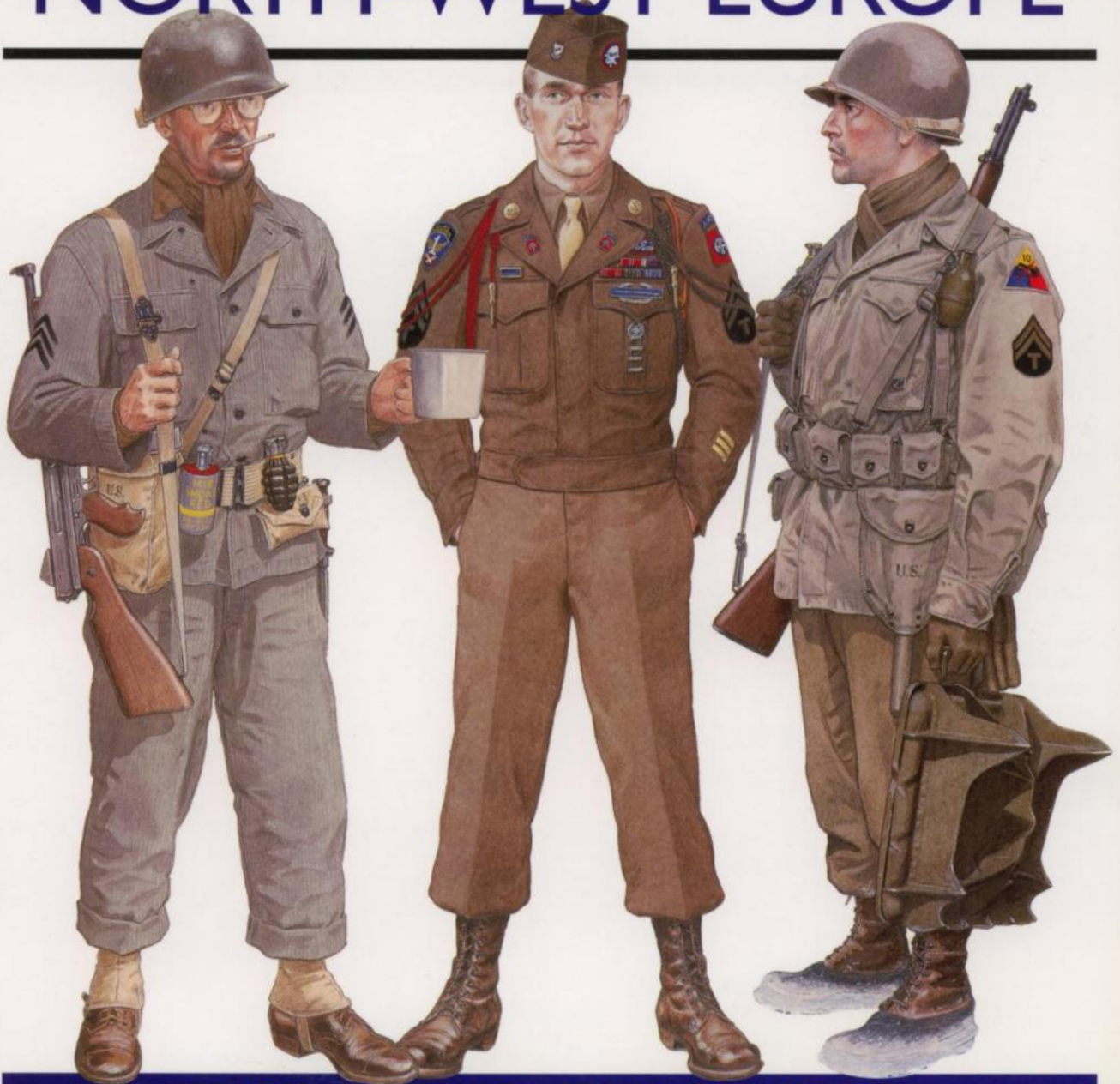


# THE US ARMY IN WORLD WAR II (3) NORTH-WEST EUROPE



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MEN-AT-ARMS 350

# THE US ARMY IN WORLD WAR II

## (3) NORTH-WEST EUROPE



TEXT BY  
MARK R. HENRY

COLOUR PLATES BY  
MIKE CHAPPELL

**OSPREY**  
MILITARY

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## Dedication

This book is dedicated to World War II veterans PFC John Holmes (65th Arm'd Inf/20th Armored Division); PFC Richard Slaughter (39th Inf/9th Infantry Division); Sgt Richard Rarick (504th Parachute Inf/82nd Airborne Division); and Lt Waldo Heinrichs (89th Infantry Division).

## Author's Note

This last in a sequence of three Men-at-Arms titles focuses on the European Theater of Operations – the 'ETO'. Some duplication between the three volumes is inevitable, but the reader should note that for space reasons **material of general application is divided more or less arbitrarily between the three:**

The main text of **this book** specifically covers service dress uniforms and insignia, including shoulder patches; combat clothing and equipment is identified in the commentaries to the colour plates. It also includes notes on the equipment of Armored, Mechanised Cavalry and Tank Destroyer units, and tactical doctrine; the major artillery pieces, including anti-tank guns; engineers; and replacement and demobilisation practice.

**MAA 342 '(1): The Pacific'** includes general information on infantry unit organisation; summer khaki uniforms; officers' insignia; WAAC uniforms and insignia; service medals; combat uniforms – HBTs, camouflage uniforms, the 'M1941' Parsons jacket, helmets, footwear, and wet weather clothing; web combat equipment; small arms, grenades and flamethrowers; and rations.

**MAA 347 '(2) The Mediterranean'** covers the organisation of Armored, Airborne, Mountain, Ranger, African- and Japanese-American units; uniforms specific to the specialised units, as well as cold weather clothing, and the M1943 combat uniform; NCOs' insignia; gallantry decorations; crew-served weapons; and, briefly, radios and transport vehicles.

Each of the three titles includes a campaign summary, and a listing of divisions that served in that theatre, with notes on their shoulder patches.

As detailed information on Airborne and Ranger unit history, uniforms and insignia will be found in two other Osprey books – see inside back cover – little space has been devoted to them in this sequence of titles. The US Army Air Force is a distinct subject, covered in depth in the Osprey titles *Elite 46 & 51*.

As always in books from a British publisher dealing with an American subject, some inconsistency in style is inevitable. British spelling is generally used but all US 'proper names' – unit titles, etc. – are given in the correct US spellings.

## Errata

In Plate E2 the M1 carbine is shown with a bayonet lug. While these did appear before the end of the war they are not known to have reached the ETO before the end of hostilities.

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to Larry Corbett, Scott Brustmaker, Robert & Alex Hargis, Frederick Spiller, Starr Sinton, Juan Gonzales (WW2 Impressions), James & Carol Henry, Virginia Aparicio, Jonathan Fong, Martin Windrow, Col Bob French (Ret), 1st Infantry Division Museum (Cantigny). I would especially like to acknowledge and recommend the books by Messrs Whiting, Gawne, Fort, Stanton, Canfield and Perret in whose footsteps I follow.

Unless otherwise noted, all photos are from US Army/CMH or National Archives sources.



This portrait of sergeant [name] in the ETO, 1944/45, is a jack on his hanging from a connector crew had tank in a photo was Sgt John Creek, Inc action in



# THE US ARMY IN WORLD WAR II

## (3) NORTH-WEST EUROPE

### INTRODUCTION



This portrait of a war-weary sergeant is typical of a US tanker in the ETO in the winter of 1944/45. Note the connector jack on his right shoulder, hanging from his helmet; this connector pulled out easily if a crew had to abandon a burning tank in a hurry. Shortly after this photo was taken its subject, Sgt John H. Parks from Mill Creek, Indiana, was killed in action in Germany.

THE GIs WHO HIT 'Omaha' and 'Utah' beaches on 6 June 1944 were members of the finest-equipped mechanised army ever assembled. As Allied, and particularly American strength continued to build up in Normandy, the threadbare but still potent Wehrmacht soon came to realise they had an elephant by the tail. After the August break-out from Normandy and the landings in the south of France the ever more powerful US armies aggressively pursued the Germans across France in a classic demonstration of exploitation warfare. Even so, in some quarters there was still some jealous questioning as to the professionalism and endurance of the lavishly supplied and self-confident GI. Some British and German leaders, harking back to the US Army's blooding at Kasserine Pass in February 1943, wondered if the Americans would prove to have a glass jaw when the going got tough. (This was not, it must be said, a doubt harboured by any who had seen the fighting in Normandy from close up, from either side of the front.) The 'Battle of the Bulge' in December 1944 would be the test.

Heavily attacked by superior German armour, outnumbered and without air support, the US Army was on its own in the Ardennes. A large portion of the green 106th Division held its position for a short time and then gave way in the biggest US surrender since Kasserine. The surprised Americans bent – but did not break. Bastogne was stubbornly held, and Germany's finest remaining Panzer troops were constantly bedevilled by skilled US delaying actions. By 1 January 1945 the Wehrmacht had suffered crippling losses without even approaching their objective, and the line was soon restored. The Battle of the Bulge had proven the battle worthiness of the GI, and was, in Prime Minister Churchill's words, 'truly an American victory'.

#### Supply crisis in the ETO

Despite America's apparently limitless manufacturing capacity and generous scales of issue for almost every necessity, one factor had a baleful effect on US operations – and on the daily conditions faced by many US soldiers – throughout NW Europe in the second half of 1944. The problem was not producing what was needed, or shipping it to Europe; it was getting it out of the ships and up to the front-line units when, where and in the quantities required. The overall supply situation in the ETO was poor, due in about equal measure to shortages of transportation and bad decisions on logistics taken by the staff at SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces).

Eisenhower's staff had planned for a steadily progressing advance with the Allies reaching the German border in early 1945. This would give time to clear the ports in western France and to move supplies



**Ardennes, December 1944:** coming in from manning a night roadblock, these three GIs (including two carrying bazookas) are lucky to have cold/wet weather footwear - in the foreground, four-clip M1942 overshoes. The man on the left wears the big fitted woollen anti-gas hood for warmth. From the diamond shape of the shoulder patch on the centre man's overcoat these soldiers could be from the 5th or 26th Divisions.

forward in a timely fashion. While the battle for Normandy ran behind schedule, the leap across France in August/September 1944 quickly outran all logistical planning. With the now distant ports still slow to clear, supplies continued to come in over Omaha beach. The 'Red Ball Express' priority trucking route (so named for the red mark used in the 1930s on priority railroad cars) gave some relief, as did the use of aircraft for cargo runs to the front. Railroads would have been the most efficient means of transport, but France's network, ripped up by Allied bombing in the weeks before D-Day, took a long time to rebuild. The opening of southern French ports after the 'Anvil' landings in August made some difference; but the failure of the British/Canadian Twenty-First Army Group to seize the estuaries at Antwerp, the greatest port in the Low Countries, left the Allies logistically adrift. The grand pursuit across France by the 1st and 3rd US Armies, and by Twenty-First Army Group in the Netherlands, ground to a standstill in September; and each of the Allied army

commanders sought to pressure SHAEF into granting him priority of supply as they argued over the conflicting strategies of 'narrow thrust' and 'broad advance'. Such absolute basics as ammunition and gasoline became critical items. Eisenhower opted to bring ashore more combat units, but the transport to move them to the front was already consumed in running supplies to meet existing demands. Some 60 to 100 cargo ships collected off Cherbourg, waiting for dock space; and in September it began to get rainy and cold.

Stocks of gas, ammunition, blankets, tyres and winter uniforms all became critically short. The new buckled combat boot was now being issued, and it was felt that if treated with dubbin it would serve well enough as a winter boot for France. The war, however, was in Belgium, on the German border and in the Vosges mountains. The new boots were found to have little capacity to resist water or give warmth. With the Battle of the Bulge raging in December, winter overshoes and shoepacs became a priority; during that month the US Army in the ETO lost 56,000 men to non-battle causes such as frostbite and trench foot - by January 1945 these losses were almost equal to battle casualties. Winter boots finally arrived in significant numbers by late January. Overcoats and the new M1943 four-pocket combat jackets were also in short supply, since they had not been ordered or brought forward from the rear area Communications Zone (COM Z). The winter of 1944/45 also caught the US Army with few white camouflage suits (reversible anoraks) available at the front. White cotton bedsheets were pressed into service, cut and sewn by local civilians, QM and the GIs. Besides whitewashing vehicles and helmets, some men actually oversprayed their uniforms and equipment. Issue hooded snow camouflage suits finally began to appear in January. With the rapidly approaching spring the demand for such special items receded; and the Belgian ports also began to open.

## SERVICE DRESS

### Enlisted men

The US Army started the war wearing the M1939 four-pocket drab brown 18oz wool serge coat and trousers for service dress (Class A). Until the issue of the 'M1941' Parsons field jacket this was also intended to be one of the Army's field uniforms. The coat had two patch breast pockets and two inside skirt pockets, both with flaps. The back had bi-swing shoulder gussets, belt hooks and an integral cloth belt across the small of the back. A russet leather belt with plain brass bar buckle was to be worn with the coat until its deletion in 1941. The open lapelled front of the tunic closed with four 1-inch diameter brass buttons bearing the eagle seal of the US; half-inch eagle buttons were used for the pockets and epaulettes. In 1942 a simpler M1942 coat, without a bi-swing back, became the standard issue. Rank insignia (see MAA 347 for NCOs' rank insignia chart) were sewn on both sleeves above the elbow in OD green on black felt; silver-on-black stripes were also used. The four-pocket coat was made limited standard in September 1944 in favour of the M1944 wool field or 'Ike' jacket.

Creased wool serge trousers (M1939) were worn with the service coat, usually of the same or a slightly lighter shade of drab brown. In the ETO the drab, long-sleeved wool shirt was worn initially with a black but more commonly with a khaki necktie. The shirt had two breast pockets with clipped flaps and a buttoned front and cuffs. With the issue of the slightly darker 'Ike' jacket in 1944/45, both the older pants and newer matching equivalents were to be seen. Russet leather ankle boots or shoes were worn with the four-pocket service dress; with the new 'Ike' jacket, shined buckle boots were commonly worn; trousers were tucked into the boots paratrooper-style, or worn loose with low quarter shoes. Most shirts and pants were made with an extra length of material behind the buttonholes; this 'gas flap' would supposedly protect the skin against blistering agents.

A brown drab visored or 'saucer' hat with a russet leather visor was the initial issue service dress hat. A flat sidecap – the 'overseas' or 'garrison cap' – in brown drab and summer/tropical khaki versions was soon authorised and became the standard issue. Initially, the edges of the turn-up flap or 'curtain' round the base of the cap were piped in branch-specific colours, and a regimental crest or branch-of-service collar disc was sometimes worn on its left front. Piping soon became optional, and unpiped caps were commonly seen. The popular overseas cap was cheap, light and easy to pack; it acquired a nickname based on the female anatomy.

