

Dear Family and friends:

I have just completed my trip report on return from Iwo Jima last week. I had jet lag for a few days but I started on this as soon as I could while the memories were still strong. There is some Marine Corps and military jargon here that may not register with some of you but since this is about Marines and their families and for Marines, many who are also my friends, you will have to forgive me.

This was a life time trip to an exceptional place that had a huge impact on the Butler family. The Butlers were not alone and the 450 folks that made a hard journey to this isolated Island were but a small percentage of the many Americans whose lives were changed forever by the events that occurred there in 1945. Even for those who walked off the Island without a scratch, and there were surely not many, what they saw and witnessed there was seared in their souls and hearts forever. I can assure you that walking that ground with my brother, and others like Col Gerald Russell who knew my Father well and fought that battle with him will remain in my heart forever.

JAB

My journey for the Iwo Jima 60th Reunion of Honor began on departure from Tampa at 0700 on 3/5 and ended on 3/14 at 2000 when I arrived home after 30 traveling hours from the hotel in Guam to my condo in Temple Terrace. Guam was the staging area for the 12 hour visit to Iwo. Altogether I spent at least five days in Guam. The rest was travel time and the Iwo visit.

The event was sponsored and handled by Military Historical Tours, which given the enormity of the task, did an exceptionally good job, less the flight arrangements with Continental which went askew when Continental failed to have the required aircraft available to accommodate the 450 attendees on the original schedule as laid out by Military Historical Tours.

Consequently a few, including yours truly, had their schedule changed rather dramatically on the outbound or return leg from and to Guam. My departure from LAX to Guam was rescheduled a day earlier with only 4 days notice. This required me to make changes to my own flight from Tampa and speed up my well planned departure arrangements, like getting everything organized. In any case it made for a good mount out drill to set the tone for this exceptional Marine Corps event. There was a further surprise in that the trip from LAX to Guam was on scheduled flights rather than special charters as originally set up. This required switching planes in Hawaii for a flight to Nagoya, Japan, where we deplaned again for a connecting flight to Guam. We arrived at our hotel in Guam, The Outrigger, about 0200 on the 8th, 23 hours after departing LAX.

By then I had back spasm's and had to spend a part of the flight walking the aisles to ease the pain, however all bitching was suppressed because of the exceptional good cheer and

disposition of the aging Iwo Marines who held up remarkably well. Particularly inspiring was an attractive elderly lady who was escorting her wheel chair bound partially crippled 3rd Marine Division husband. This lady had a beaming smile and good cheer about her that never wavered or diminished from departure to arrival and truly lifted the spirits of this grump. The entire group, "the chosen few from Nogoya" arrived tired but in exceptionally good cheer. Surprisingly I felt great after a few hours sleep despite my back ache. Perhaps it was the anticipation of the events to come, but as much as anything it was the inspiration of my fellow travelers, this exceptional group of aged Iwo vets with their spouses, kids, grand kids, and a few great grand kids accompanying Grandpa on this pilgrimage.

Day one at Guam was a no activity day which allowed me to get organized, and oriented, and prepare for the arrival of my brother and his wife later that day and to meet some of my fellow travelers. Surprisingly some of the attendees were not Iwo vets or family of Iwo vets. Of particular note in this category were two "motorcycle leathernecks" from Raritan, New Jersey and the "John Basilone" chapter of the Marine Corps League. These two early 60's era Marines were Iwo Jima enthusiasts, making their second trip. There was also a contingent of "Young Marines", a youth group of Marine Corps aspirants. Several of the Iwo vets attending were sponsors of these Young Marines. Among the "Nagoya few" was a writer/publisher and a group working on a production "Faith of our Fathers". This group was endeavoring to make the generation connection of fathers to sons through the battle of Iwo Jima. They had a considerable amount of material, as there were a handful of sons and daughters accompanying their aged fathers or like myself and my brother, coming to honor their father or grandfathers who were killed in action on that Island 60 years ago.

My brother and his wife arrived late from Hawaii with the balance of the group, and we were able to get together briefly. I signed up for the tour of the Guam battlefield scheduled for our group the next day. This was an informative tour, covering the Marine landings in Guam and the battle for Orote peninsula. No easy fight, the Guam campaign featured landings over reef fringed beaches under observations of the enemy and particularly difficult terrain. Some of the largest banzai attacks of the Pacific war occurred at Guam.

