

Trendsetter



Travel & Cruise Centre

Italy, Sicily & Malta WW II Military History Tour

5 to 19 October 2016

Escorted by Major Mike Peters, Military Historian



Trendsetter Travel's own Military History consultant has designed this WWII tour of the key battles in Italy over 1943 and 1944 including Salerno, Monte Casino, Anzio and the seaborne and airborne invasions of Sicily in July 1943. Also included is a fascinating 2 day stay on the nearby island of Malta where, for the 2 years up to November 1942, Malta held out against a bombing onslaught and a threatened invasion by the Axis forces. That Malta was able to remain in British hands was instrumental in Britain retaining Egypt, and frustrating the reinforcement of Rommel's forces in North Africa.

Our journey commences in Malta and concludes in Rome. October is a particularly lovely month to tour southern Italy as the climate is pleasant for touring, with average temperatures around 22 degrees, and the peak tourist season ended.

This will be a **SMALL GROUP JOURNEY** and while the itinerary is planned as follows, we can personalise to incorporate the special interests of any participants who might want to locate and visit family graves within the areas we visit.

To maximise your enjoyment, touring will generally not start earlier than 9.00 am. and our days allow sufficient free time for individual exploring. Breakfast daily, plus 7 dinners, including welcome and farewell dinners, are included. Other meals are not included unless specifically stated to provide for flexibility of choice with regard to cuisine and budget.

Our accommodation is minimum 4 star standard, and the best available in most locations. In Rome and Malta we will stay in superior well located inner city hotels.

YOUR ESCORTS



A special interest tour requires an exceptional guide and we are pleased to have Major Mike Peters, a retired British Army officer and Chairman of the International Guild of Battlefield Guides as our specialist leader for the entire tour. Mike is an expert when it comes to modern European military battles and received rave reviews from previous tour participants. Mike has



written two books on World War II covering the invasion of Sicily in 1943 and the ill fated Arnhem battle in 1944.

Mike will be ably assisted by David Cooper, a director of Trendsetter Travel & Cruise Centre, with extensive military history knowledge. In conjunction with Mike, David has crafted this unique tour and will act as tour participant and manager.

Itinerary

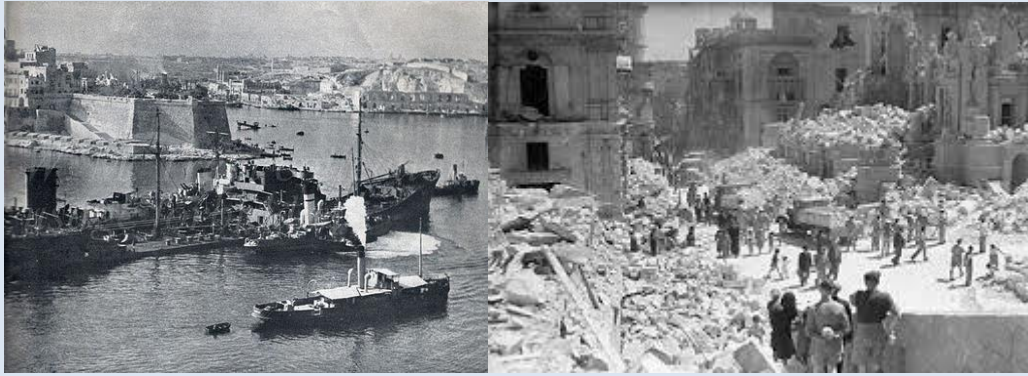
Day 1 – Wednesday 5 October 2016 – Valetta, Malta

Arrive independently at our Valetta, Malta accommodation (please enquire regarding pre-tour accommodation if you would like to arrive earlier). Tonight we will rendezvous in the hotel bar for a drink before walking to a nearby restaurant for our get together welcome dinner.



Day 2 – Thursday 6 October 2016, Malta

Today we tour the island of Malta visiting museums, and the key sites of interest relating to Malta under siege from both Germany and Italy (June 1940 to November 1942). Malta's strategic location meant it was essential that the island remain in British hands, as the key Mediterranean naval base. Malta was a significant submarine base and sank approximately 400,000 tonnes of Axis shipping intended to resupply Rommel's Afrika Korps in the ill-fated attempt to capture Egypt, and the critically important Suez Canal.



Famous photo of the nearly sunk Ohio (oil tanker) and bomb damage 1941

Day 3 – Friday 7 October 2016 - Malta/Sicily – Catania

Today we continue our tour of the island including a cruise around the Grand Harbour and a visit to the war rooms where the invasion of Sicily was planned. We catch an evening flight to Catania, Sicily.



Photo of port of Valetta, Malta



Day 4 – Saturday 8 October 2016 - Sicily

With the fall of Tunisia in May 1943, all Axis forces had been defeated in North Africa. Even before victory in Tunisia, the Allies had agreed plans to invade Sicily as a staged process prior to invading the Italian mainland. Thus Operation Husky, as it was known, commenced on 9 July 1943 and reached its successful conclusion on 17 August 1943 with all Axis forces having been killed, captured or fled from Sicily.

