



The Black Sands

Published by the Iwo Jima Association of America, Inc (IJAA)

JOIN US

2020 Reunion and Symposium

For the commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the Battle for Iwo Jima in order to perpetuate the spirit of those marines, celebrate the brave soldier who fought, and educate the masses on what happen during the epic battle.

THE BLACK SANDS

The Publication of the Iwo Jima Association of America

FALL 2019

VOLUME 101 ISSUE 1



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President's Message

MajGen David Bice, USMC (Ret)

Greetings!

This past spring and summer have been filled with activities and planning for the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima. IJAA Board of Director members **Gene Colabatistto** and **David Wells** have been leading the planning activities along IJAA Executive Director **Art Sifuentes** and **Shayne Jarosz**. We want to make this event especially memorial for our Iwo Jima Veterans and families attending. Highlights include a memorial program at the National Museum of the Marine Corps and a special Banquet Gala on Saturday, February 29th. Check out the IJAA website and the Black Sands newsletter for program details and information on registration and hotel reservations. I look forward to seeing you there.

The 2020 Reunion of Honor event on Iwo Jima is shaping up as an historic ceremony honoring the horrific sacrifices of those who fought on that bloody island in 1945. Military Historic Tours is again organizing the trip to Guam and on to Iwo Jima and back, which runs 23-30 March, 2020. We hope to get as many Iwo Jima Veterans on this trip as we can.

We continue to receive notices of the passing of our remaining Iwo Jima Veterans. We mourn their passing while also giving thanks for their service to our nation. IJAA's mission is to preserve and perpetuate the legacy of their epic contributions to the freedoms we enjoy today. Thank you for helping us to continue that mission.

Semper Fidelis,

David Bice

David Bice

MajGen USMC (Ret)





Iwo Jima 75th Anniversary Banquet Gala *Sponsor's Fact Sheet*

Date: Saturday, February 29, 2020

Location: Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Arlington, VA

Overview:

The Iwo Jima Banquet Gala will be a premier Washington, DC social Fundraising event to:

- Commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the landing and battle for Iwo Jima;
- Honor the lives of past and present veterans who participated in the battle;
- Raise historical and educational awareness through private financial donations and sponsorships of the Banquet Gala; and,
- Develop long-term relationships with the Iwo Jima Association of America (IJAA) and its charter.

Participants:

Designated a “widely attended” Gala event that will include veterans of Iwo Jima, Members of Congress, high-level representatives of US/Foreign governments, business executives and dignitaries in the news, media and entertainment industry.

To Participate as a sponsor:

LtCol Raul “Art” Sifuentes USMC (Ret)

T. *1-703-212-8128

rsifuentes@iwojimaassociation.org

The Iwo Jima Association of America

P.O. Box 680 Quantico, VA 22134

IJAA is an IRS designated 501(C)3

80-0255086

SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

Tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law

Black Sands \$25,000 [2]

Three tables of 10 with priority seating
Prominent guests seated at tables
Recognition from the podium
VIP cocktail reception
Full-page ad on inside/outside back cover of program
Logo displayed on banquet & symposium signage
Logo on awards banquet page of IJAA website
Logo on top of sponsorship page in dinner program

Platinum \$10,000

Two tables of 10 with priority seating
Prominent guest seated at tables
Recognition from the podium
VIP cocktail reception
Full-page ad inside of program
Logo displayed on banquet page of IJAA website
Logo on sponsorship page in dinner program

Gold \$5,000

One table of 10 with priority seating
Prominent guest seated at tables
VIP Cocktail reception
Half-page ad in dinner program
Logo displayed on banquet & symposium signage
Logo on award dinner page of IJAA website
Logo on sponsorship page in dinner program

Silver \$2,500

One table of 10 with priority seating
Quarter-page ad in dinner program
Logo on awards dinner page of IJAA website
Logo on sponsorship page in dinner program

Table \$1,500

One table of 10
Logo on dinner table
Logo on sponsorship page in dinner program

Individual Contributions:

Squad Leader \$1,000 / Fireteam Leader \$500

**Additional sponsorship opportunities are available and include the 75th Anniversary Remembrance.*

BLACK SANDS ADVERTISING CONTRACT

The *Black Sands* is the primary internal information vehicle for the Iwo Jima Association of America, Inc. It is mailed nationwide and overseas to Association members, major Marine Corps commands, supporters, and advertisers. Please consider purchasing an ad. It helps to provide funds for Iwo Vet's return to Iwo Jima.

