

# Activity 5:

## **OPERATION HUSKY**

### The Hasty Ps

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment, "the Hasty Ps" is an infantry regiment of the Canadian Forces headquartered in Belleville, Ont, with companies in Peterborough and Cobourg. They were integral to the Sicily Campaign during the Second World War. In order to avoid the German's defences at the town of Assoro, Allied forces, beginning with the Hasty Ps, stormed the beaches at Pachino and climbed a 900-metre cliff the German's had left almost undefended, believing it impossible to scale.

During Operation Husky they saw action landing in Sicily at Grammichele, Valguarnera, Assoro, Agira, Adrano and Regalbuto. The Hasty Ps were awarded Battle Honours (an award given to military units to commemorate their role in specific actions; the name of the battle is permanently emblazoned on its flags, "colours", uniforms or other accessories where ornamentation is possible) for Assoro and Sicily, 1943. They won more battle honours in the Second World War than any other Canadian regiment.

There are many members of the Hasty Ps buried at the Agira Canadian War Cemetery in Sicily.

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Students will explore the role the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment played in the Allied invasion of Sicily during the Second World War. They will learn about the Battle of Assoro taking into account the geographic complexities of Sicily. The students will research the Agira Canadian War Cemetery.

## **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
- 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

## **SUGGESTED GRADES**

7-12

## **VOCABULARY**

Regiment

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Battle Honours

Casualty

Operation Husky

## **MATERIALS**

- Access to *Battle of Assoro* page on Operation husky 2013 website at: [operationhusky2013.ca/the-mission/the-battle-of-assoro/](http://operationhusky2013.ca/the-mission/the-battle-of-assoro/)
- [Optional] Access to news article “Scaling the forbidding facade of Assoro”: [intelligencer.ca/2008/11/15/scaling-the-forbidding-facade-of-assoro](http://intelligencer.ca/2008/11/15/scaling-the-forbidding-facade-of-assoro)
- Access to website CWGC: Agira Canadian War Cemetery, Sicily, at: [cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/2018000/AGIRA%20CANADIAN%20WAR%20CEMETERY,%20SICILY](http://cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/2018000/AGIRA%20CANADIAN%20WAR%20CEMETERY,%20SICILY)
- *Handout 1: Battle of Assoro and Nissoria* (attached)

## INTRODUCTION

Show your students a world map and ask them to identify Canada, Germany, Italy and Sicily, noting Sicily's geographic location. Provide them an overview of Operation Husky and the Sicilian Campaign during the Second World War.

On topographic/relief maps of Sicily, point out Pachino and Assoro. Ask your students to identify the distance between the two points and think about what difficulties Canadian troops may have encountered marching inland. Be sure they take into account topography and climate. Next, have your students locate Grammichele, Valguarnera, Assoro, Agira, Adrano and Regalbuto.

Distribute *Handout 1: Battle of Assoro and Nissoria*. Instruct students to study the map and identify the major physical and human geographic challenges for the Canadians fighting at Assoro and Nissoria. Finally, provide an overview of the Battle of Assoro.

