

THE BLACK SANDS

The Publication of the Iwo Jima Association of America

www.IwoJimaAssociation.org



THE ISLAND OF IWO JIMA

THE IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (IJAA) *Mission Statement*

The Iwo Jima Association of America (IJAA) is dedicated to preserving and perpetuating the history of the battle for Iwo Jima and other Pacific Islands. IJAA sponsors two educational and historical symposiums, in the Washington, DC locale and on the island of Guam. The symposium on Guam includes the “Reunion of Honor” memorial service on Iwo Jima, jointly held with the Iwo Jima Association of Japan (IJAA). The primary purpose of these symposia’s is to honor those veterans on both sides who sacrificed so much, and to educate the young generations on the history of the battle, in particular and World War II in general.

BLACK SANDS PUBLICATION

IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

VOLUME 14 ISSUE 2
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Formation of IJAA

MajGen Fred Haynes, USMC and other veterans of the Iwo Jima battle formed the Combat Veterans of Iwo Jima Association to honor and commemorate the legacy of the Americans who fought in the Battle of Iwo Jima. The association reorganized into the Iwo Jima Association of America with additional focus on educating the public about the battle. IJAA partnered with the Iwo To (Jima) Association of Japan and the Government of Japan to foster reconciliation and to honor the sacrifices of all who participated in the battle and to pay tribute to the bereaved families of both nations. IJAA participates in the annual Joint US-Japan Reunion of Honor on Iwo Jima each year.



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

It is with a saddened heart that I convey the death of Master Gunnery Sergeant Roger Roll, USMC (Ret). After a long and courageous battle against cancer, MGySgt Roll was laid to rest in the National Cemetery in Culpeper, Virginia on 22 September. MGySgt Roll joined the working staff of IJAA to be a contributing actor toward what IJAA does with the Iwo Jima reunion of veterans and others in each February and for the Reunion of Honor on Iwo in March. MGySgt Roll took on many activities for IJAA, not after being tasked to do so but without being asked, he just saw what needed to be done and then did it. He will be sorely missed. MGySgt Roll shared his many leadership talents with many people. He was very active with young people, particularly college students. He was a noted official in track and field at the collegiate level and was widely known for his personal communication with these athletes. He will be missed in this arena as well. IJAA extends heart felt sympathy to his devoted wife, Margaret, for her loss.

On a lighter note, IJAA was pleased to learn of the elevation to ministerial level of our good friend and solid supporter in Japan, Representative Shindo. The Prime Minister of Japan has selected him to be the Minister of Economic Policy. We wish him good sailing in his new and vital assignment and we hope to visit with him in the near future.

I want to give our hard-working staff the many thanks from all of us for what they, on a daily basis, do to perpetuate the activities of IJAA. Their dedicated efforts often occur without recognition. But, without these efforts there would be no IJAA. What these staff members do is greatly appreciated and they are lauded and saluted.

As a reminder to all Black Sands readers, IJAA functions on donations so let's not forget the importance of your donations. Keep them coming!

Best to all and keep safe.

Norman H. Smith,
LtGen USMC (Ret)
Chairman



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings. I hope everyone has enjoyed the warm summer months—very warm in several locations and I trust those affected by hurricanes, floods, and fires are getting the help and assistance they need. The IJAA team has been working diligently in preparing for 2024 activities, including the IJAA Reunion-Symposium (15-18 February) and the 30 March US-Japan Joint Reunion of Honor Ceremony on Iwo Jima (now called Iwo To). You will find more information about both events in this issue of *Black Sands*.

As we continue to honor the sacrifices of those brave men who participated in the Battle of Iwo Jima, we are also reaching out to honor all of the men and women who served throughout the Pacific in World War II. Their service, hardships, and bravery are often overlooked. But they all contributed to bringing an end to the War in the Pacific. If you know of a World War II Pacific Veteran, have them contact us. We want them and their families to attend our Reunion-Symposium in February. We want to hear their stories. We want to honor them for their service to our nation.

