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## ARTICLE

## Why Did They Fight? American Airborne Units in World War II

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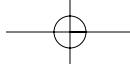
The human element,<sup>1</sup> as Carl von Clausewitz wrote, is critical to any theory of warfare, since the art of war 'deals with living and with moral forces'.<sup>2</sup> Many have tackled the question of why soldiers fight, and they have produced a variety of responses that offer insights into the motivations of combatants. Often, analysts rely on experience – either personal or historical – to flesh out their ideas and lend credence to their theories. While this approach has its drawbacks (Sir John Keegan is one noted critic of allowing cultural biases to influence theories of general warfare<sup>3</sup>) it nonetheless provides a useful means of analysing an event and distilling larger conclusions. With this inductive method in mind, this study addresses the role of ideology as a motivator of American paratroopers in Europe during World War II.

What provides the will to fight? For the United States Army during World War II, the literature in this field is vast, inspired by innovative research techniques (such as after-action interviews and troop surveys) and fuelled by interest in the European theater inspired by the 50th anniversary of D-Day. The US Army Research Branch, S. L. A. Marshall, Edward Shils and Morris Janowitz all gathered data on the combatants during World War II, and the outcome of their research has generally indicated that ideological notions exercised limited influence on the morale and behavior of the combat soldier in that conflict.

However, James McPherson's recent study of American Civil War combat soldiers reopened this debate for the nineteenth century soldier, leading us to question whether or not 'the cause' may play a bigger role in World War II than many once suspected.

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Yet the question of why men fight is much more than a simple dichotomy between ideological notions on one hand and primary group cohesion on the other. Several authors have already addressed this and advanced the analysis of combat motivation to a more sophisticated level by cataloging the variety of motivators that influence the frontline soldier. Drawing on previously published scholarly literature as well as some primary accounts, both Anthony Kellett and William Darryl Henderson have cataloged the variables that affected the behaviour of men on the battlefield. While both works are general in nature, their relevance to this study lies in their creation of a sophisticated analytical framework for examining combat motivation.

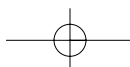
McPherson's study of the motivation of Civil War combatants used a similar technique: his analysis, based on the examination of the diaries and letters of 1,076 soldiers from both the North and South, grouped motivators into categories to make sense of the data and identify trends. This methodological approach (categorizing motivators) is one that I will adapt, albeit on a much smaller scale, for this study.

So, while a framework and descriptive analyses do exist, discussion of the field of American combat soldier motivation in World War II has so far not investigated individual airborne divisions through a combination of quantitative analysis (of surveys, taken both during the war and contributed years afterward by veterans) with a qualitative perspective that relies on primary sources. The role of ideology, discarded in the aftermath of the war, also has not received much attention as a variable affecting soldier motivation. It is in these areas that I hope to make some contribution.

The scope of my study is limited: I focus on the motivation of one small segment of the American World War II fighting force: the elite volunteer US Army paratroopers in the European Theater of Operations (ETO). An examination of airborne soldier motivation reveals a widespread belief in American war aims. A link between these beliefs and motivation in combat is more difficult to ascertain, but a study of the letters, diaries, oral histories, and memoirs of a sample of 42 airborne veterans suggests a positive correlation. Causation remains uncertain, however, and further study is needed to determine if the connection between cause and motivation was a bi-product of the volunteer status of airborne troops.

This article consists of five sections.

The first segment reviews the relevant literature concerning combat motivation during World War II, presenting the prevalent (primary group) opinion and then exploring alternative views.



The second section introduces the parameters of the case study, while the third portion discusses the concept of ideology and 'the cause' in America during World War II.

The penultimate section uses a select sample of primary accounts to explore the enlistment, combat and sustaining motivation of paratroopers in the ETO during World War II. The sources chosen reflect a representative sample of the demographics of two World War II American airborne divisions: the 82nd and the 101st,<sup>4</sup> both formed in August 1942.

The conclusion discusses the importance of ideology as a motivator of US airborne troops during World War II.

### **Soldier Motivation: The Prevalent Hypothesis**

Currently, the generally accepted theory is that ideological motivation – fighting for a cause – does not play a role in modern warfare. Prevalent scholarly opinion offers the primary group as the chief source of motivation for ground combat troops, and this focus has dominated the field of combat motivation since 1945. Proponents of this view argue that a cohesive social unit that forms among combat troops (the daily face-to-face interaction of men known as 'primary group') provides the key impetus for men in battle, and include such noted historians as the members of the US Army Research Branch, S. L. A. Marshall, Edward A. Shils, Morris Janowitz, and Stephen Ambrose.

The primary group first gained credence as an explanation for American soldier motivation in the immediate postwar years. The publication of *The American Soldier in World War II*<sup>5</sup> as well as works by Army historian S. L. A. Marshall<sup>6</sup> appeared to provide definitive proof that soldiers relied on the primary group to sustain them through the trials of combat.

Furthermore, studies of the Wehrmacht produced similar findings regarding the sources of combat motivation: Edward Shils and Morris Janowitz argued that German combat effectiveness was due largely to the ability of primary groups to avoid disintegration and maintain cohesion, a theory that they offered to counter the assertion that attributed the Wehrmacht's tenacity to the strong political beliefs of its soldiers.<sup>7</sup> Their methodology, however, was somewhat suspect: they gathered their information from interviews with German POWs on the Western Front during the last half of the war,<sup>8</sup> which left the veracity and applicability of their findings open to challenges from later researchers.

The impact of these postwar authors on the field of combat motivation was profound, as attested by many recent studies that acknowledge the

pivotal role played by primary group dynamics. The corollary of the ascendancy of the primary group as an explanatory variable of combat motivation is the corresponding decrease in the importance of ideological factors. British historian John Ellis concluded that men fought primarily for their buddies, and consequently, ideology and patriotism just did not matter to soldiers in battle during 1939–45. Ellis does note that ‘it would be going too far to claim the neither patriotism nor politics had any importance to front-line soldiers’,<sup>9</sup> but his assessment is that the troops on the front line had no place for such generalities. A combat soldier’s mind was entirely occupied with problems of eating, drinking, staying awake, and staying alive.<sup>10</sup>

The works of both Michael Doubler (*Closing with the Enemy*) and John McManus (*The Deadly Brotherhood*) also affirm the veracity of the importance of the collective, but even beyond that, the shift of priorities to those that a soldier deemed utterly necessary to survival. Their findings correlate with the well-known sociological theory advanced by Abraham Maslow; man attempts to fulfil basic physiological needs first before moving up the hierarchy and addressing more abstract emotional requirements.<sup>11</sup> Often, analysts overlook the importance of survival when examining soldier motivation.

In his many books and articles on World War II, historian Stephen Ambrose has always presented the theme that American GIs fought for their comrades due to the strong cohesion that developed between them. During his extensive search of personal narratives and interviewing of ex-GIs, Ambrose found that unit cohesion, teamwork, and the development of a sense of family in the squad and platoon are the qualities most World War II combat veterans point to when asked how they survived and won.<sup>12</sup>

Ambrose has also noted that when assessing the motivation of the GIs, there is agreement that ‘patriotism or any other form of idealism had little if anything to do with it.’<sup>13</sup> Ambrose has repeatedly emphasized the role of these strong, brother-like bonds in determining a GI’s willingness to fight.

### **Alternative Hypotheses**

Recent scholarly work suggests that perhaps the concept of ideology (or a cause for which to fight) does play a role in influencing men to risk their lives in combat. Sociologist Charles Moskos has proposed that ‘latent ideology’ plays a role in soldier motivation, albeit a secondary one. Moskos theorized that the strength and effectiveness of primary group bonds requires the consideration of socio-political factors:

I propose that primary groups maintain the soldier in his combat role only when he has an underlying commitment to the worth of the larger social system for which he is fighting. This commitment need not be formally articulated, nor even perhaps consciously recognized. But he must at some level accept, if not the specific purposes of the war, then at least the broader rectitude of the social system of which he is a member.<sup>14</sup>

The significance of Moskos' assertions lies in their recognition of the broader socio-political impact on actions others have attributed to primary group ties. This is interesting on two levels.

First, it suggests that the development of primary group cohesion requires a conducive social and value structure.

Second, if these group ties reflect the society at large, then their presence indicates acceptance of these values. This concept of latent ideology contributes significantly to understanding the role of cause in World War II. Any man is, to some extent, the product of his environment, and soldiers are no exception. They reflected the values of the society from which they came, and their formation of bonds with their buddies reflected their respect for the American way of life.

Interestingly, most analysts who argue the importance of the role of ideology in World War II focus on the Wehrmacht. By examining the Eastern Front, Omer Bartov disputed the methodology and findings of Shils and Janowitz concerning motivation in the Wehrmacht, maintaining that ideology and indoctrination served as the prime motivators for German soldiers combating the Soviets, where troops exhibited a grim determination to fight on at all costs.<sup>15</sup> Stephen Fritz concurred on the importance of political ideology,<sup>16</sup> and even Shils and Janowitz acknowledged the importance of the 'hardcore' Nazi soldier in strengthening morale within the Wehrmacht.<sup>17</sup>

But why should findings concerning German motivations matter to a study of US airborne soldiers? After all, the Wehrmacht was undeniably a very different institution from the American Army. Nonetheless, the Wehrmacht soldiers occupied the same battlefield as the American GI, and found themselves subject to many of the same environmental and combat conditions as their counterparts. Many combat veterans agree with the proposition that the transforming experience of combat is somehow universal across time, space, and often culture.<sup>18</sup> The fact that the Germans were the enemy should not preclude us from applying theories about their motivation to our own soldiers, to determine their veracity. So if ideals mattered to the enemy, perhaps it is not too farfetched to postulate that

ideas (or at least an antipathy towards those forwarded by opponents) also affected the motivation and behavior of Americans.

