

GEAR

U.S. AIRBORNE OF WORLD WAR II

AIR

U.S. AIRBORNE DIVISIONS



M1 RIFLE

The M1 was the primary weapon for most U.S. soldiers in WWII. Paratroopers often carried the disassembled rifle in a Griswold bag during a jump.



EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

Paratroopers had lots of packs and pockets to hold survival items. Some items included a rope to use if they landed high in a tree, water purification tablets, and snacks.

ESCAPE & EVASION KIT

Escape and evasion kits contained a small compass, a tiny hacksaw, a Rayon fabric map, and sometimes money. Maps were made of Rayon, not paper, so they wouldn't crinkled-up or disintegrate when wet.



COMPASSES

Paratroopers carried more than one compass. A larger model was worn on one's wrist, and smaller compasses could be hidden anywhere.

CRICKET NOISE MAKER

The cricket noise maker was a child's toy, but paratroopers were issued brass versions to use the "clicking noise" to identify each other at night. You knew they were an ally if you clicked your cricket and the passer-by clicked back.



101st Airborne Division "Screaming Eagles"

Active: Nov 1918 – Present

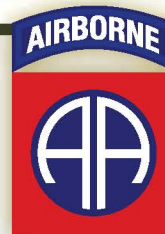
Aug 1943 • England • Training Missions
Jun 1944 • France • D-Day: Operation Neptune
Sep 1944 • Holland • Operation Market Garden
Dec 1944 • Belgium • Battle of the Bulge
Apr 1945 • Bavaria • Liberation of Kaufering IV



82nd Airborne Division "All American"

Active: Aug 1917 – Present

Jul 1943 • Sicily • Operation Husky
Sep 1943 • Italy • Salerno: The Oil Drum Drop
Jan 1944 • Italy • Anzio: Operation Shingle
Jun 1944 • France • D-Day: Operation Neptune
Sep 1944 • Holland • Operation Market Garden
Dec 1944 • Belgium • Battle of the Bulge
May 1945 • Germany • Overran Wöbbelin



13th Airborne Division "Golden Unicorns"

Active: Aug 1943 – Aug 1945

Feb 1945 • France • Strategic Reserve



17th Airborne Division "Golden Talons"

Active: Apr 1943 – Jul 1949

Jan 1945 • Belgium • Battle of the Bulge
Mar 1945 • Germany • Operation Varsity



11th Airborne Division "Angels"

Active: Feb 1943 – Present

May 1944 • New Guinea • Training
Nov 1944 • Philippines • Battle of Leyte
Jan 1945 • Philippines • Luzon: Nasgubu Beach
Feb 1945 • Philippines • Raid at Los Baños
Aug 1945 • Japan • Operation Olympic (canceled)
May 1945 • Japan • Occupation Force



27,577
CASUALTIES

721
MISSING IN ACTION

5,798
KILLED IN ACTION



IN THE U.S. ARMY
SOLDIERS HAD TO
VOLUNTEER TO GO
TO AIRBORNE
TRAINING.



PARATROOPERS
CARRIED AN
AVERAGE OF 80 LBS.
OF GEAR DURING A
JUMP.

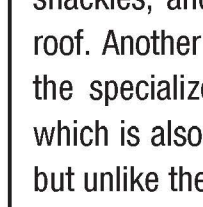
ONLY THE U.S.
AIRBORNE USED
RESERVE PARACHUTES
DURING WWII COMBAT
OPERATIONS.



FAKE DOLLS THAT
LOOKED LIKE
PARATROOPERS WERE
DROPPED TO TRICK
THE ENEMY.



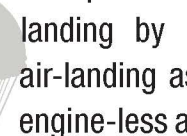
The most common paratroop transport aircraft was the **C-47 SKYTRAIN**, a modified civilian Douglas DC-3 fitted with a cargo door, hoist attachment, strengthened floor, a shortened tail cone for glider-towing



shackles, and an astrodome in the cabin roof. Another paratroop transport was the specialized **C-53 SKYTROOPER**, which is also a variation of the DC-3, but unlike the C-47, it lacks the cargo door, hoist attachment, and reinforced



floor. The **C-46 COMMANDO**, derived from the civilian Curtiss CW-20, was also used to drop paratroopers. Although C-46s is an older aircraft model than C-47s, the paratroop variant, the C-46D, didn't arrive until 1944. Paratroopers were sometimes



transported by **WACO CG-4** gliders. Troops landing by gliders were referred to as air-landing as opposed to paratroops. The engine-less aircraft were towed by transport airplanes. The benefit of using gliders was that



they could land troops and supplies together versus spread over a large area. In the Pacific, where landing large transports was problematic, **PIPER J-3 CUBS** and other liaison aircraft were sometimes used to drop platoons into remote areas.

SOURCES: <https://coffeordie.com/paratroopers-parachute>, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-101st-airborne-division>, <https://www.atthefront.com>, <https://www.ww2-airborne.us>, <https://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/Visit/Museum-Exhibits/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/196689/d-day-paratrooper-uniform>, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/dday-paratroopers>, <https://www.wired.com/2012/06/d-day-paratrooper-gear-gadgets>, and Army Battle Casualties and Nonbattle Deaths, Final Report (Statistical and Accounting Branch, Office of the Adjutant General, 1 June 1953)