We continue to coordinate with the Government of Japan and the US Embassy in Tokyo on the US-Japan Joint Reunion of Honor Ceremony scheduled for 30 March 2024. While logistical details still need to be finalized, we are looking forward to a meaningful ceremony that honors the sacrifices of those from both sides in that bloody battle. I recently attended an event at the Japanese Ambassador's residence in Washington where IJAA was cited by a speaker for the contributions made in strengthening the US-Japan strategic alliance. We are also pleased to see that Representative Yoshitaka Shindo, our friend and supporter of the annual Reunion of Honor ceremony, has been appointed Minister of Economic Policy by the Prime Minister. You may recall that Minister Shindo is the grandson of LtGen Tadamichi Kuribayashi, the commander of Japanese forces on the island during the battle.

We welcome the addition of **David Babel** to our IJAA staff as Assistant Executive Director. David is a Marine Corps Veteran Cobra Helicopter Pilot and brings much needed additional talent and skills to our office staff. Additionally, you'll see that **Laura O'Hara** has joined us as *Black Sands* Editor/Publisher. Laura replaces **Annette Loper** who volunteered her services for the past three years; thank you Annette. Sadly, **Master Gunnery Sergeant Roger Roll**, a member of our Board of Advisors, passed away in September. MGySgt Roll was such a tireless worker, fund raiser, and supporter of IJAA. My last vision of MGySgt Roll was him assisting Iwo Jima/WWII Veterans laying a wreath and saluting those lost in the Battle of Iwo Jima at the US-Japan Joint Reunion of Honor Ceremony this past March. Rest in Peace and Semper Fi Roger.

With warmest best wishes.



David F. Bice,
MajGen USMC (Ret)



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Well, there is little I can add to the President's message... He covered all the happenings well. So I shall address a new endeavor.....

True to our Charter, the Iwo Jima Association of America (IJAA) is committed to ensuring the public never forgets our Iwo Jima and Pacific Island veterans, their sacrifices and their battles. To that end, and in concert with our Reunions and Symposia, IJAA is launching an Educational Outreach Program covering the Pacific Battles beginning with the early aggression of the Japanese and the rationale behind their infamous attack on Pearl Harbor, through the Battle for Okinawa.

The intent is to make this program available to the public across America and overseas. For this patriotic endeavor, we need your help. IJAA is seeking to develop a cadre of volunteer regional historians/educators/ presenters across the US, Hawaii, Alaska and beyond, as necessary. To that end, IJAA requests your assistance in locating individuals such as (but not limited to) historians, teachers and retired teachers, etc., interested in providing presentations to schools, social organizations, veterans organizations, military reunions, VFWs, American Legions, ROTCs, Junior ROTCs, etc. IJAA will provide training and materials. Interested personnel are requested to contact me via email: rsifuentes@iwojimaassociation.org or phone/text- (703) 963-6895.

See you in February!

Raul Sifuentes,
LtCol, USMC (Ret)
Executive Director



IN MEMORIAM

It is with deep regret we advise of the passing of retired Marine MGySgt Roger Roll after of a losing battle with cancer. Husband, father, Marine and patriot; MGySgt Roll was not only a friend, but a staunch IJAA supporter and volunteer who continually stepped forward as a member of the Reunion/Symposium and Gala Committee as a fundraiser and one-man committee who coordinated the Color Guard and Marine Quintet. In the past, “Master Guns” Roll would periodically stop by the IJAA office to drop of donation checks he had collected and request additional taskers. When he first stepped into my office a couple years ago he advised of his strong desire to go to Iwo Jima. Unfortunately, Covid interrupted the next couple of years, followed by his medical pronouncement of cancer. However, his desire was fulfilled with the 2023 tour to Guam followed by the Joint Reunion of Honor on Iwo Jima last March.

As an active duty Marine, “Master Guns” Roll was considered the “go to” Marine to trouble-shoot and resolve issues at various posts around the world. As a track and field official associated with Penn State and ROTC, he was an inspiration to many young men both off and on the track, many of whom he mentored and later became Marines.

IJAA was proud and fortunate to have him as on our staff. We will miss our friend.

May he Rest in Peace in God’s Hands.

Raul Sifuentes



Raymond A. Salvie

July 7, 1925 – September 2, 2022

Raymond A. Salvie, 97 passed peacefully at home. He was born in Cranston, RI and raised in Seekonk, MA.

Ray lived his life in service to others. After graduating from high school, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in April 1944. During the battle of Iwo Jima, Ray was assigned to the 21st Regiment, 3rd Marine Division. He was an 81 mm mortarman and survived the fierce battle for 24 days.

