

THE UNITED STATES MARINES ON IWO JIMA The Battle and the Flag Raisings



HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION
HEADQUARTERS, U.S. MARINE CORPS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Marine Corps War Memorial is located at Arlington National Cemetery, overlooking Washington, D.C. The figures on the statue are 32 feet high. They stand on a base of rough Swedish granite. The base is covered with blocks of polished Swedish black granite. Burnished into the stone in gold lettering are the names and dates of principal Marine Corps engagements since the Corps was founded in 1775.

The United States Marines on Iwo Jima

The Battle and the Flag Raisings

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Previous Pamphlets

<i>The Battle for Iwo Jima</i>	Printed 1962
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Foreword

This concise narrative of the Marine battle for Iwo Jima and the events surrounding the famous flag raisings atop Mount Suribachi is an updated revision of one of the most popular pamphlets ever produced by the History and Museums Division. Compiled from original records and appropriate historical works and printed as two separate reference pamphlets in 1962, the chronicle was combined into one volume in 1967.

This revision of the 1967 pamphlet adds significant new material on the two flag raisings on Iwo Jima as well as updated biographical material on some of the flag raisers. Also included because of the immense interest in the Marine Corps War Memorial, is a fact sheet on the construction of the Memorial, along with other pertinent information on the monument.

In this 50th anniversary year of the final drive to victory in the Pacific, this pamphlet is dedicated to all of the heroes of Iwo Jima.



Edwin H. Simmons
Brigadier General, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret)
Director of Marine Corps History and Museums



With permission of the Associated Press

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 113162

The most famous battle photograph ever taken, the second flag-raising on Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima. Pictured from left are 1-PFC Ira H. Hayes; 2-PFC Franklin R. Sousley, KIA; 3-Sgt Michael Strank, KIA; 4-PM2/C John H. Bradley; 5-PFC Rene A. Gagnon; and 6-Cpl Harlon H. Block, KIA.

The Battle for Iwo Jima

Prologue

"Above all, we shall dedicate ourselves and our entire strength to the defense of the islands."^{1,2} This was the first in a series of "Courageous Battle Vows" that set forth the military philosophy of Lieutenant General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, commander of all Japanese Army forces on Iwo Jima.

In itself, the island defended by Kuribayashi was almost valueless. Iwo Jima, famed only for its sulphur deposits, measured 4-2/3 by 2-1/2 miles. At the southern tip of the fan-shaped island loomed Mount Suribachi, a 550-foot extinct volcano. A plateau scarred by twisting gorges and broken by ridges 340 to 368 feet in height took up the northern part of the island. Between the northern plateau and Mount Suribachi was a plain covered with black volcanic ash.

Nature had given Iwo Jima nothing worth fighting for, but the industrious Japanese had completed two airfields on the island and were beginning work on

a third. These fields provided the staging area for aerial attacks on American-held Saipan. From the same airstrips, Japanese fighters soared aloft to attack American heavy bombers en route to the Japanese home islands only 660 miles away. Once it had been wrested from the enemy, Iwo Jima could serve as a base for American fighter escorts and as a way station for bombers raiding Japan.

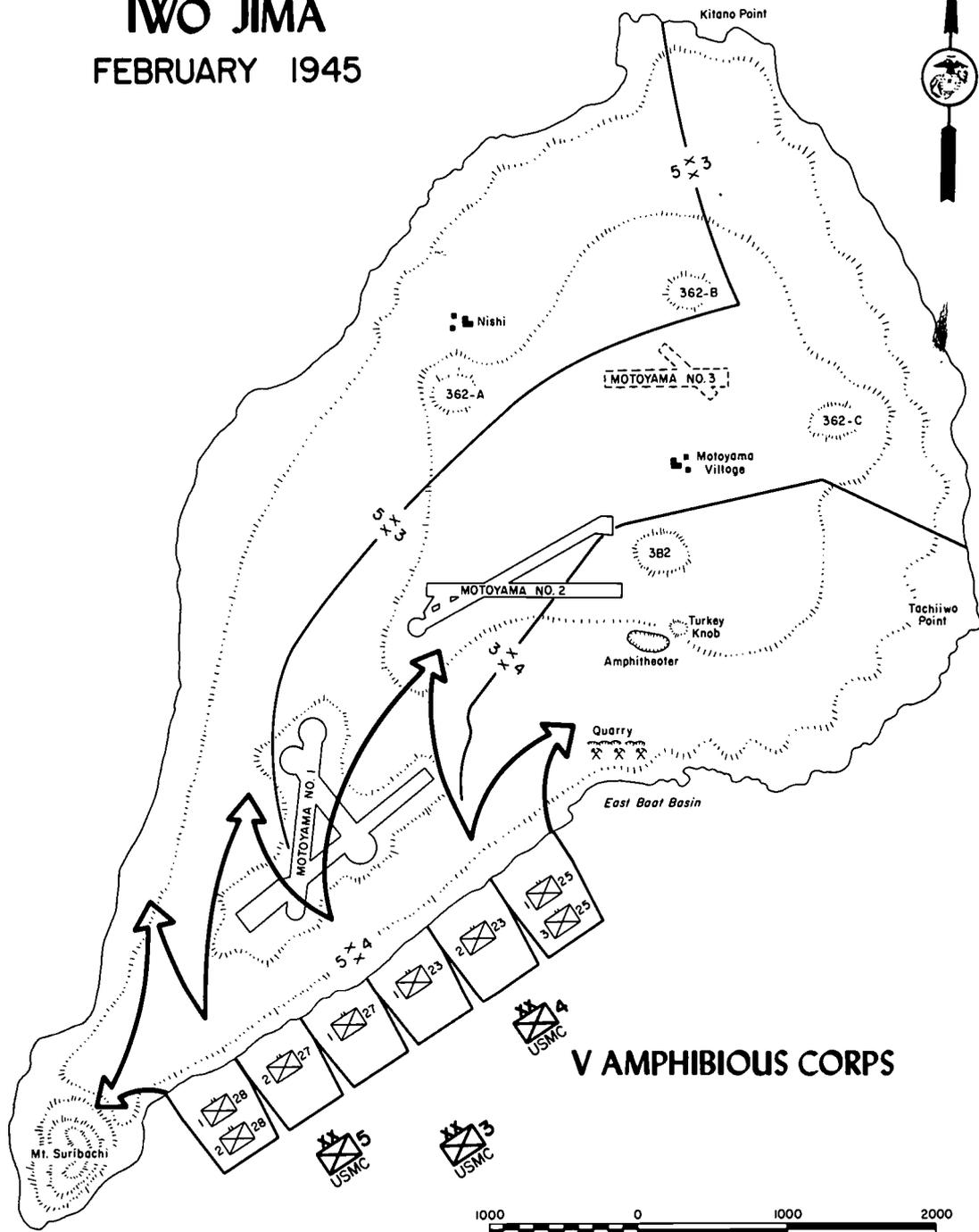
Photographs taken by both aircraft and submarines showed American planners how zealously Kuribayashi had dedicated himself and his energies to the defense of Iwo Jima. A total of 642 blockhouses, pillboxes, and other gun positions were located prior to the assault. To blunt the quills of Kuribayashi's porcupine, the Navy and Army Air Forces subjected Iwo Jima to "the longest and most intensive preparation given any objective in the Pacific in World War II."³ Beginning on 15 June 1944, when carrier planes first hit the island, the American attacks continued steadily through summer and fall and culminated in a 74-day round of con-

H-hour at Iwo Jima, 19 February 1945

Department of Defense Photo (USN) NH65311



THE ASSAULT ON IWO JIMA FEBRUARY 1945



V AMPHIBIOUS CORPS





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 111691

Initial wave of Marines lands on Red and Green Beaches at the foot of Mount Suribachi under heavy fire.

tinuous strikes by Saipan-based bombers. The effect of the intensive three-day preinvasion bombardment, far shorter than what the Marine landing force had asked for, was partially nullified by bad weather. Fortunately, the sun burned away the mists on the third day and the naval gunfire and covering force of six old battleships and five cruisers was able to batter targets adjacent to the landing beaches.

