

The All-Americans at War: The 82nd Division in the Great War, 1917-1918

James J. Cooke

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This is the first study to analyze the content, training, and performance of a World War I draft division from its formation onward. The 82nd division consisted heavily of non-English speaking European immigrants and conscripts fresh from farming towns in Tennessee and North Carolina. Despite these apparent obstacles, it would evolve into an effective combat unit on the front lines of St. Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne. These All-Americans would prove that they could fight and accomplish several difficult missions in the Great War.

From its birth at Camp Gordon, Georgia, to the battlefields of the Western Front, the 82nd division became a highly successful combat unit through good leadership and hard work. After initial training in France by both British and French forces, the 82nd entered the trenches to face the Germans. Given a difficult mission during the St. Mihiel offensive, the diverse division performed well; and during the Meuse-Argonne battle, it achieved its objectives despite heavy casualties. Despite an early lack of preparation, this force would be a true American success story.



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