

# COALITION IN MINIATURE: THE PECULIAR CASE OF TASK FORCE 45 DURING THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN OF WORLD WAR II

By Carson Teuscher

Sweeping through the sun-drenched Tuscan foothills in pursuit of Field Marshal Albert Kesselring's retreating German columns in early July 1944, Allied forces of the U.S. Fifth Army had every reason to be optimistic. They had liberated Rome, the first of the Axis capitals to fall during the war, one month earlier on 4 June 1944. Buoyed by cheering Italian crowds lining the streets of the Eternal City, the Allies soon continued their northward advance through central Italy, winding steadily up both coastlines past columns of enemy prisoners, burnt-out vehicles, and abandoned weapons and equipment. By late July, elements of Fifth Army on the Tyrrhenian Sea had captured Pisa and the vital port of Livorno, halting at the Arno River within view of the imposing peaks of the northern Apennines.<sup>1</sup>

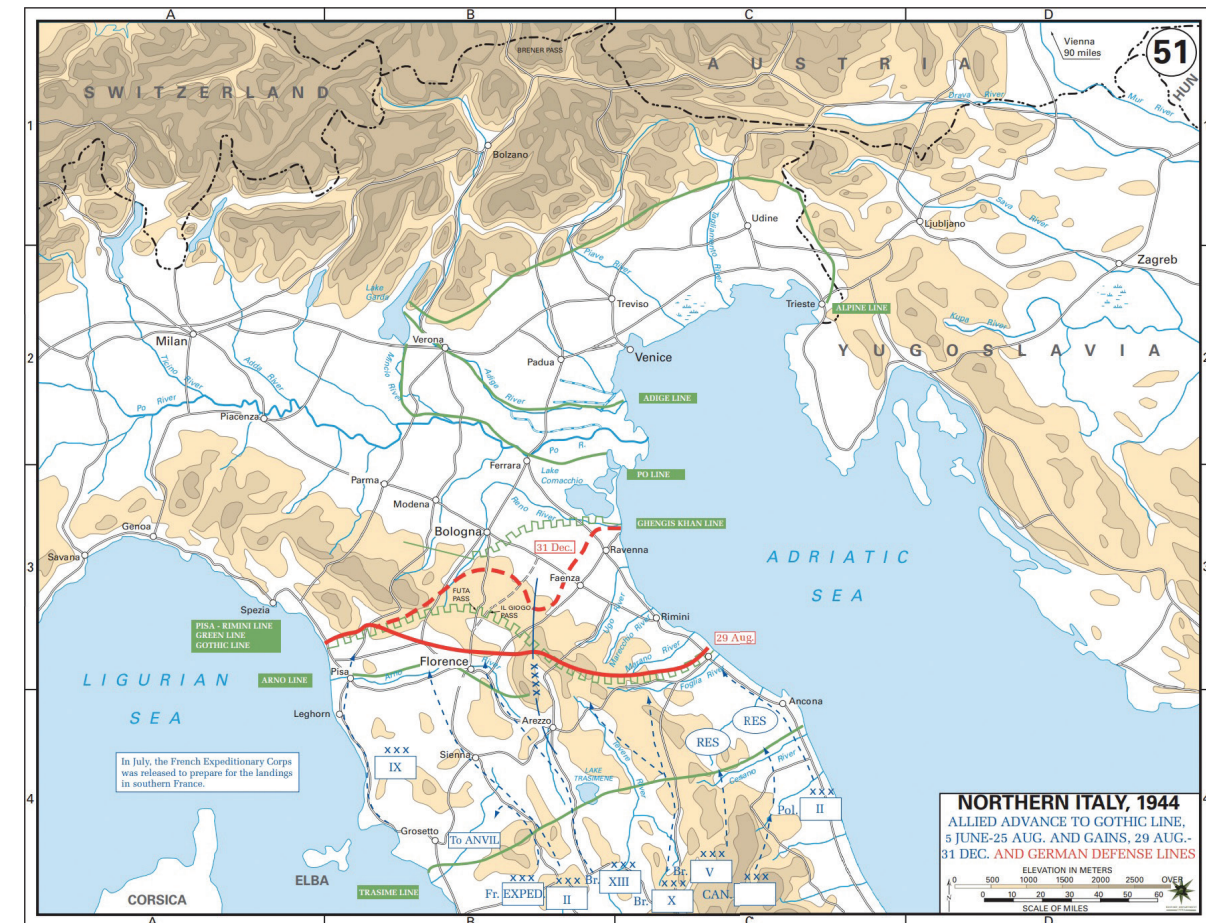
The impressive progress convinced certain Allied leaders the hard-fought Italian campaign would soon end.<sup>2</sup> Some, like British Field Marshal Sir Harold Alexander, believed a late-summer Apennine breakthrough might yield the autumn capture of Bologna and Italy's industrial heartland in the Po River Valley—perhaps even ending the campaign by Christmas. Riding high on their recent successes, few could have imagined the Allied offensive would soon grind to a halt.<sup>3</sup>

