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501st PARACHUTE  
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502nd PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



503rd PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



504th PARACHUTE  
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AIRBORNE  
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506th  
PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



517th  
PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



507th  
PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



# AIRBORNE COMMAND



518th PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



513th PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



511th PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



509th PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



508th PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY

**A HISTORY OF**

**AIRBORNE COMMAND**

**AND**

**AIRBORNE CENTER**

**PUBLISHED BY**

**THE COMMAND CLUB FOR ITS MEMBERS**

Edited By  
**MARSHALL BRUCER, LT. COL., M.C. (ORC)**  
Galveston, Texas



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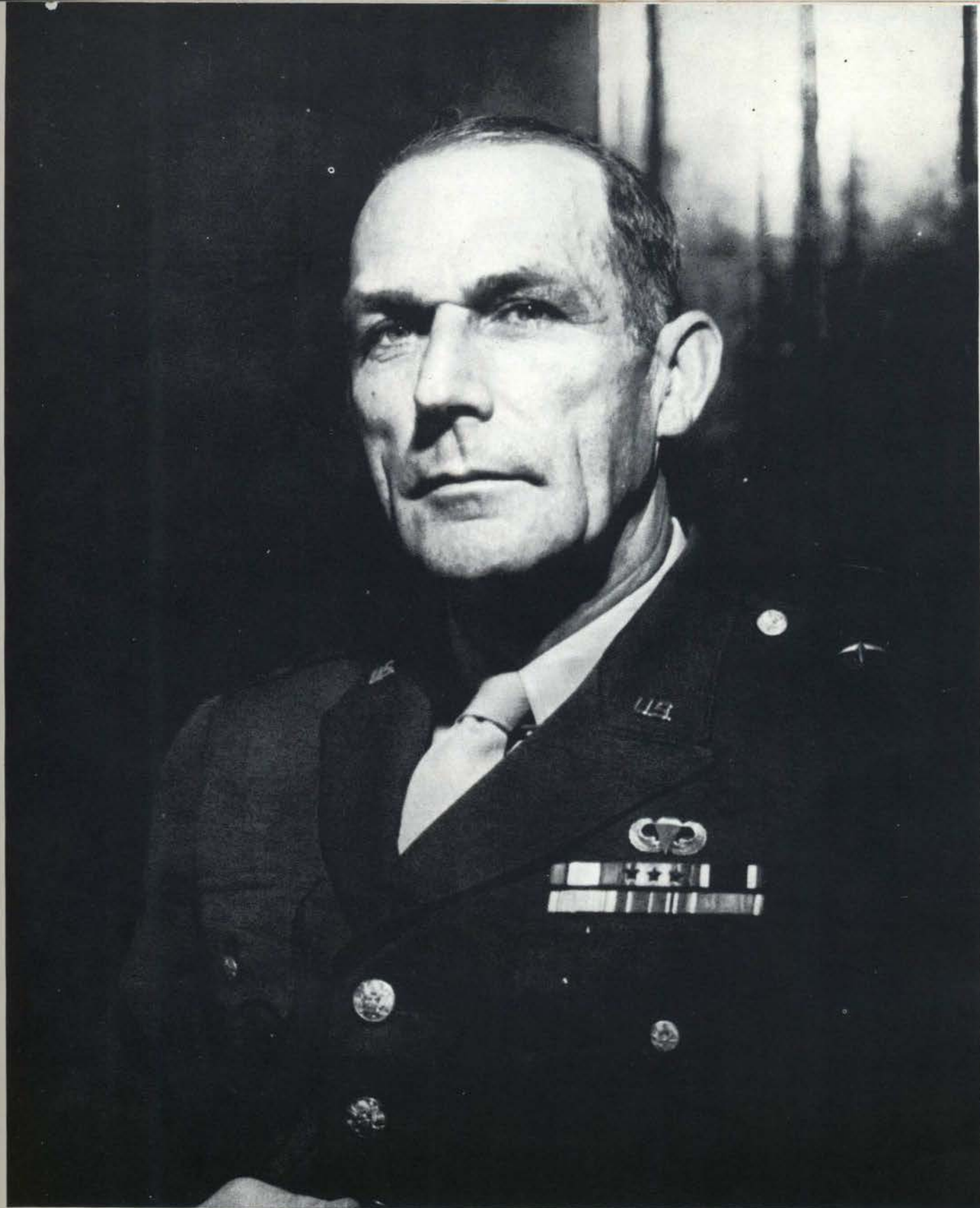
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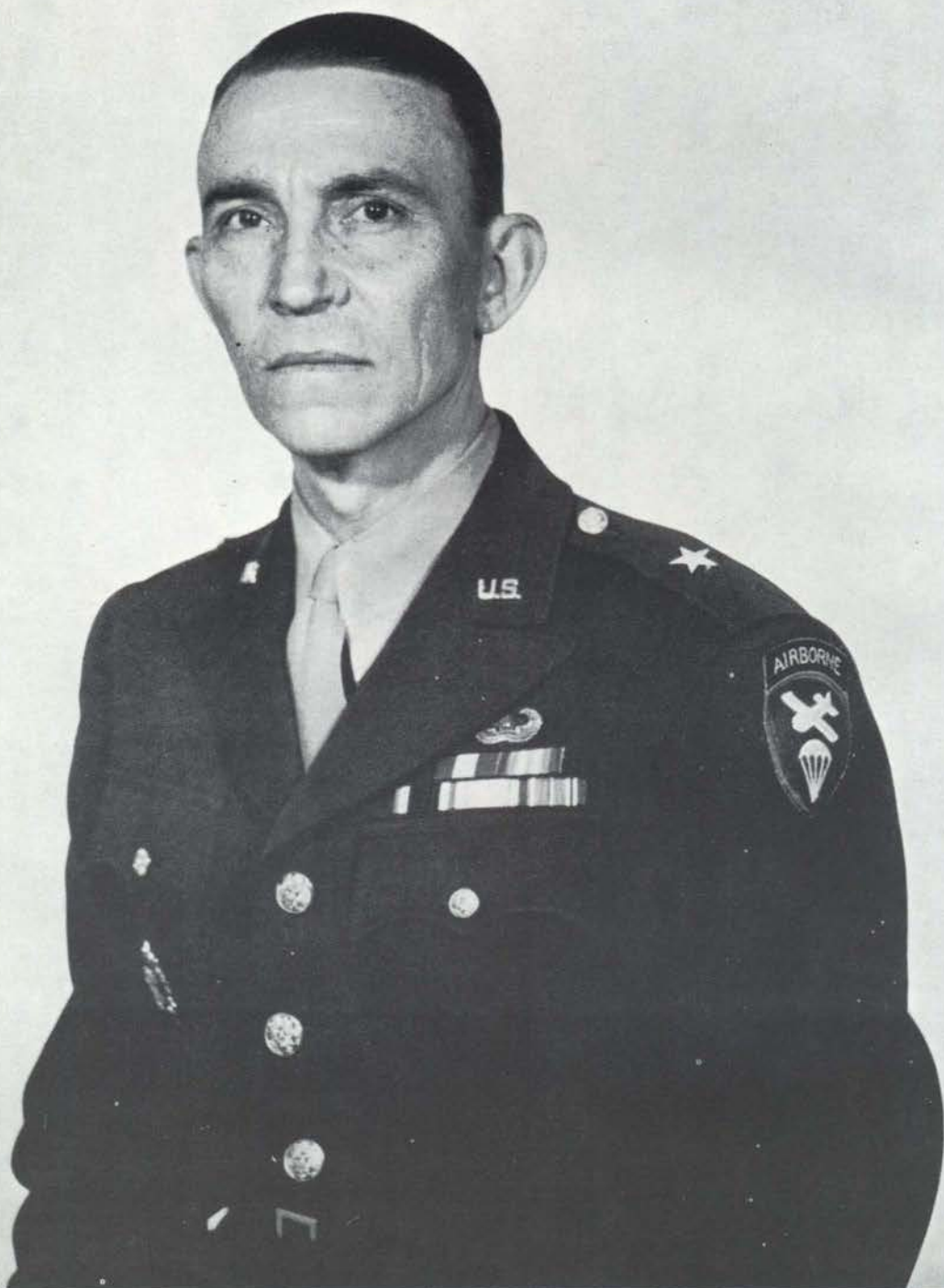
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MAJOR GENERAL WILLIAM C. LEE  
"The First Airborne Soldier"



BRIG. GENERAL JOSIAH T. DALBEY  
"He Developed The Idea"

# A HISTORY OF AIRBORNE COMMAND

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY HISTORY TO ACTIVATION

#### A. *General*

The early history of the "Airborne Effort" is, in effect, a compilation of facts and data relating the concepts, efforts, accomplishments, and problems of a few individuals who envisioned (with the development and expansion of airpower) the unlimited possibilities for the utilization of air transportation, to project into combat an offensive striking force which might well be capable of determining the outcome of battles. It is extremely doubtful if these "Airborne Thinkers" initially realized the full significance of this newly conceived striking force, and certainly not even the most optimistic anticipated that ultimately five airborne divisions, six separate regiments, and four separate battalions would be activated, trained, and committed to combat. Nor was it possible to visualize the mass employment of airborne troops eventually accomplished in Normandy, Southern France, Holland, or the crossing of the Rhine.

It is therefore of primary interest to know just how the "Airborne Effort" developed from the original concept of a limited number of "Airborne Thinkers" to the sizable airborne forces employed in World War II, both in the European and Pacific Theaters of Operations; to visualize and understand the multitudinous problems confronting those individuals initially charged with the responsibility of experimenting with and developing the project; to know how they solved the problems of personnel, equipment, supply, air transportation, and training; and to see how the doctrine of employment gradually developed from the initial thought of small combat groups landed within enemy territory

under cover of darkness for the purpose of sabotage and espionage to mass landings in daylight of two or more reinforced divisions in the face of determined enemy resistance.

#### B. *Background*

For over a decade there had been sporadic experiments in the airborne field. During the early '30's airplanes were used extensively as carriers of cargo and personnel. The Russian and British armies had transported troops by air and also landed troops by parachute. In 1931 Major General Preston Brown, Commanding General of the Panama Canal Department, moved Battery "B" of the 2nd Field Artillery from France Field across the Isthmus to Rio Hato, Canal Zone, a distance of ninety miles by air transport. The following year Captain (later Lieutenant General) George C. Kenney astounded his colleagues during maneuvers at Fort DuPont, Delaware, by air-landing an infantry detachment behind enemy lines.

In 1933 Batteries "A," "B," "C," and Headquarters, 2nd Field Artillery were transported from Bejuca to Cherrara, Panama, a distance of thirty-five miles.

On 12 March 1938 strong German forces were air-landed at the Aspern Airport, Vienna, during the occupation of Austria. On 7 October 1938 it was imperative for political reasons that occupation troops move into the Silesian town of Freiwalldau. To accomplish this movement, Von Rundstedt utilized 305 Junkers 52, in which he loaded a complete infantry regiment, approximately 2,800 men, with accompanying weapons. The landing



was made on a very rough wheat field near Freiwaldau, with complete success.

From these operations, it was generally deduced that small combat groups could be landed within enemy territory and were capable of successfully performing specific missions such as demolitions, destruction of vital communication centers, bridges, other important structures. In addition, these small units, when operating in conjunction with mechanized forces, could reconnoiter in the area to obtain vital information, and seize and hold key positions at a considerable distance from the main units, pending relief by mechanized forces.

Despite these conclusions, the matter of organizing and training such troops in the United States Army did not receive serious consideration until after the Munich Conference in 1938. In fact, on 6 May 1939 the Executive in the Office of the Chief of Infantry suggested to G-3 of the War Department General Staff that consideration be given to the organization of a small detachment of air infantry. It was noted that the infantry regiment was adaptable to such an experiment without material change in organization, and that a study would determine the kind of equipment and supply required, suitable missions to be performed, degree of control to be exercised by higher command, and collaboration with the Air Corps in obtaining the necessary aircraft.

The initiation of the proposed study eventually led to a discussion as to which branch should control the proposed development. The Chief of Engineers held that inasmuch as these troops were to be used primarily as saboteurs and demolition crews, that their training and employment should properly be under Engineer direction. The Air Corps proposed that they should be "Marines of the Air Corps," to be designated as "Air Grenadiers." The Chief of Infantry insisted that airplanes were but a means of transportation and that the primary mission of such airborne troops was to fight on the ground as ground soldiers

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#### EXPLANATIONS OF THE PICTURES

The captions were left off all the photographs for two reasons: (1) it costs a lot of moola to cut up a printed page with captions, and (2) many of the faces in the pictures are unrecognizable; and, since this book is published mainly for grandchildren, the lack of captions will allow each individual to substitute imagination for conscience and to describe each portrayed incident as an historical monument to his own steadfast devotion to patriotic duty.

Just to keep the record straight, there follows the official description of each photograph, direct from the files. The pics are numbered from left to right, from top to bottom. From personal experience the editor suggests that these notes be torn from the book and imagination given full reign. . . .

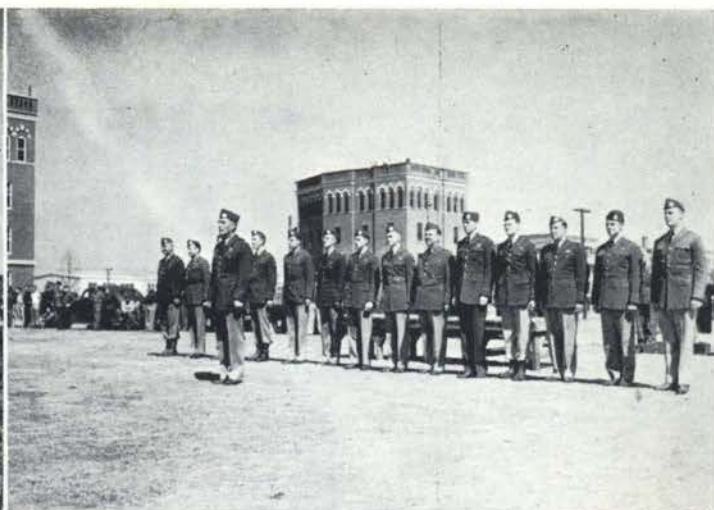
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#### *Page 1 of Pictures:*

1. Dedication of Camp Mackall.
  2. Review of 503rd Parachute Infantry by General Lee.
  3. Mascot of the 101st Airborne Division.
  4. Review of 505th Parachute Infantry by General Ridgeway.
  5. South Carolina Maneuvers, Camden-Kershaw.
  6. South Carolina Maneuvers, Camden-Kershaw.
  7. Advertisement for Indian Motorcycle Company.
  8. 13th Airborne Division Maneuvers.
- 

after they landed. In the fall of 1939 at a three-way conference of the Chiefs of Engineers, Infantry, and Air Corps, the contention of the Chief of Infantry obtained. Thus airborne troops came under the control of this branch of the service. (The matter of control of the project continued as a bone of contention for some time, as will be discussed later in this history.)

