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The newsletter for Marines of the C-1-23<sup>rd</sup> of the Fourth Marine Division Association of WWII  
[www.c123rd.com](http://www.c123rd.com)

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**Former Marine recalls Iwo Jima 65 years later by JILL  
SCHRAMM, Staff Writer for the Minot Daily News**



It's been 65 years since U.S. Marines invaded the tiny island of Iwo Jima to wage one of the most costly battles of World War II. Memories of that battle still can bring tears to former Marine Fred Schmidt of Minot, who carries remnants of a Japanese grenade in his body from his short time there.

About 110,000 Marines arriving on 880 ships stormed Iwo Jima, an island only about 5.5 miles wide, 65 years ago today.

Schmidt, who was in the first wave of about 30,000 Marines of the 3rd, 4th and 5th divisions, recalls landing at 7:30 a.m. onto a beach of volcanic ash that made it difficult for soldiers to get a footing.

Schmidt said he did better than most and was able to take off running toward the air field that was their target. They wanted that air field, one of three on the island, to be able to bring in planes for support.

Schmidt said he reached the air field only to find himself all alone. He saw the other Marines far behind him and turned back to join them.

On the ship, Marines had been instructed as to what to expect once they landed.

"But we never thought that it would be that bad," Schmidt said. "We didn't realize that they (Japanese) were really dug in as they were."

An account of the battle at ([www.iwojima.com](http://www.iwojima.com)) states that previous air bombing of the island had little effect on Japanese defenders burrowed into the island's volcanic rock. That's why the United States turned to the Marines.

The account goes on to say that shortly before 2 a.m. on Feb. 19, Navy gunners began a land attack. Later, 110 bombers added to the smoke and fire. When they flew off, the Navy opened fire again.

When the Marines finally landed, it was under heavy fire. The Marines, battling an underground enemy, rarely saw a Japanese soldier. Liquid gas, napalm and hand grenades were their more useful weapons.

That's how Schmidt remembers it as well.

"The artillery was so powerful, we just didn't know when the next shell was going to drop next to us," he said.

Having fought through fields littered with broken bodies, watching friends fall next to him, Schmidt often wondered why he was spared.

"We were just like brothers so it was hard when you would see one of them go down," he said. "It really hurt. We tried to protect one another and watch over one another."

Schmidt was attempting to take out a Japanese bunker when he was hit by a grenade.

"They couldn't get me off the island at all right away because it was getting toward dusk. They pulled me into a shell hole," he said. "I stayed there all night, and I was in such pain."

He remembers lying with dried blood on his face, grateful to the other wounded soldiers with him who shared their canteens.

"That was the only thing that helped to cut the pain was drinking water," he said.

The next day, he was carried on a poncho to a ship converted to handle the wounded since the hospital ship was full. What he saw of the beach reflected the horror of the battle.

"Even the water was bloody from the casualties," he said.

Schmidt celebrated his 22nd birthday on Feb. 21 as the ship sailed away.

Schmidt spent time in hospitals in Saipan, an island in the west Pacific, and Honolulu before returning to Saipan on military police duty until his discharge in January 1946.

Although the surgeon removed shrapnel from throughout his body, he still carries small pieces of the grenade that doctors weren't able to remove from his forehead, hand, ankle and behind an eye.

It took 36 days of fighting for the United States to gain the victory in Iwo Jima on March 26, 1945. The American death toll was 6,825 soldiers. Nearly all the Japanese, numbered at 18,000 to 22,000, died.

Iwo Jima was valued for its strategic location, about 700 miles from Tokyo. The U.S. victory is immortalized in lasting images of the flag raising by a group of Marines.

Schmidt notes that there actually were two flag raisings on Feb. 23, 1945, on Mt. Suribachi that were taken by photographers. Schmidt said he knew most of the soldiers in the first photo, although the second one is the one most famous.

Schmidt, who had enlisted in the Marines at age 19, fought in the Marshall Islands, Saipan and Tinian before Iwo Jima with C-123rd of the Fourth Marine Division.

After the war, he joined the North Dakota Iwo Jima Association and has been active in the American Legion, serving five years as state chaplain.

A native of Fessenden, Schmidt sold cars and farm equipment and retired as a rural mail carrier. He and his wife, now deceased, raised two children. He has six grandsons and a great-grandson.

For the past 20 years, Schmidt has been a lay pastor, currently serving a Lutheran congregation at Harvey. He has lived in Minot since 1993.

He sees his story in a poem written by an unknown author and published this month in the newsletter of the C-123rd of the Fourth Marine Division:

"He that outlives the battle and comes safe home will stand a tip-toe when this day is named ... Then will he strip his sleeves and show his scars and say, these wounds I had on Iwo Jima. Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot but he'll remember, with advantages, what fetes he did that day.

