

# LESSON PLAN

RE-ESTABLISHING PEACE, SECURITY AND PROSPERITY IN THE WAKE OF WAR:  
THE ALLIED MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF OCCUPIED SICILY, 1943

## AIM

Describe the historical significance of the Allied and Italian civilian efforts to re-establish peace, provide security and lay the foundation for prosperity in Sicilian society immediately following the Allied invasion and occupation of Sicily in 1943.

## EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Identify the facts relating to the devastation and hardship suffered by the Sicilian population in 1943.
- Identify the difficulties of establishing the Allied Military Government in the wake of harsh fighting.
- Establish the connection between the role played by the Allied Military Government and occupying military forces and the pacification of Sicily for the war effort.
- Identify key lessons learned from governing occupied Sicily and how these influenced the occupation of the rest of Italy and Northwest Europe

## DURATION

60-90 minutes or more.

## OUTLINE

- Introduction (5 minutes)
- Summary of reading (15-30 minutes, but may be assigned as preparatory reading)
- Viewing of video (5 minutes)
- Discussion (15 minutes)
- Conclusion (5 minutes)

## STUDENT AUDIENCE

This activity is designed for ages 15 to 18 (grades 10 to 12 and equivalent).

## SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENTS

- Students to produce a 750-word written news article from the perspective a Second World War journalist on assignment as a battlefield correspondent; or,
- students could produce a 2-minute video clip in the style of a newsreel from the era.

## SUGGESTED WRITTEN REFERENCES

- Article: "To bury the dead and to feed the living": Allied Military Government in Sicily, 1943, by Cindy Brown, Canadian Military History, Summer 2013 – Volume 22, Number 3, Special Edition – The Sicily Campaign  
» <http://www.canadianmilitaryhistory.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/3-Brown-AMG-in-Sicily.pdf>

## SUGGESTED AUDIO-VISUAL REFERENCES

- [https://www.criticalpast.com/video/65675035966\\_Italy-after-World-War-II\\_Allied-Military-Govt\\_new-currency-notes\\_US-soldiers\\_power-plant\\_trains](https://www.criticalpast.com/video/65675035966_Italy-after-World-War-II_Allied-Military-Govt_new-currency-notes_US-soldiers_power-plant_trains)

- [https://www.criticalpast.com/video/65675035964\\_relief-works-by-AMG\\_medical-checkup\\_food-distribution\\_harbor-rebuilt\\_making-bread\\_officials](https://www.criticalpast.com/video/65675035964_relief-works-by-AMG_medical-checkup_food-distribution_harbor-rebuilt_making-bread_officials)
- [https://www.criticalpast.com/video/65675035963\\_reconstruction-after-World-War-II\\_building-roads\\_removing-wastes\\_destroying-wrecks](https://www.criticalpast.com/video/65675035963_reconstruction-after-World-War-II_building-roads_removing-wastes_destroying-wrecks)

## DETAILED OUTLINE

### Introduction (5 minutes)

From the abstract of the attached article:

A little-known facet of the Sicilian campaign was the “Allied effort to provide for the needs of the Sicilian civilian population during Operation Husky. Allied Military Government (AMG) was created in January 1943 to support the strategic aim of knocking Italy out of the war by creating and maintaining a benevolent atmosphere on the island. The duty of civil affairs officers was to relieve the fighting troops from the challenge of delivering humanitarian aid or dealing with a hostile population. Despite some mishaps and missteps on the part of planners, civil affairs made a significant contribution to the success of Operation Husky.”

### Review the Readings (30 minutes)

Provide students with the attached article, “To bury the dead and to feed the living: Allied Military Government in Sicily, 1943” from the journal *Canadian Military History*. Ideally, this material can be assigned as preparatory reading to leave more time for classroom discussion and debate of the topics and issues that are raised. This is a fairly long article, but it is easily read over a few days if assigned as classwork or as a home reading assignment.

### View Videos (10 minutes)

Show suggested videos. The videos provide a visual appreciation for the plight of the population of Sicily in the immediate aftermath of combat operations during Operation Husky. It also shows Allied soldiers providing humanitarian relief and executing other aspects of their duties as occupying forces. It provides an excellent complement to the attached article.

### Discussion (15 minutes)

Follow up with a discussion. It could be an open group discussion or a facilitated discussion. You may wish to ask the students, from all of their learning throughout this activity, what stands out for them. Points to be explored:

- What did you find most interesting or remarkable about the article and video?
- Do you think the Allied Military Government (AMG) and Allied occupying forces treated the Sicilian people fairly and humanely?
- The attached article states, “Despite some mishaps and missteps on the part of planners, civil affairs made a significant contribution to the success of Operation Husky.”
- How did the civil affairs soldiers and the AMG contribute to the success of the military operation?