On 2 January 1940 the Chief of Infantry was authorized by the War Department to study the feasibility of air infantry and the practicability of the air transport of all types of ground troops included within the infantry division. Later in January the Infantry Board at Fort Benning, Georgia was directed by the Chief of Infantry to conduct a preliminary study and to develop and submit a general plan for the project. On 25 April 1940 the War Department approved the Chief of Infantry's plan to organize a test



platoon to function under the Infantry Board. In addition, the Material Command of the Air Corps was directed to develop a parachute which would permit safer jumping and landing from a low altitude. At the end of April the Commanding Officer, Flight "B" of the 16th Observation Squadron, Lawson Field, Georgia, was designated as the first airborne liaison officer for the project, thereby establishing the first official liaison for joint operations between the two army branches which were ultimately to play predominant parts in the later developments of the "Airborne Effort."

While development of the airborne project was in this rather nebulous state, the importance of airborne troops, and some indication of the part they were to play in the war in Europe, was vividly brought to general realization with the invasion of the Low Countries by Germany in May 1940. In the attack against Holland, Germany was faced with successive defense lines which, though not impregnable, would effectively retard rapid advance of the German army and allow the Dutch sufficient time to destroy the bridges over the Maas and Waal rivers. The capture of these key bridges intact was vital to the success of the German "Blitzkrieg" tactics and was accomplished by the use of parachutists who were dropped in the vicinity of the bridges, and seized and held them against counterattack. Thus, when the Panzer units, constituting the ground element of the airborne-ground team, had pierced the defense lines and reached the bridges, further advance was assured, and with the crossing of these two river lines, the fate of Holland was sealed.

In Belgium similar tactics were used to reduce Port Eben-Emeal, key fortress of the King Albert Canal defensive line. Here a small force of airborne troops, approximately 100, both parachute and glider-borne, landed inside the fortress, imprisoned some 1,800 defenders, and neutralized this key installation.

The employment of airborne forces in these two instances is of particular significance in

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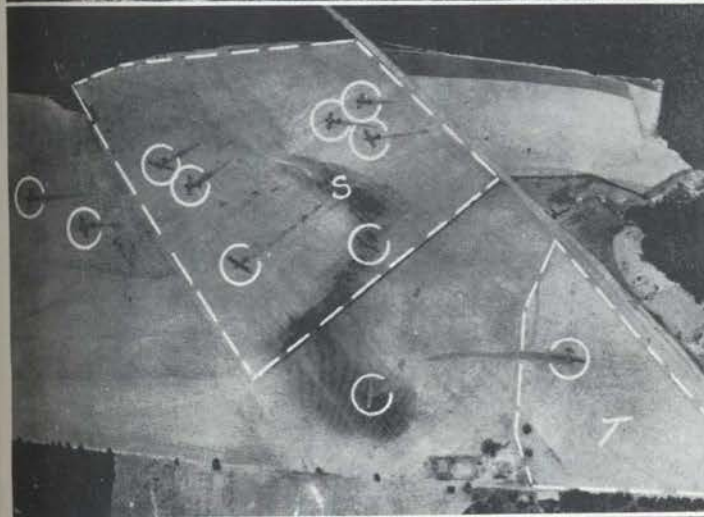
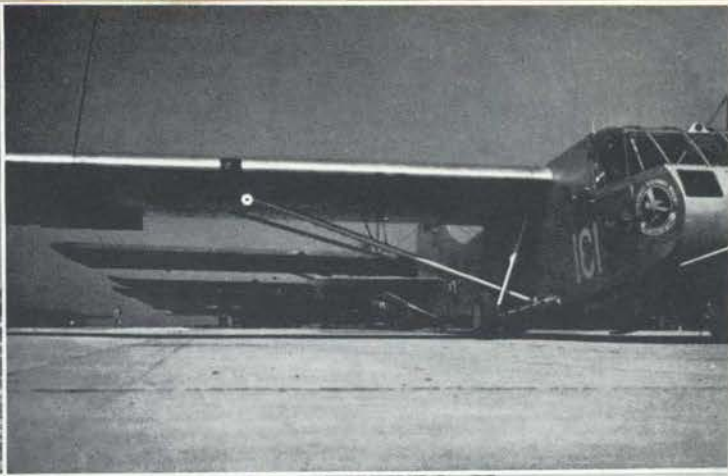
*Page 2 of Pictures:*

1. C-47 line up at Camp Mackall.
  2. CG-4A line-up at Camp Mackall.
  3. Camden-Kershaw landings—considered quite good in those days.
  4. 17th Airborne Division Maneuvers—a snow job.
  5. Camp Davis AA Units on Airborne training problem.
  6. Daylight Landings at 13th Airborne Maneuvers.
  7. Varieties of Brass watching 17th Airborne Maneuvers.
  8. AB-TCC Washington National Airport Airborne Show.
- 

its relationship to the development of the "Airborne Effort" in the United States Army. Not only was attention directed to the accomplishments of the comparatively small German airborne forces employed, but the relative bearing of their achievements in the attainment of the main objective provided a concrete example of the capabilities of airborne troops, when properly employed. The tactics of employment of these German airborne troops provided an initial guide, which for a time at least, was to influence the development of the doctrine of employment of airborne troops in the United States Army.

Following the successful employment of airborne troops by the Germans as outlined above, by War Department order dated 21 September 1940 the Commanding General of the 2nd Division was directed to conduct such tests as were necessary to develop reference data and operational procedure for air-transported troops. Because of the impossibility of foreseeing the size or composition of a force which might be required to meet a particular situation arising in the future, the tests were to be conducted so as to result in the assembly of necessary data permitting the rapid determination of the transport requirements and loadings of any size task force organized.

An infantry battalion was selected as a type unit to study. The tests conducted were to determine what equipment and personnel





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Page 3 of Pictures:

1. Infantryman (Croft), Loaded.
  2. Signalman, burdened.
  3. Medic, encumbered.
  4. Paratroopers in various stages of deshabille.
  5. Inspection of harness (pic swiped from film strip).
  6. Official method of exhausting men prior to jump.
  7. Men hurrying to wait in line.
- 

were to be transported by air, how they were to be loaded, and how many bombardment and transport airplanes would be required. Similar data was determined for artillery and other supporting services which would be required by a task force.

### C. The Test Platoon

On 25 June 1940 the War Department directed organization of a test platoon, under the Commandant of the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, personnel to be secured from the 29th Infantry Regiment. Lieutenant (later Colonel) William T. Ryder, who had previously heard that experiments in the dropping of personnel and supply by parachute were being conducted at Lawson Field, and who had subsequently filed his application for parachute duty with the Infantry Board, was designated platoon leader. On 11 July Lieutenant (later Lieutenant Colonel) James A. Bassett was selected as assistant platoon leader. The first task undertaken in the organization of the Test Platoon was to select from the 200 enlisted men who had volunteered for parachute duty, the authorized quota of 48. A flight surgeon was detailed from Maxwell Field, and he, with the aid of two assistants, began the process of selection which was based primarily on the highest standards of health and rugged physical characteristics.

Organization having been completed, the Platoon moved into a tent camp located near Lawson Field in order to be as near as possible to the airplanes based there. An abandoned corrugated iron hangar was made available

and utilized as a combined training hall and parachute packing shed. To assist in getting the project under way, a warrant officer and four riggers, with twenty-one parachutes, were made available from Wright Field. The Test Section of the Infantry Board prepared an eight-week training schedule in which were incorporated all phases of parachute training from the first orientation flight and the packing of parachutes to jumping from airplanes in flight. In addition, a specialized training program emphasizing the technique of the parachutist and including one hour of calisthenics, tumbling, hand-to-hand combat, forced marches, and a daily three-mile run, was put into effect. This schedule was superimposed upon a regular schedule of standard infantry training. With the initiation of this training program the project was now definitely *on the way*.

Early in July Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General) William C. Lee (who, as a Major in the Office of the Infantry, had rendered valuable service in fostering the parachute project), and Infantry Board representatives witnessed demonstrations of the jump towers at the New York World's Fair. Being impressed with these demonstrations and visualizing the use of such towers as valuable training aids in the early stages of parachute training, Colonel Lee recommended that the Test Platoon be moved to Hightstown, New Jersey, for a week's training on these towers, which were the property of the euphemistically-named "Safe Parachute Company." On 29 July the Test Platoon was moved to Hightstown in accordance with Colonel Lee's recommendation and there received one week's training. The results obtained were so satisfactory that two of these 250-foot towers were purchased and installed at Fort Benning, Georgia.

One of the major obstacles confronting the Test Platoon at this time was the removal or revision of the provisions of paragraph 48, Army Regulations 95-15, prescribing 1,500 feet as the minimum altitude from which para-

chute jumps would be made except in emergencies. The Platoon complied with this provision on initial training jumps, but felt that this altitude was not practical for mass jumps under combat conditions. Therefore recommendations were transmitted to the Chief of Infantry, through the Infantry Board, on 11 July 1940, that the regulation be revised as follows: "No jumps will be made at altitudes less than 1,500 feet, except in emergencies and for training and employment of parachute troops."

The recommendation was not favorably considered at that time by the War Department; however, on 21 August 1940 the Chief of Infantry was directed to train parachutists under the following instructions; "The initial jump for each individual will be made at an altitude of not less than 1,500 feet; thereafter the altitude to be determined by the officer conducting training, but at not less than 750 feet without further authority." This revision provided the authority under which jumps could be made at altitudes considered practical and commensurate with those made in combat.

Now that the project was well under way and held promise of eventually developing into a project of major proportions, the old issue of control, which had been temporarily decided in the fall of 1939 at the three-way conference of the Chiefs of Infantry, Engineers, and Air Corps, again came to the fore. In June 1940 the G-3 Section of the War Department had recommended that the project be taken from the Chief of Infantry and placed directly under the Chief of Air Corps and Stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. General Arnold here entered the picture in support of this proposal. General McNair, in one of his first official acts at GHQ, reiterated the previous contention of the Chief of Infantry, that the primary missions of parachute troops was ground action and that air transport was only another means of transportation; therefore control properly should be vested in the Chief of Infantry. A

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*Page 4 of Pictures:*

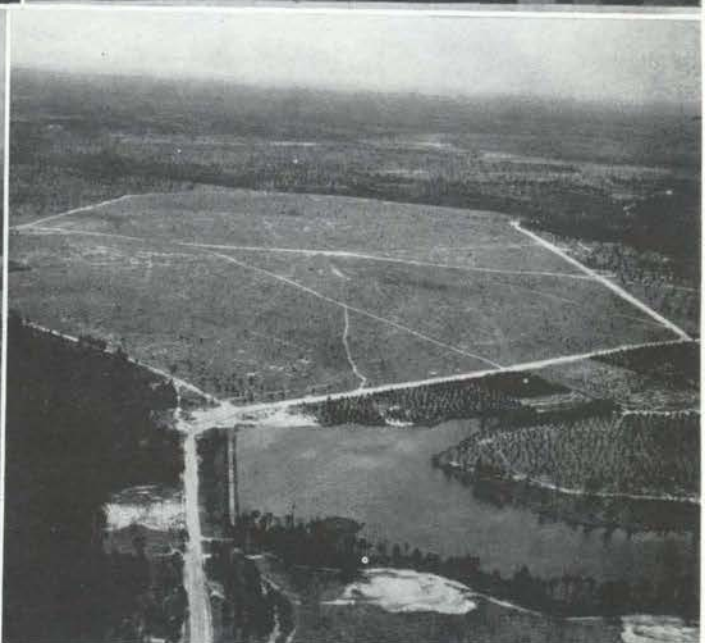
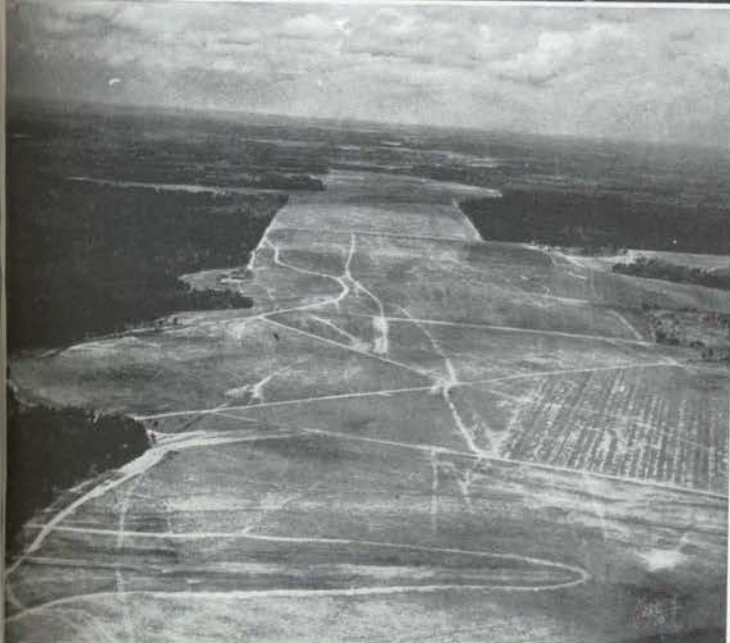
1. C-46 loading on 6th War Loan Drive Show.
  2. C-47 finally ready.
  3. Stand Up and Hook Up (a publicity shot).
  4. More inspection prior to jump.
  5. "D" Field at jump altitude.
  6. "A" Field at jump altitude (note Bean fishing off left bank of lake).
- 

later proposal of the War Department G-3 suggested that the project be placed under the direct control of GHQ, with location at either Fort Sam Houston, Texas, or at Mather Field, California. On 27 August 1940 a conference was held in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff (General Bryden) to reach a decision establishing control and location of the project. After prolonged discussion, General Bryden announced that the project would continue at Fort Benning under the supervision of the Chief of Infantry. Meanwhile the Office of Chief of Staff directed that GHQ give attention to the "organization, equipment and tactical employment of parachute and air-transported infantry."

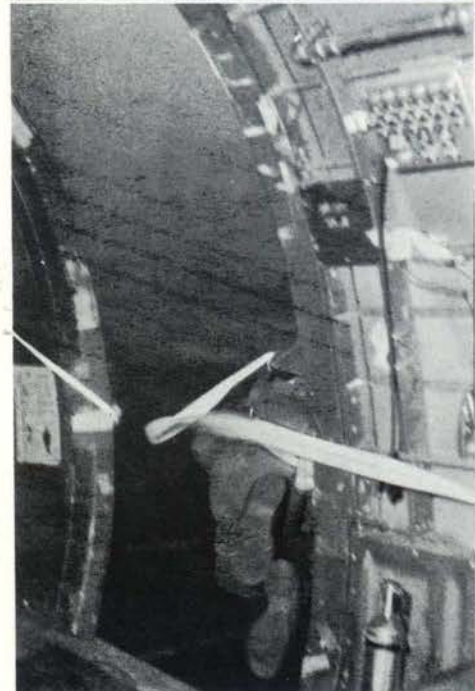
The first parachute jump from airplanes in flight by personnel of the Test Platoon was made on 16 August 1940, from Douglas-built B-18, twin-engine, low-wing, medium bomber aircraft. Each parachutist wore the standard Air Corps T-3, free-type, human escape parachute, and in addition, an emergency test type parachute. The initial mass jump took place on 29 August 1940 before an imposing assembly of high-ranking officers and notables who were not only duly impressed but enthusiastic in their praise of the accomplishments to date and their faith in the future of the "Airborne Effort." Thereafter, mass jumps became a regular training feature.