Annual Advertising Rates

Full Page (7-1/2 x 10-1/8")	\$1,000.00
Horizontal 1/2 Page (7-1/2 x 5-1/16")	\$ 500.00
Vertical 1/2 Page (3-3/4 x 10-1/8')	\$ 500.00
One Quarter Page (3-3/4 x 5-1/16")	\$ 300.00

Single Issue Advertising Rates

Full Page (7-1/2 x 10-1/8")	\$275.00
Horizontal 1/2 Page (7-1/2 x 5-1/16")	\$130.00
Vertical 1/2 Page (3-3/4 x 10-1/8')	\$130.00
One Quarter Page (3-3/4 x 5-1/16")	\$ 80.00

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO:

IJAA

MAIL CONTRACT, AD & CHECK TO:

IJAA

P.O. BOX 680

QUANTICO, VA 22134

QUESTIONS? CALL:

CONTRACT AGREEMENT

AD SIZE: _____ AD COST: \$ _____ for _____ issues

(Please enclose ad with contract and payment)

Name: _____ Ph _____

Street _____ E-mail _____

CREDIT CARDS

Type: ___ VISA ___ MasterCard ___ AmEx ___ Discover ___ Diners Club

Name & Address (If different from above): _____

Card#: _____ CVV2 _____ Exp. Date _____

If possible, send your ad via e-mail in JPEG to RSifuentes@iwojimaassociation.org or CD-ROM to IJAA (Address above).

IJAA is grateful for the support of the following sponsors:

emblem**max**



CAE



MAX KRUPKA

SEMPER FI!



Background Image Courtesy: Lauren Loria

BLACK SANDS Advertising Member Assistance

Help your Iwo Jima Association of America by asking your local businesses, tourist, convention or recreation activities to advertise in the *BLACK SANDS*. Following is a suggested note to send to potential advertisers. Make copies, attach to the BLACK SANDS Advertising Contract, sign, and send to those advertisers who might want to advertise in the *BLACK SANDS*.

Dear: _____

The Iwo Jima Association of America quarterly newsletter, *BLACK SANDS*, reaches a worldwide audience of active duty, retired, and veteran Marines, Sailors, Airmen, Soldiers, and families. The readers often enjoy travel, leisure, outdoor, and hometown activities along with brand loyalty. Please consider advertising in the *BLACK SANDS*. A contract agreement is attached for your convenience. Thank you.

IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (IJAA) MERCHANDISE ORDER FORM

IJAA Polo Shirt



Colors--Navy Blue/Red/White/Green

Price: \$40

Shirt Sizes: (Mens') S/M/XL/2XL/2XL

No: _____ Sizes: _____

(Ladies') P/S/M/L/XL

No: _____ Sizes: _____

Total # of Shirts _____ x \$40 = _____

Total # of Gift Boxes _____ x \$20 = _____

Total # of Medallions _____ x \$25 = _____

Total # of Ball Caps _____ x \$15 = _____

Total # of Coins _____ x \$10 = _____

Total # of Patches _____ x \$5 = _____

Total # of Stickers _____ x \$3 = _____

Total Video costs \$ _____

Add \$5 for Shipping + \$5

Total cost \$ _____

Iwo Jima Memorial Display Box
w/iconic Rosenthal photo & Black Sand Case



Price: \$20

Flag Raising Commemorative Medallion
Pewter w/Black Sand Capsule



Price: \$25

IJAA Challenge Coin



Price: \$10

IJAA Patch



Price: \$5

IJAA Ball Cap



Colors-Green/Red/Blue Price: \$15

IJAA Sticker



Price: \$3

Name _____ Signature _____

Credit Card # _____ Exp. Date _____ SC Code _____ (3-digit on card)

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

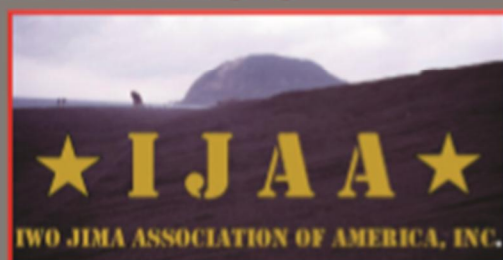
Complete Order Form (if using check attach to order form made out to the IJAA) and mail to Iwo Jima Association of America, PO Box 680, Quantico, VA 22134-0680. IJAA is a Non Profit with IRS # 80 0255086.

