

NOTE

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S. E. CARLSON

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REPORT NO. 5  
HISTORICAL SECTION (G.S.)  
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE  
THE 1ST CANADIAN SPECIAL SERVICE BATTALION

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22 Feb 46

## REPORT NO. 5

## HISTORICAL SERVICE (G.S.)

## DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

1st CANADIAN SPECIAL SERVICE BATTALION

1. This report deals with the organization, training and operations of the 1st Canadian Special Service Battalion from its inception in August 1942 to its disbandment in January 1945. With respect to the operations in which the Battalion was engaged, the report of necessity records the operations of the 1st Special Service Force, of which formation 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn formed a part. The main sources of material used in this narrative are the Unit War Diary and Headquarters Secret Files at D.N.D. (For a list of these sources see HQS 5595-5, Memo to DD Hist, dated 17 Oct 45).
2. The position of 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn as the Canadian component of the 1st Special Service Force, a joint Canadian-United States formation, was unique in the fact that while members of the battalion retained their identity as individual soldiers, there was no separation of the two nationalities by units or sub-units within the Force. American and Canadian officers and men were distributed throughout the formation on what was originally an equal numerical basis. This experiment in international military co-operation was without exact parallel in the whole period of Canadian military history.

PLANNING "LICOUGH" PROJECT (APRIL-JUNE 1942)

3. The origin of the Special Service Force, of which 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn formed a part, is to be found in the planning for Operation "LICOUGH", - a project which did not survive the initial stages of preparation. Early in 1942 Lord Louis Mountbatten, Chief of Combined Operations, at the instance of Prime Minister Churchill and the British Chiefs of Staff Committee, was given the responsibility of organizing a special force for possible employment the following winter in Northern Norway. The code name "LICOUGH" was given to the project. General George C. Marshall, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, promised full co-operation, and Harry Hopkins, U.S. Works Progress Administrator, agreed to give priority on the production of necessary equipment (HQS 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Tel GS 1404, Stuart from McNaughton, 23 Apr 42). The Chief of Combined Operations delegated the responsibility for planning, developing and conducting the "LICOUGH" project to the U.S. War Department, which placed Lt.-Col. (later Maj.-Gen.) R.T. Frederick G.S.C., a general staff officer of the War Department, in complete charge (HQS 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Lt.-Col. W.A.L. Anderson, S.D. 1, to C.C.S., 20 Jun 42). A mission, headed by Lord Mountbatten's personal representative, Mr. Geoffrey Lyke, reached WASHINGTON in May 1942 to study possibilities of developing

special snow-crossing equipment required for the project (HQ3 20-1-32 Vol. 1, Tel GS 1701, Stuart from McNaughton, 19 May 42; and W.D., Maj.-Gen. M.A. Pope, Comd Cdn Army Staff, Washington, 22 & 30 May 42).

4. Initial steps for Canadian participation were taken during the early discussions in Great Britain, when General McNaughton was consulted, primarily for assistance in the matter of research into snow conditions (HQ3 20-1-32 Vol. 1, Lt.-Col. W.A.B. Anderson to V.C.G.S., 13 Jun 42). General McNaughton asked D.N.D. to make available to the British Mission an officer trained in winter warfare, and a technical officer familiar with winter transport equipment (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Tel GS 1404). In June 1942 Mr. Iyke visited Ottawa, and the services of the National Research Council were enlisted in the development of a snow-crossing vehicle suitable for the project which was being planned (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 1, D.S.D. to A/President, National Research Council, 29 Jun 42).

5. Discussions relative to the project continued between D.N.D. and the U.S. War Department, and on 20 Jun 42 Lt.-Col. W.A.B. Anderson, who was representing the Canadian General Staff in the planning being carried on at WASHINGTON, reported that the Deputy Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, General Joseph T. McNarney, had suggested that a request might be made from Canada to supply 500 all ranks for the Special Service Force which was contemplated, including an officer to act as Second-in-Command (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Lt.-Col. W.A.B. Anderson to C.G.S., 20 Jun 42).

6. On 26 Jun 42 Mr. Macdonald King concurred in the proposal that Canada should share in the project to the extent suggested by the U.S. War Department (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Memo by Minister of National Defence, 27 Jun 42). The number of Canadian personnel required for the force underwent revision early in July (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Memo by Lt.-Col. W.A.B. Anderson, 11 Jul 42), and on 11 Jul 42 Ministerial approval was sought, and obtained on 14 July, for the despatch to the United States of 47 officers and 650 other ranks (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 1, C.G.S. to Minister, 11 Jul 42).

#### ORGANIZATION OF CANADIAN UNIT IN 1ST SPECIAL SERVICE FORCE

7. Organization of the Canadian component of the 1st Special Service Force proceeded without delay (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Minutes of a Meeting held at D.N.D. 16 Jul 42, to discuss the Organization of the 2nd Canadian Parachute Battalion). In order that the required number of personnel might be obtained without undue publicity being directed towards the proposed future employment of the 1st Special Service Force, it was decided to obtain the necessary Canadian personnel at the same time that 1 Cdn Para Bn was being raised, and to designate the Canadian component of the Force as the 2nd Canadian Parachute Battalion (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 1, D.S.D. to C.G.S., 10 Jul 42). (A call had already



been made for volunteers for 1 Cdn Para Bn which was then in process of mobilization). The unit retained this name until May 1943, when it was redesignated the 1st Canadian Special Service Battalion (HQs 20-1-32 Vol. 1, G.O. 215 of 25 May 43; and W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 27 May 43). Lt.-Col. J.G. McQueen, Calg Highrs, returned from overseas to command the battalion and to become Second-in-Command of the 1st Special Service Force under Colonel Frederick (HQs 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Tel GS 2546, C.G.S. from McNaughton, 22 Jul 42). The remaining officer and other rank personnel were selected from the Canadian Army in Canada, with a majority of the subaltern officers coming from the Officers Training Centre (E.C.) at BROCKVILLE, where they had been recently commissioned after active service (HQs 20-4-32 Vol. 1, C.G.S. to Minister, 11 Jul 42; see also D.H.S. file G.A.Q. 18, 1st Cdn Spec Service Bn, Notes on D.H.S. Interview with Colonel D.D. Williamson, April 1944). The choice of this type of officer paralleled the system adopted for selecting the American personnel for the 1st Special Service Force, where the bulk of the junior officers were obtained from the graduating classes at the Infantry and Cavalry Officers Candidate Schools (HQs 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Assistant Military Attache, Canadian Legation, Washington, to E.M.O. & I., 7 Jul 42).

8. It had first been planned that one half of the officers and ten per cent of the other ranks required for the new unit should come from the Canadian Army overseas (HQs 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Tel GS 2611, C.G.S. from McNaughton, 27 Jul 42), but the rapidity with which the organization and preliminary training of the 1st Special Service Force went forward -- all parachute training had to be completed by 1 Sep 42, as aircraft for the purpose would not be available after that date -- made it impossible for overseas personnel to return in time (HQs 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Tel G.S.D. 1590, McNaughton and Stuart from Murchie, 2 Aug 42). On their subsequent arrival these were absorbed into 1 Cdn Para Bn (HQs 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Tel GS 2704, A/C.G.S. from Canmilitary, 3 Aug 42. See also Report Hist Offr CMHQ No. 138, The 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion; Organization and Training, July 1942 - June 1944, para 9).

9. Because of the exacting nature of the training and anticipated role of 2 Cdn Para Bn within the 1st Special Service Force requirements for acceptance into the unit were necessarily of a high standard. The following limitations were imposed upon the selection of personnel:-

- (a) Only active personnel would be accepted.
- (b) Personnel must have volunteered for duty as parachute troops.
- (c) High physical standards must be met.
- (d) Personnel must be fully trained soldiers, both basic and advanced.
- (e) The combined qualities of mountaineer, northwoodsman and skier, were highly desirable; i.e. personnel should have had winter training or be deemed suitable for training under winter conditions.

- (f) A knowledge of I.C. engines leading to driver mechanics' qualifications was desirable.
- (g) As the lowest rank in the unit would ultimately be that of sergeant, personnel selected must be considered as good N.C.O. material.

(Minutes of meeting, 16 Jul 42, op cit)

10. The 1st Special Service Force consisted of a Combat Force of 108 officers and 1167 of other ranks, and a Base Echelon with an establishment of 25 officers and 521 other ranks (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Memo to D.S.D., Agreement on Administration 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 15 Jul 42. Lt.-Col. J.G. McQueen's Monthly Report, 31 Aug 42, on HQ3 20-16-32 Vol. 1, gives the W.E. of the Combat Force as 1157 all ranks). There were no Canadians in the Base Echelon, or Service Battalion as it was generally called. This Battalion was responsible for the complete administration, supply and maintenance of the entire Force, and it thus relieved personnel of the Combat Units of the performance of any fatigues or extraneous duties that might interfere with training or with combat operations. The Combat Force comprised Force Headquarters and three Regiments - designated 1st, 2nd and 3rd Regiments respectively - each consisting of two battalions of three companies each. The establishment of a regiment was 32 officers and 385 other ranks. Companies were organized on a three platoon basis, the smallest tactical sub-unit being the section, of nine men each. The Combat Force also carried a small Air Detachment (with six planes on its establishment) and a Communications Detachment of four personnel.

11. As has been indicated above, the Canadian component retained no separate identity as a unit or sub-unit within the joint Canadian-U.S. Force. Canadian and American personnel were integrated within the sub-units of the Combat Force, in order "to facilitate the administration, the equipment and training of the Force ... and to permit personnel of both countries to serve together in teams within the sub-units in using the special vehicle to be provided for the Force" (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 1, C.G.S. to Minister, 3 Aug 42). Allotment of the Canadians was made on an even fifty per cent basis in officer appointments and the distribution of other ranks. Besides the Canadian Second-in-Command of the Force, one of the three Regimental Commanders, two of the three Regimental Second-in-Commands, three of the six Battalion Commanders and the same proportion of Second-in-Commands, and ten of the eighteen Company Commanders in the original slate of officers appointed in August 1942 were Canadians (HQ3 20-16-32 Vol. 1, Monthly Report, 2 Cdn Para Bn, 31 Aug 42).

12. Formal agreement as to the division of financial responsibility between the U.S. and Canadian Governments with respect to 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn was reached in January 1943 (HQ3 20-1-32 Vol. 1, Colonel Frederick to Maj.-Gen. Pope, 19 Jan 43). The terms agreed upon were substantially those of the original proposals drawn up in July 1942, which had formed the basis for administering the Canadian unit during the first six months of its existence

(HQS 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Memo of Proposals agreed upon by Major E.J. Wickham, U.S. Army, and Major D.D. Williamson, Canadian Army, and approved by Colonel R.T. Frederick, U.S. Army, 15 Jul 42).

13. Financial responsibility was accepted by the respective Governments as follows:

(a) Responsibility of the Canadian Government --

- (i) Pensions, pay and Dependent's Allowances for a maximum of 47 officers and 650 other ranks, all parachutists, and in addition one paymaster, one pay sergeant, one records sergeant.
- (ii) Parachute pay of two dollars per diem for officers and seventy-five cents per diem for other ranks.
- (iii) Transportation costs for Canadian personnel for the initial move from Canada to HELENA, Montana.
- (iv) Repayment to the United States of the costs of rations issued to Canadian personnel.
- (v) Exchange of Canadian funds to cover personnel pay.

(b) Responsibility of the U.S. Government --

- (i) Quarters and equipment.
- (ii) Clothing, with the exception of items issued to Canadian personnel by the Canadian Government. (These items included one complete outfit with which personnel proceeded to HELENA, and subsequent issues of a brass "CANADA" collar badge.)
- (iii) All costs of transportation with the exception of the original transportation of Canadian personnel to HELENA.
- (iv) Hospitalization, medical and dental services, with the exception of such services rendered to personnel after their return to Canada as unfit for service.

(HQS 20-1-32 Vol. 1, C.G.S. to Canadian Army Staff, Washington 15 Dec 42).

14. In agreeing to these arrangements on behalf of the U.S. Government Colonel Frederick, the Force Commander, requested that further consideration might be given to the subject of pay for Canadian personnel, with a view to equalizing the rates of pay of Canadian and United States personnel performing identical duty (Colonel Frederick to Maj.-Gen. Pope,

19 Jan 43, op cit). Payment of members of 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn at rates comparable to those of their American colleagues within the Special Service Force had been repeatedly urged by the Battalion Commander, supported by the Force Commander. Monthly reports during the fall and winter of 1942-3 indicated that a general feeling of dissatisfaction existed among the Canadians because the American personnel with whom they shared the same training and were exposed to the same risks received a considerably higher rate of pay for their services.

A very trying and difficult situation exists in regard to pay. As the Directorate is aware, the bulk of the men have now been here over eight weeks, and as yet have received no parachute pay, while the American personnel have drawn theirs after qualification to the date they were taken on strength 1st Special Service Force. It is obviously difficult with men completely mixed as they are, to have a lad in front of him jump out of a plane (which is a nerve-racking business at the best) and know he is getting \$50.00 extra for doing it, while you are not getting anything, and don't even know what or when you will be paid for taking a similar risk.

(HQS 20-16-32 Vol. 1, Monthly Report, 2 Cdn Para Bn to D.S.D., 1 Oct 42).

15. The original proposals agreed upon in July 1942 as a working basis for administering 2 Cdn Para Bn (see para 12) suggested that pay for all members of the Special Service Force should be at American rates, and that Dependents Allowances for Canadian personnel would be paid under F. & A. Regulations (Memo of Proposals, Wickham-Williamson, 15 Jul 42, op cit). In seeking Ministerial approval of such a proposal the C.G.S. submitted as his opinion that it was of greater importance that the rates of pay for the unit should approximate American rates than that they should be equal to the rates for other parachute troops in the Canadian Army (HQS 20-4-32 Vol. 1, C.G.S. to Minister, 8 Sep 42). A different view was taken by the Minister of National Defence, who voiced the objection that making the pay exactly the same as that of U.S. personnel would be "a discrimination between these troops and other Canadian troops serving in a similar capacity in the Canadian Forces" (HQS 20-2-32, Minister to C.G.S., 28 Oct 42). A similar stand was taken by an Inter-Service Committee at which the Air Force Representative pointed out that if consideration were given to placing Canadian troops serving with forces of the Allied Nations on an equal footing as regards pay, R.C.A.F. personnel doing duty in Alaska and others similarly situated would have just claim for the same consideration (HQS 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Paymaster General to Deputy Minister (Army), 6 Nov 42).

16. On 29 Oct 42 special paratroop pay for Canadians in the 1st Special Service Force was approved at rates of seventy-five cents per day for other ranks and two dollars for officers (F.R. & I. 140A). The rates were to be retro-



active to the date of joining the unit (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Tel C.G.S. 572, Stuart to Pope, 29 Oct 42). The new rates were the same as those authorized for flying pay. The increase brought little satisfaction to the members of 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn.

It was a great disappointment, especially from the men's point of view, as they got less than half their American friends' parachute pay. We now have Canadian staff sergeants drawing less money than the American privates under them .... Pay parades for both Canadian and American personnel were held after dinner. There was considerable griping by the Canadians, but no breaches of discipline.

(W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 30, 31 Oct 42).

17. The U.S. Commander of the Force reiterated his conviction that "in order to ensure the necessary high morale not only of the Canadian element but also of the Force as a whole it was highly desirable, not to say essential, that Canadian members be granted the same gross rates of pay as their United States comrades (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Tel, C.A.W. 31, Pope to Stuart, 30 Oct 42. See also Colonel Frederick to Maj.-Gen. Pope, 19 Jan 43, op cit). No further changes, however, were made in the scale that had been set, although as late as June 1943 an Inter-Directorate meeting held at D.N.D. to discuss administrative arrangements for the unit "took cognizance of the fact that a serious situation obtained with regard to the difference in pay between the American and the Canadian personnel, .... and noted that this difference would be further accentuated should the Force move outside the U.S.A., as under such conditions the American personnel would thus qualify for an additional 20 per cent higher basic rate" (HQ3 20-1-32 Vol. 2, Minutes of a Meeting held at D.N.D. on Tuesday 8 Jun 43 to discuss all administrative arrangements in connection with 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn). To assist officers of 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, all of whom were required to purchase United States service uniforms, a special clothing allowance of \$124.00 per officer was authorized (HQ3 20-1-32 Vol. 1, P.C. 51/4310, 26 May 43).

18. The peculiar constitution of the 1st Special Service Force and the integration of Canadian and U.S. personnel within it created an unprecedented situation with regard to the administration of discipline. Personnel of both nationalities would come under and be required to obey the orders of their respective superiors whether the latter belonged to the Canadian or U.S. Forces. There was no such reciprocal legislation between Canada and the United States as existed in The Visiting Forces (British Commonwealth) Acts 1933. To meet this novel condition P.C. 629, of 26 Jan 43, authorized the following provisions:

- (a) Every officer of the Military Forces of Canada serving in the 1st Special Service Force was given the powers of an officer commanding a detachment with respect to Canadian personnel serving in the Force.

(b) In relation to Canadian personnel each member of the U.S. Military Forces serving with the Force was for purposes of command, but not discipline nor punishment, deemed to be a member of the Military Forces of Canada, with rank therein equivalent to that held by him in the United States Army.

(c) Canadian personnel serving with the Force if placed under arrest might be detained in such places as might be made available by the U.S. authorities.

(HQ3 20-1-32 Vol. 1, P.C. 629, 26 Jan 43).

19. The instructions issued by the C.G.S. to the Officer Commanding 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn early in August 1942 had defined the system of command of the Canadian element of the 1st Special Service Force thus:

In the case of the said personnel of the 2nd Canadian Parachute Battalion so allocated, you will order them to place themselves under the command of and to obey all lawful orders of the respective officers of the sub-units to which they are posted whether these officers be Canadian or American unless and until you are otherwise ordered. You will, however, always retain and exercise the powers of Commanding Officer with respect to such personnel for the purposes of the administration of discipline and the punishment of offences and same shall be dealt with under Canadian Military Law and the King's Regulations.

(HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Instructions to Lt.-Col. J.G. McQueen, 4 Aug 42).

It is of interest to note that in making arrangements for command and discipline with regard to the "Greenlight Force" that took part in the Kiska expedition in the summer of 1943, where the relationship between Canadian and United States Forces was that of co-belligerents operating as integral parts of a combined force in the field, a similar practice was followed. For that undertaking P.C. 5012 of 18 Jun 43 provided that except in matters affecting discipline and/or punishment the superior ranks of one force were given power of command over the junior ranks of the other force as if they all held relative rank in the same force (HQ 5393-5-4, The Canadian Participation in the Kiska Operation, p. 8).