## DEVELOPMENT

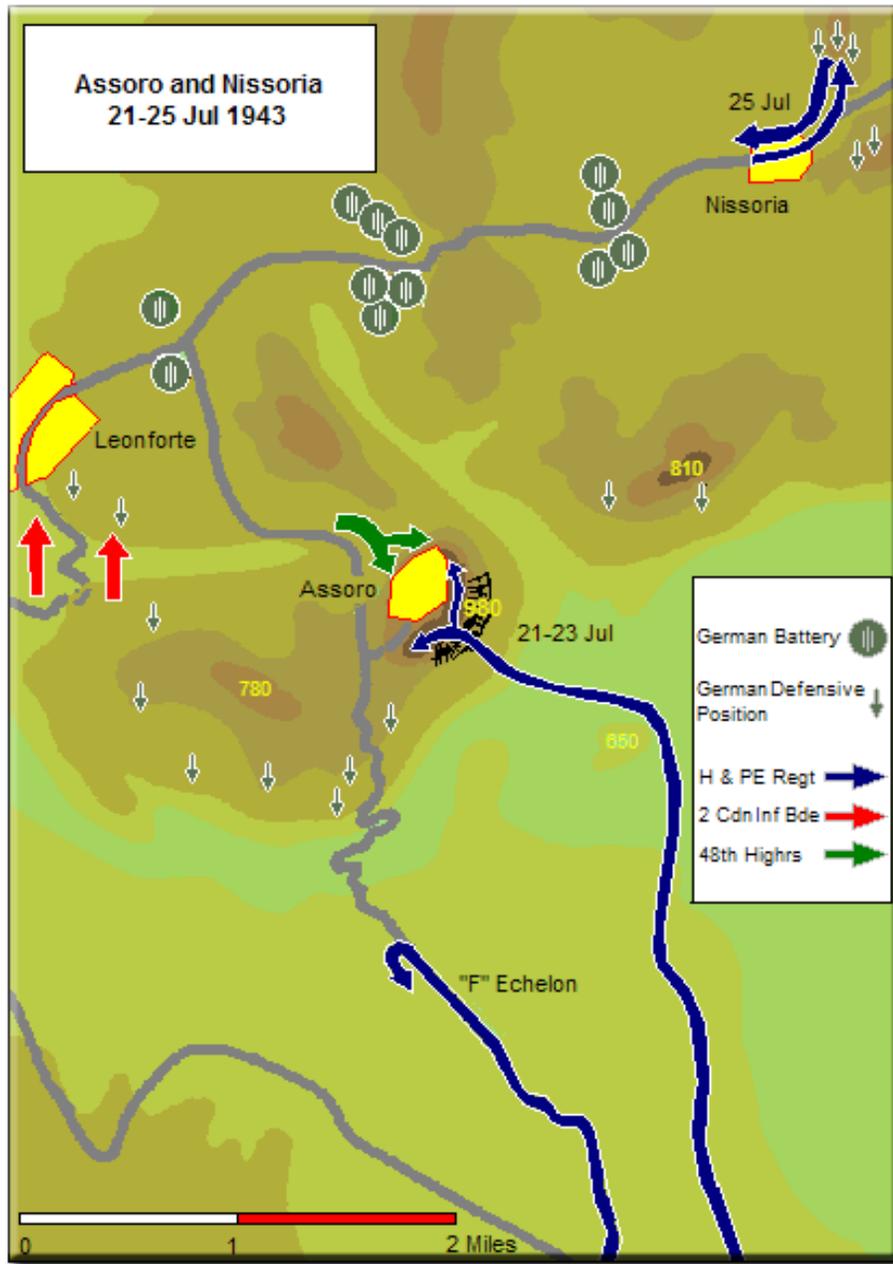
Using the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website ([cwgc.org](http://cwgc.org)), instruct your students to begin a scavenger hunt of the Agira Canadian War Cemetery in Sicily to discover:

- The cemetery's location in relation to Assoro and other battle sites
- When the cemetery was constructed
- How many identified casualties
- How many unidentified casualties
- How many members of the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment are buried there
- The names of other Canadian regiments fought during the invasion of Sicily and were buried at Agira

## **EXTEND YOUR GEOGRAPHIC THINKING**

*Interactions and Associations* – The members of the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment were nicknamed “Plough Jockeys.” The name originated during the Second World War when the Royal Canadian Regiment, Hasty Ps and 48th Highlanders formed the first brigade. Members of the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment were referred to as “plough jockeys” because of their rural roots. Many Hasty Ps joined the Regiment straight off the farm and didn't find the nickname insulting. They adopted it and the Regimental association's tabloid for years after the war was titled *The Plough Jockey*. Consider how the regiment's rural roots affected its culture and identity as a group.

## Handout 1: BATTLE OF ASSORO AND NISSORIA



Source : <http://www.canadiansoldiers.com/history/battlehonours/italiancampaign/assoro.htm>