

Clovis Allen Mayo, Jr., T-46

7 March 1925 – 8 July 2002

(aged 77)



His chest speckled with ribbons indicated major battles and citations for gallant action against the Japs in the South Pacific, PFC Allen Mayo, Jr., 1187 James, yesterday urged continued support for the men over there from Americans back home.

Private Mayo, a member of a Marine detachment sent overseas more than six months ago, arrived in Memphis recently to rest and recover from a stomach ailment acquired while fighting on the Jap-infested islands in the vicinity of Australia.

A veteran Marine at 19, Private Mayo volunteered for service at 16. Before entering the service, he was employed by The Commercial Appeal and played football at C.B.C. and Memphis Tech. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Mayo of the James Street address.

On his brightly colored service bar three stars for action in the Battle of the Coral Sea, Tenaru River, and "Bloody Knool" are evident. Quick thinking and excellent training received back home as credited by the Marine private for saving his life and for the destruction of three Japanese in the Tenaru River battle on Guadalcanal. "We were expecting the enemy to strike in the Tenaru River section at most any time," he said. "Shortly before dawn the Japanese struck our lines with fury and the

Yanks, crowded in foxholes, were waiting for them, an enemy lieutenant doctor, thinking my mansion (the foxhole) was empty, made a dive for it. I saw him first and shot twice." "He tried to bayonet me, but I shifted to one side, missed the driving steel and held the enemy at my mercy," he said. Private Mayo stressed that the training received before going into battle sometimes meant the difference between life and death. He also accounted for two other soldiers --Japanese privates --- during the fighting that morning. Commenting on the morale of the men on Guadalcanal, Private Mayo said, "There isn't a Marine out there who wouldn't prefer to be in America, nor is there a one who wants to return until it is all over, over there. The greatest thing for tearing down the morale of the fighting men." he continued, "is to mention John L. Lewis or the labor trouble that he has been causing back home."

Private Mayo was lavish in his praise of the Australian people. "When he landed in Australia, we were barefooted, ragged, and hungry. The people down there took us into their homes, made clothes for us, fed us and gave us their cars and the little gas in their ration books for our enjoyment."

As evidence of the clothes made by the natives of Australia, who we said often sit up all night to give an American soldier a bed or to wash his clothes. Private Mayo brought back to the States an expertly sewed jacket, some underclothes, ties, and other serviceable garments. The Australian women made them by hand, he said.

"The days of want, waiting and expecting with every setting sun are over for the men in the South Pacific," he added. "We have the enemy on the run now, but actually we are still playing around and getting ready for still bigger things that are to come. "

Private Mayo has been awarded the Marine Expeditionary Bar, the Defense Bar, American Theater of War and South Pacific Bars. In addition to these he has received the President's citation and a sharpshooter medal. "While on Guadalcanal," the Memphis Marine said, "we had to put up with everything. We ate molded rice captured from our enemies, boiled it in kerosene, thought of a good old American meal and enjoyed it."

"I wouldn't take a million dollars for what I've learned in the last two years. It taught me to appreciate the good home, the good clothes, a chance to walk down the city streets here in the United States without being shot, and out America."

Americans can never know just how thankful we should be for what we have. America must never know what the people over there have gone through. The boys will always keep faith with America and only ask the same of the people at home."

Private Mayo assured that the Japanese are on the run now and that they will be kept on the backward march from now on until their defeat.

"As for me," Mayo said, "I want Japan." The boys are doing a great job against Hitler in Europe, so I would prefer to return to battle the Japanese --- they aren't civilized.

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