Louis Wilson, one of the Corps future Commandants, earned a CMH as a company commander for his actions in holding out, and seizing critical terrain. We visited the famous dog cemetery, where 25 of the Corps war dogs are remembered. Our tour guides were informative and we were given a good running history of Guam covering the Spanish/American, Japanese occupation, liberation, and development as a tourist mecca for Japan. The day trip ended up at a well known Guam Bar/Restaurant where we had a big feed and a good wind up for a swell tour.

The surrender of the 200 man Marine detachment by the Naval commander shortly after the Japanese assault in 41 was surprising. For some reason or other I had thought they had put up a fight, but not so. They reluctantly and bitterly stacked arms and turned

themselves in. There was some short lived fighting by the Chamorro reserves and a handful of Marines but that was about it.

The Chamorro's are very friendly people with a particular affection for US Marines and I can imagine that duty in Guam in the old days before the big tourist build up must have been a choice assignment. As an example of this friendliness the " Motorcycle Leathernecks" from Raritan were given free bikes to ride for a day by the local Harley dealer, and every local we met whether in the hotel or on the street was super friendly. As one who has traveled and lived in the Caribbean and not been so enchanted by the attitude of the locals in these Islands I found Guam's friendliness to be a pleasant surprise. It is the affordable tropical Island mecca for the Japanese who overrun the place. A Japanese fad is getting married in Guam. Each day there is a parade of Japanese who come to Guam for a splashy American style wedding with gowns and Tux. Our tourist guide said that there are an average of 6 weddings a day at the major hotels. I surmised by the number of Japanese I saw and the money they appeared to be spending that there is considerable prosperity in Japan. Given that the Chamorros suffered considerably under the occupation it is somewhat amazing that they now provide such a haven for their former tormentors.

On return I joined my brother and sister-in law and a Iwo Sea bee for dinner at a nearby Italian restaurant. Prices in Guam are high by state side comparison but no doubt a bargain for the Japanese tourist. In the lobby we met and visited with several attendees who we were to spend considerable time with, particularly on Iwo.

Col Gerald Russell who we had met at the 50th Reunion in Washington and was a friend of my fathers was the last Battalion Commander of 1/27 in WW2. Russell landed on Red 1 as XO of Antonelli's 2/27 and then became its CO on D+19 or thereabouts when Antonelli was wounded and ordered evacuated for medical treatment by Col Wornham. Russell remained in command of 2/27 until that unit along with 1/27 was consolidated into a provisional shot up battalion commanded by Donn Robertson, the only original Bn Commander in the 27th Marines still on his feet during the last few days of fighting.

When the 27th Marines returned to Camp Tarawa, he was given 1/27 to rebuild and prepare for the invasion of Japan. He commanded the Battalion through the occupation at Sasebo until return and disbandment in January 1946. At 88 Jerry was probably the oldest attendee and one of two current surviving battalion commanders from Iwo. He is remarkably fit and works part time as an administrator at Penn State. He was a collegiate track athlete and contributed to the initial establishment of the Quantico Marine track team of which I was fortunate to be a member of in 1962. He has a sharp mind and a great sense of humor.

The other person who Russell introduced us to hardly needs an introduction. to today's Marines. John Ripley, a heroic Vietnam era Marine, is the current director of the Marine Corps Historical center and as the primary historian on Iwo Jima accompanied the tour. Besides being the famous Marine he is Ripley is a 62 USNA graduate and though I did not know him at the Academy he knew both my roommate John Lecornu and my good

friend Chuck Davis, who was in a Recon unit with him. He also knew JJ Carroll, the heroic Marine for whom Camp Carroll in Vietnam was named. Carroll and I attended St Leo Prep together in the 9th and 10th grades. He was a grade ahead of me but we knew each other sufficiently well to recognize each other at a chance encounter at the Camp Lejeune O' club bar in early 1964.

