

# CAROLINA MUSEUM OF THE MARINE

## Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class William Halyburton Jr

.James Danielson, PhD



William Halyburton Jr. was born on August 2, 1924 in Canton, North Carolina. He had two brothers, Bob and Joe. In 1940, Halyburton's family moved to Miami, Florida, but shortly thereafter, William Halyburton returned to North Carolina to live with an aunt and uncle in Wilmington. He was a Christian young man and in 1943 entered seminary at Davidson College in Davidson, North Carolina, but did not complete his program because he was drafted to serve in World War II.

Halyburton was a conscientious objector who served in the military but would not bear arms. In August 1943, William Halyburton joined the hospital corps in the Naval Reserve and spent more than a year training as a corpsman. In January 1945, pharmacist's mate 2nd class Halyburton was sent to the Pacific as a medic for the Marines of 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division.

On May 10, 1945, the 1st Marine Division was on the island of Okinawa preparing to cross a strategically important ravine called Awacha Draw, known as "Death Valley" by soldiers and Marines because so many of them died there. Halyburton was with a rifle company on that day, his first day in combat, and watched many Marines fall. Because of the heavy mortar, machine gun, and sniper fire into

Awacha Draw, wounded Marines could not be evacuated, so they were either left to be evacuated later, or treated where they lay.

Under heavy enemy fire, Halyburton ran across the ravine and up a hill to treat the wounded Marine who was farthest into the crossing. As he began giving aid to the Marine, the Marine was struck by a second bullet. Halyburton placed his body in the line of fire to protect the wounded Marine and continued giving aid until he collapsed and died from his own wounds.

William Halyburton died on May 10, 1945, and on May 8, 1946, at Bayfront Park in Miami, Rear Admiral John Shafroth Jr. presented Halyburton's Medal of Honor to his brothers Bob and Joe, who also served in the Navy during the war. Halyburton was buried at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii.

In 1984, the USS Halyburton, a guided missile frigate, was commissioned in the corpsman's honor. Nearer to our home here, the Halyburton Naval Health Clinic resides at Cherry Point, North Carolina.

Above Image:: [https://wrc.navair-rdte.navy.mil/warfighter\\_enc/History/bios/halyburt.htm](https://wrc.navair-rdte.navy.mil/warfighter_enc/History/bios/halyburt.htm), Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=729611>.

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