

Let's set the record straight.



Let's set the record straight. The U.S. Marine Corps did *not* win the war in the Pacific. However it is true these courageous men recovered critical land mass and lost far too many of their buddies on those often forsaken islands.

The losses to Americans at that time in manpower was sickening, and the U.S. Marine Corps endured less than 20% of that total.

This misconception by too many of the American people years later does little service the all the rest of those who served in that theatre.

“Marine cymbal clashers have been drowning out Army musketry for over 70 years.” (A direct quote from a son of a Deadeye; Tom Martin) One can objectively agree with this quote by watching the History Chanel coverages of WWII.

The Marine Corps made several prominent and important landings on islands and truly made their name in history. Consider, Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima, Tarawa, Midway, Peleliu and Okinawa.

The U.S. Army made a lot more landings on islands scattered all over the Pacific than they did. The U.S. Army had more troops and took more land. Do the battles in the islands; Mindoro, Mindanao, Leyte, Samar, Luzon, Okinawa, New Caledonia, and New Guinea sound familiar?

We must give credit to the marvelous trove of pictures and newsreels of those battles made available by the Corps, and because of this the American people have been well served.

Individually the men in the U.S. Marines were well trained and dedicated men. The spirit de core among these men is quite commendable. Man to man they are worth emulating. Have you seen a Marine in Dress uniform salute? They know how!

Bar room brawls and confrontations in battle zones between the men in U.S. Marines and the U.S. Army proved that everyone had robust pride in their respective services and obvious equality of manhood and character.

Now let's talk tactics. Storming the enemy with superior numbers is a common tactic dating farther back than Napoleon. It has its place, and it is not always the best tactic for taking hill A. There may be a gorge that a tank couldn't cross in the way. And take a look at all the desperate Japanese troops lost in their futile screaming bonsai attacks.

This is a crux that separates the US Army from the Marine Corps. It is an ideology of conflicting infantry tactics; and the truth is we need them both.

For example; Lt. General Simon B. Buckner, commander of all ground forces on Okinawa, was under pressure from Vice Admiral Raymond Spruance. He wanted closure. He was losing far too many ships to Kamikaze attacks. Buckner was forced to make many decisions on methods of attack. He had the big picture at hand; reports from Generals on the ground and details from Intelligence.

Marine leaders importuned and wanted to make more landings in the south behind the enemy than he did. Buckner had to consider detrimental low inventory of ordinance because a supply ship had been sank, and if a landing were to be made would the terrain be favorable to move troops inward?

Yes we must attack to win; but do it with discretion. In conscience each life is precious and rests with command. Storming a beach may not be prudent after all.

Buckner insisted that we use what he called the "corkscrew and blowtorch" method to discourage enemy troops scurrying about in tunnels so common on Okinawa; and even though it took time; it worked. (See the direct quote in our coverage of him on the website.)

Look at all the troop movements in the major battles and hills taken on Okinawa, Army or Marine, and judge for yourself.

It must be noted that the American press, sitting in tents in the back echelons were involved with nit-picking to make a headline, and often sided with the Corps, as at that time they were quite favorable in the public eye.

These members of the Fifth Estate made serious mistakes giving the Corps credit, which fueled the fires of misconception. These slanted stories printed in newspapers back home came back to Army troops and created quite a bit of acrimony.

I rest my case. William R Hill