



**506 P.I.R.
Currahee We Stand Alone
History of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment
1942-1945
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HISTORY OF THE 506TH PIR REGIMENT 1942-45

The 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment was constituted 1 July, 1942 in the Army of the United States as the 506th Parachute Infantry, activated 20 July, 1942 at Camp Toccoa, Georgia, attached to the 101st Airborne Division 1 June, 1943 and assigned to the 101st Airborne Division I March, 1945.

Coat of Arms'

The blue of the shield is for Infantry. The thunderbolt indicates the regiment's particular threat and technique of attack from the sky. The six parachutes indicate that the 506th was the sixth parachute regiment activated in the United States Army. The green silhouette represents Currahee Mountain, site of the unit's activation at Camp Toombs (later Camp Toccoa) Georgia. Currahee Mountain symbolizes the organizations strength, independence and ability to stand alone, for which paratroopers are renowned. Significantly, Currahee is a Cherokee Indian word equivalent to "Stand Alone".

Currahee Mountain further represents the foundation of the 506th's training. It was on this tough, rugged little mountain that the men of the 506th were sufficiently hardened to enable them to break the world march record held by the Japanese Army. The 506 gained nationwide attention for this feat. Currahee was also the cry of the 506th paratroopers as they exited the door during their first jump and continued to be the cry whenever they jumped into combat.

The 506th traced its ancestry back to July, 1942, when it was at Camp Toombs (Toccoa), under the command of Colonel Robert F. Sink. Col. Sink trained his men in the northeast Georgia hills putting them through the roughest physical training programs in the Army. Here men trained a 12 hour day doing push-ups, pull-ups, squat jumps and various other exercises designed to strengthen arms and legs and increase overall endurance. The men ran the mountain several times a week and then made long force marches at night. Also, the men were to go through the roughest obstacle course in the U.S. Army. In addition to rough physical training, they completed A&B stage training for jump school. They became potential paratroopers undergoing various ground training, including a jump from a 34 foot tower, connected to a steel cable to lower them to the ground.

In November, the Regiment was ordered to Fort Benning, Georgia, for parachute training in C&D stage. The 1st Bn moved by train from Toccoa to Ft. Benning. The 2nd Bn force marched, with full field equipment and weapons from Toccoa to Atlanta, a distance of about 120 miles. The 3rd Bn traveled from Toccoa to Atlanta by rail and then force marched from Atlanta to Ft. Benning, with full field equipment and weapons, 136 miles in 72 hours, in the cold, wet December weather, setting the world's record for an endurance march.

Upon arrival at Ft. Benning, the 506th started their parachute training. They learned to pack their own chutes and prepare their equipment to be dropped in an airborne operation. They also made drops from the 250 foot free-fall towers. After completion of the training, they made their 5 qualifying jumps from an airplane in flight and received the most coveted prize, the Parachutist's Badge. Of those who had begun the jump

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training, 98% finished with their silver jump wings. After training at Ft. Benning, the Regiment moved to Camp MacCall, N.C., where extensive tactical training was conducted, including many nightjumps. All jumps were made with full combat equipment.

On 1 June, 1943, the 506th PIR was attached to the 101st Airborne Division. The 506th regarded this as the Division's "greatest day". Although some may dispute that claim, no one would deny that the words "colorful, unusual, rugged" could be applied to the 506th. It was the Currahees who took their review on the double, wearing their blue trunks and jump boots!

In early June, the 506th moved west to participate in the Tennessee maneuvers. Here they parachuted behind lines to establish roadblocks, blow bridges and snarl communications. After participating in these maneuvers, the 506th moved to Ft. Bragg, N.C. as a trained fighting unit, where they were processed for overseas. During the latter part of August, they moved to Camp Shanks, N.J., where they boarded a ship, the S.S. Samaria.

After an Atlantic crossing, the 506th arrived at Liverpool, England on 17 September, 1943. In England they were stationed in Wiltshire County in the villages of Aldbourne, Ramsbury, Foxfield and Chilton-Foliat. And here they took part in such Jump exercises as Operations Wadharn and Rankin. 5 June, 1944, the men of the 506th were waiting by the parked aircraft that were to take them into their first combat mission in Normandy, France. Shortly, at 0100 hours 6 June, 1944, the men of the 506th hit the silk in the skies over Normandy, behind Utah Beach. The men were scattered on the jump but assembled in small groups first and then larger ones and took all of their objectives, allowing the seaborne troops to land on the beaches and move inland and secure the beaches to allow more troops to land.

From D-Day until 10 July, when the unit was returned to England, the 506th fought the battles of Normandy. Many of the men who jumped did not return and many more were wounded or captured, but the 506th proved it was better than the best the enemy could throw at it.

After less than three months after their return to England, the 506th was to make their second combat jump. This time the unit was to land in Holland on Drop Zone C, seize the Wilhemina Canal bridges at Zen, move south and liberate the city of Eindhoven and its four highway bridges over the Dommel River.

From D-Day in Holland until November, 1944, the 506th became familiar with the name Ste. Odenrude, Uden, Veghel, Keovining, Nijmegen, Ophensen and Randwight as they went from town to town and repelled every counter-attack the enemy launched.

