

By Jesse N. Wood

## JESSE N. WOOD

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# MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA

## JESSE N. WOOD



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## MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA

I have written here about some of the things that took place on Iwo Jima. There are things that happened that I will never forget.

This write up is not in any particular order as things happened. I wrote it up as I thought about some of the things that took place on "Iwo Jima."

One of my grandchildren asked me several times if I would write about me being in the "Iwo Jima" campaign during World War II.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

My wife and I got married on May 28, 1943. We celebrated our 65th wedding anniversary on May 28, 2008. I went into the military the same week we married.

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Time we were attached to a Marine Force needing extra man power, this is how and on to Iwo Jima, the bloodiest battle in the Pacific during World War II.

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and on to Iwo Jima, the bloodiest battle in the Pacific during World War II.



During World War II, when a boy turned 18 years of age, he was drafted into the military. I was still in high school, as most of the other boys were when I reached the age of 18. This was in 1943.

We got a deferment from the draft for about six weeks in order to finish high school.

We graduated from high school one night and the next morning we loaded up buses and went to "Fort McClellan" for our physical examinations.

I wanted to get into the Navy and be in the Submarine Service. I was told that I was color blind in green and red colors and I could not get into the Navy because of this. I was put into the Army Infantry.

I finished my basic training and was shipped overseas in December 1943. I returned to the United States in 1946.

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When I arrived overseas, I was placed into The 147 Infantry Regiment. They had been in the Guadalcanal Campaign in 1942.

The army had changed a division from four regiments to three regiments. This left The 147 Infantry Regiment not attached to any unit. We were attached to any military force needing an infantry regiment that was going into combat. Most of the time we were attached to a marine force needing extra man power. This is how our regiment was attached to the 3rd Marines on Iwo Jima.

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I thought that we had been in some bad campaigns until we got to Iwo Jima in February, 1945.

While we were on a troop ship going to Iwo Jima, a sailor came into the part of the ship I was in and asked if there was anyone here from Alabama. I told him that I was from Jacksonville, Alabama. His name was Lindsey Harcrow from Pleasant Valley, which is only a few miles from Jacksonville.

The next morning we were climbing down the landing nets to get into the landing barges to

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go ashore. Lindsey called out to me and said, "Jesse, I'll see you in Alabama when this war is over." I thought to myself, I sure hope so.

After we had gotten into the landing barges and were heading toward the shore, we could hear heavy gun fire. An airplane had just been shot down and was burning on the beach. While going toward the beach, I looked over the side of the barge and saw a rifle stock floating in the water. I thought to myself some marine did not make it to shore.

When we got to the beach, which was very sandy and loose with volcanic ash, we were told to "dig in."

I dug down about six inches and hit a dead Japanese soldier which the sand and volcanic ash had covered. I put sand back over the body and put sand bags around to make a "fox hole." I stayed on this dead Japanese for several days, until we moved out of that area.

We would go forward several hundred yards each day but would return back to our fox holes at night. The Jap body stunk real bad, but the complete island stunk.



Not For The Full time we were on the island, There were only about 3,000 Soldi  
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since I was on both of these islands. I told him yes and he gave me the two books.

We until the island was secured because there was no planes left and we shot and killed the Japanese. I did if they captured one of our troops.

I have read from the book that Iwo Jima was invaded in order to take the island for the three air fields the Japanese had on the island.

Iwo Jima was only about 4 1/2 miles long and 2 1/2 miles across at its widest part. It was about 660 miles from Japan.

On 26, 1945  
prisoners  
now where they kept them  
There were no civilians or houses on Iwo Jima. The military needed the air fields for U.S. fighter planes to escort the bombers to Japan and back. The crew of ten would bail out of their bombers that had been shot up over Japan and could not make it back to Saipan, or were unable to land on Iwo Jima. We would try to get to where they [the members of the crew in their parachutes] landed before the Japanese got them.

On page 193, it tells about an attack by the Japanese starting just before the landing of the 3rd Marine Division. The Marine book states that The 147 Infantry (U.S. Army) were attached to the 3rd Marine Division. In the book they refer to us as "The Marines who were not Marines."

It The Marine book states that the campaign lasted for 36 days, from February 19, 1945

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to March 26, 1945. That is when the Marines started leaving Iwo Jima, not when the 147 Infantry left.

We stayed for several more months and killed and captured several thousand Japanese soldiers.

On page 192 of the book, it states that The 147 Infantry assumed full responsibility for the ground defense of Iwo Jima on April 4, 1945. The Marine Book states that during the month of April and the first part of May, our unit killed 1,602 Japanese and took 867 prisoners, a total of 2,469 Japanese. We did not always report the number of Japanese killed, and we did not know that they were keeping score on the number of Japanese killed.

The number of Japanese killed and captured as reported was for only about a six week period, not for the full time we were on the island. There were only about 3,000 soldiers in the 147 Infantry.

We did not take prisoners until the island was secured because there was no place to put them. They were shot and killed, the same

We ARE ARMY Infantry", they said, "PASS  
Infantry".

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way the Japanese did if they captured one of  
our troops.

On page 193, it states that as of March 26, 1945,  
only 216 Japanese had been taken prisoner,  
though I don't know where they kept them.

There were no civilians or houses on Iwo  
Jima, just Japanese soldiers, pill boxes, gun  
emplacements, and miles of caves that most  
of the Japanese stayed in during the day. But  
at night they came out of the caves and tried to  
get us.

They would shoot at us from holes that they  
had cut into the sides of the caves.

On page 192 and page 193, it tells about an  
attack by the Japanese starting just before  
day light on the morning of March 26, 1945. It  
states that this was not a BANZAI attack but a  
well planned attack.

It states that 200 to 300 Japanese moved from  
the North side of the island and The 5th Pioneer  
Battalion formed a battle line and stopped the  
attack and killed 196 of the enemy.

I am sure they killed that many Japanese, but

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there were more than 200 or 300 Japanese soldiers involved.

Our company was also attacked on the morning of March 26, 1945. We were dug in and behind barbed wire. Our company killed more than 300 Japanese soldiers during the attack, and about 50 American soldiers were killed.

After the fighting ended that morning we pushed the Japanese that were not killed back to the northern part of the island.

As we were returning from the northern part of the island, we came back a different way than we went. We came to a company of black soldiers that were with an artillery company. This company would shoot at Japanese bombers that would come over at night to bomb the island.

The Japanese had come through this company area during the banzai attack. We were all ordered to shoot anything that moved at night, but this company of black soldiers did not shoot. We were told by some of the soldiers that survived the attack that they had challenged the Japanese by saying "Halt, who are you?"

The Japanese said, "We are Army Infantry",

I was wounded near Mount Suribachi.  
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and they said, "pass infantry." The Japanese attacked these soldiers and killed many of them.

We helped get the dead soldiers out of their fox holes. One of the dead soldiers I had seen before in Jacksonville and I knew his brother and his dad real well. He had been cut up bad. He had been cut up with a saber or with some type of knife all over his body. He was a bloody mess.

Several years later, his brother came by the bank where I worked and said he had heard I was on Iwo Jima. He said his brother had been killed there but the family did not know how he died and they had worried about that for years.