### Officers

The M1940 officer's hip length tunic ('coat') was generally similar to the enlisted version. It used a wool/barathea material of approximately 15-26oz weight, with a softer feel than the enlisted man's wool serge. The colour can best be described as a dark greenish/chocolate brown (officially, OD 51 dark shade). The breast pockets were pleated; the M1940 had bi-swing or pleated back seams and four brass buttons down the front. It was commonly worn with a russet Sam Browne belt with the crosstrap and twin-tongued thick bar brass buckle. The M1942 coat

October 1944: this retiring 5th Division master sergeant wears the four-pocket M1942 dress coat (tunic). The left sleeve shows below the rank insignia the five bars marking two-and-a-half years' overseas service in World War II; the three chevrons of one-and-a-half years' overseas during World War I; and ten re-enlistments. Below this is the officer's drab braid cuff trim, signifying his previous commissioned service in World War I. The light streak on the breast pocket is a scratch on the negative.





**Greenham Common airfield, UK, 5 June 1944: one of the famous sequence of photos showing the Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Forces, Gen Dwight D. Eisenhower, with men of the 101st Airborne Division. Speaking here to a lieutenant, 'Ike' wears the jacket he made famous; the paratroopers wear their M1942 uniforms, with tactical helmet markings – here the white heart of the 502nd PIR. The right-hand man has a general purpose ammo bag slung on his chest.**

and it was said by some British – in rueful jest, given their own clothes rationing – that Yank officers were obviously not as rich as everyone said if they couldn't afford to buy uniforms with matching trousers.

### **ETO jacket**

When the first GIs arrived in England in 1942 they saw the British battledress uniform (BD). A limited number of BDs were issued to the Americans; and their warmth, and the neat appearance which could be achieved with the waist-length two-pocket blouse, was well liked. (US senior officers were presumably judging not by the coarse serge 'Other Ranks' issue blouse, but by the privately tailored versions worn by their British counterparts.) By regulation US general officers are given a wide latitude in personal dress; Gen Eisenhower especially liked the short blouse, and had a sort of American version tailored for his own use, with a tighter fit and smoother cloth than the serge original.

The ETO staff then began to push for an American version, and in 1943 the ETO Quartermaster brought out the first model; this was essentially a version of the 'M1941' Parsons field jacket but made of the same rough, heavy-textured wool serge as the BD, warm and easy to care for. It featured exposed plastic buttons, 'handwarmer' pockets with flaps, a buckle-across waist tab and bi-swing back pleats. The second model to be produced looked more like a standard British BD blouse, with exposed plastic buttons, flapped patch breast pockets, epaulettes and a bi-swing back pleat. The ETO jacket was not an uncommon sight, particularly among Air Corps units in Britain. The QM in the States could not get the rough BD wool serge, but was making its own plans for a short blouse-style jacket.

eliminated the bi-swing back and replaced the bottom button with a smooth plastic one, which fitted under an integral cloth waist belt with a slip-through brass buckle, replacing the Sam Browne. Officers' tunics also sported a half-inch wide drab cloth braid around each cuff. Warrant officers wore the same tunic with greenish cuff braid. (See MAA 342 for officers' and warrant officers' insignia.) Beige/khaki trousers or breeches – called 'pinks' – were to be worn with this tunic. Russet brown shoes, khaki shirt and black (early) or khaki necktie completed the uniform. This outfit was sometimes called 'pinks and greens';



### M1944 'Ike' jacket

Based on recommendations from the ETO, the QM in the USA designed a short version of the four-pocket service coat. This new jacket was made from a slightly darker drab material; matching trousers with flapped rear pockets were also manufactured. The jacket had epaulettes, two pleated breast pockets with pointed flaps, buttoned cuffs, all buttons concealed, and a belted waist with take-up buckles on each hip. Unlike the British issue BD blouse, but like the ETO jacket, it also featured open lapels. The QM intended for this jacket to serve as both a field and service jacket replacing the four-pocket tunic; GIs were supposed to have it loose fitting for field wear, and to use it as a liner under the M1943 four-pocket combat jacket. However, the GIs had other ideas: they had it tailored tight and wore it almost exclusively as a service jacket.

This 'wool field jacket' first began limited issue in mid-1944 and was an immediate success, being universally nicknamed after the general who had shown the way. Because of limited availability, many GIs based in England had their four-pocket service tunics cut and retailored into a brass-buttoned version of the short 'Ike' jacket. After VE-Day GIs were issued the M1944 jacket almost exclusively. Rank was worn on both sleeves; insignia were in OD green on black felt, silver on black, or, more commonly, the newer green-on-black version.

An officer's version of the 'Ike' jacket was produced in dark green/chocolate (OD shade 51) and was worn with appropriate insignia; the officer's cuff trim was usually in a dark shade. This jacket – of which custom-tailored variations were also seen – was worn with either matching trousers or 'pinks'.

### Branch colours and insignia

Each branch within the US Army had its own distinctive colour. This colour was only normally seen on flags, in some of the embellishments on officers' dress blue uniforms, in the cord piping on the curtain of enlisted men's overseas caps, and in the cords of the old campaign hat.

Each branch also had its own collar insignia. For officers these were of cut-out design, normally in brass but in some cases with additional coloured enamelling; chaplains' insignia were silver. They were worn on both lower lapels of the officer's service coat, below cut-out 'U.S.' national cyphers on the upper lapels. When in shirtsleeve order the branch badge was pinned to the wearer's left collar and the rank insignia (see MAA 342 for chart) to his right. Enlisted men wore the national cypher and the branch insignia on brass discs on the right and left upper lapels respectively.

The colours and insignia of the major branches normally encountered in combat zones are described in the table on page 8.

### Distinctive insignia

Many units were authorised to wear heraldic-style crests in coloured enamels, which were sometimes displayed in the ETO on the officers' and enlisted

Normandy, summer 1944: an officers' orders group at a battalion HQ of the 29th Division (the censor's pen has scribbled over the right-hand man's patch). All wear the so-called 'tanker's jacket'; the man sitting in the middle has a fighting knife sticking out of his custom-made buckled leather legging. The kneeling man has British-made hobnailed boots, and an officer's bar painted on his helmet back; in the ETO all officers and NCOs were supposed to have a 2in-wide white bar painted here, vertical for officers and horizontal for NCOs. While not universally applied, these were commonly seen throughout 1944/45.



men's service dress when out of the line. They were displayed by officers centred on the service coat epaulettes, top inwards, and by enlisted men on the lower coat lapels; EMs could also pin one to the left front of the overseas cap.

### Shoulder patches

During the American Civil War the Union Army began to use cloth identification patches, distinctively shaped for each corps and coloured for each division, and normally worn on the headgear. The British Army used many complex systems of distinctive sleeve patches at battalion, brigade and divisional level during World War I; these 'battle badges' were normally geometric shapes in solid colours, identifying units within a formation by their colour, shape and number. General Pershing also authorised the use of shoulder patches within the American Expeditionary Force in France, but the war ended as they came into issue. These differed from most of the British systems in being actual insignia rather than systems to identify units. By World War II the use of such patches – officially, 'shoulder sleeve insignia' – within the US Army was common.

A division used a standard patch throughout its organisation, usually based on the previously designed World War I patch. In general these were embroidered multi-coloured patches, worn at the top of the left sleeve. The symbols used ran the gamut from heraldic designs, through visual references to the home state, to punning plays on words. Independent units, corps and armies also used patches, as did the Army Air Corps. Corps patches were normally blue on white, and commonly used Roman numerals. Those GIs not assigned to specific divisions usually wore corps or army patches.

Airborne units displayed an additional 'Airborne' title above their patch to show their status; they also wore a parachute, glider, or later a combined patch on their overseas caps. All armoured divisions and independent tank battalions used the triangular



### SELECTION OF ARMY BRANCH COLOURS & INSIGNIA

<i>Branch</i>	<i>Colour/s</i>	<i>Insignia</i>
Army Air Force	Ultramarine piped w. golden yellow	Wings & propeller
Armored Cavalry	Green piped w. white	WWI tank
Chaplains	Yellow	Crossed sabres
(all-officer branch)	Black	Cross (Christian); Two tablets & Star of David (Jewish)
Chemical Warfare Service	Cobalt blue piped w. golden yellow	Benzol ring & crossed retorts
Coast Artillery	Scarlet	Crossed cannon, shell in red oval
Engineer Corps	Scarlet piped w. blue	Castle
Field Artillery	Scarlet	Crossed cannon
Infantry	Light blue	Crossed rifles
Medical Dept	Maroon piped w. white	Caduceus
Military Police	Yellow piped w. green	Crossed pistols
Ordnance Dept	Crimson piped w. yellow	Flaming shell
Quartermaster Corps	Buff	Eagle surmounting wheel, crossed sword & key
Signal Corps	Orange & white	Crossed signal flags & flaming torch
Tank Destroyer units	Golden orange	M3 SP gun (halftrack)
Transportation Corps	Brick red piped w. golden yellow	Winged car wheel, on shield, on ship's wheel
Women's Army Corps	Old gold piped w. moss green	Head of Athena

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OPPOSITE **Gen Davis, the only black general officer in the US Army during World War II, was a veteran whose service stretched back to the Spanish-American War of 1898. He served on support and QM staffs in the ETO, and was partly responsible for the integration of squads and platoons of black GIs into infantry combat units in the winter of 1944/45. Here he wears a custom-made woollen 'ETO jacket' with exposed buttons and 'hand-warmer' slash pockets.**

**D-Day, Utah beach: two 4th Division medics work on a wounded comrade. Note the 'Ivy' patch on the left shoulder of the casualty's HBTs - not a usual practice in Normandy. The wounded medic still wears his assault gasmask and yoke-style web harness. Medics generally went in on D-Day wearing a minimum of red cross markings.**



Armored Force patch divided red/yellow/blue (for the antecedent artillery, cavalry and infantry branches) differentiated by divisional and unit numerals. (It was only after VE-Day that they began to add strips to the bottom of their triangular patches bearing their nicknames, the 2nd Armored Division's 'Hell on Wheels' being among the first seen.)

Patches were machine-embroidered onto khaki cotton cloth; original World War II patches sometimes show the khaki around the edges, and have a soft off-white rear surface. Some patches were fabricated overseas by local tailors, and bullion-embroidered versions were sometimes available. GIs who served in combat with more than one organisation were authorised to wear the patch of their original combat unit on the right shoulder of the service dress, at the same time as the current patch on the left.

### **Fourragères**

In World War I both the 1st and 2nd Infantry Divisions were awarded the right to wear a *fourragère* or French-style left shoulder cord, in the green flecked with red of the Croix de Guerre ribbon, as a collective decoration to mark their service to France. In World War II members of those divisions were also authorised to wear it as a remembrance of their forbears' service, but this was rarely seen; actual World War I veterans still in service sometimes wore the fourragère, however.

During World War II the French began once again to award the fourragère to US units; the great majority of these awards were made near the end of the war. When seen worn by GIs the cords tended to be of the old World War I issue; the fourragère for the World War II Croix de Guerre had a slightly different coloration, of red flecked with green, and was in particularly short supply. Post-war GIs wore both kinds. Availability of these items from ruined and only recently liberated France

was naturally disorganised. There were two design variants; one was a simple plaited cord, intended to be worn from the left epaulette button down the back of the shoulder, passing forward under the armpit and fixing by a loop to a front button, with a hanging brass ferrule. The other, more elaborate version had a long extra length of smooth cord which was supposed to be arranged under the epaulette so as to hang on the outside of the arm in two loops. Unknowing GIs did wear them on the correct shoulder, but in any number of ways. These cords were also awarded by

A wounded lieutenant of the 506th PIR, 101st Airborne Division is helped ashore from an LST at Southampton, England, on 9 June 1944. At left, a trench-coated lieutenant carries his web belt, complete with the canvas scabbard for a folding-stock M1A1 carbine. The black medic wears the issue raincoat.

Again, note the white 'playing card suit' tactical marking on the sides of the injured officer's helmet - a common practice in the Airborne, to distinguish regiments and sub-units. All officers were to have their rank painted or mounted on the helmet front, like these two lieutenants; after D-Day this was commonly ignored by front-line leaders. Helmet nets of various types were issued throughout the ETO, with finer-mesh examples used from late 1944; elasticated helmet bands were to be seen in 1945.



the Belgian and Dutch governments. The red/green Belgian Croix de Guerre fourragère was worn on the right shoulder; the orange cord of the Dutch Wilhelm's Order was worn on the left, passing into the breast pocket. (Examples are illustrated on Plate H.)

Most units seem to have been semi-officially notified of their authorisation to wear these distinctions soon after VE-Day. It commonly took until the 1950s for the official orders authorising these awards to be confirmed.

### Women's Army Corps

Women's Army uniforms were almost universally condemned for their poor fit and appearance. By VE-Day, however, they had some of the most practical and best-looking uniforms of any of the women's services. The 1942 drab service dress for enlisted WAACs/WACs consisted of a hip-length tunic with four brass buttons, in the same drab brownish colour (OD shade 54) as used by male personnel. It had scallop-flapped internal breast pockets and plain slashed lower pockets. A skirt reaching to just below the knee, and the stiff-billed 'Hobby' hat, were both in matching drab brown (see also MAA 342, Plate B2). A russet brown shoulder-purse was issued to be carried with this uniform. WAAC/WAC officers wore the same general style of uniform as the enlisted women. Their coat and hat were made of wool barathea in the Army officers' dark green/chocolate colour (OD shade 51), and worn with a skirt made in the colour of officers' 'pinks'. The first coat issued had transverse shoulderstraps and an integral belt; the later model had normal epaulettes and no belt. In service dress, WACs wore sensible russet brown laced low-heel shoes, and sometimes brown gloves.

With the 1943 enrolment of the Auxiliaries of the WAAC into the regular Army the new Women's Army Corps dropped their 'walking buzzard' insignia in favour of the standard US eagle. They retained the use of the Athena head branch insignia, though many WACs serving with a specific branch - e.g. the Air Corps - wore that collar insignia instead.

In late 1944 WACs in Europe followed the current fashion, receiving a specially designed 'Ike' jacket with a matching skirt, trousers, and an overseas cap of more curved shape than the men's (see Plate D1). This jacket was modelled on the GI issue field/service jacket, both with and without breast pockets. It was made in both enlisted drab and officer's dark green/chocolate colours, and proved very popular. Like the men's version, the WACs' short jacket soon became the standard issue for the 'GI Jane'.

An off-duty dress was authorised in 1944 consisting of a fairly plain-looking, long-sleeved, knee-length dress of wool crêpe. This came in both beige (summer) and dark khaki (winter) colours; it had concealed buttons, a belt, patch breast pockets and epaulettes. Basic branch insignia were worn on the collar. A standard issue drab or matching beige overseas cap was worn with this dress.