As an Iwo historian, Ripley was quite familiar with my Dad's contribution and loss. He is an impressive Marine and a guy I like. I showed him a copy of 1/27's Opn plan for the Iwo assault which my brother Clinton had acquired from a Marine who was the 1/27 "3 ops chief" on Iwo and met my brother by chance some years ago in Jacksonville, Florida. I also showed him my Dad's 1/10,000 scale map which was found by a 1/27 Marine by the name of Weber in my Dad's map case. In 1994 this Marine found my mother's address through Dick O'toole who was the 1/27 adjutant and always kept in touch with the family. He wrote my mother and she asked him to send me the map. Ripley is going to advise me how I can provide these items and my Dad's personal letters to the Marine Corps History center archives, if we choose to do so. To say the least it was an honor to meet Ripley. He is a real deal guy. I can surely see why he was "Ripley at the Bridge"

If that wasn't enough for the night we also met the Gunny, Lee Emery, who was autographing his book "Mail Call". All I can say is the Gunny you meet is the Gunny you see on Mail Call. He is funny, sincere, and likeable as hell. He signed autographs for hundreds in line and to each an eye to eye hello, a joke or two and a sincere Semper Parvum with an OOOORAH thrown in. He is preparing a special on Mail Call in May covering Iwo. I showed him the Opn order for 1/27 and when he was looking at the annex which listed the trac assignments and saw John Basilones name, he said "Holy Shit" can I have a copy. I said yes but if he could make an extra copy I would appreciate it. The next day he looked me up and gave me two copies. He remembers who the hell you are and was a great contribution to the trip.. On the way back while waiting in the Hawaii airport for the connecting flight from Hawaii to LAX we talked some about his past movies, a few of which I had seen. When I told him that I thought the Assistant DI in "The Boys of Company C" was not a DI but an actor trying to be a DI He said " Your right, they gave me this actor to train as a Di, and he never got it right". He said "the voice has to come from the gut, and he just couldn't get it."

In Guam he and my brother Clint who went to PI in 63 talked about boot camp. My brother said the misfit in "Full Metal Jacket" reminded him of a guy in his PI platoon. Emery says " Hell there one and sometimes two or more of those in every recruit platoon."

Several other characters of note who we met on the trip at one time or another was Jack Lucas and Marvin Paret. Lucas, who was just 17 when he went ashore at Iwo, was the youngest person to win the CMH in WW2. He was a big overgrown kid prone to trouble so his step father vouched for him to get him out of the house and he enlisted in the Marine Corps at age 14. He was in and out of briggs for fighting, drinking, and not being where he was suppose to be. In January 1945 he was with a supply depot unit in Pearl,

just freshly out of the brig, when he saw combat troops boarding ship after their Liberty in Pearl. He had a cousin in the 26th Marines so he took a liberty launch to the ship his cousin was on with hopes of joining his cousin and going in to combat. He hid out on the ship for days before finally turning himself in. The Battalion CO told him " Son If you want to fight this bad we will put you where you can fight. Shortly after landing on Iwo Lucas took two Japanese grenades for his buddies, and survived to receive the CMH from Harry Truman . In the early 60's after completing college he applied for a Marine Corps Commission but the Marine Corps would not assure him jump status so he accepted an Army commission and served in the 82nd Airborne Division for awhile. Lucas is a crusty old timer who looks like he could still raise a little hell on Liberty and has become a fixture and celebrity at Iwo Reunions. and WW2 memorial events.

Marvin Perrett is a US Coast Guard veteran and a native of New Orleans with a cajun accent and a passion for telling the story of the US Coast Guard's contribution in WW2. Perrett served on the USS Bayfield APA 33. The Bayfield was the only fully US Coast Guard crewed APA in the US fleet and participated in landings at Normandy and Iwo. Perrett was a coxswain of a LCVP or Higgins boat as he calls it. At Utah Beach and at Iwo he took troops ashore, however at Iwo his craft was broached by heavy seas and sunk just off shore after discharging Marines on a junkyard littered beach. The Bayfield was a command equipped APA. According to Perrett the Division Commanders of the 4th Infantry Division was on board at Utah and Clifton B Cates ,4th Marine Division was on board at Iwo. Perrett also participated in the Landings at Southern France and at Okinawa.

Perrett, dressed in his Coast Guard uniform was every where holding court on the epic landings of WW2. My brother ,Morey, who is a retired US Army officer , and currently an ROTC instructor in Gulfport Miss, frequently has Perrett as a guest to speak to his students about service, patriotism and WW2. He is very popular with the kids, and also a good friend of my brother who helped him out when he fell and broke a hip while on one of his tours. Perrett still owns and operates a custom built Higgins boat with the old PA33-21 designation , and two years ago drove that boat in a reenactment of the Tarawa landing at Lake Ponchatrain held to celebrate the opening of the Ambrose Pacific D-Day museum in New Orleans. I attended this event with my brother and aged uncles , then 94 and 88 .

