

"Matters Canadian" and the Problem with Being Special Robert T. Frederick on the First Special Service Force

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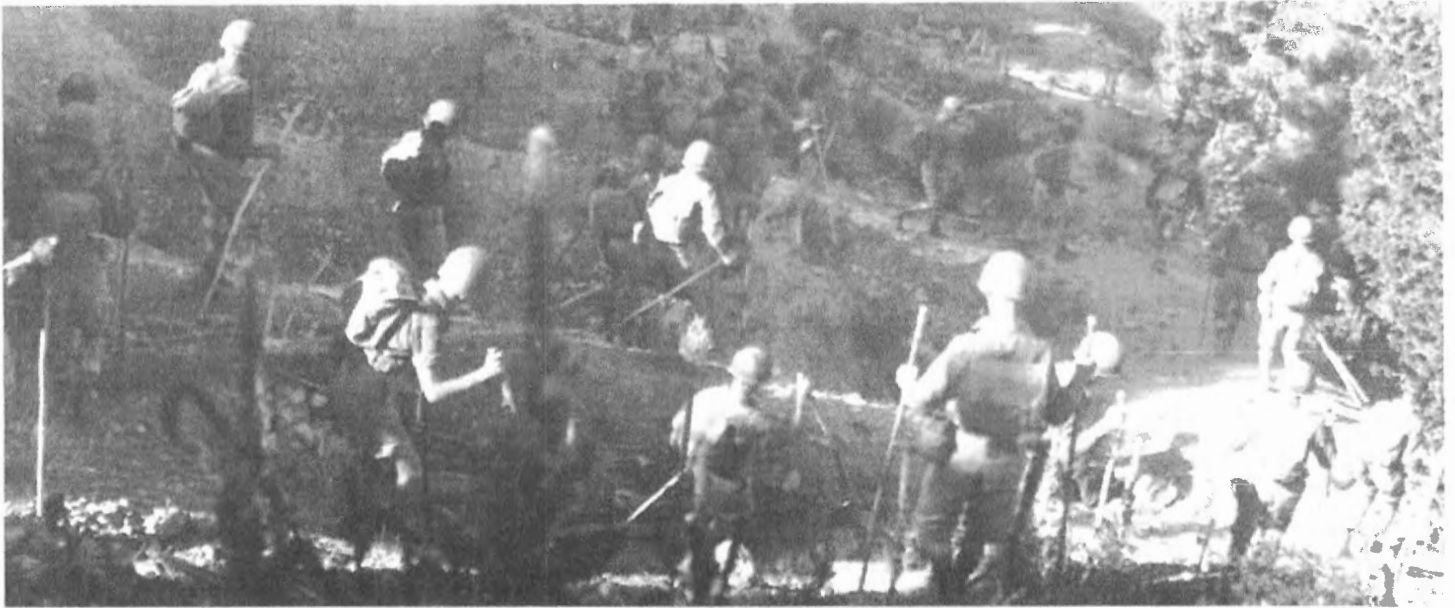
On 12 July 1942, the Canadian Army authorized the movement of nearly seven hundred officers and men to the United States for training as part of the First Special Service Force (FSSF), a highly-specialized commando unit that was being organized for the purpose of conducting raids in the alpine regions of occupied Europe.¹ From the summer of 1942 until disbandment in December 1944, this combined "North American" force consisted of soldiers drawn from the armies of both Canada and the United States. From the Aleutian Islands, to Monte la Difensa, Rome, and ending in Southern France, this élite US-Canadian infantry brigade established a remarkable combat record and became a symbol of the lasting partnership between our two countries. Today, the First Special Service Force is remembered both in Canada and the United States for its outstanding achievements in combat as well as its unique, bi-national composition.

Prior to 1942, Canadian soldiers had never served in such close association with the US Army, and even the post-war era has seen no similar examples of such near-complete integration. Within the Force, Canadian and American soldiers wore the same uniforms, carried the same weapons, and answered to the same superiors regardless of nationality – an American private could take orders from a Canadian sergeant, who in turn answered to an American or Canadian lieutenant. At the top of this bi-national chain of command stood Robert T. Frederick, US Army, the man who organized and led the First Special Service Force from its

activation on 2 July 1942 until his departure on 23 June 1944, shortly after Rome fell to the Allies.

Robert T. Frederick

A Coast Artillery officer by training, Frederick's appointment to command the First Special Service Force came about largely by default. In the spring of 1942, while working as a staff officer in the Operations Division of the US War Department, Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick was assigned the task of completing a detailed assessment of Operation PLOUGH by Major-General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Operation PLOUGH was a British scheme that called for the creation of specialized commando detachments, trained in winter warfare and equipped with armoured snow vehicles. The "PLOUGH Force," as it was called, would be capable of conducting parachute or glider landings in occupied Norway, where the mobility provided by the proposed snow vehicle would allow the raiders to sabotage German-controlled hydroelectric dams and power plants throughout the country. Although Frederick's report harshly criticized Operation PLOUGH, noting especially that the plan made no adequate provision for evacuating the raiding force upon completion of its mission, his lack of enthusiasm failed to dissuade his superiors from the project. Instead, Eisenhower appointed Frederick to take command of the PLOUGH Force itself. On 9 June 1942, Ike called the young staff officer into his office and told him: "Frederick, take this plough project. You've been over the whole thing. You're in charge now. Let me know what you need."²



Forcemen pick their way down a ravine during a September 1942 route march near Helena, Montana. The walking sticks are being used as substitute ski-poles in preparation for ski training during the winter months.

Modest and unassuming, Frederick always insisted that his selection to command the FSSF came as a result of other, more qualified officers turning down the job.³ Indeed, Frederick's initial reaction to Eisenhower's offer was to protest that he was completely unqualified for the position, noting in particular his complete lack of infantry training and his unfamiliarity with parachuting, mountain operations, and winter warfare.⁴ These objections were duly noted and ignored, perhaps due to the fact that Eisenhower was leaving for the UK in a few days to take command of the US European Theater of Operations and did not want to leave behind any loose-ends in Washington. Another possibility is that Lord Louis Mountbatten, the British Chief of Combined Operations and a key proponent of Operation PLOUGH, had some influence in the decision and viewed Frederick's appointment to command the Force as an ideal means of silencing his criticism of the project.⁵ Regardless of the reasons, on 2 July 1942, the First Special Service Force was activated by an order of the US War Department, with the newly-promoted Colonel Robert T. Frederick as the officer commanding.

In hindsight, Eisenhower would have been hard-pressed to select a more suitable candidate to command the First Special Service Force. From the unit's baptism of fire atop Monte la Difensa to its mad-dash to the Tiber bridges during the liberation of Rome, this former War Department staff officer earned the respect and trust of his men by his near-constant presence on the front lines. During the most critical stages of any given

battle, the best place to look for Frederick was said to be "up forward somewhere with the men who did the fighting."⁶ Leading from the front, even after his promotion to brigadier-general in January 1944, Frederick became the recipient of no less than eight Purple Hearts for wounds sustained in combat, earning him the dubious distinction of being the most shot-at-and-hit general officer of the Second World War. His wounds were a testament to his bravery and, to a lesser extent, his proclivity to leave the day-to-day operation of Force Headquarters to his subordinates.