Even members of the Research Branch expressed some reservations about completely discounting the notion of ideological motivation. As Shirley A. Star wrote, 'Whenever and wherever questions in this area [ideological orientation] were asked, majorities in the neighborhood of 90 per cent said that they felt that the United States was fighting for things they personally felt were worth fighting for.'<sup>19</sup> The high numbers here counter the prevalent theory that ideology did not matter to the American GI, and thus warrant further examination and investigation.

McPherson's findings regarding soldier motivation during the Civil War also offers us a reason to reconsider the role of the cause. Relying almost exclusively on primary accounts, *For Cause and Comrades* provided convincing evidence (which has yet to come under challenge) that men in both armies possessed an awareness of the broader ideological implications of the war. Once again, such findings raise the question of the applicability of ideology in other, more modern, conflicts (particularly given the high percentage of American soldiers that Star found supported the country's aims during World War II).

In *Citizen Soldiers*, Stephen Ambrose referred to McPherson's study and hypothesized that cause and country:

... were as critical to the GIs as to the Civil War soldiers. The differences between them were not of feeling, but of expression. Civil War soldiers were accustomed to using words like duty, honor, cause, and country. The GIs didn't like to talk about country or flag and were embarrassed by patriotic bombast. They were all American boys, separated by eighty years only – but that separation included World War I. The Great War changed the language. It made patriotic words sound hollow, unacceptable, ridiculous, especially for the next set of young Americans sent to Europe to fight over the same battlefields their fathers had fought over. Nevertheless, as much as the Civil War soldiers, the GIs believed in their cause. They knew they were fighting for decency and democracy and they were proud of it and motivated by it.<sup>20</sup>

Ambrose's acknowledgement of cause as a motivator of GIs is critical in that it reopens a debate that the literature of the immediate postwar years (and even Ambrose himself) appeared to settle: were American combat soldiers motivated by cause during World War II?

Yet the challenge is clear: if few GIs talked or wrote about their belief in their cause, establishing the importance of that cause becomes difficult.

By looking at a sample of a small segment of volunteer soldiers that may possess a predisposition to react to both cause and comrades, I hope to illuminate some of their motivators and raise some questions concerning the role of ideology. A look at the letters, diaries, memoirs and surveys of airborne infantrymen can provide some insight into why they fought.

### **Case Study: US Airborne Soldiers in the European Theater of Operations (ETO)**

First, some words regarding the choice of parameters for this study: airborne troops – all volunteer and specially trained – represent a segment of the American military that exhibited a willingness to fight and accept risks beyond that expected from a draftee. The all-volunteer status of airborne troops marked them as a unique subset in a largely conscript army. More so than other combat units, paratroopers shared certain commonalities that make them ideal for study here.

All paratroopers shared the experience of airborne training, which remained rigorous throughout the war. To complete Airborne School, a soldier needed to possess a certain standard of physical aptitude and a willingness to take risks. While paratroopers were by no means a homogenous group, they nonetheless all demonstrated abilities that distinguished them from another infantry soldier. If American soldiers possessed any form of ideological motivation, presumably we would see this among the paratroopers.

But in addition to this presumed propensity, airborne soldiers also exhibited strong primary group ties, often brought about by their tough airborne training and easily recognizable group identifiers – namely, the silver parachute wings (awarded after five successful jumps) on their chests. The demanding, risky training they underwent created a cohesiveness that all but ensured the presence of strong primary group ties. As Ambrose wrote: 'Each paratrooper had gone through a rigorous training course, as tough as any in the world. The experience bonded them together. Their unit cohesion was outstanding.'<sup>21</sup> Because they possess both characteristics, then, paratroopers make an ideal group for this study. The selection of the ETO naturally follows, as the vast majority of US airborne operations occurred in this theater.

Approximately 30,000 paratroopers fought as part of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions in the ETO during World War II.<sup>22</sup> Analyzing all of their thoughts and emotions is, of course, impossible. Some paratroopers never survived the battles they fought, and others simply (and understandably) did not want to re-live their experiences by talking



or writing about them. So in order to select a quasi-representative group of paratroopers who have chosen to share their experiences (either verbally or in writing), the sample must come as close as possible to the actual makeup of the paratroopers who fought in Europe.

Official records show that the Army provided each Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) (containing most of the actual ground combatants, as evidenced by their high casualty rates<sup>23</sup>) with an authorized strength of 1,958 officers and men, divided among three battalions.<sup>24</sup> The 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions contained two organic PIRs each, and received various other units as attachments throughout the war.

This study uses memoirs, letters, autobiographies, survey responses and first-person accounts of combat in World War II to identify references to motivation. During the war, members of both the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions filled out Research Branch questionnaires. In addition to examining these surveys, use is also made of the Veterans' Surveys from Carlisle's Military History Institute collection.<sup>25</sup> In an effort to obtain a representative sample, I chose sources for inclusion based on how their demographics compared to that of the army airborne divisions, as reflected by the sampling of the 101st Airborne Division gathered by the Army Research Branch in May 1944 (See Table 2 in the Appendix). Where airborne division data was unavailable (as in the case of geographic origin) I relied on the demographics of the Army ground force as a whole. Of course, these percentages merely represent a snapshot in time and certainly changed throughout the four years of the war. Nonetheless, they present guidelines for ensuring that the sample selected is not overly skewed.

As each PIR had a different command climate (which could affect the morale and motivation of the unit), my sample reflects each of the various regiments that fought with the two divisions. However, my sample of 42 paratroopers does not correspond perfectly to the demographic makeup of airborne PIRs. For example, historical data shows that enlisted personnel outnumbered officers by roughly a 12:1 ratio, while my representation exhibited a 4:1 ratio.<sup>26</sup> The sample group also reflects a higher proportion of Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) to enlisted men than existed in reality. However, some of this skewing occurred since my sample reflected the highest rank held during the war. Many paratroopers fought battles as privates and then eventually received promotions to NCO rank, which accounts for some of the disparity.

### **Concept of the 'Cause' or Ideology during World War II**

What compelled approximately 16 million Americans to fight during World War II? To address such a question, we must examine a soldier's involvement with his national socio-political system, and institutional coercion, national identity (patriotism), and acceptance of the national ideology (belief in cause) all play a role.<sup>27</sup> Each contributes not only to the cohesion of a military unit on the battlefield, but also to the enlisting and sustaining of the force.

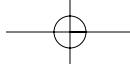
Certainly, institutional coercion in the form of the Selective Service Act legally mandated able male citizens to don a uniform in the effort to defeat Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. The Army limits an individual's freedom of choice through discipline and structure, often described as institutional coercion. However, it is erroneous to believe that a soldier has no options other than those desired by the institution, particularly on the battlefield. Here, the orders of the institution clash with self-preservation, and if we are to believe Maslow, survival will win every time. Yet, as tales of battlefield heroism attest, it clearly does not.

Other factors must play a role. Patriotism (or 'love of country') may affect behavior, and some observers have noted that Americans have developed a distinct perspective on the concept.<sup>28</sup> As G. K. Chesterton wrote, Americans can speak of 'Americanism' and 'Americanisation' because America is founded on a set of political principles and thus 'is the only nation in the world that is founded on a creed'.<sup>29</sup>

The difficulty lies in applying these general values across an entire society. As Clausewitz wrote, '... moral values can only be perceived by the inner eye, which differs in each person, and is often different in the same person at different times'.<sup>30</sup> This want of absolute values among citizens of a nation suggests that a general concept such as patriotism may lack prolonged unifying power. In the absence of tyrannical coercion, the concept of a cause serves a purpose distinct from that of patriotism in providing a concept that citizens rally around and show willingness to support with arms.

A cause, then, must transcend general and vague nationalist sentiments to something more concrete. Stephen Wesbrook argued that the great majority of individuals exhibit a normative commitment to the national socio-political system.<sup>31</sup> Specifically, this equates to subjugating the national role as a principle concern in their daily lives. Nonetheless, they exhibit a latent acceptance of this role and its demands, and view it as important in maintaining their identity with the nation. Wesbrook wrote:

Although the person with such a commitment is not an ideologue,



ideology still plays a major role in his motivations. From the individual's point of view, the significance of the national ideology is not that it directly 'causes him to do' what is demanded – as in the case of the ideologue – but that it gives him a 'cause for doing'.<sup>32</sup>

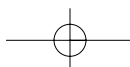
The challenge lies in articulating this concept in a way that allows a majority of American citizens to access this latent national ideology, pledge their support, and perhaps even their lives. As Keegan contended, the notion that war was an extension of policy and that soldiers and sailors fought and died for national interests is not a universal and immutable principle.<sup>33</sup> If this is indeed the case, it suggests the involvement of a certain amount of salesmanship to market the cause in such a way that it will capture the attention of citizens and inspire them to endure hardship and accept risks.

In retrospect, many Americans view the issues at stake during World War II in terms of clearcut right and wrong: democracy against fascism, defence against aggression, good against evil. The country showed remarkable unity in support of a conflict that seemed good and just; dissenters were few and relatively silent. Ambrose captured the depth and simplicity of these feelings well:

Although the GIs were and are embarrassed to talk or write about the cause they fought for...they were the children of democracy and they did more to help spread democracy around the world than any other generation in history. At the core, the American citizen soldiers knew the difference between right and wrong, and they didn't want to live in a world in which wrong prevailed.<sup>34</sup>

The overarching beliefs and values that unified Americans during World War II revolved around the American way of life. This encompassed political, economic and social elements. Politically, freedom and democracy were the guiding principles that appeared on virtually every war poster. These catchwords served as easy phrases for the public to rally around, but underlying their obsequiousness was a commitment to what they represented.

The majority of Americans could define the conflict with these terms, although critics have charged somewhat simplistically. Fighting for freedom was a popular refrain in both surveys and letters, although as Stouffer has remarked, there is often little attempt to amplify this theme. We should take care not to mistake this absence of idealism, however, for lack of commitment to the socio-political ideas of freedom and democracy.



