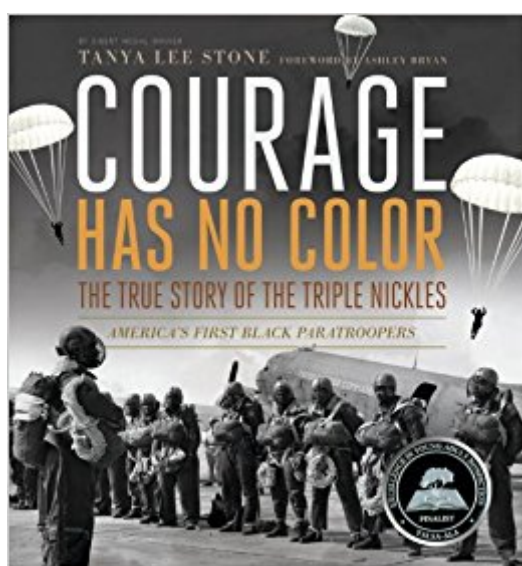


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# Courage Has No Color, The True Story Of The Triple Nickles: America's First Black Paratroopers (Junior Library Guild Selection)



## Synopsis

“A 2014 YALSA Excellence in Nonfiction Finalist” An exceptionally well-researched, lovingly crafted, and important tribute to unsung American heroes.” —Kirkus Reviews (starred review) World War II is raging, and thousands of American soldiers are fighting overseas against the injustices brought on by Hitler. Back on the home front, discrimination against African Americans plays out as much on Main Street as in the military. Tanya Lee Stone examines the little-known history of the Triple Nickles, America’s first black paratroopers, who fought in an attack on the American West by the Japanese. The 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion, in the words of First Sergeant Walter Morris, “proved that the color of a man had nothing to do with his ability.” Front matter includes a foreword by Ashley Bryan. Back matter includes an author’s note, an appendix, a time line, source notes, a bibliography, and an index.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 10 - 13 years

Grade Level: 5 and up

## Customer Reviews

Gr 5 Up—A moving, thoughtful history of the the United States military’s first black paratrooper unit. During World War II, African American soldiers were mostly relegated to service and security jobs, generally denied the same training and active-combat positions that were available to their white

counterparts. Expertly woven together are two narratives: the large, overarching history of rampant racism in the U.S. military and the smaller, tightly focused account of a group of black soldiers determined to serve their country and demonstrate their value as soldiers. Readers are taken along on the emotional journey with the soldiers as they leapt forward from guard duty at The Parachute School into official paratrooper training, the first of its kind for blacks. They faced multiple setbacks as they encountered discrimination, some justified as "policy" and some that was more personal and insidious. Throughout the book, the courage and strength of these men is evidenced in their tireless quest to be the best at what they do, throwing themselves headlong into sometimes dangerous and terrifying training requirements. The photographs and the design of the book as a whole are a gift to readers. Rich with detail, the pictures not only complement the narrative, but also tell a stirring story of their own, chronicling the triumphs and frustrations of the soldiers as they pursued their dreams. Complete accessibility to a wide range of readers, coupled with expert research and meticulous care, makes this a must-have for any library. --Jody Kopple, Shady Hill School, Cambridge, MA

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**\*Starred Review\*** Starting with a riveting opening that puts readers into the shoes of a paratrooper on a training flight, this large-format book offers an informative introduction to the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion. Known as the Triple Nickles, they were America's first black paratrooper unit. Though WWII brought increased racial integration to the military, the pace was painfully slow. This book traces the paratroopers' story through their training and their long wait for orders to join the fighting overseas—orders that never came. Instead, the Triple Nickles were sent to fight fires in remote areas of western states. Decades passed before the men were officially honored for service to their country. Written with great immediacy, clarity, and authority, Stone's vivid narrative draws readers into the Triple Nickles' wartime experiences. Many well-chosen quotes enhance the text, while excellent black-and-white illustrations, mainly photos, document both the men of the 555th and the racial prejudice on the home front. Adding another personal perspective, artist and writer Ashley Bryan, an African American veteran of WWII, contributes the book's foreword, a drawing, and a painting from the period. This handsome volume documents the sometimes harrowing, often frustrating, and ultimately rewarding experiences of the Triple Nickles. Grades 5-9. --Phelan, Carolyn --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

