

# ITALIAN CAMPAIGN CANADIAN BATTLEFIELD & REMEMBRANCE TOUR

SICILY to ROME to VENICE  
SEPTEMBER 16-30, 2021 (15 DAYS)



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# The Italian Campaign 2021 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.

**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 pays homage to the young men who sacrificed their youth in the mountains and valleys of this beautiful Mediterranean country. Your tour begins on the shores of Sicily and extends all the way to the northern frontier:

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



## September 16-30, 2021

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 WWII.

Mark has written extensively on the Canadian contribution to the Italian Campaign:





# Itinerary

## Day 1 - Thursday September 16

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 - Friday September 17

Upon arrival at Catania Airport we travel south to Syracuse, for our first evening and our Welcome Reception Dinner. Overnight Syracuse. [D]

## Day 3 - Saturday September 18

This morning we begin our tour of the battlefields in earnest, appropriately where it all began on July 10, 1943 ... at the landing site code named Bark West Beach. We visit the town of Pachino 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 Catania. [B,L]

## Day 4 - Sunday September 19

Today we head back inland, and take an inspired walk up 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. [B,L]

## Day 5 - Monday September 20

We set out again on a path following the Canadian Army, crossing the Strait of Messina to recount the first battles on mainland Italy as we make our way 'up the boot.' Overnight Salerno. [B,L]

## Day 6 - Tuesday September 21

On Day Six we approach our destination of Cassino from the south, passing in the shadow of the famous Monte La Difensa and recalling the legendary achievements of the First Special Service Force. From the little mountain village we hold a breathtaking view across the floor of the Liri Valley, the scene of heavy fighting for Canada in 1944. Overnight Cassino. [B,L]

## Day 7 - Wednesday September 22

Our focus today is the Liri Valley and Canada's attack upon the formidable Hitler Line. We stop at the monument at Kingsmill Bridge and also at the Rapido River outlook. Then it's down to the valley floor and the battleground at Forme d'Aquino. The morning concludes with the 25-lb. monument atop the village of Pontecorvo. In the afternoon we pay our respects at Melfa River, the site where Canada was awarded the second of three Victoria Crosses. Overnight Cassino. [B,L]

## Day 8 - Thursday September 23

We make a couple of short stops at points of interest at the exit of the Liri Valley, then it's onward to the historic city of Rome for two nights. Overnight Rome. [B,L]

## Day 9 - Friday September 24

Free day at your leisure in Rome. Overnight Rome. [B]

## Day 10 - Saturday September 25

We depart Rome 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, visit Sterlin's Castle, and also 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 1376 young men patiently await our visit. Overnight Ortona. [B,L]

## Day 11 - Sunday September 26

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. [B,L]

## Day 12 - Monday September 27

This morning we gather where the third and final Victoria Cross was earned in Italy, awarded to 'Smokey' 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. [B,L]

## Day 13 - Tuesday September 28

The coach departs early morning and takes us to our final destination and yet another world famous cultural centre - Venice. We arrive mid-day 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). [B]

## Day 14 - Wednesday September 29

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). [B,D]

## Day 15 - Thursday September 30

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

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



complete details & pricing at  
[www.liberationtours.ca](http://www.liberationtours.ca)



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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.



### 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!



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## Included in your Package

- Thirteen nights accommodation in twin-bedded rooms with private facilities in Trafalgar First Class Hotels (*European standards*)
- Travelers on the group flight will enjoy a premium airport departure lounge at the start of the tour (where available and as scheduling permits) ... *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 & dinners as outlined in the itinerary
- All hotel service charges, local taxes, baggage handling of one bag per person, plus entry fees to sites included in the itinerary
- Gratuities to Coach Driver, Trafalgar Agent and Local Guides **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 Catania Fontanarossa Airport on Sep.17, 2021 and group flight drop-off to Venice Marco Polo Airport on Sep.30, 2021 (*all non-group flight travelers are responsible for their own airport transfers*)

