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101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) "Screaming Eagle"



The 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, provides forcible entry capability through heliborne 'air assault' operations. Capable of inserting a 4,000 soldier combined

arms task force, 150-kilometers into enemy terrain in one lift, and possessing 281 helicopters, including three battalions of Apache attack helicopters, this division is the most versatile in the Army. For this reason, the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) is the division most in demand by combatant commanders. The 101st stands as the Army's and world's only air assault division with unequalled strategic and tactical mobility. The 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) is formed of three brigades plus Division Artillery, Division Support Command, the 101st Aviation Brigade, 159th Aviation Brigade, 101st Corps Support Group and several separate commands.

Units

- [1st Brigade "Bastogne"](#)
- [2d Brigade "Strike"](#)
- [3d Brigade "Rakkasans"](#)
- [4th Brigade](#)
- [101st Aviation Brigade](#)
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- [326th Eng BN "Sapper Eagle"](#)
- [887 LEC](#)
- [501st Signal BN "Voice of the Eagle"](#)
- [Air Assault School](#)
- [Parachute Demonstration Team](#)

Associate Units [ARNG/USAR]

- [42nd Infantry Division](#)

Supporting Units

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Facilities

- [Fort Campbell, KY](#)

Resources

- [Leaf-Chronicle.com](#) -- Clarksville, TN News
- [MyINKY.Com](#) Indiana-Illinois-Kentucky News

Official Homepage

- [101st Airborne Division](#)

References

- [101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION \(AIR ASSAULT\) RECEIVES DEPLOYMENT ORDERS](#) 06 Feb 2003

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The 101st is unique in that it normally conducts operations 150 to 300 kilometers beyond the line of contact or forward-line-of-own-troops, requiring theater- and national-level intelligence support as a matter of course.

The 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) has demonstrated the characteristics of military professionalism since the unit's activation. On August 19, 1942, the first commander, Maj. Gen. William C. Lee, promised his new recruits that the 101st has no history, but it has a "Rendezvous with destiny." As a division, the 101st has never failed that prophecy. During World War II, the 101st Airborne Division led the way on D-Day in the night drop prior to the invasion. When surrounded at Bastogne, Brig. Gen. Anthony McAuliffe answered "NUTS!" and the Screaming Eagles fought on until the siege was lifted. For their valiant efforts and heroic deeds during World War II, the 101st Airborne Division was awarded four campaign streamers and two Presidential Unit Citations.

General Order Number Five, which gave birth to the division, reads, "The 101st Airborne Division, activated at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, has no history, but it has a rendezvous with destiny. Like the early American pioneers whose invincible courage was the foundation stone of this nation, we have broken with the past and its traditions in order to establish our claim to the future. Due to the nature of our armament, and the tactics in which we shall perfect ourselves, we shall be called upon to carry out operations of far-reaching military importance and we shall habitually go into action when the need is immediate and extreme. Let me call your attention to the fact that our badge is the great American eagle. This is a fitting emblem for a division that will crush its enemies by falling upon them like a thunderbolt from the skies. The history we shall make, the record of high achievement we hope to write in the annals of the American Army and the American people, depends wholly and completely on the men of this division. Each individual, each officer and each enlisted man, must therefore regard himself as a necessary part of a complex and powerful instrument for the overcoming of the enemies of the nation. Each, in his own job, must realize that he is not only a means, but an indispensable means for obtaining the goal of victory. It is, therefore, not too much to say that the future itself, in whose molding we expect to have our share, is in the hands of the soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division."

The 101st Airborne Division was reactivated as a training unit at Camp Breckinridge, Ky., in 1948 and again in 1950. It was reactivated again in 1954 at Fort Jackson, S.C., and in March 1956, the 101st was transferred, less personnel and equipment to Fort Campbell, Ky., to be reorganized as a combat division.

In 1968, the 101st took on the structure and equipment of an airmobile division.

After the 101st was formed, only the toughest men were allowed to serve. The division needed men that could survive being dropped from an airplane behind enemy lines and still fight and win. Only 1 in 3 men passed the selection criteria to serve in the 101st which included a 140 mile foot march in 3 days and rigorous airborne training. In September of 1943 after the Division had completed its Airborne training, it moved to England to prepare for war.

