

R E S T R I C T E D

AIR HISTORICAL BRANCH

TRANSLATION VII/161

EXTRACTS FROM WAR DIARY  
OF FORTRESS COMMANDANT, MESSINA STRAIT  
(COLONEL BAADE)  
14th July to 25th August, 1943

Original Document Reference:  
AGO(CRS) Washington, No. 35746/1  
and No. 35746/2

TRANSLATED BY:  
AIR MINISTRY, A.H.B.6  
December, 1956

R E S T R I C T E D

G.3715/NLR/1/57/

R E S T R I C T E D

- 1 -

EDITOR'S NOTE

1. The Allied landings in Sicily (Operation "Husky") took place on the 19th July, 1943, after nine days of devastating air attacks against Axis installations on the Island with particular emphasis on the airfields. For a month the German forces offered tenacious resistance but were steadily pushed back into the north-east corner of the Island.
2. The vital importance of maintaining supplies across the Messina Strait was early realised by the German Commander-in-Chief South (Field Marshal Kesselring) and on the 14th July, he appointed Oberst (Colonel) Baade as Fortress Commandant, Messina Strait, to be responsible for the defence of the area. The actual traffic across the Strait was controlled by the Naval Officer in Charge, Sea Transport (Captain von Liebenstein).
3. With the Allied capture of Catania on the 5th August, and Adrano on the 7th, full-scale evacuation of the Axis forces became inevitable and on the 8th August, orders were issued to prepare for a planned withdrawal across the Strait. "Operation Lehrgang", as the German plan was called, started on the 11th August, and continued until the early hours of the 17th August. During this period ferries and landing craft, using four routes across the Strait, carried approximately 40,000 men, 10,000 vehicles and tanks and 15,000 tons of equipment to the Italian mainland. This remarkable achievement was due primarily to extremely careful planning and a highly efficient organisation; but the fighting qualities of the German ferry crews and Flak gunners were also an important factor. As Captain von Liebenstein said in his final Order of the Day "It required not only good organisation but endurance, hard work and fighting spirit to carry out this operation of historic importance. Such co-operation made it possible to withdraw our comrades from Sicily almost to a man and to bring back far more material than was ever expected".
4. Captain von Liebenstein's War Diary covering the period of evacuation has already been issued as A.H.B. Translation No. VII/156 and this publication includes a map showing the German ferry routes; a post-war essay on the evacuation, written by General Fries, is contained in A.H.B. Translation VII/94. The War Diary of the Commandant, Messina Strait (Colonel Baade) has recently become available to us and provides valuable confirmatory and complementary evidence, especially on the measures taken to ensure the safe passage of the ferries. The implementation of these measures, in particular the powerful concentration of Flak batteries and the heavy armament of the ferries themselves, played a vital part in the success of the operation.
5. It remains to be said that the evacuation of Italian troops and equipment was carried out, also successfully, as a separate operation under Italian control.

R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E D

- 2 -

ORDER

C. in. C., South (Naval Operations Division)  
No. 3892/43

14th July, 1943

1. The maintenance of supplies across the Messina Strait and the defence of the Strait itself are matters of vital importance in the battle for Sicily. I expect all H.Q. personnel and units engaged in operations to do their utmost and to impress upon all men that what they do is of importance to the successful outcome of the fighting.

2. (a) A unified and disciplined command is essential to the defence of the Strait. I appoint Oberst Baade German Commandant, Messina Strait, with the authority of a Fortress Commandant. He will be subordinated to the Commandant of the German Armed Forces in Sicily. His position in relation to the Italian military authorities is still being determined.

(b) Command limits:

On the west side: a line Divisto - Rometta - S. Teresa;  
On the east side: Scilla - Calanna and continuing along the demarcation line between 6th and 7th Italian Army.

(c) The following are subordinated to the Commandant, Messina Strait:

The German task forces engaged in his command, naval units and Flak Batterien\* within the command, Naval Gunnery Abteilung 616, which is being brought up; also, in the event of a direct attack on the Messina Strait, N.O.i/c Sea Transport, Messina Strait and all other troops and stations of the German Armed Forces.

