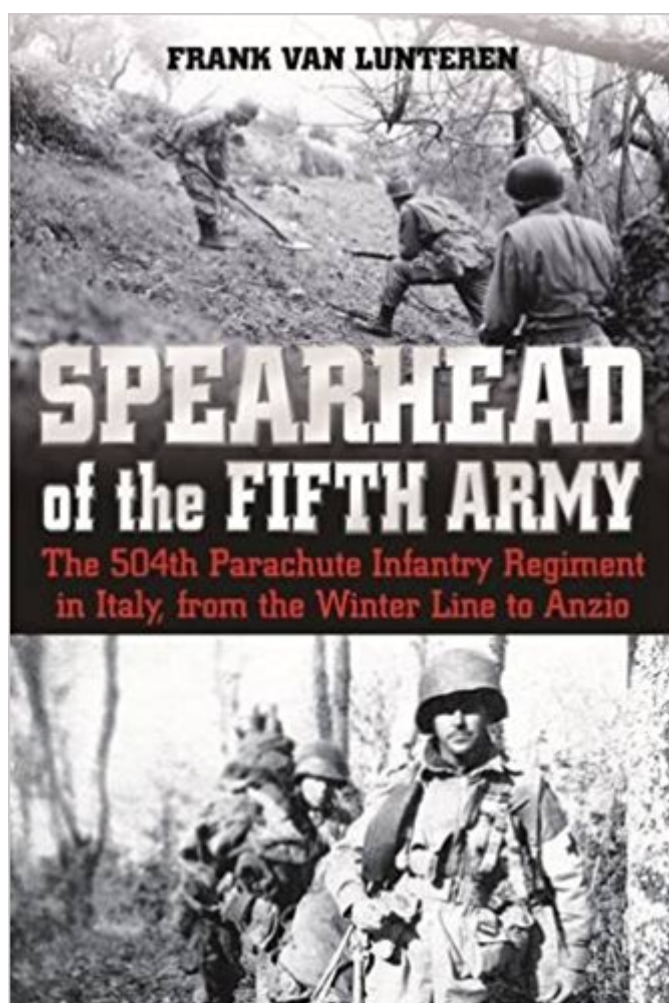


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# Spearhead Of The Fifth Army: The 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment In Italy, From The Winter Line To Anzio



## Synopsis

This work is the third book by Frank Van Lunteren on the 504th P.I.R. in World War II, focusing on their role in the Italian theater. Upon the completion of the Sicily and Salerno Campaigns in 1943, the paratroopers of Colonel Reuben Tucker's 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment were among the first Allied troops to enter Naples. A ghost town at first sight, the residents soon expressed their joy at being liberated. Four weeks later the 504th—upon the special request of General Mark Clark—spearheaded Fifth Army's drive through the notorious Volturno Valley—the Germans' next stand. January 1944 seemed to promise a period of rest, but the landing at Anzio meant deployment for the paratroopers again, this time by ship. A bombing raid during their beach landing was a forecast of eight weeks of bitter fighting. Holding the right flank of the beachhead along the Mussolini Canal, the paratroopers earned their nickname "Devils in Baggy Pants" for their frontline incursions into enemy lines, as well as their stubborn defense of the Allied salient. In this work H Company's attachment to the British 5th Grenadier Guards are painted in comprehensive light for the first time. Using war diaries, personal journals, letters and interviews with nearly 80 veterans, a close-in view of the 504th P.I.R. in the Fifth Army's Italy Campaign is here provided in unsurpassed detail. This work is the third by Van Lunteren on the 504th P.I.R. In World War II following *The Battle of the Bridges* and *Blocking Kampfgruppe Peiper*. As readers will see, however, the Italian theater held second place to none in terms of grueling combat and courage against formidable odds, and an extremely expert enemy.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 320 pages

Publisher: Casemate (September 16, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 161200427X

ISBN-13: 978-1612004273

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #216,728 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #47 in Books > History > Military > Regiments #219 in Books > History > Europe > Italy #1743 in Books > History > Military > World War II

## Customer Reviews

“An incredible account of one regiment’s contribution to the fighting in Italy - the detail is amazing.” (Books Monthly UK) “...we get looks at desperate, but often long forgotten skirmishes, details of life at the front, glimpses at relations with civilians, and more, while putting the reader in almost personal contact with the men. Spearhead of the Fifth Army is an excellent read for anyone interested in men at war, as well as for students of the airborne operations, the Italian Campaign, and the war in Europe.” (NYMAS Review) “... presents over a decade of research on America’s involvement in World War II during the battles that took place in Italy from 1943 to 1944. The book focuses on the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, also known as the “devils in baggy pants,” which accumulated almost 300 days of front-line combat. Each chapter centers on the details of a particular battle or movement. This book gives the reader a glimpse into the hard work, successes, and losses of American paratroopers and our partnership with Italian citizens during the war. Appendices include a list of distinguished Service Cross recipients, a list of battlefield commissions, and several battle and field orders.” (NYMAS Review) “The quality of description “ in the front line and out of it “ is one of the best I’ve read, supplemented by helpful tactical maps.” (Miniature Wargames) “This is not a work about generals and strategy, but a soldier’s eye-view of what took place, drawing on van Lunteren’s extensive interviews with veterans of the 504th Regimental Combat Team... This is an excellent read for anyone interested in men at war, as well as for students of the airborne operations, the Italian Campaign, and the war in Europe.” (NYMAS Review)

Frank van Lunteren was born and raised in Arnhem, the Netherlands. His interest in military history dates to the 1980s, when as a child he first visited the Airborne Museum in Oosterbeek. He went on to study political history at the Radboud University in Nijmegen, while privately researching the exploits of the paratroopers, and at the 61st convention of the 82nd Airborne Division Association in Harrisburg, PA in August 2007, he was Guest Speaker at the 504th Regimental Dinner. He originally conducted research on the wartime service of Ted Bachenheimer (1923-44), the famous top scout of the 504th PIR during World War II. But his contacts proliferated, as did his project, and he eventually met and interviewed so many veterans that the present work “ on the entire 504th PIR’s service in Market Garden “ is the Result.

Another great book about the 504 PIR from WWII. Spearhead takes you through Italy with the history and personal stories from the brave men who fought and died serving humanity. Van Lunteren’s books are a MUST have for any WWII history buff. They never let the reader down for

wanting more detail and story line. Well done from a young Dutch history teacher whose efforts to honor and remember our 82nd Airborne's 504 "Devils" with impeccable research that has also served to bring their families "together" across the globe. Thank you Frank, your books and efforts will remain a part of our WWII history, and it's soldiers and their families memories... forever!

If you are at all interested in history, and especially that of WWII, you need to buy all three of van Lunteren's books on the 504th PIR of the 82nd Airborne. He has done a masterful job of combining interviews with primary source documentation to bring these battles to life. I was especially interested in Spearhead based upon a visit to the Anzio region two years ago. You won't be disappointed!!

Frank has done great research and the book is just as my father remembers his days at Anzio.

An incredible read for any one interested in detailed account of a Parachute Infantry Regiment in the second world war.

I found the book well written and very informative

Very detailed account of 504th. Quotes from veterans throughout.

Another great book from Frank.....

Great author. Very factual, easy read.

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