

# Operation Husky honours Canadian soldiers in Sicily

Wilbert Coxe was a soldier from Milton who fought during the Sicilian campaign during the Second World War. He died in combat at age 23 on July 22, 1943. His position was corporal and he was with the Lorne Scots (Peel, Dufferin and Halton) regime. His service number was B/74679.

A remembrance ceremony to honour the thousands of Canadian soldiers who fought as he did is being held today in Sicily. Operation Husky 2013 (OH2013), a non-profit organization, has travelled with hundreds of Canadians to Sicily, Italy to commemorate the Canadian soldiers who contributed to the Sicilian campaign. July marks the 70th anniversary of 25,000 Canadian soldiers embarking on the first independent role for Canadians in the Second World War.

The Allied invasion of Sicily, known as Operation Husky, contributed to the liberation of Italy. More than 2,000 Canadian soldiers were wounded and more than 500 died during the four-week campaign. To this day, these Canadian soldiers have received little recognition for their sacrifice, according to Steve Gregory, founder of Operation Husky 2013, who leads the organization in hopes of raising awareness for the Canadian soldiers.

"Canadians need to know about our history, and our military history is a part of our contribution to the world," said Gregory.

"Brave Canadians paid with great sacrifice for

the achievements this country has been built upon. What does it say about us as a country if we forget them?"

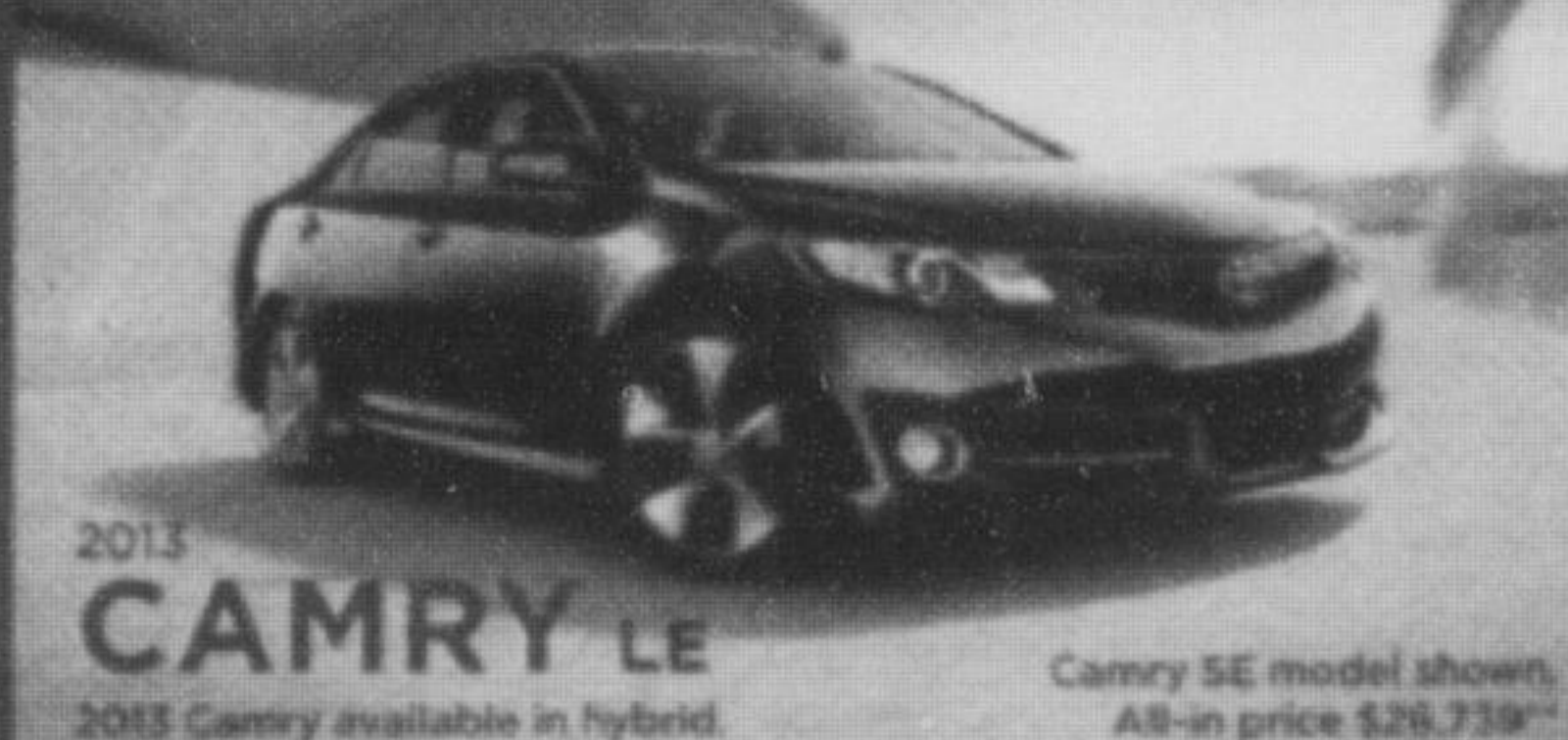
On July 10, OH2013 opened the first remembrance ceremony on the beaches of Pachino, Sicily.

