



**WWII Italian Campaign Tour including Sicily -**  
**Wednesday, October 17 – Sunday, October 28, 2018**  
**\$5445.00 per person\* (\$900.00 single supplement)**  
***includes round trip air from JFK inter-country air (Rome to Sicily)***

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After victory in North Africa, and differing strategies among the Allies about their next objective, the Allied leaders, led by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, met in January 1943, to outline the long-range plan toward complete victory and unconditional surrender. The Casablanca Conference, regarded as the first war conference between the Allied powers, established a united objective summarized by Roosevelt's proclamation.

*"...that the only terms on which we shall deal with any Axis government of any Axis factions are the terms proclaimed at Casablanca: Unconditional surrender." In our uncompromising policy we mean no harm to the common people of the Axis nations, but we do mean to impose punishment and retribution in full upon their guilty, barbaric leaders."*

**The invasion of Italy was imminent. Recommended reading before the tour...** Rick Atkinson's *The Day of Battle*.

**DAY 1: Weds., Oct. 17 – Depart JFK International Airport – 4:15 PM**

**DAY 2: Thurs., Oct. 18 - Arrive Palermo. (D)**

Meet our local guide and board the motor-coach with a short city tour of Palermo and lunch, on your own with assistance from our local guide. Travel east from Palermo to our first lodging destination... unwind, enjoy the locals or a gelato or robust espresso. Our welcome dinner is early, allowing you to turn in for a good night's sleep. Overnight

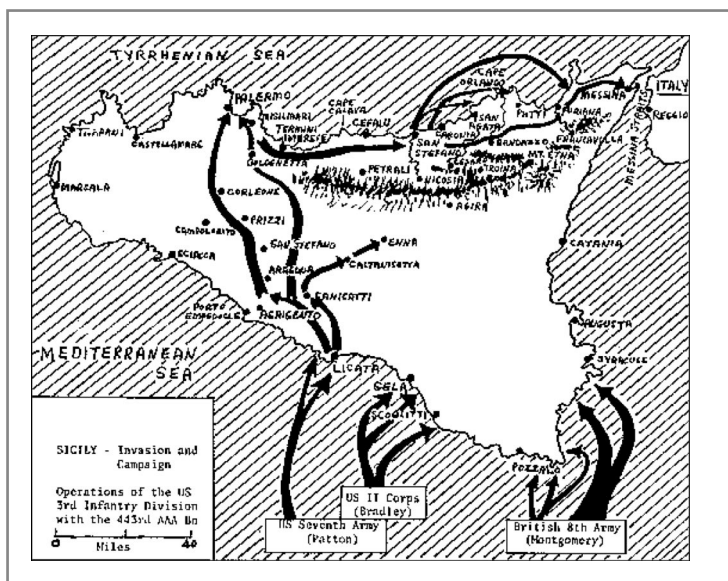
**Day 3: Fri., Oct. 19 – (B, L, D) - The American Landing Beaches - Operation Husky**

Head south to the **invasion beaches**, an expanse of 40 miles along the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea from Licata to Scoglitti. The beaches were in American hands by the end of the first day of fighting on July 10, 1943.

Inland from the beach, visit the **Ponte Dirillo Bridge**, site of action by 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne paratroopers. This site, marked by the smallest of memorials, was an expansive flat river valley with a critical causeway fiercely defended by the Germans until the grit of the All-Americans' proved too much for the combined Italian-German armies to hold the hill. Overnight Scoglitti.

*From the Casablanca Conference, the military maneuver "Operation Husky" was planned to invade Sicily, with the goal of pushing the German and Italian forces to surrender or retreat to the Italian mainland. Then, Allied forces would advance through Italy, securing airfields closer to Germany and the Balkans and give the British Royal Navy control of the Mediterranean Sea. For six months following the conference, a force including 150,000 men, and 3,000 ships under the command of General Patton and Field Marshal Montgomery, was assembled for the July invasion of Sicily. An additional 4,000 aircraft provided air support. The island of Sicily, about the size of Massachusetts, was defended by an estimated 300,000 Italian and German troops.*

*The invasion marks the first test of DUKWs, specially designed amphibious troop transport.*



**DAY 4: Sat., Oct. 20 – (B, L, D) - The Port of Catania – British Objective**

Drive up the east coast of Sicily, viewing the coastline where British 8<sup>th</sup> Army, under Field Marshall Montgomery, was tasked to liberate the ports up to Messina, at Sicily's northeast tip. Stop in the ancient Greek town of **Siracusa** for a tour of the ruins, which were spared during bombing and fighting of WWII. Pay our respects at the Commonwealth War Cemetery.

Arrive for our overnight in Catania.

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**DAY 5: Sun., Oct. 21 – (B, D) Mission Accomplished – On to the Main Land**

Visit the **Historical War Museum of the 1943 Landings in Sicily**. The museum offers an extensive exhibit of uniforms and weapons of each branch of service of Axis and Allied servicemen who fought in Sicily.

