

COMMANDO

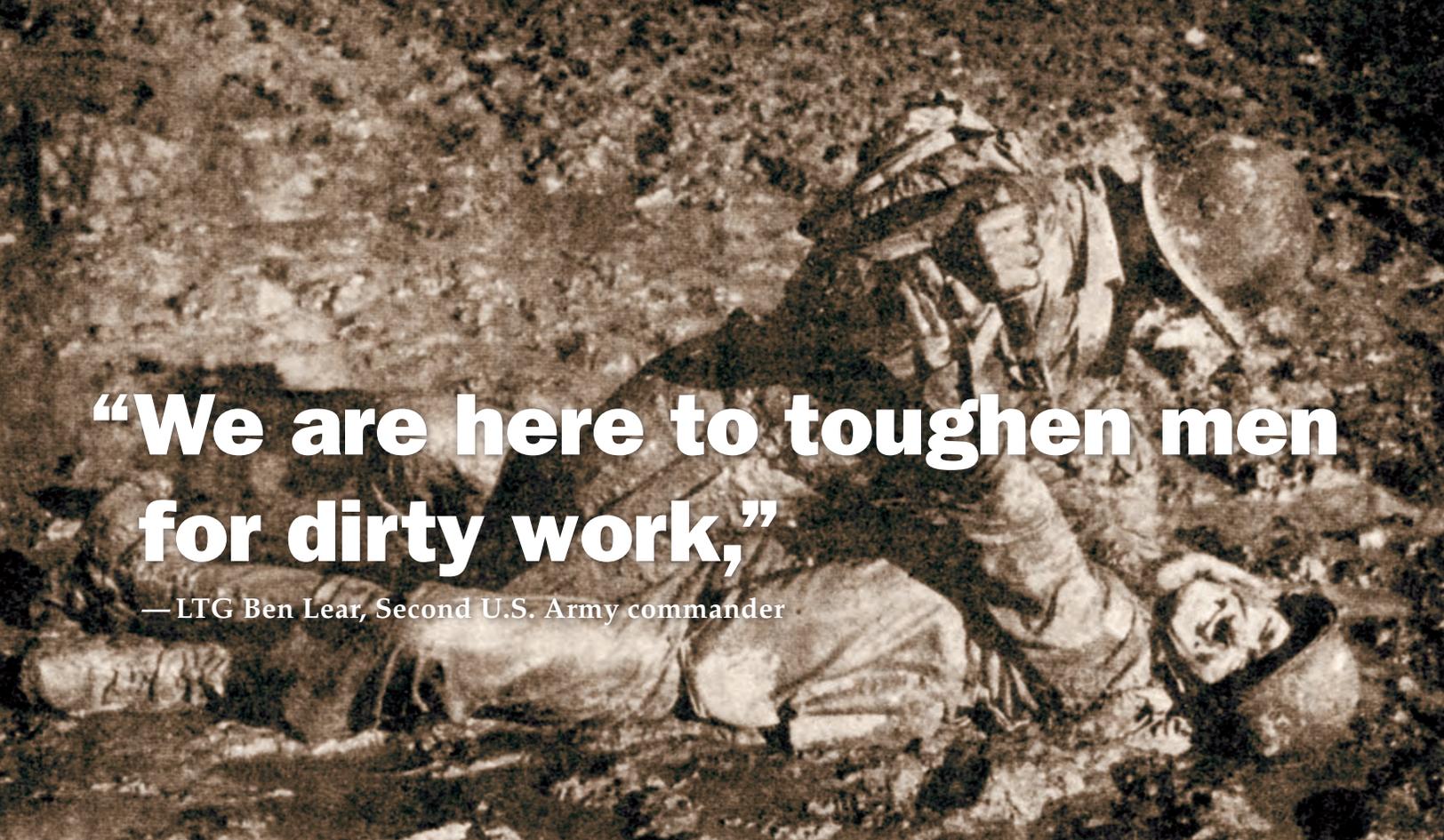
Part II, Preparing America's Soldiers for War

& RANGER

The Second U.S. Army Ranger School & Division Programs

TRAINING

by Charles H. Briscoe



**“We are here to toughen men
for dirty work,”**

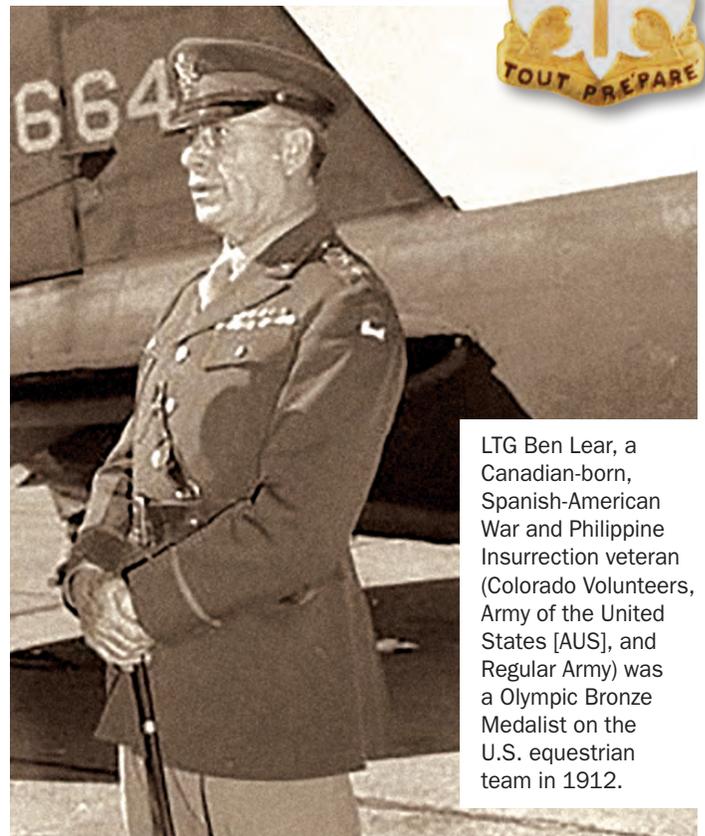
— LTG Ben Lear, Second U.S. Army commander

Commando & Ranger Training: Part I

explained differences between the provisional American ‘Ranger Battalions’ organized and trained in the United Kingdom (1st and 29th Ranger Battalions [29th Infantry Division {ID}]) during World War II and the division Commando Task Forces (CTF) specially trained to spearhead unit assault landings at the U.S. Army Amphibious Training Center (ATC) at Camp Edwards, Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Having gotten short notice in the late spring of 1942 to relocate the ATC to newly built Camp Gordon Johnston, Carrabelle, Florida, the curriculum was changed to accommodate scheduling. Tragically, Brigadier General (BG) Frank A. Keating cut the CTF concept in order to begin Commando training for all 38th ID soldiers in November.¹

It was almost serendipitous that a violent storm would strike the Florida ‘Panhandle’ in the middle of the 38th ID landings on 18-19 December 1942. Radios failed and control was lost. Barrage balloons were destroyed and equipment simply vanished. Landing craft, driven ashore, were scattered twenty miles along the coast. Fourteen soldiers drowned. Thus, in January 1943, BG Keating coordinated Amphibious Scout training with the U.S. Marine Reconnaissance unit posted at Fort Pierce, Florida, to give the 28th ID regiments experienced invasion ‘spearheaders’ for the assault landings.² The ‘Keystone’ Division was the last reinforced division to get Army-conducted amphibious training in the States. When the Navy changed its doctrinal position to ship-to-shore amphibious operations in March 1943, the Army transferred the ATC mission to theater

Distinctive Unit Insignia (DUI)
for Second U.S. Army.



LTG Ben Lear, a Canadian-born, Spanish-American War and Philippine Insurrection veteran (Colorado Volunteers, Army of the United States [AUS], and Regular Army) was a Olympic Bronze Medalist on the U.S. equestrian team in 1912.

“We are scratching the bottom of the barrel now for officer candidates. We are decidedly short of noncommissioned officer leaders. We will pay for this dearly in combat.”

