



1st Infantry Division: Big Red One (Spearhead Series 6)

Ian Westwell

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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 its 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 oldest continuously serving division in the US Army, the 1st Infantry Division, called the Big Red One because of the red numeral '1' on the uniform shoulder patch, was the first regular army division organised in June 1917 to fight in France with the Allied armies. More than 28,000 men - including soldiers with very familiar names, like George C. Marshall, Theodore Roosevelt Jnr, and Lesley J. McNair - served with the division in World War 1. Following the Armistice on 11 November 1918, the Big Red One occupied a sector near Koblenz, Germany until August 1919 when most of the soldiers returned to the United States. Units of the Division were distributed up and down the eastern seaboard during the interwar years. The Big Red One was re-designated on 15 May 1942 as an infantry division of nearly 15,000 men. It was selected for participation in Operation Torch, the invasion of North Africa, landing in Algeria on 8 November 1942. It then fought through Sicily, leaving the theatre to train for the invasion. It was part of the forces that landed on D-Day and then fought with distinction through Europe. 1st Infantry Division's battle honours are Tunisia, Sicily, Normandy, the Bulge, Germany. Postwar, the division served in Europe, Vietnam, Desert Shield, Desert Storm and Bosnia. It is currently based in Germany.

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