#### *D. Expansion of the Parachute Project*

On 16 September 1940, less than three months after the organization of the Test Platoon, the War Department authorized the constitution of the 1st Parachute Battalion. On 2 October 1940 the first paragraph of this order was amended to read: "The 501st Para-







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*Page 5 of Pictures:*

This page illustrates various stages of mental indecision, over Camp Mackall. Number 7 is you going out, isn't it?

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chute Battalion is constituted and will be activated at the earliest practicable date at Fort Benning, Georgia." The personnel of the Test Platoon were utilized in the organization of the battalion. Major (later Major General) William W. Miley was selected battalion commander.

With the activation of the first tactical parachute unit, increasing interest in the project became evident; adequate housing, special buildings, jump towers, and a better jumping area were provided. In October, high priority having been given to the project, new jump areas were cleared by CCC workers. After some delay in obtaining sufficient funds, three new training buildings were constructed at Lawson Field.

*E. Air-landing Troops—Early Thought and Development.*

Probably the greatest single impetus to airborne development and expansion was provided by the German invasion of Crete in May 1941. Here, for the first time in history, airborne forces were employed en masse in a combined effort of major proportions. The German Air Forces, obtaining complete aerial superiority, isolated the island, while glider-borne and parachute troops landed and stormed key installations. Malame Airdrome was captured shortly after the initial landing and was utilized to land air-transported forces which completed the occupation of the entire island in short order. Prior to this operation little consideration had been given to the use of gliders or powered aircraft for the landing of ground troops, emphasis having been placed entirely on the development of parachute forces. Here was a conclusive demonstration of the ability of glider-borne troops to effect tactical landings, bringing in with

them heavy weapons and transportation essential to the success of sustained ground action in overcoming organized resistance. "Airborne Thinkers" seized upon this operation as an illustration of the unlimited capabilities of a balanced airborne force, comprising all the elements of the standard infantry division, and limited only by the cargo-carrying capacity of the available air transport. In July 1941 the Air Corps began experiments with gliders for the transportation of men and material, and the following month War Department G-3 called on the Air Corps to develop new cargo aircraft for an airborne combat team, to consist of an infantry battalion, and anti-tank company, a field artillery battery, and a medical detachment.

The first air-landing unit of the United States Army was activated on 1 July 1941 at Fort Kobbe, Canal Zone, and was designated as the 550th Infantry Airborne Battalion, with an authorized strength of 22 officers and 550 enlisted men. Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General) Harris M. Melaskey was selected as the first commanding officer of the unit. Personnel were all volunteers recruited from units stationed in the Canal Zone. A short time after activation, the 550th was reinforced by the attachment of Company "C" 501st Parachute Infantry Battalion, which had completed its basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia.

A training program was prepared and put into effect emphasizing the employment of this parachute-air-landing team in the assault of key installations particularly air bases. Concept of employment envisioned parachutists dropping adjacent to the objective, seizing and holding, pending the arrival of the air-landing component, with its heavier weapons and transportation. Only a limited number of aircraft were available for training purposes, these being B-18's, B-18A's, and C-39's. In the absence of sufficient aircraft, in most training exercises it was assumed that the force had been dropped or air-landed, following which the techniques of assembly

peculiar to both parachutists and air-landing troops was emphasized, followed by the assault of the objective and defense against counter-attack.

In August 1941, the reinforced battalion, having been ordered to Rio Hato for a month's training, elected to make a tactical exercise of the move. Plans were made and orders issued for the air movement, the objective being the seizure of the auxiliary air field near Rio Hato. Coördination with the Air Corps resulted in 78 airplanes being made available for the exercise—74 B-18's and 4 C-39's. An air movement table was prepared and a system for air-ground communication provided in the form of visual signals—flares, coded panels, smoke, etc.—no radio communication being available. Parking plans for aircraft were drawn up and both Air Corps and ground troops were thoroughly briefed. Since the route selected was over water, Mae Wests were issued to each individual.

Troops enplaned at Howard Field, Canal Zone, and moving in two lifts, with the parachute element spearheading the attack echelon, completed the movement without mishap. By the time the air-landing element reached the target area (one hour later), the air field had been secured by the parachutists and was held for the landing of the powered aircraft. The entire operation was termed "a complete success" by the many high-ranking officers and notables present.

This tactical exercise is worthy of note in that it was the first major airborne training exercise in the United States Army, and because it vividly emphasized the requirement for:

- (1) Complete staff coördination between Air Corps and airborne forces.

- (2) Air-ground communication.

- (3) The development of aircraft designed to transport ground troops and equipment. In addition, the effectiveness of the parachute air-landing team as an effective striking force was vividly portrayed.

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*Page 6 of Pictures:*  
Exits.

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Meanwhile, the Chief of Staff had been considering the organizing, for test purposes, of a special air-transported unit. On 27 June 1941 the Secretary of the General Staff sent an informal memorandum to the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, noting that the Chief of Staff desired action initiated immediately. The memorandum further advised that the initial steps should be the creation of type combat teams with such auxiliary troops as necessary, and with the additional note that G-3 should "contact G-4, Air Corps, and go to it."

The new project was assigned to Major (later Brigadier General) Josiah T. Dalbey of the Operations Branch, G-3, who successfully "wet-nursed" it until 10 October 1941, when the War Department announced the activation of the 88th Infantry Airborne battalion. Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General) Elbridge G. Chapman was selected as battalion commander.

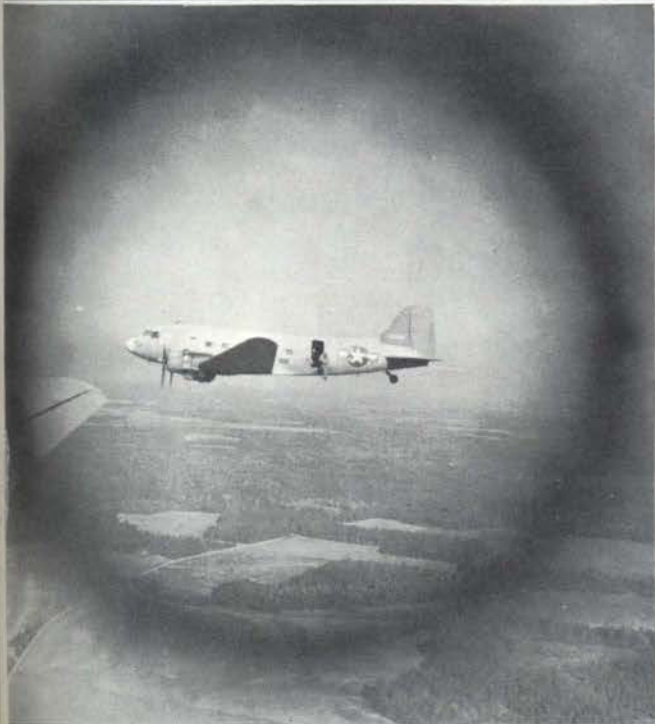
The battalion was strictly an experimental agency, under the direction of the Chief of Infantry, with the preliminary mission of conducting tests pertaining to airborne troops. With its activation, the Infantry Board was relieved of further responsibility in testing, organization, equipment, logistics, training, and development of airborne units. Priority for the test program was established as follows:

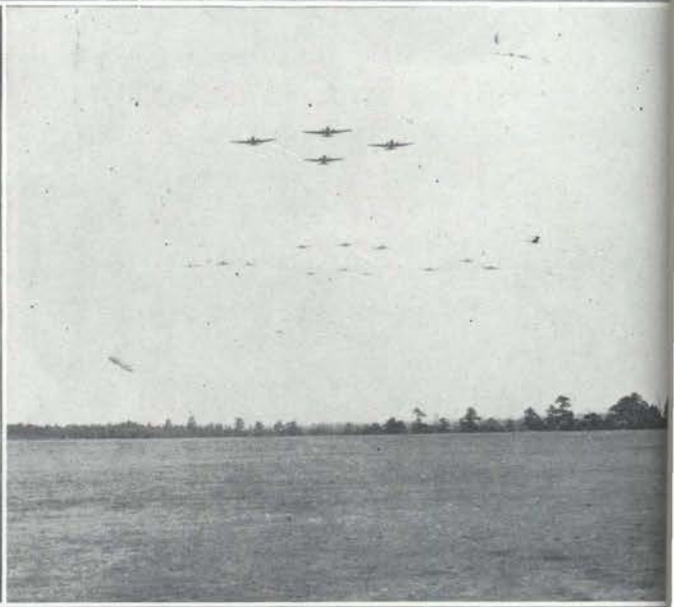
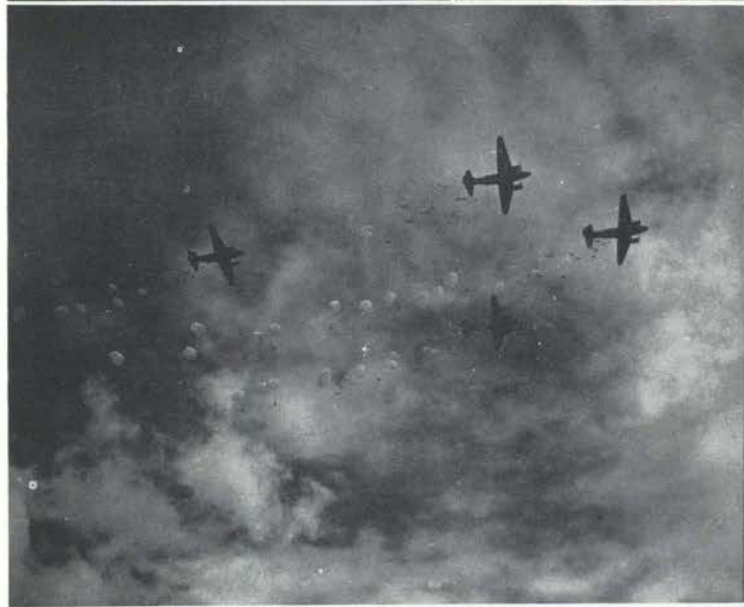
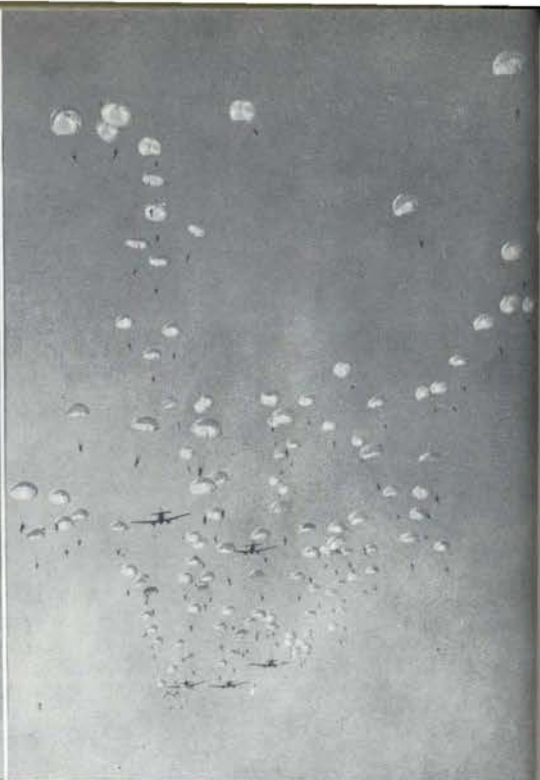
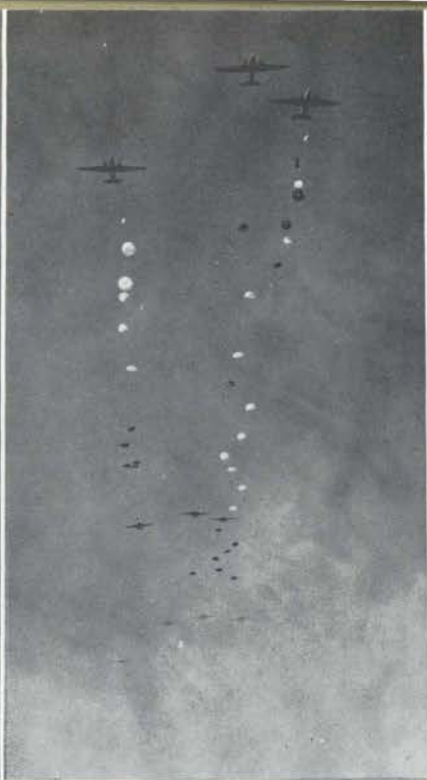
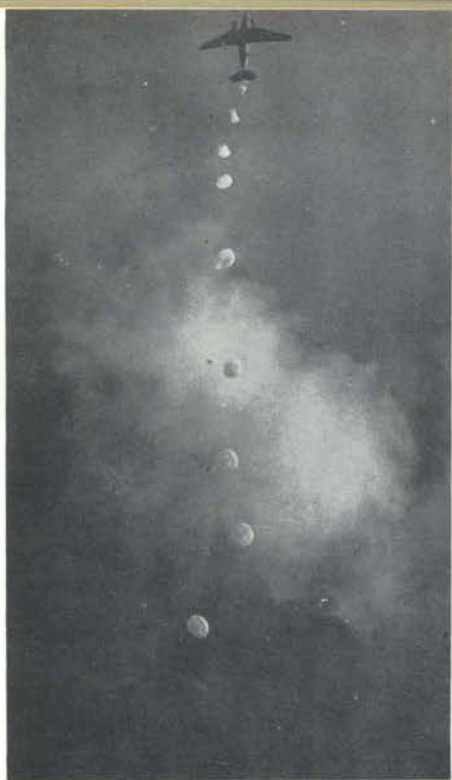
- (1) Airplane transport, including proper combat loads and merits of airplanes then in service.

- (2) Armament and special equipment.

- (3) Tables of Organization and Tables of Basic Allowance.

- (4) Tactical doctrine, including landing formations, liaison with air support units, tactical dispositions of small units for combat





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*Page 7 of Pictures:*

1. First stick to jump the Hart Chute.
  2. Artillery "Control Patton" test jump.
  - 3, 4. First mass jump with Hart chute.
  - 5, 6, 7. First "Double Door" C-46 mass jump.
- 

coöperation with parachute units, and defense of landing fields and the advance thereon.

(5) Training program for the Airborne Battalion, for preparing a standard infantry battalion for airborne missions, and special training for attached units of other arms and services.

(6) Training literature.

#### *F. The Parachute Group.*

With expansion of the parachute arm in immediate prospect, the requirement became evident for proper headquarters to plan and execute the expansion and to coördinate training activities. To provide the required controlling agency, the Provisional Parachute Group Headquarters was activated on 10 March 1941, with permanent station at Fort Benning, Georgia, and placed under the control of the Chief of Infantry. Lieutenant Colonel William G. Lee was assigned to the command of the Group. It was stated (unofficially) at the time of the organization, that the Group would be called upon at a later date to submit recommendations for the permanent organization of Group Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment. Immediate and constant attention was directed toward:

(1) The provision of training cadres for additional parachute battalions as the need should arise.

(2) Study of permanent Tables of Organization and Basic Allowances.

(3) Development of tactical doctrine for the proper employment of parachute troops.

To attain maximum jumping-fighting strength in the lettered companies and at the same time to make them light, mobile, easy to transport and supply, all administrative personnel were placed in battalion head-

quarters and headquarters company. The administrative personnel in headquarters company were so organized as to provide for separate administration, and supply detachments for lettered companies when a single company was to be used on a separate combat mission. Also, the administrative and supply organization of the battalion was such that the battalion was reasonably self-sustaining when acting on separate and independent missions. The lettered companies were so organized that each squad and platoon was a complete combat unit within itself, capable of limited independent action.