All proceeds go to funding Iwo Vets' return to Iwo Jima.

IJAA's 2020 Fund Raiser

Three Great Prizes

1st Prize*
M-1 CARBINE



M1 Carbine—U.S. Rifle .30 Caliber (7.62 mm) the carbine used in WWII, Korea & Vietnam.



* - Winner must comply with all State & Federal Firearm Regulations

2nd Prize
Flag Flown on Mt Suribachi*

- With Flag Box & Iwo Sand



3rd Prize
Patriotic Quilt



To enter this fund-raiser, complete the enclosed form and send in your tickets.
Winners will be drawn at the Reunion of Honor Banquet on Guam.
You need not be present to win. Deadline for ticket donations 19 Mar 2020.

IJAA RAFFLE TICKETS

\$20 each or 6 for \$100

Make checks payable to Iwo Jima Association of America.

You do not need to be present to win!

Mail Form (with CC Info or Checks)

IJAA

P.O. Box 680

Quantico, Va. 22134

Credit Cards Accepted VISA ☐ Master Card ☐

Credit Card Number _____

Exp. Date ____/____/____

V- Code (3-digit code) _____

2020 IJAA Fund Raiser Ticket—Win a M1 Carbine—U.S. .30 Caliber Iwo Jima Flag, Patriotic Quilt	Return This Stub Name _____ Street Address _____ City, State and Zip _____ Phone # _____ Email Address _____
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**THE IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION
OF AMERICA INVITES YOU TO
THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE BATTLE FOR IWO JIMA**



1945 - 2020

IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
FEBRUARY 26—MARCH 1, 2020
HYATT REGENCY CRYSTAL CITY, ARLINGTON, VA

Wednesday, February 26

2:00pm—6:00pm Reunion Registration Open
6:00pm—8:00pm Welcome Reception

Thursday, February 27

7:30am—8:00am Reunion Registration Open
8:00am—4:00pm Udvar Hazy Air & Space Museum/City Tour
5:00pm—10:00pm Hospitality Room Open & Registration Open

Friday, February 28

8:15am—2:30pm NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

Saturday, February 29

8:30am—3:30pm Symposium and Panel Discussion
12:00pm—1:00pm Symposium Lunch with Guest Speaker
5:00pm—6:30pm Registration Open
5:00pm—6:00pm Cash Bar Reception
6:00pm—9:30pm Official Anniversary Banquet

Sunday, March 1

Farewells and Departures

Register with AFRI online and pay by credit card!

Enter this webpage: www.afr-reg.com/ijaa2020

CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less the non-refundable AFR registration fee (\$20 per person). Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less the non-refundable AFR registration fee (\$20 per person). Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time, excluding holidays. Please call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation does not cancel your reunion activities. Each must be cancelled separately.

IJAA HOTEL REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Welcome to Hyatt Regency Crystal City at Reagan National Airport ! We look forward to hosting the IJAA events. Please book your guest room online at:

<https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/group-booking/WASRC/G-JIMA>

You can also choose your desired stay dates within this time frame: IJAA dates are

Tue, Feb 25, 2020 - Sun, Mar 1, 2020

IJAA Group Code: G-JIMA

Hyatt Regency Crystal City at Reagan National Airport

2799 Jefferson Davis Highway

Arlington, VA 22202

Phone: +1 (703) 418-1234

Email: concierge@hyatt.com

IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA REUNION ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM 2020

Listed below is the registration cost for the Reunion and Symposium. Please enter how many people will be participating and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. You may also register online and pay by credit card at www.afr-reg.com/ijaa2020. A 3.5% convenience fee will apply for all credit card payments. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before **January 28, 2020**. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form.

Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.
322 Madison Mews
Norfolk, VA 23510
ATTN: IJAA

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Check # _____	Date Received _____
Inputted _____	New <input type="checkbox"/> Revision/Addition <input type="checkbox"/>

<i>CUT-OFF DATE IS 1/28/20</i>	Price Per	# of People	Total
<u>TOURS</u>			
Thursday, 2/27: Udvar Hazy Air & Space Museum/City Tour	\$ 42		\$
Friday, 2/28: National Museum of the Marine Corps	\$ 57		
<u>MEALS</u>			
SATURDAY: SYMPOSIUM LUNCH	\$ 47		\$
SATURDAY: BANQUET (Please select your entrée below)			
Boneless Tri Tip Beef	\$ 55		\$
Napa Chicken	\$ 55		\$
Vegetarian Option	\$ 55		
Registration for Iwo Jima Veterans ONLY	FREE	#	\$
Registration for spouses, family, guests and supporters	\$20		\$
Total Amount Payable to Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.			\$

Note: Correct names and addresses are very important because of the prominent position of some of our guests. You will be required to go through metal detectors at the Museum.

FIRST _____ LAST _____ EMAIL _____

SPOUSE NAME (IF ATTENDING) _____

GUEST NAMES _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY, ST, ZIP _____ PHONE # (____) _____ - _____

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS _____

(Sleeping room requirements must be conveyed by attendee directly with hotel)

MUST YOU BE LIFTED HYDRAULICALLY ONTO THE BUS WHILE SEATED IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN BUS TRIPS? ☐ YES ☐ NO (PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY—There is a limit of one hydraulically lifted scooter or wheelchair per handicap accessible bus. Please note the combined weight of the passenger and wheelchair or scooter may not exceed 500lb due to lift limitations. If you use a scooter or wheelchair but can climb the steps to board the bus either you and/or a person traveling with you must be able to put the scooter or wheelchair in the bus's luggage compartment. Due to liability issues, drivers and tour guides cannot assist with scooters or motorized wheelchairs.)

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____ PHONE # (____) _____ - _____

ARRIVAL DATE _____ DEPARTURE DATE _____

ARE YOU STAYING AT THE HOTEL? YES ☐ NO ☐ ARE YOU FLYING? ☐ DRIVING? ☐ RV? ☐

For refunds and cancellations please refer to our policies outlined at the bottom of the reunion program. **CANCELLATIONS WILL ONLY BE TAKEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 9:00am-5:00pm EASTERN TIME (excluding holidays).** Call (757) 825-8401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion.

You may also register online and pay by credit card at www.afr-reg.com/ijaa2020

IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA TOUR DESCRIPTIONS **UDVAR HAZY AIR & SPACE MUSEUM/CITY TOUR**

Thursday, Feb 27



This museum, part of the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum, is dedicated to the preservation and display of its collection of historic aviation and space artifacts. Located at Washington International Dulles Airport, the facility has large aviation and space exhibit hangars. The museum currently has over eighty aircraft and dozens of space artifacts on display including the Space Shuttle Discovery, an SR-71 Blackbird, the Dash 80 prototype of the Boeing 707, and the B-29 Superfortress "Enola Gay." Lunch options include a food-court style McDonald's and coffee place. You



may tour the exhibits at your own pace, but there is a lot of walking, so please wear comfortable shoes. After lunch we'll depart and make our way back to the city and to the WWII Memorial and also the Marine Corps War Memorial (commonly known as the Iwo Jima Memorial).

8:00am board bus, 4:00pm back at hotel. \$42 /Person includes bus. Lunch on your own.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS (NMMC)

Friday, Feb 28



Open to the public in 2006, the NMMC is a lasting tribute to U.S. Marines — past, present, and future. Situated on a 135-acre site adjacent to the MCB Quantico, Virginia, the Museum's soaring design evokes the image of the flag-raisers of Iwo Jima. World-class interactive exhibits using the most innovative technology will surround you with irreplaceable artifacts and immerse you in the sights and sounds of Marines in action. You'll see permanent galleries and temporary exhibits. Your tour ticket will be exchanged for a box lunch consisting of a turkey croissant, chips, cookie, and a drink.



