

# THE DEADEYE DISPATCH



Official Newsletter of the 96th Infantry Division Association Heritage Fund WINTER 2023

## THE DEADEYE DISPATCH

From the jungles on Leyte Island in the Philippines in 1944 to the present day with a few interruptions, the Deadeye Dispatch has informed and posted stories pertaining to the 96th Infantry Division, its veterans and its modern command, the 96th Sustainment Brigade. Here is how the newsletter originated and evolved.

**THE LIEUTENANT AND THE GENERAL** - At a 96th Infantry Division's boot camp in Oregon, a young Lieutenant named Daniel W. Millsaps, Jr. had just completely missed a target on the shooting range with his rifle. A red flag was raised, nicknamed 'Maggie's Drawers' that indicated a miss, and that caught the attention of an officer. He shouted out "Who was that?." The green Lieutenant who was a recent graduate from Fort Bragg, North Carolina and had just missed the mark was now looking up at Brigadier General Claudius M. Easley. Easley was the second in command of the 96th Infantry Division and coincidentally having been the captain of the US Army's pistol and rifle teams, probably the best shot in the whole Army! The general took the lieutenant under his wing from that day on, making him

a bullseye target shooter, a more well rounded officer, and then Easley's friend and aide. When the Deadeyes shipped out of Hawaii, they headed west across the Pacific. When the assault transport ships first got to Eniwetok, General Easley invited Lt. Millsaps to have a drink on shore. Gen. Easley wanted some news of the Deadeyes to get to the outside world and also to bring stories and information to his troops. He therefore offered the newly authorized Information and Education officer post to Millsaps, which was accepted. From that little cocktail trip onshore the idea of a divisional newsletter was conceived. The division next shipped out to the South Pacific and the huge Seeadler Harbor anchorage of the Admiralty Island of Manus, which held the 600 ship Philippine invasion fleet. On board one of the troop transports, a primitive shipboard newsletter was printed up on a borrowed Navy hand cranked mimeograph machine. A.B. Dick, the manufacturer of the Mimeograph believed that most orders issued by American commanders in WW 2 were printed on their machines.

*DEADEYE continued on Page 2*

### World War 2 Army formations at full strength and their Commanders

Division - 14,253 men  
*Major General*

Regiment - 3,113 men  
*Colonel*

Battalion - 871 men  
*Lieutenant Colonel*

Company - 193 men  
*Captain or Major*

Platoon - 41 men  
*Lieutenant*

Squad - 12 men  
*Sergeant*

### ALPHABET SOUP US ARMY ACRONYMS

- ATSP Army Specialized Training Program
- AWOL Absent Without Leave
- BAR Browning Automatic Rifle  
A 30 caliber automatic rifle
- C2 or C3 Plastic explosive found  
in satchel charges
- CO Commanding Officer
- DUKW Amphibious truck often used to haul supplies
- GI American serviceman  
Also called GI Joe
- HBT Herring Bone Twill / green GI uniform fabric
- JANFU Joint Army / Navy Foul Up
- KP Kitchen Patrol (Kill Privates)
- LCPL Landing Craft Personnel Large  
landing craft for 36 men
- LCM Landing Craft Mechanized : could ferry 1 light tank or 100 men
- LCT Landing Craft Tank  
could carry 4 Sherman tanks ashore
- LVT Landing Vehicle Tank  
could carry 18 men ashore
- LCI Landing Craft Infantry  
carried 200 men or jeeps and trucks
- LST Landing Ship Tank  
327 ft ship with bow doors,  
carried 3,880 tons
- LSD Landing Ship Dock  
could carry 36 LCM's
- NCO Non Commissioned Officer
- OP Observation Post
- PX Servicemen's store
- QM Quartermaster
- SNAFU Situation Normal All Fouled Up
- TS Tough Stuff
- WAC Women's Army Corps



### 96th Sustainment Brigade Fort Douglas, Utah, USA

The 96th Sustainment Brigade was activated on 18 September 2008 at Fort Douglas. In 2009 the Brigade succeeded the 96th Regional Readiness Command as part of a major reorganization of the Army Reserve. The Brigade inherited the lineage and honors of the 96th Infantry Division, 96th Army Command and the 96th Regional Readiness Command. The history of the 96th began in 1918 and continues today. In 2009 the 96th Sustainment Brigade was mobilized and deployed to Taji and Al Assad, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The unit mission is to manage logistic sustainment operations in support of a Theater Support Command. The 96th Sustainment Brigade stands ready to deploy in support of our Army's worldwide mission.

The mission of the 96th Infantry Division Heritage Fund is to guard the legacies and honor the sacrifices of our 96th veterans. Through oral history preservation, documentary films, educational programs and civic events, the Heritage Fund will work to insure that Americans fully appreciate and never forget the sacrifices made by our 96th Division who have worn the uniform.

The 96th Infantry Division Heritage Fund is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization funded by generous donations from people like you. All donations are tax-deductible.

Donations to  
**HELP THEIR LEGACY LIVE ON**  
can be made payable to :  
**96th Infantry Division  
Association Heritage Fund  
and mailed to:**

**96th Infantry Division  
Association Heritage Fund  
Robert Young, Treasurer  
12 Delgado Lane  
Stansbury Park, UT 84704**



# DEADEYE NEWS & FEATURES

*DEADEYE continued from Page 1*

Although its name is lost to history, this newsletter could be considered the mother of the Deadeye Dispatch, as it was produced by soldiers under Millsap's command.

**THE DEADEYE DISPATCH** - Soon after the Deadeyes landed at Dulag Beach, Leyte Island on October 20th, 1944 a mimeograph and other equipment was 'borrowed' from an Air Force unit just down the road.

(Now) Captain Millsaps and his staff of 11 Deadeyes published their first editions of the Deadeye Dispatch as the battle for Leyte Island raged on. In many instances the Dispatch was delivered to front-line troops at the company level or posted on battalion info boards. Often the Dispatch was published daily when possible. T/4 Sid Meyer and T/4 Joe Hanisch were Editor/ Writers and Pfc. Gilbert Feinstein was the War Correspondent. He also served as the 96th press liaison with US newspapermen such as Robert Shaplen of Newsweek and Herb Paul of the Minnesota Star Journal and others. The first Dispatches were banged out on typewriters and had some cartoons and illustrations which were cut from the wax mimeograph stencils by hand with a stylus. The quality was low but the reception of the troops was high. Newsworthy stories and articles and humor was good for morale. A star was born.

The Dispatch briefly changed into more of a magazine look with the addition of the Deadeye Features which were more professionally done using a Mimeoscope for better graphics. The first Okinawan Deadeye Dispatch came out on April 1st, 1945 aka Love Day as the Deadeyes landed on the Hagushi beaches of southern Okinawa, Japan.

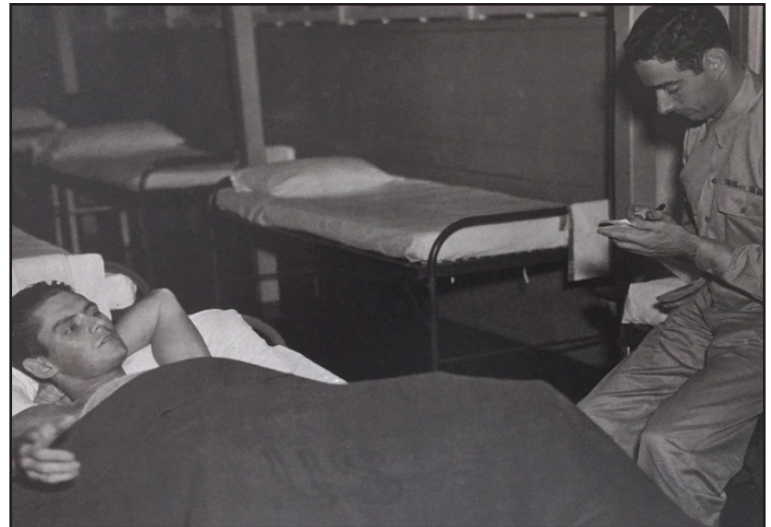
(Editors note: As a homage to that edition, I utilized the prone rifleman from that paper and incorporated the stencil cut image into the new masthead design of the Deadeye Dispatch.)

