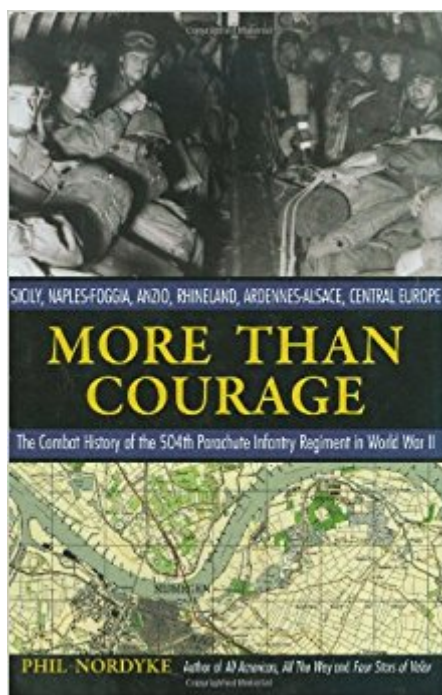


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# More Than Courage: Sicily, Naples-Foggia, Anzio, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, Central Europe: The Combat History Of The 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment In World War II



## Synopsis

Drawing on many oral and unpublished written accounts from veterans of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Phil Nordyke brings the history of the regiment to life, conveying with remarkable immediacy and power what it was like to be there. This is history as it was lived by the men of the 504th, from their pre-war coming of age in the regiment, through the end of World War II, when they marched in the Victory Parade down Fifth Avenue in New York. The 504th earned three bronze stars for their parachute wings, one for each of their combat jumps.

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## Customer Reviews

The list is incredible and includes Sicily, Salerno, Naples (Chiunzi Pass), Anzio Beach, Nijmegen (Holland), the Battle of the Bulge, the Siegfried Line and the push to secure areas around the Rhine & Elbe rivers. Citizen soldiers, with a world at war. Citizen soldiers, the men of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Citizen soldiers, real heroes. Through research, which includes a bevy of interviews, oral histories, unpublished accounts by veterans and the analysis of archival materials, historian Phil Nordyke delivers a definitive history of the remarkable men who fought for the 504th. The story travels through the period before America's entry into World War II to the massive victory parade in New York City. The scholarship is impressive and truly honors those who answered the call when democracy was teetering on the brink of ruin. It is an enlightening salute and a story that must be remembered and appreciated by future generations. ---Military dot com This is an in depth study of the actions of the 504th in combat in WW II. It helps to have a background in WW II as the author does not attempt to give the reader an idea as to the "larger picture". It does give an

excellent view of actions of the 504 men without any varnish. A German prisoner laughed when a Private knelt and covered his dead Lieutenant's body with a shelter half, so the trooper straightened up and shot the prisoner twice, killing him (good thing the Press and JAG lawyers weren't present). A Major was shot through the chest, causing the right lung to fill up with fluid, but the officer stayed on the line with his men for two days of fighting. He only evacuated after that fire fight was won. The book does a good job of covering the part of the war that involved the 504th ----military review dot com Mr. Nordyke must be one of the foremost authorities on the 82nd Airborne Division. This is a very impressive and comprehensive account of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Mr. Nordyke has done an incredible job of detailing the entire history of the 504th PIR beginning before the start of WWII through their victory parade in New York City. His ability to provide context by weaving in the individual accounts from the soldiers yet maintain the overall chronology and flow of the war was excellent. The soldier's personal testimonies are so vivid it makes you feel like you're right there with them. It makes for a revealing and exciting account of WWII. Being the son of a WWII veteran, it reminded me again of the tremendous suffering, deprivation and sacrifices these proud men endured. However, if you asked any of them, they wouldn't describe themselves as heroes. They were just doing their jobs. What a debt of gratitude current generations owe the brave men and women of WWII. --By J. Newby

The World War II combat record of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment was incredible. Its 3rd Battalion jumped into Sicily, spearheading the invasion. It was the first to jump at Salerno, which stabilized and saved the beachhead there. Company H was awarded the first of four Presidential Unit Citations that units of the regiment would be awarded during the war for its defense of the Chiunzi Pass area outside Naples as part of the Ranger Force. The 504th Regimental Combat Team (RCT) went on to fight in the Italian mountains, then came ashore at Anzio, where the 3rd Battalion stopped the breakthrough by the Hermann GÖring Panzer Division and was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation. The regiment jumped into Holland in a daring daylight operation, capturing the Grave bridge and the bridge over the Maas-Waal Canal. Three days later, in one of the greatest feats of arms of the war, it made an assault crossing of the Waal River to capture the north ends of the two huge bridges at Nijmegen. In Belgium, during the Battle of the Bulge it fought side-by-side with its sister regiments of the 82nd Airborne Division, stopping the three best-equipped and most powerful SS Panzer divisions in the entire German Army. Together with the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment, it cracked the Siegfried Line, then defended the western side of the Rhine River, ultimately pushing east of the Elbe River where it met soldiers from the Soviet Union's Red

Army. Ross Carter spoke for all 504th RCT combat veterans when he described the dead comrades and friends he had left behind in those cemeteries: "tough-fibered, hard-living, and reckless; but no braver, more loyal, or better fighting men ever lived." • Drawing on personal interviews, oral histories, and unpublished written accounts of veterans of the 504th RCT, *More Than Courage* brings the history of the parachute regiment and the associated units of the regimental combat team to life, conveying with remarkable immediacy and power what it was like to be there. This is history as it was lived by these intrepid paratroopers, from their prewar coming of age as young men new to soldiering, through the end of World War II, when they marched in the Victory Parade up Fifth Avenue in New York. • •

