

Well do you remember the date of July 21, 1944, when Marine Lieutenant T. P. Hunter died on Guam, the first day of its invasion. Another invasion - Iwo Jima - cost the life of Marine Captain Fred Eberhardt, another University of Kansas immortal. Fred lettered in track in '40 and '41. I could not depict the unquenchable valor of the man as well as did the Kansas City Star of March 16, so I am quoting this to you in full.

"Out on lonely, blood-stained Iwo Jima, Capt. Fred Eberhardt, one of Kansas University's greatest students lies among the yet uncounted dead, and his year younger brother, who trained and fought beside him for nearly four years, has buried his kin and then from a hospital wrote the parents here (Salina) to break the sad news.

"'As a man speaking to a man I must tell you plainly and directly--Fred is dead,' Lieut. Charles Eberhardt, 22, wrote his father, Frank L. Eberhardt. I write you because I cannot bear to tell mother what she must know. I cannot tell you the date and place of his death, but I can tell you that I was there and that he was killed in action leading his men in the way which has made him a near-legend in our regiment. He died instantly, from an artillery shell fragment. . . . As you read this and feel its hurt, think of the ache I felt there on the field of battle. Only my responsibility to keep going in order to lead my men kept me from breaking under a strain which even before Fred's death had seemed almost beyond human capacity to withstand. To me, Fred was more than a brother, he was the best man I ever knew.

"'Fred knew well that he might die and he was not afraid. Fred could have had a job with much less personal risk. After his conduct on Saipan and subsequent decoration he could have had nearly any job he desired. He was even given a chance to return to the states, but he could not accept it because of his deep and sincere conviction that he must do all he could out here.

"'All of his actions were judged by their relationship to his own conscience, and that conscience was no vague light, no impetuous intuition. It was the rational judgment of one of the most sincere, imaginative and intelligent men who ever lived. He fought in the front lines of the marine corps because he knew that someone had to do it and that he could do it. Therefore, he would do it. He had only loathing for the rear echelon people who devoted their minds and abilities to saving their own skins and to personal gain.

"'Above all, he was concerned with all mankind's suffering, and ignorance and greed and malice, and he hoped some day to be a part of the educational or administrative system which would work toward eliminating those ills. Meanwhile, he was doing the most any man can do in order to preserve the possibility of working for a better world.

"'In the past months we spent many long nights talking, and found that after years of identical environment and then educations in quite diverse colleges we held almost exactly the same viewpoints. Fred's greatness so far was shown only on battlefields, and the loss of that greatness is a loss which extends far beyond our family. Knowing him as no one else knew him, I ask you to be brave as he was brave and face the world for which he fought with the same hope, the same visions and the same devotion.'

"As an afterthought and in a postscript, Lt. Eberhardt told his father he had been wounded in action, was in the Mariana islands, and was recovering. The Eberhardts have a third son, Ensign Chris Eberhardt, 24, now back in the states after assignments in the South Pacific."

Marine Captain Fred Eberhardt's legion of friends can recall with pride the words of one who said, "Only those are good to live who are not afraid to die." Certainly he knew this was his lot, his responsibility, and his choice.