His brother knew about the banzai attack which was the day his brother was killed. I told him that I saw his brother the morning of the banzai attack and helped move his body from the fox hole. "I told him a lie." I told him his brother did not have a mark on his body and he looked as if he was asleep.

His brother was glad to hear this and asked if his dad could come by the bank and talk with

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me about me seeing his son the morning of his death. I told him yes.

His dad was relieved to hear this also. I felt as if I did the right thing by telling "this lie," rather than telling him the truth about how his son had died.

After the fighting ended that morning, I had a camera and took pictures of some of the dead Japanese.

I have printed some of these pictures near the end of this write up as well as pictures I took of dead Japanese that had been killed earlier that laid all over the island and a few pictures from the "Marine Book."

I don't know when the 147 Infantry got to Iwo Jima or when we left the island. The "Marine book" states that some arrived on February 27, 1945 and some arrived on March 20, 1945. But there was a lot of fighting taking place when we got there and it went on for months.



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I was wounded near "Mount Suribachi"

I was wounded near "Mount Suribachi" along with about 20 to 25 other soldiers by mortar shells. The soldier next to me had his left foot blown off. I was trying to help him by stopping his bleeding. I knew there was a lot of blood on my left sleeve to my jacket. I was told that I had been hit, and when I took off my jacket, I saw that I had been hit on the left arm and left hand.

I did not even feel it when I got hit and it did not hurt. I was told to try and work my way back to an "aid station" for treatment. The aid station was located about one-half of a mile from where I was.

When I got to the aid station, there were a lot of soldiers there hurt bad. The aid station was a large hole in the ground with canvas over it. I found a box to sit on and stayed out of the way where the soldiers that were hurt badly could be treated ahead of me. Later, the medic asked me what was wrong with me. I told him that I had been hit with shrapnel from a mortar shell. He told me to sit on a box and take off my jacket. When I did this, my head started swimming and I felt I was about to fall off the

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box I was sitting on. He told me that I was going into "shock." I told him no, but he said yes you are. He had me lower my head onto my knees for a short time. When he told me to raise my head, my dizziness had cleared up.

This was funny to me because when I first got into the army, the instructors told us that shock can "kill you." Since I was 18 years old at the time, I would say that shock would not harm me, it would take a bullet to stop me. But I found out that I was wrong. "Shock got to me this time."

The worst part about me being wounded was the tetanus shots. Before I left the aid station, the medic told me that he had to give me a tetanus shot. I told him I had been given a tetanus shot yesterday. He said regulations required him to give me one since I had been wounded.

When I got back to our company, our medic crawled into my fox hole with his shot kit. I asked him what he was going to do. He said regulations required him to give me a tetanus shot after I had been wounded.

I told him he gave me one yesterday and the medic at the "aid station" had given me one

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about an hour ago, and he was going to give me another tetanus shot. He said yes, regulations required it.

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**Night Time Ambush Patrols on Iwo Jima**

We were on Iwo Jima for some time before the island was secured. The 147 Infantry took over the night ambush and day time patrols on or about March 24, 1945.

I was on ambush patrols almost every night. Nine soldiers would go out before dark and stay all night. We were to report back to our company if the Japanese soldiers tried to come through certain areas in force. We were ordered to shoot anything that moved above ground at night. A company of about 250 soldiers would help us get to our ambush location and come back the next morning and help us get back to our company.

During the night, all of our trip flares would be tripped by Japanese soldiers trying to get to us. We only had one B.A.R., rifles, and hand grenades. When the location was where we could receive "back up fire" when needed, the

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soldiers some distance behind us would drop mortar shells or machine gun fire around us to help us out. Every morning we could see the fresh dead Japanese that had been killed during the night when they had been trying to get to us. No dead Japanese bodies were ever moved; they just laid there and rotted.

According to the Marine Book, more than 20,000 Japanese soldiers had been killed and left to rot. The complete island stunk, and blow flies and maggots ate the dead Japanese soldiers.

These ambush patrols were very dangerous. At one of the most dangerous locations, the Japanese would attack us every night.

One morning while the other eight solders covered me, I crawled out of my fox hole to search the "new dead Japanese" for souvenirs or American money. We had heard that a soldier found \$1,500.00 of American money on a dead Japanese soldier. I crawled out to far that morning and I almost did not get back to my fox hole. "I did not do that again."

After Iwo Jima was well secured and not as much fighting was going on, three of us were sent out on a three man over night ambush

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The marine book states that the patrols patrol. This location was not as dangerous as most. The next morning after the sun came up, we were throwing hand grenades to see which one of us could throw a grenade the farthest (we were 20 years old and not very smart). After the hand grenades would explode and the shrapnel would pass over our heads, we would look out of our fox hole to see where the dust or dirt was in the air to see which one of us threw the grenade the farthest. After we had thrown a few grenades we looked out of our fox hole and saw a Japanese soldier standing with his hands raised over his head wanting to surrender to us. We did not even know that he was in the area.

We made him strip where we could be sure he didn't have any weapons on him. We took him as a prisoner because the island was secured and the troops had been told if we continued to shoot prisoners we would be court marshaled for murder.

We turned him into a place that handled prisoners. When we turned him in, a soldier that could speak Japanese questioned him. The soldier asking the questions smiled. We asked him what he was smiling about. He said the Japanese soldier had come through the lines

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during the night as he wanted to surrender this morning. The Japanese soldier said he came to a fox hole near where we captured him and he found three marines asleep in a fox hole. He said he started to kill all three of the marines with a hand grenade but he knew if he did the other marines near where we were would not take him as a prisoner but would kill him.

While we were in our fox holes that night, we agreed that two of us would stay awake while one would sleep for a while, and then let another sleep while the one that had slept would stay awake with the other one.

When it was my time to sleep, I woke up a little later and the other two boys were asleep. I kicked their "rear ends" and we all stayed awake the rest of the night.

I am sure that we were the three marines this Japanese started to kill because when we captured him, he was only about 40 feet from us. He was hiding behind some rocks.

We were lucky not to have been killed for the other two soldiers being careless by going to sleep. We were always so tired and sleepy.

himself.  
We were in very hostile territory and  
The name of the area was  
AREA was a  
radio  
where we could have a company of Marines  
to control  
I was  
of marines  
for help.

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When we were on "night ambush patrol," I would put my rifle, my knife, and hand grenades on the top edge of the fox hole where I could be ready in case of an attack.

When it was my turn to sleep for 10 or 15 minutes, I would keep my 45 army pistol in my hand with the hammer cocked ready to shoot.

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**Daytime Patrols, Each and Every Day**

The marine book states that the patrols varied in size from one squad to a reinforced platoon. They used tanks, and on one occasion, naval gunfire provided by a destroyer to support their operations.

Our patrols, being made up of only nine men, were not so lucky. But there were times when additional troops were sent to help us get back from where we had gone on our patrols.

One day our nine man patrol captured 16 Japanese soldiers. They were in a large cave by the ocean. We saw their tracks in the sand on the beach in front of the cave and we thought there might be Japanese inside.

