



Put Us Down In Hell: The Combat History of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment in World War II

Phil Nordyke

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The 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment was one of the elite parachute regiments of World War II. Attached to the famed 82nd Airborne Division, it parachuted into Normandy during the predawn hours of June 6, 1944, spearheading the invasion of Hitler's fortress Europe. There, it fought with distinction for thirty-four days before being relieved. Less than sixty days later, the regiment made a daring daylight jump fifty-three miles behind German lines to spearhead the invasion of Holland. It seized vital high ground and held it against repeated German counterattacks and was the first Allied parachute regiment to fight on German soil. Shortly after being relieved in Holland, the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment was rushed to Belgium to stem the German onslaught in the Ardennes. The 508th screened the withdrawal of more than 20,000 U.S. soldiers from the St.-Vith pocket and then stopped an assault by the 9th SS Panzer Division at Erria. The regiment then participated in the drive to the German border to eliminate the Belgian bulge. It subsequently fought in the Hürtgen Forest, where it captured Hill 400 and other critical high ground south of the Kall River in its last combat action. The 508th was detached from the 82nd Airborne Division in the closing days of the war and was placed in strategic reserve. At the conclusion of the war in Europe, the regiment was selected to guard General Dwight Eisenhower's headquarters in Germany. In the third of his highly acclaimed regimental histories, historian Phil Nordyke tells the story of this remarkable unit through the experiences and words of the veterans. He has gathered hundreds of first person accounts from interviews, questionnaires, diaries, letters, memoirs, awards files, and official accounts. Mr. Nordyke skillfully weaves them to create a powerful narrative that brings the reader into the action. It is a story of close combat, tremendous courage, devotion to duty, and sacrifice.

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