

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 577

Honoring the First Special Service Force, in recognition of its superior service during World War II.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 22 (legislative day, SEPTEMBER 21), 2012

Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mr. KERRY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MURKOWSKI) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Honoring the First Special Service Force, in recognition of its superior service during World War II.

Whereas the First Special Service Force (referred to in this preamble as the “Force”), a military unit composed of volunteers from the United States and Canada, was activated in July 1942 at Fort Harrison near Helena, Montana;

Whereas the Force was initially intended to target military and industrial installations that were supporting the German war effort, including important hydroelectric plants, which would severely limit the production of strategic materials used by the Axis powers;

Whereas, from July 1942 through June 1943, volunteers of the Force trained in hazardous, arctic conditions in the

mountains of western Montana, and in the waterways of Camp Bradford, Virginia;

Whereas the combat echelon of the Force totaled 1,800 soldiers, half from the United States and half from Canada;

Whereas the Force also contained a service battalion, composed of 800 members from the United States, that provided important support for the combat troops;

Whereas a special bond developed between the Canadian and United States soldiers, who were not segregated by country, although the commander of the Force was a United States colonel;

Whereas the Force was the only unit formed during World War II that consisted of troops from Canada and the United States;

Whereas, in October 1943, the Force went to Italy, where it fought in battles south of Cassino, including Monte La Difensa and Monte Majo, two mountain peaks that were a critical anchor of the German defense line;

Whereas, during the night of December 3, 1943, the Force ascended to the top of the precipitous face of Monte La Difensa, where the Force suffered heavy casualties and overcame fierce resistance to overtake the German line;

Whereas, after the battle for La Difensa, the Force continued to fight tough battles at high altitudes, in rugged terrain, and in severe weather;

Whereas, after battles on the strongly defended Italian peaks of Sammuero, Vischiataro, and Remetanea, the size of the Force had been reduced from 1,800 soldiers to fewer than 500;

Whereas, for 4 months in 1944, the Force engaged in raids and aggressive patrols at the Anzio Beachhead;

Whereas, on June 4, 1944, members of the Force were among the first Allied troops to liberate Rome;

Whereas, after liberating Rome, the Force moved to southern Italy and prepared to assist in the liberation of France;

Whereas, during the early morning of August 15, 1944, members of the Force made silent landings on Les Iles D'Hyeres, small islands in the Mediterranean Sea along the southern coast of France;

Whereas the Force faced a sustained and withering assault from the German garrisons as the Force progressed from the islands to the Franco-Italian border;

Whereas, after the Allied forces secured the Franco-Italian border, the United States Army ordered the disbandment of the Force on December 5, 1944, in Nice, France;

Whereas, during 251 days of combat, the Force suffered 2,314 casualties, or 134 percent of its authorized strength, captured thousands of prisoners, won 5 United States campaign stars and 8 Canadian battle honors, and never failed a mission;

Whereas the United States is forever indebted to the acts of bravery and selflessness of the troops of the Force, who risked their lives for the cause of freedom;

Whereas the efforts of the Force along the seas and skies of Europe were critical in repelling the advance of Nazi Germany and liberating numerous communities in France and Italy;

Whereas the bond between the members of the Force from the United States and those from Canada has endured

over the decades, as the members meet every year for a reunion, alternating between the United States and Canada; and

Whereas the traditions and honors exhibited by the Force are carried on by 2 outstanding active units of 2 great democracies, the Special Forces of the United States and the Canadian Special Operations Regiment: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That the Senate recognizes and honors the
- 2 superior service of the First Special Service Force during
- 3 World War II.

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