The fact that the communist Soviet Union became an ally proved troublesome from an ideological standpoint, but many soon explained this away as a necessity of war. The United States needed Stalin and his massive Red Army to take some of the pressure off the Western Front, and this fact was not lost on the American GI. US soldiers consistently gave high ratings to the fighting ability of the Soviets, even if they expressed a personal dislike for the Russian soldiers or their ideology.<sup>35</sup>

The capitalist economic policies of the US allowed a certain degree of upward mobility that provided hope and opportunity, creating the concept of the American Dream (although critics argue that FDR's fiscal and social policies, designed to ameliorate the effects of the Great Depression, served to create a social welfare state). The economic conditions of the 1930s tempered some of the enthusiasm regarding the opportunities available, but these did not die. Soldiers in particular stressed the palatable economic incentives that America offered: the *Saturday Evening Post* ran a series by GIs on 'What I Am Fighting For' and most contributors mentioned houses, cars and other material items along with family, freedom and democracy.<sup>36</sup> The idea that any individual who worked hard could better his lot in life created a powerful incentive that inspired loyalty to the American way of life.

As for American society, certain ideological elements created a unifying aura. If Americans have a national character, then it is one that emphasizes individualism. From the exceptionalist tenets of historian Frederick Jackson Turner (1861–1932) to the idealistic rhetoric of President Woodrow Wilson, US intellectual history emphasizes the uniqueness of the American experience. This special nature relied on the strength, imagination, and fortitude of the individual. Yet Americans also recognized the powerful advantages of community, particularly during times of war, and accepted (however reluctantly) the necessity for discipline and hierarchy in a military organization. During World War II, they united in their efforts to defeat a common enemy and suffered the loss of individualism as a temporary event that would return to normal after the war.

To fully understand what 'the cause' meant to the American soldier, we have to examine the historical context of the society from which he came. Americans of the World War II generation experienced the full brunt of the Great Depression, and many harbored cynical memories of the unfulfilled idealism of World War I. The pre-war isolation versus internationalism debate resolved itself only when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, which had a unifying effect on the nation. The desire for vengeance (at least vis-à-vis the Japanese aggression) and mandate for self-

defense were present from the start and Americans agreed on the necessity for entering the war.

The US Army Research Branch findings reinforce this. Stouffer and his colleagues acknowledged that there was a broad belief in the rightness of the cause, what M. Brewster Smith termed 'a tacit and fairly deep conviction that we were on the right side and that the war, once we were in it, was necessary'.<sup>37</sup> The survey data also showed that 90 per cent of American soldiers indicated a belief in cause.

This is a large, very significant number, and one that often gets lost in discussions of World War II motivation. Why do so many ignore it? Researchers have suggested that while soldiers did check the 'ideological' block in large numbers, their responses to other questions indicate that they did not actually feel the intense patriotism implied. This may be true. However, a closer look at the methodology employed by the survey further strengthens the case for an alternate explanation.

The Research Branch surveys utilized closed-end questions, which automatically limited the range of responses and precluded a soldier from choosing more than one. Yet, when another survey design allowed freeform responses to the question, 'Why did you fight?', the majority of veterans in the airborne sample indicated a form of ideology or patriotism. We cannot assume that a soldier's choice of one option over another meant that the alternative not selected was negligible or did not contribute to his motivation. While their strength of conviction in the cause may have varied, soldiers overwhelmingly indicated that the conviction was present.<sup>38</sup>

Certainly, the American concept of cause was not monolithic. The rhetoric of freedom and democracy often cloaked other, less lofty aims. The war industry created jobs for those on the home front and, despite the rationing, a degree of prosperity as well. Disunity and cracks in the patriotic veneer, as critics claim, did exist. Fussell argues that America experienced the 'absence of a credible positive ideology' yet he cannot cite any evidence of mass outcry against the war, even given the disillusionment he indicates that Americans experienced after World War I.<sup>39</sup> At the very least, Americans had a tacit acceptance of the need for war and rallied around the flag for the duration. The system was far from perfect. But when faced with other options, the majority of Americans identified with the national ideology, perceived that their system was effective and proved willing to support it for the duration.

### **Enlistment Motivation: 'I want to be a paratrooper'**

Enlistment motivation<sup>40</sup> occurs once the war or conflict has started, but the soldier has not yet entered into combat. The army may have already

fought battles, but the individual has not yet taken part and experienced them. In fact, he may not yet even be a soldier. The final element of enlistment motivation manifests itself in an eagerness to enter battle, to observe and take part in the fight.

This initial enlistment impulse often came from what the French call *rage militaire* – a sort of patriotic furore and wild state of excitement.<sup>41</sup> During this phase, men exhibit the most patriotic, idealistic motives, although soldiers often tempered these by a sense of personal monetary gain or advancement in status. Men usually made decisions to join without a frame of reference; most had no experience with battle when they joined the army, and often harbored romanticized views of what combat was like. Excitement, adventure and a break from the routine also influenced men during this phase, whether they enlisted voluntarily or answered a draft notice.

The paratroopers in the sample primarily cited ideological motivations when discussing their entry into the army. Of the accounts studied, representing the experiences of 46 airborne soldiers, more than half specifically list patriotic reasons that they associated with their enlistment. One paratrooper in the sample even rejected his deferment of enlistment to ‘get into a fighting unit’.<sup>42</sup> Most agreed with one private from Michigan who joined the army in September 1942 and eventually served with the 101st Airborne Division when he wrote: ‘[I enlisted] to serve my country in need’.<sup>43</sup>

But what distinguished paratroopers from others who joined the army was their decision to volunteer for airborne training. The US Army formed the first airborne test platoon with a classified order on 25 June 1940 that directed the Infantry School Commandant at Fort Benning, Georgia, to seek volunteers for the new unit.<sup>44</sup> The uniquely hazardous duty precluded the army from merely assigning men to the airborne task, and thus the tradition of accepting only volunteers was born.

This tradition contributed greatly to the ‘elite’ status of the airborne and created a ‘mystique’ that lent itself to romanticization, which in turn attracted further recruits. As Lt. Colonel B. Horn notes, ‘The core of the mystique, however, is rooted in the individual paratrooper, normally a double volunteer, who joined the military out of choice and subsequently, on his own volition signed on for parachute training and airborne service.’<sup>45</sup>

The response to the call for volunteers was high from the outset. According to Gerard Devlin, 17 officers and over 200 enlisted men applied for the one platoon leader and 48 paratroop positions initially available.<sup>46</sup> This response rate continued throughout the war. At one point, 400

NCOs from the 9th Infantry Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, volunteered for parachute duty with the newly formed 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment, even though acceptance for such training necessitated a reduction in rank.<sup>47</sup>

The Selective Service Act of 1940 introduced the first peacetime draft in the nation's history. Citizen-soldiers now entered the armed forces in large numbers, increasing the pool of those eligible for volunteering into the airborne. Interestingly, most airborne volunteers did enter the military of their own volition before the government drafted them, corresponding to Horn's assertion of 'double volunteers' listed above. In the sample, men who indicated that they voluntarily enlisted outnumbered draftees by a ratio of almost two to one.

To define the groups involved in this investigation and set the stage for comparison, the background and differences inherent in airborne troops requires attention. First, the selection of airborne troops raises questions about their perceived 'elite' status. Indeed, during World War II, the army's criteria for selection for jump training reflected assignment policies that clearly required the airborne soldier to be more physically fit and intelligent than the average recruit.<sup>48</sup> To volunteer for paratroop training, a soldier had to first meet the following requirements:

- a. Volunteer for parachute duty.
- b. Alert, active, supple, with firm muscles, and sound limbs; capable of development into an aggressive individual fighter, with great endurance.
- c. Age – 20 to 30, both inclusive
- d. Physically qualified as follows:
  - (1) Weight – maximum weight not to exceed 185 pounds.
  - (2) Vision – minimum visual acuity of 20–40, each eye.
  - (3) Blood pressure – persistent systolic pressure of 140 MM or persistent diastolic pressure about 100 MM to disqualify.<sup>49</sup>

These physical requirements were undeniably more stringent than those of infantry recruits, and this served to set the airborne volunteer apart from his 'straight-leg' brethren. The high response rate allowed the army

to test and screen the volunteers to ensure that they accepted only the smartest and most physically fit. Furthermore, right from the inception of the airborne, the army established a screening process that assisted in the elimination of 'undesirables' and those unsuited for parachutist duty.<sup>50</sup>

As part of their physical exams, some volunteers even received an 'inspection' by their regimental commander before he permitted them to begin the training. As Sergeant William Tucker recounted, 'The exam was not over before going unclothed before Colonel Robert Sink, the regimental commander, to be looked over like a horse. "I want the best", Colonel Sink kept saying.'<sup>51</sup> As one historian noted, 'In other words, the airborne received the cream of the crop.'<sup>52</sup>

Airborne training – rigorous and very physically demanding – weeded out the weak and those who were less than dedicated. Airborne School allowed the army to ensure that its paratroopers possessed the traits that it could not measure or test during the initial selection process; stamina, mental toughness and a desire to succeed. The institution ultimately chose whom it would accept, beyond the self-selection process. The experience of manning the 506th PIR was typical: it took 500 officer volunteers to produce the 148 needed, and 5,300 enlisted volunteers to get 1,800 paratroopers.<sup>53</sup> Few would argue with Sergeant Tucker's classification of parachute school as 'murderous',<sup>54</sup> but it served its purpose of ensuring that only the best-qualified soldiers earned the airborne distinction.

Sociologists have confirmed in laboratory experiments the logic that all men who have undergone stress to be accepted into a particular group intuitively know; a severe initiation causes entrants to value the group highly, whereas a mild initiation does not engender nearly as much of a commitment to the group.