Time away from headquarters is likely to have provided Frederick with some respite from the daily complexities of administering the First Special Service Force, burdened as it was not only by the existence of a sizable foreign element in its ranks, but also having to contend with the designation of being "special". The Second World War generated a remarkable number of highly-specialized military formations – from parachute infantry and glider troops to Royal Marine Commandos and Ranger Battalions. As with many of these special units, higher commanders did not always make allowances for the unique strengths and weaknesses of the First Special Service Force. For example, although the brigade-sized FSSF was equipped with more light machine guns and light mortars than a standard US infantry division,⁷ overall, the unit traded firepower for mobility by carrying no heavy machine guns and no mortars larger than a 60mm. The Force was not originally intended

for frontal attacks against conventionally-armed opponents, the breakout from Anzio and the battle of Ardena notwithstanding.

As an added complication, although Canadian officers and men were evenly distributed among the three battalion-sized "Regiments" of the Force, on paper, they remained grouped within the 1st Canadian Special Service Battalion. This Canadian element of the Force received its pay and reinforcements from within the Canadian system and its officers and men remained subject to the King's Orders and Regulations.⁸ As a result of this arrangement, the First Special Service Force operated within two military systems and answered to two very separate chains of authority. While the difficulties resulting from "matters Canadian" and the special status of the Force were by no means so severe as to merit Frederick getting shot eight times in order to avoid spending time at headquarters, one should not underestimate the frustration of a commanding officer who was forced to deal with not one, but two military bureaucracies.

One Force, Two Official Histories

In the 1950s and 60s, official historians in both Canada and the United States devoted considerable attention to the First Special Service Force. In the United States, Stanley W. Dziuban's

Military Relations Between the United States and Canada viewed the FSSF to be a model of cooperation between the Allied armies, though he did offer the following conclusion to his assessment of the Force:

Throughout its combat history, the First Special Service Force engaged but little in the highly specialized types of operations for which it had been trained.... Furthermore, the very nature and status of the force required frequent attention of the Combined Chiefs of Staff to proposals for employment of this group of less than 2,000 men, as well as diplomatic exchanges to obtain Canadian acceptance of proposals – all in all an inordinate amount of high-level consideration in relation to the size of the force. But from the point of view of Canadian-US relations, the unique experiment was a remarkable success.⁹

In Canada, official historian C.P. Stacey was even less enthusiastic. Surveying the difficulties involved in organizing the 1st Canadian Special Service Battalion and maintaining it in the theatre of war, an effort that required the repeated attention of Canadian authorities in Ottawa, Washington, and London, Stacey offered the following advice to his Canadian readers:

The First Special Service Force was a fine fighting unit, and the relations of Canadians and Americans within it seem to have left very little to be desired. Nevertheless, the administrative

Force training emphasized physical and mental endurance. The soldiers seen here are on a particularly grueling route march that covered a remarkable 47.6 miles in one day.





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The rugged terrain of the Montana hills provided ideal training conditions as the Force prepared for a parachute descent into occupied Europe for the purpose of destroying German-held hydroelectric dams and other targets. Unfortunately, Operation PLOUGH was cancelled before the Force had a chance to put many of its unique capabilities to use.

What did Frederick think of all this? Did the special capabilities of the FSSF merit the high-level consideration it received? Did the Force Commander consider the presence of a Canadian element within the unit to be a help or a hindrance? After the war, Frederick tended to provide only a tactfully-vague response to any question regarding the use and misuse of the Force or the relative merits of the unit's bi-national composition.¹² On at least three occasions during his tenure as Force Commander, however, Frederick provided his superiors with detailed reports on the unique difficulties encountered by his command. His letters, now held by the US National Archives in College Park, Maryland, and the Hoover Institution Archives at Stanford University, provide direct answers to difficult questions, particularly in regards to the challenge of finding a mission suited to the special training and capabilities of the Force and the international complications that dogged the unit at every stage of its existence. Taken together, these letters indicate that these problems were never fully solved to the Force Commander's satisfaction, thereby offering some of the best insight available into the final decision, in December 1944, to disband the First Special Service Force, return the Canadians to their own army, and reorganize the American element along the lines of a conventional US Army infantry regiment.

and other difficulties that were encountered in connection with it – in matters of pay, decorations, and the tendency of the United States to regard Canadian members of this international unit as Canadians serving in the U.S. Army – suggest that any such enterprise should not be undertaken on another occasion without careful thought.¹⁰

Stacey and Dziuban indicate that the First Special Service Force was an administrative handful for the Canadians and a political football for the United States. Both historians recognize that these difficulties posed no insurmountable obstacles *within* the Force itself, where relations between Canadian and American soldiers were, on the whole, excellent. Nevertheless, the US official historian points to the disproportionate amount of high-level consideration of the Force and the failure to make full use of the unit's special training as causes for concern. Further, while Dziuban dismisses Canadian "administrative complications" by stating that these "were in the over-all so small and were handled so competently by the Canadian administrative personnel that they were hardly apparent to U.S. members of the force staff,"¹¹ the Canadian official historian quite obviously disagrees.

"Use It or Lose It": Finding a Mission, February 1943

In late September 1942, Frederick travelled to the United Kingdom in order to discuss the development of Operation PLOUGH. It was during this visit that the Force Commander learned of a potentially-disastrous lapse of communication between the British authorities and the PLOUGH planning headquarters in Washington. For starters, Frederick learned that the British Chief of Air Staff had expressed serious reservations about the project, as he was reluctant to divert bombers from their assigned missions over Germany in order to parachute the Force and its vehicles into Norway. Before doing

so, the Air Chief would have to be convinced that Operation PLOUGH could result in greater damage to the enemy than bombing Germany directly.¹³ Further, in London, a representative of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) informed Frederick that his organization already had a plan for destroying Norwegian hydroelectric stations using Norwegian saboteurs. Finally, the Norwegian government-in-exile was voicing strong opposition to the PLOUGH project as they expected the destruction of Norway's infrastructure to cause greater hardship for the Norwegian people than it would for the German occupiers. In short, Operation PLOUGH was about to be permanently sidelined, and on 26 September, Frederick cabled the following message to Washington:

Suspend effort on present line.... New plan may be radically different and not concerned with hydroelectric or other industrial installations.... Cease training on hydroelectric installations and...stress general tactical training, to include attack of fortifications, pill boxes, barracks and troop concentrations. Change in weapons may be necessary to provide greater firepower, so suspend further small arms training pending a decision.¹⁴

Returning to the United States in October, Frederick reported the results of his visit to Lieutenant-General McNarney, the US Army's Deputy Chief of Staff, who ordered all planning stopped pending a decision by the Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall. Given that the United States had originally adopted PLOUGH at the suggestion of the British, and since that time had devoted considerable resources to its development, Marshall and McNarney were quite understandably exasperated by this turn of events. However, in light of the investment already made in training and equipping the Force, not to mention development of the snow vehicle, Marshall decided to retain the FSSF for possible employment in other theatres. All that remained

Above right: Parachute training in the Helena Valley, summer 1942. Parachute qualification was one of the first orders of business for volunteers arriving at Fort William Henry Harrison, a process Colonel Frederick hoped might help "separate the sheep from the goats."

