First published in 2001 by Osprey Publishing,
Elms Court, Chapel Way, Botley, Oxford OX2 9LP, United Kingdom
Email: info@ospreypublishing.com

Also published as Men-at-Arms 342: *The US Army in World War II (1) Pacific*, Men-at-Arms 347: *The US Army in World War II (2) Mediterranean* and Men-at-Arms 350: *The US Army in World War II (3) North-West Europe.*

ISBN 1 84176 423 X

Editor: Martin Windrow
Design: Alan Hamp
Originated by Colourpath, London, UK
Printed in China through World Print Ltd

01 02 03 04 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Dedication

To World War II veterans PFC John Holmes (65th Armd Inf/20th Armored Division); PFC Richard Slaughter (39th Inf/9th Infantry Division); Sgt Richard Rarick (504th Parachute Inf/82nd Airborne Division); Lt Waldo Heinrichs (89th Infantry Division); T/Sgt Bill Mauldin, Willie & Joe; and 'The Benevolent and Protective Brotherhood of Them What Has Been Shot At'.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to recognise and thank the following individuals and organisations for their assistance: Larry Corbett, Scott and James Brustmaker, Robert & Alex Hargis, Frederick Spiller, Starr Sinton, Bill Mauldin, Gil Whitley, Juan Gonzales (WW2 Impressions), James and Carol Henry, Virginia Aparicio, Jonathan Fong, Martin Windrow, Col Bob French (Ret), 1st Infantry Division Museum (Cantigny), Grant Sigsworth, Karl George, Garry James, Cory Cline, Ellen Guilmette and Frank Hanner of the US Army Infantry Museum (Ft Benning). I would especially like to acknowledge and recommend the books by Messrs Whiting, Gawne, Forty, Stanton, Canfield and Perret in whose footsteps I follow. Unless otherwise noted, all photos are from US Army/CMH or National Archives sources.

Editor's Note

The first section focuses on the Pacific Theatre of Operations. It 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.

The second section focuses on the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations (North Africa, Sicily, the South of France and Italy). It 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.

The third section focuses on the North-West Europe campaign 1944-45. It covers service dress uniforms and insignia, and 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.

Each of the three sections 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 can be found in other Osprey books, little space has been devoted to them in this title. 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 of the North-West Europe section, 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.

CONTENTS

THE MEDITERRANEAN

At sea, November 1942: an unarmed chaplain prepares for the 'Operation Torch' landings in French North Africa. He wears the OD wool shirt and trousers common to all GIs, with a flag shoulder patch; a leather-bottomed musette bag on his right hip, and the large haversack for the service gasmask. He has the Christian cross on his left collar, and seems to wear his priest's narrow purple 'stole' tied around his left arm as identification.

THE US ARMY that sailed for the Mediterranean theatre in late 1942 was a very untried force. With the American public impatient for action against Nazi Germany it was politically necessary to get into the war soon. The Allied landings in Vichy North Africa, and especially the fighting which followed in Tunisia, blooded the green American troops and their leaders. With momentum in the Mediterranean and landings in France postponed until 1944, the British general staff were instrumental in persuading the other Allies to carry the war into Sicily and Italy in mid-1943. This fighting precipitated the collapse of the first of the Axis powers; Italy first surrendered, and then joined the Allied cause. The campaigns gave both the US Army and Navy valuable experience in amphibious warfare, lessons which would be put to good effect in Normandy in June 1944. But that concentration on the northern front limited the resources available in Italy; and the continued expenditure of Allied lives and equipment in the Italian mountains in 1944/45 would ultimately prove to be a strategic dead end.

Three of the best organisations in the US Army served in the Italian theatre. Interestingly, the 442nd (Nisei) Regiment, 1st Special Service Force and 10th Mountain Division were all specialised units that Gen Eisenhower refused for service in France. General Mark Clark's US 5th Army in Italy also received the first all-draftee 85th and 88th Divisions, and the African-American 92nd Division.

The US Army would maintain about six-plus divisions in 'the boot' until VE-Day, serving alongside British, Canadian, Indian, New Zealand, South African, Polish, French, North African, Brazilian and 'Co-Belligerent' Italian forces against the stubbornly brilliant fighting retreat of the Wehrmacht, which was conducted for most of the campaign by Field-Marshal Albert Kesselring.

UNIFORMS

Cold weather clothing

The Army began the war with essentially World War I style winter clothing. Drab wool shirts and trousers with the short 'M1941' or 'Parsons' field jacket were standard wear. For really cold weather the shin-length, double-breasted overcoat in 32oz drab wool was the usual issue. The coat had a large roll collar, epaulettes, rear expansion pleats and integral half-belt, and two 'slash' (internal) side pockets. It used general service brass eagle buttons for most of the war, although green plastic buttons replaced these later. Shortages of more specialised cold weather gear at the front and supply incompetence – particularly in

Belgium and France in 1944 – forced combat GIs to fall back on this monster overcoat throughout the last winter of the war. It was warm and water-resistant, but it was heavy. Unless literally in the dead of winter, troops tried to avoid wearing it. (Truck drivers sometimes used the overcoat with the skirt cut off at the hip for increased convenience.) In poor light it also gave the wearer the unfortunate silhouette of the overcoat worn by many German troops. It remained the service dress overcoat throughout the war; when appropriate, NCOs' rank stripes were worn on both sleeves in olive drab (OD) felt on black. The long button-front raincoat was also issued for winter use by front line troops.

Another hold-over from World War I was the mackinaw. Three versions of this coat were used in World War II, all thigh-length, double-breasted, belted coats with shawl collars. Comfortable and well-liked, they were a bit bulky for combat use, though somewhat more common among combat officers; they were especially popular among truck drivers. All the patterns had a water-repellant khaki/light green 10oz cotton duck exterior similar to that of the lighter Parsons field jacket, and a 26–30oz drab wool lining. The pre-war mackinaw had a wool-faced collar; the two M1941/42 versions had cloth collars. All had plain drab plastic buttons, a strapped cuff and two flapped internal waist pockets. The M1941/42 versions were slightly lighter in construction and thus less warm; the last version dispensed with the integral belt.

A buttoned knee-length arctic coat/parka was also available at the outbreak of the war. Rarely seen, this was essentially a longer version of

Officers at the 19th Engineer Regt command post near the Rapido River, January 1944; one wears the first pattern mackinaw with wool-faced collar. The radioman at left wears the II Corps patch above his technical corporal's rank badge. The pole aerial is the old cavalry type, designed to be carried like a lance by a mounted man.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning correspondent Ernie Pyle (right), wearing a mackinaw and a knit jeep cap with goggles, chatting with tank crewmen in Italy; note the cold weather 'tanker's' jacket at left. Pyle was widely admired as a writer with the common touch, who served as an unofficial spokesman for the GI to the folks back home. After VE-Day he served in the Pacific, and was with the 77th Division when he was killed in action on Ie Shima, Okinawa.

A Forceman of the FSSF, his shoulder patch 'blotted' by the censor, wearing the new M1943 field jacket and mountain trousers – the buttons on the cargo pocket distinguish these from the snap-fastened Airborne equivalent. Visible weapons are a Thompson, a .45 pistol and a Mk II grenade. He wears a web ten-pocket rifle belt.

the mackinaw but fur-lined, with a hood but without the belt. It was, however, too bulky for all but the coldest climate. For the winter of 1944/45 a hooded, fur-lined version of the arctic parka was becoming available; this had an external belt similar to that of the mountain troops' field jacket (see Plate G1). Although it is rarely seen in photos, some do show it worn by Generals Patton and Bradley.

Developed early in the war as a winter combat uniform, the Army wool-lined, bibbed overalls and short windcheater-style jacket had much to recommend them. Like the mackinaw, the winter combat trousers were of windproof and water-repellant cotton duck lined with drab blanket-weight wool; they had a bibbed front which extended up the chest, with suspenders. They featured a zipper down the front, zippers on the hips to access inside trouser pockets, and a 'quick piss' zipper on the lower front. The bibbed trousers were intended to be worn over regular woollen trousers and a shirt.

The winter combat ('tanker's') jacket had knit cuffs, waist and neck, and slash 'handwarmer' internal front pockets. The jacket had 'bi-swing' expanding back panels and no epaulettes. (I believe that a small number of an earlier version of the jacket were produced with flapped pockets and epaulettes.) With its knit neck, waist and cuffs this garment was warmer than the M1941 Parsons jacket, and was a highly prized item among all combat GIs. The bibbed trousers were also in demand, although rather bulky for infantry use. Officers of all ranks commonly wore the tanker jacket, with rank insignia pinned onto the shoulders or on custom-fitted epaulettes. Both the jacket and trousers were generally set aside for armoured vehicle personnel, and were usually seen worn by tankers and sometimes by their attendant armoured infantrymen.

The Army Quartermaster developed most of the new cold weather uniforms on the 'layering' principle; and OD knit wool sweaters certainly fitted into that scheme. Sleeved and sleeveless pullovers were common.

Near Rome, June 1944: Medics of the 1st Special Service Force watch a comrade being loaded into a medical evacuation halftrack. Note their paratrooper boots and mountain trousers, characteristic of the FSSF (see Plate E3).

The sleeved pullover with a low collar and a five-button chest closure was usually a bit tighter fitting and was worn both over and under shirts. Also available for winter use by 1943 were a woollen knit 'burglar's' toque, and heavier 18oz drab wool trousers.

Light brown leather work gloves were used in the Army. For winter use knit OD/drab green gloves were issued. Fingered gloves were the more common, including a version with brown leather palms and fingers. Knit mittens with separate 'trigger fingers', and canvas/leather overmittens, were also to be seen. A drab/OD woollen scarf was also widely used throughout the war.

Due to perpetual shortages, winter overshoes and so-called 'shoepacs' were a seasonal headache for the Army. Trench foot and frozen feet took a serious toll as a result. The 5th Army in Italy lost about 20% of its manpower during the winter of 1943/44 due to trench foot. During the December 1944 Battle of the Bulge in Belgium the losses due to foot problems were about 40% of the total.

The overshoes mainly issued in 1943/44 were the black canvas and rubber M1942 model with four metal clip buckles at the front, about 10ins high at the ankle. This overshoe suffered from the separation of the rubber sole from the canvas upper. An improved five-buckle version came out late in the war. Also available early in the war was the rubber and leather 16in high lace-up 'Blucher' boot made of mostly greased leather. For troops on the move this boot was found to cause serious foot problems, and did not last. About the best – or least inadequate – winter boot was the M1944 steel-shanked 'shoepac'. This had a rubber bottom and leather top, was 12ins high, and was efficiently waterproofed.

All of these boots gave adequate warmth when worn with woollen standard and ski socks; the M1944 used a fibre insert. None of them really answered the needs of troops involved in winter marching.

Officers in combat had access to all the same winter clothing as the EMs. On rare occasions they were to be seen on the battlefield using the officer's OD green trenchcoat. Most company grade officers preferred tanker jackets, M1943 four-pocket combat jackets or mackinaws.

In service dress, several models of trenchcoat and a shawl-collar mackinaw-style beige wool coat were to be seen used by officers. General officers were, by custom, allowed a wide latitude in their choice of uniform. Generals overseas were to be seen in the whole variety of combat jackets, including Air Corps leather and nylon flight jackets. Custom-cut or modified coats were also seen. By 1944/45 the two or three patterns of the short blouse-style 'Ike jacket' – M1944 OD wool field jacket – were in fashion among generals and senior officers, especially staff and non-divisional types. (The old M1904 brass-buckled 'US' black leather belt was also seen in use, especially by Gen Patton. This belt is still a prerogative of general officers in the US Army to this day.)

Mountain troops' uniforms

The 1st Special Service Force and the 10th Mountain Division (see below under Organisation) had a significant number of items specially developed for their use. Winter coats were among the most obvious special issue items.

OPPOSITE **91st Division GI displaying newly issued M1944 'shoepacs', M1943 jacket (still with its makers' and issue tags stapled on), and wool sleeping bag with cover. Troops in Italy in 1944 generally received a timely issue of winter gear; many GIs in France had to wait until January 1945 for theirs.**

However desirable sleeping bags are, to the frontline soldier they were almost unusable. GIs had to be free to leap to their weapons and fighting positions, and could not afford the time to get out of a bag and put their boots on again. The old drab wool blanket (M1934) with bound edges, and a rain poncho were probably the best sleeping gear available to combat GIs. The bag used by the Army essentially looked like a wool blanket folded over with a zipper added; it was a 'mummy'-style bag with cloth tapes at the feet to tie up the roll and a hooded headpiece at the top. It sometimes came with an OD water-resistant outer shell. This bag could be ingeniously modified by GIs in winter by cutting arm holes and wearing it under a jacket with the hood retained. A rarely-seen goose down mummy bag was also available for arctic use.

Men of the FSSF were issued just about every boot then made for the Army. This line-up under a bunk at Ft Harrison, Montana, in 1943 shows (left to right) low-quarter dress shoes, two pairs of ankle-length service shoes, mountain-ski boots, jump boots, and four-clip cold weather overshoes.

The Army issue M1941 drab cotton poplin anorak was based on European mountain wear. The general pattern was a thigh-length, hooded, pullover jacket with two angled 'handwarmer' chest pockets. It had drawstring neck and wrist closures and was fully reversible to white. Different versions of this came with or without buttoned or unbuttoned pocket flaps. A later version had a three-button neck opening.

The first type (ski) anorak had a fur-trimmed hood and cuffs. A white pile liner with knit cuffs was developed to add real warmth; in the snow, this pile lining could be worn as an outer coat. Pile-lined arctic parkas were also used by the mountain troops.

The M1942 mountain coat was specially designed for use by the Mountain Division. It was a close cousin of the M1943 combat jacket, and appears at first glance to be the same garment. It was made of a similar OD green cotton and had two expandable breast pockets and two internal skirt pockets. The lower pockets had an exposed OD plastic button, as did the flap covering the zipper front of the jacket. The mountain jacket had a detachable hood but no epaulettes. Its most noticeable features were the exposed web belt and buckle, and especially the integral hump-backed 'pack'. The pack had a zippered side access, and the waistbelt helped hold it down when it was folded and not in use. An interior strapping arrangement around the arms and shoulders supported the integral pack when it was extended and in use (see Plate G3).