"This story shall the good man teach his son; and Iwo Jima Day shall ne'er go by from this day to the ending of the world, but we in it shall be remembered; We few, we happy few, we band of brothers."

Schmidt received a Purple Heart for his service in Iwo Jima, although he considers the true heroes to be the men who died, including many whose bodies remain buried on the island.

"They were the ones who deserve all the honor," he said. "I was there and did what I could, but I didn't do as much as any of them."

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**<http://www.minotdailynews.com/page/content.detail/id/536722.html>**

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### **The Fighting Fourth Marine Division of WWII** **63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Reunion Information**

The 2010 reunion will be in Houston, Texas at the Westin Oaks Houston, August 24-29, 2010.  
Hotel website - <http://www.westinoakshouston.com/>  
Complete info, schedule of events and registration form can be found in the Jan-Feb-Mar 2010 issue of The Fighting Fourth Marine Division of WWII Association newsletter.

Registration form must be received by The Fighting Fourth Division Association by July 22, 2010.

### RECENT VISITORS TO IWO IN 2010

#### Richard & Irene Lowe on Mount Suribachi on the 65th anniversary of the battle of Iwo Jima



This picture is of Rich and Irene atop Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima, stretching the Red Marine Corps flag.



This picture is Richard standing on Landing Beach Yellow 1, talking to a US Navy Chaplain.

### THE ONLY FLAG THAT DOESN'T FLY

Between the fields where the flag is planted, there are 9+ miles of flower fields that go all the way to the ocean. The flowers are grown by seed companies. It's a beautiful place, close to Vandenberg AFB. Check out the dimensions of the flag. The Floral Flag is 740 feet long and 390 feet wide and maintains the proper Flag dimensions, as described in Executive Order #10834. This Flag is 6.65 acres and is the first Floral Flag to be planted with 5 pointed Stars, comprised of White Larkspur. Each Star is 24 feet in diameter; each Stripe is 30 feet wide. This Flag is estimated to contain more than 400,000 Larkspur plants, with 4-5 flower stems each, for a total of more than 2 million flowers.

For our soldiers....



### Proof That Scripture Can Protect You

An elderly woman had just returned to her home from an evening of Church services when an intruder startled her. She caught the man in the act of robbing her home of its valuables and yelled, Stop! ACTS 2:38! The burglar stopped in his tracks. The woman calmly called the police and explained what she had done.

As the officer cuffed the man to take him in, he asked the burglar, "Why did you just stand there? All the old lady did was yell a Scripture at you."

"Scripture?" replied the burglar. "I thought she said she had an Ax and Two 38's!"

### One To Pass To Your Friends

A smile - is a sign of joy.

A hug - is a sign of love.

A laugh - is a sign of happiness.

And a friend like me??

Shucks...that's just a sign of good taste!!

We'll be friends until we are old and senile. Then we'll be new friends!

## MAIL CALL



**1) Concerning Moses A. Iadanza from Patricia Dodson - [robertandtricia@msn.com](mailto:robertandtricia@msn.com)**

Thank you so much for the wonderful website and heartfelt memories. Recently I have created a family tree on Ancestry.com. I have been trying to research information about my grand-uncle Moses Iadanza but kept hitting roadblocks. This site is the first piece of real information I have been able to find. My dad was so excited he asked if I would mind digging a little deeper.

My grandfather is Peter Anthony Yadanza, he and Moses were half brothers. Their dad was Rocco Iadanza. He came to America shortly after his wife died in Italy. Rocco was at Aubrey St in Summit, NJ briefly (I do not know if Moses and his brother Costanzo were there yet) before moving to Sparkill and re-marrying. At some point, either at Ellis Island or during his naturalization, the last name was changed from Iadanza to Yadanza. I have relatives with both spellings.

I was wondering if anyone had more information about Moses. We know so little about his life and his passing. Thanks again. According to the website he started in the 23rd and was later sent to the 25th.

Sincerely,  
Patricia Dodson



**2) Concerning Edward Maderer**

We have shared the web site with everyone in my wife's family and all of our children and extended family as well. One of my wife's brothers had sent away for Ed's service records several years ago and made copies for us. It was very interesting. Ed died suddenly at the age of 46 in 1971 so many of the stories he might have shared obviously died with him.

All of Ed's 14 grandchildren never had an opportunity to know him in life but have been able to gain a glimpse of him through this great web site and the story it tells. His 8 great grandchildren will see this someday as well. By the way, not sure who put this together but I'm so grateful for the information that this site provides. It helped to fill in some gaps regarding my wife's father Ed

Maderer who was in the company C of the 23rd and is actually mentioned in several chapters.

