

# Hawaii MARINE COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

Hawaii Marine B Section

March 15, 2002

# The Pacific War Memorial

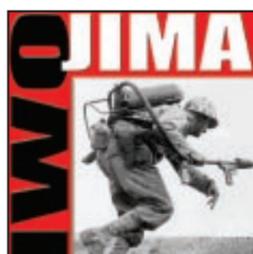


Sgt. Roman Yurek

## PWMA'S monument finds home at last

**MCB Hawaii**  
Public Affairs Office

The Pacific War Memorial is set to be dedicated tomorrow inside the front gate of MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, at 10 a.m.



The Pacific War Memorial Association, chaired by Mrs. Alice T. Clark, has worked steadily for more than five years to place an Iwo Jima memorial in Hawaii, to honor all who served in the Pacific theater of operations during World War II, those residents of Hawaii who during the war years befriended and support military personnel, and those in our armed forces who continue to serve our great nation.

### The Bronze

The Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Va., the first statue sculpted from Joe Rosenthal's famous photo, was sculpted by Felix W. de Weldon, who was on active

duty with the Navy when the photo was released in 1945. President Dwight D. Eisenhower dedicated the monument on Nov. 10, 1954.

In 1992, the National Iwo Jima Survivors Association, Inc. solicited bids from master craftsmen for the creation of a clay model for the group's proposed monument in Newington, Conn. The Association selected the bid submitted by Sculpture House Casting in New York, whose owner at the time (Mr. Alex Ettl) then commissioned sculptor Joseph Petrovics to sculpt the clay model.

Iwo Jima survivors (including Dr. George Gentile, president of the National Iwo Jima Survivors Association) brought battle gear and uniform pieces to Petrovics and advised as the model was created.

Sculpture House Casting made the molds from the clay model and used those molds to cast the bronze for the Iwo Jima Memorial Monument dedicated in Newington, Conn., on Feb. 23, 1995 — the 50th anniversary of the flag raisings on Iwo Jima.

The Newington monument was declared the National Iwo Jima Memorial in 1996.

The National Iwo Jima Survivors Assn. has worked closely with the Pacific War Memorial Association during the past few

years on the plan to erect a replica monument in Hawaii. The PWMA raised the funds to pay for creation of the replica.

The same molds were then used to cast the bronze portion of the Pacific War Memorial being dedicated on Saturday, at MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

### The Granite

The ten black granite panels that surround the base of the monument were inscribed by Columbia River Monuments in Hermiston, Ore., under the direction of owner Marty Schmid.

### In-Kind Project Assistance

More than one-third of the cost of the project was provided in "in-kind" assistance (site preparation, construction of the monument base, bricklaying, transport, landscaping, materials and more) by Dick Pacific Construction Company, Ltd., and a number of other companies and individuals.

Donald Jones, master stone mason, owner of Hawaii Stone, long-time Hawaii resident and Marine Corps veteran (Vietnam) provided rock-setting skills and materials for the top of the monument. The artist's rendering and inscription graphics were also in-kind donations.



Photos courtesy of the Pacific War Memorial Assn.

Above — Chris Messer, project coordinator, Dick Pacific Construction, poses with the crated memorial. The memorial was uncrated Feb. 13 and placed upon its base Feb. 14. Left — Artist Hitoshi Hida provided the Pacific War Memorial Association his rendering of the completed Pacific War Memorial.

2

Battle plans — The events leading up to the attack on the island fortress.

4

The Hawaiian Connection — Camps on the Big Island and Maui.

6

The man behind the lens at Iwo — AP Photographer Joe Rosenthal.

7

The warriors who supported life in the fog of war — the Navy corpsmen.

8

The people who made it happen — the Pacific War Memorial Assn.

## EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE BATTLE

## Six Marine divisions attack island fortress

**Sgt. Robert Carlson**  
Press Chief

Marines were on a roll by early 1945. The war in the Pacific had extracted a toll, though, and the final struggle against the Imperial Japanese forces lay before the 200,000-man force in the form of two seemingly insubstantial islands — Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

The Marines had fought and won seven major battles in 1944 and regrouped for a time at the start of the new year.

The First Marine Division recuperated after fighting in Peleliu, and the Fifth spun up its new Marines in Hawaii. The Third was able to fill its ranks, too, and actions in Guam helped sharpen the new Marines and ready them for fiercer fighting later. The Second and Fourth divisions were re-supplied with fresh draftees, and the men from three regiments were brought together in the form of the Sixth.

These six Marine divisions, invincible since Guadalcanal, and known as the most experienced amphibious fighting men in the world, set their sights on these two small parcels of Pacific real estate with as much determination as if they were attacking the entire Japanese homeland.

