



Learning under Fire: The 112th Cavalry Regiment in World War II (Williams-Ford Texas A&M University Military History Series)

By James S. Powell

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Thrown into the heart of war with little training--and even less that would apply to the battles in which they were engaged--the units of the 112th Cavalry Regiment faced not only the Japanese enemy, but a rugged environment for which they were ill-prepared. They also grappled with the continuing challenge of learning new military skills and tactics across ever-shifting battlefields.

The 112th Cavalry Regiment entered federal service in November 1940 as war clouds gathered thick on the horizon. By July 1942, the 112th was headed for the Pacific theater.

As the war neared its end, the regiment again had to shift its focus quickly from an anticipated offensive on the Japanese home islands to becoming part of the occupation force in the land of a conquered enemy.

James S. Powell thoroughly mines primary documents and buttresses his story with pertinent secondary accounts as he explores in detail the ways in which this military unit adapted to the changing demands of its tactical and strategic environment. He demonstrates that this learning was not simply a matter of steadily building on experience and honing relevant skills. It also required discovering shortcomings and promptly taking action to improve—often while in direct contact with the enemy.

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Review

"Powell provides the reader not just with a riveting narrative of GIs in combat but with a sharp analysis of how a unit learns under fire. This is an exquisitely crafted unit history with important lessons for a military confronting ever-changing enemies."-Peter Schrijvers, author, *The GI War against Japan*
(Peter Schrijvers *author, The GI War against Japan*)

"Learning under Fire recruits the reader into the 112th Cavalry Regiment and leads him through a combat odyssey from Texas to Tokyo. Along the way the regiment learns to fight, fights to survive, and wishes it could learn faster. James Powell has given us a clear-eyed account of combat in one of World War II's most unsung and complex theaters."--Col. Matthew Moten, professor of history, West Point

(Col. Matthew Moten)

"The book represents a valuable contribution to today's military, in addition to being a well-written history of the 112th Cavalry during World War II."—Alan M. Anderson, *Army History*
(Alan M. Anderson *Army History* 2012-12-19)

About the Author

JAMES S. POWELL is a lieutenant colonel in the United States Army. He deployed to Iraq in November 2006 and presently serves as a strategic plans and policy officer in the Defense Department's Office of Net Assessment. His PhD is from Texas A&M University.

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