If anyone has any other memories or stories to share with the family please email me.

Dick Hurst, Wheaton, IL

[dick\\_h@ameritech.net](mailto:dick_h@ameritech.net) (it is dick 'underscore' h)

**3) Concerning Harvie Franks**

I am contacting you in regards of my Grandfather, Harvie Franks. He currently has Alzheimer's and we had to put him in a rest home. My Grandfather has no records of being wounded in action. I requested and received a copy of his records from archives.gov, but my aunt has a book about the 4<sup>th</sup> Marines that has him listed as WIA. He told a story to my grandmother sometimes about how after action on IWO he was told to sign a roster for his purple heart. He never did being stubborn and proud, he figured if they wanted him to have it they would have given it to him. He received shrapnel wounds in his back. He felt that it wasn't as bad as others. Growing up he would talk to me about some things after I joined the Corps. One of those moments was going up Radar Hill with the late Jim Skidmore and receiving his wounds and thinking he was bad off, (a canteen leaked all over his back) and Skidmore looking over and going "it's okay, it's not the whiskey canteen".

My grandmother is currently seeking assistance in locating anyone that could verify that my grandfather was wounded so she can get some extra assistance. My grandfather was and is a proud man. I don't know if he would want me asking about this, but my grandmother needs the help. The family is assisting as always. I was just in Virginia and visited with him as often as I could while I was on furlough. Currently I'm getting ready to head to Afghanistan this month. I'm stationed on Camp Pendleton and Currently a GYSGT.

My grandmother has one of your news letters that you send to my grandfather every year, and is calling the list. My grandmother Vernell Franks can be reached at 540-955-2920 and her address is:

803 Withers Larue Rd  
Berryville VA, 22611

She does not have an email.

My aunt Pam Seifert, at 626-282-5257; my uncle Jim Franks 703-435-6039 and his email is

[James.Franks5@verizon.net](mailto:James.Franks5@verizon.net) (that is a period between James and Franks); my Aunt Elaine McVety 815-646-4831 [emcvely@yahoo.com](mailto:emcvely@yahoo.com) .

If you could render me any assistance it would be much appreciated.

Thank you,  
GySgt Franks, Jacob L.  
USMC 1<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance BN  
B CO 3<sup>rd</sup> Plt Sgt.

#### **Additional Info from Editor –**

Today Harvie has serious health problems and his Mrs. needs whatever financial assistance might be available if a survivor can be found that can corroborate the facts related to Harvie's wound/s to the satisfaction of the Marine/ Navy or Veterans Administration Officials through whom assistance can be arranged. If you have such information or know of someone else that does, please contact Harvie's son James Franks at [James.Franks5@verizon.net](mailto:James.Franks5@verizon.net) or Sherrie Ferguson, C123rd's Web Master at [frenchbleu@hotmail.com](mailto:frenchbleu@hotmail.com) , who has other contact information. This is a serious request. Please help if you can.

#### **4) Fourth Marine Division Association**

Roy Earle called to announce that the 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division Association needs help from a few good Marines. I told him I'd put out a call to members of C123rd. It's been a long time since any of our members were nominated and approved for open officer positions in the Association. Please decide to help and call me so I can get back to Roy, ASAP – 763-552-4545.

#### **5) Concerning Rowland Lewis**

As of May 17, 2010 I am sorry to report that Rowland is presently in a nursing home. He has been very sick with pneumonia but is getting over it though he's still very weak. He can't take phone calls yet, but like a tough Marine, he will do his best to fight back. His wife Kay could use some notes of encouragement and cards for Rowland can be sent to:  
Plum Tree Care Center  
2580 Samaritan Drive  
San Jose, CA 95124

#### **6) Need Email Addresses**

My contacts folder has been corrupted and many of the e-mail addresses of correspondents are no longer available. Help me restore my contact list by sending me an e-mail at [57jretsim12@izoom.net](mailto:57jretsim12@izoom.net) .

#### **7) Concerning George A. Richie**

I have been reading through your history and wanted to say I knew one of the members you spoke about. George Ritchie worked with my dad for many years. He told me stories about Saipan and Iwo Jima. They were very interesting and some hard to believe. I am retired from the army myself with one trip to Iraq. Is there any more information about George that is available? I think my dad would be very interested in learning more.

