States, the British Empire had a narrow resource and manpower base and preferred to wear down the enemy before thrusting the decisive blow.⁹⁴

Harold Macmillan, then British Resident Minister in Algiers, was aware of the cracks in the foundations of the Empire. Educated in classics, he crafted several well-known metaphors about the British and American "civilizations".⁹⁵ He foresaw the British demise and American ascendancy as the new ruler of the waves. This time in Casablanca, he alluded to the divided Roman Empire of the late antiquity.⁹⁶ He

⁹¹ Nigel Hamilton, *Monty: The Making of a General* (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd. 1981), 546–558.

⁹² D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 19.

⁹³ Garland and Smyth, 6.

⁹⁴ Buchanan, 111.

⁹⁵ Alistair Horne, *Macmillan Volume I: 1894–1956* (London, UK: Macmillan, 1988), 160.

⁹⁶ Harold Macmillan, *War Diaries: Politics and War in Mediterranean January 1943- May 1945* (London, U.K.: Macmillan. 1984), 8.

“christened” Roosevelt as “the Emperor in the East” who reigns in the powerful New Rome. Now in Casablanca, the Emperor in the East arrived to negotiate with “the Emperor in the West”, the British Prime Minister who resided in the crumbling old Rome ravaged by the Goths. This metaphor had strong connotations, which indicated the fragile position of the British Empire in the war. The position in question required caution that in turn resulted in a protracted war of attrition in which the prime objective was to bleed the Germans economically and militarily.

In order to hasten the steady decline of the Axis power, General Brooke proposed an expansion of the bombardment forces and pointed out the Mediterranean as the natural base for such operations against the German industrial base as well as oil fields in Romania.⁹⁷ Furthermore, in the words of the Prime Minister, operations in Mediterranean would be instrumental in “dispersing German strength and stretching the German defensive line in Europe.”⁹⁸ This perceived outcome would ease the burden on the Soviets, and it would make the Cross-Channel invasion possible by softening Northern France and by draining the narrow German resource base and manpower as the Axis would use them to reinforce the Mediterranean theatre. To improve the efficiency of the supposed dispersion, they were determined to kick the Kingdom of Italy out of the war. According to the British perspective, the disintegration of the Fascist regime would couple the recent Anglo-American victories in the Mediterranean as well as in the Russian Front in terms of military morale.⁹⁹ Their perspective was shaped by the fact that the fall of the first major pillar of the Axis would eradicate German hopes for

⁹⁷ FRUS, *Proceedings in the Conference 14 January 1943* and *CCS Minutes*, 540, 648.

⁹⁸ Garland and Smyth, 6.

⁹⁹ FRUS, *CCS Minutes: The North African Situation*, 586.

victory.¹⁰⁰ This politico-strategic vision in essence would amend the frictions in the Anglo-American global strategy by concentrating the Allied power onto a weak point in the Axis defense system. Therefore, the British strategist had identified the weakest part of *the soft underbelly*.¹⁰¹ Witnessing the opportunity, General Alan Brooke argued to use the available forces in North Africa to knock Italy out of war to open that crack, and the island of Sicily offered the most plausible option for the British planners.¹⁰²

During this period General Marshall and the Joint Chiefs of Staff increasingly came to understand the British position as they were studying strategic contingencies along with their British counterparts.¹⁰³ The logistical feasibility of the decision to invade Sicily was a strategic chance and American Joint Chiefs of Staff “had not, in fact seriously opposed the proposed invasion of Sicily” according to Coackley and Leighton.¹⁰⁴ James Lacey in his recent research went further and claimed that while General Marshall acquiesced to the decision for Husky, he intentionally continued his opposition to the Mediterranean strategy as a leverage to create pressure on the British strategists on the Cross-Channel.¹⁰⁵ How was he persuaded into approving Husky? In addition to General Alan Brooke’s firm stance on Husky decision, General Marshall personally understood that the Allied military build-up in the Mediterranean created a natural logistics bridge even before the beginning of Casablanca Conference.¹⁰⁶ In turn it made the theatre more attractive to him and General Marshall overcame his fear of

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 571.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 585.

¹⁰² Garland and Smyth, 16.

¹⁰³ Matloff and Snel, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, 326-327.

¹⁰⁴ Robert W. Coakley and Richard M. Leighton, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1943-1945* (Washington, DC, US: Center for Military History, 1989), 26.

¹⁰⁵ Williamson Murray, Richard Hart Sinnreich and James Lacey (eds), *The Shaping of Grand Strategy: Policy, Diplomacy, and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 190-192.

¹⁰⁶ FRUS, *CCS Minutes of a Meeting at the White House*, 509.

“shipping losses”.¹⁰⁷ Once the French North African coastline became available to the Anglo-American War effort, the southern rampart of *Fortress Europe* became vulnerable to Anglo-American thrusts. In addition to Alexandria, Gibraltar and Malta now the Allies could use the naval and aeronautic facilities in the former Vichy territories in North Africa. The arrival of American personnel, investment and equipment greatly enlarged the logistical capabilities of these facilities. Hopeful of these logistical developments in the theatre, Marshall consented.

Thus the Allied leaders agreed to take advantage of the strategic potential in the Mediterranean, and they began to organize their forces accordingly in the Casablanca Conference. Anglo-American air forces were given a new command structure and they were integrated to maximize their capability to wage combined aerial warfare; Royal Air Force Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder was appointed as the commander of the Mediterranean Air Command meanwhile the United States Army Air Forces Major General Carl Spaatz was going to serve under him as the commander of the Northwest African Air Forces.¹⁰⁸ The United States 8th Fleet under Admiral Hewitt was transformed into the Western Taskforce which complemented the already existing Eastern Taskforce commanded by Royal Navy Admiral Bertrand Ramsey; and both groups were given under the direct supreme naval command of the Royal Navy Admiral Cunningham.¹⁰⁹ Eisenhower became the overall commander of the invasion, while General Alexander became the commander of the Ground Forces as Eisenhower’s

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 510.

¹⁰⁸ Playfair et al. *The Mediterranean And Middle East: The Destruction Of The Axis Forces In Africa*. Vol. 4 (London, UK: HMSO, 1966), 271.

¹⁰⁹ D’Este, *Bitter Victory*, 583.

deputy.¹¹⁰ The overall command structure was finalized and even the preliminary planning started, blurring the line between the strategic and operational levels.

The Anglo-American leadership agreed that once they took control of North Africa, an amphibious attack against Sicily was to come next and differences were settled for the time. But both the issue of the Cross-Channel invasion and post-Husky operations in the Mediterranean theatre were deferred to the future processions in the Trident, and later on the Conference due to the stubborn resistance of Marshall regarding the post Operation Husky Mediterranean strategy. Nonetheless, the Casablanca Conference eventually served its purpose as Eisenhower optimistically recalled:

This discussion served to focus attention once more upon the desirability of fixing, once and for all, ultimate objectives within the Mediterranean. It was completely normal that some differences in conviction should obtain—we were not far enough along in the process of defeating the Axis to produce crystal-clear and unanimous conclusions as to the specific actions that would obviously produce victory.¹¹¹

At the end of the conference, General Marshall congratulated his counterparts for the harmony and Brooke confirmed him with appreciation, defining the product of this harmony as “a basic strategy for the future prosecution of the war”.¹¹²

Operation Husky eliminated its alternatives –particularly the proposed assault on Sardinia, *Brimstone*– and operational planning started in the immediate conclusion of the Casablanca Conference. Thus it emerged as the most immediate strategic outcome of the meeting at Hotel Anfa. The success of other issues that are discussed in Casablanca was rather ambiguous. The much publicized meeting, “*the shotgun wedding*” between

¹¹⁰ FRUS, *Final Report of the CCS to the President and the Prime Minister*, 794; AFHQ, Part II, Dec. 1942 – Dec. 1943, Section 1, *Eighteenth Army Group & AFHQ*, 110-111

¹¹¹ Eisenhower, 160.

¹¹² FRUS, *CCS Minutes*, 720-722.

De Gaulle and Giraud in essence bore no fruit.¹¹³ The Pacific Theatre remained a secondary global strategic concern and the overall impact of the unconditional surrender decision was rather questionable.¹¹⁴ Official U.S. Army historian Albert Garland defined it as a compromise; yet the Husky decision left gaps in the Anglo-American Strategy.¹¹⁵ No further operations in Italy were thoroughly discussed and the terms for the Cross-Channel operation were left ambiguous.¹¹⁶ A formula was yet to be found to “to produce crystal-clear and unanimous conclusions as to the specific actions that would obviously produce victory.” by solidifying the Anglo-American war aims.

2.2.2 The Trident, Crafting a Compromise

Two months before Operation Husky, the Allied leadership met at the Third Washington Conference (May, 12-25, 1943). At the Casablanca Conference, the Island of Sicily was confirmed as a next strategic objective of the Anglo-American Alliance as stated above. Yet, Americans were determined to nail the schedule for a Cross-Channel invasion. Likewise, the British desired to take advantage of the Sicilian ports and air fields by using them as a springboard into southern Italy (thus into the European continent). Americans got what they wanted at the Trident Conference, and both sides

¹¹³ Anglo-American leadership tried to create compromise between the former Vichite French leadership who trusted General Giraud (as did the Americans) and the Free-French under Charles de Gaulle. However, Giraud’s political passivity rendered the “*shotgun wedding*” inconsequential. See: Macmillan, 11.

¹¹⁴The term “unconditional surrender” had been a source of debate in the Second World War historiography. While FDR thought that it would hasten the fall of the Axis, the unconditional surrender clause also forced many dissident national-conservative German officers to fight until the end. See: Higgins, 190-191.

¹¹⁵ Garland and Smyth, 11.

¹¹⁶ Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1943-1944*, 38.

decided on not pursuing the Italian strategy unless the Kingdom of Italy surrendered in the aftermath of Operation Husky. However, after the Victory in Husky, the British in turn also fulfilled their desire to continue up to the Italian boot by persuading the Americans later at the Quadrant Conference (August, 17-24, 1943).¹¹⁷ Therefore, the Trident Conference refined the Anglo-American strategy by clarifying their strategic aims regarding to the Cross-Channel operation. This subsection is going to analyze the evolving positions and decisions of the Anglo-American allies in these negotiations.

Meeting with their British counterparts at home, American strategists were adamant in the pursuit of the Cross-Channel strategy. Now that the whole British landing fleet was assigned to Operation Husky and only a single American division was left in Britain, Americans were suspicious about the fate of the Cross-Channel operation.¹¹⁸ After assuring their counterparts of enduring American commitment to “defeating Germany first”, American Chiefs of Staff reiterated their global strategy:

From our standpoint the concept of defeating Germany first involves making a determined attack against Germany on the Continent at the earliest practicable date; and we consider that all proposed operations in Europe should be judged primarily on the basis of the contribution to that end.¹¹⁹

British Chiefs of Staff redefined the strategic objectives and the extent of the occupation of Sicily. “Making the Mediterranean line of communication more secure” was keeping its priority on the list of the British objectives.¹²⁰ The secondary objective the British forwarded was “diverting German pressure from the Russian front” in line

¹¹⁷ Reynolds, Warren A. Kimball and A. O. Chubarain, 69.

¹¹⁸ Trident Conference May 1943, Papers and Minutes of Meetings, *1st Meeting The White House, 12 May 1943*, Office of the Combined Chief of Staff (hereinafter referred to as CCS), 256.

¹¹⁹ CCS, *Annex “A” Global Strategy of War (Views of the U.S. Chiefs of Staff)*, 334.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, *Annex “E” Conduct of the War in 1943-44 (Memorandum by the British Chiefs of Staff)*, 336.

with the aforementioned British doctrine of wearing down the enemy.¹²¹ But the British leadership at the Trident was determined to see the downfall of Mussolini. Therefore, their third objective in the Third Washington Conference was “intensifying the pressure on Italy.”¹²²

Americans, on the other hand, desired to see the outcome of Operation Husky before further committing more troops and equipment to the Mediterranean theatre. General Marshall warned his British peers. He reminded them of the recent stiff resistance of small Africa Corps in Tunisia. Then, Marshall warned them about the probability of the full German commitment to Italy which “might make the intended operations extremely difficult and time consuming.”¹²³ He was afraid of a further drainage of military resources that were reserved for the Cross-Channel invasion. General Alan Brooke countered him with his perspective entrenched in the above listed British objectives saying: “if we did not continue operations in the Mediterranean, then no possibility of an attack into France would arise.”¹²⁴ When he was cornered by General Marshall and Admiral Leahy about the prolongation of war in Europe and in the Pacific due to the Mediterranean commitments, Alan Brooke defended his ground. He told Marshal and Leahy “to cease Mediterranean operations on the conclusion of HUSKY would lengthen the war.”¹²⁵

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Rick Atkinson, *The Day of Battle: The War in Sicily and Italy, 1943-1944* (New York, NY: Picador, 2007), 20.

¹²⁴ CCS, 83rd Meeting, 327.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 328.

The American Cross-Channel determination concluded in a strategic bet on the Invasion of Sicily. In response to the British concerns, Eisenhower summarized three strategic preconditions:

(1) If the enemy collapsed quickly in Sicily, immediate operations should be undertaken against the Italian mainland; (2) if the enemy offered prolonged resistance in Sicily, no Allied resources would be available for immediate post-Sicily operations; (3) if resistance was stubborn but could be overcome by the middle-August, no decision could be made in advance.¹²⁶

The British leadership finally consented to the American determination to carve out “a lodgment from which the further offensives can be carried out.”¹²⁷ In retrospect, with the evacuation of the Island of Sicily, American precondition for the invasion of the Italian mainland was fulfilled. Impressed by the successful execution of Operation Husky, American planners gave up their rigid attitude concerning the post-Sicily operations against the Italian mainland, and they agreed to the invasion of Southern Italy later on in the Quadrant Conference (August 17–24, 1943).¹²⁸ With the decision to invade Italy, the Quadrant Conference enhanced the impact of Operation Husky, because the decision to conduct further operations in the southern Italy enabled the utilization of the already present forces in Sicily.¹²⁹ Furthermore, in the last quarter of 1943, the Allied shipping in the Mediterranean increased 65.000 tons to 257.000 tons and as the shipping lines were becoming safer, the Allies could easily continue with amphibious landings on the Italian toe.¹³⁰ Therefore, by finalizing the process that started with Casablanca and

¹²⁶ Garland and Smyth, 25.

¹²⁷ Harrison, 69.

¹²⁸ Robert Dallek. *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1995), 409.

¹²⁹ Arthur Bryant. *Triumph in the West, 1943-1946* (London: Collins, 1959), 15.

¹³⁰ As the American war industry enlarged, the American shipping rates greatly increased. The available data shows that Allied shipping to the British Islands for the Cross-Channel operations had risen from 108.000 tons to 298.000 tons. The next year, the parity greatly changed and while shipping for the Cross-Channel Operations increased to 400.000 tons, the Mediterranean theatre received only 123.000 tons of

continued with the Trident, the Quadrant Conference completed the development of the Anglo-American Mediterranean strategy and marked the consolidation of the mid-war Anglo-American global strategy.

To sum up, the above-mentioned inter-allied conferences hastened the resolution of the strategic questions in 1943, and the Allied Invasion of Sicily was pivotal in their processes. Operation Husky was born in the Casablanca Conference on January 1942, creating a strategic gap in the Anglo-American policy and then filling it with the strategic deliberations it triggered. The American strategists led by Marshall forced the British to finally agree on the year 1944 as the year of the Cross-Channel operation in the Trident Conference. Finally in the Quadrant Conference, the British managed to boost the significance of Husky as a strategic decision by guaranteeing post-Sicily invasion of the Italian peninsula.¹³¹

In conclusion, while there were many differences in the opinions of the parties, they were freely discussed during these conferences which made the decision making a flexible process that addressed the spontaneous changes during the war. From time to time, the aforementioned differences even disintegrated into momentary tense conflicts. However, the escalation of the conflicts was controlled within an elastic hierarchy due to the inter-Allied bodies of senior Anglo-American politico-military leadership. The structural coherence and effectiveness of the combined leadership eased the conflicts between the allies and enabled these differences to synthesize into a successful roadmap for the Anglo-American victory in Europe. It is possible to emphasize the disagreements

shipment. This shift had not only proven that General Marshall and the American planners started to dominate the Anglo-American strategy making, but it also indicated that the Mediterranean Strategy did not seriously obstruct the Overlord build-up. See: Coakley and Leighton 1995, *United States Army in World War II – The War Department – Global Logistics and Strategy 1940–1943*, 216.

¹³¹ Bryant, *Triumph in the West*, 34-35.

during these conferences, but upon a closer look, the American leadership became also aware of the necessity to attack Sicily in this juncture of the Second World War as they also had their share of strategic objectives in the region as Spykman and Stark outlined in terms of geography and strategy. Therefore, the Mediterranean strategy and its culmination into Operation Husky was a joint decision and the firm British case for Operation Husky played a substantial role in winning the war in Europe as an Anglo-American effective strategic course.