Below right: A soldier struggles with his deployed parachute in a stiff breeze during parachute training at Helena. While Canadian soldiers were officially grouped within the 2nd Canadian Parachute Battalion for administrative purposes, in practice, they were integral to the Force and did not form a separate contingent of their own

was to approach the Canadian authorities to request their continued involvement in the Force.

One condition of Canadian participation in the FSSF had been that any overseas deployment of Canadian soldiers required the approval of the Canadian Government. With the cancellation of Operation PLOUGH, however, Frederick now considered the Canadian's right of refusal to be a brake on the usefulness of the Force as a whole. In the autumn of 1942, nearly half of the combat echelon of the Force was composed of Canadian officers and enlisted men. In the event of these Canadians not being permitted to take part in an operation, Frederick reasoned that their withdrawal would require an extensive and time-consuming reorganization of the Force as a whole. "It is believed that in fairness to the United States," he wrote, on 16 October 1942, "the Canadian Government should at this time specifically state any limitations upon the combat employment of the Canadian personnel of the Force."¹⁵

Stating specific limitations in advance, however, was something that the Canadians simply were not prepared to do, as this would allow the United States to send the Force,



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without notification, to any theatre that was *not* specifically ruled out. Instead, the acting Chief of General Staff (CGS) in Ottawa, Major-General J.C. Murchie, suggested that Canada retain its right of approval prior to any deployment, but conceded that once this approval had been given, "the Canadian Government should not further reserve the right to withdraw the Canadian element from participation."¹⁶

Comparing the FSSF to other examples of Canadians serving alongside Allied forces, Murchie agreed with Frederick that the circumstances of the Force were entirely different from those affecting other commands:

In the event that a Canadian force, acting in combination with the forces of our allies, did not propose to proceed with a given operation, this would not affect the independent action of the forces of the other allies involved....Should, however, the Canadian element of the First Special Service Force be similarly withdrawn, it would mean, in effect, the disappearance of the Force as such, and the cancellation of the project to which it had been assigned.¹⁷

This essential difference between the First Special Service Force and other Canadian forces acting in combination with Allied troops seemed to be of sufficient importance that the

Canadian Government should relinquish the right to withdraw the Canadians of the FSSF once approval for the general project had been given. In a letter to the Canadian Minister of National Defence, Murchie stated his opinion that once Canadian approval had been given..."we can safely leave the operational planning to the United States authorities. They are not given to rash military undertakings."¹⁸

On 30 October, the US War Department accepted Murchie's recommendations as the basis of continued Canadian participation in the Force. In Washington, Frederick's staff began to consider alternate missions for the FSSF, including operations in the Mediterranean or the Soviet Caucasus.¹⁹ At the Force training grounds in Helena, Montana, the intensive program of physical conditioning, tactical problems, and battle drill continued, alongside a rigorous program of instruction in skiing, mountain climbing, and winter warfare.²⁰

By February 1943, however, the unit was still in training and no new mission had materialized. Soon it would be spring and, with the snow already disappearing in Europe, the Force would be stuck in training for another year. Seeing no possible use for the FSSF in the winter of 1943, on 3 February, Frederick wrote the following to Lieutenant-General McNarney:²¹

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF:

Subject: First Special Service Force

The time has been reached when it is necessary to decide the future of the First Special Service Force. The First Special Service Force was created specifically for the accomplishment of the Plough Project at the request of British authorities, but in October, 1942, the Project was dropped due to the impracticability of executing it during the winter of 1942-1943. Reasons for abandoning the project were that planning information furnished by the British mission assigned to the project was faulty and erroneous, airplanes to drop the Force into the combat area are not available, and the Norwegian Government did not favour the project or its objective.

At the time that the Plough Project was dropped, a new mission for the First Special Service Force was sought. After consideration of several possible missions, it was directed that the Force complete its winter training with a view to its employment in Sicily, Sardinia or Italy early in 1943. In accordance with the last directive, the Force has continued its winter training and an attempt has been made to prepare the Force for any operation in which it may be employed.

Private John Johnston of Montreal, Quebec, is seen here in the Radicosa area during the Winter Line campaign of January, 1944. He is carrying a Johnson automatic rifle – one of the special weapons carried by the Force and an unusual sight in the European Theatre.



G. Ronald collection; CWM/MCG Archives

Private Leonard adjusts medic Private Wilson's first aid packboard of blankets and plasma at the First Regiment Aid Station. During the assault on Monte la Difensa, FSSF positions at the summit were kept supplied by means of a narrow footpath and packboards such as the one seen here.

At the present time, there appears to be no possible employment for the Force in a winter operation during this winter. To hold the Force in training without its engaging in combat before the winter of 1943-44 would bring about difficult problems.

The personnel of this Force, both United States and Canadian, volunteered for hazardous duty and have subjected themselves to a course of training more demanding and rigorous than has ever been attempted elsewhere, in order that they might be in top condition for combat... Both officers and men are beginning to get restless and have frequently stated that they volunteered for this Force in order to get into combat early. The problems of morale and discipline that might arise if the Force is continued in training for a prolonged period might become serious...

The expense incident to maintaining this Force is great and is not justified unless employment of the Force in an operation utilizing its special equipment and training is definitely foreseen. The United States is providing highly specialized and valuable training not only for United States Army personnel, but also for about seven hundred Canadian officers and enlisted men...

The combat personnel of the Force are now in excellent physical condition, and as a result of the training are able to withstand severe and difficult conditions. While a prolonged period of training would bring about greater proficiency in tactics, use of weapons and the performance of specialists, the detrimental effect on physical condition and spirit of the personnel would offset the gain.

The employment of the Force is limited by the necessity of securing from the Canadian authorities an agreement for the participation of Canadian personnel in the Force. More than a third of the officers and enlisted men of the Combat Echelon are Canadians, and to employ the Force without the Canadian personnel would seriously reduce the combat strength.

The commitment of the War Department to British authorities for the continuation and training of this force are understood, but it is believed that unless definite employment... in the near future is foreseen, the unit should be discontinued and the personnel reassigned...

Considering the capabilities of this Force and the limitations upon its use, one of the following missions offers the most profitable use and should be decided upon at this time:

- a. Participation in an operation in the Aleutian Islands, if one is to be undertaken during the spring of 1943. The Force could participate in a strong attack to drive the enemy from Kiska or could be used independently in an operation against the enemy on Attu. In view of the interest the Canadian Government must feel in the Aleutian Islands, it is believed that agreement to the employment of Canadian personnel in this area would be readily obtained...
- b. Transfer of the Force to the United Kingdom for employment on the Continent of Europe as a raiding force.



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Canadian authorities should not object to participation of the Canadian personnel. This employment offers little or no use for the special snow vehicles and would not require the winter training troops have received...

