

Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry's ITALIAN CAMPAIGN

Sydney Frost Commemorative Battlefield Tour

Rome - Landings in Sicily - Leonforte - Hitler Line - Villa Rogatti/Ortona - Gothic Line - Venice

May 16/19-31, 2024 (13/16 days)



Charles Sydney Frost joined the Canadian Army in 1942 after graduation from Royal Military College. After training in North Africa, he joined the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry on 11 April 1943. He landed in Sicily as part of OP Husky on 13 July 1943. On 16 July, Lt Frost and his platoon were tasked to move to the town of Ispica, where he was the Military Mayor from 16 July to 3 August. He was wounded twice in Italy. In 1945, he was appointed Acting Second in Command, remained with the Regiment until struck off strength on 25 September 1945.

After the war, Sydney Frost joined the Royal Regiment of Canada (Militia) in 1947 and was appointed Commanding Officer from 1959 until 1962. He was appointed Honorary Lieutenant Colonel from 1967 to 1974 and Honorary Colonel from 1974 until his death.

He developed a lifelong link to the citizens of Ispica and returned numerous times after the war. He was responsible for creating and dedicating the 1st Canadian Division Memorial near the Landing Beaches.

Sydney married Margaret Cabeldu in 1948, and they had three children, Norman, Janet, and Catherine. Colonel Frost authored three books, *Once a Patricia*, *A Life Worthwhile*, and *Always a Patricia*. He died on August 6, 2009.

Highlights:

- Choice of Sicily and Mainland Italy, or Mainland Italy ONLY.
- Follow in the footsteps of 1 Canadian Infantry Division with emphasis on the PPCLI who fought to liberate Italy.
- Honour the D-Day Dodgers, who fought through Sicily and Italy, with Military Historians Doug Delany, Ian Hope and Karen Storwick, as we explore the Landings in Sicily, Leonforte and Assoro. We will remember and honour the sacrifices Canadian Soldiers made in Leonforte, the Hitler Line (80th Anniversary on May 23, 2024), Villa Rogatti, Ortona and the Gothic Line by dedicating three Regimental Memorials.
- Pay our respects at other memorials and the war cemeteries of Agira, Cassino, the Moro River, Montecchio, Coriano Ridge and Ravenna.
- Explore Italian cities, culture and history in Rome, Rimini, San Marino and Venice.



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A word from BGen Ray Romses, OMM, CD

The Sydney Frost Memorial Tour to Sicily and Italy will be one of the feature activities of the 110th PPCLI Anniversary. It is being conducted for the regimental family to honour the 80th Anniversary of the Regiment's World War II record in the Mediterranean Theatre.

The PPCLI record in 1944/45 was a fine one, as will be this re-visitation. The tour in May 2024 will start with the Sicily landings at Pachino (if you choose this starting option). You will stand on the beaches where Patricias landed, then head inland for a look at the major battles and a memorial highlighting 1st Canadian Infantry Division which was facilitated by Sydney Frost.

The Sicily and Italy groups will then link up at Cassino. The tour is capped at 80 all up, including some cadets and their guides. This number will fit comfortably into two coaches and fine hotels. Great food and a touch of wine may help lure the tour members to early slumbers.

There is a deliberate balance in the tour itinerary with three thrusts – excellent battle touring, remembrance, and dedication of three Memorial plaques at Leonforte, Hitler Line and Gothic Line while enjoying Italian hospitality and culture. For the battles we have great Canadian historians and several Italians to guide us on our walks. For remembrance there will be war cemeteries and five luncheons with local citizens from battle-affiliated areas to remember the war and break bread, and to unveil the new plaques. For the culture, Special Travel International (STI) will select fine hotels with good dining rooms, and there will be time for on-your-own lunches, evening visits to the local area, and so on. And of course, your travel companions will deliver endless mirth as you roll along and search for the perfect 'trattoria'.

