

# THE DEADEYE DISPATCH



Official Newsletter of the 96th Infantry Division Association Heritage Fund WINTER 2024



Gen Douglas MacArthur, President Sergio Osmeña, Lt. Gen Richard Sutherland, Brig Gen Carlos P. Romulo, Maj. Gen Courtney Whitney, Sgnt Francisco Salveron

Photo Colorization by Adlai Jan Garcia Jawid

## Return To The Philippines

### LEYTE ISLAND

Leyte, which is in the Central Visayas is one of the largest islands in the Philippine Archipelago. However in 1944 it was defended by only 20,000 Imperial Japanese soldiers, 14,000 of which were from the infamous 16th Division. Leyte is divided in the middle North to South by a chain of extinct 4000 foot tall volcanoes, separating the Western Ormoc Valley from the Eastern Leyte valley. Leyte is known for massive earthquakes, typhoons, torrential rains, oppressive heat, humidity and a plethora of parasites and tropical diseases. In other words, not quite like Honolulu. During the course of the battle, many Deadeyes were bedeviled by jungle rot, blood sucking leeches, dysentery, dengue fever and tapeworm. Strangely, although mosquitos were a nuisance, there were very few cases of malaria reported. Jagged outcroppings of basalt rock, mud and sticky swamps also added to the misery to those that fought there. After weeks of constant combat in flooded trenches and foxholes, many soldier's clothes just rotted away. For many Deadeyes on Leyte, a routine task was burning off leeches from their bodies with a lit cigarette. Rather than landing on Luzon which was expected, Gen. Mac Arthur choose the lightly defended Leyte Island with it's harbors and airfields as his stepping stone to the invasion of Luzon and its capitol, Manilla. It was to be

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  
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96th Infantry Division  
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# DEADEYE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*by Liz Moroz Harper, President, 96th Infantry Division Association Heritage Fund*

## Heritage Fund President's Report for 2023

Thanks to Matt Helget, Vice President and Virtual Museum Curator, for his tremendous efforts in launching a new website in 2023, updated with features that allow us to present detailed information previously only available through archival research and now available to our Deadeye families and friends through several clicks on website links! The Virtual Museum format created by Jodi Murphy of Fetching Web Design is simple to navigate through the 96<sup>th</sup>'s timeline from WWI, WWII, post-WWII, up to the present 96<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade. And new materials will be continually added to digitally document the proud history and legacy of the 96<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.



Thanks to Robert Feinstein, Secretary and Deadeye Dispatch Editor, for the Deadeye Dispatch resuming publication on the new website debuting with the Winter 2023 edition brimming with news, photos, and features! The Deadeye Dispatch is an outstanding read with every page filled with quality, unique information about the Deadeyes in a beautiful digital format.

Thanks to Joe Boyack, Librarian, for continuing to assist with historical archival research and provide so many photos to document the history of our Deadeyes, their families, the Association, and the Heritage Fund which are in 2023 now easily available on the new website! - [www.96thinfantry.org](http://www.96thinfantry.org)

Thanks to retiring Board Members Adele Connell Young and Robert Young for their many contributions in getting the website update initiated and keeping our Treasury on sound financial footing!

Thanks to David Ellis, our new Treasurer since October, 2023, for transitioning into the role of Treasurer and handling the annual corporate registration and tax filings without a glitch!

Thanks to Jim Collins, Chairman-Emeritus and Past President, for continuing to guide us in 2023 with his historical knowledge and leadership experience!

Thanks to the History and Funding Committee Members for meeting regularly via teleconferences throughout 2023 to plan future projects, archival research, website additions, fundraising campaigns, and social in nature! Initial planning has begun for a mini-reunion in 2024 in Washington, DC following a Dedication Ceremony of the 96<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division's Unit Tribute Plaque and Commemorative Bricks at the National Museum of the Army with regional gatherings to follow in OR (Camp Adair) and New Orleans (National WWII Museum).

I look forward to working with all of you in 2024 to continue to preserve the memory and proud heritage of the 96<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division!

Please know that new Committee Members and inputs from our supporters and Deadeye families are always welcome!

Liz Moroz Harper  
President, 96<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association Heritage Fund  
Proud Deadeye Daughter of Michael Moroz, 382<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, Company L





# DEADEYE NEWS & FEATURES

by Major General James P. Collins US Army (Retired)

## A General's Journey

My journey started in 1961 as a ROTC Cadet at Hofstra University in Hempstead, NY. After four years of ROTC I received a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers and soon thereafter reported for active duty at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Nearly 40 years later, I retired from the Army in March 2005. Along the way there were several stories that some of my readers might find to be enjoyable. Here is one of them.

The 96th Regional Support Command (RSC). In March 2001, I took command of the 96th Regional Support Command from MG Craig Larson at Fort Douglas, Utah. It was a cold snowy day and so the ceremony took place indoors. It took a few months for the full significance of this new assignment to really take hold. The 96th RSC had its lineage from the 96th Infantry Division that was first formed in 1918 in preparation for duty in Germany during World War I. The Division did not deploy overseas as the War came to an end with the signing of an Armistice on the 11th hour of the 11th day of November 1918. The 96th was deactivated and remained within the Army Organized Reserve structure. The Division was called to active duty in 1942 at Camp Adair Oregon and in October 1944 deployed for the Battle of Leyte in the Philippines. On 1 April, the 96th Division was part of the invasion of Okinawa and fought there until July 1945 when the battle ended. The 96th returned to the US in 1946 and was once again part of the Army Organized Reserve structure. In the early 1960's while headquartered at Fort Douglas the Division was restructured then renamed, the 96th Army Reserve Command (ARCOM).



The Mission for the 96th RSC was to train, equip and prepare units for mobilization in support of our nation's defense. I was responsible for all of the Army Reserve units in Utah, Montana, Colorado, Wyoming, North Dakota and South Dakota. Over 7000 soldiers in 70 plus units and a full time staff of over 500. The soldiers and the full time staff were just remarkable and the challenge was always to find the resources to allow them to do their best.

As I learned more about the units and their readiness to be mobilized there came a big wake up call on September 11th 2001. Our nation was attacked by terrorists with significant loss of life. Everything about our nation and our military began to change after that day. Training took on new meaning and the security of our facilities increased. It was clear to me that mobilizations would soon begin and my units needed to be ready.

While all of us recall 9/11, I too have a special memory. That morning I was at Fort Gordon, Georgia visiting with one of my units, the 328th Combat Support Hospital. They were in the field setting up their special medical tents that would be used if the unit was called to provide medical services. Doctors and Nurses were all engaged in setting up the various tent structures. While talking with the Hospital Commander, Colonel Kathy Devlin, a Major interrupts us with news about a possible terrorist had flown a commercial air liner into the World Trade Center Tower. That news stopped everything and soon several TV's with "rabbit ear antennas" appeared and we could watch the ongoing news report including seeing the second jet hit the World Trade Center. It was soon clear that there was nothing we could do. The Fort was locked down, the airports closed and nobody was going anywhere. So, the training event went on as planned. It took several days but eventually I got a flight out of Atlanta back to Salt Lake City.

I came back to a guarded Fort Douglas and a lot of new imperatives to consider. One was the 2002 Olympics were to take place in Salt Lake City in just 4 months. What will that now mean for the military providing added security? That will be another story.



# DEADEYE NEWS & FEATURES

*by Matt Helget*

## Completed Heritage Fund Projects

The last couple years have been trying for all of us with COVID-19 and life in general. The Heritage Fund has pressed through these trying times and with the help of our Deadeye family have overcome various obstacles to hold to the dedication of preserving the legacy of the 96th Infantry Division. Here are some of the things that we have accomplished and have overcome.

First off in 2020, the Heritage Fund had set a goal of placing a monument at the new US Army Museum at Ft. Belvoir in Virginia. Our goal was to raise \$2500 and then the Heritage Fund matched that to get our monument purchased and installed on those grounds. We had set a goal of Memorial Day 2020 to achieve this, and you all came through in a big way. We raised around \$3000 to get this done. After three fixes in 2022/23, it is now installed and viewable for the public. Thank you all.