Elliot Aronson of Stanford University and Judson Mills of the Leadership Human Research Unit, Human Resources Research Organization, demonstrated this in their 1959 studies. Aronson and Mills described a situation in which subjects were given a severe initiation to a group they knew nothing about; an equal number were given a mild initiation; and a third group was given no initiation at all. After listening to the group's discussion by the use of headphones, researchers asked the subjects to rate the group and their own feelings toward being a part of the group. The subjects who received no initiation rated the group a statistically significant amount lower than did the subjects who received a severe initiation.<sup>55</sup>

The reaction to the difficult 'initiation' experienced by airborne volunteers confirms these findings. An officer who fought with 101st Airborne cited the 'challenging requirements' as a powerful incentive that



drew him to volunteer for the airborne.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, a private in the 101st expressed his positive feelings towards the stamina and determination required to make it through airborne training: 'It was hard but I loved it. The instructors were trying to weed out those who couldn't "hack" it and it made me more determined.'<sup>57</sup>

It is clear that the selection process for the airborne soldier during World War II set him apart from ordinary army troops. The elitist attitudes of paratroopers, developed due to their especially hazardous duty, received reinforcement in the distinctive uniform items (flash, boots, silver wings) that the army authorized them to wear. This made an airborne trooper instantly identifiable and also served to set him apart from other soldiers, further contributing to the special nature of his position within the army.

This selection process also created a group with an all-ranks common training background. Whatever unit the paratrooper ultimately entered, he could be certain that his fellow troopers, NCOs and officers had accomplished the same dangerous training and had met the required standard. An officer in the 82nd expressed the benefits of this: 'I felt that those who volunteered for and completed such training would have proved their courage and would be dependable in combat.'<sup>58</sup> This sense of the reliability of fellow paratroopers contributed to the unit cohesiveness and accelerated the development of primary group ties.

Airborne forces during World War II represent a unique mix of conscripts and professional soldiers, unified by their volunteer status and willingness to assume additional risk. This strongly suggests self-selection. As William Cockerham writes, a possible explanation for a lack of significant change in attitudes and behavior of men upon entry into the airborne was the self-selection of the individuals being socialized. Cockerham's research indicates that action-oriented individuals self-selected into the airborne in response to such inducements as higher status, identification with an elite unit, higher pay and the availability of action and challenge.<sup>59</sup> In fact, the reasons that Cockerham lists constitute the motives most often mentioned by the paratroopers in the sample. Elite status, extra pay, and desire for adventure served to induce over 90 per cent of the sample group to step forward and volunteer for airborne training.

Many men mentioned the elite status of airborne outfits as their primary motivation for volunteering. As William H. Tucker (who joined the army as an 18-year-old in August 1942) wrote in his memoir, 'I was joining the parachute troops because I wanted to be in the best outfit I could get into, and the paratroopers were the best.'<sup>60</sup> The expression of *esprit*, echoed by many who volunteered, is unique because it occurred even *before* the soldier entered the unit. What may remain unexpressed is

that as a member of competent, professional unit, a soldier may also increase his chances of survival on the battlefield. There was no cannon fodder in the airborne, and the volunteers knew this.

An officer in the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Joseph V. Demasi, expressed similar views in an oral interview conducted in 1996:

I am going to fight the war and I want to be associated with people who are [of] my mentality, that want to fight. And if you jump behind enemy lines, you don't see the paratroopers raising the flag and saying 'I surrender'. Obviously, the enemy is all around you. It's death before dishonor. They either get it, or you get it. There is no in-between. I knew I was going to be fighting with men of my attitude and caliber.<sup>61</sup>

The responses to the Veterans Surveys conducted by the US Military History Institute (MHI) at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, also show that this desire to enter an elite unit served as an important motivator. Just over 36 per cent of this group indicated this as their rationale for volunteering for airborne school. That feeling persisted while undergoing the difficult training, as a Staff Sergeant with 501st PIR, 101st Airborne wrote: 'It was the greatest feeling knowing I was doing something that most people only talk of doing. Being with the elite was great.'<sup>62</sup>

This sense of 'specialness' contributed to the cohesion of the airborne units, and certainly assisted the formation of primary groups. A paratrooper's pride in his chosen field often extended to his fellow troopers, all whom had proven their abilities during the airborne training experience. This created a situation ripe for bonding, and as we will discuss later, the cohesiveness of airborne units contributed greatly to their combat motivation.

The extra pay that parachute troops received also served as an enlistment incentive for both officers and enlisted men. Each officer received an extra \$100 a month in 'jump pay', and each enlisted man received an additional \$50. This extra money provided a powerful enticement to men who had experienced the economic hardships of the Great Depression. It also significantly increased their basic pay and allowances; in 1944, a private in the army made \$50 per month, receiving a 'longevity' raise of five per cent after three years in the service.<sup>63</sup> The economic incentive, then, was real.

For some, this additional pay served to attract their attention and cause them to seriously consider volunteering. For other soldiers, the monetary incentive merely sealed the deal. Dean McCandless writes of his decision

to volunteer for airborne duty as a newly married Second Lieutenant in May 1942:

... I was ordered to Fort Benning, Ga. to attend the Officers Communications School. While there, I saw the requests for volunteers to 'join the Parachute Troops and jump to the fight'. Having just recently marched all over Louisiana and Camp Bullis (northwest of Fort Sam) that appealed to me. The adventure to say nothing of an extra \$100 – per month won me. (My pay and allowances was \$128.00 per month!)<sup>64</sup>

Predictably, the additional pay also served as a major enticement to enlisted soldiers. Joe Perotti, a draftee from Arizona, recalled that he and four friends signed up for airborne training 'not because we were brave or anything; it was \$50 more per month in pay'.<sup>65</sup>

The MHI Veterans Surveys also show that the increased pay influenced the decisions of soldiers to volunteer. Interestingly, though, most of the airborne veterans who responded to the survey only mention the pay incentive in conjunction with another motivation. Only one paratrooper indicated that he volunteered solely for the extra pay. This indicates that money alone did not motivate men to take the risks involved with jumping out of an aircraft. Some other motivator acted on these men to persuade them to volunteer.

Finally, a 'quest for adventure' also influenced a soldier's decision to volunteer for the paratroops. The pursuit of excitement and desire to experience something out of the ordinary clearly appealed to many young men in the army. They viewed the paratroops as an opportunity, and approached the training as an adventure. For some, this excitement was the primary motivation for volunteering. Robert W. Ryals, a Staff Sergeant in the 101st Airborne, makes his enthusiasm clear in his response to queries about his choice of the airborne: 'Looking for adventure!'<sup>66</sup>

Six other MHI survey respondents cited the adventure, excitement, or glamor as contributing to their decision to volunteer. The comments of another 101st Airborne NCO captured this mix of emotions: 'It was the best available at this time, and real exciting, too.'<sup>67</sup>

This sense of excitement and anticipation often remained as the prospect of combat approached. As he prepared for the 5 June 1944 jump into Normandy, Sergeant Tucker recalled, 'It was all like being part of one big machine. We felt strong and confident about what we could do, and we had no thoughts of failure.'<sup>68</sup> This sense of invincibility, thought not uncommon, was often the result of youthful naïveté and the desire to get into a fight. However, perhaps belief in cause also contributed to the

paratroopers' sense of confidence. In fact, survey data taken during the war suggests a link between identification with war aims and willingness to enter combat.

A quantitative analysis of Research Branch data available on US airborne troops (a survey of enlisted men in 101st Airborne Division conducted in May 1944) reveals some interesting points. At the time of the survey, the men of the 101st had received training in the United States and had shipped overseas to Great Britain, but had not yet participated in combat. They would receive their first combat experience as part of the Allied invasion of Normandy in June 1944. This group reflects the attitudes of highly trained fighting men prior to their first battle experience.

An analysis of data shows that ideological motivation (reflected as identification with the aims of the war) did increase these paratroopers' perceived willingness to enter combat.<sup>69</sup> While the results do not necessarily indicate the magnitude of the change, they do convey the direction of the association. For example, as an airborne soldier increasingly identifies with the cause that he is fighting for, his combat motivation increases by a statistically significant amount. Therefore, increased identification with cause appears to positively influence an airborne soldier's combat motivation.

All of this provides evidence that ideology did matter to paratroopers during their enlistment and training phases. Many enlisted because they believed in America's war aims and felt an obligation to 'do their part'. Whether we term this patriotism, duty to country, or devotion to democracy, the data examined here (surveys, letters, oral histories, and personal recollections) show that it was present among airborne soldiers.

Yet, if this is the case, why do many researchers portray the American soldier as being anti-ideological?<sup>70</sup> Westbrook argues that most soldiers are, but offers an important explanatory corollary that many often overlook: the importance of a soldier's normative commitment to the national interests and ideology:

... he [a US soldier] reflects a strong moral involvement with the nation in the form of a normative commitment that has given legitimacy to his military orders and has made compliance an obligation that he has consistently fulfilled.<sup>71</sup>

Furthermore, the paratroopers examined in this study represent an elite group, which increases the probability that they will attract 'hardcore' members of society through the process of self-selection. These individuals are most likely to manifest a symbolic commitment to the

national socio-political system, characterized by a strong connection with the national way of life.<sup>72</sup> This propensity creates an enlistment rationale consistent with that found in the sample of paratroopers.

### **Combat Motivation**

The most difficult phase of a soldier's experience to measure is combat motivation, perhaps because it occurs in the most compressed period of time and under conditions of extreme duress. The soldier has now entered the battle, and the shooting has started. His life is clearly placed in danger. The forces that compel him to remain in the battle and fight until his mission is complete (rather than flee) comprise combat motivation. Clearly, individual variation will exist.