—LTG Ben Lear wrote in a letter to LTG Leslie J. McNair, AGF commander, 22 October 1942⁹

commanders. The European Theater of Operations (ETO) established its U.S. Assault Training Center at Woolacombe Beach, Devon, England.³ Though American military attitudes changed on Commando training, its benefits for building junior leaders had not been lost on the Second U.S. Army commander, Lieutenant General (LTG) Ben Lear.

The purpose of this article is to explain the mission of the short-lived Second U.S. Army Ranger School at Camp Nathan Bedford Forrest, Tullahoma, Tennessee, its divisional ‘Ranger’ training philosophy, and selected divisional programs. Two early postwar Army Ground Forces (AGF) studies, *A History of the Second Army* and *The Amphibious Training Center*, some WWII commemorative division histories, interviews of ‘Ranger’ veterans, and official records form the foundation of this article.⁵ General Lear was determined to employ realistic, hard combat training to develop physically tough small unit leaders. That philosophy is embedded in today’s Ranger School.⁶

In the months following the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States had to mobilize for war and the War Department had to organize, equip, and train a moribund military to fight and defeat combat-hardened Japanese, German, and Italian forces across the world. The Second U.S. Army, one of four field training armies, was to prepare a million men in units ranging from division to battalion for war. Division commanders, facing severe resource constraints, focused on toughening soldiers, physically and mentally, for ground combat. That could be done ‘on the cheap.’ Second Army’s strong, no nonsense leader, General Lear, set about ‘steeling his troops’ for the rigors of battle. He expanded upon the directives of LTG Leslie J. McNair, the Army Ground Forces (AGF) commander, for live-fire ‘battle inoculations,’ obstacle courses, and street fighting in different environments to build tough junior leaders (officers and sergeants).⁷

Observing the North African landings in 1942, LTG Leslie James McNair, the commander, Army Ground Forces (AGF), was badly wounded by artillery fire. While doing the same in France in 1944, he was killed by errant U.S. bombers near St. Lô, France. LTG Ben Lear succeeded him.



In the Louisiana Maneuvers held in the fall of 1941, General Lear commanded the Red Army (Second U.S. Army) against LTG Walter Krueger’s Blue Army (Third U.S. Army). Lear had been very displeased with the field performances of his senior commanders and all officers in general. He was disgusted with the poor physical stamina of the infantrymen.⁸

The Second Army commander set about remedying these problems with the middle Tennessee maneuvers in the summer of 1942 and by establishing a Ranger School at Camp Forrest, Tennessee. He moved a corps headquarters to Camp Forrest to support both and relocated the Second Army from Chicago to Memphis to be personally involved. “We are here to toughen men for dirty work,” commented LTG Lear on his decisions.¹⁰

The Second Army leader agreed with William J. Donovan, the founder of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), that ‘rekindle the spirit of the attack’ meant resurrecting historical traditions of fighting—scouts, raiders, and rangers.¹¹ Lear believed that American soldiers must learn to fight dirtier than the enemy and be versatile in their techniques—they had to be adept in the ‘art of killing.’¹² After observing Marine close combat fighting tactics at Camp Pendleton, California, and touring the Tank Destroyer Center at Fort Hood, Texas, LTG Lear incorporated training aspects from both and first hand battle reports to better Army ground combat fighters—its infantrymen. The architect for the Second Army Ranger School was Assistant G-3, Colonel (COL) John B. Sherman.¹³

By early fall 1942, the G-3 (Operations & Training) had produced a two-week course of instruction acceptable to LTG Lear, who was deeply involved as the ‘chief umpire’ in

the middle Tennessee maneuvers. In early December 1942, the Second Army and Central Defense Zone commander personally sent out 600 Ranger School quotas to his division commanders. Those men sent to Camp Forrest for Ranger training were to be the most intelligent and physically fit infantry and artillery lieutenants, corporals and sergeants from their divisions.¹⁴

The purpose of the school was “to train instructors in rough-and-tumble fighting tactics and in special techniques” to bring soldiers to an emotional and physical state that would assure successful performance on the battlefield. Once these men understood why they were fighting, the Ranger classes would teach them how to fight most effectively.

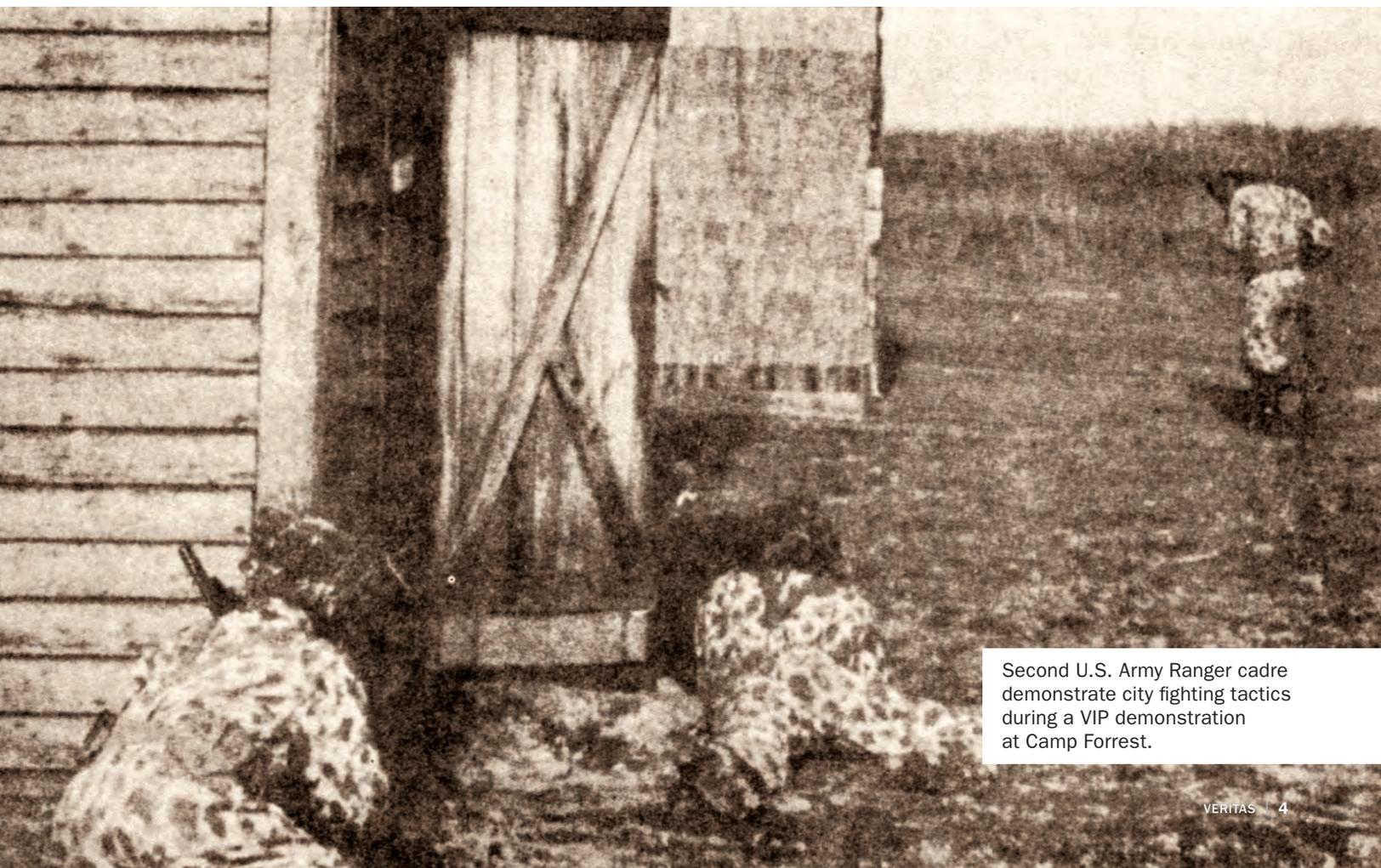


The Second Army Ranger tab, worn by cadre on their dress uniform, was positioned below the SSI. Since it was unofficial, this red & white Ranger tab was not awarded to those completing the two-week course of instruction.