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We threw some hand grenades into the cave and there was a fire fight for a short time. But when we got some T.N.T. into the front of the cave the Japanese wanted to surrender. We ordered them to come up a trail to where we were. They were required to come up one at a time with their hands raised. One of them, as he came by me on the trail, bowed to me and wanted to shake hands with me.

We did not trust them at all and I started to shoot him. But instead, I raised my rifle butt to hit him in the mouth. He stepped back from me and went on to where we had motioned for them to go.

They were all dirty, hungry, and needing water to drink. We searched them for souvenirs, but they did not have much. A few had some of their family pictures which we did not want. As we threw the pictures over the cliff into the ocean, the Japanese begged for us to let them keep them. We did not give them back.

We had them all sit down on some large rocks. One of these Japanese was an officer. One of the soldiers put a stub of a cigarette in the officers' mouth and lighted it for him to smoke. We slapped the cigarette out of his mouth, and

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then I took his chop sticks and canteen of water for souvenirs. (I still have the chop sticks)

We poured the water out of his canteen. The water was rain water and muddy. As the water was poured out, the Japanese begged for a drink of it. We did not give any of the water to them.

One of the Japanese wanted to commit suicide rather than be a prisoner. We allowed him to go some distance from us then we threw him a hand grenade. We held our rifles on him in order to shoot him if we thought he might throw the grenade back at us. He held the grenade to his stomach and killed himself.

We were in very hostile territory and the nine of us could not get out of the area with the 15 prisoners. We had a radio but not a map of where we were, where we could have a company of marines to come and help us get out with the prisoners. We radioed for help and I was sent as a runner to bring the company of marines to help get us out.

I had gone only a short distance when some Japanese shot at me. I stayed behind rocks as best as I could to try and keep from being hit.

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*in just the first 36 days of combat.*

I was to meet the marines at the end of "The Valley of the Dead." This was where several hundred Japanese soldiers had been killed and left to rot. I had to go a long distance to reach the marines to lead them back to where the Japanese were being held.

*the Third (1/3) WAR I was called upon to go to Iwo Jima. When I got to Iwo Jima, I lost*

*Weight from 152 pounds to 127 pounds*

As I went through the valley of the dead I had to pass in front of a lot of caves. The Japanese would shoot at American troops from the inside of the caves. One of the caves I was about to pass in front of had smoke coming out of it. I slipped up to the side of the cave and threw a hand grenade into the cave and then I ran the rest of the way to where the marines were waiting for me.

*whenever I was on our own I was very physically fit. I was 152 lbs. When I got to Iwo Jima, I lost 24 lbs. I was 127 lbs. Almost every one on Iwo Jima lost*

When I met the marines and started to lead them to where our troops were holding the prisoners they put out flankers on both sides of the valley of the dead to help give some protection to the troops going through "The Valley."

*Weight. I was a little tired and water was scarce on the island, only what was shipped in for the g.I. and natives.*

The marines on the flanks on the high ground started firing their rifles. They killed several Japanese on each side of the Valley. The Japanese had hand grenades and were getting ready to throw them at the marines.

*all we had to eat for a long time were K-rations. There were a small amount of cigarettes and I tried to trade my cigarettes for a cracker or two.*

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The Japanese must have allowed me to go through the Valley thinking I was going to get help and they could kill a lot more marines if they allowed me to pass. "I was lucky again."

~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*

On another patrol while we were going through "The Valley of the Dead," we looked into a very small cave. We looked in but did not see any Japanese. A few minutes later we heard shooting from that direction and went back to help out. When we got there a patrol had killed some Japanese and had captured two soldiers from the cave that we had first looked into. One was a Japanese officer.

Then another fire fight broke out about 300 yards down the trail. I and another soldier were asked to stay with the two prisoners until the fire fight stopped. When the gun fire stopped, I pointed for the Japanese to go in a certain direction. The officer shook his head "no." I pointed again, and again he shook his head "no."

I told the soldier I was with that I was going to shoot this Japanese officer. He said "do it." I took my 45 Army pistol out of the holster. When

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I raised it to shoot him he began shaking his head "yes" he would go.

We went down to where the patrols had gone. They had killed some Japanese and had taken five prisoners. One of the prisoners had been shot through both of his knees some days before and maggots were eating in both of them. He could not walk so we did not take him as a prisoner.



The Marine Book states that in the first 36 days of fighting on Iwo Jima, out of a total of 75,000 marines, there were 6,523 killed in action and 20,013 wounded. The navy had 881 killed in action and 1,917 wounded. This is a total of 7,404 killed and 21,930 wounded, for a total of killed and wounded of 29,334 in just the first 36 days of combat.

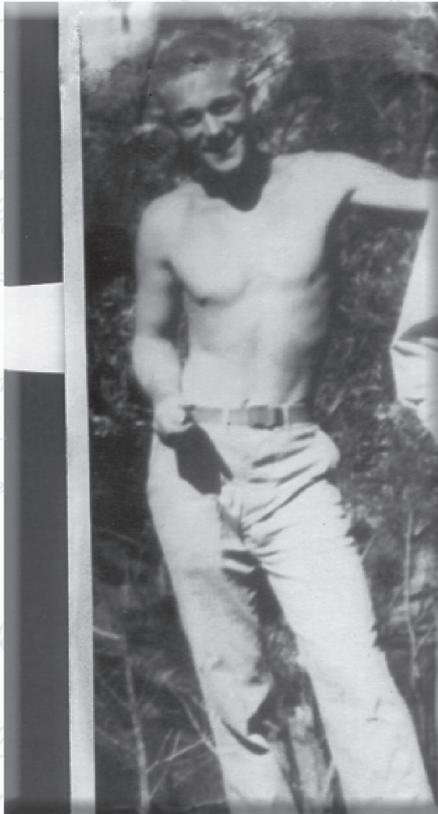
The Marine Book states that one-third (1/3) of the marines killed in World War II were killed while fighting on Iwo Jima.



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While I was on Iwo Jima, I lost weight from 152 pounds to 127 pounds.

While we were on a troop ship on our way to Iwo Jima, we were given physical examinations and my weight was 152 pounds. When we left Iwo Jima on our way to Okinawa, we were given physical examinations. I weighed 127 pounds.



**This is a picture of Jesse Wood.**

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Almost everyone fighting on Iwo Jima lost weight. We received very little food and water.

There was no drinkable water on the island, only rain water, when it rained. When the military could, water was shipped in like gasoline and rationed. All we had to eat for a long time were "K-rations" about once each day. "K-rations" were three crackers, a small can of potted meat, and three cigarettes. I did not smoke so I tried to trade my cigarettes for a cracker or two.

There were always dead Japanese near us when we would eat and the blow flies would be all over our food.

One day we were on a patrol in a very dangerous part of the island when we saw a company of soldiers digging fox holes on a hill. We felt we would be safer for a few minutes if we went up to where they were because there would be about 250 more soldiers if we were attacked by the Japanese.

I walked by a soldier digging a fox hole and said, 'how are you doing?' He said, 'I hope I live to get off of this island.' He turned toward me and I knew him from Jacksonville.

