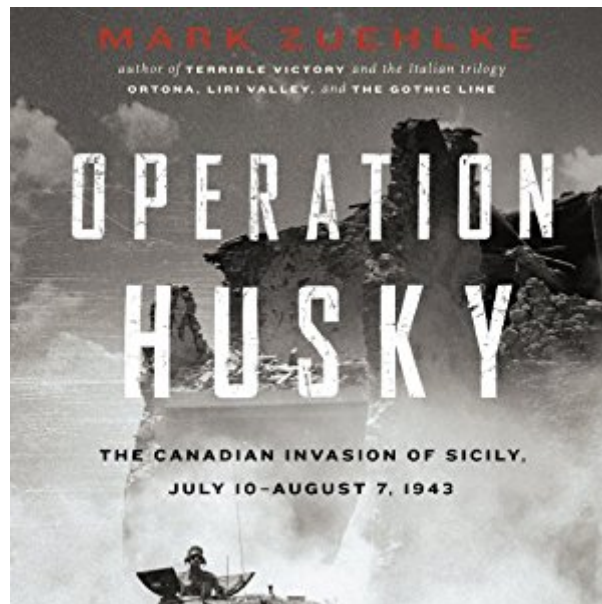


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# Operation Husky: The Canadian Invasion Of Sicily, July 10-August 7, 1943



## Synopsis

On July 10, 1943, two great Allied armadas of over 2,000 ships readied to invade Sicily. This was Operation Husky, the first step toward winning a foothold in fascist-occupied Europe. Among the invaders were 20,000 Canadian troops serving in the First Canadian Infantry Division and First Canadian Tank Brigade - in their first combat experience. Over the next 28 days, the Allied troops carved a path through the rugged land, despite fierce German opposition. Drawing on firsthand accounts of veterans and official military records, Operation Husky offers a gripping, meticulous account of this seminal operation and the young men who fought, died, and survived it.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The author continues to make a significant contribution to recognizing and examining the role of Canada in the Second World War. I have read six of his previous efforts including those focusing on the Italian campaign: Ortona, Liri Valley, and The Gothic Line. Zuehlke's style has improved greatly from his earlier work demonstrating a more narrative and engaging style that is increasingly emulating the works of Beevor, Atkinson, and Ryan (who are my favourites). And he has not sacrificed research, detail, and accuracy in this evolution. The Italian campaign has received increasing attention in the last decade having been relegated to a "sideshow" given the aggregate efforts in WW2. I most enjoyed the politics and planning involved in Operation Husky along with the fascinating challenges related to supply and logistics. This was a complex operation made all the harder for the Canadian contingent when their commander and other leaders were killed in a plane crash shortly before it was to begin. This introduces us to the prickly Simonds, the criticized Vokes (he took heat at Ortona but received redemption in the European campaign), and the

highly-competent Hoffmeister (who later was head of Macmillan Bloedel). The tale of McNaughton is also covered here. The underlying theme is rapidly maturing Canadian forces who would make a contribution to the entire war far beyond the relative size of its young nation. Sicily set the stage for the rest of the fight up Italy: rugged terrain, stubborn Nazi defenders led by Kesselring, Italian apathy and incompetence (soon followed by capitulation), and a tough climate. The Italian campaign veterans were unfairly labeled "D-Day Dodgers" for not having been present for the glory of invading Normandy and liberating Europe. However, this history and others covering Italy clearly demonstrate that the soldiers on both sides fought a tenacious and costly war with the Canadian losing 562 troops in Sicily alone.

I can't remember ever giving a book 5 stars before. The five stars here represent my enthusiasm for this book and for author Mark Zuehlke's entire series of Canadian WW II histories, a series that he "unwittingly" (his word) began in 1999 with Ortona, Canada's Epic World War II Battle. In the preface to this book, Zuehlke explains how he embarked upon the unparalleled achievement in Canadian publishing which, with the 2008 release of Operation Husky, brought the series to eight volumes. A remarkable achievement (his only rival: Tim Cook, author of what many consider the definitive series of books about Canadian troops in WW I.) However, the achievement goes far beyond the book tally. As Zuehlke puts it, "I have told the story by mixing personal accounts of veterans in with material drawn from official records, regimental histories and many other sources in order to give the reader a "you are there" experience." One of the "many sources" was the work of front-line Canadian Press correspondent (the old-fashioned word for journalist) Ross Munro, whom Zuehlke quotes. Munro was a fabulous writer (there's a photo of him sitting in his shorts on the stony ground, bashing away on his typewriter.) Like the book in which they appear, Munro's accounts are riveting. When this book was published, Zuehlke urged readers to seek out "a relative or acquaintance who is a veteran" and "consider sitting down a recording what memories remain." There are far fewer memories now, some seven years later, as this generation leaves us. That makes the books by Mark Zuehlke and Tim Cook (who likely wrote without new interviews from veterans of that earlier war) more important than ever...Lest We Forget.

Mark Zuehlke first attracted my attention with his book on the Dieppe raid of 1942. It was a part of WWII history that has been mostly ignored and forgotten. Since then, I've got almost all his WWII books. I consider his books on the Canadians in Normandy to be marvelous, a long overdue inspection of the unsung efforts of the Canadians in WWII. This is another good book and, taken with

the Dieppe and Normandy books gives not only a great account of the Canadians but of their commanders and how they grew or failed along the way.

This is another outstanding read about Canadian efforts during the Italy campaign. All the books in this series explain the plan and the effects in a way that makes you extremely proud of the efforts of our young men, and the wonder of how anyone survived not only the defence by the German soldiers, but the plans of the officers calling the shots. What is really wonderful is, that as you are reading along all of a sudden you are reading about someone you know, like Sgt. Fred Cederberg, who was lucky to make it home and who also wrote a book about his time in hell.

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