- c. Assignment of the Force to North Africa and employment as a raiding force either in Africa or in the Mediterranean area. The Canadian Government should not object to this employment of Canadian personnel... The specialized training, other than winter training, received by personnel of the Force should particularly fit them for this type of operation. The presence of the Force in this area would ensure its being available where its employment is most likely.

(signed) Robert T. Frederick,
Colonel, First Special Service Force,
Commanding.

Frederick's report of February 1943 highlights the difficulty involved in finding a mission suited to the highly specialized training and capabilities of the First Special Service Force. Having ruled out the possibility of a winter operation in 1942-43, his letter to the Deputy Chief of Staff listed four possible alternatives for the First Special Service Force in the coming year: the Aleutian Islands, the European Theatre, North Africa, or the Mediterranean. Over the next four months, both the Combined Chiefs of Staff and the US War Department gave serious consideration to these and several other deployments. By Frederick's



G. Ronald collection, CWM/ICG Archives

First Special Service Force pack mules ascend a hillside in the rocky Italian countryside. During the mountain fighting of January 1944, mules provided one of the best means of moving food and ammunition to the front.

account, one particularly busy day in Washington had seen the Force assigned and reassigned to six different missions in a period of fourteen hours.²² While Frederick was primarily concerned with finding a mission, his letter also gives some indication of the international complications encountered by his command, most notably the requirement of securing Canadian approval for any proposed deployment. Prior to departing for overseas, Frederick quite obviously considered that Canadian involvement at the planning level limited the unit's usefulness to the US Army. It remained to be seen whether the FSSF's performance in combat would justify the effort devoted to organizing and training the unit.

A "Special" Reinforcements Crisis, December 1943 – February 1944

Between February and August 1943, Allied planners considered sending the Force to theatres ranging from the British Isles to Burma before finally committing the unit to the Aleutians Campaign. Here, in August 1943, the First Special Service Force acted as the spearhead of a US-Canadian landing on the island of Kiska, but when the Japanese garrison was found to have secretly withdrawn and the island left abandoned,

the Force was quickly returned to the United States for reassignment to the Mediterranean.

The FSSF arrived in Italy on 17 November 1943, during a stalemate in the US Fifth Army's drive towards Rome. For nearly a month, the Allied advance had been stalled before a belt of German fortifications known as the Winter Line. On 24 November, the Force received orders to capture the summit of Monte la Difensa, a mountain stronghold that had been frustrating the Allied advance since the first week of November. On the night of 2-3 December, the FSSF's Second Regiment conducted a daring assault up the cliffs on the north face of the mountain, which the enemy had left unguarded as they were believed to be impassable. After a violent firefight to secure the summit, the Force held its ground against repeated German counterattacks and artillery bombardments – a six-day effort that cost the Force some 511 casualties, or roughly a quarter of its total combat strength.²³ The capture of Monte la Difensa, however, destroyed a key anchor of the Winter Line and earned high praise for the FSSF from Lieutenant-General Mark W. Clark, the Commanding General of Fifth Army:

The Special Service Force was given the task of capturing la Difensa...the possession of

which was vital to our further advance in that sector. The mission was carried out at night in spite of adverse weather conditions and heavy enemy rifle, machine-gun, mortar, and artillery fire on the precipitous slopes over which it was necessary to attack. Furthermore, the position was maintained despite counterattacks and difficulties of communication and supply. The fact that you have acquitted yourself well in your first action under enemy fire is a tribute to fine leadership and a splendid reward for time spent in arduous training.²⁴

Following its success at Monte la Difensa, the FSSF was assigned the right flank of the US II Corps advance as it rolled up the German defences in the mountains north of the Mignano Gap, which guarded the entrance to the Liri Valley and the Highway 6 to Rome. On Christmas Day, First Regiment conducted a downhill frontal assault against prepared German defences on the western spur of Monte Sammucro. Though the attack was successful, subsequent shelling and losses to trench foot and exposure reduced several companies in First Regiment to between 20 and 30 percent strength.²⁵

From New Year's Day until 17 January, Third Regiment entered the fray and fought a bitter campaign to overcome the German defences on Monte Majo. Here again, the bitter cold, difficult

terrain, and determined German resistance exacted a heavy toll. Extracts from the War Diary of the 1st Canadian Special Service Battalion provide some insight into the nature of Force operations during this period:

January 8: Today's casualty return...lists 100 names, half of them frostbite and exposure, the rest battle casualties. The weather in the hills is very cold, with high wind and snow. German resistance is quite severe, artillery and mortar fire is taking its toll.

January 9: Today's Force casualty return has 122 names, again nearly half are frostbite and exposure. There soon won't be much left of the Force if casualties keep up at this rate.

January 10: News from the front is bad... The Force is being thrown into one action after another with only a handful of able-bodied men left and no sign of their being relieved. Seventy-three names on today's casualty report, 40 frostbitten feet. Those returning to camp on light duty say it is really rugged and they are all played out. Three weeks tomorrow since they left here.²⁶

By the time the Force was withdrawn from the front on 17 January for rest and reorganization, the casualties suffered to date had reduced all three Regiments of the Force to approximately 50% strength. These losses were particularly devastating to the Canadian element, as it had been decided in April 1943 that the

A communications muleskinner points to Monte Cassino, where the Force was initially slated to take part in the assault on a German-held monastery. Instead, the unit was sent to Anzio at the beginning of February.



1st Canadian Special Service Battalion would receive no reinforcements upon departure for overseas. In light of this, and the fact that the highly-specialized Force was "acting in a straight infantry role as shock troops for the Fifth Army,"²⁷ the acting senior Canadian officer of the Force, Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas P. Gilday, made a startling recommendation to his superiors:

We have acquitted ourselves well in battle. There is good feeling and many strong friendships between the Canadians and Americans of the Force. As new American reinforcements come in and Canadians become fewer in number, it will be increasingly difficult to keep the friendly spirit and good relations that now exist. The Canadian element is liable to become a source of embarrassment to the Americans. It will also become increasingly difficult to keep the existing high morale when it becomes known that the Canadians are going to be allowed to slowly waste away.

I strongly recommend that the Canadian element be withdrawn from the First Special Service Force while there is enough of it left to be of assistance to the Canadian Army. This withdrawal should take place immediately before the force is committed again in another phase of operations and while the force is undergoing re-organization.²⁸

Gilday's recommendation was subsequently taken up by Lieutenant-General Kenneth Stuart, the newly-appointed Chief of Staff at Canadian Military Headquarters (CMHQ) in London, who agreed that withdrawal of the 1st Canadian Special Service Battalion should take place before the Force returned to the front.²⁹ In Stuart's opinion, pulling the Canadians out of the FSSF would be difficult under any circumstances, but doing so while the unit was actively engaged was impossible as it would contradict earlier agreements with the United States. In Ottawa, however, National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) took an even less favourable view, refusing to act on Stuart and Gilday's recommendation, citing the following warning from the Canadian Army Staff in Washington: "Any proposal to break up this combined unit, which is not only in a theatre of operations but is actually engaged against the enemy, would prove embarrassing to a degree and might be construed as hardly playing the game. It would certainly be difficult to put across and certainly would not enhance US regard for us."³⁰

The result of this disagreement between Canadian officials in London and Ottawa was

a two-week exchange of telegrams across the Atlantic, with CMHQ pressing for immediate withdrawal of Canadians from the FSSF while NDHQ in Ottawa considered other options. It was not until 2 February that NDHQ finally relented and agreed to raise the subject in Washington. By this time, however, it was already too late.