The urgency of capturing Iwo Jima was obvious to everyone involved in planning for the final blows of the war in the Pacific. The trip from Saipan to Tokyo, and back, was nearly 3,000 miles, and many of the B-29 Superfortresses, conducting bombing raids on the mainland, were being lost on the return trip. Heavy anti-aircraft fire and a still semi-healthy Japanese air contingent added to the early warning radar capabilities to make the mainland bombing campaign an expensive endeavor.

With Iwo Jima under American control, the bombers could fly shorter trips, which meant they could carry less fuel and more explosives. It also meant the B-29s could fly past Iwo Jima without alerting mainland defenses of the impending shower of steel.

If the Japanese anti-aircraft arsenal inflicted any damage, crippled Superfortresses could make emergency landings on Iwo instead of ditching at sea.

More than two months of aerial assault, courtesy of the Seventh Army Air Force, did little to disrupt the Japanese forces planning to defend the small island. Landing force Marines witnessed the naval gunfire during the three days preceding the landing, but remembered how little was knocked out at Tarawa and Peleliu.

Marine commanders, including Lt. Gen. "Howlin' Mad" Smith, had requested more extensive naval gunfire softening of the island, but the Navy refused.

Lieutenant Gen. Smith was in command of the forces mounting the attack on Iwo Jima and believed more days of shelling would decrease landing force casualties. He had tears in his eyes when



National Archive Photos

**Above Left — The Battle for Iwo Jima was the largest armada invasion during the Pacific War. Above Right — The U.S. Army Air Force pounded Iwo Jima in the longest sustained aerial offensive of the war. "No other island received as much preliminary pounding as did Iwo Jima," said Admiral Nimitz, then commander in chief, Pacific Command.**



National Archive Photos

**Above Left — The U.S. sent more Marines to Iwo Jima than to any other battle: 110,000 Marines in 880 Ships. The convoy of 880 U.S. ships sailed from Hawaii to Iwo in 40 days. Above Right — Lieutenant Gen. Tadamichi Kuribayashi planned the defensive strategy that caused severe casualties, but ultimately failed.**

he addressed the press corps off of Saipan on Feb. 16.

"We have never failed," he said. "And I don't believe we shall fail here."

As it turned out, the three days of pre-invasion shelling did as much as was possible, since no one had imagined the extent to which the island was fortified. The nearly impenetrable defensive positions proved to be effective to every offense outside of pinpointed attacks by men on the ground.

Major Gen. Harry Schmidt did most of the planning for the invasion and was in

command once the troops were ashore. Strategy was limited, though, as there were only two landing beaches on the island. The Fourth Marine Division landed on the north beach, or right side, and the Fifth landed on the left.

Iwo Jima was only four and a half miles long, and two and a half miles wide. To Major Yokasuka Horie, the place was desolate and useless.

Horie, who worked on the staff of Lt. Gen. Tadamichi Kuribayashi, understood the impending doom of the defensive forces and suggested an interesting



Petty Officer 3rd Class Robert M. Warren

**Landing craft and other vehicles lay knocked out on the black sands of the island. The Japanese allowed the landing force to build up on the coast before opening fire with their big guns.**

plan to defend the island.

If American forces will assault this island, it will fall into their hands within one month, he wrote. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary not to let the enemy use this island. The best plan is to sink this island into the sea, or cut it in half. At least we must endeavor to sink the first airfield.

Lieutenant Gen. Kuribayashi rejected the plan, and Horie, who had been on Iwo Jima since June of 1944, was sent to another island closer to the mainland.

Lieutenant Gen. Kuribayashi was known as a perfectionist and was going to make every effort to defend the sulfur island with the nearly 21,000 men he had at his disposal. He sent all civilians back to the mainland and told his troops the fight would most likely be a fight to the death.

He used lessons learned in previous assaults to improve his chances. He focused on accuracy of individual fighting men, and on building an intricate cave network beneath the surface. He built dummy bunkers to draw the attention of the Seventh Air Force away from his real positions, and in the days before the assault he had fortified the island in a way that had never been achieved before.

His strategy also included laying low during the naval gunfire barrages, so as not to give away any gun positions, and to wait until U.S. forces and equipment built up on the beaches, before opening up with the guns. Only when the troops opened fire on some pre-landing intelligence teams, did the Americans have any idea of where the big guns were.

The Japanese defenders thought the attack was beginning and opened up on the small cover gunboats. The naval gun teams zeroed in on the positions and left their guns dangling from the side of Mount Suribachi.

Kuribayashi's arsenal included 320-mm spigot mortars, which were so big, the 675-pound shell was bigger than the firing cylinder and actually fit over and around it.

The limited amount of turf available for landing that type of big projectile caused a lot of damage to the attacking Marines. Of the 27 Medals of Honor awarded for combat action on Iwo Jima, four were earned on that first day.