The division personnel would return to their units to teach Ranger fundamentals to their comrades.¹⁵

Infantry Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) William C. Saffarans and his cadre, wearing Marine Corps camouflage utility (fatigue) uniforms to set them apart, drilled the hand-selected junior officers and non-commissioned officers (NCO) using Marine combat training methods.¹⁶ The small unit ‘Ranger’ trainees practiced ‘hands on’ before being tested on physical conditioning, hand-to-hand combat skills, bayonet fighting, and combat marksmanship during ‘blitz training’ (immediate action live fire drills). Sniping and infiltration, camouflage, wire obstacles, mines and demolitions, and improvised tank killing were all part of individual training.¹⁷ According to LTG Lear, Ranger instruction decidedly improved “alertness, smartness, aggressiveness, esprit,” and stimulated interest in field training.¹⁸

Days started and ended with speed marches. Squads of ‘Rangers’ did ambushes, patrols, stream crossings, and urban street fighting day and night. Though the swimming and small boat practice in Commando training was absent, it was realistic, demanding tactical training ‘on the cheap.’ The German ‘village’ consisted of building facades—basic mock-ups with open windows and doors and simple indoor stairs to second levels. To add realism the mines, booby traps, and explosive devices were makeshift, field expedients built with TNT and dynamite. The ‘Rangers’ who completed the course were to epitomize the creed of ‘Rangerism’—tougher and nastier than the enemy—and were made responsible for spreading that mindset in their units.¹⁹



Second U.S. Army Ranger cadre demonstrate city fighting tactics during a VIP demonstration at Camp Forrest.

Second Army Ranger School division trainees demonstrate hand-to-hand combat fighting.



CPL Ralph E. Stacey, 30th Infantry Division, Camp Blanding, FL, 1943.



30th Infantry 'Old Hickory' Division SSI. 'Old Hickory' was the nickname of Andrew Jackson, seventh President of the United States (1829-1837).

Certificate of Proficiency

Ranger

Cpl. Ralph E. Stacey

having successfully completed the following requirement is designated a **Second Army Ranger**

PRIDE, SMARTNESS, SOLDIERLY ATTITUDE AND LEADERSHIP EXEMPLARY CONDUCT PHYSICAL CONDITIONING HAND TO HAND COMBAT BLITZ COURSE BOOBY TRAPS AND DEMOLITIONS	INDIVIDUAL CAMOUFLAGE CONSTRUCTION AND PASSAGE OF WIRE ENTANGLEMENTS SNIPERS AND INFILTRATION PATROLS AND AMBUSHING STALKING AND AMBUSHING TANKS IMPROVISED BRIDGES AND USE OF TOGGLE ROPES
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Date January 29, 1943 Lt. Col. Inf. Commandant [Signature] LL General U. S. Army [Signature]

The Second Army Ranger School certificate was signed by LTG Ben Lear, the Second Army commander, who took the course very seriously.

On 23 January 1943 the first class of Ranger instructors put on a spectacular 'art of killing' demonstration for the AGF commander, LTG McNair, LTG Lear, local government dignitaries, and newspapermen from Washington, DC (*Army Times*), Memphis (*Commercial Appeal*), and Chattanooga (*News-Free Press*). "The climactic spectacle was a raid upon a mock German town, featured by the use of live ammunition." Half of *The Army Hour* broadcast two days later was devoted to a sound-enhanced reenactment of the highlights.²⁰ The second Ranger School was held in February. Photos of that 23 January 1943 demo are shown on succeeding pages.

Training accidents and injuries were not uncommon at the Ranger School. Corporal (CPL) Ralph E. Stacey, 30th Infantry Division, was severely injured in an improvised mine accident. During a detection class CPL Stacey, probing with his bayonet, tripped an over-powered training device. He lost three fingers and half of a thumb. After spending several months convalescing in the hospital the twenty-seven year old 'Ranger' trainee was medically discharged on 27 April 1943, less than a year after enlisting in the Army.²¹

Stacey was in the second and last Second Army Ranger course. There were numerous reasons for its termination but three Army/War Department decisions were significant:

more Ranger Battalions were needed overseas to ‘spearhead’ invasions (Sicily, Italy, and France); creation of two TO&E (Table of Organization & Equipment) Ranger Battalions at Camp Forrest for the invasion of France; and General Lear was made the acting commander, AGF after LTG McNair was wounded in North Africa. Responsible for organization, training, combat readiness, and overseas shipment of all Army infantry divisions, the ‘triple hatted’ LTG Lear made the middle Tennessee maneuvers the top Second Army priority.²² But, the spark of ‘Rangerism’ continued to glow in some infantry divisions preparing for combat.

Ranger training was still the ‘hottest thing’ in the Army despite LTG McNair’s reservations. It was an inexpensive way to build junior leaders—officers and NCOs. More astute division commanders saw value in continuing the training with their Second Army Ranger graduates, some of whom were Pacific combat veterans. The simplicity of individual field training made it readily exportable. And, most Army training camps contained homemade ‘German villages’ to practice street fighting.²³ The 66th ID, one of four divisions at Camp Blanding, Florida, ‘picked up the Ranger gauntlet.’

Major General (MG) H.T. Kramer, commanding general, directed that a 66th ID Ranger course be conducted. The ‘Black Panther’ Division was activated at Camp Blanding, Florida, on 15 April 1943 with a cadre of officers and sergeants from the 89th ID. MG Kramer needed highly motivated, tough junior leaders to move collective training through the echelons as the division prepared for AGF-administered combat ready evaluations before the middle Tennessee maneuvers. He had to phase the 262nd, 263rd, and 264th Infantry Regiments, the 870th, 871st, and 872nd light artillery battalions (105mm), and the 721st medium artillery battalion (155mm) from individual basic training to unit collective training.²⁴ Physical conditioning was started at once.

After newly assigned recruits completed basic training in their battalions in May 1943, the 66th ID regiments intensified their physical fitness programs. They were getting the soldiers ready for unit training that progressed from section/platoon to battery/company to battalion level before the beginning of regimental maneuvers. Reveille formation at 0500 hours morphed into company and



Two 66th ID Rangers engage in hand-to-hand combatives at Camp Blanding.

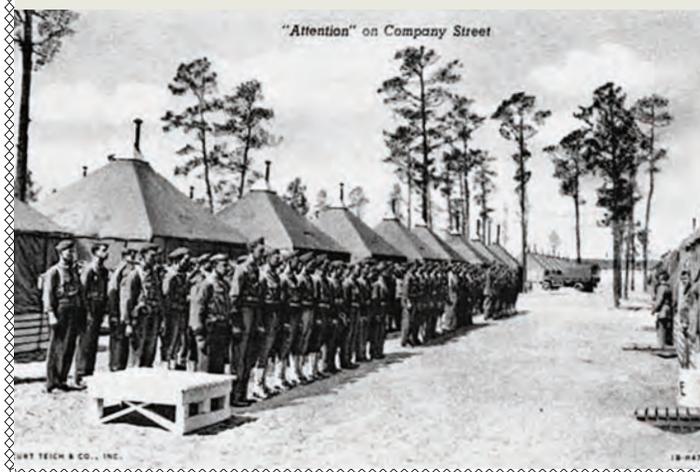
Camp Blanding

World War II

Camp Blanding, a 150,000-acre Florida National Guard training center outside Starke, was expanded into an Infantry Replacement Training Center after Pearl Harbor with facilities for two newly activated Army infantry divisions and several separate infantry and artillery regiments simultaneously. In September 1942, German prisoners of war (POW) were transferred to the Camp (eventually 1,200 were incarcerated on the post and 2,800 in fifteen other branch facilities). There were sufficient barracks and quarters to house 60,000 officers and men by 1944. By the end of the year nine infantry divisions and a separate airborne regiment had been activated at Camp Blanding. The divisions shipped out to another camp/post for collective training. The 66th ID moved to Camp Joseph T. Robinson in Arkansas in mid-August 1943. The ‘Black Panthers’ underwent AGF division operational tests as part of the XXI Corps, Fourth Army during the middle Tennessee maneuvers. They were opposed by a Third Army corps.²⁶



MG H.T. Kramer settled on the panther head version for the 66th ID shoulder sleeve insignia (SSI).