Exhausted from months of campaigning and at the end of their tenuous supply lines, Allied forces quickly encountered a new challenge. With time gained from their rapid northward retreat, German soldiers—and thousands of Italian laborers—embedded an interlocking chain of bunkers, pillboxes, artillery emplacements, and antitank ditches into the riverways, passes, and foothills of the Apennines. Stretching from the Ligurian Sea to the Adriatic coast. The 175-mile-long barrier known as the *Gottenstellung*, or Gothic Line, would impede any Allied offensive into northern Italy conducted under the best of conditions. Such conditions, however, proved elusive.<sup>4</sup>

In July 1944, senior Allied strategists notified commanders in Italy that many of their most experienced units would be diverted for the upcoming invasion of southern France.<sup>5</sup> Reduced by almost 100,000 soldiers, by 1 August American Lieutenant General Mark Clark's once formidable Fifth Army was but a remnant of its original composition.<sup>6</sup> Left with the monumental task of penetrating the Gothic Line with seven fewer divisions than anticipated, that autumn Allied leaders did everything they could to compensate for the loss of manpower, weapons, and matériel. Accordingly, they used the remaining summer months to rest and resupply their weary formations.



Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark, commanding general of the U.S. Fifth Army, salutes during a ceremony honoring Mr. Mark Alexander Kirk (left), U.S. political advisor to Allied Force Headquarters, 15 October 1944. With his army stripped of infantry units after the fall of Rome in June 1944, Clark was forced to turn to other branches for foot soldiers. (National Archives)



This map shows the disposition of Allied armies in northern Italy along the German *Gottenstellung*, or Gothic Line. The solid red line shows the Allied positions on 29 August 1944; the dotted red line shows the extent of the Allied advance by the end of December 1944. (Department of History, U.S. Military Academy)

No unit was more affected by these acute shortages than Major General Willis D. Crittenger's U.S. IV Corps. Anchoring Fifth Army's far-left flank across a broad coastal sector north of Livorno, by late July the drained corps had been whittled down to a skeleton force consisting of the 6th South African Armored Division and Combat Command B of the U.S. 1st Armored Division. Infantry reinforcements for Crittenger's hodgepodge corps were coming—albeit in the form of the segregated U.S. 92d Infantry Division and the 25,000-man Brazilian Expeditionary Force—untested combat units rushed piecemeal to the front before their training was complete. Until then, Crittenger and Clark needed a stop-gap solution to rest veteran divisions while maintaining initiative across IV Corps' frontline positions.<sup>7</sup>

The solution came from an unlikely source. On 24 July 1944, Crittenger informed Brigadier General Paul W. Rutledge, commander of the 45th Antiaircraft Artillery (AAA) Brigade, that his unit and its equipment would be retrofitted for provisional infantry service.<sup>8</sup> Once organized, Rutledge's men would protect the IV Corps' left flank, garrisoning defensive positions across a fifteen-mile sector along the Arno River. Orders in hand, Rutledge immediately began converting his units into the motley assemblage known as Task Force (TF) 45.<sup>9</sup>

While the dire need for infantry personnel motivated such a strange order, it was facilitated by Allied aerial supremacy.

Stretched thin on three fronts by the summer of 1944, the German *Luftwaffe* in Italy lacked the aircraft or trained reserve of pilots to contest the concentration of Allied bombers and fighters in the Mediterranean. As such, Allied AAA units had little to do but defend friendly columns, command posts, and rear echelons from the occasional enemy aerial interloper. In Italy, battlefield commanders placed a premium on infantry wherever they could find them; for IV Corps, this meant equipping the 7,000 officers and men manning unnecessary Allied AAA units with rifles and ammunition and instructing them to aim their guns earthward across the Arno.<sup>10</sup>

The conversion process began immediately. The departing U.S. 34th Infantry Division loaned secondhand equipment to the fledgling unit. To assist in its training, Crittenger assigned veteran IV Corps officers to each of Rutledge's new command headquarters and attached advisors to the unit's sixteen provisional infantry companies. Overnight, soldiers' fighting roles transformed in form and function: the brigade antiaircraft gunnery officer became the task force's artillery officer; the commander of the antiaircraft operations detachment became the Provost Marshal. Filling the fledgling task force's vacancies with seventeen permanently assigned officers, Rutledge rounded out his variegated task force by bringing in surgeons, an engineer officer, a photo interpretation officer, prisoner of war interrogators, and other personnel loaned by IV Corps. Within two days, TF 45 consisted