History, perhaps more than any other subject taught in our public schools, is subject to the whims of politicians and bureaucrats who, sadly, base far too many of their decisions about what students will learn on their personal racial and gender biases. As a public school student in the 1950s and 1960s, for example, I learned about white soldiers who fought against the Axis Powers during World War II. I learned their names and studied their exploits. It wasn't until much later, long after I had graduated from high school, that I learned about the exploits of the Tuskegee Airmen, African-American pilots and air crews who were members of the 332nd Fighter Group and the 477th Bombardment Group. They compiled an amazing combat record during World War II but I was denied the opportunity to know about them while attending public schools in Connecticut, New York and Ohio. Their contributions were not taught in my classes; there were no books about them in the libraries of the schools I attended. It was later still that I learned about the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a unit composed of Japanese-Americans who fought heroically in Europe, receiving more medals for bravery under fire than ANY other U.S. unit. And it wasn't until I recently purchased and read 'Courage Has No Color' that I learned about the first all-black paratroop battalion in World War II. The 555th Parachute Battalion was denied the opportunity to do battle in Europe or the Pacific because some of the most revered names in American military history - including Douglas MacArthur and George C. Marshall - were unwilling to send them into combat. Instead, the Triple Nickles trained hard and were ready to fight, only to be shunted aside by a white power structure that considered them unfit for combat duty based solely upon the color of their skin. That did not mean, however, that they did not contribute to the war effort. Unlike most paratroopers, who seldom make jumps in combat, the 555th recorded 1,200 jumps into hostile environments. Not against enemy troops. Against forest fires. Author Tanya Lee Stone has done a wonderful job in helping to bring to light the story of this pioneering unit that showed the white establishment that men of color could meet, and exceed, the military's exacting standards. Written in clear, straightforward language, this is a book that's designed for young people but, as someone who is well into his 60s, I must say that I would recommend it to anyone of any age who is truly interested in the history of the United States and its military. And that includes those elected officials and bureaucrats at both local and state levels who perpetuate the mindless racism that keeps American students from learning about ALL the people of the United States and the contributions that they have made to this country.

Courage Has No Color was an excellent historical book I read aloud to my 8, 11 & 13 year old. The author does a beautiful job narrating the irony of how our country was at war with one of the most prejudice leaders our world has known (Hitler) while African-America soldiers were facing with racial

prejudice within our own country/military. This book shares many insights that I do not recall ever learning in history. I was fascinated by the information on the balloons with bombs that were floated into our country and how the Triple Nickles were instrumental in fighting WWII on our countries home front. Excellent book to read alone or in combination with other material to stimulate conversation on WWII, Black History Month and Civil Rights. The illustrations, photos and interviews are excellent. Beautiful Book.

right on point.i'm a member of Chicago chapter of the 555th trained by them at jump school Fort Bragg N.C. during Korean war.Airborne All The Way

I am very happy with the book. I am a associate member of the 555th PIR.

Self-proclaimed non-history fan, this book made learning about history enjoyable. Well written and enough photographs to wonder where the author ever found them! Required reading for a college class....and enjoyable and worthy of your time.

Good Book! All paratroopers should read this book it's part of "Airborne History". Airborne, All The Way.

Bought this as a surprise for my husband since he is a huge history person. This touched his heart since it contained information he had not seen before. Thrill and surprise, who could ask for more.

The book is very interesting about the paratroopers and is very informational. It has good old military tactics also. Hope you enjoy whoever reads this.

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