MOBILIZATION AND EARLY TRAINING - FT. WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON  
(1 AUG 42 - 12 APR 43)

20. The first elements of 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn (2 Cdn Para Bn) collected at Lansdowne Park, OTTAWA, and at Camp Bruce, CALGARY, at the end of July 1942 (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 2, D.S.D. Memo, 24 Jul 42). 27 officers and 306 other

ranks, taken on unit strength from No. 3 District Depot on 1 Aug 42, left by train for Montana on 13 Aug. They joined the 1st Special Service Force in ~~FORT WHEELER~~ ~~HELENA~~ ~~HELENA~~, at HELENA, Montana, a newly constructed army camp that had previously been the site of an annual two-weeks' reserve force camp (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 3-8 Aug 42). During August drafts from A.16 C.I.F.C. (CALGARY), DEBENT and CAMP BURNHAM joined the unit, and by the end of the month 52 officers and 847 other ranks had been taken on strength (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, Part II Daily Orders, August and September 1942).

21. It is perhaps pertinent, in the light of the large number of rejects of these personnel that later took place at HELENA, to note that the speed with which many of the voluntary parachutists were selected and placed on draft to bring the unit to strength barely allowed the high standard of qualifications required (see para 9) to be fully met. The experiences of one infantry battalion, an operational unit in Pacific Command, as recorded in its War Diary, are probably typical.

1 Aug 42 A busy day around the Orderly Room and Q.M. Stores. A request through Brigade for 11 volunteers for paratroops brought a ready response. Each rifle company sent five to the Medical Board and only three were rejected out of twenty. Documentation and pay was completed in time to get them out by C.P.R. to CALGARY at 1740 hrs.

4 Aug 42 Another hurried call from Brigade for more paratroops. This time we provided seventeen. The move was a rapid one. Medical Board selections at 1330 hrs and away on the train at 1740 hrs.

9 Aug 42 Word from Brigade that another detachment of paratroops is needed. At short notice twenty names were supplied by companies, all except three passing the Medical Board.

(W.D., 1 Bn P.M. Vols, Dates indicated).

Of a total of 46 other ranks sent by this battalion for service with 2 Cdn Para Bn, 18 were returned immediately from No. 13 District Depot, and of the 28 which reached HELENA 13 were sent back to their parent unit within two weeks (W.D., 1 Bn P.M. Vols, Part II Daily Orders, August and September 1942).

22. From the standpoint of efficiency and morale it was imperative that "streamlining" of the 1st Special Service Force should be completed as rapidly as possible, with all unsuitable personnel being weeded out before intensive ground training began. To this end it was necessary first to qualify all men in parachute jumping. From seven to nine days' preliminary parachute training was given the Canadian members of the Force prior to their jumping from a plane at 1200 ft. Using a platform with levels of two, four and six

feet above the ground, students learned proper methods of landing and rolling. In regular parachute harness suspended from a frame that held the pupil three feet above the ground he was taught how to control his parachute during a descent, how to check and prevent oscillation, how to get his back to the wind and how to guide his chute and to land. From the "Mock-up", a frame structure built four feet above the ground and resembling the cabin of an aeroplane, the student learned the proper method of exit from the plane. Regular route marches and strenuous P.T. formed a part of the parachute training program, while leg muscles benefitted by the practice jumping from the jump platform (HQs 20-16-32 Vol. 1, Monthly Report of 2 Cdn Para Bn, August 1942).

23. During the period 6-31 August Canadian personnel to the number of 35 officers and 436 other ranks qualified as parachutists in the Force. In the same time one officer and 175 other ranks were sent back to Canada (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 31 Aug 42). Refusal to jump - two chances were given - was the main cause of these rejects. In his initial monthly report to OTTAWA the Commanding Officer, Lt.-Col. J.G. McQueen, emphasized the need for returning these men.

During the period 6-31 Aug 42, one officer and 175 other ranks have been returned to District Depot 13. The majority of this number have been due to loss of nerve and absolute inability of the men to stand height. I have personally interviewed each man before returning and on the advice of the instructor concerned and the man's statement of his nervousness I have despatched him to District Depot 13. It is imperative that such personnel leave this Force immediately in the interest of the morale of the remainder of the troops.

In fairness to the Canadians who were thus returned for failure to jump it should be pointed out that experienced United States parachute instructors declared such a condition to be quite normal and to be expected. (Monthly Report of 2 Cdn Para Bn, August 1942).

24. Casualties sustained by Canadian personnel when qualifying as parachutists were not heavy considering the hazardous nature of the training. A report made on 15 Aug showed that for the first part of August the injury rate for Canadian personnel was approximately half of that of U.S. Army personnel, a fact which indicated that there was no deficiency of instruction or equipment in the training of the Canadians (HQs 20-16-32 Vol. 1, Interim Report to D.N.D., Training Casualties, 15 Aug 42). By the end of the month injuries incurred by Canadian personnel in pre-jump training and in 1100 jumps amounted to 11 officers, (5 fractures, 6 sprains) and 73 other ranks (26 fractures, 47 sprains). While personnel injured by sprains were able to resume training within a short period, those with fractures were compelled to forego further training with the Force, as by the time that they were able to return to duty they would not only be far behind their comrades in the amount



of training received, but they would also lack the superb physical fitness that participation in such training both engendered and demanded (Monthly Report of 2 Cdn Para Bn, August 1942).

25. It was unfortunate that the Commanding Officer Lt.-Col. McQueen, who on 13 Aug 42 was the first Canadian to make a jump, fractured his ankle, and as a result was prevented from taking part in further training (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 13 Aug 42). Lt.-Col. McQueen was appointed to serve as Canadian representative on the planning staff of the "PLOW" project at WASHINGTON (HQs 20-1-32 Vol. 1, C.G.S. Instructions to Lt.-Col. J.G. McQueen, 9 Sep 42). His place as Officer Commanding 2 Cdn Para Bn and Second-in-Command of the 1st Special Service Force was taken by Lt.-Col. D.D. Williamson, who had come to the Unit in the rank of Major from 1st Battalion Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles (HQs 20-1-32 Vol. 1, C.G.S. Instructions to Lt.-Col. D.D. Williamson, 9 Sep 42).

26. By the end of November a total of 335 all ranks had been returned to Canada, and "mass evacuation" from the battalion had been completed. This number of casualties and rejects, out of a total of 54 officers and 844 other ranks taken on strength between 1 Aug and 30 Nov 42, was broken down as follows:-

	<u>Offrs.</u>	<u>C.Rs</u>	<u>Total</u>
Returned at own request (Afraid to jump)	-	193	193
Returned because of Injuries	6	64	70
Returned for Medical Reasons	3	39	42
Returned as Undesirable	-	26	26
S.C.S. as Deserters	-	3	3
Under Age	-	1	1
Total returned for all reasons	9	326	335

(HQs 20-16-32 Vol. 1, Monthly Report of 2 Cdn Para Bn, November 1942, Appx "A", Casualty Report as of 1 Dec 42).

27. In order to restore the Canadian component of the 1st Special Service Force to approximately the number originally authorized, Colonel Fredericks request for 100 other ranks reinforcements was met by a decision to supply qualified parachutists from 1 Cdn Para Bn, which was in training at FORT BENNING, Ga. (Monthly Report of 2 Cdn Para Bn, November 1942). An officer of 2 Cdn Para Bn went to FORT BENNING to select these reinforcements, and on 10 Dec 42, 97 trained parachutists, some of whom had qualified both in England and in the U.S., arrived at FORT WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON to fill the depleted ranks of the Canadian element of the 1st Special Service Force (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 10 Dec 42). As might be expected, this transfer of personnel was

regarded with dissatisfaction by 1 Cdn Para Bn, which felt that this loss of trained men was bound to retard its own growth and postpone the date of its becoming an operational unit (W.D., 1 Cdn Para Bn, 7 Dec 42). The new reinforcements, whose stage of training was well advanced, were readily absorbed into their new unit. A number of them who had received their qualifications as parachutists in the United Kingdom were required to jump again, in order to qualify in the method used in America (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 26 Dec 42. For a note on the differences between British and American methods of Parachute Training and Jumping see Report Hist Offr CMHQ No. 138, The 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion, Organization and Training, July 1942 - June 1944, para 24).

28. As soon as all members of the Battalion had qualified as parachutists, a full schedule of ground training began in earnest for the Force. There were no fatigues or duties to interfere with the rigorous training programme to which the combat regiments were now subjected (see para 10). A training day commenced at 0530 hrs and lasted until 1630 hrs, and in addition officers and N.C.O's attended classes every evening. There was a liberal supply of training equipment films, which covered practically all subjects on the programme. Canadian personnel were given special instruction and exercise in the use of the American types of weapons with which the Force was equipped. The establishment allotted to each individual of the Combat Echelon a .45-calibre Automatic Pistol and a Combat Knife. Each officer carried a .30 Carbine, and each other rank a Garand Rifle M-1. Thomson Sub Machine Guns, Browning Light Machine Guns and Anti-tank Rifles were distributed on the basis of one each per section. Each platoon carried in addition a 60-mm Mortar and Portable Flame Thrower (57 lbs) (HQ 20-16-32 Vol. 1, Monthly Report, 2 Cdn Para Bn, November 1942, Annex "B", Tentative Tables of Organization, Combat Echelon). Besides receiving training in the weapons allotted to him for personal defence each officer and man learned to use every type of weapon in the Force, and was given preliminary training in the maintenance and operation of the Portable Flame Thrower. He also received a considerable amount of practice in demolition work (Monthly Report, 2 Cdn Para Bn, November 1942).

29. The programme of physical training was designed to produce a standard of general fitness and stamina capable of meeting the severest demands made upon it by fatigue of combat, unfavourable terrain or adverse weather.

This (physical training) has been built up to such a pitch that an ordinary person would drop from sheer exhaustion in its early stages. This course includes crawling, rope climbing, boxing, push-ups, games, much doubling and running. Each officer and man must be able to run a mile in less than ten minutes, and it is worth mentioning that the majority can do it in around seven minutes, and some as low as five and one-half minutes, which is our record so far.

(Monthly Report, 2 Cdn Para Bn, September 1942).

An obstacle course that took a good half hour to negotiate was used daily by all ranks. Unarmed combat was taught by a class of instructors who received their training from an expert in the Shanghai Police whose services had been acquired by the Force (Monthly Report, 2 Cdn Para Bn, 1942). A 34-mile cross-country dawn-to-dusk forced march in battle order and with ski-poles held in mid-October proved a gruelling test of stamina that weeded out some 20 Canadian other ranks on medical grounds (Monthly Report, 2 Cdn Para Bn, 1942).

30. With the arrival of winter the trend in training turned to skiing, mountain climbing and cold weather conditioning. Four officers and eight N.C.Os. from the Royal Norwegian Army formed a capable instructional cadre for ski training and training in winter warfare. The snow-covered Montana foothills provided training grounds that simulated well the type of terrain and climatic conditions which the Force might expect to encounter in the projected "TRUCE" operation. Patrols and sub-units bivouacked in the snow to adapt themselves to operating under frigid conditions. Sub-zero temperatures during January, which at times dropped to 30° F., were not allowed to cause more than a minimum interruption of training (Monthly Report, 2 Cdn Para Bn, January 1943).

31. The coming of cold weather gave all ranks an opportunity of testing under winter conditions the performance of the new "T-15" Cargo Carrier, the secret tracked vehicle that had been especially designed and developed for the use of the Force. Late in October 1942 the Force's supply of "T-15's" had arrived from the factory, and civilian experts had begun to train an initial cadre of instructors in the maintenance and operation of the vehicle (Monthly Report, 2 Cdn Para Bn, October 1942). Later all personnel received complete mechanical and driving instruction. The "T-15" was not a combat vehicle, but for the purpose for which it was designed, the rapid transportation of men and small quantities of supply over difficult terrain in cold climates, the machine served admirably (Monthly Report, 2 Cdn Para Bn, December 1942). The Force was provided with some 600 of these vehicles, - enough to allow two men to ride in each (HQ 3 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Appx to Memo to D.S.D., 15 Jul 42, Table of Organization, Special Service Force). Every "T-15" was equipped either with radio sets capable of transmitting and receiving, or with receiving sets only. In the combat sections the special combat weapon (i.e., 60-mm Mortar, Portable Flame Thrower, etc.,) was carried in a "T-15". For one vehicle of each combat section a sled trailer was available to be towed by the vehicle. These sled trailers, which were also provided for the vehicles of the Regimental Supply Detachment, were used to carry additional fuel for the vehicles of the section, demolition material or other supplies, and for evacuating personnel (HQ 3 20-16-32 Vol. 1, Tentative Tables of Organization). It is of interest to note that "T-15" cargo carriers were supplied on a comparatively small scale to the joint U.S. - Canadian (Greenlight) Force that effected the occupation of KIEKA in August 1943. On the trackless tundra-covered hills of the

island the "snow-jeeps" proved their usefulness in transporting light loads which heavier tractors could not negotiate, but the rocky surface of the upland ridges soon played havoc with their caterpillar treads and light boyey wheels (HQS 5393-9-4 the Canadian Participation in the Kiska Operation, p. 55).

32. As individual training was completed collective training began. The purposes for which the Force had been organized were clearly indicated in the objectives prescribed for this phase of training. It was designed with a view to developing all units and sub-units from the section to the regiment to mobile organizations prepared to accomplish successfully the following types of combat "MISSIONS":

- (a) Operate against vital military or industrial targets.
- (b) Operate as an overland raiding force infiltrating, penetrating, or encircling deep into enemy territory to destroy important targets.
- (c) Operate as a spearhead in forcing strongly fortified localities with the expectation of early support from friendly troops.
- (d) Operate in cold or mountainous regions to accomplish any or all of the possible missions.

(Monthly Report, 2 Cdn Para Bn, November 1942, Annex "C", Training Memoranda, 1st Special Service Force).

With such a programme of training scheduled it would seem as though the 1st Special Service Force was well on the way to becoming the "Force of super-specialists in offensive warfare" that press announcements had proclaimed it (HQS 20-4-32, Canadian Press Bulletin, Washington, 6 Aug 42).

33. Although one of the main objectives in the training of the 1st Special Service Force during the winter of 1942-3 was to prepare for operational employment in Arctic and mountainous regions, the likelihood of the Force's being sent to Norway had disappeared with the cancellation, in October, of the "PLOUGH" project. On 8 Oct Lt.-Col. McQueen, of the Planning Staff in WASHINGTON, reported to D.H.D. that Colonel Frederick had visited LONDON and had discovered there that an alternative plan for the sabotage of Norwegian power installations had been arranged by Brigadier Robbins, S.O.E. (who was in charge of all sabotage operations for the European continent), and had received approval of the Norwegian Army and the Chiefs of Staff in LONDON. The planners of the "PLOUGH" project had encountered difficulty over the question of availability of the aircraft necessary to the operation. The U.S. Army Air Corps did not have the number of aircraft required, nor was the American type of plane suitable for dropping the Force's "T-15" Cargo Carrier. The British



Chief of Air Staff, when asked by the C.C.O. for the use of 750 Lancaster bombers for the middle of January 1943, replied that unless the "FLOUGH" project was going to inflict more damage to the enemy than the actual bombing of Germany he could not entertain the proposal to divert R.A.F. planes to the Norwegian operation (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Lt.-Col. J.G. McQueen to C.G.S., 8 Oct 42).

34. The question of the future employment of 2 Cdn Para Bn became an immediate matter for General Staff decision. Pointing out that the U.S. War Department was now faced with the choice of continuing to maintain and train the 1st Special Service Force in anticipation of some other operational objective or of disbanding the Force, General Murchie cabled the C.G.S., General Stuart, who was in LONDON, suggesting that four alternatives were open to 2 Cdn Para Bn.

- (a) Continue with Special Service Force if Americans so desire.
- (b) Amalgamate with 1st Parachute Battalion.
- (c) Disband and disperse personnel.
- (d) Retain as ordinary parachute battalion for services at home or abroad.

(HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Tel G.S.D. 2088, Stuart from Murchie, 8 Oct 42).

35. On 17 Oct 42 General Marshall informed General Pope that the non-availability of air or sea transport had necessitated cancelling the "FLOUGH" operations as originally conceived. A decision had been reached to retain the 1st Special Service Force as a special unit, and to continue its training with a view to its possible employment in the CAUCASUS area early in 1943. In view of the existing agreement that 2 Cdn Para Bn be used jointly in the "FLOUGH" operation, General Marshall asked that the Canadian Government express approval or disapproval of the continued participation of the Canadian unit in operations of the 1st Special Service Force prior to the initiation of any discussions with the Soviet Government (HQ3 20-2-32, Chief of Staff U.S. War Department to Commander Canadian Army Staff, Washington, 17 Oct 42).

36. Simultaneously with General Marshall's letter the case for a definite declaration of policy by the Canadian Government with regard to the future employment of the 2 Cdn Para Bn was advanced somewhat strongly by Colonel Frederick in a letter to Lt.-Col. McQueen. Referring to D.N.D.'s reservation that Canadian personnel would not be committed to any combat operation or moved from the North American continent without authority being granted by OTTAWA (HQ3 20-1-32 Vol. 1, C.G.S. Instructions to Lt.-Col. D.D. Williamson, 9 Sep 42), the Force Commander pointed out the limitations that were thus imposed upon the Force as a whole.

The Canadian personnel in the Force comprise almost half of the combat echelon. In the

event that Canadian personnel would not be permitted to engage in an operation to which the Force is assigned, the strength of the combat echelon would be so greatly reduced as to make it inadequate for any probable employment.

The United States is spending large sums on the clothing, housing, equipment, training, medical attention, and welfare of the Canadian personnel with this Force. In addition, all services incidental to maintenance of the Canadian personnel with the Force are performed by United States Army personnel.

It is believed that in fairness to the United States, the Canadian Government should at this time specifically state any limitations upon the combat employment of the Canadian personnel of the Force.

Will you please obtain for the information of the War Department a written authoritative statement of the theatres of operations in which the Canadian personnel of the Force may be employed as an integral part of the Force, together with definite statements of any restrictions on the movement of the Canadian personnel from this continent and on the employment of the Canadian personnel in combat operations.

(HQS 20-2-32, Colonel R.T. Frederick to Lt.-Col. J.G. McQueen, 16 Oct 42).

37. The fate of the Canadian component of the 1st Special Service Force, not to say of the Force itself, remained in abeyance while the political and military implications of future employment were considered. In his cable to General Stuart (see para 34) the V.C.G.S. had pointed to the unwelcome publicity that would accompany Canadian withdrawal from the highly advertised Special Service Force, and General Pope, although "unaware of the actual reasons which led (the C.G.S.) to recommend that Canada be represented in this Force" suggested that it would be unfortunate to have to forego the months of active training to the credit of the composite force, especially as it was "the only unit available to the forces of the United Nations, other than Russia, which had or would have had training in special fighting under snow conditions" (HQS 20-2-32, Maj-Gen. M.A. Pope to C.G.S., 20 Oct 42).

38. The question of the indefinite status of 2 Cdn Para Bn was noted by the Minister of National Defence when he asked whether from the Canadian viewpoint the 1st Special Service Force was anything more than just a stand-by Force, "its principal virtue being that it gives us the opportunity

to say that Canadians and Americans are co-operating" (HQ3 20-2-32, Minister to C.G.S., 20 Oct 42). The C.G.S. accordingly telegraphed General Pope as follows:

Does the U.S. Army really want us to continue our association with it in this Special Service Force? Will the U.S. Army agree to our conditions of continuing association, namely that any operational projects contemplated be subject to approval by this Headquarters?

(HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 1, Tel C.G.S. 570, 29 Oct 42).

39. The American reply to both queries was a definite affirmative, and a corroboration of General Marshall's letter of 17 Oct, but General McNarney, Deputy Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, was quoted as believing that the CAUCASUS proposal was "considered to be at best a doubtful starter". "Very tentative and quite inconclusive consideration" was now being given to employment of the Force in the Pacific North-East and the Pacific South-West. The possibility was also put forward of despatching the Force to the United Kingdom early in 1943, and holding it there intact for employment in adjoining theatres, as and when a suitable opportunity arose (HQ3 20-4-32, Tel C.A.W. 32, Pope to C.G.S., 30 Oct 42).

40. A more definite note was sounded by the Deputy Chief of Staff U.S. Army, in a letter of 13 Nov 42 to General Pope. General McNarney stated that the possibility of using the 1st Special Service Force for operations in the CAUCASUS had been rejected because the terrain and the tactical situation were not believed suitable. The Force would be retained as a special unit and would undertake intensive training in amphibious operations.

4. Military developments indicate a very profitable possible use for this Force in the Mediterranean Area. Special training in demolitions and in ranger operations especially qualifies the 1st Special Service Force for such an enterprise. Planning is now proceeding with a view to using the Force for early action in Italy, Sardinia, or Sicily.

5. In view of our present agreement that the Second Canadian Parachute Battalion be used jointly in the Plough Project, approval of the Canadian Government is requested for the continuing participation of the Battalion with the 1st Special Service Force.

(HQ3 20-2-32, Lt.-Gen. J.T. McNarney to Maj.-Gen. M.A. Pope, 13 Nov 42).

41. The United States proposal was given immediate consideration in OTTAWA and on 18 Nov 42 the War Committee of the Cabinet approved the Minister's recommendation that

"the 1st Special Service Force, undergoing training in the United States should have its training directed toward preparation for special operations in the Mediterranean Area" (HQ3 20-2-32, Minister of National Defence to C.G.S., 20 Nov 42). The memorandum covering this decision implied but did not specifically refer to continued Canadian participation, but on 23 Nov the C.G.S. telegraphed General Pope as follows:

Approval granted by War Committee for employment of Second Canadian Parachute Battalion with 1st Special Service Force in operation outlined in para 4 of letter dated 13 November from Lt.-Gen. McNarney to you.

(HQ3 20-2-32, Tel GB 624, Pope from Stuart, 23 Nov 42).

42. The principles upon which the above procedure of the Canadian Government appears to have been based, and which guided action on subsequent occasions (see para 50), were set forth in a J.A.G. Memorandum to the C.G.S. thus:

1st Special Service Force has peculiar characteristics in that Canadian and U.S. personnel are integrated in a greater degree than would be the case with respect to a combined Allied Force comprising tactical formations of the respective nations, each one of which was what might be termed a separate entity. In the case of the 1st Special Service Force a withdrawal of the Canadian portion would have the effect of disrupting the Force as such, whereas in the case of a combined Allied Force the withdrawal from combination of any portion thereof belonging to one of the Allied Nations would not have the effect of disrupting the other Allied components, though of course it might and probably would have some effect on the manner in which said combined force was to be employed.

... ..  
If Canadian participation in the 1st Special Service Force has been agreed to and the decision as to the tactical or strategical employment of said Force is to be left with the U.S. Government, then I suggest that the U.S. Government, upon reaching a decision in respect of the matters mentioned, should at once inform the Canadian Government and if the latter agrees to the employment of Canadian personnel in the task or role concerned there should not from that stage on be any question as to non-participation by such Canadian personnel.

(HQ3 20-1-32 Vol. 1, J.A.G. to C.G.S., 25 Oct 42).



43. While plans for the future role of the 1st Special Service Force were thus undergoing frequent revision, the Force continued its winter training at FORT HARRISON. Although the possibility of engaging in cold climate operations was now remote, the original training schedule was adhered to, with skiing, accompanied by exercises and conditioning in winter warfare, forming the basis of the programme (Weekly training schedules for 1st Special Service Force from October 1942 to March 1943 are appended to the War Diary, 2 Cdn Para Bn, March 1943). By order of the U.S. War Department winter training as such was suspended on 3 Feb 43, pending decision as to the theatre and time of employment of the Force (Monthly Report, February 1943).

AMPHIBIOUS TRAINING - FT. BRADFORD (15 APR - 23 MAY 42)

44. In mid-April the Force moved to C&P BRADFORD, a U.S. Navy Amphibious Training Centre on the Atlantic Coast, 14 miles from NORFOLK, Va. (W.D., 2 Cdn Para Bn, 12-15 Apr 43). Training immediately assumed a nautical character, and after a week of preliminary instruction and practice which included swimming, net-scaling, the handling of rubber boats, and various forms of landings, all three regiments of the Force participated in a nine-day series of ship-to-shore exercises in CHESAPEAKE BAY (HQs 20-16-32 Vol. 1, Monthly Report, 2 Cdn Para Bn, April 1943, Appx "B" and "C").

45. For six weeks the Force remained at FORT BRADFORD undergoing intensive training in all phases of the type of landing that its units or sub-units might be expected to have to make. The following schedule for the week 17-22 May 43 indicates the comprehensive nature of this training:

<u>SUBJECTS</u>	<u>HOURS</u>
Lifebelt Swimming Landings from Landing Craft	7
Destruction of Underwater Obstacles	4
Surf Training with Rubber Boats, Barges, and Lifebelt Swimming	4
Barge and Rubber Boat Towing	12
Rubber Boat Exercise and Critique	6
Hand to Hand Combat	2
Extended Order Drill and Arm and Hand Signals	2
Close Order Drill	1
Scouting and Patrolling	4
Map and Aerial Photo Reading	2
Removal of Anti-Tank and Anti-Personnel Mines	1
Care and Cleaning of Weapons	2
Inspection	4
TOTAL	<u>51</u>

(W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, May 1943 Appx "C").

46. From CAMP BRADFORD the Force moved inland again, to take up temporary quarters, on 23 May, at FORT ETHAN ALLEN, a permanent cavalry post near BURLINGTON, Vt., and about three miles from LAKE CHAMPLAIN (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 23 May 43). Land training was resumed with an enthusiasm that grew from the prospect of a move to an operational area in the near future. Colonel Frederick had told his officers that on "one day in Washington within fourteen hours the Force had been assigned to six different missions" (W.D. 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 28 May 43). The objective of training set for the first three weeks of June was "to reach the highest possible state of readiness for combat" (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, May 1943, Appx "C"). Emphasis was laid on living under field conditions for an extended period of time, operating as an assault force (from the lowest sub-unit to the Force as a whole), raiding operations by day and night, superior march technique (which included 30-mile forced marches), and above all, proficiency in the use of all Force weapons (Ibid).

47. The question of providing Canadian reinforcements for the 1st Special Service Force was raised again in February 1943, when Colonel Frederick requested that 6 officers and 125 other ranks be supplied for immediate training (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 2, Tel C.A.W. 190, Cdn Army Staff, Washington to D.S.D., 22 Feb 43, and C.A.W. 196, 25 Feb 43). Since 2 Cdn Para Bn had been brought up to authorized strength in the previous December (see para 27) no firm policy in the matter of providing reinforcements appears to have been decided on. The strength originally authorized by the Minister of National Defence was 47 officers and 650 other ranks (see para 6). The total establishment for O.Rs in the Combat Force was 1167, so that while the Canadian figure of 650 more than met the 50 per-cent quota (583), it did not allow for an equal Canadian share in the normal 20 per-cent first reinforcements, i.e. an additional 117 Canadian O.Rs.. The original intention that Canada should supply one-half the total establishment, plus one-half the 20 per-cent which would be taken as first reinforcements, had not up until now been implemented, as the shortage of time available before anticipated operations had led the American authorities to undertake to supply any deficiencies in reinforcements (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 2, D.S.D. to C.G.S., 24 Feb 43). The recent change in the Force's proposed role, however, now allowed time to complete the provision of the Canadian proportion of reinforcements (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 2, Tel C.A.W. 190, Pope to D.S.D., 22 Feb 43). A submission to Privy Council was prepared, recommending that the Canadian component of the 1st Special Service Force be 47 officers and 700 other ranks, together with a paymaster and two administrative other ranks. The recommendation was approved on 5 May 43 (P.C. 76/3711, Copy on file H.Q. 20-1-32 Vol. 1).

48. To meet the new demand 1 Cdn Para Bn, still in training at FORT DENNING, was called on to supply the required personnel, but on a voluntary basis only (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 2, A.G. Tel, MOB 459, 26 Feb 43, and C.G.S. Tel, G.S.D. 256, 26 Feb 43). But the reluctance with which 1 Cdn Para Bn had seen the transfer of 97 of its members to the Special Service

Battalion in December 1942 was once more reflected in the general disinclination of officers and men to leave their battalion. A strong "esprit de corps" had developed, and it was expected that 1 Cdn Para Bn would soon be moving overseas as a unit. No officers and only twelve other ranks volunteered for transfer (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 2, D.A.G. Memo, 2 Mar 43). One reason advanced for the lack of response to the call for volunteers was that the men feared that transfer to 2 Cdn Para Bn would deprive them of an opportunity of leave in Canada (Ibid). A few weeks' delay in supplying reinforcements was therefore requested, a request to which Colonel Frederick was unable to accede. He had been notified that the Allied Commander-in-Chief, North Africa, had on 1 Mar asked the U.S. War Department to make the Force available to him as soon as possible (HQ3 20-4-32, Vol. 2, Tel C.A.W. 206, Cdn Army Staff to D.S.D. 3 Mar 43). On 7 Mar the 12 other rank reinforcements arrived at FORT HARRISON to be taken on strength 2 Cdn Para Bn (W.D., 2 Cdn Para Bn, 7 Mar 43).

49. These were the last Canadian personnel to reinforce the 1st Special Service Force before it left the U.S. On 20 Apr 43 the C.G.S. recommended to the Minister that no further reinforcements be sent, and that the fact be accepted that the Canadian Component would be slightly less than 50% of the total strength of the Force. In submitting his recommendation General Stuart pointed out that a total of 54 officers and 955 other ranks had been despatched to the Force, of whom 307 personnel had been returned for various reasons by the end of March 1943. It followed that Canada had produced her fair share of personnel for the Force, and the existing strength of 43 officers and 579 other ranks would remain with the Force less such wastage as might occur in the future. And once the 1st Special Service Force left the United States on special mission it would not be reinforced by either Canadian or American personnel (HQ3 20-1-32 Vol. 1, C.G.S. to Minister, 20 Apr 43. See also Vol. 2, Minutes of Meeting held at D.H.D. 8 Jun 43, at which reference was made to the cancellation of Canadian reinforcements for 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn).

#### OPERATIONS IN THE ALEUTIANS (9 JUL - 21 AUG 43)

50. While 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn - this new name for 2 Cdn Para Bn was taken into use on 27 May 43 (see unit War Diary that date) - was occupied at FORT ETHAN ALLEN in the final stages of training for combat, in WASHINGTON and OTTAWA the U.S. War Department and the Canadian Government were reaching further agreement on the future employment of the 1st Special Service Force. On 1 Jun 43 the War Department requested Canadian approval of movement of the Force, with 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn included, to the United Kingdom in July 1943 for operations in the European Theatre. The proposal was based on decisions reached by the combined Chiefs of Staff in WASHINGTON (HQ3 20-2-32, Tel C.A.W. 365 Cdn Army Staff to C.G.S., 1 Jun 43). But before Cabinet action had

been taken in OTTAWA a telegram from General Pope on 10 Jun indicated the likelihood of a forthcoming request for employment of the Force in the Aleutians. General Pope pointed out that the British Joint Service Mission, who had "always held out for the Force to be reserved for use in a role and at a season when its special characteristics could be employed to the best advantage", had agreed to the proposed temporary diversion (HQS 20-2-32, Tel C.A.W. 400, Cdn Army Staff to C.C.S., 10 Jun 43).

51. The War Committee was already conversant with the plan for a joint U.S.-Canadian expedition against Japanese-held KISKA, having authorized, on 3 Jun 43, the formation of a Brigade Group to participate in the "Greenlight" project (H/C 5393-5-4, The Canadian Participation in the Kiska Operations, para 7). At a meeting on 11 Jun it approved the proposal to despatch the 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn to the United Kingdom for subsequent operations in Europe and also anticipated a formal request from the U.S. War Department (which was made next day - HQS 20-2-32, C.A.W. 400, 12 Jun 43) by sanctioning the employment of the unit in the Alaskan Area, "or whatever other theatre it could in the opinion of the Minister of National Defence be used most effectively" (HQS 20-2-32, Minister to C.C.S., 14 Jun 43).

52. The impending move of the 1st Special Service Force from the North American continent made necessary a revision of the disciplinary powers of the Canadian Battalion Commander. During the unit's period of training in the United States no authority had been granted the Officer Commanding to convene Field General Courts-Martial (HQS 20-4-32 Vol. 2, D.C.G.S.(A) to D.A.G.(E), 4 Jun 43). At the end of May, after Colonel Frederick and Lt.-Col. Williamson had raised the question with the Adjutant-General, Ministerial approval was given to a recommendation that "the Senior Combatant Canadian Officer of the 1st Special Service Force, provided he is of Field rank or above, should be given power to convene Field General Courts-Martial" (HQS 20-4-32 Vol. 2, Extract from Record of Discussions of Military Members held 27 May 43).

53. In addition to being granted authority to exercise his power to convene Field General Courts-Martial under Section 49 of the Army Act, the Battalion Commander, subject to certain limitations, was empowered under Sections 54 and 57 to confirm the finding and sentence imposed by such Courts-Martial. In cases where the sentence for other ranks was higher on the scale of punishment than imprisonment, or for officers more than a severe reprimand, finding and sentence must be reserved for confirmation at D.N.D. (or C.M.H.Q. should the Force move to Europe or North Africa) (HQS 20-4-32 Vol. 2, A.G. Directive to C.C. 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 9 Jun 43). To prepare officers of the battalion to sit as Members of a Court, an officer of the J.A.G. Branch spent two days at FORT ETHAN ALLEN instructing all Canadian officers in methods of procedure in Courts-Martial (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 23 Jun 43).

54. On 28 Jun 43 the 1st Special Service Force left FORT ETHAN ALLEN in five trains on the long transcontinental



journey to the West Coast. At CAMP McDOWELL, on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay, the Force spent a busy week preparing for embarkation. Warm clothing, waterproof clothing, and impregnated (anti-gas) clothing were issued to all ranks, and worn-out or missing equipment was replaced. On 9-10 Jul the Force embarked on two Liberty ships, one of which carried the 1st and 3rd Regiments, the other the 2nd Regiment and the Service Battalion (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn 9-10 Jul 43). Next day they sailed in convoy for the Aleutian Islands (Ibid, 11 Jul 43).

55. The expedition of which the 1st Special Service Force now formed a part was Landing Force 16.8, the military component of Amphibious Training Force No. 9. The objective was the occupation of the Island of KISKA, believed to be held by an estimated force of 11,000 Japanese. Landing Force 16.8, which was commanded by Maj.-Gen. Charles H. Corlett, had an approximate strength of 32,000. It comprised, in addition to the Special Service Force, four American and one Canadian Task Groups, each consisting of three battalion combat teams, which were tactical groups of all arms built around an infantry battalion. Supporting and co-operating with the military group were strong United States Air and Naval Forces. The entire A.T.F.9 was under the command of Admiral T.C. Kincaid, U.S. Navy (P/C 5393-5-4, The Canadian Participation in the Kiska Operations, para 24).

56. After two weeks at sea, in ship's quarters that were uncomfortably crowded, the 1st Special Service Force disembarked, on 24 Jul, at AMCHITKA, the largest of the Rat Islands, at its Western extremity only 50 miles from KISKA (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 24 Jul 43). It was originally planned that the Force should land at ADAK, some 180 miles to the East, with the rest of Landing Force 16.8, but the bivouac area selected there for the Special Service troops proved much too wet to occupy (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 25 Jul 43). On AMCHITKA the Special Service Force settled down to a busy three weeks' programme of camp construction and training, which consisted largely of becoming conditioned to the exacting Aleutian climate and terrain. Accommodation was in U.S. pyramidal tents, well dug in for protection against Aleutian gales or bomb blast from hostile planes. AMCHITKA was occupied at that time by a garrison of some 14,000 troops including U.S. Army Air Force and U.S. Naval personnel, and a squadron of the R.C.A.F. Officers and men marvelled at the amount of work that had been accomplished in road building and air field construction by U.S. Army and Navy engineers on the island (Ibid). All ranks now wore on their arm the distinctive A.T.F.9 patch, - a silver bowie knife in a circle of blue.

57. The plans for the assault on KISKA by General Corlett's forces were as complete in scope and specific in detail as skillful preparation could make them. Report Hist Sec D.N.D., No. 1, The Canadian Participation in the Kiska Operations, gives in broad outline the projected operations of Landing Force 16.8.

Amphibious Training Force No. 9, was supported by all US Army, Navy and Air

Force units in the Western Aleutians Area, as an actual and potential reserve. Landing Force 16.8, embarking at various planned staging areas in the Aleutian Chain, was to move under Navy control to specified transport areas off the coasts of KISKA, disembark and land on the island at designated beaches, move rapidly inland to carefully defined objectives, reorganize and prepare to launch a co-ordinated attack for the complete destruction of the enemy on KISKA ISLAND. Prior to landings the plan called for a naval demonstration and diversion on the south side of the island with a simulated landing at GERTRUDE COVE and VEGA BAY. Naval combat ships were to place harassing fire on enemy installations in GERTRUDE COVE and on the island of LITTLE KISKA. The supporting Air Force (Task Group 16.2) was given the task prior to D-Day of systematically destroying all vital enemy installations on the island. Beginning on the actual day of attack the Air Force, in close liaison with its ground observers, was to prevent the movement of enemy reserves, promptly report all changes in enemy positions, and closely support the defence of our ground force.

Landing Force 16.8 commanded by Gen. Corlett, was to attack in two sectors, the southern under the command of Col. E.M. SOUTHERLAND, and the northern under Brig.-Gen. Joseph L. Ready. Operating in each sector command was one regiment of the Special Service Force based on ANCHITLA ISLAND, whose task it was to precede the main bodies, land in rubber boats and move rapidly inland to neutralize enemy installations and give cover to landings of the Force. The remaining Regiment of the Special Service Force, staying in Force Reserve at ANCHITLA, was to be prepared to land on LITTLE KISKA ISLAND either by rubber boat or parachute, and to destroy enemy resistance there.

(HQC 5393-5-4, op cit, para 111, 112, see also W.D., 13 Cdn Inf Bde, August, 1943, Appx 2, U.S. Field Order No. 1, 1 Aug 43).