## Excluded

- Airfare: optional group air booking available
- Meals other than stated on the itinerary
- Travel / Cancellation / Medical Insurance
- Passport & related fees
- Any optional excursion not specifically stated
- Items of a personal nature

## Notations

- Hotels have been pre-booked but are subject to change
- This tour requires a minimum of 25 passengers to operate.
- 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 per person due with booking
- Balance of payment due no later than June 15, 2021
- **All deposits & payments are non-refundable.**
- Read Liberation Tours' Terms & Conditions from prior to booking

pricing available on our website:  
**[www.LiberationTours.ca](http://www.LiberationTours.ca)**

**\$5990**

Land Only, per person, based on double occupancy  
(two people sharing a room)

**\$1300**

Single Supplement - the additional cost if traveling  
on your own (one person in the room)

*Non-Refundable Deposit at time of Booking:*

**\$500**

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## Terms & Conditions of Booking and other Important Information

- 1. Deposits & Final Payments:** A Deposit is required at the time of booking in order to secure a place on the trip. A Final Payment is required on or before the final payment deadline to ensure your place on the trip is fully vested. Deposits and Final Payments, once paid, are non-refundable.
  - 2. Insurance:** Liberation Tours strongly recommends the purchase of Trip Cancellation and Interruption Insurance, plus out-of-country medical coverage, etc. You can obtain a quote from Manulife Insurance via our booking agent, or from Sanderson Insurance via our website, or from your favourite local travel or insurance agent. You could also check your credit card provider in case you have coverage by purchasing your trip on your credit card.
  - 3. Itinerary:** Every effort is made to deliver the itinerary of a given tour as outlined on the website and within the published literature, however due to circumstances beyond our control (including but not limited to weather, construction, passenger illness, mechanical breakdown, civil unrest, etc.) Liberation Tours reserves the right to alter the published itinerary by substituting where possible alternate venues and/or sightseeing locales so as to make the best possible accommodation under the circumstances.
  - 4. Hotels:** All hotels listed on the itinerary have been pre-booked at time of publishing. Whereas Liberation Tours will do its utmost to prevent our pre-booked hotels from 'booking out' we cannot accept responsibility for this eventuality. Similarly, there may be occasions where Liberation Tours is not able to secure our contract hotels due to conferences, sporting events etc. in which case a hotel of similar standard will be booked. Liberation Tours reserves the right to accommodate within 80 km of locations listed on the attached itinerary.
  - 5. Food Allergies:** Some tours may include one or more pre-booked group meals. For such meals Liberation Tours will make every effort to accommodate food allergies that you declare to us in advance, however please be aware that such accommodations cannot be entirely guaranteed. Our responsibility will be limited to requesting of the restaurant(s) to provide a safe, allergy-free meal and to extend to you whatever the restaurant can offer. Failing this, should you find it necessary to substitute one of these pre-booked meals in some alternate way (ie different restaurant, hotel meal, etc) you will need to be responsible for cost of same. Liberation Tours regrets we cannot refund or otherwise transfer the value of pre-booked meals.
  - 6. Coach Seating:** We employ a seating rotation program whereby all clients are shuffled through the coach to new seats daily, thereby ensuring everyone has an opportunity to be seated in different areas of the coach and also providing for different neighbours across the aisle. Requests to be accommodated in a fixed seat location will respectfully be declined.
  - 7. Group Air Seating:** Clients who choose to take seats with the group air booking should note that, while every effort is made to seat couples together, it cannot be guaranteed that they will sit side-by-side. Group air bookings are such that advance seat selection is usually not offered, and that seats are not always guaranteed as side-by-side, rather whatever free seats are available on that flight as determined by the airline. Please be prepared for the possibility that you will not sit together. Requests to be seated together should be made at the check-in desk at the airport, or otherwise with the in-flight cabin crew upon boarding.
  - 8. Individual Bookings for Air Travel, Hotels, etc:** Clients who plan to arrange their own air travel (ie. not reserving a seat with the group air booking), or extra hotels before/after the tour, should not make any non-cancellable bookings prior to the booking deadline. Once the booking deadline has passed and the tour is officially a 'go' with the minimum required number of passengers, individual bookings can then be made!
  - 9. Passport & Visa:** Canadians do not require a visa to travel to countries within the *Schengen Area* for stays of up to 90 days in any 180-day period. If you leave the Schengen Area and return within the same 180-day period, the previous stay will count against the permitted 90 days. See <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/schengen-area>. The Schengen Area includes Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. A tourist visa is also not required for the United Kingdom (for stays of six months or less). See <https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/united-kingdom>. Beginning in either 2022 or 2023, most Canadian travelers to Europe will require an ETIAS Travel Authorization. More information is available at <https://www.etias.ca/etias-mandatory-2022/>.
- In general, **it is the responsibility of each traveler** to obtain a valid passport, and to obtain any visa(s) (where necessary) or travel authorizations, for countries to be visited. Please ensure you have the relevant documentation required. Liberation Tours will not accept responsibility for clients who do not have a passport and the appropriate visas. Any interruption in travel to the client resulting from lack of proper documentation will be at the client's expense.