2nd Army
Ranger School Demonstration
Camp Forrest, January 1943

1. Main Street in 'Naziville.'
2. Two Second Army Ranger School instructors demonstrate barbed wire cutting with cloth-wrapped clippers.
3. SGT Edward M. Draper and PVT Russell B. Scarboro (Ranger students) conduct live fire 'mopping up' in 'Naziville.'
4. (L to R) SSG Bishop Scarboro, CPL Elmer Cochran (top), and SGT Howard M. Draper (Ranger students) demonstrate how to cover a window entry of a 'Naziville' building.
5. SGT Joe Perna (Ranger student) bayonets a dummy as part of the 'mopping up' of 'Naziville.' Note the caricature of Adolf Hitler in the window.

battery calisthenics across the division. Repetitions for the exercises increased daily until a standard of twelve sets was achieved.²⁷

These 'warm-up' sessions preceded four-man telephone pole lifts and overhead carry races. Hand-to-hand combat fighting culminated morning physical training (PT). Soldiers climbed into large 'bear pits' for a series of combative drills. These evolved into 'King of the Mountain' rough and tumble fighting competitions that left one man standing. Then, company and battery 'kings' fought free-for-all style to determine a battalion champion.²⁸ At this point cannoneer Private (PVT) Paul E. Spears will explain the 66th ID 'Ranger' program.

"I was a tough, smart-ass jock who had just spent six months on the Lake Erie Railroad driving spikes into creosoted rail ties with a twelve-pound maul. Rail crews were a very rough lot," said PVT Spears, an M101 howitzer gunner in B Battery, 872nd Field Artillery. "Private Harry E. Ohota, a singing Ukrainian from Monessen 'Steeltown' (PA), and I were consistently the last guys standing. He was solid as an oak and stronger than a bull. Though I was quicker, try as I might, I could never overcome his brute strength. Harry was always the battery 'pit king,'"³⁰

Bayonet training often ended with a spate of hand-to-hand combat. Since padded pugil sticks and boxing helmets were safety features in the future, sheathed bayonets on rifles raised unarmed combatives to a much more physical level. "A parried bayonet attack, followed by an instinctive vigorously delivered butt stroke to an opponent's steel helmet often led to free-for-alls," said Spears. "This was common because our natural aggressiveness was being honed to win in combat. Little did I know that my physical prowess would get me 'volunteered' for Ranger training."³¹

By July 1943, two hundred and twenty enlisted soldiers deemed by their battalions to possess leadership potential reported for two weeks of Ranger training. Three Pacific combat veterans, a first (1LT) and two second lieutenants (2LT), all Second Army Ranger graduates, conducted the 66th ID program.³² "1LT Schaefer (W.A., III) told us that we had been specially selected to fight behind enemy lines. He promised to physically push us to our last ounce of strength and then demand more. We double-timed everywhere in our steel pots carrying our weapons with unsheathed bayonets," remembered Spears.³³

"We started our first night patrol crossing a triple roll of concertina wire. The scouts covered the flanks as the first two men flung themselves onto the barbed wired rolls and we scrambled over on their backs. The last two helped the 'bridge men' untangle themselves before running to catch up," recalled Spears. "It seemed that all patrols were through swamps. We lived by compasses and map reading. To insure that everyone (non-swimmers) got across deep streams we formed human chains. There were four things out there in the night—bugs, snakes, alligators, and Rangers," chuckled the artillery private. "Every day, guys dropped out. A German POW embarrassed us in

our initial bayonet drills, but we learned quick. We would disassemble and assemble the .45 pistol, the M-1 Garand and M-1903 Springfield rifles, the M-1 Carbine, and water-cooled .30 and .50 caliber machineguns until we could do them blindfolded."³⁴

"By the last day, we were down to 120 stalwarts for whom quitting was not an option. LT Schaefer worked us unmercifully into the afternoon. Then, we formed up, went to 'Port Arms' with our bayonet-mounted weapons and double-timed to the obstacle course six miles away. There we were split into two ranks, faced one another, and fought until one was standing. Winners kept fighting until there was one 'champion.' I made it to the next to last round when I was pitted against a guy, six feet four inches tall, weighing 250 pounds. He was muscled like a lumberjack. I toppled him with a behind the knee kick and pounced on him. He flipped me off like a bug and proceeded to smother me. I was still trying to get my breath when the lieutenant blew his whistle to start the obstacle course. Yes, we double-timed back for supper," said the cannoneer private.³⁵ There was more to come.

PVT Paul E. Spears

B Battery,
872nd Field Artillery (105mm),
66th Infantry Division 'Ranger'



- DOB: 17 June 1924;
- POB: Pittsburgh, PA;
- Reynoldsville (PA) High School, June 1942: football (All Conference Defensive End 1941), basketball & baseball letters;
- Drafted January 1943, inducted Indiantown Gap Military Reservation, PA, and assigned 66th ID, Camp Blanding, FL;
- February-June 1943, basic artillery training, B Battery, 872nd Field Artillery (FA) Battalion (105 mm);
- July-August 1943, 66th ID 'Ranger' training;
- September 1943, OCS Candidate, Fort Benning, GA;
- October 1943 - September 1945, 541st FA Battalion (155mm), Fort Jackson, SC, and XII Army Group, Europe;
- November 1945, released from active duty as a Sergeant.



One 66th ID Ranger covers another as he charges out of a 'Naziville' building to assault the next one.

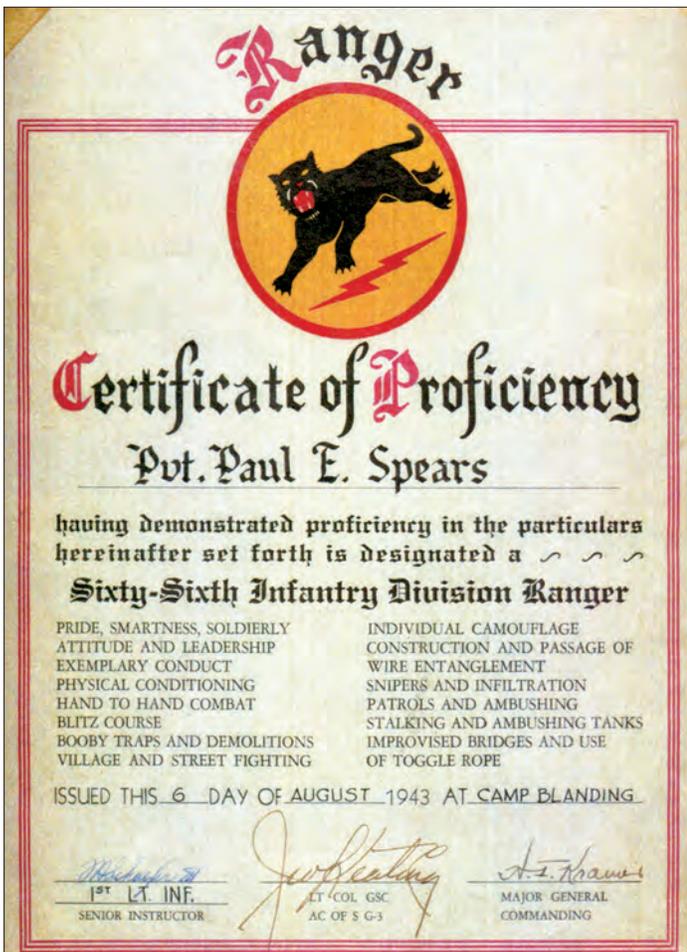
"After chow we were told to assemble at midnight in full combat gear and steel pots, carrying weapons with bayonets mounted, full field packs, and one canteen of water. We were force marching twenty-five miles and would be back by daybreak. No one could drink water unless given permission by cadre. We did it in 5 hours and 20 minutes and nobody quit. They would have died first. As we approached the Camp Blanding parade ground, you could hear a band playing. We soon discovered that the 66th Division was formed and standing at attention. Dead tired, soaked with sweat, our backs straightened as LT Schaefer marched us to the front of the reviewing stand. He stepped forward and saluting MG Kramer, presented the 66th Infantry Division 'Rangers' to him," recalled a beaming Spears.³⁶