**POSTWAR DISPATCH** - As the soldiers of the 96th returned home to start families and businesses, there was no longer a need for the Deadeye Dispatch for the time being. When the veterans of the

96th Infantry Division started to have annual reunions, the Deadeye Dispatch was resurrected as the official newsletter of the 96th Infantry Division Association,. The quality of the 'new' Dispatch was much better, having been printed on a small printing press. The paper became a way for Deadeyes to stay connected and plan future reunions. Although the graphics and stories would change and evolve with the changing times, the overall black and white look would remain with the occasional spot (second color) until the Spring 2006 edition. The big change then was a switch to modern computer graphics and full color / 4 color process. The Dispatch would only continue to improve with this appearance until the Spring of 2019. In 2017, the decision had been made to merge the 96th Infantry Deadeye Association into the 96th Infantry Division Heritage Fund, and this became effective January 1, 2018. The newsletter was placed on hold for a time. Currently the Deadeye Dispatch is planned to come out twice yearly. The focus will be on preserving the memory and legacy of the 96th Infantry Division, and its modern incarnation, the 96th Sustainment Brigade. It is hoped that these wonderful men and women and their families will be able to learn more about the rich history and patriotic service of the Deadeyes.

As the new Editor of the Deadeye Dispatch, I remember the words of the late and great Donald Dencker, Love Company, 382nd Regiment, 96th Infantry Division. "Be factual and don't embellish!" I will certainly try to achieve this. This is not my newsletter. It is YOUR newsletter. Please feel free to contribute news and stories and your content will be considered. And lastly, I am honored to remember my dad Cpl. Gilbert Feinstein, (1912-1976) combat correspondent for the wartime Deadeye Dispatch, Deadeye Features, Midpacifican and the Stars and Stripes newspaper..

RBF February, 2023





# DEADEYE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*by Jim Collins, President, 96th Infantry Division Association Heritage Fund*

## 96th Infantry Division Association Heritage Fund

### President's Report for 2022

This past year has been almost totally focused on establishing a new web site. Without it we are limited in what we can do to meet our own goals. Matt Helget took on the task of finding someone to design a new web site and worked on gathering materials to populate the site. There is a lot of information and it will take some time to get it all scanned and uploaded. When it is on the site we will be off to a good start. Our new web site will be a good start but it will have to evolve as we gather more information and as we find new uses for it as a communication tool. The initial version of the web site released on 13 September 2022 shows promise for the future. The official launch should be coming soon then it will be time to build it out and consider more changes to the design as our future needs dictate.

Our financial situation is very good. We have sufficient funds to preserve the history of the 96th and our annual expenses are very low. The web site will increase our annual expenses but that will have to be budgeted out next year. Robert Young has done an excellent job managing our finances and gives me great confidence that we are legally doing what is needed to be a 501 (c)(3) corporation.

Fund raising has slowed in large measure due to the lack of a functioning web site. That is about to change and I am confident we will be effective in new fund raising campaigns with this new tool to help us reach out to our interested supporters.

Creating the next generation Deadeye Dispatch as a digital publication has been taken on by Robert Feinstein. He was ready to publish it 8 months ago but the day is soon coming. What a fascinating connection of the past and present not only in the publication but in who is writing it. Robert's father was a writer for the Dispatch during WW II and now his son is carrying on the tradition.

In anticipation of having our web site go live I think it is a good time to have a change of leadership in the Heritage Fund. The new web site will offer an opportunity to operate differently and have some different goals as well as new ways of doing things. So I will not seek reelection for the 2022/2023 Board of Directors.

In 2005 the board of the 96th Infantry Division Deadeye Association was going to hold its last reunion in Washington DC. I encouraged the board to create a new association so that the reunions could continue. They agreed. Tom Roby and I talked about setting up a not for profit corporation. Tom had been the President of the 96th Infantry Division Deadeye Association. Initially we set up the Division Association as a fraternal organization and it was focused on holding reunions. We had 12 more years of reunions before shutting down this legal association.

It took 2 years to legally establish the Heritage Fund and so in 2007 it was in business. There were three of us that started it: Jim Collins - President, Tom Roby - Vice President and Mike McCafferty - Secretary/Treasurer. Mike was the former Chief of Staff at the 96th Regional Support Command. The Heritage Fund worked in conjunction with the Deadeye Association, one for fund raising and the other for reunions. In 2017 we decided to shut down the Deadeye Association. No more reunions. We would instead have an Annual Meeting if we wanted.

But the focus really changed from an annual reunion group to one that is focused on preserving the history of the 96th, from WW I to the present. The financial structure of the Deadeye Association could not do this. So it

*DEADEYE PRESIDENT'S continued on Page 4*



*Jim Collins  
Major General (Ret)*

#### OATH of COMMISSIONED OFFICERS

I \_\_\_do solemnly swear  
(or affirm ) that I will  
support and defend  
the Constitution of the  
United States against  
all enemies, foreign and  
domestic; that I will bear  
true faith and allegiance  
to the same; that I take  
this obligation freely,  
without any mental  
reservation or purpose  
of evasion; and that I  
will well and faithfully  
discharge the duties of  
the office on which I am  
about to enter. So help  
me God.  
(Title 5 U.S. Code 3331)





# DEADEYE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*by Jim Collins, President, 96th Infantry Division Heritage Fund*

*DEADEYE PRESIDENT'S continued from Page 3*

is my view that with the Heritage Fund we are positioned for the future. By preserving and archiving our history we are providing a wealth of knowledge that Deadeye families can research and learn about the rich history of their family, friends and loved ones who served with honor and distinction wearing the Double Diamond.

After 15 years serving as Heritage Fund President it was clear I was on a path of President for Life! No. Time for a change. Over all these years I was friends with and worked with so many great people involved with the 96th Division Association. I have great memories of them all.

While I may not be on the next board of directors I plan to stay engaged with the History Committee. I would like to write about my own experiences with the 96th Regional Support Command and publish the materials I saved from that time frame.

Liz Moroz Harper will be succeeding me as President. To Liz and the next Board of Directors I offer to you my very best wishes for success as you lead the Heritage Fund deeper into the Digital Age!

James P. Collins  
Major General, USA - Retired  
Commanding General 96th Regional Support Command  
President - 96th Infantry Division Deadeye Association  
President - 96th Infantry Division Heritage Fund

## BIOGRAPHY

### Major General James P. Collins

MG Collins retired from the Army on 30 March 2005 after 40 years of commissioned service. In his last duty assignment from 2001 to 2005 he was the Commanding General of the US Army 96th Regional Readiness Command. Headquartered at Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City, Utah, the 96th had command and control over 67 U.S. Army Reserve units in six states, Colorado, Montana, North and South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming with a total of nearly 7000 soldiers.

MG Collins was commissioned a Second Lieutenant from the Hofstra University ROTC program in 1965. His first duty assignment after completing the Engineer Officer Basic Course was with the 29th Engineer Battalion in Hawaii. While assigned to the battalion he was a platoon leader, assistant S2/3 and Commander of the 95th Engineer Company. He was subsequently transferred to Vietnam where he commanded C Company, 26th Engineer Battalion with the 11th Infantry Brigade of the American (23rd) Infantry Division. Following the Engineer Officer Advanced Course he was selected for graduate school and earned a Masters of Science in Geodesy at the Ohio State University. MG Collins then was assigned to the Secretary of the Air Force Office of Special Projects located at Space and Missile Systems Organization in el Segundo, California where was a Project Engineer and Program Manager.

MG Collins then left Active Duty in 1975, joined the 63rd Army Reserve Command and was assigned to the 1394th Deployment Control Unit at Camp Pendleton, California. He held several assignments there including Commander of the 359th Engineer Detachment and Assistant Operations Officer and then Operations Officer for the 1394th.

He was called to Active Duty in November 1990 with the 1394th DCU in support of Desert Shield and Desert Storm and deployed with the unit to Saudi Arabia. Soon after retiring from Saudi Arabia he was selected to take command of the 1394th Deployment Support Brigade in 1992. Following this there year assignment he became the Deputy Chief of staff or Operations at the 63rd Regional Support Command.

He was then promoted to Brigadier General and became the Deputy Commanding General of Military Traffic Management Command's Western Area at Oakland Army Base in June 1996. The next assignment was as Deputy Commanding General of MTMC's Deployment Support Command at Fort Eustis, Virginia in January 1999.

His awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Meritorious Unit Commendation Medal, Army Superior Unit Award and decorations for overseas service.



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*President Harry S. Truman awarding the Congressional Medal of Honor to Staff Sgt. Beauford T. Anderson*

## Publications and Media

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Adair Living History.....Matt Helget



# DEADEYE NEWS & FEATURES

## BEFORE THE TOILS OF WAR

Those of us who have followed or studied the history of our beloved Deadeyes are very familiar with the combat stories of mostly Okinawa and some with Leyte. Prior to the baptism of fire in the South Pacific and the slog of that hellacious Ryukyus island, there was a history of the 96th Infantry Division including almost two full years of training state-side. Little is known or published about it, but the 96th Division was an entity prior to the Second World War. Here is a snippet of that story.

