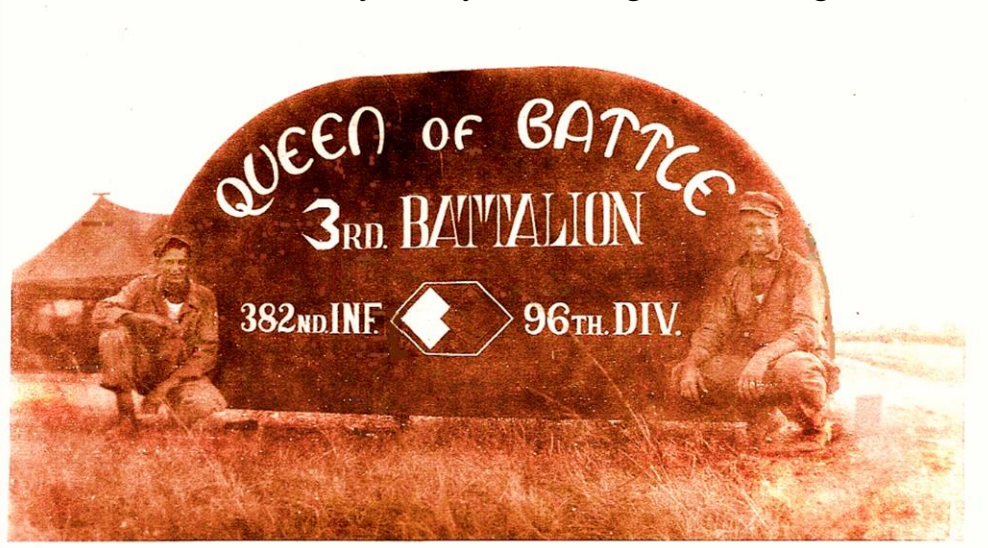


Queen of Battle

Chapter I History

When I first saw the words Queen of Battle they were an enigma; I wondered what they meant. They were *also* on a large wooden sign in our 3rd battalion area, on Mindoro, Philippine Islands back in 1945. Men often posed for pictures with it to show folks back home. That is my buddy Ken Morgan on the right.



Someone with authority had requisitioned the wood and painted the letters; so the sign had been approved. Whatever happened to that chunk of wood is unimportant, but the idea behind the words are because Deadeyes are most proud of them.

It was back on Okinawa when I *first* saw the words “Queen of Battle”. They had been stenciled on the back of shirts worn by the older men. There was the figure of a nude lady with a rifle standing by a splintered coconut tree with Asian style lettering that read “Queen of Battle” at the top and 3rd battalion, 382nd Regiment, 96th Infantry Division at the bottom.

These fatigue shirts worn by the veterans had been bleached by sun and soap from many washings. With that black design on the back they were a subtle mark of demarcation between us. New men wore spanking new fatigue shirts that looked like they were right off the cutting board, and the back panels were conspicuously blank so anyone could quickly tell us apart.

At that time I was an 18 year old green replacement and impressed with the age and combat acumen of these veterans. Not only had these older men trained in the “States” together for a year and a half, they had survived the crucible of combat on Leyte and Okinawa. I thought each man there could walk straight through a brick wall, and having been with them in action later on proved the point.

I thought their shirts with the Queen of Battle design was a symbolic of their stature and the concept was cool, and yearned to get my hands on the stencil and embolden my shirts; then I would feel like I was one of the guys.

But to disappointment I never found the stencil, and furthermore no one after the war could come up with a shirt to copy.

Several years ago I and asked around for pictures and



delightedly found the poster the stencil was copied from. I knew it would just be a matter of time and a little work; I would have both stencil and shirt.



I scanned the picture of the Queen of Battle poster on to my computer and then enlarged and traced it to make my stencil. I followed up by stenciling the shirts and jackets I proudly wear today.

Chapter II the research

I was interested in what the concept of those words stood for so I searched the internet, and learned that the queen in the “Queen of Battle” referred to the queen in chess; only outranked by the king. The queen, as a reference to battle, refers to infantry; the king; artillery. How that all happened is a unique evolving story of games down through centuries of interaction and countries at war dating back to the 6th century in India.



Checkers, draughts or dama was played (as it was referred to) with moving pieces. In fact board games have dated back to 3000 BC. Even Plato mentioned a game, pette or petteia, as being of Egyptian origin and Homer also mentions it. Can you imagine those bearded philosophers Socrates and Plato sitting on the steps of the Parthenon between discourses playing a game of

draughts back in 399 BC?

Just for fun let's pass down through history two thousand years and take a look at some different people times and places and put games and chess in perspective.

Consider the famous Frenchman Voltaire and his tentative friend Frederick the Great of Prussia in 1750, engaging in a game of chess in one of his private rooms sitting among the elegant hanging tapestries in his famous palace in Sanssouci, Germany.