Gilday's recommendation had been predicated on the FSSF *not* being engaged in active operations, as this would allow a Canadian withdrawal and reorganization of the Force to take place with a minimum of inconvenience to both parties. While the Canadian Army Staff in Washington had been mistaken in assuming that the Force was "engaged against the enemy" at the time of their warning to Ottawa, by the time NDHQ finally resolved to take the matter up with Washington, the situation had changed completely. On 31 January, the FSSF boarded a small fleet of landing craft bound for the port of Anzio, where the Force was to take up defensive positions on the right flank of the newly-established Allied beachhead.

This return to the front eliminated any possibility of the Canadians being withdrawn from the Force. The irony is that if the Canadians *had* actually approached the Americans before the Force left for Anzio, in all likelihood they would have found that many of their views were shared not only by the authorities in Washington, but also by the newly-promoted commander of the Force, Brigadier-General Frederick. In February, Frederick provided Lieutenant-General Mark Clark with a detailed and rather blunt report on the difficulties facing the First Special Service Force almost three weeks following its arrival at Anzio:³¹

19 February 1944

SUBJECT: First Special Service Force.

TO: Commanding General, Fifth Army, U.S. Army.

Upon completion of the current phase of operations, it will be necessary to know the basic decisions that have been made for the future of the First Special Service Force. The combat strength of the Force has been so reduced that it cannot again take any major part in an operation, nor can it execute minor actions for any long period.

The possible decisions appear to be limited to the following:

a) Continue the Force as:

- 1) A joint United States-Canadian unit.
- 2) A US unit without Canadian personnel.

Brigadier General Robert T. Frederick discusses the results of an FSSF raid with Lieutenant Colonel Robert S. Moore. A US Fifth Army tank is burning in the background, 15 April 1944.

b) Discontinue the Force.

To continue the Force with its characteristics is not possible under existing circumstances. The successes the Force has achieved in combat have been the result of special training and the development of certain qualities and spirit in the officers and enlisted men. This training and development required a comparatively long time under favorable training conditions. Comparable results cannot be accomplished by the Force if its casualties are replaced with men who are not specially trained, nor without its full complement of officers who have been indoctrinated with the spirit and combat methods of the command.

There is no existing source, either United States or Canadian, of trained replacements for the Force. A limited number of officers can be obtained by commissioning non-commissioned officers from the command, but this source is not great and officers without trained enlisted men cannot accomplish those missions considered normal for the Force.

If the Force is to be continued, it must be withdrawn from the combat zone to a place where suitable training conditions and facilities are available. After the arrival of new personnel, a period of four to six months should be allowed to accomplish their training.

The organization of the Force must be adjusted to the type of operations in which the Force is being employed. The present organization was created for a specific mission and was based solely on the conditions surrounding the accomplishment of that mission which was totally unrelated to the missions in which the Force has actually engaged.

Likewise, the equipment of the Force must be changed so that the Force will be properly equipped for the missions it is to be assigned, rather than to engage in combat with the handicap of unsuitable and inadequate equipment... Many essential functions, such as medical service, communications and supply during combat have not been provided and create serious problems during the type of combat in which the Force has engaged.

Originally, the Force was to be made up equally of Canadian and United States personnel. This joint composition was agreed upon at the request of Allied officials who were neither American nor Canadian. It has no military basis, nor is it a sound arrangement.

The Canadian Army furnishes no service troops, and all overhead and administrative functions for the Force, except for Canadian records and pay, are performed by United States personnel. The Canadian officers and enlisted men are subjected to strange conditions and to policies and practices not encountered in the Canadian Army... The United States has, by necessity, furnished all clothing and equipment for Canadian as well as United States personnel. This has required the Canadians to use weapons and equipment with which they have no previous experience.

While the amalgamation of personnel of two armies into a single unit has worked successfully, it is basically unsound and difficult, and it has worked only because those intimately associated with the administration and supervision of the

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arrangement have made it work.

Another complication is that employment of the Force must be approved by Canada as well as the United States. In the past, this has resulted in the Force not being sent to a theater to which the War Department desired to assign it. In addition, because of the inclusion of Canadian personnel in the Force, the British Government has had to be consulted and its agreement obtained for the Force's employment.

The Canadian government has established a figure of seven hundred (700) officers and other ranks as the Canadian personnel to be assigned to the Force. This figure... was based on an early estimate of the personnel to be required for the original mission. It does not represent half the Force, nor even half of the combat echelon. As a result of training losses and losses that have occurred since arrival in this theater, Canadian officers and other ranks now assigned to the Force total slightly more than three hundred (300). The Canadian Army headquarters in Ottawa decided that no Canadian replacements were to be furnished for the Force, and this decision appears to be firm.

If the Force is to be continued as a joint United States-Canadian unit, the Canadian Army should furnish officers and other ranks to bring the Canadian strength up to half of the total strength of the Force. To absorb new Canadian personnel it will, of course, be necessary to withdraw from the combat zone for an extended period so that the Canadians can be given necessary training.

If the Force is to be continued as a United States unit without Canadian personnel, problems of organization, equipment, and qualified replacements and training still exist. In addition, other problems less tangible but more far-reaching are introduced. The international character of the Force has placed it in the position of representing the extent to which the United States and Canada can cooperate in an undertaking. It is an exceptional example of complete integration of personnel of two armies into a single unit. The Force has become well known as a joint American-Canadian force, particularly in Canada where knowledge of its existence has become widespread. For the Force to continue in existence without Canadian personnel might bring about serious repercussions, particularly in Canada where the elimination of Canadian participation in the Force may be misconstrued...

The elimination of Canadian personnel from the Force would deprive the unit of many of its key officers and men. When the Force was activated, the Canadian Army furnished, in general, better qualified officers and enlisted men than did the United

States Army, and this has resulted in a large number of the key positions being filled by Canadians.

It is considered that, because of the possible unfavorable reaction, both official and public, that would arise if the Canadian participation in the Force is dropped, it is better either to continue the Force as a joint force, or to discontinue it...

The entire existence of the Force, until it was transferred to the North African Theater of Operations, was countenanced by the War Department only because of its international character and because of the interest of British officials, which no longer exists. The joint composition of the Force creates problems that must be solved without precedent or legal support. It is believed that the War Department would welcome the opportunity to discontinue this special unit, which has been a particular problem and unduly expensive.

Special units, such as this Force, are not looked upon with favor by other units of the Army. There is an intense feeling of dislike arising from the belief that special units are particularly favored and that they receive too much credit for their accomplishments. This feeling has been encountered quite generally, particularly in those normal units that have not been associated with this Force in operations. While this point is not of importance, it is worthy of consideration in deciding whether this and other units should exist.

