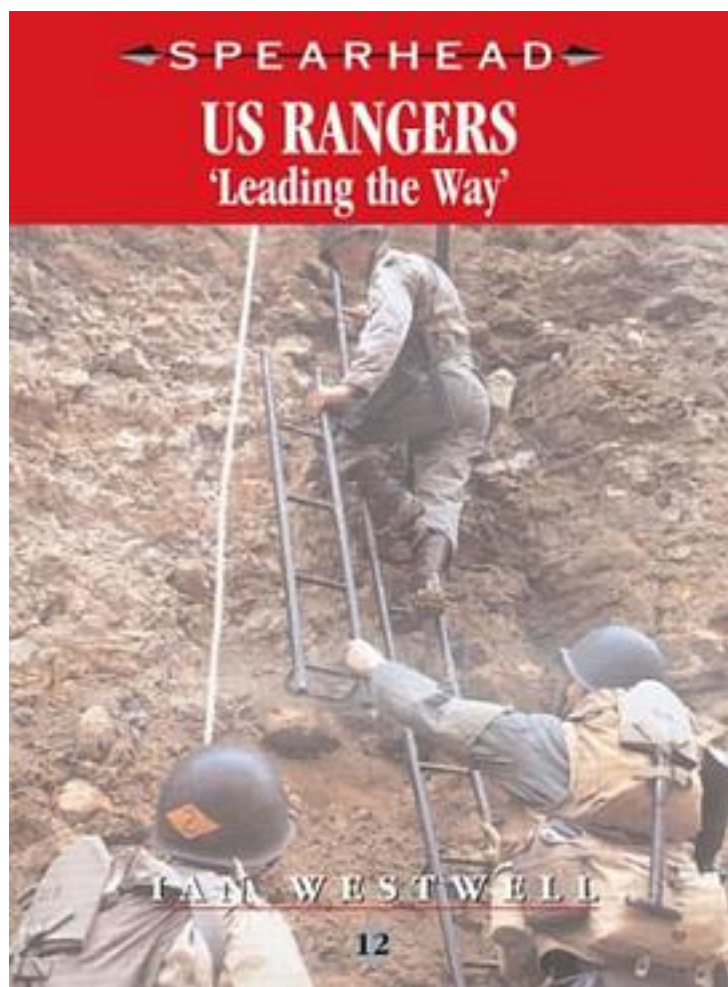


US Rangers



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SPEARHEAD SERIES This series looks at the cutting edge of war, and deals exclusively with units capable of operating independently in the forefront of battle. Each volume

in the series examines the chosen unit's origins and history, its organisation and order of battle, its battle history theatre by theatre, its insignia and markings. Also covered are biographies of the most important commanders of each unit. Each title ends with an assessment of unit effectiveness - as seen by the unit itself, by its opponents and in the light of more recent historical research. The books also include a detailed reference section with a critical biography, a listing of relevant museums and web sites, plus information about re-enactment groups and memorials.

THE US RANGERS The US Rangers were formed in 1942 after Major General Lucian K. Truscott, US Army Liaison with the British General Staff, argued that 'we undertake an immediately an American unit along the lines of the British Commandos'. The name Ranger was selected 'In compliment to those in American history who exemplified the high standards of courage, initiative, determination and ruggedness, fighting ability and achievement'. William Orlando Darby, a graduate of West Point with amphibious training, was chosen to command and he performed a near miracle in organising the unit within a few weeks from thousands of applicants from 1st Armored Division and 34th Infantry, both of which were based in Ireland. The 1st Ranger Battalion was officially activated at Carrickfergus, Ireland on 19 June 1942. Its first action was at Dleppe when around 50 men took part in the raid, but the first major use of Rangers was when as a spearhead to the North African invasion. Later in Tunisia the 1st Battalion executed the first Ranger behind-the-lines night raid at Sened. On 31 March 1943 Rangers led General Patton's drive to capture the heights of El Guettar and won the unit's first Presidential Citation. After Tunisia, the 3rd and 4th Ranger Battalions were activated and Rangers would go on to take part in the Invasions of Sicily and Italy, and in the bitter winter mountain fighting near San Pietro, Venafrò and Cassino. Rangers spearheaded the night landings at Anzio, and during the invasion of Normandy the 2nd Ranger Battalion carried out a desperate mission when it assaulted, captured and held German artillery positions atop the cliffs of Pointe Du Hoc. Later, Rangers distinguished themselves in the battles of Brest, the Bulge, Hurtgen Forest and throughout central Europe. The 6th Ranger Battalion was the first American force to return to the Philippines. Activated at Port Moresby, New Guinea in September 1944, it landed three days in advance of the main Sixth Army Invasion Force. It would go on to take part in the landings on Luzon, and on 30 January 1945, the greatest and most daring raid in American military history when it struck 30 miles behind enemy lines and rescued 500 emaciated and sickly PoWs of the Bataan Death March.

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