Selected as assault troops for the Iwo Jima operation were the 4th Marine Division (23d, 24th, and 25th Marines [Infantry] and 14th Marines [Artillery]), led by Major General Clifton B. Cates, and the 5th Marine Division (26th, 27th, 28th [Infantry] and 13th Marines [Artillery]), under the command of Major General Keller E. Rockey. These two divisions together with myriad supporting units were part of the V Amphibious Corps, a force commanded by Major General Harry Schmidt. The 3d Marine Division of V Amphibious Corps (3d, 9th, 21st [Infantry] and 12th Marines [Artillery]), Major General Graves B. Erskine commanding, was designated as Expeditionary Troops Reserve. Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith, assigned the post of Commanding General, Expeditionary Troops, had overall responsibility for the conduct of the fighting ashore.

The Landing

D-Day for the assault upon Iwo Jima was 19 February 1945, and H-Hour was set at 0900. At 0902, the

leading wave of armored amphibian tractors hit the beach and ground ashore; three minutes later, the first troop-carrying amphibian tractors cleared the water. The Marines scrambled down the ramps and began wading inland through an ankle-deep sea of volcanic ash. Initial opposition was negligible, and it seemed for a time that the 4th and 5th Marine Divisions would be able to knife swiftly across the plain to the opposite shore. Plans called for the capture of Suribachi by one regiment of the 5th Division and the capture of Airfield Number 1 by the 4th Division—both objectives to be gained on the first day. In spite of the heartening start, however, the goal established for the corps was not to be realized.

All was quiet until the lead battalions tried to cross the ashen terrace just beyond the landing beaches. The advancing Marines were seared by machine gun and rifle fire from skillfully concealed emplacements. At the same time, mortar and artillery shells began exploding all along the beaches. The lull had ended.

The initial calm had been due indirectly to the destructive power of naval gunfire. Kuribayashi knew what would happen if his men were caught above ground during the intense barrage that screened the shoreward movement of the Marine amphibians. He ordered his men to stay in underground shelters until the shelling had lifted, then to man their weapons. The Japanese commander yielded the beaches. He placed his confidence in the elaborate defensive system tun-

neled among the tortuous ravines of the northern plateau.

Although elements of the 5th Marine Division managed to drive across the island on the morning of D-Day, bypassed enemy strong points continued to resist fiercely. At 1800, when the advance was halted for the night, the Marine line stretched across the neck of land at the base of Suribachi, moved north-eastward along the coast, swerved around the southern fringes of Airfield Number 1, and terminated near the East Boat Basin. The advance had halted far short of its goal (see map on page 2).

The Fight for Suribachi

Entrusted with the capture of Mount Suribachi was the 28th Marines, supported by the 105mm howitzers of the 3d Battalion, 13th Marines. Mortar and artillery preparation began on the night of 19 February, but the enemy tried that same night to upset the plans of the regiment. An attempted counterlanding in the zone of the 1st Battalion, a mission entrusted to a single barge, was repulsed with a loss to the Japanese of 25 killed.

By night of the first day ashore, the 28th Marines had completely isolated Suribachi from the rest of the

Two flame-thrower operators team up to send twin streams of burning liquid into well-concealed Japanese positions blocking the way to Mount Suribachi.

island. Next morning the regiment began probing the defenses of the mountain. The Japanese positions were strong, and it was the evening of D plus 3 before Suribachi was surrounded. Colonel Harry B. Liversedge, commanding officer of the 28th, laid his plans to make the ascent of the mountain the next morning.

The 28th Marines, with the 2d and 3d Battalions in line and the 1st in reserve, plunged forward at 0830, 20 February. This attack ground to a halt at 1700; the day's fighting had netted the Marines a gain of only 200 yards. Another attack, this one preceded by a 40-plane air strike, was made the following morning. All the battalions were employed, with the 1st operating on a one-company front. Thanks to effective support by tanks, 37mm guns, and half-tracks mounting 75mm cannon, the regiment smothered a Japanese counterattack and rolled forward to the very foot of the mountain.

Late in the afternoon, as the 28th Marines was consolidating its position for the evening, Japanese suicide planes struck at the vessels gathered off the island. Among the ships hit by the plummeting bombers were three aircraft carriers. One of these, the escort carrier Bismarck Sea, was sunk.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 110599





LtCol Chandler Johnson gives last-minute instructions to platoon leader as he calls for an end of all gunfire on Mount Suribachi.

The attack on Suribachi was resumed on the morning of 22 February. In spite of heavy opposition, especially in the center of the regimental zone, the 28th Marines managed to surround Mount Suribachi. The only area at the base which lay unoccupied was a 400-yard strip of the western shoreline. Since friendly gunfire rained continuously on this area, neither Marines nor Japanese could survive there.

The Iwo Jima Flag Raisings

Early on D plus 4, the 23d of February, a small patrol from Company F, 2d Battalion, started to reconnoiter suitable routes to scale the slopes of Suribachi. The patrol leader, Sergeant Sherman Watson, reported as he went along that the Japanese were holed up. Lieutenant Colonel Chandler W. Johnson, the battalion commander, decided to send a 40-man combat patrol (remnants of the 3d Platoon of Company E, and a handful of men from battalion headquarters) under command of First Lieutenant Harold G. Schrier, the Company E executive officer, to seize and occupy the crest. Sergeant Louis R. Lowery, a photographer for *Leatherneck* magazine, attached himself to the patrol to record in detail the attempt against Suribachi.

After Colonel Johnson had outlined the mission, he handed Lieutenant Schrier a flag to be raised if the patrol gained its objective. This small (54 by 28 inches) flag had been brought ashore from the attack trans-

port *Missoula* by First Lieutenant George G. Wells, the battalion adjutant.

The patrol reached the rim of the crater about 1015. As the Marines scrambled over the lip, a small defending force challenged the patrol and a short, hot fight developed. Even while this skirmish was in progress, some of the men located a length of Japanese iron pipe, secured the small American flag to one end, and raised the Stars and Stripes at 1020.⁴ It was an inspiring sight for thousands of Americans on Iwo as the flag waved bravely from the summit.

Corporal Charles W. Lindberg, the sole member of this first flag raising still alive in 1994, later remembered the event like this: "We found a water pipe, tied the flag to it and put it up. Then all hell broke loose below. Troops cheered, ships blew horns and whistles, and some men openly wept. It was a sight to behold . . . something a man doesn't forget."⁵

In addition to Corporal Lindberg, those who took part in this flag raising were Schrier, Platoon Sergeant Ernest I. Thomas, Jr., Sergeant Henry O. Hansen, and Privates First Class Louis C. Charlo and James Michels. The event was photographed by Sergeant Lowery.

Shortly after the raising of this flag, Colonel Johnson told Second Lieutenant Albert T. Tuttle, Assistant Operations Officer, 2d Battalion, 28th Marines, to go down to one of the ships on the beach and get a large battle flag—"large enough that the men at the other end of the island will see it. It will lift their spirits



The 40-man patrol, with stretcher bearers in the rear, approaches the mountain's base ready to begin the climb up Suribachi.

Photographer Louis H. Lowery asks Marines to exhibit the flag they are carrying up the slopes of Mount Suribachi.





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A419741

A lone Marine covers the left flank of the patrol working its way up the slopes of Mount Suribachi. In the background are the landing beaches upon which the assault on Iwo Jima began four days earlier.

As the Marines reach the crest of Mount Suribachi, they form a skirmish line, anticipating a Japanese attack.





Cpl Charles W. Lindberg, who earned the Silver Star for bravery at Suribachi's base, reaches top of mountain shortly before taking part in first flag raising.

After a piece of iron pipe is located, Marines secure the small American flag to the pole as other Marines stand guard.



also." Lieutenant Tuttle went on board LST 779, beached near the base of the volcano, and obtained a larger set of colors. Ironically, the flag from LST 779 which would soon fly over the first captured Japanese territory had been salvaged from Pearl Harbor, probably from some decommissioned destroyer or destroyer escort.

