



The Knox County Joint Veterans Council are looking for **volunteers!!!**

The Knox County Joint Veterans Council is located at the Knox County Veterans Service Office located at 105 E Chestnut St. Mount Vernon, Ohio. The post conducts regular meetings on the third Thursday of each month. The meeting time is 7:00 P.M. **Contact Carol Riley @**

740-504-3264 if you are interested in volunteering. Thank you!



They stand guard silently, vigilantly through whatever Mother Nature dares throw at them. They do so with great pride to honor one of their own. And they do this without thought of payment. For them, honoring a fallen brother-in-arms is compensation enough.

For the families of the deceased soldier, they are the ever-watchful sentinels, and their selfless act is a much-appreciated tribute.

December is Ham Time!!

December 1st-December 31st

Come in any day during the month of December, only, for your annual ham voucher! No waiting! Head to Smithisler Meats, with your voucher, anytime during the month to pick up your ham!

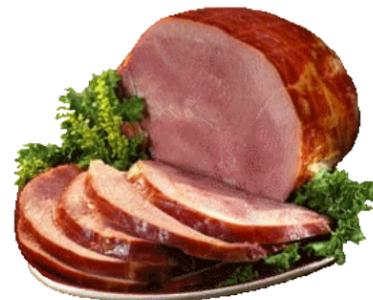
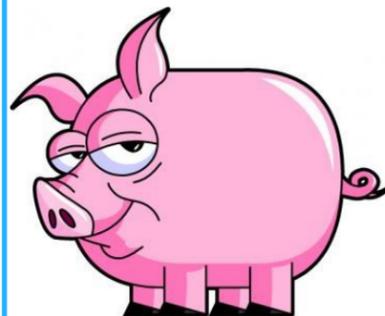
Smithisler Meats

8835 Columbus Rd

Tuesday-Friday 9AM-5:30 PM

Saturday 9AM-2PM

Closed Sunday and Monday



The Marine who was a duck (yes, an actual duck)

On Nov. 20, 1943, 18,000 Marines were met with withering fire, poured out by elite troops of the Imperial Navy's Special Naval Landing Force. The attack on Betio, the largest and southernmost island in the Tarawa atoll, required a direct assault on the beachheads by U.S. Marines. On that day, alongside those Marines clutching the beachhead amid a lethal hailstorm of mortars, machine gun and rifle fire, was a duck.

Won in a raffle at a New Zealand pub by Sgt. Francis "Pappy" Fagan, the duck was given the rank of sergeant and named Siwash after Sgt. Jack "Siwash" Cornelius of Skagit County, Washington. According to the Marine Corps Chevron, Cornelius acquired the nickname due to it sounding similar to his home county's name. (Note, Siwash is a derogatory term for Native Americans in the Pacific Northwest, and as such, the name "Siwash" will be replaced in this story with "duck.")

Becoming the 2nd Marine Division's unofficial mascot, the duck followed Fagan everywhere he went, developing a penchant for guzzling beer — just like her owner. "Siwash just can't pass up a free drink" Fagan told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette in 1944. "A long one and a short one is her limit, but she doesn't know it. She won't touch draft beer though. And it's got to be warm beer. The way it was in New Zealand."

While the "devil duck" was beloved by her men, it was her actions on Tarawa on the second day of the invasion that cemented her place in Marine Corps lore. By the end of the first day, the Marines had a tenuous hold on all three landing zones — designated Red 1, Red 2 and Red 3. From this precarious position, General Julian Smith radioed General Holland Smith midafternoon, stating, "Successful landings on Beaches Red 2 and 3. Toehold on Red 1. The situation is in doubt."

Corralled onto the narrow beaches, no units had penetrated more than 70 yards inshore by nightfall. Being driven back into the sea was a legitimate threat. Protected by coral reefs, the flat, small island was one of the most heavily fortified in the Pacific, and because of the island's geography, the nearly 5,000 Marines would have no immediate room to maneuver.

For the duck, however, the situation was never in doubt. Channeling Col. David Shoup report — "Casualties many; percentage of dead not known; combat efficiency: We are winning" — the duck reportedly locked eyes with a Japanese rooster and took the enemy encounter into her own webbed feet.

"The rooster didn't have a chance," Fagan later related to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. "Siwash whipped him and chased him 30 feet up the beach."