The 96th Infantry Division was first activated for service during the First World War in October 1918 (Inc., 2020). The Division would start to form with the initial cadre at Camp Wadsworth, South Carolina. The division would be under the tooling of Maj. Gen. Guy Carleton. The division was just starting to organize into the square division assignment of the Army (two regiments with two brigades apiece to form the square) to start training when the armistice ending the war was declared (History, 2020). The initial count of soldiers under the designation of the 96th Division would be just under 3000 dough boys. In January 1919, the division would be deactivated.

In 1921, the 96th would be given new life. The division would be transferred to the west coast and activated as a reserve unit based in Portland Ore. The division would still follow the square division formation of WWI but would serve in reserve status. This was important for the west coast in that ROTC graduates from Oregon and Washington universities would serve in these ranks during peacetime training and readiness programs. The regiments would be in strategic places throughout the Willamette Valley of Oregon according to a 1925 issue of the Columbian (Citation). At the end of the 1930s though, the number of troops in the Reserves had dwindled to a critical point to where many reserve units were about to become casualties of budget cuts. Then a little event on December 7th, 1941 would change that course of action.

With the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the division would again see new life. With the commission of the building of the Corvallis cantonment area, Camp Adair, the division would be activated there on August 15, 1942 as a triangle division. The triangle division would have the three regiments; 381st, 382nd, and 383rd

along with the artillery batteries, medical support and the troops that would round out the division support and ranks. While the division would be at Adair, the freshly conscripted soldiers would complete their basic training regimen to convert from citizens to soldiers. During this basic training, the soldiers would earn the moniker “Deadeyes” thanks to the mentorship from Brig. Gen. Claudius Easley. By accounts, it was not uncommon for a soldier to be given pointers while on the range from Easley. They would also march, practice infiltration, work with gas masks, and bivouac to gain the skills that would prove to be necessary on the battlefield. When the division would finish these first 13 weeks of training and then graduate to more advanced training, the venue would change also.

The next stop for the Division would be the freshly minted Fort Lewis in Washington. Here the division would continue learning the dreadful art of war. Here is where the non-commissioned officers (NCOs) would be trained for their new jobs. Advanced infantry tactics and the continual drill would take place. This would build the continuity of the division as a fighting unit. It also instilled more discipline by filling out the NCO ranks and the chain of command moving up. Range time, continual work with field problems (what the in the field training/ bivouacs are called), close order drill, and free time would make up the schedules of the 96th while at Ft. Lewis. During the short time there, many of the functions that would be displayed in battle would be solidified during these short weeks.

What is tended to be forgotten in the history of the Deadeyes was that they initially did not train to go to the Pacific Theater of Operations (PTO). The military brass had the notion that the war in Europe had to be won first and then the Pacific front. The Deadeyes would use the rolling hills of Oregon’s Willamette Valley to train for the similar terrain of Central Europe and the Rhineland. The division would be flagged to go to PTO after a series of war games in 1943. Additional state-side division history happens with those games and subsequent moves. This history is how the nickname would come about and initial training.

Matt Helget  
Member of the Heritage Committee  
World War 2 Historian



369th Field Artillery Bn.



921st Field Artillery Bn.



96th Military Police Platoon



96th Signal Company



796th Ordnance Company



96th Quartermaster Company



96th Reconnaissance Troop



96th Division Band



# DEADEYE NEWS & FEATURES



381st Infantry Regiment



382d Infantry Regiment



383d Infantry Regiment



321st Medical Battalion



Hq. & Hq. Battery, 96th Division Artillery



321st Engineer Combat Battalion



361st Field Artillery Bn.



362d Field Artillery Bn.



## THE DEADEYES

*What's in a name*

The phrase 'dead eye' first appeared in a 1906 article on target shooting.

"Our old friend the dead eye, the marksman who makes such a wonderful score in the yearly courses..." United Service Magazine

Not surprisingly, the 96th Infantry Division's nickname, "The Deadeyes" pays homage to the GI's skills on the firing ranges at boot-camps like Camp White and Camp Adair in Oregon. The newly minted soldiers of the 96th were trained to accurately hit targets at 200, 300 and 500 yards. All of the troops in the 96th were strongly encouraged to become marksmen, sharpshooters, or experts, whether they were infantrymen, cooks, truck drivers or members of the Division's band. Initially using World War I bolt action rifles like the Lee Enfield and the M1903 Springfield (nicknamed The Mule by the soldiers due to its sharp 'kick') after Pearl Harbor, the US Army had already switched to the semi automatic clip fed M1 Garand. The lightweight and lighter caliber M1 carbine was used on the 300 yard carbine range, but it was more useful for closer distances. On the shooting ranges, if a soldier missed his

target, a red flag was raised. The flag was nicknamed "Maggies Drawers" and the GI's soon took pride in hitting the targets accurately.

ENTER THE GENERAL - Brigadier General Claudius Easley was second in command of the 96th. In addition to a sterling career in the US Army, Easley was Captain of the Army's shooting team, and arguably the best shot in the Army. He routinely and personally instructed the soldiers on the firing lines in the finer arts of shouldering a rifle, windage and elevation, controlled breathing and trigger control. It was not unusual to see Gen. Easley laying along side, or standing behind Deadeyes while they learned the four standard firing positions, prone, standing, sitting and kneeling. It was most likely Gen. Easley who coined the name "The Deadeyes" for his beloved soldiers. An estimated 7,600 Imperial Japanese soldiers on Leyte and 37,760 on Okinawa were to perish under the guns and other weaponry of the Deadeyes of the 96th Infantry Division.



# DEADEYE NEWS & FEATURES

## A MEDAL OF HONOR STORY

*Pvt. Ova Kelley*

Ova Kelley, a mortar ammunition bearer, was a replacement soldier who was initially shunned by the veterans in his unit. Dark haired and burly, he was also a little too talkative, inquisitive and gung ho for most of them. However, he became locally popular because of his dedication to his pet carabao (water buffalo) named Satan, who carried heavy loads of ammunition and supplies for the company through the swampy terrain. And he was soon to save the lives of many of his men.



### ATTACK FROM THE SKY

At dusk on the evening of December 6th, 1944, 38 Japanese transport planes filled with elite paratroopers roared inland from Leyte Gulf. 30 were shot down and the surviving planes released their men over two airfields, San Pablo and Buri. They were joined by 450 soldiers of the Japanese 16th Division. This coup de main counterattack was intended to initiate the retaking of Leyte Island from the invading American Army and Navy forces. To counter this threat, a scratch force of GI's from several different units including Kelley's 1st Battalion were rushed to the airfields that night to bolster troops from the 11th Airborne Division.. The Japanese paratroopers spent the night shooting up equipment and buildings, sometimes using seized American uniforms and captured machine guns.

That night, the Japanese paratroopers occupied shell craters on one side of the Buri airstrip on some high ground. Kelly and A Company bedded down on the opposite side of the tarmac. The raiders set up two machine guns looking down on A Company, ready to annihilate them at first light. KELLEY and the SNIPERSCOPE

Before dawn, Kelley's gut instincts told him that something bad was about to happen. Against orders, he opened a wooden box containing a new and secret weapons system, a M2 carbine rifle, a night vision scope and its power source. Turning on the scope, he saw the two Japanese machine guns across the airstrip pointed right at him in the darkness! As the sun was coming up that morning, Ova Kelley tried to wake up the men around him and alert them to the danger. The Japanese machine guns then opened up a withering crossfire.

Just to raise ones head above their foxholes to shoot back would have been suicidal. Pinned down, Pfc. Warren G. Perkins braved the flying bullets long enough to spot the enemy guns and shout directions to a nearby 60 mm mortar squad. They



laid in a dangerously close range barrage at 50 yards and knocked out one of the machine guns with their first shot. This momentarily stunned the Japanese paratroopers and they started milling around in consternation. Pfc. Kelley saw this and decided to spring into action. Alone, he charged across the 100 yard runway. Using M1 Garands and M2 Carbines ( when 1 would jam or run out of ammunition, he would pick up another ) and armloads of hand grenades he became an 'army of one'. Electrified by this attack, his buddies joined Kelley in charging the Japanese line. In minutes, 35 Japanese lay



dead, and their defensive line was shattered. As his fellow soldiers stopped to pick up souvenirs, Kelley moved farther forward, now exposing himself to an enemy sniper. A shot rang out and Ova was hit. He was placed on a stretcher awaiting medical aid. Two hours later, still laying on the stretcher, he was shot again, and killed instantly.

