



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

Edward L. Posey

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FINALIST, 2009, ARMY HISTORICAL FOUNDATION DISTINGUISHED BOOK AWARD

The 2d Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) was the first and only all-black Ranger unit in the history of the United States Army. Its ten-month lifespan included selection, training, and seven months of combat deployment in Korea, after which the unit was deactivated. Edward Posey's magnificent new study, now available in paperback, is the first complete history of this elite, all-volunteer unit, whose members were drawn from the 3rd Battalion of the 505th Airborne Infantry Regiment and the 80th Airborne Anti-Aircraft Battalion.

After experiencing the normal travails of boot camp at Fort Benning, which segregation and racism only made worse, the all-black Rangers set out to join the Korean War in late 1950. On January 7, 1951, the Rangers found themselves defending a critical railroad running through Tanyang Pass, which Communist guerillas tried to infiltrate. The nighttime action triggered the Rangers' inaugural combat, which ended with the recommendation for a Bronze Star for gallantry for a Ranger sergeant. Additional combats with the North Korean and Communist Chinese forces erupted near Majori-ri and Chechon.

But the event that propelled the 2d Rangers into the record books was their airborne assault near Munsan-Ni on March 23, 1951—the first in Ranger history. Once on the ground, Posey and his comrades attacked and captured Hill 151. The fighting—often conducted at very close quarters, and some of it with the bayonet and rifle butt—demonstrated the courage of these tough African American soldiers. Heavy fighting marked their months at the front, including a magnificent attack and defense of Hill 581 that May. Throughout their deployment in Korea, the 2d Rangers served with honor and achieved an outstanding combat record.

Posey's long overdue *The US Army's First, Last, and Only All-Black Rangers: The 2d Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) in the Korean War, 1950-1951* (written with the help of other Rangers) is based upon the firsthand experiences of many members of the unit, official records, interviews with survivors, and other archival material. Stitched together, this information offers a rich and worthy addition to the growing literature on the Korean War by explaining the obstacles these patriotic African Americans faced, their sacrifices, and their courageous actions on the far side of the world.

Nearly sixty years have passed since the Korean War slipped into the realm of history. Now, the world will finally learn the true story of the United States Army's first, last, and only all-black Ranger unit.

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

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