With that success, we then turned our attention to the National WWII Museum in New Orleans. Here the Heritage Fund helped in a couple ways. First, Deadeye son Wes Hillstrom (who is a docent at the museum), donated for an electronic memorial in name of the Heritage fund. Then, we fundraised to install a memorial paver in the heart of the museum campus per their "Road to Victory" commemorative bricks and pavers promotion. This campaign had a goal of \$3000.

Another project that took time to get done was a display panel at Ft. Lewis in Washington state. The museum had been closed through the majority of the COVID pandemic, but we were in constant communication with the curator of the museum. In late July 2021, it was finished and sent to the printers and came out looking wonderful. The museum paid for it do to it falling within their budget, but we at the Heritage Fund felt it necessary to donate to them to solidify our relationship with them.

This year of 2023 we launched our new website, [96thinfantry.org](https://www.96thinfantry.org) after a long investigative process, coordination between the designer and the Heritage Fund board. The framework looks great and allows for future growth as we continue to research and obtain historical documents and photos. If you have entries for the site, please let us know and we will see how to incorporate it. What we are really looking for is company photos, newsletters from company, battalion, or regimental levels, or reports. The heritage fund is also working on inquiries to various museums and federal level repositories. So, keep checking back to the website and announcements will be given on the 96th's Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/120956155201>

The Heritage Fund is also investigating more places to memorialize our Deadeye veterans and history. Some places have more hoops to jump through than others, but we are diligently pressing forward with investigating places such as Ft. Sill in Oklahoma to honor our artillery batteries, the National Medal of Honor Museum in Dallas Texas, amongst various other places. If there are any other places that have significance to the Deadeye story, please reach out to us so we can investigate the possibilities. Also watch for announcements regarding upcoming reunions/ get togethers to dedicate these monuments and connect as friends.



## Digging for Records

One of the most challenging things for a historian is requesting information on a specific person for people of immediate interest. We see this regularly with requests on the 96th Infantry Division Facebook page. As an organization, we are looking into creating a repository database for Deadeye relatives and historians alike through our website.

I have been lucky in my search by meeting people who have helped me pursue different avenues to check out. One of the most important places to look is the National Personnel Archives in St. Louis (1 Archives Dr, St. Louis, MO 63138). However, this can be a frustrating route unless one can go onsite or hire an independent researcher. Many requests, my father included, defer to the 1973 fire at the archives. According to their website, <https://www.archives.gov/personnel-records-center/fire-1973>, approximately 80% of the Army files were "destroyed."

With the requests or hiring a researcher, comes a lot of waiting and/or expense. There are things that will help expedite search requests. A copy of discharge papers is a big one because they have the required information. If that is not an option, having a complete given birth name; first, middle, and last; exact birthdate, and place of birth is beneficial. Additional things that help are a social security number or the veteran's service number found on discharge documents or on a dog tag. This information helps researchers or archivists locate those specific files for our loved ones more quickly. The moral of the story is records are out there. One must be persistent and diligent to uncover them. Remember that good things come to those that wait and don't give up.





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## 96th Sustainment Brigade

The 96th Sustainment Brigade was activated on 17 September 2008 at Fort Douglas ,Salt Lake City, Utah.

The history of the 96th began in 1918 with the 96th Infantry Division, After intense combat during World War 2 in the Philippines and Okinawa , the Division commenced it's Army Reserve role in December 1946. On December 22, 1967, the 96th was assigned to the Army Reserve Command (ARCOM) headquarters at Fort Douglas.In 1996, the 96th ARCOM became the 96th Regional Support Command and then the 96th Regional Readiness Command.

Finally, the 96th became the 96th Sustainment Brigade as it is today. The 96th Deadeyes proudly honor their lineage , traditions and history and wear the Double Diamond shoulder patches. Units of the 96th have deployed overseas to Iraq, Afghanistan and Djibouti in support of the Global War on Terror and to Taki and Al Assad, Iraq managing logistic sustainment operations during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The 96th Sustainment Brigade stands ready to deploy in support of our Army's worldwide mission.

## Publications and Media

Online Newsletter ..... The Deadeye Dispatch  
Publisher ..... Mainstreet Newspapers, Inc.  
Editor..... Robert Feinstein  
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# DEADEYE NEWS & FEATURES

## PHILLIPINES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

the initial mission of the 96th Inf. Div. to land at Dulag, secure the beach heads, and drive inland. After clearing the swamps, they were to capture Catmon Hill and then secure the rest of Leyte Valley assisted by adjacent American divisions. They were then tasked with securing the mountain passes above Dagami Heights, all the while destroying any Japanese units that they encountered.

### HITTING THE BEACH AT DULAG

After thousands of 5 inch rockets were fired from LCT(R) craft just offshore, the landing boats moved in. With amphibious tanks leading the way, soldiers of the 96th Infantry Division's 382nd and 383rd regiments were ferried in by LVT landing craft through breaking waves. (Dulag today is a good surfing spot). Palm tree trunk barriers with sharpened ends had been emplaced in the sand pointed outward at 45 degrees, which were designed to disrupt landing craft from getting through. Therefore many Deadeyes had to disembark at the surf line and scramble up the beach past burning palm trees and Nipa huts from the Naval bombardment, dodging sporadic rifle, mortar and artillery fire. The lucky ones were driven 400 yards inland in the relative safety of Landing Vehicle Tanks. The next obstacle was a deep and wide anti tank ditch which had been dug by forced Filipino laborers. An abandoned LVT was driven into it, neatly filling it and providing an improvised bridge for the vehicles and soldiers that followed. Within 45 minutes of landing, an American flag was raised onto a coconut palm tree on Hill 120, the first time since 1941 that our flag had flown in the Philippines. The observation post of Hill 120 was secured after being blasted with self propelled 75mm fire at point blank range. Hill 120 has a superb view of the Liberan Head / Catmon Hill mass. It next took a 3 day fierce battle to seize Catmon Hill, aided by offshore naval gunfire. Dozens of artillery emplacements, caves, pillboxes and coconut log reinforced trenches were cleared in that battle. When word of the landings were confirmed on Leyte, the guerrilla resistance fighters of Lt. Colonel Ruperto Kangleon descended from the mountains to aid the Deadeyes in intelligence of Japanese troop strength and dispositions and critically, carrying supplies of food, water, ammunition and medicine through Leyte's difficult terrain. Kangleon was a resident of Southern Leyte, and his men fought along with the Deadeyes on many patrols.

### THE BATTLE OF LEYTE GULF

Upon learning of the American landings on Leyte, the Japanese Imperial Navy launched a major counterattack. This largest of WW 2 naval battles resulted in the destruction of most of the Japanese fleet. The Deadeyes on Leyte were not impacted by this failed attempt to destroy the beachhead, however several batteries of 155 mm howitzers were ordered to turn their guns around to the sea to 'protect the beach' with it's valuable supply ships against a possible Japanese naval bombardment. This order brought out some choice words from the gun crews who didn't relish the idea of dueling with 71,000 ton Japanese super battleships like the Yamato and Mushashi with their 18.1 inch guns!

### FIERCE BATTLES INLAND

Initially, the Japanese were surprised by the progress of the Deadeyes moving inland through the swamps behind the beach (as was Gen. Mac Arthur!). While advancing to Tanuan and Foxhill Corners, the Japanese 16th Division's main supply base was captured near Tabontabon. Japanese weapons, trucks and supplies were seized and some of the canned goods were eagerly eaten by the hungry Deadeyes. Except the canned octopus and squid in inky water which was rejected immediately. Also liberated were American weapons, staff cars and trucks which had been captured at Bataan in 1941. A major battle was fought at Tabontabon against



368th Field Artillery Bn.



921st Field Artillery Bn.



96th Military Police Platoon



96th Signal Company



96th Ordnance Company



96th Quartermaster Company



96th Reconnaissance Troop



96th Division Band



# DEADEYE NEWS & FEATURES



381st Infantry Regiment



382nd Infantry Regiment



383rd Infantry Regiment



321st Medical Battalion



Hq. & Hq. Battery, 96th Division Artillery



321st Engineer Combat Battalion



361st Field Artillery Bn.



