

The Freedom for Italy Network Bulletin

<https://www.assoknowledge.org/freedom-for-italy/the-freedom-for-italy-network>

Week ending 13 February 2026



Winter Line Museum preserves the story of the Special Service Force



Allied hopes of capturing Rome by Christmas 1943 foundered on Axis resistance on the Winter Line, a defensive bastion which ran across high points overlooking the Mignano Gap through which the Via Casilina and the railway to Rome runs.

In November, the Fifth Army's first attempt to break the line on the Camino/ La Difensa mountain mass was repulsed.

Recognising the challenging nature of the topography, the 1st Special Service Force (SSF) was deployed to help break German resistance. Formed in July 1942, the elite formation recruited from Canada and the US and was trained to fight in mountains.

The role of the SSF in the Winter Line battles of the winter

1943/44 was described by Venafrò's Winter Line Museum founder Luciano Bucci in this week's Freedom for Italy online talk. Bucci told the story of its assault on the Camino/La Difensa mountain mass south of the Mignano Gap; the battle for Hill 720 north of the gap and the advance to Monte Majo, the final SSF operation before it was relocated to the Anzio beachhead on 1 February 1944.

Bucci said he has guided tours including veterans and their families to most of the key places on the Winter Line where the SSF fought in the winter of 1943/44. The Winter Line Museum has a section dedicated to its role in some of the hardest fighting in the Italian Campaign. You can see the museum's website here:

<https://www.winterlinevenafro.it/>

Bucci is the author of *The First Special Service Force on the Winter Line*. He will be speaking at the Freedom for Italy Conference in Rome on 17 April.



YouTube documentaries about Italian campaign in February 1944

34th Division attack on Monte Cassino on 1-7 February 1944

<https://youtu.be/xIEyH5npLQY>

German counterattack against the Anzio bridgehead on 7-13 February 1944

<https://youtu.be/uyuBHfZv4U>

Attack on Monte Cassino by 34th and 36th Division on 7-11 February 1944

<https://youtu.be/EeTMjlsFMNw>

The German Fischfang attack on the Anzio beachhead on 16-20 February 1944

<https://youtu.be/TDc9j7r184E>

Brazilian Expeditionary Force and 10th Mountain Infantry Division attack on 18 February 1945

https://youtu.be/khDIZur_EOE

Dates for your diary

7-15 April The second Monte Cassino to Rome Peace Walk.

<https://www.assoknowledge.org/freedom-for-italy/the-monte-cassino-to-rome-peace-walk-7-15-april-2026>

17 April The Freedom for Italy Conference, Rome

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-freedom-for-italy-conference-tickets-1981586760343>

Allies Museum Rome to hold five conferences

The Allies Museum Rome has announced five conferences to be held in Rome, Naples, Milan and Florence in the next four months.

Co-belligerence: The Military Contribution of the Italian Armed Forces

1030am 17 February

Museo Vite di Imi, Rome

Speakers

Elena Aga-Rossi, Università degli Studi de L'Aquila; Gastone Breccia, Università degli Studi di Pavia; Massimo de Leonardis, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore; Marco De Nicolò, President, Società Italiana per lo Studio della Storia Contemporanea, Guido Molinari of The Allies Museum and Emanuele Sica of the Royal Military College of Canada.

The Allied Occupation and the Reconstruction of Italy

930am 18 March

Università di Napoli Federico II, Naples

Speakers Marco Maria Aterrano, Università di Napoli Federico II; Giovanni Cerchia, Università del Molise; Manoela Patti, Università di Palermo and Fabio Simonetti, Brunel University London.

Allies and the Resistance Movements: National Aspects and the International Dimensions

1030am 14 April

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan

Speakers

Mireno Berrettini, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore; Paolo Corsini, President, Istituto Nazionale Ferruccio Parri; Francesco Fusi, Università degli Studi di Pisa; Isabella Insolubile Università Mercatorum; Daniele Pasquinucci, President, Società Italiana di Storia Internazionale and Tommaso Piffer, Università degli Studi di Udine.

Allied Soldiers and Civilians in the Italian Campaign: Conflict and Solidarity

1030am 6 May

Biblioteca delle Oblate, Florence

Speakers Mireno Berrettini, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore; Mirco Carrattieri, Scientific Director, Liberation Route Italia; Vannino Chiti, President, Istituto Storico Toscano della Resistenza; Fabio de Ninno, Università degli Studi di Siena; Chiara Fantozzi, Università degli Studi di Pisa and Matteo Pretelli, Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale"

The Allies in Italy: Historical Debates and Collective Memory

1030am 28 May

Biblioteca della Camera dei Deputati, Rome

Speakers Marco Maria Aterrano, Università di Napoli Federico II; Mireno Berrettini, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore; Umberto Gentiloni, Università degli Studi di Roma La Sapienza; Gabriella Gribaudo, Università di Napoli Federico II; Virgilio Ilari, President, Società Italiana di Storia; Militare Guido Molinari, The Allies Museum; Leopoldo Nuti, Università degli Studi Roma Tre and Emanuele Sica, Royal Military College of Canada.

To register, write to: events@alliesmuseum.com



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