The 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment was part of the legendary 82nd Airborne Division in WW2. It took part in almost all of that formation's epic battles, as well as several significant others. Accordingly, it has a unique story that I think positions it amongst the very top US combat units of WW2. The 504th's first action was a drop into Sicily during the invasion of that island. Tragically elements were fired on by the navy and many lives lost. The combat was fierce at times but this was even more the case in the invasion of Italy, where the regiment was hastily flown in to strengthen the bridgehead. Incredibly, it was then involved in even more extensive combat at Anzio. Indeed, this seems to have been the fortune of the regiment, with each battle exceeding the intensity of the previous one. In Europe this continued with the airborne attack on Grave during operation Market Garden and the incredible Waal River crossing. The regiment was then all but expended in especially grinding battles to hold and then force back powerful German forces in the Ardennes. It is an astonishing combat journey. Nordyke tells the story superbly. He gives sufficient context for each stage, provides excellent maps and suitable pictures but most importantly he tells much of the regiment's story through the words of its men. He is fortunate to have five or six strong memoirs by veterans of the 504th but he doesn't overuse these. His excellent research builds on these and each action is explained and revealed through numerous recollections by the men who fought it. It must be said, that these are sometimes extremely powerful and graphic. It is a cliché to say that a book could not be put down. I would suggest that there are times with this book that it has to be put down. The intensity of the actions recounted is so incredible that you need a moment to digest it all. War is inherently violent but the extent of the combat revealed in this book is extraordinary. Sure many books will have face-to-face fighting and killing and the terrible injuries caused by weapons but this is almost a page by page occurrence here. These include some of the grisliest war doings I have ever read. Some truly made me flinch. It is a credit to the author that he

was able to elicit such stories, confessions even, from his subjects. War is brutal but the ferocious, sometimes callous deeds can be very grim indeed. This book really spells out what this can mean. The extent of the combat is also due to the Germans themselves. Sure we have come to expect determined, even fanatical fighting by the Waffen SS and other elite troops like the Fallschirmjagers and HG. Yet even when the 504th clashed with second rank or rebuilding units, like the 29th Pz Gr at Hill 950, they often encountered remarkable commitment. Both sides slammed into each other and Nordyke's title is proved over and over. At the end of each bitter fight, it was the men of the 504th who prevailed. They defeated elite German forces, including armoured troops, they parachuted, they crossed rivers under fire, they cleared towns and heavy forests. They were often outnumbered and outgunned, indeed, the German 20cm anti-aircraft gun was almost their special nemesis. The men of the 504th believed they were the best soldiers in the world and they proved it again and again. The US airborne forces were elite formations. Audiences were reminded of this by the wonderful Band of Brothers at the start of the century. I have read other airborne regimental histories (187th & 517th) and while worthy, they have not been of the same scope as this volume on the 504th. Phil Nordyke has told the story of the 504th in the most compelling way possible. I can't recommend this volume enough. It is simply one of the most extraordinary accounts of a regiment at war.

Arrived on time, no issues.

Exceptionally well done account of the 504th PIR combat history in World War II. Well researched...well written...I say the same for all of the books Phil Nordyke has authored on the 82nd AB in World War II. I recommend to all!! Please Note: This is a thorough history of the 504th and all actions from formation through the end of WWII...This is not an overall history of WWII. I see many reviewers give books like this bad ratings stating they could not get the "big picture", etc...You need a good grasp of the overall actions in the ETO before you can really enjoy this book and any other unit history for that matter.

The single most complete review written on the Second World War history of one of the most decorated regiments in the history of the U.S. Army. The author covers the history as an Airborne regiment from its formation through the campaigns in Sicily, Italy, France, Holland and Germany. The movie "A Bridge Too Far" showed a small example of their courage and his writing on their contribution in Italy and Sicily is the best available. This book is great for a historian or a history

buff.

The book arrived in perfect condition. This is an in depth study of the actions of the 504th in combat in WW II. It helps to have a background in WW II as the author does not attempt to give the reader an idea as to the "larger picture". It does give an excellent view of actions of the 504 men without any varnish. A German prisoner laughed when a Private knelt and covered his dead Lieutenant's body with a shelter half, so the trooper straightened up and shot the prisoner twice, killing him (good thing the Press and JAG lawyers weren't present). A Major was shot through the chest, causing the right lung to fill up with fluid, but the officer stayed on the line with his men for two days of fighting. He only evacuated after that fire fight was won. The book does a good job of covering the part of the war that involved the 504th.

For me this book is the completion of a 30 year search for information on my father. He was a member of Co "H", 3rdBn, 504th PIR, 82nd Airborne Div in WWII. It presents the details of the individuals in the units down to the squad level and gives names. My father is mentioned in the book as being in a squad that overtook a machine gun position after the assault across the Waal River Bridge. He was among a few who were able to get across the river in small canvas boats and eventually take the bridge as part of the Airborne Assault in Operation Market Garden which was shown in the movie "A Bridge Too Far". His Regiment, the 504th Parachute Inf Reg was a unit that saw a tremendous amount of action in WWII and suffered an extreme amount of casualties. My father was seriously wounded for the second time after taking the bridge on Nov 10, 1944. He returned home and after spending time in a hospital was discharged being in a wheel chair. He subsequently died as a result of his wounds in 1950. For me this was a great book. It is not often that you can find your father's detailed actions from WWII in a book. He was part of the Greatest Generation. The book helps you realize the day to day struggle of these soldiers in what were extremely harsh conditions. Over six million served in the military in WWII and today just about 1.5 million survive. We owe them all a tremendous debt.

All about my husband's father

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