

# Activity 4:

## **OPERATION HUSKY**

### Operation Husky 2013

#### **BACKGROUND**

Operation Husky 2013 was a commemorative event conceived by Steven Gregory, a Montreal businessman, and his son Eric. After hearing veteran Charles Hunter's tales about his wartime experience in the Sicilian campaign, Eric decided to do his Grade 6 history project on the Battle of Assoro. He found little information available on Canada's role in this Second World War mission. After a successful school project and a subsequent trip to Italy, Eric and his father developed the commemorative Operation Husky 2013 tour.

The tour included a symbolic march where a small group of Canadian walkers followed in the footsteps of the 1st Canadian Division, retracing the 400 kilometer route and laying ceremonial markers at each site where Canadians fought and died.

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Students will explore the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration, Operation Husky 2013, and create a sentiment/inscription for a memorial marker remembering a Canadian soldier who died during the Sicilian Campaign.

#### **LINKS TO CANADIAN NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR GEOGRAPHY**

- Essential Element # 1: The World in Spatial Terms
  - Map, globe, and atlas use
- Essential Element # 2: Places and Regions
  - Political and historical characteristics of regions
  - The importance of places and regions to individual and social identity
- Essential Element # 3: Human Systems
  - Territorial dispute and conflict
- Essential Element # 6: The Uses of Geography
  - Effects of physical and human geographic factors on major historic events
- Geographic Skill # 5: Answering geographic questions

- Make generalizations and assess their validity

## **SUGGESTED GRADES**

7-12

## **VOCABULARY**

Remembrance  
Operation Husky 2013  
Commemoration  
Memorial  
Operation Husky

## **MATERIALS**

- Access to Operation Husky 2013 website ([operationhusky2013.ca](http://operationhusky2013.ca))
- Access to CG Compass Blog: *Operation Husky: Reflections on a forgotten story* at: [travelclub.canadiangeographic.ca/blogs/feature\\_articles/archive/2013/10/23/operation-husky-pilgrimage-70-years-later.aspx](http://travelclub.canadiangeographic.ca/blogs/feature_articles/archive/2013/10/23/operation-husky-pilgrimage-70-years-later.aspx)
- Access to *Canadian Geographic Travel* Fall 2013 ([travelclub.canadiangeographic.ca/cg/TravelMagazine/CurrentIssue\\_2013\\_Nov.aspx](http://travelclub.canadiangeographic.ca/cg/TravelMagazine/CurrentIssue_2013_Nov.aspx))
- *Handout 1: Operation Husky 2013 Commemoration* (attached)
- *Handout 2: Design a marker* (attached)

## **INTRODUCTION**

Show your students a world map and ask them to identify Canada, Germany, Italy and Sicily. Ask your students to describe Sicily's geographic location. Provide an overview of the Operation Husky and the Sicilian Campaign during the Second World War. Have your students consider what the importance of Sicily was to the Italian Campaign.

Next, discuss the Operation Husky 2013 commemorative event. Have your students define commemoration, remembrance and memorial and create a Venn diagram outlining the differences and similarities among them.

Conclude by asking what the role of remembrance is.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

Begin by reading the *Canadian Geographic* blog posts by Connie Wyatt Anderson from the 2013 Operation Husky commemoration. Discuss what the author meant in the concluding sentence “The story of the Canadians who fought and fell in Sicily has always been there, it just needed telling.”

Give each student a copy of *Handout 1: Operation Husky 2013 Commemoration* and read it as a class. Ask your students how Operation Husky 2013 was an example of commemoration, remembrance and memorial?

Distribute *Handout 2: Design a marker* and instruct your students to create a sentiment/inscription for the marker.

[Note: memorial markers may still be purchased for \$150. See: [operationhusky2013.ca/operation-husky-in-sicily/sponsor-a-soldiers-marker/](http://operationhusky2013.ca/operation-husky-in-sicily/sponsor-a-soldiers-marker/)]

## **EXTEND YOUR GEOGRAPHIC THINKING**

*Geographical importance* – At the heart of any geographic analysis lies the question of importance. We ask: *What is where? Why there? Why care?* Using these questions as a framework, find out where the Operation Husky 2013 team planted the memorial markers in Sicily and answer the three questions.

## Handout 1: OPERATION HUSKY 2013 COMMEMORATION

Today, unlike other European battlefield sites, there is very little to mark the contribution made by Canada towards the freedom of Sicily during the Second World War. The objective of Operation Husky 2013 was to finance a permanent monument to Canada's role in winning the battle for Sicily. The citizen-led memorial campaign initiated several projects to rectify this historic omission:

- A monument to be installed near the site of the Canadian landing in Pachino, Sicily
- An historical exhibit about the Canadian contribution to the Sicilian Campaign at the Museo Dello Sbarco in Catania
- The sponsoring of memorial markers to honour Canadian soldiers and to fund their legacy

Each marker cost \$150. During the symbolic march, the walkers planted these markers, each bearing the name of a soldier who died on that date 70 years earlier, near the spot where they fell. The name of the sponsor appeared on the marker as well as a sentiment.

Below is the Operation Husky logo/shield. What does *nos memor* mean?



# Handout 2: DESIGN A MARKER

