



# North Texas Patriot Guard Riders

CPL Raymond C Snapp

## Mission Summary

**Military Branch:** United States Marine Corps

**Classification:** Killed in Action

**Service:** WWII

- Killed In Action on 20 Nov 1943, Battle of Tarawa, WWII
- Assigned to Foxtrot Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines, 2nd Marine Division
- Born 08 Sep 1919, in Illinois Bend, Texas
- Raised in Bonita, Texas
- Enlisted into the Marine Corps on 09 Oct 1941

Corporal Snapp's unit landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands in an attempt to secure the island.

Over four days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and Sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded, but the Japanese were virtually annihilated. Corporal Snapp died on the first day of the battle, 20 November 1943.

Corporal Snapp was buried on the island of Betio until 1947, when his remains were repatriated to the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Oahu, Hawaii. His remains were not identifiable at the time and were buried in the Battle of Tarawa Unknowns in 1949.

In October 2016, due to improvements in scientific technology and the collection of DNA Family Reference Samples for USMC casualties from the

Battle of Tarawa, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) was authorized to exhume 94 sets of remains buried as Unknowns at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

In July 2017, DPAA positively identified the remains of Corporal Snapp. After conducting genealogical research and DNA confirmation, DPAA located and contacted Corporal Snapp's closest living relative, who lives in Shreveport, LA.

**Obituary:** N/A

**Mission Segments:** Procession

**National PGR Link:** Condolences Link

It is **strongly encouraged** that everyone goes to the Condolences Link above and post a brief message of condolence/sympathy to the family on the loss of their loved one. It is regularly mentioned how those kind words bring great comfort to a family member.

**Calendar Link:** [North Texas Calendar](#)

**MRC:** Mark Littel  
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**Ride Captain 2:** Sylvia Miller  
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**Ride Captain 3:** John Blase  
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**Photography:** Permission Granted

**Summary:** The family of Corporal Raymond Snapp, United States Marine Corps, has invited the Patriot Guard to accompany Corporal Snapp on his final ride from Dallas Fort Worth Airport to Shreveport, LA. The North Texas Patriot Guard Riders will accompany Corporal Snapp and family members from the airport to Canton, Texas, where, with honors, the East Texas Patriot Guard Riders will continue the mission.

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## Part 1 – Procession

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**Mission Date:** Thursday September 14, 2017

**Staging Time:** 1045

**Briefing Time:** 1105

**In Position/KSU Time:** 1125

**Starting Time:** 1130

**Staging Point:** Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, DFW Airport Safety Office

**Staging Address:** 2900 East 28th Street  
Irving, TX 75261

**Staging Area Map:** [Map Link](#)

**Staging Area GPS:** 32.884920, -97.020454

**Details:** After the safety briefing, Riders will accompany the procession to Dukes Travel Center, Canton.

Once in Canton, all Riders will dismount and await the transfer of efforts to the East Texas Patriot Riders. When the mission is handed over to the ETX PGRs, the NTX PGRs will be debriefed and dismissed.

The family and the United States Marines escorting the family have only 15 minutes for break and preparation for departure in Canton. We will stand by bikes and render honors upon their departure.

Those who would like to accompany Corporal Snapp on the second leg from Canton to the Louisiana border may do so. The second leg will terminate at the Louisiana Welcome Center, approximately 115 miles from Canton. Please notify the Mission Ride Captain at DFW Airport if you have a desire to continue past Canton.

**Flag/Water Support:** Yes  
Sue James & Jeffrey Wike

**Procession Info:** Escort Provided  
Procession speed 50-55 MPH. Bring Big Flags if you have them.  
NO CAGES ALLOWED

**Additional Historic Info:**

Corporal (Cpl) Raymond C. Snapp was a Marine assigned to Foxtrot Company (F Co.), 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines (F-2/8 Marines), Second Marine Division (2nd MARDIV). Corporal Snapp, already a previously wounded veteran of Guadalcanal, participated in the invasion of Betio Island, Tarawa Atoll, Gilbert Islands (now part of the Republic of Kiribati) on 20 November 1943.

In the autumn of 1943, the U.S. Navy Pacific Fleet's Central Pacific Campaign targeted the Gilbert Islands. The Gilberts offered the Pacific Fleet a platform from which to launch assaults on the Marshall and Caroline Islands to advance the U.S. Navy's Central Pacific Campaign against Japan. Considered essential to that campaign was the capture of Betio Island, located within Tarawa Atoll of the Gilberts. Primary responsibility for the assault, code named Operation GALVANIC, fell to the 2nd MARDIV.

United States Navy and Marine Corps planners scheduled the assault on Betio for 20 November 1943. The plan partitioned the primary amphibious assault area into three beaches designated (from west to east) as Beaches Red 1, 2, and 3. The plan called for the assault force to capture the airfield, with minimal damage, while defeating the Japanese defenders. The main initial assault force for the invasion was the 2nd Marine Regiment (2nd Marines) consisting of the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines (3/2 Marines) at Beach Red 1; 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines (2/2 Marines) at Beach Red 2; and the attached 2nd Battalion, 8<sup>th</sup> Marines (2/8 Marines) at Beach Red 3.