England, Elizabeth senior N her bars gold-pipe overseas epaulettes insignia, ETO and sergeant ETO sho worth of (See also strong co officer's ranks' tu





England, 1944: HM Queen Elizabeth with a WAC officer and senior NCO. The captain wears her bars on the left front of the gold-piped WAC officer's overseas cap and on her tunic epaulettes, the Athena branch insignia, and the ribbons of the ETO and WAC medals. The first sergeant wears the generic ETO shoulder patch, and a year's worth of overseas service bars. (See also Plate D1.) Note the strong contrast between the dark officer's and lighter enlisted ranks' tunics.

### Army Nurse Corps

The ANC was an auxiliary organisation originating in the Spanish-American War. These nurses were essentially contracted medical professionals who were, like the WAAC, finally given full Army status in 1943/44. They started the war wearing a dark blue tunic and skirt service uniform. Their working outfit was the classic white dress with nurse's cap and blue wool cape with red lining. They also used a seersucker white and brown striped work dress with insignia. In 1944 the ANC converted to the standard WAC uniforms available at that date. Standard officer insignia were worn, with a branch emblem of a brass caduceus with a superimposed black 'N'; most nurses were second lieutenants, but were paid less than their male Army counterparts. Nurses had a

plain beige off-duty dress – this was in fact copied by the WAC (see above). The front of the nurse's service dress hat was similar to the WAC 'Hobby' hat, but the back was rounded to the crown.

## ORGANISATION

### Corps, Armies and Army Groups

A corps consisted of a minimum of two divisions. In the order of battle of the US Army in the ETO in 1945 we find about 18 corps – the uncertainty over the exact number lying in the presence of a number of divisions under direct command of an army. Most of these corps had three divisions, some four, one five and one – XVI Corps of 15th Army – had six. A representative example is Gen Walker's XX Corps of 3rd Army, which comprised four divisions – the 4th and 6th Armored, and 76th and 80th Infantry. In addition a corps normally had many independent units of tanks, artillery, engineers and other specialists under direct command.

An army was formed from two or more corps. Ten armies were formed for service in World War II. The 2nd and 4th Armies were stationed in the US and consisted of divisions under formation. By 1945 the last of the divisional units based in the US had left these two armies and were headed for the front. The 1st, 3rd and 9th Armies served in France, Belgium and Germany. The 7th Army served in Sicily, the South of France and Germany. The 5th Army was stationed in Italy. The 6th and 8th Armies served in the Pacific, with the 10th formed on Okinawa. As an example, in 1945 Gen Hodges' 1st Army consisted of III, V, VII and XVIII (Airborne Corps) and totalled 17 divisions.

Army groups were formed with a minimum of two armies. In 1945 the Twelfth Army Group (Gen Omar Bradley) consisted of the 1st and 3rd Armies (Gens Hodges and Patton). The US 9th Army (Gen Simpson) was traded back and forth between the Twelfth and the British/Canadian Twenty-First Army Group (Gen Montgomery). The Sixth Army Group (Gen Jacob Devers) consisted of the 7th Army (Gen Patch) and 1st French Army (Gen de Lattre). The Fifteenth Army Group

(Gen Mark Clark) was made up of the 5th Army (Gen Truscott) plus all the other Allied forces in Italy. In the Pacific, Army units served under Theater Commanders (Gen Douglas MacArthur and Adm Chester Nimitz). Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) commanded all ground forces in Europe (Gen Dwight Eisenhower).

**Metz, late November 1944:** riflemen and a BAR gunner from the 5th Division check houses for enemy 'stay-behinds'. Notice that only one wears a pack (to which he has strapped a K-ration box) and the others have their blankets, raincoats or ponchos stuffed through the back of their belts. The Germans turned Metz into a fortress which held up the Allied advance for many weeks; it finally fell to XX Corps of Gen Patton's 3rd Army on 22 November after a fortnight's hard fighting. At that time MajGen Walton Walker's XX Corps consisted of MajGen Stafford Irwin's 5th Infantry Division, the 90th Infantry Division, the 7th Armored Division, and the 2nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Group; but divisions were often switched between corps at short notice, and by the following spring XX Corps' composition was entirely different.

### Rotation of divisions

In World War I entire divisions were withdrawn from combat for periodic rest and rebuilding. In the Pacific in World War II the short, violent battles for island groups and the time lag between invasions helped accomplish this rest cycle for Marine and some Army units. In the Mediterranean, Sicily fell in 30 days and the preparations for the Salerno and Anzio landings gave 5th Army units a reasonable chance to rest. In the ETO, and later in Italy, this cycling of units for rest was the exception.

Once a division was committed into combat, it was expected to stay at the front. During the war the 1st Infantry Division spent 442 days in combat, of which 317 days were served in the ETO. In France and Germany alone the 'Big Red One' lost 206 per cent of its strength to casualties; 85-90 per cent of this loss was from the three infantry regiments. During the 2nd Infantry Division's 314 days of ETO service it lost 184 per cent of its strength. Among those infantry divisions which entered combat in Normandy and fought through the eleven months to VE-Day, the average loss was about 200 per cent of establishment.

This rate of casualties had a terribly wearing effect on units, and gave the ever-dwindling handful of old hands an even more fatalistic view of their fate than usual. As the war dragged on it seemed that only a 'million dollar wound' was going to get a GI out of the war with all his limbs. The exception was the Airborne force (82nd and 101st Divisions). They did suffer severe losses, and were kept in the line for longer than they should have been after D-Day, but they were pulled out of the line to keep them available for future airborne operations.



### Replacements

The giant olive drab machine needed a constant flow of additional troops to keep up its strength. The AEF in World War I solved this problem by disbanding about every fourth division arriving in France and redistributing its men. In World War II the Army refused to allow this, and depended on individuals sent from the US to fill the gaps. Emphasising its machine-like viewpoint, the Army called these men 'replacements'. In 1944 the number of men individually

trained for posting as replacement parts rapidly fell short of the needs of the ravenous armies in France. The units based in the USA were soon mercilessly plundered. This weakened these training units, and sent bewildered replacements forward to units with which they had no connection. The semi-trained GIs lurched through the system until they arrived at forward replacement depots, called 'Repple-Depples'. Here combat-experienced GIs, sent forward again after recovering from wounds, mingled with the green replacements for days or even weeks as they awaited new assignments.

The 'savvy' veterans wanted to return to their old units, and commonly went AWOL (Absent Without Leave) to hitch a ride forward - whereupon their old outfits looked the other way and gladly took them in. The fresh replacements were ushered in small groups to their new units, usually in the front line and in the dark. Friendless and almost untrained in surviving this deadly environment, they were killed and wounded in droves, often still anonymous to the GIs of their platoons. In historian Stephen Ambrose's *Citizen Soldier* he says of the 'reppledepple' system: 'Had the Germans been given a free hand to devise a replacement system for the ETO, one that would do the Americans most harm and least good, they could not have done a better job.' General Norman Cota, who distinguished himself in combat as second-in-command of the 29th Division on Omaha beach, considered it both foolish and downright cruel to send a green young man into action in this way, robbed of the psychological support of buddies he had trained with and leaders he knew.

The authorities slowly realised the brutal and wasteful nature of the system, but did little to improve it beyond changing the name 'replacements' to 'reinforcements'. Some divisions took it on themselves to introduce reforms, however; they began holding replacements back after their arrival for (re)training by veteran NCOs. These men were then hopefully introduced to their new units out of the front line, with a chance to get to know, and be known by, their leaders and comrades. These replacements had a much higher survival rate and more quickly became assets to their units.

In MAA 347 we mention the 10,000-odd African-American soldiers of non-combat units who volunteered for infantry service in response to Gen Eisenhower's call during the manpower crisis of winter 1944/45. Other classes of recent civilians and soldiers were also rushed forward to swell the ranks of the rifle companies, including deferred college men (ASTP), surplus air cadets, and GIs stripped out of anti-aircraft, tank

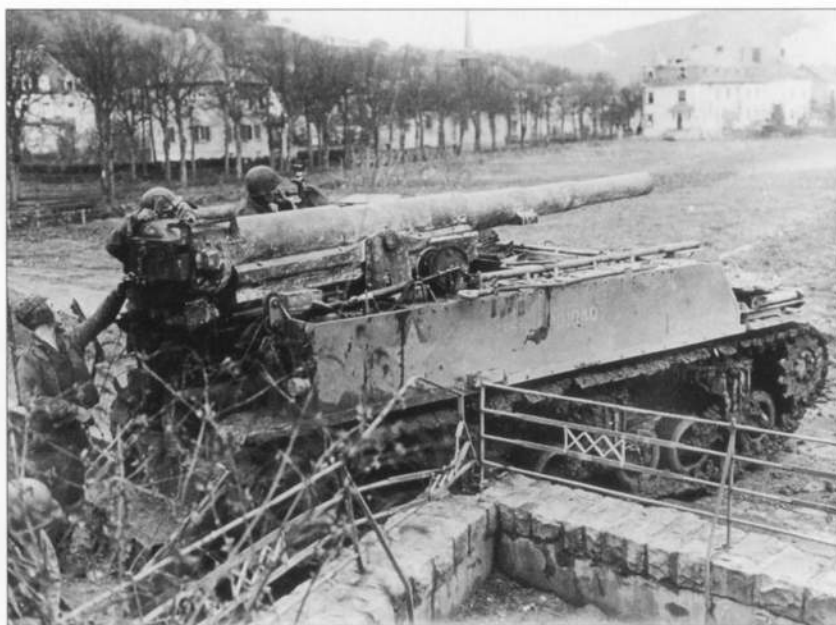


**January 1945: a 'lost patrol' of the 94th Division pose for a photo, happy to be back in the fold and getting canned rations. Both Parsons and M1943 field jackets can be seen, and note the 94th's patch worn by the medical tech-corporal at right foreground. At left centre, the BAR man's weapon still has its bipod (often discarded), and he carries the cleaning kit on his belt. Peering over his shoulder is a dark-bearded veteran; the smooth-faced boy at extreme left is probably a more recent replacement.**



**March 1945: crossing the Rhine in a DUKW, a lieutenant from an amphibious unit glances back at GIs of the 89th Division. Many seem to be wearing the new two-part M1944 pack system (see Plate G2).**

**Luxembourg, February 1945: a gunner checks the angle on the barrel of his M12 155mm self-propelled howitzer. These guns were sometimes used, as here, in the direct fire role during serious street and fortress fighting; the effect was devastating.**



destroyer, and other support units. These were intelligent and sometimes seasoned men, making the quality of replacements received at the end of the war surprisingly superior.

## ARTILLERY

Historically, Americans have been a technically minded people. As early as the 1840s the 'flying artillery' of the Mexican War earned a high reputation, and at most periods, including World War II,

the artillery has been the most effective branch in the US Army. The artillery suffered far fewer casualties than the infantry, and this contributed to its level of professionalism and cohesion. The quality of its mostly redesigned and sometimes motorised guns was about average for the period, but US-developed fire control and ammunition made all the difference.

Ammunition was first rate and usually in good supply. By German standards, US employment of artillery was lavish. In part due to its availability, US leaders were much more willing to expend ammunition than men. The introduction of air-bursting VT (radar) ammunition in late 1944 made the US guns even more deadly. With the use of Forward Observers, light spotter aircraft and telephone/radio communications to tie them together at a Fire Direction Center (FDC) they had unequalled potential to co-ordinate their fires, creating a specially devastating 'Time on Target' (ToT) technique. ToT was executed by mathematically co-ordinating different guns at different locations to land their shells on target at exactly the same moment. The FDC's accuracy and speed in calculating the complex mathematics was aided by a US-developed artillery Graphical Firing Table (GFT) slide rule.

### 105mm howitzer

The war began with the Army using both the old French 75mm howitzer and the newer M5 3in (75mm) gun. By 1943 the 75mm was rapidly disappearing from all but anti-tank work. The M2 105mm howitzer soon became the most common US artillery piece of the war. It had a range of 12,200 yards (11km, 7 miles) and used high explosive (HE), white phosphorus (WP) and smoke ammunition. The towed gun with shield weighed about 2.5 tons; the 75mm and 105mm shared



the same carriage. The 105mm was also mounted as the M7 Priest self-propelled gun, based on an M3 Grant tank hull and weighing about 25 tons. The M7 had a seven-man crew and was also armed with a .50cal machine gun in a kind of forward 'pulpit' – thus its name. It was first issued in 1942 and over 3,000 were ultimately built.

### Pack howitzers

The 75mm pack howitzer was developed after World War I as a light field piece that could be broken down and 'packed' by six mules in rough terrain; it was also modified as a horse-drawn weapon. By World War II the 1.1-ton M3 pack howitzer was issued to infantry units to fill out their cannon companies, in which role it was commonly used in the Pacific. An airborne M8 version weighing 1,300lbs (590kg) was parachuted or glidered in for use by the artillery units of the airborne divisions: A larger 105mm pack howitzer weighing 1.3 tons was available by 1944; its accuracy left something to be desired and at 8,300 yards (7.6km, 4.7 miles) its range fell about 1,000 yards short of that of the 75mm. Used in the Pacific, Italy and in airborne operations, the little pack guns did yeoman service.

### Heavy artillery

Based on the French 155mm GPF gun, the 155mm gun/howitzer also proved a very successful weapon system. (Note that both the 155mm and 8in artillery pieces came in different 'howitzer' and longer-barrelled, longer-ranging 'gun' versions.) The new M1 155mm howitzer weighed 6.4 tons and its HE, WP and smoke shells had a range of 16,300 yards (14.9km, 9.2 miles). The longer-barrelled M1 155mm gun weighed 15 tons and could fire HE and AP shells over 25,000 yards (22.8km, 14.2 miles). Some of the older M1918A1 155mm guns were mounted on M3 Grant hulls as M12 self-propelled artillery. After limited use in North Africa, six battalions were belatedly fielded in Normandy. It was guessed that the guns would be useful for direct fire operations against fortifications, and indeed they made short work of all but the stoutest, as well as providing general indirect fire support.

Due to availability of British ammunition a 4.5in gun was also built to supplement the 155mm; this was slightly heavier than the 155mm howitzer at 6.6 tons, and its 55lb ammunition did not have the hitting power of the 155mm's 95lb shell. The heavy 8in howitzer shared

Under camouflage netting, gunners of an African-American artillery unit man the standard M2 105mm howitzer during a fire mission; note the locally-cut timber under the wheels. Nine independent black artillery units served in France and Germany, of which the 969th FA Bn (Colored), an VIII Corps outfit equipped with M1A1 155mm howitzers, won a Distinguished Unit Citation for its defence of Bastogne.



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the 155mm's gun carriage, weighed about 15 tons and had a range of 18,500 yards (16.8km, 10.5 miles). Independent corps artillery battalions were usually armed with 155mm ('Long Tom'), 4.5in and 8in pieces.