362nd Field Artillery Bn.

a stand by the 16th Division. Recently these war criminals who had perpetrated numerous atrocities in Manchuria and China including the Rape of Nanjing again showed their true character. Breaking into a Leyte Army field hospital, they bayoneted and bludgeoned to death 30 wounded GIs in their hospital cots. After word of this abomination got around, the Deadeyes and other Army units on Leyte rarely took Japanese prisoners alive. At Tabontabon the 16th heavily fortified the town. Almost every house had soldiers in them, underneath in foxholes and on rooftops. of the buildings including the Catholic Church. Pillboxes and trenches were sited to provide interlocking fields of machine gun fire down all main streets. After 3 days and nights of fighting, Tabontabon was leveled by artillery fire and the 16th Division had had enough. They withdrew from the town and left 300 bodies behind in heaps. Some of the last big battles for the 96th Div. occurred in the Dagami Heights area, called by Pvt. 1st Class Don Dencker Co. L 382nd Regiment as a "green hell". These actions against heavily reinforced log bunkers and trenches on 'Suicide Ridge' resulted in the further degradation of the 16th Division as an effective fighting force. Following more battles at Chalk Ridge and Alto Peak in the mountains above Dagami, the Deadeyes shifted to patrols and skirmishes against an often unseen enemy. The major fighting on Leyte now moved across the mountains to Ormoc Bay where the Japanese were frantically bringing in reinforcements and supplies. Many of the Japanese freighters, barges and accompanying destroyers were sunk or beached following US aerial attacks from aircraft carriers and land based fighter bombers. This resulted in heavy Japanese loss of life and materials. It was Gen. Yamashita's intention for these reinforcements to counterattack over the mountains eastwards and retake Leyte Valley. It was the Deadeyes job to prevent these forces from 'leaking' over those same mountain passes. Except for the failed Paratrooper attack on the airfields, the Deadeyes were now to continue their fight on Leyte primarily against Japanese Army stragglers and the miserable daily conditions (which had not much improved since their initial landings) while on their patrols and 'mopping up' missions.

## THE BATTLE OF LEYTE BY THE NUMBERS

96th Infantry Division casualties 1,660 including 469 killed in action, 1,189 wounded, 2,500 (approximate) cases of hospitalization due to jungle diseases and combat fatigue -now called PTSD. Total American Army losses on Leyte 15,584 including 3,504 killed in action 11,901 wounded Many thousands of hospitalizations due to disease and combat fatigue. US NAVY 3,000 casualties due to surface actions during the Taffy 3 battle off of Samar and elsewhere and Kamikaze attacks. 8 ships lost, 255 planes lost.

Japanese Imperial Army casualties Of the 20,000 soldiers originally on Leyte at the start of the US invasion plus the 60,000 reinforcements through Ormoc Bay. 49,000+ died from combat, diseases or starvation. (Many of their sick or wounded were simply abandoned.) The survivors were evacuated to Cebu and other neighboring islands. ONLY 858 were captured alive. Imperial Japanese 16th Division 14,000 present at the start of the battle, 13,350 killed in action, 7,000 by the Deadeyes and the rest by other army units, disease or starvation. 350 survived. Their commander Gen. Makino committed ritual Seppuku in the traditional Samurai tradition.

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## **A Brief Account of the 96th Infantry Division and the Making of a Leader Wesley Roland Hillstrom**

The 96th Infantry Division (The Deadeyes) distinguished itself during World War II by being recognized with two highly prestigious awards: the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation (an award of the Republic of the Philippines), for extraordinary heroism during the Leyte Campaign, and the Presidential Unit Citation (an award of the United States) for extraordinary heroism during the subsequent Okinawa Campaign. The 96th Infantry was referenced in the movie "Hacksaw Ridge." Within the 96th were five Medal of Honor awardees: Technical Sergeant Beauford T. Anderson and Private First-Class Clarence B. Craft, lived to receive their MOA awards. Private Ova A. Kelley, Private First-Class Edward J. Moskala and First Lieutenant Seymour W. Terry were to receive their awards posthumously.

My dad, Wesley Rudolph Hillstrom, served as an 81mm. mortar platoon sergeant in the 96th Division's 382nd Regiment, H Company, Third Platoon. Dad grew up in northern Michigan, in Salo, a Finnish farming community on the outskirts of the town of Hancock. He was an excellent student and had won a trip to meet the Governor of Michigan after placing first in a county wide scholastic exam. He enjoyed listening to classical music, but was also a tough farm kid, growing up in the Great Depression; that background undoubtedly contributed to his success as a good soldier and an effective leader.

Like many men growing up in the Great Depression, my dad's childhood and adolescent years were not easy. His father, a carpenter by trade, and his older brother, the oldest of nine children, had to travel long distances to find work to provide for the family. That arrangement left my dad, as the oldest brother of the remaining siblings, essentially to run the farm; hence he was no longer able to continue with his education until enrolling in correspondence courses offered through the army.

Later during the Depression, dad found work in Texas digging ditches. He said the way hiring and firing was done at that time was simple. If one leaned on his pick or his shovel longer than it took for him to light a cigarette, he was fired, and the next man hired was chosen from a line of several hundred men waiting for a chance to work. On one occasion, dad had a very bad toothache and asked the foreman for permission to see a dentist. The foreman liked my dad because he was a hard worker, so he gave him one hour to see a dentist and return to his job. Dad was in such a hurry to get back to his job, the dentist first pulled the wrong tooth before pulling the right one. Nevertheless, dad returned to work within the hour. The job was just too fantastic for dad to give up. It was paying the highly lucrative wage of \$28.00 a week for a ten-hour, seven-day workweek. To augment his finances, he also had a part-time job playing an accordion in a tavern during evenings.

Dad later became a gear tester at the Timken Company, a manufacturing plant then in Detroit, Michigan. He was so good at his job that he had been known to take gears out of the scrap bin and work to put them in running order on his lunch hour, just to have something to do. As a skilled machinist, he could have been deferred from military service. He chose not to apply for a deferment with the attitude that he was ready to serve if his country needed him. Not too long after he was established in a well-paying job at Timken's, he married my mom, Madeleine, and not too long after that, was called to serve his country.

As a young man, dad's favorite poem was *Invictus*, by William Ernest Henley; dad found that poem to be very inspirational, as it ended with "I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul." During his youth dad lived that poem; it was his creed. He later said that when he ultimately went into combat, he realized he was not really the one who was in control and began developing his faith in a Higher Power.

Following the war, dad pursued mechanical engineering studies on the GI Bill but wasn't able to continue his studies. He developed tinnitus and suffered some hearing loss and PTSD issues. He tried to deal with the



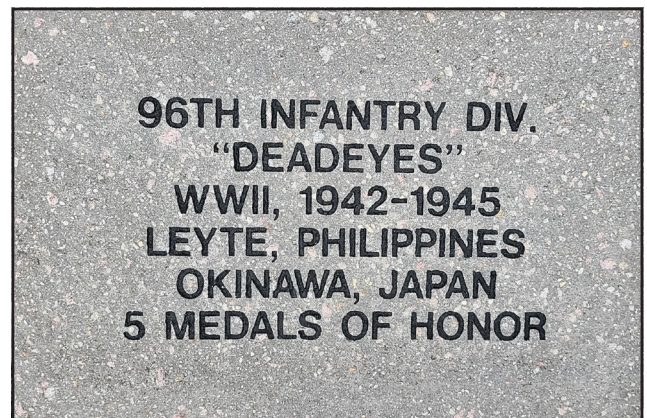
effects of the war by drinking. He ultimately quit drinking, achieved sobriety and was instrumental in helping others to achieve sobriety as well. His loving and devoted wife played a significant role in helping him to adjust to civilian life following his return from the war and in his achievement of sobriety. Family activities included fishing trips, vacations and attending symphony orchestra concerts.

For several years following World War II, my dad's platoon met at three-year intervals at different cities within the United States; families would plan their vacations to meet at wherever the reunions were held. In 1975, the reunion was held at our family home in Detroit, Michigan, where my dad met with his former platoon leader, then Colonel James H. Short (Retired). The last time prior to that meeting that dad had seen that gentleman was after he had helped to carry him off the battlefield, during a phosphorous artillery barrage, after then Lt. Short had been severely wounded with machine gun fire.