After Iwo Jima, Ray was assigned to guard duties at Bridge 66 over the Yellow River in North China with the 1st Marine Division, 7th Regiment until he was honorably discharged in May 1946. Ray also served in the Marine Corps Reserve until June 1953 and was recalled during the Korean War to Camp Lejeune, NC.

Ray moved to Syracuse, NY after the war and married Marilyn Cross, his wife of 70 years. He became a proud member of the New York State Troopers in 1954 and retired as a Senior BCI Investigator in 1979 after 25 years of faithful service. In 2018, the NYS Troopers PBA presented Ray with the Colonel George F. Chandler Award recognizing a lifetime of leadership and contributions to his community.

Ray mentored and influenced many individuals throughout his life. To this day, his fan club continues to cast a wide net. He supported various community organizations that focused on helping those less fortunate and in need. Ray was an active member of the Marine Corps League and a life member of the Emerald City Detachment, Chittenango, NY where he served as Chaplain for many years.



WELCOME

Jessamyn Harter has recently joined the IJAA as a volunteer graphic designer. She also volunteers for Honor Flight Syracuse as a graphic designer. Ms. Harter graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Communications Design (Graphic Design) from Syracuse University. Branding and visual communications is a passion of hers — the opportunity and ability to create a design giving it a robust and unique visual brand / design is something that motivates her. She has over 12 years of experience designing for the Oneida Nation Enterprise, for PGA events, national entertainment acts, promotional events, including being the sole designer for over 6 years for the Exit 33 venues, A-Bar, Tin Rooster, The GIG, and Turquoise Tiger.

Jessamyn currently designs at the AHL Utica Comets for the Nexus Center, Utica Club Lounge, Utica Coffee, ORB Food and Beverage (the Tailor & The Cook, Aqua Vino Restaurant & Bar, Babes at Harbor Point, 72 Tavern & Grill, and Kookies) and creates official apparel for the AHL Utica Comets store.



IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

SEMPER FIDELIS



15-18 February 2024

IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

15-18 FEBRUARY 2024

Hilton Crystal Hotel

ARLINGTON, VA

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15

1200- 1800 REUNION REGISTRATION OPEN
1400- 2200 HOSPITALITY ROOM OPEN
1600-1800 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16

0730- 0845 REUNION REGISTRATION OPEN
0900- 1600 NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE U.S.M.C.
WREATH LAYING CEREMONY
WWII MEMORIAL AND WREATH LAYING
CEREMONY AT MARINE CORPS WAR MEMORIAL
1000-2200 HOSPITALITY ROOM OPEN

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17

0800- 1530 HISTORICAL SYMPOSIUM
1200- 1300 SYMPOSIUM LUNCH WITH GUEST SPEAKER
1300- 1400 VETERANS PANEL DISCUSSION
1800- 1900 RECEPTION WITH CASH BAR
1900- 2130 OFFICIAL ANNIVERSARY BANQUET ENTERTAINMENT
& DANCING WITH THE RADIO KING ORCHESTRA

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18

FAREWELLS AND DEPARTURES

REGISTER ONLINE AND PAY BY CREDIT CARD AT [HTTPS://WWW.IWOJIMAASSOCIATION.ORG/?PAGE_ID=1535](https://www.iwojimaassociation.org/?PAGE_ID=1535)

CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR IJAA

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date, Iwo Jima Association of America (IJAA) shall process a full refund less the non-refundable IJAA registration fee (\$15 per person). Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that IJAA vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less the non-refundable IJAA registration fee (\$15 per person). Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9am until 5pm Eastern Standard Time, excluding holidays. Please call 703-212-8128, to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation does not cancel your reunion activities. Each must be canceled separately.

IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA REUNION ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM 2024

Listed below is the registration cost for the Reunion and Symposium. Please enter how many people will be participating and total the amount. Send that amount payable to IJAA in the form of check or money order. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. You may also register online and pay by credit card at https://www.iwojimaassociation.org/?page_id=1535 A 3.5% convenience fee will apply for all credit card payments. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before **January 25, 2024**. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. Go to <https://book.passkey.com/go/2024The79thanniversaryiwojima> to reserve your hotel room at a discount.