Thank you,  
Danny Schmitz - [dpschmitz85@hotmail.com](mailto:dpschmitz85@hotmail.com)

#### **8) Concerning Gerald R. (Dick) Casey KIA on Iwo Jima Feb. 19, 1945 & John (Jack) Cotter KIA on Iwo Jima Feb. 21, 1945**

Ben Schweers (USMC 1959-1970), cousin of Gerald, is still looking for more info on Gerald and his friend John. Both were members of C123rd. He can be emailed at [bendenise@fuse.net](mailto:bendenise@fuse.net)

The Constitution  
only gives people  
the right to pursue  
happiness.  
~~~~~  
You have to  
catch it yourself.”



**CONTINUING TALES FROM EARLIER REPORTS**

1) I have nagged C123rd members to provide copy of their experiences and I have been criticized for not adding my own story so I will do so. I have participated in the reunion of the USS Callaway, the United States Coast Guard's APA, which transported C123rd to WWII Saipan Campaign. The crew expressed their thanks for my joining the crew at Branson, Missouri in 2005. No other Marine recognized the service provided by a ships' crew during convoy. I still receive the crew's newsletter and correspond with a few of the ships' personnel.

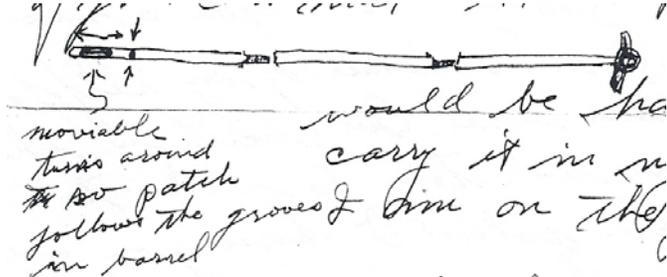
Semper Fi, Orv



2) Another of Merrill Quick's letters home provided by his sister Phyllis Garsino. It was postmarked 4 Sep 1943.

"Dear Mother, Dad & Sis,

Well I finally wrote you a much deserved letter. I am ashamed of myself for not having written sooner. But Lucille is the only one I have had time to write to. How are all you folks? I hope you are well and happy. I am fine. I am with a bunch of old-timers. They don't take to us new fellows just out of boot camp very well. But I am getting on fine. They seem to like me and I do my part and try to be a regular fellow. It is very likely that we'll go over in a couple of months; although it is hard to tell. If you would send that iron as soon as possible I would sure appreciate it as I can't afford to have my ironing and washing done. And mother if you can get me a commando knife made like you mentioned & have a leather sheath made I will square up with you. Say Dad, you are pretty handy. I wonder if you could make me a ram rod for a rifle. If you can make it in three pieces it sure would be handy as I could carry it in my pack when I am in the field.



Well must close for now. Your loving son, Merrill

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**My Helpers**



Joline (Seymour) Doersam, CLOSE RANKS Publisher, pictured here with her father, John Seymour in 2004.



Jeremy & Sherrie (Quick) Ferguson  
Sherrie is C123rd Web Master

## LEST WE FORGET



### 1) George Loren Anderson

This is to inform you that George Loren Anderson recently passed away on March 11, 2010. He was one of the original 23 Marines, Company C, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division. I do not know how many are left but I believe the last time I heard about 3-4 years ago there were only 5. For all I know he was the last survivor. He was 92 years old when he passed away. If you could put this on your web site or somehow notify others I would appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Jack Baker (George's Son-in-law)

Email [jkalters@wi.rr.com](mailto:jkalters@wi.rr.com)

### 2) Robert Carl Niederholzer

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I'm sad to report that Captain Robert C Niederholzer, USMC, a replacement with the 23rd Marines, 4th Div at Iwo Jima, passed away at his home in California on February 2, 2010.

He was my dad, and I'll miss him. He was in his own home and cared for by family and friends when he passed away from cancer.

He asked me to tell you and others in the C-1-23rd of the 4th Div, "Thank you, from one replacement to another."

Dad's address was 1951 Honeyrun Road, Chico, CA  
Received from his daughter, Jill Franz Niederholzer.

I enjoyed reading the last newsletter received at that address, especially the article titled, "Cemetery Escort duty."

Thank you for your work to connect members of the C123rd. Dad was very happy to have discovered your group several years ago.

Most sincerely and respectfully, his son Franz Niederholzer

1582 Grouse Way, Yuba City, CA 95993

### 3) Richard R. Daly

**Feb. 3, 1925 - Jan. 3, 2009**

The full obituary is on the C123rd website.

[www.c123rd.com](http://www.c123rd.com)

### 4) Roy C. Haas

**Apr. 18, 1924 – Aug. 16, 2009**

The full obituary is on the C123rd website.

[www.c123rd.com](http://www.c123rd.com)

### 5) Dean Van Horn, a member of the Fighting Fourth of WWII and the Minnesota Chapter, Number 28, passed to his heavenly home on March 9, 2010.

He was a member of the Fourth Marine Division in the recapture of several island fortresses in Central and Northern Pacific.

Following is a transcript of his life that was provided by the Spirit of Hope, United Methodist Church and was furnished at his funeral on March 20, 2010.