Our 100th Anniversary partner STI and tour leaders have recced the routes, looked at every possible good option and built a solid tour package that should satisfy everyone. Book early and do not be disappointed. I and Carol my wife intend to be there with you, as the Patricia's again gain the Moro.

VP

BGen (Ret'd) Ray Romses, OMM, CD

Colonel of the Regiment
PPCLI



Karen Storwick and a veterans group on the Italian Campaign tour, 2007

DOUG DELANEY, Military Historian



Doug Delaney, CD, PhD, FRHistS

holds the Canada Research Chair in War Studies at the Royal Military College of Canada. A retired infantry officer with more than twenty-seven years of service in the Canadian Armed Forces including tours in Cyprus, Somalia and Kosovo. His military career began when he entered Royal Roads Military College at Victoria, British Columbia, in 1983. He served with 1 and 3 PPCLI and the Canadian Airborne Regiment.

Since 2002, he has been a professor of history at RMC, where he lectures on the military history of Canada and the British Commonwealth, strategic studies, and the two world wars. He is a past head of the Military and Strategic Studies undergraduate program (2004-06) and a former Chair of War Studies (2007-2012).

His first book, *The Soldiers' General: Bert Hoffmeister at War*, won the 2007 C.P Stacey Prize for the best book on a Canadian military history topic and his second, *Corps Commanders: Five British and Canadian Generals at War, 1939-1945*, received an honourable mention for the same prize in 2012. His third monograph, *The Imperial Army Project: Britain and the Land Forces of the Dominions and India, 1902-1945*, was runner-up for the Field-Marshal Sir Gerald Templer Medal in 2019. Other publications include the edited volumes *Capturing Hill 70: Canada's Forgotten Battle of the First World War* (2016), *Turning Point 1917: The British Empire at War* (2017), *Military Education and the British Empire, 1815-1949* (2018) and *Manpower and the Armies of the British Empire in two World Wars* (2021).



Cassino ruins, 1950 @ WW2Radio

IAN HOPE, Military Historian



Colonel Ian Hope, MSC, MSM, CD is the Chief Historian for NATO. He started his military career of 40 years of service in uniform with the West Nova Scotia Regiment. Upon transferring to the Regular Force, he served 18 years in leadership roles with the PPCLI and Canadian Airborne Regiment. His operational experiences include the first Gulf War, multiple tours in the Balkans, Africa and Afghanistan, and domestic operations.

He commanded the 1 PPCLI Battle Group (Task Force Orion) in combat in Kandahar in 2006, earning the Meritorious Service Cross. In 2012-13 he commanded the Afghan National Army Collective Training Centre in Kabul, a combined NATO/ANA brigade dedicated forming and training ANA battalions, earning the Meritorious Service Medal.

He is the author of *A Scientific Way of War* (2015), *Dancing with the Dushman* (2008), *Unity of Command in Afghanistan: A Forsaken Principle of War* (2007), three monographs and a dozen articles and chapters on military history and strategic studies.

KAREN STORWICK, Military Historian



Karen Storwick, MSM inspired by the death of her great-uncle in Italy during the Second World War, is passionate about the preservation of Canadian Military History, honouring Canadian veterans and raising awareness of their dedication and sacrifice. Since 2006 she has travelled with over 70 veterans and their families on these pilgrimages, coordinated six plaques and monuments honouring Canadians in Italy and partnered in the unveiling of five others with her Italian colleagues.

As well as her work at The Military Museums in Calgary, Karen belongs to a group of historians, both Canadian and European, working toward the common goal of commemorating unmarked battlefields in Europe. As a volunteer, she assists in the coordination of annual Veteran's Pilgrimages and Commemorative Ceremonies in Italy, producing plaques and fundraising to cover costs for the monuments. In 2012 Karen was awarded the Veteran's Affairs Commendation Medal for her work in the development of the Mural of Honour and the preservation of Canadian history in Italy. In 2017 she was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal (Civil Division) and in 2022, the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal.