(d) The duty of the Commandant, Messina Strait is to defend the area under his command. The movement of ferry traffic and supplies, and all matters connected therewith, will continue to be the responsibility of the authorities entrusted with these tasks. Except in the event of direct attack on the Messina Strait, no units engaged on these tasks may be withdrawn without the approval of these authorities.

(e) The staff of the Commandant, Messina Strait is to be set up through Headquarters channels. It is to be kept as small as possible.

(f) Oberst Baade will take up duties immediately. He will report to his H.Q. and will submit his communications requirements to the Officer-in-Command, Armed Forces Communications with C. in C., South.

3. German Naval Command, Italy will consider measures to protect the Messina Strait against enemy attack from the south. They will collaborate with Supermarina and will report decisions made.

4. Luftflottenkommando 2 will consider measures for reinforcing A.A. defences and will report its intentions without delay.

5. German General with H.Q. Italian Armed Forces is requested to inform the Commando Supremo of the appointment of a German Commandant, Messina Strait.

Kesselring

(signed) Neubauer  
Kapt.z.See

---

\* The German term "Batterie" has no exact English equivalent, and has therefore been retained in the original throughout this translation. It corresponded roughly to a British A.A. troop.

R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E D

- 3 -

Commandant, Messina Strait  
(Oberst Baade)

Battle H.Q.  
19th July, 1943

Orders for the Defence of the Messina Strait  
(Mainland Zone)

In my capacity as Commandant, Messina Strait, I am in command of the German combat troops, the emergency units and the German Flak Batterien stationed in this area and, in the event of a direct attack on the Messina Strait, the Naval Officer i/c sea transport and all other troops and installations of the German armed forces would come under my command.

At present, the following units are available on the mainland:-

- (a) Fortress Battalion 926 (comprising 4 companies),
- (b) 3 Flak Abteilungen,
- (c) Emergency units.

A line linking Scilla, Calanna and Cape dell'Armi marks the limit of the 29th Infantry Division's sector. The mainland zone is subdivided into 3 defence sectors, as follows:-

Northern defence sector

C.O.: Major Roeske

The sector extends from Scilla up to (but not including) Reggio.

(a) Flak

3 10.5 cm. Batterien.

3 8.8 cm. Batterien 41

1 8.8 cm. Batterie (half Italian)

1 four-barrelled gun section (at Cannitello)

1 four-barrelled gun section (at Gallico)

(b) Emergency units

Officer i/c the Scilla -

Villa San Giovanni area : Oberleutnant Fröhlich (Engineers)

Officer i/c the Catona area: Leutnant Röseler (Army Supply Staff)

Officer i/c the Archi area : an Army Supply Staff officer.

Central defence sector

C.O.: Major Mückenberger

The sector extends from Reggio up to (but not including) Occhio.

R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E D

- 4 -

(a) Flak

1 8.8 cm. Batterie 41

1 8.8 cm. Batterie (half Italian)

1 2 cm. Batterie (12 guns, half Italian)

(b) Emergency units

Officer i/c all emergency units in the central sector:  
Hauptmann Rupp

Southern defence sector

C.O.: Hauptmann Schweiger

The sector extends from Occhio to Cape dell'Armi and includes the strong points of Melito and Cape Spartivento.

(a) Flak

1 10.5 cm. Batterie

2 8.8 cm. Batterien (half Italian)

1 8.8 cm. Batterie (unmanned)

1 four-barrelled gun section (6 guns: unmanned)

1 four-barrelled gun section (at Melito)

1 four-barrelled gun section (at Cape Spartivento).

1 8.8 cm. Batterie

One company from Fortress Battalion 926 is being transferred to the southern defence sector and will come under the command of Hauptmann Schweiger. The rest of this battalion will remain at my disposal in the central sector. It will be responsible for the reconnaissance of the whole sector from the point of view of potential enemy operations and approach routes. It will also block the streams which flow out near Reggio and will barricade the roads which lead from this town into the countryside.

The Flak guns are to be set up in such a way that it will be possible to fire either out to sea or on to the coastline from each gun position. They must be readily adaptable to ground fighting if air fighting ceases. It is essential that not one Englishman be allowed to land in my coastal sector.