**LEFT:** Brigadier General Paul Rutledge commanded the 45th Antiaircraft Artillery (AAA) Brigade, which provided most of the personnel for what became Task Force 45 (TF 45). (National Archives)

**BELOW:** Major General Willis D. Crittenger commander of IV Corps, employed TF 45 as a stopgap measure until his corps could be restored to full strength. (National Archives)

of a patchwork array of AAA automatic weapons battalions, an armored group, a reconnaissance company, a tank destroyer battalion, and a medical collecting company. Even the British 39th Light Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment was grafted into the unit, conferring the unit with its distinct Anglo-American character.<sup>11</sup>

With TF 45's headquarters established, infantry training began in earnest. Having stored the bulk of their antiaircraft equipment behind friendly lines, veterans of the American 34th Infantry Division ushered the task force-converted infantry battalions through an expedited indoctrination process. While a tiny minority of the force's soldiers had previous combat experience, the majority had never completed any type of basic training. Given M1 Garands, Browning Automatic Rifles, mortars, and .30 and .50 caliber machine guns, the newly formed rifle and heavy weapons companies in reserve tried to grasp the theoretical nuances of infantry combat before going into the line.<sup>12</sup>

Certain elements of TF 45, however, never had the luxury of training. The acute need for fresh manpower to relieve exhausted units along the Arno meant that members of the 898th AAA Battalion were committed to the front "the same night that the Task Force was created." Over the next few days, additional AAA battalions followed suit. Ordered to protect the corps' left flank by staging patrols to prevent enemy raids, TF 45 sustained its first casualties within its first two days on the front.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the overwhelming rapidity of their transformation into frontline infantry units, the unit adapted. Within *three days* of completing the formation of his command headquarters, Rutledge's Anglo-American TF 45 effectuated the full relief of the 34th Infantry Division. During that time, the unit's battalions started making forays across the Arno into enemy territory; one unit even managed to capture a pair of enemy prisoners while on patrol.<sup>14</sup>

Holding positions along the Arno throughout August, the men of TF 45 slowly picked up the intricacies of life on the frontlines. Over time, the inexperienced infantrymen learned to stage ambushes, direct mortar fire, lay minefields, set booby traps, and construct field fortifications. They baited enemy artillery batteries into firing at smoke generators, dummy bridges and artillery positions, and unmanned trucks and bulldozers left running at night. According to the unit's official history, during this period "patrols continuously made contact and in the resulting firefights casualties were taken and inflicted; when they did not encounter enemy soldiers, they took up harassing...with a vengeance." Using coordinates of enemy gun positions transmitted from forward observers, the unit's artillery fired between 1,000 and 2,000 rounds at the enemy *each day*.<sup>15</sup>

Though its initial conversion was complete, TF 45 had not yet reached its final form. Throughout the summer, Rutledge's improvised assemblage grew as units became available, morphing in makeup and mission. On 15 August 1944, IV Corps briefly attached the 100th Infantry Battalion—a volunteer Japanese-American battalion from the Hawaii National Guard and a component of the highly decorated 442d Regimental Com-



**LEFT:** An aerial photograph of northern Italy shows the rugged terrain that faced the Allies as they advanced against the Gothic Line. (National Archives)

**BELOW:** Axis forces in northern Italy were under the command of Field Marshal Albert Kesselring. (Bundesarchiv)



bat Team—to TF 45. Additionally, nearly a thousand British field artillery and antiaircraft personnel were added to the task force as American units were re-routed for duty in Southern France during what became known as the "August Lull."<sup>16</sup>

Newspapers at the time characterized the Italian campaign as a "forgotten front," a battlefield where the occasional artillery barrage enlivened an otherwise stagnant affair. The press coverage reportedly irritated the Fifth Army troops. Lying awake for hours observing enemy positions, enduring the enemy's harassing artillery fire, or toiling through the darkness on increasingly active combat patrols each night, provided plenty of action for the inexperienced infantrymen.<sup>17</sup>

The so-called lull did not last long. In September and October, the Allied Fifth and Eighth Armies began their first coordinated assault on the Gothic Line. Though IV Corps' efforts were ancillary to the main II Corps thrust further east, TF 45's maintenance of forward pressure across a thinly held front played a key role in diverting German attention from the primary line of attack.

