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The newsletter for Marines of the C-1-23rd of the Fourth Marine Division Association of WWII
www.c123rd.com

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Dedicated to A Marine's Marine "Rowland D. Lewis"



C123rd has lost a very special member.

CLOSE RANKS features the death notices of all our deceased members but this Marine is special and that is why this issue is dedicated to his memory. Read on to learn why he is special.

Platoon Sgt. Rowland DeWayne Lewis, USMC, lifelong member of C123rd, died peacefully from complications following hospitalization for pneumonia for the two months preceding his death on June 4, 2010. He is survived by his wife Keiko "Kay" and their son, Paul Lewis. Rowland and Keiko Yashikawawere married in Kyoto, Japan, on May 23, 1953, during his active service in the US Army of Occupation service in Japan.



His remains were buried with full military honors conducted by a local Army Honor Guard Team at the San Joaquin National Cemetery, Santa Nella, CA on June 14, 2010 (Flag Day). The service was attended by Rowland's Ray Marine Chapter member Dale Cook, PNP, 4th MARDIV.

Rowland was the third child born to Leslie & Eva (McCowen) Lewis in Mt. Vernon, Illinois on November 16, 1924. He grew up in Mount Vernon and graduated from high school before joining the Marine Corps.

Before he was born, his father Leslie as a young man, was a noted and popular race car driver. Leslie's car was well known throughout Southern Illinois and Indiana, vintage 1914 – 1916. It was yellow and the number 33 was his. He was a veteran of World War I.

Three of Leslie's sons became Marines. Brother Paul Watson Lewis, US Marine, 2nd Lt., 3 years older than Rowland, joined the Corps in 1939; Paul became a Flying Sergeant upon completion of pilot training at Naval Air Facilities at Pensacola, FL in 1942. He flew the Dauntless dive bomber throughout the Pacific. His plane was shot down once and he survived to fly again but died in a crash in New Hebrides on February 1, 1944.

Brother Leslie Dean Lewis, Jr., a year and a half younger than Rowland, joined the Corps in March 1944, and as a Marine Corporal, Leslie Jr. was a Marine Fighter Pilot and was stationed at Ulithi, Caroline Islands, Pacific, through the end of WWII, surviving the war.

Our Brother Marine Rowland lived an outstanding life as a Fighting Marine of the Fourth Marine Division and I'll fill you in on that part of his life after I tell you why he is special.



John Seymour and Rowland Lewis at the 4th Marine Division Monument Dedication in Vallejo, CA

The Fourth Marine Division of WWII Association was organized in 1947. It has continued to provide association services since then that have kept many of us that endured through WWII in communication with one another even though our homes are scattered throughout the U.S. As a member Rowland has been a leader in the life of the Association by being our point of contact among all the members of "C" Company, First Battalion, 23rd Regiment, "C-1-23", Fourth Marine Division, for many years.

1) In this capacity Rowland established a roster of all known members who served with us. We have never organized a distinct Fraternity with officers, member dues, and periodic meetings, aside from coming together at each annual reunion for a Company dinner. Maintaining a roster requires much work. Rowland recorded address changes, telephone changes, sickness and deaths as they were reported to him. He had copies printed and annually sent to each member listed. *This roster also listed the names, addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses, birthdates of members and wives and anniversary dates of marriage.* Rowland spent his own money to cover all costs associated with the roster.

2) Rowland maintained a newsletter without calling it such to pass on any news of interest to Brother

Marines, such as how to find and file a claim, changes in members' health, marriage, etc. Postage and long distance calls associated with this activity he paid.

3) Working with John Seymour, Rowland and John developed our unique logo C123rd and www.C123rd.com .

4) Rowland with his advanced knowledge of computers created our "C123rd.com" website to provide a permanent document composed of the individual member's experiences and C123rd war documents.

5) John Seymour,"C" Company's Property Clerk, working with Rowland and Russ Gross created "C" Company's history, which is incorporated at www.C123rd.com ,along with the members individual stories. There's no comparable history document of any military unit and this was given to us and our heirs for use by whoever is interested in researching "C" Company's WWII accomplishments at no cost to members.

In a future article you will learn more about what our Historian has contributed as a labor of love for the outfit-C123rd.

