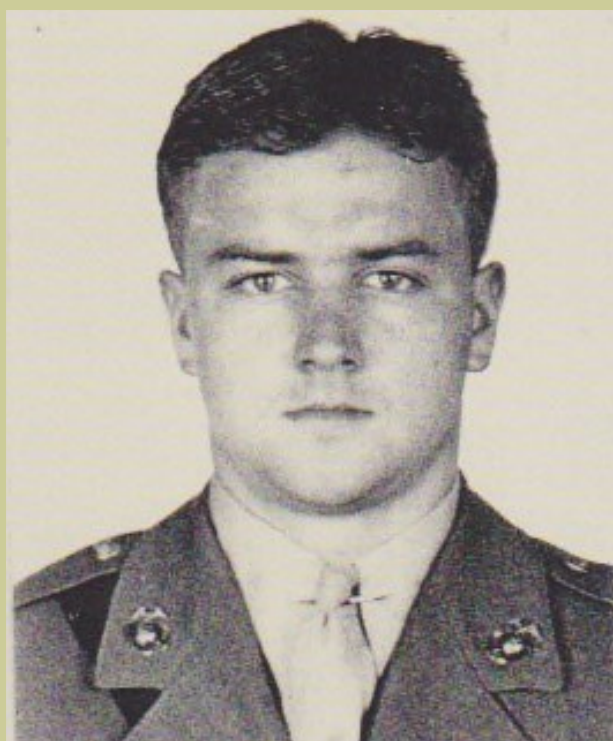


Major Robert M. Ash

U.S. Marines 1st Division, 3rd Battalion



Major Robert M. Ash
U.S. Marines

Entered Service: ROTC— Fall, 1938
University of Illinois
Active Duty—May, 1941

Overseas: December 7, 1941

Engagements: European & Pacific Theatre
USS Colorado, USS Denver,
Battle of Peleliu

Awarded: European-African-Middle
Purple Heart, American
Campaign Medal, American
Defense Medal, Pacific
Campaign Medal with 3
Battle Stars

KIA September 15, 1944

Buried in US: October 18, 1948

Burial: Greenwood Cemetery
Canton, Illinois
Fulton County. USA

Plot: S1/2, 1201, Div. M, GHS

Robert Melville Ash was born January 21, 1918 in Canton, Illinois. He is the son Mr. Lorin M. (January 27, 1862) & Mrs. Dollie B. Churchill Ash (April 14, 1875) of Canton, Illinois. Major Ash was a 1936 graduate of Watseka H.S., and a 1940 Graduate of the University of Illinois with the ROTC Program. Robert had three brothers Lon C., Russell L., and John J. Ash, and three sisters, Mrs. Ralph Beechner, Mrs. Ercel Kepple, and Mrs. L.W. Airhart of Elgin, Illinois—growing up with 3 older brothers and 3 older sisters.

The family spent the school year in Canton and summers on their farm in Iroquois County. When Robert's father died in 1933, Robert was 15 years old and although his mother had moved to Urbana in 1927, where 4 of the older children were enrolled in the University of Illinois, he was enrolled at Watseka High School living in Watseka during the week and returning to his Mother's home in Urbana on weekends.

He graduated from Watseka High School in 1936 where he was president of his sophomore class.

Upon graduating from University of Illinois in 1940 with 4 years of ROTC and national commander of Phalanx, an honorary military society. He was commissioned a second lieutenant on entering the marine corps following his graduation.

He was sent to Officer Training in Philadelphia and after his graduation was assigned as a marine recruiter for 6 Midwest colleges. His next assignment in May, 1941 was aboard the USS Colorado in the South Pacific. It was docked in Bremerton, Washington undergoing an overhaul at the Puget Sound Navy Yard when Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor opened the Pacific War. She was stationed on the U.S. West Coast during March-August 1942, then steamed

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west to Pearl Harbor with Ash aboard.

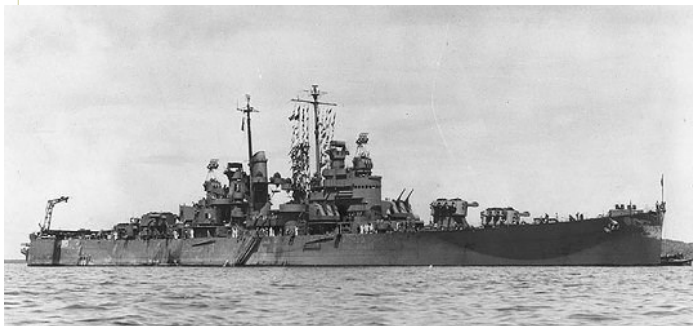
USS COLORADO

USS Denver

He remained on the USS Colorado until June, 1942 at which time he was transferred for duty as a marine officer aboard newly commissioned cruiser, the USS Denver. In June, 1943 he was promoted to



Major.



