

WNY Vets

Military Veterans from
Buffalo & Western New York



WNYV HQ US ARMY USAAS USAAF USAF USN USMC USCG MISCELLANY

PFC John F. Kiszak

Depew, NY

Originally From Cleveland, Ohio

Aviation Ordnanceman

Marine Scout Bomber Squadron 334
9th Marine Air Wing
MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina

Marine Scout Bomber Squadron 243
Marine Air Group 32
1st Marine Air Wing
Philippines
Pacific Theater of Operations

Marine Bombing Squadron 443
Zone of the Interior

John Kiszak was 17 years old and living in Cleveland, Ohio when the USA entered the Second World War. On April 8th, 1943 he enlisted in the Marine Corps at the District Headquarters Induction and Recruiting Station in Cleveland and was sent to the Marine Corp Recruit Depot in San Diego. Arriving later the same month, he was assigned to the First Recruit Battalion and began eight weeks of basic training.

At some point John was accepted into Marine Aviation, was sent to Marine Corps Aviation Depot Kearny Mesa, San Diego and assigned to Aviation Training Squadron 131. In July of 1943 he was sent to the Aviation Ordnanceman's School at the Naval Air Technical Training Center in Norman, Oklahoma, and assigned to Training Squadron 21 of the Marine Aviation Detachment there. While at Norman, John learned how to handle every kind of weapon that was carried by Navy and Marine aircraft, from machine guns and their ammunition, to all manner of bombs and rockets.

After completing the course at Norman, John's next known assignment was with VMSB-334 (Marine Scout Bomber Squadron 334), 9th Marine Air Wing, at MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina. It was with VMSB-334 that he underwent roughly six months of operational training on the type of aircraft with which he would go to war in the following year, the Douglas SBD Dauntless dive bomber.

A number of Marine scout bomber squadrons were deactivated in October of 1944, including VMSB-334. John was temporarily attached to the HQ squadron of Marine Air Group 34, 9th Marine Air Wing, at MCAF Newport, Arkansas before his combat assignment; VMSB-243, Marine Air Group 32, 1st Marine Air Wing, which was at the time operating from Emirau Island in Papua, New Guinea. Though I don't know exactly when John arrived out in the Pacific, it was most likely before late January of 1945 when the squadron moved northwest to Mangaldan in the Philippines to participate in the campaign to retake that island nation from the Japanese.

VMSB-243 is mentioned several times in a book titled 'Marine Aviation in the Philippines', which you can read in PDF form on the Marine Corps University website, [HERE](#)...

I'm not sure exactly when, but John was transferred to another outfit, VMB-443, sometime in 1945, possibly after the end of the war. VMB-443 was a medium bomber outfit that flew the PBJ, the USMC version of the North American B-25 Mitchell. His time with VMB-443 was not very long, as the outfit was inactivated in November of 1945. I have no further information about John's service history, but it's more than likely that he was discharged in late 1945 or early to mid 1946.

John returned to Cleveland but moved to Depew, NY in 1952, raising a family of four children with his wife Mary, and taking a job at Westinghouse in the old Curtiss-Wright Plant #2 at the Buffalo Airport in Cheektowaga, NY. He retired in 1972 and moved down South to Sarasota, Florida. He passed away in 1990.

This extract from the USMC Recruit Depot muster roll for the month of April 1943 shows when John showed up in San Diego, California for basic training.

CHERRY POINT, ARIZONA				
MUSTER ROLL OF OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN OF THE U. S. MARINE CORPS				
FIRST RECRUIT BATTALION, RECRUIT DEPOT, MCB, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA				
FROM 1 April TO 30 April 1943, INCLUSIVE				
NO.	NAME AND RANK	ENLISTED	REMARKS	
276	KISZAK, John	8Apr43	Person. A. 7th MARS, Cleveland, Ohio. 12, 14 by S/Ra fr CRD. 8-13, fur. 18, 14 in person.	

National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry

These next two muster roll extracts show that in July of 1943, John was present in the ranks of Aviation Training Squadron 131 at MCAB Kearny Mesa in San Diego, and that he was transferred later that month to Training Squadron 21 of the Marine Aviation Detachment at the NATTC in Norman, Oklahoma where he attended the Aviation Ordnanceman's School.

CHERRY POINT, ARIZONA				
MUSTER ROLL OF OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN OF THE U. S. MARINE CORPS				
AVIATION TRAINING SQUADRON ONE-THIRTY-ONE, MCAB, KEARNY MESA, SAN DIEGO, CALIF.				
FROM 1 JULY TO 31 JULY 1943, INCLUSIVE				
NO.	NAME AND RANK	ENLISTED	REMARKS	
227	KISSON, Martin E.		See footnote "B"	
228	KISZAK, John		See footnote "B"	
249	KRZAKOWSKI, Theodore M.	20Jul43	See footnote "B" & "D"	

National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry

CHERRY POINT, ARIZONA				
MUSTER ROLL OF OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN OF THE U. S. MARINE CORPS				
TRAINING SQUADRON 21, MAB, NATTC, NORMAN, OKLAHOMA				
FROM 1 JULY TO 31 JULY 1943, INCLUSIVE				
NO.	NAME AND RANK	ENLISTED	REMARKS	
1327	STIMLEY, Harold W.		See footnote "A"	
1328	KISZAK, John	8Apr43	See footnote "B"	
160	KATHEHN, Donald		See footnote "C"	

National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry

An aerial view of the Naval Air Technical Training Center at Norman, Oklahoma.

