



**Gerald
Boyles**
Navy

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Jul 26, 1922 -

BIRTHPLACE: Formoso, KS

SOLDIER DETAILS

DIVISION: Navy

THEATER OF OPERATION: Pacific

SERVED: Oct 31, 1942 - Jan 24, 1946

HONORED BY: Family of Gerald Boyles

BIOGRAPHY

Gerald L. Boyles grew up as a farm boy in Republic and Jewell Counties, in Kansas. He enlisted in the Navy on October 31, 1942, during WWII, and became a Navy Corpsman serving at the New York Naval Yard, Brooklyn. In 1944, he volunteered for Marine duty and became a pharmacist's mate. They were loaded onto ships and sent to Hawaii to take more training and to await orders. Gerald trained with the 25th Marines, Fourth Division. He shares 'We were loaded on ships and for well over 90 days we Practiced landing and running off the landing crafts, getting ready for battle. Then the practice was put to use when Gerald and others found out they were being sent to a little island called Iwo Jima. Gerald remembers the battle ships shelling the island for several days and nights. He wondered if there was going to be anything left of the island. Then he tells of being loaded from the large ship into a landing craft. Bullets were heard all around him. Some men fell in the water as the craft had not gotten close enough to the land. Along the black beaches there were fence, posts, and large holes, made by the shelling. Bodies of the fallen soldiers were everywhere. Gerald reports that the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Marine Divisions landed in 500 landing crafts in 10 waves onto various beaches that were named after colors. 'The Japanese commander knew a landing of American troops were coming and had hidden 800 cannons in caves and blockhouses. The Marines were met with heavy fire. 'We medics were supposed to work as a team but there were so many wounded lying everywhere that everyone split up and worked as fast as we could.' Gerald was armed with a M1 rifle and a medical bag, but he stated that there were so many wounded, that needed help, the supplies quickly ran out, so they had to use whatever was available to treat the soldiers. 'We patched them up as best we could and then carried them out for further help'. All the time he and the other medics worked under heavy fire. 'You couldn't see where you were going. At first you'd try to duck, but after a while you'd just go on as usual running to where you were needed'. Some soldiers knew they were dying. Gerald remembers one such soldier that he stopped to help saying, 'go ahead and help someone else, the life in me has just about ran out'. 'We tried to carry the wounded out and radio for help but sometimes we just couldn't get any help. It was terrible the soldiers were so brave'. He returned to farm in his home town, married Jacqueline Heskett and had 3 daughters. 'I don't know why or how I survived while I

was on Iwo Jima, but I know I'm not a hero, those brave men that gave their lives are the real heroes,' Gerald states.