

SERGEANT DARRELL SAMUEL COLE,
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE (DECEASED)

Sergeant Cole was born on July 20, 1920, in Flat River, Missouri, the son of Mr. Samuel R. Cole and Mrs. Magdalena Williams Cole. In 1938 he was graduated from the Esther, Missouri, High School, where he had developed his talent for music and played the French horn. He joined the Civilian Conservation Corps and soon became assistant forestry clerk and assistant educational advisor for his company. Following a year's service in the CCC, he found employment as a skiver machine operator for a firm in Detroit, Michigan, which specialized in the manufacture of engine gaskets.

On August 25, 1941, Cole enlisted in the Marine Corps for the duration of the National Emergency, and following boot training at Parris Island, South Carolina, he was appointed to the Field Music School for training as a Marine Corps field music, the equivalent of a bugler. Completing instruction, he was transferred to the First Marine Regiment, First Marine Division, and on August 7, 1942, reached the shores of Guadalcanal for the first American offensive of World War II.

Not too happy in his role of field music when he had joined a fighting outfit to fight, and after acquitting himself meritoriously as a machine gunner in the absence of the regular gunner, he applied for a change in rating, but was refused due to the shortage of buglers. He completed his first overseas tour of duty and returned to the United States, where in March 1943, he joined the First Battalion, Twenty-Third Marines, then forming as a part of the Fourth Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. When the unit moved to California he again asked for relief as a field music and for permission to perform line duties, but was again refused for the same reason, shortage of buglers in the Marine Corps.

During the first engagement of the Fourth Division at Roi-Namur in the Kwajalein Atoll, Cole, forsaking his bugle, again went into action as a machine-gunner. Four months later, when the Division stormed ashore at Saipan, he had been assigned to a machine gun unit. Because of his proven ability in combat, he was designated machine gun section leader, and later, wounded himself during a battle in which his squad leader was killed, he assumed command of the squad. For his "resolute leadership, indomitable fighting spirit and tenacious determination in the face of terrific opposition" he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. He was also awarded the Purple Heart Medal for wounds received in that action. A few days after the battle at Saipan, Cole led his squad ashore in the invasion of Tinian.

After the Marianas campaigns he again requested a change of rating and this time his request was approved and he was designated Corporal. In November 1944, he was promoted to the rating of

Sergeant. On February 19, 1945, he led his machine gun section ashore in the D-Day assault on Iwo Jima. Moving forward with the initial assault wave, their advance was halted by hail of fire from two Japanese emplacements which Sergeant Cole personally destroyed with hand grenades. His unit continued to advance until pinned down for a second time by enemy fire, and Sergeant Cole, calmly estimating the situation, advanced alone, armed solely with a pistol and one hand grenade, swiftly attacked the enemy, returned for more grenades, and again attacked. He was instantly killed while returning to his squad, but had heroically enabled his company to storm the remaining fortifications and attain their ultimate objective. The former "field music" had gloriously died a "fighting man."

Sergeant Cole was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor with the following citation:

MEDAL OF HONOR:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as Leader of a Machine-gun Section of Company B, First Battalion, Twenty-third Marines, Fourth Marine Division, in action against enemy Japanese forces during the assault on Iwo Jima in the Volcano Islands, 19 February 1945. Assailed by a tremendous volume of small-arms, mortar and artillery fire as he advanced with one squad of his section in the initial assault wave, Sergeant Cole boldly led his men up the sloping beach toward Airfield Number One despite the blanketing curtain of flying shrapnel and, personally destroying with hand grenades two hostile emplacements which menaced the progress of his unit, continued to move forward until a merciless barrage of fire emanating from three Japanese pillboxes halted the advance. Instantly placing his one remaining machine gun in action, he delivered a shattering fusillade and succeeded in silencing the nearest and most threatening emplacement before his weapon jammed and the enemy, reopening fire with knee mortars and grenades, pinned down his unit for the second time. Shrewdly gauging the tactical situation and evolving a daring plan of counter attack, Sergeant Cole, armed solely with a pistol and one grenade, coolly advanced alone to the hostile pillboxes. Hurling his one grenade at the enemy in sudden, swift attack, he quickly withdrew, returned to his own lines for additional grenades and again advanced, attacked and withdrew. With enemy guns still active, he ran the gantlet of slashing fire a third time to complete the total destruction of the Japanese strong point and the annihilation of the defending garrison in this final assault. Although instantly killed by an enemy grenade as

he returned to his squad, Sergeant Cole had eliminated a formidable Japanese position, thereby enabling his company to storm the remaining fortifications, continue the advance and seize the objective. By his dauntless initiative, unfaltering courage and indomitable determination during a critical period of action, Sergeant Cole served as an inspiration to his comrades, and his stout-hearted leadership in the face of almost certain death sustained and enhanced the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country."

Sergeant Cole was posthumously awarded a Gold Star in lieu of a second Purple Heart Medal, and for action with the First Marine Division (Solomons), the Fourth Marine Division (Saipan), and the Fifth Amphibious Corps (Iwo Jima), he was entitled to the facsimile of the Presidential Unit Citation awarded to each of these units, and a Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon with three stars.

In addition to the Medal of Honor, the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart Medal with Gold Star, and the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon with three stars, Sergeant Cole was entitled to the American Defense Service Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Area Campaign Medal with four battle stars; the American Area Campaign Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal.

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