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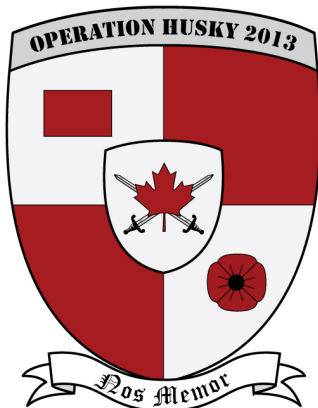
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From Sheldrake



This issue of Sheldrake's Log is devoted to Opération Husky 2013/ Operation Husky 2013®. Operation Husky 2013 is the initiative of Steve Gregory, President of IsaiX Technologies and a member of the Artillery Association of Montréal. An article in this issue of Sheldrake (*Remembrance: Operation Husky in 2013*) provides the story of his involvement and outlines the project.

The mission of the project is to honour of those who fought and those who fell during the Sicilian campaign, July and August 1943. To accomplish this, the organizers of Operation Husky 2013, will conduct a march across Sicily which will begin at Pachino on July 10th 2013 and follow the original path taken by the 1st Canadian Division. Each day of the trek at 11:00 AM, a group of Canadians equal to the number of men who perished, will assemble at the site of a battle to read passages honouring each of the fallen heroes.

A second objective is to raise the awareness of Canadians regarding the sacrifices of our soldiers during the Sicilian campaign. Specifically, the organizers wish to reach and involve a minimum of 250,000 Canadian students and teachers in project to bring alive the memory of fallen soldiers from regions across Canada. The Gregg Institute of the University of New Brunswick has been commissioned to research and write a revised history of Canadian participation in the Sicilian campaign. Local and National media involvement will be pursued in order develop the awareness of the Canadian Public. Specific media campaigns are planned for activities leading up to the march.

The regimental associations of the units that fought in the Sicilian campaign and are still present in the current order of battle of the Canadian Forces have been contacted to encourage their participation (see Participating Units).

Further information may be found on the Operation Husky 2013 website:

<http://www.operationhusky2013.ca>

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Ubique
Sheldrake



Remembrance: Operation Husky in 2013

On July 10th 1943, headlines across the country announced that over 25,000 men from the 1st Canadian Infantry Division landed at Pachino, marking the beginning of the Sicilian campaign. Little has been heard about the Canadian contribution to that invasion since, despite that fact that "Operation Husky" represented the first independent role for Canadian soldiers in the Second World War.

In 2006, Steve Gregory, a civilian businessman from Montreal launched a campaign to honour those who fought and those who fell, on the operation's 70th anniversary in July and August of 2013. "Our objective is to bring back 562 Canadians to Sicily, representing the number of men lost" says Gregory who has been recruiting participants for years. Now over 300 citizens from all over the country have made the commitment to join him.

The project began with an innocent little Grade 6 history project Gregory's son Erik undertook following an inspiring meeting with Charles Hunter an original 39er who as a bombardier with the 7th Battery of the 2RCA who had pounded his way through Sicily in 1943. Hunter still alive at 92 is thrilled at the momentum the project has developed. "He can't believe that this trip is really going to happen after so many years of obscurity" says Gregory. "Listen to his story on Youtube :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=haKI0HQ-7Q>
and you just know that we have to honour these men."

Retired members units of the 1st Canadian Corps are his target recruits for the trip and he recently submitted Briefing Notes to the Artillery Senate and the Commander of the Army. To date he has received huge support from many infantry units including the 48th Highlanders, Hasty Ps and Seaforth who each have planned to have more than 30 members of their associations make the trip. Gregory will help any regiment interested in participating with fundraising and has already committed to the Seaforth and 48th.

Attracting young soldiers who may pay their own way seems possible say Gregory. "A young VanDoo officer pulled me aside at a meeting and said he and his buddies would love to go. They could easily take holidays in the middle of the summer." To make this cost effective, Gregory is scouting for camp-grounds that will enable

him to further reduce the costs.