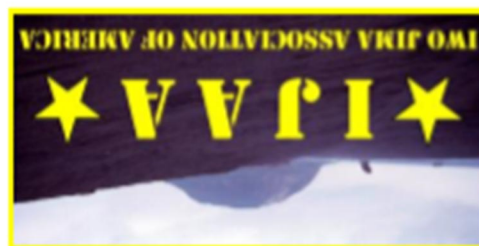
9:00am board bus, 3:00pm back at hotel. \$57/Person includes bus and box lunch.

Please be at the bus boarding area at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time. Driver and Guide gratuities are not included in tour prices.. All tours require a minimum of thirty-five (35) people.

75TH COMMEMORATION OF THE BATTLE OF IWO JIMA



**QUANTICO, VA 22134
PO BOX 680
AMERICA, INC.
IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF**



High Surf on Iwo Jima

By: Ralph G. Fallert

Majestically it comes,
Graceful, undulant, gathering strength.

And now it breaks –
Like a great scroll unrolling –
Like a rank of chargers
Taking a barrier –
Their long white manes
Loosed to the wind.

Over they go,
Stampeding to the beach,
Racing – leaping –
A wild white fury
That smashes to snowy splinters
On the great jagged feet of Suribachi,
Then draws itself back
Like a wounded thing,
Making a low growling thunder on the gravel as it goes.

Strange conflict, this –
The patient rock
Against the fluent constancy of water,
That is one moment shattered, and the next is whole.
The surf pounds fruitlessly.
And yet,
Ten thousand years away,
This tireless sea will splash upon a different shore.

Today the surf is high,
Prodigal of its power,
Thunderous – terrifying – magnificent!
Yesterday the sea was calm,
And will be so tomorrow –
Subsiding to a gentle music
That floats across the quiet graves
Of Iwo Jima.

“The following verses were written overseas during World War II, while I was with the SeaBees – briefly on American Samoa and for a longer time on Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides. Following Espiritu came a period of about a year back in the States, then transfer to Armed Forces Radio Service and again assignment overseas – this time on Iwo Jima, after it had been magnificently secured by the Marines and others. The verses “High Surf on Iwo Jima” were written on Iwo at this time.” - Fallert

Copyright 1989 by Ralph G. Fallert (b. 1914 – d. 2002)

Remembrance

By Gail Chatfield

“Iwo Jima was the most savage and the most costly battle in the history of the Marine Corps,” LtGen Holland M. Smith acknowledged. When the battle ended, 6,821 Americans had been killed and 19,000 wounded. At the base of Mount Suribachi, a little south of Motoyama Airfield No. 1, thousands of young men lay buried in the cemeteries of the 3rd, 4th and 5th Marine Division. Row upon row of white crosses and stars were seen by the troops as they regrouped to leave the island. Joe Rosenthal’s photograph of the raising of the American flag on Mount Suribachi provided the image of that horrible battle, but the words of Lt Roland Gittelsohn, CHC, USNR, furnished its meaning. Lt Gittelsohn was the first Jewish rabbi assigned to the Marine Corps and he, like his fellow chaplains, ministered to all faiths in combat. The rabbi knew the horrors of war and the toll it took on the men. At the Fifth Marine Division Cemetery dedication on Mar. 21, 1945, Division Chaplain Warren Cuthriell asked Rabbi Gittelsohn to deliver the memorial sermon at a combine Protestant, Catholic and Jewish service.



**THE
PUREST
DEMOCRACY**

Sermon at the dedication
of the 5th Marine Cemetery
on Iwo Jima

Chaplain Roland Gittelsohn

Chaplain Cuthriell wanted a single, nondenominational ceremony to honor the men of different races and religions united as Marines. It was not to be; the Protestant and Catholic chaplains objected to the idea of a combined service and a rabbi preaching over mostly Christian graves. Sammy Bernstein of Massachusetts remembers the incident well. Bernstein was a 20-year-old corporal who had been asked by Rabbi Gittelsohn to be his helper. The two shared a foxhole for two nights on Iwo before the cemetery dedication. “My job was to man the machine gun and protect him; sometimes I’d steal him some coffee,” Bernstein recalled. “I didn’t know it at the time, but that must have been what the rabbi was writing in the foxhole.” Bernstein was at Gittelsohn’s side at the bottom of the steps leading to the platform where the service would be conducted and heard

