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# Storming Monte La Difensa: The First Special Service Force At The Winter Line, Italy 1943 (Raid)



## Synopsis

Featuring full-color artwork, archive photographs, and first-hand accounts from participants, *Storming Monte la Difensa* examines the origins, execution, and aftermath of the FSSF's spectacular success at Monte La Difensa amid the savage winter conditions of December 1943. In December 1943 Monte La Difensa was part of the formidable German defenses overlooking the Allies' route to Rome via Monte Cassino. In the First Special Service Force's first combat in the Mediterranean theater, the Force would employ its special training in mountain and winter warfare to scale the peak, capture it, and then hold it against the inevitable German counterattacks. Astonishing their superiors, the First Special Service Force had succeeded in the face of seemingly impossible odds, but suffered a 77 percent casualty rate. Their victory, founded on their aggressive doctrine and extensive training in a variety of combat techniques, would prove instrumental in the postwar development of special forces.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In late 1943, the U.S. Fifth Army was stymied by the German-held Winter Line, a series of Italian mountain redoubts blocking the way to Rome. The German grenadiers atop Monte La Difensa in particular had turned back several assaults. Enter the First Special Service Force, a U.S.-Canadian Brigade specially trained in parachute, mountain and winter warfare. In a daring night attack up supposedly impossible cliffs, First Special Service Force took Monte La Difensa. In a vicious week-long fight, they helped secure a key mountain massive, opening the way north. This is the

story of that attack. "Storming Monte La Difensa" is an Osprey Raid Series book and something of a sequel to the Osprey Elite Series book "First Special Service Force 1942-44". Bret Warner authored both books; his admiration for the FSSF is obvious throughout, perhaps too much so. "Storming Monte La Difensa" briefly summarizes the formation and training of the FSSF, and their participation in the Aleutian campaign earlier in 1943. The FSSF was then deployed to the European theater, a highly trained elite unit in search of a mission. Operation Raincoat, the allied attack on the Mt. Camino hill mass, was a conventional military operation which offered an opportunity for the FSSF to prove itself. The narrative details the special preparations for Raincoat, but the heart of the story is the actual assault and the brutal fight to secure La Difensa and the follow-on objective of Mt. Rematanea. The afterword recaps what was achieved by the attack in terms of tactical gain, and in attrition of the FSSF. It is an interesting story, which does not gloss over the misuse of the FSSF by the Allied command in Italy as conventional shock troops. Recommended as an introduction to the men and the mission.

The 1st SSF is one of the most original units in the history of the US Army! The beginnings of Special Forces/operations were here! New weapons, gear and ideas were originated here in his unit! These guys were way outside the box. Once again Osprey created a small, short cheap but tons of information that you find in larger tomes. I have almost every English language book on the SSF and am not disappointed with this one! You want great information on the inexpensive, you can have it for \$20!

I am a great lover of this series and on the whole they never disappoint. Once again the series comes through. Most of what I knew of the special service force came from the movie The Devil's Brigade. To say the least I was sorely miss inform. The book covers the creation of the force and why it came into existence. It then covers it's most famous action and finally what happened afterwards. This is the Raid series at it's best. Covering a small units action. I highly recommend this book

Another great title from Bret! He has done an excellent job of balancing historical detail with first hand accounts and front-lines insight to engage the reader. A super short read that tells a piece of the incredible story of the men of the First Special Service Force. Truly heroes - what they accomplished is nothing short of amazing and truly inspirational. HIGHLY recommended!

Awesome book about this raid in Italy. I was really into it. It was very informative about the tactics and the events of the raid

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