On June 5th, 1944 the Division prepared for its first combat operation, the airborne invasion of Normandy. The 101st would drop 6,700 soldiers behind enemy lines to disrupt the Germans before the massive allied beach assault on the coast of Normandy. As soon as the planes carrying the soldiers of the 101st flew into France, they began receiving heavy anti-aircraft fire from the Germans. The pilots took evasive action and broke formation to avoid being hit. As a result, soldiers jumped at an altitude of 300 feet at a speed of 200 mph instead of the planned 700 feet at 100 mph. This caused the division to be scattered all over Normandy. Soldiers landed far from their units, behind enemy lines, and alone. Many were killed before they hit the ground by Germans firing into the sky.

By the end of the 1st day of the Normandy invasion, only 1 in 3 soldiers had found their unit. The scattered jump into Normandy confused the Germans just as much as it confused the Americans. The Germans did not know where to fight the Americans or these were no real front lines. Fighting consisted of small unit actions.

During the 2nd day of the invasion the 101st began to regroup and receive resupplies by gliders, many of which crashed on landing. During the next 2 days of fighting the 101st took objectives behind Utah beach and turned south towards Carentan, which was key to controlling the peninsula. The Germans had been ordered to fight to the last man. After days of heavy fighting, the 101st took Carentan. The division held the town for 2 more days under a heavy German counter attack until reinforcements arrived.

One month after jumping into Europe, the 101st mission in Normandy was complete, 1 in 4 men had been killed or wounded.

In September, 1944 the 101st jumped into Holland to conduct Operation Market Garden. The mission was to jump behind enemy lines to seize the highway running north to the Rhine river so allied tanks could advance into Germany. This highway was known as "hell's highway," and paved the way for the allied advance. 600 gliders landed in Holland, bringing in half the division. This jump was much more organized than the previous jump into Normandy. The 101st mission was to secure the southern end of the highway. It completed this mission in 2 days. The division was responsible for 60 miles of road and 16 miles of highway. 101st was next sent to the front lines near Arnhem.

On December 17th, 1944 over 12,000 101st soldiers were sent south to fight in what would be known as the Battle of the Bulge. The 101st arrived in Bastogne just ahead of the Germans and took control of the city. The Division formed a perimeter around Bastogne and held the city against fierce German fire. The Germans surrounded the town and cut off all roads. The division was cut off without supplies and was a sitting target for German artillery. Because the division had been deployed to Bastogne so quickly many soldiers had to endure the harsh winter without winter clothes.

After 5 days of withstanding attacks by the Germans without reinforcements or supplies, two German Officers were sent to the American Headquarters with a letter from the German Commander demanding that the 101st surrender. After hearing that the Germans wanted the 101st to surrender, the Acting Commander - BG General McAuliffe said "Nuts". Surrendering was not an option for the 101st so "Nuts" was chosen as the official response to the Germans demand for surrender. The Germans continued their attack of the American perimeter without success, and the 101st continued to hold the city.

On December 26, 1944 the 101st was relieved by General Patton's Third Army and the siege of Bastogne ended. The 101st continued to fight, pushing the Germans back towards their own border and eventually into Germany itself. The Division entered the town of Burtchesgartens where Hitler's fortified residence "The Eagles Nest" was located. The soldiers walked through Hitler's personal residence and enjoyed the comforts of his

personal retreat.

In May 1954, the 101st reappeared as a training unit at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina, and in 1956 was transferred to Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, for reorganization as a combat division. Official reactivation ceremonies were held on 21 September 1956. Subsequent activities included major training exercises, duty in civil disturbances and maintenance of full readiness as part of the Strategic Army Corps (STRAC).

In 1965 the division was deployed to Vietnam. The 1st Brigade and support troops were deployed to the Republic of Vietnam, followed by the rest of the division in late 1967. In almost seven years of combat in Vietnam, elements of the 101st participated in as many as 15 campaigns.

The 101st was now using helicopters to transport troops and supplies. This new advantage made the 101st an obvious choice for the Vietnam Conflict. Dense jungle made the use of helicopters highly desirable because of the maneuverability helicopters offer. This ability allowed the 101st to accomplish more missions than any other unit.

The 101st fought in both the Tet Offensive and the Tet Counter Offensive. As part of the Tet Counter Offensive the 101st took part in the offensive operation against entrenched North Vietnamese troops on Hill 932. This hill came to be known as "Hamberger Hill." So much fire power was used that the hill was stripped of vegetation. This was still not enough to remove the entrenched North Vietnamese soldiers. Soldiers from the 101st repeatedly attacked these positions, often under heavy machine gun fire. The North Vietnamese withdrew from their positions after 10 days of fighting, and The Americans took the hill.

