



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

By Ian Westwell

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The oldest continuously serving division in the U.S. 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 organized 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, Jr. and Lesley J. McNair—served with the division in World War I.

The Big Red One was redesignated 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 honors are Tunisia, Sicily, Normandy, the Bulge, Germany. Postwar, the division served in Europe, Vietnam, Desert Shield, Desert Storm and Bosnia. It's currently based in Germany.

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