CHAPTER III

OPERATIONAL PHASE OF THE INVASION OF SICILY: BUILDING THE ARMADA AND DESIGNING THE SCHEME

The U.S. Army defines operational phase as: “Operational art is the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in a theater of war or theater of operations through the design and organization”.¹³² Therefore the operational phase comprises an episodic bridge between the decision and its implementation.¹³³ Approximately in seven months, from Casablanca to the D-day, the British and the American commanders had to organize their forces and to find a way to successfully deploy them on the Island of Sicily. Considering how the lack of effective leadership and training resulted in high casualties and unnecessary defeats in the previous battles like the Dieppe Raid or Battle of Kasserine Pass, the Anglo-American leadership needed to set up a functioning command team to plan and eventually execute the battle. This chapter argues that the operational planning of the Husky was a complete success as both the composition of

¹³² U.S. Army, *Operations*, FM 100-5 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1986), 10.

¹³³ Vasilli Y. Savkin, *The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1974), 3-6.

the invasion force and the plan were vital for the development of the Anglo-American alliance and its triumph over the Axis.

Nonetheless, the planning of the Sicily invasion had been one of the sources of controversy over Operation Husky, due to the false conception of the rival commanders and plans. To start with, Carlo D'Este strives to portray the planning and the planning officers and the forces they commanded in constant rivalry and conflict.¹³⁴ Mitcham and Staufenberg go further and while describing the Anglo-American forces incompatible and planners as bickering men, they do not point out the fact that the Germans singlehandedly formulated defense plans, ignoring their Italian allies.¹³⁵ Therefore, this study aims to refute these arguments regarding the operational phase of the Allied Invasion of Sicily. As the operational phase involves creating the fighting forces and the planning of the military actions, this chapter is going to analyze the employment of forces first. Then it will continue with an analysis of the Operation Husky planning process, the final plan and the preliminary actions in support of these plans. By doing so, it intends to prove the superb qualities of the forces and officers involved, the efficiency of the invasion plans and exemplary success of the initial military and intelligence operations as well as the significance of them in relation to the post-Husky operations.

3.1 Forging the Invasion Force

¹³⁴ D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 92, 128, 161.

¹³⁵ Samuel W. Mitcham Jr. and Friedrich von Stauffenberg, *The Battle of Sicily: How the Allies Lost Their Chance for Total Victory* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole, 2007), 9-10, 14.

Operation Husky was the first large scale Anglo-American amphibious operation against the Axis on the European Continent. Due to its operational features, the Invasion of Sicily required the cooperation among the land, naval and the air components in order to succeed. What were the merits of the units and their commanders which made them suitable for such duty? How did their Husky assignment boost their abilities while strengthening the inter-allied and inter-branch cooperation? To answer these questions, it is necessary to analyze the first portion of the U.S. Army definition of the operational art: “employment of the military forces”.

As it is stated in the previous chapter, the command structure started to take shape in the Casablanca Conference. Eisenhower became the supreme commander of the Anglo-American invasion force.¹³⁶ He was not a commander who led his troops in the frontlines as General Montgomery or General Patton. Nonetheless, General Eisenhower’s diplomatic abilities and particularly his temperament were much appreciated among his British colleagues and those qualities were instrumental in his appointment as the Supreme commander of the Anglo-American invasion force. General Alexander defined Eisenhower’s role and his qualifications:

In warfare today a Supreme Allied Commander has much more responsibility on his shoulders than the straight fighting of battles. He finds himself entangled with strategic and political problems, with international relations, and with many other complicated issues far divorced from the frontline. Judging General Eisenhower against this background I think that his was an excellent appointment and that he carried out his assignment with great distinction.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ FRUS, *Directive to the Commander in Chief, Allied Expeditionary Force in North Africa*, 799.

¹³⁷ Harold Alexander, *The Alexander Memoirs: 1940-1945*. Edited by John North (London, U.K.: Cassell, 1962), 40-41.

Meanwhile, the British officers became the commanders of all the three conventional branches: General Harold Alexander, Army; Admiral Andrew Cunningham, Navy; Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder, Air Force. This was the adaptation of the British “*committee system*” that separated the conduct of the war by giving autonomy to the branch commands¹³⁸ (APPENDIX D).

Prime Minister Churchill rationalized this arrangement due to the parity between the American and the British forces in the theatre: “The proportions of the armies available in July were: British eight divisions, United States six; Air, the United States 55 percent; British 45. Naval, 80 percent British.”¹³⁹ Initially, General Eisenhower wanted to oppose this arrangement, demanding that the individual commands should be unified “in his own person”.¹⁴⁰ Yet, his chief of staff, Bedell Smith persuaded him not to do so.¹⁴¹ Even the ardent critic of the British and the Mediterranean strategy, General Wedemeyer defined the command structure as “[...] a logical arrangement [that would] facilitate the coordination of all United Nations’ resources in the area.”¹⁴² Thus, the command structure and the composition of the Husky invasion force emerged as a decentralized hierarchy in which the responsibility was shared by the Anglo-American commanders who directed the individual military services. While, Carlo D’Este described it as a useless British imposition, according to the documents of the Allied Force Head Quarters, the adaptation of the British committee system “did not present many of the difficulties encountered by those forming earlier combined

¹³⁸ D’Este, *Bitter Victory*, 71.

¹³⁹ Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 26.

¹⁴⁰ Garland and Smyth, 11.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Keith E. Eiler, ed., *Wedemeyer on War and Peace* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1987), 55.

organizations.”¹⁴³ Furthermore, this command system was also adapted for the Operation Overlord and worked “exceptionally well”.¹⁴⁴ Thus, the command system for Operation Husky set the organizational basis for the command hierarchy which reached ultimate victory in Europe.

3.1.1 Anglo-American Grand Army, Commanders and Units

General Alexander’s position as the field commander of the Anglo-American land forces made him responsible “with the detailed planning and the execution of the actual operation when launched.”¹⁴⁵ At this capacity, he would be serving as Eisenhower’s deputy and he was going to direct the land battles.¹⁴⁶ The two military leaders complimented each other both in terms of personality and leadership style. As the deputy Commander in Chief of the invasion force, General Alexander’s qualities made him fit for the purpose. In the beginning of the Second World War, he oversaw the amphibious withdrawal from Dunkirk and he continued to rise within the ranks due to his aforementioned successes in Africa.¹⁴⁷ Yet General Alexander, just as Eisenhower, did not have a reputation of a field commander and he attracted the criticism of his American and British peers alike for his lack of aggressiveness. However, his reserved personality and moderation made him invaluable for the task at hand, as General Bradley explained:

¹⁴³ AFHQ, Part II, Dec. 1942 – Dec. 1943, Section 1, *Fifteenth Army Group & AFHQ*, 137.

¹⁴⁴ D’Este, *Bitter Victory*, 71.

¹⁴⁵ Garland and Smyth, 55.

¹⁴⁶ Eisenhower, 160.

¹⁴⁷ Alexander, 78-79.

He not only showed the shrewd tactical judgement that was to make him the outstanding general's general of the European war but was easily able to comport the nationally-minded and jealous Allied personalities of his command. In each successive Mediterranean campaign he had won the adulation of his American subordinates.¹⁴⁸

The ground component of the Anglo-American invasion force, the 15th Army Group, under General Alexander was composed of the 7th U.S. Army and the 8th British Army. The 15th Army Group evolved out of the 18th Army Group that was renamed Force 141 for intelligence reasons. At first, it was a part of the Allied Forces Headquarters; however it became an autonomous combat formation on May 15.¹⁴⁹ Eventually, later on Force 141 became the 15th Army Group only on the eve of the D-Day.¹⁵⁰

For the command position of the U.S. portion of the ground forces, Eisenhower considered more courteous Mark Clark and impetuous General George S. Patton.¹⁵¹ But he eventually settled on General Patton for the tactical prowess he exhibited in Tunisia, but also due to Clark's organizational commitments to the U.S. 5th Army in Morocco.¹⁵² General Patton was a proponent of tactical mobility and known to be a harsh disciplinarian.¹⁵³ He also had the reputation as an effective field commander.¹⁵⁴ After assuming the command of the American forces in Tunisia, General Patton managed to transform the ruin left by Fredendall into a winning fighting force and he was promoted

¹⁴⁸ David Hunt, *A Don at War* (London, U.K.: Routledge, 2014), xxv, xxvi.

¹⁴⁹ AFHQ, Part II, Dec. 1942 – Dec. 1943, Section 1, *Fifteenth Army Group & AFHQ*, 133.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 140.

¹⁵¹ Garland and Smyth, 55.

¹⁵² Harry Cecil Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower: The Personal Diary of Captain Harry C. Butcher, USNR, Naval Aide to General Eisenhower, 1942-1945* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), 272.

¹⁵³ Alan Axelrod, *Patton: A Biography* (London, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 63.

¹⁵⁴ Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1951), 156.

to Lieutenant General.¹⁵⁵ In order to put Patton's 1st Armored Corps into equal footing with the British ground forces, it was reinforced and reorganized as the 7th U.S. Army for the invasion of Sicily.¹⁵⁶ But this designation was kept secret until the day of the invasion and once it was christened as the 7th U.S. Army, General Patton dashingly declared: "Born at sea and baptized in Blood...and crowned with victory...in battle."¹⁵⁷ The 7th U.S. Army was eventually composed of six divisions. It took its final shape when General Patton decided to divide it into two corps; U.S. II Corps that was initially present and U.S. Provisional Corps that was formed on July 15.¹⁵⁸

At the helm of the II Corps was General Omar Bradley who as well was promoted to the rank of the Lieutenant General. This promotion had a symbolic meaning, as tedious and cautious General Bradley would be the eyes and ears of General Eisenhower, tasked with keeping audacious General Patton in check.¹⁵⁹ Major General Terry de la Mesa Allen's 1st U.S. Infantry Division, *the Big Red One*, was the oldest American military formation which distinguished itself as an aggressive military unit in North Africa. However, General Allen's brash combat leadership did not reflect on the discipline of the troops. In consequence, General Bradley relieved General Allen –along with his assistant divisional commander Theodore Roosevelt Jr.– and replaced him with Major General Clarence R. Huebner during the final phase of the Invasion of Sicily.¹⁶⁰ The second division under the U.S. II Corps was the U.S. 45th Infantry Division, under the command Major General Troy H. Middleton. General Middleton was a skilled

¹⁵⁵ Atkinson, *The Day of Battle*, 17

¹⁵⁶ Eiler (eds), 49.

¹⁵⁷ Bradley, 106.

¹⁵⁸ Molony et al., 108.

¹⁵⁹ Russell F. Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany 1944–1945* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1981), 81.

¹⁶⁰ Bradley and Blair, 171-173.

trainer and his merits, which made him fit for the command position in the Operation Husky, were summarized by General Eisenhower: “He always acted according to the old aphorism: Always take your job seriously and never yourself.”¹⁶¹ Recently arrived from the United States in order to participate in the invasion, *the Thunderbirds* was “probably one of the best trained divisions in the American Army when it sailed from the United States in June 1943.”¹⁶²

The second main component of the 7th Army came into existence five days after the beginning of the tactical stage, on July 15 under the command of General Patton’s fellow armored warfare proponent and protégé—and also his operational mind—Major General Geoffrey Keyes.¹⁶³ Nonetheless, its constituent divisions had been assigned to the invasion force prior to assault. First among them was the Major General Lucian Truscott’s U.S. 3rd Infantry Division, *Rock of the Marne*.¹⁶⁴ The *dog faced general*, who carried touch pieces in his pocket and wore the same cavalry outfit throughout the war for luck, was a colorful character.¹⁶⁵ But his farsighted vision and crucial role in developing the U.S. Rangers along the same lines with the British commandos was his most significant contribution to the American Army which lacked rapidly deployable specialist light infantry up to that point.¹⁶⁶ The 3rd Division under his command was the fastest moving American division, and General Truscott transformed them into the best American seaborne regular army unit thanks to his experience with the formation and

¹⁶¹ Frank James Price, *Troy H. Middleton: A Biography* (Baton Rouge, L.A.: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), 368-370.

¹⁶² Garland and Smyth, 95.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁶⁴ Truscott, Lucian K, *Command Missions* (New York, NY: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1954), 158.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 177.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 176

the training of Rangers.¹⁶⁷ Patton's former command, U.S. 2nd Armored Corps also joined the invasion force as the only American armored division, under Patton's perennial chief of staff Major General Hugh Joseph Gaffey. General Gaffey had been working to further the development of American armored warfare since the beginning of the war along with General Patton and Keyes.¹⁶⁸

Major General Matthew Ridgway and his U.S. 82nd Airborne Division was the airborne constituent of the American invasion force.¹⁶⁹ Their participation in Operation Husky marked the first divisional scale airborne operation in the U.S. military history.¹⁷⁰ Therefore, Ridgway and his men were to experiment with this new form of warfare and the Island of Sicily became the first stage on which U.S. airborne warfare started to develop.¹⁷¹ The U.S. 9th Infantry Division, *the Old Reliables* were initially kept in reserve but they joined the battle after the capture of Palermo on General Patton's call.¹⁷² Commanded by Major General Manton S. Eddy, U.S. 9th Infantry division was one of the first American Army units to see action in Pacific and it later fought its way through North Africa with success.¹⁷³ Upon landing, they became a part of Bradley's II Corps. The 1st, 3rd and the 4th Ranger Battalions were to serve as the specialist light infantry for the U.S. 7th Army.¹⁷⁴ The Free French somehow managed to find a place in this Anglo-American invasion force as a regimental unit in the 7th Army. A battalion sized "French"

¹⁶⁷ Upon 3rd Division's speedy success at capturing Palermo, Patton greeted Truscott saying: "Well, the Truscott Trot sure got us here in a damn hurry."; Truscott, 227.

¹⁶⁸ Garland and Smyth, 96.

¹⁶⁹ Clay Blair, *Ridgway's Paratroopers: The American Airborne in World War I*. (New York, N.Y.: Dial Press, 1985), 70.

¹⁷⁰ Joseph R. Kurz, "General Matthew B. Ridgway: A Commander's Maturation of Operational Art." (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, 2011), 19.

¹⁷¹ George Charles Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgway: Soldier, Statesman, Scholar, Citizen*. (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2002), 73.

¹⁷² Garland and Smyth, 305.

¹⁷³ D'Este, *Bitter Victory*. 152.

¹⁷⁴ Garland and Smyth, 96.

Army unit, 4th Moroccan Tabor of Goums had become a part of the American invasion force with de Gaulle's insistence and Eisenhower's reluctant consent.¹⁷⁵ Entirely officered by the French, these Moroccan tribal troops were adept to the mountain warfare, yet they were subjected to harsh treatment, even summary executions due to their "barbaric" conduct unlike their more civilized counterparts.¹⁷⁶

British 8th Army, under General Bernard Montgomery, was an older and more experienced army formation. General Eisenhower did not hesitate to appoint General Montgomery as the commander of the 8th Army, considering his success and the reputation as the Hero of Al Alamein.¹⁷⁷ In his own words, General Montgomery was a "tiresome person"; never hesitating to exclaim what he saw correct directly to his British and American colleagues alike.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, unlike his superior during Operation Husky, General Alexander, he was infamous for his lack of diplomatic skills.¹⁷⁹ Furthermore, while his professionalism enhanced his command abilities, at times they could "made him an infuriatingly opinionated and stubborn ally".¹⁸⁰ But, he saw his army as a "Brotherhood" and British soldiers loved "Monty".¹⁸¹ As it is previously stated, the British Army was not enjoying a vast material and manpower reserve. Aware of the military restraints, his keen tactical wit made him an opportunistic commander who instinctively knew how to use the disadvantages of his enemies to his advantage as

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ A fine example of the "civilized conduct" of their American Allies was the Biscari Massacre. See: Edward L. Bimberg, *The Moroccan Goums: Tribal Warriors in a Modern War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999); Rick Atkinson, *The Day of Battle*, 119.

¹⁷⁷ Garland and Smyth, 54.

¹⁷⁸ Bernard Montgomery, *The Memoirs of Field Marshall Viscount Montgomery* (Cleveland, OH: The World Publishing Co, 1958), 160.

¹⁷⁹ Alan Francis Brooke, *War diaries, 1939-1945*. Edited by Alex Danchev and Daniel Todman. (London, U.K.: Phoenix, 2003), 419.

¹⁸⁰ Nigel Hamilton, *Monty: Master of the Battlefield, 1942-1944* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1983), xxv.

¹⁸¹ Montgomery, 155.

he successively exhibited during the Western Desert Campaign. Thus, unlike his American counterpart General Patton, “He must fight his battles within the limitations imposed by the weaknesses of the forces under his command [...] he refused to fight the Germans in a war of mobility but instead forced them fight on his terms – with firepower and sheer numbers.”¹⁸² Slightly larger in numbers than the U.S. 7th Army, the British 8th Army was also organized into two army corps, XIII Corps and XXX Corps, each commanded by Montgomery’s students and *protégés*.

Lieutenant General Miles Dempsey was in charge of the XIII Corps, larger of the British corps. A plain infantry officer, he gained the attention of General Montgomery before the war during his years at the Staff College as his student.¹⁸³ He had already commanded the XIII Corps with success in North Africa and his skillful conduct of combined operations made him a sound choice for the task at hand.¹⁸⁴ Newly promoted for Operation Husky, Major General Sidney Kirkman was appointed to the command of the 50th Northumbrian Infantry Division that had been fighting since the beginning of the war from Dunkirk to Tunisia.¹⁸⁵ General Montgomery, considering him “the best artilleryman in the British Army”, especially called General Kirkman to North Africa who became the commanding officer of the 50th Infantry Division for his proven capabilities.¹⁸⁶ The other component of the XIII Corps was the British 5th Division. Before their assignment to the XIII Corps for the invasion, they fought in France, Belgium, India, Iraq, Norway and Madagascar, thus earning their nickname *the*

¹⁸² Williamson Murray and Alan Millett, *A War To Be Won* (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 270.