Roman Forum, Rome



Karen Storwick at the Cassino War Cemetery

PRINCESS PATRICIA'S CANADIAN LIGHT INFANTRY and the Italian Campaign

On September 10, 1939, Canada declared war on Germany and on September 28, agreed to dispatch 1st Canadian Inf Division (Cdn Inf Div) at an early date. Mobilization started and on November 1, the units of 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade (2 CIB) were announced; they were the PPCLI, Loyal Edmonton Regiment and the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada. On December 21, 1st Cdn Inf Div sailed from Halifax, NS and arrived at Greenock, Scotland on December 30. This was the start of a long training period in England. In May 1943, the Patricias and many others within 1st Cdn Inf Div commenced amphibious training. On June 28 they sailed for Sicily as part of OP Husky.

On July 10, 1943, 1st Cdn Inf Div landed with the Patricias and Seaforth's on the left at Sugar Beach, while the RCRs and Hasting and Prince Edward Regt landed on the right at Roger Beach. The beaches were quickly seized and all units commenced advancing inland. The Patricias suffered four WIA on July 10 and CQMS John Stevens was the first Patricia KIA on July 12. He is buried at Agira Cemetery along with 29 other Patricias. Lt Sydney Frost was tasked to serve as the Mayor of Ispica from July 16 to August 3. Sydney developed a lifelong connection with Ispica which we will remember and honour. The Patricias advanced on foot across Sicily and fought their first major action at Leonforte on July 22 when they relieved the Loyal Eddies who had been surrounded by the Germans. 13 Patricias were KIA and 9 WIA. The Sicily campaign for Canadians ended on August 11. 1st Div had suffered 562 KIA, 1,664 WIA and 84 POWs, of which the Patricias had 30 KIA and 108 WIA.



Colonel Sydney Frost, CD

The Regiment landed in Italy on September 4, 1943. The first two months were spent advancing inland (northward) with the Regiment's progress slowed by demolished bridges and German rear guards. In December 1943, the Patricias were heavily engaged at Villa Rogatti and the Gully and spent Christmas in the Ortona area. The next major offensive was the Hitler Line, west of Monte Cassino. May 23, 1944 was the worst day during World War II for 1st Cdn Div and the Patricias. The Div suffered 879 casualties, with 543 from 2 CIB. The Patricias started the attack with 324 men and by 4:00pm, 77 were left. We will dedicate a Regimental Memorial at the Hitler Line on the 80th Anniversary of the Battle.



On June 6, 1944, Rome was liberated and this started the "D Day Dodgers". In late August, the regiment moved back to the Adriatic coast and took part in the assaults on the Gothic Line, San Fortunato and Rimini. The rugged terrain and never ending river crossings took their toll, both in men and equipment. Over the next five months, the Patricias advanced further north, in the Romagna, a wide valley crossed by numerous small and medium sized waterways, winning three more Battle Honours in the process: Savio Bridgehead September 20-23, Naviglio Canal December 12-15 and Fosso Munio December 19-21. It was during the Italian Campaign that the Regiment demonstrated its professionalism, tenacity and

aggressiveness. The 9 Italian Battle Honours on the Colours honour the sacrifices and victories by the men, Sr NCOs and Officers of the Regiment.

On March 13, 1946, the Patricias, along with the rest of the 1st Cdn Corps, moved to North-West Europe to join the 1st Canadian Army. Travelling through southern and central France, they arrived in Belgium. Following 11 days of light activity, the Regiment was on the move with 1st Cdn Div to liberate Holland. On April 11, the Div crossed the IJssel River, and the Patricias played an important role in the capture of Apeldoorn. Victory in Europe (VE) Day was May 8, 1945.

During WWII, 3,687 all ranks served with the Patricias. 326 paid the ultimate sacrifice, 991 were WIA, 92 were injured in a forward area and 54 were captured. The Regiment was awarded 16 Battle Honours in Italy and 2 in NW Europe and they spent 20 out of 23 months of combat in Italy. The Patricias fought as part of 2 CIB with The Loyal Edmonton Regiment (formerly 49th Battalion) and the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada from Vancouver, and we share many of the same Battle Honours.



