

Private First Class Calvin Glenn Neish Died of Wounds on February 28, 1945

Calvin Glenn Neish, born July 14, 1924, was the son of **William** and **Annie Elizabeth Hall Shepherd Neish**. **Annie** was the daughter of **John Q.** and **Emeline Hall**; Calvin was therefore the nephew of Pvt Caleb Walton Hall.



Calvin enlisted in the US Marine Corps on July 23, 1942, and was assigned to Company K, 3rd Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division. After intensive training, the 4th Marines deployed to the Pacific on January 13, 1944. According to a Marine history, "In 13 short months [the Division] made four major assault landings: Roi-Namur, Saipan, Tinian, and Iwo Jima, suffering over 17,000 casualties. It was awarded two Presidential Unit Citations and a Navy Unit Commendation [before being] deactivated 28 November 1945."

On June 15, 1944, during the Marine landing on Saipan, Calvin was wounded in the left shin and ankle. He was treated aboard USS LEON (APA-48), probably the same ship from which he had disembarked earlier that day. The *Alexandria Gazette* later reported that these wounds were caused by shrapnel from a Japanese-thrown grenade.

Calvin recovered and went back in action. At about 9 a.m. on February 19, 1945, he and the 23rd Marines landed on Iwo Jima. An account of the battle reports, "The 23rd Marines landed over Yellow Beach and sustained the brunt of the first round of Japanese combined arms fire. These troops crossed the second terrace only to be confronted by two huge concrete pillboxes, still lethal despite all the pounding [by ships and planes]. Overcoming these positions proved costly in casualties and time... The regiment clawed its way several hundred yards toward [their objective at] the eastern edge of the airstrip." At 10:39 a.m. the 23rd Marines radioed the flagship, "Taking heavy casualties and can't move for the moment. Mortars killing us."

A week later, the fighting was still desperate. On February 26, a man in Calvin's battalion single-handedly destroyed sixteen enemy positions and killed about 75 Japanese soldiers, later being awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions.

The next day, on February 27, 1945, Calvin was wounded again, this time in the right side.

He was brought aboard USS SANBORN (APA-193) for medical treatment. On the 28th, the SANBORN set sail for the Northern Mariana Islands, carrying 232 casualties to shore-based hospitals there. PFC Neish died that day and was buried at sea at latitude 24°00' N., longitude 141°05' E.

His name is on the Tablets of the Missing at Honolulu Memorial Cemetery in Hawaii.

US soldiers and Marines suffered enormous casualties in the 36 days of combat on Iwo Jima. According to the Marines, "The cost was staggering. The assault units of the corps—Marines and organic Navy personnel—sustained 24,053 casualties, by far the highest single-action losses in Marine Corps history. Of these a total of 6,140 died. Roughly one Marine or corpsman became a casualty for every three who landed on Iwo Jima." A subsequent analysis by military historian Dr. Norman Cooper revealed that "Nearly seven hundred Americans gave their lives for every square mile. For every plot of ground the size of a football field, an average of more than one American and five Japanese were killed and five Americans wounded."

The family later planted an evergreen bush on the right side of the Chapel's front door in Calvin's memory. The bush has since been moved to the corner of the chapel lot near the schoolhouse.