¹⁸³ Mead, 118.

¹⁸⁴ D’Este, *Decision in Normandy: The Real Story of Montgomery and the Allied Campaign*, 60.

¹⁸⁵ *The Second Supplement to The London Gazette of Tuesday the 21st of September 1943*, issue 35988 (23 April 1943), p. 41849, *The Gazette: Official Public Record*

¹⁸⁶ Montgomery, 104.

Globetrotters.¹⁸⁷ Its long-time commanding officer, serving since 1941, Major General Horatio Berney-Ficklin was popular amongst his men but both Montgomery and Dempsey were not content with his tactical abilities.¹⁸⁸ Thus, Montgomery replaced him with another *protégé*, Major General Gerard Bucknall towards the end of the operation.¹⁸⁹

Commander of XXX Corps, Oliver Leese also gained the appreciation of General Montgomery as his student at the Staff College.¹⁹⁰ General Leese was a dynamic commander and just as his counterpart Dempsey he was also well versed in combined warfare.¹⁹¹ At the command of the British 51st Highland Infantry Division was experienced Scottish commander, Major General “Tartan Tam”, Douglas Wimberley who gained his nickname for his insistence on employing only Scots in his division and making them wear tartans of their clans.¹⁹² The 1st Canadian Infantry Division was the sole representative of the British dominions under XXX Corps. *The Old Red Patch* contrary to its nickname was a green division as its “young and inexperienced” commander Major General Guy Simonds.¹⁹³ However, Montgomery allowed him and his men “find their feet” and unexpectedly of Monty, he protected Simonds during the campaign from distraction by constraining Canadian General McNaughton from visiting and inspecting the 1st Canadian Division on the field.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁷ *Badge, formation, 5th Infantry Division. Uniforms and Insignia*, Imperial War Museums, London. In *IWM*. Accessed July 3, 2017.

¹⁸⁸ Nick Smart, *Biographical Dictionary of British General of the Second World War* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Military, 2005), 31.

¹⁸⁹ H.F. Joslen, *Orders of Battle: Second World War, 1939–1945* (London, U.K.: HMSO, 1960), 47.

¹⁹⁰ Montgomery, 128.

¹⁹¹ Mead, 242.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 497.

¹⁹³ Montgomery, 166.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

British airborne component was the 1st Airborne Division. Under the command of Major General George F. Hopkinson –who made a name for his daring command style which led to his death in Italy a month after the conclusion of Husky- elements of *the Red Devils* were to spearhead the 8th Army’s landings.¹⁹⁵ The last division to join the battle was the British 78th Infantry Division that was recently formed for Operation Torch, and kept in reserve during the initial phase of Operation Husky. However, its constituents were the veteran units of Dunkirk and their commander Major General Vyvyan Eveleigh extensively trained them for the amphibious operations.¹⁹⁶ Upon their arrival, they served under the British XXX Corps. Three British commando units (No. 3, No. 40 and No. 41) were also part of the 8th Army and they were to perform vanguard duties as the counterpart of the U.S. Rangers.¹⁹⁷

3.1.2 Anglo-American Naval and Air Forces

Anglo-American Naval forces were under the overall command of Admiral of the Fleet Andrew Cunningham.¹⁹⁸ He was a born sailor who decided to become an Admiral at the age of ten.¹⁹⁹ Leading the British Mediterranean Fleet since the outbreak of war, Admiral Cunningham successfully kept the Italian Royal Navy at bay and he was

¹⁹⁵ Molony et al., 79, 95.

¹⁹⁶ Joslen, 101.

¹⁹⁷ Hilary St. George Saunders, *The Green Beret: The Commandos at War* (London, UK: Foursquare Books, 1959), 132.

¹⁹⁸ FRUS, *Directive to the Commander in Chief, Allied Expeditionary Force in North Africa*, 799.

¹⁹⁹ Andrew Cunningham, *Admiral A.B. Cunningham, A Sailor's Odyssey* (London, UK: Hutchinson & Co. 1952), 13.

the most experienced seaman in the ranks of the Royal Navy.²⁰⁰ To stage the largest amphibious operation in the Second World War, “altogether Allies had assembled more than 3200 vessels, up to that point the greatest concentration of sea power in World War II.”²⁰¹ Allied naval force was also divided into two fleets as the ground component. Admiral Hewitt, commanding the Western Task Force formed around the U.S. 8th Fleet, was General Patton’s counterpart on the sea.²⁰² He was a skilled naval leader who had proven his abilities during Operation Torch landings.²⁰³ Furthermore, his moderation, intelligence, decisiveness and over and above his keen sense of direction made him the right choice for the command post.²⁰⁴ The Eastern Task Force which incorporated the elements of the British Mediterranean Fleet came under the command of Vice Admiral Bertram Ramsay.²⁰⁵ His crucial role as the commander of the evacuation fleet at Dunkirk made him invaluable for the task.²⁰⁶ Now steering the British Naval contingent, Admiral Ramsay was to carry the British jack back to the European continent.

The Anglo-American air force was overwhelmingly superior to the Axis in the area as Churchill summarized: “In the air our superiority was marked. Against more than 4000 aircraft (121 British and 146 United States squadrons) the enemy could muster in Sicily and Sardinia and Southern France only 1850 machines.”²⁰⁷ Chief Air Marshal Arthur Tedder was the supreme commander of this grand air armada.²⁰⁸ As the Chief of the newly established Mediterranean Air Command, he centralized the dispersed Allied

²⁰⁰ Simpson, 44.

²⁰¹ Bradley, 124.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Atkinson, *The Day of Battle*, 31.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ D’Este, *Bitter Victory*, 73.

²⁰⁶ *Supplement to The London Gazette of Tuesday the 15 July 1947*, issue 38017 (17 July 1947), p. 3295, *The Gazette: Official Public Record*.

²⁰⁷ Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 29

²⁰⁸ FRUS, *Directive to the Commander in Chief, Allied Expeditionary Force in North Africa*, 799.

air headquarters from Middle-East to Gibraltar. Air Chief Marshal Tedder was a pioneer in the aerial warfare as his previous experiences in the Mediterranean theatre had shown. He successfully helped the Anglo-American land forces to break the deadlock in Tunisia with his innovative bombing tactics. Hailed as “Tedder’s Carpet”, this new tactic fused the close air support tactics with the principles of strategic bombardment and it was used extensively during the later operations in Sicily, Italy and Normandy.²⁰⁹ Furthermore, Arthur Tedder’s tactical wit was supplemented by his modesty and openness to cooperation.²¹⁰ His complete belief in the Anglo-American alliance-and its future-distinguished him from many of his British and American peers. He openly declared to American war correspondents that he desired to see the American and British soldiers fighting in the same uniform one day.²¹¹ The sincerity of this proclamation reverberated in the structure of the Anglo-American Air forces that was involved in Operation Husky. He perfectly molded the air forces of the two nations into a single body which worked in unison.²¹²

The primary subdivision of the Mediterranean Air Command was Northwest African Air Forces under the control of Lieutenant General Carl Spaatz, a pioneer of strategic bombing. At this capacity, he put his efforts to conduct the combined aerial assault in cooperation with the Royal Air Force along with his long time lieutenant Major General James H. Doolittle who became the head of Northwest Africa Strategic Air Force. However, while the strategic bombardments were crucial in decreasing the enemy’s morale as well as its logistical capacities, Operation Husky required more close

²⁰⁹ Denis Richards, *The Royal Air Force 1938-1945. Vol. II The Fight Avails* (London, UK: H.M.S.O, 1975), 271.

²¹⁰ D’Este, *Bitter Victory*, 159.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 160.

²¹² Richards, 300-301.

air support and tactical bombardment due to the fact that the operation was mainly a confrontation between land components. In order to hasten the victory in Sicily, it was therefore necessary to directly provide concentrated air support to the ground troops by targeting enemy ground units. Fortunately, the poor close air support during the Torch and the Tunisian Campaign taught a hard learned lesson to the Anglo-American allies.²¹³ But, Air Marshal Arthur Coningham who was to command the Northwest African Tactical Air Force was the right choice for coordinating the ground attacks as the utmost proponent of the close air support within the ranks of Royal Air Force.²¹⁴ As the commander of the Desert Air Force during the North Africa campaign, Air Marshal Coningham worked and eventually succeeded in implementing these principles along with his successor and fellow close air support pioneer, Air Vice Marshal Harry Broadhurst.²¹⁵ In addition to the Northwest Africa Air Force, British air commands in Malta, Gibraltar and Cairo were also under the command of Mediterranean Air Command.²¹⁶

To sum up, the formation of the ground, naval and the air forces constituted the initial phase of the operational level analysis of the Invasion of Sicily. These men and the units they led not only formed a company of capable men and in effect a company of heroes, but in Sicily they managed to form a truly Anglo-American Army. Furthermore, among the major commanders there were not outright incompetent ones such as “the hero of Kasserine Pass” General Lloyd Fredendall or those who looked down on their

²¹³ Molony et al., 310.

²¹⁴ Richard P. Hallion, *Strike From the Sky: The History of Battlefield Air Attack, 1910-1945* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 180-182.

²¹⁵ See: Chaz Bowyer and Christopher Shores, *Desert Air Force at War* (Worthing, UK: Littlehampton Book Services, 2010)

²¹⁶ Richards, 391.

allies such as General Kenneth Anderson, “the plain cook”.²¹⁷ Historians Samuel Mitcham and Friedrich von Stauffenberg tried hard to point out that the German leaders were far superior military minds compared to their Anglo-American rivals, but they could not exactly manage to point out their significant contributions to the Axis war effort and the military traditions of their respective countries, which were minimal in comparison to their vanquishers.²¹⁸ Carlo D’Este on the other hand, while overemphasizing the conflicts within the Anglo-American command structure and the employed forces, unwillingly admits in the postscript of *Bitter Victory* how the Sicily baked the Anglo-American forces and how the respective commanders had formed the command core that destroyed Nazism in Europe.²¹⁹ Furthermore, both of them did not bother to analyze the joint contributions of these American and British officers to the modern warfare as this study has done in this part, and their biased interpretations were largely based on their flaws, not merits. Notwithstanding the negative portrayals of the Anglo-American military leaders by overtly biased historians mentioned above, they deserved their posts as an outcome of their merits that made them pioneers and the masters of operational art. Now in their capacities they were to determine how to use the forces to the full effect on the battleground (APPENDIX E).

3.2 Planning of Operation Husky, the Final Plan and the Preliminaries

²¹⁷ Rick Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa, 1942-1943*, 324.

²¹⁸ Mitcham and Stauffenberg, ix, 78, 170-171, 316.

²¹⁹ D’Este, *Bitter Victory*, 565-573.

Returning back to the U.S. Army definition of the operational phase quoted in the beginning of this chapter, this subsection is going to deal with the latter part of the quotations, “design and organization”. The planning of the Allied Invasion of Sicily seemed as a fragmented process at first glance. The officers responsible for the planning of the operation were preoccupied with fighting a protracted battle in Tunisia.²²⁰ Due to the commitments on the field, the forces which were assigned to Operation Husky and their commanding officers were scattered throughout North Africa.²²¹ Further inseminating the planning efforts, the operational planning began separately in London, Washington, D.C. and respective force headquarters in North Africa. The critics of the Husky planning stressed this aspect of the plan and emphasized it by portraying usual operational deliberations as bitter conflicts.²²² Did this apparent fragmentation caused conflict among the American and British planners, or was it possible for the Anglo-American planners to formulate an efficient and a combined plan while continuing their duties at the front? In addition to the plans, were the supplementary military and intelligence actions operationally successful? This study argues that it was possible for Husky planners to create a successful operational plan as the above-mentioned Anglo-American command structure crafted an efficient combined plan, enhanced by supporting military and deception actions, which became an example for the later operations, especially *Overlord*.

3.2.1 Tailoring the Plan

²²⁰ D’Este, *Bitter Victory*, 109.

²²¹ Eiler (eds.), 48.

²²² D’Este, *Bitter Victory*, 89, 101; George F. Botjer, *Sideshow War: The Italian Campaign 1943-1945* (Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1996), 7; Mitcham and Stauffenberg, 12-18.

To begin with, though downplayed or outright ignored by critics, there were practical elements which made the efficient planning achievable for the Anglo-American planners. The excellent cable and wireless communications made it possible for the planners to have an open communication channel for constant deliberations over the Husky plans.²²³ Meanwhile, “fading of the cargo shortage” during the planning of Operation Husky relieved the planners of logistical burdens they had experienced during the previous actions in the Mediterranean.²²⁴ Besides, the introduction of new instruments to the allied inventory, best exemplified with the landing craft, DUKW which was put into action for the first time in the Invasion of Sicily, altered the amphibious warfare by allowing transportation of supplies and troops directly to the landing grounds.²²⁵ (APPENDIX F) Combined with these developments, the evolution of the operational plans negates the views of its critics completely as the planning of the Invasion of Sicily became an example of the operational plan which was finalized and eventually defeated the enemy on time.

A temporary plan for Operation Husky was already present during the Casablanca conference.²²⁶ The joint Planning Staff in London crafted this plan in January 1943 and it prescribed two attacks on the southeast and the northwest edges of

²²³ Molony et al., 6

²²⁴ Coakley and Leighton, *Global Logistics and Strategy: 1943-1945*, 32.

²²⁵ DUKW or simply the Duck saw action first time in Sicily and it later on became the backbone of the amphibious assaults in Normandy. The Allied commanders praised the contributions of this six wheeled amphibious vehicle to the Allied war effort and they mastered its use during Operation Husky. See: Bradley, *Soldier's Story*, 131, 278; Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 163.

²²⁶ *Second Supplement to The London Gazette of Tuesday the 10th of February 1948*, issue 38205 (12 February 1948), p. 1009, *The Gazette: Official Public Record*.

the island.²²⁷ Yet, the detailed planning of the operation started in the following month, on February 10, 1943.²²⁸ The meeting was held at a hotel room numbered 141 (which gave its name to invasion force) in Bouzera (proper spelling in Maghrebi Arabic: Bouzaréah, a township located on the outskirts of Algiers). According to this plan, the Anglo-American forces would stage a series of frontal assaults in order to secure the major ports and airfields on the island while preserving the same outline with the temporary plan. There were eight ports on the island, and only four of them were capable of large scale supply operations; Messina, Syracuse, Catania and Palermo.²²⁹ There were also nineteen airfields known to the Anglo-American allies-Axis forces constructed eleven more until the D-Day-and they were dispersed throughout the island in the close proximity of the coastline.²³⁰ In this scenario, the Seventh U.S. Army and the British 8th Army was to stage dispersed airborne assaults on a long coastline respectively between Palermo and Syracuse. The initial plan aimed to capture the important ports and airfields simultaneously, except for Messina.

Carlo D'Este claims that by not targeting Messina directly, Anglo-American planners “conceded to Axis forces the possibility of reinforcing the island via Messina strait, or to leave it by the same route.”²³¹ To start with, he downplayed the Axis anxiety for losing entire armies to allies as prisoners as they did recently in Tunisia and Stalingrad. Ignoring these facts, D'Este goes on to endorse a “*Messina/Calabria*” operation as “the boldest and most important option”, and claims that the Anglo-

²²⁷ Montgomery, 156.

²²⁸ History of Allied Force Headquarters - Part Two, Dec 1942 - Dec 1943, Section 1. 133.

²²⁹ Second Supplement to The London Gazette of Tuesday the 10th of February 1948, issue 38205 (12 February 1948), p. 1010, *The Gazette: Official Public Record*.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 76.

American high command had “unrealistic planning assumptions” and lacked courage for not taking this foolhardy plan into consideration.²³² There were more than two hundred anti-air craft batteries of various sizes concentrated around the Messina strait.²³³ In addition to the air defenses, a set of strong coastal fortifications existed along the narrow channel.²³⁴ These air and naval defenses on both sides of the narrow Messina strait were in effect comprised Scylla and Charybdis (mythological sea monsters positioned on the opposite sides of the Strait of Messina) that were capable of inflicting a heavy blow to the invasion armada. Thus, a direct attack on Messina would result in heavy Anglo-American casualties and operational failure.²³⁵ These facts render Carlo D’Este’s own claims unrealistic. Though, in the case of Anglo-American defeat at Sicily, D’Este would have the opportunity to rename his work “Utter Defeat”.

Yet the Supreme Commander of the Invasion Force would not let it happen. General Eisenhower did not appreciate the initial plan as it was too risky for his prudent military approach. He expressed his concerns about the audacity of the initial plan of dispersed assaults: “No one really liked the plan for echelon attack. Its complications, dispersion, and successive rather than simultaneous assaults were cited as risks outweighing the chance of defeat through lack of port facilities.”²³⁶ Furthermore he was anxious about the presence of a sizeable German contingent in Sicily that might have caused an operational failure.²³⁷ He had the right to be anxious, because as the supreme commander of the Anglo-American invasion force, it was not only his career at stake,

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Molony et al., 168.