The M1942 mountain trousers were simply stout OD cotton pants with tapered cuffs and thigh cargo pockets. They had angled and zippered front pockets and flapped rear pockets as well as the buttoned cargo pockets. The trousers had both buttons for suspenders and belt loops. The tapered cuffs had elastic strapping for the instep. Drab wool M1941 ski trousers were also issued. These had a broad waistband closed with three buttons, and the tapered cuffs also had elastics fitted. Other unusual items that might be seen in use by the 10th Mountain or the 1st SSF included skis, snowshoes, rucksacks, and short European-style mountain boots and gaiters.

Italy, 1944: a 34th Division MP directing traffic under shellfire, ready to duck at any moment. He appears to wear the pile liner for the M1943 jacket turned inside out – the outside was cotton duck.

Military Police usually came in two flavours: divisional MPs, and the rear echelon corps and army level MPs. Rear echelon MPs were in charge of enforcing regulations and discipline. They could 'ticket' (fine) or arrest malefactors for e.g. public drunkenness, uniform infractions, or any criminal activity; traffic control and general security were also common responsibilities. Divisional MPs handled traffic, area security, POWs and discipline. They operated close enough to the front to be at risk, and their control of road junctions under artillery fire could be hazardous. Divisional MPs were held in high regard by infantrymen, and as 5th Army veteran Bill Mauldin states, 'If an MP wearing the insignia of the dogface's own outfit tells him to do something, the doggie usually listens.'

Airborne troops' uniform

After experiments with HBT and green sateen 'balloon cloth' jumpsuits with patch zippered pockets, a khaki cotton twill two-piece jumpsuit was selected. Unlike the German and British airborne, the US Army decided to forgo a jump oversmock. The US paratroops were expected to jump with their weapons and almost all of their equipment on their person (i.e. mostly in their pockets). After a test 'M1941 jump uniform' was created in the Fort Benning tailors' shop, an improved M1942 suit was approved; this was made of a khaki/tan windproof and water-repellant cotton cloth.

The M1942 had four patch cargo pockets with inverted pleats and flaps closed with two smooth press studs. The zipped-front jacket also featured an integral belt, epaulettes, a gusset up the spine and bi-swing rear shoulders. The matching trousers had both regular side seam and inverted-pleat thigh cargo pockets; the inseam had cloth leg tapes to tie down pockets and equipment. The trouser legs were tapered to fit into the jumpboots.

For headgear, A-2 and A-8 cloth flight toques were first used, soon to be replaced by football-style Riddell crash helmets. The general issue steel pot helmet came next, with its special webbing in the liner (M1C) to suspend a leather-cupped chinstrap. Woollen knit jeep caps ('beanies') were commonly worn to cushion the helmet for landing.

Footwear was based on an 11-eyelet high-top boot probably first used by civilian 'smoke jumpers'. This boot had a strap and buckle for ankle support; the modified GI version soon produced was a russet leather 11-eyelet boot minus the ankle strap, with a toecap, bevelled front sole edges, and a partial rubber tread for moving across aircraft floors. Corcoran was the most famous of several manufacturers, and this very successful and popular boot soon acquired that generic nickname. The jump boots were commonly worn by the 1st SSF, who had originally been jump-trained, and also by any other officers and GIs lucky enough to obtain them.

In Europe the M1942 jump uniform was frequently modified by adding knee and elbow reinforcement patches (sometimes padded). The light colour was also considered a problem by some units, who over-sprayed the uniform with stripes of OD or black paint. By the latter part of 1944 the Army began issuing the new general issue M1943 OD four-pocket combat jackets and buckle boots to paratroopers. The new jacket was accepted, but jump boots were retained if at all possible. Paratroops also received M1943 OD trousers with thigh cargo pockets added – a field modification.

Besides uniforms, other items peculiar to Airborne troops were M2 switchblade knives, World War I brass knuckleduster trench knives, M1A1 folding-stock carbines, and special Air Corps-produced web belt pouches of several patterns. US paratroopers in 1944 also jumped with a special cloth parachute first aid packet which included a tourniquet, field dressing and morphine syrette; this was usually attached to a shoulder strap or the helmet.

Italy, 1944: this Pfc wears a tanker's jacket and buckle boots; note also the folding-head shovel, based on a German model. He uses an SCR 300 radio to keep his company commander in touch with battalion; 'SCR' stands for 'Set, Complete Radio' – i.e. combining receiver and transmitter – rather than 'Signal Corps Radio' as sometimes stated.

The US Army was lavishly supplied with radio sets; most tactical radios were FM. The SCR 194/195/300 series backpack radios, termed 'Walkie-Talkies', were used at battalion and company level and had a range of about five miles. The hand-held SCR 536 or 'Handie-Talkie' was used at platoon level, with a range of about a mile (under good conditions – sometimes it was said to be easier to just shout). Most tanks and command jeeps had radios. The availability of radios was one of the key factors allowing mobile and decentralised tactics; the US Army especially could co-ordinate infantry and tank movement with artillery support to an unprecedented degree.

The special insignia of the US Airborne are too extensive to cover here, but the silver jump wings and overseas hat Airborne patch were the most obvious (see Osprey Elite 31, *US Army Airborne 1940-90* by Gordon Rottman and Ronald Volstad).

M1943 combat uniform

The hip-length M1943 combat jacket (PQD370) was inspired by the M1942 paratroop jacket. It was made of an OD green smooth sateen cotton shell with cotton lining. The jacket had two patch breast pockets and two internal skirt pockets, epaulettes, concealed plastic buttons, and a drawstring waist for better fitting. The M1943 was first tested at Anzio by the 3rd Division, and was soon in great demand. The large pocket arrangement was especially admired, and GIs found they could almost fight without web gear by using the voluminous pockets.

Complaints were based on the fact the jacket was neither waterproof nor warm enough. For winter wear it was always intended to be used with a liner or a sweater. The M1943 jacket liner or pile field jacket was a artificial (mohair/alpaca) pile fur garment with a light chocolate brown cotton exterior and knit cuffs and collar. It had two slash pockets, and closed with six plastic buttons and cloth loops. The simple liner was well liked, and was often used as a separate garment or with the parka. It is not generally appreciated that the wool 'Ike' jacket was also intended to be worn in combination with the M1943 jacket (though it rarely was). GIs were also seen to wear the M1941 Parsons jacket under the M1943. A detachable hood that could be worn over or under the helmet was also a part of the M1943 uniform.

The M1943 was rapidly accepted by the 5th Army in Italy but refused by the ETO until late in 1944. The M1943 jacket is now seen as perhaps the best combat uniform to come out of the war, and is emulated by most modern combat jackets. Its line of descent to the US Army's current camouflaged BDU is evident to this day.

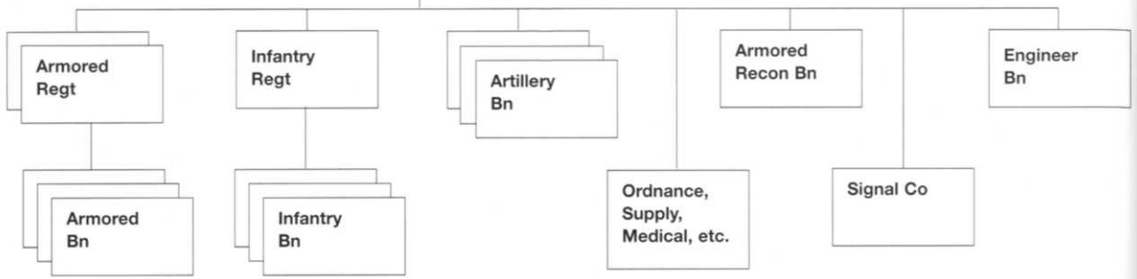
Also issued with the new jacket were the M1943 OD green sateen cotton cloth over-trousers (PQD371). These were to be worn over wool trousers, and had side seam and rear slash pockets along with a small watch pocket in the right front. They also featured both belt loops and suspender buttons. GIs sometimes modified these trousers by adding thigh cargo pockets.

ORGANISATION

'Heavy' and 'Light' Armored Divisions

The Army was still experimenting with armoured unit organisations when the German Panzers overran France. By July 1940 the 1st and 2nd Armored Divisions had been organised as assets of an Armored Corps. Originally these divisions each had two light tank regiments and

1942 (Heavy) Armored Division

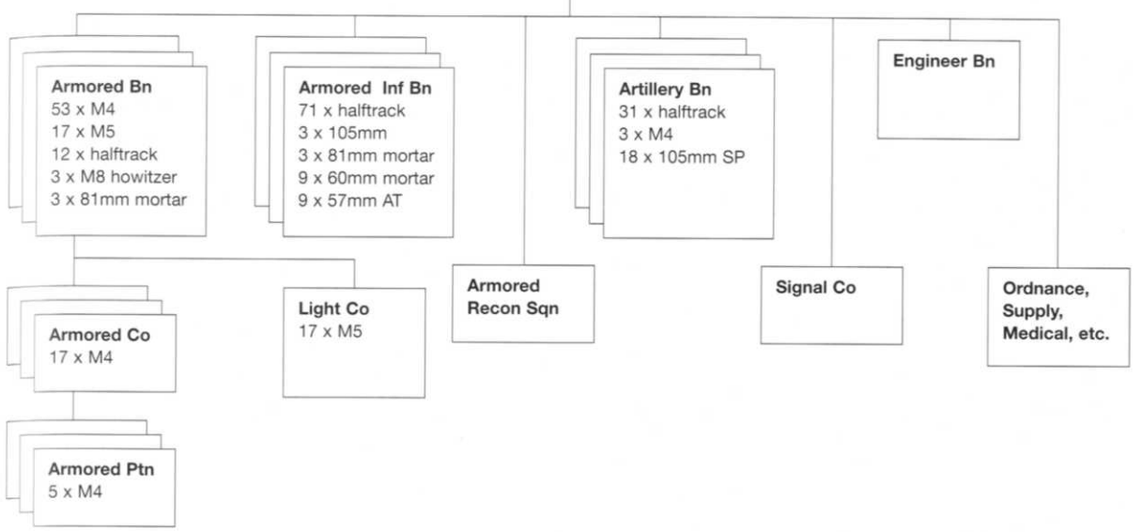


one medium. By 1942 the Armored Division consisted of two tank regiments of three battalions each, and a mechanised infantry regiment also of three battalions. The division also had a reconnaissance battalion of light tanks and armoured cars, and three self-propelled artillery battalions. The 1942 Armored Division fielded 14,620 men, 390 tanks and almost 800 half-tracks (3,500 vehicles of all types). This type of formation was soon termed a 'heavy division'. For manoeuvre operations in the field the units of the division were divided between Combat Commands A and B (CCA and CCB). The combat commands were essentially task forces configured as required for their mission and able to operate independently.

By 1943 the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Armored Divisions (heavy) were considered too unwieldy. All the later-formed divisions dispensed with the regimental level of command. They were organised into three tank battalions, three armoured infantry battalions, three artillery battalions and a reconnaissance squadron. These new 'light' armoured divisions had 10,900 men and 260 tanks. In combat the battalions were to be divided between CCA, CCB and the new Combat Command

North Africa, January 1943: the crew of a 1st Armored Division M3 Medium tank (Grant) unpack 75mm shells from their black cardboard shipping tubes. Most wear HBT overalls with a mixture of 'M1941' Parsons field jackets and cold weather 'tanker' jackets. The three men at the left wear the light khaki padded fabric 'winter combat helmet' which was designed to fit under the hardened leather 'armored forces helmet', worn here by the third man from the right. By the end of the Tunisian campaign M4 Shermans had replaced most M3s in US Army tank units.

1943 (Light) Armored Division



Reserve (CCR). The 1st Armored Division shifted to the new light configuration in July 1944, but the 2nd and 3rd retained their heavy organisation throughout the war. It was the fully mechanised US armoured divisions of 1944 with their radios, self-propelled artillery and air-liaison teams which truly executed the *blitzkrieg* as envisioned by the Germans at the outbreak of the war.

August 1944: 'glider riders' of the 1st Airborne Task Force emerge from their Waco CG-4A near La Motte, South of France, after what appears to have been a lucky landing. All are armed with carbines. The Waco carried 13 men, or four men and a jeep.

A US Army tank battalion consisted of about 71 tanks and 729 men organised into three tank companies (by 1943/44, with M4 Shermans), a light tank company (M5 Stuarts), and HQ and Service Companies. The battalion, commanded by a lieutenant-colonel, also included three 81mm mortars and three tank-mounted M8 snub-nosed 75mm howitzers. Each tank company had three platoons of five tanks each and a HQ of two tanks. A howitzer tank was added to each company in the last year of the war.

Besides the tank battalions assigned to armoured divisions, independent General Headquarters (GHQ) tank battalions were available for assignment by armies to corps and divisions as necessary (in 1944, about 65, with another 29 in process of formation). As infantry divisions were without integral tank units, it was common in Europe to

assign independent tank and tank destroyer battalions to such divisions for extended periods.

Airborne Divisions

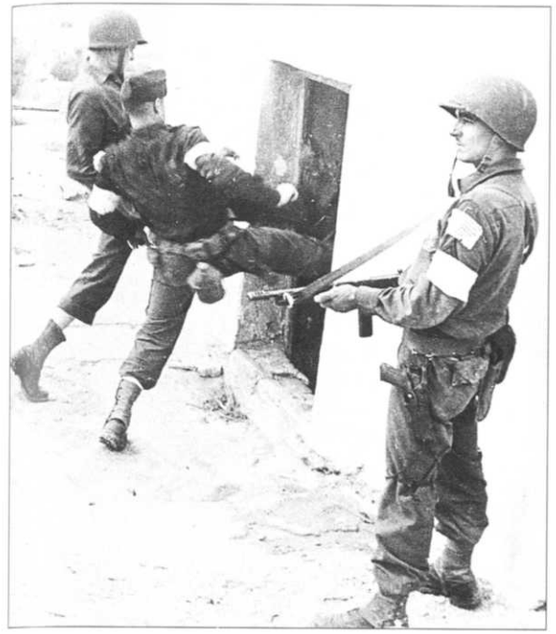
As with the Armored Force, it took the sharp example of the German paratroops in 1940–41 to get the US Airborne off the ground. An airborne training battalion (501st) was rapidly expanded into a regiment; and soon the 82nd Infantry Division found itself converting to the airborne role. Men of the 82nd then provided cadres for the 101st Airborne as it formed. The 82nd fought in Sicily and Italy, then in North-West Europe; the 101st made their first assault alongside the 82nd on D-Day, and fought in North-West Europe until VE-Day. The 11th, 13th and 17th Airborne Divisions followed. The 11th went to the Pacific; the 17th saw combat in the Battle of the Bulge and in Germany; the 13th made it to Europe in 1945, but did not see combat. An African-American parachute battalion (555th) was raised, but never left the United States.