When Tuttle returned to the command post with the larger flag, Colonel Johnson directed him to give the flag to Private First Class Rene A. Gagnon, the Colonel's runner from Company E. Gagnon was headed up the hill with replacement batteries that Lieutenant Schrier had requested for his radio.⁶ As Gagnon was carrying this second and larger (96 by 56 inches) flag up the slopes of Suribachi, Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal was just beginning his hard climb up the mountain. Sergeant Michael Strank, Corporal Harlon H. Block, Private First Class Franklin R. Sousley, and Private First Class Ira I. Hayes also accompanied this set of colors up Suribachi's slopes with Gagnon.⁷

When the men arrived at the top, Lieutenant Schrier decided that the new flag should be raised as the original one was lowered.⁸ Strank and the others fastened the larger colors to a second pipe and then tried to set the makeshift staff in the rugged ground. Since the four men appeared to be having difficulty in getting the pipe firmly planted, two onlookers,

Pharmacist's Mate Second Class John H. Bradley and Private First Class Gagnon came to their aid.⁹

All six were struggling to raise the flag when Rosenthal snapped a picture of the scene. According to Rosenthal, luck played an important part in the taking of his famous photograph. The Associated Press photographer arrived at the summit just as Lieutenant Schrier was preparing to take down the first flag. At first, Rosenthal hoped to photograph the lowering of the first flag together with the raising of the larger one. When he discovered that he would not have time to line up both pictures, he decided to concentrate on the second flag raising. He backed off about 35 feet, only to discover that because of the sloping ground he could not see what was happening. He piled up some loose stones, mounted them, and focused on the band of Marines.

Just as Rosenthal was training his camera on the men, Lieutenant Schrier walked into his line of vision. Rosenthal later recalled that just as Schrier moved away, Sergeant Bill Genaust, the Marine motion picture photographer, "came across in front of me and over to my right . . . He said 'I'm not in your way, am I, Joe?' And I said, 'Oh, no.' I turned from him and out of the corner of my eye I said, 'Hey, Bill there it goes!' By being polite to each other we both damn near missed the shot. I swung my camera around and

Shortly after the first flag is raised, Marines check out Japanese activity detected around some nearby caves as other Marines guard the flag.



The first American flag is planted atop Mount Suribachi at 1020, 23 February 1945.

held it until I could guess that this was the peak of the action, and shot."¹⁰

Rosenthal took 18 photographs on Iwo Jima that eventful day.¹¹ Among them was a shot posed by men of the 28th Marines around the flag. When queried a few days later by his wire service picture editor as to whether "the flag raising picture" had been posed, Rosenthal, unaware of which picture had had the sensational reception in the United States, thought the editor meant the one which actually had been posed. Out of Rosenthal's affirmative reply to the editor grew the misconception that the flag raising picture was posed.

The testimony of Rosenthal himself and of the eyewitnesses who survived the battle, however, attest that the flag raising photograph was in no way rigged. As Rosenthal put it: "Had I posed that shot, I would, of course, have ruined it. I'd have picked fewer men . . . I would also have made them turn their heads so that they could be identified for AP members throughout the country, and nothing like the existing picture would have resulted."¹²

As it was, the picture became perhaps the most famous single photograph ever taken. It was used as the symbol of the Seventh War Loan drive. It appeared on literally millions of posters and on a three cent postage stamp. And it was forever immortalized in the largest bronze statue in the world—the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Virginia, dedicated by President Dwight D. Eisenhower on 10 November 1954, the 179th anniversary of the Marine Corps.

The popularity of Joe Rosenthal's photograph of the



*Marines use hand grenades and flame-throwers to counter Japanese attack from a number of caves.
The second, larger American flag is raised atop Mount Suribachi as the first flag is carefully lowered.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 112718





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 112720

Photographer Joe Rosenthal takes his “posed” picture of the cheering Marines around the second American flag raised on Suribachi.

Iwo Jima flag raising caused Brigadier General Robert L. Denig, Director of the Marine Corps Division of Public Information, to try to learn the identity of the six flag raisers. Nor was General Denig the only person interested in learning the names of these men. President Franklin D. Roosevelt requested that the six Marines be located and returned to the United States. The President felt that the safe return of the flag raisers would prove a boon to national morale.

First of the flag raisers to return was Private First Class Rene A. Gagnon. Using an enlargement of the Rosenthal photo, he identified Sergeant Michael Strank, Private First Class Franklin R. Sousley, both of whom had been killed in action, and Pharmacist’s Mate Second Class John H. Bradley. He also numbered among the flag raisers Sergeant Henry O. Hansen, who was subsequently killed during the Iwo operation. A year had passed before Gagnon realized that the Marine he had believed to be Hansen actually was another victim of the fight for Iwo Jima—Corporal Harlon Block. Ironically, Hansen had taken part in the earlier, less celebrated flag raising on Iwo and was killed by a sniper a few days later while being treated for wounds by Pharmacist’s Mate Bradley.

Gagnon at first refused to give the name of the sixth

flag raiser. He insisted that he had promised to keep the man’s name a secret. Finally, Gagnon revealed that the man was Private First Class Ira H. Hayes.

Bradley, who had been wounded on 12 March, was ordered back to the United States and participated with Hayes and Gagnon in a war bond drive.

Because of the haste with which their bond-selling tour was organized, none of the surviving flag raisers seemed to have had time to examine closely the Rosenthal picture. At any rate, Hayes did not mention his doubts concerning the identity of any of the deceased flag raisers until winter of 1946. He then claimed that the person at the base of the flagstaff was Corporal Harlon Block. An investigation proved him correct, and the list of flag raisers was altered.

The Iwo Jima flag raisers, as shown in the Rosenthal photograph left to right, are: Private First Class Hayes (with poncho hanging from belt—died in 1955); Private First Class Sousley (with slung rifle—killed in action); Sergeant Michael Strank (barely visible on Sousley’s left—killed in action); Navy Pharmacist’s Mate Second Class Bradley (with empty canteen cover hanging from right side of belt—wounded—died in 1994); Private First Class Gagnon (helmet barely visible beside Bradley—died in 1979); and Corporal

Block (at foot of pole—killed in action). The biographies of these men follow:

Corporal Ira Hamilton Hayes, USMCR

Ira Hamilton Hayes was a Pima Indian, born at Sacaton, Arizona, on 12 January 1923, the son of Joe E. and Nancy W. Hayes. In 1932, the family moved a few miles southward to Bapchule. Both Sacaton and Bapchule are located within the boundaries of the Gila River Indian Reservation in south central Arizona. Hayes left high school after completing two years of study. He served in the Civilian Conservation Corps in May and June of 1942, and then went to work as a carpenter.

On 26 August 1942, Ira Hayes enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve at Phoenix for the duration of the National Emergency. Following boot camp at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot at San Diego, Hayes was assigned to the Parachute Training School at Camp Gillespie, Marine Corps Base, San Diego. Graduated one month later, the Arizonan was qualified as a

parachutist on 30 November and promoted to private first class the next day. On 2 December, he joined Company B, 3d Parachute Battalion, Divisional Special Troops, 3d Marine Division, at Camp Elliott, California, with which he sailed for Noumea, New Caledonia, on 14 March 1943.

In April, Hayes' unit was redesignated Company K, 3d Parachute Battalion, 1st Marine Parachute Regiment. In October, Hayes sailed for Vella Lavella, arriving on the 14th. Here, he took part in the campaign and occupation of that island until 3 December when he moved north to Bougainville, arriving on the 4th. The campaign there was already underway, but the parachutists had a full share of fighting before they left on 15 January 1944.

Hayes was ordered to return to the United States where he landed at San Diego on 14 February 1944, after slightly more than 11 months overseas and two campaigns. The parachute units were disbanded in February, and Hayes was transferred to Company E, 2d Battalion, 28th Marines, of the 5th Marine Division, then at Camp Pendleton, California.

The three surviving participants of the second flag raising on Iwo Jima view the 7th War Loan Poster upon their return to the United States.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 300926



In September, Hayes sailed with his company for Hawaii for more training. He sailed from Hawaii in January en route to Iwo Jima where he landed on D-day (19 February 1945) and remained during the fighting until 26 March. Then he embarked for Hawaii where he boarded a plane for the U.S. on 15 April. On the 19th, he joined Company C, 1st Headquarters Battalion, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C.

On 10 May, Hayes, Private First Class Gagnon, Pharmacist's Mate Second Class Bradley, and Marine Technical Sergeant Keyes Beech, a combat correspondent, left on the bond selling tour. In Chicago, Hayes received orders directing his return to the 28th Marines. He arrived at Hilo, Hawaii, and rejoined Company E of the 28th on 28 May. Three weeks later, on 19 June, he was promoted to corporal.