### Super-heavy artillery

The 'siege gun' version of the 8in gun weighed 35 tons; used by both the US Navy and Army, it fired shells weighing over 200lbs (90.7kg) to ranges of up to 35,000 yards (32km, 19.8 miles). The GIs learned that if they drilled a small hole through the shell fuze it caused a satisfying screaming sound as the round went down range. The 240mm howitzer weighed 32 tons and could fire its 360lb (163kg) HE round 25,200 yards (22.8km, 14 miles). Both the 240mm howitzer and the 8in gun used a wheelless split trail carriage. They were employed for the first time in the defence of Anzio; these weapons were later transferred to France for use against the fortified port cities.

### Rockets

Mindful of the success of the Russians and Germans in deploying rocket-propelled 'artillery', the US also fielded rockets in late 1944. The 4.5in finned rocket was used with limited success in saturation bombardment missions. The rockets were mounted on truck beds or on the turrets of some unhappy Sherman tanks (model T34). As the rockets had a large launch signature, it was expedient for rocket units to 'shoot and scoot'.

### Anti-tank guns

In 1939 production of the M3 37mm anti-tank gun began; this was generally based on the German 37mm, and over 20,000 were made in 1939-43. This drop-breach gun weighed just over 900lbs (408kg) and was used both as an AT gun and in the M3/M5 Stuart tank series; it could fire HE, AP, and a very useful canister ('grapeshot') round. The 37mm was adequate for use against Japanese tanks, but by the time of its deployment against the Germans in Tunisia it was ineffective. By 1944 the 37mm was only to be seen in the Pacific and in US light tanks.

The need for a heavier AT gun led to US production of the current British 6-pounder (57mm). The US M1 57mm weighed 2,700 lbs (1225kg) and fired AP or HE rounds, and



La Haye du Puits, Normandy, summer 1944: a heavy weapons team from the 79th Division bring up their 81mm mortar. The tube and the baseplate each weighed 45lbs (20kg), and the GIs use shoulder pads to cushion the load. In the left background one man wears the pannier-like ammo vest to carry rounds.

July 1944: in the wrecked streets of St Lô, Normandy, GIs unhitch a 57mm anti-tank gun from a halftrack smothered in their slung packs. This US version of the British 6-pdr AT gun was barely adequate by 1944 standards but was used for lack of anything better.





was known for its vicious recoil. Some 16,000 had been made when production ceased in 1944; although it continued in service throughout the war it was obsolete for AT work by that date.

The M5 3in (75mm) artillery piece was used for anti-tank work with good results in Tunisia. With a redesigned gunshield this 2.5-ton piece gave effective service until VE-Day. The M2 90mm AT gun used in the M36 tank destroyer and M26 tank was also built as a split-trail towed AT gun, but none reached combat before VE-Day.

### Anti-aircraft guns

The US began the war with the M2 3in AA gun and a new M1 90mm gun. Also quick to come on line was the SCR 268/584 radar fire control system. A M2 90mm gun with gunshield was produced in 1943 which could be used for both AT and AA fire. The combination of radar guidance and the VT fuze made this AA gun extremely effective. The M2 weighed 16 tons and could fire up to 34,000 feet (10,360m, 6 miles). A 120mm AA gun was fielded in 1945 that could fire over 47,000 feet (14,325 meters).

For tactical AA defence both the water- and air-cooled .50cal machine guns were used, as was the M1 US version of the British 40mm Bofors gun. The M16/17 halftrack mounting quadruple .50s in an electrically powered Maxson turret was the most common AA seen at unit level; some 3,500 were built from May 1943. A towed trailer version of the quad mount, and an M15 halftrack with two .50s and one 37mm gun, were less common.

### Tactical air support

Air forces naturally tend to see their roles as fighting for air superiority and attacking strategic targets; ground troops are only marginally assisted by such operations. The German *Blitzkrieg* of 1940 had demonstrated that aircraft could also be used as mobile artillery, but the US Army Air Corps was reluctant to be tied down to directly supporting ground actions. This to some extent negated Allied air superiority over the battlefield, and in Tunisia and Sicily it was usually the Luftwaffe that did the strafing and fighterbombing. By 1944 Air Corps Gen Quesada planned to rectify this failure in the ETO by assigning special teams of airmen – including experienced pilots – to accompany spearhead ground units as liaison officers.

The Ninth Air Force had seven tactical fighter bomber groups (each usually of three squadrons) and one photo-recce group, specifically tasked with supporting the ground troops. Each corps, division, armoured combat command and mechanised cavalry group headquarters

Operation Varsity, the Allied airborne crossing of the Rhine in March 1945, saw the first combat use of the 'recoilless rifle'; both the M18 57mm and M20 75mm were issued in limited numbers. Here GIs of the 17th Airborne Division prepare to fire the 57mm weapon, which was found to be an excellent replacement for the 2.36in bazooka; it fired HE and smoke as well as AP rounds. Note that the gunner has sewn a carbine ammo pouch to the sleeve of his M1943 field jacket.







**Belgium, winter 1944:**  
90mm anti-aircraft gunners of the 11th AA Group firing furiously in an attempt to bring down a German V-1 flying bomb on its way to Antwerp or London. Several belts of US and British AA units were set up to try to counter this new threat.

Grasshoppers and the artillery was such that the appearance of this low, slow, flimsy and unarmed light aircraft could paralyse an entire German sector.

## ENGINEERS

The combat engineer battalion assigned to each division was an important and valuable asset. They received some of the most rigorous training in the Army. Engineers were generally well armed and provided with .50cal machine guns and flamethrowers as well as mines and explosives. They were responsible for the bulldozers and bridging equipment so vital for breaching obstacles. Considering the multiple skills displayed by the engineers, it was the common GI joke that 'At least they were learning a trade'.

In Normandy, the engineers blasted holes in the massive banked hedgerows and, along with Ordnance, welded the Cullin pronged hedgerow-busting devices to the fronts of tanks. The following winter the 1128th Engineer Combat Group in Bastogne and engineer units throughout the Bulge repeatedly proved themselves key players in delaying and stopping the German spearheads.

The bulldozer was essentially an American invention, and it proved a life-saver in building and maintaining the logistical link between the front lines and the supply depots. In the Pacific it was the 'dozer that created resupply lines and airstrips in the jungles of New Guinea and the Philippines. Some bulldozers were fitted with an armoured cab because of snipers; and for obstacle-clearance under fire 'dozer blades were also fitted to Sherman tanks.

A major mission of the combat engineers was dealing with mines. Both the US anti-tank (MIA1) and anti-personnel mine were considered

had an AAF radio team; Tactical Air Liaison Officers rode radio-equipped jeeps (and sometimes tanks) with forward units, vectoring the P-47s onto immediate targets just like artillery FOs; ground-fired smoke and WP rounds were also used to mark targets for the aviators. This tighter co-ordination between ground and air became a critical part in the success of US ground operations.

It was also over the objections of the Air Corps that L4 Piper Cub 'Grasshopper' planes were procured for scouting and FO work. By 1944 the co-ordination between the

adequate but under-powered. The Hawkins mine was a light device capable (just) of blowing the track off a tank, and was used primarily by Airborne troops in Normandy. For mine location and lifting the SCR 625 mine detector was used; this could find metal mines buried up to 18 inches deep. It was fragile, however; not waterproof; and required the operator to stand exposed while using it. Probes or bayonets carefully shoved into the earth at a 30-degree angle, by GIs inching forward and making a finger-tip search of the ground ahead, were a common if nerve-racking expedient.

The Japanese rarely used buried mines but the Germans frequently employed them. For anti-personnel work the German 'S' mine or 'Bouncing Betty' was commonly encountered; once set off by a 7lb foot pressure the initial charge blew the mine about 4ft into the air before the bursting charge sent the shrapnel filling scything in all directions. The smaller 'Schu' mine was made of wood and thus difficult to detect; its ½lb to 2lb charge was capable of shattering a man's leg and blowing off his foot. The Teller mine was the powerful German anti-tank pattern. Many of these mines were booby-trapped when laid to prevent their extraction. The GIs did not envy the combat engineer his job.

In addition to mine detection, engineers also used explosives themselves. The British-developed 'Bangalore torpedo' was a 5ft long, 2in diameter pipe filled with 8.5lbs of ammonium nitrate explosive. Bangalore torpedoes were pushed ahead on the surface of the ground to clear obstacles; as well as cutting wire entanglements – their primary purpose – they could set off concealed enemy mines by sympathetic detonation. (A disadvantage was that nearby mines which were not set off by the explosion would commonly become 'tenderised', i.e. very sensitive and hazardous.) Sections of pipe could be fitted together to lengthen the charge; a larger version called a 'snake' was also used. Other explosives used by combat engineers included 'primacord' (detcord), and ½lb or 1lb blocks of TNT.

Bridging was another primary function of engineers. Pneumatic raft pontoon bridges were common, as was the use of the British-developed prefabricated steel girder Bailey bridge with a 40-ton loading capacity (i.e. capable of carrying tanks). The Bailey was quick to put in, but erecting it



**Mine-clearing, Trier, Germany, March 1945: engineers from the 10th Armored Division pay the price of getting it wrong. The nearer casualty has a chance, and the medics are dressing his badly injured face, left arm and left leg (note that the left-hand medic has his own serial number stencilled on top of his helmet). The casualty lying ignored in the background seems to be dead already from massive head injuries.**



Mine-planting, Hotton, Belgium, December 1944: a GI – probably from the 51st Engineer Combat Battalion, a 1st Army unit operating with Combat Command R of 3rd Armored Division – carefully places an anti-tank mine to slow up the advance of 116th Panzer Division during the German offensive in 'the Bulge'. On 21 December this important bridge over the Ourthe was successfully defended by a scratch force of HQ personnel, engineers and two Sherman tanks. This man wears his cartridge belt hanging open on its suspenders, for comfort.

was found to be a difficult and dangerous task for the engineers; the US Army was slow to embrace the Bailey, although it revolutionised the deployment of tactical bridges. It should be noted that the Army accepted the Corps of Engineers requirement that tanks have a limited width and weight (30–35 tons) to match existing tactical bridging capacity. This limitation further slowed the development of a heavier modernised tank.

## TANKS

The development and characteristics of US tanks in World War II is a vast subject covered in detail in many other publications (for two, see the inside back cover). The following brief notes are intended only as a very basic introduction.

### M4 Sherman

The majority of US vehicles of the 1940s were gasoline (petrol) powered and mechanically very reliable. Unfortunately, tanks using gasoline (as opposed to diesel fuel) are more likely to burst into flames when hit. The German and British nicknames for the M4 Sherman, 'Tommy Cooker' and 'Ronson' – after a popular brand of cigarette lighter – were significant: over 60 per cent of knocked-out Shermans burned. (The greatest factor in the initial detonation was loose or unprotected stowage of main gun ammunition, however.) Nevertheless, the Sherman series was the best tank available to the Western Allies in early 1942; and faced by the vast task of outfitting not only US but also Allied armies, America kept the Sherman in production throughout the war. It weighed between 30 and 35 tons, mounted a short 75mm gun and two or three machine guns, and had a crew of five; maximum armour thickness was 50mm (hull) and 75mm (turret).

In the constant race with German designers, US tanks rapidly fell behind in both armour protection and main armament. By the time of the Tunisian campaign the Sherman was already being outclassed by the new long 75mm gun mounted in late models of the German PzKw IV, but US tank losses were written off as due to poor training and tactics, soon to be corrected. The Sicilian and southern Italian campaigns saw minimal tank-vs-tank action; and the US Army landed in France in June 1944 expecting the Sherman to do well against the opposition. The actual experience of the crews – at first trapped in the tight country of the Normandy *bocage*, where the defending Germans had all the advantages – soon produced a 'Tiger psychosis'. US tanks were unable to inflict or survive significant damage in straightforward confrontations with the German 75mm PzKw V Panther at most battle ranges, or at virtually any range against the massive 88mm PzKw VI Tiger.

Comparatively speaking, the Allied types were both under-gunned and under-armoured – sometimes chronically so – throughout the war. Thin armour on tank destroyers and Stuart tanks, and barely adequate armour on the Sherman, is evidenced in many photos by the piling of

October 1944: M4 Sherman medium tank of the 32nd or 33rd Armored Regiment, 3rd Armored Division, giving a ride to GIs of the division's 36th Armored Infantry Regiment. Note the extra plate commonly welded on the hull over the ammo stowage area inside. The stack of sandbags on the front might help protect against the contact-detonated *Panzerfaust* used by German infantry, but were of no practical use against the AP shot of tanks and anti-tank guns.

US armoured divisions were configured into three fighting brigades or 'combat commands' (CCA, CCB, and CCR). Combat Commands A and B were fluid organisations embracing various infantry, tank and artillery units and attachments as the mission required. Combat Command R (for Reserve) was commonly the smallest CC and usually composed of resting or left-over units.



sandbags and extra track plates on the hull fronts. This was nothing more than a 'bandaid' to make the crew feel better; the provision of extra plates welded to the sides over the ammo stowage areas was of more help, as was the water-jacket 'wet stowage' fitted to some Shermans. The M4A3E2 Jumbo which appeared in autumn 1944 was a Sherman with frontal armour protection essentially doubled; placed at the front of tank columns to act as an anti-tank fire 'magnet', it was successful, but only 254 were built.

As well as having guns with about twice the effective range of the US 75mm, the Panther and Tiger were massively armoured. Despite the introduction of the 76mm Sherman in mid-1944, tanks with the new turret only replaced about half of the 75mm Shermans with front-line battalions before VE-Day. The 76mm gun had better armour penetration but a weak HE shell, no WP round, and left room for the stowage of 30 per cent fewer shells. Although some generals – including Patton – were unconvinced of the need for the new gun, after the 76mm Sherman reached the front it was a high-demand item and many 75mm tanks were retrofitted. Units sometimes borrowed the new High Velocity Armor Penetrating (HVAP) ammo or 'hyper-shot' from M18 tank destroyer battalions, giving their 76mm Shermans 50 per cent more penetration at under 500 yards; even so, the 76mm often 'scuffed' rather than penetrated the heavier German tanks. Only the appearance in small numbers of the 90mm M36 tank destroyer in late 1944, and of M26 Pershing tanks in 1945, theoretically gave American tankers the edge. However, other factors outweighed the bare mathematics of armour thickness and gun power.

US tanks had speed, mechanical reliability, radio co-ordination, fast gun loading and turret speed on their side – as well as sheer numbers in the field. Centrally, the decision to standardise the versatile M3, M4 and M10 hulls, drive trains and suspensions also gave US Ordnance a huge edge in ease and speed of manufacturing; large numbers of variant models, from self-propelled artillery to armoured recovery vehicles, were produced on these basic chassis. The US production of Shermans alone – 57,000 by July 1945 – represented twice the total tank production of Germany and Britain combined.