Paratroopers – all volunteers – had to complete rigorous physical training and five jumps before they were awarded their 'jump wings'. With their trousers smartly tucked into their cherished Corcoran jump boots, the Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) troopers referred to all non-paratroop GIs as 'straight legs'. The 'glider riders' of Glider Infantry Regiments (GIR) were commonly 'leg' infantry units who were simply assigned to the Airborne. A quarter of the 82nd Division went over the fence for a few days when first told of their new status. For the dubious pleasure of riding a crash-landing glider into combat they initially received no distinctions or extra pay (a special glider badge and hazardous duty pay were belatedly awarded in 1945). The Waco CG-4A glider they rode was possibly piloted by a washed-out Air Corps pilot (warrant officer), and was likely to break apart on landing. It was not comforting to know that some of the Wacos were built by a coffin manufacturer. While test riding a glider the city council of St Louis were all killed when the wing of their Waco broke off. The Waco was probably the best glider of the war, but it was inevitably fragile. When a Nisei GI riding one into the invasion of the South of France poked a small hole in one to see out, he spent the rest of the trip holding the hole closed so that the whole side of the glider did not rip off.

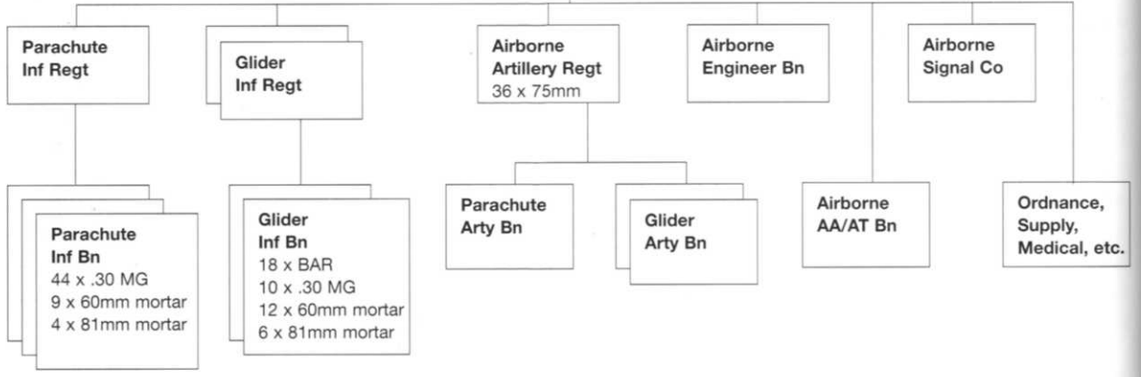
The original airborne divisions were small; the 1942 division called for 8,400 men in one parachute and two glider infantry regiments, with a single three-battalion Airborne Artillery Regiment divided between the two roles. The GIRs totalled 1,600 men in two battalions and the PIRs had 1,000 men in three battalions. The 11th Airborne Division, which served in the Pacific, retained this organisation but retrained most of their glider men for the parachute role, partly due to a shortage of gliders in theatre. Airborne artillery consisted of three (later four) battalions of glider/parachute pack 75/105mm howitzers. By 1943 the divisional establishment had changed to one glider and two parachute regiments with both units increased in size. The actual organisation and strength of each Airborne formation varied with time and mission, and there was a lot of cross-posting (see Elite 31, *US Army Airborne 1940–90* for details). The 82nd had three regiments in the Mediterranean but left one behind (504th) when it deployed to England in 1944; the 504th PIR fought at Anzio. The 82nd's Normandy airdrop was made with one glider and three parachute regiments, but the 504th, which had rejoined the division by now, was left behind in England. By December 1944 during the Battle of the Bulge a larger 13,000-man airborne divisional establishment was authorised to catch up with the already expanded 82nd and 101st Divisions.

OPPOSITE **North Africa, November 1942: men of the 1st Rangers check a French fort. Note their shortened web leggings, left shoulder flag patches, and white recognition armbands. The right hand man has an unofficial open-top holster.**

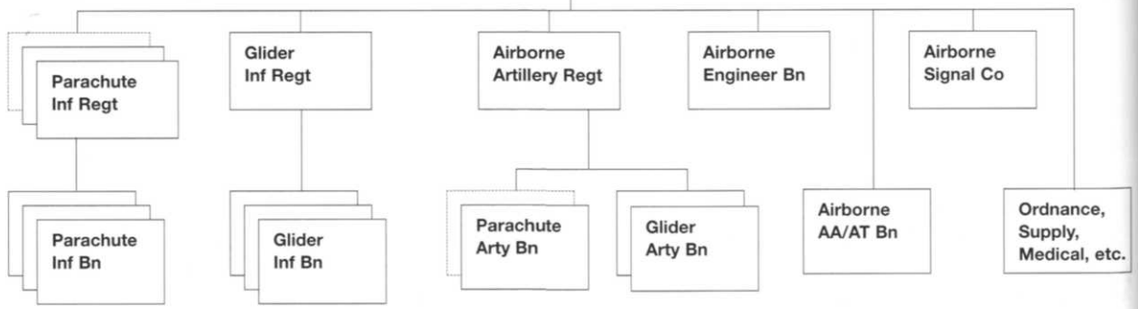
OPPOSITE, BELOW **Col. William O. Darby, 1st Rangers, on his personal Harley-Davidson; note his favoured 03 Springfield rifle in the leather scabbard.**



1942 Airborne Division



1944 Airborne Division



Airborne units were small and lightly equipped. Regardless of the outstanding quality of their troopers, they had trouble sustaining themselves in combat due to their inherent lack of vehicles, artillery and men. It was wasteful to keep them in combat as conventional infantry for long after their assault landings, but this was often required by the exigencies of battle. The Salerno operation became so desperate that part of the 82nd were airdropped into the beachhead to provide direct reinforcement. In order for the airborne divisions to stay in combat they had to be augmented with additional support and combat units.

Ranger Battalions

Impressed by the elan and effectiveness of the British Commandos, the US Army authorised the founding of a similar battalion of specially trained GIs. In June 1942, 500 volunteers from the 34th and 1st Armored Divisions in Northern Ireland were formed into the 1st Ranger Battalion, named for the old Colonial ranger companies of the French and Indian War; they were commanded by a 34th Division artillery major, William O.Darby. These men were run through the demanding British Commando training school in Scotland. The success of the 1st Rangers in spearheading part of the landings in Vichy North Africa and actions in Tunisia encouraged the formation of further battalions.

The 2nd Ranger Bn was formed in the USA in April 1943 and saw its first action at Omaha Beach and Pointe du Hoc on D-Day. The 3rd and 4th Rangers were formed in North Africa around cadres from the 1st Bn, and made the Sicily landing in July 1943. The 5th Bn was formed in the USA in September 1943 and underwent Commando training in England; they first saw action on Omaha Beach. The 6th Rangers were formed in the Pacific in August 1944 and fought in the 1944/45 liberation of the Philippines.

Ranger battalions were small, having only 26 officers and 354 enlisted men. They usually comprised one HQ company and six Ranger companies, the latter with three officers and 59 EMs; each company had two platoons, usually consisting of two assault sections and a special weapons section. By 1944 the battalion's heavy weapons scale included 6 x 81mm mortars, 18 x 60mm mortars, 14 x 2.36in bazookas, and 24 x .30cal MGs (often replaced by BARs). In North Africa, D Company, 1st Rangers had the 81mm mortars, but this was soon changed and the mortars were spread among the companies. The three-battalion Ranger Force that went into Sicily had a 4.2in mortar battalion attached. By the time of the Italy landings the Ranger Force had added a four-gun 105mm halftrack Cannon Company.

The Rangers made excellent spearhead troops and would participate in every amphibious landing in Europe except the South of France, where their place was taken by the 1st SSF – see below. (For unit details see Elite 13, *US Army Rangers & LRRP Units 1942–87.*) Like the paratroopers, however, the Rangers were often misused as regular infantry by field commanders. The problem with Ranger units was that they were generally too big for Commando raids and too small and unsupported for conventional operations. In a famous incident at Anzio the 1st and 3rd Bns were wiped out in a ferocious one-day tank and infantry battle. Due to severe losses at Anzio the 4th Rangers were disbanded; some of these orphaned Rangers were transferred into the 1st SSF, where they wore both the Force's arrowhead patch and the Ranger scroll. Colonel Darby was killed in action as a TF commander in the 10th Mountain Division a week before VE-Day.

PAYSCALE

Soldiers' pay was calculated based on their pay grade, the senior NCOs being 'grade 1'; after the war the grades were reversed, i.e. the first sergeant/master sergeant became 'grade 8' (E8). Those holding technician rank received slightly more than base pay for their grade. GIs were paid an extra $5 a month if they qualified as a firing expert, $5 for the Expert Infantryman Badge and $10 for the Combat Infantryman Badge. Paratroopers received an extra $50 a month 'hazardous duty pay'. Time in grade also boosted pay. Before September 1942 the first sergeant was grade 2 with three stripes, a diamond and two rockers. Pay in Europe was usually in local currency. Base pay by late 1942 was as follows:

Private	(recruit)	$21
Private	(7th grade)	$30
Pfc	(6th grade)	$36
Corporal	(5th grade)	$54
Sergeant	(4th grade)	$60
Staff Sgt	(3rd grade)	$72
Technical Sgt	(2nd grade)	$84
1Sgt/MSgt	(1st grade)	$126
2Lt/WO		$150

10th Mountain Division

Experimenting with lightly equipped divisions, and impressed by European mountain troops, the US Army decided that it too needed a mountain division. The 10th Mountain Division was recruited primarily from among outdoorsmen from the western states, who were trained in skiing and mountaineering in the Colorado Rocky Mountains. Their special clothing issue is outlined earlier in this text. The 14,100-man division had three infantry regiments (85th, 86th and 87th), as well as 6,000 horses and mules, and some M29 Weasel tracked snow vehicles in lieu of trucks. The divisional artillery comprised 36 pack howitzers. Refused by the high command in the ETO, this promising division arrived in Italy in January 1945, and proved perfectly suited for combat in the Italian Alps.

Anzio beachhead, January 1944: this Canadian Forceman of the FSSF wears the second pattern reversible parka white side out. Note also the two-part cloth/wool mittens; and the M1941 Johnson light machine gun, a weapon peculiar to the Force – 125 were acquired before leaving the USA by bartering two tons of plastic explosive with the US Marines.

1st Special Service Force

On 20 July 1942 former coastal artillery Col Robert T.Frederick was given a free hand to create a brigade-sized unit for a Churchill-inspired mission into occupied Norway. Uniquely, this was a bi-national force: 30-40% of his unit were crack Canadian volunteers. The GIs were mostly volunteers who responded to Frederick's call for 'paratroops, ski troops and commandos'. Some were 'discipline problems' from units that took

South of France, August 1944: British paras and GIs of the 1st Airborne Task Force take a break. Note the national flag armbands and patches, respectively. The left hand GI seems to have camouflage-painted his uniform (see Plate F1) and has padding under his web suspenders.

the traditional opportunity to shift their problems elsewhere, but all had to be personally approved by Col Frederick, who was looking for aggressive and intelligent outdoorsmen for his intended Commando-style unit. They were highly trained in hand-to-hand combat, demolitions, speed marching, winter and alpine operations, airborne and amphibious warfare. Innocuously named the 1st Special Service Force (FSSF), the unit had 1,800 men broken into three 'regiments' and a 500-man support unit; GIs and Canadians were mixed together throughout.

Their first action was not in Norway but in the Aleutians in August 1943, but the Japanese were found to have already pulled out of Kiska. The Force was then sent to Italy in November 1943, with an attached airborne artillery battalion. In the Anzio beachhead and in the mountains they proved themselves as elite infantry. At Anzio a German diary said of the Forcemen 'The Black Devils are all around us every time we come into the line, and we never hear them come'. In the South of France they seized in Commando style an empty coastal artillery battery; and served out the remainder of their war with Gen Frederick's new command, the 1st Airborne Task Force. Also known as 'the Devil's Brigade' or simply 'the North Americans', the FSSF was disbanded in December 1944.

Eastern France, November 1944: command post (CP) of Co.F, 442nd Regimental Combat Team. The white lieutenant (right, wearing mackinaw) is probably the company commander; behind him is his radio operator with an SCR 300. The four Nisei GIs all wear the M1943 field jacket. The regiment earned much praise for its behaviour during the savage winter fighting in the Belfort Gap.

1st Airborne Task Force

The planned invasion of the South of France in August 1944 called for an airborne element, but no airborne division was available in the Mediterranean theatre. A patched-together 1st Airborne Task Force (1st ATF) was therefore created, commanded by Gen Frederick of the FSSF. Near Rome, Frederick gathered up all the independent airborne units in theatre and set up a jump training school at a nearby airfield. In the main the 1st ATF consisted of the following Parachute Infantry units: 509th Bn, 517th Regt, 1Bn/551st Regt, 550th Bn, and the British 2nd Independent Parachute Bde (4, 5 and 6 Battalions). They were supported by the 460th, 463rd and 602nd Airborne Field Artillery Bns; and a glider-borne anti-tank gun company of the 442nd (Nisei) Regiment. The formation totalled about 10,000 men.

The 1st ATF was short of jump boots, and at least one unit set out to solve this problem in an unorthodox manner. A group of them went on pass into Rome, and proceeded to mug for their boots any rear area GIs and MPs they found wearing the unauthorised paratroop footwear.