²³⁴ Garland and Smyth, 54.

²³⁵ *Second Supplement to The London Gazette of Tuesday the 10th of February 1948*, issue 38205 (12 February 1948), p. 1010, *The Gazette: Official Public Record*.

²³⁶ Eisenhower, 163.

²³⁷ Ibid.

but also the lives of American and British soldiers and the prestige of the Anglo-American military. Eisenhower ordered the revision of the initial plans and in April, the Husky planners managed to transform the echelon attacks into a more concentrated assault to the northwest and southeast corners.²³⁸ This plan curbed the echelon attacks and it restrained the 8th Army between the lengthy frontage between Gela and Catania, while the 7th Army was to land near Palermo. Even General Wedemeyer agreed with Eisenhower's position, and when inquired by General Patton about the initial operational plans, he criticized diversionary actions for their lack of "tangible and realistic" direction.²³⁹

The need for direction was also occupying the mind of Montgomery who was entangled with the ongoing battle in the west Libyan Desert. He had already sent a message to Alexander, expressing his skepticism about the initial plan.²⁴⁰ As the D-Day approached slowly, the dispersed invasion plan was bothering the conservative military mind of General Montgomery more and more. He expressed his concern on the latest version—which he numbered No. 8- of the Husky plan:

"I listened to the presentation of Plan No. 8 and quickly decided that it would not do. The Eighth Army was to land in the south-east of the island in a wide arc stretching from a point just south of Syracuse, southwards round the Pachino peninsula, and then westwards to Gela. The Seventh U.S. Army was to land in the extreme north-west of the island, astride Trapani. Such dispersion was obviously based on meeting only very slight resistance."²⁴¹

²³⁸ Montgomery, 154.

²³⁹ Eiler (eds.), 50.

²⁴⁰ Montgomery, 153.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 157.

Observing the determined Axis defense in Tunisia, like Eisenhower General Montgomery was also worried about the German and Italian resistance in Sicily that might have caused failure of the whole endeavor just as Eisenhower. Even the concentrated attacks on important centers in the northwestern and the southeastern edges of the island would not ease Montgomery's anxiety. Thus, General Montgomery was determined to change the Palermo-Catania plan and ordered the 8th Army planners to come up with an alternative assault scheme for the British contingent.²⁴²

The first alternative that the 8th Army planners came up with still resembled the initial plans and it only restricted the 8th Army's assault to a small strip of land between Syracuse and Pachino, while Americans maintained their assault positions in the northwest Sicily-which Monty did not dare to challenge at that moment.²⁴³ However, Admiral Cunningham immediately objected this proposal as it was leaving most of the important ports and airfields in the hands of the Axis, which would make it harder for the Anglo-American naval contingent to continue their activities around the island. Air Chief Marshal Tedder also opposed Montgomery's proposal as it left a significant number of airfields at the hands of Axis.²⁴⁴ Yet, Montgomery was unyielding and he called for a conference at Algiers to be assembled on May 2 -though it would start without General Alexander and Eisenhower.²⁴⁵ Montgomery used this as an opportunity to convert Bedell Smith to his operational position and persuaded him to assemble the conference right away.

²⁴² Ibid., 154.

²⁴³ Ibid., 158.

²⁴⁴ Garland and Smyth, 62.

²⁴⁵ Montgomery, 159.

General Montgomery explained his rationale to the chief Anglo-American commanders except for Alexander and Eisenhower. He wanted to “keep [the Invasion Forces] *concentrated*” by “securing a suitable area as a firm base from which to develop [their] operations”.²⁴⁶ To realize these objectives he again pointed at the area between Syracuse and Pachino but this time he seized the moment by discarding the 7th Army’s northwest assault plans and proposed to reposition the 7th Army’s assaults to the south-central Sicily, to Gela.²⁴⁷ While this plan left important ports and the northwest portion of the island initially untouched, it provided the invasion force with better air and naval cover and also a more coherent operational orientation. It also appealed to the concerns of Eisenhower and Alexander, thus they approved this plan a day later on May 3.²⁴⁸ The Anglo-American planners therefore started to work in detail on it immediately as it provided much necessary direction mentioned above.

This plan was the best available compromise that offered a realistic alternative to the initial plans.²⁴⁹ It was an absolute compromise because the two armies were to fight side by side, not miles apart as in the first plan. Therefore, the British and the American operations became a unified action as the two armies became co-dependent. While Montgomery was quite content with the approval of the new plan, General Alexander was worried about the apparent secondary role of the U.S. 7th Army and the American reaction to it.²⁵⁰ Yet, General Patton accepted the plan without hesitation saying,

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 161.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 163.

²⁴⁸ D’Este, *Bitter Victory*, 120.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 119.

²⁵⁰ *Second Supplement to The London Gazette of Tuesday the 10th of February 1948*, issue 38205 (12 February 1948), p. 1013, *The Gazette: Official Public Record*.

“General I don’t plan – I only obey orders.”²⁵¹ Even when his subordinates pleaded with him to protest, Patton rejected bluntly: “An order is an order and I would do my goddamndest to carry it out.”²⁵² Alexander later eulogized Patton’s obedience in his dispatches as: “It is an impressive example of the spirit of complete loyalty and inter-Allied co-operation which inspired all operations with which I was associated in the Mediterranean theatre.”²⁵³ Thus, the planning process of Husky overcame the dispersion of the planning centers, and conflicts among the planners were contained thanks to General Montgomery’s initiative, Patton’s sense of duty and Eisenhower’s and Alexander’s cooperation.

3.2.2 The Final Plan and the Preliminaries

After the approval of Montgomery’s plan in May, the Anglo-American allies were speeding up the planning in detail as the D-Day approached. General Alexander categorized the objectives of the plan in five phases: “An operation is to be prepared to seize and hold the island of Sicily as a base for future operations . . . The intention of the Allied Commander-in-Chief is to seize and hold the island by operations in five phases.”²⁵⁴ First of all, the Allied naval and air forces were to eliminate the Axis naval and air forces. Secondly, the invasion force would seize the ports of Syracuse and

²⁵¹ Ladislav Farago, *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph* (New York, NY: Ivan Obelensky, Inc, 1963), 273.

²⁵² Samuel Eliot Morison, *Sicily – Salerno – Anzio, January 1943-June 1944* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 20.

²⁵³ *Second Supplement to The London Gazette of Tuesday the 10th of February 1948*, issue 38205 (12 February 1948), p. 1013-1014, *The Gazette: Official Public Record*.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Licata, as well as airfields in the vicinity, by a series of amphibious landings coupled with airborne assaults. Thirdly, they would establish a base of operations in order to capture naval and airport facilities, and in the fourth phase they would stage offensive operations to capture these facilities. The final and the fifth phase was “the reduction of the island.” Carlo D’Este claims that the fifth clause was deliberately vague.²⁵⁵ However, both the high command and the army commanders were quite decisive on how to reduce the island by cornering the German and Italian defenders to northeast edge and then eliminate them there.²⁵⁶

The British 8th Army and U.S. 7th Army were to land respectively on the southeast and south central coastline of Sicily as it is stated above. American official history likened this plan to the armament of a *Murillo*, a sword and shield bearing gladiator class. According to it, while the British contingent would be the sword, Americans were to be the shield that protected the flank of the fighter.²⁵⁷ However this study offers a more precise analogy by choosing a more fitting type of gladiator, Retarius, the net fighter. As the British army was to play the role of the trident, American army would in effect play the role of the net that renders the opponent immobile; because while the British ground forces would move vertically from Syracuse to Messina, American contingent was to occupy the rest of the island, denying Axis forces space to maneuver.

To perform its task as the “trident” directed at Messina, the British 8th Army was to throw its weight directly at the northwest direction. The British 8th Army was divided

²⁵⁵ D’Este, *Bitter Victory*, 145.

²⁵⁶ Molony et al., 29-30.

²⁵⁷ Garland and Smyth, 91.

into two corps as it is explained in detail above. British XIII Corps was to assault the southern outskirts of Syracuse, forming northern most part of the assault force.²⁵⁸ After their landings, they were tasked with seizing first Syracuse and then Augusta in order to provide the invasion forces with necessary port facilities. At the same time they were to seize the airfields around the town of Gerbini.²⁵⁹ Further enhancing the XIII Corps' landings, the elements of the 1st Airborne Division would stage glider-borne assault to Ponte Grande Bridge -the bridge that connects the city of Syracuse with southeast edge of the island- thus denying Axis counter attacks against the XIII Corps. To the south of the XIII Corps, the British XXX Corps would land to the southeast tip of Sicily, on the Pachino peninsula.²⁶⁰ The XXX Corps had two primary tasks. First of all, they were to guard the flank of the XIII Corps and to prevent any attempt by Axis to encircle them.²⁶¹ Secondly, they were to link with the American the 7th Army to the west of the 8th Army thus forming a unified frontline against the defenders.²⁶² After consolidating the above drawn foothold, the British 8th Army was to advance towards Catania plain and from there ultimately onto Messina.²⁶³

Landing at the south-central Sicilian coastline, to the left of the British 8th Army, the U.S. 7th Army was to first to envelop the approximately 110 kilometers of coastline from Licata to the west to Scoglitti to the east and then continue to entangle the central and northwest Sicily as the "net". Just as the British 8th Army, the U.S. 7th Army was

²⁵⁸ *Second Supplement to The London Gazette of Tuesday the 10th of February 1948*, issue 38205 (12 February 1948), p. 1014, *The Gazette: Official Public Record*.

²⁵⁹ D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 148.

²⁶⁰ Garland and Smyth, 91.

²⁶¹ *Second Supplement to The London Gazette of Tuesday the 10th of February 1948*, issue 38205 (12 February 1948), p. 1014, *The Gazette: Official Public Record*.

²⁶² Garland and Smyth, 91.

²⁶³ D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 150.

divided into two assault forces and the airborne constituent was to spearhead the assaults. General Truscott's 3rd Division was to land at Licata as westernmost assault unit tasked with capturing port and the airfield facilities in that sector.²⁶⁴ General Bradley's 2nd Corps would attack Gela in the center and Scoglitti in the west.²⁶⁵ They had two main objectives. The first one was to capture the airfields in the vicinity of the Gela port.²⁶⁶ Their second objective was to become the chain ring that connects the rest of the American assault force with the British ground component. The 82nd Airborne division was to accompany them, landing inland between Ponte Olivo and Biscara in order to hinder Axis counterattack. After consolidating their position, the U.S. 7th Army was to move towards northwest direction, denying the rest of the island to the Axis (APPENDIX G).

Naval and air plans completed the Army plans outlined above. Cunningham's naval forces were to transport, supply and provide cover for the ground forces. The two task forces of the navy-which was the largest amphibious armada that the history of war had ever witnessed with more than 3200 ships-were to accompany the Anglo-American assault forces to their landing grounds. After capturing the port facilities to the southeast of Sicily their duty was to form a mobile bridge that was tasked with pouring troops and necessary supplies to the island. In addition to this task, the armed vessels of the Anglo-American navy were to screen the Axis troop movements, provide naval gunfire support as well as protecting the above-mentioned naval bridge from Axis incursions.

²⁶⁴ Truscott, 195.

²⁶⁵ Bradley, 106.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

Tedder's air armada of 4000 aircraft was tasked with strategic and tactical bombardment as well as providing fighter and close air support against approximately 1800 German and Italian aircraft. Anglo-American transport wings also had to carry the paratroopers to their designated drop zones. Anglo-American long range bombers were to spearhead the air attacks by paralyzing the Axis military capabilities in Sicily and South Italy with a bombing campaign, starting to "reduce the island" even before the actual invasion.²⁶⁷ During the landing Anglo-American fighters and interceptors were to provide air coverage for the invasion army mainly from the bases in Malta, Tunisia and Algiers. After the Anglo-American land forces gained a foothold for the air forces by securing the above mentioned airport facilities in the south central and the southeast of the island, they were to expand their operations to whole Sicily, thereby blocking the skies to the German and Italian air forces.

These plans were supplemented by a set of two preliminary actions. One was the naturalization of the four small Italian islands south of Sicily. The second were the deception operations, Operation Barclay and its constituent operations, Animals and Mincemeat. To start with, General Eisenhower was worried about the risk of jeopardizing the Husky plans by not pacifying Pantelleria and the smaller Pelagic Islands -Islands of Lampedusa, Linosa and Lampione.²⁶⁸ Mitcham and Staufenberg speculate about the resolve of General Eisenhower saying, "had the defenders been Waffen SS men, Eisenhower would no doubt have bypassed the island and accepted the

²⁶⁷ The bombardment was carried out in two phases. From mid-May to early July Spaatz and Doolittle conducted a widespread strategic bombardment campaign against the Axis positions in the Mediterranean, Sardinia, South Italy, Sicily and Greece. Beginning from July 3, they focused their attacks on Sicily. Molony et al., 32-33.

²⁶⁸ Bradley, 115.

risk of Husky.”²⁶⁹ Yet, they needed to be reminded of the fact that some of the SS formations, especially those composed of the Soviet and Balkan minorities were not much better than the Italian soldiers, neither in terms of moral, nor in terms of training and armament.²⁷⁰ In addition to that, Eisenhower, as it was emphasized before, was a commander who avoided risky ventures and ordered the occupation of the islands. The Italians were boasting about Pantelleria as the “Gibraltar of the central Mediterranean.”²⁷¹ Even if that was the case, the Anglo-American air forces and its strategic wing was not the Royal Italian Air Force. They devastated the Island with prejudice from the end of the Tunisian Campaign until June 8, reducing it to rubble.²⁷² On June 11, as soon as the first ground units landed on the island, the Italian defenders of the so-called Italian Gibraltar surrendered without resistance.²⁷³ Lampedusa surrendered when a British fighter pilot forced-landed, then cowed the Italian garrison into surrender with his hand gun and the rest followed the suit -there was little Italian military presence in Linosa and the Italian Army did not bother to garrison Lampione.²⁷⁴ Thanks to the occupation of these small islands, the Husky armada would be able to safely reach their destination, Sicily.

Deception operations were more successful than the invasion of the above mentioned islands in their contribution to the Anglo-American operational aims. The Anglo-American planners set Operation Barclay in motion to convince the Axis that the

²⁶⁹ Mitcham and Stauffenberg, 42.

²⁷⁰ Under-armed and poorly trained SS Ost-Battalion at Omaha Beach did not performed particularly well against the American landing force at Omaha Beach. See: Stephen Badsey and Tim Bean, *Omaha Beach* (Syroud, UK: Sutton Publishing, 2004), 30.

²⁷¹ Mitcham and Stauffenberg, 42.

²⁷² Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 31.

²⁷³ Eisenhower, 165.

²⁷⁴ Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 31.

next target of the Anglo-American forces would be the Balkans or Sardinia, not Sicily- though it was the British intelligence that planned and executed these operations, proving that the Americans would not be able to mislead the Axis without the institutionalized British espionage. First of all, within the scope of Operation Barclay, British Advanced Headquarters 'A' Force invented the fictional 20th Army composed of twenty divisions in Egypt in order to convince German high command that the invasion would start from Greece and Balkans.²⁷⁵ To support the existence of this fictional invasion army and the plan, the Allies launched Operation Animals in Greece, during which the British Special Operations Executive staged a large scale sabotage operations side by side with the Greek resistance until the start of the landings in Sicily. Even though it resulted in the Axis reprisals against the civilian population, it succeeded in deceiving the German planners.

Nonetheless, among them Operation Mincemeat was the best known and the most intricate make-believe operation of the Second World War that represents the brightest contribution of the British espionage to the Anglo-American war effort.²⁷⁶ The Military Intelligence Section 5 officers, Ewen Montagu and Charles Cholmondeley engineered an uncanny scheme, inspired by Admiral John Godfrey's Trout memo that bears the "hallmarks" of his assistant Ian Fleming.²⁷⁷ According to Trout memo, in order to deceive the enemy, intelligence agents must act like a trout fisher who "casts patiently all day. He frequently changes his venue and his lures. If he has frightened a fish he may 'give the water a rest for half-an-hour,' but his main endeavor, viz. to attract

²⁷⁵ Michael Howard, *Strategic Deception in the Second World War* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995), 86.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ben Macintyre, *Operation Mincemeat* (London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010), 6.

fish by something he sends out from his boat, is incessant.”²⁷⁸ In this fashion, Montagu and Cholmondeley casted their rod into the waters of the Atlantic coast of Andalusia, and their bait was the dead body of an unfortunate Welsh tramp named Glyndwr Michael.²⁷⁹ They reinvented him as a Royal Marines Captain William Martin, wrapped him up in Marine battledress and filled its pouches with pocket litter.²⁸⁰ However, it was the content of the false documents stuffed in the briefcase, which was handcuffed to wrist of the dead body that directly aimed to mislead the Axis about the whereabouts of the next Anglo-American invasion. It included a letter from General Archibald Nye addressing General Alexander which indicated that the Anglo-American armies were about to mount an amphibious assault on Greece.²⁸¹ To further confuse the Axis planners, the suitcase also contained another letter to Admiral Mountbatten that implied a simultaneous attack on Sardinia.²⁸² The body was deposited offshore Heulva in April 30, and with the touch of Fortuna, a Spanish fisher found it and delivered it to the pro-German Spanish authorities which in turn surrendered the briefcase to Germans.²⁸³ German intelligence eventually “*swallowed*” the mincemeat as a whole and German high command diverted troops to Southern Greece and Sardinia, neglecting the defense of Sicily.²⁸⁴ Thus the deception operations opened the way for the successful implementation of Husky plans.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 7.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 334.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 64, 71.