Luckily, there were never very many Panthers or more than a handful of Tigers on the battlefield. US armour commanders adapted by bringing the co-ordination of superior numbers, artillery and airpower to an unequalled level as a 'force multiplier'. The provision of good





Germany, 1945: in the streets of a captured town a GI – apparently wearing a Parsons jacket over winter overalls – poses for an Army photographer in front of an M5A1 Stuart light tank. Note the 'duckbill' extensions to widen the track and give better floatation on soft ground – this was also a problem for the M4 Sherman. By the time of the November 1942 Operation Torch landings in North Africa the Stuart was already completely out-gunned and under-armoured for combat against Panzers, but it served on until 1945 in the reconnaissance role.

radio communications should not be underestimated as a factor in this success: every US tank had a receiver (SCR 538), and leaders' tanks – and by 1945 most others – had transmitters and receivers (SCR 508/528). The Sherman platoons manoeuvred to ambush the Panzers, fired WP rounds to blind the enemy, flank- or back-shooting them from short range, playing cat and mouse in cover, and relying on speed and numbers in break-through battles to make the most of their equipment. It is a tribute to the American crews that they were able to fight the US tanks through the 1944/45 ETO campaign and win essentially every major battle. After the German retreat from France in late summer 1944 there was a steady shift, in the US Army's favour, in the level of skills shown by German versus American tank crews.

Most US tanks were given standard model designations, e.g. M4 Medium. The British, who were heavy users of US tanks, had a tradition of naming the types, and gave them American generals' names – Stuart for the M3 Light, Grant and Lee for different versions of the M3 Medium, and Sherman for the M4 Medium. The GIs adopted most of these names, and the Army began officially naming tank models by the end of the war. The crews commonly grew attached to their vehicles and sometimes named them individually, usually using the initial letter of their company (i.e., B Co – Betty, Barbara, Beauty, etc).

### M26 Pershing

Development of the M26 Pershing heavy tank was suddenly given high priority in autumn 1944. Weighing 46 tons and mounting a 90mm M3 gun, it was capable of knocking out most German tanks. The Pershing began arriving at the front by February 1945, the 3rd and 9th Armored Divisions receiving the first limited issue. By VE-Day, of the 700 built, 310 were in the ETO and 200 of these were in combat units. Some M26s arrived in Okinawa in August 1945 too late to see use.

### M3/M5 Stuart series

The US Army fought in Tunisia with both the M3 and improved M5 Stuart 16-ton light tank. Armed with an M6 37mm main gun and the

#### VEHICLE MARKINGS

For identification purposes US vehicles were usually marked with prominent white stars; each theatre of operations had its own variation as to how these were to be applied. By 1944, GIs believed the stars, stripes and rings were too high profile and gave the enemy an aiming point, so these markings were commonly dirtied, reduced or painted over. For identification from the air high visibility coloured and shaped recognition panels and flags were used.

A semi-standardised system of unit number/letter bumper/hull markings was developed, using flat white stencilling. The standard order, seen from left to right facing the vehicle, was division-regiment-company-vehicle; the company letter and vehicle number were usually separated from the divisional and unit numbers. Armies used an 'A', artillery used 'F' or 'FA', infantry used 'I', Airborne used 'AB', headquarters used 'HQ', TDs used 'TD' and Armored units used a triangle. Thus e.g.:

**75I-291I B6** would identify 75th Infantry Division, 291st Infantry Regiment, B Company, vehicle 6; and

**82AB-505AB A2** identified 82nd Airborne Division, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, A Company, vehicle 2.



Germany, February 1945: beside a pile of discarded cardboard ammo packing tubes, a 75mm M8 HMC of an assault gun troop from 106th Cavalry Group lays down fire. Based on the M3/M5 Stuart hull, the open-topped M8 was assigned in small numbers to both recon units and tank unit HQ elements to deliver direct and indirect HE fire. Limited, but well liked, the M8 was replaced in 1945 by a 105mm howitzer Sherman which offered more punch and better protection.

### M18 Hellcat

The M18 featured the same M1 76mm gun used by the up-graded Sherman, but Hellcat crews also had the use of effective High Velocity Armor Piercing ammunition with a tungsten carbide core. Over 2,500 M18s had been built when production ceased in late 1944. This 20-ton vehicle had a powerful 400hp engine, which could propel it at speeds in excess of 45mph. With its outstanding power/weight ratio and good gun, the M18 was the most effective US TD of the war, and the GIs loved it.

### M36 Jackson

Over 1,100 M36s were produced by retrofitting existing M10s with the powerful M3 90mm gun also used on the Pershing tank; interestingly, at 31 tons it weighed less than the M10. The first models reached the Normandy front in July 1944; offering a good chance of destroying Panthers and Tigers even at long range, the M36 finally gave the GIs something like an equal chance against the late model Panzers.

*(continued on page 33)*

M10 Wolverine of a tank destroyer battalion, fitted with the 'Cullin device' for tearing a way through the massively banked hedgerows of Normandy. Again, note the piled sandbags; the M10's thin armour was no match for the main armament of the Panzers by 1944, and a single layer of sandbags was not going to help. Exposed by their open-top turret, the crew wear M1 steel helmets against the shrapnel of enemy air-bursts.





ENGLAND, 1944

1: Colonel, Corps of Engineers, US 3rd Army

2: Captain, 70th Tank Battalion

3: Platoon Sgt, 66th Armd Regt, 2nd Armored Division



OMAHA BEACH, 6 JUNE 1944

1: Corporal, 116th Inf Regt, 29th Infantry Division

2: 1st Lieutenant, 116th Inf Regt, 29th Inf Div

3: T/5, Engineers, 2nd Infantry Division



B



OPERATION COBRA, NORMANDY, JULY 1944  
1: Rifleman, 41st Armd Inf Regt, 2nd Armored Division  
2: BAR gunner, 8th Inf Regt, 4th Infantry Division  
3: Rifleman, 41st Armd Inf Regt, 2nd Armored Division



FRANCE, 1944

1: Corporal, Women's Army Corps, SHAEF

2: Sergeant, 104th Inf Regt, 26th Inf Div

3: Captain, 761st Tank Bn (Colored)





NETHERLANDS, OCTOBER 1944

1: Major, 23rd Armd Inf Regt, 7th Armored Div

2: Pfc radio operator, 23rd Armd Inf Regt, 7th Armd Div

3: Captain, Forward Air Controller, 9th Air Force



BASTOGNE, DECEMBER 1944

1: Rifleman, 28th Infantry Division

2: Bazooka gunner, 327th Glider Inf Regt,  
101st Airborne Division

3: T/5, 20th Armd Inf Regt,  
10th Armored Division





GERMANY, SPRING 1945  
1: 2nd Lieutenant, Army Nurse Corps  
2: Rifleman, 89th Infantry Division  
3: Medic, 45th Infantry Division



ARMY OF OCCUPATION, 1945

- 1: WO glider pilot, 61st Troop Carrier Gp, 9th Air Force
- 2: T/5, 505th Parachute Inf Regt, 82nd Airborne Division
- 3: 1st Sergeant, 26th Inf Regt, 1st Infantry Division



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### Tank destroyer doctrine

The shocking success of the German 1940 *Blitzkrieg* galvanised the US Army into planning a response. Liberally deployed anti-tank guns would theoretically hold enemy tanks in check, and wargames conducted in 1941 seemed to confirm this hypothesis. The doctrine evolved by the Army called for tank destroyer (TD) units to deal with enemy tanks while US tanks were used to support the infantry and serve as an exploitation force. Towed 37mm and 57mm AT guns

were assigned to divisions and TD battalions; and the 75mm howitzer was expediently mounted on halftracks to increase mobility until the M10 TD arrived in sufficient numbers to serve as the self-propelled AT weapons platform.

The new TD doctrine was to play a key role in retarding the possible up-grades of the M4 Sherman; this tank was seen by the Ordnance theorists and by many generals as an infantry support and exploitation vehicle rather than a tank-killer. Thus offers by the Ordnance in 1943 to up-gun the M4 to 76mm or 90mm were refused as 'overkill'; up-grading the armour also seemed unnecessary, as the tank was supposed to manoeuvre around enemy tanks or wait for the TDs to deal with the problem.

The TD doctrine also influenced how the Army organised its divisions for combat. The majority of the numbered Tank Battalions and all the TD Battalions were to be independent units assigned at corps level, and deployed as the situation demanded. Infantry divisions had no integral tanks and only a handful of towed AT guns. Armoured divisions alone had integral tank units, as they were by nature break-through formations. Tank and especially TD battalions were usually farmed out within a division by companies or platoons; the TD group and battalion HQs were commonly redundant. The ETO solution was to all but permanently assign independent tank and TD battalions to the infantry divisions.

However well thought out this doctrine may have been, it did not seem to work. TD units were never numerous enough to cover where required, and were commonly undergunned. Their open-top turrets made them vulnerable to field artillery. The M10 and M36 were so thinly armoured that they could not stand in the open or advance and fight; they had to be very carefully handled, using 'bushwhacking' techniques to be most effective. Desperate commanders were forced to use the Sherman (sometimes suicidally mismatched) to stop enemy tank thrusts. Though TD units had been used with limited success in 1943, their reverses had been blamed on faulty deployment and shortages of the new M10. After D-Day the generals finally acknowledged the bankrupt



Near Bitburg, Germany, 1945: GIs from the 4th Armored Division cross the undefended 'dragon's-teeth' of a pacified section of the Siegfried Line. Note the two medics (centre) with unusual helmet markings showing the red cross with only a thin white edge; the radioman with an SCR 300 and accessory pack; and the use of gasmask bags as haversacks (see Plate G2).

Normandy, summer 1944: two medics and a rifleman from the 35th Division examine a dead German. The rifleman (left) has sawn off his E-tool handle for ease of carrying; his 'beer gut' is probably ammo and rations stuffed into his field jacket to save wearing a pack. Note that the kneeling medic has a second red cross brassard attached to his helmet net - a not uncommon sight. The medic partly visible in the background has turned his Parsons jacket inside-out to show the darker wool lining rather than the more visible light duck exterior.



nature of the TD doctrine. This resulted in a belated concentration on the development of new tanks, like the M26 Pershing, serious enough to take on the German Panthers and Tigers.

The mismatch between German and US tanks is typified by the mid-November 1944 engagement between the US 2nd Armored and German 9th Panzer divisions at Puffendorf in Germany. Without air support and with no room to manoeuvre, two battalions of 75mm and 76mm Shermans (100-plus tanks) from the 67th Armd Regt were forced to fight just 20–25 PzKw IVs, Panthers and Tigers in a frontal engagement. To have a chance, the M4s tried to close to bring their guns into effective range. One 76mm Sherman fired 14 rounds into a Tiger before disabling it, and was immediately destroyed by the 88mm gun of another Tiger. The 67th Armor claimed five German tanks destroyed for the day; the timely arrival of the 90mm M36s of the 702nd TD Bn cost the Germans 15 more tanks; but the 67th lost 38 M4s, 19 M5s, and over 350 men in this engagement.

## ETO CAMPAIGN SUMMARY

### The Normandy landings

During the early morning of D-Day, 6 June 1944, some 2,500 bombers and 600 warships pounded the German 'Atlantic Wall' defences on the coast of Normandy between the Vire and Orne river estuaries (most of the bombardment falling too far inland to be of much value). Operation Overlord, under the supreme command of Gen Dwight Eisenhower, put three British and Canadian divisions ashore on 'Gold', 'Juno' and 'Sword' beaches at the eastern end of the 50-mile stretch, with British 6th Airborne Division dropped by night to secure the flank and bridges inland. The US 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions were night-dropped behind the

beaches designated for the US 1st Army (Gen Omar Bradley); despite bad scattering they secured vital road junctions and interdicted enemy reinforcements. To the west, the US 4th Infantry Division landed on 'Utah' beach at the base of the Cotentin peninsula, losing less than 200 men. On 'Omaha', about 11 miles further east, the 1st and 29th Infantry Divisions, 2nd and 5th Rangers were stopped cold on the beach, suffering more than 2,000 casualties – 50 to 95 per cent in some assault units. A handful of squads and platoons led by every rank from private to

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**Brest, France, July 1944:**  
riflemen from the 2nd Infantry  
Division during the prolonged  
street fighting for this port city.  
Several wear the M1928 pack;  
the man second from left wears  
the limited issue two-piece  
camouflage uniform (see Plate  
C3).



brigadier-general eventually forced their way up the bluffs, attacking German positions from the flanks and rear until the main beach exit points were cleared; and the two savaged divisions lurched forward into Normandy. By nightfall somewhere between 150,000 and 175,000 Allied troops were ashore in France.

Over the next three days the 2nd Infantry and 2nd Armored Divisions were landed into the slowly expanding bridgehead; soon a new division was landed about every two days. The Cotentin was cut off by 18 June; Cherbourg – a priority objective – fell after a five-day defence on 27 June but the harbour was not fully operational until 7 August.

#### **Operation Cobra**

Penned into the narrow bridgehead and taking heavy casualties, the Allies needed to break out of the difficult *bocage* countryside – of small fields bordered by massive hedgerows and sunken lanes – in order to make full use of their superiority in numbers, firepower and mobility. Repeated and costly British and Canadian attempts to take Caen, the eastern anchor of the German defence, did not succeed until 9 July, but did draw the weight of German armoured forces into their sector. To the west the strategic town of St Lô fell to the 29th Infantry Division on 18 July. Operation Cobra, the US break-out assault west of St Lô, was preceded by aerial ‘carpet bombing’, which obliterated the defending Panzer-Lehr Division (but also killed some 500 US troops of the 30th Infantry Division, and the visiting LtGen McNair). The Americans poured through the breach, seizing Coutances on 28 July and Avranches on the 31st. The US 3rd Army (Gen George Patton), activated on 1 August, swept into Brittany. Hoping to break the neck of the US advance, Hitler ordered his available Panzer forces to attack at Mortain on 6 August. One battalion of the 30th Infantry Division lost about half its men holding Hill 317, but its FOs called down aircraft and corps artillery fires; supported by the 9th and 4th Infantry Divisions, the 30th lost little ground, and the mauled Germans were forced back. Despite this dangerous attack the Allies continued their rapid exploitation attack into France.



**Hurtgen Forest, October/November 1944: a BAR team from the 4th Division struggle through the muddy pine woods. During weeks of murderous fighting GIs from the 4th, 8th and 28th Divisions were among those who paid very dearly for the 1st Army's slow advance.**

### **The battle for France**

By mid-August 1944 an opportunity appeared to cut off German forces near Falaise; at first thinking most of the enemy had withdrawn, the Allies were slow to seal off this pocket, but even so Falaise cost the Wehrmacht some 50,000 men and thousands of vehicles and guns. While the British and Canadians advanced along the Channel coast the US 1st and 3rd Armies began to race eastwards across France; the Seine was crossed on 24 August and Paris fell on the 25th. Another 25,000 Germans surrendered near Mons, Belgium, on 3 September; by D+90 days the Allies were occupying objectives that had been planned for D+340. On 11 September, Patton's 3rd Army linked up with Gen Patch's 7th Army

advancing from the landings in the south of France on 15 August (Operation Anvil), and a unified Allied front faced the Germans from the Channel to the Mediterranean.