With the end of the war, Corporal Hayes and his company left Hilo and landed at Sasebo, Japan, on 22 September to participate in the occupation of Japan. On 25 October, Corporal Hayes boarded his eleventh and last ship to return to his homeland for the third time. Landing at San Francisco on 9 November, he was honorably discharged on 1 December.

Corporal Hayes was awarded a Letter of Commendation with Commendation Ribbon by the Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, Lieutenant General Roy S. Geiger, for his "meritorious and efficient performance of duty while serving with a Marine infantry battalion during operations against the enemy on Vella Lavella and Bougainville, British Solomon Islands, from 15 August to 15 December 1943, and on Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands, from 19 February to 27 March 1945."

The list of the corporal's decorations and medals includes the Commendation Ribbon with "V" combat device, Presidential Unit Citation with one star (for Iwo Jima), Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with four stars (for Vella Lavella, Bougainville, Consolidation of the Northern Solomons, and Iwo Jima), American Campaign Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal.

The former Marine died at Bapchule on 24 January 1955. He was buried on 2 February 1955 at Arlington National Cemetery, in Section 34, Plot 479A.

Private First Class Franklin Runyon Sousley, USMC

Franklin Runyon Sousley was born at Flemingsburg, Kentucky, on 19 September 1925. After his graduation from high school in June 1943, he moved to Dayton, Ohio, where he secured a job with the Frigidaire Division of General Motors.

Sousley entered the Marine Corps Reserve on 5 January 1944 through the Selective Service System and was sent to the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, for his boot training. Upon completion of recruit training, he was assigned to Company E, 2d Battalion, 28th Marines, of the 5th Marine Division, then at Camp Pendleton, California. Private Sousley joined the company on 15 March as an automatic rifleman and remained with the same unit in the same specialty until he met his death. In September, Private Sousley sailed with his company from San Diego for Hilo, Hawaii, where it arrived on 24 September. The young Marine was promoted to private first class on 22 November 1944. In the latter part of January 1945, after extensive training and maneuvers, Sousley sailed for Iwo Jima where he landed with his company on D-day, 19 February. Sousley survived the battle for Suribachi and moved northward with his regiment. On 21 March, Private First Class Sousley was killed during the fighting around Kitano Point.

Private First Class Sousley was buried in the 5th Marine Division Cemetery at Iwo Jima in Plot 8, Row 7, Grave 2189. On 22 March 1948, a request was made to return the remains to the United States for reinterment in the Elizaville, Kentucky, Cemetery.

Private First Class Sousley was awarded the following decorations and medals: Purple Heart (posthumously), Presidential Unit Citation with one star (for Iwo Jima), Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with one star (for Iwo Jima), and World War II Victory Medal.

Sergeant Michael Strank, USMC

Michael Strank was born at Conemaugh, Pennsylvania, on 10 November 1919, the son of Vasil and Martha Strank, natives of Czechoslovakia (his father was also known as Charles Strank). He attended the schools of Franklin Borough, Pennsylvania, and graduated from high school in 1937. He joined the Civilian Conservation Corps where he remained for 18 months and then became a highway laborer for the state.

Michael Strank enlisted in the regular Marine Corps for four years at Pittsburgh on 6 October 1939. He was assigned to the Recruit Depot at Parris Island where, after completing recruit training in December, Private Strank was transferred to Headquarters Company, Post Troops, at the same base.

Transferred to Provisional Company W at Parris Island, on 17 January 1941, Strank, now a private first class, sailed for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, arriving on the 23d. Strank was assigned to Headquarters Company, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Brigade (on 1 February, the 1st Marine Brigade was redesignated the 1st Marine Division).

nated the 1st Marine Division). On 8 April, now assigned to Company K, he returned to the States and proceeded to Parris Island. In September, Strank moved with the division to New River, North Carolina (now known as Camp Lejeune). He was promoted to corporal on 23 April 1941, and was advanced to sergeant on 26 January 1942.

With the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, early in April 1942, he journeyed cross-country to San Diego, California, from whence he sailed on the 12th. On 31 May, he landed on Uvea, largest of the Wallis Islands.

In September, after a short tenure with the 22d Marines, he was transferred to the 3d Marine Raider Battalion, also at Uvea. With the raiders, he participated in the landing operations and occupation of Pavuvu Island in the Russell Islands from 21 February until 18 March, and in the seizure and occupation of the Empress Augusta Bay area on Bougainville from 1 November until 12 January 1944. On 14 February, he was returned to San Diego for rest and reassignment.

On return from leave, Sergeant Strank was assigned to Company E, 2d Battalion, 28th Marines, 5th Marine Division. After extensive training at Camp Pendleton and in Hawaii, Strank landed on Iwo Jima on 19 February 1945.

After the fall of Mount Suribachi, he moved northward with his unit. On 1 March, while attacking Japanese positions in northern Iwo Jima, he was fatally wounded by enemy artillery fire. He was buried in the 5th Marine Division Cemetery with the last rites of the Catholic Church. On 13 January 1949, his remains were reinterred in Grave 7179, Section 12, Arlington National Cemetery.

Sergeant Strank was entitled to the following decorations and medals: Bronze Star, Purple Heart (awarded posthumously), Presidential Unit Citation with one star (for Iwo Jima), American Defense Service Medal with base clasp (for his service in Cuba before the war), American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with four stars (for Pavuvu, Bougainville, Consolidation of the Northern Solomons, and Iwo Jima), and the World War II Victory Medal.

**Pharmacist's Mate Second Class
John Henry Bradley, USN**

John Henry Bradley was born at Antigo, Wisconsin, on 10 July 1923, the son of Mr. and Mrs. James J. Bradley. The family moved to Appleton, Wisconsin, when John was a boy. He graduated from Appleton High School in 1941. Apprenticed to a funeral director, Bradley had just completed the necessary

18-months' apprenticeship course when he enlisted in the Navy on 13 January 1943.

Following boot camp at Farragut, Idaho, Seaman Bradley was assigned to the Hospital Corps School there. Upon the completion of that course, he was transferred to the Naval Hospital at Oakland, California. Assigned to the Fleet Marine Force in January 1944, Pharmacist's Mate Bradley attended Field Medical School—standard training for corpsmen prior to serving with the Marines.

Assigned to the 28th Marines of the 5th Marine Division, he joined the regiment on 15 April 1944. Iwo Jima was his first and only campaign. He landed with the regiment on 19 February and just two days later earned the Nation's second highest award, the Navy Cross, for "extraordinary heroism as a Hospital Corpsman in action against enemy Japanese forces on Iwo Jima." Bradley rushed to the aid of a wounded Marine, under intense fire bandaged his wounds, and then pulled the Marine 30 yards through heavy enemy fire to a position of safety. He served until wounded in both legs on 12 March by an enemy mortar shell, but refused evacuation until rendering aid to two other wounded Marines. He was evacuated by plane the next day and finally was flown to the Naval Hospital at Bethesda, Maryland. There, Pharmacist's Mate Bradley was presented the Purple Heart on 10 July 1945. He was medically discharged, 13 November 1945.

Bradley's awards include the Navy Cross, Purple Heart, Presidential Unit Citation with one star (for Iwo Jima), American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with one star (for Iwo Jima), and the World War II Victory Medal.

The longest surviving member of the six who raised the second flag on Iwo Jima, Bradley died at the age of 70 on 11 January 1994 in his home town of Antigo, Wisconsin.

Corporal Rene Arthur Gagnon, USMCR

Rene Arthur Gagnon was born at Manchester, New Hampshire, on 7 March 1926, the son of Henry Gagnon and Irene Yvonne Gagnon. He attended the schools of Manchester and completed two years of high school before leaving to take a job with a local textile mill. On 6 May 1943, he was inducted into the Marine Corps Reserve and sent to Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, South Carolina.

From Parris Island, Private First Class Gagnon, promoted on 16 July 1943, was transferred to the Marine Guard Company at Charleston, South Carolina, Navy Yard. He remained there for eight months and then joined the Military Police Company of the 5th

Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, Oceanside, California. Four days later, on 8 April, he was transferred to Company E, 2d Battalion, 28th Marines.

After training at Camp Pendleton and in Hawaii, Gagnon landed with his unit on Iwo Jima on 19 February. After Iwo Jima was secured, he was ordered to Washington, arriving on 7 April. Together with the other two survivors, Pharmacist's Mate Bradley and Private First Class Hayes, he was assigned to temporary duty with the Finance Division, U. S. Treasury Department, for appearances in connection with the Seventh War Loan Drive.

