

My name is Anthony E. Yakacki and I am writing this in regards to my father Cpl USMC Anthony J. Yakacki. While growing up in Danbury my brother, sister and I knew very little of our father's war experiences other than he was a Marine and was wounded on Iwo Jima. We knew that Dad had some type of metal still in his back from being wounded. Dad never spoke of the battle or how he was wounded. We did see his Purple Heart medal and I remember asking him about his military gear and he replied that he was unable to take any of it when they took him out on the stretcher. Dad was always our hero working all the time to take care of his family, but always finding time to coach baseball and to be a Boy Scout leader for Troop 81. It was only the past few years that I learned about Dad's heroics that came from News-Times articles and Dad being honored by several groups for his actions on Iwo Jima in 1945. Dad landed on Iwo Jima on Feb. 19, 1945 on his 19th Birthday and marines in the landing craft sang happy birthday to him just before hitting the beach. Dad was on the island from Feb 19th until March 12, 1945 when he was wounded. Dad related in interviews that he was one of only four survivors of his group of 30 marines and that he had collected 14 dog tags of fallen marines. Dad tells of the rough terrain on the island and the soil being like coffee grounds making digging next to impossible. Dad stated that the enemy was dug in well and were difficult to find. Dad stated that at one time he actually strangled one of the enemy in some of the hand to hand fighting. On March 12, 1945, his unit was hit by an artillery shell leaving Dad wounded and only three other survivors. Dad recounts being splattered with blood and flesh from another marine prior to being hit himself. Dad remembers waking up in a hospital bed in Honolulu and says he still remembers the blood soaked sand on the island, the scores of dead marines and the fierce fighting with the dug in enemy. Dad is near 90 years old and still flies the American flag and the USMC flag in front of his home at 36 Dartmouth Lane, Danbury where he has lived since 1950. He was always proud of being in the 4th Marine Division, 25 Marine Regiment, F Company. A hero to all his family, myself retired, Robert, active DPD, sister Carol Noreika, RN Danbury Hospital, 9 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren. As I said, we are very proud of our hero father, grandfather, and great-grandfather.