²⁸¹ Denis Smyth, *Deathly Deception: The Real Story of Operation Mincemeat* (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010), 88.

²⁸² Macintyre, 124.

²⁸³ Smyth, 198.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 238.

To sum up, first of all the development of the plans showed that the operation Husky planning did not indicate a particularly British and American disagreement over the operational plans. It was the Combined Chiefs of Staff planners in London who came up with the idea of dispersed landings along the north-western and south-eastern corners of the Island and planners in Washington who modified it. General Montgomery in essence objected a plan which was conceived by the planners of both nations. When he resented and pointed at the small strip in the south eastern part of Sicily, the British commanders, Admiral Cunningham and Air Marshall Tedder opposed him and forced him to enlarge to frontage from Catania to Licata.²⁸⁵ Besides, General Eisenhower, who had similar concerns about the dispersed assault plans, supported Montgomery's plan and, even though he shared the command responsibility with the British commanders, he was in the position to approve the final plan as the "American" supreme commander of the whole operation.²⁸⁶ Therefore, as General Alexander pointed out "flexibility was, indeed, the keynote of the whole planning period and every proposed solution was examined on its own merits."²⁸⁷ Thus, Anglo-American planners succeeded in crafting an effective scheme thanks to the flexibility provided by the above mentioned Anglo-American planning structure.²⁸⁸

Secondly, the final plan was a comprehensive scheme that designated clear cut aims for the invasion forces unlike the previous operations. Dieppe Raid was simply a test for the Anglo-American ability to stage amphibious operations and it ended in bitter

²⁸⁵ D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 114.

²⁸⁶ Montgomery, 168.

²⁸⁷ *Second Supplement to The London Gazette of Tuesday the 10th of February 1948*, issue 38205 (12 February 1948), p. 1011, *The Gazette: Official Public Record*.

²⁸⁸ AFHQ, Part II, Dec. 1942 – Dec. 1943, Section 1, 136.

failure.²⁸⁹ The three fold Torch plan was a gamble, and it owed its success to the lack of French resistance, because if the Vichy forces put up a determined fight and called on the Axis reinforcements the dispersed Torch landings would have failed.²⁹⁰ The planning of the Tunisian Campaign also lacked direction due to the lack of comprehensive communication between the American and British leaders that prolonged the campaign into *Tunisgrad*.²⁹¹ Besides, the resemblance of the final Husky plan with the plans for Overlord on the operational maps is remarkable, though it can be argued that the Husky plans were more comprehensive as “both frontage and initial assault forces would be larger than those of the Normandy invasion a year later.” as the official American history points out.²⁹² The Anglo-American force successfully executed the preliminary actions, laying the groundwork for the implementation of the plans. The invasion of the islands to the south of Sicily not only secured the safe passage of the Husky invasion force but also proved the effectiveness of strategic and tactical bombing in winning battles. The deception operations on the other hand managed to mask Operation Husky completely. This experience also set the operational pattern for the later Operation Bodyguard-the equivalent of Operation Barclay for the Operation Overlord –which included the creation of sham armies and the execution sabotage operations.²⁹³

In conclusion, in terms of the employment of forces and commanders, planning and the complimentary operations, the Operational level of the Invasion of Sicily was a success. Thus the Anglo-American planners succeeded in crafting a fine specimen of operational art as defined by the U.S. Army by employing the best available forces and

²⁸⁹ William Buckingham, *D-Day: The First 72 hours* (Stroud, UK: Tempus Publishing, 2004), 15.

²⁹⁰ Jean Edward Smith, *Eisenhower in War and Peace* (New York, NY: Random House, 2012), 214.

²⁹¹ Playfair et al., 239.

²⁹² Garland and Smyth, 88.

²⁹³ John Latimer, *Deception in War* (New York, NY: Overlook Press, 2001), 159.

commanders they had at the time, in order to attain the strategic goals, they set in Casablanca through design and organization. Completing the operational level of the Invasion of Sicily, Anglo-American forces and commanders were to proceed to the final level of war, the tactical phase on July 10, 1943.

CHAPTER IV

TACTICAL EXECUTION OF OPERATION HUSKY

When the Anglo-American politico-military leadership decided to continue their strategic efforts in the Mediterranean in January and the military planners finished the scheme to how to implement this decision in May, they in effect completed two thirds of Operation Husky. Concluding the strategic and operational levels of Operation Husky, the Anglo-American alliance was about to make its stride to the final level of war, the tactical level. In this level of war, the Anglo-American military commanders were tasked with attaining the strategic goals, which were distilled into tangible military objectives during the operational level, through engagements in variable circumstances of the battlefield.²⁹⁴ In addition, they were to experiment with the new battlefield tactics on a larger scale than their previous engagements on the beaches, hills and the towns of the Island of Sicily. Furthermore, the ability of the Anglo-American alliance to carry out combined military action on the European soil was about to be tested during the operation.

²⁹⁴ Dennis M. Drew and Donald M. Snow, *Making Twenty-First Century Strategy: An Introduction to Modern National Security Processes and Problems* (Maxwell, AL: Air University Press, 2006), 19.

Operation Husky commenced on the night of July 9-10, 1943 with the bulk of the Anglo-American invasion forces landing on their designated zones in the south-central and southeastern sections of the Island of Sicily and ended when the first Allied soldiers entered the city of Messina on the night of August 16, and took the complete control of the island in the following morning. Hence, the Anglo-American alliance reached their strategic and operational goals in 38 days. They fought against the 6th Italian Army, comprised of ten divisions and two German divisions, which was reinforced with two more German Division on July 18.²⁹⁵ How did they manage to execute their first large-scale amphibious invasion on the southernmost edge of the fortress Europe, grabbing their objectives so dexterously and decisively? More importantly, what did they learn on the field of tactics? In order to address this question, it is necessary to evaluate the phases of the Anglo-American invasion of the island of Sicily with an emphasis on the tactical maneuver elements of 15th Army Group which was employed to defeat the Axis defenders. Therefore, this chapter is going to analyze the British and American engagements during Operation Husky.

To provide a clear picture of the tactical execution of Husky, the study at hand is going to divide the tactical level into two sections. The first part is going to deal with the landings and the consolidation of the 15th Army, during which the Allied invasion forces executed airborne assaults and amphibious attacks and later consolidated their foothold

²⁹⁵ Commander in Chief of the Italian 6th Army was Alfredo Guzzoni with Major General Fridolin Senger von Utterlin acting as his German liaison officer. 6 out of 10 of the Italian divisions were static coastal divisions, comprised of mostly local middle-aged men who were recalled to the active duty and armed with the outdated weapons. However, the German divisions were all elite army units, among which the Hermann Goring Panzer Division was one of the best armed and trained German formation during the Second World War. They were later reinforced with a Panzer Corps under the command of Panzer General Hans-Valentin Hube who had taken the effective command of the Axis defense upon his arrival. See, Molony et al., 43. Vol. 5; Garland and Smyth, 69-87.

on the island. The first part, as this study envisions, is going to deal with the airborne and amphibious assaults of the D-Day. The second part of this chapter is going to evaluate the tactical phase of Operation Husky following the consolidation of the Anglo-American forces on the island, from their move to inland to the eventual conquest of Messina. Nonetheless, rather than sticking to the operational chronology and reporting troop movements day by day, unlike conventional military histories, this study is going to evaluate the military actions during which the Anglo-American allies executed innovative amphibious, airborne, armor and light infantry tactics that laid the foundation of the combined Anglo-American tactical superiority over the Axis in later operations in Northwestern Europe.

4.1 The D-Day

The fate of the whole operation depended on D-Day assaults and the consolidation of the Anglo-American invasion force by gaining a firm foothold. A day before the D-Day, Commander in Chief of the Husky invasion force, General Eisenhower took his command position in Lascaris war rooms in Malta along with General Alexander and Admiral Cunningham.²⁹⁶ The walls of this underground complex had been used as the defense headquarters for centuries by the Order of Saint John against the Turkish onslaught, and later on by the British against the Axis attacks during

²⁹⁶ Air Chief Marshal Tedder stayed in Tunisia for the Anglo-American “*air formations were crowded into the airfields of northeastern Tunisia.*”; Eisenhower, 170.

the Second World War. Now Lascaris War Rooms were serving as the command center of the first Anglo-American offensive against the fortress Europe.

The Anglo-American high command was observing the gathering of the Anglo-American invasion armada in the southern and eastern coastline of Malta.²⁹⁷ As the troops had to be carried “from ports stretched throughout the length of the Mediterranean” through the sea lanes that are filled with mines, U-boats and torpedo planes, this task was to be carried out with utmost circumspection.²⁹⁸ Admiral Cunningham’s navy was carrying out its mission “faultlessly”.²⁹⁹ Yet on the night of the D-Day, the wind speed began to increase, endangering the airborne and amphibious assaults.³⁰⁰ While Eisenhower had fallen into desperation and intensive prayer, General Alexander looked at the bright side of the gathering storm, remarking in his dispatches:

for at many places along the coast the hostile garrisons, which had been on the alert for weeks, were lulled into a sense of security by the bad weather and, believing that no one would attempt a landing under such conditions, relaxed their vigil.³⁰¹

In these circumstances, the British and American soldiers were about to take a step on the Island of Sicily first from the air, then from the sea.

4.1.1. Airborne Assaults

²⁹⁷ *Second Supplement to The London Gazette of Tuesday the 10th of February 1948*, issue 38205 (12 February 1948), p. 1018, *The Gazette: Official Public Record*.

²⁹⁸ Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 171.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 172.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 172.

³⁰¹ *Second Supplement to The London Gazette of Tuesday the 10th of February 1948*, issue 38205 (12 February 1948), p. 1018, *The Gazette: Official Public Record*.

American and British paratroopers wrapped their white arm bands for identification, checked their equipment and mounted their troop transports and gliders in the early evening of July 9. Their mission was to act as the pioneering element of the 15th Army Group. Each airborne contingent was to land behind the enemy lines in their respective invasion zones for the two main tasks. First of all, they were to block enemy counter attacks and reinforcements, reinforcing the amphibious invasion. Secondly, they were to sabotage enemy communications and logistical lines, paralyzing the defenders. While the British employed gliders to deploy their airborne infantry, Americans chose to directly bail out of C-47 troop transports. In this way, the airborne elements of the invasion force were to execute the Anglo-American airborne warfare that surpassed all the previous Anglo-American airborne assaults in the Second World War, especially the “amateurish Allied parachute operations in North Africa” both in extent and preparation.³⁰²

Around 07:00 p.m., 2075 soldiers of the 1st British Airborne division along with jeeps, anti-tanks and mortars emplaned 144 British Horsa and smaller American Waco gliders which were to be towed by 109 American C-47's and 35 British Albermarles.³⁰³ Their mission was to capture the gateway to the city of Syracuse, Ponte Grande Bridge under the operational name *Ladbroke*.³⁰⁴ Carlo D'Este names the chapter of his book that deals with the British glider assaults as “the Flying Coffins”. He bitterly criticizes the personality of Major General Hopkinson and the British way of airborne warfare, counting each mislanded glider with a curious joy.³⁰⁵ However, he does not mention that

³⁰² Atkinson, *The Day of Battle*, 76.

³⁰³ Mitcham and Stauffenberg, 73-74.

³⁰⁴ Garland and Smyth, 117.

³⁰⁵ See: D'Este, *Bitter Victory*.

the American pilots towing the gliders were inexperienced. He also fails to note that the 115 out of 144 gliders managed to reach the island deploying approximately 1200 glider-borne infantry.³⁰⁶ Furthermore, their daring commander Major General George F. Hopkinson, whom D'Este accused of hubris and personal ambition, mounted one of the gliders along with his staff to lead his men on the battlefield, risking his life.³⁰⁷ In fact, his glider landed at the sea, but fortunately he was found by a British vessel and immediately demanded to be “*shipped*” to the island to his men as soon as possible, not only because of his daring nature, but also because his awareness regarding to the necessity of being on the ground with his troops to better coordinate the attacks.³⁰⁸

Just a platoon of British paratroopers, on the other hand, landed near the bridge and managed to capture the bridge thanks to the fact that the Italian soldiers manning the bridge escaped upon their mere sight without firing a single shot.³⁰⁹ In addition to their success, the scattered soldiers of the 1st Airborne Division turned the mislandings into an advantage, attacking the Axis reinforcements, sabotaging communications around the bridge.³¹⁰ The first platoon, at that moment, reinforced by two others, repulsed the first counter attack at around dawn, but in the afternoon they were overwhelmed by the two Italian battalions, surrendering due to the lack of ammunition.³¹¹ Nonetheless, in less than an hour, the cavalry arrived in the form of a battalion of Royal Scots belonging to the 5th Infantry Division and relieved the remained paratroopers.³¹² Thus, the British

³⁰⁶ Garland and Smyth, 117.

³⁰⁷ Botjer, 6.

³⁰⁸ S.W. C. Pack, *Operation HUSK: The Allied Invasion of Sicily* (London, UK: David & Charles, 1977), 87.

³⁰⁹ Mitcham and Stauffenberg, 74.

³¹⁰ James Mrazek, *Airborne Combat: Axis and Allied Glider Operations in World War II* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole, 2011), 79.

³¹¹ Mitcham and Stauffenberg, 75.

³¹² D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 236.

glider-borne assault achieved its objective by securing the bridge. But over and above, the experience which the Anglo-American allies gained during this operation made possible the later glider-borne operations including Operation Tonga, a year later in Normandy and Operation Market Garden –though unfortunately Major General Hopkinson would not be able to partake in these operations as he died in action a month later during the early phase of Operation Shingle, while leading his men.³¹³

The American airborne contingent was relatively larger. Emplaning 266 C-47s, 3045 paratroopers of the two regiments belonging to the 82nd U.S. Airborne, were tasked with landing northwards of Gela.³¹⁴ Their mission was to block the Axis reinforcements first, then to help the bulk of the 7th Army to capture the airfields in the vicinity. Even though they were scattered due to the strong wind, most of the American airborne infantry managed to land on Sicily.³¹⁵ These men, started to disrupt the Axis defenses as their British counterparts, and they created panic among the Axis defenders, accomplishing their second tactical objective.³¹⁶ Furthermore, landing on the high ground north of Gela, 200 American paratroopers held their ground, impeding the advance of the German Herman Goring Division with success, thus attaining the first objective mentioned above.³¹⁷ Even though they were not yet battle-hardened, General Ridgway’s meticulous training worked well. In addition to their success in reaching their objectives, they overcame the disorientation caused by the mislandings and “*did not panic*”, unlike the Axis forces they encountered.³¹⁸ Thus, by performing the first

³¹³ Mrazek, 85.

³¹⁴ D’Este, *Bitter Victory*, 239.

³¹⁵ Garland and Smyth, 119.

³¹⁶ D’Este, *Bitter Victory*, 252.

³¹⁷ Garland and Smyth, 119.

³¹⁸ Mitcham and Stauffenberg, 82.

American airborne assault with success, the 82nd Airborne Division and its commander Major General Ridgway not only pioneered the 7th Army's landings, but they inaugurated the American airborne warfare in Sicily.

To sum up, the Anglo-American airborne assaults, despite some misfortunes were in essence successful. First of all, the paratroopers of the 82nd U.S. and the 1st British Airborne Divisions managed to execute their operational duties. Notwithstanding the scatterization –even taking advantage of it– the Anglo-American airborne elements implemented airborne infantry tactics with quite success. They staged ambushes, disrupted enemy maneuvers and opened significant cracks in the enemy morale.³¹⁹ Therefore, they successfully spearheaded the amphibious landings in Operation Husky and their success paved the way for the later operations in France and Germany.

4.1.2 Amphibious Landings

While the airborne units began fighting inland, the amphibious landings were on their way. In line with the plans aforementioned in the previous chapter, amphibious arm of the 15th Army Group was about to land on the southern and southeastern sectors of Sicily. From Licata to west to the city of shores of Syracuse in the east, 160.000 soldiers of the 15th Army Group performed the largest amphibious operation of the Second World War. Patton on the deck of Admiral Hewitt's flagship *Monrovia* was joyously observing the coastal bombardments of the Western Taskforce and the 7th Army

³¹⁹ *Second Supplement to The London Gazette of Tuesday the 10th of February 1948*, issue 38205 (12 February 1948), p. 1018, *The Gazette: Official Public Record*.

landings around 02:00 a.m.³²⁰ Montgomery on the other hand was filled with anxiety, expecting the worst; he even ordered the British medical corps to be prepared for at least 10.000 casualties.³²¹ (APPENDIX I)

The British 8th Army landed on the southeastern coastline of Sicily. Lieutenant General Dempsey's XIII Corps started to land circa 03:00 a.m. The northernmost landing force was the 5th Infantry Divisions of General Horatio Berney-Ficklin. Commando units pioneered their assaults and silenced the coastal guns that could pose threat to the 5th Infantry Division.³²² Thanks to the element of surprise and the success of the commando raid, they managed to bring all their vehicles and guns ashore, ready to conquer Syracuse.³²³ Despite the existence of massive fortifications around Syracuse and Augusta, the 5th Infantry Division walked into the city without any opposition, as the Italian Admiral responsible for the defense of the city ordered withdrawal. Thus, the 5th Infantry division achieved to take control of the port of Syracuse intact on the D-Day.³²⁴ They did not stop there and forced their way into the outskirts of Catania where the Axis planned to make their stand. Landing to the south of the 5th Infantry, Major General Sidney Kirkman's 50th Infantry Division landed ashore the town of Avola. Notwithstanding their rough landing due to the aforementioned weather conditions, Kirkman's men captured the township in the early hours of the morning, thus securing the link with the British XXX Corps.