Our C123rd.com is to be a permanent document that will be offered to the U.S. Marine Historical Foundation after news and documents will no longer be submitted for documentation by C123rd members or family members. This has cost each member nothing. *(Two years before his death Rowland informed me that he was unable to adequately handle the communications and the C123rd.com website and unless they were picked up and managed by some qualified person he was ready to merely close the book. That would have been disastrous; an unfinished account of significant history and source of personal witnesses in WWII. I admitted to Rowland that I was not capable of managing the website but I would take it upon myself, both, to relieve him of this burden and seek help. He thanked me for doing so. When Sherrie and her husband, Jeremy learned of the change they contacted me and I in turn talked with Rowland to determine if their help was what would properly continue C123rd. Sherrie and Rowland discussed their offer to the take over management of the website. He found their offer to be an excellent solution and approved their continuance of C123rd.com for the benefit of our members.*

Presently Sherrie, together with Jeremy, is the manager of C123rd.com. On behalf of all C123rd members dead

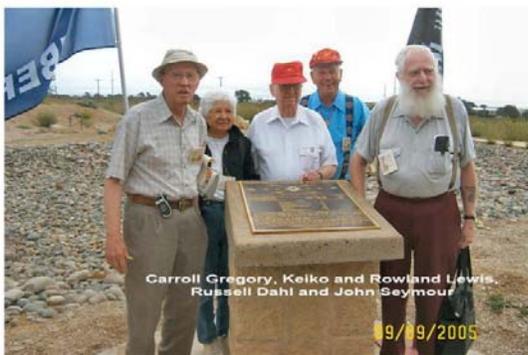
or alive, we are indebted to this woman and her husband because they are loyal followers of the USMC. Their loyalty has several underlying reasons; 1) They have family members that are active duty Marines today and, 2) Sherrie's grandfather's cousin was this writer's Fire Group Leader, Merrill Quick, Corporal, USMC, Killed in Action (KIA) on Saipan. When they learned of C123rd they contacted me first, volunteering to help us in carrying on C123rd.com, offering to maintain C123rd at no cost to us. Managing a website is not my forte and I thank them for Rowland and all of C123rd for continuing what Rowland and John initiated and honed into the C123rd.com we have today.)

During the last 10 years Rowland created and supplied each C123rd member that attended each reunion a photo album of C123rd attendees. It documented the good times and memories of reunions in various cities that 4MDA Chapters hosted The Fighting Fourth Marine Division's Annual Reunions. These photo albums were another freebie from Rowland.



2005 Reunion

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2005 Reunion

7

For a remembrance of the 62nd reunion at Reno 2009,

instead of a photo album, he produced a CD and sent a copy to each of the C123rd attendees.

I have attempted to show you his good deeds for the benefit of C123rd members during his life since he was honorably discharged from the United States Marine Corps. If I have overlooked any that you know - please let me know.

It is now time to make you aware of Rowland's combat experiences.

Rowland D. Lewis applied for enlistment in the USMC 4 days prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor and attacks by Japanese armed forces at other American facilities in the Pacific. It was December 3, 1941 and 2 weeks after his 17th birthday.



Rowland Lewis 3rd Grade

Recruit Training was at New River Training Center, New River, North Carolina. There he obtained his collar emblems, the significant identification that he was indeed a MARINE, entitled to wear the Eagle Globe and Anchor, the official emblem of every recruit that endured and passed his physical endurance testing in Marine Boot Camp.

He was initially assigned to "C" Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment stationed at Camp Elliott, CA. In early July 1942 he was one of the original 58 Marines that were sent to Tent City in New Rivers, NC. Upon their arrival they were detached from the 9th Regiment and designated as part of the 23rd Regiment. It was during this time period that the 4th Marine Division was developing in CA and this original 23rd was split up to form the building blocks for the 23rd and 25th Regiments. Those still in the 23rd were sent by train from New Rivers, NC to Camp Pendleton, CA in July 1953 and there in August 1943 the 4th Marine Division was commissioned.

There all of the individual units trained under the coordinated command of 4th Marine Division. The regiments, battalions, companies, platoons, squads and fire groups conducted maneuvers with the Navy elements that composed the task force which later took

the 4th MD from the USA to combat areas assigned to the Division.



Henderson, Rowland Lewis, Adam Radwan

We debarked from our California camp by ship on January 13, 1944 with no information as to where we were headed. In retrospect, C123rd made 4 landings and Rowland made each of them.

C123rd's first landing was on Roi Island connected by causeway to Namur, Kwajalein Atoll, and Marshall Islands, in the Southern Pacific on February 1, 1944. Resistance was light and we had no casualties.

Our second assignment was to invade the island of Saipan in the Mariana's Islands in the Central Pacific, on June 15, 1944. Resistance was intense and during the campaign there were 29 KIA and 111 WIA. The Island was secured on July 29, 1944.