Day 3 at Guam was a day of rest. My brother and I and his wife took advantage of the pool and hotel amenities. I went for a salt water swim and then a pool dip followed by a session where I let the waterfall pound my aching back. All of this was followed by a few minutes in a hot whirl pool and my back ache was history.

On day four my brother and his wife took the battlefield tour while I went with the early group to visit a Chamorro cultural center that featured dancing, singing, basket weaving, coconut husking, and cock fighting. The cock fight was called as soon as feathers started flying to preserve the cocks for the next group of tourist. We also had a village type feast there and had some leisure time to just visit with fellow travelers. While there I met and recorded conversation with several interesting folks.

John Spordone, retired L/Col , and an Iwo veteran of 2/24 survived 4 major landings as a platoon leader/ XO. and Company Commander. Spordone's major landings included Roi Namur, Saipan, Tinian, and finally Iwo. He is a native of Milwaukee and a Commander of the "Young Marines", 6 of which are on this trip with him. Spordone's battalion Commander on Iwo was L/Col Dick Rothwell, father of Dick Rothwell, an Academy classmate who went on to complete a career in the Marine Corps and serve as a Bn Commander himself. Rothwell and I were teammates on the Bullis high school team where I prepped for a year before entering the Academy. Spordone's old company is a Reserve unit in Milwaukee, no doubt now part of L/Col Smith's heart land outfit , whose updates from Iraq I pass on to many on this list.

Spordone who landed in Reserve early in the afternoon when the Japanese had found the range and were pounding the beaches with heavy fire described a gripping and horrific scene as his troops debarked from their landing craft. He pushed ahead through the mayhem until he reached the edge of the airfield and was told by his Bn commander he was on the front lines and to hold up.

I also met a P-51 pilot who arrived on Iwo before the fighting ended and was in the tent camp which was over run in the last violent day when on the night of D+35 400 Japanese stragglers assembled and moved undetected to the airfield complex where they slaughtered army pilots and medical personnel in a pre dawn raid until attacked and wiped out by a group of 5th Marine Division Pioneers assembling on the beaches to embark for Hawaii. This unit which included Black Marines was led by Capt Harry Martin, the last of 27 CMH winners on Iwo. This short bloody melee featuring hand to hand combat in the dark of night was the last bloody chapter to Iwo. This pilot whose story unfortunately I didn't record was wounded but several of his tent mates were brutally murdered. Over forty airman, many of them P-51 pilots were killed and hundreds wounded . A number of Pioneers , including Capt Martin were also killed in that last battle.

That evening I attended a 2 hour presentation by Ripley covering the Iwo Jima operation. I was familiar with most of it but no doubt John Ripley is the current Marine Corps expert on Iwo. Following the presentation there was an event banquet, a prelude to the Iwo visit The prime speaker was Lt. General Snowden, himself an Iwo company Commander. Snowden is an impressive Marine and speaker and we would hear more from him at the Iwo Jima ceremony.

Earlier my brother and I met Leonard and Fletcher Isacks from New Orleans whose grandfather was exempt from WW2 service but became a Marine and was the same age as my dad when he lost his life as a result of wounds received on Iwo Jima. With both their grand father , and my Dad being from New Orleans, and the same age , and their father, who had recently passed away the same age as I, there were many parallels in our families. These fellows had a copy of a letter their Grandfather had written their dad on Christmas day 1944 and had brought some of their grandmothers ashes to place at sea off Iwo Jima. Their grand father died at sea aboard the USS Samaritan where he was evacuated to after being severely wounded while he was supervising the work of Marines

unloading heavy equipment on Red Beach which was then under punishing fire. He was buried at sea.

My brother and I were assigned to the first flight of 3 to take the 450 attendees to Iwo Jima. Reveille was at 0300 and we aboard the buses by 0400 and then to the airport . We had a breakfast on board and arrived off Iwo shortly after daylight. The pilot circled the island several times before landing. The Island has grown with some expansion of the beaches and a peninsula forming just north of the old western beaches. The huge Airstrip now covers Motoyama #2 and #3 The Japanese SDF base is adjacent to the airfield. Most notably the majority of the Island is covered in vegetation. General Kuribayashi had reported to Tokyo during the battle that not one blade of grass remains on Iwo Jima. Covered with vegetation or not the appearance of Iwo outside the windows of our circling aircraft resurrected heavy memories which left lumps in throats and tears for some of these aged Iwo vets.