Head north to Messina for our ferry ride across the **Strait of Messina**.

Just a little more than a month after the July 10 invasion, on August 17, German Commander Kesselring, determined not to waste another Army in a futile fight, withdrew his forces of 40,000 Germans along with 60,000 Italians to the main land. By the time Patton captured Messina, the 7<sup>th</sup> Army had lost 7,000 men and the British 8<sup>th</sup> Army had suffered 9,000 casualties, but the Axis' losses of 160,000 restored a fighting spirit in Patton's troops after the US defeat at the Kasserine Pass in North Africa just 7 months earlier.

As you view the narrow **Strait of Messina**, you'll question why the Allies had no plan to blockade the short three-mile passage, or bomb the escaping German flotilla during the five day evacuation of Sicily which would have contained the Germans on Sicily. *How many lives could have been spared? How much sooner would Kesselring have admitted defeat?* Of this strategic blunder by the Allied command, Atkinson writes

*"The B-17's never came. Allied commanders had had no coordinated plan for severing the Messina Strait when Husky began, nor did any such plan emerge as the campaign reached its climax. Inattention, even negligence, gave Kesselring something his legions never had in Tunisia: the chance for a clean getaway." (p. 167)*

Transfer to the coach. Travel north to Salerno. Overnight Salerno.



**DAY 6: Mon., Oct. 22 – (B, ) Salerno & Operation Avalanche - September 1943**

Visit the landing beaches, view the Gulf of Salerno, where underwater mines tormented the Navy armada. Stop at the **36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Monument** to learn about the fighting spirit of these hearty Texans.

A stop at **Paestum**, a settlement founded in 600 B.C., includes both a tour of these ancient ruins and the assessment of the WWII battles that raged around them. General Mark Clark set up his Command Post among the ruins, as doubts of his abilities as a field commander began to emerge.

Dinner on your own – along the coastline. Overnight Salerno.

**DAY 7: Tues., Oct. 23 – (B, D) Pompeii, San Pietro Infine, Mignano Pass... Hill 424 – Three Medals of Honor**

Begin with a morning visit to **Pompeii**. In 1641, the first recorded account of a volcanic eruption was made by a young naturalist who witnessed the eruption from 40 miles away. The 4,000 residents of Pompeii and smaller nearby villages died when a layer of ash ten feet deep blanketed the valley below the crater. In March, 1944, when Mt. Vesuvius erupted, while there were no casualties, the 12<sup>th</sup> Air Force lost about 75 aircraft, many medium bombers which were covered with hot ash, causing melted or cracked Plexiglass and burned fabric. A number of B-25's were tipped onto their tails from the weight of the ash and tephra. The damage proved insurmountable in spite of efforts to rebuild, repurpose and repair, and reduced the effectiveness of bombing runs over southern Germany.

Leaving Pompeii, you'll travel north to the Western front of the German defenses known as the **Gustav Line**. Stops at **Monte Lungo** and **San Pietro Infine** are planned on the way to Cassino. At **Hill 424**, on top of a peak, the valley floor below and towering Apennines in the distance, hear of the valor of three soldiers, who each earned the Medal of Honor holding their ground.

Overnight Cassino.



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**DAY 8: Weds., Oct. 24 – (B)**

Visit the Cassino War Museum and the British Commonwealth Cemetery. Headstones indicate service from men of many “colonies” – New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Canada, and more.

Then, the coach climbs the hairpin turns to the mountain top and the **Abbey of Monte Cassino**. You'll be hard pressed to tell that it has been destroyed and rebuilt four times. During WWII, the monastery became a refuge for civilians. On February 15, 1944, the monastery was bombed and completely destroyed, killing many civilians and destroying ancient manuscripts and artifacts...an act of war that continues to be debated as there is no concrete evidence that the Germans occupied the Abbey. Nearby, the **Polish War Cemetery** commemorates the courage of over 1,000 Polish soldiers who died while storming the Abbey in May 1944. The headstones give a picture of soldiers, Catholic, Jewish and Orthodox, united in the fight against the Axis. Overnight Cassino.

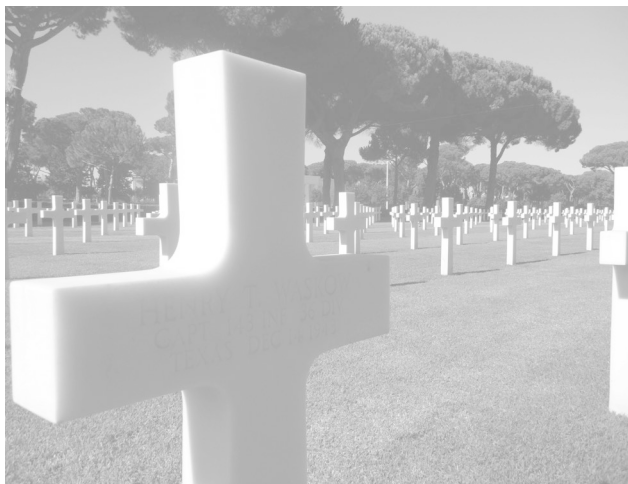


**DAY 9: Thurs., Oct. 25 – (B, L, D) Cassino Falls – Behind the Lines at Anzio**

Begin at the **Piana delle Orme Museum** in Latina. Enjoy a bagged lunch at the picnic grounds before exploring this **FANTASTIC** museum with seven buildings of animated life-like Italian Campaign fighting, sights and sounds that transport you to 1943-44. More than a museum, this tremendous collection tells the story of Italian life in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with a focus on the mid-century upheaval of WWII. Overnight Anzio.

