

The Black Devils' calling card: 'The worst is yet to come'

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Some of the American volunteers were hardly volunteers, as many U.S. commanders used the call for soldiers to man the new FSSF unit as an opportunity to rid themselves of undesirable troops. Some who reported to Montana were from post stockades, arriving under armed guard.

On the other hand, many of those troublemakers would prove themselves to be ideal combat soldiers in the unique style of fighting in the Devil's Brigade.

Originally conceived to attack German soldiers in occupied Norway and disrupt their ability to exploit Norway's resources, the unit was never used in that capacity.

The First Special Service Force joined Fifth U.S. Army in Italy in November 1943, and their first real test was to take the strongly held German position at Monte La Difensa and Monte La Rementanea in Italy.

Several previous assaults had failed, due to the sheer defence of the objective.

But instead of making a frontal attack, the FSSF's 2nd Regiment scaled the 200-foot cliff on the back side of Monte La Difensa on the night of December 2,

1943, taking the defenders by surprise. They later took neighboring Monte La Rementanea. The first action of the FSSF cost it more than 500 casualties.

More objectives followed, and the FSSF became something of a legend, taking incredible objectives, sometime with significant casualties, but never in the history of the unit did they ever fail to take their objective.

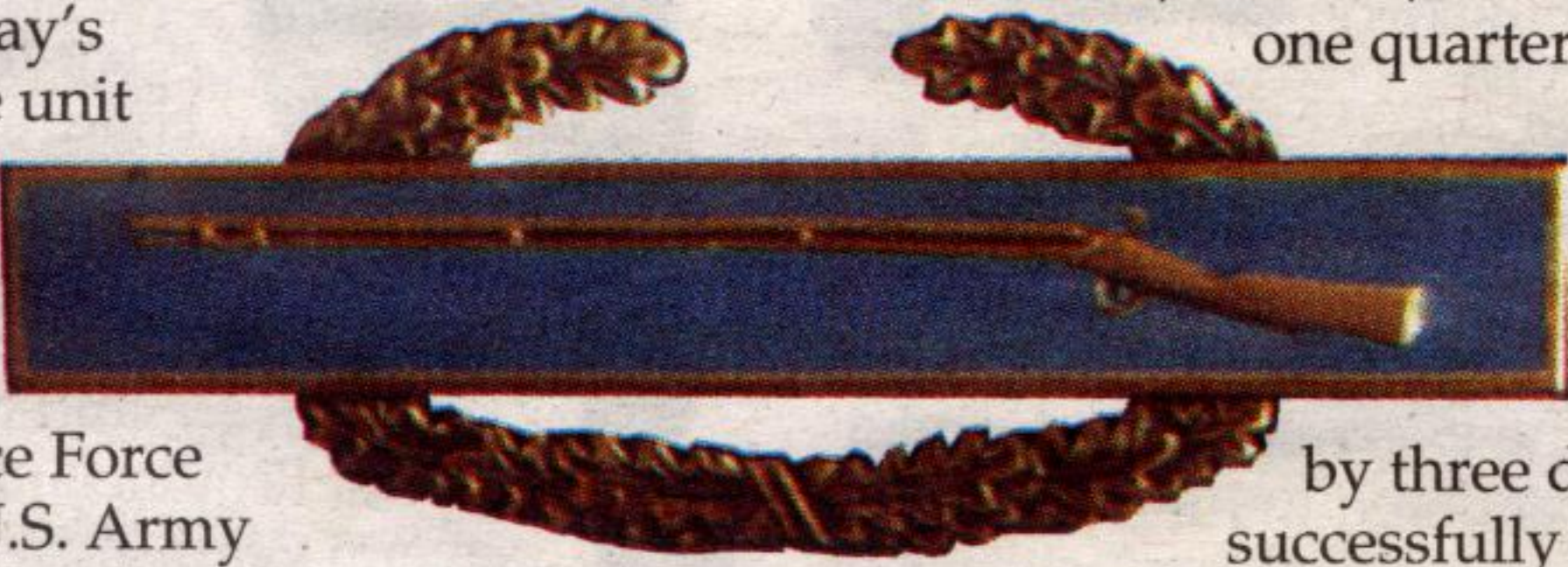
Later, the FSSF would receive its nickname, 'The Devil's Brigade' or 'Little Black Devils' when they attacked German positions at the beach at Anzio, Italy, February 1, 1944.