On the bright and clear morning of Feb. 19, the Marines went thundering in at approximately 9 a.m. Within an hour, both divisions had their Marines ashore and were at battle. One hour was all that Lt. Gen. Kuribayashi had given the Marines before his troops were to open fire. One hour.

It was enough time for the Marines to amass themselves and their gear on the beaches and become easy targets for the massive amounts of artillery pointed at them.

It may have been too long, though, as the Marines were able to get between 200 and 300 yards inland during that time, and that may have made all of the difference in the world.



Courtesy of National Archives

Marines of the 5th Marine Division inch their way up toward Mount Surbachi as the smoke of the battle drifts overhead.

## THE BATTLE: A triumph

Securing Iwo Jima's airstrip was a hard-earned victory to gain the Pacific gateway

**Lance Cpl. Jason E. Miller**  
*Combat Correspondent*

Three days of bombardment from the U.S. Navy had barely put a dent in the Japanese forces holed up deep in the man-made caves of the sulfur island of Iwo Jima.

When the Marines hit the shore, Feb. 19, 1945, many of them thought that the intense bombing had surely obliterated

the enemy forces.

Originally, ten full days of cannon fire and bombing from aircraft and ships anchored just offshore were meant to destroy any life on the island, but as Feb. 19 drew near, the pre-landing, Naval bombardment was trimmed down to just three days.

Whether or not more bombing would have made a difference remains a mystery today. The Marines were still confident, even when the fierce and bloody battle began.

*See BATTLE, B-6*

## THE HAWAIIAN CONNECTION

## Camps Tarawa, Maui played vital roles during WWII

**Sgt. Roman Yurek**  
Lifestyles Editor

The Hawaiian islands were considered a key strategic point during the World War II island-hopping campaign. However, two of the largest training areas for Marine units in the Hawaiian islands were not located on the island of Oahu, but on the Big Island of Hawaii and Maui.

## ON THE BIG ISLAND

On the island of Hawaii, 50,000 Marines situated near Kamuela on Parker's Ranch, trained for the numerous amphibious operations they would participate in.

In 1942, the Army sent 19,000 men to the 50,000-acre training area at the ranch.

By December 1943, this area had become the largest Marine Corps training facility in the Pacific.

## 2nd Marine Division

At the time, Camp Waimea — located between the two active volcanoes on the island — was renamed Camp Tarawa by the Marines of 2nd Marine Division. They renamed the camp after their recent victory at Tarawa Atoll.

Five months later, leathernecks from the 2nd Marine Division landed, but soon left for battles in Saipan, Tinian and Okinawa.

## 5th Marine Division

Shortly after the departure of the 2nd Marine Division, the 5th Marine Division arrived in August 1944 to train for what would become one of the bloodiest battles in World War II — the amphibious assault on Iwo Jima.

February 19, 1945, the 5th Marine Division landed on schedule and began its fight to capture Iwo Jima.

When 5th Marines was training on the Big Island, another group of leathernecks was training at another Hawaiian location — ultimately, for many of the same campaigns — on the island of Maui.

## 4th Marine Division

Devil Dogs from the 4th Marine Division began their journey in August 1943 when they were activated at Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Early in 1944, they boarded ships in San Diego for operations in the Marshall Islands.

## ON MAUI

As the transports made their way to the islands of Roi and Namur in the Kwajalein Atoll, the 4th Marine Division had its first glimpse of Maui. It was unaware of the fact that this island would soon be its home base for the remainder

of the war.

After its successful campaign in the Marshall Islands, the Marines of the 4th Marine Division made way to their home — Camp Maui.

Camp Maui contained tents for living quarters, mess halls, exchanges, wooden office buildings, a chapel, athletic fields and an airstrip.

## "Maui's Own"

The relationship between the Marines and the Maui natives would grow into that of a second family. The Fourth Marine Division became known as "Maui's Own."

The Marines departed from Saipan May 15, 1944. Before leaving, however, Gen. Harry Schmidt made the first of several mass presentations of the Purple Heart to Maui Marines during the division's stay there.

"This medal is not offered in compensation for the wounds you have suffered," he said. "It is a symbol.

"It betokens a nation's respect for the sacrifices you have made."

Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet, also visited the Marines.

"The world knows of the gallant performance and achievement of the men who fought at Roi and Namur Islands," said Adm. Nimitz. "There, the Marine Division wrote another brilliant chapter in the chronicles of the Marine Corps."

Saipan soon proved to be the most vicious battle thus far in the war. Afterwards, the division received recognition as a premium fighting force — but not without suffering nearly 6,000 casualties.

By July 24, 1944, the Fourth Marine Division was training for yet another campaign, the landing on Tinian.