My dad won the respect of his company commander, his platoon leader and every man in his platoon. I have written accounts of my dad's battlefield memoirs online, and plan to ultimately include them in a book format, as I think it is important for people, especially the younger generation, to know something about the price of freedom. Dad passed away in 1992.

Undoubtedly, many bands of brothers were produced as the result of the wartime experiences of "The Greatest Generation."

Among them are units within the Deadeyes of the 96th Infantry Division. In tribute to the 96th, a 12" X 18" paver was purchased by the 96th Infantry Division Association Heritage Fund, and can be seen in Section LP, near the Liberation Pavilion, relatively near to the statue of General Dwight D. Eisenhower.





# DEADEYE NEWS & FEATURES

## **A Tough Guy Named Corporal Clarence B. Craft, Rifleman, Company G, 2nd Battalion, 382nd Regiment of the 96th Infantry Division. Recipient of The Congressional Medal Of Honor**

Clarence Craft was a newly arrived replacement soldier for the 96th Division having been in the Army for just 8 months. A powerfully built 23 year old man with blonde hair, he hailed from San Bernardino, California. A blue collar kind of guy, he had worked as a foreman at a hog farm and as a truck driver. As a 'citizen' soldier he was to single handedly achieve a huge and successful victory on a Japanese strongpoint also with a mild name, Hen Hill. Like many other Deadeyes, his prowess on the rifle ranges was to pay off in combat.

**HEN HILL** The main line of Japanese defense on Okinawa was also called the Shuri Line, which ran from the east coast port of Yanabaru to Shuri Castle and then to the capitol city of Naha. This line was anchored above Yanabaru by the Conical Hill mass, which had a commanding position above Buckner Bay. When Conical was captured by the Deadeyes, General Ushijima feared the outflanking of the Shuri Line and poured in his reserve troops to reinforce a series of hills to the west of Conical. These hills were given American names such as Dick, Easy, Love, Oboe, Tom and Hen. All of these hills were mutually supportive with interlocking fields of fire. Ordered by Gen. Ushijima to hold to the last man, they were primarily defended by a mixed group of Japanese units armed with 75mm field guns, machine guns both light and heavy, rifles, mortars and the ubiquitous 50mm grenade launchers aka knee mortars. 450 ft. tall Hen Hill was to become the key position amongst the other hills, and held up the 96th's advance for 9 days. With only a company sized force of less than 200 men, the Japanese on Hen Hill stopped assaults by two Deadeye battalions (1300 men total) with many casualties. Something had to be done to release this log jam. In his first combat as a soldier, Craft was chosen to lead a team to Hen Hill.



**AN ARMY OF ONE** May 31st, 1945. Tasked with probing the enemy's reverse slope defense of Hen Hill, Clarence Craft and 5 other Deadeyes warily approached the summit of the hill. They were met by a hail of bullets and grenades, quickly wounding 3 of Craft's buddies and pinning the rest down. What happened next was later called by journalists "THE story on Okinawa." As he neared the crest, Craft exchanged in a hand grenade duel with the Japanese just yards away. He threw grenades as fast as his fellow soldiers could pass them up to him. He also pointed out targets to his men, so soon, Craft was silhouetted atop Hen Hill with grenades flying over his head in both directions. Eventually Craft threw 2 cases of hand grenades himself, at least 50. Firing as he moved toward the top of the hill, he put his M1 Garand rifle to work. With deadly accuracy he shot down Japanese soldiers while moving to avoid being shot himself. He came upon the key to Hen Hill's defense, a deep trench connected to a cave. Straddling the trench, he killed many of his opponents with point blank head shots. This was too much for the defenders who now were stunned by Craft's attack. Many then retreated into the adjacent cave. Clarence was handed a satchel charge of 18 pounds of C2 plastique explosive. He ignited the fuze and tossed it into the cave opening. Nothing happened. Craft then calmly entered into the cave in plain sight of the Japanese inside and retrieved the satchel bag. Re igniting the charge, he threw it in again and ran away from the cave mouth. A tremendous explosion followed and all in the cave were killed or trapped as the cave mouth collapsed and was sealed up. Emboldened





# DEADEYE NEWS & FEATURES

by Craft's attack, other troops rushed in and quickly seized Hen Hill. Clarence was credited with killing 25+ Japanese, knocking out a heavy machine gun and unhinging the entire Shuri line.. Craft paused in his attack only long enough to seize a Japanese officer's Samurai sword. As he remarked later, "if I hadn't grabbed the sword the 96th would have immediately picked the place clean of souvenirs!" Craft's commanding officer while witnessing the attack said, "that fool is going to leave this battle in 1 of 2 ways, either killed or with the Medal of Honor." And 3 months later, Clarence Craft would indeed receive our nation's highest military honor at the White House from President Harry S. Truman. Another MOA recipient at the ceremony that day was Desmond Doss, 77th Inf. Div., of Hacksaw Ridge fame.

RBF 01/02/2024





## Featured Weapon

Japanese Type 98 320cm mortar “Ghost Rocket” (Kyuhaichi-shiki-kyuno) Also known as ‘Spigot Mortar’ and Buzz Bomb by the Deadeyes and ‘Screamin Jesus’ by the US Marines.

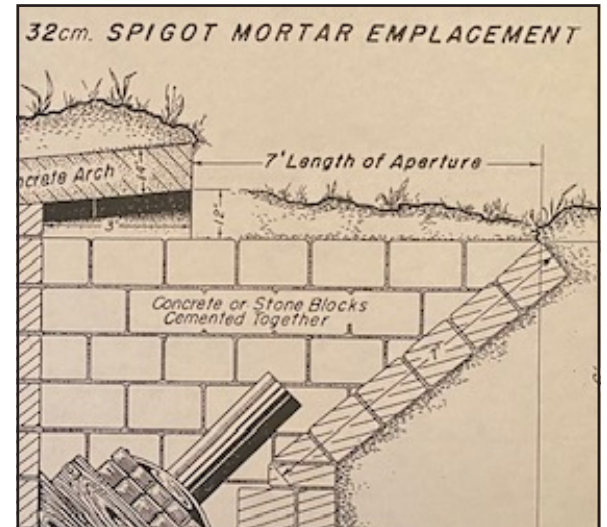
Probably every 96th Inf. Deadeye who witnessed a Japanese spigot mortar shell in flight or upon impact and detonation during the Okinawa battle could never forget it. Although the tactical importance of this weapon was minimal, it’s psychological impact was substantial. Quite a few GI’s who survived near misses from this weapon cracked up and had shattered nerves for a time. As the warheads frequently buried themselves before exploding, fragmentation was minimal in soft soil or sand. However, the explosions could be quite deadly in the rock and shale of Okinawa’s hills causing numerous casualties. In 1 instance, a spigot mortar shell hit an aid station of the 1st Battalion of the 381st, killing 2 medics, 9 soldiers and wounding 11. But primarily, the Japanese considered this mortar to be a terror weapon, similar in concept to the Iraqi Scud missiles used during the 1st Gulf War, Desert Storm. When fired in volleys they were especially dangerous. Harvey Webb, Company A of the 382nd Regiment related this story to me. Warily approaching an Okinawa home with a low wall in front of it, Harvey realized that a spigot mortar shell was coming down right on top of him. He made the split second decision to dive down in front of the wall. A good choice! The shell landed on the house on the other side of the wall. The front door was blown off and landed on Harvey followed by about 100 pounds of dirt. Harvey was trapped until his cries for help alerted his buddies to rescue him from this predicament.