We will spend the day touring the key sites associated with the nearby British airborne and seaborne invasions of July 1943. The British fought mainly on the east side of Sicily, with the USA forces taking the south and west coasts of Sicily. Our tour will include visits to some of the key glider landing sites and commando raids in advance of the main landings.

Day 5 – Sunday 9 October 2016 – Sicily

Today we spend the day touring sites associated with the US landings and the 8th armies' left hook around the dominant Mount Etna – including the Battle of Assoro involving the 1st Canadian Division capturing one of the many German hillside town fortifications. After lunch at Gela, the site of the main US landings, we will drive west across Sicily to Agrigento where we will check into our hotel.

Day 6 – Monday 10 October 2016 – Sicily

Our route today follows General Paton's 7th Army drive north through the centre of Sicily to the port city of Palermo, captured 22 July 1943. A city with a metropolitan population of over 1 million, it is the largest city in Sicily and the 5th largest in Italy. Before leaving Agrigento, our morning is spent visiting the famous Greek temples located near Agrigento, perhaps the most visited tourism site in Sicily.

Day 7 – Tuesday 11 October 2016 – Sicily

With the fall of Palermo, and the movement of the British 8th Army under General Montgomery up the east coast of Sicily, there was a "race" between Generals Paton and Montgomery to be first to take Messina. However neither won this glory since the Germans, following the fall of Palermo, undertook a staged and successful evacuation of their forces from Messina to the Italian mainland.

Today we travel east to Catania travelling through much of the country where both the 8th Army and American 5th armies fought against the staged German retreat to Messina. We will spend our final night in Sicily in Catania. Before checking into our hotel, we will visit the excellent WWII museum in Catania with its inter-active displays.



Day 8 – Wednesday 12 October 2016 – Sicily/Naples/Italy

After visiting the Catania Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery, late morning we fly from Catania to Naples and then transfer to our hotel on the Amalfi Coast, over-looking the sea side town of Salerno. Located some 80km from Naples, this was the landing spot of the main Allied invasion force after the capture of Sicily. The rest of the afternoon is free for independent exploring prior to our tour dinner.

Day 9 – Thursday 13 October 2016 – Naples/Salerno

Operation Avalanche commenced on 9 September 1943 with the main Allied force, the American 5th Army under General Mark Clark, landing at Salerno and the neighbouring beaches. The objective was to capture the Port of Naples. Naples could not be attacked directly as it was beyond air fighter support from Sicily. In the days preceding Operation Avalanche, the British 8th Army, under General Montgomery, had landed on the mainland at the foot of Italy whereupon Italy had formally surrendered, having overthrown the Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini. The British Army then fought its way north to link up with the American 5th Army. In what was a closely fought battle, the German forces under Field Marshall Kesselring concentrated all the military might at their disposal in an attempt to force the 5th Army back into the sea before it could link up with the 8th Army. However, additional Allied paratroop drops and further landings on nearby beaches ensured the Allies eventually prevailed over the Germans. Operation Avalanche ended with the capture of Naples on 1 October 1943.

The Germans then retreated to form a formidable defensive line south of Rome, known as the Gustav Line, with its centre anchored at Cassino and overlooked by the famous mountain monastery of Monte Cassino. This was the narrowest point on the Italian peninsula and contained many natural mountain and river protected fortifications. The campaign on the Italian mainland was to run from September 1943 to April 1945 and resulted in about 320,000 Allied casualties (including 60,000 dead).

Our touring today includes the key landing and battlefield sites of Salerno and associated battles of Operation Avalanche. These will include visiting both the Montecovino Airport and Tobacco Factory sites where major battles occurred. We lunch near Paestum and will have time to tour the ancient Greek Temples at Paestum



American troops walk past Temple of Neptune at Paestum and landing at a beach near Salerno

Day 10 – Friday 14 October 2016 Naples/Salerno/Cassino

We visit the historic city of Pompeii, near Naples at the foot of Mount Vesuvius. Destroyed by a major eruption in AD 79, the old walled city of Pompeii involves a must visit and is one of the great tourist highlights of the region.

After lunch at Pompeii, we drive 140 km north to the town of Cassino, a key defensive point in the German's Gustav line, to visit the famous monastery and study the Monte Cassino battlefield. The NZ Division attempted to take Monte Cassino and was only withdrawn from the line after taking over 1,000 casualties, including their commanding general, Harold Kippenberger, who had stood on a land mine. Ultimately the Polish Division captured Monte Cassino in May 1944 and raised its flag over the ruins of the monastery.

Day 11 – Saturday 15 October 2016 - Monte Cassino

We start today visiting Monte Trocchio, the high ground where the Allies based themselves during the Battle for Cassino. We then visit the Rapido River near St Angelo where the 36th US Army Division attempted unsuccessfully to cross the river as part of the 1st Battle of Cassino. Our day includes visits to the German Cemetery east of Cassino, a tour of the rebuilt Abbey of Monte Cassino, visits to the Polish Memorial on Hill 593, Albaneta Farm and Castle Hill – all sites of major battles.

