

Benjamin Franklin's "Airborne Idea" and Colonel William Mitchell's "Airborne Plan" were the beginning of the American "airborne effort," which began with small experiments of dropping parachutists and weapons in the twenties and thirties and it was just enough to develop the "airborne effort." The Russians were building on Colonel Mitchell's concept and had begun to use the parachute troops as a military weapon. Also the Germans had not fallen behind and had focuses even more on establishment of the parachute and glider units. They turned the "airborne idea" into a masterpiece and showed it to the world in the invasion of Crete in May of 1941. The cost of the airborne and glider operation in Crete was too high. For this reason the Germans abandoned further airborne operation. The German of Crete was the moment initiative in airborne effort started to grow in the United States. It convinced America of the effectiveness of airborne units, which got the attention U.S. Army Ground forces. In April 1940 the War Department approved formation of the Parachute Test Platoon. The American Airborne effort was on very soon that the War Department gave another approval to form the first parachute battalion. That battalion was activated in September 1940. The airborne effort started to grow even bigger after the War Department approved the plan to form three more parachute infantry battalions in 1941. In result of the Declaration of War, the War Department ordered that four parachute infantry regiments be formed. Those regiments were created in the spring of 1942. The establishment of the four parachute infantry regiment called for unity of command. Then the airborne command was activated in March 1942. In the spring of 1942 General Lee went to England to observe the British airborne units and ideas. The British were moving ahead with plans for airborne division.