1st Cdn Div Memorial Pontecorvo, installed by Karen Storwick



Sgt PJ Ford fought at Hitler Line - Painting by Charles Comfort

ITINERARY

Day 1 / Thu, May 16: DEPART CANADA

Depart for Rome.

Day 2 / Fri, May 17: ARRIVE ROME

After arrival in **Rome**, transfer to your hotel. Free time to relax before dinner. (D)

Day 3 / Sat, May 18: ROME – CATANIA/ACIREALE

In the morning embark on a panoramic tour to see the Colosseum, Roman Forum and St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican.

Afternoon flight to **Catania, Sicily**. Visit the Sicily D-Day Landing Museum, before checking in to your hotel in **Acireale**. (B,D)

Day 4 / Sun, May 19: CATANIA/ACIREALE

In the morning, explore the Canadian **landing beaches** of July 10, 1943, followed by a Remembrance service at memorial at 1st Canadian Division Memorial where we will present a replica set of Sydney Frost's medal to the Ispica Carabinieri Museum. We will have a luncheon and reception in Ispica and return to Acireale. (B,L,D)

Italy mainland ONLY group: Depart for Rome.

Day 5 / Mon, May 20: CATANIA/ACIREALE

Today you will visit the **Agira War Cemetery**, followed by the **Leonforte Memorial** dedication to commemorate the Regiment's action on July 22, 1943. After the luncheon and reception, return to **Acireale** via Mount Assoro where the Hasty and Prince Edward Regiment surprised the Germans by climbing the mountain at night. (B,L,D)

Italy mainland ONLY group: After arrival in **Rome**, transfer to your hotel. Free time to relax before dinner. (D)

Day 6 / Tue, May 21: CATANIA – ROME – CASSINO

After a free morning, fly to **Rome**. Transfer to **Cassino** (Italy mainland only group will arrive from Rome). Check-in and dinner. (B,D)

Italy mainland ONLY group: In the morning embark on a panoramic tour to see the Colosseum, Roman Forum and St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. Afternoon transfer to **Cassino** and join the group which started in Sicily for dinner. (B,D)

Day 7 / Wed, May 22: CASSINO

Visit **Monte Cassino Abbey** overlooking the Liri Valley which was captured by the Allies in a Polish led initiative on May 17-18, 1944. Visit the 2nd Polish Corps Memorial Museum and the **Cassino Commonwealth War Cemetery**. Free afternoon in Cassino. (B,D)

Day 8 / Thu, May 23: CASSINO

Drive to Aquino for the dedication of the **Hitler Line Memorial** followed by a reception and lunch. After lunch visit **Melfa River Crossing**, where Major Jack Mahony of the Westminster Regiment was awarded the Victoria Cross. (B,L,D)

Day 9 / Fri, May 24: CASSINO – ORTONA

Depart Cassino for **Campobasso**, which the Canadians took on October 14, 1943. Tour the area prior to lunch, and continue to **Ortona** on the Adriatic, where we stay for three nights. (B,L,D)

Day 10 / Sat, May 25: ORTONA

In the morning visit **Moro River Cemetery** as well as local battle sites, including the Gully and **Casa Berardi**. Participate in a Remembrance service at **Villa Rogatti** followed by lunch with the villagers. Leisurely afternoon to explore Ortona at your own pace or relax at the hotel.

In the evening, we have been invited to dine with the staff of the **Lanciano Canadian College**. This is a Canadian run university-preparatory, co-educational boarding high school for grades 10, 11 and 12 supervised by the Ontario Ministry of Education. (B,L,D)

Day 11 / Sun, May 26: ORTONA

Participate in a walking tour of **Ortona** where the Loyal Edmonton Regiment and Seaforth Highlanders of Canada fought from December 20-28, 1943. Free time in Ortona. (B,D)