"General Kramer expressed his pride in us and our accomplishments. Then, he walked out gave each one of us a certificate, and shook our hands. I was standing 'ten feet tall' when the division marched by in review. Afterwards, LT Schaefer congratulated all of us for exceeding his standards. He said that he would proudly serve with any of us, anywhere. The truth be known, we would have followed that Guadalcanal veteran anywhere," reflected Spears, almost seventy years later.³⁷ But, instead of imbuing 'Rangerism' in the 672nd Field Artillery, newly-promoted CPL Paul Spears was sent off to Officer Candidate School (OCS) at Fort Benning, Georgia.³⁸

The 66th was not the only infantry division to institute 'Ranger' training. The outstanding 83rd ID course at Camp Atterbury, Indiana, resulted in its director being chosen to command the 2nd Ranger Battalion at Camp Forrest. Major General (MG) Lloyd R. Fredendall, who succeeded LTG Lear in April 1943, had been very favorably impressed by the successes of the 1st Ranger Battalion in North Africa. When he left Camp Atterbury, the Second Army commander believed that the former Texas A&M football player and coach, Major (MAJ) James Earl Rudder, knew how to train soldiers for combat. The 83th ID commander, MG Frank W. Milburn, a West Point footballer (Class of '14), agreed.³⁹

Other Ranger programs were quite noteworthy. The Army Ranger Combat Training School at Fort William R. Shafter, Territory of Hawaii, directed by LTC Francois d'Eliscu, inculcated the 'spirit of Rangerism' in junior officer and NCO infantry leaders of the Army divisions slated for the Pacific. Technician Fifth Grade (T/5) Roger L.

Note: LTC d'Eliscu later ran the Special Forces Department in the Psywar Center and School at Fort Bragg.



The 66th ID Ranger Certificate was made before MG H.T. Kramer settled on the panther's head version for the division SSI.



83rd Infantry 'Thunderbolt' Division SSI. The centerpiece was a compilation of the letters forming 'Ohio.'

Reid, Service Company, 34th Infantry Regiment, 24th ID, was rated as a 'Very Satisfactory' graduate of the eight-week Hawaiian course. MG Walter M. Robertson, 2nd Infantry Division, followed four months of winter warfare at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, with a Ranger Battle Training Course from 12 April to 5 June 1943. Graduates like 1LT Larry C. Lomax, 9th Infantry Regiment, had black circular 'skull' patches made to wear above the right sleeve cuff of their dress uniforms. A 75th ID three-week Ranger program was conducted at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, by LT Robert Belior.⁴⁰ Against long odds LTG Ben Lear succeeded in preparing Second Army and AGF infantry division soldiers to fight and defeat battle-hardened enemy forces by instilling the 'spirit of Rangerism.' Despite their wartime successes, however, the scouts, raiders, and rangers faded away at the end of World War II.

The U.S. raiding program as envisioned by General Marshall was never realized. Division 'Commando/Ranger' units were also short-lived. The 29th Ranger Battalion (29th ID) that fought with the British Commandos in Norway and off Brittany, was deactivated on 18 October 1943.⁴¹ After 1st Ranger Battalion 'led the way' in Tunisia, the value of amphibious 'spearheaders' was confirmed, leading to a three-battalion Ranger Force for the invasions of Sicily and Italy. However, forming, training, and sustaining three Ranger Battalions with in-theater assets severely drained talented personnel from divisions bearing the brunt of combat.

Decimation of the Ranger Force at Cisterna, Italy, exhausted the theater capacity to reconstitute more 'spearheader' battalions for the invasion of France. The War Department preferred to form new units in the United States rather than grant permanent status to existing provisional formations in the overseas theaters.⁴² Hence, 2nd and 5th Ranger Battalions were TO&E units organized and trained in the United States. Replacing Ranger attrition was hard in America because volunteers for parachute duty in airborne divisions and flight duty received extra incentive pay.⁴³ LTG Walter Kreuger, Sixth Army commander in the Pacific, adopted the ETO practice and created a TDA 6th Ranger Battalion in September 1944 from a deactivated Field Artillery (Pack) Battalion (98th) in New Guinea.⁴⁴ 'Value added' was not factored into postwar demobilization.

All Ranger Battalions and 'Ranger' training programs implemented by the U.S. divisions and commands preparing for WWII combat were history within months of the declared Allied victories in Europe and Japan. The Canadian-American First Special Service Force 'Black Devils,' the long range penetration groups, GALAHAD (5307th Composite Unit [Provisional] Merrill's Marauders) and MARS (5332nd Brigade [Provisional]) in Burma, and the special operation elements of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) were gone by war's end. A dynamic Korean battlefield early in that war prompted resurrection of Ranger units.

Though only six Ranger Infantry Companies (Airborne) saw combat in Korea for eight months, the Army leadership 'rediscovered' the value of that training for developing junior officer and NCO leaders. The Ranger Training Center



MG Lloyd R. Fredendall, Second Army commander, 1943-1945.



LTC James E. Rudder, 2nd Ranger Battalion, Pointe du Hoc, Normandy, France, 6 June 1944.



MAJ Randolph Milholland, 29th Ranger Battalion commander, 29th Infantry Division (ID) is wearing the 29th Rangers tab above the 29th ID SSI.



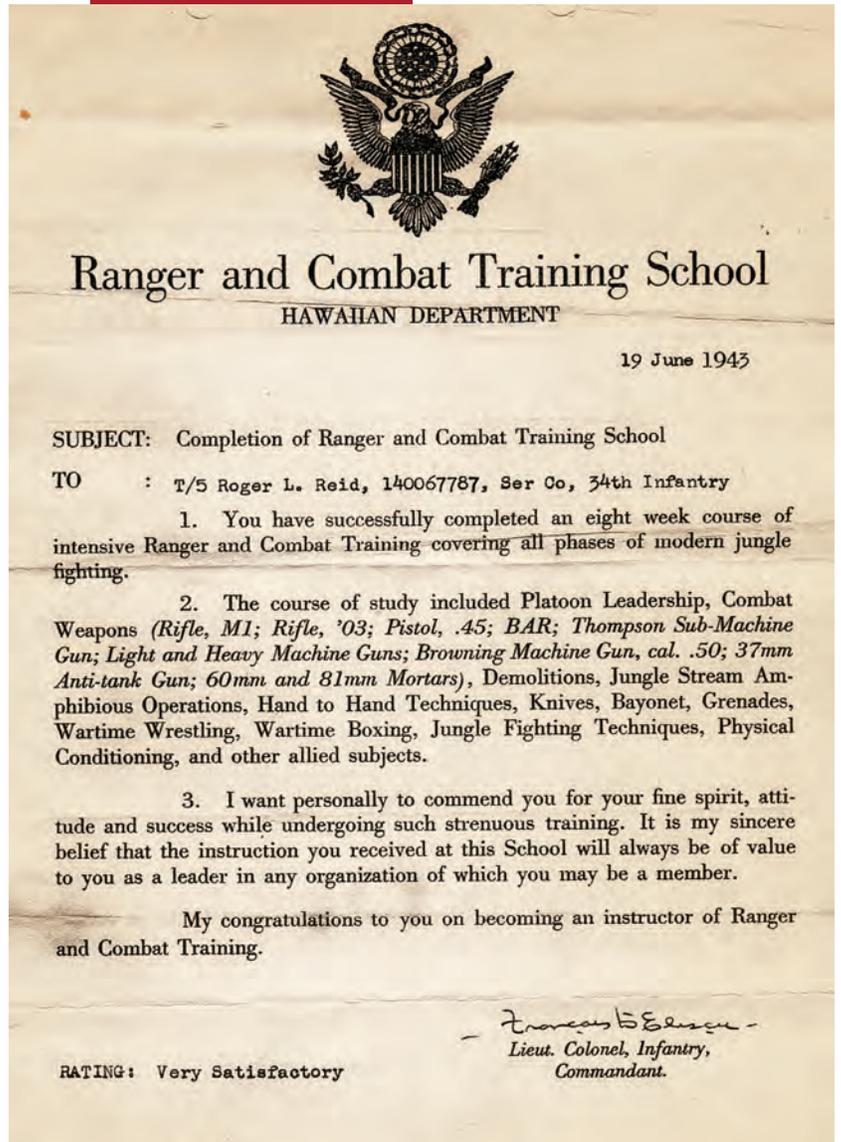


2nd Infantry
Division SSI



2nd Infantry Division
Ranger skull patch

2nd Infantry Division conducted a Ranger Battle Training Course at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, from 12 April to 5 June 1943. Graduates wore black circular 'skull' patches above the right sleeve cuff of their dress uniforms.