However, the advance now began to sputter to a halt, caused not by German resistance but by over-stretched Allied supply lines from Normandy. The situation got worse when the British received priority of supply to support their attempts on the vital port of Antwerp and the airborne seizure of the lower Rhine (Operation Market Garden – in which ultimately failed gamble both US airborne divisions participated). By the end of October 1944 the 1st Army had captured its first German city, Aachen (21 October), and several toehold breaches were made in the Siegfried Line, the German border defences. In the nearby Hurtgen Forest the US Army allowed three divisions in succession to be ground up by the stubborn defenders. Still begging in vain for sufficient fuel and ammunition supplies, the US armies only slowly consolidated their advance. This autumn pause, called by the Germans the 'Miracle in the West', gave the enemy time to build and re-equip units for the defence of the Reich.

### **The Battle of the Bulge**

Hitler gambled his reconstituted divisions in an all-out offensive to split the US and British armies apart and seize Antwerp. There was little warning of the Wehrmacht's renewed strength until US forces resting in the thinly-held Ardennes sector found themselves under massive attack on 16 December.

Winter weather grounded the Air Corps, leaving three US divisions to face the onslaught; the green 106th, the 28th (recovering from the Hurtgen battles), and parts of the untried 9th Armored held the line for two days under attack by three German armies. The north (2nd and 99th Infantry Divisions) and south (4th Infantry Division) shoulders of the penetration held firm. The shocked 106th Infantry Division ultimately surrendered two of its three regiments; the 28th, fighting stubborn rearguard actions, found its units scattered. US engineer units plagued German spearheads throughout the battle with blown bridges, which caused major delays in the difficult hill country. A 40-mile breach seemed to open, but the two-day stand allowed the highly mobile US Army to rush units into the 'Bulge'.

The Germans had to capture the road junctions at St Vith and Bastogne. With elements of three divisions, Gen Clarke (CCB, 7th Armored

Division) held St Vith until 20 December, completely disrupting the German timetable in the northern Ardennes. When it fell, outflanked by the crack Führer Begleit Brigade, the 7th and nearby 9th Armored Division combat commands managed to break out to fight another day. Bastogne was held by the 101st Airborne and elements of three other divisions. The deepest enemy penetrations, by 1st SS Panzer and 2nd Panzer divisions, were both stopped cold short of the River Meuse. By the end of December encircled Bastogne had been relieved by Patton's 4th Armored Division, and the clearing skies were full of Allied aircraft. Though the German offensive had severely shocked the Allies, Hitler had expended his last reserves for nothing.

### **The battle for Germany**

Spring 1945 saw the US armies careering into the heartland of Germany. In late March the Rhine was jumped at several locations and the 9th Armored Division seized an intact bridge at Remagen. Rapid advances were punctuated by many bitter local battles, however, as US columns encountered blocking positions held with fanatical determination by *ad hoc* German battle groups – always a strength of the German forces: a few tanks and Flak guns, the scraped-together remnants of retreating units, the staffs of officer and NCO training schools, banding together under some junior commander to sell their lives dearly. Nevertheless, by 18 April nearly 400,000 enemy troops were cut off and forced to capitulate in the Ruhr valley, the bombed-out industrial heart of Germany. While fighting doggedly against the vengeful Red Army advancing from the east, most Wehrmacht troops were now happy to surrender to the Western Allies.

By VE-Day the US had 60 divisions operational in the ETO; they were advancing into Austria and Czechoslovakia, and in Germany they were a day's march from Berlin. On 2 May, American, British and Russian troops linked up at Lübeck on the Baltic. On the 7th, the unconditional surrender of Germany from midnight on 8 May 1945 was signed at Gen Eisenhower's HQ at Rheims.

### **Going home**

The GI of World War II has accurately been described as the 'citizen soldier'; and when the war ended he couldn't wait to get home. Conscious of the US Army's unhappy experience with delays in sending the 'doughboys' of 1918 back to the States, the authorities took surveys among the GIs as to the fairest way to handle the problem. A point system was devised to award the longer-serving veterans higher scores which would enable them to go home first: five points for each campaign star, one for every six months in service, one for every six months overseas, five for each wound, five for each decoration, and twelve points for each child (to a maximum of three). The total points required for release started at 85, but by December 1945 only 50 were needed.

After VE-Day priority was given to transferring the newer ETO divisions to the Pacific to continue the war. As VJ-Day in August 1945 caught the Army in mid-transit, many GIs with minimal service found themselves in the US and were discharged. High-point veterans in the ETO were soon first on the list homeward, but it all seemed to the GIs to take entirely too much time. The US Army demobilised at a rapid rate, however, and by 1946 the wartime force of 8.3 million was down to 2 million.

## DIVISIONAL CAMPAIGN SERVICE and shoulder patches

**Note:** The following divisions which served in both Italy and NW Europe are covered on page 39 of MAA 347, *The US Army in World War II (2), The Mediterranean*: 1st, 3rd, 9th, 36th & 45th Infantry, 82nd Airborne.



**2nd Armored Division** ('Hell on Wheels'). N. Africa, Sicily, Normandy, France, Ardennes, Germany. All armored divisions wore the Armored Force triangular patch divided yellow (top), blue (left) and red, with black tracks-and-lightning motif below divisional numeral.



**3rd Armored Division** ('Spearhead'). Normandy, France, Ardennes, Germany.



**4th Armored Division** ('Breakthrough'). Normandy, France, Ardennes, Germany.



**5th Armored Division** ('Victory'). Normandy, France, Germany.



**6th Armored Division** ('Super Sixth'). Normandy, France, Ardennes, Germany.



**7th Armored Division** ('Lucky Seventh'). Normandy, France, Ardennes, Germany.



**8th Armored Division** ('Thundering Herd'). France, Ardennes, Germany.



**9th Armored Division** ('Phantom'). Ardennes, Germany, Czechoslovakian border.



**10th Armored Division** ('Tiger'). France, Ardennes, Germany.



**11th Armored Division** ('Thunderbolt'). France, Ardennes, Germany.



**12th Armored Division** ('Hellcat'). Germany.



**13th Armored Division** ('Black Cat'). Ardennes, Germany.



**14th Armored Division** ('Liberator'). France, Germany.



**16th Armored Division** Germany.



**20th Armored Division** Germany.



**2nd Infantry Division** ('Indian Head'). Normandy, France, Ardennes, Leipzig (Germany). Full-colour Indian's head in blue warbonnet on white star on black shield.



**4th Infantry Division** ('Ivy'). Normandy, France, Bastogne (Ardennes), Germany. Four conjoined green ivy leaves on khaki diamond.



**5th Infantry Division** ('Red Diamond'). Normandy, Metz (France), Ardennes, Mainz-Worms Bridgehead (Germany). Red diamond.



**8th Infantry Division** ('Pathfinder'). Normandy, Brittany, France, Ardennes, Cologne (Germany). Yellow arrow through white 8 on blue shield.



**17th Airborne Division** ('Golden Talon'). Ardennes, Rhine crossing, Germany. Yellow eagle's talon on black disc edged khaki, below yellow-on-black 'Airborne' tab.



**26th Infantry Division** ('Yankee'). France, Ardennes, Siegfried Line (Germany). Dark blue 'YD' monogram on khaki diamond.



**28th Infantry Division** ('Keystone'). Normandy, Colmar Pocket (France), Hürtgen Forest, Ardennes, Germany. Red keystone shape.



**29th Infantry Division** ('Blue & Grey'). Normandy, France, Siegfried Line, Aachen (Germany). Dark blue/grey 'yin & yang'.



**30th Infantry Division** ('Old Hickory'). Normandy, France, Ardennes, Germany. Blue 'H' and 'XXX' on red oval edged blue.



**35th Infantry Division** ('Santa Fe'). Normandy, Metz, Nancy (France), Ardennes, Ruhr (Germany). White crosses and circle on dark blue disc.



**42nd Infantry Division** ('Rainbow'). Schweinfurt, Munich, Dachau (Germany). Quadrant of red, yellow, blue rainbow.



**44th Infantry Division** ('Two Fours'). Saar, Ulm (Germany), Danube River. Blue opposed 4s on yellow disc edged blue.



**63rd Infantry Division** ('Blood & Fire'). Bavaria (Germany), Danube River. Yellow bayonet, red flames and blood, on khaki teardrop.



**65th Infantry Division** ('Battle Axe'). Saarlautern, Regensburg (Germany), Danube River. White halberd on blue shield.



**66th Infantry Division** ('Black Panther'). Lorient, St Nazaire (France), Germany. Black panther head, red & white details, on orange disc edged red.



**69th Infantry Division** ('Fighting 69th'). Germany. Interlocked, stylised red '6' & blue '9' edged white.



**70th Infantry Division** ('Trailblazer'). Saarbrücken, Moselle River (Germany). White axehead & mountain, green trees, on red background.



**71st Infantry Division** ('Red Circle'). Hartz Mountains (Germany). Blue stylised '71' on white disc edged red.




**75th Infantry Division** Ardennes, Westphalia (Germany). Blue '7' & red '5' on red/white/blue shield.




**76th Infantry Division** ('Onaway'). Luxembourg, Germany. White heraldic label on blue over red shield, narrow green divider.




## DIVISIONAL CAMPAIGN SERVICE and shoulder patches


 **78th Infantry Division** ('Lightning'). Aachen, Roer River, Ruhr (Germany). White lightning on red semicircle.

 **79th Infantry Division** ('Lorraine'). Normandy, Vosges Mountains (France), Germany. Grey Cross of Lorraine on blue shield edged grey.


 **80th Infantry Division** ('Blue Ridge'). Normandy, France, relief of Bastogne (Ardennes), Moselle River, Germany.

 **83rd Infantry Division** ('Ohio', 'Thunderbolts'). Normandy, France, Ardennes, Germany. Yellow 'Ohio' monogram on black triangle.


 **84th Infantry Division** ('Railsplitters'). Ardennes, Hanover (Germany).  
First: red axe head, blue handle & lettering 'Lincoln' & '84' on white disc edged red.


 Second: White axe splitting white log on red disc.


 **86th Infantry Division** ('Black Hawk'). Dachau, Ingolstadt (Germany). Black hawk & 'BH' on red shields.

 **87th Infantry Division** ('Acorn'). Ardennes, Germany, Czechoslovakian border. Yellow acorn on green disc.

 **89th Infantry Division** ('Middle West', 'Rolling W'). Bingen, Eisenach (Germany). Black stylised 'W' and edge on brown disc.

 **90th Infantry Division** ('Texas/Oklahoma', 'Tough Ombres'). Normandy, France, Ardennes, Germany, Czechoslovakian border. Stylised red 'TO' monogram on brown square.

 **94th Infantry Division** ('Neuf Quatres'). St Nazaire (France), Siegfried Line, Moselle River, Saar (Germany). Black '9' & khaki '4' on opposite-coloured divided disc.

 **95th Infantry Division** ('Victory'). Metz (France), Moselle River, Siegfried Line, Saar (Germany). Red '9' & white 'V' interlaced on blue oval.

 **97th Infantry Division** ('Trident'). Germany. White trident on blue shield edged white.

 **99th Infantry Division** ('Checkerboard'). Ardennes, Remagen Bridgehead (Germany). Blue/white checks on black shield.

 **100th Infantry Division** ('Century'). France, Remagen Bridgehead, Saar (Germany). '100' halved white over yellow, on blue shield.



**101st Airborne Division** ('Screaming Eagles'). Normandy, Netherlands, Bastogne (Ardennes), Germany. White eagle's head with yellow & red details on black shield under yellow-on-black 'Airborne' tab.



**102nd Infantry Division** ('Ozark'). Siegfried Line, Ruhr, München-Gladbach (Germany). Yellow overlaid 'O', 'U' & 'Z' on blue disc.



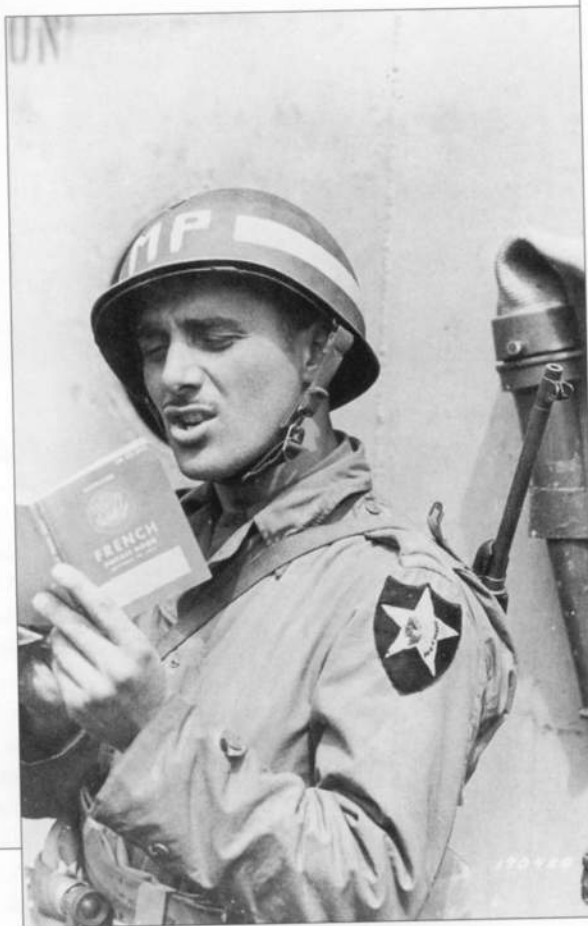
**103rd Infantry Division** ('Cactus'). Stuttgart (Germany), Austria. Green cactus, blue ground, yellow sky.



**104th Infantry Division** ('Timberwolves'). Rhine crossing, Cologne, Ruhr (Germany). Grey wolf head on green disc.



**106th Infantry Division** ('Golden Lions'). St Vith (Ardennes), Germany. Yellow lion mask, red & blue details, on blue disc edged white inside red.



Aboard ship off Normandy, June 1944: this 2nd Division MP checking the Army's official phrase book/travel guide displays the 'Indianhead' patch on his left shoulder and – just visible – painted above the 'MP' on his helmet.



St Vith, Belgium, December 1944: GIs from the 23rd Armored Infantry, 7th Armored Division take a watchful rest in the streets, covered by a white-washed M4 Sherman. The GIs are wearing field-expedient white helmet covers and capes apparently made from bedsheets.