Iwo Jima Association of America
PO Box 680
Quantico, VA 22134

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Check # _____	Date Received _____
Inputted _____	New <input type="checkbox"/> Revision/Addition <input type="checkbox"/>

<i>CUT-OFF DATE IS 1/25/24</i>	Price Per	# of People	Total
Friday, 2/16: National Museum of the Marine Corps & Memorial Service & Wreath Laying at the USMC Memorial and WWI Memorial	\$45		
MEALS			
SATURDAY: SYMPOSIUM LUNCH – 1 Entrée Buffet	\$40		\$
SATURDAY: BANQUET <i>(Please select your entrée below)</i> – Includes Valet Parking for the Evening and 1 Drink Ticket			
Herb Marinated Flat Iron Steak	\$95		\$
Seared Free Range Chicken Breast	\$95		\$
Vegetarian Entree	\$95		
Fish Entree	\$95		
Registration for Iwo Jima Veterans ONLY	FREE	#	\$
Registration for yourself	\$15		\$
Registration for spouses, family, guests and supporters	\$15 ea		\$
Registration for Active Duty Personnel (includes banquet meal)	\$50		\$
Total Amount Payable to IJAA			\$

PLEASE PRINT NAME

Note: Correct names and addresses are very important because of the prominent position of some of our guests. You will be required to go through metal detectors at the Museum.

FIRST _____ LAST _____ EMAIL _____

SPOUSE NAME (IF ATTENDING) _____

GUEST NAMES _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY, ST, ZIP _____ PH. NUMBER (____) _____ - _____

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS _____

(Sleeping room requirements must be conveyed by attendee directly with hotel)

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____ PH. NUMBER (____) _____ - _____

ARRIVAL DATE _____ DEPARTURE DATE _____

For refunds and cancellations please refer to our policies outlined at the bottom of the reunion program. **CANCELLATIONS WILL ONLY BE TAKEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 9:00am-5:00pm EASTERN TIME (excluding holidays)**. Call 703 212-8128 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion.

You may also register online and pay by credit card at https://www.iwojimaassociation.org/?page_id=1535

Hilton Arlington National Landing

703-418-6800 LOCATION: 2399 RICHMOND HIGHWAY, ARLINGTON, VA 22202

— RESERVATION INFORMATION —

Please call the number above & reference the Iwo Jima Reunion 2024 or book directly at:
<https://book.passkey.com/go/2024The79thanniversaryiwjojima>

GROUP NAME: Iwo Jima Association of America **REUNION DATES:** 15-18 February 2024

RATE: \$132 (+13.25% sales tax) - Includes breakfast for two

CUT-OFF DATE: 1.25.24 Late reservations will be processed based on space availability at a higher rate.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Cancellation must be received 24 hours prior to arrival date or there will be a charge of one night's room plus tax.

— PARKING & SHUTTLE INFORMATION —

Parking for the hotel is \$10 per day plus tax.

*Valet parking is included for those attending the dinner - Saturday night only from 1630-2230. The hotel does offer a shuttle to & from the airport

— WHEELCHAIR RENTAL —

ScootAround rents both manual and power wheelchairs by the day & week.
Please call 888-441-7575 or visit www.scootaround.com for details & to make reservations.

UPCOMING TOURS

17 – 29 Feb
Tet Offensive/Battle of Hue/Opertion Houston

★ 25 Mar – 1 Apr
Victory in the Pacific
(IJAA's Iwo Jima - 79th
"Reunion of Honor"- 30 Mar)

3 – 13 Apr
Philippines – WWII in the PI

13 – 26 Apr
"Saigon to the DMZ" 60th Anniversary VN Battlefields

13 – 26 Apr
Friends & Families Vietnam
"Saigon to the DMZ"

18 – 27 Apr
Turkey – WWI Gallipoli Campaign & Istanbul

31 May – 13 Jun
80th Anniversary of D-Day & Battle of the Bulge & Paris

30 Jul – 9 Aug
Guadalcanal & Tarawa

6 – 19 Aug
Vietnam "Delta to the DMZ"