For his calculating courage and unselfish actions that morning, Pfc. Ova Kelley would posthumously be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the only Deadeye on Leyte to receive that honor. *(More information on Pages 18&19)*







# DEADEYE NEWS & FEATURES

## THE BATTLE OF HACKSAW RIDGE, OKINAWA

*April 26-May 7, 1945*

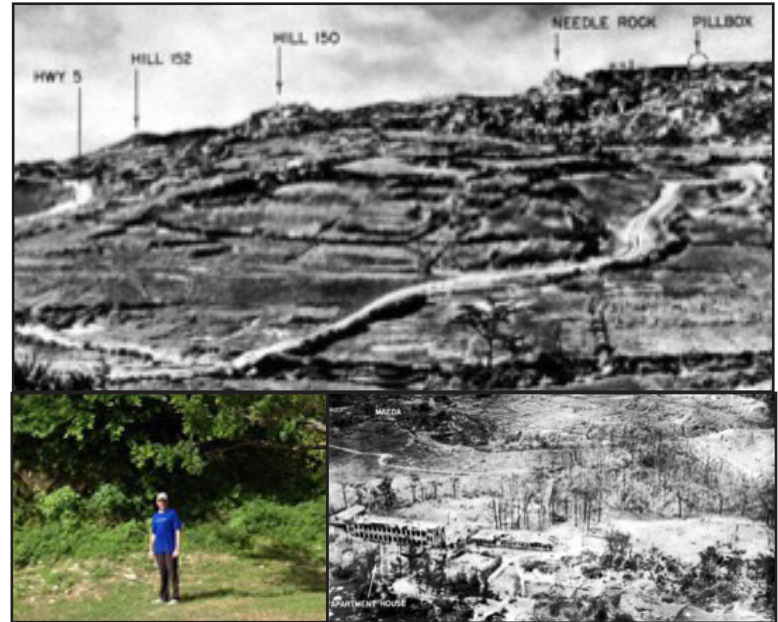
After a strategic withdrawal from their first line of defense, the Japanese Imperial 32nd Army moved into their 2nd main line of defense. This line was anchored in the middle by the Maeda Escarpment, a 500 foot tall flat topped mesa which had a commanding view of the landing beaches as well as the battlefield which the Deadeyes had bitterly contested for the last 25 days. Clearly visible from the escarpment were Kakazu, Tombstone and Nishibaru ridges.

The 381st Regiment of the 96th was ordered to attack the eastern end of the ridge which features a 30 foot tall sheer vertical cliff and a coral monolith called Needle Rock. This section of the Maeda Escarpment was dubbed 'Hacksaw Ridge' and 'Sawtooth Ridge' because the gap between the cliffs and Needle Rock looked like a sawtooth from a distance. In preparation for the upcoming battle, thousands of rounds of 105 and 155mm artillery rounds hammered the ridge and the US Navy fired large caliber shells, up to 16 inch battleship rounds as well, (hardly denting the position). Navy F4U Corsair fighters which flew in from offshore aircraft carriers dropped napalm canisters to burn off the native vegetation on Hacksaw, revealing the jagged coral and limestone rock underneath, and exposing the sheer cliff face. What was unknown at the time was the existence of three levels of extensive interconnecting underground tunnels, reinforced concrete pillboxes, caves, fighting positions and ventilation shafts. They had been dug out over a period of months by hand using picks and shovels. The heavily camouflaged cave and tunnel openings numbered about 100 and the reverse slope of Hacksaw was connected to a concrete Japanese barracks called "The Apartment" by our troops. They were therefore able to feed in and move troops underground as needed during the battle. They started the battle with a regimental sized force of 3000 men and sent in reinforcements as the battle unfolded.

The defenders of Hacksaw let two companies of the 381st climb up at Needle Point and the face of Hacksaw Ridge. But as soon as the GI's were on the top, they were hit with sheets of machine gun fire, 50mm 'knee mortar' grenades and artillery rounds from the Shuri Heights. The top and reverse slope of Hacksaw was where the battle would be fought. The Japanese attacked all day and infiltrated all night. Hand to hand combat was a daily occurrence with no quarter given. It was a slaughter for both sides. The Deadeyes of the 381st were reduced to 40% combat efficiency after 4 days of an all out effort. Although their casualties were high, they discovered the locations of many of the underground entrances. Deadeyes even explored some of the insides of caves and tunnels. These locations were passed on to the 77th Division (who relieved them) along with the idea of how to eliminate the fanatical Japanese inside who would continue to fight to the death.

### CORKSCREW and BLOWTORCH METHOD

When possible, specially equipped American tanks had sprayed flaming napalm into caves and tunnel openings. The soldiers of the 77th brought up barrels of oil and gasoline, poured them into ventilator shafts and other tunnel openings and then threw in phosphorus grenades and satchel charges of plastic explosive. This created 'fuel air' explosions which caused flames to race through the underground tunnels and erupt through many of the above ground openings. For the next 7 days, the 77th fought a savage battle atop Hacksaw Ridge, and a demolition battle to seal off every cave and tunnel possible. The dangerous Pillbox on the top of Hacksaw was hammered for days with bazooka rounds until satchel



charges blew the top off. Eventually all of the enemy combatants were killed. It was 11 days of pure hell for both sides.

### THE DESMOND DOSS STORY

Cpl. Desmond Doss was a conscientious objector who served as a medical corpsman for the 77th Division atop Hacksaw Ridge. He saved the lives of 75 of his wounded men by lowering them down from Hacksaw in an improvised rope sling harness. He would later receive the Congressional Medal of Honor from President Harry S. Truman for his heroic and unselfish actions.

The director Mel Gibson made a movie called "Hacksaw Ridge" in 2016, highlighting the battle and Desmond Doss's participation in it. Although the movie was very well made and mostly historically and militarily correct, there were some inaccuracies and embellishments which often happen in war movies. Regrettably, because Mel Gibson never visited Hacksaw Ridge on Okinawa and he chose to build a reproduction of it in his native Australia, the set was scaled much too large. The real face of Hacksaw Ridge is 30 feet tall. The top is just 5 feet wide at Needle Rock and about 75 feet across at the Pillbox. In Gibson's movie, the cliff appears to be 90 feet tall, and about a 1/4 mile wide.

### HACKSAW RIDGE TODAY

During the battle, the top of Hacksaw was a moon scape of coral and limestone boulders and outcroppings. In recent times, the local Okinawans decided to turn it into a Peace Park. Tons of topsoil were trucked in and leveled over the rocky scene of the battle. Grass, trees and landscaping and a wooden fence atop Hacksaw Ridge were completed. It now is a place of tranquility and solace with an incomparable view to the north towards the ocean. It is a must see for many tourists to the beautiful island of Okinawa, and a popular spot for the locals as well.

RBF September 2020



## MIKE MOROZ

February 4, 1924 - April 7, 2022

Technical Sergeant and Squad Leader, 3rd Squad, 1st Platoon, L Company  
382nd Infantry Regiment, 96th Infantry Division

Michael Moroz was born to the Ukrainian immigrants Anna and Nicholas Moroz on February 4, 1924 in New York City and grew up in Bayonne, New Jersey. He attended Stevens Institute of Technology, studying engineering and machine design before being drafted into the US Army during WW 2. He began military training as a medic, studying in the select ASTP Program before joining the 382nd Regiment of the 96th Infantry Division. After basic training aka 'boot camp' he learned additional skills in amphibious and jungle warfare. By September 9, 1944 he was stationed at the Schofield Barracks Oahu, Hawaii as a Squad leader of 11 men. Regrettably, only 1 of these men would finish the war unscathed by disease, wounds or death.

Landing at Dulag Beach, Leyte in the Central Visayas, Philippines on October 20, 1944, L Company waded through the surf in-between Japanese log obstacles and crossed a deep antitank ditch while dodging mortar rounds and snipers. They were in the southern leg of General Douglas Mac Arthur's return to the, "I Shall Return!" Philippines. Within 45 minutes, L and K Companies had captured their first objective, Hill 120. Over the next 30 days, Mike and his buddies like Donald Dencker fought in pitched battles at Tabontabon, Foxhill Corners and Dagami Heights. The 96th decimated the Japanese Imperial Army's 16th Division, infamous for years of atrocities including the Rape of Nanjing.

