

# Medal of Honor

A special category of hero

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**F**rom his athletic career to his military service, Lt. Andrew Jackson Lummus Jr. was known for getting the job done.

Getting the job done for his country cost the Baylor University graduate his life on Iwo Jima in 1945 and resulted in a grateful nation's highest military award – the Medal of Honor.

Lummus was born on Oct. 22, 1915 in Ennis, Texas, the son of a second-generation cotton farmer. He attended public

## WORLD WAR II

school in Ennis, then took high school courses at Texas Military College in Terrell, according to a web site managed by his relatives.

In 1937 Lummus enrolled at Baylor University, where he studied physical education and history. He was a center fielder for Baylor's varsity baseball team and an end for the football team.

After his four years at Baylor, Lummus signed with both the Wichita Falls Spudders under a minor league baseball contract and the New York Giants under a football contract.

Lummus saw some playing time as a rookie end for the Giants in 1941. His athletic career was cut short by his decision to enlist in the Marines in January 1942, roughly a month after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.

By August 1944 he was stationed in Hawaii as an infantry school instructor at Camp Elliott, according to the U.S. Marine Corps History Division.

While in Hawaii, Lummus organized a baseball team for the men in the 5th Marine Division and was later reassigned to Headquarters Company as the Battalion Liaison Officer. After an initial stop in Saipan, Lummus and his men were shipped to Iwo Jima on Feb. 1, 1945.

## Crush all resistance

On March 8, the men of 5th Company were ordered to push toward the northern coast of Iwo Jima, past the elaborate defense system of foxholes and underground tunnels the Japanese forces had made long before the U.S. invaded the island.

After fighting for two days and nights without rest, Lummus was assigned to lead 3rd Platoon toward the northernmost point on the island, slightly east of Kitano Point.

As the platoon advanced through heavy enemy fire, Lummus charged forward and single-handedly killed the Japanese soldiers in two concrete pillboxes, suffering major shoulder wounds as a result of two grenade blasts, according to the



official citation.

Lummus continued leading his men onward until they encountered a third pillbox. He killed the Japanese manning that one as well.

His Medal of Honor citation described what happened next: "Determined to crush all resistance, he led his men indomitably, personally attacking foxholes and spider traps with his carbine and systematically reducing the fanatic opposition."

As Lummus was moving from one foxhole to another, he stepped on a land mine that blew off both of his legs, according to the family's web site.

## Leading in the face of death

Records show that the mortally wounded Lummus propped himself up on his stumps as best he could and ordered his men

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www.jacklummus.com

A three-time All-Southwest Conference center fielder for the Baylor baseball team, Jack Lummus also sparkled on the football field.

A two-year starter, he was a second-team All-American his senior season. In addition to playing minor league baseball, he played nine games for the NFL's New York Giants before enlisting in the service on Jan. 30, 1942.

to keep going. Inspired by his commitment, the horrified and exhausted Marines charged forward and took the remaining 300 grounds of the bitterly contested battleground.

Lummus lived long enough to receive medical attention, but his fate was sealed. "Well, Doc, it looks like the Giants have lost a good end," he said just before his death, according to the U.S. Marine Corps History Division.

Laura Francis Lummus received the Medal of Honor awarded to her son for "dauntless leadership and unwavering devotion to duty" on May 30, 1946.

Lummus was buried in Myrtle Cemetery in Ennis.

**The Medal of Honor feature runs every other Sunday, alternating with "Voices of Valor," which focuses on Central Texas veterans. To suggest a story of a Central Texas veteran, email [voicesofvalor@wacotrib.com](mailto:voicesofvalor@wacotrib.com).**

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