6 – 18 Aug
Vietnam 55th Anniversary
Return to I-Corps

6 – 19 Aug
"Body & Soul" US Navy Medical & Clergy in the VN War

12 – 20 Aug
80th Anniversary of Operation Dragoon – South of France

23 Aug – 5 Sep
"Longest Day" D-Day, Normandy & Battle of the Bulge

6 – 19 Sep
Rise & Fall of the Third Reich: Munich-Berlin-Nuremberg

29 Sep – 6 Oct
Battlefields of France WWI, WWII, Napoleonic & Franco-Prussian War

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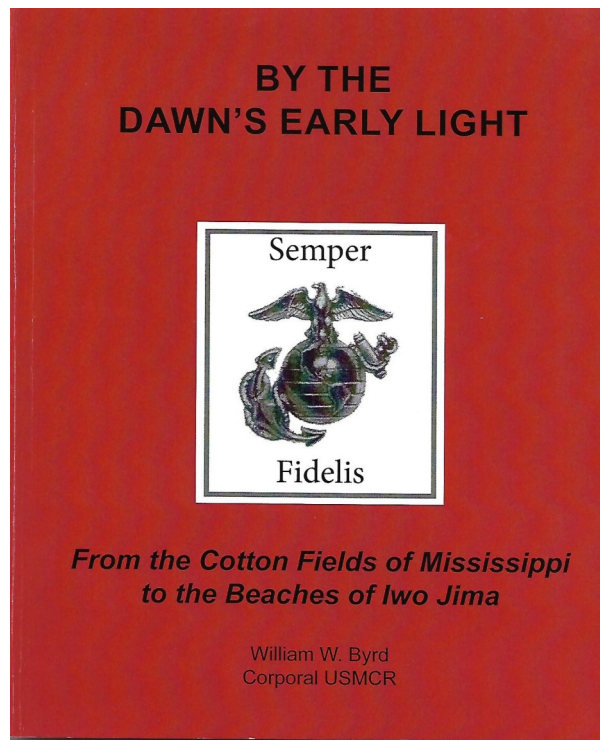


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Introduction

Yea though walk through the valley of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Thy rod and they staff they comfort me.

These words were on the lips and in the hearts of the Marines who landed on the beaches of Iwo Jima on February 19, 1945.

The Bible quote “*Death where is they sting?*” cannot be appropriately associated with this horrible battle. At age 18, I saw a lifetime of dying. It is etched in my memory forever. I also have memories during training of the smiles, laughter, and good times with my buddies. At times I feel guilty. Why am I here? I lost so many friends over there. Even to this day, I get depressed. Life goes on, but it doesn’t seem complete sometimes.

I am not a book writer. I have limited education. So there won’t be any fancy writing in this story. I did very little research. I wrote mostly from what I remember. Like many Veterans, for many years I was reluctant to talk about my war experiences. Many of my close friends and even relatives did not know that I served my country in the Second World War. This, however, may be the only true story written by a Marine infantry rifleman about the battle of Iwo Jima. I lost a lot of sleep writing this book because I would get up in the middle of the night to write. That’s when a lot of memories come back to me. Some are blocked out of my mind forever. I know that is an answer to prayer. I prayed many nights that the good Lord would help me forget some things that happened on that four mile long island in the Pacific Ocean.

As you read this book, you will see young men in battle. You will see the sweat on their brows. You will see the tears on their cheeks. You will see the blood on their bodies. You will hear the rifle and machine gun fire. You will hear the awful sounds of mortar shells exploding. You will hear the calls for help from the wounded and the dying. You will smell the sulfur gas and the volcanic ashes. You will smell the smoke of the battle. You will smell the stench of burning flesh. You will be on the front lines. Never forget the real heroes of this battle. They are the boys that did not make it back. They are the boys that never came home. I say boys because that is what we were, boys who through battle were forced to become men.

William Byrd

1 CHILDHOOD

In the mid-thirties, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal was in full swing. The great depression brought hard times, but strangely some of my happiest childhood memories came out of that era. Most days were spent hunting and fishing, playing games, climbing trees, and playing basketball on a dirt court. A also became obsessed with reading newspapers.

I read about the Chicago World's Fair, and also kept up with the latest political news. I read about G-Men and gangsters. Melvin Purvis and John Dillinger were household names, as were "Pretty Boy" Floyd, "Baby Face" Nelson, and of course Bonnie and Clyde. I remember reading of the world heavy weight championship fight between Max Baer and Primo Camera. Two or three years later names like Jimmy Braddock, Joe Louis, Jack Sharkey, and Sugar Ray Robinson were well known. Baseball also had its own who's who. Johnny Mize, Joe Dimaggio, Mel Ott, Dizzy Dean, and Jimmy Foxx were among the greats. The movies had Clark Gable, Myrna Loy, Norma Shearer, and Shirley Temple. Buck Jones, Bob Steels, William Boyd, Tim McCoy, Ken Maynard, and everyone's favorite Gene Autry.