On 1 September, the first elements of TF 45 boarded their assault boats and crossed the Arno River east of Pisa. Advancing under enemy fire, newly minted infantrymen with no prior experience conducted offensive operations alongside friendly armored units and assaulted enemy positions across the Apennines. Along the way, they navigated minefields, scrubby thickets, roadblocks, and enemy patrols amongst the Apennine foothills. Notably, that week the unit's racial composition changed as Battery C, 450th AAA Battalion—its first African American unit—was attached and assigned to guard the Cascine Nuove bridge over the Arno.<sup>18</sup>

Using close artillery support from nearby British units, by 9 September elements of TF 45 had managed to infiltrate German positions and occupy a series of villages north of the Serchio River and the Italian *Autostrada* beyond. As TF 45 advanced, the Germans made life hard for the Anglo-American soldiers. Blown bridges over bloated canals and streams regularly appeared around bends

in the winding mountain roads; oppressive heat provoked thirst; and white powdery dust caked the soldiers' uniforms. The Germans contested each Italian village during their slow, stubborn withdrawal. Nevertheless, TF 45 persevered.<sup>19</sup>

Securing the IV Corps' left-most flank for the remainder of the autumn, the unit encountered increasing enemy resistance the further it drove up the Italian coast. Its armored patrols probed the outskirts of timeworn Italian villages tucked high in the Apennines, searching for suspected enemy garrisons. They worked hard to bridge canals and streams to preserve vehicular movement through the countryside. Casualties mounted, day by day.<sup>20</sup>

In the short span of a month, TF 45 had passed through a monumental conversion. The Italian "school of hard knocks" had, in the words of a IV Corps historian, forced the task force to transform from "anti-aircraft artillery to field artillery to foot-slogging infantry and then to mountain infantry."<sup>21</sup> That autumn TF 45's numbers fluctuated between 5,000 and 7,500 men. With shortages of vehicles, engineers, and supplies growing more acute by the day, the unit's soldiers resourcefully recycled captured German howitzers, supplies, and other matériel to bolster their fighting capabilities. Over time, they became more efficient, coordinating with air support to eliminate enemy positions. Some were pulled off the line to fulfill vital engineer functions—a case, one IV Corps historian noted, of "Robbing Peter to pay Paul," although some might reverse the expression, for Paul was the Task Force Commander's first name"; others were pulled back for rest.<sup>22</sup>

The work never ceased. Firmly "under the guns of the Gothic Line" by the end of September, the task force's regular patrols



**TOP LEFT:** Major General Crittenger (second from left) Major General João Baptista Mascarenhas de Morais, commander of the 25,000-man Brazilian Expeditionary Force (BEF) (to Crittenger's left), and two American staff officers, watch artillery fire at a BEF observation post, 21 November 1944. The arrival of the BEF on TF 45's right flank allowed TF 45 to patrol a smaller area. (National Archives)

**TOP RIGHT:** Former AAA soldiers of TF 45 receive orders from their platoon leader before heading out on a patrol, 20 December 1945. (National Archives)

**BOTTOM LEFT:** Italian civilians work on a revetment under the supervision of the TF 45 Engineer Section, 21 December 1944. (National Archives)

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** Brigadier General Rutledge employed some 500 Italian partisans such as the two photographed here to stage raids, man forward posts, guide patrols, observe enemy positions, and sabotage important infrastructure. (National Archives)

frequently encountered the enemy, providing vital intelligence to their corps and army commanders.<sup>23</sup> On 28 September 1944, the unit introduced a battalion of Italian engineers into its ranks who, aided by the tank-dozers of the neighboring 751st Tank Battalion, worked tirelessly to repair roads and bridges in the unit's sector. Rutledge's commanders integrated truck-drawn artillery into its ranks lent by IV Corps. British troops from a newly converted light anti-aircraft brigade learned the ins-and-outs of American artillery under the supervision of the task force artillery officer—a group who “performed yeoman service and tremendously increased the task force's firepower.”<sup>24</sup> Other strange elements found their way into the task force's ranks that autumn. Some fulfilled important military police duties guarding strategic infrastructure in TF 45's sector. Even a quartermaster war dog platoon arrived at the front to contribute. Too jumpy near the forward guns, this group, however, was quickly moved to a quieter area behind the frontlines.<sup>25</sup>

A welcome—but new—foreign face arrived in the IV Corps sector that September: members of the Brazilian Expeditionary Force (BEF). Situated on TF 45's right flank, the Brazilians' presence enabled Rutledge's soldiers to patrol a smaller area. Working closely with the Brazilians as the two units advanced up the northwestern Italian coastal plain, the soldiers of TF 45 were again required to adapt to the needs of their new ally. As the first and only contingent from South America to commit fighting forces against the Axis, the Brazilians were untested in battle, under-equipped, and slotted into the IV Corps' front with far less training than most Allied units. As Anglo-American and Brazilian patrols penetrated deeper into the Apennines, the two units worked closely together to overcome the language barrier and improve their combat effectiveness.<sup>26</sup>