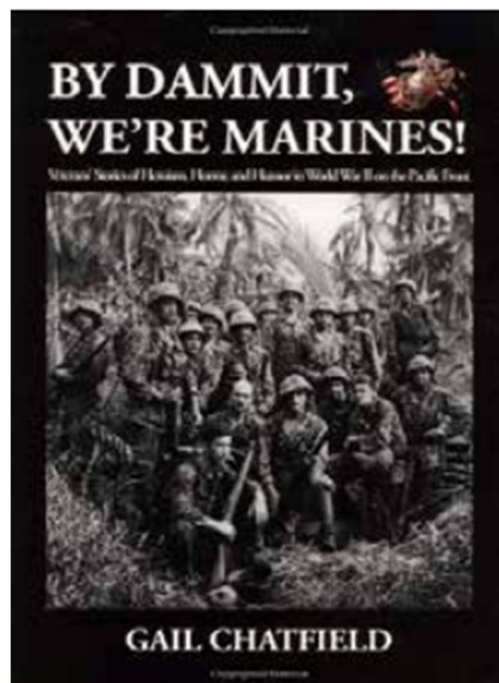
the chaplains tell the rabbi that he would not be giving the eulogy. Rabbi Gittelsohn accepted this but asked Bernstein to bring a jeep around and pick him up immediately after the ceremony. The rabbi also asked Bernstein to gather up the Jewish boys and send them to a certain area of the cemetery.

A few minutes after the main ceremony, Gittelsohn delivered his original eulogy to Bernstein and the 25 or so gathered there. Several Protestant chaplains, angered at the attitudes of their colleagues, attended the service. Unknown to the rabbi, thousands of copies of the sermon were later circulated among the troops who then sent them home for the families to read. Gittelsohn’s eulogy appeared in hometown newspapers and coverage spread even further when excerpts were published in Time magazine. The entire sermon was later inserted into the Congressional Record. Rabbi Gittelsohn’s words remain powerful and timeless. Here is an excerpt: “This is perhaps the grimmest, and surely the holiest task we have faced since D-Day. Here before us lie the bodies of comrades and friends. Men who until yesterday or last week laughed with us, joked with us, trained with us. Men who were on the same ships with us, and went over the sides with us as we prepared to hit the beaches of this island. Men who fought with us and feared with us.

“Somewhere in this plot of ground there may lie the man who could have discovered the cure for cancer. Under one of these Christian crosses, or beneath a Jewish Star of David, there may rest now a man who was destined to be a great prophet... to find the way, perhaps, for all to live in plenty, with poverty and hardship for none. Now they lie here silently in this sacred soil, and we gather to consecrate this earth in their memory. “It is not easy to do so. Some of us have buried our closest friends here. We saw these men killed before our very eyes. Any one of us might have died in their places. Indeed, some of us are alive and breathing at this very moment only because men who lie here beneath us had the courage and strength to give their lives for ours. To speak in memory of such men as these is not easy. Of them, too, it can be said with utter truth: ‘The world will little note or long remember what we say here.

It can never forget what they did here.’ “Thus do we memorialize those who, having ceased living with us, now live within us. Thus do we consecrate ourselves, the living, to carry on the struggle they began. Too much blood has gone into this soil for us to let it lie barren. Too much pain and heartache have fertilized the earth on which we stand. We here solemnly swear: this shall not be in vain! Out of this, and from the suffering and sorrow of those who mourn this, will come—we promise—the birth of a new freedom for the sons of men everywhere. AMEN” The cemeteries are no longer on Iwo Jima. The return of the American dead buried in foreign cemeteries was provided for by Congress in 1947.

