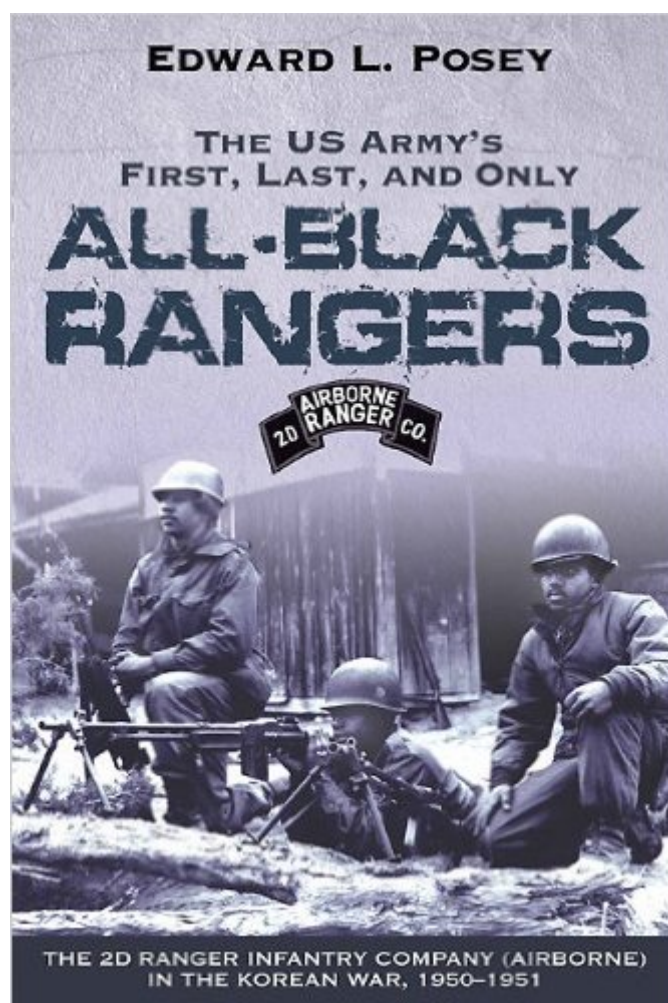


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# The US Army's First, Last, And Only All-Black Rangers: The 2d Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) In The Korean War, 1950-1951



## Synopsis

The 2d Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) was the first and only all-black Ranger unit in the history of the United States Army. Its ten-month lifespan included selection, training, and seven months of combat deployment in Korea, after which the unit was deactivated. Edward Posey's magnificent new study, now available in paperback, is the first complete history of this elite, all-volunteer unit, whose members were drawn from the 3rd Battalion of the 505th Airborne Infantry Regiment and the 80th Airborne Anti-Aircraft Battalion. After experiencing the normal travails of boot camp at Fort Benning, which segregation and racism only made worse, the all-black Rangers set out to join the Korean War in late 1950. On January 7, 1951, the Rangers found themselves defending a critical railroad running through Tanyang Pass, which Communist guerillas tried to infiltrate. The nighttime action triggered the Rangers' inaugural combat, which ended with the recommendation for a Bronze Star for gallantry for a Ranger sergeant. Additional combats with the North Korean and Communist Chinese forces erupted near Majori-ri and Chechon. But the event that propelled the 2d Rangers into the record books was their airborne assault near Munsan-Ni on March 23, 1951—the first in Ranger history. Once on the ground, Posey and his comrades attacked and captured Hill 151. The fighting—often conducted at very close quarters, and some of it with the bayonet and rifle butt—demonstrated the courage of these tough African American soldiers. Heavy fighting marked their months at the front, including a magnificent attack and defense of Hill 581 that May. Throughout their deployment in Korea, the 2d Rangers served with honor and achieved an outstanding combat record. Posey's long overdue *The US Army's First, Last, and Only All-Black Rangers: The 2d Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) in the Korean War, 1950-1951* (written with the help of other Rangers) is based upon the firsthand experiences of many members of the unit, official records, interviews with survivors, and other archival material. Stitched together, this information offers a rich and worthy addition to the growing literature on the Korean War by explaining the obstacles these patriotic African Americans faced, their sacrifices, and their courageous actions on the far side of the world. Nearly sixty years have passed since the Korean War slipped into the realm of history. Now, the world will finally learn the true story of the United States Army's first, last, and only all-black Ranger unit.

About the Author: Master Sergeant (Ret) Edward L. Posey joined the US Army in 1947. After serving with Company L, 3rd Battalion, 505th Airborne Infantry Regiment, he volunteered for airborne training with the Rangers in 1950 and served with distinction in the Korean War (where he was wounded). Sergeant Posey retired from the service in 1969. In 2002, he was inducted into the Ranger Hall of Fame for his dedication to duty and distinguished military career.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

My father, who died in 2007, was discussed in the book. His name is James E. Freeman, Sr. (referred to as Freeman in the book). He was part of the first and only black paratrooper-rangers unit to go to Korea. I'm extremely proud of his sacrifice and his comrades sacrifices to our country. The book is well written. In the early 1990s, my husband and I took my parents to Fort Benning, GA to visit and on one of the plaques, there was detail of a particular battle in which he and his troops fought. That was the first time I saw tears in my father's eyes. He said one of his men died in his arms. The book is excellent for anyone who loves history.