Agira War Cemetery © Davide Mauro



Cassino Commonwealth War Cemetery @ Damian Entwistle

Day 12 / Mon, May 27: ORTONA – RIMINI

Depart Ortona, travelling along the Adriatic Coast with a stop at the **Ancona War Cemetery**. Proceed to **San Marino**, the oldest republic in the world. After lunch enjoy a guided tour of the medieval walled old town. Late afternoon arrival in **Rimini**. (B,L,D)

Day 13 / Tue, May 28: RIMINI

Visit **Montecchio War Cemetery**, followed by the dedication of the **Gothic Line Memorial** and a reception/luncheon. Continue to **Coriano Ridge War Cemetery**. Return to Rimini for some down time and the opportunity to enjoy the city by night. (B,L)

Day 14 / Wed, May 29: RIMINI – VENICE/MESTRE

Depart Rimini and visit the **Naviglio Canal** and **Ravenna War Cemetery**. Late afternoon arrival and check in at **Mestre** near Venice. (B,D)

Day 15 / Thu, May 30: VENICE/MESTRE

Take a water taxi into the heart of **Venice**, La Serenissima. Enjoy a tour of Piazza San Marco, and the stunning Basilica, known for its opulent design, gold ground mosaics and its status as a symbol of Venetian wealth and power. Spend the afternoon in Venice. Then return to Mestre by water taxi to celebrate the conclusion of the Sydney Frost Commemorative Battlefield Tour with a farewell dinner. (B,D)

Day 16 / Fri, May 31: DEPART VENICE – ARRIVE CANADA

Transfer to the airport for your flight(s) home.

Those wishing to extend their stay in Italy can take a train to Florence, Rome or other destinations. (B)

Minor adjustments may need to be made to our programme due to the scheduling of local events and security arrangements for ceremonies.



Bridge of Tiberius, Rimini

TOUR COSTS in CAD*

*based on a group size of 32-40 travellers and currency exchange rate applicable at the time of printing (March 2023)

Sicily & Italy

Per person, twin-share	\$4,890
Single supplement	\$1,090

Mainland Italy ONLY

Per person, twin-share	\$3,950
Single supplement	\$890

INCLUDED

- Accommodation in superior tourist class hotels
- Meals as per itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Private air-conditioned coach transportation
- Comprehensive sightseeing incl. Military Historian, local guides and admission fees as per itinerary
- Return flights Rome – Catania – Rome incl. taxes (for Sicily & Italy tour)
- Special events and commemorations
- Gratuities for drivers and guides
- Local taxes and service charges

NOT INCLUDED

- International airfare Canada – Rome; Venice – Canada
- Travel insurance (please contact our office for a quote)
- Drinks with meals
- Hotel portage
- Seat selections on domestic flights
- Items of a personal nature

GROUP FLIGHT OPTION in CAD

We will offer a group flight option based on the tour dates (with/without Sicily):

May 16/19: Toronto/Vancouver – Rome

May 31: Venice – Toronto/Vancouver

Booking the group flights will allow you to pay for your airfare in the spring 2024 – along with the balance for the tour.

Our group flight details/airfares will be available at the end of June 2023. Based on the 2023 airfares, we are expecting the following costs:

\$ 1790 from Vancouver / **\$ 1590** from Toronto

incl. taxes and 1 piece of checked baggage

(extra baggage and seat selections at additional cost)

Should you wish to make your own flight arrangements, extend etc., availability and costs change continuously. If you wish to secure specific flights at a certain cost, you will have to book/pay for your flights at the same time.

RESERVATION FORM

☐ ITALIAN CAMPAIGN – Sicily & Italy

May 16–31, 2024

☐ ITALIAN CAMPAIGN – Mainland Italy ONLY

May 19–31, 2024

Please complete this form and return it to us with your deposit of \$500.00 per person. Please write name(s) exactly as listed in passport (e.g.: William, not 'Bill'). Travel insurance is optional but strongly recommended.