Their efforts culminated in a series of combined operations with the Brazilians in early October, after which the bulk

of the task force was finally granted a welcome reprieve. Continuously engaged on the frontlines since the summer months, all but TF 45's headquarters company and general staff were relieved on 5 October for a month of rest and relaxation behind friendly lines.<sup>27</sup>

Recommitted to the front on 5 November as the Allied offensive in the Apennines began to stall, Crittenger ordered TF 45 to hold a constellation of Italian villages tucked high in the mountains. He hoped this decision might forestall Axis incursions into the Serchio Valley capable of threatening the important Allied port of Livorno. Active patrolling and daily contact with the neighboring BEF and African American 92d Infantry Division occupied the unit's time as the autumn conditions grew more severe. Operating in rougher terrain, poorer weather, with less and less effective artillery and air support, there seemed to be more and more work for the beleaguered infantrymen.

Morale sunk to an all-time low that winter for all the Allied armies in Italy. As it had in 1943, harsh terrain, a stubborn enemy, and wintry impeded the Allied advance. In a laconic appraisal of the situation, Field Marshal Alexander told reporters at a November 1944 press conference that contrary to expectations, his forces were “rather stuck.”<sup>28</sup>

Alexander's comment was a severe understatement. In what Prime Minister Winston Churchill later described as a “skillful but hopelessly mutilated offensive,” several more weeks of hard fighting convinced Allied leaders of the futility of penetrating the Northern Apennines before Christmas.<sup>29</sup> Rather than incur needless casualties, the U.S. Fifth and British Eighth Armies held fast, once again shifting to a defensive posture that enabled them to resupply and reorganize their formations.<sup>30</sup> Another demoralizing winter in Italy beckoned, and this one would prove to be one of the coldest on record.

Now committed to the Allied holding operation in the mountains, the Anglo-American soldiers of TF 45 resisted whatever the opposing German mountain troops threw at them early that winter. Though much of the region remained relatively calm, patrols remained active. Occasional firefights and flare-ups resulted in casualties and prisoners on both sides; the relentless artillery duels common to the campaign continued indefinitely. Soldiers on both sides suffered through supply deficiencies attributable to impassable mountain roads. On several occasions, TF 45 used its half-track mounted anti-aircraft weapons to repel German patrols. Sometimes, they were even utilized in an ad hoc, direct-fire artillery role.<sup>31</sup>



(From left) Major General Crittenger and Major General George P. Hays, commanding general of the 10th Mountain Division, stand at attention during a ceremony disbanding TF 45 and inactivating the 45th AAA Brigade, 12 February 1945. (National Archives)

TF 45 made the most of its situation by building closer relationships with local Italian communities. Recruiting hundreds of local villagers to help the unit's engineers repair vital bridges and roads destroyed along their advance into the mountains, the task force fed, paid, and transported “skillful and conscientious” Italian masons and their building materials to job sites throughout the sector. Hoping to threaten nearby German positions near Mount Belvedere, a critical massif guarding the entrance to the Po Valley in IV Corps' sector, Rutledge also coordinated with almost 500 local partisans to stage raids, man forward posts, guide patrols, observe enemy positions, and sabotage important infrastructure.<sup>32</sup>

On 18 November, elements of the BEF, 92d Infantry Division, and 751st Tank Battalion were attached to TF 45 for their greatest test yet. With Mount Belvedere and its adjoining heights looming over IV Corps' sector, dug-in German defenders atop its peak could concentrate deadly artillery fire on Allied positions in the valleys below. Crittenger wanted it captured. Doing so would require a concerted, collective effort.<sup>33</sup>

Working in tandem with the 2d Armored Group and local partisans, the polyglot assault force advanced on the objective before dawn on 21 November 1944. A thick fog obscured visibility; there would be no air support, and only limited supporting artillery fire. Covered by British AAA units while fighting uphill for the entire day, the task force made considerable progress by evening.

