

## The Press &amp; Dakotan

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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## OPINION

Tammy Haas Case  
Hits Social Media

A somberly fitting quote from William Faulkner comes to mind today: "The past is never dead. It's not even past."  
Unfortunately, this remains true with the case of Yankton's Tammy Haas, the 19-year-old girl who disappeared in the autumn of 1992 while in town for the YHS homecoming and whose dead body was found in a ravine near the Crofton golf course several days later.

What followed was a dark period of speculation and a trial that ended in an acquittal. More than 18 years have passed since that verdict, and there have been no new leads. No confessions. No suggestion that we are any closer to the truth of this aching mystery.

A generation has passed — had she lived, Haas would have turned 42 this spring — but the gnawing lack of closure in this vacuum remains.

Now, the matter has been taken to the province of social media, a communication arena that didn't even exist when Haas disappeared so long ago. Recently, a Facebook page called "Justice for Tammy Haas" went online, an outgrowth from references elsewhere to facts of life in Yankton — of which this girl's death is one haunting, unanswered fact.

Also, a crowdfunding effort has begun to raise money in order to re-start the investigation in this cold case.

Indeed, the past really isn't past — not in this case.

According to numerous accounts, the arrival of these efforts has once again tapped into the raw emotions that have developed around this case. There are people who are absolutely sure they know what happened, and there are those who are angry that the old details, the suspicions and squirming rumors, which failed to garner a conviction once upon a time, are being resurrected again.

But the blunt fact is, the worst thing this community can ever do is to let the past go, to tuck it away as something merely unresolved and unknown.

In that respect, the Facebook site and the crowdfunding effort, two 21st century tools, are not only logical extensions of the grief, anger and bafflement of those who care about the case, but also healthy and necessary things.

As we've said before in this space, there is a truth that remains unspoken regarding the fate of Tammy Haas. It most likely isn't a lost relic like a missing piece of a grim puzzle. Instead, it's a truth that may well be carefully guarded. Perhaps it hides in this very town. And it's been stowed away for a very long time.

Tammy Haas deserves better than a generation of silence. Her family deserves better than years and years of not knowing. Her friends deserve closure. And this town needs a resolution.

If the Facebook page and the crowdfunding effort can at long last disclose the truth (as opposed to work at verifying old theories, which could in fact be two different things) from its dark hiding place, then they will have done a great service. Because this sad, divisive saga must reach an end, and Haas's spirit must at long last find some rest.

kmh

## ABOUT THIS PAGE

The View page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the PRESS & DAKOTAN. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at kelly.hertz@yankton.net/.

## ONLINE OPINION

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the Press & Dakotan's Web site are as follows:

## LATEST RESULTS:

Should the legal age for smoking be raised to 21?  
Yes.....56%  
No.....40%  
Not sure.....4%  
TOTAL VOTES CAST.....295

The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

## CURRENT QUESTION:

Do you support a special minimum wage of \$7.50 for kids under age 18?  
To cast your vote in the PRESS & DAKOTAN'S Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

## IN HISTORY

## By The Associated Press

Today is Shrove Tuesday, Feb. 17, the 48th day of 2015. There are 317 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On Feb. 17, 1865, during the Civil War, Columbia, South Carolina, burned as the Confederates evacuated and Union forces moved in. (It's not clear which side was responsible for setting the blaze, or whether it had been deliberate.)

**On this date:** In 1815, the United States and Britain exchanged the instruments of ratification for the Treaty of Ghent, ending the War of 1812.

In 1863, the International Red Cross was founded in Geneva.

In 1904, the original two-act version of Giacomo Puccini's opera "Madama Butterfly" received a poor reception at its premiere at La Scala in Milan, Italy.

In 1913, the Armory Show, a landmark modern art exhibit, opened in New York City.

In 1925, the first issue of The New Yorker magazine (bearing the cover date of Feb. 21) was published.

In 1933, Newsweek magazine was first published under the title "News-Week."

