



LiberationTours
THE CANADIAN LEGACY

The Italian Campaign 2019 Canadian Battlefield Tour Historic WWII Sites & the Culture of Italy

Follow in the footsteps of the Canadian Army as we retrace the 1943-1945 Italian campaign - the fierce battles that set the Canadians apart as the superior fighting force even in the most difficult conditions of war.

It was here, long before the Normandy campaign, where our soldiers - affectionately called the 'D-Day Dodgers' - fought in legendary battles at such places as Agira, Monte Assoro, the Liri Valley, Ortona, The Moro River, Coriano Ridge, The Gothic Line and more. This tour features special 75th Anniversary events commemorating the Battle of the Liri Valley.

Liberation Tours is an all-Canadian company specializing in escorted, high quality coach tours to the battlefields of Europe including Italy, France, Belgium, Holland, the UK and more.

Your journey traces Canada's legacy of service and sacrifice in the pursuit of freedom and democracy. Your tour begins on the shores of Sicily and extends all the way to the northern frontier:

*Pachino • Grammichele • Leonforte • Monte Assoro
Agira • Aquino • Pontecorvo
Melfa River • Kingsmill Bridge • Cassino
Ortona • Sterlin's Castle • Casa Berardi • The Gully
Point 204 • Coriano Ridge • Savio River • Ravenna ... plus:
Syracuse • Rome • Florence • Siena • Venice*



May 17 - June 2, 2019
Liri Valley 75th Anniversary

www.liberationtours.ca





Itinerary

Day 1 - Friday May 17

Depart from Canada for your overnight transatlantic flight to Rome, except for those who may choose to depart sooner to extend their trip.

Day 2 - Saturday May 18

Upon arrival at Fiumicino Airport we will transfer to Rome for the first of two days in this incredible, historic city. Hotel rooms are pre-booked and available for immediate morning check-in. We will tour the city in the afternoon, following which we will gather together with our fellow travelers for our evening Welcome Reception Dinner. Overnight Rome - Mercure Rome Colosseum Centre. [D]

Day 3 - Sunday May 19

Free day at your leisure in Rome. Overnight Rome - Mercure Rome Colosseum Centre. [B]

Day 4 - Monday May 20

We transfer to the airport, for a brief flight to Catania on the island of Sicily where we will spend the next three nights. Free leisure time in the afternoon. Overnight Syracuse - Hotel Parco Delle Fontane. [B]

Day 5 - Tuesday May 21

This morning we begin our tour of the battlefields, appropriately where it all began on July 10, 1943 ... at the landing site code named Bark West Beach at Pachino. We visit the town nearby, and then move inland following the route of the Canadian 1st Division with a lunch stop in Grammichele and points nearby, where the Canadians first encountered heavy resistance from the German army. Overnight Enna - Grand Albergo Sicilia. [B,L]

Day 6 - Wednesday May 22

Today we head north, and up, ascending Monte Assoro to see where the Canadians made their legendary climb to the top and where you will take in the commanding view of the battlefields in the countryside below. After lunch we make our way to a not often visited solemn location, the Agira Canadian War Cemetery and the final resting place of 489 Canadians. Overnight Catania - Il Principe Hotel. [B,L]



Day 7 - Thursday May 23

We take a brief morning flight from Catania back to Rome, then head southeast into the mountains of Italy and the Liri Valley. Here we spend the balance of the day looking at the battles near Aquino, with breathtaking views across the valley from high above in the little village of Piedimonte San Germano - followed by a drive and walk down to the actual battle site on the valley floor by the river. The itinerary is left flexible to allow for a tentative special remembrance event planned by the local citizens. Overnight Cassino - Best Western Hotel Rocca. [B]

Day 8 - Friday May 24

Today is the 75th Anniversary of John Mahony earning a Victoria Cross for his actions at the Melfa River, which will be one of our stops today. Special events are also expected in the nearby hilltop town of Pontecorvo, where a fully restored 25-lb field gun stands in the town square as a testament to the actions by the Canadians to free the town 75 years earlier. Day Eight is again left flexible to allow time to attend these and/or other special anniversary events. Overnight Cassino - Best Western Hotel Rocca. [B,L]

Day 9 - Saturday May 25

As we again venture into the battlefields of the Liri Valley we attend a special 75th anniversary liberation event in the town of Roccasecca. We visit the famous Gustav and Hitler Lines against which the Canadians hurled themselves under heavy artillery and machine gun fire. The day concludes at the Cassino Commonwealth War Cemetery. Overnight Cassino - Best Western Hotel Rocca. [B,L]