Ranger and Combat Training School

HAWAIIAN DEPARTMENT

19 June 1943

SUBJECT: Completion of Ranger and Combat Training School

TO : T/5 Roger L. Reid, 140067787, Ser Co, 34th Infantry

1. You have successfully completed an eight week course of intensive Ranger and Combat Training covering all phases of modern jungle fighting.

2. The course of study included Platoon Leadership, Combat Weapons (*Rifle, M1; Rifle, '03; Pistol, .45; BAR; Thompson Sub-Machine Gun; Light and Heavy Machine Guns; Browning Machine Gun, cal. .50; 37mm Anti-tank Gun; 60mm and 81mm Mortars*), Demolitions, Jungle Stream Amphibious Operations, Hand to Hand Techniques, Knives, Bayonet, Grenades, Wartime Wrestling, Wartime Boxing, Jungle Fighting Techniques, Physical Conditioning, and other allied subjects.

3. I want personally to commend you for your fine spirit, attitude and success while undergoing such strenuous training. It is my sincere belief that the instruction you received at this School will always be of value to you as a leader in any organization of which you may be a member.

My congratulations to you on becoming an instructor of Ranger and Combat Training.

Francis B. Eason
Lieut. Colonel, Infantry,
Commandant.

RATING: Very Satisfactory



24th Infantry Division SSI

Technician Fifth Grade (T/5) Roger L. Reid, Service Company, 34th Infantry Regiment, 24th ID, was a 'Very Satisfactory' graduate of the eight-week Hawaiian Department 'Ranger' course.



LTC William O. Darby, Ranger Force commander, makes rounds in Italy on his motorcycle.



WWII 1st Ranger Battalion shoulder scroll



Scroll of the all-black 2nd Ranger Infantry (Airborne) Company, Korean War



Scroll of the Ranger Training Brigade at Fort Benning, GA

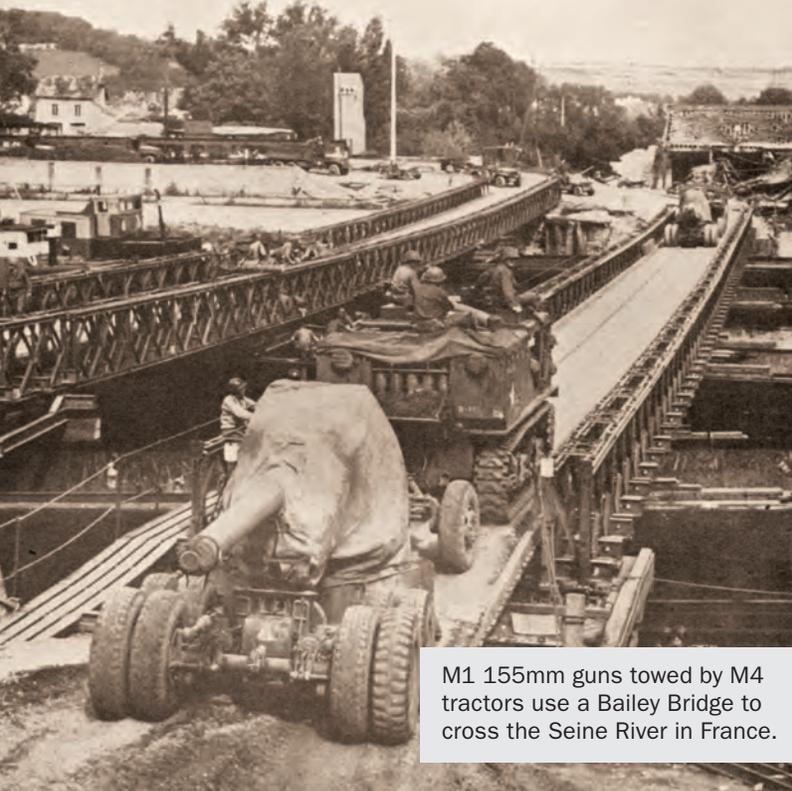


82nd Airborne Division Raider School pocket patch



101st Airborne Division Recondo School pocket patch

focus shifted from preparing Ranger companies for combat overseas to developing infantry junior leaders as the U.S. Army Ranger School. In 1958, the 101st Airborne Division (MG William C. Westmoreland) adopted a modified version of that curriculum for its Recondo School to develop junior NCOs. 'Recondo' was derived from combining reconnaissance (recce) and commando. The 82nd Airborne Division followed suit with its Raider School. General (GEN) Westmoreland later directed that Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) start a Recondo School at Nha Trang in 1966. Today, the Ranger Training Brigade (RTB) at Fort Benning, Georgia, performs that junior leadership mission with its Ranger School.⁴⁵



M1 155mm guns towed by M4 tractors use a Bailey Bridge to cross the Seine River in France.



Six cannoneers 'manhandling' a 155mm 'Long Tom' stuck in French mud shows reality of 12-man crew in war.



SSI for the XII Army Group (General Omar N. Bradley) which consisted of four armies with twelve corps controlling forty-six divisions.

EPILOGUE

A serious family problem caused Candidate Paul Spears to withdraw from Infantry OCS. When he returned to Fort Benning from emergency leave, CPL Spears had been reassigned to the newly formed 541st Field Artillery Battalion (FAB) (155mm) at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. As a 'Long Tom' cannon crewman Spears had much to learn.⁴⁶ The five-hundred man battalion had twelve cannons, each crewed by an officer and eleven soldiers. The fifteen-ton, twenty-two foot long barrelled M1 and M2 'Long Toms' were towed by M4 High-Speed Tractors.⁴⁷ It took a well-trained crew thirty minutes to get their cannon operational. A good crew could fire forty rounds an hour, but the physical labor of unloading, carrying, and loading 95 lb. shells and 7-14 lb. powder propellant charges, made any extended rapid-fire impossible.⁴⁸

While the 541st FAB (3rd Army), like the 66th ID (Fifteenth Army), was assigned to the XII Army Group in Europe, neither got into the fight in Germany. Their war ended in France. The separate 155mm FABs were rarely assigned lower than corps. Because of set up time and limited defensive measures (an M-2 Browning .50 cal machine gun and M-1 Carbines), 'Long Toms' normally fired from static positions several miles behind the front. But, their capacity to fire hundred pound shells 13.5 miles made them invaluable to armored advances.⁴⁹ By the end of the war, Spears was a Sergeant (SGT) section leader, the 'chief smoke'.⁵⁰

The WWII veteran used his GI Bill to earn a bachelor of science degree in accounting at Indiana University (PA) while playing football. After several years in Detroit with Ford Motor Company, he returned to Pennsylvania to work for Hanover Shoe in 1953, subsequently rising to Senior Vice President and Treasurer. The former amateur harness horse racing champion died 11 August 2012. The 66th ID Ranger course was the most memorable event of his wartime service.⁵¹ ⬆

Special Thanks

To CPT Marshall O. Baker (*The Amphibious Training Center*), MAJ Bell I. Wiley and CPT William P. Govan (*History of the Second Army*), AGF Historical Section; Ms. Nancy L. Kutulas, Librarian, Special Warfare Medical Group, for locating these post-WWII materials; Mr. Gregory Parsons, Curator, Camp Blanding Museum; retired CW3 Noel F. Mehlo, Jr. (*The Lost Ranger: A Soldier's Story*) for sharing his Camp Forrest Ranger research; MG Clarence K.K. Chinn, Commander, U.S. Army South; retired MG John C. Raaen, Jr., HHC Commander, 5th Ranger Battalion, WWII; retired LTG David E. Grange, Jr. and retired MG John K. Singlaub, the reviewers.