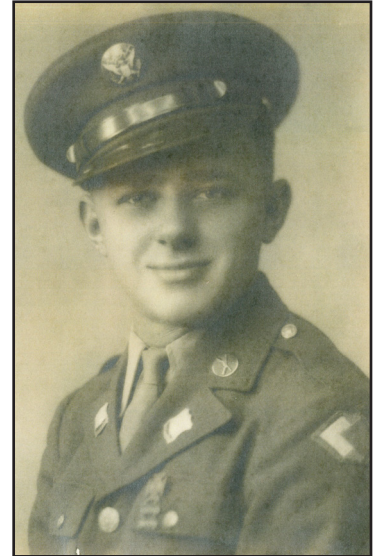
The Deadeyes of the 96th Division suffered 3014 casualties, a total of 514 KIA plus 2500 sick or wounded on Leyte. ( Trenchfoot, and a plethora of tropical diseases due to the constant wet and unsanitary jungle environment were constant problems for the GI's. L Company of the 382nd suffered 50% casualties, and Mike's 3rd squad was reduced to just 3 men 'effective' at this time. The Deadeyes of the 96th Division would next invade the Island of Okinawa on April 1, 1945 and that 11 week campaign proved to be the deadliest in the Pacific Theater in WW 2.

On Okinawa, Michael fought in some of the worst battles against a fanatical foe who preferred death to the ignominy of surrender. Mike and Don Dencker somehow survived the battles of Tombstone and Nishibarur Ridges against a hidden enemy who poured out of underground caves to attack them from all sides. The 382nd at this time became so depleted in men that they had to be relieved to absorb fresh replacements and try to recover for the next battles. They had a brief respite from April 21st to May 9th. Mike and his 3rd Squad first went to Kochi to help relieve the combat weary 7th Division. Then after a series of sharp battles near Conical Hill, Mike's string of luck would finally be severely tested. On May 14th while attacking the Dick Hill mass, Mike was struck by shrapnel from a near miss of a 50mm 'knee mortar' grenade. Striking him in the left temple, the iron fragment just missed from killing him.

He awoke with a terrible headache that lasted 2 days. He was released from the hospital after 14 days and definitely earned his Purple Heart medal. During his service to his country, Mike Moroz hauled his 24 lb M1918 A2 Browning Automatic Rifle through the jungles of Leyte Island and the hills of Okinawa, using it to great effect. He was a well respected Sergeant and Squad Leader who gave his all for his 'buddies' as the Deadeyes called each other.

Mike received an honorable discharge from the Army in February 1946, Mr. Moroz returned home to Bayonne, N.J. After earning a degree in mechanical engineering at New York University, he married his sweetheart Elsie Mary Boyko on October 3, 1953 and they raised 3 daughters. Mike began a highly successful career as a piping engineer for major corporations such as M.W. Kellogg Company, Bechtel Corporation, and Stone and Webster Engineering Corporation. As they enjoyed their daughters and grandchildren, he and his wife found time to be involved in church and charitable organizations such as the Christ Episcopal Church Vestry, Lions Club International, Holy Cross Orthodox Church, Loyalsock Lancer Band Parents, VFW Post Hall-Burke 5547, Sts. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church and of course the 96th Infantry Division Association.

News Flash! Mike's daughter Liz Moroz Harper has just been elected to be the new President of the 96th Infantry Division Association Heritage Fund! Congratulations to Liz!





Burning 'em out. The tank shoots its tongue of flame into an Okinawa cave where Japs are holed up. If they emerge, the crouching rifleman gets them.



## The Alley Fighters of the 96th

By ORLANDO DAVIDSON

AFTER the First War, when air and armored power were flexing their young muscles, military experts joined in an international wake over that outmoded instrument of warfare, the infantry. One pallbearer was Liddell Hart, the British military pundit, who wrote in 1923 that infantry forces of the future would be small, highly specialized, and "transported in protected vehicles to consolidate territory won from an enemy."

Among the several million young infantrymen who, twenty years later, found this a decidedly cloudy forecast of their duties, few were more emphatically disillusioned than the men of our 96th Infantry Division. They were rarely transported in

So modern warfare isn't what it was in the days of Mad Anthony Wayne? Maybe not, but out in the South Pacific a typical Johnny-come-lately outfit discovered some disconcerting similarities.

vehicles, never protected, and the only territory they ever got to consolidate was what they won for themselves. Winning it cost some 2000 of them their lives.

Those 2000 men may be the last - as they were the first - to die under the colors of the 96th Infantry Division. In the cold atomic light of 1947, it seems likely that the prophets of the '20's erred only in writing off the infantry one war too soon.

*(Continued on page 12)*

Reprinted from *The Saturday Evening Post* magazine, March 8, 1947. ©1947. Saturday Evening Post Society



# DEADEYE FEATURE

*(Continued from page 11)*

Even old-line traditionalists now concede that ground forces of the future will be largely, if not wholly, airborne. Military radicals see no place at all for infantry troops in a war of nuclear and bacteriological attack. Thus, like a few other Johnny-come-lately infantry divisions, the 96th very possibly ran its entire race on the bloody homestretch of World War II.

Even before the day at Hiroshima in 1945 when Buck Rogers assumed complete sway, the crawling, creeping infantrymen of such outfits as the 96th were like warriors out of another century. The trucks and jeeps, the flame throwers and the infrared "snooper-scopes" were new, but the tactics were pure Mad Anthony Wayne and Sam Houston. It was the ancient pattern of men dashing across open ground in short rushes, bellying up on unwary outposts, circling to get in the enemy's rear. On one eerie morning, amidst the boulders of an Okinawa ridge, Company F, of the division's 381st Infantry Regiment, fought a battle that a War Department historian described as "straight Western-movie stuff," complete with shots from the hip and close-in knife play.

By such primitive individual combat, plus some very unprimitive armor and artillery, the Deadeyes of the 96th Division fulfilled their anachronistic destiny in a twentieth-century war. One observer on Okinawa swore when he returned to Washington that they were "the finest exponents of alley fighting in modern war." On second thought, he eliminated the "modern." The Deadeyes, he averred, were "the best bunch of fighters since the Alamo." In fact, he added, the 96th was "the perfect infantry division."

He would get an argument on that from several dozen other Army and Marine divisions, but it is at least clear that the Deadeyes were death on Japs. As their division newspaper put it, they made "Good Japs" - dead ones—out of 7600 Nips on Leyte, and 31,700 more on Okinawa. The Okinawa harvest was reaped with a professional smartness which twice brought the division extra-special kudos from the high command.

It wasn't always that way. The 96th was one of the original sad-sack all-draftee divisions. In August, 1942, when it commenced training at Camp Adair, Oregon, few of the bewildered young men who filled its ranks had even an inkling of how to

go about saving their country. Except for a ninety-day whirl through OCS, most of the officers had an equally unblemished amateur standing. At the center, however, was a hard core of Regular Army officers and NCO's. As in other divisions, they brought off one of those miracles on which Americans count to save their hides in time of war.

The senior magician was a husky, middle-aged man from Missouri, Maj. Gen. James Lester Bradley. Jim Bradley was not a unique individual. There were other professionals like him - just enough - to build and operate the Army of the United States. Jim Bradley had an intimate approach to his troops, and a deep feeling for their ordeals. But his story, undramatic, unspectacular, was essentially the same as that of some dozens of other top commanders. It was, to a larger extent than most of us have ever acknowledged, the story of how we won the war.

Bradley entered West Point at nineteen. He was duly commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1914, and not until 1935 did he make lieutenant colonel. There was little enough money, and even less glory. But Jim Bradley stuck to it. It was the old Army round: Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. Fort Missoula, Montana. The Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia. The Command and General Staff School, and the Army War College.

Suddenly it was 1941, and the remote game of war became desperately serious. Our resources of manpower and industry wouldn't win without men at the top who knew what to do with them. We had those men; they were the Jim Bradleys, who had been keeping themselves ready for this since 1918, at Missoula and Benning and the Presidio. They knew what to do, and they did it.

Under General Bradley, the miracle of the 96th was built up, over a two-and-a-half-year period, through two winters of garrison training in Oregon, three months of maneuvering on the Central Oregon desert, capsuled courses in amphibious and jungle warfare and, finally, a rugged introduction to Mr. Moto on Leyte. It all crystallized on Okinawa, where the Deadeyes, three times called upon to break the backbone of the Japanese defenses, hurled themselves on the entrenched enemy with such mass valor that even when they failed - as once they did - they came back as drenched with glory as they were with blood. A modest measure

*(Continued on page 13)*



# DEADEYE FEATURE

*(Continued from page 12)*

of the glory splashed over on their unassuming boss. General Bradley was one of the few World War II troop commanders to direct a division continuously from birth to deactivation. The 96th was strictly his baby. No parent was ever more surprised than Bradley when, a few months before Okinawa, he found his fledgling outfit headed for a premature baptism of fire at Leyte.