These orders do not entail any changes as regards the duties of Flak in air defence.

Flak Untergruppe 3, under the command of Major Roeske, will continue to control the Flak in the whole area.

Sector C.O.s are responsible for defences in their individual sectors and the emergency units are at their disposal for this purpose. Arrangements for the bringing up and utilisation of these units are to be made with Major Senn, the German Garrison Officer, in accordance with the time schedule already fixed. In the event of an emergency, sector C.O.s will immediately instruct officers i/c emergency units to appoint two representatives for the purpose of receiving orders.

R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E D

- 5 -

Orders will follow concerning the bringing up of transport in the event of an emergency. The basic conditions for this are laid down in the original orders issued by the German General in Rome.

Sector C.O.s will report positions of their battle H.Q.s and what means of signals communication they have.

After air raids, sector C.O.s will be responsible for seeing that the roads in their sectors are cleared of debris.

All ranks have permission to stop vehicles in order to obtain lifts.

Fortress Battalion 926 and the sector C.O.s will each send a representative to my battle H.Q. daily at 18.00 hrs. for the purpose of receiving orders.

My battle H.Q. is in Campo Piale (near Major Roeske's H.Q.).

These orders are not to be passed on, either wholly or in extract form. Where no facilities exist for the safe keeping of top secret documents, this communication is to be destroyed after its contents have been noted.

Signed: BAADE

Distribution:-

Northern sector  
Central sector  
Southern sector  
German Garrison Officer; Reggio  
Fortress Battalion 926  
Commandant, Messina Strait

Commandant, Messina Strait  
- Oberst Baade -

Battle H.Q.  
23rd July, 1943

Orders for the Defence of the Messina Strait  
(Island Zone)

1. In my capacity as Commandant, Messina Strait, I am in command of the German combatant troops, the emergency units and the German Flak Batterien stationed in this area and, in the event of a direct attack on the Messina Strait, the officer i/c sea transport and all other troops and units of the German armed forces would come under my command.

The following units are available for duty on the island:-

- (a) 2 Flak Untergruppen, with a total of 12 heavy and 5 light Batterien. (Further Batterien are being brought up from Palermo).
- (b) Emergency units. (Arrangements for the utilisation of these units are to be made with Major Geusgen, the German Garrison Officer).

R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E D

- 6 -

A line linking Divieto, Rometta and Santa Teresa marks the limit of the XIV Panzer Korps sector. A Flak Untergruppe, comprising four heavy Batterien and one light Batterie, is stationed north-west of the sector for purposes of coastal defence.

2. Oberstleutnant Fischer is in charge of all defences on the island.

His zone is subdivided into two defence sectors, as follows:-

Northern defence sector

C.O.: Hauptmann Menner (O.C. Heavy Flak Abteilung 281)

The boundary of the sector is marked by a line between Divieto, Rometta and Messina harbour (the lighthouse).

Strength:-

(a) Flak artillery

1st Special Batterie 41, Messina 8.8 cm.

1st Batterie, Abteilung 281 8.8 cm.

2nd Batterie, Abteilung 281 8.8 cm.

1st Batterie, Abteilung 334 8.8 cm.

2nd Batterie, Abteilung 334 8.8 cm.

2nd Batterie, Abteilung 334 A 8.8 cm.

2nd Batterie, Abteilung 304 8.8 cm.

Special Heavy Batterie 1571(S) 8.8 cm.

Special Light Batterie 2022 3.7 cm.

2nd Batterie, Abteilung 507 2 cm.

Special Light Batterie Merkelbach 2 cm.

(b) Emergency units

Arrangements for the utilisation of these units in the northern defence sector are to be made with Major Geusgen.

Southern defence sector

C.O.: Major Uhseman (O.C. Heavy Flak Abteilung 304)

The boundary of the sector is marked by a line between Messina harbour (the lighthouse), Rometta and Santa Teresa.

Strength:-

(a) Flak artillery

1st Batterie, Abteilung 523 10.5 cm.

2nd Special Batterie 41, Messina 8.8 cm.

