



Currahee!: A Screaming Eagle at Normandy

Donald R. Burgett , Stephen E. Ambrose (Foreword by)

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The title represents the battle cry and motto of the famous Screaming Eagles of the 101st Airborne Regiment as they parachuted into Normandy in World War II. This story, told by a man who was there, was first published in 1967 and appears in mass market for the first time. Dwight D. Eisenhower called this book "a fascinating tale of personal combat".

Currahee!: A Screaming Eagle at Normandy Details

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From Reader Review Currahee!: A Screaming Eagle at Normandy for online ebook

Paul Carr says

This is a very good first-hand account of a paratrooper's training and combat with the 101st Airborne before and during the early days of the European invasion. Donald Burgett shares graphic descriptions of battles and their aftermath, and these memories are the "highlights" of the book, emphasizing the atrocities of war without glorifying them.

It serves as a useful parallel narrative to the more-known Band of Brothers, covering similar timeframes and battles but without overlapping personnel.

Chrissy says

This was a fast paced, quick read that I enjoyed. It's the first book in a series of 4 telling the author's story of being a paratrooper with the 101st Airborne during WWII. This book covers his initial jump training, his time leading up to D-Day, D-Day itself, and the subsequent battles that followed over the next few days. The author doesn't delve into bigger issues or about the war as a whole. He simply tells you what he himself went through, so it's very action-packed. He doesn't hold anything back, so he relates gory details also. I look forward to reading his subsequent books

Dirk Grobbelaar says

So, how do you rate a war memoir? Literary merit? Hardly.

Consider: there are numerous scenes in here that would have been considered over-the-top or unrealistic had you come across them in a fictional setting. Problem is: this really happened (or at least there is no reason to doubt the book's claim to authenticity). No dramatic flourishes here either; it's a fact-by-fact, straight as a razor, recounting of events.

It is **imperative** that you read the introduction by Martin Blumenson since it sheds some light on one or two inconsistencies (if you're the nit-picking type), taking into account that the author, as a frontline soldier, wasn't always aware of the bigger picture and is recounting events as he himself remembers them. This is **his** truth, and what a truth it is!

What this book sets out to do, it does exceptionally well. It's a snapshot, from a paratrooper's point of view, of those first chaotic hours of the invasion of France. If ever you've harboured some doubt that war is indeed hell, then this book should set you straight fairly quickly. It's often a harrowing read, especially since the events are (for the most part) depicted rather dispassionately.

As an intimate, first hand, account of men at war, I doubt if you could go wrong with this novel. There are some pretty bizarre situations in here, and the mind-set of the airborne soldier in 1944 takes some getting used to, but it was quite literally a case of desperate situations calling for desperate measures. These were

people (boys) who were trained with one purpose in mind: killing! And kill they did (they were referred to by the Germans as the *Butchers mit big pockets*). Many of them died too. Read this and weep.

Jonathan says

Excellent memoir, honestly written, truly a no holds barred look at training and the fighting in Normandy as seen by Burgett. Highly recommended.

Janet C. says

This is an excellent memoir! The author tells his story from his military training as a paratrooper to fighting battles he was in during World War II in Normandy. I felt that his way of telling his own story made it more real to me.

Tony says

Not as good as the other books I've read about the 101st, but this one was written 41 years ago before the whole "Band of Brothers" thing took off... Very interesting, pretty blunt and plain-spoken - makes you look at these guys as regular old human beings just like the rest of us. I think after watching Band of Brothers so many times I've sort of come to identify these men as their characters in the movie - but they're actual men who had the same fears and short-comings and desires as I do. This book made that very plain.

S.A. Bolich says

I first read this book as a very young teen in a Reader's Digest Condensed version a few years after it came out, and the imagery has stuck with me for all these years. Some of the things he saw and survived were brutal and his luck was phenomenal, especially when you read all 4 of his books. This is one of the most straightforward and completely honest combat accounts ever written. Burgett spares neither himself nor those he feels screwed up around him, while giving praise wherever it is due. His is the foot soldier's account, the guy who never got to see the overall "big picture" but could only piece it together afterward, and it is all the more valuable because of the worm's eye, very personal view of the war he offers. When, in "Seven Roads to Hell", his account of the siege of Bastogne, he admits to screaming in his foxhole during heavy shelling, you know he's not holding much back.

People ding Burgett for the stripped-down style of his writing, but the narrative tells you everything you need to know without dwelling on things that would make any normal person insane if they did so. There is none of the raw anger that drips from Audie Murphy's "To Hell and Back", but you feel Burgett's rage against the casual slaughter perpetrated by the Germans and his wonder over his survival when so many of his friends die around him. One of only 11 of the original 200 guys in his company to survive the war, I can well imagine he has spent his whole life since pondering the vagaries of bullets and fate.

These are excellent books that give you a true sense of what it was like to be a paratrooper in the 101st. He is rightfully proud of his service, and America should be proud of him and all the others who served.

Knowlton Murphy says

Reading Currahee! is like sitting in a small town diner and drinking black coffee from a stained old mug with a too small handle--you feel like you are in a different time and world. Now imagine you are sitting in this diner with a guy who volunteered to jump out of a plane behind enemy lines, and who did in fact invade France. You get brilliant stories of human strength and courage. How anybody could survive what Burgett went through is beyond human reason. Burgett does not describe deep emotional conflict, so the characters often come across as static and two dimensional. But then again, it's a different generation processing horror and shock differently. Also, frankly, the narrator's description of his thoughts and actions describe a kind of survival mode that probably wouldn't have allowed for the kind of Hollywood internal struggles that I usually assume accompany warfare. The only other potential negative is that the author, whether intentionally or not, can sometimes sound a bit braggadocious and his narrative can be accompanied by some stereotypical machismo. But then again, the guy invaded France, so he's probably the real deal. Who knows? Great read, incredible story, worth reading. A bit graphic, but you probably expected that.

