

THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN CANADIAN BATTLEFIELD & REMEMBRANCE TOUR

SICILY to ROME to VENICE

OCTOBER 17-30, 2023 (14 DAYS)

www.LiberationTours.ca



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The Italian Campaign Canadian Battlefield Tour

Historic Sites of WWII plus
the Amazing Culture of Italy

October 17-30, 2023

Follow in the footsteps of the Canadians and 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.

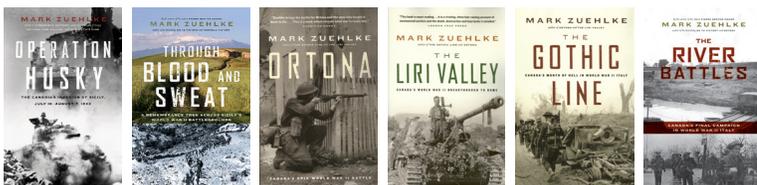
Liberation Tours is an all-Canadian company specializing in escorted, high quality coach tours to the battlefields of Europe including Italy, France, Belgium, Holland, the UK and more.

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 Agira
Monte Cassino Aquino Pontecorvo Melfa River
Kingsmill's Bridge Ortona Sterlin's Castle Casa Berardi
The Gully Point 204 Coriano Ridge The Savio River
plus Rome & Venice, and more ...*

Mark Zuehlke has written extensively on
Canada's contribution to the Italian Campaign:



Your guide and host 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 Canadians in WWII.





Monday October 16

For many of our Canadian travelers it is departure day, for the overnight transatlantic flight to Italy. Some travelers may choose to leave for Europe sooner to extend the start of the trip - let us know if we can quote you on pre-tour accommodations. Guests who have other travels already in progress, or guests from other points of origin including the United Kingdom, the United States and elsewhere, will meet the start of the tour on Day 1 in Catania.

Day 1 - Tuesday October 17

In the mid-afternoon all clients can check into the group hotel. In the evening we gather for our Welcome Dinner, to share a glass of wine and set the stage for our special journey. Overnight Catania. [D]

Day 2 - Wednesday October 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 3 - Thursday October 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 4 - Friday October 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]

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Day 5 - Saturday October 21

On Day Five 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 6 - Sunday October 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 7 - Monday October 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 8 - Tuesday October 24

Free day at your leisure to explore the amazing city of Rome. Overnight Rome. [B]

Day 9 - Wednesday October 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 10 - Thursday October 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 11 - Friday October 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 12 - Saturday October 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 incredible city on the lagoon. Venice in its entirety is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Overnight Venice (Murano). [B]

Day 13 - Sunday October 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 Dinner. Overnight Venice (Murano). [B,D]

Day 14 - Monday October 30

This morning is departure day for those Canadians returning home on the optional group flight - buffet or box breakfast is included, depending on departure time from the hotel. Some travelers may choose to remain in Europe longer to extend the end of the trip - let us know if we can quote you on post-tour accommodations to enjoy extra time in Amsterdam. Others guests will depart for home or continue their travels on other routes. [B]



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additional details and pricing at
www.LiberationTours.ca

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



THE TOUR.

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 Valley & 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 TRIP.

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

- Thirteen nights accommodation in twin or double rooms with private facilities
- 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 select meals as outlined in the itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner); group lunches and dinners typically include a glass of wine/beer!
- All hotel service charges, local taxes, baggage handling at most hotels (one bag per person), plus entry fees to sites as outlined in the itinerary
- Gratuities to coach driver and local guides (note: these gratuities are extra on most other tours and can add up to \$200 CAD or more, be sure to compare!)
- Tour package which includes select daily detailed historical battle maps, period photographs, original audio recordings, and more; a complete digital copy of all this is also given to you at the conclusion of the tour!

EXCLUDED

- Airfare - we can provide a quote for flights from any gateway in Canada, including alternate travel dates; travelers on the designated transfer flights will be picked up at Catania Fontanarossa Airport on October 17, 2023 and dropped off at Venice Marco Polo Airport on October 30, 2023; all other travelers are responsible for their own airport transfers (see website for details on designated flights)
- Pre-tour and/or post-tour accommodations - ask for a quote and extend your stay!
- Travel Insurance Protection - ask for a quote!
- Meals other than stated on the itinerary
- Passport & related fees, Covid testing fees (as may be required)
- 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 20 passengers to operate
- In order to reach the amazing locations on this tour we may: walk a minor distance, ascend or descend stairs, walk up or down hills or slopes of varying degree on paved or unpaved pathways; good personal mobility is key to a positive experience!
- Non-refundable deposit of \$500 per person due upon booking
- Balance of payment due on or before the booking deadline: July 14, 2023
- Liberation Tours will donate on your behalf to Forest Recovery Canada, to make your trip **carbon-neutral**
- Read Liberation Tours' Terms & Conditions prior to booking

ground transportation by:

TRAFALGAR

\$6750

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

\$1425

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

\$500

deposit per person upon booking (all prices in Canadian dollars)

ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON OUR WEBSITE @

www.LiberationTours.ca



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