

# Sample essay on history of the 82nd airborne division on world war 1

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



## **Introduction**

The 82nd airborne division is the one in duty for the airborne infantry division in America. The division are skilled in parachute assaults in a war zone or battle. The work of the 82nd airborne division in the military is to coordinate, execute, plan rapid forced and combined arms operations. The operations can be operated alone or on a joint force with others. The 82nd Airborne Division was formulated or became part of the national army in 1917. It was based at Camp Gordon in Georgia. It has been claimed that all the original members of the division hailed from all the 48 states in America. This is the reason why it was nicknamed " All-American" by the commanders. This caused the distinctive shoulder patch " AA" in the officer's uniforms (1).

The division is said to have had two infantry brigades that was in control of two regiments. The 82nd airborne division participated in the First World War. In the war, the allies had already formulated two offensive attacks that were to cause the Germans resistance in France. The two offensive operations are called the St. Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne offensive. In the St. Mihiel offensive operation, the 82nd division was able to penetrate into the allied lines. This was in the Verdun-Toul railroad where the Germans and the allied had occupied. In the second offensive mission, the division was able to capture some of the areas that the allied had occupied. One of the famous hero's from the division is Alvin York. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery and for capturing over hundred enemy soldiers and killed twenty.

The division was demobilized after the war in 1919 and then reconstituted in

1921 (2). In looking at the history, it is stated that the airborne division was stated by Benjamin Franklin in 1784. However, the division came to pass or became a reality after one hundred and fifty years. Since the introduction of the division it has been claimed that they are the ones in the military that responds faster and effectively when it comes to conflict in anywhere in the world. It has been stated that in the American military the 82nd division is one of the most powerful forces.

## **World War 1**

The division went to Europe in 1918 where they paraded in front of the king of England. This was a way for the people of America to show their undivided commitment to the allies. The division fully assembled in Liverpool England by May 1918. The division had also gone to England for training purposes.

This was so that the troops would be able to have experience and also to engage well with the other troops from England. The 82nd airborne division is claimed to have sent a small number of troops (3). It is said that there were also non-commissioned officers that were sent to Britain to train.

In their training action, the 82nd division suffered their first casualty when Captain Jewett Williams died in action. The troops then travelled by train to France in an area called Somme to Toul (4). While they were in this area, they acquired the French rifles. Some of the rifles that they acquired include French Hotchkiss machine guns that were 8mm and the French automatic rifles. The main reason for acquiring the French rifles was that it was easy to resupply. The division was sent to France in order to help the 26th division that were located in Lagney Sector from northeast of Toul (5).

The Lagney sector was believed to be the defensive sector during the war. The work of the 82nd division was to patrol the area and also they raided some of the regions. This was done for a period of a few weeks. The 82nd division was then relieved off their duty by the 89th division. In August 1918, the division went to the Marbache sector in order to relieve the second division. This was done under the command of the first United States army that had been formed. In Marbache, the division was able to train there until September. After the training, the division was able to join the others in the St. Mihiel Offensive (6).

### **St. Mihiel Offensive**

In the St. Mihiel operation, the First Army of the American troops consisted of the V, IV and I corps. It is stated that the 82nd division was assigned to the I corps (7). All the troops in the war had their own missions and objectives this included the 82nd Airborne Division. The division was the one responsible of ensuring that the German forces would not try to attack the first army from the right flank. This means that, their job was to hold the Germans thereby distracting them. The division as well as the other troops advanced to the Moselle River (8).

While they were there the division from the west was relieved by the 90th division. The French ninth division relieved the 82nd division thus causing them to move to Belleville and Marbach. They proceeded to the stations that were near Rarecourt and Triaucourt. These areas were where the first army were situated. Throughout the St. Mihiel offensive operations the 82nd division suffered a number of casualties a good example was the first person

from the division who was given the Medal of Honor named as Colonel Emory Pike. The end of the operation marked the end of the division's participation of the Lorraine Campaign. The division went on to prepare for the Meuse-Argonne offensive. The preparation included training using their rifles and skills.

## **The Meuse-Argonne Offensive**

The Meuse-Argonne offensive main aim was to ensure that the Germans position in the Argonne forest and the Meuse Rift Valley was reduced. The other main objective was to take control of the Carigan Sedan-Meizieres railroad. This was because this was the main way for the enemy to supply their weapons and other important items. The 82nd division had been moved to the Clemont area that is situated on the west side of Verdun. Their main function in that area was to act as a reserve for the First Army on the East edge of Argonne (9).

The 164th Brigade was able to achieve the two objectives they set out to do, which is to seize Hill 223 and Hill 180 (10). The seizer of the Hills made it easy for the division to head towards Cornay. In the following day, the division was able to continue with its attack. Some of the troops from the division right frank were able to enter Cornay. They were able to hold Cornay from the Northern side, which was at the Decauville railroad. The division was able to proceed to the East and Southern parts.

They were able to clear half of the Eastern side of the Argonne Forest. The division from the left frank was able to reach the Northwest side of Chatel-Chehery (11). The division continued with their attacks on the line of the

south until they reached Rau de la Louviere. Most of October 1918, the division was able to advance in their attacks to the North side of the Aire River. This was on the east side of St. Juvin. The capture of St Juvin was not a smooth one because the division had to defend it the following day. This was through the heavy counterattacks with the enemy.