In the United States in Illinois in 1858 a hundred years later Abraham Lincoln and Steven Douglas in their debates stayed at roadside Inns.. After a fine meal and a glass of hard cider by candlelight and a crackling fire in the fireplace I suggest they often enjoyed a game of checkers or chess before turning in, as was the custom of the day.

President Franklin Roosevelt and England's Prime Minister Winston Churchill eighty years later spent much time together during WWII and were often at Roosevelt's home in Hyde Park in upstate New York. Here they often had contrasting views of events which they discussed at length. This quiet estate was the perfect place for relaxing in the breezes on the screened-in porch while enjoying a glass



of Port and often a challenging game of chess. Winston with his famous cigar and Roosevelt with his famous cigarette sticking from his holder.



Also in camps on land and or on board ships many troops in WWII enjoyed playing games. Many liked to shoot craps; until they ran out of money. Some in the rear enjoyed playing sports, and many in closer quarters played poker, pinochle, bridge, checkers and chess; all depending on the whims of each branch of service and

equipment on hand. So the game of chess has been a favorite for many years.



As the history of games is revealed, men in board games were usually called stones, pieces, or some similar term that does not imply a gender. Men promoted to kings are called dames or ladies instead. In these early languages, and customs, the queen in chess or in card games is usually called by the same term as the kings in draughts. So we can surmise how the concept and term Queen of Battle evolved and survives today.

The term infantry dates back to the 1570s, and taken quite possibly from French *infanterie*, and even from older Italian, Spanish *infanteria* described as "foot-soldiers which would be a force composed of those two inexperienced or low in rank for cavalry. The term also roots back from the Latin *infante* "foot soldier," which was originally "a youth," and also *infantem* meaning "infants collectively". Infantrymen's most

effective method for locating all enemy forces on a battlefield is still the patrol (or drone now). It is the presence or absence of infantry that ultimately determines whether a particular piece of ground has been lost, captured or held. The King of battle; Artillery either has completed its job, or waits for the infantry to summon.





Examples in history circa 200 BC, using infantry would be well represented by Hannibal the great military genius from Carthage, who battled the Romans, and at times even used elephants. Like others of the day Calvary decimated their enemies with sabers, then the men on the ground with shield and long knives took the ground away from the enemy in close hand to hand combat.

Hannibal was followed later by another great leader over 100 years later; Julius Caesar, a Roman general, statesman, and consul, and notable author of Latin prose. He played a critical role in the events around that led to the demise of the Roman Republic and the rise of the Roman Empire. He is known for building a bridge across the Rhine and conducted the first invasion of Britain.



The Roman infantry would wait for the enemy to come to them and await the order to advance. Upon receiving this order, the soldiers would take one step forward and thrust their shields, or scuta, into the bodies and faces of the enemy, causing them to lose their balance. They used a short knife called a Gladius and later on a Spatha.

We also want to remember Charlemagne who was crowned in 800 AD, his vast empire in Europe protected and won by cavalrymen with their swords and men on the ground with shields, spears, arrows and up close with daggers. His legacy includes thousands of enemy dying at his hand, and many of prisoners murdered as he forced Christianity on populations.



He was a learned man and a ruler for thirteen years being who left his mark on history all over Europe.



Another prominent leader, Genghis Khan, was the founder of Mongol empire in twelfth century Asia. His forces conquered all of modern-day China, Korea, and the Central Asian countries, and even substantial portions of modern Eastern Europe, Russia and the Middle East. Many of these encounters slaughtered local populations. He used siege warfare and even diverted rivers and feigned retreat to lure unsuspecting enemy troops into ambush and counterattack. Their warriors were

mounted archers, who shot from the saddle during a full gallop. Mongols could shoot while facing backward, or while hanging from one side of their saddle, using their armored horses as a shields.

There are many other military leaders and warrior tactics to site down through history and the one prominent one that comes to mind is the popular figure Napoleon Bonaparte, who was a general in the French army who rose to power after the French revolution in 1789 He is noted for his success in the Napoleonic Wars with every major European power, until his army was defeated in the Peninsular War, and Russia. His artillery consisted of cannons, his Calvary used sabers, and his infantrymen used muskets with bayonets, pistols and daggers in close hand to hand combat.



We Americans celebrate our military leaders and often superior weaponry beginning in the Revolutionary War down through the Civil War WWI, WWII, Korea, Viet Nam, Iraq and Afghanistan. Our technology used to wage wars is feared and respected the world over.

It is true that in any modern war satellites identify, artillery cannons pulverize and neutralize, aircraft bomb and destroy, battleships shell, computerized drones take out strategic objectives, and armored tanks hurl missiles and belch flame, and the importance of these units cannot be overstated as they coordinate the attack.

But in the final analysis property is not taken or secured until those in infantry boots on and in tunnels, dirt and mud, snow and ice have secured it. Ask any soldier having served in the cold mountains of Afghanistan, or an infantryman in WWII who survived the battle of Bastogne in the snow, Guadalcanal or Leyte with its jungles and swamps, or the rocky hills and caves of Okinawa and they will tell you; the title Queen of Battle is well earned.