Killingsworth says

My first serious introduction to WWII, read in 2015. John Keegan in The Second World War gives the reader an excellent and balanced one-volume analysis of this crucial historical conflict. At 500 plus pages, it is not a short read. However, it is presented with a clear prose and provided me, as a beginner, enough material to understand the events and inspired me for further readings.

John Nevola says

Don Burgett takes the reader on an interesting odyssey of recruiting, training and deploying paratroopers in World War II in Currahee! The "airborne experiment" was totally new and untried in the United States Army and everything had to be learned from scratch. As a result, initial standards for volunteers were extremely high and the hard training reduced the number of men even further. The first airborne regiments consisted of the absolute best-of-the-best when they finally deployed to Europe. It was a standard of such high excellence that it was never to be achieved again in the Airborne.

Burgett takes us through the demanding training and the evolving culture of this new breed of warriors. Then he takes the reader to deployment in England and finally to the chaos of combat before dawn on D-Day. His prose is simple and straightforward and his descriptions of combat are riveting and revealing. He was part of a group of highly trained kids, many still just teenagers, that were dropped all over Normandy, mostly in the wrong places, who were expected to complete their missions. That they did in fact succeed was a tribute to the individuals who coalesced as small units and took action. The 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment lived up to its motto, Currahee (We stand alone, together).

This book has some photos and decent maps and is a must read for those interested in D-Day, paratroopers or World War II in Europe.

Keith says

Donald Burgett wrote 4 books about his experiences as a paratrooper. This is the first book. It is about training and his first combat jumping into France on D-Day. This is a great book from the private's point of view. Easily one of the most readable memoirs to come out of WW2.

I read this when I was about 12 and have read it over several times. I can't recommend it highly enough. If you want to know what the war was like throw out Stephen Ambrose and read this.

Mr. Burgett produced a video series in the last few years about his returning to Europe to visit the sites of his old videos. Check them out. You order right from Mr. Burgett and the proceeds go directly to him.

Relstuart says

A quick read but a good one. The author of this memoir was a paratrooper in WWII. In this book he tells his story of going thru training and how incredibly tough they were on people. Shocking how many people died during training. Those who washed out were sent to the military police (MP). Leading the paratroopers who made it resent the officious demeanor of the MPs.

If you have seen Band of Brothers and enjoyed it this is a great supplement as it shows some of the rougher edges and interesting things that happened that didn't make it into the show. He also talks about the paratrooper mindset where you didn't get attached to people around you because you never knew who might get killed next.

A couple parts that stood out to me was when he talked about while they were training in England a very pretty young woman who didn't think she was being watched took off her shoes, waded into a stream, and drowned herself. They ran to the edge of the stream to pull her out but could not find her. The author does not speculate why and so you don't have any idea either.

He also talks about how they killed several Japanese troops in Japanese uniforms in the fighting around D-day and how Russian troops fighting with the Germans attacked them mounted on horseback in classic cavalry charges.

His story is told with no literary flourishes in a very direct style.

Granny2793 says

Ah Currahee; this book started it all... During 8th grade (a kid who hated reading) I picked this book to end the year on. This book was the greatest book I have ever read I stayed up all night (school night) reading this book. This book got me started on reading. Donald R. Burgett can write this series of novels takes you through the entire 101st tour from Normandy to Germany. It's not just a war story but a greater legend. Highly recommend this war series, make your son read it and who knows maybe he will thank you for it.

Xon says

This reads almost as a diary. Burgett takes you from his training to become a paratrooper, to his life in England while waiting for the Normandy jump, to D-Day and the close fighting with Nazis that ensued in the days after. There is no strategy, no politics, no 40 year old man trying to make heads from tails on something that happened 70 years ago, and nobody's fourth hand interpretation of someone's stories or writings who was actually there. You feel like you are there in all the confusion and fighting amongst the hedges. Burgett doesn't even use chapters to separate towns, battles or days. This often made me feel confused, especially if I set the book down for a few hours. However, this adds to the feeling of being there because it's likely that Burgett was so overwhelmed that each battle and town just meshed together to create one big blur. Very unique memoir. Looking forward to reading his other three.

Shane Mcgonigal says

Currahee is one of the best books that I have ever read. For a book on World War II, it is the best one that I have ever read.

Burgett is a natural story teller who brings you right into the training of a paratrooper (that might be correct, I'm not good with military terminology) and then onto the bloodstained country of France during D-day and the several days that were after it.

He goes into just enough detail to keep you reading but without going into long explanations. He does a marvelous job of showing the emotions he went through when friends died, when something happened that went against them.

Definitely a must read if you are a WWII buff. It gives you a very good idea of what life was as a soldier during that time of the war.

The next book, Across the Arnhem is almost as good. It has the same detail, but doesn't quite carry as well.

The third book, Seven Roads to Hell, is just as good. It goes into detail about the Battle of the Bulge and the pressure we were under to hold the line.

The fourth book, Beyond the Rhine, deals with the after affects of the war. It doesn't have the action, but it is very entertaining