It was easy to get lost in the make believe world that was in the movies and in the papers especially because in my world my dad was a sharecropper. We were as poor as a church mouse. I had five brothers and one sister. Just as soon as we were old enough, we had to work in the fields in the summer and chop wood in the winter. For breakfast, Daddy would sometimes make pancakes, and for supper Mom would make biscuits. Most days, we ate oatmeal but there were times we had only sugar mixed with milk.

During the cold winters we sometimes had hog killings with the neighbors pitching in so we could all eat through the winter. Our only day of rest was on Sunday because we went to Church and Sunday School. Every night we did our homework by kerosene lamps and when we finished we listened to our Silvertone radio. We heard shows like the Grand Ol' Opry starring Roy Acuff, Bill Monroe, and Minnie Pearl. We also heard Kate Smith, Fred Allen, and the hilarious Jack Benny. A few times we were allowed to stay up to hear some of President Roosevelt's Fireside Chats.

Childhood Memories

I would like to touch on some of the places where my family lived. As you will learn, we moved quite often. The first move I remember was to Petal from Hattiesburg, Mississippi in 1931 when I was six. It's about six miles from the Hub City.



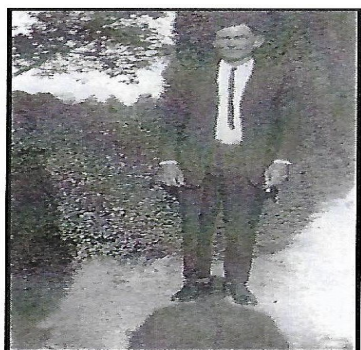
I lived in this house when I was five years old. Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

Most people remember a lot of things that happened in their childhood. One day Jerry and I were swimming in water in a ditch when Dad drove by in a borrowed Model T, and after chewing us out drove us to school, muddy as we were.

Our nearest neighbors were a black family. The two kids, David and Rose, were my best friends – for a little while before we moved from Petal to a little place called Harvey. John, the fourth oldest, was born there. Dad farmed about four crops he rented along with the house. We never owned any land. My Uncle Ernest and his wife and their three children lived with us.

The next move we made was way out in the country to a community called Oak Grove. It had one store. Uncle Ernest, his wife Annie Lee and their kids Burnell, Coily, and Lola Mae also moved there. Their home was about a mile from ours. We would visit them on Saturdays and stay until eight or nine o'clock at night. On the way home on the gravel road, the star lit night brightened our way.

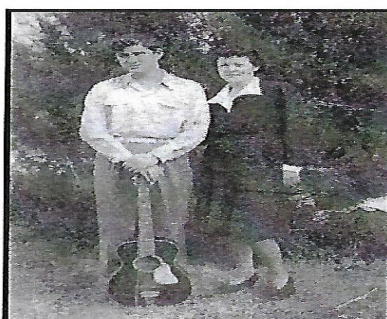
We walked nearly a mile to school every day. If we got a spanking at school, we would get another when we got home. We played basketball on a dirt court. The kids that didn't bring lunches ate vegetable soup for five cents. The schools rest rooms were outhouses about fifty yards away from the school house. We climbed trees like monkeys. We drew cartoons in our dirt yard. I remember sitting in front of the fireplace one Christmas Eve waiting for Santa Claus before I finally went to sleep. One day, three friends and I were walking down the road and saw a little dog that had been hit by a car. Although it was badly hurt, I took it home where it died that night.



My Dad, Carl Byrd 1930's.



My Mom, left and Aunt Louie.



Mom and Me in the Early 1940's.

Once a week, Mom and Dad took the family laundry over to the Walkers who lived about two hundred yards away. They had a big black pot and a fire was built under it. They would stir the clothes and sheets around with a paddle in the boiling water.

My Grandma lived about a mile away. My brothers and I loved to go visit her because she always gave us pie or cake, and she had a good yard to play in. Dicky, the third oldest of us kids said, "I'm gonna be the next world heavyweight champion. Just like Max Baer, by George." Grandma overheard him, stuck her head out a window and said, "Whoever is doing that cussin', I'm gonna wash his mouth out with soap."