58. The projected landings were to take place on the North-West, or Bering Sea, coast of the Island, in each case well to the rear of the main Japanese installations at GERTRUDE COVE and KISKA HARBOUR on the Pacific Ocean side (See Appx "D"). It will be observed that two regiments of the 1st Special Service Force were to be heavily committed. The operations planned for the 1st Regiment, assigned to the

Southern Sector, and the 3rd Regiment, participating in the Northern landing, followed a common pattern. The 1st Regiment embarking at ANCHITKA on the transport, "U.S.S. Kane", and one L.S.T., would move so as to arrive under cover of darkness, and with the utmost secrecy, at points as close as possible to the shore at QUISLING COVE and LULU HILL, behind the enemy position at GERTRUDE COVE. From these points they would paddle to shore in rubber boats, landing not later than H-200 on D-Day (15 Aug 43). In the little more than three hours that would elapse before Colonel Southerland's main landing force began to go ashore at H-Hour, the Special Service troops had the task of making their way inland to seize and hold the hilly area of LEATHER HILL and LAWSON HILL which overlooked the Japanese positions around GERTRUDE COVE. They would destroy such enemy forces as might be encountered, and would cover subsequent landings on Beaches 9-10, and the inland movements of the Battalion Landing Groups in the Southern Sector. Their work would include the marking of the landing beaches and the demolition of rocks that might interfere with the entrance of landing craft (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, September 1943, Appx "D", Field Order No. 5, 1st Special Service Force, 8 Aug 43).

59. Operations in the Northern Sector were scheduled to take place on D-plus-1 Day (16 Aug). Brig.-Gen. Ready's force, which included Task Group 13 (13 Cdn Inf Bde Gp), commanded by Brig. (later Maj.-Gen.) H.W. Foster, would commence landing at H-Hour (0620 hrs) on Beach 14, between WITCHCRAFT POINT and WEST KISKA LAKE. The 3rd Regiment, Special Service Force, having moved by L.S.T. from ANCHITKA to a point offshore North-West of WEST KISKA LAKE, was to embark by night in rubber boats, and reach the bar between the lake and the Bering Sea not later than H-300. The raiding party would then carry their boats over the bar and proceed in them across WEST KISKA LAKE, landing at a point near the mouth of ROBIN CREEK. Advancing inland by the best available routes they would seize and hold the RIOT HILL - RANGER HILL ridge, organizing to cover landings of the main force on Beach 14 (Ibid).

60. The remaining unit of the 1st Special Service Force, the 2nd Regiment, was placed in Force Reserve at ANCHITKA. It was under orders to stand by, prepared to "land by parachute at any point on KISKA or LITTLE KISKA, as designated, in order to relieve or exploit an emergency tactical situation". In addition to this reserve role the 2nd Regiment was detailed to "land on LITTLE KISKA by parachute, rubber boat or landing craft, independently or supported by other troops, to destroy the enemy and his installations on LITTLE KISKA". Headquarters 1st Special Service Force would operate from "U.S.S. Kane", less a detachment remaining on ANCHITKA to effect co-ordination with the Eleventh Air Force for movement of personnel or supplies by air (Ibid).

61. Operating with the 1st Special Service Regiments were two officers and sixty C.R.s of the Alaskan Scouts, who familiarly bore the striking sobriquet "Eastner's Cutthroats". These were described as "a tough bunch of Alaskan trappers and prospectors, ... familiar with this type of country".

A few were attached to each camp, to assist in any way that they could (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 12 Aug 43).

62. The last day or two on A.C. IJMA prior to embarkation for the move to IJMA were spent by the Special Service troops in putting finishing touches on training and equipment. The Op List of the Canadian unit noted on 11 Aug:

P.A.D.

Personnel from the 1st Regiment who were on a night patrol with rubber boats are heartily commended. The Navy this evening, they were supposed to be collected by a L.S.M. about six miles up the shore at 0700 hrs., but were waiting for an hour and no Navy decided to pull in because of a distance of about 1 1/2 miles between the boats and the shore. It took them until 1300 hrs.

(W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 11 Aug 43).

On 13 Aug, an officer and W.C.O. of the 2nd Regiment jumped by parachute in a satisfactory test of the manner in which their complete combat equipment was carried. There was a feeling of tense expectancy as they watched U.S. medium bombers take off to try almost directly to the enemy on the neighboring island. On 12 Aug, Radio TOKYO had announced that the main invasion of IJMA would begin on the 15th. They are correct, as the 15th is D-Day. We not only know this, do not know where the landings are to be made (Ibid, 12, 13 Aug 43). Late in the evening of 13 Aug the 2nd Regiment went aboard their ships, and on the following morning the 1st Regiment embarked. Personnel of the 2nd Regiment, having given up an unbroken and having been fitted with parachutes, began a period of waiting and wondering when and where they would be sent into action (Ibid, 14 Aug 43).

63. First landings in the occupation of IJMA took place in the darkness of the early morning hours of Sunday, 15 Aug, as the 1st Regiment, 1st Special Service Force, went ashore and reached its objectives. Advanced Headquarters Pacific Command on ADAL picked up the following A.T.F. 9 message at 0700 hours:

0700 hrs. - Special Service Force 30 thern  
Sector landed successfully QUSLING COV.  
No opposition

(The Canadian Participation in the IJMA Operations, Annex 33, Ops Log, Adv H.Q., 1st Cdn, ADAL, 15 Aug 43).

A more detailed account of the Force's operations in the Southern Sector was given in a message from the Force Commander to his A.C. IJMA base at 2045 hours on 15 Aug:

Marshall's Regt. (1st Regt.) reached objective without meeting a single enemy or firing shot. Hills are terrific, wind and tide played hell with rubber boat movement. Regiment now going to Sector Reserve. Aschenberg, (Major, Plans and operations Officer) and one



land party paddled five hours. Were further (from shore) than when they started. Picked up by Navy boat and given brandy. Ryan's pyrotechnic display quite impressive (Lt. Ryan's demolition squad blew up rocks in the bay in preparation for landing). No yellow bastards in sight. Hoping for better hunting. Frederick.

(W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 15 Aug 43).

64. At 0110 hrs on D-Day plus 1 the two battalions of the 3rd Regiment, Special Service Force, landed on the bar which separated WEST KISKA LAKE from the sea. While a detachment moved down the coast to set up markers on Beach 14, and pave the way for the main landing, the rest proceeded to carry their rubber boats over the bar and continue their course across the lake. It was not an easy task. The sand beach shown in reconnaissance photographs and maps proved to be a pebble ridge that "did not have a grain of sand weighing less than 100 lbs." (Ibid, 23 Aug 43). But boats and equipment somehow made the crossing, and by daylight the objectives on RICT and RANGER HILLS had been taken without any opposition having been encountered. At 1-Hour Canadian and American Battalion Landing Groups began to come ashore above WITCHGRAFF POINT.

65. By the evening of 18 Aug, when all initial objectives of the main landing forces had been taken, it was apparent that a major evacuation of the Japanese had somehow been effected, and that if any opposition were now to be encountered, it would be from small bands of soldiers lurking in fox holes and underground caves for a last-ditch suicidal stand. In the uncertainty that prevailed during the first thirty-six hours of the landings the almost total lack of visibility on some of the fog-covered ridges made it impossible to distinguish friend from potential foe; and several instances occurred of men firing upon moving figures suspected to be enemies. (The Canadian Participation in the Kiska Operations, Appx 37, Account of Wounding of Fus. D.Y. Mills). An operations summary early on the morning of 18 Aug reported 14 dead and 13 wounded in the Southern Sector, with most casualties being due to mistaken identity (Ibid, Appx 33, Ops Log, Adv H.Q. Pac Comd, Adak, 18 Aug 43).

66. That Special Service Force troops sustained no casualties by such means may be attributed more to their good fortune rather than their blamelessness in this regard, if the observations of the diarist of H.Q. 13 Cdn Inf Bde are correct.

The Special Service boys, having seized their initial objective (RANGER HILL), had pushed down towards the ridge of the Main Camp. Now, each man of the Special Force carried over 500 rounds of ammunition, and when they reached the ridge, rich in abandoned Japanese small arms weapons and smaller articles, they decided to lighten their original load. The result was that they

conducted a field firing exercise in the valley west of S.I. C. 14000 and in front of our troops. After a few brisk exchanges of fire between the IFA (Task Group) and Canadian troops on one side and the S.S.F. on the other, without casualties, the situation clarified itself. Throughout the night small bands of S.S.F. withdrew through our lines.

(I.D., No. 1, 13 Oct Inf Reg, 17 Aug 43).

And a message from Task Group 14 to the Northern Sector sent at 2200 hrs on 16 Aug 1943:

Please contact S.S.F. and tell them to please stop firing mortar bombs as they are landing close to our lines.

(Canadian Participation in the Kiska Operations, Appx 34, Battle 10, 13 Can Task Group, 16 Aug 43).

67. The 2nd Regiment, remaining on the alert on A'CHITKA was not called into action. On the afternoon of 17 Aug Lt.-Col. Marshall, S.C. 1st Regiment, landed at S.I. C. 14000 on A'CHITKA with a company from each of 1st and 3rd Regiments, and confirmed the evacuation of all Japanese from the Island (Ops Log, 13 Can Task Group, 17 Aug 43). On the 19th the two companies made a reconnaissance in force of S.I. C. 14000, a small island 20 miles east of A'CHITKA, without finding any trace of Japanese occupation past or present (Ibid, 19 Aug 43). See also U.S. Alaska Defense Command Intelligence Summary, The Enemy on Kiska, p. 74). Thus it fell to troops of the 1st Special Service Force to give the final confirmation of the removal of all Japanese land forces from the Aleutian Islands. The fourteen-month enemy occupation of U.S. territory in the Western Hemisphere was over. (For an account of the Japanese evacuation of Kiska on 28 Jul 43, as revealed in an enemy report captured on T.I.R.A., see The Canadian Participation in the Kiska Operations, Appx 55A).

#### THE REPORT FROM KISKA (22 AUG - 1 S.I.F 43)

68. With their task at KISKA finished, little time was lost by the Special Service Units in leaving the Aleutians. On 19 Aug orders were received from the Combined Chiefs of Staff recalling the Force to the U.S. (LCS 20-16-32 Vol. 2, Mont. 1 Report, 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, September 1943). The 1st and 3rd Regiments sailed directly for A.D. aboard the "U.S.S. Bell", leaving their comrades of the 2nd Regiment at A'CHITKA to collect and pack for shipment the clothing and equipment that had not been taken with them on the final assault. There appears to have been a considerable amount of waste and loss in the manner in which the two assaulting Regiments had abandoned their belongings and in the way in which their equipment was later put on board at A'CHITKA.

The reports of abandoned clothing and equipment are very concerning. Clothing in perfectly good repair, rifles, carbines, pistols, rocket launchers ("Bazookas"), were found trampled in mud. Quantities of "C" rations had been opened and only partly consumed. Neglect and carelessness concerning clothing and equipment has always been noticed but this was an all time high. This may be partly excused on the grounds of their leaving very hurriedly and earlier than expected.

(W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 21 Aug 43).

The loading was strictly a mess. Boxes were dumped and jammed in any old way. No attempt was made to keep each organization's boxes separate. A number were smashed wide open and some equipment will undoubtedly be damaged.

(Ibid, 22 Aug 43).

69. Late on the evening of 22 Aug the 2nd Regiment and the Service Battalion sailed from AMCHITKA on the Liberty ship, "John B. Floyd". Two days later they reached LULUIE BAY, ADAK, where the "U.S.S. Bell", with the remainder of the 1st Special Service Force aboard, was already lying at anchor. The troops aboard the "Floyd" transferred to roomier quarters on the "U.S.S. Heywood". On 24 Aug the "Bell" put to sea again bound for SAN FRANCISCO, to be followed next day by the "Heywood". The two transports reached the Golden Gate on 31 Aug and 1 Sep respectively (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 1 Sep 43).

70. This ended the initial mission of the 1st Special Service Force. Although no enemy had been encountered, it should be borne in mind that for the great majority of the troops taking part the Japanese evacuation was not even suspected until after the 1st Regiment, Special Service Force, had landed, nor was it confirmed until after the 3rd Regiment had gone ashore on D-Day plus 1. The work of all ranks, performed as it was under exceedingly difficult conditions of terrain and weather, was warmly praised by the U.S. Task Force Commander, Maj.-Gen. Corlett, in the following commendation:

1. In the occupation of the island of KISKA, the 1st Special Service Force was under my command. They performed all missions according to plan and even though no actual enemy was encountered, their missions were difficult and dangerous. They landed in rubber boats at unknown beaches during hours of darkness against what was presumed to be a hostile shore. They moved across difficult terrain and positions where cleverly concealed

explosive traps had been left by the enemy. They reached their objectives on schedule exactly according to plan.

2. To accomplish their missions, it was impractical for them to carry packs to provide the ordinary comforts of soldiers in the field. As a consequence they were exposed to extreme discomfort for long periods of time.

3. It is desired to commend all officers and men of the 1st Special Service Force for their fine spirit and unselfishness.

4. It is especially desired to commend Colonel Robert T. Frederick for his splendid leadership and devotion to duty.

5. Colonel Frederick has a force that should be of great value in almost any difficult battle situation.

(HQ3 20-1-32 Vol. 1, Commendation of 1st Special Service Force, 26 Aug 43).

71. Upon the Special Service Force's return to the United States mainland the first three weeks of September were taken up with a staggered system of leave, as all personnel were given six days or more. During this period the Force moved from CAMP JONEMAN, VIKERSBURG, Calif. (48 miles from SAN FRANCISCO) to its former camp at FORT ETHAN ALLEN, Vt. (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 8 Sep 43). When the day arrived for each group to return from leave, there was a large number of A.W.L.'s, a condition that was by no means novel to the Force.

15 Sep 43 - Well over 200 are A.W.L. ....  
It looks as though we are in for the usual absence without leave encountered after all leaves.

(W.D., 15 Sep 43).

72. During October, 48 other ranks were struck off strength, 17 as medically unfit, 14 as undesirable, and the remaining 17 as A.W.L. or deserters (Monthly Report, October 1943). It seems probable that this impending reduction in strength prompted a reconsideration of the decision made in April not to supply further reinforcements to 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn (see para 49). On 25 Sep Colonel Williamson (who was promoted to that rank on 30 Sep 43) and two of his officers went to MONTREAL to interview respective reinforcements concentrated at No. 4 District Depot. At the end of three day's selection a draft of 65 volunteers proceeded to FORT ETHAN ALLEN, there to reduce the strength deficiency of 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn to 10 officers and 87 O.Rs below authorized establishment (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 25-28 Sep 43).



73. Although official announcement of future moves of the Force was slow in coming, there was little doubt in the men's minds that they were slated for the Mediterranean. While the Force was participating in the HISEA Operations, Allied troops had been overrunning Sicily, and the capture of MESSINA, with the resulting conclusion of the Sicilian Campaign, had taken place on 17 Aug, on the same day that the occupation of HISEA was completed. 3 Sep saw the invasion of Southern Italy, and on 1 Oct the Allies entered NAPLES. On 22 Sep the Force was told that its next operation would be "in the big league", and on 2 Oct all personnel attended a lecture by a university professor on the Italian people! (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 22 Sep, 2 Oct 43).

74. On 6 Oct 43 Maj.-Gen. Thomas T. Hardy, Assistant Chief of Staff U.S. Army, informed Maj.-Gen. Pope that the combined Chiefs of Staff had on 17 Sep assigned the 1st Special Service Force to General Eisenhower for future operations (HQ3 20-2-32, Maj.-Gen. Pope from Maj.-Gen. Hardy, 6 Oct 43). It was intended that the unit should be sent to the Mediterranean in response to a request of General Eisenhower, and it would there have two possible uses --

- (a) initially to provide strong reconnaissance units for flank protection in the Apennines, and for raids behind enemy lines, and later possibly in the French Alps, and
- (b) for independent guerrilla and sabotage activities in the Balkans and for support of resistance groups

(HQ3 20-2-32, Tel C.A.W. 648, Pope to Stuart, 7 Oct 43).

This action of the combined Chiefs of Staff was approved by the War Committee of the Cabinet on 12 Oct 43, on the recommendation of the Minister of National Defence (HQ3 20-2-32, Minister to C.G.S., 14 Oct 43).

75. On 16 Oct 43 D.N.D. was notified by WASHINGTON that the 1st Special Service Force would be sailing for CASABLANCA on or about 28 Oct (HQ3 20-2-32, Tel C.A.W. 669, Cdn Army Staff to C.G.S., 16 Oct 43). In anticipation of such a move measures were already being taken at OTTAWA to ensure that administrative machinery with respect to 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn should function as smoothly as possible when the unit came under command of the C-in-C, Allied Forces in the Mediterranean. A new directive to the C.C. 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn gave full instructions regarding changes necessitated by the unit's impending transfer from the North American Continent (HQ3 20-4-32 Vol. 2, C.G.S. Instructions to Colonel D.D. Williamson, 19 Oct 43). Authority was given Colonel Williamson to commit the personnel of his battalion, "allotted as they be to sub-units within the 1st Special Service Force, to any operational employment deemed necessary and expedient on orders from the Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces in the Mediterranean."

#### ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

76. It had originally been planned that should the battalion move overseas C.M.H. would assume the responsibility of maintaining unit records and documents, a task that had in the past been carried out by the Directorate of Records at D.N.D. (HQS 20-1-32, Vol. 2, Minutes of Meeting held at N.D.H., 8 Jun 43). In view of the fact that the unit formed an integral part of the 1st Special Service Force, that it was not now expected to visit the United Kingdom, and that there was no guarantee that it would be serving within easy communication distance of any other Canadian formation, a decision was reached to maintain the existing channel of communication from the Special Service Battalion through the Canadian Army Staff, Washington, to D.N.D. The unit was to issue its own Part II Orders, and hence maintain its field documents (Triplicate copies of H.Fs.M. 1, 2, 4, 6, and 14), but all other documents would remain in the custody of the Director of Records at OTTAWA. A Canadian officer (the former battalion Paymaster) was appointed from within the establishment of 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn to serve with Headquarters of the Force as Administrative Officer, responsible for the publication of Part II Orders, the maintenance of field documents, and, in effect, to perform the duties normally assigned to Second Echelon (HQS 20-4-32, Vol. 2, A.G. to D.C.G.S. (A), 15 Oct 43).

77. In view of the fact that 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn formed part of the 1st Special Service Force, it was not considered practical or expedient to authorize, under the Visiting Forces Act, Canadian personnel of the unit to "serve together" or to "act in combination with" other Commonwealth forces with whom they might be associated in their new theatre of operations.

The position of the Canadian personnel under your command, in respect of their conduct and attitude towards personnel of other Commonwealth forces, as well as with respect to their compliance with any instructions or orders issued by personnel of such other forces, will be regulated by such orders in this regard as you may from time to time issue.

(Instructions to Colonel Williamson, 19 Oct 43).

