

Tribute to Albert Mixan – 382nd Inf Co B

By son John Mixan, Omaha

My V-J memories were the ones told to me by my parents, Albert and Bernice Mixan. My dad was a combat infantryman serving with the 96th Infantry Division (known as the “Deadeyes”) in the Pacific. Mom was his neighbor and sweetheart that hung out with his sister, my Aunt Minnie (who worked at the Martin Bomber Plant near Offutt). As soon as they heard the war was over, they headed to downtown Omaha to celebrate the wonderful news.

Dad, like most World War II vets, never really talked much about his war experiences until late in life. (He passed away in January 2006.) Dad’s division fought in two major battles, Leyte in the Philippine islands, in October 1944, and the battle of Okinawa from April to June 1945. Dad was awarded a Bronze Star for bravery on April 10, 1945, and his unit spent 82 days on the line until the island was secured.

Dad’s memory of V-J Day was that he and his unit were on a Naval troop transport back to the Philippines to be refitted for the next big battle. That battle was the invasion of Japan proper. Well, when they heard the war was over, he said, “Guys were jumping up and down so much with joy that I thought we were going to sink that ship.” It was like a death sentence had been lifted, because he knew firsthand how hard the Japanese had fought on Okinawa; he knew it was going to be worse on Japan proper.

Dad was discharged from the Army in January 1946, came home, married Bernice and had nine sons they raised in South Omaha.