### Conclusion (5 minutes)

- When recalling the Second World War, it is common to focus on military operations, strategy, Nazi horrors (e.g. the Holocaust), as well as massive death and destruction.
- However, we often fail to recall the difficult task that faced occupying forces and Allied Military Government in the face of widespread destruction, disease, famine, and fear.

- The Allied Military Government of Sicily played a crucial role in ensuring the pacification of Sicily and Italy.
- It probably also contributed greatly to the downfall of the Fascist government in Rome and Italy's subsequent switch to the Allied side of the war.

## TEXTS OF VIDEOS

### **Views of Financial institutions in Italy, during oversight by the Allied Military Government (AMG) in World War 2**

Seen are buildings of the National Bank of Lavoro and The Bank of Sicily, that were undamaged by bombing. Inside a financial building, American soldiers are lined up to obtain "scrip" (special currency issued by the Allied Military Government). Sign at the cashier window reads: "currency exchange." A soldier holds a piece of Scrip. American soldiers making purchases from street vendors. One eating an apple he just purchased. Men working under AMG auspices to bring a damaged electric power plant back on line again. A steam locomotive begins pulling a train out of a station, as Italian railroad operations resume again under administration of the AMG. Passengers look out the windows as the train passes the camera. On a street corner, a man obtains a copy of a newspaper (Sicilia Liberata) as a free press reappears under the AMG. Churches are seen including one with a large gathering of persons outside. Red Cross workers are seen among others making their way across a makeshift passageway near a destroyed bridge. Other general scenes of Italian citizens living under the administration of the AMG.

### **Relief activities of the Allies in Italy during World War 2**

Opening scene shows a sailing Schooner under Allied Navy control, docked at a port in Italy following the Allied invasion of Italy in 1943. This schooner is being loaded with Allied Military Government (AMG) medical supplies. Closeup of wooden crates containing the supplies. American medical corpsmen checking a stream of water for mosquitoes, and then spraying the area from a DUKW. A hospital building and interior with Italian women holding their infants as they await checkups and inoculations against disease. Italian citizens in a street anxiously seeking food from the AMG. Local Italian police work to control the crowd in which some persons become unruly and have to be removed. American troops of the U.S. 5th Army marching along Italian roads. Troops riding on a Sherman tank and on a truck pulling an artillery field piece. Supply yard stacked high with food supplies for U.S. troops. (Narrator states it required 750 tons a day to feed the 5th Army.) Views of Naples harbor cluttered with 30 large ships and 300 smaller ones blown up or scuttled by retreating German forces. Firemen manning hoses to fight fires at the waterfront. Smoldering ruins in the port. Three months later, U.S. forces are seen operating supply missions through the port. View from a hill of the port with barrage balloon overhead. Closeup of flour being offloaded from holds of ships by derricks. Italian soldiers unloading the flour bags and placing them aboard trucks for transport to Italian commercial food companies. A U.S. Army Captain at a table with Italian businessmen who purchase the flour from AMG at a fair market price. Italian purchasers examining the flour. Flour being transported to bakers who bake it into bread. Young men busy making and baking loaves of bread. Loaves stacked up at the bakery. A big tray of fresh loaves being sampled by Italian officials and distributed to local Italian civilians who enjoy it.

### **Allied Military Government efforts to rebuild Sicily after capturing it from Axis forces during World War 2**

Italian men needing employment board an open truck for transport to a job site. Workers standing with American soldiers preparing to work. A huge crowd of men pushing and shoving outside an Allied Military Government (AMG) labor hiring headquarters where they were offered decent wages to begin rebuilding after the war's destruction. Italian men, as well as American soldiers, rebuilding roads in the Alpine region of Italy, where German forces had destroyed them as they withdrew. U.S. Army engineers using a bulldozer, to clear and smooth a road. A large dump truck spreading new gravel for a highway bed. A team of workers manning a cable to pull down a damaged portion of a building. A British Army officer and a Colonial soldier in

a turban, set explosive charges to destroy a bomb-damaged building. They detonate the charges and bring down the entire large building. Bulldozers at work on huge piles of rubble. A steam shovel being employed to clear large piles of debris. Men at work in Palermo, to clear entire streets buried in rubble. Men clearing rubble near piles of twisted steel building girders. Rubble being moved by horse-drawn carts and dumped into the sea. Italian masons at work building new homes and refurbishing old ones. In views three months after the original Allied landing in Sicily during July, 1943, Palermo is seen well on the way to restoration. School children, including girls with brooms, walking to a place needing cleanup. Views of them cleaning steps and windows. Citizens picking up debris from streets and sidewalks. A man using a hose to clean a street and sidewalk in the city.