In 1944, during World War II, U.S. forces invaded Eniwetok Atoll, encountering little initial resistance from Imperial Japanese troops. (The Americans secured the atoll less than a week later.)

In 1959, the United States launched Vanguard 2, a satellite which carried meteorological equipment.

In 1965, comedian Joan Rivers made her first appearance on "The Tonight Show" with Johnny Carson.

In 1972, President Richard M. Nixon departed the White House with his wife, Pat, on a historic trip to China.

In 1985, Murray P. Haydon became the third person to receive a permanent artificial heart as doctors at Humana Hospital Audubon in Louisville, Kentucky, implanted the device. (Haydon lived 488 days with the heart.)

In 1995, Colin Ferguson was convicted of six counts of murder in the December 1993 Long Island Rail Road shootings (he was later sentenced to a minimum of 200 years in prison).

**Ten years ago:** President George W. Bush named John Negroponte, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, as the government's first national intelligence director. Iraq's electoral commission certified the results of the Jan. 30 elections and allocated 140 of 275 National Assembly seats to the United Iraqi Alliance, giving the Shiite-dominated party a majority in the new

parliament. Actor Dan O'Herlihy died in Malibu, California, at age 85.

**Five years ago:** President Barack Obama marked the one-year anniversary of the \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, saying it had staved off another Great Depression and kept up to 2 million people on the job. Eight American missionaries charged with child kidnapping in Haiti were released after nearly three weeks in a Haitian jail. Americans Lindsey Vonn and Julia Mancuso captured gold and silver in the women's Olympic downhill in Vancouver. Actress Kathryn Grayson, 88, died in Los Angeles.

**One year ago:** The co-pilot of an Italian-bound Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 767 locked his captain out of the cockpit, commandeered the plane, then headed to Geneva, where he was arrested upon landing by Swiss authorities (no one was injured). Meryl Davis and Charlie White won the gold medal in ice dance at Sochi, the first Olympic title in the event for the United States. (Davis and White finished 4.53 points ahead of Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir of Canada, the 2010 champions.) Jimmy Fallon made his debut as host of NBC's "Tonight Show."

**Today's Birthdays:** Actor Hal Holbrook is 90. Mystery writer Ruth Rendell is 85. Singer Bobby Lewis is 82. Actor-comedian Barry Humphries (aka "Dame Edna") is 81. Country singer-songwriter Johnny Bush is 80. Actress Christina Pickles is 80. Football Hall-of-Famer Jim Brown is 79. Actress Brenda Fricker is 70. Actress Rene Russo is 61. Actor Richard Karn is 59. Actor Lou Diamond Phillips is 53. Basketball Hall of Famer Michael Jordan is 52. Actor-comedian Larry, the Cable Guy is 52. TV personality Rene Syler is 52. Movie director Michael Bay is 51. Singer Chante Moore is 48. Rock musician Timothy J. Mahoney (311) is 45. Actor Dominic Purcell is 45. Olympic gold and silver medal skier Tommy Moe is 45. Actress Denise Richards is 44. Rock singer-musician Billie Joe Armstrong (Green Day) is 43. Actor Jerry O'Connell is 41. Country singer Bryan White is 41. Actress Kelly Carlson is 39. Actor Ashton Holmes is 37. Actor Jason Ritter is 35. TV personality Paris Hilton is 34. Actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt is 34. TV host Daphne Oz (TV: "The Chew") is 29. Actor Chord Overstreet (TV: "Glee") is 26. Singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran is 24. Actress Meaghan Martin is 23. Actress Sasha Pieterse (TV: "Pretty Little Liars") is 19.

**Thought for Today:** "People show their character by what they laugh at." — German proverb.

## Point Of View

## Remembering Iwo Jima

BY DAVID HOSMER

Yankton

Before Eugene Drier and Gerald Hill left Yankton in 1943, they probably hugged their mothers.