R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E D

- 7 -

2nd Batterie, Abteilung 281 A	8.8 cm.
3rd Batterie, Abteilung 237 A	8.8 cm.
4th Batterie, Abteilung 354	3.7 cm.
Special Light Batterie 2023	2 cm.

(b) Emergency units

Arrangements for the utilisation of these units in the southern defence sector are to be made with Major Geusgen.

3. The Flak guns are to be set up in such a way that it will be possible to fire either out to sea or on to the coastline from each gun position. They must be readily adaptable to ground fighting if air fighting ceases. It is essential that not one Englishman is allowed to land in my coastal sector.

These orders do not entail any changes as regards the duties of Flak in air defence.

The Flak artillery on both sides of the Messina Strait will continue to come under the command of the regimental commander, Oberstleutnant Fischer.

4. Sector C.O.s are responsible for defences in their individual sectors and the emergency units are at their disposal for this purpose. Arrangements for the bringing up and utilisation of these units are to be made with Major Geusgen, the German Garrison Officer, in accordance with the time schedule already fixed. Major Geusgen is subordinate to Oberstleutnant Fischer. In the event of an emergency, sector C.O.s. will immediately instruct officers i/c emergency units to appoint two representatives for the purpose of receiving orders.

Orders will follow concerning the bringing up of transport in the event of an emergency. The basic conditions for this are laid down in the organisational order issued by the German General in Rome.

5. At night, a zone of the Strait, about 3 km. broad - the exact limits of which will be notified - will be immune from gunfire. The southern boundary of this zone will be lit by searchlights during the hours of darkness.

6. After air raids, sector C.O.s are responsible for seeing that the through-roads in their sectors are cleared of debris. The release of men to do this work is to be arranged through the German Garrison Officer.

7. All ranks have permission to stop vehicles in order to obtain lifts.

8. Sector C.O.s will send a representative at 17.00 hours daily to Regimental Battle H.Q. at Santa Agata, Villa Giuseppina (Flak Regiment 135 H.Q.), for the purpose of receiving orders.

9. My Battle H.Q. on the mainland is in Campo Piale (near Major Roeske's H.Q.) and my Battle H.Q. on the island is at Flak Regiment 135 H.Q.

R E S T R I C T E D



R E S T R I C T E D

- 8 -

10. These orders are not to be passed on, either wholly or in extract form. Where no facilities exist for the safe keeping of top secret documents, this communication is to be destroyed after its contents have been noted.

Distribution:-

Flak Regiment 135  
Heavy Flak Abteilung 281  
Heavy Flak Abteilung 304  
Heavy Flak Abteilung 212  
German Garrison Officer  
File copy

S.O. Patrol Forces, Messina Strait

Op.H.Q. 1st August, 1943

Order for Patrol Forces for Messina Strait  
Ferry Traffic

A. Command Organisation for Messina Strait patrol forces:

1. Patrol organisation on land, at sea and in the air is the main responsibility of both German and Italian Army, Air Force and Navy units engaged in the Messina Strait.
2. Orders for German-Italian naval units will be given by Commando Marina, Messina.
3. S.O. Patrol Forces, Messina Strait will be responsible for the protection of German shipping against naval attack. All German naval units in the Messina Strait will be subordinated to this command.
4. S.O. Patrol Forces, Messina Strait is, in turn, subordinated to the Fortress Commandant, Messina Strait.

B. Ferry Protection by Day:

1. Ferrying will be carried out on set routes between prepared jetties.
2. The protection of ferry traffic against naval attack is the responsibility of coastal artillery and the Air Force.
3. Where possible, preparations will be made for torpedo and mining operations.
4. Air attacks will be opposed by Flak ashore and afloat.
5. In the event of land attacks the ferry area will be defended to the very last.

C. Ferry Protection by Night:

1. If the enemy situation demands it, ferrying will also be carried out by night.
2. The protection of ferry traffic against attack by land and air is the responsibility of Army and Flak.