The Iwo Vets debarked first and passed a block long double column of FMF Marines from Okinawa, as they passed they were given a salute. The sons, daughters, and grandsons followed and they also were rendered the same courtesy as was everyone who debarked.

We cleared Japanese Immigration and Customs and then assembled for assignment to Humvees for the Island tour. My brother and I were fortunate to make the tour with John Ripley as our guide. Gerald Russell rode shotgun with the Corporal driver. The tour commenced in the 4th Marine division zone with features known as Turkey Nob and the amphitheater. These terrain features were part of an area known as the "Meat Grinder" which contributed heavily to the blood shed on Iwo by the 4th Marine Division. Hill 382 was the dominant terrain feature of the "Meat Grinder", but no longer existed as it had been leveled to form part of the new modern Jet strip. From the Meat Grinder we worked our way down to "the Quarry" , a high and nasty piece of ground on the right flank of the landing beaches which was the D-day objective of 3/25 commanded by Jumping Joe Chambers, who earned a CMH and lost a good part of his Bn trying to take the Quarry which did not fall for a number of days. Ripley commented that the enfilade fire on the landing beaches from the Quarry was more damaging to the landing forces than the plunging fire from Suribachi. The truth is that with dominating heights covering both ends of the landing beaches it was a grim proposition from the get go.

Following the Eastern coast road we proceeded toward the landing beaches , which are accessed by a single dirt road to Green Beach not far from Suribachi As we passed by the ceremonial tents a Gunny from MEF troops stopped our vehicle. The Gunny addressed Ripley, "Col Ripley the Commandant doesn't want any one to be late for the ceremony which is 1100, You don't have time to take this group to the Landing beaches and be back here on time." Ripley replied. " Gunny I assure you that I am well aware of the time and I won't fail to be back". The Gunny made it clear that he didn't agree with the Col's opinion , and then realizing that Ripley was not about to budge added a "very well sir" Ripley cracked a smile and I commented that for sure nothing has changed with Gunny's in the Corps. As it was the Commandant was at Green Beach.

From Green Beach my brother, his wife , and I struck out for Red Beach 2 , easily identified by Fatatamune Rock, a huge out cropping which on D-Day was off shore and caused some disruption to 1/27' landing. This rock, a huge vertical out cropping is now about 50 yards inland from the shore line. At Red 2 we found a huge Blockhouse about 200 yards from the shoreline, which I believed to be where my Father initially established his CP. after landing with his battalion at H-hour.

According to his Navy Cross citation the blockhouse was still enemy occupied when he set up there. From this precarious position he moved up to the airfield where he was able to asses the disposition and progress of his assault units, which led him to commit his Reserve to replace his disorganized and casualty ridden right flank assault company.

Some of the Marines in that unit were co-mingled with the left assault company. With the reorganization completed the Battalion move rapidly on to the south end of Motoyama airfield #1. It was during this period that John Basilone was killed. Basilone had knocked out a bunker and was pushing troops on to the airfield. Chuck Tatum describes some of these D- day events in "Red Blood, Black Sand" Tatum had already been placed on the airstrip by Basilone, and saw Basilone hit by mortars as he was bringing more men up from the Beach.

My Brother and I planted a small flag at the Block House and then proceed inland on the same line of attack to the airfield that 1/27 took that morning. Initially I had intended to walk back to Green beach so we could join the group for the ride to the ceremony, but had I done that Ripley would have been wrong and the "Gunny" right, and maybe the Commandant unhappy. As it was we completed this very emotion filled hike from the block house to the road in good time, arriving very near the ceremonial site on time.

Old Motoyama #1 was just beyond the road covered in brush and dirt. I might add we collected a bag of black sand from Red Beach 2, which was littered with old rusted shrapnel. That was incredible and when you think of the fire storm falling on those Beaches and the men clinging to the ashen slopes sinking to their calves and struggling with weapons and gear under relentless attack it stirs the soul and makes one wonder how any one survived. Just walking in light high tops was a huffing puffing event. The slopes now are not as steep as they were on D-day. Somewhat worn down by wind and wave I suppose.