Our next home would be in Prentiss, a small town sixty miles south of Jackson. We lived in two places in Prentiss. From Prentiss, we moved to Carson where my sister Patsy was born. Carson had three stores

including a Gulf Station.

Next we moved to Whitesand, where we lived in a very small house. On Saturday nights we walked a half mile to Bob Magee's house to hear the Grand Ol' Opry. The next move was about four miles down the road where we ordered our first radio, a Silvertone, from Sears and Roebuck. We heard the Carter family from a station in Texas. I believe it was Del Rio. Two of the shows sponsors were Dr. Brinkley and Color-Back. My mom started listening to soap operas.

After cotton picking season was over, Jerry, Dicky, and I had to knock the cotton stalks down with sticks because we didn't have a mule and a plow.

Our next move was to a farm about four miles outside of Carson. It was our second time to live in Carson. We had neighbors that were black. We picked cotton together and played together. It was here that Dicky burned down our barn. He lit a match to look for a school book. We had two bales of cotton stored waiting to be taken to the gin. We didn't have running water. We had to tote it by bucket from Mr. Dolan's house almost a quarter mile away.

Our next move was to Clem, a few miles outside of Prentiss. Jerry and I were in Junior High and played varsity basketball. Sometimes we would walk to school and other times we would ride the school bus. Dad continued farming and us kids helped all we could. We now had a mule, a cow and a bunch of chickens.

My daily job when I got home from school was to take an ax and go to the woods and come back with a sack of fire wood. Dicky's job was to put a rope on our cow and lead it to pasture. One day, the cow went around our outhouse and Dicky went the other way and the rope pulled over the outhouse. Grandad was inside and he pulled up his pants halfway, tripping and limping with a what's going on look in his eyes.

We had our share of cuts and bruises. Jerry was thrown by our mule and only a few days later got a broken leg when he was run over by a school bus. Patsy received a bad cut on her lip by a bat when Jerry took a swing at a ball thrown by Dicky.

I had a crush on Jamie Polk, a girl who lived across the road. When she got home from school – everyday she would put her books in the house and walk up the road to the little store her folks owned. When I heard her front door slam, I knew it was her, so I ran to the window to see her walk up the road.

It was very hot in our house during the summer and very cold in winter. There were cracks in the floor. We took turns lighting a fire in the fire place about five or six in the morning. We ate oatmeal most of the time for breakfast, but Dad would do pancakes for us on weekends. Every day after school, we kids would raid the pantry and eat black eyed peas.

I fooled around with our Silvertone radio a lot, I knew where every station was on the dial. It was on this radio that we heard about the Japanese bombing Pearl Harbor. Grady was born in this old house. We all loved our new baby. Dad was like a kid himself when he played with him.



Sammy and our House, 1941.



Grady, Age Six.

My Family Breaks Up

One day a man and woman from the health department came to see us. Mom and Dad went back to town with them and they didn't return for three or four hours. Then about a week later the health department people returned and gave us the news that would change our lives forever. Mom and Dad were diagnosed with tuberculosis. It was a tragic time in our lives.

Family and friends were contacted in three states. Our family was torn apart; we lost everything. Mom and Dad went to the Sanatorium near Magee, MS. My brother Jerry and I went to Hattiesburg, MS. My brothers Johnny, Sammy, and Dicky went to Texas, my youngest brother Grady went to Tylertown, MS, and my sister, Patsy, went to New Orleans. There were many times I was homeless, having to hitchhike to the homes of relatives. Eventually all five of us would join some branch of the armed forces. Little did I know that I would lose my father in 1950 and my brother Dicky in Korea, a month later.

To end the story of my childhood, I want to go back to the last day my family spent together. It was a Sunday when Mom took us to church and Dad stayed home with baby Grady. I don't think anyone in the congregation knew of our misfortune. Among the hymns that were sung at church that day were *Love Lifted Me*, *Standing on the Promises*, and *In the Garden*. I saw tears in mama's eyes as we sang *In the Garden*.

I came to the garden alone while the dew is still on the roses
And the voice I hear falling on my ear the son of God discloses.

And He walks with me and He talks with me and He tells me I am His
Own. And the joy we share as we tarry there none other has ever known.

