

# **PFC EDWARD JOSEPH TUCKER**

**By Charles W. Tatum**

## **D-Day Plus 15.9 and some odd days**

**In the 15,900 plus days that have passed since February 19, 1945 I have to confess that time has eroded my memory somewhat. I had thought that nearly everything that happened on Iwo Jima had been so deeply engraved in my poor brain that even time would not dim the recollection of the events that happened so long ago.**

**Some of my fondest memories from my time in the Marine Corps are not about Iwo Jima. My best memories are about the men that I met in the Corps. I can't recall those times without thinking about one of the Marines I admired the most. I was pleased to call PFC Edward Joseph Tucker my friend and buddy, because that's what Tucker was to me, a real friend and comrade in arms.**

**Tucker, Lloyd Hurd and I went a lot of places together. I guess we were simpatico. Tucker came to the Marine Corps from The Motor City, Detroit, Michigan. Tucker was a former paratrooper and he came to the Fifth Division from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Paramarine Training Battalion. Tucker was the gunner in Corporal Brookshire's squad. Tucker and I trained together at Camp Pendleton, and Camp Tarawa. Hurd, Tucker and I pulled some liberty together in Hawaii. The three of us just seemed to get along real good.**

**Now I liked nearly everyone in the machinegun platoon, but Tucker was something special. I liked the “cut of his jib.” I spent forty-three years thinking that Tucker was killed on the beach at Iwo Jima, and that was it. Time and research for this book revealed that I was completely mistaken. Tucker did get killed on Iwo Jima, but not on D-Day. Tucker was wounded on D-Day, shrapnel in his left leg. This only put him out of action till the 25 of February 1945. That’s the day he returned to duty, back to B Company, First Battalion, 27<sup>th</sup> Marines.**

**The Company was out of corporals, so Tucker took over the duties of the squad leader in his section. Now we were so short of personnel that Tucker was a welcomed addition to the machinegun platoon. Six days is not a long enough time for his wounds to heal and he was in continual pain, the wound still draining. The truth is that his wound was a “million dollar wound”, bad enough to get you off Iwo Jima. So bad, that no one would ever expect or send you back to the front. The truth is that PFC Edward Joseph tucker volunteered to come back, even after the medical doctors told him not to go back because his wound hadn’t healed completely. Tucker had given me fatherly advice once, which was never, ever volunteer for anything in the Marine Corps, and here he was violating his own advice!**

**The medical corpsman wanted Tucker evacuated, his wound was still cause for concern due to the chance of infection. But Tucker was a real fighter and always had the safety and welfare of his squad foremost on his mind. This was to cost him his life. Through the hellish assault**

on Hill 362A, and day-in and day-out phases of the “siege” Tucker was in the thick of it, against the entrenched Japanese enemy.

The Japanese defenders had become a real enemy. The siege had become personal, the loss of friend and comrades had surfaced a real animosity against our unforeseen enemies. This fight was now more than a fight, it was now a vendetta. We wanted revenge. We vowed to kill 10 for one. We had learned to hate our enemies. Men who are mad are hard to stop. The Japanese did stop PCF Tucker on March 14, 1945. Tucker’s love and passion for helping his men cost him his life.

“No one could have more love for his fellow man than to give up his own life to save another’s.” I read this someplace, but I don’t remember where. So I don’t know who to credit with this saying, but it doesn’t matter. What matters is that this saying is what comes to my mind when I recall memories of Ed Tucker. I could go on and write page after page about Tucker, but let’s let his Citation for the Silver Star speak of his courage and devotion to duty:

*“The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the Silver Star Medal to Private First Class Edward J. Tucker for services set forth in the following citation:*

*For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity as a squad leader, serving a platoon of Company B, First Battalion, Twenty-Seventh Marines, Fifth Marine Division, in action against enemy Japanese forces on Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands, 14<sup>th</sup> March, 1945. Heedless of his own painful wounds*

*and refusing evacuation in order to remain with his men in continuance of an assault against the bitterly defending Japanese, Private First Class Tucker unhesitating braved a deadly hail of hostile rifle and machinegun fire to rescue a wounded Marine lying in an exposed position. Although mortally wounded while administering first aid to his stricken comrade, Private First Class Tucker, by his unselfish courage and devotion to duty, had strengthened the morale and fighting spirit of his entire company, thereby reflecting great credit upon himself and the United States Naval Service.”*

**The eloquence in the wording of Edward Tucker’s Citation for the Silver Star says it all about Tucker. There are no words that I can add to improve it. My real regret is that I never contacted his parents after the war. I would have wanted to tell them that their son was a “Hell of a Marine” and one of my best friends ever.**

**Tucker had a foreboding of his death. He once told me that he wouldn’t survive Iwo Jima. I told him, “*Bullshit, Tucker! You are wrong!*” But I guess he knew more than I did. The one thing I might add is that he went down fighting, and saved a fellow Marine’s life doing it.**

**I’m mad at the Marine Corps because that Silver Star should have been the Congressional Medal of Honor. Maybe God gave him one.**

**Private First class Edward J. Tucker returned home on October 27, 1947. He lies buried in a hero's grave at the Chapel Memorial Cemetery in Birmingham, Michigan. May he rest in peace. He did his part to preserve it for the rest of us. Who knows, maybe we will meet again, somewhere, sometime.**

**USMC CASUALTY REPORT**

**Date: 3Apr45**

**Card: Yes      Casualty No. 032247**

**Name: Tucker, Edward Joseph**

**Rank: PFC**

**Class: USMCR**

**ID No: 851184**

**Organization: Co. B., 1<sup>st</sup> Bn., 27<sup>th</sup> Marines, 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Div**

**Killed in Action**

**Area: Pac**

**Date: 14Mar45**

**Date Enlisted: 27Apr43**

**Place of Enlist: Detroit, Mich**

**Date of Birth: 25June23**

**Place of Birth: Detroit, Mich**

**Prior Service: No**

**Marital Status: S**

**Race: W**

**Next of Kin: Mrs. Mabel Tucker**

**Relationship: Mother**

**Address of Kin: 6112 McMillan Street, Detroit, Mich**

**Beneficiary: Mrs. Mabel Tucker, Mother, same address as above**

**Nature of wound: GSW, heart**

**Buried in the 5<sup>th</sup> MarineDivCemetery on 17Mar45\*\***

**\*\*Burial bulletin #23: Fr. Hq. 5<sup>th</sup>MarDiv (reinf) dtd 17Mar45 rec'd 247Mar45 states man buried in Grave#1727, Row#1, Plot#7. Date of burial used as date of death.**

**\*\*\*Change of status and correction date of death taken from MB#0199 fr CG 5thMarDiv to MarCorps dtd 9May45 rec'd 19May45. AMB Ser#1091 CasRep #82 fr CG 5thMarDiv to SECNAV dtd 8mary45, rec'd 18May45, states DOW 19FEB45**

**(ref) CondLtr fr CO, B-1-27-5 to NOK, dtd 9Jun45, rec'd  
18Jul45 certificate of death received from zone Jul 24 1945.  
Service record book received July 26 1945.**

**Mother requests remains ret to W.F. Hackett & Son, 5616  
West Vernor Highway, Detroit, Michigan for pvt burial in  
White Chapel Mem Cem, Birmingham, Mich. Appl dated  
27Oct47.**