While there was initial talk among Marines of rewarding the duck with a Purple Heart, she was eventually cited for bravery. (The Marines initially believed she was a he until the duck began to lay eggs.)

"For courageous action and wounds received on Tarawa, in the Gilbert Islands, November 1943. With utter disregard for his own personal safety, Siwash, upon reaching the beach, without hesitation engaged the enemy in fierce combat, namely, one rooster of Japanese ancestry, and though wounded on the head by repeated pecks, he soon routed the opposition," the citation read. "He refused medical aid until all wounded members of his section had been taken care of."

From there, the duck served during the Battle of Saipan — this time from the safety of a destroyer — and the Battle of Tinian.

But the Marines couldn't keep a good duck down, and at Tinian, the duck "hit the beach on D-Day and personally captured a tiny Jap duck," TIME reported in 1944. After Tinian, however, the duck's war was over.

Upon returning home, the devil duck was given a hero's welcome before parting with Fagan to live out the rest of her days at Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo. There she stayed until the hard drinking girl passed away from liver disease in 1954. Her body was later stuffed and presented to the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Virginia.

Rah.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/2022/11/23/the-marine-who-was-a-duck-yes-an-actual-duck/>

Army Sergeant Charged with Stealing Machine Gun Parts, Smoke Grenade After Brigade-Wide Search

An [Army](#) noncommissioned officer has been charged with allegedly stealing machine gun parts and a smoke grenade, the disappearance of which set off a chaotic brigade-wide recall and search on and around [Joint Base Lewis-McChord](#), Washington.

Sgt. Christopher Shepler, a company NCO from 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 1-2 [Stryker](#) Brigade Combat Team, was charged with larceny and loss of military property, according to a Monday statement from 7th Infantry Division spokesperson, Lt. Col. Bryen Freigo.

The charges, filed last month, allege that Shepler stole an [M2 .50-caliber machine gun](#) receiver and an [M240](#) machine gun barrel, in addition to the smoke grenade.

The .50 cal piece was first reported missing on Oct. 7 by 5-20's sister company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment. The weapon was left in the care of 2-3's staff duty for soldiers to use if they wanted to practice operating the unloaded weapon in preparation for the brigade's upcoming Expert Infantry and Expert Soldier Badge qualifications.

Military.com has reached out to Shepler for comment via email but did not hear back by publication. Military.com also requested the contact information for the NCO's legal counsel from the Army.

Messages reviewed by Military.com reveal unit leadership attempting to wrangle the chaos in the aftermath of the loss, asking subordinates not only to look for the missing items, but identifying Shepler, referring to him as a "person of interest" and sharing an apparent image of him in a group chat. The entire brigade was called in to search for the weapon during what was supposed to be a four-day weekend.

"It was really unfortunate that a leader in the organization made such a poor decision that affected the entire brigade right before a much-deserved four day," one soldier in the brigade told Military.com over text, adding that the decision to leave the equipment out in the first place was a leadership failure.

"I'm all for making equipment accessible to soldiers to train, but it's leaders' responsibility to ensure weapons are properly accounted for. ... There were failures all up the chain of command that allowed it to happen." Freigo said that the charges specify that Shepler allegedly "later lost the firearm," referencing the M2 receiver. He was charged with stealing all three items and charged with the "willful loss" of the .50 cal part, according to his charge sheet. The receiver contains parts that make the .50 cal fire and, along with the barrel of the M240, are inert on their own.

A week after the items were reported missing, the charges against Shepler were filed. "The charges have been referred to a general court-martial, and Sergeant Shepler was arraigned on November 17, 2022," Freigo told Military.com.

"A trial date has not been set at this time," he said, adding that "just as in civilian criminal proceedings, these charges are merely accusations and Sergeant Shepler is presumed innocent until proven otherwise beyond a reasonable doubt."

The M2 receiver ended up in a dumpster, which was routinely transported off post, and had been moved before the unit could find it, according to two soldiers familiar with the incident.

The M2 .50 cal receiver has not been recovered, Freigo said. The other items were recovered. He encouraged individuals with information on the missing machine gun part to contact [JBLM's CID office](#).

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2022/11/23/army-sergeant-charged-stealing-machine-gun-parts-smoke-grenade-after-brigade-wide-search.html>

Pictures of the Month



Sailors investigate the scene of a simulated fire during a drill aboard the guided missile cruiser USS Normandy in the Atlantic Ocean, Nov. 23,

