

Sergeant Thomas Edward Gowans
Utah
United States Marine Corps
World War II
August 6, 1917 July 21, 1944



Thomas Edwards Gowans, the son of Thomas Edward Gowans and Della May Salisbury Gowans, was born on August 6, 1917, in Rockport, Utah. It is assumed that his life in Rockport was similar to others of his age and that he did what others boys did during the time he lived there. The town of Rockport is now inundated by Rockport Reservoir and there are few remnants of its existence.

He enlisted in the Marine Corps on October 10, 1940. He was a member of the 21st Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division and was killed in action on July 21, 1944, during the landings on Guam in the Mariana Islands

At the time of his death, he was survived by his Mother and a sister, Elizabeth Gray.

He was buried in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific on January 27, 1949. It is located in Honolulu, Hawaii in an extinct volcano. Because of its shape, it is often referred to as the "Punchbowl". This cemetery serves as one of the Nation's two honored resting places in the Pacific. The American Military Cemetery at Manila in the Philippine Islands is the other one. His burial site is located in Plot C, Grave 36.

The 3rd Marine Division was activated on September 16, 1942 at Camp Elliot, California. It then proceeded to New Zealand for additional training. The 3rd Division participated in three major operations. Their first action in the Pacific was the assault on Bougainville in the Soloman Islands. The division then returned to Guadalcanal and prepared for further engagements. It was back in action as part of the initial landing and fighting on Guam, Mariana Islands. The last operation they participated in was the invasion of Iwo Jima. After the brutal fighting on the island, it was relieved and returned to Guam to prepare for the invasion of the Japanese mainland.

The official colors of the Marine Corps are scarlet and gold. The division patch is triangular shaped so that it has three points. The center contains a Caltrop that was used to stop cavalry charges. A caltrop has four points and when it is placed on the ground three of the points can be seen. The three points of the caltrop signify the 3rd Division This insignia was authorized in August 1943. In 1947, the Marine Corps discontinued the wearing of unit shoulder patches. The 21st Marine Regiment patch is red and gold with the names of the three major operations it participated in during World War II on it.