Tinian was not as vicious as Saipan, but still inflicted the division with more than 500 casualties.

The Fourth then returned to Maui to train for what would become the fiercest battle in World War II.

Though the recent campaigns wounded the division, the people of Maui helped to ease the pain and thoughts of combat. Local hula troupes performed for the war-battered Marines.

In January 1945, the Marines left their extended Maui family for the battle of Iwo Jima.

It was Feb. 19, 1945, when the Fourth landed on Iwo Jima. By the end of the battle, this division alone suffered 9,000 casualties. Rifle companies had losses exceeding their original landing strength. Yet, Iwo Jima was secured, after close to a month of bitter fighting.

## "Maui Marines No Ka Oi"

For the 4th Marine Division, the thought of returning to friends on Maui

made the trip to Hawaii a happy one. When the Marines disembarked their ships in Maui, the people handed out pamphlets.

The pamphlet read: "Hi, you Marines! It's no 'snow job' when we tell you that the servicemen and women, and the civilians of Maui, are throwing this big shindig for you because we think you're just about the greatest guys that ever landed on this island.

"When the news came over the radio that the Marines had hit Iwo Jima, everybody asked the same question, 'Are the Maui Marines there?'

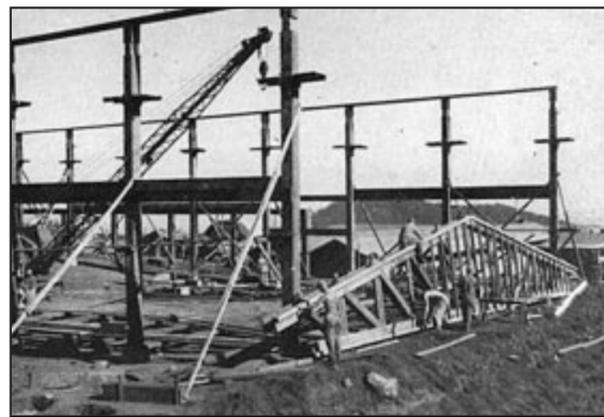
"Then we heard the news flash that you and a lot of other Marines were pitching in there. After that, nothing else that happened seemed to matter very much.

"We don't need to tell you that everyone from Hana to Lahaina is mighty proud of you. And when we read that you had named that first street 'Maui Boulevard,' we were practically bursting at the seams."

The people of Maui cheered for their Marines. Both the people of Maui and Marines also shed tears.

The Maui Marines soon began training and readying themselves for the assault on mainland Japan. Luckily, the Japanese surrendered before an assault was ever necessary.

In total, during the division's journey across the Central Pacific, it suffered



Courtesy Bailey House Museum

Camp Maui was equipped with nearly the same facilities as any other base, and pictured is the construction of the USO Theater, where Marines watched movies and shows during down time between training and battles.

more than 18,000 killed or wounded: A number that exceeds the division's official strength.

The nickname of "Maui's Own" was changed to "Maui Marines No Ka Oi," before the Fourth left Maui. Translated, it means, "Maui Marines are the best."

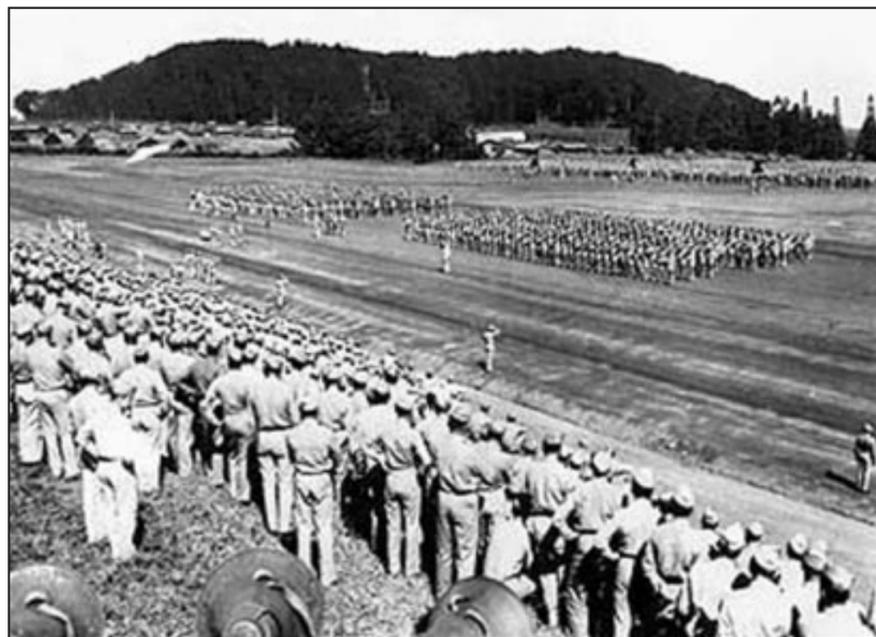
In February 1945, the 1,191 people of Maui signed a petition for Adm. Nimitz. The last paragraph asked that the division make Maui its wartime home for future operations.