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It was Johnny Bagget. He told me that he had just gotten to Iwo Jima a few days before as some of the replacements. (To replace some of the soldier that had been killed or wounded)

After the war was over and I had returned home, I learned that Frank Casey Jr., Junior Goodwin and Russel Greenleaf, all from Jacksonville, were also in the battle on Iwo Jima.

Sometime after I returned home, my wife and I were eating in a restaurant in Jacksonville when Russel Greenleaf came into the restaurant and saw us. He came over to our table and we talked for a while.

He asked me if I was on Iwo Jima on March 26th 1945. I said yes, what happened on March 26th? He said that was the morning the Japanese launched the big banzai attack.

When I got back home, I looked in the Marine Book and read where the attack did take place on March 26th. I did not know the date of the attack until then.



By Jesse N. Wood

## MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA

These are pictures of some of the Japanese soldiers killed on March 26, 1945, during a "banzai" attack that began just before daylight.

These are some of the Japanese soldiers that were killed in front of our company area.

Our company killed about 300 Japanese soldiers that morning. About 50 American soldiers were killed.

The Marine Book states that the attack and fighting lasted about three hours.



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The military I was still in high school, as most of the other boys were when I reached the



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Tom Read from the "Reads Mill Community" near Jacksonville heard that I was on Iwo Jima. He came by the bank where I worked and told me that he was also on Iwo Jima. He asked me if I saw the large pillbox that was blown up on the island. I told him that I saw a lot of blown up pillboxes.

I told him that I had taken some pictures and I believed one of them was of a pillbox.

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He asked me if I would bring the pictures to the bank as he would like to see them. We set a date when I would bring the pictures and he could come by and see them.

He saw the picture of a large destroyed pillbox. He said that he and his squad were the soldiers that had destroyed that pillbox. (I have enclosed a picture of this pillbox at the end of this write up.)

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



**This is a picture of one of the many "Pillboxes" on Iwo Jima.**

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**This is a picture I thought at first was me.**

I remember being on this trail several times. I knew it was not me because we did not have a 'camera crew' with us to take our pictures.

This is also where, after a fire fight took place a short ways down the trail I took a rock and raked the brains out of a dead Japanese soldier's helmet. I later shipped it to my Dad from Okinawa.

Notice the dead Japanese soldier on the ground behind the American soldier. "The Marine Book" states that there were about 20,000 dead Japanese soldiers all over the island.

Killed 196 of The Enemy.  
I Am sure They killed that money  
JAPAN  
200  
Our company was attached on the  
Morning of 25 March 1945 also we  
Were  
Our  
JAPAN  
About 10 American Soldiers were killed.  
After the fighting ended that morning  
We  
Killed back to the northern part of the  
island  
As  
part  
way  
of  
company  
Japanese bombers that would come over at  
night  
The  
area  
All  
at night, but this company of black soldiers  
did  
The  
They had challenged the Japanese by saying  
"Hait, who are you," the Japanese said,

## JESSE N. WOOD

The Marine Book shows a picture of a U.S. soldier moving fast and low with a dead Japanese soldier behind him on a trail.

I thought this picture was of me when I first saw it because I was on this trail when a fire fight started. (I knew this picture was not me because a camera crew was not with us at any time.)

My Dad had written to me and asked that I send him some souvenirs from Iwo Jima.

When the fighting ended that morning, a Japanese soldier had been shot in the head and his brains had run out into his helmet. It was a new helmet and I thought that my Dad would like to have it for a souvenir. I took a rock and raked his brains out of the helmet and kept it in my fox holes until we left Iwo Jima.

When we got to Okinawa, the war had ended and we could ship packages home. I shipped the Japanese helmet and a Japanese bayonet and some pictures I had taken while I was on Iwo Jima.

When I returned home, I asked my Dad how he liked the Japanese helmet and the Japanese

We ARE Army Infantry, they said PASS  
Infantry.

## MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA

The bayonet I had sent to him. He told me that he gave the Japanese helmet and bayonet away. He still had the pictures.

We were happy to get the dead soldiers out of their fox holes. One of the dead soldiers was from Camp Pendleton, I know his name. His name was... Well. He had been cut up bad. He had been cut with some type of knife all over his body. He was a bloody mess.

I would have liked to have the helmet and bayonet. There were some important memories attached to them.

### My Pay When I Went Into the Military

When I went into the military service in 1943, the pay was \$50.00 per month. An allotment was taken out of my pay each month for my wife. The government took out a premium for life insurance, and I had \$6.25 taken out each month to help buy a \$25.00 savings bond.

This left me \$5.15 each month.

We would be paid about once each six months, and for the six months period, I would receive \$30.90. Most of the time we were on an island where there was no place to spend your money.

"We had some good poker games".

And talk with me about me seeing his son the morning of his death. I told him yes.

**JESSE N. WOOD**

**Thirty six days compared to 6 years in Iraq**

His Dad was relieved to hear this also. I told him the truth about how his son had died.

In this write up, I stated that in the first 36 days of combat on Iwo Jima, there were 7,404 military personnel killed.

After the fighting ended the morning, I had some pictures taken by some of the Marines. I had a few pictures of dead Japanese that had been killed over the island all over the island. I had a few pictures from the "Marine Book".

As a comparison, as of June 2008, after approximately 6 years of war in Iraq, there have been almost 4,100 military personnel killed.

This gives you a comparison of how much more deadly the fighting on Iwo Jima was.

This was only 36 days compared to about 6 years in Iraq.



I don't know when the 147 Infantry got to Iwo Jima or when we left the island. The "Marine Book" states that some arrived on February 27, 1945, and some arrived on March 20, 1945, but there was a lot of fighting taking place when we got there and it went on for months.

"This write up is not in any particular order as things happened. I wrote it up as I thought about some of the things to write about that took place on Iwo Jima

*"I was wounded near Mount Suribachi."*  
**MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA**  
*I was wounded near Mount Suribachi.*

*along*  
*by*  
*had*  
*trying*  
*I*  
*my*  
*told*  
*I*  
*been*  
*I*  
*and*  
*and*  
*for*  
*about*  
*when*  
*a*  
*Aid*  
*grove*  
*box*  
*where*  
*could*  
*Medic*  
*me.*  
*With*  
*told*  
*my*  
*started*

On the following pages are some of the pictures that I took while I was on Iwo Jima and some pictures from "The Official Marine Book."



*feeding*  
*on*  
*the*  
*then*  
*had*  
*hand*  
*hit*  
*my*  
*station*  
*located*  
*I*  
*was*  
*the*  
*he*  
*and*  
*way*  
*the*  
*with*  
*hit*  
*He*  
*take*  
*off*  
*my*  
*heart*  
*to*

A picture of Jesse Wood, 20 years of age, taken after the fighting had ended on Iwo Jima.

JESSE N. WOOD



This is a picture of Russell Wagner, Jesse Wood and Bill McGue. You can see that Bill McGue also lost weight.

## MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA



This picture is of one of our prisoners that was killed because there was no place to turn in prisoners at that time.



This Japanese soldier was killed by our patrol when he ran out of a "fox hole." You can see by the bandage on his head that he had already been wounded before our patrol killed him.

JESSE N. WOOD



This Japanese soldier was killed by a "Flame Thrower." He was dressed in an American uniform.



