

INTO BATTLE: SICILY AND ITALY

July 1943–June 1944

We are the D-Day Dodgers, out in Italy,
Always on the vino, always on the spree.
Eighth Army skivers and their tanks,
We go to war, in ties and slacks,
We are the D-Day Dodgers, in sunny Italy ...

The Moro and Ortona were taken in our stride,
We didn't really fight there, we went there for the ride,
Sleeping 'til noon and playing games,
We live in Rome with lots of dames,
We are the D-Day Dodgers in sunny Italy ...¹



With the 1st Canadian Army Tank Brigade, the First Canadian Division formed part of the Allied force that invaded Sicily on July 10, 1943. The successful conclusion of the North African campaign in early 1943 had marked the first Anglo-American victory of the war – an especially satisfying one because it encompassed the destruction of Rommel's fabled Afrika Korps. Now President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill had decided that Sicily and, likely, Italy were next. An invasion could topple the Mussolini regime and, ideally, it would force the Germans to deploy large numbers of troops in Italy, troops that could be used to more effect elsewhere.