The 101st was the last combat division to leave Vietnam. The Screaming Eagles left Vietnam in 1972. The 101st suffered twice as many casualties in Vietnam as it did in World War II, but further established a reputation as an excellent fighting force. Seventeen 101st soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor.

In February 1974, Major General Sidney B. Berry, Commanding General, signed Division General Order 179, authorizing wear of the Airmobile Badge. (Later redesignated the Air Assault Badge and approved for Army wide wear in January 1978.) Finally, on 4 October 1974, the 101st Airborne Division (Air Mobile) became the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

In March 1982, elements of the 101st began a six month peace keeping tour of duty in the Sinai as part of the Multinational Force and Observers. Tragedy struck in December 1985, when 248 Screaming Eagles died in a plane crash returning from the Middle East.

In August, 1990 the Iraqi Army invaded Kuwait. The US responded by deploying troops to Saudi Arabia. with one the first units to deploy being the 101st. The division fired the first shots of "Desert Storm" by taking out Iraqi radar sites on 17 January 1991. After the ground war began, the 101st was ordered to go deep into Iraq and set up a base of operations for further attacks. During the ground war phase of "Desert Storm," the 101st made the longest and largest Air Assault in history. More than 2,000 men, 50 transport vehicles, artillery, and tons of fuel and ammunition were airlifted 50 miles into Iraq. Units from the division Air Assaulted into Iraq and set up Forward Operation Base Cobra. Land vehicles took another 2,000 troops into Iraqi territory west of Kuwait to allow U.S. Armored Forces unrestricted access to Iraq. The 101st was responsible for seizing highway 8, which was used to resupply the Iraqi Army from Baghdad. To accomplish this, the division conducted the largest Air Assault in history. The division moved from FOB Cobra to set up FOB Viper, which was used as a base of operations to attack Iraqi Army units withdrawing from the Kuwait border. A cease fire was declared within 100 hours of the US launching the ground war. Five soldiers from the 101st lost their lives during the ground war. With the cease fire established on 27 February 1991, the division began preparations for redeployment. By 1 May 1991, the Screaming Eagles were home.

Fort Campbell soldiers have supported humanitarian relief efforts in Rwanda and Somalia, then later supplied peacekeepers to Haiti and Bosnia.

A press release issued on February 6, 2003 by the 101st Airborne Division stated that elements of the entire Division have been ordered to deploy in support of the war on terrorism. The 101st Corps Support Group and the 86th Combat Support Hospital are also involved in the deployment.

The Military Sealift Command reported on February 11 that the USNS Dahl and the USNS Bob Hope were loading military cargo, in Jacksonville, Fla, for the 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, Ky., as part of the repositioning of U.S. forces in support of the president's global war on terrorism. Cargo includes Army Blackhawk, Apache, Kiowa and Chinook helicopters and a variety of wheeled vehicles. Together, the two have a capacity of more than 600,000 square feet of military cargo. It is thought that the ships will depart by February 15 and that it will take roughly 21 days to arrive in the CENTCOM AOR.

As of 8 AM (eastern) on February 27, 2003 there were roughly 10 civilian aircraft at Fort Campbell preparing to transport the first elements of the 101st Airborne Division from the United States to Kuwait. Elements of the 101st began to arrive in Kuwait on or about February 28, 2003.

The 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at Fort Campbell, Ky., officially kicked off its transformation effort on 16 September 2004. By 15 March 2005, the division will have reorganized into four BCT (UA)s, two aviation BCT (UA)s and a support UA.

There have already been major changes at Fort Campbell, especially with the transformation of the post's two aviation brigades - the 101st Aviation Brigade and the 159th Aviation Brigade. Currently, the 101st Brigade is strictly an attack helicopter brigade, while the 159th Brigade is purely an assault helicopter brigade. Several of

the aviation companies under the 101st and 159th have reflagged and moved around in creating a modular brigade structure.

When transformation of the 101st Division is complete in mid-March 2005, both aviation brigades will be made up of an attack battalion, an assault battalion, a cavalry squadron, a general support aviation battalion, and an aviation support battalion.

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