## Remembering Heroes

To show the valiant efforts of all the Hawaii Marines, monuments have been built on both islands.

Big Island and Maui Marines trained in Hawaii's environment of hills, jungle and tropical weather.

Many who served in the 2nd, 4th and 5th Marine Divisions still visit the camps they called home during World War II.



Courtesy Bailey House Museum

In July 1945, a mass ceremony was held to award Maui Marines the Purple Heart.



Official DoD Photos

Left — After Camp Tarawa was built, the Marine Corps Band marched through the streets of the largest Marine Corps training area in the Pacific. Above — Thousands of Marines trained at Camp Tarawa. Modern-day visitors will see a monument at the Big Island site, dedicated to those who served and died defending the United States during World War II.

# Many Iwo Jima photos impacted the nation

**Sgt. Alexis R. Mulero**  
*Combat Correspondent*

The shutter clicked, and the image was frozen forever. Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal didn't know it at the time, but he captured what might be the most famous image of World War II, and the most reproduced photograph of all time.

Its impact was so overwhelming that it changed the lives of the five Marines and one Sailor in the photo. It strengthened a nation's will to win at any cost, and it may have single-handedly changed the outcome of the war.

The American flag raising on Mt. Suribachi took place on Feb. 23, 1945, on the fifth day of battle.

In the picture, the front four are (left to right) Ira Hayes, Franklin Sousley, John Bradley and Harlon Block. The back two are Michael Strank (behind Sousley) and Rene Gagnon (behind Bradley).

Strank, Block and Sousley were killed shortly after the picture was taken. Bradley, Hayes and Gagnon became national heroes within weeks.

"With that one photograph, my dad's life was transformed," said James Bradley, author of *Flags of Our Fathers*, and son of John "Doc" Bradley, one of the six flag raisers. "He suddenly was the equivalent of a 1945's Backstreet Boy.

"When he returned to the U.S., he and the others were seen as heroes: People lined up to see them. They met the president and all sorts of celebrities."

With celebrity status now linked to them, Bradley, Hayes and Gagnon led the Seventh War Bond Tour.

The Mighty Seventh had set a goal \$14 billion to keep feeding, clothing, sheltering and arming the millions of men and women still fighting World War II, and to keep providing more planes, ships and tanks for their efforts.

By the end of the tour, with the assis-

tance of these three men, the tour had raised more than \$26.3 billion — almost double what the Department of Treasury had expected.

At that point in World War II, Americans were growing weary of the fighting, which had already claimed so many lives in Europe and the Pacific.

The flag-raising photo caused an immediate sensation.

The photo appeared in newspapers across America, and reminded people why the war was being fought and that victory was in sight. It rallied the Nation.

Just two days after it was first seen in the U.S., senators rose on the floor of the U.S. Senate, calling for a national monument modeled after the picture.

The California State Legislature petitioned the federal government to build a grand monument. Thousands of Americans wrote the President appealing for a monument to immortalize the picture they loved.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower eventually dedicated the Iwo Jima Memorial in Arlington, Va., on Nov. 10, 1954.

Aside from the inspirational value of the American accomplishments on Iwo Jima, the victory there was extremely important to the war effort.

In overtaking the island from the Japanese, American forces had won an air base that would save the lives of thousands of Allied airmen returning from raids on Japan with crippled aircraft or near-empty fuel tanks.

By war's end, 2,400 B-29 bombers carrying 27,000 crewman had made emergency landings on Iwo Jima.

This image of six men and a red, white, and blue flag on top of a war-struck hill probably changed the world.

In *Flags of Our Fathers* that being part of the flag-raising electrified the nation. It had surprising effects on his life, wrote Ira Hays.

"It's funny what a picture can do.

*"With that one photograph, my dad's life was transformed."*

James Bradley  
*Author of Flags of Our Fathers*



Official U.S.M.C. Photos

Left — Marine Sgt. Lou Lowery photographed the first flag raising atop Mt. Suribachi. In the image, a Marine provides security as flag warriors behind him raise the national standard at 10 a.m. on Feb. 23, 1945. Above — Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal took several images of the Marines and Sailors on top of Iwo Jima's Mount Suribachi immediately following the flag raising. When he took this image of the elated warriors atop the peak, he had no idea his earlier image of the flag-raising would become so widely distributed.