Day 12 — Sunday 16 October 2016 – Monte Cassino/Anzio

We continue our study of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th battles of Cassino which occurred over the 4 month period to May 1944. Our visits during the morning include the Commonwealth War Cemetery in Cassino, the Polish Cemetery and Museum on Monte Cassino and the scene of the NZ Corp's tank attack along Cavendish Road.

After lunch we drive 2 hours to the beach side town of Anzio. In January 1944, this little known Italian seaside town witnessed one of the then largest ever amphibious landings of approximately 40,000 troops. While the landing was largely uncontested, the American general commanding the operation did not advance inland in a timely manner to take the then unoccupied high ground. As a result, the German army rushed in reinforcements trapped the advancing forces in a small enclave for the next 4 months. The intention of the Anzio landing had been to break out behind the Gustav line and force the Germans manning the Gustav line to retreat, since their supply lines would have been cut.

Day 13 – Monday 17 October 2016 – Anzio



Today will see us studying the Anzio landings, the resultant battles and the many missed opportunities. Some compare the Anzio entrapment as similar to Gallipoli in 1915, with the one significant difference being that there was no retreat and an eventual breakout.

Our touring includes the American landing beaches at Nettuno and the British landings north of Anzio, a visit to the port of Anzio, the two Commonwealth war cemeteries plus driving to several of the key battlefields including the Wadi and Camoleone Station.

Captured German soldiers at the Anzio beachhead.

Day 14 – Tuesday 18 October 2016 – Anzio/Rome

Spend this morning looking at the breakout from Anzio in May 1944 and the lost opportunity of the American forces to encircle the retreating German forces following the Allied breakthrough on the Cassino front. We also visit the ANZIO WWII museum following which we drive the 90 minutes to our hotel in Rome. There is a free afternoon to independently explore Rome before our final tour dinner.

Rome, declared an open city, was occupied by the Allies on 4 June 1944, 2 days prior to D- Day. With the build up of American and British forces through France in 1944, including an invasion through the South of France from August 1944, Allied forces were progressively downsized in Italy and this campaign become secondary to the main war effort. Allied forces subsequently became bogged down on the Gothic Line – a heavily defended German line running across Italy north of Florence – and a stalemate eventuated during the 6 month period from August 1944 to February 1945. German defences were eventually breached in March 1945 and the more mobile Allied forces achieved a significant breakthrough during April 1945 with the German forces suffering one defeat after another.

With the Allied forces close to the Italian border, all German forces in Italy surrendered on 29 April. By this stage, the NZ Division had occupied the strategically important Trieste on the border with Yugoslavia.

Day 15 – Wednesday 19 October 2016

Say goodbye as our tour ends officially after breakfast this morning.



Terms and conditions, including cost are shown on the following page.

THE FINER DETAILS

Participation Cost: EUR4,800 twin share/EUR 1,200 single supplement

The Tour Cost Includes:

- 14 nights accommodation, portage, and touring as specified
- Flights from Malta to Sicily and Sicily to Naples
- Breakfast daily, welcome and farewell dinners including beverages, and other meals (without beverages) as specified in the itinerary
- Entrance fees to all included sightseeing and gratuities
- Services of Tour Guide and Trendsetter Travel Tour Manager

The Tour Cost Does NOT Include:

- International travel to Malta and onwards from Rome
- Pre/post tour accommodation and items of a personal nature
- Insurance – RECOMMENDED FOR PARTICIPATION ON THIS TOUR

TERMS AND CONDITIONS – PLEASE READ

A completed reservation form is due at the time of deposit. Payment of your deposit and balance constitutes acceptance of these terms and conditions.

1. A non refundable deposit of **A\$2,500 per person** is to accompany the booking form to secure your place on this tour. As the tour is subject to a minimum number of 4 persons, if the tour does not proceed the deposit will be fully refundable. The final payment will be for the full tour price in EUR converted to AUD based on the best EUR sell rate from the Major 4 banks as at 10am on **Wednesday 31 July 2016**. The deposit will then be deducted from this to give the balance owing. No refunds are available after this date other than through your travel insurance policy.
2. While every effort will be made to operate the tour exactly as per the brochure, the organisers reserve the right to make changes, should these be deemed essential, due to changed conditions outside of our control, or in the best interests of the group as a whole.
3. Payment by credit card is subject to a merchant fee of 1.5% (VC/MC) and 3.1% (AX)

FOR BOOKINGS & ALL ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT

DAVID COOPER or ADRIENNE WITTEMAN

TRENDSETTER TRAVEL AND CRUISE CENTRE PTY LTD, 2 KENNETH STREET,
LONGUEVILLE NSW 2066 - PH (02) 9428 5900 www.trendsettertravel.com.au

EMAIL: david@trendsettertravel.com.au or adrienne@trendsettertravel.com.au

Trendsetter



Travel & Cruise Centre