Unless provisions are made for the reorganization, re-equipment and replacement of personnel losses with adequately trained personnel, the Force will soon become an ineffective combat unit. Because of the international interest in the unit, it would be better that it be discontinued before any strained feelings are created and while it is looked upon with favor by both interested nations. The whole project is delicate and has potentialities for international complications.

Should the Force encounter disaster in combat, it is possible that the Canadians at home may feel that their officers and men were unnecessarily sacrificed. Likewise, there is always the possibility of criticism for placing American soldiers under Canadian officers and non-commissioned officers should the fortune of battle be against them.

For the sake of United States and Canadian relations, it may be best to let this unit pass out of existence while it is still in its prime, rather than to sustain it through a period when it will be remembered only for its faults and defects.

Robert T. Frederick,
Brigadier-General, US Army,
Commanding.

One year after recommending that that the First Special Service Force be committed to action at the earliest opportunity, Frederick's letter of 19 February 1944 expressed grave concern over the long-term viability of the Force, noting in particular that after two months of sustained combat, the unit "cannot again take any major part in an operation, nor can it execute minor actions for any long period." Having made no provision for replacing combat losses, and with no existing source of trained replacements

– either Canadian or American – Frederick was of the opinion that the FSSF should be disbanded at the earliest opportunity... "rather than sustain it through a period when it will be remembered only for its faults and defects." Though fully aware of the international difficulties involved, the letter leaves no doubt that Frederick now considered the bi-national composition of the Force to be a significant impediment that should be done away with as soon as possible. This, he felt, would be in the best interests of both nations. What his letter fails to consider, however, is whether such disbandment was even possible now that the Force had been committed to holding the line at Anzio.

Reorganization Under Fire, Spring 1944

Two days after Frederick's letter to Fifth Army, Lieutenant-General Stuart sent the following cable to the Chief of General Staff in Ottawa: "The whole question of the future of the First Special Service Force is apparently now in the melting pot. I was called by telephone on Friday by [the] Chief of Combined Operations, who told me that...the Americans were now proposing that the force be disbanded, but hesitated to make specific recommendations until they knew the Canadian reaction to this proposal."³² Within the FSSF itself, both Frederick and Gilday, the acting senior Canadian officer, now considered disbandment to be the best course of action. The Chief of Staff at CMHQ agreed, as did the CGS in Ottawa and the Canadian Army authorities in Italy. On the American side, General Jacob Devers, Commanding General of US forces in the North African Theater had also suggested that the Force be inactivated and the personnel reassigned.³³ Opposed, however, were those commanders who were more immediately concerned with the situation at Anzio, including General Eisenhower and Lieutenant-General Clark.

By the first week of March, the matter had been settled between the Anglo-American authorities and Clark's Fifth Army was allowed to retain the FSSF as a combined US-Canadian unit. In Italy, the Canadian Army was instructed to bring the 1st Canadian Special Service Battalion back up to strength by drawing volunteers from the existing infantry reinforcement pools in the Mediterranean Theatre. Fifth Army, meanwhile,



Colonel Edwin A. Walker, who assumed command of the FSSF after Frederick's departure, is seen here observing enemy positions in the Radicosa area. With him are Major Robert B. Walker of Wakima, Washington; Major J.M. Sector of Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Captain Frank W. Erikson of New Jersey. 16 January 1944.

went a step further in its effort to rebuild the Force when Clark decided "to increase its strength, revise its organization and equipment, and re-orient its mission to encompass essentially Ranger actions and, at least in part, paratroop capabilities."³⁴ Frederick's letter of 19 February had recommended that the organization and equipment of the Force should be brought in line with the missions to which it was being assigned and this was exactly what Clark intended to do.

On 8 March, Fifth Army assigned the 456th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion as a permanent attachment to the FSSF and ordered the US 4th Ranger Battalion inactivated to provide the Force with roughly 20 officer and 500 enlisted man replacements.³⁵ In doing so, Clark's intent was to reorganize the First Special Service Force and expand the unit from its current strength of 2,000 men to as much as 3,500 – an organization that would "combine the best of Fifth Army's special troops into a hard-hitting, well-led unit which will be of even greater value to the Army Commander than its very excellent component parts."³⁶

This was easier said than done. In March 1944, the officers and men of both the Ranger Battalions and First Special Service Force were

equally convinced that *theirs* was most elite formation of the United States Army. This created some degree of tension when Fifth Army opted to combine these "very excellent component parts" into an expanded First Special Service Force. Many of the former Rangers resented being assigned to the Force: "We were amazed by the apparent lack of organization in the Force – we were also the outsiders coming into a new unit – we felt that we had been taken advantage of as we were never given the opportunity to join the Ranger Battalions forming in England."³⁷ The FSSF, meanwhile, considered many of these replacements to be "Rangers in name only," as those Rangers with more than two years of overseas service had been returned to the United States as instructors.³⁸ Overall, the integration of Ranger replacements into the First Special Service Force was not easily accomplished.

Canadian replacements, on the other hand, had literally lined up to volunteer for the Force, drawn by the unit's reputation and the promise of higher pay. In April, the Canadian Army provided the FSSF with 15 officers and 240 other ranks replacements, though the officer responsible for the Canadian reinforcement stream in Italy had to personally intervene in order to prevent these

men from being sent to Anzio without proper training: "With the Canadian reinforcements totally unacquainted with American weapons, customs and methods of fighting, I am somewhat concerned that in the event of these troops being involved in combat, there is a possibility of loss of life because of unfamiliarity with weapons."³⁹ Seeing the point, Frederick agreed to provide the Canadians with two weeks of instruction by Force officers and NCOs before they were sent to the beachhead. Arriving at the port of Anzio on 27 April, the Canadian replacements were divided among the three regiments of the Force.⁴⁰

At this time, the FSSF was preparing for a role in one of three possible plans for the upcoming breakout from Anzio, which would see US VI Corps fight its way out of the beachhead and rejoin Fifth Army for an advance on Rome. Each of the scenarios under consideration would require the FSSF to operate in conjunction not only with the units on its flanks, but also the artillery, tanks, and tank destroyers that would be attached to the Force itself. Although the FSSF, by this time, had gained extensive experience in working with artillery, tank-infantry cooperation remained a relatively new concept to the Force. In April, however, by rotating units off the front line during the hours of daylight, the Force was able to conduct some fifteen exercises in tank-infantry cooperation in an effort to overcome this lack of experience.

Training exercises provided valuable experience and offered a chance to integrate the large number of US and Canadian replacement personnel into the regiments. Further, in keeping with Frederick's earlier recommendation that the Force needed to be properly equipped for the type of operations in which it was to be employed, attachments to the FSSF for the upcoming breakout included the 463rd Parachute Field Artillery Battalion; D Company, 39th Combat Engineer Regiment; two companies of the 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion; A Company, 191st Tank Battalion; the mortars of B Company, 84th Chemical Battalion; and a Collecting Company from the 52nd Medical Battalion.⁴¹ Unfortunately, some of these attachments were made effective only days before the breakout began, which offered little time for them to train with the Force prior to the operation.