He finished the tour on 5 July and was ordered to San Diego for further transfer overseas. Private First Class Gagnon was married to Miss Pauline Georgette Harnois, of Hooksett, New Hampshire, in Baltimore, Maryland, on 7 July.

By September, he was on his way overseas again, this time with the 80th Replacement Draft. On 7 November 1945, he arrived at Tsingtao, China, where he joined Company E, 2d Battalion, 29th Marines, 6th Marine Division. He later served with the 3d Battalion of the same regiment.

On duty with the U. S. occupation forces in China for nearly five months, Private First Class Gagnon boarded ship at Tsingtao at the end of March and sailed for San Diego, arriving on 20 April.

With nine days short of three years' service in the Marine Corps Reserve, of which 14 months was spent overseas, Gagnon was promoted to corporal and discharged on 27 April 1946. He was entitled to wear the Presidential Unit Citation with one star (for Iwo Jima), the American Campaign Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with one star (for Iwo Jima), the World War II Victory Medal, and the China Service Medal.

Corporal Gagnon died on 12 October 1979 in Manchester, New Hampshire and was buried at Mount Calvary Mausoleum. At his widow's request, Gagnon's remains were reinterred in Arlington National Cemetery on 7 July 1981.

Corporal Harlon Henry Block, USMC

Harlon Henry Block was born at Yorktown, Texas, on 6 November 1924, the son of Edward Frederick Block and Ada Belle Block. Young Harlon graduated from Weslaco High School in 1943. Following graduation he worked as a farm and oil field laborer.

Block was inducted into the regular Marine Corps through the Selective Service System at San Antonio on 18 February 1943 and transferred to the Recruit Depot at San Diego. Upon completion of recruit train-

ing, he was assigned to the Parachute Training School at San Diego on 14 April, where he completed the course in six weeks. He qualified as a parachutist on 22 May and was promoted to private first class on the same day. Block was assigned to the Parachute Replacement Battalion at the same camp.

Arriving at New Caledonia on 15 November 1943, Private First Class Block joined Headquarters and Service Company of the 1st Marine Parachute Regiment, I Marine Amphibious Corps. He saw combat as a rifleman during the latter part of the Bougainville campaign when he landed on that island on 21 December.

On 14 February 1944, he arrived at San Diego with his unit and the parachutists were disbanded on the 29th of that month. Block joined Company E, 2d Battalion, 28th Marines, of the 5th Marine Division at Camp Pendleton on 1 March. He was promoted to the rank of corporal on 27 October 1944. After training at Camp Pendleton and Hawaii, Block landed on Iwo Jima on 19 February 1945.

Following the securing of Mount Suribachi on 23 February, Corporal Block moved northward with his company. On 1 March, he was killed as the 28th Marines was attacking toward Nishi Ridge. The Marine's body was buried in the 5th Marine Division Cemetery on Iwo Jima in Plot 4, Row 6, Grave 912, and was later returned to the United States for private burial at Weslaco, Texas.

Corporal Block was entitled to the following decorations and medals: Purple Heart (awarded posthumously), Presidential Unit Citation with one star (for Iwo Jima), Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with two stars (for the Consolidation of the Northern Solomons and Iwo Jima), American Campaign medal, and the World War II Victory Medal.

Action in the North

Even before mopping-up operations on the slope of Mount Suribachi had been completed, plans were being made to move the 28th Marines to the northern part of the island. This unit entered the lines in the northern sector on 1 March.

While the 28th Marines was fighting its private war on the slopes of Suribachi, battalions from the 23d, 24th, and 25th Marines of the 4th Division and the 26th and 27th Marines of the 5th Division had undertaken the job of securing Airfield Number 1 and pushing northward into the heart of the enemy's defenses.

Like the drive on Suribachi, the push toward the north began on 20 February. The most spectacular gains were made in the 5th Division zone of action; but the 23d Marines, posted on the left of the 4th Di-



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 110848
Two Marines on Mount Suribachi look out over the remainder of Iwo Jima, which is still stubbornly held by Japanese defenders.

vision, was able to keep pace with the neighboring unit. Stiffest resistance came from the Japanese troops in the zone of the 25th Marines along the east coast.

Although the corps line surged forward as much as 1,000 yards on the far left, the deepest penetration made by the 25th Marines was 200 yards. Impassable terrain and a determined enemy had joined forces against the regiment.

Again the following day, 21 February, the 5th Division made the greatest gains along the northern front. Early that morning, the 21st Marines of the 3d Marine Division was ordered ashore to reinforce the 4th Marine Division. General Cates hoped to replace the battered 25th Marines with this fresh unit. Terrain, however, thwarted his plan. Because of the limited routes leading to the zone of action of the 25th Marines and the congested traffic on the beaches, it was necessary to shunt the reserve regiment into the center of the corps line in place of the 23d Marines. Unfortunately, there was not time for a night relief.

Two frontline units, one regiment of each division, were relieved on the morning of 22 February. Heavy rain, enemy fire, and broken terrain hampered both operations. General Rockey, commander of the 5th Division, ordered the 26th Marines to relieve the 27th. An alert enemy, plus hastily issued orders and ill-

defined unit boundaries made the move a difficult one; but the relief was accomplished, and the fresh regiment managed to grind out short gains. The relief of the 23d Marines by the 21st Marines, the operation carried out in General Cates' sector, was equally as difficult. Here the Japanese did their best to pin down the units slated to be relieved. So well did the enemy succeed that six hours after the relief began, some elements of the 23d Marines remained hotly engaged. Little ground was gained by the 4th Division that day.

General Schmidt came ashore on 23 February to confer with his division commanders. Out of this conference came the order for an attack to be launched the following morning. Although the main effort was scheduled to be made in the zone of action of the 5th Division, the decisive fighting would occur in the zone of the 21st Marines. Here tanks would thrust toward Airfield Number 2.

On the morning of 24 February, the enemy was subjected to a 76-minute naval bombardment, a pounding from Marine artillery, and a carrier air strike. At 0915 tanks from the 5th Division sector crossed the divisional boundary line to attack along the western portion of the airfield. Simultaneously, the 4th Division's armor pushed forward toward the eastern edge of the field. Mines and the fire of antitank guns halted the western attack and forced the armored vehicles to withdraw. Although the other approach also was heavily mined, a dozen tanks reached the airfield and began blasting the enemy holed up in the hills to the north. The fight that followed proved bitter, but the results of the day's action were impressive. Along the axis of the main attack, Marines of the 5th Division advanced some 500 yards. Again, the deepest penetrations were made on the corps' left, while the weary 4th Division was stalled by a skillful foe dug into commanding terrain.

The 3d Division Enters the Fight

General Erskine's 3d Marine Division, less the 3d Marines, landed on 24 February. One of its regiments, the 21st Marines, had already been committed to the fight for Iwo Jima. The task assigned this veteran division was that of driving along the relatively flat central portion of Iwo's northern plateau. Actually, flat is a misleading term; for the sandstone of the plateau had been pockmarked by centuries of wind, rain, and volcanic upheaval. Once the Marines had gained control of this rugged tableland, they could attack down the many ridge lines leading from the plateau to the sea.

The 3d Division's 9th Marines passed through the



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 110104

An exhausted handler takes a nap during the advance northward while his war dog stands guard.

lines of the 21st Marines on 25 February; at 0930 the division attack got underway. Gains were slight and losses heavy, for the Marines now were hammering at Kuribayashi's main defense line. A full 50 percent of corps artillery's missions was fired in support of the 3d Division. Flame-throwing tanks incinerated the enemy in his shell-proof tunnels. Three days of unremitting pressure finally cracked the Japanese line, and the evening of 27 February found the 9th Marines in control of the twin hills north of Airfield Number 2. On the following afternoon, the 21st Marines, which had attacked through the lines held by its sister regiment, overran the ruins of Motoyama Village and seized the hills that dominated Airfield Number 3.

The last day of February found the 4th Marine Division struggling desperately to take Hill 382 on the right. On the left, the defenders of Hill 362A initially thwarted the 5th Division. These critical terrain features were the strongest links in the chain of defenses that Kuribayashi had thrown across the island. On 1 March, to speed the advance along the flanks, corps artillery fires were redistributed so that each of the three divisions committed would have its equal share of support.