This Japanese soldier killed himself with a hand grenade. You can see his stomach is blown out and his hand is blown off.

morn'ng After the sun  
came up we threw hand grenades to  
see which one of us could throw a  
grenade  
and  
would  
over a  
fox hole  
in the  
the g  
a few  
hole,  
his h  
surre  
he wa

## MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA



We  
sure that he didn't have any weapons on him  
We t  
Island  
been t  
We w  
We  
priso  
could  
asking  
what  
come t  
he wa  
The  
Jap  
we captured him and he found three maver

This Japanese soldier killed himself with a hand grenade. He blew his insides out.



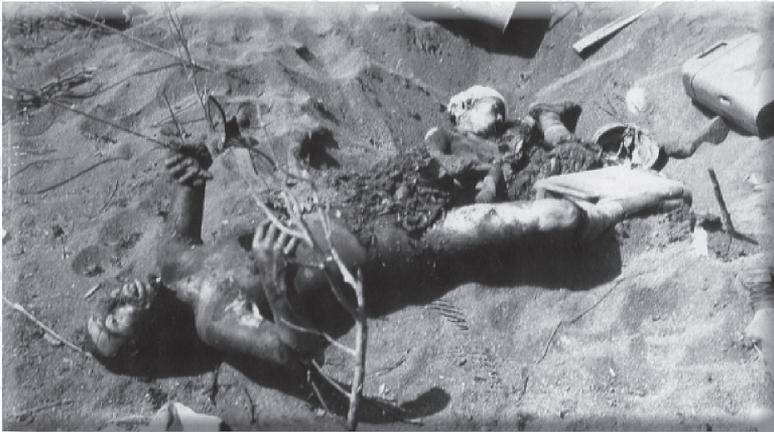
the  
had  
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we.  
able  
ldies  
ldier  
w

Our patrol went into this cave and killed nine Japanese that were inside of the cave. This was very dangerous to do, but a lot of times we had to do it.

**JESSE N. WOOD**



These Japanese soldiers were killed one night by our "Ambush Patrol." There were about eight of them. We think they were out trying to find some water to drink. There was no water on the island except rain water.



These two Japanese were killed by a "Flame Thrower." You can see where their insides were blown out and their clothes burned off.

Day time Patrols, Each and Every Day

## MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA

The Marine Book states that the patrols



This is a picture of a Japanese soldier with only his legs and feet above the sand. The wind has blown volcano ash and sand over his body. The Japanese soldiers were left where they were killed and no bodies were ever moved. The "Marine Book" states there were about 20,000 dead Japanese on Iwo Jima.

The smell was so bad you could hardly breathe.

**JESSE N. WOOD**



This Japanese soldier was shot several times by our patrol.



This is a picture of one of the many "Pillboxes" on Iwo Jima.

Tom Read, who lived near Jacksonville, told me a few years after the war that he and his team blew up and destroyed this "Pillbox."

himself.  
**MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA**

We were in very hostile territory and  
The n  
AREA  
radio  
where  
to con  
d W  
of ma  
got ha  
d to  
some  
as be  
being  
d u  
The V  
hundred  
to no  
reach  
where  
as  
d ha  
The J  
from  
Caves



the  
a  
were,  
rigor  
prison  
a comp  
radical  
shew  
d rocks  
now  
of  
verd  
d left  
to  
to  
dead,"  
es.  
troops  
the  
had

This is a picture of Jesse Wood and one of his friends on a Japanese tank.

Smoke came out of the cave. I slipped  
up to the cave and threw a  
hand grenade into the cave and then I ran  
the rest of the way to where ~~the main~~

the marines were waiting for me.  
When I met the marines we started to  
lead  
the  
on  
give  
the "V"  
high  
killed  
The  
getting  
The  
threw

**JESSE N. WOOD**

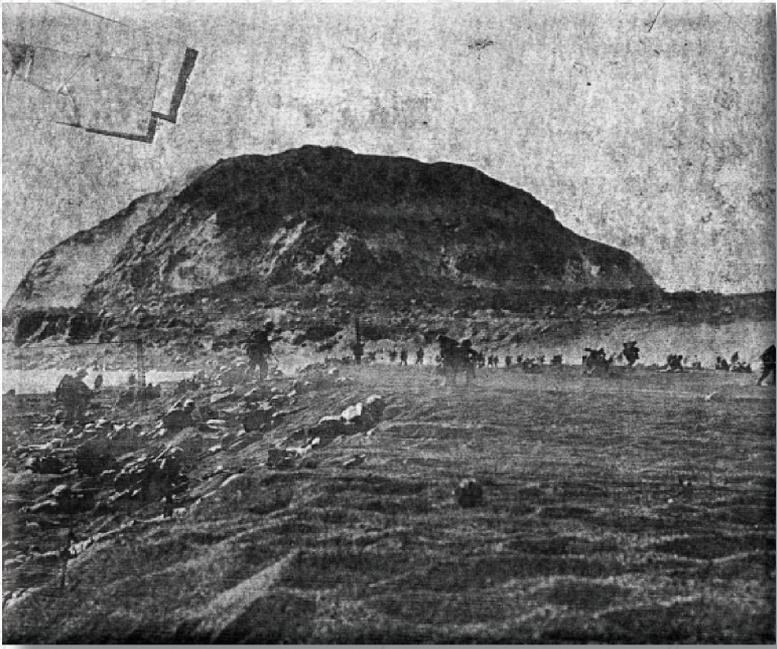


This is a picture of "Mount Suribachi," where the marines raised the first U.S. flag on February 23, 1945.

I took this picture from a landing barge (boat) as we were going out to a ship to leave Iwo Jima in 1945, to go to Okinawa.

MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA

These are pictures from  
"The Marine Book"



This is a picture of "Mount Suribachi."

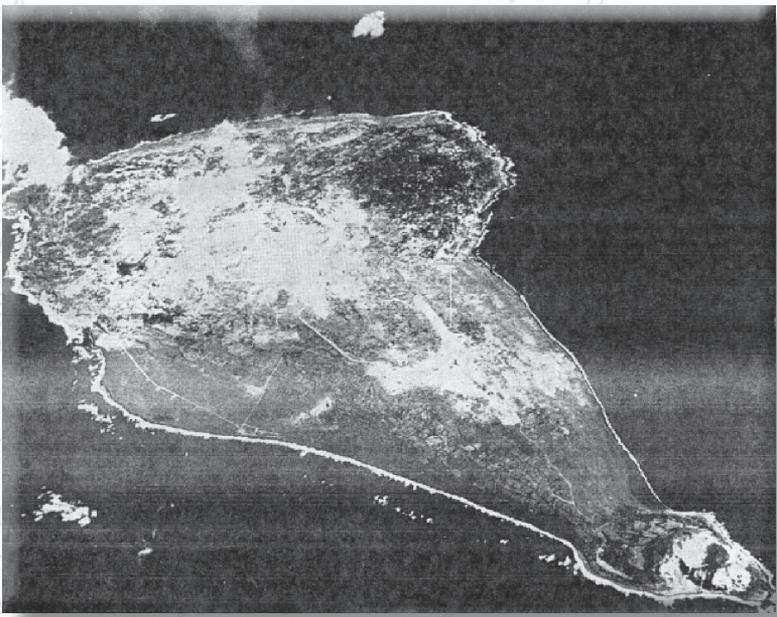
This photo is from the front of the Marine Corp Book. Mount Suribachi is where the flag was raised on February 24, 1945 or February 25, 1945.