78. The powers of the Officer Commanding 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn were broadened with respect to confirmation of the findings and sentences of Field General Courts-Martial convened by him, and the right to mitigate, remit or commute the punishment awarded. The limitations previously imposed upon his authority under Sections 54-57 of the Army Act (see para 53) were to a considerable extent removed, so that only in cases where the sentence was death or penal servitude was reservation to be made for confirmation by higher authority, and in the case of penal servitude, flogging and sentence would be reserved only if "factors of time and distance feasibly permitted" such a course to be followed (Ibid.).

79. On 20-21 Oct 43 the 1st Special Service Force moved from FORT ETHAN ALLEN to a staging Camp, CAMP PATRICK HENRY, 12 miles North of NEWPORT, Va. (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 21 Oct 43). Clothing parades, the packing of baggage, medical inspections and final inoculations occupied much of the week that remained before embarkation (Ibid 22-27 Oct 43). On 27 Oct the Force went aboard the "Empress of Scotland" at the HAMPTON ROADS Port of Embarkation. Next morning the ship sailed for North Africa with some 4900 troops aboard (Ibid., 28 Oct 43). The strength of 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn after embarkation was 38 officers and 571 other ranks (Monthly Report, October 1943).

#### NORTH AFRICA (5-14 NOV 43)

80. After an uneventful voyage the "Empress of Scotland" reached CASABLANCA, French Morocco, on 5 Nov. On disembarkation the Force proceeded by train to ORAN, Algeria, -- a slow and tedious two-and-a-half day journey that was made in shifts, one regiment at a time (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 5-9 Nov 43). Movement by ship to NAPLES commenced on 14 Nov and was completed within five days. On the 20th the Force moved by road convoy to SANTA MARIA (7277), 18 miles due north of NAPLES, and just south of the VOLTURNO River (Map, ITALY 1/250,000, Sheet 35, NAPLES). Here the Force came under command of 2 Corps of General Mark Clark's Fifth U.S. Army (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 1 Dec 43).

THE MIGNANO SECTOR (29 NOV 43 - 30 JAN 44)

81. At the end of November 1943 the general defence line of the German forces in Italy ran across the peninsula in a south-westerly direction from the mouth of the SANGRO on the Adriatic to the mouth of the GARIGLIANO below GAETA, roughly following the course of these two rivers. Advancing against the enemy on the right was the British Eighth Army, now preparing to launch its assault across the MERO River, with 1 Cdn Div in the extreme eastern coastal sector. On 15 Army Group's left the Fifth U.S. Army, having fought its way forward from its SALERNO landing on 9 Sep, now faced the southern end of the German "Barbara" line, running through ALFEDENA (7085), south of CASSINO (6882), and MINTURNO (6779). Fifth Army dispositions had 6 Corps on the right, 2 Corps in the centre opposite CASSINO, and 10 (British) Corps on the left flank along the coast (Information given on Italy Campaign Map 3, D.M.I., January 1944). During the latter part of November strong German counter-attacks delivered in the mountainous sector held by 2 Corps had produced an almost static condition in the centre of Fifth Army's front (Ibid). (See Appx "E").

82. On 29 Nov 43 orders were issued for a large scale attack in the MIGNANO (6981) area. German forces were occupying positions on the heights of MT. CAMINO (695808) and MT. MAGGIORE (693871) from which their artillery observers were directing fire into the low-lying MIGNANO-TORA (7080) area to the west. 2 Corps acting in co-operation with 10 (British) Corps was ordered to attack and capture the MT. CAMINO-MT. MAGGIORE hill mass. While 56 (British) Div was assigned the task of capturing MT. CAMINO on the left, 36 (U.S.) Div, reinforced by the 1st Special Service Force, was directed against the central and highest features of the mountain mass, -- MT. MAGGIORE (HILLS 510, 630 and 619), MT. LA DIFENSA (HILL 960) and MT. LA REMETANEA (HILL 907) (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, November 1943, Appx. 2, 1st Special Service Force Field Order 14, 29 Nov 43; Appx. 5, Map, ITALY 1/25,000, Enlarged from ITALY 1/50,000, War Office 1943, Sheets 160 II & III). 36 Div was to employ two regiments in the operation, -- 142 Regt on the right against MT. MAGGIORE, and the 2nd Regt., 1st Special Service Force, to seize successively and hold MT. LA DIFENSA and MT. LA REMETANEA (Field Order No. 14). D-Day was 3 Dec 43.

83. On the evening of 1 Dec the three combat regiments of 1st Special Service Force moved from SANTA MARIA up to the bivouac area, just south of MIGNANO, where the 1st and 3rd regiments were to remain in divisional reserve during the impending operations (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 1 Dec 43). At 0100 hrs on the morning of 3 Dec the 2nd Regiment began its assault up the steep side of MT. LA DIFENSA, which rose abruptly some 2500 feet above the



valley in which MIGNANO was situated. The difficult climb through the darkness was successfully completed. By 0700 hrs the 1st Battalion of the Regiment had captured the summit, but had suffered heavy losses. During the day the 1st Battalion was relieved by the 2nd Battalion, but because of shortage of ammunition and uncertainty as to the enemy's strength further attack was postponed until reinforcements and ammunition resupply should arrive.

84. The Hill 960 position was held successfully by the 2nd Regiment during 4 and 5 Dec, while reinforcements came up from the 1st and 3rd Regiments. Both of these units were used throughout the remainder of the operations to supply the 2nd Regiment and to evacuate casualties. During the two days patrols probed their way to the west and south, and some intermediate positions were secured. On 6 Dec the 1st Battalion advanced against HILL 907 (MT. LA DEFENSA) under machine gun and mortar fire from the south, where the Germans still held positions on MT. C. JINO. No enemy forces were encountered on HILL 907, and by 1200 hrs the main objective was taken. On the 8th, following a heavy artillery concentration -- all guns of 2 Corps were in support of 36 Div's operation -- the 1st Battalion of 2nd Regiment launched a final attack and drove the Germans down into the valley to the west of MT. LA DEFENSA. That afternoon and evening units of 142 Regiment relieved the 1st Special Service Force, and the return to base camp at S. L. HILL was completed on 9 Dec (HQ 3 20-16-32 Vol. 2, Monthly Report, 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 18 Oct-15 Dec 43, Appx "G", Narrative History of Events, period 1-9 Dec 43).

85. Casualties for the complete operations were heavy. The Force lost 9 officers and 71 other ranks killed or missing, and 11 officers and 339 other ranks wounded. Canadian casualties, included in the above figures, amounted to 2 officers and 25 other ranks killed or missing, and 2 officers and 84 other ranks wounded. Among the Canadian losses was Lt.-Col. T.C. MacMillan, C.C. 1st Battalion, 2nd Regiment, who was killed by mortar fire after leading his battalion in the successful assault on MT. LA DEFENSA (Monthly Report 28 Oct-15 Dec 43). The evacuation of the wounded down steep MT. LA DEFENSA was a slow and difficult process. Six men were required to carry each litter, with a seventh, acting as a brake, holding on to a rope in the rear. It took up to eight or ten hours to bring each casualty down the hill (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, December 1943, Appx "A", War Diary H. Q. 34 Regt). To replace U.S. and Canadian officer battle casualties resulting from the operations, eight Canadian N.C.O.'s were provisionally commissioned in the field in the rank of lieutenant (1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, Part II Order No. 53, d/16 Dec 43). These appointments were subsequently approved by the Officer Commanding, Canadian Section, G.H.Q. 1st Trenchon (Brig. A.W. Beament) (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 14 Dec 43).

86. The night of 7 Dec all objectives in the two corps' advance had been taken and the MAGGIORE-CASSINO hill mass was in Allied hands. Two days later, further north between S. PIETRO and VALMERO, a Ranger Regiment of 36 (U.S.) Div pushed to the top of MT. SALLUCRO (697817), thereby securing 2 Corps' right flank for a further advance westward. In its first engagement in the Mediterranean Theatre -- indeed in its first opposed operation in any field -- the 1st Special Service Force had carried out a completely successful action. Maj Lt.-Gen. Hank Clark came high commendation:

The Special Service Force was given the task of capturing LA DIPENSA, an extremely difficult piece of high ground in the MT. MAGGIORE hill mass, the position 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 counter-attacks 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 the spirit of arduous training. (HQS 20-2-32, H. A. Fifth Army, Commendation, Commanding Officer, 1st Special Service Force, 10 Dec 43).

Similar praise was forthcoming from Maj.-Gen. Geoffrey Keyes, Commanding General, 2 Corps:

I am fully cognizant of the stubbornness of the enemy and the difficulties of weather and terrain encountered in this seizure of MT. DIPENSA and Hill 907, and of the bravery, fortitude, and resourcefulness with which your command overcame them.

It is with genuine anticipation that I look forward to your next assignment under my command.

(HQS 20-2-32, H. A. 2 Corps, Keyes to Frederick, 10 Dec 43).

87. On Christmas Day the 1st Special Service Force again went into action. Although as a result of their joint assault during the first ten days of December 2 Corps and 10 (British) Corps had gained a firm footing in the eastern half of the mass of mountains and hills that lay between MIGNANO and CASSINO, there still remained a formidable barrier of heights -- MT. CHIATA (693818), MT. PORCIA (691815) and MT. TROCCIA (600818) -- that the enemy was

holding east of CASSINO. The new attack was therefore launched by 2 Corps to secure a suitable line for future operations against the C. SINCO stronghold (HQ'S 20-16-32 Vol. 2, Monthly Report, 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 16 Dec 43 - 31 Jan 44, Appx "D", 1st Special Service Force Field Order 16, 22 Dec 43).

88. In preparation for the operation combat units of the Force moved up from S.M.T. MARIA to bivouac in the vicinity of CEPPAGNO (701817) on the evening of 21 Dec. Next day the 1st Regiment, chosen for the assault, climbed MT. SMIUCRO, which was held by friendly troops (141 Inf Regt.), and from which the forthcoming attack was to be launched. Early on Christmas morning the 1st Regiment, reinforced by a company of the 2nd Regiment, and supported by strong artillery units (6th Armoured Field Artillery Group), assaulted westward against HILL 720 (961179). The temperature was below freezing point, and snow covered the mountains. Strong enemy opposition was encountered and the regiment was caught under heavy shell fire as it moved forward. Casualties were severe. But the attack was successful, and a Christmas dinner of K-rations was celebrated on HILL 720 (Ibid, Appx "G", Activities of 1st Regiment during period of Dec 21st 1943 to Jan 16th 1944).

89. The success of this operation paved the way to a continuation of Fifth Army's advance towards the CASSINO-RAPIDO line. On 1 Jan 44 orders were issued for a joint corps attack, with 34 Div, under command of 2 Corps, assigned to capture MT. CHI.LI, and, on the left, a task force from 10 (British) Corps assaulting MT. FORCHIA. The 1st Special Service Force was to operate on 34 Div's right, -- its task to seize and hold areas for C.F.S. and protect the right flank of 2 Corps (Ibid, Appx "F", 1st Special Service Force Field Order 17, 1 Jan 44). This time it was the 3rd Regiment's turn to carry out the Force's attack.

90. Working in a northwesterly direction from CEPPAGNO, the 3rd Regiment for five days fought its way, hilltop by hilltop, to the VITICUSO (697824) - CERVICO (692819) R.C.D., and the base of MT. MAJO (HILL 1259) (695823). Shortly after midnight on 6/7 Jan MT. MAJO was stormed successfully, and was held for the next three days in the face of numerous strong enemy counter-attacks. On 10 Jan a French unit relieved the Special Service Regiment, which went into bivouac at RADICORA (697820). After further patrol activities in the area the entire Force returned to base camp at S.M.T. MARIA on 16 and 17 Jan (M.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 16, 17 Jan 44).

91. An idea of the difficult conditions under which personnel of the 1st Special Service Force were fighting in the December and January operations may be gained from

extracts taken from the War Diary of the Canadian unit:

SANTA MARIA: 2 Jan. A bright cold day. Packages are being sent forward as there is about 5" of snow in the hills and quite cold.

7 Jan. Bright and cool. Casualty returns from the front include a number of frost-bitten feet.

8 Jan. Continues bright and cold. Today's casualty return from the R.A.P. lists nearly 100 names, half of them frost bite and exposure, the rest battle casualties. The weather in the hills is very cold, high wind and snow. German resistance is quite severe, artillery and mortar fire still taking its toll.

9 Jan. Today's Force casualty return has 122 names. Again nearly half are frost bite and exposure. There won't be much left of the Force if casualties keep at this rate.

10 Jan. Mild and damp. Ice 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; 75 names on today's casualty report, 40 frost-bitten 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 home.

(W.D., 1 Can Spec Service Bn., January 1944).

92. It is of interest to note that the conditions of weather and terrain under which the Force was now operating afforded an opportunity to bring into use the cargo-carrier, the special vehicle whose invention and development for employment in the "Plough" Project had co-incided with the original organization of the Force. Over 100 "T-24's", an improved version of the "T-15" (Snow-jeep), had been brought from America. A dozen of these were now uncrated, and used to transport supplies right to the front line. In this work they performed a useful purpose "although the rocky terrain plays Cain with their tracks" (W.D., 1 Can Spec Service Bn, 22 Jan 44). More successful in the system of supply, because less liable to develop mechanical defects, were the army mules, whose strong backs and sure footedness made them invaluable in the transport of ammunition and supplies up the steep hillsides (Monthly Report, 16 Dec 43 - 31 Jan 44).

93. In the second and third major actions of the 1st Special Service Force in Italy, -- HILL 720 and MT. MAJO, 1 Can Spec Service Bn lost two officers and twenty other ranks killed or died of wounds. Ten officers and 68 other ranks were admitted to hospital as wounded or suffering from frost-bite or exposure (Ibid). As a result of these and previous



casualties the total effective strength of the Battalion at the end of January was 26 officers and 323 other ranks. On the same date Americans in the Combat Echelon of the Force numbered 33 officers and 781 enlisted men. The greatly diminished proportion of Canadians within the Force, brought about by the policy of non-reinforcement in the operational theatre, while U.S. personnel were continually being reinforced, evoked from the Officer Commanding regret that "the Force is rapidly losing its character as the Canadian element decreases, and morale is bound to be affected accordingly" (Ibid).

94. Costly as these two operations of the 1st Special Service Force had been, the results from an Army viewpoint were well worthwhile. The capture of IT. MAJIC and the surrounding high ground had restored to 2 Corps its mobility on the right flank. It was now in a position to use this 4000 ft height as a pivot of manoeuvre for further advance towards CASSINO (Ibid). But the struggle for the German stronghold on the RIFIDO RIVER was to be desperate and long. By the end of March Allied bombers and artillery had reduced the town to rubble. During April and early May there was a prolonged lull in operations while our lines regrouped for a greater and more comprehensive attack. On the night of 11 May the Allied Eighth and Fifth Armies, under General Sir Harold Alexander, launched the tremendous drive that was to smash the "Wolf Hitler" line and in 25 days lead to the occupation of Rome (DHI Weekly War Review, Nos 186-170). Six troops of the 1st Special Service Force fell the honour of making the initial Allied entry into the Eternal City. But before that long-awaited event took place the Force had another important and exacting role to undertake. On 30 Jan 44 the 1st Special Service Force left its base at SANTA MARIA for a staging area two miles from the port of POLICOLI (7174) on the BAY OF NAPLES (HQs 20-16-32 Vol.3, 1st SSF FC 18, 30 Jan 44). Next afternoon it embarked in four L.S.T's. and six L.C.I's. that formed part of a large convoy of similar landing craft. On the morning of 1 Feb the Force went ashore on the ANZIO beachhead (HQs 20-16-32 Vol.2, Monthly Report, 1 Can Spec Service Bn, February 1944). In command of 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn. was Lt.-Col. J.F.R. McArthur. Col. D.D. Williamson vacated the command of the battalion on 2 Jan 44, and was returned to Canada on medical grounds (HQ 6-W-82, Tel 476, Montague to Letson, 6 Jan 44).

#### THE ANZIO BEACHHEAD (1 FEB - 9 JULY 44)

95. The initial landing of the ANZIO operation had been effected in the early morning of 22 Jan 44, when 6 U.S. Corps, composed of 1 (Brit) Div, 3 (US) Div, Rangers and Commandos and elements of 1 (US) Air Div and 45 (US) Div went ashore, unopposed, on a twelve-mile sector which centred on the town of ANZIO. By the end of the month a beachhead twelve miles deep had been established against

increasingly strong Italian resistance. It was becoming apparent that the enemy was determined to force the British and U.S. force back to the sea. The shock of attack and counter-attack was producing a firmly held perimeter that was destined to remain practically unchanged for the next sixteen weeks. On the right this boundary followed the line of the MUSCOLINI C.M.L.; to the north it fell short of CISTERNA (6083) and the VIA APPIA; on the left it ran south west through CARROCCIO (585833) to the sea (Weekly War Review No.153, 30 Jan-5 Feb 44).

96. On its arrival in the beachhead after its withdrawal from the Fifth Army front the 1st Special Service was assigned the task of organizing defenses and patrols along the MUSCOLINI C.M.L. and thus guarding the 6 Corps' right flank. (see Annex "F"). On the night of 2-3 Feb the Force relieved the 39th Regiment Combat Engineers, taking over the line of the Canal from its mouth to a point opposite BORGO PODGORA, 11,000 yards inland. The seaward half of this line was given to the 1st Regiment to hold; the 3rd Regiment held the northern half of the sector; and the 2nd Regiment formed the Force Reserve (Monthly Report, 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, February 1944).

97. For fourteen weeks the 1st Special Service Force, with its Command element, 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, distributed through the combat regiments, held the line of the MUSCOLINI C.M.L. in positions that remained virtually unchanged. The monthly reports of the Canadian unit for February, March and April describe a period of mainly static affairs, during which offensive action was limited to patrols and raids that varied in strength from section to three-company scale. During February and the early part of March a considerable amount of work was completed on the strengthening of defenses and the replacing of blown bridges across the MUSCOLINI C.M.L. Defense positions were constructed forward of the Canal, well protected by wire and mines. A total of 15,000 anti-personnel and 500 anti-tank mines were laid. Fifteen foot bridges and three bridges for vehicular traffic were put across the Canal (Monthly Report, 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, March 1944).

98. This work was carried out under the most trying conditions. Most of the time the weather was cold and wet. From his vantage points on the high ground to the east and north of the bridgehead the enemy could look down over the low-lying ground held by the Allies. As a result the positions occupied by the Special Service Force were daily harassed by German shelling, which at times increased in intensity to a full-scale artillery action. The 11,000-yard sector assigned to the 1st Special Service Force -- almost one-quarter of the whole bridgehead perimeter -- was too long to be more than thinly held, and the resultant extra duties that fell on all personnel imposed a severe strain on officers and other ranks alike. But the Force was well trained for such hardship. At the end of

February the diarist of the Canadian unit reported:

Morale of all ranks continues to be very high. The men are very tired, as they are either digging or fighting 24 hours a day. The main question is, "When will we be relieved"?

(W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 29 Feb 44).