³²⁰ Rick Atkinson, *The Day of Battle*, 72.

³²¹ Molony et al., 43.

³²² D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 257.

³²³ Mitcham and Stauffenberg, 78.

³²⁴ Molony et al., 64.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant General Oliver Leese's XXX Corps began their landings to the Pachino peninsula. The 51st Highland Division landed onto the easternmost tip of the Pachino. Its commander Major General Douglas Wimberley denied the calls for postponement by the naval officers due to the strong waves in the vicinity.³²⁵ The Italian defenders they encountered surrendered immediately, and in the morning the Highlanders seized the town of Pachino, attaining their operational objective.³²⁶ Major General Guy Simonds' 1st Canadian Infantry Division arrived before the dawn to the west of the Highlanders. They rapidly moved towards Pachino Airfield and found it abandoned, thus they captured one of most important initial objectives that will allow Anglo-American air forces to operate directly from the island.³²⁷ While D'Este claims that the British lost their chance to surprise in the morning of July 9 when an Italian vessel reported the Allied naval moves –though the Axis command ignored it– American official history refutes him saying, “everywhere the first assault waves achieved tactical surprise” and it is obvious from the chaotic and petty reactions of the Axis defenders.³²⁸ Thus, the British 8th Army executed their amphibious attacks with great success and executed a fine example of amphibious operation.³²⁹ At the end of the day, unlike Montgomery's grim assumptions, the British landing force lost only 1.517 men.³³⁰ Enjoying one more victory and adding one more laurel to his list of military

³²⁵ D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 258.

³²⁶ Mitcham and Stauffenberg, 78.

³²⁷ D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 258.

³²⁸ Garland and Smyth, 120.

³²⁹ Molony et al., 64.

³³⁰ D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 257.

accomplishments, General Montgomery congratulated his branch commanders for their contribution to the victory on the D-Day.³³¹

Patton's U.S. 7th Army landed at the left of the British 8th Army. II U.S. Corps under General Bradley landed at the coastline between Gela at the center and Scoglitti in the east, while Truscott's 3rd Division landed at Licata, performing the westernmost assault of the 15th Army Group. Major General Terry Allen's 1st Infantry Division was at the center of the 7th Army's amphibious assault. Reinforced with two Ranger battalions, *the Big Red One* landed at 03:35 a.m. directly to the Gela beach.³³² They were about to experience the strongest resistance among all landings.³³³ Foreseeing it, Patton picked somewhat headstrong, but quite effective *Big Red One*. Furthermore, landing in advance, U.S. Ranger battalions pushed into the town center.³³⁴ Rangers singlehandedly repulsed the first Italian counter attack at 10:30 a.m. with improvised and captured weapons, raising the Stars and Stripes before the mid-day while the *Big Red One* was swarming to the Gela beaches. Thus the 1st Infantry Division achieved its objectives. To the right of the Allen's men General Troy Middleton's 45th Infantry Division landed around the small fishing town of Scoglitti.³³⁵ However, the swelling sea caused two hours delay for the *Thunderbirds'* landing while Middleton's landing was in complete disarray. Fortunately for the 45th Division, the Italian coastal division at the vicinity not only lacked the will to fight, but also lacked the matching ammunition for their newly confiscated French artillery batteries.³³⁶ Thus the 45th Infantry managed to overcome the

³³¹ Hamilton, *Monty: Master of the Battlefield, 1942-1944*, 298.

³³² Garland and Smyth, 136.

³³³ Bradley, 128.

³³⁴ Atkinson, *The Day of Battle*, 82.

³³⁵ Garland and Smyth, 142.

³³⁶ Mitcham and Staufenberg, 87.

apparent chaos and became the first unit to leave the beaches only to link with the 1st Canadian Division on the next day.³³⁷ At the end of the D-Day, the II Corps successfully landed and connected with the British landing force and was ready to move inland. The 3rd Infantry on the westernmost flank of the assault started their landing in Licata. Truscott's men started to disembark to beaches around Licata around 03:00 a.m.³³⁸ *Rock of the Marne* met little resistance and their assault went ahead as planned.³³⁹ With the help of the naval bombardments, they silenced the Italian rail guns and the Italian defenders began to disperse. They captured the airfield, town center and its port in seven hours, guaranteeing that there would be no Axis interference from the northwestern direction.³⁴⁰ Observing the flow of troops and equipment –as well as the elements of 2nd Armor Division– to the landing grounds in the afternoon of D-Day, Truscott reported that “We had established a firm base.”³⁴¹ Next day Patton arrived to Gela, the central point of the 7th Army's assault and just as General Montgomery delighted with the victory of the 7th Army's assault, boasting “I think I earned my pay.”³⁴²

Amphibious assaults, ultimately, were triumphant, exceeding the expectations of the Anglo-American planners. Despite the rough sea, the Anglo-American navy successfully transported their enormous human cargo on the Sicilian beaches. Anglo-American planes provided necessary aerial coverage, guarding the landings from above. Allies managed to form a foothold and thanks to DUKWs supplies, they began piling up on the American beaches. Preliminary operations on the other hand proved to be

³³⁷ Garland and Smyth, 144.

³³⁸ D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 260.

³³⁹ Truscott, 214.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² George S. Patton, *War as I Knew It* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), 57.

effective, easing the burden of the invasion force as they had thrown the defenders into confusion beginning from the D-Day. On the D-Day, thus, the Axis failed in rushing towards the beaches to root out the invading the Anglo-American army. Therefore, amphibious operations completely fulfilled the operational objectives. Thus, Husky assaults outclassed previous amphibious operations such as Dieppe Raid or Torch landings, becoming the epitome for the stipulated assaults in Northwestern France. Across the long frontage now, the 15th Army Group was ready to drive the Axis out of the island.

4.2 The Reduction of Sicily

As it is mentioned in the previous chapter, this part is going to analyze the 15th Army Group's actions to implement the fifth and the last operational objective: "*reduce the island*". This Anglo-American invasion force carried out this objective in two phases. During the first phase of the operation, lasting from the immediate end of the D-Day to the first days of August, the 15th Army Group started its move to push the Axis forces towards the outskirts of Etna, capturing the important strategic points in the northwestern, central and eastern Sicily. During this phase, the Anglo-American forces managed to neutralize the Axis defenses on the western and eastern portions of the island. Following the capture of these points, the Axis forces attempted to entrench themselves around a half circle south of Mount Etna. Again, the 15th Army Group

pushed hard and penetrated the Etna Line along similar lines finally reaching Messina; thus reducing the island.

4.2.1 First Phase, Palermo to Catania

With the crucial D-Day won, the 15th Army Group was now tasked with “*reducing the island*”. From their landing ground, the 8th British Army and the 7th U.S. Army was now in position to drive the Axis out of the Island. This movement was to be realized in western, central and the eastern directions. On the D-Day, the 15th Army Group captured Syracuse, the first of the aforementioned five important ports in the previous chapter. The second one, General Kirkman’s 50th Division took Augusta on 14 July due to his successful conduct of mass infantry assaults with intense artillery support.³⁴³ At this juncture, the 15th Army Group needed to capture the other important ports on the island, Palermo on the northwest and Catania to the south of Messina. Furthermore, they also needed to drive into central Sicily in order to fill the gap between the flanks of the 7th and 8th Armies.

To attain these operational aims, both armies had to act in total coordination. While Dempsey’s XIII Corps was continuing its thrust towards Catania, Leese’s XXX Corps was moving steadily into central Sicily in the following days of the D-Day. Bradley’s II Corps, meanwhile continued its advance to the left of the XXX Corps. Their collective task was to capture the Italian Army headquarters at Enna and later at the

³⁴³ Molony et al., 94.

town of Nicosia. On the western part of the 7th Army's invasion zone, Patton created the Provisional Army Corps on July 15 under the command of Major General Keyes which was tasked with pacifying western Sicily and eventually captured Palermo. Axis defenders, on the other hand, were retreating towards the defensive lines on the southern slopes of Etna massif.

To start with, General Keyes' Provisional Corps was rapidly advancing towards Palermo. Their first stop was the Town of Agrigento. The 82nd Airborne formed the left flank of the Provisional Corps, while Truscott's 3rd Infantry enveloped the town from the north. Supported by Major General Gaffey's 2nd Armor, they captured the main transportation hub in southern Sicily, Agrigento and its port Porto Empedocle on July 16.³⁴⁴ After the capture of Agrigento, the elements of the Provisional Corps started making their three pronged advance towards western Sicily on July 19, two arms of which were directed at Palermo.³⁴⁵

The 82nd Airborne followed the southern coastline and mopped up the southwestern direction of Palermo, capturing Marsala and Trapani on July 23, a day after Palermo's eventual conquest. At the center, Gaffey's 2nd Armor moved rapidly through the rough terrain and reached its objective on July 22. General Patton hailed their performance "as a classic example of the proper use of the armor" that would be later employed in 3rd Army's offensives in France and Germany.³⁴⁶ Truscott also praised the 2nd Armor's performance as "the first great exploit by American Armor", therefore it is safe to say that the 2nd Armor's achievements spearheaded the modern American

³⁴⁴ Truscott, 221.

³⁴⁵ D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 419.

³⁴⁶ Patton, 63.

armored warfare³⁴⁷ Their praises pointed out the fact that the American ability to execute armored tactics were rapidly growing and this growth was vital in countering German panzers later in the European theatre.

The 3rd Infantry, on the other hand, matched the speed of its armored counterpart and moved rapidly on the “most tortuous terrain in Sicily”.³⁴⁸ They crushed the Italian resistance around the town of Corleone and reached Palermo simultaneously with the 2nd Armor thanks to Truscott’s superb training efforts in light infantry tactics.³⁴⁹ Thus, performing exemplary armor-infantry cooperation on the field of tactics, General Patton and his subordinates entered the city as liberators of the first significant city center in Europe on July 22 amidst the cheering Palermitans.³⁵⁰ With the rapid armor and infantry assaults and eventual liberation of Palermo, Americans did not only attain one of their key operational objectives of the campaign, but they also accomplished one of the strategic objectives of the war. Three days later Grand Council of Fascism passed a vote of no confidence and King Victor Emmanuel III dismissed and ordered the arrest of the Italian Dictator Benito Mussolini, and effectively ended the fascist Regime in Italy, its birthplace.

While the left flank of the 7th U.S. Army was enclosing on Palermo, Bradley’s II Corps were staging their offensive in central Sicily. The 1st and 45th Infantry Divisions of the II Corps were the main constituents of this offensive. Allen’s 1st Infantry Division’s task was to capture Enna and Nicosia. Middleton’s 45th Infantry Division, on

³⁴⁷ Truscott, 222.

³⁴⁸ D’Este, *Bitter Victory*, 419.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 420.

³⁵⁰ Patton, 61-62.

the other hand, was tasked with securing the rear of the 1st Division and wedging towards the northern coastline, thus complementing the Provisional Corps' Palermo offensive. Allen's men started their offensive on July 18. The Italian garrison supported by the elements of Herman Goring Division put up a fierce resistance in the walled city of Enna. However, with the arrival of 1st Canadian Division on July 18, the Axis defenders started to pull back out of the city in the fear of being trapped while booby trapping buildings, mining the roads and setting up sniper positions on their way out.³⁵¹ Two days later, *Big Red One* staged its final offensive and completely cleared the town of remnants of the Axis resistance, capturing the initial Axis Headquarters on the Island of Sicily. The intelligence officer of the II Corps congratulated General Bradley saying, "it took Saracens 20 years in their siege of Enna. Our boys did it in five hours."³⁵²

After freeing Enna, the 1st Infantry Division's next target was the town of Nicosia. Standing at the vital strategic position as the inland link between the cities of Palermo and Messina, the II Corps had to liberate the town in order to coordinate with the Provisional Corps' drive to Palermo. Aware of this, Bradley ordered Allen to march on Nicosia.³⁵³ The road to Nicosia from Enna was tortuous and the 1st Infantry had to sweep the mines, destroy pillboxes and endure constant harassment by ambushing Italian and German troops. Hard-pressed and withered, the 1st Infantry however was fortunate, as General Hube had already given up Nicosia and ordered Axis troops to retreat north. Thus, Allen's men occupied the last town in north-central Sicily before the

³⁵¹ *Second Supplement to The London Gazette of Tuesday the 10th of February 1948*, issue 38205 (12 February 1948), p. 1020, *The Gazette: Official Public Record*.

³⁵² Bradley, 143.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 147.

defensive Etna positions without opposition on July 28.³⁵⁴ All the while Middleton's men liberated one town after another, finally reaching San Stefano –the last town on the northern shore before the Etna Line.

While Americans were closing in for Messina, General Leese's XXX Corps was also moving inland to the right of Bradley's II Corps. In the first week of the campaign, they had already established a base of operation as the 51st Highlanders captured Vizzini on July 14 and the 1st Canadians captured Piazza Armerina on July 16, thus driving German and Italian defenders towards Centuripe, Gerbini and Catania.³⁵⁵ At this point, Montgomery was resolute on capturing Gerbini and the airfield group in its vicinity as well as the port city of Catania, which stood as the last obstacle on the road to Messina. However, the defenders were also determined to hold onto the airfields around Gerbini, while they directed bulk of their forces to the defense of Catania.³⁵⁶ On July 19, 51st Highlander Division attacked the Gerbini positions and captured one of the airfields on July 20 only to be driven out next morning upon a fierce Panzer counter attack.³⁵⁷ Meanwhile, Montgomery ordered Dempsey's XIII Corps to stage an all-out offensive to capture Catania on July 17. The 5th and 50th Divisions pressed hard but reinforced by a new German formation, German 1st Parachute Division, German and Italian troops repelled all the attacks with heavy casualties on both sides.

Witnessing the heavy casualties and exhaustion in his forces, General Montgomery with his tactical prudence halted all offensives and called the reserves in

³⁵⁴ Garland and Smyth, 319.

³⁵⁵ *Second Supplement to The London Gazette of Tuesday the 10th of February 1948*, issue 38205 (12 February 1948), p. 1019, *The Gazette: Official Public Record*.

³⁵⁶ Garland and Smyth, 216.

³⁵⁷ D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 408-409.

the 78th Infantry Division under Major general Vyvyan Eveleigh.³⁵⁸ Montgomery also set his eyes on a new target to break the emerging stalemate, the town of Centuripe. This town, curiously looking like a human being lying on the Sicilian hills was the northernmost part of the defensive line that stretches to Gerbini in the center and Catania in the east. Montgomery understood very well that it can be used as a domino to breach this heavily defended line. When the 78th Infantry Division arrived from North Africa, Leese deployed them around the steep hills surrounding the town. Next morning, General Leese swung *the Battleaxe Division* to town and the men of the 78th Division fought in the urban environment against the well-entrenched Hermann Goring Division house by house, capturing the town completely in the evening.³⁵⁹ Following days proved Monty's tactical calculations right. The Axis command ordered hasty retreat from the positions both in Gerbini and Catania upon the fall of Centuripe. While Germans retreated towards a short stripe of land between Etna and the Mediterranean in an orderly fashion, the Italian troops defending the area simply vanished among the Sicilians. Dempsey's men captured Catania without resistance on July 5 and XXX Corps immediately seized Gerbini (APPENDIX H).

With the capture of Catania, the fate of the Axis forces in Sicily was sealed. 15th Army group captured all its aforementioned operational targets, except for Messina. The defenders of the island were aware of this fact and General Hube ordered to start the evacuation on the same day with the fall of Catania.³⁶⁰ Furthermore, while the British advance took longer, they bore the brunt of the Axis resistance, easing the job of the 7th

³⁵⁸ *Second Supplement to The London Gazette of Tuesday the 10th of February 1948*, issue 38205 (12 February 1948), p. 1020, *The Gazette: Official Public Record*.

³⁵⁹ Garland and Smyth, 341.

³⁶⁰ Molony et al., 164.

U.S. Army in enveloping the western portion of the island. Therefore, Anglo-American tactical movements complimented one another. Now the 15th Army Group was poised to inflict the final blow on the Axis defenders.