Two formal events are planned in Sicily:

July 10th at Pachino: A ceremony on "Bark West" beach, the site of the 1st Canadian Division landing.

July 30th Agira: A memorial service will be held at 9:00 AM at the Canadian War Cemetery on the outskirts of town including a roll-call, in which Canadians in attendance will be asked to represent each fallen soldier. In the evening, organizers will re-create the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada pipe concert, originally broadcast by Peter Stursberg of the CBC on that date in 1943, in the central piazza of Agira. The Canadian broadcaster, TLN (Tele-Latino Network) will be filming a documentary about the event.

Gregory and a small group of Marchers including LGen Michel Maisonneuve (ret) of the 12e Blindé, (Three Rivers Regiment) will be retracing the steps of the 1st Div and 5th Tank Brigade between the 10th of July and the 8th of August. Units of the 1st Canadian Corps are being invited to participate in ceremonies at the sites of significant battles such as Pachino, Piazza Armeria, Leoforte, Adrano, Agira and Troina Valley.

Canada Company, a charitable non-partisan organization that supports veterans and serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces, has recently offered \$25,000 for project. Several major fundraising events were held this past fall and others are planned to help subsidize the travel of Cadets, veterans, relatives of the fallen and on-site logistics.

In recent research of German and Italian archives, the Gregg Centre at UNB revealed important findings about Canada's central role in the final outcome on Sicily in 1943 that helped turn the tide of the Second World War and open the road to final victory. Veterans Affairs Canada have contributed funds towards the research and publication of this story. Only when the fractured parts of our national story in Sicily are integrated together and within the larger Allied campaign does the full impact of Canada's achievement there become clear. This initiative promises to become a major national commemorative event. The 562 lost will finally get some recognition.



Units that participated in Operation Husky in 1943 by region

Atlantic Canada

Carleton and York Regiment 1st Bn The Royal New Brunswick Regiment (Carlton and York) (Primary Reserve) Fredericton, Edmundston, Grand Falls, and Saint John, NB

West Nova Scotia Regiment (Primary Reserve) Aldershot, NS

Québec

Royal 22^e Régiment (Regular Force) CFB Valcartier

2nd Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery (Primary Reserve) Montréal, QC

7th Field Battery Montréal, QC

12th Armoured Regiment (The Three Rivers Regiment) (Primary Reserve) Trois-Rivières, QC

No 425 Squadron (Alouetté) RCAF (Regular force) CFB Bagotville

Ontario

10th Field Battery, Royal Canadian Artillery (Primary Reserve) St-Catherines, ON

11th Armoured Regiment (The Ontario Regiment) (Primary Reserve) Oshawa, ON

The Royal Canadian Regiment (Regular Force) CFB Petawawa, ON

Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment (Primary Reserve) Belleville, ON

48th Highlanders of Canada (Primary Reserve) Toronto, ON

No 424 Squadron, City of Hamilton, Tiger RCAF (Regular Force) Trenton, ON

51st Anti-tank Battery, Ottawa, ON (inactive but commemorated by the Bytown Gunners)

Alberta

1st Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery (Regular Force) CFB Wainwright, AB

Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (Regular Force) CFB Wainwright, AB

Loyal Edmonton Regiment (Primary Reserve) Edmonton, AB

14th Armoured Regiment (The Calgary Regiment) The King's Own Calgary Regiment (Primary Reserve) Calgary, AB

No 417 Squadron, City of Windsor RCAF (Regular Force) Cold Lake, AB

British Columbia

Seaforth Highlanders of Canada (Primary Reserve) Vancouver, BC

The organizers of this project have tried to identify all of the units that fought on Operation Husky. Many of the units that took part no longer form part of the order of battle of the Canadian forces or their identity has been lost because of the many reorganizations that have occurred since 1946.