# AP's Rosenthal captured timeless image of Marines

The man behind the lens on Iwo Jima, rejected twice as a military photographer, for bad eyes

**Sgt. Roman Yurek**  
Assistant Editor

Nearly everyone has seen the famous photo depicting the Marines and Sailors who raised the American flag atop Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima.

The photographer who captured that moment and made those warriors famous is not as well known.

Joe Rosenthal, an Associated Press photographer, was on Mt. Suribachi. He took the Pulitzer Prize-winning photo on Feb. 2, 1945, days after the attack began.

Born Oct. 9, 1911, in Washington, D.C., Rosenthal grew up in our nation's capital.

When he was old enough to join the military, he looked into the Army and Navy to become a military photographer. Both services rejected him because he had bad eyes.

Even though he couldn't get into the military, Rosenthal still pursued his passion for photography and began working for the Newspaper Enterprise Association in San Francisco, Calif.

In the early 1930s, he served as the chief photographer and manager for Times Wide World Photos. Later, he received a job with the Associated Press.

Working with the AP would allow Rosenthal to photograph the military. He was soon sent to the Pacific.

His first assignment in the Pacific was Guam. As the Marines fought through their island-hopping campaign, he soon landed on Iwo Jima.

"It was like shooting a football game," said Rosenthal during an interview shortly after the Iwo Jima campaign. "You never knew what you got on film."

When Rosenthal got the word that he was going to Iwo Jima, he was not alone. There were 64 other correspondents on the Iwo Jima campaign.



Courtesy of National Archives

Left and Above — Associated Press Photographer Joe Rosenthal captured the "Flag Raising on Iwo Jima," which was actually the second atop Mt. Suribachi, Feb. 23, 1945. Below — The public demanded a stamp commemorating the flag raising; however, Congress had to urge the US Post Office to break with policy as, "no living person(s)" could then appear on US stamps. In a sweltering July 1945, people stood patiently in lines stretching for city blocks, for a chance to buy one of the 137 million beloved stamps. A retouched image was reissued in 1995 to celebrate its 50th anniversary.

On Iwo Jima, Rosenthal took a photo. That photo has been used almost as a trademark for the War in the Pacific.

It has been used on stamps, war bonds and covers of books and magazines. It is considered to be the most reproduced image of all time.

Rosenthal is very humble about his renowned picture and has said "hundreds of photographers would have done equally well. A large part of it is being there."

He was at the right place at the right time.

"In a moment, Rosenthal's camera recorded the soul of a nation," wrote the editor of US Camera Magazine.

This quote captures the understanding of his picture. No matter how it was taken, this flag was, and is, a symbol recog-

nized around the world.

Over the years, controversy about the photo has come and gone. There are those who say that Rosenthal's shot was posed.

It is true that the flag which he took a picture of was the second to be raised atop the mountain. But, it was not posed.

Eventually, Rosenthal left Iwo Jima and came back to the States. After his tour in the Pacific for World War II, he was hired by the San Francisco Chronicle, as a photographer.



Besides earning a Pulitzer Prize in 1945 for his photo, Rosenthal was also made an honorary member of the Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association.

In all the uses of his Iwo Jima photo, one thing remains that Rosenthal says should be remembered.

"The biggest part of the picture is the sacrifice of the Marines and Sailors who died in the war," explained Rosenthal. "Because of what I have seen, I have a lot of respect for the young men who participated in such an important event."

"We are still benefiting from that," he added.



Courtesy of National Archives

Marines of the 4th Marine Division shell Japanese positions concealed back from the beaches. Here, artillery pieces pump a stream of rounds into Japanese positions inland on the tiny volcanic island.



Courtesy of National Archives

Marines of the 5th Division inch their way up the slope on Mount Suribachi as landing craft lay crippled in the surf below. It took only five days for the Marines to fight their way to the top of the tallest peak on the island.

## BATTLE: A triumph in the Pacific

From B-3

The 5-mile strip of land was coveted by allied forces for two main reasons. The first was to provide a landing site for bombers that had been damaged in air battles over the ocean. Preserving resources became imperative late in the war, and too many aircraft were crashing into the ocean, while returning from bombing missions over the Japanese mainland.

The second and most important reason was that the island would allow long range bombers to conduct fire missions over mainland Japan. It meant a chance to inflict major damage on the enemy.

Japanese forces, which consisted of more than 20,000 men, knew of the imminent attack, and were willing to die for the land they were holding. In fact, Japanese soldiers were told that they were most likely going to die, and to take as many Marines with them as they could.

In the end, 70,000 Marines invaded the island, and close to 7,000 of them were killed or injured in the battle. Conversely, nearly all of the Japanese defenders were killed. Two thousand of them survived to leave the island.

The 3rd, 4th and 5th Marine divisions headed up the raid from the black sand beaches of the island. The 4th and 5th hit the sand first. The 3rd followed some hours later.