The ceremony marked the beginning of the symbolic march from Pachino to Agira and included the unveiling of a new memorial monument to the Canadian forces. The second ceremony will take place today at the Canadian War Cemetery in Agira.

There are 484 Canadians at rest on this site and Operation Husky 2013 plans to have one person in attendance for each of the graves. Participants will be invited to stand graveside, representing a fallen soldier and answering in their place as a ceremonial role call is performed.

In the evening an event will include a concert by the Seaforth Highlanders in the main square at Agira, which will re-create the famous broadcast made on July 30, 1943; their predecessors played the first Allied musical concert in previously-occupied Europe in Agira on July 30, 1943. It was recorded by CBC and broadcast around the world by the BBC. Since 2006, the Museo dello Sbarco exhibit at Catania, a 20,000-square-foot museum dedicated to the allied landing in Sicily, had no Canadian exhibit. Tomorrow, the opening of the Canadian exhibit at the Museo dello Sbarco in Catania will take place.

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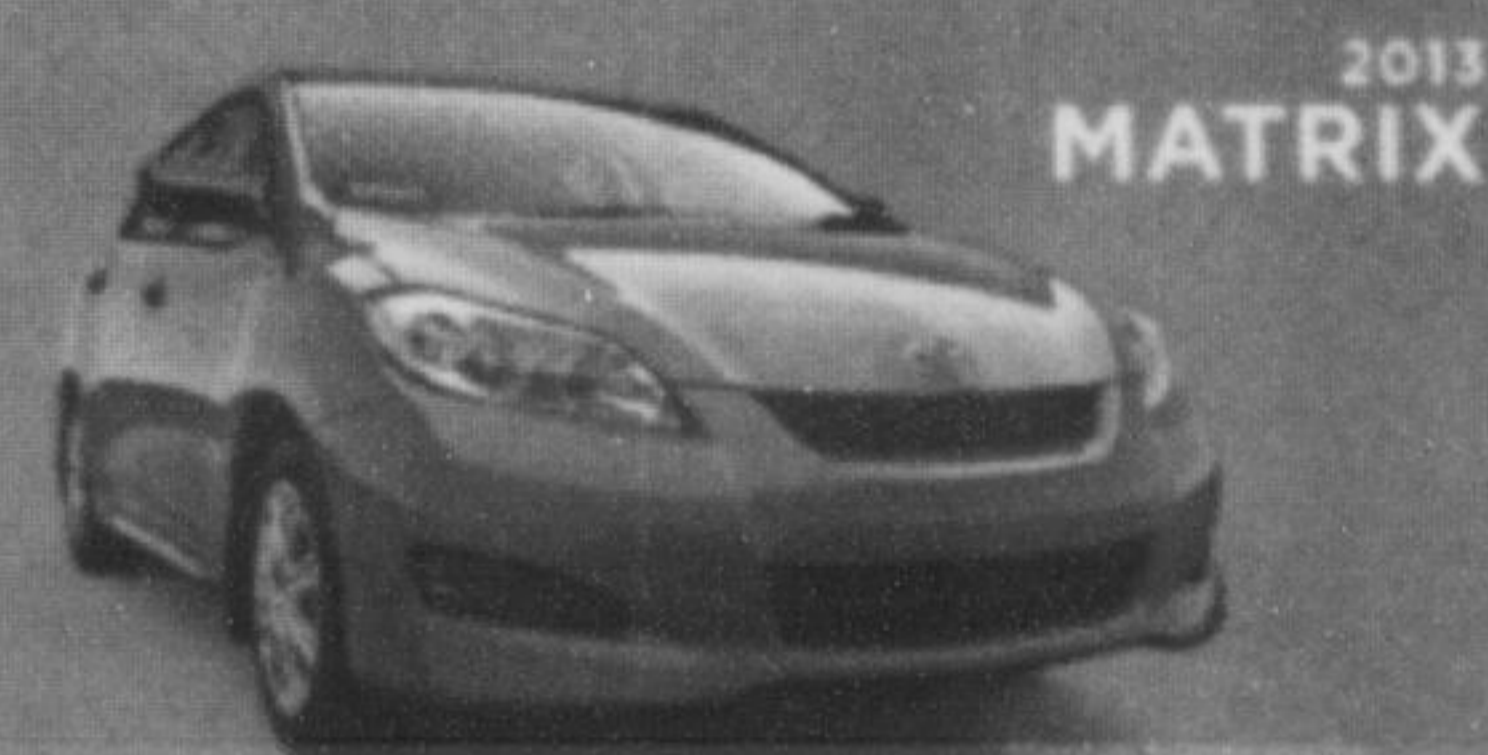