With a relatively small strength of 1,200 men, the FSSF took over one quarter of the 52-kilometre-long Allied perimeter at Anzio; the rest was held

by three divisions. By successfully holding their sector (with their lines widely spread out) the soldiers of the FSSF earned their nickname as they kept the Germans in a state of panic with their night patrols as the

Germans kept moving their lines back, thinking they were facing many more troops than they actually were, when in fact, they were sparsely spread quite thin along their lines.

In the diary found on a dead German officer, he'd written, "The black devils



The Combat Infantryman Badge earned by Georgetown veteran Ormie Carter.



Ormie Carter was honoured as Lt. Gen. Marc Caron (Canada) pinned his CIB on him at the dinner honouring surviving members of the First Special Services Force last August in Calgary.
Photo by David Carter

are all around us every time we come into the line and we never hear them." Referring to the aggressive patrols and night-time raids by the FSSF, with their faces blackened for camouflage, they had discovered a new way of warfare—psychological intimidation.

In the wake of their night raids at Anzio, they'd leave calling cards behind, emblazoned with their famous U.S.-Canada arrowhead, with the message 'Das Dicke Ende Kommt Noche!' which translated into "The worst is yet to come."

The brazen covert actions of the Force was the stuff legends would be made from, as Hollywood later made the Devil's Brigade an everyday name with the release of a movie of the same name in 1968.

It was at Anzio that Carter joined the FSSF.

Having enlisted in October 1942, (just weeks after his 18th birthday) he was required to remain in Canada until the following year, as Canadian troops weren't allowed to be sent overseas until they were 19.

Following basic training at Brantford, Carter was later stationed at Camp Borden, and shipped out to England in December of 1943.

In the spring of 1944, he received his orders, assigning him to the FSSF in Anzio.

Donning the American uniform, Carter was now part of the famed Devil's Brigade.

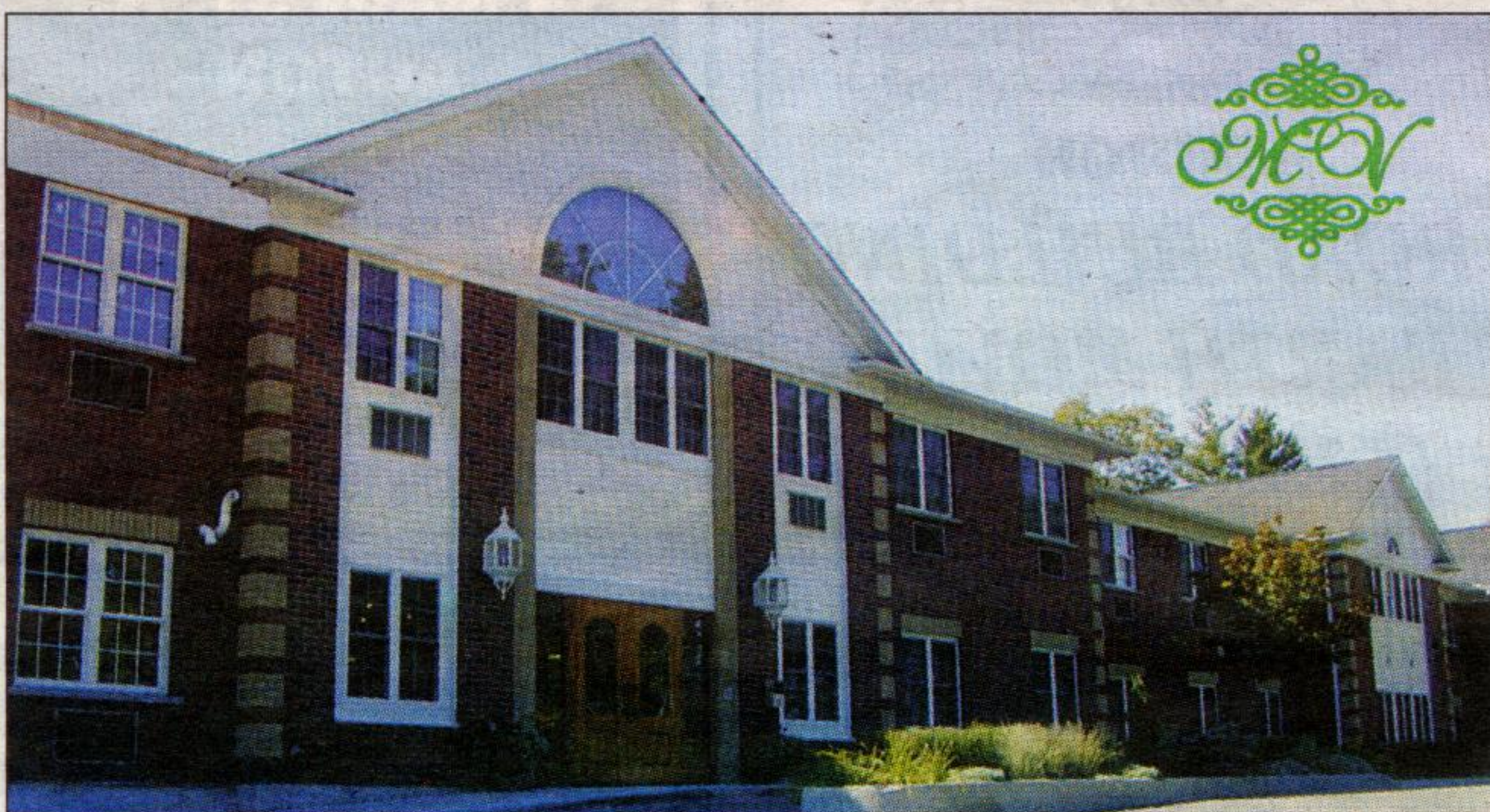
"I saw action as we entered Rome," said Carter, "It was street fighting, very intense. You never knew where the next shot was coming from. Damned scary at times."