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## THE PLATES

### A: ENGLAND, 1944

#### A1: Colonel, Corps of Engineers, US 3rd Army

This 'bird' colonel wears his rank on the epaulettes of the regulation officers' service coat in the darker OD shade 51, with trousers of the optional light drab colour popularly known as 'pinks' – in this case with a cavalry-style inseam. Either cap could be worn with this uniform; he has the service cap, in this case an example with a noticeably lighter shade ribbed band – colours varied in officers' privately purchased uniforms. It has the standard russet leather visor and strap and gilt officers' badge. The coat has the drab-on-drab lace band above each cuff indicating officer rank, and – a peculiarity which survives to this day – special Corps of Engineers buttons. Officers' collar badges came in cut-out pairs, here two 'US' cyphers over two Engineer castle emblems. His left chest displays ribbons for service dating back to World War I; among his 'fruit salad' are the DSC and Silver Star, 1918 Victory medal with two campaign/battle stars, the French Croix de Guerre, and both the Pacific and European theatre ribbons. His cuff stripes show one year's overseas service in World War I and two years (four bars) in World War II. Re-enlistment stripes are not worn – officers don't enlist. The 3rd Army patch of an 'A' inside an 'O' represents its service after World War I as the AEF Army of Occupation in Germany.

#### A2: Captain, 70th Tank Battalion

He chooses to wear a khaki shirt and prewar black tie with his service uniform. The Sam Browne officers' belt, with sword hanger, had been required before the war, but purchase became optional during hostilities. Note the Armored branch emblems on his lower collar, shaped like a British World War I tank. Unit crests for officers, when available, were worn on the epaulettes. This officer wears American Service and ETO ribbons. Independent tank units – i.e. those unassigned to a division – used the Armored Force shoulder patch with no number in the yellow segment; battalion numbers were sometimes custom-woven onto the patches later in the war. The 70th Tank Bn was the first of these independent battalions to be raised, from a picked group of men; it fought in North Africa, Sicily, Normandy, France, the Bulge and Germany. Over his arm this officer carries a trenchcoat; these were to be seen in colours

August 1944: soldier of the 26th Infantry, 1st Division, wearing the experimental load-carrying combat vest issued in some numbers to assault units of the 1st and 29th Divisions and Rangers for the D-Day landings, but not usually kept this long. On the Normandy beaches the pockets scooped up large quantities of water and wet sand; most GIs found it bulky, hot, burdensome and awkward, and soon discarded it or cut it down. Based on the British limited issue 'battle jerkin' – which the Tommies also disliked – the US cotton duck canvas version had four generous patch pockets on the front and an integral pack and 'butt pack' on the back; the side of the pack had a sleeve for the bayonet, and the shoulders had quick release straps. The vest was closed with buckled web straps at the waist and chest. Normal web belts were supposed to be worn under the vest – not over it, as here – so that it could be shed quickly in the water if necessary. (See Plate B2.)

ranging from khaki-beige to medium green. Originating with the Duke of Wellington's prejudice against officers with umbrellas, it is to this day against regulations for an American officer to carry one (unless with a lady).

#### A3: Platoon sergeant, 66th Armored Regiment, 2nd Armored Division

This technical or platoon sergeant wears the enlisted man's M1939 four-pocket coat in OD shade 54; either this overseas cap or the limited-issue visored service dress cap ('saucer hat') could be worn with this uniform. The overseas cap could be piped in his mixed green/white arm-of-service colour; it is worn here unpiped but displaying the divisional sign in enamelled metal. On his upper collar are bronze discs bearing the national cypher (right) and his arm-of-service emblem (left). Most GIs did not have pairs of unit crests in enamelled metal for wear on the lower collar, but this NCO proudly wears those of the 66th Armored Regiment. This was the oldest tank unit in the US Army, tracing its roots back to the 351st Tank Battalion in World War I. He wears the divisional patch on his left shoulder, and rank chevrons – in prewar silver-on-black – on both upper sleeves. The two bars on his left forearm are two six-month overseas service stripes (nicknamed 'Hersey bars', after the director of the US Draft, Gen Lewis B. Hersey); the diagonal bar is a re-enlistment stripe, showing this NCO to be a prewar volunteer regular rather than a draftee. On his left chest are the ribbons of the American Service and European-African-Middle Eastern medals, the latter with a bronze campaign star; this NCO fought in Sicily.





**B: OMAHA BEACH, D-DAY****B1: Corporal, 116th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division**

At H-Hour of D-Day, 6 June 1944, elements of the 1st and 29th Infantry Divisions were the first units to land on Omaha beach, supported by engineer troops and men from the Ranger force. Expecting heavy losses, most D-Day units were 10 per cent overstrength when they embarked. The assaulting regiments of the 29th Division lost about 60 per cent of their men on 6 June.

This corporal wears the 'M1941' Parsons field jacket with OD wool shirt and trousers treated with anti-gas impregnation. On his right shoulder would be worn the gas detection brassard illustrated on B2 – this would change colour when exposed to chemical agents. The US Navy floatation belt he wears was also attached to important equipment so that if lost it would float ashore. If inflated by a heavily-loaded man who was out of his depth it was often lethal, tipping him upside down to drown. Besides his normal web equipment and the M1928 pack he carries the M5 assault gasmask in its black waterproof chest bag, and a general purpose ammunition bag. An Airborne-style aid pouch, including bandages, sulfa tablets, and two morphine syrettes ('one for pain, two for eternity'), is taped to his left shoulder brace – again, see B2; and he carries his M1 Garand in a clear Pliofilm cover. The helmet he is staring at reminds us that Rangers from the 2nd and 5th Bns landed on Dog Green and Dog White sectors of Omaha soon after the first waves of the 29th.

**B2: 1st Lieutenant, 116th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division**

The 29th was a National Guard division originating from



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Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania, and the blue and grey 'yin and yang' divisional sign symbolised unity created from the opposing Civil War histories of these states. It was among the first formations deployed to Britain, and stayed so long that it was nicknamed 'England's Own'; no doubt the division's personnel contributed honourably to the British stereotype of the GI as being 'over-sexed, over-paid and over here'.

The 29th landed on Omaha beach wearing fully painted helmets and with their chinstraps down. The men of both the 1st and 29th Divisions had their shoulder patch designs painted onto the fronts of their helmets for D-Day; 4th Division GIs commonly had them painted on their helmet liners. The divisional markings on helmets soon faded, and it became unusual to see them after the Normandy campaign.

This carbine-armed first lieutenant is uniformed essentially like his men, his rank marked by the bar painted on his helmet below the divisional sign, and metal insignia pinned to his epaulettes. Over the Parsons jacket he wears the assault vest, issued in quantity to D-Day units and not only to Rangers as is sometimes assumed. It was a rational approach to reform of the load-carrying web equipment, but was not much liked in practice – most were dumped soon after the landings, though not as swiftly as the M1926 US Navy lifebelts.

**B3: T/5, Engineers, 2nd Infantry Division**

Combat engineers played a key role in clearing water and beach obstacles on D-Day. Several types of joint Army/Navy engineer units were created for the invasion, and a number of volunteer engineers from the 2nd Division served with these. (The bulk of the 'Indianhead' division began to come ashore on D+1.) They wore anti-gas impregnated HBT fatigues over their woollen uniforms; some officers and many of the beach clearing personnel wore specially authorised paratroop boots. This engineer from the 2nd Division carries a purple smoke grenade – in case he has to signal landing troops to keep clear of an area rigged for demolition – and a demolition bag filled with half-pound or one-pound blocks of TNT. He sports a British-made aid pouch on his belt and would also be carrying an Airborne pouch. He is armed with a carbine, but like many GIs he may pick up the more powerful M1 Garand on the beach. The 2nd Division's most important action during the war was its stand holding the north shoulder of the 'Bulge' during the Ardennes fighting of December 1944. (Inset) 2nd Infantry Division patch.

**C: OPERATION COBRA, NORMANDY, JULY 1944****C1: Rifleman, 41st Armored Infantry Regiment, 2nd Armored Division**

Like the 3rd, the 2nd Armored was a 'heavy division' (see MAA 347) with two tank regiments (66th & 67th Armor) each of three battalions, and the three-battalion 41st Infantry. Its Combat Commands A & B landed over Omaha beach

Snatching a moment's rest during the savage fighting in the Normandy *bocage*, this battle-worn infantry sergeant from the 4th Division wears green HBT fatigues over his wool uniform (see Plate B3). He is armed with his M1, a spare bandoleer of ammunition and two 'frag' grenades. Like many GIs he seems to carry letters or photos from home stowed inside his helmet.

between 11 and 14 June, and it saw very heavy fighting during the July/August break-out from the beachhead areas. This lightly-equipped rifleman from the 41st Armored Infantry wears the so-called 'tanker jacket', which was actually commonly worn by many non-tank troops of armoured divisions, including the infantry. Otherwise his combat uniform and web equipment are standard. His gasmask has been 'lost', and his pack was last seen hanging off the side of his halftrack. Web canvas slings on M1 Garands began replacing the complex leather sling in mid-1944. It was common to see an 'immediate use' clip carried like this on a web brace or bandoleer sling, with the fabric trapped between the two rows of cartridges.

**C2: BAR gunner, 8th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division**

Every infantry squad had at least one man armed with the Browning Automatic Rifle. This 'Ivy' division GI carries a BAR with the bipod removed to save weight; he also has a Mk II fragmentation grenade. Like many GIs, he carries minimal equipment and has stuffed his 'M1941' field jacket into the back of his belt. The normal load carried by a BAR gunner was 13 x 20-round magazines – two in each pocket of the six-pocket belt, and one in the gun – but a designated assistant would carry two more belts. One 6ft 4in, 240lb BAR gunner from the 2nd Armored Division actually carried in combat 27 magazines in various pouches and pockets. Part of the 4th Division rode 2nd Armored Division tanks during 'Cobra'.

**C3: Rifleman, 41st Armored Infantry Regiment, 2nd Armored Division**

During the break-out the 2nd Armored Division swept through the initial opposition, but on 28/29 July a fierce counter-attack by tanks and infantry from 2.SS-Panzer-Division 'Das Reich' hit the 2/41st Infantry and 3/67th Armor near St Denis-le-Gast. The attack was repulsed after desperate fighting, in the course of which LtCol Coleman, CO of the 2/41st, personally manned a bazooka before being killed in action. Later the division's Combat Command A served under the tactical command of the 29th Division.

While the great majority of infantry in Normandy wore the standard wool uniform, field jackets and/or herringbone twill

fatigues, there was a limited experimental issue of the Army's two-piece M1942 camouflage uniform. Given the lush, sun-dappled terrain of summertime France this was reasonable. However, the resemblance of the unfamiliar printed pattern to that of the camouflage clothing routinely worn by the Waffen-SS troops encountered in Normandy led to its withdrawal after tragic cases of mistaken identity. Elements of the 2nd and 30th Infantry Divisions received this uniform, as did the 17th Engineer Bn and elements of the 41st Armored Infantry from the 2nd Armored Division; other individuals also received it when issued replacements for worn-out clothing during July and August. This figure is based on photographs of the 41st AIR taken by Robert Capa. The M1 helmet is garnished with a net and small strips of burlap scrim. Light field equipment is worn, without packs – like B1, this soldier travels in a halftrack and stows his gear on the vehicle. His web belt carries 80 rounds and the expendable bandoleer has an additional 48 rounds.

**D: FRANCE, 1944**

**D1: Corporal, Women's Army Corps; Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces, Versailles**

This WAC corporal is serving at SHAEF as a member of the Signal Corps, thereby 'freeing a man to fight'. By the end of the war 140,000 WACs were serving in the US Army. She wears the new WAC curved-cut overseas cap piped with the old gold and light green branch colours; these were in short supply, and many WACs wore the men's overseas cap without piping. The tailored female service dress uniform with plastic buttons bears US and Signal Corps collar discs, though the WAC's own Athena-head emblem was often worn. She wears ribbons for the ETO and the WAC Medal marking service in the pre-1943 WAAC. By the end of the year WACs in the ETO could expect to receive the short WAC 'Ike' jacket. Her laced russet brown shoes were known as the 'gruesome twosome' due to their appearance and fit. She carries an issue shoulder bag ('purse').

(Inset) This tab in WAAC colours was ordered worn on the sleeves, below any rank chevrons, from 25 March 1942.

**Operation Cobra, July 1944:** two GIs from the 41st Armored Infantry, 2nd Armored Division watch over a seriously wounded buddy during the Normandy break-out battles. All wear the two-piece camouflage fatigues briefly issued to some units in Normandy (see Plate C3). The casualty has been treated and tagged by the medics. The Thompson gunner, probably a squad leader, also carries a fragmentation and a smoke grenade. (Photo Robert Capa, Magnum)





During the Battle of the Bulge a chaplain (second right, wearing an Air Corps flight jacket) stops to chat to men of the 2nd Bn/504th PIR, 82nd Airborne Division. Most of the paratroopers wear wool overcoats or raincoats (see Plate F2); some carry 'hobo' bedrolls slung with rope instead of packs.

It was discontinued in July 1943 when the WAAC was transformed into the WAC – from Auxiliaries into full members of the US armed forces.

**D2: Sergeant, 104th Infantry Regiment, 26th Infantry Division**

This NCO from the New England National Guard 26th 'YD' or 'Yankee Division', taking a coffee break, wears M1943 HBT fatigues over his wool uniform. Promotion came quickly in combat, and his rank has been hastily inked onto his sleeves. He is armed with an M1 (side-bolt) Thompson SMG, and carries smoke and fragmentation grenades. His small haversack-style bag is a limited issue item for holding 30-round Thompson magazines. This sergeant's wire-framed glasses are standard GI issue. The 'YD' division first saw action around Metz in November 1944, where it worked closely with the 761st Tank Battalion.

**D3: Captain, 761st Tank Battalion (Colored); Metz, November 1944**

By VE-Day the Army had two Tank (761st & 784th) and two Tank Destroyer (614th & 827th) battalions of black GIs. When they joined his 3rd Army the essentially racist Gen George S. Patton told the 761st, 'I don't care what colour you are as long as you go up there and kill those Kraut sons-of-bitches'. For its record in World War II this crack battalion would receive a long-delayed Distinguished Unit Citation only in 1978. The 761st worked comfortably with the 26th Infantry and 17th Airborne divisions, but did not fare as well when serving with other divisions of a more Southern origin.

African-American GIs wore all the standard uniforms and insignia of the US Army. This captain wears the tankers' jacket (some officers had theirs modified by adding epaulettes), and the bib-fronted cold weather overtrousers. His rank is shown on his helmet, and pinned through leather patches to the jacket shoulders. The M1 was worn along with the armoured crew helmet by tank personnel – and sometimes even on top of it. Like many tankers, this officer sports a .45 pistol in an M7 shoulder holster.