With the initiation of the expansion program, the Provisional Parachute Group found its functioning handicapped by shortage of specialized personnel. Already understrength, the 501st Parachute Battalion was further depleted when it provided a cadre for the 502d Parachute Battalion, which was activated on 1 July 1941.

The activation of the 3d Battalion, 503d Parachute Infantry, was in the immediate offing. Unpredictable problems occasioned by school washouts, some cases of inferior battalion personnel, and transfers further complicated the situation. In addition, the entire problem of personnel procurement was "up in the air," pending a decision of whether or not the National Guard would return to State service, and the authorization of an increase in the Army by Congress. Until those questions were decided, personnel for the activation of units in accordance with 1942 Troop Basis were not available. By 1 July 1941 the Replacement Training Centers had run dry and no men could be procured therefrom. When the Office of the Chief of Infantry asked for a clear-cut picture of the personnel situation, Colonel Lee commented, "I can well understand why you are confused as to our enlisted personnel. With the general intermixture right now, damned if we don't have trouble understanding it ourselves." A partial solution was effected by making available Regular Army personnel of the 8th and

9th Infantry Divisions; nevertheless, the 502d Parachute Battalion was activate at reduced strength.

To alleviate this personnel shortage, Colonel Lee and two of his staff officers visited the 9th Infantry Division at Fort Bragg, to secure 172 jumpers to fill the 502d Parachute Battalion. Major General (later General) Jacob L. Devers, the Division Commander, offered full coöperation, and his Chief of Staff accompanied Colonel Lee to each of his regimental commanders. In addressing them, Colonel Lee stated that misfits, slow-wits, stupid and physically awkward men, chronic drunkards, habitual AWOL's, and offenders of military discipline would be promptly returned to their units. Neither Colonel Lee nor his officers talked to the men directly, the proposition being presented by the divisional company commanders. Volunteers then reported to the visiting parachute officers at various recreation halls made available for consultation and examination. The results obtained exceeded the most optimistic expectations, approximately 1,000 men having volunteered for the quota of 172 vacancies, including 400 non-commissioned officers who were willing "to take a bust" to volunteer for parachute duty.

Results from the 8th Infantry Division at Fort Jackson, South Carolina were not as satisfactory. Officers assigned for recruiting purposes with this division had not perfected the system used so successfully by Colonel Lee and his officers at Fort Bragg, and it became necessary to canvass the division several times, Colonel Lee concluded, "The cow at that place has been milked dry . . . , the 9th Division at Fort Bragg is a fertile pasture. . . ."

By 14 July 1941 the personnel picture had brightened. The requested increase in allotment of grades and ratings for the Infantry Service Command (Parachutists' Course) and the establishment of a course for parachutists as a part of the Infantry School was approved 10 July 1941, thus constituting a permanent force (The Parachute School) to properly

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*Page 8 of Pictures:*  
Every Man a Superman!

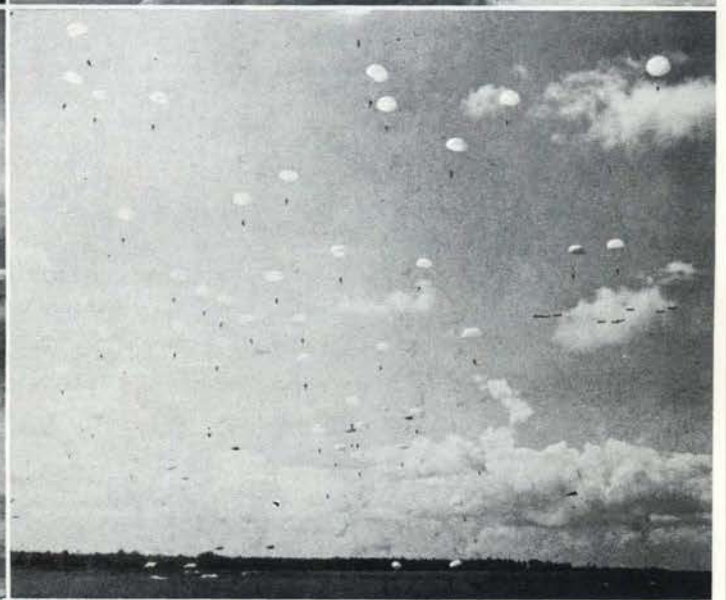
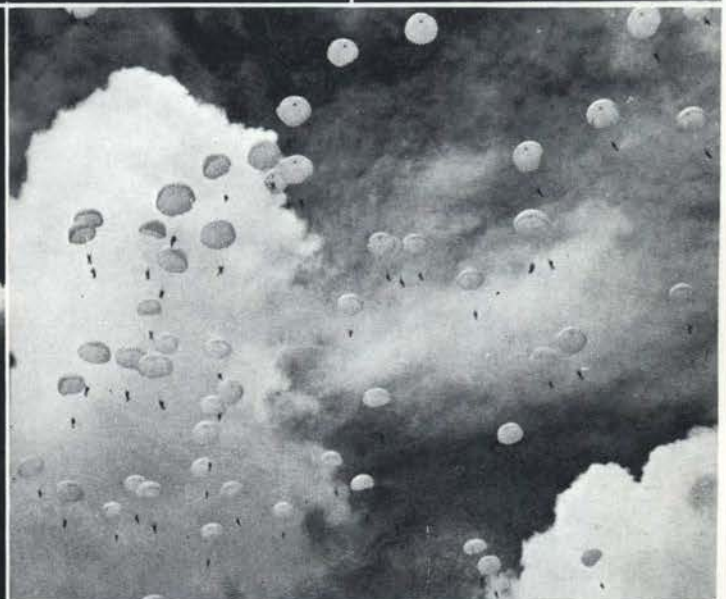
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train all new men. The effect of this increase was to constitute an organization and to perform a function which had been in operation, unofficially, with instructors furnished from the 501st Parachute Battalion. With the establishment of The Parachute School, the 501st Parachute Battalion was brought up to full strength in officers and enlisted men, and all were qualified parachutists. The 502d Parachute Battalion was also at full strength. Colonel Lee was enthusiastic in his report to the Chief of Infantry: "Please permit me to say that your Personnel Section has certainly played ball with us. . . ."

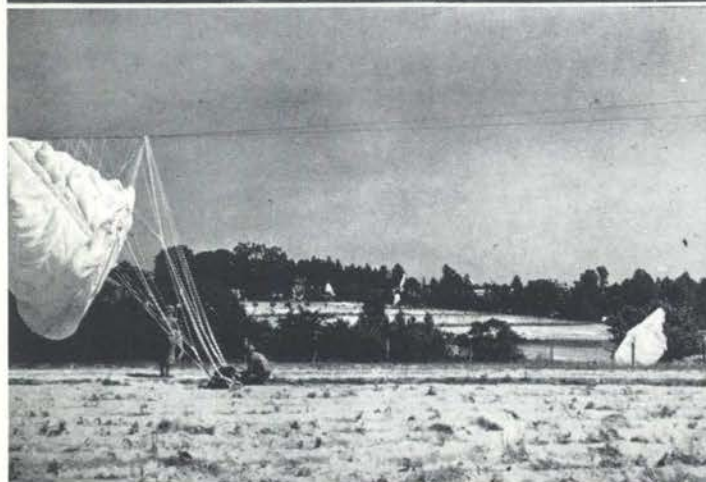
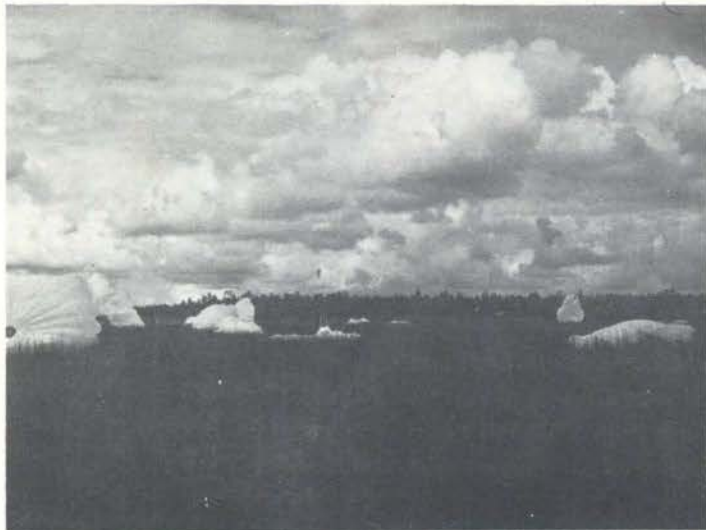
During July 1941 acquisition was made of a tract of land in Alabama to adequately provide training areas for the rapidly expanding program. Two hundred and thirty-five thousand dollars were made available for training facilities, and by 14 July the local Quartermaster had initiated preliminary surveys for target ranges, jump grounds, auxiliary landing fields, roads, and ferries. Reporting to the Chief of Infantry on 14 July Colonel Lee was optimistic about the future of the entire project. Only one minor detail worried him: "I pulled my remaining hair out the other day when three parachutes failed to open, but the reserve parachutes functioned and the boys came through smiling."

On 2 September 1941 the addition of 971 enlisted men for the Parachute Group was approved, thus clearing up a number of problems in personnel shortages. The activation of the 504th Parachute Battalion was stepped up to 5 October. By that date there were three battalions at full strength, less basics, and one battalion at full strength, including basics. Loss replacements and some over-strength were also made available to alleviate further shortages.

The training of the early groups at Fort Benning was that of the regular infantry or-







ganization, with stress being placed on calisthenics, long marches, daily three-mile runs, and other exercises tending to develop the physical stamina which the contemplated employment of the parachutist envisioned. Also, perfection was demanded in map reading, use of the compass, scouting and patrolling, and proficiency in all parachute weapons. It was repeatedly emphasized to the parachutist that the method by which he entered combat would, of necessity, impose upon him greater problems than those of the regular infantry soldier; therefore he must excel in every respect. In addition, an intensive technical training course with the parachute was required. This course was divided into two phases:

(1) Parachute maintenance, which included folding, packing, inspection and repair; and

(2) Jump training, which included proper exit from the airplane, manipulations of the parachute in the air and on the ground, proper landings for water, forests, etc.

Under the Provisional Parachute Group, this training was designated as individual training of the parachutist.

The early training of the units of the Provisional Parachute Group was divided into two phases: (1) Squad, platoon, and company training; and (2) battalion training. The objective outlined was for the completion of these two phases within sixteen weeks after the parachutist had completed individual training. The first phase, fourteen weeks, included basic subjects, technical weapons training, marksmanship qualifications, communication specialist training, jumping with combat equipment, squad, platoon and company exercises (day and night) following parachute drops in which technique of assembly, communication, etc., were stressed,

combat firing with the assumption that the troops had been dropped, combat missions with troops jumping and proceeding on tactical missions with resupply accomplished by parachute.

The second phase, or battalion training, included field exercises in which the battalion operated on independent missions; Two training periods of seventy-two hours each, of sustained combat, attack and defense; and one battalion exercise, prepared by the Provisional Parachute Group Headquarters and serving as a test of tactical proficiency. In all instances the techniques of assembly, movement without transportation, communication with only signal equipment dropped by parachute, aerial resupply, and all other matters peculiar to parachute operations were emphasized. This phase was completed in two weeks.

While this training program was initiated by the Provisional Group Headquarters, it was extremely difficult to maintain. Parachute troops were the "Infant Prodigy of the Army," and as such, created intense interest in all quarters. Frequent calls for "demonstrations" were received. Officials of higher headquarters wished to observe and to display the "Parachute Infantry," Army commanders requested the participation of parachute troops in maneuvers. Thus in November 1941, we find Colonel Lee deeply concerned over frequent interferences with training. He complained to the Chief of Infantry that the Group had not been able to maintain an orderly and progressive training program. With the 502d concentrating its efforts almost entirely in preparing for participation in maneuvers, its other essential training had been spotty. The planning, preparation, and coordination of outside exercises and activities detracted from the efficiency of the small Group headquarters in the conduct of normal training routine, and purely spectacular jumps of the units gave the wrong impression to the Army and public.

Ten days before Pearl Harbor Colonel Lee,

hospitalized by an accident, renewed his drive for thoroughness in the essentials of training. In a letter which was read to all battalion and company commanders he stressed combat training as the primary objective of the group, insisting that all obstacles to intensive combat training be eliminated, stating bluntly: "A unit which cannot fight is useless."

#### G. *Equipment.*

From the beginning parachute units at Fort Benning were handicapped by shortages of equipment, particularly parachutes, communication equipment, and ammunition. In May 1941 Colonel Lee wrote to Major Gaither who in those days fostered the project in the Office of the Chief of Infantry: "Our communication equipment is zero. God knows we have got to have something with which to fight or else we will have to use megaphones for communication." Major Gaither, although not directly responsible for equipment, pulled many Washington strings to hurry along the procurement. Major Ingomar Oseth also pulled strings within the Office of the Chief of Infantry for the equipment needs of the parachute battalion. He was handicapped, as were all elements of the Army that early in the game, by a lack of material with which to work. "Gaither showed me your letter . . . in which you very kindly said you didn't blame 'Ingomar,' but suggested that I stir it up." Major Oseth wrote to Colonel Lee: "I have been stirring the matter up since the parachute project was first placed in your lap, but I am confronted by the inexorable fact that it does little good to stir an empty pot. When there is something to put into the pot, the stirring will produce results, but at present the principal items of signal equipment asked for are non-existent."

Despite this discouraging response Colonel Lee continued to press his needs for essential equipment, providing the Office of Chief of Infantry with precise information on the nature and seriousness of the shortages; ultimately the equipment was forthcoming.