**DAY 10: Fri., Oct. 26 – (B, D) Anzio – Operation Shingle – Sicily-Rome American Cemetery - Rome**

While the beaches of Anzio are closed to the public (part of an active Italian military base), you stop at the small museum dedicated to the preservation of the history of the **Battle for Anzio**. On January 22, 1944, impatient with the progress of fighting to the south of the Gustav Line, the Allies launched Operation Shingle, an amphibious assault in Anzio with 40,000 men. Coming ashore, Allied forces met little resistance and began moving inland. By midnight, the troops had secured a beachhead 2-3 miles deep. However, the German forces were replenished and prevented further advance by the Allies for several weeks. A change in command for the US forces changed the strategy of assault and by the end of May, the Allies had demolished the Gustav Line and could turn their sights toward Rome. While the Allied surge was successful in its objective, the operation was criticized for allowing most of the Tenth German Army to escape and continue fighting. Churchill defended the operation, stating that overall, the Italian campaign had engaged Axis troops that otherwise would have fortified the German defenses in Western Europe just before Operation Overlord.



Then pay your respects at the **ABMC's Sicily-Rome American Cemetery** where 7, 861 of our military dead lie beneath the field of headstones. On the white marble walls of the chapel are engraved the names of 3,095 of the missing. Rosettes mark the names of those since recovered and identified. The map room contains a bronze relief map and four fresco maps depicting the military operations in Sicily and Italy.

En route to Rome, visit the **Ardeatine Caves Massacre Memorial**. Entombed in the cave on March 24, 1944, the three hundred thirty five victims of a “reprisal action” by the SS who selected their victims from prisoners, as well as individuals known or suspected of having engaged in resistance activities in Rome. In 1994, fifty years after the massacre, ABC journalist Sam Donaldson interviewed Captain Erich Priebke, one of the two SS officers who shot each victim with a single bullet to the back of the head. Priebke expressed no remorse. The case was re-opened and Priebke was extradited from safe haven in Argentina to Italy where he received a life sentence, served under house arrest, until his death in October 2013.

Evening Illumination Tour of Rome. Overnight Rome.

**DAY 11: Sat., Oct. 27 – (B, D) Rome – A day on Your Own**

Explore Rome on your own... museums, architecture, antiquities or shopping!

B- Breakfast, L-Lunch, D-Dinner  
Toll Free: 717-417-USA1

[www.dogtagtours.com](http://www.dogtagtours.com)

[Info@dogtagtours.com](mailto:Info@dogtagtours.com)

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Farewell dinner will bring your tour to a close. Enjoy one last Limoncello! Overnight Rome.

**DAY 12: Sun., Oct. 28 – (B) TRANSFER to Rome Fiumicino Airport (FCO)**

Nonstop flight departs at 2:45 PM – arrival in JFK 7:35 PM

**Accommodations:** 3 and 4 star properties with modern amenities and features.

**Meals:** Breakfast Daily – Two Lunches - Seven Dinners - Enjoy freedom of choice for sampling dinners of the world-renown cuisine of Italy according to your own tastes and budget. Lunch stops en route between battlefields and museums.

**Gratuities:** Included for motor-coach drivers, local guides, museum docents, porters and restaurant staff for meals and services included in the tour. Recommended for historian/guide is \$5.00 - \$6.00 per person per day; for Escort \$3.00 - \$4.00 per person per day.

**Alcohol:** Alcoholic beverages are not included but are available.

**Tour Capacity:** Minimum of 15 people must be registered 90 days prior to departure or tour may be cancelled. All deposits refunded or you may transfer to another tour.

**\*Air:** Roundtrip air from JFK, including inter-country flight from Rome to Palermo, Sicily.

**Optional Travel Protection**

Group Deluxe Travel Protection available and based on trip cost per person.

Optional: Deluxe "Cancel For Any Reason" Policy must be purchased within 14 days of deposit.

Full 12-page policy descriptions available upon request.

*2016 Italian Campaign Group in Salerno – Thirteen REPEAT Travelers from other Itineraries  
Mike Matalonis, Randy Ent, Lynn Hetman, Krista and Bart Callear,  
Phil and Carolyn Jones, Guy and Maria Goldsmith, Craig Smith, Bobbi Kling, Don Rutter, Jeff Thomas*