Just as in Sicily, the South of France drop was widely scattered; but Frederick's men seized all their objectives and raised hell in the German rear areas, including the capture of a corps headquarters. Amazingly, Frederick's ersatz division remained in combat (the British brigade having been replaced by the FSSF) until November 1944, with no transport or logistics support. They became expert at purloining vehicles and rerouting supplies to maintain themselves in combat. The ATF was finally broken up in November and its men assigned to the 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions (XVIII Airborne Corps).

Italy, 1943: a shirtsleeved Nisei GI of the 100th Bn – judging from his just-visible binocular case, an NCO – photographed while commanding a 60mm mortar crew of his company's heavy weapons platoon. Note the 'Red Bull' shoulder patch of the 34th Division; the 100th replaced the 2/133rd Infantry in this division, and distinguished itself during the Cassino fighting of winter 1943/44 (see Plate D2).

Ethnic units: the Nisei

The 100th Battalion, 1,500 strong, was formed mainly from Hawaiian National Guardsmen of Japanese-American descent (Nisei). These troops were rerun through basic and unit training and were eventually forwarded to Europe. They were deployed to Italy in September 1943 as a part of the 34th Division. In the meantime, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team was formed from Nisei in Hawaii and the 'relocation' camps in the USA; it consisted of three rifle battalions and an artillery battalion (552nd), with a mixture of white and Nisei officers. With part of one battalion left behind, the 442nd joined the 34th Division and the 100th Bn just after the Anzio breakout in July 1944. In September the 442nd RCT, now incorporating the 100th Bn, was redeployed to the South of France and attached to the 36th 'Texas' Division. In support of the 36th, the Niseis' most famous combat action occurred near Belmont. After two vicious days of fighting, the 442nd came to the rescue of a surrounded battalion of grateful Texans. Leaving the artillery battalion behind to serve in Germany, the 442nd RCT was reassigned to the 34th Division in Italy. It finished the war as part of the reconstituted 92nd Division. The 442nd RCT was the most highly decorated regiment of the US Army; the 100th Bn alone won three Distinguished Unit Citations.

It is worth noting that not all Nisei soldiers served in the 442nd RCT; a handful of them served in other ETO units, and a few in the Pacific as translators/interrogators.

African-American troops

Although all-black units (officered primarily by whites) had been a part of the US Army since the Civil War, even in World War II it was still generally felt (though it is hard to imagine on what supposed

Northern Italy, December 1944: Gen Truscott, commanding 5th Army, inspects troops of the African-American 92nd Division; note the 'buffalo' shoulder patch at right. Truscott wears a leather flyer's jacket and private purchase strapped boots; the GIs wear the M1943 jacket with wool trousers and M1944 'shoepacs'.

historical evidence) that blacks would make poor combat soldiers. As a result, most of the African-American GIs initially served in rear area Quartermaster, Engineer, Signal and Transport units. Indeed, 60% of the famous 'Red Ball Express' were black. Manpower shortages and pressure from the Army Chief of Staff saw about 5% of the black GIs organised into two divisions (92nd and 93rd) and over 30 independent artillery and tank units.

Hopes were high that these units would perform well. Unfortunately, many of the unhappy white officers assigned to black units were (intentionally) Southerners, and had low expectations of their troops. After an uncertainstart the 93rd Division in the Pacific performedoutstanding, though limited, combat service.

The independent battalions also did well, the 969th Artillery and 761st Tank Battalions being among the most notable. The 92nd Division, however, fared poorly. Badly trained and badly led, its service in northern Italy in 1945 was at best uninspiring. Its original infantry units were the 365th, 370th and 371st Regiments; it was finally reorganised to have one white, one black, and one Nisei (the 442nd) infantry regiments.

Although the Army still refused formal integration, the dire need for infantry replacements encouraged Gen Eisenhower to call for black GIs in support units to volunteer for combat duty in the ETO. Some 10,000 blacks – including NCOs who agreed to accept reduction to private – were forwarded to white units as squad- and platoon- sized reinforcements. The results were generally good; and the Army moved another step closer to full integration.

CREW-SERVED WEAPONS

Machine guns

The Browning M1917 water-cooled machine gun was introduced to the US Army in the trenches of 1918. Arguably the best machine gun of the Great War, this solid and reliable weapon would provide the basis of all the machine guns used by GIs in World War II. The M1917s on hand (70,000) were slightly modified to the M1917A1 configuration just prior to 1941. During the war some 55,000 additional M1917A1s were produced by Rock Island, Colt and Brown-LC. Wartime modifications included the replacement of some bronze components with steel, and the bolt was improved.

The M1917A1 was a water-cooled .30 calibre belt-fed heavy machine gun; gun and tripod weighed 93lbs (42kg) 'wet' (41 & 52lbs respectively). Its rate of fire was 500-600 rounds per minute (rpm). It excelled in sustained fire work in defence and perimeter coverage, but was found to be too heavy for rapid moves forward in the attack. The M1917A1 was usually to be seen in the Heavy Weapons Companies and was sometimes mounted on half-tracks. Due to its weight some Heavy Weapons units discarded it in favour of the lighter air-cooled M1919A4.

Near Naples, September 1943: a weapons company man from the 36th Division mans his M1917A1 machine gun. He wears the M1928 pack, and a pick-mattock slung on his hip; his helmet chinstrap is hooked up to the netting. In the background is a British Sherman tank of the Royal Scots Greys.

At the end of World War I an air-cooled M1919 machine gun for tank and air use was developed by modifying the M1917 (removing the water jacket). In the 1930s various improvements were made for its use by the infantry, with the final version designated the M1919A4. About 389,000 M1919A4s were made by Colt, Saginaw and Buffalo during the war. This gun, and the M2 cavalry tripod which was found best for general issue, totalled 45lbs (20.4kg) and had a heavier barrel with a slim ventilated metal cooling jacket, with a 500rpm rate of fire. The A4 was almost universally used at infantry platoon level and in tanks. It was also found that a BAR bipod could be mounted for rough terrain and light machine gun use. A wheeled cart was available to transport machine guns but it was not commonly seen.

The even lighter M1919A6 machine gun came into issue in 1944. Based on the A4, the A6 had a detachable shoulder stock, folding bipod, carrying handle and lighter barrel, the entire assembly weighing 32lbs. It was issued throughout the Army but was especially noticeable in the Airborne units. The A6 was newly manufactured by Saginaw (43,000), though many were modified A4s.

Both the M1919A4 and A6 were capable of being used on the move, awkwardly fired from the hip, though a heavily gloved hand holding the barrel or a temporary sling was required. This unhappy kind of compromise was not recommended for accuracy or good health. The 250-round ammo belt was usually cut short for this operation.

Italy, October 1944: machine gunner firing the M1919A6 with shoulder stock; the white canvas belts are very visible here, as they were on the battlefield.

GIs were generally happy with the powerful and reliable M1919 series; their biggest complaint, however, arose when they compared it to the German MG34/42 series. The MG42 especially was lighter (25lbs); it was easier for the crew to change hot barrels; and it had a significantly higher and intimidating rate of fire (1,100rpm). Regardless of Ordnance opinions about balancing accuracy and ammo conservation, it was still felt that German machine guns had an edge. GIs also disliked the white cloth ammo belts, as the cloth would sometimes catch in the mechanism. The belts finally came in OD in the last year of the war, as did the new disintegrating metal link belts still in use today. The A6 could handle the new metal links, but the A4 had problems. Good machine gunners took time over cleaning and reseating the rounds in the belt.

The machine gun squad consisted of the gun and five men: a gunner and assistant gunner who fired and fed in the ammo, and two ammo

bearers, all under command of a 'buck sergeant' or corporal squad leader.

The .50 calibre machine gun was created in 1919 as an anti-tank/aircraft weapon based on the M1917 and the World War I German anti-tank rifle. The Army and Navy eventually bought about 1,000 water-cooled M1921 .50cal guns, mainly for anti-aircraft use. In the 1930s a version was created with a longer, heavier, air-cooled barrel for vehicle and ground use, and designated the M2HB. The gun weighed 81lbs (36.7kg) and the M3 tripod another 44lbs (20kg). Its cyclic rate was about 450rpm; the 'big fifty' fired ball, AP, tracer and incendiary, and could be belt fed with metal link from either side. A water-cooled M2 weighing 121lbs 'wet' was also made for anti-aircraft use. Some 347,000 M2s were made during the war for ground use by seven different manufacturers including AC Sparkplug and Frigidaire. One .50cal could be found in the heavy weapons platoon of the infantry rifle company, and they were also mounted on any number of vehicles from tanks to trucks and jeeps, though in the latter case the strain of firing was very hard on the light vehicle frame. The four-barrelled 'quad-fifty' mounted on a halftrack or trailer for anti-aircraft use could also destroy almost any ground target except heavy armour, and was nick-named 'the meat chopper'. Even a single .50cal firing from a foxhole could be guaranteed to put an entire German infantry company on its face. The impact of the 700-grain slug on a human body can only be imagined. This classic weapon is still in use world-wide.

North Africa, June 1943: a bazooka team from the 505th PIR, 82nd Airborne Division, use mortar shell vests to carry extra 2.36in rocket rounds. The No.2's job was to load the rocket and attach its firing wire to the terminal on the tube; he then slapped the No.1's helmet, and got well clear of the backblast. Note the early T-handle shovels, and the No.1's M1A1 folding stock carbine, skein of rope and apparently custom-made ammo pouches 'rigger'.

Bazookas

Before the war the Army Ordnance Dept – like their Napoleonic predecessors – had played around with rockets of various sizes, considering their practicality as weapons of war. By 1942 they had developed a tubular shoulder-fired rocket launcher, but were unsure what warhead to mount for what purpose. As the Army was scrambling for anti-tank weapons, an M10 AT grenade was fixed onto the front of the rocket. It was immediately recognised as the perfect infantryman's AT weapon. Informally named the 'bazooka' after a comic's fanciful musical instrument, it was rushed into production; General Electric got a 30-day contract to deliver 5,000 of them. Half that time was spent creating an acceptable prototype. The bazookas were delivered to the ports with 90 minutes to spare on the contract. Literally fresh from the factory, the bazookas were handed out to somewhat bewildered GIs aboard ships bound for the North African landings of November 1942.

The bazooka was a 4.5ft-long steel tube weighing 18lbs (8.1kg). It fired a 2.36in rocket warhead, as that was the size of the M10 shaped charge AT grenade. The first model (M1) had two firing handles and crude sights, and used a flashlight battery in the wooden stock to ignite the rocket. A two-man firer and loader team operated the weapon. The bazooka was used in Tunisia, and although it is doubtful if it destroyed a single enemy tank it gave the GIs something to fight back with. The forward handhold was found to be unnecessary; and in hot weather the rocket motors sometimes detonated in the tube.

The improved M1A had wire tightly wrapped around the back half of the tube for strength and the forward handle was eliminated. By late 1943 the new M9A1 bazooka was in production. This could be broken down for carriage in two halves (16lbs) and its trigger-operated magneto replaced the battery. The rocket and warhead were also improved. The backblast of the rocket motor proved a troublesome problem for the operators. Goggles and special facemasks were issued, but most GIs did not bother. A round muzzle shield was also used, but it was fragile and commonly disappeared. Though underpowered by 1944/45 standards, the 2.36in bazooka proved a godsend to the infantryman exposed to enemy armoured attacks. It could keep tanks at arm's length, and with a lucky hit it could knock them out or immobilise them. Interestingly, the British declined the bazooka, but the Russians received and used a shipment of them in 1942. It is probably from this source that the Germans captured one, and later copied it to produce their 88mm Panzershreck.

Italy, 1944: a brigadier-general and a captain (S2 – intelligence officer) of the 1st Armored Division examine a captured 88mm *Raketen Panzerbuchse 54* (*'Panzerschreck'*), the German anti-tank weapon copied from US bazookas captured on the Russian Front. Note that both wear the divisional patch on their left chest instead of the shoulder (see Plate E2).

When used aggressively against enemy armour unprotected by infantry, tank-hunting teams could do real damage. GIs in both the Pacific and Europe also found the bazooka excellent for busting walls and bunkers. Pfc Carl V. Sheridan of the 47th Infantry (9th ID) was awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor for his attack on Frenzenberg Castle with a bazooka. With his stovepipe and ammo picked up from a wounded bearer, he joined his company in a furious fight with about 70 enemy paratroopers in the castle courtyard:

'... With complete disregard for his own safety (he) left the protection of the buildings and in the face of heavy and intense small arms and grenade fire, crossed the courtyard to the drawbridge entrance where he could bring direct fire to bear against the (oak) door. Although handicapped by the lack of an assistant, and a constant target for the enemy fire that burst around him, he skillfully and effectively handled

Near Colmar, France, December 1944: a 4.2in mortar crew of the 83rd Chemical Bn in action. This unit had supported the Ranger Force in the Sicily landings.

his awkward weapon to place two well aimed rockets into the structure. Observing that the door was only weakened, and realizing a gap must be made for a successful assault, he loaded his last rocket, took careful aim, and blasted a hole through the heavy planks. Turning to his company, he shouted "Come on, let's get them!" With his pistol blazing, he charged into the gaping entrance and was killed by the withering fire that met him. The final assault on the castle was made through the gap which Pfc Sheridan gave his life to create.'

Recoilless rifles

By mid-1943 the Army was testing 'recoilless rifles' (RCL) for anti-tank and general use. This weapon vented the majority of its propellant gases out the rear of the breech, making it virtually recoilless. It was normally fired from the shoulder like a bazooka, or from a M1917 machine gun tripod mount; it was slightly longer than a bazooka and weighed 45lbs (20.4kg). The RCL could fire HE, anti-tank or smoke rounds. First fielded in 1945 in Europe, the initial M18 57mm version proved very effective and its range, accuracy and hitting power made it popular among GI users. The M20 75mm recoilless also made it to the front in 1945; its 115lb weight (52kg) and almost seven feet in length forced the use of the M1917 mount. Both the 57mm and 75mm were found to be excellent for airborne use. Though available in very limited numbers in both Europe and Okinawa, the RCLs gave infantrymen an excellent bunker-buster and anti-tank weapon.