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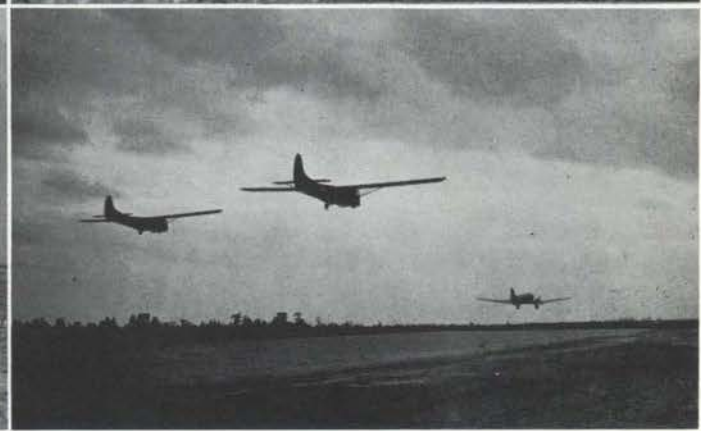
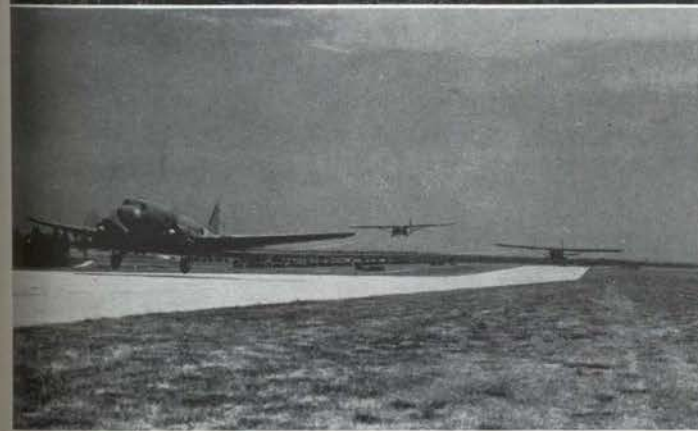
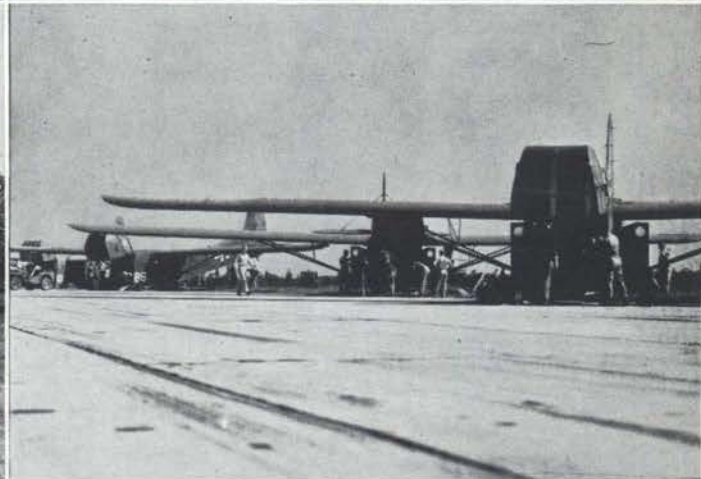
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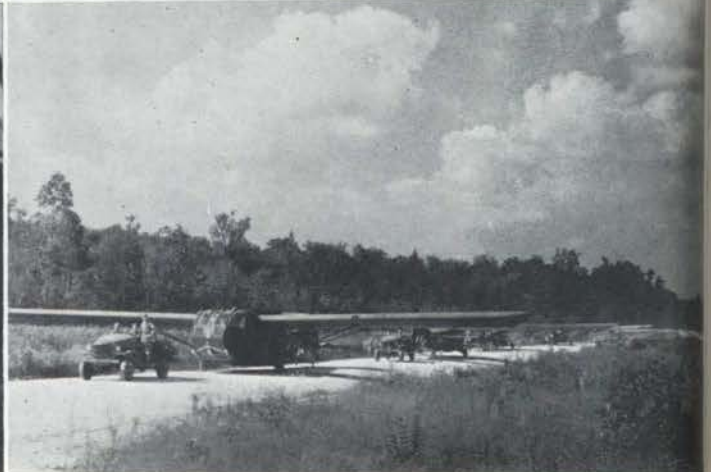
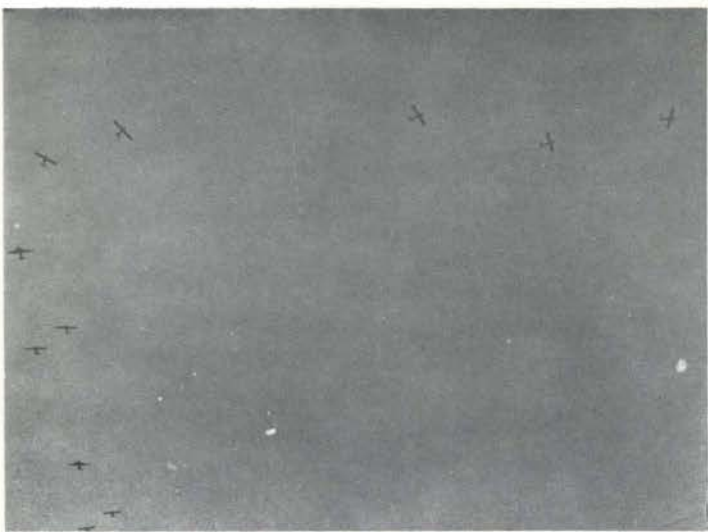
1. The C-47 Mock-up training area.
  2. Loading the C-54.
  3. CG-4A Bone yard.
  4. Loading the CG-4A.
  - 5-8. Glider take-offs.
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Meanwhile, liaison was maintained with private parachute manufacturers, the Army Air Corps, and other interested agencies. Captain (later Colonel) W. P. Yarborough, Test Officer for the Group, and his associates rendered valuable service in this respect, frequently visiting Wright Field, Irving Air Chute Company, the Maintenance and Material Commands of the Air Corps, Marine Corps installations at Lakehurst, New Jersey, and other centers interested in parachute development. From these and many other sources they obtained the latest items of equipment to conduct tests, and voiced the opinion of the Provisional Parachute Group on modifications and development in parachutes, weapons, airplanes, gas masks; in fact, everything down to water bags.

Throughout 1941 the parachute shortage continually plagued progress because, as aptly stated by one of the early parachute officers, "A parachutist without a parachute is like a cavalryman without a horse, only more so." Manufacturers were unable to step up production to meet the requirements occasioned by the expansion of the parachute program. The Irving Air Chute Company contracted to produce 200 parachutes by 8 September 1941, and 100 per week thereafter, while Switlick Parachute Company promised 3,750 packs, T-5, by July 1941. By 15 October 1941 neither company had delivered nor was ready to make delivery of any parachutes.

In mid-September the Group had a slim total of 208 parachutes, with new men coming in fast. The Air Corps obligingly diverted some of its own parachute appropriation to the Group for the purpose of badly-needed 'chutes, and some of the deficit was





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*Page 11 of Pictures:*

Some gliders landed without mishap. Pics number 3, 4, and 5 were taken at Camden-Kershaw. Number 8 was taken on Christiansen's Pike (the only improved road in the county built by an architect; note the soft shoulders).

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made up by open-market purchase; meanwhile pressure from many sources was brought to bear on the contracting manufacturers to fill their commitments more promptly.

*H. Command Echelon for Parachute Troops—The Parachute Regiment.*

At the time the first parachute battalion was activated in 1940, the idea was prevalent in the General Staff that parachute troops would seldom, if ever, be employed in units larger than a battalion; therefore they were organized as separate GHQ battalions without provisions for any higher headquarters. The mass employment of German parachute troops in Crete and later in Greece led Colonel Lee to state, "After these successful operations, I think it would indeed be dull of us to say that parachute troops will seldom be employed in units larger than a battalion." Colonel Lee felt throughout the life of Provisional Parachute Group that it was inadequate to exercise the necessary tactical control which the situation demanded. For example, in the early life of the Group, the Table of Organization provided only two staff officers and a small detachment of ten enlisted men. The duties of S-1 and S-4 were combined in one officer, and the S-2 was also the S-3. This organization was adequate for the experimental stage, but obviously could not exercise supervision and tactical control over the expanded parachute organization as it existed in the fall of 1941.

The lack of a larger group headquarters also created many administrative bottlenecks. War Department orders assigned officers to the battalions rather than to the Group; thus, when it became necessary or desirable to transfer officers from one battalion to another within the Group, requests had to be referred

to the Office of Chief of Infantry and then to The Adjutant General before they could be effected. Corps Area and War Department agencies repeatedly by-passed the Group with information and orders for the battalions. Even funds, requested by the Group, were in some instances allocated directly to the battalions. Without court-martial jurisdiction, the Group was again by-passed as each battalion was placed under the 4th Division for such jurisdiction.

Faced with these difficulties, Colonel Lee continued to agitate for a tactical headquarters from the Fort Benning end, while efforts to attain this objective were exerted in the Office of Chief of Infantry and the War Department. With the formation of tank groups to exercise tactical supervision over separate tank battalions, it seemed logical to conclude that a similar tactical control should be established for the parachute battalions. With this long-sought objective apparently within immediate grasp, one thing caused Colonel Lee to temper his recommendation: The fear that the change would remove the Group from the control of General Hodges, Chief of Infantry, who by his efforts in fostering the project from the beginning, had earned the sincere appreciation of all interested in the parachute program. Thus, he cautioned General Hodges: "I believe that your office can feel out the General Staff in advance on this matter, and, if your office can get informal assurance that no step will be taken at this time to remove the Group from your control, I go on record as heartily recommending the action prepared by your Training Section."

The issue of a tactical Group Headquarters was adroitly side-stepped. While General Hodges was considering the paper for the establishment of a tactical group, Major Gaither suggested to Major Dalbey that an order be issued assigning the four parachute battalions to the Provisional Parachute Group; thus in effect, accomplishing the desired result without pre-

senting the issue squarely. Major Dalbey agreed to the suggestion, pointing out that inasmuch as both the Group and the battalions were GHQ troops, it would be necessary for GHQ to issue the order. Therefore, the matter was discussed with Colonel (later General) Mark W. Clark in order to accomplish the result without further question or debate, and by 1 July 1941, GHQ was ready to issue the desired order, giving Colonel Lee all the prerogatives of a regimental commander.

Late in 1941, the War Department was considering the idea of placing all parachute and airborne troops under the Air Support Command of the Army Air Corps. Colonel Lee, in a letter addressed to Colonel Miley, commenting upon this plan, stated that he felt there should be a special headquarters under GHQ or the Chief of Staff, charged with organization, development and training of all parachute troops, airborne troops, and participating Air Corps troops. He further expressed the opinion that this headquarters should be commanded by a Major General, "preferably an outstanding Air Corps officer," and that the headquarters not be subject to any chief of branch.

In reply to this proposal, Colonel Miley advocated, "A parachute force similar to the Armored Force." His plan envisioned a number of parachute divisions, to consist of three parachute regiments and one group of air transport. A senior Air Corps officer on the staff would coordinate and advise on aviation matters. To assign parachutists to the Air Corps would be a "step backward," because there might be no tactical headquarters, and they would be overshadowed by other interests.

With the outbreak of the war, there was renewed interest in airborne activities, both in the War Department and in GHQ. Four days after Pearl Harbor, G-3 War Department initiated a paper on the subject of a command echelon for parachute units. The paper compressed in two pages the tactical lessons of European operations and our own

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*Page 12 of Pictures:*

Illustrating various forms of Parachute Malfunction. The pigeon became a malfunction during the 13th AB Division maneuvers. He was supposed to have delivered a message to Troop Carrier that rations were to be delivered to a stranded parachute unit. With typical Airborne efficiency the parachutists went straight to the heart of the matter, and ate the pigeon instead.

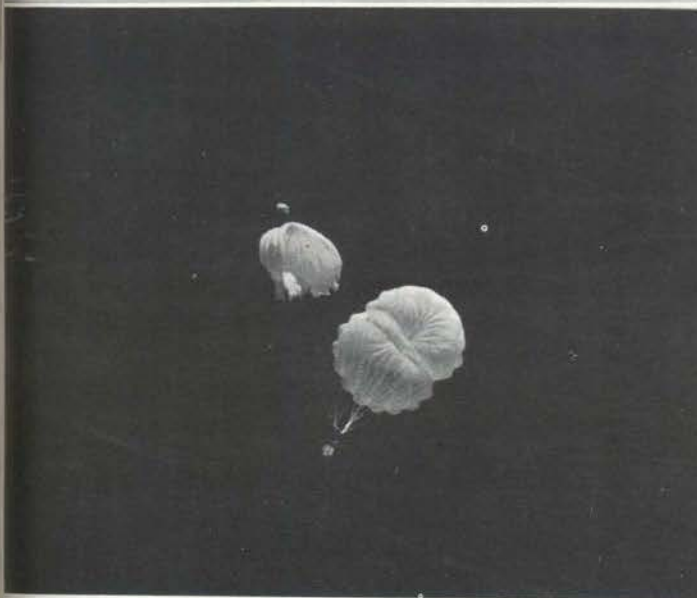
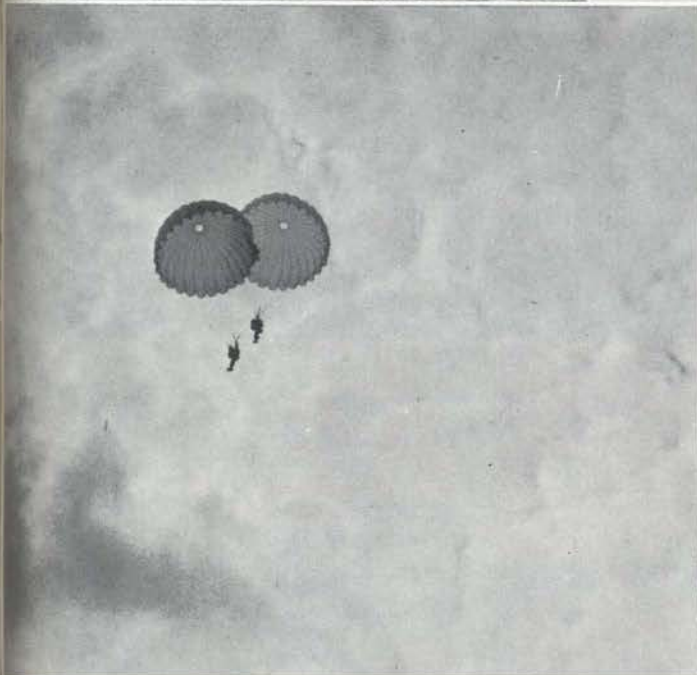
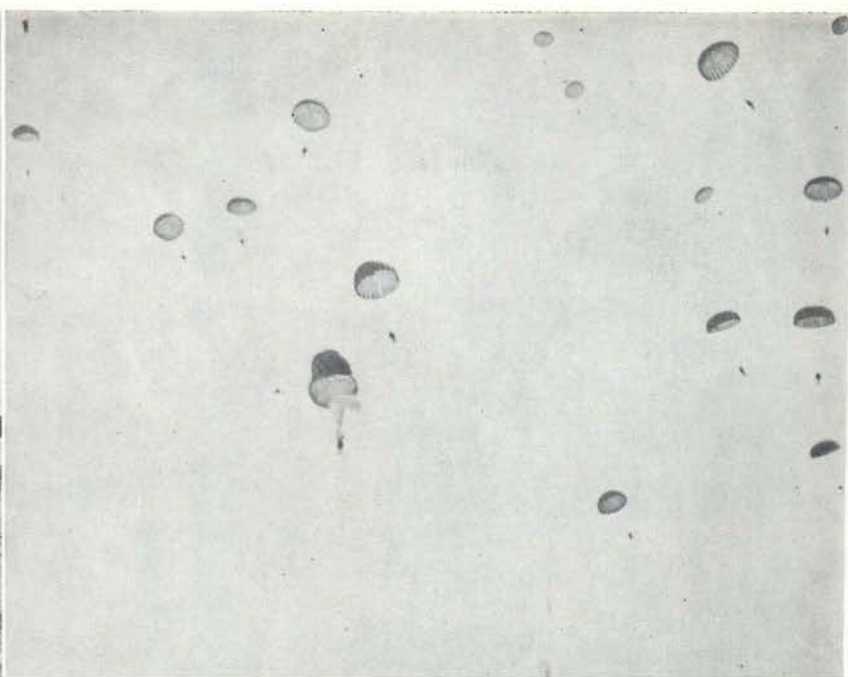
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maneuver experiment consisting of intelligence, operations, communication, supply, and staff sections.