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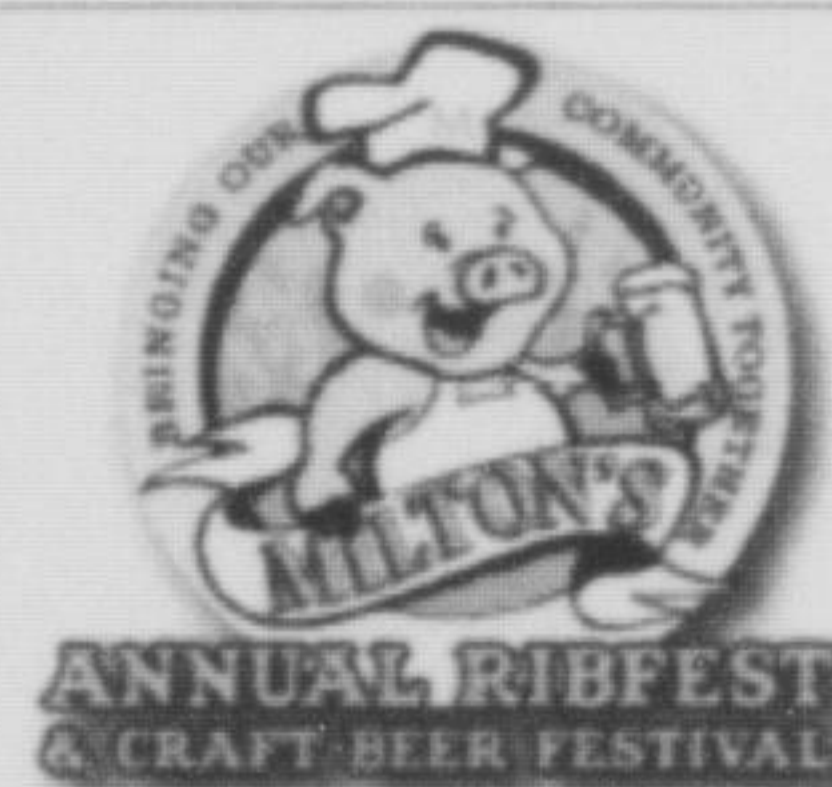
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