R E S T R I C T E D

G.3715/NLR/1/57/

R E S T R I C T E D

- 9 -

3. Three warning signals for defending ferry traffic against naval attack.

(a) On the approach of enemy naval forces, the coast will fire three white (small enemy units) or three yellow (heavy enemy units) single flares, one after the other. Coastal artillery will then open fire against the sea targets. There must be no firing into or illuminating of the ferry area. Ferry traffic will continue, but ferry vessels will carry position lights.

(b) If there is a danger of enemy vessels penetrating the ferry area, guard ships or the coastal defences in the vicinity will fire four green single flares. Thereupon all ferry craft and guard ships will set course immediately for the coast so as to leave a free field of fire. Coastal artillery may then open fire on the enemy, even in the ferry area. Ferry vessels will use their armament if necessary.

(c) The all-clear will be signalled by three red single flares. Ferry traffic will then be resumed.

4. These warning signals will not affect Army and Flak operations against attacks on land or from the air.

(signed) von Kampts  
Kapt.z. See

2nd August, 1943

08.00 hours: Commanding Officers' conference.

General Heidrich asks what steps have been taken to accommodate troops on the mainland in the event of the island being evacuated.

Oberst Baade gives a detailed account of his duties as Fortress Commandant, Messina Strait. The demarcation lines of the sector are defined. The main resistance will be provided by the Flak. Sixty five heavy Flak Batterien have been assigned the task of concentrating on air and sea targets, whilst some Batterien are to be used exclusively for ground fighting. In addition to these, the following auxiliary units are stationed in the sector:

1 well-armed Fortress Construction Battalion (Army) with 40 light machine guns, 10 heavy machine guns and sixteen 8 cm. mortars; 1 poorly armed Construction Battalion and 1 company of a Luftwaffe Construction Battalion.

The Flak units on the mainland are subdivided into task forces and the C.O. of each task force is responsible for the defence of his sector. One 8.8 cm. and three 2 cm. Flak units are stationed near Melito for defence purposes further to the south. Outside the sector, defences are concentrated on Cape Spartivento. A Flak task force and an armoured reconnaissance patrol belonging to the LXXVI Panzer Korps are stationed near Locri.

R E S T R I C T E D

G.3715/NLR/1/57/

R E S T R I C T E D

- 10 -

Our main strength on the island is concentrated in the Flak, which is also being used for ground fighting. We depend upon the Flak for communications and for our link with the XIV Panzer Korps and the 26th Panzer Division.

We are co-operating with the Italian General Carbone and with Admiral Baroni (Messina).

Auxiliary units in the fortification area are no longer controlled from the Wehrmacht garrison at Gioia Tauro, but come under the command of Oberst Vullers. Kapitan von Kampts and Freg. Kapitan Jasper report on the defence measures taken by the German Navy. The projected setting up of naval artillery positions is being delayed because of interference with railway transport. The plan is to provide the sector with 10 coastal Batterien (with calibres ranging from 10.5 cm. to 24 cm.) and one railway Batterie. Eight 10.5 cm. and three 21 cm. guns are already in Italy, but their whereabouts are not known as a result of the railway disaster. Transport north of the Brenner Pass has been stopped and there is no knowing when it will get through. There are good Italian batteries in Caperina, Belaro\* and Ali. The first two have infantry support, but in the case of the Ali battery there is a shortage of gun-crews. The railway artillery section which was to have been installed near Catanzaro is held up in the Naples area.

In the sector there is a 900 ton Aviso equipped with radar to guard against sudden attacks. 6 minesweepers are protecting the ferrying from surprise attack. It is suggested that torpedo batteries be set up in the Messina area to strengthen the defences. It is not expected that the Italian Navy will participate.

Freg. Kptn. von Liebenstein reports on the organisation of the ferry service. The following vessels are available for the evacuation:

- 9 Siebel ferries
- 12 landing craft
- 14 naval ferry barges
- and one floating crane.

In reserve there are 41 assault craft, 40 rubber landing dinghies and 10 rubber dinghies. Crews must be provided by the divisions on the island. It will not be possible to allocate one ferrying point per division, as large vehicles with trailers can only be transported on a certain type of ferry.