The first use of the Type 98 spigot mortar was in the siege of Bataan, Philippines in 1942. Later used at the Battle of Imphal/Kohima in Burma, a Type 98 spigot launcher and two shells were somehow dragged up through jungles and mountain trails. At the Battle of Iwo Jima several hundred of the 320 mm shells were fired at the Marines. They were often launched from caves where their gun crews were largely protected from counter battery fire and lived and slept next to their mortars. Another Heavy Mortar Regiment of spigot mortars was in transit by sea to Saipan before that battle in the Marianas. The Japanese transport ship that was carrying the mortars was picked off by a US Navy submarine and sunk

### WHY THE NAME SPIGOT MORTAR

Most mortar weapons consist of a tube (mortar) that an explosive shell is dropped into and fired from. A spigot mortar consisted of a tube (spigot) that had a shell placed over it. The spigot was loaded with silk bags of black powder/nitrocellulose propellant. The more bags, the greater distance the bomb could fly. The Japanese spigot mortar was also a massive weapon, dwarfing traditional mortars of 60mm, 81mm or 4.2 inch diameters. The explosive force of the shell was equivalent to a World War I era 12” battleship shell. 103 lbs of molded picric acid and a P.E.T.N. booster were the explosive charges used that blasted craters of 8 ft deep and 15 ft across and up to 12 ft deep and 30 ft across.



Where the shells landed and what type of ground,(sand, mud, dirt or gravel) determined the size of the swimming pool sized holes.

The spigot had a diameter of 10 inches and the shell 13 inches. The projectile was in 3 sections which threaded together. Each section weighed about 200 pounds and they were placed in sequence over the spigot. (tail fin assembly, main body and warhead assembly).2 or more men would lift the sections up with removable handles that clamped on. The assembled shell was 5 ft 1 in tall and weighed 660 pounds. The spigot and base plate was bolted onto thick boards resembling rail road ties. The weapon could be crudely aimed by loosening those bolts and using brute force to move the assembly. A primer was remotely fired electrically, creating a tremendous blast and recoil. The Japanese mortar men were probably quite wary of this and fired off the shells from a protected distance when they could. Upon firing, the spigot mortar shells were lobbed into the air at 110 meters per second (360 feet per second). As they travelled in a parabolic flight, they emitted a ringing sound, like a bell or gong that had been struck. With





# DEADEYE NEWS & FEATURES

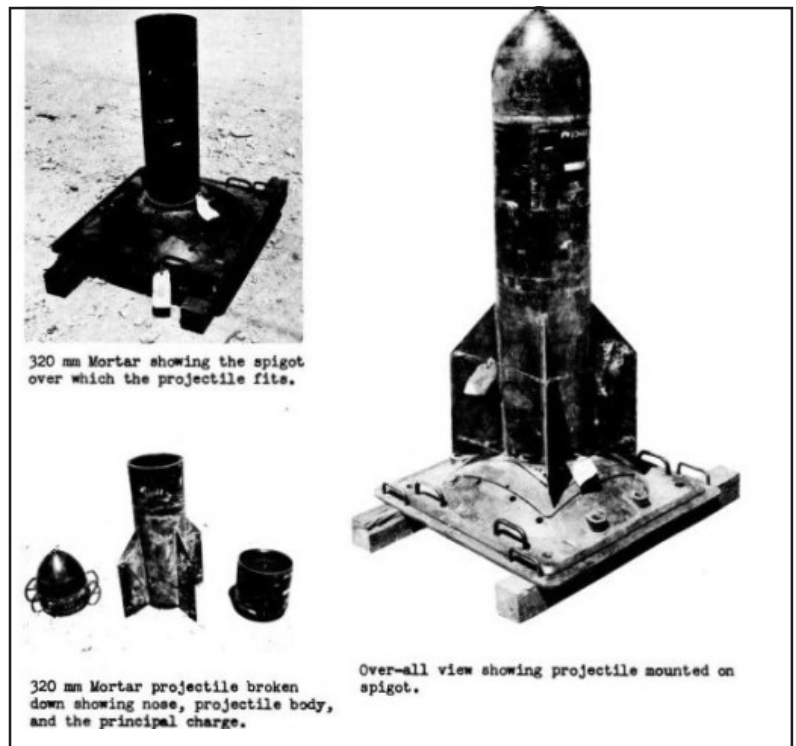
a maximum range of 1440 yards, the shells were inaccurate, tumbling on their descent. It was usually a guess where they would land. However shells travelled so slowly that often GI's could see them coming and ran away from the point of impact during daylight. In combat, the spigot tubes became deformed after 5-7 firings and had to be replaced.

## EMPLACEMENTS AND USAGE ON OKINAWA

The 1st Independent Heavy Mortar Regiment was based at the Okinawan town of Iso, on the western Maeda Escarpment overlooking the ocean at Machinato Inlet. Many shells landed below in the so called Buzz Bomb Bowl. Iso controlled the spigot batteries which were located roughly in a west to east direction, covering the Japanese 1st defense line. Initially 6 batteries of 4 spigot mortars each were mostly placed in fixed fortifications with many concentrated in the Kakazu / Nishibaru area. They were to fire an estimated 224 shells during the battle. The 2nd Btn of the 382nd were the first to encounter a spigot mortar attack, as they advanced southward to Nishibaru Ridge on the 8th of April. Later attacks were a factor at battles such as Tombstone Ridge, Kakazu and Nishibaru ridges. In at least 1 location, behind Kakazu West, a spigot mortar was emplaced on 40 foot trolley tracks behind a steel door in a tunnel on the reverse slope. It was rolled out, the projectile was fired and then it was pushed back into it's cave and the steel door slammed shut. This emplacement was attacked by 5 Deadeyes.

Only 1 returned alive after knocking it out. Many of the emplacements utilized an underground 45 degree aperture that was constructed of cinder blocks. Adjacent caves safely stored the ammunition and explosives. Most of these batteries were destroyed by counter battery US mortar fire. In spite of all efforts to find and destroy these firing sites, the Japanese cleverly camouflaged them and fired sporadically. However firings were reduced after April 26th with the capture of Nishibaru Ridge. Nishibaru was a center of the spigot mortar batteries and only a handful of spigot mortars now remained in action as they no longer could be transported to different locations without difficulty. They were too heavy to be moved easily, their gun crews reduced by combat and many prime mover trucks had been destroyed. And after April 23rd, the headquarters of the 1st Heavy Mortar Regiment at Iso also lost effective control of the spigot batteries after the West Pinnacle battle there. The last surviving spigot mortar was operating at Ishimmi Ridge on the Shuri main line of defense on May 18th.

RBF 12/10/2023



**SAVE THE DATE**

96TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
ASSOCIATION HERITAGE FUND

PLAQUE DEDICATION AT THE US ARMY  
MUSEUM AND ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

WATCH OUR FACEBOOK PAGE AND  
THE UPCOMING EVENTS TAB ON OUR  
WEBSITE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

DATES 10.18 - 10.20.20





UNIT

## 96TH INFANTRY DIVISION

By Matthew J. Seelinger

Organized in the final weeks of World War I, the 96th Division never joined the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) fighting the German Army on the Western Front. It would not be until the next world war that the 96th saw combat, this time battling the Japanese in the Pacific Theater on Leyte in the Philippines and during the brutal battle for Okinawa less than 400 miles away from the Japanese home islands.

The 96th Division was constituted in the National Army on 5 September 1918 and organized on 20 October at Camp Wadsworth near Spartanburg, South Carolina. With the end of combat coming less than a month later on 11 November after the signing of the armistice between the Allies and Germany, the AEF did not require any additional divisions, and as a result, the 96th remained stateside and was demobilized on 7 January 1919 at Camp Wadsworth.

The 96th Division was reconstituted a little over two years later on 24 June 1921 and organized on 7 October in the Organized Reserves, with its headquarters at the New Post Office Building in Portland, Oregon. This would serve as the home of the division's headquarters until the 96th's activation for World War II. The division was allotted to the Ninth Corps Area and assigned to XIX Corps, with its home area in the states of Oregon and Washington. In an effort to encourage esprit de corps, the officers of the 96th adopted the nickname "Columbia Division" after the Columbia River that formed the border between the two states of its home area.

The organization of the 96th Division resembled the Army's "square" divisions of World War I, with two infantry brigades, each comprised of two infantry regiments, and a field artillery brigade. The 96th's two infantry brigades were the 191st (381st and 382d Infantry Regiments) and 192d (383d and 384th Infantry Regiments). The division's 171st Field Artillery Brigade was comprised of the 361st and 362d Field Artillery Regiments, along with the 321st Ammunition Train. The 96th also included a number of support elements, including signal, engineer, medical, and ordnance units.