4.2.2 Second Phase, Breaching the Etna Line and Drive to Messina

After the liberation of Palermo, Nicosia, Centirupe and Catania, the 15th Army Group effectively squeezed the Axis defenders on the northern sector of Sicily. During this stage, the British and American forces fought against the Germans and Italians who entrenched themselves on the Caronie Mountains in the northwest and the slopes of Mount Etna in the southeast. The Axis positions along this rugged terrain collectively comprised the Etna Line. The primary positions along the Etna Line were the town of San Stefano in the north, the townships of Troina and Adrano in the center and the densely inhabited coastline to the west of Etna massif. To breach the Axis defenses, the elements of the 15th Army Group had to repeat the similar three pronged tactical pattern of the first phase, this time to reduce the island completely.

Starting from above, Truscott was to unstitch the German and Italian positions in San Fratello, where the 3rd Infantry had to drive through “naturally strong defensive terrain.”³⁶¹ *Rock of the Marne* crashed into the strong Axis defensive positions on August 3 that dotted the Monte Fratello which oversees the town.³⁶² However, *Rock of the Marne* repulsed and faced a strong counter attack next day. Facing a strong

³⁶¹ Truscott, 230.

³⁶² Ibid., 232-233.

opposition, Truscott came up with the idea of staging a small-scale amphibious behind the enemy positions to surround the defenders.³⁶³ His men landed at the east of San Fratello unopposed on August 6.³⁶⁴ It worked perfectly and the defenders abandoned their positions hastily –in fact the Germans left their positions without notifying their Italian allies, thus the 3rd Infantry captured more than 1,000 uninformed Italian personnel– and the town fell on the next day.³⁶⁵ By capturing San Fratello, Truscott and the 3rd Infantry opened the first breach on the Etna Line. Furthermore, Truscott’s tactical wit unraveled itself with this dexterous small-scale amphibious operation in San Fratello as the 3rd Infantry utilized the same tactic during the liberation of Brolo on August 11, and later on General Middleton’s 45th Division did the same, landing on the outskirts of Messina on August 16.

Already in possession of Nicosia in the center, Bradley’s II Corps had begun to pound on the central anchor of Etna Line, Troina on the last day of July. Allen’s 1st Infantry –quite exhausted to that point– was now supported with General Manton’s 9th Infantry freshly arrived from Africa. On the other side of the front, the Axis command was determined to hold the town and therefore fortified the defensive positions with one German and an Italian Division. In addition to the Axis defensive efforts, the terrain was even harsher than the San Fratello area, making circumstances harder for the II Corps’ advance.³⁶⁶ But, Terry Allen was unyielding and ordered the first offensive, lasting from July 31 to August 4. Nonetheless, the defenders were also unyielding and they repulsed

³⁶³ D’Este, *Bitter Victory*, 478.

³⁶⁴ Truscott, 234.

³⁶⁵ Mitcham and Staufenberg, 270.

³⁶⁶ D’Este, *Bitter Victory*, 457-458.

all the attacks on which Allen remarked as “the Kraut’s touchy as hell here.”³⁶⁷ Thus, the II Corps began to surround the town with two enveloping maneuvers. Furthermore, heavy artillery moved in the vicinity to accompany the tactical envelopment and began to reduce the town into rubble.³⁶⁸ At the same time, close air support and tactical bombardment enhanced the ground bombardment, which would be “the eyes for our ground forces in their swift liberation of France.”³⁶⁹ The II Corps’ tactical efforts paid off and in two days German and Italian defenders lost their appetite for battle, and *the Big Red One* entered the devastated Troina on August 6.³⁷⁰ Nonetheless, Allen’s aggressiveness cost him his command and while the 9th Infantry relieved the 1st Infantry Division on that day, General Bradley relieved Terry Allen, replacing him with Major General Clarence R. Huebner.³⁷¹ With the liberation of Troina, 9th Infantry was to move to the town of Randezzo in central Sicily, the last stop before Messina.

All the while, General Leese’s XXX Corps was moving steadily to the right of the II Corps with the objective of capturing Adrano, which was the main defensive point of the Etna Line in the south-central British zone. Consolidating their gains in Centirupe, Leese ordered 1st Infantry to flank the Adrano from the north, while ordering the 78th and 51st Infantry Divisions to advance, respectively from the center and the south of the town.³⁷² Again, the British formations overwhelmed the Axis defenders with superior men and fire power. Thus, simultaneously with Troina, the XXX Corps captured its objective on August 6. With the fall of both towns, the tactical movements of the 15th

³⁶⁷ Bradley, 149.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 150.

³⁶⁹ Bradley, 150.

³⁷⁰ Garland and Smyth, 346.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 347.

³⁷² D’Este, *Bitter Victory*, 466-467.

Army Group completely rendered the Axis defenses untenable in the central Etna Line.³⁷³ The II Corps and the XXX Corps finally met in the town of Randazzo a week later, thus they cleared the Axis defenses in the center.

Dempsey's XIII Corps, on the other hand, continued to push northwards. The 50th Infantry spearheaded its offensive and had taken the town of Riposto. However, they again faced the strongest defenses on the eastern coastline. But Dempsey ordered a small-scale amphibious assault behind the lines in a similar fashion with the 3rd and 45th Divisions' northern seaborne assault, and enforced it with an armor offensive on August 15, reaching the outskirts of Messina on August 16.³⁷⁴ On the night of the same day, *Truscott trot* took the men of the 3rd Infantry Division to Messina as they became the first Anglo-American unit to enter the last strategic point on the island.³⁷⁵ Nonetheless, the Axis forces started their preliminary evacuation in the first week of August and accelerated the process into a full-scale evacuation once the Anglo-American forces breached the Etna Line.³⁷⁶ The Germans did not bother to notify their Italian counterparts and General Guzzoni ordered Italian evacuation only after he found out about the German withdrawal by himself on August 12.³⁷⁷ On August 17, with the evacuation of a small Italian patrol around 08:30 a.m., the last of the Axis defenders abandoned the Island.³⁷⁸ One and a half hours later, Patton entered the city triumphantly, sharing his laurels with General Truscott.³⁷⁹ While they were driving through the city,

³⁷³ Mitcham and Stauffenberg, 264.

³⁷⁴ D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 517.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 518.

³⁷⁶ Molony et al., 166, 174-175.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁸ D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 517.

³⁷⁹ Truscott, 243.

the pioneering elements of the XIII Corps also made their entrance, thus “The race to Messina was ended” in a tie.³⁸⁰

Seemingly successful evacuation of the remnants of the German and Italian forces is blamed on Montgomery’s cautiousness, Alexander’s indifference or Patton’s desire to reach Messina first. However, only one in five German and Italian soldiers was lucky enough to be evacuated back to the Italian Mainland out of more than 300.000 Axis personnel.³⁸¹ 20.000 men, half of the German contingent, were either killed, went missing or captured.³⁸² The Italians fared worse, as 147.000 Royal Italian Army soldiers shared the same fate with their German comrades.³⁸³ Mitcham and Staufenberg claim that it was a lost victory for not repeating the “entrapment in Tunis,”³⁸⁴ This is not a fair assessment of the result of Husky, as the Tunisian Campaign lasted for nearly seven months with the price of more than 70.000 Anglo-American casualties.³⁸⁵ But in Sicily, the total Anglo-American casualty was 20.000 –of which only 5.000 were killed– and as it is previously mentioned it lasted only for a month and a week.³⁸⁶ Thus, with a simple mathematical proportioning –though such head-counting insults the memory of those who fought, were injured and died– it is easy to determine which of the two campaigns was more successful and more total.

On the other hand, Carlo D’Este defines the evacuation as a “*Great Escape*” and goes on his mudslinging during the chapter that deals with the Axis evacuation, blaming

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 243.

³⁸¹ Molony et al., 182.

³⁸² Mitcham and Staufenberg, 305.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 315.

³⁸⁵ Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn*, 536.

³⁸⁶ Mitcham and Staufenber, 305.

every high ranking officer in the Anglo-American army.³⁸⁷ However, as this chapter has displayed, the Anglo-American forces and their commanders perfectly complemented one another on the tactical level –particularly Patton’s aggressiveness and Montgomery’s prudence created a fusion of tactical harmony which vanquished its enemies, meanwhile Alexander and Eisenhower stood as just arbiters between them. In addition to their skillful attainment of strategic and operational objectives during the tactical phase of the Invasion of Sicily, they in effect forced the Italian nation to surrender and defect to the Allies. In short, both historians need to remember Churchill’s wise dictum: “Wars are not won by evacuations.”³⁸⁸

In thirty-eight days, the 15th Army Group utterly crushed the Axis defenses thanks to the skillful adjustment of the employed officers and forces to the intricate tactical circumstances they encountered. The American and British men had proven themselves on the battlefield with the tactical vigor they had shown. Notwithstanding the dispersion due to the abrupt change in weather, British and American airborne infantry performed unexpected success when they bailed out of their troop transports or landed in their gliders, creating terror among the Axis ranks. The Anglo-American seaborne component executed amphibious assaults faultlessly despite the heavy waters, not failing on one landing ground and gaining a foothold on the D-Day. Thus, the military arm of the Anglo-American alliance gained the necessary tactical experience from Operation Husky D-Day to perform airborne and seaborne assaults in later operations, particularly in Operation Overlord.

³⁸⁷ D’Este, *Bitter Victory*, 497-522.

³⁸⁸ Churchill, *Their Finest Hour: The Second World War*. v. 2. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1949), 115.

During the reduction of the island, from the D-Day plus one to the end of the campaign, the Anglo-American forces repeated their success. While the Americans mopped out large spaces on the west and central Sicily, the British once again exhibited tactical prudence, bleeding out German and Italian defenders day by day. During this phase, both armies conducted operations in urban environments, which they were going to repeat in the towns and cities of Northern Europe. Furthermore, American armor had found the chance to conduct its own *blitzkrieg*, once it rapidly cleaved into Palermo. The American infantry, on the other hand, proved its abilities in the eyes of the enemy and the ally alike, by deploying rapidly in the rough Sicilian terrain. British forces on the other hand, perfected their integrated assaults with overwhelming artillery barrages and infantry assaults. Therefore, the British Army started to curb its defensive posture and began to adopt an offensive tactical posture, as it gained its first victory on the European continent in Sicily, thus revenging its defeat in 1940.

Also considering that the Americans and the British fought side by side in such fashion, “one of the valuable outcomes of the campaign was the continued growth and development of the spirit of comradeship between British and American troops in action.” as General Eisenhower remarked after the conclusion of the Invasion of Sicily.³⁸⁹ Furthermore, American and British officers became more and more acquainted with the tactical style of one another and this acquaintance would prove to be crucial in the later stages of the Second World War. In conclusion, the Anglo-American forces decisively and rapidly attained their aims in the tactical level of Operation Husky, which were set on the strategic and operational levels of this endeavor.

³⁸⁹ Eisenhower, 108.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The Ideology of Fascism was killed in Sicily, and the opponents of Operation Husky tend to turn a blind eye to this fact.³⁹⁰ Yet, with the victory in Sicily a totalitarian regime lost its credibility in the eyes of the people it ruled over. The fall of Italian fascism deeply damaged the prestige of Nazi Germany and it inspired the leaderships of minor Axis paternal autocracies in Europe, such as Bulgaria or Romania to leave the Axis at the first opportunity they encountered in the course of war. Operation Husky left the Axis's underbelly scarred. Who would dare to guess the strategic results of a hypothetical continuation of full-scale Anglo-American adherence to the Mediterranean theatre after the Invasion of Sicily? Nonetheless factuality was sufficient. Germany had to maintain the defense of Italy by herself, despite her dwindling manpower and resource base. Furthermore, in order to defend its vulnerable southern flank, Nazi Germany had to transfer much needed forces from the Eastern Front to Italy, Southern France and the Balkans. The immediate result of this was the decisive Soviet Victory in the Battle of Kursk, the last major Nazi offensive in the east.³⁹¹ From then on the Nazi

³⁹⁰ AFHQ, Part II, Dec. 1942 – Dec. 1943, Section 1. 140.

³⁹¹ Atkinson, *The Day of Battle*, 172.

Germany lost its ability to mount strategic offensives and Operation Husky directly triggered the prelude of *Götterdämmerung* (Wagner's Twilight of Gods) for the crumbling Third Reich. Thus, the decision for Operation Husky consolidated the Anglo-American strategy, and made the decision for Operation Overlord possible.

The Anglo-American leadership picked its ablest commanders and military formations for the Invasion of Sicily. The Anglo-American command structure took its shape essentially with the command assignments for Husky. Higher ranking commanders of the Husky invasion force constituted an effective military team. Apart from several aforementioned divisional commanders, high ranking military officers would lead the Anglo-American military forces with success in the other operations thanks to their proven abilities. Allied command also employed the Anglo-American military formations that would leave their mark on the military history of the Second World War thanks to their tactical accomplishments during the Invasion of Sicily. Both the commanders and the formation did not repeat the previous mistakes and acquired necessary faculties in combined operations as an outcome of Operation Husky.

The above-mentioned commanders in their positions crafted an effective military plan with flexibility and prudence. Concentrating on the southeastern and south-central coastline, they deployed the forces under their command with success and with minimal risks. In a post-war conversation, the defeated German General in Sicily and later on in Italy, Fridolin von Sanger und Etterlin advised Michael Howard. "Next time you invade Italy; do not start at the bottom."³⁹² It might have been completely natural for a defeated Wehrmacht general to make such an incongruent suggestion to whitewash his own

³⁹² Michael Howard, *Captain Professor, The Memoirs of Sir Michael Howard* (London, UK: Continuum Publishing, 2006), 155.

incompetence in the face of a former officer in the army that defeated the forces he commanded. If he had read military history as extensively as General Patton or General Alexander, he would have known the famous dictum of Thucydides on where to start invading Italy: “If Syracuse falls, all Sicily falls also, and Italy immediately afterwards”³⁹³ Therefore, Syracuse was the key to victory in Sicily and Italy, and it is not a coincidence that the Anglo-American leadership had chosen to start savaging the underbelly from Syracuse. With the conquest of the island through a concentrated plan, the Anglo-American alliance destroyed the pedestal on which the crumbling Kingdom of Italy was standing. Therefore, the operational plan of Operation Husky that envisioned the invasion of Sicily from the southeastern tip was befitting, as General Montgomery had foreseen.

The preliminary operations in support of the Invasion of Sicily were also significant in their contribution to the Anglo-American operational efforts. Because they did not only contribute to the success of Operation Husky, but they also determined the standard of the preliminaries for the future military actions in the Second World War. The intense aerial bombardment of Pantelleria and the Pelegian Islands had proven the significance of air forces in breaking the resolve of the fortified enemy. The defenders of these islands surrendered without fighting once the first Allied soldiers landed, because a brief but heavy bombardment campaign reduced the Italian encampments on these islands into indefensible archipelago of rubbles.³⁹⁴ Furthermore, the deception operations in support of Operation Husky; Operations Baclay, Animals and Mincemeat were the finest examples of deception in the Second World War as they convinced the

³⁹³ Thucydides, *History of Peloponnesian War* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications Inc., 1910), 317.

³⁹⁴ Garland and Smyth, 72-73.

Axis leadership that the next Anglo-American attack would take place in either Greece or Sardinia. Nevertheless, Operation Mincemeat through its complexity and cunning organization, which was not matched by any other deception action in the Second World War, overshadowed the invasion itself. Thus, the operational phase of the Anglo-American Invasion of Sicily was a complete success in terms of the development of command structure, employment of forces, planning and preliminary actions.

General Bradley said “in Africa we learned to crawl, to walk, then run.”³⁹⁵ But this study transposes this statement into: In Africa, the Anglo-American Alliance learned to crawl and in Sicily they straightened up and began to walk only to run towards Berlin from Normandy. The decisive success of the 15th Army Group’s airborne and seaborne assaults on the D-Day enforces this transposition. First of all, the Anglo-American airborne assault crippled the Axis capacity before the beginning of landings, as American and British paratroops disrupted the Axis ability to react immediately. Secondly, the amphibious landing on the southeastern and the south-central coastline proved the capabilities of both armies in amphibious warfare, because they did not fail to secure a foothold and therefore they established a foothold on the first day of Operation Husky.

After the conclusion of the Invasion of Sicily, General Eisenhower praised the Anglo-American formations: "Allied Forces of all services and of all arms had demonstrated even more perfect teamwork than in the closing stages of the Tunisian campaign."³⁹⁶ This is particularly for the post D-Day actions, as both the American and the British contingents executed tactical maneuvers in their invasion zones in

³⁹⁵ Bradley and Blair, 159.

³⁹⁶ AFHQ, Part II, Dec. 1942 – Dec. 1943, Section 1, 140.

coordination. The U.S. Provisional Corps' rapid sweep of the western portion of the island and the liberation of Palermo stands as a model armor-infantry offensive. Close cooperation of the U.S. II Corps with the British XXX Corps in central Sicily contributed to the development of the Anglo-American tactical proves in the mountainous terrain and urban areas. Nonetheless, the XIII Corps slow but determined advance on the southeastern coastline made the above mentioned victories possible, as they pinned the Axis defenders down in their zone and destructed it with overwhelming artillery barrages and infantry assaults. Once, the above mentioned Anglo-American military formations raced to the city of Messina and liberated it, they had achieved their first victory on the European Continent.

