

Credit: Trombetta, Alfredo
Archivi Alinari, Firenze / TCA-F-001877-0000



Comune di Campobasso



PHOTO EXHIBITION

**CANADA
TOWN
1943/44**

May 28th
June 2nd, 2024
Circolo Sannitico
Campobasso

OTHER IMAGES OF
LIBERATED
CAMPOBASSO

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During the Second World War the **Molise** Region was unwillingly involved in the clash between the most powerful armies in the world. On the one hand the Anglo-American armies landed in Sicily in July 1943 ("Operation Husky") and on the other the German armies who set up solid defenses in the heart of the Central Apennines after a vain opposition in Sicily. The rugged and savage conformation of the land facilitated German defensive tactics which made the Molise region a theater of operation with the construction of three defensive lines (Viktor, Barbara and Bernhard) and an all-out defense line (Gustav), which was later broken only in May 1944.

Mountains, impetuous streams, harsh winters and a narrow war front, which did not allow the deployment of significant military equipment, allowed Germans to compensate for the disparity of forces.

Campobasso was occupied by German troops starting from September 1943, when they carried out a systematic and indiscriminate strategy of raids and requisitions both against the civilians and public properties.



Scan the code to watch
the video of the
Canadian soldiers
entering Campobasso



A pipe band parading through Via Marconi
on October 18th, 1943

Credit: Smith, Lieut. Jack H.

Library and Archives Canada / e011783220

The partial or total destruction of the strategic main buildings of the town - including the Railway stations, the Railway bridge, the Town Hall, the Military District, the Post Office and the Gasometer, but especially Campobasso mills (Ferro, Guacci, Fontana Vecchia and Ferrante) - was particularly ruthless and had the purpose of turning farmland out of the land.

The 1st Canadian Division's troops coming from Tappino Valley deployed their weaponry near Gildone on October 10th and opened artillery fire on the town, causing damage and casualties. Among the victims also was Campobasso's Bishop, Monsignor Secondo Bologna. Meanwhile the Germans withdrew from Oratino and bombarded the area in the following days.

