Montana lost its last two members of the First Special Service Force (FSSF) on Sunday

**COL Mark Radcliffe Service**
Tuesday, April 10, 1300
Anderson, Stevenson, Wilke Funeral Home
3750 N. Montana Ave
Helena, MT
Reception following service at funeral home
Internment, Montana Veterans Cemetery, Ft Harrison, 1530

**SGT Joe Glass Service**
Wednesday, April 11, 1300
Anderson, Stevenson, Wilke Funeral Home
3750 N. Montana Ave
Helena, MT
Internment, Montana Veterans Cemetery, FT Harrison, 1430
Reception following internment at Service Club, Ft Harrison

A press release on Thursday states that in honor of Mark Radcliffe and Joe Glass and all the other Montana FSSF veterans who preceded them in death, Governor Brian Schweitzer has issued a proclamation ordering flags lowered on the days of the services scheduled for these two fine men. The press release asks Montanans to join the governor in honoring all members of the First Special Service Force, especially those who returned to Montana and contributed so much to our state.

HELENA, Mont. - Ninety years ago, two boys grew up on opposite corners of mid North America. Mark Radcliffe was born in Farmington, N.M., in 1918, while Joe Glass was born two years later, in Sarnia, Ontario. In 1942, Radcliffe and Glass were both selected for the Plough Project, described as a "suicide mission," and began training at Helena's Fort Harrison. The First Special Service Force (FSSF) was an elite commando unit combining American and Canadian soldiers. During World War II, the FSSF captured more than 27,000 enemy prisoners. Nicknamed the "Black Devils" by the Germans, their legendary accomplishments were inspiration for the movie "The Devil's Brigade."

After the war, the two men returned to Helena, where they spent the remainder of their lives. On Sunday, Radcliffe and Glass - who were Montana's last surviving members of the FSSF - died just 12 hours apart. "Mark and Joe were two of the original members of the First Special Service Force, and it's appropriate that they were the last two survivors in the state," said FSSF aficionado Bill Woon, whose father was also a member of the elite unit. "It's also appropriate that they were an American and a Canadian."

Radcliffe, 94, was stationed with the 161st Infantry in Hawaii when Pearl Harbor was bombed by the Japanese on Dec. 7, 1941. He then attended Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Ga., graduating in July 1942, before volunteering for the FSSF.

As commander of Third Company, Third Regiment, Radcliffe participated in the North Africa campaign, and the conquests of Italy's Mount la Difensa and Mount Majo. While on patrol on the beachhead of Anzio, he was captured and taken prisoner by the Germans. During interrogation at La Florre, Radcliffe managed to escape. Traveling at night, it took three days to work his way back to his outfit, during which time he was hit by mortar shrapnel. After a stint in the
hospital, Radcliffe was assigned to lead an independent reconnaissance mission that was part of the retaking of Rome. At 6 a.m. on June 4, 1944, his special corps patrol passed through Rome’s Porta San Giovanni Gate, a half-hour ahead of any other Allied unit. By war’s end, Capt. Radcliffe had earned one Silver Star, six Bronze Stars and three Purple Hearts. Glass, 92, enlisted in the Canadian Army in 1940. He was a bayonet instructor before volunteering for the FSSF in order to "get into combat quicker."

With the First Company, First Battalion, Second Regiment, he was wounded during the legendary midnight assault up the cliffs of Mount la Difensa. During the siege of Anzio, Glass and the late Lorin Waling teamed up as a mortar tandem near the Mussolini Canal. The two were part of dozens of recon patrols and "nearly 90 combat ambushes in No Man's Land" between the Allies and Nazis.

Waling later recounted working with Glass, telling a reporter "Man, Joe was super-quick loading those mortar shells." During the breakout in March 1944, mortar shrapnel hit Glass in the chest and exited out his back. His lung collapsed, most of his ribs were broken and separated from his spine, and he was paralyzed from the waist down. When he started coughing up blood, Glass told his buddy, "Say goodbye to my wife and kids." Then another piece of shrapnel hit him in the arm. But he somehow made it out alive and was taken to an Army hospital. In surgery, the doctors wired his ribs to his backbone, and removed one rib to repair his lungs. Glass returned to Helena with a 50 percent disability, but with the same grit and determination he used to help win the war, he worked most of his life at various jobs. His occupations ranged from delivering potato chips and milk, to selling cars and insurance; from tending bar and driving taxis and concrete trucks, to owning and operating several businesses. Glass and Radcliffe were among many of the FSSF who married local women.

Joe and his late wife Dorothy raised four children; Chuck, Bob, Victoria and Dottie. Radcliffe, who raised children Bob and Carolyn with his wife, Edith, remained in the Army Reserve, retiring as a full colonel. He traveled to Fort Bragg on numerous occasions while spearheading the high-altitude training facility for the Special Forces operations at Fort Harrison, and also helped start the military museum at the Helena fort. "Dad was just a soldier through and through," Bob Radcliffe said.