In conclusion the Invasion of Sicily was not a backdoor to a stalemate. On the contrary it was the gateway to victory for the reasons outlined above. To return back to the research question of this study, first and foremost of all, the decision to invade Sicily was a sound one, because the predictions of its proponents became true one by one as the second chapter had shown. Therefore, the strategic process that started with the decision for Operation Husky gave the Anglo-American strategy its final form. Secondly, this study addressed the operation contributions of the Invasion of Sicily to the Anglo-American Alliance and its victory in Europe and Mediterranean in the third chapter and composition of command structure, invasion force and military plans, as well as the execution of preliminary actions were crucial for the Anglo-American Alliance as they succeeded in forming a sturdy bridge between the decision and its implementation. As for the execution of Operation Husky, it proved the tactical capability of the Anglo-American forces side by side as just in 38 days the elements of

15th Army Group landed on the island, carved a foothold on the same day and drove the Axis out of the island with a series of decisive victories. These experiences assuredly contributed to the Normandy Landings a year later and especially American forces proved their worth. Thus, Operation Husky was a decisive strategic, operational and tactical victory and the Island of Sicily was the cradle in which the Anglo-American triumph over Third Reich in Europe and Mediterranean had grown.

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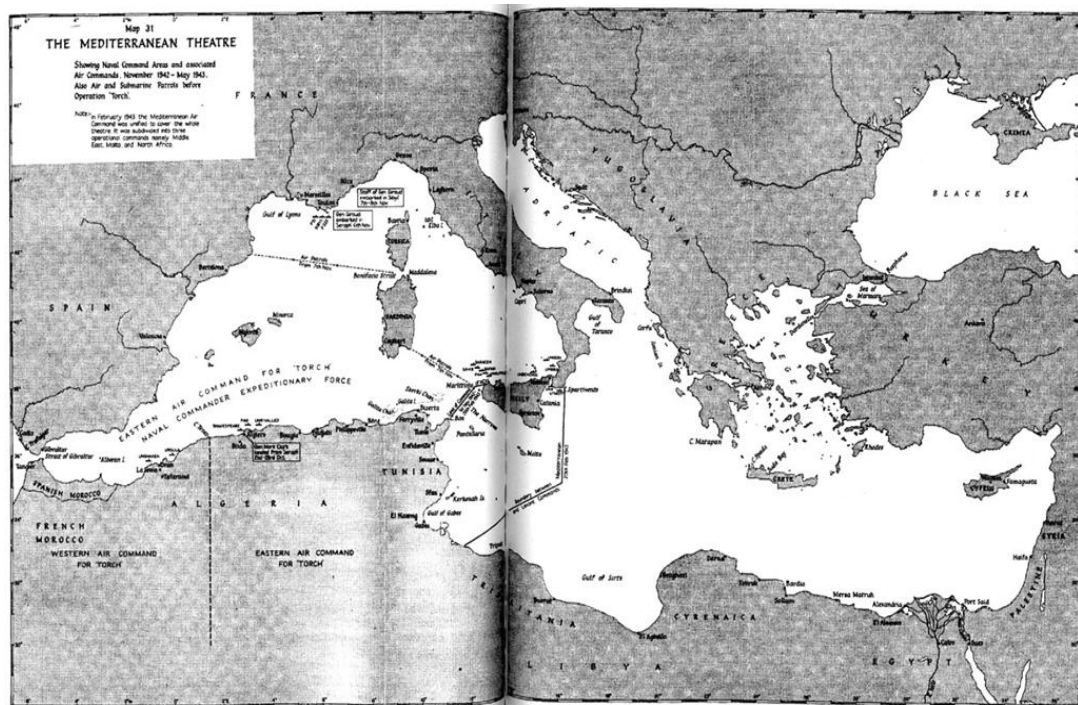
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A



Map 31. The Mediterranean Theatre.

Stephen Wentworth Roskill and J. R. M. Butler, *The War at Sea, 1939-1945*, 312.

APPENDIX B



Map 25. Radius of action of Allied aircraft from Malta in relation to Axis shipping routes, Summer and Autumn, 1941

Playfair et al., 279.

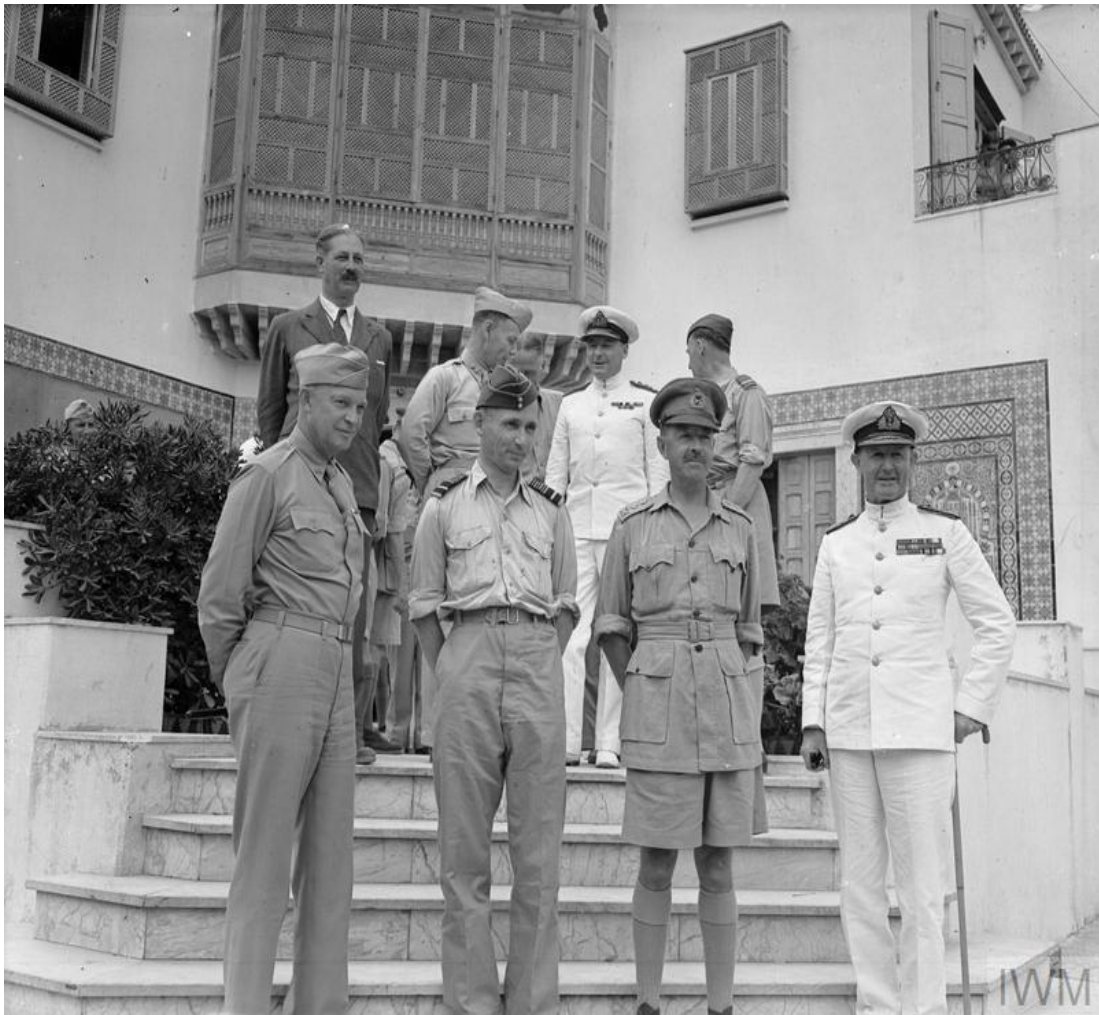
APPENDIX C



PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT AND PRIME MINISTER CHURCHILL AT THE ALLIED CONFERENCE IN CASABLANCA, JANUARY 1943.

[url=<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205186202?cat=photographs>]PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT AND PRIME MINISTER CHURCHILL AT THE ALLIED CONFERENCE IN CASABLANCA, JANUARY 1943. © IWM (A 14110)[/url]

APPENDIX D



The Allied commanders of the campaign photographed in Tunisia.

[url=<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205125432?cat=photographs>]THE CAMPAIGN IN SICILY 1943. © IWM (CNA 1075

APPENDIX E

Remarks on Commanders and Forces

The command structure was formed in order to accommodate the requirements of a modern combined assault, and all the major commanders of Anglo-American forces that were employed for Operation Husky were pioneering figures in their respective branches. Generals Eisenhower and Alexander jointly played the role of Don Juan de Austria at the Battle of Lepanto –who kept the navy of the Holy League together despite not being a seaman at all– by forging a truly Anglo-American invasion force. While Eisenhower went over to become the chief military leader in the liberation of Europe from Nazism, General Alexander succeeded him in the Mediterranean theatre as the Supreme Commander of the Allied armies in Italy. Both Patton and Montgomery had risen through the ranks and they also served with distinction later on in Europe. General Montgomery commanded the British component of the Overlord Invasion force, and later on he had risen to become the Chief of the Imperial General Staff and the Deputy Supreme Commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. As for Patton, his achievements in Sicily and later on with the 3rd U.S. Army in Europe conveyed him to the pantheon of the American military figures along with Jackson, Lee and Pershing. Additionally, his 7th U.S. Army that was created for the invasion of Sicily became the

United States Army Europe which had been serving the American interests in Europe since its creation aboard the landing crafts heading for the Sicily to present day.

American corps and division commanders of the ground units also made their way into the higher echelons thanks to their successes during the Operation Husky. Among them Omar Bradley had risen to the rank of General of the Army, surpassing his senior officer Patton. Truscott, Ridgeway, Keyes left their marks on the American military tradition with their exemplary performance during Operation Husky, respectively in the light infantry, paratrooper and armored warfare tactics and they led larger military formations later on in their careers.³⁹⁷ British Corps commanders Miles Dempsey and Oliver Leese as well had risen through the ranks of the British Army. While Monty took Dempsey to Northwest Europe as his most indispensable lieutenant, he entrusted his first love, the British 8th Army to Oliver Leese to lead in the Italian Campaign.³⁹⁸ It is not possible to say the same for the British Divisional commanders with the exception of Guy Simonds and Sidney Kirkman. Young Canadian General served as a corps commander under Monty and after the war he went on to become the Canadian Chief of the General Staff.³⁹⁹ Sidney Kirkman fought on with success in Italy and he became the deputy of General Montgomery after the war as the Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

The Naval Commanders and the units of the Operation Husky also left their mark in the naval history. Admiral Cunningham became the First Sea Lord after the death of Admiral Dudley Pound three months from the end of the campaign. Bertram Ramsay

³⁹⁷ D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 568, 570.

³⁹⁸ Montgomery, 186, 196.

³⁹⁹ Jack. L. Granatstein, *The Generals: The Canadian Army's Senior Commanders in the Second World War* (Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press, 2005), 266-267.

commanded the naval forces in the Operation Overlord and due to his untimely death in January 1945 his substantial contribution to the Allied victory is largely forgotten.⁴⁰⁰ Admiral Hewitt continued to command the American navy in the Mediterranean during the Invasion of Italian mainland and southern France. But the fame of the navy he commanded surpassed his name, as the United States 8th Fleet later became the United States 6th Fleet after the Second World War and it continues to defend American interests in the Mediterranean up to this day, based in Naples, Italy.

Anglo-American air forces also gained their share of experience from the operation Husky, as its chief Arthur Tedder later remarked that it was the finest exhibition of air warfare that paved the way for the victory on air later on in Northwest European skies.⁴⁰¹ Tedder himself became the deputy supreme commander of the Normandy invasion and his signature represented the Anglo-American allies on the German Instrument of Surrender.⁴⁰² He later on succeeded Air Chief Marshall Charles Portal as the Chief of the Air Staff of the Royal Air Forces. His lieutenants Arthur Coningham and Harry Broadhurst also continued to command tactical wings in Operation Overlord. Tedder's American counterpart General Spaatz, with his lieutenant James Doolittle, also went onto command strategic air forces in Northwest Europe. Following the victory in Europe, Spaatz continued his mission in Pacific, prosecuting the first and only nuclear strikes in the history of warfare. When the war was over, Spaatz oversaw the development of the United States Army Air Forces into an independent military branch, the United States Air Forces, as its first Chief of Staff.

⁴⁰⁰ William S. Chalmers, *Full Cycle: The Biography of Admiral Sir Bertram Home Ramsay* (London, UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 1959), 182.

⁴⁰¹ Arthur Tedder, *With Prejudice: the war memoirs of Marshal of the Royal Air Force* (London, UK: Cassell, 1966), 447.

⁴⁰² Henry Probert, *High Commanders of the Royal Air Force* (London, UK: H.M.S.O, 1991), 38.

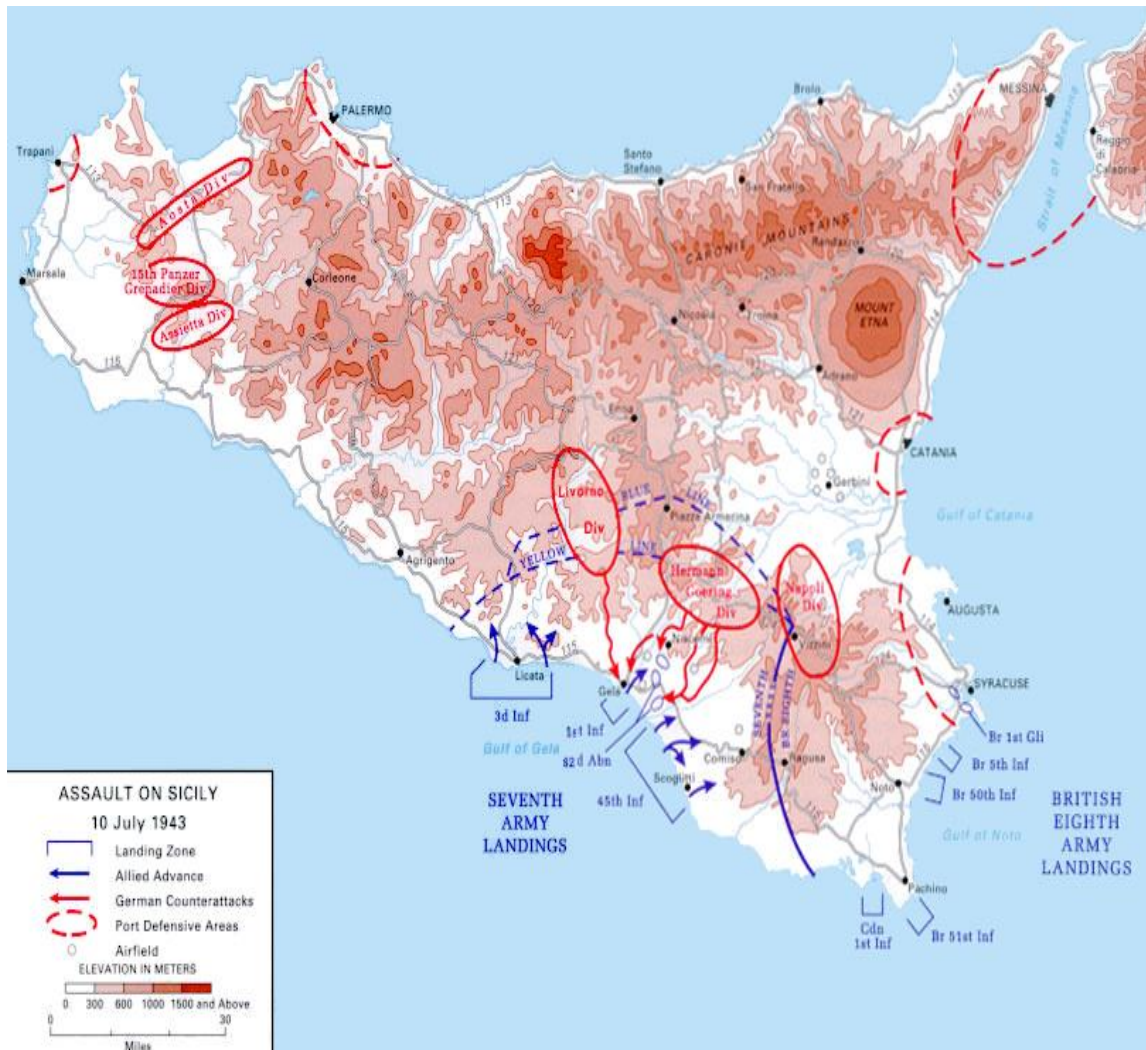
APPENDIX F



British troops on DUCKW.

[url=<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205204229?cat=photographs>]THE BRITISH ARMY IN SICILY 1943. © IWM (NA 4381)

APPENDIX G



Map of the Invasion Plan.

"Assault Plans." U.S. Army Center of Military History. Accessed June 15, 2017.
<http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/72-16/map1.JPG>.

APPENDIX H



A Glimpse of the invasion coast: An armored vehicle was being towed ashore from landing craft during the landings in Sicily at dawn of the opening day of the invasion.

[url=<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205186517?cat=photographs>]THE ROYAL NAVY DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR: OPERATION HUSKY, SICILY, JULY 1943. © IWM

(A17918)[/url][url=<http://www.iwm.org.uk/corporate/privacy->

APPENDIX I



A panzer wreckage in Centirupe.

[url=<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205195599?cat=photographs>]THE CAMPAIGN IN SICILY 1943. © IWM (NA 5389)