At nightfall, however, “blood-curdling yells and screams” pierced the cold darkness. Descending on the Allied troops was a company-sized German force that was soon broken up and

repelled. “As they withdrew,” the IV Corps historian sardonically noted, “It appeared that the screaming had died down to whimpering.” The next day, the uphill advance continued as casualty reports arrived at unit headquarters thick and fast. Concentrated enemy mortar fire killed and wounded dozens, prefiguring another German counterattack. With the dogged support of fixed British artillery positions and the local Italian partisans fighting by their side, the task force held its line.<sup>34</sup>

Their luck would not last. Having held newly established and fortified outposts in Querciola, Vidiciatico, Lizzano, and Pianaccio through the second week of December and staged a series of diversionary attacks in support of the main Brazilian thrust on Belvedere and Monte Castello, IV Corps proved unable to capture and hold the key heights. With snow and sleet now blanketing the landscape, TF 45 received instructions to continue patrolling, remain at their forward positions in the villages, and hold tight until the spring thaw.<sup>35</sup>

Now nearing the end of its operational odyssey through Italy, TF 45 again shifted its composition. Swapping commanders and shedding some of its idle mechanized units, as well as the Brazilians and African Americans attached for the thwarted Belvedere assault, the unit welcomed the newly arrived American 10th Mountain Division to its ranks shortly after New Year’s Day 1945. The grizzled appearance of veteran Anglo-American AAA soldiers fortifying their shared defensive infantry positions and departing on dozens of patrols a day served as a chilling omen of what the American mountaineers could expect in the sector over the coming months.<sup>36</sup>

Luckily for the survivors of TF 45, as more elements of the 10th Mountain Division arrived in Italy, many were moved off the line for rest and reassignment to other units across Italy. The 10th Mountain Division, completing its relief of the exhausted AAA units still in the mountains by February, would operate anonymously under the TF 45 nomenclature until their first major combat operation—a return to Belvedere and its adjoining heights—where on 18 February it would complete the work TF 45 fearlessly started.<sup>37</sup>

On 11 February 1945, IV Corps commander Major General Crittenberger disbanded TF 45. The next day, he conferred upon the acting commander of the 45th AAA Brigade the Legion of Merit. In its official commendation, the unit received high praise for the “outstanding manner in which it handled the many difficult and diversified tasks assigned to it during its existence within the Fifth Army.”<sup>38</sup> Lieutenant General Lucian K. Truscott, commander of the U.S. Fifth Army, echoed Crittenberger’s sentiments: “I have heard nothing but praise for the performance of the men and organizations of the 45th Antiaircraft Brigade both in their antiaircraft role and in ground action.” “They functioned at all times,” he continued, “in a highly commendatory manner.”<sup>39</sup> By 13 February, all men within the 45th AAA Brigade were reassigned to other Allied units across Italy.

In the grand scheme of the Allied effort of World War II, Task Force 45 played a small—seemingly imperceptible—role in ending Axis domination of the European continent. In seven months of front-line duty, it sustained eighty-seven men killed, 452 wounded, and 111 missing in action. Indeed, while elite units like the 10th Mountain Division loom large in popular memory, few, if anyone, remembers the motley assemblage that prepared the 10th Mountain Division’s arrival in the Apennines and prefigured their place in the history books.

In many respects, TF 45 was a microcosm of the broader Allied effort after the fall of Rome: a piecemeal, ad hoc, multinational force facing stubborn, dug-in resistance eager to hinder its advance.

Fighting in sun, rain, mud, sleet, and snow across rugged mountains, rolling hills, and flooded valleys, its converted infantry forces adapted to the combat role assigned to them, improvising antiaircraft weapons for artillery use, becoming adept at combat patrolling and joint operations, and learning the art of mountain warfare against a formidable opponent in the Italy’s Apennine Mountains.<sup>40</sup>

All coalitions hope the sum of their capabilities become greater than their individual parts. Despite considerable logistical, organizational, and training disadvantages, Task Force 45 in Italy made this ideal a reality:

Its artillery was their anti-aircraft guns, the guns of attached tanks and tank destroyers, and captured German weapons. Its engineers were mostly Italian civilians who were not afraid to work within the sound of guns and who built well. It accomplished much with little. British anti-aircraft soldiers who rode forward on American tanks, under cover of American mortar fire from behind and American mine clearing engineers ahead, and the Yanks who climbed out of their fox-holes with British artillery bleating protection from the rear, with Italian Partisans at their side and with Brazilians on their flanks, learned that different peoples can fight well together for a mutual cause.<sup>41</sup>

Though it is largely forgotten today, Task Force 45’s adaptability, flexibility, and determination epitomized the multinational Allied slog up the Italian peninsula. Aggregating the capabilities of many nations in pursuit of a common operational end, by the end of their journey in the Apennines this unconventional contingent had truly become a veritable coalition in miniature. ☞