Both the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions saw a substantial amount of combat in the ETO: the 82nd Airborne Division spent 422 days in combat and the 101st Airborne counted 214 battle days.<sup>73</sup> This compared to a mean of 169 days for all infantry divisions in theatre, placing the combat exposure of paratroopers well above average.<sup>74</sup> This occurred despite emerging doctrine concerning the employment of airborne troops only in highly specialized roles for certain missions. The concept called for the insertion of paratroopers behind enemy lines to fight disruptive battles until linked with and relieved by a larger, heavier fighting force. Although many airborne leaders decried the use of their elite troopers as 'regular infantry fighters', the fact is that once on the ground, this is exactly how paratroopers operated. Many do not realize that 'unlike other units pulled off-line for rest, the airborne units could be back in combat within a few hours'.<sup>75</sup>

Once airborne soldiers actually entered battle, their change in attitude is evident. The horrors of combat quickly altered their previous priorities and forced them to face a completely different existence. As one veteran noted, 'Emotions [in combat] veer wildly almost moment to moment, from profound fear to exhilaration, from the belief that you would be the next to die to the certainty that you would live forever'.<sup>76</sup>

In light of these varying emotions, it is not surprising to discover that paratroopers often refer to many different sources of motivation when describing their combat experience. The sample troopers specifically mention cause, primary group cohesion, survival, pride, leadership and religion and each deserves attention here. Of course, many of these motives are interrelated, and the paratroopers eloquently articulate this.

When addressing why they fought, six out of ten paratroopers in the MHI surveys referred in some way to ideology. Whether they reference

patriotism, war aims, or obligation to country, the airborne soldiers repeatedly indicated a clear connection with their cause. 'Everything I had I owed to our country and our way of living', wrote one 82nd Airborne NCO.<sup>77</sup>

Many expressed similar sentiments. A junior officer in 101st Airborne focused on obligation to country: 'The basic reason [that I fought] was that my country was at war, and I wanted to do what I could to help.'<sup>78</sup> Notice the identification with the nation and the desire to assist the cause, which many in the surveys echoed. Patriotism, defense of America and response to attack were popular answers to questions of motivation for combat.

Some paratroopers articulated more specific war aims as their rationale for fighting. Two mentioned fighting oppression and tyranny, and one officer even provided theater specific rationale: 'To help contribute to the defeat and elimination of Nazis and Fascists in Europe and the Mediterranean area.'<sup>79</sup> Here, soldiers link the actual aims of the war to missions in their theater, providing evidence that they understood their role in the greater operational and strategic scheme.

It was not just the veterans in MHI surveys who conveyed this sense of fighting for cause. The sheer frequency of these comments regarding ideology indicates that at the very least, soldiers identified with the necessity of their participation in combat. But during combat itself only a small portion of paratroopers placed these patriotic motives foremost in their mind. As Kellett has observed, certain 'acute influences' dominate motivation once combat commences.<sup>80</sup>

A critical motivator to men on the front line was their tie to their primary group. Accounts of battle often reveal that any type of broad overview collapses, and a soldier's focus narrows to the immediate moment and survival. A private from South Carolina noticed the bonding that occurred upon exposure to fire. 'We became closer to each other. My team of five men became our main concern.'<sup>81</sup> The only people who can truly understand this are those who have experienced it. A soldier naturally turned to those who were experiencing it alongside of him, his buddies.

This 'band of brothers' that Ambrose identified inspired men to accomplish awesome things. Paratroopers were willing to risk everything for their buddies, and many often did increase their exposure to danger to protect those fellow combatants. A NCO in 82nd Airborne captured this feeling of attachment to his buddies:

The trouble was, they made me want to risk my life a lot because I felt so loyal to each of them. We were 'all for one' and 'one for all'.<sup>82</sup>

Private First Class John Agnew concurred with this explanation of courageous behaviour among paratroopers when he wrote, 'Pride in Reg[iment] and Division and being able to depend on each other makes individuals courageous regardless of fear, don't let your comrades down.'<sup>83</sup>

Agnew touched on how this sense of group pride could extend beyond the small band of paratroopers to encompass the unit. Others concurred with this assessment, and invoked the elite nature of the paratroopers as justification for their pride. An NCO in 82nd Airborne captured this camaraderie, 'Airborne was airborne, better than anybody. Really, we had a lot of pride in our outfit, and it showed.'<sup>84</sup> A pathfinder with the 82nd Airborne recounted an incident during the Normandy invasion that typified this *esprit de corps*:

Here's this colonel...he's getting peppered and he was wounded already, but he's hollering, 'You're All American! You're All American! Let's go!' Boy, that pumped your blood up. For a moment you didn't care whether you got shot or not.<sup>85</sup>

Airborne officer Jack P. Nix suggested that the inseparable bond between airborne soldiers created a degree of vanity, which he saw as a useful attribute that made these men 'tenacious in battle'.<sup>86</sup> This vanity grew out of constant reinforcement, as airborne leaders repeatedly told their paratroopers that they were worth five other soldiers.<sup>87</sup> True or not, the airborne soldiers believed it, and sometimes fought to live up to this image.

Airborne soldiers felt a similar pride in the high calibre of their leaders. Many describe personally encountering Major General James M. Gavin at the front lines, exposed to the same dangers as his paratroopers, and they loved him for it. As a private from the 504th PIR recounted, 'I believe that we would have followed General Gavin right through the gates of hell.'<sup>88</sup> Paratroopers also praised their leadership at the junior officer and NCO level, often describing these men as 'exceptional'.<sup>89</sup>

Not surprisingly, troopers from the sample also rated survival highly. Most made it very clear that they fought to stay alive, and this was their most immediate and overwhelming concern once the bullets started flying. This sentiment agrees with the findings of Gerald Astor, who wrote of veterans that fought to try to dispatch their adversaries in order to avoid being killed themselves.<sup>90</sup>

Basic survival is the first rung on the hierarchy of needs, and although it does not receive much scholarly attention, it nonetheless provides a powerful motivation for killing the enemy on the battlefield. In particular, the airborne veterans who participated in the MHI survey frequently cited

self-preservation as a determinant of why they fought: a full quarter of the sample mentioned some form of survival in their descriptions of their combat motivation.

The concept of personal honor also affected the paratroopers, but perhaps to a lesser extent than that of World War I Doughboys. The increasing specialization of the military – combined with aptitude tests designed to match abilities with specific jobs – mixed soldiers from various parts of the country together in each army unit. Furthermore, as volunteers with stringent physical requirements, paratroopers often found themselves among strangers when they reported to training. Rarely did a soldier serve shoulder to shoulder with his neighbors, as was the case during 1917–18. Presumably, such a mixing of individuals would serve to dilute the effects of personal honor, as many knew that their families and friends back home would never hear firsthand accounts of their exploits on the battlefield, good or bad. Nonetheless, some airborne soldiers did regard personal honor as a motivator. As Joe Dimasi of 82nd Airborne stated, 'Well, I will tell you what, you've got to get this in your mind. It is death before dishonor that's it. I went through the whole war that way.'<sup>91</sup>

In a foxhole, so the saying goes, there are no atheists. Yet religion is often a private matter, making it difficult to ascertain its role in getting men through the horrors of battle. Many paratroopers relate how they turned to prayer in difficult situations. In a letter to his father describing his jump with the 101st into Normandy, Private Thomas Raulston recalled his thoughts in the final moments before leaving the aircraft:

Then there was the door, a black exit in our little world, all of a sudden the night became alive with red, yellow and white flashes and streaks of light; among these tracers, one could notice the burst of explosive ack-ack. I prayed then most of the guys did; it wasn't much of a prayer but a very sincere one. Over and over I said 'give me guts'.<sup>92</sup>

An army survey conducted in 1942 found that roughly 56 per cent of enlisted soldiers attended religious services in the preceding four weeks.<sup>93</sup> The 101st Airborne Division chaplain's log shows similarly high levels of attendance for services conducted in January 1945, the month immediately after the division helped repulse the German offensive in the Ardennes. Eight chaplains (four Catholic and four Protestant) conducted 236 services during the month, attracting a total of 7,607 attendees (although some of these soldiers may have been repeat customers).<sup>94</sup> This represented approximately 61 per cent of the division strength (with attachments), a significant showing by any measure.<sup>95</sup>



While an airborne chaplain ruefully referred to the paratroopers as ‘by and large a Godless bunch’, he does note that ‘by being with them continually where the bullets were flying I gained their confidence and their hearing and many became Christians’.<sup>96</sup> Regardless of their lack of faith, however, this chaplain unabashedly attested to their fighting abilities: ‘As a chaplain, I and the medics, never were concerned that in battle these troopers would retreat and leave us. They didn’t know what the word retreat was. What a superb group of fighting men.’<sup>97</sup>

Many paratroopers frankly discussed their fear. Naturally, most were afraid of being wounded or killed, but sometimes this extended to a fear that their battlefield performance would not measure up to standards. A private from Brooklyn, New York described his feelings upon first entering combat, and he mentioned ‘fear I would not be as good a soldier as I should be’ as an overriding concern.<sup>98</sup> Some of this performance anxiety relates to the strong bonds they felt for their fellow paratroopers; there was a real desire to do a good job for one’s buddies, and this often manifested itself as a fear of letting them down.

Some men thoughtfully wove together varying combat motivations, citing one that they began with and then moving to others. One 101st Airborne private wrote that he fought ‘to preserve our freedom as an overall view! But to save face with my immediate buddies and self-preservation.’<sup>99</sup> An officer from the same division elaborates that he fought ‘...[because] my country was at war, and I wanted to do what I could to help. After my training in the 506th PIR, I fought to be worthy of belonging in the regiment and in my company. In combat situations I fought to defeat the enemy.’<sup>100</sup> These comments make it clear that no one motivator influenced paratroopers during their time in combat, but rather their drive changed with situation and environment.