The ceremony was stirring with a joint MEF/JSDF honor guard. Speakers from our side included the Commandant and Lt. General Larry Snowden( retired) , who was an Iwo Company commander 60 years ago.

Representing and speaking for the Japanese were the grand son of General Kuribayashi and former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori. On conclusion of the ceremony my brother and I met briefly with Rosa Ogawa who is the 74 year old daughter of Captain Wachi, the original Naval commander of Iwo, and responsible for placing the large caliber naval guns on the Island. Wachi who was recalled by the Emperor when Kuribayashi was



posted became a Buddhist monk after the war and devoted his remaining life to praying for the Japanese dead and working to retrieve remains.

Annually a representative from the 4th and 5th Marine divisions return souvenirs and items acquired by Marines in the battle to the Japanese Iwo Jima representatives which helps in the healing process.

While we were talking to Rosa an Iwo vet presented her with a sailor's jacket he had found in a cave

60 years ago. This jacket according to Rosa had the man's name and home village.

The Reunion ceremony was well done. Given that Japanese and Marines are strong on ceremony it was a superb and tearful event.

After the ceremony we joined Col Russell and John Ripley and the remainder of our group to continue the island tour. They were glad to see us, not sure where we had disappeared to after our quick hike to Red 2.

Our first objective was to go to the top of Suribachi. On the way we stopped at the base where the majority of defenders fought from caves and terrain which can be described as formidable. At one site near a Japanese gun position I found the remains of an aiming stake, most likely theirs because of the location.

The top of Suribachi was crowded. Many old Marines and their families were raising and lowering US flags, permitted on this day only.

The Fifth Marine Division maintains a Memorial at the site of the Flag Raising. There are a number of other Memorials, all Japanese except for a small plaque honoring Sgt Bill Genaust, the photographer who captured the flag raising on movie film. Genaust was later lost in a cave forever, one of 46 Marines lost on Iwo and never recovered. They were either entombed or disintegrated and join the 20,000+ Japanese not yet accounted for.

After Suribachi we proceeded north on the western road paralleling the western beaches.

I asked John Ripley if my brother and I could go to the top of Motoyama #1 or to where it had previously been since it is no longer an airstrip. John said it will be tight but we will do it. Just after clearing Suribachi John had the driver pull over near a small trail leading to the right of the main road. Ripley said we will have to hurry so he debarked and at close to a run walk cut through the bushes on a small path. It was a short fast hike which charged my old grunt batteries, particularly sharing this with my brother and a Marine like Ripley.

We reached the top of the field where we found remnants of the runway, and an old Betty bomber encased in concrete as a provisional bunker. John said this was the south end of

the airfield reached by 1/27 on D-Day. My brother and I placed our flag and reflected on what it must have been like 60 years ago. John Basilone was killed not far from where we were standing. We found shell fragments scattered about and I picked one up to bring home with me.

Returning to the vehicle at a good clip we rejoined the group and continued north on the western road which was very close to the axis of advance of the 27th Marines, with 2/27 on the left and 1/27 on the right and 3/27 relieving as directed. Battalions rotated in and out of assault/attack responsibilities. The resting Battalion would follow in trace and then mop up as they licked their wounds and get ready to jump off in the next round.

This was the process day in and day out. Most advances were measured in yards. A big day was 500 yards, On D+9 and 10 the 27th Marines attacked 362 A and the ridges running to the western coast. They made progress but were bloodied in the process and pulled back to lick their wounds. The 28th Marines now rested from Suribachi came forward and completed the conquest of 362 A and then became entangled in a series of tough fights along Nishi ridge. These were sheer cliff fortifications as was 362 A and it is wonder they were ever taken. Many of the flag raisers and LT/Col Chandler Johnson of 2/28 were killed in this area as Ripley pointed out. By then we were short on time and unable to reach 362 A and find RJ 338, a small trail junction not far from an old sulfur mine where my Dad was hit and killed by a 47mm antitank round on D+14. This was not far from old Motoyama #3 where 1/27 was then located. After resting from the battering on 362A 1/27 was attached to the 26th Marines and working on the flank of the Division near the 3rd Marine Division Zone of Action. John Ripley had already stuck his neck out to get my brother and I on top of old Motoyama #1, and to reach those other sites would have been too much for one day and unfair to the rest of the group in our Humvee.