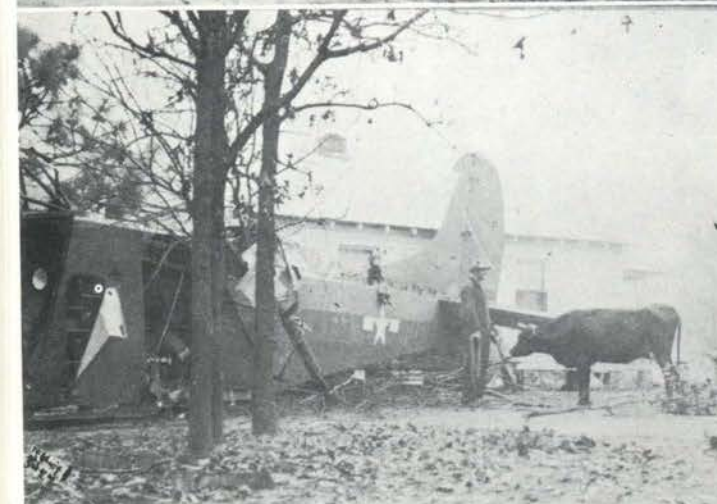
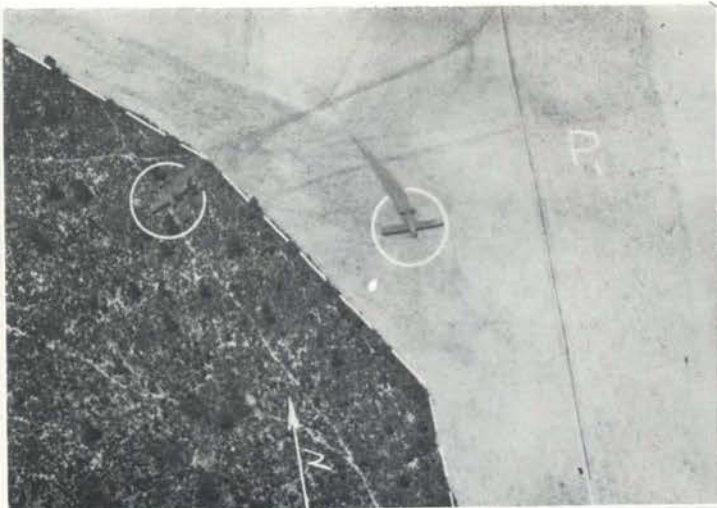
Over in GHQ, thought was developing along the same lines. General Clark, writing personally to Colonel Lee, stated: "I for one feel that these units should be expanded materially, for they are mighty handy to have around when a difficult job is to be done." General Clark further stated that he had passed upon a paper (recommending in substance what G-3 War Department had originally drawn up).

The Chief of Infantry, in commenting on the expansion, advocated the use of the term "regiment" rather than "group," pointing out that this term was more familiar to the average infantryman, and that a regimental organization insured that with each three battalions, a new regiment would be added. Then too, it seemed that there was something a little foreign to Infantry and akin to Air Corps in the word "group."

On 30 January 1942, the War Department directed that four parachute regiments be constituted. The existing battalions were expanded immediately into two regiments, both of which were initially understrength. The 503d Parachute Infantry Regiment was formed from the 503d and 504th Parachute Battalions, and received priority on personnel and equipment during its formation. The 502d had an initial strength of less than 900 men and did not reach its authorized strength until enough men had completed basic parachute training to provide fillers. It was planned to activate the other two regiments by May 1942.







## CHAPTER 2

### ACTIVATION AND MISSION

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*Page 18 of Pictures:*

Illustrating various forms of Glider Malfunction. The cow in number 5 and Wallace-Troth in number 7 are plainly puzzled. The cow didn't give milk for three days following the crash. Neither did Wallace or Troth, come to think of it. . . .

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#### *A. Requirement for Unified Command.*

Early in 1942, it became evident that the "Airborne Effort" had progressed to that stage which required unity of command to provide uniform organization, equipment, training, and effective liaison with the Air Corps.

Up to this point, the several airborne components had progressed satisfactorily under the rather loose control of the Chief of Infantry and now provided a nucleus on which a real airborne force could be built. However, it had become apparent to those individuals closely associated with the developments that continued expansion (four additional parachute regiments were scheduled for activation by 1 July 1942), with its accompanying problems, required the direction and supervision obtainable only by a command echelon provided for that purpose.

Under the existing arrangement, parachute units, upon completion of unit training at Fort Benning under the Provisional Parachute Group, passed to control of GHQ for advanced training and preparation for combat. At that stage, such units were only partially trained and equipped. Further tactical training, in the form of battalion and regimental day and night jumps, loading and unloading of supplies and air transport, combat team exercises with air-landing units—field artillery, infantry, and antitank—and advanced training with air combat team, was required.

It was the consensus of opinion of those

responsible for the training of these units that this advanced and combined training could be best accomplished by a unified command under which all parachute regiments could be grouped until such training was completed, at which time they could be released to commanders in the theaters of operation. Under such an arrangement, regiments could be progressively released upon completion of training and new regiments formed to replace them, assuring uniform methods, proper equipment, and the achievement of a high standard of training. In the absence of such a training headquarters and the probable dispersal of these units to various parts of the United States, it was feared that not only would the training task be more difficult, but the lack of suitable means to insure uniformity, coupled with the non-availability of transport planes might lead to the collapse of training control.

Experience during the past year's operations had emphasized the vital part that the Air Corps would play in basic, unit, and combined training stages. It was known that at the beginning of 1943, transports would be coming off production lines in quantities adequate for a major airborne operation, and that the Air Corps was engaged in training a suitable force, pilots and staffs, for such an operation. It had become evident that lack of effective coordination between the Air Corps and airborne troops was primarily due to the absence of accurate, long-range information of airborne transport requirements. Obviously without such advance information, the Air Corps would not properly train crews and perfect training to meet the requirements of airborne troops.

As a solution to all of these problems, Colonel Gaither, in a memorandum to the Chief of Infantry, suggested the creation of

an "Air Infantry Training Command," pointing out the pressing need for such a command to direct and coordinate all airborne activities and concluding that without such control, the airborne program might well bog down deeply, both from lack of air transportation and from lack of organization in advance planning to carry it beyond the basic air training for small parachute units which was then being accomplished under the Chief of Infantry.

The reorganization of the War Department and the Army, effected 9 March 1942, paved the way for the constitution of such a command as had been proposed by Colonel Gaither. The creation of the Army Ground Forces and the merging into one command of the various Army agencies under which the several parachute and air-landing units were operating, simplified procedure and established unity of command. The establishment of the Army Air Forces, and the delegation to that headquarters of all functions, duties and powers, formerly exercised by the GHQ Air Force (Air Force Combat Command) and the Chief of the Air Corps, provided one air force command to which airborne units, through Army Ground Forces, could effect the coordination required to provide the long-range planning which had been so obviously lacking and which was essential to controlled, progressive airborne training.

#### B. Activation.

With the wheels now set in motion for a suitable headquarters to control the training of airborne troops and to provide effective liaison with the Army Air Forces, Army Ground Forces now evidenced interest in the formation of a higher headquarters for all airborne troops. In a memorandum to the Chief of Staff, United States Army, on the subject of the Airborne Command, General McNair (Commanding General, Army Ground Forces) stated:

"1. In order to provide properly trained

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#### Page 14 of Pictures:

1. The Lockheed Airtrooper, smallest plane tested by the E & M Section, and
  2. The C-97—largest plane tested!
  - 3 & 5. First mass test jump from the CG-4A glider.
  4. Unloading the truck, 2½ ton, 6x4, complete with spare tire and wench (in back seat), from the C-82.
  6. Snatch Pickup, a development of ITCC. More useful on War Bond Rallies than in combat.
  7. Wallace-Roberts about to establish an airfield.
  8. The CG-10A, developed through the insistence of ABC.
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airborne forces for offensive action, this headquarters proposes to form an Airborne Command.

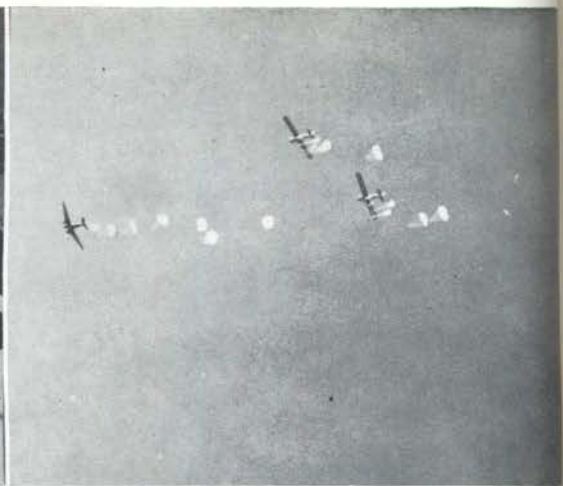
"2. The several components of an airborne task force have progressed separately to a point where their training and their common need for air transport requires direction, supervision and coordination obtainable only by a command echelon provided for that purpose.

"3. The Airborne Command will operate directly under this headquarters to: organize and train especially organized airborne ground units such as parachute, air-landing infantry and artillery; continue airborne training of such other ground force units as may be designated; control the allocation for training of such Air Corps transport airplane or glider units as may be made available by the Army Air Forces; coordinate training with Army Air Forces combat units; determine operating procedures for airborne operations and supply of large forces; and cooperate with the Navy to determine operating procedure for joint airborne-seaborne operations.

"4. It is proposed to move immediately the Headquarters, Provisional Parachute Group from Fort Benning, Georgia, to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and redesignate that Group as the Airborne Command.

"5. This information is furnished in view





Illustrating all of the gliders developed and used in Airborne operations.

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of the fact that such a command was not included in the original organization chart of the Army Ground Forces.”

The Commanding Officer was empowered to activate airborne units under authority from Army Ground Forces. Unit and airborne training and all organization were to be under the direction of Army Ground Forces. Liaison with the Army Air Forces, formulation and development of tactical training doctrine, and development and standardization of material and equipment were among the primary functions of the Airborne Command.

The Infantry School was to continue parachute jump training with graduates being assigned to the Airborne Command. The Replacement and School Command was

designated to provide suitable officer parachute volunteers to be given parachute training at the School.

The Airborne Command, as such, was activated 21 March 1942 at Fort Benning, Georgia, under the command of Colonel W. C. Lee, and included the following units:

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Airborne Command.

501st Parachute Infantry, less one battalion (inactive).

502nd Parachute Infantry.

503rd Parachute Infantry (less 3rd Battalion, inactive, then at Fort Bragg, North Carolina).

88th Infantry Airborne Battalion.

Under the memorandum from the Commanding General, Army Ground Forces, to the Commanding Officer, Airborne Command, it was agreed that the Airborne Command should be transferred from Fort Benning, Georgia, to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, on or about 1 May 1942.

## CHAPTER 3 EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT

### A. General.

From the date of activation (23 March 1942) to the date of reorganization (28 February 1944), the Airborne Command, in compliance with Army Ground Forces directive, devoted the major portion of its time and effort to the activation, training, equipping, and preparation of units for combat.

During this period, the search for better methods, perfected organization, and improved equipment, was continuous. With the expansion of the airborne effort from infantry alone to all elements of a division, other arms and services were developed and trained for airborne operations. In the attainment of this objective, the assistance and coöperation of the various service schools were timely and helpful; especially was this true with the Field Artillery School, the Infantry School, and the Antiaircraft School of the Coast Artillery.

Constant search was maintained for effective lightweight weapons and vehicles to increase the fire power and mobility of airborne units. The requirement was not limited to air-transportability alone, for ammunition, in quantity, had to be moved with the piece. In most instances, after landing, both guns and ammunition had to be man-handled into position.

The problem of supply by air was recognized as a challenge to the success of airborne operations, and as such, the Airborne Command devoted much time and thought to develop methods and techniques to provide the proper solution. The development of a workable communication plan for large-scale airborne operations, the perfection of organization, procurement of equipment, and training of signal personnel were matters of primary concern and major importance.

With the expansion of the glider program

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### Page 16 of Pictures:

Test - and - Development - and - Equipment - and - Material - and - finally - The Airborne Board had more fun than a Hutchinson bag full of unessential paratroopers.

1. Casualty Loading, developed by ABC, later taken over by ITCC.
  2. The AA Mount T-91 modified with old Kochevar contemplating more modifications.
  3. A good idea before and . . .
  4. After!
  5. The "Control Patton."
  6. Triple tow of puddle jumpers.
  7. The war ended just in time!
  8. Whatever happened to them?
- 

of the Army Air Forces, and the activation of the I Troop Carrier Command, glider training centers were established at Laurinburg-Maxton, North Carolina; Sedalia, Missouri; and Alliance, Nebraska, with the greatest activity centered at Laurinburg-Maxton. Through coördination with Army Air Forces, airborne units were later stationed at each of these bases and there received advanced glider training.

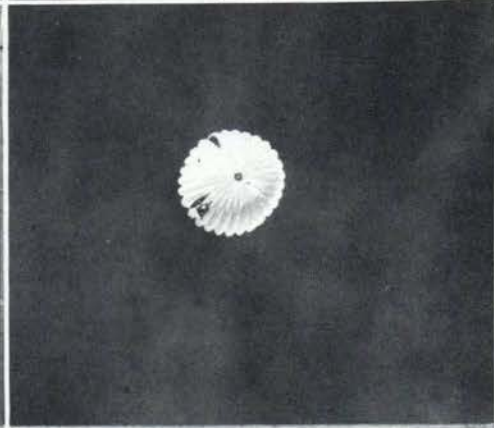
The Parachute School at Fort Benning, Georgia, previously operating under the Infantry School, was activated under the Airborne Command, and its facilities expanded to meet the ever-increasing demand for parachute personnel.

The requirement for the establishment of a training camp for the exclusive usage of airborne troops resulted in the selection of Camp Mackall, North Carolina, as the location, and construction was rushed through to completion in early 1943.

It is impossible in one chapter to fully cover all important events occurring during this period; therefore, this chapter is devoted primarily to outlining major events in the development and expansion of the Airborne Command. Subsequent chapters will







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1. The Hart chute, claimed to be the best ever.
  2. The Triangular chute, claimed to be the best ever.
  3. The British foot bag, claimed to be the best ever.
  4. The Elastic Line chute, claimed to be the best ever.
  5. The Derry chute, claimed to be the best ever.
  6. Water Jump tests with new life vest, claimed to be the best ever.
  7. TBM-3 jump tests—no claims.
  8. Pilot chute tests, claimed to be the best ever.
  9. The German parachute, claimed to be the best ever.
  - 10, 11. Jump from Cub planes—all claims outrageous.
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be devoted in detail to activities such as training, test and development, personnel, etc.

*B. Activities From 23 March 1942 to 15 August 1942.*

On 9 April 1942 the headquarters was moved from Fort Benning to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Prior to the movement, Colonels Lee, Chapman, and Miley had visited Fort Bragg to survey facilities available for the Airborne Command Headquarters and the 503d Parachute Infantry. For many years, Fort Bragg had been known in Army circles as the largest field artillery installation in the United States Army; consequently, the authorities there were inclined to view with skepticism the encroachment of any other arm of the service. The advance party, therefore, was not received with open arms, and initially the outlook was anything else but bright. Despite this chilly reception, suitable barracks, motor shops and sheds for the use of the regiment as parachute packing, maintenance, rigging and drying buildings, were secured. Modifications necessary to adequately provide space and facilities to meet the requirements of the 503d were accomplished at an expense of \$27,000. A portion of the old 9th Division area, including

the former administration building, was made available for Airborne Command Headquarters. Arrangements were completed to use airplanes based at Pope Field for orientation flights and jump training. Suitable jump fields being nonexistent, two fields sufficient for immediate training requirements were selected and cleared.