99. But no relief was to be forthcoming until well on into May, and in the meantime the Force must continue to protect the right flank of the bridgehead. Only by active patrolling all along the lightly-held front was it possible to maintain the initiative. In general the two regiments in the line supplied small patrols in search of information while from the 2nd Regiment in Force Reserve went larger raiding parties striking deep into contested territory to attack strong points and carry out demolitions of observation posts and other useful targets. To these raids the Germans reacted with strong counter-attacks, which were as strongly resisted by the Special Service Regiments. One of these operations that cost the enemy dear took place on the last day of February, when a German attack made in company strength on the 1st Regiment sector was repulsed with the capture of 4 officers and 107 other ranks, and at a cost of only five Special Service personnel wounded (Monthly Report, March 1944).

100. Towards the end of March patrolling became more aggressive, and mobile T.D. (Tank Destroyer) guns accompanied the raiders to shell enemy positions. (During the Force's occupation of the MUSCOLINI CANAL Sector an artillery Group of approximately 80 guns, including S.P., T.D., and assault guns, was placed in support under command of the Force Commanding General) (Monthly Report, March 1944). The biggest raid conducted by the Force during the whole period was staged on the morning of 15 April. Three companies of the 2nd Regiment, supported by a company of medium tanks from the 1st (U.S.) Arm Division, with a platoon each of light tanks, armoured cars and T.D.'s., attacked two enemy strong points in the coastal area, about one mile east of BORGO SABOTINO (601814). The attack was a success. Both objectives were reduced with resultant enemy casualties of 16 killed, an unknown number wounded, and 61 captured, against the cost of one man slightly wounded and two medium tanks destroyed (Monthly Report, April 1944). Less successful was a raid made in strength in the same area on 1 May by a battalion of the 2nd Regiment with armoured support. The raiding party encountered dense mine fields before reaching the final objectives. Mines were of the wooden box variety, to which ordinary mine detectors were not sensitive (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 1 May 44). 25 casualties were suffered and two tanks were lost, but



compensating information was gained as to type, size and location of the enemy mine fields and the technique required for more successful penetration (Monthly Report, May 1944).

101. On 9 May the Force was relieved, and command of the sector passed to the 36th Regiment Combat Engineers. For the next ten days the Special Service Regiments remained in their rest area near the centre of the bridgehead, engaged in refitting, training and rest in preparation for heavy offensive action. Although out of the line they were still subjected to heavy enemy artillery fire and almost daily air raids (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 10-22 May 44). 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn had been reinforced by 15 officers and 240 other ranks. They arrived on the bridgehead on 27 April, having had three weeks' training in US weapons and drill and special Force tactics. "A good-looking body of officers and men and well received by the Force" (Monthly Report, April 1944). These were the first reinforcements that the Battalion had received since the commencement of operations in the Mediterranean Theatre, during which the unit's effective fighting strength had dwindled from 609 to 379 all ranks (See Appx "A"). Their arrival restored the Canadian representation in the Force to the proportion originally planned, and as a further consequence raised morale generally among the Canadian personnel as they prepared for the forthcoming operations (HQ S 20-6-32, Tel GS 919, Camilitary to CGS, 27 Mar 44).

#### THE DRIVE TO ROME (23 MAY - 6 JUN 44).

102. During the first three weeks of May there was a lull in major activity along the ANZIO front as German Forces, weakened by the hasty withdrawal of formations in an effort to stem General Alexander's thrust in the south-east, were content to remain wholly on the defensive outside the beachhead perimeter (Weekly War Review, No.168, 14-20 May 44). Then, on the morning of 23 May, a synchronized attack by 1 Cdn Corps and 6 U.S. Corps drove at the enemy from two sides. The Canadian formations smashed the "Hitler Line" at its points of greatest strength in the LIRI VALLEY, and from the ANZIO beachhead American, British and Special Service troops struck at the German defences that had encircled them since early February (Ibid, No.169, 21-28 May 44).

103. While light thrusts were made all along the Allied perimeter, the greatest power for the breakout was massed southeast of CISTERNA (602832). Available to attack in this zone were the 1st Special Service Force, 3, 34, 36 and 45 (U.S.) Inf Divs, and 1 (U.S.) Armd Div (Weekly War Review No.169). On the night of 22-23 May the 1st Special Service Force, with supporting artillery, armour and engineers, moved from its bivouac area into attack positions 5000 yards southeast of CISTERNA. At first light the 1st Regiment and a battalion of 2nd Regiment



attacked northeastwards along the MUSSOLINI CANAL towards HIGHWAY 7 (VIA APPIA) and the ROME-NAPLES railway. Forward elements advanced 2000 yards to cut the road and railway, but a strong counter-attack supported by Tiger tanks which the enemy launched during the afternoon neutralized gains and inflicted heavy casualties on the Force (Monthly Report, 1 May to 10 Jun 44). The Force was relieved, and all units reorganized in the assembly area during the day of 24 May.

104. In the meantime 3 (U.S.) Div had completed an effective outflanking move on CISTERNA from the northwest, and on 25 May the stronghold fell. 34 Div and the 1st Special Service Force now began a concerted drive to the northeast. Passing through the infantry division the Force attacked and seized LT. ARRESTINO (612835) on the afternoon of 25 May. Next morning the Force occupied the town of CORI (609838), as 30 Inf Regt of 34 Div passed through to attack and take ROCCA MASSIMA (610842). As ROCCA MASSIMA fell Special Service Troops immediately moved through to the heights above ARTENA (609848). At dusk on 27 May they captured the town.

105. Elsewhere around the bridgehead there had been joint Allied advances, but to a less spectacular degree. On the extreme left flank British troops had crossed the MOLETTA RIVER in the face of very strong resistance, while in the centre columns of the 34 and 45 (U.S.) Divs were at the outskirts of VELLETRI (598843). Early on 25 May Allied patrols in the coastal sector to the east of the bridgehead had made contact with reconnaissance units of the Fifth Army moving up from the south in a climax to its notable advance of more than 60 miles in 14 days. (Weekly War Review, No.169).

106. Allied occupation of ARTENA formed a serious threat to HIGHWAY 6 (VIA CASILINA), the enemy's principal east-west communication route. On 28 May the 1st Special Service Force, now attached to 3 Div, which was operating on its left flank, launched an attack from ARTENA to the north, in the direction of VALMONTONE (610853). The enemy, in an attempt to prevent the cutting of the vital highway, put up a stubborn resistance and counter-attacked with Mark VI tanks, S.P. guns and Flakwagons. Again Special Service Force casualties were heavy, but objectives along the high ground midway between the two towns were all taken and held (Monthly Report, 1 May to 10 Jun 44). For five days the Force held these positions in the face of heavy artillery fire and frequent counter-attacks. On 1 Jun, in another forward drive, advance Special Service elements reached the southern edge of the town of VALMONTONE. The next day the Force, relieved from its attachment to 3 Div and its commitments outside VALMONTONE, launched an attack down HIGHWAY 6 to COLLEFERRO (617849). The town was captured with comparatively slight opposition, and 405 prisoners were taken, but heavy enemy resistance later developed north

of the Highway and in several hours of bitter fighting many casualties were sustained on both sides. In COLLEFERRO contact was established with 3 Algerian Div advancing from the southeast. The French formation took over the town from the Special Service troops, and on the night of 2/3 Jun the Force sent a strong reconnaissance group northeast to PALLANO (621856). It returned without casualty on the morning of 3 Jun, reporting the area clear of enemy troops. On the same day VALMONTONE and VELLETRI fell to U.S. forces, and the way lay clear for Fifth Army's final push towards ROME.

107. In the operations against the Italian capital 2 (U.S.) Corps, continuing the rapid advance which had started at the GARIGLIANO RIVER, was ordered to attack astride the VIA CASILINA, using 3 Div on the right, and its own 88 Div in the centre and 85 Div on the left (HQS 20-16-32 Vol.4, 1st SSF.F.O. 26, 3 Jun 44). The attack was spearheaded by the 1st Special Service Force preceding 3 Div and 88 Div. Attached to the Force was a composite armoured task force ("Task Force Howze") whose assignment was to attack enemy positions during daylight hours, while Special Service troops attacked each night under cover of darkness. Resistance southeast of ROME, however, was slight. On the night of 3/4 Jun the 2nd and 3rd Regiments of the Force attacked successfully along the highway westward from DEL FINOCCHIO (910629), midway between VALMONTONE and ROME.

108. Early on 4 Jun a detachment from the 1st Regiment went forward with supporting armour to secure six bridges across the TIBER in ROME. It met strong resistance in the outskirts of the city, where the enemy was employing S.P. guns and tanks to supplement efforts of his parachute troops engaged in a delaying action. At noon the 2nd and 3rd Regiments were committed, and attacked with Task Force Howze from the northeast. By 1600 hours Special Service troops were within the city, -- the first Allied troops to effect a permanent entrance. Fighting continued throughout the day, but by 2300 hours the six bridges were all secured, and the main formations of 2 Corps were moving into the city. "There was a considerable amount of Hun rearguard activity and the men found themselves being embraced wholeheartedly by the populace one minute and engaged in heavy street fighting the next". (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 6 Jun 44). For two more days Special Service troops held and guarded eight TIBER bridges. On the night of 6/7 Jun they were relieved by 3 Div, and the Force moved into Fifth Army Reserve at LAGO ALBANO (588848), 15 miles southeast of ROME (Ibid).

109. After more than six months of operations, during which the Force had been almost continuously in action, it was a welcome change to spend three weeks in rest and refitting at the bivouac area on the north shore of LAGO ALBANO. There was swimming and sunbathing, boating and fishing, and every day fifty percent of the command were given twelve-hour passes to ROME (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 11 Jun 44). The speed that Fifth Army was maintaining in its pursuit of the enemy made it appear unlikely that the Force would be called again into action in the near future (Ibid, 19 Jun 44). There was time to bring 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn once more up to strength. Wastage in the unit personnel had been heavy as the 1st Special Service Force spearheaded the push from the ANZIO beachhead up to ROME. From 1 May to 7 Jun the battalion had suffered casualties of 18 officers and 194 other ranks killed, missing and wounded, or approximately thirty percent of the establishment (Ibid, 20 Jun 44). On 23 Jun four Canadian officers and 206 other ranks arrived to reinforce the battalion (Ibid, 24 Jun 44). They were all trained infantry replacements, and their general proficiency and high physical standards were the subject of favourable comment on the part of the Force Commander, Brig-Gen Frederick (W.D., Cdn Sec GHq 1 Ech, 28 Jun 44).

110. The new arrivals began immediate training in Special Service methods of warfare, training which was interrupted on 29 Jun as orders were received for the Force to move to a new location in preparation for a new role. Over the weekend of 30 Jun-3 Jul the First Special Service Force moved by land and sea from LAGO ALBANO to SANTA MARIA DI CASTELLARATE (781687), a seaside village approximately 50 miles down the coast from SALERNO. Prior to the movement of the Force, a change in command took place. Brig-Gen Frederick left to take command of 36 Div. He was succeeded by Col Edwin A. Walker, C.C. 3rd Regiment, 1st Special Service Force (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 23 Jun 44).

111. On embarkation at ANZIO the Force left Fifth Army and came under control of Seventh Army (Monthly Report, 11 Jun-3 Jul 44). In a farewell message the Army Commander, Lt. Gen. Mark W. Clark, paid high tribute to the achievements of the Special Service Force:

The part played by your elite American-Canadian Force is so well known that it hardly needs to be rehearsed at this time. The gruelling fighting which you went through on the main front in the dead of winter, the important part which you took in the establishment and in the defence of the beachhead during its historic four months' siege, the way in which your relatively small Force maintained an aggressive offensive on a front



equal to that held by any full division, and finally your brilliant performance in the final break-out and in the strong fighting which culminated in the capture of Rome have entered history and forged a bright new link in our military tradition.

(HQS 20-16-32 Vol. 3, Hq Fifth Army, to CO 1st SSF, 30 Jun 44).

#### INVASION TRAINING (3 JUL - 11 AUG 44)

112. At SANTA MARIA DI CASTELLARTE the Force began a six weeks' period of intensive "invasion" training. All ranks were given a refresher course in basic training, and new members of the Force underwent rapid instruction in the use of Force weapons and special methods. Landing exercises included rubber boat training, the assault of beach installations, cliff scaling and infiltration to inland objectives. Physical fitness was a primary consideration throughout the entire period, and in the final week of July it received increased attention to put the Force in special combat form (Monthly Report, July 1944). Training concluded with a full rehearsal when, on 7 Aug, the Force embarked, along with a French Commando Group, for an "invasion" landing at PONZA and ZANIGONE, two small islands off the Italian coast above NAPLES. Among the ships employed to carry personnel of the Special Service Force was a Canadian vessel, the L.S.I. "Prince Henry" (HQS 20-16-32 Vol. 3, 1st SSF F.O. 1 DR, 4 Aug 44). On the evening of 8 Aug the Force returned, with a number of valuable lessons learned as a result of the problem just completed (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 8 Aug 44). Two more days were spent in replacing lost and damaged equipment and ammunition which appeared unserviceable after lying in storage in Africa (Ibid, 9-10 Aug 44); Ships were refuelled and re-supplied. On 11 Aug the Combat Echelon embarked from SANTA MARIA DI CASTELLARTE to spearhead the Allied invasion of Southern France.

#### THE LANDINGS IN SOUTHERN FRANCE (14-17 AUG 44)

113. Early on the morning of 15 Aug 44 troops of Lt. Gen A.M. Patch's Seventh Army began landing along a 15 mile front on the southern coast of France, between TULON and CANNES, in the CAP ST. TROPEZ area. Their ultimate objective, according to the order of General Sir Naitland Wilson, who commanded the Allied Force in the Mediterranean, was "to drive the Germans from the south of France and join up with the Allied armies advancing from Normandy" (General Wilson quoted in The World at War, The Infantry Journal, Washington, 1945, p. 307). The leading formations on the beachheads were the veteran divisions of 6 (U.S.) Corps, the 3, 36 and 45 Divs, together with French Commandos, while ten miles inland, near LE MUY, on the right of the invasion



front, airborne and glider troops of the 7 (U.S.) Airborne Div landed from the air to disrupt enemy communications (Weekly War Review, No. 181).

114. The 1st Special Service Force was assigned the task of capturing the two easternmost islands of the ILES D'HYERES, ILE DE PORT CROS and ILE DU LEVANT. These islands had been occupied by the Germans early in 1943, and were believed to contain defensive positions of at least one battery of 120-mm C.D. guns, together with local defences of lighter calibre artillery and infantry weapons (HQS 20-16-32 Vol. 3, 1st SSF F.O. 29, Appx 1 to Annex 2, Estimate of the Enemy Situation). Situated on the extreme left flank of the projected Allied landings their reduction was a necessary part of the invasion plan. The 1st Regiment, 1st Special Service Force, was given the task of attacking and capturing PORT CROS; the 2nd and 3rd Regiments were assigned to the occupation of LEVANT (1st SSF F.O. 29).

115. From SANTA MARIA DI CASTELLARATE the 1st Special Service Force proceeded to a staging area on the Island of Corsica, and on the night of D-1/D-Day, moved into the attack. It was exactly one year after the Force's initial operations in the Kiska landings, but this time resistance described as "moderate" was encountered (HQS 20-16-32 Vol. 3, 1st SSF, S-3 Periodic Report No. 128, 17 Aug 44). Landing shortly after midnight on two beaches on the east side of ILE DE PORT CROS, 1st Regiment drove the defenders inland, where resistance by enemy garrisons in three strongpoints was overcome within 48 hours with the assistance of heavy naval shelling from H.M.S. "Rameses" (Ibid, Report No. 129, 18 Aug 44). In the meantime 2nd and 3rd Regiments made successful landings on the east coast of LEVANT (for sites of landings see HQS 20-16-32 Vol. 3, Annex 1 to F.O. 29, Operations Overlay Map: France, 1/25,000, HYERES, SE). The 3rd Regiment, meeting only slight resistance, had taken all its objectives by 0730 hours 15 Aug, and was able to send assistance to the 2nd Regiment, which was being opposed by the enemy holding strongpoints with considerable tenacity. All hostilities on the island ceased by nightfall of D-Day (S-3 Periodic Report No. 128, 17 Aug 44).

116. On completion of the operations both islands were turned over to French garrisoning troops, and the 1st Special Service Regiments embarked without delay for the French mainland, which was reached at intervals ranging from 1700 hours on 16 Aug to 0900 hours on the 18th (S-3 Periodic Report No. 129, 18 Aug 44). In a bivouac area (453075) south of ST. TROPEZ the Force spent several days reorganizing and re-equipping. According to an officer of 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn the reissue of a considerable amount of equipment was necessary after each

operation or large scale exercise in which the Force was engaged. The men had little compunction in discarding their heavy loads of ammunition, entrenching equipment and even weapons, to ease their marching once the initial action was over (Lieut. W. Brousseau, 2nd Regt, 1st Special Service Force interviewed at D.H.D., 7 Jan 46). On the morning of 21 Aug the Force once more moved into the line.

#### THE RIVIERA COAST (21 AUG - 9 SEP 44)

117. After a week of successful operations against the surprisingly weak resistance of the German Nineteenth Army, General Patch's forces had expanded the invasion beachhead to more than 1000 square miles of territory, and, aided by the F.F.I., had taken an estimated 12,000 prisoners (Weekly War Review, No. 181). On the right, the 1st Airborne Task Force, a composite group of French, British and American units, had relieved 6 Corps formations and was now nearing CANNES; to the north armoured elements had reached the DURANCE RIVER, and were heading for GRENOBLE; on the left flank MARSEILLES and TOULON were under threat. The 1st Special Service Force now found itself placed in attachment to the 1st Airborne Task Force on the right flank, as it moved from its bivouac area to relieve elements of 2nd (Brit) Para Bde in positions west of the SIAGNE RIVER (S-3 Periodic Report No. 130, 22 Aug 44). On the Force's right, along the sea coast, was the 509 Para Inf Bn; the 517 Para Inf Bn was in contact on the left flank (HQS 20-16-32 Vol. 3, 1st SSF F.O. 30, 20 Aug 44).

118. There now began for units of the Force a series of rapid advances along the Mediterranean coast that was to take them in less than three weeks a distance of some 45 miles to the Franco-Italian frontier. In general enemy resistance was light. It was not necessary for the Force to mount any large-scale operations. Engagements were on a regimental, or lower, level, as the enemy fought small typical delaying actions. Each day brought its quota of two or three towns occupied, a number of M.G. positions destroyed, a score or so of P.S.W. taken, a mined road crater filled or a bridge replaced by the Engineers. Casualties sustained by the Special Service troops were slight, enemy mortar or artillery fire accounting for most of these. The greatest hardship on officers and men alike was the strain of being almost continually on the move, with no opportunity for rest or relaxation. The Force was advancing on a wide front, almost 10 miles from flank to flank, and it was not until November, when positions became stabilized on the Italian frontier, that it was found possible to withdraw units into reserve, a battalion at a time (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 31 Oct 44). The whole of the advance was carried out on foot, and without the aid of armour. Supporting fire was available, however, from two field artillery units, the 602 and 937 Field Artillery Bns, which were attached to the Force

(S-3 Periodic Reports Nos. 130-150, 22 Aug - 11 Sep 44).