Those buried on Iwo Jima were either re-interred at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl, Hawaii, or returned to their families for burial. While the American Graves Registration Service recovered most servicemen killed in the campaign, an estimated 250 servicemen are still listed as missing. In 1968, the United States returned Iwo Jima to Japanese jurisdiction. In June, 2007, at the urging of its original inhabitants, Japan changed the island’s name back its prewar Iwo To. The 48-star flag in Joe Rosenthal’s photograph is on display at the United States Marine Corps Museum at Quantico, Virginia. On the 67th anniversary of the Marines landing on Iwo Jima, we remember the men who fought and died on that volcanic island and the legacy they left for today’s Marines.



One Beach-First Wave: Two Marines

By Warren Mason

“Thirty-six days ... I only wish. The Corps had me stay one extra ...’til day 37!” John Lauriello (A-1-27) said, laughing, at the IJAA’s 67th Iwo Jima Reunion in February. Lauriello, not the only Marine who had to overstay his “reservation” on that fateful island, realized the humor in his statement. Thousands of other Marines, such as fellow IJAA member George Alden, (A-1-27) also had their own battle service on Iwo. However, their tenure there would be much shorter: wounds and death would see to that.



(L-R), Iwo Jima veteran John Lauriello (A-1-27), IJAA Associate member Warren Mason and George Alden (A-1-27). Mason introduced the two at the February IJAA 67th Iwo Jima Reunion and Symposium. The two landed on Red Beach on Feb 19, 1945, in the First Wave, had never met before, even though were only yards apart and in the same company

Despite the length of their service, long or short, few of the invasion Marines would share the distinction of landing on any of the beaches in the first wave that first day. For these two Marines, Lauriello and Alden, it was a fateful landing on Iwo Jima’s Red Beach Two on the morning of Feb. 19, 1945, in the First Wave. When LtGen Todamichi Kuribayashi, the commander of Iwo Jima’s Japanese forces, surveyed Iwo’s potential landing beaches in anticipation of the American invasion, even he could not imagine the strength of the Marine assaults that would cross those black sands. The assault on beaches Green, Red One, Red Two, Yellow One, Yellow Two, Blue One and Blue Two would total 30,000 Marines from the 3rd, 4th and 5th Marine Divisions ashore by the end of the first day. These beaches would also become the starting point for close to a total of 40,000 more U.S. Marines by the end of the battle in March. Two of these Marines, Alden and Lauriello, would not meet each other in person for another 67 years, although they would serve within yards of each other and advance over Red Beach at the same time that February morning.

Also, despite being in the Iwo Jima Association of America for years, until the most recent reunion in Washington they did not realize their common connection of Red Beach Two – First Wave or even of each other's existence. For Lauriello, "Wireman" would become his MOS on Iwo because his electronic repair skills would not be needed for this invasion. He would endure 36 combat days on Sulfur Island. While his injuries involved being bashed, slammed, torn, and his own helmet flipping forward and almost smashing his front teeth out, there was no direct enemy combat wound. "Thankfully," John related, "I was one of the lucky ones." Sgt Alden, on the other hand, led his men ashore on Red Beach and advanced through the initially quiet sands. However, by D +3 he was wounded in combat and soon evacuated. T

These two members of the IJAA were that close to each other on the first day in the first wave on Red Beach Two and would remain unknown to each other until an IJAA associate member read both of their inscriptions on a photo of Rosenthal's flag-raising that they signed for him at the conference. Alden wrote, "A-1-27-5th Div. – 1st Wave, Red Beach 2," while Lauriello signed, "5th Marine Div. 27th Reg., 1st Wave, Red Beach." In casual conversation later, when asked where they were both positioned relative to one another during the initial Feb. 19 assault, Lauriello answered, "No idea; never met him [Alden]."

At the Saturday evening IJAA banquet, Alden more or less related the same story, noting that everyone he served with that morning "was now gone; none left." Later in the evening, with both of their sons present, the two seasoned Marines were coaxed out to the hotel's banquet reception area to meet for the first time after hitting Red Beach decades ago. Said Alden to Lauriello: "I know why we never met – they [the Japanese] got me on Day 3, and I was evacuated." Replied Lauriello, "Well, I stayed a bit longer." Smiling for a photo together some 67 years later as comrades in arms who had stormed one hellish beach in that determined first wave stood two grateful, venerable Marines.