If you know of veterans or families of veterans who took part in the Sicilian Campaign (Operation Husky), please forward this message to them as we wish to have as large a participation as possible.

Sheldrake



Memories of the 2 Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery, at War

as set down by Bombardier Charles Hunter in 2008

(Editor's Note: this extract covers the period in Sicily. The full story was published in two issues of Sheldrake's

Log and may be found on our website at:

http://sheldrakeslog.com/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/Sheldrake_Printemps_Spring_2008.pdf

http://sheldrakeslog.com/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/Sheldrake_Automne_Fall_2008.pdf

July 10 off Pachino beach. Beautiful sunny day. A few shells splashing in the water but many more inland. Beside our ship is a 15-inch monitor. Every time it fires our ship heels over.

Of the approximately 650 men who went over with the regiment in 1939 there remains the following; from the 7th Ralph Willis, Norman Newman and myself; the 8th, Gordon Lutes, Mike McCormack, Bob Keiver, Art Boudreau; the 10th: Jim Gibb, Nicholson. I know of no one from the 35th. There must be a few others around but obviously, not too many. Most of the above still have a good head on their shoulders. Up until recently, before failing eyesight, I played duplicate bridge as a life master and did the New York Times crossword puzzle.

So here we are off the coast of Sicily.

The whole area seemed to be full of ships of various types. Our turn finally came to land. I am not sure of the time but it was at least late morning. After all our training on an LST what do we get? An LCI (landing craft infantry). It was just large enough to hold one quad, one limber and one gun. They loaded them first, then we had to go down scrambling ropes. Now, normally this would not be a problem, but remember the sea was still running at 6 to 8 feet. If the ship heeled to starboard you swung away, if to port, you hit the side. But this wasn't the worst. When you stepped off, if it was on its way down, it could be a long step, if coming up, you could get a thump.

On with the invasion. We hit bottom, down ramp, charge into three feet of water, up onto the beach, directed to a dirt road, then inland. Our first sight of the enemy was a group of prisoners, escorted by some

commandos. They looked very happy and waved to us.

All the roads were walled on both sides with stone. But these roads were made for mule drawn wagons and had 90-degree corners. A bulldozer had to knock down all the inside corners so we could get around them.

Inland for a bit, then taking up a position. We stayed there for the night and were able to see the fire works that night at the beach. Beautiful sight if it wasn't such a deadly game going on.

The second night we welcomed the American invasion. We had watched the plane go over three times and couldn't figure out what he was up to. A sky full of parachutes soon told us.

I don't mind saying I was scared for a moment but I think they were just as frightened. It seems we got off a lot of shots before they landed.

I felt a lot of sympathy for the infantry at this time. They had to walk and with tanks, trucks and us stirring up the dust from the dirt roads they were white in no time. Then they had to do the fighting when they did stop. PBI (*Poor Bloody Infantry*) was a good term.

When we entered the Catania plain we fired our first shots in anger. We then moved onto the facing side of a low ridge. Jerry waited until we settled then baptized us. No one was injured except our crate of rations, which was demolished.



A quick move forward to the reverse side of another ridge. It was from this position that we supported the Hastings after they had captured Mt. Assoro.

On past Leonforte to Agira, again the PBI took a beating here, and Nissoria. By this time we had reached the slopes facing Mt. Etna. It was here that we watched the bombers come over; one got hit and crashed on headquarters. The pilot, a South African, chute did not open. He landed about 25 feet from me. Despite the fact that we were on solid rock, he still made a dent.

Back to a rest area in the middle of an orange grove (not ripe yet). The owner had built a concrete tank for water to irrigate his orchard. It was quite large so we emptied it, scrubbed it down, then refilled it. There was a small town not too far away immediately put out of bounds by the MPs. Nevertheless, the road from our camp at the edge of town was interesting, to say the least. Outside of a couple of small shops, bakery, wine etc. It was of no interest. But there was no plumbing, so the street we used was walled on both sides, one side for ladies, one side for men. It was quite common to walk into town and hear squatting citizens say "bonne journo, signor". Wait. This was not wasted. Every day it was picked up for fertilizer. Next time you buy grapes, think of that.