The First Marine Division on Iwo Jima, there were killed in action 6,523 Marines and 20,013 were wounded, out of a total of 75,000 Marines. The Navy had 881 killed in action and 1,917 wounded. This is a total of 7,404 killed and 21,930 wounded, for a total of killed and wounded of 29,334.

JESSE N. WOOD

in just the first 36 days of combat.

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(1/3)  
WAR



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Jim

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**This is an aerial view of Iwo Jima.**

This aerial photo of Iwo Jima shows just how small the island is.

"The Marine Book" states that it is 4 2/3 miles long, with the width varying from about 2 1/2 miles to slightly less than one-half mile at the narrow base of the volcano.

The surface [area] of Iwo Jima is 7 1/2 square miles. It is a very small island.

Examined... pounds.  
Almost every one on Iwo Jima lost weight. We received very little food and water. There was no water on the island, only rain water which was scarce. We were "K-rations" about once each day. K-rations were crackers, a small can of potted meat and three cigarettes. I did not smoke so I tried to trade my cigarette for a cracker or two.

## MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA



**This is a picture of members of the 147 Infantry (which I was a member of).**

“The Marine Book” states that on April 4th, and into the month of May 1945, this unit killed 1,602 Japanese and took 867 prisoners, for a total of 2,469 Japanese. We did not always turn in these totals.

This was after the marines had left the island and the fighting was supposed to be over, but it went on for months. All of the marines had already left the island. (This group had a camera crew with them to take their pictures. We never had a crew.)

JESSE N. WOOD



This is a picture of part of the place I refer to in my write up as "The Valley of the Dead."

This was a very dangerous place and there were several hundred dead Japanese soldiers lying everywhere in this area.

In my write up about "The Valley of the Dead" I wrote that it was not a valley but an area between two rock banks with a lot of caves and several hundred dead Japanese everywhere.

## MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA

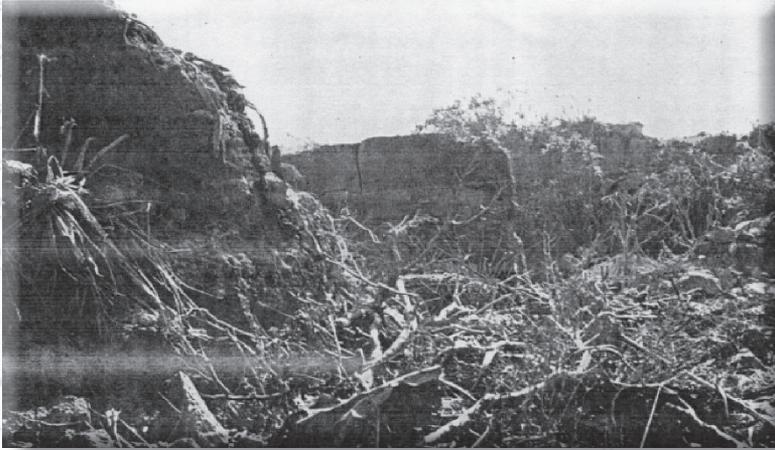
Sometimes there would be some live Japanese lying among the dead Japanese and you had to be careful and shoot them before they shot you.

We went through this area often and I remember seeing this wagon many times. Nine of us would be on the patrol and a good part of the times, there would be a fire fight with the Japanese in the caves, almost each time we went through "The Valley."

This is the area I went through by myself the day I went to lead a company of marines back to where we were holding 15 Japanese prisoners we could not get out by ourselves. In my write up, I wrote the Japanese on the top of these cliffs let me pass, thinking I was on my way to get more troops and they would be able to kill a lot more soldiers than just me. But instead the Japanese are the ones that got killed that morning. As I wrote in the 'write up,' I was lucky again.

If you notice in the upper left hand corner of this picture, there is an American soldier with a machine gun. That did not last long, and we were by ourselves after a few days.

JESSE N. WOOD



This is another picture of part of  
"The Valley of the Dead."

when I returned home, I asked my Dad how he liked the job. He said he had a bayonet and had a lot of fun.

He told me the Japanese had attacked my position. When

and picture next view

1943, the pay was \$50.00 per month, an allotment to my wife. I had to pay each month for my wife's life insurance premium. I had \$6.25 taken out each month to help buy a \$25.00 saving bond.

This left me \$5.15 each month. We would be paid about once each six months. For the six months period, I would be paid \$30.90. Most of the time we were on an island where there was no place to spend your money. "We had some good poker games."

In this write up, I stated that in the first 36 days of combat on Iwo Jima, there were 7,404 military personnel killed.

As a comparison, as of June, 2008, after about 6 years of war in Iraq, there have

## MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA



**This is a picture I thought at first was me.**

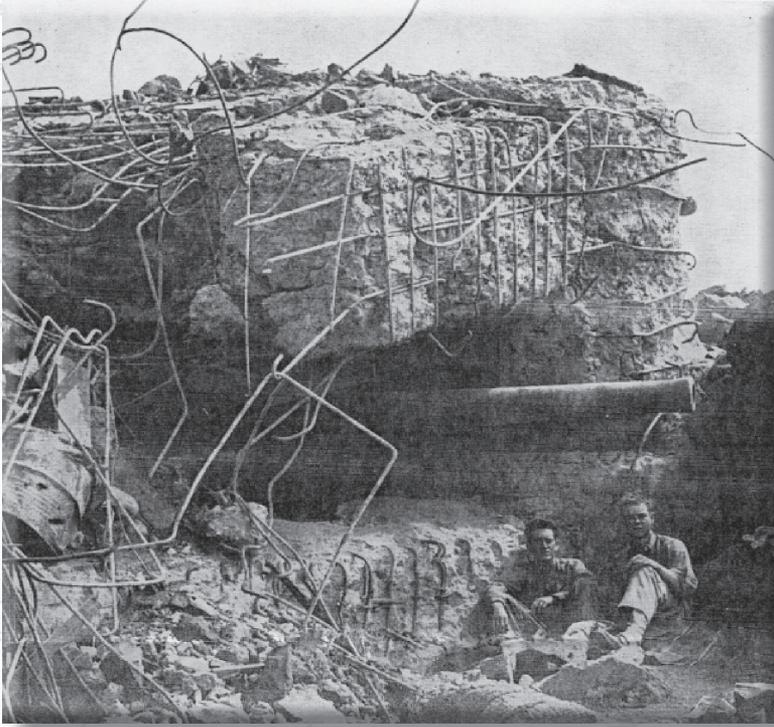
I remember being on this trail several times. I knew it was not me because we did not have a 'camera crew' with us to take our pictures.

This is also where, after a fire fight took place a short ways down the trail I took a rock and raked the brains out of a dead Japanese soldier's helmet. I later shipped it to my Dad from Okinawa.