Mortars

Veteran Bill Mauldin summed up mortars thus: 'Outside of the bazooka, they carry more viciousness and wallop per pound than any weapon the infantry has.' An infantry regiment would have at least 27 x 60mm and 18 x 81mm tubes; three 60s served in the weapons platoon of each rifle company and six 81s in the battalion's heavy weapons company. Perhaps the biggest virtue of these weapons was that they were owned and operated by the frontline infantry themselves. Because they were so far forward they made tempting targets, however; and, like the machine guns, they never seemed to have enough ammunition.

Mortars operate by dropping the 'bomb' or shell down the tube; a shotgun shell primer in the base hits the stud in the bottom of the mortar tube, which ignites the small bags of powder which propel the shell out. The range and accuracy are determined by the elevation of the barrel and the number of propellant packets left on the shell by the crew.

The US M2 60mm mortar was developed in 1939 and was essentially a down-scaled 81mm. The weapon weighed 42lbs (19kg) and could fire HE, smoke, and illumination (parachute flares). The 3lb (1.36kg) HE shell had a maximum range of 2,000 yards.

The US M1 81mm mortar was basically a 1930s French improvement on the British World War I Stokes mortar. It could fire HE, smoke, white phosphorus and illumination, the shells varying in weight from 7lbs to 15lbs (11kg–24kg) each. Like the 60mm, this 135lb (61kg) weapon could be broken into three parts for carrying. The M43A1 (7lb) light HE shell had a range of 3,290 yards. In mechanised units particularly, 81mm mortars were sometimes mounted on halftracks.

The 4.2in (106mm) chemical mortar was developed after World War I by the Chemical Corps to project gas and smoke shells. Unlike the smoot-bore 60mm and 81mm, this was a rifled mortar, and improved M1A1 and M2 versions were the most common 4.2s in use. Its weight of 330lbs (149.6kg) made it transportable by vehicle or mule only. The development of HE rounds for the chemical 'four-deuce' made it a formidable weapon, firing smoke, HE, WP and chemical shells over 3,000 yards. These weapons were formed into Chemical Corps-operated 4.2in mortar battalions, and used as corps level assets for assignment as needed. One of their first employments was in Sicily in support of the Ranger battalions. (The Army also developed a 155mm mortar, a few of which were used in the 1945 campaign for the Philippines.)

VEHICLES

'Soft skin vehicles'

Although interested readers should pursue this very large subject in other relevant books, a few words on the most widely used vehicles may be helpful.

After some minor experimentation with half-ton 4x4 trucks, the Army called for manufacturers to produce a light 1,300lb (590kg) truck for testing in 1940. Bantam, Willys and Ford produced models, with the over-weight (2,160lb) Willys model deemed the winner. During the war both Willys and Ford would produce 650,000 of these four-cylinder wonders. Its 60 horsepower engine could propel the vehicle up steep inclines and through mud as well as reaching 55mph on roads. If it got stuck, it was small and light enough to be lifted out of trouble by several GIs or any other vehicle. It was called either a Peep or a Jeep (after the cartoon character Sweetpea's pet creature). The jeep could carry three to four men, had a payload of 800lbs (362kg) and could haul a trailer. It was in heavy demand by all the Allies, and even the Germans loved driving captured jeeps. It could be armed with a .30cal machine gun, and .50s were sometimes (precariously) substituted. A vertical bar was often welded to the front of the vehicle to cut wires strung neck-high across roads.

Italy, January 1944: 34th Division artillery forward observers (FOs) plan a strike from the back of their jeep. The snow chains on the tyres were commonly retained for traction in mud.

Also purchased in significant numbers was the Harley Davidson motorcycle. Some 60,000

Tunisia, March 1943: MPs from the 1st Armored Division see off a 'Jimmy-load' of German POWs. The MP at right seems to have a (rare) yellow or white brassard, and the divisional sign painted on his helmet front. The holster of the MP at left can be seen, under magnification, to be decorated with Italian eagle and star insignia and a German wound badge.

WLA model Harleys, whose design was somewhat influenced by German cycles, became Army property. The Harley weighed 512lbs (233kg) and was driven by a 23hp engine. They were heavily used by the Military Police and couriers, and a leather rifle scabbard was commonly attached to the right front.

During the war Dodge produced 82,000 utility ¾-ton 4x4 trucks for the Army. Sometimes known as a 'weapons carrier', this truck had a six-cylinder engine and a 1,500lb (680kg) payload. They could be found throughout the Army hauling both men and equipment, and an unsuccessful early version (M6) mounted the 37mm anti-tank gun. A Dodge 'command car' and a 6x6 truck version were also produced, as was the 4x4 ambulance. Each medical battalion had about 33 ambulances which could hold four stretcher cases each.

The GMC 2½-ton 6x6 truck was a commercially available vehicle in 1940. With a 9,200lb (4173kg) payload, the 'deuce and a half' or 'Jimmy' was made in more than 800,000 examples by GMC, Studebaker, International and Reo. For a cargo truck this powerful vehicle had excellent cross-country ability. The Jimmy was the main cargo vehicle

France, 1944: M2 halftrack from an Armored Division mounting an 81mm mortar; and note at left the 'roller coaster' rail for mounting machine guns. This is a good example of the 'gypsy caravan' look which US vehicles tended to acquire during a campaign of movement.

MOROCCO & ALGERIA, NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1942

1: Lieutenant-colonel, Ordnance, 2nd Armored Division

2: BAR gunner, 9th Infantry Division

3: Sergeant, Military Police, II Corps

TUNISIA, WINTER 1942/SPRING 1943

1: Sergeant, bazooka gunner, 1st Infantry Division
2: Infantry private, 1st Infantry Division
3: Sergeant of a tank unit, 1st Armored Division

B

SICILY, SUMMER 1943

1: Machine gun crewman, 3rd Infantry Division
2: Corporal, machine gunner, 3rd Infantry Division
3: Private first class, 3rd Ranger Battalion

C

ITALY, 1943/44

1: 1st Lt, Field Artillery, 36th Infantry Division
2: Technician 4th grade, 100th Battalion
3: S/Sgt, Field Artillery, 34th Infantry Division

ANZIO, JANUARY 1944

1: Medical orderly, VI Corps
2: Major of a tank unit, 1st Armored Division
3: Pfc, 1st Special Service Force

SOUTH & EAST FRANCE, 1944

1: Capt, 1/551st PIR, 1st Airborne Task Force
2: Brigadier-general, US Army
3: Pfc, infantry, 45th Infantry Division

ITALY, 1945

1: Staff captain, HQ 5th Army
2: Master sergeant, 10th Mountain Division
3: Infantry private, 10th Mountain Division

PO VALLEY, 1945

1: 1st Lt, 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion
2: Infantry sergeant, 92nd Infantry Division
3: 2nd Lt, 92nd Infantry Division

used at divisional level. It could be modified to serve many specialised purposes: hauling fuel, people, or any kind of supplies; as a tow truck, or – with a built-up box back – as a workshop. Heavier trucks like the 4x2, 4x4, 6x4, and 6x6 were also produced, the '6x's being commonly used in the Red/White Ball Express priority convoy system.

By 1944 the two-ton M29 Weasel was to be seen with the 10th Mountain Division (it was originally intended for the FSSF's raid into Norway). A small, broad-tracked amphibian shaped like a bathtub, it was specially modified to cross snow, at which it excelled. The Weasel had a Studebaker 65hp engine which gave it speeds of 3 to 4mph on water and 36mph (58k/ph) on land. It could carry three passengers or 1,200lbs (545kg) of cargo.

Italy, December 1943: in the mountains, packhorses and mules were a great deal more practical than vehicles, and fulfilled a high proportion of the Allies' front line logisitic needs. Here troopers of the 504th Parachute Infantry load up a donkey with a M1919A4 machine gun. Note that the man at right has a World War I canteen and a bolt-action 03 Springfield rifle; and note the snap-fastened cargo pocket marking him as Airborne.

Halftracks

The ubiquitous halftrack series was initially a replacement for the M3A1 four-wheeled scout car, whose Hercules 87hp engine was underpowered for cross-country use, though it could reach a top road speed of 50mph (80k/ph). The open-topped M3A1 was armed with a .30cal and a .50cal MG on skate mountings riding a 'roller-coaster' track which allowed the weapons all-round fire. Almost 21,000 were produced by White in 1939–44. They could carry six men in the rear, protected (from small arms fire only) by half-inch armour. A few scout cars and 46 halftracks were in the Philippines by November 1941.

By 1940 the artillery were looking for a hybrid halftracked prime mover, and the infantry were also interested in a halftrack personnel carrier which could keep up with the tanks across country. The M3 and slightly shorter M2 halftracks began issue in 1941. The M2/M3 had a 147hp gas engine with a top speed of 45mph (72k/ph). Both the steerable front wheels and the rear tracks were powered. The front bumper commonly mounted a winch or a large roller for getting over obstacles.

The M2 rear compartment was one foot shorter than the M3 and, like the scout car, it had an all-round MG mounting track and no rear door; it held seven men, and had interior storage bins. The M2 was commonly used as a prime mover for the artillery. The M3 was intended for infantry use and could seat ten men in the rear, with a rear hull door. It was armed with a .30 or .50cal MG, initially on a pintle mount in the middle of the vehicle. Both vehicles had quarter-inch face hardened steel armour. The main improvement of the new M2A1/M3A1 halftracks was

the addition of a ring mount above the front 'shotgun' seat for the machine gun, eliminating the track and pintle mountings.

The M2/M3 was well-liked, or at least tolerated by its users in the infantry battalions of armoured divisions. It was a bit high-maintenance, very noisy, and the armour protection was inadequate. One veteran of the Tunisian fighting, when asked if the M3's armour could be penetrated by bullets, responded, 'No sir, it does not. As a matter of fact, bullets only generally come in one side and rattle around a bit.' The halftrack was not truly intended to be an infantry fighting vehicle, but simply a battle taxi; once near the fighting, the infantry learned to dismount rapidly. Experiments in increasing the armour or covering the top led to vehicle handling problems. In combat, GIs added sandbags to the floor (against mines) and machine guns to the sides. Racks for spare road wheels and miscellaneous gear were also attached to the outside hull, giving the mechanised infantry columns a distinctly 'gypsy' look.

Numerous variants of the M2/M3 were produced. One which attracted attention, if not affection, was the M3 75mm Gun Motor Carriage (GMC) used as a stop-gap anti-tank gun. The M3 75mm GMC saw extensive use in Tunisia, where it proved a very limited success; it was also used in smaller numbers in Sicily and Italy. It was thankfully replaced by the M10 tank destroyer as rapidly as possible. (The Tank Destroyer branch used the silhouette of the M3 75mm GMC as its insignia.) The anti-aircraft M15 mounted two .50cal machine guns and a 37mm gun; the M16 'quad-fifty' AA and M4 81mm mortar halftracks were also commonly seen variants. The M5 and M9 were produced by International Harvester for Lend-Lease and were almost identical to the M2 and M3 respectively.

Sicily, July 1943: a stretcher bearer from the 3rd Infantry Division holds a plasma bottle for a wounded GI. One of his 'dogtags' and his divisional patch are clearly visible. Since he wears the brassard, but no red cross on his helmet, he may be a rifleman temporarily assigned to this duty. Three men from the battalion's medical section were supposed to be attached to the headquarters of each rifle company.

MEDITERRANEAN THEATRE CAMPAIGN SUMMARY

Between 1942 and 1945 US troops and other Allied forces fought and won control in North Africa, Italy and France, before finally advancing into Germany and Austria on VE Day.

Morocco and Algeria

Three separate Allied landings under the command of Gen Dwight Eisenhower (Operation Torch, 8 November 1942) put 105,000 US and British troops ashore in Vichy French North Africa. In Algeria Gen Fredendall's Central Task Force landed near Oran and Gen Ryder's Eastern Task Force near Algiers. Both attempted a coup-de-main by taking ships and troops directly into harbours, but both attacks were checked by Vichy resistance led by the anti-British Admiral Darlan. After some sharp fighting Algiers and Oran surrendered on 8 and 10 November. In Morocco Gen Patton's Wesern Task Force landed at several points on the Atlantic coast; two of the three landings met stout resistance. Patton's commanders did not lose their nerve, however, and after some tight situations Casablanca surrendered on 11 November. Morocco cost the US Army 1,200 killed and wounded, but the landings proved to be a valuable 'live fire exercise' which highlighted the problems of amphibious warfare.

North Africa, 1943: an Engineer officer from the 9th Infantry Division clears German explosives from a booby-trapped building. He wears an officer's wool shirt with epaulettes; note the Engineers' castle insignia on his left collar, and the divisional left shoulder patch.

Tunisia

British 1st Army, US II Corps and pro-Allied French troops moved east into western Tunisia to take the German/Italian forces there – and those retreating westwards from Libya, pursued by British 8th Army – from the rear. II Corps (Gen Fredendall) consisted of 1st Armored and 1st, 9th and 34th Infantry Divisions. In mid-February 1943 Rommel's reinforced *Panzerarmee Afrika* broke the crust of the US defences around Sidi-bou-Zid and pushed through Kasserine Pass (20 February) to threaten Le Kef and the lone supply base at Tebessa. After early confusion and retreat, defensive fighting – both planned and spontaneous – slowed the attack and convinced the over-extended Germans to withdraw. The untried US Army had been bent at Kasserine, but not broken. The Allied command structure was reorganised; and after two and a half months of fighting the Axis forces surrendered on 11 May 1943. The aggressive American drive on Bizerta and Tunis in early May proved to any who doubted it the potential of the US Army. Coming so soon after the ruinous fall of Stalingrad, some among the quarter-million Axis prisoners referred to this new defeat as 'Tunisgrad'.

Sicily

In conjunction with Gen Montgomery's British 8th Army in the east, Gen Patton's US 7th Army landed on the south-west coast of Sicily on 10 July

8 August 1944: soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division embark on LSTs for the invasion of the South of France; they wear HBTs and M1928 packs. Apart from the divisional sign painted on both sides of their helmets they seem to have 'playing card' symbols on the back, probably identifying their battalions or companies.

