

A map of Italy is shown against a dark gray background. The map is color-coded to represent the Italian Campaign during World War II. The regions of Northern Italy, including the Po Valley and the Alpine areas, are colored green, indicating they were under German occupation. The regions of Southern Italy, including the heel of the boot and Sicily, are colored red, indicating they were under Allied control. The central part of the boot, including the Tiber valley, is white, representing the front line or the area of active combat. The text 'Italian Campaign' is written in a green, serif font in the upper right, and 'BATTLE OF ORTONA' is written in a bold, red, sans-serif font in the center-right.

Italian Campaign

BATTLE OF ORTONA

Canadians landing in Sicily



ITALIAN Campaign

OVERALL:

- The Italian Campaign was the name of all Allied operations in and around Italy
- These operations ran from July 10, 1943 - May 8, 1945
- In July 1943, Allied troops caught the Axis troops by surprise when they landed in Sicily, located at the tip of the boot
- Allied members took Sicily quite easily
- Italians turned against Mussolini

ITALIAN Campaign



ITALIAN Campaign

continued

OVERALL:

- Italians wanted to surrender, Germans did not
- The invasion of Sicily forced the Axis members to mainland Italy
- Italy has mountainous terrain (was tough to cross); defending a position was much easier than advancing on it
- Canadians advanced northward
- The fight to liberate Italy was long, hard, and costly

Italy's mountainous terrain



Italy's mountainous terrain



Canadian infantry prepare for an assault



Battle of ORTONA
“Bloody December”

OVERALL:

- German troops were prepared for the invasion by Canadians
- A week (December 20-28, 1943) of intense, close-quarters combat,
- The depleted German troops lacked reinforcements and finally withdrew from the town
- Ortona was won by Canadian troops, but the city was left in shambles

Battle of ORTONA



ITALIAN Campaign



CAUSES:

- The Italian Campaign was meant to take pressure off the Soviets on the Eastern front
- It was important to keep the Axis forces occupied on MULTIPLE fronts
- If Allies took control of Italy, Allied troops could advance on Germany from the south
(Western=France, Eastern=USSR, Southern=Italy)

ITALIAN Campaign

SIDE NOTE:

- Mostly fought against Germans because...
- Italians surrendered so...
- Hitler sent hundreds of thousands of German troops to hold Italy



Benito Mussolini

ITALIAN Campaign

EVENT:

- Canadian, American, and British troops caught the Germans and Italians by surprise when they landed in Sicily
- Allies tricked Axis members in thinking they were going to land in Greece
- Sicily fell after only 38 days of fierce fighting
- Italians turned against Benito Mussolini and wanted to surrender
- After Mussolini was executed
- Hitler sent German troops to occupy Italy and keep fighting
- Canadians fought their way northward through mountainous terrain

Battle of ORTONA

EVENT:

- Canadians encountered tough, highly-skilled German soldiers when they attacked Ortona
- At the same time, a northerly attack to the west of the town was attempted to cut off Ortona's communications; this was slow to occur because of the rough terrain and the highly-skilled Germans

- German troops booby-trapped houses, fortified buildings, concealed machine guns, and cluttered and barricaded the narrow streets with rubble to make it difficult for the Allies to move through the city



Battle of ORTONA

EVENT:

- Canadians were forced into certain areas and literally trapped
- Small, yet extremely fierce, battle fought between German and Canadian forces
- 8 days of intense, vicious, close-quarters combat
- The depleted German troops lacked reinforcements and finally withdrew from the town

ITALIAN Campaign

RESULTS:

- Allies won Sicily, southern Italy, and Ortona
- Estimated 60,000 Allied and 50,000 German soldiers died in Italy from September 1943-April 1945
- No campaign in Western Europe cost more than Italy in terms of lives lost and wounds suffered by infantry
- **30,000 Canadians** were killed or wounded in the fight to liberate Italy (highest death and injury suffered in Italy)
- **SUCCESSFUL** in terms of land and troops captured
- Also successful because it pulled German troops away from both the Western and Eastern Fronts

Battle of ORTONA

RESULTS:

- Canadians won Ortona
- The city, Ortona, was left in shambles
- This was a MAJOR VICTORY in a successful push towards Rome
- 1,375 Canadians died; this was $\frac{1}{4}$ of all Canadians killed during the entire Italian Campaign!

SIGNIFICANCE:

ITALIAN Campaign

- Italy is virtually knocked out of the war, leaving Hitler's army alone
- The invasion of Italy helped weaken Germany's line of defense on the coast of France because German troops were taken from their positions to fortify the south
- This allowed the Allies to invade France on June 6, 1944 (D-Day)

Battle of ORTONA

- Canadians showed that they could defeat a German army that was considered superior in many respects