The next few days the division was involved in heavy fighting from the Ravin Aux Pierres and Argon River (12). It is claimed that on the 10th of October the division was able to relieve the First army. This occurred on the North side of Fleville. When they were there the division continued with its assault and thus were able to capture Marcq and Cornay. The capture of the two areas made it possible for the division to hold a front on the south. On the 11th of October, the division from the right flank were able to enter the area of Sommerance.

They were also able to occupy the north side of La Rance Rau (13). While they were in these areas, the 82nd troops were able to be relieved by the 42nd division troops. This enabled the division to continue with the attack with the enemy. In the Hindenburg, the troops from the division were able pass through it and they had to use defensive positions. When they did this, the division were able to leave the road of St. Georges in order for them to reach St. Juvin. This is the reason why they were able to capture and occupy the area of St. Juvin and some areas that are surrounding it.

It has been stated that the 82nd division is the one that relieved some of the troops of the 78th division on 18th October (14). The division was able to relieve 78th division from Champigneulle and Marcq. This advance made it easy for them to reach and capture Ravin Aux Pierrers. On 31st October

most of the troops were relieved by the 77th and 80th division among those relieved were the 82nd division. It has been stated that the only troops that were not relieved are the ones from the artillery. When the troops were relieved, they went to the Argonne Forest.

In the Argonne Forest, the division and other troops went for training in a place near Champ Mahaut (15). The division then went on to concentrate on the La Chalade area as well as the Les Islettes and attacked the areas thereby took control over the region. When the division was relieved, they went to the Vaucoulers for training on 4th November. The division changed their training areas and moved to the Bourmont area. This occurred on 10th November 1918. The troops remained in this region until the following day when there was another offensive attack.

It was in this fight that Corporal Alvin C. York who came from the G Company won the Medal of Honor for his outstanding work in capturing and killing a good number of the enemies. It is claimed that York used the machine gun to attack. It has been claimed that the 82nd division was relieved of duty on November and the troops went back home. This marked the end of the participation in the First World War or the Great War for the division. On the 27th of May 1919, the 82nd division was demobilized thus marked the end of the division (16). This was until 1921 when the division was reconstructed and has been used ever since in wars such as the Second World War and even the recent Iraq war.

## **The aftermath of the First World War**

When the war ended the troops from the 82nd Airborne Division went training to some of the areas that are near Prauthoy. The troops remained in the regions doing their training until February of 1919. It has been claimed that some of the troops from the division returned to the United States of America in April 1919 while others returned in May 1919. In May 27th at Camp Mills, that is where the division was deactivated. This caused the division to be made part of the Organized Reserve. In 1921, the division was reconstituted. Its headquarters was in Columbia in the state of North Carolina.

The other location where the division was located was in Georgia and Florida. The war had many casualties from both the allied and the allies' sides. This included the troops from the 82nd Airborne Division. According to many reports, there are claims that the estimated number of troops from the 82nd division that died throughout the war was over 900 people. Some of them are said to be decorated soldiers who had accomplished a lot in the war. This caused them to be given the Medal of Honor (17).

According to most reports, it is stated that about 34 troops were awarded by the Distinguished Crosses Awards. A good example of the soldier from the 82nd airborne division was colonel Emory Pike who died from some of the injuries that he had acquired in battle. It is stated that the award that he received was among the top honors in the military. It is also stated that he was among the first soldiers from the 82nd troop to ever get the award. The numbers of wounded people in the war are estimated to be about 7082.

The number of casualty is claimed to have been about 8, 077 soldiers from



the 82nd Airborne Division (18). Some of the casualties from the division are said to have come from the prisoners of war. This is because some of the troops from the 82nd division were captured during the assaults or attacks from the enemy. These prisoners were tortured and others were killed. The numbers of those prisoners' casualties were over 169. There are some other soldiers who went missing in action during the war. These soldiers have been claimed to have died in action or were captured and killed by the enemy. In conclusion, the 82nd airborne division was formulated on fifth august 1917. The 82nd Airborne Division work in the American military was to use their parachutes assault operations in the battlefield. The use of these assault operations was to be used on the denied areas or areas where the ground soldiers could not penetrate. In the First World War, the division was taken to England where they trained in early 1918 (19). The troops then moved to France and began to use their weapons. The main reason for doing this was that it was easy for them to get more supplies of weapons from that region.

This was so that they can be prepared for the Great War or the First World War in France. In the war, the division was able to enter many places and captured the areas. They were also able to block the railroads that were used by the allied to get their supplies and food. Some of the people in the division were able to accomplish a lot especially Sergeant Alvin C. York. York was able to capture many enemies and killed several others using his machine gun. There were over 8, 000 casualties from the war who came from the 82nd Airborne Division alone. Some of the casualties are claimed to

have been prisoners of the war. The 82nd division was demobilized in 1919 but then reactivated in 1921.

### **Work cited**

Anzuoni, Robert P. *The All American: An Illustrated History of the 82nd Airborne Division, 1917 to the Present*. Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishers, (2001): p112-125 Print

Cooke, Tim. *US Airborne Forces*. New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, (2013): p8-9. Print

Francois, Dominique. *82nd Airborne Division 1917-2005*. Bayeux: Heimdal, 2006: p215-300. Print

McGrath, John J. "The Brigade: A History: Its Organization and Employment in the US Army." *Combat Studies Institute Press* (2004): p172. Print

Nordyke, Phil. *The All Americans in World War II: A Photographic History of the 82nd Airborne Division at War*. St. Paul, Minesotta: Zenith Press, (2006): p203-226. Print

Verier, Mike. *82nd Airborne Division 'All American'*. London: Ian Allan Publishers, (2001): p55-69. Print