Given the mission of seizing Hill 362A was the 28th Marines, the same organization that had taken Mount Suribachi. For a brief time on the afternoon of 28 February, a few men of the 27th Marines had reached the crest of this heavily fortified hill, but this small force had to pull back in order to keep contact with the rest of the regiment. With the 3d Battalion, 26th Marines attached, the 28th Marines was scheduled to make its assault on the morning of 1 March.

Deadly artillery and mortar fire greeted the Marines as they moved forward, but by day's end the crest was firmly in American hands. The cost had been high—224 killed and wounded—but Hill 362A was an objective that could not have been bypassed.¹³ During the following day, the entire hill was overrun and neighboring Nishi Ridge, just to the north, was captured.

Hill 382, in the zone of the 4th Marine Division, was a formidable installation. In keeping with Kuribayashi's desire that his men have underground protection, the hill was honeycombed with tunnels. The crest had been hollowed out and converted into a huge bunker mounting artillery pieces and antitank

guns. Dotting the approaches to the hill itself were Japanese tanks, carefully hidden in the numerous fissures in the surface of the plateau. Southward from Hill 382 wound a series of ridges and draws which terminated in a massive rock called Turkey Knob. South of this rock was a natural bowl called the Amphitheater. During the bloody fight to crack this portion of the main defense line, this entire region came to be called the Meat Grinder.

The 1st of March was the fourth day that Marines had relentlessly hurled themselves into the Meat Grinder. On this day, the main effort was directed against Hill 382. Naval gunfire, artillery, and air strikes aided the attack, but progress was slow. The Japanese had to be blasted or burned out of their positions by bazookas, grenades, or flame throwers. The attackers gained a position on the hill, but an attempt to envelop Turkey Knob was thwarted. A heavy artillery barrage coupled with a smoke screen allowed the Marines to pull back before darkness.

The attack was repeated the following day. This time, the 2d Battalion, 24th Marines, managed to gain control of Hill 382. Not until 10 March, however, were the Japanese defending Turkey Knob and the Amphitheater eliminated.

While the Turkey Knob-Amphitheater salient was being reduced, the remainder of V Amphibious Corps was moving forward against the Hill 362 complex. In the 5th Division zone, Hill 362B fell to the 26th Marines on 3 March, and by the 7th, the 3d Division was poised to hurl itself against Hill 362C.

A flame-thrower tank goes into action, along with Marine snipers, to take out a Japanese strongpoint.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 140758

This attack marked a departure from tactics previously used, for it was launched under cover of darkness. During the Iwo fight, indeed throughout most of the Pacific War, American troops habitually remained on the defensive at night. General Erskine, confident that the enemy had been lulled by past experience into a sense of nocturnal security, obtained permission to begin his assault before dawn.

Movement across Iwo's darkened terrain was both slow and tiring. The enemy, however, was caught by surprise, and the attackers managed to cross unopposed over a heavily defended strip of ground. Daybreak found one assault company out of position and the other engaged in an intense firefight for the objective. The company that had strayed was re-oriented by radio, and by mid-afternoon Hill 362C was in American hands.

Beginning of the End

Undeterred by the loss of Hill 362C, the Japanese continued to resist stubbornly, but the enemy's efforts no longer were closely coordinated. Kuribayashi's overall system of defense had broken down. Patrols from the 3d Marine Division reached the seacoast on 9 March. By the following evening, only one isolated pocket of enemy troops remained active in that division's zone of action. There was, however, a scattering of diehards who had to be killed one at a time.

In the meantime, the Japanese battling the 4th Marine Division had grown desperate. The enemy's means of communication were failing rapidly, a condition that bred panic. Instead of clinging to their carefully





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 142472

The remaining Japanese are flushed out of some of Iwo Jima's numerous caves by men of the 4th Marine Division.

prepared positions, the Japanese gambled on a counterattack.

The intensity of enemy mortar and artillery fire increased during the evening of 8 March. Hugging the shattered earth, the Japanese tried to worm their way through the lines of the 23d and 24th Marines. Some of the attackers screamed in true banzai style, but most of them took advantage of the abundant cover in the area. A few dragged stretchers behind them and with cries of "Corpsman" tried to pass through the main line of resistance. In spite of his ingenuity and careful reconnaissance—the attack was directed at the point where the regimental zones of the 23d and 24th joined—the enemy failed. By noon of the following day some 650 Japanese had been killed by the defending fires of the Marines.

Final result of this counterattack was the sudden dissolution of the enemy's defenses. On 10 March, the 4th Marine Division completed destruction of the Turkey Knob-Amphitheater salient and pushed patrols all the way to the coast. The battle for Iwo Jima now entered its final phase.

Mopping Up

For the remainder of the campaign, the fighting would center around various pockets of enemy resistance. The 3d Marine Division would face the grim prospect of reducing a heavily fortified pocket of resistance near Hill 362C. The 4th Marine Division was to corral the enemy about halfway between the East Boat Basin and Tachiiwa Point; and the 5th Di-

vision would compress the Japanese troops in its sector into the area around Kitano Point.

After a sweep along its sector of the coast line, a maneuver conducted on 10 and 11 March, the bulk of the 3d Marine Division concentrated to overwhelm the deadly pocket which lay southwest of Hill 362C. Both flame-throwing and 75mm-gun tanks were called upon to aid the infantry in destroying the enemy defenses. On 16 March, after two battalions of the 21st Marines had been dispatched northward to aid the 5th Division in clearing the Japanese from Kitano Point, the last vestige of organized resistance in the 3d Division zone was crushed.

The remaining enemy strongpoint in the 4th Division's sector was manned by about 300 Japanese. These last-ditch defenders, who had plenty of small arms, ammunition, and water, were holed up in caves and tunnels within a few hundred yards of the sea. An attack scheduled for 0700, 12 March, was delayed to permit the Marines to try their hand at coaxing the Japanese to surrender. A loudspeaker was carried forward, but the gasoline motor that provided its power refused to start. Since Japanese snipers continued to blaze away at the men struggling with the motor, the project was abandoned. The Marines moved forward at 0900.

Flamethrowers, grenades, and rifle fire killed many Japanese in four days of fighting but enough of them remained alive to attempt to infiltrate Marine lines on the night of 15 March. This effort accomplished



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 113129
LtGen Holland M. Smith, who commanded the Marines in the seizure of Iwo Jima, congratulates MajGen Graves B. Erskine, commander of the 3d Marine Division, after the official flag raising on the island.

Marines and Seabees gather around the first B-29 to land on Iwo Jima on 4 March 1945.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 112392



nothing, and on the following day the last of the defenders perished.

The last group of Japanese to be destroyed during the Iwo Jima campaign was the force defending Kitano Point in the zone of the 5th Marine Division. The 5th had begun its final drive on 11 March when two regiments had attacked in the wake of a 50-minute air, artillery, and naval gunfire preparation. In spite of the extensive preliminary fires, and the pinpoint support of 37mm guns, half-track mounted 75s, and 81mm mortars, the attack made little headway.

Again the following day, the 5th Division resumed its hammering of the determined Japanese. Weeks of vicious fighting had reduced many of the 5th Division's rifle companies to platoon strength. In spite of these losses, the division, supported by flame-throwing tanks, managed to gain about 1,000 yards on 14-15 March. The next day saw the 3d Marine Division begin moving onto line to the right of the 5th Division. Attacking abreast, the 21st Marines, 3d Division, and the 26th Marines, 5th Division, ground out gains of as much as 400 yards.

The fighting was far from finished, however, as far as the 5th Division was concerned. In the path of the 28th Marines lay a gorge, its banks honeycombed with caves. Packed into this redoubt were some 500 ill-organized but fanatic enemy soldiers. Seldom did the attackers see a live enemy, for the Japanese refused to be lured into the open. General Erskine of the 3d Marine Division had a surrender appeal translated into Japanese and delivered by two prisoners of war. Although the appeal was ignored, the defenders of Kitano Point did allow the messengers to return unharmed to American lines. Not until 25 March was this last pocket eliminated.

The Last Japanese Attempt

Although organized enemy resistance was declared at an end on 25 March, the surviving Japanese still

had fight in them. Somehow, the senior officer alive on the island managed to contact many of the isolated remnants of Kuribayashi's command. On the night of 25 March, these men assembled in the vicinity of Airfield Number 2, and early the following morning they launched the final counterattack of the Iwo Jima campaign.