In this engagement Rowland, a Corporal Squad Leader was wounded on June 17, 1944 with a quickly healed flesh wound and was back into service a few days later. Then he quickly took on the advancing leadership role, assuming first the responsibilities of the Acting Assistant Platoon Sergeant when Art Erickson, who had been rated Assistant Platoon Sergeant, was promoted to Platoon Sgt. Later when Art Erickson was relieved of duty for medical reason Rowland was promoted to Acting Platoon Sgt. In rapid succession after the loss of our Platoon Leader, Rowland took over the responsibilities of Acting Platoon Leader until an officer was transferred from another unit and Rowland went back to control as Acting Platoon Sergeant. Rowland

proved his capabilities to lead men in various activities under enemy fire.

Next came the invasion of the island of Tinian where our costs in lives were lighter than they had been on Saipan. Two deaths were recorded and 6 Marines were wounded; this editor being one of the 6. We were on the beach of Tinian on July 24, 1944 and it was declared secure on August 1, 1944.

The next test in leadership for Rowland was the invasion of the Iwo Jima Island in the Bonin Islands in Northern Pacific. Enemy resistance on Iwo was the toughest so far and in the end, 49 of C123rd lost their lives and another 130 Marines were wounded. Marines were on the beachhead (in the sand) on February 19, 1945 and the island was declared secure on March 16, 1945.

Two significant actions affected Rowland. During the landing on Iwo Jima, casualties were numerous and Sergeant Rowland Lewis' Platoon Sergeant was wounded on the beach and the Platoon Leader, Lt Burns was pinned down by enemy fire. Rowland assumed the Platoon Sergeant duties and reorganized the 1st platoon under heavy fire and led the platoon into the position needed to solidify our position. This was extremely important and for his quick actions was awarded the Bronze Star along with the following commendation.

COMMENDATION

*FOR "Sergeant Rowland D. Lewis (serial number 328564)
United States Marine Corps
Semper Fidelis*

"For excellent service as a squad leader in a Marine rifle company during operations against the enemy on IWO JIMA, VOLCANO ISLANDS, on February 19, 1945. When his platoon sergeant was wounded on the beach and his platoon leader pinned down by enemy fire, Sergeant LEWIS assumed the duties of the platoon sergeant and reorganized his platoon while subject to intense enemy fire and completely disregarding his own safety. This quick reorganization permitted his platoon to be committed immediately on the right flank of the battalion where it was needed. His courage and conduct throughout were in keeping with the highest tradition of the United States Naval Service"

*Signed/ C. B. Cates
Major General United States Marine Corps.
Commanding Fourth Marine Division*

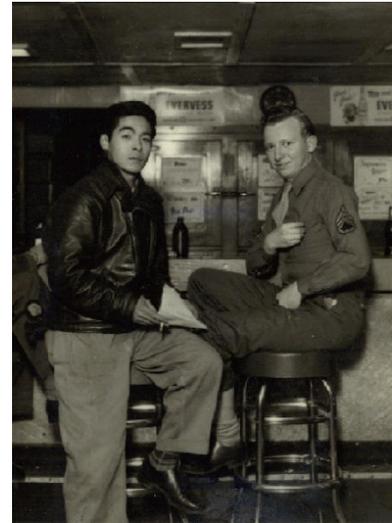
He was cited again for exceptional service on February 26, 1945 along with Homer Booth, a Section Leader of the attached Machine Gun Section, who was his foxhole partner for the night. Sometime after midnight on February 25, 1945 Homer woke Rowland and whispered to him that a Japanese patrol was at the top of the near embankment. Homer carried a Thompson Sub-Machine Gun; it was jammed with sand and not capable of firing. Likewise Rowland's carbine had so much sand in it that he couldn't pull back the bolt. In the near total darkness, barely illuminated by light from a starshell, three Japanese soldiers were visible and advancing. Then they were seen by others in nearby foxhole and they shot two of the three. The third one jumped up and came charging down the embankment shouting "Banzai" and swinging a saber right toward Rowland and Homer. Both Homer and Rowland leaped up to meet his charge. Unable to shoot his carbine, Rowland held it by the end of its barrel. When the enemy got near enough he swung his saber to behead Rowland but Rowland avoided the slashing saber by ducking and at the same time swung his carbine like a baseball bat from the barrel end "with all my strength", he stated later. He hit the attacker in his neck just at the lower edge of his helmet with such power the carbine's stock broke off at the pistol grip. Together Rowland and Homer proceeded to club him to death.