119. The main axis of the Force's advance to the northeast in general paralleled the Riviera coast at a distance of from five to ten miles inland. The combat regiments crossed the SIAGNE RIVER on 22 Aug, taking LES VEYANS (623571) and TANNERON (702655), and next day the town of GRASSE (333732) was occupied (S-3 Periodic Report No. 132). By 26 Aug the Force had reached the LOUP RIVER, and the 2nd Regiment had captured VILLENEUVE LOUBET (462761), -- later to be used as a Force bivouac area (Ibid No. 134). On 28 Aug the towns of CAGNES (482763), ST. PAUL (465801) and VENCE (459830) were occupied with little opposition as the enemy withdrew to the east bank of the LE VAR RIVER (Ibid No. 136). Two days later the Force crossed the LE VAR RIVER without incident.

120. East of the LE VAR resistance stiffened. The topography of the country was becoming increasingly difficult, and the enemy took full advantage of natural features in siting his defence positions. The advance of the Force slowed down. Vigorous patrolling was carried out to determine the location of enemy strong-points and to direct artillery fire upon them. On 3 Sep the 2nd Regiment relieved 509 Para Inf Bn in the coastal area immediately west of MONACO, the coastal sector becoming included in the Force commitments from that date. On the same day the 1st Regiment occupied the town of PELLE (698900) (Ibid No. 143). At the request of the MONACO Government a platoon from the 2nd Regiment established a position in MONTE CARLO on 6 Sep. On that date patrols into MENTON found the city evacuated. (Ibid No. 146).

#### THE FRANCO-ITALIAN BOUNDARY (9 SEP-28 NOV 44)

121. By 9 Sep the Force had taken up positions behind the international boundary, in a line that ran northward from the sea coast east of MENTON to include CASTELLAR (774895) and MONTI (765902), and then west of the CASTELLAR-CASTILLON (746935)-GOSPEL (740980) Road to a point 3000 yards south of SOSPEL (Ibid No. 150). This line was held without change for the next seven weeks. The enemy was in a strongly fortified position in CASTILLON, where he occupied well constructed pill-boxes that had been originally built by the French as part of a system of frontier defence. From this fort artillery and mortar fire continually harassed Special Service positions, while reconnaissance patrols frequently came under machine gun fire from the defenders. Without the equipment or the personnel available for a full scale assault upon the fort the Force resorted to directing artillery fire against CASTILLON. Naval fire support was employed, and almost daily throughout September and October the town became



the target for 14" shells from warships cruising off MENTON (Ibid No. 151). On 6 Oct civilians were evacuated from CASTILLON but it was not until 28 Oct that patrols found SOSPEL and CASTILLON clear of the enemy, and Special Service troops entered the two towns (Ibid No. 197).

122. This German withdrawal across the Italian boundary made it possible to straighten and shorten the line held by the 1st Special Service Force. On the last two days of October the 1st and 3rd Regiments advanced east to CASTILLON and SOSPEL to occupy the mountain heights along the frontier, and to come into line with the 2nd Regiment holding the seaward end of the boundary (Ibid No. 199 and 200). During November operations were confined to patrolling activities and small scale raids on enemy positions. There was sporadic long range artillery action on both sides, and a few casualties from enemy shelling were suffered by Force personnel in the rest area at MENTON (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 1 Nov 44).

123. Morale was running low. The Force had been continuously in action since 14 Aug, without relief. The Battalion Commander reported that there had been a noticeable increase in cases of psychoneurosis, especially among the original men. "They have been through a lot of heavy and trying fighting" (Monthly Report, September 1944). 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn was now experiencing the aftermath of the costly operations in the MIGNANO Sector (see para 93) and of the strain of the long and exacting period of fighting in the ANZIO Beachhead. Trained to lead the attack in specialized forms of warfare, it did not help matters that the 1st Special Service Force now found itself entering upon a period of comparatively inactivity which apparently led nowhere. The campaign seemed to be petering out in a long and unpleasant anti-climax as the men found themselves "sitting up on the mountains day after day", exposed to cool, wet weather that was in complete variance with all popular conceptions regarding the climate of the sunny Riviera (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 12 Oct - 2 Nov 44). The Seventh Army was now far to the north, fighting in the Vosges Mountains east of EPINAL, preparatory to their break-through to the RHINE (Weekly War Review No. 195). There was a feeling among the personnel of 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn that they had been forgotten by their own country (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 10 Oct 44).

124. The end of an operational tour of 107 days came on 28 Nov, when the 1st Special Airborne Task Force was withdrawn from the line. The 1st Special Service Force was relieved by 100 Inf Bn and elements of 442 Regimental Combat Team, -- units composed entirely of American-naturalised Japanese (S-3 Periodic Report No. 228, and HJS 20-16-32 Vol. 5, Monthly Report, 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 1 Nov 44 to 9 Jan 45).



DISBANDMENT (29 NOV 44 - 10 JAN 45)

125. Plans for the disbandment of the 1st Special Service Force had been under consideration since the middle of October, when a recommendation to this effect was made to the U.S. War Department by the Commander, Mediterranean Theatre (HQ 20-1-32 Vol.2, Tel CAV 463, CGS from Cdn Army Staff, 12 Oct 44). At D.N.D. the reaction to this proposal was favourable. The possibility of the disbandment of the Force had been discussed early in 1944, when the withdrawal of 1st Cdn Spec Service Bn because of lack of reinforcements had been seriously contemplated (see para 131). The Canadian viewpoint was that "the continued employment of this Special Force on operations detached from those upon which the main forces of the Canadian Army were employed constituted a dispersion of our resources for which there was no special necessity". The proposed disbandment of the 1st Special Service Force now presented an opportunity of minimizing Canadian commitments of infantry of the best type (HQ 20-1-32 Vol.2, D.C.G.S. (A) to C.G.S., 13 Oct 44). Canadian concurrence in the U.S. recommendation was given by the Minister of National Defence on the grounds that (i) "the Force had originally been organized to perform a special operation in Norway which was later abandoned, and (ii) it constituted a dispersion of Canadian resources and particularly resources in top-grade infantry" (HQ 20-1-32 Vol.2, Tel GS 619, Ralston from Murchie, 13 Oct 44). The disposal of the Canadian element of the Force was to be carried out by arrangement with C.M.F.Q. (HQ 20-1-32 Vol.2, Tel GS 667, CGS to Cdn Army Staff, 6 Nov 44).

126. At its bivouac area near VILLENEUVE-LOUYET disbandment of the Special Service Force began, as all personnel of the 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn were segregated to form a single unit. On the afternoon of 5 Dec the Force assembled for a farewell parade and memorial service in honour of those who had fallen in France. Mutual good wishes were extended by the Canadian and American Commanders. The Force Commander shook hands with every officer and man in the Canadian battalion. The Force flag was sheathed, and the Canadians said goodbye to their American comrades (W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 5 Dec 44). /B

127. The next day a long convoy of trucks carried 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn to MARSEILLE, where embarkation of 35 officers and 618 other ranks took place on the "Ville d'Oran" (1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, Pt II Order No.52, 14 Dec 44). After a rough passage the troops disembarked at NAPLES on the morning of 9 Dec and by evening all were at AVELLINO, where they "received a good reception back into the Canadian Army" (W.D., 1 Cdn

129. These changes lightened the work of the 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn administration staff at the Force Base Echelon. Considerable delay, however, was encountered in connection with the reporting of casualties. From the ANZIO beachhead it took four days for casualty returns to reach 2nd Echelon at AVELLINO (Monthly Report, February 1944). Later, when the Force was fighting in Southern France where no cable or air mail facilities were available, the transmission of returns took as long as 15 days (Monthly Report, September 1944). Since the casualties were handled by U.S. Medical Installations, and the dead buried in American cemeteries, constant difficulty was experienced in obtaining regular submission of hospital records and burial reports concerning Canadian personnel. At every move of the Force it was necessary for the Canadian Administrative Officer to contact the appropriate hospitals and instruct them to forward the required reports to 2nd Echelon (Ibid).

130. In March 1944, in order to facilitate the work of 2nd Echelon in handling the evacuation of casualties to the United Kingdom, all documents for personnel of 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn held at D.N.D. were forwarded to C.M.H.Q. (HQS 20-4-32 Vol. 2, Tel A1626, Camilitary to Defensor, 11 Mar 44, and AG 256, Defensor to Camilitary, 14 Mar 44). In August, following receipt of authority from D.N.D. (HQS 20-1-32 Vol. 2, CGS to C.M.H.Q. 24 Jul 44), C.M.H.Q. issued administrative instructions establishing a channel of communication between the Commanding Officer, 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn and D.N.D. through Cdn Sec G.H.Q. 1 Ech, A.A.I., and C.M.H.Q. The battalion was to continue to function on a Field Return basis, but documents would be maintained by C.I.C. Records at C.M.H.Q. instead of by the Director of Records, D.N.D. (HQS 20-1-32 Vol. 2, C.M.H.Q. Adm Inst No. 20, 7 Aug 44).

#### REINFORCEMENTS

131. The policy regarding the supply of reinforcements to the Special Service Battalion also underwent revision during the period of operations in Europe. When the Force sailed for the Mediterranean Theatre in October, 1943, it was considered that since this was a "task force" of highly trained specialist troops it would not be found practicable to reinforce the unit in future. As a result no special arrangements were made by Canadian authorities to train or earmark reinforcements for the Force (see para 49, and HQS 20-6-32, CGS to Cdn Army Staff, 14 Jan 44). The heavy casualties suffered by the Force in its December operations made it apparent that without reinforcement the Canadian element might soon waste to nil. So serious was the situation that the Commander, First Cdn Army (General Stuart), recommended that arrangements be made with WASHINGTON to withdraw 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn and use its

personnel to reinforce 1 Cdn Para Bn, which was operating with the British 6th Airborne Div (HQS 20-6-32, Tel A356, Murchie from Montague, 26 Jan 44). It was realized, however, that such an action on the part of the Canadian authorities would result in the breaking up of the Special Service Force, which was at the time not only in a theatre of operations, but actually engaged against the enemy. Such a proposal could not be expected to improve the solidarity of U.S. - Canadian relations (HQS 20-6-32, Tel CAW 52, C.G.S. from Cdn Army Staff, 28 Jan 44).

132. It was ascertained that the American element of the 1st Special Service Force was being reinforced from a general infantry pool as the Force moved to the ANZIO beachhead, there to be employed in a role of infantry shock troops (HQS 20-6-32 Tel GS 448, Murchie from Stuart, 11 Feb 44). In view of this change in the unit's commitments General Stuart, to whom General Eisenhower had expressed his opinion that it would be a mistake to withdraw the Canadian component, now recommended that the battalion be brought up to strength with infantry-trained reinforcements (Ibid). Ministerial approval was given on 14 Feb 44 (HQS 20-6-32, C.G.S. to Minister, 12 Feb 44), and led to the arrival in the bridgehead, on 27 Apr, of the 15 officers and 240 other ranks above referred to (see para 101). 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn was brought up to strength again by successive drafts in June, July and August prior to the commencement of operations in Southern France (see para 109 and W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 12 Jul and 3 Aug 44).

133. All these reinforcements were immediately placed upon the same rates of pay as the rest of the personnel in 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn regardless of the fact that they had not qualified as parachutists (HQS 20-6-32, C.G.S. to Minister, 12 Feb 44). They were thus receiving regular Canadian army rates of pay supplemented by parachute pay of two dollars per day for officers and 75 cents for other ranks (see para 16). All requests made by the Battalion Commander and the Force Commander to pay the Canadians at rates comparable to those received by their American comrades had been turned down by D.N.D.

134. For the first eight months of their stay in the Mediterranean Theatre members of the 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn enjoyed a slight advantage over other Canadian troops in Italy in the matter of rates of foreign exchange. Through a misunderstanding the bulk funds drawn from the U.S. War Department by the Canadian paymaster allowed payment to officers and men at the American rate of 100 lire to the dollar, instead of the less favourable exchange rate of 100 lire to \$1.1175 Canadian. As a result members of the battalion benefitted by an average individual amount of \$22.25 for the eight months' period

(HQS 20-4-32 Vol.3, submission to Minister, 17 Nov 44). Effective 1 Jul 44 the battalion was paid at Canadian rates of exchange ("There is always someone digging morale busters out of the hat", -- W.D., 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, 2 Aug 44). It was decided not to recover the difference from the recipients, and by Order-in-Council payment of the total amount involved, \$24,072.04 was confirmed, "the said payments having been made and received in good faith" (HQS 20-4-32 Vol.3, P.C.106/8990, 29 Nov 44).

#### HONOURS AND AWARDS

135. It is probable that, apart from the question of inequalities of pay, no greater cause of dissatisfaction to members of 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn was to be found than the failure, throughout almost the entire period of operations, to receive any British awards for gallantry in the field. Notification of American awards, made by the Commander in the Field in consultation with the senior Canadian Commander, began to appear in April 1944 (Monthly Report, April 1944). By October 29 American awards for gallantry, ranging from the Distinguished Service Cross to the Bronze Star Medal, had been accepted on behalf of the Canadian Government (HQS 20-4-32 Vol.3, J.A.G.(2) to A.G., 19 Oct 44). But no British awards had been received. Members of the battalion continually asked, "Why don't the Canadians receive any British awards?" (HQS 20-4-32 Vol.3, Lt.-Col. Akehurst to the Minister, 27 Sep 44). In supporting the Battalion Commander's request for consideration Colonel Walker, the Force Commander, wrote:

I feel that in fairness to the Canadians in the organization there should be a recognition of their deeds by their own country. American awards cannot take the place of a recognition by the country to which they bear allegiance. I also feel that awards lose much of their value by being indefinitely delayed.

(HQS 20-4-32 Vol. 3, Colonel Walker to the Minister, 3 Oct 44).



136. From the time of 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn's entry into the field of operations in December 1943 until the following November the battalion was included in the general allotment of British awards to the U.S. Fifth, and later the Seventh Army (Monthly Report, April 1944). There was no specific allotment to the Canadian personnel as such and members of 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn competed for British awards on the same basis as all other members of the U.S. Armies. The power to confer British recognitions for gallantry in the field was delegated to the C-in-C, 15 Army Group, and, as might be expected, the allotment of British awards to the Fifth and Seventh Armies, which were substantially all American in composition, was strictly limited (HQS 20-4-32 Vol. 3, V.A.G. (2) to A.G., 19 Oct 44). As a matter of fact no awards were received from General Sir Alexander by the 1st Special Service Force (HQS 20-4-32 Vol. 3, Lt.-Col. Aechurst to the Minister, 27 Sep 44).

137. As a result of representations made by D.N.D. to the War Office at the end of October 1944, it was agreed that 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn should be treated on the same basis as other Canadian or British troops in the granting of British awards (HQS 20-4-32 Vol. 3, Tel A8583, Cannilitary to Defensor, 1 Nov 44). These measures were made retroactive, and Routine Orders for November contained the announcement of British decorations for four members of 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn, two of whom had been recommended for recognition the previous February (Monthly Reports, February and November 1944). Altogether a total of 70 American and 17 British awards for gallantry were won by personnel of 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn (as at 31 Dec 45. See Appx "C"). They were divided as follows:

NOTE:

*ALL M.I.D.s were posthumous awards.*

British Awards

	D.S.O.	2
	M.B.E.	1
M.C. →	D.C.M.	1
	M.M.	2
	M.I.D.	11
	Total	<u>17</u> 17

American Awards

	Distinguished Service Cross	6
	Silver Star	39
	Bronze Star Medal	24
	Oak Leaf Cluster to Bronze Star Medal	1
	Total	<u>70</u>

138. This is an imposing list of awards, and it becomes all the more meritorious when one considers the strictly competitive conditions under which these honours were won. But the worth of a battalion cannot be measured alone by the number of medals bestowed upon its personnel. Certainly its efficiency cannot be gauged from the publicity afforded its activities. From its very inception the operations of 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn had of necessity been cloaked by the closest security. Segregated from units and formations of their own nationality, the personnel of the battalion faced the uphill task of taking their place side by side with specially picked American troops, and accustoming themselves to the use of American weapons and American methods of fighting procedure. That they succeeded in winning the respect of their American comrades and superiors speaks well for the calibre and determination of Canadian officers and men alike.

139. Throughout the two and a half years of its existence the 1st Special Service Force was on numerous occasions called upon to undertake assignments more difficult and hazardous than were usually the lot of regular troops. In each such operation the Canadian element of the force played its part efficiently and well. Training together on the snowy plains and hills of Montana, the beaches of Virginia and the rain-soaked tundra of MICHTKA, and fighting shoulder to shoulder in the mountains before CASSINO, on the plains of the ANZIO beachhead, on the invasion islands of Southern France, and along the increasingly difficult terrain of the Riviera coast to the Italian border, Canadian and American soldiers forgot differences of nationality in the performance of a common task. The story of 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn and of the 1st Special Service Force is the story of an experiment in national military co-operation, -- an experiment which, despite certain administrative difficulties proved, in the main, successful.

140. This report was prepared by Major G. J. L. Nicholson.

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for (G. F. G. Stanley) Lt. Col.  
Deputy Director  
Historical Section (G.S.)  
Department of National Defence.