## Endnotes

- Ernest Fisher, Jr., *Cassino to the Alps* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1977), 203–280; Clayton D. Laurie, *Rome–Arno* (Washington DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, CMH Pub 72-20, 1994).
- For several operational histories of the Italian campaign, see Dominick Graham and Sheldford Bidwell, *Tug of War: The Battle for Italy: 1943–45* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1986); Edwin H. Hoyt, *Backwater War: The Allied Campaign in Italy, 1943–45* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2002); Ian Blackwell, *The Fifth Army in Italy, 1943–1945: A Coalition at War* (Yorkshire: Pen and Sword Books, 2012); George F. Botjer, *Sideshow War: The Italian Campaign, 1943–1945* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007); Thomas R. Brooks, *The War North of Rome: June 1944–May 1945* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 1996).
- Fisher, Jr., *Cassino to the Alps*, 308–311; Dwight D. Oland, *North Apennines* (Washington, DC: CMH Pub 72-34, 1994), 4–6, 24–25.
- For more on the Gothic Line, see Christian Jennings, *At War on the Gothic Line: Fighting in Italy, 1944–45* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2016); Jon Diamond, *Beyond Rome to the Alps: Across the Arno and Gothic Line, 1944–1945* (Oxford: Pen & Sword Military, 2018).
- Fisher, Jr., *Cassino to the Alps*, 255–70. For more on the Allied invasion of southern France (Operation Anvil/Dragoon), see Jeffrey J. Clarke and Robert Ross Smith, *Riviera to the Rhine* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1993); Anthony Tucker-Jones, *Operation Dragoon: The Liberation of Southern France 1944* (Oxford: Pen and Sword, 2010); Steven J. Zaloga, *Operation Dragoon 1944: France’s other D-Day* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2009).
- During his visit with General Mark Clark at Livorno on 19 August 1944, Winston Churchill “realised how painful the tearing to pieces of this fine army had been to those who controlled it.” In their interactions, General Clark “seemed embittered that his army had been robbed of what he thought—and I could not disagree—was a good opportunity.”

- Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: Triumph and Tragedy*, Vol. 6 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953), 107.
- “IV Corps History,” Willis D. Crittenberger, Jr. Papers, Box 10, United States Army Heritage and Education Center [Hereafter USAHEC], Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 275; Oland, *North Apennines*, 10.
  - Willis D. Crittenberger, “Report of the Operations of the IV Corps in the Italian Campaign, 1 August to 31 August 1944,” Folder 204-0.3, Box 2814, Entry 427, Record Group [Hereafter RG] 407, National Archives and Records Administration II [Hereafter NARA], 1–6.
  - “History of Task Force 45 (29 July 44 to 28 January 45),” 1945, Tenth Mountain Division Collection (TMD) 1, Box 5, Folder 25, Denver Public Library (DPL), Denver, Colorado, 1. For a digital copy, see World War II Operational Documents, Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library Digital Library, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Accessed 19 November 2021. <https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4013coll8/id/3426>
  - “History of Task Force 45,” 1–2; “IV Corps History,” 262.
  - “History of Task Force 45,” 1–3; “IV Corps History,” 264.
  - “History of Task Force 45,” 1–3; “IV Corps History,” 264–65.
  - “IV Corps History,” 264.
  - “IV Corps History,” 265.
  - “History of Task Force 45,” 7–8.
  - On the August Lull, see James Holland, *Italy’s Sorrow: A Year of War* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2008), 291–316; Fisher, Jr., *Cassino to the Alps*, 255–294. For more on the Japanese-American 442d Regimental Combat Team, see Masayo Umezawa Duus and Peter Duus (trans.), *Unlikely Liberators: The Men of the 100th and 442nd* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983); Minoru Masuda, Hana Masuda, and Dianne Bridgeman (eds.), *Letters from the 442nd: The World War II Correspondence of a Japanese American Medic* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011); James M. McCaffrey, *Going for Broke: Japanese American Soldiers in the War against Nazi Germany* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013); Bill Yenne, *Rising Sons: The Japanese American GIs Who Fought for the United States in World War II* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2007).
  - “IV Corps History,” 321–22, 326–27. After France’s June 1944 liberation, the press frequently labeled the Italian campaign a “forgotten front.” Cognizant of the label’s potential impact on soldier morale, President Roosevelt reminded the American people it was “wrong and unjust to underrate the importance of the fighting in the peninsula” in a January 1945 broadcast. See “Forgotten Front,” *The Washington Post*, 11 January 1945, 6. See also Herbert Matthews, “Soldiers in Italy Gaining in Morale: Events Help Them Lose Feeling That They Fight and Die on Forgotten Front,” *New York Times*, 14 January 1945, 11; Mark W. Clark, *Calculated Risk* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), 3; Robert H. Schmidt, *The Forgotten Front in Northern Italy: A World War II Combat Photographer’s Illustrated Memoir of the Gothic Line Campaign* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1994).
  - “History of Task Force 45,” 13. For several great histories of the U.S. 92d Division in Italy, see Hondon B. Hargrove, *Buffalo Soldiers in Italy: Black Americans in World War II* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2003); Daniel Gibran, *The 92nd Infantry Division and the Italian Campaign in World War II* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2001); *With the 92nd Infantry Division* (Information Education Section, Mediterranean Theater of Operations, U.S. Army, 1945).
  - “IV Corps History,” 295.
  - “Ibid, 352–57; “History of Task Force 45,” 14.
  - “IV Corps History,” 354.
  - “Ibid, 354.
  - “History of Task Force 45,” 15.
  - “IV Corps History,” 352–57.
  - “History of Task Force 45,” 15–16.
  - For more on the Brazilian Expeditionary Force, see Frank D. McCann, *The Brazilian–American Alliance, 1937–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), chap. 12; Frank D. McCann, *Brazil and the United States during World War II and Its Aftermath: Negotiating Alliance and Balancing Giants* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2019), chap. 6; Cesar Campiani Maximiano and Ricardo Bonalume Neto, *Brazilian Expeditionary Force in World War II* (Oxford: Osprey