With the Command Headquarters now established at Fort Bragg, Colonel Lee set about the expansion of his staff by the addition of key officers and enlisted personnel selected from the 88th Infantry Airborne Battalion. Colonel Chapman was selected as Executive Officer, Lt. Colonel (later Brigadier General) Charles L. Keerans, S-4, and Captain (later Colonel) Hugh P. Harris, Assistant S-3.

One of the first missions undertaken by the headquarters was the preparation and publication of the "Instructional Pamphlet for Airborne Operations," based primarily on the findings of the 88th Infantry Airborne Battalion, and providing the information necessary in the planning and execution of the movement of an airborne force; the training of units in the technique of loading and unloading of airborne personnel and equipment, employing all available types of air transports and gliders. This pamphlet, prepared under the direction of the S-3, Lt. Colonel (later Major General) James M. Gavin, provided the data used in the air-landing training of the Second Infantry Division later in 1942, and was the forerunner of many such pamphlets prepared and published by the Airborne Command in the Form of "Training Bulletins," for the guidance of airborne troops in the loading and unloading techniques of infantry, artillery, antiaircraft, engineer, signal corps, quartermaster, ordnance and medical units. Additional training aids in the form of training films and film strips were prepared and made available not

only to airborne units but also to all units undergoing air-landing training.

This project was initiated in early May 1942, and by 20 September 1942 instructional pamphlets, training films and film strips were available for troop instruction.

In early June, the Airborne Command and the 503d Parachute Infantry were inspected at Fort Bragg by Secretary of War Stimson, Chief of Staff General Marshall, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and other dignitaries and officers of high rank. Shortly following this inspection, the Second Battalion, 503d Parachute Infantry, left the United States for further training in England, thus being the first airborne unit to move overseas.

Activation of new units and the expansion of others now followed in rapid order. The 504th Parachute Infantry was activated effective 1 May 1942; The Parachute School was activated under the Airborne Command, 15 May 1942; the 3d Battalion, 503d Parachute Infantry, 8 June 1942; Battery A, 215th Field Artillery Battalion, 15 June 1942; 700th Coast Artillery Battery, Separate (AW), 27 July 1942; 505th Parachute Infantry, 6 July 1942; 506th and 507th Parachute Infantry Regiments, 20 July 1942. General Lee had been ordered to England to observe and study British airborne organization and technique, and to make recommendations concerning the organization and employment of airborne troops in operations then under consideration by the combined Chiefs of Staff. Upon his return to the United States, he recommended the activation of an airborne division in the United States Army. On 30 July 1942 Army Ground Forces ordered the activation of two airborne divisions—the 82d and 101st—effective 15 August 1942 at Camp Caliborne, Louisiana, activation to be accomplished by the Third Army with the divisions assigned to Second Army for administration and to the Airborne Command for training.

Initially, consideration was given to placing

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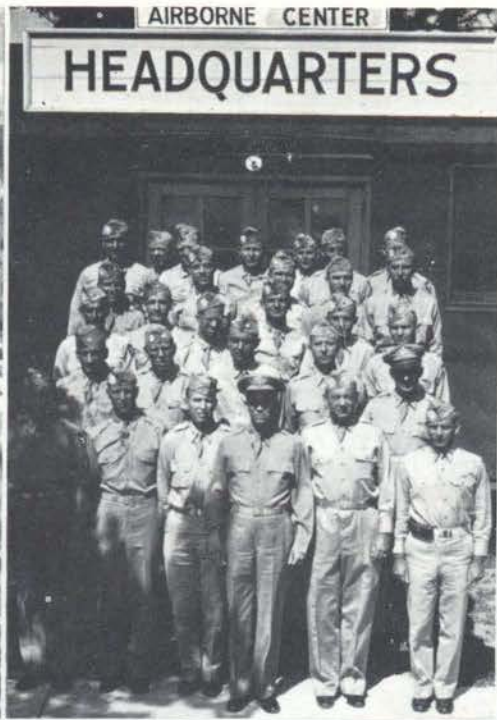
1. Assorted Brass at 11th Division Maneuvers, observing consumption of taxes.
  2. HQ—1944. They never did get that light bulb over the door!
  3. Maj. Gen. McAuliffe, the 5th and last CG.
  4. Friday Afternoon Tea Jump.
  5. Maj. Beaty Receiving the Hart "Supreme Sacrifice" Award upon completion of his 100th jump. The official citation read: "To the Superest of the Dooperest for having proved conclusively that the most necessary piece of equipment of the parachutist in flight is Parachute, complete with Harness." Behind Mr. Hart is the famous German Parachutist, Col. General Chester von und De-Gravystein.
  6. Illustrating the Approved School Solution.
  7. The Hollywood Tour—78 men in one B-17!
  8. Snow Jump in Milwaukee.
- 

the two divisions under Second Army not only for administration but also for ground training. However, General McNair ruled against this division of training responsibility, and the Airborne Command was given the full responsibility of the training of the two newly activated divisions.

General (later Lieutenant General) Mathew B. Ridgway was assigned to command the 82d Airborne Division, and on 15 August 1942 General Lee relinquished command of the Airborne Command which he had been instrumental in developing from the initial stage of a "Test Platoon" in 1940, to a command with corps responsibilities in 1942, to assume command of the 101st Airborne Division. General Chapman assumed command of the Airborne Command on 16 August 1942.

*C. Activities From 16 August 1942 to 15 November 1943.*

With two airborne divisions activated and the activation of additional divisions, separate regiments, and battalions contemplated in the immediate future, expansion of the Airborne Command Headquarters was necessary to properly plan, coordinate and supervise the many airborne activities then engaged in. On





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*Page 19 of Pictures:*

Illustrating time consumption at ABC. We became the first wearers of the Glider Wings by undergoing rigorous and rugged glider instruction. (Prigge flunked the first class so got into two pictures.) We demonstrated that anybody could be a paratrooper, and dropped Knuckle Knob Rockefeller to prove it. We played baseball and repeatedly demonstrated that Smith's (ORC) team could beat Quinto's (RA). The last photo illustrates Final Maneuvers at ABC—and a good one it was!

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20 August 1942 authorization for such expansion was provided by Army Ground Forces directive, creating a general staff.

Organizational plans for the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions called for the assignment of the 502nd Parachute Infantry to the 101st Airborne Division and the 504th Parachute Infantry to the 82nd Airborne Division, assignment to be accomplished when the divisions were moved from Camp Caliborne to Fort Bragg, in October 1942. Personnel for other parachute elements (artillery, engineer, medical, etc.) were to be recruited within the divisions, received individual parachute training at the Parachute School, then rejoin the divisions at Fort Bragg to complete individual, unit, and combined training.

In October 1942 the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions moved to Fort Bragg where they were joined by the 502nd and 504th Parachute Infantry Regiments, and immediately engaged in an intensive training program. The month of October also witnessed the departure of the first parachute unit to the Pacific Theater of Operation, this unit being the 503d Parachute Infantry—later to win fame at Lae, Salamaua and Corregidor.

In November 1942 the Army Air Forces glider base at Laurinburg-Maxton, North Carolina, was completed and made available for the glider training of airborne units by the I Troop Carrier Command.

A glider school was constituted at Laurinburg-Maxton with the mission of giving air-

landing training to all airborne units. Also in November, the cargo glider, CG-4, was checked out of the experimental stage at Wright Field, Ohio, and in limited quantity, was made available for the training of these two divisions.

In addition to its other responsibilities, the Airborne Command had been directed by Army Ground Forces to train the Second Infantry Division for movement by air transport. This mission was carried out in Texas in September and October 1942, with Fort Sam Houston as the base of operations. Instructional teams were organized and dispatched to San Antonio; mockups of the C-47 and C-46 transports were constructed; the division was streamlined by the deletion of non-airtransportable equipment and non-essential personnel; combat teams were organized; and the necessary coordination effected with the Army Air Forces. The training of the division in the loading and lashing of its equipment was only the initial stage in this training program. Staff functioning in the planning and preparation for an air movement was outlined and emphasized; details including movement to marshalling areas adjacent to airdromes; control of traffic at the airdrome; methods of enplaning; liaison with troop carrier elements; organization for control after landing, and all other essentials were fully covered.

As a second phase in the training program, a flying CPX was prepared and conducted. The third and final phase consisted of the air movement of the division, by combat teams (because of limited aircraft available), to Brackettville and Del Rio, Texas.

Coincidental with the training of the Second Division, an airborne team was conducting tests in determining procedures of air supply at the Desert Training Center in California. As a result of the findings of this team, on 15 November 1942, a draft copy of the Field Manual FM 31-40, "Supply of Ground Units by Air," was submitted to Army Ground Forces by Headquarters Air-

borne Command. It was realized that this draft did not provide the "last word" in aerial supply procedure, but it did make available in written form valuable data not heretofore available, and after much discussion and very little change, was published in May 1943.

On 9 November 1942 construction began on the new airborne training center. Preliminary surveys had been in progress for some time and a general location known as the "Sandhills Recreation Area," near Hoffman, North Carolina, and approximately forty miles from the Fort Bragg military reservation, had tentatively been agreed upon prior to final authorization by the War Department. Consisting of 97,000 acres, 65,000 of which were government-owned at the time, this area was deemed ideally located for an airborne training installation. Although close to existing airfields, the entire area was remarkably clear of air traffic. Numerous large and reasonably level areas were available and suitable for parachute drop zones and glider landing areas; the sandy loam soil assured quick drainage; the terrain was well adapted for ground training and maneuvers; records showed the area free of flood dangers and health surveys indicated generally favorable conditions; railroad transportation was assured by the nearby Seaboard Railroad lines. With proper pumping and filtering equipment, an ample water supply was available, and nearby power companies could furnish all necessary electrical power without the need of camp power installation. The area was in the heart of the North-South Carolina Maneuver Area, which minimized the difficulties entailed in staging division or other large-scale maneuvers, and the location of air bases at Pope Field, Laurinburg-Maxton, Florence and Lumberton assured adequate departure bases for large-scale airborne maneuvers.

Approved plans called for a camp to accommodate Headquarters Airborne Command, two airborne divisions, five parachute regiments, the necessary station complement,

and Army Air Forces station troops—a total of approximately 32,000 troops. The site consisted of approximately 18,000 acres; 2,000 acres for cantonment areas, 5,000 acres for small arms ranges, 1,000 acres for the airfield, and 10,000 acres for the maneuver area.

On 27 November 1942 orders were received directing the activation of the 11th Airborne Division at the new camp at Hoffman, North Carolina, followed on 31 December by orders for the activation of the 17th Airborne Division. With this added incentive, construction of the new camp was pushed with the greatest vigor. On 25 February 1943 the 11th Airborne Division was activated at the new camp, and on 4 April 1943 Headquarters Airborne Command was officially opened at Camp Mackall, North Carolina, which was the name given to the new camp in honor of Private John T. Mackall, the first airborne soldier to give his life in the invasion of North Africa.

While construction of Camp Mackall was in progress, training activities at Fort Bragg and Laurinburg-Maxton were under full headway, with both the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions rapidly completing training required prior to their release to theater of operation commanders. Parachute operations centered in the Bragg Area with Pope Field as the air operations base, while glider training was centered at Laurinburg-Maxton Army Air Base, with units of both the divisions being moved successively to this base to undergo advanced airborne training.

The outstanding highlight of this period was the visitation to the Command on 22-24 March 1943 of a party of distinguished notables including Anthony Eden, Foreign Minister of Great Britain, Sir John Dill, Chief of Staff General Marshall, and many others. To provide a realistic demonstration of the capabilities of airborne troops, both the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions were employed in a simulated attack of the Fort

Forces, which agency recognized the training value of such procedure to elements of the Troop Carrier Command.

In preparation for such a maneuver for the 101st Airborne Division, which was nearing completion of its training, the Airborne Command organized its first maneuver directorate and completed all necessary preparations for the staging and direction of a full-scale maneuver to be held in the vicinity of Camden, South Carolina, on 24-28 May 1943. Following this maneuver, the 101st Airborne Division, reinforced by the 506th Parachute Infantry, participated in the Tennessee Maneuver under Second Army. During the progress of these maneuvers and prior to its departure overseas, the division engaged in an airborne CPX, prepared and directed by Headquarters Airborne Command.

In July 1943 the Second Airborne Infantry Brigade was activated at Camp Mackall, with Brigadier General George P. Howell as Commanding General. After completion of organization and training, the Brigade was ordered overseas in December 1943. Colonel (later Brigadier General) Ridgely Gaither succeeded General Howell as Commandant of the Parachute School.

On 10 July 1943 the Command, as well as all airborne units, was electrified by the news that the 82d Airborne Division had spearheaded the allied invasion of Sicily. Despite the fact that later detailed reports revealed that planning and execution of this mission left much to be desired, the effect on morale and the stimulus to training were immediate.

Many principles of employment, long advocated by airborne commanders and generally recognized as essential to the success of airborne operations, were violated in the planning and execution of this mission. As a result, by War Department directive, a board was constituted, comprising representatives of the War Department, Army Air Forces, and Airborne Command, with the mission of recommending procedure to be

followed in the planning and execution of airborne missions in combined operations.

The recommendations of this board were published as War Department Training Circular No. 113, "Employment of Airborne and Troop Carrier Forces." Throughout the remainder of World War II, adherence to the general principles outlined therein prevailed, and the basic principles outlined therein were determined to be basically sound and not requiring major change.

During the months of August and September 1943 the expansion program of the Airborne Command was practically completed. The 464th and 466th Parachute Field Artillery Battalions were activated on 1 August 1943; and 13th Airborne Division was activated at Fort Bragg, 13 August 1943, with Brigadier General (later Major General) George W. Griner, commanding; the 597th Airborne Engineer Company was activated 1 August 1943; and 541st Parachute Infantry, 12 August 1943. To supervise the training of the several separate field artillery units then existing, the 407th Field Artillery Group was activated at Camp Mackall, 5 August 1943. On 1 September, the 542d Parachute Infantry was activated at Fort Benning, Georgia.

During late September and early October 1943 General Chapman having been ordered to the European Theater as an observer, Major General Swing assumed command during his absence. On 15 November 1943, shortly after his return, General Chapman was assigned to command the 13th Airborne Division. On 16 November Brigadier General Leo Donovan assumed command of the Airborne Command.

#### *D. Activities from 16 November 1943 to 28 February 1944.*

The outstanding events in the history of the Airborne Command during this period were combined airborne-troop carrier maneuvers staged in December 1943 and January 1944, under the direction of combined airborne-



troop carrier maneuver headquarters constituted for that purpose.

Combined maneuvers under such a directorate had long been the objective of the Airborne Command, not only as a training exercise of inestimable value and a test of readiness for combat for both airborne and troop carrier forces employed but also as the most suitable means of effecting the coordination required between the two agencies in the planning and execution of a major airborne operation.