STRENGTH OF 1 CDN SPEC SERVICE BN AT APPROXIMATELY  
MONTHLY INTERVALS, AUGUST 1942 - NOVEMBER 1944

(Compiled from Monthly Reports and War Diary 1 Cdn Spec Service Bn)

Date	Location	Reinf'ts		Non-Effectives		Total Strength		
		Offrs	Ors	Offrs	Ors	Offrs	Ors	All Rn
31 Aug 42	FT WILKINSON					52	717	769
30 Sep 42	" " " "					45	593	638
31 Oct 42	" " " "					45	549	594
30 Nov 42	" " " "					45	519	564
10 Dec 42	" " " "		97					
31 Dec 42	" " " "					44	616	660
31 Jan 43	" " " "					43	606	649
26 Feb 43	" " " "					43	603	646
7 Mar 43	" " " "		12					
31 Mar 43	" " " "					43	579	622
30 Apr 43	" " " "					43	573	616
31 May 43	" " " "					42	573	615
10 Jul 43	Embarkation, SAN FRANCISCO					42	552	594
1 Sep 43	Disembarkation, SAN FRANCISCO					42	551	593
28 Sep 43	FT STEWART		65					
30 Sep 43	" " " "					36	615	653
27 Oct 43	Embarkation, EASTON MASS					36	571	609
5 Nov 43	Disembarkation, CASALE CA					36	571	609
14 Nov 43	Embarkation, GLEN					36	570	608
1 Dec 43	Into Action, IRLAND					36	570	608
15 Dec 43	(Incl Commissions in Field)			2	84	44	536	580
21 Dec 43	Into Action, MT SANTIAGO			5	125	44	535	579
1 Feb 44	Disembarkation, ANZIO			12	154	39	493	532
28 Feb 44	ANZIO Beachhead			6	143	39	471	510
31 Mar 44	" " " "			4	102	36	447	485
1 Apr 44	" " " "	15	240					
30 Apr 44	" " " "			4	81	53	676	729
11 Jun 44	LAGO ALBANO			16	192	48	588	636
23 Jun 44	LAGO ALBANO	4	206					
4 Jul 44	SERRA S. DI CASTELLASATE			12	159	49	783	832
12 Jul 44	" " " "	1	36					
31 Jul 44	" " " "			10	152	48	784	832
3 Aug 44	" " " "	8	62					
31 Aug 44	Southern France			5	154	55	795	850
30 Sep 44	" " " "			5	140	50	757	807
31 Oct 44	" " " "			8	105	49	711	760

APPENDIX "B"

CASUALTIES 1 CDN SPEC SERVICE BN FOR  
SIGNIFICANT PERIODS OF OPERATIONS  
(ref. HQ 54-27-22-3 (DR4), 11 Jan 46)

Period	OFFICERS			OTHER RANKS			ALL RANKS TOTAL
	Killed	Missing & IW #	Wounded	Killed	Missing & PW #	Wounded	
1 Dec 43 - 31 Jan 44 (HIGHWAY Sector)	4		12	48		162	226
1 Feb - 30 Apr 44 (ANZIO Beachhead)	1		6	27	2	89	125
1 May - 10 Jun 44 (Breakout to A&E)	5	2	13	39	11	164	234
11 Jun - 13 Aug 44 (Invasion Training)				1	1	1	2
14 - 20 Aug 44 (ILES D'HYAKES)	1		1	12		37	51
21 Aug - 10 Sep 44 (Riviera Coast)	2		8	5	4	43	62
11 Sep - 30 Nov 44 (Franco-Italian Border)	1		6	10		63	80
TOTAL 1 Dec 43 to 30 Nov 44	14	2	46	142	17	559	780

# Includes Repatriated and Liberated PsW.

1. Personnel Died of wounds are included in figures for Killed.
2. The above figures cover period 1 Dec 43 to 30 Nov 44 and are correct to reports received up to 9 Jan 46.





AMERICAN SILVER STAR (Cont'd)

D-57066	Lieut. Pte.	MITCHELL, John Donald MAGNE, William James Francis Ernest
D-7744	Pte.	MURDOCK, Cletoes
L-31330	A/Sgt.	PARFETT, John Allinson
F-5014	Sgt.(A/S/Sgt.)	PERARD, George Herbert
H-25272	Sgt.	PRINCE, Thomas
H-35060	Sgt.	PETERSON, Douglas Ferrin
H-205057	A/S/Sgt.	RUDDIE, Leopold Henry
L-41387	Pte.(A/Sgt)	RESVE, Walter Henry William
A-29576	Sgt.	RAIVILLE, George
H-102270	Sgt.	STIRLING, Ronald Alexander
C-10146	Pte.(A/Sgt.)	SCARPE, Lindsay
C-5003	Sgt.	WHIT, George William
	Capt.	WILSON, Walter E.W.
	Major	WATERS, Stanley Charles
	Capt.	WATT, William Edgar
B-128511	Pte.(A/Sgt.)	ZALARA, Samuel Jack

*Det 1 S.S. Gr.*

ONE OR MORE BRONZE STAR MEDAL (American)

Lieut. BENNETT, William Reynolds

BRONZE STAR MEDAL (American)

B-80150	Lieut.	BENNETT, William Reynolds
D-72202	Pte.	BIDDON, Raymond George
A-58613	Pte.	BAGWELL, John
H-42002	Sgt.	BUNDY, George Thomas
L-86836	Sgt.	BAILEY, William Gilbert
F-33186	Sgt.	CUTT, Kenneth George
F-30467	Sgt.	DEVISON, Lawrence Henry
D-71519	Pte.	DICKIE, Douglas Earle
L-36407	Cpl.(A/Sgt.)	FAYON, Thomas E.
A-117875	Pte.	FILLEUL, Philip Thomas
H-66360	Pte.	FITZPATRICK, Donald L.
	Sgt.	HART, Geoffrey A.W.
	Lieut.	HARRISON, Truman Harry
F-13255	Sgt.	JARLSON, Joseph Thomas
H-106249	Pte.	KIRCH, Thomas Reinald
D-132238	Pte.(A/Sgt.)	MCCOLL, William
H-25048	Sgt.(A/S/Sgt.)	MEHL, JOHN, Keith R.S.
B-53066	Pte.	MAGNE, William James E.
B-120506	S/Sgt.	MCDONALD, Gerard Hugh
C-51124	Pte.	ODENRICK, Orvest Miles
H-40708	S/Sgt.	PLAYFORD, James Alexander
B-137590	Sgt.	POTENZA, Thomas Charles
	Maj.(A/Lt-Col)	PAGE, John Pemberton E.D.
H-30931	Sgt.	WEBB, Harold Emery

*Det 1 Cdn S.S. Gr.*



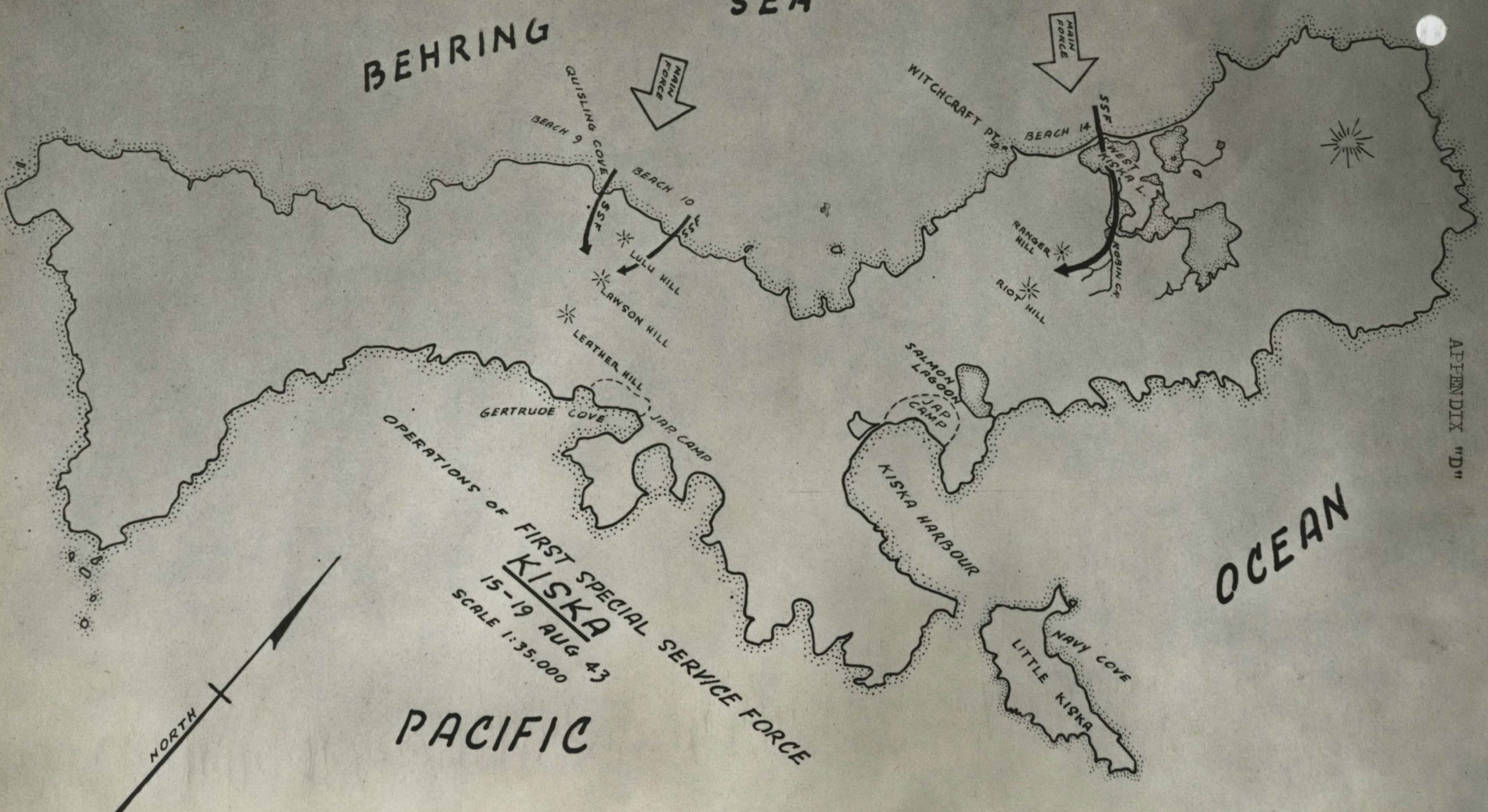
BEHRING

SEA

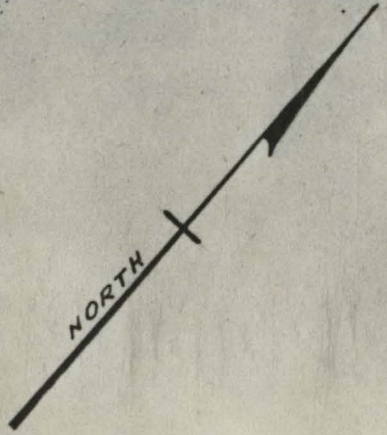
OCEAN

PACIFIC

APPENDIX "D"



OPERATIONS OF FIRST SPECIAL SERVICE FORCE  
**KISKA**  
 15-19 AUG 43  
 SCALE 1:35,000

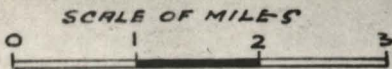




OPERATIONS OF FIRST SPECIAL SERVICE FORCE, ITALY.

MIGNANO SECTOR

2 DEC. 43 — 17 JAN. 44



LEGEND

OPERATIONS

2-10 DEC 43

21-26 DEC 43

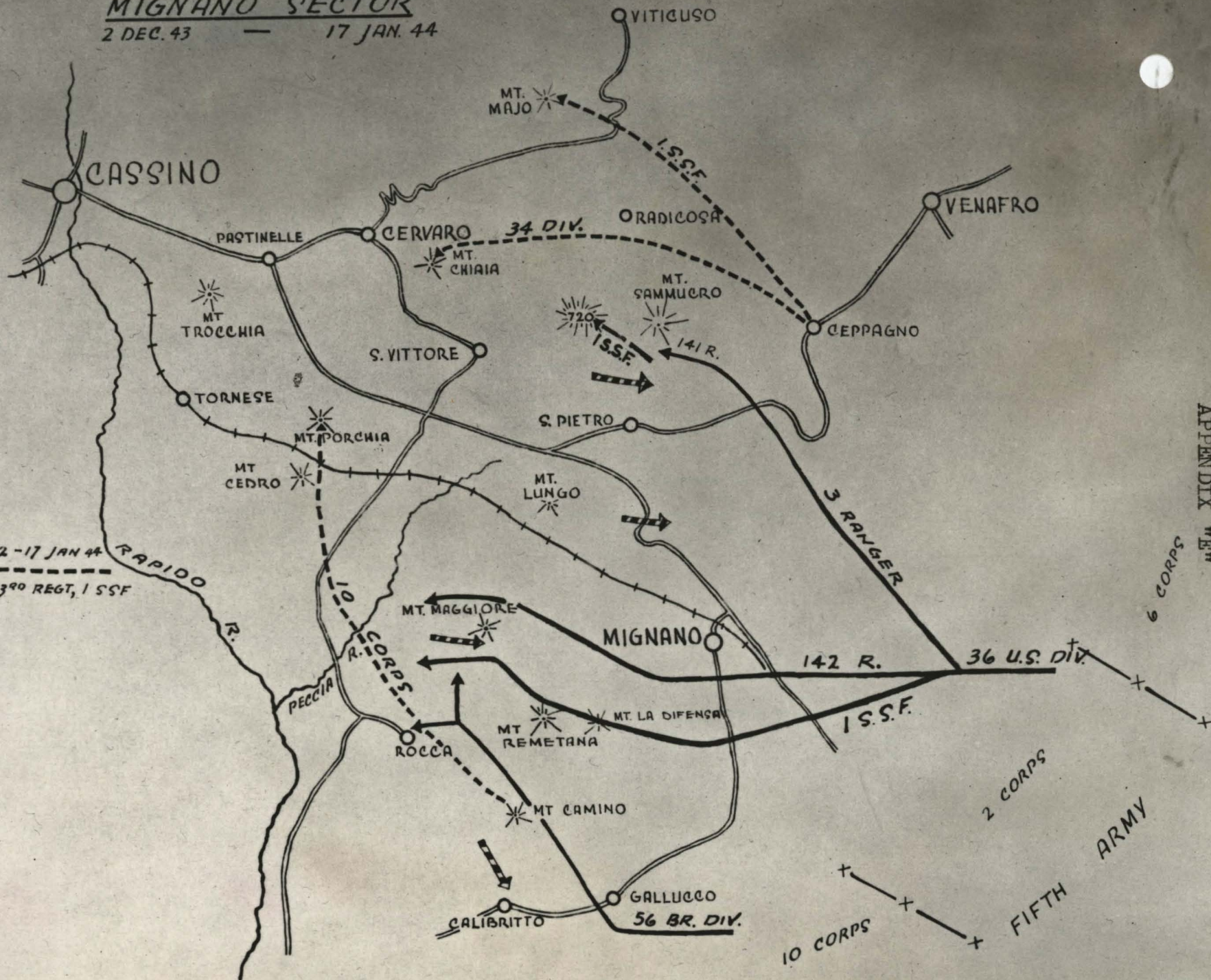
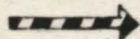
2-17 JAN 44

2<sup>ND</sup> REGT, 1 S.S.F.

1<sup>ST</sup> REGT, 1 S.S.F.

3<sup>RD</sup> REGT, 1 S.S.F.

COUNTER ATTACKS. (GERMAN)



APPENDIX "E"

6 CORPS

2 CORPS

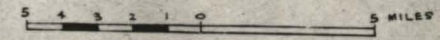
10 CORPS

FIFTH ARMY



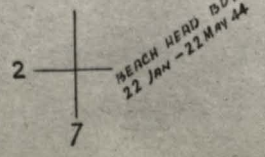
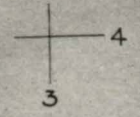
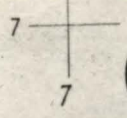
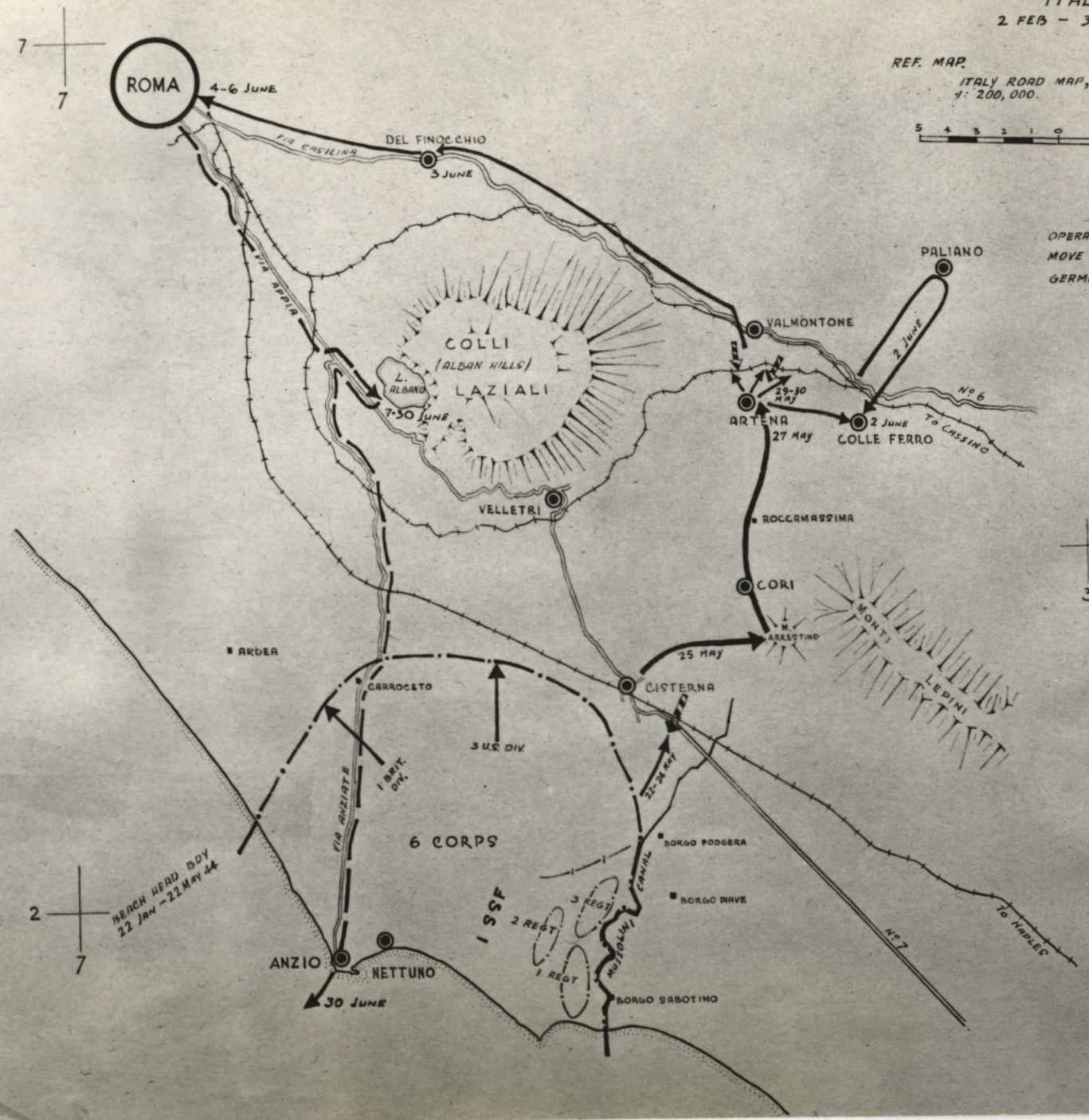
OPERATIONS OF FIRST SPECIAL SERVICE FORCE  
 ITALY  
 2 FEB - 30 JUNE 44

REF. MAP  
 ITALY ROAD MAP, SHEET 17  
 1:200,000.



LEGEND

- OPERATIONS OF 1<sup>ST</sup> SSF. →
- MOVE OF 1<sup>ST</sup> SSF FROM ROME. ———
- GERMAN COUNTER ATTACK. <-----







OPERATIONS OF FIRST SPECIAL SERVICE FORCE  
SE. FRANCE  
14 Aug - 28 Nov. 44

SCALE - 1" = 5 MILES

LEGEND

- OPERATION OF 1 SSF (NUMBER OF REGT AND DATE SHOWN)  1 SEP
- MOVE OF 1 SSF
- FLANKING FORMATIONS
- BRIDGE HEADS