**E: NETHERLANDS, OCTOBER 1944**

**E1: Major, 23rd Armored Infantry Regiment, 7th Armored Division**

The 7th Armored Division fought a month-long series of tank battles near Overloon/Venlo in the Netherlands in October

1944. The division's most important action would come two months later, with its CCB's defence of and break-out from St Vith in the Ardennes. This major's rank is only just visible on his shirt collar; veteran officers and NCOs commonly kept the wearing of insignia to a minimum to increase their life-span. As a major he is probably the CO or second-in-command (executive officer, 'XO') of his battalion, and here he is talking over the SCR 300 radio with one of his companies; the scale of issue was six SCR 300s per battalion – two of these FM sets for Bn HQ and one each for the company headquarters. The batteries in the lower component of the backpack gave about 24 hours' use. The officer wears, as an alternative to the field or tanker's jackets, the third-pattern US Army mackinaw in cotton poplin with a notched, unfaced collar and without the integral cloth belt of earlier models. Herringbone twill trousers are tucked into a pair of the much sought-after paratrooper boots. He is armed with a .45 pistol and a M1 carbine with 15-round magazines; the pistol is carried in a custom-modified open-top M1916 holster.

**E2: Private first class, radio operator, 23rd Armored Infantry Regiment, 7th Armored Division**

Neither the woollen 'ETO jacket' nor its smarter cousin, the M1944 'Ike jacket', were commonly seen worn by front-line GIs, but it was not unknown. This Pfc has sewn his prewar silver-on-black rank stripes on the sleeves of his short British-made ETO jacket. Though 'buckle boots' were coming into issue in the autumn of 1944 this GI still wears the old 'service shoes' and canvas leggings. Sufficiently weighed down by his 34lb SCR 300 radio, he is otherwise very lightly equipped. The belt that came as part of the radio's rig would not accept any other equipment items, so he wears a pistol belt for his canteen, aid pouch and the magazine pouch for the carbine, which is his regulation weapon. The axe-shaped canvas bag looped to the radio belt is the BG150, which held the radio handset and both long and short sectional antennae. Within the infantry company the platoons communicated with the 'handie-talkie' SCR 536 AM radio.

**E3: Captain, Forward Air Controller, US 9th Army Air Force**

Close co-operation between ground troops and the tactical aircraft which more or less ruled the skies over the ETO in



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1944-45 was a major factor in the successful Allied advance. Pilots were assigned for limited periods of service with front-line units, to provide a knowledgeable link between them and the supporting Air Corps. Unfortunately, US planes sometimes hit friendly units during the battles for France, prompting the infantry – particularly the unfortunate 30th Division, who were bombed several times between Normandy and the Bulge – to rename the 9th Air Force the '9th Luftwaffe'. This air controller wears his rank and 9th AAF shoulder patch on a trenchcoat of a darkish green shade, a version commonly worn in England and sometimes by front-line officers. He too is fortunate in having obtained a pair of 'Corcorans'. Hidden here, a .45 pistol is holstered on his right hip. Nearby, no doubt, is a radio vehicle capable of direct communications with circling P-47 fighter-bombers.

## **F: BASTOGNE, DECEMBER 1944**

### **F1: Rifleman, 28th Infantry Division**

The 28th Division was originally a National Guard outfit from Pennsylvania, the 'Keystone State'. Its red keystone patch was nicknamed by the 28th's GIs the 'Bloody Bucket' after its losses in Normandy and – with the 4th and 8th Divisions – in the meatgrinder of the Hürtgen Forest; the 28th was then sent to the 'quiet' Ardennes sector to rest... Its two-day stand in the face of the advancing 5. Panzer-Armee gave the 101st Airborne time to occupy Bastogne. This soldier, wearing a 'home-ripped' snow camouflage cape and helmet cover made from a bedsheet, is probably from the Quartermaster company or some other divisional support unit, pitched into the fighting at short notice. Under his sheet he wears a first-pattern mackinaw with wool-faced shawl collar, a five-button sweater, the usual drab wool trousers, a pair of the new M1943 'buckle boots', and wool trigger-finger gloves. His equipment is minimal: a rifle belt, and a musette to carry all his other gear.

### **F2: Bazooka gunner, 327th Glider Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division**

The standard issue enlisted men's wool melton overcoat was much used by the Airborne during the Battle of the Bulge.

(One paratrooper of the 82nd is reputed to have said to a worried tank crew, 'Looking for a safe place? Well, buddy, just pull in behind me.') Under his coat this 'glider-rider' wears the standard M1943 combat jacket and buckle boots now becoming common throughout the ETO. His baggy trousers with cargo pockets are the only remaining sure sign of his Airborne status, though his belt equipment includes one of the limited-issue 'rigger's' ammunition pouches peculiar to the Airborne. He is armed with the M1 carbine, and a M3 trench knife strapped to his boot; some photos show civilian knives carried as well. His main weapon, however, is the latest M9 folding version of the 2.36in anti-tank rocket launcher or 'bazooka'. A white 'club' helmet symbol identifies his regiment.

**(Inset)** By 1945 the 'glider-riders' finally received this 'wings' badge and the same hazardous duty pay as their parachute brethren. The bronze stars mark two combat landings, in Normandy and Holland.

### **F3: T/5, 20th Armored Infantry Regiment, 10th Armored Division**

Active in the capture of Metz in November 1944, the 10th Armored Division had its Combat Command B inside Bastogne throughout the siege. This GI wears the new four-pocket, sateen-shell M1943 field jacket, introduced as a universal garment for all branches of service; he has not yet received the matching trousers, but is fortunate in having secured himself a pair of M1944 shoepacs. He is armed with the M1 Garand, and grenades including a smooth-cased Mk III concussion type. Among his belt equipment is the folding-head entrenching tool based on a German design, with a cut-down haft. His web equipment is in the new greener OD shade 7 now reaching the front in quantity, although existing stocks of items in the sandier shade 9 would continue to be issued for years. Since it is of little practical use this GI has dispensed with his bayonet. More useful is the blanket just visible tucked through the back of his belt. He is carrying the baseplate for an 81mm mortar.

Along with the 101st Airborne and 10th Armored the Bastogne garrison included elements of the 9th Armored

**Operation Market Garden, September 1944: a classic shot of an 82nd Airborne Division lieutenant and NCOs going over the orders before putting on their 'chutes for the drop over Holland. With the issue of the well-liked M1943 field jacket after D-Day the special M1942 paratrooper's jacket began to be a rarity. The buckle boots also began to replace the jump boots in the Airborne, much to the annoyance of paratroopers. Note (left) the white-painted horizontal NCOs' recognition stripe on the back of the corporal's helmet.**



and 28th Infantry divisions, the 705th Tank Destroyer Bn, 1128th Engineer Combat Group, and five corps-level artillery battalions.

### **G: GERMANY, SPRING 1945**

#### **G1: 2nd Lieutenant, Army Nurse Corps**

Some 60,000 nurses served in the Army during World War II, and many went into harm's way; for instance, about 200 served in the Anzio beachhead, where six were killed in action and four won the Silver Star. Nurses were fully commissioned in 1943 with the majority ranked as second lieutenants. This nurse wears the WAC issue two-piece herringbone twill fatigues, quickly identifiable by the slanted thigh pockets and the reversed buttoning. She displays her rank painted on her helmet and pinned to her right collar, balanced by the caduceus with superimposed 'N' of the ANC; like all medical personnel she is entitled to wear the red cross brassard. She carries a musette bag pressed into service as a medical haversack and roughly marked as such. US Army nurses played their part in the ghastly task faced by the Allied troops who unexpectedly found themselves liberating Nazi concentration camps as they rolled across Germany in 1945.

#### **G2: Rifleman, 89th Infantry Division**

The 'Rolling W' division was one of the first across the Rhine; as it raced into Germany its advancing columns were led by captured Wehrmacht vehicles hastily overpainted with white stars, and two German fire engines with sirens blaring. As part of 3rd Army the 4th Armored and 89th Divisions found the first concentration camp liberated by the Western Allies - Ohrdruf, near Gotha, on 4 April. This typical infantryman of the last weeks of the war - here shown handling an M1942 litter - wears the new two-part M1944 'combat and cargo' pack standardised in July 1944 as the replacement for the old M1928. The lower, cargo bag for non-essentials could be unfastened easily from the upper, combat section holding the immediate necessities; the blanket roll and entrenching tool were attached to the upper bag. Another new item is the



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bag for the lightweight gasmask, worn on the left hip; the gasmask itself may have been dumped, however, as the bag made a handy repository for personal kit. Note finally that an elasticated band was now being issued for the small mesh helmet net.

#### **G3: Private first class, medical orderly, 45th Infantry Division**

The 45th 'Thunderbird', along with elements of several other divisions including the 42nd 'Rainbow', liberated Dachau concentration camp and its satellites on 29 April 1945. This medic's left arm shows his divisional patch, rank and red cross brassard; the latter was individually numbered and registered to the wearer, as the status of those claiming the protection of the Geneva Convention was a serious matter (medics also carried annotated ID cards - 'Geneva cards'). Photos show a number of different styles of red cross markings used in the ETO; at Dachau medics of the 45th were photographed with this four-circle presentation under wide mesh nets. His pair of medical bags are carried on a special yoke harness with a very broad rear shoulder piece; the basic load in these included dressings and bandages of various types, iodine swabs, ointments for burn and eye treatments, a tourniquet, morphine syrettes, and a duplicate pad of labels for describing treatment given and attachment to the casualty. Besides a medic's ability to slow blood loss, his administering of morphine was perhaps the most important thing he could do to prevent a wounded man from going into potentially fatal shock. His nickname among front-line GIs was invariably 'Doc'. Other than knives, medics in the ETO went unarmed; they routinely carried two canteens on their belts. (Inset) Being non-combatants, front-line medics were not allowed the Combat Infantryman's Badge. After much lobbying, they were authorised the Combat Medic Badge in early 1945.

### **H: ARMY OF OCCUPATION, 1945**

Three veterans celebrate victory, out on the town in their spiffiest uniforms, displaying all the badges and decorations which they have richly earned. Note that one of them is still of an age which might make it hard for him to buy a beer in some states of the USA without showing identification.

#### **H1: Warrant Officer glider pilot, 61st Troop Carrier Group, US 9th Army Air Force**

As was common among flying officers, his cap and jacket are of officers' quality and, apart from his specific rank bar in gilt and brown enamel on the epaulettes, he wears officers' style badges. This aviator has a '50 mission crush' service cap, an officers' M1944 OD wool field jacket ('Ike' jacket) and matching trousers in a dark 'chocolate' shade, and an officers' chocolate shirt set off with a pale necktie. On his left chest the silver glider pilot's wings are distinguished by a 'G' - they used to say this stood for 'Guts'. Below are a typical

Part of a group photo of command and staff personnel from the 17th Airborne Division chuted up ready for Operation Varsity, the joint US/British drop across the Rhine in March 1945; after serving in the Ardennes this was the 17th's only airborne deployment. All wear the M1943 field jacket apart from (standing second left) one with the M1943 jacket's pile liner, and (kneeling right) the lieutenant in the old M1942 Airborne field uniform, as illustrated in MAA 347.

Germany, early 1945: officers of the 5th Ranger Bn still wearing their D-Day 'Sunoco' diamond-shaped Ranger shoulder patches, and probably also the orange Ranger diamond on the backs of their helmets. They wear 'tanker jackets' and matching trousers (left), an Air Corps flight jacket (second right) and a mackinaw. Among the visible weapons are a bazooka, a .30cal machine gun, two M1 rifles, an M3 'grease gun' and a Thompson, taped grenades and a captured P08 Luger.



array of ribbons; NB on most of these plates these naturally reproduce too small for identification, but representative selections are listed – here, the Bronze Star, Air Medal (with two oakleaf clusters marking three awards), Purple Heart, American Service, and ETO Medal with an invasion arrowhead and two campaign stars; on the right chest is the blue Distinguished Unit Citation (DUC). His four overseas service bars mark two years abroad. Late in the war glider pilots added Airborne tabs to their Air Force patches on the left shoulder. His polaroid aviator sunglasses became very popular among GIs.

While not illustrated here, in 1945 combat officers in command positions were authorised green 'leadership tabs' to be worn looped over their epaulettes.

**H2: T/5, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division**

This paratrooper wears the overseas cap and an enlisted man's 'Ike' jacket, with the earlier drab wool trousers common throughout the war bloused into spit-shined jump boots. The cap bears the 505th PIR enamelled metal crest at right front, because the left is occupied by the combined parachute/glider patch of the Airborne. His rank is marked by the new issue green-on-black stripes. Having served 18 months' overseas in the infantry, he has transferred into the Signal Corps – a fact shown only by the crossed flags on his left collar disc. On the lower collars are enamelled versions of the divisional patch of the 82nd Airborne as worn on his left shoulder; the right shoulder patch denotes his combat service under the 1st Allied Airborne Army. He wears parachute wings on the regimentally coloured backing of the 505th, the Combat Infantryman's Badge and the DUC. His ribbons are for the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Good Conduct Medal, ETO Medal with arrowhead and three stars, and American Campaign Medal. The lanyards – *fourragères* – mark collective awards to his unit by the Allied nations which the 82nd helped to liberate: on his right shoulder the Belgian Croix de Guerre, on his left the French Croix de Guerre and

the orange cord of Holland's Wilhelm Order. His expert marksmanship badge sports three 'shingles' for rifle, bayonet and grenade.

(Inset right) Parachutist's qualification wings, on the blue and red oval backing adopted by the 505th PIR. Stars or arrowheads were sometimes fixed to the badge to represent combat jumps.

**H3: 1st Sergeant, 26th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division**

This long service first sergeant in his late 30s wears the overseas cap, 'Ike' jacket and trousers in slightly differing shades of OD, and a pair of 'buckle boots', which he has painstakingly shaved and waxed to a shine. (In 1947 the Army were obliged to convert their footwear to universal Department of Defense black; World War II veterans would boast of having served in the old 'brown shoe Army'.) His cap is piped infantry light blue and bears the 26th Infantry's enamelled crest. His rank is shown by early-style silver-on-black chevrons and rockers. The shoulder patch of the 'Big Red One' marks one of the most battle-experienced formations in the ETO, and his left chest identifies a soldier highly decorated for valour in combat. Beneath the CIB, here a version in silver embroidery on blue, might be seen the ribbons for the Silver Star and Bronze Star (with oakleaf clusters marking repeat awards); the Purple Heart (also with clusters); the Good Conduct Medal with one 'tie'; the American Campaign Medal; and the ETO Medal with the arrowhead marking participation in at least one amphibious (or airborne) invasion, and one silver and three bronze stars for eight distinct campaigns. He too will soon be authorised the French and Belgian Croix de Guerre lanyards. This 'top sergeant' also sports the marksman's badge with two 'shingles'.

(Inset left) The 'Ruptured Duck'. Ex-servicemen were allowed to wear their uniforms for 60 days after mustering out, but had to sew this patch over the right pocket of their uniform tunic to show their status.



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