During the interwar years, the 96th conducted monthly and annual drills, usually at Camp Lewis (redesignated Fort Lewis in 1931),



**TOP:** Major General James L. Bradley commanded the 96th Infantry Division from its activation for World War II on 15 August 1942 through the end of the war. (National Archives)



the division's training and mobilization center, in Washington. Most of the time, the division trained with units of the 3d Division and took part in Fourth Army and Ninth Corps Area maneuvers; in some instances, soldiers of the 96th filled out the 3d Division and the National Guard 41st Division to bring them up to full strength for field exercises. Along with unit training, the four infantry regiments assigned to the 96th rotated responsibility for conducting Citizen Military Training Camp duty annually at Camp Lewis.

On 15 August 1942, with the United States now at war with the Axis powers, the 96th was ordered into active military service

**BOTTOM:** The 96th Division shoulder sleeve insignia was approved by the Army on 14 February 1927. The blue and white squares represent the states of Oregon and Washington, the division's original home area. (Courtesy of David Kaufman)





# DEADEYE NEWS & FEATURES



**ABOVE:** Soldiers of the 383d Infantry Regiment, 96th Infantry Division, look for enemy snipers shortly after landing on Orange 2 Beach on Leyte Island, Philippines, 20 October 1944. (National Archives)

**ABOVE RIGHT:** Antitank gunners from the 383d Infantry Regiment fire a 37mm gun into Japanese-held caves near Yuza, Okinawa, 13 June 1945. (National Archives)



By 18 July, the entire 96th Division began staging at Camp Stoneman for eventual departure from the San Francisco Port of Embarkation. The division's departure, however, was delayed when a massive explosion of munitions destined for the war in the Pacific devastated nearby Port Chicago on 17 June, killing some 320 men, most of them enlisted African American sailors. All medical personnel from the 96th were rushed to the scene of the disaster, soldiers lined up to donate blood, and the 381st Infantry was alerted for possible police duty.

On 21 July, the Deadeyes began shipping out for Hawaii and jungle training on Oahu before its first combat operations against Japanese-held Yap in the western Pacific. Not long after beginning its deployment to Yap, the 96th was informed that the operation was canceled (Yap would be bypassed and isolated by American forces). Instead, the Deadeyes learned that their baptism of fire would come with the American landings on Leyte Island and General Douglas MacArthur's return to the Philippines, scheduled for 20 October.

After a brief stop in Manus in the Admiralties that allowed the soldiers of the 96th to escape the cramped and sweltering confines of their troop transports and enjoy a swim and a bottle of beer, the Deadeyes began boarding LSTs on 11 October for the voyage to Leyte. The 96th was assigned to Sixth Army's XXIV Corps and was to land north of Dulag on Leyte's east coast. After landing, the 96th had the mission of capturing the Catmon Hill mass and gaining control of the Dagami-Tanuan area. Of the six divisions taking part in the Leyte Campaign, the 96th was the only one that had not seen combat.

At around 1000 on "A-Day," 20 October, the first elements of the 96th (less the 381st Infantry, serving as Sixth Army reserve) landed on Leyte after four hours of naval gunfire and air strikes. Facing more resistance from swampy terrain than from the Japanese, the 96th and 7th Infantry Divisions had established within an hour beachheads deep enough allowing vehicles and supplies to be brought in. Despite the swamps, the 96th made good progress; on 28 October, the 382d Infantry seized a key Japanese supply base at Tabontabon after a three-day fight that inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy and opened Leyte's central valley to Sixth Army. On the following day, elements of the 381st (released from Sixth Army reserve) and 383d Regiments, supported by tanks and artillery, captured the 1,400-foot Catmon Hill that threatened the landing beaches.

at Camp Adair, Oregon, and redesignated the 96th Infantry Division. The 96th was also reorganized as a "triangular" division that eliminated the division's infantry and field artillery brigades. In addition, the 384th Infantry Regiment was relieved from the division and the field artillery regiments were reorganized into four field artillery battalions—the 361st, 362d, and 921st (105mm howitzers), and 363d (155mm howitzers). The division was rounded out by various support elements, including the 321st Engineer Combat Battalion and medical, ordnance, and quartermaster units.

Under the command of Major General James L. Bradley, the 96th underwent a period of intense training, including participation in the IV Corps Maneuvers in September 1943. Bradley placed the division's infantry and marksmanship training under the direction of the 96th's assistant division commander, Brigadier General Claudius M. Easley, a sharpshooting Texan considered one of the Army's crack shots. Easley's emphasis on marksmanship led to a new nickname for the 96th—"Deadeyes."

In the spring of 1944, the 96th Division was brought up to full strength with the addition of hundreds of soldiers, including a large contingent of former cadets from the inactivated Army Specialized Training Program. Later that spring, the War Department designated the 96th an "amphibious" division, with the specialized mission of conducting amphibious landings against hostile shores. As a result, the Deadeyes conducted several practice landings on beaches in southern California over the next several weeks.

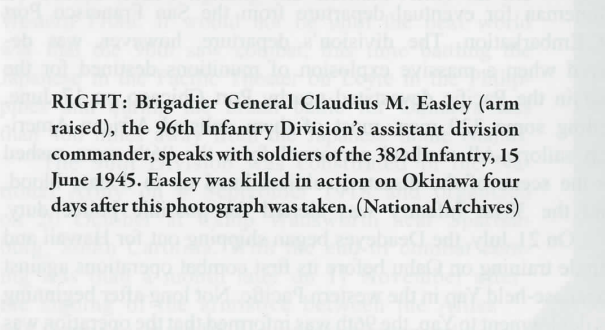




# DEADEYE NEWS & FEATURES



**LEFT:** Riflemen from 2d Battalion, 381st Infantry, cautiously advance across the summit of the Yaeju-Dake Escarpment, 14 June 1945. (National Archives)



**RIGHT:** Brigadier General Claudius M. Easley (arm raised), the 96th Infantry Division's assistant division commander, speaks with soldiers of the 382d Infantry, 15 June 1945. Easley was killed in action on Okinawa four days after this photograph was taken. (National Archives)



During November, after battling the terrain and the elements, including a typhoon that struck Leyte, the 96th fought at places such as Dagami Heights, Chalk Ridge, and Alto Peak. The Dead-eyes conducted mopping up operations against an ever-elusive but dwindling enemy. When an attack by 350 enemy paratroopers and elements of two Japanese divisions in Leyte's central mountains on 6 December threatened to overwhelm two airfield airfields in the Buraen area, 1st Battalion, 382d Infantry, along with elements of the 38th Division, reinforced the 11th Airborne Division, fought to contain and defeat the Japanese assault by 11 December. On 25 December, Leyte was declared secured, although the campaign did not officially end until 1 July 1945. Early the following month, 2d Battalion, 382d Infantry, and 3d Battalion, 381st Infantry, took part in fighting on nearby Samar to clear Japanese troops from that island.

While the American victory of Leyte was never in doubt, it did not come without cost to U.S. forces. In all, the 96th alone lost 376 killed, 1,289 wounded, and four missing. Another 2,500 men were knocked out of action from disease or injury. Soon, however, as intense as the fighting could be on Leyte, the 96th began preparing for what became the bloodiest campaign of the Pacific Theater.

On 10 February, the 96th Division was relieved from all tactical responsibilities in the Philippines and began preparing for Operation ICEBERG, the invasion of Okinawa and the Ryukyus Campaign. After intensive training with flamethrowers and demolitions, joint exercises between armored units and

field artillery, and two practice amphibious landings in Leyte Gulf, the 96th and the rest of XXIV Corps, now assigned to Tenth Army, under the command of Lieutenant General Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., departed the Philippines on 25 March. While the 96th took in replacements to help fill its ranks depleted by the fighting on Leyte, the division remained thirty-nine officers and 1,167 enlisted soldiers below authorized strength.

On 1 April, Easter Sunday, American forces began landing on the southwestern shore of Okinawa, the main island of the Ryukyus, some 350 miles from the Japanese home islands. The first elements of XXIV Corps began splashing ashore at 0830 at Hagushi, with the 7th Division to the north and 96th to the south. Much to their surprise, Army forces, along with their Marine counterparts to the north, landed without opposition. The Japanese decision to not defend the beaches on Okinawa reflected a deliberate strategy to focus the the island's defense in the interior, using Okinawa's terrain of ravines, caves, and escarpments that greatly favored the Japanese defenders.

