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Operation Husky was a massive amphibious WWII Allied invasion of Sicily which diverted Hitler's army and led to the surrender of Italy. Operation Husky impacted the course of the war and taught the Allies many crucial lessons.

At the January 1943 Casablanca Conference, American President Franklin Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and other Allied officials met, debating their next initiative. America and Russia wanted to attack France to devastate Germany. However, Britain did not have enough supplies or manpower to execute this. The Allies believed something had to be done for the sake of morale. America reluctantly agreed to invade Sicily, "the soft underbelly of Europe," beginning a long, weary campaign.

American General Eisenhower became Supreme Commander of Operation Husky. British General Alexander was designated as deputy in command of ground forces and also given operational control. Eisenhower allowed subordinate leaders to make last minute decisions, causing unnecessary conflict within the Sicilian campaign.

Intelligence was essential in executing Operation Husky. British XX "double cross" intelligence enacted Operation Mincemeat to mislead Germany into believing the Allies would invade Europe by Greece or the Balkans. A corpse was dressed in a Royal Marine Uniform, with false papers in its pockets, and placed in the ocean. A fishing boat discovered it and informed German agents. Hitler diverted 1/5 of the German army from Italy to reinforce Greece and Sardinia.

On July 9, 1943, Operation Ladbrooke, the opening of Husky, was launched. A large British air force flew over Sicily to capture the Ponte Grande bridge. Italian defenses prepared to destroy this bridge at any sign of invasion. Although this operation met its objective, it was chaotic due to huge gusts of wind, searchlights, and friendly anti-aircraft fire from the naval invasion fleet. The airborne division scattered; only twelve of 144 gliders landed accurately. A small group of paratroopers seized the Ponte Grande bridge, controlling it long enough to prevent its destruction. Better communication and coordination between air, naval, and ground forces could have yielded more decisive victory.

Before dawn on July 10, 1943, an Allied fleet of transport ships approached the southern tip of Sicily. Bad weather convinced the Sicily defenders that there would be no assault that day, but unfortunately, many Allied ships were blown off course. The enemy mistakenly fortified beyond the beaches, allowing the Allies to land 150,000 troops and 7,000 vehicles. The Allies pressed inwards and suppressed counterattacks. However, the conquest of Italy would not end quickly.

After capturing Sicily's main ports and airfields through amphibious attacks, the final objective of Operation Husky was to seize Messina, cutting off retreating Axis troops and trapping them in Sicily. On August 17, 1943, Operation Husky finally ended. Patton had beaten Montgomery in the "race to Messina." Unfortunately, due to poor Allied planning, the Axis made an organized retreat, evacuating thousands of troops, vehicles, and stores to fortify Italy, further drawing out the Italian campaign.

Poor cooperation and lack of trust during Operation Husky impacted both the Allies and the Axis. British commanders had little confidence in the less experienced American military. The Americans were assigned subordinate roles, causing resentment and distrust. British General Montgomery and American General Patton both focused on attaining glory. Patton refused to accept British forces as the lead role. On the Axis side, Italian General Guzzoni and German Field Marshal Kesselring disagreed with each other about every trivial detail of their plans.

Operation Husky led to the fall of Italian dictator Benito Mussolini. Mussolini rose to power in 1922. He was appointed Prime Minister after his fascist party's march on Rome. Mussolini obtained absolute power, and destroyed Italy's democratic system, denying many freedoms and killing his opponents. The already weak Italian forces began collapsing from being dragged into power-seeking wars.

Mussolini allied with Germany in 1939 to deter an inevitable invasion of Italy. However, Hitler had broken many previous agreements; it was obvious that he could betray Italy. If Italy had sided with the Allies initially, the Allies might have prevented Germany from occupying Italy. The exhausting Italian campaign might not have been needed.

On July 24, 1943 the Fascist Grand Council voted to remove Mussolini. He ignored them and was arrested. Hitler broke Mussolini out of prison and installed him as the head of a new Fascist government in the north, a puppet regime. Mussolini attempted to flee to Austria as the Allies proceeded north, but was found and executed.

Pietro Badoglio became the new Italian Prime Minister. After secret negotiations, Italy joined the Allies by the Armistice of Cassibile, signed on September 3, 1943. This was a turning point in WWII. The Allies no longer had to expend resources against Italy, and created bases in Italy.

Operation Husky offers many lessons. Communication, cooperation and coordination are crucial in war. Strong leadership is necessary to promote unity and decisiveness. Developing and executing a complete plan is essential. Additionally, trust in one's allies is very important. Lastly, solid intelligence is key to victory.

My life would have been impacted if Americans had not fought and died during Operation Husky. Failure to resist Hitler's oppressive regime might have eroded American morals. Without the surrender of Italy, the war may have continued longer, costing more lives and further damaging the economy. To this day, Italy is allied with the U.S.

Americans fighting in this operation set examples of patriotism and perseverance, inspiring the Resistance in Nazi occupied countries to keep fighting. The American military learned to cooperate with allies, and became stronger and united, paving the way for a more successful direct invasion elsewhere. Additionally, these lessons have helped the U.S. improve its homeland defense and war strategies.

Operation Husky was a turning point in WWII. It led to the fall of Mussolini and the liberation of Italy, also forcing Hitler to divert troops to defend Italy. Germany and Italy suffered around

165,000 casualties. The Allies acquired needed experience for the 1944 D-Day invasion of France. The Allied soldiers of Operation Husky did not fight in vain.

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