Courtesy of National Archives

Above and Below — Liquid gas, napalm and hand grenades were more useful against the Japanese defenders on Iwo Jima than rifles.



Enemy forces allowed troops to build up on the beaches for some 20 minutes before they opened fire, in an effort to inflict more casualties on the landing forces. The casualties did mount. The Marines invading the island were hit with a hail of gun and mortar fire.

Slowly, however, the Marines began to advance across the landscape of the island. Some days, only 100

yards were gained. Eventually though, both airfields on the island were taken, and the mission's objectives were being accomplished on all fronts.

One damaged bomber even managed to crash land on one of the island's airstrips, while the battle was raging. The plane and the crew were saved and the capture of the island had proven its worth even before the battle was complete.

One of the major points in the battle occurred when five Marines and one Navy Corpsman ascended to the summit of the island's highest point, Mt. Suribachi. They then raised an American Flag that could be seen across the island.

The significance of that flag raising went far beyond inspiring the Marines fighting below to take the rest of that desolate strip of volcanic rock. It went on to inspire an entire Corps to stand proudly for an eternity.

It created an image that would stand forever in the eyes of Americans — a symbol of hope and freedom and that even in times of hardship and pain, America and its Marines will triumph.

The significance of the battle for the Second World War went beyond creating a place for bombers to land and take off. The island's location and the impact of the battle hurt the Japanese. Their homeland was now even more vulnerable to attack.

The victory at Iwo Jima paved the path to victory for the United States on the Pacific battlefield.

# CORPSMEN UP!: Navy medics supported life in fog of war

**Sgt. Richard W. Holtgraver Jr.**  
*Combat Correspondent*

The Battle of Iwo Jima went down in military history as a fight that forever proved the true mettle and spirit of the Marine Corps, but hundreds of unsung heroes battled beside those brave, fighting men from the first amphibious landing until after the last shot was fired: Navy corpsmen.

They were selfless individuals who risked their lives every minute of the fight, just as the Marines did. Instead of taking the lives of the enemy, the corpsman's mission was to save the lives of the few and the proud.

Each battalion of Marines was assigned one surgeon and 13 corpsmen, along with numerous litter bearers.

These medical men were just as tough as the Marines they were there to treat.

Marines quickly learned that the corpsmen would risk life and limb when the time came to low crawl towards the wounded amidst the hell of combat.

Their guts and determination, as well as their ability to apply vital first aid in a firefight, made the corpsmen quickly accepted into the ranks of their Marine units.

"We had outstanding corpsmen; they were just like family," said Staff Sgt. Alfred I. Thomas, a half-track platoon commander in the 25th Marine Regiment, 5th Marine Division, according to *Closing In: Marines in the Seizure of Iwo Jima*, by retired Marine Col. Joseph H. Alexander.

In the first days of the battle, these lifesavers worked their miracles on the wounded and dying only feet from the advancing Marine lines.

With bullets flying over their heads and mortar shells landing nearby, corpsmen applied battle dressings to those men who weren't so fortunate in the fighting.

Corpsmen faced the same



Official U.S.M.C. Photos

**Above — Often four-man litter crews returned from the frontlines with only three men. Right — Corpsmen assist a doctor as he works on a Marine at the 2nd Bn. Aid Station on Iwo Jima. Below — Corpsmen tend to a wounded Marine in a shell-hole aid station as plasma hangs from a rifle.**



dangers as fighting Marines, because Japanese snipers didn't give quarter to any American servicemembers, whether carrying a weapon or not.

Litter crews, corpsmen, and even the wounded themselves, would often become targets for snipers' bullets.

The best chance of survival a wounded Marine had during combat was that a corpsman be close at hand during those moments after receiving a wound from a bullet or shrapnel.

Corpsmen attacked the problem in orderly fashion by controlling the hemorrhaging, giving plasma, applying sulfa, in-



jecting morphine (if needed) and getting Marines removed from the danger to an aid station or field hospital.

Most times, an aid station was only a hole in the ground or a shell crater.

As the battle wore on and the Marines slowly advanced, the crude, small aid stations continuously moved within a couple hundred yards of combat to treat the wounded as quickly as possible.

Corpsmen assisted the doctors in treating various degrees of wounds at these aid stations, while waiting for litter carriers to haul the

wounded in need of addition medical attention back toward the beachhead.

Doctors and surgeons on the beaches of Iwo Jima had a new tool to help in the fight to save the lives of wounded Marines in Iwo Jima, whole blood.

The success of the corpsmen during the Marines' 36-day battle for the three airfields on the island could be seen in the numbers of wounded men who were able to return to their units for further combat after medical healing.

Some Marines were wounded more than once, occasionally three times, and still recuperated to fight another day.