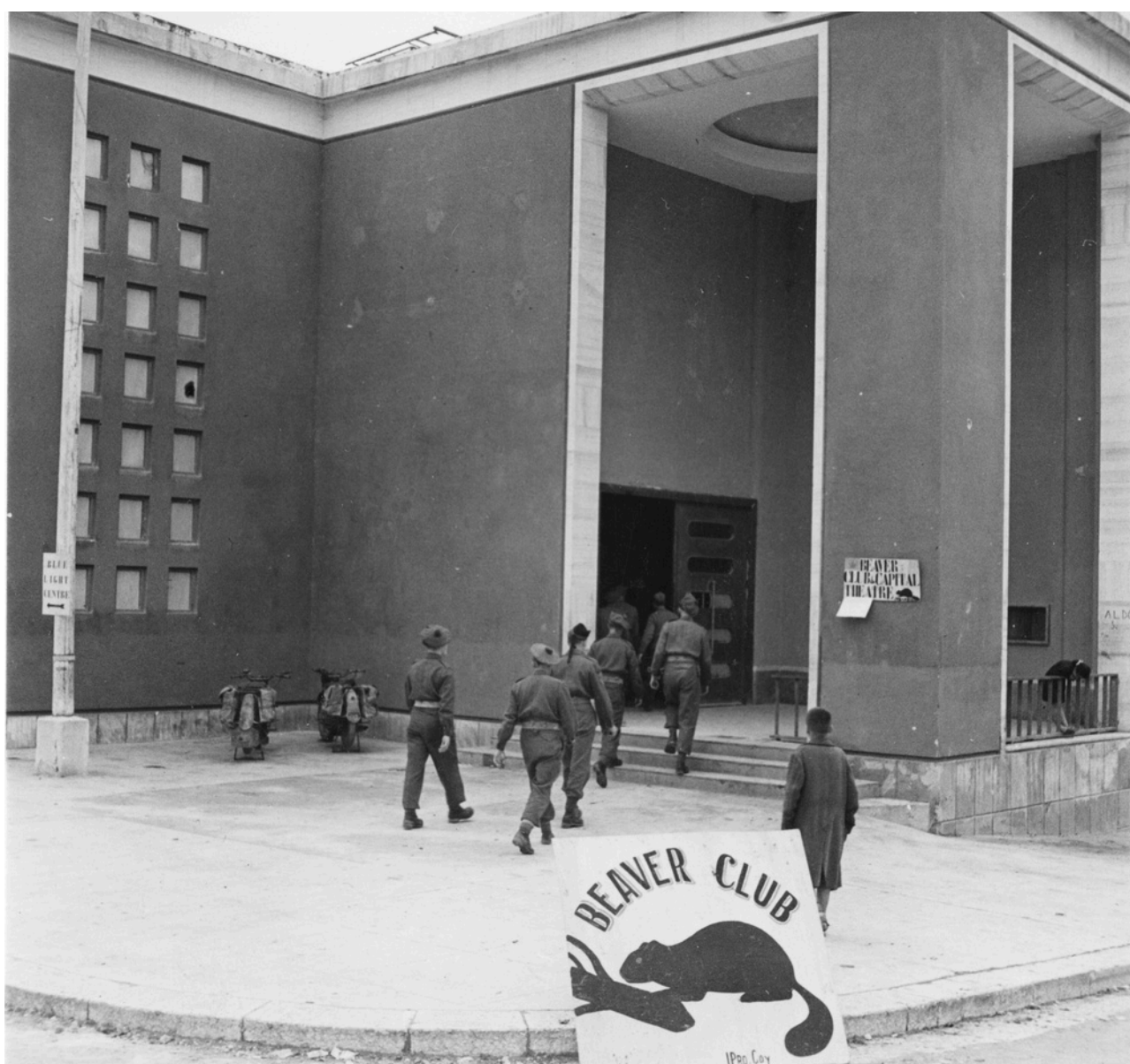
The 1st Royal Canadian Regiment Soldiers entered Campobasso on October 14th 1943, at 09.20 a.m, welcomed by enthusiastic crowds; the town had been liberated. The Allied presence implied the political and military occupation of the town turned into the provincial headquarters of the Allied Military Government of Occupied Territories (AMGOT), stationed in the Prefect's building.

Campobasso hosted soldiers of different nationalities and a massive number of Canadians, who ruled the town in wartime. It was then that a really significant event in Europe occurred: Campobasso was renamed **Canada Town** or **Maple Leaf City** with the subsequent change of the toponymy of the most representative streets, squares and buildings.



Above: Canadian soldiers looking at the "Canada Town" billboard - October 21st, 1943
 Credit: Lieut. Jack H. Smith
 Library and Archives Canada / PA-213685

Below: soldiers entering the Beaver Club - October 30th, 1943
 Credit: Sgt. Whicker -
 ENTERTAINMENT TOWN - IWM / NA 8342



The Municipality of Campobasso
in collaboration with

Centro per la Fotografia Campobasso "Vivian Maier"
Canadatown.it
Osservatorio Culturale "Enzo Nocera"

organizes the second edition of the photo exhibition

CANADA TOWN 1943/1944

Other images of liberated Campobasso

May 28th-June 2nd, 2024

Circolo Sannitico - Campobasso

Sources

Fondazione Alinari per la Fotografia, Firenze;
Library and Archives, Canada;
National Archives, Stati Uniti;
Imperial War Museum, Inghilterra;
National Army Museum, Nuova Zelanda;
Alexander Turnbull Library, Nuova Zelanda;
Archives of the Polish Province of Dominicans, Polonia;
Canadian War Museum, Canada.

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CENTRO PER LA FOTOGRAFIA
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CanadaTown.it