The presence of the pea-green 96th among the veteran divisions which spearheaded the return to the Philippines was definitely not "according to plan." When Maj. Gen. John R. Hodge's new XXIV Corps, composed of the Deadeyes and the seasoned 7th Division, left Pearl Harbor in September, 1944, its destination was Yap.

Meanwhile, however, Bull Halsey radioed back from the far Pacific that the Philippines were prematurely ripe for a knockout. From Quebec, where Roosevelt and Churchill were meeting, authorization was flashed for a one-two punch - first Leyte, then Luzon. Yap was deleted from the XXIV Corps sailing orders, planning staffs went on a twenty-four-hour workday, and on October twentieth, the Corps hit Central Leyte.

On that pivotal island, the Deadeyes initially distinguished themselves as swamp angels. Their first job was to drive inland from the beaches, but they immediately discovered that there were not only no roads or trails inland but no land - only a sucking swamp. Nevertheless, Col. Edwin T. May, an ex-enlisted man of the breed who holds that orders are meant to be followed, led his 383rd Infantry Regiment straight into the morass - always knee-deep, often hip-deep. In three days he had outdistanced his supplies. General MacArthur visited the 96th Division command post the third day, was shown May's location and all but called General Bradley a liar.

"No man could get through those swamps," he said.

The Japanese, it would seem, had thought likewise, for they had left them undefended. By the third night May's regiment had split their defenses.

The Deadeyes' 382nd Regiment crawled inland through similarly unpleasant terrain, also against a minimum of resistance, until it reached the barrio of Tabontabon. There it fought a spectacular battle with Japs stationed under, inside and on top of every building in town. Col. Macey L. Dill dashed

across a bridge into the town at the head of his troops, and they did the rest.

Back on the coast, Col. Michael E. (Screamin' Mike) Halloran's 381st Regiment attacked Catmon Hill, the ominous promontory which dominated the entire corps beachhead. Already flanked by the 383rd and hammered by incessant artillery fire, it fell quickly. By October twenty-eighth, the beachhead was secure.

That was only the beginning for the 96th Division. Three hundred and eighty men were dead and 1300 wounded by Christmas. Most of the battles were patrol-scale actions—small, but vicious skirmishes, often against an unseen enemy. As usual in the Pacific, the Jap was frequently less of a problem than the disease-ridden jungle.

The Deadeyes' principal mission was to defend and expand the beachhead while other units crossed the island to meet Jap reinforcements. This was a grueling job, but not the kind that makes headlines. It did, however, make heroes - such stanch men as 1st Sgt. Francis H. Thompson of the 382nd Regiment, who took over two companies when every officer in both was wounded, and directed them so magnificently that a Distinguished Service Cross award followed inevitably.

Eight other Deadeyes won the DSC on Leyte, but four of them died winning it. Then there was Pvt. Ova Allen Kelley, of Norwood, Missouri, a sturdy, dark-haired boy whose job was packing ammunition on his back. One morning in December he started throwing lead instead of carrying it. When he was through, his company had retrieved an airfield from the Japs; and Kelley, who had stalked forward alone and wiped out half the enemy before anyone else knew what was happening, was in line for the division's first Medal of Honor. Five minutes later a sniper cut him down.

Even while the 96th was still fighting in the hills of Leyte, planning was underway for an operation oddly known as "Iceberg." On Easter Sunday in 1945, the American 10th Army poured across the ancient seawall guarding the island of Okinawa. This time it was no accident. that the 96th Division was there — and on the flank nearest the enemy. By dusk of the fourth day, the vehicle-mounted cavalymen of the division's reconnaissance troop had found the Jap. In the outposts of what was to become known as the Shuri Line,

*(Continued on page 14)*



# DEADEYE FEATURE

*(Continued from page 13)*

he was waiting for them.

The Shuri Line was really a ring - a rock and concrete maze of interlocking hills, caves and pillboxes. It was not to fall for fifty-seven days - and then only under the combined assault of four Army and Marine divisions - but for two weeks the 96th and the 7th hammered it alone.

On April ninth, on an obscene little ridge named Kakazu, the Deadeyes' 383rd Regiment went to its Calvary. Of six companies that attacked, only three made the crest. Two of these immediately found themselves in impossible positions, raked by Jap fire from three sides, and had to get back as best they could. About half the men who had charged up the hill ultimately were saved. Pfc. Ed Moskala, of Chicago, the last man down, learned that a wounded buddy was still on the hill. He went back and got him out. Twice more he went back into the inferno, and the final time he did not come out. His pals, those who survived, say he killed twenty-five or thirty Japs during that retreat. They also figure that he earned his Medal of Honor.

Farther down the ridge, Company L, of the same regiment, had fought its way to a shallow saddle that afforded some slight degree of protection. This company was commanded by a remarkable officer from the Deep South one Willard F. (Hoss) Mitchell.

The hill was crawling with Japs. All morning a fiery conflict raged. About noon the Nips apparently sensed how small the American force was, and hurled the first of a vicious series of counterattacks. Four times they struck, charging wildly through their own mortar fire; four times the outnumbered Yanks turned them back.

By four o'clock Mitchell knew that his men - most of them wounded - could not withstand another attack. He called for smoke and began a withdrawal. Of the eighty-nine men who had made the assault, exactly three got back unscratched. Seventeen were dead or missing, thirty-seven more had to be carried from the hill. Later, 165 Jap bodies were found where the company had stood. Company L had qualified for its Unit Citation award recommendation - the first on Okinawa.

The 383rd Regiment as a whole suffered 326 casualties that black day. On April tenth what was

left of the regiment teamed up with the 381st and attacked again. One battalion of the 381st seized and held a toehold where Mitchell's band had fought, but that was as far as anyone could go. Later another division attacked Kakazu, but only when the enemy evacuated it during a general withdrawal did that notorious ridge finally fall.

Meanwhile the 382nd Regiment had been suffering farther inland on a hill appropriately named Tombstone. It was the same general story. Colonel Dill's first battalion had stormed to the crest, then immediately become a target for every weapon in the catalogue. Rifle companies were riddled and one machine-gun section wiped out before the battalion wearily made its way back to positions 200 yards behind its jump-off point. The



Instead of being flushed with triumph, the victors often look like this when the battle is over. Deadeyes succumbed to exhaustion after taking "Big Apple Hill" Okinawa.

rest of the regiment was stopped less bloodily, but equally decisively.

It was at this desperate point, a Japanese staff officer later revealed, that the enemy seriously considered throwing his major counterattack of the campaign. "Such an attack," commented a 10th Army intelligence report, "would have had some chance of momentary success, as the 96th Division would initially have taken the brunt alone." This was a classic understatement. Bradley's 96th Division lines by this time were paper-

*(Continued on page 15)*



# DEADEYE FEATURE

*(Continued from page 14)*  
thin.

Happily, the Japs waited a month to make their major effort, but on April sixteenth they did throw a violent local attack against the Deadeyes' 381st Regiment, still crouched in the shadow of Kakazu. A young man named Beauford T. (Snuffy) Anderson won himself a Medal of Honor that night by turning back an entire company without assistance. His method was unique and effective – he used mortar shells as hand grenades,

By now it was obvious that two divisions could never break the Japanese line, and the fresh 27th Division was readied for action. On April nineteenth, behind the most pulverizing artillery preparation of the Pacific war, the three divisions jumped off in a coordinated attack. It seemed inconceivable that anything could live where the big shells had fallen, but the burrowing enemy simply took to his caves. When the doughs moved out, sudden death still waited for them.

But the Japs, too, had taken a frightful beating, and now they began to bend. In two days the 382nd Regiment of the 96th overran its old nemesis, Tombstone Ridge. On the night of April 23rd, the Nips silently evacuated the entire Kakazu-Nishibaru ridge line, and two days later the Deadeyes drove to the crest of the Maeda Escarpment, a weird stone formation which the infantry called Hacksaw Ridge. Here the 381st Regiment found itself squatting on the lid of a vast fortress hollowed into the rock and faced with concrete. Thus any Deadeye who moved beyond the crest came under fire from inside the ridge as well as around it. Each night Japs poured in counterattacks from innumerable caves within the ridge. Here Capt. Bill Bollinger's F Company fought the Wild West battle mentioned earlier; here Sgt. Bill Reeder, a professional baseball player, threw the handsomest strikes - with grenades - of his career.