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## Terms & Conditions of Booking and other Important Information

- 10. Surcharges:** Prices may be subject to a Surcharge to cover any unexpected costs over which Liberation Tours has no control, including but not limited to fuel surcharges, government taxes and country visas. The Surcharge shall not exceed 7% of the Land-Only booking price and shall, if needed, be applied no later than the date of final payment. If a Surcharge of more than 7% is necessary clients may, at their option, cancel their booking and receive a full refund of any payments made, with no penalties. No Surcharges shall be applied after the date of final payment.
- 11. Baggage:** Maximum baggage allowance on motor coach tours is one large suitcase per person, plus a small hand luggage item (ie. backpack/satchel) which can be stored in the shallow overhead bin inside the coach cabin. All hand luggage must be carried personally aboard the coach. Although the Tour Manager and Coach Driver supervise the transfer of luggage to and from the motor coach and every effort is made to handle luggage as carefully as possible, Liberation Tours cannot assume liability for loss, theft or damage due to breakage, fire, water, etc. Porterage is available at most hotels, although it is often the case that clients will need to port their own luggage between the coach and the hotel lobby. Some hotels do not offer porterage and thus clients will need to handle their own luggage.
- 12. Responsibility:** You acknowledge and agree that Liberation Tours (the "Organizer") acts solely as an organizer of the tours outlined in this brochure and as such is a middle-person between you and the carriers, hotels, tour operators and other service/product providers which form part of this tour. Consequently, Liberation Tours shall not be held liable for the services rendered, and/or the products offered, by such third-party providers. Liberation Tours shall not be liable and assumes no risk for the obligations, or any default or negligence, of third-party providers and for any damages including, among other things, damages due to delay, cancellation, loss of goods, sickness, injury, accident, quality of services, inconvenience, loss of enjoyment, disappointment, acts of God or force majeure. The Organizer reserves the right to make any changes before or during the tour for the comfort and enjoyment of the clients.
- The Organizer reserves the right to decline any person as a member of the tour at any time before or during the tour should such person's presence be considered, at our sole discretion, detrimental to the interest, comfort or enjoyment of the other tour members. Persons leaving the tour during operation will not receive a refund of unused services.
- 13. Itinerary:** All tour itineraries are subject to change or cancellation without prior notice. Tour managers and/or historians designated for a particular tour are subject to substitution where deemed necessary.
- 14. Cancellations made by the Tour Operator:** Should it become necessary for the tour operator to cancel a tour prior to the start date, all clients on the manifest would receive a voucher equivalent to the value of the ground portion of the tour, for use on a future tour. Vouchers for airfare booked through us would be subject to airline policy.
- 15. Acceptance:** Liberation Tours, its agents and all clients agree that conditions set out herein are part of the terms between the client and the Organizer. Acceptance of the ticket for the tour or any deposit given to the Organizer's agents represents acceptance by the client of all the aforementioned Terms and Conditions.