Cause may have influenced enlistment, but did it play a role in combat motivation? The answer here is more equivocal. Far fewer paratroopers in the study invoked ideology vice the primary group as motivation while on the battlefield. Yet the fact remains that many did relate patriotism and a belief in the aims of the war to their combat performance. The use of the American flag as a symbol of why they fought was powerful, as one 82nd Airborne NCO wrote of a speech the paratroopers received just prior to the Normandy invasion:

The point of his [Major Krause’s] speech was when he held up the American flag he always had. He said, ‘This flag was the first American flag to fly over Gela, Sicily, and the first American flag to be raised over Naples. Tomorrow morning, I will be sitting in the

mayor's office in Sainte-Mère-Église, and this flag will be flying over that office.' Major Krause's speech was stirring, because the United States flag was a powerful symbol to us of our pride, sense of duty, and determination. Like the Civil War cavalry, we even carried company guidons into the fighting.<sup>101</sup>

The motivation here is evident; the paratroopers placed a high value on patriotism and duty to country, and their leaders tapped into this when considering how to motivate them.

A Research Branch survey of five divisions in the US First Army taken during the war (including 82nd Airborne Division) revealed that soldiers supported the aims of the war in high numbers. The sample showed that 70 per cent of the soldiers in the First Army responded that the issues of the war meant 'everything' or 'quite a bit' to them.<sup>102</sup> Interestingly, the data shows that 82nd Airborne Division was perfectly representative of this average. This is significant, as the division had already experienced combat in the Mediterranean and yet 70 per cent of the paratroopers still felt a personal identification with the war aims. Unfortunately, the raw data from this survey is not available, precluding further analysis.

While Stouffer and his colleagues interpreted the Research Branch data as indicative of a lack of interest in cause, perhaps there is an alternate interpretation. Most of the survey questions concerning ideology and war aims were closed-ended, which did not allow for any interrelationship among various motivators. Perhaps by adapting a different perspective, such as the one proposed by Stephen D. Wesbrook, we can establish that a relationship exists and that latent ideology proves crucial to a cohesive band of soldiers in combat.

Wesbrook discusses three broad theories of combat motivation that all rely on the moral involvement of a soldier with a larger collectivity, which depends on the formation of psychological bonds between the soldier and the group such that the soldier believes that his own welfare and that of the group are related.<sup>103</sup> Wesbrook argues that the primary group, the military unit and the national socio-political system substantially influence a soldier's compliance with military demands. By linking the individual to the group, and the group to the larger society, we can see a web of influences that act on a combat soldier's performance. The words of the paratroopers examined in this sample indicate that ideology and belief in the values of the society proved an important thread in this web that affected their behavior during combat.

### **Sustaining Motivation**

This period occurs when the immediate shooting battle has either stopped or the soldier is no longer on the front lines, but the war is not yet over. The soldier knows that he must enter combat again, perhaps repeatedly, before his role in the war is over. The variables that act to keep the soldier in the theater of combat – and to accept the likelihood of entering further combat – form the crux of sustaining motivation. Sustaining motivation provides the ability to endure and resist the many forces that encourage disintegration.

A critical element of this phase is the onset of battle fatigue or combat stress. After exposure to prolonged combat, a soldier will reach a point at which he is no longer combat effective. Psychologists claim that every soldier has his breaking point, and that this point is highly individualized. Thus, some soldiers may last years, while others may last days in a combat zone before reaching a state of combat saturation in which they can no longer perform.

For an army to maintain effectiveness, its soldiers must maintain a commitment to continuing the fight. Here, something more than mere survival compels the soldier to remain in the army and enter another battle. Predictably, this is difficult. Paratroopers from the sample convincingly indicated that they overcame their battle-weariness through a variety of techniques, including reliance on their belief in the cause.

The effects of protracted combat altered the paratroopers' perceptions once again. Often, emotions and actions felt in the first battle had changed. One veteran described this transformation: 'I had become coarse – it seemed that something had been taken from me and there was no end.'<sup>104</sup> Another attempted to relate the onset of battle fatigue: 'Gradually, your numbers are whittled down, your men grow jumpy, and approach the cracking point.'<sup>105</sup>

Not all effects of battle harmed combat effectiveness. An officer in the 101st acknowledged the benefits of combat experience: 'At first I was foolhardy, trying to be a hero. With more combat experience, I became more analytical and more effective, particularly in depending on team, rather than individual, action.'<sup>106</sup>

Again, the wartime survey of the 82nd Airborne Division indicated that 70 per cent of the enlisted men in the division indicated an identification with the aims of the war. These men were combat veterans; at the time of the survey, they had participated in the Sicilian and Italian campaigns. When asked why paratroopers fought so hard when sometimes they had difficulty articulating concepts like the Four

Freedoms, Sergeant Tucker replied, 'pride and discipline'.<sup>107</sup> The lack of effective articulation did not make these concepts any less real, or the beliefs behind them shallowly held.

As the paratroopers often mentioned, once a soldier experiences the realities of combat, self-preservation compels him to not desire to return to the battle experience. Of course, this does not explain heroic actions that occur during battle in which a soldier deliberately exposes himself to a higher level of danger to protect his buddies or to complete the mission. However, it appears that these are exceptions to the norm – outliers – that occur in very small numbers when compared to the number of men participating in battle. The prevalent desire of soldiers exposed to combat is to not repeat the experience.

And yet it is hard to reconcile this reticence with the sheer effectiveness and intensity of the paratroopers' effort in battle after battle as the war progressed. Again, this points to the existence of a motivator that could overcome the powerful survival instinct. Rather than a single motivator, paratroopers relied on primary group cohesion, loyalty and pride in their airborne unit, and their belief in their country and cause to sustain them and compel them to return to battle.

Members of both the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions participated in the liberation of concentration camps, and the experience had a profound effect on them. For the paratroopers who saw the atrocities of the camps, their revulsion and disgust often led to a renewed belief in the righteousness of their cause. An 82nd Airborne trooper acknowledged that his convictions about the war became exceedingly clear when he viewed the Woebblin concentration camp: 'There were train loads, box cars, filled with bodies. Big ditches dug with people already in them. What really hurt me was the little kids. These little kids had sores and you could see maggots in them.'<sup>108</sup> The horror of sights such as this shocked even the battle-hardened paratroopers, but by the time they saw them, Germany was on the brink of defeat and the end of the war was in sight. Thus, while the concentration camps provided affirmation of cause to some, to a large degree they did not influence actual combat or sustaining motivation.

By the spring of 1945, paratroopers recognized that the end of the war was near. Most had fought long and hard, and the desire to return home soon became overwhelming. The army developed a 'point system' to determine when a soldier could return to the United States: soldiers received points for time in a combat theater, awards received and so on. The more points a soldier accumulated, the sooner he could return home. Returning to the United States dominated paratroopers' thoughts and this then became their primary motivator.

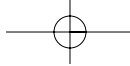
Airborne soldiers fought to survive and to defeat the enemy so that they and their comrades could get back home. Did this concept of returning home signify less devotion to the cause? Or, should we view it as a natural longing of all men at war? Indeed, the idea of returning to loved-ones manifested itself long before the end of the war appeared imminent. Research Branch analysts noted that combat veterans expressed the desire to finish the task in order to return home and often felt that after a certain amount of combat they had 'done their share' and wanted others to pick up the fight.<sup>109</sup>

These concepts hark back to the belief that America was a land of plenty and this included manpower resources. Certainly the paratroopers did not want to see the Germans win the war; some just felt that they had sacrificed enough for the cause and expressed willingness to let others shoulder the burden for a while.

### Conclusion

Why did so many overlook the paratroopers' belief in their cause? Perhaps the novelty of the primary group and unit cohesion explanation overshadowed the role of cause. For the first time, these important concepts received attention and study, and this enriched our understanding of a soldier's willingness to fight when faced with so many compelling reasons to flee or quit the battle. But with the rise of the cohesion concept, a corollary also developed that questioned the role of ideology and patriotism and denied that these older notions played a role in World War II. This perspective overlooked the explanatory power of latent ideology and normative commitments to the national socio-political system as means for predisposing a soldier to fight for the national goals.

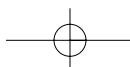
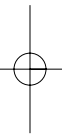
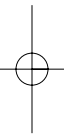
For a variety of reasons, then, by 1945 the concept of cause has lost its lustre as an explanation for soldier motivation. While other acute motivators may influence a soldier more during combat itself, this study of a sample group of World War II paratroopers indicates that this should not lead to the assumption that ideology and patriotism have little influence in wartime. World War II researcher and survey administer John Dollard describes the role of ideological convictions by saying: "The soldier is not forever whispering, "My cause, my cause." He is too busy for that. Ideology functions before battle, to get men in, and after battle by blocking thoughts of escape...Identification with cause is like a joker in a deck of cards: it can substitute for any other card. The man who has it can better bear inferior material, temporary defeat, uneasiness, or fear."<sup>110</sup>



## AMERICAN AIRBORNE UNITS IN WORLD WAR II

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Statistical data shows that American paratroopers fighting in the European Theater during World War II exhibited a greater willingness to enter combat if they personally identified with the aims of the war. Comments from a sample of paratroopers support this finding. Thus, a link exists between ideology and a soldier's motivation, and this association deserves further exploration to discover if it has validity in other contexts (different combat arms and branches of the military) and other time periods within the American military experience. Research examining this correlation during the Vietnam War, the era of the all-volunteer force, and the Persian Gulf War could prove particularly useful and increase our understanding of the elusive human element of war.