Yankton was different then. About 7,000 people lived here, but agriculture was still the largest industry. Eugene's family owned a creamery and probably knew many farmers. Gerald's Father farmed near Mission Hill. To cross the Meridian Bridge required a toll, and Gavins Point Dam did not exist. The most popular business was Gurney's Seed and Nursery. By that time, Yankton's Battery E of the 147th Field Artillery Unit had already been in the Pacific for over 24 months. Both Eugene and Gerald left by bus or train.

And they held one more thing in common — they both died during the Battle of Iwo Jima, which was fought 70 years ago this month.

There are several reasons to remember Iwo Jima.

First, the victory was a turning point in the war. Bombers could now fly straight to Japan. There were no pesky Japanese fighters from Iwo to bother them, until they reached Japan and often there were now American fighter escorts. And, Japan's early warning radar on Iwo was gone, which meant less timely anti-aircraft fire. The Japan bombing campaign shortened the war and, in so doing, saved the lives of many GIs. And, rather gruesomely, Iwo Jima and Okinawa established the level of defensive brutality that would face the Americans should they invade. As a result, it ushered in the nuclear age.

Second, the iconic symbol of six Marines raising an American flag gave a super boost to morale. The war had been slogging along for more than three years with no end in sight. Iwo Jima was a prefecture of Tokyo, which meant that a American flag on Iwo was a flag flying over Tokyo. The picture emphatically speaks of teamwork and suggests the likelihood of success. The picture was the center of the 7th Bond Drive, which raised \$26 billion — more than any prior war bond drive.

But there is a more compelling reason for Yanktonians to recall Iwo Jima. We might be able to say that we walked in the shoes of Eugene and Gerald, only because we live in the Yankton area. But only a few Yanktonians walked in their "combat boots."

We should know more about them because they and 6,819 more men served and sacrificed more than any of us. Another 19,217 were wounded. Forgetting about them is not an option. After a few interviews, I think I can paint a picture of their short military careers.

## THE BASICS

Marine basic training was as Camp Pendleton near San Diego. Basic training was "terrible," according to Donald Graves, a member of the 28th Regiment, 5th Marine and Iwo Jima veteran. This shared, rigorous training created a bond. Don said he would "have died" for his buddies. They loved their fellow Marines. Jack Thurman, a member of the 27th Regiment, 5th Marines and Iwo Jima veteran, described it as "a feeling of togetherness."

After stateside training there was island training. Gerald, who was in the 3rd Marine Division (which had fought in Guam in July 1944), received additional training in Guam. Eugene, who was in the 4th Marine Division (which had battled in Saipan in June 1944), was in Saipan with his training. Dale Oare, also in Saipan with the 2nd Division after that battle, said the training consisted mainly of mock landings. Finally, the men of the 5th Division (which was created in response to the bloody Battle of Tarawa in 1943) prepared for their first engagement at Camp Tarawa on the Big Island, Hawaii. All three of these divisions saw combat at Iwo. D-Day was set for Feb. 19, 1945.

Prior to the amphibious landing, American airplanes and Navy bombed the hell out of Iwo. Unfortunately, it did little, other than create craters that Marines could use for cover. "Iwo Jima" translated is "sulfur island." The island emits yellow sulfuric mist that smells like rotten eggs. It was created by the volcanic activity of the now-dormant 500-foot high vent referred to as Mt. Suribachi. The Japanese took advantage of this topography by building tunnels. Hidden within the landscape were concrete bunkers and pill-boxes. It was eerie because these defenses meant that advancing Marines could not see their foes.

Jack was in one of the first waves on Red 1 Beach on February 19th; his job was to advance to the north and west of Airfield No. 1. On the way into the beach, he saw two amphibious blow up with dozens of men aboard. As soon as he hit the beach, he saw an injured Marine so he moved to help him. "That's when I got it," Jack recalled. "The bullet went through my canteen and cup. It was full of water. It must have slowed it down. The bullet knocked me off my feet. I had a lot of pain, but I saw to it that I was going to get over and help that guy yelling for help." He fought onward.