Off to one side, a Jap-held concrete barracks was giving the Americans a very bad time. Lt. Col. Danny Nolan, who commanded the third battalion, sent his K Company to take it out. At this point, K Company consisted of precisely thirty-six men. Soon it was down to twenty-four. In the midst of the struggle, Nolan called Capt. Albert Strand, the company commander, and asked how things were going. Strand replied, "I can see more Japs to my front than I have men, but I think I can

advance."

The Deadeye 381st Regiment never got beyond the crest of Hacksaw. On April twenty-ninth the 307th Infantry, of the 77th Division, inherited the ridge, and in five days all but leveled it. Still it held. Finally, on the sixth, it was taken. Everyone of its defenders was dead or sealed within it.

In the meantime, the division's 383rd Regiment, now heavily dependent on 660 young replacements, had paced the attack of the entire 10th Army and punched a salient to within 1000 yards of the fortress of Shuri, core of the Japanese defense. The enemy, as always, was making the nights hideous, but losing a lot of men in doing it.

On April thirtieth, the battered 96th Division was relieved. At a press conference back at 10th Army headquarters, Lt. Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner, the Army commander, singled out the weary Deadeyes for praise. The 96th, he said, had shown "superb spirit." Simultaneously he paid the division an even higher, but grim, compliment: it would return to the line in ten days.

In its rifle companies the 96th was now virtually a new division. Thirty-six hundred replacements, most of them nineteen-year-old boys, had taken the places of those who had fallen.

The Deadeyes were now on the left flank of a four-division front, and on May thirteenth, they brought off one of the decisive strokes of the Okinawa campaign. Looming before their 383rd Infantry was Conical Hill, eastern anchor of the Shuri Line. After two days of maneuvering, Colonel May's second battalion was poised to strike directly up the hill's northeast flank. Back in ancient Nakagusuku Castle, General Hodge, the corps commander, looked at his situation map and called the 96th's General Bradley.

"Jim," he said, "that second battalion of May's looks pretty good up there at Conical. Do you think he can push them up tomorrow? Bradley replied that if anyone could, Eddie May was the man.

"If he can make it," Hodge told his chief of staff, "we'll have the key to the Shuri Line."

Thanks largely to the initiative of two platoon sergeants of Company F, May's men did not let him down. Tech. Sgts. Guy J. Dale and Dennis O. Duniphin had led their platoons halfway up the hill when they lost contact with their company com-

*(Continued on page 16)*



# DEADEYE FEATURE

*(Continued from page 15)*

mander. Sensing that they had found a weak spot which might be closed in another ten minutes, Dale and Duniphin raced their platoons to the crest. It was none too soon, for as they reached the top and began digging in, the Japs attacked. At this point Company E came charging up from behind. It was touch and go whether the two companies could hold. Then a Cub plane, droning overhead, spotted their plight and sent back word to the 921st Field Artillery to get busy, but quick. Just as it appeared that the Americans might be driven off, an overwhelming concentration of artillery landed twenty yards beyond the crest - too close for comfort - and that counterattack dissolved.

Conical Hill was not yet won - the 383rd Regiment still had only a foothold - but the all-important first brick had been laid in a wall behind which the 7th Division would sprint down the coast and flank the Shuri Line.

The fall of Shuri, however, was seventeen days away - the most dreadful seventeen days on Okinawa. All along the front, the 10th Army was now enmeshed in the inner spokes of the Japanese defense ring, where every enemy hill was covered by half a dozen others. A painful example was a grubby little hill which the codebook called Charlie. Here May's first battalion, which had taken a shattering beating on Kakazu, underwent the same thing all over again. Day after day, the Deadeye infantrymen attempted to push over or around the crest; day after day they were sent reeling back. The artillery pounded the hill incessantly, and Capt. Red Hymers, who was serving as the infantry eye for a squadron of Marine dive bombers, even led an air strike against it backwards—in the direction of our troops. It all came to nothing.

Dill's 382nd Regiment meanwhile was fighting on the direct approaches to Shuri. Here Capt. Seymour Terry, one of the many sons of Arkansas who sparked the 96th Division, single-handedly cleaned out a whole network of caves and trenches. His Medal of Honor was posthumous; three days later, he and thirteen of his men were killed by a single flurry of Jap artillery. Here the doughs of Company E charged up the slopes of murderous Dick Hill and held it with a gallantry that was to win them a Unit Citation. Here Pfc. John MacKenis, of C Company coolly assumed command of a platoon when there were no officers



"It became a continuous torrent. Movement grew impossible..." This is what the rain did to a fair Okinawa road.

or NCO's left. Here the entire regiment was engaged in fighting of such savagery that when the casualty lists were totted up at the end of the campaign, the 382nd Infantry, of all the Army regiments on Okinawa, proved the hardest hit.

Off to east, Halloran's 381st began building the wall around Conical Hill. Several hundred yards south of Conical lay another peak, Sugar Hill. The two were connected by a continuous ridge. If the 381st could neutralize the crest all the way south to Sugar, the hill mass would be sealed off and the 7th Division could start its end run. It took the 381st three rugged days to jockey into position, and one more to do the job. During the maneuvering, a platoon commanded by Lt. Leonard K. Warner, a Hawaiian, found itself so far up in front of the regiment that Japs were peppering it from the rear.

"Can you move onto Sugar?" Warner's company commander messaged.

"Hell, yes! " Warner answered. "The way the Japs are shooting me in the back, they'll chase me onto it! "

*(Continued on page 17)*





# DEADEYE FEATURE



The one and only happy beachhead. When the dead-eyes got back to Uncle Sugar Able, Marjorie Main, chosen as their "Occupation Girl", in the Philippines, greeted them, with the result shown above.

*(Continued from page 16)*

For a week the normal misery of combat had been heightened by a drizzling rain. On May twenty-second, it became a continuous torrent. Movement grew impossible - even tractors bogged down - and the entire 10th Army offensive ground to a halt. The 96th Division G-3 one day summed up the Deadeyes' progress in these terms: "Those on the forward slopes slid down. Those on the reverse slopes slid back. Otherwise, no change."

To the first battalion of the 382nd Infantry, this state of affairs was not amusing. This battalion, on the eve of the great rain, had made a remarkable charge through Jap mortar fire to a point just below the crest of Oboe Hill, the highest ridge in the Shuri ring. It was a notably unhealthy position, for the Nips were snugly entrenched on the other side of the crest. All day, every day they harassed Lt. Col. Charles W. Johnson's men, who were clinging desperately to the slime covered

slopes. Then each night the Japs came boiling over the crest. Twice the Americans were driven to the base of the hill; twice they clambered back up. Johnson, who had entered the Army four years earlier as a nineteen year-old private, finally threw even his jeep drivers into the line. The line held, but by week's end the first battalion was so small that, for the balance of the campaign, it fought as a single company.

The weather broke on May thirtieth, and so did the Japs. Under the concealment of the rain, Lt. Gen. Mitsuru Ushijima, a brilliant commander, had withdrawn the bulk of his shattered army. So the Yanks, for the most part, simply walked into Shuri. On Hen Hill, however, in the path of the 382nd Regiment's G Company, the enemy chose to stand. This set the stage for a Santa Ana, California, truck driver named Clarence Craft to put on a dazzling individual display. In a classic one-man charge, he killed more than twenty-five Nips with grenades, rifle and bayonet, stopping in the middle to

pick up a sword for his family. "I knew those guys behind me would have that place stripped clean of souvenirs by the time I got back," he said later. The most remarkable thing about his Medal of Honor was that he lived to receive it.

"I regard the capture of Conical Hill by the 96th Division as the most important single factor in the collapse of the Shuri Line," General Buckner told correspondents.

