

Martin L. Allday was born in El Dorado, Arkansas in 1926. When he was three years old his family moved to Waco, Texas, and after five years there moved again to Austin. His father died there in 1935 and his mother then started work as a state employee, in a job arranged by Governor Allred (who had once been given work by Martin's father). Martin attended public schools in Austin from age nine through his junior year of High School. His mother then sent him to Schreiner Institute in Kerrville where he graduated from High School in 1943 and then completed his first year of college in the Spring of 1944. Shortly afterward he received his draft call, and on Aug 31, 1944 he reported for induction into the Army at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas.

He immediately went into Basic Training at Camp Hood, Texas. The standard seventeen week course had been cut down to fifteen weeks in order to speed fillers, especially infantrymen, to replace the losses in France after the D-Day Invasion. Martin originally had orders for Europe, but before he had completed Basic at the end of December those orders were canceled and he was sent to the Pacific instead. After staging at Fort Lewis, Washington he, sailed from the U.S. on February 12, 1945 and arrived in Hawaii on February 19th. He went through a quick two-weeks jungle training course on Oahu and, without so much as a pass or any time off, was shipped out again before the end of February, this time for Saipan. After a further two-weeks of training on Saipan, Martin was put on a ship with orders for Okinawa. A convoy started to assemble at Eniwetok and Martin remembers his ship being at anchor there when the news came about President Roosevelt's death. His ship then staged to Ulithi, remained at anchorage there for a number of days as more vessels assembled, and then they all steamed in convoy to Okinawa, zigzagging all the way.

Meanwhile, on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1945, a landing force of 60,000 U.S. troops had gone ashore on Okinawa at the beginning of the campaign that would continue through June 22nd. Eventually, the U.S. Committed 180,000 combat troops and 368,000 support troops against approximately 130,000 Japanese troops on the island.

On May 1st, PFC Martin L. Allday arrived off Okinawa, climbed over the side and down the net into a landing craft and was put ashore. On the beach, he says, "The first thing we were told was to throw our gas masks away, and so we did. All of us had been issued our gas masks upon induction at Fort Sam Houston, and we had carried them all through training and everywhere else. Also, because I wore glasses, my mask had been specially fitted with glasses, but it went onto the pile with all the rest. Everybody unloaded as much as they could in order to get as light as possible. From that point on, I carried no

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personal equipment except a poncho and a small sack with a change of socks, a toothbrush, and a spare pair of glasses.” The men were loaded onto trucks and moved out to join their designated units. As an infantry replacement, Martin was assigned to Company C, 382nd Infantry, 96th Infantry Division (the “Deadeyes”). He was put in a rifle squad (normally 12 men) that had only 2 men remaining present for duty at that time, but the infusion of replacements brought them up over-strength to a total of 15. Martin was made First Scout and he and PFC Scott Blackmore made up the two-man scout team in their rifle squad.

By early May the main body of the remaining enemy troops (about 100,000 men of Lieutenant General Mitsuru Ushijima’s 32nd Army) had been pushed into the southern part of Okinawa and offensive operations were pressing the Japanese all across the width of the island along the so-called Naha, Shuri, Yonabaru defense line. The Japanese had forcibly moved many civilians with them when they withdrew to the south and at night they attempted to infiltrate by concealing troops within large groups of civilians and forcing them through gaps in the American lines. The tactic was unsuccessful. Martin says, “Our orders were to take them under fire and we did. Large numbers of civilians were killed, and the Japanese never successfully infiltrated our positions.” By daylight, the U.S. troops continued a slow and costly advance each day.

On May 10th the 382nd Infantry attacked and took Zebra Hill. Company C went into position occupying the right-side half of that horseshoe-shaped hill. Their company dug in on the reverse slope, concealed from enemy observation, but; Scouts Allday and Blackmore were assigned to man a look-out post out front. They prepared their foxhole on the side of the hill facing the enemy. They soon drew fire from a light machine gun positioned only 300 yards away on the hill to their front and so they stayed down under cover continuously to avoid taking fire.

But, the next day, May 11th, Company C resumed the attack and, obedient to orders, the two scouts rose up to join in. Immediately upon exposing themselves they caught a burst from the machine gun, a .25 caliber weapon, and were both hit. One bullet pierced high up on the front of Scott’s steel helmet, creased the top of his scalp, and came out the back of the helmet splattering fragments, some of which wounded him in the shoulder and one of which also hit Martin in the face. Bleeding profusely from the fragmentation wound to his face, Martin at first believed he had taken a bullet in the head and was much less anxious about a wound to his right hand. Another of the small caliber bullets had shot through his hand, passing cleanly between the bones without breaking any. Although exposed and vulnerable, unaccountably after that initial burst, the wounded men were not fired upon again. The two scouts assisted each other

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back to the company position where they received first aid and were sent on their way back to the aid station.

Martin says, "I was treated and then held in a tent hospital unit that was set up on the beach about ten to fifteen miles behind the front line, and I was there for three days awaiting evacuation. There were many Kamikaze attacks; they came often, and when they did we took shelter in trenches outside our tents whenever the alarm sounded. I watched a Japanese suicide plane hit one of our cruisers just out from the beach where we were. It struck the fantail and killed all of the sailors at their stations there. The Kamikazes were doing tremendous damage, 36 ships were sunk, 368 others were hit and 5,000 navy men died before the campaign ended.

"I was flown out on a four-engine Medivac plane to Guam, where I remained for another 30 days in the hospital. I tried to write a letter home to my mother using my left hand, but just couldn't do it. A Red Cross nurse offered her help, and by the time I left Guam she had written seventeen letters for me. Because of that I have been generous to the Red Cross ever since. My right hand was far from healed, but; losses had been heavy and men in my condition were being returned to their units in combat. I could not close my hand to make a fist so the medics gave me a pencil to squeeze as they sent me on my way back to Okinawa."

PFC Allday rejoined Company C the day the island was declared secure, but they spent the next ten days in mopping up, an operation that Martin describes as, "No prisoners were taken; they did not take prisoners and neither did we." The 96th Infantry Division remained on Okinawa for another month and then was withdrawn to the Philippines for refitting and training in preparation for an invasion of mainland Japan. Martin remembers that they were aboard ships en route to Mindoro Island when the atomic bombs were dropped and the war ended. The men of the 96th Infantry Division stayed on Mindoro for three months waiting their turn to be shipped home. When they sailed, Martin was left behind.

Only men with 85 points could go home and Martin L. Allday had only accrued 29 points. He was first put in the "Port Company" which had the job of cleaning off the island of Mindoro, shipping away the equipment and supplies that had been left behind by the departing troops. That mission was completed after two months work, and after that Martin was transferred to Luzon and assigned to the 86th Infantry Division until his turn came to go home. Finally his time was up, and on August 12, 1946 Martin sailed from the Philippines. On September 7, 1946 he was discharged at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, the same place where he had been inducted two years before.