The first assault wave of the 2/8 Marines, under the covering fire of Navy destroyers, hit Beach Red 3 before the Japanese defenders could effectively man their weapons, allowing the amphibian tractors (LVTs) to deliver Marines of Echo Company (E Co.), F Co., one platoon from Golf Company (G Co.), and selected sections of Hotel Co. directly on to the beach. Two LVTs transporting E Co. Marines passed through a break in the seawall and moved inland on to the Japanese airfield before stopping. While the first three waves assaulted in LVTs, subsequent waves in the assault used traditional Higgins Boats (LCVPs). Because the LCVPs were not able to cross the shallow reef, the Marines had to exit the LCVPs on the reef and wade approximately 600 yards to shore through heavy Japanese fire suffering many casualties.

Although the 2/8 Marines were able to get ashore and secure a portion of the airfield, without more men and supplies they could not secure the beach or hold their positions for very long. That afternoon the Division Reserve was called in and so the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines (3/8 Marines) began landing and also suffered losses. The heavy losses suffered by the 2/8 and 3/8 Marines throughout that first day of battle included the loss of Corporal Raymond C. Snapp. Despite the losses, both units worked to consolidate the day's gains and by nightfall the 2/8 and 3/8 Marines held a large portion of Beach Red 3 and part of the Japanese airfield. Although there would be moments of uncertainty in the coming days, the Marines were on Betio.

By the end of 23 November, all organized resistance ceased; the battle on Betio was over and the Japanese virtually annihilated. Friendly forces, however, also paid a heavy price. During the battle, Marines hastily gathered the dead and moved them to various unit collection points for burial. Identified and unknown remains received temporary burials either in isolated graves, in one of six larger cemeteries on the island, or via burial at sea if evacuated to a ship for medical care and later died. For Marines and Sailors that were identifiable, burial details recorded basic information such as burial location and an individual's position within a burial trench, sometimes alongside an unidentified Marine or Sailor. By this time the number of American personnel reported killed in action (KIA) neared 1,000 men and, in the case of Corporal Snapp, the disposition of his remains is reported as Unknown. Corporal Snapp's Marine Corps Casualty Card reports both a burial in the 'Division Cemetery' and then a memorial grave in Cemetery 11, Grave 3, Row 3, Plot 5 based on the island Commander's Memorandum to the Commanding General, Second Division, USMC.

On 24 November, little more than 24 hours after the battle, the majority of the 2nd MARDIV re-embarked onto ships bound for Hawaii to recuperate and begin training for future operations. Left behind were the division's dead, to be cared for by chaplains and personnel from other units sent to garrison the island. With the departure of the assault force, however, anyone who could help to identify the dead, and their burial locations, was gone. As the war progressed, the island of Betio physically changed to meet the needs of the advance in the Central Pacific and burials took on a secondary importance. Trained graves registration personnel were in short

supply and record keeping was incomplete, also causing inconsistencies were the well-intentioned efforts to memorialize and honor the dead on the island. All of the known burial locations were affected and were renamed (given numbers) by the Navy. Eventually, the U.S. Navy designated one of several burial locations known as 'Division Cemetery' as Cemetery 11.

At the end of the war the United States began the task of returning its war dead from all theaters of war. In the Pacific, the task to recover the dead from Betio Island and the Tarawa Atoll fell to an Army detachment of men from the 604th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company (604th GRC). On 4 March 1946, the men arrived at Betio and began recovery operations that lasted until late May.

Through bad record keeping, massive reconstruction on the island, and poor memories, almost half of the known casualties on the island were never found: of the slightly more than 1,100 expected, only 532 sets of remains, from 41 separate burial sites, were located.

In Cemetery 11, while there was now a monument and an enclosed cemetery with 162 crosses, the majority of them were Memorial Graves. Although the USMC reported 50 actually buried in Cemetery 11 (20 Known, 30 Unknown), the 604th GRC reported the recovery of 39 sets of remains, 33 identified and six Unknowns. The 604th GRC moved all of the American remains found on Tarawa to a central cemetery named Lone Palm Cemetery for later return to Hawaii. Cemetery 11 (20 Known, 30 Unknown), the 604th GRC reported the recovery of 39 sets of remains, 33 identified and six Unknowns. The 604th GRC moved all of the American remains found on Tarawa to a central cemetery named Lone Palm Cemetery for later return to Hawaii.

In 1947, the 604th GRC returned to Betio Island and removed all the remains from Lone Palm Cemetery for repatriation. The recovered remains were sent to the Schofield Barracks Central Identification Laboratory (CIL), Schofield Barracks, Territory of Hawaii, for further identification. While at the Schofield Barracks CIL, exhaustive efforts to identify all of the remains continued, resulting in many more individuals being identified. The Schofield Barracks CIL could not associate any of the unidentified remains with Cpl Snapp.

During the Schofield CIL effort, all unidentified remains were also examined in an effort to identify them. One of the Unknowns from Cemetery 11, identified as Unknown X-275 was also examined for possible identification. The Schofield CIL was not able to identify Unknown X-275 with any missing individual and was interred in March 1949 in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

By 1949, the Schofield Barracks CIL interred all of the Betio Island remains not sent back to the continental U.S., including the Unknowns, in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (NMCP) Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii. Concurrently, Boards of Review met to analyze the cases of those missing throughout the Pacific. A Board of Review determined on 28 February 1949 that Corporal Raymond C. Snapp was killed in action at Tarawa and, although reportedly buried on Tarawa Atoll, his remains were not found by the 604th GRC during any of its searches of Betio Island. The Board of Review therefore declared the remains of Corporal Snapp to be non-recoverable.

**PDF:**

**Obituary:**

**MRC**

**Notes:**

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