	TRAVELLER #1	TRAVELLER #2 (if different address/payment method than Traveller #1, please fill out a separate booking form)
Title (Mr / Mrs / Ms etc.)		
First name		
Middle name(s)		
Last name		
Date of birth (dd/mm/yyyy)		
City + country of birth		
Passport #		
Passport expiry (dd/mm/yyyy)		
Passport issuing country		
Preferred first name (for name tag)		
Dietary restrictions		

ADDRESS

Street:

City:

Province/State:

Postal code:

Country:

Cell #:

Home #:

Email:

TRAVEL PREFERENCES

Accommodation: ☐ Single* ☐ Double ☐ Twin ☐ Sharing with:

*Please contact us if you would like to be paired up with another traveller and we will do our best to assist.

If we are unable to arrange a twin-share, you will be accommodated in a single room and invoiced accordingly.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

Next of kin's name:

Next of kin's phone #:

TRAVEL INSURANCE

☐ I/we would like to receive a travel insurance quote.

☐ I/we have arranged my/our own travel insurance.

PAYMENT

☐ Please make cheques payable to:

SPECIAL TRAVEL INTERNATIONAL

☐ Send an e-transfer to:

sti@sticanada.com

☐ Visa / MasterCard / American Express

(a 2% service fee applies to payments made by credit card)

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Expiry date:

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Amount to be charged: \$

I/we acknowledge that I/we have read and agree to the terms and conditions outlined in the brochure.

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

RESERVATIONS AND PAYMENT:

\$500 pp deposit due at time of booking
2nd installment of \$500 pp due by June 30, 2023
3rd installment of \$1,000 pp due by October 31, 2023
Balance due by March 16, 2024
Tour documents will be sent to you approximately 14 days prior to your trip departure, provided full payment has been received.

TOUR PRICES:

All tour prices for land arrangements are based on rates effective at the time of printing and are expected to be in effect at the time of departure. Should these rates change, it may be necessary to surcharge the price of your vacation. Should the tour price increase by more than 10%, the passenger shall have the right to cancel within seven days of notification without penalty.

CANCELLATION AND REFUNDS:

Notice of cancellation must be made in writing. The effective cancellation date is the date when written notification is received by Special Travel International (hereafter called STI). **Deposits are non-refundable.** The following scale of charges will apply when cancellation is received prior to departure:

Until June 30, 2023	\$200
July 1 – Oct 31, 2023	\$700
Nov 1, 2023 – Mar 15, 2024	\$2,000
Mar 16 – Apr 15, 2024	50%
From Apr 16, 2024	100%

NB: different payment/cancellation policies apply to airline tickets; you will be advised at time of booking.

TRAVEL INSURANCE:

STI strongly recommends that each tour participant has health, cancellation, interruption, accident and baggage insurance for the duration of his/her travels.

RESPONSIBILITY AND LIABILITY:

STI acts only as an agent in securing all services related to the tours described in this brochure, including transportation, sightseeing and accommodation. STI shall not be responsible or liable for any loss, cost, damage, injury, delay or expense arising from the use of any conveyance, accommodation or service or from acts of God, strikes, weather, quarantine, accidents, sickness, government regulations, insufficient documents and any loss expense resulting from the above contingencies shall be borne by the tour member. In the event it becomes necessary or advisable for the comfort of the passenger, or for any reason whatsoever, to alter the itinerary or arrangements, such alterations may be made without penalty to the operators. Additional expense, if any, shall be borne by the passenger. The right is reserved to withdraw any or all tours should conditions warrant, and also to decline to accept or retain any passenger as a member of the tour. In such instances, full or equitable amounts will be refunded.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS, VISAS AND VACCINES:

It is entirely the passenger's responsibility to possess whatever documents, visas and vaccines are required by the law of the countries visited on the tour.

AIRLINE RESPONSIBILITY:

Any air carrier providing transportation in connection with these tours is not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time the passenger is not on board its planes. The passenger contract in use by the airlines concerned, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airline and the purchase of these tours and/or passenger. Similar responsibility as noted applies to all types of carriers, including car rental companies.



Venice - Courtesy of Veneto Inside



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