Donald was in the third wave; he landed on Green Beach, the closest to Mt. Suribachi. His duty was to advance up the beach, pivot to the south and secure Mt. Suribachi. His amphib went as far as it could go in the water; it hit sand and then the coxswain yelled, "over the side." He rolled over and went down with the flame thrower on his back. "Two guys jerked me up and drug me up to where I could walk," he recalled. When he hit the beach, he buried his head in the sand. He started talking to himself. "God, I don't know anything about you. I have never been to church, but if you get me off this island, I will serve you the rest of my life." He fought onward.

The 25th Regiment of the 4th Marines landed on Blue Beach, the farthest to the north, which was overshadowed by the heavily defended "Rock Quarry." General Cates stated, "If I knew the name of the man on the extreme right of the right-hand squad I'd recommend him for a medal before we go in." Eugene's duty was to advance over the beach and pivot to the north to overtake the heavily defended Quarry. If he advanced to the beachhead the first day, he would have seen the hell that Donald and Jack saw. But he fought onward.

The 21st Regiment, 3rd Marine Division was in reserve. Due to the first day's heavy casualties, it was ordered into service. However, rough seas stopped their beach assault. Finally, on D-2 Gerald Hill hit the beach, which was still very hot. He would have seen the beach riddled with destroyed equipment and badly injured Marines lined up on the beach. Shells continued to hit the beach, landing on those men. They relieved the 23rd Regiment, which had been tasked with taking the east side of Airfield No. 1. He fought onward.

## THE FLAG

That same day, Donald recalls seeing kamikazes strike and sink the aircraft carrier USS Bismarck Sea. One plane crashed through the hangar deck and struck the ship's magazines. The second plane hit the saltwater distribution system, which prevented them from fighting any fires. 318 men died. Donald had a tear in his eye.

The flag raising was on D+4. Donald was midway up Suribachi when the first American flag was raised at about 10:15 a.m. "We were crawling up, mopping up and ducking and throwing grenades," Donald said. "Then we saw the first flag go up. Oh, man. Everyone said, 'Old Glory is waving up there! Look!'"

Everyone started firing weapons. The horns of the ships sounded for several minutes. "You'd have thought it was New York Harbor on the Fourth of July!" Donald said. He had a tear in his eye.

The flag raisers were members of the 28th Regiment. A few Marines in the 27th Regiment, including Jack, were asked to assist in the "mop-up" on the north side of Mt. Suribachi. He was standing fairly close to the flag raisers as the second flag was raised at about 3:15 p.m. He was invited to join them in a group photo, but he was hesitant. They cajoled him into joining them because he was a Marine, after all! (Search the Internet for "Gung Ho Iwo Jima." He is the farthest left standing up with his helmet in the air.)

Jack was inspired by the flag. "I looked up there at nighttime. Lying on the ground taking cover behind lava rock, I looked up there and saw an American flag every time an artillery shell or flare would go off. I thought of Bunker Hill. 'O say, can you see the flag ...?' It just moved us to see that flag waving in the breeze. It stayed up there the whole time." A tear was in his eye.

One misnomer is that the battle was complete when the flag was raised. More than a month of gruesome fighting remained. Jack advanced northward. Between airfields No. 1 and No. 2 was a minefield. His lieutenant stepped on a mine. "I went backwards 100 feet and then took off to the right. As I ran I said, 'If I'm gonna step on it, so be it,'" Jack said. "I got to him and knelt down to hold his right arm. I told him, 'Help is coming. Hang in there.' His whole bottom part was ripped apart and laying in black sand. Within seconds he died." A tear was in Jack's eye.

## 'YOU SING AGAIN'

On D+10, Donald participated in a prolonged assault upon the infamous Hill 362A. "That's when we lost our battalion." He and Cpl. Clyde Shivers used shape charges and a 5-gallon can of gasoline to blast out a cave and then collapse it. It took a great deal of courage to do that.