Oberst Baade reports on the following:

- (a) the steps that have been taken on the mainland for the reception and further transit of evacuated troops and vehicles,
- (b) the organisation of road traffic,
- (c) the unloading stations for heavy cargoes,
- (d) the distribution of divisions on the road network,
- (e) the employment of military police,
- (f) the steps taken to avoid road congestion etc. Organisation on the island is the responsibility of the individual divisions.

---

\*This should probably read Pellaro (translator).

R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E D

- 11 -

General Heidrich says that the most rigid organisation is necessary on the island. The evacuation plan must be drawn up and practised, since, if it had to be put into operation, many complications would arise which cannot be foreseen at the moment. He will take steps at Corps H.Q. to ensure that reliable officers are entrusted with the task of organisation on the island at once. Static officers will have to be installed on the mainland for the reconnaissance of reception areas, the control of water supplies etc. Links must be established with the General's H.Q.

Divisions must report daily the arrival of officers and men, cars, lorries, tanks, assault guns and anti-tank guns. Reports will be sent by radio. This will also apply to those sections of the 29th Division which are under the command of LXXVI Korps. A reporting centre will be set up in the Villa San Giovanni area to co-ordinate signals traffic. It is everybody's duty to resist the enemy paratroop units and landing troops with all available means.

---

Orders issued by Oberst Baade on 6th August, 1943,  
for the Defence of the Messina Strait,  
10.30 hrs., Battle H.Q. (Hauptmann Paul)

The Flak commandant will continue to be the officer responsible for defences. An infantry officer will co-operate with him in matters concerning the infantry and its duties.

	<u>Officer i/c Defence</u>	<u>Infantry Officer</u>
Northern sector:	Major Roesky	Oberleutnant Fröhlich
Central sector:	Hauptmann Zimmermann	Hauptmann Rupp
Southern sector:	Hauptmann Schweiger	The officer i/c the recently attached Paratroop Company.

Oberst Vüllers will make the necessary decisions in the matter of general defence measures. He will assist and advise the Flak commandant.

Signals: Everyone will be sent a copy of a plan showing radio communications, of which each responsible officer is to make use in the course of his individual duties. The Flak have 3 W/T stations at their disposal. Direct communication exists between sectors. All sectors are linked with the Flak Regiment. The W/T stations are only to be used for sending reports on the enemy. Officers i/c sectors are asked to instruct radio personnel in the use of code tables etc.

We are setting up our own intercept stations so that reliable reports may be disseminated.

By order of the general, demolition points and mines are to be guarded.

Ferry Traffic: The Korps (i.e. IV Panzer Korps - translator) intends to evacuate the troops by night. Experience has shown that the enemy has a healthy respect for our heavy concentrations of Flak in the Messina Strait. Oberst Baade's suggestion:- Evacuate by day and move up by night.

R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E D

- 12 -

Oberstleutnant Fischer: asks whether the Flak will be evacuated from the island before or after the infantry guard units.

Oberst Baade: replies that the decision will be taken jointly by the local Flak and Infantry commanders. Details concerning battle headquarters are under consideration. The Panzer Korps must send liaison officers.

---

14th August, 1943

07.00 hrs. Morning report: Three enemy destroyers shelled the Pellaro area from off Saline. Italian coastal batteries returned the fire. The destroyers made off. No other incidents.

Baade.

---

16th August, 1943

14.00 hrs. Battle Report, 5th Panzer Artillery Regt. 33

On 16th August, between 07.05 and 07.35 hrs. the Batterie fired 14 rounds at enemy destroyers, a medium-sized ship (presumably a cruiser), and at several boats which were trying to enter the Messina Strait. As a result of accurate fire, the vessels spread a smoke screen and were forced to withdraw.

At 09.20 hrs. Oberst Baade reported by telephone that the enemy had reached Scaletta, about 22 km. S.W. of the 5th Batterie's observation post. The Batterie received orders to fire and from 09.35 to 10.05 hrs. heavy concentrations of enemy vehicles on the road near Scaletta were attacked, 11 rounds being fired. The firing was accurate and this detachment continued to be our main target.