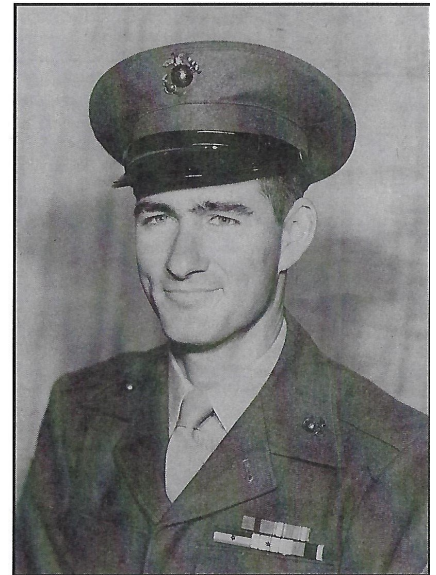
Precious Lord take my hand, lead me on, help me stand.
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn through the night.
Lead me on through the light.
Take my hand precious Lord lead me home.

On one occasion, before I found a job, I remember sitting under a tree with an elderly black man. We were just sitting there shooting the breeze and he mentioned that he had a guitar that he played occasionally. I remember begging him and pleading with him to let me see it. Eventually, he walked down the road and brought it back for me. I hadn't learned to play a guitar yet, but I strummed it and asked the man to teach me a chord or two. Once he did, I knew I had to have it so I begged him to sell it to me. I only had two dollars with me, but he finally gave in. I guess he just felt sorry for me.

After I bought the guitar, I hitchhiked to Hattiesburg to find a job. I didn't know what to do with my new guitar in the meantime so I went into the rest room at the county courthouse and put it in one of the stalls. I locked the door so I thought it would be safe, but when I came back an hour later it was gone. My brother Jerry found a job driving a laundry truck and I got a job in the kitchen department at the Forrest Hotel. The cook would yell out what kind of meat he wanted. Then I would run down stairs to get the meat out of the freezer.

I lived in the YMCA where the rent was three dollars a week. One day my draft notice came in the mail. I was ordered to report to Camp Shelby only ten miles away, where I joined the Marines. I took my first train ride to New Orleans and from there the Sunset Limited took me to San Diego. The train took two days to cross Texas.

The serialization of "By the Dawn's Early Light" will continue with part 2 in the next issue of Black Sands.



Corporal William W. Byrd USMCR
1945



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I hereby make application for membership in the Iwo Jima Association of America, Inc. If applying for full membership, I certify by my signature that I am either a veteran of the battle or a direct descendant of a veteran of the battle.

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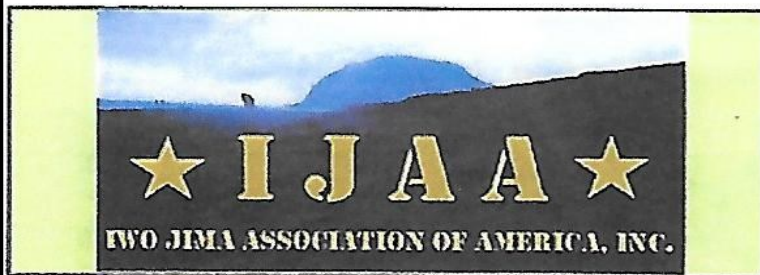
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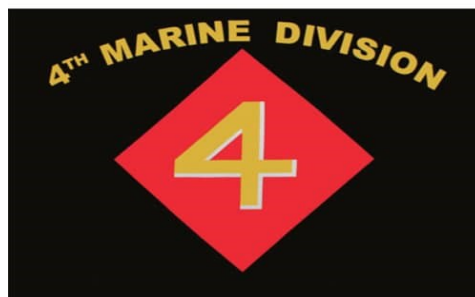
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P.O. Box 680 Quantico, VA 22134
Phone: 703-212-8128 Fax: 703-590-1292
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Your story is one to be told and shared***

Where you grew up.

Family... growing up and now.

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Boot camp (traveled by bus, train, car)? Your experience in boot camp.

Military schools. Awards/ribbons. Rank on discharge?

Where did you serve?

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And what you would just like to share?

If you have difficulty writing your story, do your best or call and we will chat with you and write it for you...and Pictures are welcomed.

YOUR STORY IS IMPORTANT

***Black Sands Editor
IJAA
P.O. Box 680,
Quantico, VA 22134***

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of hope and strength and grace,
from someone who has made our world
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It's filled with moments,
sweet and sad with smiles and sometimes tears,
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- Author Unknown





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