The breakout from Anzio began on the morning of 23 May 1944. During the opening phases of the attack, the FSSF made a rapid advance to cut Highway 7 and the rail line beyond, but was then forced into a temporary withdrawal when a counterattack by German Tigers knocked-out much of the supporting armour and shattered two of First Regiment's forward companies. Following a brief reorganization, on 25 May, Third Regiment advanced to secure the heights of Monte Arrestino, from which the Force continued through Cori and Rocca Massima to the town of Artena. It was here, on 28 May, that the FSSF advanced in the face of concentrated fire from German artillery, tanks, and small arms in a five-hour attack to sever the enemy's line of communications along Highway 6. Pushing the advance in the direction of Valmontone and Colferferro, it was not until 2 June that the latter town was captured in an attack led by Second Regiment. Effective the next day, Task Force Howze – comprised of the 81st Reconnaissance Battalion and the 13th Armored Infantry – was attached to the FSSF to provide armoured support for the unit's advance on Rome. Fighting its way through tough resistance on the outskirts of the city, on 4 June the FSSF made the first permanent entrance of Allied soldiers into Rome, where a day of intermittent street fighting ended in the capture of eight bridges over the River Tiber.

With Rome in Allied hands, the First Special Service Force was transferred to a nearby rest area on the shores of Lake Albano. It was at Lake Albano, while recovering from wounds suffered in a skirmish near the Tiber bridges, that Frederick had an opportunity to consider the "lessons learned" on the road from Anzio to Rome. Firstly, it had not been possible in one month to train FSSF replacements to the standard of the original personnel, just as he had warned in his letter of 19 February. No amount of enthusiasm on the part of these volunteers could equal the full year of intense training provided at Helena, Montana. Second, it was immediately apparent that armoured and artillery support had been absolutely critical to the success of recent FSSF operations – just as they would be for any conventional United States infantry regiment conducting conventional, infantry battles. When the supporting armour was destroyed during the breakout from Anzio, the advance faltered

and two forward companies of the Force were overrun. Five days later, at Ardena, supporting artillery had been essential, both in preparing the ground over which the Force would advance and in repelling the German counterattacks that followed. With these lessons in mind, on 22 June, Frederick made the following recommendation to Lieutenant-General Clark:⁴²

HEADQUARTERS, FIRST SPECIAL SERVICE FORCE,
U.S. ARMY

TO: Commanding General, Fifth Army, U.S. Army

After deliberate consideration of the many factors involved, it is recommended that the First Special Service Force be organized and equipped in accordance with the Tables of Organization and Equipment for an Infantry Regiment, with the addition of one (1) battalion of light Field Artillery.

The non-availability of replacements specially trained for the Force, and the absence of facilities for training those replacements received to the standards of the original personnel, make it less desirable to continue the force under a special organization.

The present equipment of the force includes large quantities of parachute and winter warfare equipment. Such a small percentage of the present personnel of the force have received parachute or winter training that there is no necessity for maintaining this special equipment for the command.

The missions that have been assigned to the Force in combat have in most instances required the use of equipment normal to an Infantry regiment. This particularly applies to communication equipment. For each operation it has been necessary to make arrangements for the temporary use of necessary equipment.

The operation for which the Force was originally organized did not require the medical personnel or motor transport that have been found necessary in the execution of missions assigned. Reorganization as an Infantry Regiment would correct these deficiencies.

Robert T. Frederick,
Brigadier-General, U.S. Army,
Commanding.

The Force without Frederick?

Frederick's letter of 22 June 1944 is perhaps best considered as the Force Commander's "parting shot," written on the day before his departure to command the First Airborne Task Force in the upcoming invasion of Southern France. On 23 June 1944, Frederick ordered the First Special Service Force assembled near the shore of Lake Albano for the presentation of awards. It was here that the Force Commander announced that he had been reassigned and was leaving the FSSF. "A discernable, protesting

gasp broke the hush in the ranks of men who normally withheld such sentiments. The General carried the confidence and admiration of his men.... From the first fight to the last, memories of combat would evoke visions of the General up forward somewhere with the men who did the fighting."⁴³ On the day of Frederick's departure, a saddened entry in the Canadian War Diary reads: "He has been the driving power behind the Force and its future is now in the air."⁴⁴ Without having read Frederick's letter of 22 June, the officer who wrote this entry could not have known how close to the mark he actually was.

In July, General Clark endorsed Frederick's recommendations for reorganizing the FSSF in a letter to the commander of the US Army's North African Theater. In this letter, Clark forwarded Frederick's suggestion that the current temporary attachments to the FSSF – the field artillery, combat engineers, and medical services – should be made permanent and the Force reorganized as an infantry regimental combat team.⁴⁵ In his letter of 22 June, Frederick had cited two overriding reasons why this was necessary, the first being the impossibility of training replacements to the standard of the original personnel and, second, that the missions recently assigned to the Force had differed little from those that were regularly assigned to an infantry regiment. Further, from the Anzio breakout onwards, it had been necessary to make special arrangements for provisional attachments and the temporary loan of equipment. This was something that Frederick hoped an extensive reorganization of the First Special Service Force might correct and that Mark Clark's support would help to make a reality.

Over the next six months, the new Force Commander, Colonel Edwin A. Walker, fought a rearguard action to save the FSSF as a special unit, but his efforts were ultimately doomed to failure. Although Walker repeatedly attempted to retain the Canadian element of the Force, both Canadian and American authorities now agreed with Frederick's earlier assessment that the bi-national composition of the Force introduced unnecessarily complex difficulties for both parties. Thus on 5 December 1944, the First Special Service Force was disbanded after a final parade in Villeneuve-Loubet, France, at which time the Canadians were returned to their own army and the American element reorganized to

form the 474th Infantry Regiment, complete with its own anti-tank company, heavy machine guns, mortars, and vehicles – all the things Frederick had been asking for since Anzio in order to do the type job the Force was being asked to do.

In his letter of 19 February 1944, Frederick suggested that the time had come to let the Force “pass out of existence while it is still in its prime, rather than to sustain it through a period when it will be remembered only for its faults and defects.”⁴⁶ In hindsight, this warning seems depressingly exaggerated. Today, the First Special Service Force is remembered both in Canada and the United States as the “North Americans” who broke the Winter Line atop Monte la Difensa and went on to become the first Allied formation to enter Rome. The Force is not, as Frederick once predicted it would be, remembered for its faults and defects. Nor should it be. During its brief existence, the Force established an enviable combat record – and did so despite the difficulties described in Frederick’s letters. On the ground, the FSSF proved repeatedly that Canadians and Americans could be molded into an extremely effective fighting unit. Viewed from above, however, the special status and international character of the Force introduced unique difficulties that were never fully resolved before the unit was disbanded in December 1944. Changes made to overcome these difficulties came too late to rescue the Force from disbandment, though it must be said that at least one of Frederick’s stated objectives was achieved when the Force was allowed to “pass out of existence” in December 1944, before its faults and defects threatened to overshadow any of its achievements.

