

THE 96TH INFANTRY DIVISION DEADEYE ASSOCIATION



Since the 96th Deadeye Association was established in 2003, the organization has maintained a three-fold objective: to preserve and celebrate the 96th's proud history, to provide assistance to deployed soldiers and families, and to foster camaraderie among members.

The 96th Infantry Division or "Deadeyes," was activated in July 1942. After unit training, Corps maneuvers, amphibious and jungle training, the Division helped liberate Leyte Island in the Philippines, where they suffered 1,800 combat casualties.

The Deadeyes invaded Okinawa on 1 April 1945. They penetrated the enemy outpost line between 5 and 29 April, and broke the main enemy defensive position between 11 and 20 May. The 96th Infantry Division was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation on 10 January 2001. The Deadeyes had over 7,200 combat casualties on Okinawa. Of the 21 U.S. Army Divisions deployed to the Pacific Theater, the 96th suffered the second highest number of total casualties even though it was the last to enter combat.

During the Vietnam war the 259th Quartermaster Battalion was mobilized and deployed. During Desert Storm over 2400 soldiers were mobilized and deployed. Soldiers were also sent to the Balkans for that operation.

Today, the Division's descendent organization, the 96th Regional Readiness Command, is responsible for U.S. Army Reserve units in Utah, Colorado, Montana, Wyoming, and North and South Dakota. Units from the 96th RRC or its predecessors were deployed to Vietnam (1968-9), Germany and the Persian Gulf (1990-1), and the Balkan peacekeeping operations of the 1990s. Since 11 September 2001, over 5,000 Soldiers from the 96th have been deployed in support of Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom.

The 96th Deadeye Association aims to foster a spirit of camaraderie amongst current soldiers assigned to the 96th RRC, former members of the 96th since World War II and , members of the former 96th Infantry Division veteran's association, and their families. In order to do this, the association will produce a newsletter and a magazine, in addition to maintaining a website. With these tools, members will be able to share their stories from their days as Soldiers, track the organization's events, read news from the 96th RRC, and communicate with other members in order to build lasting friendships. Additionally, the organization will set up regional chapters that will host periodic social events in various regions, and will hold an annual reunion for all members.

Set up as a non-profit organization, the 96th Deadeye Association is designed to be a charitable organization for Soldiers and families of the 96th Regional Readiness Command. The Deadeye Association will be able to give out scholarships, grants, and provide general financial support to Soldiers and their families. Today, most of the soldiers of the 96th RRC have been mobilized and deployed. Some have been mobilized a second time. They have been on duty an average of 18 months and the mobilizations continue. These soldiers and their families have needs that in some cases go beyond what the military can do for them. The Deadeye Association can make a difference by donating to a special fund to be used specifically for taking care of these soldiers and their families.