But not everything was violent.

Donald has a wonderful voice, even today. His inspiration was Bing Crosby. While in a shell hole with two other guys, with the Japanese no more than 200 feet away, one of his friends said, "Hey, Graves, give us a song." The Japanese would attack at night, which presented different fears. "What do you want to hear?" Jack asked.

"Anything."  
So, he sang the Lord's Prayer as loud as he could. A Japanese soldier replied, "That's very good, Marine. You sing again."

At approximately the same time across the island to the east, another battle raged. Iwo held three airstrips. The 3rd Marine had staked a position on the north side of Airfield No. 2. On March 1, Gerald's regiment reached the south side of Airfield No. 3. According to a letter from Gerald's friend, on March 2, they dug a foxhole near that Airfield. The next morning, his battalion advanced to the high ground to take the remainder of the Airfield and to head northeast. Gerald didn't make it. Somewhere, his mother cried.

Gerald didn't get to see the fruits of his labor. The next day, D+13, a B-29, the Dinah Might made a rocky emergency landing. Jack recalls that the crew kissed the ground to demonstrate their happiness!

Cpl. Drier's regiment had moved north toward Airfield No. 2. They proceeded to circle around to the east toward Tachuiwa Point. Between March 5-9, the 1st and 3rd battalions had completely encircled the Japanese on the infamous Turkey Knob. There was no let up on March 9 as they crawled another 300 yards. On March 10, the 25th replaced the 24th in the line, but Eugene did not join them. Somewhere, his mother cried.

## BLOODY GULCH

Bloody Gulch is where the Japanese made their last stand.

"We held them down right there," according to Donald. "We were in a ravine. My squad was gone; there were three of us."

Over the radio came a request. "We are sending a young man out to help you."

"Bring him. We need him," was the reply. "He will be there in about five minutes so don't shoot him."

Sure enough, the kid, who happened to be from Kentucky, rolled into the hole.

"I'm your replacement."

"Just sit down over here. We're not going to do anything."

Another command came. "Have you got glasses? Look and see if you can spot any snipers out in front of you. We're getting hit."

Neither Donald nor a fellow Marine named Lovinsky saw anything. The kid wanted to take a look, but he was warned that he would get himself killed.

But Lovinsky said give him the glasses. They were talking while the kid was up there looking.

A shot rang out.

"His helmet fell back, and he got shot right between the eyes," Donald recalled.

The kid fell back. When his helmet fell back, there was a picture of his wife and two children in the top of it.

"I jumped up and I threw my rifle on the ground," Donald said. "I cussed and I cussed the Marine Corps. I cussed God. I cussed everything. I was out of my mind, and Lovinsky got up and smacked me one. Pulled me down on the ground. I started laughing. I thought it was funny. That stuff goes on."

## DEAD SILENCE

Donald, Jack and their dog-tired buddies climbed aboard a ship on March 31, 1945, and headed back to Hawaii. The next day, the Battle of Okinawa began. On the way to Hawaii, word came that President Roosevelt had died. "They blew the whistle and said, 'all hands listen. The Old Man is dead.'" Dead silence. There were tears in many eyes. "Our Commander in Chief was dead. What are we going to do?" At that moment, the Iwo Jima veterans knew that the invasion of Japan lay ahead of them.

When Jack arrived back at Hawaii, he ran into Ira Hayes (a flag raiser), who had returned from the War Bond tour.

"You had it made!" Donald recalled telling him. "What are you back here for?"

Ira replied, "It was a bunch of bull. I couldn't handle it. It wasn't true. I never even saw a Jap on Iwo. They were making heroes out of us. I'm not a hero."

I know that veterans don't like that word — "hero" — but Donald, Jack, Eugene and Gerald, you are courageous men who deserve our thanks. I won't forget what you did for me and for our country.

Semper fi, gentlemen. Semper fi!

## FROM THE BIBLE

He is not here, but has risen. Luke 24:6. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.