Details of Ferrying Duties performed by Engineer Landing Battalion 771  
(Hauptmann Paul) from August 1st to 15th, 1943

The following were ferried from Sicily to the mainland:-

3,305 lorries.	
1,255 cars	(Landing craft
488 motor-cycles	and ferry barges
37 tractors	were used.
6 tanks, Mark 4	Average:
35 guns	10 landing craft,
27,814 men*	3 ferry barges).
9,936 tons	

\*Including 13,532 wounded evacuated to Scilla.

During the last night the following were evacuated on 4 ferry barges:-

413 men	} Totalling
35 lorries	
34 8.8 cm. guns	
8 tractors	
1 trailer	
1 tank, Mark 4	
	626.3 tons

Out of a total of 18 landing craft, 11 were lost, 4 of which were hospital boats.

R E S T R I C T E D

G.3715/NLR/1/57/

R E S T R I C T E D

- 13 -

Disposition of Units belonging to the Messina Strait Defence Sector

Unit	Off'rs	Off'cls	NCO's	Men	Carbine 98	Sub- Machine Guns	Machine Guns	2 cm AA	Trucks	Landing Craft	Ferries	Large Assault Weapons	Small Assault Weapons
Engineer Landing Battalion 771	12	2	82	510			37	8	<sup>14</sup> (55½ tons)	17	4	4	41
Engineer Construction Battalion Italy	2	-	15	140	144	3	2	-	<sup>1</sup> (3 tons)	-	-	-	-
Auxiliary Units N.O.i/c Sea Transport	2	-	6	30	31	-	3	-	<sup>2</sup> (6 tons)	-	-	-	-
Construction Battalion 432	22	-	6	48	212	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supply Kompanie (Air Force) 5/VII	1	-	32	120	130	3	2	-	<sup>3</sup> (9 tons)	-	-	-	-
Supply Control Staff (Air Force) 4/VII	2	-	20	30	45	2	2	-	<sup>1</sup> (3 tons)	-	-	-	-
II Paratroop Regt. 7 Kompanie	1	-	30	59	27	21	10	-	Anti-tank rifle 41  1	Light Mortar  2	Verrey pistol cartridge 6	Discharger cup 4	-

R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E D

- 14 -

Vessels engaged	Ferry Barges	Siebel Ferries	Assault Siebel Ferries	Naval Gun Barges	I-Boats	Whalers	Losses	Trucks	Heavy Lorries	Trailers
2nd Landing Craft Flotilla	12	-	-	2	-	-	5 ferry barges	5	1	2
4th Landing Craft Flotilla	24	-	-	-	-	-	2 ferry barges	-	-	-
10th Landing Craft Flotilla	-	7	3	-	7	4	5 Siebel ferries 2 I-Boats	3	-	-

Armament of Vessels

	8.8 cm. A.A.	7.5 cm. A.A.	3.7 cm. A.A.	Four- barrelled A.A.	2 cm. A.A.	DSR Equipment (Radar)	Machine Guns	Sub- Machine Guns	Pistols
2nd Landing Craft Flotilla	4	12	2	-	28	8	5	2	17
4th Landing Craft Flotilla	-	24	-	-	48	-	-	-	-
10th Landing Craft Flotilla	5	-	3	11	6	-	4	-	2

Each man is also equipped with rifle and hand grenades.

R E S T R I C T E D

G. 3715/NLR/1/57/

R E S T R I C T E D

- 15 -

Strength of Flak in the Messina Strait area on 25th July, 1943,  
(based on map supplements to Oberst Baade's War Diary  
and entries in the Diary itself)

1. Mainland Zone

Untergruppe San Giovanni  
(Res. 167)  
(Northern Sector)

Unit	Calibre	No. of Guns
2./167	8.8	4
2./167A	8.8	4
1./287	10.5	4
2./287	10.5	4
4./287	10.5	4
3./523	10.5	4
1545 z.b.V. (Special Batt.)	8.8/41	6
1554 z.b.V. (Special Batt.)	8.8/41	6
1599 (Italian)	8.8	4
1600 (Italian)	8.8	4
2029 z.b.V. (Special Batt.)	2 cm.	6

Untergruppe Reggio (heavy 8.841,  
four-barrelled, Messina)  
(Central Sector)