As the Marines advanced north to clear the northern part of Okinawa, XXIV Corps swung south, with the Deadeyes advancing on the corps' right; the 382d and 383d Infantry Regiments were forward with 381st in reserve. On 5 April, the 96th faced its first significant enemy resistance along well-fortified high ground, especially along an area known as Cactus Ridge. During the fighting there, 1st and 3d Battalions of the





# DEADEYE NEWS & FEATURES



Reservists of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 96th Infantry Division, wait for a train to take them from Salt Lake City, Utah, to Fort Hunter Liggett, California, for a two-week summer encampment, 25 July 1954. (National Archives)

383d engaged Japanese troops in brutal hand-to-hand fighting five miles north of the town of Shuri, the key to the Japanese defenses of the Shuri Line in the southern part of Okinawa.

The next American objective, Kakazu Ridge, proved more difficult; on 9-10 April, the 96th's attack on the ridge stalled. The Deadeyes then faced repeated Japanese assaults on 12-13 April, with a final attack coming at around 0300 on 14 April that was eventually repulsed with heavy casualties on both sides. The Japanese proved to be successful at night infiltration of American lines, and this would plague American soldiers and marines throughout the battle for Okinawa.

With XXIV Corps reinforced with the arrival of the 27th Infantry Division, the corps attacked south with three divisions abreast, with the 96th in the center and tasked with the mission of capturing Shuri itself. On 19 April, a massive bombardment by twenty-seven battalions of field artillery and naval gunfire, followed by the largest air strike of the campaign, pounded Japanese positions. The artillery and aerial bombing, however, did little to weaken Japanese resistance and the American advance south was largely blocked for more than a week. The Deadeyes were able to push forward through the enemy defenses, using flamethrower tanks and demolition teams in what Lieutenant General Buckner termed "blowtorch and corkscrew" methods, and take Tanaburo Ridge.

From 26-29 April, the 96th attacked Japanese positions along the Maeda Escarpment, achieving little and suffering heavy casualties in the process. On 1 May, the 96th was relieved by the 77th Infantry Division for rest and rehabilitation. During its week off the line, the Deadeyes enjoyed performances by the division band, a limited supply of Coca Cola, and movies, although the first evening of showings was interrupted nine times by air raid sirens. The 96th also took on 2,600 replacements to fill its ranks depleted by the intense fighting so far on Okinawa.

After relieving the 7th Division, the 96th took part in a four-division attack that called for an envelopment of the Shuri Line. While much of the attack, as previous ones, initially stalled against fierce Japanese resistance, the 383d Infantry attacked and captured part of

Conical Hill, held it against a fierce enemy counterattack on 13 May, and secured the hill by 15 May. Over the next two weeks, the 96th fought a series of bloody engagements over a series of hills—Sugar, King, Love, Oboe, and Hen—against determined Japanese resistance and torrential rains during the last ten days of May that turned much of the landscape into a quagmire.

The final major action for the 96th and all other U.S. forces on Okinawa took place around the Yaeju-Dake Escarpment, a large coral outcropping in the southeast part of the island where the Japanese decided to make their last stand. From 6 through 14 June, the Deadeyes battled the Japanese along the escarpment, with heavy losses on both sides, then fought for several peaks in the area. While Japanese numbers began to dwindle, and American forces took increasing numbers of enemy prisoners, fierce fighting continued. On 18 June, Lieutenant General Buckner, Tenth Army commander, was killed by enemy artillery while at a forward observation post. The following day, the 96th Division's

assistant division commander, Brigadier General Easley, who had been wounded on Leyte, was killed by machine-gun fire during his daily tour of the front. The last week of June was spent mopping up the last of Japanese resistance; on 2 July, the fighting on Okinawa came to an end and the island was declared secured. By the time the battle for Okinawa concluded, the 96th Division suffered 1,598 killed or missing and 5,614 wounded, the highest number of casualties in any XXIV Corps division during the campaign.

The 96th Division departed Okinawa on 22 July and arrived at Mindoro in the Philippines, where it remained through the end of World War II. Rather than serving with the occupation forces in Japan, the Deadeyes remained in the Philippines. On 17 January 1946, the 96th left the Philippines for the United States, arriving at the Port of Los Angeles on 2 February. It was inactivated the following day at Camp Anza, California.

Five soldiers from the 96th were awarded the Medal of Honor—one for actions in the battle for Leyte and four for Okinawa; three of the five were posthumous awards. Eighteen soldiers were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, and hundreds of the division's men received the Silver Star, Bronze Star, or other decorations. In addition to earning two campaign streamers—Leyte and Ryukyus—the Deadeyes were awarded the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation for Leyte.

On 31 December 1946, the 96th Infantry Division was activated in the Organized Reserves (later Organized Reserve Corps in 1948 and U.S. Army Reserve in July 1952) with headquarters in Helena, Montana. The division's headquarters remained in Montana until it moved to Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City, Utah. It remained there until it was inactivated on 31 December 1965, ending the 96th Infantry Division's service as a division. Since 1965, a number of Army Reserve units, including the 96th Army Reserve Command and the current 96th Sustainment Brigade, wear the shoulder sleeve insignia of the 96th Infantry Division, but these units do not share the lineage of the same unit with the proud combat history in the Pacific Theater of World War II. ☐





## Among Men... Commander



The blow heard 'round the world on December 7, 1941 did more than just throw the United States into war. It also put the hex on a 12-handicap golfer.

You know him as Major General J. L. Bradley, your boss, and you've never seen him on a golf course. He turned his back on his favorite game the day we entered the war and hasn't touched a club since.

And that, Deadeyes, is illustrative of the iron will of the man who has lead you to one victory and will lead you on to others.

While his golf clubs moulded in the closet, General Bradley worked around the clock at the Presidio of San Francisco. During those critical days when we lay wide open to a Jap attack, his job was Chief of Staff of the Fourth Army and Western Defense Command, a headquarters charged both with defending the Pacific Coast and Alaska and training troops for the offensives to come.

By June, the immediate crisis was over and the War Department was scouring its files for competent officers to train and lead new assault divisions. One of these was the 96th - and you know the rest of the story. General Bradley got another star and his own division.

Our General Bradley, like another Bradley of military fame, is a Missourian. He was born in the little town of Doniphan and was reared in Rolla, where his father, who died last spring, was a much-beloved professor in the Missouri School of Mines. His mother still resides in Rolla.

Following graduation from the United States Military Academy in 1914, General Bradley was commissioned a second lieutenant of infantry. With the army desperately in need of competent instructors to turn the raw manpower of the nation into soldiers, General Bradley suffered the same fate as many other young West Point men of that period and spent the entire war at the Infantry School passing on his knowledge to other men.

He did see service in Vera Cruz and in the Mexican border campaign, but for all practical purposes, October 20, 1944, was our commander's baptism of fire as well as our own.

Many of you know General Bradley chiefly as the straight-talking officer who stood up before you when you came to the 96th and said, "My name's Bradley. My friends call me Jim." If you were with the Division at Camp Adair and Fort Lewis, you will remember these blunt words:

"Our enemies are tough. We must be tougher. We kill or get killed.

"My reputation lies in your hands. I want no higher command, but I ask you as a personal favor that you so train and work that I may go into battle with you at least once."

We have proved tougher than the enemy. We have killed 20 of him for every one of us that has lost his life. We have gone into battle under General Bradley and have emerged triumphant. Score - 100.

General Bradley's personal post-war program is about as military as yours and mine. It has three main planks:

1 - To spend a little time, for a change, with Mrs. Bradley and their daughter, Mildred.

2 - To go to work on that rusty golf game.

3 - To go back home to Missouri and dabble in local politics as plain Jim Bradley.

So - if you ever see a poster reading, "Bradley for Sheriff" you'll know that there's the guy to vote for. As General Yamashita will testify, he always gets his man.







# SOME DEADEYE HUMOR

During the land battle of Leyte, these two humorous events took place.