When the battle over this small, black volcanic rock finally ended, 827 corpsmen and 23 doctors

were either killed or wounded.

Four corpsmen received the Medal of Honor for their actions during the battle; two of those were awarded posthumously.

According to Bill D. Ross's book, *Iwo Jima; a Legacy of Valor*, a story can be told of a corpsman who felt obligated to help his Marines despite being wounded.

On D-Day plus nine Pharmacists Mate First Class John H. Willis, of the 27th

Marine Regiment, was busy tending to wounded Marines when he was struck by hot shrapnel.

Ordered out of the action, Willis went to the battalion aid station to get his wound treated and dressed.

Willis returned to the action 30 minutes later and immediately resumed his duties.

He clambered up a hill to reach a fallen Marine. Halfway to the top, Willis came under fire and barely had time to jump into a small ditch.

In one swift motion, Willis took the rifle he had and buried it, bayonet first, into the ground next to the wounded Marine. In no time, Willis had the Marine's hemorrhaging wound dressed and an "I-V" drip running. That's when he ran into trouble.

The Japanese started throwing grenade after grenade at Willis and the Marine.

Willis did his best to hold off the attack and protect the injured Marine by trying to throw the grenades back at the Japanese in the direction from which they had come.

His efforts were for naught. Finally, one of the grenades exploded in his hand.

"He was the bravest young man and the best damned corpsman I ever saw," said Willis's battalion surgeon, Navy Lt. Charles J. Hely. "He'd made one helluva fine doctor."

Some people might say that the brave corpsmen, doctors and countless litter bearers who lost their lives on Iwo Jima did so for their country or service.

To the Marines of Iwo Jima — living and dead, who showed the world that, "Uncommon Valor, was a Common Virtue" — they know that those corpsmen gave their lives to preserve something more important — freedom.

# MCBH lauds efforts of Pacific War Memorial Assn.



Cpl. Dustin Senger

**Mrs. Alice Clark, chair of the Pacific War Memorial Association, stands by a model of the Pacific War Memorial during the 55th anniversary celebration of the battle for Iwo Jima.**

## Press Release *Pacific War Memorial Assn.*

Mr. Sefton R. ("Bee") Clark and his wife Alice T. Clark of Kamuela, Hawaii, founded the Pacific War Memorial Association (PWMA) to raise the funds to place the Pacific War Memorial at an appropriate location in Hawaii.

Mrs. Clark chairs the PWMA's board of directors; Mr. Clark is its secretary.

Many members of the board of directors, the advisory board and the fundraising advisory group invested years of their time to see the dream of a Pacific memorial become a reality.

The MCB Hawaii community will officially thank them for their resolve and dedication during the Iwo Jima Dedication ceremony, Saturday at 10 a.m., at the front gate.

### Board members include:

- Kenneth Brown, chair, The Queen's Medical Center & chair, Mauna Lani Hotel and Bungalows.

- Judge James S. Burns, chief justice,

Hawaii State Intermediate Court of Appeals and son of former governor of Hawaii, John A. Burns.

- Dr. W. Donald Duckworth, (former) director, Bishop Museum.

- Mr. George Ellis, director of The Honolulu Academy of Arts.

- Retired Marine Maj. Gen. Fred Haynes, president of the American-Turkish Council, Washington, D.C., & Iwo Jima veteran.

- Retired Marine Brig. Gen. Richard Vercauteren (former commanding general, MCB Hawaii), regional director, Lockheed Corporation.

- Mr. Phillip K. White, A.I.A., architect.

### Recent PWMA board members:

- Mr. Burl Burlingame, *Honolulu Star Bulletin* writer and author.

- Ms. Kitty K. Kamaka, attorney.

- Mr. Manuel C. Menendez, III, City of Honolulu.

- Retired Marine Col. Mike Olson, airfield manager, Marine Corps Air Facility,

MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

- Mr. John Wheeler, A.I.A., memorial project architect at Kaneohe Bay.

### The PWMA Advisory Board:

- The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye, US Senator.

- Retired Marine Brig. Gen. Jerome T. Hagen.

- Retired Army Col. John R. Hawkins.

- Mr. David Heenan.

- Retired Marine Lt. Gen. V. H. Krulak.

- Retired Marine Lt. Gen. H.C. Stackpole.

- Retired Army Gen. Fred C. Weyand.

- Retired Army Maj. Gen. Herbert Wolff.

- Dr. Donald Duckworth, (former) director, Bishop Museum.

### The PWMA Fundraising Advisory Group:

- Mr. Henry B. Clark, Jr.

- Mr. Warren G. Height.

- Mr. Bill Mills.

- Mr. Randolph G. Moore

- Mr. Wilmer C. Morris