Notice the dead Japanese soldier on the ground behind the American soldier. "The Marine Book" states that there were about 20,000 dead Japanese soldiers all over the island.

By Jesse N. Wood

JESSE N. WOOD

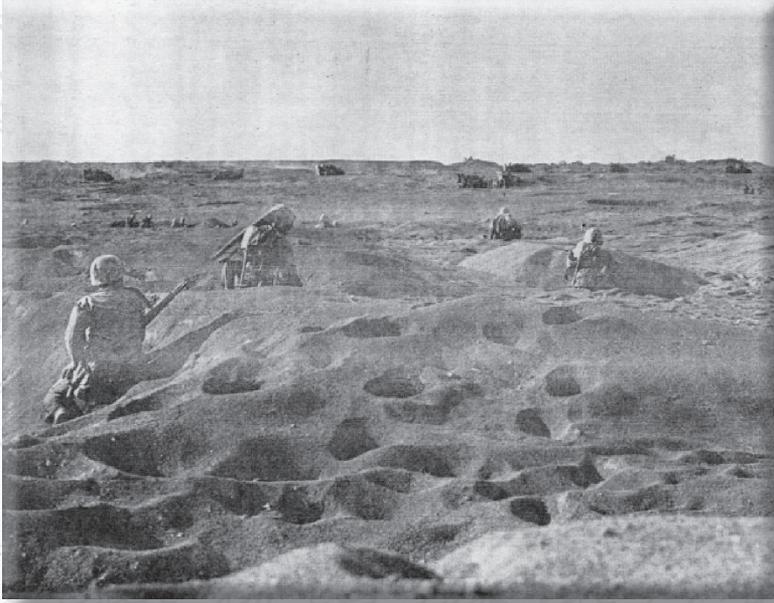


This is a picture of one of the many Japanese pillboxes on Iwo Jima. You can see how strong they were built.

This is a write up about when I graduated from High School, my basic training in the military and on to Iwo Jima, the bloodiest battle in the Pacific during World War II.

During World War II, when a boy reached the age of 18 years,

## MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA



This picture shows the sand mixed with black volcanic ash. It is light enough to be sifted or blown by the wind. Walking in it was difficult. This is the type of sand that had covered the dead Japanese with about six inches of sand the morning I dug my first fox hole.

JESSE N. WOOD



This is another picture showing just how sandy some of the beaches were.



I have a picture of me sitting on one of these Japanese tanks. There were a lot of them on the island.

did not make it to shore.  
When we got to the beach, which was  
very... We  
were...  
of a...  
a dead...  
and...  
put...  
sand...  
stay...  
until...  
we...  
yards...  
to...  
body...  
island...  
after...  
thru...  
when...  
eat...  
were...  
air force would spray the island with  
D.D.T. to...  
two...  
1945. The next day I turned 20 years of  
age. Our unit was not in the force that  
invaded Iwo Jima. Our unit arrived some  
days later, I don't know when we arrived

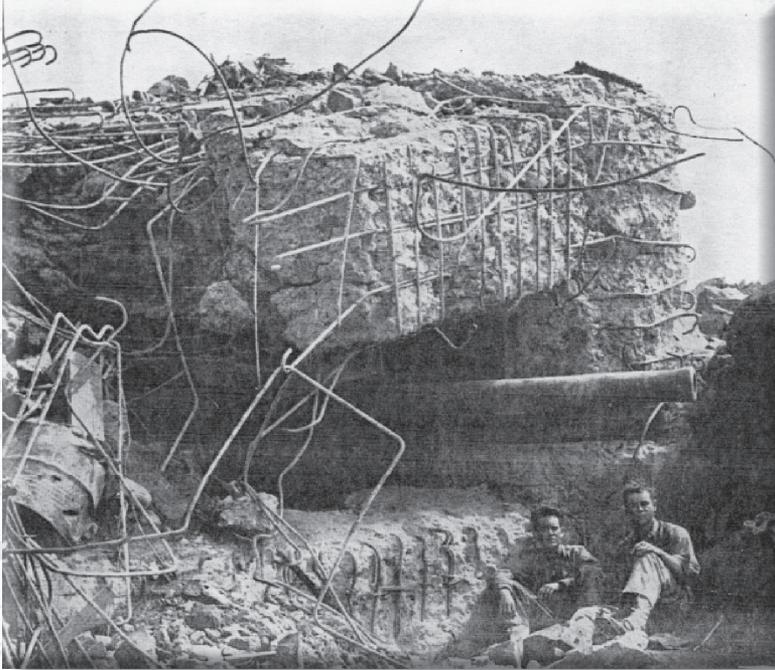
## MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA



I was in this cave several times and I remember seeing this mortar and wondering how they could fire it as the shells were so large.

There were a lot of dead Japanese inside, but we never found a live Japanese when we went in looking for some live ones.

**JESSE N. WOOD**



There were many of these large pillboxes on the island. I saw this pill box many times.

This is not the pill box Tom Read told me that he and his squad destroyed. I do have a picture of the pill box that he said they destroyed.



## MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA

### When The Japanese Would Bomb Iwo at Night

After the beach head was made on Iwo Jima, there was no way the Japanese could have sent in reinforcements by sea.

As far as you could see, there were U.S. Navy ships all around the island. On page 57 of the "Marine Book," it states there were 450 Navy ships at Iwo Jima.

The Japanese air force would fly over the island some of the nights and drop bombs, but they would not be able to drop Japanese soldiers for reinforcements, because the search lights would light up the skies at night when the bombers came over and the Japanese would not have lived to land on the ground in their parachutes.

The air force would send up fighter planes called "night fighters" to attack the Japanese bombers. One night during an air attack, our fox holes were near some of the anti-aircraft gun emplacements and we could watch the "dog fights" better and the gunners shooting at the Japanese planes. These gunners by accident hit an American fighter plane. The gunners

Not For The Full time we were on the island, There were only about 3,000 soldiers.

**JESSE N. WOOD**

We told us it was not their fault because the fighter plane should have gotten out of the way of their bullets. The island was secured because there was no place to put them. They were shot and killed.

The gunners we were watching shot down two Japanese bombers and "one American fighter plane."

ON page 193, it states that as of March 26, 1945, This was another accident, and there were a lot of them all over the island.

There were no civilians or houses on Iwo Jima, just Japanese soldiers, pillboxes, gun emplacements, and a lot of caves that most of the soldiers were in during the day, but at night they came out of the caves and tried to get us.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

**The Night We Heard That  
The War Had Ended**

We were in our fox holes spread all across Iwo on the night we heard on our "walkie-talkie radios" at about midnight that the war had ended.

ON page 192 and page 193, it tells about an attack on Iwo Jima. Just before the attack on Iwo Jima, OF MARCH 26, 1945, THE WAR WAS NOT A BATTLE. IT WAS A PLANNED ATTACK.

All at once, it seemed as if every person that had a machine gun or a 20 millimeter gun started shooting into the air. Every third bullet is a tracer and the night sky was lighted up with these tracer bullets. It was like a July 4th celebration.

It states that 200 to 300 Japanese moved onto Iwo Jima.