Day 10 - Sunday May 26

We depart Cassino for an amazing trip through the Apennine Mountains to the Adriatic Coast and the small town of Ortona where Canadians made a significant sacrifice. We'll walk in the footsteps of the soldiers who fought in the streets of Ortona, then visit Sterlin's Castle, and Casa Berardi where Capt. Paul Triquet earned a Victoria Cross. We stop at 'The Gully', one of Canada's infamous battlefields, before concluding the day at the Moro River Canadian War Cemetery, our largest cemetery in Italy where 1,376 young men patiently await our visit. Overnight Ortona - Hotel Mara. [B,L]

Day 11 - Monday May 27

We continue our journey north, along the Adriatic coast visiting the Canadian monument at Point 204 and a discussion of the fighting on Coriano Ridge. Here we can take in a long and wide view of the battlefields. Following lunch we visit a nearby Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery, concluding the day in the beautiful and historic Ravenna, the last capital city of the Roman Empire. Overnight Ravenna - NH Hotel. [B,L]

Day 12 - Tuesday May 28

This morning we gather at the place where the third and final VC was earned in Italy, awarded to 'Smockey' Smith for his exploits at the Savio River. Later we discuss the overall importance and costs of Canada's almost two years of campaigning in Italy with a visit to the Villanova War Cemetery, before returning to Ravenna. The afternoon is free to visit Ravenna's UNESCO World Heritage mosaics, including an optional (no extra charge) private tour with our local expert guide. Overnight Ravenna - NH Hotel. [B]

Day 13 - Wednesday May 29

We now travel to the world famous city of Florence, birth place of Europe's Renaissance of the 14th century. Enjoy the afternoon to explore this amazing city of art, architecture, museums and monuments. Overnight Florence - Grand Hotel Mediterraneo. [B]

Day 14 - Thursday May 30

Enjoy a full free day at your leisure in Florence. Alternatively, you can choose to join the optional (no extra charge) day trip to see the incredible UNESCO World Heritage town of Siena in the heart of Tuscany. Overnight Florence - Grand Hotel Mediterraneo. [B]

Day 15 - Friday May 31

The coach departs Florence and takes us to our final destination and yet another world famous cultural centre - Venice. We arrive before lunch so you will have the full afternoon to discover this amazing city on the lagoon. Venice in its entirety is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Overnight Venice (Lido) - Best Western Biasutti. [B]

Day 16 - Saturday June 1

Your final day of this grand tour of Italy is yours to discover Venice at your leisure. In the early evening we gather for our farewell meal. Overnight Venice (Lido) - Best Western Biasutti. [B,D]

Day 17 - Sunday June 2

Return flight from Venice, except for those who may choose to extend their stay or travel onward to further destinations. [B]

Itinerary and hotels are subject to change prior to departure. Minor variances are possible during the actual tour based on the need to adapt to circumstances we may encounter.



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The Battlefields.

Sicily

For the 1st Canadian Division the invasion of Sicily was the first major campaign of the war. After a relatively easy landing against Italian coastal units at Pachino the Canadians were engaged by increasingly determined German troops who fought tough delaying actions from vantage points of towering villages and almost impregnable hill positions. Grammichele, Leonforte, Assoro, Agira and Adrano were finally overcome but at a cost - 562 young Canucks would not be coming home.



The Liri Valley & Cassino

In the spring of 1944 the Germans constructed two formidable lines of defense against the Allied Armies intent on liberating the Italian capital - the Gustav Line and the Adolf Hitler Line. After massive bombing attacks the Abbey of Montecassino was captured by the victorious Poles and the Canadians, having hurled themselves at the enemy under heavy enemy mortar and machine gun fire, finally breached the German defences. The road to Rome was open.

The Moro River & Ortona

The medieval town of Ortona, overlooking the beautiful Adriatic Sea, is now a pleasant place to visit but in 1944 it was the scene of some of the heaviest fighting of the war. Along the Moro River Canadian troops inched forward against repeated and determined German counter-attacks. Finally entering Ortona, they had to literally blast their way from house to house in this battle that would come to be known as 'Little Stalingrad'.