Dean Van Horn, age 85, of Golden Valley passes away peacefully on March 9, 2010. He survived 28 days as a US Marine in combat on the Isle of Iwo Jima in WWII, colon cancer, lung cancer, skin cancer and a stroke. He was preceded in death by siblings Marlys Leaman, Floyd and Keith. He is survived by his loving wife, Ruby; daughters Gail, Sandra Mistretta, Nancy (Kit Quigley) and Judy (Michael) Larson, grandchildren, Loka (Cassie) Mistretta, Arnie Larson, Amanda Truedson (Ken Peterson), Charles Truedson, Danny Larson, Jeremy Gaines and Nevin Quigley; great-grandson Leo Dean Mistretta; sister Carol Hartman; many nieces, and nephews and cousins in Holland, where his father was born.

Dean was medical management consultant for many years, having founded his own company and the National Society of Medical-Dental Management Consultants. He wrote articles for 6 professional magazines and gave lectures at medical meetings. He was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity at the University of Iowa. He was active in Republican Politics, serving a state convention delegate and on Golden Planning and Zoning Commission. He was a member of the Northwest Suburban Optimist Club, the Golden Valley Historical Society and the Fourth Marine Division Retirees. He loved travel and was eligible for the Century Club having visited more than 100 countries on all seven continents. Ruby and Dean enjoyed camping with their children.

Dean was a member of the Recon Company of the Fourth Marine Division and a lifetime member of the Fourth Marine Division Association of WWII.

Dean was not a member of C123rd but was an active member of MN 28 for many years, representing his Recon Company and has been known by many C123rd members who are also members of MN 28.

**JUST A COMMON SOLDIER**

**(A Soldier Died Today)**

**By A. Lawrence Vaincourt**

He was getting old and paunchy and his hair was falling  
fast,  
And he sat around the Legion, telling stories of the past.  
Of a war that he had fought in and the deeds that he  
had done,  
In his exploits with his buddies; they were heroes, every  
one.

And tho' sometimes, to his neighbors, his tales became  
a joke,  
All his Legion buddies listened, for they knew whereof  
he spoke.  
But we'll hear his tales no longer for old Bill has passed  
away,  
And the world's a little poorer, for a soldier died today.

He will not be mourned by many, just his children and  
his wife,  
For he lived an ordinary and quite uneventful life.  
Held a job and raised a family, quietly going his own  
way,  
And the world won't note his passing, though a soldier  
died today.

When politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in  
state,  
While thousands note their passing and proclaim that  
they were great.  
Papers tell their whole life stories, from the time that  
they were young,  
But the passing of a soldier goes unnoticed and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution to the welfare of our land  
A guy who breaks his promises and cons his fellow  
man?  
Or the ordinary fellow who, in times of war and strife,  
Goes off to serve his Country and offers up his life?

A politician's stipend and the style in which he lives  
Are sometimes disproportionate to the service that he  
gives.

While the ordinary soldier, who offered up his all,  
Is paid off with a medal and perhaps, a pension small.

It's so easy to forget them for it was so long ago,  
That the old Bills of our Country went to battle, but we  
know  
It was not the politicians, with their compromise and  
ploys,

Who won for us the freedom that our Country now  
enjoys.

Should you find yourself in danger, with your enemies  
at hand,  
Would you want a politician with his ever-shifting  
stand?  
Or would you prefer a soldier, who has sworn to defend  
His home, his kin and Country and would fight until the  
end?

He was just a common soldier and his ranks are growing  
thin,  
But his presence should remind us we may need his like  
again.

For when countries are in conflict, then we find the  
soldier's part  
Is to clean up all the troubles that the politicians start.

If we cannot do him honor while he's here to hear the  
praise,  
Then at least let's give him homage at the ending of his  
days.

Perhaps just a simple headline in a paper that would  
say,

Our Country is in mourning, for a soldier died today.

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<http://iivvpa.net/vaincourtal/index.php>

[http://vaincourt.homestead.com/common\\_soldier.html](http://vaincourt.homestead.com/common_soldier.html)

Pass On The Patriotism!

YOU can make a difference.

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**Just a reminder...**

We welcome any pictures, stories, and personal  
memories about C123 and its members. Over time they  
will be added to the website to preserve history.



*Cur Johnson*

~ Editor