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Endnotes

- Charles H. Briscoe, "Commando & Ranger Training: Part I: Preparing America's Soldiers for War," *Veritas*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 76-78. BG Frank A. Keating's career 'flat lined' after the storm induced 38th ID assault landing debacle in December 1943. In March 1943, BG Keating was assigned as the Senior Officer in Force Headquarters Section (Army) of the Amphibious Command, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, at Norfolk, VA. On 2 July 1945 he was promoted to Major General (MG) as Military Governor of Germany. MG Keating was Chief, U.S. Military Assistance & Advisory Group (MAAG), Republic of Korea when North Korea invaded on 25 June 1950. He was retired 31 August 1950. "Frank A. Keating, Major General, United States Army" at <http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/fakeating.htm> accessed 10/13/2015.
- Briscoe, "Commando & Ranger Training: Part I: Preparing America's Soldiers for War," 76-78.
- Briscoe, "Commando & Ranger Training: Part I: Preparing America's Soldiers for War," 76-78; The Army Ground Forces (AGF). CPT Marshall O. Becker, *AGF Study No. 22: The Amphibious Training Center* (Washington, DC: AGF, 1946). The U.S. Assault Training Center in England was no better resourced than the ATC in the States. Its first commander, LTC William B. Kunzig, former director of the Commando Task Force training at Camp Edwards, MA, resorted to the same field expedient training aids—from engineer-taped outlines of assault boats to rope net towers to practice troop ship disembarking into landing craft.
- COL R. Allen Griffin, oral history interview by James R. Fuchs, 15 February 1974, Pebble Beach, CA, 8-9, Harry S. Truman Library & Museum at <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/griffinr.htm> (accessed 10/15/2015); R. Manning Ancell and Christine M. Miller, *The Biographical Dictionary of World War II Generals and Flag Officers* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press, 1996), 184.
- Army Ground Forces. MAJ Bell I. Wiley and CPT William P. Govan, *History of the Second Army: Study No. 16* (Washington, DC: Army Ground Forces Historical Section, 1946); AGF. CPT Marshall O. Baker, *The Amphibious Training Center: Study No. 22* (Washington, DC: Army Ground Forces Historical Section, 1946).
- Kenneth Finlayson, "Rebirth of the Rangers: The Ranger Infantry Companies in Korea," *Veritas*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 5.
- Briscoe, "Commando & Ranger Training," 73.
- Second U.S. Army. Second Army Ranger School, Camp Forrest, TN. Certificate of Proficiency designating Corporal Ralph L. Stacey, 30th Infantry Division, a Second Army Ranger dated 23 January 1943, courtesy Camp Blanding Military Museum, Starke, FL; David W. Hogan, Jr., *Raiders or Elite Infantry: The Changing Role of the U.S. Army Rangers from Dieppe to Grenada* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), 23.
- Department of the Army. United States Army in World War II. The Army Ground Forces. Robert R. Palmer, Bell I. Wiley, and William R. Keast, *Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1948), 19.
- Tennessee, Department of Environment and Conservation, Division of Archaeology, Report of Investigations No. 13 (2007): Benjamin C. Nance, "An Archeological Survey of World War II Military Sites in Tennessee," 17.
- Letter. William J. Donovan to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, 1941, National Archives (NARA), RG 226. E92. B1. F37.
- Wiley and Govan, *History of the Second Army*, 140.
- Wiley and Govan, *History of the Second Army*, 140; Hogan, *Raiders or Elite Infantry*, 21.
- LTG Ben Lear letter, 14 December 1942, Subject: Second Army Ranger School, AG 352-1 cited in Wiley and Govan, *History of the Second Army*, 140.
- LTG Ben Lear letter, 14 December 1942, Subject: Second Army Ranger School, AG 352-1 cited in Wiley and Govan, *History of the Second Army*, 140, 142.
- LTC William C. Saffarans, a distinguished athlete, rifleman (Georgetown University 1923 National Intercollegiate Champion of Rifle Clubs, NRA), and rifle team coach, was selected by LTG Lear to be the Commandant, Second U.S. Army Ranger School. Wiley and Govan, *History of the Second Army*, 140; "Amusement in the Archives: A Sampling of Student Diversions and Extracurricular Activities at Georgetown" at <http://www.library.georgetown.edu/exhibition/amusement-archives-sampling> (accessed 10/30/2015).
- Second U.S. Army, Second Army Ranger School, Camp Forrest, TN. Certificate of Proficiency designating Corporal Ralph L. Stacey, 30th Infantry Division, a Second Army Ranger dated 23 January 1943, courtesy Camp Blanding Military Museum, Starke, FL; Hogan, *Raiders or Elite Infantry*, 23.
- Wiley and Govan, *History of the Second Army*, 142.
- Hogan, *Raiders or Elite Infantry*, 21.
- Wiley and Govan, *History of the Second Army*, 142.
- Second U.S. Army Ranger certificate awarded to CPL Ralph E. Stacey, 23 January 1943, courtesy of Curator, Camp Blanding Museum and Memorial Park, Starke, FL; Ralph E. Stacey, Jr. and Laura Thurfield (son and granddaughter of CPL Stacey), interviews by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 27 and 30 January 2014 respectively, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- Wiley and Govan, *History of the Second Army*, 142.
- Second Army insisted that division Ranger Schools be part-time in accordance with LTG McNair's directive. They were not to interfere with regular division training. Wiley and Govan, *History of the Second Army*, 142; 134th Infantry Regiment "All Hell Can't Stop Us": Combat History of World War II, Chapter 2:9 at http://www.coulthart.com/134/chapter_2.htm accessed 9/28/2015; "The Story of the Century," 19, 20 at http://www.lonesentry.com/gi_stories_booklets/100thininfantry (accessed 11/9/2015).
- "Infantry Divisions, 66th Infantry Division, Wartime Press," at <http://www.wartimepress.com/archives.asp?TID=037%2066th%20Infantry%20Division> (accessed 11/18/2013); "66th Infantry Division" at <http://www.history.army.mil/documents/ETO-OB/66ID-ETO.htm> (accessed 11/18/2013); *40,000 Black Panthers of the 66th Division* (Marseille, FR, 1945), v; "66th Infantry Division, World War II Divisional Combat Chronicles" at <http://www.history.army.mil/html/forestruc/cbtchron/066id.htm> accessed 11/18/2013; The numbers of soldiers lost in the sinking of the S.S. *Leopoldville* on 24 December 1944 vary from 792 to 804. "My Wartime Service in Europe: A Biographical Letter" [I/5 (Technician Fifth Class) Richard C. Jewell, 66th Reconnaissance Troop (Mechanized), 66th Infantry Division] at <http://www.edjewell.net/letter.htm> (accessed 12/6/2013); "Panthermen Claw Stubborn Enemy," from ETO WWII G.I. Stories Booklet (1945) at http://www.lonesentry.com/gi_stories_booklets/66thininfantry (accessed 12/6/2013).
- The 1st Infantry Division (ID) 'Big Red One,' 29th ID 'Blue and Grey,' 30th ID 'Old Hickory,' 31st ID 'Dixie,' 36th ID 'Texas,' 43rd ID 'Winged Victory,' 66th ID 'Panther,' and the 79th ID 'Cross of Lorraine' formed and trained at Camp Blanding from 1943 into 1945. Camp Blanding became Florida's fourth largest city during World War II. "Camp Blanding Museum & Memorial Park, Starke, Florida" at <http://www.museumusa.org/museums/info/123> (accessed 1/2/2014); "Florida During World War II" at http://fcit.usf.edu/florida/lessops/ww_ii/ww_ii1.htm (accessed 1/2/2014); Shelby L. Stanton, *World War II Order of Battle* (NY: Galahad Books, 1984), 598.
- "Infantry Divisions, 66th Infantry Division, Wartime Press," at <http://www.wartimepress.com/archives.asp?TID=037%2066th%20Infantry%20Division> accessed 11/18/2013; "66th Infantry Division" at <http://www.history.army.mil/documents/ETO-OB/66ID-ETO.htm> accessed 11/18/2013; *40,000 Black Panthers of the 66th Division* (Marseille, FR, 1945), v; "66th Infantry Division, World War II Divisional Combat Chronicles" at <http://www.history.army.mil/html/forestruc/cbtchron/066id.htm> accessed 11/18/2013; Panthermen Claw Stubborn Enemy," from ETO WWII G.I. Stories Booklet (1945) at http://www.lonesentry.com/gi_stories_booklets/66thininfantry (accessed 12/6/2013).
- Paul E. Spears, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 20 June 2012, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited as Spears interview with date; Spears, undated "Certificate of Proficiency for PVT Paul E. Spears, Sixty-Sixth Infantry Division Ranger," hereafter cited as Spears "Certificate."
- Spears interview, 20 June 2012; Spears "Certificate."
- Spears interview, 20 June 2012; Spears "Certificate." The Sergeant E-5 rank insignia during WWII consisted on three chevrons above one rocker, today's insignia for a Staff Sergeant, E-6.
- Spears interview, 20 June 2012; Spears "Certificate"; *40,000 Black Panthers of the 66th Division*, 199, 204.
- Spears interview, 20 June 2012; Spears "Certificate"; *40,000 Black Panthers of the 66th Division*, 199, 204.
- "Infantry Divisions, 66th Infantry Division, Wartime Press," at <http://www.wartimepress.com/archives.asp?TID=037%2066th%20Infantry%20Division> (accessed 11/18/2013); "66th Infantry Division" at <http://www.history.army.mil/documents/ETO-OB/66ID-ETO.htm> (accessed 11/18/2013); *40,000 Black Panthers of the 66th Division* (Marseille, FR, 1945), v; "66th Infantry Division, World War II Divisional Combat Chronicles" at <http://www.history.army.mil/html/forestruc/cbtchron/066id.htm> (accessed 11/18/2013); "Panthermen Claw Stubborn Enemy," from ETO WWII G.I. Stories Booklet (1945) at http://www.lonesentry.com/gi_stories_booklets/66thininfantry (accessed 12/6/2013).
- Spears interview, 20 June 2012; Spears "Certificate."
- Thomas M. Hatfield, *Rudder: From Leader to Legend* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2011), 73. MAJ James E. Rudder replaced LTC William C. Saffarans, the former commandant of the Second Army Ranger Course at Camp Forrest. The tyrannical Saffarans was relieved as commander of the 2nd Ranger Battalion for heavy drinking and for writing bad checks. He was summarily reassigned to the Hawaiian Department. Robert W. Black glossed over this when he described Saffarans as a "good officer, but the needs of the service quickly sent him off to run a jungle school in Hawaii." Robert W. Black, *The Battalion: The Dramatic Story of the 2nd Ranger Battalion in World War II* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2006), 6. Rudder's Rangers scaled the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc, France, on D-Day, 6 June 1944, to capture its 155mm coastal artillery battery, 'spearheading' the Allied invasion of Europe.
- Office of the Chief Signal Officer, "Ranger Combat Training School, Fort Shafter, Territory of Hawaiian," 1942, Series "Moving Images Relating to Military Activities, 1947-1964" Record Group 111: "Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, 1860-1985, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD; Hawaiian Department Ranger Combat Training Course certificate (T5 Roger L. Reid, Service Company, 34th Infantry, 19 June 1943) and 2nd Infantry Division Ranger Battle Training Course certificate, 12 April-5 June 1943, Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; "2nd Infantry Rangers" *The Indianhead* (11 January 2008) at <http://theindianhead.blogspot.com/2008/01/2nd-infantry-rangers.html> (accessed 11/6/2015); George H. Hall, "War Tactics Demonstrated at Activation of Missouri's First Infantry Division," *Post Dispatch* (Fort Leonard Wood, MO), 16 April 1943 at <http://hldnoqr.tripod.com/newsparart.html> (accessed 9/12/2012). A 1 November 1942 AGF training directive, based almost exclusively on lessons learned in battle, was issued. It provided for approximately two months training after maneuvers in mine removal, scouting, patrolling, night fighting, infiltration, physical hardening, small-unit leadership, and progressive field exercises from the squad to the division. Palmer, Wiley, and Keast, *Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops*, 448.
- Chapter 3: Special Operations in the European Theater, 38-39 at <http://www.history.army.mil/books/wwii/70-42/70-423.htm> (accessed 11/6/2015).
- Chapter 3: Special Operations in the European Theater, note 4 at <http://www.history.army.mil/books/wwii/70-42/70-423.htm> (accessed 11/6/2015).