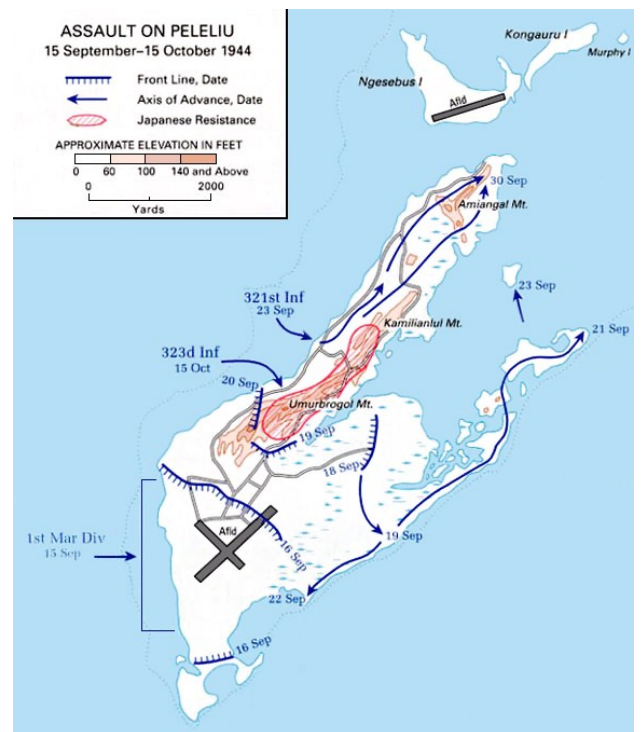
In February, 1944 on a 15-day leave after having been out of the states for a year, he visited his family and then he flew to New York City and in March he reported to Marine Corps Base for Officer Training School in Quantico, Virginia.

Major Ash graduated Command School in June,

1944 and left on what was to be his last Pacific tour. He had been on two cruisers for many months and had participated with courage and valor, in nine major engagements in the Southwest Pacific Theatre.

Ash was carried to an advance U.S. base by clipper plane, transport and submarine for his next and last assignment. Sadly, on September 15, 1944. Marine Major Robert M. Ash died in the Battle of Peleliu.

Officially, Major Ash was killed in action at Peleliu Island in the South Pacific on September 15, 1944 while serving with the 3rd Battalion of the 1st Marine Division. He was 26 years old.



Battle of Peleliu
September to November 1944

Major Robert M. Ash

U.S. Marines 1st Division, 3rd Battalion

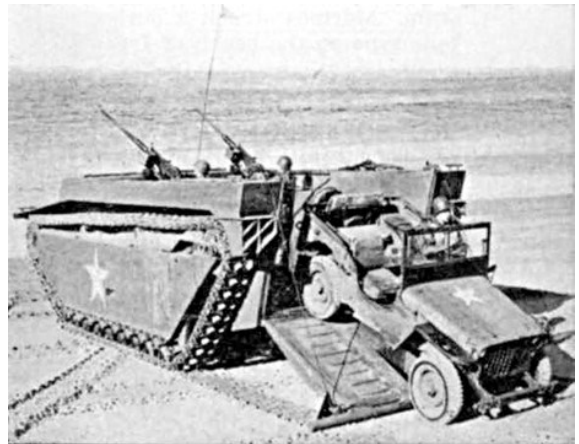


Bloody Beaches: The Marines at Peleliu
by Brigadier General Gordon D. Gayle
U.S. Marine Corps (Ret).

Major Ash is included on page 14 of *Bloody Beaches: The Marines at Peleliu* written by Brigadier General Gordon D. Gayle U.S. Marine Corps (Ret). “With the counterattack over and the Japanese in apparent disarray, 2/5 immediately resumed its attack, moving north along the eastern half of the airfield. The battalion advanced halfway up the length of the airfield clearing before it stopped to organize for the night. It was the maximum advance of the day, over the most favorable terrain in the division front. It provided needed space for artillery and logistic deployment to support the continuation of the attack the next day.

However, that relatively advanced position had an open right, south, flank which corresponded to a hole in the regimental command structure. At that stage, 3/5 was supposed to maintain the contact between north-facing 2/5 and south-oriented 3/7. But 3/5's battalion command and control had been completely knocked out by 1700. The battalion executive officer, **Major Robert M. Ash**, had been killed

earlier in the day by a direct hit upon his landing LVT. “ (Landing Vehicle Tracked Originally



intended solely as cargo carriers for ship to shore operations, they evolved into assault troop and fire support vehicles.)



The first wave of U.S. Marines in LVTs during the invasion of Peleliu on September 15, 1944



Robert M. Ash

Major Robert M. Ash

U.S. Marines
1st Division, 3rd Battalion



Major Robert M. Ash



Although Major Ash was killed in 1944, his body was not returned to the U.S. until 1948.

Buried in US: October 18, 1948
Burial: Greenwood Cemetery
Canton, Illinois
Fulton County, USA
Plot: S1/2, 1201, Div. M, GHS

This account of Major Ash's service and sacrifice to his country is lovingly submitted by your grateful family on June 20, 2020.

Barbara Ash Dougan, Niece
Portland, OR