The end of November found the unit at a former French artillery garrison just outside of the village of Moumelon. Here they were to rest, reorganize and receive replacements. The lucky ones got to go to Paris. And then came Bastogne and it was back to combat.

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On the 18th of December, the men left for Bastogne and on 19 December started the stubborn defense that was to amaze the world and prove to it that the German Army could not dislodge the paratroopers, although the Currahees were surrounded. For 28 days the fighting continued, through Christmas of 1944 and New Years of 1945. They fought with what they had and prayed that the weather would clear so that the aerial drops of supplies could get to them. And the weather did clear, the supplies were dropped and the first tanks of the 4th Armored Division arrived. But during the darkest part of the siege, the famous response to the demand by the Germans for surrender, "Nuts", was given.

Relieved on the 20th of January, 1945, the 506th moved to the Alsace Province of France. This was the men's most comfortable month of warfare, with an opportunity to get their clothing and sleeping bags laundered, as well as to shower. They then returned to Mourmelon, France, where General Eisenhower spoke to them. The 101st Airborne was awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation for its stand in Bastogne. This was the first time in the history of the U.S. Army that an entire Division had been so honored.

On April 2, 1945, the 506th moved to the "Ruhr Pocket" where they went on line, facing the Rhine River south of Dusseldorf, Germany. Patrolling across the Rhine was a common occurrence and the handling of displaced persons was a constant problem. On 14 April, the 506th received orders to move to the southern part of Germany.

On 4th and 5th of May, 1945, the 506th received and carried out its last wartime mission, to capture Bertschgarten. This was done and accounted for the last 3 casualties of the war, for the 506th and the 101st.

On 8 May, 1945, Col. Sink accepted the surrender of the German LXXXII and the 506th established its command post in Zell Am See, where it would receive the following World War II Campaign Streamers

Normandy (w/arrowhead)
Rhineland (w/arrowhead)
Ardennes-Alsace
Central Europe

Decorations:

Presidential Unit Citation (Army)
Distinguished Unit Citation, embroidered Bastogne
Distinguished Unit Citation, embroidered Normandy
Cited in the Order of the Day, Belgian Army, twice
Streamer French Croix de Guerre w/Palm, WWII Normandy
Netherlands Orange Lanyard

Compliments of
Stephens Federal Bank
welcoming the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment "Currahees" back to Toccoa

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A PARATROOPERS CREED

I volunteered as a paratrooper, fully realizing the hazards *of my* chosen service, and by my actions will always uphold the prestige, honor and high "Esprit de Corps" of the only volunteer branch of the Army.

I realize that a parachutist is not merely a soldier who arrives by parachute to fight but is an elite shock-trooper and that his country expects him to march farther and faster than any other soldier.

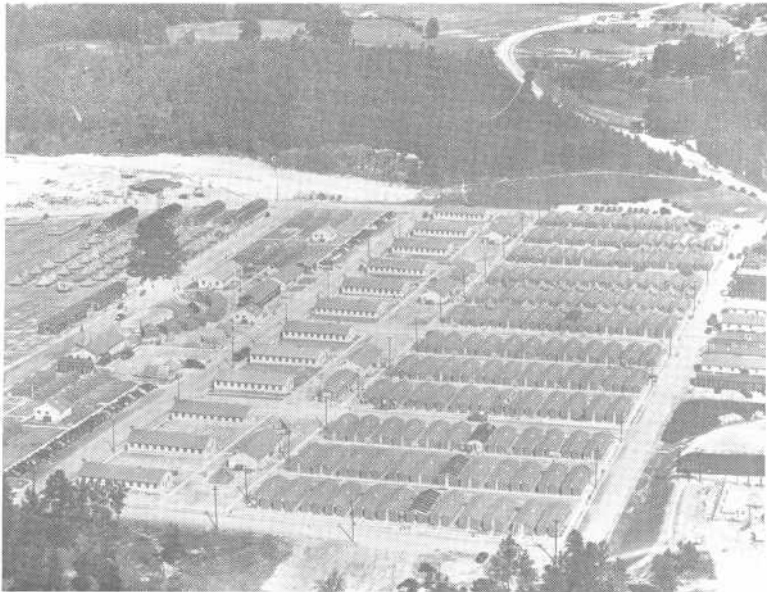
I shall never fail my comrades, shirking my duty or training, but will always keep myself mentally and physically fit and will shoulder my full share of the task, no matter what ever it may be.

I shall show other soldiers by my military courtesy to superior officers and non-commissioned officers, by neatness of dress, by my care of my own weapon and equipment that I am a well trained soldier.

I shall endeavor always by my soldierly appearance, military bearing and behavior, to reflect the high standards of training and morale of parachute troops.

I shall respect the abilities of my enemies. I will fight fairly and with all my might. Surrender is not in my creed.

I shall display a higher degree of initiative than is required of other troops and will fight on to my objectives and complete the mission, though I be the lone survivor.



CAMP MOCCO, GEORGIA, 1942-45