We continued on and John told of the tough fights in the Gorge and Kitano Point. The terrain in this area defied description and harbored immense caves, including Kuribayashi's and the incredible hospital cave which was found after the Marines had left. When opened this mammoth system contained 45 mummified bodies. The walls in the cave are iron hot and being in them is like being in a sauna.

Col Russell who in the last days took command of 2/27 when Antonelli was evacuated recalled the bitter fights in this area including the loss of Jack Lummus, the Baylor All American who was a New York Giant end. Lummus stepped on a mine after destroying a series of Japanese positions. With both legs gone and bleeding to death he was brought in to the Bn aid station. Col Russell recalled giving him a cigarette and talking to a still coherent and conversational Lummus, despite his traumatic wounds. Evacuated to the rear for further treatment he died later in the evening but not before he told the Doctors that it looked like the New York Giants were going to loose a damn good end. Lummus was one of Iwo's CMH winners and a legendary small unit leader during the fighting.

With daylight fading fast we were near the end of the trip and fairly close to where we were going to assemble, when we were stopped by a lady Marine Captain , who told John Ripley that we were overloaded and the Humvees were limited to sitting passengers only.

She insisted that we have passengers disembark which didn't make all of sense to Ripley when we were just a few minutes from reaching the air terminal and it was already too dark to continue touring. John politely conveyed to the determined lady Captain that he did not agree with her. Luckily John's logic and determination prevailed and we completed the short ride to the air terminal where we disembarked. This was not quite like the Gunny encounter which was a recycle of the past but rather a new Corps deal. It reminded me of the First lady Coast guard officer/ inspector I encountered when I was working in the maritime business. She didn't make a bit of sense but she was "The Boss". I hope any ladies reading this don't get upset but we should use judgment when issuing orders.

We arrived at the terminal to find out for whatever reason that since we were first in we would be last out. I might comment that our group did not get any lunch as we would have had to wait to get some after the ceremony. By vote we all agreed to proceed without a lunch. John Ripley did a superb job getting us to so many places and giving us a complete tour from one end of the island to the other. Our driver, a corporal did a superb job and John was going to make sure his superiors knew how well he had done which shows the kind of person and officer John Ripley is.

We boarded late, around 2100 after waiting, standing around and being hungry. This was particularly tough on some of our older travelers, one who got sick and required hospitalization. There were a lot of tired folks on the plane coming back to Guam and for those going to Hawaii the next day it was really rough as they had to be up at 0300 and aboard busses at 0400. My brother and his wife were in that group.

Luckily they had a day to recover in Hawaii before the scheduled events, a memorial service at the Punch Bowl and a commemoration event at the Iwo statue located at Kaneohe Bay. They visited my Dad and Mom's resting place in the Punch bowl with Col Russell who finally had the opportunity to say Goodbye to his 27th Marines friend in Arms and later to speak of him at the Punch bowl Memorial service. It was a special moment for my brother and all of our family.

I had one last day in Guam which I used to recover and get ready for the trip home. In the lobby I encountered John Farritor, a retired First sergeant, in his 80's who enlisted in July 1941. In WW 2 he

was at Bougainville, Guam, Iwo, and then in Korea at the Pusan Perimeter, Inchon, Seoul, and the Frozen Chosen. Now that is a seabag full of Campaigns. The Top has published a book "Through it All" which is all of \$16.00 plus postage and can be purchased by calling 1 760- 726 55739 or e mail [topsgtuscabd41@sbcglobal.net](mailto:topsgtuscabd41@sbcglobal.net).

While boarding at Iwo Jima the Top took a nasty fall over an unmarked grating. This happened right in front of my brother and I. He was a little goofy for awhile. I thought he could have been badly hurt, even after we helped him get a seat on the plane and asked the corpsman to check him out. In any case I checked the next day and the tough old Top was OK but a little sore.

A group of retired Marines on Guam provided a first class Luau type feed at a place called the Military Museum, which was a collection of old equipment and military hardware maintained on a farm. It was an outdoor event topped off with singing of the Marine Corps Hymn. We were joined at that event by our Chamorron tour guides and the Military History tours staff.

We departed Guam 0 dark30 and I arrived home 30 hours later.

It was a lifetime trip, and an event to forever remember.

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