Edward L. Posey's (US Army Master Sergeant, Ret.) non-fiction book, *The US Army's First, Last, and Only All-Black Rangers*, published by Savas Beatie, LLC, is far more than a detailed record of events, highlighting the pride, patriotism, and military prowess of a capable military unit of all-black soldiers in the Korean War (1950-1951). The book's even-handed discourse provides an orderly and factual account of the undeniable dedication, extraordinary military skill, and superb esprit de corps of these men, who served as a catalyst for the military establishment's understanding of its obligation to integrate all-black units into the larger force. Although the author carefully maintained focus upon military operational issues and the soldiers' exposure to battlefield injury, pain, and loss, there was a larger social struggle underlying the Korean War experience for these undaunted warriors. Despite the lack of availability of critical support and forward observers, inconsistent provision of replacements, and less than full confidence of senior leadership at Corps, Theater, and

higher levels, the personal and collective bravery of these dedicated soldiers could not be diminished. These volunteer combatants were cognizant of the Truman Executive Order 9981 (equal treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed service). However, they did not make an issue of the compromises made and the lack of response to their requests for needed combat reinforcements and artillery support normally provided. Senior leadership proved insensitive to the need for recognition through awards and collective encouragement of these highly dedicated, stellar, and combat-weary American soldiers. It is instructive that these mission-focused combatants soldiered through numerous traumatic and stressful adversities imposed both by society and by the battlefield. Though the larger society was lagging behind in implementing desegregation laws and President Truman's Executive Order requiring racial desegregation, the United States military had reluctantly begun to formulate desegregation plans during World War II. It was becoming more obvious that every resource is critical when the nation is in peril, and plans were formulated to dismantle and deter racial segregation in military units. The soldiers of the 2d Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) had a larger task and function than mission accomplishment in the Korean War (1950-1951). After the Korean War, social change gradually began occurring in society in general (from the mid-1950s), partially spurred by the selfless sacrifices of courageous military men such as these, who stepped up and proved their devotion to their country. The book describes the strenuous efforts of these dedicated soldiers, which went a long way toward furthering the removal of barriers to using black citizens in increasingly racially balanced and mission-critical roles in the military and in the larger society. The credibility of the documented facts and poignant interviews are a valuable supplement to the official record. These perspectives capture the thoughts of a number of important participants, some no longer alive, at a time relatively close to the events under consideration. American society owes these brave men great respect for not only doggedly enduring the rigors and horrors of combat, but for the extraordinary dedication, dispatch, honor, and distinction with which they served the United States of America. These rugged soldiers represented the finest model of patriotism and pioneering, overcoming psychological burdens such as the presupposition of failure of a skeptical nation, long prone to stereotyping and branding along racial lines. (Note: This review was written by COL (Ret) Dorothy Spencer for NAAV, National Association of American Veterans, and posted on by the book's publisher Savas Beatie LLC at Col. Spencer's request.)

This unique work describes the experience of a small number of Black American paratroopers who volunteered to undergo additional hardship and fight as some of America's first "Airborne Rangers." The 2nd Ranger Company (approximately 112 officers and men) was one of six Ranger

Companies that ranged across the battlefield performing raids and ambushes, often operating behind enemy lines. The 2nd Ranger Company experience in battle was not unlike those of the other companies. It was what they had to endure just to fight for their country that was different. They served at a time when segregation existed in the United States Army, a time when because of the color of their skin, their intelligence and their courage was questioned. With courage and sacrifice they faced the horror of war and prevailed. With quiet dignity they fought the additional battle earning the admiration and praise of their white comrades. They built a bridge of mutual respect that men crossed to see each other as friends, as Rangers...as Americans. The men of the 2nd Airborne Ranger Company were a once-in-history American experience. They were pathfinders in the development of the modern Army of the United States. We will never again have an "All Black" Ranger unit. They are an inspiration to an army where men of all races and creeds function together in defense of our mutual freedoms. This is a highly recommended work of American pride. Robert and Carolyn Black

This book gives insight of Black soldiers, who participated in special operations in combat. Over the years, our participation in special operations have not been captured in any books or documentaries. I strongly recommend the book to those, who are interested in reading about our heroes of the Vietnam War.

This item is very informative and fills many voids in military history, The item exceeds my expectations, and my family is equally excited. This item is great, well written and is quite satisfactory.

This book needs to be shared with all history students, students of military history and anyone who has an interest in civil rights. This black unit of American patriots were shunned and sent to the front lines where whites didn't want to serve, but were victorious and not recognized for their bravery and love of country. Very interesting book worth the read.

My grandfather is Donald S Allen 1st Sgt, on the book cover photo he's the one in the middle. I can remember talking with Granddad about jumping out of planes, training exercises and military life. It was a tougher time back then and it built for tougher people too. Today they are burying him in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, DC. He was a proud man who was proud to serve his country and he has left behind a proud legacy. Rest in peace Granddad.

This book arrived in excellent condition. I am very pleased. It's for my Dad.

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