## Appendix 1

TABLE 1  
COMPARISON OF RESEARCH BRANCH SURVEY RESPONDENTS TO THE  
US ARMY POPULATION

Branch		From AGO	A Recent Research
		Records %	Cross Section Survey %
<b>Age</b>	18-19 years	4	5
	20-24 years	42	45
	25-29 years	29	24
	30-34 years	14	14
	35 years and over	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>
		100	100
<b>Education</b>	Grade School	33	32
	High School Non-graduates	28	26
	High School Graduates	26	28
	College Men	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>
		100	100
<b>Geographical Origin</b>	North and East	61	64
	South	29	29
	West	<u>10</u>	<u>7</u>
		100	100
<b>Branch of Service</b>	Air Corps	26	26
	Infantry	17	20
	Medical Dept.	9	9
	Field Artillery	7	9
	Coast Artillery	8	8
	Quartermaster Corps	6	6
	Corps of Engineers	6	5
	Ordnance Dept.	4	6
	Signal Corps	4	4
	Military Police	3	4
	Chemical Warfare Service	1	1
	Other	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
		100	100

Source: From Research Branch, Office of Director of Training, Army Service Forces, War Department, *What About Research?* p.9.

TABLE 2  
SAMPLING DEMOGRAPHICS

	Army Ground Force (AGO) <sup>(a)</sup>	101st Airborne Division <sup>(b)</sup>	Sample
<b>Enlisted</b>	N/A	79%	31%
<b>NCO</b>	N/A	21%	43%
<b>Officer</b>	N/A	0% <sup>(c)</sup>	26%
<b>North and East</b>	61%	N/A	65%
<b>South</b>	29%	N/A	23%
<b>West</b>	10%	N/A	12%

*Notes:*

The sample group consists of 42 paratroopers from the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions who served in combat in the European Theater of Operations (including the Mediterranean and North Africa) between 1942 and 1945.

(a) All data represents enlisted men; officer statistics are not included in the percentages. These percentages fluctuated during the war. The data used here represents the state of the Army Ground Forces (AGF) as of March 1943. From *What the Soldier Thinks #2*, Aug. 1943, pp.106–11.

(b) From the Army Research Branch Survey 134, taken of enlisted men only. The sampling techniques used by the researchers ensured a random, representative sample. Out of 1,033 participants, 511 were from Parachute Infantry Regiments and their demographic breakdown is shown here.

(c) The survey did not include officers. Strength reports from the 101st Airborne Division indicate that officers composed approximately 7% of a Parachute Infantry Regiment (See RG 407, 101st Airborne Division, Folder 3101-1: Headquarters, 101st Airborne Division After Action Review, France, NACP).

NOTES

1. The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army, the US Military Academy or any other agency of the US government. An earlier version of this article was presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association 2001, San Francisco, 30 Aug.–2 Sept. 2001.
2. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, translated and edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton UP 1984) p.86.
3. See John Keegan, *History of Warfare* (NY: Knopf 1994) pp.22–3. ‘We all find it difficult’, Keegan wrote, ‘to stand far enough outside our own culture to perceive how it makes us, as individuals, what we are.’ According to Keegan, this constraint also applies to Clausewitz: ‘Good historian though he was, Clausewitz allowed the two institutions – state and regiment – that circumscribed his own perception of the world to dominate his



thinking so narrowly that he denied himself the room to observe how different war might be in societies where both state and regiment were alien concepts.'

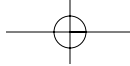
4. The 17th Airborne Division, which also fought in the ETO, is not included due to a lack of a representative number of primary sources and a significantly shorter amount of time spent in combat (Dec. 1944–May 1945).
5. During World War II, the US Army Research Branch of the Information and Education Division of the War Department administered over 200 separate surveys to soldiers designed to assess the attitudes of the men (and some women) in uniform. Samuel Stouffer and his colleagues presented an analysis of these surveys in the four volume series, *The American Soldier in World War II* (Princeton UP 1949).  
Of particular interest is Volume II – *Combat and Its Aftermath* – where M. Brewster Smith produced percentages and correlations derived from cross tabulation that he used to identify trends. Smith carefully delineated the complexities of such a study of combat motivation, and then examined different topics that played a role in molding behavior during battle. While noting that his results are extremely generalized and making no 'pretense of completeness', Smith concluded that the immediate combat (or primary) group played a large role in motivating men in combat, and found that soldiers attached little importance to idealistic motives such as patriotism and concern for war aims. See Vol. II, pp.108–12. This finding, with its supporting survey data, rapidly gained widespread acceptance within the sociological and historical communities.
6. See S.L.A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire* (NY: Morrow 1964) and *Night Drop: The American Airborne Invasion of Normandy* (Boston: Little, Brown 1962). Marshall's *Men Against Fire* suffered from serious research flaws, and critics have convincingly challenged his thesis that over 80 per cent of US infantry soldiers did not fire their weapons while in battle during World War II. See Roger J. Spiller, 'S.L.A. Marshall and the Ratio of Fire', *RUSI Journal* 133/4 (Winter 1988) pp.63–70. See also Harold Leinbaugh, quoted in Fredric Smoler, 'The Secret of the Soldiers Who Didn't Shoot', *American Heritage* (March 1989) pp.37–45. In this article, Marshall's own assistant, John Westover, who accompanied him on most interviews, stated that he does not remember Marshall ever asking the troops whether they fired their weapons.
7. Edward A. Shils and Morris Janowitz, 'Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II', *Public Opinion Quarterly* 12 (Summer 1948) p.281.
8. John Ellis, *The Sharp End: The Fighting Man in World War II* (NY: Scribner's 1980) p.282.
9. *Ibid.* p.315.
10. *Ibid.* p.316.
11. See Abraham H. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*. (NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold 1968).
12. Stephen E. Ambrose, *Citizen Soldiers: The US Army from the Normandy Battlefields to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany, June 7, 1944-May 7, 1945* (NY: Touchstone, Simon and Schuster 1997) p.14.
13. *Ibid.* p.473.
14. Charles A. Moskos, *The American Enlisted Man: The Rank and File in Today's Military* (NY: Russell Sage Foundation 1970) p.147.
15. Omer Bartov, *Hitler's Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* (NY: Oxford UP 1991) pp.34–5.
16. See Stephen Fritz, 'We Are Trying...to Change the Face of the World – Ideology and Motivation in the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front: The View From Below', *Journal of Military History* 60 (1996) pp.683–710.
17. They wrote, 'The presence of a few such men in a group, zealous, energetic, unsparring of themselves, provided models for weaker men, and facilitated the process of identification.' Shils and Janowitz (note 7) p.304.
18. Alan Cate, 'Tales of Three Generations: American Soldiers in the Best and Worst of Times', *Parameters* 28/4 (Winter 1998–99) pp.145–51.
19. Stouffer *et al.* (note 5) Vol. I, p.437.
20. Ambrose (note 12) p.14.

21. Stephen Ambrose, *D-Day: June 6, 1944. The Climactic Battle of World War II* (NY: Simon & Schuster 1994) pp.47–8.
22. See Leonard Rappoport and Arthur Northwood Jr, *Rendezvous with Destiny: A History of the 101st Airborne Division* (Washington DC: Infantry Journal Press 1948) pp.802–3.
23. See 101st Airborne Division Casualty Reports, 'After Action Review, France, December 1944, January 1945, and February 1945' in 'WWII Operations Reports (1940–1948) 101st Airborne Division', Folder 3101-1, RG 407, National Archives at College Park, MD (NACP) and 82nd Airborne Division 'G-1 Journals', Folder 382-0.4 to 382-1.6, RG 407, NACP.
24. Gerard M. Devlin, *Paratrooper! The Saga of US Army and Marine Parachute and Glider Combat Troops During World War II* (NY: St Martin's Press 1979) p.118.
25. I recognize the difference in observations gleaned from memoirs vice those recorded immediately in a diary or letter. This methodological challenge is masterfully addressed in Samuel Hynes, *The Soldiers' Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War* (NY: Penguin Press 1997).
26. See 101st Airborne Division G-1 Reports, 'After Action Review, France, December 1944, January 1945, and February 1945' in 'WWII Operations Reports (1940–1948) 101st Airborne Division', Folder 3101-1, RG 407, NACP.
27. See Stephen Wesbrook, 'The Potential for Military Disintegration' in Sam C. Sarkesian (ed.) *Combat Effectiveness: Cohesion, Stress, and the Volunteer Military* (Beverly Hills and London: Sage Publications 1980) pp.244–77.
28. See Walter Berns, *Making Patriots* (Univ. of Chicago Press 2001).
29. G.K. Chesterton, *What I Saw in America* (NY: Dodd, Mead 1922) pp.4, 7, 14, quoted in Berns (note 28) p.3. Berns does address the similar foundations of the French Revolution, but argues that this attempt to found a nation on universal principles went awry with Napoleon's efforts to 'spread French universalism', which led to tyranny. *Ibid.* p.7.
30. Clausewitz (note 2) p.137.
31. Wesbrook (note 27) p.255.
32. *Ibid.*
33. See Steven Metz, 'A Wake for Clausewitz: Toward a Philosophy of 21st-Century Warfare', *Parameters* 24/4 (Winter 1994–95) pp.126–32.
34. Ambrose (note 12) p.473.
35. See US Army Research Branch, *What the Soldier Thinks*, Special Services Division, Research Branch, Services of Supply, War Department, Washington DC (Dec. 1942, revised Feb. 1943).
36. *Saturday Evening Post*, 17 July 1943, quoted in John Morton Blum, *V Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II* (NY and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1976) p.67.
37. Stouffer *et al.* Vol.II (note 5) p.151.
38. The US Army was keenly aware of the pre-war isolationist sentiment and sought to counter it and sustain morale through an education program intended to keep the concept of cause foremost in soldiers' minds. Frank Capra produced the well-known *Why We Fight* film series, consisting of seven movies designed to stimulate ideological fervour. But as Paul Fussell wrote, these were perhaps 'more effective in stimulating a necessary hate than in providing satisfying answers to the question implied in the title'. Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (NY: Oxford UP 1989) p.138.