1943. Bad weather and inexperience caused heavy losses and scattered landings for the airborne phase of the operation; the ground formations were the 1st, 3rd and 45th Divisions with three Ranger battalions. A spirited reaction from the Italian 'Livorno' and German 'Hermann Göring' divisions was decisively repelled with air and naval gunfire support. While the British slowly punched north towards Messina, 7th Army, reinforced with the 9th Division and part of the 2nd Armored, swung westwards, taking Palermo in a week. Driving eastwards across the top of Sicily, Patton closed in on Messina. Using small amphibious landings to outflank the growing opposition, US forces occupied the city on 17 August. Although the Germans suffered some 30,000 casualties, about 60,000 made a successful escape to the Italian mainland. The Sicily campaign cost the US Army just over 7,000 casualties.

Italy: Salerno

Italy secretly negotiated an armistice with the Allies, though this was not actually announced until 8 September 1943 – five days after the British XIII Corps crossed the Straits ofMessina to land on the 'toe' of Italy almost unopposed. On 9 September Gen Mark Clark's US 5th Army began landing at Salerno near Naples, with two US and two British divisions plus Commandos and Rangers. General Kesselring rapidly concentrated German forces and launched determined counterattacks, preventing consolidation of the four beachheads. Only a desperate defence and naval gunfire support stopped the most dangerous attack (12 September); further reinforcements, including a regimental drop by 82nd Airborne Division, helped stabilise the situation; and the slow Allied advance reached the Germans' Volturno defensive line just north of Naples on 8 October. Kesselring, with the terrain all in his favour, pulled back to the winter Gustav Line, running across the country roughly from Gaeta in the west to Ortona in the east. He continued to conduct a masterly delaying campaign in the face of a series of joint offensives by US 5th Army in the west and British 8th Army (Gen Leese) in the east, with increasing support from a French Expeditionary Corps. The key to the western sector of the Gustav Line was the Monte Cassino massif, which the Allies reached just before Christmas 1943.

Italy: Cassino

Cassino and the surrounding hills dominated a major road axis north to Rome through the Liri Valley. Defended mostly by the crack German paratroops of 1.Fallschirmjäger-Division and mountain troops of 5.Gebirgs-Division, it withstood five months of repeated Allied attacks. First unsuccessfully assaulted across the Rapido River in February 1944 by the US 36th and 34th Divisions, this bastion was bombarded by the Air Corps; repeatedly attacked by British, Indian and New Zealand troops; and finally – to the surprise of both Allies and Germans – made untenable by a strategic envelopment initiated by the French corps. The Germans made a fighting withdrawal in May 1944, and the mountain was finally taken by Polish troops. Canadian forces now joined the US and British armies for the next offensive up the Liri Valley.

Bill Mauldin was a private in the 45th Division with a talent for cartooning, who soon became the leading cartoonist for the GI-run *Stars and Stripes* magazine. His characters 'Willy and Joe' – Joe on the left here – quickly became favourites with the front-line soldiers. In this scene the captain is saying: 'I'm depending on you old men to be a steadying influence for the replacements.' (Reprinted by permission of Bill Mauldin & Watkins/Loomis Agency)

Italy: Anzio

It was believed that landings at Anzio to the north, astride the German lines of communication, would force them to abandon the Gustav Line. The US VI Corps (Gen Lucas) with the 3rd and 45th Divisions, Rangers, and the British 1st Division landed unopposed on 22 January 1944, but were allowed by Gen Clark to dig in instead of immediately exploiting the surprise they had achieved. The Germans concentrated all their reserves onto the high ground surrounding the beachhead; throughout February they hammered the landing force, and by March the fighting had settled into a World War I style trench-bound siege.

With the fall of Cassino to the south the steadily reinforced beachhead broke out at the end of May – not east to cut off the retreating German 10th Army, however, but north, to seize Rome on 4 June. The bungled Anzio gamble cost the US almost 24,000 casualties. Gen Clark's failure to reinforce and exploit the landing, and his obsession with the purely symbolic capture of undefended Rome rather than destroying a significant part

Bambiano, Italy, October 1944: the war is over for this barefoot Russian recruit to the Wehrmacht. His escort wears M1943 combat uniform, and has an illegible name or slogan chalked on the front of his helmet. He is armed with the M1 carbine, here with a grenade laucher muzzle attachment, and the M3 fighting knife.

Italy, 1944: a staff sergeant (right) from the 88th Infantry Division – note blue quatrefoil patch and rank insignia – talking to refugees. His buddy's medical haversack and their lack of weapons suggest that both are medics. Note the field jacket (or raincoat?) carried tucked under the GI's belt – a common sight.

of Kesselring's armies, ensured that the war in Italy would drag on into 1945.

South of France

The combined British/US 1st Airborne Task Force made a typically scattered parachute landing on the French Riviera on the night of 14/15 August 1944, and the next day the Allies began landing US 7th Army (Gen Patch) with the veteran 45th, 3rd and 36th Divisions and the 1st Special Service Force. The newly constituted French Army B (later 1st Army – Gen de Lattre) quickly reinforced the landings, which cost only some 200 US casualties. The weak, low priority German 19th Army was unable to prevent the US army from racing northwards, while De Lattre's French turned west to capture the ports. Patch cut off and all but destroyed the 19th Army at Montelimar on the Rhone, and Toulon and Marseilles fell to the Allies on 28 August. They were soon handling more supplies than all the Normandy ports combined, and proved a logistical life-saver for the continued Allied advance across France. Patch's 7th linked up with Patton's 3rd Army near Dijon on 11 September. The French 1st and US 7th Armies were organised into the 6th Army Group under the US Gen Devers (15 September), and served on the southern flank of the Allied armies, advancing through Alsace/Lorraine into Germany and Austria by VE-Day.

Northern Italy

After abandoning Rome in May 1944 the Germans slowly retreated to the prepared Gothic Line in northern Italy. With Gen Clark promoted to command 15th Army Group, comprising all Allied troops in Italy (24 November 1944), 5th Army was now capably led by Gen Truscott. By 1945 5th Army included the 10th Mountain, 34th, 85th, 88th, 91st and 92nd Divisions and 1st Armored Division. To the east, British 8th Army (Gen McCreery) combined British, Indian, Canadian and Polish divisions. In April 1945 both 5th and 8th Armies penetrated the Gothic Line, and all the cities of northern Italy fell into Allied hands by the end of the month. The German forces, now commanded by Gen von Vietinghoff, surrendered unconditionally on 2 May. The US 5th Army linked up with the 7th Army in the Brenner Pass on 4 May 1945.

DIVISIONAL CAMPAIGN SERVICE and shoulder patches

1st Armored Division ('Old Ironsides'). Morocco, Tunisia, Anzio (Italy). Armored Force triangle with black '1'.

1st Infantry Division ('Big Red One'). Morocco, Tunisia, Sicily, Normandy, France, Battle of the Bulge, Germany. Red '1' on bronze-green shield.

3rd Infantry Division ('Marne'). Morocco, Sicily, Cassino, Anzio (Italy), South of France, Germany. Blue/white diagonally striped square.

9th Infantry Division ('Varsity'). Morocco, Tunisia, Sicily, Normandy, France, Germany. Nine-petalled flower halved blue above red, white centre, all on khaki disk.

10th Mountain Division ('Mountaineers'). Gothic Line, Po Valley (Italy). Crossed red swords edged white on blue rectangle edged white, below white-on-blue 'Mountain' tab.

34th Infantry Division ('Red Bull' or 'Longhorns'). Morocco, Tunisia, Cassino, Gothic Line, Po Valley (Italy). Red bull's skull on dark blue Mexican flask shape.

36th Infantry Division ('Texas'). Salerno, Cassino (Italy), South of France, Germany. Bronze-green 'T' on blue-grey Indian arrowhead.

45th Infantry Division ('Thunderbirds'). Sicily, Salerno, Cassino, (Italy), South of France, Belfort Gap (France), Germany. Yellow Indian thunderbird on red triangle.

82nd Airborne Division ('All American'). Tunisia, Sicily, Salerno, Anzio (Italy), Normandy, Battle of the Bulge, Netherlands, Germany. White opposed 'AA' on blue disk on red square, below white-on-blue 'Airborne' tab.

85th Infantry Division ('Custer'). Rome, Po Valley (Italy). Red 'CD' on khaki disk.

88th Infantry Division ('Blue Devils'). Liri Valley, Volterra (Italy), Northern Italy, Trieste. Solid blue quatrefoil.

91st Infantry Division ('Powder River' or 'Pine Tree'). Gothic Line, Bologna, Gorizia (Italy). Green pine tree.

92nd Infantry Division ('Buffalo'). Northern Italy. Black buffalo facing left on khaki disk edged black.

THE PLATES: MEDITERRANEAN

A: MOROCCO & ALGERIA, NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1942

A1: Lieutenant-colonel, Ordnance, 2nd Armored Division

This 'short' colonel (addressed out of courtesy as 'Colonel') wears the standard khaki summer shirtsleeve uniform with officer's belt buckle. (Medal ribbons were also authorised to be worn with this shirt, though this officer chooses not to.) The brass flaming bomb insignia on his left collar point identifies him as serving in the Ordnance branch, responsible for weapons, ammunition, and the repair and maintenance of vehicles and hundreds of other GI items; in the 2nd Armored this element was provided by the former 17th Ordnance and 14th QM Bns combined into a single divisional Maintenance Battalion. Rank is shown by the silver leaf on his right collar and cap. This headgear is the khaki overseas cap, piped with mixed gold and black for officers, but he could also wear the khaki version of the leather-visored service dress hat. The patch of the Armored Force, with the divisional number, is worn on the left shoulder. After briefly fighting the Vichy French, in November 1942–January 1943 the 2nd Armored, garrisoned in Morocco, provided G and H Companies, 67th Armored Regt, to the British 78th Division fighting in Tunisia. The 'Hell on Wheels' division – whose main units were the 66th and 67th Armor, 41st Infantry, 82nd Recon Bn, 14th and 92nd Armored Field and 78th Field Artillery – would see its first major combat in Sicily, where it landed at Gela with the 1st Infantry Division on 10 July 1943.

A2: Infantry private, BAR gunner, 9th Infantry Division

Because of the bad blood between the British and the Vichy French caused by events earlier in the war, the Allied high command – who wanted the French garrison to recognise the Allied invaders as essentially friendly – ensured that US troops generally led the landings, and came ashore wearing white armbands and US flag shoulder patches or brassards. This infantry squad Browning Automatic Rifle gunner wears the standard first pattern herringbone twill (HBT) uniform, identified by its two-button waistband, buttoned cuffs and pocket details; later HBTs would have large breast pockets and thigh cargo pockets. Note the haversack for the M1A2 or M2A1 gasmask, marked with the symbol of the Chemical Warfare Service; and the BAR magazine belt with six large pockets. Veteran BAR gunners commonly dispensed with the M1918A2 weapon's extraneous features such as the bipod, to reduce its weight from 18 to 15lbs. This young soldier's eye glasses are the standard Army metal frame issue. He wears his helmet chinstrap buckled in the regulation manner; veterans soon violated this requirement for fear of literally losing their heads in the concussion of a shell burst.

A3: Sergeant, Military Police, II Corps

Each division had an MP company, and independent MP units were also assigned as corps and army assets. As enforcers of discipline and regulations, rear-area MPs inevitably had a reputation for officiousness and short tempers, and had few admirers among the GIs. This sergeant sports the standard white helmet markings and white-on-black armband used throughout the war. His khaki 'chino' service uniform was commonly worn in rear areas in the Mediterranean theatre; as part of a II Corps HQ guard detail he is neatly turned out, complete with necktie; and note the whistle and chain. Below the II Corps left sleeve patch his rank chevrons are machine-woven in dull silver on black. He is armed with the newly produced M1903A3 rifle, closely based on the World War I Springfield 03; and carries the early war M1905 long bayonet in the new OD plastic scabbard.

This MP wears the standard drab wool uniform and Parsons jacket with the addition of a tanker's helmet marked 'MP' and a brassard. His Harley has leather saddlebags and an M1 carbine in the scabbard. The censor has scribbled over some of the road signs.

The standard uniform for MPs almost invariably included steel helmets or liners marked with a broad white stripe with 'MP' at the front, and a white-on-black 'MP' left sleeve brassard. In army-level headquarter locations the MPs wore white leggings and webbing and all-white helmet liners, earning them the nickname 'Snowdrops'. MPs were commonly armed with .45 pistols and 03 rifles or M1 carbines.

Stateside GIs at Camp Stoneman play baseball while wearing M1/M3 gasmasks, to accustom them to its discomfort. Gasmasks were developed and issued throughout most of the war; since the Allies were concerned that a desperate enemy might resort to chemical warfare at any time, masks were actually carried onto the beach in North Africa and Normandy. The Army started the war with the M1 rubberised face mask, hose and canister very similar to the World War I issue. An improved M2 Heavy Weight mask was also issued but was found too cumbersome at 5lbs (2.26kg). The M3 Light Weight mask (3lbs) came into use in 1943. The M4 mask, which went into production in 1944, was a revised Heavy Weight mask. All these models continued to use the hose and canister configuration.

The M5 Assault mask of 1944 was based on the German mask with the canister fitted directly to the cheek of the facepiece; this mask, stowed in a black rubberised carrier, was used in the D-Day landings – if properly closed the carrier also acted as a buoyancy aid for the wearer. An issue woollen gas hood was welcomed by GIs in winter; and the 1944 general issue gasmask carrier was also found to make a handy haversack.

B: TUNISIA, WINTER 1942/SPRING 1943

B1: Infantry sergeant, bazooka gunner, 1st Infantry Division

Winter in the Tunisian hills proved unexpectedly cold and wet, and GIs often wore the drab wool uniform underneath their HBTs for warmth. This 'buck sergeant' wears his HBT trousers over wool trousers; behind him lies his OD field jacket (the Parsons jacket, incorrectly called by modern collectors the 'M1941'), of cotton duck with an inadequate flannel lining; he may well be wearing woollen 'longjohns' too. On his drab wool shirt – note 'gas flap' at the neck – his rank is shown by dull silver chevrons on black backing; on his left shoulder is the 'Big Red One' divisional patch. His personal weapon is a holstered M1911A1 Colt .45 semi-automatic pistol, and he has added a civilian hunting knife to his belt kit. He carries the modified first pattern of the M1 bazooka, with the forward grip removed; his goggles are as much to protect him from the weapon's backblast as from the desert dust. Note the thick, pale edge of his early fabric-covered helmet liner. Both the 1st Infantry and 1st Armored Divisions were roughly handled by the Germans in the fighting near Kasserine Pass in February 1943.

