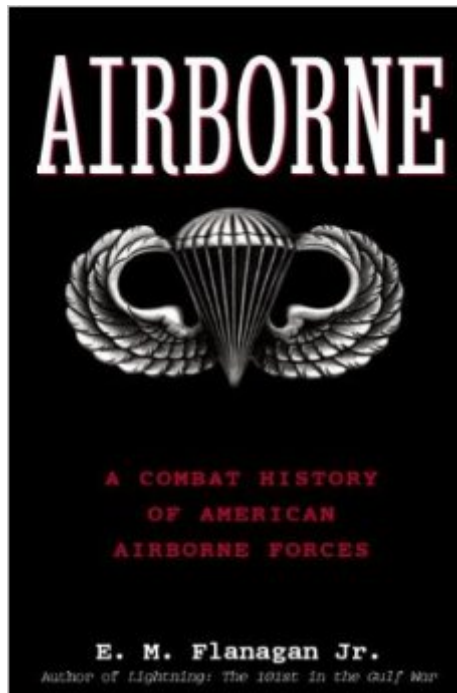


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Airborne: A Combat History Of American Airborne Forces



Synopsis

The United States Army's experiment with airborne forces started at Fort Benning, Georgia, in early 1940 with a single platoon of paratroopers. From this tiny seed grew the mighty American airborne legion that spearheaded America's attack against Nazi Germany in Sicily and Normandy. Ultimately this branch included an airborne corps headquarters, five full airborne divisions, and several independent battalions and regiments. On the nights of June 5 and 6, 1944, the parachutes and gliders of six regiments of American airborne infantry filled the dark sky over Normandy. Paratroopers and glidermen of the 101st Airborne Division Screaming Eagles were literally dropping into battle for the first time, harbingers of the vast Allied D-day armada. Moments later, they were joined by the veteran All Americans of the 82d Airborne Division, who had first jumped into combat almost a year earlier in Sicily. For the American airborne troopers, the road to victory in Europe led through the ill-conceived Arnhem campaign and on to the Bulge, where the American paratroopers saved the day for the Allies. The 17th Airborne Division rebounded the Rhine in the last airborne operation in Europe and fought across Germany until VE Day with their band of brothers. In the Pacific, the Angels of the 11th Airborne Division saw hard combat in the Philippines. The independent 503d Regimental Combat Team fulfilled General MacArthur's promise to return when it daringly parachuted onto the small area known as Topside on the rocky fortress island of Corregidor. Following World War II, the airborne fought with distinction in Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War. Along the way American paratroopers have also given yeoman service on smaller battlefields such as the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Panama. Written by a former paratrooper, Airborne is the definitive combat history of these elite forces.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Airborne: A Combat History of American Airborne Forces by LTG (Retired) E. M. Flanagan Jr. Allow me to state my prejudices up front. I am a former United States Army officer commissioned through the reserve officer training program (ROTC). I have my jump wings. For those who attended jump school at Fort Benning, I was A36 in class 37 - 76. I proudly wore my jump wings. Airborne: A Combat History of American Airborne Forces by LTG Flanagan reminds me in some ways of a military after action report. It mentions people, equipment, backgrounds, TO & E and the never ending officer name, his West Point class year, his class standing if high or low, and if he currently had and in the future will have a historically significant assignment. Rarely is an ROTC and never a battlefield or OCS commissioned officer mentioned. The use of Medal of Honor citations throughout the book is good, though it significantly declined after the chapter on the Korean War. The book covers the period of pre World War Two to the end of World War Two in painful detail. At some points the level of detail bogs down and even gets as boring as reading a TO & E. The best written part of the book was the coverage of Operation Just Cause in Panama. It reads almost like a newspaper account of the operation. Unfortunately, the coverage given to this operation was not duplicated in other post World War Two events. The brevity of coverage from the period 1946 to the end of the 1990s is shocking. I would be interested in knowing when the airborne troops were integrated. Who was the first African American to get his jump wings? Who was the first African American to make a combat jump?

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