-About the Author Warren Mason is a Professor of Business at Plymouth State University in New Hampshire. His uncle was a Marine during the Korean War era, and his father served as an enlisted Marine in the Pacific Theater during WWII with Marine Bomber Squadron 443. He is an Associate Member of the Fifth Marine Division Association and the Iwo Jima Association of America.

The Meaning of Iwo Jima

By Mark Flowers

The fighting on Iwo Jima symbolized the role of the Marines in World War II. This epic campaign became a touchstone that forcefully demonstrated the sacrifice of Leathernecks in pursuit of victory. In military history, Iwo Jima ranks among the most demanding and costly battles ever. Of the 71,000 Americans who served there, 26,038 were killed, wounded or missing in action. Expressed as a math equation, to conquer each one of Iwo Jima's 8 square miles of volcanic slag, 3,255 American servicemen were killed or wounded. The vast majority of these heroes were Marines, but men of every branch became casualties in the fight to capture Iwo Jima. Adding Japanese casualty figures, more than 46,000 men died or were wounded during the 36 days of this indescribable battle. With- was beyond human com- the slaughter. And still, the

For many Americans, the Suribachi became the ultimate symbol of World War II. The picture, though, didn't just show some flag. It reinforced the ethos of the Marine Corps. But lost in the publicity was the fact that only three of the six Marines in the photo survived the battle, and only one lived to tell the tale. The flag raising is an iconic image, even to people who weren't in World War II. But, at least some of the symbols of Iwo Jima were



The Spirit of Iwo Jima, honoring the Marines of the 5th Amphibious Corps who conquered this critical objective of World War II.

out question, Iwo Jima prevailed. The flag raising on Mount Suribachi became a symbol of the Marine Corps.

flag raising on Mount Suribachi became a symbol of the Marine Corps. The grim fact that only three of the six Marines in the photo survived the battle, and only one lived to tell the tale. The flag raising is an iconic image, even to people who weren't in World War II. But, at least some of the symbols of Iwo Jima were

They were not on the top of Mount Suribachi, but down below, not far from the black sand beaches where American fighting men first set foot on this piece of hell on a morning like no other in February 1945. The cemeteries that sprung up even as the fighting raged, served not just as collecting spots for the dead, but as powerful and sobering reminders to the Marines who were left behind and to the American people. Each of the thousands of graves were not just a marker, but a life cut short, with buddies left behind, and families who would never really share in the joy of homecoming and victory. As weary survivors of battle were pulled off the line, they made their way alone and in groups to visit their friends. Standing at the graves of their friends and comrades, many must have been awe-struck that so many other graves surrounded those of men they knew. Iwo Jima was an equal opportunity killer of Marines. Among the dead were high-ranking officers, Medal of Honor Marines, buck privates, Navy Corpsmen and Seabees, infantrymen, tankers, cooks, runners, staff officers and clerks. They were a cross section of the best America had to offer in 1945. Although almost all wanted to live, many ultimately had no say in the matter. They died from shellfire, sniper bullets, antitank rounds, machine gun fire, edged weapon attacks and a thousand other ways. This was not just death in an individual sense, but on a machine-age scale that took advantage of every bit of technology to kill. There was little glory to be found on the hellish wastes of Iwo Jima, but honor could be found everywhere one chose to risk a look under the rain of fire that fell there in 1945.



It was the quiet honor of a Marine who strapped on his pack and loaded a rifle, even though all his buddies were dead and he knew he would soon join them. It was the honor of a runner with a critical message to get back across a piece of fire-swept ground where two guys had already gotten hit trying to cross it. It was the rifleman with a fusillade of machine gun fire ahead and no one else to do the job. That honor still echoes across time, if you listen closely for it. Staunch and determined, not wanting to die, but ready nonetheless, the Marines wrote their own place in history. Each paragraph was the inscription on a cross or Star of David. So many stories, so many chapters. Can you hear them?

- Reprinted with permission of Mark Flowers, editor of the Emerald Empire Detachment #917 Marine Corps League newsletter, February 2011.

A Marine stands at the grave of GySgt John M. Basilone, killed in action on D-Day at Iwo Jima on 19 February 1945. (USMC Photo)

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