B2: Infantry private, 1st Infantry Division

This assistant bazooka man wears the 'M1941' Parsons field jacket over his wool shirt and trousers. His issued helmet net can hold camouflaging vegetation or serve simply to soften the outline of the M1 helmet. Wearing standard rifleman's equipment – rifle cartridge belt with suspenders, aid pouch and canteen – this harebrained private has discovered that his cartridge pouches also serve as an ideal spot to carry the cigarette packs from his combat rations. He is armed with the M1 Garand and leather sling, the standard personal weapon of the GI by 1943, with – at this date – the long M1905 bayonet; an Mk II fragmentation grenade is fixed to his web belt suspenders. As the loader for the bazooka he carries one rocket (visible – others will be carried in a web bag). From World War II until today grenades, mortar bombs and bazooka rounds have all come issued in the same kind of stout black cardboard tubes.

B3: Sergeant of a tank unit, 1st Armored Division

To the envy of his infantry comrades, this NCO from the 1st or 13th Armored Regiment sports the wool-lined winter combat overalls and wool shirt as outer wear; like the vast majority of tankers, he has dispensed with his leggings. His

Armored Force shoulder patch bears the divisional number in the yellow upper section. (Independent tank battalions assigned as corps or army assets, which were identified by three-digit numbers, sometimes had their number custom-embroidered onto their un-numbered issue patches.) He is armed with a .45 holstered on his pistol belt, which also supports a two-clip ammunition pouch, and a World War I vintage aid pouch with a two-snap flap. The M1942 'armored forces' helmet', in hardened leather, was developed to protect crewmen from getting their brains beaten out against the many steel projections as they were bounced around inside a lurching tank; headphones are mounted into its earflaps, and a throat microphone rig was sometimes used. It is worn here over the padded 'winter combat helmet' in khaki fabric. The packaging of the Lucky Strike Green cigarette brand was changed to white during the war to save on green dye; it was said that 'Lucky Strike Green went to war, and didn't come back'. The 1st Armored Division – 'Old Ironsides' – served out the entire war in the Mediterranean theatre.

C: SICILY, SUMMER 1943

C1: Infantry private, machine gun crew, 3rd Infantry Division

This loaded-down private carries the 14lb (6.3kg) tripod for the Browning M1919A4; later in the war a BAR bipod was sometimes unofficially substituted for this. The metal ammo box with one 250-round belt weighed about 5lbs (2.25kg). A machine gun team needed at least three men to carry the weapon and particularly the ammunition; regulations called for five-man gun teams – any crew-served weapon used up ammunition in large quantities. This GI is also burdened with his own M1 Garand; the standard cartridge belt carried 80 rounds of 30-06 ammunition, and the disposable six-pocket cloth bandoleer another 48 rounds. His bayonet is attached to the left side of his M1928 pack. Although HBTs were sometimes worn as combat clothing in summer, it was found that the woollen uniform could be tolerated during the day, and came in handy during the cold nights of spring and autumn. The 3rd ('Marne') Division – whose infantry regiments were the 7th, 15th and 20th – would have 531 days in combat, and would make five amphibious landings in World War II.

C2: Infantry corporal, machine gunner, 3rd Infantry Division

At 31lbs (14kg), the .30cal Browning M1919A4 air-cooled machine gun was 10lbs (4.5kg) lighter than its water-cooled M1917 predecessor, and came as a godsend to the infantry; each rifle company's weapons platoon had two guns. Its 250-round feed belt came in this unfortunate highly visible white cotton; this gunner's 'immediate use' belt has been cut in half to ease handling. Every fifth round came as red-tipped tracer, though veteran GIs would replace these with normal M2 ball to reduce the signature of the firer. For self-defence this corporal gunner is armed with a .45 pistol and the well-liked M3 combat knife. His standard wool shirt and trousers are in the drab colour described by 106th Division veteran Kurt Vonnegut as 'dogshit brown'; he displays silver-on-black rank chevrons and, on the left shoulder, the blue and white patch of the 3rd Division. This was not seen painted on the sides of the helmet until after Sicily. His field jacket is carried tucked into the back of his belt, and he lugs a 250-round ammunition box in his free hand.

C3: Private first class, 3rd Ranger Battalion

The 1st, 3rd and 4th Ranger Battalions distinguished themselves as shock troops during and after the landings in North Africa, Sicily and Italy; on occasion they operated as an *ad hoc* brigade under command of LtCol William O.Darby, CO of the 1st Rangers, and at other times battalions were attached to the 1st, 3rd, 36th or 45th Infantry Divisions. In Sicily the 3rd Rangers were attached to the 3rd Division for the final push to secure Messina. On 30 January 1944 the 1st and 3rd Bns would be wiped out almost to the last man at Cisterna di Littoria near Anzio when surrounded by the elite Fallschirm-Panzer-Division 'Hermann Göring'.

The older bolt action M1903 was a favourite weapon of Col Darby, and individual Rangers continued to carry the 03 even after the M1 Garand was readily available (it was also the only weapon capable of propelling rifle grenades until mid-1944). This Ranger carries an M1903A3 and Mk II grenades; he wears standard drab wool shirt and trousers; and it was common in the Rangers to cut the M1938 leggings short by several inches for greater ease and general comfort. The Rangers also preferred the M1928 pack to any of the alternatives, as they felt it to be more comfortable on long marches. This private first class (Pfc) wears the winter-style chevrons in OD felt sewn to black backing, as commonly used throughout the war; above this on the left shoulder is the locally produced scroll-shaped Ranger battalion title, which several photographs show to have been worn in combat. Photos also show individuals with cleated boot-soles.

France, September 1944: combat-laden GIs from 3rd Division clamber up the embankment of the Doubs River. The lower man on the ladder has a BAR belt, two canteens, a two-pocket grenade pouch, and his Parsons jacket stuffed under his belt. (See Plate C.)

D: ITALY, 1943/44

D1: First lieutenant, Field Artillery, 36th Infantry Division

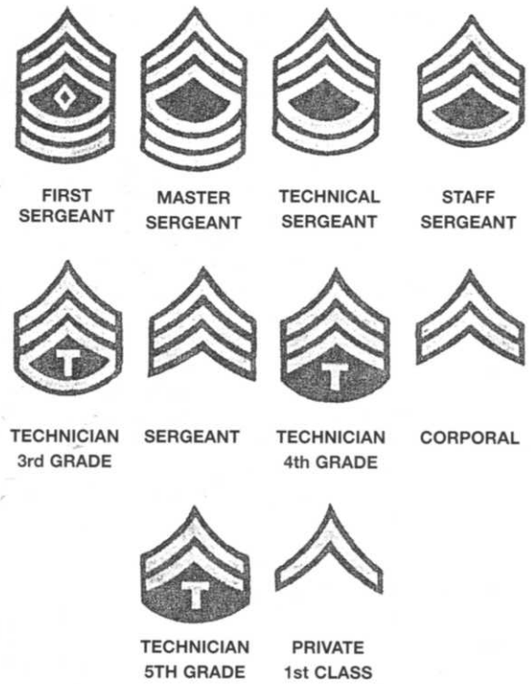
This artillery FO (Forward Observer) from the 36th Division – sometimes called the 'Texas Army' – wears the officer's version of the wool service shirt. Officers' shirts were usually differentiated by darker colours (anything between standard EM's drab to a dark chocolate brown), and the inclusion of epaulettes (shoulder straps). This fairly natty first lieutenant wears matching drab shirt and trousers; his branch is shown by brass crossed cannons on his left collar, his formation by the Texas division's shoulder patch. He is armed with an M1 carbine and a .45 pistol; his binoculars have a russet leather case. It was not intended that the carbine double clip pouch be worn on the weapon stock, but enterprising GIs soon made this modification. The 36th Division landed at Salerno and saw heavy fighting in Italy, eastern France and Germany until the end of the war. The divisional artillery units were the 131st, 132nd and 133rd Light and 155th Medium battalions. Special air-ground FO units – called 'Rover Joes' – were also used in Italy; these specialised in calling in air strikes on 15–20 minutes' notice.

D2: Technician 4th grade, 100th Battalion

The 34th 'Red Bull' Division was among the first to order its sign to be painted on the M1 helmet. The crack 100th Bn was made up of mostly Hawaiian Nisei (Japanese-American) National Guardsmen, whose unit motto was 'Remember Pearl Harbor'. It joined the 34th Division in September 1943, spearheading two divisional attacks on Monte Cassino, and later served at Anzio; the unit subsequently became part of the Nisei 442nd Regimental Combat Team. (The other divisional infantry were the 133rd, 135th and 168th Regiments.) This Signal Corps 'tech sergeant' – who, although a technician, would be addressed as 'Sergeant' – is about to check with his wire-laying teams, using the SCR 536 'handie-talkie' radio. This had a single preset frequency and was turned on by extending the antenna; the theoretical effective range was about a mile. Installing lines and fixing breaks could be a disconcertingly hazardous duty under fire. This NCO is lucky to be armed with the M1 carbine – most Nisei carried the heavier M1 Garand throughout the war. His linesman's leather case containing wirecutters and knife is unofficially embellished with an officer's full colour Signal Corps insignia. (This kit is still in use by the Army, as is the WD-1 two pair field wire.)

D3: Staff sergeant, Field Artillery, 34th Infantry Division

This artillery NCO serving as an FO is using the leather-cased EE-8B field telephone to call for fire. The handy M1936 musette bag which he is using as a general purpose haversack could also be attached to the 'D' rings on the web suspenders and worn as a backpack. An L-head GI flashlight is visible clipped to his pistol belt. Though ranked as a 'staff'



NCOs' rank insignia

The 1st Sergeant (1Sgt) was the senior NCO in a company. After World War I the battalion rank of sergeant major – (SgtMaj) (Bn) – was eliminated, with master sergeants (MSgts) filling that role until the return of the sergeant major after the war. The lower arcs on senior NCOs' insignia are called 'rockers'. In 1941 the rank of first sergeant was marked by three chevrons above two rockers; in 1943 a third rocker was added.

NCO stripes were worn on both arms mid-way between the elbow and the shoulder. The common style available at the beginning of the war were in dull silver on black backing, and these were used on almost every form of combat and service dress. Also available were a version in OD green felt appliquéd on black, used on winter overcoats and wool shirts. In combat zones both types were used on wool shirts and combat jackets (M1941 and M1943). Bronze-coloured stripes on a khaki backing were sometimes used on 'chino' shirts but the silver-on-black pattern was much more common. In 1944 medium green stripes on black backing began to become available. These are most usually seen on the service coat and 'Ike jacket' late in the war.

The Army began experimenting with special technician ranks and pay in 1940. Technician ranks were created to reward soldiers who had technical skills such as medics, mechanics, cooks, radiomen, etc. They received slightly more money than their 'hard stripe' equivalents, but were considered junior to them in seniority.

sergeant this NCO would most frequently serve as a platoon leader or even as first sergeant in a line combat outfit. Like all but the most senior NCOs he would be addressed as 'Sergeant', or even the familiar 'Sarge'. The workhorse 34th Division was recruited mainly from Minnesota and the Dakotas, and was the first Army division shipped to Europe; its artillery battalions were the 125th, 151st and 175th Light and 185th Medium. The division would serve 517 days in combat in the Mediterranean theatre.

E: ANZIO, JANUARY 1944

E1: Medical orderly, VI Corps

This Medical Corps soldier lacks any insignia other than the helmet markings (one of several shapes used – square, 'tombstone', etc.) and left arm brassard identifying his role. He wears the standard issue five-button pullover, drab wool trousers, and the newly issued and much appreciated M1943 combat service boots – 'buckle boots' – which did away with the need for leggings. Instead of the issue medical pouches he has a haversack-style gasmask bag which has been field-converted into an aid bag. Note the 'dog tags' hanging at his throat. This triage station is probably under intermittent artillery fire, as was everything else in the Anzio beachhead.

E2: Major of a tank unit, 1st Armored Division

Probably the second in command of a tank battalion, this major wears the sage green HBT one-piece overalls for combat, as was common in mechanised units (especially in hot weather – though in this case a sweater is visible at the neck). His rank and World War I tank Armored Force branch insignia are displayed on the collar of the HBTs. The unusual wearing of the divisional patch on the chest, as shown, was first encouraged by Gen Patton when he commanded the 2nd Armored Division in 1940, and is seen in a number of much later photographs. The use of the M3 shoulder holster was also common in tank units, as wearing waist belts could cause snagging inside the confines of a tank.