The next morning, we were told that three

## MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA

soldiers were killed and many more had been wounded by this celebration.

All soldiers on the island were informed that if this happened again or if they could find out who fired these guns that killed and wounded these soldiers, they would be court marshaled for murder.

These guns were fired because we were all happy the war had ended. And as I have written before, we were not very smart because we were only about 20 years of age.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*

### Another Time I Almost Got Shot By Accident

After the war had ended and we were still on Iwo Jima, we were given tents and cots to sleep on. This was the first time in months that we were not sleeping in "fox holes."

In our area, there were three rolls or lines of tents. It was Sunday morning. I was on my cot, lying on my back with my legs pulled up with my left leg resting on top of my right leg. There was a gun shot from the first roll of tents.

"We ARE ARMY Infantry", they said, "PASS  
Infantry".

JESSE N. WOOD

A second or two after the gun shot, a soldier in the third roll of tents screamed out that he had been shot in both of his legs.

Someone in the first roll of tents yelled out, 'who gave "Andy By Gad" some bullets?'

"Andy By Gad" was a real dumb "hillbilly" and he was so dangerous that he was not allowed to have any bullets unless there was fighting taking place.

He was cleaning his rifle, which was loaded with ammunition. He pulled the trigger to his rifle and it fired.

When things settled down after a few minutes, we checked to see how the soldier in the third roll of tents was shot. The bullet from "Andy By Gads" gun came through the tent where I was laying on my cot, went under my propped up legs and out the other side of the tent and into the next tent and shot the soldier laying on his cot in both legs.

"Andy By Gads" gun was taken away from him and he did not get his gun back again.

"I was lucky again."

## MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA

### The Accidental Crash of an Airplane

We were in our fox hole on a beach and behind us a short distance was one of the three airfields. At the end of this airfield, there was a cliff of about 100 feet high or more.

Some distance from the beach was an aircraft carrier. Some of the planes were leaving the aircraft carrier to land and operate from the airfield. The planes came from the aircraft carrier in groups of three.

One group of the planes came in to land, but two of the three airplanes were much higher in the air than the third plane. I told the soldier I was with that the third plane was much too low and if the pilot did not gain altitude fast, he was going to fly his plane into the cliff.

As the first two planes passed over the cliff and were near where they were to land, the third plane did not gain altitude and flew into the cliff. The airplane exploded and the pilot was killed.

This was just another of the many accidents I saw where people were killed, and in most cases, death could have been avoided.

"I was wounded near Mount Suribachi."  
JESSE N. WOOD

How I Almost Got Shot By  
A Member of Our Patrol

We were on a nine man patrol and I was the next to the last person in the patrol. On patrols, we would walk about 10 feet between each other where we would not make as good of a target for the Japanese to shoot at.

We came to a small cliff of about 10 to 12 feet high which we would have to jump off of or go hundreds of yards in another direction to bypass the cliff. As a rule, the person the Japanese would shoot at first was the first man in the patrol or the last man in the patrol, and then they would try and shoot the rest of the patrol.

As we jumped off of the cliff, the members of the patrol would wait about five to 10 seconds after the man in front of them had jumped to give him time to roll around and try to get behind some rocks or cover. When it came my time to jump, I had just started to jump off of the cliff when I thought a Japanese soldier had shot me. Something exploded in my right ear. I could not hear for my ears ringing and my head hurting. When I hit the ground, the

## MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA

others were asking did anyone see where the gunshot came from.

I had gotten behind a rock and was trying to feel around my ears and head for blood and trying to find where I had been shot.

I looked to my right side and there was the soldier that was supposed to wait for five to 10 seconds before he jumped.

When I jumped, he was afraid to wait the five to 10 seconds before he jumped. He had the safety off on his rifle and when he jumped, he gripped the trigger of his rifle and the muzzle of his rifle was maybe one-half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) of an inch from my head and right ear. It took some time for the ringing in my ears and head to clear up.

I was lucky that the barrel of his rifle was not one or two inches more to the left, or I would not be alive to be writing about it.

There were a lot of soldiers killed by accidents.

JESSE N. WOOD

about one hour ago and was he going to give me another Tetanus shot. He said yes, Regulations required it.

I had three Tetanus shots within 24 hours. The Tetanus shots hurt more than my wounds.

"Night time Ambush Patrols on Iwo Jima."

We were on Iwo Jima for some time before the island was secured. The 147 Infantry took over the night ambush and day time patrols on or about March 24, 1945.

I was on Ambush patrols almost every night. Nine soldiers would go out before dark and stay all night. We were to report back to our company if the Japanese soldiers tried to come through certain areas in force. We were ordered to shoot anything that moved above ground at night. A company of about 250 soldiers would help us get to our ambush location and come back the next morning and help us get back to our company.

During the night, all of our trip flares would be tripped by Japanese soldiers trying to get to us. We only had one B.A.R., rifles and hand grenades. When the location was where we could receive "back up fire" when needed, the soldiers some distance behind

MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA



Grandpa + Granny  
Jesse + Mary  
Wood  
1943

Just before he  
went ~~into~~ over  
seas

(9) 07/26/2006

M J  
14~~th~~ and 18

JESSE N. WOOD



Married for 60 years  
working on 60 more  
Jesse + Mary Wood

May 28

1943 - 2003

## MEMORIES OF IWO JIMA

asleep in a fox hole, he started to kill all three of the maunies with a hand grenade but he knew if he did, the other maunies near where we were, would not take him as a prisoner, they would kill him.

While we were in our fox holes that night, we agreed that two of us would stay awake while one would sleep for a while and then let another sleep while the one that had slept would stay awake with the other one.

When it was my time to sleep, I woke up a little later and the other two boys were ~~up~~ asleep. I kicked their "real ends" and we all stayed awake the rest of the night.

I am sure that we were the three maunies this Jap started to kill because when we captured him, he was only about 40 feet from us. He was hiding behind some rocks. We were lucky by not being killed for the other two soldiers being careless by going to sleep, but we were always so tired and sleepy.

When we were on "Night Ambush Patrol," I would put my rifle, my knife and hand grenades on the top edge of the fox hole where I could be ready in case of an attack.

When it would be my turn to sleep for 10 to 15 minutes, I would have my .45 Army pistol in my hand with the hammer cocked, ready to shoot.

## JESSE N. WOOD

The Marine Book states that the patrols varied in size from one squad to a reinforced platoon and used tanks and on one occasion, naval gunfire provided by a destroyer to support their operations.

I couldn't have done it without you, Little Man. Maybe it's just what Grandpa's do; letting their children's children help them with things they could do faster and better alone. But to me he's always been this way.

Letting me help him with this book has been more of a gift to me than a favor to him. After all, my task was simply wrapping this book around his words. A contribution as significant and indispensable as the countless times I 'helped' him with a project by holding the flashlight or driving in the nail he got started.

If you've ever sat in his living room and listened to him tell a story, you'll recognize his voice in these pages. He writes as he talks and every word is his.

And because I know he'll try again to give me more credit than I deserve, I'll remind you, every word is his.

I love you Grandpa. Thanks for letting me hold the flashlight-

"little man"