

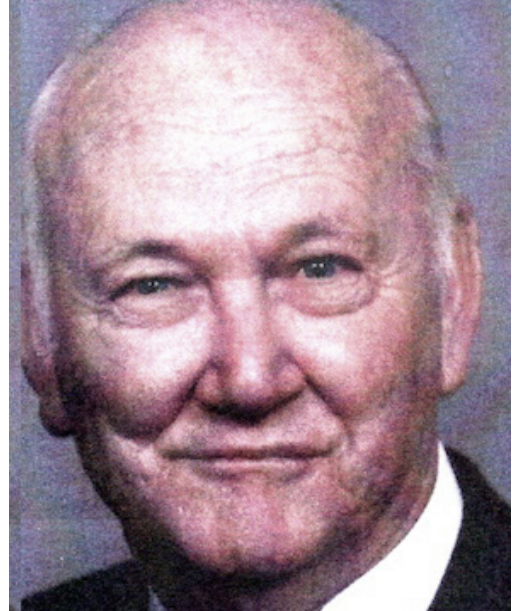
Wilburn "Levis" Worsham

96th Infantry Deadeye

WWII

Wilburn "Levis" Worsham 89, of Joaquin, passed away Thursday, August 9, 2012 at his residence. He was born August 20, 1922 in Joaquin to Wilburn Dewey Worsham and Mamie Stone Worsham.

Mr. Worsham served in the United States Army 96th Infantry during World War II and later owned and operated Worsham Grocery for sixty-five years. He was a member of Jackson Missionary Baptist Church in Joaquin and Joaquin Masonic Lodge #856. He is survived by Wife: Louise Faulk Worsham of Joaquin and Daughters: Kay Worsham and husband, Ken of Joaquin Son: Phil Worsham and wife, Dr. Deborah of Joaquin.



Staff Sargent Wilburn Levin Worsham was a medic in M Co 382 and served his country very well. He began his service when he was 21 years old with the division beginning back at Camp Adair for several months and then to Camp White back in 1943. From there they moved to Camp San Luis Obispo and Camp Callan, for extensive training. They made landings with US Navy LST craft getting ready for assaulting beaches.

The Division then went to Camp Beale, California and participated in more extensive rifle training, infiltration, range practice and overseas preparation. The Deadeyes would prove in combat that they were crack troops and all this preparation was necessary.

They moved to Camp Stoneman, California and shipped out from San Francisco July of 1944 and arrived at Oahu, Hawaii, Schofield Barracks for more training.

Worsham landed with the Division on the Leyte beaches on October 20, 1944 along with General MacArthur, and served the troops in M Company through the fighting in several small villages and towns in some of the worst weather and battle conditions a man can endure. The foxholes they slept in were often half full of water. The men suffered from all types of fungus, insect and mosquito bites and snipers tied up in trees, all while attacking the enemy on slick slopes, head high elephant grass and swamps.

Japanese troops infiltrated at night to slit the throats of any man sleeping. On one occasion the sadistic Japanese clubbed to death wounded men lying in beds in a regional hospital and it was also proven that they skinned Americans while still alive.

Can we imagine what a medic would need to do to help his men? Medals certainly are an afterthought.

Fortunately this carnage came to an end in December. When the battle was over, over 500 Deadeyes of the 96th Division had lost their lives, hundreds lie wounded in hospitals, and 7,700 Japanese had been killed. Combined American forces had secured the island and had eliminated 48,790 enemy troops.

This is bloody warfare, and the Deadeyes had performed well. Our country had a foothold in the Philippines now and used Leyte for a base to liberate all the Philippine Islands.

The US Navy was involved in the greatest sea battles the world had ever endured to land and protect American forces on Leyte, and Deadeyes were the recipient of all this activity.



Wilburn Levis Worsham

Staff Sergeant – United States Army – World War II

Hometown Hero of Joaquin, Texas

Born August 20, 1922 in Joaquin, Texas – 1940 Graduate of Joaquin High School

Assignments—Medical Detachment, 382nd Infantry Regiment, 96th Infantry Division

Engagements—World War II-Asiatic Pacific Theatre – Leyte Island, Philippines October 20 to Dec. 20, 1944, Okinawa Island, Japan April-May, 1945, Southern Philippines Liberation

Awards and Decorations— Bronze Star Medal "for heroic service in connection with military operations against the Japanese on Okinawa Island on April 16, 1945. When his unit was receiving an intense barrage of artillery fire and suffered heavy casualties, he left his foxhole and administered first aid to the many wounded, evacuating all of the more seriously wounded to safety. His action was an inspiration to all present and was largely responsible for the saving of several lives." Issued by command of Major General James L. Bradley, U.S. Army

He was also awarded the American Theater Campaign Medal; Asiatic Pacific Theater Campaign Medal (with 2 bronze stars and 1 bronze arrowhead); Philippine Liberation Ribbon (with 2 bronze stars); Good Conduct Medal; Victory Ribbon; 1 Service Stripe.


Owner and Operator of Worsham Grocery, Joaquin, Texas

After weeks of mopping up straggling Japanese troops on Leyte Deadeyes did get to lick their wounds before preparing for the next invasion.

Under the supervision of Vice Admiral Raymond Spruance and the US Navy the division was transported to do battle on Okinawa.

Medic Worsham made the landing with the 96th Deadeye Division on April 1, 1945 and the division traversed the island and turned south. Soon enemy resistance increased. M Company was hit by intense artillery fire on April 16. Several Machine Gunners in the company were killed and many wounded.

For his heroism in saving many lives on that day Worsham received a bronze star risking his life so that others would live.

<p style="text-align: center;">Citation:</p> <p>"For Heroic service in connection with military operations against the Japanese on Okinawa Island on April 16, 1945.</p> <p>When his unit was receiving an intense barrage of artillery fire and suffered heavy casualties, he left his foxhole and administered first aid to the many wounded evacuating all of the more seriously wounded to safety.</p> <p>His action was an inspiration to all present and he was largely responsible for the saving of many lives."</p> <p>This was issued by the Command of Major General James L Bradley</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Bronze Star</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Awarded to Wilburn "Levis" Worsham</p> <div style="text-align: center;"></div>
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It is here that the largest artillery barrages of WWII impacted enemy soil, and when the tally was completed after 82 days of combat on Okinawa there had been hundreds of 81 mm mortar rounds fired by M company as well as hundreds of belts

of .30 cal. machine gun shells emptied into enemy positions, and victory had been achieved.

Staff Sergeant Worsham was well liked. One day however he was brought to task for bringing medical alcohol into M Company for his men to drink. Many soldiers drink and crave it so he was doing them a favor. In my immediate area men cut it with synthetic lemonade. When poured into a spoon and lit it; it burned with a blue flame. That is potent. Within one half hour all six men in the tent next to mine had passed out.

When the Company Commanding Officer, Caption William Procknow heard of this he called Worsham into his headquarters for an explanation. Worsham's personality prevailed and the understanding officer still chastised him. (With tongue in cheek no doubt).

Wilburn was not a personal buddy of mine at that time because I was still a teenager and he was a veteran of two battles, but I kept in contact by phone with him over the years and we became friends. He shared stories with me and I appreciated that. I relayed a lot of his messages.

I really miss sharing the life and stories of this Deadeye from Texas. William R Hill