Troop Carrier recognized the value of such procedure, however, participation in combined training and maneuver had been hampered by overseas shipment of troop carrier units on short notice and without suitable replacements, resulting in the frequent disruption of carefully planned training activities of both airborne and troop carrier units. Then too, in all prior combined maneuvers, troop carrier units and staffs had been made available on such short notice, and in such limited number, that in many instances the normal functions of troop carrier staffs had, of necessity, been performed by airborne staffs. Such procedure was definitely unsatisfactory, unrealistic, and not conducive to the attainment of success in combat airborne operations.

The Airborne Command had repeatedly brought this matter to the attention of the Army Ground Forces, insisting that remedial action be taken to correct this situation.

The solution was provided on 2 November 1943 on which date both Army Ground Forces and Army Air Forces issued directives covering "Joint Training of Airborne and Troop Carrier Units," setting forth the training

policy and providing the instrumentability under which such training and maneuver could be accomplished.

Combined airborne-troop carrier headquarters was established 12 November 1943 at Camp Mackall, North Carolina, with Brigadier General Frederick W. Evans, Director of Maneuver, and Brigadier General Leo Donovan, Co-Director, and plans were developed for the combined maneuver to be staged from 6 to 10 December 1943. (For the January maneuver, this order was reversed.)

The 11th Airborne Division, reinforced by the 501st Parachute Infantry, constituted the airborne force (attacking force). One combat team from the 17th Airborne Division, reinforced by one battalion of the 541st Parachute Infantry, composed the defending force.

The scope of the maneuver called for an operational period of five days, the use of four departure air bases, flying of a circuitous route of approximately 200 miles with at least one-half of the landings and assembly of airborne units to be made at night; reinforcement, resupply, evacuation, and other support to be effected by air only.

During the exercise, the 53rd Troop Carrier Wing utilized 200 C-47 transport aircraft and 234 CG-4A gliders (most of which were flown in double tow); landing 10,282 men, either by parachute drop, glider, or air-landing. One thousand, five hundred four tons of equipment and supplies, including 295  $\frac{1}{4}$ -ton trucks, 48  $\frac{1}{4}$ -ton trailers, and 326 tons of supplies, were flown in and landed.

Total casualties for the maneuver, including air and ground operations, were two fatalities and 48 minor injuries.

## CHAPTER 4 THE AIRBORNE CENTER

### A. *General.*

The Airborne Command was reorganized and redesignated as the Airborne Center by War Department order, effective 1 March 1944.

In effect, the mission of the Airborne Center was essentially the same as its predecessor, the Airborne Command. However, the sizable reduction of the troop list, occasioned by the completion of training and departure of the 11th and 17th Airborne Divisions and various other small combat units, and the shifting of major administration functions to other headquarters, materially alleviated the responsibilities of the headquarters and decreased the demands made on it by subordinate units making possible a reduction of personnel and reorganization of staff.

In lieu of a general staff section, four operating sections were created, these being: Adjutant General Section; Organization, Doctrine and Training Section; Supply Section and Equipment and Material Section.

With the departure of airborne units to overseas theaters and the reorganization and reassignment of others as outlined above, the training of airborne units, heretofore the major function of the headquarters, was practically completed. Only three airborne units remained—the 13th Airborne Division, the 541st Parachute Infantry, and the 464th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion. Airborne training of these units was completed under the Airborne Center in late 1944 and early 1945 and all three units proceeded to the theaters of operations.

To complete the air-transport training of these divisions within the time limit imposed by the Army Ground Forces schedule, five instructional teams were organized to do the job. Plans called for the use of sixty CG-4A mockups for each division. The 84th and

103rd Divisions completed the course of instruction and the instructional teams were prepared to move to the next two divisions when orders were received from Army Ground Forces cancelling the remainder of the training program, because of the "stepped-up" movement of these divisions to theaters of operation.

### B. *Training Detachments, Schools, and Demonstrations.*

In December 1944, in compliance with Army Ground Forces directive, participation in joint airborne-troop carrier training of troop carrier combat crew replacements was initiated.

At that time the I Troop Carrier Command, Army Air Forces, operated four replacement training unit bases, located at Bergstrom Field, Austin, Texas; George Field, Lawrenceville, Illinois; Sedalia Army Air Field, Warrensburg, Missouri; and Maulden Army Air Field, Maulden, Missouri. Each of these bases was engaged in the training of approximately eighty-five replacement crews per month.

To orient, indoctrinate, and instruct these combat crew replacements on pertinent airborne subjects, an airborne instructional team was placed on detached service at each replacement training unit base.

Ground school training comprised a comprehensive course in the organization of airborne troops, the procedures that airborne troops were taught, and the knowledge and requirements expected of troop carrier crews in order to obtain maximum effectiveness in airborne-troop carrier operations.

Flying training included actual flying problems, involving the dropping of free bundles and bundles from pararacks, concluding with the planning and execution of a demonstration parachute drop involving

the employment of actual troops and equipment, consisting of one parachute infantry platoon, one parachute field artillery gun section, and one parachute engineer squad. In the absence of combined airborne-troop carrier training (not possible because all major airborne units were in theaters of operations) this procedure provided the means whereby these replacements were prepared for operations with airborne troops, and proved to be of such value that at the request of I Troop Carrier Command, it was continued and remained in effect as of 1 September 1945.

In September 1943, at the request of Headquarters Army Air Forces, arrangements were completed by the Airborne Center to provide a short course of instruction on airborne tactics and techniques for Army Air Forces staff classes, after their completion of the course of instruction at the Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and as a part of their general orientation on the functions of the various Army Ground Forces commands. Four such classes received instruction under Airborne Command between 11 September 1943 and 24 November 1943. On 24 December 1943, Headquarters Army Air Forces, stating that this course of instruction had proven to be of such interest and value, requested that arrangements be made to provide similar instruction to each Air Forces class completing the course at the Command and General Staff School. Subsequently ten classes received a three-day course of instruction under the direction of the Airborne Center.

In May 1944, in compliance with the request of Headquarters Army Air Forces School of Applied Tactics, Orlando, Florida, arrangements were completed for a tactical demonstration, staged monthly for the orientation and edification of graduates of senior officers attending the Army Air Forces Tactical Center. The first demonstration was staged 15 June 1944 and at the request of the Army Air Forces, participation in such

demonstrations has continued regularly since that date.

Another activity engaged in by the Airborne Center, which also can be termed as cooperation with the Army Air Forces, is the conduct of the "airborne training in safe loading for Army Air Forces glider pilots." The value of such training was recognized by the airborne headquarters in the early stages of joint airborne-troop carrier training. However, the opportunity to engage in such a training program for glider pilots was not present until early June 1944 at which time Headquarters I Troop Carrier Command, Stout Field, Indianapolis, Indiana, directed that sixteen hours of loading, lashing, and balance, be incorporated into the glider pilot training course. Troop carrier officials at Laurinburg-Maxton having no instructors qualified to prepare and conduct such training, called upon Airborne Center for assistance which was gladly provided. By 1 September 1945 sixteen such classes had been instructed under the supervision of the Airborne Center, and the continuance of this type of instruction was contemplated as long as desired by the Army Air Forces.

### *C. Theaters of Operations Detachments.*

Being charged with the responsibility of developing and recommending the organization and doctrine, tactics and techniques of airborne troops, Headquarters Airborne Center, early in 1944, felt a crying need for constant and continuous contact with airborne troops in both theaters of operations. It was fully realized that airborne organization, equipment, and material were not perfect, having been hastily consummated and procured to meet emergency requirements, and being recognized at the time as only the most suitable expedient readily available.

Headquarters First Allied Airborne Army, on 29 August 1944, initiated a request, through channels, for four officers and twenty enlisted men from Airborne Center to be placed on temporary duty with that head-

quarters for a period of approximately ninety days. This request having received the approval of the War Department and the necessary orders issued by Army Ground Forces, this detachment was prepared and shipped by air, arriving in the theater on 28 September 1944. Evidence of its attainments are best evaluated by the remarks of the Deputy Chief of Staff, First Allied Airborne Army, in a letter addressed to the Commanding General, Army Ground Forces: "This detachment, since its arrival, has been and is conducting a series of tactical evaluation tests relating to the development of airborne equipment, procedure and technique. This work has been most beneficial and it is essential that it be continued."

#### D. *War Bond Demonstration Teams.*

In April 1945, at the request of the United States Treasury Department and in compliance with Army Ground Force orders, three War Bond Airborne Demonstration teams (each team consisting of four officers and 28 enlisted men) were organized and prepared to be staged in 54 of the largest cities in the United States.

The demonstrations, sponsored jointly by the War and Treasury Departments as a feature of the Sixth and Seventh War Loan Drive, were staged to provide the American

public with an opportunity to view, at first hand and on a miniature scale, the work of airborne troops, Troop Carrier Command, and Army Air Forces, in simulated combat operations, as practiced in the European and Pacific Theaters of operation.

In each city visited, weather permitting, an "Airborne Attack" was launched in the logical sequence used so successfully in combat operations; First, a parachute echelon dropped and seized a landing area; second, reinforcements consisting of glider-borne troops with artillery, antitank guns, and transportation, were flown in and landed; third, resupply was landed by both parachute and glider; and fourth, wounded were evacuated by gliders snatched by troop carrier planes in flight.

These demonstrations were witnessed by thousands in each city visited and to use the phraseology of most newspaper accounts, "the Airborne Attack demonstration with its thundering planes and whistling gliders attracted probably the largest crowd ever gathered in this city." Prior to and following demonstrations the public was invited to inspect airborne equipment such as transport planes and gliders. During the "Airborne Attack," by the use of public address systems, narrators informed the spectators as to the tactics and techniques employed.

WHERE AIRBORNE UNITS FOUGHT

UNIT	DATE OF ACTION	PLACE OF ACTION	TYPE OF ACTION
509th Parcht. Inf. Bn.	8 Nov. 42	*Oran, North Africa	First American use of airborne troops.
	15 Nov. 42	*Youks Les Bains, Tunisia	Contact French troops and proceed to Gafsa, Tunisia for attack; at Gafsa encountered Italian troops.
	Nov. 42	*Faid Pass, Tunisia	Demolition action and infantry contact with Italian troops.
(Radioman, Pathfinders)	Sept. 43	*Island of Ischia off the coast of Naples, Italy	Captured garrison and Radar units.
	14 Sept. 43	*Avellino, Italy	Attacked 25 miles behind enemy line.
	22 Jan.- 1 April 44	Anzio, Italy	Sent to hold beachhead.
	Dec.-Jan. 45	"Belgian Bulge"	
82d Airborne Division	9-10 July 43	*Gela, Trapani, Palarimo	First large scale airborne operation—night operation.
	14 Sept. 43	*Salerno, Italy	Reinforcements to hold beachhead.
	5-6 June 44	*Normandy, France	Disrupt Nazi Communications and supply.
82d Airborne	17 Sept. 44	*Nijmegen, Holland	Seize and hold highway bridges across Mass River at Grave and Waal River at Nijmegen.
	20 Dec. 44- 17 Feb. 45	Stavelot, Trois-Ponts, Hablemont Seigfried Defenses, Undenbreth, to the Roer	"Belgian Bulge."
	April-May 45	Elbe River Bleckede Area	Assault across Elbe River—Contacted Russians at Grabow.
504th Prcht. Inf. Regt.	14 Sept. 43	*Altavilla, Italy	Reinforce Salerno Beachhead.
	Oct.-Dec. 43	Venafro, Italy	Ground fighting.
	22 Jan. 44- 1 April 44	Anzio, Italy	Sent to hold beachhead.
505th Prcht. Inf. Regt.	15 Sept. 43	Salerno to Naples, Italy	Beachhead landing — weeks of fighting.

\* Denotes airborne assaults.

WHERE AIRBORNE UNITS FOUGHT

UNIT	DATE OF ACTION	PLACE OF ACTION	TYPE OF ACTION
(Two battalions)	Oct. 43	Villa Litorno to Volturno River, Italy	Ground action with British X Corps.
First Airborne Task Force: 517th Precht. Inf. Regt. 460th Precht. F.A. Bn. 463rd Precht. F.A. Bn. 509th Precht. Inf. Bn. 551st Precht. Inf. Bn. 550th Glider Inf. Bn. 596th A/B Engr. Bn.	15 Aug. 44	*Southern France	Spearhead invasion.
101st Airborne Division	5-6 June 44	*Normandy, France	Seize Causeways, disrupt Nazi communications and supply.
	17 Sept. 44	*Eindhoven, Holland	Seize the four highway and railway bridges over the As River and Williams Vaart Canal at Vechel, seize bridge at St. Oedenrode seize Eindhoven and bridges.
	19 Dec.- 15 Jan. 45	Bastogne, Belgium	"Belgian Bulge."
	Apr. 45	Germany—Berchtesgaden	Ground fighting.
11th Airborne Division	Jan. 45	Leyte, P. I.	Boat landing — an artillery battalion dropped by parachute.
	1 Feb. 45	Nasugbu, Luzon	Amphibious operation with the glider elements of the division.
	3 Feb. 45	*Tagaytay, Luzon	Invasion of South Luzon.
	23 Feb. 45	*Los Banos Camp, Luzon	Raided prison camp, liberating 2,146 American civilians.
	Mar. 45	Cavite, Manila, Batangas, Luzon	Ground fighting.
11th Airborne Division	25 June 45	*Luzon	Parachutists, gliders (used for first time in Pacific Theater).
	Aug. 45	Honshu, Japan	First troops to arrive at Honshu—air-landed.
17th Airborne Division	Jan.-Feb. 45	Flamierge, Flamizoule, Clervaux, Belgium	"Belgian Bulge."
	24 Mar. 45	*Across the Rhine at Wesel	Start of rush to Berlin.

\* Denotes airborne assaults.

## WHERE AIRBORNE UNITS FOUGHT

UNIT	DATE OF ACTION	PLACE OF ACTION	TYPE OF ACTION
503d Pacht. Inf. Regt.	5 Sept. 43	*Lae, Salamaua, New Guinea	To cut off route of escape of 20,000 Japanese fleeing from Salamaua and Lae.
	3 July 44	*Noemfoer Island	To capture main airdrome.
	16 Feb. 45	*Corregidor, P. I.	Destroy enemy guns from the rear.
	April 45	Negros Island, P. I.	67 days of continuous fighting.
13th Airborne Division	April 45	Marshalling areas, France	Reserve troops

\* Denotes airborne assaults.

Price: \$13.95



82nd AIRBORNE  
DIVISION



101st AIRBORNE  
DIVISION



11th AIRBORNE  
DIVISION



17th AIRBORNE  
DIVISION



13th AIRBORNE  
DIVISION



ENGINEER  
REPRODUCTION  
SECTION



AIRBORNE  
TRAINING  
DETACHMENT



XVIII AIRBORNE  
CORPS



1st ALLIED  
AIRBORNE ARMY

## AIRBORNE COMMAND



2nd AIRBORNE  
BRIGADE



541st PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



542nd PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



551st PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



1st AIRBORNE  
BRIGADE





501st PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



502nd PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



503rd PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



504th PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



505th PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



AIRBORNE  
ENGINEERS



506th  
PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



517th  
PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



507th  
PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



## AIRBORNE COMMAND



515th PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



513th PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



511th PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



509th PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY



508th PARACHUTE  
INFANTRY