The US government assisted with this demonization of the enemy: even a cursory examination of American propaganda depicts Nazis as barbaric and Japanese as subhuman. The Orientation Branch also had a role in ensuring that soldiers reflected on American war aims through company discussions led by a member of the unit, assisted by materials provided by the Pentagon. Both the films and discussions met with mixed responses from soldiers, but the overall assessment is that their impact on GI motivation was limited.

39. Fussell (note 38) p.143.
40. To examine the question of why airborne soldiers fought in World War II, we need to differentiate between enlistment, combat and sustaining motivation. This framework, developed by French Revolutionary War historian John A. Lynn, incorporates the element of time, and is a useful analytical tool for examining changes in motivation over different phases of a soldier's experience. James M. McPherson also found this technique useful and used it in his book *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (NY: Oxford UP 1997).
41. Ibid. p.16.
42. Walter E. Hughes, World War II Veteran Survey, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR), 82nd Airborne Division, US Army Military Institute, Carlisle, Pennsylvania (MHI).
43. Walter Lukasavage, 506th PIR, 101st Airborne Division, MHI.
44. Devlin (note 24) p.46.
45. Lt. Col. Bernd Horn, 'The Airborne Mystique' [article online] available from [www.brunnet.net/inforsch/journal/33/33-Horn-a.html](http://www.brunnet.net/inforsch/journal/33/33-Horn-a.html) (accessed 28 Jan. 2001).
46. Devlin (note 24) pp.49–51.
47. Ibid. p.109.
48. Robert J. Allison (ed.) 'Airborne Forces in World War II', in *History in Dispute, Vol. 5: World War II, 1943–1945* (Andover, UK: St James Press 1999). Reproduced in History Resource Center, Farmington Hills, Michigan: Gale Group, [www.galenet.com/servlet/HistRC/](http://www.galenet.com/servlet/HistRC/) (accessed 13 Jan. 2001).
49. US Army Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia. *Airborne History, 1940–1946*, 10 Jan. 1946, Appendix No.19, p.100.
50. Ibid. p.34.
51. William H. Tucker, *Parachute Soldier (Based on the 1942 to 1945 Diary of SGT Bill Tucker)* (Athol, MA: Haley's, 1994) p.2. Available at the 82nd Airborne Division Museum, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Personal Papers of World War II, 504th PIR.
52. Robert L. Bateman in Allison (ed.) 'Airborne Forces in World War II' (note 48).
53. Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne, From Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (NY: Simon and Schuster 1992) p.16.
54. Tucker (note 51) p.2.
55. 'The Airborne Mystique', [www.paratrooper.net/aotw/ABNSpirit/airborne\\_mystique.asp](http://www.paratrooper.net/aotw/ABNSpirit/airborne_mystique.asp) (accessed 29 April 2001).
56. C. Carwood Lipton, Veterans Survey, 506th PIR, 101st Airborne, MHI.
57. Arthur C. Jones, Veterans Survey, 506th PIR, 101st Airborne, MHI.
58. Edward J. Sims, Veterans Survey, 504th PIR, 82nd Airborne, MHI.
59. William Cockerham, 'Selective Socialization: Airborne Training as Status Passage', *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 1/2 (Fall 1973) pp.215–29 cited in Anthony Kellett, *Combat Motivation* (Boston: Kluwer Nijhoff 1982) p.75.
60. Tucker (note 51) p.1.
61. Joseph V. Demasi, interview by Kurt Pichler and Tara Liston, 1 April 1996, interview transcript, Rutgers Oral History Archives of World War II, [www.fas-history.rutgers.edu/oralhistory/demasi.html](http://www.fas-history.rutgers.edu/oralhistory/demasi.html) (accessed 23 Feb. 2001).
62. Michael Zelickovics, Veterans Survey, 501st PIR, 101st Airborne, MHI.
63. War Department Pamphlet 21-13, *Army Life* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office 1944) pp.19–20. Soldiers also received foreign-service pay when they served overseas; this represented a 20 per cent increase in their base pay.
64. Dean McCandless, 'Remembering the Army', 82nd Airborne Division Museum, 505th PIR World War II Personal Papers.
65. Joe Perotti, 'Khaki Doll Beneath a Green Lampshade: Joe Perotti of Tombstone', interview by Cindy Hayostek, Cochise County Historical and Archaeological Society Library, March 1995. *The Cochise Quarterly* 25/2 (Summer 1995) p.27. Copy in 82nd Airborne Division Museum, World War II Personal Papers, 325th Glider Infantry Regiment (the army assigned paratroopers to the glider regiments as pathfinders, and Joe Perotti was one of these).

66. Robert W. Ryals, Veterans Survey, 501st PIR, 101st Airborne Division, MHI.
67. William Guarnerd, Veterans Survey, 506th PIR, 101st Airborne Division, MHI.
68. Tucker (note 51) p.30.
69. Using data from Army Research Branch Survey 134 (a sampling of the attitudes of enlisted airborne personnel from 101st Airborne Division), I set up dummy variables for qualitative predictors and used a standard multiple regression to explore the effects on combat motivation. Results indicated that, holding all other factors constant, ideology does affect the combat motivation of these paratroopers. For a detailed quantitative analysis of the survey data from the enlisted men of the 101st Airborne Division, see Tania Chacho, 'Why Did They Fight? American Airborne Units in the Second World War', paper prepared for the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting 2001, Appendix B (accessible via Internet: [www.pro.harvard.edu/papers/018/018009ChachoTani.pdf](http://www.pro.harvard.edu/papers/018/018009ChachoTani.pdf)).
70. See Wesbrook (note 27) for citations of the literature discussing the anti-ideological American soldier.
71. Wesbrook (note 27) pp.255–6.
72. Ibid. p.254.
73. See *The Army Almanac: A Book of Facts Concerning the Army of the United States* (Washington DC: US GPO 1950) pp.588–9. The 82nd Airborne fought in Sicily and Italy (July 1943–March 1944).
74. *Order of Battle, United States Army in World War II*, European Theater of Operations, Office of the Theater Historian, ETO, Dec. 1945.
75. Jack P. Nix, '505 Parachute Infantry Regiment (A Legacy of Lessons)', (US Army War College Military Studies Program Paper, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1989) p.20.
76. Thomas Cooper, Vietnam veteran, quoted in Steve Vogel and Frederick Kunkle, 'Veterans Recall Stress of Combat', *Washington Post*, 27 April 2001, Section B, p.9.
77. Gerard Valles, Veterans Survey, 504th PIR, 82nd Airborne Division, MHI.
78. C. Carwood Lipton, Veterans Survey, 506th PIR, 101st Airborne Division, MHI. Lipton was the recipient of a battlefield commission.
79. Edward Sims, Veterans Survey, 504th PIR, 82nd Airborne Division, MHI.
80. Anthony Kellett, summary of remarks during TISS Conference, [www.unc.edu/depts/tiss/Summer95.htm](http://www.unc.edu/depts/tiss/Summer95.htm) (accessed on 18 June 2001).
81. Carl Howard Cartledge, Veterans Survey, 501st PIR, 101st Airborne Division, MHI.
82. Tucker (note 51) p.91.
83. John Agnew, Veterans Survey, 506th PIR, 101st Airborne Division, MHI.
84. Fredrick Kerr, interview by Sandra Stewart Holyoak and Shaun Illingworth, 21 April 1999. Interview transcript, Rutgers Oral History Archives of World War II, [www.fas-history.rutgers.edu/oralhistory/kerr.html](http://www.fas-history.rutgers.edu/oralhistory/kerr.html) (accessed 23 Feb. 2001) (505 PIR, 82nd Airborne).
85. Perotti interview (note 65) p30.
86. Nix (note 75) p.7.
87. Ibid.
88. Walter E. Hughes, Veterans Survey, 504th PIR, 82nd Airborne, MHI.
89. Sims interview (note 58).
90. Martin Blumenson, review of *The Greatest War: Americans in Combat, 1941–1945* by Gerald Astor, *Parameters* 30/1 (Spring 2000) pp.144–5.
91. Demasi interview (note 61).
92. Letter from Thomas Raulston, in Annette Tapert (ed.) *Lines of Battle: Letters from American Servicemen 1941–1945* (NY: Times Books 1987) pp.157–8.
93. *What the Soldier Thinks*, Special Services Division, Research Branch, Services of Supply, War Department, Washington DC (Dec. 1942, revised Feb. 1943) pp.42–3.
94. Chaplains Report, G-1, Headquarters, 101st Airborne Division, After Action Review, France, RG 407, Folder 3101-1, NACP.
95. Strength Report, G-1, Headquarters, 101st Airborne Division, After Action Review, France, RG 407, Folder 3101-1, NACP. See 101st Airborne Division Strength, 14 Jan. 1945.



96. Delbert Kuehl, Veterans Survey, 504th PIR, 82nd Airborne, MHI.
97. Ibid.
98. Hughes interview (note 88).
99. Arthur Jones, Veterans Survey, 506th PIR, 101st Airborne Division, MHI.
100. Lipton interview (note 56).
101. Tucker (note 51) pp.30-1.
102. 'Attitudes and Morale of Men in Five Divisions in the First Army', Feb. 1944, Research Branch, G-1 Division, Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, RG 330, folder ETO-B65, NACP.
103. Wesbrook (note 27) p.251.
104. Tucker (note 51) p.67.
105. Henry Keep, letter to Mother, 20 Nov. 1944, 82nd Airborne Division Museum, World War II Personal Papers, 504th PIR.
106. Lipton interview (note 56).
107. Tucker (note 51) p.162.
108. Perotti interview (note 65) p.33.
109. Stouffer *et al.* Vol.II (note 5) pp.108-10.
110. John Dollard, *Fear in Battle* (New Haven, CT: Institute of Human Relations, Yale Univ., 1943).