Erupting into bivouac areas occupied by support troops, the Japanese raised havoc among the sleeping Americans. Focal point of the assault was the area of the 5th Pioneer Battalion. This unit, and men of the Army's VII Fighter Command and the Marine's 8th Field Depot, threw together a defensive line and contained the enemy until daylight. Once the sun had appeared, the fight became a hunt, with the Americans tracking down and killing the last of the survivors. At least 223 Japanese perished. Among them may have been the redoubtable Kuribayashi, if that capable soldier had not been killed earlier.¹⁴

Summing Up

The conquest of Iwo Jima had taken a heavy toll of the Marines—17,372 wounded and 5,931 killed—but the island had to be taken. An inkling of its importance in the aerial war against Japan may be gained from the fact that by the war's end, 2,251 heavy bombers carrying 24,761 Americans had found refuge at Iwo Jima during the course of raids on Japan.

The courage and heroism displayed by all those who fought and died on Iwo Jima, including those who proudly raised their nation's colors atop Mt. Suribachi, inspired a war-weary nation to push for final victory.

The Japanese defenders led by General Kuribayashi had proved a formidable foe, but were beaten. They were overwhelmed by a skillfully led band of Americans among whom, in the words of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, "Uncommon valor was a common virtue."

Notes

1. Unless otherwise noted the material in this paper is derived from: LtCol Whitman S. Bartley, *Iwo Jima: Amphibious Epic* (Washington: HistBr, G-3, HQMC, 1954); Howard M. Conner, *The Spearhead: The World War II History of the Fifth Marine Division* (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1950), pp. 65-68; Bill Miller, "The Whine of Snipers' Bullets Comprised the Only Opposition," *Leatherneck*, v. 30, no. 9 (Sep47), pp. 10-11.
2. Quoted in Maj Frank O. Hough, *The Island War* (Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1957), p. 332.
3. Bartley, op. cit., p. 39.
4. 28th Marines War Diary, in 5th Marine Division War Diary, Feb45 (Unit Historical Report File, Marine Corps Historical Archives).
5. Quoted in Danny J. Crawford, "The Flag Raisings of Mount Suribachi," *Marines*, Vol 17, No. 2, Feb88, p.28
6. Col Dave E. Severance, USMC (Ret), ltr to CMC, HQMC, dtd 14May86, and Statement by former 2dLt Albert T. Tuttle, USMCR, dtd 13Feb86 (Subj File, Iwo Flag Raisings, Marine Corps Historical Center).
7. Director, Division of Public Information, HQMC, ltr to Mr. Keyes Beech, dtd 17Feb47, in folder "Investigation of Flag Raising." (Marine Corps Memorial Fund Records, Marine Corps Historical Archives).
8. Mr. Joe Rosenthal ltr to Asst Chief of Staff, G-3, HQMC, dtd 12Feb62 (Biography File, Marine Corps Historical Archives).
9. Capt Harold G. Schrier ltr to President of the Board [to investigate the flag raising], dtd 10Dec46, and Mr. Rene A. Gagnon ltr to MajGen Pedro A. del Valle, dtd 10Jan47 (Marine Corps Memorial Fund Records, Marine Corps Historical Archives).
10. Joe Rosenthal with W. C. Heinz, "The Picture That Will Live Forever," *Colliers*, v. 135, no. 4 (18Feb55), p. 65.
11. Rosenthal ltr, op. cit.
12. Rosenthal, "The Picture That Will Live Forever," op. cit.
13. Capt Clifford P. Moorehouse, *The Iwo Jima Operation* (Washington: HistBr, HQMC, 1946) pp. 51.
14. Hough, op. cit., pp. 356-58.

Unit Citations

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION to

Assault Troops of the Fifth Amphibious Corps, Reinforced
United States Fleet Marine Force

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

“For extraordinary heroism in action during the seizure of enemy Japanese-held Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands, February 19 to 28, 1945. Landing against resistance which rapidly increased in fury as the Japanese pounded the beaches with artillery, rocket and mortar fire, the Assault Troops of the FIFTH Amphibious Corps inched ahead through shifting black volcanic sands, over heavily mined terrain, toward a garrison of jagged cliffs, pillboxes and blockhouses commanding all approaches. Often driven back with terrific losses in fierce hand-to-hand combat, the Assault Troops repeatedly hurled back the enemy’s counterattacks to regain and hold lost positions, and continued the unrelenting drive to high ground and Motoyama Airfield No. 1, captured by the end of the second day. By their individual acts of heroism and their unflinching teamwork, these gallant officers and men fought against their own battle-fatigue and shock to advance in the face of the enemy’s fanatical resistance; they charged each strongpoint, one by one, blasting out the hidden Japanese troops or sealing them in; within four days they had occupied the southern part of Motoyama Airfield No. 2; simultaneously they stormed the steep slopes of Mount Suribachi to raise the United States Flag; and they seized the strongly defended hills to silence guns commanding the beaches and insure the conquest of Iwo Jima, a vital inner defense of the Japanese Empire.”

The following Assault Troops of the FIFTH Amphibious Corps, United States Fleet Marine Force, participated in the Iwo Jima Operation from February 19 to 28, 1945:

9th Marines; 21st Marines; 3rd Engineer Battalion (less detachment); 3rd Tank Battalion; 3rd Joint Assault Signal Company (less detachment); Reconnaissance Company, Headquarters Battalion, THIRD Marine Division; Liaison and Forward Observer Parties, 12th Marines; Pilots and Air Observers, Marine Observation Squadron 1; 23rd Marines; 24th Marines; 25th Marines; Companies A, B, and C, 4th Tank Battalion; Companies A, B, and C, 4th Engineer Battalion; 1st Joint Assault Signal Company; 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Platoons, Military Police Company, Headquarters Battalion, FOURTH Marine Division; Companies A, B, and C, 4th Pioneer Battalion; 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion; 5th Amphibian Tractor Battalion; Reconnaissance Company, Headquarters Battalion, FOURTH Marine Division; Companies A, B, and Detachment, Headquarters Company, 2nd Armored Amphibian Battalion; 7th Marine War Dog Platoon; Pilots and Air Observers, Marine Observation Squadron 4; Liaison and Forward Observer Parties, 14th Marines; 1st Provisional Rocket Detachment; 26th Marines; 27th Marines; 28th Marines; 5th Engineer Battalion; 5th Tank Battalion; 6th War Dog Platoon; 5th Joint Assault Signal Company; 3rd Amphibian Tractor Battalion; 11th Amphibian Tractor Battalion; Companies A, B, and C, 5th Pioneer Battalion; Reconnaissance Company, Headquarters Battalion, FIFTH Marine Division; 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Platoons, Military Police Company, Headquarters Battalion, FIFTH Marine Division; 3rd Provisional Rocket

Detachment; Pilots and Air Observers, Marine Observation Squadron 5; Liaison and Forward Observer Parties, 13th Marines; Companies C, D, and Detachment, Headquarters Company, 2nd Armored Amphibian Battalion.

For the President,

John L. Sullivan
Secretary of the Navy

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in commending the

Support Units of the Fifth Amphibious Corps
United States Fleet Marine Force

for service as follows:

“For outstanding heroism in support of Military Operations during the seizure of enemy Japanese-held Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands, February 19 to 28, 1945. Landing against resistance which rapidly increased in fury as the Japanese pounded the beaches with artillery, rocket and mortar fire, the Support Units of the FIFTH Amphibious Corps surmounted the obstacles of chaotic disorganization, loss of equipment, supplies and key personnel to develop and maintain a continuous link between thousands of assault troops and supply ships. Resourceful and daring whether fighting in the front line of combat, or serving in rear areas or on the wreck-obstructed beaches, they were responsible for the administration of operations and personnel; they rendered effective fire support where Japanese pressure was greatest; they constructed roads and facilities and maintained communications under the most difficult and discouraging conditions of weather and rugged terrain; they salvaged vital supplies from craft lying crippled in the surf or broached on the beaches; and they ministered to the wounded under fire and provided prompt evacuation to hospital ships. By their individual initiative and heroism and their ingenious teamwork, they provided the unfailing support vital to the conquest of Iwo Jima, a powerful defense of the Japanese Empire.”