In a large Quonset hut, a Company of soldiers from the 96th Inf. gathered to hear a motivational speech by a visiting General. Not a Deadeye, he was somewhat cut in the mold of a George Patton, and was fond of the use of the word 'WE'. During his speech, he repeatedly used powerful phrases like: WE must kill the enemy wherever WE find him, WE will go into battle tougher than the Japs, WE shall audaciously attack and destroy our foe! Finally a Deadeye Private at the back of the hall had enough of this talk. In back of his buddies and shielded from view of the General, he yelled out: "What do you mean WE General! Do you have a frog in your pocket??"

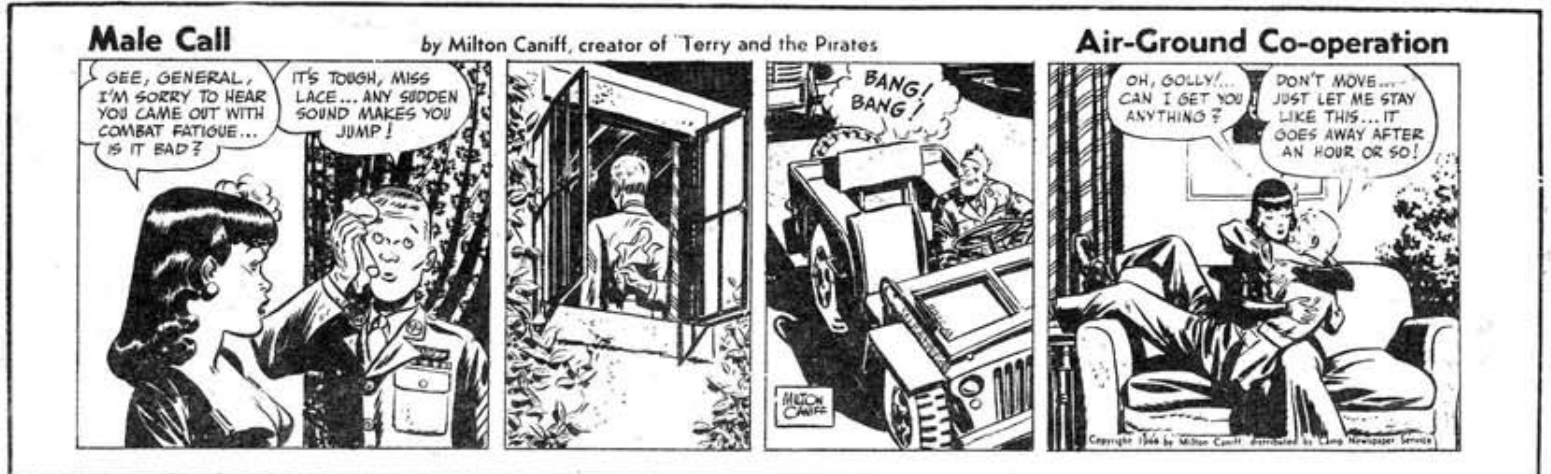
(The fate of this Private is not known).

Among the many miseries and privations that were endured by the soldiers on Leyte Island was lack of clean water, food, and other supplies. Resupply was a constant issue due to the swamps, jungles and mountainous terrain. And weeks spent in flooded foxholes in near constant rain caused many soldiers uniforms to literally rot and fall apart. A General decided to see for himself what the GI's were in need of. Meeting with some Deadeye's who had just returned from the front lines he said, "Soldiers, I am here to get you whatever is required for you. What do you need most?" A soldier than did a headstand, exposing his torn trousers and naked buttocks to the General. He said, "For god sakes General, pants. We need pants!"

As told by Pfc. Gilbert Feinstein



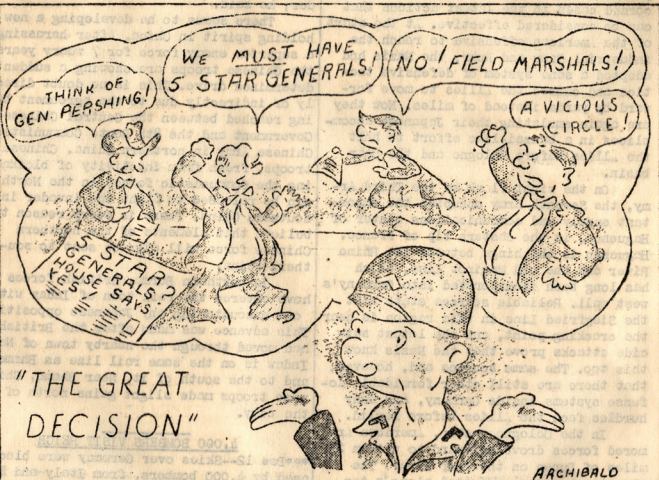
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**DEADEYE DISPATCH**  
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- WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE--?**
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. In orange.   | 10. A pair of two-tone shoes.           |
| 2. A city-street lit up at night.                                 | 11. A foundation garment you know what. |
| 3. A white woman. (Oh we know some of you birds have been lucky!) | 12. A whiff of ecstatic perfume.        |
| 4. Catsup.  | 13. A lily-white handkerchief.          |
| 5. A barracks.  | 14. A big soft easychair.               |
| 6. A copy of the Los Angeles Times.                               | 15. Maggie's drawers.                   |
| 7. Bedsheets.   | 16. Five aces.                          |
| 8. Ice Cream.   | 17. A popcorn waggon.                   |
| 9. A white broadcloth shirt.                                      | 18. A quart.                            |



"THE FOXHOLE'S FINEST"  
 Thur, 14 Dec 44. Published by 96th Div I&EO.-Tel Ext-75. Special Home Edition.

## BRITISH FLEET FOR PACIFIC

\*\*\*Dec 12—The Australian Minister of War has stated that Great Britain is assembling a mighty new Pacific fleet which will be based in Australia. This fleet, one of the largest ever mustered by the British Navy, will be under the command of Admiral Himitz and General MacArthur when needed. The new fleet is entirely separate from the British fleet based in Indian Ocean waters. Prize ship of the powerful armada will be the new British super-warship "Howe", commissioned in 1942. It was reported that this fleet itself will have enough power to engage all of Japan's fleet at once. Great Britain's pledge to help the United States finish off Japan is taking solid shape.

### ENTIRE ORMOG GARRISON DESTROYED.

\*\*\*Dec 12—United States troops have eliminated the southern segment of the Yamashita line extending south from Ormoc. General MacArthur said that when the port of Ormoc was captured Sunday night by the 77th Division, the entire Japanese garrison there was destroyed. Before the town fell, the fighting was described as of the most bitter sort. The elimination of the Ormoc segment of the Yamashita line was accomplished when the 77th Division effected a junction with the 7th Division. With the 77th Division being used as an anvil, the Japanese forces trapped between the two divisions are being pounded by the 7th Division. To the north of Ormoc, the 32nd Division is moving forward over almost impossible terrain to break up the remaining segments of the Yamashita line. Unofficial estimates from MacArthur's headquarters place the number of Japanese remaining on the island of Leyte at 40,000.

### BIRDSEYE ACCOUNT OF ORMOG LANDING

\*\*\*Dec 12—Speaking over the world-wide Army Hour, an eyewitness of the Ormoc landing said, "45 minutes after H-hour, the entire division had been landed and supplies were already coming up onto the beach. To say our landing was a complete surprise to the Japs was putting it mildly. Instead of us, they were expecting their own convoy to land—The incoming Jap convoy was first spotted by our covering planes. While our P-40's directed the fire, the Navy laid down the salvos. As I said before, in 45 minutes we were in possession of Ormoc Bay." Another flier said that it was in this attack that Major Dick Bong got his 37th or 38th plane.

As far as the Japanese are concerned the battle of Leyte is the decisive battle of the Japanese Empire. The eight Japanese convoys and their cargo of 30,000 troops which were sunk trying to reach Leyte bears out the enemy's determination to stop the Americans at any cost. To quote a Tokyo broadcast, "The decisive battle at Leyte is not a battle which decides whether we lose one corner of the Philippines to the enemy or not. It is the battle on which the life of (Cont'd on page two.)