Publishing, 2011); João Baptista Mascarenhas de Moraes, *The Brazilian Expeditionary Force by Its Commander* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966).

- “History of Task Force 45,” 16; “IV Corps History,” 385–94.
- Milton Bracker, “Campaign in Italy Seen Stalemated,” *New York Times*, 3 November 1944, 11; “IV Corps History,” 395–96.
- Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 330.
- Justin J. Chabalko, *Forging the 10th Mountain Division for War, 1940–45: How Innovation Created a Highly Adaptive Formation* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Press, 2020), 64.
- “IV Corps History,” 401–02.
- “History of Task Force 45,” 19; “IV Corps History, 400–04.
- “IV Corps History,” 395–438. The underprepared Brazilian Expeditionary Force was heavily involved in these operations. For a more detailed account of their contributions during this period, see Moraes, *The Brazilian Expeditionary Force by Its Commander*, 85–101; Maximiano and Bonalume Neto, *Brazilian Expeditionary Force*, 11–13.
- “IV Corps History,” 408–09; “History of Task Force 45,” 19–26.
- “IV Corps History,” 405–43.
- “IV Corps History, 472–79; “History of Task Force 45,” 26–32.
- To preserve the anonymity of the 10th Mountain Division as it gradually arrived on IV Corps’ front, Crittenberger ordered the unit to operate under the identification of Task Force 45 until late January. “Contents, Operations History,” TMD1, Box 5, Folder 48, DPL. For more on the 10th Mountain Division’s journey through Italy, see McKay Jenkins, *Last Ridge: The Epic Story of America’s First Mountain Soldiers and the Assault on Hitler’s Europe* (New York: Random House, 2007); Peter Shelton, *Climb to Conquer: The Untold Story of World War II’s 10th Mountain Division Ski Troops* (New York: Scribner, 2014); Maurice Isserman, *The Winter Army: The World War II Odyssey of the 10th Mountain Division, America’s Elite Alpine Warriors* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2019); Gordon L. Rottman, *US 10th Mountain Division in World War II* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2012).
- Willis D. Crittenberger, Jr., “Commendation,” 10 February 1945 in “History of Task Force 45,” 36–38; “IV Corps History,” 477–79.
- Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., “Commendation,” 12 February 1945 in “History of Task Force 45,” 33–34.
- On the character of the Italian campaign, Frank Gaffen once argued: “If I were to write a full history of the Italian campaign, trying to bring out its essential character, it would have to be in large measure a tactical account. It would be necessary to describe in detail stubborn and bitter fighting for one mountain ridge after another. It was as unpleasant a campaign as any in modern history. The weather was unvaryingly cruel. The mud was as devouring as anything on the Somme. The mountains were stony and bare of cover. Much of the real history consisted of small tactics, company and battalion action.” See Fred Gaffen, *Ortona: Christmas 1943* (Ottawa: Balmuir Book Publishing, 1988), 28. Cited in Bill McAndrew, *Canadians in the Italian Campaign* (Montreal: Art Global, 1996), 59.
- “IV Corps History,” 477.

## About the Author

Carson Teuscher is a Ph.D. candidate specializing in Military History at The Ohio State University and a 2020–21 Hans J. Morgenthau Fellow in Grand Strategy at Notre Dame’s International Security Center. His dissertation explores the development of the Allied coalition in the Mediterranean Theater during World War II.