Unit	Calibre	No. of Guns
3./281A	8.8/41	4
1./507 (4-barrelled)	2 cm.	12
1601 (Italian)	8.8	(4-6)
Italian	8.8/41	(4-6)
1546 z.b.V. (Special Batt.)	8.8/41	6
1555 z.b.V. (Special Batt.)	8.8/41	5

Untergruppe Bocale (363, heavy)  
(Southern Sector)

<u>'Bittihn' emplacement:-</u>		
1577 z.b.V. (Special Batt.)	8.8	5
<u>'Bencard' emplacement:-</u>		
1./167A	8.8	5
"	2 cm.	2
<u>'Meller' emplacement:-</u>		
4./452	8.8	5
"	2 cm.	2
<u>'Vetter' emplacement:-</u>		
363	8.8	3
"	2 cm.	2
<u>'Beel' emplacement (Melito):</u>		
2029 z.b.V. (Special 4-barrelled Batt.)	2 cm.	3
3./264	8.8	6
"	2 cm.	2
<u>Cape Spartivento:-</u>		
V./5237 (4-barrelled)	2 cm.	3

R E S T R I C T E D



R E S T R I C T E D

- 16 -

Strength of Flak in the Messina Strait area on 25th July, 1943

2. Island Zone

Untergruppe Messina-Nord (281)

(Northern Sector)

Unit	Calibre	No. of Guns
1./281	8.8	4
2./281	8.8	3
Four-barrelled M. (Naval)	2 cm.	2
II/M. (Naval)	2 cm.	2
III/M. (Naval)	2 cm.	2
IV/M. (Naval)	2 cm.	3
2./304	8.8	4
1./334	8.8	4
2./334	8.8	4
2./334A	8.8	2
2./507	2 cm.	5
I.2./507	2 cm.	2
II.2./507	2 cm.	3
III.2./507	2 cm.	3
IV.2./507	2 cm.	4
I./2022	3.7	3
III./2022	3.7	3
IV./2022	3.7	3
1.z.b.V. 41 (Special Batt.)	8.8/41	4

Untergruppe Messina-Süd (304)

(Southern Sector)

Unit	Calibre	No. of Guns
3./237A	8.8	4
2./281A	8.8	3
I.4./354	3.7	3
1./523	10.5	4
2023 (4-barrelled)	2 cm.	3
II./2023	2 cm.	2
IV/2023	2 cm.	3
2. z.b.V. 41 (Special Batt.)	8.8/41	4

Untergruppe Milazzo (212)

(Northern coast of Sicily to the rear of Untergruppe Messina-Nord)

1./212	8.8	2
3./212	8.8	4
1573	8.8	4
II./2022	3.7	3
2024 (4-barrelled)	2 cm.	3
I./2024	2 cm.	3
II./2024	2 cm.	3
III./2024	2 cm.	3
IV./2024	2 cm.	3

R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E D

- 17 -

State of Flak and Ammunition on 14th August, 1943

	<u>No. of Guns</u>	<u>Proportion of Ammo. Issue held*</u>
<u>Messina</u>	47 2 cm. )	
	5 four-barrelled guns )	1.5
	10 3.7 cm.	1.7
	31 8.8 cm.	3
<u>Mainland</u>		
<u>2 Untergruppen</u>	35 2 cm. )	
	25 four-barrelled guns )	0.8
	46 8.8 cm.	3.4
	20 8.8 cm. 41	2
	16 10.5 cm.	1.8
<u>Army Flak 302</u>	29 2 cm.	0.5
	24 four-barrelled guns	0.5
	6 3.7 cm.	0.1
2,700 rounds are held in addition to this.		
<u>Navy</u>	28 2 cm. )	
	11 four-barrelled guns )	1.1

10.35 hrs. Report from Wachtmeister Bamberger, received by Hanstein.

\* Note: The back issue of ammunition (Munitionsausstattung) was as follows:-

2 cm.	1200 rounds per gun
3.7 cm.	800 " " "
8.8 cm.	240 " " "
10.5 cm.	175 " " "

R E S T R I C T E D