Before jumping across the Messina straits, I would like to dwell a little longer in Sicily.

Allow me to show my pride in the Canadian Army and the work of the artillery, called 5-mile snipers by the PBI. In 2005 the Hastings and Prince Edward Regimental Association, of which I am a member, offered a tour of Sicily and Italy. Andrew Gregory, his mother Paula and myself, took advantage of the offer. We flew into Catania and stayed the night at a first class hotel. The following morning on our way to breakfast, we were stopped by a man who said "Bdr. Hunter I presume". This was my introduction to Col. Patterson. It turns out that he was to be our tour guide.

In our group there were about 50 members of the Hasty P's reserve, a dozen vets and the rest were relatives of the vets. Into two buses and away we go. Through orchards and vineyards until suddenly we came to the Catania plains.

This was the most vivid sight I had on the whole trip.

Memories came flooding back.

The explosion of the ammunition dump (by the way this was triggered by one of the men who were killed there), our first experience of being shelled and the general view of the valley itself.

(Editor's Note : Erik Gregory's model of the 7th Field Battery gun position at Assoro is in the Officer's Mess of 2 RCA.)

The Hasty P's had to walk four miles towards the mountain, go around the back and then climb it in the dark. Our contribution would be very important shortly. 500 men performed this feat and arrived at the top just as dawn was breaking. There were two Germans who were instantly killed. As it turned out they were artillery observation officers with the best of equipment. As per their wont, they counter attacked, were driven back and then started to shell and mortar the position. As it happened Major Kennedy, the 2 i/c, was an ex artillery officer. With the aid of the captured equipment he quickly brought counter battery fire on them. To quote Col. Tweedsmuir of the Hasty P's, "slowly now the tide of battle began to turn. As the enemy's guns began to fire at us, the muzzle flashes gave them away and short minutes later, salvoes from our field and medium guns rained down on them." Kennedy kept up the counter battery work until noon when most of their batteries had been put out of action or moved back out of range. This battle was on the British War College's list of lectures for its ingenuity.



L'Association de l'Artillerie de Montréal
Artillery Association of Montreal

C.P. 40557, 2963 boul. Saint-Charles
 Kirkland, Qc
 H9H 5G8

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Vice-President	Sgt G.D.F. Davis
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List of the fallen

To view the list of the fallen at Agira Cemetery consult the website at:

<http://www.operationhusky2013.ca/operation/list-of-the-fallen/>

Preparation for the march

In preparation for the march, in May 2012 Steve Gregory visited many of the towns where we will be holding remembrance ceremonies. For videos of the meetings, consult the following website:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCB9DjcXwW1TUW-6SnoGbivw>



Travel to Sicily



Our travel partner [Preference Vacations](http://www.preferencevacations.com) has prepared three travel package options. Packages leaving from the following Canadian cities are available now:

Montreal Toronto Vancouver

Visit their website for details about these packages at:

<http://www.vacancespreference.com/2012/?lang=en>

For those who would wish to stay longer in Sicily or elsewhere in Europe, please contact [Preference Vacations](http://www.preferencevacations.com) to make special arrangements.

Operation Husky 2013 Remembrance Ceremonies

Each day of Operation Husky 2013, a group of participants will pause along the route taken by the 1st Canadian Infantry Division in 1943, to conduct a remembrance ceremony at a location of significance to the Canadian advance on that same date in 1943. While a number of these events will be held in ancient Sicilian village or town squares and be held in cooperation with the local authorities, others will take place in the open expanses of the island's beautiful and rugged countryside.

CEREMONY LOCATIONS AND DATES

For the details of the march in Sicily, please consult the website at :

<http://www.operationhusky2013.ca/about/operation-husky-remembrance-ceremony/>

