



Agira Canadian War Cemetery

The 1st Canadian Infantry Division and the 1st Canadian Army Tank Brigade (both part of General Montgomery's Eighth Army) sailed from the UK in June 1943 and landed in the south of Sicily July 10, along with their allies from the UK and the US. Agira was one of a number of Sicilian towns taken by the Canadians as they advanced northward across the mountains and over the island's hot, barren terrain toward the Strait of Messina. The town fell on July 28 -- three days after the resignation of Mussolini -- and following five days of hard fighting in what proved to be the Canadians' biggest battle of the Sicilian campaign.

Sicily fell completely to the Allies August 17, after 38 days' fighting. On August 6, following the capture of Adrano, the Canadians, who had marched farther in the campaign than any other formation in the Eighth Army, were withdrawn to rest, and so they did not participate in the last 10 days of battle. But during their month in the field they had gained valuable experience and self-confidence. They had also suffered battle casualties. After the Sicilian campaign the decision was made to concentrate into one cemetery the graves of all Canadians who gave their lives in the island fighting, and in September of 1943 Canadian officers chose the site at Agira. It contains the graves of 490 Canadians (13 members of the RCAF and 477 of the army), six of whom are unidentified. It should be remembered, a number of war dead have graves which are unknown (including 58 Canadians who drowned when convoys were attacked en route to Sicily). Their names are commemorated on the Cassino Memorial in mainland Italy. In all, it is estimated that 562 Canadians died as a result of this campaign.

The Agira Canadian War Cemetery is located on a small hill in the Commune of Agira and the Province of Enna, in the heart of Sicily, approximately 70 kilometres from Catania. After the Sicilian



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