- 43 "The Story of the Century," 22 at http://www.lonesentry.com/gi_stories_booklets/100thinfantry (accessed 11/9/2015).
- 44 Andrew L. Hargreaves, *Special Operations in World War II: British and American Irregular Warfare* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013), 48.
- 45 Retired COL William T. Palmer, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 24 March 2014 and Palmer, official DA Form 66, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date and Palmer, DA Form 66. **1LT Palmer, B Company, 1st Airborne Battle Group, 327th Infantry, was special duty (SD) as the Operations Officer of the 101st Airborne Division Recondo School in 1959. The 101st Recondo School had been established by WWII veteran and Korean War Medal of Honor recipient, MAJ Lewis L. Millett in 1958. "Military History: Interview with Colonel Lewis L. Millett" at <http://www.historynet.com/military-history-interview-with-lewis-l-millett.htm> (accessed 9/10/2014); 'Recondo' was derived from combining reconnaissance (rece) and commando. CPT Lewis L. Millett was on the cadre of the Ranger Training Command with MAJ Singlaub before going to Korea. Retired MG John K. Singlaub (MG Westmoreland's G-3, 101st Abn Div), interview by Briscoe, 30 December 2015, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.**
- 46 Spears interview, 20 June 2012; Spears "Certificate."
- 47 Shelby L. Stanton, *World War II Order of Battle* (NY: Galahad Books, 1984), 30-31.
- 48 Former Technician Fourth Grade (T/4) Richard D. Sylver, Service Battery, 721st FA Battalion (155), 66th ID, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 11 December 2013, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. **T/4 Richard Sylver was sent from Camp Blanding, FL, to Fort Sill, OK, the Army Artillery School, to be trained as a mechanic on the M4 High-Speed Tractor being produced by Allis Chalmers. The recovery vehicle for the M4 was the ten-ton M108 wrecker built by the Reo Motor Car Company, Lansing, MI.**
- 49 Charles B. MacDonald, *The Last Offensive*, United States Army in World War II: The European Theater of Operations (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Office of the Chief of Military History, 1973), 323, 477; Shelby L. Stanton, *World War II Order of Battle* (NY: Galahad Books, 1984), 413, 418, 421; "155 mm Long Tom" at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/155_mm_Long_Tom (accessed 1/2/2014); http://olive-drab.com/idphoto/idphotos_m2longtom.php (accessed 1/2/2014); "M4 Tractor" at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M4_Tractor (accessed 1/2/2014).
- 50 Spears interview, 20 June 2012; Spears "Certificate."
- 51 Spears interview, 20 June 2012; "Paul E. Spears: Obituary" at <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/eveningsun/obituary.aspx?pid=159153459> (accessed 12/27/2013).



PFC F. F. Santucci demonstrating how to use the bayonet on blitz assault course constructed for Ranger training at Camp Forrest, TN, 12 January 1943.