Notes


1. Memorandum, Lieutenant-General Stuart to the Minister of National Defence, 11 July 1942. DND Directorate of History and Heritage, Ottawa, Ontario (hereafter DHH), 112.3S2009 (D255), File: Org & Mob, 1st SS Bn, Jun/Dec 42.
2. Letter, Robert T. Frederick to Robert D. Burhans, 10 September 1946, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, California (hereafter HIA), Robert T. Frederick Papers, Box 8, File: Burhans Manuscript.
3. *Ibid.*
4. “Major General Robert T. Frederick: Remarks by General Paul D. Adams.” First Special Service Force Association

- Pamphlet, 17 August 1973.
5. Catherine C. Yeats, *The Worst Was Yet to Come: The Genesis and Evolution of the First Special Service Force, 1942-1943* (MA Thesis: University of Idaho, 1995), pp.19-20.
 6. Robert D. Burhans, *The First Special Service Force: A War History of the North Americans, 1942-1944* (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1947), p.249.
 7. *Ibid.*, p.42.
 8. Memorandum for Director of Staff Duties, General Staff, Ottawa, 15 July 1942. DHH, 112.3S2009 (D255) File: Org & Mob, 1st SS Bn, Jun/Dec 42; Memorandum, Lieutenant-General K. Stuart to Lieutenant-Colonel J.G. McQueen, 9 September 1942, DHH, 112.3S2009 (D255) File: File: Org & Mob, 1st SS Bn, Jun/Dec 42.
 9. Stanley W. Dziuban, *Military Relations Between The United States and Canada, 1939-1945* (Washington: Department of the Army, 1959), pp.267-268.
 10. C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments. The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), p.392.
 11. Dziuban, p.264.
 12. For example, when interviewed by US Army official historian Sydney T. Matthews, Frederick declined to comment on the following questions: “Was there any difference in quality between Canadians and Americans?” and “Did Gen. Frederick believe that 1st SSF was used in the best place it could be used and that its mission was a good one in [the] May attack out of the beachhead?” See “Interview with Major General Robert T. Frederick,” 31 December 1948, HIA, Robert T. Frederick Papers, Box 3, File: FSSF History - Correspondence.
 13. Memorandum, McQueen to Stuart, 8 October 1942, DHH, 112.3S2009 (D255), File: Org & Mob, 1st SS Bn, Jun/Dec 42.
 14. Telegram, Frederick to FSSF HQ, 26 September 1942, HIA, Robert T. Frederick Papers, Box 1, File: Memoranda, MSS, Map 1942.
 15. Letter, Frederick to McQueen, 16 October 1942, DHH, 145.3009 (D5), File: Org & Admin, Corresp and Instr, Jul 42 – Dec 44.
 16. Memorandum, Chief of General Staff to the Minister of National Defence, 26 October 1942, DHH 112.3S2009 (D255), File: Org & Mob, 1st SS Bn, Jun/Dec 42.
 17. *Ibid.*
 18. *Ibid.*
 19. Memorandum, Lieutenant-General Joseph T. McNarney to Field Marshal Sir John Dill, 13 November 1942, US National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland, (NA-CP), RG 165, Entry 21, Box 968, Stack 390/30/16/4, Folder 320.2 (7-29-42).
 20. FSSF HQ to Commanding General, Army Ground Forces, 24 November 1942, HIA, Robert D. Burhans Papers, Box 1, File: Training; War Diary, 2nd Canadian Parachute Battalion (hereafter WD), 1-30 November 1942, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario (hereafter NAC), RG 24, Vol. 15,301; Monthly Report of 2nd Canadian Parachute Battalion, 1-30 November 1942, DHH, 145.3009 (D7), File: Monthly Reports.
 21. Letter, Robert T. Frederick to Deputy Chief of Staff, US Army, 3 February 1943, NA-CP, RG 165, Entry 418, Box 830, Stack 390/36/30/6, Folder OPD 322.9.
 22. WD, 28 May 1943.
 23. Burhans, p.124.
 24. Letter, Lieutenant-General Mark W. Clark to Commanding Officer, First Special Service Force, 10 December 1943, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 12.540.

25. Report of Activities. 1st Canadian Special Service Battalion, 16 December 1943-31 January 1944, DHH, 145.3009 (D7). File: Monthly Reports.
26. WD. 8-10 January 1944.
27. Letter. Lieutenant-Colonel T.P. Gilday to Brigadier-General General A.W. Beament. 15 January 1944. DHH, 145.3009 (D3). File: Instructions and Directives. 1 Cdn Spec Serv Bn.
28. *Ibid.*
29. Telegram. Major-General R.J. Montague to Lieutenant-General J.C. Murchie. 18 January 1944. NAC, RG 24. Vol. 12.540, File: Org and Admin. 1 Cdn Spec Serv Bn.
30. Telegram. Canadian Army Staff, Washington, to National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa, 28 January 1944. NAC, RG 24. Series C-1. Reel C-5489.
31. Letter. Robert T. Frederick to Commanding General. US Fifth Army. 19 February 1944. HIA. Robert D. Burhans Papers. Box 19. File: Table of Org.
32. Telegram. Stuart to Murchie, 21 February 1944. NAC, RG 24. Vol. 12,540, File: Org & Admin. 1 Cdn Spec Serv Bn.
33. Letter. General George C. Marshall to Field Marshal Sir John Dill, 16 February 1944. NA-CP RG 165. Entry 418. Box 830. Stack 390/36/30/6. Folder OPD 322.9.
34. Letter. Headquarters, US Fifth Army, to Commanding General. First Special Service Force, 8 March 1944. HIA.
- Robert D. Burhans Papers, Box 19. File Table of Org.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*
37. Interview Questionnaire. George Sabine. HIA. Robert H. Adleman Papers. Box 8. File: 1st Regiment Interviews.
38. Memorandum, FSSF Supply Officer to Frederick. 27 February 1944. HIA. Robert D. Burhans Papers, Box 7. File: Secret Corresp.
39. Letter. Brigadier-General E.G. Weeks to Fifth Army Headquarters. 3 April 1944. HIA. Robert T. Frederick Papers. Box 1. File: FSSF Miscellany.
40. Activities of the First Canadian Special Service Battalion. 1-30 April 1944. DHH. 145.3009 (D7). File: Monthly Reports.
41. Activities of the First Canadian Special Service Battalion. 1 May – 10 June 1944. DHH. 145.3009 (D7). File: Monthly Reports.
42. Letter. Robert T. Frederick to Commanding General. US Fifth Army, 22 June 1944. HIA. Robert D. Burhans Papers. Box 7, File: Confidential.
43. Burhans. p.249.
44. WD. 23 June 1944.
45. Letter. Headquarters, US Fifth Army, to Commanding General. North African Theater of Operations. 3 July 1944. HIA. Robert D. Burhans Papers. Box 19. File: Table of Org.
46. Letter. Frederick to Clark, 19 February 1944.

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