Ushijima had one futile ace left in his kimono - the Yaeju Dake-Yuza Dake hill mass on the southern tip of the island. He holed up there with what troops he still had, and waited. On June fifth the Americans caught up, and the 96th Division drew the two central hills. It took two weeks of stubborn fighting to clean them out. Halloran's 381st Infantry took one hill and the two other Deadeye regiments teamed to capture the other. Those last two weeks were terrific ones for the armored infantry of the 769th Tank Battalion;

*(Continued on page 18)*



# DEADEYE FEATURE

(Continued from page 7)

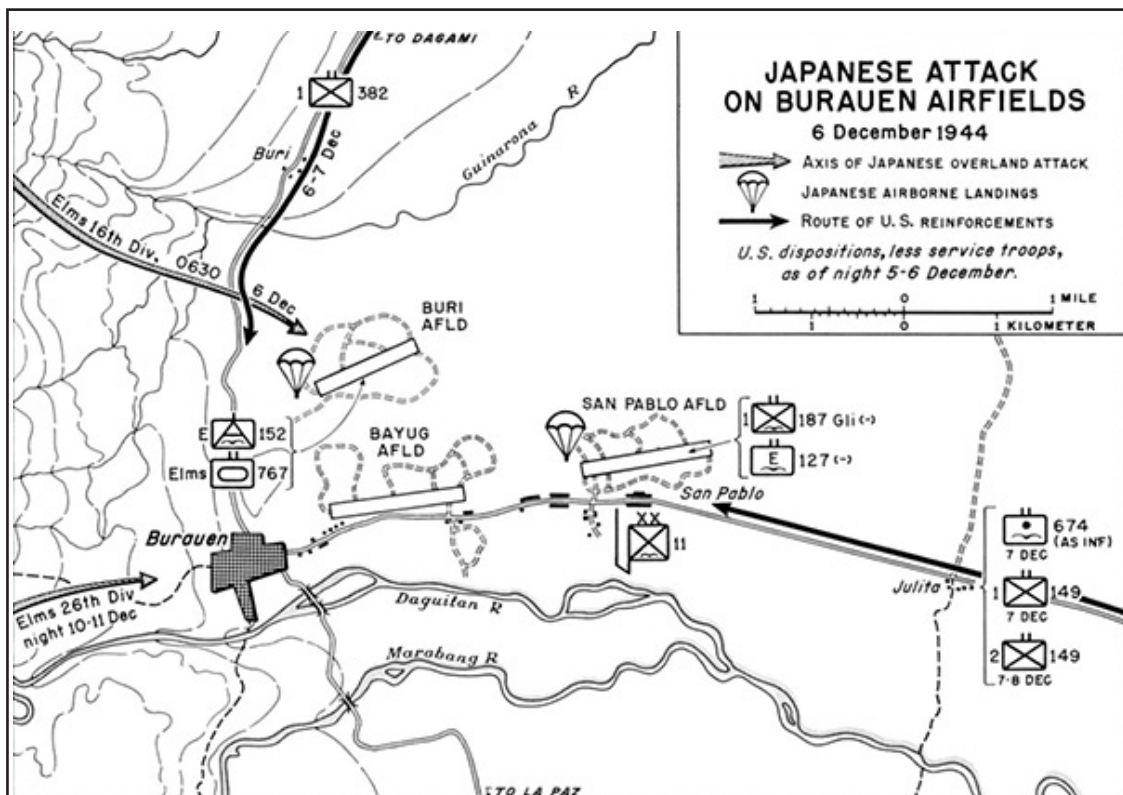
here, for the first time on Okinawa the tankers, who had taken awful losses, found the terrain suited to their kind of fighting.

The Japs went down shooting. On June third, a machine gunner picked off Colonel May, and from that moment the 383rd Infantry could never be quite the same regiment. On June eighteenth the 10th Army chief, General Buckner, was their victim. The next day, Brig. Gen. Claudius M. Easley, the 96th Division's indomitable little assistant commander, was killed while personally directing fire against a machine gun which had wounded his aide. "Spec" Easley, a sharpshooting Texan and, in General Bradley's words, the spark plug of the 96th, had been tempting death since the division's first day on Leyte. Once before he had been wounded; it was perhaps inevitable that he should

die as he did—shooting it out with the enemy at close range. Perhaps, too - in the light of what happened twenty-seven days later on the New Mexico desert - he will be the last general of the United States Army to die in that heroic tradition.

Sixteen hundred other soldiers of the 96th died no less honorably on Okinawa. Fifty-six hundred more brought wounds home with them. In the infantry regiments, one man in two had fallen. But the Deadeyes wiped out more than 30,000 Japs.

It wasn't done in the manner the prophets envisaged after the first World War, and envisaged again after this one. Perhaps they are right this time, and any future war will be conducted by men at push buttons. But it might still be handy to have some troops like the Deadeyes - brave men who will come to grips with the individual enemy and fight it out to the death. THE END



Map of [Japanese Attack on Bureau Airfields on December 6, 1944](#)

The map shows the disposition of U.S. forces, less service troops on the night of December 5-6, 1944 in eastern [Leyte](#) including [Buri](#), [Bureau \(Burouen, Bureau\)](#), [Bayug Airfield](#), [Buri Airfield](#) with parachute icon indicating Japanese airborne landing and [San Pablo Airfield](#) with parachute icon indicating Japanese airborne landing, [San Pablo](#), Julita, Daguitan River and Marabong. The two gray arrows at the left indicate the axis of Japanese overland attack from the hills to the west by elements of the 16th Division at 6:30am and elements of 26th Division during the night of December 10-11, 1944. The black arrow indicating the advance of U.S. Army reinforcements to the area. At the upper left is a black arrow indicating the advance of the 382nd Infantry Regiment during December 6-7, 1944.

Credit: U.S. Army Date: [December 6, 1944](#)



# DEADEYE FEATURE



**Katori Shimpei Force Commanding Officer (C.O.) Major Tsuneharu Shirai** wearing a hachimaki headband. In the background is a paratrooper standing at attention near a Ki-49 Helen transport. The location is either [Angeles South Airfield](#) or [Del Carmen Airfield](#) during preparations for [Operation WA paratrooper attack on Leyte Airfields](#)

Credit: Nippon News Date: December 6, 1944  
Still from film

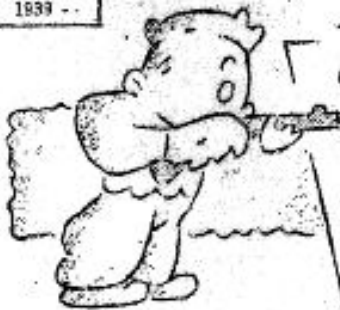
## Special Weaponry of Japanese Paratroopers





# DEADEYE 1944

MILITARY  
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## The DEADEYE DISPATCH

MOVIES  
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"THE FOXHOLE'S FINEST"

Thur, 7 Dec. 44. Published by 96th Div I&EO.-Tel Ext-75. Special Home Edition.

## NAVY FIGHTS AT ORMOC

\*\*\*(AFRS)-Dec 5--General MacArthur announced that American naval vessels engaged three enemy warships, believed to be destroyers, as they entered Ormoc harbor. One Japanese destroyer was sunk. An American destroyer was sunk by what probably was a floating mine. Most of the crew of the sunken American destroyer was rescued. In this action, six enemy fighter planes were shot down. American naval units also sank a Japanese cargo ship and damaged another near Ormoc Bay off the west coast. Ormoc is the last port on Leyte controlled by the Japanese. The town is defended by shore  
(Cont'd on page two.)

\* \* \* \* \*

### 4,000 PLANES BLAST REICH RAIL CENTERS.

\*\*\*Dec 5--4,000 Allied planes opened an offensive yesterday to cut off the Saar and Ruhr industrial regions from the interior of Germany. Attacks were made on six separate railway centers near Cologne. If the large amounts of food and ammunition necessary to sustain the huge concentration of Nazis defending the city could be made unattainable, the task of the First and Ninth Armies would be easier.

All that the Allies can throw against the Nazis in men, tanks and planes is being committed to the Cologne drive. Latest dispatches indicate that the Ninth Army is driving the Nazis from Jurich on the Cologne Highway, where every yard gained has been costly in men and materials to both sides. During the bloody  
(Cont'd on page two.)

## GREETINGS HOME FROM GEN. BRADLEY

"When I had the pleasure of addressing a word to you just before we left the States, I told you that I had not the slightest doubt as to how your men would acquit themselves in battle. How right I was!

"They have not a skilled, battle-wise enemy, and they have beaten him. They have met mad and ruin which are beyond my power to describe, and they have conquered it. I cannot begin to express my admiration for them. To them, and to you who are giving them strength by your faith, I offer a soldier's salute.

"Inevitably, we have lost some of our comrades. Others have been hurt. To those of you whose men have made the ultimate sacrifice, nothing I can say can make up to you your sad loss. I know they would want you to carry on in the same way in which they gave their lives - bravely and proudly. I am sure you will.

"Our men - yours and mine - now are seasoned soldiers, poised and confident. Nothing can stop them, for they know they are on the road to Tokyo, and beyond Tokyo lies home."

*J. L. Bradley*  
Major General, U.S.A.