Ask any American leader be it George Washington, Joshua Chamberlain, Robert E Lee. William Sherman, Andrew Jackson, John Pershing, George C. Marshall, Dwight Eisenhower, Douglas MacArthur, Robert Eichelberger, Chester Nimitz, Joe Stilwell, Simon Buckner, William Westmoreland, Norman Swarzkopf, and David Petraeus or Tommy Franks and they would concur.

Chapter III

The Battle for Leyte

On October 20 of 1944 the US Army landed on the beaches of Leyte, and Philippine Islands which included over 200,000 troops. We needed to secure bases and air strips to take the battle to the Japanese. Americans suffered over 12,000 wounded and 3,500 killed in action. Thousands suffered jungle diseases.

The Deadeyes made a landing at that time that preceded General MacArthur as seen in the now famous photograph of WWII. He returned as he said he would.



General Hodge of Guadalcanal fame was the commander of the XXIX Corps at that time. The 96th division Deadeyes was under his command. General Bradley was the division commander. The Island was declared secure in December and Deadeyes lost over 500 men and also recorded were 2500 with combat fatigue diseased or wounded.

Chapter IV the Battle for Okinawa

The battle for Okinawa was directed by the US Navy under Vice Admiral Raymond Spruance who answered to Admiral Chester Nimitz. Spruance also directed the battle for Iwo Jima, the Marshalls, and the Marianas.

General Simon Buckner commanded the Battle, with Gen Hodge as XXIV Corps commander and General Bradley commander of the Deadeyes.

Picture (left to right) features Spruance, Nimitz and Buckner.



Also in command were:



General Hodge



General Bradley



General Easley

(General Easley insisted on everyone being a sharpshooter. He is the reason men in the division were known as Deadeyes).

Americans landed on Okinawa Easter Sunday on April 1, 1945. Ground troops consisted of Six Army Divisions and two Marine Divisions. They faced Japanese forces of 110,000. Total American and British forces ranged around 300,000. Okinawa was needed for its air and storage bases for the final attack on Japan. It covers an area over 450 square miles and is about 350 miles from the mainland. Deadeyes landed around 15,000 men, and pushed south with little resistance.

However Okinawa proved an imminent challenge of continuing rocky hills, torrential rain, steep cliffs, gullies, escarpments, and the enormity of desperate enemy troops in caves and connecting tunnels, who were making a last ditch effort to protect their homeland. Deadeyes were well trained killers and seized crest after crest and one rocky hill after another, eliminating over 30,000 enemy troops

American forces took 82 days to claim victory, but they paid the price in the death of men. The US Navy lost 4,907, Marines lost 2,792 and the Army 4,582. The Deadeye lost 1622, and 11,984 wounded men are listed as casualties.

Chapter V Deadeyes on the ground

These men had seen and fought the heinous Japanese soldiers, in Leyte day and night in some of the worst conditions of human existence.

In tropical heat they pushed through dense vegetation and swamps, picking their way in mud, clouds of insects, lingering scents of rotted flesh, with rifles ready while probing for Japanese. They became killers searching for prey, and they were

very successful eliminating them hundreds at a time. They cleared out villages and secured hills, and they lost their buddies in the process. Gritting their jaws in revenge, and hate overcame fears, they became fierce mean fighters; they were Deadeyes.

Okinawa was different; with much less vegetation and more hand to hand combat with grenades and bayonets. More vectored artillery shells coming in as well as searing machine gun cross-fire and mortars. More rocks and gullies, more atrocious and suicidal Japanese. Rain and more rain came in among the odors of burnt flesh, and Deadeyes trudged through the mud and fought on. The enemy was dense and Deadeyes took heavy casualties.

Nights were similar as Japanese soldiers infiltrated and slit throats of sleeping men. Mosquitoes were a problem, and flies from corpses were a nuisance.

Deadeye attacks were coordinated with other American units as they forced the enemy to retreat crest after crest. There were miles of tunnels and caves on Okinawa full of enemy troops and success was in feet and yards.

Deadeyes came from all over the country. They were draftees, volunteers, college men from the ASTP, farmers, scholars, factory workers, teachers, backwoodsmen, and pardoned prisoners; and they got the job done. They became proud Americans, with twenty-seven front line companies of riflemen and many supporting companies they earned the title “Queen of Battle”

Match them with any unit, in any war, with any Airborne, any Marine, Ranger or Green Beret. They were audacious and fearless in battle!

Deadeyes earned five Congressional Medals of Honor, twenty-three Distinguished Service Crosses, and more than two hundred Silver Stars. Thousands were awarded bronze starts. They also were awarded the prestigious Presidential Unit Citation.

At this time in 2014 many are still alive and many in nursing homes, mental wards, and are buried in the Oahu Punch bowl, Leyte, and all over the US. Some are still acknowledged as missing in action and not buried. They and all their buddies will be remembered for the victory over Japan that helped to preserve our way of life.

Deadeyes *are* Queen of Battle.



