

# 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment

## Operation HUSKY: 10 July 1943



### 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR)

9 July 1943

KAIROUAN, TUNISIA

Annex A: Task Organization for Operation HUSKY

### 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment (REIN) [3407 soldiers]

|  |  |
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|  | Col James M. GAVIN                                   |
|  | XO: LtCol Herbert F. Batcheller                      |
|  | S-1: Capt Alfred W. Ireland, S-2: Charles Peterson   |
|  | S-3: Maj Benjamin H. Vandervoort, S-4: Edward A. Zaj |
|  | LtCol Arthur F. GORHAM (KIA)                         |
|  | XO: Maj Walter Winton                                |
| <b>1st Bn, 505th PIR</b>                             |  |
| <b>2nd Bn, 505th PIR</b>                             | Maj Mark J. ALEXANDER                                |
|  | XO: Capt Jack Norton                                 |
|  | S-3: Capt Paul Woolslayer                            |
| <b>3rd Bn, 505th PIR</b>                             | Maj Edward C. "Cannonball" KRAUSE                    |
|  | XO: Maj William J. Hagan (WIA)                       |
|  | S-3: Lt William J. Harris                            |
|  | LtCol Charles W. KOUNS                               |
| + <b>3rd Bn, 504th PIR, 82nd AB</b>                  |  |
| + <b>456th Parachute FA Bn, 82nd AB</b>              | LtCol Harrison B. HARDEN Jr. (REL)                   |
| Batteries "A", "B", "C" (75mm)                       | XO: Hugh A. Neal                                     |
| AA Battery (.50 cal)                                 |  |
| + <b>"B" Co, 307th Airborne Engineer Bn, 82nd AB</b> | Capt William H. JOHNSON                              |
| + Det, 307th Medical Bn, 82nd AB                     | S/Sgt Kenneth I. KNOTT                               |
| + Det, 82nd Division Signal Co, 82nd AB              | 2ndLt Edward KACYAINSKI                              |
| + Det, Shore Fire Control Party                      | Ens G.A. HULTON, USN (KIA)                           |

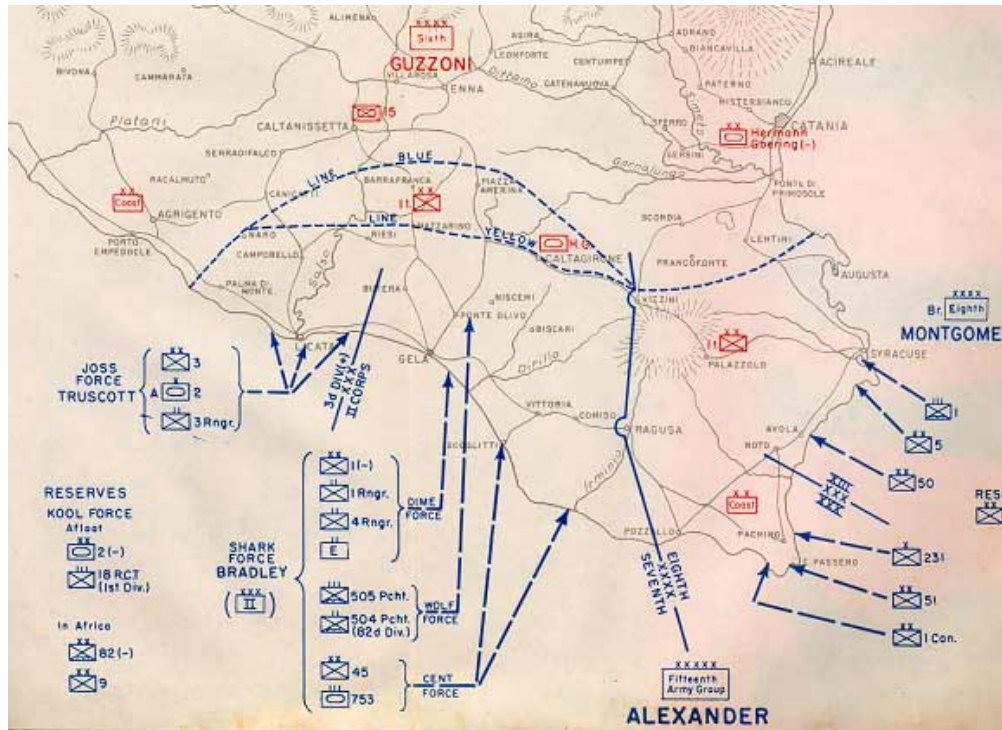


*On 9 July 1943, at an airfield outside Kairouan, Tunisia, Colonel James Gavin, CO of 505th PIR, briefs his soldiers prior to their boarding C-47 transports. Operation HUSKY was the first U.S. airborne operation of WWII.*

*226 C-47 transports were required to lift the regiment. Of the 3407 soldiers of 505th PIR who jumped into Sicily, 424 – 33 officers and 391 soldiers – were wounded or killed.*

# Operation HUSKY

## Sicily: 10 July 1943



*Map 1. U.S. and British Landing Diagram for Operation HUSKY. 505th PIR is shown landing (NE) of GELA, in the vicinity of PONTE OLIVO.*

1. **On 10 July 1943, U.S. and British forces landed in Sicily.** Operation HUSKY preceded the main invasion of Italy, Operation AVALANCHE, which occurred in September 1943.
2. **The 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment (REIN) jumped into Sicily the evening of D-1, 9 July 1943.** II Corps Field Order #6 specified the tasks for the 505th PIR:
  1. Land on D-1 (N) and (E) of GELA IOT secure the high ground.
  2. Disrupt communications and movement of EN RES that night.
  3. Attach to 1st ID on D-Day.
  4. Assist 1st ID in securing the landing field at PONTE OLIVO.
3. **The parachute landings were a near disaster.** Inexperienced transport pilots could not find the drop zones, so troops and equipment were widely scattered and lost. Leaders were separated from their men. Radio communications between units, with advancing ground forces, and with fire support organizations were feeble or non-existent. **Despite these problems, the 505th PIR fought aggressively and well and contributed much to mission accomplishment.** Their unit training had emphasized (1) independent small-unit leadership, (2) an aggressive willingness to close with the enemy, (3) a thorough understanding of the mission and intent by all hands, and (4) a capability for decentralized execution by widely separated units behind enemy lines. These organizational strengths proved their value in combat with the Germans. Operation HUSKY reinforced the importance of simple, flexible, and robust plans, well-understood by all hands, which could be executed despite the friction of night parachute inserts and strong enemy interference. After the war, Gavin said “Sicily in July 1943 was the birthplace of American airborne technique.” **It was not the parachute method of insert, but the strength and flexibility of the independent and aggressive infantry units produced by the parachute organizations that made the U.S. airborne force so successful in combat during World War II.**

- *Drop Zone Sicily* by Breuer
- *Combat Jump* by Ruggero

- *Ready: A WWII History of the 505th PIR* by Langdon
- *On To Berlin* by Gavin

- *Ridgway's Paratroopers* by Blair