See CARTER'S, pg. 4

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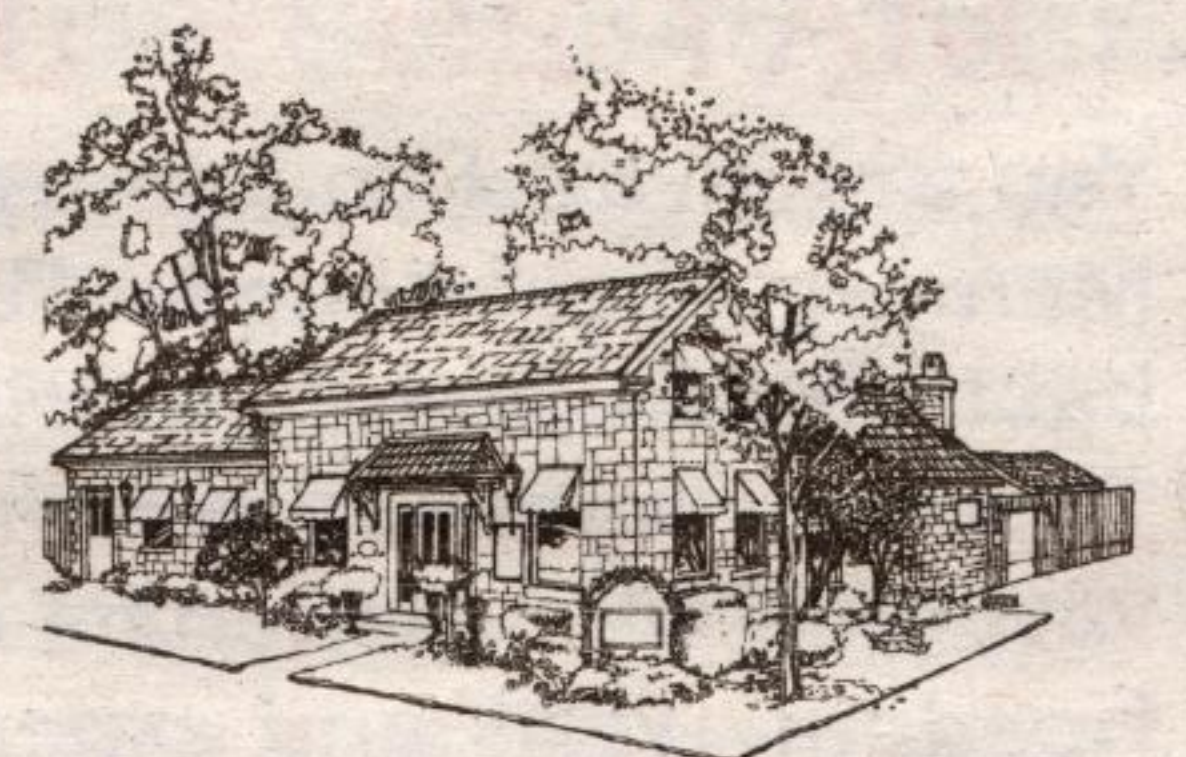
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