Coriano Ridge & The Gothic Line

In the summer of 1944 the Germans were determined to hang on to the industrial north of Italy. To stop the Allies they constructed the formidable Gothic Line, composed of machine-gun posts, anti-tank guns, mortar and assault-gun positions as well as mines, wire obstacles and anti-tank ditches. Months of hard fighting, following on from the ferocious struggle for Coriano Ridge, would take place before the Germans relinquished their hold.

The Culture.

Rome

It is called The Eternal City and with good reason - it has been a center of culture for two thousand years and it endures to this day. While in Rome you might wish to visit the Vatican Museums, the Colosseum, or perhaps the Pantheon or the Trevi Fountain. There is much to see in this amazing capital city.



Siena

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the historic center of Siena is world famous for its medieval architecture and also the famous Palio horse race held twice annually. Visitors will need to walk a bit uphill from the coach park to reach the town but it is well worth the effort!



Florence

It's the birthplace of the Renaissance and the capital city of the region of Tuscany. It is famous for its art, architecture, monuments and museums. It's a center for culture, politics and fashion. It's Florence, a city of treasures guaranteed to delight.



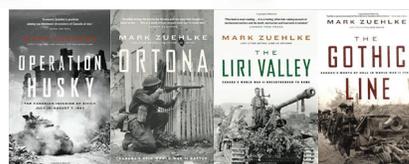
Venice

It is perhaps the most magical city in all of Europe, built on 100+ islands in a lagoon connected by scenic canals and pedestrian bridges. No trip to Italy would complete without a visit to this beautiful city, the standard by which many others are compared. A ride in a gondola on the grand canal is a must!



Your guide for this amazing tour is **Mark Zuehlke**, one of Canada's leading historians and author of the award-winning *Canadian Battle Series*, each volume of which focuses on a battle or campaign fought by the Canadian Army in World War II.

Mark has written extensively on the Canadian contribution to the Italian Campaign including **Operation Husky**, **Ortona**, **The Liri Valley**, and **The Gothic Line** - with a new book coming soon.



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Included in your Package

- Fifteen nights accommodation in twin-bedded rooms with private facilities in Trafalgar First Class Hotels (*European standards*)
- Premium airport departure lounge at the start of the tour (where available) ... *an exclusive benefit not offered by other battlefield tours*
- Immediate early morning check-in available at your hotel in Rome ... *an exclusive benefit not offered by other battlefield tours*
- Travel by luxury air-conditioned coach with reclining seats, on-board facilities and free mobile Wi-Fi
- Buffet breakfast (cold and/or hot) at the hotel each morning, plus selected lunches as outlined in the itinerary
- All hotel service charges, local taxes, baggage handling of one bag per person
- Gratuities to Coach Driver, Trafalgar Agent and Local Guides are **included!** (*important note: these costs are extra on most other tours and can add up to \$150 CAD or more at the end of your trip, be sure to compare!*)
- Group pick-up from Rome Fiumicino Airport on May 18, 2019 and return group transfer to Venice Marco Polo Airport on June 2, 2018 (*individual transfers would be the traveler's responsibility*)
- Domestic return flight from Rome to Catania, Sicily including airport transfers (check website for updated flight information)
- Liberation Tours Lapel Pin

Excluded

- International Airfares ... see our website for optional group airfare offer
- Meals other than stated on the itinerary
- Travel / Cancellation / Medical Insurance
- Passport & related fees
- Any optional excursion not stated
- Items of a personal nature

Notations

- Prices are subject to change based on currency fluctuations, to be confirmed at time of final payment.
- This tour requires a minimum of 20 passengers to operate.
- Hotels have been pre-booked but are subject to change.
- Note: this tour will occasionally feature a walk of some short distance, ascending some stairs, or walking up some minor hills or slopes of varying degree in order to reach some of the amazing locations on the tour; good personal mobility is key to a positive experience!
- **Non-refundable deposit of \$500 due upon booking.**
- **Balance of payment due on or before February 15, 2019.**
- **All deposits & payments are non-refundable.**
- **IMPORTANT:** download and read our Terms & Conditions from www.liberationtours.ca prior to making your booking.



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Land Only, Based on
Double Occupancy

Alitalia Airfare
Return Rome/Sicily

\$5890 + ~\$500

Optional
Single Supplement

\$1600

Alitalia airfare includes estimated departure taxes & surcharges. Alitalia flights are mandatory so that the tour travels together between mainland Italy and Sicily. These flights will be booked for you. For international flights from Canada to/from Italy please check our website for a group offer and/or contact our agent.

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