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MS # D-091

EVACUATION OF SICILY AND SARDINIA

IN AUGUST 1943

Brief account in general terms of the German plans by which
their troops and supplies were evacuated to Italy.

By Generalmajor Conrad Seibt

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Evacuation of Sicily and Sardinia in August 1943

On 1 July 1943 the Allies invaded Sicily. The combined German and Italian forces did not succeed in driving the Allies from the island during the days following the landings. The piecemeal commitment of the German 1st Parachute Division, which did not arrive from Southern France until the end of June and was in part transported by air failed to improve the situation. In severe fighting the enemy slowly succeeded in pushing the few German troops northeastward. The Italians offered only feeble resistance.

In late July the evacuation of supplies from Sicily was ordered, while the troops remained on the island until mid-August. Special staffs were assigned to ensure the smooth functioning of ferrying service and the orderly embarkment of troops at the ferrying sites.

Most German supply depots were situated in the northeastern part of Sicily. Only some of the supplies left over from the African campaign were stored near Trapani. These supplies in western Sicily had fallen into enemy hands immediately after the landings. In eastern Sicily, particularly at Siracusa and Augusta, the enemy also captured large quantities of supplies.

The remaining German supplies were evacuated to the Italian mainland. On the other hand, an attempt begun in June to salvage German rolling stock failed and the enemy seized approximately 2,000 German railway cars. The evacuation of German troops proceeded according to plan.

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The evacuation of Sardinia was ordered in late August. Small vessels as well as aircraft were pressed into service. The evacuation of troops from Sardinia proceeded smoothly because there was no enemy pressure, and enemy air attacks occurred only on a small scale. By the middle of September all supplies and German troops had been evacuated from Sardinia. Soon afterwards, German troops and supplies also left Corsica.