All personnel attached to and serving with the following Support Units of the FIFTH Amphibious Corps, United States Fleet Marine Force, during the Iwo Jima Operation from February 19 to 28, 1945, are authorized to wear the NAVY UNIT COMMENDATION Ribbon.

Headquarters & Service Battalion; Medical Battalion; Signal Battalion; Motor Transport Company; Detachment, 1st Separate Radio Intelligence Platoon; Detachment, Signal, Headquarters, Air Warning Squadron 7—Army Fighter Command; Detachment, 568th Signal Air Warning Battalion—Army; Detachment, 726th Signal Air Warning Company—Army; Detachment, 49th Signal Construction Battalion—Army; Detachment 44—70th Army Airways Communications Service—Army; Detachment, Communication Unit 434 (Group Pacific 11); Landing Force Air Support Control Unit No. 1; 2nd Separate Engineer Battalion; 62nd Naval Construction Battalion; 2nd Separate Topographical Company; Detachment, 23rd Naval Construction Battalion (Special); 8th Field Depot (plus Headquarters Shore Party); 33rd Marine Depot Company; 34th Marine Depot Company; 36th Marine Depot Company; 8th Marine Ammunition Company; Detachment, 8th Naval Construction Regiment; Corps Evacuation Hospital No. 1; 2nd Bomb Disposal Company; 156th Bomb Disposal Squad—Army; Company B, Amphibious Reconnaissance Battalion, Fleet Marine Force; A and C Platoons, 38th Field Hospital—Army; Joint Intelligence Corps, Pacific Ocean Area, Intelligence Teams No. 22, 23, 24, and 25; Detachment, Joint Intelligence Corps, Pacific Ocean Area, Enemy Material and Salvage Platoon; Detachment, 1st Platoon, 239th Quartermaster Salvage and Collection Company—Army; Detachment, Headquarters, Army Garrison Forces, APO 86; Detach-

ment, Headquarters, 147th Infantry—Army; Detachment, Headquarters, 7th Fighter Squadron—Army; Detachment, 47th Fighter Squadron—Army; Detachment, 548th Night Fighter Squadron Army; Detachment, 386th Air Service Group (Special)—Army;

Detachment, Group Pacific 11; Detachment, Port Director; Detachment, Garrison Beach Party; Headquarters & Service Battery, 1st Provisional Artillery Group; 2nd 155mm Howitzer Battalion; 4th 155mm. Howitzer Battalion; 473rd Amphibian Truck Company—Army; Detachment, Headquarters & Headquarters Battery, 138th Antiaircraft Artillery Group—Army; Detachment, 506th Antiaircraft Gun Battalion—Army; Detachment, 483rd Antiaircraft Air Warning Battalion—Army; 28th and 34th Replacement Drafts (less Advance Groups and those assigned assault units); Headquarters Battalion, THIRD Marine Division (less Reconnaissance Company); 3rd Marine War Dog Platoon; 3rd Service Battalion (less detachment); 3rd Pioneer Battalion (less 2nd Platoon, Company C); 3rd Medical Battalion (less Company C); 3rd Motor Transport Battalion (less Company C); 12th Marines (less detachment); Marine Observation Squadron 1 (less detachment); Headquarters Battalion, FOURTH Marine Division, (less Reconnaissance Company and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Platoons, Military Police Company); 4th Motor Transport Battalion; 4th Medical Battalion; 133rd Naval Construction Battalion; 4th Tank Battalion (less Companies A, B, and C); 4th Service Battalion; 4th Pioneer Battalion (less Companies A, B, and C); 442nd Port Company—Army; 14th Marines (less detachment); 4th Marine Amphibian Truck Company; 476th Amphibian Truck Company Army; Marine Observation Squadron 4 (less detachment); Detachment, 726th Signal Air Warning Company—Army (FOURTH Marine Division-Reinf.); 24th and 30th Replacement Drafts (less Advance Groups and assigned assault units); Headquarters Battalion, FIFTH Marine Division, (less Reconnaissance Company and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Platoons, Military Police Company); 5th Medical Battalion; 13th Marines (less detachments); 5th Marine Amphibian Truck Company; 471st Amphibian Truck Company—Army; Marine Observation Squadron 5 (less detachment); Detachment, 726th Signal Air Warning Company—Army (FIFTH Marine Division-Reinf.); 5th Pioneer Battalion (less Companies A, B, and C); 31st Naval Construction Battalion; 592nd Port Company—Army; 5th Motor Transport Battalion; 5th Service Battalion; 27th and 31st Replacement Drafts (less Advance Groups and those assigned assault units).

JOHN L. SULLIVAN
Secretary of the Navy

The Marine Corps War Memorial

The Marine Corps War Memorial stands as a symbol of a grateful nation's esteem for the honored dead of the United States Marine Corps. Although the statue depicts one of the most famous incidents of World War II, the Memorial is dedicated to all Marines who have given their lives in the defense of the United States since 1775. Shortly after Associated Press newsphotographer Joe Rosenthal's inspiring action picture of the Marines raising the second flag on Mount Suribachi was released, Sculptor Felix W. de Weldon, then on duty with the Navy, constructed a scale model and then a life-size model inspired by the scene.

The three survivors of the flag raising, Gagnon, Hayes, and Bradley posed for Mr. de Weldon, who modeled their faces in clay. All available pictures and physical statistics of the three Marines who gave their lives were assembled and used in the modeling of their faces. The figures were originally molded in the nude so that the strain of muscles would be prominently shown after clothing was modeled on the struggling figures.

Steel framework, roughly duplicating the bone structure of the human body, was assembled to support the huge figures under construction.

Once the statue was completed in plaster it was carefully disassembled into 108 pieces and trucked to the Bedi-Rassy Art Foundry, Brooklyn, New York for casting in bronze. The casting process, which required the work of experienced artisans, took nearly three years.

The third casting, consisting of three figures, is brought into position to be bolted to the other three members of the six-man group on the Marine Corps War Memorial, in September 1954.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A400849





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A316804

Aerial photo of the Marine Corps War Memorial just before the dedication ceremony on 10 November 1954.

After the parts had been cast, cleaned, finished, and chased, they were reassembled into approximately a dozen pieces and brought back to Washington by a three-truck convoy. Erection of the Memorial on the edge of Arlington Cemetery near the Virginia approaches to Memorial Bridge was begun in September of 1954. It was officially dedicated by President Dwight D. Eisenhower on November 10, 1954.

Memorial Statistics

The figures on the statue are 32 feet high; they are erecting a bronze flagpole 60 feet in length. The figures are placed on a rock slope rising approximately 6 feet from a 10 foot base. Overall height of the statue is 78 feet. A cloth flag flies from the pole.

The M-1 rifle carried by one of the figures is approximately 16 feet long, the carbines about 12 feet long. The canteen, if filled, would hold 32 quarts of water.

The figures of the statue are standing on rough Swedish granite. The concrete face of the statue is covered with blocks of polished Swedish black granite. Burnished into the granite, in gold lettering, are the names and dates of principal Marine Corps engagements since the Corps was founded in 1775. Also inscribed on the base is the tribute of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz to the fighting men on Iwo Jima: "Uncommon Valor was a Common Virtue." Opposite this, on the base is the inscription: "In honor and in memory of men of the United States Marine Corps who have given their lives to their country since November 10, 1775."

The Site

The Memorial site is a seven and one-half acre tract of land bordering the northern end of Arlington National Cemetery, and overlooking Washington, D.C., near the western end of Memorial Bridge.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A401027

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Vice President Richard M. Nixon, and Gen Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps, discuss the program at the dedication ceremony of the Marine Corps War Memorial.

The three surviving members of the flag raising immortalized by Joe Rosenthal's photograph, witness the dedication ceremony of the Marine Corps War Memorial. From left are: John H. Bradley, Ira Hayes, and Rene A. Gagnon.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A401029



The Cost

The entire cost of the statue and developing the Memorial site was \$850,000, donated by U.S. Marines, former Marines, Marine Corps Reservists, friends of the Marine Corps, and members of the Naval Service. No public funds were used for the monument.

For more than four decades, the Marine Corps War Memorial has stood overlooking our nation's capital, joining other Memorials to honor those who have made this nation great.

The device reproduced on the back cover is the oldest military insignia in continuous use in the United States. It first appeared, as shown here, on Marine Corps buttons adopted in 1804. With the stars changed to five points this device has continued on Marine Corps buttons to the present day.

