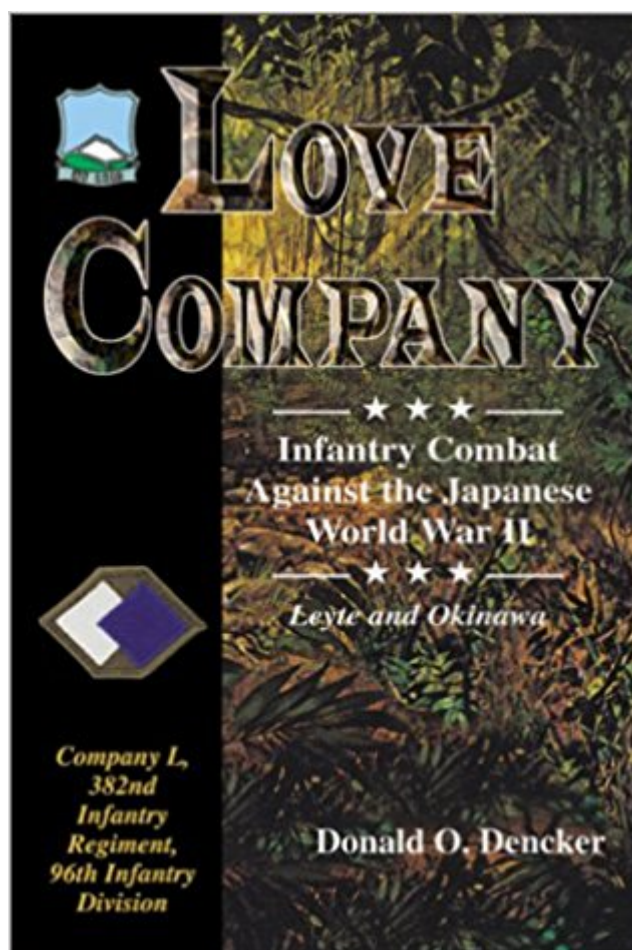


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Love Company: Infantry Combat Against The Japanese World War II : Leyte And Okinawa



Synopsis

Excerpt from the Introduction: Love Company is a tribute to the American foot soldier of World War II - and subsequent wars - the men of the Rifle Companies of the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps. These men, God bless them, who directly faced the enemy, did the most bleeding and dying , and were the cornerstone of our victory over Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. I served in one of these Rifle Companies - Company L, 382nd Infantry Regiment, 96th Infantry Division. I called the 96th Division "Everyman's Army" because it was composed of men from all over the United States and of every social status. It was a draftee division, and was led at the battalion, company, and platoon levels by men who prior to World War II were not professional soldiers, but civilians.

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Customer Reviews

Excerpt from the Introduction: Love Company is a tribute to the American foot soldier of World War II - and subsequent wars - the men of the Rifle Companies of the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps. These men, God bless them, who directly faced the enemy, did the most bleeding and dying , and were the cornerstone of our victory over Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. I served in one of these Rifle Companies - Company L, 382nd Infantry Regiment, 96th Infantry Division. I called the 96th Division "Everyman's Army" because it was composed of men from all over the United States and of every social status. It was a draftee division, and was led at the battalion, company, and platoon levels by men who prior to World War II were not professional soldiers, but civilians.

Dencker was one of only 7 men who survived the two battles the 96th Army Division fought during World War Two. This is both his personal story and a well researched history of the 96th.

Dencker started his war in the ATSP and quite enjoyed it. When the program was cancelled he found himself reassigned to the 96th Infantry Division, specifically with L Company of the 382nd Infantry Regt. He chose to become a mortar man and fought in this role on Leyte and Okinawa. There is also a little on his childhood as an only child and training. The importance of letter writing and connections with people at home is also made clear. The author quite openly confesses he chose mortars because he thought it the branch that offered the best chance of survival. Given that he went through both campaigns without being wounded, it seemed a wise decision. He was by no means in a safe position of course and he writes of many occasions where he is under fire and operating in extreme proximity to the front. His landing on Leyte occurs under fire and if there were any places on Okinawa that offered security he wasn't in them a great deal. This said, he writes with wonder of the quiet first days on Okinawa, when the Japanese sat and waited in their inland strong points. While this is very much Dencker's story he writes quite a bit on his comrades. He notes who became casualties and who won medals. Indeed, it was surprising how many seemed to be handed out on Leyte. All seemed totally deserving but it seems that some units went to greater lengths than others to acknowledge their soldiers bravery. Dencker's unit is in virtually continuous combat and there are many casualties and while there is graphic description it is not described as viscerally as Sledge's 'with the Old Breed' or some of the others at the top of my list. It is clear though that the 96th had just as bitter a time of it, as Dencker demonstrates with his own company's figures. Of 187 who landed on Leyte, he is one of only seven who served every day from there to the end on Okinawa. After keeping away from the war for a few decades, Dencker got involved in reunions in the 1980s and is now the divisional historian, which has allowed him to supply some interesting details on his service. Aside from information on other personnel, he also writes on the numbers and types of ships involved in transporting his unit for instance. He also goes to lengths to identify the enemy units he was in contact with. This is quite common with writers who served in Europe but is rare in accounts of the Pacific theatre. So aside from his personal story there is a lot of interesting context and background. It is a straightforward account and while lacking the pace and excitement of the top memoirs it has a lot to offer. Recommended

I purchased this book at the MacArthur Memorial for \$20. As a MacArthur scholar (descendent of

his associate Frazier Hunt and Brig. Gen. Bonner Fellers), I found this book to be a treasure...in fact, I believe that it's one of the best first hand accounts of the Philippines and Okinawa. The author not only was able to explain his perspective but also got the 'big picture' items correct, too. Highly recommended! If it's too expensive here, try the Kindle edition.

Learned about this book through the same friend who suggested the historical novel, *The Happy Immortals*, whose author, Robert Boyd Delano, also served in Leyte and Okinawa. I'm under 40, a retired professional athlete, a true blue Californian, and have never spent time in combat like the heroic infantry soldiers in the Pacific islands, but I truly enjoyed this book. Thank goodness for books like this, for can learn greatness from the soldiers like the Love Company who went gave so much to allow us to enjoy our freedoms.

This book is a magnificent testimony to the valor of the unsung U.S. Army infantrymen who fought in the Pacific during WWII. The author writes about his experiences as a 60mm Mortar gunner in "Love Company". His story brings the U.S. 96th Infantry Division "Deadeyes" to life during the grueling struggle for Leyte in the Philippines and the desperate close combat battles for Tombstone, Dick, and Flattop Hills on Okinawa. "Love Company" is a wonderful book that ranks with the best of the literature to emerge from the Pacific War.

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