After dawn broke on February 26, 1945 and sand had been cleared from their weapons the three platoons double-timed across the airfield runway as several Japanese came out of a large emplacement. They ran and most made it to previously prepared holes. Rowland stated that during the next few minutes about 20 C123rd Marines were killed or wounded. By then attached machine guns covered the area and there was a certain calm while the dead and wounded were taken care of. But the Japanese troops were in abundance. The company's platoons took whatever cover they found but contact was lost. Several attempts were made to contact the third platoon without success. Lt Burns was hit and evacuated. Captain Mc Daniel told Rowland to make another attempt to locate third platoon so Rowland, Herb Johnson and another man, led us in at an angle to the right across the runway and of course that's where a lot of Japs were. Rowland was hit by a bullet to his left forearm and while trying to find cover was hit again in the upper abdomen. He staggered into a 16 inch shell hole and laid there, soaked in blood, ill and so weak he was unable to put a full magazine in and lock it. He laid there and in mid

afternoon someone, perhaps a corpsman, applied bandages that applied pressure on the wounds and probably saved his life. But he didn't know who it was and they did not return.

At dusk, just as he came out of one of his drifting consciousness, Ed Rajkowski and several others got Rowland to the beach and to medical treatment. His war as far as in the C123rd was over. However, it was better than a year in hospitals for treatment surgery and such before he was ready to pick up his life. He attempted to rejoin the Marine Corps but was turned down because his Honorable Discharge showed he had a medical discharge.

Rowland, in disgust, signed on with the US Army in 1947 and served in Japan, Korea from January 1947 to January 1963 a total of 16 years.



Army Service Days

For all of his service to our country, the US Army to the USMC and especially to members of C123rd, Thank You and God hold you in the power of his hands.

Editor - Orvel Johnson

LEST WE FORGET

1) Richard W. Cassidy

Sunday, June 27, 2010 11:00AM

Telephone call from Kevin Cassidy, reported the death of his father, Richard Cassidy. He passed away on June 20, 2010 and will be buried in the VA Cemetery @ Union Grove, Wisconsin on Tuesday June 29, 2010.

MAIL CALL

1) Concerning Harvie Franks

Dear Orvel, Thank you for writing to us about Rowland Lewis' passing. We heard from him for many years and are so sorry to hear of his passing.

Thanks also for printing the letter from my Grandson Jacob Franks. We have since received information that Harvey was wounded on Iwo Jima. We have now new hope that he will get his Purple Heart for Harvey while he is still remembering some things of those days, long ago. He has Alzheimer's and it seems to be progressing fast.

Harvie and I had four wonderful children, 2 daughters, 2 sons, 9 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

There have been times when Harvie talked about the war, especially about funny stories and also some very sad ones. Several times he has talked about his friend, James Skidmore and the time that Skidmore walked along and beside a tank as it made its way through a mine field. And many others.

Sincerely, Vernell and Harvie Franks

(Editor's Note: Harvey can still use information from buddies who were there to support his request for the awarding of his Purple Heart. To contact: Mrs. Vernell Franks, Telephone (540) 955 2920 or 803 Withers Larue Road, Berryville VA. 22611. Thanks Orv.)

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.

Mass. researcher says he has ID'd 7 MIAs from WWII



By DAVID DISHNEAU, Associated Press Writer David Dishneau, Associated Press Writer – Wed Jun 16, 6:29 am ET

SUITLAND, Md. – A private researcher who has labored for years to identify the remains of U.S. service members declared missing in action during World War II says he has matched seven MIAs with the remains of unknowns and he expects to match as many as 19 more within a week.

Ted Darcy's list of five Marines and two sailors missing since the 1944 Battle of Saipan may not sound long. But his announcement Tuesday — the 66th anniversary of the battle's opening day — was remarkable, considering the military's average of confirming 72 such matches annually from all U.S. wars.

Darcy, a retired Marine Corps gunnery sergeant from Fall River, Mass., has helped bring home three WWII MIAs since 1991 from burial sites in the Philippines, Hawaii and Newport, R.I. Now he is accelerating his work using computerized databases filled with information he painstakingly entered from two sets of government documents: those containing physical descriptions of MIAs and those containing autopsies of slain service members buried as unknowns.

The full article can be read at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20100616/ap_on_re_us/us_mia_researcher (the blank between letters is actually underscore _)



Cur Johnson

~ Editor