There were two Naval facilities at Norman: The NATTC and the Naval Air Station. You can see many more photos of both, as well as photos of the town of Norman itself, [HERE](#).



Moore-Lindsay Historic House Museum - Larger Image

Here we see that John was still at the NATTC in Norman during October of 1943.

CHERRY POINT, ARIZONA				
MUSTER ROLL OF OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN OF THE U. S. MARINE CORPS				
AVIATION TRAINING SQUADRON 21, MARINE AVIATION DETACHMENT, NATTC, NORMAN, OKLAHOMA				
FROM 1 October TO 31 October 1943, INCLUSIVE				
NO.	NAME AND RANK	ENLISTED	REMARKS	
20	STIMLEY, Donald K.		See footnote "B"	
20	KISZAK, John		1-16, see footnote "A"; 20, see footnote "C"	

National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry

By April of 1944, John had been transferred to VMSB-334 to undergo operational training.

CHERRY POINT, ARIZONA				
MUSTER ROLL OF OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN OF THE U. S. MARINE CORPS				
VMSB-334, 9th MAF, MAF, CHERRY POINT, M.C.				
FROM 1 April TO 31 April 1944, INCLUSIVE				
NO.	NAME AND RANK	ENLISTED	REMARKS	
9	JOHNSON, Gilbert M.		911 AOM.	
10	KISZAK, John		911 1-14, 26-30 AOM; 15-25, fur.	
11	LEWIS, Thomas D.		911 AOM.	

National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry

And he was still with VMSB-334 in July...

CHERRY POINT, ARIZONA				
MUSTER ROLL OF OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN OF THE U. S. MARINE CORPS				
VMSB-334, MAB-34, 9th MAF, MAF, CHERRY POINT, M.C.				
FROM 1 July TO 31 July 1944, INCLUSIVE				
NO.	NAME AND RANK	ENLISTED	REMARKS	
5	KISZAK, John		911 1-11, 17-21, AOM; 12-16, fur.	
9	LEWIS, Thomas D.		911 AOM.	

National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry

On October 10th, 1943 VMSB-334 was deactivated, and John was temporarily assigned to the Headquarters Squadron of Marine Air Group 34 at MCAF Newport, Arkansas. From there he would be sent to MCAD Miramar in California prior to overseas deployment.

CHERRY POINT, ARIZONA				
MUSTER ROLL OF OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN OF THE U. S. MARINE CORPS				
HQ, Sq. 34, MCAF 34, 9th MAF, MAF, NEWPORT, M.C.				
FROM 1 October TO 31 October 1944, INCLUSIVE				
NO.	NAME AND RANK	ENLISTED	REMARKS	
5	KISZAK, John	8Apr43	Footnote "A"; 10-27, Ord; See Footnote "C"	

National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry

In April of 1945, John was counted on the roll for VMSB-243. He was 'in the war' now, based in the Philippines, and probably had been for at least a couple's months.

CHERRY POINT, ARIZONA				
MUSTER ROLL OF OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN OF THE U. S. MARINE CORPS				
VMSB-243, MAB-34, 1st MAF, 6th FFG, San Francisco, California				
FROM 1 April TO 30 April 1945, INCLUSIVE				
NO.	NAME AND RANK	ENLISTED	REMARKS	
6	STIMLEY, Harold W.		553	
7	KISZAK, John		911	
8	KATHEHN, Donald L.		662	

National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry

With a 250lb bomb already hung under each wing, USMC aviation ordnancemen load a 500lb bomb on the centerline rack of an SBD Dauntless during the Philippines campaign in March of 1945.

John undoubtedly performed this very same task many, many times.



Project 914 Archives - Larger Image

By October of 1945, John had been transferred to VMB-443, a veteran medium bomber outfit that had seen much action in the Pacific and which would be deactivated the following month. John would follow soon after, with his discharge likely coming within the next several months.

CHERRY POINT, ARIZONA				
MUSTER ROLL OF OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN OF THE U. S. MARINE CORPS				
MARINE BOMBING SQUADRON FOUR FORTY THREE				
FROM 1 October TO 31 October 1945, INCLUSIVE				
NO.	NAME AND RANK	ENLISTED	REMARKS	
9	STIMLEY, Lawrence G.		767 AVE.	
10	KISZAK, John		911	
11	STIMLEY, John J.			

National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry

VMB-443 flew the PBJ, the USMC version of the B-25 Mitchell that was flown by the USAAF.



Project 914 Archives - Larger Image

The full-sized, and complete muster roll pages from which the above extracts were taken can be found on Ancestry.com, [HERE](#). They're free to view, but you must be registered on the site.

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