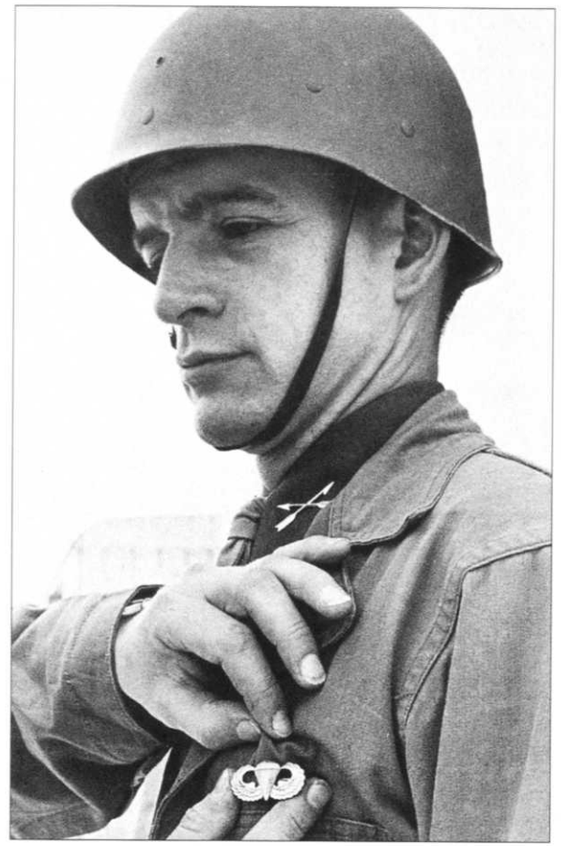
E3: Private first class, 1st Special Service Force

This regiment-sized unit successfully occupied a length of the front at Anzio normally held by a division. In southern France it was attached to the 1st Airborne Task Force; and was finally disbanded in November 1944. This Pfc wears the newly issued M1943 four-pocket OD green jacket, issued or 'scrounged' while at Anzio, where it was first field-tested; and the special mountain service trousers with thigh cargo pockets, common in the FSSF. The paratroop jump boots were also issue items to this parachute-qualified unit. He is armed with a wartime production M1 Thompson sub-machine gun with the new 30 round magazines; as the three-pocket 30-round magazine pouches were not yet available, GIs commonly used the five-pocket 20-round pouches, or a haversack. This soldier's V42 knife was particular to the FSSF and marks him as a 'Forceman' as clearly as his shoulder patch. **(Inset)** The crossed arrows branch insignia had previously been used by the Indian Scout units of the US Army. The 1st Special Service Force adopted both it, and the arrowhead unit patch, in commemoration of the Scouts; the Forcemen sometimes referred to themselves as 'braves' or the 'bow and arrow boys'. The 'Green Berets' of the US Army Special Forces resurrected the branch insignia and patch shape in the 1960s and use it to this day.

F: SOUTH & EAST FRANCE, 1944

F1: Captain, 1st Battalion, 551st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Airborne Task Force

This Airborne officer wears the standard khaki M1942 paratroop uniform used in the first half of the war, in this case liberally striped with the OD green paint camouflage common to pathfinders and the 1st Airborne Task Force. His rank is shown only on his helmet; note also the painted camouflage, and the special web and leather airborne chin harness of the M1C model. The captain's weapons consist of a folding-stock M1A1 carbine, .45 pistol and Mk II grenade; an M3 fighting knife can just be seen tied to his left ankle. A musette is worn backpack style attached to the 'D'-rings of his suspenders, to one of which is attached his special aid packet containing both a bandage and a morphine syrette. The temporary 1st ATF – which lacked both vehicles and a logistics train – continued in front line service across south-eastern France well into the autumn of 1944 before being disbanded. It never had a patch, and the US flag worn on the shoulder served as its only insignia.



While still in the USA an officer of the 1st Special Service Force receives his 'jump wings'. The FSSF crossed arrows branch insignia were custom-made for Col.Fredrick's outfit, copied from the insignia of the old Indian Scouts – and since copied by today's US Army Special Forces (see Plate E).

F2: Brigadier-general, US Army

As general officers were allowed a wide latitude in dress any number of variations might be seen from Eisenhower on down. Various US Army Air Corps jackets might be seen worn informally by general officers, and this one-star general has chosen to wear the glamorous A2 pilot's jacket in brown horsehide; note also the much sought-after 'Corcorans' – paratroop jump boots. His shirt is of the dark 'chocolate' shade, and his trousers are of dark shade OD wool almost matching it. Senior officers usually had their rank insignia

Medals for valour

The *Medal of Honor* (MoH) is the highest medal awarded for extraordinary gallantry above and beyond the call of duty against an enemy. The light blue neck ribbon and the medal were slightly modified in 1944. The 3rd Division were awarded the largest number, 22, including the award to Lt Audie Murphy, among the most highly decorated US servicemen of the war. Controversially, the Medal of Honor could also be awarded for service rather than valour. General Douglas MacArthur accepted such an award for his service in the Philippines; Gen Dwight Eisenhower refused to accept one for his service, as he believed that the Medal of Honor should only be granted for bravery.

The *Distinguished Service Cross* (DSC) was established in July 1918 to recognise acts of extraordinary heroism not deemed worthy of the MoH.

Displayed after World War I as a small star added to the 1918 Victory Medal ribbon for bravery, the *Silver Star* was established in 1932, retroactive to 1898, as a medal in its own right. It was awarded to those who had distinguished themselves by gallantry in action against the enemy. Multiple awards were distinguished by oakleaves ('appurtenances') on the ribbon.

The *Bronze Star* was created in February 1944 to recognise acts of bravery or merit (not involving flying). A bronze 'V' for valour was attached to the ribbon to distinguish awards for bravery from those for merit. The provision for awarding this medal for merit or service somewhat devalued it in the minds of combat GIs. (The Air Corps equivalent, the Air Medal, preceded the Bronze Star. It was established in May 1942, retroactive to 1939, to recognise acts of heroism or service involving aerial operations.) Oakleaves distinguished multiple awards of these medals.

The *Soldier's Medal* was created in 1926 for acts of heroism not involving combat but at the risk of ones own life.

The *Distinguished Unit Citation* was instituted in February 1942, for award to entire units for extraordinary heroism in action. The blue ribbon is framed in brass and is worn above the pocket on the right breast. Oakleaves distinguish multiple awards. This decoration was renamed the Presidential Unit Citation in 1957.

Combat Infantryman Badge

The Combat Infantryman Badge (CIB) and Expert Infantryman Badge (EIB) were created by the Chief of the Army Ground Forces, LtGen L.J.McNair, in October and November 1943. The CIB took the form of a silver musket on a light blue enamel plaque edged and wreathed in silver; it was awarded to infantrymen who had served in combat for 30 days or who had been wounded in combat. The award was made retroactive to 7 December 1941. The EIB, similar but without the wreath, was awarded to infantrymen who had performed to a standard on the rifle range, in physical tests, and for proficiency in different combat-related tasks. Holders of the CIB and EIB received $10 and $5 a month respectively as an addition to their pay.

The CIB allowed combat infantrymen a distinctive badge that readily marked them as veterans. It could only be earned in combat by infantrymen or GIs officially serving directly in an infantry job, with medics, tankers and artillerymen excluded. (In 1945 an equivalent special Combat Medic badge was created.) The CIB was very popular among GIs, who sometimes took to proudly wearing it after VE-Day on their four-pocket M1943 field jackets.

October 1944, South of France: 2nd Lt Barfoot, 157th Infantry Regiment, 45th Division, wearing his newly awarded Medal of Honor on its blue watered silk neck ribbon. On his EM's shirt he displays his rank bar on his right collar, the infantry rifles on the left, his Combat Infantryman Badge above the ribbon bars on his left breast, and the division's 'Thunderbird' patch on his left shoulder.

painted or mounted on the front of their helmets. He is armed with a .32cal ('general's model') M1903 Colt automatic worn in the M3 shoulder holster. Within a division this brigadier might serve as the second-in-command or as the divisional artillery commander.

F3: Infantry private first class, 45th Infantry Division
This rifleman, carrying K-ration cartons back to his squad, wears the new M1943 four-pocket field jacket but has not yet received the matching trousers; again, he does not display his rank chevron. Though officially only supposed to be worn under a helmet, the drab wool knit jeep cap or 'beanie' was a well-liked piece of GI headgear. In another departure from regulations this soldier has acquired a carbine to replace his M1 Garand – these were commonly seen in rifle companies by this stage of the war. Slung round his body is a general purpose ammunition bag, probably holding a steel 250-round machine gun belt box or rifle grenades. Wire cutters are carried on his belt, as is a captured Walther P-38 pistol; GIs sometimes carried 'hideaway' Lugers or P-38s in field-rigged shoulder holsters. The 45th 'Thunderbird' Division was a National Guard outfit based in the south-western states of the USA, which actually began the war with a Navajo swastika as its shoulder patch. It served in Sicily, Italy, southern and eastern France and Germany, and helped liberate the Dachau concentration camp. Its infantry regiments were the 157th, 179th and 180th.

A sniper checks his scope-sighted M1903A4 rifle. He is a reminder that front line soldiers are constant improvisers. He wears a loose-fitting home made burlap helmet cover to break up its silhouette, and his boots have been 'custom extended' by the addition of ankle sections.

RIGHT **France, October 1944: a staff sergeant and another GI take cover. The NCO wears the M1943 jacket with optional hood attached, and leather overgloves over knit wool gloves. Note the tape cross on the front of his helmet – he may be a medic.**

G: ITALY, 1945

G1: Staff captain, 5th Army
Serving with 5th Army headquarters has given this staff officer access to the latest in winter wear. Though his rank bars show clearly on his helmet, many infantry officers smudged or painted over theirs to avoid drawing the enemy's attention. He sports a special issue cold weather coat-type hooded parka; this has two patch skirt pockets below two slash pockets and, unlike other parkas, it unbuttons all down the front (Gen Patton favoured this type of coat). Such outer garments were usually worn without insignia, but our spiffy captain has had the 5th Army patch added. A white pile liner with OD tape binding and knit cuffs was available for this parka. His trousers are the 18oz wool darker brown issue; and he has acquired a pair of the M1944 shoepacs – badly needed, and in short supply, for GIs in the winter mountains of northern Italy. Slung around his body is the officer's dispatch (map) case; and under the parka he probably carries a .45 pistol. Behind him lurks 'Kilroy', the ubiquitous character drawn on any suitable surface by GIs the world over. The original James J.Kilroy was a shipyard inspector who chalked 'Kilroy was here' when he approved a riveting job. Supposedly, military personnel boarding the new ships were intrigued when they found his mark everywhere – 'Kilroy always got there first'; and the craze for chalking it wherever troops arrived first spread all over the world.

G2: Master sergeant, 10th Mountain Division
Made up of outdoorsmen and skiers, the crack 10th Mountain Division was refused by Eisenhower for the ETO but was snapped up by Gen Clark's 5th Army. It especially distinguished itself in the Po Valley fighting in March 1945. This NCO would be the senior enlisted man in his unit and would serve as a battalion sergeant major. He wears the limited issue Alpine-style second pattern anorak or 'ski parka'; this was reversible to white, and is otherwise identifiable by the fur trim around the hood only and the narrow buttoning flaps to the slash pockets. Like the mountain trousers which he also wears, it was peculiar to this division and the FSSF. Perhaps in the interests of ensuring that all his GIs get first chance at the available shoepacs, he still wears buckle boots (waterproofed?). He is armed with a carbine and M3 knife, and has decided to use a musette and a sleeping bag roll to carry his effects. The sergeant's helmet net is held down by the newly issued elasticated band.

G3: Infantry private, 10th Mountain Division
This private in either the 85th, 86th or 87th Infantry wears the special mountain troops' jacket, superficially similar to the four-pocket M1943 but with an integral belt and an expanding 'humpback' pack pocket on the back. The large chest pockets had zip fasteners under the flaps, and the skirt pockets were internally hung. He also wears the mountain trousers; leather-palmed wool gloves; and in place of the more common M1944 shoepacs, a pair of ski-mountain boots with 7in web ski gaiters secured by a crossed leather strap. He is armed with the M1 Garand, by this date issued with the 12in bayonet. This GI is heading for the woods to answer a call of nature, with a shovel – in this case a British GS type – and a dual-purpose copy of *'Yank'* magazine.
(Background) Apart from the mountain rucksack, wood and plywood frame packboards were used throughout the Army and especially by the 10th Mountain Division. Jerrycans, rolls of wire, ration marmites, radios and ammunition were commonly man-carried using these frames.

H: PO VALLEY, 1945

H1: First lieutenant, 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion
This TD officer wears the wool-lined winter combat overalls and 1942 'tanker's jacket', with its knit waistband, cuffs and collar. His shirt collar shows his rank and the TD branch symbol; his jacket shoulder, the un-numbered patch common to all TD battalions. Tank destroyer crews – whose M10, M18 and M36 vehicles had open-top turrets – wore both the M1 and tanker's helmets. This lieutenant may be a platoon or company commander, depending upon his unit's recent rate of casualties. He is armed with a .45cal M3 'greasegun', the cheaper and simpler replacement for the Thompson SMG, which was standard issue to AFV crews. He is reading one of the range of handy phrasebooks/travel guides which the US Army produced for most of the countries where the GI might find himself.

H2: Infantry sergeant, 92nd Infantry Division
Even in Italy, where cold weather gear was a bit more available, the 32oz wool drab overcoat was still used until the end of the war for winter combat wear, partly due to the failure of the command and logistics chain to gather and forward the newer cold weather clothing to the front. This GI does at least have a pair of wool gloves and the new M1944 shoepacs, and wears his helmet over the knit wool 'beanie' cap. As a sergeant he could carry the M1 carbine if he wished, but he prefers to keep the Garand rifle for the sake of its greater range and stopping power. As was very common, he uses an M2A2 gasmask bag as an all-purpose haversack; the shade contrasts with his greener late-war web gear. He is about to throw an M15 white phosphorus smoke grenade; apart from its 'Smoke/WP' marking, it is identifiable from other smoke canisters at night by feeling the domed bottom surface.

Italy, March 1945: troops of the 10th Mountain Division advance as the war nears its end. This GI wears the four-pocket mountain jacket with external belt and 'humpback' rear packpocket (see Plate G3). He may wear his web gear under it, or may be 'fighting out of his pockets'.

H3: Second lieutenant, 92nd Infantry Division
The African-American 92nd 'Buffalo' Division was officered mainly by southern whites; this black lieutenant is old for his rank. His helmet has no visible insignia, but by this date may have a large bar painted on the back to mark him out to following troops. His wool-lined cotton duck mackinaw coat – the wool-faced shawl collar identifying the first of three patterns, introduced in 1938 – was favoured by officers and vehicle drivers. His buckle boots are protected by four-clasp black canvas and rubber overshoes. As was common among line officers, his insignia of rank and branch are worn on his shirt collar only and are thus hidden when in the field. He carries his kit in a slung musette bag; among his belt equipment are a compass pouch attached below a carbine clip pouch, and a folding-head entrenching shovel. He has armed himself with an M1 carbine with the M8 grenade launcher muzzle attachment; this use put a strain on the stock, which here has been prudently bound with copper wire to prevent cracking – standard British practice, which he has perhaps copied. When rigged for launching the MkIIA1 fragmentation grenade had a range of about 250 yards.