

Champaign County Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

Museum at 809 East Lawn Avenue, Urbana OH 43078

February 2011

WWII - Pacific Theater

Indelible Memories: The Battle for Peleliu

The Champaign County Historical Society 809 East Lawn Ave. at 2pm, Sunday, March 20, 2011, will host George Peto and Joe Dodge, WWII Veterans, to give there recounting of the Battle of Peleliu that was fought between American troops and those of the Empire of Japan from September to November 1944 on the island of Peleliu, present day Palau. U.S. Forces spearheaded by the 1st Marine Division fought to capture the Japanese airstrip on the small coral island south east of the Philippines. It was one of the bloodiest engagements of the war in the Pacific.

George Peto and Joe Dodge both served with the 1st Marine Division and saw some of the fiercest fighting in a battle which lasted 72 days. Peto, a line sergeant and machine gunner, landed with his company of 235 men. A day later, he was one of only 18 in his company still alive. Dodge, a corporal, was a qualified sharp shooter. He spent 70 days between Bloody Nose Ridge and Death Valley carrying a satchel of dynamite and demolishing the caves where the Japanese hid.

Dodge and Peto want to make sure that the sacrifices on Peleliu are not forgotten. They have spoken to thousands of students in recent years. Dodge explains their mission in a recent article in the *Plain City Advocate*: "We're not bragging. We're not complaining. We're just telling the truth." They will share their stories at the Museum at 2:00 p.m. on March 20th. The public is invited.